

## Katzkin Leather Upholstery Installation

By XS650 21 June 2011

I installed a Katzkin leather interior in my Gen III Model 2 Prius several months ago. It now has about 3500 miles on it. I did the work myself and several months later still am glad I got what I did instead of getting the Toyota version of a leather interior.

I purchased it from Shop Sar

<http://www.shopsar.com/Toyota-Prius-Custom-Leather-Interior-p/katzkin-toypri.htm>

their service was generally good except it took them three tries to get the correct charcoal perforated door vinyl to me. That was a special order and I guess unusual for them. Other than that they were very thorough and easy to work with. Once they received my order, they email me with additional questions to be sure everything in the order was correct. It looks like Katzkin website is also consumer friendly now.

They were having a \$50 off sale (really only \$30, read on), so the base upholstery was \$700 instead of \$750. I managed to run that up to \$1,100 and would do the same again.

Extras were:

- Perforated leather for the light gray seating areas.

- Additional leather coverage for the full rear seat seating area.

- Two tone leather (Charcoal and Dove Grey (Excellent match to stock interior colors)

- Gel pads in both front seat cushions

- Perforated vinyl for the doors

- Installation kit, installation materials and tool (\$90 and saved shopping time)

I didn't get the heaters because I don't bother to use the heaters in our other two cars.

I don't recommend this as a do-it-yourself job unless you have some upholstery experience and skill, or are very handy and feel lucky. It's a difficult job and detailed instructions aren't available because the kits are intended for pros. If you buy their \$90 installation kit, it includes a useful CD that shows about three generic ways to do each major part of the job, but none are Toyota or Prius specific. The CD is still a big help and a valuable part of the kit. I also used my ebay Prius shop manual CD. It goes into detail on how to take the seats out and remove and install the upholstery. The detail is where fasteners and hog rings are, not technique.

The installation includes a 16oz aerosol can of DAP Weldwood High Strength Spray Adhesive. This stuff is just right. You need something that has enough tack to hold things in place but gives you several minutes to reposition, then turns into a high strength adhesive. I ran out just before I finished and had trouble finding more, nothing else I tried worked nearly as well. If you decide to do this job yourself, and don't get anything else useful out of my post, use this adhesive. It's perfect for the job. I wasn't able to find any locally, but Graingers will special order it and you can find it online.

Shop Sar will sell you a leather sample brochure for \$20. You get the \$20 back unless they are having a better special offer. In my case I had the choice between my \$20 back or a \$50 discount everyone could get, even if they didn't buy the sample brochure. It's still worth it, you need to see the actual leather to pick colors. At least I saved \$30.

#### Katzkin Pros:

A bazillion color combinations, some different leather options.

You actually sit on the leather instead of on a protective coating of vinyl over the leather.

Costs less than factory.

Smells more like leather than vinyl coated factory leather

It doesn't look plain and industrial like it belong on an airline or bus seat.

You get to choose options like gel pads or heaters.

#### Katzkin Cons:

A little poorer fit than factory, but not bad and no, it's not an installer problem.

No protective vinyl coating. ( That's a pro for me, but not everyone)

When you car is shut up in hot weather, you can tell the leather wasn't perfectly tanned. Not a serious problem and getting better with age.

It's a lot of work to install, or about \$400 for installation. That varies.













