

International water sports industry celebrates sailing yachts and powerboats of the year

## “Boatbuilding Oscars” 2019 take centre stage

FLAGSHIP NIGHT, the maritime industry event organised by publishing house Delius Klasing Verlag and the “Boot” trade show in Düsseldorf on Saturday evening, focused on the two renowned awards “European Yacht of the Year 2019” and “European Powerboat of the Year 2019”. Everyone was excitedly looking forward to the results. An expert jury also awarded the SEAMASTER-Award 2019 to a prominent watersports personality that was to be presented within the scope of the international gala

Bielefeld/Düsseldorf, 20 January 2019. Centre stage for Europe’s best powerboats and sailing yachts, which were again awarded “boatbuilding Oscars” in a total of ten categories in 2019. At the FLAGSHIP NIGHT event within the scope of the 50th “Boot” trade show at Düsseldorf attended by 450 guests, the international award “European Yacht of the Year” was presented for the sixteenth time, and the “European Powerboat of the Year” award for the thirteenth time. The winners of the renowned awards were chosen by an expert jury consisting of testing organisations and the editors-in-chief of Europe’s leading twelve sailing and eight powerboating magazines.

Around 60 new sailing boats are launched in Europe every year. However, only five shipyards can claim the title “European Yacht of the Year 2019”. The first tests carried out by the jury members from the twelve sailing magazines from Norway (Seilmagasinet), Sweden (Båtnytt), Great Britain (Yachting World), the Netherlands, (Waterkampioen), Switzerland (marina.ch), France (Voiles et Voiliers), Spain (Nautica y Yates), Denmark (Bådmagasinet), Austria (Yachtrevue), Italy (Vela e Motore), Finland (Vene) and Germany (YACHT) took place in Ellös on the island of Orust in Sweden in late August. The second stage of the test was held in near Port Ginesta to the south of Barcelona.

All of the nineteen candidates were thoroughly tested and rated. All in all, the trade journalists sailed almost 2,000 sea miles with the nominated yachts. All decisions are made on a jury majority basis; a nationality clause ensures that the jury members cannot favour candidates from their own country. The respective yacht of the year reflects what’s happening on the market in general. On the one hand, the latest trend is going towards increasingly larger yachts with customised interiors and numerous extras and on the other, sports boats optimised for a crew of one or two are currently adding a breath of fresh air to the sailing boat market.

This year's winner in the **Family Cruiser** category was the **Oceanis 46.1**. The touring yacht from international market leader Beneteau is based on the same lines as the Oceanis 51.1, which was already nominated last year – however, with one major difference: the 46.1 has more sail area, which along with a finely balanced rig geometry and successful aerodynamic lift distribution improves its sailing performance even more. Below deck, it holds up two ten berths in five cabins. The boat can be customised to a maximum extent, is modern and looks attractive.

In the **Performance Cruiser** category, the winner was the **Arcona 435**. On the one hand, it follows the typically Scandinavian design of a racy performance cruiser: stiff, solid, with a cosy and well-equipped interior, which makes it relatively heavy. On the other, it has modern lines with a wide tapered stern plus a contemporary sail plan with a genoa that overlaps only a little and a huge mainsail. It impresses with a rudder that responds precisely and sensitively and an extremely good performance.

In the **Luxury Cruiser** category, the **Sunbeam 46.1** triumphed. This new design marks the return of the elite yacht building brand Mattsee. The 46.1 is the shipyard's top model and very versatile: it is as suitable for long distance tours as it is for bay cruising. The design is extremely well-thought-out and features all of the latest contemporary details such as a twin tiller, a fold down swim platform, a large cockpit with a table, Targa bar with a fixed window and an integrated spray hood.

In the **Multihulls** class, the coveted award went to the **Astréa 42**. The multihull yacht from catamaran builder Fountaine Pajot is the most recently launched of the sailing boats. Front cockpit, electric dinghy lift, recliners on the cabin roof, outdoor pantry – the Astréa 42 is a strict continuation of the trend towards more exclusive design quality and comfort on 57 square metres of living space and on top of that, it also performs well.

In the **Special Yachts** category, the **Lite XP** stood out from the competition. The French sandwich construction weighs only 150 kilograms and comes with fuel-free hybrid propulsion. The skiff hull with a small cabin can either be paddled or sailed – in lighter winds even with a gennaker. Perfect for active owners on inland waters or adventurer types in coastal areas. Did quite well in the Race to Alaska 2018, thereby proving its performance capabilities.

