



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Bass Cat, Cobalt, Correct Craft, Grady-White, Harris FloteBote and Regal Rank Highest in Their Respective Segments in New-Boat Owner Satisfaction

Small, Privately Owned Boat Companies Dominate the Boat Awards in 2007

MIAMI: 15 February 2007 — Bass Cat, Cobalt, Correct Craft, Grady-White, Harris FloteBote and Regal rank highest in customer satisfaction in seven boat segments included in the J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM released today at the Miami International Boat Show.

Independent single-brand boat companies continue to dominate the award rankings. These manufacturers appear to be particularly dedicated to optimizing quality and satisfaction, and as a result, have led the rankings virtually every year since J.D. Power and Associates first launched the study in 2001.

“There are exceptions, but as a general rule this group of independent boat builders tend to outperform the larger builders when it comes to overall customer satisfaction,” said Todd Markusic, senior director of the powersports practice at J.D. Power and Associates. “These companies tend to be more nimble than the larger builders in making changes, correcting problems and adopting new technologies, whereas larger companies naturally face challenges in implementing the same processes. That’s not to say that it’s impossible for the larger builders to produce quality boats and provide an excellent sales and service experience for their customers. For example, Harris FloteBote, part of Brunswick Corporation, ranks highest in the pontoon segment, and Sea Ray, another larger Brunswick company, also performs well in the study.”

Now in its sixth year, the study measures owner satisfaction with new boats among 76 brands in seven segments: ski/wakeboard; fiberglass bass boats; small runabouts (16 to 19 feet); large runabouts (20 to 29 feet); coastal fishing (17 to 28 feet); pontoons; and express cruisers (24 to 33 feet). Overall customer satisfaction index scores are based on performance in nine categories: cabin; engine; ride and handling; helm and instrument panel; design and styling; sound system; maintenance; water sports; and fishing.¹ Scores are measured as problems per 100 (PP100) boats, with lower scores reflecting higher quality.

The number of owner-reported problems has decreased compared with the 2006 study and are at the lowest levels in the study’s history (309 PP100 in 2007 compared with 327 PP100 in the 2006 study). The most dramatic quality improvements are in the segments for coastal fishing (40 PP100 improvement compared with the 2006 study), bass boat (26 PP100 improvement) and ski/wakeboarding (10 PP100 improvement). Additionally, quality improvements have a positive impact on overall customer satisfaction, as satisfaction levels in 2007 are at their highest since the study was first launched.

“It is evident that manufacturers are listening to their customers,” said Markusic. “However, despite the improvements, not all boats have high quality, and not all customers are happy. We continue to see companies that struggle with quality and satisfaction year after year, and given the competitiveness of the marine industry, these companies must work harder by improving quality and listening to the voice of the customer to succeed.”

¹ Not all segments include every factor.

While quality and product satisfaction are essential, the dealership experience—both sales and service—are also crucial to customer satisfaction. The study finds that, on average, boat owners are more satisfied with the dealership experience than they were in 2006.

While 27 percent of boat owners report that they have not had their boat serviced, 79 percent of owners who have had service work performed did so at the boat dealership, and 16 percent had their boat serviced on-site by a dealer service. Among owners who received repairs or service, 79 percent indicated the work was done right the first time—up slightly from 77 percent in the 2006 study.

“Sales and service satisfaction levels are much lower in the boating industry when compared with the auto industry,” said Markusic. “However, the two industries are very different as boating dealerships are exceptionally busy during the boating season and then slow greatly in the off-season. Customer expectations for service on their boat are based partially on their automotive experience, so they expect their boat to be repaired in the same timely manner as their vehicle. Also, given the relatively short boating seasons in many parts of the country, the last thing owners want is to have their boat tied up in maintenance service for an extended period of time.”

Bass boat segment

For a third consecutive year, Bass Cat ranks highest in the bass boat segment, leading in each of the six factors that determine overall satisfaction. The company also receives the highest index score in the study for the second consecutive year. Bass Cat owners report experiencing high levels of quality, recording 84 fewer PP100 than the second-ranked brand in the segment. Triton, Ranger and Skeeter, respectively, follow in the segment rankings.

