



BOTTOM SCRUBBING

As a new boat owner, I have no end of questions, but here's a quickie: I have recently had my boat hauled and sanded to the gelcoat, and repainted with all the right stuff. (The bottom was coated with Interlux CA Bottomkote.) Now, how often should I have a diver clean the underside, bearing in mind I live in San Diego?

The service providers have a vested interest in selling frequent cleans—one company running a special at the moment wants me to sign a contract for a bottom clean every three weeks, but that sounds way too often to me. I realize it may well vary with geography and ambient temperature, but there should be some kind of general rule of thumb, perhaps?

Terry Rugg
Tatenda, Islander 36
San Diego, Calif.

For now, it looks like San Diego's shift toward eco-friendly paints will be a boon for bottom cleaners. The municipality's test protocol for antifouling paints (PS, March 2009), unlike ours, includes cleaning at regular intervals. As a result, the products deemed acceptable for your region will require more frequent cleaning to ward off hard growth. Our test boats—painted with conventional copper-based paints and lying in the Chesapeake, New England, and Florida—get cleaned as needed. The intervals between cleanings range from two weeks to never, depending on conditions, paint, and how the boat is used. Remember that hard scrubbing some ablative paints will shorten their lifespan because it removes paint. A light wipe-down—or more frequent use—is preferred. From what we have found, three weeks



Skimmer, a Cape Dory 25 test boat, was painted in November 2007 with Interlux Bottomkote and Bottomkote mixed with cayenne pepper. No difference between the two sections was noted. Initially, the boat was cleaned of soft growth every six to eight weeks. Now, nearly two years later, it requires weekly cleaning or else hard growth sets in. Bottomkote is a mid-priced hard paint that holds up well to scrubbing.

between cleanings is not unusual for boats in your area, though that may be because that is what is offered, not what is required. An update on our bottom paint panel test will appear in the October issue.

ZAINO FAN

I have used Zaino Bros. wax (www.zainostore.com) for six years on my family's cars with incredibly good results. The shine is outstanding—the best I have ever seen. The coating survives most commercial car washes and lasts for nine to 12 months in New England weather.

The manufacturer suggests several coats, and to get the shine desired, Zaino advises applying a coat of their detailer between coats. There's minimal labor—apply, wait 30 minutes, wipe off white coating, done—no rubbing, no polishing.

Last year, I considered using the Zaino Bros. wax on my 1987 Ericson 34, but not knowing of any test where it was used on fiberglass, I opted for Poli Glow acrylic, which has worked very well so far this season, but your test raises my interest in using Zaino again.

Arthur Stock
Rejoice, Ericson 34
Mattapoissett, Mass.

Zaino Bros.' Z-3 Show Car Polish was among the dozens of liquid waxes we applied to fiberglass test panels and reported on in "Liquid Wax Test Launch" in the July 2009 issue. The oily-wax formula offered excellent water-beading and gloss, earning it an initial Recommended rating for use on fiberglass. Stay tuned for updates on the long-term protection of the liquid and paste waxes (PS, February 2009) we're testing.

ISLAND GIRL

I sail a 2004 Catalina 350 out of Long Beach, Calif. and have some comments

PRACTICAL SAILOR ONLINE

Due to high reader response, our survey on favorite do-it-yourself boatyards will remain online at www.practical-sailor.com a bit longer. Be sure to rate the best yard in your area. (You don't have to be a subscriber to participate.) A link to the survey is posted at the top of the homepage, and we hope that readers will share their views on this topic. Readers are also encouraged to check out some classic tests, DIY tips, and special reports resurrected from the archives in our "Tools & Techniques" section.



Bill Van Wagoner's topsides still retain gloss one year after applying the Island Girl two-part system, which fared well in our July report on liquid waxes.

regarding your boat wax and polish studies in the July issue. I applied traditional wax every six to eight months after buying this boat new. I tried your recommended Collinite Fleet Wax the first time and found it no fun to apply. I went back to 3M cleaner-wax, which I had applied every six months for about 10 years on my previous boat.

Due to the need to re-do the wax every six months and the labor

involved, even with the cleaner wax, I was interested in something easier, hence my interest in the Island Girl two-part system, which includes the Elixir followed by Mirror Hard Superglaze. I applied this two-part system about a year ago, and the hull still looks good with water beading, except where the fenders have rubbed on the hull during docking. The cabintop needs to be re-done as it is not beading water that well and

the gloss is gone. This stuff is still easier than wax to apply, and seems to last longer. However, I would be interested in knowing how it stacks up against other non-wax products such as Poli Glow etc. The Island Girl does not seem to leave a residue that yellows or requires removal like some of the other non-wax products.

