



THE SAIL TOP 10 BEST BOATS OF 2023

BY THE SAIL BOAT REVIEW TEAM

Every year, sailboat manufacturers around the world launch their latest models, and every year, *SAIL* magazine's experienced boat reviewers spend days and weeks learning what's new, talking with boatbuilders, examining the boats top to bottom dockside, and finally taking them sailing. This culminates at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, where our review team gets together and makes its final assessments on which boats earn top honors. Results are announced in our January/February issue, and full reviews of the winning boats will be published throughout the year.

For almost 20 years, we've called this awards program *SAIL* Best Boats, but this year, we're refining and renaming this program to better and more fairly represent the boats we've selected. Restricting boats to categories and labels—such as Best Cruising Monohull 30-40 feet and Best Performance Monohull 40-50 feet—doesn't bring our readers the full picture. Too often, defining these boats by categories results in unfairly comparing apples to oranges, sorting boats with very different purposes and design briefs into the same bracket just because of their LOA, and inevitably kicking out some really terrific boats. So, starting this year, we're honoring the Top 10 boats, period. By eliminating the artificial straitjacket of size categories and focusing on what are simply the Top 10, *SAIL* will present readers a more complete and equitable assessment.

So, without further ado, here's the *SAIL* Top 10 Best Boats for 2023. After exploring a mix of bluewater boats, racer/cruisers, speedsters, dinghies, and multihulls, we've settled on the very best the industry has to offer. We were excited to see that designers and builders are steadily pushing the envelope in propulsion, electrical generation, and more sustainable options for getting out on the water. And as always, we admire the ever-evolving innovations and tenacity of the sailboat industry that makes what we do possible.



MEET THE REVIEW TEAM

- Logging some 30,000 blue-water cruising miles with her family, *SAIL* Editor-in-Chief **Wendy Mitman Clarke** has raced and cruised all kinds of boats over a lifetime of sailing.
- *SAIL* Cruising Editor **Charlie Doane** has been testing boats for the magazine for over 20 years. An avid coastal and bluewater cruiser, he has crossed the Atlantic seven times and has crewed in several distance races.
- **Tom Dove** became hooked on sailing by a Penguin class dinghy in 1954. He has been reviewing boats of all sizes for *SAIL* magazine since 1988.
- A USCG 100 Ton Master, *SAIL* Charter Editor **Zuzana Prochazka** logs miles on all kinds of boats around the world and never misses an opportunity to raise a sail or crawl into the engine room of a new design.
- Managing Editor **Lydia Mullan** has been involved with *SAIL*'s Best Boats competition for five years, sea trialing all manner of boats. However, her first loves will always be dinghies and performance boats.
- **Phil Gutowski** is founder of BoatRx, a high-tech marine systems company dedicated to increasing the efficiency of onboard power systems.

NEEL 43 Trimaran

Trimarans are known for having a good turn of speed but also for not having much livable space, which may be why so few of them are out distance cruising. French builder NEEL has been working to change that mindset. With the new baby of the family, the NEEL 43, they've dialed in a good combination of comfort and easy, fun, fast sailing.

Step into the cockpit and you'll be surprised that it has nearly the same dimensions as a cat. There's plenty of room for 10 people to mingle, and six can gather for a meal. The helm station is offset onto the starboard bulkhead, so the driver remains part of the social activity in the cockpit but still has good visibility when sailing.

Three cabins, one head, a compact galley, and a fair-sized saloon make up the interior, most of which is on the same level. Below the cabin sole, the immense "basement" houses the engine room and utility spaces. Everything is labeled and very accessible, so it won't be a punishment to do maintenance. As an upgrade, the NEEL 43 offers a 48-volt system, lithium batteries, multiple solar panels, and an Integrel supersized alternator that eliminates the need for a separate genset. This innovative system reduces carbon emissions and extends time at anchor without constant combustion-engine charging.

Fully commissioned and FOB East Coast, the NEEL 43 is \$575,000; if you add the whizbang lithium powerpack and Integrel, you can expect to pay another \$100,000. That's not an extreme price for what is a unique cruising experience—one that can keep your carbon footprint small and your hair flying back as the three hulls eat up the miles.

