

# Eco-friendly French cargo ship revives sail power

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A 3D view of a prototype of the first cargo sailboat operated by TOWT.

A French ship navigating past New York City to harbor laden with Champagne, Cognac and jam under sail might recall a long-forgotten age of wind navigation.

But with the Anemos, the world's largest cargo sail ship, a French

company is seeking to revive the eco-friendly and cost-effective technology to become a regular fixture on the high seas once again.

There has been increased interest in recent years in the use of sail technology to move cargo as fuel costs and environmental concerns have mounted for both shipping companies and consumers.

Anemos completed its inaugural 18-day transatlantic sailing from the French port of Le Havre to the Port of Newark Tuesday, and Guillaume Le Grand, chief executive of operator TOWT, hopes it will be the first of many.

"They're the largest sailing vessels around and we're starting to make an impact," he said of the ship and its sister vessel, Artemis, due to be launched in Vietnam Wednesday.

"We were full on this crossing and there's strong demand. Six more (vessels) are ordered already," Le Grand added, explaining that clients increasingly want to know the carbon intensity of their shipping.

Anemos, which is 81-meters long, carried with it 1,000 tonnes of cargo.

The inaugural sailing of Anemos was not without difficulties, with the backup motor used and refinements having to be made to the setup of the ship and its giant double sails.

"This was a little but challenging, we had to manage the routing. We are improving the tuning of the sails," captain of the nine-person crew Hadrien Busson told AFP.

The vessel uses a computerized, robotic rigging system to adjust the vast sails which make the ship 206 feet tall.

With around one billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted every year, shipping is responsible for almost three percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which aims to achieve carbon neutrality in the sector by 2050.

Wind is already used by some forty large cargo ships worldwide, according to the International Windship Association.

But that is a drop in the ocean when compared to the 105,000 vessels worldwide weighing more than 100 tonnes.

Several other shipping companies are using vessels harnessing wind power including Zephyr & Boree, Windcoop and Neoline.

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