

SCIENCE-FICTION  
ADVENTURE IN  
THE FAR FUTURE

---

# TRAVELLER

Referee's Aid 5: Type-Y Yacht

# TRAVELLER

## REFEREE'S AID 5:TYPE-Y YACHT

### CREDITS

#### CLASSIC TRAVELLER

Marc Miller

Loren Wiseman, John Harshman, Frank Chadwick, Darryl Hany, Winston Hamilton, Tony Svajlenka, Scott Renner, Doug Poe, David MacDonald, Wayne Roth, Paul R. Banner.

#### MONGOOSE TRAVELLER

##### AUTHOR

Martin J. Dougherty

##### EDITOR

Matthew Sprange

##### LAYOUT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Will Chapman, Amy Perrett

### CONTENTS

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION                  | 2  |
| THE TYPE-Y YACHT AND VARIANTS | 3  |
| THE YACHT AS A PLAYER SHIP    | 6  |
| YACHT OPERATIONS              | 7  |
| YACHT ENCOUNTERS              | 10 |



*Referee's Aid 5: Type-Y Yacht* ©2015 Mongoose Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work by any means without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden. All significant characters, names, places, items, art and text herein are copyrighted by Mongoose Publishing.

This game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Game License, please go to [www.mongoosepublishing.com](http://www.mongoosepublishing.com).

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United Kingdom and of the United States. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people organisations, places or events is purely coincidental.

Traveller is a trademark of Far Future Enterprises and is used under licence. Printed in the USA.

# INTRODUCTION

---

Almost every society has an upper echelon, whose status may or may not be deserved. Endless arguments are possible about whether someone who 'earned' fame through a reality vid show is as deserving or more, less or the same respect as someone born into a powerful family, but regardless of viewpoint these people exist.

Whilst some elements of the upper echelon might (perhaps rightly) be regarded as rich idiots who waste their own time and that of everyone else, many of these people fulfil a variety of important functions. Those who do nothing more than fill the gossip pages with their antics at least provide entertainment and something for folks to talk about and many of these upper-class citizens actually do make things better for the rest of society.

The nobility, or the upper segments of other societies, are often heavily involved in politics, business and the mediation of disputes. This may not be apparent to those who see them having yet another high-class ball or sweeping through customs without all the hassle that everyone else has to deal with. Nevertheless the noble may well make important business deals at that party which create jobs for others, or might be on the way to head off some crisis before it can become serious. These efforts rarely make the news – or at least, they are not luridly splashed across a certain kind of newspage in the same manner that the Baroness of Tildy's new boots or Sir Boris Ulriaan's drunken rant at the Zhodani ambassador's reception is likely to be.

Wealth and power are a reward and also a tool. It is a controversial fact, but a fact nonetheless, that people are impressed by status symbols and someone with a lot of 'big toys' is more likely to be taken seriously than someone humbler but equally competent. Among these big toys are starships such as the yacht. It is more than a pleasure-craft in many cases; it enables the owner to get where he is going and to impress those he meets. This translates to better deals and easier negotiations, and thus may justify the fact that the noble gets to swan around in a fabulously expensive jump-capable mobile home.

Thus there are many aspects to the upper end of society. Ultimately, whether or not they are worth the wealth and privilege that they have is a difficult question that can only be answered by examining the results they obtain and how those benefit society at large. These results may not be apparent to an outside observer... and they may not exist at all in some cases. Sometimes all that is apparent is the cash and the status symbols for the very good reason that there is nothing else. In other cases, the noble more than earns their status, or is in a position to do so if the need arises. These are people who may some day be able to save millions of lives with a few words, and the ability get others to heed those words is arguably worth all the wealth and privilege it took to put the noble in that position.

Opinions, of course, vary.

## TYPE-Y YACHT

For the very rich, starships are eminently affordable purchases. Although a starship may be bought as an investment, then hired out to other organisations or used for mercantile operations, a yacht is a personal vessel. Most are specially commissioned or refitted to fulfil a specific purpose, and can provide some inspiration of what can be done with an open-ended budget without simply sinking money into armaments. The Type-Y yacht is the merest of what is possible with truly unlimited wealth but provides a classic status symbol recognisable throughout Charted Space.

Built on a 200-ton hull, the Type-Y yacht is a noble's plaything used to entertain friends and undertake political or commercial missions. The ship includes sixteen luxury staterooms, two of which are combined into a suite for the owner aboard. There are no low berths. No turrets or weaponry are installed, but there is one hardpoint and one ton has been set aside for fire control. The yacht carries an air/raft and a ship's boat in hull compartments, and an ATV is also carried (the ship's boat is fitted to ferry it from orbit to surface and back).

# THE TYPE-Y YACHT AND VARIANTS

World governments, megacorporations and smaller business entities all have a need for local agreements which are best negotiated in person by an individual empowered to speak for the polity or business group in question. Larger corporations also need numerous starships to act as personnel transports or mobile headquarters. These roles can be (and often are) fulfilled by a converted Free Trader or even a small scout ship, but there is more to this than merely providing transportation. The vessel that a negotiator arrives in can influence how he or she is received; a company that uses beat-up free traders to transport its executives makes a weaker first impression than one that sends a negotiator in a luxurious yacht.

The 200-ton yacht was designed to meet this need. It provides luxurious transportation for an important person or group, with sufficient additional capacity to allow adaptation to a variety of other roles. Yachts are often described as 'playthings for nobles', and indeed many are used simply for pleasure or as a status symbol. However, a large proportion of yachts are working vessels whose silverware and deep-pile carpets are a tool as well as a luxury.

The yacht provides (relatively) low-cost transportation for a reasonable number of people. Its drives can only make jump-1, but fuel capacity is sufficient to make two consecutive jumps. Thus a yacht can carry its owner more or less anywhere he wants to go – eventually. Cargo capacity is far too small to make commercial operations viable, though some yachts do function as 'trade scouts', carrying samples to a target market

along with a negotiating team who will set up a deal to provide as much as the client wants if a market is found. This role is often completely forgotten, but it is one of the main functions of the yacht. Many have a cabin or two converted to offices and act as a mobile headquarters for a small business, or allow a merchant factor to move from market to market promoting his business.

