



SOLAR POWERED

Harnessing The Power Of The Sun

By Michael Deulley

There's nothing quite like a day aboard a houseboat. Enjoying the warm days of summer on the water is amazing in itself and doing it with all of the luxuries and amenities of home makes every trip a memorable one. Unfortunately, staying on a houseboat requires a lot of power from your generator. Although they provide the necessary power, generators take a lot of maintenance and money to run. Luckily for houseboat owners, Donn DeVore and his team at Donn's Boat Shop, Inc., offers solar energy solutions to handle every one of the boat's electrical needs. Whether you're looking to watch your favorite movie, or light up the night for an evening with friends, you can now do so with the power of the sun.

Powering The Future

Donn's Boat Shop in Page, Ariz., offers an unlimited variety of services and no task is too difficult for DeVore and his team. Just a quick search through the website and it's clear to see, this is a great shop to get all of your houseboat work done. From custom fabrications to complete repair, Donn's is the Swiss army knife of houseboat care. With everything that the shop offers, it was only a matter of time before they began expanding the empire and reach for new

sources of energy for the houseboat.

"Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be changed from form to form. But in one way I feel we are creating energy from the sun. It is free and simple," says DeVore. "So it just makes sense to use it when you play so you can focus your time with family instead of fuel costs. We have set up boats that run a household refrigerator, deep freeze, and other AC loads 24/7 and never run their generator unless

they want the air-conditioning on. It just makes sense."

DeVore has a history in engineering and has been doing repairs and fabrications for houseboats for years, but he went several steps further with the implementation of solar power. Seeing the excessive energy used and potential hazards from using generator power, DeVore saw the amazing potential inherent in solar panels, and solar-powered houseboat owners can attest to the





remarkable output of their solar panels.

"I've only ever had two complaints about solar power," says DeVore with a smile. "Some say, 'Donn, why didn't you convince us to get these panels sooner?', and, 'Why didn't you convince us to use solar power for everything?'"

The power of solar has begun to make a strong presence in the houseboating community, so taking a deeper look into this phenomenon is a must.

The Solar Phenomenon

Throughout history, people the world over have understood the life-giving properties of the sun. From warming the days of summer, to providing life-sustaining energy to plants and animals, the sun has always been the literal "battery" powering Earth from the beginning. As technology progressed and fossil fuels began to dwindle, scientists and the environmentally concerned have looked for alternative ways to generate energy. For them, the obvious answer was right above their head. DeVore was no different. He began to teach others of the advantages of solar power by conducting seminars and showing there was more to solar than people previously thought.

"When solar panels first started, their efficiency was less than satisfactory," explains DeVore. "A lot of people refused to get them because the technology was new and panels were expensive. Now, we can add four 240-watt panels to a houseboat and they'll run every electrical system, aside from the AC."

Advancements in research have led to more efficient, less expensive solar panels and DeVore had it right when he said using them just makes sense. With all of

the energy benefits solar power provides, it's also safer to use than generators and requires less maintenance and money to operate.

"Solar provides many other advantages and safety benefits as well," adds DeVore. "First, you will never have to be concerned about carbon monoxide building up in your cabin while running your generator. There's also the fuel cost savings by not running the generator, and if you moor your boat or don't have access to shore power, your batteries will constantly be charging, and you can continuously run any appliance that would normally require electricity."

For a long time, people have been in debate regarding the usefulness of solar panels, but spend a day with DeVore, and he'll make a compelling argument that will have you rethinking the power potential of the sun.

Energy For The Masses

When DeVore began to campaign the benefits of solar, he didn't fully know how far his reach would go. Throughout the United States, houseboaters have called on him to outfit their houseboat for solar, but the desire for renewable energy has stretched as far as New Zealand, Canada and Australia. Generally, each panel installed has a life of 25 years and the process of installation is simple and fast. According to DeVore, more than just houseboaters are finding the obvious advantages of solar including large commercial businesses.

One of the greatest innovations inherent in DeVore's panels is that people can install the standard panel, but Donn also offers a more versatile, flexible panel



that comfortably follows the contours of a houseboat and provides the same energy output. What once seemed an expensive, impractical approach to energy is now being recognized as a simple and promising resource that is not only renewable, but will lead to a safer and cleaner environment.

The most inspiring fact of solar, however, is how accessible it is. Whether you're located on the sunny shores of San Diego, Calif., or under the overcast skies of Long Island in New York, the panels equipped to a houseboat still convert enough of the sun's light to energy to operate the all electrical needs while onboard. Much of people's needs can be met simply by the powerful sun that creeps over the horizon each day. With the promise of a cleaner and safer world, a world powered by a completely renewable source of energy, the future of houseboating is beginning to look a little brighter, which makes a lot of sense.

For more information visit
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