

Life's a box of chocolates but this paint really is magical

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BLACK MAGIC

Flag Paints and Finishes, www.flagfinishes.co.uk
Available exclusively through Ideal World
www.idealworld.tv
£19.99 for 1litre plus 250ml bonus pot

THE words Black Magic will more than likely strike one of two images in your head — one is a box of chocolates made by Nestlé, the other means you're a viewer of Ideal World's Sunday DIY show.

The Black Magic I'm interested in is certainly not the edible variety and is one which requires the use of a paintbrush.

I have watched the Ideal World DIY show many times and admit that I was thoroughly impressed with what appeared to be a super paint — but was this just shopping channel hype?

The paint stands out as being different as soon as it arrives — my 250ml sample came in a plastic tub with a screw top lid — no tin in sight.

The paint itself is water-based so is virtually odourless. When set against the white sides of the plastic tub the product takes on a slightly greyish charcoal tinge but it dries a satin jet black.

One thing to note about this paint is that a little goes a long way. Unlike some gloss paints where you have to ladle on so-called 'one coat' products, a brush full of Black Magic covers an unbelievable amount of surface area.

Passing over the basics, this product as you would expect creates a stunning black satin finish on wood. There are no brush marks, no nasty gloss paint fumes and it dries rapidly — touch dry in about 20 minutes on a sunny day.

But I didn't want to try Black Magic on something as simple as wood. I wanted to paint all of those areas that are almost impossible to paint.

I wanted to paint plastic, rubber and rusty metal.

If you have ever attempted to paint plastic before you will know that as soon as



**SIMPLE ...
easy to apply,
water-based
and quick
drying**

'I tried, but I couldn't force this paint to crack, peel or flake'

'Like the specialist metal paints on the market, Black Magic also contains rust neutraliser to give long-term metal protection'

the plastic flexes the paint starts to flake and eventually peels off. Blasting painted plastic with a hosepipe also tends to fetch off huge sections of paint.

The plastic I was painting was badly weathered and had started to change from a shade of black to a worn shade of grey and therefore was in need of a new look.

Using Black Magic on plastic was surprisingly easy. Although water-based the paint didn't run off and the slight greyish tinge to the wet paint made it possible to see where I had covered.

As an ultimate test, the product I was painting had remnants of silicone sealant present — the ultimate nightmare to try and conceal.

I gave my test piece two coats of the paint and although you can clearly see brush strokes when applying, the product dries smooth and blemish free. Even the silicone covered with ease.

I was thoroughly impressed with the finish of the dried paint but the ultimate test would be to flex the plastic.

I tried, but I couldn't force this paint to crack, peel or flake. I even tried two or three days later once the plastic had had time to bake in the April sun but the finish

was still perfect.

Painting rubber is not something that you need to do very often — if at all, but if you're looking for a super flexible product likely to cause all sorts of problems for paint, then rubber is the obvious choice.

Again the Black Magic held firm and the finish as with the plastic was impeccable.

My next challenge for the paint was somewhat more traditional but one which I have always resorted to buying specialist paint for — metal.

The metal I was painting had been pre-treated but was starting to show signs of rust and corrosion.

The paint quickly adhered well to the surface even though the existing paint had a weathered but gloss finish. I was again surprised at how well this water-based paint adhered to difficult surfaces.

Like the specialist metal paints on the market, Black Magic also contains rust neutraliser to give long-term metal protection.

At first the scepticism in me failed to believe what I was seeing on a television shopping channel — but I too can now verify that this general purpose paint is simply magical.

weekender PREPARING TO DECORATE

RONSEAL BASECOAT

www.ronseal.co.uk
2.5 litre £15.98 or 5 litre £24.98

Review by Stephen Sinfield

If your walls resemble crazy paving then before you even contemplate redecorating you need to eradicate the problem.

If you want to avoid the job of having to have the walls re-plastered then the next best thing is to fill the cracks.

Using traditional filler would be a painstaking task so Ronseal developed Basecoat.

The scientific element of this product means that it contains a super-flexible elastomeric formula that flexes with movement, completely filling and covering hairline cracks.

The paint comes in one colour — white — and is as the name suggests, a basecoat to use before you emulsion or wallpaper.

The paint is slightly thicker in texture than standard emulsion paint and is best applied with a roller.

I did part of my test using a large paintbrush and this is a product that tends to leave brush marks so follow the instructions carefully and use a roller.

It's also important to thoroughly stir this product to achieve perfect results and an even colour.

Applying the paint is no different to applying any



other emulsion-based paint, the secret with this product lies in its chemical composition. The paint works its way into hairline cracks and fills minor gaps and blemishes.

The result after around four hours drying time is a bright white wall free of fine cracks.

This product can also be used as a basecoat for covering dark-coloured walls that are in need of repainting.

The bright white finish will ensure that when you come to redecorate in your chosen colour the old colour will not impede or alter the finish.

If you have walls that have been treated for damp or mould but the tell-tale signs still exist then this thick covering will permanently hide the marks.

This is far from just being super thick emulsion paint though as it is designed to stretch with movement.

It's too early to tell on the wall I tested but so far any minor cracks and blemishes are filled and they haven't started to reappear.

Very easy to apply, you don't need any special skills just a standard paint roller.

SMALLTALK

by James Benstead



Becoming the outdoor type

EVEN the changing of a season — something in my pre-dad days I took largely for granted — presents a whole new set of logistical challenges nowadays.

So far, it's meant trips into town for new T-shirts, shorts and cooler clothes for our little boy, Samuel, who has taken to the warmer weather like a duck to water.

It's also meant a couple of new sunhats and sunscreen for his nursery bag and, now he's 20 months old and into absolutely everything, more regular trips out on his bike, to feed the ducks and to the swings, often accompanied by an ice cream.

He's also showing a particular liking for throwing and kicking around the football I keep in the boot of my car, and I'm sure we're going to have a little left-footer on our hands.

All this has again fuelled my anticipation of family holidays and, aside from a planned trip to Portugal later in the year, camping suddenly appeals more than it ever has.

Perhaps as a result of the tough financial times, a staggering amount of Britons are choosing to take their annual break on home soil and, with the cash you've saved on a pricey foreign holiday, it's an opportunity for you to really go mad.

We're lucky in Burton to have a Millets store, the excellent outdoor specialist which sells everything from tents and camping equipment to clothes, sunglasses, wellies and navigation systems.

Last year, I got hold of the family starter tent set and now I'm looking to build up my collection of essentials for when we take the plunge and head out on the open road. Check out the website at www.millets.co.uk.

If you fancy a camping trip, don't forget to plan ahead. Research campsites to check facilities and their suitability for families, and always take a first aid kit along with you.

Pack the right clothing for rain or shine, and practice pitching your tent before you get there — always on a level surface but not too close to shower or toilet blocks.

Try to keep it simple on your first expedition, particularly in regards to cooking.

Camping with kids for the first time is a leap into the unknown, but it is great fun and an inexpensive way to have a holiday or weekend break. Once you've worked out what to pack and where to go it doesn't have to be a trauma either.

There are some excellent tips at www.littleadventureshop.co.uk if you're unsure.

Fresh air and nights under the stars — what could be better?