

BMW Isetta Paint and Color Schemes 1955–1962

I guess you could say I'm somewhat of a "purist" when it comes to older cars, so one of my concerns when I began restoring my Isetta was applying the correct paint color. The previous owner had repainted the car with several cans of spray paint he picked up at his local hardware store, but fortunately I was able to find the original factory paint colors underneath some body pieces he hadn't removed. After a lot of research and letter writing, I eventually confirmed my car's original colors, and had it repainted with a factory *Japan Red* and *Feather White* paint scheme that matched very closely to what the car must have looked like the day it rolled off the Munich assembly line in March of 1957.

In an effort to shed some light on the obscure and confusing lists of original Isetta paint colors, color combinations, and paint schemes, and since a similar article hasn't been published in a while, I've compiled the following information in the hope that it might be useful when you decide on a color for your Isetta restoration, a new paint job, or perhaps just to verify your existing color(s).

The earliest "Bubble Window" (what the factory calls the Standard Model) Isettas were all painted a single color (paint scheme #1), but in December 1955, the "Z" body trim became an option, and two-color paint schemes became available for the first time. The paint line on these early "Z" bodied paint schemes was at the aluminum "Z" belt line that ran along the side of the body, with the door being painted the same color as the upper body color (paint scheme #2).

In early 1957 the factory began transitioning to the new "Sliding Window" (what the factory calls the Export) model. The standard paint scheme for all European and exported versions of the "Sliding Window" Isetta was a single color (paint scheme #3), and was by far the most common Isetta paint format used throughout its production. However, between 1957 and 1962 there were also four optional two-color paint schemes available on the "Sliding Window" or "Export" model.

The first of these two-color paint scheme options was only available between 1957 and 1959, and was used on both European market and exported Isettats (paint scheme #4). This version had an aluminum belt-line trim piece that ran along the side of the body, approximately 60-80 mm below the lower edge of the side windows. This paint scheme is often called the "Wide Cleavage" model because the paint line on the door flows up to, and matches with, the belt-line trim piece, creating the look of a wide cleavage on the door.

The aluminum window trim pieces at the lower edge of the side windows on all “Sliding Window” Isettas built between 1957 and 1959 were 10mm in width.

The second two-color “Sliding Window” paint scheme was only sold in Europe (paint scheme #5) between 1960 and 1962. It looked much like the export version above, but it did not have the aluminum belt-line trim pieces and the paint line on the door followed the door crease exactly up to, and matching with, the lower edge of the side windows. This paint scheme is usually called the “Narrow Cleavage” model. The window trim pieces at the lower edge of the side windows on all “Sliding Window” Isettas built between 1960 and 1962 were 20mm in width and had a small “groove” or channel running down the length of the trim piece.

The third two-color “Sliding Window” paint scheme was also only sold in Europe (paint scheme #6) . The paint line between the upper and lower body colors on this model was located at the lower edge of the side windows, and the front door was painted the same color as the upper body.

The fourth two-color “Sliding Window” paint scheme had the same aluminum belt-line trim pieces as seen on the 57-59 paint scheme #4, but the entire door was painted the same color as the upper body instead of having a cleavage paint pattern on the door (paint scheme #7). The majority of European two-color Isettats were painted with either paint scheme #6 or #7, while the vast majority of American two-color Isettats used paint scheme #4.

All paint applied to BMW Isettats at the factory was a sprayed-on nitrocellulose lacquer that gave a nice shiny finish, but over the years it doesn't seem to hold up to the weather particularly well. In addition, most lacquer paints don't tend to be as tough and chip resistant as enamel paint. Major advancements in automotive paint technology have been made since 1955, and there are many paint finishes available today that are easier to apply, stronger, and longer lasting than any factory Isetta paint job. So, unless you demand an absolutely authentic lacquer paint job, go with the newer paints and clear coat finishes available at your local paint and body shop.

