

411

Car Care Tips

'Summerizing' Your Car

By Marc Battle

For many people, preparing the car for summer travel merely means giving it a good wash, wax and vacuum. However, it is more important to make sure your car is in top mechanical condition to safely make those trips.

Consider this: The hot sun can be just as cruel to your car as cold temperatures. So, if you took the time to "winterize" your car, why not "summerize" your vehicle?

One of the most important things to do is to check the coolant in your car's engine. It is essential that the proper level is maintained at all times, but especially so in hot weather. If your car overheats because of a lack of coolant, it may result in serious (and expensive) engine damage.

The assorted rubber belts and hoses throughout your engine are extremely



By Brenda Spears

important as well. The timing belt must be checked before taking a road trip, because if it breaks, the car simply will not move.

Also, the hoses routing fluids throughout the engine are worth replacing before a major drive. At the very least, they

should be checked for any cracks or excess wear. A weak hose, softened by the summer heat and sustaining high pressure, will leave your engine susceptible to damage from extremely hot temperatures.

Finally, your car's appearance is important and should be maintained. Besides normal washing and waxing, it may be wise to invest in a leather or vinyl protectant. These liquid compounds will help protect your seats and dashboard from the harsh sun.

There are a number of books available at your local library or bookstore on this subject. Two popular ones are: "How to Make Your Car Last Forever" by Jack Gillis, and "The Complete Consumer Car Guide" by Mike Spaniola. Also, check with your local AAA office, information is often free -- even for nonmembers. But above all, be consistent in maintaining your car. Regular oil changes, lubrications, and engine inspections are the best way to make sure your car doesn't spend its summer in the repair shop.

Please send your questions or comments for "411" to Jackie Mitchell, 2034 National Press Building, Washington, D.C., 20045.

LETTERS AND E-MAIL



Having always been a BMW person, I enjoyed your piece on the BMW Z3 2.8. I am the former owner of a BMW 528E and a 320. However, I became turned off from the high cost of service when BMW began to introduce new technology. With the Z3, maintenance is no longer a concern, so I have come back to BMW. It is a smooth car, with luxury, and it is affordable. It has a contemporary, bold look and is a conversation piece. I have a Z3 on order packed with all the power and features I enjoy. I'm looking forward to top down weather.

Antonio Bruton
Accokeek, Md.

African Americans On Wheels is long overdue, much needed in our community and is receiving rave reviews. You have a

great publication, an impressive, experienced staff and information that everyone can understand and use. I wish you much success and pray that the auto industry understands that the best African-American consumer is an informed consumer.

Thank you for a top quality presentation.
Cathy Hughes
Owner & CEO
Radio One

Thank you so much for arranging my participation in the "For Love of Automobiles" program, in which my racing car was taped and shown on a segment by News Anchor John Harter, of WJLA-TV News Channel 7 (in Washington, D.C.).

Though I have enjoyed drag racing for many years, nothing compared with the day my car was taped at Maryland International Raceway.

Again, thank you for making this opportunity available to me.

Hilliard Bowman
Quartermasters Racing Team
District Heights, Md.

Editor's note: After WJLA's John Harter called us looking for a black race team in the area to profile in his one-hour broadcast, the Quartermasters were the first automobile lovers that came to mind. The team is doing a lot of positive things, including involving young people in motorsports. And, a reminder -- Don't forget our special issue on blacks in motorsports will be out this summer!

I recently went shopping for a new car and my experiences were quite eye opening. The first dealership I visited was a Honda. The salesman aggressively tried to push me into buying a make and model of car in which I had no interest. He would not listen to anything I said, and finally got angry when I wouldn't buy a car that day.

While browsing at the Toyota dealership, a salesman informed me that I would have to come into the showroom and see his manager otherwise he would get into trouble. I left dumbfounded.

At Saturn, no one bothered me for 10 to 15 minutes. When a salesman did approach me, he simply informed me that there were brochures available, then he gave me his card. Suffice to say my next car will be a Saturn!

Kim Frazier
Lanham, Md.

Thanks for your wonderful advice on car care tips for women by Jacqueline Mitchell. Most of us women drivers know absolutely nothing about car care. It was very important and valuable information. Please tell me where I can find the book she mentioned.

Jenetta Campbell
Philadelphia, Pa.

Editor's Note: Jenetta, you should find "Everything Women Always Wanted to Know About Cars But Didn't Know Who To Ask," at your local book store or library.



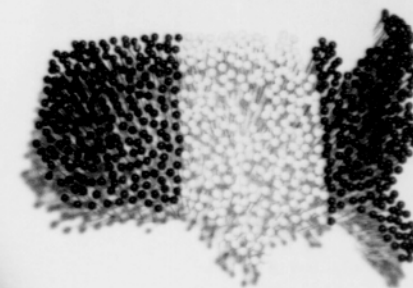
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