

FREE

# MARINE INDUSTRY NEWS

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The winter show season will be a good litmus test for the potential successes and challenges of the new year to come.

Many businesses are looking to consolidate as they wait to see how consumer spending habits pan out - but that doesn't mean innovation and new technologies are not providing potential to invigorate parts of the market. As companies turn their attention to data harvesting to enhance customer experience, *MIN* investigates how smart marinas are improving efficiency on the pontoons. Read about the new tech platforms in use at key marina groups around the world on page 4.

On page 8, Scanstrut reflects on how critical its in-house design team has been for its growth and lifts the lid on the evolution of the DAME Award-winning ATMOS. While Navico Group discusses the formation of its brand and gaining advantages on page 29.

Gender equality is brought under the spotlight on page 19 with the need for a more modern representation across businesses. GMBA chairperson Veda Pretorius discusses South Africa's multihull sector on page 13. And, as the industry navigates challenges in a post-pandemic landscape, *MIN* asks what is needed from industry bodies and how they can remain relevant. Read about the Australian organisation that has adapted to change, honed its mission statement and diversified on page 23.

The *MIN* team will be at all the key 2024 shows so do drop us a line to connect and meet up.

*Chantal*

# Marina approved

Words: Gemma Harris



## Are marinas getting smarter? *MIN* looks at the rise and usage of booking technologies and apps within marinas.

Like all industries, the maritime sector is increasingly under the influence of a technological shift, and the transformative power of digital solutions is coming to the fore. With the industry ushering in a younger generation of end users, this demographic shift is changing the leisure marine landscape and increasing demand for digital services.

Across the sector, some marina groups have begun to launch mobile-optimised portals and apps, alongside an increase in third-party app partnerships, in a quest to respond to this rising demand and growing expectation.

### New demand

Edouard Fiess, co-founder of the marina booking app

Navily, sheds light on the increased demand: “There is a change of mentality and a new generation entering boating that is used to immediate booking processes on platforms such as

Airbnb, UberEats, etc. All these apps give them what they want easily and quickly, so they are used to using technology.”

Marina groups are responding to this growing appetite for digital solutions. Matthias Ghering, chief digital officer at D-Marin, comments on the centralised booking platform - D-Marin’s Premium Marinas app: “It is a solution that our customers want, and it enables us to provide an enhanced level of service. In 2022, approximately 30 per cent of transient bookings were already made, paid for, and invoiced online using our digital platform. This demonstrates the app’s effectiveness in streamlining the booking process and improving convenience.”

MDL Marinas has also increased its digitisation and has recently implemented a new, optimised platform to facilitate the demand for online bookings.

Tim Mayer, sales and marketing director, explains: “Through the system, about 20 per cent of visitor bookings are booked online, and in terms of renewals,

there is about a 60 per cent rate of those now booking online.”

### Enhanced efficiency

Embracing digital booking solutions represents not only a paradigm shift for clients seeking heightened efficiency and an easier booking process but can also overhaul a marina business model, leading to enhanced efficiency and maximised occupancy.

“Enquires that have come into MDL since the implementation of our new systems have increased by an average of about 23 per cent, and customer conversion has increased by an average of about 4 per cent,” says Mayer.

Ghering explains D-Marin launched its app as part of its ‘connected marina’ initiative: “D-Marin customers can use the app to remotely check in and create real-time bookings, as well as pay online, which in turn has significantly reduced waiting times and has had a demonstrable return on maximising marina occupancy. The app has been part of the driving force behind the overall occupancy rate of 93 per cent across the group.”

**“There is a change of mentality and a new generation entering boating that is used to immediate booking processes on platforms such as Airbnb and UberEats...”**

**Edouard Fiess, co-founder, Navily**

Meanwhile, utilising technology within booking can be seen across multiple marinas through third-party technology. Fiess notes: “We started Navily in 2015 with about 20 marinas. Today, we have around 700 marinas utilising bookings through us. Our growth this year will increase by about 70 per cent of the volume of bookings we have done with each marina we have worked with. We know we are substantially increasing the volume, and once marinas begin to adopt our platform, it makes sense to run all their traffic through it as it is a centralised space to manage all bookings.”

### Visitor berths

The increasing capabilities in real-time availability, monitoring



MDL Ocean Village marina, Southampton



MDL's smart marina monitor on trial



MDL monitor trial at Queen Anne's Battery marina

“Our goal is for sailors to go to the harbour office not for administrative reasons but to go and chat with the marina about what there is to do in the area, resulting in enjoying a more human approach by removing the consistent document scanning and other logistics.”

Edouard Fiess, co-founder, Navily



MDL Marinas

and surveillance are offering more interconnected real-time solutions that could transform the digital booking scene.

Ghering continues: “D-Marin customers can use the app to check in remotely and create real-time bookings. The real-time availability enables customers to book a specific preferred berth in one of our marinas.”

Mayer adds: “We have real-time availability of berths if someone is leaving an MDL marina to go to another; when they book into the other marina, it automatically frees their berth up for the period they are away.”

MDL Marinas has partnered with marine digitalisation firm Falco and its marina management software provider, Havenstar, to trial smart marina technology at its Queen Anne's Battery marina. As part of its digital transformation, MDL is running a pilot programme using Falco's Smart Marina wireless technology to detect occupancy in real time on the visitor pontoon at its Plymouth based marina.

“Currently, our teams have to physically walk along the pontoons to check if a boat has left the marina, so it can take time to detect if a berth is available for visitors,” says Mayer.

“Over the past year, we have

had motion sensors put into berths, which allows real-time communication between those leaving and arriving. This smart technology improves efficiency around the availability of berths and triggers communication to that berth holder,” he adds.

This new digital tool will enable MDL to automate parts of its operational processes, maximising availability of visitor berthing and freeing up the marina teams to spend more time on the pontoons and meeting and greeting customers. The company hopes it will improve the quality of the marina experience for berth holders and customers alike.

“The real time data on boat movements will also provide us with a more accurate number of spaces available for visiting yachts at any one time,” adds Mayer.

#### Marina startups

Startups are also entering the digital marina booking and management space with notable success.

Metarina is building marina software that ‘bridges the gap between boaters and marinas’. The startup's co-founder, Nicola Kienzle, explains: “Throughout the season (2023), we have managed

to generate five-digit additional revenues for specific marinas after just a few months of onboarding them. They are now seeing the huge potential if they fully leverage the use of our digital solution.”

Kienzle believes the leisure marina industry needs to promote the power of new technologies. “This involves advocating a paradigm shift towards recognising technology as an enabler rather than a threat, and ensuring collaboration between technology providers and marina operators. As technology can only enhance the effectiveness of its users, Metarina places a strong emphasis on supporting marina teams to ensure that technology is used to its full potential.

“We've designed Metarina as a modular software solution, ensuring that it can be tailored to meet the unique requirements of different marinas.”

According to Kienzle, big opportunities await progressive marina companies – mainly in the form of huge scope for operational and experiential improvements within their

businesses that will not only make the lives of marina staff easier, but also increase boater satisfaction. “However, a significant challenge lurks in the form of resistance from individuals who are still entrenched in traditional methods and reluctant to embrace technological advances,” she adds.

Austrian start-up Seasy launched a marina booking platform in 2020 and has experienced ‘record growth’ since its inception. The Seasy booking system is designed to enable hassle-free berth bookings across Europe, and currently has marinas signed up in 16 countries and regions, including Italy, Croatia and Spain.

Niklas Baumgartner, CEO of Seasy, emphasises the benefit of enhanced customer service: “Online platforms can help with the strategic streamlining of information and directing customers through an online process is key to heightened customer satisfaction.”

According to Seasy, the number of active users on the platform is now at over 2,000 daily users in high season, and the number of berth bookings facilitated through the app has reached 12,000.

#### Step by step

While some marinas are





D-Marin

**“Enquires that have come into MDL since the implementation of our new systems have increased by an average of about 23 per cent,..”**

**Tim Mayer, sales & marketing director, MDL Marinas**

just beginning to trial digital booking technologies, others have launched apps for berth holders to manage various aspects of their accounts, intending to offer booking capabilities in the near future. Amy Parker, senior communications executive at Premier Marinas, explains: “We launched the (Premier Marinas) app because we wanted to offer more hands-on customer service in the marinas. Our team now has more time to patrol the pontoons, check lines and fenders and offer more on-the-ground assistance to berth holders.”

