

Beating the barnacles

Last April YM painted a 10m yacht with 12 different eroding antifoulings. She spent the season cruising West Country waters from a swinging mooring on the River Tamar. Which brands performed best? Which was the barnacle Bill? James Jermain reports

This is the time of year you see boat owners scanning the paints section of their local chandlery, trying to choose a brand of antifouling that will do a better job than the barnacle magnet they applied the previous season. We shared their confusion, and with more brands coming on the market each year, the chances of making a mistake get greater.

To shed some light on the problem YM selected a range of popular eroding antifoulings that represented all sections of the market, and subjected them to trial by reality for nine months (see YM July 2005, p83). The products range in cost, from the premium Awlgrip Gold Label at £94 for 2.5 litres, through mid-range coatings such as Jotun Mare Nostrum to the budget buys from XM and Compass at around £30 for 2.5 litres. We also tried the latest product from International – Cruiser Uno – a one-coat, one-season paint.

Left: Each product was applied in six strips – one each side of the bow, stern and keel

HOW WE DID IT

The rate of fouling on a hull varies widely from bow to stern, from waterline to keel and even from side to side. Yachts on swinging moorings are not exempt from this either. So my Scanmar 33, *Sweet Lucy*, for the second time in her life, sported a fetching patchwork of bottom paints. Each product was applied in six strips, including one at the bow and stern on each side and one at the top and bottom of the keel. The extremities of the bow and stern were left unpainted, exposing last year's antifouling, Blakes Cruising Performer. Each strip was separated by a 3cm-wide control strip. Each product was therefore exposed to as near as possible the same conditions.

The coatings were applied on an overcast day in April with the air temperature a degree or two above the recommended minimum level. The atmosphere was damp but rain, which threatened all day, held off while we were doing the painting. Each paint was applied with a new roller and paint tray according to the manufacturers' instructions on the tin. All were given two coats (except



>> COMPASS CRUISING
★★★★★ £29.95

Application rating: ★★★ Medium density, good obliteration and moderate coat build-up
Performance rating: Very good on starboard side, moderate on port side with light weed on the waterline and moderate slime build-up. No shells on either side.
Colours: White, Wine, Navy Blue, Royal/Navy, Black
Sizes: 750ml; 2.5 litres
Contact: Compass Watersports
Tel: 08704 204107
Website: www.compass24.com



>> FLAG FLAGSHIP
★★★★★ £39.95

Application rating: ★★★ Medium density, good obliteration and moderate coat build-up
Performance rating: Protected well against slime on the body of the boat but a slight weed fringe and a very few barnacles on the port bow knocked this product off the top rung.
Colours: Steel White, Red, Dark Blue, Black
Sizes: 2.5 litres
Contact: Flag Paints **Tel:** 01621 785173
Website: www.flagfinishes.co.uk



>> INTERNATIONAL UNO
★★★★★ £52.50

Application rating: ★★★★★ One coat only is recommended so quick and easy with good obliteration
Performance rating: Worst for barnacles which, on some patches, were so dense it was impossible to tell if there was any weed or slime growth. On other patches growth appeared light. However, International's premium products, such as Micron Optima and Extra, have a good reputation as all-round performers.
Colours: White, Red, Blue, Navy Blue, Black
Sizes: 750ml and 2.5 litres
Contact: International Coatings
Tel: 023 8022 6722
Website: www.yachtpaint.com



>> JOTUN MARE NOSTRUM
★★★★★ £61.85

Application rating: ★★★ Medium density, good obliteration and coat build-up
Performance rating: A good all-round performer with no barnacle growth, no weed at the waterline and only a light build-up of slime on all patches
Colours: Red, Blue, Black
Sizes: 2.5 litres
Contact: Jotun **Tel:** 0207 481 2741
Website: www.jotun.co.uk



>> NAUTICAL
★★★★★ £40.50

Application rating: ★★ A very thin product which tended to run down the arm. But it went on quickly and obliterated the sub-strate surprisingly well
Performance rating: Thin paint means thin coats and so this product struggled a bit with a moderate to heavy fringe of waterline weed on most patches and some moderate to heavy barnacle growth particularly on the port side, amidships
Colours: Red, Blue, Black
Sizes: 2.5 litres
Contact: International Coatings
Tel: 023 8022 6722
Website: www.yachtpaint.com



>> NAUTIX PERFORMER
★★★★★ £49.85

Application rating: ★★ A thick formulation with took more effort to apply though obliteration and coat build-up were good.
Performance rating: A consistent performer all round the boat. Some barnacle growth was apparent on the starboard side only. There was a light weed fringe at the waterline and a light to moderate build-up of slime
Colours: French Blue, Navy Blue, Green, Black
Sizes: 2.5 and 5 litres
Contact: Marineware **Tel:** 02380 330208
Website: www.nautix.com





Above and left: having been immersed for eight months, the patchwork hull is lifted to compare and contrast results

» THE LEAGUE TABLE

1	Seajet Shogun Teamac D	Joint winners for best buy
3	Flag Flagship Jotun Mare Nostrum	
5	Nautix Performer	
6	Awlgrip Gold Label Blakes Cruising Performer Venetziani Raffaello	
9	Compass Cruising	
10	Nautical	
11	XM CX 2000	
12	International Uno	

