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Preventive Maintenance

Assessing a Boat's Mechanical Condition And Correcting Problems Before Listing it For Sale Can Help it Move Quickly.



Image by: Westport Yachts

Even the most outwardly pleasing yacht can be troublesome to sell if its upkeep in the engine room hasn't been much of a focus. When a yacht goes up for sale, there are several things that should be addressed to ensure it moves quickly and both the seller and buyer are protected. Positive first impressions are key.

Many owners grossly underestimate the rate at which boats deteriorate if they are not used for an extended period. Propulsion machinery should be operated and run periodically to maintain a flow of liquids through the various systems. Shafts should be turned weekly to avoid problems such as crevice corrosion. Sea cocks should be exercised weekly as well, to keep them free of marine growth and make sure they seal. Air conditioning raw water cooling should also be flushed out periodically, approximately every three months, depending what is found initially.

Prior to any sea trials, it may be wise to have a diver come and clean the bottom and running gear. Propellers rapidly lose performance with any growth. When you do run the boat, is there a vibration? Buyers want a smooth and quiet ride, so this is a major item to address. But how do you best tackle this problem? Whether a vibration is present or not, a vibration analysis is a valuable assessment to gauge the health of the vessel's mechanical systems. It is a relative easy and cost-effective.

During a vibration analysis, data is collected at different rpms. After only a few hours, enough data is collected for an experienced analyst to review and determine where there are issues, or, where issues are likely to develop. The vibration report will serve as a road map to where your focus needs to be.

Every engine has a rated full-throttle rpm. What is it, and is the yacht getting the rated speed? Engines should be evaluated and checked for things like misfire and faulty injectors. Fixing items like these will go a long way when it comes to getting the offer you want.

Additionally, there are some mechanical items that should always be addressed, including:

- Check your engine room for fuel, oil or water leaks.
- Have the engines and generators evaluated.
- Make sure alignment is good.
- Have propellers reconditioned, repaired and balanced if necessary.
- Shafts should be removed, cleaned, and checked for straightness. If there's any pitting or damage, they should be repaired.

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of a yacht will save time, energy and money later when the deal closes. Buyers are looking for a boat that's been well maintained that they won't need to spend a lot on to fix, so uncovering any potential structural or mechanical problems early will give you the opportunity to have them corrected and command your selling price. In the end, buyers want to be satisfied with a boat's condition, performance and eye-appeal before they complete the purchase.

