

CUSTOMIZE your ride

IN HER eight years as an auto wholesaler and 20-plus years as a gear-head, Barbara Terry has installed stereo systems, DVD players, new wheels, new seats—you name it. She recently did a makeover on her '97 Jeep Wrangler, and she spends a fair bit of time working on her '68 Camaro. When she's not turning a wrench, the ranch-raised Texas native writes scripts for her TV show, *In the Driver's Seat*, which airs on ESPN2, and promotes her line of car-care products.

Her philosophy: "Focus on adding value to your car." Lowering kits and two-foot-high spoilers—typical fare on *Pimp My Ride* and other customizer shows—may make your car harder to sell. What you want are add-ons with wide appeal that can be easily removed in case your car's next owner doesn't share your idea of personalization. The good news is that most aftermarket enhancements cost less than ordering similar options when you buy a new car.

A DVD player is a good bet—especially if you take kids on rides that exceed five minutes. Panasonic's Overhead Mobile Video System installs in the ceiling and flips down. It comes with wireless headphones, or you can play the audio through the car speakers with an FM modulator. The unit plus installation runs about \$1,000 at Circuit City.

If you prefer to install

IDEA NO. 15 headrest monitors (even though the video resolution may not be as good), plan on spending about \$300 per monitor and less than \$200 for a DVD player that installs beneath the seat. Add installation costs (generally \$200 or less, for two monitors) and you'll finish just under a grand.

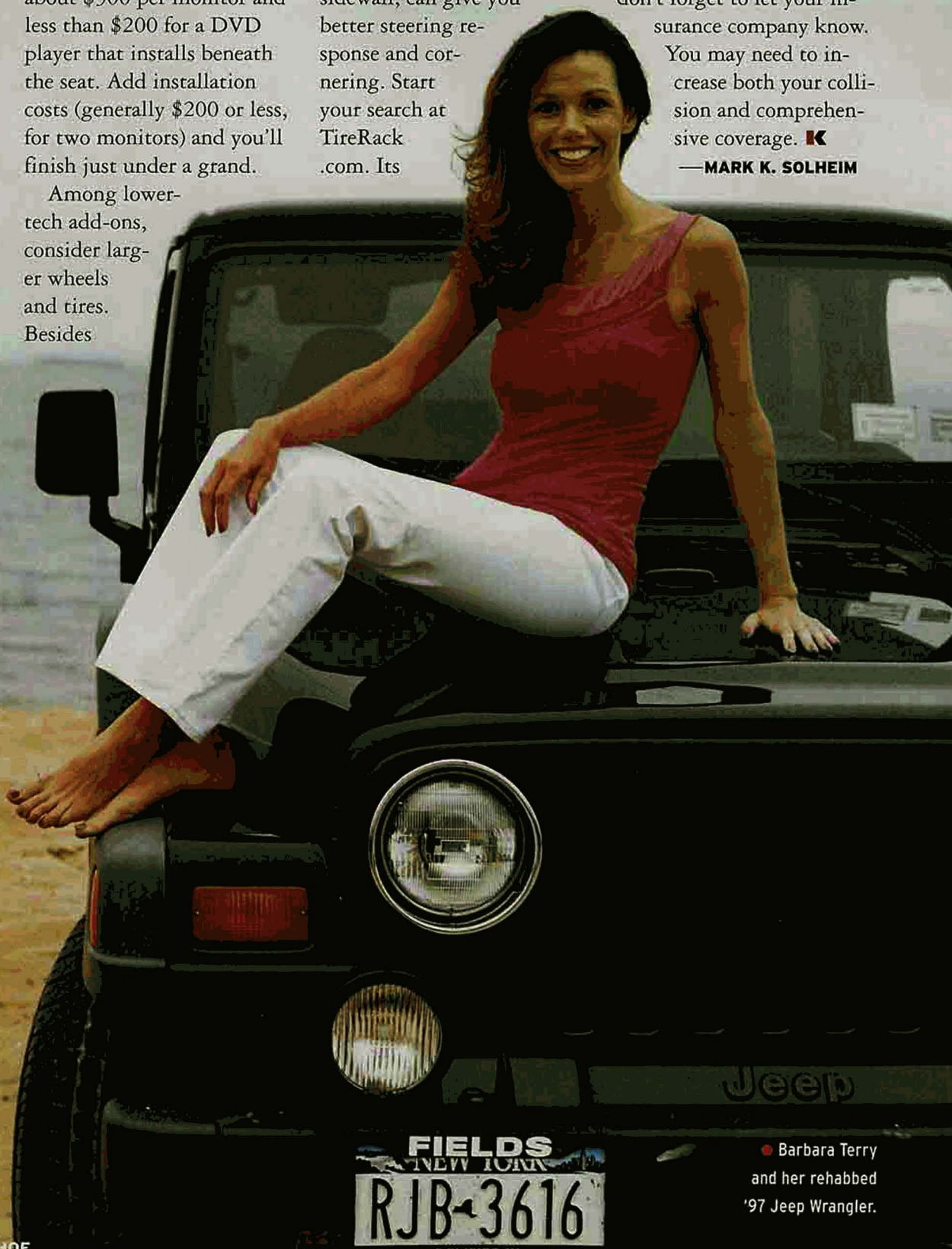
Among lower-tech add-ons, consider larger wheels and tires. Besides

giving you a wheel look you like, buying larger-diameter alloy wheels (for lighter weight), in combination with tires that have a shorter sidewall, can give you better steering response and cornering. Start your search at TireRack.com. Its

"upgrade garage" displays a variety of wheels and tires to fit your car.

After you've upped the bling factor of your ride, don't forget to let your insurance company know. You may need to increase both your collision and comprehensive coverage. **K**

—MARK K. SOLHEIM



● Barbara Terry and her rehabbed '97 Jeep Wrangler.