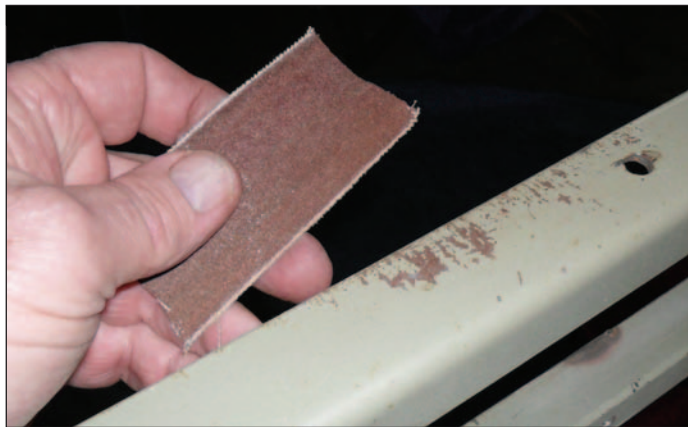


Painting the Chassis

TECH

'36 Ford Tudor Project



ABOVE: Minor scratches in the etch primer were inflicted as the chassis was manhandled for welding on brackets etc., so these areas were feathered out using old pieces of emery cloth.



ABOVE: The emery cloth was also used to remove the scaly surface rust where brackets were welded onto the chassis rails. Coarse body filler emery sheets were also used where more 'bite' was required.

After many long months, no make that a few years, the '36 Ford Tudor project has finally reached the point where it is ready for tearing apart and painting, prior to re-assembly. Some bodywork is not yet completed, but it will be done after the body is back on the chassis for the final time. My plan is to paint the chassis and all suspension pieces, then re-assemble the rolling chassis. Once that is under control, I intend to paint the floor of the body and then bolt it in place permanently on the chassis. Filling the roof insert and final bodywork will be done once the body is bolted down.

My Last Word column from issue 254 indicated how I had pulled the rolling chassis apart and now have no space left in my shed, as there are parts everywhere. As I paint and re-assemble, that situation should improve considerably with all the parts being bolted back together. Recently, all concentrated effort has gone into painting the chassis and all of its associated suspension pieces. Here's how I went about it.

When my Lilow chassis first arrived in the shed I painted it with 'weld-through' etch primer to protect it from the elements while I plugged away at fitting it out with all of the suspension and running gear. That worked very well in keeping surface rust at bay, but anywhere that it was removed, as brackets were welded in place, the area was left as is. Consequently there was surface rust on all of these areas. As I have added all of these brackets I went to considerable lengths to ensure they were as tidy as possible, so that once painted it would all look neat and tidy. The '36 is very much going to be a road car, but it doesn't hurt to make it as clean and tidy as you can, especially when it comes time for engineer inspections and to please all of those inquisitive eyes at rod runs.

While I was keen to make the chassis as clean as possible, I didn't want to go to the lengths of smoothing welds with filler and all of those types of tricks used on show cars. What I needed was a simple, straightforward way to get this tangle of steel looking good, without breaking the bank or the clock. I found that something in the form of the KBS Chassis Coater Kit.

I first noticed this product at MotorEx in Sydney a couple of years ago and it looked a likely contender for my chassis coating purposes. This paint is a single application, moisture catalysed product that you can paint straight over bare metal or primer and it dries and seals like glossy baked enamel or



ABOVE: The etch primed areas of the chassis were given a scuff-down with dry 240 sand paper to give it a smoother surface, but still with some 'key' that would allow the RustSeal paint to adhere to it properly.

ABOVE: A small cold chisel was used to remove odd spots of weld spatter from around all of the brackets and crossmembers so that they wouldn't show up after painting.

powder coating (it's also available in an OEM style satin finish). The application process is actually a three step process, but only one of them involves actually putting paint on the steel. The first step is a cleansing one, using AquaKlean (an industrial strength water-based cleaner/degreaser) to remove any oily residue from the part you are painting. This it does extremely well and it is a simple process, words you are going to hear a lot relating to this product. You simply dilute the base AquaKlean with water to the ratio recommended for your purpose and brush it on. Once it has done its work, you wash with clear water and you are ready for the second stage.

