

## **SAMPLE WORK**

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# **Chapter 1 - The Joy of Restoring a Car**

## **→ Why Restore an Old Car?**

They don't make them now like they used to. Old Vintage Classic cars have a lot of charm and character. Bringing an old and rusty collector car to its former glory is not only challenging but it is also a most satisfying and enjoyable experience. The process of



renewal is literally embedded in our DNA. Every day we shed old cells and create new cells to replace them. According to scientists, we even get a whole new body every seven years. Renewal surrounds us. On most parts of the planet, the Earth goes through the shedding process in the fall, rests during a long, cold winter and comes back to life in the spring.

Is it really surprising then that we feel the urge to take things that are old or worn out and make them new again? This propensity for restoration can be seen in our need to refurbish old homes, turn an empty lot into a beautiful garden and to take an old car that's seen better days back to its younger, friskier years through auto restoration.

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“For others, it is the challenge of taking something that has been ravaged by time and returning it back to its former glory.”

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Auto restoration is the process of cleaning, replacing or restoring the worn out parts of an older model car so that it shines like new again.

This involves not only the parts that people can see, such as the exterior and the interior seating, but also the mechanical components like the engine and braking system.

Now, restoring a car is not the same as rebuilding it. In a rebuilt car, it doesn't matter where the parts come from as long as they fit the purpose they are needed for. Car restoration, on the other hand, involves returning the car to as much of its original glory as possible which usually involves hunting down and using authentic original parts.

As you can imagine, this takes a lot of time, patience and money which begs the question: Why do people do it? The reasons for restoring a car are as varied as the people who engage in this challenging hobby. For some, it is about the achievement of a dream. They may have fallen in love with the car when it first came out but lacked the funds to purchase it right then and there. For years, they may have dreamed of owning that particular model car and restoring a classic they found via a newspaper ad or through word of mouth allows them to fulfill a need that's been with them for as long as they can remember.

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For others, it is the challenge of taking something that has been ravaged by time and returning it back to its former glory. Restoring a car requires learning new things, employing new skills and having the fortitude to see a major project through to the end.

It's about meeting new people and sharing a passion that few others may understand. A lot of life lessons can be learned on the road to restoring an old car and it is the process learning about oneself and life in general that is most attractive to classic car enthusiasts.

And still, others are driven by the need to own a piece of history and the slowdown of time that comes from that. The technological revolution has put the world on fast forward and many people find themselves needing to put on the brakes so they can spend more time enjoying life rather than letting it whiz by them.

So they restore a classic car while reminiscing about the days spent driving along the coastline when they were young. When the car is complete they treat themselves to a trip down memory lane—courtesy of a simple drive to the country in their newly restored automobile. Many often join classic car clubs where they can show off their cars as well as socialize with other enthusiasts.

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Whatever the reason, restoring a collector car is not for the faint of heart. It takes a lot of time, effort, patience and money to take a car from a dull scrap of rust and dented metal to a sparkling vision of color and chrome. Specifically, it can take several years to turn a car around; especially if you have other commitments, such as employment and family obligations, that take up most of your time.

Therefore, the decision to restore a collector car shouldn't be taken lightly. Before you even begin to hunt down the car of your dreams, you have to decide if you are able to commit to the project; otherwise, you'll be doing yourself and the project a disservice.

### **→ Different Restoration Methods**

When people think about restoring a car, most assume they will be taking it apart, piece by piece, to its bare bones, and then reassembling it into a new and improved version of itself. While this is certainly one way to attack a car restoration project, it really is not the optimal way.

In fact, completely disassembling the car may very well cause the project to go on longer than necessary as some pieces may get lost or the restorer could lose sight of the project altogether and get discouraged at the amount of work that needs to be done.

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The best way to handle restoration of a classic car is to take on one section at a time.

It'll be easier to keep track of where you are in the project and parts are less likely to get lost in the shuffle. In addition to those benefits, if you suddenly have to pack up and move, you'll be able to quickly piece the car back together and take it with you wherever you go.

### **→ Car Restoration Goals**

It is important, right from the beginning, to define the goals you have for your car restoration project. Not all cars will need a full and complete restoration and much of that has to do with what you intend to do with the car when the project is complete.

### **→ Show Car**

If you are restoring a car simply to show it off or to enter it into competitions, then generally, the goal will be to restore the car to "Factory New" status or as good (or better) as it was when it left the factory for the car showroom floor. Usually, this entails fully breaking the car down to its components, as we warned you not to do in the previous section, and fixing, replacing and cleaning them all to picture perfection.

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By far, this type of project takes the largest amount of time and money to complete.

However, when you are finished, you will have a car worthy of winning collector car competitions.

### **→ Personal Usage**



If you are looking to actually use your car, then a full restoration may not be necessary. This is especially true if the car has been well maintained throughout the years and is only in need of minor touch ups.

In these cases, restoring a car to “Nearly New” condition is good enough. Additionally, you may need to bring some systems, such as the brakes, into the current century in order to remain safe on the road.

### **→ For Resale**

This is another large project that may or may not require a complete disassembly of the vehicle—depending how the vehicle is going to be used. Your goal is to restore the car to as close to its original value as possible in order to secure the price you want.

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**→ Research**



After you have decided on the type of car restoration project you want to engage in, and have picked out your car, the next step involves doing research on the car to get a sense of what it originally looked like. Knowing the car's original appearance will give you an idea of what, if anything at all, has been changed about it through the years as well as spawn ideas about how you want the car to look when it is complete.

Lucky for you, you have decided to restore a collector car in the age of the Internet where information about your classic vehicle of choice is literally at your fingertips. There are numerous websites online that will not only show you pictures of what your car looked like in the past, but you can often use online sources to track down needed parts and materials.

