

## Ask Mr. Bailey

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## DreamCarRaffles.com

We are offering the following E-articles for your information and enjoyment.

Much of what is contained here is the opinion of the author. It is all based on fact, but when it comes to the subject of cars, especially old cars, opinions play a huge role. Therefore, we welcome your opinion and we invite your comments.

First thing to note is that I base all my opinions strictly on looks. Although most car enthusiasts take into consideration things like engine size and/or performance, handling, ride, and reputation, I believe that competition eventually forces all the carmakers to be very close when it comes to mechanicals. Therefore, looks, especially in the 50's, are the best way for a car to be "unique". And, "unique" is king!

### E-Article #1—**Top 10 Best Looking Cars Between 1940 & 1979**

As mentioned in the forward, the following list is the opinion of the author and is based solely on looks and is based on the following parameters:

1. Trend setter-first to have something that others copy extensively.
2. Something Unique and Great! Remember "unique" is King!
3. Others have it, but it looks better on this one.
4. "Classic" look that lasts and lasts and still looks good many years later.
5. Good combination of charm and flash and the aforementioned #'s 1-4.
6. All models have what it takes, not just the best model.

Important features to consider:

**Grille**  
**Taillights**  
**General Shape**  
**Dashboard**  
**Wheels/Wheelcovers/Hubcaps**  
**Color Combinations**

First, let's start with Honorable Mention:

### **1965 & 1966 Pontiac Grand Prix**

Attributes-Great overall shape, nice grille and taillights, some really nice colors (Royal Blue) and as with all 60's Pontiacs, the distinctive wheels.

Downfalls-Not considered by too many to have the long-lasting classic look and didn't really set any particular trends.

### **1964-66 Thunderbirds**

Attributes-Very shapely body, great wire wheels (on the best models), very nice dash, and absolutely awesome rear seat that wraps around the sides. But, best of all is the unique and should have been trend setting sequential taillights (65 & 66). This is one of the neatest features ever developed.

Downfalls-Never set any trends that I know of and no long-lasting classic look in spite of its very good looks. I always compare the front of a car to a human face, and these T-Birds and many others, always seem to be frowning or even scowling a bit. I would prefer a smile.

### **1958 Corvette**

Attributes-Great styling overall with a trend-setting sports car look. Unique chrome "straps" on the trunk lid (only Corvette to have them) are a very nice touch. Handsome grille and taillights and the cove in the side, also unique to Corvette, definitely sets it off!

Downfalls-There's not much, but it is just a tad less "classic" than the ones that made the top 10.

### **1955-57 Chevy**

Attributes-Almost everyone's classics of all classics. Nice grille, taillights, overall shape, hubcaps and dash along with the colors, for the most part. Definitely have the long-lasting classic looks that keep them valuable.

Downfalls-Interior not very striking. Even though the classic look lasted, it didn't set a trend. In fact, the 57 only lasted one year. Even Chevrolet itself chose to completely restyle their cars in 58 and again in 59, never to return again.

## **Top Ten Countdown:**

### **#10 1963 Corvette Stingray Coupe**



Attributes-Set the trend for all of the American sports cars to come. The split rear window was unique, not only for Corvette but all other cars as well. Great combination of charm and flash. Very impressive shape, dash, wheels, and colors.

Downfalls-Not a very impressive grille, if fact,

no grille at all really. And, I'm not impressed with the hidden headlights. It's like a face with no eyes, except at night.

### #9 1955-56 Desoto



Attributes-Great grille, especially the 55, and great taillights, especially the 56 with the three vertical ones. The 3-tone paint combo in 55 is wonderful and the dash is one of the best ones ever. Very nice overall shape and the graceful fins are an asset on this car.

Downfalls-Not necessarily any trends set here, but not because they didn't try.

### #8 1950 Buick

Attributes-Great, Great grille integrated into the bumper to create a "waterfall" effect.



Very nice curves make up the overall shape and the portholes in the front fenders, although not the first year for them, are unique and set a trend that Buick kept for many years and created an "identifier". If it had the portholes, it had to be a Buick. It also had perhaps

the very best looking dashboard ever!

Downfalls-The taillights were too small and not distinctive enough. The taillights on the 49 and 53 were better.

### #7 1949-51 Mercury



Attributes-Like the 55-57 Chevy's, it has the long-lasting classic look. Others had a similar look, but Mercury did it better. Fabulous grille, nice shape, dash, and taillights, especially in 51.

Downfalls-Never really set any trends, as Mercury never regained the popularity of those three years.

#### #6 1960 Buick



Attributes-Fabulous use of curves in it's finely sculptured sides. Awesome grille and taillights with the gently curved fins in the rear that match the curved eyebrows in the front over the headlights. Distinctive hubcaps and the simulated portholes in the side of the fender are still a nice touch as it continues to "identify" it as a Buick.

Downfalls-Not exactly a trendsetting look, but very, very nice none the less.

