Wagner Power Painter Plus – Evaluation

I recently bought a Wagner Power Painter Plus and used it to paint (so far) three sides of my two story house. In the late 1970's I had purchased a Sears Electric Airless Spray Gun and used it to paint my house twice, doing two coats each time, one coat of oil followed by one cote of latex. In this document I will compare the two sprayers from my perspective and suggest areas where I would like to see improvements in future Wagner sprayers. The big differences in the two sprayers are the cleanup (the new one takes about ½ hour longer) and what one must do when changing paint types.

OLD SPRAYER –
I don't have pictures of the old sprayer but it was quite simple. It was a Sears Electric Airless Spray Gun model # 3015528 and cost $79.99. It had a paint cup which screwed on to a sprayer body, a rigid suction tube with a small filter at the bottom, spray tip assembly, and an atomizer valve. Things about it that annoyed folks were:
1. The paint cup screwed on with multiple rotations
2. When the paint was low you had to only paint with the sprayer aimed up or down since the suction tube was rigid and angled toward the cup edge.
3. When changing paint types you had to change atomizer valves to the proper size.

NEW SPRAYER –

Wagner Power Painter Plus

In the new sprayer the previous annoyances have been resolved as follows:
1. The paint cup is attached with only ¼ turn
2. The suction tube is flexible so when paint is low you can paint aiming up or down
3. When using different paints there is a dial at the back which you turn to indicate type of paint (thickness) and you apparently use the same atomizer valve for all types of paint. (note: so far I have used the new sprayer only for un-thinned latex paint, Duration from Sherwin Williams).

In addition :
4. There is a spray tip assembly to help stop overspray.
5. The suction tube has been made so that if you stop painting the paint does not run back into the cup so that when you start painting again you don't have to wait for the paint to be sucked up again. Also when you are refilling the cup the paint does not run out all over the place you put the spray head down.

MY EVALUATION –

New Features Did Not Help That Much

In painting my house I use the sprayer mainly to put a layer of paint on the house (in place doing it with a brush or roller). I do, however, brush the paint in after it has been sprayed on. Thus for my purposes I was not interested in any of the new features of the sprayer.

1. Screwing the cup on with multiple turns was actually easier than turning a ¼ turn since there were no O rings and the ¼ turn is really hard to do at times.

2. Having to refill the cup a few seconds earlier than you would have to when needing to spray up was never a problem for me.

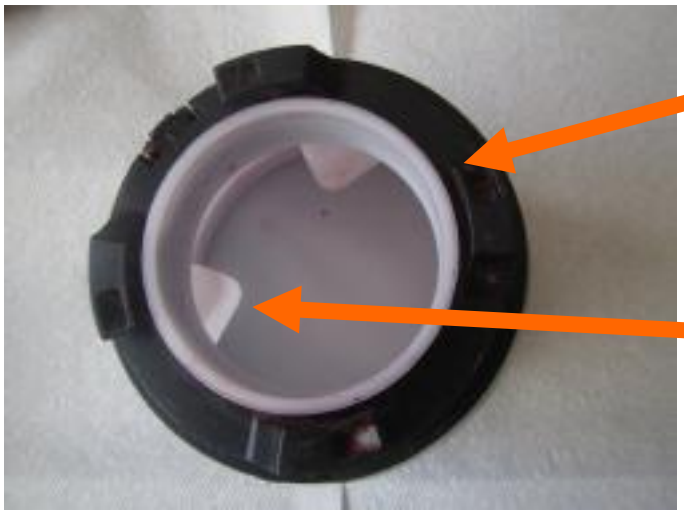
3. Having different atomizers for different paints was not a problem since I bought the atomizer I needed for the paint I was using.

4. I never had much of a problem with overspray since by following up with a brush I never went close to edges since I could do the edges with the brush.

New Features Caused A Huge Cleanup Problem

What I did find was that comparatively, the new sprayer was much harder to clean than the old one (15 minutes for the old vs about 45 minutes for the new). That's a big enough difference to make one think twice about using the sprayer on a small job. Through pictures and text I will try to explain.

1. Paint Cup –



Paint cup – top view

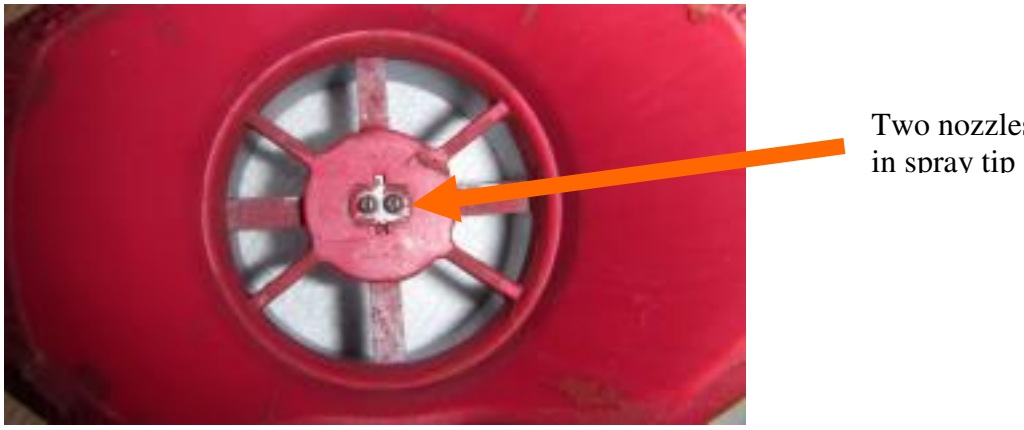
The paint cup on my new sprayer has a flat upper edge which is required for the ¼ turn capability. While cleaning, you find paint adhered to the underside of that lip and it is hard to get a finger in to clean it and get all the paint out. Putting water in and shaking does not get it all. Also there are indentations in the side again added to help turn the cup ¼. The indentations made extra crevices where paint would get stuck. If you buy the Pro or Max versions instead of

