

# How I Painted My Camaro *with* Show Car Results

By John Doyle



**D**eciding to paint your own car is an intimidating thing. Somehow most amateur restorers will feel comfortable rebuilding just about anything mechanical, yet when it comes to the painting process, they become skeptical of their ability to paint a car with the show quality results that they expect. I was in this exact position a few years back; I was about five years and many thousands of dollars into my restoration of a '67 Camaro I had owned since 1979. As any of you who have gone through a restoration know, it's a money-burning, time-consuming, marriage-straining ordeal. You question yourself if the years that it takes will be worth it. Well, I'm telling you it is, and it especially is if you paint the car yourself!

I was willing to spend \$3500.00 in 1996 to have my car painted by the local custom car guy. I visited his shop a few times to talk to him about it. My car was a total frame off resto and was completely

apart, and I was handling all of the body work. For this price he wanted me to cut-in the jambs and reassemble it before he applied the final top coat. This sort of bugged me, but I was willing to do it and spend the money to get the results I was looking for. The cost would be substantially more if he was to paint it apart and assemble it. I had painted two cars in the past, but they were with lacquer, and frankly, looked like crap. I wanted this car to have the base coat/clear coat urethane paint that all the show cars had. I felt I had invested too much time and money to screw it up with a lousy "do-it-yourself" paint job. I have to credit my brother-in-law, Jeff, for changing my mind. For Christmas, he gave me a touch-up spray gun as a gift. I already had a Bink's #7, but he said that this would be a great gun to get into the jambs, and other tight spots. As I was unwrapping it, he said, "Come on John, you know you want to paint it... you can do it." He was right, I realized I did want

to paint the car myself. Being that it was Christmas Eve at the time and I also had a few beers in me, I vowed that “I was going to paint it myself!” It was one of the best decisions that I had ever made.

The following article will tell in detail how I painted my car using a base coat/clear coat urethane. I’ll include the mistakes I made as well as what I learned in the process. I also want to state that I am by no means a professional. Even though I had painted two cars before, I still basically was a novice. This article is only a recount of the procedures I followed on my ‘67 Camaro and the way they worked for me. I won’t assume responsibility for any misinterpretation of this article. I highly recommend that you still read any “how to” articles and Paint and Bodywork reference books, as well as possibly taking an adult education course. I will try to be as detailed as possible to answer any questions that you might be asking and hopefully you will get the courage to paint your own car. And if you’ve intended to paint your car all along, doing it yourself will save you money, but this is not a cheap endeavor. Depending on what equipment you need along with paint and materials, it can run you any where from \$1000.00 to 2500.00. You might want to put together a shopping list to help you decide if it is worth it to you.



***Hold a single edge razor as shown and lightly push.***

There are other considerations you need to take into account too. The amount of time that it takes will vary, but this is not a weekend job. My entire restoration took me eight years, with the paint and body work taking well over a year. I worked on the car nights and weekends, but I still had a life beyond my Camaro, so my term might seem long to some. To me and especially my wife, it sometimes seemed like a project that would never end. I would allow at least a 6-12 month window to handle the paint and bodywork, again depending on the amount of bodywork needed, it could be more or less. You need to be able to have a garage that you can tie up, and know you’ll have to invest in a

decent air compressor and spray gun (more on this later). And even though you’ll be doing the work yourself, the paint and related materials are still very expensive. I also want to state that you must read and follow all directions, for safety as well as applications on all materials and paints. Along with using common sense, you must use a proper respirator, and keep the paint off your skin. These are some serious chemicals and should not be taken lightly.

Painting your own car is actually the easy part. That whole spraying part that I was fretting over actually was a breeze. Now I’m sure Tiger Woods thinks that what he does with a golf club is easy to him. I’m not comparing myself to Woods here talent wise, (I won’t even mention my average golf score, often three digits), but you can’t be a total klutz either. You do have to possess some dexterity. Not anywhere near the skill level of a pin striper, but, perhaps more than a house painter. It was everything else about the process that was hard. I don’t mean “hard” as in being difficult (at times it will be), but more as being time consuming and patience testing. But I’m getting ahead of myself here, let’s start at the beginning.

## **Getting Started**

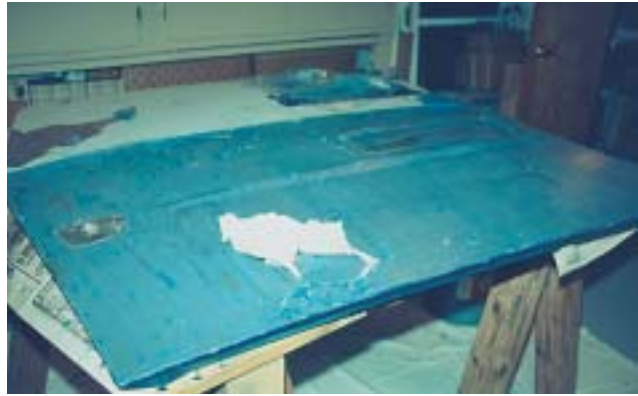
I’m sure I don’t have to tell any of you about how to take your Camaro apart. But if you haven’t started yet, take measurements of gaps, make templates of your door strike positions, etc. and take a ton of pictures of every possible square inch of your car. Take at least four rolls, shooting every possible part and at multiple angles and views of your car. Also shoot them as it’s coming apart. Don’t cheap out on this; trust me you’ll need to refer to them. Also invest in an assembly manual which will be heavily referred to when you’re putting your car back together, but the pictures will be invaluable, not to mention the neat part of showing off the “before and after”. I wish I had more painting process photos to show you, but... So lesson learned! Take lots of photos.



***It’s nice to see before and after, so take plenty of photos.***

Once mine was apart I started to strip the paint off every piece. My car had been repainted with an air dried enamel with the original lacquer still underneath. I started to use a chemical stripper to remove the enamel and then the lacquer. This was using a lot of stripper. I found that I could use a razor blade to zip off the topcoat of enamel. Hold a single edge razor between your thumb and forefingers with both hands, the rest of your fingers will be pointing up. Then start around a chipped area and lightly push away. The key word is LIGHTLY!, (I don't have to tell you how sharp a razor blade is.) The enamel has to be on thick enough for this to work; if it is you will see the enamel zip right off. I did not wear gloves, but you might want to. Definitely wear eye protection! If it's coming off, depending on the age of the enamel, it will either zip off in sheets as wide as the blade, or it will pop off in shards that can fly up in your face. The paint will also build up under and push out the metal clasp that holds the razor. Over time, you will go through a couple of razors. So be careful! If it doesn't want to come off easily, your enamel is on either too thin, or it's lacquer paint.