Coastal fishing segment (17 to 28 feet)

Grady-White ranks highest in the coastal fishing segment for a sixth consecutive time. Grady-White, which has the fewest problems experienced in the segment (154 PP100 compared with the segment average of 298 PP100) also performs well in dealer sales and service. Following Grady-White is Boston Whaler, which had the greatest year-over-year improvement in the segment. Scout and Century, respectively, follow Boston Whaler in the segment rankings.

Express cruiser segment (24 to 33 feet)

Having made substantial improvements in the study during the past two years, Regal ranks highest among express cruises. Regal receives the highest ratings in the segment in ride and handling, design and styling, engine satisfaction, quality, cabin, helm and instrument panel, and maintenance. Sea Ray follows Regal in the segment rankings.

Small runabout segment (16 to 19 feet)

Regal ranks highest in the small runabout boat segment for a second consecutive time. Regal performs particularly well in ride and handling, which has the greatest impact on overall satisfaction in the segment, while also posting strong results in service satisfaction. Crownline, Sea Ray, Stingray and Chaparral, respectively, follow in the segment rankings. Crownline records the fewest problems experienced in the segment at 249 PP100. Chaparral experiences the largest improvement in the segment, improving 54 index points from the 2006 study.

Large runabout segment (20 to 29 feet)

Cobalt ranks highest in the large runabout segment for a sixth consecutive time. Cobalt receives segment-leading scores in each of the seven factors of overall satisfaction, and performs particularly well in sales and service. Regal, Sea Ray and Four Winns, respectively, follow Cobalt in the segment rankings.

Pontoon segment

With substantial year-over-year improvements in customer satisfaction, Harris FloteBote receives its first award in the study, leading the pontoon boat segment with high ratings in six of the seven satisfaction factors. Bennington, Premier, G3 Sun Catcher and Parti Kraft, respectively, follow Harris FloteBote in the rankings. Bennington receives high ratings in ride and handling, while Parti Kraft records the fewest problems experienced by owners in the segment with 167 PP100, compared with the segment average of 287 PP100.

Ski/wakeboard segment

Correct Craft ranks highest in the ski/wakeboard segment. Correct Craft, which has ranked highest in the ski/wakeboard segment each of the five years since the segment was added to the study, leads the segment in engine, ride and handling, sound system, and maintenance, and performs particularly well in sales satisfaction. Correct Craft is followed in the segment rankings by Malibu, which records considerable improvements in overall satisfaction from 2006. Malibu receives segment-leading scores for helm/instrument panel, design and styling, and water sports, and performs particularly well in service satisfaction.