Jonathan Cook, group marketing manager at Yacht Havens, says: “We have certainly noticed an increase in demand for digitisation within our business over the past few years. As a result of this change in customer behaviour and our desire to meet customers’ needs, we will be launching MyYachtHavens next year [2024]. This is our customer portal where customers can manage and renew their berthing contract, pay invoices, manage electricity,

request services and more.” For those marinas embracing digitisation, it seems the results have been positive and helped streamline the businesses. D-Marin’s Gehring comments: “We believe the customer should have an effortless experience driven by digital touchpoints and innovations. The app elevates the customer experience by combining the advantages of digital innovations with our commitment to personalised service; it acts as a central hub that threads all of our digital solutions in one, easy-to-use place,” he adds.

Mayer paints the same picture at MDL: “Our goal in our digitisation process is to make an overall better experience for the customer and make MDL Marinas as customer-centric as possible, continuing improvement, optimisation and adding more online services as we go.”

**The human element**

While technology is undoubtedly proving influential, there is still a consideration toward the personalised connection. Gehring notes: “The ability for customers to have direct contact with the team through the app strengthens the relationships between our marinas and customers, still maintaining a human touch that defines our premium service while being able to enjoy the benefits of remote digital booking.”

Mayer reaffirms that MDL is not using digitisation to replace its bricks and mortar service. “These tools do not replace the fact that people can still speak to the team. It simply complements all our services. None of our offline services have been removed, allowing customers to choose whatever methods suit them best.”

“Our goal is for sailors to go to the harbour office not for administrative reasons but to go and chat with the marina about what there is to do in the area, resulting in enjoying a more human approach by removing the constant document scanning and other logistics,” says Fiess.

**Future horizons**

Whether a system is developed specifically for a marina group or bookings are utilised through a third-party provider, increasing digitisation is enhancing the boating experience.

Integrating digital booking services continues to benefit the sector. From a customer standpoint, the ease and efficiency of marina logistics will continue to improve. Meanwhile, as marinas invest in more smart technologies, they can improve systems, ultimately maximising occupancy and customer service catering to the next generation. ■



Seasy launched its app in 2020

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# OUTSIDE the BOX

## How retaining an in-house design team has proved vital to the progression and enhanced agility of marine technology and mounting specialist Scanstrut

In October 2023, Scanstrut announced that ATMOS, its in-built air station for inflating paddleboards, fenders and the like, had won the prestigious IBEX Innovation Award in the Mechanical Systems category. In November 2023, the ATMOS continued to gain industry acclaim, winning a DAME Design Award in the Comfort & Entertainment

Afloat category – an award that lauded the manufacturer’s innovation, design prowess and product invention.

Scanstrut has been making installation solutions for marine electronics since 1986, but ATMOS represents an entirely new category for Scanstrut and a

departure from its traditional product lines. Upon the announcement, one of the IBEX Innovation Award judges, Ryan Gullang, praised ATMOS as

an elegant and effective solution to the relative drudgery of inflating water toys. While many companies in this space claim to be dedicated to inventing new products that energise the sector, Scanstrut has put a strategy together that is reaping rewards.

### Multi-market tech

Beating drudgery has been one of Scanstrut’s core principles – not that the Exeter-based company uses those words. The way the company puts its mission is to develop “anything that makes boating easier and more convenient,” according to George Bowles, head of design. He’s been in place for a decade and has worked on everything from mounting solutions for marine electronics, to wireless charging systems for boats.

Now Bowles looks after the in-house design team, which works across Scanstrut’s core markets – marine, RV, agri-off road and industrial. The company utilises product developments in each area to feed the design in another, and Bowles says the current focus is very much on “exploring ways to integrate cutting-edge technology into our products, such as advanced materials and wireless power transfer.”

**The in-house design team works across the marine, RV, agri-off road and industrial markets. Scanstrut utilises product developments in each area to feed the design in another**

The design team has always worked in-house – occasionally seeking support for electronics development. Bowles notes that having an in-house design team is obviously more flexible – but he says it’s also faster and the designers have a much better understanding of Scanstrut products in general and how they need to be built to suit existing and potential customers.

### Bold projects

The team is responsible for developing a mix of what Bowles terms ‘bold projects’ like ATMOS and the Waterproof 12V Wireless



The Dame Award winning Scanstrut ATMOS



Power Transfer, as well as more bread-and-butter projects such as cable seals and mounts. In fact, Bowles characterises ATMOS as “remarkably” bold. This, he explains, is because of its multifaceted nature, with a new usage scenario, a fresh product type, and a step forward for the company’s business strategy.

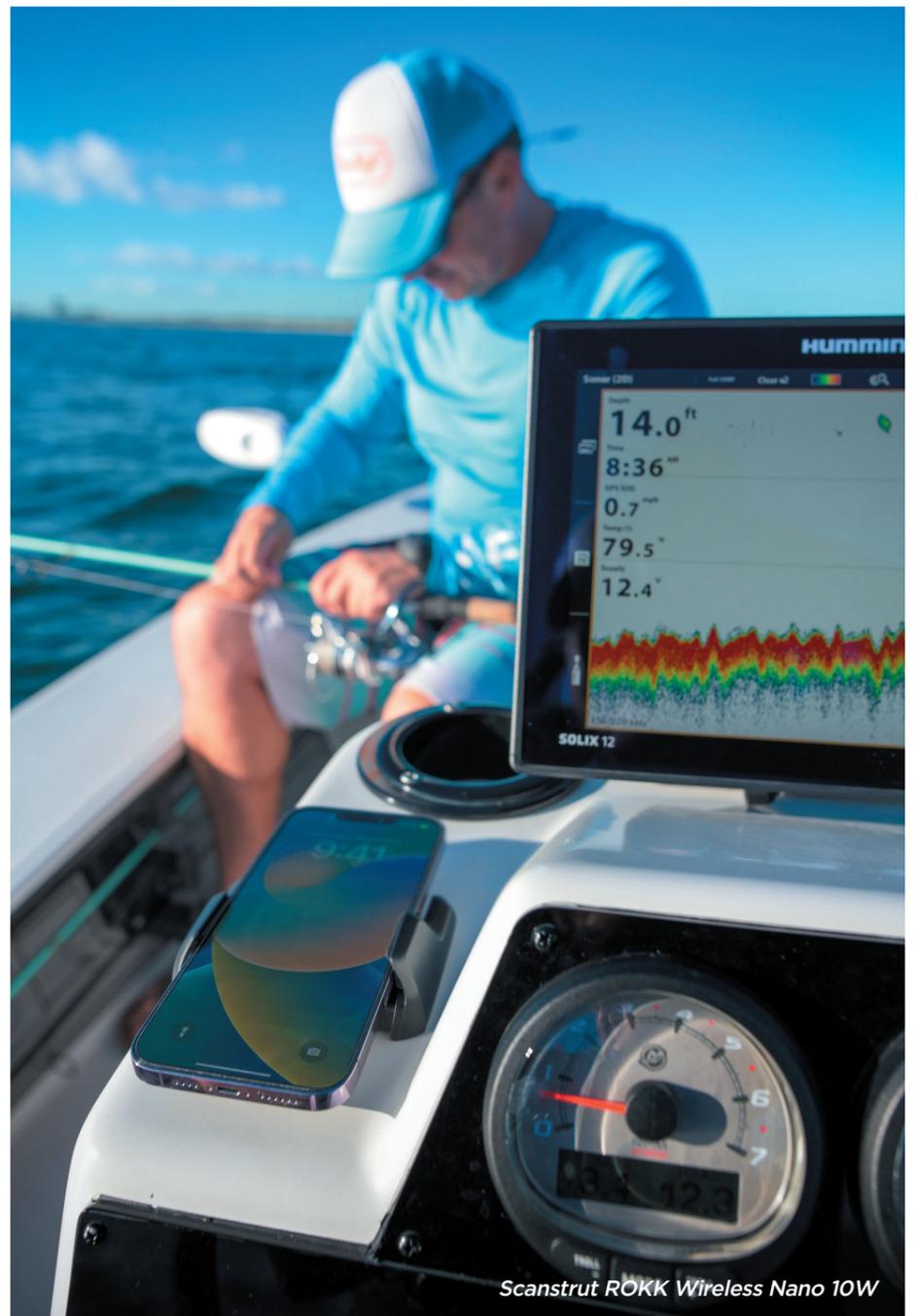
ATMOS was also a response to market need. “The project evolved iteratively,” Bowles says. “Through testing of existing pump products, the team identified ways to enhance product lifespan specifically in the context of boat usage. Remarkably, ATMOS reached a stage where it shared no common components with existing pumps. The user interface underwent significant improvements, and the range of included accessories expanded.