The ability to carry a significant number of people in luxury means that some yachts, especially older vessels which have been sold on when their operators wanted something new and shiny, serve as liners on minor routes or fill in the gaps between bigger ships. With sixteen cabins (of which two are combined into a suite) a yacht can carry a small crew plus a dozen High passengers at premium rates. This is insufficient for a brand-new ship to pay its way, but there is a significant market in older yachts with much lower mortgage payments.

The three main purchasers of yachts are world governments, large corporations and nobles (or other high-status individuals). All three groups are highly concerned with image and will often sell a yacht to buy something newer rather than put it in for a mid-life refit. This refit is slightly misnamed, in that it is rarely possible to predict the service life of a vessel when it is built. However, most ships are bought on a 40-year mortgage, making the 20-year point a natural time for a major refit. Smaller refits are common every ten years, in addition to the normal annual maintenance. These 'mid-life crisis' yachts, as they are sometimes known, may become available at a good price to a secondary operator.



Not every user sells their yacht at the midlife point, of course. Some noble families (often poorer ones) are very proud of their century-old family yacht, and treat it (perhaps rightly) as an heirloom. However, in the sort of circles where yacht operators move, a 20+ year old yacht might well be sniffed at. Those with the money and sufficient concern for their image thus tend to sell on their yachts and buy the newest model. Some super-rich individuals buy a new one every year.

The yacht is thus part status symbol and part means of personal transportation for important people. Some impoverished nobles own little more than their ancient yacht, making it also their home, and at times a noble might be given a yacht and a stipend on the condition that he or she goes far away and stays out of the news. Older yachts may also be used by others, for example scientists or engineers-for-hire who can command a sufficiently high fee to operate their vessel.

The yacht has an unstreamlined hull, and is thus better suited to docking at a highport or sending its ship's boat down from orbit than landing on-planet. It can do so, but this is a complex and difficult evolution, and getting back to orbit is worse. Despite this, the yacht as standard has two areas designated an ATV bay and an air/raft bay. The ATV, if carried, is garaged in its bay but landed by the ship's boat. Moving the vehicle between the bay and the boat's cargo hold is tight and tricky, and in truth most yachts do not carry an ATV at all.

The ATV bay can take any vehicle up to the size of an ATV or can be converted as an additional cargo hold, squash court or whatever else the user wants. Corporate yachts often build a safe into this area to carry high-value trade samples and documents, or partition it off as an office or conference room. Many noble users find quite inventive uses for this space, though a few do carry an ATV or other ground vehicles in this space. No ATV is provided with the vessel when it is bought, so this space is invitingly available for conversion.

A high quality air/raft is included in the price of the ship, but the air/raft bay can take any similar craft. Many operators swap the standard air/raft out for a high-end speeder or a grav limousine, and often use this to descend to a world's surface rather than the ship's boat. Getting back to orbit aboard a grav limousine or air/raft takes several hours, so it is not uncommon for the yacht to descend into a very low orbit to meet its owner.

A fairly standard ship's boat is included in the price of the vessel, which adds MCr16 to the overall cost if bought new. A brand-new yacht, without its subordinate craft, actually costs slightly less to build than a Type A Free Trader. This is another way that yachts find their way into the liner business; either the vessel is built or bought without a ship's boat, or it is sold for whatever the operator can get for it. This does limit the yacht/liner to operations between highports or vacuum worlds but that is not a problem on some runs.

No hardpoints for weapons are fitted as standard, but this is a common conversion in some regions. Similarly, the yacht does not have a particularly high-end electronics fit. It does not need military or scientific sensors, nor high manoeuvrability, in most of its likely applications. What a yacht needs to do is to make its occupants feel comfortable and important, and the luxury fittings do a good job of that.

The yacht can be operated by a minimal crew of two: a pilot/astrogator and an engineer. Its luxurious and highly automated systems allow High passengers (or the equivalent) to be carried even without a steward aboard. However, for reasons both of comfort and status a larger staff is normally carried. Typically this means a second pilot (for the ship's boat), gunners i.e. weapons are fitted, and at least one steward/medic. If it quite common for noble-owned yachts to fly with a crew of six (two 'flight' personnel, two engineering/technical crew, two stewards) plus at least two or three other personnel acting as bodyguards, drivers, clerks, personal physicians or whatever else the owner feels necessary to maintain his high status.

Some operators run a rent-a-yacht service for those undertaking a long voyage or wanting personal transportation for a business trip. The quality of these vessels varies from an interstellar limousine service to a rather tired not-much-better-than-a-free-trader experience. Yachts of this sort are sometimes sent to fetch someone as part of a deal or negotiation, or can be hired as a party venue. Those that 'bring the party to you' at mining camps and similar outposts are often rather seedy, but still make good money off those willing to pay for a little luxury and the company of anyone but other roughnecks.

Yachts are occasionally put to other uses such as command ships for a small naval force or military intervention on a planet. Large forces such as the Imperial Navy would not do this, but smaller planetary forces have much less money in the budget and have to make do with whatever ships they can get. Older yachts might be bought up for conversion to as mail ships or similar vessels that do not require a very large cargo capacity.