The 2007 Boat Competitive Information Study is based on responses from 12,140 owners who registered a new boat between June 2005 and May 2006.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is an ISO 9001-registered global marketing information services firm operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, consulting, training and customer satisfaction. The firm's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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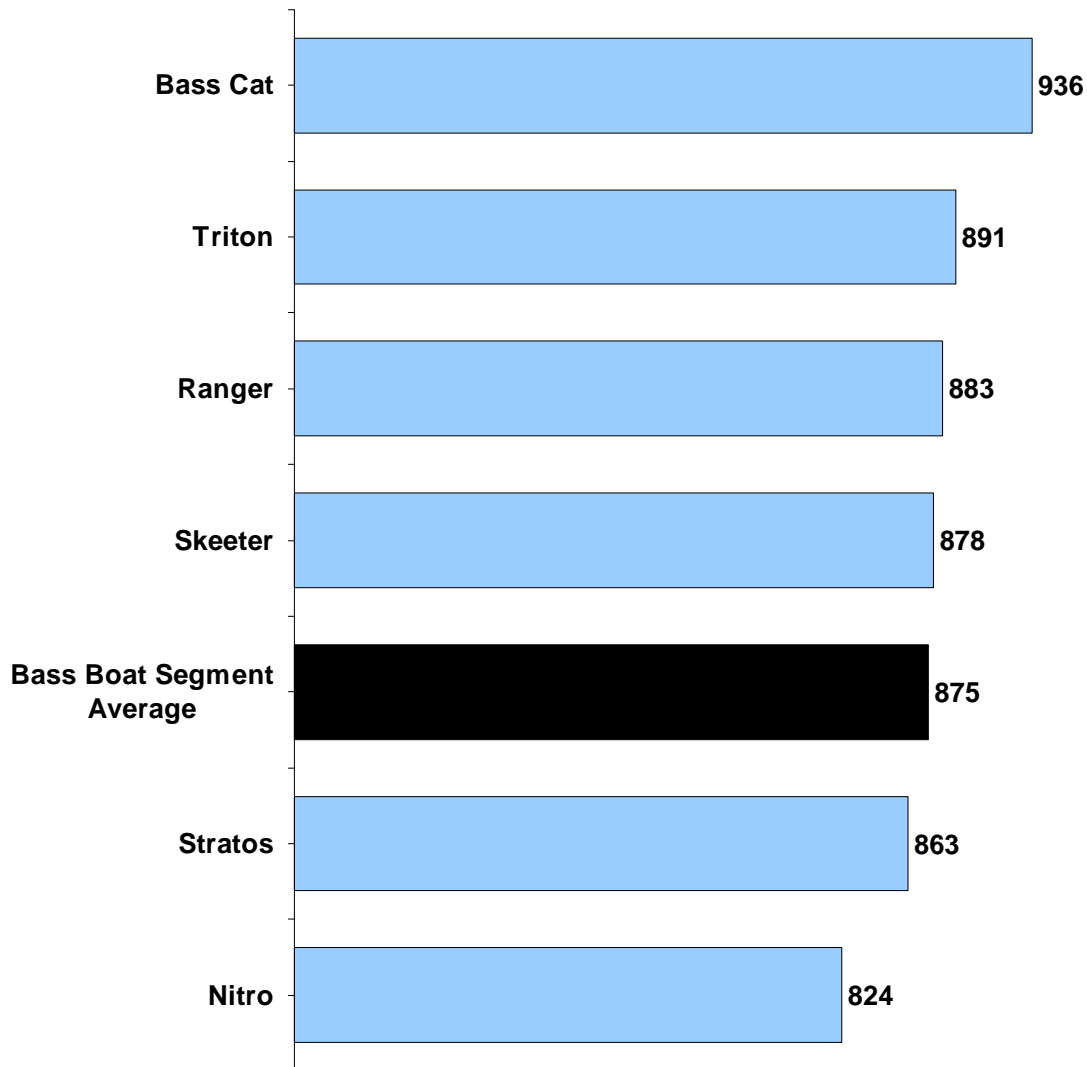
NOTE: Seven charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

Bass Boat Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

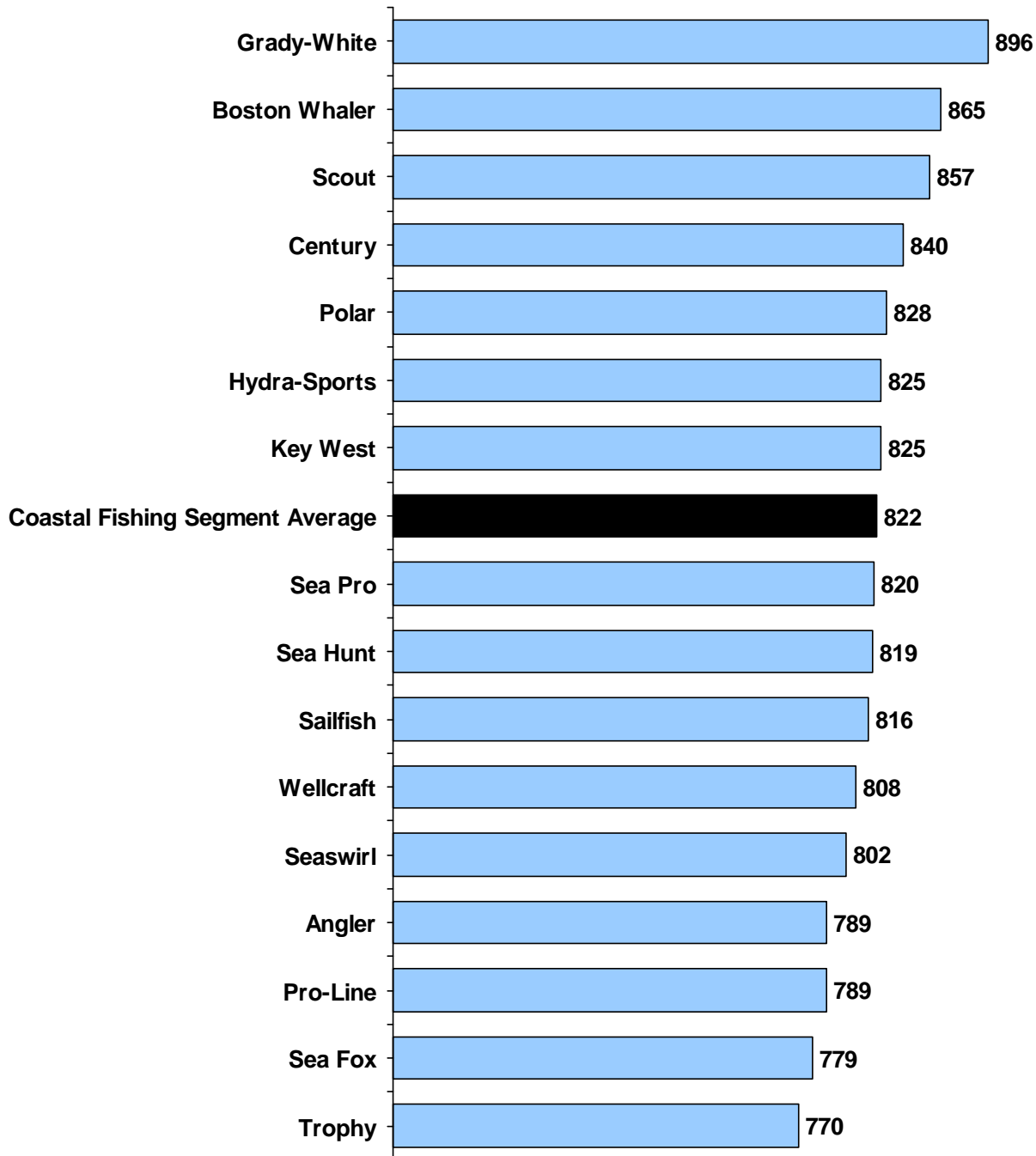
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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

