

PROJECT OMG!

SOFT TOP HOOD RESTORATION HOW TO - THANKS RENOVO!

We've been working very hard on bringing our £280 17-year old MGF VVC back to health but the poor old hood had been a little neglected, so we decided to do something about it. The marvellous products of RENOVO were called for...

Our MGF's hood was a bit forlorn and sad-looking. Some of the previous eight owners had clearly lavished a no-holds barred budget at the little two-seater whereas some hadn't. The soft top though had been neglected over the years and had taken on a faded look with areas of mildew beginning to show.

Due to a cushion's worth of long white cat hairs all over it when we bought the car, it had been used as a feline bed for a period of time, which might also explain the couple of small holes in its surface. These had been hastily bodged with



As this image shows, our hours of polishing was being let down by a shabby-looking, faded hood. Renovo's products would be tested to the extreme if this soft-top was going to be restored to former glories.

some black gasket sealant, by a former owner, which look a bit odd, but do the trick.

In reality our budget dictated that the new hood required was out of reach, as was a decent used item, which command around £400, so we'd use alternative means to bring it back to health. The king of the hill, as far as hood restoration treatments are concerned is



RENOVO, so a call went into the company's MD Patrick Coghlan and the result was the arrival, a few days later, of a parcel containing a hood revival kit...

Our pictorial feature plots our progress...



Renovo's line-up of products we'd be using...only other 'tools' needed were a couple of 2in brushes, la scrubbing-type brush, latex gloves, a kitchen roll and several old plastic Chinese takeaway containers.



First step was to brush any loose dirt and bird lime away, while also washing it with clean, cold water. The day we chose to do our test wasn't ideal as the temperature was in the low eighties.



We began by using Renovo's Soft Top Canvas Cleaner.



We had to laugh. Just as we were starting the job a bloke in a water company van and a tannoy drove up and down our road announcing he was cutting the water off for essential repairs to the mains. Just when we needed copious amounts of clean water to rinse the Soft Top Canvas Cleaner off! We managed to fill a couple of buckets before the tap ran dry!



It's a clear liquid with the consistency of water that is brushed on, starting in the centre of the hood and working outwards.



After a cup of tea giving the hood time to dry, the next step was to use Renovo's Soft Top Reviver, in black, obviously. These containers are handy and give a good excuse for a regular Chinese takeaway!



I wouldn't say it produced a lather but does go a bit soapy and I could physically see the dirt lifting..



It is a dense liquid with a runny consistency and although can be polished off bodywork, you need to take a bit of care when applying it if you want to avoid unsightly black specks everywhere. The product smells like the stuff your mum used on your school canvas plimssoles back in the day. Once again, you need to brush it on, starting from the centre.

The label says apply two coats, although we went for the belt and braces approach and applied three, leaving about 30-minutes between each one. The product becomes a little harder to work into the material with each progressive coat. Make sure you work it well in.



We used a bit of cloth the try and protect the clear plastic window from splashes. Mind you, look at the state of it...that would need plenty of work, later on.



With the soft top looking nicely black and feeling revived to touch, the final step is the application of Renovo's Ultra Proofer, which helps make the material remain resistant to water. Again we went the extra mile and applied three coats. After the first one the liquid began to bead on the surface showing that it was working. This stuff smells like PVA glue without the stickiness.



As you can see, Ultra Proofer goes on nicely with a 2in brush and once again we divide the hood into sections for easy application.



During all three processes I made sure to pay attention to important areas such as seams and around the plastic window.



With the hood looking revived and back-to-black, it was time to turn our attention to the clear plastic window, which wasn't looking very good on our car. Where it folds down it's very easy to get a permanent crease that you don't want. Our window was also 'milky' in places. The windows can be replaced but it's quite a task and can be expensive.



I was hoping for big things from Renovo's Plastic Window Polish...



Ronsonol, the car enthusiast's special weapon is an essential addition to your kit, with a multitude of uses. I used it on our plastic window to get rid of the black splashes. It made a difficult job very easy...



Once the plastic was free of black splashes, it was time to apply the polish. Shake the little bottle well and apply with a cloth to the surface, and you can feel the abrasives working as you rub it in. This one smells like that Deep Heat linament rub you put on aches and pains...I also repeated the process on the inside of the rear screen.



It's very easy to remove with a clean cloth once it's gone hazy. It left our plastic window looking shiny, clean and completely restored. It even managed somehow to get rid of the 'milky' appearance.



The end result after a few hours of easy work is a soft top hood that is as good as new in feel and looks. BRILLIANT...



The Renovo products we used were:

SOFT TOP CANVAS CLEANER – 500ml £13.25 (vinyl version costs £10.95).

SOFT TOP REVIVER – 1-litre (Black, Dark Blue, Green & Brown available) £33.25 (Use on Wigan canvas, Everflex, Double Duck and Mohair).

ULTRA PROOFER 1-litre £21.95 (vinyl version available £10.95)

PLASTIC WINDOW POLISH 100ml £15.95

We used Renovo's 'Soft Top Kit A' containing all of the above for £75, which is a small price to pay for restoring your hood to rude health and also restoring the transparency to your rear plastic window. Absolutely superb and highly recommended.

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