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🚩 Finally Bought a Soda Blaster! (Read 1564 times)

👤 **Tom Neitzel**
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

📄 Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Nov 12th, 2010, 10:45am

The price finally got down to something I thought was reasonable so I picked up a blaster last week. Talk about cheap.

📎 [coke.jpg](#)



👤 **Lee Sumner**

📄 Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #1 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:12am

Just add Mentos

Posts: 1014

👤 **John Kennedy**
Ex Forum Member

📄 Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #2 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:13am

[Quote from Tom Neitzel on Nov 12th, 2010, 10:45am:](#)

The price finally got down to something I thought was reasonable so I picked up a blaster last week. Talk about cheap.

Tom,

Quit it,
JUST QUIT IT!!



👤 **Tom Neitzel**
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

📄 Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #3 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:14am

Actually not the Mentos and Diet Coke version 😊, but one from Harbor Freight.

<http://www.harborfreight.com/15-lb-portable-soda-blaster-66742.html>

They're on sale now and you can come up with a 20% off coupon so it drops down to around \$79.99. Media runs about \$28.50 for 50 pounds, again using a 20% off coupon.

I have to say I'm really impressed with how fast and easy it is to use.

You have to have a decent air compressor, 8cfm at 90lbs, to start.

The media is plain old baking soda, sodium bicarbonate.

Questions I asked myself - How hard is soda? Will it tear up my pieces?

I've attached a pdf with the Moh's Hardness scale. This was devised by a mineralogist to rate relative hardness of things. Something with a higher number will scratch something with a lower number. Things with equal numbers may be able to scratch each other - maybe. If you look at the red numbers you can see that it is a logarithmic curve - Diamond is many orders of magnitude harder than the one just below it.

Now if you scroll down the list you will see some Moh's values for common items.

Soda is 2.5.

Finger Nail is 2.5.

Iron is 4 to 5 (good news, soda can't scratch Iron).

Aluminum 2.5-3 (might scratch, but likely not).

So I've been playing around with it and have been absolutely amazed 😊😊😊.

I started by taking the paint off part of a full can of Sprite (figured if it eroded the surface, it would burst). It stripped the paint off in a heartbeat but left the surface looking a bit frosted. But not to worry, I washed it off (the soda dust kind of hung on, then hit it with 0000 steel wool like I normally do with aluminum and it polished right back up. Couldn't tell a difference from areas I had not touched.)

Tried it on an aluminum waffle iron with non-removable Alaska steel handles. Again just amazing results in just a couple minutes - I'll post a picture later.

Tried it on the base to the Mustad Krumkake Iron I had cleaned with Evapo-Rust. It looks like a brand new piece of cast iron just out of the mold - proper colors and textures.

It even did a nice job on that old waffle iron that was driving me nuts with Evapo-Rust (lots of rust would come off in the Evapo-Rust, but there would always be more. It has to be some odd sort of iron. I actually detect a sulfur odor from it (the waffle iron) with anything I use to clean it with - even steel wool). Again, I'll post some pictures a bit later.

Is there a down side? Yes, I think it can get a bit expensive regarding media use. I couldn't wait to try it so I just held the pieces (which you are not supposed to do) in the driveway outside the garage. It took about 10 to 15 minutes of blasting to have 12 pounds of baking soda laying all over the driveway. Almost \$10 worth. But really no significant environmental concerns since it is just baking soda (maybe a bit on the alkaline side though).

I'm going to clean the glass beads out of my blasting cabinet and see if I can contain and

recover some of it. You can really clean a lot in 10 minutes time though and adjust the soda air mix to keep it lean. It only takes seconds to clean a surface - almost as fast as you can move the nozzle.

The blasting media is soda but coarser than you get in the grocery store. It is like grains of salt. It is said that it breaks up into powder as it is used so it doesn't reuse well. I'll test that.

As far as dust, it is miles ahead of walnut shells, but I was still white from head to foot - the powder just brushed off.

If you decide to get one, let me know and I can help with the assembly - the instructions are non-existent. I would also added a quick connect coupling to the air supply line to make it easier to fill the container. They talked about it in the "instructions" but I couldn't figure out where to put it until I went to fill the tank.

The way it works is that you fill the tank with soda. Then put the long tube on the mixture control valve into the tank and seal it. The air pressurizes the tank, then the soda is forced up the tube and out the nozzle. The control valve adjusts the amount of soda it will let come out.

