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Blacker than black is the new black

Researchers find a way to make metals suck up all visible light

Nov. 26, 2006. 01:00 AM
ANDREW CHUNG
TORONTO STAR

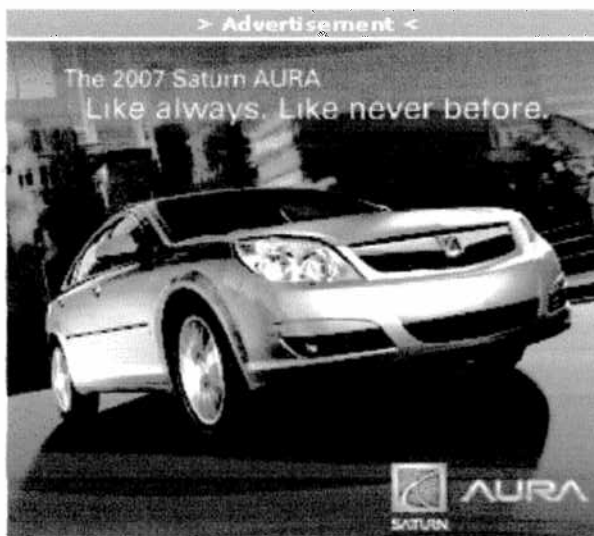
It can be a pretty sweet feeling driving your brand new car off the dealer's lot, its black paint so perfectly waxed that you can see your face in it.

And it can be a pretty sickening feeling when that first rock hits the hood and chips a piece of that seductive paint away, revealing the bare metal underneath. Suddenly Gino Vannelli was right: "Black cars look better in the shade..."

If you're a fan of black vehicles, fret no more. A scientist at the University of Rochester has developed a new way to turn metals blacker than ever. But instead of using paint, he uses a femtosecond laser.

A femtosecond laser unleashes a pulse of light so ultrafast that it's hard to fathom: It lasts one-billionth of one-millionth of a second.

Put another way, a femtosecond is to a second what a second is to 32 million years.



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