

# Ask Ronny

by Ronny Shaver @ Ronny's Garage

Answering Your Questions About Classic Car Care Service And Restoration

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## **Should I Convert My Car To A Convertible?**

by Ronny Shaver

As the old saying goes, "when the top goes down, the price goes up". This fact is true throughout the auto industry. In fact, the convertibles will always hold their value much better than standard sedans. I think this is true for a number of reasons. First, fewer convertibles are made of certain models than the hardtop versions (usually but not always). Second, the convertible has a higher wow factor and feeds romanticism. Third, convertibles are generally "coach-built" and require much more labor to build. I can think of more but will stop here.

I recently had a member ask me what the pros and cons of converting a car to a convertible were and also whether it would add or subtract value from the car. Now this may seem like an odd question so let me explain.

Approximately six years ago, a long-time customer with a Bentley S3 that was a daily driver for many years, came to me and asked me if I would convert his car to a convertible. He had found a well-known fabricator in the UK who specialized in converting and fabricating "kits" to convert the Silver Cloud/Bentley S sedan into a two-door drop-head. For those who are un-aware, Rolls-Royce and Bentley supplied non Continental drop-heads that actually started life as a sedan and were "cut" into two-door drop-heads by Park Ward. The story I was told is that this UK company bought the rights to re-produce the "kit" used for re-sale. My customer had already researched the kit and contacted the producer when he came to me to ask. I nervously said I would take on the project knowing it would be difficult and time-consuming. I told the customer that to estimate the final cost would be impossible since I had never been down that road before. He said he had the utmost confidence that I could complete the job to his satisfaction. He was more confident than I was! I won't bore anyone with all the details but that job was the most difficult I had ever attempted and would, after reflection, not attempt again. After more than three years of anxiety, sweat, fit and refit and refit and refit, persistence and an amazing amount of patience on my customer's part, the car was completed and turned out beautiful!! In fact it has won many awards and different shows and concours events, including "most improved Bentley" of 2011 in the RROC So Cal region.

So what are the pros to converting a car to a convertible? In my opinion, my customer has a beautiful convertible that he can enjoy and be proud of. He has a car that is virtually completely restored at cost that is less than purchasing one of these rare models. The cons can be many. Fortunately this model had a "kit" available that was very true to the factory specifications. This was a rare situation indeed. I have seen a number of cars that have been "cut" and turned into convertibles with disastrous results. I call them "butchered hack jobs" because fit and finish are forgotten along with serviceability and longevity. Also lacking in many conversions are keeping with the proper design lines of the car to preserve the aesthetics.

As far as adding value, yes in this case much value was added to the car. But how much will not be determined until the car is sold. A significant amount of money was invested in the conversion but what is important for me is that it wasn't done just for a profit. It was done for the enjoyment of the car. That is my opinion and I'm sticking with it. I have and have seen many people spend more money on cars than they could sell them for just to preserve the beauty and history of the car. Just think, if this process didn't

happen as much as it really does, we wouldn't have all these beautiful pieces of automotive history on the road.



Enjoy your PMCs!

Thank you for the questions and keep them coming. Please send your questions to Ronny at [ronnyshaver@ronnysgarage.com](mailto:ronnyshaver@ronnysgarage.com).

Happy Motoring!  
Ronny