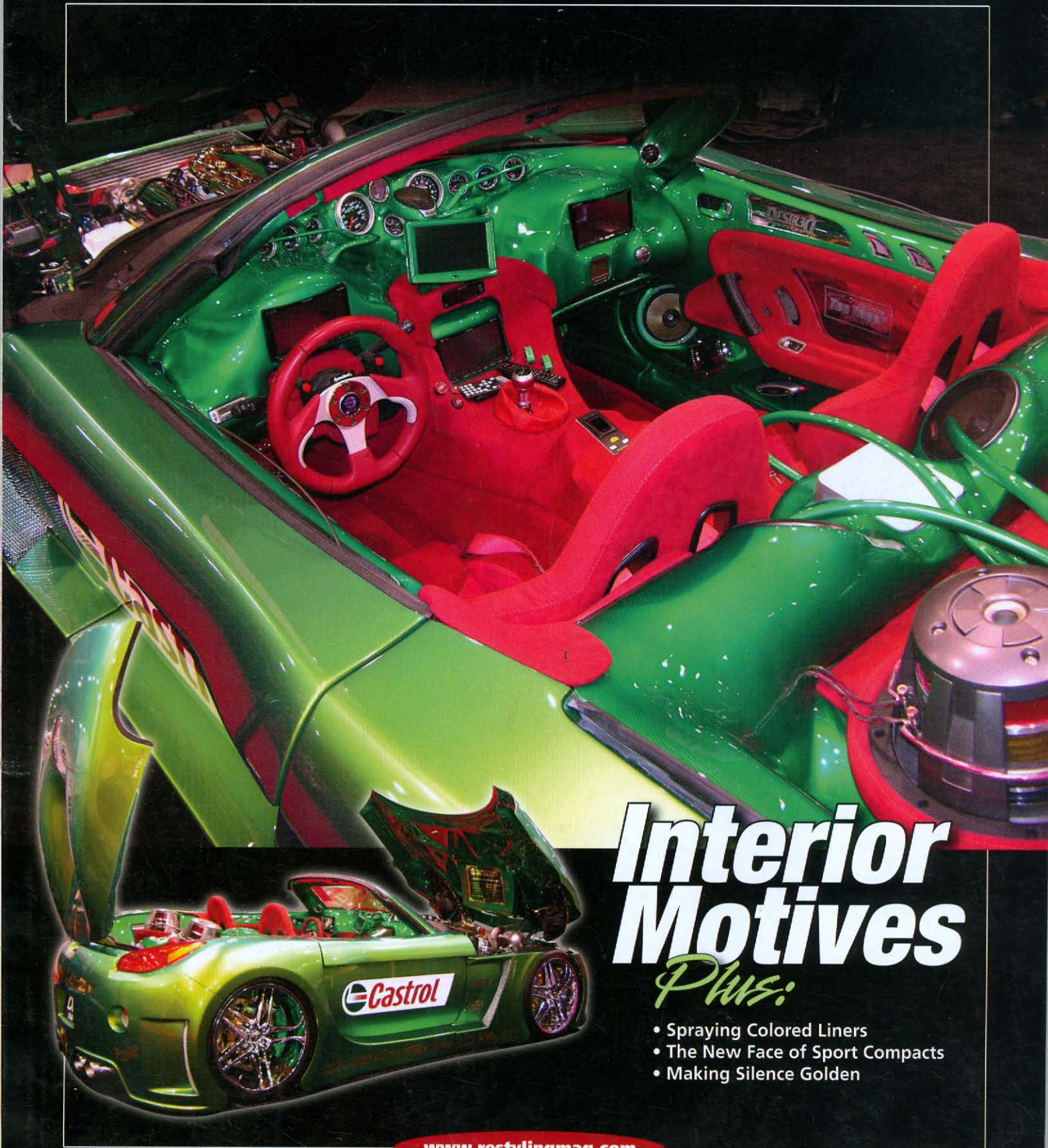


# Restyling

The Auto, Truck and SUV Accessory Magazine



## Interior Motives

*Plus:*

- Spraying Colored Liners
- The New Face of Sport Compacts
- Making Silence Golden

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Bulk rolls and vehicle-specific kits allow installers to work sound deadening into their list of services in a way that is right for them.

Dynamat

# Silence Is Golden

**Well-known in 12-volt circles, sound- and vibration-deadening materials are making inroads in the restyling and trim aftermarkets.**

By Dirk Vinlove

**A**ny car guy knows the adrenaline boost that courses through his veins when a *real* muscle car, complete with tuned exhaust, is fired up. But that same car guy might also admit—in a weak moment—that an hour-long daily commute in that same car might not be the most soothing on the senses.

“The 2007 Mustang comes from the factory with virtually no OE insulation,” says Tim Cox, president of Quiet Ride Solutions/Acoustishield in California. “People love their car, but the noise it makes is something that flat-out wears on them.”

Today’s aftermarket sound- and vibration-deadening materials can take a huge bite out of that noise for your customers, and is an installer’s dream with self-adhesive backing requiring little more than stout scissors to trim.

