READER'S CHOICE AWARDS

A few years ago, the editors attempted to create a list of the best boats from that year. It didn't go great. Friendships were tested. There was name-calling. HR got involved. Knowing we would never agree, we turned to you, our readers. By looking back at our website analytics, we were able to determine the boats that most struck a nerve with you this year. Join us as we look back at some of your favorites.

By The Editors

Hood 57 LM

This boat isn't the product of a high-capacity production builder. Actually, that's probably why this boat has engendered such intrigue. A collaboration of Lyman-Morse, C.W. Hood Yachts and Stephen Waring Yacht Design, the 57 LM debuted not under the sun-soaked backdrop of a major Florida boat show or at a pomp-and-circumstance-filled christening, but on a cold, gray winter evening. What struck me then, is what struck you, our readers: This thing is freaking beautiful. In some ways it's a Down East yacht, but inside, the styling screams commuter yacht. Classic lines and IPS propulsion give it wide appeal for today's discerning yacht owner. With seemingly miles of gleaming brightwork and a systems room that you could eat a meal in, there's not many like the Hood 57 LM—and that's the point. *—Daniel Harding Jr.*

Tiara 48 LS

With triple 600-hp Mercury Verado outboards, the Tiara 48 LS (luxury sport) is fun to drive. Really fun—she hits 50 knots on the pins! But what I love most about this boat is its use of outdoor deck space. I pictured myself standing behind the counter of the outdoor galley, chatting with friends while grilling up lobster tails and handing out beverages.

The amount of space and seating is staggering. The port side, drop-down terrace opens up the deck and makes swimming and boarding a breeze with a built-in ladder. The rotating lounge seat, a Tiara hallmark, provides yet another layer of flexibility, allowing you to face a table or spin back and lounge. If the weather picks up or you need some A/C, electric-sliding doors let you enclose the helm and lock out the elements. The interior is surprisingly roomy with a forward master, full head and two more berths situated aft. After a fitful rest, I'd take my morning coffee up on the bow, where there's a hi-lo table, watching the sunrise as I plan out the day's activities: maybe some fishing or snorkeling.

I honestly don't know if I have enough friends to fill all of the seats on the 48 LS, but then again, once you post a few photos of the family enjoying time on this boat, I bet those old friends will come out of the woodwork. *—Charlie Levine*

8 X Shore Eelex 8000

Dubbed the Tesla of the Sea, X Shore's Eelex 8000 has been turning heads everywhere it goes, from its home country of Sweden to the U.S. and everywhere in between. And it's easy to see why. This fully electric 26-footer is pushing technological boundaries while proving that electric boating is not only possible, but practical too.

With an industry-leading range of 100 nm (or 20-plus hours), a 2-hour run time at 25 knots and a top end of 35 knots, the Eelex 8000 can take you to your favorite cruising grounds and back without worrying about running out of battery.

Perhaps most impressive about the Eelex 8000, though, is its advanced internal software. This will tell you what speed you need to travel to reach your destination, and it also connects to your Garmin watch or smartphone. Plus, X Shore downloads 150 data points per second from each of its boats, which allows it to roll out upgrades and perform predictive maintenance over the software.

The list of innovative features only continues, including its modular layout and a flax-fiber construction option as a green alternative to fiberglass, but most importantly, X Shore is showing the world that electric boats can be lots of fun.

—Carly Sisson

7 Formula 500 SSC

Who says you can't power a "yacht" weighing nearly 25 tons with outboards?

Formula has been pushing the needle for years, and its 500 SSC falls right in line with the company philosophy. Fueled by four 600-hp V12 Mercury Verado outboards, the 500 SSC busts out of the hole like a Kentucky Derby winner. Hold on, because the acceleration will push you back in your seat. We hit 25 knots in less than 13 seconds and she just kept climbing, topping out a hair shy of 60 knots. Yes, 60 knots!

The engineers at Formula admitted that even they were a bit surprised by the performance of this boat. Stepping inside the salon, I found myself on a scavenger hunt discovering all of the smart, custom design touches that improve livability: things like a pull-out beverage center, or hidden stools at the dinette that you can pop out when you need a little more seating space. At the helm, you feel like you're behind the wheel of a luxury vehicle, and you are.

While driving the 500 SSC had me smiling like a kid on a roller coaster, this boat is equally impressive at rest. Between the U-shaped seating in the bow, the dinette and sofa in the salon and the bar in the cockpit, the Formula 500 SSC was built for people who like to get where they're going in a flash and make the most of their time on the water. *—Charlie Levine*

6 Back Cove 39O

Versatility, Down East styling and outboard power: three things that will make just about any modern boater swoon. So, it's no surprise that the Back Cove 39O garnered so much attention when she splashed last year in her home waters of Maine.