#### #5 1948 Cadillac Series 61/62

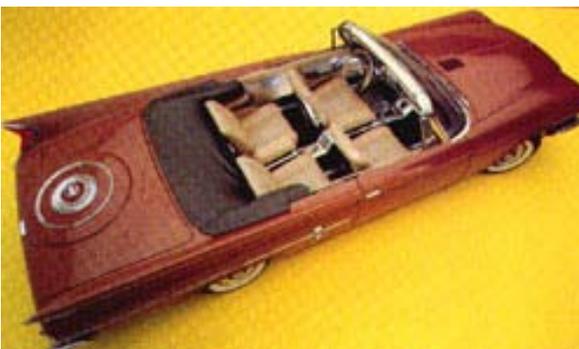


Attributes-One word: Fins! This car's fins set the trend for probably the biggest styling feature of all time. Fins would hang around for another decade or more. Most cars didn't get around to using them until at least 1955, so it was way ahead of its time. The 48 started the classic grille for Caddy that lasted in some variation for decades and copied by many others. It has great taillights and good use of just the right amount of chrome. Great

shape, too!

Downfalls-Dash not distinctive or trendsetting at all, which is perhaps the only thing against it.

#### #4 1960 Chrysler 300F



Attributes-Fabulous front end/grille with the bumper curved upwards to seemingly form a smile. Very curvy overall shape and slanted fin with the taillight incorporated into it. Magnificent interior with front and rear bucket seats and full-length console. Great, if not the best, example of the Chrysler letter cars that would perpetuate for several more years.

Downfalls-Not sure about the fake spare tire on the trunk lid but otherwise the car is simply wonderful.

### #3 1959 Dodge



Attributes-Marvelous front end with the grille and parking lights in the pods and the curved eyebrows over the headlights to give it a “sophisticated” look. Great shape with just the right size fins over the dual bullet-type vertical taillights. The hubcaps on this car are classics. The swivel seats, also available on other Chrysler products, are a nice added

feature and seemingly very practical.

Downfalls-There must be one somewhere.

### #2 1959 Chevy



Attributes-This car has lots of everything good. It has a great overall shape and fabulous dash with a “sports car” flavor. It has absolutely the most unique front and rear-end treatment of any car ever. The front has the bushy eyebrows over the headlights and the distinctive knobs across the grille. The rear has the horizontal bat wing fins over the unusually shaped taillights that look kind of like stretched cat’s eyes. No car before or since has had either the front or the rear look of this car. This is the ultimate in uniqueness. Remember; “unique” is King!

Downfalls-No trends set, but who cares.

### #1 1960 Cadillac



Attributes-Absolutely without a doubt this car has the best combination of charm, flash, and downright good looks. In addition, every model looked good, not just one. It has the very best grille ever, both front and rear. It has the best fins, high, but not as extravagant as the 59 Cadillac and a few others, and topped with that wonderful chrome. It has

the best taillights ever, actually two sets of them, one in the fin and one in the pod above

the bumper next to the rear grille. The rear grille matches the front grille nicely. It has a fabulous shape with Cadillac's best dashboard (along with 59) and nice wheel covers on all the models including the lowest 62 series. Naturally, it had a lot of chrome, but not too much chrome, including chrome eyebrows. All this creates the most classic look of all classics and the **number one** classic.

Downfalls-I can't find a single one!

## E-Article #2--Top Ten Worst Looking Cars Between 1940-1979

As previously mentioned (a couple of times), the following list is based on the author's opinion, using the following parameters:

1. Looks different, but it's not a "good" different.
2. Something unique about it that makes it **less** attractive than others.
3. Nothing "classic" about it, unless you consider "ugly" classic.
4. No charm, no flash, no anything, but ugly, ugly, ugly. 3U award winner!

First, let's start with honorable mention:

**1940-52 Crosley**—Every model could "brag" about it's looks as they were all equally ugly. One model looked like the front of a freight train, another a blob on wheels, and the Hotshot Roadster looked like a golf cart with headlights. All models qualify for the 3U award.

**1940-41 American Bantam**—Actually looked a little bit like the aforementioned Crosley but it looked more like an oversized peddle car that your kids might like, rather than a car, which is probably why it didn't make it. The best thing about it was the name of its models, that is, Hollywood, Speedster, and Riviera. Other car companies used all these names with much more success. Familiar names, different look, but not good different.

## Countdown of Top 10

**#10—1948 Tucker**-Distinctive central headlight in front may have been a good



functional idea, but to me it looks like a big pimple in the middle of your forehead. The taillights would have looked better right next to the rear grille instead of sitting on the rear fender several inches away from the back. The dash is not very impressive either. It was a car ahead of it's time in many ways, so I don't want to be too hard on it, but from a strictly looks standpoint, it left a little to be desired.

