

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yachting Ventures announces jury for 2026 Metstrade Startup Pitch Competition

Yachting Ventures has unveiled the judging panel for the 2026 Metstrade Startup Pitch Competition, bringing together a group of entrepreneurs, investors and marine industry leaders to evaluate the next generation of leisure marine innovation.

Taking place during Metstrade in Amsterdam on Wednesday 18th November from 12:30pm – 1:15pm, the competition will see some of the industry's most promising startups pitch live to an audience of investors, media, corporate partners and industry professionals.

The competition forms part of Yachting Ventures' wider startup programme at Metstrade, supported by Metstrade, which gives emerging companies the opportunity to increase their visibility, build commercial relationships and connect with key decision-makers from across the global leisure marine industry.

Among this year's judges are:

Edouard Fiess

Edouard is the Co-founder of Navily, a leading digital platform connecting boaters and marinas worldwide. Since launching Navily in 2014, he has helped grow the company from an early-stage startup into a major player in the leisure marine industry, building a strong international community of boaters at its core. He brings extensive experience in community-led growth, digital marketplaces and scaling a marine technology business internationally.

Roel van der Zwet

Roel is a Partner at Paul Thames, where he advises startups and scaleups, alongside his role as Managing Director of Schneider Containment. He has more than 15 years of experience in the superyacht industry, working across over 100 yachts and projects spanning high-end AV/IT, exterior lighting and lithium fire-prevention technology. He brings extensive experience in technical innovation, luxury technology and turning new ideas into commercially relevant solutions.

Mark Rutgers

Mark is the Director and Owner of Allpa Marine Equipment, a leading European marine equipment wholesaler which he has led for more than 25 years. Alongside his work in the marine industry, he is an active investor in Dutch commercial real estate. He brings extensive

experience in international trade, business development, strategic partnerships and long-term value creation.

Matt Vranich

Matt is a Senior Advisor at BCE Consulting and a former commercial executive at Navico and Brunswick Corporation. With more than two decades of international leadership experience, he has helped global marine businesses accelerate growth across North America, Europe and Latin America. He brings extensive experience in commercial strategy, international expansion and scaling businesses within the global marine industry.

Philippa Drysdale

Philippa is the Publisher of IBI (International Boat Industry), a leading B2B media platform dedicated to the global leisure marine industry. With more than 16 years of experience covering market trends, manufacturing advancements and supply chain dynamics, she brings extensive insight into the technologies, businesses and sustainable solutions shaping the future of the leisure marine industry.

Floris Lettinga

Floris is the Director of Sales and Marketing at Yanmar Marine International, with more than 23 years of experience across the global recreational and commercial high-speed craft sectors. He brings extensive knowledge of marine technologies, including electronics, electrification, propulsion, power generation, energy storage and sustainability, alongside broad experience in product development, yacht racing, sponsorships, and both sail and powerboats.

Romain Devismes

Romain is CEO of Yacht Sentinel and TowPro, with more than a decade of experience in private equity and M&A prior to moving into entrepreneurship. Romain previously worked with Ardian, Mizuho, 3i and ABN AMRO, and has led Yacht Sentinel since 2015. An ESSEC Business School graduate and serial entrepreneur, he brings extensive experience in investment, business development and scaling marine technology businesses

Jelte Liebrand

Jelte is the Founder and CEO of Savvy Navvy, the marine navigation app used by boaters in more than 100 countries. A former Google engineer and Clipper Round the World Yacht Race sailor, Jelte founded Savvy Navvy in 2017 to simplify navigation on the water. He has since grown the platform to more than three million app downloads and expanded the business through Savvy Integrated, working with boatbuilders, engine manufacturers and marine technology partners to bring its navigation technology directly to the helm.

Nicola Pomi

Nicola is the Vice President, Yacht & Superyacht at Volvo Penta, with global responsibility for strategy and business development across the yacht and superyacht segments. With more than 20 years of marine industry experience, Nicola has held senior leadership roles at Volvo Penta and previously served as General Manager at Azimut Benetti. He works closely with leading yacht builders and industry partners on the development of new propulsion, electrification and hybrid-electric solutions.

Roelof Borggreve

Roelof is a board executive, investor and technology entrepreneur with more than 35 years of experience across venture capital, technology and digital transformation. Roelof is Chairman of the Supervisory Board at Twin AI and Chairman of the Advisory Board at HENQ Capital, where he supports high-growth technology companies with investment, scaling and corporate governance.

Together, the panel represents decades of experience across the global marine industry and startup ecosystem, bringing valuable commercial, operational and investment perspectives to this year's competition.

"We're delighted to welcome such an experienced jury to Metstrade this year," said Gabbi Richardson, Founder of Yachting Ventures.

"A strong pitch competition is about much more than choosing a winner. It's about putting startups in front of people who can challenge their thinking, offer valuable industry insight and potentially open doors. Our judges bring a wealth of experience from across the marine industry, and I'm looking forward to seeing the conversations and connections that come from the competition."

Applications for the Metstrade 2026 Startup Pitch Competition are open now and will close on 31st August 2026.

[Interested startups can apply here.](#)

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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 Metstrade

Metstrade is the world's largest trade exhibition for marine equipment, technology and services for the global leisure marine industry. Organised by RAI Amsterdam in association with ICOMIA (International Council of Marine Industry Associations), Metstrade target audience includes yacht builders, naval architects, refit yards, distributors, dealers, wholesalers, captains, marina owners and marine equipment manufacturers worldwide.

The 35th edition of the DAME Design Awards [PB1] are the most prestigious accolades in the leisure marine industry, recognising excellence in product design. Open to all companies exhibiting at Metstrade, these awards celebrate the innovation, functionality, and sustainability of new marine products. Judged by an international panel of esteemed designers and industry experts, the DAME Design Awards highlight cutting-edge designs that push the boundaries of leisure marine technology and design.

Metstrade 2025: 17-19 November 2026, Flagship event: The Superyacht Forum, 16-17 November 2026 at RAI Convention Centre in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.