

# 2026 Minneapolis Innovation Award Winners Announced

The NMMA and Boating Writers International (BWI) announced the winners of the [2026 Minneapolis Innovation Awards](#), recognizing groundbreaking new consumer marine products, during the new Breakfast Briefing and Awards Presentation on January 22 at the [Discover Boating® Minneapolis Boat Show](#), in partnership with Progressive® Insurance.

The Minneapolis Innovation Awards honor manufacturers and suppliers who bring new, innovative products in the boating industry to market. This year's program honored six Innovation Award winners across four categories – one in the aluminum and non-fiberglass fishing boats category, one in the fiberglass category, two in the pontoon category and two in the furnishings category.

“We’re proud to recognize the recipients of the 2026 Minneapolis Innovation Awards, whose products and technologies continue to move our industry forward,” said Darren Envall, show manager. “These innovations, along with dozens of new marine products on display at the 2026 Discover Boating Minneapolis Boat Show, give attendees a premier opportunity to explore, compare and shop the latest in boating.”

In the aluminum and non-fiberglass fishing boat category, **Princecraft received the Innovation Award for the Platinum 190.**

“The bold new silhouette on the Platinum 190 with a cut nose at the bow creates added well-used space in the stern, helping this 19-foot premium aluminum fishing boat feel like a much larger boat,” said judge Brady Kay.

In the fiberglass fishing boat category, **Vexus received the Innovation Award for the DVX23s.**

“The DVX23s is loaded with innovation from its unique livewell and overall setup in the stern, to its patented Petestep hull. The flagship model from Vexus is extremely well built with extra attention focused on its details,” said judge Brady Kay.

In the furnishings category, dual winners **Barletta Boats received the Innovation Award for the 2026 Lusso 25UA Seakeeper Collaboration, and Premier Marine received the Innovation Award for their Command Anchor.**

Judge Bill Gius said, “To help bring a smoother ride, higher performance and greater maneuvering control, Barletta Boats has partnered with Seakeeper to develop a true

first in the pontoon segment. The Seakeeper Ride features a digitally controlled trim system at the stern of two logs, which respond to proprietary gain algorithms in fractions of a second.”

Judge Robert Beringer, “No one likes dirty anchors! So often anchors on pontoon boats are an afterthought, something that needs to be clumsily retrieved and heaved overboard; and retrieving it can be dirty and difficult. But Premier Marine has eliminated this onerous chore with their digitally controlled Delta plow anchor that fully deploys from the bow foot controls or helm and fully retracts into its own locker within the PTX center tube.”

In the pontoon boat category, dual winners, **Godfrey was honored with the Innovation Award for the Sanpan, and Viaggio received the Innovation Award for their Lago Z24B.**

Judge Bill Gius said, “The Godfrey Sanpan exhibits many of the most contemporary features of what is expected by the discriminating pontoon boat buyer in 2026. Power options, controls, creature comforts, electronics and sound technologies make it an exemplary platform for all around boating enjoyment.”

Judge Robert Beringer, “In finding the right pontoon boat in today's market it's all about the details. The judges were very impressed by the Lago Z's roomy seating, electric grill, lighted cup holders and fully functioning galley (with hidden cutting board!) Ready for a day of family fun on the lake or river.”

**Judges for the 2026 Minneapolis Innovation Awards are:**

**Brady Kay (Chair):** Kay is the executive editor of Pontoon & Deck Boat magazine and has been at the helm of the publication for 25 years. During his tenure, Brady has tested and reviewed countless pontoon and deck boats, traveled to all 50 states for feature profiles, and has taken thousands of photos. He served three years as president of Boating Writers International.

**Robert Beringer:** Robert Beringer is a Florida-based freelance marine journalist & photographer, and a member of Boating Writers International. He holds a USCG 100-ton Merchant Mariner Credential and has logged over 28,000 miles under sail in the Great Lakes, East Coast, and Bahamas. His articles regularly appear in most national boating magazines, and he serves as judge for BWI's annual writing contest and Marine Marketers of America Neptune Awards.

**Bill Gius:** Gius has been in the marine industry for over three decades. He has worked in brand and product management at Pabst Brewing, Mercury Marine, Kohler Company, Turning Point Propellers and iboats.com. He owns “Country Consulting,” a marine industry consulting firm recently retired from working with Great Lakes Marine

Marketing, a long-standing, Midwest manufacturers rep company. Gius is also a contributing writer to Pontoon & Deck Boat magazine.