

BOATING INSIDER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY NBAM

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NBAM UPDATES: MALDIVES BOATING AWARDS 2026 NOMINATIONS OPEN ON 1 JULY

Welcome to the July edition of Boating Insider!

The July edition highlights NBAM's continued efforts to support and advance the Maldives' boating and marine tourism industry.

This month, the Association continued engagement with government authorities and industry stakeholders, while progressing preparations for the Maldives Boating Awards 2026 and addressing key issues affecting our members and the wider industry.

This edition brings you the latest updates on NBAM's activities, industry developments, and ongoing initiatives to strengthen and promote the boating sector.

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Maldives Strengthens Tourism Partnerships Through High-Level China Visit

The Maldives intensified its engagement with one of its most important tourism markets in July, as a high-level delegation travelled to China from 1 to 11 July 2026 to strengthen tourism partnerships, explore new opportunities and support continued growth in visitor arrivals.

The delegation brought together representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC), Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), Maldivian and leading tourism industry associations. It was headed by Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation Haris Mohamed, while VMC was represented by its CEO and Managing Director, Ibrahim Shiuree.

The programme covered three major Chinese cities — Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu — reflecting the importance of maintaining engagement across different segments of the Chinese travel market. Throughout the visit, the delegation held discussions with government representatives, airlines, tour operators, travel agencies and travel technology companies, while networking events provided opportunities to present the Maldives' tourism offerings directly to the Chinese travel trade.

Strengthening a Key Source Market

The timing of the visit comes as international travel continues to respond to changing geopolitical and aviation conditions. Disruptions to transit routes and changing travel patterns have placed greater importance on maintaining strong relationships with established source markets while identifying new opportunities for connectivity and market growth.

For the Maldives, China remains particularly significant. According to figures cited by the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 168,677 Chinese visitors had travelled to the Maldives by the end of June 2026, representing a 19.8 percent increase compared with the same period in 2025. China therefore remained the country's largest tourism source market during the first half of the year.

The continued growth reinforces the importance of sustained engagement with Chinese travel partners and consumers, while also highlighting the role of air connectivity in supporting tourism demand.

Building Stronger Trade and Aviation Connections

During the Beijing leg of the visit, the Ministry and VMC hosted a high-level tourism networking event that brought together representatives from Chinese airlines, tour operators, travel agencies, travel media and other industry stakeholders.

The event provided an opportunity to showcase the diversity of experiences available in the Maldives, ranging from luxury and leisure travel to emerging tourism segments. It also created a platform for strengthening existing commercial relationships and exploring new partnerships within China's outbound travel industry.

In Shanghai, the delegation continued its engagement with travel industry partners. Meetings included discussions with travel companies and Maldivian's General Sales Agent in China, with conversations covering potential tourism packages, business-to-business partnerships, destination marketing and air connectivity.

These engagements demonstrate the increasingly interconnected nature of tourism promotion, aviation and travel trade partnerships. For an island destination such as the Maldives, maintaining reliable con-

nectivity and strong relationships with airlines and travel intermediaries remains an important component of supporting visitor flows.

Connecting Chinese Travellers with the Maldives

Beyond traditional destination marketing, the China engagement also provides an opportunity to better understand the evolving preferences of Chinese travellers.

Meetings with tour operators, travel agencies and travel technology companies allow Maldivian tourism stakeholders to explore how the destination can be presented to different traveller segments, including luxury travellers, leisure visitors, families and emerging market segments.

For resorts, liveaboards, marine excursion operators and other tourism businesses, stronger engagement with the Chinese market can also create opportunities to develop experiences and packages that respond to changing traveller interests.

A Broader Industry Effort

The participation of VMC, MACL, Maldivian and tourism industry associations reflects a coordinated approach to international market engagement, bringing destination marketing, aviation and private-sector tourism interests together.

For the Maldives' tourism industry, such collaboration is particularly relevant as the country continues to expand its international connectivity and maintain relationships with major source markets.