Chemical stripping is messy. If you're doing it on a car that's still assembled, be extremely careful not to let the stripper get into any gaps. I had totally disassembled my car which makes this process a little easier. I did a part at a time, in sections so I could see some results. I tried just about every stripper out there, and found Zip-Strip Original Formula to be as good as any. I'm mentioning the brand only because you can buy it in just about any hardware stores' paint dept. and you'll often see it on sale for less than \$20.00 a gallon. You can also get it in pints in case you run out with just a little more paint left to strip. Also a pint is easy to pour the stripper out of and is easy to refill from a gallon, so you might want to get one anyway. I would follow the directions for safety, but not for the application time. I found that the stripper worked best if you pour out a blob enough to brush out about a 6 to 8 inch square, then lay a piece of plastic Saran wrap over it. Heavier plastic sheathing would curl, but the thin stuff worked fine. I would do this in two sections at a time. After about 3-4 minutes I would lift off the wrap, lay it down with the stripper side up. Take a bondo squeegee and push the stripper over to a new section, maybe add a dash of fresh stripper and lay the plastic back on top. Then squeeze it out in the direction of the unstripped area. You can sort of reuse the stripper/paint gook for maybe three or more times before you need to scrape it up and remove it. If you're like me and trying to save a buck, it's a fairly effective way of stretching the



***Layers of paint need to be stripped. The lacquer paint is the most difficult to remove.***

stripper. You probably are still going to use a few gallons to strip an entire car.

Unlike enamel which will wrinkle up and remove easily, lacquer will only soften or "liquefy" with the stripper. This is the messy part; the squeegee just sort of pushes it around, don't worry if you miss a spot here and there. Once the lacquer has been mostly removed, you'll see the factory primer, still hard as nails, smilin' back at ya. Before you throw in the towel, drop a half dollar size dollop of stripper on the primer and rub with a #2 medium coarse piece of steel wool, do not allow the steel wool particles to get into any crevices. This will quickly cut through the 2 layers of primer and any lacquer remnants to the sheet metal below. Just keep going, this is just the beginning of your test of time and patience.

It took many days and nights to strip the doors, trunk and entire front clip. Don't forget to strip the inside of the front lower valance, it shows when you lift the hood. Also photograph any crayon marks or "PBT" marks if you plan on reapplying them. Then it was on to the main body. I decided to clean the under carriage first, so I jacked up the car and proceeded to lie on a creeper and start scrubbing off the 20+ years of crud. Definitely no fun! Plus I was actually getting dizzy from laying on my back in the confined space. I considered buying or making a rotisserie, but my budget would not allow it. I needed something to get the car on it's side cheap. I had these 4x4 posts that were 8 ft. long and bolted them to the front sub frame mounts, using 2 x4's as spacers and long enough bolts to pass through them both. Then I ran one across the cowl mounting to the top fender mounts in the same fashion, these required spacers as well. The 3rd post bolted up to the rear frame rails where the leaf spring perches mount. No spacers were needed there. then a short support tie across the 2 bottom ties were bolted together. Make sure the ends protrude out the soon to be floor side evenly (squarely). Then attach a hoist to the the short tie and



*It's easy to detail the bottom, when the bottom is now on the side.*

slowly start to crank. Before you know it your body will be on its side up off the floor. I recommend cleaning the post attachment points first, then you can either paint before you attach the ties, or after you lower the car back down and remove the posts (which is what I did). It also pays to have a friend or two to keep watch as this thing goes up and down. With the car on its side it's obviously easier to clean, detail and paint the underside of your car.

## **Glancing Back..**

I was living in Florida in 1979, I was 21 and determined to get the car I always wanted, a '67 Camaro. I searched for months before finding what was almost the perfect match for my wish list. I got a Marina Blue RS/SS 350, it had power brakes (not original at the time) power steering, power windows, black deluxe interior and air conditioning. It was also an automatic, but hey, you can't have everything (I did convert it to a 4 speed during my restoration). A restoration, like archeology, will unearth the history of your car. I discovered that the car originally had a vinyl top, which under the hot Florida sun must have cracked and held rain water. This water rotted out where the quarters meet the deck lid panel and eventually found its way into the trunk and rusted the pan, a common problem on first gens. Stripping the paint unveiled some other problems; my Camaro also must have taken a minor hit to the rear. I was



*When I saw this ad in the Auto Trader, I knew I had found my car!*

lucky to find two N.O.S. '67 quarter panels that were purchased new in 1969. I had a body shop install the quarters along with new wheel housings, a new trunk pan, rear window deck lid panel (tulip panel) and rear tail light panel. I felt that this level of body work was beyond my expertise and tools. You need some serious spot welding equipment and at this point it was too early in my restoration for me to try and tackle major body panel replacement. I'm not sure even now that I would have attempted to do it.

Having the car on its side allowed me to easily finish off the underside welds from the trunk pan installation and fix a dent in my rocker panel. I'm not going to go in to detail about collision repair or metal patching in this article. Most "how to" books are very thorough on this topic. Whether you feel as though you can handle it, or need to farm it out is up to you. Getting the body straight will be covered ahead. I will stress that all dent and rust repair work be done correctly and completely, otherwise your paint will not last. You must remove any trace of rust that appears on the face sheet metal. Don't rely on special paintovers like POR-15 or Corroless on face (exterior) sheet metals. I had a small spot of rust near my side view mirror on the driver's side door. I sanded it down to a tiny brown spot and painted it over with Corroless. Now I have a small spider vein of rust growing! Ironically I spent mega hours removing rust on my door interiors and other areas (definitely use the "paint overs" in places like those), but didn't take that spot so seriously, thinking that the little dab of Corroless would work. It must have gotten sanded too thin during the block sanding. So get all the rust!

Rust removal can be done with sand blasting and chemicals including acid, but they all have their drawbacks. Sand blasting can warp the panels, and of course you have to own one. I was cheap, so I used the chemicals (Eastwood's Oxysolv) and Muriatic acid (swimming pool acid). Oxysolv works good, it's safe but it's also slow. It leaves a zinc phosphate coating that might be helpful. Muriatic acid is much faster, but it's corrosive and if you get a whiff of the fumes, they'll knock you on your ass! If you

decide to use it, definitely wear a respirator, eye protection and gloves. Apply it outdoors, you can stop the acid with water, so have a hose handy. Lay down plastic sheeting on your driveway, or any drips will start to etch your concrete. Don't use it on any structural metal, such as bolts, bumper brackets, braces etc. it will weaken the metal leaving it more brittle. I applied it to a spring and then the spring didn't spring, it cracked. So stick to sheet metal only. It really works well on like, a inner front fender well that's covered with light surface rust and maybe some pitting. Muriatic will erase the rust fast, along with removing most of the original black paint, yet still leave the original metal texture that some parts like inner fender wells have. When repainted, it looks brand new. Even after rinsing with water, the bright metal will slowly turn orange again due to the corrosive nature of the acid. I wouldn't recommend using Muriatic in an area such as a roof, where it could drip down to a lower enclosed area that would be hard to reach to stop the acid. Use the Oxysolv in places like that and only use the Muriatic on areas that you can easily rinse it clean and treat. During this rinsing stage I would actually wash down the parts with hot soapy water to remove any stripper residue that might have remained and then rinse thoroughly.

