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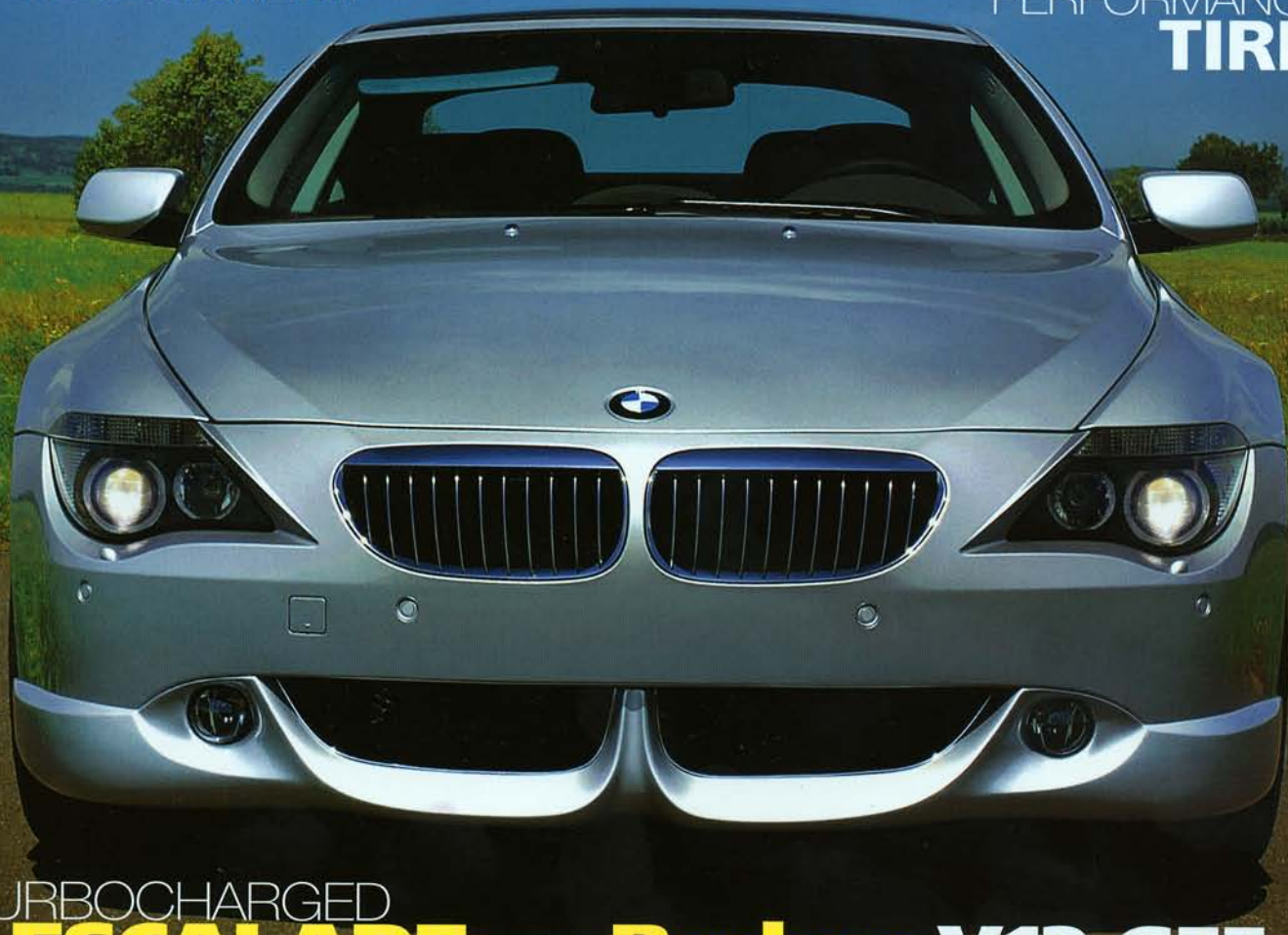


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ADVANCED CAR CARE

The Pros at Meguiar's Show us How

STORY AND PHOTOS JASON SIU

Washing, detailing and caring for your car is a daunting task at times. So much so that many out there simply pay to get it done right. But what if you are a proud owner that prefers to detail on your own time? With so many different products out on the shelves at your convenient automotive superstore, Wal-Mart or Target, it's often difficult to differentiate what does what outside of some soap and a mitt. We all know one thing: we want to keep our cars looking





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brilliant and carry a luster greater than a showroom shine. Many of you understand the ins and outs of car detailing, but some can only go so far as to read the bottle; there's always room for education. Having over 104 years of experience in the paint care and detailing business, the gurus at Meguiar's have the know-how when it comes to caring for our high-end luxury and exotic automobiles.