Coastal Fishing Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are: Parker, Pursuit, Sea Boss and Triumph.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

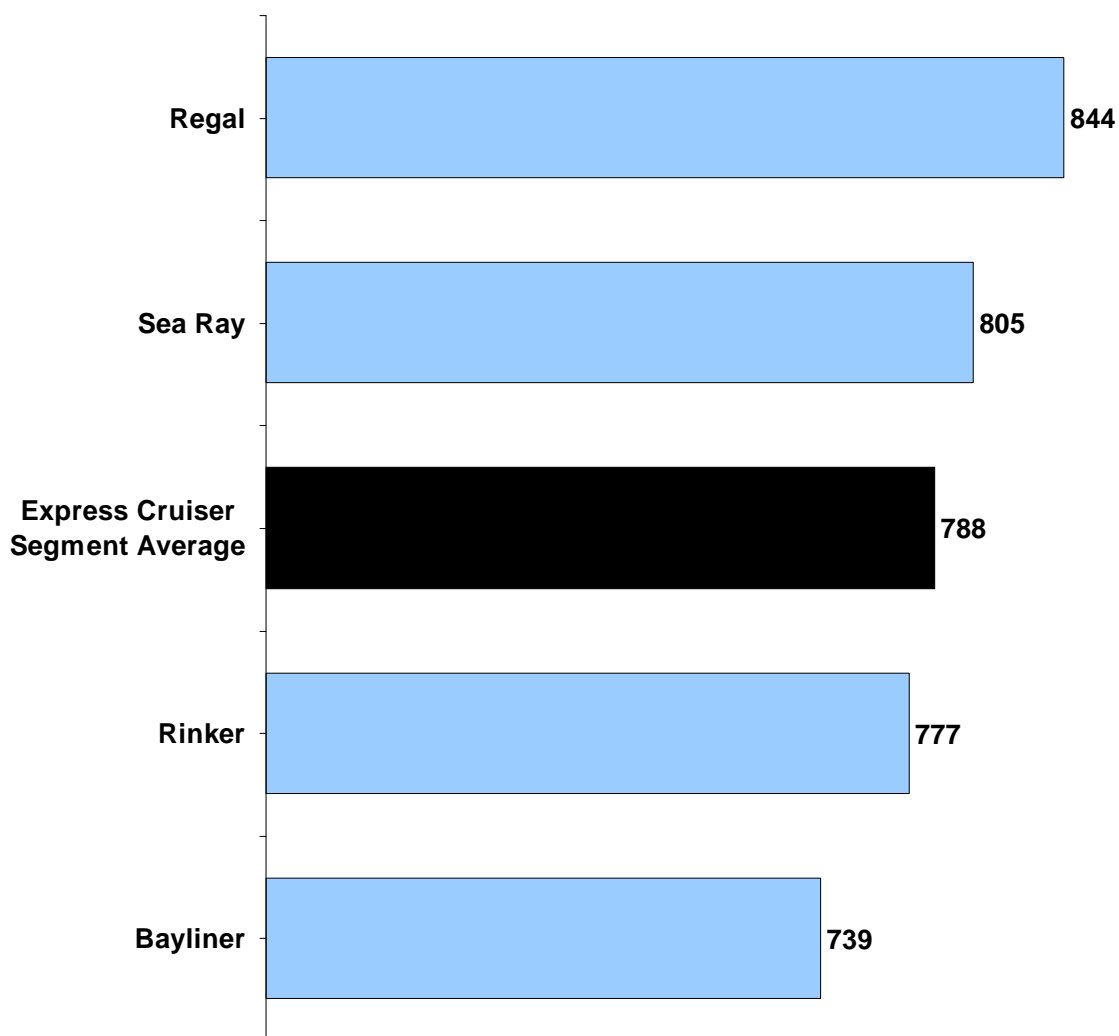
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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

