

How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/21 20:46

As some of you may already know, I got a spare set of 17" alloys with my car when I bought it. The tyres on these wheels were a little tired to say the least (metal coming through on one of them) and the wheels themselves weren't in great condition about 6 out of 10 I would say.

I thought about selling them on but then decided to refurb them with a view to putting them on the car when my current tyres need changed this winter. I didn't want to pay for a professional refurb so I set about reading various articles on the net to try and do it myself.

The following is my advice on how to do this. Most of my recommendation come from mistakes (all stupid ones) that I made :blush:

The usual disclaimer applies to this advice. If you damage your wheels following my steps then its your fault, so dont come crying to me :crybaby:

DIY ALLOY REFURB

What do you need:

Halfords Project Pack - Alu Oxide and wet & dry paper

Filler - I used Cataloy Knifing putty

Sugar soap spray or wipes (I used the wipes ... much easier)

Latex gloves & goggles for sanding and painting

suitable dust mask for spraying

Primer spray*

Colour spray*

Clear coat/lacquer spray*

* you need about 300ml per wheel of each paint for a complete refurb

What I did:

I will try to keep this as brief as possible ;) This is what my wheels looked like at the start

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01730.jpg>

1

After removing the tyres, thoroughly clean the wheels. Power hose and then used the sugar soap wipes until the wheels are free of all dirt and grime. Make sure you get into every nook and cranny.

2

This step should only be attempted if you wheels are in a really bad way and even then I would suggest trying step 3 first. Apply Nitromors to the wheels to remove paint. I found this caused more damage than benefit (see pic). The paint bubbled up and I used two coats but it didn't strip the paint effectively. I ended up having to sand away the damage on the two wheel I done.

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01732.jpg>

3

Sand the paint and rust/corrosion off the wheels using the coarsest paper to start and getting finer as the paint is removed ending up with the 400 w&d. This should take about 10-30mins per wheel (depending on their condition) and should be tried without paint stripper ... trust me :)

4

Once sanded and smooth, hose down the wheels again and clean with sugar soap wipes to remove all sanding debris. Ensure wheels are totally dry before starting to paint.

5

Apply two coats of primer to all surfaces of wheels. The primer is touch dry within 15mins but you should resist the temptation of sanding until at least a few hours has passed or better to wait until the next day. I found the number of runs was reduced if you keep the wheels horizontal when spraying. You do need to paint one side and wait for at least 1 hour before spraying the other side

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01735.jpg>

Leave the wheels overnight before continuing if possible.

6

Before applying the coloured spray, smooth out the primer with 600 w&d or finer. Again clean all dust from the wheel. Spray the colour on the wheels in a similar style to the primer. I found that a light coat first followed by to proper coats (and a final touch up check) reduced the possible runs.

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01738.jpg>

Again leave overnight to set before finishing

7

Some of the websites I read said about using an ultra fine w&d paper before the clear coat. I didn't do this as I thought it would spoil the finish. I again clean the wheels (using the sugar soap wipes as they were handy), dried them off and sprayed the clear coat. I gave the wheel 2 coats all over and an extra coat on the front. The lacquer was the thinnest of the three paints and ran very easily so you need to be careful applying this coat. Ensure the wheels are flat when spraying the front, that way, any runs will go to the back.

... and hey presto you have refurbed your wheels.

Other tips:

Do the spraying inside in a well ventilated area where over-spray won't land you in trouble with the other half

When setting a wheel onto a surface that may have wet paint on it, lay down a sheet of paper to protect the wheel finish to that point

Be patient and don't try to take short cuts

Always wear your mask & goggles when spraying and sanding

I would recommend gloves when sanding as I managed to sand off my finger prints :blink:

Don't bother with a sanding block of any sort - it just doesn't get into the wheels properly

I think my wheels turned out pretty well. The colour I used is Peugeot Cossack Grey with a grey primer. It would be a slightly darker version of Quandry's SMG and it quite metallic, so the wheels have a nice sparkle.

The job done is not perfect, but it isn't that far off and I am more than happy with it. I made a few mistakes which meant back track/sanding and having to redo bits but it still only cost me about £80 for all materials and everything was bought from Halfords. A professional job would have been from £250-400. Pick a colour from Halfords standard pre-mixed ranges, that way matching wont be a prob.

The total amount of time required for the four wheels is probably about 6-8 hours. However, to do it properly this needs to be spread over at least two day but better three.

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01799.jpg>

<http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/wheel%20refurb/DSC01797.jpg>

BTW, I sprayed my centre caps as well (not in the pic) so they match the wheel finish.

If you want to give this a go and have any questions, just give me a shout. If you find it useful then give me a Karma Click <http://i797.photobucket.com/albums/yy254/markspence/jae-1.png>

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Re: How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Darc - 2010/09/21 21:01

Thanks a million for this! was talkin with my mate today who is a celica owner and gonna be redoin the alloys of the MR2 when i get her back and we were discussing best practice for strippin them back and then painting them up! many many thanks :)

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Re: How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/21 21:05

Darc wrote:

Thanks a million for this! was talkin with my mate today who is a celica owner and gonna be redoin the alloys of the MR2 when i get her back and we were discussing best practice for strippin them back and then painting them up! many many thanks :)

No worries dude :yes:

It is surprisingly easy, just takes a little time and determination. Its all in the prep really, if you get a good smooth foundation to start the painting on then your half way there.

