

The Illustrated Buyer's Guide to DeLorean Automobiles



**By James Espey
with foreword by William T. Collins, Jr.
Updated Second Edition**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Foreword | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| First, a bit of history | 6 |
| Beginning your search | 7 |
| Towing/Transporting a DeLorean | 9 |
| Matching Numbers and the DeLorean | 11 |
| Operating Controls | 13 |
| DeLorean Vehicle Specification Data | 15 |
| Common Abbreviations | 17 |
| Exterior | 21 |
| Interior | 35 |
| Luggage Compartment | 53 |
| Engine Compartment | 59 |
| Frame/Body/Roof | 71 |
| Vehicle Systems | 77 |
| Exercising and Storing Your DeLorean | 94 |
| Common Problems and Cures | 95 |
| Dealer Options | 105 |
| Factory Specials | 107 |
| Notable DeLoreans in the Modern Era | 110 |
| Performance Modifications | 112 |
| Painted vs Stainless | 113 |
| VIN's and Production Numbers | 115 |
| VIN Listing of Company Cars | 118 |
| Financing & Insurance | 123 |
| Service | 124 |
| Suggested Further Reading | 125 |

Matching Numbers and the DeLorean

Matching numbers is a phrase often used in the collector car hobby, but for different people it has different meanings - the definitions of which are beyond the scope of this book. Fortunately, in the DeLorean hobby, it really doesn't matter anyway.

The complete Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on a DeLorean is typically located in two places - the pop-rievted plate (11-1) in the driver's side door jamb about knee level, and the pop-rievted or glued plate on the dashboard (11-2).



11-1



11-2

The former almost always lists the “build month/year”, though in the case of the “1983” model DeLorean cars with VINs that end in 15XXX, 16XXX and 17XXX, this build month/year is not accurate (*see page 116*). Some early cars in the 500 VIN-range don't have this plate at all. The build month/year may be stamped or embossed, with stamped dates more characteristic of early build cars. There is at least one known car where this area is blank, having never been stamped or embossed.



11-3

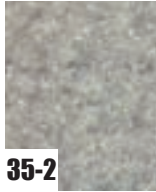


11-4

There are a couple other locations where you are likely to find at least the last five digits of the VIN, and those are on the stainless under the door headliners (11-3) typically on later, single-key cars and on the rear cross member of the frame (11-4), behind the impact absorber.



35-1



35-2



35-3

Interior

Only black and grey interior colors were offered to the public during the production of the DeLorean. DMC had planned to introduce blue, burgundy, and tan. Two of the gold-plated DeLorean cars produced (*see page 109*) were fitted with this tan interior.



35-4

The interior color of a car is determined by the color of the dashboard, binnacle and seats.



35-5

Carpets: Three different carpet colors and two different types of carpet were used during production. Black interior cars up to approximately VIN 10578 have a coarse dark grey/charcoal color carpet (*35-1 and 35-4*). Grey interior cars up to approximately VIN 10578 have a coarse light grey color carpet (*35-2 and 35-5*). Both grey *and* black interior cars from approximately VIN 10579 have a smooth textured light grey carpet (*35-3 and 35-6*).



35-6

The driver's side floor carpet has a molded rubber footpad under the pedals as well as one to the right of the accelerator pedal on the center tunnel. Original carpets are all molded

to fit the contours of their position. Some aftermarket carpets are sewn or stitched to fit and are not a good match for color or texture and typically fit poorly. Original pieces of most (but not all) the interior carpets are available, and a complete molded reproduction carpet set was introduced in 2009,



47-1



47-2



47-3

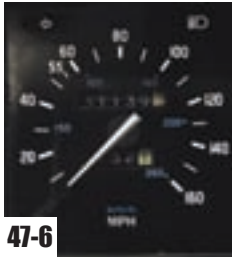


47-4

to have been installed only on DeLoreans originally sold in Canada and the Middle East. Canadian cars are typically identified by having VIN numbers in the 17XXX series, and there were 50 Middle Eastern cars with the VIN range of approximately 11740 to 11790.



47-5



47-6

There are known to be a very small number of cars fitted with 140 mph (47-3) speedometers that were intended for non-US markets. These clusters can be identified by

their dominant (white print) mph markings and the subordinate metric (blue print) markings.

Several variations of aftermarket speedometer faces have been produced and sold over the years including 140 mph (47-4), 170 mph (47-5), and 160 mph (47-6). These can usually be identified by the noticeable difference in the typ-styles between the speedometer and the tachometer. The exception to this is the illustrated reproduction 140 mph speedometer, which is a very close match for the original, with deliberately fewer metric (blue) markings to distinguish it from the rare, original unit.



69-1

has a recessed 5/16" opening, and requires the same sized tool to remove. This tool is readily available from any full-service DeLorean vendor. Over the years, some owners have replaced this with a more conventional drain plug. A new seal washer - included with filters obtained from most of the full-service DeLorean vendors - should be replaced at every oil change.



