

# CHANDRIS LINES

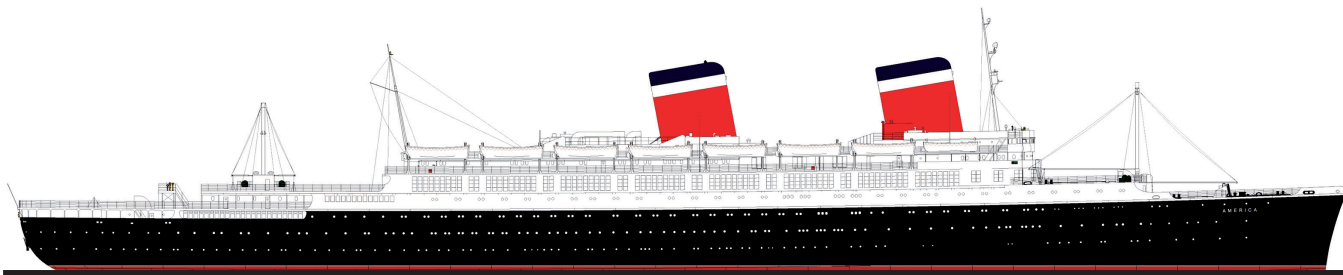
## NEW FLAGSHIP

# RHMS AUSTRALIS

The largest one class liner in the world 35,400 tons 723 feet long  
8 decks 2200 berths Fully air conditioned Attractive public rooms  
Indoor and outdoor swimming pools Speed 22.5 knots



# TO U.K. AND EUROPE



## SS America - USS West Point - SS America (1940-1964)

The United States Lines (USL) was formed in 1921. In that year, the company started a regular passenger service between America and Europe using four former German liners. With an (upgraded) tonnage of 59,956 their *Leviathan* (ex *Vaterland*) became the largest passenger liner in the world. In 1933, the United States Maritime Commission (USMC) built a new liner as a replacement for the outdated and uneconomical *Leviathan*.

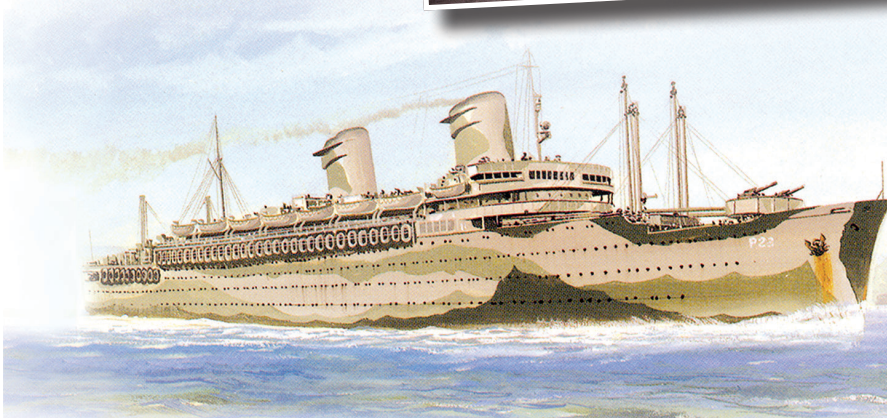
In 1934, the renowned naval architect William Francis Gibb was given the job of designing the new ship. Tenders were officially invited, and a contract was signed with Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. for the construction of a 35,000-gross-ton liner. The new ship was designated "Number 569" and her keel was laid on 22 August 1938. Four months later, it was announced that the new liner would be named *America*. She was launched on 31 August 1939 by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.



*America was launched on August 31, 1939, the day before Germany invaded Poland, marking the start of World War II.*

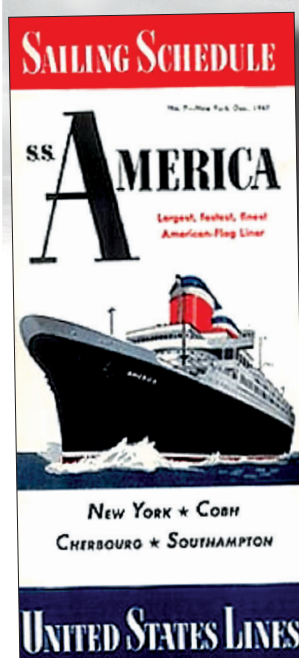
The *America* was delivered on 2 July 1940 and due to the progress of World War II, started her career as a cruise ship. On 28 May 1941, while cruising to Puerto Rico, the *America* was ordered to return to New York to be handed over to the Navy. While moored at her builder, the liner was renamed *USS West Point* with pennant number AP-23 and converted to a troop carrier.

She was painted in camouflage grey and served all around the world. In continuous service since the outbreak of the war, the *USS West Point* completed 151 trips and covered more than 436,144 nautical miles. During her 56 months of war service, she transported 505,020 passengers.