The second outboard-powered model from Back Cove, the 39O is only 5 feet longer than the 34O, but it adds a second stateroom with twin berths and a lower salon, making it more than suitable as a weekender for a family of four. A spacious cockpit area with fore- and aft-facing bench seats makes the boat ideal for entertaining too.

What I was most appreciative of on my November sea trial, though, was the climate-controlled enclosed helm, which up north means this boat can outlast most others on the water as the season draws to a close. Plus, it is remarkably quiet inside; you would hardly believe that triple 400-hp Mercury Verados were pushing us into the 40-knot range. In fact, she just might be the fastest and quietest Back Cove yet. *—Carly Sisson*

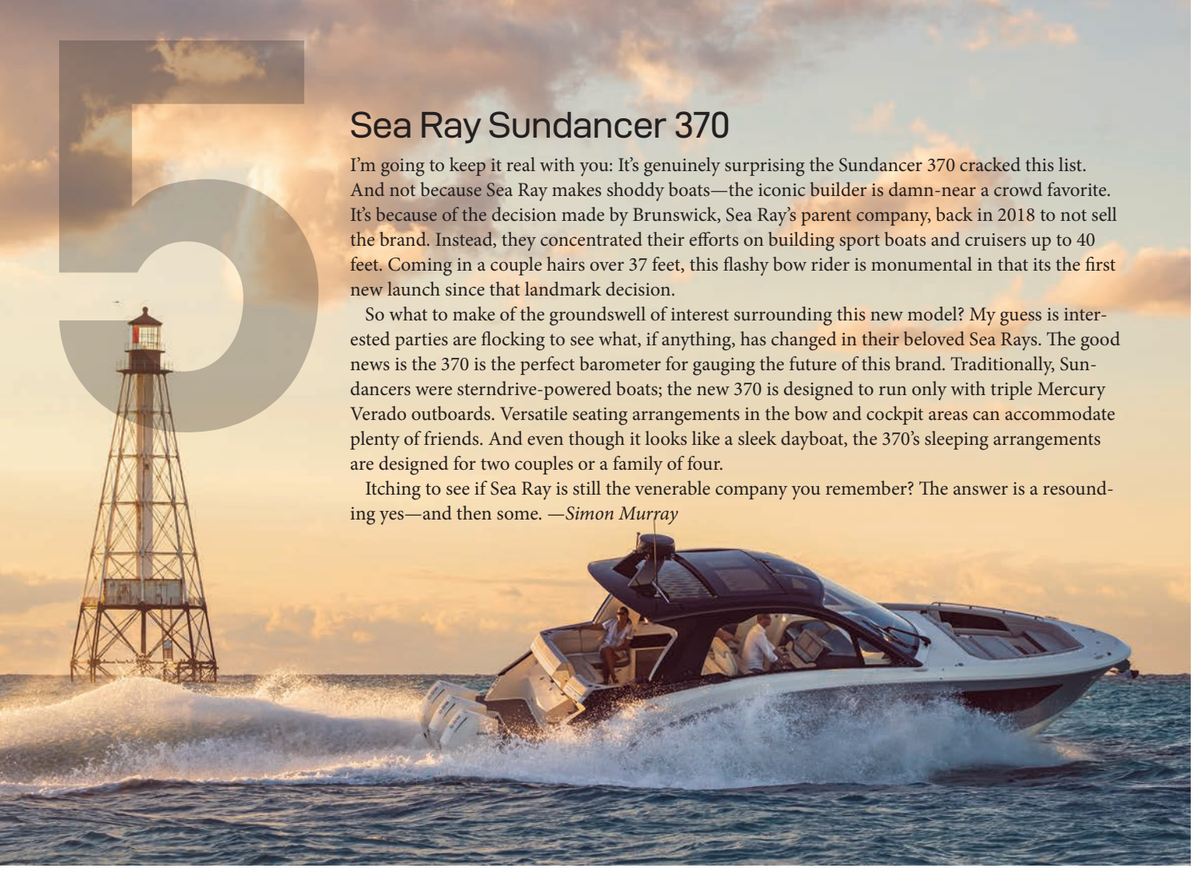
5

Sea Ray Sundancer 370

I'm going to keep it real with you: It's genuinely surprising the Sundancer 370 cracked this list. And not because Sea Ray makes shoddy boats—the iconic builder is damn-near a crowd favorite. It's because of the decision made by Brunswick, Sea Ray's parent company, back in 2018 to not sell the brand. Instead, they concentrated their efforts on building sport boats and cruisers up to 40 feet. Coming in a couple hairs over 37 feet, this flashy bow rider is monumental in that its the first new launch since that landmark decision.

