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Extreme BOAT MAKE OVER

By Heather Maxwell

We've all seen the shows — take a shack and in three days turn it into a mansion with minimal investment and maximum effort. It looks pretty cool on TV. The home makeover projects I have taken on never went so well. Have you ever used a torch to remove old linoleum and ended up catching the bathroom on fire? Well, suffice it to say that was a day I will never forget and the torch always travels with an extinguisher (now).

Boat owners, on the other hand,

approach things differently. An extreme boat makeover is never expected to be on time or on budget. Is it because we owners have such low expectations or is it because we have proven the old saying true time and time again? You know the one about the hole in the water you throw money in. I know a fellow who says the real life pirates aren't in Somalia — they run the boat yard! It could be that we are victims of a combination of all.

I believe the simple truth is this

— boat owners know that boats are expensive. Whether you own a 24 footer or a tricked out 80-foot custom, your boat is gonna cost you. You know it, you accept it and the more you can afford, the less you have to sacrifice. It is this very mindset that had the average East Coast tournament fisherman replacing his beloved yacht every four years before our economy took a turn. And it is this mindset that will bring us face to face with a set of Veem props before we sacrifice a knot.

RENEW OR REPLACE?

I can name four boats on the market today that I would love to have. They range from an old Ricky Scarborough fixer upper that I have been watching for years to a bells and whistles, tournament proven Paul Mann that has got enough good ju-ju about her to carry me through the next season. Too bad for all those brokers out there — I am not a qualified buyer!

What I am is a realist with vision. Had I the money, the time and the

inclination I would go for the Ricky boat. She is old, worn out and unloved, but beneath her chipped paint and rotten fly bridge wings I can see the boat she should be. It also doesn't hurt that my husband owns a boat building shop and can fix anything that floats.

And so goes the story of Harry MacDonald and the HATTENUFF.

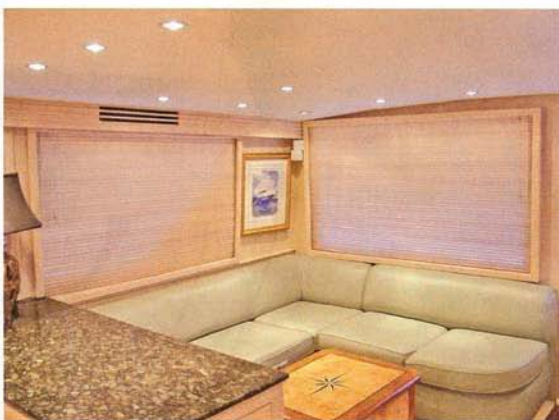
THE BEST LAID PLANS

For the MacDonald's the plan was pretty simple. Retire and cruise the islands in their beloved 50' Hatteras.

As the flagship of the 50-foot line back in 1991, the Palm Beach style interior of the HATTENUFF was featured in the company's brochures and her 12V71 Detroit's were state of the art. Nearly 20 years later, however, her interior was in need of a major overhaul and the last engine rebuild was only expected to give a few hundred more dependable hours. Plans were set in place to give her a facelift.

Now, my husband is a boat builder which is great, but I know there are times when he wishes his wife was an





engine salesman. The MacDonald's just so happen to have an engine salesman in the family. Their son, Jamie, has worked for Caterpillar in the Wilmington area for years. The assurance of excellent Caterpillar service coupled with the fact that MacDonald's favorite Detroit mechanic was planning his own retirement was all the push the family needed to commit to a repower complete with an engine room "redesign" and all the trimmings that go with it. The HATTENUFF found herself in the yard at Jarrett Bay Boatworks and work began during the spring of 2007.

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

For a boat owner facing a repower, the chicken and the egg scenario

takes on an all new meaning. No longer an adage of "which came first," when we think of the chicken we wonder how in the world he managed to keep his sheer mass in that egg at all! So goes the repower of a 20-year-old boat. Back in the day as much power and essential what nots as would fit were crammed in the engine room. Today an engine room you can usually stand in is on the tour — there is plenty of storage, you can access the outboard side easily and more often than not you can even (heaven forbid) drop the pan.

When it came to the HATTENUFF the makeover began with a serious de-cluttering of the engine room. Then the Detroiters were stripped down to the blocks in order to get them out of the hatches and

through the salon door. Transmissions were next, the genset, then non-essential wiring and plumbing were removed. With the engine room cleared, a looming space confronted the owners and that's when technological advances in "space design" took over.

The MacDonalds had committed to a pair of CAT C-18's with ZF 550A gears. But knowing what you want and knowing how to cram it into the egg are two different things. This is where that promise of exceptional CAT service was proven for the first time. CAT engineers provided a 3-D model of the MacDonald's stripped engine room and the engines and gears were placed into a virtual reality world where they fit perfectly.

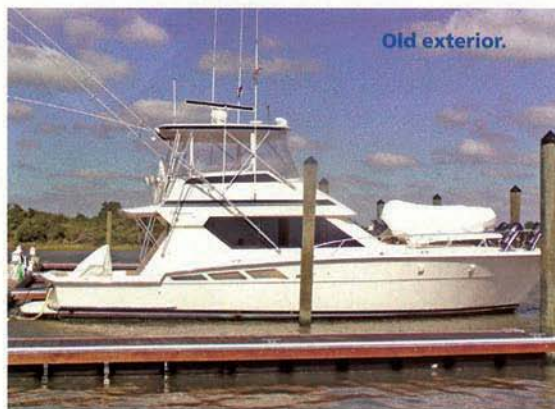
Considerable space was saved in



The HATTENUFF's old 12V71 Detroit's.



