

For Immediate Release

December 14, 2005

Contact: Erika Fish
Marketing Manager, Beneteau USA, INC.
843-629-5300



Beneteau 523 Wins Boat of the Year "Best Full Size Cruiser"

Marion, SC... The Beneteau 523 was awarded Boat of the Year by *Cruising World* Magazine for Best Full Size Cruiser. *Cruising World* magazine announced the best in boatbuilding for 2006 with its 12th annual Boat of the Year Awards on December 13th. The results will be featured in *Cruising World's* January 2006 issue.

A field of 42 boats had entered the competition before *Cruising World* Editors Herb McCormick and Tim Murphy, assisted by Ralph Naranjo, a world cruiser who oversees the sailing program at the U.S. Naval Academy, whittled down the fleet to 26 nominees. The nominated boats were then inspected and sailed by independent judges Bill Lee, formerly of Santa Cruz Yachts; Suzanne Giesemann, the winner of *Cruising World's* 2005 essay contest; Peter Hogg, a New Zealand-born veteran multihull sailor who holds a slew of offshore sailing records; and Ed Sherman, who serves as the Curriculum Designer and Senior Instructor for the education programs of the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC). Judges toured the boats at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, and sailed them on Chesapeake Bay over four days.

"On our go-fast/go-slow options scale," Lee said, "it had a good, real mainsail with real battens. It had the six-foot-two-inch medium draft, so those things were good. But it still had the three-blade prop so I bet you could pick up another half knot with a folding option. It sailed just fine, and if you put the deep keel and folding prop on the boat, it could fit right into the performance cruising class. It would sail that well."

Geisemann described the overall feel as one of the "luxury and comfort". Details she liked in the main salon included the sole ("gorgeous, and adds to the total picture") and the counter space in the galley ("best I've seen on any boat"). "The layout of the whole boat was great," she said, "but I especially liked the aft cabin with the small desk. And the aft head had a shower that was nothing short of inviting. Even with all that luxury, the boat gave us a fun, fast ride with a nice feel."

For more information about the Beneteau 523 please visit www.beneteauusa.com.

Beneteau USA, the American division of the world's largest sailboat manufacturer, builds hundreds of 32-47 foot production sailboats, as well as the Swift Trawler 42, in Marion, SC and imports sailing yachts up to 57 feet in length from its parent company in France. The boats are sold through a network of over 40 dealers from the north in Alaska to the southern tip of Chile.

###