Tom

Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #4 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:50am

Here's the Sprite can test. I've polished the bottom half (shiny) the top half has the frosted look before hitting with the steel wool. I really can't detect any alteration of the metal surface. It's really tough for me to take pictures with all the shiny parts. (I should send a plane ticket to Clark and have him come and take the pictures 😊)

Tom

[Sprite_Can_Stripped.jpg](#)



Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

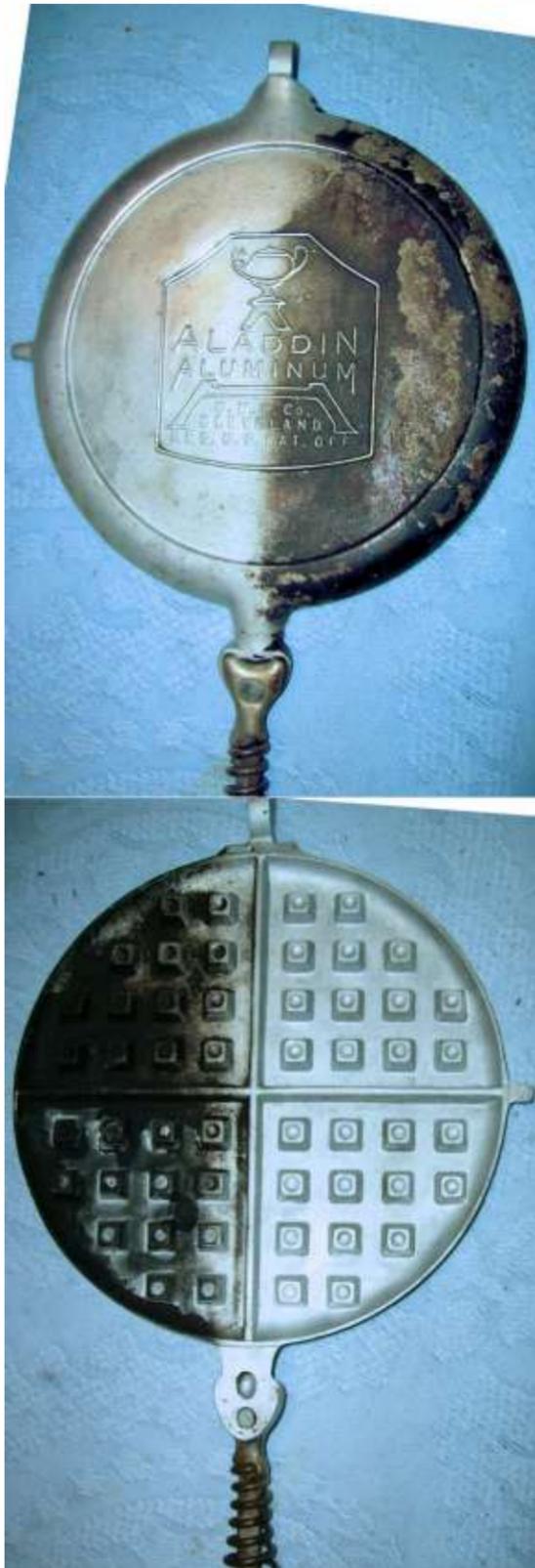
Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #5 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:54am

Here's an aluminum Aladdin waffle iron test. It has riveted on steel coil handles so I couldn't put it in the oven. I've started to polish (with 0000 steel wool) the upper left corner. The odd bronze looking cast is from my lighting. It is the proper aluminum color, you can even see some reflection of the hinge. There are still some dark tarnish spots that I think cream of tartar will take off. It doesn't show in the pictures but the steel handles clean up wonderfully. This is about 2 minutes work at the most. One of the big tasks was keeping my fingers out of the blast stream (Mr. Stupid at work).

Tom

[Aladdin_Soda_Sample.jpg](#)



Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #6 - Nov 12th, 2010, 11:57am

Here's a portion of the Mustad base. I've left it intentionally big so you can scroll around and see the detail (let me know if you prefer it resized). You can see some pitting to the left of the letters. Also casting flaws in the handle. The color looks like it just came out of the mold. This iron pre-WWII - mid-20's to 30's.

Tom





Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

So - What do they do with the rest of the mole?

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #7 - Nov 12th, 2010, 12:01pm

Here's that old iron. I was drying it off after rinsing the soda off and put it in the oven for a few minutes to dry. I forgot it was set to 425 and left it for an hour, so a little surface rust developed on the flipping part. If you look at the handle, that's the color it ended up after the blasting. This is an old iron, the gate it the round mark in the middle of the paddle. I think there is something odd about the iron composition of this piece. It's the cleanest I think this thing will ever get.

Tom





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Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #8 - Nov 12th, 2010, 12:09pm

What I may try next is cleaning up the steel rivets that hold the fiber handles on the Mustad Krumake iron. I'm thinking about clamping a couple washers over the rivets (to mask the fiber and let it rip - come to think of it, masking tape might work long enough too.) We'll see.

