

Classic Car Auction Photo Checklist

119-point photo and video checklist for BuyTheCar.com

Tips & Tricks for Great Photos

Photos tell the story of your car — the more compelling and detailed, the more confident buyers will be, and the higher your sale price.

- **Clean it first.** Wipe or wash down the exterior, interior, engine, and undercarriage, then dry it. Remove all personal items not included with the sale.
- **Light it right.** Pick a day with good weather and soft morning or evening light. Avoid shadows and shade, and skip the harsh midday sun if you can.
- **Choose your backdrop.** A neutral, empty background - plain pavement, an uncluttered wall, empty parking. Avoid people, trash cans, and other cars. Your car is the star; let it shine.
- **Format.** Take all photos and videos in landscape (horizontal), in a 3:2 ratio. Make sure the whole car fits in frame - don't cut off the front, back, wheels, or bumpers.
- **Keep it level and steady.** Hold the camera at mid-door height and keep the same distance for each shot.
- **Get the numbers.** Photograph all numbers clearly and readably - VIN, body tag, data tag, window etching, stickers, and odometer.
- **Be honest about flaws.** Show wear and tear, scratches and scuffs, stone chips, damage, and rust up front - it builds buyer trust.
- **Shoot big, shoot it all.** The more the merrier! What makes your vehicle special? What would a buyer want to know? Shoot it. Upload in this order: exterior, interior, engine, numbers, concern spots, undercarriage, then receipts and documentation.

EXTERIOR — Full Car Shots

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Front 3/4 driver's side (hero shot, best lighting)
Your money shot | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Front 3/4 passenger side
Mirror the hero angle on the opposite side so buyers see both front corners and the full stance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Rear 3/4 driver's side
Show the rear corner, taillight, and quarter panel together | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Rear 3/4 passenger side
Match the opposite rear 3/4 for symmetry; confirms the body is straight from every corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Direct front (straight on, level)
Square up dead center, camera level with the grille | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Direct rear (straight on, level)
Same discipline as the front |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Full driver's side profile
Stand back to avoid distortion; keep the camera level and parallel to the car | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Full passenger side profile
Repeat the level, parallel profile on the passenger side |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. High angle front 3/4 (elevated)
Shoot slightly down from a step stool to reveal hood, roof, and overall proportions in one frame | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Low angle front 3/4 (dramatic stance)
Drop low for an aggressive, poster-style look |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Overhead / drone shot (if available)
A clean top-down shows paint condition and overall layout | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Car in flattering environment / backdrop
Place the car against a clean, uncluttered setting that flatters it |

EXTERIOR — Panel by Panel

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Hood (full, top-down)
Capture the whole hood evenly lit to show paint, swirls, and any ripples | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Roof (full, top-down)
Often overlooked - buyers check here for sun fade, dents, and clearcoat failure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Trunk / decklid (full)
Show the full panel and shut lines | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Driver's front fender
Fill the frame with the panel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Passenger front fender
Match the driver-side fender shot for consistent lighting and angle | <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Driver's rear quarter panel
Quarter panels are common rust and repair zones - light them to show the surface honestly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Passenger rear quarter panel
Repeat on the passenger quarter | <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Driver's front door
Square to the panel; capture the full door, handle, and shut lines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Passenger front door
Mirror the front door shot | <input type="checkbox"/> 22. Driver's rear door (if applicable)
Four-doors only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23. Passenger rear door (if applicable)
Match the opposite rear door for a complete set | <input type="checkbox"/> 24. Front bumper (full)
Show chrome/finish condition end to end |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25. Rear bumper (full)
Same as front - full length, even light, note any damage or repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> 26. Rocker panel — driver's side
Critical rust area |

- 27. Rocker panel — passenger side**
Repeat on the passenger rocker

- 28. Cowl / windshield base area**
A notorious rust trap

EXTERIOR — Trim, Glass & Details

- 29. Grille (close-up)**
Fill the frame; show every bar and the finish

- 30. Front emblem / badging**
Sharp close-up confirms model/trim authenticity

- 31. Rear emblem / badging**
Capture all rear scripts and badges - they verify the exact model and engine callouts

- 32. Fender badges / scripts**
Detail any side badges

- 33. Hood ornament / scoop (if equipped)**
Highlight distinctive features; light to show chrome or paint condition

- 34. All chrome trim runs (close-ups)**
Walk the full trim, shooting each run

- 35. Door handles (each)**
Close up on every handle - wear and finish are quick condition tells