Then you have to treat the metal to stop the further corrosion that the Muriatic will cause, I used a metal prep (Dupont's 5717 S metal conditioner, also a mild acid) to completely rewash and etch all treated areas. When properly dried, this one will not start to immediately corrode, but should be primed and painted soon. On any underside areas, I sprayed a Zinc primer (Dupont 215S) to help prevent future corrosion. These aerosol spray cans are expensive, but they are worth it.

## Patching Holes

Now I'll concentrate on one part to demonstrate different repair methods. I'm going to use a door for example. I did not need new door skins, so I can't tell you about installing them. However I probably could have used them! My doors were not in the best of shape. So far they've been stripped, de-rusted with acid, washed with liquid detergent, rinsed thoroughly, washed down with metal prep (to neutralize and etch) and wiped dry. Then they were cleaned thoroughly with a surface cleaner (Dupont's Prep Sol) and wiped dry. Any previous repair Bondo has been removed (either ground off or removed with stripper) And any interior metal has been painted with Corroless and sprayed as best as possible with Zinc primer. So there is my door, loaded with parking lot dings and a huge grapefruit sized former rust hole on the inside lower

front, just down from the lower hinge. You have three choices; you can give up and sell the car (often crossed my mind), you can dig deep into your pockets and buy rust free doors (if you can find them) or you can repair them (my only real choice). To fix the hole, the purist approach is to metal patch it. It can be difficult to form metal into some of the compound shapes required and then it must be welded. Another choice is fiberglass repair, but I've heard it can be difficult to shape without a support form. Then there's that nylon screen that comes in those Bondo repair kits, (nah, that can't be good). Well, lucky for me I got a tip that's not too far off from that last one. The guy who replaced my quarters told me to buy that spray insulation foam used in homes (i.e. Great Stuff) and use it to fill any large holes. When hardened, it can be shaped with a knife and cheese grater tool, then a light coat of filler can be applied on top of it. It makes for a really firm and solid repair and this foam will not absorb water. The foam really expands, so be careful not to over do it, but even if you do. it can be trimmed easily. To my amazement, it really did work great, especially on those compound curves at the base of the door. Four years have passed and it's still holding up great (although I never let my Camaro get wet).

Now on to the door dings. Body filler is a wonderful thing, when applied correctly. Nobody wants a "bondo bucket", the connotation indicates a half baked repair that will ultimately fail. Yet virtually every restoration will need it. If you use it correctly, it should not be a problem. The two main things to practice are surface prep and to keep it thin. After the rust prep and any major dent repair, the metal should be roughed up if it hasn't already, with a disk grinder. This will help the bondo bite into the metal. The final bondo should not be any thicker than  $\frac{1}{8}$ " of an inch, preferably less than  $\frac{1}{16}$ ". If it is, you're taking a risk that it will shrink or move in some way, so



**Primer, metal conditioner, bondo and sanding boards are needed for basic bodywork.**

more hammer and dolly work might be in order. As you know metal will expand and contract with heat (especially the hood). The bondo won't move like the metal if it has too much mass or substance to it. It also will continue to shrink, long after the paint has been applied. So the best practice is to do enough metal massaging so that only a thin coat of filler remains after it's sanded down.

I used the more expensive brands such as Dynatron Ultimate lightweight filler and Evercoat Xtra-fin glazing compound. The Evercoat goes on like a toothpaste that turns into a rock hard glass. You can get a really fine feathered edge, but it's more difficult to sand. This glazing compound is more for minor imperfection work and cleaning up pinholes etc. Both require adding hardeners to make them work. Adding the right amount of hardener is tricky, you add too much and it sets up too fast, too little and it's tacky when sanding. If you're to err, I would add just a tad more when mixing than not enough. You might risk running out of hardener along with a shorter working period, but sanding tacky bondo is not fun. I would spread out the filler over the door peak, filling all the dings. After a rough filing with a cheese grater, sand it smooth with some 80 grit on a sanding board. I would suggest investing in some sanding boards.



*Note how the fluorescent light bends naturally with the contours.*



*Here is a low spot I missed; notice how the light on the top fender deflects in the low spot.*

Eastwood among others sells them in packages of various sizes. I also purchased a long board that had a plastic flexible base, which was great for sanding curved areas like the roof. It's amazing how most of the filler winds up as dust in this process. It will also take many applications of filler and sanding to get it perfectly smooth. You will also need to go to finer sandpaper grits (100 and then 150) as you get it smoother. I found that a fluorescent shop light will help with the "smooth and straight" process. Hang the light directly above your work area. When you think it's right, wipe it down with a wet rag. I used water, I have heard not to use water but a solvent instead. However, I did not have any problems with the water, I just made perfectly sure it was dry (an old hair dryer works well) before adding anymore filler.

When the area is wet, it acts like a clear coat. Step back and catch the reflection of the light on your work. As you move back and forth, so will the light over the part. Look for any bends or distortions in the light reflection. Any that you see are most likely low spots or improperly feathered edges that will need additional filling or rough spots that need more sanding. You will see a natural bend of light due to the shape of the panel, but it should not be wavy or distorted. It should be a mirror reflection of those fluorescent tubes. Keep doing this until you see its mirror image on every part that you will see your topcoat. Primer will also help in filling minor low spots. You can learn the touch approach, rubbing your fingers over the work, but this takes some practice. I like the "seeing is believing" method, if you can see that it's straight in the reflected light, it will be straight. Don't be surprised if it takes about 5 or 6 applications to get it straight. You will also need to trial fit any moldings etc. that come in contact with a repaired area. My car had the new quarters etc. so my rear window areas took some finessing as well. Just remember, anything that you can see now, won't disappear with the topcoat. The paint won't hide anything, more likely it will only magnify it. Any pinholes that might show should be filled as well, the glazing compound works well for this.

## **Preparation is the Key**

Preparation is the most important step that a good paint job needs. It's always been something that we've known, but not always practiced. The more you work on preparation, the better your paint job will be. This becomes difficult due to the time you need to invest to get it straight. It takes a lot of patience, a lot of applications of filler, and a lot of sanding. Then you're done with just one door!

And you have another door, two fenders, a trunk lid, hood and some valance panels. Then there's the body! Then you have to prime it. Then you have to block sand the primer. The primer will fill only the most minor low spots, but there will be these low spots. A fill 'n sand primer can be used to add bulk before you block sand it down smooth, you should also expect to do a few coats of this too. Always wipe the surface clean with a surface cleaner and wipe with a tack cloth before spraying the primer.