**#9—1950 Studebaker**-It has that same big pimple in the middle of its face, not a headlight, just an ornamental thing in place of a real grille. It needed a real grille to give it character. Its shape was odd as well and the wraparound rear windshield on the



Starlight Coupe was interesting but didn't add much to its looks. It's not a 3U but it is worthy of #9

**#8—1961 Desoto**-What is that thing in the front above the grille and headlights? It looks like a big scab that developed after you ran into a door with your face. The curved bumpers and parking lights are a feeble attempt at making a smiley face, but looks to me more like a smirk. Nothing very distinctive about the taillights either. It's no wonder this was Desoto's last year of production. I sure hope their stylists got fired!



**#7—1970 Plymouth Superbird**-It's a bird, it's a plane, but is it a car? With that ridiculous rear stabilizer and the extended shovel-nose front end, it looks more like "something" other than a car. It may have had race car-like performance, but remember, this is all about looks. It was rare, only 1920 were made, which makes it very valuable (up to \$125,000.), but then there is a lot of very valuable art out there that I wouldn't hang up in my garage or any place for that matter. Take this thing to the track but keep it out of my sight.



**#6—1970-78 American Motors Gremlin**-I guess it was American Motors version of the VW Bug, except not even that good looking. Not that the Bug was good looking. It had a very distinctive shape, indeed, but why? It may have been functional but it certainly wasn't good looking. It looks kind of like a miniature station wagon without the wagon. And, who ever said station wagons were good looking? Not me! It's different



looking, but not good different.

**#5—1952 Allstate (1951 Henry J)**-Sears made an attempt to make cars and this is it. They should have stuck with making tools. This one has that "thing" in the middle in the



front above the grille again like the Tucker and the Studebaker previously mentioned. It's ugly and so is the shape, the odd rear fenders, the tiny taillights, the dash, and just about everything else. This car could have easily have been higher on the list. There is nothing classic about this one, unless you consider "ugly" classic.

**#4—1950 Nash Airflyte**-The "bathtub" on wheels had a nice grille, but the overall shape was stupid looking and the skirts over the **front** wheels didn't help it's looks. The tiny taillights in the middle of the trunk lid instead of on the end of the fenders above the bumper didn't do much for it either. The dash was too plain and simple to be attractive. It had no flash, no charm and not much of anything else. It's shape alone qualifies it for this list. Who wants to drive a bathtub on wheels anyway?



**#3—1975-79 American Motors Pacer** -Speaking of shape, how about this one? It's similar to its counterpart, the Gremlin, with a very unusual shape and low and wide to boot. It had a decent grille and taillights, but that wide, squatty shape is just too much of a diversion to even notice anything good about it. If American Motors was trying to create a classic, they failed miserably. The different and unique features didn't help its cause. It's ugly, ugly! (Only a 2U



and thus ranked #3 and not higher)

**#2—1948 Willys Jeepster** -It's ridiculous to think of this as a car. The front end looked like something from the 20's and the back, with the exposed spare tire on it, kept the same theme. If you look up ugly in the dictionary, there will be a picture of this. It's a poor attempt at making something into something else it's not capable of becoming. It's hard to make a Jeep into a car, and, when it is all said and done, it is just that, a Jeep. Has anyone ever thought of a Jeep as being attractive in any shape or form? **It is a 3U!**



**#1—1973 VW Thing** -If you refer to the list of parameters, you'll see this "thing" qualifies for all four. They definitely got the name right. It is a piece of tin on wheels. The sides look like garage doors. The inside has no "soft" appointments other than the seat. There are no vinyl door panels, no carpeted floorboards, and no padded dash. Everything is just metal. If Volkswagen was trying to make something really "different", they succeeded, but it was not a good different. (#1 parameter) It had a lot of unique features about it (previously mentioned), but they made it **less** attractive. (#2 parameter) If different and unique features were an attempt to make it a classic, well, not unless you consider "ugly" classic. (#3 parameter) Lastly, it had no charm, no flash, no anything, but ugly, ugly, ugly. (#4 parameter) This is, of course, why it is #1. The VW Thing gets the ultimate **3U Award** and believe me it deserves it!



### E-Article #3—**Tips on How to Buy a Classic Car**

The key to buying a classic car is the same as buying almost anything, and that is, you've got to know what you want. You can't go shopping for an unknown. Most everyone has a favorite car brand, or at least a manufacturer, such as Ford, Chrysler, or GM. Certainly most people's favorite car is either Chevy or Ford, since one or the other was the top seller in probably every year from 1940 to 1979. However, if your thing is rarity and uniqueness, like me, you might want to opt for a Lincoln, Cadillac, Studebaker, Hudson, Rambler, or at least a limited production model of a Chevy, Ford, Plymouth, Dodge, or Chrysler. Of course there are literally 100's of models to choose from between 1940 and 1979, so this could be the most difficult task in buying a classic car. I would suggest looking through lots of car books and magazines. Remember that I'm high on "looks", so when you have looked at enough publications, surely some will be pleasing to your eye. I would suggest the following books:

Cars of the 40's

Cars of the Fabulous 50's

Cars of the Sizzling 60's

Cars of the Sensational 70's

Also, the following publications will help in your decision. They have lots of pictures and also helpful information:

Old Car Trader

Hemmings Motor News

Old Car Weekly News & Marketplace

Wheeler Dealer

Deals on Wheels

Special Interest Auto

Car Collector Magazine

Dupont Registry

First, decide what you want and then decide how much you can spend. If you want to buy a Chevy or Ford, be prepared to spend big bucks if you intend to buy a #3 car or better.

