

# May '98 Wheels

## Don't wait until you're desperate to find a good mechanic

Don't wait until you're desperate for help to find a reliable automotive service technician.

Finding an automotive service technician you trust, is like finding a doctor or a minister — you need to build a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. These things don't happen overnight.

Most of the business for a repair garage is from referrals. The only way to get referral business is from satisfied customers.

So, if you are looking for a new automotive service technician, ask around.

Ask your friends, relatives, business associates, church members — anyone you can think of.

You'll probably get a more reliable feel for who is good and who is not by getting several opinions instead of just one.

If you get a chance, drop in and meet the technicians who will be working on your car.

Is the shop tidy and well organized?

*Turn off your stereo once in a while and listen to the sound of your car when it's healthy, so you're better able to notice when it needs help.*

Do they have the latest computer equipment?

Is there evidence that the mechanics, more commonly referred to nowadays as

automotive service technicians to reflect the increasingly computer complexity of the profession they practice, are taking regular training courses on the latest automotive and diagnostic technology?

The days of the mechanic under the hood with a screwdriver, tuning things until they sing just right, are a distant memory.

Now, they have to be computer literate, interpreting the communications between the on-board computer system and the diagnostic computers in the shop.

Whether you go to an independent garage, a department store, or a franchised repair centre doesn't matter all that much.

In the end, it all comes down to trust.

You're looking for somebody

who is willing to tell you which repairs should be made immediately, which can be delayed without affecting safety and which are completely optional for performance upgrades.

Car Care Canada notes that you can help your automotive service technician to help you, too.

When you take your car in with a problem, tell the technician what the symptoms are (not what you think the problem is).

Describe whether it happens when the car is warm or cold, at highway speeds or in the city, stopping or accelerating and so on.

Get to know your car, too. Read the owner's manual so you know what to expect. Turn off your stereo once in a while and listen to the sound of your car when it's healthy, so you're better able to notice when it needs help.

Don't forget, if you want your vehicle to

remain in excellent, dependable working order, you have to give it some tender loving care in the form of regular and preventative maintenance.

The average Canadian consumer will spend approximately \$800 in 1998 on vehicle maintenance, depending on the age of the vehicle.

By practising regular maintenance you can reduce the amount and prolong the life of your vehicle.

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