



# NEWS RELEASE

Route 9, New Gretna, NJ 08224 • P. 609.296.6000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CHRIS LANDRY** | 609.296.6000 ext. 1438  
clandry@vikingyachts.com

## Let the Good Times Roll

*The Viking Key West Challenge blends tournament fishing with festive celebrations in a tropical paradise. In its 11<sup>th</sup> year, the event is held exclusively for Viking and Valhalla owners.*

**(April 13, Key West, Florida)** – The Viking Key West Challenge (VKWC) gets better every year, with more good times, smiling faces and family-focused fun. The 2025 event, held April 9-13, featured 50 boats and over 500 guests.

“We want to thank all of you for being here – it was another unbelievable four days,” Viking President and CEO Pat Healey said at the Awards Dinner at the Opal Key Sunset Pier. “The fishing was good, the parties were even better and the friendship, camaraderie and fellowship were over the top. That’s what it’s all about – coming together and having a good time and doing what we love.”

Anglers released 168 sailfish over the two days of fishing and the [Spot Zero](#) Weigh Station was thumping as excited anglers brought their catches – tuna, cobia, dolphin, kingfish and the tournament’s first-ever pompano – to the scales.

Presented by Christi Insurance Group and Travelers Insurance, this year’s Viking Key West Challenge saw the Viking 61 *Right Choice* repeat as the Grand Champion and Top Boat in the Sailfish category, releasing 12 sails and boating a cobia. Right on their heels in Second Place was the Valhalla 55 *Wingman II* with 10 sailfish releases, followed in Third Place by *Pipe Dreamer*, a Viking 70, with eight.

*Right Choice* angler Lucie Kapusta won Top Angler with eight releases, as well as Top Female Angler. Second went to Brad VandenBerg on *Wingman II* with a half dozen sailfish releases and a kingfish. Christina Henry on the Valhalla 37 *Rehab* took Third Place Angler with five releases.

In the tuna category, Guy Lanciano aboard the 58 *On A Roll* took first place. Jessika Gonzalez on the 90 *Zatara* won First Place for dolphin, while Richard Battaglia on *The Interview*, a 68, and Al West Jr. on the 72 *Tami Ann* captured First for kingfish and Cobia, respectively. Rob Lopez on *The Provider*, an 80, took First for bottomfish.

### Howdy Partner

The youngsters are always the stars of the show. This year it was 11-year-old Hayden Rickman – never without his cowboy hat – who won the Top Junior Angler award with four sailfish releases aboard the family’s Viking

48 *Dear Rodeo*. This was the first time the Rickman family had participated in the Challenge. “We’ve just had a tremendous time,” said a proud Joby Rickman after his son received his award, with his brother Kamden by his side for a photograph with Pat Healey. “Everyone has been so nice and has made us feel so welcome.” “I can’t say enough about this event,” added mom, Leslie Rickman. “We love being part of the Viking family and we aren’t going anywhere. We are already talking about moving up to a bigger Viking.”

The fleet featured Vikings ranging from 46 to 90 feet and Valhallas from 37 to 55 feet. The industry-leading boats took over the waterfront for the week in the Conch Republic. What a sight it was as the fleet returned from fishing each day to the weigh station, with members from the Viking team, dealers and sponsoring partners greeting them with thumbs-ups, high fives and hugs.

Another newcomer to the event was the Viking 58 *FFMD* (Fishing For Muscular Dystrophy). Captain Paul Robertson founded the non-profit FFMD, which shares the joy of fishing to raise awareness and funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. “We’re very glad to be here,” said Paul. “I’ve met Pat a few times at the boat shows and always had my eye on a Viking and last year the time was right and we pulled the trigger. We’ve had center consoles, so this is a whole different animal; we’re very happy with the boat and the event has been great.”

Of course, there were many veterans of the event. This is the sixth VKWC for team *Relentless*. The 72 is Dan and Jenene Braden’s third Viking; Based out of Orange Beach, Alabama, the couple also currently own a Valhalla 41. “Key West is very unique and this is just a great get-away for us,” said Jenene. Dan loves “the camaraderie, the festive atmosphere and meeting other Viking owners.”

### **Festive Friday**

Although not a money tournament, the Viking Key West Challenge has great partners who gave away some incredible prizes – almost \$40,000 worth. In a drawing, the top prize of a [GOST](#) Global Tracking and Security Monitoring package worth \$7,500 went to *Sea Hawk*, a Viking 90; a [Spot Zero](#) Mobile Pro Unit valued at \$7,000 went to 1<sup>st</sup> Place team *Right Choice*; and a \$6,000 [Switlik Coastal Passage Raft](#) was awarded to Top Angler Lucie Kapusta. Prizes were also from FLIR, Simrad, Seatronx, Garmin, Furuno, Icom, KVH, SiriusXM, Yeti, Airmar and others.

The teams traveled to the southernmost point of the U.S. to compete in an event that is “More Than Just Fishing!” The festivities began on Wednesday evening at Dante’s Key West with registration, cocktails, hors d’oeuvres and the Captains’ Meeting. “We have the best owners and the best boats in the world,” said Healey. “We’re going to do some fishing and the most important thing is we’re going to have a lot of fun.” Friday’s lay day included a Pool Party Lunch, a Duval Street Bar Crawl Poker Run and a Kids Dock Tournament.

More than 75 of Viking’s business partners sponsored the VKWC, supporting event functions, such as the Captains’ Meeting (Foley Cat), Thursday Dinner (MAN Engines) and Awards Dinner (Christi Insurance Group and Travelers Insurance). Johnson & Towers/MTU sponsored the Pool Party, while the Kids Dock Tournament was supported by the The Billfish Foundation. Several companies provided assistance for the Poker Run.

The 12th annual Viking Key West Challenge takes place Wednesday, April 8 through Sunday, April 12, 2026. Book your slip at your favorite Key West marina today. Questions? Send an email to [marketing@vikingyachts.com](mailto:marketing@vikingyachts.com).

#####