

## **THANKS TO DON BEDFORD (CANDYMAN) FROM HEMET CALIFORNIA FOR ALLOWING THE COPYING AND DISTRIBUTION OF THIS GUIDE.**

### **Detailing How-to-Guide: Washing your PT**

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I know washing is a somewhat simple task, but I want to be thorough in explaining the detailing process from start to finish!

First off make sure you are in a shaded area out of direct sunlight and that your paint is cool to the touch. This is primarily to prevent water from drying, and forming hard water spots on the paint. If you plan to re-wax and/or detail your PT after the washing process, then I recommend using dishwashing liquid. This type of soap has a high PH level to strip all chemicals from the paint surface. If you are not intending on waxing, or detailing your PT, then you will want to use a good car wash soap to clean your Cruiser with. These soaps contain a low PH level that will not strip chemicals from the surface reducing the possibility of fading.

**ONE QUICK WARNING:** If you take your PT to a Full Service Hand Car Wash on a regular basis, these facilities usually use a high PH soap to keep costs down, and create a marketing ploy for detailing. If you are a regular customer, the idea is to strip the wax off your finish using high PH soap, and let the paint fade. After a few washes, they might talk to you about detailing, and might use a little Glaze to show you how much better your vehicle would look if you paid \$100.00+ for the exact same process I describe in this series.

You want to start by cleaning your wheels to eliminate the possibility of getting brake dust, and other related contaminants on your paint. Start by spraying the wheels, tires, and inner fender wells with degreaser, like Simple Green. Add approximately two ounces of dishwashing liquid to a five gallon bucket of water. Dip a bristle brush into the soapy solution, and start by scrubbing down the inner wheel well to remove road dirt, and grime. Next move on to the tire, you can use the same brush or a stiff tire brush for this. For the wheels, most large retail stores carry what looks like an over sized bottle brush designed to clean wheels. Meguiar's also makes one available at [www.Meguiar's.com](http://www.Meguiar's.com). Dip the brush into the soapy solution, and scrub the wheel thoroughly to remove all brake dust build-up from the entire wheel. Finish off with a rinse of cool clear water, and we are ready to move on.

Next in our washing process we are going to give the engine a good cleaning. Start by popping the hood. Take your garden hose, and rinse down your front fenders. Next lay an old bath towel over each fender to avoid getting chemical overspray, and grease/oil onto your paint. Now spray your engine down with a good foamy engine cleaner like the one manufactured by Gunk (available at most auto parts stores). Spray the engine down with the chemical, and allow it to react for a few minutes. While you are waiting, take your degreaser, and give the underside of your hood a quick spray. Use your soft bristle brush for any stubborn grease, or grime on the hood, engine, or anywhere where the chemical might need a little extra help. Now,

hop in and start the engine before you rinse the engine down. This is an extra precaution to assure you get no water into any electronics that may affect the engine in any way. Rinse the underhood first, and then the engine. While the engine compartment is still wet, apply a light coat of water based dressing to the entire engine compartment. Next remove the towels from the fenders, and we are ready to move on.

Now its time to move on to your paint, start by re-filling your bucket with fresh soapy suds. Next begin by pre-rinsing your paint to remove any loose dirt from the surface that may scratch the surface. It is best to use a good wash mitt as opposed to a brush to minimize scratches. I break a vehicle up into five sections: Top, Rear, Left side, Right side, and Front. I wash each section starting with the top first. By starting at the top, the suds will run down the body minimizing trips to the bucket resulting in less work. Continue washing the entire vehicle before you rinse. This sounds a little strange, but it is by far better for soap to dry on your paint, than hard water spots. After you have washed, and rinsed the entire vehicle, take your hose nozzle off, and run the hose over the paint starting at the top, and working down. The water will sheet off of your paint, making it easier to dry.

Now we are ready to dry. Start off by popping your hood again, and opening your doors, and rear hatch. One trick I use to blow water out of your mirrors, and related hard to reach areas is to use a small can of compressed air used for cleaning your computer keyboard which can be purchased at most retail stores (Wal-mart). After the mirrors are blown out, I take a Microfiber Drying Towel, and start by quickly wiping down the paint. On the first pass, I am just going over the bulk of the water quickly to avoid spotting. I then follow up with a second pass for all the final detail work, including the door jambs, rear hatch, and engine compartment, finishing up with the wheels.

There are many products available for drying and the choice simply comes down to personal preference. I use a Microfiber Drying Towel as it is ultra soft, and absorbs three times more than a chamois. You use a California Water Blade (a double edged squeegee) to lightly pull the water off your paint which will help reduce time by half. If you use a synthetic chamois, you want to use the rough side, and again work in one direction.

ONE LAST NOTE: If you have a water softener, then it is not necessary to dry your vehicle. Soft Water is referred to in the detailing industry as Spot Free Rinse, and will not leave water spots. The only exception is at coin operated car washes, as they often do not maintain their soft water filters, and can leave spots on occasion.

Now your PT is clean with all wax, and residue removed from the paint surface. In our next step, we will discuss how to check your paint for Parasitic Contaminants, and how to use a Clay Bar to remove them safely, and easily, without any harm to your paint surface.

## Detailing How-to-Guide: Claying Your Paint

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Before we begin, lets get a little insight on what a Clay Bar is, and how it works!

Clay bars are designed to remove most types of paint contamination which can usually be broken down into three catagories.