“It’s a product that anyone in the 12-volt world knows well. We have really just begun to promote its benefits to the restylers and trim shops,” says Tim McCarthy of Kansas-based HushMat. “We have come a long way from the days of a jute mat under the carpeting. Once your customers hear and feel how much quieter their vehicles can run, the word will really get out.”

## **Block that Noise**

The physics of sound and vibration inside a vehicle isn’t hard to understand, with the two main components of cockpit noise improvement either aimed at reducing airborne noise or vehicle structure noise.

Airborne noise is noise from wheel vibrations on the road surface, wind noise, transmission noise or exhaust system sound that makes its way through panels to the

driver's ears. Sealing any gaps and adding another layer is much like adding a double-pane window to your home.

Structure noise is a more direct vibration of unsupported, thin material panels such as the doors, roof, quarter panels and the firewall due to engine or transmission vibration. These issues increase over time with virtually every automobile on the road.

Both types of noise can be lessened with aftermarket sound-deadening materials.

It isn't until a consumer spends upwards of \$80,000 to \$90,000 on a Lexus or Mercedes that they get the level of sound dampening the aftermarket can easily provide, says Quiet Ride's Cox.

"A lot of cars come to us at 100 db [decibels] and we can knock 20 db off them pretty quickly," he explains.

*continued*



Dynamat



Quiet Ride Solutions



Quiet Ride Solutions

**A quiet interior is attractive to many drivers, and particularly those with longer commutes.**



**Simple peel-and-stick installation makes laying down the material a quick, easy process.**

HushMat

# Silence is Golden

continued

Among the main customers for sound dampening are drivers who spend significant time commuting.

"People love their tuned exhaust systems—for the first 20 minutes. Then that aggressive sound coming through the floorboards gets old, especially on hour-long daily commutes. We can take away that cabin noise while preserving the performance and sexy street sound," Cox says. "People are spending more and more time in their vehicles and increased time equates to increased

driver fatigue. By creating a quiet and more comfortable environment, we are improving the experience for the consumer."

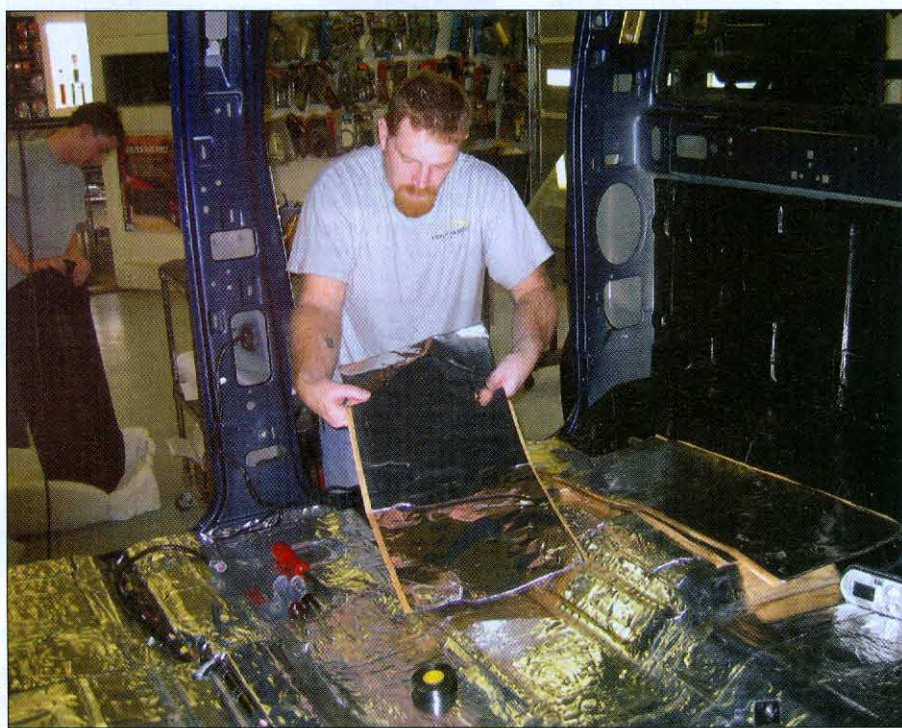
This is done by simply peeling up carpet, headliner and door kicks, and covering from 50 percent to 75 percent of the surface with the self-adhesive sound-quelling mats that are typically no more than 1/8-inch thick.

The mats are not difficult to install. With a self-adhesive backing that requires no surface prep short of removing any

stray dirt that has made its way through a floor mat, modern sound-deadening mats require nothing more than a pair of scissors in the way of shop tools, suppliers say.

HushMat ships its material in flat sheets in an effort to maximize sound deadening through micro-channel elimination. Other companies such as Ohio-based Dynamic Control, maker of Dynamat, ship rolls of bulk material. Both systems suggest a minimum of 60 percent surface coverage for optimal performance.

continued



HushMat



HushMat



Pre-cut kits make installations that much easier.

