

# There's no better way to turn heads than with a classic

We've all seen them, or better said, we've all noticed them. Cruising down the road, or sitting beside us at a stoplight, they're a shining jewel out of time, but not out of place. There is always a look of contentment on the drivers' faces, as though they are exactly where they want to be...behind the wheel of the classic car of their dreams.

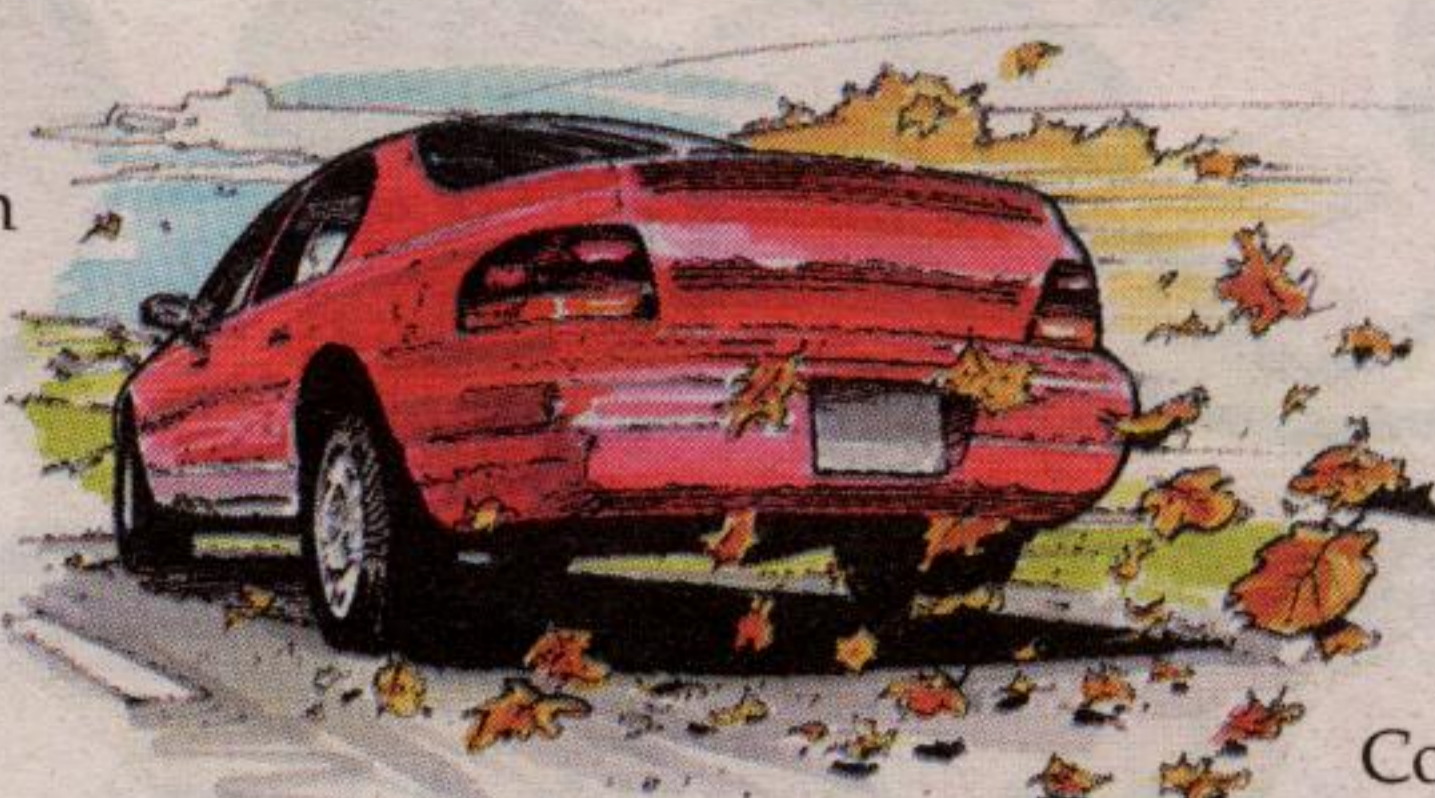
It may be a '58 Ford with all the original trim in place or a '55 Corvette, or even a '64 Falcon. In the L.A. area, a 1960 Metropolitan sedan competes for gawkers with a '66 Shelby Cobra. Anyway you look at them, they're Dream Machines. Every year, the tastes of classic car aficionados change, and what was on the "B" list last year is suddenly the hot rod of today. And wouldn't we all like to have one in our garage.

Truth is, we can. There are dozens of ways to own one of the beauties of yesteryear, and you can pay a relatively small fortune for a reconditioned one,

or a large one depending on make and model. Or you can start literally from scratch, building that fantasy car up from a decaying frame. To give you an idea of what the top picks are these days, let's look at what the Web site [buyclassiccars.com](http://buyclassiccars.com) lists as the recent top choices.

