

# carus

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*Magazine*

A portrait of Christophe Mathieu, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a red tie with thin white diagonal stripes. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green foliage and rocks.

Christophe Mathieu  
**Carus Excellence  
Award 2022**

# Carus Excellence Awards in Spain

Carus welcomes since 2012 its Carus Excellence Awards in Spain. The ceremony will take place in the **Hotel Wellington Madrid next June 21st**, to coincide with the **General Assembly of the Spanish Shipowners' Association —ANAVE**, of which Carus is an Associate Member and Sponsor.

The event is represented by the highest maritime and port institutions, the attendance of the **Minister for Transport**, the Secretary of State for Transport, the President of State Ports, the General Director of the Merchant Navy, as well as a large representation of the Spanish private maritime sector with the owners and C-level executives of the main shipping companies.





The Spanish Minister for Transport, during her speech on the last General Assembly of the Spanish Shipowners' Association, Hotel Wellington Madrid —July 20, 2021

The **Carus Excellence Award 2022** will be presented during the ANAVE General Assembly next June 21st, and this year's recipient, nominated unanimously by the board of Carus Spain is **Christophe Mathieu —CEO of Brittany Ferries.**

The Spanish Shipowners' Association, ANAVE, will hold its annual General Assembly on 20 of July 2021, with a cocktail event and a gala lunch at the Hotel Wellington, Madrid. The event is co-sponsored by Carus, an ANAVE associate member, and will be attended by the Spanish shipowners as well as maritime and port authorities. There will also be a representation of European maritime delegates, and the Spanish Ministry for Transport will close the assembly. The Carus Excellence Award 2022 will be presented, and this year's recipient, nominated unanimously by the board of Carus Spain: Christophe Mathieu, CEO of Brittany Ferries.

This award is intended solely to highlight the Excellence and Dedication to the maritime sector, and is awarded to the most outstanding professionals in this regard. Previous editions of the Carus Excellence were awarded to the President of ECSA and SUARDIAZ Group, Mr. Juan

Riva, and to the President of BALEARIA Group, Mr. Adolfo Utor. The Carus edition of the Excellence Award 2014 went to the Director General of Spanish Merchant Marine, Mr. Rafael Rodriguez Valero. And the latest Carus Excellence Award went to: Mr. Vicente Boluda —President of Boluda Corporation and Carus Excellence AWARD 2015; Mr. Emanuele Grimaldi —CEO of GRIMALDI Group and Carus Excellence Award 2016; Mr. Luis Miguel Sousa —CEO of SOUSA Group and Carus Excellence Award 2017; D. Antonio Armas —President of Naviera ARMAS and TRASMEDITERRANEA, and Carus Excellence Award 2018; Mr. Mike Corrigan —CEO of Interferry and Carus Excellence Award 2019; Mr. Nils Erik Eklund —Member of the Board of Directors of Viking Line and of Interferry, and Carus Excellence Award 2020; and Mr. Alejandro Aznar —President of the Ibaizabal Group, and Carus Excellence Award 2021.





**Christophe Mathieu** was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Brittany Ferries in April 2016.

He has worked with **Brittany Ferries since 1992** in various roles including work in the Finance, Operation, Marketing and Revenue Management Departments, Group Business Controller, Strategic Development Director, Group Strategy &

Commercial Director and Member of the Executive Board.

Christophe has a Master in Management Science from Paris 1 University, and has completed the International Executive Program through INSEAD.

He is also a member of the Interferry Board since 2010, and Interferry Chairman 2020/22.

Brittany Ferries' 2nd LNG-fueled E-Flexer "Salamanca"



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Picture: Sarah Standing

## Our Interview with Christophe Mathieu

**JOSE RODRIGUEZ (CARUS):** No one can overlook the magnificent commitment made to the Spanish market, with the introduction of excellent new state-of-the-art E-Flexer ferries, named as *Galicia*, *Salamanca*, and *Santoña*. Vessels that are already in service in Spain (the *Galicia* operating since last December between the ports of Santander and Portsmouth), propelled by LNG so cleaner from the environmental point of view, as well as more comfortable for passengers, and also more efficient for freight. What is the origin of your relationship with Spain, and of course with Brittany Ferries?

**CHRISTOPHE MATHIEU:** Brittany Ferries has proudly served Spain for nearly 45 years. We opened a route connecting Plymouth with Santander just five years after the company was formed in 1978. This made business sense of course as Spain exploded as a tourist destination for British holiday makers in the late 70s and early 80s. Many tourists were not comfortable flying, or preferred the joy that comes from a voyage by sea with their car. Others preferred to visit regions of the country that were –shall we say– a little less like a beach-and-beer holiday. Over the last decade, we have progressively developed our routes to Northern Spain from 2 calls a

week to 11 calls a week. Personally, I have a very close relationship with Spain and the regions we serve. My wife Maria is from the region of Galicia and I like to think that I am, at least in part, a little Spanish, there might be a small causal relationship here!

**JOSE RODRIGUEZ (CARUS):** Yes, I know María, she is a great person and professional, and as you know we are countrymen, since I am also Galician, from La Coruña.

In your recent statements (Tribuna Salamanca, 02-12-2021), we could read the following: "*Passengers expect more comfortable, cleaner, more ecological ships and society demands, and rightly so, sustainability as a norm. Shipping companies that do not improve are therefore bound to fail,*" —said Brittany Ferries CEO Christophe Mathieu—. "*Galicia, Salamanca and Santoña are a clear sign that we are determined to navigate towards a sustainable and successful future.*" The question that arises is about the present of Brittany Ferries, in terms of the evident improvement experienced in its services, despite the pandemic suffered. What is the current situation of Brittany Ferries, after this parenthesis that we have all suffered?

**CHRISTOPHE MATHIEU:** Covid and Brexit have hit our business hard. But we were determined to get through it and thanks to the support of the regions we serve, our staff and French government, I am delighted to say that we are still here and looking to 2022 as our comeback year. We were forced to make some very difficult decisions during the crisis, temporarily closing routes for example. However, we refused to compromise on our commitment to more sustainable shipping. There is no point in coming through one crisis to face another. And the climate crisis is surely the biggest crisis we face, not just in shipping, but as a global society. That's why our two new LNG-powered vessels serving Bilbao (this year) and Santander (next year) are so important.

**JOSE RODRIGUEZ (CARUS):** And what can you tell us about the future of relations between Brittany Ferries and the Spanish market? What do you expect from this next season without going any further?

**CHRISTOPHE MATHIEU:** Spain is an increasingly important market for Brittany Ferries. Firstly for routes connecting Bilbao and Santander with

Plymouth and Portsmouth in the UK. While reservations on routes connecting France with the UK are recovering slowly this year, our UK-Spain routes are back with a bang. We are already seeing reservation levels identical to 2019, the last year before the Covid crisis hit. But we also have another axis. In 2018 we opened a new route connecting Spain with Ireland for the first time. Three years later this route is a success, certainly from the freight side. We hope to develop passenger traffic in the years to come as Irish visitors take in the best of Spain and –we hope– more of our Spanish friends visiting the Emerald Isle.

Finally, I want to praise our fuel partner Repsol and our ports of Bilbao and Santander, for supplying cleaner LNG to our ports and for investing in the storage facilities on-site that will be used to refuel our two new LNG-powered vessels.

**Thank you very much for your time, dear Christophe, and see you soon in Madrid for the 2022 edition of the Carus Excellence Award!**



Brittany Ferries' 1st LNG-fueled E-Flexer "Galicia"

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