

Re-Dying Your Car Interior

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When I purchased my 1969 1800S four years ago, it had already been modified so much that I decided that it would not be practical to try to get it back to stock condition. Originally British racing green with a tan interior that I didn't care for, it had been repainted a darker green which was in very poor shape.

The front seats were destroyed so I had them professionally recovered in a beautiful black/gray fabric with black vinyl trim. Done by Jimmy's Upholstery in Bellevue, WA, they turned out beautiful.

To temporarily fix the exterior of the car, I had it painted by Macco who did an okay job for what I paid for it. The exterior is now a champagne color which I do get compliments on. However, my real wish is to have it really professionally painted the Volvo medium blue that was used in 1969. A real "stand out" color.

It was always my intention to redo the interior in all black but being unemployed for over two years - it was not an option to take it back to Jimmy's and have them do it. Two years ago, I had purchased some interior pieces from a guy in Portland that included the rear side panels, back seat and bench seat. They were all black but faded and the upper back seat had a number of holes and cracks in the top. Gary Ramstad gave me a new bench seat which was in better shape than the one I purchased along with the two front pocket panels which were in great shape.

So, I decided to do it myself after Ramstad, PSVSA Coordinator and VSA Vice President, provided me with an article written by a member of the Volvo Club of BC, John Dymond, who successfully re-dyed his front seats using the products supplied by Leatherique (www.leatherique.com). With the interior pieces I had purchased and were given to me, the only tan pieces that had to be re-dyed were the door panels and the wheel wells.

I ordered a kit which includes the following products:

- Rejuvenator oil
- Pristine cleaner
- Prepping agent
- Dye (which they will custom color to a sample you send them)
- Crack filler (which was extra for \$10)

Since I was going black, they said they would make up a nice black for me which turned out to be beautiful. The total cost was \$100 including shipping.

Since I've included the instruction sheet from Leatherique after this article, I won't go into the details that they cover. However, after going through the process, I found their instructions could have been more detailed.

I decided to go through the oiling and cleaning process on all the pieces to see how they looked and then decide if all needed to be re-dyed.

The first step of applying the Rejuvenator oil is very easy and I did it as instructed with a brush and set all the pieces outside in the sunshine for the afternoon. I would suggest using disposable glove for this process as the oil is very thick and hard to wash off.

The next day, I cleaned them with the Pristine Cleaner and shop towels. This two-step process did wonders for the black pieces I had but some still needed to be re-dyed. This process was also easy.

The following day I started the wet sanding with the Prepping Agent. This is the hard part but not as bad as I expected. It was easy to remove the arm rests and bottom door panels but I wasn't able to remove the top door panels as I couldn't figure out how to take off the handles for the windows. So I decided to do the upper panel while it was still on the car along with the wheel well leather which I had no intention of attempting to remove.

Although not covered in Leatherique's instructions, I used a sanding block for the two different grades of sandpaper that you use. I also put the Prepping Agent in a spray bottle rather than dipping the sanding block into it. It was very easy to spray on the Prepping Agent and then wet-sand

with the sanding block, especially since all the interior pieces are flat. The only piece that would have been difficult was the two panels with pockets but luckily, the oil/clean process worked so well on them that they didn't need to be re-dyed. Completing this process on the front seats would have been much more difficult than the side panels and back seat.

The wet sanding process is to remove as much of the old dye as possible. However, I discovered on both the tan and black pieces that I was working on that Volvo had used leather that was already tan or black so there wasn't any dye to remove. Rather, this process cleaned up the leather and scuffed it up so the dye would take. If your interior is red, I would expect that you would be removing a lot of dye during this process. This was hard work and my hands definitely hurt at the end of the process. Again, use gloves.

The most difficult part was filling cracks and holes in the leather which is done at this point. The Crack Filler is a thin white liquid and can be difficult to get it where you want it. I applied it with cotton swabs and toothpicks. The instructions say that you can reapply after 20 minutes, but I found that it takes much longer than 20 minutes for the filler to dry so you can add more to the cracks or holes. It also dries white but takes the dye very well.

Then to the final step of dyeing the prepared leather. Follow the instructions and pour all the dye in a container and stir regularly. Most importantly, use a high quality brush. I used a high quality, thin angled brush which made it easier to get the dye where I wanted it. I did end up with some brush strokes but I don't think they will be noticed with the pieces back in the car.

All in all, I found their products to be very good and easy to use. And since they reshipped another kit by mistake, I ended up having enough to finish the project. (I did call them and told them they sent a second kit worth \$100 by mistake and they told me to keep it.)

After completing the process on the entire interior with the exception of the two front seats, I used the following amount of product:

- Rejuvenator Oil: 2/3 of the bottle (16 oz) used
- Pristine Clean: 1 ½ bottles (16 oz) used.
- Prepping Agent: 1 bottle (16 oz) used
- Dye: 1/3 bottle (16 oz) used. (I was amazed at how much was left over.)
- Crack Filler: Hardly any used. There was enough crack filler to do 20 cars.

If you decide to take on this project yourself, order the 32 ounce bottles of the Pristine Clean and perhaps the Prepping Agent as I used all of it for my car.

I'm very pleased with the results I got, particularly since I have never done this before. While my re-dyed leather doesn't look exactly like it originally did, it looks clean, new and beautifully black. I'm very happy with the results.

See next page for Leatherique's Restoration Instructions

Leather Restoration, Leather Care, Leather redye, Leather refinishing, Leather renewal

THE LEATHERIQUE LEATHER RESTORATION WAY TO LEATHER RENEWAL

Please read all directions before beginning your Leather Restoration project. Do not hesitate to call or email if you have any further questions about Leather Care. **Rubber gloves & eye protection are recommended.** Rinse with soap & water in case of contact with skin. Do not ingest. Leatherique Leather Restoration Dye is a revolutionary, complex polymer coating,. It is highly acclaimed and gives excellent results when used according to directions.