The yacht can thus be encountered in a wide variety of roles, of which the common denominator tends to be a need for transportation with a certain degree of luxury. Applications include but are not limited to:

- Luxury transportation for nobles and other important persons
- Mobile corporate or political headquarters
- Mobile negotiating facility
- Itinerant impoverished noble's home/ship
- Passenger work
- Scouting for speculative trade
- Mail ship
- Mobile venue for party or expensive holiday
- Rental yacht

The standard yacht is built to a well-established design, and is more than eligible for the 10% discount such designs receive. Vessels are built in small private yards as well as huge Megacorporate facilities. The Imperial Megacorporations Ling Standard Products and General Products both mass-produce yachts, with the buyer able to specify various packages for décor and internal facilities at the time of fitting out. These vessels are built to a generally high standard, as might be expected, but 'generiyachts' (Generic Yachts) are sniffed at by those able to afford a custom build. This is of course unfair – a generiyacht is an expensive and luxurious status symbol, but one that impresses people who cannot afford a yacht much more than those who can.

Many of the privately built yachts coming out of the smaller yards are also essentially Generiyachts, though since each one is a custom order there tends to be a little more variation. This is sometimes due to customer requirements but often because a given yard has a particular way of building what is otherwise a standard vessel. Some companies specialise or are particularly strong players in the yacht-building marketplace. Of these, many build a range of luxury starships and may also construct liners; others are exclusively builders of the 200t version.

The Holy Grail of yacht ownership is a vessel from the Imperial Yacht Corporation, which builds vessels to the basic 200t design but incorporates features that are beyond the imagining of generiyacht owners. IYC yachts are extremely expensive, even after multiple owners, and are so prestigious that the corporation often buys back older vessels for scrapping rather than allowing a run-down IYC ship to wander around detracting from the firm's image. IYC also builds much larger yachts, but stays out of the luxury liner marketplace as part of an agreement with Imperiallines and LinerCorp. The latter is a mid-sized Imperial firm that builds small yachts for individual clients when an order comes in, but mostly constructs passenger vessels or 200t yachts modified to act as high-end small passenger ships.

A modified (and heavily armed) version of the 200t yacht is used by Solomani Security (SolSec) officials in the Solomani Rim as a 'Standards and Procedures Enforcement', typically carrying a senior investigator and a staff of bureaucrats and guards. Many of these vessels operate on a fairly loose remit, arriving unexpectedly and conducting an aggressive and invasive assessment of the local situation. The arrival of one of these ships is a cause for apprehension; its departure is grounds for celebration. Investigations are not conducted everywhere the ship goes; in many cases one simply passing through the port is a reminder to tighten up accounting and security procedures. SolSec thus considers these little ships a good investment, as a reminder to everyone that whilst the price of not being annexed back into the Imperium is constant vigilance, the price for not being treated to a full and formal SolSec audit is ensuring that the Standards and Procedures Enforcement officer does not spot anything out of order.

Unified Space Industries, based in Trojan Reach sector, constructs a variety of yacht variants based on the standard model. These include a mobile-head-office variant, a passenger ship and a command vessel for crisis management or mercenary operations. By far the most popular is the 'small liner' variant, which can be encountered on many local routes in Trojan Reach and up into Spinward Marches subsector. This vessel often has two remotely operated laser turrets added in place of some cargo space, and may also carry a mail safe or secure cargo hold in place of the ATV bay.

Many Class A starports have an area (inevitably termed a 'marina') where yachts congregate. This practice started out as an exercise in practicality – yachts and similar vessels do not need heavy-duty cargo handling equipment – but over time the general-small-ship pads where these vessels were typically assigned became an area where lower-class ships were not welcome. Many marinas have their own access to the starport concourse, usually close to the best hotels and high-end entertainment.

Marinas also exist away from the starports, sometimes as a specialist facility serving only yachts and the occasional cruise liner. These independent marinas attract wealthy clients, especially those frequented by owners of huge top-end IYC vessels, and often grow into resorts in their own right. Marinas of this sort have what might be considered a 'tradesman's entrance'; a set of docking slips for the use of merchant ships delivering supplies and the like. Free traders and subsidized merchants are not permitted to dock next to ICC yachts.

Possession of a docking bay at one of these marinas is a status symbol among yacht owners, especially if it is for a specific slip. There is often a waiting list measured in years for a permanent slip, and many owners never actually berth their yachts in most of the places they have slips – just owning the slip costs a fortune and thus impresses a certain class of people. Lesser yacht operators must slum it down among the generiyachts that rent a slip whilst they are in port, which can affect status among the yacht-operating class. There are bars and clubs in some marinas that require possession of a high-status docking slip just to get through the door – such is the world in which high-end yacht owners live.



# THE YACHT AS A PLAYER SHIP

---

At first glance the yacht might not seem ideal as a ship for a player group. It can carry very little cargo and thus might be considered unsuited to a 'free trader' style of game. Its 21-ton cargo hold can carry a little speculative cargo; not enough for the ship to pay its way except on the most spectacularly lucrative deals, but it is sufficient to permit players to indulge in a little trading on the side. This inability to make a living from trade can be an asset to the referee since it limits the players' ability to wander out of the prepared playing area.

A yacht must pay its way through other means. This might be money the characters already have, an outside backer, or as a result of what the characters do wherever they go in their yacht. The benefit to the referee is that the yacht can be a plot hook – a need to pay for refits and general running costs forces the characters to take on jobs or find ways to make money – as well as providing the mobility required to get from one adventure site to another.

For the players, a yacht does offer some good possibilities. Its ability to make two jump-1 transits allows it to cross between mains and clusters, enabling it to go almost anywhere – albeit slowly. It can also jump into a system without readily available fuel and out again. Arriving in a yacht rather than an old free trader has social advantages too, which can be translated into opportunities for higher-paying work or some highly inventive scams. Customs and naval personnel are (sometimes) more relaxed in their attitudes towards yacht owners than scout ships or traders.

Of course, this to some extent depends on the state and age of the vessel. An ancient yacht that is falling apart will be no better regarded than a beat-up old scout ship, unless it has found fame as a 'living antique'. A crew that takes some time and trouble with their own appearance, and who maintain their ship in good condition, can often make a sufficiently good impression to gain access to government officials and other high-ranking people. This may enable a yacht crew to get high-end work that a lesser vessel could not.