For removing oxidation from rubber and vinyl, I prefer the Island Girl Sea Glow, which works well on rubrails, lifelines, etc. (badly oxidized lifelines clean up quickly with this stuff). I have followed the Sea Glow with the Silkenseal protectant, which seems to work a little better than other rubber protectants I have tried such as 303.

I am very pleased that *Practical Sailor* is looking into these products, as I believe material technologies should be able to provide superior alternatives to the old-fashioned methods requiring lots of elbow grease.

Bill Van Wagoner
Destiny, Catalina 350
 Long Beach, Calif.

Photo courtesy of Bill Van Wagoner

GEAR GRAVEYARD

PS Urges End to Zippered Life Jacket Stowage Bags

In our recent move to a new larger *PS* workshop, we took a quick inventory of products still in long-term testing. As expected, a few items were dispatched to the Gear Graveyard, the final resting place for products that have fatal flaws or have reached the end of their life.

ZIPPERED LIFE JACKET STOW BAG

This design should have never seen the light of day. We found two standard, zippered life-jacket storage bags in the back of our store room, each with six life jackets. Both were permanently zipped tight, seized with corrosion and requiring tools to open. Regular use and a wax coating would prevent such corrosion, but a simple Velcro closure is a better remedy. In our view, bags used to store emergency equipment should have maintenance-free closures that won't seize in the marine environment. Velcro and drawstrings work just fine.

SOLLIGHT RAIL LIGHT

We weren't too surprised when our four-year-old rail light from Sollight (www.sollight.com) finally bit the dust. This

solar-powered light went into continuous service in late fall 2005. It died in April 2009. It appears that internal corrosion caused by salt air and water intrusion may have led to its demise. The lens is faded, the clamp wobbly, and the solar lens cloudy. It cost \$28 (now it's \$32) and delivered about five to eight hours of light per week for almost four years. Better engineering would add a few years to its life, but the price would go up as well. We couldn't expect much more for the price.



Sollight rail light

IGLOO COOLER

Our next victim of sea and sun was the Igloo Max Cold 60 wheeled cooler that did mediocre in our December 2005 test. As expected, the mild-steel wheel axle is severely corroded and the plastic latch and hinges have broken. Even Igloo's "marine" coolers have plastic latches, compared to Coleman's stainless-steel hardware. For about \$15, we were able to get new hinges and latches from Igloo online (www.igloo-store.com).

Thanks for sharing your experience. A one-year update on acrylic finishes like Poli Glow and Vertglass is in the works. These products, like most we tested, claim only one-year protection. Most acrylics are holding up surprisingly well on our blue-hulled test boat, better than the waxes applied at the same time. Poli Glow has a new product for removing the old Poli Glow that we are also testing.

SHURFLO

When the micro pressure switch on my Shurflo water pump (Shurflo Extreme 5901 0211, manufactured in 2005) failed, I contacted Shurflo to order a replacement part. I was advised by their warranty center that they re-designed the switch in 2006 and that my only alternative was a new pump.

In my third follow-up call to Shurflo (www.shurflo.com), I learned that Honeywell (www.honeywell.com) made the switch, but had discontinued it. Honeywell technical services advised me that the switch had been replaced, that the replacement switch would function just as the original, and they directed me to where I could find the replacement. For readers who may need a replacement micro pressure switch for their Shurflo Extreme 5901 0211 manufactured prior to 2006, the following information is provided: Honeywell switch (Part No. 24PCFFMGG) can be ordered from Newark Electronics, 800/367-3573. (Newark's stock part number is 46WX452.) The cost is approximately \$45.

I've installed the replacement switch, and it works just like the original at a savings of about \$200 for a new pump. The assistance by Honeywell technical reps and Newark Electronics was outstanding.

Robert R. Kane
S/V *Cheers*, Sabre 362
Lottsburg, Va.

CLIP-ON SHADES

Regarding your July 2009 article on sunglasses, I'm surprised your usual thorough analysis did not include clip-ons for prescription glasses. The gray

lenses in the glasses are not enough!

For coastal sailing near San Diego, I found Polaroid clip-ons to be just right for sunny days. The only problem has been reading some digital instruments from the cockpit or even my digital watch, which require angle viewing. But I have no problem with my Garmin GPS chartplotter and digital readout.

Walter C. Tice
Charisma, CAT30
San Diego, Calif.

