

Watts takes top award



BOATING
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Marine industry stalwart and former board member of the State's peak boating body, Phil Watts, has been voted West Australian Boatman of the Year for 2009.

Passionate about boats and the marine industry, Watts entered the industry as an apprentice builder after his schooling, riding his moped from Lesmurdie to Greg's Marine in O'Connor every day before he got

his driver's licence. He later managed the spare parts divisions of several Perth marine dealerships before moving into the sales arena.

His knowledge of boat building and engine mechanics served him well and he soon became a successful boat retailer.

In 2002 he became sales manager with Chivers Marine, Bibra Lake, where he remained until his forced retirement in May due to failing health.

In February a dinner in his honour raised more than \$80,000 to assist Phil, his wife Alaina and their young family deal with his fight against motor neurone disease.

"Indeed there will never be another 'Phil' whose pride in his job, work and personal ethics and sheer 'likability' made him one of the very best assets that our company has ever had," said Julie Chivers from Chivers Marine.

The 2009 WA Boat of the Year award went to the new WA Water Police vessel, a 10m Kirby Naiad.

Built by Rob Kirby of Henderson, the boat has a plate-aluminium hull with an inflatable collar and big sea rescue equipment and the latest navigation aids.

The same boat was also judged winner of the custom vessel commercial division.



Top of the lot: The 10m Kirby Naiad won the WA Boat of the Year award.

In other categories, the Couta 685 Walkaround built by Commodore Marine was winner of the fibreglass under 8m section.

The aluminium under 8m award went to Ledge Point owner/builder of Evolution Boat Builders, Chris Prince with his 550 Centre Console.

The same builder also won the title for custom-built private vessel with the 640 Outsider Island Cab.

Fury Custom Boats of Bibra Lake was judged winner of the fibreglass over 8m division with its Fury 282 Centre Console.

In the aluminium section for boats over 8m, the Chivers 265 Bronze Whaler took the judges' fancy.

Among the boats imported into WA from other States to win Boat of the Year awards, the judges selected

New-look boat show a winner

There's been strong interest in the new-look Club Marine Perth Boat and Leisure Show at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre.

For the first time the show is also featuring other leisure activities, such as caravanning and camping, as well as boating, attracting a greater variety of patrons.

There's also more emphasis on the family, so mum and the children can watch the stage entertainment or look at the caravans while dad studies the latest on offer from international, Australian and local boat builders and fishing tackle outlets.

Like other industries during the global financial downturn, the marine sector has not escaped the hard times but dealers are promising great offers.

Officers from the Water Police and marine staff from the Department of Transport will also be on hand to discuss new rules and regulations and safe practices.

The show is open from 9.30am until 7pm today and 9.30am-5pm tomorrow.

the 760 HT Bar Crusher sold by Offshore Marine to win the aluminium vessel under 8m award and the Haines Signature S80 Bowrider submitted by All Boat Business won the fibreglass section in the same class.

Other award winners were:

Outstanding Contribution, Brendon Grieve from R Marine Perth; Young Marine Retailer, Damien Walker from All Boat Business; Apprentice of the Year Marine Mechanic/

Electronics, Jesse Booth also from All Boat Business; Apprentice of the Year Marine Craft Construction/

Fabrication, Michael Busested from Kirby Marine Fabrication.

The WA Boating Education and Training award went to respected mariner John Watson.