

MAILPORT



TIPS ON SPECS

For 35 years, I've been wearing glasses (or contacts and sunglasses) while on the water, but I have yet to discover an end-all solution to crusty lens-itis.

In light spray, I keep a couple sheets of paper towels in my jacket pocket to periodically wipe the lenses. In medium spray, licking the lenses actually improves visibility if they are heavily crusted. In heavy spray, I occasionally dump a 1/4 of my water bottle over my face and shades.

I now race a Melges 24, and in a breeze, the freshwater rinse is fairly effective. I was curious if any of your staff or readers have any experience with lens products?

Morgan Dale
St. Croix, USVI
Via e-mail

We talked to the folks at sunglasses-maker Costa del Mar, who offered this advice: If all you have are your hands to clean with, a dab of neutral pH soap and water are excellent cleaners. Paper towels are too abrasive; use moist lens towelettes or micro-fiber cloths instead. Many glasses makers offer their own cloths laced with isopropanol. It is worth noting that some sunglass makers, like Maui Jim, recommend only glass lenses for saltwater, presumably because of the potential for scratched lenses.

DAYSAILERS

I read your "Trophy Boat" article in the January issue of *Practical Sailor*. This excellent article was very descriptive in highlighting a new culture of sailboats.



Do \$20 glasses offer the same UV protection as a \$200 pair? PS hopes to answer this and more in our upcoming report on polarized sunglasses.

After successfully campaigning my J-120 for 10 years, I decided to change my sailing and racing approach to fit my new emerging lifestyle (retirement). I bought an Alerion Express 28 (hull No. 337) and have thoroughly enjoyed sailing and racing the boat. Donna and Garry Hoyt winced when I ordered lifelines. However, I sail on Lake Michigan and safety for my grandkids overrode the aesthetic theory. The crowning glory, to me, was your side article on the Cape Dory Typhoon. My first sailboat was a Typhoon (hull No. 199 in 1971). What a fun boat. I admired Carl Alberg's designs so much that I eventually bought a Pearson Ariel, followed by a Pearson Triton.

Jack Kelley
C.C. Rider, Alerion Express 28
Grand Haven, Mich.

BOTTOM PAINT PRICES

Do you have any recent survey on the price of bottom paints. One supplier shows an increase in price of 25 percent over the past year, and meanwhile the copper price has dropped from \$3.50 per pound to \$1.50 per pound, so what is the excuse now? Are the boat owners being held ransom by greedy paint manufacturers?

Jens Bagh
There You Are, BCC 28
Edmonton, Canada

It is indeed frustrating to the boat owner that bottom paint prices seem to quickly rise with copper prices, but never fall. The explanations from paint makers that we got for this are many and varied: The raw materials that manufacturers buy on the commodities market are normally purchased several months in advance. Raw material prices also don't include the additional charges to convert the raw commodities into a usable form. Hurricanes along the Gulf Coast in recent years caused the price for other raw materials to rise, and those high prices

PRACTICAL SAILOR ONLINE

How are the older automated steering systems like the Raymarine ST4000 wheel pilot holding up? More importantly, how are their "smarter" descendants surviving in the real world? A reader survey focusing on the reliability and performance of autopilots has been posted online at www.practical-sailor.com. The data will accompany our upcoming reports on automated steering systems. A link to the survey is posted at the top of the home page, and we hope that readers will share their views on this topic. Readers are also encouraged to check out some classic tests, PS Advisors, DIY tips, and special reports resurrected from the archives in our "Tools and Techniques" section.



Falling copper prices haven't impacted the bottom line on bottom paints.

have not retreated. Finally, some states are raising their pesticide registration fees in an attempt to make up for shortfalls in other tax revenues. For instance, the fee for a two-year pesticide registration in the state of Florida more than doubled in 2009. The bottom line to all of this is no surprise: We will probably not see any significant price reductions in bottom paint pricing this spring.

FIRST-AID FACTS

I read with interest your evaluation of first aid kits, which wrapped up with the final installment in the December 2008 issue. I'd like to add a couple of points: Weekend, cruising, and bluewater sailors should invest in a good up-to-date first aid and CPR course. It is as important as a functional bilge pump.

