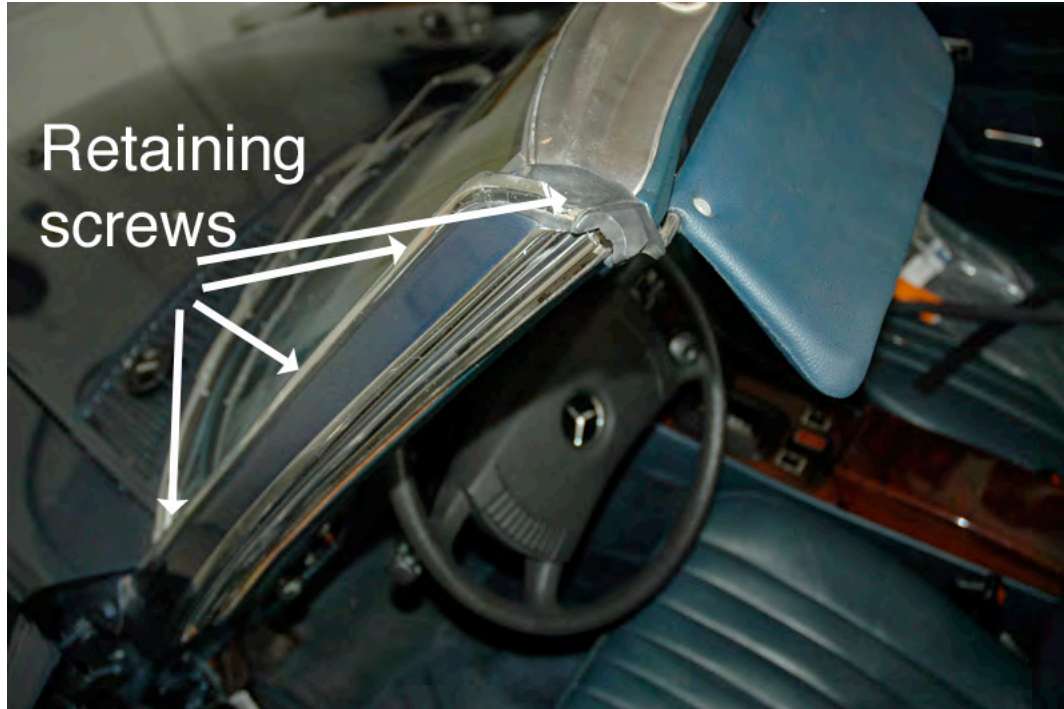


A-Pillar Seal Replacement

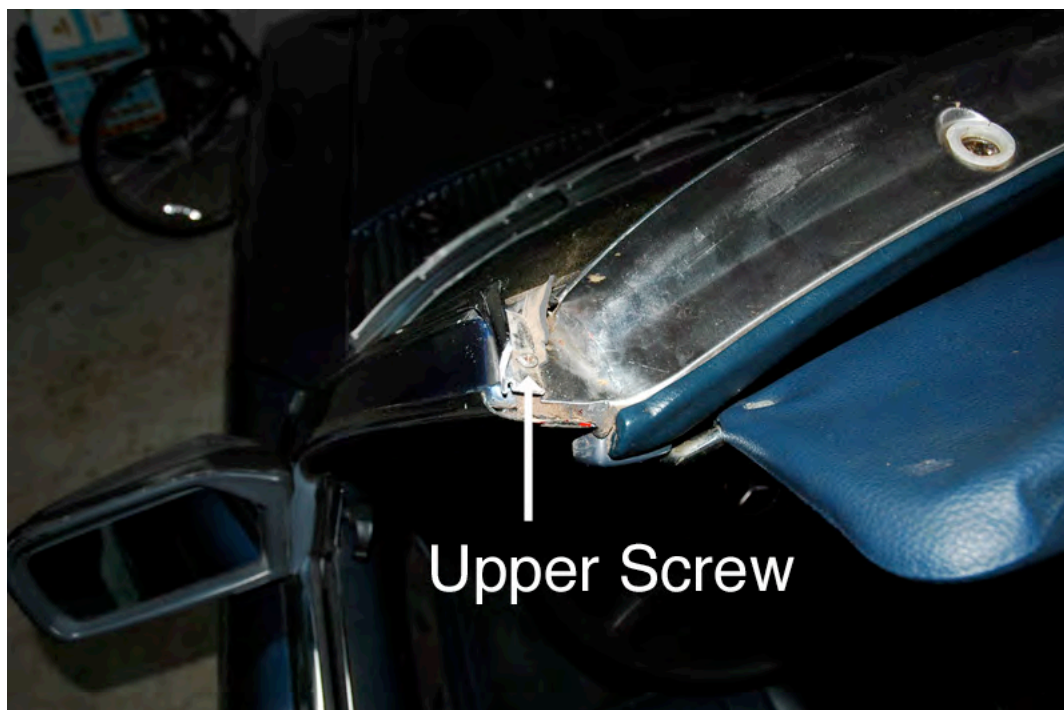
The rearward portion of the “A” pillar seal, against which the window closes, is held in place by grooves in the rubber molding that fit into a channel in the aluminum trim. One simply pulls the old piece out; there may be a “T” shaped nylon retainer at the lower end of the weatherstrip, below the channel. It simply pulls out. There is no need to remove the aluminum channel. Although the weatherstrip is one piece, my old one had long since separated at the top of the pillar.