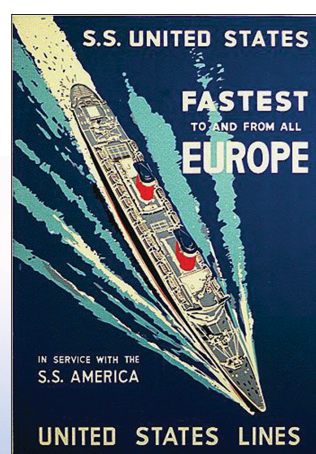
*Artist's impression of USS West Point*



*Departure from New York.*

Once reconverted from troop carrier to passenger liner at her builders, the *America* returned to New York for her first commercial voyage across the Atlantic. She marked her 100th transatlantic voyage in September 1952 by celebrating with her passengers. By that time, she was already carrying over 160,000 passengers. After 24 years of service, her lengthy career for the United States Lines was about to come to an end. The *America* was costing the company too much money. She left New York on 9 October 1964 for her last transatlantic voyage and returned to New York on 27 October 1964 with 439 passengers. One of the passengers was Mr. Kaparis, a naval architect/marine engineer for the Greek Chandris Lines. He was on board to inspect the vessel for Mr. Chandris. In November 1964, the *America* was sold to Okeania S.A., a subsidiary of Chandris Lines.

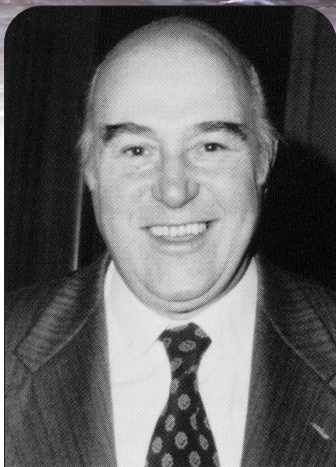
Chandris Lines had plans to use the ship as a passenger and emigrant vessel between Europe and Australia. The liner was handed over to Okeania S.A./Chandris Lines on 16 November 1964 at Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Company and two days later was renamed *Australis* (Australian Lady). With her funnels repainted in blue with black tops and flying the Greek flag, the former *America* departed on 18 November 1964 from Newport News for her new homeport of Piraeus (Greece) where she was due to undergo extensive refitting and conversion.



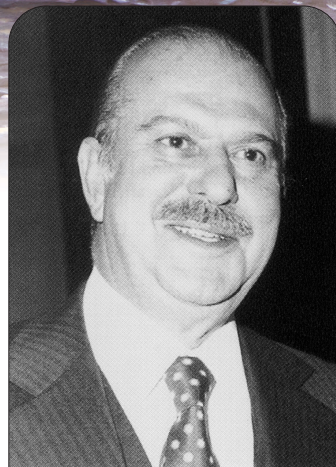
During her commercial service, the *America* completed 288 transatlantic voyages, having accommodated 476,462 passengers and 20,000 passengers during cruises. She was a perfect ship for transatlantic crossings!

*Final departure from New York to Europe on 9 October 1964.**(Photo Collection Ian Shifmann).*





Δημήτριος Ι. Χανδρός  
Dimitrios J. Chandris



Αντώνιος Ι. Χανδρός  
Anthony J. Chandris

INTRODUCTION

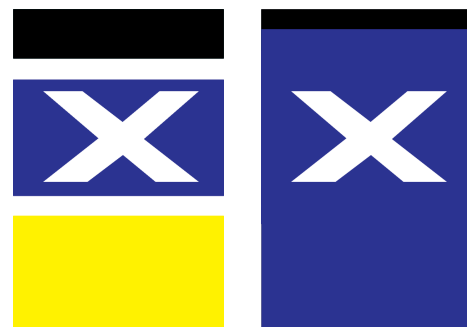
On 4 November 1964, the United States Lines officially requested permission from the Maritime Administration to sell the SS *America* to “Okeania S.A.” a subsidiary of the Greek shipping company Chandris Lines. The Maritime Administration approval came the very next day, when it was announced that a sale had been finalised. Mr. Demetris Kaparis attended the handover of the SS *America* to Okeania S.A./Chandris Lines on 16 November 1964, after which the red, white, and blue on her funnels were replaced with a coat of Chandris blue with a black band at the top.

1. CHANDRIS LINES/CHANDRIS CRUISES, A SHORT HISTORY

John D. Chandris learned the shipping trade from his father-in-law on the Greek island of Chios. In 1915, he left the Georgandis operations on Chios and headed for Piraeus, where he bought the sailing ship *Dimitrios* (I). It was a time of high freight demand and too few ships. The *Dimitrios* prospered, so much so that John Chandris was able to buy his first steamships. By the onset of World War I, his fleet comprised three steam ships: the *Dimitrios* (II), *Vlassios* and *Eugenia*. In 1922 he started passenger shipping with the steamer *Chimara*, a 300-tonner that ran a coastal service between Piraeus and Corinth. The Chandris Company flourished and was

more than just a tramp ship operator. It had branched into shipping agency work, insurance, and shipbroking. In 1936, Chandris acquired his largest vessel to date, the 1,306-ton *Corte II* from its French owners. The vessel was renamed *Patris* (I). This marked the inception of a Chandris passenger service, with the *Patris* (Greek for fatherland) sailing under the British flag. Following the outbreak of World War II, John Chandris moved to London, where he died in 1942 at the age of 52. His widow, Evgenia Chandris, and their two sons Dimitri (1921-1980) and Anthony (1924-1984), carried on the family business.

Top: Painting of the *Australis* by the British painter Derrick Smoothy (1923-2009).



Funnel colours of Charlton Steam Shipping (left) and Chandris Lines/Chandris Cruises/Celebrity Cruises.