“The focus was not merely on



improving functionality but also on making these pumps seamlessly integrate with boats, compatible with boat battery systems, and robust enough to withstand extreme conditions. The rigorous testing and development phase played a pivotal role in refining the concept.”

As well as ATMOS, Bowles says one of the team’s breakthroughs is the Scanstrut ROKK Wireless - Nano 10W. This is a waterproof wireless charging mount, designed specifically for boats. “It’s not just a wireless charger; it’s a complete problem solver of a product that has simplified the way boat owners charge and mount their devices while on the water, eliminating the need for cumbersome cables.” Scanstrut aspires to bring the same level of innovation to the RV space and while marine may have been the initial focus, the company’s intention is to extend its innovative approach to both sectors.



Scanstrut ROKK Wireless Nano 10W



“Generally anything designed to withstand the marine environment will be a premium RV product,” says Bowles. “Understanding of key environmental factors and how to protect against them for minimal extra cost is key.”

The team collaborates closely with boatbuilders, electronics manufacturers, and end users to stay at the forefront of its

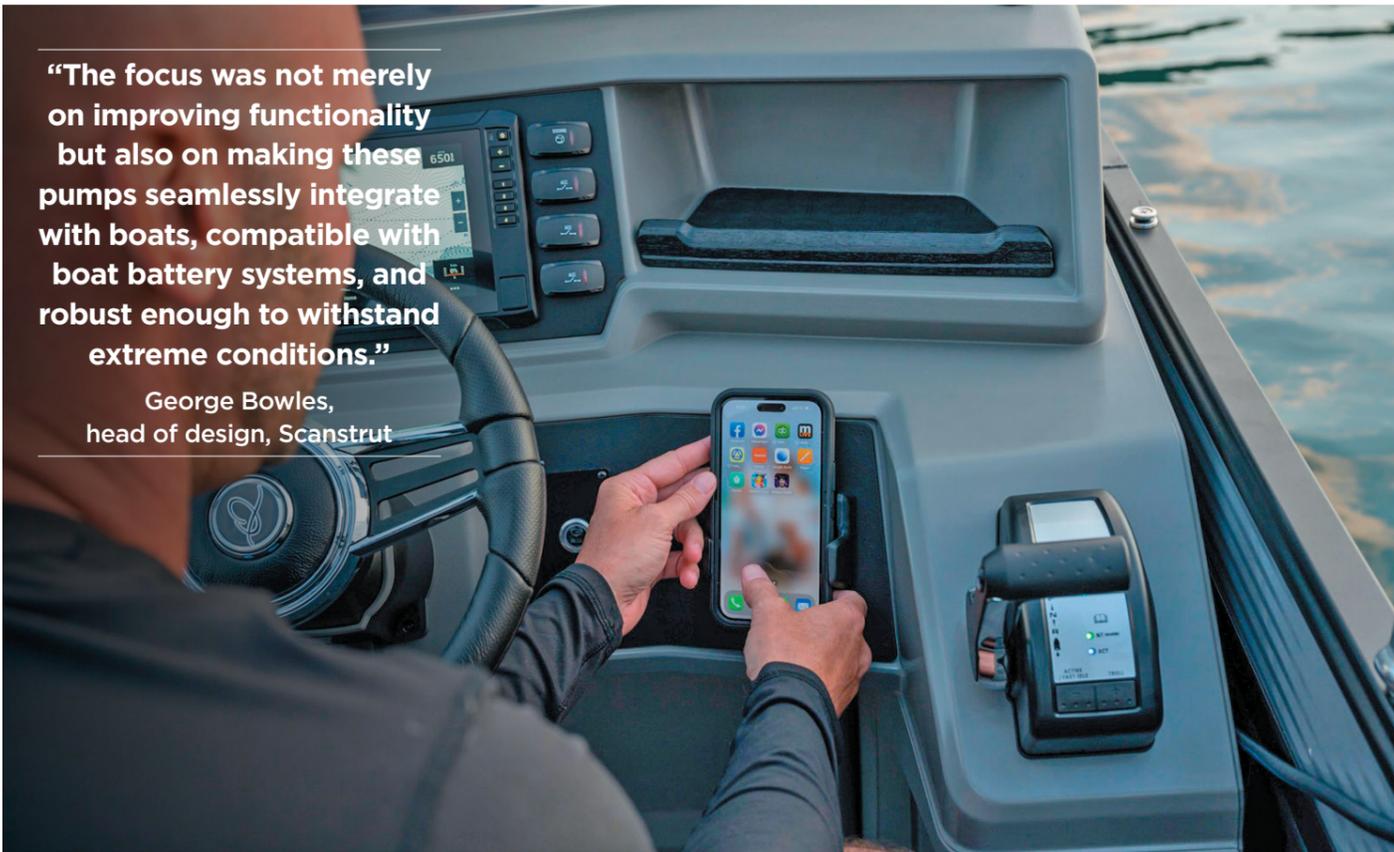
ambitions. “This collaborative approach allows us to anticipate the evolving needs of the marine electronics market and design products that align with those needs.”

**Boat show inspiration**

Inspiration comes from team visits to shows such as Southampton International Boat Show, METSTRADE and the Consumer

“The focus was not merely on improving functionality but also on making these pumps seamlessly integrate with boats, compatible with boat battery systems, and robust enough to withstand extreme conditions.”

George Bowles,  
head of design, Scanstrut



*Inset and right: Scanstrut ROKK Wireless Nano 10W charging mount*

Inspiration comes from team visits to shows such as SIBS, METSTRADE and the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, which Scanstrut attends looking for latest trends in both technology and marine



Electronics Show in Las Vegas, which Scanstrut attends looking for latest trends in both technology and marine.

Bowles says a noteworthy example inspired by exhibitions is the new Wireless Power Onboard. “[It] allows you to send power to lighting and other low wattage electronics around the boat without physical connection,” he explains.

“This eliminates metal on metal wiring and the risk of corrosion onboard. This concept has not only made it to market but has undergone a meticulous development process, driven by valuable feedback from OEMs. It’s set to enter production and is expected to be available by 2024.”

Bowles’s aim for the next five years is to see the development of more complex custom

**Bowles’s aim for the next five years is to see the development of more complex custom electronics from Scanstrut.**

electronics from Scanstrut.

“We are doing an increasing number of large projects,” he says. These are characterised by a combination of challenges and unknowns with significant team demand, extended development timelines, and complexity in design, manufacturing, and testing processes.

Enabling this, the culture which has grown up is of an open office, with all employees free to ask questions of each other. Brainstorming and workshopping are actively encouraged to push boundaries

and the list of potential ideas is growing.

“In the next five years, I’d like to see more complex custom electronics of ours in the market. Displays, interfaces, wireless power etc.,” finishes Bowles, and there’s not much that’s set to stop him. ■





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# Multihull MODE



Two Oceans 82. Credit: Dale Staples of Staples Productions

## South Africa's multihull production blooms and new-to-boating clients enhance growth and design cues, says GMBA chairperson Veda Pretorius

South Africa has a long and well-documented history as a multihulls manufacturing giant. It is the second-largest manufacturer of catamarans worldwide and the largest manufacturer of power catamarans. This is mainly due to the volume of power catamarans manufactured by Robertson and Caine, South Africa's largest boatbuilding company, although there are many other manufacturers in the region including Two Oceans Marine and Phoenix Marine that contribute to the sector's status.

The last decade has seen a significant rise in the popularity of catamarans globally, not only in the cruising and charter market but in the superyacht sector. Recent superyacht launches include the magnificent 47m Perini Navi S/Y *Art Explorer* and the 43m Tecnomar M/Y *This Is It*. The 80 Sunreef Power, owned by Rafael Nadal, has boosted the popularity

of Sunreef, and its new Sunreef 43 Eco shares significant sustainability credentials. Locally, Southern Wind Shipyard has also embraced the trend of multihulls. The concept design SWCAT90 is a 27m sailing catamaran constructed of carbon composite, matching its monohulls' design aesthetic with the multihull's space and comfort.

