

Pioneers in the Gulf

On 5 October, BW Offshore signed a contract with Petrobras America Inc for the conversion, installation and operation of an FPSO at the Cascade & Chinook fields in the US Gulf of Mexico.

This will be the first FPSO in the US Gulf of Mexico and the second in the Gulf of Mexico, following BW Offshore's successful operational start of the FPSO YUUM K'AK'NAAB for Pemex. First oil is planned for the first quarter of 2010, after which BW Offshore will operate the unit for a period of up to eight years.

THE WINNING FORMULA

This pioneering project strengthens BW Offshore's position as a world leader in this region. The contract was secured after an intensive and exciting tender process. BW Offshore edged out its competitors with the company's solid track record that includes 12 successful projects. APL's unparalleled disconnectable mooring technology, the BW Group's extensive marine operations (around 180 calls to US ports each year) and the group's operating relationship with the US Coast Guard (USCG) also enhanced the attractiveness of BW Offshore's bid.

THE FIRST FPSO TO ENTER THE US

Being the first contractor to place an FPSO in the weather-exposed US Gulf gives BW Offshore a seal of quality. This project is also a great responsibility as it will require careful management and cooperation with the USCG and the US Minerals Management Services (MMS).

It is likely that this project will open doors to more FPSO projects in this part of the world; a prospect that spells opportunity for BW Offshore and others.

"This project is complex and will call for a careful balancing of Petrobras' requirements and the rules and regulations that apply in the US", says Svein Moxnes Harfjeld, CEO of BW Offshore. He continues: "By giving us this opportunity to be the first provider of an FPSO in the US, Petrobras as well as the USCG and MMS have shown great confidence in our abilities and experience."

The FPSO – which will be named BW Pioneer – will be a converted 1992-built double hull Aframax tanker, which will be delivered to BW Offshore in January 2008. It will have a fairly traditional topside plant, possessing gas export facilities of 16 mmscfd, a flaring system, and the capacity to receive 80,000 bpd of oil. Gas turbines will be the main source of power for the FPSO.

DEEPEST WATER EVER

BW Pioneer will be turret moored at a water depth of around 2600 meters – the deepest waters ever for an FPSO project – presenting a significant challenge. To be located around 300 km off the coast south of New Orleans in Louisiana, which is a cyclone area of the US Gulf of Mexico, the unit will therefore

be designed to disconnect and move with its own propulsion to safe waters in the event of an approaching 'named storm' such as a new Katrina or Rita. Here, APL's disconnectable mooring system with an unparalleled history of successful disconnect and connect operations provides comfort to the client as well as to the authorities. This system will enable the FPSO to sail on short notice during the operational

