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Mir's Old Teak Deck Lives On!

by Abigail Alling



Mark on deck in Bali having started the project



Returning to Singapore with a completed deck

In view of Asia's deforestation crisis, efforts to reclaim hardwoods whenever possible is fast becoming a growing movement. *Mir* does her part in supporting the recycling cause.

Biosphere Foundation had the opportunity to reuse the teak deck of its 1910 classic sailing yacht *Mir*. It was clear at her purchase in 2009 that we would have to replace the oroco wood and steel deck with its teak overlay. We had hoped to reuse this wood wherever possible.

So with this pledge, Captain Mark Van Thillo and a team of volunteers began the daunting project in the fall of 2011, by removing 4,500 screws and their wooden dowels; two kilometers of old caulk, the teak and then the oroco wood (to be

used later for the interior floors). Once completed, *Mir* moved high up onto ASL Shipyard's dry-dock to work side by side with teams of expert steel workers who replaced the ancient corroded steel frames and laid the new steel deck.

Thanks to the generosity of Sika, we were instructed to pour Sika Transfloor (apolyurethane filling and leveling product) that provided a perfect surface for the wood to adhere onto the new steel. The smooth grey, soft surface of the Transfloor gave us the feeling that we had transformed *Mir* into a space ship; leak tight and ready to return to the sea! Thus we sailed *Mir* to Bali to finish the project with skilled carpenters and lay the 300 or more pieces of old teak onto the Transfloor with Sika 298.

Working with Tag Tag, a local Balinese company, damaged teak was replaced with those salvaged from an 1880 former bakery in Java, thus fulfilling our aim to use only reclaimed teak. It was a bit like a puzzle: the wood had to return, as close as possible, to the pattern laid out a century before. Upon completion, the teak was then leveled, sanded and bonded into

one continuous piece by squeezing Sika 290 in between the grooves.

It was a labour of love, but in the end the original deck is back onboard *Mir* and it looks beautiful. The possibility of reclaiming wood from old ships is becoming valuable. As we walked along the deck, it was very rewarding to know that no new trees were felled and that our valuable woods were put to work once again.

Please join Biosphere Foundation at www.biosfirindonesia.org/sponsors.php to view all our deck sponsors.



Mark and Robert work side by side to lay the teak



Mir on arrival in Bali with the teak bundled up and ready to go



Carol fills the grooves with Sika 290



Mark laying the teak onto Sika 298