

# Best Boats 2010

SAIL SCoured  
THE FALL  
BOAT SHOWS  
FOR THE  
SHINING STARS  
AMONG THIS  
YEAR'S CROP OF  
NEW BOATS.  
HERE THEY ARE

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THERE WAS A BUZZ AROUND THE DOCKS AT the Annapolis and Newport shows, and it wasn't the sound of the plague of locusts we were half expecting, given the disasters of recent months and years. No, the sun shone, the water sparkled, the brightwork gleamed, and you all came to the show. Well, it sure seemed that way. On the opening day at Annapolis it seemed the docks might sink beneath the throngs of visitors; boats were being sold, business was being done, and the retail outlets did brisk trade.

It's too soon to tell if consumer confidence has truly returned, but the signs were good as the judging team for SAIL's Best Boats awards trolled the docks. There were fewer new boats than in previous years, but the fleet lacked for nothing in variety and quality. From entry-level dinghies to fully kitted-out global cruisers, every sailing niche was represented. Here are our choices for SAIL's Best Boats Awards.

Our judges liked the 445's clean lines, good hardware, and great helm stations



The port-side aft cabin can either feature a full berth or two stacked bunks and a dedicated workbench

### Cruising Monohull Under 50ft

## Catalina 445

> One encouraging trend that we have seen in recent years is a marked improvement in the overall design and construction of production fiberglass cruising boats. The best example this year is the new Catalina 445, which astutely balances the often competing dictates of comfort, convenience, performance and functionality.

Our favorite feature was the innovative port-side aft cabin, which can be converted from a guest cabin with either a full double berth or over-and-under single bunk berths to a utility space with a dedicated work bench. Its functionality is greatly enhanced by an overhead cockpit seat hatch, which opens to provide great ventilation and full access to the cabin's interior from above, plus full headroom for anyone standing at the workbench.

Other thoughtful accommodation features include carefully designed storage spaces in the galley with special bins and drawers for canned goods, bottles and cookware, a motorized elevating bed-head on the master double berth forward, under-settee storage spaces that can be accessed without lifting cushions, a laptop-friendly nav desk and a carefully offset double berth that maximizes useable headroom in the starboard-side aft cabin.

The 445 is a winner on deck, too. The standard Seldén furling rig features an in-mast mainsail with vertical battens to maximize convenience and performance, plus there's an optional removable bowsprit for flying asymmetric spinnakers and furling

gennakers to keep the boat sailing well in light air. Again, there is a plethora of thoughtful details, including retractable lifelines at the aft pulpit gate and ergonomic twin helm stations that make it easy for a helmsman to trim a headsail while steering.

Systems details have also been treated carefully and include such features as a dedicated filter locker for easing engine maintenance and a well-designed manifold system for controlling the flow of fresh water aboard. Tie it all up in a boat with attractive, crisp lines, a relatively moderate beam and a long waterline, and you have one user-friendly cruiser that should be both fun and easy to sail. [catalinayachts.com](http://catalinayachts.com)



A modern, airy saloon is a signature of the 445