

compromises: the battery tray had rotted nearly completely away, there were small cancerous rust patches under the windshield, some extra holes had been drilled for bolt-on accessories and the original red door panels now hosted 5.25-inch Pioneer speakers (this was a shame because they would have been retained had they not been hacked up).

The car also had some additional features which could be carried over. The rear beam had been replaced with one from a 16-valve Scirocco so it had rear disc brakes and the rear sway bar. The motor had a 'G' grind cam, a GTI centre console with gauges had been installed and a lower front stress bar added.

## Gutting

Preparing the car for the paint and body shop yourself can save you a lot of money and allow you to familiarise yourself with the disassembly

process, which is a good idea – especially when it comes to reassembly and you're handling rare and often obsolete parts! Depending on how far you intend to tear the car down (bare rolling 'shell, or completely stripped, non-rolling 'shell) it's a good idea to start with the interior first. This will allow you to keep the car weatherproof should the process take a bit longer than you intend.

With Project '77 we planned on the tear-down taking a week at the most, so we gutted the interior first since we knew the car would be sitting outside at least a couple times before being shipped over to the body shop. Most of the interior was then tossed in the bin (we did hold onto the seats though). If you're reusing any of your hardware or accessories, pack them up well in boxes keeping all relevant connectors and fasteners close by in a labelled bag or container.

Next out was the drivetrain. At this stage, we hadn't decided what engine we were going for, so we kept the engine and its wiring intact and merely removed it. (We pulled the engine wiring, brake lines, and fuel lines away from the firewall for the paint process). If we knew at this point the car was going to get any kind of motor swap we would have completely removed and discarded the wiring since it would no longer be used.

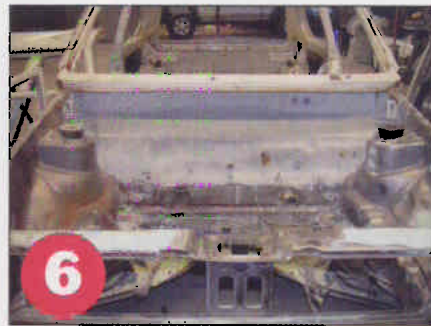
With the motor and the rest of the engine bay accessories removed we undid the associated bracketry for the windshield washer bottle, battery tray, and some other useless brackets. This was all done carefully using a spot weld drill bit that makes removing spot welds a fairly painless activity. Once removed what's left of the spot welds can be ground flush as Eric Asp shows in some of the photos.

5) Once the engine bay was clean, we turned our attention to the exterior. We pulled the doors, hatch, bonnet and bumpers off and kept those in storage, while the rest was chucked out. The car was then sent to the bodyshop as a bare rolling 'shell. Here it is ready for the paint preparation process...



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6) Once at the paintshop, the experts stripped all the old paint with special aviation stripper and filled any holes left from the old spot welds. We also decided to remove the rain tray to neaten the engine bay – it really opens it up and makes a bit more room for the turbocharged engine!



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7) Removing the back seat belt anchor points for a smooth, clean look in the hatch area. Again, we located the factory spot welds, drilled them out and then cut out the remaining pieces of metal with a air-powered mini cut-off saw



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8) On US spec cars there are ugly side repeaters both front and rear, which of course we didn't want. The light units are removed, a patch panel



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9) The 'shell at this stage, with front wings removed

10) Next, the doors were stripped to bare metal before smoothing over the dings and dents with panel filler and then spraying with a sealing



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