That brings us to another decision. Do you want a car that “needs nothing” or are you willing to spend more money than the purchase price to fix it up? If the latter is true, that could be very costly, unless you can do at least some the work yourself. Take it from my experience, I can only clean up the car and that’s about it. For me to buy a “fixer-upper” would be insane. However, I could be insane, because I’ve done it a couple of times. But the bottom line is, if you pay for all the fix-up work to be done, you will no doubt have more invested in the car than you will ever be able to sell it for when it’s done. Some of you may not care about how much you could resell it for, in which case it doesn’t matter how much you spend, as long as you have unlimited funds, which is about what it would take. If you do have unlimited funds, you probably should just buy a #1 or #2 Car unless you just can’t find one.

You could be the type of person who just gets a thrill out of taking a piece of junk and turning it into a masterpiece. That’s fine, but it takes a lot of money. So, be prepared to write a lot of large checks.

Some people like to do the rags to riches thing as a Father-Son project. This is very difficult as well. In this modern time, we all seem to be always busy doing something, something other than working on the car together. You’ll probably end up selling the car in whatever condition it’s in at 25-50%, or less, of what you have in it just to get it out of your way.

### **Recap and Recommendation**

1. Decide what you want to buy.
2. Decide how much you want or can spend.
3. Determine your direct involvement in improving your purchase, if improvements are needed, and the inherent cost involved.
4. Determine whether you are buying it for pure pleasure, a project, or an investment.

My recommendation would be to buy a somewhat rare or unique car in #2 or #3 condition with sound mechanicals and just a few “cosmetic” repairs needed. Items such as chrome, headliner, upholstery, and even paint cost a whole lot less than a new engine or even new brakes and brake lines and exhausts, etc, etc. If you want that certain car, but the funds are a little short, don’t be afraid to borrow some of the funds (preferably no more than 50% of the purchase price) in order to move up to a #2 car instead of a #3 car with mechanical problems. At least you’ll know what you’re spending each month and for how long. Also, don’t be afraid to get a lesser model or a 4-dr instead of the best

model and/or a 2-dr. Unless everyone you hang around with is an old car expert, they'll still gaze in wonderment and ask you all kinds of questions about it. That should make you feel very special, especially when you realize you spent thousands less for that 4-dr than you would have for the 2-dr. Really, almost any old car in great condition (#2 or #3), will get positive reactions from others. Even if it doesn't, you will still feel "special". There is just something about a 30-40 year old car surviving and even thriving after all that time and still looking that good! The feeling is incomparable.

## E-Article #4 - **Classic Car Values -A Study of Investment Vs Recreational Enjoyment**

Before deciding what is an investment and what is only recreation, we must understand values. A #5 car cannot be an investment, a #1 car cannot be a recreational car, and a #6 car cannot be either. Let me explain.

The standard numbering system most car buffs use is 1-6 regarding condition of the car. Starting from the worst to the best, a #6 car (poor) is a parts car and not worth restoring and is useable only as parts for another just like it. A #5 car (fair) is one that is restorable but needs “complete” restoration including mechanicals, body, and interior. A #4 car (good) is driveable but still in need of some work to be an everyday driver. It doesn't even look good from 20 feet away.

A #3 car (very good) is, in my opinion, where any serious buyer of a classic car should start. It is in good driving condition, with generally good to very good mechanicals, but from a looks point of view, it is a “20 footer”. It looks perfect from 20 feet away, but up close, it's blemished and definitely not perfect.

A #2 car (fine) has a very good combination of looks & mechanicals. It is either a very well maintained original or a superior restoration or a combination thereof. It is a daily driver, a show winner, or just an investment. Whatever you want it to be is what it is. This is the condition we all should strive to find, purchase, and own.

A #1 car (excellent) is the proverbial “show car”. It is about as perfect as a car can be and still be a car. Then again, maybe it's not really a car, more like just an object of admiration, like a painting. This object just happens to be able to run down the road on four rolling tires, but you'll never see it being driven. It is all for show! It's also not for anyone with limited funds. Luckily there are very few of them.

