

"We put on the top coats when we are at anchor"

THEY WEAR IT WELL

The unforgiving sun of the Mediterranean is both the bane and the boon of classic-boat skippers and owners who look after boats with acres of brightwork. Keeping the varnish looking good requires constant vigilance... then again, varnishing in a climate like that, where you can often apply two coats a day, is less of a challenge.

The standard varnish used for many classics is Epifanes, with the high-gloss UV filter version being cited as good.

"It's a constant job really," Mat Barker, owner of *The Blue Peter* (CB152), says. "I probably do it five times a year. The main three or four coats go on during the winter, then during the

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PRACTICAL WOOD FINISHES ■

season we'll put another three on. You get used to it; whenever you stop you varnish something like a hatch or a rail. And we go out and put on the top coats at anchor, to avoid getting dust in the varnish.

Peter Woodd, of *Cometa* (CB197), agrees: "It's amazing when you think of the amount of work that goes into keeping the varnish looking good, and it does look brilliant, especially with all the boats together. But it does take hours and hours every year. And you can't get it wrong... you prepare, then you wash down, then you use a rag and spirit. And you learn stuff, like to put your plastic pot for varnish inside another pot, so you don't get any drips on the deck. And you wear rubber gloves for the same reasons. You can't really varnish



west of St Tropez; it's too dusty and there's too much wind coming down from the mountains in the hinterland. We varnish in Cannes, which is good, and quite dust free."



Varnish for Nereis

Apropos of nothing (to do with the Mediterranean) we bring readers' attention to a polyurethane clearcoat varnish that we were pleased to find in our store cupboard last November. With work cracking on apace on *Nereis* (right) we needed to attend to her brightwork, but the weather, in late autumn, was hardly conducive to varnishing. The season may be all about mists and mellow fruitfulness but too much moisture in the air can make varnish cloudy... and we were going to a boat show. But Uroxsys Marine Aliphatic, from Auckland, New Zealand, is moisture curing, which gets around that problem.

With surfaces clean and back to bare wood it was a pleasure to apply the four coats that we deemed necessary for a good level of finish. One of the aspects of the coating

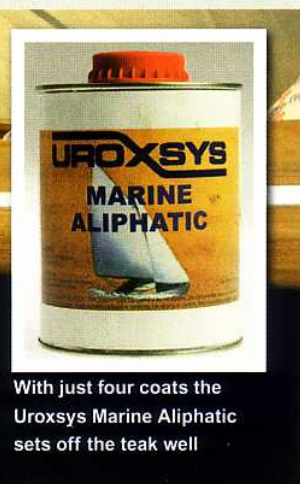
"One apparent aspect of the coating was its elasticity"



that became apparent was its elasticity. The little left in the cup (or whatever we were using) can be picked out when dry and it feels like polythene. It's malleable and has some degree of stretch. Uroxsys say that it will stretch some 50%, which is nowhere as good as Coelan's avowed 300%, but it does bode well for timber boats where there is some movement of the wood. Cited coverage rates are 8m²

and drying time is an initial one hour (you have to decant enough varnish for a 30-minute application). This means that multiple coats can be put on in a day. The final cure time, though, is set at seven days.

Well, we were chirruping with joy at the idea that we could get a half-decent, nay snazzy, finish in the depths of winter. The shed would have had temperatures around 4° and 5°C. And we are pleased with the results so far. The boat was comprehensively climbed on at the show, and



With just four coats the Uroxsys Marine Aliphatic sets off the teak well

has been moved twice; so far there is not a scuff mark to be seen on her brightwork.

It's early days for the development and manufacture of the varnish and so far the company does not have a European distributor. David Waddingham, for Uroxsys, says he expects the product to retail at £30 a litre, giving a coverage of £12.50 per square metre at a recommended six coats. We will report on how the stuff fares after its first season.