Good luck with the job ;)

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Re: How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Darc - 2010/09/21 21:13

Thank you! have a feeling im going to be getting to know ye all on here very very well! :casual:

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Re: How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/21 21:22

Darc wrote:

Thank you! have a feeling im going to be getting to know ye all on here very very well! :casual:

I would offer to help but Kildare is a bit of a trek :hmm:

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Re: How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Darc - 2010/09/21 21:25

Spanky wrote:

I would offer to help but Kildare is a bit of a trek :hmm:

Thanks it means a lot! but the advice over keyboard is enough help at the moment!

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Snulty - 2010/09/21 21:26

Looking Good!

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by slipsliderg - 2010/09/21 21:31

Good write up Spanky.

Doing my own wheel refurb at the minute as well, but going a different direction with the finish.

KC awarded.

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Quandry - 2010/09/21 21:37

Very nice job Spanky - KC +1

those aren't Rays Gram Lights by chance?

Nice looking wheel, keep me posted if you ever decide to sell

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Darc - 2010/09/21 21:53

Oh yeah and sorry took so long to comment on them god they do look pure sex! KC +1

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by ricky2 - 2010/09/21 22:25

Well done mate you must be so proud KC+1

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/21 22:35

Cheers for the KCs guys :yes:

If I didn't know better I would say some of the responses had a hint of sarcasm :P :laugh:

Quandry wrote:

Very nice job Spanky - KC +1

those aren't Rays Gram Lights by chance?

Nice looking wheel, keep me posted if you ever decide to sell

I dont know what they are. There is nothing on the back except the usual ET, JJ etc codes.

<http://www.fftec.com/images/P/57PRO.jpg>

They aren't the same as these ones (if that the one you were thinking of). However, they are very similar.

I would guess that they aren't a very expensive wheel butt hey look reasonable and will do me for a set of tyres, then I can decide to go back to the standards or not.

I will be giving them a refurb as well once swapped over before shoving hem into the roof space

They are a decent looking wheel and will be on my car (maybe) by Christmas but definitely for next year

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by slipsliderg - 2010/09/21 23:50

Stickied.

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Cashy - 2010/09/22 01:04

Nice work there Spanky. KC for you. Bet you were kinda worried when you saw the wheels after applying the Nitromors :laugh:
On a srious note I was half thinkin of gettin mine refurbished professionally down the road sometime, This thread has me thinkin otherwise...

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spidey - 2010/09/22 08:54

Great job :yes:

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by dshamrock2000 - 2010/09/22 08:55

Great job Spanky, I agree about the nitromors, i used it to strip my conservatory, took me twice as long to get it right then, just bubbled and unless you sand it asap it just rehardens, it was a pain in the ass, id never use it again

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/22 13:41

Def avoid Nitromors :laugh:

I don't think it matters how bad your wheels are, it is fairly easy to remove the paint with the coarse aluminium oxide paper and then smooth the scrapes out with the finer grades.

@Cashy: if you are unsure I would recommend buying the project pack from Halfords and see how you get on. If you get the wheels clean enough then the spraying part is easy although it does take a while

Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by SWAGGER - 2010/09/22 18:08

Excellent write up Spanky. Well done and I have to say, they do look professionally finished.

A little tip though on the clear coat. It can seem odd to sand the paint before clear coat. The natural assumption is that you will ruin the finish by dulling the paint, but the fact is, you have to rub the glossy finish off the paint so that the clear coat can adhere to it properly, otherwise it will eventually chip and just flake away.

Use really high grade wet paper, always wet, 1600+, 2000 if you can get it. If you have a thick enough paint application and you are delicate, there is no chance of going through the paint, all you want is to flatten any texture and remove the gloss. Don't worry, the clear will then protect and bring the paint out and make it sparkle. As you said already, wash and dry between all sanding. Sorted.

Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/09/22 21:23

SWAGGER wrote:

Excellent write up Spanky. Well done and I have to say, they do look professionally finished.

A little tip though on the clear coat. It can seem odd to sand the paint before clear coat. The natural assumption is that you will ruin the finish by dulling the paint, but the fact is, you have to rub the glossy finish off the paint so that the clear coat can adhere to it properly, otherwise it will eventually chip and just flake away.

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Cheers dude :yes:

I wasn't sure whether to take the chance or not. I had made a few stupid mistakes (setting the wheels on wet lacquer for example) that I didn't fancy making any more work for myself.

If they don't last I will be able to swap the standards back onto the car and give the 17s a quick re-coat of colour and clear

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by SleepMethod - 2010/09/23 13:21

Very interesting piece man :) +KC for you :)

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by gv1.3 - 2010/10/13 04:13

great write up

have a KC :)

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by SWAGGER - 2010/10/13 19:10

How are they holding up Spanky Spankerson? All good ya?

Any pics of them fitted? Bet they look well on the car. :)

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Re:How to do a DIY alloy refurb

Posted by Spanky - 2010/10/13 21:11

SWAGGER wrote:

How are they holding up Spanky Spankerson? All good ya?

Any pics of them fitted? Bet they look well on the car. :)

Not fitted yet. I'm planning to put them on over the winter some time. I still need to get rubber for them and narrower nuts as the standards wont fit.

I might also need spacers for the rear as the offset is ET40 rather than ET45 (standard wheels) but will fit an see.

I will post up a pic when they are done. Might be on for Christmas.

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