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Photos: Beneteau Group



The Riviera Protocols:

Two days in Cannes with Groupe Beneteau's revolution on the water

The early morning light over Port Canto does not simply illuminate the Mediterranean; it lacquers it. In mid-April 2026, Cannes possesses an elegant, unhurried gravity, free from the frenetic static of the impending film festival. Against this backdrop, Groupe Beneteau gathered a select contingent of the international press to unveil a bold strategic manifesto. Despite a mixed global market, the French conglomerate is not bracing for a downturn; it is actively engineering a rebound. By investing heavily in premium services—symbolized by the structural integration of SAS, the acquisition of BMS in Canet-en-Roussillon, and a massive new water-access Services Center in Les Sables d'Olonne—the group is moving aggressively upmarket, pledging an astonishing 66 new models by 2027.

To demonstrate this maritime renaissance, the harbor became a living laboratory for forty-eight hours. Under the immaculate coordination of the group's communication teams, we were invited to step away from the static display docks, take the helms ourselves, and evolve a story across the water toward the historic Îles de Lérins.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF STILLNESS

Stepping aboard the Sea Loft 480 feels less like embarking on a traditional boat and more like entering an ultra-luxury floating villa. This 14.85-meter platform represents an entirely new category targeting premium nautical tourism, specifically designed to capture the upscale hotel market where guests demand memorable experiences „outside the walls“ of a traditional resort. Managed under the communication guidance of Noémie Roussel and designed by Marc Lombard Yacht Design and Jeanneau Design, the vessel is a triumph of absolute minimalism.

The interior layout is entirely on a single level with no door thresholds, flooded with natural light from massive hull windows. At the helm, the leather-wrapped wheel feels remarkably intuitive, offering a calm, reassuring sense of control. As we glided away from the mainland, the Sea Loft 480 revealed its true calling: quiet sailing and a profound connection with nature.

The wide hull geometry ensures incredible stability by design, completely neutralizing the rolling motions that often alienate non-boating guests. With an estimated daily charter value calculated at €1,200, it offers coastal hoteliers an exceptional platform to leverage their immediate natural assets, turning a night on the water into a seamless, high-yield luxury lifestyle statement.

Detail of the dual, downward-sloping swim terraces of the Sea Loft 480 lowered at mooring, creating an intimate, private beach club platform that rests just inches above the crystal-clear waters of the Lérins channel.



The Sea Loft 480 resting at anchor off the sun-bleached shores of Île Sainte-Marguerite, its avant-garde, glass-fronted architectural silhouette completely blurring the line between a luxury boutique hotel suite and the open Mediterranean sea.

A view from the immense forward lounge of the Sea Loft 480, highlighting the seamless integration of the flush, single-level deck with the natural assets of the Cannes coastline, bathed in the soft amber glow of early morning.



The Sea Loft 480 maneuvering with effortless, silent grace past the ancient stone ramparts of the Royal Fort, demonstrating a unique equilibrium of heavy-duty engineering and lifestyle-focused serenity.

The sun-flooded central island galley of the Sea Loft 480, showcasing the premium Corian countertops, high-end culinary fittings, and the expansive, single-level layout that completely eliminates traditional companionway thresholds.



- **The Solar Ceiling:** The rigid fiberglass hardtop features 12 integrated Marlex 400W solar panels generating 4.8kW of clean, autonomous energy. This massive solar array completely powers the onboard domestic systems without needing a generator.
- **The Hybrid Pod Alternative:** While our test model ran on twin 45hp Yanmar shaft-line diesels, the platform is engineered to accept dual 10kW Fischer Panda electric POD motors. This green propulsion system is paired with a 22kW DC generator for silent, zero-emission coastal cruising.
- **The Cold Storage Matrix:** Designed for long, indulgent stays at anchor, the central island galley boasts an extraordinary 288-liter refrigeration capacity. The system is backed by a heavy-duty 36-liter-per-minute water pressure group and a 60-liter hot water tank.
- **The Digital Overseer:** The helm incorporates SEANAPPS connected technology, allowing operators to monitor GPS position, bilge levels, and battery banks remotely via a smartphone. The data is mirrored on a beautiful Raymarine Axiom 12-inch navigation display.
- **The Thermal Equilibrium:** To combat the intense Mediterranean summer heat, the vessel can be outfitted with a reversible 23,000 BTU Webasto air conditioning system. The installation is heavily soundproofed with 40mm fireproof acoustic foam insulation.



The Jeanneau TH38 showcasing its high-performance hull design in open water, effortlessly cutting through a sharp Riviera chop while keeping its wide cockpit dry and remarkably level at thirty knots.

THE KINETIC SHIFT

The transition from the architectural calm of the Sea Loft to the muscular dockside profile of the new Jeanneau TH range instantly alters the emotional tempo of our trials. Orchestrated under the sharp oversight of Product Communications Manager Vanessa Clairgeaux, the launch of the TH33 and TH38 power catamarans represents a dramatic expansion of Jeanneau's 70-year heritage. Initially unveiled under the American brand Four Winns, these twin-hull models have been brilliantly integrated into the Jeanneau universe to meet the growing demand for stable, open boats designed for high-speed escape. Dropping the throttles of the twin Mercury outboards outside Port Canto, the acceleration is instantaneous and perfectly linear.

Unlike traditional monohull powerboats that lean aggressively outward, the TH hull bites hard into the Mediterranean waves, staying beautifully level and exceptionally stable. The driving dynamics are intensely pilot-focused, with meticulous attention to ergonomics at the helm that gives the driver absolute confidence.

Yet, beneath this raw offshore performance lies superior functionality and exceptional space utilization. The TH38 features an ingenious three-cabin overnight layout, offering generous living spaces that turn a high-velocity day boat into an incredibly capable weekend cruiser, completely redefining the concept of a premium crossover center console.



