

Shiny Bright Again: Farécla Trials 2012

By Keith Thatcher, SOA Technical Web Sec (First published in *The Shrimper*, Autumn 2012)

Readers will recall mention in the last issue of *The Shrimper* (Spring 2012) of problems experienced by owners using the cleaning and restoring processes developed by Farécla Ltd for maintaining Shrimper topsides. Although effective on some boats, others did not fare so well, their topsides becoming dull soon after launch. It was this inconsistency in performance that prompted Farécla to re-examine their existing cleaning and maintenance processes. This resulted in a number of proposed changes to products used and these were presented to owners at a Technical Briefing held at the Royal Motor Yacht Club in February 2012.

To evaluate which process option might offer the best solution it was decided to test them on four trial boats; *Ruth* (764), *Porthilly Dreamer* (851), *Gentle Breeze* (786) plus the original test boat, Richard Pottinger's *Black Swan* (434). Each boat was cleaned and polished by Farécla experts prior to launching and inspected at regular intervals throughout the season. Two additional boats, David Maunder's *Scallop* (248) and my own *Winkle* (144) were owner processed using the latest ideas to confirm that Farécla's proposals are viable for the wider Shrimper ownership.

The processes applied to each boat are listed in Table 1. It will be seen that, in most cases, each boat had a different process applied on port and starboard sides. It was hoped that this might remove any inconsistency between the boats resulting from different mooring type (swinging or pontoon berth), use pattern (regular weekly racing or casual daysailing) or location.

All compounds were applied mechanically using wool pads as indicated with polish being applied and finished off by hand. Where wet and dry paper was used this was always rubbed by hand to ensure that the amount of gel coat taken off was the minimum necessary to remove surface oxidation.

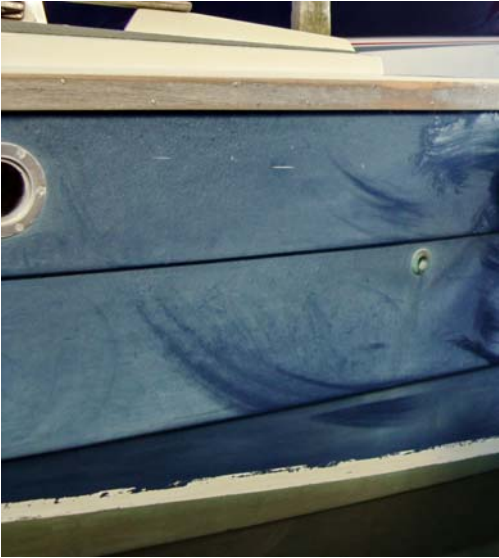
The four test boats have now been examined at least once during the 2012 season with a final second inspection scheduled for late September, after the copy deadline for this issue of *The Shrimper*. However, mid season inspections carried out in July indicated that all boats were performing better than in 2011, with two, *Black Swan* (434) and *Scallop*, showing little or no surface degradation.

Farécla has always maintained that a mid season touch-up could be of benefit, so in July both *Black Swan* and *Scallop* were fresh water washed and re-polished. None of the other trial boats have received any extra treatment, so it will be interesting to see at the end of the season how much additional protection the top-up provides.

Table 1: Trial Boat Processes

Boat Name (No.)	Ruth (764)	Black Swan (434)	Porthilly Dreamer (852)	Gentle Breeze (786)
Process				
Remove Oxidation & blooming with P1200 Wet n Dry	Port side only	Both sides	Starboard side only	Starboard side only
Profile 100 with Twisted Wool pad	Compound both sides		Compound both sides	Compound both sides
Profile 200 with Twisted Wool pad	Compound both sides	Compound both sides	Compound both sides	Compound both sides
Profile 500 with Lambs Wool pad	Compound both sides	Compound both sides		Compound both sides
Profile UV Wax applied & finished by hand	2 Coats	1 Coat	1 Coat	1 Coat Starboard
Profile Polymer Wax applied & finished by hand	1 Coat	1 Coat	2 Coats	1 Coat Starboard
Aquasheen Wax Treatment				2 Coats Port Side

With the trial underway the Shrimper Topside Team of Richard Pottinger, Keith Thatcher (SOA) and David Taylor (Farécla Marine Industrial Business Manager) started looking into the process specifications to suit different types of hull deterioration. When Farécla products were first introduced to the SOA we had tried to provide a “one fits all” solution. It has now become evident that, in particular, bad oxidation requires a more aggressive approach, so for 2013 Farécla will be offering three processes, each aimed at a specific level of topside deterioration. **Deep Cut** is for a badly bloomed or oxidised surface – essentially a matt hull. A hull with **Moderate Blooming** would be patchy, say 50% dull but with some shine still remaining. The **Light Weathering** process is for owners whose boat still has most of its shine intact and who want to keep it that way – essentially a preventative process. The following photos are intended to assist owners in identifying into which category their boat falls.



Hulls requiring Deep Cut



Hull with Moderate Blooming



Hull with Light Weathering

If in doubt, always go for the next more aggressive process. Experience over the past three seasons has shown that removing too little of the oxidised surface generally allows the blooming to return quite quickly, often in a matter of weeks. One benefit of Farécla products is their ability to “self limit” the amount of material being removed as the abrasive degrades in use. Although some of the coarser compounds, particularly Profile 100, can seem aggressive, none can do any significant damage if used sensibly. More information will be available on the website once the processes have been finalised.

Owners not wishing to carry out the work themselves may be interested in a hull cleaning and polishing scheme to be offered by Farécla through Aquasheen, one of their associate companies. Information on this and the revised processes will be presented at a Technical Briefing to be held at RMYC, Poole, on November 3rd, 2012. Further details will be available on the website in due course, but if you have any queries in the meantime, please contact Richard Pottinger (*Black Swan*, 434); Tel: 01202 880121 or richard@repakp.co.uk.