

The anatomy of a re-paint

I bought my Porsche 964 over the Christmas period of 2003 – a purchase made all the more traumatic through the sheer distance between me (in Milton Keynes) and the object of my lust in Cornwall.



Since deciding to look for a suitable candidate in August of that year I'd developed and honed my idea of my perfect car and I'd finally settled on a wide bodied Carrera 4 – but it HAD to be yellow!!! The car in Cornwall was exactly that – to a tee. Adrian Crawford was drafted in to do a pre-purchase inspection and the outcome looked bleak. Problem after problem, things not working, unsafe to road test etc. etc. It got worse and worse!! There was nothing for it but to make the trip to Cornwall to see for myself.

To make a very, very long story somewhat shorter, the dealer selling the car agreed to a long list of repairs and fixes to bring the car to a decent road-worthy state. The repairs took a few weeks and the car was delivered to me in MK by mid-January 2004.

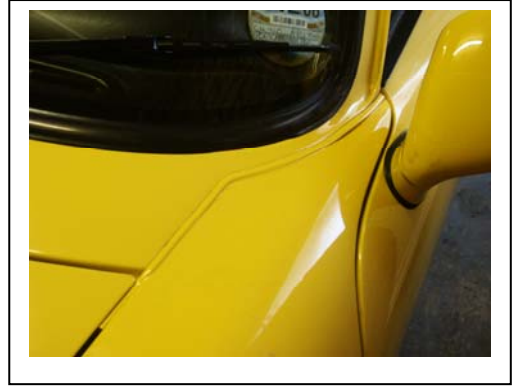
If we now fast forward some two years the car is now getting near to the state I had wanted. The yellow paintwork was of a reasonable standard but the two years were beginning to take their toll on the re-worked turbo wheel arches and a number of other issues were starting to suggest a respray was in order. With this in mind I started looking for a local company who were willing to do what I wanted and were prepared to take the trouble to work with me. Through the PCGB forum I had got some suggestions (!!) and one of those led me to T.A.B.S. Enterprises Ltd in Woburn Sands. An initial meeting with the owner convinced me that they knew what they were doing (they are BMW (UK) approved after all) and, moreover, their enthusiasm was refreshing.

The car was deposited at its new home for the coming 2½ months on 13th March this year and, since the job was being done on a not-too-generous budget the work was scheduled on a “when there's nothing else to do” basis. Over the next few weeks bits started coming off and it seemed that every time I went to see the progress we'd find something else which needed – or, at least, could do with – being fixed/replaced.



One of the major issues which resulted in the work being done was the fixing of the body kit. Fitted by the supplying dealer, the kit (from Pro-9) was literally stuck on and we decided to make a better job of both the front and rear bumpers and to make the side skirts a much neater fit. Also, it was preferred to have the bumpers bolted into place rather than stuck on to aid in future maintenance work as well as utilising some proper sealing strips rather than the line of Stikaflex adhesive as previously used.

The disassembly went pretty much as expected, the body examination revealed a number of blemishes which needed repair as well as one of the great annoyances to me – the painted over scuttle sealing strips. It was obviously too much trouble to remove them when the car was first re-painted and it just offended me every time I caught sight of it.



Along with the new sealing strips there were a host of other new parts needed including sunroof seals, headlight seals, sealing strips for the bumpers and side skirts (more of this later), both door retaining straps were broken, weather seals for the door mirror fixings were missing, door sill protectors were very tatty – the list seemed endless. It seemed reasonable that the new coat of paint could easily justify a new bonnet badge and model inscription for the rear too.

Once the main disassembly had been done it was time to re-examine the method of fixing the body kit components and it quickly became apparent that the side skirts would **have** to be bonded on since there was no accommodation for the fixing studs used by the factory parts. That meant that the sealing strips I'd already purchased couldn't be used but it did mean that the fit would be better than before and it was decided to make a seamless joint between the side skirts and the body.

The rear bumper was refitted using threaded inserts and screwed via the standard 965 sealing strips. The front bumper was another story!! Having bought a new Turbo "smile" we discovered that the profile of the Pro-9 bumper was substantially different to the standard factory item such that the inner bumper strengthening bar was missing and the "smile" wouldn't fit at all. That was another £80 wasted!!! Fortunately, ingenuity won the day when a modified BMW seal fitted the wing/bumper joint.



With the re-fitted bumpers now removed, the rest of the car was prepared for the spray booth. Door reveals and panel edges were done first followed by the removal of the glass and sunroof. Sections which had been repaired were re-primed.

All the paint being used was two pack product with compatible 2 pack primer and subsequent clear coat lacquer. The colour chosen was the same as previously used – MG Trophy Yellow although some additional thought was put in to the possibilities of longer term protection against stone chipping.

Many Porsche owners have seen, considered and, maybe, even used, stone protection systems from 3m and others with products from ArmorFend and the like. These solutions were not practical for this application due to the Pro-9 body kit. All of the "film" suppliers rely on the use of pre-designed film kits – designed to fit the "standard" cars, but the non-standard Pro-9 kit required the design of a special kit which promised to be expensive and time consuming. Another solution was needed – and the Internet came to our rescue.

I discovered a relatively new product from ArmorAuto in Minnesota called ArmorCoat. Unlike the film products, ArmorCoat is a spray-on clear lacquer, applied in multiple coats it builds a flexible film approximately 0.008" thick which protects against the typical chips from stone contact. Because the product is quite new there is no distribution in place yet for the UK so we had to import some from Germany (where it's marketed as SeidenFaust – Silk Fist). Although not as expensive as the film application would have been it was still a little over £200 for almost 3 litres. Only time will tell how effective it is although first impressions seem pretty good.

By the time early May came around it was time for the spray booth. The main body was painted on a Friday afternoon and left to air dry over the following weekend. Oven drying was not considered because of its impact on the fibreglass parts, often causing shrinkage. The picture to the right was taken in the spray booth before any polishing had been done. In total the car had 3 coats of colour (yellow doesn't cover very well) and 2 coats of lacquer. The parts vulnerable to stone chipping were to be treated separately and the sills (painted while on the body) were to be "ArmorCoat'ed" some 7 days later once the paint had had time to vent off its solvent.



The bumpers, headlamp rims and door mirrors were all to be treated with ArmorCoat – but used as the initial lacquer rather than in addition to a regular lacquer. Here the first attempt gave an unusual finish after drying and the trials of rubbing it down with a view to preparing for another coat just brought home the apparent toughness of the stuff!! It was found that 1500 grade wet and dry wouldn't touch it and the body shop had to resort to 400 grade paper on an electric sander to rough up the surface sufficiently to accept another coat!!

With the main body painted and dried the re-assembly was pretty straightforward, all the glass was refitted (fortunately, without breakages), new hinge pins and bushes fitted to the badly dropped driver's door, new door straps to both doors and the driver's A-post mount re-welded. As mentioned earlier, new seals to headlamps and new sill protectors were fitted. Finally, the new "**PORSCHE**" shield was fitted to the bonnet and the new "Carrera 4" applied to the engine cover.



Overall, including the new parts which were used the whole job turned out a little over £2,600 + VAT.

The car has been transformed into a real head turner and I'm hopeful it will give a good account of itself at many of the PCGB events during the Summer – and for a few years to come!!