Tom

C. Perry Rapier
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 23581

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #9 - Nov 12th, 2010, 12:26pm

Tom it sure sounds like you got it goin on there. Very interesting to say the least. I'm thinkin of all the pros and cons. Sounds like if you want it clean "NOW", this certainly is the way to go. Thanks a bunch. Now what does your wife think of this Tom? I'm thinkin about that cave man, gettting caught, bringing home another "treasure". 🤔🤔

Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #10 - Nov 12th, 2010, 12:52pm

Quote from C. Perry Rapier on Nov 12th, 2010, 12:26pm:

Tom it sure sounds like you got it goin on there. Very interesting to say the least. I'm thinkin of all the pros and cons. Sounds like if you want it clean "NOW", this certainly is the way to go. Thanks a bunch. Now what does your wife think of this Tom? I'm thinkin about that cave man, getting caught, bringing home another "treasure". 🤔🤔

She hasn't seen it yet 🤔

Clean now does work. I also see it useful for those very difficult items to clean, like this Aladdin waffle iron. Also would work well on stripping paint on the car. It's supposed to take paint off plastic too.

C. Perry Rapier
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 23581

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #11 - Nov 12th, 2010, 1:01pm

That sure sounds like it would be the cats meow to clean the crooks and nannies of waffle irons. After you clean about a hundred of them, and then get this thing, it'd make you wanna bust all your waffles up, and start over. 🤔🤔🤔

Sam Roberts
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 3672

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #12 - Nov 12th, 2010, 1:04pm

I'm glad that you've done the testing, now I won't have to. I bought that one from Harbour Freight a couple months ago but have been down in my back and haven't had a chance to use it yet. Guess I'll have to take the plunge.

Jon Wollenburg
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 125

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #13 - Jul 16th, 2011, 10:27am

Have you done any more cleaning with this if so how is ir working?

Cheryl Watson
Forum Administrator
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 4009

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #14 - Jul 19th, 2011, 1:37am

Quote from Jon Wollenburg on Jul 16th, 2011, 10:27am:

Have you done any more cleaning with this if so how is ir working?

I second that question!

Gee... thanks Jon, so much<not>, for resurrecting this post, which I had not found yet!!! 🤔

Now, guess who wants a new gadget?? 🤔🤔 (stated as she looks at that newly acquired hammered aluminum DO)

I was at Harbor Freight tonight..... again.....

So... Please Tom... tell me it does not work well, is way too expensive, Right?? Not worth the investment, right?????

Of course the guy at Harbor Freight wanted to take me back to show me the Soda Blaster, AND the Walnut shell blaster thingy! I said NOOOOOOO.... trying to talk myself outta it!! besides which I do not own an air compressor thingy....yet.
Which alter ego will win the argument with self???????



Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #15 - Jul 21st, 2011, 9:38am

No, I've not done a bunch more work with it. Not because I don't like it, but because I've been cleaning things that don't need the special equipment.

I don't have anything bad to say about it and would advocate purchasing one if you have soft items like aluminum to clean. The only issue I see with it is to build a containment area for the soda as it is used. I just use it in the driveway outside the garage and end up with a big white dusting all over the place. It's not toxic and washes away, but still a mess.

It is relatively expensive to use, a 50 pound bag is about \$30 (cheaper with the ever present 20% discount coupon at Harbor Freight). I've gone through 25 pounds. As you can see, I've not tried capturing and reusing the media. I think I will if I get ambitious enough to build a containment area (maybe just a blue tarp. ☹️). I'm not holding out a lot of hope for reuse though since the soda is soft and I think will lose it's cutting edges ones through the process. It is very fast to use - it cleans as fast as you can move the nozzle around the surface - maybe 5 minutes at the most for a waffle iron paddle.

Sorry Cheryl - no compressor - no soda blaster. (most of the small, portable compressors like for nail guns won't produce enough air volume to run blasting tools) I can't imagine what the salesman was showing you for walnut shell blasting. Harbor Freight does carry the media, but those big red, pressurized blasting units they sell will not handle walnut shells - they clog. The simple enclosures they sell with a siphon style gun will work, but be prepared for very fine walnut dust all over the place, even when using a cabinet - it gets through the smallest opening. I do like walnut media but it is slower and messier than the soda.

Just FYI, here's what I like to do for cleaning.

1. Everything goes in my self-cleaning oven to start - if I can get wood, plastic, or steel handles/bails off first.

1a. If there is really a lot of heavy crud (that will make lots of smoke in the oven, but my oven is vented outside anyway), I will put it in the lye bath first for a few days. Usually I can't wait to get started though. 😊

2. Cast iron then gets a trip through the electro tank to get the rust and blemishes off. If it is small and intricate, or a waffle iron made after about 1890, I will use the EvapoRust instead.