The responsible sailor can outfit a substantial and superior first-aid kit for much less money than a commercially available kit. The kit should be appropriate for the expected duration a victim will need treatment prior to evacuation. Most commercial kits contain a lot of fluff and are unnecessarily redundant—a lot of Band-Aids. I stress to distance sailors stocking a few prescription items and aggressive treatment for seasickness, beyond Bonine. I favor a solid medical text such as "A Comprehensive Guide to Marine Medicine," by Dr. Erick

ing kits appropriate for your boat. Remember, the victim may be the captain or medical officer, and a novice may be the one rendering treatment. A medical guide is an invaluable resource.

Curtis Edwards, MD, FACS
General surgeon
FAA Aviation Medical Examiner

THOOSA FIELD TRIALS

In the September 2008 issue, *PS* discussed electric power, and I'd like to share my own experience with this technology. I installed an Asmo (Thoosa) system in my Alberg 30, which weighs around 10,000 pounds. I need propulsion to get in and out of my slip and up the river to Lake Michigan, about 3/4 of a mile. I do not plan on long motoring trips.

So far, the Thoosa has done everything the dealer (NGC Marine) said it would. When the lake level was low, my boat would bottom out in the river, and each time the Thoosa had ample power to get me through the muck.

In addition, the system was

The Thoosa 6000 takes up a fraction of the engine space required for the diesel it replaced.



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Weiss and Dr. Michael Jacobs, or "Medicine for Mountaineering and other Wilderness Activities," by James Wilkerson. The latter is available from Mountaineer Books. Both texts give guidance on stock-

said to be able to recharge the batteries. I was skeptical of that but an hour of sailing regenerates all the amps used during the trip from the slip to the big water (I haven't yet measured drag in this mode). The other reason I chose the electric over a new diesel was that I was able to install the entire system by myself with the help of a good friend who welded up the frame to attach to the existing motor bed. I know there are potential problems, but I compare them to those of a diesel.

Dan Walker
Alberg 30
Indianapolis, Ind.

GALERIDER RELIABILITY

I do not think the February 2009 *PS* article on drogues supports the conclusion that the Galerider is reliable. [The wire hoop that keeps the drogue open] broke in two of the very few real-world uses cited. That is not reassuring for a piece of equipment intended for use in extreme conditions. Perhaps you should seek a wider information base by asking your readers to comment on their experiences.

Ray Smith
Jeanneau 43
Chesapeake Bay

Any reports of the wire hoop in the Galerider breaking would, of course, interest us, as well as the maker Hathaway, Reiser & Raymond.

As noted in the article, the Galerider has been around for a long time and these reports are very rare. It is also worth noting that in the two cases we cited, the drogue still slowed the boats (although it behaved erratically in one of the

incidents). Like any piece of safety equipment, the Galerider needs to be maintained and inspected. Stowing the Galerider wet or in a damp locker and keeping the hoop tightly coiled could contribute to weakening of the wire over time.

Signs of weakening, such as broken strands or corrosion, should be noticeable upon inspection. Unfortunately, the wire runs through a Dacron sleeve that prevents visual inspection, so the user must feel around inside the Dacron sleeve and inspect the sleeve for rust stains. PS encourages sailors to routinely uncoil the Galerider and closely inspect the wire hoop and Nicropress terminals. Owners should also consider stowing the Galerider fully opened or with the minimum number of coils. Hathaway, Reiser & Raymond advises anyone with concerns about the condition of their Galerider to contact them directly (www.hathaways.com, 203/324-9581). The Galerider is not perfect, but our has held up well to testing and we still consider it a good piece of equipment worth recommending.

HEAVING TO AND THE SHARK

Regarding your February 2009 article on drogues and heavy-weather tactics: Heaving to is a technique I practice every season. My yawl has a shallow draft and nearly flat bottom sections. I tried a military surplus parachute as a sea anchor, but the lack of a deep keel allowed my boat to yaw uncomfortably. The chute spun, tangled the bridle and created 200 feet of hockles in the rode. Drogue and sea-anchor maker Fiorentino suggested I deploy their 6-foot Para-Anchor from a bow cleat rather than the anchor roller.

They also suggested trying a bridle, consisting of a block on the rode run back to a stern or quarter cleat. Experimenting on the Oregon coast, I found an angle to the swells that dramatically eased the motion. Retrieval was easier than picking up a crab pot. I hooked one of the lines and pulled the Para-Anchor into the cockpit. It was small enough that I was able to simply spread the chute over my dodger to dry. My rode had no hockles in



The Shark drogue from Fiorentino folds compactly for stowage.

it because the Para-Anchor design eliminated any spin. Will you be testing the Fiorentino Shark drogue in the next comparison?

