

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE MY PARENTS' CROWN VIC TO COLLEGE



BY RAY MAGLIOZZI

Dear Car Talk:

I'm just starting college, and my parents have agreed to buy me a used car. They were going to give me their car, but I don't want it. It's a Crown Victoria. Get serious. I want something big enough to carry four people, capable of hauling my mountain bike and fun to drive. What do you recommend? —Alden

A Crown Vic, Alden. You've heard the expression "don't look

a gift horse in the mouth"? Well, my advice would be don't look a gift Crown Vic in the engine compartment. You may not realize this, but the Crown Vic is so uncool that it's cool. I'll lay out the advantages.

First of all, it's going to be reliable. Your parents were the original owners and not only drove it gently, but probably took good care of it, too. That's going to save you a ton of money. Money that could be better spent on textbooks and Donkey Kong. Plus, there will probably be a guilt factor involved if anything does go wrong. If the engine compression plummets — before your GPA does — they may say, "Oh, gee, Alden, we gave you a car

with bad compression. We'll take care of that for you, son."

Second, a Crown Vic is large, and all things being equal, larger is safer. Since you're presumably going to be driving long distances to school and back, I'd certainly rather see you in something with some bulk around it than something smaller and "fun."

Third, it's versatile. I bet your mountain bike will slide right into the back seat. It'll carry you and four classmates to the library on Saturday night (right!), and the trunk will swallow an entire dorm's worth of empty kegs. Finally, your friends are going to admire it. It's not the average Corolla or Subaru that most students bring to college. It's a

cruiser. It's comfortable. Your friends are going to want to go out in your Crown Vic instead of stuffing themselves into their Honda Civic.

And if all that doesn't make it cool, you can mount an auxiliary spotlight to the driver's door and watch the traffic move out of the way for you when you cruise home ... if you don't get arrested for impersonating an officer.

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Got a question about cars? Write to Ray in care of King Features, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

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