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Radon Team

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President's Message: Custom Boats



We are currently in process of doing a particularly special project, the type of project we get involved in from time to time when our existing molds or methodology become insufficient to meet the needs of the customer. In this case, we are building a custom 24', even though we do not possess a mold of that size. How, you might ask yourself, are we building a boat when we don't even have a mold that size? Well, the answer is really quite easy; we simply took a 22' hull and modified it so that it would become a 24'. Doesn't sound too hard, right? As a matter of fact, this process is surprisingly labor intensive and difficult. And I know you want to hear about it, so here it goes. First, we built a Radon 22', but we left the transom (i.e. the back of the boat) unfinished. Essentially, we built a hull with no back so that we could add on to it more easily. The next step was making a transom for the boat, but instead of just building a back to affix to the boat, we also included two extra feet that we laid up from the back of the mold. That way, we ended up with the magic number of 24'. Pretty neat, huh? We are excited about this development - though we have done a number of projects like this before - because it gives us the opportunity to test out a new size of boat, which is always fantastic and informative. Most importantly, however, this project has allowed us to work on our specific style custom boat building which we take pride in. Basically, this project gave us a chance to improve the best aspect of our business.

Don Radon

Now we embark upon the saga of Don's leg. You will hear more about his ruptured Achilles tendon later on in the section about the company picnic (!), but for now I'll just say this, it is healing nicely and he will hopefully have his cast off in the end of September. Don is naturally frustrated with his unfortunate lack of mobility, but he says, "I am more appreciative of all the things that I used to be able to do." Anyone who knows him though, has no doubts he'll be back doing the things he wants to do in no

time. He can already be seen trying to walk on his crutches, while hold the remote control in one hand, clutching a glass of juice in the other as he waves off our help. That's Don for you though, if you try and keep him down, you are just encouraging him to overcome more quickly. If the truth be told, though, the main thing that really upsets him is that he can't go surfing right now. But, even with your leg in a cast, you can drink beer and watch the Dodgers; so personally, I think he'll be fine.



Lance (right) and Kevin holding up the famous 58lb. Halibut

Featured Customer/Friend/Colleague: Lance Merker

Without Lance Merker, you wouldn't be reading this newsletter. I cannot write in html or any other tml for that matter, so without Lance, I would be completely lost. He has helped us immensely with putting together this newsletter and our website, but our relationship with Lance stems back from the good ole' days: 1998.

Lance first contacted us in that year because he wanted us to build him a custom Radon 26'. Lance has been a life-long diver and sports fisherman, starting from his very early childhood. His father, Ron Merker, owned a dive shop in Newport Beach as Lance was growing up. This undoubtedly had a profound effect upon the development of his love affair with the sea. In fact, his dad was considered to be one of the premiere sport divers in the world. Lance's son Kyle is following in the Merker family footsteps - he is already a proficient free diver at age 6.

Lance learned about Radon Boats as a young man, and heard about their quality construction and durability. So when he came to us to buy a boat, he had a very good idea of what he wanted out of his purchase. From the beginning, Lance participated fully on the design work of his boat. He worked with Don so that together they could build the best boat to suit all of his needs.

During the time that his boat was under construction, Lance used his knowledge of computers to keep an online journal detailing the progress of the construction of his boat. That way, his friends and family could be kept up-to-date on the status of his boat; they could follow the process of the construction of a Radon. Since Lance works for a software company, the idea of building a website of this kind came naturally to him. It was at this point that he suggested to us that he start a website of our own. We had often thought of doing so, but we lacked the time and expertise to go through with it.

Fortunately for us, Lance volunteered his expertise to build our website. The website, hopefully, has helped keep our customers, potential customers and Radon enthusiasts informed, educated and up-to-date about our boats. Not only did Lance construct this very website, he works on it continuously, providing updates, posting the newsletters and giving us invaluable suggestions.

Lance has contributed to our business in many other ways as well. When he saw the new D.R. Radon logo written in cursive on his boat, he coined the term "Signature Series," a term we still use to describe that particular style of custom boat. Not only that, Lance volunteered, with mere hours notice, to take Kevin Costner out on a test ride on his 26'. He even took the day off work to do so! We were so grateful that he was willing to devote his own time to helping our business, it was very touching. He also invited Kevin and his friends Tim and Bill to go on a diving trip with him out to the Channel Islands.

