

Motor City AutoSpa

Business is cleaning up by detailing prized automobiles

By **JOE ROSSITER**
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Among serious car buffs there are few pleasures in life that can rival the sight, smell and feel of a new car purchase.

Motor City AutoSpa, an automobile detailing company specializing in exterior and interior work for all types of vehicles, is in the business of recapturing those memorable moments for its customers, only at a more affordable price.

"We understand the pride and excitement that comes in driving a car that is as beautiful and immaculate as it can be," said Matt Lifter, 37, the company owner. "We're all about bringing the long-lost shine back to cars."

Located in Royal Oak near Woodward and 11 Mile Road, Motor City AutoSpa will pamper everything from an old Chevy pickup to a luxurious Bentley. But it doesn't do mechanical work.

The services provided by Lifter and his staff of five full-time and two part-time workers include paint polishing, waxing, interior rug shampooing, vinyl cleaning, underbody detail, interior fabric protection, odor removal and glass treatment.

Aside from cosmetic appearances, there are several other financial benefits to a good detailing job, according to Lifter. It can increase the resale or trade-in value of the vehicle, protect an investment by maintaining the appearance and cleanliness of the vehicle and minimize problems when turning in a lease vehicle.

A classic car owner, Lifter has a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle, a 1965 Cadillac Deville convertible and 1923 Ford Model T.

While the business has prospered since its inception,

Motor City AutoSpa

What: An automotive detailing business that maintains interiors and exteriors of all types of vehicles.

Founded: 2008.

Location: 901 W. Eleven Mile Rd., Royal Oak.

Employees: Five full-time and two part-time workers.

Prices: Exterior: \$149; interior: \$139.

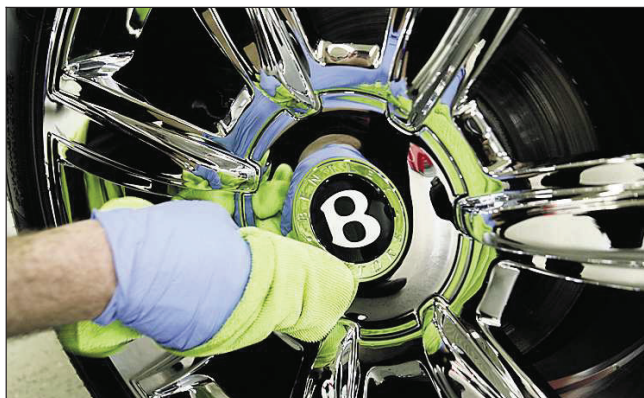
Web site: www.motorcityautospa.com.

Phone: 248-288-6772.



Photos by PATRICIA BECK/Detroit Free Press

Detail technician Jason Shanker of Southfield, from left, shop manager Paul Lieb Gott of Troy and owner Matt Lifter of Royal Oak in the shop at Motor City AutoSpa of Royal Oak.



Lifter polishes a wheel as he details a customer's 2007 Bentley Continental GT convertible in the shop.

Lifter's future didn't appear so promising a couple years ago, when he was out of work and at a career crossroads. The company he was employed by for the past 15 years — Handleman, a Troy-based music distribution business — closed in 2008.

A passionate car buff since his youth, Lifter had been detailing cars since high school and continued to do side work while employed in his former job.

Deciding to take a giant leap, he purchased an 80-year-old building that was a neighborhood eyesore and with help



from family and friends, restored it to the point where it recently won the City of Royal Oak's Business Beautification Award.

Thus began Motor City AutoSpa, which reported a 40% increase in business this past year.

"They're very good at what they do and I should know," explained Lauren Mendelson, the mother of two teenage daughters and a self-described

hands-on car nut. "Their attention to detail is impeccable and they always go that extra mile to please the customer."

Mendelson of Huntington Woods and her husband, David, an orthopedic surgeon, own 11 automobiles that are routinely serviced at Motor City AutoSpa. Included among their personal fleet are a 2003 BMW V8 Alpina Roadster, a 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia, a 2010 Morgan Aeromax and a 2009 Ferrari 599 GTB, a few of which have been displayed at the Concours d'Elegance of America at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Hall.

"We wouldn't trust our cars to just anyone," said Mendelson. "The staff is very professional and they consistently do excellent work that's reliable and on time."

It's testimonials like that, Lifter said, that have substantiated his decision to go out on a limb and start his own company.

"Running your own business is hard work and involves many long hours," he said. "But knowing you have your own thing going and your customers are impressed with your work makes it all well worth it."