

Delta Line – The last truly American flag passenger steamship company.

Posted by: Michael L. Grace May 28, 2009 in STEAMSHIP LINES 5 Comments

*Now Delta Line offers 2 cruises in 1—
the magic of South America
and the charm of the Caribbean*

and every place you visit is a new adventure

- *different people*
- *different scenery*
- *different cultures*
- *different languages*

No other cruise compares with Delta's carefree combination of relaxing days at sea and visits ashore in gay Caribbean and South American ports of call.

You embark from storied New Orleans with its French accent, and sail to San Juan which is Spanish in tone. Then to Barbados with its British flavor. Next follow Rio, rich in Portuguese tradition, and Santos. From here, on to Spanish-speaking Montevideo, and Buenos Aires—the Paris of the Americas. Returning, there's the thrill of cruising along the Spanish Main to La Guaira, gateway to Caracas, and to the island of Curaçao which is quaintly, delightfully Dutch. Rare bargains for shoppers are everywhere. Scenery is ever changing—from spectacular mountains to the unhurried pace of breeze-swept tropic isles.

Aboard ship there's never a dull moment. These completely air-conditioned liners feature on-board events such as the Mardi Gras costume ball, King Neptune's party, and various international nights.

Superb cuisine. Swimming pool. Movies and games. Buffets and cocktail parties. There's lots to do, or not do, aboard ship—the choice is yours. It's all waiting for you on the cruise that's unlike any other, and each day is a new, exciting experience. Ask your travel agent for all the details.

Delta Line

DELTA STEAMSHIP LINES, INC.
P. O. Box 50250, New Orleans, La.
550 S. Flower St., Los Angeles, Calif.
1 Bush Street, San Francisco, Calif.
1211 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, Wash.

Offices: HOUSTON • CHICAGO • NEW YORK • WASHINGTON

Delta Line (Mississippi Shipping Co.), New Orleans (1919-85)

Cruising The Past looks at the Delta Line. They provided service from Gulf of Mexico and east coast of South America; originally established by coffee merchants to ship Brazilian produce directly to the Mississippi Valley through New Orleans, bypassing New York. Officially the Mississippi Shipping Company until 1962, but was already known unofficially as the Delta Line long before that.



Resort at Sea

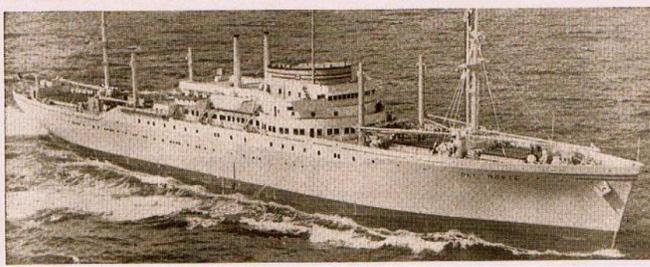
Among the finest cruise ships in the world today are Delta Line's luxurious sister ships: DEL NORTE, DEL SUD and DEL MAR. These ocean-going ambassadors to our South American neighbors are well-known visitors to the ports of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. A Delta Line cruise to South America leaves every two weeks from fabulous New Orleans and a typical voyage visits Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, with stops at the Caribbean's most colorful islands, Curacao and St. Thomas. Each Delta liner is a floating resort. The finest accommodations are enjoyed by a limited passenger list of one hundred and twenty, ideal for shipboard social events. Consult your local travel agent for complete information.

DEL NORTE DEL SUD
DEL MAR

Delta Line New York Chicago
Washington St. Louis
MISSISSIPPI SHIPPING CO., INC., NEW ORLEANS San Francisco Los Angeles

The line's management failed to buy container vessels in the 1970s, lost so much money that its owners (by then the Holiday Inn Corporation) sold out to Crowley Maritime, the largest US barge and tug operator, in 1982.

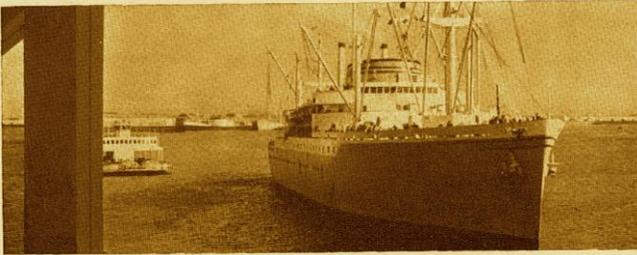
HISTORY – thanks to the fabulous OCEAN LINER MUSEUM website. Click here visit this terrific online museum.



