

BLAZING A TRAIL:
‘We don’t expect to make millions overnight but what we are looking to do is make Mideast [Shipping] a global operation,’ said Steve Wansell.

Brilliant has second Maroil VLCC seized over bunker bills

Jonathan Boonzaier Singapore

Maroil Trading of Venezuela has seen its second VLCC arrested as bunker trader Brilliant Maritime Services (BMS) tries to force it to pay its bunker bills.

The 308,000-dwt *Hero 1* (built 1999) was seized by the Singapore sheriff on Tuesday. BMS says the company still owes it \$1.259m and interest of \$105,000 from a \$2.125m bill for bunkers supplied

to the ship in September. It also claims it is still owed \$1.6m for bunkers supplied to Maroil’s 308,000-dwt tanker *Leander* (built 1999) in October.

The *Leander* was arrested in Singapore on 29 December while en route to Qingdao with a cargo of crude oil for PetroChina. BMS claimed at the time that Maroil subsidiary Oceanic Oil Venture had not paid a \$2.8m invoice for the bunkers. Both deals had been

done through bunker broker Ocean Connect.

Immediately after the *Leander* was arrested, BMS received a payment of \$2.2m of which \$1.2m was to go toward this bill and \$1m toward the *Hero 1*’s bill.

BMS released the *Leander* on 3 January after Maroil agreed that it would pay off the balance of the ship’s bill by 10 January and the *Hero 1*’s bill by 12 January.

It was told that money was not

the problem but that it was an issue of charter parties being completed by the end of the year.

It claims that no money has been forthcoming from Maroil since the *Leander* was released. It regards the agreement as null and void, and wants Maroil to pay all outstanding balances before it releases the *Hero 1*.

The vessels were purchased from AP Moller-Maersk in August 2006 for \$116m each.

Photo: Geoff Garfield

pressures but performance issues generally. Can the cash buyer take delivery without problems and where will a ship be broken?

“Shipowners in today’s market want a hassle-free way of selling,” said the former banker.

The “breakaway” cash buyers will be those able to raise their game to a new professional level.

“That is what I have come in to do,” said Wansell. “There are even more vessels to be purchased if you can market your brand. It isn’t rocket science.”

Although not naming the competition, he refers to a rival that has taken the same path — “branding itself with a catchy name, setting up a website, going on the road to seminars and embracing everything”, says Wansell.

It does not take a genius to work out he is talking about Anil Sharma’s Global Marketing Systems (GMS), although even a company like Tahir Lakhani’s Dubai Trading Agency/United Eastern Trading has sought to raise its profile by sponsoring seminars and holding receptions at top London hotels.

“People buy into that,” added Wansell. Owners are more receptive to someone well presented and who can talk the talk, as opposed to dealing with a one-man cash buyer with no back-up.

“Owners come back as long as you can pay a decent price and deliver the vessel in a smooth and timely manner,” said Wansell. “It’s like any business.”

Mideast Shipping is said to have around 10 vessels ongoing at any particular time, something that requires resources, says Wansell, including the ability to be a real cash buyer by paying cash. Relying on the banks in this market to purchase a ship is very dangerous, he says.



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