

Boatbuilders: Rise in home holidays helps boost domestic sales

Lockdown fatigue and another long, hot summer has seen a surge in demand at the smaller end of the market, though sales of boats over 12m remain subdued

WORDS: BELINDA SNELL



Interboat's Intender 950 has sold well since its launch in late 2019

Lockdown fatigue helped boost sales of small dayboats in the Netherlands this summer. New and used models sold in high numbers as boaters shunned long-distance vacations to spend their holidays at home. But demand was mostly limited to the lower end of the market – small open sloops, fast sportsboats and even sailboats under 12m in length sold well. Sales of big boats, however, were down considerably, although as always there were a few exceptions.

Aquatec Industries, based in Friesland, is one of Holland's leading sloop producers, responsible for the Antaris, Maril and Makma brands. "Compared to last year, our sales are up by around 30%," Aquatec owner Klaas Schiphof told *IBI*. "The pandemic started for us in March

and in the beginning the fear was palpable among many employees. We had to pre-quarantine a few who had been in contact with people infected with Covid-19, but fortunately we did not have any employees who were infected themselves.

"Our company is now operating as normal," he adds, "and sales are good."

Aquatec introduced three new models at the height of the crisis – the Antaris X, a 10m cabin boat with all mod cons, and the sporty Makma Cayos 27 and 28 luxury tenders.

The Antaris X is a CE Category B sloop with a spacious and modern interior, superior sailing characteristics and a high-quality finish. It has four berths, storage space in the stern, and separate toilet and shower facilities, making it suitable for offshore cruising.

QUALITY, COMFORT AND LUXURY

"A trend that has been noticeable in the past year is that customers are purchasing boats with more luxurious accessories. For example, larger navigation screens and jet thrusters instead of normal bow thrusters," Schiphof says. "In general, it can be said that our customers go for quality, comfort and luxury."

The interiors onboard the new Cayos 27 and 28 also exude quality and comfort, with a large double bed, separate toilet facilities, a functional galley with hob, sink and refrigerator, a spacious sun bed and luxury panelling throughout. Suitable for both inland and coastal waters, both units offer good sailing characteristics and are capable of speeds of up to 50km/h.

At Interboat, sales of new and used sloops, tenders and cabin cruisers are 30% up on last year's levels as boaters took to the water this summer in record droves. "Because of the coronavirus, ➔

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people spent their holidays at home. This was the case in the Netherlands as well as Germany and the UK,” says Interboat director Jerry Schuiten, referencing two of the company’s main export markets. “Good weather over the last three seasons was also good for sales.”

Apart from a few late deliveries of parts at the height of the pandemic, Schuiten told *IBI* that Covid-19 has had minimal impact on production so far. The company continues to have 20 boats in build at any one time at its 7,000m² yard in Zwartsluis, around 85km northeast of Amsterdam, where staff numbers remain unchanged at 50. In 2021, Interboat expects to deliver 175 new units, of which 25% will be exported. “This percentage is stable,” says Schuiten.

Interboat’s latest new model is the 9.5m Intender 950 which launched at the 2019 HISWA In-Water Boat Show in Lelystad last September. Sporty yet elegant, it’s a mix between a tender and a cruiser with plenty of outdoor space – the perfect antidote in these Covid times. “The introduction of the Intender 950 last year has been a great success,” says

A Pelagic 77 is currently in build at KM Yachtbuilders in Makkum



Aquateq is one of Holland’s leading sloop producers, responsible for the Antaris, Maril and Makma brands



Schuiten. “The enormous cockpit space with aft sunbed in combination with its good looks made it very popular.”

The Intender 950 claims to be the ultimate in luxury boating with outdoor bar and cooking facilities, luxurious sofa, a choice of helm position (midships or to stern) and a comfortable cabin with double bed and wet room. Inboard diesel engine options range from 65hp-320hp, giving speeds of up to 48km/h. It is rated RCD Category B for offshore cruising.

“More focus on day/weekend boats with low maintenance are what our customers are looking for,” Schuiten adds.

In contrast, Van den Hoven Jachtbouw in Waspik builds semi-custom, steel-hulled yachts from 15m-24m under the Executive line and is now building in aluminium following the launch last year of the Rene van der Velden-designed Voyager range of all-aluminium, fast displacement vessels aimed at a more international clientele. Holland is a major producer of aluminium and steel-hulled motoryachts, most of which are exported to neighbouring Germany, Belgium or France, although Spain, Sweden, the UK and increasingly the US are popular destinations too.