Express Cruiser Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



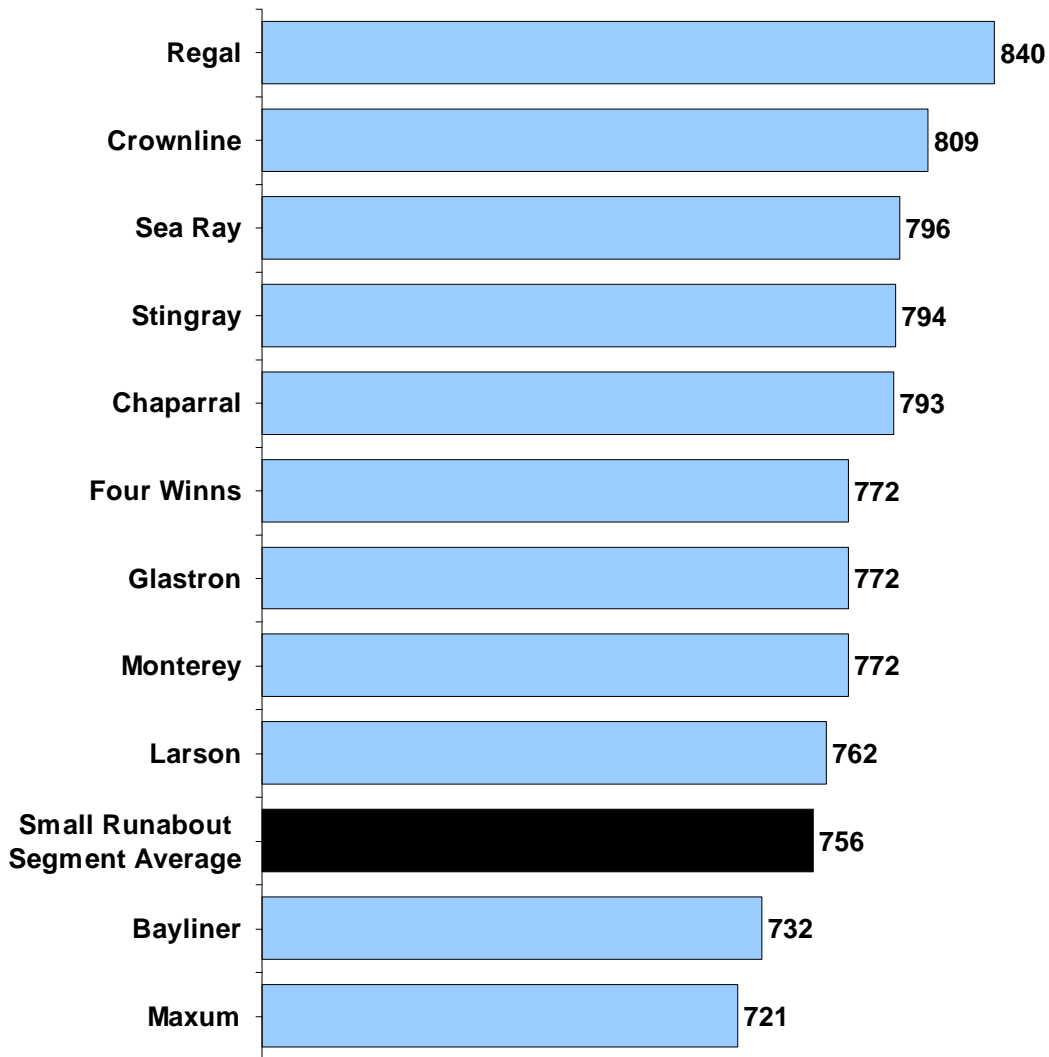
Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are: Chaparral, Crownline, Formula, Four Winns, Larson and Monterey.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking **Small Runabout Segment** (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size is: Tahoe.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

