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# MARINE INDUSTRYNEWS

FOR THE MARINE TRADE | APRIL 2025 | ISSUE 15

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Marine brands discuss the red tape and costs of Brexit



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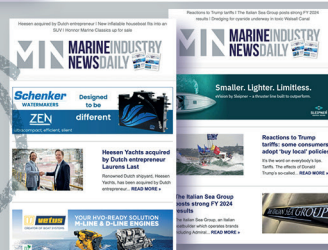


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As this issue goes to print, trade tariffs threaten to cast a long shadow over some parts of the manufacturing industry. While the ramifications of President Trump's trade policies will draw into sharper focus in the coming months, marine brands are in preparation mode, hoping to weather the storm.

In this issue of *Marine Industry News* magazine, we look at another policy that caused seismic shifts of its own - Brexit. Three companies discuss the red tape and real costs, and share the realities of what Brexit has meant for their businesses.

Is there room for another trade marine fair? Seaquip's organiser reveals why the new 2026 event in Milan is attracting an untapped market of component producers and marine brands on page 15.

On page 11, Zparq's CEO reveals how the electric motor company intends to carve its niche and grow. The GMBA sets out its market report on page 19 with a look at Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Marine safety companies discuss the current challenges and opportunities in their sectors on page 25. Plus, D-Marin talks rapid growth, marina clusters and Mediterranean strategy on page 22. Finally, hydrogen power is put in the spotlight on page 29.

The *MIN* team looks forward to seeing readers at the upcoming spring and European shows. Share your news with the editorial team at [info@marineindustrynews.co.uk](mailto:info@marineindustrynews.co.uk)

We hope you enjoy this issue.

*Chantal*





Regulations, red tape and spiralling costs associated with Brexit are angering marine businesses who say policies and bureaucracy is putting manufacturers in a chokehold



Kevin Rough (left), Daniamant's CEO, doesn't mince his words about the pain that Brexit has put the UK's marine manufacturers, importers and exporters through. "The movement of goods into the EU has become more bureaucratic, with more paperwork and more cost," states Rough.

"Brexit has resulted in more red tape not less, that is not hearsay, that is a fact. If, as a UK manufacturer, you export into the EU, you have to adhere to all applicable EU regs. So, we now basically have to adhere to EU, and UK, regulations."

Daniamant is a Denmark-based company that is best known for manufacturing safety equipment and has recently acquired Jotron's Marker and Strobe Lights. In 2006 it acquired McMurdo Survivor Location Lights, and established Daniamant UK, based in Portsmouth. That's where Rough unpicks the ongoing legislation and calculates the costs per existing – and new – product.

Post-Brexit, EU legislation was basically mirrored into UK legislation, Rough explains. But, since 1 January 2023, any EU marine equipment directive (MED) approved safety product (commonly referred to as Ships Wheel approval) also has to be approved to the new UK marine equipment regulation (MER), known as Red Ensign approval if it's to be used on a UK-flagged commercial vessel – whether it's a merchant ship, passenger vessel, fishing vessel or commercially operated leisure craft.

That all seemed straightforward at first read, but a couple of years on? "Now the EU and UK regs are becoming out of sync in both date of issue, and content. It is more and more difficult to adhere to both," Rough says.

#### Brexit's impact on marine safety legislation

In 2024 Daniamant updated all its certificates in line with the 8th edition of MED. That came into force in September 2024. So now Daniamant can show Declarations of Conformity to customers (and surveyors). But meanwhile the UK's Red Ensign was four months behind



Courtesy of Cannes Yachting Festival/Kelagopian



Thermaxflex from Rooster. The technical watersports gear supplier opened and subsequently closed its German warehouse





**“It feels that you are penalised for innovation. The more products a manufacturer has, the more the regulatory, certification and audit costs... There is a competitive disadvantage to following all the legislation — due to costs involved to be compliant.”**

Kevin Rough, Daniamant

*Women's supertherm clothing from Rooster*

MED, with an implementation date of 31 January 2025.

This means that Daniamant has to update its certificates again to reflect MER's latest version when it comes out.

“Ironically,” says Rough, “we don’t have to update our certificates as the version of the MED or MER that we approved the product to at the time is valid until the certificate expires in five years (normal expiry date). But, in practice, the customer and surveyor demand to see the latest regulations reflected on all paperwork pertaining to the product approval.”

Making matters worse, Rough notes that there is a new proposed MSN 1874 Amendment 11. That means the UK’s MER is likely to change again mid-2025. “Some of the clauses could change, or the UK might not deem some elements of the MED relevant for MER. What was one harmonised European standard has become two standards, out of sync, more admin, more cost... and for what?” he asks.

#### **UK and EU regulations for marine products**

MED and MER aren’t the only compliances in the mix. There’s also the EU’s ATEX, which allows product to be used in atmospheres in the EU such as on chemical tankers. Now the UK’s UKEX allows the same in the UK. Then there’s the UKCA mark

which needs to be placed on equipment for potentially explosive atmospheres (UKEX), and the CE mark to be placed on equipment for potentially explosive atmospheres (ATEX).

“As a simple example, some of our products have so many references and logos on for compliance it is difficult to even see them,” Rough says.

He cites time spent reading, and then understanding, and then implementing the paperwork around the regulations, as onerous.

As an added factor in the Brexit mire, Rough mentions notified bodies (NBs). These are specialised entities who look after harmonising testing standards and certification on behalf of the EU. After Brexit, Daniamant had to appoint a UK NB to issue new certificates for the above UK regulations. But, the company also had to utilise a NB in Europe for the above EU Directives, which meant reissuing all Daniamant certificates so they originated in the EU.

“This was, and still is, a significant cost,” says Rough. “Each product requires certification and we have approx 34 products at approximately €3,000 per certificate. Each

product requires a declaration of conformity (we cannot make a dual declaration), double the administration for us as a manufacturer and for our customers who legally have to keep the declarations.”

#### **Brexit penalises UK marine manufacturers for being innovative**

Rough calculates that Brexit’s certification costs are now “basically double what they were.” Plus, there are now two standards to audit against – so those costs have doubled too.

“It feels that you are penalised for innovation. The more products a manufacturer has, the more the regulatory, certification and audit costs.” He fears this will stifle innovation across the marine industry. And, to add insult to economic injury, Rough says no one is policing the regulations. “We still see products on UK-

flagged vessels that do not comply with the new MER regs,” he says. “There is a competitive disadvantage to following all the legislation — due to costs involved to be compliant.”

But that doesn’t stop Daniamant spending the time and money to do the right thing. “You have to be compliant and hope your customers are also

compliant,” Rough says, but he notes that not all are, especially from lower-cost countries.

Part of the problem is lack of information and advice. “You have to find out things yourself – there’s no industry feedback into what works.” With this in mind, Rough advocates joining trade associations where upcoming legislation is communicated to members. He lists personal associations such as IOD, IEMA, IOSH, IoE, CMI, etc and trade associations such as ILAMA, CIRM, and RTCM.

#### **The rising costs of Brexit for marine manufacturers**

“Brexit also had an influence in the acquisition of Jotron’s marker lights,” Rough details. “We decided to put the manufacture and supply of these new products into Denmark, and not the UK.” The majority of the customers for these products are based in the EU and if we had moved manufacture to the UK, those EU customers would now be treating the sale as an import. That would come with associated increased costs and paperwork to import from the UK. By moving it to Denmark our customers can still enjoy the free movement of goods.

“The promise of customs’-free, and friction-free, trade between UK and EU has not happened,” says Rough. He says some of Daniamant UK’s smaller customers – importing perhaps £100 an order – are now finding some of the costs doubling.







Kevin Rough, CEO, Daniamant



Barton Race kit



Women's Thermaflex clothing from Rooster



Barton Marine at Metstrade



Barton still exhibits in Europe in spite of red tape

Thus they've switched alliances to competitors in Europe to avoid costs (such as custom duties).

Although many of Daniamant's products do not attract duty, there are also increased costs due to new tariffs. "The main increase in customs' costs comes from the 'rule of origin' tariff. That applies to the import of goods from the EU which were originally made, or contain components made, outside of the EU. The increased cost of customs duties places further burden on UK businesses.

"Importing goods from the EU has also become far more complicated and time-consuming for UK businesses due to the bureaucracy involved. Daniamant has Authorised Economic Operator status, this is a decision we took to help make border processes more efficient as a pre-approved business recognised as low risk (another cost however)," Rough explains.

Authorised Economic Operator status is an internationally recognised standard. It shows a business's role in the international supply chain is secure and has customs control procedures that meet set criteria.

"I can see how Brexit has not impacted many organisations on a micro basis, but on a macro basis – those who previously and currently deal with international trade and regulations have, in my opinion, seen no benefit," he concludes.

## Barton Marine vocal over red tape and rocketing costs



Barton Marine's CEO, Suzanne Blaustone (left), has also been vocal about the disastrous impact Brexit has had on marine businesses.

"Brexit is the most devastating form of self-harm... and has had a negative financial effect on the UK manufacturers, retailers and food providers since its inception," says Blaustone.

Speaking out against the chaos of the carnet system, the costs involved of exhibiting in the EU and the continued detrimental affect that Brexit is having on marine businesses, Barton Marine is finding the UK's red tape much more onerous than pre-Brexit.

Barton Marine has been exhibiting at European trade shows – such as Metstrade and boot Düsseldorf – for many decades.

Before Brexit, Dermot Bealey (Barton's production director) describes the process of taking a show to mainland Europe as: "Put everything in the van and drive to Calais. The only paperwork we needed was our passports."

But now? He sits dispirited,

**"Brexit is the most devastating form of self-harm... and has had a negative financial effect on the UK manufacturers."**

**Suzanne Blaustone, Barton Marine**

alongside Jeff Webber the company's chief commercial officer, as both bemoan the pernicky processes involved in taking a stand to a trade show – and getting it back.

