

Moira Nyalic's her topsides

Modern polyurethane paints, in addition to being hazardous to health and environment, are supposed to last a long time. Linear polyurethane, I have been told, can last up to 12 years. In fact, we hardly ever get more than 5 years from a paint job before the chalking begins. And painting the topsides every 5 years is a gigantic pain in the wallet, plus it's getting difficult to do.

Painting the hull of a yacht is always a drama. A very expensive drama. First you have to get the yacht out of the water and onto a clean hardstand. Every day in the yard is like watching a gasoline pump at a service station whirring up the bucks with daily charges for everything even if you don't do anything but wait for the paint to dry.

Then you need the weather to be nice, not too much wind, not too hot, not too cold. And cooperation from everyone upwind of you in the yard every time the next coat is sprayed (very big chuckle here).

Spray painting is, of course, the normal way to paint on a glossy polyurethane. You just can't get a perfect glass like finish with rollers and brushes although some top notch painters come close (but they don't come cheap). Just to make all this more interesting, Australia is breeding laws as quickly as electronic worms that are making spray painting harder and harder - and even impossible for all but the most expensive indoor solutions.

We painted Moira only two years ago and I dread having to do it again in 3 or 4 years. So, this year, I thought I'd do a bit of creative preventative maintenance to trim the ever enlarging spiral of costs of keeping Moira shipshape.

The idea was to cover Moira's expensive polyurethane topsides with an invisible, impregnable, glass shine shield that can easily be touched up from time to time using a roller. Does such a shield exist? It does. It's called Nyalic and I did an experimental two year test of it on my pedestal steering that looks as new today as it did when I first coated it.

So, having slipped the Moira to do her lovely bottom, Freddy and I put some special Nyalic cleansing agent into a bucket, added water, then used a sponge to get off the two years of dust, dirt, exhaust, etc from the polyurethane paint on our hull. I used 1000 grit sandpaper to get rid of the odd run or bug that had fouled the original paint. Then, the next morning, Freddy and I got ready. We donned our paint masks with organic filters (not even a hint of a smell got through), and poured the water thin Nyalic into two little plastic trays that came with the rotacota foam rollers we bought at Dulux. These rollers are white and only 100 mm long. They come in a pack of 10 for \$20.

I winged that it was going to take forever to paint the entire hull with these teeny little rollers but Freddy said, "I'll bet we get done in an hour."

In fact, from the time we poured the Nyalic to the time we were standing there admiring the perfect shine was 1 hour and 20 minutes. Part of the extra time was my fault. You know how when you try to get a good finish with a brush or a roller you have to paint in one direction only and carefully and quickly tip the surface to remove any brush or roller marks? Well, I quickly discovered that with Nyalic you just roll away up, down, backwards, forwards, anyway you like and go over it again if you get a run or a ridge. Then about five minutes later you look back and it is perfectly, absolutely wondrously smooth and shiny. It was more than a pleasure to use; it was fun.

The goal is to get it on as thinly as you can and still not miss anyplace. Since the original finish was already shiny and since the Nyalic is as close to invisible as you can get, it was sometimes difficult for me to see if I missed anywhere. But if I stood below and looked up into the shine I could see the missed spots. So naturally the best thing to do was have Freddy paint while I pointed out the missed spots. This was even more fun but it did slow us down a bit. If a bug landed in the freshly painted Nyalic Freddy would just reach out with one gloved finger and delicately wipe it off - then give the smear a quick roll over to erase even the smallest trace of the event. Try doing THAT with polyurethane!

And then, wonder of wonders, it was done. I saw a big bug land amidships minutes after we were finished and it happily walked over the now touch dry surface. Perfection is the only word for the finish and every time I look at it I marvel that it looks so good, was so easy to apply, and took so little Nyalic to do it. We used 1.25 litres to do it. Did it in less than 2 hours and used two disposable rollers that cost us a grand total of \$4. Since we were slipped to do the bottom anyway the yard bill might be an extra day (counting the washing time and drying time). All up the paint job cost us less than \$350 which is, you can believe, a whole lot cheaper than repainting the hull.

All in all, I couldn't be happier with Nyalic. Easy to use is an understatement; beautiful finish is a reward.

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