

What's Next for Collector Cars?

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With the Arizona auction week past us and a thing of memory, now things can get back to normal again for me and everyone else here in the Phoenix area. We have a big golf tournament in full swing right now and we'll have a lot of baseball spring training fans coming through before the weather becomes unbearably warm again.

One of the things I get a lot of questions, comments, and thoughts on is, "Where are the prices of certain cars going?" Each year I hear comments like, "Why do you think this sold for so much?" Or, "Why do you think this sold for so little?" Along with the usual conspiracy theories about why they sold for that price or the sale couldn't have been real. I have heard it all.

This leads to a bigger question: Where is the collector car hobby going? Seems every year we have a panel of experts who sit around and discuss this with an audience during the auctions because everyone wants to know that magical answer. The truth is that we don't know. But there certainly are signs pointing us in a certain direction.

The biggest thing to consider is that the average population of collectors for musclecars of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States are typically Baby Boomers. They hold the largest share of these cars today and cherish them. But if this interest cannot be handed down to the next generation, then what? The value of cars in general, or of anything, means you have to have a lot of buyers and not enough product to sell. It keeps the values up when that happens and makes sense. But if you have a lot of product and not so many buyers anymore, the values will drop.

So, for me, one of the big things I like to promote is to keep the interest in these cars going by sharing the experience of what these cars are and what they mean. I see too many cars sitting in garages or collections collecting dust. Sure, they look good sitting there, but nobody is driving them or doing anything with them. I have even had that conversation with myself: "So, you own this car but you don't drive it? Then why do you own it?"

I am an advocate for getting in a car and taking someone else for a ride. Let people feel what it's like and, if you can handle it, let them actually drive the car. One way you can connect with a younger generation is to let them experience what these cars are all about. After all, when these cars were new, they were parked in supermarket parking lots, outside an office, or on driveways in the snow. It's what cars do. This is

how we treated them back then.

At the same time, I understand what new cars offer. Actually, it's surprising what new cars offer today. I was recently in the market for a new car and discovered that the features and technologies are astounding. We all know about airbags and air conditioning and GPS, but I can't believe some of the features in cars today. Things like seats with built-in back massagers, heated seats and steering wheels, ventilated seats,

WiFi systems, and automatic remote-control parking. Probably the most baffling thing for me is the continued move away from a car key. Now you can open a car with a cell phone and share the car access with someone else through a cell phone app for as little or long a period as you want without ever giving them a physical key.

I guess I could write a lot more on the modern features, but my point is that, when you are driving cars like that, you need to understand why someone would want to purchase or

own an old Mustang. And that's where we come back to the idea of having the younger generation appreciate and understand what we have. I would encourage everyone out there who owns an older Mustang to make sure you drive it and enjoy it this year. Make sure you have a passenger and someone sitting in the back. Enjoy it for what it was made for and maybe we can pass this all along to some degree to the next generation. And with that keep the interest and demand in these cars strong for years to come.

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