

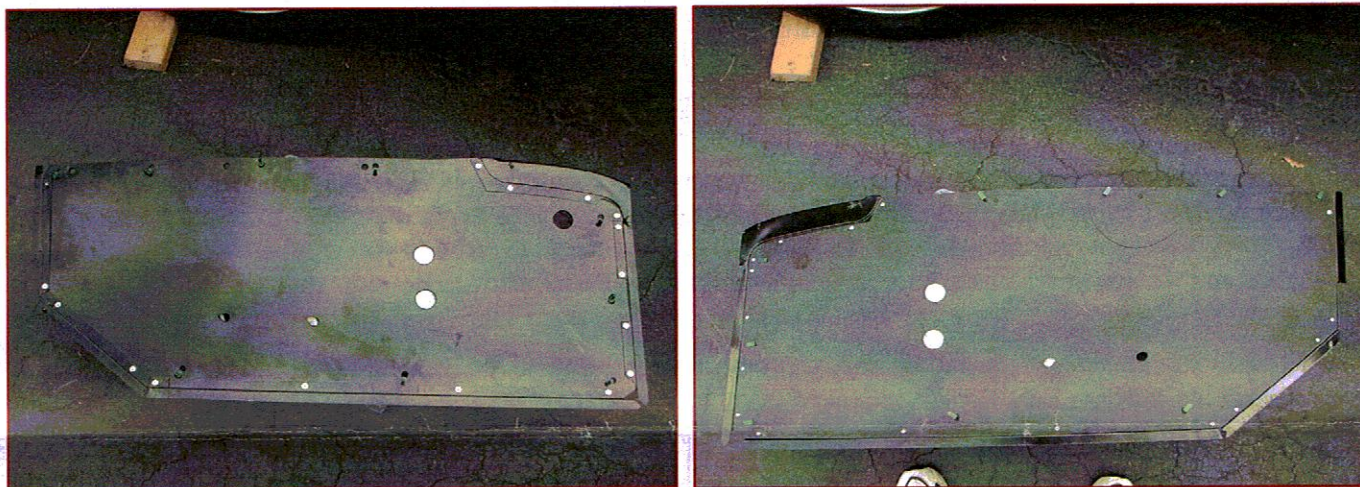
How to Restore your Alpine or Tiger Doors - Part 1 of 4

by Joe Parlanti

Any Tiger restoration will eventually require some attention to the doors themselves. Many times, only the door panels need to be restored as the door mechanisms generally hold up pretty well. However, the seals, rub strips, and sometimes the window winder shaft mounting assembly may need to be replaced. In my case, I'm doing a nut and bolt restoration of the car, so this article will cover the restoration of all door components. Let's get started.

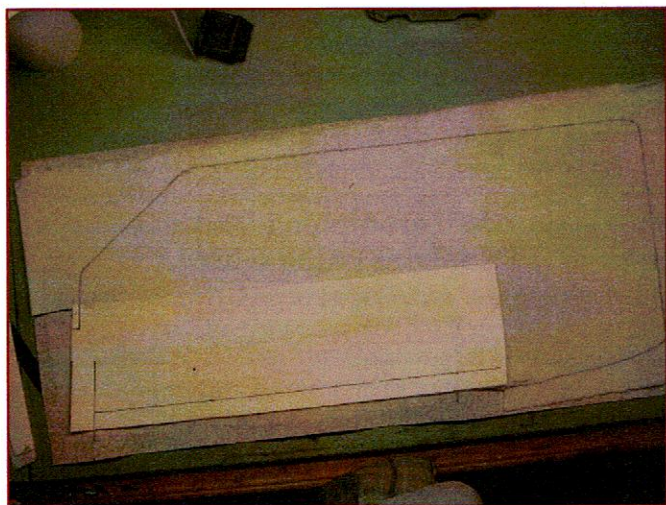
Part 1 - Door Panel Restoration

My car is a Mk1A, which has the pleated style door panels with the vinyl waist roll. The original door panels were a cardboard material which was prone to warping when they became wet. Of course, since our cars never leak, how could this be a problem? As sanity finally checked in, plastic door panels became available. I ordered everything from Rick at Sunbeam Specialties, and as usual, the parts were all top notch. The plastic door panels come pre cut to shape with all of the holes in place. One difference in the GT style panels is that they have a series of sheet metal parts that run around the perimeter of the panel as shown here:



There's really nothing special about these pieces that need a lot of attention. I sandblasted and powder coated them in preparation for installation. The parts are riveted to the panel.

The vinyl cover in the case of the GT has the pebble finish with several horizontal pleats. The material has a foam and cotton like backing which must be trimmed prior to fitment to the door panel. The key here is to make several marks (I use a Sharpie) on the back of the material in order to locate it correctly on the panel. Begin by drawing a line corresponding with the top pleat, followed by the rear vertical pleat. Next draw a horizontal line about 1.25" above the top pleat line to establish the top of the door panel location. The rear of the door panel location is found by marking a line 1.5" to the rear of the vertical line. Now, lay the door panel on the cover and mark all the way around with the pen as shown here:



Double check that everything is where it should be by flipping the panel and cover over, and then fold the top and rear over. If everything looks good, you're all set.

The next step is to trim the padding all the way around to the outside line. You may need to carefully pull it back a bit where the heat formed pleats are. Finally, trim the vinyl itself 1.5" to 2" around the padding. A tip from Tiger Tom is to remove some of the padding at the rear edge of the door panel leaving only the vinyl or the door panel will be too thick to get the door to close properly when all of the rubber seals are in place.

Remember here that we're making a left and right door panel, so be careful when cutting and gluing things together. To glue the vinyl down, liberally apply contact cement to both parts. →