The July visit to China forms part of the wider effort to sustain tourism momentum while responding to changes in the global travel environment. Continued engagement with airlines, travel trade partners and tourism organisations is expected to remain an important part of the Maldives' international tourism strategy.

As the Maldives continues to welcome visitors from around the world, strengthening relationships within key markets such as China can provide opportunities not only for increasing arrivals, but also for deepening the range of tourism experiences promoted to prospective travellers.

For the country's boating and marine tourism industry, this broader market development is closely connected to the continued growth of resort transfers, liveaboard holidays, diving, surfing, fishing and other ocean-based experiences that form an important part of the Maldives' tourism offering



Protecting the Maldives' Blue Heart: A Month of Conservation at Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru



This July, Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru reaffirmed their long-standing commitment to protecting the Maldives' marine environment through a month of conservation initiatives designed to inspire guests and local communities to become active stewards of the ocean.

Plastic Free July: Protecting the Maldives' Blue Heart

According to the UNDP, the Maldives generates more than 43,000 tonnes of plastic waste each year, equivalent to approximately 120 tonnes every day. For an island nation whose future is closely connected to healthy oceans, reducing plastic pollution is essential to protecting marine biodiversity and preserving the natural beauty of the Maldives.

Throughout July, guests were invited to participate in weekly sunset island beach cleans and reef cleans led by the resorts' Marine Lab. These activities provided an opportunity to remove marine debris while learning more about the importance of protecting fragile coastal and coral reef ecosystems.

The programme also included a collaboration with a local sustainable NGO, demonstrating how discarded plastic can be transformed into artwork, jewellery, and other meaningful products through creativity and circular design.

Shark Awareness Day: Why Sharks Matter

On 14 July, the resorts marked Shark Awareness Day in collaboration with Miyaru, a Maldivian shark research and conservation NGO.

Often misunderstood and portrayed as dangerous, sharks play a vital role in maintaining healthy and balanced marine ecosystems. By regulating fish populations, they help support the natural balance of coral reef environments and contribute to the overall health of the ocean.

Through talks and interactive sessions with marine experts from Miyaru, guests learned about Maldivian shark species, the challenges they face, and ongoing conservation efforts to protect these important guardians of the ocean.

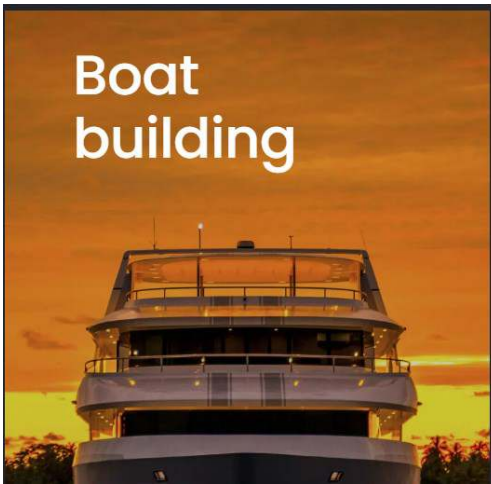
Mangrove Conservation Day: 26 July

On 26 July, Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru also marked the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem through a community mangrove planting and cleanup initiative conducted in collaboration with Huraa Council.

Mangroves are among the Maldives' most valuable coastal ecosystems. They provide important nursery habitats for marine life, help protect shorelines from erosion, filter pollutants, and contribute to climate resilience.

Together, the month's initiatives highlighted the interconnectedness of the Maldives' marine ecosystems—from mangroves and shorelines to coral reefs and open waters.

Through Plastic Free July and its wider conservation programme, Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru continue to bring together guests, local communities, and conservation partners to protect the Maldives' marine heritage and encourage meaningful collective action for a healthier ocean.



JOALI Maldives Named No. 2 Resort in Asia and No. 3 in the World



JOALI Maldives has been recognised as the No. 2 Resort in Asia and No. 3 in the World's Top 100 Hotels in the prestigious Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards 2026.

Celebrating the world's most exceptional hotels, resorts, cities, islands, airlines and travel experiences, the Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards are among the most respected recognitions in global hospitality, based on the votes and experiences of the publication's international readership.

