

Wheelin' around



by Charlie Moore

Buying a used car is a hit or miss proposition at best. Unfortunately for many people, a new automobile is an economic impossibility. Therefore, (seeing the need or feeling the desire for a set of wheels) the prospective but impecunious buyer searches for a good used car. Used cars, like vacationing axe-murderers, must be approached with some degree of suspicion. There is no sure-fire way to ascertain the condition of a used car unless you are good buddies with the seller and he values your friendship. However, here are some tips on used car shopping:

1. Determine how much you can afford to spend on a car, then deduct \$200.00 plus the cost of insurance. After owning seventeen used cars, I can say from experience that you can usually count on having to spend at least \$200.00 on any used car after you buy it. After these deductions you have the amount you can really afford to spend on a car. Stick to this.

2. Never buy the first time you look at a car. Go home and sleep on it. Try to look at a good cross-section of vehicles before you make your choice.

3. If you are not mechanically inclined, have someone who KNOWS cars (not just thinks he does) look at anything you seriously consider. One way to be sure is to take the car to a diagnostic centre (if the owner is willing) and have it checked out. This will cost you about ten bucks but is well worth it if the test points out an important defect.

Always test drive the car for at least thirty minutes, some of this time at highway speeds. Listen for expensive noises when the engine gets hot. Rev the engine and check the color of smoke, if any, which emits from the exhaust pipe. White steam is usually condensation and little cause for worry. Black smoke denotes a rich mixture and is usually caused by a sticking choke or bad carburetor adjustment, inexpensive to remedy. The one to watch out for is blue smoke. This is burning oil and means \$\$\$.

Be wary of automatic transmissions. Pull the automatic transmission dipstick and look at the fluid. If it is not clean and red or if it smells burnt, steer clear. Automatics are expensive to repair.

Check under the car for signs

of oil or fluid leaks or extensive rust. Pull up the floor mats and check there for rust. Advanced rusting is expensive or impossible to fix. Jack up the front end and check the ball joints or kingpins for wear by shaking the front wheels. Sight down the sides of the body for ripples or badly fitting panels, which could be signs of collision damage. As a rule, it is bad practice to buy a car which has been badly smashed.

4. The make and model you buy is largely a matter of personal taste, but here are a few points to be considered. Big American cars are relatively easy to work on, comfortable and parts are cheap. The hassle with these land-barges is that they gobble gas, pollute the air, handle badly, are terribly awkward to drive and park — just generally too big.

If you are not capable of doing your own maintenance and repair work, Volkswagen is your best choice. VW's are dependable and service and parts are readily available. They are a bad choice if you plan on doing your own mechanical work, as special tools and training are required.

This limitation also applies to Renaults, front wheel drive

Austins, Mercedes, Corvair, Citroen, Peugeot and others. If you plan on doing your own work, simple conventional designs are best. Non-front wheel drive Austins, most Sunbeams and Hillmans, Cortinas, some Japanese offerings, old Vauxhall Victors, most American compacts and virtually all pickup trucks are easy to work on. If you are serious about working on your own car, try to obtain a service

manual on it. Many dollars can be saved by doing your own work.

To sum up, vans are nice but are cold in the winter and have poor traction on snow and ice (except VW). Vauxhall Viva and Epic owners usually have many interesting things to say about their cars. Printable ones are rare. Ditto for Austin America automatics. Forewarned is forearmed. Till next week, keep a wheelin'.

Gesundheit!

(cont'd. from p. 8)

variety of toxic gases from the tobacco and the paper. Not only is future cancer and heart disease more likely, but your immediate health suffers.

Caffeine (tea, coffee, cola) and tobacco seem to be a particularly addictive combination. If you want to give up smoking, a rejection of caffeine — and a change of scene — will

help you stop. Alcohol should also be avoided. Follow the simple health practices of good food, moderate exercise and adequate sleep.

To avoid drug interaction, tell your doctor what drugs, prescription or otherwise, you are taking. Ask him what he is prescribing and why. Also ask about driving and about drinking. Follow directions

meticulously and call him if you notice any side effects. Finally, women who suspect they are pregnant should stop all drug use until a gynecologist gives approval.

Don't pump yourself with drugs. A cold calls for rest and fluids, and a headache is best soothed with a cold compress. Better to use a wet towel than to be one.


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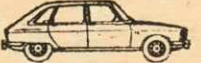
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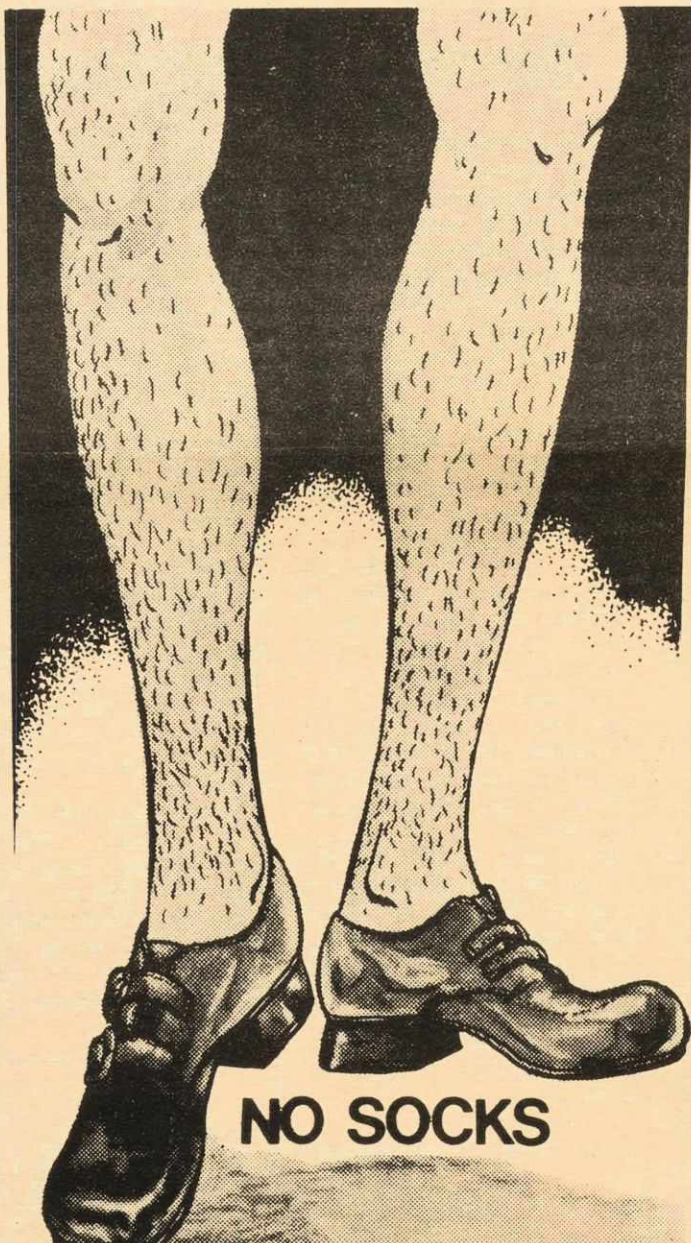
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