1. Rail dust: Produced by friction of train wheels as they make contact with the track. 70% of all vehicles delivered throughout the United States are delivered by rail making this a big problem for paint contamination.
2. Brake dust: Produced by friction of brake pads against the rotor dispensing microscopic metal shavings that collect on the paint surface.
3. Industrial fallout: AKA pollution. Bio-chemicals that disburse airborne particles that love to eat your paint.

These contaminates will cause the paint to feel rough to the touch, and cannot be removed by waxing, polishing, or buffing your paint. Unlike compounds, clay bars do not etch, or remove paint, and can be used as often as you like. The cost is approximately \$25-\$30 with a life expectancy of 5 to 6 uses before discarding. For those of you unsure of how to use this product, here's the basic idea.

Before you Clay your PT, it is a good idea to check your paint to see if you have surface contaminants. These contaminants range from rail dust that was left on the surface, to brake dust particles expelled from other cars on a busy freeway. Here is an example of just a few contaminants that can be found on most paint surfaces.

To check for contaminants, simply place your hand in a plastic sandwich bag, and run your fingers across the paint surface. If it feels smooth like glass, then you do not have contaminants, however if it feels rough to the touch, then you should remove the contaminants before proceeding. The best way to remove these contaminants is with a Clay Bar. The process is simple, and unlike buffing, Claying will not damage the surface, and can be performed as many times as desired without fear of damaging your paint.

As always recommended it is a good idea to work on paint that is out of direct sunlight, and cool to the touch. Like wax, work in a small area of about two to three square feet at a time. Mist the section with a good lubricant (as an example, if you use Meguiar's quick detailer, or Final Inspection which are available at most retail stores works fine) and simply glide the clay bar across the paint till it is smooth and the clay bar glides freely. Wipe any excess with a clean microfiber towel, and continue till you've completed your ride. Even though clay does not cut the paint, it can remove some chemicals used in less expensive wax, so it is a good idea to follow up with a fresh coat of wax when you're done.

### **QUICK TIP**

Just like paint, your glass can also contain these same contaminants, and may be mistaken for tiny pits in the glass, but are actually on the surface. These

contaminants can also be removed with the Clay Bar process, to restore clarity, and improve the overall look of your PT.

## **Guide to Detailing: Buffing Your Paint**

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We are now ready to talk about buffing. To give you a better understanding on what buffing does for your paint, lets say you had a piece of wood that had a gash in it. You could use wood filler to fill in the void, or you could sand the surrounding area down to where the imperfection is completely smooth. Automotive paint can be looked at in much the same way. If you have some light scratching, you can hide it with Glaze, or for deeper imperfections, you may need to buff it out with compound which is a liquid based product that contains micro-abrasives designed to etch the surrounding area removing a slight amount of paint until the paint is level, and completely smooth again.

A QUICK NOTE: Most modern vehicles have Base coat/Clear coat paint. The process involves using a thin coat of acrylic enamel for a base color, and then applying a coat of clear Acrylic Urethane over it. Most compounds on the market today are clear coat safe, but there are a number of compounds still around that are intended for use on single stage non-clear coat paint. Here is a simple way to determine if your vehicle has a clear coat, or not. Take a white terry cloth, or microfiber towel. Apply a small amount of wax, and rub it on a small section of your paint. If color appears on your towel, then you do not have a clear coat. If no color appears, then you do, and should only use clear coat safe products to avoid damage to your paint.

Now that we have a basic understanding on what buffing does for your paint, lets take a quick look at compound (AKA Cutting Material) which is the chemical used in the buffing process. There are three basic types of compounds on the market today. They range from light duty, to medium duty, to heavy duty.

**LIGHT DUTY COMPOUND:** Is used to remove light oxidation, minor swirl marks, and light surface scratches. This is the least abrasive compound available, and will cause the least harm to your paint. It is always recommended that you try this compound first, and work your way up to a more aggressive chemical if needed.

**MEDIUM DUTY COMPOUND:** Is used for moderate oxidation, medium scratches, swirl marks, and light paint defects ranging from paint overspray, to bird droppings, etc. This is a more aggressive compound, and will etch the paint more than light duty compound. Use this chemical with more care, as you are removing more surface from your paint.

**HEAVY DUTY COMPOUND:** Is used for removing heavy oxidation, color sanding scratches, heavy scratches, paint overspray, and paint defects. This is the most aggressive compound, and should only be used as a last resort. This chemical will remove the most surface of your paint of the three types of compounds available, and extra care should be taken when using this material.

The best way to buff your paint requires the use of a high speed rotary type buffer. These machines use a high speed rotation as opposed to an oscillating orbital buffer

(AKA Dual Action Buffer), and are capable of removing swirls, light scratches, and most paint contaminants more effectively than by hand, however they remove these defects by etching, or removing paint. So every time you buff your PT you are removing paint, and making your surface thinner, so this process should be limited to a full buff once, or twice a year as opposed to routine maintenance. This can be a little intimidating since high speed buffing can burn paint if not done right, however if you follow the steps I give you, you should never have a problem of any kind. These methods, and recommendations are safe for both clearcoat, and non-clearcoat paint finishes.

If you are not very well versed in high speed buffing, I strongly recommend using a rotary buffer with a speed setting of 1000 to 1200 RPM. This is enough speed to do a good job without the risk of burning, or causing damage to your paint. If you do not have a buffer, and are interested in purchasing one, I recommend the Makita 9227 with a cost of approximately \$199.00, or the DeWalt 849 with a cost of approximately \$225.00. Note: Most liquid compounds are only effective when using a high speed rotary buffer due to surface friction, and heat.

