

Yachting World

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Alex Thomson tribute to charity partnership

Solo racer Alex Thomson has named a new addition to the Dream Yacht Charter UK fleet. The Dufour 460 Grand Large is called *Oarsome Dream* in recognition of the company's work with charity Oarsome Chance. The Portsmouth/

Gosport-based organisation works with young people aged 9-19 disengaged from mainstream education, providing training in watersports and boatbuilding and helping up to 100 people a week. More details from oarsomechance.org



Dan Towers/Flickr Digital



Beneteau's exciting new Figaro 3

jugiradot.com

Beneteau yacht sales on the rise

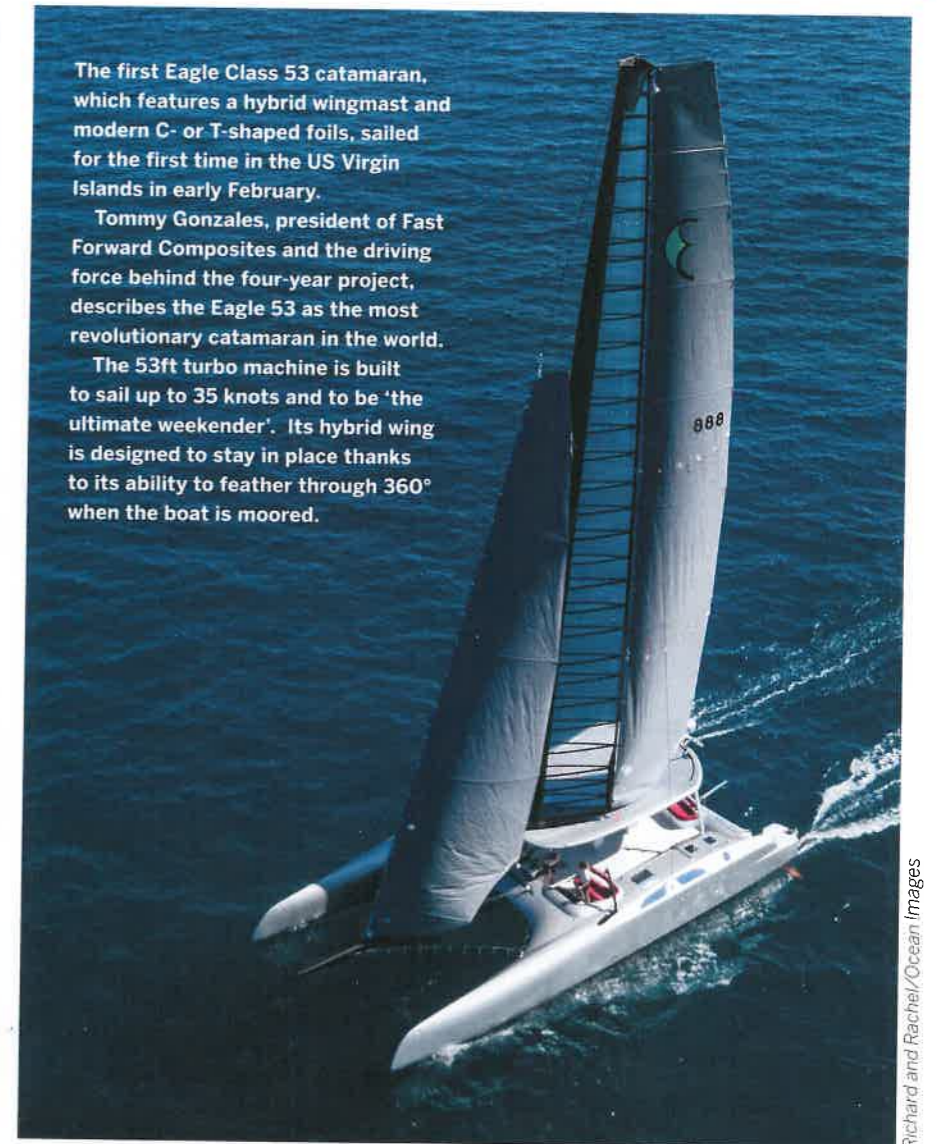
Sailing is enjoying fresh interest, while motorboat sales are down, according to sales figures released by Beneteau Group. The French conglomerate's outlook for 2019 defies industry perceptions, which suggest motorboat sales are racing ahead of sail – Beneteau's order book for sailing yachts is up 12.3% while the power segment is down 3.2%.