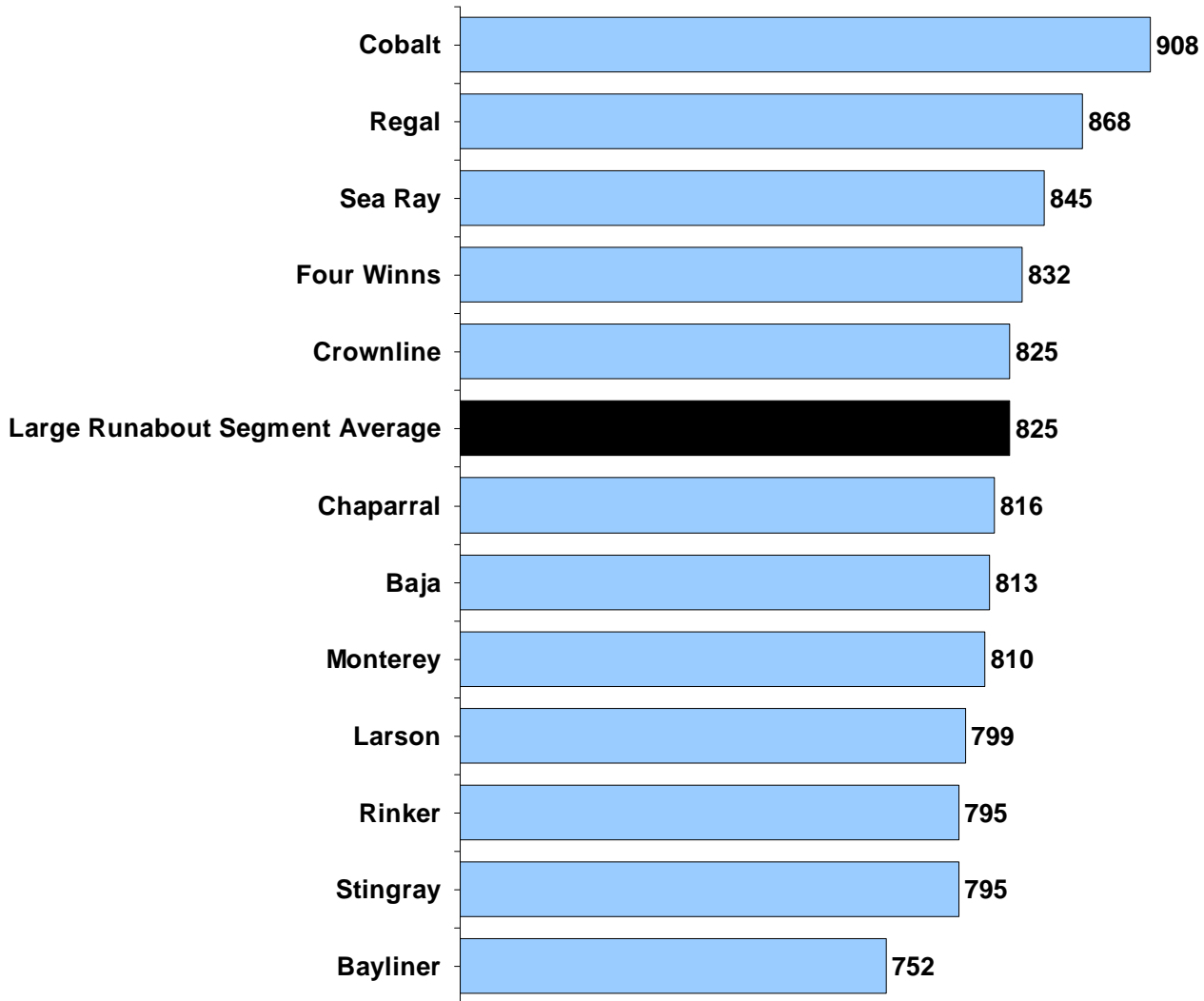
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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

