

THE ORIGINAL AUTOMOTIVE LIFESTYLES MAGAZINE

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BREAKDOWN

PHOTOS & WORDS: CHUCK WALLACE

DETAILING FOR SHOW

Meguiar's shows you the secrets to picking up extra points

Whether you're in the street class or radical custom, you've probably spent countless hours—and dollars—getting your ride just right. And you think it's finally finished and ready to show. Well, almost. It still needs one very important thing before rolling into the show: careful cleaning and detailing with good car care products and the proper tools.

There's an old saying that goes, "The devil is in the details!" Well, thanks to today's car care chemists that's no longer true. Now it's easy for you to keep your whip looking tight for street or show. However, with the plethora of products on the shelves, figuring out exactly what to use can be bewildering. To make that task easier—and get some tips what to do at home and at the show—we visited car care guru Mike Pennington at Meguiar's corporate offices and training center (in Irvine, California).

With more than 100 years of experience, Meguiar's is recognized by consumers and professionals as the world's finest surface and car care products, and is a major sponsor of the 2006 DUB Custom Auto Show Series. The family-owned company even conducts "free" car care clinics for clubs every Saturday at their training center, complete with lunch and goodie bags full of Meguiar's products. Check their online calendar or call them for information on how to book a date for your club.

You can also find a Meguiar's dealer near you online, or get a free personalized Car Care Prescription in seconds that is tailored to your car, your local environment and your goals. Simply go to www.meguiars.com, click "Rx Plus" and follow the directions to get your free prescription.

Mike Pennington puts car care into five basic categories: wash, evaluate and eliminate paint surface defects, polish, protect and maintain. (Detailing for show could be considered a sixth category). For our photos, Jack Dayeh of DAI Motorsports in Laguna Niguel, California, let us borrow his 2001 BMW 325Ci convertible that he busted out at the 2006 DUB Show February 19 in Los Angeles.

You have to start with a clean car. So first, we'll show you the simple steps for washing and cleaning, then some secrets on detailing for show. For further information, great videos and answers to virtually any car care question go to www.meguiars.com or, call (800) 545-3321 and talk with a surface care specialist.

1. This BMW wide-body convertible is good to go and detailed for show.



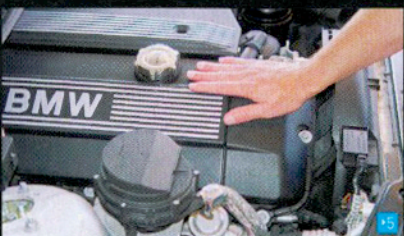
2. First, you must have the proper products to clean, protect and detail your car.



3. You'll also need a good quality wash mitt, a terry cloth towel for wheels and engine components and micro-fiber towels for, drying and waxing your ride.



4. You must also have the proper "tools" and brushes for cleaning, waxing and detailing.



5. Begin under-hood with the engine cleaner, being cautious of electrical components (especially aftermarket lights and audio connectors) and a good stiff-bristle brush where needed.



6. Then apply a good all-purpose engine cleaner, being cautious of electrical components (especially aftermarket lights and audio connectors) and a good stiff-bristle brush where needed.



7. The wheels are next. Either remove the wheels and wash them and the brake components separately, or apply a good all-finish wheel cleaner like Meguiar's foaming Multi-Piece wheel wash.



8. & 9. Use a wheel brush to get into every area of the wheel, including the back surfaces, and rinse with cold water and an adjustable spray gun.



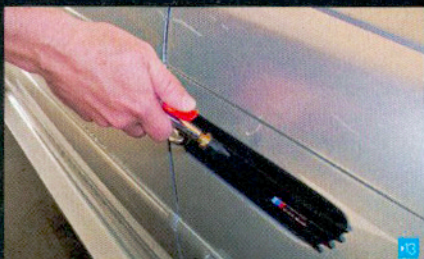
10. Now you should wash the car. Use a good car wash liquid (not dish washing liquid) and fill a bucket with water and plenty of suds.



11. Wash the car with a wash mitt from the top down. (Note: If the car is really dirty, use one bucket for soap and one to rinse the mitt.)



