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MASTERVOLT ACQUIRES ELECTRIC PROPULSION SPECIALIST, BELLMANN

Mastervolt, the leading designer and manufacturer of electrical power systems has acquired the electrical propulsion company, Bellmann.

Dutch-based Bellmann is widely regarded as a leading player in the market for complete electrical propulsion systems, and has been producing dedicated electrical drives for boats since 2002.

The products include drives ranging from 1kW to 20kW complete with matching shafts and propellers, along with control panels and switching gear. The expertise of Bellmann's Marien Schoonen and Fred Bellis is well known in electric boating circles throughout Europe.

Combining Bellmann's innovations with those of Mastervolt now provides a completely integrated package for the boating market. Mastervolt specialise in total power management systems, vital for the efficient use of electric and hybrid drives. It also developed the award-winning 24-volt Lithium-Ion marine battery.

Bellmann's drives and expertise will be integrated immediately into Mastervolt's dynamic development programme, which has just completed a product-wide review to ensure its own range of chargers, generators and Masterbus systems is fully 'hybrid ready.'

'For many boatyards, it is a logical step to move to electric propulsion,' said Paul Kenninck, Mastervolt's CEO. 'Some yards are experimenting with the new technologies, but don't have a contact with enough all-round knowledge. Mastervolt's strategy has always been to offer complete solutions, and with the acquisition of Bellmann, we can now offer everything needed for a complete hybrid or dedicated electrical drive system, whatever its configuration.'

These configurations can vary from a simple battery-powered electric drive recharged from the mains, to a fully managed hybrid-drive that can be recharged from a free-wheeling propeller when the boat is under sail. Some yards are now testing electric 'pod' drives powered by a generator, which can be placed anywhere aboard, giving designers much more freedom with internal layouts.

Remarking on the future for electric propulsion, Paul Kenninck said, 'There is no doubt that – just like hybrid cars – the market for electrified boats will take off, and the stakes are high for the marine industry. The million-dollar question is how long will it take – years or decades? At Mastervolt, we think it will be just a few years, thanks to rapidly increasing customer interest and innovations aimed at reducing costs. With the acquisition of Bellmann, we will be at the cutting edge of integrated power systems to make electric drives as efficient as possible, both in terms of installation, and of use.'

