

MOTORWORLD

KEEPING AUTOMOTIVE LEADERS BEHIND THE WHEEL AND AHEAD OF THE MARKET

RETAIL REVOLUTION

Sonic Automotive is transforming the retail sales process with its new dealer model that offers a premium car-buying experience. **PAGE 20**



GERALD JONES AUTO GROUP

Gerald Jones Auto Group is respected in the community for treating its customers and employees the right way. **Page 24**

CRAIN AUTOMOTIVE TEAM

The Crain Automotive Team has created a successful brand in Arkansas for selling and servicing cars. **Page 29**

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New technology solutions are critical for attracting younger workers and sustaining innovation for the future.

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Avoiding the auto recall pileup can be tough.

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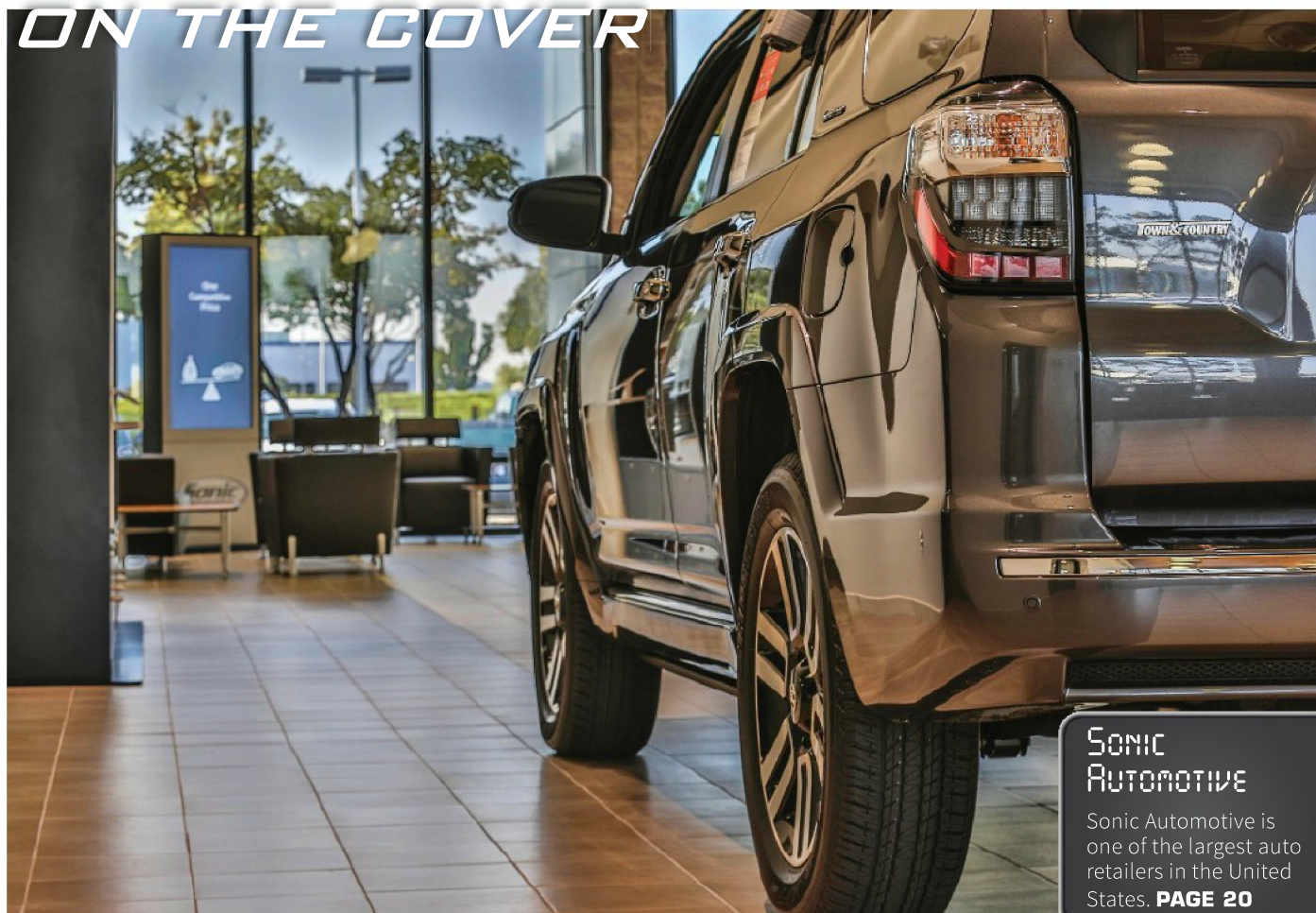
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ON THE COVER