- 36. Side mirrors (each)**
Show glass, housing, and mounting

- 37. Windshield (check for chips / cracks)**
Angle to catch chips, cracks, and delamination

- 38. Rear glass**
Same as windshield; also check defroster lines and trim seal condition

- 39. Side windows (each)**
Photograph each pane for scratches, fit, and seal condition

- 40. Vent / wing windows**
Detail these classic features - frames and seals are often worn

- 41. Antenna**
Quick shot confirms type and condition (original vs

- 42. Gas cap / fuel door**
Show the cap and surrounding paint; note originality and any scratching

EXTERIOR — Lights

- 43. Headlights — driver**
Close up on lens clarity, housing, and trim ring

- 44. Headlights — passenger**
Match the opposite headlight; check for fogging or cracks

- 45. Taillights — driver**
Show lens condition and any cracks or fading - originals carry value

- 46. Taillights — passenger**
Mirror the driver-side taillight shot for the set

- 47. Turn signals (front / rear)**
Document lens condition; turn them on for a working shot if possible

- 48. Reverse lights**
Confirm presence and condition; capture lit if you can

- 49. License plate light**
Small but expected on a thorough listing - show it works and is intact

- 50. Marker / running lights**
Detail side and running markers, especially on trucks and later classics

WHEELS & TIRES

- 51. Driver front wheel (full)**
Fill the frame with the wheel

- 52. Passenger front wheel (full)**
Match the front wheel angle and distance

- 53. Driver rear wheel (full)**
Same framing on the rear; note any difference in wheels front to rear

- 54. Passenger rear wheel (full)**
Complete the set of four matching wheel shots

- 55. Tire sidewall — date code & brand**
Close up so the brand and DOT date code are readable

- 56. Tire tread depth (close-up)**
Show tread depth and even wear

- 57. Wheel center caps / hubcaps**
Detail caps for originality and condition; reproductions are common

- 58. Lug nuts / knock-offs**
Capture the fastening detail - especially knock-offs on sports classics

- 59. Spare tire**
Photograph the spare's condition and matching status

- 60. Jack & tools (if original)**
Original jack and tool kits add value - lay them out and shoot clearly

ENGINE BAY

- 61. Full engine bay (top-down, hood up)**
Hood fully up, shoot straight down for an even, well-lit overview

- 62. Engine — driver's side**
Step to the side and capture that side of the engine, the accessories, and detailing

- 63. Engine — passenger side**
Repeat on the opposite side to show the full engine

- 64. Valve covers / air cleaner**
Highlight dress-up parts and finishes that signal a quality build or restoration

- 65. Engine ID stamp / casting numbers**
Macro shot of stamps and casting numbers - essential for matching-numbers verification

- 66. VIN stamp on block / firewall (if present)**
Document any VIN/partial-VIN stamps

- 67. Firewall (full)**
Show the firewall's finish and cleanliness; a tidy firewall signals care

- 68. Master cylinder / brake booster**
Capture brake components and any leaks or corrosion

- 69. Radiator & cooling**
Show radiator, hoses, and fan

- 70. Wiring / harness condition**
Photograph the harness - clean wiring reassures buyers; messy wiring is a flag to disclose

- 71. Hoses & belts**
Detail belt and hose condition; fresh ones suggest recent service

- 72. Battery & tray**
Show battery type, mounting, and a clean (non-corroded) tray

- 73. Underside of hood (insulation / data plate)**
Capture the hood underside, insulation, and any build/data plate or sticker

- 74. Cold-start / running engine (video ideal)**
Shoot it running, and film a cold start

INTERIOR

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 75. Full dashboard (wide)
Wide shot of the entire dash from the back seat or door | <input type="checkbox"/> 76. Instrument cluster (lit if possible)
Close up with the cluster lit so buyers see working gauges and lens condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 77. Odometer reading (clear close-up)
Sharp, legible odometer shot - mileage is a top buyer question | <input type="checkbox"/> 78. Steering wheel & column
Show wheel condition (cracks, wear) and column/ignition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 79. Driver's seat (front & wear areas)
Capture bolsters and seating surface - the driver's seat shows the most wear | <input type="checkbox"/> 80. Passenger seat
Document the passenger seat for comparison and overall upholstery condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 81. Rear seats (full)
Show rear seating surfaces and any wear, stains, or cracking | <input type="checkbox"/> 82. Door panels — each
Photograph every door panel for fit, color match, and wear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 83. Headliner (full)
Shoot up at the headliner - sagging or stains are common and worth disclosing | <input type="checkbox"/> 84. Carpet / floor — front
Show front carpet condition and color |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 85. Carpet / floor — rear
Same for rear floors; check for dampness or fading | <input type="checkbox"/> 86. Center console / shifter
Detail the console, shifter, and boot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 87. Pedals (wear indicates mileage)
Close up on pedal pads - wear is a real-world mileage indicator buyers trust | <input type="checkbox"/> 88. Glovebox (open)
Open and shoot inside; show condition, light, and any original documentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 89. Under-dash (lie back, shoot up)
Lie across the seat and shoot up under the dash | <input type="checkbox"/> 90. Wiring / harness (interior)
Document the fuse box and harness routing behind/under the dash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 91. Trunk interior (lined / finished)
Capture trunk lining, mat, and finish - a detailed trunk signals a thorough restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> 92. Seatbelts & date tags
Show belts and their date tags; originality and function both matter |

