

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TONJO to bring automotive autonomy expertise to the US marine market at IBEX

Marine tech company TONJO will use its debut at the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition and Conference (IBEX) in Tampa to accelerate its entry into the US market, building on orders for more than 500 units and the completion of its first TONJO Intelligent Helm System installation.

The Shanghai-based company recently returned from the Cannes Yachting Festival, where it met a number of leading European boatbuilders and invited them to China to see a live demonstration of the system. TONJO also secured a pilot project to retrofit a sailing yacht for an owner preparing for a round-the-world voyage.

The project will be TONJO's first retrofit installation and represents an important strategic step for the company. Alongside factory-fit installations with boatbuilders, the retrofit market is a deliberate part of TONJO's product plan, and the pilot will take the system into a new type of vessel and use case.

TONJO's next stop will be the Yachting Ventures Start-Up Pavilion at IBEX from 6–8 October, where the team aims to establish the local relationships needed to launch and support its technology in the United States.

TONJO is already moving the system towards series production after securing orders for more than 500 units across multiple Chinese boatbuilders. The first installation has been completed aboard the Allegro Yacht 62CAT, ahead of the vessel's launch and delivery.

Built on a unified software architecture, the system brings navigation, engine and systems monitoring, lighting, climate and entertainment together through a single interface.

Voice control and vessel monitoring are designed to run on-device, allowing core functionality to remain available in marine environments where connectivity is limited or unavailable.

From autonomous trucks to intelligent vessels

TONJO founder Chenglun Zhang brings ten years of experience from China's intelligent vehicle industry. From 2016 to 2019, he was among the first 20 employees at TuSimple, the autonomous trucking technology company founded in 2015.

TuSimple developed autonomous driving technology and an autonomous freight network for heavy-duty trucks before listing on the Nasdaq Global Select Market in April 2021. Its IPO raised approximately US\$1.35 billion, making the company's journey from technology startup to US-listed business a valuable source of experience as TONJO prepares for international growth.

Zhang subsequently served as CEO of an autonomous mining technology company in China, which grew to around 200 employees. The company now has 200 autonomous mining trucks in regular day-to-day operation and has recorded more than 10 million kilometres of cumulative autonomous driving, according to its published figures.

Today, TONJO's approximately 20-person team brings together expertise in automotive cockpit software, vehicle control systems, connected platforms and the commercial scaling of technology businesses.

TONJO is now applying that experience to the marine sector. Rather than starting with a separate system for each onboard function, the company treats the vessel as one integrated platform. Its software is configurable across different boat types and shipyards and can continue improving through regular releases after delivery.

Adapting automotive technology for use on the water requires new marine-specific capabilities and datasets, particularly around wave dynamics and the different ways vessels move and respond at sea.

"The automotive industry spent the past decade turning the cockpit into one system that runs the whole vehicle," said Chenglun Zhang, founder of TONJO. "We're bringing that approach to boats: one system that runs the whole vessel, so its functions are easier to understand, access and control."

From intelligent helm systems to assisted navigation

The system is the product TONJO is bringing to the US market, and it is now moving into series production.

A second product line, Assisted Navigation, will be delivered to Chinese customers from late 2026 onwards. In 2027, TONJO plans to introduce that navigation capability to international customers, including assisted docking and undocking - consistently identified by owners as one of the most demanding manoeuvres - drawing directly on Zhang's automotive autonomy experience and the team's wider intelligent vehicle expertise.

Building the right US partnerships at IBEX

TONJO plans to enter the US through a B2B2C model, working with local distributors and after-sales service providers to reach boatbuilders, dealers and end users. The company is also seeking senior US marine industry advisors to support its market-entry strategy and the planned establishment of a US subsidiary in 2027.

"The United States is a strategically important market for TONJO, and IBEX gives us the opportunity to meet the people who can help us build the right foundations for long-term growth," added Zhang. "Our experience has taught us that scaling advanced technology requires more than a strong product. It depends on trusted local relationships, industry expertise and dependable after-sales support."

At IBEX, TONJO is particularly looking to meet US distributors, established service partners, boatbuilders and OEMs, as well as senior marine industry leaders interested in advising the company's US expansion.

TONJO will exhibit alongside nine other international startups in the Yachting Ventures Start-Up Pavilion at IBEX 2026. Industry professionals interested in distribution, after-sales partnerships, product integration or advisory opportunities are invited to meet the team during the show.

For further information, visit www.tonjo.tech, the [TONJO LinkedIn page](#), or watch their latest videos on [YouTube](#).

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Notes to Editor:

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

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About TONJO

TONJO develops intelligent technology for the marine helm, applying expertise from the automotive intelligent vehicle sector to create a more integrated onboard experience. Founded by Chenglun Zhang, the Shanghai-based company marked its first anniversary and completed its seed funding round in June 2026. The TONJO Intelligent Helm System brings key vessel functions together through a single interface and is designed to be configured across different boat types and shipyards.