

Winning Paint Concepts



AkzoNobel

■ Sailboat performance

The big three variables in sailboat performance are crew skill, sail quality and bottom condition, and for decades, Interlux® has been offering cutting edge options in high performance paint technology that minimizes fouling and maximize slipperiness – thus ensuring that at least one of the key legs of the performance triangle is locked in place well before you reach the starting line.

Through the development of products like **Micron® Copolymer Technology**, **Baltoplate**, **VC® Offshore**, **VC®17m Extra**, **VC® Performance Epoxy** and a full line of epoxy bottom primers and fairing materials, Interlux® provides pro speed shops as well the savvy do-it-yourselfers with a one stop shopping plan that helps ensure a premier bottom finish. Add to this the most complete paint product line in the industry, internet (www.yachtpaint.com) and print based informational resource along with a tech tips helpline (1-800-468-7589), and it's clear why the competitive edge belongs to Interlux®.

Picking the right paint to enhance your specific racing needs requires a close look at your own boat's underbody, the biological features effecting local waters and your budget. In a nutshell, a fast bottom counts most when the gun goes off, and no matter how smooth it is in the boatyard or when it is launched, the real advantage lies in the condition of the surface on the day of the race. Top tier competitors dry sail or wipe down before every regatta. They know that drag inducing organic growth will exert a negative impact on performance, and recent research findings show that bacteria are the first to colonize a boat bottom and they start homesteading within the hours of immersion. And for this very reason, many top tier competitors prefer to do a bottom wipe down the morning of the regatta rather than the day before the event.

Each owner needs to define the point where competitive common sense ends and obsession begins. The law of diminishing returns certainly holds true in the quest for the best bottom finish, and the sailor's sequel to low hanging fruit is found in the form of spray applied bottom paint over a long-

board faired and **InterProtect®** primed underbody. The club racer is usually better off with a higher level of antifouling protection offered by a **Micron®** product, while Grand Prix level racers prefer the hard and slick surface provided by a **VC®** product or **Baltoplate**. These highly burnishable bottom finishes won't give you the performance of something like **Micron®**, but are easy to burnish into a slick hard surface that must be wiped or lightly scrubbed on a regular basis to keep free from fouling.



Multiple coats of carefully sprayed and wet sanded **InterProtect® 2000E** epoxy barrier coat exemplifies the hard slick surface sought by those who dry sail one design sailboats. **InterProtect®** is also an ideal substrate upon which to apply antifouling paint, and is compatible with all products in the Interlux® line-up. These bottom paints vary greatly in how they deter marine growth, and in their long term capacity to keep marine organisms off a sailboat's bottom. In warm year round boating climates, fouling tends to be more extreme than in colder climates where shorter seasons and less active marine growth prevail. When choosing an antifouling product, such climate conditions and the resulting biological constraints need to be considered along with how a boat will be used and maintained. **Micron® CSC & Micron® Extra**, represent the best choice for those who want a smooth sprayable finish, and an easy to maintain bottom. These products have superior anti-slime properties and do not lose their effectiveness even if hauled and stored out of the water for a protracted period. In addition, their semi soft polishing nature means that paint build up and flaking is a thing of the past.

Hard type antifouling coatings behave in just the opposite manner, they have high initial antifouling capability, but neither the polishing quality of **Micron® Technology** nor the ability to be hauled and re-launched without destroying their antifouling quality. Paint buildup can be a significant problem with hard paints, and it results in the need to periodically strip off all of the accumulated layers, a process that can damage a carefully developed race boat bottom.

Grand Prix sailors looking for the fastest alternative in bottom finishes are separated into two categories, those who wet store their boats and those who haul and land store between events, with the latter spending little more than the length of a regatta weekend in the water. The best bet for these competitors is the painstakingly faired and long board sanded bottom created with multiple sprayed layers of **VC® Performance Epoxy** that is progressively wet sanded down to 600 grit paper, and perhaps burnished even further with a lamb's wool buffing pad and polishing compound. This is the epitome of the hard smooth approach to skin drag reduction.



