CARE OF HULL, TOPSIDES, AND SAILS

I would advise waxing the hull and topsides at least in the beginning of the year. It prevents crazing and chipping; it is not just cosmetic. Cleaners such as oxalic acid take off a lot of stains. - Art Levin

The best product is from a Sherwin Williams car paint shop. It is a rubbing compound for acrylic finish and it is finer than regular rubbing compound and works faster.
- Mace Miyasaki

For waxing I use Classic or Starbright. - Art Levin

I use DuPont Rain Dance. - Mace Miyasaki

I use Starbright, but the Vega man said not to use it. He said later repairs might not stick to the gel coat.
- Sam Amoss

I use Starbright also and find it very good. - Russ Walker

I use teak oil on the teak and put it on three or four times a year, but I do not clean my teak first. I paint it on with a brush but you can use a rag. It will stain the gel coal but the stains can be removed with a cleaner. It is important not to let the teak dry out; it will crack. In the cabin I use furniture wax on the interior finish.
- Art Levin

I have seen several boats which had their teak done in "DEKS OLJE" number 1. It gives a rich brown color and is also a sealer. The people I have talked to all like the product. The product is also manufactured in a glossier finish (#2). The BOAT US price is $4.70 (List $6.21) for a quart size can. The initial application requires more than subsequent applications. - Sid Rosen

Most boats have their bottoms painted with 3 quarts of anti-fouling paint annually, and a hard, vinyl-type finish seems to be preferred. Some of us are experimenting with painting only every other year, with not too bad results. The test for your area is how soon the boat gets very sluggish in the water, even under full engine power. - Art Levin

I took my sails to Housley the first time and they seemed to get more wear by having them washed than from sailing. This year I did them myself.

- Jim Hartzler

I had my sails washed one year and I didn't see any difference. Last year I took the genoa and jib to a laundromat where they have a giant washing machine. It was a sudsy disaster and I haven't done that again. I just hose off my sails occasionally now.

- Art Levin

I had my sails cleaned one year by Thurston and another year by Murphy and Nye in Annapolis, but I didn't see any difference. I haven't had it done again. But I do hose them down occasionally to get the salt off.

- Russ Walker

One of my happier sailmates managed to step thru the cover of one of my vents over the lazarette. A thoro search of U. S. suppliers convinced me that nothing in this country was made to fit the hole. Thru Albin Marine in Sweden I located a Swedish chandlery with parts for the Vega:

Peter Andre'N AB
Hamnvagen 6
S-18363, Taby
Sweden

In 1984, the cost of two covers plus shipping was 120 kronars, or $15.

- Robert Brillhart

I had sunken areas near the stern cleats over the lazarette. I filled them successfully with car-body filler and gel coat.

- John Sprague

A hull problem now receiving major and increasing attention is "boat pox" or blistering of fiberglass boats. As described in a Cruising World article by Jim Gilbert (Dec., 1986), blistering is caused by water penetrating the gel coat and getting trapped in the underlying laminate. As more water accumulates in the hull, the internal pressure results in blisters on the underwater portion of the hull.

All resins used in fiberglass hull construction are permeable to some extent. Theoretically, isophthalic resins are less permeable than orthophthalic resins, and epoxies are less permeable than isos. Some manufacturers are now using, or will use on special order, reinforcing fibers laid down with a chopper gun in place of the first layer of laminate, and an epoxy gel coat, to prevent blistering. One major manufacturer has been using vinylester resin in the laminate and for blister repair, with good results so far. The Gilbert article, "A Pox On Your Boat," describes in detail the causes, prevention, and cure of blistering, for further reference.

The good news for Vega owners is that isophthalic resin was used for the gel coat, and the lamination was made partly by spraying chopped fiberglass mixed with polyester resin and partly by laying up by hand two layers of woven fiberglass rovings. No fillers were used. While this does not guarantee against blistering, it should be of comfort to know that Vega hulls were properly constructed long before blistering was recognized as a major problem, now affecting as many as one of three fiberglass boats.

Blisters can be detected by careful examination of the underwater portion of the hull when drydocked for bottom painting. The old paint may hide small blisters, which, however, can be felt by touch. In the terminal stages, blisters grow like mushrooms, the hull laminate becomes waterlogged, and the boat leaks like a sieve. The condition is reparable, by pouring money into the fiberglass holes.

- Art Levin

During the original survey of "Double Fantasy," we were informed that all six of our stanchion bases were surrounded by hairline cracks. Fortunately, these cracks were only on the underside of the deck and did not extend through to the topside. I decided it was wise to repair these before any significant weakness developed.

My first step was to remove the trim boards inside the cabin in order to provide easy access to the bases. I then applied fiberglass mat and cloth to the cracks. Seran wrap and tape were used to hold the cloth in position. The plastic wrap was peeled off after the fiberglass had dried.

I replaced the existing small aluminum backing plates with larger ones made from stainless steel. It cost about $20 to have the six new plates made. Each stanchion base was removed, rebedded on both sides, then repositioned. It's a good idea to purchase extra nuts and bolts; inevitably one or two of these get broken. Also, care should be taken to avoid plugging the drain holes at the base of the stanchions.

Next, the screws holding the stanchions in their bases were removed. My stanchions were constantly wobbling inside their bases, so I decided to tighten them up. By removing the screws, they moved ½ inch deeper into their bases. I used a prick punch and hammer to mark the stanchions. I drilled and tapped two new holes; one through the original hole and a second, totally new hole. I put in two new screws which reduced the wobble significantly.

Finally, I installed a few "gate stops" (they look like doughnuts with set screws). They fit over the lifelines up against the backside of the aftermost stanchion posts. They keep the lifelines from drooping down when the pelican hook for the boarding gate is released.

I spent under $50 and about 20 hours in repairing the system. Now I feel much more confident that I'll stay on board.

- Paul Halvachs