

European boatbuilder

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Sportmanship Marin buys Navico importer

Sportmanship Marin has acquired Navpoint AB, the Swedish distributor for Lowrance, Eagle, B&G, Simrad and Northstar marine electronics.

Sportmanship has been active in the marine business since 1985 and established Sportmanship Marin in November 2008 when Garmin decided to open its own company in Sweden.

Navpoint has represented Lowrance and Eagle for several years on the Swedish market and has served as the exclusive Swedish distributor for Northstar, Simrad and B&G since 2008.

"Navpoint represents strong brands with a very high potential," says Christian Olsson, managing director of Sportmanship Marin AB. "With years of experience and a high competence level this is a very interesting company to develop further."

He continues: "We have different knowledge bases that will be

positive for our customers and the end-users of the products we're representing. We will focus even more on a high service level and will recruit another three people for the organisation as soon as possible."

Lorentz Simonsson, managing director of Navpoint AB, explains: "Since last autumn, when we gained the confidence by Navico to represent Simrad and B&G, we need to further strengthen our company. Sportmanship's acquisition of Navpoint is a fantastic opportunity to bring more resources and competence around the brands, their development and future."

Sportmanship Marin represents a wide range of brands for OEMs, dealers and end-users. The company also serves as the general agent in Sweden for Lewmar, Zodiac, Bombard, Avon, Glomex, RMC Swingtruster and Sony Marine.

2009 Qualitec Award winners revealed



Sergio Ciappi of Altraluce (far right) picked up the Qualitec Design Award for the Faretto RGB IQ.

This year's Seatec exhibition in Carrara, Italy — which ran from February 5-7 at the CarraraFiere exhibition centre — once again played host to the Qualitec Awards, which aim to identify companies that have made a substantial contribution to the development of the industry.

A&E Yacht Services in Italy picked up the Qualitec Technology Award for its IMR 1.0 system for the robotic application of complete filling and topcoat cycles on superyacht hulls.

Special mentions went to Whale/Munster Simms Engineering for its Supersub Smart 650 bilge pump; CMC Marine for Stabilis Electra, a stabilising fin with an electric starter; and to CJR Propulsion for its VEEM Interceptor Propeller.

Participation in the Qualitec Design Award was extended this year to all companies exhibiting components and furnishings at Seatec.

This year's winner was Altraluce International Srl for its LED lighting system, the Faretto RGB IQ.

Now in its sixth year, Seatec — otherwise known as the international exhibition for technology, subcontracting and design for boats, yachts and ships — attracted a record 11,380 visitors during its three-day run in February, a seven per cent increase compared to the previous year's show. Foreign visitors accounted for around 10 per cent of the total, with the bulk of people coming from the UK, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, the US and Slovenia.

The number of exhibiting companies also reached record levels. According to show organiser CarraraFiere, exhibitor numbers grew by 11 per cent compared to last year's edition, with 963 companies spread over a 34,000m² area of space. Of this total, 319 companies were foreign.

Next year's Seatec exhibition will be held from February 10-12, 2010.



Left: A&E Yacht Services' IMR 1.0 system. Right: The Faretto RGB IQ from Altraluce.

Raymarine reports sales drop in fiscal 2008

Raymarine said sales for the year ended December 31, 2008 dropped to £134.9m from £140.7m in fiscal 2007. The marine electronics manufacturer's before-tax profit fell to £10.7m for 2008, down 54.4 per cent compared to the same period a year ago.

"Whilst the outlook for 2009 remains very tough, our strategy for Raymarine is to strengthen our position in the leisure marine market. We will direct our sales resource to work with our worldwide distribution to gain market share," said Peter Ward, executive chairman of Raymarine plc, in a statement. "The Board takes confidence in the hard steps that have both been taken and are being taken to re-establish an appropriate cost base for 2009; Raymarine's market success and penetration into new sectors is well proven, however the outlook for the leisure marine market remains challenging."

Raymarine has secured new credit facilities through March 2010, according to Ward, and is beginning to enter discussions to extend those credit facilities at least through March 2011.

Ward said that Raymarine's global sales were "depressed" in 2008, with the US market in particular "suffering" last year.

"Markets in Eastern Europe and the Middle East performed especially well, seeing an average annual growth of over 35 per cent in countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and other territories in the Arabian Gulf," said Ward. "China and Asia Pacific saw double digit growth. However, although boatbuilding continues to grow in Asia, it appears that it will be a number of years before the local leisure market is fully established."

He said that even the rise of new markets did not compensate for the shortfall in sales in Raymarine's "established" markets.