

10 Wishes



Same Boat—More Space, More Practical

By Pete Dubler

When it comes to making our boat more comfortable and practical, the best ideas come from listening carefully to the admiral's dissatisfactions, which my wife Jill kindly expresses as "I wish ..."

As we restore and refit our Pearson 424, Regina Oceani, our woodshop has been working overtime to dramatically improve her interior. Here are Jill's top wishes come true.

WISH ONE

"I wish the engine cover would not have to go on the bed or take over the cabin when you work on the engine."

Each day when I checked the engine, the heavy dog-house cover would have to be lifted and placed on a tarp on the aft cabin Pullman berth. It was heavy, awkward and inconvenient—a back injury waiting to happen. Jill would proclaim that our bed should be "sacred—not a

dumping ground for tools and parts," and she was right. When it came time to work on the engine, the dog-house slid forward but then completely blocked the aisle. With the new engine in place, it was time to completely rethink the cover. Instead of a one-piece wraparound base with a separate cover, a three-piece breakdown base was fashioned with a hinged cover. In the cover, I added a separate small door for accessing the dipstick.

Now, the whole engine can be inspected by raising the



lid. When more access is required, the forward panel hinges down flush with the cabin sole. The side panels hinge out on take-apart hinges, and—along with the top and forward panel—can be removed if necessary and stacked beside the engine (and not on the berth). A rack on the port side holds the companionway drop boards, while one on the starboard side is dedicated to key documents such as Colregs and Chart 1. The whole engine compartment was lined with new sound insulation (see “New Sound Insulation,” *BWS* July 2006).

WISH TWO

“I wish the aft cabin were brighter.”

The 30-year-old aft bulkhead had endured several generations of electronics mounted on it and showed the wear in the form of dozens of prior screw and cable holes. I resurfaced the entire dark wood area with white laminate and installed new teak trim. A sheet of stainless plate now provides a kick at the top step of the companionway ladder.

The area over the engine was also remodeled. A fold-down panel provides access to gauges, alternator regulator, etc. A fold-up panel, connected to the hinged engine cover, provides even better access to aft of the engine to facilitate belt changes. The white laminate makes the aft cabin much brighter but still carries plenty of teak warmth.

In the category of bright ideas, the aft locker door is



BOATSWAIN'S LOCKER



surfaced with Egan VersaJot whiteboard material on top of the laminate. This provides a perfect place for to-do and navigational notes right at the nav station. The inside of the locker door has quick-access racks for the most-used tools.

WISH THREE

"I wish the drawers were easier to pull out and more usable."



The drawers under the Pullman berth were impractically deep, had to be lifted to open and were difficult to slide on their wooden tracks. Replacing the two deep drawers with four new drawers on stainless steel full-extension slides created 25% more space, all of which was more usable. The slam latches provide secure closure and perfect handles for easily pulling the long drawers open. These drawers will receive cedar liners before we set sail.

Extra dead space under the berth was also discovered. A new access hole and cover over this space provided the perfect place to store all of our refrigeration tools (vacuum pump, leak detector, parts, etc.).

WISH FOUR

“I wish the leeboard did not make it so difficult to get into and out of the berth.”

The fixed leeboard on the Pullman berth had an illogically-placed low spot for access to the berth. While fashioning the new under-berth drawers, the entire beat-up side of the berth was replaced, creating an opportunity to re-design the leeboard. A sliding panel retained by the top molding of the berth side created a much larger and ideally-positioned open access to the berth. The panel easily slides into place, creating a completely enclosed berth when conditions dictate the need.



WISH FIVE

“I wish these drawers were bigger.”

Long, tiny drawers in the V-berth had no practical use except possibly for the few pair of socks we keep on board. The usable space was a small fraction of the available space in the cabinet.

To make this space more usable, a larger hole was cut and four long pull-outs were installed on stainless steel full-extension slides. A new door covers the four pull-outs, and their spacing creates the perfect larder for

storing canned goods. A movable stop in each pull-out—which locks in place using a cam—is repositioned as cans are removed to keep the remaining cans in place while at sea. In net, 3.5 times the storage in the same space!



BOATSWAIN'S LOCKER



WISH SIX

"I wish the galley had more usable storage."

Several years ago, I added three drawers in place of the under-sink locker. This was a great improvement, but still the space was far from optimized. The drawers hung on wooden tracks, which took up vertical space between the drawers. They also could have been wider.

Four new drawers on stainless steel full-extension slides increased the usable space by 60%. A tilt-out drawer front with a double-deep spice rack—which I fashioned from stainless steel plate—captured this otherwise dead space. To the side of the sink, over the tilt-out trash bin, another tilt-out drawer front with a shelf behind provides storage for trash bags, again using otherwise dead space.

WISH SEVEN

"I wish there were a better place for all the spare parts."

Spare parts and hardware not stored under the Pullman berth were stored in plastic parts boxes in the lockers behind the saloon settee cushions. This easily-accessible space should be used for items that are accessed more often. Under the nav station was a long bookshelf that used to hold many binders of manuals, all of which have since been scanned and are now readable (and searchable!) on the PC or an e-reader. Isn't technology wonderful?

A rack to hold plastic fishing tackle parts boxes fits perfectly into this space. The boxes are held in place with a stop that slides up and to either side to allow access to one column of boxes at a time.

At the base of the forward companionway (a unique feature of the Pearson 424), a multi-compartment storage area was created, which also replaces the lower step of the companionway ladder. Separate compartments here contain the Clark pump for the watermaker, first aid kit, spare parts such as filters, and varnish and paint cans. In the corner, the watermaker membrane is mounted vertically and covered by a teak-veneered plywood trim box.





WISH EIGHT

"I wish we had more storage space for clothes."

Back in the aft cabin, there were drawers above the foot of the Pullman berth. It was a stretch to access these and they used only a fraction of the available cabinet space. Replacing the drawers with doors and lining the cabinet with automotive headliner cloth created three times the storage—ideal for out-of-season clothes.



WISH NINE

"I wish we had another large locker."

In the V-berth, there was a removable wedge that could be set in a lower position to create a seat—a nice idea for which we never found any use. This area was framed in with oak moldings covered with teak. A shelf was installed at lower station for the wedge and a large door installed. This locker is so large it could hold our two immersion suits.

WISH TEN

"I wish we had more berth-side storage."

Our berth has a large overhead bookshelf, but storage for the many smaller things we like to have near the berth—such as headlights—was lacking.

Two narrow open-top holders were fashioned from teak scraps and screwed to the bulkhead. A shallow cabinet with adjustable shelves was built without a back to maximize the usable space. The bulkhead to which it is screwed provides the back of the cabinet. The door is oriented so the contents can be accessed while sitting on the berth.

Listen carefully to the thoughts and suggestions of your admiral and crew. There are lots of great ideas to be found in their musings! ~

BWS is following Pete and Jill Dubler's refit and restoration of their Pearson 424, S/V Regina Oceani in a cornfield in their home state of Colorado. After over 5000 offshore miles crewing for others, Pete selected the 424 for their future world cruising plans. It will take a few years, working nights and weekends, but Pete is committed to the belief that cruising should not be "repairing boats in exotic locations" so "she will be sound and Bristol when she splashes."

