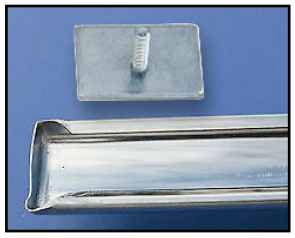
Tech Talk

INSTALLING SIDE TRIM

By Ian Bowman

Installing side trim can be a daunting task, especially on a fresh painted car. There's a lot of pressure for it to be as nice as possible, and there's a (sometimes) VERY expensive paint job at risk with mis-installation. For the guy who's never taken on such a task, it can even go as far as to be perceived as too much to handle.

Fortunately, we're here to walk you through, step by step, to show you installing some exterior trim, utilizing some of the pre-made trim clip kits commonly found on the market. Our test subject, happens to be a brand-new 1955 2-door sedan, being built for a customer at Woody's Hot Rodz. Opting for a simpler trim, but still wanting some "pop," the owner selected a 210 trim level. The basics carry over for any 1955 210 or Bel Air but will specifically show the 210 belt line mouldings.



….and the belt line mouldings are where we'll start. These thin mouldings sit underneath the window, at what is called the "belt line" of the car, and originally used a push-in style clip. New clip sets use a much nicer, much easier bolt-through style clip that slides into the moulding itself, DAN-1024.

What you'll typically find is there's far more variance in these belt mouldings than there is in the clips themselves that'll many times inhibit proper install. Rather than force the clip in and damage the moulding, or leave clips out where they should be, a few simple passes with a sanding tool of your choice will shave enough off for proper install.

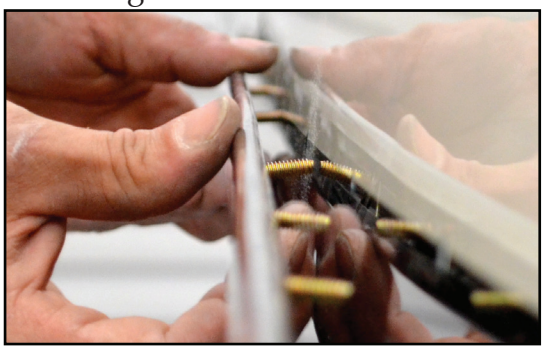
With the clip massaged to proper width, it'll fit in the moulding as it is meant to. This may not be required with all but will be dependent upon the moulding itself.

After sliding your clips into the moulding, hold it up to the car to figure out orientation. Simply move them around until the clip holes, as well as the moulding to the body, are properly aligned.

With everything aligned to your liking, go ahead and insert the moulding, and tighten from the inside using the nuts supplied in the kit.

With the belt line installed, we'll move along to the quarter spear. This moulding uses a "Spring-style" clip, the longer arm under spring-like tension to hold the clip in place in the moulding itself. For these mouldings, we use the DAN-284 clip set.

Similar to the belt line, you'll slide your spring clips into place along the length of the moulding and align the moulding to the car.

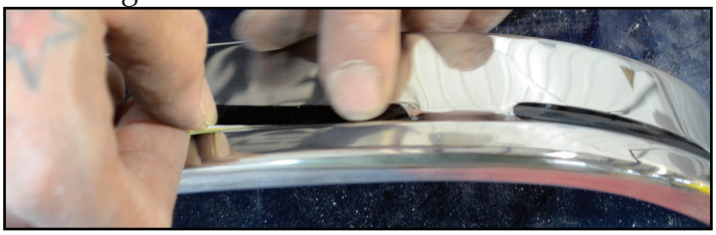


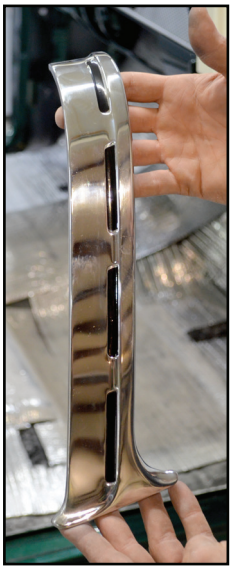
Clips in, moulding goes on!

The door opening is a perfect point of reference. Obviously, you don't want to leave this gap too wide, or the quarter moulding loses continuity to the door point or be so far over the edge it makes contact with the door. Once it is where you like it, attach the mounting screws from the inside , both in the access panel area if the quarter window, and on the inside of the quarter panel as you go back.

With our quarter moulding in place, we can now do the upper paint divider. As a bonus, we'll install the decals (DAN-17399) as well. Brian here prefers a paint pre-prep spray to make sure it is free of dirt, oil from your skin, or anything that'd keep them from properly adhering.