The achievement reflects JOALI Maldives' continued commitment to redefining contemporary luxury through its philosophy of Joy of Creative Living — a distinctive approach where art, nature, wellbeing and heartfelt hospitality come together to create meaningful experiences.

A Destination Where Art, Nature and Hospitality Intertwine

Since opening as the Maldives' first art-immersive luxury resort, JOALI Maldives has introduced a distinctive expression of island living, inviting guests to discover a destination where creativity and connection are woven into every detail.

Located on Muravandhoo Island in the pristine Raa Atoll, approximately 45 minutes by seaplane from Malé, the resort offers a sanctuary where guests can reconnect with nature while experiencing a world shaped by creativity and craftsmanship.

JOALI Maldives' Creative Living philosophy is brought to life through collaborations with renowned artists and artisans, immersive installations throughout the island, and curated experiences that encourage guests to engage with art beyond traditional boundaries. From exploring the island's living galleries to partici-

pating in creative journeys, each stay offers opportunities for discovery and self-expression.

Villas and Residences: Private Worlds of Creative Living

Set among lush tropical landscapes and the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, JOALI Maldives features 73 beach and over-water villas and residences, each designed as a private sanctuary combining refined luxury, natural beauty and artistic expression.

Contemporary architecture is complemented by natural materials, handcrafted details and bespoke artworks, while floor-to-ceiling windows frame uninterrupted ocean views. Private pools and expansive outdoor spaces create a seamless connection between indoor and outdoor living.

Guests can choose from elegant Beach Villas, iconic Water Villas and spacious multi-bedroom Residences, each offering privacy and personalised experiences.

Every villa is accompanied by a dedicated Jadugar, meaning "magician" in Dhivehi. Going beyond the traditional role of a butler, the Jadugar provides intuitive and personalised hospitality, anticipating guests' needs and helping create memorable moments throughout their stay, from private dining experiences and island adventures to celebrations tailored to individual preferences.

Guests can also explore Muravandhoo at their own pace with complimentary bicycles, discovering tropical gardens, hidden pathways and tranquil viewpoints across the island.

Celebrating a Shared Vision of Excellence

The latest recognition celebrates the passion and dedication of the entire JOALI Maldives team, whose commitment brings the spirit of Creative Living to life every day. It also reflects the continued support of guests, partners and the wider JOALI community.

As JOALI Maldives continues its journey, the resort remains committed to creating experiences that celebrate imagination, wellbeing and meaningful connection.

For those seeking more than a traditional holiday, JOALI Maldives offers a destination where art, nature and hospitality come together, creating stays designed to inspire curiosity, discovery and joy.



- 1 REFERRALS TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS
- 2 FREE CONSULTATION ABOUT INDUSTRY
- 3 INVITATION TO NBAM EVENTS AND GATHERINGS
- 4 FREE WEBSITE LISTING FOR LIVEBOARDS
- 5 SPECIAL TERMS AND PRICES ON FUEL SUPPLIERS

- 6 FREE WEBSITE LISTING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND MARINE EQUIPMENT SELLERS
- 7 SPECIAL MEMBER PACKAGES ON INSURANCE PREMIUMS FROM ALLIED INSURANCE COMPANY (EXCLUSIVE FOR NBAM)
- 8 SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ON REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES
- 9 SAFETY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREW MEMBERS
- 10 SPECIAL RATES FOR MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN MALDIVES MARINE EXPO

- 11 MEMBER TO MEMBER NETWORKING
- 12 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM DISCOUNTS
- 13 FREE LISTINGS FOR MEMBER BOATS ON LIVEBOARDS OF MALDIVES MAGAZINE
- 14 LOGO ON BROCHURES AND ADDRESS CARDS / PROMOTIONS
- 15 SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FROM BOATING PRIVILEGE PARTNER BUSINESSES

- 16 EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS IN NOMINATING TO MALDIVES NATIONAL BOATING AWARDS
- 17 OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITIES AS A TEAM AND COMMENT ON REGULATIONS

MEMBERSHIP
BENEFITS

Visit Maldives Partners with Hey Travellers to Bring the Maldives to Virtual Worlds

Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) has partnered with Hey Travellers Private Limited to promote the Maldives as a leading virtual destination through the Loopcraft gaming platform.

