



In its natural habitat: a sailing boat covered with an EasyTec tent in wintery Sweden

EasyTec boat tent

Ben Meakins assesses the effectiveness of the EasyTec boat tent while painting the deck of his Impala 28 *Polly*

Winter is an bad time for boat maintenance, really. It's cold and wet – terrible conditions for painting and epoxying – and even if you leave the boat until the spring, you'll return to find her dirty and covered in green slime.

This makes some sort of winter cover a real boon. An effective cover will keep the boat dry, aired and clean – and you can even work underneath it. Buying one, however, can be an expensive experience. A custom-made canvas cover is very pricey. Shrink-wrapping is another option, but can't be reused – and it's not great for the environment.

While walking around METS last November I spotted the EasyTec tent from Sweden. The Swedes know a thing or two about winter – their boats are often covered in snow for months at a time – and the EasyTec tent stood out as a neat (and relatively cheap and

reusable) solution to covering your boat. It comprises a flexible ridgepole which slots into a special fitting at each end. These hook around the bow and stern cleats respectively, projecting over the end of the boat and providing a male attachment for the curved ridgepole. The ridgepole is then supported by two pairs of diagonal braces which can be attached to your stanchion bases with webbing straps. These and the ridgepole make a rigid, secure frame for the cover.

The cover comes with a sleeve sewn along its ridge, into which the long ridgepole can slide. Once inserted, you slot the ridgepole into its end fittings and lash the edges of the cover down. It's a clever shape, tapering at bow and stern to lace together and create a double-ended cocoon that will envelop the boat while presenting an aerodynamic profile for minimal windage. The shape of the tent is such that it will shed rain and snow



Good working space on deck under the tent
INSET FAR LEFT These hooks loop around cleats to support the ridgepole
BELOW LEFT The tent and poles come in this bag.

due to its high peak, while providing plenty of space inside and on deck. When the roof blew off the tent we were in for painting *Polly's* hull and deck (see the *Kiwigrip* article, page 40), the EasyTec tent provided an excellent solution to keep the April showers off the decks to finish the painting.

The cover was a good-quality, thick tarpaulin, with strong lacing eyes and heavy stitching. There was only a 7m (23ft) version available at the time, which is a little short for *Polly's* 8.5m (28ft) length, but it covered the deck really well. The longer cover would lace up at the bow and stern and enclose the whole boat. The tent withstood big gusts and shed water with ease - and packs into a neat bag for next winter's use.

Prices start at £245 for package 6. There are five sizes: (Prices converted from SEK to £ on 20/09/16)

Package 6	4-5 metre	£245
Package 7	5-6 metre	£318
Package 8	6-7 metre	£424
Package 9	7-8 metre	£468
Package 10	8-9 metre	£503

Contact: www.rapidmarin.se

Verdict

An excellent winter cover that will let you work on the decks and keep the boat fresh and clean. Best of all, it's cheaper than many alternative covers, and well-made to boot. Recommended. **PBO**