So, what is the “correct” color for your Isetta? That depends on how authentic you want your restoration to be, whether or not you can live with the original color, and your personal color preferences.

Unless you are restoring your car to 100% factory original condition for a museum, painting your Isetta a color you really like is probably more important than painting it an authentic factory color you just tolerate. Bright, vibrant colors are very popular in the States, while the Germans lean more toward the original factory colors. Personally, I don't think the metallic or pearl colors lend themselves well to the Isetta shape and design, but a lot of people do. BMW did produce some pretty mundane colors between 1955 and 1962, so it's not surprising that many restored Isettas end up with a paint job totally different than their factory color(s). Another thing to think about is that if every third Isetta you see is bright red or yellow, perhaps your car would stand out a little more if it was painted a deep factory *Bavarian Blue* or a rich *Birch Green*. The bottom line is, paint your car a color you like, and if it happens to be a factory original color, so much the better.

Researching Isetta colors, combinations, and paint schemes with the BMW factory in Munich, the Standox Paint Company in Germany and England, and the Dupont Corporation was more tedious than I expected, especially since I don't read German very well. Vic Cameron of the Rocky Mountain Isetta Club and Peter Maevers of the German Isetta Club both provided volumes of information for the research as well. What I learned is that there were more than 30 factory colors, and 13 different two-color combinations used on the Isetta between 1955 and the end of its production in 1962. The following paint colors have all been identified as specific to the BMW Isetta, although I'm sure some of the colors were also used on the 600 Model. Whenever possible, the color listings will include the BMW color name and paint code, the year the color was introduced or the year(s) it was available, and the Standox and Dupont color code numbers that can be used to mix the original paint color using today's modern paints. I really tried to obtain some color chips or samples to include with the color code numbers, but it seems that copying each individual color chip from one of the three color chip books the factory still has is very costly and time intensive. If you need a specific color chip perhaps they can accommodate you.

Most of us don't have the time, patience, facilities, or skills to apply a quality paint job, so a paint and body shop may be the only option when it comes time to paint your Isetta. If you decide to repaint your car to look like it just rolled out the factory door, you should be able to come very close to the original color(s) by using the paint codes listed above. A new paint job on your Isetta will be the single most expensive part of your entire restoration, so take your time and pick your color(s) carefully. You should expect to pay \$1000 to \$4000, or more (2001 prices) for your Isetta paint job, depending on the quality of the finished product, how much body work is needed, and how much of the prep work you can do yourself.

BMW factory standards (1955-1962) used molten lead as a filler between the welded body panels, so be sure to use a respirator when sanding the body.

Good luck and Happy Bubbling!

Notes:

- 1) Most of the Dupont colors listed are available in both Delux Enamel (D, H, DH & DM), and Acrylic Enamel (A, & AH).
- 2) Colors marked with an asterisk (*) indicate Isetta colors that were only available on an optional two-tone paint scheme.

Color Name (English): **Azure Blue**
BMW Color Name: Azurblau
BMW Color Code: 549
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1959
Standex Color Code: 56959
Dupont Color Code: 6544D & 6544A

Color Name (English): **Arabian Gold***
BMW Color Name: Araber gold
BMW Color Code: 613
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1960
Standex Color Code: 89181
Dupont Color Code: 44139DH & 44139AH

Color Name (English): **Bavarian Blue**
BMW Color Name: Bayerischblau
BMW Color Code: 524
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955-1957
Standex Color Code: 25556
Dupont Color Code: 78387D & 78387A

Color Name (English): **Birch Green**
BMW Color Name: Birkenguren
BMW Color Code: 640
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 28769
Dupont Color Code: 74844H & 74844AH

Color Name (English): **Ceramic Blue***
BMW Color Name: Keramikblau
BMW Color Code: 755
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958-1959
Standex Color Code: 27059
Dupont Color Code: 5205D & 5205A
Color Name (English): **Cortina Gray**
BMW Color Name: Cortinagrau
BMW Color Code: 717
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1956-1962
Standex Color Code: 08479
Dupont Color Code: 72092D & 72092A

