

Starting out in Concours novice class:

Firstly you have to decide what model you like. Then the search starts. You will need to find the right car and decide whether to keep it standard or modify it. Believe it or not modified cars are easier to prepare as you can buy all the parts you need off the shelf. On the other hand if you go down the standard route, then everything you replace on the car must have been factory fitted from new (novice class doesn't matter).

Looking for a car:

You need to find the best car to start your project and that doesn't necessarily mean the most expensive. What your looking for in a standard car is original glass, original paint, nice interior and as few miles on the clock as possible.

So you have now bought your nice original car, what's next?

Now novice class is a good entry to Concours and as you compete, the car will improve every show. Novice cars will be judged on interior, exterior, engine bay, wheels, tyres and boot. So no need to worry about stripping the underside.

Interior:

Remove the seats and steam clean if required. Clean all the seat runners and repaint if required. Remove the carpet if required and steam clean or wet vac it. Check for damage, tears, marks and holes will lose you points. Remove and clean all doors cards. Clean the headlining and sun visors. Clean all vents ashtrays switches. Steering wheel, steering column, pedals and the arm rest all need cleaning. Remember not to use a greasy product as that is not a true representation of how the car came out of the factory.

Engine Bay:

Here is the big question. Do you remove the engine? If you have the tools to do this then it will make the cleaning process easier, but lets say you cant. Where possible remove as much as you can to improve access to the engine, i.e. starter motor, alternator, header tank, air filters, radiator and anything else you can remove. Using a good degreaser start cleaning all the loom and wiring. Pay good attention to the inner wings, underside of bonnet and engine block.

Exterior:

All wheels need to be removed and thoroughly cleaned inside and out. Try to avoid getting them refurbished if possible as paint does cover some mouldings and names. Tyres need to be cleaned thoroughly including treads.

Hopefully the car you have bought has good paintwork so will just require a bit of cutting and polishing. If paint is required, ask around, recommendation is the best way in finding a good body shop.

Glasswork should hopefully just need a good clean. Remember the more you do now the easier it will be to prepare at the show. I wont go into products to use as everyone has their own preferences so best to look around on the various sites or talk to someone else to ask what they find does the job. There are plenty of products out there.

That is a basic guide to preparing your car for novice class. Remember the car you have bought is standard. The question now is how far do you want to go?

The judges will offer support and pointers on the day to help those entering get the best from their detailing. Remember, that the more you do in advance, the less you have to do on the day and book soon as there limited spaces available.