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MailOnline

Yours for just £1.7million... the Thames penthouse in an old coal barge

- 130ft Dutch barge is moored in Battersea, South London can be used as an entertainment venue
- Vega IV comes with a working engine which can reach a top speed of 10mph
- Luxury boat built in 1959 is now fitted with under-floor heating, hanging fireplace and an on-call butler

By [Simon Cable Showbusiness Correspondent](#)

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Once it plied the waters of Europe, carrying coal from port to port. These days, Vega IV's cargo is rather different.

It includes a home cinema system, state of the art kitchen and walk-in dressing room – not to mention a fully stocked cocktail bar.

The 130ft Dutch barge, built in 1959, has been transformed into a 'floating penthouse' moored on the Thames. And if you happen to have £1.65million idling in the bank, it could be yours.



Luxury liner: Gone is the barge that lugged coal from port to port. Now, 64 years on, Vega IV has been re-purposed as an opulent 'floating penthouse'



High living: The barge is on the market for £1.65million. It offers a luxury lifestyle but is cheaper than similar properties on land. Most London houseboats cost less than £100,000



Shaken, not stirred: When the river is calm, owners can entertain in their state of the art cocktail bar. The barge is expected to be use as an entertainment venue rather than a home

Its other luxurious features include under-floor heating, a 40in HD flatscreen television, a rainfall shower and a hanging fireplace.

If that wasn't enough, the lucky owner will have their own butler on call 24 hours a day, with room service offered by the nearby five-star Hotel Rafayel.

As you might expect, the property is being marketed towards the capital's wealthiest businessmen and celebrities.



Floating house, floating fireplace: The unique hanging fireplace in the corner of the living room is just one of the barge's novelty features. It's quirky extras, including an on-call butler, have peaked the interest of singer Bryan Adams and explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes



Small print: There is no stamp duty or mooring charges on the barge, which is moored in Battersea, South London. Owners will have to pay a £3,000 charge every year to Port of London Authority and an annual service charge of £7,500



No expense spared: The barge has been imported from Holland, Belgium and France and takes between seven and ten months to fill out. The boat has three double bedrooms and an outdoor terrace

Singer Bryan Adams and explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes are among those said to have made enquiries. The vessel is moored at Oyster Pier, a new development in Battersea, South London.

THE 10MPH FLOATING PALACE

- The interior of Vega IV was designed by TS Rigging, the firm which restored the Cutty Sark
- It was built in 1959 and carried coal throughout Europe, with cargos of up to 400 tons
- It will cost the owners £2,000 to fill the fuel tank from empty and £50 for a return six-mile trip from Battersea to Westminster – travelling at 10mph
- It took 5,760 hours to design and create the interior, which was built by hand
- Designers have received several requests for the other boats, including a recording studio, Jacuzzi and a giant fish tank

Vega IV is the first boat to have been refitted so far, and there is space at the harbour for nine more vessels.

Prospective buyers can have their craft tailored and designed to their own specifications.

Developers say they expect the boats to be used mostly as entertaining spaces rather than homes. Owners will be able to use the hotel's gym and beauty salon and will even be granted the use of a neighbouring heli-pad.

The first boat has three double bedrooms and 2,300sq ft of internal space, with its own outdoor terrace.

It also comes with a working engine, which can reach a top speed of 10mph. The barges themselves, which are being sold through London estate agent Bective Leslie Marsh, are imported from Holland, Belgium and France, and take between seven and ten months to fit out.

There is no stamp duty or mooring charges, although owners will have to pay a £3,000 Port of London Authority charge each year, plus an annual service charge of £7,500.

Chris Atherton, manager at Oyster Pier, said: 'The challenge was to design houseboats to appeal to the prime central London market.

'The boats are the floating equivalent of luxury penthouses, but they cost a fraction of the price of what a similar type of property on land would cost.



Room with a view: The owner can watch the world go by from their spot on the Thames. Prospective buyers can have their craft designed and tailored to their liking



Prototype: The 2,300sq ft barge comes with an on-call butler, with room service offered by the nearby five-star Hotel Rafayel. This is the first of nine models moored in Oyster Pier

There is almost no limit to what people can create. Whatever they want in their boat, we can try and make it happen.

'There has been a lot of interest, not just from people who want to use them as homes to live in, but from people who simply use them as spaces to entertain their guests.'

Most houseboats and barges in London cost less than £100,000.

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Of all the descriptions that could be applied to a boat, 'penthouse' is the least appropriate.

- [SeaBee](#) , London, United Kingdom, 20/7/2013 08:38

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At least no danger of Japanese knotweed here.

- [rog24](#) , Swindon, 20/7/2013 08:28

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To the people saying they'd rather have a solid on the floor house, how many of us would like to move their beautiful home to Spain like my friend is? I would!

- [smoothie Maker](#) , England, 20/7/2013 08:16

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My friend has done the same with her barge and its absolutely beautiful and spacious, her decor is not unlike the pics here and I thought it was hers at first! Lots of space and rooms lower deck too and the engine room is great!

- [smoothie Maker](#) , England, 20/7/2013 08:15

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Extortionate mooring fees, never-ending hull maintenance, no garden, additional parking costs, and above all.. it's still a knackered old coal barge. No thank you.

- [Owen Hales](#) , Halesowen, United Kingdom, 20/7/2013 08:13

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that is awful. what about the stinking thames water that will leak through? no thanks. there was a whale in there once.

- [Michelle](#) , Grantham, United Kingdom, 20/7/2013 08:10

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I love the idea to live in that boat but the decoration is dull. I like the chimney.

- [Marielle](#) , Nearest of Paris, France, 20/7/2013 08:07

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When will the DM stop getting their news stories from Rightmove?

- [Username](#) , Gateshead, United Kingdom, 20/7/2013 08:07

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Boats are a notorious money pitt

- [shiner](#) , London, 20/7/2013 08:04

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Definition of a penthouse: Any sp[ecially designed apartment on an upper floor, especially the top floor, of a building. This is not a penhouse. If newspapers do not use decent English what hope is there?

- [Rambler](#) , Devizes, 20/7/2013 08:02

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