Large Runabout Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are: Caravelle, Ebbtide, Formula, Glastron, Maxum and Tahoe.

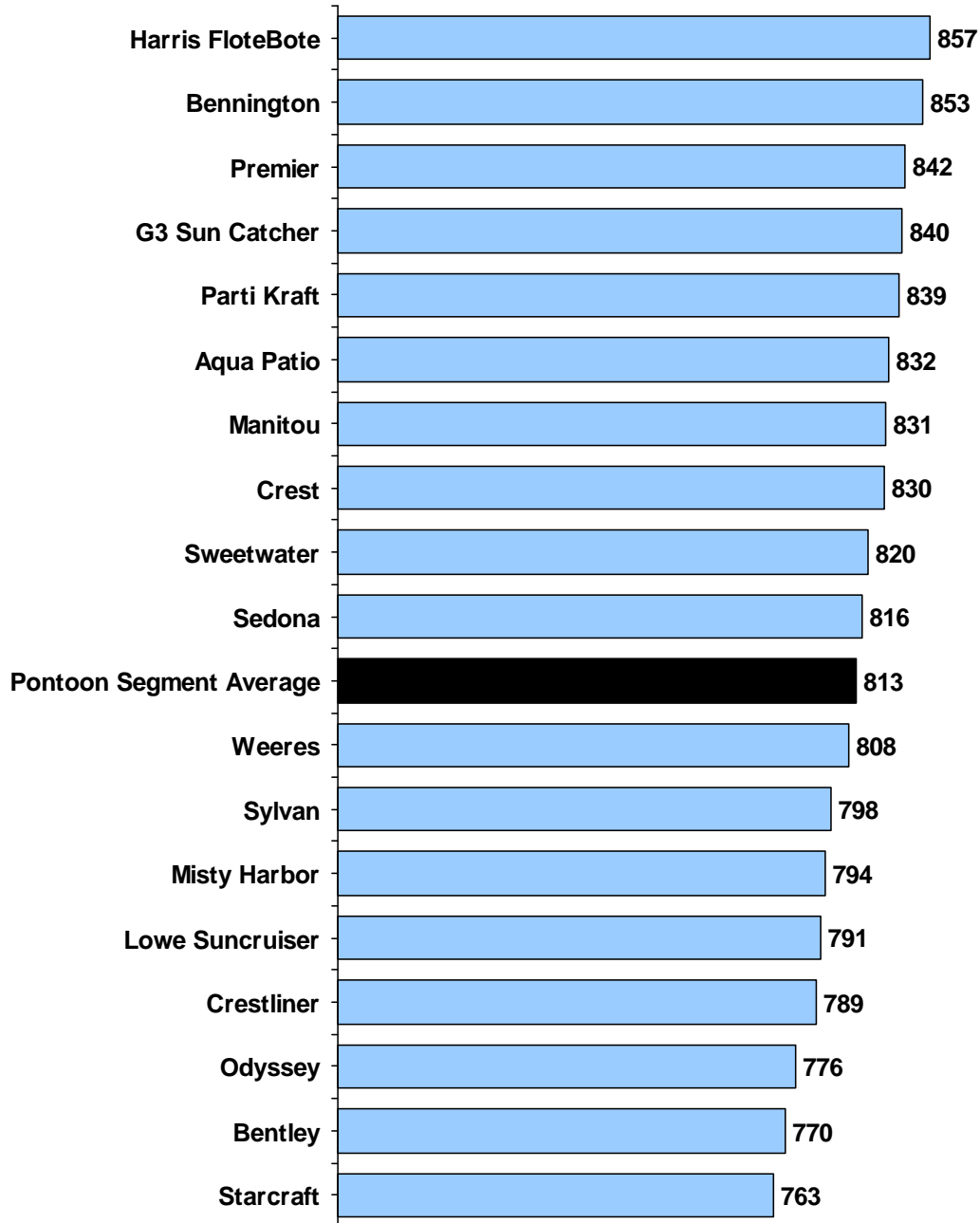
Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

