

THESE ‘DENTED’ DOORS DO NO GOOD



BY RAY MAGLIOZZI

Dear Car Talk:

We have a 2017 Jeep Cherokee with the dented-door look. Is this a fashion statement, or does it have a genuine purpose? We live on a dirt road that gets muddy in winter. The shape of the Jeep’s doors splashes mud onto the door handles. We do not have this problem with any other vehicles. Thanks. — Sam
We call it the “sunken cheeks”

look. Automotive fashion is like every other type of fashion. Once somebody has success with some odd twist or look, everyone else follows.

The sides of cars used to be slabs. A crease or an indentation was relatively rare, because it was hard to manufacture. We felt fortunate enough that the doors didn’t fall off when we opened them. Making them look fancy never crossed our minds. But as manufacturing got more sophisticated, we started seeing more creases, lines and bulges. Then it was off to the races. Now, pretty much every new car has a rising belt line, a crease under the

windows, a huge front grill, bulging fenders and some kind of carved out doors, like your Cherokee has. Eventually, this trend will get out of hand, and some carmaker will buck the trend and make an old-fashioned, slabsided car that sells like crazy. Then everyone else will go back to slabs. This is as inevitable as watching lapels widen and thin, or watching your grandmother’s ugly furniture show up on a trendy magazine cover at the supermarket. don’t think it has anything to do with aerodynamics. It’s possible a “scooped out” door may have an effect on the handling of a Lamborghini when it’s going 170

miles an hour. But it’s not going to change anything on a Jeep Cherokee doing 70 on the highway. So, if the only downside is the mud splattering, Sam, you need to go back to your dealer and buy the official Jeep door-handle mud rag for \$39.95. Don’t worry; your next Jeep Cherokee will look different.

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Got a question about cars? Write to Ray in care of King Features, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

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