So what to make of the groundswell of interest surrounding this new model? My guess is interested parties are flocking to see what, if anything, has changed in their beloved Sea Rays. The good news is the 370 is the perfect barometer for gauging the future of this brand. Traditionally, Sundancers were sterndrive-powered boats; the new 370 is designed to run only with triple Mercury Verado outboards. Versatile seating arrangements in the bow and cockpit areas can accommodate plenty of friends. And even though it looks like a sleek dayboat, the 370's sleeping arrangements are designed for two couples or a family of four.

Itching to see if Sea Ray is still the venerable company you remember? The answer is a resounding yes—and then some. *—Simon Murray*



4

Valhalla V46

In hindsight, it was silly to think I had tested the pinnacle of Viking's center console engineering. But admittedly, that's what I felt back in 2019 when sea trialing the Valhalla V41 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The boat reached 65 knots as we screamed through the low-lying marshes. I think it took me a second or two to realize I had been smiling like a lunatic the entire time.

Barely two years later, there was the V46—bigger, faster and more luxurious in every way than its three smaller brethren. Powered by quad 450-hp Mercs, the pairing felt like a speed demon's unholy communion. This time, in southern Florida, the 46-foot, 7-inch vessel topped 60 knots with a crew of four arrayed comfortably across the seven helm chairs.

Okay, it's not quite as fast as the 41, but honestly, who cares? It's the accommodations, and Viking's attention to detail, that will keep people clambering for the 46, and maybe even a larger model. Although truth be told, I can't even begin to imagine what that will look like. *—Simon Murray*

3

Tecnomar Lamborghini 63

In my original write-up of this Frankenstein-like creation between Lambo and Tecnomar, I lasered in on UFC superstar Conor McGregor, who had just purchased one of the first hulls, even though he had broken his leg in the Octagon. And while McGregor brings a certain credibility to the brand, this time around I want to focus on the vessel, because boy, is she something. Actually, comparing the 63 to the lumbering Frankenstein might be unfair (and objectively wrong), since this sleek Italian vessel—with the noticeable lines of a Lamborghini—isn't so much a clashing, brain-dead amalgam as it is a beautifully happy union built on speed.

The 63 makes full use of twin MAN V-12 diesels that produce a roaring concert of 4,000 horses. At 63 feet in length, the boat should behave more like a high-performance offshore racer than a dayboat thanks to generous amounts of carbon fiber that give it a 48,000-pound displacement. In fact, with a top end in the 60-knot range, classifying it as a "dayboat" feels like a grave injustice. This is rarefied air, and worthy of the Lamborghini name. *—Simon Murray*

2 Aquila 70

The 27-foot beam on the Aquila 70 Luxury Power Cat is wide enough to fit two Volkswagen Beetles across the cockpit. The boat feels as stable as a floating island, but make no mistake about it, this cat is born to run. Powered with twin 1,000-hp Volvo D13 diesels, she can cruise at 21 knots with a top end of 27 knots. Drop her down to displacement speed and you're looking at a 3,000-nm range. Talk about finding joy in the journey—the Aquila 70 can accommodate any cruising agenda imaginable. While owners can choose from a four-, five- or six-cabin layout, the flybridge is where you'll undoubtedly spend the majority of your time—at least I would. The views up top are unabated in all directions, so you won't miss a dolphin surfing the bow wave or a sunrise off the stern. From the Portuguese-style bridge you can slide out the starboard door and head forward to a set of stairs down to the massive bow area with sunpads and bench seats.

Since this boat is very happy on the hook, you're going to need a tender. Aquila offers a 14-foot catamaran (of course) RIB that slides onto a remote-controlled transom ramp, which angles down to the waterline to pull the tender in or flattens out to create more deck space. Aquila didn't miss a beat when designing this long-legged cat. —*Charlie Levine*

1 Nordhavn 41

Listen up, dreamers. Here's a smallish, relatively affordable Nordhavn that can keep you and your significant other totally comfortable for months, while you cruise one or both North American coasts or perhaps make that ocean-crossing jump you've been fantasizing about for years.

The thing that truly sets the 41 apart from most other long-rangers in her class is her powerplant—not one but two 75-hp mechanically-injected, turbocharged Kubota diesels that can be repaired at sea with conventional tools. No need for two laptops and a degree in computer science.

Nordhavn reports a fuel burn at WOT of 8.9 gph for a speed of 9 knots and a range of 922 nautical miles. Throttle back to 6 knots and the resulting burn is just 1.6 gph and the range tops out at a whopping 3,383 nautical miles, enough to make a sedate crossing from California to Hawaii with a whole pile of fuel to spare. You can go with either a single- or a double-stateroom layout. Otherwise, just about everything, except for your watermaker and tender, is standard. And oh, just in case you're wondering about the stout resiliency of this little beauty: Nordhavn touts a CE Category A Certification, a bluewater rating that covers winds of 40 knots or more and seas of at least 13 feet. —*Capt. Bill Pike*