

MADRIGAL SHIPPING



The Madrigal Shipping Company has a long and vibrant history. The company was established before the World War II under the name Madrigal & Company. It was the Philippines' biggest Filipino-owned shipping company at that time, primarily focussing on the carriage of cargo, rather than passengers, which was of secondary importance.

The Madrigal Shipping Company is a shipping company with a long, established pedigree in the Philippines, although few may be familiar with the name. They started before World War II under the banner of Madrigal & Company and was probably the Philippines biggest shipping company at that time.



Vicente Madrigal (above), who was the

founder of the shipping company, considered to be the top Filipino industrialist-businessman, and was probably one of the wealthiest Filipinos. He had strong political connections in Malacanang (residence of the President of the Philippines), and was himself a political heavyweight due to him being a Senator of the Philippines Government. The shipping company supported the Madrigal's businesses empire by transporting their cargoes such as Abaca (Manila Hemp), Coal, Ore, Copra and Sugar.

However, during the World War II, the Madrigal Shipping Company lost its fleet of vessels, and only saved one. Most of the ships were captured by the Japanese troops, which were later destroyed due to American attacks.

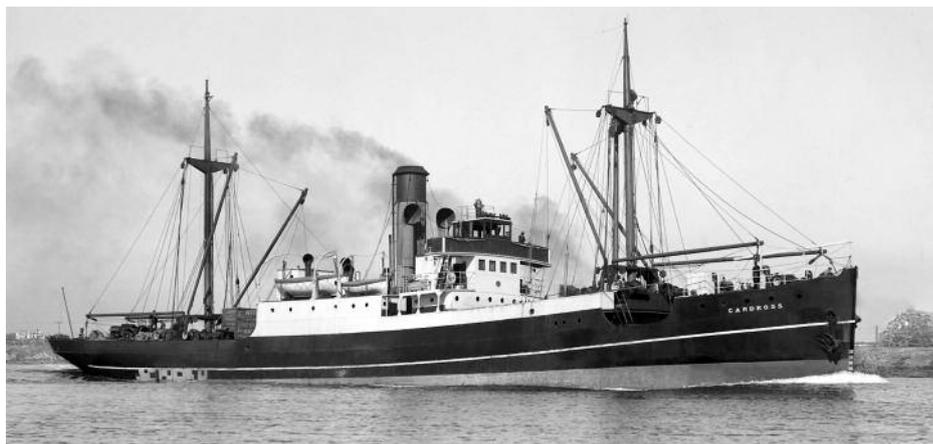
However, the Madrigal Shipping Company revived its shipping business in 1946, at the conclusion of World War 2.

One ship taken by the Japanese was the *Hirondelle* which had only just been acquired by Madrigal. She was built as the Royal Yacht for Prince Albert of Monaco. The Japanese renamed her *Gyonan Maru*. However, after the war she was returned to She served as a luxury ferry running between, Manila, Iloilo, and Tacloban, with sporadic use as the Presidential Yacht. The vessel continued to serve in a variety of trades under the Madrigal banner, finally being scrapped in 1965, some 54 years after she was built. After World War 2, the company was renamed Madrigal Shipping Company and

started shipping again in 1946. The company had a mixed passenger-cargo and cargo fleet, the latter being the larger ships. The passenger-cargo ships of the company were smaller, size being limited by many of the ports they visited. Madrigal Shipping Company concentrated its passenger services to Bicol and Northern Luzon. The route to Bicol would extend to as far as Larap port in Jose Panganiban town, in Camarines Norte and the Northern Luzon route would call on Salomague (in Ilocos Sur), Batanes and Aparri. They also had a passenger-cargo ship that would circumnavigate the entire of Luzon starting from Manila to Northern Luzon before proceeding to Bicol ports and round the tip of the Sorsogon isthmus, on the return trip to Manila, to complete its coastal voyage.

The passenger-cargo fleet of the Madrigal Shipping Company were very basic and cannot be categorized as being luxurious by any means, in fact they were primarily cargo ships, with spartan passenger accommodations, but they served their purpose as they were the only realistic means of inter-island and coastal transportation for passengers, during the earlier post war years.

In 1955, in the aftermath of the sinking of one of their small passenger vessels the *Citus*, in the Babuyan Channel, whilst attempting to out-run a Typhoon, triggered the withdrawal of the Madrigal Shipping Company from passenger services. It had become easier to forecast that improvements