Space is a primary advantage of multihulls, with expansive areas above and below the deck. Multihulls boast roomy saloons and cockpit areas while enhanced stability increases their appeal by making them accessible to newcomers to the yachting lifestyle. The minimal heeling allows for a lifestyle akin to being on land, while the shallow draft of multihulls facilitates easy access to beaches and secluded areas.

### Cape Town boatbuilding

The boatbuilding industry in Cape Town is mirroring international

trends, with a general consolidation in the market over the last 15 years. Although the number of yachts being built in South Africa has increased, the number of boatbuilding yards has decreased – reflecting a natural consolidation as efficiencies across departments and processes are realised. The companies that remain are doing exceptionally well.

The industry does have its challenges, though, as outlined at a recent industry stakeholder meeting hosted by the City of Cape Town, South Africa. Factors including ageing infrastructure, water access problems and the need for more professional artisans and skilled labour need to be addressed.

One of the successful South African companies that mitigates these risks is Xquisite Catamarans. The Xquisite X5 Plus sailing catamaran has won *Cruising World* and *Sail* magazine's Boat of the Year Award

and is manufactured in Cape Town at the Phoenix Catamaran factory. The factory is also building Xquisite's new 60ft sailing catamaran, Sixty Solar Sail, which is due to launch in March 2024.

Xquisite Yachts has experienced an increase in the demand for power catamarans – popular with older couples, new entrants to the yachting market, and even owners of traditional power trawlers. Xquisite's new 60ft power catamaran includes a kite – easily deployed and retrieved – to reduce fuel consumption and increase speed on long voyages.

The vast majority of Xquisite's yachts are made for export and thus Xquisite plans to manufacture its new range of power catamarans in Aveiro, Portugal, to be closer to the end market and reduce shipping costs. Another reason for this manufacturing strategy is that



Rendering of the Two Oceans 870



Xquisite Yachts' Bahamas base

**The boatbuilding industry in Cape Town is mirroring international trends, with a general consolidation in the market**

the South African boatbuilding model of doing everything in-house means there is a significant lead time involved in getting a factory up and running. With the more decentralised model in Europe, the brand can quickly get subcontractors on board and outsource entire departments, such as cabinetry or marine electronics.

Xquisite Yachts has also adapted its sales model. It has a dedicated base in the Bahamas and operates a concierge service, giving a two-year warranty to the client, with a paid service plan available following that term.

Like the car industry, Xquisite follows up with suppliers and component manufacturers on behalf of the client. This has meant the boatbuilder can monitor the after-sales service of its suppliers firsthand to see if they are providing quality service and whether they honour their

commitments (warranties). The boatbuilder also tracks which suppliers cost the company the most money in terms of direct costs and time.

**Specialised labour**

The expansion of a specialised sector inevitably encounters challenges. Since the 1980s, South Africa has been at the forefront of composite catamaran construction, but the workforce skilled in this domain is ageing. A critical shortage of proficient artisans persists, particularly in attracting younger individuals to occupy factory floor positions within the marine sector.

Recognising the industry's significance, most factories have initiated in-house training initiatives to assimilate unemployed school leavers and equip them for careers in the field.

**Xquisite Yachts has experienced an increase in the demand for power catamarans – popular with older couples and new entrants to the market**

**Next gen multihull owners**

Anton du Toit, from Du Toit Yacht Design, is South Africa's foremost multihull designer and naval architect. In terms of trends, he highlights the increasing popularity of power catamarans, performance cruising multihulls and larger catamarans.

Many changes have been made in catamaran hull designs to improve efficiencies and performance and the industry has witnessed a significant increase in demand for larger catamarans as they lend themselves to more customisation.

As younger buyers enter the market, they are spending money on additional performance enhancing extras such as carbon fibre, rigs and expensive sails. Shifts in interior design trends also dovetail with the rise in younger owners and new entrants to the catamaran market with many of these customers desiring the yachting experience to meet the same high standards as shore-based lifestyles.

**Multihull legacy**

As a nation adept at overcoming challenges posed by power blackouts, port inefficiencies,

**South Africa is resolute in advancing its multihull legacy, with catamarans firmly established as the cornerstone of the boatbuilding industry.**

or the ageing demographic of skilled artisans, the South African marine industry remains poised to innovate and discover solutions.

South Africa is resolute in advancing its multihull legacy, with catamarans firmly established as the cornerstone of its boatbuilding industry.

South Africa currently stands as a dominant force within the burgeoning segments of the global multihull market – charter yachts, power catamarans, and performance cruisers. ■

*Veda Pretorius is the GMBA chairperson.*

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## Seldén - Manual & Electric Winches

### Asymmetric Rib Technology Winches

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Available in both manual & electric options, the Electric winches are manual 2-speed winches fitted to a SEL-Bus driven motor pack allowing for a third high-speed velocity. The back-up solution, in case you run out of power, is to put a winch handle in the socket and grind. If you decide to fit the manual winch option, then you can easily upgrade to electric at a later stage.

The motor packs are powered up by Seldén's Power Supply Unit converting 12/24V to 42V which makes for an efficient and compact design of the motor assembly and thin 6 mm<sup>2</sup> power cables.

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### Aqua-Base - Watermakers

The range of AQUA-BASE® watermakers from French manufacturer SLCE Watermakers are once again available in the UK.

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Also on offer is the Aruba, a particularly robust and compact design, again with a comfort option and also introducing a premium option with automatic pressure regulation and fully automatic flushing. Powered by either 230v ac or 400/440v three phase, these compact units can easily product up to 300lph, and are often found to be fitted to vessels equipped a generator. The Aruba Premium is a very unique unit, as the only watermaker that automatically protects it's own membrane(s) against overflow, coupled with a 7" touchscreen panel, it is easy to see why many OEM's fit Aqua-Base as standard.

The range of Aqua-Base machines undergo intense trials, some of which last more than 10,000 hours, hence why the entire range qualifies for "Bureau Veritas" certification.

### Omnisense Systems - High Performance Thermal Imaging Cameras

TMS are the exclusive UK distributor for Omnisense Systems, their thermal imaging and low light cameras are proving a great hit with our OEM and commercial customers; so we will be displaying both the Mini and the Micro models at BoatLife.

The Ulysses delivers more than high-resolution and crisp images in day, night, smoke, fog or glare but increases the essential element of crew awareness.

The range is designed and built to be adaptable to end-user needs with proprietary components that can be configured to suit client needs.

The Ulysses Micro C is a dedicated low-light camera system that is, specifically designed for easy installation on small and fast boats. Built upon the reliable Ulysses Micro platform, it incorporates an exceptionally sensitive low-light imaging sensor, enabling the streaming of high-definition video that remains sharp and clear regardless of the lighting conditions. This system is an excellent choice for boaters looking to extend their time at sea!



### ARCO Zeus - High Energy Alternator Regulator

The IBEX Innovation Award winning Zeus from American manufacturer Arco Marine, is the only high-energy alternator regulator to feature Bluetooth and a native app allowing for easy installation and configuration. With its intuitive interface, you have access to information on your system that you never had before, allowing you to regulate your system and optimise your battery charge and alternator output resulting in a safer experience while protecting onboard energy systems. Zeus is the only alternator regulator that can read both the battery shunt and the alternator shunt at the same time, enabling instant reactions to inputs from the battery current/temperature and alternator current/temperature.

Through the app, you are in good hands as your data is automatically logged and can be shared with technicians to help troubleshoot your system when remote.

Zeus optimises battery charges for 12-48 volt systems. Whatever your battery type, the pre-set battery libraries and configurable menus allow you to optimise your charging profiles whilst managing a complex set of inputs by giving you easy to understand options.

Taking into consideration the power of your engine and allowing you to configure your alternator's power take off from the engine, an advanced feature is that the regulator can turn your engine into a dedicated generator with a press of the button, whereby it focuses the alternator's performance to the creation of energy in replenishing your battery bank quickly. Zeus is the only alternator regulator on the market that comes with alternator/battery harnesses and 2 thermistor harnesses, without an additional charge, saving users money and time from sourcing harnesses.