12. Use a soft spray to rinse the car from the top down and a microfiber towel to dry the car, not an old T-shirt.



13. Use an air hose to blow water out of small areas such as vents and grilles.



14. Use a terry towel to dry the wheels and brake components. Don't use this towel to dry the body.



15. Next, we move into the interior. Vacuum and (if needed) clean the floor mats outside the car.



16. Use an all-surface interior cleaner like Meguiar's Quik Interior Detailer Wipes on vinyl, plastic and other surfaces and don't forget the backside of the sun visors. (Use PlastX on clear plastic gauge faces, headlights and taillights.)



17. & 18. Be sure to clean the between A/C vents and little areas around switches with detailing brushes.



19. Use a good vinyl and rubber protectant after cleaning the surfaces.



20. Don't forget to clean the door ends, jams and sill plates with a product like Speed Detailer.



21. Clean the inside of the glass next with a mild cleaner that won't attack aftermarket window tinting. Clean the outside of glass last. Wipe glass horizontally inside and vertically outside to determine on which side of the glass streaks are.



22. Use a good all metal polish and a soft towel to make wheels shine.



23. Natural Shine Vinyl and Rubber protectant is perfect for painted engine parts (and plastic cowl covers).



24. Depending on how shiny you want the tires, use a spray on/wipe off dressing (left), or a spray on/leave on spray.



25. Use an all metal polish on exhaust tips, chrome grilles, headlight bezels and metal trim parts.

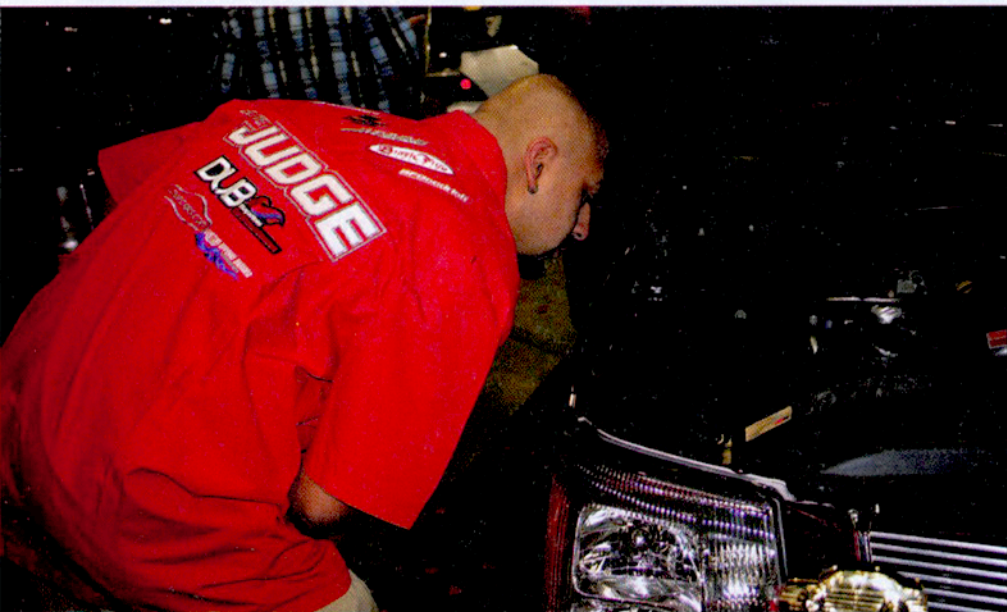


26. Clean the outside of the glass last (wiping vertically) to remove overspray from other cleaning/detailing products.



27. For those last minute touch ups at the show, use a product like Speed Detailer and a microfiber towel.

WORDS: RAMSES SANCHEZ



After you spent a few all-nighters installing accessories and doing last minute add-ons, the least of your worries is cleaning the car. Right? Many competitors make that mistake and it costs them in the points scale. Therefore, from an ex-competitor, owner of Winning Edge Customs, and 2006 DUB Custom Auto Show head judge from the Elite Judging Team, here are a few pointers on prepping your auto just right.

