

WASH CLEAN BE GREEN

by kimberly mullen | photography by briggs photography

As Californians everywhere are bombarded with public service announcements regarding our statewide historic drought, we see and hear messages everywhere to conserve water, to save water, to continue to make cuts to outdoor watering and overall water usage in general. While dining out, we see marketing materials regarding water being served upon request; while driving we hear commercials over the radio waves about the new campaign of “California Gold,” a clever attempt to make us feel better about our lawns turning brown. Water is a critical part of our way of life. We need water to flourish in our daily lives, our economy and our environment. I decided to take a look closer look at the water usage in my household and examine areas where we continue to make cuts.

Like most of us, my outdoor watering this year was the first and most effective place to start. Our front lawn is peppered with shades of brown, yellow and few remaining patches of green. We skipped planting flowers this year and the side of our house is lined neatly with stacks of flower pots I have collected throughout the years, all emptied and organized by shape, size and color. My hanging baskets have been removed from their designated homes where they once flourished with brightly colored blooms. My research on water conservation efforts led me into

household water usage, but the most surprising findings came when I entered the garage and found my shiny and clean SUV staring back at me. My heart sank as I worried I would have to give up on my clean car. I travel quite a bit for work, and my car is like a second home and office to me. This couldn't be happening, I thought; there had to be a solution and a way for me to continue my water conservation efforts and maintain a clean car at the same time.

I immediately jumped into more research and made a phone call to Evan Porges, President of Prime Shine Car Wash. I remembered seeing some marketing pieces on my last trip through a local Prime Shine regarding Wash Clean, Be Green. Evan was quick to return my call and before I knew it my inbox was filling up with statistics and facts about home car washing vs. washing with professional car washing facilities such as Prime Shine. I was excited to learn about all of the areas that Prime Shine has found to cut back water usage, and one statistic stuck with me more than others. Taking your vehicle to Prime Shine uses 75 percent less water than washing your car at home in the driveway. Even more impressive is that 95 percent of the water used is captured for potential re-use and 60 percent of water used to clean each vehicle is recycled.

As I talked with Evan, he shared with me the environmental impact that

“Prime Shine has been aggressive over the years to educate the communities we serve that washing at Prime Shine will use 75 percent less water than when washing at home. We collect for potential reuse approximately 95 percent of the water that is used in the wash process. Additionally, 60 percent of the water used in the wash process is a recycled product,” affirmed Evan Porges, President of Prime Shine Car Wash.

at-home car washing can have on our precious water resources, and I learned that Prime Shine does not send waste water through storm drains. “Not only is Prime Shine water-use efficient, but our waste water is properly handled by being sent to the municipal processing facilities and not down the storm drain that runs into our rivers, as is the case when washing at home,” Evan shared. Several environmental studies have revealed that significant quantities of storm water contaminants are generated annually from residential car washing activity. Storm water carries these pollutants, soapy water and all, to storm drains in urban areas, which then flow to surface waters with little to no water quality treatment.

Prime Shine has been employing water-saving technology since opening for business in 1991. Early on they rec-

ognized the best practices of utilizing recycled water in the wash process so that fresh water was not necessary. “During the past several years, as the drought has continued, Prime Shine reviewed all of its washing and employee practices to see where we could continue to cut water use,” Evan stated. “I am proud to say that we have reduced our fresh water use in excess of 25 percent. We also adjusted much of our physical site cleaning processes to reduce water and even eliminated the planting of fresh flowers and shut down sprinklers to save even more.” After talking with Evan and reading environmental impact reports, I felt a sense of relief that I could continue to keep my car clean during the drought in a responsible fashion. Not only is Prime Shine on the cutting edge of water conservation, their facilities are maintaining environmentally friendly strategies for wastewater. For this California girl, I may struggle with buying into the so-called “California Gold” as my front lawn turns fifty shades of brown, but at least I can keep my windshield clean and my car looking new as I travel through the Valley. **HLM**

For more information on Prime Shine's water conservation efforts, please visit savemoneysavetimesavewater.com. To review statistics on the California drought and find ways to save and conserve, please visit saveourwater.com and CA.gov/drought.

