

Used cars: the big question

Everyone drives a used car. Your auto is new only after you have signed and before you drive it off the lot. Once it hits the street, it's used.

When you buy a "used car" you buy a car that

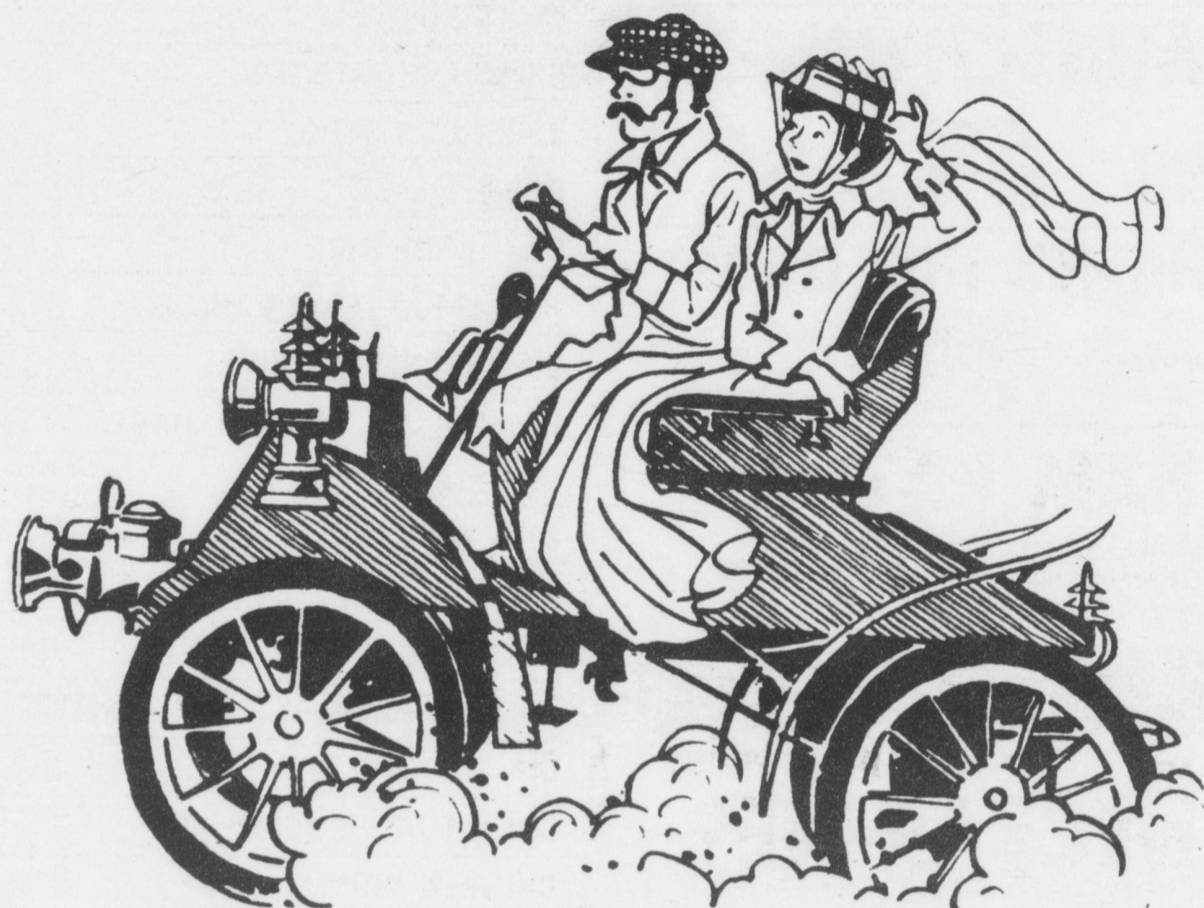
some one else used, and then got rid of. They may have discarded a lemon, or they may have bought another car for reasons that don't have anything to do with mechanical problems. Some people buy a new car every so many years,

whether or not the old one is wearing out. When you shop for a used car, you want one in good shape, one that was not discarded because of serious problems.

The auto's true condition

is the big question. Some aspects of condition are obvious, like a big rust hole or torn upholstery. Other indications are very subtle, like the noise of a bad engine bearing -only a trained mechanic can hear that.

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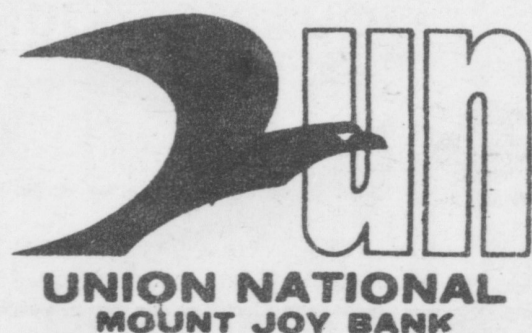


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Inspect a used car very carefully before buying.

Looking

← how to go about it

This may sound obvious—but the first step in buying a used car, as in buying a new one, is to decide what you want. Figure out what sort of vehicle you require: car or truck, Ford or Chevy, big or little. Then go looking. Shop around.

Some dealers specialize in one type of vehicle. For instance, L & G Motors in Mount Joy sells many trucks.

Once you find a car or truck you like, check it out (see accompanying article).

After-purchase service is something you should ask about. A buyer "should look for a (used car) dealer with a reputable service department," according to Roy Wissler of Wissler Motors. Dale Arnold of Arnold Pontiac agrees. "Getting good service on your car is an important thing to look for," he says. A dealer who doesn't maintain a service department on the lot might be allied with a garage which can service your used car. In any case, a reputable dealer will offer a written

guarantee, if he offers one on a vehicle. Some dealers go over a car before selling it, replacing worn out or questionable parts. This will raise the price, but help prevent immediate problems.

Don Hess of Donegal Auto Exchange says that cars from out-of-state are to be suspected. They are more likely to have the odometer changed, and have rust (because PA has strict inspection in this regard). If a car comes from the local area, you can call the previous owner for valuable information.

Some people feel suspicious of used car dealers, but they shouldn't. In a small area like this, where so many people know each other, a used car dealer lives on his reputation, like any other businessman. Buying a used car is certainly a bit of a gamble, but then, so is buying a new car. The only difference is that, when something wears out, "Detroit" or even "society" is blamed in one case, and one man is blamed in the other case.

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