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\*Big Daddy Tribute-**ASTROSLED**...Page 58

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# Flaking Out

By **Bo Bertilsson**

Photography by **Bo Bertilsson**  
and the **Spade Brothers**

**P**reparing an original steel-bodied hot rod for paint is a big job. If it served time as a jalopy racer, as my '32 five-window did, it's going to be an even bigger job. Once I had the old Ford body beat back in shape, I took it to the Spade Brothers' custom paint shop in Huntington Beach, California, and started the sanding process.

After some filling and sanding with coarse sandpaper was done, the first fill-primer was sprayed and things got a little easier. I went over the body several times, starting with coarse 80-grit paper, and worked my way up through 150-grit, 220-grit, and finally 320-grit (using dry paper equaled 400-grit wet paper). If you're planning on shooting metalflake as I was, make sure all the gaps around the doors, trunk, etc., are at a maximum, because the 'flake and all the clearcoats builds up in thickness.

Once we got to 220-grit paper, we weren't making things much straighter, but we still used a guide-coat, which makes it easier to see that everything was sanded. The coupe was sanded once more using 320-grit paper and then given a last fine work-over with Scotch-Brite, which is like 600-grit paper, before it was rolled into the paint booth.

These days, you almost need to be a chemical engineer to understand all of the paint that is used. To simplify matters, we used all the products from one manufacturer, PPG, which makes it easier to avoid mistakes by mixing different brands.

We planned for a dark red or maroon Roth 'flake for the car color, which is not on the regular color chart, so it had to be mixed. "Uncle-Bob" Spina, a Roth 'flake expert, gave us a hand with some test spraying. It's not easy to get the 'flake itself mixed to the right color, so we took the easier way to get it done, using candy on top of silver 'flake. Shaun

Spade then sprayed a black PPG base color, which made it easier to see when the 'flake fully covered all parts of the body. Shaun layed down six layers of the Roth 'flake to get a satisfying final result, and then a few more layers of PPG clear were sprayed to top it off before it was baked in the booth.

After the clear had been given a couple of days to harden, it was wet-



**The ex-jalopy  
coupe gets  
a glittering  
Roth 'flake job**

sanded to smooth it out. It was then time for the final color—the red PPG candy—and more layers of clear. The result was stunning, and better than I could have imagined. It looks like something you would hang on your Christmas tree. All the hard work is starting to pay off; I can't wait to get it all assembled and on the road. Stay tuned. **Rec**





1

To ensure the rear body reveals that run along the decklid were as straight as we could get them, we made a sanding block from All-Metal that fit the shape perfectly. A little piece of fine-grit sandpaper was then used in it to sand the reveals on the car.



2

The body was pretty straight at this point, but Ryan Spade sprayed a light guidecoat before the 150-/220-grit sandpaper block sanding began. It was much easier to sand and see what we were doing with the thin coat of color on top of the primer.



3

We used a guidecoat powder instead of paint for the final block sanding with 320-grit because most of the sanding was done at this point and we wanted to avoid getting too heavy of a guidecoat. The powder wipes on, leaving a very thin coat that shows minor imperfections and sanding scratches.



4

A PPG black base color was shot on the body before the silver Roth 'flake' was applied as a base for the candy. The black base made it easier to see when the 'flake completely covered the body.



## ► Flaking Out



5

Once the black base was dry, it was starting to get exciting as Shaun started mixing the silver Roth 'flake in the PPG clear. Shaun mixed two parts of the finer 'flake and one part of the bigger 'flake in the clear to get a better covering faster.



6

Shaun sprayed the first layer of the Roth 'flake on the body with a big 2.2mm tip in the gun and the clear/'flake mix unreduced. All the parts should be sprayed at the same time to keep the layers and color the same. We masked off some areas (like inside the grille shell) to avoid too thick of a buildup that might prevent pieces like the grille insert from fitting.



7

The body started to look impressive with the glittering Roth 'flake after three or four layers, but we could still see some black between the 'flakes upon closer inspection. That called for more layers.

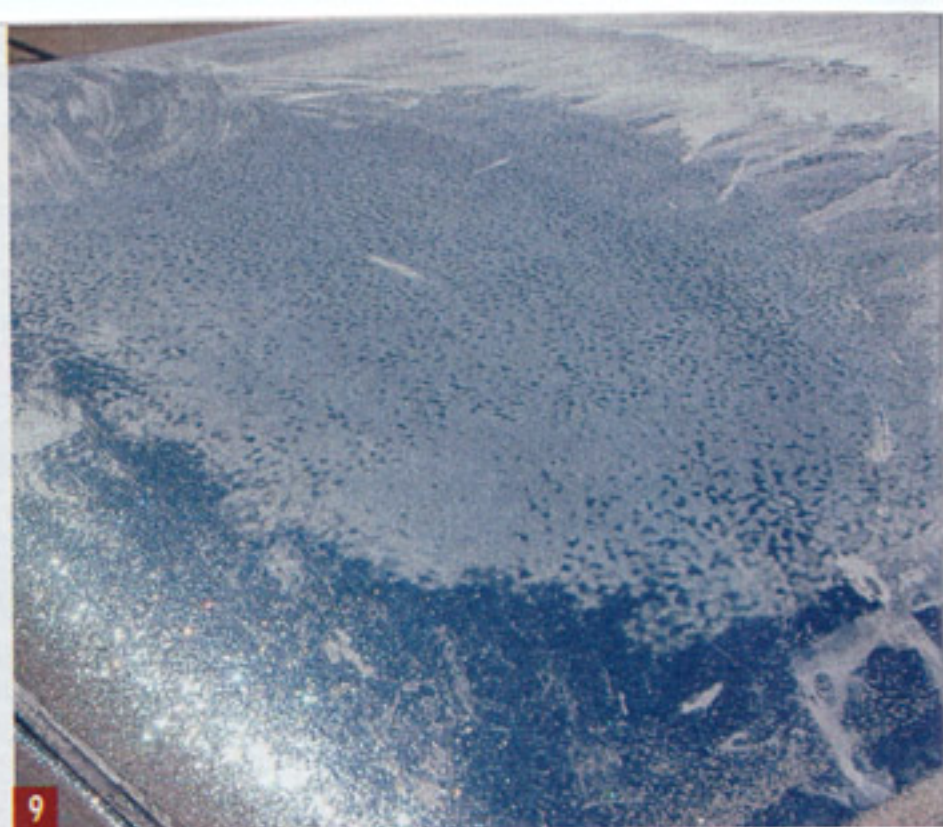


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8

Once the body was completely covered in 'flake and topped with several clearcoats, it was time to start sanding it to get things smooth again. We started wet sanding with 400-grit and worked our way to 600-grit.



9

Here you can see the "craters" that had to be sanded smooth. During this process, the hands will feel a lot more than the eye can see. It's a few days of work just to sand the clearcoat smooth before the next step can be taken. At this point, it's important to take your time to ensure that you don't sand through the clearcoat on the body edges.



10

We can't stress it enough that it's important to paint the pieces at the same time and spray each piece with the same number of coats for the best possible outcome. Shaun is spraying the first topcoat layer of red-concentrated PPG candy.



11

It was a very long process to get to the final coat of paint, but all that was nearly forgotten once we saw the result. Our friends at Spade Brothers did a great job!

### Sources

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