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GELCOATS



TIGÉ  
BOATS

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FINISH FIRST



## VALSPAR GOES DEEPER THAN EVER INTO TIGÉ BOATS

### High-end marine manufacturer Tigé Boats asks Valspar to take a look into shine.

In the marine manufacturing industry, there is a never-ending quest for a better boat exterior. “Boat exteriors take a massive amount of abuse,” states Tigé Boats VP and General Manager Rick Correll, “from sea water on ocean-going craft to intense thermal shock from boats used in the upper Midwest and Canada.” The perfect exterior gelcoat would need to be supremely durable, hold a deep shine and fight the ravages of changing weather conditions. Mr. Correll presented the problem to Valspar and together they went to work.

“We call it the Holy Grail of gelcoats,” laughs the Valspar sales representative “The one perfect finish—which, of course, completely changes depending upon the use and need. But marine products are, quite possibly, the hardest to perfect.” The two companies mapped out their plan and started down that path to perfection.

### Finding the right partner

Tigé Boats had gone through what a number of companies before working with Valspar. “As with all boat manufacturers, “gelcoat drift” on colors and gel times can be a major problem. It causes added production costs, repair costs—not to mention the most important aspect—our end customer who works a lifetime to buy a dream boat only to have the shine fade or unsightly cracks appear.” Mr. Correll continued, “We put our customers first, and so does Valspar. That is what makes ours such a great partnership. Through diligent engineering and trials, Valspar came up with a superior product that meets or should I say exceeds our expectations. Valspar really stepped up to the challenge to assure our end user will never have to worry or question ‘did they buy the best or are they just like the rest?’ because, if it says Tigé—it’s the best.”

Valspar was able to come in and work directly with the gelcoaters and finishers at Tigé, setting them up with the new product, teaching them technique, usage and spray processes that eliminated the problems Tigé had been facing in the past. From batch to batch, the colors were exact matches—day after day, week after week. Rework, which had been a significant portion of finish labor costs, dropped to near zero. And switching to the Valspar process and product brought Tigé a valuable additional benefit—lower VOC's on every product line. "Once the boats started rolling off the production line, we all knew we were on to something really great," said Mr. Correll.

### Running hot and cold is no problem

Another major problem in the marine industry is thermal shock, which was also solved with the new gelcoats. The Valspar thermal coefficient in conjunction with their superior elongation and flex modulus has virtually eliminated stress cracks in boats out in the field. "We follow the process Valspar recommends exactly," Mr. Correll comments with a sly grin "then I know if anything fails, I can hold them accountable! So far, I have never had to do that. We listen to them and they listen to us."

Tigé also takes great pride in its design and mold work, yet prior gelcoats couldn't live up to the promise the high-quality molds held. "The molds are perfect, it's the most perfect example of what the boat should look like. We understand the importance of that but it does little good to build the best molds in the industry and then put a gelcoat on that will not help maximize your up front work. We found that, with the Valspar finish, every boat was going to be as good as the mold. The fuzzy lines, egg shelling, low hide and print-through that had meant constant rework in the past were all gone," explains Mr. Correll. "Right out of the mold, the part using Valspar gelcoat was completely reflective of the mold quality."

### Looking deep into Tigé

With all the science and technology that goes into Valspar gelcoats, one very low-tech tool is still the gold standard used to test what is known as depth of shine. "We always use a ruler," comments Mr. Correll "Until we switched to Valspar, we'd angle a ruler at 90 degrees to the surface finish and we could usually read 10-12 inches into the reflection." With Valspar, the old test was no longer effective. "We had to switch to a tape measure!" laughs Mr. Correll "The depth of shine was so dramatic! We increased the visible reflection to 18 to 24 inches! My Quality Control guy can check anytime and it's always that deep. It's amazing."

"I knew we made the right choice at the Surf Expo trade show," Mr. Correll said. "Our exhibit boat, a Tigé RZ2 inboard, featured a custom black and white color combination. It was gorgeous and it actually caused the sales team all sorts of problems—in a good way. We had a premiere location at the show, and we put spotlights every three feet to shine on the boat, a boat right off the production line. Most manufacturers would be squirming with that much light on a black boat, because it shows off every flaw. Everyone that walked by kept constantly touching the boat—nobody could believe the shine, the rich, deep color and how perfect it looked. That show exhausted our staff—from constantly wiping down the fingerprints! Nobody else in the industry can do that—It's truly a testament to our styling, level of quality and to the gelcoat finish that Valspar provided us."

Mr. Correll summarizes "Our goal is to produce the very best possible boats, and to that end, we only partner with vendors who will meet those lofty goals. Valspar has met and exceeded our expectations because, frankly, I believe they truly share our goals."

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