So, going back to my original question, obviously a #6 car or a #5 car cannot be driven, at least not with any pride. Neither could be a recreational vehicle, a so-called “fun machine”. Neither could be considered an investment by any stretch of the imagination. By the time you spend the money it would take to bring a #5 car up to a #2 car, you most certainly would lose money when you try to sell it. That is not an investment, it's just an expensive hobby.

The same applies to a #4 car, except you would spend a little less money on it and lose less if you sold it. You wouldn't have to spend a lot on it, but it would still not be either a true fun machine or an investment.

With a #3 car, you're getting a true fun driving machine, with a few flaws, but most of the flaws would not be that noticeable. You can have a lot of fun with it and not spend a

lot of money on it. You have to maintain it, which costs money, but a must to keep it “fun”. As an investment it is not very good, unless you spend the big bucks on it with little or not chance to recoup your investment when selling it.

A #2 car is the ultimate “driver” if you choose it to be, the fun machine of all fun machines. With a great combination of looks and mechanicals, it can be anything you want it to be. If you want it to be a true investment, you’ll have to do what’s necessary to make it #1 car. In my opinion, find a good mutual fund for your investment dollars and use your #2 car as a “fun machine”.

The #1 car is an investment. But, it would take a long holding period, funds to maintain its #1 rating, room-temperature storage space, and insurance. Unless it’s an extremely rare car, and expensive, it still wouldn’t be as good an investment as a good mutual fund.

I’d go for a #3 car, or a #2 car if you can afford it, and DRIVE ON!

**Note: Car Condition Ranking Scale**

- #1 Excellent
- #2 Fine
- #3 Very Good
- #4 Good
- #5 Fair
- #6 Poor

## E-Article #5—It's My Story and I'm Sticking to It

Everyone who has ever bought an old car has a story. I'm no different. To the best of my knowledge and recollection, this is the way it happened. I have always been an old car fanatic. At first I liked Chevy's, but later, for various reasons, I became a Cadillac enthusiast. There is something about the best, most unique, most "classic" car ever produced. (At least in America)

I bought my first old car, a beat-up 57 Chevy, on 11-7-77 for \$450.00 with good intentions of restoring it. About 2 ½ years later (3-31-80) I sold it after a few mechanical improvements and new tires (total cost of \$954.) for \$100.00 with my Dad's brand new jumper cables still in the trunk. So much for good intentions.

On 5-1-79, I purchased a 1961 Mercury Monterey 4-door for \$200.00 and did nothing to it. I sold later for a profit but I don't remember how much or when. I hate it when I can't remember.

My next attempt came much later, 5-19-91, when I purchased a 1951 Chevy 210 4-dr Sedan. It was all original with only 86,000 miles on it and cost only \$1,700.00. It needed a little upholstery work and that's it. Just three weeks later on the way back from the County Fair, the engine threw a rod. For the next three years, I had it sitting at a mechanic's garage in hopes of replacing the engine. It never happened and it just sat there and rotted away. I sold it for a parts car for \$125.00 just to get it out of the driveway.

These two bad experiences might have convinced most people to stick with the new cars and give up on any more "old" cars. However, I just kept remembering how I felt when I drove those cars and the old cars my Dad always had. There was something different about each of them, something special. Something you can't find in modern cars. I just had to find the car that would "take me back in time" again.

So, the search began. I poured through numerous books and magazines, studying, toiling, sweating and enjoying ever minute of it. I got an idea of what I could afford and I set out to find it. After 7 or 8 years of this "search" and several visits to dealers and private owners, I just made a random visit to Country Classic Cars in Staunton, IL. This was on Saturday, June 10, 2000. I had been there several times before and every time I had gone there I picked out one or two cars I would consider buying, but none had really blown me away. This time was different. The salesman walked up to me as I was looking at a 53 Cadillac Series 62 4-dr Sedan in need of some help and asked "looking for a Cadillac?" I said yes, he took me inside, and there it was. A big black Cadillac! It was a 1960 Series 62 4-dr Sedan with 42,000 original miles on it, new tires, new exhaust, new headliner, absolutely no rust anywhere, even underneath. ( I checked) It was

basically a “new” old car. Just what I was looking for in view of the bad experiences I’d had previously. This was the car that “blew me away”, my dream car!

Since then I have purchased a 49 Plymouth Special Deluxe 4-dr Sedan for \$350.00. I envisioned it as a project for my Son and I. I’ve spent \$2,000.00 or so on it for brakes, brake lines, new battery and other minor engine work. It is still sitting in the driveway nearly a year later with a flat tire on a wheel with frozen lug nuts. The engine purrs like a kitten, if you can get it started, which is not an easy task. Do you think I could sell it for the \$2500.00 I have in it? No way! I’d be lucky to get my original purchase price for it. That’s paying for your mistakes. Call me insane and you may be right. The next car I get will be a #3 or #2. You can bet your bottom dollar on that!

