

AquaCote water based Polyurethane paint from BoatCraft Pacific

by ROBERT AYLIFFE

AROUND 15 years ago I tried the prototype AquaCote paint system.

I liked the idea of a non isocyanate polyurethane paint, especially one that had no toxic fumes and washed up in water. You can drink our thinners had a certain appeal.

Sadly, it was not a happy experience back then. Poor coverage, too runny and the colour range was not complete.

I was busy and lost faith in it.

Around 10 years ago I visited the home of Bruce McConkey, the industrial chemist who had first formulated AquaCote. He showed me a handrail he had painted with the reformulated AquaCote.

The rail was fire engine red. It was in direct Brisbane sunlight and weather all year. Red is one of the worst colours for fading. I thought he'd made a bad decision!



Rolled AquaCote interior faces for NIS 18.

Last year, during August and September at Loganholme I worked at BoatCraft Pacific, where AquaCote is made. I noticed that AquaCote was a big seller in the shop. Once more I visited Bruce and Sarah at their home, and noticed what seemed to be a freshly painted verandah rail. The same one I had last seen 10 years previously.

Have you just repainted this, I asked Bruce.

Came the reply: "Robert, it has not been touched

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We Stock

Woven Glass Cloth in 125gsm, 200gsm and 300gsm

Uniaxial Glass Cloth in 300gsm and 450gsm

Biaxial Glass Cloth in 300gsm, 450gsm and 600gsm

Double Bias Glass Cloth in 320gsm, 435gsm and 600gsm

Triaxial Glass Cloth 750gsm Weft laid and 750gsm Warp laid

Quadriaxial Glass Cloth in 610 gsm

Woven Glass Tapes in 155gsm

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Woven Carbon Fibre in 200gsm

Uniaxial Carbon Fibre in 150gsm

Dynel Polyester woven cloth, Peel Ply, Release Film.

1m wide, 200gsm also in 1.4m wide,

1.27m wide,

1.27m wide,

1.27m wide,

1.27m wide,

1.27m wide

38mm, 50mm, 75mm, 100mm, 150mm and 200mm wide

100mm, 150mm and 200mm widths.

1.07m wide,

0.61 wide

We cut to length.

BoatCraft Pacific

www.boatcraft.com.au

22 Babdoyle St, Loganholme, Qld 4129 Ph: 07 3806 1944

And all BoatCraft Pacific distributors.

We stock full rolls

Colour and weight are nominal. Actual weights vary.

since you saw it, 10 years ago.”

This really surprised me. I knew that Bruce had been running accelerated weather testing experiments in Townsville for a number of years, and I knew the results were very, very pleasing.

But I had not expected it to be this tough.

The next day I started to do some experiments of my own with samples of AquaCote in BoatCraft Pacific’s Loganholme store. I tried various colours, and various applications, roller, spray, foam and regular paint brush. The only application that did not work was with ordinary paint brushes. Foam rollers, foam brushes and spraying all gave excellent results.

It’s different than other paints, as turps based paint is different to use than two pot isocyanate paints are. You just practice a bit, and suddenly you wonder why you’d ever go back to the older, more dangerous, environmentally dubious paint systems. This is a win all round!

It’s very different to the prototype paint I tried all those years ago.

It’s best painted over the AquaCote Hi Build Epoxy Primer, though some successfully paint it directly over sanded Bote Cote. Drips of cross linker are added prior to use, to tension the surface.

It now has much denser coverage. The cross linker which is added whenever the paint has been left standing in the can for more than three hours really pulls the surface tight and smooth, and it was possible most days to sand between coats after about two hours. After four hours the cross linker stops working, and the process can be restarted by adding fresh cross linker.

The next time I used it was on a commission from Premier Trailers in Adelaide. They in turn had a Defence Force commission to make a trailer for a big inflatable power boat. The trailer had to have the ability and toughness to allow the boat to be driven up under power onto the trailer without hanging around for retrieval crews. Premiers need a tough, smooth durable surface to permit the repeated sliding action of the inflatable during launch and retrieval without causing damage to the inflatable yet strong enough to cope with the watery abrasion.

Over a year of heavy use has gone by. Happy clients!

I am now using AquaCote on a new NIS 18 that I am building. The interior faces of the topside panels that I prepainted with a foam roller were leaning up against the shed wall prior to gluing onto the frames.

A boat building friend came in to fill in some time.

Spotted the AquaCote panels. Looked closely, then smoothed his hand over the painted surface.

‘You glued laminex on these?’

‘Right question!’

It was that smooth. Not blindingly shiny, but shiny nevertheless. Smooth, very hard but still flexible enough to withstand considerable panel bend, should it be needed.

Okay Bruce, you win. I am a convert.

AquaCote. Water based polyurethane paint for extreme conditions that is kind to the painter, and the world. Available in standard marine colours from all good Chandleries and Boatcraft Pacific outlets around Australia. ■



AquaCote rolled on NIS 18 centreboard case.