For buffing, I recommend a wool cutting pad. Foam pads are also available for cutting paint, but I prefer wool pads as more of a traditional method, which to me produces better results. Both are available at most Automotive Paint Supply Stores. Be sure to ask for advice, on both types. A couple more items recommended are a rubber backing plate, and a tool called a Spur, used to clean wool pads.

For Chemical in this segment, I am using Meguiar's #2 Fine Cut Compound. This is a good mildly abrasive compound that is inexpensive (\$10.00), and produces good results. Note: When buffing always use the least abrasive chemical possible, and work your way up until you achieve the desired results. I also recommend always testing a small less visible section of your paint before you buff (Example. the lower valance under your rear bumper by your exhaust pipe).

Now, let's break down your PT into the five sections I mentioned in part 2 of this segment. If you have experience using a high speed buffer, then start on the roof. If you have never used a high speed buffer, then I recommend you start on the hood.

Start by applying a ring of chemical around the buffing wheel. Before you start buffing, slide the chemical across the panel to minimize splatter. Now grip the buffer firmly in your hands. The buffer will feel a little squirrely on the paint. To minimize this, hold the buffing wheel at a slight angle as opposed to laying the pad flat on the surface. Now you are ready to buff.

On flat surfaces such as the hood, and top, I recommend either using a cross hatching pattern (first side to side, then front to back), or a figure eight pattern. Continue buffing until most of the compound is gone, and a good finish is either visible, or the surface feels smooth as glass. Please note, if your paint appears hazy, it is normal, and will be cleared up in the next step. Be sure to wipe off any remaining residue with a clean microfiber towel, folded into quarters, and misted with either Meguiar's Final Inspection, or Meguiar's Quick Detailer.

Always work in small sections, and monitor your progress. Continue till the entire vehicle is completed.

## **Detailing Your Paint: Polishing**

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Many detailers' overlook polishing due to the extra time involved, but if you want to perform a true detail I usually recommend this step. Polish is similar to compound, but contains a much more refined form of micro-abrasive that will help better reduce the Micro scratching left by compounding which will result in more gloss.

Though you can perform this task by hand, for best results I recommend using a rotary buffer. If you use a rotary buffer, I recommend using a foam polishing pad. These foam pads are available at Automotive Paint Supply Stores, and are specifically engineered to maximize the gloss on your PT.

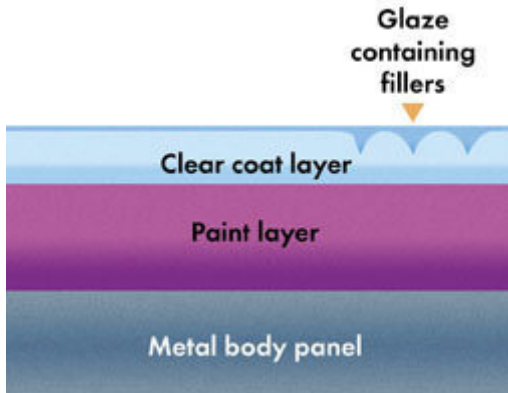
For this segment, I will be using Meguiar's #9 Swirl Remover. This is a good polish that is inexpensive (\$10.00), is available at most PEP BOYS, NAPA, and is simple to use.

For this segment, I am using a Dewalt 849 and a white cool foam polishing pad. As an extra step, I spray a light mist of Meguiar's Final Detailer directly to the pad to help lubricate during the polishing process.

Start by applying a ring of swirl remover to the foam pad. Begin at the top of the vehicle, and work your way down. Like the compound segment, spread the chemical across the panel you are working on, to minimize splatter. Use either the cross hatch pattern, or the figure eight pattern discussed in part 3 of this segment. Proceed over each panel until the exterior is polished, and good gloss is achieved. Be sure to wipe off any left over residue with a clean microfiber towel folded into four and misted with Meguiar's Final Inspection, or Meguiar's Quick Detailer.

## **Detailing Your Paint: Glazing**

In this segment, we are going to talk about Glazing. Many people think of Glazing as being the same thing as Polishing, but this is simply not the case! As Polishing is a lighter, more non-destructive form of Compounding, Glazing provides much needed Oils, and Nutrients which your paint needs to maintain its true rich, vibrant Colors, and bring out that Showroom Shine! Glaze also contains resins and fillers which improve light refraction by rounding off the edges of Swirl Marks. The less Swirl Marks, and imperfections visible, the more gloss and depth your paint will have, and the more gloss you have, the more your ride will pop at a show!



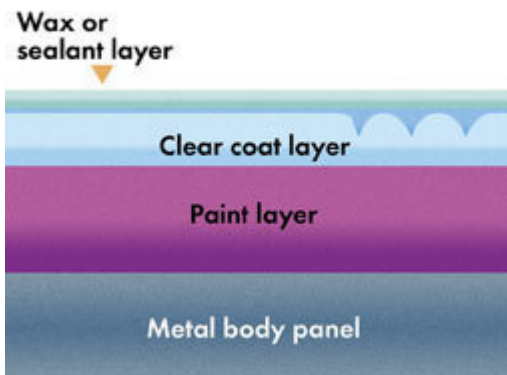
For this segment, I am going to use Meguiar's #7 Show Car Glaze. This is a good product that is inexpensive (\$10.00), Available at most PEP BOYS or NAPA, and is easy to use. Note: Though I am using my rotary buffer, this product can be applied by an orbital buffer, or by hand.

