

## Z a to b of Interior Wood Work – Solid Timber & Veneer Finishers

This article is based on the restoration of my ZB Magnette and the two supporting references acknowledged at the conclusion.

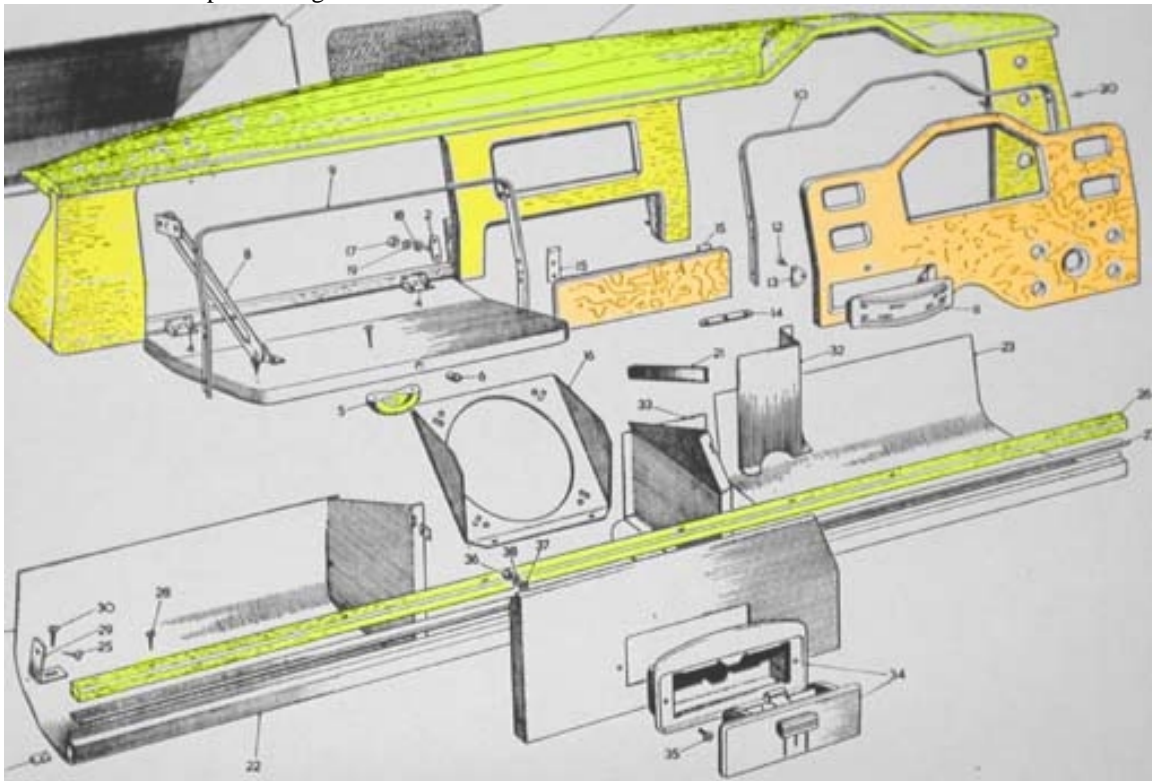
Provided some basics are not ignored, a very satisfactory refurbishment can be achieved e.g.: Timber and veneers are matched as a car set, staining (if required) is easily overdone, veneers are easily rubbed through, and screw holes must be left clear of refurbishment materials.

Emphasis is placed on refurbishment of top finish; for repair and gluing of veneers, it is recommended that a copy of veneering and marquetry techniques be borrowed from the local library.

Information is in point form under two headings:

**Part 1** Removing old finish through to gaining a clean prepared surface.

**Part 2** Repair through to finished surface.



**Fig. 1 ZB Magnette Dashboard – contains both veneered and solid timber**

### **Part 1. Removing old finish and progressing to the stage of gaining a clean prepared surface for both Veneer and Solid Wood.**

1. Refurbishment can only be done properly removed from the interior.
2. Note damage or wear and try to identify how it happened- water (leaks) and scratches (from what).
3. All removed timber pieces should be labeled and stored properly.
4. Once removed – Look for damage, splits and lifting veneer.