3. If there is a steel handle I did not take off and ran through the oven, I will get the discoloring off with EvapoRust (like a wafer or pizzelle iron).

4. If there is discoloring on an aluminum piece, I'll put it in a warm Cream of Tartar bath from 30 to 60 minutes. It will clean up instantly if it is going to work. Cream of Tartar only works for the darkening (kind of a tarnish) you find on aluminum. It will also lighten up actual corroded areas sometimes. Cream of Tartar is expensive in little spice bottles, but cheap from bulk spice dispensers. If you are looking for it, it is in the spice section at the store.

5. I like to do a final rinse in warm water with Dawn and an SOS pad for cast iron. Dawn and 0000 steel wool for aluminum.

6. My aluminum is done at this point. Iron pieces will get a mineral oil coat, then left for a day or more, then wiped off (I prefer the natural, unseasoned look of cast iron.)

Heat/Lye takes off seasoning/crud, Electro/EvapoRust remove rust, mineral oil preserves.

I have been known to clean aluminum in a lye bath or with ammonia (it turns aluminum black, but the Cream of Tartar turns it back) but that is not for the faint of heart and is done for just a few minutes. I don't think I will ever use these again since I have the soda blaster.

Is this enough answer for you Cheryl? ☹️ I was pretty much away from the internet while traveling the first half of July so I missed a few messages.

Tom

Cheryl Watson
Forum Administrator
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 4009

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #16 - Jul 21st, 2011, 1:12pm

Thanks Tom for all the great information!
Since I picked up some Aluminum pieces I have now been faced with the new challenge of cleaning something a bit trickier than CI!
I had never heard of a soda blaster until Jon resurrected this thread with his question!
Hope your July travels were for vacation and pleasure!
Cheryl

Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #17 - Jul 21st, 2011, 1:18pm

Glad to help. I'm not sure if it was clear above, but the self-cleaning oven is just magical with cast aluminum as long as you can remove wood, plastic or steel parts, if any. Don't touch aluminum with SOS or green Scotchbrite pads - they will scratch (I will use an SOS pad sometimes on non-polished surfaces with lots of water. I haven't noticed scratches then).

Tom

Cheryl Watson
Forum Administrator
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 4009

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #18 - Jul 21st, 2011, 2:06pm

Read you loud and clear Tom on the SOS and Scotchbrite pads! The men in the house have destroyed several of my WearEver Cookie sheets by using the above! ☹️ They are now banned from using my good AirBake pans! And finding nice aluminum cookie sheets is a real bear nowadays....they certainly do not make them like they used too! But isn't that the case with most things in todays world!
I have been challenged for years over trying to get that baked on grease off of my aluminum everyday stuff!

Jon Wollenburg
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 125

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #19 - Jul 23rd, 2011, 11:33pm

thanks for the update

Tom Neitzel
Forum Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

Re: Finally Bought a Soda Blaster!

Reply #20 - May 10th, 2013, 10:44am

An update for Tom Oen. This is a picture of the modification I made to my 15lb soda blaster. I added a quick disconnect fitting just after the pressure regulator. It makes it easier to refill the tank. The red arrows point to the male and female parts. When you fill the tank, you have to unscrew the big nut (yellow arrow) and lift that black square with the blue tube attached off. The black block has a long aluminum tube inside that goes almost to the bottom of the tank. Without the disconnect, the blue tube is a little short so it is a pain to lift it out, then you would have it laying around attached and in the way.

The gold knob you see at the top (green arrow) controls the amount of soda that is coming out. The air flows constantly through clear outlet hose, the knob lets you control the soda quantity. There is a shut-off valve at the end of the clear hose. I use that valve a lot since the soda goes through fast.

A neat tool for a pretty specialized cleaning need. You can use it to take paint off sheet metal pretty nicely too.

I told Tom to buy the larger 50lb version if he got one (he did). Not because it works better, but because it is a pain to have to disconnect everything to refill the tank through the little 1/2" hole on the 15lb one I have. I can go through the 15lbs in about 10 minutes if I'm not careful. That's not too bad though, as it cleans as fast as you can swing the nozzle across the piece. 5 minutes on a waffle iron is usually more than enough time.

Just to be complete, they have (Harbor Freight) two sizes of soda, fine and coarse. Both are pretty fine. I use the coarse. Shouldn't make much difference, maybe less dust with the coarse, but not much. The 15lb one is around \$100 on sale, the 50lb around \$150. Plus you can scare up some 20% off coupons in most Sunday papers and magazines like Popular Science, maybe Discover too. The coupons really help with the media cost.

Tom

 [Soda_Blaster_Quick_Connect.jpg](#)