For maximum gloss, I am going to continue using my Dewalt 849 rotary buffer and a Black "Cool Foam" Glazing/Finishing pad. Just like in parts 3, and 4 of this segment, I am going to start with the roof of my Cruiser and work my way down. I start by misting the pad with Meguiar's Final Inspection to help lubricate, and follow by applying a ring of glaze to the pad. I then spread the glaze around on the roof to minimize splatter. As previously mentioned, you can use a cross hatch pattern, or a figure eight pattern to apply. Wipe remaining residue with a clean microfiber towel folded into quarters and misted with Meguiar's Final Inspection.

Always work in the shade, on small sections at a time, and on cool paint. Continue until the exterior has been glazed. Now your paint is nearing perfection and is ready for the final steps. In our next segment, we will get to protecting all the hard work that you have done this far.

## **Detailing Your Paint: Waxing**

We are almost done with the outside of our Project! Now that our paint has been perfected, it is time to add some good protection against the elements, as well as harmful Ultraviolet Rays that can damage your paint surface if not properly cared for!



For this segment, I am going to use Meguiar's Gold Class Paste Wax. Though this wax is a little more difficult to apply, and remove, because it's a paste, it is stronger than liquid wax. This means longer protection, and better gloss. It is also inexpensive at approximately \$12.00, and is available at PEP BOYS, or NAPA.

For this segment, I will apply the wax using the foam applicator that is included with this product. I start on the roof, working in small sections, and work my way down. I apply wax to the foam applicator pad, and work in a side to side pattern. The reason for this is to help fill, and blend minute scratches, and achieve maximum gloss. Let the wax dry to a white haze, and wipe off residue with a clean microfiber towel folded into quarters, and misted with either Meguiar's Final Inspection, or Meguiar's Quick Detailer.

After you have waxed the exterior of your PT, it's a good idea to go back over your paint one more time, misting each panel with either Meguiar's Final Inspection, or Meguiar's Quick Detailer, and wipe down with a clean microfiber towel.

### **QUICK TIP:**

One added step I do just for show car prep is to apply a paint sealant over the wax. This will make darker colors like red, blue, or black, as well as metallic, pearl, and candy paints pop better, giving more vibrant color, and a more wet appearance. Paint sealant can also add several months of protection to your finish. If you choose to do this final step, I recommend Meguiar's #20 Polymer Sealant. This product is easy to apply, and remove, and is inexpensive for a polymer Sealant at (\$17.00) this type of product is more often carried in Automotive Paint Stores. The application process is the same as the wax. Apply sealant directly to a clean microfiber towel, and gently massage the chemical into the paint. Allow a few minutes for the chemical to bond, and react with the surface, and wipe with a separate clean microfiber towel to visual perfection.

Please note that I have used Meguiar's products to perform this detail for its cost effectiveness, and ease of use. Though these chemicals are less expensive than some other brands on the market, they will produce the results in the picture of my Cruiser. These Chemicals are readily available at most Automotive Chain Stores like PEP BOYS, or NAPA AUTO PARTS, as well as many large Retail Stores like WAL-MART nationwide.



## **INTERESTING FACTS:**

When you are applying a coat of Wax, or Polish to your PT by hand, Do you use small circular motions, or straight back and forth motions to apply product, and which way is best?

If you're using a non-abrasive product with a high quality, clean, soft foam applicator pad, and you're working on a clean surface, then it shouldn't matter which direction you move the applicator pad over the finish because nothing you're using will be instilling any scratches or swirls into the finish.

The above being true, then some panels lend themselves better to straight line motions, while other panels lend themselves better to circular motions.

## **EXAMPLES:**

### Circular Motions

Most people find it's easier to apply products in circular motions to large panels like the hood of a car. The reason for this is because circular motions act to help you spread your product out over large areas for more even, and thorough coverage. Some people also feel that circular motions help you to better work products into the finish. One thing for sure, moving your applicator pad in a circular motion tends to feel natural, and appears to come natural to most people. (Hand a wax applicator to 10 people and ask them to apply some wax to the hood of a car and stand back and watch how they apply the wax).

### Straight Line Motions

Without good technique, applying products using straight-line motions is more difficult on larger panels. Straight-line motions are just as easy to use as circular motions, (and sometimes easier), on small panels and panels or sections that are longer in one direction while narrow in the other direction. Some times the panel itself will determine which direction you will apply your product.

Common sense tells you, (as well as the actual application of a product), that it will be easier and more efficient to use straight-line motions versus circular motions to apply a polish or wax to this thin, narrow painted section, than it will be to use circular motions.

The key thing to remember is this,

If you're applying non-abrasive products, i.e. products that do not scratch or scour the finish, and you're applying them with a soft, clean applicator and using good technique, then you should not be instilling any scratches or swirls no matter what direction you're moving your hand.

Did you know that the outside Temperature, and Humidity has a big effect on how Detailing Chemical can react to the surface of your PT? The best surface temperature range for applying cleaners, polishes, and protectants is approximately 60 degrees to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. More importantly, the surface does not feel warm or hot to the touch.

Basically, when you're working within this temperature range, it's not too cold, and it's not too warm to realize exceptional results from just about any Meguiar's product.

Meguiar's products will work easily within a much broader temperature range, such as 50 degrees to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but guaranteed best results will be achieved in the 60 degrees to 80 degrees range.