Robert Taylor
Primrose, Nimble 24
Winchester Bay, Ore.

We tested a prototype of the Fiorentino Shark for the February 2009

PRODUCT UPDATE

Extinction of the Force 10 Seacock is a Sign of the Times

When heavy weather sets in, even the gourmand will happily settle for a warm bowl of soup. No doubt thousands of foul-weather soups have been heated on the Force 10 Seacock, a single-burner swinging stove that easily mounts on a bulkhead and is fired by a small propane canister.

Although the ruggedly built Seacock failed to comply with industry standards for cooking below decks (lack of a flame-failure shut off valve held it back), it routinely fared well in PS evaluations (see "Compact Cookers," July 2007). In the summer of 2006, Force 10's cabin heater line was sold to Vancouver-based Dickinson and the galley range product line (along with the Force 10 name) was sold to the French company ENO. The water heater and barbecue line remained in the hands the Force



10 principals, under a new name Kuuma. (Kuuma may continue to use the Force 10 name through 2010.) Kuuma also retained rights to the Seacock stove—classified as a barbecue—but the cooker has since been dropped. According to Kuuma (www.kuumaproducts.com), the product needed re-tooling and because of its limited market, the expense did not seem worthwhile.

Today, the nearest thing to the Seacock is the Forespar (www.forespar.com) Mini Galley, a petite rendition that hardly compares. With no plans to resurrect the Seacock in sight, it seems that our generation will be the last to know the purpose of that U-shaped bracket found near the companion-way on so many older boats.



The keel on PS's 35-year-old O'Day Javelin is prepped for a coatings test (above). Reader Dick Paden's keel weeps (right).



Photo (right) by Dick Paden

.....
 article on heavy-weather tactics, but withheld our findings until we could confirm the production version was the same as what we tested. The two are basically the same. Used as a drogue, the Shark's performance was very similar to the Galerider and the Delta drogue in how much it slowed the boat. Each of these reduced boat speed about half the amount that the Jordan series drogue did. One of the Shark's interesting features is a heavy line with a spliced thimble exiting the rear. Although this could be used to

add a second drogue, Zack Smith, the owner of Fiorentino, said it was designed for setting a length of chain behind the drogue, which, he reports, has been shown to boost the drogue's holding power significantly, and with less expense than adding a second drogue in the line.

WEEPING KEEL

My keel continues to be problematic; you can see in the picture (above, right) that shows where water is weeping out of the keel. I have been grinding these weep-

ing spots down to shiny metal with my Dremel tool and then applying a coat of epoxy resin to seal the metal from the air. After the epoxy dries, I have been using more Mas epoxy to fair the repaired keel area to a smooth finish. After fairing, I have been applying two coats of Interlux InterProtect 2000 to keep the epoxy dry. Finally, I have been applying two or three coats of Interlux Micron Extra with Biolux. Ideas for improved keel treatment are welcome.

Dick Paden
 Petite Cherie, Dufour 27
 Arnold, Md.

Your approach is a bit different from the one Practical Sailor has advocated in the past: Thoroughly prep the weeping wounds by grinding, wire-brushing, or

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

DR. LED DOES GOOD

I recently purchased four Saturn Ring recessed LED light fixtures from Dr. LED (www.doctorled.com) and installed them in place of my existing incandescent fixtures. I was so pleased with the results that I purchased an additional 16 fixtures.



Saturn Ring MKII

Unfortunately, every one of the 16 fixtures began to fail soon after installation. I was so pleased with the performance of the first four lights that I contacted Dr. LED for warranty replacements versus requesting a refund. Dr.LED apologized for my inconvenience and offered me a choice: Replace-

ment with the same model or pay the price difference and upgrade to their new Saturn Ring Mk II with the next generation LED "bulb."

I opted for the upgrade, and Dr. LED immediately sent me 16 of the Mk II models. Each Mk II has three extremely bright LEDs (compared to the 24 medium-bright LEDs in the original Saturn Ring) and is advertised as equivalent to a 20-watt incandescent bulb. I agree. I am very pleased with Dr. LED's product and their product support.