The presentation of the “European Powerboat of the Year 2019” awards was just as exciting. This expert jury consists of editors-in-chief and testers from the eight leading European powerboat media from Norway (Båtliv), Italy (BoatMag), France (Neptune), the Netherlands (Motorboot), Spain (Nautica y Yates), Switzerland (marina.ch), Austria (Yachtrevue) and Germany (BOOTE).

Every year, more than 200 new boat designs are launched on the powerboat market. At the Cannes Boatshow in September, the powerboat experts nominated their 24 top contenders from this multitude of new models with the aid of a clever points-based system.

Besides the usual characteristics that indicate the quality of a boat, such as the solidness of the construction or its performance properties, for example, the overall concept and the value for money aspect also played a decisive role for the jury members when it came to their choice and the rating system. Often, a boatbuilder's innovative and unusual ideas also ultimately lead to award-winning success in one of the four length classes or the length-independent displacement hull class.

In the small boat class, **up to 25 feet**, the **Nordkapp Noblesse 660** ultimately won the race. The Noblesse 660 represents a new concept in the day cruiser segment. It offers many well-thought-out detail solutions, a well-protected cockpit and excellent performance properties. The 6.5 metres long Nordkapp also scored points with its groundbreaking design.

Above all, the boats in the **35 feet** class must offer practical solutions, a solid finish and safe handling on all waters. In this category, the **Nimbus Weekender 9 Outboarder** won the award. With the 9-series, the Swedish boatbuilder is entering the outboard boat business. The stepped hull of the Weekender 9 permits speeds of up to 40 knots, makes it safe and also a serious rival for the current top models in the area of fast offshore boats.

The winning entry in the **under 45 feet** class was the impressive **Cranchi T 36 Crossover**. The T 36 Crossover combines the best of several worlds. Its trawler hull and the generously proportioned deckhouse offer plenty of room and living space; the powerful Z-drive with two 300bhp diesel engines offers speeds of up to 40 knots.

In the boats **over 45 feet** class, the jury selected the **De Antonio Yachts D46 Open**. The luxury yacht can be equipped with up to four outboard engines and can reach speeds of up to 46 knots – that's powerboat level. Due to the flexible manufacturing technique employed, the D46 can for the most part be totally customised.

Length-independent **displacement hull** class, the "European Powerboat of the Year" award 2019 went to the **Steeler NG 65 S**. Steeler's NG 65 S is a very special boat for very special customers. It proves that it is also possible to build modern, smart steel boats for the disabled. It is equipped with everything that disabled people need to cope with life on board. Clear lines, no frills, exquisite finish – the Steeler NG 65 S meets all of these requirements.

This year's **Innovation-Award 2019**, presented within the scope of the "Powerboat of the Year" awards, went to the **Garmin Panoptix LiveScope**. "With state-of-the-art computer technology, the Garmin Panoptix-Sonar brings the underwater world up close and intimate in a completely new three-dimensional way," explains BOOTE's editor-in-chief Torsten Moench, summarising the jury's winning choice in this category.

The **SEAMASTER-Award** was awarded for the seventh time at the FLAGSHIP NIGHT 2019 event. The "Boot" Düsseldorf trade show and the Delius Klasing Verlag publishing house honour an outstanding watersports personality with this award. The 2019 award was presented to Dutch sailing professional **Carolijn Brouwer**. With her win of the 2018 Volvo Ocean Race, the 45-year-old wrote sailing history. She was the only woman to have completed each leg of this prestigious round the world regatta – and won the last leg as well as overall with the team Dongfeng. A historic win for the yachtswoman, who is smart as she is ambitious. Her compatriots cheered her on madly during the thrilling sprint to the finishing line off Den Haag.

The SEAMASTER jury included the editors-in-chief of the industry magazines BOOTE, BOOTE EXCLUSIV, YACHT and SURF. It was chaired by publisher Konrad Delius from the Delius Klasing Verlag publishing house and Petros Michelidakis, the director of "Boot" Düsseldorf.

More detailed news from FLAGSHIP NIGHT 2019 to follow in YACHT 4/2019 (available from retailers from 30 January onwards) and BOOTE 3/2019 (available from retailers from 20 February onwards) as well as on the online portals yacht.de, boote-magazin.de and also at powerboat-award.com and europeanyachtoftheyear.com.