



Palm Beach Is on a Roll, On Land and Sea, the Palm Beach International Boat Show Is No Exception

By Hope Gainer

Palm Beach is having a moment—and nowhere was that more evident than at the **Palm Beach International Boat Show**.

For decades, Miami has dominated South Florida's social and cultural spotlight. Yet, in recent years, Palm Beach has quietly—and now confidently—claimed its place among the world's most elite destinations. Nowhere is this evolution more apparent than at this increasingly influential yachting showcase, set against the polished backdrop of West Palm Beach and its ever-expanding luxury landscape.

What was once a strong regional event has transformed into something far more significant: a refined, high-caliber experience often likened to a boutique version of the **Monaco Yacht Show**. With each passing year, the Palm Beach International Boat Show elevates its profile—attracting top-tier exhibitors, global shipbuilders, discerning buyers, and a well-heeled audience that expects nothing short of excellence

A Billion-Dollar Showcase

This year's five-day event presented more than \$1 billion in vessels, from nimble 8-foot inflatables to nearly 300-foot superyachts. Held along the **Palm Harbor Marina**, the show continues its legacy as a cornerstone of the marine industry, now spanning over four decades since its founding in 1982.

Its economic impact is equally impressive, generating an estimated \$1.05 billion statewide. Beyond commerce, the show has also deepened its community footprint, with a grant program launched in 2024 already contributing \$1.5 million to local initiatives.

The experience itself extends far beyond the docks. Guests indulged in the **Windward VIP Lounge**, complete with celebrity chefs and premium hospitality, while the **Nautical Ventures AquaZone** delivered on-water thrills. Educational seminars, family-friendly programming like the **Kids Fishing Clinic**, and curated social events ensured broad appeal without compromising sophistication.

A City in Transformation

The rise of the Palm Beach International Boat Show mirrors the transformation of West Palm Beach itself.

Driven by significant investment and visionary development, the city is rapidly evolving into a world-class destination. New commercial and residential towers, luxury hotels, and high-end retail and dining concepts are reshaping the skyline and elevating its global appeal. The boom is being spearheaded by 84-year-old mega-developer, **Steve Ross** of **Related Ross South Florida** who moved officially from NYC to Palm Beach.

During the show, top hotels operated at full capacity, while restaurants and rooftop venues buzzed with energy. The popular Greek **Milos** restaurant recently landed in West Palm Beach exuding pure elegance, while **KYMA** shares a more hipster vibe with Mediterranean cuisine. On upper Flagler overlooking the **Rybovich Marina** and superyachts is popular **La Marina** restaurant.

Across the bridge, Palm Beach Island continues to refine its legacy with new hospitality concepts and dining destinations that blend heritage with modern sophistication. Ultra-luxe **Veneta Hotel** has moved into the 100-year-old legacy location of the Chesterfield Hotel just blocks from Worth Avenue with European sister properties like **Hotel du Cap-Eden Roc** and **The Bristol**. **The Polo Room** restaurant is another new entry on the Palm Beach Island side conceived by charismatic polo player/Ralph Lauren model, **Nacho Figueras** as well as **Tutto Mare** Italian dining spot.

Luxury residential developments are also surging, with globally recognized brands entering the market and redefining waterfront living. West Palm Beach is being invaded by brands anxious to put their flags on this prestigious soil. Recently announced are **Mandarin Oriental Residences** and **Banyan Tree Residences**, the first in America. Already being delivered this Spring is **Alba Residences** along the intracoastal on North Flagler Avenue. Alba has been hosting guests in their sales lounge during the last few Palm Beach International Boat Shows with free-flowing liquid libations and bites. **Mr. C** from the Cipriani

family is also under development in downtown West Palm Beach that will include a special private club for residents. Here membership is a privilege in Palm Beach.



The Takeaway

The Palm Beach International Boat Show 2026 delivered on every front: scale, sophistication, and spectacle.

Over five windy, sun-drenched days, guests explored, learned, celebrated, and connected -immersed in a world where craftsmanship meets lifestyle, and business blends seamlessly with pleasure.

While official sales figures remain undisclosed, one thing is certain: with the extraordinary concentration of wealth and influence now centered in Palm Beach, the flow of capital from superyachts to real estate, hospitality and beyond— shows no signs of slowing.