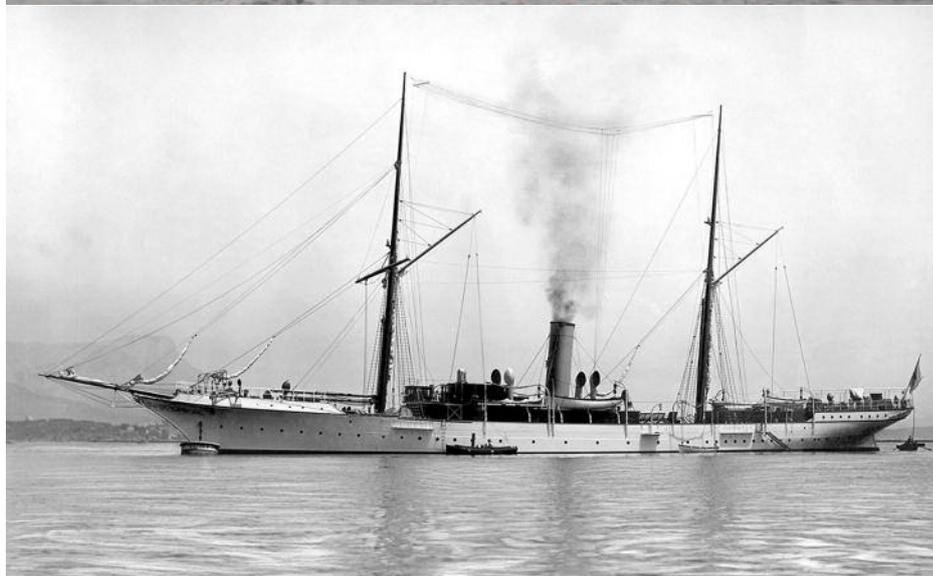


Left: The 3,021grt Ameise was built in 1924 by Dunlop, Bremner & Co. at Port Glasgow as the Lowana for Melbourne SS Co. She joined Madrigal in 1955 and in 1960 she moved to Kimberley Shipping Corporation as Dennis I. She was broken up at Hong Kong in February 1961. *(Chris Howell collection)*

Above: The 1,364grt Juno seen in her original guise as Cardross before being sold to Madrigal Shipping in 1955. She was built in 1927 by John Lewis at Aberdeen for J. Patrick & Co. of Melbourne. In 1935 she joined John Burke Ltd. as Bidelia. In 1959 she was transferred to Cia. Globo de Nav. S.A., Panama (V. Madrigal). She was tragically, reported as missing from 10th October 1964 after radioing she was engulfed in a severe Typhoon in position 18°20'N, 118°44'E on voyage from Kaohsiung to Brunel with cement, bricks, and general cargo. *(The late Allan Green collection)*

Below: The 7,155grt Sula was built in 1943 by Burrard DD at Vancouver as the Fort Columbia for the British Government. In 1948 she joined Saguenay Terminals as Sunrell before moving to Madrigal in 1959. On 17th September 1969 she arrived at Kaohsiung to be broken up by Shieh Sun Sa Iron & Steel Works. *(City of Vancouver Archives - Walter E. Frost)*

Bottom: The lovely 1,243grt Argus was built in 1911 by Mediterranee at La Seyne as the Hironnelle, the Royal Yacht of Prince Albert of Monaco. After being taken over by the Japanese in 1942 she became Argus in 1949. She was broken up in The Philippines in 1965.



in rail and road, with the expansion of post war infrastructure, would create more highly competitive challenges to the coastal passenger shipping service. With their government connections, it is possible Madrigal was conversant with future planning, for regional development.

By the 1970s only one passenger-cargo ship was still remained with Madrigal Shipping Company, the Viria and before the

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MADRIGAL SHIPPING CO., INC.

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Above: The 2,142grt Hong Kong ferry Nam Sham was sold to Madrigal as Madrigal Surigao in 1989. She was built in 1972 by Niigata Engineering in Japan. She was broken up in April 1993. *(Paul Morgan)*

Below: The 7,141grt Arthur Cross was built in 1944 by United Shipyards in Montreal as the Alder Park for the Canadian Government. She joined Dominion Shipping of Montreal in 1946 and was renamed Arthur Cross. She was purchased by Madrigal in 1964 and retained her name. On 3rd April 1970 she arrived at Hong Kong to be broken up by Lee Sing & Co. *(FotoFlite)*

Bottom: The 5,269grt Lylepark was built in 1951 by Charles Connell & Co. at Scotstoun for Denholm Line. In 1963 she joined Madrigal as Susana and in 1968 she moved to Industrial Navigation of Somalia as Seamaster. In 1975 she became Dolphin of Dolphin Shipping and the following year they renamed her Sunny Dolphin. She was broken up by Fuji Marden & Co. at Hong Kong in October 1977. *(FotoFlite)*



end of that decade they had totally withdrawn from passenger shipping. However, their pure cargo shipping division remained strong, and Madrigal was still purchasing cargo ships, mainly from European and Australian owners.

Vincente Madrigal passed away in 1972, at age 92 and the operation of the company was assumed by his close family.

Whilst the cargo shipping division of the company remained, it did decline over time. It however, it was a surprise later when together with a Taiwan shipping company, Madrigal bid for the state-owned National Shipping Company of the Philippines, which was then in the process of being privatised. Again, in 1988, another welcome surprise as Madrigal Shipping Company returned to passenger shipping rebranded as the A.P. Madrigal Steamship Co. Inc. This time it was truly liner shipping and not just like the basic passenger-cargo shipping of their earlier years.

