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NEW SEASON NEW MODELS

GLOBAL DEBUTS ON THE RIVIERA

REVIEWS CRN 62M R/O, ABSOLUTE 60 FLY,
BLUEGAME BG54, LAGOON 51
SPECIAL SHIPYARD MONACO YACHT SHOW
POLAND LEADER SUNREEF CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
PROFILE EUROPE'S QUIET DYNAMO
CHARTER ALAIN RAAS, AQUILA
RACING CARMEN LAU, CAMPER & NICHOLSONS
ONBOARD SEQUOIA, INDONESIA
ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE

HONG KONG: HKD80
CHINA: RMB90
SINGAPORE: SGD12
MALAYSIA: MYR32
THAILAND: THB350
PHILIPPINES: PHP 450
VIETNAM: VND200,000
INDONESIA: IDR 125,000
REST OF THE WORLD: USD12



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CRN 62M R/O

EUROPE'S QUIET ACHIEVER

Poland remains Europe's leading producer of outboard motorboats, many for international brands, yet the country remains a hotbed of innovation and ambition. This year alone, Galeon has released three models ranging from a 50-knot outboard to an 83ft flagship, Sunreef has launched two sailing catamarans from its pioneering Eco series, while Conrad is launching its biggest luxury superyacht to date.

WORDS **JOHN HIGGINSON** PHOTOS **POLBOAT & SHIPYARDS**





Six of the seven Galeon models at the third Polboat Yachting Festival, with the 375 GTO arriving just before her world premiere on the third day, where it was displayed beside the 325 GTO

Marking four decades since it was founded in 1982 during Poland's communist era, Galeon has been celebrating its 40th anniversary this year with a bang. One of the world's leading mid-range luxury yacht builders, Galeon has about 1,600 staff working in Gdansk on 30-49ft models in its inland site in Straszyn and yachts 50ft upwards at its bigger site along the Martwa Wisla river, where it has its own marina.

This year's new models from its two facilities in and around the north-coast city have included the 375 GTO, 440 Fly and long-awaited flagship 800 Fly, the latter a possible world premiere at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show from October 26-30.

The 375 GTO and 440 Fly had their global debuts at this year's Cannes Yachting Festival, although seven weeks earlier the former was unveiled for its Polish premiere at the third Polboat Yachting Festival in Gdynia, a nearby sister city to Gdansk.

Galeon was again the leading exhibitor at the Polboat Yachting Festival, which was held at Marina Yacht Park and organised for the third year by Polboat (Polish Chamber of Marine Industry and Water Sports). The builder displayed the 375 GTO alongside the 325 GTO, the first model of the brand's Grand Touring Outboard series, and also showed a 400 Fly, 460 Fly and 680 Fly, a 425 HTS sport cruiser and a 510 Skydeck.

However, the 375 GTO was the star attraction, as the first example

of the new GTO series growing in length. There was also extra interest because the unit on show was built for speed ... serious speed.

Engine options on the 38-footer include triple 300hp or 400hp Mercury outboards, but if you really want to muscle up, you can upgrade further to twin 600hp Mercury V12 Verado outboards. This was the case on the second hull, chosen for the model's Polish premiere, with hull one already sent to the US ahead of the Fort Lauderdale show.

Pawel Gorski, Galeon's Business Development Manager, said the effect of these twin beasts was astonishing. "We almost touched 50 knots. We were basically at 49.5 knots," he said. "It's sharp, very stable but very fast, so you have to hold on when you're turning at speed. It's a really nice ride."

BOATBUILDING FORCE

Sunreef Yachts, which employs 2,000 staff across its two shipyards in Gdansk, displayed a 60 Power catamaran at the Gdynia show, but otherwise the models were typically smaller, more in keeping with the Central European country's status as a world leader in the production of small outboard motorboats.

Boasting a population of 38 million, Poland has 112 yacht builders employing 48,800 staff plus 121 boat accessory and marine equipment manufacturers with a further 6,780 employees,



Galeon's 325 GTO (left) with twin 350hp Mercury outboards; the 375 GTO (right) with two 600hp Mercury V12 Verado engines



Galeon staff (left) at the third Polboat Yachting Festival, which also featured fellow local builders like Balt, Northman and Parker (right)

according to figures from Polboat.

Last year, the country's production of 24,000 boats included 22,000 outboard motorboats up to 39ft, with small sailing boats making up two-thirds of the remaining 2,000, according to Polboat figures. Most are for foreign brands and 90-95 per cent are exported, whether it's north to Norway, west to Germany, Netherlands and France, or across the Atlantic to the USA.

