



Fort Lauderdale Show Strong Results

Boat dealers reported strong sales following the completion of the five day Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. A cross-section of small and big boat dealers indicated that customers were buying again, a year after Hurricane Wilma delayed the 2005 show, cut it short by a day and prompted thousands of visitors to cancel their trips.

Scott Clark, General Manager of Lauderdale Marina who sells Boston Whaler, said they sold nine boats ranging from \$8,000 to \$185,000. "The crowds were great this year," Clark added, noting that his company will be following up with potential customers for several months.

MarineMax, the show's largest exhibitor

with 138 boats on display, had its best year ever at the Fort Lauderdale show. Dave Witty, Florida Regional President said they had sold more than 140 boats, from 13 feet to 130 feet.

Other dealers, including Lazzara, the Ferretti Group, Riviera Yachts, Zodiac, ProLine and Viking Yachts, also reported good results.

In stark contrast to last year's hurricane-stricken show, the docks and walkways were packed with thousands of boaters eager to see the record number of launches of new models, some of which were new to the US market but many made their world debuts at Ft Lauderdale.

They ranged from a 5m (17ft) centre console from Century Boats to Genmar's new classically-styled mahogany boat in the restyled Windsorcraft line to the new 60m (197ft) motoryacht, Blue Moon, from Feadship.

Many boat manufacturers took the opportunity to show off their new boats. Hatteras Yachts, a Brunswick division, showed three new models: a 77 Convertible, an enclosed bridge edition of the 64 Convertible, and a new mezzanine edition of the 54 Convertible. Hatteras also had plans of a new 72 Motor Yacht and 60 Convertible.

Other new boats included: Young 24, Sailfish 30-06 Center Console, Sabre Yachts 34 Hard Top Express, Hinckley T38R Convertible, Cigarette Racing Team's 39 Top Fish, Luhrs 41 Hardtop, Manta 44 Powercat, Oviatt Marine 60 Pilothouse Motoryacht, 630 Hampton Pilothouse Motoryacht, and MMI Bladerunner 51S.

Italian builder Cranchi also showed six new models to the US market. Italy's largest boatbuilder, Azimut, also displayed its 43S and 62S for the first time in the US. These new yachts have a sportboat exterior with a luxury interior, and represent a new departure in styling for Italy's largest boat manufacturer.

Builders from Australia and New Zealand were also in attendance. Riviera Yachts had a large presence at the show, and introduced a 3600 Sport Yacht and 51 enclosed flybridge.

Maritimo also made its US debut at the show.