



TClinic

RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF MGTC WOODWORK by Adri-Jan Verbiesen

During a complete restoration one usually finds himself in the precarious situation of what to do with his 25 year old ash woodwork. Should he replace it, or rejuvenated it, and if so, how does one go about it? Listed below are the basic steps which have proven to be the best, and simplest methods for restorations:

1. Remove rear fenders, gas tank, etc., and remove rear just over the wheel wells.
2. Cut the interior as this is essential to exposing all the woodwork. (The cowl and scuttle panels need not be removed unless all new front members must be fabricated).
3. Take 100 or 150 grit sandpaper, remove all old paint varnish and grease. After a complete sanding of all woodwork, let it cure for about two days in a weather protected area.
4. At this time inspect the wood for cracks, rot caused from settling, and of course, the menace of all woodwork, dry rot. (All dry rot areas must be replaced, either the whole section, or part of the section, using a carpenter's joint, some good glue, and some stainless steel countersunk screws of approximately 1/2 inches in length.)
5. Special equipment might be necessary for this phase of rejuvenation. A clothes steamer of good capacity is best, however, any small area that can be turned into a humidity chamber will do. The idea is to get the wood moist enough to expand from the inside out, and return to its original strength. In areas of heavy cracking, particularly that spot behind the doors and flowing into the wheel arch structure, do not use screws when gluing. This specific area is a stress point of a TC bucket, too much rigidity here could cause structural damage to adjoining woodwork.
6. Now that the wood has been steamed, let it naturally dry for about 24 hours, then a light sand of 400 grit paper, and you're ready for the finish.
7. This is the finishing phase. The longevity of your restoration will depend on this step. Seal the wood with a hard wood sealer or half marine varnish and half turpolene. Let this dry well. A light wet sand (320 or 400 grit wet and dry paper) and you're ready for the last coat. Marine varnish used full strength in a number of thin coats (three is sufficient) will hold up quite well. If you desire originality you can paint over the marine varnish with your exterior car paint, provided your varnish is thin, and roughed up again with 320 grit wet sandpaper (marine varnish provides a surprisingly good base for paint).
8. When replacing all screws, tacks, and nails, your efforts will best be served by the use of stainless steel. If possible, use Bedding compound, as this makes a good air and water tight seal between screws and wood.

Note: This moistening process is only really successful with dry wood, not dry rot. Cars just imported from England and East coast cars which were subjected to wet climates usually cannot be restored with this process. Generally, wood in this condition must be replaced.

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Original wood is now over 50 years old but this process will still valid. If you do have to replace any timber, reinstall using the original fastening method. The tub will flex and if you glue and screw it together, it may not flex the same and put stress on other members. If it was just screwed or bolted, then just use screws or bolts. Stainless hardware can be bought at most hardware stores but the selection might be better at a marine store.