

# Replace a Headliner

TMI PRODUCTS OFFERS **CUSTOM HEADLINERS** IN MOST POPULAR COLORS Text and Photography by Jim Smart



**P**roject Reclaim from Mustangs Plus and The Restomod Shop has been progressing quietly for the past few months on its way to completion this fall. The engine and transmission have been installed. Soon to come are windows and the interior. Right now, we're going to show you how to install a headliner using Reclaim as an example.

For years, we have been limited to the Mustang's original moonskin headliner along with factory colors. However, TMI Products has changed all that with colors and materials that will make your Mustang as distinctive as your individual desires. TMI Products now offers a simulated leather material (vinyl) designed to add richness to a classic Mustang interior. For Project Reclaim, we've



**1** Richard Bramlett from The Restomod Shop lays our TMI headliner in the sun to get it warm and pliable, making it easy to stretch. Richard has performed many headliner replacements, so he knows a headliner needs to be flexible for easy installation.



**2** Quiet Ride Solutions installed sound deadening in Reclaim, which will make a tremendous difference in ride quiet. It's affordable and very effective.



**3** Headliner bow location is very important. Ford had its own color-coding system for headliner bows. Although Richard has come up with his own color coding system based on the way these bows came out, here's what you can expect to find from an original car. Colors may vary from generation to generation and plant to plant: Front: natural or purple (shortest bow); second bow: green (next longest bow); third bow: pink (next longest bow); fourth bow (hardtop only, longest bow): natural or plain.



**4** Before installation, Richard suggests carefully cutting the headliner sheaths just enough to allow flexibility at the sides. Don't cut too much.



**5** These tension wires can be found attached at the roof rail and aft bow in fastbacks and hardtops. They keep the headliner stiff once all connections are made. Make sure you have both. Without them, it's impossible to achieve proper tension.



**6** Ron Bramlett of Mustangs Plus helps Richard clear the first hurdle of headliner installation, which begins at the rear with the first bow. Some prefer to begin in front. However, if you're going to have problems, it's better if they're in the rear. Each bow location yields at least two pairs of attachment holes to give you flexibility because no two headliner kits are alike.



**7** Ron and Richard move to the second bow to establish dimension and fit. Again, Ford gives you at least two choices on bow positioning. Install the bow and check headliner positioning and stretch. Too much slack? Try a different hole combination.



**8** Headliner installation continues toward the front. The objective here is to establish proper fit before anchoring the headliner at each end.



**9** Once fore and aft positioning is established, Ron and Richard pull the headliner to the sides to check for stretch. Sides will be temporarily anchored with wind lace before moving on.



**12** Sides are anchored with small pieces of wind lace before being sprayed with 3M Trim Adhesive.



**10** In back, the headliner is pulled tightly to establish stretch and fit. These are all temporary steps to ensure proper fitment.



**11** The headliner is again pulled to the sides, as well as fore and aft, to get it centered.



**13** Windshield and backlite locations are temporarily anchored with wind lace. Stretch is checked all around. There should be no wrinkles.

decided to go with a cool Graphite Gray to match the rest of the interior. Custom Sports Seats from TMI Products will follow.

Headliner installation requires patience and perseverance. However, you can do it in your home garage using scissors, a razor knife, heat gun or hair dryer, 3M Trim Adhesive, and roughly six feet of wind lace. Headliner installation mandates windshield and rear window removal, so count on purchasing new windshield and backlite gaskets along with the appropriate flexible sealer.



**14** Richard sprays contact surfaces with Trim Adhesive, making sure not to get it on visible painted surfaces. Most trim adhesives will damage paint. 3M Trim Adhesive is sprayed on both surfaces—paint and headliner—and allowed to tack off (semi dry, sticky). Then, the headliner is secured and retained with wind lace.



**15** Headliner is pulled tight so there are no wrinkles. Do not overdo it because headliners can tear. Wind lace is installed to secure the headliner. Leave the wind lace in place for 24 hours.



**16** Our headliner has been pulled tight and is free of wrinkles. If there are wrinkles, carefully use a heat gun or hair dryer at the wrinkles. They will vanish right before your eyes. Never get the heat gun or hair dryer too close.



**17** Headliner is glued and secured in front, making sure all wrinkles are gone.



**19** Headliner is completely secured front and rear. There are a few minor wrinkles to be ironed out with a heat gun or hair dryer.



**18** Richard carefully cuts the headliner to create smooth, flexible corners when securing the headliner.



**20** Richard does a test fit with windshield pillar instruments. Watch for this installation in a future issue.

## Sources

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**21** Headliner installation is complete. The small pieces of wind lace need to remain in place until the windshield and backlite are installed.