Although we didn't test any clip-ons, we did experiment with some fitover designs. If clip-ons, fitovers, or prescription glasses are consistent with our general criteria for conventional sunglasses, as described in the July article, they should serve nicely. The problem with most clip-ons is that they do not offer UV protection from the side, so you are relying on your existing frames for that.

PRESCRIPTION SUNNIES

Thanks for the great information on sunglasses in the July 2009 issue. For those in the market for prescription sunglasses, it would be helpful to know which of your picks can be had in prescription form. My research already tells me that Maui Jim and Costa Del Mar, do. Do Harken, Kaenon, and Oakley?

Brad Brown
S/V *Easily Influenced*
San Diego, Calif.

Except Harken, all of the glasses manufacturers with products recommended in the July review offer the prescription sunglasses.

A NOTE FROM OCEAN EYES

Regarding your July 2009 report on polarized sunglasses for eyeball navigation. The inshore guides and sailors who field tested Ocean Eyes (www.oceaneyes.biz) products tried several combinations of front mirrors and polarized filters and found that certain combinations would allow them to see



Neutrogena's Ultra-Sheer Dry-Touch, containing oxybenzone, ranked low in a recent safety study, while its zinc and titanium-based Pure & Free baby scored higher. Neither was among the top recommended products.

New Sunscreen Study Identifies Safer Lotions

According to a study of 2,073 sunscreens by the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org), two product trends bear watching: the appearance of some sunscreens with mega-ratings of SPF 55 or higher; and a shift away from oxybenzone, a product found in many of the products *PS* tested in 2007.

According to the EWG, sunscreens with high sun protection factors (SPF 55-100) block only 1 to 2 percent more UVB radiation than SPF 30. They also require two to three more times the ingredients, some of which may be absorbed into the body.

The study also noted a big drop in products containing oxybenzone, a hormone disrupter that can be absorbed by the skin.

The EWG could not find evidence that effective physical blockers zinc and titanium could be absorbed through healthy skin, concluding that "on balance, zinc and titanium-based formulations are among the safest, most effective sunscreens on the market, based on available evidence."



The Ocean Eyes Jack Nicklaus Eagles we tested had amber lenses with green flash mirror coating. The lenses were excellent, but the frames were better suited for the fairway.

deeper in the water better than any other lenses. A favorite for this purpose was our Backwater Green, which has an amber base. This was developed especially for sight fishing and sailing where they could see the sandbars and the “heads” better than ever before.

The same testing was carried out for lenses for deep water. The testers would want to see things at a sharper angle since they would be traveling at a faster rate and would be looking at a greater distance. When the exact combination was chosen by the field testers out of around 20 different pairs, we knew we had our Offshore Blue lens, which has a grey base and a blue-mirror combinations.

Kevin Carlson
President, Ocean Waves Inc.

Unfortunately, we did not have the chance to test the Backwater Green lenses, which, based on this description, would be a good choice for eyeball navigation. The testers' favorite lenses from Ocean Eyes were an amber lens with a green flash mirror coating that compares to the description of the Backwater Green. The only drawback was the frame, the Jack Nicklaus Eagle, which lacked side protection. The Offshore Blue lenses that we tested blocked too much light to rate highly in our shoal-spotting exercises, though they would serve well offshore.

NAVIGATING BY GOOGLE

Regarding your comments on digital charts in the June 2009 Mailport section: Your readers should be made aware that all electronic charts are

based on paper charts, and they are based to a greater or lesser extent on quite old survey work. It does not matter much which electronic chart manufacturer you rely on, as they all use the same base data with the corrections published in the local notices.

We have had the opportunity to compare charts from different manufacturers (including the U.S. NOAA ENC's), both in the U.S. and abroad. Reading the footnotes on the paper chart will give you an indication of when the surveys were actually done. Here in Ireland, the baseline surveys often date back to the 1840s.

As these are often lead-line surveys done well before electronic navigation (GPS or Loran) was even conceived, the positions given are relative to the next land feature and will often not be close to the precision achieved with GPS. There are places where the position can thus be well over a mile off. We find that using dead reckoning and conventional navigation methods help overcome this adequately.

We have also made extensive use of Google Earth. We either simply review a destination and print out the screen grab, or cache a route and destinations prior to setting off. We can then use either EarthNC or Fugawi Marine together with a GPS mouse to follow our course on the Google Earth image. For U.S. waters, both of these software packages will also allow you to use electronic charts together with the Google Earth images.

Capt. Alex Blackwell
Aleria, Bowman 57
Westport, County Mayo, Ireland

BIG-HEARTED HONDA

A small, light sailboat demands small, light equipment, so last spring, I purchased a Honda EU1000i generator for power on my C&C 27.

