A Long-term Test

Readers might want to review the initial April 1, 2005, report. As shown in these photos, the surfaces are fiberglass; wood (teak and oak); aluminum (raw and anodized); stainless steel, and brass—all used in various combinations with wood dowels, stainless bolts and washers, and brass screws.

The caulks and sealants were used in globs (to provide more exposure to sun, rain, snow, etc.) instead of thin layers as they would be in most applications. Having more body meant that the curing time had to be generous.

Instead of the hours, days, or weeks of cure time specified by the makers (as shown in the chart), *PS* gave them all four months indoors to cure in fairly pristine conditions. After several months, it appeared—by checking for elasticity and odor—that the curing was complete. (Curing is one thing; aging is another.)

The panel and the bottle rack containing small bottles used to check waterproofness (see photo, above right), were placed outdoors on June 1, 2005.

Although the bottles were subjected to the hot summer sun and repeatedly frozen solid during the winter, either the sealant test must be considered a flop or it proves that one need not worry about the sealing nature of these products, at least for a year.

Now, after a full year of exposure to wind, rain, heat, and the snow and freezing of a New England winter, this is intended as the final report on these products.

(*PS* often says, "final", but staff curiosity—especially for those who conducted the tests—frequently means that test panels like varnish samples, etc., are kept around "just to see...")

Practical Sailor apologizes to readers for the repetition that is unavoidable in a time-layered test of this kind and further notes that another problem with any extended test is that some of the products may not still be available or have been changed or improved.