Quiet Ride Solutions



Quiet Ride Solutions

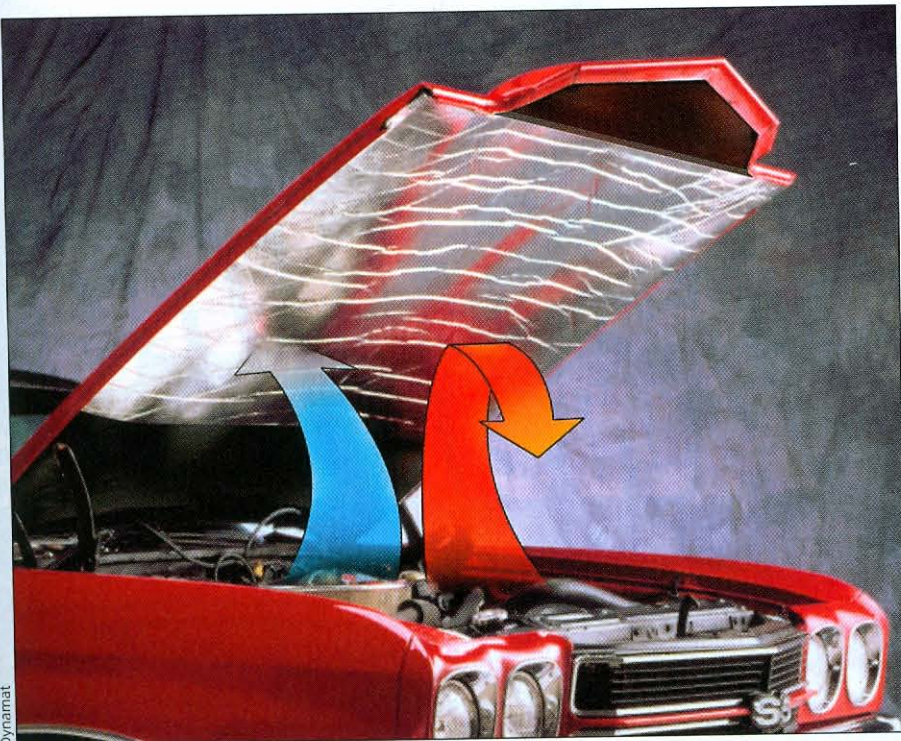
Sound-dampening materials can reduce airborne noise in the cockpit, as well as the typical rattles all vehicles experience.



Quiet Ride Solutions

# Silence is Golden

continued



Dynamat



HushMat



Dynamat

Well-known in 12-volt circles, sound- and vibration-deadening materials offer restylers benefits on classic and new-car accessory packages.

Quiet Ride Solutions/Acoustishield offers vehicle-specific kits that come pre-cut, complete with orientation markings.

## Endless Applications

Regardless of if you buy the material in bulk rolls or pre-cut kits, however, manufacturers agree that independent restyling and trim shops should see a great return on investment offering this service.

Jobbers are looking at 40 to 50 points over cost when charging by the segment, plus installation labor, suppliers say.

"We see most of our customers charging by vehicle segment, which seems easier for the customer to understand than straight hourly rates," says HushMat's McCarthy. "For example, a ticket might be written for sound deadening in two doors for \$240. It

makes sense to the customer from a value standpoint, and we find an installer can pretty much go around a pickup in 45 minutes with this product."

Cox notes that Quiet Ride/Acoustishield installations include the Dynamat first, then a vehicle-specific pre-cut insulation layer that blocks heat as well. This can be particularly attractive to drivers of older vehicles with thin floorboards and hot exhausts.

One success story he relays comes from the company's work on a 1965 Chevrolet Chevelle dream machine.

"This show-winning vehicle came from the Southeast and had undergone a full-body restoration on a completely updated chassis and drive train including a GM 350 crate motor and 700 R transmission, and

a high-performance exhaust system. The body and interior and all the mechanics were top quality," he explains.

"Our test drive told us the vehicle had major noise issues at all speeds—from idle to 70 mph," he continues. "We dismantled the interior except for the new headliner and installed an off-the-shelf Chevelle kit and then reinstalled the interior over new carpet. Our post-test drive gave an immediate 20-db reduction in interior noise levels throughout the entire range of operation. And with a roof insulation kit, the interior noise level would be reduced even more."

Of course, there are sound-deadening benefits to newer vehicles as well—particularly late-models that may have received some aftermarket 12-volt add-ons.

**We can take away that cabin noise while preserving the performance and sexy street sound.**

Rattles can penetrate areas where mobile electronics have been installed, such as a roof equipped with a flip-down rear-seat DVD screen. HushMat offers a butyl tape specifically developed to replace common adhesive tapes like duct tape to seal the new wiring and harnesses bridging over the wiring to sheet metal or plastic trim that won't come loose or rattle, McCarthy notes.

So, whether it's a new vehicle or old, pimped or mildly accessorized, sound deadening is an attractive restyling add-on shops can easily explore.

"We have tested thousands of applications in OEM-approved Detroit acoustics labs over the years and can state that every automobile produced is different," McCarthy summarizes. "We can also state that your vehicle will be quieter and more comfortable with this product than without it."