### Applying for a carnet for exhibiting abroad

It sounds simple enough: UK companies now need to complete the carnet process in order to exhibit at an EU trade show. But the reality?

"The ATA Carnet is an international customs document that permits duty-free and tax-free temporary import of goods for up to one year", says the London Chamber of Commerce website, which hosts the process.

("To be clear, it [the carnet] isn't for a whole year," says Bealey. "You can only use it once.")

It contains pre-prepared unified customs declaration forms to be used at each customs border offices and serves as a guarantee to customs duties and taxes. It essentially means exhibitors may travel through customs without paying import duties or taxes at

each customs border office. So far, so good. Except... all the goods being displayed and all the goods being used to make the exhibition display (hand tools, exhibition parts, light bulbs, stand, back drop) – typically 400-plus items for Barton Marine – need to be itemised. Within that process, each item needs its weight, dimensions, country of origin, tariff code, quality and value and more added to the portal.

When this first came into effect, Barton spent 'a couple of days' working out how to fill it in. Now the company has a spreadsheet of the basic bits and it's a much quicker process for them, but as Bealey says: "If you're new, it's a massive hurdle to learn about, and overcome."

When all the minutiae of data has been added, the carnet (which cannot be altered once submitted) takes around two days to be issued. "It's a traditional system," says Bealey, "with a lump of paper at the end, posted to you." He waves a booklet around that contains all the details that were painstakingly submitted. "This cost £555 to produce," he says, "plus the handling fee which takes it to about £600."

After the carnet arrives, Barton then applies for two Goods Movement References – one there, one back – and permission to head for the border. "All the pre-booking paperwork needs to be done before you're allowed to set off,"





Companies lament the red tape Brexit has introduced when it comes to exhibiting in Europe. Image courtesy of boot Düsseldorf

Bealey says. That's to a car park in Sevington, Ashford. It's called an 'inland border facility'.

"There's hundreds of people there in high-vis. It's a massive waste of tax payer and private money. There are hundreds of people standing around a one-way system, but not doing anything. There are no checks of the van."

Once in place at Sevington, the goods movement documentation is checked, signed and dated. Then the waiting begins as the literal paperwork is given to the Border Force to check. That can take hours.

"You wait for a phone call saying you're clear. You get a red piece of paper and you can leave the site and go to the tunnel," says Bealey. The only physical check is at the tunnel. When exhibitors arrive in France it's a quicker and simpler process, he says. "You're signed off to go in ten minutes."

Coming back, the French have a kiosk in the Eurostar coffee area to get the paperwork signed off, but once you're in the UK it's back to the lorry park and waiting for a phone call . . . spending a couple of hours but still with no physical checks.

But that doesn't mean that Barton will stop attending European exhibitions.

"We're not actually thinking about not doing them," says Bealey. "But we're not looking to grow anymore. There's a show in Austria which we won't do, it's another £600 on a carnet. We would be doing more European shows if it wasn't for this system."

And while he concedes that it might be cheaper to use freight shifters, like Penguin, Barton would still need to produce original invoices to be added to Penguin's carnet. There is no getting away from the administration.

Bealey adds that even the extra paperwork to simply ship a package to Europe is massively more complicated.

"Red tape around the world is going up," says Webber. "Shipping delays, while paperwork is processed, is adding weeks to deliveries to Europe." He cites the shipping charges, and handling charges for collecting VAT in destination countries as adding to the burdens and notes that – thankfully – Barton Marine is a B2B business.

"Because we're B2B, we don't need to worry about VAT in Europe. But what's totally impossible is shipping to end customers. You have to be responsible for getting VAT-in, and be VAT registered in all those countries. As a B2C, Europe wouldn't be viable for us."

And that's not all. Both Bealey and Webber are horribly aware of both GPRS (General Product Safety Regulation) and CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) changes coming down the line at speed and what they'll need to put into place to make sure that – while they're doing one thing in the UK – they can still trade effectively in the EU.

"It's a disaster for the UK and the taxpayers," says Blaustone, "and for us. We have to keep stopping what we are doing and make time to comply with double the regulations. This means we're behind other country's productivity."

Barton Marine has stood staunchly and vocally against Brexit since before the referendum in 2016.

"We were one of the few UK companies that provided EU customers and distributors in 2018 with a written Brexit brief on how Barton was preparing and responding to upcoming Brexit regulations affecting our EU shipments and product support,"



Rooster's new warehouse in Germany became prohibitively expensive to run

says Blaustone. "We continue to feel that Brexit is the most devastating form of self-harm that the UK can support given the loss of free trade and borders with the EU, that it has not curbed illegal immigration – which has actually soared since the referendum vote, which did not assist or 'fix' the NHS which has declined in health service and efficiency, and has had a negative financial effect on the UK manufacturers, retailers and food providers since its inception."

Blaustone believes that the UK government has been crippled by the cost of legally re-writing all its laws – many to remain virtually the same to align with the EU.

"Britain's GNP has declined while banks and multinationals have moved their companies or resources out of the UK. We no longer are one of the largest allocation points for EU funding – so many of our prior EU funded projects for business and infrastructure upgrades have vanished," adds Blaustone.

#### Should British Marine do more?

British Marine has come in for flack from some industry quarters for not taking a firm position on Brexit and the ramifications it has for member companies.

"British Marine is taking a non-position about how Brexit has affected the industry," says Blaustone, echoing online criticism of the trade association posted after *MIN* wrote about Danaimant's MED/MER safety regulation experiences.

Although Blaustone concedes that British Marine is now offering a much higher calibre of advice, she would love to see the association take a firm stance and give up what she sees as its 'diplomatic' approach of not having an actual opinion.

**"We would be doing more European shows if it wasn't for this system."**

**Dermot Bealey,  
Barton Marine**

British Marine says it deals with a broad range of issues on behalf of its members, including Brexit and its ongoing impact on the marine industry. It recognises that Brexit affects different businesses in different ways, from regulatory compliance to market access, and says it continues to work closely with members to provide tailored support and guidance.

"Brexit is an extremely broad issue that impacts marine businesses in many different ways," says Lesley Robinson, CEO of the association. "British Marine continues to support its members by providing guidance on regulatory compliance and market access, as well as engaging with policymakers to address industry concerns. We encourage any business facing Brexit-related challenges to reach out to us directly so we can provide tailored support and advice."

For companies facing specific challenges related to Brexit regulations, British Marine encourages them to contact the organisation so they can offer advice and information relevant to their needs. This includes support around key areas such as the UK marine equipment regulations (MER) and the EU's marine equipment directive (MED), where they help businesses 'navigate compliance requirements and market entry complexities'.

The organisation says it also remains engaged with policymakers and industry stakeholders, advocating for practical solutions to the regulatory and trading challenges that impact the marine sector.





Cannes Yachting Festival. Courtesy of Kelagopian/CYF



Daniamant RL8 liferaft lighting system

**British Marine has come in for flack from some industry quarters for not taking a firm position on Brexit and the ramifications it has for member companies.**

## Maintaining stable margins is more challenging post Brexit



Luke Morrison (left), CEO of Rooster – the UK-headquartered supplier of technical watersports gear – unpicks the

reasons behind the firm opening and closing an EU warehouse in the space of four years.

“Pre-Brexit we were a relatively highly profitable company with good steady growth,” says Morrison.

But now? Like *MIN*’s recent discussions with companies such as Daniamant – livid with the cost of dual regulations – and Barton Marine – expressing outrage at the pain of taking exhibitions to the continent – Rooster is unhappy with the unnecessary Brexit burdens shackling the UK.

“Since day one we have been quite vocal about Brexit being the worst thing that could have happened,” says Morrison. But Rooster took a different pathway to Barton and Daniamant. “Very early on we decided that rather than giving up the large amount of business we have in the EU, we would invest and capitalise a new business in Germany and get a warehouse.

“We said to our European customers ‘we are going to back our business, back you and make it work, ensuring smooth product supply’.” So that’s what Rooster did. It rented a warehouse in Witten, Germany with the accompanying outlay in finance. The idea was to stock up the warehouse – in addition to premises in the UK and USA. “We knew that there’d be turmoil over the first couple of years [of Brexit] with harmonising

what stock we needed where, and how all that would work, but customers were able to get their product locally and from day one it reassured our marketplace.

“They thought ‘absolutely fantastic’.”

In the transitional year one (2020), Rooster was still sending product from the UK, but by plus one (2021), the warehouse was fully functional. “We were already up and running with our German warehouse, so all was good.” Morrison is upbeat as he points out that it was definitely the right thing to do for that period of change. “We didn’t lose any business or customers, and against our competitors it positioned us really well as well.”

### Weighing the benefits and costs of Rooster’s German warehouse

The move came with downsides, like having to de-invest in the UK, although Morrison says that wasn’t “too much change.”

“We thought in the run long it would work,” he says. But by early 2024 the benefits were being weighed against the costs – and were found wanting. “Over time as supply chains have eased and UK exporting procedures have eased, it started to cast relevance over the Germany warehouse”

The warehouse initially opened to get the product to the customer. Coming out of covid the expectation was that the European market was going to come back buoyant and carry on growing more than it had ever done before... and that there wasn’t going to be a war in Ukraine.

Morrison notes that during this timeframe, dealer networks have also been experiencing a shift in customer purchasing behaviour.

He believes that’s driven by continued growth in online sales

and lingering overstocking habits from the covid era.

“It’s important to note that Rooster fundamentally believes in supporting a strong dealer network. Dealers remain our greatest asset for geographical growth,” he says. “We have a compelling and well-considered product range that is built to meet the needs of our market. However, there is a growing perception within the marine industry that aligning product offerings with dealer needs – in a way that remains commercially sustainable – is becoming more challenging. In recent years, dealer networks have faced notable pressures, particularly due to the aftermath of covid and other global events that continue to reshape how customers buy and how products are promoted.”

At the same time, Morrison says, the ability to send parcels into Europe has become easier. He acknowledges there’s still the duties and VAT to figure out but says, in essence, things work.

