Test Driving a Used Car

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Article published on December 6th 2011 | Auto

When you have found a car that you are interested in you will want to inspect and test-drive the car that you are considering purchasing. This is the best way to weed out the bad cars from the ones that have potential.

When you evaluate a used car, you will want to keep two main considerations in mind. The first is whether or not you even like the car. Do you like the color? Do you like the interior? Does it have enough headroom and legroom? Secondly, you will want to know if the car is mechanically sound. These two factors will help you decide whether or not you actually like the car. If you do like the car then you will have a few more questions to ask yourself. Will the car work well in the long run? Will it be in good condition in six months or will you begin to have to repair and put money into it? It is important to realize that in many situations you will need to put a certain amount of money into a used car. You cannot typically find a used car that doesnâ€™t need some kind of repair or sprucing up.

While you are test-driving the car, take it to your mechanic. If you are seriously thinking about purchasing the car, you may have doubts as to whether it is mechanically sound. Take the car to your mechanic and have him check it out for you. Many mechanics are more than happy to test drive the car quickly, check for leaks, and do a compression check. Then they will give you their expert opinion and you can make your decision from there. They may tell you that you would need to have something replaced and it would cost you so much. It would then be up to you to make the decision as to whether or not you would be willing to spend the additional money on the car.

Before you drive the car you will want to inspect the car. Walk around it and get a good overall visual inspection. Ensure that there are no ripples in the door panels, as that may suggest that the car has been in an accident. Look for uneven gaps between the doors and along the hood. Check for leaks such as coolant, oil, transmission fluid or gasoline. Examine the area where the car is normally parked to look for spots from leaks. You will then want to open all doors and the trunk. Test the lights, controls, heater, air and radio. Open the hood and look for leaks or sprays. While the engine is running you will want to listen for knock, ticking, hissing or whining. Check to see that all the tires have enough tread left on them.

Once you are driving the car, you first impression should be the way that the car feels. Does it fell comfortable to you? Are the gauges and controls easily accessible? Do you have enough leg space and headroom? If it is possible to drive the car when it is completely cold you will want to do so. Some older used cars may have difficulty starting when they are cold and this will reveal any chronic problems the car may have. Adjust the seat and mirrors before taking off and drive with the radio off. You will want to hear the engine and listen for other noises.

Be certain to include these factors in your test drive:

- Accelerate from a dead stop

- Check for blind spots

- Listen to the engine noise

- Listen for how the car downshifts

- Braking

- Cornering

- Suspensions

- Listen for rattles or squeaks

- Be sure to get on the highway and get the car up to highway speeds

Following these key points will help you make an accurate assessment of the vehicle before making your decision.

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Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/auto-articles/test-driving-a-used-car.htm - Article Side

Hiteshbhoi - About Author:
a 2012 Chevy Equinox houston

Article Keywords:
Used Cars, Used Car, Car insurance, Car loan, Financing

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