The Ford Mustang, years 1965-70, are at the top of the list. Actually, the first model is at times listed as 1964-1/2, but who's quibbling. It was the first car available to the masses with sleek, two-door, bucket seat styling, and the look endures. Muscled up, redesigned as a fastback, it doesn't matter...this was the car that turned the Ford company around. You may pay \$3,500 in certain areas for a decent 'Stang or a later Mach 1 that needs some work, or tens of thousands for a clean one of Carol Shelby's GT limited editions. Either way, this is a car that will hold its value throughout your lifetime.

Number two on the list is the



Pontiac GTO. The "Goats," designed by John DeLorean in his younger days, was a true muscle car that was easy to add after-market stuff to, even though it came with a stock 289 (and optional 427) engine. It didn't have the pretty lines of the popular sports cars of its day, but there were few who would challenge its power and acceleration. A GTO in need of work can perhaps be picked up for around \$3,000-4,000, while those in pristine condition will easily fetch \$10,000.

Third on the list (perhaps slipping a bit in recent years) is the venerable Corvette. Having

spawned a cult since the late '50s, there's no stopping the admiration for this car, particularly those from 1958 to 1968, according to [buyclassiccars.com](http://buyclassiccars.com). There's little need to go into what a fine Corvette from these years will cost; talk to your loan officer at the bank instead.

Some possible surprises are also in the top 10 list. These days, lots of collectors are into the "land yachts" of the 1960s, the four-door Lincoln Continentals (find one with the "suicide doors" for passengers) and old Cadillacs, particularly convertibles. Sure, they'll guzzle more gas than your SUV, but are likely to be just as heavy, and a lot cooler-looking ride. The old Chevy Impala convertibles are in high demand, as are the more stylish sedans of four decades ago, like the Ford Fairlanes, Galaxies and T-Birds.

We actually did buy imported cars that many years ago,

though certainly not in the number purchased today. Hot older imports include the Karmann Ghias, Triumph TRs, Porsches and Jaguars of virtually every make. But while not on the hot list, a mention should be made of the favorite of so many, the Volkswagen Beetle.

The high demand for the new Beetles produced by Volkswagen attest to America's love of this simple, fun car. Easy to repair and a pleasure to drive, the old Bugs are still a mainstay on the roads in warmer climates, such as Southern California. An old Beetle from the '50s in great shape is hard to find, and apparently difficult for owners to part with. But there are plenty from the mid-'60s on, and the convertibles are by far the preferred models. A refurbished, great-condition Beetle will likely cost around \$4,500, and as much as \$6,000 for a cool convertible. But as you're cruising down the boulevard with the Beach Boys on the radio, it's a small price to pay.

—By Daniel Aspel, special

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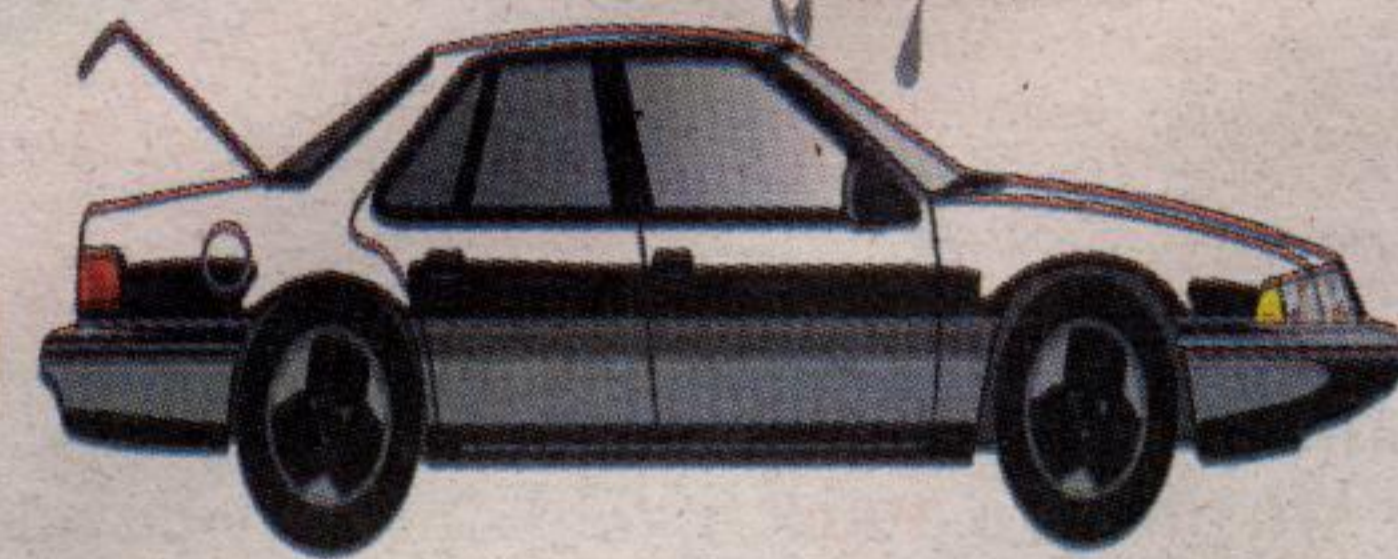
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