Since its modern economy emerged post-communism, Poland has become home to production facilities for many leading international brands including several from yachting's two biggest conglomerates – France's Groupe Beneteau and USA's Brunswick Group. In 1992, Jeanneau became one of the first foreign companies to build boats in the country.

Most yachts are built in four northern regions: Western Pomerania (Szczecin), Pomerania (Gdansk, Gdynia), Warmia-Masuria (Ostroda, Olecko, Gizycko) and Podlasie (Augustow) to the east.

An hour's drive southeast of Gdansk, Groupe Beneteau has a huge facility in Ostroda that builds Beneteau and Jeanneau boats. In 2018, Groupe Beneteau added a second facility in Poland – and another brand – when it bought Delphia Yachts, one of the country's biggest

yacht builders and now focused on motor boats at its Olecko facility.

Brunswick brands like Sea Ray, Bayliner and Quicksilver are also built in Poland, while other foreign companies with boats built in the country include Germany's Hanse, Denmark's X-Yachts, Norway's Windy and Askeladden, and Finland's Axopar and Saxdor.

THIRD POLBOAT FESTIVAL

International brands at this year's Polboat Yachting Festival included the likes of Nimbus, Bayliner, Saxdor and Windy, but the show is a far bigger occasion for local builders such as Parker, Northman, Balt, Cobrey and emerging companies including D-Boat, Vulcan, Nautic and VTS.

Parker showed four models, Cobrey showed three including its 50 Fly, Vulcan presented its JP 47, Balt debuted its flagship 37 Grand, while the Northman 1200 was among other boats in the water.

In the mid-1980s, Parker entered the leisure boat business in Poland as the distributor for Mercury Marine then started building boats in the 1990s, initially focused on RIBs. Today, the company has about 1,000 staff split between building Parker boats up to 38ft and for foreign brands including Nimbus and



The third Polboat Yachting Festival featured about 100 boats at the Marina Yacht Park in Gdynia, a sister city of Gdansk



A 60 Sunreef Power hosts the opening ceremony, where Polboat President Sebastian Nietupski addresses the audience

Windy at its Model Art boatyard.

Meanwhile, D-Boat co-founder Szymon Zielinski was proud to announce 16 sales to date – including four to the US – of the 37-knot Diamond 550, an impressive return since exhibiting the first hull at the show's predecessor in Gdynia in 2019. Back then, Zielinski was a first-time boatbuilder and part-time DJ, but is now fully focused on D-Boat, proudly making the step from start-up to production builder.

This year's exhibition also offered lively watersports demos and a variety of toys including SeaDoo and Kawasaki water scooters, RIBs from Sportis, Airslide hovercraft, as well as Awake jetboards and Hobie kayaks presented by Passionautica. Mercedes-Benz BMG Goworowski was among the event's luxury partners, while Marina Yacht Park owned by PHN Group was a strategic partner.

"Poland is one of the world's best-performing exporters of boats and yachts, so it became obvious that we should have an exhibition like the Polboat Yachting Festival," said Michal Bak, General Secretary of Polboat, whose representatives are attending this year's Cannes Yachting Festival and Monaco Yacht Show, before hosting a booth at Metstrade in Amsterdam in November.

"The third edition was a huge success. We see a lot of improvement compared to last year and have been receiving great feedback from exhibitors and visitors. This year, we brought in more luxury brands and international exhibitors, and truly believe next year will provide an even greater experience for visitors."

LUXURY CATS FROM SUNREEF

A Sunreef catamaran hosted the opening ceremony for the second year, with the 60 Power playing the role a year after *Double Happiness*, the Sunreef 80 sailing cat that was the star of last year's show.

Like Galeon, Sunreef is hosting a notable anniversary this year, having been founded in the Gdansk Shipyard in 2002 by Francis Lapp. The French entrepreneur, who has also held Polish citizenship since 2014, has overseen the company's growth to become the world's premier builder of large luxury catamarans, highlighted by the launch of the 100 Sunreef Power late last year.

As the company celebrates its 20th anniversary, Lapp reflected on why he chose to build in Poland, where he had already been



Cobrey, founded in 2004, showed three motor yachts including its 50 Fly and 42 Fly; Mercedes-Benz cars from BMG Goworowski, among the show's luxury partners



The four-day show featured regular water toy demos and trials (left); Polish builder Vulcan presented its stylish JP 47 (right)

working for a decade before building his first luxury sailing cat, the Sunreef 74 *Che* launched in 2003.

“Poland has a lot of experience in boat building,” Lapp said. “When I started Sunreef Yachts, I was already established in Poland with my business. I knew the country’s potential and had no doubt that it was the right place to start building yachts.”

