

Several hundred thousand enthusiasts visit boat shows held coast-to-coast every year – most between September and February – to get an up-close view of the latest and greatest in all things boaty. Enter 2020 and COVID-19. The breezy, carefree, dream-a-little-dream boat show experience we all know and love is mostly on hold for now. A few show managers are pressing ahead as of press time. But most shows have been canceled.

Despite these headwinds, new and used boats are selling strongly at local dealerships and at the private-seller level according to the National Marine Manufacturers Association. After a quiet March and April, it seems even nonboaters figured out that escaping to the water was one of the most viable and compelling recreational options. By May, new boat sales jumped 59% from April – up 9% even from prepandemic levels, according to NMMA's Sarah Salvatori. "Total sales in May were the highest they've been in a decade," she says, "with upticks across all segments." Other notable statistics:

- Personal watercraft sales in June were up 41% from a year ago.
- Saltwater fishing boat sales were up 9% in May, compared to a year ago.
- Jet boat sales were up 31% in May, compared to a year ago.
- Outboard engine sales in June were up an average 28% from prepandemic levels.

Here at BoatU.S., we met many of those new boat-ers flocking to take online boating courses offered by our BoatU.S. Foundation. Plus we're seeing new-boat registrations go through the roof. The bowrider segment was up 12%; pon-toons and aluminum fishing boats rose nearly 23%. Compared to 2019, June registrations for both personal watercraft and jet boats shot up more than 27%. Across a 30-state sampling, more than 12,100 new PWCs were registered, according to Michigan-based Statistical Surveys Inc., a leading market analyst for the recreational marine industry. On the other hand, registrations for boats 30 to 40 feet were down by 18%, 40 to 65 feet down 40%, and sailboat registrations were down 64%, according to SSI.

So, in lieu of your show pass, here's a glimpse of what you would've/could've seen at the fall and winter shows. Then, as an extra bonus, online we include lots more detail on these and many other impressive boat and product debuts, plus additional photos and info on all those included in our pages here. Stay safe, enjoy the water, and we hope to see you next year!

Your ALL-
ACCESS
PASS to
the BoatU.S.
VIRTUAL
BOAT
SHOW

Like many boaters, you may not be able to attend any shows for a while. So this year, our editors bring the show to you!

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The 2021 fleet has arrived

BY RICH ARMSTRONG, BOATU.S. SENIOR EDITOR

Boat manufacturers were on schedule to show off their latest models at the fall boat shows, but one-by-one show producers assessed the realities and opted to take a year off. One thing remained the same: They let our editors know what they were preparing to launch. So here's a sampling of what you would've seen at some shows

More than any other boat type, fish boats come in the broadest array of styles and sizes from simple aluminum jon boats to rocket-powered fiberglass center-consoles to 50-foot-plus luxury sportfishermen. Let's call it "Anglers' Delight" because there's something for every taste.

Grady-White Canyon 326

Customer loyalty is pretty much a standard feature for Grady-White owners. The once pure fish boats have evolved to incorporate more creature comforts for day cruising. The Canyon 326 is a

perfect example – a center-console that pairs fishing functionality with comfort for family cruising. Grady's exclusive SeaV² hull delivers a soft, stable ride with excellent tracking.

An expansive beam (10 feet, 9 inches amidships) that sits the helm on center and features three deluxe contoured captains chairs with flip-up bolsters, armrests, and footrests. The large console on the 326 includes an ample flush-mount electronics area, compass, prerigged Yamaha engine with Helm Master EX controls, hydraulic tilt with power-assist steering, and windlass remote switches. The fiberglass T-top with painted aluminum frame includes a radio box, storage net, LED recessed lights, fore/aft spreader lights, four rod holders, radar flat, and outrigger plates. A 32-gallon full column, recirculating, lighted raw water livewell and three insulated, overboard-draining fishboxes, two 180-quart boxes forward, and one 318-quart box in the transom area make this a 32-foot fishing machine. The roomy head compartment with sink/shower combo makes it family-friendly.

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