



MINNEAPOLIS – With gas prices hovering above \$3 a gallon and expected to creep higher throughout the summer, it is critical now more than ever that boating consumers find reputable dealers to buy from and have service their boats. Thanks to *Boating Industry* magazine and its soon-to-be-published list of the 2007 Top 100 Dealers, consumers will soon have the definitive list of the best-of-the-best dealers at their fingertips.

“While most industry awards are given to those dealers that sell the most boats, our Top 100 program is much more qualitatively focused,” said Matt Gruhn, Editor-in-Chief of *Boating Industry*, “thereby recognizing the businesses that deliver outstanding customer service through overall operational excellence and leveling the playing field for all dealers and directing consumers to those dealers that can best deliver on the dream that boat ownership promises.”

This ranking, which will be highlighted in the January issue of *Boating Industry* magazine, represents an incredibly powerful group of marine dealers. Recognized at a black-tie gala in Las Vegas on Nov. 28, this class of dealers generated more than \$3.25 billion in retail sales, which is 8 percent of the entire \$39.5 billion marine market. The 2007 *Boating Industry* Top 100 employ nearly 7,500 people and operate 377 retail locations across North America.

Hampton Watercraft & Marine, based in Hampton Bays, N.Y., and its two locations, ranked 44 on this elite list, which recognizes the best-of-the-best of the more than 5,000 marine dealers in North America.

“Our editorial staff was extremely impressed with Hampton Watercraft & Marine’s marketing excellence,” said Gruhn. □ “Of particular note was the company’s daddyneedsaboat.com marketing campaign, which has been so successful that the company has now secured the rights to four more Web sites: daddygotaboat.com, mommyneedsaboat.com, thekidsneedaboat.com and thefamilyneedsaboat.com.”

*Boating Industry's* editorial staff reviewed nearly 400 applications, culled from more than 3,000 nominations. The applications asked both quantitative and qualitative questions regarding all aspects of marine dealer operations.

“The *Boating Industry* Top 100 has, in short order, become the most coveted award in the marine market,” explained Tammy Galvin, Vice President for Ehlert Publishing Group’s consumer boating and trade groups. “Marine dealers are on the front line with consumers every day, and this is one way we can help provide much-needed benchmarking information for all other dealers to measure themselves against.”

To help bring the *Boating Industry* Top 100 to life, Ehlert Publishing Group, the magazine's parent company, created the Leadership Alliance, an elite group of the marine industry's leading suppliers. These companies were invited to participate because they possess, as one of their corporate values, a true belief in and commitment to raising the bar of professionalism across all marine industry sectors, and particularly for dealers.

The 2007 Leadership Alliance members include: BRP/Evinrude, GE Capital Solutions and GE Money, Yamaha, BoatTrader, Volvo Penta, ADP Lightspeed, Channel Blade Technologies, Honda, Manheim Specialty Auctions and the Marine Retailers Association of America.

To see the complete ranking of the Top 100 dealers, visit [www.Boating-Industry.com](http://www.Boating-Industry.com).