### Rooster closes its warehouse

At the beginning of 2024, Rooster took the decision to bring its European dealers back to the UK and close the German warehouse – which happened in October 2024. It paid its final bill in March 2025. “We now seem to have European customers successfully purchasing from Rooster. Goods are leaving our UK warehouse or our China warehouse, and going directly to them,” says Morrison.

“Nine months in, we’re maintaining the customers well, but it’s on the proviso that we pay the duty. And there’s complexities around how we manage all of that, but generally we think it’s working.

Morrison believes it was the right time to come back to the UK as that’s the company’s roots. Plus, In the medium to long term Rooster is

a much less costly business to run without the German company.

“On a practical level, it’s the right thing to do. On a business level, we expect profitability to increase and continue to do so as we head into 2026/2027, essentially because we haven’t got an extra warehouse.

“There are still barriers – a customer can’t receive their package without enhanced paperwork through tariffs. That’s really tricky and does frustrate customers. But because we set the scene well and communicated well, our customers stay with us.”

Now he says Rooster is working on enhancing its distributor network across Europe. “We know that there are smaller entities who just want to take product from within the EU, we work with these resellers to ensure that they can receive product

### Rooster utilises its China factory for distribution

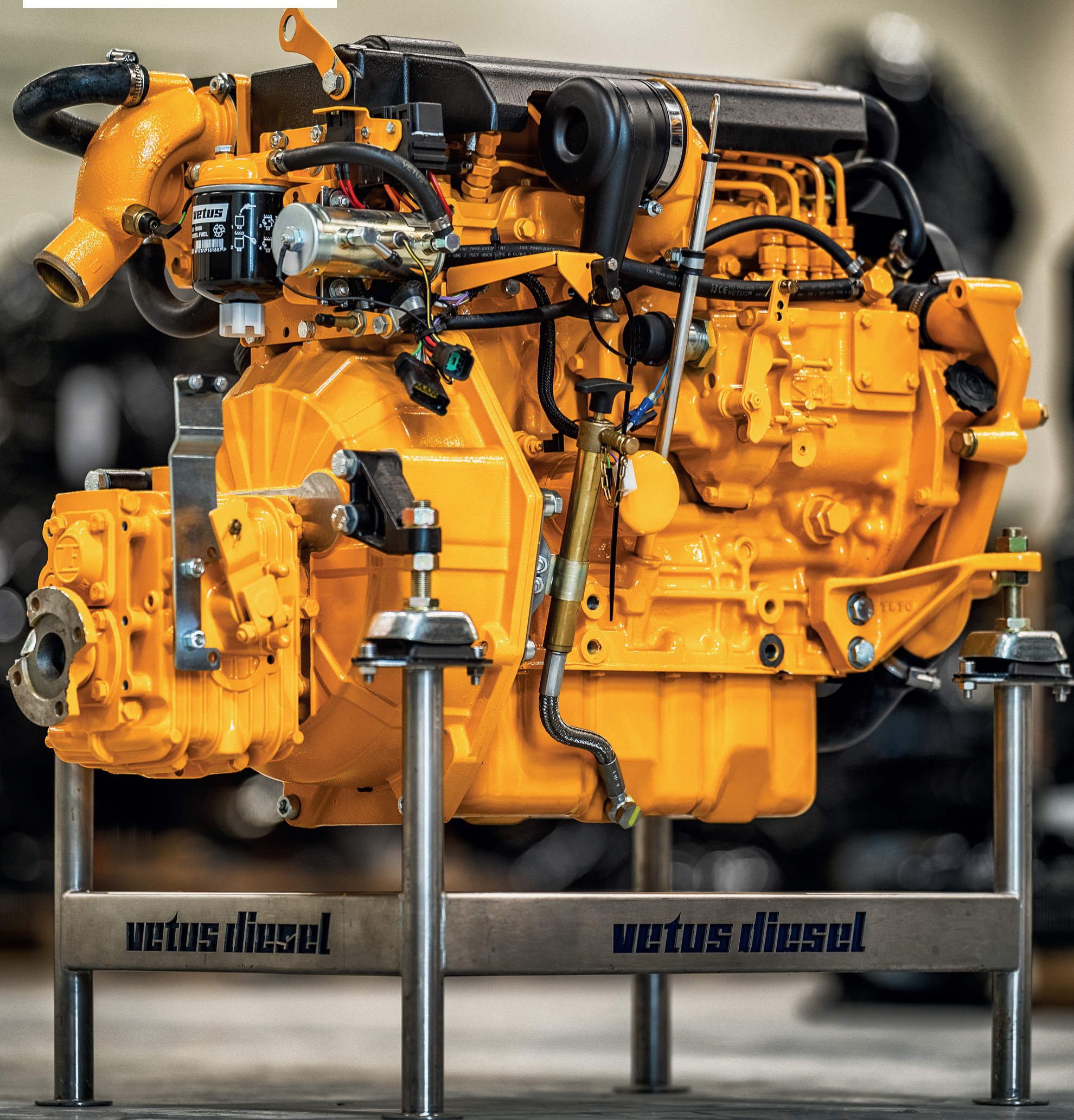
Rooster’s had a factory it’s worked with for over 20 years in China. That long-standing and secure relationship means it’s now able to use them as ‘a consolidation hub’ from the other factories that produce Rooster products.

“Effectively, whether you’re a dealer, distributor or US store or UK warehouse, we can bring products together, containerise them and air freight them or whatever to any location,” he says.

“We’ve put a programme together so customers can take product directly from the factory if they want – some like it, some don’t like it as they have to use freight forwarders instead of couriers. But it’s there as a back-stop. If people invest in more product we can do it more cost effectively from the factory.

“Our direct business is consistent; it’s growing quite nicely.” ■





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# Seamless circuit

Jonas Genchel, CEO of electric motor developer Zparq, says new collaborations and dynamic strategies are needed for wider electric adoption

Words: Chantal Haines

According to electric motor startup CEO, Jonas Genchel, the marine industry finds itself at a crossroads. "With increasing regulatory pressure, rising environmental awareness, and rapid technological advancements, stakeholders must rethink their approach to propulsion and energy use," he says.

## Electric propulsion in a traditional industry

The marine sector has long relied on internal combustion engines (ICE), supported by existing infrastructure, supply chains, and entrenched consumer habits that make the transition to electric alternatives challenging. But Genchel is adamant that the drawbacks of ICE technology – environmental impact, maintenance costs, and regulatory hurdles – are becoming harder to ignore.

Zparq has developed compact electric outboards that offer an alternative that Genchel says

are not only sustainable but also competitive in performance.

"Sustainable marine mobility isn't a distant goal – it's a reality being shaped today through collaboration, smart strategy, and bold innovation," he says. "But the challenge for companies like ours has been twofold: convincing boatbuilders and end-users to embrace change while ensuring the necessary infrastructure is in place for widespread adoption. Additionally, the higher cost of electric motors compared to ICE alternatives remains a barrier for all electric motor manufacturers, making strategic positioning and gradual cost reductions essential for driving broader market adoption," says Genchel.

## Collaboration as a catalyst for change

"The shift to electric propulsion cannot happen in isolation," he adds. Genchel says wider adoption requires a coordinated effort

between businesses, governments, and regulatory bodies. "Stronger policy support, including incentives and legislation, can accelerate electrification, while partnerships with boatbuilders, marinas, and charging infrastructure providers are critical – not just for introducing electric motors, but for creating a complete ecosystem for electric boating.

"One of our key collaborations has been with organisations committed to decarbonising waterways. Through pilot projects showcasing the efficiency and reliability of our propulsion systems, we have gained valuable insights into regulatory frameworks that support the transition to electric alternatives.

Notably, Zparq's work with the Swedish Sea Rescue Society and RISE (Research Institutes of Sweden) has played a crucial role in this effort. Additionally, collaborating with other clean-

tech startups and established marine brands has fostered knowledge-sharing. "Our work with these companies is under NDAs however the firms have ranged from large established brands to smaller innovators," Genchel adds.

## Pitfalls and opportunities for marine startups

"Startups in the marine industry face distinct challenges. Unlike in the automotive sector, where electrification has scaled rapidly, marine startups encounter higher entry barriers due to cost, certification requirements, and slower consumer adoption," Genchel says. "Additionally, the industry is highly seasonal – at least in our home markets – and boating is primarily a leisure activity rather than a daily necessity like cars. These factors make it more challenging for startups to achieve stable year-round revenue and accelerate mass adoption."



**“Unlike in the automotive sector, where electrification has scaled rapidly, marine startups encounter higher entry barriers due to cost, certification requirements, and slower consumer adoption.”**

*Jonas Genchel, CEO, Zparq*



Genchel says a key lesson from the company’s journey so far has been the importance of adaptability. “The ability to pivot based on market feedback, collaborate with unexpected partners, and continuously refine technology has been critical to Zparq. One great example of an unexpected partnership is our work with the Swedish Sea Rescue Society where we are learning first-hand about the demanding needs of rescue operations — which helps us refine both hardware robustness and user interfaces.”

According to Genchel, the surge in sustainability-focused investments, growing regulatory pressure on emissions, and a rising interest in electric mobility create unprecedented market potential. “For startups willing to navigate the complexities of the marine industry, the opportunity to lead the transition is immense,” he continues. “Initially, we are focusing on the Nordic and broader European markets, where there is a strong focus on sustainability and rapidly evolving regulations driving the shift to electric solutions.

“Looking ahead, one emerging market we’re keeping an eye on is Africa. It’s a large and potentially valuable market for electric marine transport, especially given the strong access to renewable energy and the potential for long-term cost savings. That said, the higher upfront cost of electric solutions remains a significant barrier today.”

## **Addressing safety concerns around battery technology**

Safety remains a top concern for all involved in electric

propulsion. It’s a driving force in the company but Genchel flags that misinformation surrounding battery risks can slow adoption, so it’s crucial to address these concerns transparently.

