



# The Lighthouse

## Routine maintenance goes a long way

*Courtesy www.discoverboating.com*

Big or small, basic or customized, every boat needs to be maintained. Fortunately, routine maintenance and small repairs aren't that tough. In the long run, a little elbow grease will definitely pay off.

**Wash your boat:** The first and simplest task is to wash your boat regularly. If you boat in saltwater, rinse your boat thoroughly with fresh water after every outing to remove salt residue. Salt will not only corrode metal, fasteners and other hardware, left too long on your gelcoat, it can mar that as well. Use a long-handle, soft-bristle boat brush and some quality soap. Marine boatwash is best and is formulated for gelcoat. Car wash soap is next best and some boaters use laundry soap in a pinch.

**Change your oil:** Just like cars, boats need to have their oil changed. Four-stroke outboards, inboards and stern drive boats require regular oil changes. The frequency will vary by model but a good rule of thumb is to change the oil every 100 hours of operation or once a year.

Unfortunately, there aren't any quick change oil shops for boats, so you either have to change your boat's oil your-

self or take it to your local dealer. Luckily, changing the oil in your boat's engine is easy and can be done quickly with the right tools. You'll need an inexpensive oil extractor pump that removes the oil via the dipstick tube. Also, an oil wrench and enough rags to catch the normal drips. As added protection against messy oil, it's a great idea to put an absorbing pad under the engine, particularly near the oil filter.

**Step 1** – If your boat is in the water, start the engine to warm it up. If your boat is on a trailer, you'll need to supply cooling water to the water intake at the gearcase. Do this by placing what mechanics nic-named "earmuffs" over the water intakes. Earmuffs consist of two suction cups on a V-shaped piece of tubing. A hose fitting at the Vee supplies water to the engine. Outboards and some stern drives have special hose fittings for this purpose.

**Step 2** – After 5 minutes, turn it off and remove the dipstick.

**Step 3** – Insert the oil extractor suction tube into the dip-

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## Tips for choosing the right marine cooler

*Courtesy www.boat.com  
by Lenny Rudow*

Marine coolers come in all shapes and sizes, but they also come in many different quality levels. What are the details to look for? We stopped in at a fishing tackle and boating supply store

for a quick look at some of the important features that set one cooler apart from another — and also determine whether a cooler costs a couple of bucks, or an arm and a leg.

*More Coolers, page 4*

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# Fowler and Chesnutt headline Bayou Fest

Kevin Fowler and Mark Chesnutt will headline the musical entertainment for the La Marque Bayou Fest on October 21. It is held in La Marque's Mac McGaffey Highland Bayou Park on Interstate 45.

The annual community festival and concert is — as always — free to attend.

Also on stage that day will be local musical legend The Pee Wee Bowen Band.

Bayou Fest also features a \$10,000 barbecue cook off that starts off October 20 and is capped off by a fireworks show.



The free event features a slew of kids' activities with a fishing tournament, pumpkin carving contest, the always popular mutton busting and bounce houses.

For everyone else there will be vendor booths and food trucks on the festival grounds.



Kevin Fowler



Mark Chestnutt

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# Maintenance

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stick tube and slide it all the way in until it stops. Pump out the oil. It will remain safely in the pump until you can take it to an oil change shop for recycling.

*Step 4* – Hold a rag around the oil filter and remove it with the wrench. Screw on the new one after rubbing oil on the sealing gasket..

*Step 5* - Replace the dipstick and fill the engine with new oil through the oil fill port—the cap is marked “oil.”

Some engines have a special drain tube fit to the oil pan. You pull this tube out the bilge drain and drain the engine without ever dropping a drip on the bilge. Some outboards have comparably simple drainage mechanisms as well. Check your owner manual for the exact procedure.

Be sure to use marine grade oil in your boat engine. Boat engines work much harder than car engines and automotive oil isn't made to protect marine engines.

**Check the propeller:** If you have an outboard or stern drive boat you should check the propeller as part of your pre-launch routine. Use a deep well socket to remove the propeller several times during the season to make sure discarded fishing line hasn't become wrapped around the propeller

shaft. If it has, have your dealer inspect the gear case because fishing line can cause gear case leaks and that is not a do-it-yourself job.

While you have the propeller off, inspect it for nicks, dents and other signs of damage. It's alright if your prop is missing paint, but send it out for repairs if you find signs of impact. The smallest dent can cause your boat to lose performance and burn excessive fuel. A damaged prop also can vibrate, putting too much stress on bearings and seals causing additional damage.

Finally, put a liberal amount of waterproof grease on the propeller shaft to prevent corrosion from “freezing” it in place. Then re-install the propeller and hardware in the same order that you took them off. Tightening the nut snugly and secure the locking tabs against the nut so it can't back off the shaft threads.

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## Coolers

continued from page 1

Let's recap the most important items to look for when choosing the best marine cooler:

**Hinges:** Cheap coolers usually have very thin plastic hinges, which are sure to fail in a couple of seasons. Some have slightly thicker hinges, which swing open on a pin. Although this is better than thin plastic that merely bends, if that pin is plastic, they'll still fail after a few years. The best coolers have beefy hinges built right into the top and back of the cooler, which swing on a thick stainless-steel pin. You can extend the useful lifetime of a marine cooler by swapping out cheap plastic hinges for replacement hinges like those from Cooler Shield.

**Insulation:** Just how well will a cooler hold in the cold? Insulation thickness is the biggest determining factor and essentially, the thicker the insulation is the better the cooler will hold ice. But there's a price for increased insulation, since the thicker cooler walls eat into interior volume. Other items that will have an effect are how well the

top seals (the best models close on gaskets), and how it's held down (tensioning clasps or rubber catches that close the top under pressure are much better than plastic latches).

