

Trade Winds
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Emanuele Grimaldi — showjumping's loss, shipping's gain

Riding high

Q Did you go through training/university or straight into work? After attending the prestigious Nunziatella military academy [in Naples] I obtained my Economics degree *magna cum laude* while working.

Who have been your mentors? Many great Italian and foreign shipowners, but above all my father, Guido (who learned from my uncle Achille Lauro). We often don't realise how much we are sponges and how much we take from great characters. If you look back, Socrates taught Plato, and Plato taught Aristotle, and Aristotle tutored Alessandro the Great. It is a privilege, and great luck, to be enlightened by those who teach through doing (not in the classroom).

Ambition or talent, which is more important? No doubt: talent with dedication.

What would you have done if you hadn't gone into shipping? Perhaps one aspiration would have been horse riding at Olympic level. When I was 17 at the military school, I won the horse-riding championship in Naples. To try and convince me to take a military career, someone said: "Stay and you will be like the D'Inzeo brothers" [two famous Italian military showjumpers]. But we have a family business and I had responsibilities to my father. It didn't take long to decide, but I think most young men want to be great sportsmen.

Not a politician? Your father was in the monarch's party and your uncle Achille was mayor of Naples... I've been offered hundreds of times [laughs]. It has never really attracted me. I've been offered the chance to become a senator in many parties, and once they wanted me [to run for] mayor of Naples, like my uncle. But I believe people who are in business should perhaps not be in politics.

But you are president of the Italian Shipowners' Association. I didn't nominate myself as a candidate, but they were looking for an owner who had a type of consensus, and the vote was unanimous. It is good if there is a strong mandate in difficult times.

Is politics important to you? It's important for everybody.

How do you relax? Riding.

What would you like to own that you do not possess? Artistic talent, especially in music.

Where and when are you happiest? Spending time with my family, and horse riding. I have bought a magnificent palazzo near Rome with 25 acres of land. It was an old [hunting] lodge for princes and I have a lot of land to grow vegetables, have 10 horses and go hiking. I'm very happy spending weekends there.

What would you change in shipping if you could? I would apply only reasonable, sustainable and not counter-productive environmental rules.

Which four people, living or dead, would you like to invite to dinner? Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Julius Caesar.

Three philosophers and a dictator? Caesar was a historian. He wrote the *Bello Gallico* [the Gallic Wars], which is very interesting. Also, I think he deserved to have become the greatest emperor of Rome. His great success was getting the respect of the countries that he defeated, by making agreements with the old kings. What I love about Caesar is how he was able to administrate, not just fight and win, because I am of the opinion that the greatest victory (quoting the Chinese) is the battle you don't have to fight.

What keeps you awake at night? I sleep well at night.

What are your favourite song, book and film? The song *Caruso*, dedicated to Italian tenor Enrico Caruso; *Antigone*, the tragedy by Sophocles; and the movie *Champions* — the story of Bob Champion, a British jockey diagnosed with cancer.

What is the most important lesson you have learned? Prudence and restraint, as taught by my elders, although I am not 100% sure I have learned the lesson!

Your best and worst characteristics? Perhaps friendship and generosity are my best. My worst: I am easily bored by boring issues and people, and I sometimes tend to lose my temper.

Your greatest achievement so far? Vision in economics and shipping. In Europe I saw how you could move business from land to sea — that it could be more competitive than road or rail, and I started services like Euromed. When I started in the Mediterranean, everybody was operating vessels with a capacity of 600 cars. After a few years I was operating ships that were six times bigger, but people thought I was crazy... It was the same when I ordered 4,000-lane-metre ro-ros. Perhaps also buying companies like ACL, which nobody would have thought worth it 12 years ago.

What has been your greatest disappointment? I'm a happy man.

What ambitions do you still have? My greatest [remaining] ambition — and I think we are fulfilling it — is for the current generation of the family to continue to be less and less involved in running the company and to see the new generation taking over. I have also become a grandfather — I have two grandsons, one called Emanuele, like me — and I want to see them grow and enjoy a good life with my children. ✪

Ian Lewis

+ With more than 100 ships, Emanuele Grimaldi represents the largest shipowning group in Italy, with one of the world's biggest ro-ro and car-carrying fleets.

He was born in Naples, southern Italy, in 1956, and went on to study Economics and Commerce at university there. After graduating in 1980, he worked for his family shipping operations, which he now runs with his brother Gianluca and brother-in-law Diego Pacella.

Grimaldi is chairman or managing director of its Italian operations, Atlantica di Navigazione, Grimaldi Compagnia di Navigazione and INARME, and heads the group's growing overseas operations, including Finlines, Minoan Lines of Greece, Malta Motorways of the Sea and Atlantic Container Line. Last year he was appointed president of the Italian Shipowners' Association, having previously been president of the European Community Shipowners' Associations.

Grimaldi and his wife, Ilana, have two sons and a daughter.

Q1 Emanuele Grimaldi: "I am easily bored by boring issues and people, and I sometimes tend to lose my temper" (Photograph: Grimaldi Group)