



COASTAL HOME MAINTENANCE Caissons underneath coastal homes require consistent maintenance.



NEW COATINGS Workers repair beams under coastal homes.



MARK (LEFT) AND CHARLES HARWELL (RIGHT).



CAISSONS Properly maintained caissons ensure home safety.

HARWELL BROTHERS

A GAMECHANGER

Brothers Mark and Charles Harwell introduce new rust prevention products for decks and railings on coastal properties.

 written by Barbara Burke

The Harwell Brothers are well known in Malibu for renovating and repairing foundations, caissons, decks, and other custom elements of Malibu coastal homes that are exposed to maritime elements. Now they have invented something that saves the day for Malibuites with coastal homes who

fight the battle against rust. “We have developed the solution for every deck and outdoor railing with our new complete broad-spectrum coatings that address rust problems in coastal homes,” Mark Harwell said. “Whether dealing with wood or concrete on railings, caissons, cross beams, or the foundation of a coastal home or a sea wall, our products can provide a great solution.”

“The first rule of addressing corrosion is adhesion,” said Lee Greer, CTO of O’Toole Applied Technology, who specializes in corrosion, concrete, and coatings. Greer discussed the thorough research and development and product testing that went into the creation of the coatings.

“Adhesion cannot be achieved if there is loose material on metal,” he said. “Therefore, it is critical to first clean off all loose

materials from the surface.”

The secret: the products change the nature of the concrete or wood because they are absorbed into the concrete or wood, and do not merely sit on the surface.

“The coating seeps deep within the surface and seals itself and becomes part of the underlying surface,” Greer explained. “You can paint or tile over the surface, and the coatings shield from water intruding, prevent spalling, and push the ocean salts out of concrete and wood.”

“If used properly, these products are a game changer,” said Reg K. Browne, P.E., President of Pacific Engineering Group, a well-known structural and coastal engineer in Malibu. “They’re more resistant to abrasion and corrosion than other products. Abrasion is prevalent when dealing with beach houses in Malibu during high tides and such. The wave uprush goes up under the house and it is like the metal is constantly being sandblasted. The coatings work by preventing exposure to the

marine atmosphere.”

He explained that people used to treat surfaces with a hot dip galvanization of the steel, which worked in the past.

“However, the problem is that people don’t look under their houses and don’t perform the maintenance needed,” Browne said. “Owning a beach house is like owning a boat. It requires constant maintenance - it’s like the myth of Sisyphus. And, if you don’t do that, you end up with decks falling into the ocean.”

He added, “A lot of Malibu’s coastal homes are getting pretty old, and whatever will corrode will corrode and whatever will rot will rot in Malibu.”

Browne elaborated stating, “The big deal is that it is necessary to perform maintenance on the foundation and the first floor, where moisture and wave uprush occur.”

He noted that most of the coastal homes that were built in Malibu prior to 1980 were placed on wood piles - a decision that

was mostly financial for builders.

“The Malibu prior to 1980 is not today’s Malibu, and the homes at that time were mostly weekend cottages that served as beach cabins,” he said. “Over the years, more and more affluent people wanted to live on the beach, and they are now trying to give older homes life support. We’re coming into an era where people will either have to tear down the beach house, build a new one, or put in a lot of money in the foundations which are constantly being hit by the ocean. You get the wear and tear due to abrasion, rot, and corrosion.”

“Our treatments help save beautiful historic homes,” said Harwell. “All of our products are ocean-friendly and low VOC.” Finally...a welcome answer to solve Malibu’s long-standing rust and corrosion problem.



Harwell Brothers | 310.774.3325
www.harwellbrothers.com