

Thistle UniFinish

Product Data Sheet

Introduction

Thistle UniFinish is designed for the finishing and re-finishing of a wide range of backgrounds, from low to high suction and from low to high levels of key (e.g. painted, textured finishes, old skim, fillers, plasterboard, moisture resistant board, paint i.e. gloss, emulsion, satin, vinyl, etc., undercoat plasters, tile adhesive, concrete, cement boards and Glasroc H TILEBACKER). Backgrounds should be sound, clean and free from dust.

Product description

Thistle UniFinish is a gypsum finish plaster specially formulated for re-skimming over a wide range of backgrounds with no need for pre-treatment with PVA. It provides a smooth, inert, high quality surface to internal walls and ceilings, and a durable base for the application of decorative finishes. Thistle UniFinish is a retarded hemihydrate, pre-mixed gypsum plaster, requiring only the addition of clean water to prepare it for use. Apply with firm pressure, build out to 2mm thickness in two applications and trowel to a smooth matt finish as the plaster progressively hardens through setting or by loss of water into the background.

Performance

Fire protection

Thistle UniFinish achieves a Euroclass A1 reaction to fire rating.

Fire resistance

It should be assumed that Thistle UniFinish makes a negligible contribution to fire resistance of building elements.

Thermal resistance

It should be assumed that Thistle UniFinish makes a negligible contribution to thermal resistance of building elements.

Effect of temperature

Ambient and background temperature must be maintained above 5°C until fully dry to obtain the full performance. Once fully set and dry, Thistle UniFinish is suitable for situations where the temperature does not exceed 49°C. Dry, bagged plaster is not affected by low temperatures.

Limitations

Painted, textured ceiling finishes: Thistle UniFinish will adhere to painted, textured ceiling finishes. British Gypsum cannot guarantee the bond between the textured finish and the original substrate.

Coverage per bag (m ²)	Setting time (hours)	Water requirement	Dry set weight
10 at 2mm thickness	1.5/2 hours	11.5 litres per bag	3.4 kg/m ²

Application and installation

Suitable backgrounds

All backgrounds should be clean, sound and free from dust.

Most backgrounds encountered in re-skimming jobs will need no pre-treatment before using Thistle UniFinish, some do need pre-treatment, and there are a few where Thistle UniFinish is not suitable even with pre-treatment.

No pre-treatment is needed for:

- Most paints, including matt, silk, vinyl, eggshell emulsions, kitchen/bathroom paint
- Walls stripped of wallpaper (with minimal wallpaper adhesive remaining)
- Painted texture compounds
- Undercoat plaster, except if very high suction (see below)
- Skim finish plaster
- Tile adhesive

Some preparation or pre-treatment is needed for:

- Loose or friable surfaces – these need to be stripped back to a sound surface. Loose layers can be identified by a hollow sound when tapped. Loose or friable backgrounds should be stripped back to a sound surface. After stripping them back, the sound surface can then be assessed

– in many cases the required plaster thickness will necessitate dubbing out, patching or complete replastering with a new undercoat before refinishing

- Extremely high suction backgrounds – e.g. some lime-based or sand/cement backgrounds – these need suction control, which can be done with one application of Thistle GypPrime (diluted as required, to soak in rather than remain at the surface). PVA may also be suitable. If this suction control is not done and the first application of Thistle UniFinish crazes severely, the suction should be controlled before continuing

For tips on dealing with more mild suction however see next page.

Unsuitable backgrounds include:

- Unpainted texture compounds – these can soften significantly when wetted, leading to adhesion failure
- Self-cleaning or anti-graffiti paints – these are often designed to not fully harden, or to have a deliberately water-repellent or weak surface layer so that materials that stick to them are removed easily, so they are not suitable for plastering
- Surfaces where there is flaking or delamination between layers, and poorly bonded, friable or dusty surfaces – there is a high risk of failure unless such materials are removed

Application and installation

What about other backgrounds?:

Our recommendations follow controlled testing and extensive trials across many sites and situations. In re-skimming work, other backgrounds will inevitably occur for which we do not have sufficient data to support a clear recommendation. We can only suggest that customers apply common sense and caution – e.g. it may be appropriate to test a small area, remembering that the whole system of previous layers needs to be stable both during and after refinishing. If there is doubt that it will, then removal or overboarding should be considered

Note on texture compounds:

If unpainted these backgrounds are not suitable for plastering.

If painted they are probably suitable, but note the following:

- They still need to be checked for cleanliness and soundness
- Deep texture patterns will be more difficult to cover than shallow patterns
- Scraping the peaks off a deep texture before plastering is not recommended for two reasons: 1) if the compound is old enough it may contain asbestos and 2) scraping removes all paint from small areas, exposing unpainted compound
- No-one can guarantee that failure within or between earlier layers won't occur, e.g. between texture compound and the original substrate, when more weight of plaster is applied

Storage

Bags should be stored dry, as absorption of water shortens the setting time, causes set lumps to form in the bags and may reduce the strength of the set plasterwork. If storing on a concrete floor, dry timber platforms should be provided. Thistle UniFinish stored correctly has a shelf life of 4 months and bags are printed with the 'use by' date in order to permit use in strict rotation.

Mixing

Mix by adding to clean water and use clean mixing equipment. Contamination from previous mixes adversely affects the setting time and the strength. Suitable for mixing by hand or

mechanical whisk of a slow speed, high torque type. While mechanical mixing speeds the process up, there is no need to continue mixing after dispersing lumps and achieving the right consistency – over-mixing can affect setting times, lead to deterioration in workability and create difficulty in achieving a flat finish.

Application

- The powder should be added gradually to clean water in a clean mixing vessel, stirring continuously until a smooth consistency is achieved
- Apply in 2 coats, each coat at a minimum of 1mm thickness
- For the best surface finish results use a clean, damp trowel
- Avoid polishing and aim for a matt finish

Decoration

Gypsum-based plasterwork must always be thoroughly dry before decorating, although a coat of permeable paint can be applied in the interim. Plaster surfaces can be decorated with most proprietary paint finishes and will accept the majority of wall covering adhesives. The manufacturers' recommendations in respect of applied decorative treatments should always be followed. Tiles up to 20kg/m² can be applied after a suitable primer has been applied. If plastering to provide a background for tiles, avoid polishing the surface. Polished plaster surfaces should be roughened and a suitable primer used.

Observations from site

The following points may be helpful in dealing with unexpected problems:

- When plastering a high suction area, the first application may "pull in" quickly
- "Tearing" of a plaster coat suggests control of background suction with GypPrime or PVA may be required
- Sometimes a third coat will be needed. Depending on the size of the area the third coat (and sometimes the second) will probably be from a second mix, which can be mixed a little softer than the first

Product standards

Thistle UniFinish complies with *EN 13279-1 type B7*, and is manufactured under a quality system independently audited and certified as conforming with *ISO 9001: 2000*.

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British Gypsum reserves the right to revise product specification without notice. The information herein should not be read in isolation as it is meant only as guidance for the user, who should always ensure that they are fully conversant with the products and systems being used and their subsequent installation prior to the commencement of work. For a comprehensive and up-to-date library of information visit the British Gypsum website at: www.british-gypsum.com. For information about products supplied by Artex Limited or Saint-Gobain Isover please see their respective websites.

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