

For Immediate Release

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BENETEAU USA, INC. IN SUPPORT OF US-IRC

Marion, SC... Beneteau USA, Inc. is pleased to announce that in support of the internationally recognized IRC handicap rating rule and the efforts of the US-IRC organization, it will offer new Beneteau First series owners, for boats delivered through Beneteau USA dealers during the 2006 season (January 1, 2006-August 31, 2006), a voucher that will entitle them to get an IRC rating certificate at no charge for standardized measurements (vouchers will be paid for by Beneteau USA).

The IRC is the most popular, worldwide, sailboat rating system and has proven to be a growing success; rewarding a simple, reliable and affordable way to go handicap racing. It has the benefit of answering the needs of owners wanting to enter club or hi-level racing as well. With more than 7,000 boats racing under IRC; it has been accepted in over thirty countries and is being used under every conceivable condition of wind and water.

IRC encourages design characteristics found in the majority of good, solid, seaworthy, production boats. Owners of Beneteau boats will find their IRC ratings reasonable, equitable and understandable. Many of the current Beneteau Firsts already have IRC certificates on file for sister ships, or are listed one-designs which greatly simplifies the certification process.

Barry Carroll, Executive Director of the US-IRC, is enthusiastic about the agreement: "We are very happy to build a proactive relationship with Beneteau USA, Inc., the American division of the world's largest sailboat manufacturer. They chose to act and exercise leadership in the sailing industry. This is an unprecedented attempt for us to work together, and try to improve fair and accessible handicap racing in North America."

"Our intention is to help promote the joys of racing under a reliable, realistic rule and to offer the owners of new Beneteau First models easier access to racing. As the builder of one of the fastest growing, big boat, One-Design Class's in North America, the First 36.7, and many other performance models, like the Farr Yacht designed First 44.7, support of the US-IRC provides an enhanced value to our owners. Beneteau USA, Inc. is proud to be the first manufacturer to propose this and we encourage others in the boating industry to do the same." said Wayne Burdick, president of Beneteau USA, Inc.

Beneteau USA, the American division of the world's largest sailboat manufacturer, builds hundreds of 32-47 foot production sailboats, as well as the Swift Trawler 42, in Marion, SC and imports sailing yachts up to 57 feet in length from its parent company in France. The boats are sold through a network of over 40 dealers from the north in Alaska to the southern tip of Chile.

For information on the IRC please visit: www.us-irc.org

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