

FieldTest

Extending Battery Life

Battery equaliser is put to the test. By Brad Roberts



For cruisers who like to spend more time swinging on the hook and less time plugged into shore, a long battery life is essential. However, the resulting charge-discharge cycle is hard even on deep-cycle batteries specifically designed for this purpose. Replacing your boat's batteries every few years is a very costly exercise.

Seven years ago, when I invested in a Surette 8D as my house battery, I was determined to get as many years out of it as I could. I had read about a battery life extender additive called Battery Equaliser and decided to add 2ml to each cell.

Today, after seven seasons of powering a 2000W inverter all summer, and (at 187lbs!) staying aboard the boat each winter, the internal plates look brand new. Now looks aren't everything, but they do matter. The Battery Equalizer product changes the chemical makeup of the electrolyte solution in the battery to prevent—and even reverse in the case of older batteries—power-robbing sulfation from forming on the plates. With clean plates, the battery charging time is reduced, internal resistance is lowered resulting in higher output, and the need to add water is reduced.

Readers of this column will know that the proof for me always lies in the performance of all the things we field test. That Surette battery still provides two full days of house battery use before needing a recharge and, with only about 4 hours of cruising to the next anchorage, it is back up to full capacity. I've since added Battery Equaliser to every battery I own: the boat starting batteries and my vehicle batteries. Originally designed for commercial battery applications like forklifts, the product lives up to its claims of extending battery life and increasing performance without voiding any warranties.

For more information visit www.batteryequaliser.com or find it on the shelf of your local chandlery.