The first two ships were actually sisters, named the Tai Shan and the Nam Shan, both being ex Hongkong-Macau ferries. They were acquired by A.P. Madrigal Steamship Co. Inc. on bareboat charter with an option to purchase from Cortes Shipping of Zamboanga. Tai Shan became the Madrigal Tacloban while Nam Shan became the Madrigal Surigao. Madrigal Tacloban's applied route was Manila-Catbalogan-Tacloban while Madrigal Surigao's applied route was Manila-Maasin-Surigao. It was a timely strategy as both routes had recently been withdrawn by previous operators, Escano Lines, who ceased their passenger services.

Although the Madrigal ferries were already established in their routes by 1990, the Madrigal ferries did not survive long. This was already the era when more liner type vessels were being engaged on the routes, with a passenger capacity of well over 2,000, service speeds nearing 20 knots and with hotel-like accommodations, amenities, and service.

After only a few years, A.P. Madrigal Steamship Co. Inc. withdrew from passenger shipping, however, they were still in cargo shipping. The sister ships Madrigal Romblon and Madrigal Surigao were sold to breakers and they were broken up in 1994. After this experience, Madrigal never returned to liner shipping again.

Throughout 1960 and 1970s, Madrigal Shipping remained quite actively engaged in sale and purchase of tonnage.

Madrigal purchased several 'Park Class' vessels, mostly through one of their Liberian companies, Pacific Trading & Navigation Ltd., Monrovia. One of their acquisitions was the Park Class vessel Alder Park. Which was renamed Arthur Cross in 1946 after being sold to the Dominion Shipping Co., Montreal. It was purchased by Madrigal in



Above: The 51,270dwt tanker V. Madrigal joined the fleet in 1968. She was built in 1961 by Eriksberg MV at Gothenburg as the Mobil Endeavour for Mobil Tankships. On 4th November 1976 she arrived at Kaohsiung to be broken up by Li Chon Steel & Iron. *(FotoFlite)*

Below: The 3,790grt Santa Ursula was built in 1958 by Alexander Stephen at Linthouse as the Katea for the Union SS Co. of New Zealand. She joined Madrigal in 1976. On 6th March 1982 she arrived at Kaohsiung to be broken up by His Ying Enterprises. *(Chris Howell collection)*

Bottom: The 8,831grt Sainte Alexandrine was built in 1981 by Neptun VB at Rostock. In 1985 they renamed her Santa Filipinas and the following year she was sold to Tersichore Shipping and renamed Meredith E. In 1987 she was sold to Seaways Co. Inc. of Greece as Flora and then sailed for them and various charters as Flora V (1990), CCNI Ancud (1991), CGM Mana (1993) and Safmarine Palanca (2006). In 2010 she reverted to Flora for her final voyage to Alang where she arrived on 26th December to be broken up. *(FotoFlite)*



1964, retained its name and was placed under Liberian flag. Like most other vessels of this class purchased by Madrigal it was engaged in worldwide tramping. The ship went to Hong Kong for demolition in 1970.

Another Park vessel was the Wellington Park, built by United Shipyards Ltd, Montreal for Canadian Government (Park S.S. Co. Ltd. managers), Montreal. In 1948 she was sold to Saguenay Terminals Ltd., and became their Sunwhit. In 1960 she was sold to Pacific Trading & Navigation Ltd., Monrovia, (Madrigal entity) and renamed Ceres. She was sent for demolition at Osaka in 1970.

A slightly more modern addition to the Madrigal Fleet was the 1951 built Lylepark, built by Charles Connell, Glasgow, for the Denholm Steamship Group. Sold to Madrigal Shipping via Pacific Trading & Navigation Ltd. in 1963, and was renamed Susana. She was resold to other Far East interests in 1968 and renamed Seamaster. She was sent for demolition at Hong Kong in October 1977, by Fuji Marden & Co. Ltd.

Madrigal shipping of Manila has certainly enjoyed a long and colourful existence. Like many Far East shipowners, they 'bought and sold', operating older vessels for a few years before sending them for demolition. Many Asian shipping moguls forged their initial fortunes following this method of operation, also paving the way for them to acquire a shrewd understanding of the shipping world. Many Asian shipowners with large and modern fleets started their shipping empires using this technique.

There were shipping companies that tried augmenting their fleet by ordering brand-new ships locally, from Japan and West Germany, using loans provided by the government. But from the middle 1960s to the early 1970s, the surplus ships from Europe were more numerous. And the biggest reasoning was that for the cost of a brand-new ship, two or three surplus ships could be acquired and thus the capacity and revenue far greater. If the ratio is one to one, the brand-new ship would take longer to amortize. Although surplus, it was assumed the ships would last quite long, provided maintained in good condition. European built surplus tonnage was favoured as it was known that European built ships used a higher grade of steel in their construction.

By 1978 and 1979 containerization in the Philippine trades was in full swing, but like many other long established Filipino companies, Madrigal Shipping did not take up the challenge and engage in any meaningful way. Hence it slowly faded into a ghost of its former glory, relying on conventional shipping whilst it remained feasible to operate, but with the domination of containerization, and multi-purpose ships, break bulk and conventional cargoes became fewer and far between, for ageing tweendeckers.