#### Ambient Temperature (Outside temperature)

Ambient temperature is the room temperature or the temperature of the surrounding environment. It's easily possible to have between 10 to 50 degrees difference in ambient temperature compared to surface temperature. This can make the difference between a product that's easy to work with, or hard to work with. Keep in mind, the hotter the ambient temperature, the quicker products will dry.

#### Humidity (Moisture in the air)

Simply put, humidity is moisture in the air. Technically there is Relative Humidity and Absolute Humidity, it relates to:

- \* Applying
- \* Working with
- \* Curing, drying, hazing
- \* Wipe-off or removal of car care products.

The simple explanation of moisture in the air, or more specifically, the amount of moisture in the air, is the major factor which will affect how easily or potentially difficult a product will be to work with, or a procedure will be to perform.

Low humidity, in warm to hot temperatures, will act to cause liquids to evaporate and dry more quickly. This can make a product difficult to work with or decrease the amount of time the product remains easily workable on the surface.

High humidity in cold temperatures can make products hard to work because it can dramatically increase the amount of time necessary for the product to cure, dry or haze (depending on which product you're using).

Low humidity in low temperatures tends not to be a factor in working with, cure times, and when applying and in the removal of cleaners, polishes, and protectants (Low temperatures are a factor, but not low humidity in low temperatures).

High humidity in high temperatures tends not to be a factor in working with, cure times, and when applying and in the removal of cleaners, polishes, and protectants (High temperatures are a factor, but not high humidity in high temperatures).

Extreme temperatures, both cold and hot will make any product more difficult to work with.

#### Direct sunlight

Direct sunlight will dramatically increase the surface temperature compared to ambient temperatures and make cleaners, polishes and protectants extremely more difficult to apply, work and remove.

#### Air current/wind

Air current/air flow, or windy conditions will act to increase the evaporation speed and potentially making some products more difficult to apply, work, or remove. In some cases this can be a bonus, helping a wax to cure/dry more quickly.

#### Summary

The best conditions for using cleaners, polishes and protectants on automotive paints would be in a cool place, out of direct sunlight, in a surface temperature range between 60 degrees and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, with comfortable to low humidity, with a light breeze to create the perfect conditions for detailing your car's finish.

Common sense and a good rule-of-thumb is to avoid applying any product if the surface is too warm to touch with the palm of your hand comfortably.

50 degrees Fahrenheit = 10.0 degrees Celsius

90 degrees Fahrenheit = 32.2 degrees Celsius

## **Re: Detailing Your Paint: Waxing**

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### **MORE INTERESTING FACTS:**

#### **Why should you Wax Your PT?**

Predating the automobile, it was European coach builders that first applied coatings of animal fats and wax to protect the custom paintwork on their horse drawn carriages. This tradition has endured over 100 years and is still the best way to protect the paintwork on modern-day coaches. Today, the multi-layered finish on your car, from the primer through the top (clear) coat, is only .006 to .008 of an inch thick. Regardless of how fine the finish is now, it will deteriorate and dull. Radiant and ultraviolet energy, acid rain, salt, atmospheric pollution, insect fluids, and bird droppings wage a constant war on your car's finish. Waxing provides an easily renewable, transparent barrier between the finish and a hostile environment.

Waxing also makes your car, new or old, look better. Quality waxes now combine enriching oils that "wet" the surface with Brazilian Carnauba Wax and/or modern polymers for a high gloss shine. This brings us to the subject of selecting a wax. Waxes can be made from a natural wax, usually Brazilian Carnauba, or synthetically made with polymers and acrylic resins. In choosing a wax, here are some points to consider:

#### **Carnauba Waxes**

Carnauba comes from the fronds of the "Tree of Life" (Copernicia Cerifera) native to northern Brazil. It is nature's hardest, purest, and most transparent wax. Carnauba car waxes tend to produce a deeper, darker, richer shine that is often described as "three-dimensional".

Many enthusiasts and show-car owners prefer the shine of carnauba waxes, especially on black, red, and dark color cars. Carnauba waxes bead water nicely, absorb the acid content in rain and hide minor swirls in the paint.

On the minus side, carnauba waxes are not as durable as synthetic waxes. Depending on your climate, they typically last 90 days. (Paste carnauba waxes will outlast liquid carnauba waxes due to their higher wax content.) Some carnauba waxes are a little harder to apply and buff off. And, carnauba waxes can be temperamental, sometimes "streaking" under certain temperature conditions.

### **Synthetic Waxes**

Made from modern polymers and acrylic resins, synthetic waxes offer maximum durability and ease of application. Synthetic waxes can last six to nine months or longer and typically wipe on and buff off with very little effort. These waxes, sometimes called sealants, create a very bright shine and are resistant to clouding and streaking.

On the down side, many enthusiasts feel synthetic waxes lack depth and richness. Black cars can look a sterile silvery-white in direct sunlight. And, the mirror-like polymers can collect in minor swirls and actually highlight paint flaws.

### **One-Step Cleaner/Waxes**

Many brands of carnauba and synthetic waxes can be purchased with or without cleaning agents. If you are using a polish before you wax, select a "pure" wax without cleaners. These formulas should produce a higher gloss and last longer. If you cannot devote the extra time for separate polishing, select a one-step cleaner/wax. One-step waxes can do an excellent job of maintaining newer finishes but cannot restore older cars with dull, oxidized, or neglected paint.