5. Stripping old finish from veneer timber – commence by applying automotive paint stripper with a paintbrush. *Please use protection for your eyes and skin*
6. Give paint stripper time to work, but don't let it dry – A fine 000 steel wool used lightly is effective in removing old finish.  
Many applications of stripper may be required to remove old finish (varnish). Don't leave any traces of old finish as it will spoil the final result!
7. The factory matched all veneers as a set for each car. A partial refurbishment or a refurbishment with pieces from different cars will be noticed.
8. All traces of stripper to be removed with a damp cloth and allowed to dry. Do not use sunlight or artificial heat.
9. Once clean and dry. The veneer or solid timber can be checked, at this stage, for colour (does it need staining?). To do this wet a small area as an indicator/guide to how it may look in its final state. **Warning. Warning. Don't be too eager to stain, as it probably won't be needed. If you do decide its necessary, build the colour by applying very light applications. It's very easy to have a result that is too dark and unpleasing.**
10. Once the surface is fully clean, with no stripper or varnish remaining, the wood should be allowed to thoroughly dry.
11. If one panel of a set is left un-stripped, it can be used as a guide to reference the others to. This would be a personal choice and depend on your situation at the time.



**Fig 2. ZB shown here has the full mix of veneers and solid wood**  
{Chrome borders enhance the instrument cluster, glove box & parcel shelf}

## **Part 2. Repair through to finished surface.**

1. Remove any dust before commencing. A rag with methylated spirits is effective and dries quickly.
2. Scores or staining can be scraped down on unveneered wood. Where as sanding and filling is the way to go with veneered surfaces, keeping in mind how thin the veneer actually is.

3. Holes or deep scratches usually need to be filled. A fade resistant coloured filler applied with a straight edged putty knife is a good choice. Veneers can be glued back if split or alternatively patched. *[Outside scope of this article]*
4. Smooth the surface with 320 minimum dry abrasive (not Wet & Dry). Remove any dust with methylated spirits.
5. Once filling is complete, staining can be applied {if needed}. This must be done evenly all over. Completing one light coat at a time in the build to a final colour. After each coat, wet a finger and dab it on the wood to gain an idea of progress achieved. (Dabbing the surface with a wet finger is a useful guide to fully finished colour).



**Fig3a. Shown is the dashboard in its un-restored state.**  
*Note. Instrument panel is included as an example of potential mismatch.*



**Fig3b. Close up of dashboard woodwork to be restored {solid wood on top and two veneer types on the front}**

6. Apply 3 - 4 coats with clear acrylic, allowing 10 to 15 minutes between coats and overnight to dry.
7. Rub with Wet & Dry 800 grade abrasive until gloss is removed. *Important, do not rub through the acrylic surface. Penalty for a rub through is not death but a return to point 6.*
8. Make sure the abraded surface is clean before applying another 3 – 4 coats of clear acrylic. Allow 10 to 15 minutes between coats and 24 hrs to dry.

## Part 2. Continued.

9. Rub with Wet & Dry 1200 grade abrasive until gloss is removed. Again do not rub through the acrylic surface, if you do it's a free trip back to point 8.
10. As a first cut use a compounding abrasive to polish the acrylic surface.
11. Last of all, obtain that final gloss with non-silicon based polish.
12. **Before fitting the wooden pieces**, ream out all screw/fixing holes to remove any build up of surface material. Buildup will likely comprise both acrylic and polish. **It cannot be over emphasized that a buildup in a screw hole will causes too tight a fit for the screw; resulting in the surface finish being cracked. It's the last job and critical.** *This apparently minor step is like playing snakes and ladders, its awareness time?*



Fig 4. Partial picture of dashboard and door capping with indicated blemish and repairs.

### Acknowledgements

- One – Mr. Darby from Darby's paint shop, Geelong.
- Two – English Magazine Practical Classics Jan 1982.
- Three – MG Parts book – Dashboard line drawing.

Loz Scott – Geelong MG Car club.  
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