

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 27th July

Yachting Ventures' Pitch Competition returns to IBEX 2026

Yachting Ventures is opening applications for the third edition of its Pitch Competition at the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition Conference (IBEX), taking place on Tuesday 6th October 2026 from 1pm - 2:30pm, in room 107 at the Tampa Convention Center.

Five high-growth start-ups raising investment in the leisure marine sector will be selected to pitch live to a panel of investors, OEMs and industry experts in front of one of North America's largest gatherings of marine professionals.

Priority will be given to companies exhibiting in the Yachting Ventures Start-Up Pavilion at IBEX 2026, although a limited number of additional places will be offered to other start-ups.

The Pitch Competition sits within the wider Yachting Ventures Start-Up Pavilion, now in its third year at IBEX, which gives emerging companies a dedicated space to exhibit, build commercial relationships and enter the US market.

[Applications for the Start-Up Pavilion are currently open and can be found here](#). They are being reviewed on a rolling basis, and prompt applications are strongly encouraged as space is limited.

Yachting Ventures works closely with local start-up ecosystems at every show it runs, and Tampa is no exception. The IBEX judging panel will once again be drawn from Florida's thriving investor and marine innovation ecosystem.

The state has become one of the leading blue economy hubs in the US, home to organizations including Tampa Bay Wave, Embarc Collective, Florida Funders, Ocean Azul Partners, Fuel Venture Capital and Miami Angels. Combined with Florida's \$30 billion recreational boating industry and more than 500 boatbuilders, the competition gives founders direct access to customers, partners and investors.

Start-ups selected for the Pitching Competition will present live in room 107 to a panel of investors and industry experts with backgrounds spanning venture capital, marine technology, manufacturing and entrepreneurship. Pitches are judged on criteria including uniqueness, market potential, scalability and relevance to the marine sector.

Beyond the stage time, founders receive direct feedback from judges, introductions to potential investors and partners, extensive media coverage, social media content and increased visibility within the North American marine market.

[Gabbi Richardson](#), Founder of Yachting Ventures, said:

"IBEX has become one of our flagship events for connecting start-ups with the North American marine industry. Every year we're seeing stronger founders, more investor interest and greater engagement from the wider industry. The Pitch Competition has become an important platform for showcasing the technologies shaping the future of boating, and we're excited to return for another year."

[Mary Velline](#), IBEX Show Director, said:

"IBEX has always been a place where new ideas and better ways of building are shared."

Through the Yachting Ventures Start-Up Pavilion and Pitch Competition, we're creating a meaningful platform for emerging companies to introduce fresh thinking, gain insight from marine industry and investment leaders, and connect with the manufacturers, investors and partners who can help move their ideas forward.

Supporting these entrepreneurs brings new energy to IBEX and helps strengthen the future of our industry."

Since launching in 2020, Yachting Ventures has helped dozens of marine startups pitch at leading international boat shows, with over 80 startups taking part in pitch competitions across its global events in 2025 alone.

Applications for the IBEX 2026 Pitch Competition are open now. [Interested startups can apply here.](#)

Notes to Editor:

[Please follow this link to access imagery.](#)

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About Yachting Ventures

Yachting Ventures is a growth platform for leisure marine startups and scaleups, focused on founder visibility, industry access and strategic connections. Through a curated community, media and content, and activations at major international boat shows, Yachting Ventures supports founders as they scale into new markets and engage with investors, partners and customers worldwide.

About IBEX

IBEX, Where Better Boats Begin, is the marine industry's largest technical trade event in North America. IBEX is owned and produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (www.nmma.org) and RAI Amsterdam (www.rai.nl). The 2026 IBEX is scheduled to take place at the Tampa Convention Center, October 6-8, in Tampa, FL USA. For more information, please visit www.ibexshow.com.