## E-Article #6—**Can't Afford to Buy a Classic Car? How About Winning One!**

Did you know you could win a \$20,000.00 classic car for as little as \$2.00? Of course, your odds of winning with one \$2.00 ticket would not be as good as several \$25.00, \$50.00, or \$100.00 tickets, but the odds are still much, much better than any of those state lotteries or any gambling casinos many of you partake in. The odds could be as little as 1 in a 100.

If you can't afford to buy a \$15-25,000 classic car, then surely you can afford to set aside \$10, 25, 50, or even a 100.00 to participate in a classic car raffle. You can choose the car or cars you would like to own from the many raffles out there. If you wouldn't want the car even if you did win it, then don't enter that raffle. There may be a limited number of makes and models being raffled, because most will either be sports cars, such as a Corvette, or really rare and/or expensive cars such as old T-Birds, Z-28 Camaros, Mustangs/Shelbys and the like. Even though you could never afford to buy one of those cars, you'd still love to own one, especially if it is virtually free.

The best part about raffles is they are almost always run by non-profit 501(3)C corporations that do something to benefit some group of people in need. The profits from the raffle are used for humanitarian purposes. So, what that means is by participating in these raffles that support humanitarian causes, you're in turn supporting those causes. Therefore, even if you lose, you win, because you get the satisfaction of knowing you have helped support the cause. It is an all win situation.

Where can you find these raffles, you ask? The Old Car Trader, Hemmings Motor News, and various other old and classic car publications is one place to look. Oh, and there is the internet. DreamCarRaffles.com is a website that lists various raffles in one place. With the internet becoming more and more popular, DreamCarRaffles.com will continue to be an ever-increasing option. Don't think that winning a car is impossible. Just like every other contest and raffle, someone has to win. Why not you? If you don't participate, you definitely will not win. But if you do enter, who knows?

### E-Article #7—**Should You Drive it, Show it, Store it, Sell it, or Just Junk it?**

If you've already got an old classic and don't quite know what to do with it, here are some tips. It mostly depends on the condition of the car (see E-Article #4). If it is a show car, obviously you need to treat it like a newborn baby. You never drive it, because it's not really a car, it's a showpiece. It's a priceless piece of art. It's rare, almost the only one in existence. It should be shown only and when its not being shown, its stored in a climate-controlled garage, secured of course, so nothing bad can ever happen to "your baby". That's a #1 Car.

A #2 car is another story. It begs to be driven and shown off, maybe not in shows, although that's entirely alright, but on the streets of any town or city. Drive it, maintain it properly, and then drive it some more. Polish it, wax it, wash it, not necessarily in that order, but most importantly, drive it and show it off as much and as often as possible. I would limit it to spring, summer, and fall and not subject it to any harsh winter weather. When not driving it and/or showing it (off), store it in a garage away from the weather. It will give you many years of ultimate enjoyment.

The same pretty much applies to a #3 car except that you may not show it as much and you might have to spend more to maintain it, both cosmetically and mechanically. One thing to remember is that you will have paid quite a bit less than you would have paid for a #2 car and a whole lot less than a #1 car when you bought it. Who wants a #1 car anyway, it's not really a car. Oh, I already said that, didn't I? You can get just about as much enjoyment from a #3 car as a #2 car when you are driving it around. Most people will never get close enough to see the flaws. Remember it is a true "20-footer". About 20 feet away is about as close as most people are ever going to get. Even so, they are most likely still in awe of the car. If they happen to pull up to you, they will still ask you a lot of questions about it and compliment you on it, just like they would for a #2 car. You might consider improving it, over time, if you can afford it, to a point where it is a #2 car, just because of less maintenance. That would be the ultimate. However, if you don't, you can still enjoy it for years to come if you store it in the winter and do the necessary maintenance.

With a #4 car, you purchase it for less, but you're putting yourself in a position to have to spend some money on it before you can drive it regularly. It could be all right mechanically, but it won't look very good. Or, it could be the other way around. You really need both the mechanicals and the cosmetics to be decent. After spending a lot of money on it, you can then drive it, or if you make it a #2 or #3 car, you may even be able to show it. Many times, however, the costs start mounting and the time involved becomes excessive and all that happens is you sell it. As stated in an earlier E-Article, I would not recommend buying a #4 or especially a #5 car, unless you are prepared to do all or most of the work yourself and you have the funds for the parts you'll need.

If you have a #5 or #6 car, sell it. Get as much money as you can out of it (which won't be much), and combine those funds with other funds, or perhaps a loan, and buy at least a #3 car or even a #2 car if at all possible. Sometimes you can buy a #3 car that ends up being a #4, 5, or 6 because something happens out of your control. Maybe the engine blows up when you're penniless and can't fix it, or may you lose your inside storage and the car has to sit outside and endure harsh weather. The paint fades, the dash cracks, the tires rot, varmints make meals out of the carpeting and the seats, and your #3 car is now a #5 car, or as happened to me (see E-Article #5), it s a #6 car. All you can do is take your lumps and sell it for whatever you can get, if for no other reason than to get that eyesore off your property. You might even have to just junk it, but even then you'll get at least something for it.

