



March 2008

Newsletter

Our Mission

At Women's Automotive Solutions, we make car buying easy! We are a team of automotive consultants who work with dealers and wholesalers to enable our clients to get the best possible deal. We believe the car buying experience should be an exciting and pleasant process, and we are committed to creating a positive experience one client at a time.

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What We Do

For a modest, flat fee, Women's Automotive Solutions will help guide you through the entire car selection and buying process.

1. Tell us what type of car you want (new or pre-owned), and we'll find it!
2. We will negotiate price and financing to enable you to get the best deal.
3. We arrange delivery of your new or pre-owned vehicle.

You simply sign the contract and take the keys!

We make car buying easy!

Mobile Detailers and Body Shops Save You Time and Hassle!

Getting your car ready to sell can be a pain, especially if your vehicle has some minor damage. You know that you should really fix that scrape on the side where you grazed the garage door or the dent in the bumper where you hit the mailbox, but you don't want the hassle of putting your car into the body shop for a couple days. Fortunately, there are companies that bring the body shop to you! Companies like *Collision on Wheels* can do minor collision repairs in your own driveway or the parking lot at your office, saving you valuable time. They even have a mobile paint booth (think big, blow-up tent) to do paint touch-

Getting Your Car Ready to Sell

By LeeAnn Shattuck

While most people understand the importance of getting their car into pristine condition when selling to an individual, they rarely take the same care when trading in a vehicle to a dealer. After all, they're just "trading it in", right? WRONG! The term "trade in" was intentionally developed by the automotive industry to separate consumers from the idea that they were *selling* their car. It's the same reason that casinos have gamblers use chips instead of cash – to make them feel like they aren't risking real money. But, you are. When you are "trading in" car to a dealer, you are really *selling* the car, and you should take the proper steps to prepare your vehicle, if you want to maximize the selling price.

Your car should be in the best possible mechanical condition when you try to sell it. Be sure that you have performed all of the scheduled maintenance and consider fixing any minor issues. Gather all of your maintenance records and receipts, including oil changes and any warranty or repair work, so you can prove to prospective buyers (including dealers) that the vehicle has been well maintained.

The appearance of the vehicle is equally important. You may overlook some dirt, stains and cosmetic blemishes because you have an emotional attachment to the car (whether you realize it or not). A prospective buyer does not. That isn't to say that you need to have every tiny scratch and door ding removed to make the car look brand new again. A certain amount of wear and tear is to be expected on a used car, consistent with its age and mileage. However, spending a few hundred dollars to have any dents or scrapes fixed (remember that time you backed into the mailbox?) could net you hundreds to thousand dollars in the selling price. You may not even need to take your car to a body shop. Mobile repair companies can perform minor body and paint work in the comfort of your own driveway at a lower cost than most body shops (see side bar).

You should also thoroughly clean your car inside and out. Clean out all the junk and trash you may have floating around inside, under the seats and in the trunk. Vacuum every nook and cranny, clean the upholstery and headliner, and wipe down the dashboard and other interior surfaces. Clean all the glass, inside and out, including the mirrors. Wash and wax the exterior, polish the wheels and gloss the tires. If the vehicle is a sports car or luxury car, consider buffing out any scratches, fixing any "curbed" wheels, and even detailing the engine compartment, as buyers of these vehicles tend to be more discriminating. If all of this scrubbing sounds like too much work, consider having your vehicle professionally detailed. Even taking it to the local car wash for a quick bath and vacuum will make a difference.

The appearance of your car is just as important if you are trading it in. When a dealer appraises your car, he has to take into consideration all the costs he will incur to recondition the vehicle for resale. He has to pay to fix it, clean it, advertise it and sell it, while making a comfortable profit. While a dealer may be able to do repairs and detailing at a lower cost, it is still a hassle and increases his overhead expenses. The dealer may even decide that the reconditioning costs are more trouble than they are worth, and he will simply haul the car off to an auction and offer you *below* wholesale price!

Dealers are also human beings and, therefore, not immune to the "wow" factor. A clean, beautiful car invokes a positive emotional reaction, which easily raises the selling price. Most of us, including dealers, also assume that people who care about their car's appearance also take good care of it mechanically. This can be a dangerous assumption, but you might as well use it to your advantage. The bottom line is that *nobody* wants to buy a dirty car. Spending a few dollars upfront to make your vehicle looks its best will pay you back in the long run.

ups. Naturally, they can't fix the big stuff, but bumper dings and scrapes are their specialty and at a price that is typically 20% - 50% less than a traditional body shop.

