

## Testers' Notes from the Field

To get a better idea of how the paints behave in real-world use, *PS* testers picked a sampling of top performers and popular paints to be applied to various boats representing a broad range of types, usage levels, and boating areas.

For the head-to-head tests, one paint is applied to the port bow and starboard quarter while another is painted onto the starboard bow and port quarter, giving the paints equal exposure.

### AQUAGARD vs. HYDROCOAT

In March 2008, testers applied two water-based, "hard" ablative paints, Flexdel Aquagard and Pettit Hydrocoat, to the hull of a Union 36, a full-keel cruising boat. Based in Virginia and Annapolis, Md., the boat sails mainly in the Chesapeake Bay area. The boat was sailed often between March and August, but has seen limited use since then.

After 10 months, the hull was covered with a layer of slime and a grass-like algae that showed no obvious preference for a particular paint. All sections of the hull were easily cleaned with a light rub of the diver's hand, making this head-to-head neck-and-neck after a single season.

### THE MYTH BUSTER

In November 2007, testers applied Interlux Bottomkote and Interlux Bottomkote mixed with cayenne pepper to our Cape Dory 25 test boat to see whether the cayenne increased the paint's antifouling ability. Nearly a year and a half later, testers

BOAT	LOCATION	DURATION	PAINT A / RATING	PAINT B / RATING
Union 36	Chesapeake, Va.	10 months	Flexdel Aquagard / Good	Pettit Hydrocoat / Good
Cape Dory 25	Sarasota, Fla.	14 months	Interlux Bottomkote / Fair	Interlux Bottomkote with cayenne / Fair
21-foot Parker powerboat	Sarasota, Fla.	6 months	Interlux Micron 66 / Good	Blue Water Kolor / Good
Seacraft 20 powerboat	Tavernier, Fla.	8 months	Pettit Vivid Free / Fair	Epaint EP 2000 / Good
Ericson 41	Annapolis, Md.	6 months	Micron 66 with InterProtect* / Excellent	Micron 66 with SeaGuard* / Excellent

\* Barrier coat long-term test

confirmed their last report that there is no difference in fouling between those sections with and without the cayenne additive. Soft growth, mainly at the waterline, and even some hard growth was noted.

The Cape Dory—daysailed several times a week and cruised occasionally—is kept on a mooring in the warm waters of Sarasota Bay, Fla.

### KOLOR vs. MICRON 66

On *Practical Sailor's* 22-foot Parker powerboat, testers compared two ablative paints: Blue Water Kolor, a paint that uses aluminum-safe cuprous thiocyanate (45 percent) as the active ingredient and is available in a variety of colors, and Interlux Micron 66, a past top finisher that is 40-percent copper. After six months of sitting at the dock on a saltwater canal in Sarasota, Fla., where the boat saw weekly use, all paint sections had slime at the waterline that was easily sponged off. The rest of the hull was very clean.

### VIVID FREE vs. EP 2000

A 20-foot Seacraft homeported in the Florida Keys was painted with two copper-free "eco-paints": Pettit's ablative Vivid

Free and Epaint's race-ready EP 2000 hard paint. The often-used boat is stored in the water and on a trailer. Eight months into the test, and after the boat had been in the water for 30 consecutive days, testers reported both paints had soft growth at the waterline and transom. However, the EP 2000 is holding up much better to the bumps and scrapes of trailering.

### BARRIERS & MICRON 66

Another *PS* test boat, a 41-foot Ericson in Annapolis, is the platform for a test of two barrier-coat systems, Interlux InterProtect 2000E and Sherwin Williams Seaguard 5000HS, topped with Micron 66. (For more on this, see "Barrier Coat Breakdown," page 27.) Testers are monitoring the boat for paint adhesion and performance. After six months, there was no sign of growth on the hull.

Our most recent reports from the field have yielded too-close-to-call evaluations, with all paints performing up to snuff. We will be adding more boats to the water this spring, including the 1974 Catalina 22 *Jelly*, our ongoing rehab project. For more on these test boat tests, see the previous report in the October 2008 issue.