

www.fournierenterprises.com) can be modified to work very well. It is a little easier to use and may be easier on your arms if you have a lot of work to do. The tip must be ground down so that it is not so sharp, otherwise it will damage the panel. A tip I picked up from Wray Schelin: During metal-finishing, use a large magic marker ("Magnum" size) to ink the whole repair area before filing. This really makes the low spots stand out, just like using a guide coat for sanding primer. For more about metal-finishing from a different perspective, please see the "Jag Lovers" articles written by Wray Schelin, also on my links page. "The Key to Metal-Bumping," by Frank Sargent, is another good resource booklet.

USING THE DISC: Once you have the metal smooth but high, start running the disc over the surface, back and forth, while moving sideways slightly after each pass - basically a zig-zag pattern, much like what you would use when conditioning a panel with a sander. For most applications, a 6" x 6" area of coverage is a good starting point. Small high spots will turn blue. Stop immediately and use a wet rag to quench and cool the metal. *Do not rush* - there's no hurry! I keep a rag in the bottom of a bucket with about an inch of water in it so it doesn't splash much when I drop the rag in after use. The smoother the panel is, the longer you can run the disc without turning any part of the panel blue. It is not necessary to use the disc until the metal turns blue in order to shrink; use it just long enough so that it steams when you quench it with a wet rag. This will take practice to gain the experience of knowing when to stop. Run your hand over the metal both up and down and back and forth to feel the surface while it is still wet. You will be able to tell where the high spots are, and use the disc for a shorter period of time to shrink specific areas. The disc will mark the metal and show the low spots as unmarked. Don't hesitate to go back to some of the previous steps of on-dolly stretching or using the bullseye pick to raise low spots. You may find it necessary to bump up some low spots, or even go back to some off-dolly work. This is part of the process. Once you have done an operation, never assume that that can't be the problem. Always let the panel dictate what needs to be done. Most severe damage will require multiple passes of the shrinking disc interspersed with quenching, hammer-and-dolly work, and/or the bullseye pick. Once you have the panel nice and smooth, you can spray a guide coat on it, or use the Magnum marker, then sand with an appropriate sanding block with 80-grit to help show small discrepancies. At this stage, you can use a worn-out Scotch-Brite pad on a 7" Velcro backing pad fitted to your sander, just as you would the shrinking disc, then quench, to simultaneously polish the surface and shrink a little more as well.

One non-traditional use of the disc is as a shaping tool. I regularly use the disc to correct over-stretched areas caused by being a little careless with an english wheel or planishing hammer, to the point that I worry less about my metal-shaping techniques, because areas of over-stretch are easy to shrink. I no longer consider them mistakes, just part of the process. You can also do a lot of nice metal work with just a shotbag, mallet, slapper, post dolly, and a shrinking disc. Some people like to be very judicious with a file while metal-finishing, others use it more liberally. Some people don't like the bullseye pick and opt for pure hammer-and-dolly work. Use any combination of these techniques that works for you. I use them all.

CONTACT INFO: I can be contacted at my current email address: ghiafab@coastaccess.com or through my web site: www.ghiaspecialties.com. Please check the "MY LATEST WORK" link on my web site for updates on the uses of the shrinking and shaping disc, as well as information in the other albums.