

Tom Hallman Says UHU Holds Tissue Quite Well

For those who haven't had the good fortune to see any of Tom Hallman's models, let me just say that he has few peers in this game when it comes to craftsmanship. Since I'm a relative amateur at building models, I have an unfortunate tendency to overbuild and seem to always have lead sleds. Thus, when I saw his letter in the FM Clinic column in the July 2004 issue of Flying Models I paid attention. In his letter he states that 12 years ago he switched from dope or white glue to adhere tissue to purple UHU glue sticks.

He makes the following points:

1. He just sands the frame smooth and applies the glue directly to the wood — thus saving a few grams (something that got my attention!)
2. He has never had the tissue come loose in damp weather — because he believes the glue is directly on the balsa instead of a thin coat of dope.
3. He says there's no need to hurry in putting the tissue down; that the glue can sit for hours or days and easily be reactivated by using isopropyl rubbing alcohol. Glenn Bearry, of Austin, Texas points out to me that isopropyl alcohol contains water, which will cause the tissue to pucker while you are working with it. He told me to try denatured alcohol, which if kept carefully closed, contains no water. I did, and it works much better. Denatured alcohol will absorb water quickly if left open, so it would be a smart move to not only keep it tightly closed, but to test it on a piece of scap tissue to see if it is free of water.
4. Tom applies the tissue in the standard way, tugging softly as he moves down the fuselage, using alcohol on a small brush as needed to soften the adhesion. He says that alcohol doesn't break apart the tissue fibers as quickly as water. You can reposition the tissue as much as you like.
5. On overlaps, he just floats a bit of alcohol to seal the overlap, which seems to melt the seam together.
6. He generally pre-shrinks and pre-colors his tissue on a frame, and although he usually airbrushes markings on the tissue before attaching it to the model, he sometimes adheres markings to the tissue on the frame with UHU, using alcohol to activate and seal it.
7. After he has further shrunk the tissue on the frame with alcohol or water, he "dusts" the model with either Krylon matte or gloss, which he says has proven to prevent continual shrinkage.

Tom's comments have me convinced. I'm using it to cover my recently completed Heeb Wren. With the humidity of the Florida Gulf Coast, there will definitely be a test of adhesion!