“We believe that a safe system is an integrated system – one where the motor, batteries, and inverter are designed, tested, and certified together. Supplying an electric motor without a properly matched and certified battery solution leads to performance issues, overheating, or even failure. That’s why we provide fully integrated systems to ensure seamless operation and maximal safety.

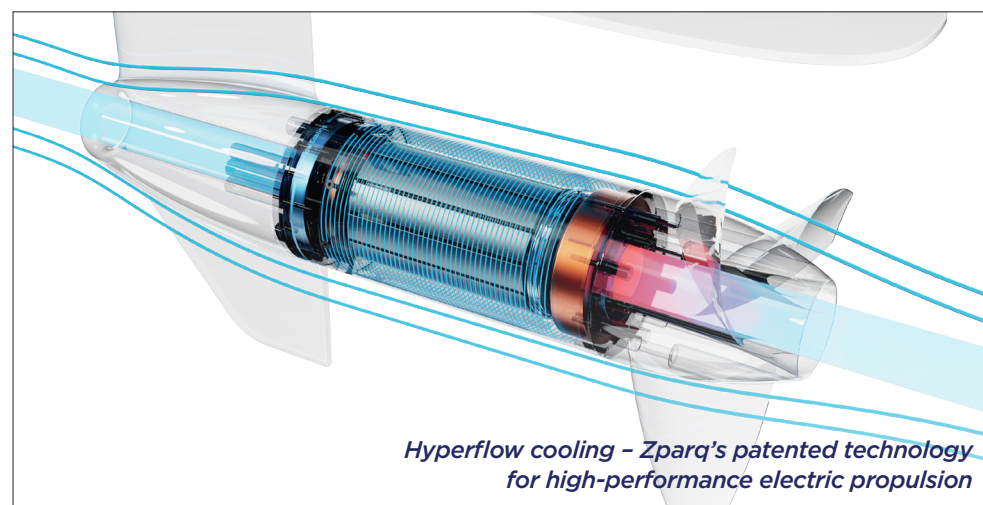
“Advanced battery management technologies should monitor temperature, voltage, and state-of-charge in real-time to prevent overheating or overcharging. We also advocate for stringent safety standards and work closely with regulatory bodies to ensure compliance and consumer confidence. Additionally, Zparq holds patents on extra safety features integrated into both our inverters and battery packs, reinforcing our unwavering commitment to safe and reliable electric propulsion.”

## **Preventing theft**

One often overlooked advantage of electrification, he adds, is the opportunity for smart, connected features. “One of the biggest concerns for boat owners is outboard motor theft – a problem that costs the industry millions every year. Our Z10 electric outboard addresses this problem with built-in geofencing. This means that once a boat is assigned a designated operational area, the motor will not function outside



*Mikael Sundberg, CTO and co-founder, in discussion with Jonas Genchel, CEO and co-founder*



*Hyperflow cooling - Zparq's patented technology for high-performance electric propulsion*

that perimeter. If removed from the boat, the system renders it completely unusable – making it an unattractive target for thieves. Furthermore, our batteries and motors are paired to work exclusively together, adding an extra layer of security against theft. This ensures that even if stolen, the components cannot be used separately or with other systems, enhancing both performance integrity and safety. Such innovations don’t just add security; they redefine how we think about marine mobility in the digital age.”

**One often overlooked advantage of electrification is the opportunity for smart, connected features. One of the biggest concerns for boat owners is outboard motor theft.**

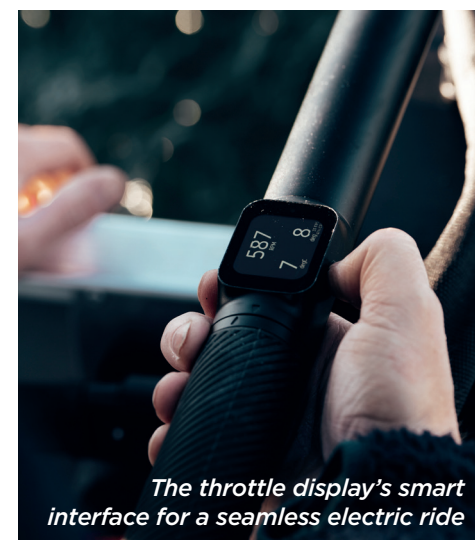
## **The road ahead**

It is clear that the Zparq team believe electrification is no longer a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’. but cross-industry collaboration is the key to expediting growth.

“For startups like Zparq, the challenge is not only to develop groundbreaking technology but also to drive industry-wide adoption by addressing infrastructure gaps, regulatory challenges, and market scepticism,” Genchel explains. “By working together – industry leaders, policymakers, and startups alike – we can make marine electrification a seamless transition rather than a disruptive challenge. It’s an exciting time to be in the marine industry, and we’re committed to playing a pivotal role in shaping its future.” ■



*Jonas Genchel, CEO and co-founder of Zparq*



*The throttle display's smart interface for a seamless electric ride*



*Zparq portable battery pack*



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Words: Chantal Haines

# Show business

**A new B2B trade fair for marine components will launch in Milan next year. Here, the organiser of Seaquip discusses why there is room for another marine trade event**

"I have never spoken with someone in the marine industry and they've said, 'No, we don't need it. We don't need a B2B show, we don't see it as viable'," says Pier Paolo Ponchia, managing director of Easyfairs Italy, the company behind new B2B trade fair Seaquip. "There are obviously some sceptics, but everyone told me this type of show was lacking in the market and reception has been so positive."

Seaquip – the Mediterranean Yacht and Marine Equipment Trade Fair will make its debut in Milan from 4-6 March 2026 and Ponchia believes there is a huge untapped potential for a specialised B2B trade show in Italy.

"We started analysing the nautical sector around January 2024 and noted that, while Italy is leading this market in terms of production, components and other materials, there were plenty

of B2C events but not something really dedicated and specialised vertically on the B2B market in Italy," Ponchia continues. "We want to launch an event that enables the European yachting market to meet in Italy, the country that leads the industry."

## **Component companies to revel in their own show**

Organised by Easyfairs, one of the world's top 20 trade fair organisers, Seaquip is expected to attract over 150 exhibitors, bringing together shipyards, suppliers, and industry leaders.

"The main show in the B2C arena is boot Düsseldorf, and in the B2B sector it's Metstrade – and they are great shows, huge shows for big companies and big players that can afford to be there and to show their muscle. Through our research, there are plenty of companies, at least in Italy, that are not participating in these events

because they're too big for them," explains Ponchia. Then there are the costs involved with exhibiting at one of the larger boat shows such as boot Düsseldorf, Metstrade or Cannes.

"I believe that there is a huge market in Italy that is not participating in trade shows at all. Most companies try to show their products in B2C events, and, honestly, it's very hard for them to get traction. If you are a small component manufacturer or a producer of highly technical parts, it's hard to connect with your potential client base while you also have families and hobbyists wandering the show."

## **Milan – a strategic B2B location**

The choice of Milan as the host city is strategic – aiming to offer convenient access for international professionals and investors from across Europe. "Milan is central and very easy to access for foreign attendees. My

goal is to launch something really European," says Ponchia.

The team says that Seaquip aims to support the growth of Italian, European and foreign marine business, rather than set out to compete with anyone. And Ponchia is realistic regarding the success of existing shows.

"During the first year or years, I don't really consider competitors because we are establishing ourselves in the nautical event space. In Italy, we currently have mostly B2C events with some small sections of an event dedicated to B2B. Most events currently are also dedicated for the end user."

## **Is the marine event market at saturation point?**

Ponchia and his team believe there is a big chunk of the market that don't exhibit at the larger shows. And, many Italian companies that





**“I actually believe that having a very strong B2B event in Italy could help the strongest B2C events in Italy as well.”**

Pier Paolo Ponchia,  
Easyfairs Italy



Pier Paolo Ponchia, MD, Easyfairs Italy



would welcome a B2B fair in Italy. “I also don’t see [other boat shows] as competitors, because our concept is B to B vertical. It’s only for professionals it’s not open to the public,” explains Ponchia.

“Obviously, there is Metstrade but I wouldn’t consider it a competitor because it’s a behemoth and we are in year one. If we become a competitor of Metstrade in the future it means that we have done a great job. Yeah, that’s my hope, I hope to become a competitor of Metstrade.”

Seaquip has sold 1,000sqm of exhibition space for the 2026 event with confirmed exhibitors including CMC Marine, Raymarine, Tecnimpianti, Indemar, Opac and Osculati. Ponchia expects large uptake from Italian companies and a broadly Mediterranean focus in

the first years of the event. “We have spoken with Confindustria Nautica – The Italian Marine Industry Association [which supports the Genoa International Boat Show],” says Ponchia. “We are in good relations with them – they are not supporting our show right now, but neither are they against us.

“I actually believe that having a very strong B2B event in Italy could help the strongest B2C events in Italy as well. I hope that’s going to be a value chain and both would foster market growth.”

#### Utilising AI and new platforms

Easyfairs intends to tap into its network of events to bring new markets together at Seaquip. “We organise many trade shows with exhibitors in luxury packaging, high-end furniture,

fashion, jewellery and interior design. When we spoke with them about Seaquip, we found great interest from these other sectors. The crossover is clear – be it luxury furniture, interior design, lightning – and many companies already work with yacht builders. Seaquip thus becomes another place to network and to expand their business potential.”

Easyfairs will also bring expertise in AI, apps and event design from its other large-scale events to Seaquip. “Being part of a group like Easyfairs gives us the chance to pool expertise in design, new platforms, services, applications for registration and so on,” explains Ponchia.

