Headline: Find a vehicle that fits your lifestyle

Deckhead: Focus on needs, budget; what defines your persona?

Questions abound in all aspects of our lives. Some are more significant than others. Some are rhetorical. And many are necessary – especially when purchasing a new vehicle.

How do you find the perfect fit? What is your budget? What is the purpose of the vehicle? Leisure or work? Are you interested practicality or personality? These questions barely scratch the surface.

Choosing a vehicle often reveals your persona. A convertible might appeal to someone sporty and active. Practical thinking could lead to a four-door sedan. Color also plays a role. An outgoing personality might prefer red or blue. A more preserved person might choose an ivory or cream.

Gauge your response to vehicles on the road. Which ones grab your attention? Which ones have you yearning to visit a dealership and make a purchase?

Your initial response often reveals your intentions. Anything is fair game – including a vehicle’s skin-deep appearance – in your quest to purchase a new vehicle.

The reflection of your personality is important, but so is visualizing whether it will meet your everyday needs. Simply put, which type of vehicle will best fit your lifestyle?

Questions to ask yourself:

* Do you take road trips?
* Tow or haul?
* Do you have or plan to have kids?
* Do you live in a cold-weather region with harsh winters?

Another question is likely the most important. What meets your budget? Estimate your monthly income before subtracting the following:

* Estimate monthly bills/utilities and rent/mortgage payments.
* Include other recurring payments like cred cards, personal loans.
* Be sure to leave room for unexpected or miscellaneous expenses.

Calculate the number, then see what remains. This an excellent indicator as to what you can afford monthly.

Perhaps the most frustrating step is haggling over a price. It can deter the enthusiasm of most shoppers – even if you’re dead set on buying the vehicle.

AAA is eager to assist you in the process of helping its members shop with confidence by taking advantage of the AAA Auto Buying Program. Visit AAA.com/AutoBuying. It simplifies browsing makes, models and options. Learn about incentives and crash-safety ratings and reviews.

Find out what others paid for the same vehicle with national, regional and local data with free TrueCar Price Reports – making sure you know whether your being offered the best deal.

Ask questions. Know your tastes. Set a budget. And taking advantage of AAA’s invaluable car-buying tools. They’ll simplify a complicated process.

Cutline: PICKING A WINNER – Purchasing a new vehicle is a vigorous process that takes time, patience and research. Image: HBS. Adobe Stock.

**Kicker**

**SAVE ON YOUR NEXT VEHICLE**

The AAA Auto Buying program provides unbiased new- and used-car pricing information free of charge to AAA members through AAA’s preferred supplier TrueCar. To save money and get the upfront price on your next new car, visit the AAA Auto Buying Program at AAA.com/AutoBuying.