

This month I would like to review the process of giving a quick detail job to your street driver or your racecar. This article is geared for the guys and gals that don't normally do this kind of thing. I know that you guys that race your cars barely have enough time to adjust the valves and change the oil. Racecars could use a coat of wax now and then too. The smoother finish has a chance of improving your lap time because the body will be so slick it will cut through the air with less friction. As for the street drivers, they can always use a good clean up. Protecting your investment along with adding some sex appeal are the benefits of giving your car a detail. So, I'm going to keep this simple and hopefully motivate some of you to clean up your car. You know it's one of those jobs you have had on your list of "things to do" for a while now.

First, you're going to wash your car. Not much new going on here, but I'll give some pointers that might help you get done a little quicker and do a better job. Always wash the car in the shade; this will help you prevent water spots from forming. By keeping the car cool it will slow down the evaporation period and give you more time to dry off your car properly. Wash the car completely using a bucket filled with car wash soap and water. Use a brush for the wheels, tires and underbody. Now that your car is washed, dry it off completely with a chamois or a clean beach towel. Make sure you dry off the windows so you don't have to deal with the water spots later.

Now that your car is clean it's ready for some wax. Before you start to wax you will need to assess the paint finish. Just by looking at the paint you can learn a lot; touching the finish to feel any imperfections will tell you how much work needs to be done. More than likely you will have a combination of both paint oxidation and contamination. The contamination can occur as the result of many things, paint over spray, industrial fallout, acid rain, and other environmental factors. The paint oxidation comes from a lack of wax and polish, poor paint quality and being exposed to the

elements on a constant basis. Considering that you have all this stuff on your paint, it will be necessary to remove it. Removing it easily is an issue. Now, everyone knows that nothing is easy, but I'm going to point you in the right direction. I'll give you some tools and knowledge to make the most headway with out being a concours nut.

You will need to purchase a product called "clay". This product is perfect for removing over spray and contaminants that are on the surface of the paint. This is easy to use and the results are wonderful. You will use it just like a bar of soap, only it's for your car. This stuff is like the play dough that you played with as a kid, only better. The clay and a lubricant are usually provided in a kit available at your local auto parts store. To use the clay, start by spraying the lubricant provided onto the car in a small area. Rub the clay back and forth over the paint to remove all the surface contaminants. Work your way around the car eliminating any texture you feel with your hands. Once you do the whole car it will be smooth and ready for wax.

For hand waxing you should use some type of cleaner wax. This is a wax just like the name implies, it is a "one step" wax that has a cleaner included. This will work great on your street car or racecar. Now, there are a lot of cleaner waxes around, between the advertisers in this famous magazine and the local auto parts shop it will be easy to find a product that's going to work wonders on your cars paint. When waxing your car please use clean towels! This alone will make a huge difference in the final result of how your car looks. An old towel has the possibility of scratching your paint or leaving a residue on the surface. For a more professional shine a straight motion (headlight to taillight) opposed to a circular application is preferred. Change your towel often, keeping the build up of wax to a minimum.

After you're done waxing use a detail brush to remove any excess wax left in the cracks. Without getting too carried away with the detail process, I hope this article got some of you motivated to get out there and wax your car. Polishing is a very basic way to improve the appearance of your car without investing too much time. I'm sure your car will enjoy all the extra attention and maybe reward you with some quicker lap times? At least a few looks at the stop light.

Wax on

Mark