

SS Ellinis

Chandris Line 1962-1986

The vessel began life as *Lurline*, launched in 1932 for Matson Line's Pacific services. After three decades of distinguished service including wartime duties, she was purchased by Chandris Line in 1962 and renamed *Ellinis*, beginning a new career carrying immigrants to Australia.

Ship Information

Former name	Lurline
Company	Chandris Line
Built by	Bethlehem Shipyard, Quincy Massachusetts
Year launched	1932
Fate	Scrapped 1987 in Taiwan
Tonnage	18,021
Length	129.9m (632 ft)
Beam	24.2m (79 ft)
Propulsion	Geared Turbines, Twin Screws
Speed	22 knots
Initial Capacity	475 first class, 240 tourist
Later Capacity	1,668 tourist class
Crew	359
SWI Ref	564

Construction and Early Years

Built by Bethlehem Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, *Lurline* was launched on July 18, 1932. She was one of three sister ships, alongside *Mariposa* and *Monterey*. The vessel was designed for Matson Line's Pacific services, operating between San Francisco and Australia, as well as the popular San Francisco-Honolulu route.

Wartime Service

On December 7, 1941, *Lurline* was approximately halfway between San Francisco and Honolulu when news of the Pearl Harbor attack was received. The vessel made a blacked-out, zigzagging return to port at full speed, subsequently serving throughout the war carrying troops and supplies. One of her most notable wartime passengers was Australian Prime Minister Curtin, whom she transported to his meeting with President Roosevelt.

Post-war Matson Service

After a post-war refit, *Lurline* resumed her position as the Pacific Ocean's premier passenger liner. She continued in this role until air travel competition made her operations uneconomical.

Chandris Line Service

In 1962, Chandris Line purchased the vessel, attracted by her tonnage and interior beauty. Her original name was transferred to the former *Matsonia*. Following an extensive refit at North Shields, which included new funnels and a modernized superstructure, the ship was converted to single-class tourist accommodation for 1,668 passengers. As *Ellinis*, she commenced her maiden voyage from Piraeus to Sydney on December 30, 1963, returning via the Panama Canal to Southampton. For the next decade, she maintained regular immigrant voyages to Australia and continued around-the-world services on an eastward route.

Final Years

Ellinis was laid up in Piraeus in 1980 after more than 50 years of service. In 1986, she was sold to Taiwanese shipbreakers and was scrapped in 1987.

Legacy

The *Ellinis* holds a special place in maritime history, particularly for her role in Australia's post-war immigration program. During her service with Chandris Line, she transported thousands of European migrants to Australia, contributing significantly to the country's multicultural development.

Many former passengers recall the journey aboard *Ellinis* as their first introduction to their new homeland. The vessel's comfortable accommodations and reliable service made the long voyage more bearable for families embarking on new lives.

Maritime historians note that vessels like *Ellinis* represent an important bridge between the golden age of ocean liners and the modern era of air travel. Her conversion from a luxury liner to a primarily immigrant transport vessel reflects the changing nature of sea travel in the mid-20th century.

Today, memorabilia from both her *Lurline* and *Ellinis* periods are highly sought after by collectors and museums dedicated to preserving maritime heritage.

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