DOCUMENTATION & IDENTIFICATION

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 93. VIN plate / chassis number
Sharp, readable shot of the VIN plate or stamped chassis number | <input type="checkbox"/> 94. Any data tags / plates
Photograph any data tags, trim tags, or door-jamb plates the car has - not all cars carry them, so capture whatever is present with codes legible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 95. Build sheet / window sticker (if available)
Lay flat and shoot square | <input type="checkbox"/> 96. Service records / receipts
Fan out or stack key records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 97. Owner's manual & literature
Photograph original manuals and literature - collectors value complete sets | <input type="checkbox"/> 98. History, provenance / documentation
Capture restoration photos, matching-numbers paperwork, or any history that supports the car's story |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 99. Awards / show recognition (if included in sale)
Only if the awards convey with the car | |

CONCERN SPOTS — Paint and body condition (be thorough & honest)

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100. Lower doors (rust-prone)
Open the door and shoot the bottom edge and drain holes | <input type="checkbox"/> 101. Wheel arches — all four (close-up)
Get in close on each arch lip, inside and out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 102. Floor pan edges / rockers underneath
From underneath, light the floor edges and rocker seams | <input type="checkbox"/> 103. Trunk floor (lift mat / spare)
Pull the mat and spare; shoot the bare floor and spare well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 104. Battery tray area
Acid corrosion lives here | <input type="checkbox"/> 105. Lower quarter panels (behind wheels)
Shoot behind each rear tire where debris collects and rust forms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 106. Cowl seams
Light into the cowl seams and corners - a hidden, expensive rust area | <input type="checkbox"/> 107. Window / glass channel edges
Capture the lower glass channels and pinch welds where moisture sits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 108. Door bottoms (open, looking down)
Door open, camera angled down at the bottom seam and drains | <input type="checkbox"/> 109. Frame rails (visible sections)
Light the frame rails from underneath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 110. Spare tire well
Show the well and its condition - another moisture trap worth documenting | <input type="checkbox"/> 111. Any visible filler / repair / paint work
Photograph repaired areas honestly |

UNDERCARRIAGE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 112. Front suspension
Light the front suspension from underneath - show components, bushings, and any rebuild work | <input type="checkbox"/> 113. Rear suspension / axle
Capture the rear axle and suspension; note upgrades or fresh components |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 114. Exhaust system (full run)
Follow the exhaust front to back; show material, condition, and any leaks | <input type="checkbox"/> 115. Transmission / driveline
Document the trans and driveshaft area; note leaks or upgrades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 116. Frame condition — driver's side
Light the driver-side frame rail | <input type="checkbox"/> 117. Frame condition — passenger side
Repeat on the passenger rail for a complete underside picture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 118. Brake components (visible)
Show discs/drums and lines - disc conversions and new parts are selling points | <input type="checkbox"/> 119. Fuel / brake lines
Capture line routing and condition; fresh lines suggest a careful build |

Video Checklist

Three short clips are all we need - they prove the car runs and drives. Shoot landscape (horizontal), keep them steady, and let the engine be what people hear. Please note: we cannot use videos with music or voiceovers.

- 1. Cold start** — Film the very first start of the day, before the engine is warm
- 2. Walk-around tour** — A slow lap around the car - ideally with the engine running and the hood up part-way through
- 3. Driving** — A short driving clip: a pass-by from a fixed camera, or in-car footage of acceleration, shifting, and braking

Bonus (optional): a few vertical (portrait) clips give our team great material for social and ads - helpful, but never at the expense of the three above.

Visual Reference Guide

Real examples of the key shots done well — match the framing, lighting, and cleanliness. Exterior walk-around, panels & details, engine/interior/underneath, then sample records.

