

Princess Louise

From Passenger and Cargo Vessel to Restaurant to Sunken Fishing Reef

She was built as a passenger and cargo vessel to replace the Pr. Sophia, which went down off the Vanderbilt reef with all aboard, on the Alaska run. She had a four cylinder triple expansion steam engine that on her sea trial at Esquimalt, B.C. on Nov. 30, 1921, she made an even 17 knots.

Interestingly, she was the second Pr. Louise. The first Pr. Louise, which was also the first Princess in the fleet, was a side-wheeler built in 1869 and sunk at Port Alice in 1919.

She originally accommodated 133 first-class staterooms and 26 single berths. However, because of the small size of some of her staterooms, they were enlarged bringing the stateroom count to 126. Her dining room seated 125 people. After she was withdrawn from service in 1964, she was sold to Shoreline Holding in Vancouver. In 1966, she was sold to Princess Louise Corp. and was towed to Long Beach, California and preserved as a restaurant.

After the restaurant failed in 1989, the Princess Louise was seized by the bank and moved from her berth at San Pedro and tied up at the ship yard on Terminal Island. One night, very mysteriously, she rolled over, sinking at her dock. A ship's security guard, in a TV interview, noted that the Louise began making loud sounds from below. She left her post only to watch her heel and roll over in place within minutes.

Finally sold as salvage after the sinking, it was originally planned to re-sink Princess Louise outside the harbor as an artificial reef and scuba divers attraction. Impatient divers insistent on visiting the wreck during the refloating process so annoyed the owners that they revised the plans. On June 20, 1990, they towed the Louise out to the deepest part of the channel and sank her well out of the range of dive equipment where she rests today 400 feet below the surface.

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