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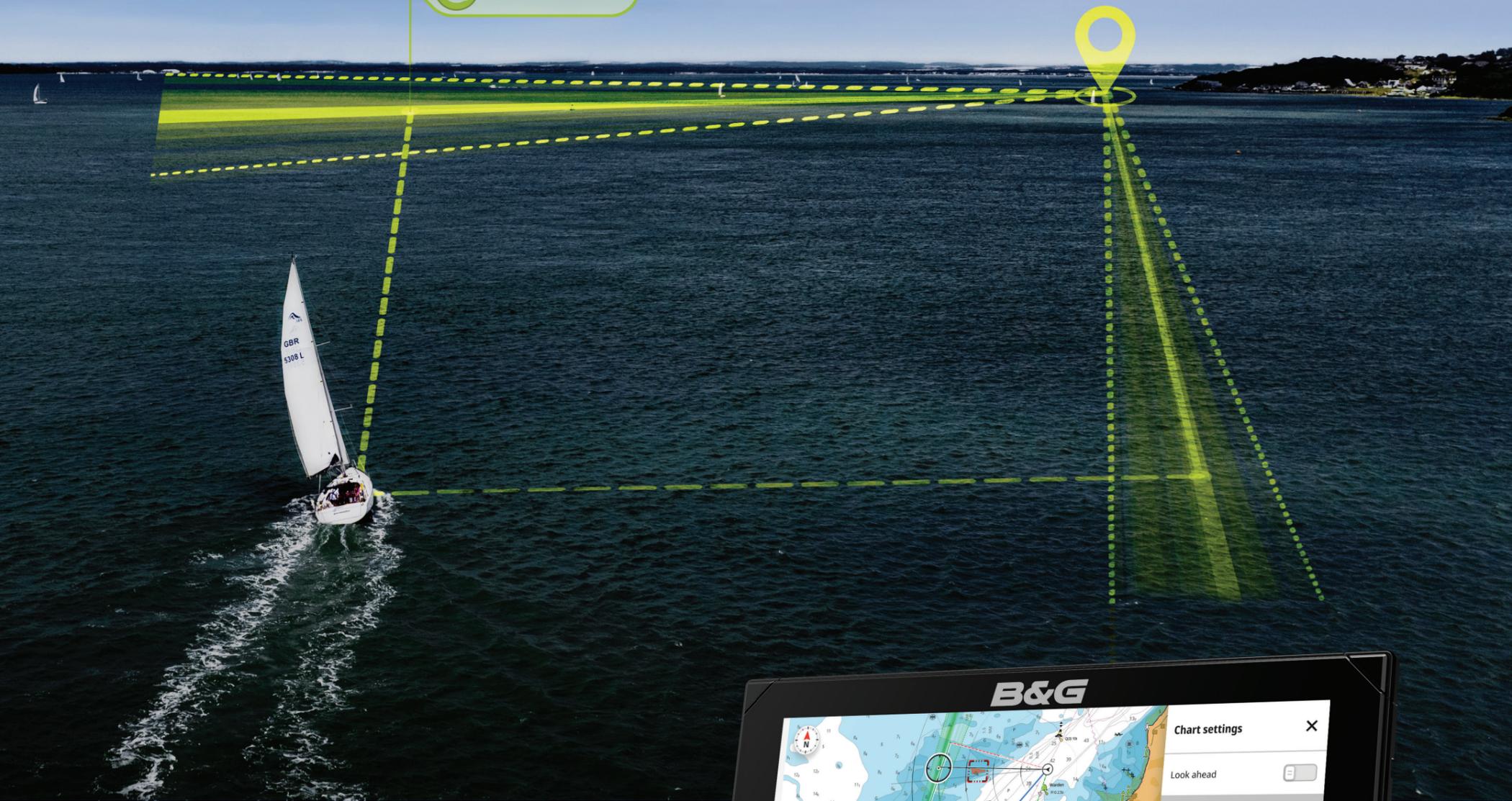
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# Navigating equality

## Diving into gender mainstreaming in the marina industry

Words: Melanie Symes

A glance around the room at a meeting of national marine industry associations will reveal a disturbing disparity in terms of gender representation. Despite national legislation and the International Bill of Human Rights advancing gender equality, the marine industry falls worryingly short in this regard.

Women are notably under-represented in decision making positions; potentially affecting matters such as employment and promotion opportunities and industry culture.

Roles including harbourmaster are still widely male dominated and the need for better female representation and female leaders of industry within nautical tourism is high.

Campaigns promoting the inclusion of women in boatyards, where training can be offered from scratch are few and far between. There are also projects currently underway trying to promote women in the blue economy, whose teams struggle to source original images depicting professional females in the industry.

### Women in marine

Wendy Stowe was selected from a pool of some 50 men as the only female candidate when she was recruited as harbourmaster for Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour on the Beaulieu River, UK. She has now shifted the dynamic with a workforce that is far closer to an equal mix and encourages women to step into traditionally 'male' roles.

One of just a small handful of female harbourmasters on the UK's south coast, with less than 15 in the whole of the UK, Stowe is clear on the need to change the inherent boating culture where the position is often filled by retired

navy officers. "It's also important to understand that the job has changed. This is no longer a matter of chugging along collecting harbour fees; a harbourmaster is now a business manager, involving an understanding of finance, strategy, and environmental issues, as well as operational competence.

"One way that we could make a difference is by educating the educators. Rather than just opening doors for women, we need to ensure that everyone is aware that women can carry out these roles perfectly well. By engaging in community outreach and connecting with schools and universities, we can begin to convey a more modern and accurate perspective of the nature of our industry."

Most companies would fervently deny actively practicing gender discrimination and yet only a handful have adopted specific workplace diversity practices or taken a good hard look at their culture to check for the existence of discriminatory practices or unconscious bias.

Gender segregation in the marina industry is rife – where women are being employed almost exclusively in particular positions, such as marketing, cleaning, brokerage and office-based roles – and change is needed for the marine and marina industries to provide a modern proposition for all future employees.

TransEurope Marinas is proud to say that member manager meetings reflect gender parity on most occasions, with a strong female voice in the decisionmaking process. Many female managers are certified marina managers (CMM), despite a female representation of

less than 12 per cent within the current list of European CMMs.

Mieke Vleugels CMM, managing partner at Jachthaven Wetterwille in Holland, despite agreeing that more could be done, views the glass very much as half full. Vleugels says: "The last few decades have seen a greater influx of women in the marine industry in general, and especially in the marina business. Just looking around in Europe, I can think of numerous examples of prominent female marina managers who combine hospitality with great organisational skills and technical insight – the latter aspect being sometimes overlooked as this is unfortunately still somewhat viewed as a typically 'male' characteristic."

Vleugels applauds the networking benefits from the CMM accreditation process, saying that the programme "can also help to empower women in the industry and provide them with the necessary tools, title and confidence to reach the next level in their career."

Renata Marević CMM, from Marina Punat in Croatia, stepped into her role as manager via previous positions in the marina office and highlights the opportunities she was given throughout her career. Heading up Marina Punat for the last ten years, and a strong believer in positive encouragement and promotion of the active role of women in society and business, Marević is pleased to report gender parity within the team of people in leading positions in Marina Punat but notes the need for wider change.

"Women are indeed present in the nautical industry, in all positions, where they actively participate in decision making and daily marina



Marina Punat. Credit: Miroslav Svetec

operations," she says. "Statistically however, most women are involved at sales level, in receptions, marketing, brokerage, etc., and there are far fewer of them at the level of marina management, design or jobs of a traditionally technical nature which tend to be 'reserved' for the opposite sex."

### Moving the dial

Suzanne Bell CMM, marina manager of boatfolk's Rhu Marina in Scotland, also counts on a female assistant manager and welcomes the "recognition and encouragement" received from boatfolk in generating a supportive and equitable workplace. She also however recognises the existence of unconscious bias. Bell explains: "When accompanied by a male colleague and a technical question is asked or a decision is sought, the assumption is that he's in charge.

"Promoting an inclusive culture within the marine industry will ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, has encouragement, resources, and support."



**“By engaging in community outreach and connecting with schools and universities, we can begin to convey a more modern and accurate perspective of the nature of our industry.”**

Wendy Stowe, Harbourmaster

*Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour, UK. Credit: Beaulieu Enterprises Ltd*

**“When accompanied by a male colleague and a technical question is asked or a decision is sought, the assumption is that he’s in charge.”**

Suzanne Bell, marina manager, Boatfolk, Rhu Marina

Kerrie Grey CMM, manager at Poole Quay Boat Haven and Port of Poole Marina, describes first entering the marina industry in 2005, where she only stayed for a couple of years because she couldn’t see a career path: “There were no female marina managers that I saw or met at boat shows. “Even when I returned in 2011 it was only expected to be on a temporary basis because it was still difficult to see how my journey would unfold if I were to stay.” Grey remained however due to falling in love with the industry and wanting to help make a change, and has demonstrated that with the right encouragement and provision of opportunities, the industry has much to offer women.

