

Winning Car Shows – 3 Parts

Part 1

Okay, so you want to know how to win that all important car show?

You want to know how all the big time competitors end up in the winning circle?

Do you want to get that hot chicks (or guys, if you're a girl) phone # but yet they wont look at you until you win a car show????

Well, fear not my fellow Korean Car Enthusiasts...Visionz is here to save the day!!!

Follow these tips and you'll be golden!

Interior Judging

Okay, lets start with the interior, and make our way outward.

Area 1: Instrument gages, clock, radio, rear view mirror, ash tray, steering wheel, & horn assembly. The ash tray should be spotless, empty it and inspect for rust or burns. As the ashtray may be costly to replace and hard to find, rub in a little silver "calyx" manifold dressing to mask the burn and blemish marks. While not perfect, it will probably pass inspection. When cleaning your rear view mirror, don't forget to clean the backside. Next clean out the glove box completely, and if it has a cardboard liner, use a permanent magic marker to hide minor scuffs. Check around the ignition lock for paint scratches. Obtain from a hobby store 3 "liquid paint marker pens" in silver, black, and one that is close to your car's color. Forget buying the costly, stupid, extra thin bottle stuff with a built in brush that "factory matches" your car color but never really does! With the proper paint pen, carefully dab and then rub in as needed. (Repeat a few time). Spray on a Q-Tip your favorite cleaner to remove accumulated dust from around the instrument gages.

Area 2: Dash, sun visors, and headliner. Sun visors are deadly point stealers. Remember to flip the sun visor to clean the other side, and seek out the discolored or rusty fasteners. Hold on before removing a 30-year-old sun visor to replace with new fasteners! You may pay dearly in time and money for doing so, as it often the grit, grease, and crumbs that are holding the old thing together. For a fast immediate cover up, just smear in a dab of calyx silver manifold dressing on the rusty fastener. For all the other fasteners and interior screws, do likewise or else use the silver or black paint pens. If your headliner has a small hole or two, as many do, fill the hole with anything that sticks and smoothes out flush, then touch it up with a permanent magic marker or paint pen. (I know...it sounds ghetto, but it works) If the dash and headliners look dull, and time is scarce, you might try this. Squirt a mist of clear tire blackener on your rag and slowly work it in to enhance the luster shine. This new look shine outshines any "proper" commercial coating we have ever-wasted money on.

Area 3: Carpeting and floor mats. Move your seats in all possible directions and take a close look, upfront -- behind -- and on the side. Shampoo the carpet and floor mats not only to make them clean, but also to smell great. Then wrap masking tape or duct tape inside out around one hand. Massage this hand over the entire carpet and floor mats, to ensure picking up the fuzz balls, and hair from unknown origins.

Area 4: Seats and seat belts. Make sure you clean the entire backside of the seats. Analyze the seat belts... if they're in fair shape wedge them along side the seat (and hope the judge won't dig them out), if they are nice, lock them over the seat. Judges love to check the metal framework around the seat, so remember the silver paint pen? You probably need it now.

Area 5: Get ready to work. Look inside the door jambs, (hinge area), because this is where the judges' eyes focus. Clean like crazy, use your markers and paint pens, then reapply a light lubricant. Shine up door sills, and add some luster to door panels. Look closely at old rubber around the glass, especially between the dash and windshield, plus dull weather stripping. Remember that clear tire silicone? You may have to use it here.

Area 6: Hatch & Trunk area. Before starting to clean, make it easy on yourself. Invest in a small bucket, a couple of plastic containers, or even strong plastic bags. Put everything possible in these containers, if it doesn't fit, leave it home. That way you can easily remove your belongings during inspection at the show. Yes the judge will look there, and especially at the hinges. Use your tricks to restore the hinges to appearing new. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, don't forget to bring your bag of trick touch ups with you to the show. You may need them, plus you could easily auction them off, for quite a price, to your neighboring car show participants.

Part 2

In this part, we'll discuss the fundamentals of having an award-winning exterior.

Area 1: Let's start with the wheel areas, before washing the car. With your hose at a fairly high pressure, spray down the wheel wells. Often they have turned a bit gray from road wear and tear. After fully cleaning the wells with your soapy soft brush, use a dab of touch-up paint. Remember upon arrival at the show, to brush off the stone pebbles that mysteriously accumulated on the bottom edge of the wells. Use a proper wheel cleaner spray that is designed solely for wheels, and wash off as directed. DO NOT use tire cleaner on the wheels!!! Very important: Do not apply any foam tire cleaner, where you "Spray and walk away". All you are doing is putting a shiny, temporary coating on dirt and grime. Within a short time period you will have point-costing smears. Instead, use an old semi-firm brush to wash & scrub down your tires, it will be worth it.

