

CRUISING WORLD BOAT OF THE YEAR 2026



BOAT OF THE YEAR RULES

Following are the official *Cruising World* Rules for Boat of the Year 2026. Please read carefully and contact us if you have any questions.

1. Entry Deadline

Materials for your entry must be received by **Thursday, August 1, 2025**.

2. Participation Fee:

A participation fee, based on the size of each sailboat entered in the 2026 Boat of the Year contest, must accompany each entry. Details of the fee can be found on the Entry Form included in this package.

3. New Production Models

The 2026 Boat of the Year contest is open by invitation of *Cruising World* and *Sailing World* magazines to new cruising sailboats and performance sailboats introduced to the North American market between the end of the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, in October 2024 and the beginning of the same show in 2025.

A new model refers to a boat that represents a new design that requires new molds and tooling. To qualify, an entry must have been introduced to the North American market between the end of the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, in October 2024 and the beginning of the same show in 2025. If the boat has been introduced as a prototype within that period but has, in your opinion, not been completed to compete in that year, you may enter it the following year. If the boat was introduced abroad in the current year but not in the United States, you may enter it the following year. To be “new,” a boat must be substantially different from any predecessors; such changes should include but are not limited to substantial changes in tooling for the hull and the deck. Moving bulkheads or rearranging cockpits or accommodations will not necessarily qualify the boat as “new.” If you feel that this may be an issue for your boat, you are invited to submit material to demonstrate that your boat is new. The nominating panel will consider and carefully weigh this issue.

4. Entry Material

Included with this mailing are BOTY entry forms and liability forms for both magazines from which we’ll also draw for our featured roundup of new models that will appear in the October issue of *Cruising World*. Even if this model will not participate in BOTY, **please complete the entry form and email it along with other supporting material** (design and construction details, sales brochures, line art, photos, etc.) to:

BOTY@firecrown.com

Entry materials are also available at:

cruisingworld.com/boty2026

sailingworld.com/boty2025

5. Awards

Cruising World Awards: All Cruising World entries must be deemed “cruising sailboats” by the judging committee. Boats will be evaluated on a wide range of criteria, including seaworthiness, comfort, safety, ease of maintenance, sailing performance, design and construction quality, and overall suitability for intended use. When submitting your entry, please indicate the general category in which you’d like your boat to be judged; a category reference sheet is included with the Boat of the Year entry form. These preliminary categories are subject to refinement by Cruising World after reviewing the full slate of nominees. We also request a design

statement outlining the boat's purpose and philosophy; this statement plays a key role in how entries are classified and considered. Award categories may be organized by size, price range, or boat type (such as monohull or multihull). In addition, special awards may be granted for innovation, versatility, or other standout achievements across the fleet. Cruising World may also designate an overall Domestic and Import Boat of the Year. Finalists will be previewed in the *Cruising World* "Boat of the Year Preview Special" (January/February 2026 issue), with winners to be announced online at the start of the October 2026 U.S. Sailboat Show and featured in the *Cruising World* "Boat of the Year" issue (November/December 2026). A formal recognition event at the October 2026 U.S. Sailboat Show is anticipated and further details will be shared closer to the date.

6. Nominating Round: A special nominating panel, consisting of *Cruising World* editors and select judges, will evaluate entries prior to and during the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland. Finalists moving into the official judging round will be announced around the time of the show. At that point, nominated builders will receive official nominee decals and appointments coordinated for onboard inspections and test sailing.

7. Availability for Judging and Test Sailing: Boats advancing to the judging round will need to be available for dockside inspection and on-water testing during and after the 2025 U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis in October. These evaluations are essential to ensure each entry receives comprehensive and fair consideration. Further information about exact timing, location(s), and schedule coordination will be shared in an addendum upcoming. In special cases where a nominated boat cannot be present in Annapolis (i.e., logistical challenges, weather-related issues, etc.), alternative arrangements may be considered at the discretion of the judging committee. Additional costs may apply for offsite evaluations depending on location and judge availability.

8. Equipment: On all sea trials and during any other times that the participating boat is involved in this event, it must be both fully equipped with all safety equipment as required by law and prudent seamanship as well as fully insured, covering, but not limited to, personal injury and property damage. At any time the vessel is under way and/or involved in any manner in this event, said vessel shall have aboard a designated representative and agent of the owner or builder who shall have ultimate authority and responsibility for the vessel. Entrants shall include the enclosed Release of Liability and Indemnity Agreement with the entry form, signed by an authorized representative of the boat owner and any other persons or entities entering the boat in the contest. Entry and participation in this event certifies acceptance of all of these terms and conditions.

If you have any questions please contact our respective Boat of the Year Director:

Cruising World, Andrew Parkinson, andrew.parkinson@firecrown.com, 954-536-7443