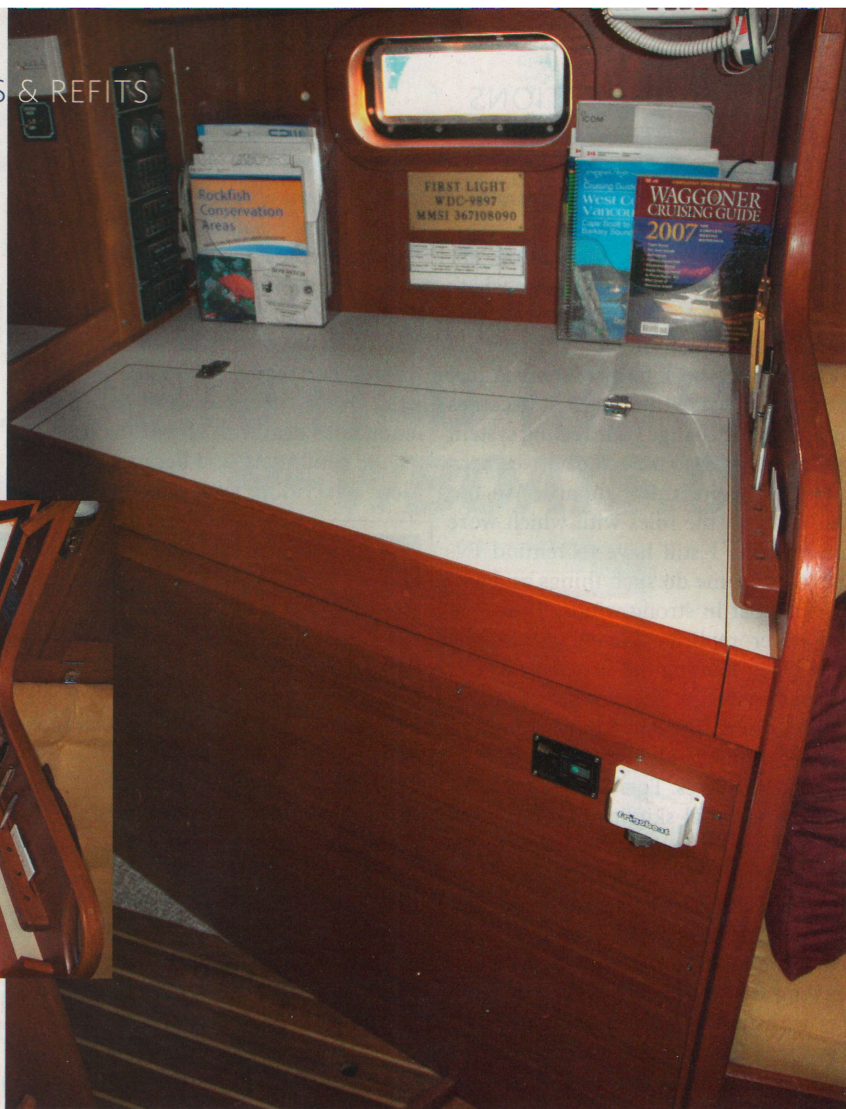


Serving their beverage of choice at the ideal temperature was a powerful motive for replacing their refrigeration.

BY JENNIFER PORTZ



The Lure of Cold Beer

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A COLD BREW after a hard, hot day. Ahhh, the refreshing amber liquid sliding down your throat. Sometimes, if the day's been particularly sweaty, you can feel it hit your stomach, chilling you from the inside out.

Cold beer is a U.S. thing—Europeans just don't get it, we decided, as we looked incredulously at the tiny box, with the tinier opening, sitting about 3 inches from the stove on our 1983 Hallberg-Rassy 352. "Who thought of that?" my husband, Harvey, said while scowling. I could see he was silently calculating how many beer cans could be crammed into the small space—along with the vegetables and dairy products we'd want on a several-weeks-long sea passage. So our list of projects to resurrect this neglected boat increased by one: a new fridge. It wouldn't be easy, and

it wouldn't be cheap, but having cold beer is a compelling reason.

The only superfluous space was the nav area. Directly across from the galley stove, it was perfect for a fridge with a chart table on top. Using screwdrivers, an old chisel, and a hammer, we disassembled the units and broke the fiberglass bonds that secured them to the hull.

Our previous boat, a Catana 431 catamaran, had a wonderful fridge that was silent and spacious; we decided to duplicate it on our current boat. The main concern was whether our 150-amp house batteries could accommodate the added load. We also needed to know what size of fridge box the unit could support, what amount of insulation was appro-

priate, and how many B.O.A.T.—that's Break Out Another Thousand—units it would run us.

The Internet is a vast repository of information. We sifted through it and found a Frigoboat (www.frigoboat.com) K50-SSC that could chill up to nine cubic feet of space.

We contracted for a custom fiberglass unit from local boatbuilders Todd and Tim Uecker, at Cape George Marine Works (www.capegeorgecutters.com). The box's dimensions would depend on how much insulation was needed and the material's R factor, its resistance to heat transfer. That wasn't an easy question to answer. Several refrigeration websites suggested that three to five inches of polystyrene (blueboard) was adequate to yield an R

The loss of a seat for the nav station is offset by a new fridge capable of storing provisions for a cruise as well as an adequate supply of beer. Custom baskets lift out and allow access to the depths of the fridge.