

THISTLE RESTORATION HULL 3015



On December 5, 2020, Dave Paligo and myself with the blessings of the Junior Sailing Program, removed Thistle Hull number 3015 from the East Port Storage Yard and brought it to my home for restoration. Upon getting it to the house and taking a good look at it, I questioned whether it could be rehabilitated.

After giving the boat a good power washing and getting it inside my garage, my enthusiasm for the project grew finding that the teak and the hull were in better condition than I anticipated.



Because the running rigging of the vessel is so complicated, we did a photographic inventory of what existed on the boat when we brought it home.



We removed all the existing hardware and cataloged each piece. Once that was completed we started sanding down the teak and then washed down the interior and exterior of the hull.



We then proceeded to put three coats of teak oil on all the wood with a slight sanding in between coats. In addition we put our first coat of Hatteras Beige on the interior. We allowed one week for that coat to dry and then applied the second coat.



At this point in time we made contact with Douglas Laber at Great Midwest Yacht Company located in Sunbury, Ohio. Douglas was the consummate expert on all things Thistle. He was able to provide us with all the blocks and running rigging and invaluable information as to how the rigging should be set up. He also rehabbed the block system and the boom for the outhaul.

My investigation of the boat revealed that there were three manufacturers of Thistles. This particular one, Hull Number 3015, was manufactured by a company that put two scuppers in the transom. The scuppers are designed to bail the boat if it were to capsize. The two holes in transom are quite severe approximately four inches square. As the boats aged, most Thistle owners covered the holes with duct tape. In my restoration, I manufactured two scupper covers that were held in place with a shock cord.



Having completed the interior, we now started the task of painting the exterior. Having sanded the imperfections of the hull, we then cleaned it with acetone. Having complete that task, we painted the hull burgundy.





Having completed the hull, we attached all the running rigging and lines connected with operating the boat.



We added the name "PHOENIX" to the hull in that the boat represents returning from the ashes. You will also note it is now equipped with a Minkota trolling motor to get in and out of the canals.

With boat completed, we turned our attention to rehabbing the trailer. We lowered the fenders so they would not scrape the hull, sanded down the old paint, added rollers for the keel, a jack stand for the tongue, a roller for the mast support and a winch to pull the boat on to the trailer.





Once the trailer was completed, we cleaned, waxed and rethreaded the mast with the main halyard, jib halyard and spinnaker halyard. We also added a topping lift for the spinnaker pole then took the boat off the jack stands and put it back on its trailer.



We procured a brand new set of sails including a jib, main and spinnaker and tested them while the boat was on the trailer.

The "Phoenix" will be 50 years old this summer and will be making its racing debut at the BLYC thistle regatta set for Saturday, April 24.

I want to acknowledge the help from David Paligo who, without his involvement, this restoration would not have happened.

