

The Statenjacht *Utrecht* 1746

Ab Hoving (Editor)
Cor Emke (Plans)

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One of the chapters in this latest offering from Sea Watch Books is called “A Delight to the Eye.” This would be an appropriate title for the entire book! *The Statenjacht Utrecht, 1746*, is a remarkable photo-essay that takes you through each step in developing, building and sailing a reconstruction of an 18th century Dutch yacht.

The book starts out with a brief history of how this



unique vessel type came to be, and how the Dutch provinces became a naval and economic power in 17th century Europe. It was this prosperity, and the geographic peculiarities of the Netherlands that would eventually lead to the development of the Statenjacht. Although many served as VIP transports for specific organizations such as the Dutch East India Company, others served as naval vessels, or could be rented for personal use by individuals with great wealth.

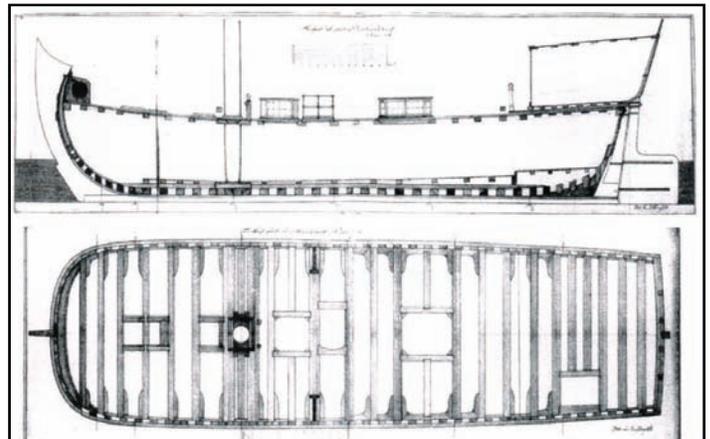
The second chapter addresses the specific history of Statenjachts built in the province of Utrecht. The author, Ab Hoving, points out that the current *Utrecht* is a historical reconstruction of a ship type, and not a replica of any specific vessel from that province. It's also interesting to note that the province of Utrecht was a land province, and



lacked seaports, an admiralty, fleet, or chambers of the United East or West India Companies. Yet, records indicate that the province commissioned the building of yachts that were a necessity in dealing with Dutch politics.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology practiced by the Dutch shipwrights, which was referred to as the “plank first” method. This segment goes on to explain how the need for standardization in the eighteenth century would force shipwrights to develop draughts, which was quite a departure from earlier practices. Although a very technical chapter, it ties in nicely with the next installment, which gives the specifications for a Statenjacht.

A set of drawings dating back to 1746 were the basis for *Utrecht*, and the project planners did not want to leave



anything to chance. Mr. Hoving relates how the specifications are analyzed using twenty-first century technology, which confirms the vessel's reliability.

At this point, construction begins, as the fifth chapter visually describes the building process in well-defined

steps, from laying the keel to fabricating and installing the windlass, leeboard and rudder. Many photos include the construction crew performing various tasks, which capture the conditions, physical exertion and concentration that was required while building *Utrecht*.



Decorations were such an important feature on these vessels, and the author outlines the different styles, and how they evolved in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Making choices for *Utrecht* was not an easy task, and the extensive research, and how decisions were made is described. Colors, which are so important to the modeler, were meticulously researched to find the correct hues peculiar to that

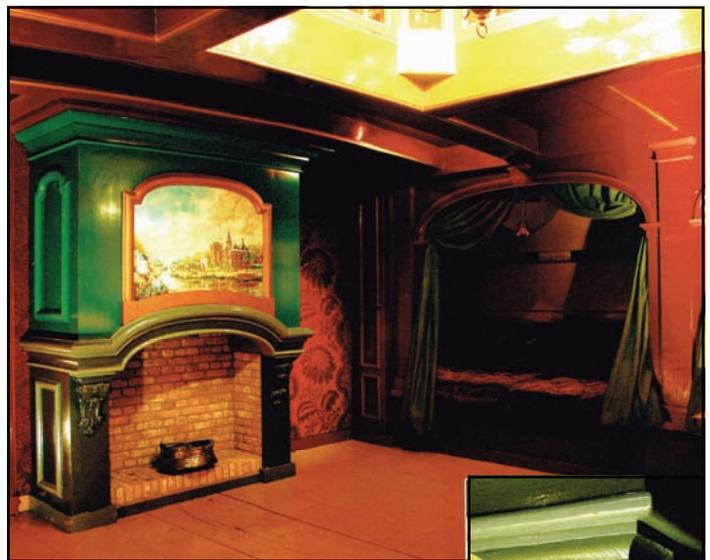
period. In particular, attention is given to the different “optical effects” between 18th century and modern paints, which gives the reader some idea as to how detailed the planning was.

Without a doubt, one of this writer’s favorite chapters is the segment devoted to the interior of *Utrecht*. As with other aspects of this reconstruction, research and atten-



tion to detail are emphasized. Fortunately, archival materials were available, which helped in designing the plush living quarters so unique to these yachts. The blending of different shades of Berlin blue in the pavilion, and the magnificent fireplace in the great cabin give some idea of the richness of the décor. After reading this chapter, one can fully appreciate that life could be quite pleasant in the 18th century for those with wealth!

With the hull essentially covered, chapter 9 is devoted to rigging, which includes spars, ropework, sails, blocks, flags, anchors and sources for the specifications concern-

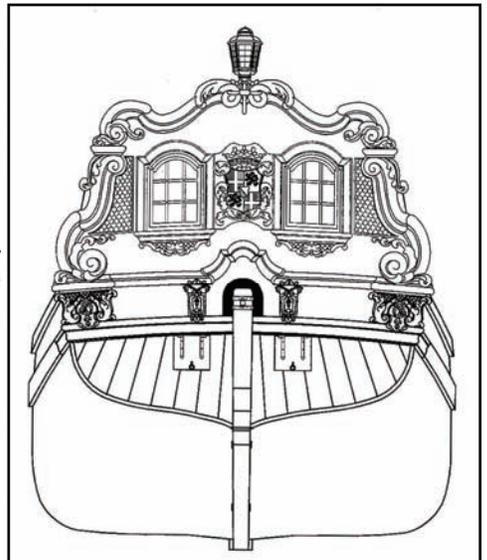


-ing all these facets of the vessel. This chapter also features spar tables (in Dutch), rigging plans and block diagrams.

Like so many reconstructions today, *Utrecht* required a mechanical propulsion system. Chapter 10 outlines the ingenious means by which this was accomplished without compromising the authenticity, and aesthetics of the Statenjacht to any great extent. Other amenities, such as hot water, air conditioning and electricity are also discussed.

The final segments cover the launching of *Utrecht*, and an evaluation of the sailing qualities of this beautiful vessel. The author’s remarks are quite frank, and the learning process described is intriguing. Puzzling rigging practices become quite clear when used under actual conditions.

The Statenjacht Utrecht, 1746 also features a package of thirteen plans that can be found in a pocket in the back of the book. Created by draftsman, Cor Emke, these



plans cover every aspect of the yacht, including the interior. The large scale of 1:50 allows for considerable detail to be incorporated, but the moderate dimensions of *Utrecht* will result in a project that can be carried to club meetings without any difficulty!

Ab Hoving and Cor Emke are to be congratulated on this remarkable treatise. This book is highly recommended.

Reviewed by
Bob Filipowski