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Cruising for New Cruising Products

A safer storm jib, a better anchor, and a frost-free freezer rank among the most innovative new gear seen at the 2008 U.S. Sailboat Show. "Gear and Gadgets" from our November 13, 2008, *CW Reckonings*

Nov 12, 2008

By Michael Lovett ([More articles by this author](#))



Courtesy Banner Bay Marine

Launching the Storm-Bag storm jib requires minimal time on the foredeck, which minimizes the risk of catastrophe in storm-tossed seas.

What was the highlight of last month's U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland? For me, it was watching the crew of the sightseeing schooner *Woodwind* try to defend the boat's topsides from the Laser Bugs swarming around the boat basin.

What is the most innovative cruising gear I saw? It's a three-way tie between a storm jib, an anchor, and a freezer.

Banner Bay Marine introduced the Storm-Bag storm jib at the show. Here's how the system works: as heavy weather approaches, a crewmember wraps the saddlebag-shaped device around the headstay, clips the tack in place, attaches the included jib sheets, and connects a halyard. When the time comes, the crew raises the halyard and, presto, the sail pops out of the bag. Because the Storm-Bag is compact and self-contained, lugging it to the foredeck is no hassle. Once rigged, the Storm-Bag stays neatly poised on the headstay, ready to be launched from the safety of the cockpit. \$900, www.bannerbaymarine.com

A clunky anchor can be an eyesore on the bow of an otherwise beautiful boat. Quickline's Ultra Anchor, made of 316L stainless steel, has a shiny finish and an elegant profile to put your old Danforth to shame. The Ultra Anchor also works extremely well. A rounded crown and low center of gravity make it self-righting; the curved, tapered fluke forces it to dig deep into the bottom; the hollow construction makes it structurally sound and relatively light for its size. I had a chance to test a miniature Ultra Anchor against Danforth, Bruce, and CQR models in a sand tank at the Quickline booth. The Ultra Anchor's unique shape caused it to bury itself deeper-- and hold stronger-- than the competition. I've yet to try the Ultra Anchor in action in a real-world setting, but my time in the sandbox has made me a believer. \$892.00, www.quickline.us

It's hard to get excited about refrigeration. But I suppose if it were my task to chip the ice out of the freezer every few weeks, I'd be pretty psyched on the DR 55 Inox by Isotherm. This drawer-style freezer is frost free, thanks to a fan that channels condensation to an outside evaporator unit before it can freeze to the inside walls. Thick insulation reduces power consumption to 1.5 amps. The front panel is simple and sleek, making the DR 55 a logical choice for your next upgrade. www.isootherm.com

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