

2006 • 12 Years with Dr. Gel • 2018



Ask

Dr. Gel

by Dave Weakley



Dave Weakley is the owner of American Boat Restoration and has been helping Northeastern boaters keep their boats in fine trim and good repair for over 40 years.

"Email me or call me with your questions! I'll be happy to help you out"

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Thank you all for reading Ask Dr Gel! We look forward to another year being helpful to our fellow boaters! Email us any questions you may have!

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As we plow through these winter cold, snow and icy days try to warm yourselves with thoughts of those hot lazy days of summer floating on your boat!

Will you be ready for 2018?

There are some benefits to the "off season"! It's the perfect time to have those repairs done that you've been wanting to do and be set for a new season. Repair facilities appreciate the early birds - shops are much happier to do the repairs without the pressure of spring rush!

Its the perfect time to address; gelcoat color fade- gelcoat cracks-chips-scratches- spider cracks - airvoids - fiberglass fractures - osmotic blisters - transom repairs - stringer/engine mount repairs - dock rash-loose hardware.

Don't store it and forget it! If your boat is shrink wrapped and stored out in the elements check on it periodically. Make sure the shrink wrap is in tack and not torn. If there are tears and holes repair them. Keep snow and ice load off of it. I highly recommend a cover that goes to the bottom of the boat. Long term exposure to the sunlight can cause fading



Gunwale crushed by building collapse.

even in the winter as well as have a effect on tires of the boat trailer it's on. Covering the boat entirely keeps the boat protected from wind damage, flying debris, hail/ice etc.

Is the boat stored in a "wanna be" make shift garage, barn, under old tress with big limbs, or under anywhere where snow and ice load can accumulate? Is the building sturdy? Roof/limb collapse can cause catastrophic boat damage. We have have repaired a lot of crushed gunwales, windshields, etc.

Winter's freeze takes a toll on a Mastercraft leading to a resurrection

During a harsh and cold winter a few years ago a 1997 Mastercraft Prostar 205 LTI boat was stored outside. In the early spring the owner discovered the wake board tower on it was damaged. The tower was designed to slide down into a pipe. The pipe filled with water and froze causing the tower to crack. The old tower needed to be removed and a new one replaced. Due to the age of the boat the original tower was no longer available and the old tower mounts would not line up with the new ones. The old holes had to be properly repaired and new holes drilled.

As I examined the boat further I discovered that parts of the boat



The repair in progress.

were painted. The boat was purchased from the Mid-west and was used as a tow boat for a water ski show team.

The previous owner had the deck and upper hull painted red to match the other tow boats on the team. Underneath all the red paint was the original color of the gelcoat; Oyster white, black, teal and grey.

In order to do the repair all the paint on the deck needed to be removed. The rub rail and insert had to be removed along with all the hardware including bow railings, stern grab handles and canvas snaps. I used Peel Away® Marine Safety Strip Paint Remover to strip the

paint. Peel Away is designed to remove anti fouling, epoxy barrier coat & other marine paints & varnishes without damage to the fiberglass.

After all the paint was removed the old tower holes were repaired with Mas epoxy resin and fiberglass materials for strong reinforcement. The numerous gashes and scratches that were revealed were ground out, filled with fiberglass fillers and sanded. The deck was sanded and prepped for new Oyster white gelcoat. After applying the gelcoat it was sanded, compounded sealer glazed and waxed.

As the restoration progressed the owner decided to restore below the rub rail as well. First



The previous owner had the deck and upper hull painted red.

The look of the Mastercraft has been totally changed and looks like it just left the showroom.



all the old decals, stickers and striping had to be removed on the port, starboard and stern sides.

Peel Away was again used to strip off the red paint. Under the paint were many deep gashes and scratches especially on the starboard side. Areas along the forward keel had quite a lot of damage as well. All were repaired and the hull sanded. The owner decided he wanted to do two color gelcoats on the hull rather than the original four colors. Black and Oyster white were chosen. I followed the original design line of the former multiple colors under the rub rail and applied black gel. Below that I applied Oyster white gel. Both gels were sanded and compounded. New graphics were applied next and a new 1" silver stripe tape was added where the black and white gels met. The transition line came out so perfect we could have left off the stripe but the silver was a nice accent on the white and black. It also set off the new chrome "Mastercraft" decals. The hull was sealer glazed and then waxed.

"Food for thought"

This is a good time of year to review your boat insurance policy. Can you get a better rate? Worth doing some research! Our current insurance company matched a cheaper rate we found, a nice little saving! Many companies offer a "bundle" discount if they insure your auto, home and boat.

What kind of coverage do you have? A customer of ours paid on what he thought was 25K coverage for years, since his boat was new. When a snow loaded roof collapsed and damaged his boat he was told the boat was covered for Blue Book value of 8K. The repairs to the boat amounted to 13K. He was very upset and shocked as he assumed he was covered for 25K for years.

Best to repair those cracks asap!

Friends of mine bought a 42' pre-owned boat three years ago in Annapolis, MD and motored it up the coast to Albany, NY. Shortly after it arrived they asked me to look at a series of gelcoat cracks above and below a broken section of rub rail on the starboard

side just forward of mid ship. The previous owner damaged the boat when he got caught in a cross current and the boat drifted into a dock piling with enough force to crack the side of the boat and destroy part of the rub rail. The impact started a series of gelcoat cracks running parallel above the rub rail that grew like cracks in a windshield.

Three years ago the cracks were approximately 5' long and by this spring they grew to almost 12' in length.

I began to repair the boat by color restoring the undamaged gelcoat surrounding the cracks so the new gelcoat would blend with the old. Next I started grinding the cracked gelcoat surface using vacuum assisted equipment to eliminate dust and debris. The damage was severe and deep into the fiberglass laminate. The repair required laying up new fiberglass cloth with resin. With a plan in place I ground out the fiberglass deep enough to accommodate the new fiberglass cloth lay up material and enough room for the new gelcoat.

Multiple layers of fiberglass cloth and resin were applied to the 12' long ground out area. When the resin cured I sanded the amine blush off with a pneumatic board file using 40 grit paper on the entire area. Flexible fiber fillers were then applied and I sanded the surface again. The deck and hull had to be sanded strategically so it was straight, free of moguls and the body lines shaped back to original design and to accommodate a perfect fit for a new rub rail section.

The boat was then covered with plastic. The surface was prepped for new gelcoat and it was applied. The new gelcoat surface was coated with PVA (Polyvinyl alcohol, a water-soluble synthetic polymer essential for a good gelcoat cure) and left to dry overnight. After sanding and compounding the new gelcoat I installed a new section of rub rail and the work was complete.

It was clearly evident that once the fiberglass on this boat was breached the damage became worse over time. I suggest getting repairs done as soon as possible before the stress marks grow into a major reconstruction project.

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