Hey Travellers is a Maldivian digital and gaming company and the developer of the Hey Travellers gaming application, created with the support of Loopcraft, a platform combining virtual destination experiences with interactive, tourism-focused gameplay.

The partnership agreement was signed by Ibrahim Shiuree, CEO and Managing Director of Visit Maldives Corporation, and Nasru Dean, Managing Director of Hey Travellers Pvt Ltd.

Exploring the Maldives Through Gaming

The interactive travel simulation game allows users to explore real Maldivian resorts, complete quests, earn points and stand a chance to win resort stays. Users can create customised avatars, explore authentic resort environments and even design their own dream island resort.

By integrating Visit Maldives branding into the gaming platform, the partnership aims to strengthen destination promotion through emerging digital channels. The initiative uses interactive experiences and innovative technologies to introduce the Maldives to global audiences in a format that combines entertainment, exploration and tourism.

The collaboration will also create opportunities to engage users through virtual exploration and tourism-themed gameplay, offering potential travellers a new way to discover the destination before experiencing it in person.

Using Data to Shape Digital Tourism

As part of the partnership, Hey Travellers will provide regular analytics and engagement reports covering areas such as user interactions, audience reach, application downloads and campaign performance.

These insights will help measure the effectiveness of the initiative and provide data to support future digital tourism promotion strategies.

Commenting on the partnership, VMC CEO and Managing Director Ibrahim Shiuree highlighted the potential of the initiative to reach younger, digitally engaged audiences and solo travellers seeking meaningful experiences through digital platforms.

He noted that engaging potential travellers through immersive digital experiences can create new pathways for destination inspiration and travel consideration beyond traditional marketing channels.

A New Digital Window to the Maldives

The agreement also provides opportunities for future collaboration on events and marketing activities. Importantly, Visit Maldives has been designated as the exclusive destination partner within the Loopcraft application, providing a dedicated platform to showcase the Maldives through interactive digital experiences and virtual tourism initiatives.

The partnership represents another step towards expanding the Maldives' presence across emerging digital platforms, bringing the country's islands, resorts and tourism experiences to audiences in an increasingly interactive way.



LUX* South Ari Atoll Recognised Across Three Categories at Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026



LUX South Ari Atoll, the award-winning Maldivian resort of global hospitality group The Lux Collective, has been recognised in the Top 10 across three categories at the Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026: Best Resorts for Families, Best Resort Pools and Best House Reefs.

The recognitions highlight the resort’s diverse guest experiences, from family-focused activities and expansive pools to its exceptional marine environment.

Presented annually by Travel + Leisure, the Luxury Awards Asia Pacific celebrate outstanding hotels, resorts, destinations and travel experiences across the region, based on votes from the publication’s readers.

A Marine Wonderland in South Ari Atoll

Located within the South Ari Atoll Marine Protected Area, LUX* South Ari Atoll offers guests the opportunity to experience one of the Maldives’ most remarkable marine environments.

The South Ari Atoll is internationally recognised as a year-round whale shark aggregation area. The resort’s location provides direct access to a vibrant house reef, allowing guests to explore the underwater ecosystem through guided snorkelling and diving experiences.

Marine conservation initiatives and signature LUX* Extraordinary Experiences, including Swimming with Whale Sharks, further connect guests with the surrounding marine environment.

Designed for Every Generation

Stretching across a two-kilometre-long island, LUX* South Ari Atoll features 192 beach and overwater villas and pavilions, catering to couples, families and multi-generational travellers.

The resort’s newest accommodation category, the Temptation Beach Pool Villa, combines generous indoor and outdoor living spaces with

a private pool and direct beach access.

Families can choose from a wide range of activities, including the PLAY kids’ club, a dedicated programme for teenagers, island treasure hunts, creative workshops and marine-based experiences. Guests can also enjoy 40 complimentary activities during their stay, spanning leisure, wellness, sports and exploration.

