

# TOP COAT SERIES: PART 4

## CARING FOR TOP COAT

BY STEVE ROSENBERG



A paint job to be proud of.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ALEXSEAL YACHT COATINGS



**N**ow that you've got a new top-coat paint job, what's the best way to make that shine last?

You have undertaken the complex but rewarding process of having your topside repainted, but what are the secrets to keeping that beautiful finish looking showroom perfect? After all the effort you put into choosing the right paint system, application process and the extensive prep work, why not enjoy that gleaming new shine for as long as possible? Next up in our series on top-coat paint projects, here are some great ideas and easy tips

to help get the most out of your new paint job, even in the toughest conditions Mother Nature can dish out.

**Keep it clean:** Always rinse down the paint surface with clean fresh water every time the boat is used to remove salt spray and dirt. A buildup of hard-water spotting can be confused with premature dulling of paint. Use a water softener or a reverse-osmosis water supply to minimize water spotting. The paint surface should be washed once a week using a mild detergent with a neutral PH formulated specifically for paint fin-



**Hurricane Hunter 35**

**Outboards, Waverunners, Motorcycles, Inverter Generators**



Authorized Dealer

**Diesel Engines, Diesel Generators**



Authorized Dealer

**Boats**



Authorized Dealer

**Inflatables**



Authorized Dealer



TEL (340) 776-5432 • FAX (340) 775-4507  
WWW.OFFSHOREVI.COM


ishes. Some detergents will strip waxes and protective sealants off the surface and should be avoided. Check the detergent label. Do not use abrasive brushes, pads or cleaning agents on paint. These will scratch and dull the finish. Use only soft clean wash mitts and brushes that are specifically designed for washing painted surfaces. Dry the surface to prevent water spots. Wherever possible, dry the surface with a quality towel, chamois or wiping blade to eliminate water spots.

**Polish:** Apply a high-quality wax or polymer sealer two to three times a year on polyurethane painted surfaces. This will act as a sacrificial coating to protect the paint and can dramatically improve the coating's life expectancy. Many companies make products for sealing and protecting painted surfaces. Only use products specifically designed for surfaces painted with polyurethane. These products should not contain abrasives or caustic chemicals.

**Moisture buildup:** Don't let moisture collect or be trapped between polyurethane top coat and plastic film shrink wrap, hardware, seat cushions, or wet fabric. Polyurethane top coats should not be continuously submerged under water. Any moisture held against a polyurethane top coat, even for a few days, can result in bubbles forming on the surface.

**Stains:** Remove stains from a polyurethane finish as soon as possible. Some stains can actually etch the surface of the paint and embed into the coating. If a stain cannot be removed with a mild detergent during the washing process, solvents may be used to loosen the stain. Always start with mild solvents such as mineral spirits, naphtha or denatured alcohol. Harsher solvents such as acetone and lacquer thinner should only be used as a last resort. After removing the stain with solvent, wash the area with a mild detergent and clean water to remove all solvent residues.

**Salt residue:** Use a solution of warm water and white vinegar to remove dried salt residue. Mix one-part white vinegar to one-part warm water and wash the surface. When finished, rewash the surface with a mild detergent and clean water.

Special thanks to Tripp Nelson of Alexseal Yacht Coatings for his contributions to this article. Coming next month: We'll look at some easy ways to repair minor damage to your new paint job. 

*Steve Rosenberg is the former editorial director of Boating World magazine and now writes exclusively about boating and yachting.*