

WORKSHOP Big Stuff

Being able to strip components yourself will make a huge difference to a restoration or repair job. Blasting parts will give you an idea of their overall condition. This saves time and money over slower stripping methods or having to go to a specialist.

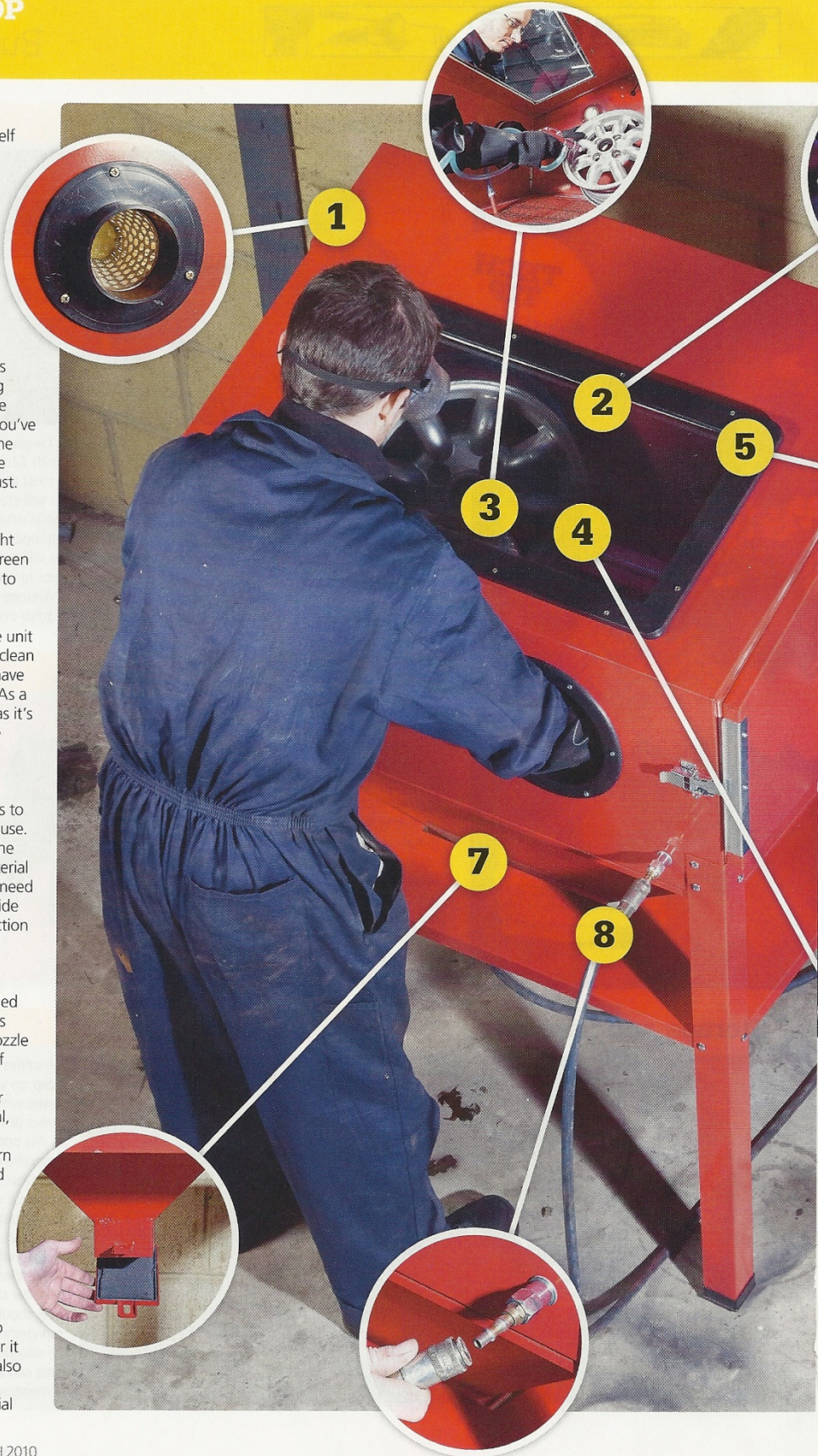
1 Extraction port
Blasting components is going to create dust. Having somewhere that dust can be filtered out will mean that you've always got a clear view of the workpiece. Without this, the cabinet will soon fill with dust.

2 Internal light
Relying on ambient light shining through the clear screen isn't the most effective way to use a blast cabinet. Even a low-level light, such as that provided by the LEDs on the unit pictured here, will help you clean awkward parts that might have lots of nooks and crannies. As a rule of thumb, and as long as it's not shining in your eyes, the more light the better.

3 Internals
The blasting gun needs to be comfortable and easy to use. A pickup tube attached to the gun enables spent blast material to be reused. The gauntlets need to be heavy enough to provide the necessary level of protection for your hands.

4 Nozzles
These should be supplied in various different sizes. This enables you to match the nozzle to the material being used. If you're using coarse material, you'll need a larger-diameter nozzle. The finer the material, the smaller the nozzle. If something's proving stubborn to remove, don't be tempted to force fine material through at a higher pressure – go to something more coarse.

5 Viewing screen
This should be large enough for you to be able to gain a clear view of whatever it is you're working on. You'll also want it to be made out of toughened glass. Any material



BLASTING CABINET

Make your restoration easier by being able to take components back to bare metal at home.

WORDS BY JAMES PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEZ HUGHES

Model shown for demo purposes: Sealey SB973 blasting cabinet. RRP £634.44 including VAT. Visit www.sealey.co.uk or call 01284 757500.

6



“Check the overall dimensions to make sure you'll be comfortable standing at the unit”

that's easily marked by the blast material is no good because it'll soon degrade to the level where you haven't got a clear view. The cabinet should come with replaceable screen covers to provide some sort of protection.

6 Dimensions

Whether the unit opens at the side or the top, you'll want it to be able to easily swallow the sort of components you'll be working on. As can be seen on the unit in the picture, a Minilite wheel easily fits in. Check overall dimensions as well, to ensure you'll be comfortable when standing at the cabinet.

7 Waste disposal

Disposing of the debris caused by blasting should be quick and easy – here there's a flap at the bottom of the unit. The shelf below the main cabinet also provides useful extra storage.

8 Air connection

Check what sort of compressor you'll need to use. Cabinets will come with a recommended airflow (15cfm for this one) and air pressure (90psi). Check the inlet size to ensure that you can connect the line properly. **CM**

What to pay

- **Sub-£200:** A bench-mounted unit. Okay for small components.
- **£200-£400:** Free-standing cabinet with airflow rating of around 10cfm.
- **£400-plus:** Large free-standing cabinet with all the features you see here.

