

**Minneapolis Star Tribune**  
**Let it Ride: Interior Motives**  
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## **Interior Motives**

I probably spend as much time in my car as I do in some of the rooms in my home. But do I let those unused rooms pile up with empty soda cans, food wrappers, Target bags, and loose change? I do not. I've even been known to invest in an amenity or two for my home—yet my cars are always the stripped-down models.

Talking with a couple of local car-care companies has given me the sense that my car's interior could be a more soothing and attractive space.

Chris Hazuka manages Sunshine Detail Center in Hopkins. Many of his patrons come in for interior renewal twice a year. Spring and fall are the favorite seasons for detailing, he says—after the summer road trips and before the winter snow and sludge. “If the car is clean, it seems like it runs better,” he says.

Interior detailing can also be prompted by a one-time event: Spilled milk or someone getting car sick, on the downside. On the brighter side, people often come in for detailing when they're getting ready to trade in a used car or turn in a lease.

For a cost of about \$75 for a four-door sedan—\$10 more for an SUV and \$15 more for a full-sized van—the Sunshine people will remove all dust and grime with a combination of 3M cleaning products, brushes, and pressurized air. They even vacuum out the air-conditioner vents. They can get salt stains off the carpets and coffee stains off the seats. The rare stains that can't be removed—Kool-Aid, for example—can be spot-dyed to match the original color. “You may still know the stain is there, but the next person won't,” Hazuka says.

Does the Sunshine Detail treatment involve any pine-scented cardboard air fresheners? Absolutely not, Hazuka says. His shampoos are unscented—although some of the grime-cutting cleaning products have a citrus base.

Auto detailing can get your car's interior back to its showroom condition. Dealer Automotive Services, also in Hopkins, can make it even better. Owner Steven Rush sites video systems, in-dash navigation, and heated seats as some of the hottest amenities his company provides.

For people traveling with kids, an investment of \$1,000 and up gets an over-head mounted video screen, or two screens mounted in the back of the headrests. The backseat passengers have remote control and wireless earphones—allowing front-seat passengers to listen to music or even carry on a conversation. Aftermarket systems come with 10 to 12 inch screens—far bigger than those provided with original equipment.

If you're a road warrior, Rush offers high-tech weaponry: An in-dash navigation system that replaces the radio with a computerized touch-screen. Enter the address you're going to, or query for the nearest pizza parlor, ATM, or golf course. The system will provide a map and audibly signal every turn. Mapping covers all of the United States, plus "a good portion of Canada," Rush says. Upgrades to the \$1700 basic system include backup cameras, so parallel parking is no longer Mission: Impossible.

Rush also offers the luxury I yearn for: Heated seats. For just \$300 apiece, seats can be wired for heat, with an on-off switch mounted close to existing seat adjustment controls.

Do these upscale investments make sense for a modest, high-mileage vehicle? That's entirely up to the owner, Rush says. While the aftermarket equipment might cost more than original equipment, it might—as in the case of the video systems—be better quality. Then, too, Rush notes, many of today's bells and whistles come as part of a package. Why pay \$5,000 or more for a set of amenities if there's only one that really matters? In some cases, the amenities can be removed when the car is sold and transferred to the next vehicle, Rush says.

Sunshine Detailing and Dealer Automotive Services prove that what Mother always said is still true: True beauty begins within.