### **How long will wax last?**

Many enthusiasts prefer the shine from Carnauba waxes. It is a deeper, richer shine and tends to mask and hide minor swirls in the paint. While Carnauba has the highest melting point of all natural waxes it does start to melt at 180 degrees F. A dark color vehicle parked in the sun on a summer day can have a sustained paint temperature exceeding 200 degrees f!

A good rule of thumb is to expect 50% of your Carnauba wax layer to be gone after 30 days, 75% after 60 days and 95% gone after 90 days. If you use a carnauba wax, you should plan on waxing your car four (4) times a year. You can extend the waxes life expectancy by parking indoors, using a car cover and by using spray-and-wipe detail sprays like Meguiar's Quick Detailer.

Synthetic waxes contain man made polymers with melting points in the thousands of degrees F. These coatings can last 6 to 9 months or longer. Some of these products bead water while others "plate" the surface causing water to sheet off. This lack of a visual cue (beading water) often makes it difficult to determine when to re-apply synthetic products. a good rule is to wax your car once in the spring and again late fall. This should give your car good protection all year long.

## Detailing Your PT: Convertible Top Cleaning

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In this segment, we will be discussing how to properly clean and care for Convertible Tops.

The PT soft tops are made of polyacrylic/polyester canvas. This type of material will stain over time, and can become deteriorated at an accelerated rate if it is not cared for. Before we begin, here are a couple of things to remember. Do not use harsh all purpose cleaner to clean your top. It can stain the material, and like leather, can also pull some of the color off of the material. Do not use powder chemicals like A-Jax to clean your top. This will act like sand paper, and can destroy the top in no time at all! With this said, lets do some cleaning!

I recommend you clean your top at least once a month, or more if it is dusty. Do not use "car wash soap" to clean your top. The oils, and gloss enhancing minerals will make your top a virtual dust magnet. . I recommend using Wolfstien's Raggtop Cleaner. It is the only cleaner endorsed by the Haart's Corporation that supplies the tops to Daimler Chrysler. Fill a bucket with water, and approximately 2 ounces of soap. Do not use a cloth or chenille wash mitt as they will leave lint. Instead, if your top has a lot of bird droppings, or other related staining, use a soft bristle brush to agitate the surface. A good rule of thumb is if you can rub the brush across the back of your hand without scratching the skin, then it is safe to use on your top. After washing, follow up with a thorough rinse with clean cool water. To dry, use a clean microfiber towel, or synthetic chamois. Rather than wiping the water off, blot the water up with the rag or chamois. Do not use terry cloth or a diaper as they will leave lint.

Sooner, or later you will run across a stain that won't come out. Weather it is bird droppings, or tree sap, or some other related type of contaminant, the first natural thing to do is to scrub it till it comes out. This will only spread the material around, and will create an even bigger mess. Instead, keep a spray bottle with some of the Raggtop Cleaner used full strength.. Spray the spot, and let it sit for 3 to 5 minutes. Do not let it dry, as it will leave a stain. Follow by a thorough rinse with clean cool water, and then proceed to wash the entire top as outlined above.

Now that your top is clean, lets move on to protection. I am also going to recommend using Wolfstein's Raggtop Protectant for this process. It is not expensive, and is the only protectant endorsed by Haart's Corporation. This material is a spray, like Scotchguard, and it will leave a messy film on your paint, that is difficult to clean up, so I recommend taking a few minutes to mask off your paint and windows prior to using this product. Simply use cheap masking tape, and some old newspaper. Mask around the bottom of your paint as to not get overspray on the paint. Then lift the front of the top slightly and place newspaper between the top, and the windshield. Repeat with the side windows to finish the masking process.

Shake up the can of protectant for approximately 30 - 60 seconds before use. Start in the middle of the top on one side, holding the can between 7" - 9" from the surface, work toward the body line in smooth back, and forth sprays, releasing your finger at the end of each pass. Proceed until the top is completely covered. I recommend you follow up with a second coat of protection and a third coat on the surface around all seams. Allow the protectant to set up for approximately 30 minutes, and you are good to go.

Remove the masking material, and check for overspray on your paint, and windows. If any overspray present, a little wax on a clean microfiber towel should remove it easily.

## **Detailing Your PT: Finishing Details**

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In this segment, we are going to do some final touch ups, and discuss some great tricks to finish off our Detail!

### **WHEELS & TIRES:**

No matter what kind of wheels you have, it is a good idea to polish them every now and then to keep them looking their best and make them easier to clean! Meguiar's, and Mothers both make a good Mag Wheel Polish, or for even better results, if you live near a Truck Stop, most carry a product called Jeweler's Rouge, which is a white liquid product that is used to make aluminum truck wheels shine like chrome! If you can get some of that product, I highly recommend it as it does a great job! Application is very simple! Just take a clean white terry cloth or Microfiber rag, apply a little polish, and then rub it onto the surface of your wheel. Keep rubbing until your rag starts to turn black, and then wipe the excess product off! To save time, you can also use the Mothers Power Ball which attaches to an electric or 12 Volt Drill!

Now it is time to dress your wheel wells, and tires. I usually start at the wheel wells, and work my way down! Simply take an old rag, and a bottle of APC (All Purpose Cleaner), mist the inside of the wheel well, and wipe it down good. Next take a good one coat paint brush, and apply a little Tire Dressing directly to the brush, and apply it to the plastic wheel well. I like to use Meguiar's Endurance Tire Gel, but any good tire dressing will do! Next I apply dressing to the side of the tire walls using the same brush, and method as the wheel wells.

