

	TYPE	NAME	MFR.	PRICE/GALLON*	SPECIALTY/COMMENTS	BIO-BOOSTER	COPPER**	18-MONTH RATINGS FL
BEST	ABLATIVE/SOFT	Awlstar	Awlgrip	\$81/qt.	Multi-season high copper		40%	Good
		Copper Pro SCX 67 Ablative ✓	Blue Water	\$175	High fouling areas	Irgarol	67%	Good
		Copper Shield 45 Ablative \$	Blue Water	\$90	Economical ablative		45%	Good
		Copper Shield SCX 45 Ablative ✓	Blue Water	\$145	Biocide boosted high copper	Irgarol	45%	Good
		Kolor ✓	Blue Water	\$170	Aluminum safe, bright colors		45%	Good
		Aquagard Bottom Paint \$	Flexdel	\$100	Water-based, dual biocide	Zinc-based	26%	Good
		Micron CSC ✓	Interlux	\$180	High-strength ablative		37%	Good
		Tarr & Wonson Copper Paint \$	Interlux	\$100	Soft workboat paint		25%	Good
		Tri-Lux II ✓	Interlux	\$260	Aluminum safe		22%	Good
		Alumacoat SR ✓	Pettit	\$180	Aluminum safe	Zinc Omadine	None	Good
		Hydrocoat ✓	Pettit	\$120	Water-based, trailerable ablative		40%	Good
		Ultima SR 60 ✓	Pettit	\$190	Biocide boosted multi-season ablative	Irgarol	60%	Good
		Ultima SR 40 (WM PCA Gold) ✓	Pettit	\$160	Multi-season ablative	Irgarol	40%	Good
		Vivid Free ✓	Pettit	\$200	Aluminum-safe ablative	Zinc Omadine	None	Good
	Biocop TF ✓	Sea Hawk	\$200	Dual biocide	Zinc Omadine	38%	Good	
	Cukote Biocide Plus ✓	Sea Hawk	\$200	High copper and biocide	Irgarol	48%	Good	
	HARD	Copper Pro SCX 67 Hard ✓	Blue Water	\$150	High copper, dual biocide	Irgarol	67%	Good
		Copper Shield 45 Hard \$	Blue Water	\$90	Economy hard paint		45%	Good
		Fiberglass Bottomkote ✓	Interlux	\$140	Dual biocide, fast dry, racing	Irgarol	43%	Good
		Ultra ✓	Interlux	\$200	High copper, dual biocide	Irgarol	67%	Good
		Ultra-Kote ✓	Interlux	\$190	High copper hard paint		67%	Good
		VC Offshore ✓	Interlux	\$270	Race paint		41%	Good
		Trinidad ✓	Pettit	\$190	High copper hard paint		76%	Good
		Trinidad SR ✓	Pettit	\$225	High copper hard paint	Irgarol	70%	Good
		Vivid ✓	Pettit	\$175	Bright colors, white	Zinc Omadine	25%	Good
		Sharkskin \$	Sea Hawk	\$110	Budget-priced hard paint		45%	Good
		Tropikote ✓	Sea Hawk	\$170	Multi-season, high copper		76%	Good
		Tropikote Biocide Plus ✓	Sea Hawk	\$250	High copper, dual biocide, multi-season	Irgarol	74%	Good

✓ Recommended \$ Budget Buy

* Prices based on online search. Shipping excluded.

Wide Range of Paints Make the 18-month Cut

If long-term protection is what you want, the list above is a good place to start your search.

These are the best performing paints out of 72 that have been continuously submerged for 18 months. The paints were selected based on cumulative ratings during the period. (See "How We Tested," on page 22.) Unlike the six-month table, which represents scores in one location, these paints were painted on two separate sets of panels, one immersed in Connecticut, one in Florida. The Connecticut panels were rated at the six- and 12-month intervals. Florida panels were rated at the six-, 12-, and 18-month intervals. We will pull and rate them again at 24 months.

To make the 18-month list, a paint must rate Good at 18 months, have no Poor ratings, and at least one other Good during the rating period, or it must have the best cumulative rating score in its category (water based, aluminum friendly, etc.). Test and ratings procedures followed those used for our six-month paints.

FINDINGS

Most of the paints that made the 18-month mark are ablative paints. Pettit dominated this category with seven different paints, covering the range of special purposes (aluminum friendly, water-based, etc.). Flexdel and Blue Water had top contenders in the budget paint category. Interlux (three paints), Sea Hawk (two paints), and Awlstar (one paint) rounded out the ablative field. One of our perennial long-term finalists, Interlux Micron 66, missed the cut this round, but based on past results and an ongoing field test (see page 26) we still regard it as a good choice.

Of the 11 top hard paints, four were Interlux brand and three were Sea Hawk. Two paints each from Pettit and Blue Water also made the cut. Not surprisingly, most finalists had high quantities of copper in the blend. The field was nearly split between those that used a biocide booster or algacide and those that didn't. The cheapest paint was Coppershield 45, and Interlux's racing paint, VC Offshore, was the most expensive.