In addition to using the Internet, there are a myriad of other sources you can also tap for information about your classic car. Trade shows, other collector car enthusiasts, manuals, brochures and auto magazines are all good places to turn to when you need to learn a little something about your vehicle.

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### **→ Your Workspace**

Restoring a collector car requires space. You'll need a place big enough for the car, for storage of the disassembled pieces of the car and for you to work. Usually, a two car garage will do. If that type of space is not available to you, some alternatives would be storage facilities or a paid garage. If you have access to a barn or a warehouse, that would work as well.

In later chapters, we will go over the specific tools you will need in your workshop that will assist you in your car restoration efforts. If you have never worked in an auto shop before, then it is important that you study up on workshop safety so that you can make it to the end of your project with all of your fingers and toes in place.

The most important asset you will need, however, when it comes to your collector car project, is knowledge. It would be beneficial if you knew a little something about cars but it is not 100% necessary. Classic cars are much simpler to understand and work with than today's computerized automobiles so really, all you need is a willingness to learn.



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Access to knowledge is as easy as booting up your web browser. The Internet is a vast place with more and more people logging on every day to share their knowledge. You will be able to find a vast network of blogs and informational sites that will tell you all you need to know about cars.

In addition to the Internet, you can also increase your knowledge by going to relevant seminars, joining clubs, taking classes at the local community college as well as purchasing books and magazines on the subject.

### **→ Cleaning the Car**

While you may not need to completely take the car apart in order to restore it, one thing you can count on is having to do lots and lots of cleaning. Parts will need to be degreased, rust will need to be sloughed off and old paint will need to be stripped away before you can rebuild or refinish them.

Some of these steps can be bypassed and in upcoming chapters we will talk about several tools you can use to make cleaning up easier. One of those tools is to outsource the cleaning to someone else. There are several companies that specialize in auto part cleaning and if you have the funds available to afford such a service, it might be worth the savings in time to use one.

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However, this guide will provide you with all the information you need to do it yourself and thus save money that could be used on something else.

### **→ Bodywork**

Unless your collector car is dent free, which is highly unlikely, there will be a bit of bodywork involved in the car restoration process. However, when it comes to working



with metal, you will need special tools and knowledge in order to bang out professional quality work, so to speak.

Many people outsource this type of work to others which is certainly a viable option if you have the money. Since this guide aims to provide you with all the detailed information you need to restore your car, there is no reason why you cannot do the

work yourself. In addition to saving money, you'll learn a valuable skill by forgoing the expensive body shop.

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### **→ Paint**

Applying paint to a car is also an acquired skill that is usually forwarded to the experts. However, there is quite a bit of prep work you can do, which we will discuss in upcoming chapters that can significantly reduce the cost of painting if you choose to go this route.

On the other hand, painting is a skill that you can learn especially since paint sprayers have advanced to the point that even beginners can use them without too much trouble. Painting methods and tools to help you with this task will be discussed as we go along in the book.

### **→ Brighttrim**

There is nothing like the gleam of a piece of brighttrim as the sunlight hits it on the right angle. More often than not, a car's brighttrim will need to be attended to as it is usually the part of the car that suffers the most in the hands of time.

Brighttrim comes in three types. The most common type is stainless steel which can be buffed and polished back to its previous shining glory. The second type is chrome which requires a commercial plater's touch to restore. The third kind is plastic coated with a thin layer of aluminum that looks like chrome.

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This third kind of brighttrim can present a challenge to new auto restorers and may also be a part of the project best outsourced to the experts. Later on in this book, we will go over some ways you can try to repair this type of trim yourself and what to look for when selecting a professional brighttrim restoration service.

### **→ Upgrading the Interior**

Unless the car has been kept in pristine condition, the interior will probably need just as much work as the exterior. The sun as well as daily wear and tear can do a number on upholstery, carpeting, door coverings, ceiling fabric and convertible tops.

Since this is an area that needs frequent attention, even with newer cars, the auto restoration industry has produced



upholstery kits that can be purchased for a variety of truck and car models. A benefit to using a kit is that many are able to duplicate the design of the original fabric that was in that year and model vehicle.

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This book will also discuss how to purchase these kits for your car, as well as how to remove old upholstery and install the new.

### **→ Upgrading the Braking System**

One of the reasons why you want to decide what your goals are regarding the car is because it influences how you handle the car's safety features; namely the braking system. Since show cars are not usually driven, restoring the original braking system is not as much of a big deal as it would be if you were planning on driving in traffic.

Today's driving conditions require a reliable braking system that will keep you out of trouble. The last thing you want is to restore your car to pristine condition only to wreck it in a horrible accident. That's why we have devoted a whole chapter to the rebuilding of a vintage car's braking system so that you can be sure you will be safe on the road.

### **→ Overhauling the Engine**

Possibly the most challenging part of a car restoration will be the engine. Getting it cleaned and in good working condition will require hours of work and an acute attention to detail. After all, a beautifully restored car should have an equally gorgeous engine to accompany it. We will provide you with tips and techniques you can use to ensure that the engine in your restored car is ready to display.

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**→ Storage and Preservation of your Finished Project**

Last but not least, we devote a whole chapter about the best way to store your finished car so that your hard work remains preserved. There are several products on the market that will slow down and even halt the degradation associated with time and normal wear and tear.

As we've noted many times, car restoration is not for the idle hobbyist. It takes commitment and fortitude to see a car restoration project through to the end. However, the joy of seeing the project rise like a phoenix from the ashes of its own decay is well worth the time and effort you will be devoting to the project. Good luck!