Starting off with an overview of the detailing process itself, Meguiar's emphasizes three key points in properly assessing any situation: evaluate the surface, choose the right product and use good technique along with the right tools. With this as the foundation, simply washing a car is the first step in proper car care. In caring for the paint on a vehicle, the wash cycle consists of removing loose dirt, grime and any other sort of contaminants that might plague the finish and shine. Ideally it's highly recommended to wash the car yourself so you have full control of all the variables in the process. Simply washing a car at least once a week helps ensure things stay in top form.

Some general knowledge and advice in terms of the wash cycle: it's the most important process and often times the least understood. Stray from dishwasher detergent as it strips the wax and always seek a pH balanced wash – check the label and stick to something neutral. Most importantly, follow the directions supplied on any car wash container, including mixture amounts. A key component of proper car wash is to have two buckets handy with one consisting of plain water and the other with the properly mixed wash solution. The plain water bucket is convenient in rinsing your mitt or sponge off when washing the car. Keep the loose contaminants separate from the wash bucket! Always wash from the top down, starting from the roof – onto the hood and trunk, bumpers, etc. Grab the highest quality tool that's available to you. Hand mitts and wash brushes are proper tools, so always utilize the best ones possible.

After a proper cleaning, the drying process opens the door to several available tools as well. Whether you prefer a natural chamois, synthetic chamois, micro-fiber towels, or a waffle-weave micro-fiber towel just ensure you purchase the best one possible – they do make a difference. With the car dry, the most important step is now to evaluate the surface. At this point there are imperfections that can be located below or above the surface you're detailing. Anything remaining above the surface are considered bonded contaminants, as any loose ones would've been properly discarded during the wash process. Below surface defects are mostly defects as a result of oxidation, stains, scratches or swirls. Evaluate the car carefully and go through it in natural sunlight and under fluorescent light if possible. As an additional exercise, run your hand across your car's surface, keeping in mind areas that aren't as smooth as glass.

The core components to paint care can be looked at in detail at this point, starting with the clean component. The actual process of cleaning consists of removing bonded contaminants and stubborn defects that washing did not. With two options in the cleaning process available, choosing the right tool for the situation is again, extremely important. Clay items are used to remove any contaminants above the



surface – they will not affect oxidation, swirls or scratches; they aid in making the surface as smooth as glass. Attacking below the surface defects requires a liquid cleaner to help remove swirls and scratches. Be aware however, liquid cleaners remove defects by removing the right amount of paint. Now if you are evaluating the vehicle and find that there are absolutely no bonded contaminants or defects that concern you, entirely skip the cleaning process or clean on an "as needed" basis.

Your next core component to paint care is with polishing products. The process of polishing allows the paint to shine and create the high gloss effect we all desire. Keep in mind that polishing



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Meguiar's **NXT Generation® Tech Wax Paste** dramatically enhances color by delivering darker, richer-looking painted surfaces, provides the deepest, clearest, shine and eliminates fine scratches and swirls to create a flawless, swirl-free finish. A tough polymer barrier offers the most durable, extreme protection available, with UVA/UVB inhibitors that block ultraviolet rays and resist the damaging effects of the sun. Revolutionary engineered synthetic polymer (ESP) technology allows the product to easily glide on and off. Applied with Meguiar's new **Even-Coat Applicator**, made of super soft microfiber and sized for fatigue-free application, an even, consistent coat of wax can be laid down for highly reflective results.



Meguiar's **NXT Generation® Glass Cleaner** delivers amazing clarity and the assurance that it is safe to use on all types of automotive glass, even tinted windows. An advanced, ammonia-free, formula offers exceptional cleaning of smoke, film, bugs, tree sap, road grime and fresh contaminants from glass surfaces and provides more resistance against haze and dirt build-up over time. Pairing NXT Generation Glass Cleaner with Meguiar's new **Duo-Fiber Glass Super Towel**, the ideal accessory for cleaning windows and mirrors, provides (guaranteed) streak-free results. The combination of cotton softness and super absorbency of microfiber produces a cross weave construction that traps and collects water and glass cleaner for ultimate performance.



As the perfect complement to its exterior surface detailers, Speed Detailer and Quik Detailer, Meguiar's new **Quik Interior Detailer™** is the fast and safe way to clean, shine and protect all interior surfaces including plastic, vinyl, rubber, leather, metal. A simple mist and wipe application quickly revitalizes interior surfaces for a "just detailed" look, feel and smell. The high-tech formula lifts off dust, ashes, dirt, grime, spills, and fingerprints without build-up or an artificial greasy feel and is safe on dashboard gauges and audio/video equipment. Surfaces are returned to their original, natural shine with minimal time and effort.



