

92-year-old Sedov docks in Cape Town

On Monday, 22 April 2013, the 92-year-old clipper The Sedov docked at Quay 6 at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, a full 77 years after she last visited Cape Town in 1936. Sailing with just under 40 trainee sailors on board, she will remain there until her departure for Walvis Bay in Namibia on Wednesday, 24 April at 4pm.



"We are delighted to welcome a ship of the Sedov's stature to the V&A Waterfront. During our long and proud maritime history we have witnessed the arrival of countless ships of all shapes and sizes, but few could equal the grace and elegance of this beautiful ship. She is one of the best examples of a tall ship still in existence today," said Waterfront Harbour Master, Captain Steven Bentley.

The four-masted barque has a history almost as romantic as her appearance. Ordered in 1919 for German shipping company F.A. Vinnen & Co, the ship was completed and launched as the Magdalene Vinnen II in 1921. She became the first sailing ship to be fitted with a modern auxiliary engine after the ship yard finally won out its arguments with her owners to be allowed to do this. After her maiden voyage on 1 September 1921, she sailed the seven seas transporting cargos of coal, timber, wheat and pyrite. Her last voyage under the Vinnen flag took her to Argentina, South Africa, Australia, Reunion and the Seychelles.

Part of war reparations

On 9 August 1936 she was sold to Norddeutscher Lloyd, Bremen who renamed her the Kommodore Johnsen, modifying her as a training ship capable of carrying a complement of 50 to 60 trainee officers in addition to her regular crew.

Following Germany's surrender at the end of World War II, the British handed her over to the Soviet Union on 20 December 1945 as part of war reparations. In Russian hands she was converted into a training vessel for the Soviet Navy and renamed The Sedov. Between 1957 and 1966 she was used for oceanographic research in the North Atlantic.

By 1981 she had been given a make-over which included a glass domed banquet hall with a stage and movie theatre. She was based at the Baltic Division of Training Ships in Riga, serving the cadet schools of Kalingrad and Murmansk. Following the declaration of independence of Latvia in 1991, her ownership was transferred to the Naval School at the Murmansk Technical University. Today, the city of Murmansk is responsible for her management and maintenance, and she once again sails the seven seas training young naval cadets in the art of sailing.

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