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[Give Good Gifts: Auto Accessories for Car Lovers](#)

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[What's New for 2005?](#)

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[Conversion Vehicles](#)

[Recalls](#)

[Rebates](#)

[Vehicle Profiles](#)

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Give Good Gifts: Auto Accessories for Car Lovers

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By **Mary S. Butler**
cars.com

This year, don't disappoint the automotive enthusiast in your life by gifting them with a safe but uninspiring cologne, magazine subscription or I-couldn't-spend-more-than-five-minutes-on-you department store debit card. Instead, indulge them with an automotive accessory as unique as they are.



GG Bailey's custom-fit Oriental carpet floor mats feature serged yarn edging and start at \$185.

Customized Floor Mats

Do you know someone who's splurged on their first luxury car — complete with supple leather seats — yet still has stock floor mats? Treat them to a pair of custom-fit Oriental carpet floor mats with serged yarn edging from GG Bailey. The mats are offered in two designs, Black Hereke and Red Ishtar, inspired by Ottoman Turkish origins.

Pricing will vary depending on the year, make and model of the vehicle and the mat configuration you order, but expect to pay at least \$185 for driver and front-passenger

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floor mats. Hammacher Schlemmer and other specialty retailers also carry the mats.

Think a solid-color plush carpet mat with a leather monogram would be a better choice? Consider heavyweight mats by Lloyd, carried by Everything SUV. The mats are available in 10 colors and start at \$176 for a monogrammed two-piece front floormat for trucks and sport utility vehicles; the same mat configuration for cars starts at \$155.



Seat covers from JC Whitney come in several styles, including flame-patterned ones that light up.

Seat Covers

Aftermarket seat covers are popular in hot climates, and sheepskin covers are a good idea in the winter in colder climates. Plus, there are lots of covers that can help personalize the recipient's vehicle. Here are a few examples of what you can find:

- Hang Five: Hawaiian print seat covers, \$80 a pair from AutoAnything;
- Comfort and warmth: Sheepskin covers, \$70 - \$200 per cover from Sheepskin Factory;
- Vest dressed: Sheepskin Seat Vest, \$160 each from GG Bailey;
- Hot to trot: Flame-patterned covers hook up to a car's 12-volt system, and a switch lets you turn illumination on or off, \$80 each from JC Whitney;
- Luxury upgrade: Leather covers, \$700 from JC Whitney;
- Should be required in Minnesota: Heated seat covers, \$330 - \$340 from JC Whitney;
- For the jocks: Waterproof covers, \$18 - \$30 from SeatShield.

Steering-Wheel Covers

Just because they don't have a Ferrari engine under the hood doesn't mean you can't add

some racer cachet. Anything leather-covered — steering wheel, gearshift knobs, gearshift boots, etc. — can give a car a custom look. Start with a leather steering-wheel cover, in single or two-tone colors, solid or perforated, by Wheelskins, \$35 - \$40 from Aftermarket Automotive Parts Distributing.

Portable Electronics

Instead of a gearhead, are you shopping for backseat passengers who double as tech geeks? Keep them occupied — and away from your front-seat audio controls — with mobile electronics. You can find an assortment of iPod adapters and chargers for the car at Dr. Bott, priced between \$23 and \$219. Dr. Bott also carries one of the best iPod accessories for the fashionista in your family — the Groove bag tote with external speakers and iPod hookup for \$145.

Are your passengers more into TV and film than music? Consider the Virgin pulse portable TV/DVD player with a 10.4-inch screen for \$450; it's available at Target stores or can be ordered online.

Looking for the next big thing in portable electronics? Check out pocket video players that play back recorded TV shows or movies on a built-in color LCD. These devices also allow you to transfer photos from digital camera memory cards and transfer data from a PC, as well as record and listen to music. These players are dependent on a Microsoft Windows XP PC to get their content and are available from various brands, including the AV420 (\$550) and AV480 (\$800) from Archos and the 20GB Lyra Audio/Video Jukebox (\$400) from RCA.

Just released was the first 7-inch portable video player from MobiNote. Available from Tight Systems, the \$600 DVX-Pod 7010 boasts the largest screen available on a portable multimedia player.

Car Cleanup

Are they always eating on the go? Get them to clean the crumbs off their seats — and pants — with an Oreck car vacuum from GG Bailey, \$40.

Behind-the-Wheel Dressing

Now that you've splurged on their car, what are you going to wear in it? Some suggestions include a vintage Pucci scarf (\$10 and up on eBay) with oversized Chanel sunglasses (vintage for \$38 and up on eBay) for you convertible drivers; ladies looking to drive like Janet

Guthrie should consider genuine deerskin racing gloves by Wheelskins, \$40, or better yet, a one-piece Sparco Tech 5 Nomex Driving Suit, \$1,000+.

*Mary S. Butler is managing editor of **cars.com**.*

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image courtesy of GG Bailey.*

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