» AWLGRIP GOLD LABEL ★★★★★ £94

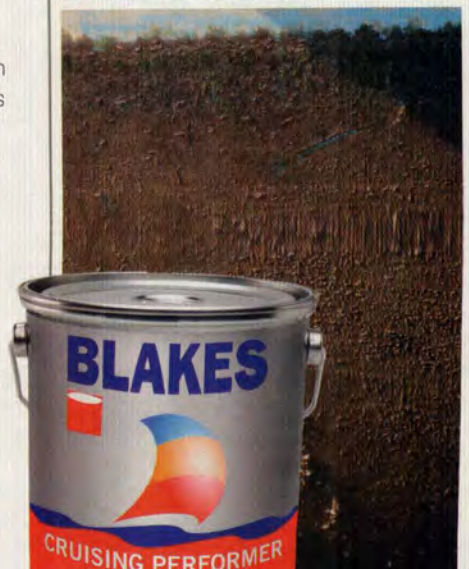
Application rating: ★★★ Medium density with good obliteration of substrate; good build-up of coats
Performance rating: Moderate overall performance. No barnacles or mussels on any patches, light to moderate slime coating, very light weed at waterline
Colours: White, Black, Dark Blue, Light Blue, Red, Green
Sizes: 750ml; 2.5 litre;
Contact: Marinewear Tel: 02380 330208
Website: www.awlgrip.com



All prices shown are for 2.5litres

» BLAKES CRUISING PERFORMER ★★★★★ £43.50

Application rating: ★★★★★ Medium to thin density but covered well and was quick to apply
Performance rating: Variable performance on different patches ranging from almost clean (starboard amidships) to a moderate slime coating with moderate weed growth on the waterline and some barnacles on the port amidships patch.
Colours: Dark Blue, Light Blue, Red, Black
Sizes: 2.5 litres
Contact: Blakes Paints Tel: 01489 864440
Website: www.blakespaints.com



for International Uno) and were applied just over the recommended minimum time apart. *Sweet Lucy* was launched the following day.

Sweet Lucy's mooring is on the Tamar River by Cargreen in Cornwall, about seven miles above Plymouth Sound. The river is still fully tidal at this point, heavy with silt and the water is salt, although after heavy rain a fair bit of freshwater comes down on the ebb. She was used for coastal cruising last year and, unusually, made no really long passages. She plied a regular course between Plymouth Sound, Falmouth, Salcombe and Dartmouth. The antifouling was untouched between April and the end of December when she was hauled out. The strips were carefully inspected and photographed before the whole hull was pressure-washed.

THE RESULTS

As soon as *Sweet Lucy* came out of the water it was immediately noticeable that the port side was more heavily fouled than the starboard but that there was very little difference between the two sides.

each side. Each paint strip was intact and the coatings had remained firmly attached to the hull. All had a good residual thickness of effective antifouling, with the possible exception of the one-coat International Uno.

The difference in performance between the best and worst was striking, though the six middle performers were much the same. Interestingly, the two-year-old Blakes paint on the control strips out-performed some of this season's coatings.

Reports from other boatyards on the River Tamar suggested last season was a bad one for mussels and barnacles but reasonably good for weed and slime. Our results tended to confirm this, though the top performers were all barnacle-free. With the exception of the three at the bottom of the table, we were impressed by general performance.

International Uno proved to be a special case. This is a new product developed in response to boat owners who habitually antifoul each year and want a cost-effective product that does not build up excessive

LONG-TERM TEST RESULTS



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» SEAJET SHOGUN ★★★★★ £73.15

Application rating: ★★★★★ An easy product to apply with a good balance between thickness and flow. Good obliteration of sub-strate.

Performance rating: An excellent all round performance spoiled by one or two barnacles on the after patch on the starboard side. Elsewhere there was no waterline fringe and most panels were almost clean of slime.

Colours: White, Red, Middle Blue, Navy Blue, Black, Grey.

Sizes: 750ml and 2.5 litres

Contact: Seajet **Tel:** 01629 406822

Website: www.seajetpaint.com



» TEAMAC D ★★★★★ £49.50

Application rating: ★★★ Medium to thick coating which was easy to apply and covered well

Performance rating: A very good all round performance with no barnacle growth on any patches. Slime build-up was very light all over. A slight weed fringe on both port side patches prevented it being the outright winner

Colours: Red, Blue, Grey, Green, Black

Sizes: 1l and 2.5 litres

Contact: Teamac Marine Coatings

Tel: 01482 320194 **Website:** www.teamac.co.uk



» VENEZIANI RAFFAELLO ★★★★★ £76.25

Application rating: ★★★ A medium thickness product with no application problems

Performance rating: One of a group of average performance. Waterline weed was its weakness and a small patch of barnacles on the port side, amidships also let it down. Over most of the patches slime was very light. For 2006 this product has been modified to include carbon, a hydrophilic element which reduces surface friction.

Colours: Red, Dark Blue, Light Blue, Green, Grey, Black

Sizes: 750ml, 2.5 and 5 litres

Contact: Veneziani Yachting **Tel:** 02380 382588

Website: www.vzyachting.co.uk



» XM CX 2000 ★★★★★ £34.96

Application rating: ★★ This is a thick product which was hard to apply but covered well and built up a good film thickness.

Performance rating: Moderate to heavy barnacle growth on all four hull patches let this product down. There was also a light fringe of weed on all waterlines but slime build-up was light to moderate all over.

Colours: White, Red, Blue, Navy Blue, Black

Sizes: 3 litres

Contact: Navimo UK **Tel:** 0870 751 4666;

Website: www.xm-yachting.co.uk

