



Would you buy a used car from this man? Of course. He's Pete Cunningham, owner of Affordable Used Cars located at I-85 and Beatties Ford Rd. Cunningham says as a used car dealer, he has to please and satisfy his customers since most of his business comes from referrals.

Advice On "How To Buy A Used Car"

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

It can be difficult to advise a 19-year-old on how to buy a used car, especially if he or she has worked part-time all year and has, as he or she will state, "My own money!"

This teenager, delirious with car fever, will see a shiny, little, foreign sports car and say, "That's me!" Parents or adults will see the same car and envision high repair bills, difficulty getting parts, other possible car catastrophes and will feel a headache coming on when the teenager asks, "Will you co-sign for me, please?"

Now that spring is here, income tax refunds are arriving, kids will soon get out of school for summer, families have grown larger and many people are considering buying a used car. Of course, car dealers are aware of this and they are anxious to make a deal. And though some car dealers can be extremely nice, others can be unscrupulous. Many adults and teenagers have been duped into buying a shiny, little lemon.

However, if you follow the important guidelines to buying a used car, you're guaranteed to be able to differentiate between the good, the

bad, and the ugly.

TIME TO BUY

Experts say, the right time to shop for a used car is during the day. At night, artificial lighting on car lots make cars gleam like jewels. In daylight, they'll look more realistic. Also do not shop when it's raining. You won't be able to detect whether the car might be leaking.

WHERE TO GO?

For some reason, in Charlotte, specifically in the inner city area, there appears to be a used car lot on every corner. A fact that makes it ever more difficult to decide from where to buy a used car. The fact is, most car specialists agree that a new car dealer is the best place to buy a second hand car, especially if you're paying a substantive price.

The reason is, some of these dealers will offer guarantees, such as one on the "drive train," which covers any problems with the engine, transmission, drive shaft and differential. Note, if the car costs more than \$2,000 at any dealer, insist upon at least a 30-day drive train guarantee.

Other places to pursue: private owners normally sell a car for less

than a dealer does, but almost always "as is"; used car dealers may charge a little extra though you can often get some type of limited guarantee; remember, small dealers often buy cars that are auctioned because nobody else wants them.

NOW THAT YOU'VE FOUND IT

If you find the car of your dreams, to keep it from becoming your worst nightmare, be sure to carry out the examination points that follow. Don't allow the dealer to pressure you. It is your right to check each and everything about the car BEFORE YOU BUY.

-Look for any flaws, ripples in the body, or whether the car has been repainted (look under the rubber seals around the door or under chrome trim). These occurrences might indicate a past accident.

-Check the odometer for total mileage, and then compare that figure with stickers still attached to door posts. If there are no stickers, be a little suspicious.

-Check pedals and controls for wear. If they are brand new, be suspicious. If they are worn out, beware.

-Doors, hood and trunk should all open easily and close solidly.

-Check to see that front and rear wheels line up.

-Look under car for fluid leaks. No car should drip anything.

-The car's engine should be clean. Dipstick should show oil that is clean and rather thin. The battery should be solid and clean.

-Inside the car, check seat adjustment, door locks, window mechanisms, horn, lights, signals, radio-all accessories. This will show how well the car has been treated.

-When starting the engine it should turn over quickly and then settle down to a fast idle. Watch for smoke from the rear. Once the car is warmed, white smoke can mean a leaking gasket, blue smoke, a complete engine overhaul, black, a maladjusted carburetor. If there is any engine knocking, reject this car.

-Check the tailpipe after car is turned off. Residue inside should be whitish-gray.

-Restart the engine and check the oil in an automatic transmission. It should be clean and clear.

HIT THE ROAD, JACK

For a test drive, a short stint around the block is not enough. Plan to road test the car and if the dealer's not happy about this, tough. Take your money elsewhere.

Your test route should include city streets, a freeway, a bumpy road and an empty parking lot.

Watch for: the oil pressure and engine heat gauges, they should remain steady throughout; automatic transmission should shift without jerking or making any noise; in manual cars there should be no sticking or grinding when operating stick shift; there should be no squeaking or grinding when you apply brakes. Brake hard. The car should come to an immediate stop without squealing or swerving. Check power steering and steering response.

On the bumpy road, the car should not shimmy or shake.

Acceleration should be smooth and steady with no smoke out of the back and no clunking or other noises.

After road test, return car and check engine for any leaks or seepage.

THE SECOND OPINION

Take the car to a service station or auto-diagnostic center where a technician will pinpoint faults you may have missed and estimate the cost of fixing faults you may have found. He will also give the engine a compression test to check rings and valves.

