

KEVO'S BOATING TIPS & MORE

BY
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Marine Canvas

Marine canvas has always been very popular in the Bay and Delta. One of the reasons why is that many Nor Cal boaters want to use their vessels nearly all year (myself included). So they set them up for shade in the summer and button them up with isinglass curtains to be nice and cozy while cruising during the winter.

Recently, I was instructing some clients on close-quarters maneuvering around Tower Park Resort and Marina in Lodi and we decided to take a break. I took the opportunity to visit with Mr. Curt Page, president and founder of West Coast Canvas, which is located right in the marina.

There are few people on the Bay and Delta with name recognition that even comes close to legendary longtime *Bay and Delta Yachtsman* magazine contributing editor Mr. Hal Schell. Curt Page is one of these few.

Curt Page grew up on the Delta right in Antioch. At age 15, he took a job sweeping floors and taking out the trash at Delta Canvas (now defunct). Along the way he took a keen interest in and learned the intricacies of fabricating and installing marine canvas.

In 1982, Curt opened up for business at Tower Park with the "lofty" name West Coast Canvas. This "empire" consisted of him and a seamstress. It didn't take long for the business to take off. Today, with 24 full-time employees, West Coast Canvas is the biggest canvas outfit in the SF Bay and Delta areas. West Coast Canvas is located 14900 W. Highway 12, Lodi CA 95242. You can reach Curt at 209/333-0243 or visit his website at www.westcoastcanvas.com or e-mail sales@westcoastcanvas.com.

So I asked Curt "To what do you contribute your success?" He responded: energy, enthusiasm, creativity, follow-through, communication skills, commitment to customer satisfaction and the "can do" attitude of his team. Curt personally designs and inspects the work of his team and if something doesn't meet his high standards, he'll tear the whole thing off and redo it even before the customer has a chance to approve it.

Canvas Care

There are three names to remember when it comes to choosing a canvas brand: Sunbrella®, Sunbrella and Sunbrella. The fact is Sunbrella supplies 90 percent of marine canvas fabric nationwide. So how do you clean canvas? Sunbrella recommends using a mild detergent such as Ivory Snow®. Sunbrella canvas is impregnated with a water repellent treatment right in the weaving process. If you use harsh detergents, the water repellent qualities of the fabric will deteriorate prematurely.

Marine canvas is best stored rolled up, never folded. Don't store your



Mr. Curt Page, founder and president of West Coast Canvas.

canvas in the bilge area or anywhere excessive heat, cold, moisture or mildew might be present. A good trick is to put a tube such as PVC tubing at the center of the roll in order to keep any kinks out of the fabric. After about five years, it's a good idea to take your canvas down and treat it with a water repellent. (303 Fabric Guard® is the recommended product for this.)

Zippers and Snaps

Zippers and snaps should be lubricated with paraffin wax, which you can find in the baking aisle of any supermarket. Never use products like WD-40®, which will stain the fabric. Just rub some wax on the zippers and snaps once per year. You'll be amazed at how effective this is.

Isinglass

Isinglass (pressed, polished, clear/smoked vinyl) should never be folded or rolled. The best way to store isinglass is to lay it flat with fabric between the sheets. Our vessel, *Her Way*, has 17 pieces of isinglass. Personally, I store mine in our garage rafters on a sheet of 4-by-8 plywood. I went to the local fabric store and asked for the cheapest fabric I could get. Then I cut it to match the size of the isinglass sheets and put it between each curtain. Isinglass can be cleaned with the same mild detergent used on the canvas, but this will not "treat" the isinglass. For this you need to coat it with a product called Plexus®. Meguiar's® Plastic Polish or Kleenmaster® Brilliantize (available at Tap Plastics) are both just as effective as Plexus.

Installing marine canvas and isinglass curtains can be a very frustrating experience. If you're like me, and insist that all snaps and zippers function properly, it can get personal. I've had many a client at Pacific Powerboating who has endured countless hours trying to get their canvas and isinglass deployed and after many hours of trying, accepting defeat. When I get to their yachts



and show them my tricks, they can't believe it. (It usually takes me about 5 minutes to fix the problem they have been working on for hours, even days.)

What's the Secret, You Ask?

First of all, according to Curt, if the canvas was fabricated and installed correctly in the first place, all snaps and zippers would cooperate. Curt is adamant about this issue and for good reason. While you're cursing out your stubborn zippers and snaps it would be very easy to include the outfit that made and installed it in the first place.

So: What to do?

Don't force the issue. If snaps or zippers don't snap and zip, you need to reduce the tension on the fabric and isinglass. Sounds simple enough, huh? Take for instance the front of the canvas/isinglass: If you can't get it to come together, pull the pins on each side of the rear of the base of the frame and/or the front. (Be careful not to scratch gel coat or rip upholstery with the ends of

the frame.) This will dramatically reduce tension on the entire structure.

Next, start all zippers but zip them only about 2 to 3 inches. Then snap the first snap in the line of snaps on one curtain at a time. Alternate between port and starboard curtains. Go to the other end of the snap line and snap the last one. By doing this you will be taking advantage of maximum stretching ability of the snap line. The middle snaps will now be easier to snap.

Now it's time to zip those zippers. Take it slow and easy. Don't get frustrated. If one won't zip, move to another. With the pins out of the frame, the zippers should (ultimately) cooperate. Finally, lift the frame back into place and reinsert the pins. You may need a screwdriver to boost the frame into the right position for the holes to align with the pins. Putting the pins back in is remarkably easy on most boats. However, with some vessels you may need your first mate to help with this.

Now, most people who know Curt know he's DA MAN when it comes to marine canvas. What many Nor Cal boaters don't know is that West Coast Canvas does complete interior makeovers for all kinds of yachts up to 100 ft. In fact, West Coast Canvas now generates more revenue from interior makeovers than they do canvas. They are experts at marine carpeting (indoor and out), upholstery, headliners, draperies, hardwood decking, countertops, appliances and much more.

If you own a yacht, chances are Nor Cal West Coast Canvas has probably done interior work on the same or a similar vessel. One of my clients has his vessel (45-ft. Bayliner Pilot House) there right now undergoing a complete interior makeover. When I asked Curt how many of these (specific) vessels he has redesigned, he said twenty-four.

While there are many competent canvas outfits around the Bay and Delta, we at Pacific Powerboating recommend West Coast Canvas exclusively to our clients. Like me, Curt believes in 100 percent customer satisfaction. I can always count on Curt and his team to "Git R Done!"

As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at kevo@yachtsmanmagazine.com or 925/890-8428. Be safe and happy boating. 🚤

