



**AUTO-AIR
COLORS**

custom automotive paint

*Stuart Foster
Sin City Astra Van*



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This project started as a bog standard Vauxhall Astra Diesel Van. The first job was to thoroughly degrease the van and mark out all the tiny dents and stone chips



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All the dents and stone chips were filled with stopper and sanded back. Two pack primer was then applied to the repaired areas along with a guide coat to ensure perfectly flat finish on final sanding



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The inside of the engine bay was then prepped and given a coat of Base Coat Sealer Dark followed by Deep Black



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The van was then taken to the body shop for the base coat black. This was done with two pack due to the risks of working outside. Otherwise it would have received the same treatment with Base Coat Sealer Dark and Deep Black



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The entire van was then wet flatted with a DA sander using 1200 grit pads. This was then further sanded with 2000 grit to remove any swirls for a perfectly flat surface



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The Portraiture was then started using the new Auto Borne white. This was mixed 50/50 with 4011 Reducer. The portraits were all done freehand with the basic layout sketched in pencil using photo reference



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I tend to work with the brightest brights first and then work backwards, effectively pulling the depth out of the black base



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*I airbrushed the basic shapes of the portraits
and got them all to the same level*



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Where there were dark areas I misted a light haze of white to give a lighter base to work on. This gave a good contrast using opaque black. This would also be exaggerated when picking out the highlights later



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All the airbrushing on the van was done outside on my driveway. I do not have the luxury of my own shop but this goes to prove that you don't need it to still achieve professional looking results



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I painted

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After the initial layout of the portraits I went back in with the same mixture of Auto Borne white and started to sharpen up on the details. This is the first stage of white before Deep Black was added for more contrast



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The portrait of Becky on the tailgate was the only portrait that was painted under artificial light. I had to keep the van in the garage for a while until the rain cleared. You can see greater depth in this one



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Once the portraits were completed they were masked off ready to paint the fire. All the bumper, skirts and mouldings were put on to give the fire complete continuity throughout the vehicle



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The first layer of fire was put with Transparent Fire Red and this was done very loose with minimal stencil work. Despite the large coverage this layer only used 120ml of paint. This was then tinted with Candy Pigment Red. Transparent Fire Red was then applied further



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The next layer was Flame Yellow which was applied over the layers of Transparent Fire Red. This was still loose but freehand stencils were used to give structure



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*The Flame Yellow was tinted back with Transparent Orange.
Flame Yellow was then applied for a second layer*



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The whole flame structure was tinted using Transparent Sun Gold. Here you can see the process half way through



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*I then picked out the brightest parts of the fire with a mix
of Flame Yellow and Brite White*



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*This was then tinted again using Transparent Sun Gold.
I used Gem Sapphire to add vapours from the fire*



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Once the van was finished it had its second trip to the body shop where it was given five coats of lacquer. This was then flat and polished using the new 3M three stage polishing system