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B. J. RATIGAN

CHRYSLER  PLYMOUTH

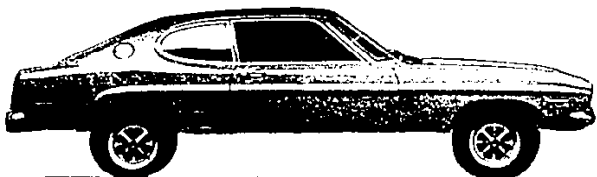


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Pros Buying Cars At Auction Seek Ones In Mint Condition

It's noisy. It's colorful and the last word in what your car and millions of others are actually worth.

It's the auto auction, held daily in cities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

It is here that professional buyers and sellers of used cars gather in a carnival atmosphere to test their skill in bargaining.

To the average man or woman who thinks of auctioneering as a genteel competition to bid for antique china, the auto auction would prove a baffling but colorful contrast.

The track is fast with the average car being on the block for



Attempting to liven up bidding on a "sharp" car, the auctioneer pleads, jokes and reasons with the professional buyers. The action is fast with each car being on the block for a matter of seconds.

less than a minute. In that minute, buyers appraise its worth and bid accordingly. The car is sold, or the offer is refused by the seller and another car is quickly driven in place.

IN SOME AUCTIONS as many as four lanes of cars and a like number of auctioneers are in action at once.

Each auctioneer is equipped with a microphone, a length of rubber hose which he slams on the desk for emphasis and a set of lungs that would put a hog-calling champion to shame.

Adding to the decibel level is a crew of men among the bidders who serve as combination cheer leaders, kibbitzers and spotters of the furtive bids from the buyers.

Meanwhile the auctioneer is chanting the bidding, wise-cracking, ("If I could buy a car that cheap, I'd be down there bidding, not up here selling") and pleading for reason ("There's no way you can buy this Caddy for less than a Chevy!")

Out of this study in chaos comes the hard-headed evaluation of what a car is really worth. To bid too low means that the seller will not accept the bid. To bid too high can mean the difference between a profit and a loss on the resale.

TO EVEN be considered for sale at an auction, cars must appear in almost new condition. Mechanical condition of the car must be honestly represented by the seller.

How do the pros who attend these auctions judge the cars before bidding?

Hal Humphries of APTCO Auto Auction near Detroit says, "The first thing to attract a buying dealer is the appearance of the car. Body repairs must be perceptible only to the trained eye, if at all.

A sloppy job of bumping and refinishing can be spotted instantly. Most often, the dealer attending the auction will stay away from a car like this rather than get involved in a costly refinishing job."

WILLIAM JACOBS, a Columbus, Ohio, car auctioneer says, "The owner who has the foresight to keep his car in top-notch shape may come out as much as \$300 to \$400 ahead of the man who has neglected the same make and model.

Most buyers, both wholesale and retail, don't want to bother with the 'dogs'."

The pros offer this advice to the car owner. If you get a crease in the fender have a qualified body man repair and paint it.

Keep your car clean inside and out. Keep mechanical components in good condition.