1. BASIC LEATHER CARE/LEATHER CONDITIONING/CLEANING TO MAKE IT FEEL LIKE NEW LEATHER

You will need Leatherique Leather Restoration Rejuvenator Oil, Prestine Clean, and clean terry towels

Apply Leatherique Leather Rejuvenator Oil liberally to all leather and vinyl surfaces, with a brush, spray bottle or soft sponge. Massage Leather with your hands to work the nutrients in. Don't miss this step as reconditioning and proper Leather Care is what will make your upholstery feel like glove soft leather again. Allow to sit in a sunny spot for several hours or overnight. Clean Leather with Prestine Clean and terry towels. Buff with clean towel. Reapply as necessary, until leather is supple and strong. Wait 48 hours before proceeding to next step to allow the Leatherique Leather Rejuvenator to fully penetrate. Our BMW friend Rick Viedorfer, of Arvada, CO suggests that if your leather is cardboard hard or if your leather is sun damaged, to skip to the sanding step after one application of Rejuvenator Oil and remove as much of the old, hardened dye as possible with wet sanding and prepping. Then apply more Leatherique Leather Rejuvenator onto the hide for immediate results.

2. BASIC LEATHER CARE/LEATHER RESTORATION/PREPPING YOUR LEATHER SURFACE

You will need prepping agent, fine grit sand paper, 400 to 600 grit, and a clean, empty bowl or container. Pour a few ounces of prepping agent into the bucket and use that to dip your wet or dry sand paper into. Also have plenty of paper towels to wipe dirt from the surface of the leather.

Using 400 grit, lightly wet sand the leather to smooth out any cracks and hangnails in the surface. Remove as much of the old Leather dye as you can without creating suede. Wipe surface with soft rags or paper towels to remove as much of the faded or oxidized old Leather Dye as possible. Do not attempt to redye over damaged dye. Be sure all old dye is broken down, and all previous treatments such as silicone, wax or oil product residue is gone. Then resand with 600. If you are

filling cracks with Leather crack filler, this is the time to do that step. Apply Leather crack filler only into cracks, not near grain. Allow to dry 20 minutes and refill as necessary. For holes in leather, a mechanical repair will be necessary. Insert a patch larger than the hole, (a piece of canvas or leather fuzzy sides together) carefully into the hole. With a toothpick, spread a small amount of craft or leather glue into hole and press to adhere. Fill remaining scar with layers of Leather crack filler. Resand Leather as necessary with 600 for a smooth, flawless finish. Allow project to sit overnight or about 6 hours to allow prepping agent and crack filler to dry. Sufficient Leather prepping is the key to a successful Leather Restoration project. It is helpful to a good finish to remove the top surface of the old lacquer base Leather dye to allow new Copolymer Leather dye to "bite". This also assures that any silicone, petroleum or mineral oils, or wax are removed. **If doing a color change, remove as much of the old dye as possible without damaging the leather** or creating suede.

3. LEATHER CARE/LEATHER RESTORATION/LEATHER RECOLORING AND PROTECTING YOUR LEATHER SURFACE

After the Leather surface is clean and prepped, simply brush or spray on your new Leatherique Leather dye.

You will need Leatherique Dye, top quality synthetic, acrylic type brushes, very small for cracks and piping and wider for larger areas, a dirt free environment, preferably indoors. ***Thin Leather dye if necessary to prevent heavy buildup of color. Temperature of 70 to 85 degrees, low humidity, no rain.**

Pour all the Leatherique Leather dye into a suitable container so it can be stirred and mixed properly with a wide paint stirrer. (tupperware type with lid) Some pigments are heavier than others and settle.

Start with a small, inconspicuous area to get a feel for the product. * If it is too thick, stir in a small quantity of water to reach workable consistency. Your color has been matched to your swatch using the newest computer technology, and most long lasting high quality pigments available. It is normal that the color may appear more vibrant than the faded hue you have become accustomed to. Begin with the seams, piping and edges and allow them to dry. (Usually by the time you are done, they are dry) Then proceed with broader areas. Apply several very thin coats, brushing in all directions rather than back and forth. Do not stop in the middle of a panel. Consistency will be rewarded with a professional job. Allow each piece to dry thoroughly. Apply second coat as necessary. **If doing a COLOR CHANGE, another coat will be necessary.** Clean brushes and all equipment immediately with soap and hot water.

3A LEATHER CARE/LEATHER RESTORATION/ LEATHER REDYE WITH AIR TYPE SPRAY GUN

You will need Leatherique Leather Dye, thinned about 10-25% with water, or to your equipment specifications. Set your equipment for a fine, almost dry mist coat. Spray 2-3 fine, dry mist coats to cover. Clean your equipment with soap and hot water.

FINAL STEP - Allow project to remain untouched for 48 hours, as dye will be fragile. Then with a very soft, lint free cloth, you may buff the Leather Surface to a natural luster and remove excess pigment. If you have any brush strokes or imperfections, they can be buffed out with fine 600 grit dry sandpaper. For regular maintenance, wipe gently with a soft cloth and Prestine Clean to help extend the life and beauty of your leather.

Key Benefits

- You will have a "new" leather interior for a fraction of the cost of replacing your leather.
- Application is easy, if you have refinished wood or any craft project, you can redye leather.
- Leatherique dye is water based, not petroleum based, cleans up quick and easy, with no harsh odors.