

## Weapons of Choice

**P**aint removal is a little like dental work in that there's no one perfect tool and getting the job done usually requires a tray full of devices—from multiple scrapers to sanding tools and sanding discs.

My arsenal of hand-scraping weapons ranged in caliber from a lightweight, extra-thin and narrow scraper sharpened to a knife's edge to what old shipwrights referred to as a "slick." This heavyweight king of the chisel family was kept sharpened with a whetstone and had the mass to plow into thick paint buildup and peel the substrate evenly. Drag scrapers utilize a pulling motion, and the key trick-of-the-trade is keeping a file handy to regularly sharpen the blade.

The downside of scraping paint from a surface goes beyond the drudgery and sore arms and shoulders associated with such toil. The real drawbacks are the nicks and gouges that result from even a slightly misaligned scraper. When the paint removal is completed and the surface has been thoroughly washed and inspected, it's time to repair the scraper damage with an epoxy filler. This is done at the same time blisters penetrating the laminate are repaired, and the extent of this endeavor can be kept to a minimum by rounding scraper edges and being very careful when a chisel is used for heavy-duty paint removal.

**SANDERS**

Fein's 120-volt AC random orbital vacuum-assist sander is a double-barrel winner. Not only is it a vigorous, efficient sander, but the dust and residue collection system is superb. Even so, I did need a conventional disc sander to tackle the really tough stuff, and not

having Fein's version of this tool, I was more than satisfied with my medium-duty, two-speed Hitachi sander/polisher, a tool for many occasions.


The heavy and powerful Bosch grinder had to be used with a deft hand and would be good for removing coatings from a steel hull.

## SANDING DISCS

Heavy-duty sanding discs used on soft pads transmit considerable torque, and conventional “Stikit” type adhesive-backed discs often fly off soft pads like sharp-edged Frisbees. To solve this problem, 3M ([www.3m.com](http://www.3m.com)) and others have switched to backing discs with an attachment system called “Hookit.” This three-dimensional securing system provides a Velcro-like connection between the disc and pad. Even 36-grit “paint buster” abrasive discs stay stuck to the pad. When it comes to less abrasive grits, the product from 3M was a favorite. Fein offers 150-millimeter diameter discs with a hole pattern matched to its soft pad. These abrasives are expensive, but they allow the vacuum system to work at its optimum level.

**PS VALUE GUIDE**

## PS VALUE GUIDE SANDING DISCS FOR REMOVING BARRIER COAT

Product	Type	Price*	Source	Performance Ratings			
				Cutting	Clog Free	Durability	Attachment
3M 	Hook	\$73 / 25 pack	westmarine.com	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
FEIN	Hook	\$94 / 50 pack	jamestowndistributors.com	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
NORTON	Stick on	\$46 / 50 pack	jamestowndistributors.com	Good	Excellent	Good	Good

 Best Choice

\* Prices for 6-inch discs, 40-60 grit