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**Radon Team**

## President's Message: Boat Restorations and Repairs

Long an integral part of our business, boat repairs and restorations continue to be a very rewarding aspect of boat building. A misconception exists that repair and restoration work is inherently less fulfilling than building a boat from scratch. However, this issue cannot be stated so simply. I have always done this type of work because I believe that it improves my boat designing ability and allows the crew to encounter a diverse range of building techniques and difficulties. Many times, when a customer brings us a boat for repair work, I have an opportunity to review work that I have done in the past, or work that others have done. The benefits are obvious: It allows our crew and me to see what worked in the past and what did not work as well. At times, I am amazed at the durability of our products over the years. For example, when a customer brings in a Radon that was built 30 years ago and he wants us to replace the fuel tank or fish hold, the process of cutting the deck out illuminates how well the material and work holds up over the years.

Often times, this process leads me to ponder our current construction techniques. I look at something that was done in the past and I become aware of a small change I could make to prevent future problems. This is something I have been doing for over 25 years and I plan on continuing to do so as long as I am in the business. Our contemporary boats have benefited greatly from this ongoing process of reflection.

When I started building boats with my dad in our garage in the mid 60's, I had no idea that the business would flourish as it has and that I'd still be working on boats in the year 2003. My journey has been blessed, in the sense that I have maintained my passion for building a quality boat; a boat that I have been proud to put my name on for all these years. I would like to send out a special message of thanks and appreciation for all of those who have supported me throughout the years!

-Don Radon, President, D.R. Radon Boat Building



Who's the Boss? Foxie and Don sit down for a much needed Developmental planning meeting.

## Featured Boat: Kevin Costner's 26'



In July of 2001, [Kevin Costner](#) and his family took delivery on his custom Radon 26'. His boat was specifically designed for voyages out to the Channel Islands and beyond. Kevin is an accomplished sport fisherman and diver who has traveled around the globe engaging in aquatic adventures. On his first trip on a Radon out to the Channel Islands, he speared a huge halibut, weighing in at nearly 60 pounds!

As for the boat itself, its construction quality and hardware are second to none. The vessel is powered by a single 496 cubic inch big block, packing the punch of 425 horse power. What is really unique about the boat, however, is the underwater video system. While Kevin is out diving, he can take the video camera with him. Onboard, there are two monitors that display the output of the video camera. While he is diving, the folks above water, such as his friends and family, can see what he's seeing. Since not everyone is an avid diver, this is a great benefit. Among the other amenities on the boat: a hot water shower, a built-in bait tank, a foam insulated fish hold, an ice box for

extended voyages, a DVD player, a custom dive platform, and a custom transom dive door. For emergencies, or just for trolling, he also has an Auxiliary Yamaha 9.9 high-thrust outboard engine.



Above: Two interior shots of Costner's cabin.

I spoke to [Bill Kendig](#), Kevin's boat captain, to ask him how they felt about the boat. "Kevin loves it!" Bill gushed, "The seaworthiness and reliability of the boat has been astonishing so far." Bill also explained that Kevin deeply appreciates the relationship between himself and [Don](#). If Kevin has a question or concern, he knows that he can always come to Don. His confidence in the safety level of the boat gives him a degree of comfort that allows him to enjoy his boat to its full potential. Best of luck to you on the open seas!

## Employee Feature: The Legend



This month, we have a very special employee to feature. Now, this employee is important to us for so many reasons that we have decided to dub him "The Legend" of D.R. Radon Boat Building, Inc. **Ignacio Lopez**, better known to us as "Nacho," has been working with us for nearly 20 years. This makes him one of our longest standing employees. Though he has always been the unofficial leader of the fiberglass crew, he was given the official position of shop foreman a year and a half ago. His work is both the epitome of quality and the model of consistency. He has been the rock upon which much of our fiberglassing has stood for all the years he has worked with us.