So instead of transporting some freight and whatever passengers they can get, a yacht crew might be offered a fuel-and-maintenance deal, plus personal fees for crewmembers, to transport an eminent scientist or broker a trade deal. They might of course have absolutely no idea how to accomplish what they are being paid to do; looking respectable and competent can allow people to land jobs they are not qualified for. Blagging their way through the task might be an interesting challenge....

Thus a yacht might be a good choice of ship for a player group that wants to be involved in the upper end of the adventuring spectrum – getting involved in politics, economic manoeuvring and corporate or interplanetary espionage for example. Alternatively, a very old yacht with its mortgage paid but the décor in tatters might be an interesting alternative to the more usual scout ship or free trader. If the mortgage is paid off, the ship will cost a little over Cr40,000 per month to run, assuming a couple of jumps each month using unrefined fuel. Crew and personal costs are on top of this, of course, but a clever adventuring group with good skills should be able to pull in this amount by various means.

If this is the case, then the yacht provides a useful mobile base. It has an ATV, an air/raft and a ship's boat (assuming it is fully equipped) for the characters' use, plenty of comfortable accommodation, and a modest amount of cargo space. Far from merely being a noble's plaything, the yacht is capable of being a very versatile working starship in the hands of an eminent scientist, diplomat or a band of 'freelance experts' specialising in solving (or causing) problems wherever they go.

# YACHT OPERATIONS

As already noted, a yacht cannot pay its way in commercial freighting; not with just 21 tons of cargo capacity. However, this is not a concern for most people buying yachts. In general, operators do not buy a yacht to make money with; they buy one because they already have money and want to flaunt it, or they want to impress people so that they can go on making ever-more-huge amounts of money. In this case the cost to operate the yacht is met from funds generated elsewhere. Thus a government official's yacht is paid for out of his budget, and may well be considered a worthwhile investment if it allows him to negotiate good treaties with neighbouring worlds. Similarly, a yacht used for speculative trade scouting will not make enough to support itself, but may open the door for bulk freighters to start bringing in large amounts of goods to the new market.

## OVERHEADS

Mortgage: This can vary but for a new vessel it is Cr.189438.75 per month based on the discounted price for a standard design

Crew Salaries: These vary depending on the crewing level

Maintenance: Cr.4210 per month

Fuel: Cr.500 per ton (refined) or Cr.100 per ton (unrefined)

Life Support and Supplies: Cr.32000 per month

Assuming a crew of about six (pilot, astrogator, engineer, three steward/medics), sharing cabins, a yacht acting as a passenger vessel can offer eleven normal passenger cabins plus the double-sized suite. Having several stewards allows the crew to provide a high-class service and, hopefully, fill all the cabins with high passengers. This would generate Cr.66000 for eleven High passengers, plus whatever could be charged for the suite and any small amounts of cargo or mail that could be carried.

At two jumps per month, a new ship could not pay for itself without a subsidy from some outside source. This might be available if a government felt that a regular high-class passenger service was desirable. Alternatively, a ship that was sold off at its mid-life point (with half the mortgage paid off) could just about break even with a full complement of passengers. Selling the ship's boat to reduce the mortgage repayment (and thus restricting the ship to Highport-to-Highport runs, which should not be a big problem) brings the margins up to an acceptable level, especially if the boat bay is used for cargo.

Alternatively, high-tempo operations are an option, with the ship averaging more than two jumps per month by reducing time in port. This is very tiring for the crew but does allow more revenue to be generated over the course of a year. This of course assumes a 20-year-old yacht. One that is older and has changed hands a few times may be much cheaper, but will more than likely need refurbishment before returning to high-end passenger service.

Most spares and components for this vessel are not particularly hard to source, since it makes considerable use of off-the-shelf standard components for its major systems such as drives and power plant. However, whilst every starship breaker's yard has a partially stripped scout/courier or free trader that can be cannibalised for spares, yachts are much less common and it is relatively rare to find one with components specific to its design still in place. The 'standard' galley, for example, is notorious for not being very standard at all. No other ship uses components with the same shape or design as the yacht. Thus while this system does provide excellent facilities without taking up much space, it is very difficult to fix if a fault occurs, and components are expensive.

