

Shhh!

Most boaters prefer quiet to noise. Some things, however—engines and gensets come to mind—are inherently noisy. Which brings us to the subject of soundproofing.

Soundproofing comes in a variety of forms: mats, tapes, and sheets being the most popular (we've tested and reported on soundproofing materials several times, most recently in June 1999). At a recent boat show, we came across a new soundproofing material, in a different form—a paint. Silent Running 1000 (**Current, Inc.**, 877/436-6542, info@silentrunning.us) is a gray paint that can be applied to just about any surface by brush, spray or roller. It's water-based, and rather thick for a paint, but we found that it went on easily by roller or brush. It was dry to the touch (and ready for a recommended second coat) in less than one hour; it takes up to a week of curing before it fully develops its sound-deadening properties. It can be top-coated with any ordinary paint if you don't like gray.

Silent Running absorbs sound by a property called *viscoelasticity*.



Above: Silent Running is a paint-on sound-deadening coating. It's not cheap: (\$150 a gallon) but it works.

Sound, being a form of energy, can't be destroyed, but it can be converted into another form of energy—in this case, heat. The rise in temperature is so small it's unnoticeable. The whole process is similar to the conversion of energy you'd get by trying to stir a jar of molasses vigorously.

We subjected Silent Running to a simple, but effective, screening test. We took an 8"-square panel of sheet steel, and applied two coats of the paint. After a week,

we hung the panel from a string, hit it with a hammer and listened. Where an unpainted panel produced a loud, ringing "bong" (something like the sound of the gong that was the trademark of J. Arthur Rank movies away back when), the treated panel produced a dull thud. We'd expect a similar degree of sound deadening if we were to apply Silent Running to a genset enclosure or engine room hatch. In fact, we're planning on including Silent Running 1000 in our next full test of sound-absorbing products.

Silent Running 1000, according to its manufacturer, is non-toxic, VOC-free, won't burn and will withstand temperatures from minus 30 to 375 degrees F. It's resistant to gas, oil and most chemicals. It's much easier to apply to irregular surfaces than are more conventional soundproofers, and at the applied thickness of 1/16" that we obtained with two coats it takes up much less space than most other approaches. At an MSRP of \$150 per gallon, it's not cheap, but it looks like a good bet to help make life on the water a lot quieter.