Bruce Marschall
 Purrfection, Privilege 51
 Chesapeake Bay, Md.

U.S. YACHTS STANDS OUT

As long-time subscribers to *Practical Sailor* and owners of an Ultimate 24 sailboat, we wanted to say thanks to the people at US Yachts (www.ultimatesailboats.com) out of Capitola, Calif. We purchased our Ultimate 24 five years ago, and we just recently contacted the new owners/builders with questions regarding the keel crane that came with the boat. They cheerfully told us that there was an upgrade made to this and promptly sent one out to us with no charge!

Dan and Barb Hackenyos
 Solution, U-24 Hull No. 11
 Avon, Conn.

media-blasting down to white metal, wipe with solvent, apply a thin coat of acid etch primer (such as Interlux 353/354), prime with an epoxy primer meant for underwater metals (Awlgrip 545, Interlux 404/414, not resin), fair and fill with fairing compound (resin and filler OK at this point), reprime any areas where metal was exposed by sanding, barrier coat with Interprotect or similar barrier coat system, and then add anti-fouling. While a mix-and-match of brands may work, Practical Sailor's preference is to stick with one manufacturer for metal preparation, treatments, primers, top coatings, and antifoulants. This ensures chemical compatibility.

For the past six months, PS has been testing various etching acids, epoxy primers, coatings, and fairing compounds, including some industrial-grade, non-marine products. It is still too early in the test to publish any results.

A poor fit at the interface between the keel stub and the iron or lead keel is often a contributor to keel corrosion problems. Any water that enters this area can get trapped, leading to corrosion not only of the keel, but also the keel bolts. We described how to improve the keel/stub interface by making an epoxy mold in the September 2007 issue.

For reference, four different PS Advisors (May 2002, January 2007, September 2007, and March 2008) on this topic are posted online under "Tools and Techniques."

SERIOUS ABOUT WAXES

The February 2009 article on waxes struck me positively. I always learn something from your basic discussion before the test results are presented. Still, there are some missed opportunities to provide truly helpful information on this topic.

A trick my hull detail man uses is to put some combo cleaner/wax in the tub to make it slightly more creamy. Ease of application



William Solberg's 1996 Tartan 3800, Wind Dancer, reflects the results of meticulous polishing followed by a high-quality carnauba-based wax.

thereby becomes less of an issue and makes thick products like 3M Ultra Performance Paste Wax more attractive.

I'd like to see articles on this subject less product-oriented and more topic oriented. Frankly, I have a very shiny 13-year-old boat with high-quality gelcoat. The only way I can keep it shiny is to polish, polish, and polish followed by an initial coating and subsequent coatings at least every two months until I see that I have to go back and polish again. I have yet to remove too much gelcoat with 3M Finesse-It II since I do it by hand mostly.

William Solberg
Wind Dancer, Tartan 3800
Marina del Rey, Calif.

Indeed, proper execution of the various steps to restoring and protecting a gelcoat finish are key to achieving a shiny hull, and polishing is one of the most critical. Over the years, we have found significant differences among the products designed for this purpose. There is a science to almost any maintenance task, and although we try as much as possible to amplify our print reviews with practical tips, the more extensive discussions are posted on our website, www.practical-sailor.com, under the "Tools and Techniques"

section. The two that come to mind are "Offshore Log: Gelcoat Maintenance," www.practical-sailor.com/marine/gelcoat_maintenance.html, and "Plastics Versus the Weather: The Nature of a Losing Battle," www.practical-sailor.com/marine/boat-building-construction-material.html. William Burr's book "Boat Maintenance: The Essential Guide to Cleaning, Painting and Cosmetics" is also a good resource.

FANTASTIC FESTOOL

I found a great tool in the 6-inch Festool Rotex 150 sander/grinder (www.festoolusa.com). The dual-mode transmission allows both grinding and orbital sanding, and the variable speed allows it to do a very good job of polishing. The internal dust extraction system is a bonus. It is pricey, but the customer support is nothing less than fantastic.

Jerry Brown
Always, '68 Moody Halberdier ketch
San Francisco, Calif.

Practical Sailor welcomes letters from our readers. Please include your name, home port, boat type, and boat name. Send e-mail to practicalsailor@belvoirpubs.com and mail to *Practical Sailor*, 7820 Holiday Dr. S., Suite 315, Sarasota, FL 34231.