Del Norte

10,073 gross tons. 466.8 x 69.6 x 32.1 feet. Steam turbine. Built by Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, Miss., 1946. Gray and white hull, white superstructure, buff dummy funnel with yellow and green stripes. "Funnel" is actually radio and radar quarters; oil-fired boilers exhaust through twin black-topped stacks aft of dummy funnel. Flagship of fleet, Mississippi Shipping Co. (Delta Line), New Orleans, La.
Master: Capt. J. T. O'Dry. **Crew:** 126 officers and men. **Passengers:** 119 first class.
Regular cruise service between New Orleans and South American east coast ports.
Sisters: Del Mar, Del Sud.

The Del Norte and her sister ships – Del Sud and Del Mar were most distinctive and revolutionary ships.



Del Sud

10,073 gross tons. 466.8 x 69.6 x 32.1 feet. Steam turbine. Built by Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, Miss., 1947. Gray and white hull, white superstructure, buff dummy funnel with yellow and green stripes. "Funnel" is actually radio and radar quarters; oil-fired boilers exhaust through twin black-topped stacks aft of dummy funnel. Mississippi Shipping Co. (Delta Line), New Orleans, La.
Master: Capt. A. Tooker. **Crew:** 126 officers and men. **Passengers:** 119 first class.
Regular cruise service between New Orleans and South American east coast ports.
Sisters: Del Mar, Del Norte.



Del Mar

10,073 gross tons. 466.8 x 69.6 x 32.1 feet. Steam turbine. Built by Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, Miss., 1947. Gray and white hull, white superstructure, buff dummy funnel with yellow and green stripes. "Funnel" is actually radio and radar quarters; oil-fired boilers exhaust through twin black-topped stacks aft of dummy funnel. Mississippi Shipping Co. (Delta Line), New Orleans, La.
Master: Capt. T. R. Williams. **Crew:** 126 officers and men. **Passengers:** 119 first class.
Regular cruise service between New Orleans and South American east coast ports.
Sisters: Del Norte, Del Sud.

They were the pride of the Southern Hemisphere and soon became synonymous with revival of the Delta Line's service from the USA to South America after the Second World War. They were "resorts at sea" and fully air conditioned and the last word in ocean comfort.

Design and Construction (1946 – 1947):

The Delta libraries are always filled with the best in reading material



The Mississippi Shipping Company of New Orleans introduced three revolutionary passenger-cargo ships to its South American services in the post-war years of the 1940s. In keeping with the trade name of the company, "Delta Line", the three vessels were given "Del" names Del Norte, Del Sud and Del Mar. The three "Dels" unusual design, by the naval architect George G. Sharp of New York, made them unique along the New Orleans waterfront and the east coast of South America, an area where they had traded for nearly a quarter of a century.



The liners were originally based on standard C-3 design cargo hulls, all that was available for purchase during the late war years. With the cooperation of Admiral Vickery, head of the construction division of the American Maritime Commission, Delta Line arranged that three of these hulls be redesigned as passenger/cargo vessels to re-establish the company's services to South America. The ships, built at the Ingalls Shipyard, Pascagoula, Mississippi, were fitted with D.R. geared turbines giving a 17 knot service speed. A new innovation for the time was complete air-conditioning throughout the accommodation areas for passengers, officers and crew. Being nearly identical, the sister ships were all 10,074 tons, 495 feet in length and 70 feet in breadth. Their total cost in 1946 was over \$7,000,000 each.



The Del Norte was the first ship of the trio to be completed. She sailed on her maiden voyage to Buenos Aires on the 26th November 1946. She was soon followed by her sister ships: Del Sud (28th March 1947) and Del Mar (13th June 1947). Once in service the three passenger/cargo liners maintained a regular schedule of two sailings per month from U.S. Gulf ports to the Caribbean and South America. The "Del" trio quickly established an enviable record for dependable sailings and were soon offering 44 day round-trip cruises to such ports of call as Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Paranagua and Buenos Aires.

The Delta Line era (1946 – 1967):

Life on board the "Dels" was an leisurely affair. One could start the day with a stroll along the glass enclosed Promenade deck, a visit to the ship's library – or breakfast in bed. The latter "institution" was served with a full view of the sea sliding by outside through sem-square "windows" which had replaced the traditional round port hole in many cabins. Mid-morning coffee was served in the main lounge, a room decorated by murals of "old" New Orleans. Glass partitions separated the various public rooms, yet, at the same time, created an open spaciousness associated with much larger ships. Days were lazy and relaxed with games available on the sports deck or a long siesta in one of the comfortable lounge chairs awaiting passengers out of the wind's way on the aft deck. Evenings had their beginnings in the ship's dining room, then were continued in the Grand Lounge while the band played – or on warm, tropical evenings at poolside.

Ease "executive pressure"

Sail calm Southern Seas
to gay BRAZIL and ARGENTINA



Come home refreshed, relaxed, revitalized and rarin' to go! Aboard a Delta Liner time passes so pleasantly it is almost forgotten. Cares are gone with the sea-breeze . . . you luxuriate in solid comfort.

