

V16 Restore – Painting the Cadillac Crest

Chapter 6

This is the sixth of many articles covering my experience restoring a 1940 V16 Town Car. For an introduction, start with the first chapter.

This chapter describes painting two of the Cadillac crests. The first is the crest on the dashboard and the second is the lubrication tag. Painting the dashboard crest was completely done with bottled paints, a toothpick and clear coat. The lubrication tag received both spray paint and bottled paint. I found the lubrication tag to be the most difficult. I lost count of how many times it went back into the lacquer thinner to remove the paint and start repainting it again.

After Restoration



Before Pictures



Restoration Materials and Equipment



Materials and Equipment Notes

Sandpaper, two grits 600 and 1000. Testors model paint black, white, blue and red. Spray paints of black, clear and **not-to-be-used white**. The upside down cans were used as pallets to control the amount of paint for dipping by toothpicks. Using a miniature paintbrush dipped into a bottle was unmanageable. The critical tool is the magnifier. For myself, working without the magnification was impossible. Lacquer thinner was used to strip old paint and, when needed, strip the new paint for a redo. Mineral spirits was used to thin the Testors model paint. I'm guessing I spent about \$70 on materials. Some tools and materials I already had in supply.

Painting with a Toothpick

I found these tiny spots impossible to control with a paintbrush. Paint got on the borders even using the toothpick. Removing the extra paint was done with a pick and sandpaper. At the start of the project I bought miniature paintbrushes only to be disappointed with my ability to control the amount of paint applied.



Polishing Using a Steel Pick and Removing Extra Paint

The hardened steel tip of an O-ring tool did an excellent job of removing the old paint and lacquer. Soaking in lacquer thinner helped remove the old finish, yet a polished surface on the rough brass surfaces required patience and rubbing with the tool. Polishing the flat surfaces was accomplished using the Dremel polishing wheels and Bar Keepers Friend.



Painting the Lubrication Plate

Not having a path to success, I found this one to be difficult. Now knowing how to paint this tag, it is easy. After cleaning the tag, here are the steps:

1. Mask the white areas
2. Spray paint the whole tag black
3. Let it dry for about an hour
4. Remove the masking tape
5. Polish out the brass with 600 grit paper followed by 1000 grit paper (the black paint is still soft and easy to polish)
6. Add the white paint with a toothpick
7. Let the white paint harden for two days
8. Rub out the white paint with 1000 grit sandpaper
9. Polish the tag with Bar Keepers Friend polish (some polish dirt will impregnate into the white)
10. Finally apply two or three coats of clear acrylic paint (not getting this last step right caused me many redos)

Using Sandpaper to Polish the Brass

Partial completion of step 5. I decided to polish out the brass at step 5 as having the white paint in place results in black residue being impregnated into the white.



The Difficulty with Clear Coat and Avoiding Using White Acrylic Spray Paint

I found that letting the enamel paint dry for two days followed by spraying the tag with clear coat was successful. Test this for yourself on spare materials. Even after drying for two days the black acrylic needed a light coat of clear coat as a heavy coat would cause the black paint to bleed. Under all circumstances, I found the white acrylic to be unsuitable to receive a clear coat. It would crinkle regardless of how long I let it harden. After more retries than I can recall, for the white, I reverted to using Testors white enamel followed by polishing it with the 1000 grit paper.

Location of the Lubrication Tag

From the 1939 Owner's Manual