Alison Wakelin CMM, managing director of Emsworth Yacht Harbour in the UK, came into the industry through the family business, with a strong background in economics and the electricity industry. Her experience employing female workers throughout the marina and yard services has been very successful, and she recognises that this can “do much to break down stereotypes, notably among our customers, some of whom have more traditional expectations.”

Wakelin notes that there “has very much been a ‘changing of the guard’ as older more traditional employees have retired or moved on and today’s workers are more modern and open

Integrating a gender perspective or a gender dimension is no easy task. The good news however is that plenty of tools, methodologies and supportive resources already exist. Strategies include:

- Identifying, sharing and celebrating good practice; building and supporting mentorship programmes and networks and inviting external parties to bring in fresh ideas and expertise.
- Developing gender-sensitive recruitment and retention campaigns.
- Actively promoting more diversity in the boating industry with images and language that reflect a more inclusive and accessible culture.
- Supporting family or caring responsibilities and work-life reconciliation with more flexibility in terms of working hours and remote working where possible.
- Developing a harassment policy, including learning about the ways in which this can manifest such as gender-related verbal, non-verbal or physical degradation or abuse; discrimination, or online comments, etc. Identifying how to set up secure and confidential reporting channels and an effective response strategy.
- Assessing gender disparities in terms of salaries or examples of horizontal or vertical discrimination.



*Emsworth Yacht Harbour, UK. Credit: Compass Aerial Photography*



*Rhu Marina, Scotland*

to less gendered roles.” She admits that diversity needs work, particularly given their local context and the historical culture of the boating industry. Naturally, these practices should ideally also extend to any gender identity or sexual orientation, as to ethnicity, disability, age and religion.

**Data drive**

By amassing data on gender representation, establishing gender indicators across the

industry and obtaining a baseline, the marine sector can create goals for improvement, begin to develop a strategy to tackle underlying issues, and monitor progress.

It’s time to address the issue of underrepresentation of women in marinas and the boating industry and make a serious attempt to start moving the dial. ■

Melanie Symes is owner of Innovamarina: [info@innovamarina.com](mailto:info@innovamarina.com)



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# GROUP DYNAMICS

## What does the future hold for industry bodies? GMBA's Maryanne Edwards reviews an Australian success story

The relevance of industry bodies in today's economic environment varies significantly. Some industry bodies appear to members to have become 'old boy networks', some struggle to remain relevant, while others are seen as dynamic organisations that have evolved to progress the industry. Whatever the sector represented, leadership is always a critical element for its success or demise. With the correct steerage, an industry body can create a thriving ecosystem that supports the growth, development, and success of its members and the industry as a whole.

The Australian International Marine Export Group (AIMEX) is one such organisation that has evolved and flourished. Established in 1998 to develop and promote Australia's international competitiveness in the marine sector, it has had strong leadership that has cultivated a dynamic and adaptable way of working.

Founding members and chairpersons, Alistair Murray,

chairman of Ronstan, and Richard Chapman, MD of Coursemaster and Hydrive Engineering, believe that visionary leadership, strong fiscal management, and a diverse board can sustain industry bodies.

Murray says: "The original goals for AIMEX were to have a united front for Australia's marine exports - a 'club' if you like - and to tap into additional government support. There was a great opportunity to bring all Australian marine exporters along for the ride, with the more experienced exporters mentoring and supporting the smaller, newer companies."

Murray says one of AIMEX's greatest challenges was that it had so many small exporters that had a good idea or product but were inexperienced and under-resourced meaning success in overseas markets was a step too far. Through mentorship, support and access to global markets and insights, AIMEX started many export members on their global journey.



Richard Chapman, chairperson, AIMEX. Credit: Salty Dingo

"It's a tough world in international business, and it's even tougher, if not nigh impossible to go it alone in your quest for customers, markets, and a greater, profitable market share," continues Murray.

"This is where industry bodies come into it. They are full of experienced campaigners that have been there before you and are generally more than willing to assist up and coming industry players in every way possible. The industry body also has a



Alistair Murray, chairperson, AIMEX. Credit: Salty Dingo

**"There was a great opportunity to bring all Australian marine exporters along for the ride, with the more experienced exporters mentoring and supporting the smaller, newer companies."**

**Alistair Murray,  
chairperson, AIMEX**

management and staff structure whose job is to support and assist you, thereby increasing the

effectiveness of your team. Join forces with them and your fellow industry members to be united and more successful together.”

**What drives a successful industry body?**

A key attraction for businesses to join industry bodies is to be part of a group with established iconic brands. Having global brands as members adds credibility and often, they are the ones either feeding or purchasing from the supply chains that smaller businesses form part of.

Chapman says: “In the early days AIMEX strengths were the enthusiasm, commitment and experience of the founding members and the development of a strong relationship with the Australian government’s export arm.

“Our strength at the time was also the growing reputation of established brands like Ronstan, Muirs, Coursemaster, Steber and along the journey long term members like Riviera, Maritimo, Aqualuma and other Australian manufacturers who were making big strides internationally.”

Smaller AIMEX members have likened the industry body to a family where members support each other and belonging gives a sense of security especially when they are small fish in the big pond of a trade show such as METSTRADE.

Given the leadership styles of both chairmen, Murray and Chapman have also actively encouraged new people to stand for the board and worked hard to ensure that passionate, visionary people and those who can commit the necessary time are those attracted to join the board.

Chapman adds: “It is very important that industry boards are made up of members from a cross section of industry. Board members must make decisions that are best for their members and industry but not necessarily best for the company they represent.”

**Recipe for industry success**

It is critical for any industry body to constantly review its financial position, its management structure, its offering to members, its standing within government and the industry, the environment and the economic landscape it is operating in. There are many aspects to maintaining relevance and strong boards will continually undertake internal audits to review their efficiencies.

**1. Clear mission and purpose**

A successful industry body has a clear and well-defined mission and purpose. It should have a compelling vision that resonates with its members and stakeholders, providing a sense of direction and purpose.

**2. Advocacy and representation**

Industry bodies serve as advocates for their members, representing their interests and concerns to policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders. If an industry body can effectively advocate for its members and influence policy decisions, it can maintain its relevance and continue to provide value. Ministers and government representatives often prefer to talk to board members who own and operate their own business within the industry, versus paid association staff.

**3. Adaptability and innovation**

The business landscape is constantly evolving, and successful industry bodies are adaptable. They embrace change, anticipate industry trends, and proactively respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This ensures that the organisation remains relevant and continues to meet the evolving needs of its members.

**4a. Collaboration and networking:**

Industry bodies should be facilitating collaboration and networking opportunities among members, foster knowledge sharing,

best practices, and business partnerships. If an industry body can provide a platform for meaningful connections and collaboration, it remains relevant in facilitating industry growth and development. However, one platform does not fit all. It is critical events are tailored to the various membership sectors and association services and sponsorship of these events by relevant parties provides much needed revenue generation for the association.

**4b. Collaboration with other stakeholders**

A successful industry body collaborates with other stakeholders, such as government agencies, academia, other industry bodies and non-profit organisations. By building partnerships and alliances, the organisation can leverage collective resources and expertise to address industry wide issues and drive positive change. A key emphasis recently for many industry bodies is looking at ways to attract skilled workers into the industry.

**5. Information and resources**

Industry bodies that provide valuable information, research, and resources to their members can maintain their relevance. But it is critical that data promoted to industry is carefully scrutinised for accuracy as members make decisions based on this data. Utilise experienced consultancy firms to ensure credibility of data and process.

**6. Effective governance**

Strong governance practices and transparency are essential. The organisation should have clear policies, procedures, and accountability mechanisms in place. Transparent decision-making processes and financial management build trust among members and stakeholders. There should also be opportunities for members to step up to board positions and diversity within boards should be encouraged.

**7. Member engagement**

The level of engagement and participation from industry members can impact the relevance of an industry body. If members actively participate, contribute, and find value in the services and initiatives provided by the industry body, it will remain relevant.

