

Detailing your Cadillac for Spring

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As the weather gets better we all will use our old cars more, and that usually means that we want them to look and run as well as possible. If you plan on having your car judged at a local multi-make show, the judging will obviously be done by a less critical eye than it will at a regional or a national Cadillac event. So, here are some considerations for you to ponder:

- 1) *Whom are you trying to please, besides yourself?* You have to decide what it will take to make you happy! Are you happy just visiting the local cruise night, or driving to regional club meets? Are you going to enter the Cadillac Grand Nationals? Will you compete for a Past President's Preservation Award?
- 2) *Are you going for "survivor" status, "restored" status, or simply a high quality driver?*
 - **A survivor must be largely original.** That means only normal wear items have been replaced over the years: belts, hoses, batteries, exhaust, brake pads and cylinders and tires, etc. "Original paint" generally means at least 90% original. "Original" also means a numbers-matching engine and an engine bay that looks unmodified. Your engine compartment should *not* be repainted; it should be cleaned with *great care* so as not to disturb original wiring, decals, and colors. (We have discussed detailing under the hood in a previous issue.) "Original" also means an original interior.
 - **Restored or rebuilt status** requires you to restore the car to a "like new" condition. You have to keep in mind that in this class you may be competing with others who have completed similar projects that have cost \$100k or more. You'll run into owners who have removed the body from the chassis. You'll see those who have taken the body down to bare metal before professional re-paints. Expert judges in these classes are able to see the difference in authenticity.
 - **High quality drivers** are what most of us use for local cruise nights and Peach State club tours. Here are some tips that will help you get where you are going in the driving scene:
 - **Paint:** This topic takes a lot of discussion; specifics on your car would be needed to provide the best suggestions. However, there are lots of "correct" products for sale in any parts store and most of them have a hotline that you can call to get more information. I find that Maguiars has the most products and has the easiest sequence to follow to get the best job done. If you hire a professional to fix your paint, expect to pay \$100-\$150 for a normal detailing. Sometimes wet sanding is a good idea before detailing. Wet sanding will give you a great result, but it must be done by an expert who has done it before. I know of people who have spent 20 plus hours wet sanding prior to detailing. It may be cheaper than re-painting, but it can be costly.

- **Glass:** Nothing magic here! Start with a razor blade, use an ammonia-based product, and rub away, both inside and out. A great paint job will look weak if the windows are dirty.
- **Tires:** SOS or Brillo soap pads on the whitewalls work best. There are some liquid bleaching products that will help as well. I am not a big fan of real shiny black tire dressing, but that is a matter of personal preference. The tire dressing you do choose should not have a rubber degradation ingredient, as many of them do.
- **Leather care:** Your leather seats need a two-step process. First, use a specific leather cleaner, and then a protectant. I like Lexol the best, but there are other good ones out there.
- **Carpets:** Spots are best removed with a product called "Folex." I think you can find it at Lowes or Home Depot. There is no substitute, hands down.

Last are some thoughts about the "junk in your trunk." For an upcoming road trip, you obviously need a good, full spare tire. Second, include some basic hand tools (i.e., pliers, Phillips and regular screwdrivers, a flashlight, an adjustable wrench or assorted open-end wrenches). Take an extra quart of oil, a map, and some phone numbers, too. Before leaving, call your insurance company to verify if you are covered for towing or a rental car – and take your AAA card if you have one. (We have talked about emergency road kits in past articles.)

Bottom line: Have Fun and enjoy your car !!!!!!! As always, call me if you have any specific questions.

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