“I hope that market will not view Seaquip as a threat but as an opportunity, as a tool for them to

**“I believe that there is a huge market in Italy that is not participating in trade shows at all. Most companies try to show their products in B2C events, and, honestly, it’s very hard for them to get traction.”**

Pier Paolo Ponchia,  
Easyfairs Italy

grow and to increase business. Because in my experience, a market as large as this one is used to having more than one dedicated show. I hope that the nautical market takes the opportunity to have another industry event that can help them to grow their sector and their companies.” ■





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- Competition opens at 9:00 on 3rd March 2025, and closes at 17:00 on Friday 30th May 2025
- The first 80 valid quotes issued before 30th May 2025 will be guaranteed a prize.
- Winners will be notified using the contact number and/or email address noted on the enquiry.
- Only 1 entry per business.
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### Technical Marine Supplies - News Update 2025!

We always bring the latest innovations to the marine industry market.  
Here's what's new for 2025!

**Arco Zeus – Full Victron integration now available.** The latest Arco Zeus now features full Victron Energy integration, offering seamless compatibility with Victron's power management systems. This means better energy efficiency, improved charge control, and optimised performance for boats equipped with Victron-based electrical setups. The new range of alternators from Arco Marine is specifically designed for the harsh environment found at sea. Unlike the competition, Arco does it differently. With true 24V and 48V motors, its alternators deliver unmatched efficiency, cooler operation, and longer-lasting performance. Coupled with a Zeus regulator, the results from the advanced regulation technology offer precise control and optimised charging performance.

**Watt & Sea – Racing Class 40 Hydrogenerator proving a hit.** The new Watt & Sea Racing Class 40 Hydrogenerator delivers 450W of reliable power, expertly handling speed fluctuations for offshore racing and long-distance cruising.

**EGIS Mobile Electric – NMEA XD Relays – Now available.** EGIS Mobile Electric's new NMEA XD relays are now available! These durable, networked relays enhance marine power distribution with seamless onboard communication and robust load control.



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## GONE ARE THE FEARS OF BEING HIT BY LIGHTNING WHILST AT SEA.

The CMCE from Sertec Marine is a passive sensor system designed to balance and deionise the effects of atmospheric phenomena such as lightning. Its operation principle is based on compensating and stabilising the existing electric field in its immediate environment, therefore removing the physical atmospheric conditions needed for lightning to occur.

The Storm 7 is a device that works together with the CMCE, monitoring the electric field in real time in the protection area, with this information it is possible to control the performance of the CMCE and verify the atmospheric activity.

- The Storm 7 system integrates four basic components: sensors/devices, connectivity, data processing, and a user interface.
- The sensors collect data from the environment where the CMCE is installed. Connectivity allows data to be sent to the cloud system, this can be via ethernet, WiFi or mobile connectivity. Once the data is received, it is processed, validated and stored in a database.
- The user can view the data in the form of graphs and make queries about the historical data of interest through the web interface.

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# MARKET REPORT

Marine business experts discuss domestic and export markets, along with tech innovations in Norway, Finland and Sweden



## NORWAY | Knut Heiberg Anderson

After a chilly autumn 2024, the marine industry in Norway has experienced a cold winter business-wise. Suppliers, builders and dealers have for some time felt the pinch and a full upturn feels some way off still.

Speaking regularly to both builders and dealers, there is not much joy and positivity from the Norwegian market. Inventories are too high, production is on a low, liquidity is tight, however, a strong resolve to survive remains. Pricing is the only real tool one has in the arsenal to attract buyers at this time and with model year 2022 and 2023 still in stock, prices are under severe pressure. Liquidity is a must to operate and cutting overhead cost is normally not enough. Thus, it is certainly a buyer's market at the moment.

Yet, there are always a few brands that see opportunities and slowly

move forward at a decent pace. Metstrade 2024 also offered some hopes and expectations that some markets are coming back.

There is some movement in the higher end of the market, which shows improved consumer confidence from high-net-worth clients. The refit and repair market is a steady and more stable segment than boat sales. And while times have been tough, real wages are moving in the right direction as inflation is expected to reach the low targets of the Bank of Norway.

Sales of electric boats are still low and the infrastructure is still a challenge particularly with the rough coast of Norway. However, investors are starting to see the potential. Evoy is one of the leading stars in electric propulsion in Norway and Axopar has taken a 10 per cent position in the company – we await what is next with keen anticipation.

Having been through numerous ups and downs over the years, challenges like those faced today have only made the Norwegian industry stronger

and more resilient. The industry is still passionate and has a determination to endure. Most Norwegians are used to cold, snowy winters and love their skiing and wintersports. But just as much, they welcome spring and warm summers and the new boating season.



**FINLAND | Jouko Huju**  
*Jouko Huju was a widely respected commentator on marine industry affairs, and a valued contributor to Marine Industry News. This was one of the last pieces he contributed to before he passed away in January 2025 after a short illness.*

The Finnish boat industry is beginning to show signs of recovery following a period of downturn. While domestic boat registrations in Finland remain approximately 20 per cent below last year's figures, the 2024 autumn boat shows indicated

a positive shift in consumer confidence. This renewed interest is offering hope to the industry as it navigates a challenging economic landscape.

The export market, however, continues to face significant headwinds. Demand for smaller boats remains low in key export markets such as Norway and Sweden, where economic conditions have affected purchasing power. Additionally, the prolonged depreciation of the Swedish krona and Norwegian krone has posed further challenges for Finnish boat manufacturers, as currency fluctuations make Finnish-made boats more expensive for consumers in these neighbouring countries.

According to customs statistics, the value of Finland's boat exports decreased by approximately 24 per cent during January–November 2024 compared to the previous year. Over 3,000 boats were exported to 45 different countries. In terms of quantity, boat exports fell by 39 per cent, while the export value also dropped by 24 per cent.



According to Finnboat’s economic survey, 44 per cent of companies anticipate an increase in sales, while 43 per cent expect sales to remain stable in 2025. Some 23 per cent of companies plan to increase their workforce, while only 9 per cent expect to reduce it.



Finnish Marine Industries Federation Finnboat reasons that consumers’ weak purchasing power and the prolonged economic uncertainty depressed sales in 2024. However, the organisation predicts a turnaround for 2025. According to Finnboat’s economic survey, 44 per cent of companies anticipate an increase in sales, while 43 per cent expect sales to remain stable in 2025. Some 23 per cent of companies plan to increase their workforce, while only 9 per cent expect to reduce it.

“2024 was still a challenging year for the boating industry, but a survey conducted among Finnboat’s members at the end of the year predicts a turnaround. Another promising sign is that significantly more boats than last year were showcased at the Helsinki Vene Båt show, which marks the start of the boating season”, says Jarkko Pajusalo, CEO of the Finnish Marine Industries Federation Finnboat.

The Helsinki International Boat Show, Helsinki Vene Båt, underwent several changes this year with more boats showcased and a larger range of sailboats on offer than ever before. Otto Brandt Oy, which presented Faster, Silver, TG and Terhi boats, made a fifth more sales at the boat show than 2024 and received significantly more requests for quotations at the fair. “Our expectations

**Inventories are too high, production is on a low and liquidity is tight, however, a strong resolve to survive remains.**

**Knut Heiberg Anderson, GMBA Norway**

were high, and we can say that sales have started well. The Silver collection and TG boats in particular have been popular. In addition to boats, the ePropulsion electric outboard motors clearly attracted more interest due to the wider range on offer,” says group CEO Markku Hämäläinen.

The trade of used boats continued to be much more active than before the pandemic. According to the boat register maintained by the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, a total of 23,506 ownership changes were registered, only a hundred fewer than the previous year.

The market for larger vessels is also showing some resilience. Many manufacturers report robust order books, with some indicating production commitments extending into the next few years. This demand for larger boats is providing a valuable cushion for the industry as it works to regain momentum across all segments. The Finnish boat industry remains

hopeful that the combination of improving consumer confidence and a strong export market for larger vessels will pave the way for a more robust recovery in the coming years.



**SWEDEN | Annika Lindqvist**

Last year was a tough one for boat manufacturers, boat dealers and equipment companies. Consumers are – and continue to be – hesitant and price sensitive. Fewer boats and less equipment and accessories have been sold, service companies have also been affected – but not as severely.

Despite this, there are some glimmers of hope. More expensive boats are still selling relatively well, as the higher net worth customer segment is less price sensitive.

The domestic market is slow but export is better due to our weak krona. We have a good reputation for quality and innovation in the area of equipment and apparel and Sweden exports a great deal in those segments.

The refit and repair sector remains steady and is more stable than boat sales, as is usually the case. In fact, the refit and repair market

**The refit and repair sector remains steady and is more stable than boat sales, as is usually the case. In fact, the refit and repair market remains the backbone of the Swedish leisure boat industry.**

**Annika Lindqvist, GMBA Sweden**

remains the backbone of the Swedish leisure boat industry.

We are hopeful for more upturns – in a survey conducted in August by the Swedish Marine Industry Federation, Sweboat, around 42 to 43 per cent of the 124 respondents had a positive outlook for 2025 due to lower inflation and interest.

In terms of electrification, while Sweden saw a boost of electric boats in use regionally at the beginning of 2020 it has slowed down significantly. And it seems the focus of the Swedish industry has changed towards solutions for fuel efficiency. We also see an increased effort in research and development within hydrofoiling. ■

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# Tip: Upgrading Your Underwater Lights For Less

There are some key things to consider when replacing your underwater lights. Upgrade kits can save you a fortune. Whether you're replacing your underwater lights due to age, because you want something more powerful, or they have failed, it doesn't matter, install costs are killer when you're looking at a re-glass.

An upgrade kit could hold the answer. Imagine you have an flush mount style underwater light, one of those lights that slides into your hull and sits flush with the transom. Amazing lights, very powerful and easy to service, but they need a big cutout. Technology moves on and designs change, today's equivalent lights have smaller bodies thanks to modern LED technology, and you're left facing an expensive re-glass before you've even looked at the cost of new underwater lights.

This is where the new Pro-Series to Explore Upgrade Kit from OceanLED saves the day, and

your wallet. For \$250, you have an easy to install solution that saves you thousands of dollars by removing the need to re-glass.

