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Heidmar throws big 20-year bash

Some 600 guests are expected at Heidmar's party this weekend.

Heidenreich Marine (Heidmar) has grown a lot in 20 years. So has the guest list for its anniversary celebrations.

The Connecticut-based tanker company is expecting more than 600 to attend its 20-year bash over the weekend at the Immigration Museum on New York's Ellis Island.

"We had a bet within the staff and I said no way would it be more than 400," said Heidmar founder Per Heidenreich. "I lost that one. I still can't believe we had that type of response."

The company Heidenreich founded on 1 October 1984 has grown to become a leading operator of tanker pools. Its Star Tankers (1 January 1998) is the largest panamax operator in the Atlantic basin.

Its second venture, Dorado Tankers (1 January 2001), has taken a leading position in products tonnage.

Heidmar is now building its third pool, Sigma Tankers (1 April), for aframax.

The company estimates nearly 10% of US crude and petroleum imports will be handled on Heidmar-controlled tankers by the end of this year.

Heidenreich calculates a growth rate of 20% to 30% per year in fleet size. The company now has 90 employees in five offices: Darien, Houston, Caracas, London and Singapore.

As another measure of Heidmar's growth, the company's guest list was around 250 five years ago when it celebrated with a dinner cruise around Manhattan Island.

Heidmar president Tim Brennan says this weekend's location was chosen by a committee of company employees. With Ellis Island's historic link to immigrants' passage into the US, the symbolism was entirely intended.

"We have about 20 nationalities represented in the Darien office alone, not to mention our customers, which range from China to Connecticut," Brennan said. "We thought the location could not be more appropriate," he added.