

Boat show opens Thursday; JFK's Honey Fitz will be on display

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LOCAL

The popular show annually draws thousands of people to the West Palm Beach waterfront.

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Special to the Daily News



The 41st annual Palm Beach International Boat Show will feature a special vessel when it opens Thursday: The Honey Fitz, a yacht enjoyed by President John F. Kennedy and his family in Palm Beach, will be on display.

Expected to be a star attraction, the Honey Fitz is making its debut at the show, fully restored by its current owner, Charles R. Modica. He bought the yacht in a deteriorated state in February 2020, and then embarked on an extensive, three-year historic restoration that tied

in elements from its original build in 1931, but also targeted details from its era as a presidential yacht during the Kennedy administration.

Kennedy named the 93-foot boat for his maternal grandfather, John Francis Fitzgerald, a two-time mayor of Boston known as "Honey Fitz."

Owned by the Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County, and produced by Informa Markets, the boat show will take place along Flagler Drive on the West Palm Beach waterfront from through Sunday.

In addition to the Honey Fitz, hundreds of boats ranging from 8-foot inflatables to superyachts nearly 300 feet in length will be on view, said Alyssa Freeman, executive director of Marine Industries.

"As the proud owners (of the show), we are thrilled about the new things to do and see at the show this year," she said.

The popular show annually draws thousands of people. It was canceled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and had fewer boats than usual in 2021, but returned to normal in 2022.

Last year's total sales and economic impact of the boat show surpassed 2019, said Andrew Doole, president of U.S. Boat Shows with Informa Markets. Total sales reached \$725 million, and the overall economic impact generated an estimated \$1.05 billion. Last year, 55,000 tickets were scanned. "Based on the strong economic turnout in 2022, we anticipate sales and tourism revenue for the 2023 Palm Beach International Boat Show to be even stronger," Doole said.

Also, he noted that there is a high demand for superyachts, especially ones for charter.

Here are some of the largest yachts at the show.



The 246-foot Arrow is offered for sale through Fraser Yachts at 139.9 million euros (about \$148.282 million). Built in 2020, it benefited from the latest generation of Feadship's hybrid technology for the most efficient use of energy with the lowest possible impact.

Also for sale through Fraser Yachts, the 230-foot Alfa is offered for 67 million euros (about \$71.014 million). Built by Benetti in 2020, it won the 2021 World Superyacht Awards' Displacement Motor Yachts 1000GT to 1599GT award. Its amenities include a dedicated owner's deck on the upper deck with a salon, gym and massage rooms; and a full-beam beach club on the lower deck with fold-down balconies to the ocean.

The 238-foot Coral Ocean, built in 1994 by Lürssen and designed by Jon Bannenberg, is on exhibit as a charter yacht. Ian Malouf, CEO of the digital charter platform, Ahoy Club, bought the yacht in 2019 and took it through an extensive 35 million euro rebuild. Current price for chartering is \$650,000 to \$790,000 per week.

Calex, a 220-foot Benetti on display and making its premiere at the show, was custom-made for a California owner who took delivery a year ago. A distinctive feature, the upper deck is reserved for the owner, and has a totally private outdoor lounge area that can't be seen from the deck above.

New to the show this year is the educational Cox Science Center and Aquarium Stem Activity Station, a booth with a solar boat activity pool, instruction on how to choose and use sunscreens, fish and coral memory cards, and an interactive demo about the senses that sharks have.

The NY Concours at Palm Beach, presented by Lotus, another new venue, offers an evening to enjoy an open bar and canapes along with the opportunity to view classic and exotic cars.

A number of venues are returning. The Windward VIP Club, offering an open bar, gourmet food and pop-up activations in a lounge setting, comes with one-day admission to the Modern + Contemporary (PBM+C) Art Fair, an Informa-produced event that runs concurrently at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Children can enjoy the Kids' Fishing Clinics by Hook the Future, offering instruction on basic fishing techniques. And Nautical Ventures' AquaZone, a hands-on attraction, is also back with yacht-toy demos and debuts. An example is the popular Fliteboard's new Series III, priced at \$9,999.

If you go

The show runs 12 to 7 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday to Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are digital only. Prices are: \$31 for adults for one-day admission and \$56 for two-day admission; \$16 per day for children ages 6 to 15; and free for children ages 5 and under. VIP Experience tickets are \$370 a day and a VIP/Concours Bundle one-day ticket is \$520.

For more information, www.pbboatshow.com.