Sailing 8,000 bottles of wine to Copenhagen on the brigantine Tres Hombres of Holland

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Fair Transport is the world's foremost sail cargo company. Its 32-meter ship, the Tres Hombres, has pulled off many a voyage in the past few years to bring rum, cacao and other goods from the Caribbean to northern Europe. Shorter runs have involved France, the UK, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

The solid, strong brigantine vessel's home is Den Helder, the naval/ship-building/museum port first envisioned by Napoleon. Now the ship is bound for Copenhagen where a visionary buyer will capitalize on the "green" market for carbon-emission-free wine.
Not only does this wine consist of varieties of organic Bretagne vintages; it was brought to the dock in Brest by horse and cart.

Now I get to help on the high seas to deliver the wine and unload it (what's left of it!).

The Tres Hombres is engineless, thus greenhouse-gas free. Yet it gets where it needs to go, hauling up to 35 tons of non-perishable goods as well as passenger-trainees to assist the crew.

To be viable Fair Transport needs to keep up its momentum with more shipments and passenger-trainees. We sail this Monday with five empty berths. You could have signed on! it's my pleasure to help sail the boat, strum a few tunes, and spread the word of successful sail transport. (Please pass it along.) There's the next voyage for you to support from afar, if you can't come along and be at sea for weeks.

The future of trade and travel will not be based on dwindling, ever-more-costly petroleum. The atmosphere cannot stand today's vast quantities of catastrophically polluting bunker fuel and jet fuel. And the beauty of the ocean, crossing it peacefully with traditional skills (plus modern navigation technolgy), with the satisfaction of energy-efficient, non-polluting transport, are all here now. In comparison, the vaunted techno-fix for maintaining the industrial consumer economy depends on ever more manufacturing and investment; in short, growth and collateral damage known as climate destruction.

In the case of the Tres Hombres -- named for the founders, Arjen, Andreas and Jorne -- the fixer-upper hull was already available. A fast but safe design from 1930s Germany, the oak and douglas fir hull was gotten for very low cost by the three "hombres" [Tres Hombres = three men, in Spanish] with a vision of traditional completion via community investment. Shareholders cheer on the voyages and hope for the movement to spread. No less than three hundred volunteers had a hand in bringing the Tres Hombres to life as a functioning, able ship.

In the accompanying photo of Tres Hombres on which I stood amidships, I'm looking aft at wind generators and solar panels on davits. In the background there is an historic lightship, part of the Den Helder harbor's Willemsoord Museum Dock complex.

The future of sail transport is on many levels: local crops across a channel, tropical goods brought thousands of miles along coasts, and, some day, transoceanic cargo and passenger service that the world will depend on. The days of the global corporate economy based on never-ending expansion are numbered. Why wait until total collapse of the funny-money house of cards, when we can build or convert ships now for serious sailing? Good employment, cooperative and communal enterprises, and profitable ventures await the full revival of sail power

We all appreciate consuming nice goods, and we expect a reliable supply. With awareness required today, we not only need to buy wisely (organic, fair trade, shade grown, sail transported) but must also take the extra steps to support visionary projects and movements. It's time to live the future now. Crew members and trainees of the Tres Hombres know this as they arrive by train and bicycle -- the most popular modes of land transportation in Holland.

My next report will be text only from the sea, and once in Copenhagen I should be able to furnish stills and video for your enjoyment and inspiration. But Fair Transport and the Tres Hombres do need your help to keep going. It would be timely for you or someone you know to send a donation to Fair Transport, for both the maintenance of the ship and further development of their Ecoliner concept. Please use this PayPal address for Fair Transport and Tres Hombres voyages -- after clicking here Martin D Romer insert the email address martinusromer "at" hotmail.com

Or, for a tax-deduction, mail your check payable stateside to "GVI / Fair Transport" and send to:

Global Village Institute

attn. Sail Transport Network/Fair Transport

P.O. Box 90

Summertown, TN 38483-0090 USA

Check out FairTransport.eu, and on SailTransportNetwork.com watch Hombre Jorne eloquently discuss sail transport in his TED talk (scroll down several stories).

Thank you,

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Photographs by Jan Lundberg except where noted.