

CAR CRAFT | PAINT & BODY

Cleaning and Preserving Bare Metal Parts

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The MCR staff - Photography;



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Restoration can mean a lot of different things. For many, it's simply replacing everything that's worn out with whatever new reproduction parts are available. It matters not if they don't look just like the original as long as they are functionally identical.



Others will take steps to make sure everything looks good, like with powder coating, even though the look is not factory correct. The trade off here is that the parts are protected from the weather and are relatively easy to clean. This is common for Muscle Car Restorations in Chippewa Falls, WI when they restore a car for someone intending to put a lot of miles on it.



Then there are owners that need their car to look exactly like it did when it left the showroom. Aftermarket parts are no good here. Only original parts or NOS will do. This is especially true if the parts you need are not even being reproduced.

So what's the best way to clean up old parts without altering their original appearance? One way not to do it is with any sort of blasting material. While you'll easily get your parts back to bare metal again, you'll also likely alter the surface texture as well. Cast parts are particularly susceptible to this.

What you are trying to do is to remove all the grease, oil, grime, dirt and rust without removing any metal. Being careful not to remove any factory paint markings can also be a challenge as they are always past preserving and often somewhat fragile but still need to be documented so they can be reapplied as they were.

Of course once the part is restored it will immediately begin to rust again. This is especially true with exterior parts if the car gets driven at all. Fortunately there are a couple ways to preserve the proper look of bare metal parts.



We know this is obvious but for greasy parts the best place to start is the common parts washer and a brush. It does a great job of dissolving away greasy gunk and won't harm any surfaces. For less grimy parts, MCR will use hot water with a good dose of Dawn dishwashing soap and a toothbrush.



For simple rust like what's on this brake and clutch pedal bracket, MCR relies on soaking the part in Evapo-rust. The product is a liquid that comes in large pails so the parts can be just dropped in and left to soak. Larger parts will require multiple buckets poured into a big plastic bin.



A couple of times a day, lift the part out and gently wipe it with steel wool to remove whatever rust is loose. This will speed the rust removal process. Parts could be clean in a single work day or may need to be soaked for several days.



Once the rust is gone, wash the part in hot soapy water to remove the Evapo-rust liquid. Thoroughly dry the part right away to prevent rust from reforming.



Besides using steel wool to aid in removing rust during the Evapo-rust soak, MCR has found that hot soapy water and a stiff brush can remove the rust and clean the part in one step.



A light touch with steel wool will finish cleaning the part.



Before and after seat brackets, from rusty to like new.



No one would attempt to reuse a part this pitted but it is a great example of how well Evapo-rust will remove rust from even the deepest pits. Notice that it will not harm any plastic parts that may still be attached.



To insure that rust will not return, MCR likes to use a product called Rust Prevention Magic. The part is first warmed with a heat gun or even a hair dryer and then as the paste is applied it liquefies which gives the part a slight gloss which can be seen to help to insure complete coverage. As the part cools, the RPM quickly becomes dry to the touch and looks completely natural and it will not attract dirt. Note that any paint markings will need to be applied before the RPM is used.



Another product MCR finds useful for rust prevention is Boeshield T-9. This is a product developed by the Boeing Company. It's simpler to apply as it only needs to be sprayed on and left to dry.

Sources

Boeshield
(800) 962-1732
<http://www.boeshield.com>

Evapo-Rust
(888) 329-9877
<http://www.Evapo-Rust.com>

ECS Automotive Concepts
855-532-7846
<http://www.ecsautomotive.com>

Muscle Car Restorations
11371 20th Ave.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
(715) 834-2223
<http://www.musclecarrestorations.com/>

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