

Paintwork - Street

There is not a lot of difference between the finish of Street and show paint jobs these days. Obviously the undercarriage is where the separation is but I would expect a good street car to have excellent paintwork at least on all the outer panels. The major difference would be on the type of finish and process, ie street would use solid colour, metallic, overlays, pearls and Kandy base coats but not normally Urethane Kandy's or heavy flakes due to difficulty in matching and touching up.

Paintwork - Show

All the categories are important in Show Car judging, but paintwork is the area that the public notice most. The paintwork of an elite show car must be excellent in all areas including under bonnet, boot and doorjambs. It is essential to have the outside excellent but it is the underneath and inside area's that separate the consistent winners from the rest. As with all the areas the paintwork must be planned and managed as well. Think about the colours, do they go together, is it right for the shape, do you want graphics or murals, there is a lot to consider. If you decide to go with graphics or murals they must be of high quality and good final finish on the clear to get maximum points. More is not always better, whatever paint you have it must be of a high standard.

Quality is the key to paintwork, it must have a good foundation. If you have prepared the body correctly, it would be primed with Epoxy primer filler and sanded with hard block and finished off with a fine grade paper ready to shoot the colour. The area's almost always neglected are roof gutters, under sill panels and under panels. If you are shooting for a Show Car award, all areas must be prepared, sanded, painted and detailed to a high standard. In show car judging we get into every crevice and quite often it will be only half a point to separate the winner.

Top show cars require the removal of handles, mouldings and rubbers before applying paint. They also require the removal of engine and mechanical items to paint engine bays and undercarriage. Painting engine bays and undercarriages to a high standard will take your car from a street car to a show car so you must understand the direction this will take you. You will not be able to drive a car with fully detailed undercarriage on the street every day and compete at the level of a show only car.

After applying paint the finish will need to be cut and buffed. With the introduction of two pack paint in the 80's most companies claimed buffing was finished. If you want your finish to match existing factory finish peel you can settle for an off the gun finish but if you want a show winning job it will need to be cut and buffed. Most winning custom paint jobs will have colour, possibly graphics or murals, clearcoat, then sanded back, more clearcoat and sanded back with fine paper and buffed and polished.

There are so many exciting new finishes out there today, look around at the bright clean colours and effects you can have to set you out from the crowd. Check out the winning cars and the companies that are supporting your scene at the shows and talk to the personnel on the stands about paint and how to keep that show car shine.