

MIRROR

THIS MONTH, THE BANANA COPS A SET OF VK MIRRORS TO UPDATE ITS LOOK A LITTLE, AND WE SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT

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The first-generation Commodores are surely some of the best-looking Australian classic cars ever made, and as the model range evolved from the first VB through to the VK and VL models, Holden continued to make changes that made the cars better looking with each model update.

One of the many myriad of changes that were made in the VK was the design and shape of the door mirrors, which changed from the slightly awkward external-mechanism design to a more compact internal-mechanism design, which not only looks better, but is much easier to operate as well.

So, without further ado, here is a guide to replacing your VB-VH-model mirrors with a set from a VK. *SC*





STEP 1

The stuff you'll need for the job includes a set of VK mirrors (obviously), along with a Phillips-head screwdriver, window-winder remover tool, a Dremel (or file if you don't have a Dremel) and a door-belt removing tool (or a strong piece of wire). I also had my Holden factory service manual on hand, which shows you how to disassemble pretty much everything in the car – one very handy book to have. I suggest you pick one up if you have the means.

STEP 2

First things first, you need to remove the door trim. I haven't shown this step, as we've done this a fair few times in the past. It is a simple case of popping off the handle surround, unscrewing the armrest and removing the winder with the clip-removing tool. You will need that tool, as it is near-on impossible to do without it. With that done, remove the rubber cover on the adjusting lever on the old mirror.

STEP 3

That will leave it exposed, looking like this. Those clips are holding it onto the shaft. Lever them off (I ended up breaking them off) with a flat-head screwdriver. This will allow you to remove the knob, which will leave the shaft looking like this.

STEP 4

Now lever off the old plastic interior cover, which will expose the screws securing the mirror head. With the screws exposed, use a Phillips-head screwdriver to remove them, which will allow the mirror head to be separated from the car.

STEP 5

Remove the mirror head from the door, which will leave the hole in the plastic cover surround.

STEP 6

Here are the two mirrors side by side so you can see the distinct differences. Aside from the fact that the VK mirror is new, and clearly much glossier and shinier than the faded, old original, it is also a much more attractive design. The VB mirror has the head and neck as separate pieces, with the whole head moving when you adjust the mirror. The VK item is one piece, and only the glass moves when you make adjustments. It is obviously a much neater, more modern design. It is just better.

STEP 7

The next step requires you to remove the metal belt strip from the top edge of the door skin. While the manual suggests that you need a special tool to remove this, you can use strong wire – like a coathanger – to remove it. Try grabbing it and pulling it up gently with the window down.

STEP 8

Pull the plastic cover surround towards the centre of the door. It will be stiff, but some manipulation will get it off, leaving the painted steel behind it visible.

STEP 9

Initial test-fitting showed that the hole through which the original shaft came through was too small for the VK items, so it needed to be enlarged.

STEP 10

The hole was enlarged using a Dremel rotary tool fitted with a cylindrical grinding stone. It took some time and a few test fits to get the desired result, so make sure you keep checking. You don't want to take too much metal out. As the old saying goes, you can always take more out, but you can't put some back in (not without great difficulty anyway!).

STEP 11

With the hole large enough, it is a simple matter of fitting the VK mirror from where the VB one came off. It simply screwed into the factory holes, just like it was meant to be there!

STEP 12

The last piece of the puzzle is the VK interior trim to replace the old VB one. It has three plastic mounting clips that slide into factory-drilled holes. One of the 'prongs' fouls on a mounting screw in the VB, though, so I ground it off with the Dremel and used the two remaining clips to secure the piece. Now replace the door trim and exterior door belt to complete the picture. I didn't do this, as they are being replaced, which you will see in a later issue.

STEP 13

Here is the finished result, inside and out. It's not too bad at all, and it makes a nice change from the original ones. As a plus, they are easier to adjust, and the new plastic is nice and shiny compared to the dull, chalky finish of the oldies. All in all, it's a very worthwhile swap, and pretty easy, too!