

COLOR MATCHING GUIDE

When a boat comes out of the mold. The color and appearance of the gelcoat can start to change, due to several different "Attackers", among them light, water, pollutants and temperature.

Although UV protection has been built into the gelcoat, sunlight, over time, will start changing the color, yellowing whites and light colors and fading darker ones.

Water attacks the surface also, starting to desolve it, changing the appearance and causing staining.

Pollutants, and there are many in the are, and high temperatures also take their toll on your gelcoated surface.

Color is a very subjective thing and how one person perceives it may be quite different from someone else's evaluation. Color perception is affected by many things from general health to color blindness. Having more than one person check a match is a good safeguard against color misconceptions. Northern light is best for checking colors, while a gray background helps your eyes key in on the color. A dark room or very bright light or sunlight tend ti distort ones color perception.

When it's time to match a color, an evaluation between the actual gelcoated surface and the repair material must be made. Three different properties come into play. These are defines as: Cast, Depth and Grayness or Dirtiness. Cast is red, blue, yellow or green and is usually quite easy to perceive. Depth is darkness or lightness and can be a little trickier. A color being clean or dirty is also fairly easily picked up.

Cast needs to be established in the color matcher's mind before starting the color. For instance if the wrong yellow is used for a beige, you probably can't fix it. Also, if a color goes too dirty, it's very difficult to bring it back. A touch of white is often needed in dark colors but care is required to ensure not over shooting. The same is true of a touch of black in off whites and beiges.

When a color is mixed that seems right, smear a bit of it near the area to be repaired. Take some wide clear tape and place it over the wet gelcoat and the dry area. This will equalize the gloss and give you a really close idea of how well the color matches. This works especially well with darker colors. Really helping establish the dark-light factor.

Remember that light colors will sand out a bit darker than they seem and dark colors will sand out lighter.