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p.56

# CRUISING WORLD

## SEASON IN MEXICO

A Guide to Baja

p.48

## Watch Systems

that experts use

p.72

## Best ways to take your kids cruising

p.36

## New Boats in Miami

Outbound 52 p.66

Catalina 375 p.88

Hanse 430e p.92

JUNE 2008

## How to replace your teak deck

p.80

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PROJECTS BY NEVILLE HOCKLEY

# Decked Out in New Teak

Before taking off on a round-the-world journey, *Dream Time* gets a major refit.



MY WIFE, CATHERINE, AND I bought *Dream Time*, a 1981 Cabo Rico, in the spring of 2000 with world cruising on our minds. The 38-footer has a full keel, heavy construction, a solid reputation, and beautiful classic lines, so we knew immediately that she was right for our adventure.

In order to prepare *Dream Time* for our circumnavigation, we replaced, rebuilt, and installed practically every piece of equipment and hardware on the boat. The biggest, most complex, and ultimately most satisfying project was the deck restoration. We knew that the teak decks needed replacing because of

**1.** We began by removing *Dream Time's* bowsprit and hardware to get the old deck down to bare wood.

**2.** Before we removed the original planking, we made a template of the shape of our Cabo Rico's deck. We shipped the template to Teakdecking Systems, in Sarasota, Florida, and the company fabricated the new teak deck.

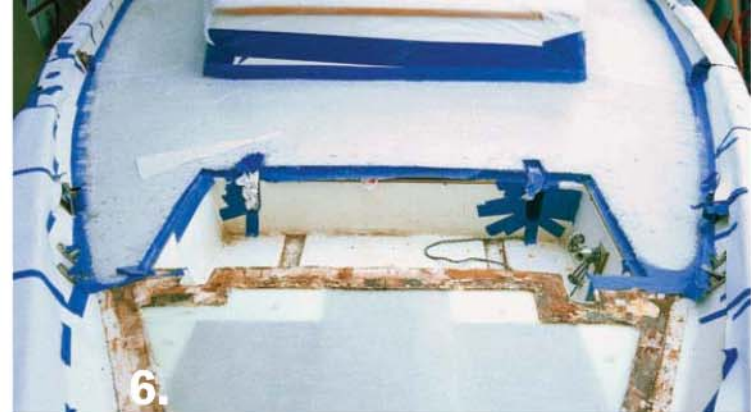
**3.** We removed the original teak planking and more than 1,000 screws. We drilled 2-inch holes through the top layer of fiberglass and into the core. Core samples around the deck revealed that the original balsa core was saturated with water throughout and had parted from the fiberglass, especially by the scuppers on both port and starboard sides. We used jigsaws to cut away the top layer of fiberglass. The balsa core was removed, a job made easier by the severe delamination existing between the core and fiberglass.

**4.** We cleaned and sanded the inner, bottommost layer of fiberglass and the exposed top fiberglass edge and prepped them for the new core.

**5.** We filled the cavity around the deck edges, at the gunwale and the coachroof, with a dense, pourable, two-part foam.

**6.** After we sealed the deck perimeter, we used Klegecell, a durable, PVC-based, rigid, closed-cell foam, as the new core. Klegecell has a high strength-to-weight ratio, doesn't absorb

NEVILLE HOCKLEY



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water stains in the cabin, loose and missing bungs on deck, cracked caulking, and numerous soft spots underfoot.

It was a tremendous amount of work, but today, after cruising from New York to Florida, we're eight months into our planned five- to 10-year circumnavigation. Per the rec-

ommendation of Teakdecking Systems (941-756-0600, [www.teakdecking.com](http://www.teakdecking.com)), the company that made our new deck, we haven't treated it in any way, and we've left the teak to gray naturally. We regularly wash down the wood with salt water, and occasionally, when it's in need of a real cleaning,

we scrub the planking with 3M pads and salt water, always rubbing across the grain.

Construction materials have improved significantly since our boat was built in 1981; adhesives, epoxy resins, foam cores, and caulking have increased in strength, durability, and life expect-

tancy. It's comforting to know that we now have a solid deck under our feet that will see us around the world.

Neville and Catherine Hockley plan to cruise the Caribbean for a year before transiting the Panama Canal and heading into the South Pacific.

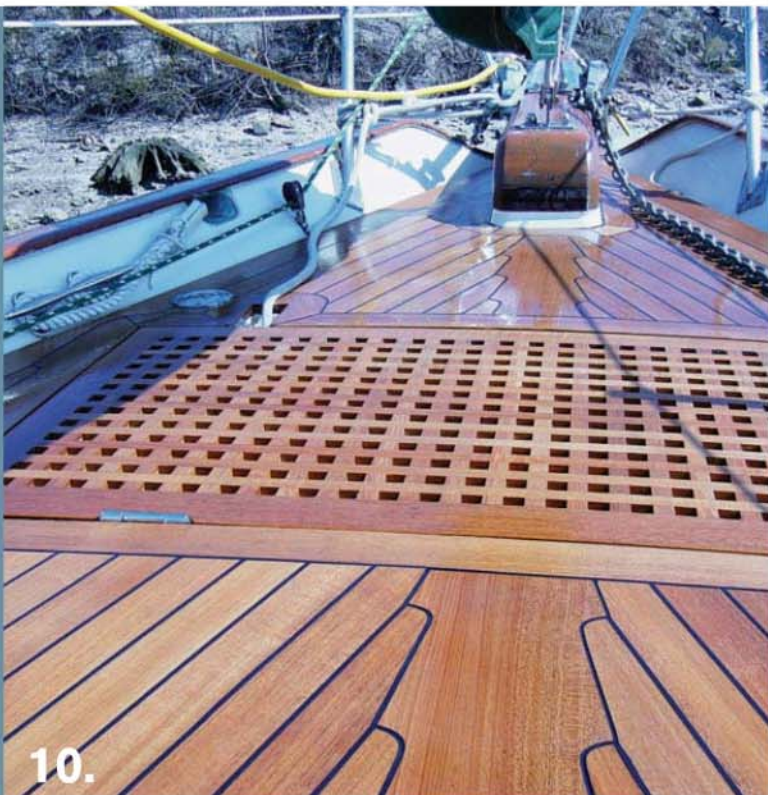
water, and is unaffected by mold and fungus. We vacuum-bagged the sheets of Klegecell in place with West System epoxy. Additionally, we reinforced the bow section with solid-fiberglass sheets at the spots where we'd later install deck cleats and a windlass.

**7.** The new deck arrived from Teakdecking Systems in pre-assembled sections of half-inch teak planking secured with fiberglass backing.

**8.** We layered fiberglass cloth and epoxy resin over the Klegecell core, then faired, sanded, primed, and painted with gelcoat the new glass and gunwales. The instructions from Teakdecking Systems were explicit: To ensure that the new teak planking would bond properly, the new fiberglass deck had to have a perfect finish.

**9.** We glued and secured all perimeter planking with temporary fasteners. Once set, the fasteners were removed from the deck; then the holes were filled with epoxy and sealed with wooden plugs. We secured all remaining planking using no fasteners, only a high-strength fitting epoxy.

**10.** Showing off her new teak deck, *Dream Time* is launched, rigged, and ready to go cruising.



10.