

Alcatraz by Hybrid Ferry

San Francisco covers just over forty-seven square miles. Every year about sixteen million visitors find their way to this small patch of the West coast, attracted to the ambiance, restaurants and scenic beauty of this city by the Bay. At least one million of them also board the ferry that carries them to Alcatraz Island. This is the iconic tourist destination whose history as a notorious federal prison and then an outpost for American Indians has eclipsed its earlier use as a lighthouse and military fortress.



Cruisin' the Bay

Boat trips to the Island only take a matter of minutes. But daily round trips to and fro take an environmental toll on the San Francisco Bay waters. Alcatraz Cruises, the National Park Service ferry provider for Alcatraz Island, is ramping up to be the 'greenest concessionaire' in the National Park Service system. They have reengineered two of their diesel-powered ferryboats with more fuel-efficient Tier 2 marine engines that are outfitted with selective catalytic reduction units.



In December 2008 Alcatraz Cruises launched its next eco-friendly phase, unveiling the **Hornblower Hybrid**, a 64-foot long catamaran that uses a combination of solar power, wind power as well as other alternative technologies. Two ten-foot tall wind turbines harness the wind while a photovoltaic solar array on the top deck leverages sun rays. Battery banks store this converted wind and solar input in order to power the onboard navigation, lighting systems and other marine technology.

An Extreme Makeover

The **Hornblower Hybrid** also uses Tier 2 marine diesel engines. With such features as Vetrazzo-designed countertops made from recycled vodka bottles, LED lighting and carpeting composed of recycled material; the ferryboat itself can easily be considered an extreme makeover, having been a commercial diving boat previous to this reincarnation.



Tegan Firth, **Alcatraz Cruises'** Corporate Public Relation Manager says looking for money-saving strategies was not the driver for building the new ferry: "We are very interested in testing alternative eco-friendly technologies," she explains. The cruise company has plans on the drawing board to introduce another hybrid ferry into their San Francisco Bay operations as well as into their group of ferries that now carry New York tourists to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Hornblower Hybrid:

Carpet - Carpeting contains post consumer recycled materials and is recyclable. Counter tops - Vetrazzo counter tops throughout the vessel are made from pieces of recycled vodka bottles. Lights - LED fixtures light the main deck and pilothouse of the vessel. These fixtures require a fraction of the energy of standard bulbs and provide an equal or greater amount of illumination. Interior signage - A significant portion of the interior signage is printed on Plyboo, a composite material made from sustainable sources and contains no harmful chemicals.

Photo: Alcatraz Cruises (John A. Martini)

By Patricia Kutza

Patricia Kutza is a U.S. travel, business and technology journalist based in the San Francisco Bay region. She crafts features for such outlets as Bay Area Kids Magazine, Excell, Acura, Journeys, Executive Traveler, and San Joaquin Magazines.

Date: 2009-02-23

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-alcatraz-by-hybrid-ferry-article789>