The group puts the decline in motorboat sales down to 'the market slowdown on the inboard segment' as well as trade tariffs introduced since last July by the EU and Canada on the motorboats produced in the US. It also notes 'an increasingly challenging economic and financial environment'.

However, the group, which has 11 different sail and power brands, is forging ahead with developing new models. It has revived its renowned First range by purchasing the Slovenian sportsboat brand Seascope and its range from 14-27ft, and recently launched a new First 53 by America's Cup designer Roberto Biscontini.

This year will also be a big one for Beneteau's new Figaro 3 – the first builds are launching this spring. The group's Jeanneau brand is also launching numerous new designs. An astonishing five new models in their new Excess catamaran marque will launch in the next 18 months.

Of the company's €1,287m revenues in 2017-18, 47% was from motor and 38% from sail.



The first Eagle Class 53 catamaran, which features a hybrid wingmast and modern C- or T-shaped foils, sailed for the first time in the US Virgin Islands in early February.

Tommy Gonzales, president of Fast Forward Composites and the driving force behind the four-year project, describes the Eagle 53 as the most revolutionary catamaran in the world.

The 53ft turbo machine is built to sail up to 35 knots and to be 'the ultimate weekender'. Its hybrid wing is designed to stay in place thanks to its ability to feather through 360° when the boat is moored.

Richard and Rachel/Ocean Images



Richard and Rachel/Ocean Images

Bente 39

This German company turned heads with its first model, the Bente 24, which introduced a raft of innovative thinking intended to appeal to younger boat buyers. The 39 extends this philosophy to a design that's fast enough to race and large enough to cross oceans and live aboard.

Bente's trademark dodger has become a full deckhouse that's part of the structure of the deck. This allows all-round visibility from a raised inside watch-keeping position, floods the interior with natural light, and maximises headroom.

Clearly influenced by short-handed racing yachts, the Judel/Vrolijk-designed hull has a long static waterline, relatively little rocker, a full-length chine and twin rudders. A reverse bow and chamfered topsides reduce weight and aerodynamic drag, while lowering the centre of gravity.

The large cockpit is on two levels, with the primary working area in a raised aft section. The forward section is more of a relaxing area and benefits from some shelter below the aft extension of the deckhouse. The interior of the boat at Düsseldorf had an all-white finish, with the only interior woodwork being the cabin sole. Steps from the internal watch keeping position lead down to a full width galley area, which includes a central storage unit with additional worktop space and drinks fridge.

A high degree of customisation is possible – the first six boats sold are configured in different ways, including two- and three-cabin layouts, and one boat is optimised for IRC racing.

Price ex VAT: from €197,540
www.benteyachts.com



Oceanis 30.1

The first all-new cruising boat of this size from Beneteau for more than a decade brings many of the latest advances in yacht design to a smaller size bracket. It's a Finot-Conq design that combines a relatively slender hull, with maximum beam carried well aft, and impressively bright, spacious accommodation in a two-cabin layout.

As with the Oceanis 46.1 and 51.1, there's a full-length chine, although the flare above the waterline is less pronounced than that of Beneteau's larger boats.

There are twin rudders, optional twin wheels or tiller steering, plus a choice of keels, including a deep draught 1.95m bulb that looks very efficient.

Price ex VAT from €70,000
www.beneteau.com



SpeedLounge 8500

This Dutch aluminium daysailer was one of the most distinctive boats at Düsseldorf. There's an almost artistic combination of the roughness of the metal – welds are not ground back or faired – blended with a high standard of finish in every other respect. It's an interesting and surprisingly appealing concept that helps make the SpeedLounge stand out among a sea of white boats.

This is a serious sailing and party boat, with comfortable all-weather upholstered

seating for a large group in the huge cockpit. This is arranged around a big table that sits above a 5kW Bellmarine electric motor, or optional diesel inboard. The mast is stepped at the front end of the cockpit, which makes for easy sail handling with a minimum of friction.

The double-width companionway leads to a surprisingly civilised interior, with a seat each side, galley with induction hob to port, concealed toilet to starboard and a large double berth forward. Lines are led through pipework along the edges of the accommodation, which gives a clean deck layout, keeps the areas below deck dry, and creates an almost industrial appearance. Pricing includes the electric engine, sails, cockpit upholstery, galley and electronics.

Price ex VAT: €152,000 on the water
www.speedlounge.nl

