

Guide to Preparing a car for The Club Concours

The following notes may be helpful to Concours entrants.

This guide is intended as a starting point for all potential Concours competition entrants, but can also be used by anyone wishing to keep their car looking its best.

You will be amazed how you can transform your classic Scimitar or Sabre into a show standard car for minimal cost and just a little of your time and effort; the rewards are considerable. Not only have you now increased the value of your car, since it is now of show standard and not just another Scimitar, but you may well find that you get bitten by the bug and get a real buzz from the competitiveness of Concours events. You will make many more friends, both fellow competitors and other members, and the general public will also appreciate the high standard you have achieved by your efforts.

The Concours competition is open to all Club members and points are given for condition, presentation and originality of the exterior and interior of your car, including the engine bay, underside of the bonnet and the wheels and wheel arches, which are all judged as they have a major impact on the look of the car. Wheel nuts/wheel nut caps and brake drums should also be clean and tidy. The underside of the car is not judged.

To encourage attention to detail of the whole car, as well as concentrating on those items listed on the score sheet, the judges will choose a 'wildcard' item to check on the day before judging commences, which will be something that is not listed already on the score sheet.

For more information, contact the Concours Coordinator, and refer to the Calendar for locations and dates of Concours Events.

Always think of Concours Preparation in four distinct time stages as follows:

Long Term Work

This includes items such as bodywork, paint, chrome, wheels and interior trim. Although it is not necessary to have a repaint or new interior, these notes assume that the condition of all major items has been addressed.

Medium Term Work

You should be looking at the paintwork under the wheel arches, which includes the parts of the chassis and the suspension that can be seen easily. This area takes time to clean, rub down and repaint, all of which can be done by anyone with a paint brush, aerosol paint and enthusiasm. You will be amazed how new paintwork under the wheel arches, together with polished chrome, alloy or newly painted wheels transforms your car.

Also to be tackled in this medium term category are stone chips, stress cracks and scratches to the paintwork, and (for cars with chrome bumpers)

the removal of front and rear bumpers to clean, polish or repaint the rear and the repainting of the bumper brackets. It is always worth replacing any fastenings with new plated ones when doing this type of preparation as it makes a significant difference to the visual impact.

Time spent tidying up the door opening/shut areas is well worthwhile; clean, repaint, polish, paying particular attention to polishing door catches and kick plates. If the latter are badly scratched it may be better to replace them altogether.

The boot or rear storage wells should also be inspected and cleaned and repainted. The tools, spanners, jacks, wheel brace, etc. should be cleaned and repainted as they will also be judged. The tools may need a new tool roll to present them at their best.

All this detail work, which almost certainly will include some paintwork (most can be brush painted) will take time, so aim to start the work several weeks before the first event.

Two Weeks Before the Event

The two main areas in this section are the interior and the polishing of the exterior.

Interior cleaning includes the cleaning of the upholstery and the carpets.

There are lots of products on the market that are excellent at bringing tired cloth, leather and carpets to near their original condition.

Do not forget all the little nooks and crannies where dust and dirt collects – you can be sure that the judge will find them.

Specialist glass cleaning materials really make a difference – use them inside and out.

Use rubber cleaners around the window and door seals and on the pedal rubbers plus heel rubbers on the carpets. *Caution; do not drive the car with cleaning/polishing product on the pedals or heel mat as they could be slippery!*

It is a good idea to cover up the seats and carpets when cleaned if you are using the car prior to the show.

When dealing with the exterior it may be necessary to ‘T-cut’ or buff-polish the paint prior to applying polish to the paintwork. There are several excellent polishes on the market that bring the paintwork to Concours standard with that extra shine.

Chrome/bright-work and all exterior rubber should be cleaned at this time, taking care to remove any remaining polish from awkward corners, such as the grill and around the letters and badges.

Wheels are easier to clean if removed from the car. This is best left until as near the show day as possible. Clean, highly polished wheels are another important scoring point of the car. Tyres can be brought to life with one of

several special tyre polishes.

Note that all tyres, including the spare, should match and be of the same make to score maximum points.

The Day Before and the Morning of the Show

The day before the event remove everything from the inside of the car and give the interior a final vacuum and polish. Wash and dry the outside of the car then polish all the paintwork, chrome/bright-work and glass.

All that remains now is for fine weather for your journey to the event. Make sure that you arrive well in advance of judging time (which will commence at 1100, after which no further cleaning or preparation is permitted). This will give you time to wash under the wheel arches and give the tyres a final buff with tyre cleaner, not forgetting to clean in the treads as well as the walls of the tyres. At this point you will hear several people comment that you must have trailered your car to the event as the tyres are not even dirty!

If the weather is unkind and the roads are wet on the journey to the event, you will have to allow some extra time to wash and leather down the exterior, as well as to clean your wheels and wheel arches. Make sure that everything is removed from the interior of the car, including glove box and storage cubby holes, however some personalisation such as documents or items relating to the cars history, adding interest and well-presented is likely to secure extra points, so that it is now just as it was when collected from the showroom when new.

The tools may be displayed inside or outside the car together with the handbook and MoT certificate (if applicable). Also, some well-presented personalisation, such as documents, photos or items relating to the cars history and that adds interest is likely to secure extra points

All competing cars must have current Road Fund Licence and must have been driven to the show.

Finally check that all your lights, indicators, horn, wipers and washer jets are working (it is a good idea to carry spare bulbs just in case) as the judge may ask you to operate all these, as well as start the engine and let it run on tick-over. It is a good idea to start the engine so that it is warm prior to judging and starts first time and ticks over smoothly.