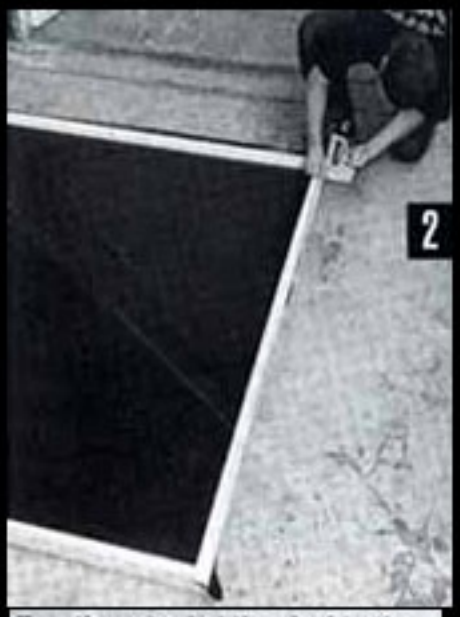
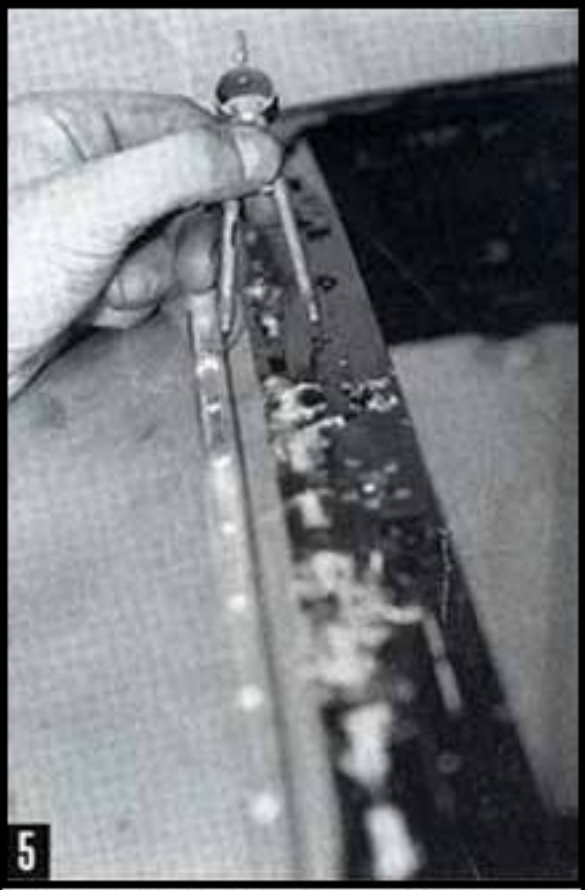
First thing first, we inventoried everything. Troy then measured out the main vinyl piece, since Juliano's suggests tacking it to a framework for the smoothest install. He fabricated a 2x2 framework from lumber-store pine trim. Although Juliano's suggests making the frame about an inch smaller than the material, we opted to make it 2 inches smaller. That way we had plenty of excess vinyl to stretch. There's no fancy joinery here; he just butt-nailed everything.



Troy then stapled the vinyl to the frame he fabricated earlier. Note: when stapling the vinyl to the frame, be sure to start with the finished side up. All this will make sense later on.

Troy eliminated most of the wood in the coupe earlier on and replaced it with steel tubing, so we had nothing to tack the vinyl barrier to. He had the forethought to fabricate the framework well away from the original tack strip, though, so we ripped some 3/4-square pine in half and screwed it to the roof from the underside. To ensure permanence, though, we used Liquid Nails-brand construction adhesive to bond the wood to the roof steel.

While the adhesive dried we marked and drilled our aluminum extrusion in 2-inch increments. Words of wisdom: keep the extrusions taped together and drill them in a bundle of three. It saves mucho time and effort. Juliano's advises using a drill press, and after we took the time with a hand drill, so do we, but we got good results nonetheless. Juliano's extrudes the aluminum with a narrow groove that centers the drill. Slick!

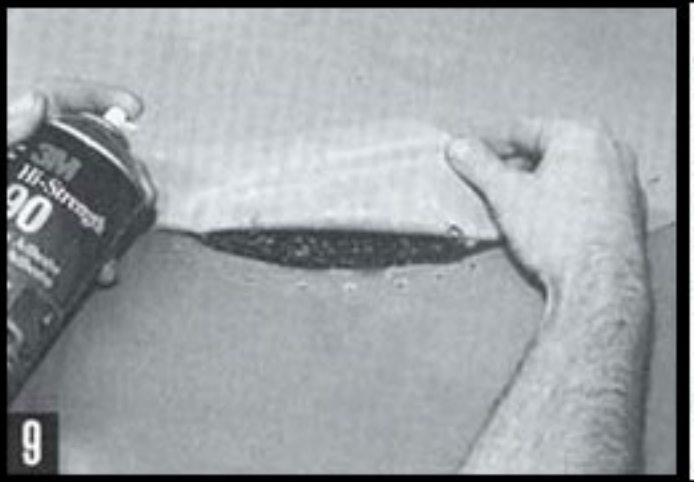


With the extrusions finished we drilled a starter hole in the roof and riveted the extrusion to it. For consistency's sake we used a compass to mark how far away we would route the trim from the roof opening.