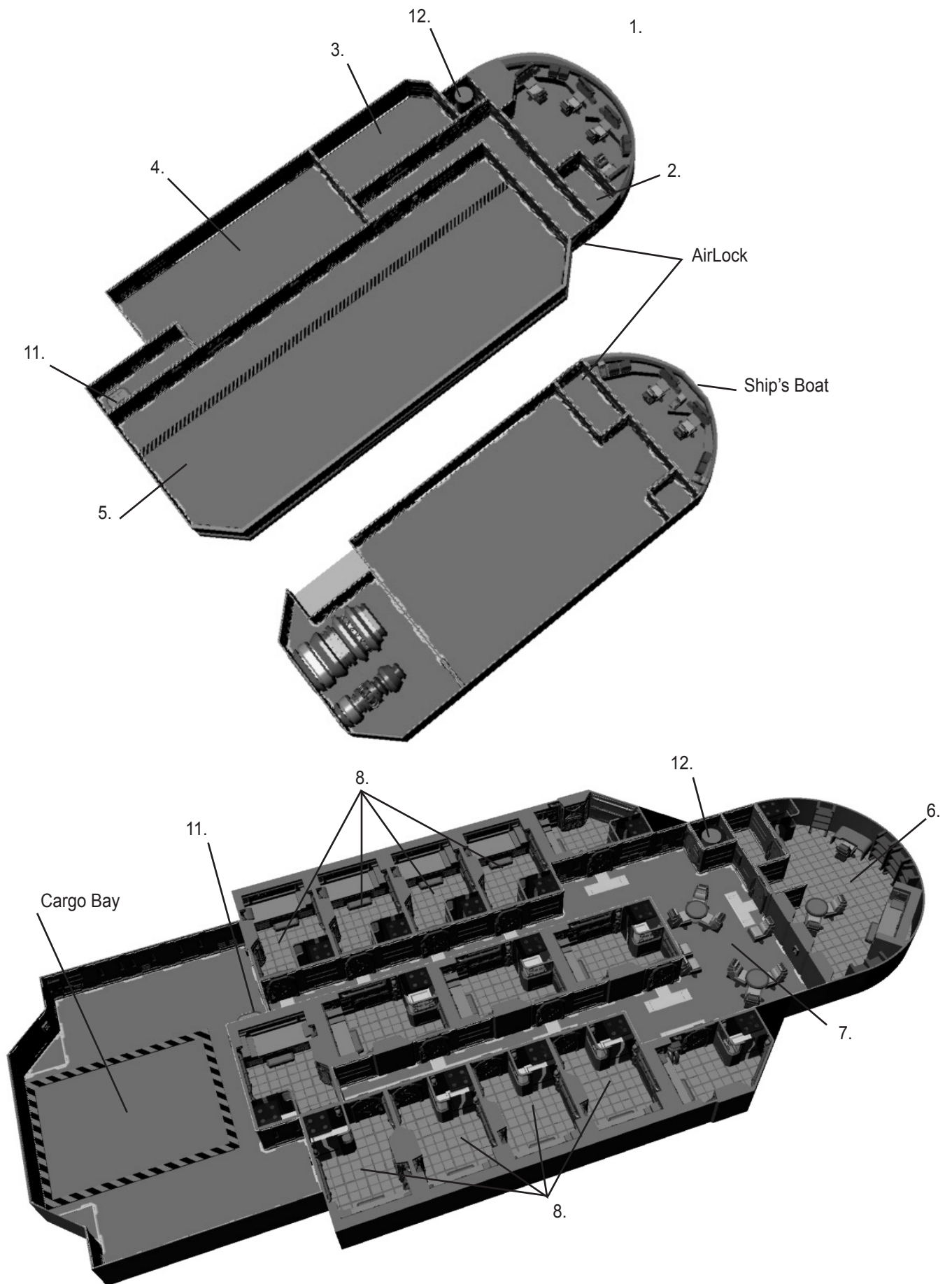
The same comments apply to some bridge and control components, and the entertainment systems installed in the cabins. These systems are the first to be stripped out of a yacht that comes in for breaking, and generally find a buyer very quickly. It is not uncommon to find yachts that have been given downgraded systems simply because the proper components were not available or were too expensive – and thus naturally it is a status symbol to have all-as-specified systems aboard and in good working order.

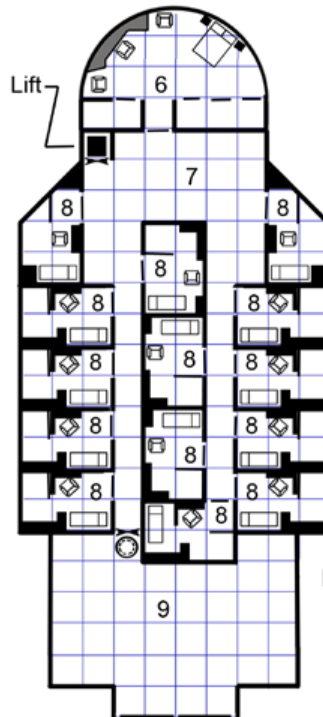
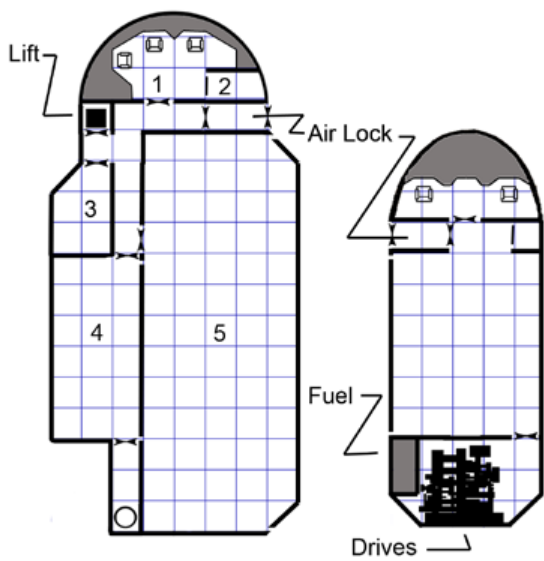
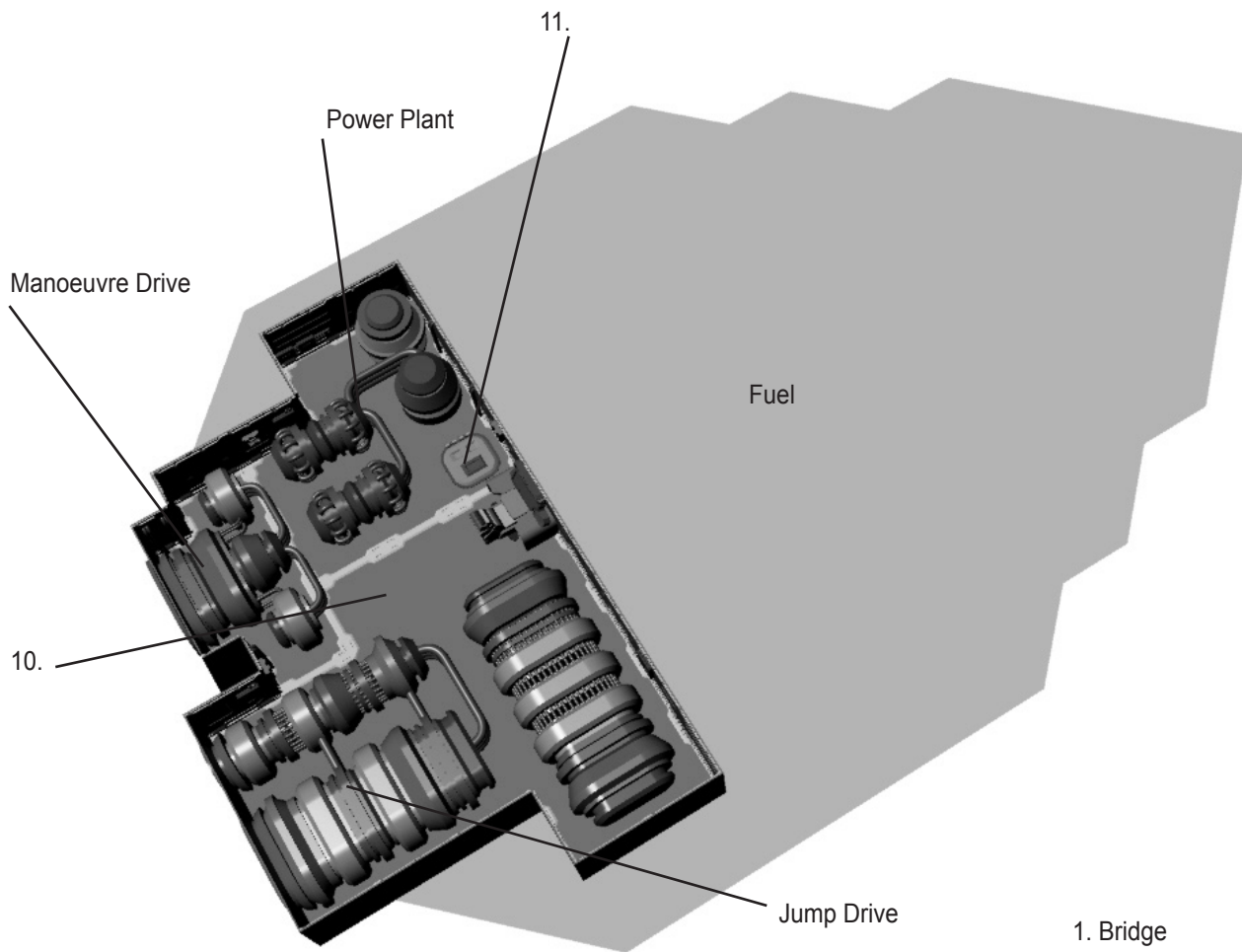
## THE TYPE-Y YACHT

