

STORM MARINE LEADS THE CHARGE ON A NEW GENERATION OF 'CLUB' BOATS

The Storm 18 will be one of the most Versatile and Affordable Watercraft Ever Designed

STAMFORD, CT, UNITED STATES, February 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bill Crane, Karl Ziegler and a group of influential marine industry experts and professionals launched the Storm Marine Group

(www.stormmarinegroup.com) last year to take institutional boat building to the next level, and the Storm 18 is their first major product. Their 18-foot keelboat will be formally released this spring to fulfill the need for a new Ideal 18

(<https://sailboatdata.com/sailboat/ideal-18/>), one of the most popular small watercraft ever built.



The Storm team has done over 90 sailing "demo" days in several states starting late last summer through last week in Coronado, CA, as part of its extensive field test program.

“We’ve spent the last six months field testing our prototype all over the country,” says Crane, the former Chairman of LaserPerformance Group. “Our development and design team is fully committed to a longer and more exhaustive process in order to build the best and most versatile club boat ever produced.”

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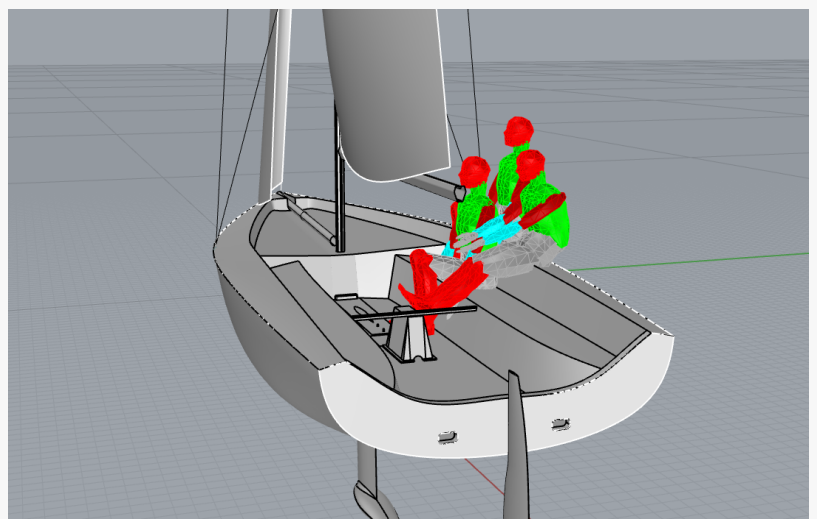
Institutional boats – or “club boats” – are typically acquired as fleets by larger organizations such as yacht clubs, schools or public sailing centers for use by their members, students and the public. Most institutional boats are built to accommodate 2-5 sailors. Many of the most historically popular classes are either no longer built at all, hard to replace and find parts for, or manufactured overseas at too high an expense for most US-based sailing

organizations.

The company informally introduced the first prototype at the Newport Boat Show (<https://newportboatshow.com/#>) late last summer, and started a tour down the Atlantic Coast, through Louisiana and Texas before finishing their “test tour” at US Sailing’s Sailing Leadership Forum (<https://sailingleadership.org>) in Coronado, California, last week. In that time, dozens of sailors from many different backgrounds have sailed the 18 and given extensive feedback on all aspects of the experience.

“As a potential all-use boat, it will be a great learning platform,” says Edward Padin of New Rochelle, NY, who is on the yachting committee of the Larchmont Yacht Club and tested the 18 last fall. “The first thing I noticed and appreciated stepping aboard was how stable the boat was; it is considerably wider than the Ideal (18) and much roomier. The boat was responsive, well balanced, and easy to sail by everyone who came with me for a test sail.”

As a direct result of the extended tour, Crane and his team have made extensive adjustments and changes, including raising the boom six inches, adjusting the size of the mainsheet sail, redesigning spinnaker bags and sail covers, and moved essential controls away from the center console to reduce the “spaghetti factory” of extensive lines and instruments that can be perplexing especially for new sailors.



Storm’s high powered build and design team has employed a wide array of sophisticated technology, including 3D computer modeling and five axis cnc machining. The end result is precision which facilitates maximal quality of the end product.



The Storm 18’s test tour started last September at the prestigious Newport Boat Show; Storm Marine partners Karl Ziegler (far left) and Bill Crane (back turned, second from right) are pictured here talking to potential prospects.

“She (the 18) moved well in the light air and handled nicely in more air,” said Storm Snaith, Commodore of the Cedar Point Yacht Club of Westport, CT. “We had concerns about the deck layout, boom height and so on when we first sailed her in September. When we took her out again in November, the boom was raised and the deck layout improved. I think the Storm 18 will be a great upgrade for the Ideal 18 as a club boat for instruction and team racing. She’s simple, stable, sturdy and responsive.”

Ziegler emphasized that increased demand with the space for a a more versatile, affordable and adaptable watercraft in this general size category drives their every decision. “We want this boat to appeal to women and persons with disabilities in terms of being able to move easily around the boat,” he says.

Britt Hall from the Noroton Yacht Club of Darien, CT, was one of the first women to sail the 18 last year and is thrilled with what it could offer both her program (she founded her club’s first women’s program) and newer sailors in general.

“I loved the stability and easy handling,” says Hall, “which will be especially helpful for teaching women from ‘rookies” to seasoned racers, and it’s also clearly a great family boat. I’ve also tested a couple or other boats that could possibly replace the Ideal 18 over the last few years, and none of them were close to appropriate. It’s clearly being built to provide all the good attributes of the Ideal without its liabilities.”

Crane and Ziegler both see the Storm 18 as an evolution of the Ideal 18 that is modern, ergonomic, durable, and easy to maintain that helps clubs and sailing centers meet the growing post-COVID demand from people who want to join organizations that provide a fleet of boats rather than starting off by buying their own. The baseline price of the each boat will be \$43,000.

The design and build team includes noted builder David Clark from Fulcrum Speedworks, legendary sailor and sailmaker Robbie Doyle, as well as naval architects Bob Ames and Casey Brown, a team Crane describes as an “marine industry all star team” all committed to helping create a next level on water experience.

“We’ve all been the beneficiaries of institutional sailing all of our lives,” says Ziegler, a champion sailor, sailing coach and longtime friend and sailing partner of Crane’s. “All of us see this as a mission and a passion and have a genuine desire to give back to the sport we love and help literally build its future.”

For more information go to www.stormmarinegroup.com .

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