

# FIFTH GEAR

By Marko Peric

WHILE ALMOST EVERYONE WOULD love to buy a brand-new car, most students just don't have that kind of money. Used cars are a more common choice. If you are a smart, patient shopper, you can find a great used car at a low price.

If you haven't guessed by now, this is a used car edition of *Fifth Gear*. Actually, this is a two-part column; the second half will appear next week. I hope my tips for buying a used car will be helpful to all.

The first thing you have to establish is the type of car you need or want. Needs and wants are not necessarily the same. A Mazda Miata is lots of fun, but a real pain if you have to carry more than one passenger on a regular basis (or ever, since a Miata is a two-seater). The same thing goes for most trucks. It's difficult, illegal in fact, to carry more than three in a truck that does not have a king cab. On the other hand, a truck is indispensable if you ever need to move furniture, firewood, or other bulky items. Before you buy a vehicle, sit down and decide what you're going to get. You needn't bother deciding on the exact make, model, and year, but a general idea is essential. The worst thing you could possibly do is arrive

at a dealership and announce you want a car.

Speaking of dealerships, there are many places to buy a used car. New car dealers are the best places to find recent models in good condition. Most of these come in on trade-in, and the dealer will often make repairs to the car as needed before selling it. Also, cars in poor condition are rarely found on new car lots. If a rusty Chevette or Reliant is traded in, the dealer will get rid of such vehicles very quickly. Having old and ugly vehicles does little to enhance the reputation of a business, and word-of-mouth is very important to car dealership, especially in Charlottetown. Obviously, selling a lemon is bad for public relations. When buying an almost-new car from a dealer, be wary of the make of the car. If someone trades in a Ford at a Chevy dealer, odds are they didn't like the car, and wanted something different. If a Ford is traded in at a Ford dealer, however, the person probably liked the car and bought a new one. This is not an absolute, but it is a point to be aware of.

Used car dealers are a common choice when shopping for cars that are not almost new. You have to approach these with caution. Most are honest, but there are dealers who use less

than ethical practices. I'm not saying you should steer clear of used car lots, but check them out before you buy. Ask around, and find out if anyone you know has dealt with a particular dealer. If you're careful, a used car lot can be a great place to find a vehicle.

Another idea is buying a car privately. There are certain advantages to doing this, most notably taxes. When you buy a car through a dealer, they charge you both provincial tax and federal GST. If you buy the car privately, you only have to pay the provincial tax when you register the car. If you drive a hard bargain, a private purchase is probably the cheapest way to buy a car. Be aware that the seller is trying to make as much money as he can. Many people will not hesitate to rip you off, so check out the price carefully.

When looking for a car by private sale, there are myriad places to check. There are numerous used car magazines, the best being the PEI Buy-Sell-and-Trade. This locally produced newspaper has a wide selection of cars, and comes out weekly. Most of the others are regional or even national, and generally are monthly. Also, advertising in the Buy-Sell-and-Trade is free, so more people use it.

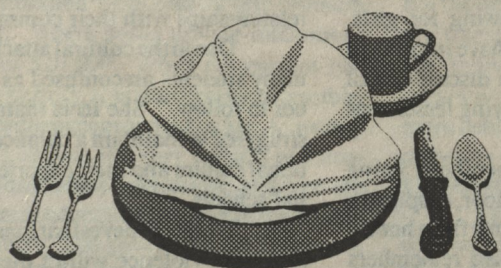
The classifieds in the Guardian/Evening Patriot are also a good place to check, especially on Fridays and Saturdays. People place ads in the week-end issues because they'll be home to answer calls and show their cars to potential buyers.

Car rental agencies also sell cars, as they want to keep their fleets as fresh as possible. These are a good source for almost-new cars, but don't bother looking for a car that's more than two years old at a rental shop.

There are many other place to find used cars. Many gas stations will have a car or two for sale on the property. Often people will park their car visibly on their lawn and display 'For Sale' signs. Rare are the days when I have not seen a car in the UPEI parking lot with a sign on the window.

In general, if you have patience, almost any car you want to buy can be found-- and usually for the right price. Look carefully, and you'll find what you want. And get other people to help you search as well. Most people are more than willing to help.

Next week: After you find a car, what next?



## Restaurant Retrospective This week: The Apothecary Lounge

One busy day, I joined Shannon and a few other X-Pressers for lunch at Apothecaries' (lured in by some "buy one get one free" coupons). What we found was a truly delightful meal. The restaurant was quiet since we hit slightly after the traditional lunch hour, which allowed us to talk and laugh unreservedly. Service was great, and they let us make substitutions in the menu for vegetarian wants. I had a simple Chicken sandwich, and it was good: thick bread, lots of meat, with homefries and salad on the side for less than \$5. The staff were very friendly, chatting with us throughout our stay. Apothecaries' has definitely improved since my previous visits, and I would go again anytime. The restaurant has a somewhat small menu since Apothecaries' is primarily a lounge, but everything on the menu is good. Keep in mind the casual atmosphere of this restaurant-- you won't get formal dining with all the accoutrements, but Apothecaries' does meet my requirements: "good food, lots of it, and cheap." So, 4 out of 5 cookies for this downtown establishment.

-- Aldera Chisholm

Let me begin by saying I was the first of us to return to Apothecaries and try their food (I was the bravest of the three). It was fabulous. The portions were excellent (at good prices) and the food really tasted good (at good prices)-- and did I mention the prices? Well, they were good. I treated my mother to lunch last Friday, and boy was she impressed: we both rated our meal at 4 cookies. For those of you who don't know, last year my comrades and I checked out Apothecaries and we left them on bad terms (if you want more details, head to the archives). As a token of peace and good faith, we decided to give Apothecaries another try-- and are we glad we did! As a special treat, Don (our waiter) showed us the inside of the safe-- wow. They have the ledgers in there from the old pharmacy, and there's even a prescription for JOHN A. Mac DONALD. Well, that's it. For more info, check it out for yourself.

-- Jennifer Caseley

Here is my suggestion: Go! Apothecaries' at lunchtime was recommended to me and it turned out to be worth every penny. During the week ending October 8, Apothecaries' lounge on Grafton St. was running a buy-one-get-one-free lunch special deal. This turned out to be one of the best deals I have ever lucked into. Apothecaries' has a good, economical menu with plenty of choices. The prices are all under \$8.00, and most dishes will cost you \$5.00 or \$6.00. When you count in the coupons, five of us ate for \$25, including a generous tip for the staff.

The restaurant was almost empty, which was a shame. The Apothecary is too good to keep secret. The addition of tablecloths (and very attractive tablecloths) does wonders in transforming the Apothecary from bar to restaurant, but it kept its dark, cosy atmosphere. Better than the decor, even, was the food and service. The kitchen is very willing to make substitutions - creating another vegetarian meal by leaving the chicken out of the stir-fry special, for example. I cannot let the service

go without comment. Our waiter was fast and friendly (Jeff! Another great job!).

To cut through this gushing, what I'm trying to say is that I am eagerly awaiting the next round of Apothecaries' coupons. Even the full prices are reasonable, so I am giving The Apothecaries' a full 5 out of 5 cookies.

-- Shannon Younker

### Ratings System

- 5 cookies: Better than mom's home-made
- 4 cookies: Worth spending the last of your student loan on
- 3 cookies: Jen's cooking on a good night
- 2 cookies: Sorta like fast food
- 1 cookie: Stay home and eat Kraft Dinner