The generator received its first real test when Hurricane Ike hit the Gulf

Coast in September 2008. For two weeks, the Honda ran from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. with only an hour's break around noon. During that time, it powered a freezer, a large TV, various lights, and all manner of computer equipment, as well as charged a Group 27 battery that supplied lights during the hours that the generator was off. The Honda's quiet, dependable performance so impressed my neighbor that he bought an EU2000i. I would happily recommend the Honda to anyone who is in need of a small, quiet generator with a big heart.

Mike Mathews
C&C 27
Houston, Texas

Practical Sailor contributors Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger ocean-tested the 1,000-watt version of the Honda generator during their winter cruise of Chile's Beagle Channel. They found it to be well-engineered, relatively quiet, and generally maintenance free. Their review of the Honda EU1000i appeared in the December 2008 issue.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In last month's article on sunglasses, we neglected to give due credit to Capt. Tom Stephens Jr., a second-generation fishing guide (www.topnotchfishing.com) and artist from Sarasota, Fla., who volunteered advice, equipment, and an expert pair of eyes for our project.

CORRECTION

The contact number for tank sensor maker BEP/Marineco is 707/226-9600. It was listed incorrectly in the July issue.

*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.*

NAUTA and WEST SYSTEMS

Returning to Lake Champlain from the Chesapeake aboard our Tartan 34C this spring, we had two difficulties that needed to be remedied.

Last year, we installed a Nauta flexible tank. Unfortunately, we positioned the fuel vent incorrectly, and the result was leaking diesel when the tank was filled to capacity. We e-mailed the tank maker, Imtra (www.imtra.com), to ask whether a fitting was available that would seal the original hole and allow us to reposition the vent. We received a prompt reply from Peter Nolet, who understood the problem and is sending us the fitting we need at no charge, even though our error caused the problem!

On the same day, we heard from Tom Pawlak of West System (www.westsystem.com) "Epoxy Works" magazine. He confirmed that our approach to repairing a problem with the centerboard pin (sleeve the centerboard) on our Tartan 34 was sound, and advised us on the appropriate epoxy to use. Kudos to two fine companies for their great customer service!

Richard and Karen Hajek
S/V *Trefoil*, Tartan 34C
Hadley, N.Y.

ICP SOLAR PANEL

I purchased a Sunsei SE-1200 solar panel from ICP Solar (www.icpsolar.com) in early 2007. It kept our 200-Ah house bank nicely topped up for two seasons. At the beginning of this season, I noticed that the panel was not showing voltage on one of its output taps, and I contacted ICP about it. At ICP's request, I sent a photo of the panel with a digital volt meter on the tap. ICP shipped a new panel the following day. Great product and great service.

John Devine
S/V *Suddenly*
Via e-mail

FERRIELLO SENSOR

After many months of faultless operation, the indications on the Solo Profile tank monitor I had purchased from Ferriello Sales (www.ferriellosales.com) and installed in my boat became erratic. I contacted the company's owner, Dennis Ferriello, and although my system was beyond the warranty period, he diagnosed the problem as a faulty sensor and immediately sent me a replacement at no charge.

This is an excellent monitoring system, and the company has superb customer support!

Greg Frazer
Via e-mail

SEA FROST

We would like to give credit where it is due to Cleave Horton and Sea Frost (www.seafrost.com) for outstanding service. We spend the winters cruising aboard our Pacific Seacraft 37 out of Simpson Bay Marina in Saint Maarten, N.A. During hurricane season, when our boat is on the hard, we live in Vermont.

Our 10-year-old Sea Frost BD3 refrigeration unit has had some challenges maintaining a constant cool temperature in the tropical Caribbean climate. We had the opportunity to visit Sea Frost's facility in Barrington, N.H. Owner/founder Cleave Horton greeted us to provide a personal tour and took the time to methodically review the mechanics of our system, the connection fittings, and how best to correct the problem. We elected to purchase a remote thermostat, which should solve the problem and provide greater convenience. For good mea-



Readers Richard and Karen Hajek, sailing their Tartan 34C, give thumbs up to Imtra and West System.

sure, Cleave also gave us several seals and caps at no charge.

The personal attention we received was a very pleasant surprise in this day and age of automated phone reception where it is difficult to actually speak with a customer-service person, let alone benefit from the personal attention of the owner/founder.

Don and Donna Merkle
Destiny, Pacific Seacraft 37
Sint Maarten, N.A.



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The Sea Frost reefer conversion kit was among the 12-volt units we tested recently that used cold-plate technology.