

2006 • Over a Decade with Dr. Gel • 2017



Ask

Dr. Gel



Dave Weakley is the owner of American Boat Restoration and has been helping Northeastern boaters keep their boats in fine trim and good repair for over 40 years.

by Dave Weakley

"Email me or call me with your questions! I'll be happy to help you out"

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"With the coming of spring, I am calm again"

Gustav Mahler

"I should buy a boat!"

If that's what you're thinking there are important things to consider when choosing the color boat you want whether it is new or pre-owned. I have advised many people over the years on this subject and feel it's important to bring up again as we look to another boating season!

*WHITE VS. blue-red-yellow-orange-green-black-grey
What's the best choice?*

My answer is white. My boat is white...

From a professional repairer's point of view and for ease of repair the best color boat to buy would be one that is white. One reason is white reflects the heat from the sun far better than any other high pigmented color. There is less fade, it's easier to match and has fewer pigments in it. In southern states, e.g. Florida you will see the majority

of boats docked are white. Darker colors especially dark navy blues, dark reds and greens absorb more heat. In addition the more complicated the color schemes the more challenging and longer it takes to repair thus increasing the repair cost. In the past we have removed darker colored gelcoat samples off older boats to have a computer match done to mix gelcoat and even a computer sometimes cannot get a perfect match. It may match one spot on the boat but not in another area. A good color match also depends greatly on how well the boat has been cared for and how much sun exposure it has had. During my repair process I always color restore the repair area(s) by compounding and if needed wet sand to get the original color back as best as possible. Often the entire sides of the boat are done. This helps to insure the new gelcoat will blend with the original and

helps to achieve a good color match and avoid blotches.

The most common material boats are built with is polyester resin. The material is inexpensive and lighter in weight than epoxy resin. Polyesters never stop curing and get brittle with age. The more exposure to the sun a boat gets the more brittle and bleached it becomes.

All gelcoat is porous; It needs regular maintenance. I've written this many times. You can clearly see boats on the water that are well maintained and those that are neglected. The sun's UV rays will penetrate the porous gelcoat quickly. The damage from sunrays can be slowed down by periodically applying a gelcoat sealer glaze followed by a good marine UV protecting wax. The best way to protect gelcoat is to keep it covered. Consider full canvas, roofed boat lifts, indoor storage, etc. Your investment is expensive protect it as best as possible.

In the spring when boats are prepped for summer use the owners uncover them and they are washed down; some use soaps such as Dawn liquid dish washing detergent. While it's good for grease and dishes, it's not a good choice to clean porous gelcoat. It strips the wax and the sealer glaze making the gelcoat vulnerable to UV light penetration and fade. The best cleaner to use to wash your gelcoat is a good boat soap made especially for boats.

There are situations when a harsh cleaner is needed such as "On-Off" an acid cleaner that removes waterline stains, algae, rust and gas stains. This type of cleaner will definitely remove the protecting sealer glaze and wax. The hull will be susceptible to water seepage and osmotic blistering.

There are two ways to help eliminate this problem. The first is to apply Epoxy barrier on the hull starting at the waterline down. Epoxy barrier paint is as close to impervious of a paint you can apply to protect the hull from water intrusion as you are going to get. You can also acid wash the epoxy barriered hull and not worry about any damage that may occur. An alternative way to



Chalked with light scratches.



Color restoration complete.



Unfortunate storm damage on well kept 2007 Chaparral.



Starboard stern storm damage.



Chaparral repairs complete
New white gelcoat is perfect match to original!.



protect your hull and gelcoat is to be sure to apply a good coat of sealer glaze and marine wax on the hull after every time it is cleaned with harsh chemicals.

Some boat manufacturers are now recommending barrier coat if you are going to leave your boat in the water all season. If you purchase a new boat be sure to check your gelcoat and hull warranty carefully!

Manufacturers are designing boats with a goal of appealing and attractive colors understandably but do not always think about long lasting beauty and repairing damaged gelcoat designs. I have come across repairing gelcoat damage so complicated that even the manufacturers did not want the boat back to repair!

We have a high standard of repair. There are repair shops that are "patching" gelcoat damage. There is a big difference between a "patch" and a repair. You can see a "patch": we do a repair!

Email your questions to:
Boatrepair@aol.com
I'd be happy to help!



Dark navy blue
Cobalt chalk
and fade.



After color
restoration.



Dark blue Moomba color
restoration in progress.