

Greg Bowron wrote the following article from his knowledge of award winning Corvette preparation

Car Care products that work...

I've detailed a lot of Corvettes and some products stand out that really work so I thought I would share as we are all looking at our "spring cleaning".

For cleaning interior fabrics and leather, Griot's Garage sells an Interior Cleaner that really cleans. Be sure to use a leather conditioner after cleaning your leather upholstery.

<http://www.griotsgarage.com/product/interior+cleaner+35+ounces.do?sortBy=ourPicks>

When polishing your Vette start with a good wash. Any *car* soap will work unless you want to strip the old wax and then you can use Dawn dish detergent, which will remove the old wax and polish. Next use a clay bar to prepare the surface and it will be smooth as glass. Finally add a good polish. I can recommend two: 1. If you are into car shows and want the best possible shine for your Vette, I recommend you try Zaino. I think I have tried almost every over the counter car polish and car wax and I was once the Production Manager for Simoniz and Prestone Car Care Products and I had the R&D development group reporting to me. I made many millions of cans of wax and polish so I am familiar with a lot of the products out there. Zaino is simply the best system I have found and I use it exclusively on my '68, Donna's 2000 and my red 2001 Vettes. I use Z3 with ZFX on my '68 and Z2 with ZFX on the C5s. I use both Z6 and Z8 detail sprays on those Vettes. Zaino is mostly sold over the Internet. <http://www.zainostore.com/> 2. If you want a great polish that will make your car look terrific with minimum effort try a product called Exponent. Originally developed to improve fuel efficiency on aircraft this polish may make it more difficult to put your car cover on, as it may want to slide off the other side! It gives a great shine, good protection and all with minimum effort. It is sold locally by Vince Mercuri (vmercuri@indy.rr.com) in Carmel out of his house.

<http://xxponet.com/applications.html>

By explanation you will note that I have referred to the above 2 products as a polish. There are polishes and there are waxes. Waxes usually offer better *protection* than polishes but I no longer use waxes, as waxes ALWAYS will leave a slight haze or smears that are all but impossible to remove. All waxes will contain some percentage of the same carnauba wax that our dads used on their cars back in the 40's and 50's when they were sweating up a storm putting on the original Simoniz wax. Its great stuff but usually a lot of work to use. If you insist on using a wax, I like Zymol

(<http://www.zymol.com/zymolcreamewax8oz.aspx>). I used this on my '68 for many years until I got too old and lazy to apply it. A tip if you use this or any other wax, after you have buffed it off go back one more time and mist it with cold water and then buff it again. This "sets" the wax and makes the smears I referred to less visible.

Other stuff:

For car washing I use any car soap, as these generally will not remove your previous polish or wax. Do NOT use dish detergent unless you intentionally want to remove old wax buildup and start over. Dish detergents will strip grease, wax and polish from your car.

For clay bars, use whatever automotive clay bar you find the best price per ounce on as I think the same manufacturer makes them all to the same specification. Use great care when using a clay bar so you don't scratch your paint. If you drop the clay bar on the ground throw it away! You can find instructions on how to clay bar on the internet

(http://www.zainostore.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=SGCWC&Store_Code=Z).

If you use a buffer: 1. Use it sparingly as each time you buff you are removing some of your clear coat, 2. Use a good orbital buffer system as some will burn and ruin your paint and some won't ... (I use Griot's Garage's <http://www.griotsgarage.com/product/griots+garage+random+orbital.do?sortBy=ourPicks>), 3. Learn how... The "Junkman" has a video tutorial (<http://www.autogeekonline.net/forum/auto-detailing-101/55571-junkman-s-mother-all-how-fix-your-paint-novices-thread.html>) . I use Griot's buffing products but the products he uses I'm sure must work well too. Griot's has a how to DVD that gives you the ABC's. http://www.griotsgarage.com/text/content/prodinfo/videos/html/orbital_polishing-basics_g3.html

For detail sprays, I usually use Maguire's Quik Detailer but Griot's Speed Shine, and DFT Detailer (used by Mecum) are also very good. I use Zion's Z6 & Z8 products at shows.

For window cleaning there are many good household products. I even use detail spray for these at car shows. Donna swears by the Magic Rag for glass.

For tires, I like the "wet" look. A great cleaner to start with is Wesley's Bleachwhite tire cleaner. After they are clean I use Black Magic Tire Wet. At car shows I often apply Mequiar's Hot Shine but beware, this is a silicon based product and if you get it on your tire treads (which I always do) your traction will be greatly reduced for several miles after the show and virtually non-existent if it rains!

For engine detailing, USE GREAT CAUTION! Water in the wrong spots will cause you some serious issues. That said I have successfully pressure washed engines before. Cover electronics and anything that you don't want to get wet with plastic. Spray on Simple Green and let soak then rinse off being careful to avoid getting electronic devices wet. After washing, I use a leaf blower to blow off most of the water and then wipe everything clean and dry. The "Junkman" has a video that can help...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C78qyX9PuHA>

For wheels, there are a lot of good products. I've tried several and all seem to work. Just read the directions and use caution as I have found some of these contain hydrofluoric acid and even a retired Global Director of Safety knows that HF is more dangerous than most acids because you may not feel any pain until hours later after serious bone damage has happened. The products with HF work but scare the calcium outta me! <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/hydrofluoricacid/basics/facts.asp> If your wheels are clean and you are doing final detailing for a car show, I have found that glass cleaner works great on chrome wheels. Invisible Glass is a great product but any glass cleaner will work.

For the undercarriage... yep, I even wash the underside of the car. If its really dirty I'll spray it with Simple Green, let it soak and then hose it off. I might then wash it with a sponge and solution of Dawn detergent and then rinse and dry it off. After it is clean, an occasional wipe off with detail spray and a rag keeps it clean. Tip; NEVER use a towel you've used on the undercarriage, your wheels or your exhaust on your paint unless you really do want some nasty scratches in your paint.

For the exhaust, I use Never Dull (<http://www.nevrdull.com/>). There are also some neat but expensive buffing attachments that you can put on your power drill to clean the inside of your exhaust tips that are found in most automotive sections of your favorite stores.

Want more? Talk to the experts! There are at least 2 members in the club that are detail specialists, Dick Pacetti and Chris White! Both of these guys main secret is an item called "elbow grease" but they have techniques and products that work and are willing to share. Trust me, it can be embarrassing if we park our Vette next to theirs at a car show! There are also tons of how to videos out there on youtube that will help educate you. One such series is by a guy that calls himself the Junkman. I can't vouch for the products that he is pushing but you can learn from his techniques and ideas. You can find a complete series at: <http://www.detailingworld.com/forum/showthread.php?t=116730>