69-2

Transmission Pan Drain Plug (Automatic): Similar to the oil pan drain plug, the same tool can be used to remove this plug (69-3). The same seal washer should be used here, as well.



69-3

Starter: The factory Paris-Rhone starter (69-4, right) has proven to be very reliable, but in recent years the correct internal parts required for rebuilds have been discontinued. Original starters are no longer available, but solenoids can typically be had at a price when needed. In most cases, an upgrade to the smaller, quieter and more modern starter (69-4, left) offered by the full-service vendors is a better choice.



69-4

Located on the right-hand side of the engine, just forward of the oil filter (70-1), the smaller ones can be easier to install,

Fiberglass Underbody: It doesn't necessarily take a severe accident to have damage to the fiberglass underbody. Many times, it goes unnoticed or is sloppily repaired as it's "out of sight". Look for cracks in the visible portions, particularly in the area at the corners of the radiator and also the front and rear wheel wells. Unusual looking patches were sometimes performed at the factory to correct imperfections in otherwise good underbodies. If in doubt, get a qualified bodywork professional to examine and offer an expert opinion.



Frame and Roof Rust: While the stainless body, urethane bumpers and fiberglass underbody won't rust, an increasingly common problem with DeLorean cars is rust on the frame and in the roof box. Quite possibly the most expensive issue to be aware of when inspecting a DeLorean for purchase, the impact of rust on the frame, suspension components and/or roof box cannot be overstated.



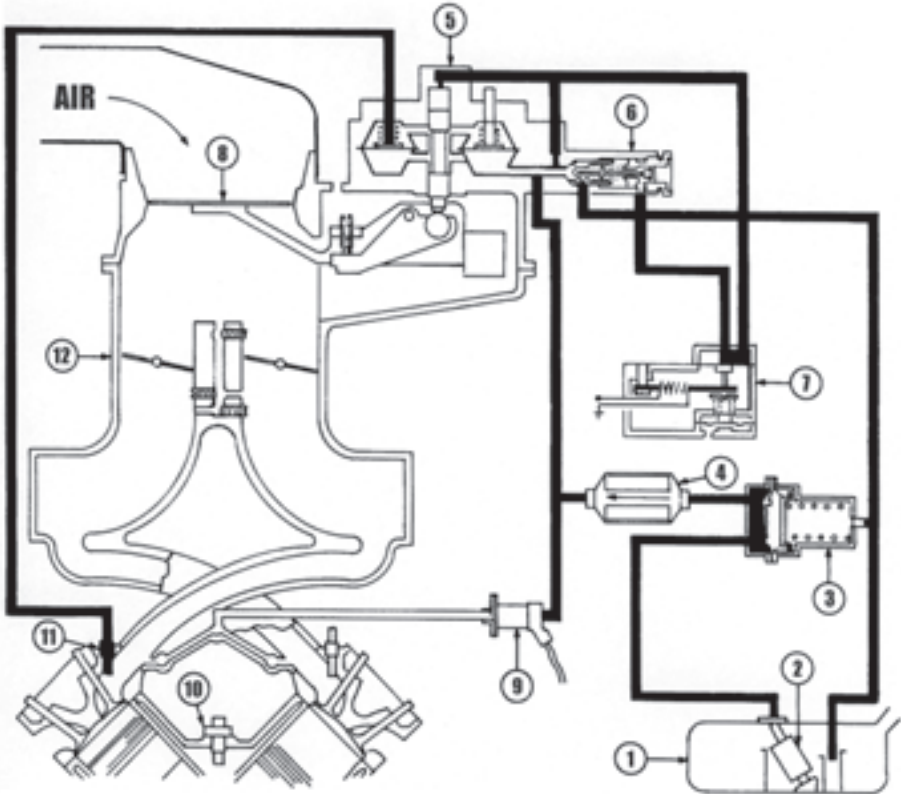
The mild steel frames were coated with a two-part epoxy with the idea that this would provide corrosion protection. In many cases, this is true, but particularly in areas where salt is used on roads, or salt air is prevalent, close attention should be noted to the condition of the frame and suspension components. The epoxy will crack with age rather than flex, and allow moisture to become trapped between the steel frame and epoxy, accelerating corrosion.

The need for careful examination cannot be overstressed (74-1 and 74-2) as the epoxy may look good, but in reality can be nothing more than a shell over

Fuel System: The DeLorean came from the factory with Bosch K-Jetronic mechanical fuel injection, with an electric pump mounted inside the tank. This pump delivers fuel at a constant pressure to the mixture control unit, which consists of an airflow sensor and a fuel distributor. The airflow sensor measures the air entering the engine, and the fuel distributor delivers the proper amount of fuel to the injectors.

A stock DeLorean requires 87 RON octane gasoline, though the Stage II/III upgrades and any turbocharged engine will typically run better with 91 RON octane or higher.

