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BOOT DÜSSELDORF 2026 PUTS GLOBAL WATER SPORT INDUSTRY ON COURSE

Good sales climate, excellent atmosphere and international flair in the Düsseldorf exhibition halls

There was an excellent atmosphere in the exhibition halls when boot 2026, the world's largest water sports trade fair, recently closed its doors in Düsseldorf, Germany, after nine days: "After the difficult past few years with sluggish sales, our exhibitors are back on track. They report very good discussions and business deals at their stands. boot 2026 has once again presented itself as the international beacon and

driving force of the industry,” said Marius Berlemann, COO Messe Düsseldorf. The increased internationality of the visitors and the high proportion of trade visitors distinguish it as the leader for the entire maritime industry. Berlemann added: “boot 2026 thus bids farewell as a powerful catalyst, international industry meeting place and emotional highlight. The business deals are made here in Düsseldorf!” Almost 1,500 manufacturers, dealers and destinations from 68 nations presented their products at boot 2026.

With over 200,000 visitors from more than 110 countries, boot 2026 recorded a slight increase in visitor numbers this year. The percentage of international visitors traveling to Düsseldorf is especially remarkable: about a quarter of them came from other European countries and overseas. boot 2026 also achieved an outstanding score in terms of visitor satisfaction, with almost 95% enthusiastic about what the exhibitors had to offer and stating that they had achieved their visit goals. Interest in the sailing boat offerings at the trade fair also rose significantly, with 25 class associations among others. boot Director Petros Michelidakis, stated: “We were excellently positioned in the sailing boat and yacht sector this year. Almost all the global players were on board with their boat premieres. In addition, we were able to attract innovative new manufacturers, with many boats being presented for the first time here in Düsseldorf.”

The range of motorboats in all classes and sizes, as well as engines and accessories, was also in high demand. Numerous boat premieres, technical innovations and new products demonstrated the strength of the industry. In addition to interest in new boats, water sports such as paddling and surfing as well as all information and presentations related to vacations on and around the water, were particularly popular. Petros Michelidakis: “This year’s vacation and charter presentation in the Destinations & Boatlife Hall was very well received by visitors. The diverse holiday regions simply whet the appetite for the most beautiful weeks of the year. Many of our visitors were also inspired by our wide range of houseboats and motorboat and sailing boat charters and made bookings on the spot at the trade fair.”

Once again, the diving halls drew large crowds this year, with their huge range of equipment, accessories and high-tech gear, as well as the Dive Center and the presentation of the ‘Dive Award’, which now has a wide reach and international winners. The program on stage and the action in the diving tower were absolute highlights.

For many water sports fans, their sport is also closely linked to marine and nature conservation. Accordingly, the trade fair’s ‘love your ocean’ campaign in cooperation with the German Ocean Foundation,

the information stands of the associations and institutions, and the international marine conservation award 'ocean tribute', which was presented for the eighth time this year, are in high demand. This year's winner is the 'One Ocean Planet Foundation' from Spain.

The boot sustainability forum blue innovation dock (bid) in Hall 10, in cooperation with the European Boating Industry (EBI) in Brussels, is paving the way for the future of a sustainable, innovative and competitive maritime economy. At boot 2026, it was a well-attended forum for exchange between international politics, industry and research.

Petros Michelidakis explained: "We water sports enthusiasts love water and want to protect it. That's why marine conservation projects are particularly well received here. The unmistakable boot spirit also makes the trade fair much more than a product show – it is an experience space, a dialogue platform and a community meeting place all at once. Throughout the entire duration of the trade fair, there was an electrifying mood and a special atmosphere in the exhibition halls: open, inspiring and filled with genuine enthusiasm for the element of water – perfectly in keeping with the trade fair motto We love water." The "boot for school" program was also fully booked. In this program, students learned about the sea and water in the "Maritime Classroom"—in cooperation with the Aquazoo Löbbbecke Museum - and were also able to try out paddling, sailing, surfing, and diving.

boot 2026 was the focus of international media attention. 1,810 journalists and content creators from 49 countries reported on the world's largest water sports trade fair in their media and TV channels.

International industry spokespersons and exhibitors gave a positive assessment of boot 2026:

Henning Mittelman, President of the German Maritime Industry Association (VMWD):

"Our association, the VMWD, is the conceptual sponsor of boot. The trade fair offers our members the perfect marketplace to reach customers from all over the world. At the same time, we find it the right place to cultivate our networks in the industry and also to show representatives from politics and administration the breadth of the maritime industry in Germany.

Our member companies have given us very positive feedback on this year's boot: customer interest was high, and many were able to close sales. The market environment was difficult in 2025, so it is all the more gratifying to see that many exhibitors are now taking home orders and contracts. This successful boot therefore marks a good start to the 2026 financial year for our member companies!"