Color Name (English) **Crème**
BMW Color Name: Crème
BMW Color Code: 751
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958-1959
Standex Color Code: 78319
Dupont Color Code: 530D & 530A

Color Name (English): **Ivory**
BMW Color Name: Elfenbein
BMW Color Code: 101
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955-1962
Standex Color Code: 33823
Dupont Color Code: 4775D & 4775A

Color Name (English): **Ivory**
BMW Color Name: Elfenbein
BMW Color Code: 101
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1962
Standex Color Code: 11019
Dupont Color Code: 55769D & 55769A

Color Name (English): **Feather White**
BMW Color Name: Federweiss
BMW Color Code: 549
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958
Standex Color Code: 566619
Dupont Color Code: 7372D & 7372A

Color Name (English): **Greenish Ivory**
BMW Color Name: Elfenbeingrünlich
BMW Color Code: 759
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958-1961
Standex Color Code: 60319
Dupont Color Code: 5363D & 5363A
Color Name (English): **Cornflower Blue***
BMW Color Name: Kornblumenblau
BMW Color Code: 756
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955
Standex Color Code: 27259
Dupont Color Code: 92095D & 92095A

Color Name (English): **Light Beige**
BMW Color Name: Hellbeige
BMW Color Code: 632
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1959
Standex Color Code: 96181
Dupont Color Code: 43938D & 43938A

Color Name (English): **Light Blue**
BMW Color Name: Hellblau
BMW Color Code: 515
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955-1959
Standex Color Code: 12666
Dupont Color Code: 4950D & 4950A

Color Name (English): **Interior Silver**
BMW Color Name: Innen Alusilber
BMW Color Code: N/A
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1960
Standex Color Code: 60375
Dupont Color Code: 71537D & 71537A

Color Name (English): **Interior Light Gray**
BMW Color Name: Innen Hellgrau
BMW Color Code: N/A
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1956
Standex Color Code: 11175
Dupont Color Code: 817D & 817A

Color Name (English): **Japan Red**
BMW Color Name: Japanrot
BMW Color Code: 311
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 22939
Dupont Color Code: 8554DH & 8554AH
Color Name (English): **Coral Red**
BMW Color Name: Korallenrot
BMW Color Code: 319
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1958
Standex Color Code: 23139
Dupont Color Code: 6282H & 6282AH

Color Name (English): **Light Gray**
BMW Color Name: Lichtgrau
BMW Color Code: 555
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 25875
Dupont Color Code: 8796D & 8796 A

Color Name (English): **Pastel Blue**
BMW Color Name: Pastellblau
BMW Color Code: 526
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 61359
Dupont Color Code: 43500D & 43500A

Color Name (English): **Frame & Chassis Gray**
BMW Color Name: Rahmen Chassis Grau
BMW Color Code: N/A
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1956
Standex Color Code: 10975
Dupont Color Code: 55137D & 55137A

Color Name (English): **Reseda Green**
BMW Color Name: Gesedeagrueen
BMW Color Code: 604
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955
Standex Color Code: 12366
Dupont Color Code: 29608DH & 29608AH

Color Name (English): **Sand Beige**
BMW Color Name: Sanduenenbeige
BMW Color Code: 823
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 39923
Dupont Color Code: 4296D & 4296A
Color Name (English): **Sapphire Blue**
BMW Color Name: Saphirblau
BMW Color Code: 516
Yr(s) used/introduced: N/A
Standex Color Code: N/A
Dupont Color Code: 77257D & 77257A

Color Name (English): **Savanna Yellow**
BMW Color Name: Savannagelb
BMW Color Code: 824
Yr(s) used/introduced: N/A
Standex Color Code: N/A
Dupont Color Code: 44162D & 44162A

Color Name (English): **Signal Red**
BMW Color Name: Signalrot
BMW Color Code: 302
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955-1962
Standex Color Code: 91934
Dupont Color Code: 44128DM & 44128AH

