



Area51 Project: "Stealth 503"

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When pushing the limits of man and machine, accidents are bound to happen. I've have had many close calls myself and have succeeded in turning every ATV and Skidoo I've owned upside down at least once! This has been the fate of many a snowmobiler who's desire to push the limits is often confronted with an unexpected surprise. One of the Sled Sooley crew met a similar fate a couple seasons ago, not once, but twice!

For a little bit of background, Mr. Burton was the first member of the Sled Sooley Crew to experiment with a "drop". This first drop was a laughably slow speed decent from the roof of the old potato cellar, a total drop of about 8 feet onto a hard flat landing.

Having successfully survived this feat of bravery and excitement, Mr. Burton wasn't quite so lucky while doing donuts on a small gully later that season. As the track unexpectedly hooked a rut, the machine tossed the rider both landing hard on their sides. The rider landed with a thump and the machine landed with a resounding crack making a lampoon of the previous Summer's Yellow paint job.

His luck remained much the same later that same season as we were travelling across the bottom side of Cochrane pond at speed in the dark. We met with a series of large snow drifts and Mr. Burton quickly learned that speed does not get you out of trouble as the machine bobs up and like a wild Bronco on each drift! On the last drift, the machine took flight shaking itself free of its rider, rolled many times finally stopping upside down a short distance later. Once Mr Burton realised that he was indeed not blind (that his helmet was just packed with snow), an inspection of the still running upside down sled revealed little damage short of a very broken bonnet.

This rough riding season lead to the post season transformation of the "Yellow Banana Scandic" to project "Stealth 503".

Fortunately this particular year and model ski-doo featured a fibreglass hood, which is fixable with the right tools, materials and knowledge. First, the all the damaged areas were sanded down inside and out to bare fibreglass and the cracks cleaned out to promote good adhesion of the new chopped mat and resin. I prefer to use chopped mat and resin rather than fibreglass filler as it adheres better and closely matches the original product. The right side bore the brunt of the impact and there was a rather large hole in the bonnet. The outside of this area was covered in tinfoil and masking tape to create a mould for the repair. Pieces of chopped mat were cut to fill the gaps of missing bonnet with a total of 4 layers which approximately matched the thickness of the surrounding area.

The affected area was soaked with resin from the inside, and the new pieces soaked and pressed in place eliminating air bubbles as we went. One final layer of chopped mat was cut to cover and overlap the entire area inside for additional support. The resin was applied with a stickle paint brush which was also used to dab out any lingering air bubbles. Other smaller cracks were simply filled with resin from the outside and a layer of chopped mat and resin applied to overlap the damaged area from the inside.

Once the resin had fully cured, the outside mould was removed to reveal a successful filling of the hood. The rough edges were taken down with a coarse file in preparation for the next step. Since the hinges had also come loose in the accidents, we reattached them using pop rivets that we counter sunk from the outside of the hood.

Next the repaired areas were coated in a thin coat of spot putty filler to level and blend to the surrounding areas. The filler was first knocked down with a grater and finished by block sanding to a nice even finished surface. Then the entire hood was prepped with 600 grit sand paper, thoroughly cleaned, and sprayed with three coats of grey high fill primer, lightly block sanding for dust and imperfections between coats.

Once the primer had cured, the colour coats were applied. The colour chosen was a metallic black which was applied in 5 light coats. After curing, 5 light coats of clear were applied to build a shine as well as provide protection from the elements and environment.

The rest of the machine also took a fair amount of abuse and had been painted

yellow to match the previous theme. The entire tunnel, front suspension and rear rack were repainted jet black to keep with the new stealth theme. The sled was reassembled and finished with a simple thick silver and thin red pinstripe that ended in a simple flame at the rear of the tunnel.

This once battered hood was successfully resurrected and looked better than ever. This repaired provided the owner another few years of service until he recently upgraded to a REV platform machine. For more pictures, please visit www.shed-headz.com and check the Area51 page.

Cheers, Mike