Area 2: Wash the car. Get out the old hose, spray down the car for 3 minutes, and then get a beverage. Next, flood your car with water again and walk away. Now locate your wash mitt, car wash soap, and what you plan on drying the car with. For the 3rd (and final) time, soak the car down. All dirt, dust, and droppings should be softened up and ready to gently wash away. Do not use too much soap as it entices a cloudy finish, this includes the windshield. Decision time on how to dry the car: (1) get in, put the pedal to the metal and circle the block 20 times, or (2) use soft cotton towels (caution... clean towels washed in laundry soap, might streak), or (3) get out the chamois, caution again-- it must be a real deluxe chamois, not the one from the dollar store that feels like sandpaper, or (4) get out the 100 mph leaf blower and watch all the dirt water and debris shoot from areas never touched by human hands. This works great, but stand a little back from the emblems, or they may become airborne.

Area 3: Find everything you missed. For this, you need a nice spray cleaner, window spray, a couple tiny paintbrushes, and a few small clean rags. First open up the gas bay door... yup, this area is open game for judges to nail you. Clean it well, and throw the rag away. Secondly, clean the license plate unless you plan on driving with it off. Third, check all emblem areas, and shoot some spray cleaner on your paint brush (or q-tip) to touch up edges and crevices. Fourth, Spiff up behind the mirrors, under the bumpers, around the window trim, inside the hood grooves, and elsewhere as needed. Now what about all the rusty and discolored bolts you just noticed? Too late now to remove and replace! Get out the "point saving" black and silver paint pens you bought at the hobby shop. This 5th step of a couple dabs here and there will make nuts and bolts look like new. Last step is back to the grill area. Sit on your butt and stare at the radiator. How did all those fried bugs get there? Here's an area judges find, and your competitors overlook. A good 5 minutes spent here is worth more points than 58 minutes of rewaxing your hood. Use lost of spray, a small taped handle paintbrush, and a couple toothpicks to very carefully dislodge all those nasty cremated critters.

Area 5: More decisions-- to touch or not to touch? Count up all the stone chips bigger than a paint dot. You will loose points here, but it is a big, big chance to try covering up these chips. Choice 1 is to fetch that "exact match" paint bottle with the brush built into the cap. Do you really think that this too thin, runny stuff is going to work?? Oh well. Risky choice 2 is to use the paint pens. Start by testing a low down chip. Apply a tiny dab, then carefully rub it out, Dab and rub out again from 3 to 10 times. This should produce a spot that at least blends in. Let it dry down, and later squirt the area with your final spray cleaner. Works for some people, but do it at your own risk.

Area 6: Magic in a spray can. If you don't have a can of tire spray, speed over to the store and find a can. Get a couple of pieces of cardboard to use as a paint finish shield. Go to it, gently spray in a circular motion, and presto your wheel wells and tires will shine without streaking. The final step is to crouch way, way down and look at any visible suspension and frame areas. Lay flat down on your cardboard and using cheap cleaner spray blast away.

Part 3

In this section, we'll talk about cleaning your engine!

Before you start preparing the engine compartment for judging, evaluate all the time and effort it may take. Many judged car shows (even those with true qualified judges), have class divisions for "wash and shine" or "closed hood". For this kind of judging, chrome is not king, and some judges cringe at shiny parts that didn't come chromed from the factory. Also make sure that painted pieces or black areas are not all the same shade of black. There should be different degrees of color, luster and shine.

Area 1: Carefully start spraying and rinsing. Did you buy Engine Gunk? If you want to finish this project fast, opt instead for cheap spray cleaner and a slow running garden hose. Cheap grease removing cleaners, generously applied, work great, plus you can survive the fumes afterward. After completing your entire engine bay cleaning, finish this project with a few quick whisks of carefully shot, lemon pledge. Judges love a clean smelling engine and get point deducting crazy if the aroma is of fried gunk.

Area 2: Next, start with the most inexcusable area under any hood... rusty manifolds. Countless car owners open their hoods to show off their show quality chrome, mirrors, and perfect sparkle, unaware that spectators and judges alike are turned off by rusty manifolds!!! Yes, you can buy or "calyx" manifold dressing for under \$10.00 and easily make an engine of difference. Sure, it is not a long-term solution, but cleaning off the inevitable gray fingers from dirt/rust, may allow you to take home the gold.

Area 3: Hood latches discolor and mar endlessly. Spray clean, dry, and then apply your paint pen, or manifold dressing. In fact, while you have these handy touch ups out; see how many other nuts, bolts, and latches you can restore to a new look. Next examine the fan blades for discolorment or spots missing paint. Grab your permanent magic marker or paint pen and touch them up. Or if you have time, spray paint the blades. Don't forget to check out the radiator from the engine side. Those pesky bugs sometimes heat pressure themselves, and you need to squirt their carcasses heavily with your cleaner to gently remove them.

Area 4: Cleaning the valve cover, spark plug cover, and air box/intake are common sense. But what about the engine block? Get the Q-Tips and toothpicks here, and don't quit until it is clean enough for a judge to eat off of.

Area 5: All the wire and hoses need to be cleaned, and a fresh "brand new" look obtained. Your tire spray stuff applied onto a rag, might remove alot of dullness is a hurry.

Area 6: Make sure you clean underneath the hood as well. Alot of people have under hood mirrors or mirror film. Get out the ol windex and go to town. Also, the tire spray stuff works well on your windshield fluid nozzle hoses, in a quick jiff.