

The word patina has sure come up a lot lately! Patina refers to the aging process as a result of natural oxidation. The Webster dictionary says, "it's the sheen on an antique surface produced by use and age". All the rest of us know it as the perfect 356 find.

I've received a couple phone calls lately from guys who have been lucky enough to find one of these old Porsches. Coming across a car that has been stored for a long period of time but is still in good condition is like winning the lottery! Buying the car (often sight unseen) because one of his buddies tells him to. "If you don't buy it.... I will" is the threat.

So, the story begins when the car is picked up and the new proud owner can finally take a good look at what he just bought. In the beginning, one has to ask, "What have I done"? I need another project like a hole in the head! I don't even have garage space to park the car, much less the time to start rebuilding this thing! Rumor has it that restoration costs are out of sight and you have to wait for a year or so just to get your spot in line. Typically it's another year or so before the restoration is complete. Well, at least this solves your worries of garage parking for a while!

After "buyer's remorse" subsides a bit and you really start looking over the car, you can evaluate your purchase with a practical eye. Hopefully the more you look, the more you see and the better the car looks. Rub your eyes, squint a little and the picture of this fuzzy car will look a little clearer. Remember this car has had little or no maintenance for the last 10 or 15 years, maybe it wasn't abused but surely it was neglected. Taking some time to give this car the much-needed TLC it will take to see what beauty lies under the decade of filth, makes a lot of sense. Definitely worth the effort.

This world has a multitude of beautiful Porsches that have been restored to the highest level. I admire all the craftsmen that take the necessary time to restore these old cars to a better than new condition. In some cases, not all old Porsches need to undergo the complete restoration process. Maybe you were one of the lucky ones to find the classic car with low miles and in a garage somewhere that just needs an excellent detail job. Perhaps the owner had forgotten about the car, or the spouse had passed on, or the car belonged to an uncle who wasn't into cars. There seem to be a lot of cars out there with similar stories.

Now that you have your car home, you and your buddies start looking over your new purchase and the consciences is that this car may be a survivor, instead of a candidate for a complete restoration.

A survivor car can be a very fun project. You will basically take the car that you have and detail everything to the best of your ability. Lurking below, under all the years of neglect there might be a very handsome car. The first thing to do is give the car a good bath. Clean the top, the bottom, the fender wells, the motor, and the inside. Just clean everything! This will give you a clear viewpoint on how this car looks. If you use a high-pressure washer in the engine compartment, use caution; don't get water in the motor. Be careful with the sound insulation on the firewall and around the perimeter of the interior body. Make sure that the water doesn't go in the air cleaners or down the carburetors. Another thing to watch out for is, not to let any degreaser over spray on the rear fenders. Use common sense when cleaning the motor compartment and you should be fine. But, if you don't feel comfortable you may want to have your mechanic do this part.

The next thing is to clean the bottom of the car. This includes the motor and the trans, the fender wells, the front suspension, as well as the inside of the tires, wheels and brake drums. This is a dirty job, but very rewarding when the job is done. Don't forget to wear your safety glasses.

The outside of the car is next. Give the car a complete bath. An air compressor is very handy for blowing excess water from nooks and crannies that are hard to towel dry. At this point you'll need to clean and vacuum the inside. You may want to remove the mats and maybe even the seats. Check closely at the floorboards for any water or rust.

Now that the car is clean, you can access the finish of the paint and other trim pieces. You may need to address some mechanical items at this time also. It's always nice to have the car in good running order before you move on with the detail process. With old cars that have been sitting for a while, make sure you check all the brakes and tires, along with the fuel lines and all the wiring. It's always comforting to know that you can stop the car before the thing catches on fire!

If the paint has any life left in it, with some detail work, this will make the biggest improvement of the car. Most of the time the paint needs to be

rubbed out with a rubbing compound, either by hand or by machine. You are going to need some experience with a machine polisher if you plan on buffing out the paint yourself. This is not the car to learn on, either rub the car out by hand or call an experienced detailer to help you out. After the paint is cleaned properly you can start polishing and glazing the paint back to the original luster. The more glaze, the more luster. Follow that with some quality wax. At this time now that the paint has come back to life you can see all the hard work has been worth the effort. With the paint in now in good shape, it's time to polish all bright work. Use a quality metal polish to do this job. Sometimes you can use 0000 steel wool for stubborn chrome pieces. Clean all the rubber seals and then use a detail brush to remove excess wax that remains left over in the cracks. By now the out side of the car should be looking pretty good!

The wheels and tires will need attention also. To do a great job you need to take them off the car, and clean them with a scrub brush and a general purpose cleaner. Do both the inside and outside of the rims and tires. After you dry them off apply a cleaner wax to the rims and hubcaps. While you have the tires off the car check under the fender wells to make sure they're clean. Reinstall the tires and hubcaps.

The interior is next to be cleaned. Remove all trash and vacuum. Most older cars will need the upholstery cleaned. Be careful doing this, older leather some times doesn't respond well to vigorous cleaning. Be gentle. Warm soapy water does wonders, along with some upholstery cleaner. Wax the dashboard and polish all the chrome pieces. You can finish up the interior by cleaning the windows.

You're finally on to the last few things; the trunk needs some attention along with the door jams. When you clean out your trunk make sure you clean around the battery box. It's important to check the air pressure in the spare tire, and what condition it is in. Spend a minute cleaning the spare and other tools in the trunk. After that's done, treat the rubber seals around the trunk and the doors. Now all you have to do is clean up the door jams with some cleaner wax and this project is done!

Now that the survivor car has been completely detailed; with all the patina you could ask for, you should be feeling very happy with the out come of this project. Not only have you restored a car to its original beautiful condition, but also you have created a safe car that you won't be afraid to

drive. Not to mention, you probably made a handsome profit along the way.
All's good.

Wax on, Mark