

# Gift Ideas To Make Your Miata Smile

by Rick Morris

It's that time of year again and in the spirit of gift-giving, why not get your favorite car some things to make life more pleasant for it (and for you)? Here is a list of things that can make your car's life experience more fulfilling, along with some really neat toys (and as we all know, toys are always good).

*The Absorber* – the best thing I have found so far for drying the car. They do a great job drying the car, last forever and clean up in the washing machine. An Absorber will last at least two years with moderate care and are available everywhere for about ten dollars. I can't imagine this not being in my car care bucket.

*Towels* – you can never have too many. I must have at least three dozen towels of assorted shapes and sizes. The ones I use most are hand towels, which are just exactly the right size for so many car cleaning tasks. Get white, all-cotton towels and wash them a half dozen times (hot water, no bleach or fabric softener) before using. I'm cheap, so I get the hand towels from Wal-Mart for a little over a dollar apiece. Our old bath towels get turned into car towels, but guys, ask the boss before doing this recycling project. (Honey, I've decided to buy you new towels!)

*Spray Bottles* – for whatever reason, every cleaning product I buy comes in a really crummy spray bottle. The OEM spray bottles don't let you adjust the flow and absolutely refuse to put out an even amount. Get some plastic plant mister bottles from any garden shop and put your cleaning fluids in them. Much more convenient. About a dollar apiece.

*Leatherman Crunch Tool* – Leatherman makes a lot of multi-purpose



tools. I've got three of them and the one to keep in the car is the Crunch tool. It comes with a vise-grip tool along with the usual assortment of knife and screwdriver blades. Pretty much indestructible and comes in a nifty case which makes it handy to store in one of the pockets on the back of the seats. It's out of the way, but indispensable when you need it.

*Flashlight* – most of you are saying "Of course I've got a flashlight in the car". Maybe so, but are the batteries any good? Buy a flashlight and a fresh set of batteries, but leave the batteries in their package until you need the flashlight. Batteries corrode over time and it would be particularly upsetting to get the flashlight out of the glove box and find out that the batteries you put in two years ago have self-destructed. Already got a flashlight? Then how about a fresh set of batteries? Also, a lot of people seem real impressed with the LED type flashlight. Batteries seem to run these things forever.

*GPS Unit* – one of the really spiffy toys for the Miata. The global positioning satellite system can show you just exactly how lost you are anywhere on Earth. The Garmin ones come with very detailed maps that can show you which street you are on. Just the ticket to keep you amused on those long drives. Priced anywhere from \$300 to \$1200 dollars. Look at [www.gpscitiy.com](http://www.gpscitiy.com) for what seem to be good prices. Already got a GPS unit? Take a look at the extending mapping CD's offered by your GPS manufacturer.

*Passenger Side Ejection Seat* – only available from the CIA, but just what you need for the uncooperative navigator. If you are the navigator, there is also a driver's side ejection seat, but it requires extensive modifications to the car for safety reasons. If you have to ask, you can't afford it.

*Microfiber Towels* – this is something that I haven't tried yet, but the people that have swear by them. These towels apparently leave no lint whatsoever and are excellent for glass cleaning and other tasks. About two dollars each.

*Roll Bar* – just what you need to avoid Compacted Driver Syndrome. Prices start at about three hundred dollars for the bar. AIM Tuning can install it for you if you don't want to attempt the job yourself. Get the harness tabs when you buy the bar. Harnesses are very reassuring when worn. (Personal opinion – wouldn't be without one. You never know when the bozo driving an SUV while eating lunch and talking on their cell phone is going to run over you).

*Air Horns* – probably the most fun for the dollar. These run about sixty dollars for a set and anybody can install them in less than an hour. In addition to being great fun to honk when you drive through an underpass, they will get the undivided attention of the SUV driver mentioned above.