

Press release

DESIGN INNOVATION AWARD: ENTRIES ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE SEVENTH EDITION

Now in its seventh edition, the Design Innovation Award continues to consolidate its role as an international benchmark for innovation and design culture across the yachting sector.

Genoa, 4 August 2026 – Entries are now officially open for the seventh edition of the **Design Innovation Award**, an acknowledgement promoted by **Confindustria Nautica**, the Italian Marine Industry Association, and the **Genoa International Boat Show**, first established in 2020 to recognise design excellence and support a culture of innovation throughout the yachting sector.

Over the course of its past six editions, the Design Innovation Award has defined itself as one of the leading international awards dedicated to innovation and design culture within the yachting sector. In partnership with the Genoa International Boat Show, each year the Award celebrates the finest examples of contemporary yachting, recognising the projects that best embody the evolution of design, innovation and sustainability.

The seventh edition will take place as part of **the 66th Genoa International Boat Show**, scheduled to be held in the historical maritime city from 1 to 6 October 2026. All exhibitors at the event are eligible to enter by submitting original products presented at the Genoa International Boat Show and produced within the past year.

The international jury will be chaired by **Paolo Brescia**, architect and co-founder of the OBR – Open Building Research studio, and one of today's leading figures in contemporary architecture. Following his collaboration with Renzo Piano, he founded OBR in 2000; the studio has since been responsible for numerous projects of national and international significance. Among these are, in Genoa, the Casa della Vela and the Waterfront di Levante, developed in collaboration with

Renzo Piano. These represent defining examples of urban regeneration and now form the new setting for the Genoa International Boat Show itself. His profound understanding of design and his connection to the sea, cultivated in part through extensive sailing experience, make him an ideal candidate to lead the Design Innovation Award jury.

*"I am honoured to chair the jury of the Design Innovation Award. I like to think of this award as a call to action for conscious and responsible design, one that combines aesthetics with quality. Human activity has a massive impact on our planet. With this award, we would like to foster a vision of the future that is shaped not by adapting the environment to us, but by adapting ourselves to the environment. It is my firm belief that the underlying value of this award is, above all, ethical, encouraging projects that do not simply add objects to the world, but which achieve more with less, moving beyond sensationalism and standardisation. I would like to thank President Piero Formenti, General Manager Marina Stella and the entire Confindustria Nautica association for the trust they have placed in me" – **Paolo Brescia**, President of the Design Innovation Award jury.*

The jury itself, comprising leading Italian and international experts from the worlds of design, industry, research, media and institutions, will select the winners through an independent and multidisciplinary evaluation process, a hallmark of the Award since its inception.

Among the new features of this year's seventh edition, the Design Innovation Award is expanding its awards system by introducing a category dedicated to **marine components**, alongside that for **marine accessories and equipment**. This decision reflects the Award's continuous evolution and its desire to highlight, in an even more targeted approach, the design, technological and innovative contributions of a segment that is strategic for the competitiveness and development of the entire yachting supply chain.

"The Design Innovation Award was created to recognise the value of innovation as a driving force for the development of the yachting industry. This decision is consistent with the very nature of the Genoa International Boat Show, which is not only one of the sector's most important international events, but also a sector-wide tool designed to support the growth of the entire supply chain. Ever since its inception, Confindustria Nautica has sought to establish an award capable of expressing the sector's values with authority, entrusting the assessment to an independent jury composed of international experts, which ensures expertise, rigour and impartiality." – **Piero Formenti**, President of Confindustria Nautica.

"The Design Innovation Award is now much more than just an accolade: it is a forum for open dialogue between companies, designers and design culture, capable of providing, year after year, an authoritative insight into the evolution of contemporary yachting. The ever-increasing quality of the entries confirms the sector's vitality and the ability of companies to innovate, experiment and anticipate market changes." – **Marina Stella**, General Manager of Confindustria Nautica.

Entries must be submitted exclusively online by **18 September 2026**. In order to submit an entry, exhibitors must fill out the application form available on the official Genoa International Boat Show website: <https://www.salonenautico.com/design-innovation-award/>

The Design Innovation Award is divided into **eleven product categories**, Special Awards dedicated to Innovation, Career and Talent, and Honourable Mentions for products deserving of particular attention. All projects will be assessed according to criteria that recognise design quality, innovation, sustainability, technical and scientific research, and the ability to interpret the evolution of contemporary yachting.

The winners will be announced on **Friday 2 October** during the Design Innovation Award gala evening, one of the most eagerly anticipated events of the 66th Genoa International Boat Show,

which celebrates the finest examples of contemporary yachting and the projects set to shape its future.

66th Genoa International Boat Show

The 66th edition of the **Genoa International Boat Show**, organised by Confindustria Nautica, the Italian Marine Industry Association and representative body of the country's entire yachting sector, will take place from **1 to 6 October 2026**. An international benchmark for the sector, the Genoa International Boat Show has supported, over its 66 editions, the growth and expansion of the yachting industry, fostering dialogue between businesses, innovation and industrial culture.

Held on the Waterfront di Levante, a venue designed by Renzo Piano, the Genoa International Boat Show offers an exhibition format divided into five product categories (Yachts & Superyachts, Boating Discovery, TechTrade, Sailing World, and Living the Sea), with over 85% of its spaces located outdoors, offering an immersive experience combining design, sustainability and industry-defining technologies, and reaffirming its role as a strategic platform for the development of the blue economy. This year, the traditional events programme is complemented by Blue Arena, a new space housed within the new Palasport pavilion and dedicated to bringing together yachting, innovation, maritime culture, institutions, and professional training opportunities. Conceived as an open and accessible venue, Blue Arena enriches the Genoa International Boat Show experience, expanding its content beyond the exhibition itself.

<https://www.salonenautico.com/en>

Confindustria Nautica – Italian Marine Industry Association

Confindustria Nautica - Italian Marine Industry Association is a non-profit organisation that, since 1967, has represented the yachting industry and its businesses, working to expand the sector and promote maritime culture along with the development of nautical tourism in Italy.

Based in Genoa and Rome and a member of the General Confederation of Italian Industry, the Association operates in direct dialogue with the Italian Government and Parliament, actively

participating through its representatives in ICOMIA and the EBI federation (European Boating Industry) to promote the global and European yachting sectors. It is also a member of Italy's marine and tourism federations Federazione del Mare and Federturismo, of Fondazione Edison, Fondazione Symbola, the Sustainable Development Foundation and of IT-EX. It collects and disseminates economic data, carries out studies and market analyses, and organises conferences. It promotes the sector through events such as the Genoa International Boat Show, the Design Innovation Award, TechTrade Days, National Sea Day, the FIV Sailor of the Year award, the SATEC Convention and the Boating Pioneer Award. It offers its members technical and regulatory assistance and advice, as well as professional training and development programmes.

<https://confindustrianautica.net/en>

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