

## SECOND IN A SERIES

# The Dream Team Meets Mercedes

### PART 2:

## STRIPPED AND SANDED

When we last visited BASF's classic Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing (*Winning Spirit* Spring 2008) at Legendary Motorcar in Ontario, Canada, cable television's *Dream Car Garage* team got their first impression of the show-car-to-be. They discovered, following sanding to the bare metal and media blasting, that the frame was steel, while the doors, hood and trim were aluminum – a far-ahead-of-its-time metal for 1957.

Along with the impressive German engineering, says host Peter Klutt, "we also found a couple of surprises. The left front nose and the rear had both been damaged in separate accidents. The damage on the nose was a bit extreme, so we had to replace it." Also slated for replacement were a number of panels under the car, which had fallen victim to rust.

That's not all that needed replacement; the car's back valance was deemed beyond repair as well. The goal for the replacement parts, doors and panels? "We're going to fit them a lot better than they were at the factory."

The restoration of a classic is truly a collaborative process, and Klutt demands top quality from every supplier whose products touch his cars. To restore the original Mercedes chrome, Klutt has called in Paul's Chrome Plating of Evan City, Penn. "They plate hundreds of items," says Klutt. "Trim items to wheels to every knob and dial on the dash."

## DON'T SETTLE WHEN IT COMES TO METAL

With the car stripped, "you want to protect the metal," Klutt notes. Easier said than done, but Klutt and crew follow a well-proven process that involves several steps. As *Dream Car Garage* knows, having a clean, well-prepared metal surface is vital to the final look of the paint.

The first step is cleaning the surface with a Scotch-Brite® pad and Glasurit® 360-4 metal cleaner. Then comes a coat of Glasurit epoxy primer – "this helps protect the bare

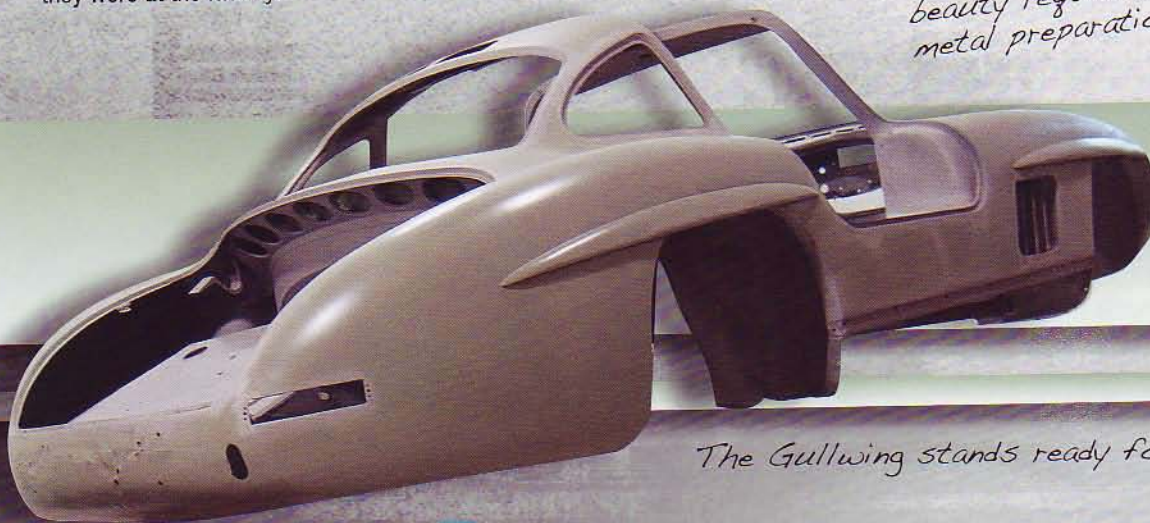
metal," Klutt notes. Next, Klutt chose Glasurit high-build 1006-23 polyester primer filler to even out the surface.

Getting into the curves and angles of the Gullwing is critical at this point. "Low or uneven areas are filled with the primer filler," Klutt says. "Then the body is sanded – first with 80 grit sandpaper, then 120, then 180, then 240 grit. A new coat of primer is sprayed after each sanding."

Why so many steps? "Any time you break through to bare metal when sanding, you want to apply primer again." Whenever the metal is exposed to hand oil or the elements, he explains, "the oil could cause the paint to bubble up in those areas. I've actually seen paint bubble up in the perfect shape of a palm print."



*Restoration of a classic beauty requires top-notch metal preparation.*



*The Gullwing stands ready for its makeover.*