

Sheehan Speaks

by Michael Sheehan

The \$15K Side Marker Lights

Dear Mr. Sheehan: I am contemplating having the following bodywork done to the 365 Boxer that I bought at the Christie's Auction on June 17, 2000 (S/N 18745, reported August 2000 SCM, page 65, sold at \$56,400.—ED.) and would like your advice as I consider the following modifications.

To the front bonnet: Remove DOT side marker lights (holes were drilled previously) and replace with production markers, repair holes and refinish entire bonnet in same yellow color; refinish center louvers to correct silver color; paint and install correct 365 front valance (it now has a 512 valance).

Rear bonnet: Remove DOT side marker lights as above (including refinishing of entire bonnet), relocate Ferrari script from side to top of bonnet, remove prancing horse emblem from fuel filler cap and refinish, remove extra two rows of outside louvers (by fabricating new pieces and welding into place), refinish center louver from black to body color, correctly mount and refinish carburetor cov-

ers (mounting rivets are currently visible), refinish small matte black louvers behind carb covers, and refinish lower rear valance.

A body shop has provided the following cost estimates (with \$55/hr. labor rates):

Front bonnet, \$5,000 (excluding the cost of the front valance piece). Rear bonnet, \$11,100.

Another estimate, for refinishing the middle section of the car (door, roof, etc.) in the same original color totals approximately \$8,700.

The total for the repairs and respray, in the current color, is \$24,800.

I have been operating under the premise that I could repaint the entire car in a different color for around \$15,000. Therefore, these estimates seem high to me, but I confess to "bodywork ignorance." Your thoughts?—**Steve Biagini, Westmont, IL**



Steve, I had a chance to look at your car at the Christie's Auction, and despite the few modifications to the bodywork, thought it seemed extremely honest—and I also thought you got a great buy. Now you've brought it home, and, like all collector car owners, are determined to spend some money on it. It's a kind of "ritual of personalization,"—we all do it, and can't seem to help ourselves. You don't like the side marker lights, the extra rear louvers, or the extra prancing horse. So... you have two options.

First, just keep it as it is, drive it and enjoy it, and spend nothing. Rationalize that the side marker lights are required to meet US DOT standards, the extra louvers probably helped dissipate underhood heat, and with the extra horsie emblem on the gas tank cap, every gas station attendant will be able to figure out what kind of car you have.

If you can't live with the side marker lights, extra louvers and emblem, things will get expensive in a hurry. In theory you can fill in the side marker lights and spot paint the areas, but there are no "break points" on the large flat

panels of a 365 BB to blend the paint. Consequently, you will end up painting the complete nose and tail. Matching the colors will be difficult, at best, so realistically, you will end up painting the complete car—just to get rid of some side marker lights.

As part of a respray/repair/reundercoating, the front and rear bonnets will have to come off, be disassembled and then refitted. That labor is factored into the paint jobs.

Aside from the paintwork, the labor to make the flush-mounted butt-welded pieces to fill in the front marker light holes and then metal finish them to (almost) no-filler-required standards should be one day's labor or about \$500, perhaps even a bit less. Labor for the side lights on the rear deck will be about the same, \$500, as will the fabrication labor to remove the extra louvers.

You haven't mentioned why you are considering changing the color of your car. It's striking in yellow, and really, does the world need another red Boxer? Nonetheless, my estimate to strip and paint the entire car with a color change, including color sand and buff, and respraying the black areas, would be about 225 hours. At \$55 per hour, that's about \$12,500. Then add \$2,500 for materials. So, \$15,000 plus the \$1,500 in side marker/louver repair above, for \$16,500. Of course, this assumes that when you strip the car, you find virgin, untouched sheets of extraordinarily straight metal that show no signs of previous impact. We can all dream, can't we?

I would not color change a car without stripping it first. However, if you choose not to chemically strip the car, you save about 50 hours,

ending up at 175 hours, or \$9,500. Add another \$2,000 for materials, plus \$1,500 in side-marker repairs, and you are at \$13,000.

If you don't change colors, you don't necessarily have to re-paint the door jambs, inner striker panels, etc., so you can subtract another 20 hours or \$1,100 from the estimate, bringing the total to \$11,900.

So let's sum this up.

Choice 1, do nothing:	Cost, zero.
Choice 2, respray entire car and change color:	Cost, \$16,500.
Choice 3, respray car, change color without stripping:	Cost, \$13,000.
Choice 4, respray car without color change:	Cost, \$11,900.

So, to me, the \$24,800 you were quoted seems high. I would suggest getting another quote, or at least another opinion. In your part of the country, I've had good luck with Motion Products (Neenah, Wisconsin). Contact Wayne Obry at 920/725-4688.

On the financial side, a "best-in-the-world" 365 Boxer is a \$100,000 car, while a beater normally sells for around \$60,000. Since you bought your car so reasonably, you could spend another \$20,000 and not be under water.

However, my advice is the same to anyone who has just gotten a used Ferrari. Drive it for a couple of months. See how you feel about it—let the car have a chance to talk with you. You may find out that the things that bother you right now become insignificant after you've had the car around for awhile. If not, you can always start writing checks and join the rest of us as we put the children of restoration shop owners through college. ♦