The HATTENUFF's new pair of CAT C-18's with ZF 550A gears.



Old exterior.



New exterior.

the engine room by replacing the outdated manual fuel tank selectors with an electric transfer system. This change also simplified controls on the bridge by providing one switch for the owner on the helm. The VR engine room also provided for a new Caterpillar C 2.2 21.5KW genset to replace the original Onan and the redesign of the battery banks in order to save even more room. I believe that one of the most cost effective tricks of this virtual engine room was the design of engine and gear mounts. Imagine the time saved by adjusting placement, height and angles on a computer in order to spec the perfect mounts that can be fabricated in a shop and installed on the equip-

ment prior to hoisting the new power aboard!

In choosing their new power package, consideration was given to gear ratio and shaft size and the family saved considerable time and money in sticking with the original 2.5" shafts. The original exhaust system was also incorporated into the new plan and only required the addition of bypass resonators to accommodate the CATs. As the MacDonalds have proven, replacement of the running gear and exhaust systems during a repower are not always necessary and both are a great place to save money (usually spent somewhere else) if the systems are sound. The family did not get off completely without cost — the C-18's do require custom built risers provided by Marine Exhaust of South Florida.

In order to prepare the engine

room, the crew at Jarrett Bay performed an extensive amount of work to include, but not limited to (after all it is a boat yard), the following. After stripping the "clutter," stringer caps were removed, lengthened, sand blasted, painted and reinstalled. The entire engine room was sanded and repainted with a two-part epoxy. New wiring was installed for the power package, fuel transfer, controls, power steering, oil — exchangers and other essential systems. When the engine room was ready, the brand new CAT's were stripped down to the blocks and craned through the salon door and down through the engine hatches.

I, for one, have a hard time accepting the fact that one would purchase new CAT's and then take them

apart without ever taking them out for a spin, but this is the whole “chicken and the egg” concept that is easy to forget if you haven’t experienced it. Strip the old motors, sure! But strip the new ones...ouch! In the end, the engines got in the egg, the CAT mechanics put them back together in the hole and the controls and risers were attached. That’s when work started on the interior (the initial plan if you remember) and on the bridge because updating the power means updating the helm.

TRICK MY RIDE

By now the MacDonalds have come full circle. Harry has his engines and his darling bride who has waited patiently finally gets her interior makeover (now that there is once again a floor in the salon). Given the fact that the interior was practically gutted to get the engines out, there was no compromising when it came to putting in back in. But in the end those folks at Hatteras Yachts knew way back in the early 90’s what every brilliant and unassuming husband will tell you — the babes really buy the boats. The original interior layout was next to perfect — space conscious and living large. The natural ash interior was stripped down and refinished, lighting was replaced with more efficient fixtures and all soft goods, including the headliner and carpet were replaced.

While Mrs. MacDonald was bringing the interior to 2010 standards, the Jarrett Bay and CAT crews were busy streamlining the helm. Everything is smaller and more efficient these days and the new pod custom made just for the HATTENUFF now features CAT color power displays, side mounted color controls, one switch for the fuel transfer system and, of course, new electronics to replace those that have seen better days.

The MacDonalds dropped 1000

pounds with the weight of the new power package at 4200 pounds. Capt Omie Tillett would say they picked up almost a knot. I would say they needed a new paint job. Tricking your ride just isn’t complete without it and the HATTENUFF went from factory white to light blue with the help of the Jarrett Bay paint booth.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

No matter what you spent or how good you look the truth about an extreme boat makeover is speed. Everyone wants to go; some faster than others, but in the end, with boats at least, you always want to know whatever you did doesn’t only provide factory warranty peace of mind or make your wife happy. You want to know about performance.

In keeping with the design of the hull and the boat’s overall displacement several key areas for performance had to be addressed by the CAT engineers during design. Changing the reduction from 2:1 to 2.5:1 allowed the CAT engineers to capture the horse power of the C-18’s. The new reduction also enabled the engines to turn a larger more efficient wheel. The HATTENUFF originally turned a 33X35 five blade nibril wheel and now turns a set of 34X48.5 inch 6-blade Veem Star-C props. Wow.

And when it was all said and done, Harry MacDonald and the HATTENUFF were blessed with knots — four more of them to be exact at 2300 RPMs.

So was it worth the time, effort and money? Should the MacDonalds have replaced instead? All I can tell you is that they are happy. Happy with the work — their warranties, the performance and the new interior into which they shall soon retire and cruise off into the sunset. Sounds pretty good to me. 🐟

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



HEATHER MAXWELL

lives on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where she and her husband, Billy, own a 57’ charter boat. In the off season when charters are slim out of the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, Heather runs the office for Billy and Buddy Cannady’s boat building company, BB Boats, Inc.

Best known for running the tournaments out of Pirate’s Cove Marina for nearly a decade, Heather retired from the professional side of the sportfishing industry a few years ago. “I had to be a Mom while I had the chance,” she says. “I miss all the people but not the pace. Right now I can drop everything at 2:30 to meet the bus after school.” However, keeping up with her husband is no easy task. BB Boats puts out one 57+ footer each winter and the TUNA FEVER boasts a pretty popular guide service. That part of her life hasn’t changed much—when the phone rings at home she knows she’ll be talking about fishing.

While Heather still contributes to several magazines a year, she also stays busy building houses on the Outer Banks. “It wasn’t a huge leap from tournaments to contracting,” she says. “I still work with the boys, organizing chaos, but when the bite is on I get to go fishing!”