**Accessory parts:** Depending on how you use the cooler, you may want to consider accessories like wheels. These certainly make carting the cooler down the dock easier, but they also require the loss of a lot of interior cooler space. Handle quality is another important factor. And the presence of a drain can be very important as well.

**Cost:** Naturally, for many people this is one of the most important things to consider when buying a cooler. And like the old saying dictates, you'll get what you pay for. An inexpensive, cheaply built cooler will only cost you \$20 to \$60 dollars, depending on size. A mid-range cooler can be purchased for \$100 plus or minus. But a top-notch, high-quality cooler will cost several hundred dollars and an extremely large high-quality marine cooler can even break the \$1,000 barrier.

The next time you're shopping for a new marine cooler be sure to take all of these considerations into account — remember, coolers are an essential item when it comes to partying on your boat.

# Boating blogs worth bookmarking

*Courtesy BoatU.S. Magazine  
by Rich Armstrong*

Some bloggers are young, some not so much. But all share a love for boating and for chronicling their passions in blogs and very cool videos. Here are a few stand-outs.

## ***Inspiration From An Intrepid California Couple Ryan and Nicole Levinson***

What makes Ryan and Nicole Levinson's blog so magnetizing is that Ryan, a former world-class athlete and champion sailor, was diagnosed with a form of muscular dystrophy in 1996. There's no cure, and his disease is degenerative. Suffering from muscle loss, Ryan can no longer hold up his arms, do a situp, pushup, or stand on his toes. But you'd hardly know that from their video posts, as Ryan treats his disease like another athletic challenge, while savoring the fact that he's living out his dream. With the help of Nicole and a growing host of friends, they're out there, cruising in the French Polynesian islands aboard their 38-foot *Naoma* and determined to sail around the globe.

"Through these videos we're reaching out to you from over the horizon, a reminder that despite whatever challenges you face, wild places still exist in this world and are within your reach to explore," they write in their first blog post. Next time you hear, "attitude is everything," think of this couple. [www.patreon.com/twoafloat](http://www.patreon.com/twoafloat)

## ***Passion Drives This Angler Carter Andrews holding a redfish***

Carter Andrews says he did not choose his life of fishing — the life chose him. Barely past his toddler years, he was obsessively casting his line into the local ponds of his Tennessee farm-country hometown. Today, *Big Boy*, as he's known, is an accomplished fishing guide, tournament angler (he fishes some 300 days a year in both fresh and saltwater), author, blogger, and TV host. His website serves as a springboard to his social-media presence (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vimeo). Carter has earned a reputation as one of the most "complete" anglers, splitting time between Panama and his ranch in Jackson, Wyoming, which allows him to, on any given day, troll bait for marlin, cast plugs for dorado, saltwater fly fish for yellowfin tuna, or chase Rocky Mountain bass. [www.theobsessionofcarterandrews.com](http://www.theobsessionofcarterandrews.com)

## ***Sailing La Vagabonde Elayna Carausu and Riley Whitelum***

Elayna Carausu and Riley Whitelum are 20-something Aussies on the adventure of their lives. Now three years into an open-ended global voyage, where they work along the way — she's a singer/songwriter — they document their lives on their blog, as well as on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, where they have, wait for it, 211,000 subscribers! The couple posts a compelling new video every week, on everything from whale watching off Tonga to fishing for their dinner, fixing gear breakdowns, and exploring ashore. Elayna's soothing acoustic guitar adds to their well-edited

video posts. Their international following has grown to the point where French boatbuilder Outremer has offered to build them a 45-foot sailing catamaran to replace their 43-foot, 2007 Beneteau Cyclades monohull. Try not to be jealous. [sailing-lavagabonde.com](http://sailing-lavagabonde.com)

## ***Exploring The West Coast In Style Selene 53 trawler anchored off Ketchikan, Alaska***

Alex Benson is a retired real estate agent from San Luis Obispo, California, who's been chronicling his voyages aboard his Selene 53 trawler *Wild Blue* from Mexico to Alaska since 2008. This summer he journeyed to scenic Vancouver Island, off Canada's West Coast, and Ketchikan, Alaska, fishing and venturing ashore with family and friends who fly in to various ports to catch a leg or two of the voyage. Like any good ship's log, this is a detailed chronology full of incidents and observations; plus he accompanies it all with video — of crossing Oregon's treacherous Tillamook Bay bar, cruising in snow off British Columbia, landing a giant king salmon, bear watching in Alaska, and close-up views of icebergs. [mwwildblue.blogspot.com](http://mwwildblue.blogspot.com)

## ***Honey, Let's Bring The Kids!***

### ***Bryan and Laura Merrick and their two daughters***

Bryan and Laura Merrick made a commitment to live aboard three years ago, when they had a 1-year-old daughter and Laura was seven months pregnant. The amazing thing is, they made it happen! On June 15, they cast off from Beaufort, South Carolina, and headed south with their two young children aboard their 1994 Hunter Legend 37.5 *All In*. Bound for a winter in the Bahamas, they've had their share of broken gear and groundings, while dealing cleverly with the needs of their kids, now 4- and 3-year-old daughters, Avery and Leslie. To cope with little people with short attention spans on board, the couple had to get creative, going as far as fabricating a travel-day fairy who comes the night before long travel days. The "fairy" takes the girls' toys and arranges them on the table and brings out special snacks and movies. These parents have come up with lots of tricks, all the while learning about the cruising life underway. [releasingthebowlines.com](http://releasingthebowlines.com)

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