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Shop Talk, Bob Price

Protect All

It's hard to believe the label on a can of Protect All. "Protect All Does It All!" it says. It cleans. It polishes. It waxes. You can use it on *any* part of any motor vehicle. Yeah, sure. And I have some swamp land in Florida you might be interested in, too. But this time, the manufacturer really is telling the truth. I might keep my swampland. It could be close to Disney World.

Rather than beat around the bush, I decided to give Protect All the acid test first. In my driveway, there is a 1980 Kawasaki KZ440 that has been parked, uncovered and unwashed, for years. It has taken the brunt of California sun and L.A. smog. It is not a pretty sight.

After I followed the instructions for spraying the Protect All, then wiping with one cloth and following with another, the blue paint exhibited the showroom shine the little Kawasaki hadn't seen in nearly a decade. It looked as if I'd spent a lot of time with a fine paste wax, but in truth it only took about a minute. The fuel tank had that slippery feel of paste wax, too, and when I sprayed the bike with a hose the water beaded up and ran off. I could also detect a lemon scent, similar to Pledge® furniture polish by Johnson Wax.

I knew that a lot of people use Pledge as a motorcycle polish, so I decided to do a comparison test. After all, Pledge is a lot cheaper and more readily available. But after checking the two labels, I noticed that motorcycles aren't mentioned anywhere on the can of Pledge. I don't like to use the wrong tool for a job, and after I talked to Johnson Wax, it's obvious they don't like the idea either. "Pledge is a furniture polish designed for indoor use on wood," they said. Johnson Wax would take no responsibility at this time for nondirected use as a motorcycle cleaner.

But in all fairness to those who swear by it, I gave Pledge a try anyway. As a cleaner and polish for motor vehicles, the Pledge finish came up well short of Protect All. Although water would bead up at first on the Pledge-treated bike, after a few rinsings the effect was noticeably lessened. Also, Pledge left a residue on the metal parts that seemed to attract dust. Of course, attracting dust is what Pledge is *supposed* to do, but in your dust cloth. Your furniture does not have to contend with road salt, rain and kamikaze insects zeroing in on the finish at 60 mph. By comparison the Protect All has anti-static ingredients that seem to repel dust, and the paste wax appearance lasts for weeks. Dirt and bugs don't stick as tenaciously to a Protect All-treated bike, so a quick rinse and wipe will restore that like-new shine. Actually, the best part about this comparison test was that I could take the leftover Pledge home for use on my piano.

Beside the body panels, Protect All also works well on textured plastic, rubber parts and chrome. Because Protect All makes everything it touches slippery, in the interest of safety I would keep it off tire tread. But other than that, you don't have to worry about overspray like you do with other cleaners and polishes.

The only drawback to Protect All is its expense. A six-ounce aerosol can costs \$6, a 13.5-ounce aerosol can is \$8 and a one-gallon container with pump will set you back 40 bucks. To help conserve our supply, I don't usually don't use it on bodywork. Fairings, fuel tanks and side panels can be paste waxed easily if you take your time applying it. But have you ever tried to get paste wax out of the creases in textured plastic? One session digging out carnuba

residue with the point of a toothpick and you will use Protect All on all matte-finished surfaces from that moment on.

Protect All is available from motorcycle dealers, or you can order it direct from Champion Choice, P.O. Box 5968, Orange, California 92613; (800) 322-4491 or (714) 635-4491 in California.