

Boatman's Notes

The ultimate Med wood finish test



BY RICHARD HARE

Our ultimate test involves subjecting some of the test-rig passes to a high-hazard environment: they are applied to an iroko rubbing strake, close to the waterline in the high UV and high salinity Ionian Sea. One on each side

means that two products will be tested at once.

This is not a precise test under controlled conditions but a real-life 'road' test using products in the manner for which they're intended.

Summer sailing is punishing and, as if that wasn't bad enough, the products will then endure winter rainfall considerably higher than in the UK. There's not a boat awning in sight either! Most damage will be done during the summer and this will be exploited by rainfall and damp conditions in the winter. It's so extreme, it's cruel.

We don't expect the products to last anywhere

near as long as they would in, say, the Baltic (low salinity and UV) – or even on the English East Coast where our test rig is located.

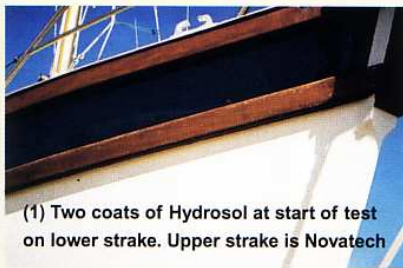
By definition, the products being reviewed in the Med test are good products as they passed our benchmark criteria 12 months ago. It is also important to note that speed of failure is only part of the equation. Consider, too, how easy and inexpensive products are to repair.

Each product has distinct advantages and disadvantages. Where one may perform well above the gunwales (low salinity/high fresh rainfall) and in northern

climes close to the water, for example, it may not do quite so well close to the waterline where it has to endure baked-on salt for weeks on end. This means that we should perhaps consider using a mix of wood finishes aboard our boat.

Already we've hit a snag. Our original plan was to assess products after six months' use. The two with which we started this phase of the test have already fallen at the first hurdle. Indeed, they had failed within two and a half months.

It's certainly not the end of the road for them though – see below.



(1) Two coats of Hydrosol at start of test on lower strake. Upper strake is Novatech



(2) Novatech after 2½ months on lower strake. The upper strake is less affected



(3) The tiller received five coats of Ronseal exterior varnish (2000) and one prima (2005)



(4) Hydrosol after 2½ months. The upward-facing surface has been affected by UV



(5) Novatech after 2½ months. The upward-facing surface is slightly affected by UV



(6) Novatech has stood up well around the cabin and coamings after 12 months

Med results

- 1) Burgess Hydrosol Woodsealer
- 2) Novatech

Despite the water-based Woodsealer Hydrosol being a test rig pass – and probably a good performer in a northern European sea environment (weak UV/low salinity and plenty of cleansing rain) – about 40 per cent of it had disappeared after only a 2½-month trip around the Peloponnisos. Had we tested it on a lake or an inland

waterway it might have been fine. But, despite it remaining a *Classic Boat* 'pass' product, it didn't perform well when put in the worst possible conditions. That isn't to say that it wouldn't have done a lot better in an above-gunwales situation – coamings, grabrails, hatches, for example. Either way, the remnants were removed from the strake to clear the decks for something else.

And it was above the gunwales that Novatech continues to perform very well (see Photo 6). Alas, it, too, failed

to cut the mustard on the strake. Although its outward- and downward-facing surfaces performed OK, it was the upper-facing surface of the strake (which faces into the strong sun, and probably accumulates the most salt) that broke up. Although it performed better than the Hydrosol (it did have three coats as opposed to two), we can't recommend it for below-gunwales use in the Med. It remains a *Classic Boat* Pass+1 Premium product.

Next test: Prima and Skippers Starwind UV

Finding and fixing deck leaks

WISDOM FROM THE CLASSIC BOAT FORUM

>> Just entered a new phase in the (continuous) cycle of finding and fixing leaks. The decks of my c1975 Colvic Atlanta are teak on ply and the cabin/wheelhouse sides are ply. I believe that one source of drips is in the seal between the cabin sides and the deck. The current 'seal' is a wooden beading strip bedded on old sealant. This has been leaking, causing debonding of the ply on the cabin sides, and (I think) some of the drips are getting into the boat. I propose to remake this seal just using a sealant bead around the join rather than sealant and wooden beading. My view is that modern sealants will be up to the job and that the wooden strip is just a complication and more screw-holes. What do the experts think? *pcatterall*



The cabin-to-deck joint may leak

>> I would agree with that; as with a quarter-round beading there are two joints to cover, I would imagine a decent bead of sealer on a 100 per cent dry wood surface would be OK. Don't forget one of the joys of a wooden boat is the leaks! *mogy*

>> Thanks *mogy* – problem with the quarter-round stuff is that it needs shaving a bit as the cabin sides are not at right angles. I can buy the stuff with the back angle planed off but it's still a fiddle! Yes, dry wood is the key; good weather and a warm up with the blow torch, I think... I'll just check my fire insurance first! *pcatterall*