### **QUICK TIPS:**

To avoid getting Tire Dressing on your freshly polished Wheels, Try this. Cut a piece of cardboard the same size diameter as your rim. Trim off just enough to fit inside the lip of your rim but cover your wheel. Cut out a hole in the center for a handle, and cover it in duct tape. Now you have an instant wheel cover, and you will never get your freshly polished wheels messed up with tire dressing ever again!

If you have a Billet Grille on your PT, you can save a lot of time, and effort when polishing it by stopping by your local carpeting store, and picking up a small scrap of deep pile carpeting.. Simply apply a dab of Jewelers Rouge directly to the carpeting, and let the pile of the carpet get polish into every small nook and cranny that would otherwise take a very long time! After you have polished your grille, simply wipe off any excess product with a clean Microfiber Rag, and check out your freshly polished Grille!

If you ever find yourself in a situation where you have gotten dried wax on black plastic, and you cannot get it to come off, grab a clean Terry Cloth Rag, and a dab of either Peanut Butter, or Peanut Oil. The Peanut oil content has a chemical reaction which will dissolve the wax residue, which will correct the problem both quickly, and easily! This method also works excellent on Aluminum Diamond Plate, which can

easily tear up, and/or rip rags to pieces!

### **FINAL DETAILING:**

Once the wheels are polished, and dressed, I take a clean rag, and finish polishing all the rest of the Chrome using the same Mag Polish, or Jeweler's Rouge to give everything a good luster, and overall better, more finished look! After that is all done, I then wipe the car down with another clean Microfiber rag folded into four and a bottle of Quick Detailer. Look really closely for wax residue in all of the small cracks, around windows, and moldings. These areas can be cleaned using the tip of a toothpick, or a small spritz of Quick Detailer, and a Q-Tip! The more attention to the small details will pay off with the end result!

Next is the glass. First off, spray your glass cleaner onto the window. Instead of wiping it off right away, give it a couple of minutes to react on the surface. Agitate the glass cleaner with 000 or 0000 grade steel wool prior to wiping off. Now, when you are ready to wipe the glass down, you want to wipe the interior windows in an up and down motion. Next wipe the outside down using a side to side motion. The reason for this is, if you see streaks, you will know where they are.

### **FINAL WIPING TECHNIQUES**

One mention about your final wiping technique, (Not initial removal of product, but after the most of a product has been removed and now you're just giving the finish a final wipe).

Often times we'll witness people wiping the wax off their car, or giving their cars paint a final wipe using fast, spastic wiping motions. Instead, try this, take your wiping cloth, whether microfiber or cotton, be sure it is large enough to fold it 4 ways to give you plenty of cushion to distribute your hand/finger pressure more evenly over the surface of the side of the cloth in contact with the paint, and then wipe the finish sloooooowly, not quickly like you're trying to put a fire out.

Wipe the finish slowly. Give the substance on the surface enough time to transfer to the fibers of the wiping cloth. Think about it... if you move your wiping cloth quickly over the surface, you're only allowing nano-seconds for any small amount of wax/polymer residue to transfer from the paint to the cloth.

If you slow down the rate of travel of the cloth over the finish, you improve the chance for whatever it is you're trying to remove to successfully transfer to the fibers of your wiping cloth.

If you follow all of the above, always using clean, dedicated applicator pads to apply your products, then removing them using clean wiping cloths, your finish should look clear, glossy and rich in color.

Now, your final step on Detailing the outside of your PT is to stand back, and admire all your hard work! The outside of your ride is now detailed to perfection, and you did it all on your own!

## **Detailing Your Interior: Carpeting**

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In this segment, we are going to discuss how to begin the process of Detailing you Interior.

First we need to open all of the doors, and trunk, slide both front seats all the way forward, and remove all belongings, as well as the floor mats. Next, we are going to start by vacuuming the interior! I always use a Soft Bristle Brush while I am vacuuming which helps out when trying to loosen soil embedded into the carpeting, and then use a crevice tool (Long Narrow Vacuum Tool) to reach into those really hard-to-clean areas. Visually, it only takes a few of those overlooked areas to make an otherwise clean car feel dirty, so just a little extra time spent making sure you have gotten everything will pay off big time in the overall finished result! Once you have vacuumed under the back of the front seats, be sure to slide the seats all the way back so that you can then finish up front.

After you have thoroughly vacuumed the Carpeting, visually inspect the Carpeting for light stains. Most light stains can be easily removed with a general APC (All Purpose Cleaner), and a Soft Bristle Brush. Simple Green or a good Citric Cleaner will do fine! Simply spray the area, agitate the area with your Brush, and then either pat dry with a clean Microfiber Rag, or vacuum up any left over residue. This method should work on most types of light stains on Carpeting, and Cloth Upholstery except cloth headliners which are made from a much more delicate material.

It is always a good idea to first try a test area in a non conspicuous area whenever you try new chemicals on your interior to assure that you do not potentially cause damage to your interior!

### **QUICK TIP:**

Since Floor Mats (Including Carpeted ones) do not have insulation under them, you can wash them out with a bristle brush, a bucket of soap, and water, and a garden hose! Simply lay them out in your driveway, fill your bucket up with some water, and dish washing liquid, or car wash soap, and give them a good scrub down! Next hose them down to get all the soap, and dirt out, and if you have a Wet/Dry Shop Vacuum, simply suck the water right out of the mats, and you are good to go!