Dining, Wellness and Island Experiences

LUX* South Ari Atoll features eight restaurants and five bars, offering a diverse selection of dining experiences, from Italian and Japanese cuisine to Indian Ocean-inspired flavours and international favourites.

The resort’s award-winning LUX ME Spa* complements the culinary offering with personalised treatments, wellness rituals and holistic therapies, alongside the resort’s LUX* curated healthy cuisine, Keen On Green.

With its combination of family-friendly facilities, wellness experiences and access to the surrounding marine ecosystem, the resort offers a broad range of activities for guests of different ages and interests.

Celebrating the Team Behind the Experience



Commenting on the recognition, John Rogers, General Manager of LUX South Ari Atoll*, said the resort was honoured to be recognised by Travel + Leisure readers across three categories.

He highlighted the awards as a reflection of the passion and dedication of the resort team and its continued commitment to creating memorable experiences for guests.

The three recognitions further highlight LUX* South Ari Atoll’s distinctive approach to island hospitality, bringing together contemporary resort experiences, family-focused facilities and meaningful connections with the Maldives’ extraordinary marine environment.



Onda at The Standard, Maldives Nominated for World Culinary Awards 2026



simplicity and bold flavours.

According to Nandakumar Dharuman, Director of Culinary at The Standard, Maldives, returning guests have been an important part of Onda's early journey. Families and couples have highlighted the combination of food, atmosphere and hospitality as among the memorable aspects of their dining experience.

Dining Inspired by Life at Sea

Beyond its cuisine, Onda's design forms an integral part of the experience. Inspired by the rhythm and openness of life at sea, the restaurant combines natural textures, ocean-facing views and indoor-outdoor spaces.

The setting transitions from relaxed daytime dining into vibrant sunset gatherings, reflecting The Standard's characteristic blend of style, energy and authenticity.

Just months after opening its doors, Onda at The Standard, Maldives, by Hyatt has been nominated for Indian Ocean's Best Mediterranean Cuisine Restaurant at the prestigious World Culinary Awards 2026.

The nomination marks an early milestone for the restaurant, recognising Onda's distinctive approach to Mediterranean cuisine, its focus on guest experiences and its growing presence among the Indian Ocean's dining destinations.

Named after the Italian word for "wave", Onda celebrates movement, connection and shared experiences. Since opening in April 2026, the restaurant has welcomed guests with vibrant flavours, relaxed sophistication and a dining experience closely connected to the natural beauty of the Indian Ocean.

"We are incredibly honoured to receive this nomination," said Justin Swart, General Manager of The Standard, Maldives. He explained that the restaurant was created to offer an approachable yet exceptional Mediterranean dining experience, bringing together outstanding food, genuine hospitality and the spirit of island living.

Mediterranean Flavours by the Ocean

Onda's menu draws inspiration from the coastal cultures of the Mediterranean, combining premium ingredients, contemporary techniques and a philosophy centred around sharing.

Signature dishes include Bouillabaisse Scampi, Red Snapper Crudo with Citrus and Daikon, and Wahoo Carpaccio, reflecting the restaurant's focus on fresh ingredients,

The World Culinary Awards recognise restaurants, chefs and culinary experiences across the global hospitality industry. Onda's nomination places the newly opened restaurant among the nominees competing in the Indian Ocean's Mediterranean dining category.

For the team behind Onda, the nomination represents more than recognition of its cuisine. It reflects a broader ambition to create meaningful moments around the table, bringing guests together through food, conversation and shared experiences.

As voting for the 2026 World Culinary Awards opens, Onda continues its journey with an emphasis on expressive Mediterranean flavours, an energetic island setting and personalised hospitality.

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BML Introduces Special Financing Facility for Safari Vessels



Bank of Maldives (BML) has launched a dedicated “Liveboard Finance” facility designed specifically to support safari vessel operators in the Maldives, providing financing for the purchase, construction, engine installation and repair of safari vessels, as well as the acquisition of equipment and amenities.

