



## Maintenance Must-Haves

Nowhere in the marine industry will boat owners find more choices than on the maintenance isle at their local chandlery. While having a bevy of products to choose from is good at times, having too many can make your head spin—hull cleaners, metal cleaners, black streak removers, vinyl cleaners, rust removers, lubricants, and on and on. To sort through the countless sprays, putties, paints, and pastes, we test new products against the old stand-bys—some come from reader recommendations—to find out who's worthy of a spot on your maintenance must-haves list. Here are our 2007 picks.

### BOTTOM PAINTS

For long-term protection of your boat's bottom, only seven paints out of 52 tested on our two-year panels (October 2007) earned ratings high enough to get *PS's* recommendation. Out of the recommended seven, five are hard paints.

Our top choice after two years is Interlux's Micron 66. This self-polishing copolymer paint lived up to its claims of a controlled release of biocides throughout the lifetime of the antifouling, without decline. The test panels were clean of buildup even when stationary for long periods.

### ANTI-CORROSION SPRAYS

With so many products on the market designed to help you in the war against corrosion, a sailor can get a little rusty on the facts. In *PS's* April 2007 review, we tapped CorrosionPro Lube as the best for corrosion-inhibiting metal protection. In September, we tested 10 products and found TC-11 to be the most effective for



## GEAR OF THE YEAR



Our bottom paint pick after two years is Micron 66, a self-polishing copolymer. It is not recommended for freshwater use, however.

keeping electrical systems conducting.

**CorrosionPro Lube:** Of the 12 products tested for metal protection, West Marine's CorrosionPro Lube offered excellent water resistance and superior rust and corrosive preventative characteristics. CorrosionPro's waxy film isn't pleasant to the touch, but for hard-to-reach parts, it's on the money.

**TC-11:** During our admittedly harsh tests of rust-inhibiting sprays for electronic equipment, we tested the sprays on radio circuit boards. ICC Industries' TC-11 isn't the silver bullet—but it protects quite well in fresh water and was the most effective product in saltwater tests. Though it can't prevent mixed metals from behaving badly in a saltwater environment when they have access to electricity, it's still our Best Choice.



### ONE-STEP WAXES/CLEANERS

In the spring of 2007, *Practical Sailor* tested 10 one-step cleaner/waxes. All of these products claimed to reduce the buff-and-wax routine to a single step. For the test, the hull of a 1980 Hunter 25 was taped off into small sections. Each section was waxed with one of the test products according to the manufacturer's instructions. We also applied each of the cleaner/waxes to the weathered hull of one our test powerboats, a Parker 2110, to evaluate the ease of application. Testers initially rated each product on its ease of application, cleaning ability, and gloss.

After six months, most of the cleaner/waxes had lost their initial gloss. After 12 months, two products stood out for their gloss and their ability to bead water: Star brite One Step Cleaner Wax and Re-Structure Marine Polish. Simoniz Royale Boat Cleaner Wax (the only paste wax in the field), was a distant runner-up. At 69 cents an ounce, the Star brite is less than half the price of Re-structure Marine Polish, making it *Practical Sailor's* Best Choice for cleaner/waxes. The Star brite Cleaner Wax is a liquid in an easy to use squeeze-top bottle. It has a nice consistency—neither too runny, nor too thick—and it doesn't require excessive elbow grease to buff to a shiny finish. ▲



### CONTACTS

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