

# Floatel set to bed in as new kid on block

## Accommodation floater to give Swedish-based unit a foothold

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A NEW player is about to emerge in the high-end market for semi-submersible accommodation vessels, as Sweden-based Floatel International will take delivery of its newbuild Floatel Superior from Singapore yard KeppelFels by the end of March.

The newcomer will then challenge heavyweight contractor Prosafe — which has a fleet of 11 floaters making it a dominant force in this niche market — for offshore accommodation contracts in regions such as the North Sea, West Africa, Asia and the Gulf of Mexico.

At a naming ceremony in Singapore on Saturday, Floatel International chief executive Peter Jacobsson was bullish about prospects for his fledgling outfit.

"The vessel behind me is far superior to anything else operating offshore today and will certainly elevate the standard for the oil and gas industry," Jacobsson said.

"The Floatel Superior is the first North Sea accommodation rig built for about 22 years, and it



Naming ceremony: the Floatel Superior at the Keppel Fels yard in Singapore

Photo: FLOATEL

is certainly a vessel that the market has been waiting for."

The DNV-classed floater is in full compliance with the stringent rules and regulations for the Norwegian sector. According to Jacobsson, there are only five North Sea-compliant accommodation semisubmersibles in the world, with an average age of more than 20 years.

Floatel Superior features both DP3 dynamic positioning and an eight-point mooring system, and has an operating payload of 2700 tonnes.

The unit is due to leave the yard early next week for thruster

installation and sea trials, "and will in all respect be prepared for its maiden charter for ConocoPhillips Australia — housing about 500 persons for the Bayu Undan shutdown project", Jacobsson said.

Floatel Superior is listed as having 440 single-bed cabins but another 72 beds will be added temporarily for the three-month maintenance support contract at Bayu-Undan.

"Following completion of the maiden charter, we have interest from several international operators to take on the rig thereafter," Jacobsson added. The Swedish

company's second newbuild unit, Floatel Reliance, is due for delivery from Keppel Fels at the end of this year. It has a slightly higher accommodation capacity at 500 beds, but it is targeted at more accessible markets in the Gulf of Mexico and Asia, featuring only DP2 positioning and a smaller operational displacement of 17,900 tonnes versus the 29,000-tonne Floatel Superior.

The cost of the smaller unit is said to be about \$200 million, while the price of Floatel Superior is understood to be more than \$300 million.

## Montco deal gives yard a lift

US LIFTBOAT owner Montco Offshore has selected Gulf Island Fabrication in Houma, Louisiana, to build a new 335-foot class diesel electric liftboat to be named L/B Robert.

The 18-month construction project is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2011.

The vessel will be able to jack down and operate in up to 270 feet of water and will have a crane capable of lifting 500 tonnes. It will also have more than 15,000 square feet of usable deck space and accommodation for 132 persons in addition to a crew of 20.

Other contractors include Louisiana Machinery for power plants, Karl Senner for propulsion units and bow thruster; RAACI for power switchgear equipment, Hydraquip for hydraulics and jacking systems, and Oil States for the three on-board cranes.

## Scorpion nets Mischief gig

RIG player Scorpion Offshore has secured a contract of at least five and a half months for its jack-up newbuild Offshore Mischief.

The contract is for work off Brazil for an affiliate of a US operator and runs for between 165 and 240 days from 1 July at a dayrate of about \$140,000. It can be extended by up to 240 days.

The Offshore Mischief is due for delivery from the Lamprol yard in the United Arab Emirates in April. Scorpion has been trying to sell the rig, so far without success.

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