### **WARNING**

Do not try washing your carpets in your PT using the above method! In doing so, you may generate Mold in the Insulation which would result in irreversible damage, so Please, just don't do it!

## **Detailing Your Interior: Plastic and Vinyl Trim**

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In this Segment, we will be discussing how to clean, and dress Plastic, and Vinyl Trim in your PT.

Vinyl is subject to deterioration from thermal heat (baking grime into the surface),



UV radiation (causing fading and cracking), abrasion (sliding in and out of seats) and solvents found in some cleaners and dressings.

A microscopic view of automotive vinyl would show raw PVC (polyvinyl chloride) covered by a thin layer of plastic called the "topcoat". The topcoat is the part of the vinyl you see and can touch. To keep vinyl soft and flexible, manufacturers add agents known as plasticizers to the raw PVC. A major function of the topcoat is to hold in these plasticizers, which otherwise would evaporate as the sun heats them. This is why new cars develop a greasy "vinyl haze" on the inside windshield for the first three to six months.

Protecting the topcoat is the top priority in properly maintaining automotive vinyl. All vinyl manufacturers agree on and recommend the following:

#### **CLEANING:**

Never use household cleaners, powdered or other abrasives, steel wool, or industrial cleaners, dry cleaning fluids, strong petroleum distillates, bleach or detergents. Use a medium-soft brush, warm soapy water, (such as Ivory soap), wipe off with a mist of cool water and then dry with a clean Microfiber Rag. Stubborn stains should be cleaned with an alkaline (soap) based formula, not a solvent (acid) based formula.

#### **DRESSING:**

In order to dress your Plastic/Vinyl trim, simply take a clean Microfiber Rag folded into four, and spray a small amount of Interior Dressing directly to your rag, and gently apply it to your trim components. Allow the Dressing to remain on the trim you are treating for approximately five minutes, and then grab another clean Microfiber Rag, and wipe off the excess chemicals. Follow these steps on all of your plastic, and vinyl trim components, until you have completed your interior.

## **Detailing Your Interior: Leather Seats**

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In this Segment, we are going to discuss the proper way to clean and care for Leather Seats. Conditioning your Leather Seats, replaces the natural tanning oils evaporating out of the hide. The smell of leather comes from these oils. If not replaced, leather will eventually dry out, become brittle and crack. Think of these tanning oils as microscopic, lubricating oils. If you look at leather under a microscope, the fibers look like a pile of rope that's all tangled up. Tanning oils coat these fibers allowing them to bend, move and slip across one another. These oils keep the leather soft and supple. Without lubrication, leather fibers will become stiff and brittle. When repeatedly flexed, stiff, dry fibers will simply break and the leather will develop cracks. Here is a basic plan to clean, and care for your Leather Seats!

#### **TO PROPERLY CLEAN YOUR LEATHER:**

- \* Spray cleaner to a wet applicator pad and apply to one area at a time (i.e. a seat back).
- \* Gently agitate the surface with a leather cleaning brush. This removes stubborn

grime and will not harm the leather.

\* Use a clean, damp sponge to rinse the leather.

\* Towel dry with a clean terry cloth towel.

In addition to regular cleaning, leather requires replacement of natural oils. (The smell of leather comes from oils evaporating out of the hide.) If these oils are not replaced, the leather will dry out, deteriorate and crack. Once every month or two, use a leather conditioner to restore these natural oils and keep the leather soft and supple. Leather conditioners with rich combinations of natural oils that have a high rate of UV Leather Conditioning agents which are especially beneficial on neglected, abused or aged leathers that have developed "character lines".

### **TO PROPERLY CARE FOR YOUR LEATHER:**

Apply conditioner to a damp applicator pad and wipe all leather surfaces in the vehicle.

Allow 15 to 20 minutes for the oils to penetrate and give a final wipe down with a clean towel. Don't be alarmed if there is conditioner on the wipe towel. The leather will only absorb as much conditioner as it needs.

If you own a convertible with a leather interior, you should consider additional sunscreen protection. Leather conditioners typically do not offer any UV screening. The best solution is to alternate between a leather conditioner and a good Leather Cleaner which contains UV Protection in its Formulation. For example, one month I'll use a conditioner to keep the leather healthy and supple. The following month, I'll mist and wipe the leather with my Leather Cleaner to add UV protection.

Coated or "Corinthian" leather.

Some leather being used in domestic automobiles has a top veneer of vinyl. This should be considered a vinyl interior and treated with a vinyl dressing. Do not use a leather conditioner on vinyl topped leather. The conditioning oils can not penetrate the vinyl coating to reach the leather. If you're not sure if your car's leather is vinyl coated, check with your car dealer or the manufacturer.

## **Detailing Your Interior: Finishing up**

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Now that we are basically done with our project, I just wanted to throw a couple of little tricks to give your ride a little more finished appearance!

### **QUICK TIPS:**

A good trick I always use to keep the interior smelling fresh is to place a Fabric Softener Sheet under each seat. This will leave a nice, clean, fresh smell that will last for days!

Next, take your soft Bristle Brush, and give your carpeting a quick brushing using

side to side strokes. This will create the illusion that your carpeting has been professionally shampooed, and adds definition at Car Shows!

And lastly, be sure to click in your rear seat belts! This just gives a neat, and clean look, and is done by most Detail Shops!

Congratulations! If you have followed the steps outlined in this Guide, then your PT Should be looking as good, or better than when it rolled off the Showroom Floor!