

Proper Detailing Protects Your Investment

By IRENE BERNARDO
For The Mustang Times

There were two reasons for my decision to compose this series on auto detailing. To begin with, I was extremely disturbed by the numerous articles, innocently promoting over-the-counter products which contain every destructive, toxic chemical that can legally be poured into a container.

The need for information on a safe, high quality car care system was urgent. I wanted to provide the car enthusiast with an exciting new approach to the presentation of their show cars and the long term preservation of their personal automobiles.

My second reason was probably a selfish one, since I knew the articles would be a promotional opportunity for our products. When I was asked to write the article, I gladly accepted the challenge, even though I dreaded the agonizing hours of careful thought and editing that would accompany the project.

Preparing Your Auto For Detailing

I want you to put aside your preconceived ideas on automobile detailing and literally "throw them to the wind." This system is unlike any you have used, and by keeping an open mind, it will shorten and improve every step of the exacting process. Pay close attention, as you probably have acquired a few bad habits that are damaging your car.

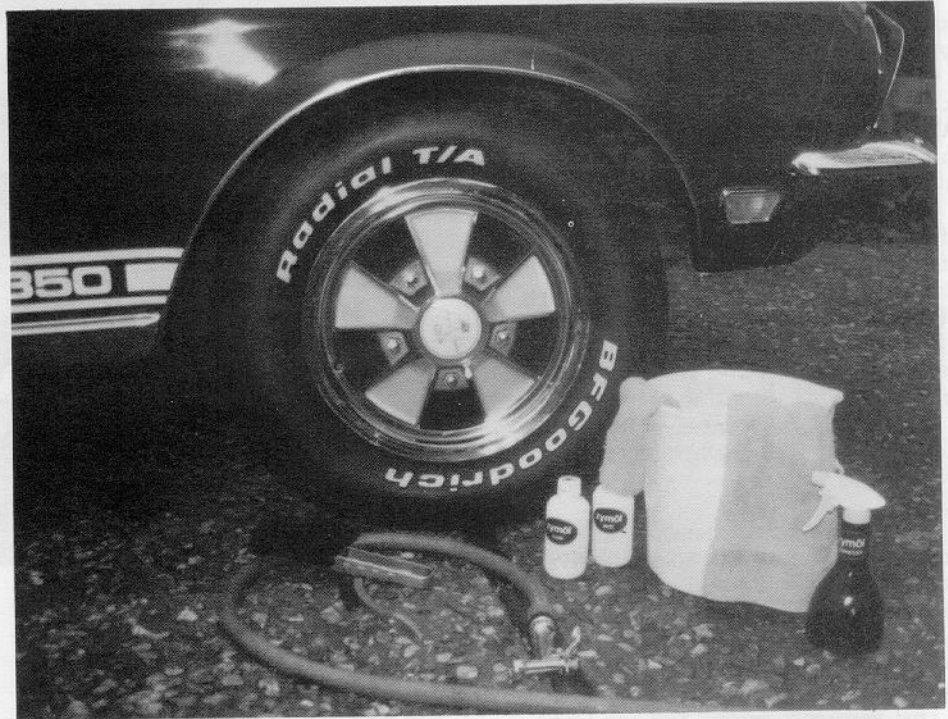
I won't insult your intelligence by discussing commercial car washes, but you may be one of those purists who only wash with plain water — or maybe you are the proud owner of a trailered show car and only damp wipe its meticulously waxed finish.

Were you aware these common practices allow dust and dirt particles to take on the characteristics of fine sandpaper as they are moved across the surface? Did you know that your favorite sponge or chamois was accelerating this process by harboring layers of embedded dirt particles that can never be completely washed out?

Always use 100 percent cotton terry wash cloths and towels that can be machine washed and thoroughly dried.

The final blow comes when you add detergent soaps or sodium-based car wash solutions to your water. These mixtures trigger the slow process of etching and stripping the wax and stealing valuable moisture from the vinyl and rubber.

