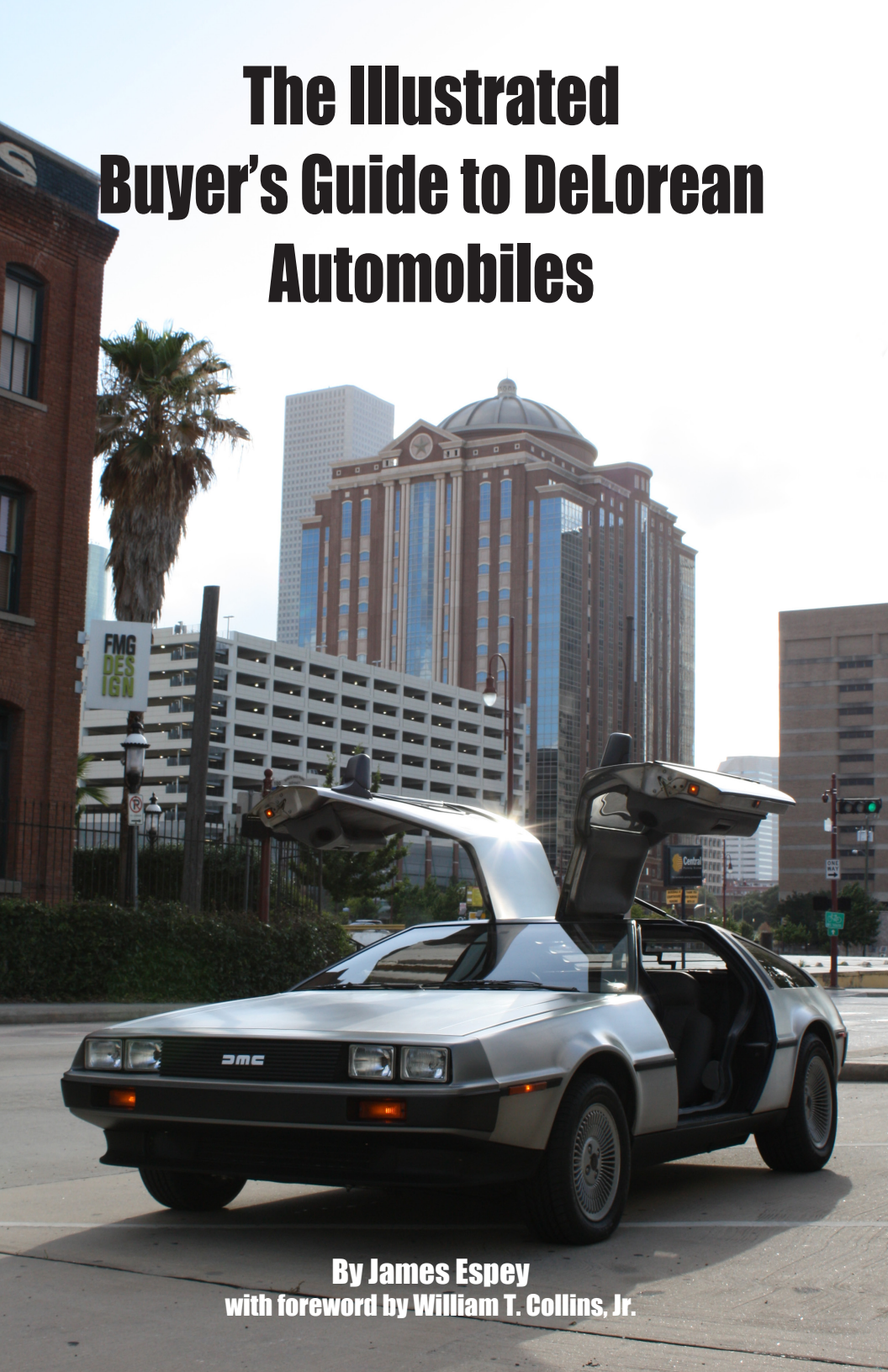
The Illustrated Buyer's Guide to DeLorean Automobiles



By James Espey
with foreword by William T. Collins, Jr.

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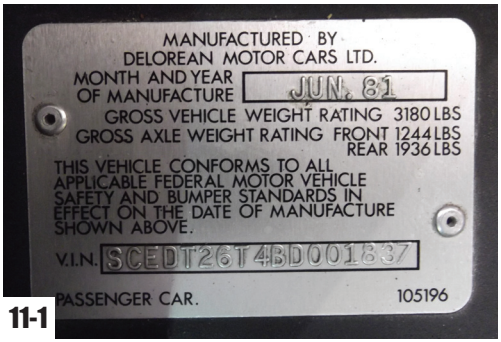
Matching Numbers and the DeLorean

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 located in two places - the pop-riveted plate *(11-1)* in the driver's side door jamb about knee level, and the pop-riveted or glued plate on the dashboard *(11-2)*.

