

gallery

Being Sure Of Shell

This long-term 'Cuda project is a genuine bare-metal resto.

One of our sister titles here at ACM HQ is MOG, the Morgan magazine. Obviously there's not a lot of crossover there, but when one of their Stateside readers contacted them to tell them of a project he'd titled MogRod - a Morgan body on a Pontiac Solstice chassis - they let us know right away! Anyway, MogRod is still in the early stages of development but the owner/builder, James Flaagan, mentioned he also had another long-term project on the go - his Dad's old 1970 Plymouth Barracuda ragtop.

It's been many, many years coming, but it's finally out and about, and with a story or two to tell along the way. The first of these involved stripping the shell down and having it acid-dipped. "Historically speaking, the process was usually used as a way to reduce weight on cars for track use," says James. "For us,

it was the only process we knew of at the time that could handle completely cleaning off the surfaces of the car. I'm hesitant to recommend it because after all the trouble we went to getting the car prepped, dipped and then coated afterwards, the entire car had surface rust as a result. This isn't to say that this would be everyone's experience, but the owner of the body shop we went with said it was something he'd seen before, usually when the dipping company doesn't do a correct and immediate job of cleaning and coating the metal after dipping."

James ended up taking the entire unibody to a nearby powder-coating shop and having them media-blast the entire car. A black, weldable rust-inhibiting primer was then added. They then peeled open the sills and frame rails and used a coating that soaks into the top layer of →





metal, stopping any current and future oxidation.

"The powder coating shop ended up getting a lot of our business during the restoration - anything that could be powder coated was; anything that couldn't was often painted by them. This was more often than not for black parts, things like the rear axle axle, the front clip etc, but we also had them powder coat the newer Rally rims we put on the car. The shop has already been involved on the Morgan, doing the same 'clean and primer' job on the body panels for storage.

"As a side note, the frame rails, screen frame, and anywhere that made sense (such as between the rear quarter panels) was filled with off-the-shelf expanding foam (the kind you get at a local hardware store). This serves two purposes: first, it prevents moisture and debris from getting into these spaces and promoting rust or damage, and secondly it does an incredible

job of 'silencing' the car. It's particularly noticeable when you close a door on the car - instead of the usual hollow, echoing, metal-rattling noise it's more of a solid thud as you'd get on many modern cars. This is something I've recommended to plenty of friends and other project/classic car owners. Those that've been willing to try it have all been very happy with the results."

It's a 318 two-barrel car, but it's now a 340 four-barrel with the 904 auto trans and dual 3-inch exhausts exiting AAR-style ahead of the rear wheels. The colour is - quite clearly - the original Sub-Lime, about which James says, "The photos cannot convey just how much that colour reaches out, grabs your eyeballs out of their sockets, sets them on golf tees and drives a 500-yard hit down-range with them." Nicely put. Anyway, after 10 years of on and off resto-modding, the 'Cuda lives, breathes, and prowls the streets, cruises and car shows of Cupertino, California. **ACM**