Armed with this knowledge you now realize the difficulty of safely removing surface contaminants that *must* come off. Sur-



prisingly, this can be accomplished without removing a fraction of the micro-thin layers of wax. You begin with a solution of natural tallow soap combined with oils in a clean bucket of cool water. (There's only one product on the market with this unique ingredient list). Thoroughly wet the car and work your way down from the roof so you won't carry the grit from below to the flat surfaces.

The tallow soap will release the dirt, and the oils will capsulize and suspend the particles above the surface. You may now safely wash away the dirt without etching the surface. The oils also moisturize the paint, vinyl and rubber, preventing removal of previously applied protectant.

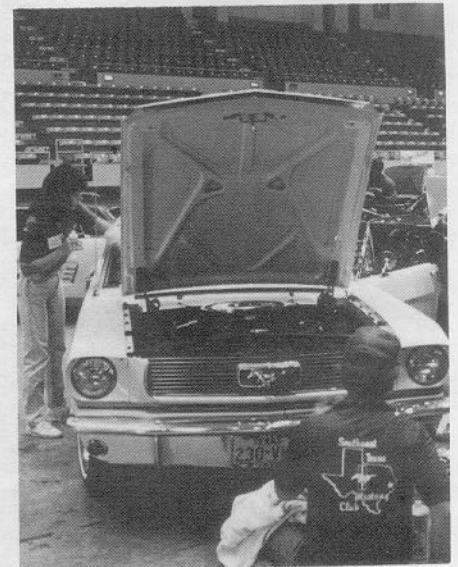
When you have rinsed well, use large, 100 percent cotton terry bath towels to quickly dry the car, beginning with the windows and chrome to prevent water spots. Always use separate towels for the wheels. Later, when you wash your towels and cloths, rinse twice, and never use fabric softener. It streaks.

Proper Wheel Cleaning

The most hated — and least understood — part of the car cleaning regimen is the wheel cleaning. Even though the wheels and tires are one of the first subjects of interest between car enthusiasts, the enthusiasm

falls short when they envision the crouching and exacting detail work required on today's designer wheels or yesterday's "spokes of horror" — so many tiny spokes, slots, or holes, and half of them upside down!

Initial wheel cleaning begins while you are washing the car. Always use a second



Irene Bernardo Explains Detailing

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bucket of water to protect the car's surface from wheel grit. Never use wash water from another exhibitor at a show. Use a plastic core, heavily populated wheel brush and an auto detail brush for spoke wheels. A sudden slip from a metal core brush can produce a permanent gouge in soft, clear-coated alloys or a scratch on prized mags.

The adhesive used to mold brake pads is the culprit that attracts brake dust. This adhesive will etch and pit if allowed to remain on a heated wheel. It must regularly be removed and finding a safe cleaner for this job may seem next to impossible.

The auto stores are full of spray bottles promising quick, easy wheel cleaning without harming your expensive wheels.

Take a closer look at the contents and smell the open bottle. What's this, a warning label? "Do not allow spray to come in contact with the painted surface of the car." Don't wheels often have painted surfaces? "Avoid skin contact." Your skin or your car's? Do you really want to spray this stuff on your expensive wheels?

The only non-destructive solution to the brake dust, wheel grime problem is a formulated product that utilizes the same previously mentioned tallow soap and oils with the addition of citric acid. It is only recent that the outstanding cleaning properties of citric acid have become widely appreciated. By using this prepared solution, the adhesion of the brake dust is broken. The oils capsulize the dirt particles and everything can easily and safely be brushed away.

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Always spray on a cool, dry wheel — not allowing the solution to dry. Rinse very well and dry with one of those indispensable terry towels. It's quick, easy, safe for all wheels — and leaves no white streaks on your tires!

See you next month for part two: **Exterior Preparation and Protection.**

(Irene Bernardo and her husband, John, are MCA members. The Arkansas couple operates a Zymol Car Care Product dealership. They participate in shows, driving events and conduct free car care seminars for more than 20 car clubs each year. They also professionally prepare privately owned automobiles for concours competition. In 1990, they became involved with the American Classic Car circuit by participating in numerous MCA shows.)



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