On the forward side of the pillar, a curved, “L” shaped trim piece is held in place by four screws.



I forcibly tore the uppermost piece of weatherstrip off to reveal the uppermost screw. Once that screw is removed, one may be able to loosen the remaining screws and tilt the trim piece so that it comes off (if you can, this is not necessarily a good thing).



Silly me, I thought that by leaving the screws in place I would be able to slip the front part of the weatherstrip over the trim piece, line up the holes in the rubber and aluminum, and slide the trim back into place, and retighten the screws. Attempting this resulted in 2-1/2 hours of sheer frustration and a very sore back, from bending over the pillar for that time. Below is the aluminum trim piece, followed by the trim positioned in the rubber “pocket” in the front part of the weatherstrip.



The error in this approach is that 1) Despite having OE Mercedes weatherstripping (P/Ns A 107 690 07 97 and A 107 690 08 97), the holes in the rubber did not line up with the holes in the aluminum. 2) The screws were corroded, and the heads were smaller than the holes in the aluminum trim – so that when they were tightened, after much wrestling to keep the rubber slipped over the trim, they pulled through and the trim popped free. I quickly came to realize why folks hate this task.

The answer was to replace the corroded screws (which have the shape of a wood screw) with a new, self-tapping screw with a slightly larger head. I had one un-corroded screw that I used at the top hole in the pillar, but replaced the other three. Old and new screws are below.



I found that what worked best was to 1) Replace the topmost screw first. The fit of the rubber over the aluminum was very tight, and the misalignment of the holes in the rubber and aluminum trim made it impossible to line up; so I punched a new hole in the rubber for this screw, so that I could use the original hole in the pillar. 2) Stretch the rubber down to the lowest hole on the pillar, so that it lines up with the hole in the trim. Because the new screw is just slightly larger than the original, I used a titanium drill bit to slightly enlarge the original hole in the A-pillar. If you can get help, now is the time to use it – four hands would have been much better than two for getting the screws replaced. Do not fully tighten this screw yet. 3) Enlarge the remaining holes in the A-pillar. Use a dull blade, a flat-head screwdriver, or the famous nylon spatula to re-fit the rubber over the aluminum trim, and also to force the rubber into position between the pillar and under the trim. I found it easiest to use a flat screwdriver blade to get the rubber “pocket” over the trim, and the nylon spatula to force the rubber between the pillar and the trim. 4) Put the remaining 2 screws into place, but don’t fully tighten them. 5) Don’t worry about fitting the very thin rubber projection into the tiny groove on the underside of the aluminum trim; once all

the screws are loosely in place, and the weatherstrip is properly positioned, it will line up with the groove. If it doesn't, use the spatula. 6) Tighten all of the screws, being sure the trim is in the rubber pocket of the weatherstrip, and the section between the trim and the pillar is uniform.

Finally, push one side of the weatherstrip on the rearward side of the pillar into the aluminum channel shown in the first photo in this document. I found that a screen spline tool was useful for seating the remaining groove in place (it is also invaluable to seating the weatherstrip on the soft top rear bow, when you replace that). Then, push the nylon "T" retainer into the hole below the rear channel, and you're done.



If I had used the technique outlined above in the first place, the job would have taken only one hour (for one side). Having taken the trim off, and done the rearward part of the seal first, once I decided to entirely replace 3 of the screws, and slightly enlarged the original holes to accommodate them, the job only took 30 minutes – even with only two hands. Four hands would speed the whole thing up.

The last step was to use some silicon seal near the new screws. The heads are slightly rounded and slightly larger than the originals, and left a “bump” and a small opening in the rubber covering them that I wanted to seal.

Thanks to all of you who wrote of your experiences before; I hope this adds to it, and helps.