

BOAT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Accolades For St Francis 50



Pic by Richard Crockett

Cruising World magazine in the USA have announced the best in boatbuilding for 2006 with its 12th annual Boat of the Year Awards - and South African-built catamarans featured highly again, with the St Francis 50 receiving the Cruising Catamaran of the Year award.

The South African-built Jaguar 36 and Gunboat 48 were also nominated in the cruising cat category; not bad when one considers that there were 26 nominees, with 20 being imports from Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, England, France, Germany, Slovenia, South Africa, and Sweden.

Of the six American boats nominated, the Morris 42 was universally praised by the judges. "Absolutely awesome", said judge Suzanne Giesemann. "What sailing should be. I think it's the best America has to offer with the quality craftsmanship. It takes you back to the art."

In a crowded field of 20 boats, Hallberg-Rassy had two nominees for Import Boat of the Year, but the Hallberg-Rassy 62 stood out among its peers the judges said.

A field of 42 boats had entered the competition before Cruising World editors Herb McCormick and Tim Murphy, assisted by Ralph Naranjo, who oversees the sailing program at the U.S. Naval Academy, whittled down the fleet to 26. The nominated boats were then inspected and sailed by independent and very experienced judges.

Along for the sailing trial of the St. Francis 50 were the boat's owners, Michael and Jeri Innis, who'd moved up to the boat from an Island Packet 45. With occasional visits from their four grown daughters and an ever-expanding load of bikes and gear, they decided to look into a cruising cat for an Atlantic crossing and Mediterranean

sailing. Their search led them to the St. Francis 50. After an initial inspection the Innises took a pass because Jeri didn't like the galley-down layout. But when they couldn't find a galley-up layout, they bought the boat anyway, and the plan has grown on them. "When we have guests, they can be up in the saloon, and the dishes and mess are down below and out of the way. We can relax and clean up later," Jeri said.

Seeing it as a long-distance cruiser, judge Ed Sherman was enamoured of every aspect of the boat, which recorded a top speed of 12.2 knots reaching during the trial. "We were in 30-knot winds," he said, "and the sailing was thoroughly enjoyable. I felt I'd be comfortable on this boat in virtually any situation; that it could be adjusted to deal with it. It had a nice motion through the sea.

"The finish was good; the welds were all ground out, then acid-dipped and polished. The metal work was exquisite, better than any other boat we've inspected. The systems were really good, and the glasswork had no rough edges. Everything was faired nicely."

When another judge Bill Lee, poised at the helm to do the motoring test, asked for the cruising rpm speed, he got a surprise. "The owners picked right up on it," he said. "Their trick was to just use one engine. It cut the noise and fuel consumption and still achieved 8.7 knots." ⚓

Cruising World Boat of the Year Winners 2006:

Domestic Cruising Boat of the Year - Morris 42
 Import Cruising Boat of the Year - Hallberg-Rassy 62
 Production Cruiser 31 to 36 Feet - Tartan 3400
 Production Cruiser 37 to 39 Feet - Hallberg-Rassy 37
 Production Cruiser 40 to 44 Feet - Hunter 41 DS
 Performance Cruiser Over 45 Feet - X-46
 Full-Size Cruiser - Beneteau 523
 Unlimited Class Kanter - Bougainvillaea 65
 Cruising Catamaran - St. Francis 50
 Best Value - Hunter 41 DS

Cruising World Boat of the Year Awards (South African built boats only)

2005	
Boat of the Year	Moorings 4000
Best Import Award	Moorings 4000
Multihull 40' and under	Moorings 4000
2004	
Most Innovative	Gunboat 62
2003	
Best Full-Size Cruiser	Aerodyne 47
Best Cruising Multihull	Voyage 580
2002	
Overall Boat of the Year	Voyage 440
Cruising Multihull	Voyage 440
2001	
Overall Boat of the Year	Shearwater 45
Traditional Voyager	Shearwater 45
1998	
Best Charter Boat	Moorings 4500

SPERRY
 TOP-SIDER
 THE ORIGINAL BOAT SHOE

The publishers of **SAILING** magazine thank all entrants in the Sperry Topsider competition for their support, and in particular, thanks to the distributors of Sperry Topsiders for the magnificent prizes.

COMPETITION RESULTS

THE WINNERS

Mrs Janet Greene	Stutterheim
Ian Henderson	Higgovale
Monty Erasmus	Middleburg
Bjorn Hanssen	Durban
MF Silberbauer	St Francis Bay
Keith Mattison	Constantia