Automotive Painting

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A car with an excellent paint job is one of life's true joys. It's like being the kid with the best bike in the neighbourhood or the biggest piece of birthday cake. Whether you drive a '47 Eldorado, a '66 Beetle or an '07 fortwo, a great paint job will take your vehicle from ho-hum to headturner.

Actually creating a great automotive paint job takes skill and finesse. Automotive painting is one of the most arduous and painstaking tasks in crafting an automobile. It can also be one of the most costly. If you are on a budget, there are options for you. Some paint shops can deliver a good paint job for a fair price. Your other option is to take on the task yourself. If the paint job is a success, you'll have even more to brag about: a hot set of wheels AND a "do it yourself" tale to tell.

Achieving a great paint job is a step-by-step process. You simply can't rush automotive painting. Follow the basic steps of preparation, primer application, blocking, final paint coat and detail application. This can seem like a daunting task for any beginner, but the entire job can be completed in just a few days.

Prepare

Before you begin, check with local bylaws and regulations regarding the use of spray paint in homes and enclosed areas. The last thing you need is a legal holdup delaying your painting job.

Cleaning the car is your next crucial step. The car must be spotlessly clean and free of dirt. Use detergents to clean the car top to bottom, and then follow up with grease removers. After the car has been cleaned, it's time to begin sanding. An air sander (preferably a dual-action sander) should be used to remove the old paint from the car. This kind of sander will not cause body damage because it removes paint without digging like other sanders and grinders. Every trace of paint must be removed to create a perfect palette for your new paint job. Automotive detailing tape or even duct tape can be used to cover and protect other parts of the car, including plastic moldings and windows. In addition to removing the old paint, all traces of rust have to be sanded off. Rust will spread if ignored or untreated, and the last thing you want is body rot happening beneath your spiffy new paint. You can repair minor body flaws on the car's surface using fillers. Shape the compound with care using a sanding board, then follow up with a glazing compound. This step will help to ensure a smooth-as-glass finish on your ride.

Mask

After the whole car has been initially cleaned, then sanded, a final cleaning takes place and the vehicle is ready to be masked. In this step, every part of the car that shouldn't be touched by paint is covered and protected. Remember, you will be using high-grade automotive paint that doesn't wash off with water. Cover your windows, every light and reflector, all window rubbers, all chrome, tires, wheels, door handles, wipers.. take a good look and what needs to be masked. If you don't want even the tiniest bit of over spray on it, cover it up! The tools and materials needed for masking are available at automotive supply warehouses and hardware stores.

Prime

Priming is an essential step to providing a good foundation for your new paint. A flawless prime coat will help you to achieve a perfect paint job. Valspar epoxy is a good primer choice, combining dependable filling capabilities with minimal shrinking. After the primer has been applied, a second

coat in a contrasting colour should be applied on top of the first layer. This will serve as a sanding guide. The primer should be sanded to a smooth finish, but don't sand too vigorously or you could actually damage the body of the car. When the priming is complete, a sealer is applied and a final sanding takes place.

Finishing off

In finishing off the automotive painting, it is essential to achieve uniform colour. The spray gun should be held ten to twelve inches away from the body to avoid streaks and runs. This is necessary when applying the basecoat, final coat and clear coat.

Regardless of the type of car you drive, a new paint job can turn it into a real showstopper. Automotive painting can be a time consuming task, but you can do it if you take it step by step. The creative energy will be good for your soul, and the compliments you receive will be great for your confidence.

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