

Tips for the Winter storage of the Z8



Every year this is a topic of great discussion in the different old timer magazines, and yet there are amazing differences. I like to share the practical experience I've collected in over two decades of winter storage with you.

1. Car maintenance

External cleaning

None of my cars have ever seen the inside of a car wash. The sponge has also become obsolete. I generally use only cotton towels, which go into the wash after each use so there is never any residue left in the towels which could scratch the paint of the car. (If you ever drooped your sponge on the pavement you'll know what I mean). Even the good old leather cloth had to make room for the cotton towel, the micro fibre cloth and the silicone wiper. Comparing the various cleaning agents there aren't huge differences except in price!

Products with wax or integrated polish are, in my humble opinion, not nearly as good as a good car shampoo, when you mix the shampoo with lukewarm water foam is created and the more foam you get the better, because foam transports dirt

Preservation

I've always polished and waxed my cars in the Fall before the Winter storage. I find that this effort I make once a year has been sufficient, considering that I drive my car approximately 3000 km annually. Insects come off easier, washing is easier and dirt doesn't cling to the paint as much. Often you see, especially on dark colours, polish or wax streaks, if you expose a car that has been polished with Swizöl (www.swizol.de) to the sun for a couple of hours, you'll be amazed and almost "blinded" by the sheen on the paint.

I can also recommend the surface protection of Ultrashine-Protector (www.ultrashine-protector.de) it works totally without abrasives, is based on nano-technology and is not only easy to apply but shows remarkably good results.

Interior and leather care

Naturally it requires much more effort to care for lighter colour leather than it does for black leather... Here is a little tip... take a damp (small) sponge, pour the cleaning agent on the sponge and knead it through until a good amount of foam develops. Apply this foam to the leather either with a brush or with the same sponge and after you have completed the foam cleaning wipe the foam off with a clean damp cloth.

Basically the important part is the technique you use and not necessarily the product! As with the cleaning agents for the exterior, it's all about the foam. As far as smaller "scratches" in the leather are concerned, the "Lederzentrum" (www.lederzentrum.de) is really amazing. They make colour tints that are especially mixed for the Z8 and are an exact match to the different leather colours, that really makes a big difference. With this product smaller scratches literally become invisible.



Other great "stuff" !!!

The soft-top impregnation spray from Mercedes Benz (BMW doesn't offer it anymore).

The Paint Rubber by Swizöl (a kind of plasticine) which gently erases even the most persistent crusty residues (e.g. insects).

Nivea Body Lotion, for all types of leather! It contains no preservatives; is absorbed quickly and is inexpensive. In my experience Nivea is much better than special leather care products from BMW, which, at least in my experience, usually had to be re-polished and left marks.

Here are a few visual aides:

Car Duster
Silicone wiper
Wax "Onyx" by Swizöl
Polishing Cloth



2.Storage

Tires

With all the disadvantages in handling with our standard Run Flat tires at least there is one advantage. You don't get flat spotting! I fill the tires with 4 bar and that's how the car is kept in my garage from November till April! For other tires, e.g. the Alpina's, you can use so called Tire Cradles, for about € 100, (www.reifenwiege.de) which completely prevent flat spotting. I would highly advise against "jacking up" of the vehicle. The entire weight of the tires and axles hangs fully suspended from the completely stretched out shock absorber element, which in turn will often show leakage as a result of this atypical stress placed on it. It becomes apparent very quickly because you will find oil leaks underneath the tires.

Gas tank

Although we have a plastic gas tank installed in the Z8, I recommend you fill the gas tank completely in the Fall before storing the car for Winter. A fuel pump is installed in the gas tank which can very easily corrode because of the build up of condensation (see: picture of the fuel pump of a BMW Z1, it also has a plastic gas tank). Unlike other component parts there is no air circulation in the gas tank thus providing an excellent breeding ground for condensation.

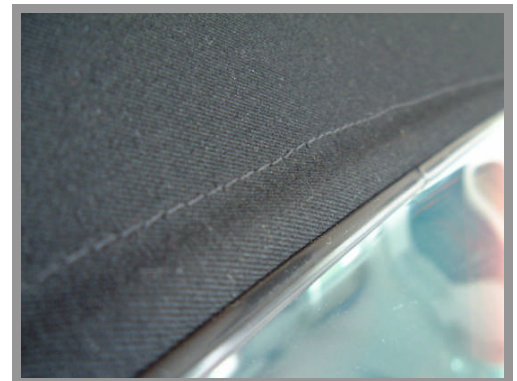


Starting the engine in the Winter?

This is a commonly made mistake! The strain on all component parts is at its highest point when temperatures are low, what most people don't consider is the build-up of condensation. To run a car, while stationary, until it is warmed up, is not enough to evaporate condensation that has build up in e.g. the exhaust system. Although the Z8 is equipped with a standard stainless steel exhaust system, over the years, I've seen terrible damage done to cars that occurred because the engine was started in the Winter while the car was stored. There was, for example, the case of a vehicle that was stored in a prefabricated concrete garage. The build up of condensation had caused mould to grow on the walls and by the end of Winter the mould had spread and covered the entire leather interior of the vehicle.

