

First Car!

Planning and Pre- Purchase Information

Almost all makes and models of cars made now are made very well. All the manufacturers have come along way and have quality paint jobs and dependable mechanical systems. The useful, comfortable lifespan of a vehicle, whether it is an expensive one or not, depends more on the vehicle getting proper preventive maintenance, both mechanically and cosmically, than on the cost of the vehicle. If the maintenance is adapted properly, the amount of useful miles that we can get out of today's cars is nothing short of amazing. Proper maintenance, however, does not necessarily mean the manufacturers recommended maintenance. From our perspective, there is a certain amount of planned obsolescence involved with car manufacturer's directives. Not as much in the recommendations in areas like drive train lubrication but very much so in their recommended oil change intervals. A manufacturer that recommends 100,000 miles between oil changes is simply not offering proper servicing guidelines. In fact, if you drive around a metro area in any vehicle, especially considering the peppy little aluminum block engines that have been installed in most cars over the last years, it would be a good idea to change your oil more often than what is recommended. Cutting the recommended oil change miles from a recommended 3,000 and doing so at 2,000 miles would be more appropriate. For the cost of a few extra oil changes, you can save over 10 times that amount in future problems and dependability. If you get an extra year or two of quality service from the car, it will also reduce the total carbon footprint created by that vehicle if the proper manufacture and recycling data are factored in.

Have you noticed that expensive cars seem to have fewer dents, run and look nicer, longer? Did you know that it has very little to do with how expensive a vehicle it is? It is because normally, when someone spends \$60,000 - \$500,000 on a vehicle, they are going to take very good care of that investment. If you do the same with a less expensive car, like keeping your car clean, people tend to respect your property more. If you are careful where you park, you will receive fewer additional dents and vandalism. Any model of car will run at least as long and as well as those high end vehicles if you have it serviced properly or do so yourself. Less expensive cars sometimes do have door hinges and latches that are not made very well. That is one area manufacturers tend to cut costs. Therefore a little adaptive preventive maintenance is important. If you keep the hinges, lock assemblies and latches well lubed with something like WD40 you will have fewer problems with any car. About the time a warranty runs out the lubrication on those points is usually gone also. Those points may have been made not as sturdy if it is a less expensive car so you will notice the wear sooner unless you do the preventive maintenance.

If you get a nick or a little surface rust spot somewhere, have it touched up ASAP. That little nick could become a rust spot that will expand under the paint quickly and instead of being a \$50 surface rust touch up, will become an expensive panel repair and repaint situation by the time it becomes a large enough area to become embarrassing. The original factory paint that comes on most cars is normally far better then what a body shop will apply. Therefore, it is usually best to preserve the paint you have instead waiting until the whole car is in need of being repainted.

Even if you may be a nonconformist at heart, if you purchase a popular or common vehicle that has been on the market for a while, more service facilities and mechanics will be knowledgeable about the vehicle. Therefore, in most cases, you will not need to go to an expensive specialty shop or car dealership to get it worked on. This will normally provide you with both a better price on labor and more timely service. **When does this matter?** When you really, really want an exotic vehicle but may need to make a compromise because your reality is that you may not have an exotic budget to go along with the craving for that certain vehicle or look. Owning that special car, especially if you cannot afford to drive it, does not get you very far. The extra cost and stress of supporting one may even keep you from focusing on becoming or being the person you would like to be. School, work and family, which is the important basic stuff, needs to come first. A car should lend support to what is important in the big picture and not be a way to project an image of oneself, especially if it is just a

status symbol of what you'd like to have someday. People these days, although it is perceived in it different ways, understand that quality is in the person, not the car they drive or the color of their skin. Be smart, be real, be happy, figure out your budget, gas, insurance, maintenance then add at least \$100 per month, it is a fact there will surely be some unexpected operating costs with any vehicle.

That being said if you if can afford a fine peace of workmanship and are ready to express or pamper yourself, **Go for it!** The automotive industry needs and is deserving of your support. Become an educated consumer do the research and you will not be disappointed. Technology, comfort, speed, and efficiency are all available and ready to be purchased.