Top tier racers who keep their boats water stored for longer periods, and those who want the added advantage of extra slipperiness, Interlux® offers some additional cutting edge options. One of the most popular being legendary **VC® Regatta Baltoplate**, a moderately effective antifouling paint that's renowned for its ability to be wet sanded and burnished into an ultra slick fast surface. **VC® Offshore** is another product, formulated for the high end racer looking for a 'developable' spray finish that can be wet sanded into a very low profile slippery surface. Another very capable product on the Interlux® shelf is **VC®17m Extra**, a thin film paint with a fluoro microadditive for speed, and it uses **Biolux® Technology** to increase antifouling performance.



All of these 'slick surface' products perform best when sprayed, and are meant to be augmented with regular low abrasive wipe downs during the season. **VC® Offshore** can also be 'built up' in multiple coats to provide enough mil thickness to allow for several bouts of serious wet sanding, further refining the finish.

Some feel that a bright colored bottom gives a crew a psychological advantage, especially when the forefoot of a sailboat is clearly visible while surfing down the face of a wave or launching off the crest of another. At minimum, it draws the attention of competitors in the vicinity and shifts their focus from sail trim to wondering whether their neighbor just caught a lucky wave, or actually has a faster bottom. If a slick surface with mind game potential fits your game plan, **Trilux® 33** is Interlux®'s secret weapon and comes in bold bright red, blue and green along with white and black. It too, is a highly burnishable smooth racing finish that's compatible with aluminum boats, saildrives and all fiberglass and carbon composites.

Competitive freshwater racers have long seen the value of **VC®17m (Canada)** and **VC®17m Extra (USA)**. These thin-film slick finishes offer just enough antifouling to keep freshwater organism at bay while providing the slipperiest of surfaces.



VC® Systems

VC®17m Extra

Regatta Baltoplate

VC® Offshore

VC® Performance Epoxy

Ultimate Performance

Micron® CSC

Micron® Extra

Trilux® 33

InterProtect® 2000E

Bang for the buck

Paint is the last thing in race boat bottom development to skimp on, and even budget bound racers should invest in the best performing material for their part of the country. The cost of a haul out, prep work, spray application and diver service significantly exceeds the material cost of what's in a paint can. Skimping on the quality or quantity of material makes little sense. The big questions are what level of finish is desired, what the cost is of the maintenance routine associated with a specific bottom finish, and whether or not it makes sense to bite the

bullet and pay for the spray application. Choosing to use a hard antifouling paint, a highly burnishable coating, or opting for the upside of **Micron®**'s polishing & user friendly nature, depends upon how much bottom cleaning a crew or the owner's budget is willing to endure. Those looking for the least amount of post painting bottom cleaning, and annual prep should definitely consider the **Micron®** alternative. Those looking for every bit of performance enhancing edge may want to take a closer look at Interlux® **VC® Offshore**, **Baltoplate** and **VC®17m Extra**.

■ Powerboats – optimize your speed

It is not only racing sailboats that benefit from having a smooth bottom. All boats can benefit by selecting and specifying a bottom paint that offers optimal results:

- Improved speed and/or maintained speed at less power
- Reduction in fuel emissions and their impact on the environment
- Performance longevity

Remember – the smoother the bottom the lower the drag, and the lower the drag the faster the boat. This also translates to better fuel economy. There is only one way to ensure that the bottom is smooth – proper surface preparation. If in doubt sand it out. And when it comes to choosing your bottom paint – remember that the least expensive initially can end up costing you the most in the long run!

Avoid a rush job in the Spring

Instead, paint in the fall, once you've hauled the boat! Interlux® has antifoulings such as **VC®17m Extra** and **Micron® Technology**, that are products that you can paint early and launch in the Spring. So, when getting ready to winterize your boat, think about a high pressure water wash and as long as the surface is clean and dry, and the temperature doesn't drop below 41°F you're good to paint!



For further information, contact Interlux® today or visit the new website: www.yachtpaint.com

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Our World is Water