

TINY BUBBLES

by David Mills

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Editor

I've been using Mylar for years. Other than the loss of some torsional strength, it's far superior to tissue in all other aspects. However, it does require an additional skill set, but remains fairly easy to learn with a little practice. The problem that continued to plague my efforts, particularly with the 1/4 mil, is the formation of bubbles under the Mylar at the trailing edge when heat is applied. Well, I've learned two things recently that have lessened this problem. First, I switched to Velcro Adhesive in the squeeze tube from Sig Stix-It in the can as an adhesive. The "stick 'um" element in the Velcro Adhesive seems to give off fewer vapors under heat than does Stix It which was my old standby of several years. You can find Velcro Adhesive in a 1 oz., white/orange tube at good fabric stores. It lasts forever in the tube. Thin it a ton with nitrate thinner. You don't need much, but hit the rib undercamber twice to be sure.

The bubbles became even less of a problem when I started spraying all my bare frames with clear lacquer from a spray can prior to covering. Down here in Georgia we have extreme humidity changes and I've come to assume some of my warping is caused by it. The spray lacquer seems to do a better and lighter job than brushed nitrate with better sealing and less over-slop and it dries faster. Also, lacquer raises the fuzz on balsa better than nitrate and is a great prep for all finishes on balsa. BTW: The cheapest source of high-quality spray lacquer is the old Aqua Net hairspray in the big howitzer rattle can. The smell doesn't last very long. (And for a while at least, the room smells like the old Southern matriarchs of your youth.) You can find it at most beauty shops and drug stores, right next to the blue rinse. Look for it the next time you go in to stock up on emery boards.