“Our sales are the same as last year with three units sold,” Michelle van den Hoven told *IBI*. “What is interesting, however, is the fact that the yachts are bigger and more complex, and two of them are flybridges. After three hot summers we’re seeing an upward trend in orders and requests for flybridge yachts.”

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Van den Hoven Jachtbouw says the pandemic has had little effect on business so far. The company currently has two yachts in build and the construction package of the third will be delivered in November. All three units will launch in 2021.

“We are currently working with Rene van der Velden on a new yacht in our Voyager line. We see the demand for aluminium, semi-displacement yachts increasing at 15m, so we are working on a very sporty Voyager 50,” van den Hoven explains. “In 2021 we will come up with the definite design of this yacht, but the plans are to launch it in 2022.”

Van den Hoven is also working on a restyled version of an Executive 1850 flybridge in consultation with the client, giving it a more modern look with increased interior space. Unlike series builders, van den Hoven offers customers the opportunity to be fully involved in the yacht’s entire build process. “Together with the client we build what they like,”

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says van den Hoven. “At this moment it’s not that different from previous years – modern and sleek. What does stand out, however, is the demand for flybridge yachts.”

Business is also operating as normal at KM Yachtbuilders, a family-run yard best-known for its Bestevaer line of custom-built aluminium sailing yachts from 48ft-100ft.

Company owner Eeuwe Kooi told *IBI* that KM typically sells around 4-5 yachts per year, a level that has so far gone unchanged. Besides new builds, the yard also focuses on refits and large maintenance projects – a side of the business that is said to be going strong and showing no signs of abatement.

SUPPLY CHAIN BACK TO NORMAL

“There were some delays in supplied goods from affected countries such as Italy and the UK in the beginning of the pandemic, but that has smoothed itself out now,” says Kooi.

“We’ve had two prominent yachts launched this year, the first being our Bestevaer 53 Motoryacht. We wanted to broaden our market and target groups by adding a motoryacht to our portfolio.

“Sailing yachts have become less popular in recent years, whereas the opposite is true for motoryachts,” Kooi explains. “With our motoryachts we try to appeal to former sailors who still want to be out on the water but for whom sailing is too intensive, or perhaps they want to explore more inland waters or new territories.

“We also want to target current motorboaters who are looking for a new yacht, or who want to start exploring places like Scandinavia, Scotland or even Iceland but don’t feel comfortable doing so with a GRP motoryacht.

“We think it is a cool looking design, thanks to the people of Dykstra Naval Architects,” he adds. “The first Bestevaer 53 Motoryacht was a demo and we have already sold it to one of our previous sailing yacht owners.”

KM’s second launch of the year was a one-off custom Bestevaer 72 for a family wanting to explore high-latitude destinations such as Iceland or Greenland as well as the Med or Caribbean. The all-aluminium yacht has no paint on the hull or decks for low maintenance and is fitted with a carbon rig and a lift keel, ensuring fast and comfortable sailing conditions.

As *IBI* went to press, KM Yachtbuilders had five yachts under construction – a Pelagic 77, due for delivery next year to well-known skipper and adventurer Skip Novak, as well as a Bestevaer 45, a Bestevaer 53 motoryacht, a Bestevaer 53 sailing yacht and a 56ft Ed Joy design for launch this year.

The company is also busy working on three large refit projects involving a 32m catamaran, a Maxi 80 and a 60ft Dykstra design. **IBI**



Van den Hoven Jachtbouw delivered this Executive 1700 Mk2 in July

An advertisement for CLION-MARINE air conditioning systems. The top half features the brand name 'CLION-MARINE' in large, white, bold letters against a blue sky background. Below this, a motor yacht is shown from a rear perspective, with two large, white, rectangular air conditioning units mounted on the deck. The units have 'CLION-MARINE' written on them. The bottom half of the ad shows a close-up of a white air conditioning unit with various ports and a fan. To the right of the unit, the text 'HIGH QUALITY AIRCONDITIONING SYSTEMS BASED ON INVERTER TECHNOLOGY' is written in blue, bold letters. At the bottom, the CLION-MARINE logo and the website 'WWW.CLION-MARINE.COM' are displayed.