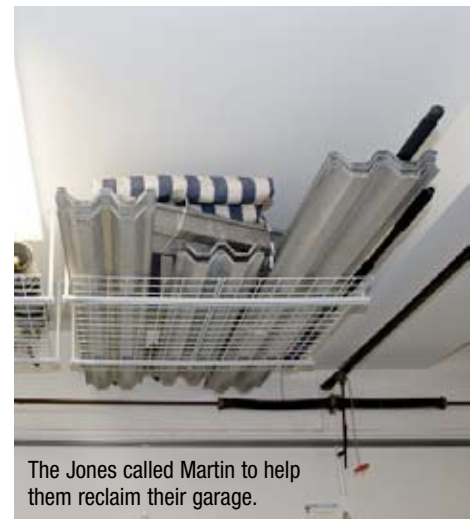


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Safety first

BY MONICA YOUNG
Special to *NCboatinglifestyle*



The Jones called Martin to help them reclaim their garage.

Sure, we all like a clean garage where everything is in its place and cars can be moved in and out with ease. But how many of us think about a safe garage?

Garage safety is a key theme for GarageTek, says George Martin, owner of GarageTek of Coastal NC. Part system and part service-oriented, the company provides products for organization and functional performance. Martin and his employees also come in and sort through homeowners' clutter, categorize it, haul off what needs to go away and put back what needs to stay. They take usable goods to organizations like Habitat for Humanity or Play It Again Sports and bring

back receipts.

"Our idea is not to put anything in a landfill that we can help. We even recycle all of the cardboard that our cabinets come in. We create some waste, but it is very minimal," says Martin.

Often those unnecessary goods include paint cans or multiple containers of gasoline, kerosene or propane – all dangerous chemicals if not stored correctly.

"I've been through this. This is how I got into GarageTek. I was a customer first. I had boat fenders, anchors and all sorts of stuff in my garage when I called GarageTek. I had tons of paint cans and even potting soil that had attracted ants," says Martin. "It was pretty typi-

cal of what you encounter at houses on the coast. We're all faced with the same thing – how to store our stuff."

Martin's heightened awareness of safety has caused him to learn a few tricks that he shares with customers. Since paint is no longer good after a year, he recommends stirring the paint with a wooden stirrer during the paint job. Label the stirrer with black permanent marker with the brand, color and any identifying numbers. Let dry and then store in a Ziploc bag. After a year, paint cans can be discarded according to local waste management guidelines, thus freeing the garage of clutter and reducing fire hazards.

Marianne and Jeffrey Jones live on the

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Intracoastal Waterway near Morehead City. They called Martin to help them reclaim their garage.

“We needed to clean up our act. It was an organized mess with a ton of items. It was reasonably well-stacked, but there was more than we could bear,” says Jeffrey Jones.

GarageTek replaced the floor and set up a GarageTek system on a side wall. They removed a heavy duty work bench and replaced it with a sleeker, more functional workspace from GarageTek. The Joneses kept existing cabinets on two other walls.

“This really impressed me. George told me the cabinets were good and there was no need to replace them,” says Jeffrey Jones.

“The good thing about GarageTek is

that you can add on later and just do one wall at a time or at all,” says Martin.

For George Martin, his own system paid off when a hurricane skirted the edge of the North Carolina coast. A hail storm could have damaged his vehicles. However, thanks to GarageTek’s organizational system, both cars were snug inside the garage, avoiding costly dings.

“Having everything in its place just keeps everything safer, even your cars,” says Martin. 🚗

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