**The new upgrade kit is the first of its kind, and ingeniously simple!**

It was designed by the Research & Development team at OceanLED to allow boat owners with Pro-Series OceanLED underwater lights, to upgrade to the new Explore Series underwater lights.

A happy additional benefit to all those out there who have flush mount style underwater

lights (the big bulky ones), this kit may also work for you. If your existing underwater lights have a hole cutout between 3.57 inches and 4.7 inches, the new upgrade kit from OceanLED will work for you. You can then install any of the Explore E3, E6, E7 XFM underwater lights from OceanLED, with no re-glass costs in sight.

So, for all those Pro-Series owners out there, and those with flush mount style underwater lights (big hole cutouts), your wallet will be thanking you.



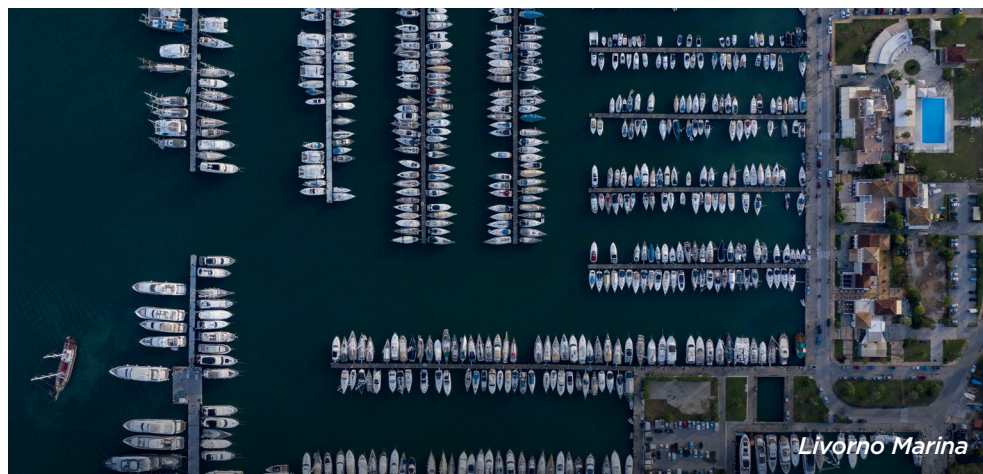
# QUAY INSIGHTS

D-Marin's CEO Oliver Dörschuck reflects on what it takes to be the 'fastest growing brand in the marina industry'

Words: Chantal Haines



Oliver Dörschuck, CEO, D-Marin



Livorno Marina

Last year was a busy one for D-Marin, which saw 3,204 berths and three new boatyards added to the marina group's portfolio.

D-Marin's CEO Oliver Dörschuck outlines the company's robust expansion strategy: "During 2024, we added seven premium marinas, including locations in Malta, Aregai, San Lorenzo, and Livorno. We also expanded with Marina di Varazze and Porto Mirabello in Italy, and Port Camille Rayon in France — further strengthening our selection of premium marinas in the Mediterranean."

## Growing a marina network

D-Marin's process centres upon creating regional footholds in prime boating areas. "Our strategy focuses on creating connected yachting clusters, giving customers more seamless cruising options, innovative service standards, and access to exclusive benefits across destinations. We continue to look for marinas that are a great fit for our approach.

"We carefully select marinas based on location to create cruising routes across the Mediterranean. By forming regional clusters, we make it easier for customers to explore multiple destinations."

Dörschuck appreciates that

expansion has been swift but says the company can ramp up without losing its USP thanks to regional expertise in its teams.

Dörschuck says local staff with an intimate knowledge of each region has proved key to expanding in multiple destinations without sacrificing the company's DNA.

"D-Marin is a Mediterranean company, and I truly believe that to be successful, we need to act in line with the country we're in. That's why we have a dedicated D-Marin company in each country, led by local teams who operate according to national and local rules and procedures," Dörschuck says. "For example, in Italy, we have an Italian director with a fully Italian team. The same goes for France."

## Breaking into France

Since 2020, D-Marin has rapidly expanded its marina network, growing from 12 marinas to 25. The group now offers 14,000 berths to 50,000 customers and over 1,000 specialised berths for superyachts.

In July 2024 D-Marin entered the French marina market when it acquired the Camille Rayon marina on the Côte d'Azur, signalling somewhat of a milestone for the company. The marina operator

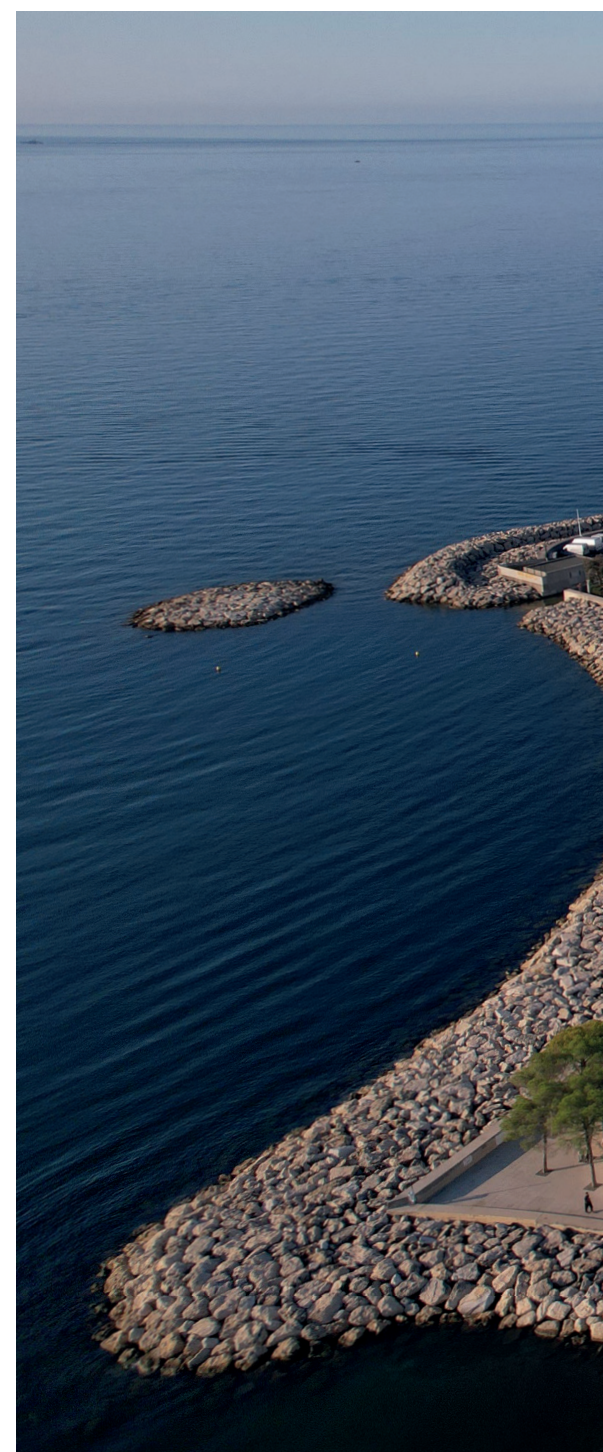
plans to enhance the marina, which currently has 841 berths for yachts up to 75 metres, with a €52 million investment over 25 years.

"We're committed to expanding across the Mediterranean and, naturally, France plays a key role in that strategy," Dörschuck continues. "In Port Camille Rayon, we found a strong alignment with the town's vision to develop a premium, welcoming waterfront destination that's open to everyone year-round.

"Camille Rayon completes the most valuable cluster of marinas in the Mediterranean. This key stretch of coastline — spanning the French and Italian Rivières — connects six premium marinas: Livorno, Porto Mirabello, Marina di Varazze, Marina degli Aregai, Marina di San Lorenzo, and now Camille Rayon. Together, they offer customers the opportunity to explore some of the world's best yachting destinations while enjoying a consistent level of service and experience across all locations."

## Regional integration

This year will see company developments in Livorno, Dubai, Pylos and Vlora, promising to add more destinations to D-Marin's network of marinas.



**By forming regional clusters, we make it easier for customers to explore multiple destinations...  
...Camille Rayon completes the most valuable cluster of marinas in the Mediterranean.**

Oliver Dörschuck, D-Marin

"Marina di Livorno is progressing well and plays a key role in our expansion in Italy. We are proud to have partnered with Azimut|Benetti. Set in the heart of this historic harbour city, the marina will offer 815 berths and provide direct access to exceptional cruising grounds — including the Tuscan coastline, the islands of Elba and Sardinia, and the secluded coves of the Ligurian Sea.

"We're working closely with the local authorities, key partners, and stakeholders to bring the project to life. We're expecting to welcome boats in 2026," says Dörschuck.

While integrating new marinas comes with its own challenges, D-Marin leverages experience from sister marinas to smooth the transitions. "Growing fast comes with its challenges, especially when integrating new marinas. Our team has the advantage that





Camille Rayon is the company's first venture in France

we have expertise we can activate from other regions to smoothly bring new properties into the D-Marin selection.”

While the company’s customer demographics remain largely consistent across its destinations, Dörschuck notes a rise in expectation. “Customers are becoming more demanding — they value quality, seek out innovation, and are open to new sailing experiences. They expect seamless service and smart solutions, and where we provide these, the customer reaction is particularly strong.”

#### Infrastructure and IT

Smart marina technologies are increasingly changing the business processes of marina groups. D-Marin has been proactive and is utilising several new technologies.

The D-Marin app enables users to monitor their vessel remotely and manage energy consumption via smart systems. ‘Smart sensors’ provide real-time monitoring of vessel parameters such as battery levels, temperature, smoke detection, bilge status, and GPS location. The sensors give boat owners control, ensuring safe and efficient vessel management. ‘Smart pedestals’ enable customers to monitor and control

electricity and water consumption remotely, with real-time data access. And online booking allows boat owners to select mooring spots, make reservations, and complete payments online with a contactless experience.