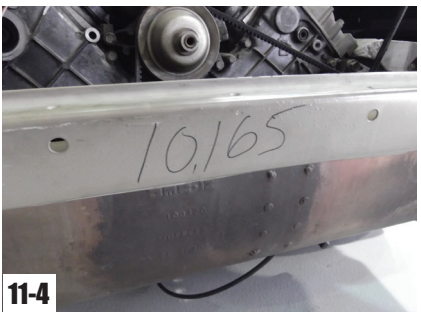


11-1


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 112). 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.

21-1

Exterior

Giorgetto Giugiaro of ItalDesign is credited with penning the exterior shape of the DeLorean car, originally in 1975. The edges were softened before production began in 1979.

21-2

Front Fascia (fay-shuh): Fascias are interchangeable among all model years, but original paint finishes came in both a "glossy" (up to approximately VIN 03599) and "matte" (from approximately VIN 03600) finish *(21-1)*. These urethane bumper covers were supplied to the factory already painted and ready to install *(21-2)*. On original fascias the middle "bumper" area is a matte black, unpainted finish, as is the lower area nearest the bottom edge.

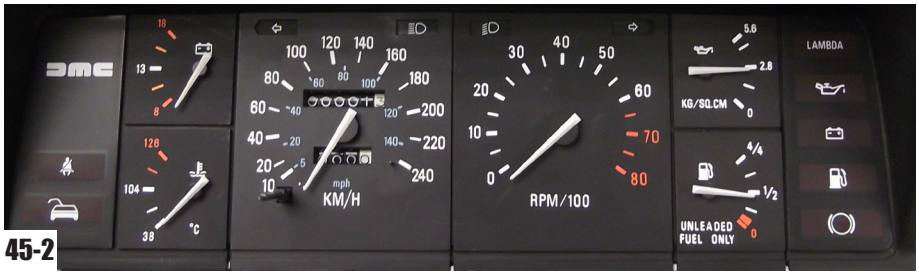
21-3

Warping over the headlights *(21-3)* is common, though undesirable, and can only be cured by removing the fascias, heating, straightening and reinforcing this area, and then repainting and reinstalling. Achieving an exact match when repainting has proven difficult over the years as has paint adhesion. Reproduction fiberglass front fascias are now available, unfinished, and require fitting and painting.

Grilles: The plastic grille is non-functional *(21-1)*, and all but a few early models have a cast metal "DMC" logo *(21-1)* affixed in the center. Originals of both grille and logo are readily available and easily replaced.

Rock Screen: Fixed screen *(21-1)* beneath the front fascia that fits into the front spoiler. Original design is a mild steel wire mesh (.375 inch mesh) painted black and is prone to rust and damage from road debris. Reproduction screens are readily available.

45-1



45-2

45-3

45-4

45-5

45-6

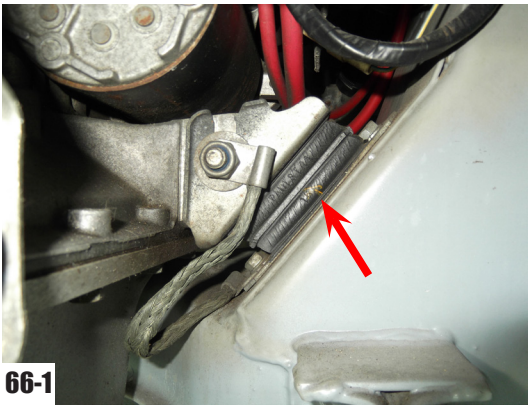
ply (though reproductions are planned) but switches, lights and latches are readily available and easily replaced.

The molded plastic insert came either as vacuum formed or blow molded, the latter typically being a more durable piece. Both are flocked with a black material on the inside. Originals are no longer available, but aftermarket glove box insert housings are available.

