

Avatar to sail the world's seas

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On 4 July 2014 the naming ceremony of the topsail schooner *Avatar* took place in Harlingen, the Netherlands. Akkie Sluiter-Van der Weij, spouse of the mayor of Harlingen Roel Sluiter, performed the christening of the charter vessel, which may be called a 'Tall Ship', because she has the possibilities to take trainees with her on sailing trips. The vessel is named in honour of the movie 'Avatar' by James Cameron, released in 2009.

The 34.5 metres long and 6.4 metres wide *Avatar* is not a newly built vessel, but was originally constructed in 1941 in Wolgast, Germany, as a marine vessel with the looks of a fishing vessel to misguide the allies during World War II. Eventually, the vessel sailed as *Grietje Maria* as a (sport) fishing vessel and in 2010 she was bought by André Hanzens who turned her into the schooner *Avatar*.

Refit

The refit to a luxurious sailing charter vessel was done by Scheepsbouw & Reparatie Friesland, also from Harlingen. In the deckhouse a saloon with a bar and a panoramic view was created, below deck the en-suite double cabins can be found as well as the galley where the ship's cook will present his meals to the guests. On the upper deck there are two lounge areas, one located amidships and one on the aft deck, both can be sheltered against sun or rain. During the construction of *Avatar*, special attention has been paid to safety and stability, leading to an EU 2009/45 certification and fireproof port holes.

André Hanzens, owner: "This type of ship can handle a lot of wind. The green colour and the layer structure enhance the luxurious look

of a yacht, while the yards give the vessel an authentic look and also playing opportunities for young passengers."

Participating in races

In March 2014 *Avatar* participated in her first race, the Race of the Classics. After the christening, *Avatar* participated in the Tall Ship Races that started in Harlingen and ended in Frederikstad, Norway, during which youngsters between 15 and 25 had the possibility to sail along as trainees. The *Avatar* can accommodate a total of 55 passengers during day time travels, and there is room for twelve passengers during longer sailing trips. She will be making sailing trips in the Baltic Sea, German Baltic coast, Denmark, Sweden, the North Sea, the Netherlands and Great Britain.

Avatar is equipped with 450 square metres of sails, but she will usually be using 285 square metres. During tests a speed of 9.7 knots was received with 300 square metres of sail, the same speed she can achieve when sailing on the engine with 1,800 rpm.

Anne Kregting

Main features

Name:	Avatar
Type:	Topsail schooner
Owner:	André Hanzens, the Netherlands
Shipyard:	Scheepsbouw & Reparatie Friesland, the Netherlands
Length:	34.5 m
Breadth:	6.4 m
Main engine:	Volvo Penta – TMD 120
Speed:	10 knots
Accommodation:	55 (daytime)/12 (in cabins)