the Plus, there is a cup handle and a push button on the outside and so no indentations on the inside.

Since the paint cup goes on with only ¼ turn it must seal quickly. To accomplish this, an O ring is provided. Even when the O ring is oiled, I found it hard to get the cup to turn ¼. After some drops of paint got on the mating surfaces it took all my strength to make the ¼ turn. Even after it was all cleaned up and had been sitting for a week it took all my strength to turn that cup ¼ and get it off. I would much rather have to make 3 or 4 turns as with the old cup style, which apparently did not need such a tight seal.

Paint cup top

2. Adjustable Spray Tip –
This tip is the addition which stops some of the overspray. It has two nozzles built in. After use, paint adheres inside and outside of the nozzles and they must be cleaned. If cleaned right away with a strong spray of water (for latex) they clean up rather fast. However, if oil paint was used they would be harder to clean unless you had a way to give a strong spray of thinner.



3. Atomizer Valve Spring and Piston -
The atomizer valve and the spring and piston require the same cleaning in both the new and old sprayers so there is no difference. Also the piston chamber needs the same cleaning.

4. Suction Tube and Filter Assembly –

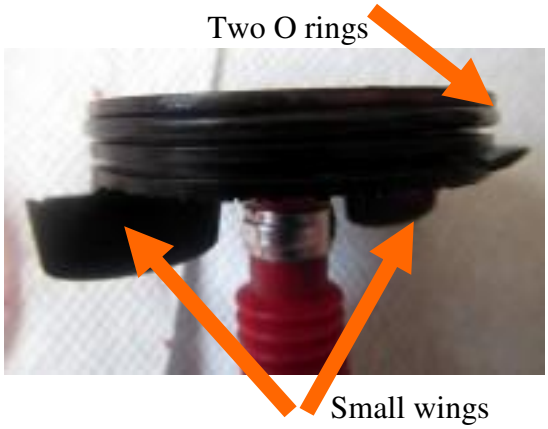
Assembly still connected to sprayer top

This is the unit that really drives me nuts. First it is practically impossible to take apart. Again it takes all my strength to untwist the suction tube and filter assembly from the body which holds the spring and piston. There are two O rings which make this a tight fit. It is hard accomplish with paint or even when it is clean without paint.

Assembly disconnected from sprayer top

Once you get the assembly off, the instructions suggest you flush out the paint to waste. This could amount to several teaspoons of paint lost since there is paint in the tube and also in the strainer chamber. Once it is flushed out the assembly can be taken apart. Again it takes all my strength to untwist the two parts of the strainer compartment (yes even when it is clean). You can only get your hands on two small wings and when the wings are covered with paint or water, and thus slippery, they are hard to grab.

Siphon assembly parts



Once all this is apart you have to clean all the parts making sure you get any paint off surfaces that are going to make that tight vacuum fit.

Now, when putting the assembly back together, you have to lubricate the O rings and with the small, stiff sided bottle of oil provided, it is hard. I did not see in the instructions a recommendation for the type of oil to use other than the small bottle they provide (enough for about 4 cleanings). Actually I am now putting the suction Tube and Filter Assembly together and inserting it into the body when storing the unit but I don't put the paint cup on because it is so hard to get off or on.

5. Vent Hole

Vent hole
Top view

Vent hole
Bottom
view

Oh yes, as in my older sprayer, there is still a vent hole in the body that gets paint in it and causes a vacuum which causes the spraying to stop. It is easy to clean but it would be nice if an air hole could be provided in a place that is not susceptible to clogging by paint.

BOTTOM LINE

If I could have either of the two sprayers I would rather have the old one since I don't use the new features and the old one cleans up in about 15 minutes rather than 45 minutes for the new. In this document I am only comparing the two sprayers I have used and I do not have any idea how long it takes to clean other currently available paint sprayers

Overall, when painting my house which takes many hours over many days, I couldn't do it without the paint sprayer which has saved me a lot of time and makes the job much easier.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

The tight seal provided by the O rings seem to be the main problem. Perhaps using pivoting clips and a simple rubber seal rather than O rings to hold the suction tube and filter assembly together as well as for holding the paint cup to the sprayer body would help. It is not clear how much of the O ring design is for allowing a strong enough suction for when the unit is used without the paint cup but rather with a tube coming out of a pail (see Max and Pro versions). If I had this purchase to make over again, knowing what I know now, I would probably have spent $25 more and gotten the Max version which has the cup handle and the remote suction hose capability.