Yann Masselot, Chief of brands & communication officer Beneteau Group

"Once again boot brought an amazing quality of buyers with over 50% of visitors from foreign countries. Our powerboat brands have achieved a very good performance while our participation with our four sailboat brands has confirmed our leadership both with monohulls and catamarans. Whether you are powerboat passionate, a diver, a sailor, a fisherman or a surfer, boot offers by far the best visitor experience you can find."

Norbert Leifeld, CEO BAVARIA YACHTS

"At the end of boot 2026, we sensed a very positive mood in all halls – among visitors, exhibitors and our partners at the stand. This is not yet a new hype, but a clear upward trend. We were able to meet many existing customers and make numerous new contacts on all days. We would like to thank the boot trade fair team for their excellent organization – we are already looking forward to 2027.

We achieved our trade fair goal: we showed what Bavaria Yachts stands for – quality 'Made in Germany', a strong partner network and reliable solutions in service, financing and insurance. All this with the aim of giving our customers security and the clear feeling that they are in the best hands with us. Overall, we are very satisfied with how the trade fair went."

Maxim Neumann, Vice President Hanse Yachts

"At HanseYachts AG's successful return to boot Düsseldorf, we proudly presented the Hanse, Sealine, Fjord and Moody brands. HanseYachts AG exhibited a total of three Hanse yachts, including the flagship Hanse 590, the Hanse 460 and the Hanse 360. The presentation was complemented by the Moody 41 DS, the Sealine C390 and C335, and the Fjord 41 XL.

We welcomed numerous existing customers as well as many new prospects to our stand. Despite the continuing challenging market situation, our expectations were met. Overall, we are seeing a slow but noticeable stabilization of the market and are optimistic about the 2026 season."

Erna Russi, CEO Saxdor Yachts

"Thank you boot 2026! We had amazing show, great crowd every single day, sold lots of boats and very helpful and timely support from organizers! We loved our new location in Hall 1 and will for sure be back again next year!"

Hans Roelants, General Manager International Sea Ray / Boston Whaler / NAVAN

"Our premium brands, Sea Ray, Boston Whaler and NAVAN will be closing off another successful boot Düsseldorf. We know that the volumes are under pressure, but the mix is very strong. Dealers are very positive and are looking forward to a good season! We are also of course very proud to have won the Powerboat of the Year award for our Sea Ray SDX270 SURF and the NAVAN S30 won the award from Motor Boat and Yachting."

Antonio Cressi, CEO Cressi-Sub

"Our conclusion is very positive. As always, we met numerous regular customers in Düsseldorf and cultivated old contacts. Of course, it's also important for us to win new customers – and Düsseldorf is exactly the right place for that. The exciting international encounters were particularly noteworthy, and we are naturally delighted with the increase in sales figures compared to last year. As expected, boot Düsseldorf

was a great trade fair with a wonderful atmosphere and a very high-quality audience. The good results at boot Düsseldorf give us momentum for this year, in which we are celebrating our company's 80th anniversary."

Natascha Heinemann, Managing Director of the German Sport Divers Association

"We are very happy with our participation in boot 2026 and see a slight recovery in the industry, which makes us optimistic about the future. We are already looking forward to the new joint placement of all diving exhibitors with the Dive Center and the 'love your ocean' stand in Hall 13 at boot 2027. This year, we presented our new 'Mermaids' initiative, with which we want to set up more courses by women for women, both in diving and in technology. There was enormous interest in this, and we will be inviting people to a large women's diving festival in the summer."

Jarkko Pajusalo, CEO Finnish Marine Industries Federation Finnboat

"Finland was for the first time presented not only with boats and boating equipment, but also as a boating destination. We were very satisfied with the set-up and believe that the synergies of this holistic approach exceed the additional resources that it requires. Finnish boats are well known, and our boat builders were pleased to meet customers and dealers from a wide variety of markets. The market has been challenging past several years, but the activity and deals made in boot Düsseldorf show that the tide is slowly turning for better. Interest towards boating in Finland was overwhelming and proved how unique our archipelago and lakeland areas are worldwide. Boot exceeded our expectations, which means that we may need to increase our presence even further in the next edition."

Bernd-Thomas Hoffmann, Managing Director Bukh Bremen GmbH

"boot was once again a complete success, and we saw a high number of visitors at our stand. We made a great many high-quality contacts and saw a fantastic mix of trade visitors and end consumers. We also had a large number of international customers, mainly from the Netherlands, France, Spain and Eastern Europe. Concrete deals and good investments – boot Düsseldorf is operating at a high level. We are well placed to judge this, as we are celebrating our 50th anniversary this year and have a long tradition with boot! As a location in Germany, the trade fair here in Düsseldorf is unrivalled. If you want to make your presence felt, this is the place to be. boot Düsseldorf continues to be important for us and the entire industry."

The next staging of boot will take place from January 23 – 31, 2027 in Düsseldorf, Germany. For further information on visiting or exhibiting at boot 2027, contact Messe Düsseldorf North America; Telephone: (312) 781-5180; E-mail: info@mdna.com; Visit www.boot.com and www.mdna.com. Follow us on <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mdnachicago/>

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