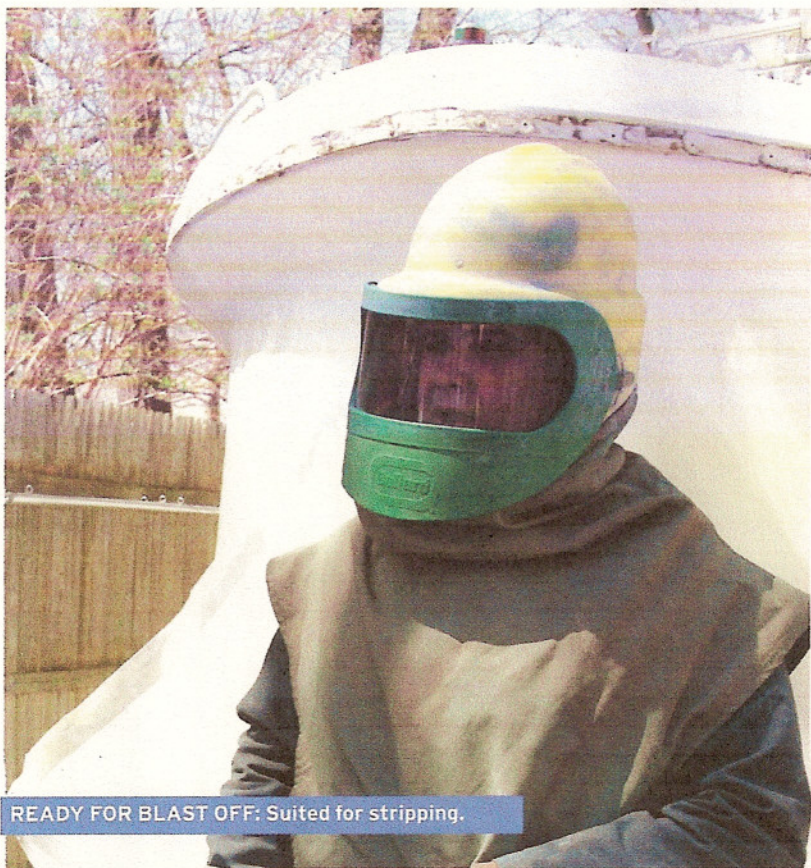


HOW TO



READY FOR BLAST OFF: Suited for stripping.

BOTTOM BLAST

Using baking soda to prep your hull.

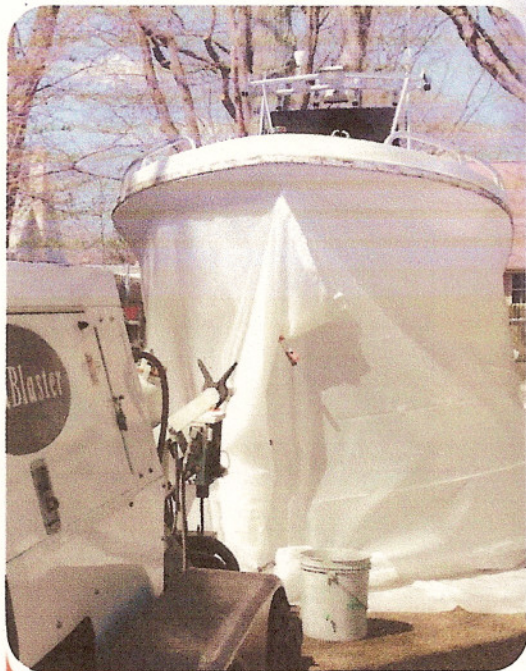
BY GARY CAPUTI

SHOW ME A BOATER WHO LIKES STRIPPING OLD bottom paint and I'll show you a masochist. But there's a new system that is both fiberglass and environmentally friendly called "soda blasting." It utilizes pure, dry baking soda to gently remove built up bottom paint without damage to underlying surfaces. I was introduced to the process by Wade Weisleder, owner of Atlantic Sodablasting, LLC, the local franchisee for SodaBlast Systems, which manufactures the equipment for its servicing dealers around the country.

TIME TO STRIP: Weisleder checked my 23-foot boat that was in need of a bottom job. It had a few coats of paint over an epoxy barrier coat. He explained the process could be controlled to remove the bottom paint and retain the barrier coat, or he could remove the majority of the barrier coat for reapplication. Plans were to apply a new barrier coat, so the order was "strip it!"

SEALED FOR YOUR PROTECTION: The two-man crew arrived pulling the SodaBlast unit behind a truck, which employs a large gasoline engine to power the massive compressor. They laid out plastic tarps under the boat and then proceeded to create a cocoon to capture the residue for disposal. They sealed the boat so well that it requires a large shop vacuum to relieve the excess pressure during the cleaning process.

SUIT UP: The operator wears heavy coveralls taped at the openings and a sealed helmet that receives a constant supply of fresh air through a regulator and hose while he works. He looked like he was ready for blast



LAUNCH PAD: The SodaBlast unit and the boat turned into a cocoon with plastic tarps.



IT'S A WRAP: The hull is totally sealed off from the environment.

HOW TO

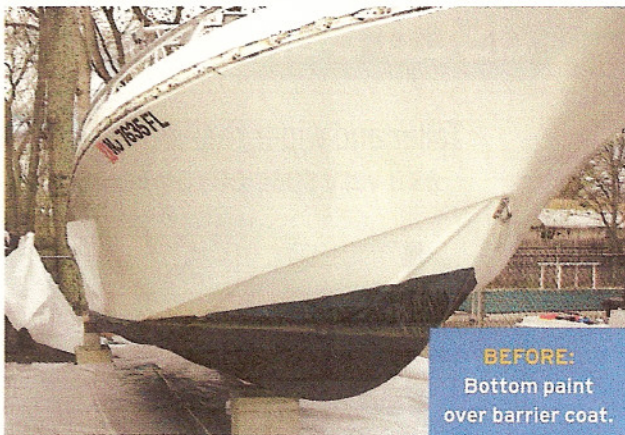
off in the space shuttle, but safety is inherent in the system.

BLAST OFF: It took 45 minutes from the time he entered the cocoon to when he exited. Obviously, larger boats or boats with a thicker buildup of paint take longer. The crew can do two small boats in a day if they are in the same location, or one larger boat.

ma. clean

■ The plastic sheeting was gathered up in garbage bags along with the 200-pounds of baking soda used on the job. The results were excellent. A thin layer of the barrier coat remained, nicely scuffed for the application of a new coat without doing any additional prep except a quick power wash with water.

Interested? Check out www.sodablast-systems.com for more information and the service provider near you. If you're in New Jersey call Weisleder at 732-714-9501 or email ASBLLC@comcast.net.



BEFORE:
Bottom paint
over barrier coat.



AFTER:
Right down to the
fiberglass hull.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CAPUTI

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