You can use different colors of primer like red and gray to help find the low and high spots when blocking. This works the same way, using sanding boards. Long boards should be used on long flat panels such as hoods. You can use a round piece of hose with sand paper wrapped around it for tight curves. Don't use your hand or fingers, these can leave ruts. I used strips of 240 grit "wet or dry" sandpaper in the dry mode for my blocking. Sand back and forth and at diagonals in long strokes (10 to 20 inches) to make it perfectly flat. Keep the board moving around, not in a single straight back and forth movement that will cut a groove. With a red oxide primer base and a gray on top, it will be easy to find the problem spots without the lamps as the gray will vanish evenly except for the low areas. Don't use the wet method on primer because it absorbs water. Keep applying the primer and keep sanding until it's flat, straight and flawless. This practice is explained clearly in most auto body how to books. Like I said earlier, this is not a week-end deal. I'm not trying to scare you, but you need to realize what's involved to get the results that I know you're looking for.

You can rush it, but more than likely your paint job will reflect it. If you're faster, good for you, you might make a good professional. It takes a lot of experience and acquired skill to eliminate the number of steps that an amateur will need to take. You could have an exceptionally straight body too, miracles do happen. But not for me, I kept sanding and sanding and sanding...

But hey, along with some good tunes on the radio, you get into it! Sort of like a Zen-like state, you forget about all the stresses in your life and you're just focused on that finish. It can make for good therapy. Automobile restoration is your hobby, and that's what a hobby is supposed to do, relax you. You will get quite good at it too, so go back and reinspect the ones you did first, to see if they meet your present skill level. You'll also probably master the feel technique of rubbing your hands over the panels to feel variations, keep trying it, you'll eventually be able to feel the low and

high spots. If you stay focused on one panel at a time, making sure each square inch passes your inspection, you've done it. After what's probably going to be a few months, you're ready for paint!

## **Trial Assembly**

Well, almost ready. Since my car was apart and I had some new sheet metal and a new radiator support, I knew I had to do a trial assembly of the car. I'm glad I did, I had a few alignment problems to fix that I would have missed if I didn't reassemble the car. I will cover the tricks to the assembly process ahead in the paint section, but for now I won't get into it other than to say it's time to hang the doors and reattach the front clip. I didn't install the inner fender wells but everything else went on. This is also a good drill to help you get the feel of how the car will finally go together. You do not have to use every fastener either, just use enough to hold it correctly in place.

If your sheet metal is all original (another miracle) you could skip the trial assembly. If you want to paint your car assembled, you should cut in the jambs with paint at this point. There is a jamb-cutting clear made for this purpose that is especially fast drying; you can use it if you feel you need to save time, or you could use the regular clear. I didn't want the over spray problems that can arise with the assembled method, so I sprayed my car apart. You'll get better results if you paint each part separately and then install them. This is a riskier method, since you can scratch a good paint job when reinstalling the sheet metal after it's painted. You will see how I did it and you can judge for yourself. If you feel it's too risky and want to cut in before assembly, you'll have to guard against the over spray that will get into any sheet metal gaps. I can't really offer specific advice on how to do this since I didn't do it that way, but I've talked to people who say they've masked off the cut-in areas before continuing with



***Notice how my front gap is a tad too big compared to the back.***



***You can see the haze that the clear coat creates. Definitely wear a paint suit, you need more protection than I had.***

the top coat. The doors, trunk and hood are highly exposed areas for car shows etc. I wanted the interior jamb areas to look as good as the exterior. The only way I could figure out how to do this was to treat every area as an exterior area and paint the car in pieces.

So after the car is trial assembled, it comes back apart except for the doors. Make sure your doors have the right gaps (refer back to those photos, my left rear gap is a tad too tight) and tighten down all the hinge bolts. The doors are tricky to align and to hang. I did mine by balancing the bottom center on a floor jack that's been well padded. You will need a helper to do this. You don't need to attach the striker and latch for the trial fitting either. Also refer to my reassembly instructions further ahead in the article. The hinges are designed to move for adjusting, the post hinges are easier to align due to the body gaps and body ridges. The door jamb hinges have to be approximated for the fender alignment and might require additional alignment once the fender goes on. Only you'll have to remove the fender again to get at the bolts. Hopefully you didn't chip any of the primer, if you did you'll have to feather it out and re-prime it. After you make sure all the primer is perfect and that there is no exposed metal, it's time to start the paint process. I will cover exactly what paints I used further ahead in this article, for now we'll just go along with the procedures I followed. I tried to spread all the parts out in my garage, so I could get around them easily and also be able to flip some of them (like the trunk etc.) I do have a two car garage, but it was still very difficult getting everything to fit so I could maneuver around it. You might be forced to paint different parts on different days if you're tight on space. You need ample room so you don't bump in to any parts that are still wet when you're shooting something else.

## Constructing Your Paint Booth

Whenever you are ready to paint and even when you shoot the primer, you need to do a thorough cleaning of the parts as well as the garage area. You need to sweep up all primer and bondo dust from the floor, and remove any other debris, tools, cans, or whatever. I did not wet the floor to keep dust down when priming, but I did when I shot the color and clear. When sweeping, try not to kick up too much dust. Let it settle for a few hours, and then wipe down the parts with the appropriate cleaning solvent. Wipe the solvent dry and then lightly tack cloth all parts.

Again, this procedure goes for priming as well as painting. Dust will ruin a good paint job, so clean it as best as you possibly can, then shoot your paint as soon as possible. While we're on the topic of cleaning, we should also discuss masking. Since my car was totally apart I did not really have any masking in the usual sense, but I did have to mask off the areas I wanted to keep paint free (such as my undercarriage) and also inside the car. The primers and base coats will settle and dry quickly forming a paint dust, but the clear coat creates a haze that will literally hang in the air just like fog. It will get EVERYWHERE. I thought I covered up my newly detailed engine, only to find a hazy coating in spots when I uncovered it. It was very difficult to remove. So mask it air tight! Also mask and cover any garage walls, radios,





**Measuring stick really helps you get accurate results.**

tools, etc. Close off your air compressor and paint mixing area. Also know the garage floor will turn the color of your car, so you might want to somehow mask it off with sheets of plywood or cardboard. The floor does get sticky when the clear starts going on. Use sheet plastic and a staple gun to mask walls. Do whatever you need, to more or less construct your own paint booth. I basically just hung 10' x 25' plastic sheathing loosely from the rafters and didn't know enough to worry about tight seams. Now my air compressor and garage radio are blue and blotchy! You might want to frame in some furnace filters along with an exhaust fan to pull in a stream of dust free air. The fan should be outside of the paint area, and not close enough to spark any of the fumes. Make sure you use a brand new high quality respirator and I would strongly suggest buying a paint suit. I wore jeans and a sweat shirt with my sleeves pulled up. My forearms were exposed to the clear coat and itched like crazy for days!

