

# FINE CAR CARE

## Number 2

### Interior

This is the second of a series of articles on how to care for the cosmetics of your Porsche or other cherished autos in your garage. There are many options available to you and we will present our favorite based on what has worked to bring interiors to show winning condition. Most of the major brands of cleaning material work well but be sure to test on a small area before doing the entire surface.

#### Don't panic, it can be fixed or repaired

The interior of the car gets the most wear and tear with the exception of the engine. Like the rest of your Porsche it is made with high-quality materials which must be maintained. With even older cars the interiors can usually be saved through good cleaning/conditioning or even re-dyeing back to the factory color. In case replacement is required there are several fine suppliers who can provide kits for seats, carpeting and dashes. But there are also some excellent craftsmen in the Chicago market that can do outstanding and affordable custom interior work.

Do I have leather or vinyl seats, side bolsters, trim? What about Alcantara? Alcantara is a tradename given to a composite material used to cover surfaces and forms in a variety of applications. It can be described as an artificial substitute for suede. Vinyl is a man-made material and has a memory where leather is natural and recovers slowly. The easiest way to tell the difference is with your fingernail. Press into the material with your fingernail to make a deep impression. When you remove the pressure and the material bounces back immediately to shape then it is vinyl. If it responds slowly it is leather.



*A fifty year old full leather interior restored to national award-winning condition.*

Seats take the most wear particularly the side bolster that you rub every time you enter or exit. These wear to the point where they look worn-out and even need to be replaced. If the material is not cracked then just that section can be cleaned and dyed back to new condition. Even the complete leather seats can be saved if the leather is not cracked and separated. There is a great supplier of leather cleaning and matching color dye and with a lot of patience a novice can usually do a good job. Leather interiors

must be conditioned a couple of times each year. With an open car that gets a lot of sun, once a month is suggested.

The carpets are high grade material and most of us use floor mats to protect the wear points. But they do get dirty and should be vacuumed regularly. If the matting (worn area) is obvious then a good shampoo along with a very gentle wire brushing can bring it back to almost new appearance.

Most dashes are vinyl but some are leather. They dry out and even crack. Aftermarket suppliers offer a total cover but there are local suppliers who will come to your garage and fill the cracks and re-dye the material so it looks as new and will last for years.

On older Porsche, the headliner starts drooping with age. They should be replaced by a professional but the material kit is available from several sources. This is especially true of older Targa's.

Mom always had her favorite technique for cleaning windows. There are multiple products for cleaning glass but the secret is to do it in the shade and put a fluorescent drop light inside the passenger compartment. This specific lighting will show all of the dirt and smudges. A microfiber cloth works far better than Mom's old newspaper

The following cleaning solutions are not necessarily the most expensive and have proven to work well.

#### Vinyl and Leather

Lexol Leather Conditioner (brown bottle) is good and inexpensive for regular maintenance. If your leather is in bad shape then here is a company that offers professional grade cleaner, conditioner and color dyes to match your interior: Color-Plus Leather Restoration System, [www.colorplus.com](http://www.colorplus.com)

Vinylex Protectant works great on vinyl and plastic surfaces.

To clean Alcantara go to their web site for specific cleaning suggestions: [www.alcantara.com](http://www.alcantara.com)

#### Carpeting

Folex Carpet Spot Remover is available at Jewel and is a great cleaner and inexpensive. A new product that has been used by several of our members with great success is Würth Activ-Clean. Although a fabric cleaner I accidentally used it on my aluminum engine case and it even removed the grease. Don't do this; there are better products for cleaning engines.

#### Windows

Invisible Glass seems to be the best so far. Used with the fluorescent light and microfiber clothes it works great.

#### General

Würth Rubber Care Silicone Free cleans and leaves a nice deep and dull final finish. An optional utility product for rubber trim and tires is Vinylex Protectant in the blue plastic bottle. And to end, our favorite is Simple Green for cleaning anything. This is biodegradable, will not damage any surface, safe on skin and will clean the floor if you spill it.



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