Go one step further, and have your car professionally cleaned by a mobile detailer.

Professional detailers know how to buff out light scratches, get stains out of upholstery and make your car shine!

Collision on Wheels is a national franchise with certified technicians in most major cities, including Charlotte. For a free estimate, call 1-866-551-DENT. www.CollisionOnWheels.com

Zoom Impressions is a mobile detailer in Charlotte, NC that cleans cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles and even airplanes. For a quote or appointment, call 980-297-6546. www.ZoomImpressions.com. (Women's Automotive Solutions clients get a 10% discount - just ask the Car Chick for a coupon!)

Car Chick Trivia!

Be the first person to email the Car Chick (LeeAnn Shattuck) with the correct answer and receive a \$5 gift card!

Trivia Question: Which car manufacturer used the ad slogan "A different kind of company"?

Contact Us

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Vehicle Spotlight – 2008 Smart Fourtwo

By "The Car Chick" (a.k.a. LeeAnn Shattuck)

Each month, I pick a vehicle out of a hat and write about it. The article contains industry information about the vehicle and, occasionally, my humble opinion. Neither the car manufacturers nor the dealers pay me to do this, I just love cars. If you have a suggestion for a vehicle spotlight, please email me at leeann@womensautomotivesolutions.com!



Many people have been asking me about the new Smart cars, so I decided to swing by the new Smart dealership here in Charlotte to get you the scoop. The name SMART is an acronym for Swatch Mercedes ART. If you are thinking that Swatch sounds like those trendy watches from the 80s, you are right! The idea for this micromobile was actually conceived by the Swiss watch company, which teamed up with Daimler-Benz to create a vehicle that could be easily parked on the crowded streets

of Europe. The SMART debuted in Germany in 1998 and, after a decade, has finally made it to the United States.

But is America, the land of "bigger is better", ready for this minicar? The Smart "Fourtwo" (does that stand for four wheels, two doors?) hit the U.S. market in January 2008, and there is already a 14 month wait list. Not too long ago, such a car would have been unthinkable in the U.S., but obscene gas prices and global warming have made environmentally friendly cars trendy. The Fourtwo gets over 40 mpg on the highway and nearly 35 mpg in the city, but that's not what makes it so "green". Smart uses only water-soluble paints for its three basic colors (black, white and yellow), and the body panels, dashboard, and wheel housing covers are fully recyclable. Protecting the environment and preservation of natural resources are truly hallmarks of smart brand. They even offer all-natural floor mats made from hemp.

The next question is "can such a tiny car really be safe?" The laws of physics dictate that any small car is at an inherent disadvantage when hit by a larger, heavier vehicle. However, Smart has gone to great lengths to make the Fourtwo as safe as possible. The core is a reinforced steel safety cell, which surrounds the driver and passenger and acts as a protective shell, much like a roll cage in a race car. Standard front- and side-impact airbags, as well as antilock brakes and an electronic stability system provide additional safety. The Fourtwo passed every American and European crash test, but a star rating has not yet been issued.

The two-seater Smart Fourtwo sports a 1.0 liter, 3 cylinder, rear-mounted engine that puts out a mere 70 horsepower and 68 pound feet of torque. Yet, weighing only 1800 lbs, the little car can still make 0-60 mph in under 13 seconds. Its top speed is electronically limited at 90 mph.

The Fourtwo comes in two trim levels. The base "Pure" model starts just under \$12,000 and comes standard with a 5-speed automated manual transmission, central remote locking system, 2-spoke leather steering wheel, and 15 inch steel wheels. The upgraded "Passion" starts at \$13,590 and adds a panorama roof, alloy wheels, air conditioning with climate control, 3-spoke leather sports steering wheel with shift paddles, power windows, electric and heated side mirrors, and AM/FM radio with CD player. Options for the Passion include leather seats, heated seats, a premium sound system, power steering, an alarm system, rain and light sensors, and metallic paint. The "Passion" is also offered in a cabriolet (starting at \$16,590), which has a fully automated, retracting soft top and removable side roof bars. Fun accessories are expected for enthusiasts who want to pimp their ride.

I had the pleasure of test driving the Smart car, and it was delightful. The ride is quite smooth, and it has sufficient "umph" to maneuver confidently through traffic. The turning radius is phenomenal, although the complete lack of front-end takes some getting used to. The cockpit is comfortable, ergonomic and, surprisingly, non-cramped. Cargo space is limited, but the passenger seat does fold flat, in case you need to go to Wal-Mart. Wow. Something smaller than my Mini.