

Project Preparation

Preparing Your “Head” For The Project



- Read a couple of *Hemmings Motor News* issues cover to cover. Not only will you learn the basic range of prices that people and businesses ask for cars like yours, but you will become aware of a wide range of parts suppliers, service providers, car shows, flea markets and parts swaps, auctions, sources for tools and supplies, insurance, appraisals, and more. From time to time you could call owners of cars for sale like yours to make sure that your project goals cannot be better realized more quickly and at less expense by selling what you have and buying a finished one. Certainly you could also take such an opportunity a step further and ask for some advise. Most private owners love to talk about their cars, more so when you are calling them at a convenient time. It is the best investment you can make to obtain free advise.
- Get a catalog from Motorbooks International (their thick catalog). Select and order a variety of books that are focused on your project car, make, and model. Its almost guaranteed that they will have helpful books, and those books that detail points of originality are mandatory. Also, you should select a general history book of your project’s manufacturer. You may also want to look at a couple of “how-to” books.
- Seek out and join your local chapter and national organization that is focused on your make/model. This is your gateway into a wealth of resources, experience, and a network of experts. Ask them for their favorite flea markets and car shows then make plans to attend some of these.
- Attend as many car shows as practical. Talk to owners showing a car similar to your project. Take a small notepad and get the names and phone numbers of owners you would consider contacting later for advice and information.
- Start a list of critical parts missing or seriously damaged on your project. Take this list with you to club meetings, car shows, and flea markets. Start a similar list of key questions you have about tackling your project and about sources, certain components and details.
- Collect sales literature for your project car, or a book that includes copies. Original sales literature is always desirable to collect and display with your car at show. Also collect sources for manufacturer’s photos. Many are contained in books you will acquire. But if you are in Southeastern Michigan, do not overlook the tremendous resource material which is archived at the Detroit Public Library’s National Automotive History Collection, America’s most comprehensive source of domestic and foreign auto history. Nothing beats the authority of a manufacturer’s pictures and written documents for indisputable evidence about points of originality. The only caveat is not to be misled by photos of “specials” such as prototype or auto-show cars that might deviate from production standards and options (unless your project is the real thing).



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- For some projects a parts car may be a cost-effective source of what else? Parts. The only down-side is bringing it home and storing it. Besides parts, you could also use it to learn how to remove or disassemble certain components, before you damage your own. Enterprising and knowledgeable experts buy such cars to disassemble and sell piece meal for profit. It is often possible to sell parts from such a car and earn ten times more than you invested, but it takes time, advertising, and space.
- Learn to use the internet. At virtually no cost, the value of the information you can mine with it is positively astounding, as is the geographic reach it provides. It is a lot cheaper and usually more productive than phone calls. Almost all makes and models are supported by a "LIST" or bulletin boards of enthusiasts that have found the information highway. It is well worth the effort to find them. They are your "virtual" club meeting where you can ask questions of many owners and experts at the same time, and get answers within hours.
- Seek out or start compiling a parts-interchange list, especially if your project is a high-end car, or it is rare. Suppliers that support high-end cars usually charge commensurate prices. Many components are likely to be used by the manufacturer on their less pricey models, and many components and parts are sourced from "outside suppliers." Often the original manufacturer or supplier of that component also supplies other manufacturers. The trick is to identify those contemporary vehicles that used the same part or component. When you succeed, you have located a fresh source for parts, often at a much lower price. Salvage yards subscribe to a publication called the *Holland's Parts Interchange Manual*. This is a wonderful source of such information if you can find one that covers your project.