So, show your #1, drive, maybe show, but mostly show-off and enjoy your #2 or #3 car, fix-up or sell your #4, sell #5, and sell or even junk, your #6 car.

## E-Article #8—What Makes a Classic Car a “Classic”, or is it Just a Very “Old” Car?

If you own a 49 Plymouth or a 52 Mercury or perhaps a 60 Studebaker Lark, do you have yourself a classic car or just a 40-50 year “old” car? Any car 25 years old or older qualifies as an antique car (another word for old car). Antique, however, does not mean classic.

There are some distinct characteristics that a car must have to be a classic. Setting a trend that many others follows qualifies. A 1948 Cadillac Series 61 & 62 with its fins that would become an American Icon and would be copied by virtually every car in America is a definite classic. The pinnacle of the fins craze, the 1959 Cadillac with the highest, most outrageous, fins of them all made it arguably the biggest classic of them all.

Another characteristic would be if a car can come up with a “look” that just never seems to fade. Sometimes a car will come up with a “new” look for its time, but 2 years later people tire of it and move on to another “new” look. Classic looks make a car a classic because its looks never get old. An example of this is the 55,56, and 57 Chevrolets. These are the classics of all classics from that standpoint. They continue to this day to be in demand because of their looks. Others that might qualify for the classic “look” are just about any Cadillac or Lincoln. Some don’t look as good as others, but they virtually all have that identifiable look that makes people know it’s a Cadillac or Lincoln.

Probably the biggest factor to determine a classic is popularity. Of course, popularity is in direct relation to looks, mechanical advances, or other goodies (toys & whistles) or some combination of all these. However, why some cars become popular and later classics is really inexplicable. Just ask the car manufacturers who try to predict what people will buy every year. Sometimes they hit a homerun and sometimes they strike out looking. Only three manufacturers have been able to it consistently while 100’s of others have failed. In addition, sales at the time they were made can be misleading. In 1957, Ford outsold Chevy, but the 57 Chevy is considered much more of a classic than the 57 Ford.

Then there are the limited edition production models that didn’t have a chance to sell very many cars and become popular because of sheer sales volume. The 3 GM limited production models in 1953, the Cadillac Eldorado Convertible (532), the Oldsmobile Fiesta Convertible (458) and the Buick Skylark Convertible had technological advances, downright good looks, and best of all, rarity. Models in great condition bring well in excess of \$50,000.00 to as much as \$125,000.00. Now that’s a classic value.

The 1957 & 1958 Cadillac Brougham was considered by many to be “the most luxurious car ever made”. They only made 400 in 1957 and 304 in 1958. Luxury and rarity along with its uniqueness made this car a classic. They’ll bring in excess \$50,000.00 for a cream puff. The same could be said, to a lesser extent, about a 1956 & 1957 Lincoln

Continental Mark II. They are a little less valuable but no less a classic. We could go on and on with many other examples of other classics. Most cars that are 30, 40, or 50 years old would not be considered by the “experts” to be classics, just “old cars”.

As stated in earlier E-Articles, most non-car people won't know and won't care if a car is a real classic or not. They will be able to tell it's old, especially 40-50 year old cars, but not necessarily if it is a classic or not. In my opinion, a real classic in the “experts” mind is overused. I feel that if a car looks good, runs well, and is one that you can find a place for in your heart, you have your very own classic car!

## E-Article #9—Classic Car Business Opportunities

There are many opportunities for an entrepreneur who loves old classic cars. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but it will give you a few ideas of what's out there.

If you have mechanical aptitude, a mechanic or body technician or both, you could be in the classic car restoration business. You can take a #4 or #5 car and maybe throw in a #6 car of the same kind and you can turn it into a #2 or even a #1 showcar. Your customers, of course, are the affluent, because, as I've mentioned in earlier E-Articles, one has to have lots of money to complete that process paying you to do the work. There are big bucks for you and a great deal of satisfaction knowing you turned a beast of a car into a masterpiece.

Another opportunity is the parts business. All those old cars out there being worked on by restorers, whether professionals or amateurs, are going to need lots of parts. Parts that you can provide. The markup is healthy (remember money is no object to some of these restorers) and you stand to profit if you run the business properly. Some people may choose what many before have done, and that is to specialize in a particular manufacturer such as Mopars, Chevys, Fords, Cadillacs, Etc. It might be easier to be an expert on one particular car rather than knowing a little bit about every car. Whether to specialize is obviously a personal choice, but quite possibly a good one.

