

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2020

# COMPASS



## FLIBS Scheduled To Be Live!

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## Amels: Yesterday And Today

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“Can’t-Miss”  
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International Yacht Brokers Association

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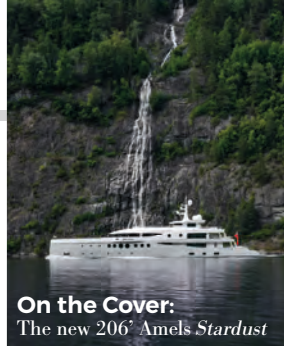
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### October 7-8

IYBA Charter Open House  
Location TBD\*

### October 28 - November 1

Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
(For a preview, see page 8)

\*Visit [IYBA.org/events](https://www.iyba.org/events) for the location of this  
event, and to learn about future Open Houses,  
Webinars and other IYBA events.

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by **Jordan Balbresky**, *Rushton Gregory Communication*

# DOCKING WITHOUT DRAMA: THE BENEFITS OF A REMOTE-CONTROL DOCKING SYSTEM

Some years ago, as a new charter captain with an untested crew, I took some advice from a more experienced captain, who said: “Always wear sunglasses so no one can see the fear in your eyes.”

Although calm and cool on the outside, the stress of my first time docking my owner’s multimillion dollar 80-footer was palpable. Add to that the fact that I was performing under the watchful eyes of charter guests. I had ample boating experience but maneuvering in tight quarters a boat that big was a little nerve-racking. Up on the flybridge, I found myself running back and forth from the rail to the wheel to judge distances and give a little thrust. Thankfully, there was no wind or current to add to the stress of the moment and I was able to dock successfully.

Since that time, there have been amazing advances in marine technology. Vessels are equipped with cameras to aid in visibility, and proportional thrust control for bow and stern thrusters simplifies maneuvering. One of the best innovations to come out in the past few years, however, is remote-control docking systems.



## Plug-and-play connectivity

Easy to install and compatible with most engine and thruster systems, remote-control systems let captains and crew operate engines, bow and stern thrusters, anchor winches and horns from anywhere onboard with a small handheld device. Systems like Dockmate deliver “plug-and-play” connectivity and the wireless remote control lets users confidently command the boat’s movement while stepping away from the helm for the best vantage point.

The Dockmate system also includes software that lets installers customize the feel and response time to meet the specific preferences of individual boaters. For example, if a boat only has a single bow thruster, Dockmate’s software can be programmed to “walk the boat” sideways directly towards the dock by programming the engine transmissions and throttle combined with the bow thruster – just as if the boat had a bow and stern thruster.

In addition, if the boat has two non-proportional bow and stern thrusters, which is also very common, one thruster is often more dominant than the other, resulting in greater difficulty with moving the boat sideways and parallel to the dock. The settings can



be customized so that a slight press on the joystick only engages one thruster and a harder push engages both thrusters.

Each Dockmate wireless system comes with a rugged wireless, handheld transmitter with an easy-grip rubber finish that sits comfortably in your hand. The lanyard keeps it in easy reach and the wireless charger lets the remote act as a joystick system at the helm.

The powerful, waterproof, floating transmitter's two-way communication ensures faultless operation with a five-channel Frequency Hopping Spectrum System (FHSS), which is a wireless technology that spreads a signal over rapidly changing frequencies for uninterrupted transmissions.

### Dockmate testimonials

Several Dockmate customers shared their first-hand experiences with the system. Long-time boater, educator and author, Bob Arrington said, "We think of Dockmate as similar to our bow and stern thrusters, or possibly our autopilot. Can we handle the boat without these accessories? Sure, we can, but having them makes it so much easier and safer. Our Dockmate has proven to be the same.

"Quite often when we're traveling, we leave marinas early in the morning before the staff arrives for work. In these cases, one of us has to stay at the helm while the other is left to untie the boat and re-board it safely. Our Dockmate has made this so much easier, by allowing the person controlling the boat to also be outside on deck assisting with lines as well.

"We especially like the system when anchoring or catching a mooring. From the position in our pilothouse or flybridge, we lose sight of the mooring ball when close to it. Having the ability to be outside on deck where we can control the boat while keeping the mooring ball in sight at all times is great. Being out on the bow while retrieving the anchor has proven to be safer and more efficient as well."

***The wireless remote control lets users confidently command the boat's movement while stepping away from the helm for the best vantage point.***

These systems also can be used in emergency situations, particularly when short-handed. Eric Koeppel, owner of a Galeon 500 had a windlass failure while in a crowded bay in windy conditions.

"When raising my anchor from the bridge, my windlass failed and dropped the anchor back down. It continued to feed more rode and would not lock. I grabbed my Dockmate and while heading for the bow I engaged the system, all while not managing to trip or fall in the process.

"You can imagine the movement of the boat in those winds. So, while on the bow and trying to tighten and fix my windlass, I was able to use the remote to avoid other boats. After numerous tries I was able to secure the anchor. Had it not been for my Dockmate Twist I would not have been able to get home!"

Having tested this system on several boats, I have to say that Dockmate is easy and intuitive and the best way to eliminate the stress of crowded marinas. I wish I had had it years ago.

*For more information on Dockmate visit [www.dockmate.us](http://www.dockmate.us).*

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