

Concours Corner: Rubber Strip Conditioning

Bev Frohm

Second in a Series...

Last time we talked about washing your car. This month I would like to discuss how to keep your rubber parts looking fresh.

Every car I have ever owned has needed a little TLC, from time to time, on the rubber stripping both inside and outside. You know the look; light gray, maybe some water spots or a powdery look etc.. The California sun and water can be treacherous for rubber. Washing the car again won't remedy the problem. Recently, purchased a new car and already I have those wonderful little telltale signs on my rubber window stripping.

There are a few ways to get rid of these and I will tell you some pro's and con's. Now these are products I have tried and either kept or threw away. There may be some of you out there who have had luck with a certain brand or product, write us and let us know what your experience has been. It is all personal preference!

Vaseline – A BIG No-No! First of all this is a petroleum product and will do the opposite of what you are trying to achieve. It dries out the rubber over time! On top of that it is slick looking and gets all over the place.

Armour All – This product's has had some controversy for a while now. Some people swear by it and others tell tales of woe. Personally, I do not use it. On your rubber it will give a shiny slick look, unless you put it on and then wipe it off. It doesn't last very long either, your first wash you'll see a discoloration on the rubber. Some light gray spots etc., so you have to use the product again to get rid of them – hopefully.

Black Wax – I do not think this product is available any longer. I used to use this on the bumpers and tires. It was too difficult to use on rubber stripping, as you had to rub it off just like wax. It would just be my luck I would be rubbing off the wax on the stripping and take half the stripping off because I got into my work too much.

Black Chrome – This is my current product of choice. It gives

the rubber a satin look and does not come off with the first washing. It is also a wax base, so it protects the rubber from the elements. I have also used it on the rubber bumpers (the hard rubber on the older 911's) with some success, but I use another product on those now. I have also used it on the gray plastic you find in the older 911 & 912's. It will bring life to the plastic without giving it that slick phony look.

Pledge – You can close your mouth now. Many of us in the Concours circle use Pledge, but not for rubber stripping. Remember those funky rubber bumpers I mentioned above? Well Pledge does a great job on those, as well as the seats (not leather) in the car.

Meguiars Rubber Conditioner – I have had some success with this product, but before a show I always go back to the tried and true Black Chrome.

Now the rubber stripping is not a large area, so apply the product of choice with a Q Tip. You do not have to rub it in hard, just apply the product and then go over it again with a rag or another Q Tip. A word of caution, do not use the Q Tips with the wooden sticks, just one slip and you could tear your rubber and you will be very unhappy if you do that.

A word of caution for you Targa owners, for the cloth covered side of the Targa there is another product that will do the trick. Do not use any of these on the cloth, it will not look good. Go to a Crafts shop and get a charcoal gray or black fabric paint. I know this sounds crazy, but another Concours person gave me this tip years ago and it works. Mix the fabric paint rather thin and dab it on with a sponge. As with anything, first do a test in a less visible area. The fabric paint work s great! Don't get the metallic black fabric paint though, unless you need a little sparkle in your life.

How often do you apply the product of choice? This depends on how often your automobile is in the elements. The 911 lives in the garage and I apply the Black Chrome every third show or so. The new car lives outside, so I apply the BC once a month.

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