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# How to Restore Automotive Trim and Hardware (Motorbooks Workshop)

*By John Gunnell*



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By John Gunnell

When it comes to restoring classic cars, the devil is often in the details--specifically, the small pieces of decorative trim and hardware. In this book one of the best auto restorers around provides step-by-step instructions for getting those essential details just right. Whether you're looking to replace it, repair it, polish it or re-chrome it, this book tells you how---and photos guide you through each step. Master craftsman Jeff Lilly covers the repair of stainless steel and aluminum trim, decorative strips, fenders, bumpers, hub caps, wheel covers, door and trunk handles, and more. So whether you're restoring your classic car for show or for late-night cruises, this book will help you perfect the finishing touches that make all the difference.



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## **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Whether you're restoring your collector car for show or for the weekly Saturday night cruise, some of the most difficult parts to refurbish are the decorative trim and hardware. *How to Restore Automotive Trim and Hardware* offers step-by-step instructions to restoring the little touches on your classic car that make it unique. Whether you're looking to replace it, repair it, polish it, or re-chrome it, this book covers all your options. Author John Gunnell details the repair of stainless steel and aluminum trim, decorative strips, fenders, bumpers, hubcaps, wheel covers, door and trunk handles, and more. No matter your ride, Gunnell's tips and instruction will ensure your restored beauty looks perfect right down to the knobs on the radio.

About the Author

**John Gunnell** has more than 40 years of experience in the classic car industry. He is a prolific writer, having authored 85 books about cars, trucks, and motorcycles. His titles include *Illustrated Firebird Buyer's Guide*, *Illustrated Chevrolet Buyer's Guide*, *How to Restore Automotive Trim and Hardware*, and many more. He is the former editor and publisher of *Old Cars Weekly*, and continues to contribute to that publication's blog. In January 2010, Gunnell added a classic car restoration and gift shop to his portfolio when he opened Gunner's Great Garage in Manawa, Wisconsin.

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Introduction

This book started out as *How to Restore Metal Auto Trim* by Jeff Lilly. Jeff is a professional restorer in San Antonio, Texas, and his book was a professional-level guide to this topic. It is the standard reference work for anyone who wants to repair bright metal trim on their collector vehicles. The Eastwood Company, which sells the specialty tools and supplies needed to do this work, includes Jeff's book in its kit of buffing aids.

When Jeff said he was not interested in doing a revised and expanded trim restoration book, MBI asked me to try. Truthfully, I thought it would be easy to redo an existing book and update it with color photos. I thought I could just visit a shop that does stainless steel buffing, take a few photos and bingo! But things didn't quite go that way.

Unlike Jeff, I do not pay my bills by restoring cars. I'm a professional writer, and I have 30 years of experience in the old-car hobby. Yes, I have a few vehicles (11) that I tinker with. Yes, I have an Eastwood buffer and supply of rouges that I use occasionally. You might say that I know "just enough to get me in trouble" about buffing. But, I also know lots of restorers. So, I decided to do a different kind of book relying on my car-collecting communications skills and the buffing knowledge of experts I've met over 30 years from all parts of the country.

As I started working on the book with MBI editor Pete Schletty, I found out that MBI wanted me to write about a broader range of skills than covered in Jeff Lilly's classic metal buffing guide. The hobby had changed a bit, and MBI was being asked for information on newer products and about restoring cars with plastic trim. Hobbyists restoring muscle cars wanted to know about chroming plastic parts. Younger restorers

wanted to learn how they could redo the carbon fiber trim on their "new millennium" cars.

I told Peter Schletty that a lot of these restoration skills are not appropriate for home shops, so we made the Appendix much larger to list all the vendors who can help. We also added a photo essay on restoration hardware to the ending chapter of the book to cover this important subject. Hardware suppliers are also listed in the Appendix.

Editor Chris Endres took over the project in midstream to "light a fire under" the lazy author and to guide the book to completion. Chris made the always-challenging wrap-up of a yearlong project simple and easy.

What we wound up with is a great deal of expert advice gathered from professionals throughout the country that was organized for you by a home restorer who knows a bit about communications and compiling books. We hope--in other words--that you'll find good information that's easy to read.

This, of course, is different from the do-it-every-day, hands-on advice that Jeff Lilly packed into How to Restore Auto Trim. And if I were interested in learning how to restore the trim on one of my own cars, trucks, and motorcycles, I would want both of these books on the D-I-Y bookshelf in my home restoration shop.

John Gunnell

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