You can afford both the time and the money. You owe it to yourself, your business, your family, your health, and your future to slip out of high gear for awhile . . . take the trip you've dreamed about . . . but never found time to enjoy.

Delta accommodations are fashioned with your comfort in mind . . . all are first class, and only first class. You will be pleasantly surprised to find fares lower than other modes of travel.

Delta Line cuisine is superb . . . service incomparable. The entire family will enjoy the pool, deck games, cards and conversation with congenial new friends. Evening entertainment is planned for your pleasure . . . or you may prefer the serene silence of starlit nights on deck.

Plan your trip for this fall while it's springtime below the equator. Visit Brazil, Argentina, the Virgin Islands and Curaçao. Your travel agent will be happy to discuss everything in detail. Bon Voyage!



Resort hotel in Petropolis, Brazil



Gaucho from the Pampas, Argentina



Calle Florida in Buenos Aires

ROUTE OF THE LINERS
DEL NORTE, DEL SUR, DEL MAR

Delta Line

MISSISSIPPI SHIPPING CO., INC., NEW ORLEANS
New York • Chicago • St. Louis
Houston • San Francisco • Los Angeles

You may embark from either New Orleans or Houston. Sailing dates from New Orleans: Sept. 4 and 18, Oct. 3 and 23, Nov. 6 and 27, and Dec. 11. Delta liners sail from Houston three days after above dates.



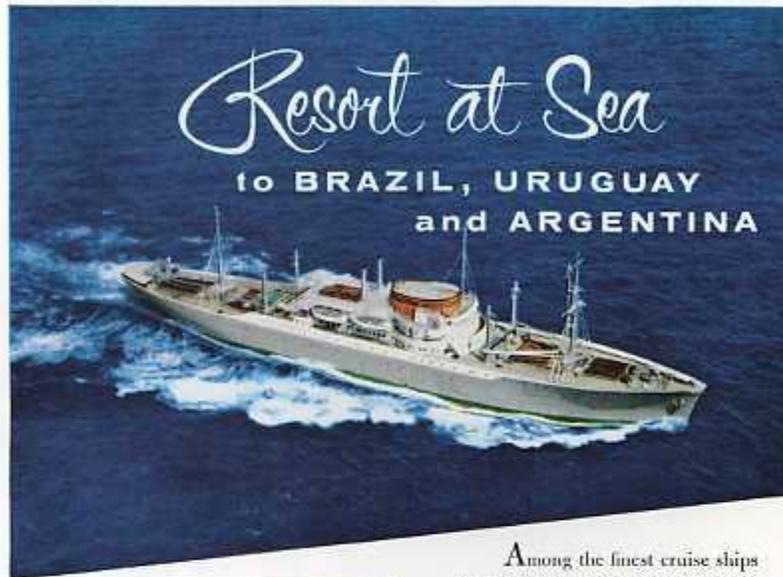
On deck a dominant feature of the new ships was the huge funnel – actually a dummy built of aluminium. Inside this structure were two decks of officer's quarters, the main radio room and an emergency generator. The actual exhaust gases were discharged through two thin stacks just aft of the dummy funnel, somewhat disguised as kingposts.

<>The vessels were among the first commercial ships of the world to be equipped with post-war radar, highly refined after stringent wartime use. A scanning screen with three ranges of visual presentation gave the navigating officers views at 2, 6 and 30

nautical miles, a comforting factor in the highly congested waterways of the Mississippi Delta and River Plate. On departure from New Orleans, the ships sailed southwards through the Caribbean to San Juan (Puerto Rico), then to Bridgetown, Curacao and La Guaira. After this the ship headed out into the South Atlantic round the east coast of Brazil. After 12 days at sea the ship would sail past the majestic Sugarloaf and into the bay at Rio de Janeiro. Santos, the second port of call in Brazil, held a special place in Delta's post-war cargo trade. It was the world's leading coffee loading port and American consumption of the aromatic bean had made Delta Line the globe's largest coffee carrier – so much so in fact that Delta ships were known as the "Coffee Fleet". After Santos the ship sailed on to Montevideo, Paranagua and finally its destination of Buenos Aires.

Life on board these vessels was a pleasant surprise to passengers who had undertaken pre-war voyages in less refined ships. Most appreciated was the air-conditioning, particularly after reaching some of the South American ports, but also appreciated was the swimming pool situated aft of the main superstructure on each liner. These facilities, together with the open sun deck and nearby bar and cafe, assured a first class holiday for passengers as the ship sped southward.

At Buenos Aires the liners turned around for the three week voyage that would take them back to New Orleans.