One extremely popular business opportunity is a classic car dealership. Selling classic cars can be vastly rewarding. It would be important to have car sales, sales management, or at least some financial related experience. This business would require a large up-front investment as well as very good credit to establish a floor plan. You could, however, sell most or even all your classic cars on consignment for a commission. You provide the place to show the car and store it and the consignor provides the car to sell. You serve as the broker. Either way you choose to pursue your classic car dealership, you will need to have extensive knowledge of what you are selling, that is, the classic cars. You need to be a big fan as well as know a lot about your product, not unlike any other sales business in that regard. You have to believe in your product, understand everything about it, and be able to translate your enthusiasm to your potential customer. I think, in the case of classic cars, you really have to love your product. After all, the potential buyer probably "loves" your product or he wouldn't be there shopping at your lot.

Somewhat along the same lines, is the classic car brokering business. This involves putting willing buyers together with sellers and vice versa. This is not an easy task and there are companies out there that will teach you how to do it, for a fee of course. This task can be done in a variety of ways, but all would involve a computer and so you would have to be willing to spend a lot of time working on a computer. It's my understanding there is a lot of money to be made if one is willing to spend the required computer time.

In addition, there is a classic car publication of some sort. A Weekly or Monthly publication with articles and ads specializing in classic cars could be your forte. Obviously the qualifications are many for this business, including writing skills, sales ability (for the ad sales), organizational skills, perseverance, a great deal of business acumen and the required funds to get it all off the ground. As with the other businesses mentioned, you also have to have a genuine love for the old classic cars.

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### **Helpful Sites**

**AllWebSource.com** provides search engine submissions for as low as \$1.95.

**DollarTemplates.com** offers pre-designed web templates to small businesses.

**DropShip101.com** helps you start your own online store without inventory.

## Article #11 **Bucket Seats**

I remember back in 1964 when just about every car made at that time had at least one model in their lineup that had bucket seats and usually a nice counsel between the seats. One interesting quality that virtually all these bucket seat models had was that they were all two door coupes. They represented the manufacturers attempt to make a plain Jane car into a sports car, or at least a sportier car. The most popular were probably the Chevy Super Sport, Pontiac Grand Prix and the Ford Galaxie 500 XL. There were the other one's that already were supposed to be sports cars or at least sporty, like the Ford Thunderbird, Buick Riviera, and Olds Toronado, and all of them were also 2-Door Coupes. These cars would be called "personal luxury cars" now; however there would be one big difference. If any of these cars were being made right now, they would be 4-Doors.

A few years back I went to a car show, one of many I attend every year, and one of the cars there that really caught my eye was a Red 1964 Ford Galaxie 500XL. Now this would be a somewhat rare car to see at any car show but this one had something that I have never seen before or since for that matter. It had four doors! Yes, folks, four doors on the Sportiest version of a Ford for that year. This was absolutely unheard of back in 1964 and before and for many years after that. I do not know if this was a factory 4-Door or if the owner just customized a 4-Door into what looked like a factory Ford Galaxie 500XL. It looked to me like it came out of the factory just that way. If that is the case, then Ford must have had a vision of things to come.

In the 70's and 80's America began to lean more and more in the direction of Foreign Cars and many of those foreign cars came equipped with bucket seats. Some of the cheaper ones, Toyota, Nissan, Mazda, Honda, typically would not have the nice counsel in between the seats. However, others, like the BMW's and Mercedes', developing the "personal luxury car" theme, would have not only the counsel but also leather bucket seats, sunroofs, and just about every luxury accessory available on cars at the time. The important thing to note on these cars is that virtually all of them were 4-door sedans. They were not 2-door coupes or even 2-door sedans, but 4-door sedans. Throughout the history of cars, and certainly in the collector car market, the most coveted models of any car were the 2-door coupes and convertibles. The 4-doors were always considered "family" cars and the model that the manufacturers made the most of, so they certainly did not have the rarity factor going for them. Because they made so many of them and because they are less coveted by collectors, they are much less valuable and less desirable to own. "Genuine" collectors up until now, anyway, have always preferred the 2-dr Coupes and convertibles. That, however is about to change.

Maybe Ford knew it was coming back in 1964 with their Galaxie 500XL 4-door, but I really doubt it. Even if the one I saw was a factory original, Ford made no effort then or since then to advertise any 4-dr Sports cars to get people to buy them, with the possible exception of the Thunderbird 4-dr in the early Seventies which only lasted a couple of years. No other manufacturer tried to push off 4-dr sports cars on the American public, to my knowledge, choosing instead to start a completely new model line and label it a

“personal luxury” car, influenced by and patterned after the German BMW and Mercedes lines. Cadillac was probably the first to do it with their 1975 Seville. Others followed along gradually and by 1990, even the Japanese joined in with the Lexus, Infinity and Acura models from Toyota, Nissan, and Honda. At any rate, for a variety of reasons, the “worm turned” and now the coveted cars, both now and in the future, are the “personal luxury” 4-door sedans with all the luxury accessories anyone could imagine along with sports car performance, handling, and braking, and lest we ever forget, **bucket seats!**

Steven W Bailey