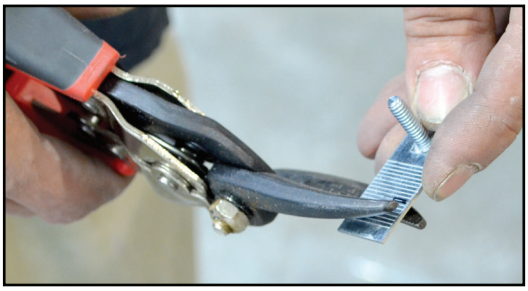
Start by peeling up a small section towards the end of the sticker. Apply the exposed part to the paint divider, line it up to your liking, and pull the backing off while applying the rest (much like the dash trim article in this issue as well). This will help keep it in place and keep bubbling/ bunching to a minimum.





With our stickers on, we're ready for the clips.

DAN-283 covers the paint divider clips. These clips are, however, a substitute for original style clips and some modification is required. Simple as holding them up to the paint divider and marking them with a sharpie. The channel will hold the clip but be sure not to cut it too short.

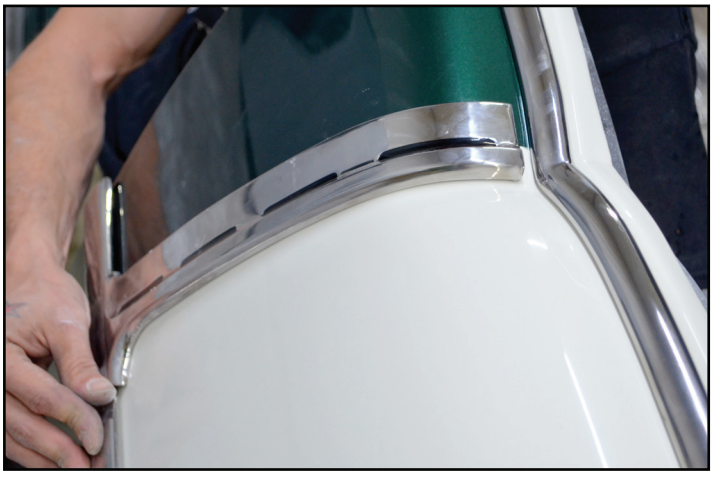


The clips aren't *ridiculously* tough by any means. A set of tin snips will be sufficient to cut them, as shown, but your favorite cutting tool can be used.

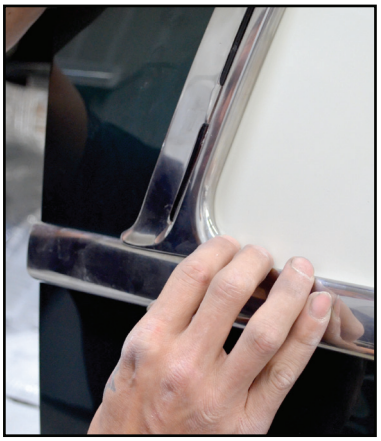
A side by side shows roughly how much will be cut off.

With all your clips cut, insert them into the channel on the divider.

As with the other mouldings, move your trim clips to correspond with the holes, then go ahead and set the upper paint divider on the body. Don't bolt it down just yet.



There will be some adjustment in how the paint divider can sit on the car. Line it up with the quarter spear, and make sure it is even up top, then go ahead and cinch it down.

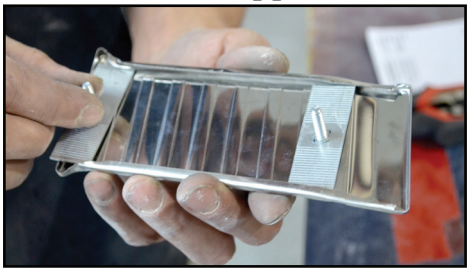


Run into some variance? Simply split the difference between the two, and it'll be less noticeable, or adjust the quarter spear as well. A lot of work, yes, but proper moulding alignment can make a break a high-level car.

All buttoned up!

Let's move on to the back.

When using the popular two-tone including the roof and the quarters, a lower, or rear, paint divider (DAN-152) is a must. The same clips we used for the uppers, can be used at the rear



in place of a spring-style clip, just at full length, and wind up easier to work with overall.

The lower paint divider has contours built into both ends, so fitment *should* be pretty straight forward. However, again, some alignment may be required of any and all pieces in order to fit as nice as you'd like it to. Splitting the difference can be taken into account here just the same. The studs for the clips are easily accessed on the backside of the quarter panel.

No more paint line, the lower paint divider breaks it all up perfectly.

…and since this car will wind up with an LS3 as the build progresses, the decision was made to add the factory V8 emblems under the taillights for additional flair. With careful measurement, taping, and drilling, these emblems can even be added after the fact to a done car. ATF