

Ready to Rise?

Many collector cars and trucks have experienced sharp increase in value over the last four years, and especially over the last year and a half. Values for top-shelf muscle cars in particular have shot to the moon during this period. But there are still desirable, affordable cars out there that have the potential to outperform the market in the future. Below are some we like, but there are many more. Price ranges are for good to excellent cars that are fully servicable.



1966-68 Oldsmobile Toronado

Unique, muscular, all-American styling. Powerful V8, luxury features, and technical innovations. Sounds like a formula for an in-demand collector car, doesn't it? We think so, yet the market currently doesn't. You can still

pick up a nice example of one of these boldly-styled, front-wheel drive "Personal Luxury" cars for well under \$10,000.

Look for: A/C, deluxe interior, full power
Restoration Cost: moderate *Supply:* fair
Current value: \$5,000 - \$12,000



1965-69 Chevrolet Corvair

Another technically interesting GM vehicle, this one can be bought for real cheap money. Even after all these years people look warily at a 'Vair, and not just because of Nader's crusade. Unreliability, oil leaks, and belt-throwing

lead the list of reasons why collectors shy away, but in fact a sorted example is a lot of fun to drive and won't give you any more headaches than most other collector cars. They look great, too. Even the four-door.

Look for: Monza 140hp, Corsa 140hp (driver) 180hp-turbo (show)
Restoration Cost: average *Supply:* average
Current value: \$2,000 - \$7,500



1970-73 Pontiac Firebird Formula

There probably isn't much time left to grab this one. The 400 is genuinely fast, a full-on muscle car. The Trans Am gets all the performance glory here and as a result has received all the market attention. We've seen

that changing already, but there's still time. After '71, the base motor dropped to 350 cubic inches. You want the 400.

Look for: big block, options, 4-speed
Restoration Cost: below average *Supply:* fair
Current value: \$7,000-15,000



1951 Ford Victoria

Most fifties iron is pretty stagnant in the market right now. But we like this one. The '51 "Victoria" was significant for being Ford's first pillarless hardtop, and while most collectors currently prefer the '49 and '50 styling, in this

configuration the '51 is pretty attractive, too. The flathead V8, for all its troubles, is for a big draw for us. For those of you that might not know, a properly tuned flathead will give a Lexus LS430 a good run in the quietness and smoothness departments. They are virtually silent.

Look for: Yes!
Restoration Cost: moderate *Supply:* low
Current value: \$7,000-15,000



1968-69 Torino GT

A direct competitor to the Chevelle Super Sports and Plymouth Roadrunners of the day, most collectors today don't consider the Torino even in the same league as those muscle cars. That's good for you, as this may be

one of the best bargains out there. We're leaving out the 428 here, as those have recently been swept up in the market's muscle car mania. The NASCAR inspired-fastback is striking; the formal hard-top handsome. A 390 admittedly won't beat its GM or Mopar counterpart, but they're still plenty fast and costs a lot less. If you're on a budget, the 351-4V is pretty satisfying, too. A neat cruiser.

Look for: Fully optioned cars with A/C
Restoration Cost: average *Supply:* fair
Current value: \$4,500 - \$14,000



1968-72 Chevrolet Corvette Small Block

The '63-67 models have been increasing monthly, and they've already started to pull the later models up with them. As any Corvette guy will tell you, it's tough to lose on one of these. Get one ready to go, drive it,

enjoy it, sell it. As long as you keep it properly maintained and looking good, you'll at least get your purchase price and any money you put into it back. The formula works almost every time.

Look for: A/C (a must in the cpe), deluxe interior
Restoration Cost: average *Supply:* good
Current value: \$10,000- \$16,000



1967-68 Cadillac Eldorado

Big brother to the Toronado, the Eldo is just starting to catch on. A design that reveals something every time you look, it was a GM styling tour-de-force. Like the Toro, you may have some FWD transaxle issues to sort through, but once done you won't have to revisit it. All the options are important.

Look for: The best example you can afford
Restoration Cost: high *Supply:* low
Current value: \$5,500 - \$12,000



1971-77 Toyota Celica

Will old Japanese cars ever get respect in the marketplace? Only a couple come to mind, but we think this one will join them. The early 70s Japanese kitsch is cool, and performance was pretty good. There is a good chance that these are interesting enough that original buyers, who are now in their fifties and probably own an Avalon or Lexus, will start looking. It's an age-old formula in the collector car world.

Look for: Manual transmission, no rust
Restoration Cost: average *Supply:* fair
Current value: \$3000 - \$6000



1970-74 BMW 2800CS 3.0CS/CSI

When smog-engined pseudo muscle cars regularly bring \$20,000 and one of these in similar condition may hit \$10,000 on a good day, something's amiss. Can you say market correction? These have nowhere to go but up. They're beautiful and drive superbly. Some body and trim pieces can be a tough find, so only buy complete and solid cars.

Look for: Manual transmission, sunroof, no rust
Restoration Cost: moderate *Supply:* fair
Current value: \$7,000-15,000.