What makes his story even more inspirational is that his family lives in Mexico. As **Greg** somberly remarked, "Nacho is a saint. He has sacrificed being near his family to give them a better life." Through the tremendous hardship of being away from his family, he has never let it affect his work, as he comes in every day ready to do his best work. He has seven kids living in Mexico, and he works every minute at the boat yard to support them. As **Don** says, "His work is consistent, he is even tempered, and he thoughtfully reflects on his own work so that he can improve his techniques." **Kate** has noticed his influence on younger employees; "The younger guys really look up to him," Kate notes, "They respect what he says and he is a tremendous role model for everyone at the shop." Nacho is always positive and upbeat, encouraging others to do their best and complementing the work of his fellow employees.

In fact, in light of Nacho's hard work and leadership, the guys at the yard were eager to say their piece about Nacho. **Rene**, our assistant shop foreman, called Nacho "very funny," and "extremely talented at what he does." **Ralph**, who has been working with D.R. Radon Boat Building, Inc. for nearly as long as Nacho, declared, "He is a good worker and a nice guy. He tries to make the company better with his quality work." As Kate mentioned earlier in this article, many of the younger guys at the yard look up to him. **Jose** enthusiastically explained how he has grown as a worker under Nacho's expert tutelage: "He has taught me so much," the 22 year old explains, "He has made me a better worker with his wisdom." **Ramon**, one of the newest workers, said simply, "There is no one else like Nacho."

As for Nacho's own take on his position as shop foreman, he humbly pronounces, "It's good. I try to teach everyone the right way to do things and make sure that everything is neat and clean." Without Nacho (He leaves periodically to stay with his family in Mexico) the boat yard suffers a great loss, both in terms of sheer work and in the camaraderie he fosters among his coworkers. Whenever he returns, there are shouts of joy reverberating through the boat yard. He brings smiles to the faces of his fellow employees. As **Linda** points out, "Sometimes when he's working, you can hear him singing beautiful Spanish ballads. Now that's something to smile about."

## Man's Best Friend



Above: Radon 29' customer Wally McVey relaxes on his couch with his new dog Tulip, which he and his wife Barbara rescued from a humane society in Oakland.

## Shop Tip of the Month

When we get a boat in for repair work, there are some common problems we run into. So, in light of this fact, we thought we'd enumerate some of these difficulties and how to take care of them before the boat gets into the yard.

1) Unsealed holes. These are a big problem. Often a boat comes in to our yard and it is riddled with dry-rot because of unsealed holes. You must make sure to seal all holes in your boat to avoid this pernicious problem.

2) If you suspect a fuel leak, do NOT cut your own deck open to get to the fuel tank. This is not smart. Bring your boat in to professionals lest you inadvertently blow yourself sky-high.

3) Take care of your bilge. Often boats come in with filth plugging the screen of the bilge pump. If you keep the bilge clean then you will correct this common problem.

4) Wiring. Many boats come into the yard with electrical wiring that looks like spaghetti. It is in the best interest of safety and time to straighten out your electrical wiring. If there is an electrical problem, it is important that the electrical routes are clear. Otherwise, you will encounter extreme difficulty in identifying where the specific failure is taking place.

5) Check the water level of your batteries. All too often people let the water level of their batteries dip to low levels.

## Radon 22' UCSB Research Vessel

Recently, we had a chance to make a major modification to a boat we built just a few years ago. In 2000, UCSB bought a Radon 22' with a center console. The guys from UCSB came to us and said that they loved the boat, but that they wanted to have a cabin instead of the center console. No problem, we said, so we took the center console out and installed a new custom cabin. Here are the before and after pictures, shown below. The picture on top shows the old center console, while the photo on the bottom shows the revised version, with a larger overhead cabin.





The Radon Team newsletter is finished for now, but as always, we'll be back next month (or thereabouts) with more tips and photos from D.R. Radon Boat Building. If you have any questions, comments, pictures or ideas regarding the newsletter, e-mail us at [radonteam@aol.com](mailto:radonteam@aol.com). We are always grateful for any contributions!



**Don and Josh on the first RADON Morro Bay Patrol Boat, circa 1978.**  
This was my first boat ride! (But not my last...)