WE ALL HAVE OUR PRICE

Use what you've learned from the examination, road test and mechanic to get the price of the car down. Don't be embarrassed to bargain on the best price. Try to get the seller to throw in certain repairs. Remember, you're spending your own money.

Thieves Stole More Cars In 1984; But Recovery Rate Was Up

Car thieves stole five percent more vehicles in North Carolina in 1984 than they did in 1983.

That's bad news for insurance buyers because the losses go into rate calculations. The good news is that the recovery rate was 85 per-

Special Celebration

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A schouyard of fun also is planned for all ages. Three stages will offer nonstop entertainment from 10 a.m. to noon. Entertainers include the First Ward Break Dancers, the Charlotte Caledonia Bagpipe Band, a "perfect double" for Michael Jackson, a gospel singing ensemble, a state champion girls' gymnastic team and Little Miss America of 1984, who will sing country hits. Many civic leaders, including Mayor Harvey Gantt will join in on the celebration.

More than 20 rides and games await to test your skill, whether your passion is dunking machines, soccer kicking or driving miniature cars. And, of course, there will be plenty of food. In addition to the traditional midway munchies (hot dogs, pizza, nachos, popcorn and cola), a group of First Ward residents will be frying up their favorite fish dishes.

MT. SINAI BAPTIST

The Greater Mt. Sinai Baptist Church extends an invitation to the public to be a part of its Easter Day services. The Annual Sunrise service will be held at 6 a.m. in the main auditorium with the Rev. Herbert Sturdivant, associate minister, preaching the message; and the mass choir, under the direction of Mrs. N. E. Kerry and Steven Cooper, bringing the music.

The Annual Sunrise breakfast, sponsored by the brotherhood, will follow the services at 7:15 a.m. The Sunday School Department will begin its in-depth study of God's word at 9:45 a.m. and close with moments of decision whereby each person will check their own personal relationship with God.

Morning worship will begin at the 11 o'clock hour with music being rendered by the noted Voices of Sinai and Choirs One & Two. The message will be brought by the pastor's son, Rev. N. E. Kerry Jr., associate pastor of the church. The Easter services will conclude at 5 p.m. with an Easter program presented by the youth of the church and an Easter Egg Hunt directly after the program.

Rev. N. E. Kerry Sr., pastor, welcomes you to each of these services and wishes to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your many prayers and acts of kindness during his illness. May God continue to bless you.

Mt. Sinai is located at 1243 West Blvd.

cent. After declines for three consecutive years, the number of thefts rose from 8,565 to 9,043. Even though 7,706 of the vehicles were recovered, the thefts cost insurers millions of dollars which will go into future rates, said G. D. Culp, president of the North Carolina Insurance News Service.

"Even when the cars are recovered, the insurance company incurs expenses in handling the claims and those expenses also affect rates," said Culp, general manager of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company.

Lloyd Letterman of the Division of Motor Vehicles, N.C. Department of Transportation, credits the high vehicle recovery rate to good work by law enforcement agencies.

Careless drivers contributed to the higher theft rate, according to Culp. "Many drivers make it easy for thieves by leaving their keys in their cars," Culp said. "Removing the keys would prevent thousands of the thefts."

Thefts in five counties accounted for 41 percent of the state's total and thefts in 10 counties added up to 55.3 percent of the total. Only Gates, Jones and Tyrrell Counties reported no thefts in 1984. Gates and Jones had that distinction for the second consecutive year.

As might be expected of the state's most populous county, thefts in Mecklenburg County led all others. Mecklenburg's thefts of 1,265, up from 1,194 in 1983, were 13.8 percent of the state's 1984 total.

Wake County's 770 thefts moved it ahead of Cumberland County which was second in 1983. Cumberland had 715 thefts in 1984.

Guilford's 519 thefts placed it fourth and Forsyth's 441 ranked it fifth. "The best anti-theft measure is to pocket your keys and lock your car," Culp said. "Spare keys that are hidden under the hood or in various places on a car are an invitation to thieves."

The Raleigh insurance executive said another anti-theft measure is to etch an identification number onto your windshield. "Because replacing glass is expensive, a thief will think twice before taking a car with such identification."

Culp also suggested a measure that may help with recovery in case your car is stolen. "Etch your North Carolina driver's license number in a hard-to-find place on your car, or write in on a piece of paper and drop it down a window well into the door where it is out of sight."

You may obtain a car-theft prevention brochure by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Car Theft Prevention, N.C.I.N.S., P. O. Box 11526, Charlotte, N.C. 28220.

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