Soft top

I urgently advise against storing the vehicle with its hard top on. The folded down soft top, and especially the rear window, will crease. This becomes evident when the soft top fabric no longer fits into the rubber extrusion. The soft top fabric is glued into the rubber lip and it can only be "re-glued" with a great deal of effort. There have been vehicles that were stored long term, e.g. at a dealership, who's rear windows had to be replaced. The rear window has an "expiry date"! The reason for this is that the softening agents contained in the plastic evaporate over time. Contrary to the other BMW models, the Z8 rear window is made out of 2mm strong TPU and not PVC, which is supposed to results in a greatly improved scratch resistance.



When storing my vehicle I always refrain from closing the soft top completely but stop short a couple of cm before the actual bolting in order to prevent the acrylic fabric from fully stretching and to avoid compressing the rubber seals.

After having accumulated over 20 years of experience with soft tops this is the way I've been able to prevent water leaks that occurred with other similar vehicles because of compressed rubber seals and rubber seals that got stuck together. In addition to that I always leave the side windows approximately 10 cm open, this allows for air circulation in the car and it is also easy on the rubber seals.

I even treat the tailgate the same way. I do not lock it in place but just lower it until it rests easily on the rubber seals and now I lock the car manually from the inside to prevent the interior tailgate light from staying on and to prevent any problems with the alarm system. Come spring you just need to push the tailgates unlocking button and the lock you closed manually will open up again.



When is a good time for an oil change?

Most likely any service and/or oil change is done in Spring. I highly recommend not to do that! With continued use, every type of oil, synthetic oils as well, will develop resins and acids and they settle on the cylinder and not only there. I always make an oil change in the Fall, just before the Winter storage, regardless of the service intervals or the, rather low, annual mileage I put on my car!

Battery

The battery I use is connected to a battery guard of the new generation which does not load constantly but occasionally simulates driving conditions and in doing so extends the life of the battery.

The battery in my Z1 for example has lasted 14 years now and is still going strong and I only drive the car about 2000 km annually. Even during the Summer all of my "for fun and spur of the moment only" cars are connected to these battery guards/chargers.

The Z8 has a plug to connect the battery guard in the engine compartment and it is also possible to connect the battery guard directly to the battery in the rear.



Windshield wipers

It is possible to extend the life of the windshield wipers. I have to say that my car only experiences rain when we are at an event or when we get caught in the rain. Some people are all the more surprised when, despite hardly being used, the wipers performance is anything but satisfying. The small cork of a wine bottle is the answer to this little annoyance, you just place it upright underneath the wiper in a position that prevents the wipers from touching the windshield. This way the rubber part of the wiper doesn't touch the windshield and thus really extending the life of the wipers.



Car covers

Numerous car covers are available on the market. I find that covers made out of cotton are the best to make adequate air circulation possible and to compensate for possible moisture.

Plastic is conceivably unsuitable and leads to spots on the soft top, the paint, and worst case scenario, to mould on the interior of the car. At BMW you can get a cover especially constructed for the Z8 that is made of the same silver coloured fabric as the hard top cover. The cost for this cover is about € 255 and the BMW part-number, if you wish to order is: Nr. 82 15 0 018 224.

3.The problem with humidity! Physics!

At a room temperature of 20°C 1 m³ air takes on up to 17,2g of water. If the temperature in the room drops, then the saturation point rises up to 100% and the water existing as water vapour in the air condenses to liquid water – drops of water form. Rust develops when the relative humidity is approximately 75% or higher and likes to settle in corners and on edges with little air circulation.

How humidity can damage our car?

The problem is the change in temperature and thus a change in humidity or lack of air circulation. Often you can see water condensation on the walls of underground parking garages, usually, a constant low temperature is kept in these parking garages, if warm air enters from outside water will condensate on the walls and on the surface of our cars.

This effect also occurs when a vehicle is cold and is placed in a warm, heated garage.

Condensation forms on the vehicle, on the surface and even the electrical system is not spared and corrodes. If, for example, the car's engine is started in the Winter, in a cold garage, the air warms up and the water condensates first on the cold external walls and when cooling off on the vehicle itself.

Suggestions that can help you extend the life of our car...

Certainly there are several possibilities on how to deal with this problem. Here are two examples:

- You can store your car in an “air chamber” storage unit (www.permabag.com) and keep the humidity at a certain level.

This is, in my humble opinion, not very practical when you have a large garage with several vehicles because you only create a “dry California climate” for the car/cars contained in the air chamber, but I also store other vehicles and things in the garage which would still be exposed to the humidity.

- Acquiring an air dehumidifier (www.wilms.de). The air dehumidifier regulates the relative humidity in the air by extracting water from the air. The humidity can be regulated automatically with a Hygrometer.



If you require further information: Technik@Z8-Club.de!

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