



## **Chesapeake Tartan 30 Association**

### **ANOTHER WAY TO MAINTAIN TOPSIDES TEAK**

Tom and Roberta Abbott, T-30 #155, *New Horizons*, September 1998\*

Upon seeing *New Horizons* for the first time several club members have asked what we have done to the exterior teak. For those who are interested, there is an alternative to Cetol or varnish which is called Honey Teak; we applied it two years ago and are very happy with results thus far. It has really “dressed up” the boat and now requires very little time in maintenance.

When we bought our Tartan 30 two and a half years ago as neophyte sailors, we bought a boat well cared for by the original owner, but we quickly concluded that teak maintenance would be a challenge. The previous owner had used Semco on all exterior teak — requiring several applications per season to sustain it. After going through the process a couple of times, we thought there must be a better way, and we researched *Practical Sailor* for recommendations. In the April '96 issue, PS did an article on teak treatments that they were testing, including a product out of Florida called Honey Teak. It was well-rated, and importantly for sailors that live 75 miles from where we berth our boat, could be applied “wet-on-wet” and the entire job could be completed over two days.

We bit the bullet and contacted Fabula, Inc. in Florida and ordered the product to refinish *New Horizons*' teak. Tom Fabula is very helpful and full of information. He will help you with amounts needed and UPS to you immediately. Roberta and I followed all the directions (cleaning and recleaning to remove many layers of Semco — remember, this will be the last time), and applied the product in June, '96. It involves mixing of three components in two separate operations — three coats of the Honey Teak and two of a clear sealer — for a total of five coats. Keep in mind this product can be applied “wet-on-wet.” We found it was best to work in the morning and out of the sun if possible, but you can apply the product in a much wider range of temperatures and humidity than most other paints and varnishes. Even a little rain is not disastrous. Direct sun will cause some bubbling, but it is easily brushed out. If you must pause and let it dry then it is necessary to do a light sanding before continuing.

We discovered after the fact that it is possible to alter the color of the Honey Teak — we're happy with it the way it is, but some may not like the deep honey result. If you have seen ours and don't care for the color it would be worth investigating this option. Sounds complicated, but it arrives with complete instructions and if I could figure it out, anyone could.

In accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, we added a single coat of the clear coat last year (this took about four hours total), and still have very attractive and protected bright work topsides. This is all you should have to do every 12-18 months to maintain the teak. There were a few spots on the toe rail that needed repair because of weather exposure or improper application (we are not sure which). In any case it was simple to do a little sanding and then go through the application process to effect the repairs. It all blended in perfectly and it is impossible to tell these spots from the original. It is advertised that this stuff can survive oil, gas and even putting a cigarette out on it! We have not tried this. The result is a golden brown (like honey) high gloss finish. Traditionalists might not like that, but it looks very attractive on our experienced Tartan. For product info, contact Signature Finish at (561)287-6077.

P.S. The May 15, 1998 issue of *Practical Sailor* reports that Honey Teak is still holding up well in their tests. By the way, I have no stock or any other financial interest in this product, but am impressed with its performance thus far for me.

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