

# CAR CORNER

## Avoiding Lemons In The Used-Car Market

(NAPSA)—No matter what year, make or model, a vehicle is one of the most significant investments a consumer makes. Often, an automobile purchase represents a considerable portion of the buyer's savings, and for those with jobs that require the use of a car—like a pizza-delivery person or regional sales manager—a vehicle may be directly tied to future income.

When buying a used car, individuals forgo the luxury of a factory warranty and take their chances in a market where costs are lower but risks are higher. Fortunately, knowing how to recognize dependable vehicles helps shoppers feel more confident through the purchase process and when on the road.

According to recent Bureau of Transportation statistics, Americans purchased more than 42 million used vehicles in 2004. In fact, 85 percent of car sales are used vehicles. This is not surprising considering how much drivers can save by purchasing used. For example, the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) listed in Kelley Blue Book for a 2006 Ford Taurus is \$21,515, compared

to a similarly equipped used 2004 model at \$11,600. That is nearly 10 thousand dollars thrifty shoppers keep in their pockets. On the

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other hand, if the used car is in poor condition, it may require expensive repairs that completely outweigh any initial savings.

In addition to having a used car checked out by a mechanic, here are several tips to better your odds for a good pick. Firstly, bring a soft refrigerator magnet with you to check for old damage hidden beneath new paint. Run the magnet along steel panels like doors and fenders. If the magnet doesn't "stick," there is most likely body filler below the paint. Inside the car, check for water stains and dried mud on the carpet. A flood-damaged car could be big trouble down the road. Wear on the gas and brake pedals should be consistent with the mileage claimed on the odometer. Low-mileage vehicles should have little wear on the

pedals. Wear on the outer edges of the front tires usually indicates that the car is out of alignment and/or has worn-out components.

Once you make the right purchase, one of the first steps you should take is to ensure the fuel system is clean. Since you don't know what type of fuel the previous owner used, you don't know what condition your fuel system is in. Deposit buildup on fuel injectors, intake valves and combustion chambers can rob engines of power and performance. Tankful after tankful of lower-quality fuel contribute to this problem. Use a fuel-system cleaner such as Techron® Concentrate Plus, which is designed to eliminate engine deposits, maximize performance and restore fuel economy. Your new purchase should be clean on the inside along with the outside.

You can visit Web resources such as [www.usedautotips.com](http://www.usedautotips.com) for more strategies on what to look for when shopping for used cars. When you understand what to look for in a vehicle, you can purchase with confidence and drive home with peace of mind.