Pontoon Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



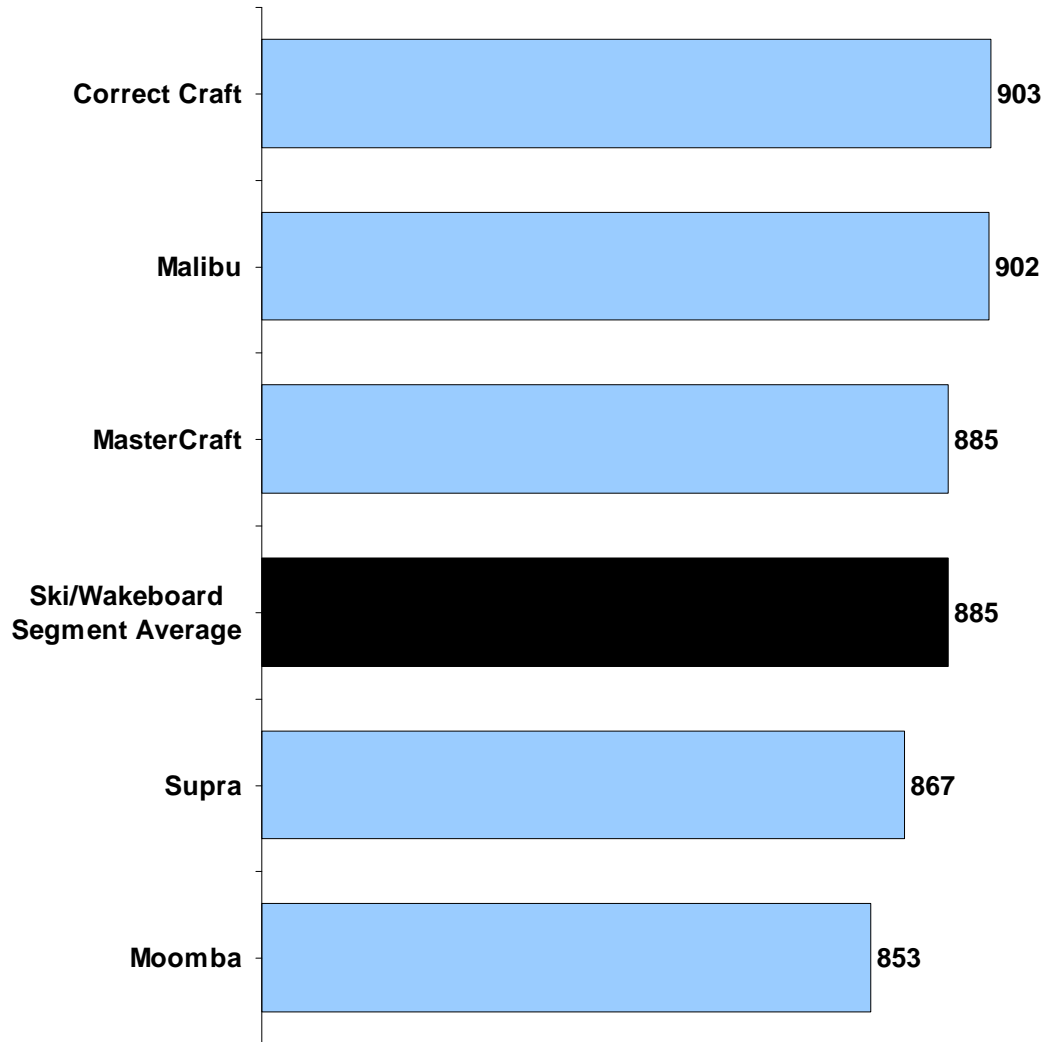
Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are: Avalon, Princecraft, Sanpan, Smoker Craft, SunChaser, SunTracker and Tahoe.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

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Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking **Ski/Wakeboard Segment** (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Included in the study but not ranked due to small sample size are: Centurion and Tige.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Boat Competitive Information StudySM

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