Sunreef currently employs about 2,000 staff across its Gdansk Shipyard site and its new 80,000sqm site further east along the Martwa Wisla river.

Over the summer, during a tour of the two shipyards, Sunreef was building 36 yachts simultaneously, a remarkable figure considering the best-selling models are the Sunreef 80 sailing cat and 80 Sunreef Power, while the smallest models are the Sunreef 50 and 60, and 60 Sunreef Power.

Furthermore, the complexity of models has increased with the launch of the Eco range, in which an advanced solar-panel ‘skin’ is integrated into the hull sides, superstructure, hard top roof and even the mast on sailing models. Other green tech on Eco models can include hydrogenation, wind turbines, ultra-light lithium batteries, and sustainable materials used in the finish and décor or even superstructure. This year, Sunreef has launched the first 80 Eco and

60 Eco sailing models, as the builder works hard to keep up with demand.

“The Gdansk Shipyard has a great reputation and has access to many skilled workers, although finding enough workforce for both sites has been a challenge recently,” Lapp said. “That’s why we employ many workers from abroad and are on a constant search for more staff.”

SUPERYACHTS FROM CONRAD

Conrad Shipyard, named after Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad, was founded in Gdansk in 2003, a year after Sunreef. However, it was actually a new luxury-yacht business for the Marine Projects shipyard established in 1989 and today the companies have about 400 staff between them.

Mikolaj Krol, son-in-law of the shipyard’s owner, is CEO of Conrad and has overseen the company’s up and downs for almost 20 years.

“I was green when I started, but my father-in-law had faith in me running the company. If I had known at that time how hard the work would be, I would never have done it,” laughed Krol, who was initially an architect. “Anyway, after many years of superhuman



The 60 Sunreef Power in front of the tented booths, which offered boating accessories, clothing, navigation equipment, and yacht financing and insurance



Conrad's 44m C144S features a plumb bow; the first hull is expected to be delivered to its Swiss owner in early 2023, with a second hull to follow for a French client

effort by everyone, I'm proud of where we are. We've outlasted some competitors elsewhere in Europe."

There's good reason for his optimism. Conrad's business started with the 27m Bill Dixon-designed *Escape S* (now *Chillin*) launched in 2005 and has included a hugely diverse range of custom motor and sailing yachts, refits and short-lived series.

The early years also included two stylish 15m tugboats developed with Polish designer Juliusz Strawinski, the jet-powered Capo series of aluminium motorboats, and the 55-knot SUC Docksta line of luxuriously finished patrol-boat-style vessels built for Middle East clients.

Later models included *Lunar* (2013), the 35m aluminium ketch motorsailer, and *Bellkara* (2016), a 28m aluminium sloop, while in 2014 the yard completed a refit of the classic 46m steel schooner *Malcolm Miller* launched in 1968.

However, it was the 40m *Viatoris* for a repeat client that put Conrad on the luxury superyacht map, especially following its world premiere at the 2018 Monaco Yacht Show. Featuring an exterior by UK-based firm Raymond Langton and naval architecture by Dutch studio Diana Yacht Design, the C133 model won multiple awards and inspired the upcoming C144S that has received not one but two orders.

Like the 393GT *Viatoris*, the C144S is designed by Raymond Langton and Diana Yacht Design but is bigger in every way, with an

overall length of 44m, a beam of 8.9m and a volume of 494GT. The S is for 'straight bow', with the plumb bow adding extra volume for a yacht with an owner's suite, four VIP guest cabins, four double cabins for crew and a captain's cabin on the bridge.

Notably, the C144S is the first Conrad yacht to not feature interior design by Krol himself, with Italy's m2atelier taking on the role. The first hull is due to launch in October and handed over to its Swiss owner by the end of the year, while the second hull sold to a French client will launch in mid-2023.

"The C144S is like a big sister of the C133," Krol said. "The first hull is for someone who liked *Viatoris*, but wanted a more modern silhouette, a plumb bow and more volume for crew. Both have timeless designs and I think both *Viatoris* and the C144S will still look great in years to come."

After years of one-off superyachts, Conrad will mark its 20th anniversary in 2023 with ongoing production of their biggest model to date while promoting the C133, C133S, C144S, C155 and other designs on the board.

"We're now in a position to start building customised superyachts on a more regular production scale," said Krol. "However, there's a special spirit at Conrad because we're not too big and every client can still discuss everything with me directly. I'm personally connected with each yacht – they're like my babies." ✎



The 40m *Viatoris*, Conrad's first C133 model, is among Poland's most famous superyachts, won multiple awards and inspired the new C144S