

Faux Heathkit Paints

by

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There are three definite "schools" where the subject of repainting equipment is concerned. The first are those that use whatever paint, no matter what the color, to paint the equipment. The second are those who truly restore (or at least try to truly restore) and use "exact" matched paints to the original. Then, there are those who try to find "off the shelf" paints that most closely match the original, but who don't want to pay the "price" for the "exact" matched paints.

Now, if you fit into either of the first two categories, please turn the page and start reading another article. If you fit into the third category, then read on!

I had in my attic a Hallicrafters S-40A that belonged to someone who fits the first "school". It is a bright, medium blue, except for the control labels that were "masked" off with some type of tape. Frankly, it is hideous!

Included in the second "school" are those amateurs like Howard Mills (Collins "A" Line restorer) who uses as closely matched paints to the original as possible.

Now, for the third group!

Over the years, I have acquired a lot of "boat anchor" equipment, and a lot of it had cabinets that were not in the best of condition. A good percentage of this equipment was / is of the Heathkit persuasion. The oldest Heath item that I now have is a "toss up" between an AR-3 and a DX-35 and the newest are the SB-Line "twins". In between are the old "twins" (Apache, Mohawk, SB-10, Warrior), SB-110A, and Seneca, as well as the "gray line" equipment like the DX-20, and DX-100.

As I have indicated before, I am a firm believer in the principles of the conservation of my finances and energy ("cheap and lazy"). Thus, trips to the home improvement centers, paint stores, and even Wal Mart have produced "off the shelf" paints that just happen to look pretty good on my Heathkit equipment.

I have a number of different pieces of the "SB" Line equipment. Of these there are 5 different cabinet colors (6 if you include the wattmeters). Obviously Heath was much like the Atwater Kent Company back in the 1920s and early 1930s, they used whatever paint that just happened to be in the paint gun at the time. These cabinets range in color from an almost dark green (somewhat like the Apache) to a very light green. Thus, I could almost use any color green paint and match at least one of cabinets.

Believe it or not, Wal Mart has probably the best selection of spray paints around these days. It is better than Lowe's or Home Depot (the two local home-improvement centers in this part of the Dallas, Texas, area) and much better than any of the paint stores (including Sherwin Williams and others). Well, a trip to one of the local Wal Mart(s) produced a can of Krylon Light Sage Gloss (#2018) that just happened to match the two cases that were identical. Thus, it was used to repaint all of the cabinets that were in need of paint. If you can find the Light Sage Satin, I would use it because the gloss is just a bit too glossy. I had to overspray with Crystal Clear Krylon to "tone down" the paint. This paint is on the lighter side of the Heath paints, but not the lightest. However, it definitely was within the range of paints that Heath originally used on the cabinets. Unfortunately, it seems that Sherwin-Williams, the owner of Krylon, has apparently dropped this color from the line. However, you may be able to find it in a store that doesn't have much of a "turn over" in their spray paint colors.

Now, my SB-600 speakers needed their grills repainted. Looking at the various front panels of the SB-Line equipment I saw at least three different shades of green! Well, Krylon Sage Satin (#3512) just happened to almost perfectly match one of the three shades of the green used on the front panels of my Heath SB-Line equipment (there are 4 if you include the wattmeters. Of course, I used the Sage Satin to repaint the grills. There is another, "off the shelf" paint that matches another of the panel colors and that is ColorPlace (Walmart) #21032 Evergreen.

There also seems to be a slight deviation in the "Apache Green" paints used on the Seneca, Apache, Mohawk, SB-10, Warrior, etc. However, it is much closer in color than any of the other equipment that I have seen. However, if you want a paint that is fairly close and looks fine, then there are two possible choices. The first is the same Krylon Sage Satin and the other is a private brand from Wal Mart (Color Place Rust Control Evergreen #21032). The Sage Satin is a shade on the light side and the Evergreen is a shade on the dark side. I prefer the look of the Sage Satin, but you might just like the Evergreen.

For the older Heath gray, I like to use Krylon Smoke Gray Gloss (#1608). It is a "tad" lighter than some of the older units, but looks pretty good.

The title of the article tells it all. Faux means "fake", and that is just what the paints outlined above are. They definitely are not "original". But, unless you put an original paint job next to the "faux" one, most people can't tell the difference. So, if you want to actually restore your equipment, then, by all means, get the "exact" matching paints the formulas of which are referenced in the article entitled "Boat Anchor Paints" that is also available on this website.