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Honoring Portugal's Leaders:
An Invitation to Europe's Sailing Community to Invest in the Blue Economy

The **Stone Soup Leadership Institute's 2026 Cronkite Ocean Awards** were held on October 29 at the **Clube Naval de Cascais** (CNC) in Portugal. **Portugal's Secretary of State for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Salvador Malheiro**, received the award in recognition of his leadership in Portugal's Blue Economy. The event honored Portugal's leaders in the Blue Economy from business, education, organizations and youth.

The Clube's Executive Committee Board member **Duarte Champalimaud** welcomed guests: "On behalf of the Clube Naval de Cascais board, a very warm welcome to you all. Here at the Clube, the ocean is part of our everyday lives. It brings us together through sailing, sport, friendship, a shared sense of belonging. That connection gives us responsibility to take care for it and to help future generations understand its value. It is a pleasure to welcome an occasion that celebrates people whose dedication and actions help build a better future for our ocean. To those being honored, congratulations. By your example, you inspire others to take action. May this evening create new friendships, conversations, and opportunities to work together."

The Clube's **Olympic champion Carolina Joao** shared what it takes to be a champion—in sailing and in life. As she trains young sailors at CNC, she serves as an inspiration and ambassador for the next generation.

Since debuting on Walter Cronkite home of Martha's Vineyard, the **Cronkite Ocean Awards** have been held in:
• **2025 Nice, France** at the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3, the Award honored global leaders who are advancing ocean sustainability and exemplifying the integrity, courage, and vision of legendary broadcaster and environmental advocate Walter Cronkite. **Mayor Christian Estrosi** was recognized for his visionary leadership and commitment to building a sustainable coastal economy made him an exemplary host at UNOC3.

• **2024 Climate Week New York City**: the Award ceremony was timed to the U.N.'s General Assembly and to spotlight The U.N. Goal #14 and celebrate the historic High Seas Treaty that aims to protect marine life in the ocean's high seas, ratified by 60 nations. Hosted by Classic Harbor Line at their Chelsea Piers, it included the christening of their newest schooner, the 90-foot Adirondack IV. Following the event, VIP guests celebrated together on it -- sailing by the Statue of Liberty. " Walter Cronkite christened our yacht MANHATTAN in 2006, so hosting this year's ceremony is an honor and a testament to his legacy as a life-long environmentalist," said Captain Sarah Pennington. "Creating meaningful sustainability practices and growing our programming dedicated to climate change and the environment have been major company priorities over the last decade."

• **2014 Martha's Vineyard:** oceanographer **Dr Sylvia Earle** received the award on as she launched her film *Mission Blue* and her Hope Spots campaign in support of marine protected areas worldwide.

The Institute premiered its video with Cronkite reporting on the Tall Ships featuring the Portuguese built barquentine Gazela and its sailing adventures with youth leaders.

Engaging Europe's Sailing Community in the Blue Economy

Europe's sailing community has a unique connection to the ocean—and a vital role to play in shaping its future. Portugal's ocean future depends on protecting marine resources, growing sustainable industries and preparing people to work in them. Sailing organizations can help bring these priorities together by connecting young people with mentors, training and real-world experiences across the maritime sector.

That opportunity was at the heart of the **2026 Cronkite Ocean Awards**, where **Secretary Salvador Malheiro**, was recognized for his leadership in advancing a sustainable Blue Economy. The scale of the opportunity is growing. Portugal's **Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors** highlighted in their **Manifesto** that blue start-ups have risen in value from €47 million to €1.6 billion since 2020. In his acceptance remarks, Secretary Malheiro emphasized the importance of engaging coastal communities and young people: "A boat without a crew is just a hull tied to the dock. You are the crew we need."

The Manifesto, presented by Miguel Roque, calls on leaders to connect young people with emerging opportunities, training and careers. "Invest in our Youth. Invest in Portugal. Invest in our Future," it states. Roque urged leaders to "Open this Blue Economy to all our youth and show us where the opportunities are," adding: "Working together, we know that we can turn our potential into opportunities, and vision into real careers."

Cascais' role as the 2026 European Capital of Democracy also underscored the importance of participation. **Mayor Nuno Piteira Lopes** connected democracy with ocean stewardship, saying both "belong to everyone" and depend on shared responsibility. Young people should have a voice in shaping the Blue Economy—not only as future workers, but as members of the communities whose lives and livelihoods are tied to the sea.

Vice Mayor Luis Capão issued a direct challenge to the sailing and business communities. "To the companies in this room: invest in the ocean as you would in your most valuable asset because it is. To our scientists and public institutions: keep turning knowledge into decisions. To our Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors: do not wait to be invited to the table; you already have a seat at it. And to every one of us: let us leave Cascais tonight with at least one concrete commitment to the sea, however small. Cascais, European Capital of Democracy, stands ready to be your partner."

The Institute invites yacht clubs, businesses and maritime partners to learn about and invest in the emerging Blue Economy. "We're calling on everyone who feels a connection to the sea—especially sailors—to invest in the communities and waters we all depend on," said **Marianne Larned**, author and founding director of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute.

The Institute welcomes conversations with leaders across Europe who want to maximize their investment in the Blue Economy by building bridges and empowering young people to discover, prepare for and pursue careers in the Blue Economy. Together, the sailing community can help build a stronger crew for the ocean's future.

About the Stone Soup Leadership Institute
For 30 years, the Institute has worked alongside island and coastal communities—from Martha's Vineyard, Newport, and other New England communities to Hawaii, Vieques, the British Virgin Islands, and the Philippines. A global nonprofit founded in Massachusetts, the Institute brings young people together with business, education, government, and community leaders to build bridges, develop strategic initiatives, and form partnerships that strengthen ocean communities. The Institute's book, ***Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life Changing Stories of Young Heroes*** and Curriculum feature ocean champions whose examples inspire young people to become ocean champions themselves. Its Blue Economy Career Pathways Platform helps educators connect students with local employment projections, training requirements and career opportunities. The Institute invites strategic partners and funders to join its efforts to expand these resources nationally and globally honoring Cronkite's enduring spirit and helping young people build a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

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