The standard Type-Y yacht officially has three decks, though the lowest 'deck' is really nothing more than an engineering pod containing the drive systems, located below the main deck and surrounded by the fuel tanks. The sort of person who buys a yacht is likely to forget that this deck even exists. It is accessed via a shaft from the cargo bay; another area that yacht owners tend not to have much to do with. The engineering pod has an iris valve in the floor that permits access to the outside of the ship.

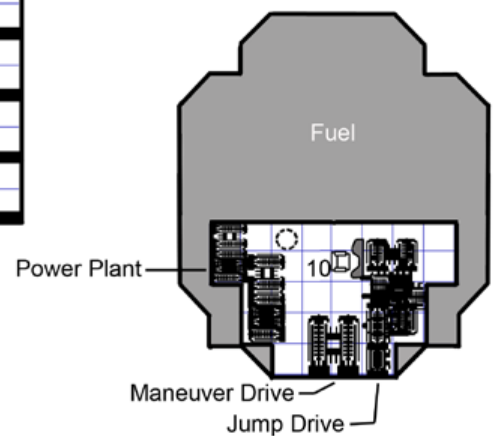
The main deck is dedicated to accommodation for the most part. A 21-ton cargo bay spans most of the rear of the ship, and contains access points to the engineering 'deck' and the main corridor on the command deck. Two corridors run fore-and aft through the main deck, giving access to the fourteen standard cabins. Unless the builder specifies differently, these are all extremely luxurious. They are no larger than a standard cabin but make excellent use of the space available to give the illusion at least of more room. They also contain high-end entertainment facilities and extremely high-quality fittings.







1. Bridge
2. Ship's Locker
3. Air/Raft Bay
4. ATV Bay
5. Ship's Boat Hanger
6. Owner's Suite
7. Passenger's Common Area
8. Passenger's Staterooms
9. Cargo Bay
10. Engineering
11. Deck Access
12. Lift



There are no crew cabins elsewhere aboard the ship, so the crew of a standard yacht do have a very comfortable place to live. Some builders shave a little off the cost by only outfitting some of the cabins to full standard, but many potential buyers feel that they want their crews to have the best. There are various reasons for this, ranging from ego ('even my underlings live well') to a desire to build crew loyalty. There are also those who feel that since all cabins are on the same corridors, they do not want their high-class friends seeing shabby crew accommodation as this might detract from the general classiness of the vessel.

The portside corridor has a hatch through into the cargo bay which on some ships is concealed in various ways. This corridor is often referred to as the 'crew corridor' as the four cabins along it generally house crewmembers. This enables them to access the cargo area and proceed through it to the command deck above without using the lift and thus disturbing the important people enjoying the common area. It is quite common on yachts that have been converted to passenger operations to find security doors fitted at the fore end of this corridor, and for everything aft of the doors to receive little attention when the fittings are refurbished. Indeed, 'it's a bit aft of the doors these days' is a common expression for something that is worn, shabby or outdated.

At the fore end of the crew corridor is a large common area/galley which usually features a well-stocked bar and very fine silverware, and also has a lift to the upper (command) deck. This is used by the owner and any passengers needing to move between decks. Some owners-aboard are not even aware that there is an alternative route though the cargo bay. Forward from the common area is the owner's suite, created from two stateroom-equivalents. Some yachts replace part of the forward hull with a viewing dome, which is covered when the ship is in jump or when danger threatens. The rest of the time the owner can gaze out on the stars or survey a world below whilst thinking important thoughts.