If you've read all this and are still willing to go the distance, It's time to invest in the proper spraying equipment. You will need an air compressor that's capable of delivering at least 7.5 CFM at 50 PSI (your Spray Gun may require more). And you need to set up some sort of dryer on the line. The air compressor heats the air up, and as it passes through the hose it cools down and will condensate. So some sort of trap is needed a distance away from the compressor. I purchased a Motor Guard filter from my paint vendor. You might have seen some guys mount this trap right off the back of the compressor where the hose connects, but at that point there is no condensation yet to trap. I wasn't about to install a hard lined system like all the books show, I just got an extra length of air hose and installed the filter half way using quick disconnect's, then ran the 2nd hose from it to my gun. Be careful not to go to long, lengths over 50' will require a larger hose diameter. At the gun I installed a mini trap for a final moisture trap. I would also advise shooting the car when the humidity is somewhat low and the temperature moderate, if possible. You really should buy a new gun too, I recommend an H.V.L.P (high volume, low pressure)

model with a gravity feed cup. What you spend is up to you, but if you're doing all this, it doesn't make sense to buy a cheap gun. I purchased a Sharpe Platinum gun #2015 which retailed for \$450.00 in '96. I bought it at the same time I purchased the paint and other materials, so after a little negotiating (begging and pleading) I got it for \$395.00. I honestly believe that the quality of the gun had a direct effect on the final quality of my paint job. You could always sell the gun afterwards as well.

## Getting Ready for Paint

So now you're all set up to start painting the car. The first step is to apply a primer sealer to match the color paint you will use. Your paint dealer will recommend the best choice for your specific color. They come in red, gray and transparent, that can be tinted for a closer match your final color. I used Dupont's Prime 'N Seal in gray for my Marina blue color. It required an activator to be mixed in a 1:1 ratio. I gave everything two wet coats with a 15 minute flash between coats.

Now if you've never done this before, this is when this whole process becomes intimidating. I'm here to remind you it's not that overwhelming. But as I sit here typing what I did three years ago, all the memories of my worries are coming back to me when I was reading the directions. Like, "what the heck is flash?" and "what do they mean by spray viscosity; 18-20 seconds in a Zahn #2 cup?" These and other terms really don't make sense to the average Joe. Basically, you can somewhat ignore viscosity and flash is the drying time which I'll explain a bit ahead Take your time and ask your vendor for advice. Buy your paint from a Jobber that knows their stuff, not from some kid managing the paint counter at the local discount auto chain. I want to state again that these are some serious chemicals here! They actually state on the product that they are not for sale to the General Public and are for "Professionals" only. Talk to the dealer that you buy all your paint supplies from to make sure you get all the protection you need. Again a quality respirator along with a paint suit to keep this nasty stuff off your skin is a must! If you're really wor-



*A display of paint and pails that I used.*

ried about how you will handle the gun, buy some extra paint or one of the jobber's paint mix mistakes to practice with. Get an old fender or door and strip and prep it. Then go to town practicing your painting technique on that part. Or, you could get some large pieces of cardboard to practice on.






I used Dupont paints on my car, I found that they had my Marina Blue formula #4704F available in their base coat clear coat line and the jobber was close to where I worked. I chose the Chroma Premier line, it's Dupont most expensive, I felt I needed all the help I could get. I purchased a gallon of color (base coat) and a gallon of clear coat, along with all the appropriate activators and reducers required. My vendor sold me mid-temp formulas, that were appropriate for the temperature range that I was painting in. The color base coat is mixed with a basemaker activator in a simple one to one ratio. My jobber gave me this measuring stick that was very helpful in mixing, ask yours for one. It looks like a metal ruler painted with numbered measurement lines from 1 through 5, so you can mix the paint in volumes that suit your needs, depending on the size of the pail you're mixing it in. I purchased several plastic mixing pails, both in 1 quart and 2½ quart sizes with lids. I also purchased an empty 1 gallon tin can with lid for all of my gun cleaning solvent waste. After thoroughly stirring the paint and shaking the basemaker well, insert the stick into a empty mixing pail holding it straight up. Pour in the paint until it reaches the desired unit of the volume of paint you want to mix. For instance if you only needed a small amount of paint, you would use a one quart pail and pour the paint until it reaches the line of the #1 unit shown under the basecoat heading, then add the basemaker until it reaches the #1 line shown on its heading. Since #1 is the smallest unit and we used a 1 quart pail, we probably have mixed and activated about 8 ounces of paint. But since we're painting the entire car I'll fill a 2½ quart up to the 5th line unit along with the

5th unit line of the basemaker, now I have about 2 quarts of mixed paint. I would start mixing smaller amounts that are easier to mix, handle and pour into your gun. Never return extra activated paint back in to the can with inactivated paint and don't mix too much that can't be used within the set pot life of the mixture (see manufacturers specs). This stick really comes in handy when mixing the clear coat which is a little more complicated. The clear is a 3:1:30%, meaning 3 parts clear to 1 part activator and then 30% of the volume for the reducer. Very difficult to figure out, but the stick makes it easy.

## **Using a Gravity Feed H.V.L.P. Gun**

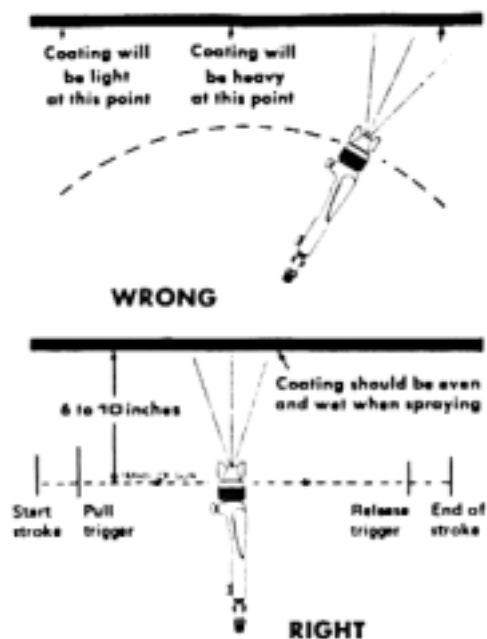
As I mentioned before, even though I had a Old Bink's #7 spray gun, I decided to buy a new one. My old Bink's was actually my father's gun, it was a good quality siphon type (cup is mounted at the bottom) spray gun, I had painted my first car, a '71 Cutlass and then a '71 Chevelle with it. It was a heavy gun and when filled with paint it weighed a ton. I knew it had seen better days. My new gravity feed (cup is mounted at the top) Sharpe Platinum gun #2015 is very light and with the gravity feed cup, when filled with paint is very balanced. It 's a H.V.L.P. (high volume, low pressure) gun which will direct more paint towards the surface and not blow it away in over spray. This particular model also comes with a regulator and gauge that gives you a precise air pressure reading and adjustment right at the gun. Correct pressure at the gun is very critical to the quality of the paint application. The only negative thing about the gravity feed style is that they aren't as easy to fill as the siphon cup ones are. They need to be hung on a hook, make sure the gun you get comes with one. I actually made a little wooden stand to mount the hook to, which made it easy to pour the paint at my work bench You need to adjust the gun to give you the proper spray pattern. When correct, the paint should fan out in an oblong oval shape, like a flying saucer. Your manual should outline how to best do this. Mine was preset at the factory and was perfect right out of the box. There is a metal ring at the air nozzle which when loosened, allows you to turn the air direction ring so you can change your paint direction from horizontal to vertical. To paint horizontal strokes, the air nozzle should be in the 3:00 and 9:00 o'clock position, which in turn will shape the spray fan in a 12:00 and 6:00 position. Adjust the nozzle vice-versa to 12:00 and 6:00 for vertical strokes. The paint trigger has two steps, the first will blow air only and the second will send the paint. The blow air step can be used as a last minute way to blow

