Article published on December 7th 2011 | Auto

It is possible to get a great bargain when purchasing a used car, but on the other hand if you know very little about cars then you could end up with a â€œrust bucketâ€• that wonâ€™t move from the side of kerb. So how do know how to go about purchasing a good used car as opposed to a â€œrust bucketâ€•? Here are some top tips to help you.

The first tip is to make sure that you test drive the car for at least 30 minutes. This should give you adequate time to get the feel of the car and test out all you need to.

Check to make sure the lights work, test the handling and steering, make sure the engine idles smoothly and that there is no smoke coming from the exhaust. Make sure that the car isnâ€™t pulling towards one side and that the brakes work effectively. Does the CD player or radio work? Is there a blind spot?

These are all things that you need to look at.

On the exterior of the car, always make sure that you perform the standard quick checks on the car. These should include checking for rust on the sills, wheel arches, suspension mountings and bottoms of the doors.

Check the door panels for body filler with a standard magnet and check the seals on the doors, windows and sunroofs.

Check to make sure that the mileage on the odometer is in line with the condition of the car. A good indication of this having been tampered with is excessive stone chips on the bonnet and grill and a worn gear knob or steering wheel. Also look for loose screws on the instrument panel as this could indicate it has been removed.

Finally, you could invest in a vehicle data check. This is a low cost way of checking a carâ€™s history â€“ and will definitely show up any skeletons in the closet if there are any.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/auto-articles/top-tips-for-buying-a-used-car.htm - Article Side

Hiteshbhoi - About Author:
a 2012 Chevrolet Cruze houston

Article Keywords:
car, buying a used car internet, used car search, vehicle data check

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