Now it's time for RustBlast (a powerful rust remover/metal etch). Use of this product requires that you wear protective gloves and they are included with the Chassis Coater Kit. This time you spray the RustBlast onto any surface rusty areas with the supplied pump squirter bottle and keep it damp by repeating the application for the length of time required to do its work. For most light surface rust this is about 10 minutes. You can actually see the bare metal appear as this process happens and once it is all clean you simply wash off the RustBlast with clear water, dry the pieces and you are ready for final paint. You can even leave the parts bare for several days before painting without any undue negative affects.

The pictures accompanying this article describe the methods I used to prepare and apply the KBS RustSeal paint to the '36 chassis, but first a few more words about the basic preparation.

As I have been working on the chassis, the primer has been scratched and bruised here and there from dragging things across it and hauling it up on my gantry so welding could always be done in a horizontal plane. These scratched areas need to be blended out so they don't show through the glossy black final paint. For most of this I used old emery belt material. Where there was surface rust around added brackets I used the same emery belt material and occasionally some really coarse emery sheets such as those used to file down body filler. You don't need to be too concerned about scratching the metal as it just helps the RustSeal paint to bind better to the metal and the coverage is such that these minor scratches don't show through the final paint.

Breathing apparatus should be used when painting with the KBS product and you should wear the black gloves they supply as part of the kit, as this stuff



ABOVE: AquaKlean was used to clean any evidence of oiliness or grease from the surface of the chassis. This is simply painted on with a cheap brush and washed off with clear water.



ABOVE: Next all of the surface rusted areas were treated with RustBlast to bring them back to shiny bare metal ready for painting. Spray it on, keep damp for 10 minutes and then wash it off.

doesn't come off skin easily. The flow-out and gloss finish of the KBS RustSeal paint is such that you can actually apply it with a brush and get a very good result. I did it this way on the rear end for the '36 and it did work very well, especially on the rough-cast parts like the diff centre. It was a little harder to get a nice flat finish on the smoother parts such as the axle tubes and the Commodore trailing arms, so I would recommend spraying it for those applications where you want a smoother finish.

Normal spraying gear is all you need to apply the paint if you are going to do it this way. Only a little thinning is required for spraying (about 5-10%) using the special #1 Thinner from KBS. Coverage is excellent so beware preparing too much paint. The entire chassis used less than a full spray pot and I gave it several coats. Great care is required when spraying as it is easy to get carried away trying to build up 'colour' too quickly, as I did on parts of the chassis. The result was a few runs that needed to be rubbed out later and recoated. Go very lightly and slowly and resist the urge to lay on heavy coats. The RustSeal paint takes a couple of hours to touch dry, but it dries with an outstanding gloss finish that requires no further treatment. However, if you are painting parts that are exposed to ultra-violet light the finish can go slightly dull over time, so I would recommend doing as I did and applying a top coat of KBS BlackTop, which is ultra-violet stable. This can be applied over the RustSeal once it is tack-dry, or you can wait until later, rub out any small imperfections (like the runs I caused) and then apply the BlackTop as your finish coat.

The standard Chassis Coater Kit comes with enough AquaKlean, RustBlast and RustSeal to paint a full-size car or ute chassis, but I would recommend the Chassis Coater Kit Professional that includes the BlackTop as well. The KBS website <www.kbs-coatings.com.au> has full details on all of their products including the Chassis Coater Kit.

RIGHT: RustSeal is the KBS product used to paint the chassis with no further preparation. If exposed to ultraviolet light it can dull with time so I added a coat of BlackTop over the top for a super glossy finish that is outstanding.

