

GEAR On test



Just as she came out of the water, complete with weed on the waterline



Photos Garth Cooper



Portside forward end: weed on the waterline and slime below... The power washer takes all the slime off... The finished job; ready for another season

BLAKES PAINTS
Ocean Performer
Antifouling £79.99 (2.5 lt)
**Underwater primer/
 undercoat £33.75 (2.5 lt)**
 ★★★★★

Last month we gave a quick verdict on the Ocean Performer antifouling. Now we've had a better look and can confirm its success, plus some cost savings.

In May last year I applied four coats in total, with the aim of seeing if there were real savings to be made in not having to antifoul every season (see *ST* 89 Sept '04).

Just before Easter this year I hauled the boat out. I could have gone on the scrubbing posts at £12 a go plus power wash, but other engineering considerations dictated I go to the expense of a lift out. Without this lift I would have saved around £180 over the two seasons.

I already knew I hadn't got her waterline quite right to cope with the weight she carries when cruising and it was no surprise to find a beard along part of the water line. However, apart from the propeller, there were no barnacles and only a heavy slime about 12-18in down from the boot top. There were just three small areas where paint had lifted off.

A good blast over with the power washer, an hour to dry, a quick touch up and she was ready to go back in the water. *Garth Cooper*
 Contact Blakes Paints ☎ 01489 864440
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Sailing Today Verdict

This is a good product. Multi-coating appears to work mechanically as well as offering financial savings

RENOVO PLASTIC WINDOW POLISH
 £4.99 per 30ml
 ★★★★★



Photos Colin Jarman

The window panels on my sprayhood, in common with those on many others, had been dulled by salt and sun. You could still see through them, but not as clearly as I would like to be able to. So, after cleaning up the canvas parts of the hood with Renovo's canvas

cleaner, I turned to the windows and Renovo's Plastic Window Polish.

The little 30ml bottle needs to be shaken well before use and then small quantities of the white cream are applied not directly to the windows, but to a soft cotton cloth, which is used to coat the windows. Once the cream has dried on the plastic panels it can



be polished off with a clean section of the cotton cloth and buffed up to a nice, transparent shine.

I used about half the bottle to cover both sides of the window panels of the sprayhood on my 26-footer, so it's fairly economical if used only a couple of times in the season. I'll have to see how it lasts, but for the moment the view



Photos Colin Jarman

The separate mini-lamp and the charging socket

PIFCO LIGHTBLASTER SPOTLIGHT £12.99

★★★★★

The Pifco LightBlaster is a rechargeable, million candlepower spotlight not actually designed for use afloat, but, with a £12.99 price tag, it is likely to be bought by many small boat owners.

The lamp isn't waterproof and in fact has a shell in two halves that barely meet, so it would be essential to tape over this seam before using the lamp afloat. Spray and rain would be kept at bay by so doing.

The big main beam housing has a small subsidiary light beneath it, angled downwards with its own little slider on/off switch on the side. It's not especially powerful, but saves using the main beam at times. An internal rechargeable battery powers the small lamp and the main beam. It is recharged using the mains charger provided, or by plugging into a 12V cigar lighter socket with the connections also provided. A red LED lights up when the lamp is being charged. Apart from its lack of waterproofing, the main drawback is that when the bulb goes, the unit is finished – the halogen bulb is not replaceable.

Controlled by a trigger, the main beam can either be flashed or switched on and off. It is powerful enough to help pick out a mooring buoy or signal your presence to a ship, but could also dazzle and destroy night vision if not used carefully. Despite being fairly heavy, because of the rechargeable battery, the LightBlaster is well balanced and fits comfortably into your hand.

This is a useful lamp to have on board, but might not survive being dropped too often.

Colin Jarman

Contact Salton Europe ☎ 0845 658 9700

Website www.saltoneurope.com

Sailing Today Verdict

A useful, powerful lamp, built for use in dry weather, with a life limited by the bulb life



Blakes paints update

Brilliant Enamel £15.50 (750ml); Primer/Undercoat £34.50 (2.5lt); Waterline £15.50 (350ml); Favourite Varnish £10.25 (750ml)

I did not expect to be updating last month's report on these finishes so soon, but the power of the weather never ceases to amaze. My report was written in January, but then in early March heavy snow and ice wreaked havoc.

A year ago Brilliant enamel was applied to the topsides and Favourite varnish to the cockpit and the brightwork – see *ST* 89 Sept'04. I left the winter covers off and really thought I'd got away with it, but then came several inches of snow, which froze then rapidly thawed. Most of the varnish work is still sound and looks pretty good – except for the forehatch, coachroof grab rails and the seat and sole slats in the cockpit, and parts of the toerail. Next winter the covers go on, regardless of product testing.

The Brilliant enamel on the topsides has retained its sparkle and, from a

distance, looks good. Close up, however, the seams have cracked and raised. I think this is down to the planks swelling throughout the mild and wet winter months until early March, and then moisture in the cracks freezing and swelling the seams. I hope that a few hours of early summer sun will work miracles, but we'll see.

The topsides will have to be repainted next winter and, unless I can find the time and money to re-glue and re-spline them, I will probably go back to using traditional oil-based enamel paint. It's more flexible and forgiving, but, unfortunately, is not quite as knock-proof as the Brilliant, which is a nice paint to apply, covers well and maintains a good wet edge. Also, on areas such as the transom and the bows, where there's little movement of the planks, the finish remains superb. *Garth Cooper*

Contact Blakes Paints ☎ 01489 864440



The starboard, sheltered, side is much better than the more exposed areas



A foot of freezing snow and ice wrecked the varnish on the cockpit slats



Photos Garth Cooper

This area takes the worst of the weather, but the paint hasn't broken away and is giving some protection to the seams



Here the paint finish is good, but has cracked and raised on the seams

out through the windows is considerably improved for little effort. *Colin Jarman*
Contact Renovo International ☎ 01444 443277
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Sailing Today Verdict

Good and effective, at a reasonable price



Use a soft cotton cloth to apply



The improved view through the window panels