

ON THE WAYS

COMPILED AND EDITED BY BRUCE BULS, TECHNICAL EDITOR

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY AT WORKBOAT YARDS

All American completes fuel-efficient tour boat

As the price of diesel fuel approaches \$3 a gallon, **Kenai Fjords Tours** knows it made a smart move when it abandoned the monohull design of its existing 13 boats and went with a hydrofoil-supported catamaran for its newest 150-passenger tour boat, the *Aialik Voyager*.

Designed by **Teknicraft Design**, Auckland, New Zealand, the 82'7"×29'2" *Aialik Voyager* was built by **All American Marine**, Bellingham, Wash.

"Fuel efficiency was the major factor in building this boat. In the contract phase, we were promised 30 percent fuel savings [compared to Kenai's monohulls], but we ended up doing 44 percent," said Dan McDonald, director of marine operations for the Seward, Alaska-based glacier and wildlife tour operator.

Another advantage with the *Aialik Voyager* is usable space. "All the boats are 150 passengers. This one is shorter, but there's more room in the cat design," said McDonald.

For passengers, being on an excellent viewing platform is what it's all about. On the *Aialik Voyager's* two decks, there's enough open space outside for all 150 passengers to observe Alaska's wildlife. Or, when the weather is bad, passengers can stay warm and dry inside while catching the scenery through large windows.

Inside the lower-level cabin, there's 360° viewing. You can also walk completely around the boat on the lower deck. On the upper deck, passengers can sit enclosed just behind the wheelhouse, or enjoy Alaska's scenery from exterior **Beurteaux** seats.

Down below in the main cabin, there are **Eknes** tip-up seats, with each row of seats facing tables, which are used



New catamaran offers passengers excellent viewing options.

All American Marine

for meal service. Because the *Aialik Voyager* makes two six-hour trips a day, the crew serves lunch and dinner. To accomplish this, there's a galley with a refrigerator, freezer and convection ovens. Most of the food is brought onboard frozen and heated before serving.

One thing that's immediately noticeable as you move around the *Aialik Voyager* is the low doorsills. "We've eliminated the six-inch threshold that most T-boats have," said McDonald. "Six inches is a trip hazard and hard on those with mobility issues." In its space is a 1.5" sill, which is just enough height to seal a watertight door.

Since the Coast Guard was worried about down-flooding with the lower

thresholds, a 4" drain was installed into each of the cabin's four corners.

For the 125- to 135-mile round trip, the 82-footer cruises at about 25 knots (top speed is 30 knots) behind the power of a pair of 1,400-hp **Caterpillar** C32 diesels matched with **ZF** 2500A marine gears that turn **Osborne** 5-bladed propellers.

Props were chosen over waterjets because of fuel economy. "The fuel efficiency at 25 knots made more sense," said McDonald.

The *Aialik Voyager's* first official trip wasn't scheduled until May 5, but McDonald was already impressed with the new boat. "I'd like to replace the whole fleet with these boats."

— Michael Crowley