Two cabins open directly off the common area, and on many ships are assigned to stewards or the personal staff of the owner. The remaining eight cabins all open off the starboard corridor, which has no access to the cargo area. Instead this corridor ends at the aftmost cabin, which has various connotations. On some ships, this cabin is the least prestigious, since it is furthest from the owner. On others, it is outfitted a bit better than the others in keeping with a tradition that the most important guest sleeps furthest from the host and helps watch over the lesser guests in between – and also has the best excuse for arriving late for dinner, though aboard such a small ship there is a limit to how far this can be stretched.

Some variant vessels combine pairs of cabins (often the two pairs on the starboard side) into suites. Another occasional alteration is to remove all the central cabins, leaving just a few pillars in place for strength. This creates quite a large space and still retains ten cabins plus the owner's suite. More commonly (aboard corporate and government ships at least), some of these cabins are converted into offices or records rooms, whilst on private ships some might be walk-in wardrobes or filled with nothing but racks and racks of fishing tackle. The longer a particular owner has had his ship, the more personalized it tends to become.

The upper deck has a well-equipped bridge with an airlock beside it. This is the main access point when in Highport, creating a slight security issue when a yacht is converted to passenger operations. Most passengers go directly down to the main deck via the lift and do not return to the command deck until they disembark, though there are always exceptions.

The rest of the command deck is taken up with the ship's boat bay and the ATV area opposite it, plus the air/raft bay. As noted elsewhere, these areas are often converted to other uses. The ATV bay makes a reasonable conference area after removal of the vehicle tie-downs and tool racks, and on some vessels the ship's boat bay is also available for conversion. Vessels involved in corporate or business operations often convert some of the cabins to offices, allowing the ship to function as a mobile headquarters for a troubleshooter or regional head.

# YACHT ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters are all with Type-Y yachts, but each has very different characteristics. These vessels and their crews might be encountered on the landing pad at a starport, or in passing as local colour. The characters might even travel aboard or interact directly with one of these ships.

## FLAFF

FLAFF is an abbreviation for 'Footloose And Fancy Free', though the ship's official name is indeed FLAFF. This vessel is a rather weary Generiyacht originally built by General Products about 120 years ago. She has been refitted several times and is in reasonable operating condition, though her internal décor and non-essential systems are rather tired. FLAFF's interior is characterised by chipped and scratched surfaces, chandeliers that only partially work, and an intermittent fault with her galley that makes cooking an adventure all of its own.

FLAFF has been owned from new by the same family; a minor Imperial noble house with branches on several worlds. She was one of a group of yachts purchased a long time ago, and started out as a prestigious conveyance for whichever of the family's younger members had business elsewhere. FLAFF has carried a daughter to the Imperial Naval Academy at Core and a much-loved grandfather home to the family burial plot. She has taken negotiators to a conference that ended a war and been sent to bring home a wayward son who almost started one.

But that was long ago. As the vessel aged, she was gradually passed down from the main branch of the family to its lesser cousins, eventually finding herself in the hands of Sir Richard Hault-Imissent. Sir Richard is a minor member of his family, with a knighthood he inherited from a rather more worthy line of hereditary nobles. He is a drunk and a gambler who caused one scandal too many and was essentially given a starship and a stipend in return for making himself scarce. So long as Sir Richard is somewhere else, and not in the news, then his family does not really mind what he does.

Unfortunately, this has resulted in Sir Richard becoming ever more bored and dissociated from mainstream society. He seeks ways to amuse himself, which occasionally stray into the realms of worthy and respectable behavior. He has dabbled in diplomacy and mountaineering, even disaster-relief at one point. However, most of the time he is a wandering space-bum, dragging his long-suffering crew far off the beaten track to visit some astronomical phenomenon or particularly good Vilani restaurant.

Sir Richard likes to fill up his ship with interesting people, so in addition to his crew there are usually a handful of other individuals. These might be 'great minds', members of a minor

race or unusual culture, war heroes or students hitching a ride home. Some of these people have turned out to be more interesting than Sir Richard might have wanted; hijack attempts generally occur at the rate of one or two a year.

FLAFF herself is obviously run-down and tired, both inside and out. Hull panels are dinged, carpets are worn through to the underlay in some places, and the silverware is scandalously mismatched. However, her owner and crew are perversely proud of their impoverished-but-still-classy image, and the ship itself has become something of a celebrity in certain ports and marinas. Sir Richard has use of high-end berthing slips at some marinas due to his family connections; so long as another entitled vessel is not present he can berth right next to the IYC vessels. Some top-end owners resent Sir Richard and his crew holding a landing pad picnic outside their shabby old ship and right next to their betters, but some are willing to hop over the fence with a bottle of incredibly expensive wine and join in the somewhat disreputable fun for a while.

## THE DUCHESS OF QUEJAY

The Duchess of Quejay was built by Unified Space Industries as a generiyacht, about thirty years ago. She passed through several sets of hands, averaging four to six years with any given owner, before being bought back by her builder and given a facelift. She was then sold to BorderLines Shipping as a passenger vessel operating along the Imperial border and just beyond it.

The Duchess is armed, with a triple turret fitted on each side of the cargo bay. Each is served by a small control room/missile loading area, and as is common with such retrofitted weapon systems there is no integrated fire control or central director. Instead, the two gunners operate their turrets under local control and receive only the most general instructions from the bridge. This is generally considered adequate; a yacht or small liner will generally accelerate away from danger and fire at whatever is chasing her; there is little need for more complex tactical instructions.

Each of the two turrets contains a pair of missile launchers, with three ship-to-ship missiles on the autoloader racks. Reloads are not normally carried, and would have to be manhandled in from the cargo bay if reloading is required. Each turret also has a beam laser for missile and small-craft defence. This weapons mix allows the ship to run away behind a hail of missiles, at least for a short time. An enemy vessel that is evading missiles is not giving chase, and one conducting point-defence fire is not shooting at the liner. Thus the weapons fit is considered to be defensive/deterrent in nature even though missiles can do a lot of damage.