DeLorean Fuel System Components

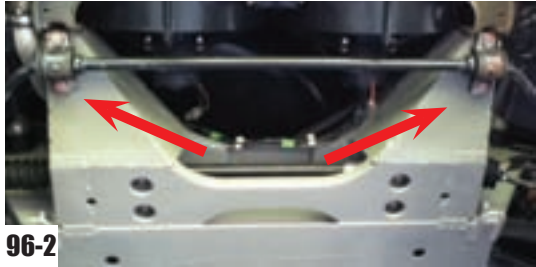


1. Fuel Tank - The fuel tank is blow-molded plastic, and located in the front “wishbone” of the frame. Accessing the in-tank components (*see page 88*) is most easily accomplished via the inspection cover inside the trunk, rather than by removing the tank from underneath the car.

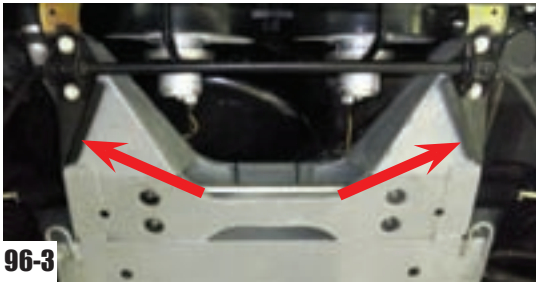
Electrical Relays/Fuses: An examination of the fusebox and relay compartment is advised. It is not uncommon that at least one of the fuses and/or fuse receptacles will be melted (96-1). This is usually the result of corrosion on the fuses and heat buildup. The installation of inline fuses is one option, though an improved reproduction fuse box is also available. The electrical relays and circuit breakers also merit attention. The original fan fail relay and cabin fan circuit breakers are prone to failure and some of the others are underrated or of poor quality. Relay update kits, which replace these components, are recommended for all cars that have not had these previously replaced.



96-1



96-2

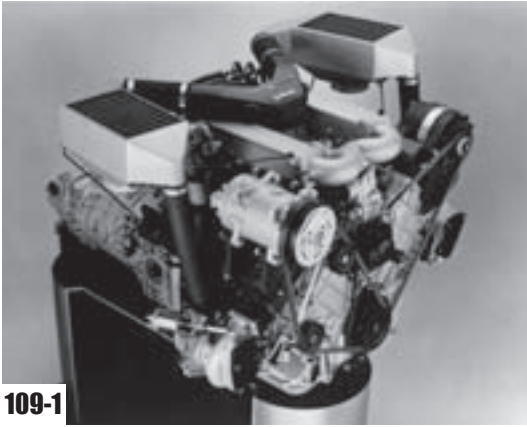


96-3

Typically, if a car still has the blue fan fail relay installed, or an *unfused* wire jumper in that location, the odds are very good that it still has the original relays and should be updated.

Front Suspension Recall: Of all the factory recalls, perhaps the most serious is the front suspension (96-2) recall. The easiest way to check if the car you are considering has had this important update is to simply look under the front end of the car, and check for the added metal brackets (96-3) on the frame extension. Kits with installation instructions to perform this recall are available and highly recommended.

Oil Pressure Gauge: You may notice the oil pressure gauge in many cars will be “pegged” when driving. This is due to an incompatibility between the oil pressure sender (on the right side of the engine block) and the gauge. This is easily fixed by replacing the sender with a new, correctly calibrated unit which is readily available and easily installed.



109-1

tion cars were sent to Legend and used for development and testing of both single and twin turbo (*109-1*) packages, the most famous being VIN #502. This twin turbo prototype (*109-2*) is now in a private collection in New Zealand. See page 118 for all VINs confirmed to be used by Legend.



109-2

Gold Cars: The 1980 American Express Christmas catalog offered a limited edition of 100 24K gold-plated DeLorean cars at \$85,000 each. Only two were sold by American Express (VIN 4300 and 4301).



109-3

VIN 4300 has a tan interior and a manual transmission, while VIN 4301 has a black interior and a manual transmission. The only other example of a tan interior DeLorean is VIN 20105.

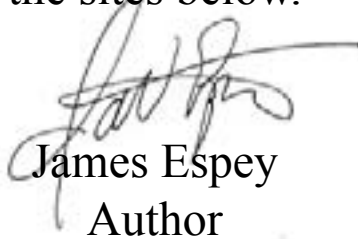
Regarding VIN 20105, a spare set of gold panels was kept on hand in case one of the other cars (VIN 4300 or 4301) was damaged. These parts were later used to “skin” the DeLo-

rean that was assigned the last DeLorean VIN - 20105. However, detailed inspection and historical accounts confirm that this car was actually a much earlier production car, and former DMC employees confirm that the gold-plated panels were attached to the car in the United States, by a Consolidated International employee.

The two American Express cars are located in the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles and the National Automobile Museum in Reno, Nevada (*109-3*). VIN 20105 is in a private collection in Maryland.

Thanks for taking a look at this preview of
“The Illustrated Buyer’s Guide
to DeLorean Automobiles”.

A printed copy of the complete book, with
152 pages and over 200 photos and
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