Color Name (English): **Spanish Red**
BMW Color Name: Spanishrot
BMW Color Code: 599
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958-1959
Standex Color Code: 78939
Dupont Color Code: 48DH & 48AH

Color Name (English): **Turquoise**
BMW Color Name: Turkis
BMW Color Code: 658
Yr(s) used/introduced: N/A
Standex Color Code: N/A
Dupont Color Code: 5351D & 5351A

Color Name (English): **Light Turquoise**
BMW Color Name: Tuerkishell
BMW Color Code: 596
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1955
Standox Color Code: 15766
Dupont Color Code: 5079D & 5079A
Color Name (English): **Light Turquoise**
BMW Color Name: Tuerkishell
BMW Color Code: 596
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1959-1962
Standox Color Code: 30969
Dupont Color Code: 58360D & 58360A

Color Name (English): **Turquoise White**
BMW Color Name: Tuerkis Weiss
BMW Color Code: 659
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1958
Standox Color Code: 26966
Dupont Color Code: 95605D & 95605A

Color Name (English): **Dark Turquoise***
BMW Color Name: Dunkelturkis
BMW Color Code: 595
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-
Standox Color Code: 31069
Dupont Color Code: 96581D & 96581A

Color Name (English): **Wine Red**
BMW Color Name: Weinrot
BMW Color Code: 305
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standox Color Code: 23039
Dupont Color Code: 51078DH & 51078AH

Color Name (English): **Wine Red**
BMW Color Name: Weinrot
BMW Color Code: 305
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standox Color Code: 90134
Dupont Color Code: 4992DH & 4992AH

Color Name (English): **White Gold**
BMW Color Name: Weissgold
BMW Color Code: 106
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 56719
Dupont Color Code: 59373D & 59373A
Color Name (English): **White Blue***
BMW Color Name: Weissblau
BMW Color Code: 753
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1958-1959
Standex Color Code: 54419
Dupont Color Code: 7414D & 7414A

Color Name (English): **Police Green** (not exported)
BMW Color Name: Polizeigrün
BMW Color Code: 758
Yr(s) used/introduced: 1957-1962
Standex Color Code: 47669
Dupont Color Code: 79039H & 79039AH

As mentioned earlier, two-color Isetta paint schemes became available after December of 1955 and remained a factory option on all Isetta 250/300 models until the end of production in 1962. The following two-color combinations are listed as the optional factory two-tone paint schemes:

Note: Colors marked with an asterisk (*) indicated colors only available as part of an optional two-color paint combination.

Upper Body: **Cortina Gray**
Lower Body: **Wine Red**
Years Available: 1956-1962

Upper Body: **Light Blue**
Lower Body: **Cornflower Blue***
Years Available: 1955-1962

Upper Body: **White Gold**
Lower Body: **Arabian Gold***
Years Available: 1957-1960

Upper Body: **Pastel Blue**
Lower Body: **Bavarian Blue**
Years Available: 1955-1962

Upper Body: **Light Turquoise**
Lower Body: **Dark Turquoise***
Years Available: 1955-1961

Upper Body: **Light Beige**
Lower Body: **White Gold**
Years Available: 1957-1962

Upper Body: **Sand Beige**
Lower Body: **Coral Red**
Years Available: 1957-1962

Upper Body: **Sand Beige**
Lower Body: **Wine Red**
Years Available: 1957-1962

Upper Body: **Feather White**
Lower Body: **Japan Red**
Years Available: 1957-1959

Upper Body: **Light Gray**
Lower Body: **Azure Blue**
Years Available: 1957-1962

Upper Body: **Beige Green**
Lower Body: **Birch Green**
Years Available: 1957-1962

Upper Body: **White Blue***
Lower Body: **Ceramic Blue**
Years Available: 1958

Upper Body: **Seiden Green?**
Lower Body: **Spanish Red**
Years Available: 1958