



49th Annual Midwestern Model Ships & Boats Contest & Display

A Nautical Research Guild Associated Contest
May 15-17, 2026



Please read the following carefully before mailing the entry form.

Entry Rules and Conditions

1. The contest and display are open to all ship modelers regardless of age or expertise. Contestants may enter more than one model. Each model must be the sole work of the entrant. Models may not be entered in multiple categories. Models winning any previous award in this contest are only eligible for display.
2. Models must be accompanied by an official entry form along with payment. Entries are due at the museum by May 1, 2026.
3. Competition entries must include a historical account of the actual ship or vessel type represented by the model. Type the information on an 8 1/2- by 11-inch sheet of paper. Although newspaper clippings, magazine articles, photographs, or other written documentation may accompany the model, the judges will not consider this material.
4. Competition entries must include an account of the model's construction. Special materials, tools, and techniques should be highlighted. Follow the format for the historical account.
5. The museum suggests placing the models in cases. The Wisconsin Maritime Museum is not liable for damage to them while on the premises nor are they covered by the museum's insurance.
6. Models must be on the tables no later than noon on Saturday, May 16, 2026. The museum will accept models by mail only if prior arrangements have been made with Alexandria Bolle. The contest winners will be announced on Sunday morning, May 18. The People's Choice Award and special awards will be presented at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday.
Winners must be present for group photographs. Attendees may not leave until the contest concludes at 2:30 p.m. Early departure without prior approval from a Model Contest Committee member may result in disqualification and jeopardize participation in future contests.
7. The Wisconsin Maritime Museum and the Nautical Research Guild reserve the right to describe and photograph entries and to use them appropriately.



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Judging

Models in the Wisconsin Maritime Museum's Model Ships and Boats Contest are judged according to areas of inspection that include a historical account, a construction account, historical accuracy, workmanship, and overall appeal. Models are judged independently based on a point system developed by the Contest Committee and not against other entries. The judges' decisions, although based on these standards, are subjective. Gold, silver, and bronze awards and special awards are presented only if entries achieve the required point totals. The judges' decisions are final, and they are not obligated to discuss them. Address judging questions or comments to the contest committee.

Areas of Inspection

Historical Paper: See Entry Rules and Conditions.

Construction Paper: This paper should include building materials, the use of special tools, jigs or fixtures, total build time, original construction techniques, kit modifications, and after-market parts. If applicable, include special circumstances about the model. See Entry Rules and Conditions.

Historical Accuracy: Points are deducted for anachronisms. Flags, mast and spar fittings, deck furniture, and livery must match the model's time period. Unusual details must be explained in the historical account. If the judges find the explanation valid and can find no evidence to the contrary, no points will be deducted.

Construction Value: Craftsmanship has the greatest point value. Judges evaluate:

- Symmetry and scale
- Joinery
- Cleanliness of metalwork or other materials
- Paintwork and weathering
- Assembly (glue spots, paint smears, tied lines)
- Fittings that should move appear functional
- Display mounting (horizontal waterline) and case (spotless)

Operational Models: They must meet the same criteria as static models, but judges consider that hatches and deck sections must open for access.

Nautical Crafts: Although items may be more of an artistic piece, they must be well constructed.

Overall Appeal: This includes visual appeal and the display's effectiveness.