>> I had a similar leak between the sheathed plywood deck over the cabin top and the cabin sides. I wouldn't bother with the quarter round, but cut out a groove along the cabin side, at least down to the surface of the ply, and not more than 4mm wide. Mix up some epoxy and dilute about 2:1 with acetone, until it has the consistency of water. Paint this into the joint until it stops penetrating the timber. You shouldn't let it actually fill the joint, as it should be acting as a surface preparation for the timber rather than a filler. Allow this to set, and then fill and seal the joint with a urethane sealant. I did this on DW seven years ago and haven't had a problem with it since. *pyrojames*

Got a problem? Email us at cb@ipcmedia.com or post it directly onto the CB Forum at www.classicboat.co.uk

Blackened, filthy wood?
Tried oxalic acid and it wasn't strong enough? Try a two-pack bleach preparation. My mast was black head-to-toe and now looks like new. *ajc*

Sail creases – troubleshooting Part 2

SAIL CORNER

In my last article I discussed possible causes of creases from head to tack and from throat to clew. Here are some other common creases and what you can do about them.

Picture C shows creases down the luff of the sail, caused either by the luff

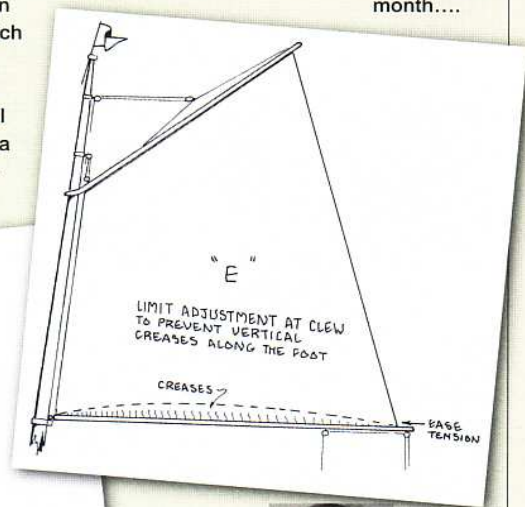
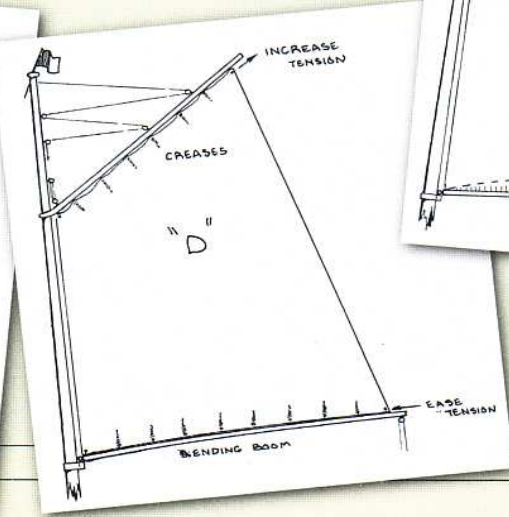
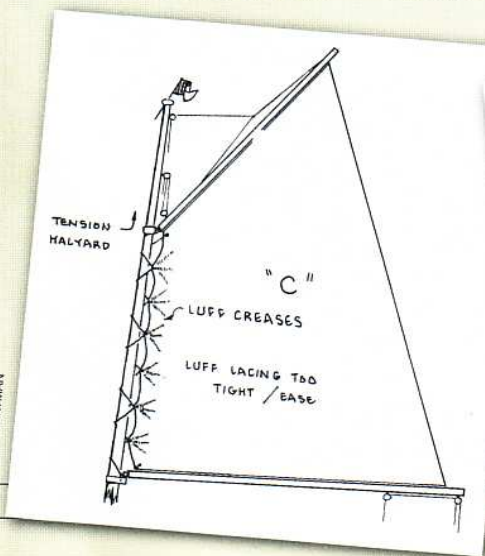
lacing being too tight or insufficient tension in the throat halyard. You will need to relax the luff lacing and/or increase the tension in the throat halyard.

Picture D shows creasing at 90 degrees to the gaff or boom, for which you will need to increase the head and/or clew outhaul tension. Or you could try easing the lacing in the areas where there is creasing as it could be that the spar is bending more than desired.

Picture E shows creases from tack to clew, usually caused by the clew tension being too tight. In this instance you will need to ease the clew outhaul. However, it is possible that if you do this, you may end up with the 90-degree creases shown in Picture D, in which case your sail ropes may need adjusting. All sail ropes stretch to a certain degree –

but when they are overstretched it becomes impossible to set your sail correctly. It is, however, a relatively straightforward process for your sailmaker to rectify this.

More sail crease advice next month....



By Chris Jeckells

JOHN PERRYMAN