



**PROFESSIONAL TLC**

# These Guys Turn Cars into Stars

BY JONATHAN WONG

PROPERLY MAINTAINING YOUR CAR'S appearance is more than a simple wash and wax every so often, as we learned from Darren Buell and Barry Meguiar (see page 26). It's an in-depth and time-consuming process mastered over time. ▶ If you're more comfortable leaving it to a pro, there are some great services out there. Here, we profile three of the best and list six other top detailers from across the country.



### Todd Helme

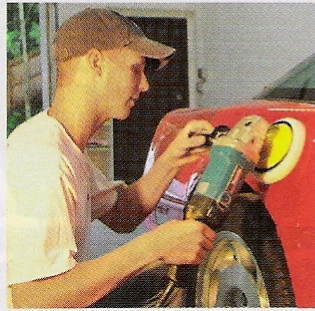
#### [ BELLA MACCHINA ]

It's not uncommon for auto detailers to make house calls with numerous mobile services available today, but Todd Helme might own the title for the longest distance traveled to a detail job.

"A Lamborghini collector from South Africa found me on the Internet and paid all expenses to fly me out, on top of my normal hourly rate," he says of his transatlantic work trip. "It was pretty cool."

As the owner of Bella Macchina (Italian for "beautiful machine") in Orlando, Fla., Helme specializes primarily in high-level detailing. On average, his details cost \$1,700 and take 22 hours.

During his 11-year career, he has established an impressive résumé, which includes works that have won awards at the Pebble Beach and Amelia Island concours. But his most memorable job is a paint correction for a rare 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO.



### Rick Nelson

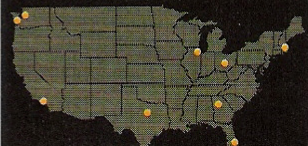
#### [ UNIQUE CAR CARE ]

Rick Nelson prides himself on being a detail-oriented person. That trait has helped build a nice following for his detailing services at Unique Car Care in Wakefield, Mass. "I do not spend a dime on advertising, and I am constantly booked several weeks in advance," he says.

After becoming disenchanted with average details available at every corner garage, Nelson decided to specialize in high-level jobs and cater to the most discriminating clients. His work comes at a price, but his customers are glad to pay it, with full-vehicle rejuvenation jobs costing around \$2,000.

"Every square inch of the vehicle is attended to, ensuring the end result is nothing short of absolute perfection," Nelson says proudly.

## 9 OF THE TOP U.S. AUTO DETAILERS



■ BELLA MACCHINA  
Orlando, Fla.  
[www.belladetailing.com](http://www.belladetailing.com)

■ ESOTERIC DETAIL  
Columbus, Ohio  
[www.esotericdetail.com](http://www.esotericdetail.com)

■ GRIOT'S GARAGE  
Tacoma, Wash.  
[www.griotsgarage.com](http://www.griotsgarage.com)

■ LUSTR  
AUTO DETAILING  
Chicago  
[www.lustrdetail.com](http://www.lustrdetail.com)

■ OTTMANN DETAILING  
Grand Prairie, Texas  
[www.ottmanndetailing.com](http://www.ottmanndetailing.com)

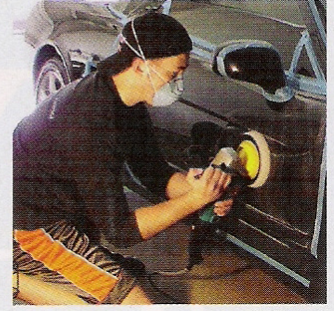
■ PEACH STATE  
AUTO DETAILING  
Atlanta  
[www.peachstatedetail.com](http://www.peachstatedetail.com)

■ SUPERIOR SHINE  
Los Angeles  
[www.superiorshine.com](http://www.superiorshine.com)

■ 3 LAYERS OF GLOSS  
AUTO DETAILING  
Seattle  
[www.3lgautodetail.com](http://www.3lgautodetail.com)

■ UNIQUE CAR CARE  
Wakefield, Mass.  
[www.unique-car-care.com](http://www.unique-car-care.com)

Got a favorite detailer? Let us know who makes your car Best in Driveway (or Best in Garage or Best in Cruise Night or, what the heck, Best in Show) at [autoweek.com/detailers](http://autoweek.com/detailers).



### Joshua Ottmann

#### [ OTTMANN DETAILING ]

An engagement ring turned Joshua Ottmann's auto-detailing hobby into a business. To save up money for the ring, he detailed cars on the side and became aware of the demand for proper car-care services.

"The list of cars grew larger and larger until this became my full-time passion," he says.

Credit Ottmann's 2004 Chevrolet Corvette for his extensive detailing knowledge: "When I purchased my Corvette, I realized I had to take my detailing to a new level. I learned about two-bucket washing and clay-barring and ultimately bought a random orbital buffer to properly care for my Corvette."

After four years on the job in Grand Prairie, Texas, Ottmann remains enthusiastic about his work: "I don't detail for the money; I do it because I love cars."

## ESSENTIALS & EXT



Dragonfiber Microfiber Basics, \$35,



EZ Detail Brush (for wheels), \$22, [www.detailedimage.com](http://www.detailedimage.com)



EZ Detail Brush (for wheels), \$22, [www.detailedimage.com](http://www.detailedimage.com)



California Gold, \$20,



Porter Cable 7424 Variable Speed Polisher, plus pads, polishes and lube, \$200,



Blackfire "Wet-Ice over Fire" Shine Kit, \$100.