PPG Pointers – Bridging

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In the past we have been reproducing from MEN. newspaper, articles by Jon Whitby, the Product Development Manager of PPG Australia.

PPG Australia is the new name for ICI which marketed its paint under the Dulux name. The company name has changed, but the usefulness of Jon Whitby's tips remains the same. Here is the third in this interesting series- Ed.

Bridging is a defect that usually occurs on masking lines or over small gaps in panels. It happens when the paint film 'bridges' from the panel to the masking tape or the next panel and the paint film cracks or lifts away from the substrate. Sometimes this defect can be seen over panel joins where seam sealer has been used.

The usual causes of this defect is insufficient sanding around the joins. Insufficient cleaning or silicone contamination near the joins, a heavy build up of paint in these areas during application, or poor masking technique.

Bridging may not be visible until the masking tape is removed. As the tape is removed the paint film tears across the bridge, leaving a jagged mask line. This can be minimised by pulling the masking tape at right angles to the masking line when removing the tape. Fine plastic masking tape usually gives a superior result to conventional tape and is easier to bend and work with when masking fine styling lines.

To prevent bridging, detail sand the panels right to the edge of the masking line. Thoroughly clean the panels before sanding with detergent and water, then a solvent wipe. After sanding, give the panel another light solvent wipe.

When applying the paint, take care to avoid heavy edges building up near the edges of the panels or masking, by spraying light coats of paint, ensuring the paint is mixed correctly and leaving the appropriate flash times between coats.

If bridging has occurred the edge should be detail sanded and repainted, spraying light coats of paint, using the recommended mix ratios and flash times and a good masking technique.