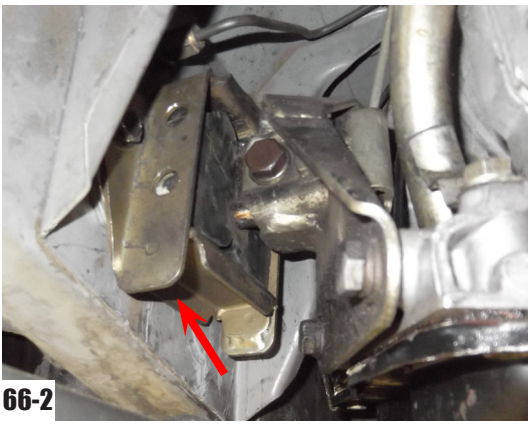
Instrument Clusters: Two different instrument clusters were used in production, one *(45-1)* with customary U.S. units of measure, and the other *(45-2)* with metric units.

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) at the time required that vehicles sold in the USA have speedometers that only registered up to 85 mph (in white letters, with blue subordinate metric markings) and a highlighted 55mph, the National Maximum Speed Limit at the time. The metric clusters used by the factory registered 240 km/h (in white print, with blue subordinate markings going up to 140 mph), and are believed to have been installed only on DeLoreans originally sold in Canada and the Middle East.

the rubber on most is cracked and in many cases they have separated from the metal mounting plates. These are inexpensive and easily replaced.


66-1

Transmission Mounts: The metal parts of the transmission mounts *(66-2)* are different between the automatic and manual versions, but these are usually in good shape. When cracked or broken, they can be removed and welded and are usually as good as new. The rubber portions, however, are usually original and are ready for replacement due to the same heat and age issues that impact the engine mounts.


66-2

Fuel Filter: Bolted to the left-side frame rail near the transmission, the fuel filter *(66-3)* should be considered a maintenance part and replaced every four years (30K miles) or when cleaning/replacing fuel tank components. Some cross-reference units are known to leak, so it's best to get this part from a full-service DeLorean vendor.


66-3

Engine Oil Drain Plug: The engine oil drain plug *(67-1)*is located at the end of the engine closest to the front of the car, and thefactory drain plug 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.

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.


72-1


72-2

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 understated.


72-3

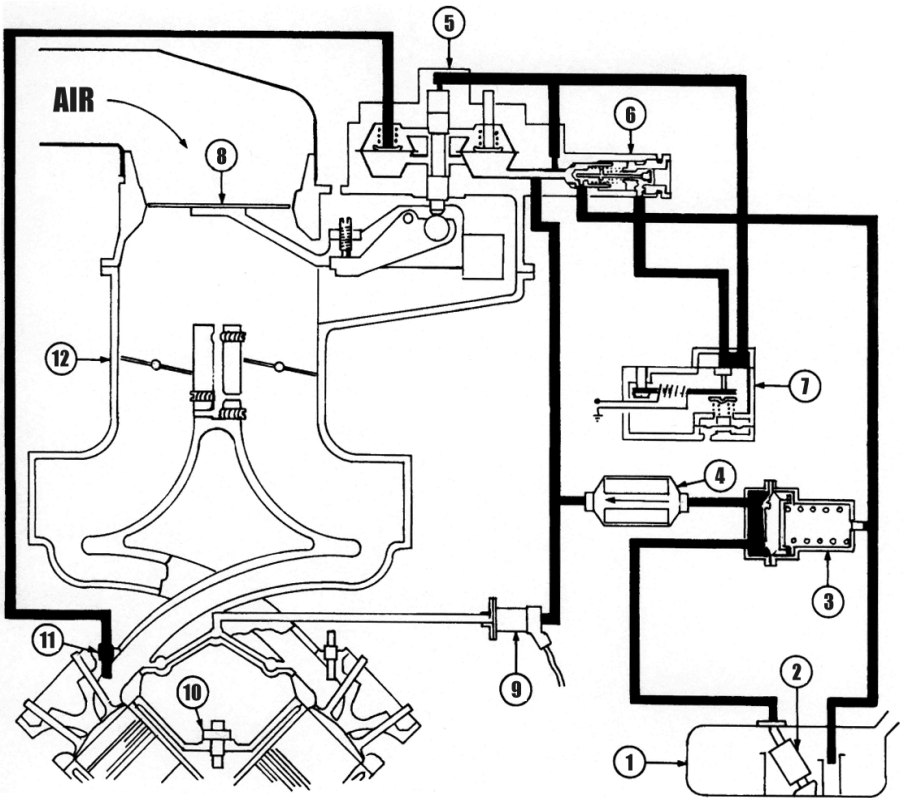
The mild steel frames were coated with a two-part epoxy with the idea that this would provide corrosion protection. In many cases, this is true, but particularly in areas where salt is used on roads, or salt air is prevalent, close attention should be noted to the condition of the frame and suspension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

Careful examination cannot be overstressed as the epoxy may look good, but in reality can be nothing more than a shell over a severely rusted frame.

