

Picking a car to start the build

Posted by Dolfan - 07 Jul 2011 05:49

I've read different accounts here on the forum of the car builds and I'm curious what item would rank highest with picking a car to begin the build?

It seem like all builds recommend to rebuild the bottom end of the engine for reliability so how important is the running condition of the motor?

A smooth shifting transmission would seem to be ranked high on the list of wants?

I know body should not be a big consideration but what are the thing you don't want to see?

Interior I would think is mostly about recouping as much value out of the project car through selling parts?

Good functioning brakes wanted but the entire system would be gone through in the build process?

Suspension need to be decent with no major binding or knocks in the operation, most of this would also be gone through during the build?

So would it be safe to rank these major areas like this?

1 Engine

2 Transmission

3 Suspension

4 Brakes

5 Body

6 Interior

Are there key things to look for and with run away from a project car or factor in extra expense?

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Re: Picking a car to start the build

Posted by joepaluch - 11 Jul 2011 11:13

michaelreich wrote:

do you think of this strategy? I never seem to see the race cars for sale in time to snatch up the good deals.

Seems solid. You have a car with known history. That is good. Building it over time is a sound approach. There is no "right" way, just the way that works for you. I bought junkcar and built it up with the aid of 87 924S parts car. It had been street in the family since 1991 until it got wrecked in 1997 with 47k on it. So I bought a 84 with motor as 944 tub/shell donor. I had plans of rebuilding it as street car using all the good parts from the 924S. I gave up those plans and decided to make it into a cheap lightweight autocross car. So the good drive train got swapped over and I stripped the 84 chassis and ran it. Bone stock other than the stripping. It took me 2 more years, but I eventually made it into a race car. By late 2002 it was "built". Since then it has been maintenance and small upgrades.

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Re: Picking a car to start the build

Posted by joepaluch - 11 Jul 2011 11:21

Porsche's are more expensive to rebuild as compared to SBC. The reason is volume. How many SBC's are out there? Millions I would guess. There are what 60,000 924/944 of all types in the US and abroad? Maybe?

The good thing is that for the most part stock works and stock is good. So cheaper parts. Plus the bottom ends can handle 500 hp (2.5L Turbo). Since we are 150 hp at the crank there is a lot of hp margin. It does not mean stuff cannot break, but rarely does.

I rebuilt my 84 944 motor in January of 2003. It had coolant mixing and was a mess and had at least 147k on it. However I pulled it all apart, cleaned it and reassembled it. I did not even change the rings. Anyway that motor lasted in the car for 5 years and 80+ races. I pulled it out since I was getting some leaking from the valves due to carbon build up. Bottomend looked just as good as the day I installed it. 80+ races of hard miles and it was fine.

Re: Picking a car to start the build

Posted by Dolfan - 11 Jul 2011 13:18

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I guess it makes sense about the cost due to market size, never thought of the parts kits being so different in price. But good to hear your comments about the reliability of the plant once rebuilt to good specs.

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Re: Picking a car to start the build

Posted by Dolfan - 13 Jul 2011 11:50

Another question is how many folks are also running in SCCA ITS class? I'm not familiar enough with the overlap but my thought in going with a 944 initially would be I could run 944-spec/SCCA ITS/PCA events.

I realize that you'll probably be behind the curve competitively by meeting a common set of rules but it increases the places to play and gain experience.

Anyone else adopt this strategy?

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Re: Picking a car to start the build

Posted by Sterling Doc - 13 Jul 2011 11:57

A 944 Spec car would be legal in ITS, I believe, but not competitive. There were some regional "Spec 944" classes in some part of the SCCA with a very similar rule set, but not any more. Between NASA & PCA events, you should have lots of opportunities to get on track. If you can swing even more track time, ITS is an option.

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