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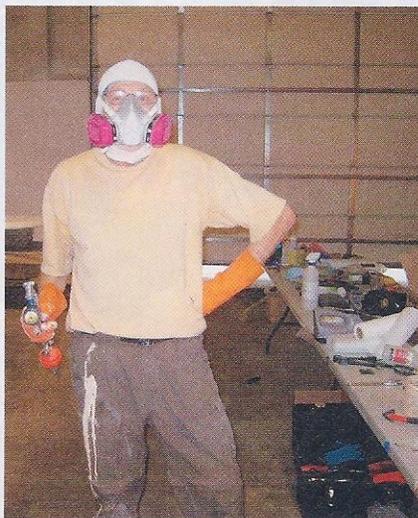
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IMPROVING THE VIEW



on the cab door of the motorhome that I extended rearward in a slight curve to divide the top two colors.

The top is 2006 Porsche Carmon Red Metallic, a rich burgundy color, to replicate the Porsche I sold to buy the motorhome (the Porsche is a fabulous car and great fun, but I couldn't sleep in it). Dark paint (especially red) is more expensive and requires more coats, but adds drama. The middle is 2010 Acura Tuscan Beige Metallic and the bottom is Honda Odyssey Mocha Metallic, both of which I discovered while cruising new-car lots. Color chips are fine, but I needed to see the color on a vehicle before I made my final selection.

STEP SIX: FINALLY PAINTING

Showtime. I used a two-step automotive paint, applied in multiple thin coats to cover uniformly before applying two clear coats to make it shiny. This takes skill, and I was fortunate to have a friend with auto-painting experience apply the final coats. It was helpful to have two of us — he sprayed and I managed the air hose and mixed the paint. The paint is precisely mixed with a reducer to provide good flow through the spray gun. The clear coat is mixed with a hardener before being applied.

It is important to apply the color coats and the clear coats in a timed sequence for proper adhesion and a smooth, shiny finish. You don't have time to stop for lunch once you start the final coats. The motorhome is too big to paint all at once as you would a car so we divided the process into sections: hood, cab doors, RV top, front, sides and rear. Each section was masked

in sequence to isolate it for painting. It was thrilling to see the color on the Winnebago after weeks of preparation.

After applying the color and clear coats, we added a flourish with an airbrush to break up the big panels of color and create a unifying element in the paint scheme. Like the dividing line between the top colors, the flourish began with a crease in the cab doors and flowed rearward, like ribbons blowing in the wind.

The project took 10 weeks and cost about \$3,000 for materials, including paint, masking tape, masking paper, sandpaper and the use of the painting equipment. The biggest portion of this was for the paint.

To complement the new paint scheme, I replaced the soft vinyl spare tire cover with a hard cover painted to match the View (\$220), and installed a Mercedes-Benz grille and logos, to show off the Sprinter van's original German heritage (\$700). For the final touch I added a custom-color Girard electric awning (\$2,200).

Exterior makeover complete, my inner architect was now at peace. I was ready to hit the road and enjoy the fruits of my efforts. The public response to my unique motorhome has been very positive, encouraging me toward my next project: interior magic, coming soon. ♦



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