**SONIC
AUTOMOTIVE**

Sonic Automotive is one of the largest auto retailers in the United States. **PAGE 20**

DETAILING

BEFORE




AFTER





DRIVERS NEED BETTER CAR CARE INFORMATION

ACCORDING TO RECENT STUDIES, THE AVERAGE AGE OF PASSENGER CARS ON THE ROADS IS CURRENTLY AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH WITH AMERICANS SPENDING MORE THAN 100 HOURS EACH YEAR COMMUTING TO WORK. TO CATER TO THE INCREASING NUMBER OF USED CAR OWNERS AND RESULTING USED CAR DEALERSHIPS' BUSINESSES, THE TEAM WITH CREATIVE COLORS INTERNATIONAL (CCI) – THE INDUSTRY LEADER IN ON-SITE REPAIR, RESTORATION, CLEANING, PROTECTION AND DYEING OF LEATHER, VINYL, FABRIC, PLASTIC AND CARPETING – RECOMMENDS THAT AUTO DEALERS RAMP UP THEIR EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THEIR CUSTOMERS ON CAR CARE BEST PRACTICES IN ORDER TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES IN THE SATURATED MARKETPLACE AND OUTPACE COMPETITORS. OFFERING GUIDANCE AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FREE-OF-CHARGE WILL POSITION DEALERS NOT ONLY AS EXPERTS, BUT AS CARING, KNOWLEDGEABLE LOCAL PROFESSIONALS, WHICH IN TURN WILL INCREASE CUSTOMER RETENTION AND ATTRACTION, AS WELL AS SERVE AS A REPUTATION BOOSTER.



As industry professionals, it should be a priority to help educate car owners about their options to protect and remedy any interior damage. It's important to explain that taking preservation steps will not only improve a car's looks, but also help car owners get the most out of their vehicles in terms of performance, economy, emissions and longevity, in addition to increasing the resale value. For leather seating in particular, many people mistakenly believe that common mishaps like scratches, tears, burns, cuts, stains and/or fading indicate the interior is ruined so they'll spend a large amount of money to replace it; however, it's important for customers to understand that with proper care and maintenance, leather can stay looking new and retain its flexibility, durability, comfort and beauty for much longer.

First and foremost, to help customers preserve their car's leather interior before repair or replacement is needed, auto dealers can offer the following dos and don'ts.

DOS:

- Avoid sharp objects near leather such as scissors, pens, keys or children's toys. Leather is skin and is therefore subject to cuts, tears, burns and surface scratches.
- Be aware of dark colored clothing and blankets as the dye may rub off on leather when the material is dry and will bleed on leather when the material is wet.
- Be careful with dairy products near leather as dairy spills will leave spots; even after cleaning, the oils in the dairy will eventually rise back up to the surface.
- All leather needs to be wet dusted routinely as dirt, dust and clothing leave behind traces. Wet dusting is the simple process of taking a white cloth towel, immersing it in warm, clean water, wringing out as much water as possible, and wiping down the leather material.
- To help protect leather from drying out and cracking in a dry environment, regularly condition it.

DON'TS:

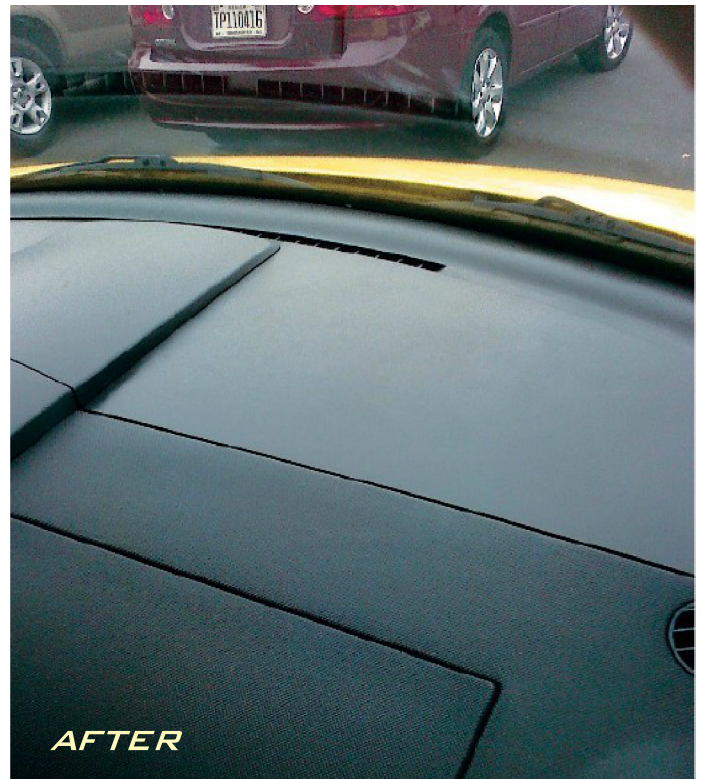
- Do not place newspapers on leather seats as the ink can bleed through and is very difficult to remove.
- Do not use paint, ink, nail polish or antiseptic dyes around leather since they alter the coloring and will leave a stain.

