



# Oldies that are goodies

**P**EOPLE keep the strangest cars. Some have a garage full of old timers they love, others just cannot let go of something as obscure and unloved as a Nissan Cedric or Datsun 120Y.

Obsession can also kick in, which is why retired V8 Supercar racer Larry Perkins has dozens of old tractors; why there are Holden fans with dozens of rusting hulks; and why a man called David Bowden has all of Allan Moffat's old racing cars — including his transporter truck.

Very few people have Bowden's money, so have to settle for something that's special to them. It could be an early Volkswagen Beetle or an original Datsun 1600 — both on my list — or the Datsun 240Z, so desirable to one of my friends. But how do you choose something that is going to be more than a money pit?

One mate had to have a Triumph Stag, though it drove him to distraction, rarely ran well — if at all — and cost him thousands in telephone calls to Britain, repairs and airfreight deliveries of bits and pieces.

From the many cars introduced in the past 20 years, the Mazda MX-5 stands out. It is cute, fun to drive, is reliable and easy to fix and prices have been extremely stable.

It was an instant classic when it arrived in 1989 and little has changed. It's no surprise that the MX-5 is now the world's all-time best selling sports car, or that so many people still want them in 2007.

The Lexus LS400 is also a good car to have, as the early cars are now extremely affordable yet classy to drive and incredibly reliable. And anything with a Peter Brock connection in the Holden family should hold its value well.



**Instant classic:** The sporty Mazda MX-5.

In today's showrooms, the born-again Mini looks like the best bet as a future classic. Of course, anything with a Porsche badge is going to do well over the long haul, but the Mini is relatively affordable — and will become better buying over time — is fun to drive and has BMW quality.

The born-again Beetle? A definite loser, since it is nothing more than a bug-copy body dropped over the mechanical package of a Golf.

The Chrysler PT Cruiser? Not likely, since the quality is nothing special and even the hotrod looks have dated very fast.

The Peugeot 307 convertible? Not if you're interested in something beyond looks.

The Jaguar XK coupe? A nice car, but far too costly and not nearly distinctive enough. But there are many, many others that people consider and it's easy to make a mistake.

Which is where James Dutton comes into the picture, thanks to a company which has bought and sold many classics over many years from its base in inner-city Melbourne.

Dutton — now the managing director of [www.duttondirect.com](http://www.duttondirect.com) — has just put together a list of the best buys in classic cars, naming the 1968 Shelby Mustang — think of Steve McQueen in *Bullitt* — alongside the latest Aston Martin V8 driven by 007 in the new James Bond film.

Dutton also thinks the limited-edition Park Lane model of the new Mini will be a winner, like the 1963 Jaguar E-Type.