

SEA TALES: Eduardo Bages

A love of ships and travelling captivated Eduardo Bages at a young age. His youthful ambitions came to fruition in a magnificent way, as he now celebrates 58 years in the shipping industry, having visited 70 countries during the course of his long career.

Eduardo Bages was born in October 1928 to a Catalan family in Barcelona. There was no tradition of shipping amongst his immediate relatives and indeed, his father was a doctor and his family tended towards the medical profession. However, in 1946 Eduardo Bages was apprenticed to Condeminas in Barcelona, an old established firm of ship agents and owners. During the next six years, he progressed from being an apprentice in the commercial department to becoming a manager of the shipowning company at the age of 23.

The Spanish people endured many restrictions in the 1950s, one of which was

So as General Manager of Marasia, Eduardo Bages began his travelling career. In 1961, the company began trading in West Africa, from Senegal to Angola. South American trade followed, with particular success in Chile, since Spain was a favoured trading nation there. But the political upheavals in Chile resulted in considerable numbers of refugees: such was the aid that Eduardo Bages was able to give in transporting people to and fro, that he received the Bernardo O'Higgins Award from the Chilean government.

Trade with Australia and South-East Asia blossomed in the 1970s. Marasia



encountered considerable opposition to its trade in Australia but it was finally accepted as member of the Australian Conference in 1974. Eduardo Bages visited Korea for the first time in 1975 and, in recognition of his expertise in trade with that country, he was appointed Chairman of the Spain-Korea Trade Committee. Marasia was the first Spanish shipping company to become a member of all the major world conferences and, as General Manager of the firm, Eduardo Bages was awarded the Spanish First Class Navy Order for its services to Spanish trade and the Republic of Italy Order of Merit.

With such worldwide experience, Eduardo Bages was set to become a very valuable asset to BIMCO. Marasia had joined BIMCO in 1960 and found its services and facilities of considerable help. At that time, Spain was not a wealthy nation and communications were poor. BIMCO provided information on port conditions, chartering activities, tariffs, weather forecasting and the use of standard forms. Since membership of BIMCO denoted respect and a certain standard among its shipowner Members, Marasia could deal with Member Companies with confidence.



that it was difficult to travel outside Spain. Nevertheless, from 1951 Eduardo Bages managed to travel in Portugal, France and Italy and in 1956, he spent two months in London to improve his English. When he returned to Spain, he went to Madrid rather than back to Barcelona, since Franco had concentrated the control of the main exports and imports of goods in the capital and the opportunities for trading were the greatest there. In a very short time, he founded Compañía Naviera Marasia S.A. with a group of partners, chartering vessels on the tramp trade. The company quickly established trade with India and East Pakistan, transporting jute to Spain where it was used in the manufacture of carpets and bags. By 1959, just two years after its establishment, Marasia was accepted as a member of the India-Pakistan Conference – quite an achievement, given the pedigree of other members of the conference, such as Cunard and P&O.

ABOVE LEFT: Eduardo Bages with Jorgen Lauritzen, President of BIMCO 1981-83, preparing for the BIMCO General Meeting in Madrid, 1983.

ABOVE: The Presidency of BIMCO passed to Eduardo Bages in 1983. He received his badge of office at the General Meeting in Madrid with obvious pride and delight.

ABOVE RIGHT: The *Maresme*.

BELOW: Eduardo Bages at the helm of the sailing ship *Altair* in 1986 with his wife and brother-in-law.



Eduardo Bages participated actively in BIMCO from the time Marasia joined and he gave his first paper, speaking publicly in English for the first time, at the Madrid General Meeting in 1965. The paper, entitled *Citrus Export and Shipping*, highlighted the competition which shipowners faced from the transport of goods by land and warned of the need to improve the speed of delivery and the conditions on board for cargo. His detailed analysis was reported in the London *Financial Times*.

By 1979, Eduardo Bages had become a substitute Member of BIMCO's Executive



COMPANIA NAVIERA
MARASIA, S.A.



PAISES, EN 5 CONTINENTES.

ABOVE: The company logo.

TOP RIGHT: Time for a break during BIMCO's General Meeting in Hamburg, May 1989. Eduardo Bages enjoys a drink while Christopher Lund faces the camera.

RIGHT: Eduardo Bages at table with Mrs Bages, Mrs Skaanild and Mrs Sohmen in Athens, May 1987.



Committee. He became President Designate in 1981 and finally, with a justifiable pride and a sense of great achievement, he became President of BIMCO in 1983, the only Spanish-speaking President in BIMCO's history. His appointment was made official at the General Meeting held that year in Madrid: the King of Spain was the patron of the event and the event was considered greatly advantageous to Spain's shipping industry.

Eduardo Bages felt that his challenge as

President of BIMCO was to modernise and expand. In modernising, he was greatly aided by Christopher Lund, who had done much to modernise the old documentary forms, and by Torben Skaanild, who became General Secretary when Eduardo Bages was President. As part of the on-going modernisation plans, BIMCO's full name, hitherto the Baltic and International Maritime Conference, was changed to the Baltic and International Maritime Council and the post of General Manager became General Secretary in 1985. In expanding BIMCO, Eduardo Bages was instrumental in arranging the first General Meeting outside Europe, in San Francisco in 1985. The meeting was a great success and from that time on, there has always been an American representative in BIMCO. It was the natural next step to spread BIMCO's membership

East and he embarked on a month-long promotional trip to South-East Asia, during which he visited Thailand, Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong, China and Japan.

During his distinguished career, Eduardo Bages has been Director of the Madrid Chamber of Commerce, Spanish representative at GENSA, Director of Anave Spanish Shipowners' Association, first Chairman of Imarco, the Spanish Institute of Maritime Arbitration, and Foreign Member of The Baltic Exchange. Now almost 75 years of age, he is an advisor to AP Moller/Maersk Espana. And in recognition of all his support, Eduardo Bages was elected Honorary Councillor of BIMCO at the General Meeting in Barcelona, October 2003.

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