## TROUBLE SHOOTING SPRAY GUN TEST PATTERNS

CONDITION	CAUSE	CORRECTION	CONDITION	CAUSE	CORRECTION
 <b>RIGHT</b>	1. Correct Normal Pattern	No Correction Necessary	 <b>WRONG</b>	1. Dirty or distorted air horn holes.	1. Rotate air cap 180° A. If pattern follows air cap, problem is in air cap. Clean and inspect the horn holes. If horn holes are distorted, replacement is necessary.
 <b>WRONG</b> Heavy Top or Bottom Pattern	1. Dirty or damaged air cap. 2. Dirty or damaged fluid tip	1. Rotate air cap 180° A. If pattern follows air cap, problem is in air cap. Clean and inspect. If pattern is not corrected, replacement is necessary. B. If pattern does not follow the air cap, the problem is with the fluid tip. Clean and inspect the tip for dried paint, dirt or damage. If the pattern is not corrected, replacement is necessary	 Gun spitting  <b>WRONG</b>	1. Air getting into paint stream somewhere.  EXAMPLE: Same symptoms as a cup running out of paint.	1. Check and tighten fluid needle packing nut. 2. Tighten fluid tip. 3. Check fluid tip seat for damage. 4. Check for poor gun to cup seating.
 <b>WRONG</b> Split Pattern	1. Pressure too high for material viscosity being sprayed.	1. Reduce air pressure 2. Increase material viscosity. 3. Pattern may also be corrected by narrowing fan size with spray width adjuster control knob.	<b>Air back pressuring into cup</b>	1. Excessive air blowing back into cup	1. Tighten fluid tip. 2. Check fluid tip seat. 3. Check for damaged fluid seat on tip or seat on gun head

off any dust particles that might have settled. The proper spraying technique is to make long parallel strokes. This is a bit harder when cutting in on jambs, so don't be heavy handed with the paint there. You will need to spray multiple coats, so go light with the jambs as it's easy to get runs in these tight spots. As for the outside panels, again, make long straight parallel movements holding the gun perpendicular to the surface. The stroke should start before the trigger is pulled and the trigger should be released before the stroke is ended. This will give accurate control of the gun and the paint. The distance between the gun and the surface should be about 8 to 10 inches. Practice this motion before you're even ready for paint. A long reach from the left to the right, rocking your hips and legs as you transfer your weight from your left foot to your right. Keep the gun pointed at 90 degrees to the surface, start at the top and work your way down, then back up to the top. Move over to the next unpainted spot and repeat, your strokes should overlap the preceding stroke and the ends where you stood previously. Don't worry about coverage, you will be spraying about 4 to 6 coats, so the first ones will still look blotchy. By the third or fourth coat, the color will start to look uniform.

So let's recap. The car is ready for paint, I've wet down the floor and tacked clothed the entire surface. All my parts are either hung from the ceiling (cowl and fender extensions) or are on tables (hood and trunk lid etc. ) or are on saw horses (fenders). Luckily in my garage I still have enough room to



*Top is wrong way, bottom is right.*



***The clear coat brings out the true color.***

move about freely without backing in to anything that could still be wet. If I didn't I would have to paint the other parts at another time. I'm up at the crack of dawn, when the wind is still and the bugs have gone off to sleep. I have protected myself from the paint and have mixed my first batch of paint. I pour it through a strainer into the cup and snap the lid into place. I put on my respirator, my heart is pounding and I'm ready to go. I started with the jambs on the doors and for that I needed my touch-up gun. It's a De Villbiss # 009-02d and was perfect for getting into those tight areas that the big gun would have been to clumsy in. I wanted to finish these areas so I wouldn't have to keep changing guns, so I had to let the paint "flash". This means essentially that the paint has started to dry. It turns a different shade and with a couple of passes, you'll be able to tell from looking at the paint that it's flashed. It should also be noted that with a metallic color in the base coat, clear coat paint, the base coat color won't look anything like the final color when the clear goes on. My Marina blue looked flat and pale with a silvery crepe look to it. My vendor assured me that when the clear went on, it would change to match my Marina Blue original color as close as could be. After three coats on the front jambs and under the doors, the color looked even, then I cleaned up the gun with lacquer thinner, switched spray guns and went on with the rest of the car. I started on something small, the fender extensions. They're small but rounded, a few light coats to fog them on both sides and on to the cowl. It's hanging as well so it's easy to spray both sides. I'm not laying on the paint too heavy, I don't want any runs. The spoiler's done, now on to the trunk lid. I'll do the inside first. My lid is lying on pillows on a table I have inserted bolts into the nut holes so that when I do the topside, it will stand on the bolt heads. Nice long

overlapping strokes, I'm on to the big stuff now and feel a little more confident. The fenders are easy to get inner and outer since they're on saw horses. The hood is on a table and easy to reach across half way to evenly coat it and get up under the front and side edges. I've had to refill the gun being careful not to fill past the full line. I'm using the same directional strokes I would use to paint as if the car was assembled (very important, the hood and fenders should get the same front to back spraying motion so there is no difference in the "grain") I'm gaining more confidence and the "butterflies" are gone. As I said in the beginning, this part really isn't all that tough. I'm just keeping my head, spraying nice even long strokes with medium-light coats. The lower valance is also hung from wires and allows me to get both sides as well.

Now I'm on to the main body. I've already cut in the front jambs where the hinges are and the bottom of the door. I start on the rear getting inside the trunk. I allow the hinges to spring up so I can get them completely, then push and hold down with a piece of wood placed diagonally under the weatherstrip channel. I shoot the channel, window "tulip" panel, then the rear valance. On to the quarters and roof, I needed to set up a few things prior to starting the paint. I've made sure I will get all the way down to the weld flange by jacking the car up and placing it on jack stands. The lower areas like this flange and the rocker panels can be tough to coat if your gun is pointed down at them; ideally it should be pointed up as the panels roll under. You must make sure you're getting paint to all these underside areas of your car as well as the roof/window weatherstrip channel. I've also set up a picnic table bench with some 2 x 4 extensions at the leg bottoms so I can stand and actually lean forward without it tipping backwards on me. I also hung a 2 x 4 from the ceiling that runs along the top center of the car. Now I can stand securely on the bench and with the air hose draped over my shoulder I can lean forward over the roof with my left hand resting on the 2 x 4. This allows me to shoot the paint down on the roof and reach the middle. My reach isn't quite long enough to coat the entire roof in one pass, so I'll move forward and overlap with each coat. Before I actually start any long flat panel such as the quarters or roof I'll spray around any jamb or window opening, adjusting the nozzle for either a vertical or horizontal pass. You sometimes have to pivot the gun with your wrist to get into areas like the rear window curve. Always cut in first and then overlap with the panel strokes. Spray your quarter panel jambs and door jambs and then leave the door open when