“As we grow, connectivity is essential. Our global IT infrastructure supports a seamless customer journey, while allowing for local customisation. It also powers our digital tools, like the D-Marin app and boat sensors.”

He says the company’s IT infrastructure gives the team real-time insights to improve customer experience and operational efficiency. “Take our customer feedback system, for example,” he adds. “If a guest reports an issue, like a broken cleat, it’s logged automatically, assigned for resolution, and the customer is notified once it’s fixed. This ensures fast response times and consistent service quality across all marinas.”

D-Marin’s robust growth and regional cluster strategy has enabled remarkable brand amplification in the sector. With more investment in tech and rumours of new marina acquisitions, 2025 is set to be a busy year for the group. ■



D-Marin's Gouvia Marina



Camille Rayon



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## How are safety equipment manufacturers navigating a changing consumer and product landscape?

The safety equipment segment is anticipating change – both in terms of regulations and in its consumers. Safety equipment businesses are adjusting to shifting purchasing patterns, market dilution, and increasingly need to consider consumer environmentalism in their product messaging.

*MIN* sits down with three leading marine safety companies to discuss current trends, how sustainability can marry with equipment without impacting quality, and what's coming next.



**Kenny Ballard**  
President,  
Mustang Survival

According to Mustang Survival president, Kenny Ballard, the safety equipment sector is seeing

increased percentage in white-label, lower priced products in the marketplace, which in turn is putting pressure on manufacturers to refine their value proposition and messaging to both existing and future end users.

In today's unsettled waters, markets are tricky to anticipate, thus Mustang says brand equity is evermore critical. "We are seeing slight increases in the fishing, cruising, and sailing markets, while paddlesports have remained flat post-covid as consumers reassess their leisure priorities and spending," Ballard explains.

"With geopolitical and economic uncertainty potentially impacting consumer confidence and spending, we are focusing on delivering value and reinforcing our nearly 60 years of experience as a leader in on-the-water safety and performance. We are also more clearly defining which end users we are focusing on."

It's a period of shifting sands, says Ballard, who highlights that tariffs and supply chain disruptions will continue to impact manufacturing costs across the sector. "Businesses will either have to absorb these increases or pass them on to consumers, which could negatively affect consumer confidence and discretionary spending," he explains.

He says that upcoming certification process and regulatory changes will ultimately provide a clearer path forward in North America resulting in more harmonised products and a simplified purchasing process for both retailers and consumers. "Retailer consolidation is also expected to continue, alongside a growing percentage of consumer spending shifting to online platforms." This is where Ballard expects a focus on lower-priced, promotional purchases to be key.

The trickle-down from elite racing and the influence of elite racing has proved a helpful boost for companies such as Mustang. As an example, the success of the Atlas 190 DLX Life Jacket among elite users directly influenced the development of the company's new Elite PFD Series, which is launching in North America in 2025.

"Consumers are looking for high-value products that offer increased comfort, innovation and a strong focus on safety and performance. The Atlas 190 DLX Life Jacket has delivered on all of that and has met with significant market

**"The safety equipment sector is seeing increased percentage in white-label, lower priced products in the marketplace."**

**Kenny Ballard, Mustang Survival**

interest," Ballard says. Pressure for manufacturers to eliminate PFAS (or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) from their product ranges will continue to drive innovations in materials, he adds.

Mustang is actively transitioning to recycled alternatives: "While we must be PFAS compliant, we are choosing and innovating even better materials, looking to be more efficient in our designs to reduce waste, and benchmarking our emissions so we can work to decrease our footprint holistically," he says.







**“The MCA is urging for the registration of PLBs to become mandatory, which could raise awareness of sea safety products as people look to register and/or update their devices”**

**Mikele D’Arcangelo, Ocean Signal**

*Wescom sMRT Alert*



**Sean McCrystal**  
Marketing director,  
Wescom Group

Legislative and regulatory change has always been a key milestone for driving both innovation and technology adoption in marine safety, says Wescom’s marketing director, Sean McCrystal.

“The 2025 introduction of Class M regulations by the Electronic Communications Committee under ECC/DEC/(22)02, means that from 1 January 2025, only Class M-compliant AIS man overboard (MOB) devices will be permitted for use in a number of European countries. The result has led to the development of more powerful man overboard devices, like the sMRT Alert. This unit utilises DSC alongside AIS to alert nearby vessels to emergencies, but with more advanced two-way systems to allow confirmation of your call for help and easy cancellation of false activations. As a mainstay of marine safety, improvements to the capabilities of AIS MOB devices could have a sizeable impact on marine safety,” he explains.

“Reports from racing teams of false activations of personal distress beacons due to waves coming over the vessel helped sMRT understand the need for a more sophisticated two stage water activation system, where MOB beacons need to be armed, and the unit submerged before a distress alert is activated. This also helped sMRT develop a better system to remotely deactivate DSC alarms when they are identified as false alerts, reducing the nuisance factor, and

again making MOB units a more effective safety solution.”

According to McCrystal, following a wider adoption of life jackets as standard, customers are increasingly looking for wearable safety products. “This isn’t merely to do with the size of the products, but the ease of fitting, tracking the usability when inside a jacket and ensuring secure fitting when deployed.”

“The sMRT range offers out of the box usability, without the need for professional life jacket fitting and the use of the sMRT app allows users to see power and servicing data without having to take the unit off the life jacket.”



**Mikele D’Arcangelo**  
Vice president of  
global marketing  
and product  
management,  
Ocean Signal

D’Arcangelo agrees that regulatory changes to sea safety issues accelerate shifts in demand for products. “For example, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency is urging for the registration of PLBs to become mandatory which could raise awareness of sea safety products as people look to register and/or update their devices as they review their marine equipment,” he explains.

Registering a personal locator beacon (PLB) or emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) is free and ensures faster, more effective rescues, as well as minimising false alarms.

D’Arcangelo says customers are looking for improved safety and



*Atlas life jacket from Mustang Survival*

enhanced sustainability around the products they purchase.

“For example, more and more customers are asking for safer alternatives to the hazardous pyrotechnics on the market. Our E-flare EDF2 is more eco-friendly, less hazardous, longer lasting and safer than outdated pyrotechnic flare alternatives.

“The technology has now advanced with new RTCM regulations, which more countries should start adopting as an alternative solution for boaters looking to get rid of pyro flares.”

As well as the product innovations that are replacing more traditional variants, D’Arcangelo says companies are increasingly addressing the environmental impact of their product lines and their lifecycles. “Our product design process focuses on longevity, ensuring that our devices are durable and require fewer

replacements. By incorporating recyclable and sustainable materials, we help reduce waste and minimise the environmental footprint at the end of the product’s life. We are committed to optimising our manufacturing processes by reducing energy consumption and adopting eco-friendly practices. Packaging is another area where we have taken action. We have reduced the use of single-use plastics and shifted towards sustainable, recyclable packaging materials.” ■





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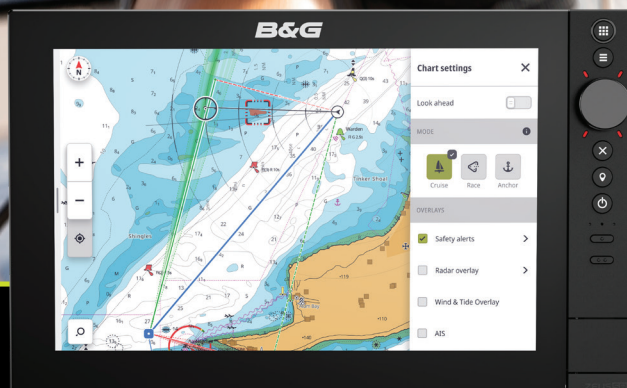
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# Hydrogen: future factors

Project 821. Image courtesy of Feadship

Words: Nina Done

## How is Lloyd's Register navigating regulatory framework for the use of hydrogen power in the marine industry?

The yachting industry has ramped up investment and is searching for ways to make the switch from fossil fuels to greener alternatives. In recent years, the market has witnessed compelling arguments made for a number of potential sources in the race to decarbonise maritime travel, including biodiesel, HVO, ammonia and green methanol.

With a growing number of voices in the marine industry championing its benefits, one of the frontrunners in the race for carbon-neutral cruising is hydrogen. Already adopted across several sectors, including agriculture, car racing and the space industry, hydrogen is one of the cleanest and greenest fuels around (depending on its production process).

Engel-Jan de Boer, global yacht segment director for Lloyd's Register (LR), believes the yachting sector is at a "tipping

point" regarding the integration of alternative fuels and has stressed the necessity for comprehensive guidelines to ensure safe and effective adoption.

In an exclusive interview with *Marine Industry News*, de Boer discusses the critical role of developing regulations for hydrogen and other alternative fuels in reducing the maritime industry's reliance on fossil fuels.

### What needs to be overcome for hydrogen to be a viable fuel for superyachts?

**DB:** "One of the key regulatory sticking points is safety standards for hydrogen storage and handling on board, which is crucial due to its high flammability and explosion risk. Hydrogen's storage systems require specific containment and insulation regulations. Material compatibility must be considered to address hydrogen embrittlement, which can weaken

certain metals and alloys used in storage tanks and pipelines.

"Infrastructure and refuelling regulations are also a significant challenge. Standards for safe hydrogen bunkering at ports, including refuelling processes, emergency protocols and monitoring systems are still evolving. LR has assisted various ports in developing hydrogen bunkering protocols that could be adapted by marinas, although this is still in its early stages.

"Additionally, operational safety regulations must ensure that crew teams handling hydrogen are well trained and certified.

"Regulations must address the integration of hydrogen fuel cells with conventional diesel systems, including transitional compliance frameworks. Standards are also needed for hydrogen fuel cells

interfacing with existing yacht power management systems.

"Lastly, flag state regulations require a risk assessment to be carried out for the use of hydrogen as fuel for power, which must involve the flag state."