AIMEX admits getting member engagement in all activities is not easy as members see value in different areas. Many are also time poor. To counter this AIMEX offers a range of ways for members to engage with the organisation whether it be via newsletters, its industry magazines, networking events, participation at international trade shows, conferences, or the Australian Marine Industry Awards.

The board and CEO also hold meetings in various states of Australia to ensure the organisation remains in touch with the grass roots. If industry bodies lose touch with the grass roots, member resignations and questions relating to relevance will follow.

**8. Industry recognition**

Governments prefer to deal with one strong organisation as opposed to many smaller ones. In the case of AIMEX, rationalising parts of the industry as AIMEX has done has reduced the overall cost to industry as, rather than have three costly administration structures, they have reduced it to one.

**It is critical for any industry body to constantly review its financial position, its management structure, its offering to members, its standing within government and the industry, the environment and economic landscape it is operating in.**





Boat show exhibiting. Above: The AIMEX Garden at the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show

**How critical is diversification?**

To survive and be recognised by governments, industry bodies must reach a critical mass. To represent industry at government level, to have a strong financial base to operate from and to be able to deliver valuable services an organisation needs numbers.

This makes a diversification strategy for many industry bodies important. However, to take on other industry sectors or take over other industry groups there must be a common thread of relevance otherwise it will not work.

Both Murray and Chapman noted that AIMEX's weakness was really not having a critical mass of enough exporters of substance, which is why the subsequent diversifications into the superyacht and commercial worlds were necessary and successful.

In 2012, AIMEX was approached by some key superyacht industry stakeholders to include the superyacht industry under its wing with the purpose of strengthening the superyacht industry, and promoting Australia as a preferred destination for the global superyacht fleet.

At the time this was a big decision for the AIMEX chairman and board

as AIMEX was enjoying success with the single focus in regard to exporters. However, during the global financial crisis (GFC) businesses had been finding it tough, exchange rates and other economic factors were affecting exporters and membership in this sector was starting to slow down. The AIMEX chairman and board debated this diversification and its risks – pressure on staffing resources and the requirement to inject some funds to provide the best chance of success. Ultimately, it was seen as an opportunity to support stakeholders in the superyacht industry, expand the reach of AIMEX, increase membership numbers and create an even stronger voice to government.

AIMEX subsequently expanded its board to include a superyacht industry representative and created the Australian Superyacht Committee with a focused objective agreed by all parties at the time.

In 2014 AIMEX was again approached by a number of businesses in the commercial marine sector as they felt they were not being represented loudly enough at government level. During the GFC and the downturn in many sectors of the marine industry, AIMEX and superyacht industry members had refocused

their business to the commercial defence sector in an attempt to try and secure business to stay afloat. At this time, globally the defence and commercial sectors were in a better economic status than the traditional export and superyacht sectors, with governments investing heavily in this sector.

Following this approach, the AIMEX chairman called a board meeting to discuss the appetite of the board for further diversifying and expanding the AIMEX portfolio by developing a commercial marine group. The chairman and CEO put the new initiative to the board, again with considerable debate, but all ultimately agreed it could only be positive to be able to further represent existing members in this industry sector, attract new members and continue to expand the AIMEX voice to government.

The Australian commercial marine group was thus developed with a representative on the AIMEX board, their own committee of key commercial sector stakeholders and a clear focus of providing a much stronger voice to government for this sector and promoting the sector's products and capabilities to the global market.

Over the past nine years, the size and credibility of the Australian

Commercial Group has grown with key Australian commercial defence businesses including Austal coming on board.

**Where next?**

Industry bodies that maintain their relevance and elect strong leaders will survive and thrive. The marine industry, like many industry sectors, is constantly evolving with new technology, new government regulations, changing economic conditions, plus environmental and sustainability issues driving many changes.

Industry bodies need to represent members' interests across all these issues. Old boys' networks and egos must be a thing of the past, organisations now must have dynamic, passionate leadership, committed experienced chairpersons, a strong agenda, a democratic election process and above all a strong financial management structure. Members have become extremely discerning and want value for money because, when times are tough, membership is the first thing to go. It can never be taken for granted. ■





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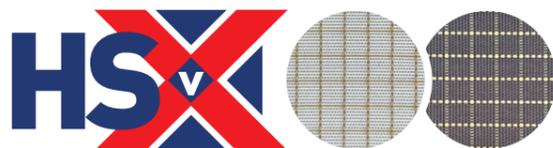
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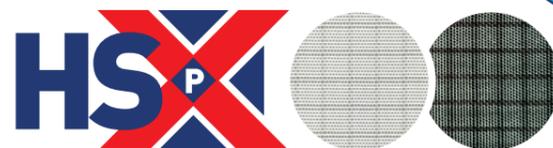
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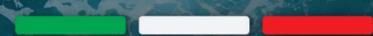
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# On brand

## How did Navico navigate the trials and take the opportunities involved in bringing the ASG and Navico companies under one entity?

In July 2022 ASG (Advanced Systems Group) and Navico companies joined together under the Navico Group name. The shift for the businesses was no mean feat and brought great opportunities and some challenges along the way.

“Trying to bring two huge companies together is a challenge in itself, without even looking at the brands,” says Nick Holland (director - OEM marine division



EMEA at Navico Group), previously director OEM and distribution EMEA of ASG.

“You’ve got people dotted around all over the globe in

offices with bunches of legacy Navico people and ASG legacy people, so you have to form a new company and then come up with departments and get rid of replication.” But, says Holland, that process also highlighted synergies and enabled new products like Fathom.

### A new-age in collaboration

Fathom brought together seven Navico Group brands to create a complete e-power management system, essentially a silent running system that generates, stores, converts and distributes AC power.

Holland says the joy came from recognising the brand portfolio could enable something different and although he’d been working on something like Fathom for over a decade, it was not a joined up approach.

“As ASG we worked in collaboration with Navico going back ten years designing systems like this. People were doing their bit but everyone had their own agenda and the companies were going in different directions.”

But the new group relationship opened doors. “A bunch of people got together and thought about the brands we’d got that could be used to build a platform – almost from end to end in the boat. The energy storage platform, the distribution platform, the monitoring platform – we realised we could do the whole lot ourselves. We’d never been able to

do this before because there was always bits of the puzzle missing.”

Holland believes that currently Navico Group is the only company that can work in this way. “Someone else would need to reach out to so many other suppliers and manufacturers to enable them to build one. All of our brands are in-house, it means we can support it centrally and we can commission the whole system.”

### Fathom: makes waves

Holland admits that lots of people will look at Fathom and say ‘that’s nothing new’ but counters with the fact that although the technology has been around for many years with the same concept (removing a diesel generator and using lithium-ion batteries to store energy), it wasn’t really until Navico Group was formed that it came to a workable reality.

“As boats today are becoming more complex and sophisticated, people who are buying from 40 feet upwards tend to want the vessel to operate a little bit like being at home,” says Holland.

**“[We] thought about the brands we’d got that could be used to build a platform – almost from end to end in the boat.”**

**Nick Holland,**  
director OEM marine division EMEA,  
Navico Group

He cites, among others, the power use of hairdryers, air conditioning, and electric hobs and says owners don’t want to be in a beautiful marina listening to a chugging generator.

