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Questions To Ask When Buying A Used Car – Part 4

By Mike Willis

You can save a lot of time and fuel by making a list of questions to ask when buying a used car,

and phoning around before you try and drive. In part three of my used car buying tips article series, I covered the topics of organized note taking during phone interviews, rust awareness, and problems the owner may have knowledge of concerning their own car. In this part I'll go over some specific mechanical aspects which are typical problem areas with used cars.

Engine Issues:

How is the engine? Does it burn oil? This is a good thing to know because an engine that burns oil is worn out to some degree. When a car is burning oil it means that the oil in the engine, which is there for lubrication and cooling purposes, is escaping into the combustion chamber somehow, and going out the tailpipe as blue stinky smoke. That means that the car is excessively polluting the air, and more oil must be added to replace what has been lost. These things can be expensive to fix.

Similarly, oil leaking from the seals of the engine will land on the ground and end up polluting the streams, rivers and oceans in your area. Like the increased air pollution from an oil burning car, the oil leaking car is an environmental menace. Repair of oil burning problems usually requires a major overhaul of the engine. Oil leaks may require similarly complex repairs, or they may be much simpler. A leaking valve cover gasket is a very common oil leak affecting many cars which can be repaired with a \$6 gasket and an hour of labor.

Transmission:

Ask the owner if the transmission shifts without any grinding. If not, this can be expensive to fix. Ask them about the clutch, when it was last replaced, and if they have the bill for it. If it has never been replaced, that's not necessarily a bad thing. It may indicate that the car has been driven gently. It could be a \$500+ job if it needs one though, which is ok if the asking price reflects that needed work.

Tires and Wheels, Glass and Exhaust:

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Ask them about the tires. New tires cost around \$100 each and up, depending on the car. Are the wheels steel or aluminum? Aluminum ones cost more when the car was new, and are generally more valuable, and nicer looking. Is the windshield cracked or pitted? New ones start at around \$200 and go up from there. How about the muffler? Is it quiet? When was it last replaced? A new one of decent quality will cost a few hundred bucks minimum.

Brakes:

Brakes need to be done every couple of years on any car. When were they last done? Both front and rear? You can expect to pay \$100 per wheel to have them done at least. You will need to have the brakes up to standard to insure your newly purchased used car, as a vehicle inspection is usually required by insurance companies. This is a good thing since it can save your life and the lives of others.

Paint:

What color is the car? How does the paint look? Like the rust question, this is a matter of perceptions, but its worth asking. Has the car ever been painted? If so, when? New paint may indicate that the car was rusted, or in an accident. New paint can be a good thing, especially if the paint has been there for a few years and still looks good. Original paint is the best though, because then you can see that there's no rust or accidents, and they do paint right at the factory!

Interior Condition:

How is the interior? The condition of the upholstery is easy to see, and may reflect the level of care that has been taken in looking after the rest of the car. Find out what color the interior is too. Do you like that color? Asking if the car has ever been smoked in is a good idea if you like things that are clean. The difference in cleanliness between the interiors of a smoker's car and a non-smoker's car is quite remarkable.

The Price:

What is the asking price? It says in the ad, but ask anyway and make sure you are both on the same page about this important detail. Are they flexible on the price? See what they say.

The Location:

Find out where the car can be seen, and when. If they don't want to meet you at their home, that should be a red flag. They may have lots of cars there, and try to meet you somewhere, anywhere but their place! Seeing where they live and the condition of their home will give you greater insight into how they take care of their lives, and therefore their cars. I like to go to their place to see what it looks like, so I can get a feel for how they take care of their stuff.

Follow Mike's article series for tips on used car buying on his blog at

<http://www.carsopia.com/>

and

check out the Car Buying Tutorial at

<http://www.cartorials.com/>

How To Know When Not To Buy A Used Car!

By "Dr. Drew Henry"

If you are looking to save money by buying a used car, it can be a very viable tactic. However, even though you are on a tight budget, buying a used car should not be immediately decided upon and should take a lot of consideration. Why? This is to avoid throwing your hard earned money away.

Below are some pointers that may help you decide when to buy or not to buy a used car:

1. You should consider your budget.

If the reason why you choose to purchase a used car is because of your budget, then it should be the same reason why you should be careful and meticulous in choosing a used car. Thus, if the car needs a lot of maintenance, repairs, and other modifications, it is best not to buy that used car (or else you lose the benefits of buying a used car).

2. You should be wary of buying used cars from owners that do not have complete and pertinent documents.

This could mean a lot of negative things and you are the only one who will be at the losing end. Documents are crucial especially if the car is second hand. It is the only solid guarantee that you can get hold of when buying used cars. If this is the case, then, you might as well not pursue the deal.

3. If the you are not comfortable after test-driving the car, then it is best not to buy it.

There are instances wherein some people tend to opt for used cars because of the model of the car being sold. It is their dream car and there is no other way they can purchase them but to buy them second hand. However, if you are not comfortable with the car after test-driving it, then it would be better not to pursue the deal, even if it means the world to you to have that car.

The bottom line is that buying used cars should never be your sole alternative if you cannot afford to buy new ones. This means that you should value the process of choosing a used car like what you would do when buying a new car. In the end, it is your money that will be put to risk. Thus, it is extremely important to consider all the factors in order to have the best buy ever. Happy hunting!

Dr. Drew Henry maintains a network of auto-related sites, including

<http://www.luxurycarsecrets.com>

,

<http://www.exoticcarsecrets.com>

and

<http://www.carspeakersecrets.com>

. For more auto-related

articles and resources, visit his sites.



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