### What's been the feedback from superyacht owners and operators?

**DB:** "We know that hydrogen in liquid form takes up too much space and comes with increased risks. In addition, the availability of hydrogen in marinas with appropriate bunkering protocols in place is limited.

"Therefore, the industry is not yet convinced of the use of hydrogen to power yachts for propulsion. However, it does see potential in providing hotel load power in combination with methanol. Small yachts with limited ranges could see an uptake of compressed hydrogen in this segment."



## Safety risks associated with using hydrogen on superyachts

Using hydrogen as a fuel on yachts presents several challenges, but these risks can be effectively mitigated with appropriate technologies, design considerations and regulatory compliance.

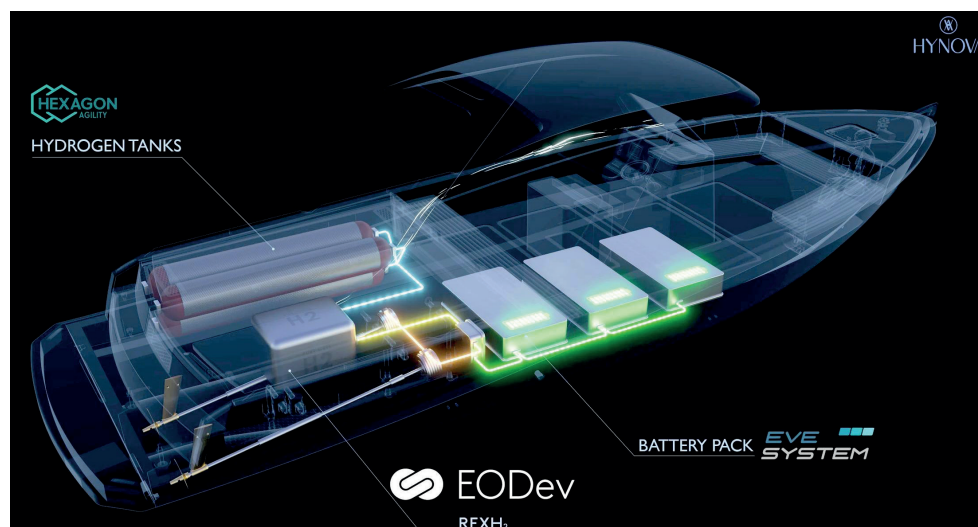
The primary safety risks associated with hydrogen onboard include:

- Hydrogen's high flammability and low ignition energy pose significant risks, as it can ignite at low concentrations (4-75 per cent in air) and burns with an almost invisible flame, making detection difficult. In theory, even the friction of your shoes could be enough to ignite hydrogen.
- Another concern is hydrogen embrittlement, which can weaken certain metals and alloys, leading to potential structural failures in tanks, pipelines or components. Hydrogen molecules are very small, increasing the risk of leaks through tiny cracks or seals, and it diffuses quickly, which can lead to the formation of flammable mixtures in confined spaces.
- Storing hydrogen as a cryogenic liquid at -253°C poses risks of frostbite, equipment failure and pressure build up due to boil-off. For compressed hydrogen, which is stored at high pressures (350-700 bar), there is a risk of tank rupture or explosion if the system is compromised.
- During refuelling, hydrogen transfer poses risks of leaks, static discharge or over pressurisation, and managing hydrogen-related emergencies, such as fires or leaks, requires specialised knowledge and equipment."

## How can the risks associated with hydrogen on boats be mitigated?

**DB:** "Using advanced materials, such as composite or stainless-steel tanks to resist hydrogen embrittlement. Multi-layered insulation and vacuum jackets for cryogenic hydrogen storage, and robust leak-proof seals and fittings are also essential.

"Highly sensitive hydrogen detectors to identify leaks promptly, flame detectors capable of recognising hydrogen's invisible flame should be used and adequate ventilation in storage and engine compartments are all crucial to prevent the accumulation of hydrogen in enclosed spaces.



"Pressure relief valves can be equipped in tanks to manage pressure build-up safely and advanced boil-off management systems are needed for liquid hydrogen storage. Crew members require training in hydrogen handling, emergency response and system maintenance. It is also important to follow strict refuelling procedures, such as grounding to prevent static discharge, and to use automated and monitored bunkering systems to reduce human error."

## How does Lloyd's Register assess the scalability of hydrogen production in the marine industry?

**DB:** "The global shortage of hydrogen bunkering facilities limits operational flexibility for superyachts. Early adoption will depend on the establishment of refuelling infrastructure in key luxury yachting hubs.

"Hydrogen's low energy density means storage tanks take up more space than diesel, posing challenges for luxury superyacht designs where space is a premium. Therefore, the impact on volume, safety and availability is still a concern preventing the industry from moving faster in the adoption of hydrogen."

## Which innovations in hydrogen storage show most promise in the next five years?

**DB:** "Solid-state hydrogen storage, which involves storing hydrogen in solid materials such as metal hydrides or porous materials like metal-organic frameworks (MOFs), is one of the most promising innovations for maritime applications in the next five years. This method offers several advancements, including the development of lightweight, high-capacity hybrid materials and improved absorption/desorption rates for efficient hydrogen release.

**"The global shortage of hydrogen bunkering facilities limits operational flexibility for superyachts. Early adoption will depend on the establishment of refuelling infrastructure in key luxury yachting hubs."**

Engel-Jan de Boer, Lloyd's Register

"The benefits of solid-state hydrogen storage are significant: it is safer and more compact than gaseous or liquid hydrogen storage, and it does not require high-pressure or cryogenic systems.

"Another development to watch closely is the introduction of hydrogen (dual) fuel internal combustion engines, which could further enhance the viability of hydrogen as an alternative fuel for the maritime industry."

## What is Lloyd's Register doing to aid hydrogen adoption?

**DB:** "By acting as a bridge between flag states, the IMO and the maritime industry, LR plays a vital role in shaping the regulatory landscape for hydrogen fuel in maritime applications.

"LR is involved in various groundbreaking projects with stakeholders to test and demonstrate hydrogen systems, identify risks and propose regulatory frameworks to flag states and the IMO. We also encourage flag states to adopt proactive policies that support hydrogen adoption, including incentives for green hydrogen.

"LR's Fuel for Thought is a comprehensive series of reports and webinars on alternative fuel sources for ships, including hydrogen."

## Are there existing class rules for hydrogen-powered vessels?

**DB:** "In June 2023, LR issued the world's first maritime rules for hydrogen fuel, including for superyachts. They are available in the Regs4ships digital compliance solution, powered by OneOcean, part of the LR Group.

"The regulations provide both general and specific guidelines for ships using hydrogen fuel. The purpose of these regulations is to address the gap in the IMO International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IFG Code), which does not yet offer guidance for the safe use of hydrogen.

"LR's hydrogen fuel rules build on existing low-flashpoint

fuel standards but are specifically tailored to hydrogen's properties. These include guidelines for hydrogen bunkering stations, risk-based explosion analyses and requirements for both gaseous and liquid hydrogen systems, offering a comprehensive framework for hydrogen-powered vessels."

## Hydrogen boats in the news

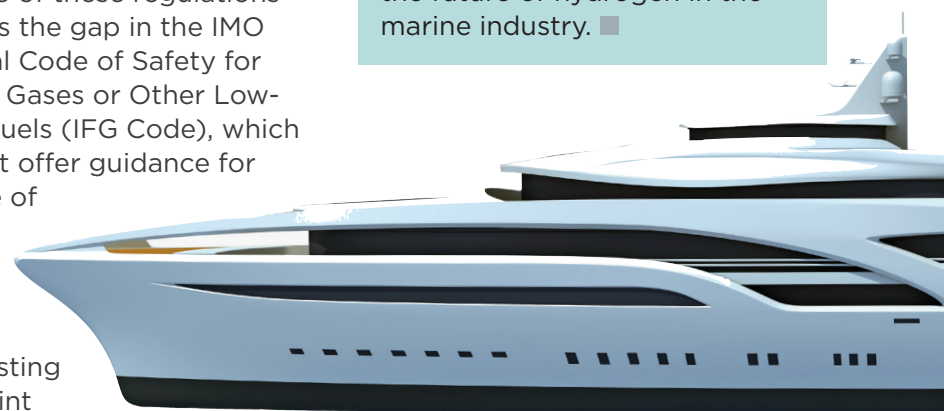
While some boatbuilders are enthusiastic about hydrogen's potential, its adoption is expected to be gradual.

Early adopters, such as those investing in pioneering vessels including Feadship's yacht Project 821, may lead the charge, but scalability and practicality will ultimately dictate whether hydrogen can anchor itself as the fuel of choice in luxury yachting.

Recent developments also include EODev's (Energy Observer Developments) REXH2 hydrogen fuel cell system, which received Type Approval Certificate (TAC) from Bureau Veritas Marine & Offshore. This is the first certification issued by Bureau Veritas Marine & Offshore for a marine hydrogen fuel cell system. Building on Toyota's advanced PEM fuel cell technology, the REXH2 is designed to be a scalable, plug & play power solution. EODev's fuel cell technology has already been integrated into several maritime projects, including the Bluegame hydrogen support vessels (HSV) for the America's Cup teams *Orient Express Racing* and *American Magic*.

In the hydrogen production arena, a demo project has kicked off between Man Energy Solutions and Quest One. Its first 10MW electrolyser module is being built at MAN Energy Solutions site in Augsburg, Germany, as part of the project. Once assembled the plant will be open to interested parties looking to set up their own electrolyser, which could be in a busy port to serve recreational and commercial vessels.

With regulatory bodies working in tandem with the maritime sector it appears cross-industry collaboration and knowledge sharing will prove pivotal for the future of hydrogen in the marine industry. ■





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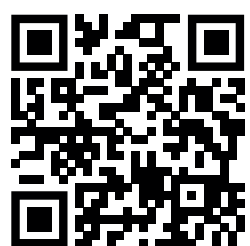
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