First, every competitor must understand that it is a car show competition. As impressive as it may be that a vehicle is a daily driver, it doesn't change the fact that it's up against "trailer queens." This makes it difficult for some competitors whose vehicles receive rock chips and all the abuse from seeing pavement on a daily basis. This doesn't even include the effects of Mother Nature. Just remember the show is built for spectators and they don't come to see the car next door. Depending on the extent of your modifications, judges will put you in the proper class to compete. So, yes, you are up against the guy on the trailer if you both spent the same amount of time at the body shop.

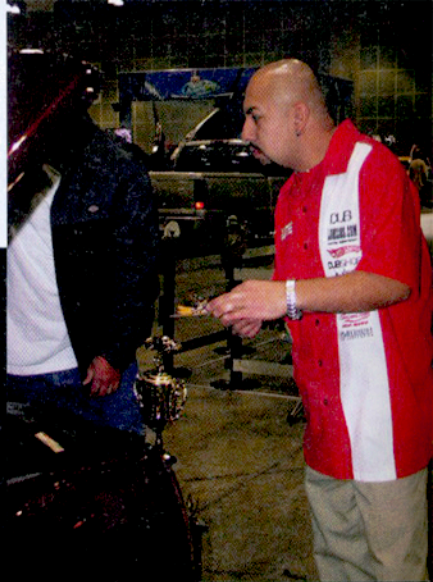
The judging of competition vehicles is based on a points scale. The vehicle is broken down into different categories by the judge. These include 1) paint, 2) body, 3) engine, 4) wheels and tires, 5) suspension, 6) interior, 7) audio, 8) trunk, hatch or bed area, and 9) "extra credit." Twenty points are available for paint and body, and ten points for each additional category. This adds up to a max total of 120 points. Competition vehicles are expected to be spotless in the areas to be viewed by the general public. If you're expecting a trophy, then you definitely want to make that extra effort to clean any areas that the judges will be keeping an eye on. Judges are looking for both modifications and cleanliness.

Keep in mind that cleanliness is important for many reasons. You wouldn't show up to a wedding in dirty clothes, so don't display your auto with grime. It's very important to know how to clean your own vehicle. Most shows provide car show contestants with two passes, so bring along a friend for companionship and aid in prepping the vehicle.

Now the fun part. How can we get the vehicle ready for competition? I can only give you my recommendations based on past experience and what I have seen work from coast to coast. It's always best to wash and wax the vehicle at home because this is the most time-consuming part. You want to buy a bucket to carry your cleaning supplies everywhere you go. Things to include in the bucket are a quick detailer for your paint, gloss tire spray, window, interior and wheel cleaners, and duct tape. Don't forget micro-fiber and polishing rags to wipe it all down. You should also carry a roll of tape. Not only does it work well for cleaning carpet and fabric tops, someone is always in need of tape to hold up a banner or just to keep something from falling off. It's a good way to meet future friends and, sometimes, last-minute add-ons just aren't strapped on right. So, tape (and cable ties) can get you by for a few hours at the show. Just try your best to hide it from the judges.

You are also going to spend a good amount of time in line just waiting to get into the show. That's a good time to get grime off the car from the drive to the show. It's always difficult to know how much time you will have to clean your vehicle before judging commences, so you want to take advantage of any time you have.

Once you're finally parked in your show spot. Your first order of business is to disconnect the battery. Staff members will ask you to have your battery disconnected



always while parked inside the venue and to come in with a quarter tank of gas or less. All indoor venues are required to comply with local fire marshal's standards. Fire marshals have the authority to cancel the show if the vehicles inside do not comply with their regulations. So, it is very important to follow those two simple guidelines.

Hopefully, these few hints will help make your car show experience more pleasant and memorable. Keep in mind that show promoters put on shows with the thought of promotions and business profit. Just like a business, they must make their customers happy. This includes competitors and spectators. Big cash prizes and trophies are up for grabs for competitors, and spectators want to get their monies' worth. In the end, the competitor who puts the biggest effort and thought into building their show vehicle will prevail.

So, good luck in the competition and remember, you're out to have a good time, meet new people and show off your ride. See you at the next event. 📧



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