



Mercedes-Benz

THE ANNUAL MERCEDES-BENZ WINTER DREAM EVENT



Special financing and lease offers available on select C, E & S-Class models.

Event. Unlike any other.



Home

Buy

Sell

Research

News & Advice

LOOKING FOR A NEW OR USED CAR? HOW TO GET THE BEST DEAL NOW

How to Take Advantage of These Offers

Now that you know this is a good time to buy used, how can you take advantage of the opportunity? As with most decisions that affect your personal finances, you will need to be prepared in order to get the best deal.

Search for Used Cars by Make:

Do Your Homework

Because you are reading this article on

cars.com, you are already well on your way. All the research advice and tools that you need are on this Web site. Just as you need to do when buying new, your first job is to find out which vehicles in your price range are reliable and offer a good value. A good starting point is our list of [Best Bets in Used Cars](#), which is excerpted from "The Used Car Book 2002 - 2003," by Jack Gillis. If you are interested in finding a vehicle that comes with the standard equipment you prefer, you can [look up the specifications](#) of specific year, make and model cars dating back to 1990. To see what was thought of a particular model when it was introduced, search through our database of [thousands of automotive reviews and road tests](#) by the leading transportation writers in the country. We have reviews from 1984 through the present, with additional reports filed each week. (For more used-car buying advice, read our articles on "[How to Buy a Used Car](#)" and "[The Illustrated Guide to Buying a Used Car](#).")



Used-car lots are filling up as consumers trade in their vehicles to secure zero-percent financing on new models.

Price Your Market

Search through our [used-vehicle database](#), which contains hundreds of thousands of dealer and private-party listings from across the country, to determine both the average asking price in your area as well as the availability of a particular model. If you are [looking for a classic car](#), such as a 1955 300SL Gullwing Mercedes, then price obviously isn't an issue. But, if you are seeking a 1999 Ford Taurus and find 76 listed on **cars.com** within a 10-mile radius of your ZIP code, as we did recently when we entered a Chicago ZIP code, it is very likely that the sellers will be open to negotiation.

How do you know how much to offer initially? Start by proposing to pay only the trade-in value — the average amount a dealer will give you for the vehicle as credit toward a new-car purchase. You are in a stronger negotiating position if you work your way up from the wholesale or trade-in value than if you try to bargain down from the vehicle's listed price. You can find trade-in values with our [Used-Car Values](#) pricing tool from Kelley Blue Book.

FIND CURRENT DEALS

[Email This Article](#)

[Printer-Friendly Format](#)

[Finance Calculator](#)

NEW-CAR BUYERS

- [▶ Incentives Hitting Plateau, but not Ready to Come Down](#)
- [▶ First Things First: Find the Best Deal](#)
- [▶ Are These Offers Too Good to Be True?](#)
- [▶ How Will Offers Affect the Industry?](#)
- [▶ Top 10 Cash-Back Offers](#)
- [▶ Best Bets for 2004 Models](#)

USED-CAR BUYERS

- [▶ Want the Best Possible Deal? Buy a Used Vehicle Now](#)
- [▶ How to Take Advantage of These Offers](#)
- [▶ Best Bets in Used Cars](#)
- [▶ Certified Pre-Owned Financing Offers](#)

RESEARCH

Take advantage of the extensive tools on **cars.com**:

Buying Guides — Overviews of every model, from 2001 to 2005

Vehicle Profiles — In-depth, multimedia model reviews

Reviews — Thousands of automotive reviews from **cars.com**'s newspaper affiliates

Be Prepared to Walk

The simplest response to a counteroffer that's too high is "That's not quite good enough," advises Art Spinella, president of CNW Marketing Research. No histrionics, ranting or raving. If the salesperson can't come down far enough to your liking, ask if the dealership can shave a quarter point off the interest rate. This brings us to the best place to find a deal: in the Finance and Insurance office. First, get your bank or credit union to give you a rate quote and a preapproval that's nonbinding. Second, tell the F&I Manager you're preapproved but willing to take a loan through the dealership if it can beat your preapproved rate. In most cases, the dealer can and will.

Best Bets in Used Cars — [Read On](#) ▶

Reported by [Mary S. Butler](#), cars.com

[SECTION CREDITS](#)

Last updated on 8/8/03

[Home](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Index](#) | [About cars.com](#) | [Become a cars.com Dealer](#)

By using this site, you agree to our [terms of service](#)
©2004 cars.com | [Privacy Statement](#)

Visit our partners: [Apartments.com](#) | [Homescape.com](#) | [CareerBuilder.com](#)