Removing the nozzle of a water sprayer and letting water run off your car like a waterfall, significantly reduces drying time. To shorten the drying process even more, Meguiar's offers a new, super absorbent **Water Magnet Drying Towel** to soak up three times the amount of water as traditional terry towels. The extra-large, 22"x 20" high-tech textured towel provides fast, spot-free results with the safety of premium, satin-trimmed edging to prevent scratching. For cham-oi-like performance, Meguiar's also provides a **Microfiber Super Suede Drying Towel**, safe for all surfaces, that effortlessly absorbs buckets of water to produce an amazing mirror-like shine.



Contaminants like tree sap mist, industrial fallout and hard water spots substantially degrade the reflective qualities of automotive paint finishes. If not removed quickly, contaminants will bond and eventually chemically etch the surface. **Meguiar's NXT Generation® Speed Detailer**, safe for all paint surfaces, quickly removes fresh contaminants, enhances protection and restores that "just waxed" appearance. To obtain a flawless finish, product must be properly and safely removed. Meguiar's **Supreme Shine Microfiber towel** is ideal for all surfaces, absorbs three times more than traditional terry towels and provides a mirror-like shine. Prolonging show car shine is effortless with the partnership of NXT Generation Speed Detailer and Meguiar's Supreme Shine Microfiber.



is an optional step but highly recommended on dark color cars.

The protection step is arguably the most important to enthusiasts. Protecting the car is otherwise known as waxing, which aids in preserving the high gloss and is a barrier coat to slow down the effects of Mother Nature. As you walk the aisle and ponder several different wax bottles and containers, you will notice two different kinds: carnauba and synthetic. Carnauba-based waxes are the natural, the hardest wax known to man. Harvested from a certain type of palm tree, there are several different grades of carnauba. Carnauba waxes are tried and true and



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deliver good results but be aware that a higher percentage of carnauba doesn't directly relate to better protection on your car's finish.

Pure Synthetic waxes are polymer based and contain no carnauba whatsoever. Synthetic based products offer the advantage of a better quality of protection and is much easier to control in the formulation. Both types of waxes are available in liquid or paste form. The liquid form is the easier of the two to use and abuse. When waxing, ensure you use thin and even uniformed coats on your car. Meguiar's advises that two to three coats is enough to lock in that finish. Layering with multiple coats results in the law of diminishing returns; wax and polymers have a difficult time sticking to itself after three coats. How often you desire to wax will vary from the given conditions of the vehicle's life including where it's stored, which products are used or heavy weather conditions. Evaluate your surroundings but it's highly recommended to wax a minimum of three to four times on a clean body per year!

At this point it is all about maintenance. Maintain the car with proper cleaning to prevent contaminants from bonding. Stay away from the cleaning process as often as possible, ensuring that your surface is as smooth as glass and the gloss is protected with a couple of coats of wax. Quick detailers and cleaner waxes are available to aid in the maintenance process. Cleaner waxes basically do a little bit of everything: cleaning, polishing and a little bit of protecting.

Many of the luxury and exotic vehicles have a fitting match of wheels and tires. Caring for them is just as important as

caring for the body. Do careful research on your wheel composition and be aware of which wheel cleaning products are safe for your particular finish. Anodized pieces are extremely sensitive while clear coated and painted wheels can be treated more liberally. When deciding on a product and determining what your wheel can withstand, contact the manufacturer to obtain the correct information. There are several wheel cleaners on the market; if you're unsure of which one to use, start with the least abrasive product available. Applying the wheel cleaner isn't just a spray on and wipe off process either, be cautious of your high-end brake components behind those wheels. Many of the luxury and exotic vehicles are equipped with extremely sensitive brake components that have experienced deterioration due to some strong wheel cleansers on the market.

Lastly, care for your interior with the correct product for the particular surface. Cleaning the surface and conditioning the surface are separate processes and are extremely vital to keeping your leather looking and feeling like showroom. Again, use the right tools and products, and evaluate the surfaces to your liking.

Meguiar's focuses on always evaluating the surface and doing what is necessary to keep your car looking as clean and shiny as ever. Maintaining a perfect surface can be done easily with proper washing and cleaning from time to time. Pay close attention to the products you are purchasing, and most importantly use the right product for the task you're about to tackle. Let's face it nothing beats a smooth body with a shiny, glossy finish and properly cleaned wheels and tires when you head off to that club meet. **ML&E**