



THE TENDER MARKET WHAT'S NEW?

BY JOHN APPS

HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM DÜSSELDORF BOAT Show after spending 10 days exploring 17 halls displaying the latest of marine offerings from around the world, it is obvious that there has been a sea change in the market brought about by the recession and financial insecurity.

Manufacturers are now having to put much more thought and innovation into what they are designing and producing in order to attract customers. We are in an interesting time of great technological advance causing manufacturers to try and develop the 'next step' in boat evolution, whilst at the same time endeavouring to keep production costs low and quality high. For the person with money this is certainly an exciting time as many new products hit the market, generally at more competitive prices than a few years ago.

One of the stars of Düsseldorf in terms of tenders was the new Windy SR26. This 26 ft tender has been designed and built to top quality specifications, primarily as a yacht tender, but also as a stand-alone boat. It brings to the market all the necessities required of a bespoke custom built tender, with new features too, but all in a production package and at a production price. To find an 8 m yacht tender with an electronic folding console, a garage height of 1.5 m, seating for 12 persons, a very clever flexible seating arrangement and also a beautiful finish in an enviable choice of colours and upholsteries for less than €190,000 is extraordinary to say the least. Working

together with the Windy Special Projects production facility in Vestavik, Sweden means you could have a new boat in less than three months from order, turning the often required 18 months on its head.

I met with a great many potential buyers and several tender suppliers at the show and everyone seemed amazed at this boat. Buyers were saying it was almost perfect for all round use as a yacht tender and suppliers were saying that there was nothing else like it on the market and how they would have their work cut out to compete. Even the press were in agreement and celebrated the fact with a double page spread in the National Papers saying 'Norwegian beauty steals the show'.

Of course there were many other tenders on display and many reflected the direction in which this special market is heading right now. As yachts get bigger and their capacity to carry more guests increase, the use of chase boats comes more to the fore. Many owners are now turning to having large support tenders to follow their yacht with the corresponding benefits, no wasted time in launching and recovery, ample space for all the guests to be carried in comfort, the owner can take off by himself should he so wish and of course with size also comes added safety. It is also attractive for the owners of 'smaller' Superyachts (50 m or less) to have a chase boat, why be run ashore in a mere 6 m vessel when you can really look the billionaire and be run ashore in a 50 ft Superlaunch!

Some other tenders that caught my eye were a 10 m from Fauscher and a 12 m from Fjord Yachts. The Fauschers are beautiful and the Fjord is functional and both offer great support boat experience. Another boat that I saw for the first time at the Gothenburg Boat show was the new Goldfish 50 Ocean, which again would make the most fantastic chase boat.

Moving away from boat shows and on to general trends, we are finding that the market is still very buoyant. Many yachts are now looking to replace and upgrade their present boats for new ones and are being very flexible in what they will look at. One yacht that we have recently worked with has just replaced three RIBS with vessels from a recreational supplier who would not normally be considered for a purchase of this kind. They found the quality of these boats to be very close to that of 'specialist' builders but with a much lower cost. Their main onboard tender is still of very high quality but by mixing and matching they found much more diversity of use and lower running and maintenance costs. I think that this is a trend that will continue to grow in future years as mainstream manufacturers look towards the yacht market to increase their sales during quiet times in their own recreational arena. Of course they have to adapt to the needs of this new market with more customisation, but I have no doubt that most manufacturers will be prepared to do this in some form or another.

With regards to what is new and what is on the horizon, we know we can expect a new 10 m Limousine tender from our good friends at Pascoe International. They are at the forefront of the yacht tender business having been one of the first to recognise the importance of creating beautiful tenders to go with great yachts. Their new boats design looks to follow suit and we are looking forward to seeing it in the flesh when it is launched in August 2013.

I also had a chat with Richard Faulkner of Compass Tenders who is just completing two 11 m Limousine vessels for a new build. He confirms that the large bespoke tender market is quite buoyant right now alongside the very large yacht market. As soon as he delivers his two boats in 2013, he will immediately start on four more.

There is also talk of the Windy Special Projects Division following up on the success of the SR26, with a double offering in the 10 – 12 m range comprising of an open tender and a limousine tender both using the same hull format to enable yachts to have two boats with the same garage envelope, but with entirely different layouts and usage. The benefits to a yacht are considerable as both would have the same running gear and equipment meaning that maintenance and spares carried on board can be kept to a minimum, with no weight problems and similar lifting arrangements. The project is in the early stages but there appears to be a lot of interest from new build owners and so with luck the projects will come to fruition quite quickly.



At the smaller end of the market Williams Boats have now added two Diesel jets, a 5.65 m and a 6.25 m, to their product range. With their excellent production facilities and their price point, I feel that they could very easily break into the large yacht market and sell well against other products of this size.

I think we can say with confidence that we are in an exciting period where we can foresee many exciting new projects coming into being. That there will continue to be new introductions, many at reasonable prices as more and more recreational manufacturers, as mentioned above, recognise that the large yacht sector is still an untapped market for their boats, all they have to do is be able to adapt to the specialised requirements of the demanding yacht owner. >||

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