shooting the outside door . Then close it almost all the way and move on. This will prevent air turbulence that will leave over spray patterns. These occur when the paint and air swirl in a gap formed when the door is closed against the quarter jamb or “B” pillar. Think about how you’ll shoot the car before you actually start. Logically, if you treat every inch of your car like it’s a separate flat piece, you will get your smoothest paint finish. I finish up with the front “A” pillars and cowl. I mix up some more paint and start all over again. The only thing I’ll finish quickly is the inside of my trunk lid. As soon as it’s flashed I’ll go back to it and give it another coat. when it’s got enough coats and dry enough to handle (test by grabbing one of the bolts), I’ll flip it over on to the bolts I’ve inserted, tack cloth it and then shoot the outside, trying to catch up to the rest of the car, always allowing the paint to “flash” before the next coat. The paint will have flashed everywhere else probably before you’ve finished one complete coat of all your parts.

## Time for the Clear Coat

I’m not exactly sure how many coats it actually took to get complete coverage (maybe 4 or 5), but it took close to a gallon. My vendor told me a gallon was more than enough for the Base coat and that I would have about one quart left in case I needed to do a touch-up down the road. It turned out to be pretty close, I have about a little more than a pint left. After I took a break for some lunch, it was on to the clear coat. You should plan on using the whole gallon of the clear coat. I re-tack clothed the whole car and started to mix my clear. As I said earlier, it’s a bit tricky to mix unless you have that stick. I plan on shooting the clear in the same order as the paint, along with completing the inside of the trunk lid before I flip it over for the topside. A few things to note about the clear. It doesn’t flash as fast, and it will make any powdery basecoat over spray that is on the floor very sticky, so wear crummy shoes. Refer back to what I wrote earlier about the haze problems. This is also the stuff that you don’t want on your skin (as I was sorry to find out) It also will change your base coat into its true color bringing a huge smile to your face. It goes on wet and heavier, so be careful with your coverage. It also will dry back, this happens as the solvents evaporate. What looks thick and glossy after three coats will look thin and bumpy after it totally dries. So don’t skimp, keep giving the car coats until you’re almost done with that gallon. You will want to leave some if you have stripes to paint. With my car being apart, I had to mock up the valance and



*The fenders and balance panel were assembled on sawhorses. After the stripe was taped off, I disassembled the pieces and then painted the stripe.*

two fenders so I could paint my Bumble Bee stripe. I assembled the fenders and upper valance while they hung from the saw horses. I liked painting the stripe over the clear because it allows you to clean up any rough edges or foggy areas with 1500 grit sand paper and not harm the color base coat. The next weekend, I roughed up the clear with 400 grit and taped off my stripe as per the specs in the assembly manual, (and also what I noted when seeing the original stripe during the stripping process). Then I shot the stripe also with Dupont Chroma Premier Arctic White # 4024 F. It’s a little off-white and the correct color is one of those details that makes the stripe look just right. I cleaned up the rough and fuzzy edges and cleared over it again with a few coats. When I sanded it and buffed it out the stripe really turned out nice.

## Cleaning Your Equipment

Now that I’ve finished painting, it’s time to discuss cleaning the gun. The primers, paints and clear coats when activated will eventually harden, and you must clean all the paint out before it does (see the labels for specific pot life instructions on this) or you will ruin your gun. Using lacquer thinner, make sure you clean your gun thoroughly. With the gun disconnected from the air hose, add small amounts at a time and swish it around in the cup, then dump into a gallon can that you can eventually seal. When the cup is clean, add more thinner and pull the trigger letting the thinner run through the gun and into the waste can. Remove the nozzle and clean it thoroughly. I had a small bowl that I would place the cup lid and nozzle into and swish them around in the thinner. Once clean add more thinner to the cup and connect the air supply and reattach the nozzle. A few blows through the gun and it should be clean. Really take your time when doing this and your spray equipment will work better and last longer.

## Wet Sanding

Now you need to wet sand the car, twice! I kept mine in pieces and sanded everything first in 1500 grit and then in 2000 grit. The 1500 will take a long time to knock down the orange peel that you will have on the clear. Then the 2000 will knock down the scratches from the 1500. Use a foam backing pad made specifically for wet sanding and work in small areas. Keep the paper clean and wet. Sand the area until you can take a rubber (not plastic) squeegee, rub it across the sanded area and see no shiny pits. The wet sanding is scary because you're taking your somewhat shiny finish and making it completely dull. Don't worry, when it's buffed the shine comes back even better. I did one part at a time, completing the 1500 grit before doing the 2000. Again, it takes a long time to get it smooth, but at least I could feel as though I was making progress by completing in full one part at a time. You must also be extremely careful not to burn through the clear. This is very easy to do, especially on sharp fender ridges and peaks. You do need to sand these areas too, so constantly check them and go slow. This is one of the reasons for using a whole gallon of clear, you want to make sure you have enough on the car. I did not sand the underside of the trunk, fender inside areas, sides of the hood or door jamb areas. One of the benefits of spraying the car apart helps make these areas look pretty smooth to start with. After a many nights and weekends of constant wet sanding you're finished.

## Buffing and Polishing

Now you need to buff out the car, twice! (I actually did three steps, three are recommended if you have a dark color) While still in pieces I buffed each part, doing all the pieces in one step at a time. I purchased a Black & Decker BuffMaster #6138 along with a 3M # 05717 Hook-it velcro pad. The Buffmaster has a variable speed trigger along with its RPM settings. I also purchased Schlegel polishing bonnets, there's a number one and a number



*A display of the sanding and buffing products I used.*

two for each step. The first step I used 3M Imperial Micro Finishing Compound #06011. Squirt out a 10 inch line and lightly squeeze the variable trigger to coat the pad and surface. Bringing up the speed the variable speed buffer to about 1500-2500 RPM will quickly bring out the shine. The first thing you will see is your reflection SMILING! This is when you know that it was worth every bit of effort. Again be careful not to buff on any ridges or you will burn through in seconds. Also be careful on rounded surfaces too. If you are very careful you can learn how to buff these out at slow RPM's, but take baby steps here. Most recommend that you tape off the ridges and buff them out by hand. You've come too far to ruin the job with haste. After the first step, I repeated the same process with 3M's Imperial Micro Finishing Glaze with the #2 Shlegel pad. This will virtually bring out the show quality shine and an even bigger smile. Bring up the RPM's for this step and again be careful. Another benefit to painting the car apart is that this stuff spatters and flies every where. It's a lot easier to clean up when all the pieces are apart. When the wheel loads up with compound, you can clean it by running it over the blade of a screwdriver to remove the excess (don't do this with the foam pads). I went one step further, even though my color was not considered a dark one it was sort of half way. My vendor recommended that I do this and I'm glad I did. I used 3M's Perfect-it Foam Pad Polishing Glaze #05996 along with the velcro backed foam pads #05725. While this step was not as dramatic, I could see the difference. It also virtually eliminated any swirl marks that were there. I would recommend using it on any color. I also used Perfect-it II rubbing compound Fine Cut #39002 hand polishing formula for any areas that I could not get with the buffer.