The new facility is aimed at helping operators expand their fleets, modernise existing vessels and bring new safari vessels into operation. It also creates an opportunity for experienced operators seeking to renew or expand their fleets and for new entrants looking to invest in the sector.

According to BML, the facility offers an interest rate of 9.5% per annum, described by the bank as the lowest rate currently available

for marine vessels in the Maldives. A key feature of the financing is that only the vessel being financed is required as collateral, removing the need for additional security. Repayment terms extend for up to seven years, with repayment structures designed around the seasonal nature of the liveboard industry. Rather than following a rigid repayment schedule, operators can make repayments structured around revenue generated from their vessels during peak and off-peak periods. Financing repayments will be made in US Dollars.

Commenting on the launch, BML CEO and Managing Director Mohamed Shareef highlighted the importance of liveboard vessels to the Maldivian tourism industry and the need for financial solutions that reflect the

way businesses in the sector operate.

He said the new facility was developed by considering the industry's revenue streams and expenditure patterns, allowing operators greater confidence and flexibility to invest in business growth.

The introduction of dedicated financing comes at a significant time for the Maldivian safari industry, which has developed over more than five decades through the continued investment and dedication of vessel owners and their crews.

For an industry that plays an important role in connecting visitors with the Maldives' marine environment and supporting tourism across the country, access to suitable financing has long been an important consideration for operators seeking to build, maintain and modernise their vessels.

With the introduction of Liveboard Finance, safari vessel operators now have a financing option specifically structured around the characteristics of their industry, potentially making investment in new vessels, fleet expansion and vessel upgrades more accessible.

The facility represents a notable development for the liveboard sector and provides operators with another avenue to invest in the continued growth and modernisation of the Maldivian safari tourism.

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NBAM Updates:

Maldives Boating Awards 2026: Nominations Now Open

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) has officially opened nominations for the Maldives Boating Awards 2026, inviting industry professionals, businesses and stakeholders to recognise the individuals and organisations contributing to the growth and development of the Maldivian boating industry.

The awards celebrate excellence across the country’s diverse boating and marine tourism sector, recognising achievements in areas including marine operations, hospitality, diving, water sports, marine services and other fields that contribute to the industry.

With a wide range of award categories, the Maldives Boating Awards 2026 provide an opportunity for businesses and individuals to showcase their achievements and highlight the work being carried out across the sector.

NBAM encourages eligible members and industry stakeholders to participate by submitting nominations for deserving individuals, businesses and organisations. The awards aim to bring greater recognition to the people and companies whose dedication, innovation and service continue to shape the Maldivian boating industry.

Following the nomination period, submissions will proceed through the awards evaluation and voting process, with the winners to be announced at the Maldives Boating Awards 2026 ceremony later in the year.

The awards are part of NBAM’s ongoing efforts to promote excellence, recognise industry contributions and strengthen the profile of the Maldivian boating sector.

Nominate. Recognise. Celebrate.

Industry stakeholders are encouraged to submit their nominations through the official Maldives Boating Awards platform.

Nominations open: 1st July 2026
Original nomination deadline: 15th August 2026

For award categories, eligibility requirements and nomination details, visit www.boatingawards.mv.



WHO CAN APPLY?

Only NBAM members are eligible to submit nominations.



UP TO 3 CATEGORIES

Each nominee may apply for a maximum of three (3) award categories.



NOMINATION PERIOD

1 July 2026
to
15 August 2026



RECOGNISING THE BEST

Honouring excellence, leadership and innovation in the boating industry.

HOW TO APPLY



1. VISIT

Go to www.boatingawards.mv and explore the award categories and criteria.



2. REVIEW

Review the Nomination Kit, category descriptions and judging criteria on the website.



3. NOMINATE

Complete the online nomination form and upload the required supporting documents.



4. REVIEW

Your nomination will be reviewed. You will be notified once it is accepted.



5. PAYMENT

Nomination fee details will be provided after your nomination is accepted.



NOMINATIONS CLOSE

15 AUGUST 2026

For more information, visit www.boatingawards.mv



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