

How to: project '77 resto part 1

Prepping

If the engine bay looks as though it has never been cleaned, take the time to clean it for the paint shop. Again, this will help keep your labour bill down.

Since Project '77 is to be a rolling chassis project, the suspension, fuel tank, brake and fuel lines were all left in place. Later we'll remove some of these pieces and have them powder coated or chrome plated.

Next came the removal of the body panels and glass. Unless the window rubbers are in exceptional condition remove the windows simply by cutting the seals and pushing them out from the inside. If the window seals are in reusable condition and they fit your theme (chrome trimmed or not) remove the glass by carefully prying them out instead. Start inside the car, working out towards the corners to free the seal from the body. Be careful and be sure

to wear eye protection – 25-year old glass has a tendency to break easily.

With all the glass removed, the next step was to disassemble the doors, then remove them along with the hood, hatch and bumpers. The bumpers were discarded as they'll be replaced with early metal European units. The rest of the panels were carefully set aside and labelled, along with their hardware.

The final step of the pre-body shop process was the clean up and prep. We gave the car a thorough pressure washing inside and out and also removed the pinstripe – this will keep the body/paint shop bill down to only cover the work that is absolutely necessary. As with all projects, during the teardown we found more damage and rust than originally noted but nothing terminal. This is usually the case and further reiterates why you want to spend time finding the best project candidate possible.

With the car cleaned and ready for paint prep, we went around the car with a marker, noting what holes needed to be filled (US cars have side markers in the front and rear that we wanted to remove) and any dents/dings we noticed along the way. This may or may not be helpful to the shop depending on how far they plan on stripping off the existing paint. Be sure and note in writing the exact holes you want removed or anything you think may be overlooked in the prepping process.

The paintshop

Ah yes, the paint and body work experience. Often referred to as the most stressful and expensive part of any good project. The body and paint shop can not only suck up your money, but can take your car (along with your sanity) for extended periods of time – often many months. Fortunately we've been using



12) The hatch and spare wheel area was then prepped for its new interior panels and final finishing work



11) The same bare metal treatment was continued over the entire car



13) Fast forwarding through a lot of time consuming filling, rubbing down, priming and more rubbing down stages we get to this. After painting in our chosen shade of black, the hatch and boot area was machine polished where possible and here's the finished product