

## "BETTER THAN NEW" BRAKE CYLINDERS FROM WHITE POST RESTORATIONS

**W**HITE POST RESTORATIONS already was well known for first-class restorations of antique, classic and collectable cars when it began to resleeve hydraulic cylinders with brass 16 years ago. "Now about one quarter of our sales are re-sleeving brake cylinders," says White Post's president, Billy Thompson.

"I'm amazed by the sheer numbers that come in," machinist Max Sampson comments. "You don't think there can be that many brake cylinders in the whole world." In his fourth year at the Virginia facility, Sampson is one of the newest members of White Post's 16 person crew, three of which do re-sleeving exclusively. Max enjoys his job. "Brass is easy to work with," he says. "And it's much more cost effective than stainless."

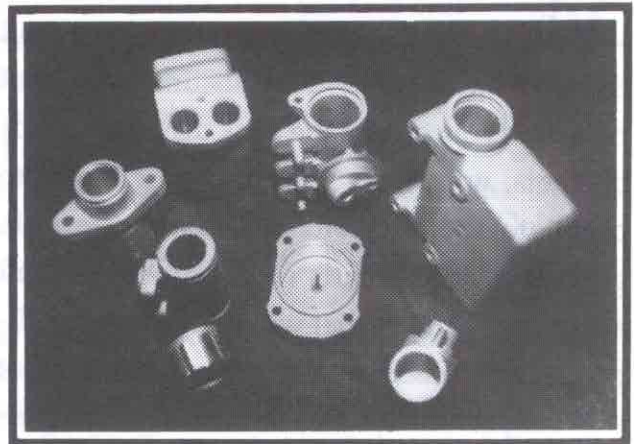
Thompson echoed those sentiments, saying "I think that's true in all cases, but especially when some Rolls-Royce cylinders cost \$2,000.00 or more. Plus, a person may buy a "new" cylinder that's been lying on the shelf for 15 years and has already rusted inside. We say our re-sleeved ones are "better than new" because they never rust. The only things that touch brass sleeves are rubber and fluid, so they never wear out."

White Post's initial foray into cylinder re-sleeving came as a result of not having the proper brake cylinders for a car being restored. Used to fabricating parts when they're not available, White Post's craftsmen bored out the old cylinder and fabricated a replacement brass sleeve, exactly following factory specifications, knowing that the brass would never pit or rust. At the time, it was just another job well done. But shortly thereafter a local farmer contacted Thompson about fixing a far different vehicle, an International Grain Harvester.

### FARM EQUIPMENT SITS IDLE

The machine only was used during harvest time. It sat outside, idle and exposed to the elements, the rest of the year. Predictably, its brake cylinders fell prey to rust within a few years. Thompson figured that what had worked for an antique car also might work on a piece of modern farm equipment. He was right, and the successful solution to the farmer's problem gave Thompson the idea of offering re-sleeving services to the general public. Incidentally, the grain harvester still is in use today.

White Post receives an average of 300 sleeves a week — or over 15,000 a year. The shop promises three day service and pays for return shipping of payment (\$40.00 per sleeve on calipers, wheel cylinders, and pistons; \$50.00 for masters, slave, or clutch cylinders) accompanies the cylinder housings, which are first glassbead cleaned, then bored oversize. The new brass sleeve is pressed in and then returned back to standard



size. Breaking down the re-sleeving work, Thompson estimates that 60 percent is wheel cylinders, 20 percent is masters, calipers are about 15 percent, with pistons being less than five percent.

White Post veteran Al Safranek has seen many changes in the 12 years he's worked on re-sleeving. "The biggest difference is the number of machines we use to keep up with the number of sleeves coming in," he says. "We're always looking for ways to do the job better, and we've made a number of improvements over the years that have enabled us to do more cylinders in the same amount of time." Safranek also is impressed by the amount of cylinders White Post's three machinists process.

### STEADY WORK

"It's amazing to me how steadily they come in," he marvels. "It's never up and down — we're not swamped or out of work. It's just a steady stream. When I started working here, Billy would ask me, "Don't you get bored doing the same thing every day?" Besides the opportunity to work, I face each job as a new challenge. Lots of times we're not sure of the function of the cylinders that we do." Thompson adds: "After thousands of sleeves, you'd figure to have seen it all. But about once a month we'll get in something we haven't seen before."

There's no doubt that brass re-sleeving of cylinders is important to the craftsmen at White Post Restorations. "We've pretty much mastered the techniques to do any that we receive," says Al Safranek. "Some take longer than others, but we have no real problems. The most different pieces are from industrial hydraulic machinery. We had one from a stamping press that put on part numbers. After many years the cylinder leaked fluid, but we fixed it. It came from a man who was already a customer for brake cylinders. I enjoy being able to help other people and I think we provide a good service to the general public."

*Bob Hall of White Post Restorations in Virginia (703) 837-1140, has sent me this article about their sleeving they do which can help owners to save their original parts. Please read it, because you will save money and keep your Corvette more original.*