

Tech - DIY Fuchs Wheel Refinishing

Tech Tips from your Tech Committee Economy Fuchs Wheel Refinishing

by Rob Mairs

Being kind of a pack rat for Porsche stuff, I had a set of 15"x7" Fuchs wheels in the garage and got to thinking; how would these look on my 914/6? The 914/6 currently is running with the stock 14" Fuchs but I have seen pictures of other Sixes with 7" wheels and thought they looked a bit more muscular. I had sent wheels to Al Reed in the past and he does a great job but I wanted to experiment with refinishing myself. I had read a few Pelican threads on refinishing wheels so I decided to give it a shot.



My wheels were not concours but they were in pretty good shape. I like the frosted RSR finish but the question was "is it possible to get a fair approximation of the RSR finish (lightly frosted petals with black background) on an otherwise pretty decent Fuchs wheel.

First of all I had the tires removed from the wheels. I then started by removing all the black paint on the wheels using strong paint remover; the kind that says it is ready in 15 minutes. This stuff worked quite well on 2 of the wheels but I decided to use sandpaper on the other 2 started with wet & dry 220 and then 320 grit. Both techniques worked fine and resulted in a nice smooth finish.

I had read a few threads on Pelican where Harvey Weidman had written that one could spray paint directly over anodized surfaces without primer. He stated that "an anodized surface is a perfect substrate for paints as it stops the oxidation" and "I like to recommend spray cans for the garage project because they frequently have the needed primers right in the paint, and they are free of moisture in the propellant." Since he is one of the experts that is what I did. Wanting a frosted RSR finish I experimented with several different products and settled on Krylon "Dull Aluminum" #1403.

Another strong recommendation from both Al Reed and Harvey Weidman is thorough cleaning with lacquer thinner or similar. I then tried masking around the petals. I found that getting a consistent line around the petals was working for me. After trying this for an inordinate amount of time I gave this up and started thinking about options. I had heard or read that Fuchs or Porsche got the nice fine line of paint on the wheel by dipping the wheel in paint. I clearly didn't want to buy multiple gallons of paint it would take to dunk 6+ inches

Photos by: Rob Mairs

wheel so the question was “could I tape off the back side of the wheel and pour paint in from the top”? I decided to give it a try.

After leaving the wheel out in the sun for a couple of days to dry the paint I turned it over and began to tape over all the openings between the petals and the wheel lug holes. I used 3M packing tape.



Next up was to pour in the satin black paint (quart can of Rustoleum). I placed the wheel over a plastic container and leveled it out using tapered cedar shingles I happened to have from a previous house project. I also placed several quart paint buckets un-

But first I needed to paint the petals with the Dull Aluminum. Since the outer part of the wheel had a decent anodized finish I taped over the area I wanted to remain untouched by paint. I then cleaned again, tacked and painted several coats with the Dull Aluminum spray paint.



Tech - DIY Fuchs Wheel Refinishing

der the rim inside the plastic container to catch paint as I cut through the packing tape. I carefully poured in the paint over the 5 cavity areas. I just kept pouring until I was happy with the level of the black on the petals and the rim. I then let it sit for several minutes and surprisingly enough the packing tape held. I then took a utility knife blade and cut through the packing tape letting the paint fall/drip into the quart paint buckets. I caught most of the paint in the buckets but as you can see in the photo, not all of it.

You probably have never noticed but if you look at your Fuchs carefully, at least these 7" ones, there is a little gutter between the petals and the outer rim and the paint won't drain. To get rid of this paint I used West Epoxy systems plastic syringes to suck up the paint. You can buy these at your local West Marine store.

I did thin the paint 10% but the paint was still fairly thick and it takes quite a while to dry. After a day or two inside to at least surface dry, I placed the wheels in direct sunlight for several days and that did the



trick. I have read elsewhere where folks have placed the wheels in their ovens set at 200 degrees but I didn't think my wife Diane would consider that a good option.

looking for perfection. For this experiment I wasn't looking for perfection but I am pretty happy with the result.



Was I happy with the result? Yes, photo on left. Is it as good as the refinish work ones gets with Al Reed or Harvey Weidman? No, photo on right. But if you are not looking for perfection this technique is a pretty good option. The last time I sent wheels to Al Reed it cost \$150/wheel plus the shipping and I was extremely pleased with the result but I was