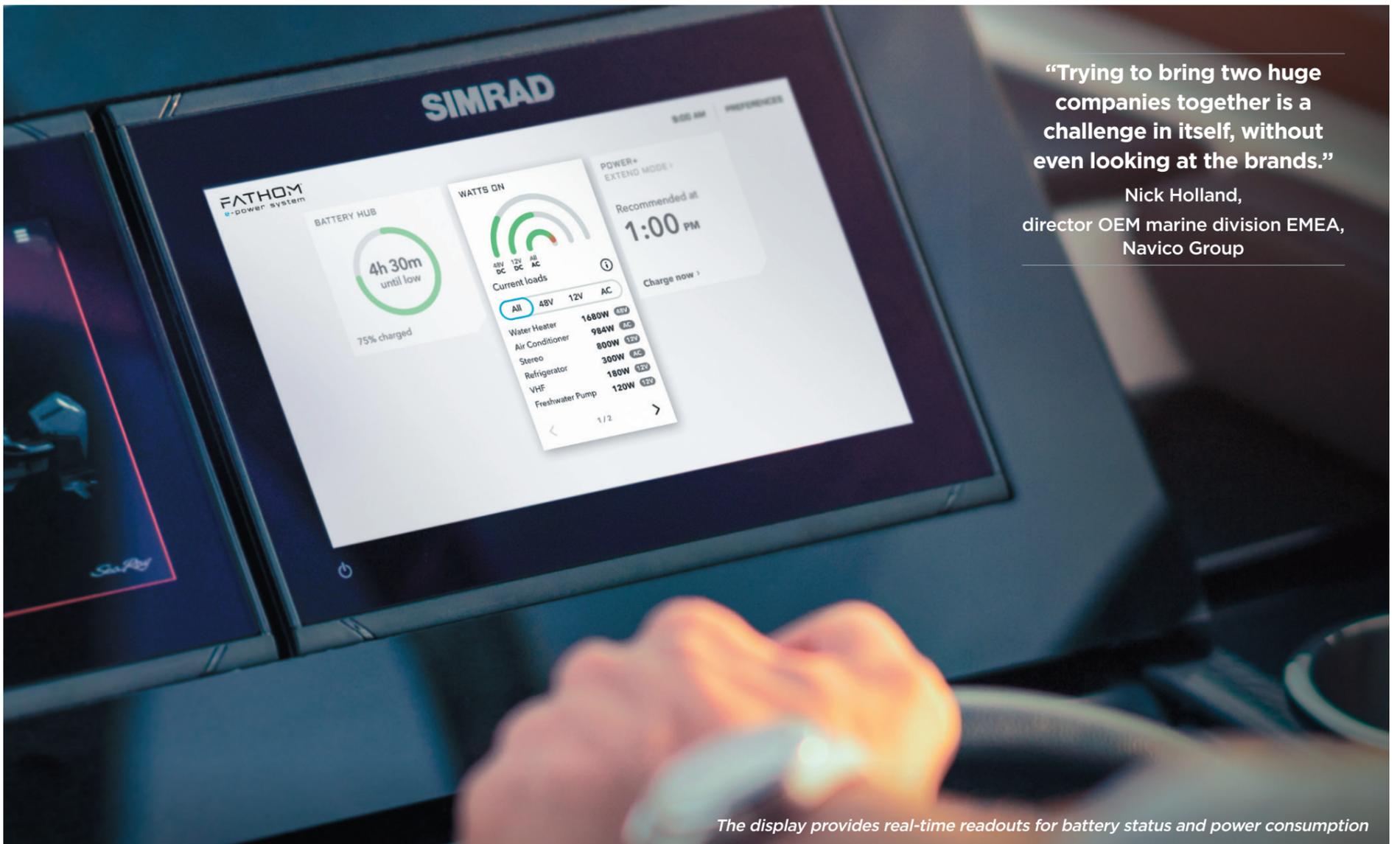
“It’s alright for the first five or ten minutes but eventually people get sick of it,” says Holland. “Having more luxuries onboard means people need more power. A lot of the luxuries are using AC power. Typically there’s been one way of getting that – from an AC generator. The problem with that is that they’re not massively environmentally friendly.

“It’s been accepted for a long time in the boating community that that’s the price you have to pay to have AC onboard. What’s happened over the last ten years is we’ve had a huge explosion with new technology in lithium ion and people are making batteries using lithium-ion to store a lot of energy very quickly in a really small footprint.”

### The technology

Battery development is essentially what enabled Fathom to come to fruition. Navico Group also includes Mastervolt, which Holland refers to as a ‘pioneering’ company. He says Mastervolt’s technology effectively means a customer “can chuck your diesel powered generator – with initial and maintenance costs – away.”

End users can generate energy with an outboard engine, an



“Trying to bring two huge companies together is a challenge in itself, without even looking at the brands.”

Nick Holland,  
director OEM marine division EMEA,  
Navico Group

The display provides real-time readouts for battery status and power consumption

**As all the brands are in house, Navico Group can commission the whole system**

inboard engine, solar, hydro-generators and they all produce DC current. All of that can be stored in lithium-ion batteries and then converted into AC to power appliances.

Then he mentions Mercury. “That’s also part of Brunswick Group,” he says (parent of Navico Group). “Mercury’s V10 and V12 outboards now come with alternators to generate lots of power in 12, 24 or 48 volts.”

Once that’s all in the system, so to speak, Fathom tries to automate as much as it can to take away user intervention and user error, Holland says.

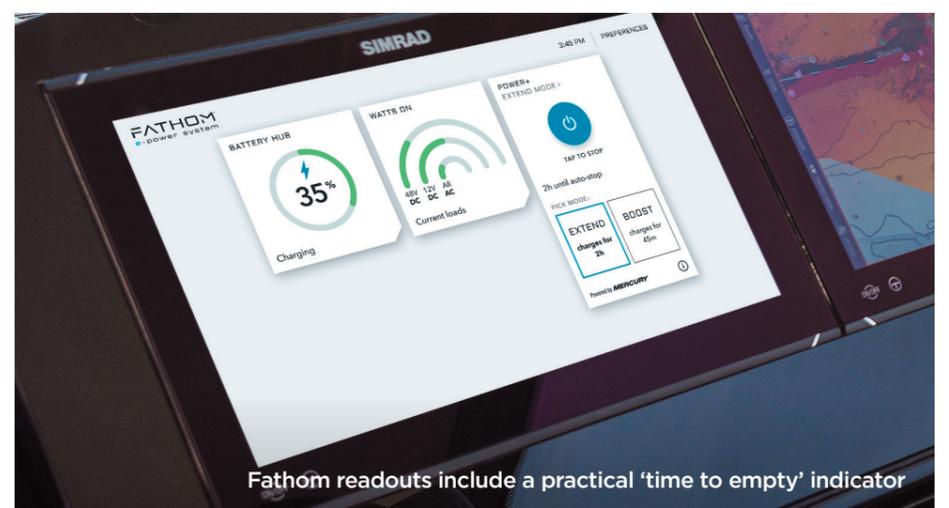
As well as prioritising power usage to owner’s needs, Fathom will send a note to the chartplotter, a phone or to the multifunctional display to say there’s, for example, an hour and half left before the battery needs recharging.

“Before Fathom, crew had to tape over switches so they were never turned off – as loads came on, the skipper or engineer would turn other things off. Fathom takes away the over-intervention of managing the load.” Not only does the system offer practical comfort, it’s

also greener, says Holland.

“Everyone now is more environmentally conscious. And sustainable. There is a lot of government legislation driving these decisions... Navico Group has been able to look at what we have internally and see what we’ve got, to become environmentally friendly.

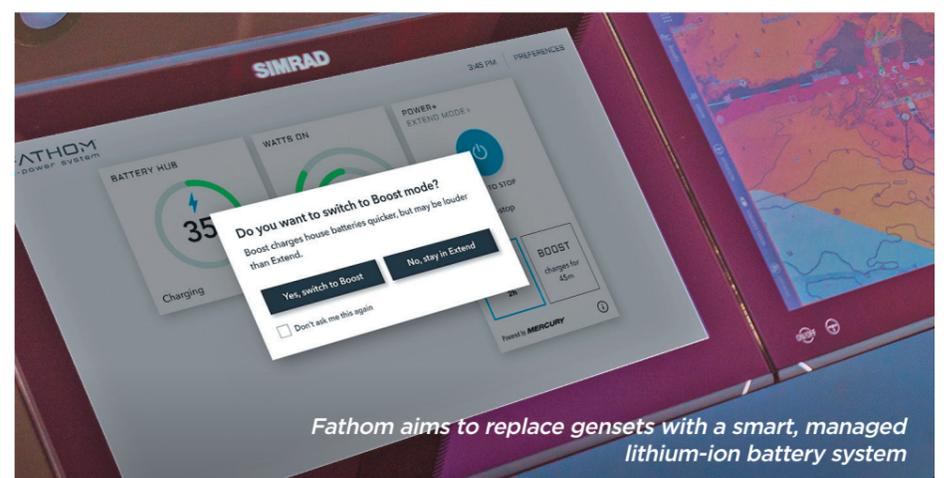
“And we can help other people become greener by using our products and our solutions and the systems we’re designing. A boatbuilder can talk to us and have a direct partnership with us to work on more sustainable greener and cleaner systems going into their vessels. We can help them achieve some of their environmental goals and sustainability projects because of using our products – particularly Fathom,” concludes Holland. ■



Fathom readouts include a practical ‘time to empty’ indicator



End users can monitor their power via mobile devices



Fathom aims to replace gensets with a smart, managed lithium-ion battery system



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