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Photography Paul Wager



# Colour By Numbers

Convertible roof faded? We show you how to paint the colour back in.

**BMW makes its convertible tops out of the most durable material in the business** but after a few years out in the weather the colour does start to fade, especially the black and dark blue. Throw in some mildew round the edges and your otherwise pristine BMW can easily start to look a bit down-at-heel.

With a new hood costing the thick end of £1500, you'd have to be pretty fussy to replace the fabric just because it's slightly faded but there is an easier

solution. Although not badly faded, the blue roof on our 1996 E36 convertible was starting to show its age and a call to Renovo saw us trying out its Soft-top Reviver.

The product is already approved by Saab (which makes its roofs from similar fabric to BMW) and Renovo reckoned it would bring our roof back to as-new condition. Read on and find out just what's involved.

## Parts Counter

Renovo fabric soft-top kit 'B' (Includes foam cleaner, colour reviver, proofer and plastic window polish)	£47
Soft-top Reviver 500 ml	£16.95
Soft-top Reviver 1 litre	£29.95
Ultra Proofer 500 ml	£11.95
Ultra Proofer 1 litre	£19.95
Plastic window polish 30ml	£4.99
Plastic window polish 100 ml	£14.95

## Contact

Renovo International 01444 443277  
[www.renovouk.com](http://www.renovouk.com)



### Safety

The first rule of working on cars and using tools of any kind is don't take risks:

- If you're using power tools, protective gear is essential.
- Never work under a car without supporting it using axle stands first.
- When cars catch fire, they burn fast. Always have a fire extinguisher to hand.
- If you're not completely confident in your ability to complete any task safely, don't even start it. Leave it to the experts.

The advice and guidelines given in *Total BMW* magazine are given in good faith and neither *Total BMW* nor A&S Publishing can take any responsibility for injuries sustained while carrying out the described tasks and procedures, or any consequences arising there from.



- 1** The kit supplied by Renovo includes four products: a foam shampoo, the colour reviver, a waterproofer and the plastic window polish. You'll also need a 2 inch paintbrush and some masking tape. The easy-removal type is best.
- 2** First step is to clean the roof completely with the foam cleaner. It's important to get the roof as clean as possible to avoid a patchy result with the colour reviver.
- 3** Simply spray the cleaner on to the roof, work it into the fabric and wipe it off with a damp sponge. You'll be surprised at the amount of grime which comes out of the fabric.
- 4** The 3-Series' roofs seem to attract mildew around the seams at the bottom rear corners and it's worth using a stiff brush to remove it.

- 5** The colour reviver itself is a coloured liquid and the instructions warn against letting it dry on to rubber or paintwork. It won't wreck it, but it will leave an unsightly residue, so it's worth carefully masking around the rear window and the rubber seal above the windscreen.
- 6** Here's what the colour reviver looks like. It's essentially a paint product but acts like a dye and smells like a cross between poster paint and ink. Several colours are available including black, brown and the blue used here.
- 7** Paint the solution on to the roof using a 2 inch paintbrush in even strokes, loading the brush generously to avoid bare patches. To avoid 'tidemarks' and a generally patchy result it's sensible to do one section at a time, allowing you to finish applying the colour reviver to a complete section before it starts to dry. Two people working from either side makes it much easier. Don't break for lunch halfway through the job and don't do the job when the roof is hot from standing in the sun.

  


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**8** The worst fading on our roof was evident around the rear window and on the top and after giving it a coat of colour reviver it was still slightly patchy. The kit supplies enough solution for two reasonably large roofs, so we chose to give it a second coat in these areas which gave a much better result.

**9** After leaving the colour reviver to dry for a couple of hours, the proofer can be applied in the same way. It's a colourless liquid which is just brushed on to the roof and it makes sense to leave the masking tape in place for this, otherwise any solution spilled on the rear window will be horribly obvious when it's wet.