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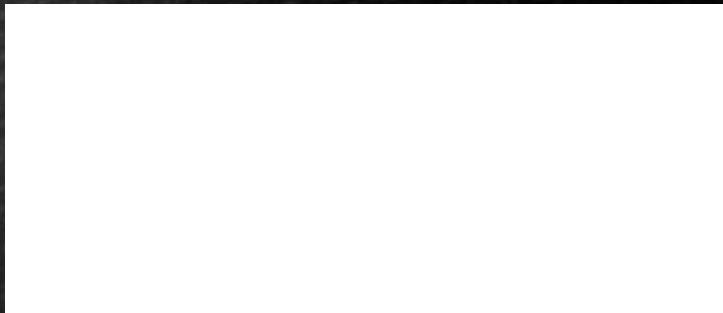
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By Robert Montgomery

V-T2: A Simple New Device in Fish Care

With little recognition and fanfare, a small Kentucky company arguably has engineered the most significant improvement in fish care since invention of the livewell.

Thus far, sales have been mostly to individuals, but two boat companies, Storm and Stroker, now are making factory installations and talks are ongoing with others, according to Judy Tipton, inventor of the V-T2 ventilation system and owner of New Pro Products.

“This is the first year that we have approached distributors and retail stores to add the V-T2 to their product lines,” she added. “I am happy to report that we are now entering into vendor relationships and working with boat manufacturers to include the V-T2 as a factory standard.”

Why are more than 3,000 anglers around the world now using this inexpensive product and why should manufacturers, distributors and retailers take note? How about endorsement from Gene Gilliland, national



**Judy Tipton,
V-T2 developer**

conservation director for B.A.S.S.?

“It’s such a simple device, with no moving parts and no power required,” he said. “That’s what makes it so cool. It just works.”

Plenty of testimonials from anglers confirm that.

“In Oklahoma, we frequently fish in air temperatures of 100 degrees plus and waters of 90 degrees plus,” said tournament angler Charles Parker. “Before installing the V-T2 system, we would have a burst of hot air hit us when opening the livewell lids.

“The V-T2 has alleviated this issue and definitely keeps the livewells cooler and fish healthier. In the three years that I have used it, I have not lost a single fish...and when I got my new boat this spring, the V-T2 was the first thing that I added to it.”

Brian Fisher, a member of the U.S. Air Force, added this: “While I was living in South Texas, I had several tournaments where I carried coolers of ice or frozen water bottles to help with keeping fish alive.

“Once I overcame my fear of cutting a hole in my livewell lids and installed the V-T2s, this was no longer necessary. My livewell remained cooler and the fish had no problem remaining healthy. This product is the standard in fish care.”

And FLW competitor Phil Jarabek explained that “when you see the science behind it, everything about it makes sense. A lot of people are putting them on their boats once they see it in use and how easy it is to mount.”

Sold as a pair in black or white for about \$45, each V-T2 is inserted in a livewell lid. Once installed, it



Two boat live wells with V-T2 installed under the lids

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is flush with the floor, requires almost no maintenance, and allows continuous fresh air into the previously sealed compartments. That air increases dissolved oxygen, helps moderate temperature, and assists with removal of metabolic wastes and gases.

“The V stands for ‘ventilation.’ The T2 means ‘times 2.’ In developing the V-T2, the initial design was to allow heat and metabolic gases to naturally rise out of the livewell through the process of passive air,” explained Tipton.

“But it was soon apparent that running the boat could utilize ram air (air flow created by a moving object) to cool, oxygenate, and de-gas the livewell at an even greater rate. So, I incorporated a front and back louver with a dividing wall to create continuous flow of air in the livewell. It ventilates your livewell in two distinct ways, thus the name V-T2.”

Gilliland calls that “a great concept.”

During his career as a fisheries biologist, he explained, he learned that venting a livewell can “make a huge difference in the efficiency of an aerator system.

“If you keep the lids closed and run your recirculating aerators, you are recirculating stale air and CO2. Your system is not doing

what it is supposed to do.”

Additionally, he said, livewells quickly heat up from sun-warmed carpet and metal. But ventilation helps keep temperatures moderated.

And it means fishermen are more likely to notice if their aerators stop running than they would with a closed system. That’s because the V-T2 lets the sound out.

Tipton’s own experience as a tournament angler guided her in development of the ventilation system.

“No matter what I did, our fish never were as healthy when the temperatures started rising,” she remembered. “In 1988, while fishing a tournament on the Ohio River in May, I caught a nice bass, and, as I lifted the lid to place the fish in the livewell, I was met with a rush of hot air. This was the first indication that this buildup of heat and metabolic gases could be harmful to fish.”

Also, she noticed that tournament-caught fish often nosed back into the bank when released. “Having studied biology in college, I knew right off that this was a sign of oxygen deprivation,” she said. “The greatest concentration of oxygen in a lake is in the shallowest water, where the atmosphere and

water meet at the point of diffusion.”

Eventually, she realized that closed livewells hold heat and metabolic gases and shut out atmospheric oxygen.

“It was obvious that summer heat didn’t hurt fish in the lakes, but they did struggle once placed in the livewell,” she said, adding that she wanted to make the livewell environment more like the lake.

“Also, the product had to work without angler participation, require no battery power, not let water splash out, not cause a tripping hazard, and look good.

“I often hear from anglers that the V-T2 is so simple, and this makes me smile because a lot of effort, work, study, and testing went into its development.”

Now Tipton is directing effort at getting out the word about this revolutionary innovation.

“I really hope she can make inroads with the boat manufacturers so that they can be installed at the factories,” Gilliland said. “They wouldn’t add significantly to cost or hurt the strength and integrity of the livewells.

“Manufacturers already are making good livewells, but the V-T2 easily could become a standard.” ■

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– Judy Tipton

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