



A NEW KIND OF SHOW

A free and safe hybrid show with live components to allow you to navigate your own experience.

CLEVELANDBOATSHOW.COM

2021 U.S. BOAT SHOW SCHEDULE

These events may change after press time — Please confirm with event organizers

January 14-17

St. Petersburg Power & Sailboat Show
STPETEBOATSHOW.COM

January 14-17 (Hybrid)
Progressive Cleveland Boat Show & Fishing Expo
CLEVELANDBOATSHOW.COM

January 21-24
Naples Boat Show
GOBOATINGFLORIDA.COM/
BOATING-SHOWS

January 28-31
(Virtual) Seattle Boat Show
SEATTLEBOATSHOW.COM

February 24-28
Atlantic City Boat Show
ACBOATSHOW.COM

February 28-March 3
(Hybrid) Progressive Akron Boat & Water Sports Show
AKRONBOATSHOW.COM

March 4-7
Bonita Springs Boat Show
GOBOATINGFLORIDA.COM/
BOATING-SHOWS

March 11-14
Progressive Novi Boat Show
BOATMICHIGAN.ORG

March 19-21
Traverse City Boat Show
TRAVERSECITYBOATSHOW.COM

March 25-28
Northwest Sportshow
NORTHWESTSPORTSHOW.COM

March 25-28
Palm Beach Intl. Boat Show
PBOATSHOW.COM

April 16-18
Bay Bridge Boat Show
ANNAPOLISBOATSHOWS.COM/
BAY-BRIDGE-BOAT-SHOW

April 23-25
Sarasota Suncoast Boat Show
SUNCOASTBOATSHOW.COM

August 6-8
Antique Boat Show & Auction
ABM.ORG

August 14
Les Cheneaux Islands
Antique Wooden Boat Show
and Festival of Arts
LCIBOATSHOW.COM

August 14-15
Door County Classic & Wooden Boat Festival
DCMM.ORG

August 27-29
Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Hydrofest
DETROITBOATRACES.COM

September 10-11
Port Huron Boat Show
MICHACBS.COM/PORT-HURON-BOAT-SHOW

September 16-19
Newport International Boat Show
NEWPORTBOATSHOW.COM

September 2021
Progressive Metro Boat Show
BOATMICHIGAN.ORG

September 2021
Progressive Cleveland North Coast Harbor Boat Show
NORTHCOSTHARBORBOATSHOW.COM

October 14-17
U.S. Powerboat Show
ANNAPOLISBOATSHOWS.COM

that there is a clear interest in the virtual boat show experience as well as a pent-up demand for boating."

The Seattle Boat Show, famous for a huge selection of boats, accessories and seminars, was compelled to run in January 2021 via a digital format. This required a massive effort amongst exhibitors, vendors and technological assets, but with the extra lead time they were able to pull it off.

"We spent five and a half months researching and planning for a digital show," said George Harris, president, Northwest Marine Trade Association, prior to the event. "We're leaning in and doubling down and giving it all we've got. I'm proud and excited about the new features and technologies we're adding to the website and making available to exhibitors to help them drive those all-important winter sales."

The Seattle show had an appointment-setting tool with live reps from the various vendors that allowed customers to schedule meetings in-person or via Zoom, live text chat or FaceTime. Added to that was 100 hours of original boating, fishing and lifestyle seminars via live video streaming.

Some shows are opting for a hybrid model, including the Progressive Cleveland Boat Show & Fishing Expo, as well as the Progressive Akron Boat & Water Sports Show in February 2021, which will offer both online and in-person events at local boat dealerships.

"We intend to make attending our 2021 boat show a fun experience, too, both online

and in every dealership," said Michelle Burke, president of the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association. "We'll feature contests and activities for all ages. Boaters and anglers will be able to tour the online portion of the show and decide on the boats and dealers they want to visit during the 10-day show run. Then, they can head to those dealerships and climb aboard everything they want to explore in a safe, controlled setting, or visit the salesperson and dealership right from their phone or computer."

Most of these online shows still have a fee to attend, and this may give boat buyers pause; however, don't forget that attendees can do this without plane tickets, taxis, hotel rooms or restaurants to pay for — easily \$2,000 that can go toward a desired purchase instead.

THE PROS AND CONS

Passagemaker Magazine hosts several sail-in Trawler Fests around the U.S. each year and pivoted to an online summit in November. Utilizing the Whova app, they featured 12 educational seminars and online demonstrations of products and

services. Steve Zimmerman, of Zimmerman Marine, served up the highlight of day one with a live-stream presentation of his voyage around the Downeast Loop.

"In the current environment, doing an online seminar was much safer," he commented. "Also, instead of traveling to Florida and staying for several days, I could easily log in, give my presentation, and then go on to other activities — far more efficient."

Zimmerman noted that a downside to the online show was that he wasn't able to see the faces of attendees and chat with them one-on-one during breaks.

After attending two online shows, despite the great effort to create them, I have to say that it's just not the same, the tactile experience of walking through a boat with a human guide and wandering around a large exhibition hall will never be replaced with a computer — not in our lifetime, anyway. But it's an acceptable substitute for now, and it will just have to do.

There's good news: At press time, the Palm Beach International Boat Show plans to return to in-person when it runs in March 2021. But at the top of its website is a stark reminder of how the world has changed. In bold letters it reads:

"FACE MASKS REQUIRED." ★