Spacious air-conditioned cabins



Beautiful sundeck and pool

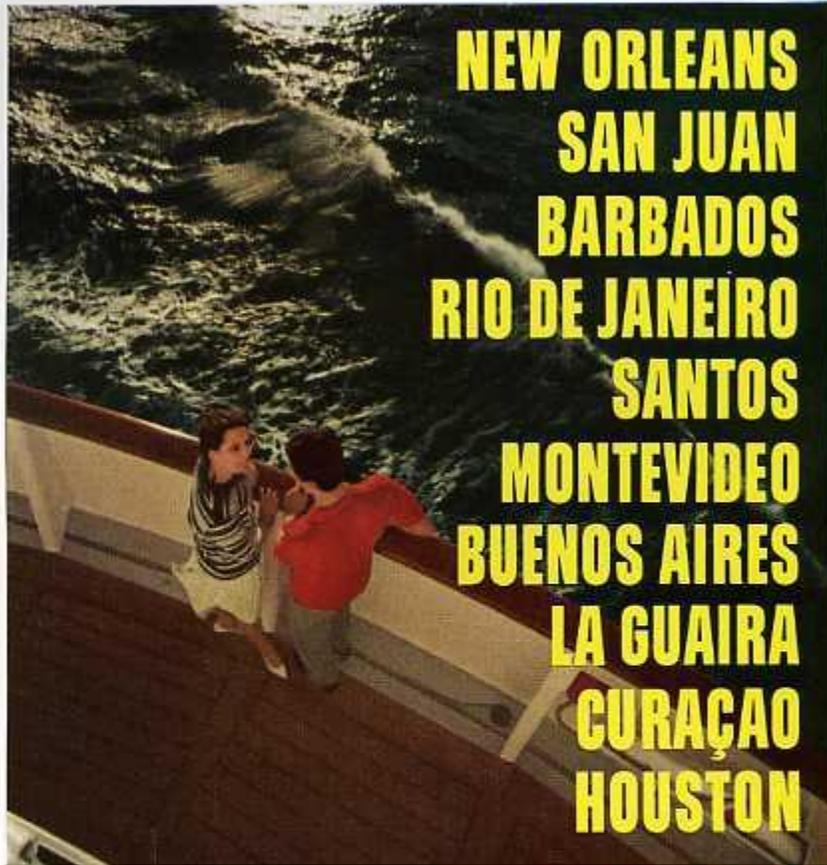
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Delta Line
 MISSISSIPPI SHIPPING CO., INC., NEW ORLEANS
 New York Chicago Washington
 St. Louis San Francisco Los Angeles

Route of the Liners • DEL NORTE • DEL SUD • DEL MAR

The Final Years (1967 - 1972):

For twenty years the three light grey-hulled vessels carried a steady following of passengers - including the rich and famous - but economic difficulties were on the horizon. By 1967 rising operating costs had exceeded passenger profits and the line was forced to discontinue its passenger trade, a service not to be renewed for another decade. The DEL SUD, DEL MAR and DEL NORTE were converted over to express cargo liners supplementing an already growing fleet of Delta ships serving both coastlines of the South Atlantic and the Caribbean.



47 days of **ADVENTURE**
and the **UNUSUAL**

*... aboard the ultimate in combination cargo-liners
... air conditioned accommodations ... superb cuisine
... swimming pool ... buffets, parties, movies, games
... never a dull moment.*

See your travel agent for further details and schedules.

Delta Line
DELTA STEAMSHIP LINES, INC.
P. O. Box 30250, New Orleans, La.
17 Battery Place, New York, N. Y.
CHICAGO • WASHINGTON
HOUSTON • LOS ANGELES

American President Lines, Ltd.-Los Angeles-San Francisco • American Mail Line, Ltd.-Seattle-Portland

In early 1972 the three ships, now 25 years of age, were placed on a one-way charter run to Indonesia, one that eventually took them on to scrapping in Taiwan. They had served a useful and profitable life – just missing, in fact, the dramatic rise in fuel prices during 1973 that would send many a newer ship out of business. When it came time for Del Norte, the first of her class to be completed, to make her final departure from New Orleans she seemed reluctant to leave. Twice the ship swung back snug to the wharf before the efforts of river tugs, pilot and captain eased her out into the river for the final voyage to the scrappers.

Crowley tried to modernize the fleet, but decided to cut its losses by selling Delta to United States Lines in 1985, which subsumed Delta's ships into its own fleet before going bankrupt in 1986.

Flag green with a yellow Greek letter delta (a triangle). In 1949, Delta owned 14 ships, with a total of 98,000 grt.

Their passenger service, last under the American flag, was deluxe and first class cargo-passenger service.

These are ads along with profiles of their post-World War 2 ships.