- Do not use waxes, silicone products or other leather preparations that impair the ability of the leather to "breathe."
- Never use caustic household chemicals to clean leather. Avoid leather preparations that contain alcohol or petroleum distillates, such as Windex, Fantastic, turpentine and mineral spirits.
- Do not use mink oil or other animal fats as they will darken the leather and can turn rancid, causing the stitching and leather to rot over time.

Next, auto dealers can share the following do-it-yourself techniques for all types of car seating, not just leather.

- **Leather** - Without proper care and maintenance, leather seats can easily be worn down prematurely from cleaning-related factors such as dirt, spills and oil from skin. To remove fresh stains and clean leather seats, apply a solution of 10 parts water to 1 part ivory liquid dish soap to one section of the seat at a time and wipe clean using a soft, dry towel. To avoid expensive and unnecessary replacement costs, it's important to wipe down seats regularly using a clean, damp towel which prevents the dust from working its way into the leather. To protect seats, apply a leather conditioner several times a year so the leather continues to breathe and stays flexible.
- **Upholstery** - Stains are inevitable with the amount of time drivers spend on the road, whether they're commuting, traveling or catering to their family member's busy schedules. For hard stains such as crayons and dried food, scrape off as much of the debris as possible before wiping or scrubbing using a





spatula, putty knife or vacuum. For liquid stains, pour several drops of ivory liquid dish soap over the area, spray with water and wipe down area using a clean cloth or soft brush. Finish by wiping the area with a clean, dry towel.

- **Carpeting** - Before vacuuming dirt and debris, use a stiff brush to 'scrub' the area, bringing unwelcome contaminants to the surface. For unwanted pet hair and dander, wear a pair of latex or rubber gloves and rub your hand over the surface. For increased effectiveness, dampen the glove with water to attract and bring allergens to the surface. Floor mats should be vacuumed then washed thoroughly using a power washer or self-service car wash to remove the dirt buildup from weather elements. Lastly, floor mats should be completely dry before putting them back into the vehicle to avoid the possibility of mold growth.
- **Air conditioning and heating vents** - Dust, dirt and debris can accumulate in narrow vent spaces, which can cause musty smells and enhance respiratory symptoms for those with allergies. Using a cotton swab or a sponge brush and spray cleaner, scrub away any dirt or allergens that are stuck to the vents. For cars with a cabin air filter, either change it or remove it to blow dirt and dust out. Air filters should be replaced every 12,000 to 15,000 miles, or at least once a year. If you're not sure what kind of cleaner to use, Creative Colors International makes an all-around cleaner for everything in the car's interior.

Lastly, auto dealers can share a couple of simple cleaning and maintenance techniques to properly prepare vehicle interiors for any upcoming road trips, especially around the holidays and school breaks.

- **Prevent and remove unwanted smells** - Leather is a natural material and will bake when placed in the sun, just like your skin. Keeping the windows open and regularly cleaning the entire interior with a soap and water mixture will help immensely. While driving, keep the vent open to help the air circulate and cool it with air conditioning. With anything, if a vehicle is completely sealed, smells will be noticeable. To remove foul odors, clean the vehicle through hot water extraction.
- **Avoid messes** - Keep a plastic bag in the vehicle for all garbage, along with a few towels or extra napkins for quick cleaning of spills. Keep rubber floor mats on carpets at all times to help protect from spills. If anything does spill, it will get trapped in the mats and then those mats can be taken out and hosed off or cleaned. ■

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