During this trip, Kevin speared a 58 pound Halibut! Shortly thereafter, and probably not coincidentally, Kevin ordered his own custom 26' Signature Radon, which was the featured boat in Newsletter #8.

Lance is a devoted family man and named his boat after his wife Caroline.

Lance has become a valued friend and continues to be a great resource for us in many areas. Thanks for everything Lance!



Don and Lance, with Lance's white sea bass



Three generations of Merkers

Shop Tip- Trailer Maintenance

Though many people overlook their trailer when thinking about boat maintenance, it is an important concern that must be dealt with at least once a year, and much more frequently if your boat spends a significant amount of time in salt water. If you do run or keep your boat in salt water, it is imperative that you wash the salt water off your boat trailer immediately upon taking it out. Salt water is very corrosive to the metal on your trailer and can possibly damage the brakes, so be wary. If you are mostly using your boat in fresh water, this will not be as much of a problem. However, most Radons get used in the rough oceans up and down the coast, so this advice is pertinent to many Radon owners. Here are some general tips to help you keep your trailer in good condition for as long as possible:

1. Lights and Wiring: trailer wiring tends to be susceptible to corrosion, so check all of the electrical connections, particularly where the clearance lights are attached. We would recommend sealing these connections with liquid tape or silicone. Another option is to replace this connection with a heat shrink connector. But most importantly, any time you tow your boat, check ALL of the lights to make sure they work. This seems like common sense, but it is easy to overlook.
2. Get your brakes inspected often, or if you possess the expertise, check them yourself. This could make a huge difference for very obvious reasons.
3. Check your brake fluid and brake lines.
4. Grease the gears in the jack stand and winch.
5. Tires: Check air pressure and tire wear to see if you need to add air or replace your tires altogether.
6. Check the wheel bearing if you feel comfortable doing so. If not, have them inspected by a professional.



The End of Summer: The Crew Barbeque

Every summer, we have a crew barbeque where everyone can relax, have a good time and eat some good food. This year was no different. A few weeks ago, we went to Refugio State beach and staked out a really nice spot between the beach, the basketball court and the horseshoe pit. Don and Linda started throwing horseshoes and as the rest of the crew showed up, many followed suit. After everything was set up and everyone was there, our assistant shop foreman and senior barbeque analyst, Rene, started throwing various meats on the barbeque and we did our part by downing some Coronas.

This is when things became abnormal. Everything was going fine, until I had the great idea that we should go play basketball. In fact, I was going to make sure that Don came out there and had a good time. So after about three points or so, Don made a mad dash for the basket, cutting through defenders and over the rocky unkempt court. Then, in the blink of an eye, he was on the ground, clutching his leg. We were all hoping it was nothing, something he could walk off perhaps, but after a few moments it became evident that this was not the case. When Don has a minor injury, he gets up immediately and shakes it off, but after a few minutes, he was still on the ground, writhing in pain. The barbeque continued, but my sis Kate took him to the emergency room. He wouldn't let anyone else go or let us stop having fun at the barbeque. He was very clear about this, and he's the boss, so we had to follow his orders.

Still, the whole time we were gone, we all talked about him and worried ourselves sick. The looks of concern on the faces of the crew members were apparent. Then we got the phone call telling us that he had ruptured his Achilles tendon. Everything became dark and foreboding at the barbeque, everyone was so worried about Don and the severity of his injury.

But in true Radon fashion, before we knew it and to our amazement, Don and Kate were pulling up next to our barbeque spot. Don got out of the car, on crutches and with massive amounts of ace bandages wrapped around his leg, and hopped over. Still in shock, the crew gathered around Don, bellowed out a triumphant cheer and followed with words of encouragement. Besides that, the barbeque was a complete success.



Rene, Nacho, and Ramon soaking up the sun at the picnic



Linda comforts Don, injured leg resting upon the offending basketball

Photos from around the boatyard



Matt give the "thumbs up" to the newly installed Yanmar



Kate with her so-called "light"



Don driving some sort of vehicle



What?



John says "Reading, it's FUNdamental!"



Don Diving in Maui, Hawaii in the mid 1980's