The expansive aft cockpit of the Jeanneau TH38 is configured for afternoon hosting, illustrating the class-leading entertainment areas and premium upholstery that define this new power catamaran segment.

The aggressive silhouette of the Jeanneau TH33 running at speed against the backdrop of the Esterel mountains, embodying the spirit of instant fun and unparalleled build quality without limits.



The pilot-focused helm station of the Jeanneau TH33, where heavy-duty T-Top architecture meets an ergonomic digital layout designed to minimize fatigue during aggressive blue-water transits.



Close-up of the high-output outboard engine installation on the transom of the TH38, highlighting the clean integration of digital steering linkages and advanced joystick maneuvering sensors.

- **The Transatlantic Cross:** The TH series represents a major manufacturing milestone, blending high-speed American power catamaran hull design with sophisticated European deck ergonomics. This cross-cultural engineering allows Jeanneau to capture new market share in the premium day-boat sector.
- **The Twin-Bed Paradox:** Despite the narrow physical constraints of traditional catamaran hulls, the TH38 features a second guest cabin equipped with proper twin beds. This unique layout provides comfortable, flexible overnight accommodations for families or charter programs.
- **The Smart-Wave Telemetry:** The hull integration includes a series of automatic speed and hull-impact sensors that monitor wave frequency. The system communicates directly with the engine trim, automatically adjusting the outboard angles to ensure a smooth, stable ride.
- **The Network Power:** The TH range is backed by Jeanneau's massive global network of over 400 dealerships. This extensive infrastructure provides buyers with immediate access to specialized maintenance, technical support, and premium concierge services worldwide.
- **The Dual-Engine Versatility:** The transom is engineered to support the latest digital outboards from both Mercury and Yamaha. This flexible engine platform allows owners to select between pure offshore racing performance or highly efficient coastal cruising setups.

THE PURE LINEAGE

The final evolutionary stage of our Riviera trial brings us back to the purest, most romantic form of blue-water navigation. The new Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 455 flagship is an absolute masterclass in balance, designed by the legendary Lombard Design Office for naval architecture and Jean-Marc Piaton for interior styling.

This 45-foot yacht is built around a core belief: the sea is most beautiful when experienced together. It is a powerful, reassuring cruiser that completely avoids the heavy, sluggish feel of a typical charter boat. Raising the sails into a freshening afternoon breeze off Cannes, the 455 reacts instantly, locking onto its chine and tracking forward with elegant velocity.

The deck design is revolutionary, featuring a step-free walkaround layout and an expansive, modular cockpit that functions as a true open-air lounge. The helm offers twin ergonomic steering stations with perfect visibility and direct access to the winches, making the entire sailing experience remarkably fluid and intuitive.

Below deck, Piaton's interior styling is breathtaking. Jeanneau has managed to concentrate the sheer volume and luxury of a 50-footer into a 45-foot hull, offering up to ten guests a warm, contemporary sanctuary where every volume expresses a simple, beautifully human way of life.



The Sun Odyssey 455 resting at twilight inside a secluded cove, its wide, welcoming stern platform lowered to create an elegant terrace for a classic Mediterranean sunset aperitif.



The clean, dynamic profile of the Sun Odyssey 455 cutting through the water at dusk, representing a new generation of sailboats where technical mastery and convivial luxury live in harmony.

The flagship Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 455 walking the wind under full sail, its beautifully balanced modern chine hull optimized for high-performance and long-distance ocean passages.

Looking down the revolutionary walkaround deck of the Sun Odyssey 455, showing the complete absence of steps, which ensures safe, fluid movement from the twin helms to the forward bow.



The contemporary interior saloon of the Sun Odyssey 455, where warm premium joinery, refined upholstery, and clever overhead storage create the volume and luxury feel of a fifty-foot yacht.



- **The „2-Ways“ Office:** The saloon introduces a world-first innovation for this yacht category: the „2-Ways“ modular chart table. This clever piece of furniture quickly transforms from a traditional navigation watch station into a spacious modern workspace.
- **The Volume Illusion:** Through advanced structural engineering, the Lombard Design Office managed to replicate the internal living space of a 50-foot yacht inside a 45-foot hull. This optimization delivers unmatched comfort without the added docking fees of a larger vessel.
- **The Step-Free Sanctuary:** The walkaround deck layout is completely devoid of steps or companionway obstacles. This seamless design

allows the crew to move safely between the bow and the twin steering consoles during heavy weather.

- **The Four-Layout Matrix:** To suit both private blue-water owners and demanding international charter operations, the 455 is engineered with four distinct cabin layout options. This modular interior allows for complete personalization of the living quarters.
- **The Matte Lacquer Defense:** The premium interior joinery is treated with a specialized, non-reflective matte finish. This industrial coating is highly resistant to saltwater degradation and protects the wood from fading under intense sun exposure.

THE HORIZON BECKONS

As the sun finally dipped behind the rugged, red silhouette of the Estérel coastline, bathing the Port Canto marina in a warm, amber glow, the true significance of Groupe Beneteau's 2026 fleet became clear. These are not merely vessels designed to move across water; they are sophisticated instruments of lifestyle expansion. From the architectural peace of the Sea Loft to the high-velocity precision of the Wellcraft catamarans, and finally, the wind-driven elegance of the Sun Odyssey flagship, each boat represents a distinct chapter in a grander story of maritime freedom. They leave behind a lingering sense of anticipation. It is impossible to step off these decks without imagining them anchored in the dramatic, cliff-shadowed coves of the Amalfi Coast, or slipped into a private berth in St. Tropez for one of our upcoming luxury lifestyle features. The horizon is calling, and the fleet is ready.

