

# Single Shot

Many factors must be considered when trying to replicate a matte finish. — *Dave S. Clark*

**M**atte finishes may make luxury cars and exotics stand out, but owners will have a significant price to pay if there are any damages to the finish, as repairs can be quite complicated compared to conventional paint jobs.

Jeff Pabst, General Manager of Pfaff Autoworks in Vaughn, Ont., says his shop has been doing matte finishes for 10 years, which is long before OEMs started offering them from the factory. He estimates his shop has done 20 complete matte refinishes and has done many repairs on top of that.

## Many Variables

The most challenging aspect of repairing a car with a matte finish, according to Pabst, is managing all of the different variables such as temperature, humidity, pressure and angle of the gun, which all have an impact on the overall sheen. When doing repairs, it is possible to match the sheen of any finish, but without the ability to touch up any imperfections you have to get it right the first time.

"You've got one kick at the can to get it right," he says. "You can't polish any blemishes out. So the main issue is preparation and the cleanliness of the preparation. It has to be meticulous. If you get dust nibs or a run, you're doing it all over again," notes Pabst. "It's all in the clear and the process is the same whether it's a factory job or aftermarket."

To ensure he gets the finish matching the first time, Pabst says he always sprays a couple of test panels before spraying the car. But even still, it can be difficult to replicate the matte finish perfectly, so typically even very small jobs will require repairing more than the damaged panel.

## A Complete Side

"If a car comes in and it has a scratch on the fender, we're more than likely going to do the complete side of the car, just to be safe. We would do it just to protect ourselves from having to do it again," he says. "If you're painting a fender then clearing into the door to ensure the car is seamless from front to back; we would just clear the whole side. Especially if a car is a few years old and has wear and tear on it, that's the best way to go about it."

Other than that, Pabst says the process is just the same as conventional paint jobs. If the car is older, it gets completely disassembled and if it has damage like stone chips, all

of that has to be primed first, as it would for a regular finish.

## No Buffing

Pabst says he hasn't witnessed many issues with the durability of matte finishes, but if they get stained, there isn't much you can do. Maintenance is easy. All owners need to do is wash the car with soap and water. Anything else, like waxing, buffing or polishing, will damage the matte look.

Since the repairs are complicated and there aren't a lot of shops with experience in working with matte finishes, Pabst thinks that manufacturers like BMW, with its line of Frozen matte finishes and Mercedes Benz, with its Magno finishes, may discontinue them. While Pfaff has repainted many cars in matte, including an Audi S8 that came directly from the factory, and was refinished before the owner even took delivery, Pabst says that this type of aftermarket work has already started to slow down.

"I think the whole thing peaked a couple of years ago and has since seen a decline," he says. 🔄

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*Jeff Pabst, general manager, Pfaff Autoworks*



Matte finishes require special techniques for repair and restoration.