

Stock vs. Modified

In the vast market of collectible vehicles, the question will come up, if a stock vehicle or modified vehicle will suit one's desires. There are advantages and disadvantages of both:

- *A stock vehicle will be easier to purchase and resell than any modified vehicle.

- *Many cars found in poor condition, are modified heavily, because it would be too expensive to return them to stock condition. Many enthusiasts and hobbyist, such as myself, appreciate the fact, there are people who restore and save these cars.

- *However, when it comes time to sell a highly modified car with expensive custom paint, narrowed rear ends, highly modified engines, etc. Your market is limited by the fact you must find a buyer with the same taste as the seller regarding to color schemes, engines, etc. I have seen many resto-mods sell for a fraction of what it costs to restore the said car.

- *Many hobbyist, such as myself, do like tasteful modifications on our Thunderbirds, that are easily returned to stock. Items such as reproduction Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels, seen on many 55-66 Thunderbirds. This option was only available on 62-64 Thunderbirds. They really dress up a Thunderbird. Reproduction air cleaners for 55-57 Thunderbirds that feature a paper element instead of the old oil bath air cleaner. This air cleaner is more efficient, and one can't tell it from stock. One sees many modifications for the retro-birds, everything from headlight lashes to fender skirts, ugh. However, I do like the hood scoop chrome trim for the retro-bird, Ford could have added this feature at a very low cost when these cars were produced.

*Our club President, Roger Noll, has a 2004 Thunderbird Merlot with many tasteful performance modifications such as: a lowered suspension that really enhances handling, Borla exhaust that has a nice rumble, and a K + N air filter. The former owner of this car had the forethought to save the stock parts, if Roger decides to return his car to stock. A good selling feature.

*Many hobbyists prefer adding stock options that are correct for the year of Thunderbird. Items that I added to my 58 Thunderbird were fender skirts and dual mirrors, both factory options that were not installed on my 58. I also added dual Thunderbird script mirrors on my 64 Thunderbird. I will also add a passenger side mirror on my 61. These could be considered modifications, although these are factory correct options.

*Even though I prefer bone stock cars, I must admit, I modify all my engines internally with an undercut on the valves, when doing a valve job. This is an old “hot - rod” trick, that yields performance almost as good as porting and polishing a valve head. I hope a V.T.C.I. or H.V.T.C. judge will not make me remove my heads on my 61 Thunderbird. Just kidding.

*A future restoration project will be my clone 1970 Buick G. S. 455 Convertible. This car's appearance will be completely stock, with mechanical modifications including: aluminum Edelbrock intake manifold, 455 Buick Heads with oversized stainless Chevy valves, 67 Buick header exhaust manifolds, and a slightly radical cam. All Buick performance parts are hard to find. I've had a few muscle cars in my past, but this car is my favorite one. I've never modified any car to this extent. There was no hope for this car so here I am modifying this car to my taste.

“Variety is the spice of life.”

Happy Motoring,

Larry Sneary