

I&J unveils new fishing vessels

AVI subsidiary and South Africa's oldest deep-sea Cape Hake fishing company, I&J has unveiled their new fishing vessels. The naming and ceremonial blessing of the new vessels by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's daughter, Reverend Canon Mpho Tutu took place at the V&A in Cape Town on Monday, 16 November.



Skipper John Slingers and Reverend Canon Mpho Tutu about to bless the vessel

The unveiling of the two vessels, the "Ferox" and "Umlobi", forms part of what has been the largest investment in the South African fishing industry in the last 25 years, demonstrating both I&J and its shareholders' recognition that material investment is necessary in this complex, vertically integrated industry. It also reflects the company's confidence and belief in the Cape Hake fishing industry, internationally recognised as one of the best managed and sustainable fisheries in the world.

Growth and job creation

Guest of honour, His Grace, Archbishop of Cape Town and head of the Anglican Church of South Africa, The Most Reverend Doctor Thabo Makgoba congratulated I&J on its considerable investment commitment within the South African borders, underpinning growth and adding badly needed employment in the Western Cape. I&J's considerable investment will not only support existing jobs, replacing aging vessels and processing technology but will also see the creation of 75 new jobs in the Western Cape by adding modern fishing vessel capacity and technology to the I&J Fleet.

Tutu officiated the formal vessel christenings and delivered a blessing of prayer to bestow good will and divine protection over each vessel. Reverend Tutu became the vessels' Godmother, as she ceremonially broke Champagne bottles over each of the bows.

Fierce fishermen

I&J's ground-breaking R0.5 Billion Rand investment includes the purchase of the Ferox (from the Latin meaning "fierce" and named after the indigenous Aloe Ferox plant), a 45 metre long, deep-sea fishing trawler at a cost of more than R150 million; the acquisition of the 66 metre long freezer factory ship, Umlobi ("Fisherman" in Xhosa), worth in excess of R255 million, as well as the R67 million upgrade of I&J's Woodstock processing facility in Cape Town, where the daily Cape Hake catch is converted into product for both domestic and international markets.

Ferox, a newly-built wet-fish vessel, is a 910 gross ton stern trawler, capable of fast turnarounds and delivering fresh fish to the V&A Waterfront for further processing at I&J's Woodstock plant in Cape Town.



I&J Ferox

Umlobi, I&J's new flagship vessel, was one of the top performing Norwegian fishing vessels prior to its sale to I&J in Cape Town. The 2,600 gross ton fishing trawler is able to catch and process all fish on-board, producing the internationally respected Cape Hake frozen-at-sea Fillets.



I&J Umlobi

Collaboration has been key

Jonty Jankovich-Besan, I&J's Managing Director, explains, "I&J was a pioneer in the attainment of the demanding Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability certification of the Cape Hake fishery back in 2004, which has since been re-certified twice, most recently in May 2015. Over the last 12 years, the Deep Sea Fishing Industry has collaborated effectively with the Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and scientific and mathematical experts, ensuring the attainment of the stringent MSC audit demands."

"This collaboration has been key, as the MSC sustainability certification allows access to higher value, sophisticated international markets, which in turn supports the investment in both these expensive physical assets and very importantly, its employees." explains Jankovich-Besan.

I&J currently employs 1,900 dedicated and highly skilled staff, converting all of the I&J catch off the SA coastline to finished product. No raw material is exported for further reprocessing as is common in many other fishing industries. This investment highlights I&J's commitment to both its current and future employees, aligning well with government's job creation objectives, in addition to the Operation Phakisa objective, focused on unlocking the economic potential of SA's oceans.

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