

Posted on Wednesday 6 June 2007 at 12:34 pm

Cleaning the wheels is the first step of washing a car, and with complex rims like mine they take almost as much time to wash as the rest of the car. A clearcoat-safe rim cleaner and good wheel brushes (as detailed on my [car care page](#)) allow the brake dust and dirt to be easily removed, but it still takes a lot of time cleaning between all the spokes. Though I'm always on the lookout, I have yet to find any miracle product that allows the rims to simply be hosed off without a need to get a brush into every nook and cranny of the rim.

I obtained two new wheel products over the winter and finally got the opportunity to test them out. After my glowing review of their trim reconditioner in my [trim tests](#), Forever Black sent me some of their similar [Tire Gel](#) to try out. Though I am happy with [Zaino Z16](#) that I currently use on my tires, a product that lasts for months instead of a week sounds tempting, so I thought I'd try it. The second product is [Prima Wheel Shield](#), which claims to defend against brake dust as well as clean baked-in wheel stains. Many claim that applying [Zaino Z2](#) to their rims also protects from brake dust and makes wheels easier to clean. So I put these to the test against each other.



I applied each product to a third of the tire/wheel, using the valve stem as a marker. The far third was left untreated. After application, the Z16 was much darker than the Forever Black, and once the forever black dried it looked the same as the untreated tire. Sadly this continued throughout the rest of the testing. Though it mentions multiple coats are optional, maybe they should be required, as even my liberal application was hard to see. Perhaps the product is more suited for old and faded tires, if anyone somehow manages to have a set that old.



After two weeks of driving and two days of rain, it was time to wash the car and see how the wheel products fared. Click the image above to see the full-size images. The first photo shows the dirty rim. Though more apparent to the naked eye, you can still notice the darker Z16-treated portion of the tire, even after two days of driving in rain. The wheel shield portion is barely cleaner but almost impossible to notice. The next image is after spraying with a strong jet of water, no cleaners. Again the wheel shield is just slightly cleaner, but now you can see apparent beading by both of the Zaino products (I'm not sure if there is any value to that though). I then sprayed my rim cleaner and let sit for a few minutes and rinsed off for the third picture. Not very much difference. The Wheel Shield portion of the rim is definitely cleaner, but nowhere near clean enough. So I still had to go through the full effort of spraying with rim cleaner and using wheel brushes to clean the wheel (the final picture).

So it looks like WheelShield does actually keep the wheel slightly cleaner, which is actually the first time I've ever seen a product do this. But not nearly clean enough for you to skip any cleaning steps and save effort. I suppose it could be used as a replacement for a wheel cleaner, but it must be applied with a cloth (not sprayed on and brushed), which will probably need to be thrown away after getting wheel dust and dirt on it. Perhaps it is useful for keeping the occasional tar and grime from sticking, and maybe at the end of the season when I do a final scrub on the wheels to clean deeper than rim cleaner. Zaino was even worse, though if you notice there was more outward streaks of dirt on the zaino portion, perhaps showing that it is changing the characteristics in some way. As for the Forever Black Tire Gel, it doesn't seem very useful unless perhaps you have old tires. The Z16 continues to be my favorite tire treatment, and I'm still using the same bottle after six years! Meanwhile my search goes on for rim-cleaning time savers.

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5 Comments for 'Wheel Product Tests'

1.

Joe

June 6, 2007 | [2:48 pm](#)

Nice writeup Josh. I still say Simple Green diluted 50-50 and a lambswool wash mitt does a great job on both my MINI's and my Mercedes-Benz... Not a lot of work..

2.

beken

June 6, 2007 | [4:36 pm](#)

Thanks for the research, Josh. Like Joe, I use a dilute of Simple Green. When I was at my local tire shop, I asked what they would suggest for cleaning wheels and he said soap and water. Every time I wash my car, it's simple green, spray, sponge, toothbrush and more spray. I guess nothing truly beats elbow grease but the Wheelshield seems to sort of work.

3.

[Josh Wardell](#)

June 6, 2007 | [5:32 pm](#)

I used to use (full strength) simple green years ago but rim cleaner works better and requires less effort.

4.

[twistybitz](#)

June 7, 2007 | [10:32 am](#)

Always great tech stuff here. Thanks

5.

Mav

September 29, 2007 | [3:08 pm](#)

Josh, useful and helpful site you've got going, I enjoy reading it. A product I have just recently started using is one called Wheel Shield. I saw the product mentioned on the TV show Two Guys Garage and purchased it off of Amazon. I've only had the chance to use it one time but so far the results have been very positive. Its a liquid that you spray on (NOT the metal shield product w/ same name) your rims, after they've been cleaned. I applied it for the 1st time about 3+ months ago and its still protecting. What little brake dust or other dirt that happens to stick to the rim just runs right off with spray of the hose.

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