## Final Assembly

The car is now done and ready to go back together. First I will install the trim pieces that go on the fenders. Much easier to do with the car apart (yet another good reason to paint it apart!) I used the speed nuts, turned down onto rubber washers, then I added a dab of silicone to cement them in place. It seems that these new trim pieces are not as strong as the originals, be careful not to crack the posts!. I did break one, so I ended up holding the post in a vice grips in one hand while turning the speed nut down with the other. After backing it off, it then installed easily on the precut thread. At this stage I also installed all my motor's stuff (exhaust manifolds, A/C box and anything else that will be easier to install with the front end off).



Now you're ready to start to hang the sheet metal. This is the same procedure you need to follow when you do your trial fit. After the radiator support and fender braces are in place, you're ready to go. The key to reattaching the fenders, etc. and not scratching them up, is to cushion the impact points. I did this by using chip board and masking tape. Chip board is the heavy brown paper board you find on the back of a writing pad. Call any local printing company and ask for some scraps, or you can also cut up some shoe boxes. You're going to need a fairly large supply of this stuff. Using a scissors, I cut up 2" squares and taped them down on both parts wherever two metal points could possibly touch. If a bolt went through the metal, I would cut a U-shaped piece (sort of like a fender alignment shim) If you taper the cut slightly, narrower at the beginning of the U than the bolts diameter, it will prevent the chip board shim from slipping off the bolt as your aligning it. If the metals touch without protection, they will scratch and chip. Think about any possible contact point and "chip it" before it really chips or scratches. Sometimes you'll need to double up on the chip board, taping pieces together as well as taping the chips down to the contact points. Start with the fender, lay it down (outside facing down) on a soft blanket and some pillows, chip the fender well holes (upper and lower!) and loosely attach the inner fender well with a few screws (you might need a helper for this, and don't do it on a day that you're feeling clumsy) Leave the chips in, don't remove until you're ready to snug everything down. Next chip the doors' front edge every few inches and seal with two complete long strips of tape, then do the same for the opposing fender edge. Chip the "A" pillar bolt hole, fender well braces, cowl bolt hole and radiator support holes. These pieces can slide around a lot, so if you can visualize the metal contacting something, protect it with whatever size piece of chip board you

need to cut! Pick up the fender and walk it into position from the side, starting slightly towards the front. Have your helper spot the alignment holes as well as look for possible unprotected hits. Once its snugged in to position, you will have to remove all the chips and tape to open the door and check your adjustment. First, compare it to your original photos and measurements. Second, even though the gap might look right, be careful when you open the door, it might pinch the inside fender flange. Open very slow while your helper looks into the gap. Hopefully you've already gone through this during the trial fitting stage and will know what to look out for.

Another area to note is the painted fender flange that screws to the top of the radiator support. You must use screws with washers here or the fresh paint will crack and tear as the screws start to get tight. If you do get an accidental hit and a chip lifts off, after you've stopped cussing, dab a little super glue underneath and push it back down. Other than that, you can try to touch it up, or if it's really bad you'll have to repaint the area. This is the bad thing about painting the car apart. Putting it back together is risky! For a show car, everything must look perfect so nothing should appear marred or touched. I put rubber hoses on my socket wrench handles to cushion any accidental knocks and used any old spare bolts and screws I had to initially align and bolt down. Once the holes were aligned and the bolts were loosely inserted, I would pull out the "chip". After I was happy with the fit, I would back out the spare bolts and use the good ones. You don't need to use a spare bolt in "every" hole during the initial alignment, but you'll want to get everything adjusted as well as shimmed correctly



***Rustoleum Satin Black #7777 works perfectly for interior black paint areas.***



before using the “good” fasteners in the locations that are visible to the eye. I even wrapped the heads with tape to protect them when I screwed down the good ones. Eastwood sells plastic inserts that you can insert into your sockets to protect from marring. Next do the same to the opposite fender, valance panels and so on. Before long, your car is together!

Some miscellaneous spray bomb paints that I used for detailing that worked extremely well are as follows: For the lower rocker panel area, I used Rustoleums’ Satin Black #7777. This is a perfect black that goes on thin, looks “factory” and can be touched up seamlessly years later. I used it for any black paint areas in my interior, engine bay and other misc. parts. It’s one of the best restoration tips I’ve ever received. Another one that I discovered was the use of Plastikotes’ Bumper Chrome #615. It’s perfect for anything that you want to have a bright metal look. I even used it for my spark plug manifold heat shields. Seymours’ Cast Blast #16-048 has a nice cast look and their Stainless Steel #16-054 worked well for my gas tank. I also recommend EMTs’ Exhaust Manifold Treatment, also a very nice look.

I keep my car in a garage and covered with a car cover, I don’t use a hose to wash it, I spray a foam cleaner (Dirtex) on the paint if there is mud or something, but often it’s just dust. I gently wipe with a damp piece of cheese cloth, turning it often, then wiping it with a dry piece. I rinse the cheesecloth often. I feel that the risk of a scratch from a dirt particle will be easier to buff out than the rust repair would be from constant washings. I also rust proofed the car with an oil

based solution that I got from “Rustop” rust proofing (a chain of rustproofing shops, they may or may not be in your area, you could use regular motor oil) I parked the car on plastic sheeting and with a oil pump and attached rubber hose, I pumped oil into all of the seams and crevices. I did this after assembly, but before installing the interior on every piece of sheet metal. allow a few days for all drips to escape, and you might want to jack your car up to “tip” it various directions to help vacate any puddles of oil.

So that’s what’s involved in painting your car. I’d like every restorer to try it, but I know it’s not practical for everyone. There were things on my restoration that I didn’t particularly feel comfortable doing, like my engine rebuild. But I can honestly say without bias, that it’s the paint on show cars that usually gets the most attention. This might be unfair to some, but unfortunately it’s true. I can’t tell you how proud it makes me feel when somebody says, “Nice paint” and I reply “Thanks, I did it myself.” Is it perfect? NO! I’m not about to leave you with the impression that I didn’t make mistakes. I have some dirt in the paint, I burned through slightly on the tail panel, the edge of the door and on the Bumble Bee stripe. I have a nick from the reassembly that I had to repair. I missed a low spot on the top of the fender and the bondo on a hood dent repair shrunk slightly. Still with these mistakes, I... 1) Saved about \$2500.00 (probably a lot more) 2) Won two golds (972 points and 990 points) at National Camaro shows, as well as numerous trophies such as “Best Chevrolet” and “Best Production” in local shows with more than 350 cars in attendance. 3) Have a tremendous sense of pride for completing what seemed to be a never ending project. Honestly, the last one means the most to me. **Good Luck!**