The weapons fit uses up a small part of the ship's cargo capacity, but this is offset by the fact that no ATV is carried. The ATV bay on the command deck has been converted to a secure cargo area. Passengers are not normally permitted on this deck once they have boarded, and anyone who did gain access would find that this area contains two heavy, armoured cargo safes and not much else. These are used for mail and secure packages, and although they are rarely full the ship receives a flat Cr.25000 fee upon arrival in every port with which she has a mail contract. Sometimes there is no mail at all; sometimes there is quite a lot. Sorting the mail is a job for the ship's designated postmaster, a job usually done by the senior gunner in return for a small pay bonus.

The Duchess has a standard modification in the form of heavy security doors at the fore end of the portside corridor. The four cabins aft of these doors house the flight and operations crew, consisting of the ship's master (who serves as a backup pilot), pilot/astrogator and engineer. Two gunners are carried, sharing the aftmost portside cabin. These individuals are rarely required, so most of the time they act as extra hands doing maintenance or watching the sensor boards. They are also responsible for security if there is a disturbance among the passengers.

The port and starboard 'shoulder' cabins are occupied by the ship's stewards and purser. Either one or two stewards or steward/medics are carried, sharing the portside cabin if there are two of them. The purser (head steward and ship's legal/accounting expert) occupies the starboard cabin. At least one steward is on duty at all times when there are passengers aboard; carrying three spreads the load.

The eight cabins on the starboard corridor are available to High passengers for the usual fee. Depending on the destination, the Duchess will sometimes refuse to take a Mid passenger to fill up her cabins, as her operators feel this devalues their service. 'High or nothing' is not an option for a beat-up old free trader but the Duchess is a very luxurious ship that operates in areas where it is fairly rare to have more than one or two empty cabins on a run. The suite is available for three times the cost of a normal High passage if booked in advance, and if it is not taken then other passengers may be offered the opportunity to upgrade for 50% additional cost once the ship has left port.

The Duchess of Quejay generally serves a contracted route, but this shifts from time to time and she might be re-tasked of a one-off opportunity presented herself. She has occasionally been chartered by government or corporate clients to convey negotiators to a conference, or to carry out a specific mission requiring the discretion and professionalism of her smartly uniformed crew. Whilst arriving aboard a chartered small liner makes less of an impression than stepping down from your own yacht, it is a lot better than coming in aboard a free trader.

## IGNATIX CONFERENCE SERVICES

Ignatix Conference Services (ICS) is the name of a vessel and her parent company, which is exclusively based aboard its sole interstellar asset. ICS offers mobile conferencing services for scientists, diplomats and merchants, and can act as either the venue or transportation to it. In the latter case, a negotiating or legal team can prepare themselves on the way to their conference, trial or whatever the destination may be. The ship has a very extensive (and regularly updated) legal database, and can arrange to have specialist scientific, political or military data available at need.

ICS has been used as a mobile negotiating centre for clients ranging from world governments to mercenary units. It is favoured by Armed Services LIC, an Imperial corporation operating several military units, as a place to meet clients and has sometimes been the venue for operational planning. This requires a high degree of confidentiality, and ICS has a good reputation in this field.

The ship named ICS started her career as a typical generiyacht, but was sold off after a collision that partially crushed her ship's boat bay. Rather than rebuilding to the original standard, it was decided to remove the worst damaged section and replace it with a slightly smaller area that could not handle a boat but which might be useful for other applications. Thus the 30-ton boat bay became a 26-ton configurable mission area plus four additional tons of fuel, adding a little to the ship's endurance and returning her to full structural integrity.

The former ship's boat bay is currently set up as a conferencing area, complete with a small food/drinks preparation area, and an 'office farm' at the aft end of the bay. This is a collection of cubicles and workstations which allow research, report preparation and the occasional heated argument to be carried out away from the common area on the main deck. The conferencing area has an impressive suite of visual aids and a presentation lectern. Holographic projection systems damp out noise from the office farm and can create the impression that the conference or negotiation is taking place in a variety of environment ranging from open countryside, underwater or out among the open stars.

This facility has been used by military formations as a training aid or a novel method of interviewing a candidate. After clearing away the office equipment and conference tables, it is possible to project a very realistic battle on the walls. Mercenary units can thus stick potential officers in the middle of a high-stress situation and feed them data along with all the distractions of a real conflict. Those that can focus and do a credible job stand at least a decent chance of being hired.



The lack of a ship's boat forces ICS to operate from highport to highport, and thus the vessel can only serve systems with a class C Starport or better. A class C port will have a small orbital station or a mooring beacon, from which passengers or conference delegates can disembark by means of a groundside shuttle. Class A and B ports have large orbital facilities where an unstreamlined ship can dock without effort, whereas lesser (Class D and E) ports are not typically the venue for the sort of services offered by this ship. Shuttles and small craft can dock at the external airlock of course, if operations over a world with no decent port are required.

The ATV and air/raft bays have been converted into crew cabins, accommodating the pilot/astrogator, engineer and deck hands when the passenger/delegate cabins are in use. Conference staff serve as stewards for the delegates, and are berthed on the main deck, whereas crew move into a more luxurious cabin when they have the opportunity, and generally stay out of the way in their cramped crew quarters when there are important people aboard.

In addition to the suite, which is sometimes converted into a secondary conference room, twelve of the fourteen passenger cabins are generally available for conference delegates. Sometimes a client will request that one or more cabins be made available as a secure office or research room, permitting a delegate to prepare his or her presentation without interruptions.

ICS commands a high fee for its services, as might be expected. Transit times to and from the conference as well as the duration of proceedings will determine the fee, which starts at Cr.20000 per day plus unusual expenses such as providing hard-to-source foods and other amenities. Despite the cost, the ship sees steady business and generates a very respectable amount of revenue. Most clients are very satisfied with the level of service provided; some important deals and treaties have been negotiated aboard this ship.