

DINGHY CLEANERS

Inflatable Cleaners Recap

For every thing, there is a season, and for every type of marine filth, there is a dedicated cleaner to deal with it—and we’ve tried most them. Over the years, we’ve tested everything from black-streak removers to canvas cleaners to mildew fighters. We’ve come to the conclusion that a mild solution of biodegradable boat soap and some elbow grease is often all that is needed. But when it comes to deep cleaning or attacking stubborn stains, a specialty cleaner is sometimes worth the added expense and can save a great deal of time.

Inflatable boat cleaners are case in point. For regular cleaning, boat soap and water work just fine, but for more serious jobs—like prepping a weathered, oxidized dinghy for a topside paint job—an inflatable boat cleaner is recommended. All of the makers of inflatable boats we’ve spoken with advise using a dedicated inflatable cleaner rather than high-strength multi-purpose cleaners. Not only does a specific cleaner mean it won’t damage the material it’s cleaning, but you also won’t have to worry about adhesion issues when it comes time to patch a leak. Trying to patch a leaky dinghy that’s been treated with a product like Armor All is a losing battle.



The top set of panels shows the “before” state of the test panels: filthy and oxidized. The bottom set shows how well Nautical Ease dinghy cleaner removed the grime and chalky finish.

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We last tested inflatable boat cleaners in the March 2008 issue. For that review, we evaluated products from Star brite, MaryKate, Nautical Ease, Marine Development and Research Corp. (MDR), Seapower, Pennel & Flipo, and Zodiac Inflatables.

Testers rated each cleaner on ease of application and cleaning effectiveness. The top three performers were the NRS Inflatable Boat Cleaner, MDR Inflatable & Dinghy Cleaner, and Pennel & Flipo Orca Tube Cleaner, and Nautical Ease was named the Budget Buy.