We then drilled and riveted the extrusion to the body as we routed it around our path. As we negotiated curves we found that the extrusion wanted to lift from the body, so we finessed it back into place with light rubber mallet blows. The extrusion can make rather tight corners, but bend it too sharply and it'll kink. We drilled and riveted every inch around each corner to maintain radius.

Once we routed and riveted the extrusion around our top's perimeter, we drilled the straight sections every inch. We didn't rivet them, however, since we had to drill each and every rivet out anyway to remove the trim for the next step.

We let our tack strips' adhesive dry overnight before we stapled the fortified vinyl barrier sheet to them. This barrier gives our top an additional boundary against downpours and car washes, but more importantly it prevents the vinyl top from ballooning from air pressure since the barrier stretches very little. Troy stretched the sheet tightly and stapled it in place at each corner's center. He then worked his way away around the top.



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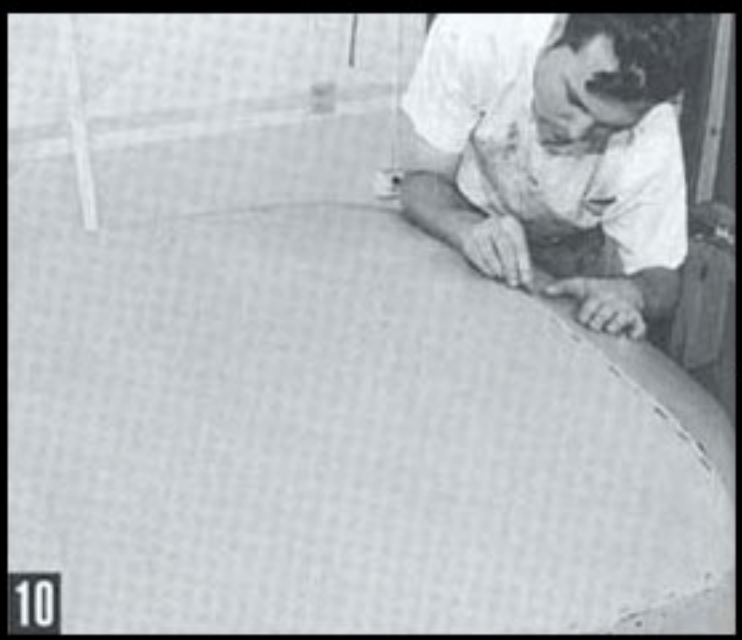
Even though Troy foresaw the need for wood tack strips earlier on, he had no way to install them at the corners. After stapling the top on the sides he hit the corners with more 3M Hi-Strength 90, let the surfaces tack, then stretched and bonded them together.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With the corners bonded Troy trimmed the barrier sheet about 1/2 inch outside the staples.


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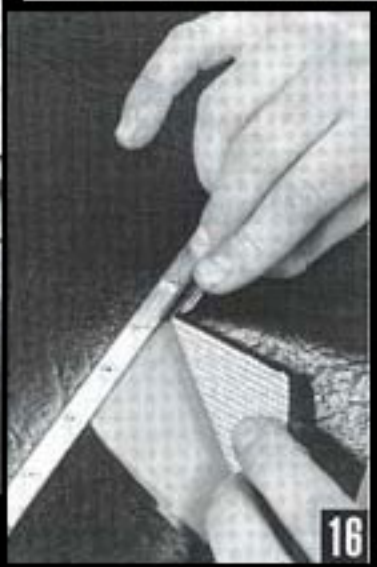
Troy then sprayed both the barrier sheet and the supplied 1/2-inch foam, let them tack, and then mated the two. We pulled the foam rather taut to avoid wrinkles.


Troy reinstalled the aluminum extrusion with the foam in place, but this time he didn't fasten the rivets. He used the extrusion as a guide and trimmed away with a razor blade.


Remember the frame we fabricated in the first step? Well, here's where it makes sense. The frame's weight and structure consistently pulls the vinyl tight over the foam. This step might be best executed under sunlight so the vinyl stretches and conforms to the roof and yields a tighter finished surface, but ours came out just fine.


Troy then located each hole with a scribe and popped a rivet in as he worked his way around the top. The finished product relies on how tight the rivets fasten to the body, so press the extrusion as tightly against the body as possible.





Troy then trimmed the vinyl away, once again using the extrusion as a guide. Once finished, he pressed the vinyl cover over the extrusion, thereby hiding and sealing the rivets. This step shows all the details, so remember, the more effort, the better the results.