



BABY BOOMERS GET ONBOARD WITH BOATING *Social Benefits and Affordable Options Bring 50+ to the Water*

CHICAGO (2008) – Aboard her appropriately named boat, *First Boomer*, 62-year-old Kathy Casey-Kirschling is leaving the retirement stereotype in her wake – and she’s not alone. America’s first baby boomer is also a proud boat owner. Casey-Kirschling was one of the 17 million boomers (ages 50-64) who went boating in 2007. With 80 million boomers retiring over the next two decades, recreational boating industry experts from Discover Boating predict the number of boomer boat owners to grow.

The boomer generation is known for redefining every stage of their lives from adolescence to parenthood and retirement is no exception. For boaters, spending time with family, the feeling of freedom on the water and being active in nature are key factors that drive them to the boating lifestyle. It’s no surprise then that as boomers look for ways to stay active after retirement, they’re turning to boating.

According to an AARP segmentation study, 57 percent of baby boomers expect to live near at least one of their children and 70 percent say they look forward to being a grandparent. The same survey also reported that 73 percent of boomers expect to have a hobby or special interest that they will dedicate a lot of time to when they’re retired.

“Boating keeps me engaged and moving in my retirement,” said Kathy Casey-Kirschling. “Whether we’re tubing, fishing or simply hosting celebrations on the water, boating enhances the time I spend with my husband, kids and grandkids.”

As a 15-year veteran boater, Casey-Kirschling recommends boomers conduct extensive research before dipping their toes in the boating waters. From choosing the right boat for a particular lifestyle to understanding costs, she underscores the importance of doing homework to ensure an enjoyable boating experience.

“With the help of unbiased resources like DiscoverBoating.com, boomers can find the advice they need to make smart decisions in their boat buying process,” said Casey-Kirschling. “Many find boating to be an extremely accessible activity for people of every age, income and lifestyle. But, I always stress the real value of boating is time spent with family and friends – that’s priceless.”

Boating is also more convenient. NMMA reports that 90 percent of Americans live less than an hour’s drive from a navigable body of water. With airport delays getting longer, and road trips getting more costly, boating allows families to make the most of their leisure time together, make new friends and create new experiences in their own backyards.

“Boating is at the heart of what boomers, like myself, love – an active hobby that provides an opportunity to explore the world while bonding with family and friends,” said Thom Dammrich, president of Discover Boating and the National Marine Manufacturers Association. “Boating resonates with boomers because it’s a lifestyle that speaks to their independent spirit, desire for social experiences and travel, while being attainable when it comes to affordability.”

Boating within Boomers’ Budgets

With an estimated annual spending of \$2 trillion, according to MetLife Mature Market Institute, boomers have their sights set on recreational activities. A recent RBC Capital Markets survey found 80 percent of people plan to purchase a recreational product at some point in the future, with baby boomers and GenXers focusing their spending on recreational vehicles. Of this 80 percent, most respondents were desirous of a boat (27 percent) followed by an all-terrain vehicle, motorcycle, towable RV and motorhome.

While the desire for boat ownership is prevalent, many boomers are under the misconception that boating is reserved only for the affluent. However, according to the NMMA, nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of boat owners have a household income under \$100,000.

“Many boomers are surprised at how easy and economical it is to fit boating into their retirement plans,” said Jim Coburn, president of the National Marine Bankers Association. “Similar to buying a car, there are a variety of financing options available with monthly payments for many entry-level boats under \$200 a month.”

In a [boating budget planner](#) found on DiscoverBoating.com, the site compares average annual costs of owning a boat versus other recreational activities. For example, a seven-day Florida vacation will cost a family of four an average of \$3,100 over the course of a year or \$258 a month. Whereas, a family can own a \$25,000 boat for \$225 a month and enjoy the entire summer out on the water for the cost of a single vacation.

For additional boating information, visit DiscoverBoating.com or contact Discover Boating’s Kelly Kaylor at kkaylor@nmma.org.

About Discover Boating

Discover Boating is a national awareness campaign developed by the recreational boating industry and managed by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA.) Discover Boating programs focus on improving the boating experience and building interest in recreational boating by demonstrating the benefits, affordability and accessibility of the boating lifestyle, while helping potential boaters experience why life is better with a boat. Each year approximately 59 million adults in the U.S. enjoy boating. To find out more, visit www.DiscoverBoating.com.

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