

SHOWING THE DETAILS!

Car shows are a year-round event now—even in the great white North with the help of Convention Centers, Expos, etc. More and more people are asking me how to prepare their cars for a car show. I usually answer with a few pointers on car show etiquette and finally some basics that make the car shine and allow you to fully enjoy the show's entertainment.

If you're attending a car show at local drive in cruise night or a big indoor event like Autorama, the protocol is the same: Look But Don't Touch! OK, these owners are not up-tight snobs, they just have a lot of time, money, and love put into their cars and want to keep them as nice as possible for as long as possible. Touching a car's finish will leave fingerprints at best and in the worst case scenario could leave small scratches in the paint caused by dust particles or dirt on the surface. Even if your hands are clean, touching this dust and dragging your finger across the finish can leave surface scratches.

The same protocol is true with leaning anything on a car: Just Don't Do It! I am continually amazed when someone (usually someone who should know better) sets something like a note book, purse, paper, bag, etc. on top of a car. I can just about guarantee that will leave a mark! Another good example is when people use a hood or roof as a desk top. When you write something on a piece of paper, the amount of pressure that can be applied at the tip of a ball point pen is amazing; it can actually "crush" the paint if written on. If you absolutely have to write something down and you absolutely have to use a car as a writing surface, then use the windshield or back glass to rest the paper on. The chances of damaging the glass are very slim when you just can't find another surface to write on.

Kids, you got to love them—sticky fingers, strollers, "something" in there hands, a disaster just waiting to happen. Kids rarely have any education on what to do around special cars, so I recommend making a little game up to show them what they can do and cannot do—keep your hands in your pocket, don't lean on the car, etc.—BEFORE they go to a car show. Remember kids are only seeing the bottom half of the car and any kid who is into cars wants to see the engine, or interior, or the junk in the trunk. If you are with a child, offer to lift him up to see the rest of the car while at the same time explaining (and

demonstrating!) The no touch rule. One final tip for adult show goers, make sure that you do not have anything that can swing into the car if you lean over to pickup a child to show him/her the interior or engine compartment. Things like purses, bags, pocket chains, name tags, etc. can swing into the car and cause damage, so just hold onto them, leave them at home, or tuck them out of the way.

Compliment the owner! Most people that are displaying their car will "hang out" near their pride and joy, so try to locate the owner. If you have questions about the car, they will usually be delighted to answer them for you (after all, it's their baby!). Before you move on to the next car give the owner a nod or "nice car" or some compliment, it will make their day!

So how can you prep your car to look good and stand tall in a car show? First, and probably the most obvious, make your car as spotless as possible. Even a car that has some "miles" on her will show well if properly detailed. Detailing is not just washing and waxing. Detailing means you pay attention to every detail—what a concept! For example, a car that has been washed and waxed should be examined for any left over wax residue in any nook or cranny. The idea is to make your car shine, but leave no evidence that you waxed it. Don't forget the door jams, hood and trunk seal areas, exhaust tips, wheels and tires and be sure to give the glass an extra wipe.

Engine compartments scare a lot of people; I often get asked if it is OK to wash the engine compartment. The short answer is yes! Every component in the engine compartment has been designed to function in this environment and the engine compartment is hot, wet, sometimes exposed to anti freeze, and other engine fluids. Basically, anything in the engine compartment can get wet and you can use the same car wash soap that you use on the exterior. You can even use a car care dressing on the hoses and plastic parts to make them look clean and fresh like new.

Keep these key products on hand to make the car care process a little bit easier: a micro-fiber cloth and a detailing spray to keep your car clean and fresh throughout the show. I like the clean and gloss wipes for the interior, tires, and plastic parts. If you do not like the high-gloss shine, you can now buy a good looking, low-gloss alternative. A car duster is a handy way to remove air born dust and grime off the car during an event and won't scratch the car if used with little to no pressure.

And finally, always bring a chamois cloth or towel because on occasion the cars are so incredibly beautiful, it brings tears to Mother Nature's eyes! Enjoy your day, have fun, relax, and check out all of the cool cars that others love!



Scott Hoag

