

Cruisers unveils new boat models in Sturgeon Bay

Ramelle Bintz 9:13 a.m. CDT July 31, 2014



(Photo: Ramelle Bintz/Gannett Wisconsin Media)

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STURGEON BAY – Cruisers Yachts, part of KCS International Inc. in Oconto, unveiled its new sports yacht and several other new recreational boats during its dealership meeting at Stone Harbor Resort and Conference Center.

More than 40 dealers arrived from all over the world last week to get a firsthand look at several new models for the 2015 season and become familiar with the new designs and features.

The boats will remain docked for a week at Stone Harbor and will be open this weekend for retail customers to ogle and possibly place an order to purchase. A photo shoot of the new models in the waters surrounding Sturgeon Bay will be done next week, said Jon Viestenz, vice president of marketing.

Sturgeon Bay is just across the bay from Oconto where the boats are built, and Skipper Buds of Sturgeon Bay is one of their dealers, Viestenz said.

Their newest yacht is the 390 Express Coupe, a 39-foot hybrid designed for entertaining with what Viestenz described as the most diverse and largest cockpit in its class anywhere in the world. The coupe with the options at this weekend's show sells for about \$540,000.

"This will do well in freshwater lakes and saltwater coastal areas and is excellent for our overseas penetration in the market," he said.

Overseas dealers in Door County last week were from Russia, China, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, Spain, France, Central and South America, and Canada as well as dealers in the U.S., particularly from coastal areas such as Florida. Several wrote orders, but numbers were not yet tallied, Viestenz said. Orders of the new 390 Coupe would be produced for deliveries this fall.

The Oconto plant has more than 300 employees working for Cruisers in a boating industry that struggled in past years when the economy slumped. KCS International president Mark Pedersen said the economy has slowly been recovering but is not back to its all-time high.

"We're starting to see growth," Pedersen said. "It's slow but sure."

He said he was proud of the craftsmanship and design of the new 390 launched from Oconto on Saturday and brought to Sturgeon Bay on Sunday for its unveiling.

This is the third year Cruisers chose Sturgeon Bay to host its international dealer meeting. Viestenz said the community is convenient crossing the bay, has a number of marinas and accommodations for guests and interest in boating in Door County, as well as the dealership at Skipper Buds.

In addition to the midsize luxury yacht, there are also four new "bow rider" recreational boats at the dock at Stone Harbor introduced by Cruisers this season. Those have new swim platforms and interiors and new exterior gelcoat graphics.

KCS International owns boat brands Cruisers Yachts, Cruisers Sport Series and Rampage Sport Fishing Yachts. It produces midsize luxury yachts from 31 to 54 feet. The sport series range from 20 to 32 feet. The fishing yachts are from 34 to 45 feet.

— *Ramelle Bintz writes for the Door County Advocate, Sturgeon Bay.*