

system simple. (In other words DO NOT, as the previous owner of my boat did, install pressure water on a trailer sailer. Keep it simple, and you'll be happier in the long run.)

Painting the exterior

After all the prep work, painting and sanding of the hull and topsides, it was finally time to paint the exterior. There are several paint manufacturers to choose from, but I went with Petit because it was readily available from catalog suppliers, and slightly cheaper. The exterior of a sailboat is a punishing environment for a coat of paint to endure, so I don't recommend scrimping on paint. Buy a good, marine-grade paint, and stick with one manufacturer for everything. Interlux thinner might do some strange things when used to thin Petit's paint. Maybe it'll work fine, but if I were you, I'd confine my experiments to the doghouse. (not the "doghouse" on the boat, either... the doghouse in your yard. See page 36.) At least, don't experiment on something as large as your hull unless you really know what you're doing.

For painting the hull, polyurethane is the only way to go. Standard oil-based enamels, even the best marine grades, will have a life expectancy of about two years. It isn't unusual for polyurethane finishes to last five years to ten years.

The very best finish is a two-part, sprayed-on finish. The only problem with this is that spraying polyurethane is so toxic that the fumes can kill you. Some two-part spray coatings are only available to professional refinishers, who use full body protective suits and positive-pressure ventilation systems. Since we're talking about rel-

69. The exterior paint job at the start of the project. A little more scraping and sanding remains to be done around the bow.



PAINT CHOICES

As I was completing the section on polyurethane paints, Practical Sailor magazine published an article comparing different paint types for above-the-waterline use. (Topside Paint Kick-Off, Vol 28, #4, Feb 15, 2002) They applied different one-part and two-part polys, as well as other industrial and standard enamel coatings, to the side of an old Boston Whaler.

The initial results were that most two-part polys had excellent to good gloss, while most one-part polys had fair or poor gloss. The exception was Interlux Brightside, rated excellent in red and white, fair in blue. My choice, Petit's Easyoxy, was rated as poor for all three colors.

Even though Practical Sailor didn't rate the paint very highly, I'm extremely satisfied with Easyoxy's performance and gloss. Maybe I'll try Interlux next time, but if the difference is as dramatic as they indicate, I'll need sunglasses to look at my hull.

70. Drybrushing the hull. The paint has been rolled on, leaving a very bubbly and rough surface. Lightly stroking with the brush pops the bubbles and smooths the surface greatly.



atively small boats here, the cost to have a hull sprayed might be worth considering, especially if you can work out a price where you do all the stripping, scraping and sanding. And a sprayed poly finish is BEAUTIFUL. Really. It can look as if the hull popped from the mold hours ago, rather than decades.

There is an alternative, though, if you decide that two hundred dollars per foot (A common rate to refinish just the deck... hulls are often less, around \$100 per foot) is a bit too dear. The major paint manufacturers have developed polyurethanes that are designed to be applied by roller and smoothed out with a dry brush. This technique is called “drybrushing,” and if you’re careful can result in a finish that’s nearly as

71. The resulting gloss. I was very pleased with the performance of the Petit one-part poly, though I’ve heard that two-parts give even greater gloss.



72. The hull after the first coat of green polyurethane.



glossy as a sprayed-on paint job.(See “Paint Choices, sidebar) This technique is especially suited to amateur boat restorers who may not have access to all that safety equipment.

One of the more recent developments in boat paints is one-part polyurethane paints. They are much easier to use than two-part paints since they don’t need to be catalyzed before application, but they do need to be thinned a bit. They are less expensive as well. I used Petit’s Easyepoxy one-part polyurethane, “Jade Green.”

It works best if you have a helper or two, but it can be done by one person. Here’s how it works. Using the paint manufacturer’s special brushing thinner, a batch of paint is thinned to a consistency of heavy cream. This is rolled onto the hull with a foam roller cover. (NOT a household roller cover that you can get from Lowes... they’ll fall apart and ruin the job) At this point the paint will slightly resemble the surface of an orange peel. While the paint is still wet, the finish is tipped off by gently stroking it with a good brush. This smooths the finish considerably.

I started by sanding the entire hull with a 1/4 sheet electric pad sander. I had a few areas where the scraping had taken small chips from the hull, so I spot primed these and sanded them in. (a mistake, as I later discovered) I removed the dust by wiping the hull down with a damp cloth.

If you have access to some help, it’s great if you can get one person to mix paint and fetch rags, another person to roll, and a third person to tip it out. I did all three jobs myself, and it isn’t too bad if you do small sections of the hull at a time... I’d roll out about five feet of hull, then brush, then mix more paint and start again.

As the paint dries, the brushmarks seem to flow together. It also brings out even the slightest imperfection of the surface beneath, as I found out. My paint job still looks super, and I'm quite pleased with the way it turned out, but if you examine the hull closely, you can tell it's been painted. Next time, I'll prime and sand the entire hull.

Bottom Paint

There are some considerations regarding bottom paint that I had to think about. Since my boat will be primarily sailed in an inland lake, I had several options. I could go without bottom paint at all, and haul out on the trailer to scrub off the slime every once and awhile. Or I could use a hard paint finish with no antifouling properties, like the racers use. In the end, I chose a low-cost house-brand bottom paint from Boat/US. My reasoning was that the cheaper paint would be somewhat less toxic, yet still protect the hull. The fresh coat of paint looks good on the trailer, too.

The bootstripe, which is the stripe of (usually) contrasting color at the waterline, deserves special mention. Part of the time it's dry, part of the time it's under water. And it needs a bit of antifouling chemicals to prevent grass and slime growth. There is a special bootstripe paint available that I used, and though it's expensive, I felt it was worth the cost.

Painting the deck

To prepare the deck, nearly all of the hardware was removed, and nearly all of the holes were filled. A few things— like the winches, for instance— remained in their original location, although they bothered me. The line from the jib-sheet blocks to the winches should ideally be an unobstructed, straight line... and mine wasn't. As it was originally installed, the jibsheet would rub against the cabin as it went to the winches. That would easily rub straight through my nice new paint job, as well as increase friction and wear on the sheet. My options were to install a small wooden or brass chafe strip on the cabin side, or move the winches outboard. In the end, I removed the winches, fabricated a pair of custom stainless steel brackets to mount the winches on, and reinstalled the whole thing. The new location works fine on the starboard side, but since winches turn clockwise, the port jib sheet still just touches the edge of the cabin. Its much better than the original arrangement, though.

The topsides were painted with Petit's "Off White" polyurethane, and I used