BELOW: This KBS product can be applied with a brush as it flows out nicely, but I would still recommend spraying it. Wear the gloves and use a respirator. The paint is moisture catalysed and dries to touch in about two hours, depending on weather conditions.



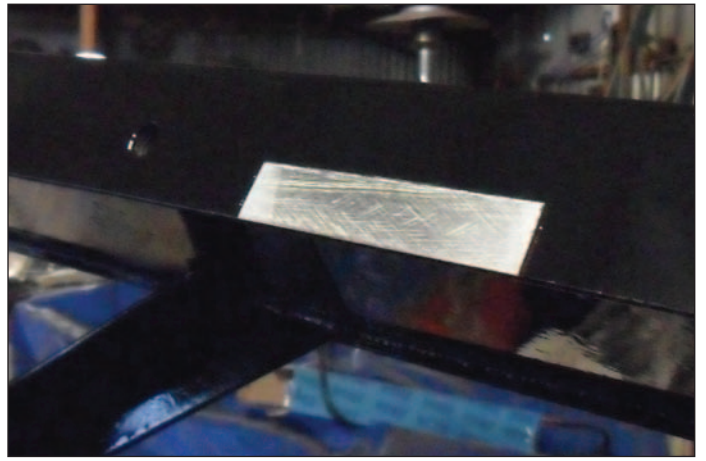
LEFT: Go slowly and lightly or you risk getting some runs in the paint. I was a little too heavy handed and suffered some runs in the paint as shown here. Wait for it to dry properly and sand with 400 wet and dry before recoating.



RIGHT: As I was using BlackTop over the whole chassis I scuffed it all over with the 400 wet and dry, paying particular attention to the runs in the RustSeal, before applying the BlackTop finish coats.



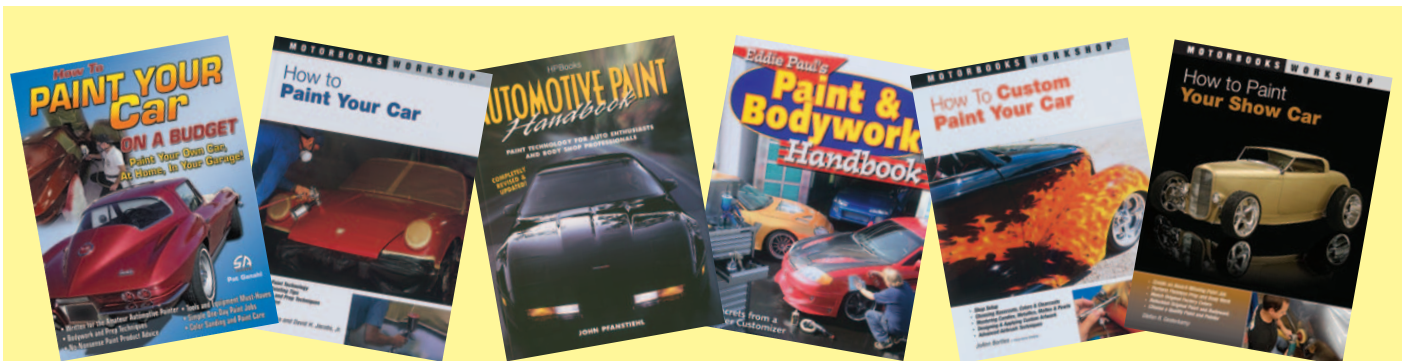
ABOVE: Here you can see an area inside the boxed section of the chassis rail where the RustSeal paint sagged from applying too much too quickly. Make sure you rub such areas right out flat again before top coating.



ABOVE: My new Lilow chassis doesn't have a number yet, so I masked off an area of the chassis rail just in front of the firewall where one can be added later. VicRoads will issue a number when it is getting closer to rego time.



ABOVE: Finally a finished, painted chassis. The BlackTop finish coats came up superbly glossy and smooth right off the spray gun. No further finishing will be required, just paint all of the suspension pieces the same and start bolting it all back together.



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