



MOST INNOVATIVE

"I want this on the record: Sailing this boat was the happiest sailing experience I had this entire contest."

TIM MURPHY



NEEL 45

THE SECOND OF THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL awards goes to the Neel 45, the only production trimaran introduced for 2013, which the judges felt was easily the Most Innovative of all the entries. For many years, builder Eric Bruneel was the managing director of Fountaine Pajot, and in that capacity he oversaw the construction of roughly 2,000 catamarans. He's also an accomplished solo transoceanic trimaran racer, so it perhaps goes without saying that he knows more than a little about multihulls. So when he started his own company, he had a specific vision of what he wanted to accomplish. And Tim Murphy, for one, believes he succeeded in his quest.

"I truly believe this is a breakthrough boat," said Murphy. "Under sail, it behaves differently. It looks different. You live differently in it. It solves problems that had previously not been solved. Bruneel said it's a 10-knot boat, that



it trucks along at 10 knots on coastal cruises or on passage, which translates into 240-mile days. We saw that.

"And the thing is," he continued, "it's not just the speed itself. It's the *kind* of speed. It's beautiful speed. The way the boat moves, it kind of has this floating motion. You feel relaxed. I believe you'd feel rested after a passage at 10 knots on this boat.

"Look, it's not perfect," he concluded. "The aesthetics aren't for everyone, and there are some production details that need to be addressed. But you can think of boatbuilding as an art, and there are a handful of boats this year that expressed that artistry. Bruneel is kind of an artist. He gets the business, and design, and how his boat will be used. There's a lot of art in his boat."

WINNING DETAILS

+ Truly unique and successful approach to interior space, with a very good nav station, cavernous centralized engine room, and outward-facing berths in the ama cabins.

+ Fantastic sailing performance, perhaps the best for 2013 models, with easily driven hulls, a versatile and manageable sail plan, and consistent double-digit speed potential.

+ Cool details, including an excellent emergency tiller, highly effective nonskid, simple but clever dinghy davits, and sloping decks with ample walkways that work well.