

DEFENDER STEPS UP

Defender Industries (www.defender.com) has much improved its attention to shipments and customer service. A year ago, I purchased a Bravo 12 12-volt inflator for my inflatable dinghy. I used it only a few times before it failed, a year later. I called Defender in search of a repair shop, and instead, within an hour, they shipped a replacement. (Accolades to Bravo also, since it was probably out of warranty.) I noted in Defender's catalog an improved version of the pump and called to see whether I could upgrade. The replacement had been already shipped, so they advised me to return both pumps (new and old). I did, and 48 hours later, I had my new, upgraded pump. My only cost was the upgrade and postage. Outstanding service!

Ken Drewry
Via e-mail

KUDOS KVH & TRACFONE

Over 13 years ago, I wrote to *Practical Sailor* complimenting KVH Industries (www.kvh.com) on its prompt service in providing parts for my Sailcomp 103AC. At that time, I was racing in the Caribbean and found the Salicomp one of my greatest weapons. I recently sent the same Sailcomp to KVH for service and repair. This they did with no charge.

And about cellphones: In the Caribbean, cellphones function as well, if not better, than VHF radios. I recently discovered Tracfone, which provides a prepaid nationwide wireless service using leading cellular providers. I get the same service locally but at a fraction of the cost. Through their international service, I can call Europe for the same cost as a local call. I had some problems getting this service, and Tracfone CEO and President PJ Pollak went out of his way to have the prob-

lem fixed. They offer one year of service plus 400 minutes of air time for \$85. They also have deals on well-known cellphones. My Motorola C281's camera refused to store photos. A call to customer service, and the phone was replaced, at no cost, within three days.

Doug Allen
Goldeneye, 1981 Pearson Flyer
St Croix, USVI

GILL FOR LIFE

I purchased a Gill windbreaker from West Marine in 1994. That jacket accompanied me on a 4,000-mile Alaska Eagle bluewater training course and multiple bareboat charters in the Caribbean and Newport areas. And in 1999, when I purchased my sailboat in France, and sailed across the Atlantic with my family, that same Gill windbreaker came in useful. The Gill Coast Lite Jacket continued to serve me very well for 12,000 sea miles until in 2005, it began to delaminate. At the 2006 Annapolis boat show, I showed this windbreaker to the people at the Gill (www.gillna.com) booth, intending to only ask them if they had a similar windbreaker I could buy. They gave me a new Coast Lite Jacket on the spot. I have since learned that Gill offers a lifetime warranty on its products. Gill's products are top notch, and the company stood behind this product without question, even after 10 years.

Gill Coast Lite



Gary S. Silver, M.D.
Liahona, Amel Super Maramu 2000
Jolly Harbor, Antigua