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Undersea Princess

The Louise Will Be Raised, but Only to Be Deep-Sixed Again as an Artificial Reef

May 03, 1990 | CLAY EVANS | TIMES STAFF WRITER

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The floral carpeting in the main bar now smells of mildew, broken glasses sparkle beneath green water, and the mahogany woodwork is overgrown with algae. A mannequin's head--tossed into a water-filled hallway by a salvage worker with a morbid sense of humor--stares back through a porthole.

Salvage workers said they would probably let the boat float a day before towing it out to sea.

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"We want to check that hull several times over to make sure it's OK," Boelman said. "Besides, we want to get at the Dom Perignon. We know where the bottles are."

Local diving clubs and sport fishermen have long lobbied for creation of a reef in the area because it would attract fish, said John Grant, a marine biologist with the state Fish and Game Department. Fish and Game officials already held the necessary permits to scuttle a ship when Grant decided to pursue the Princess Louise last winter, he said.

"It is a pretty boat," Grant said. "We thought, 'What a shame to melt it down.' There was not enough money to restore it, so we thought, why not use it for something people can benefit from?"

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