

# Providing Proper Ventilation for your South Coast 21

---

Straight from the factory, the South Coast 21 had no ventilation at all other than some ventilation slits cut into the bin boards. This lack of ventilation leads to the accumulation of moisture below decks that will lead to mildew and rot. Even when it does not rain, moisture will accumulate as the hull sweats each night when the temperature drops and the trapped, humid air inside the boat releases its moisture. After years of having to deal with a musty, mildewed interior of my boat, I decided to do something about it. It is easy to upgrade to a proper, active or passive ventilation system for your boat which will keep it dry and mildew free.

A good ventilation system will:

- Reduce moisture and humidity below decks when the boat is left unattended.
- Reduce the chances of mold, mildew and musty air development caused by trapped moisture and humidity in the boat.
- Reduce the likelihood of blisters caused by moist air saturation of the hull.

A properly designed ventilation system provides adequate air circulation throughout the boat without allowing water from waves, spray or rain to come aboard. Experts recommend that your ventilation system provide at least one air exchange every hour. In the South Coast 21 and similar sized boats this means approximately 500 cubic feet. Provisions must be made for both the intake of new air and the exhaust of old air. Vents can be classified as passive or active. Passive ventilators, such as cowl vents simply provide an access path for air to enter or leave the interior of the boat. As long as either the boat or the air itself are moving, they work just fine, but when the air is not moving, they provide little ventilation. It is highly recommended that at least one active ventilator is used and that it should be used for exhaust.

Active ventilators, suitable for the South Coast, include the Nicro solar vent 1000. This ventilator exhausts 1000 cubic ft. per hour in full sunlight, twice the recommended circulation, and once the sun goes down, it exhausts 600 cubic ft. per hour with as little as six knots of wind. I added a low profile cowl vent on the foredeck and placed the solar exhaust vent on the aft deck. The cowl vent is turned in the direction of the prevailing wind. The cowl vent can be removed and replaced with a deck plate while the boat is in use in order to prevent taking on water and keeping the deck free of possible snags while sailing. The solar vent is baffled to prevent taking on water.

Once these vents are installed, I recommend having a friend douse the deck with water while you look for leaks. Any leaks should be caulked to prevent excessive intake of water. The interior mildew can be cleaned with any commercial anti-mildew product or simply a 10% solution of Chlorox, which is what I used. Since installing this system, I

have yet to find any water in my South Coast, even with all of the rain that we have had in the 2007 season. The mildew problem is gone for good.

The final result looks like this:

