



P6 ROVER OWNERS CLUB

PAINT FADE

It is an interesting fact that the older you get the more you realise that you can learn a lot from others, and that your assumptions can be very wrong!



Recently the Nelson Rover Car Club of New Zealand held a Classic and Collectables show day at Pigeon Valley, where the sales rep for Autoglym had a stand where he was selling their products.

I have to admit that I am a great fan of Autoglym polishes, though I do not buy some of their other products, mostly because of cost.

Anyhow, I was talking to him about the problem of paint fade on imported cars that have dark paint colours. I own a 1997 Rover 825 finished in pearlescent British Racing Green, which was growing whitish areas in several places. If you own a dark coloured import you will be familiar with the normal areas, bonnet top, roof, especially above the rear window and the top of the boot. I had always assumed

that it was the effect of the ultra-violet light spectrum of New Zealand sunshine affecting the paint under the lacquer surface that was reacting to the ultra-violet light and it was treatable.

The sales rep obviously was trying to put forward the case for some of the products he sold, although he admitted there was not one product that would do the job.

When I got home, I had a fresh look at my car, and thought 'well in for a penny in for a pound', and began work on the worst area on the roof.

I started off using a cellulose thinner to thoroughly clean off any polish and then started tackling the whitened area using a mixture of thinners and non-soaped wire wool. This proved to be too harsh and removed too much of the lacquer, but it did show there was nothing wrong with the colour underneath. Although I have a matt area now, the whitened area has gone. A few coats of polish later and it is not nearly as noticeable as it was when I had finished cutting it back.

I then moved onto the bonnet area. This is far more obvious if you make a mess of things, so I tackled a little area at a time, starting with a cutting compound paste, diluted with water. This proved to be a waste of time and had little effect, so then I moved to using a cutting compound undiluted, straight out of the tin, but using as little pressure as I dared. This was far more successful. After washing off the compound and drying it, I then gave it two coats of a wax polish and then a liquid polish on the top.

I am far more pleased with this, and to a large extent the whitening has disappeared. I do not know how long it will last though.

The Autoglym rep suggested using 'Ultra Deep Shine' polish that is specially formulated for dark paint colours, and finishing with 'Extra Gloss Protection'.

However the combined cost of those two bottles is close to \$80. I have tried a sample of the Ultra Deep Shine and it is certainly very effective.

How successful this technique is for restoring paintwork would depend on how far the lacquer coat has gone. I have seen cases where the coating has broken down completely and has blistered. I suspect that no amount of cutting and polishing will cure that state.

However, if your paintwork is just starting to show signs of bleaching and you are confident that the lacquer is still complete, try the old-fashioned 'cut and polish' (something we all thought had gone with the introduction of metallic finishes) and you may well be pleasantly surprised. It is very hard work but straightforward.

Incidentally it is a fallacy to say that white and light colours do not suffer the same problem, it is just that it is not nearly as obvious. Today's solid colour finishes are also finished off with a lacquer coating.

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