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.

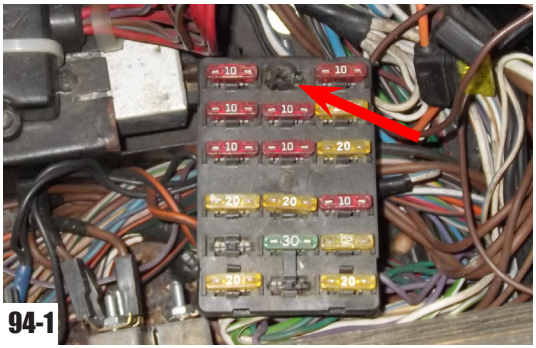
A stock DeLorean requires 87 RON octane gasoline, though the Stage II/III upgrades and any turbocharged engine will typically run better with 91 RON octane or higher.

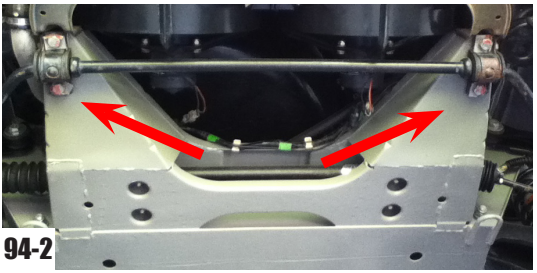
DeLorean Fuel System Components

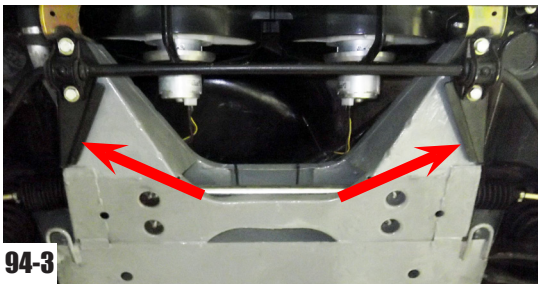


1. Fuel Tank - The fuel tank is blow molded plastic, and located in the front "wishbone" of the frame. Accessing the in-tank components (see page 86) is best accomplished via the inspection cover inside the trunk, rather than by removing the tank from underneath the car.

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 *(94-1)*. 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 (see Systems) 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.


94-1

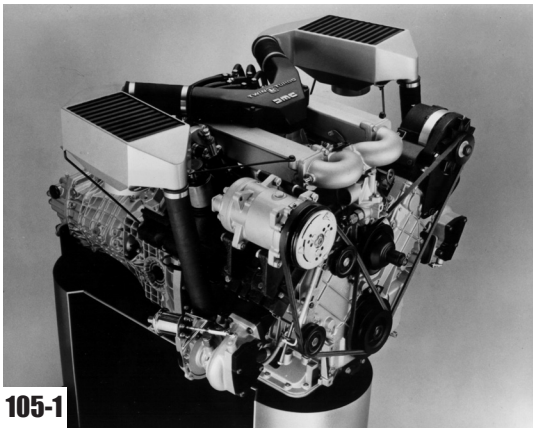

94-2


94-3

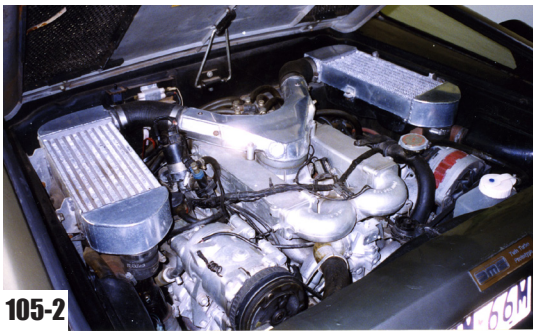
Typically, if a car still has the blue fan fail relay installed, or an *unfused* wire jumper in that location, the odds are very good that it still has the original relays and should be updated.

Front Suspension Recall: Of all the factory recalls, perhaps the most serious is the Front Suspension *(94-2)* 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 *(94-3)* 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.



105-1



105-2

105-3

tion cars were sent to Legend and used for development and testing of both single and twin turbo *(105-1)* packages, the most famous being VIN #502. This twin turbo prototype *(105-2)* is now in a private collection in New Zealand. See page 114 for all VINs confirmed to be used by Legend.

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).

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 at the request of American Express in case one of the other cars (VIN 4300 or 4301) was damaged. These parts were later used to "skin" the DeLorean 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 *(105-3)*. VIN 20105 is in a private collection in Maryland.

Thanks for taking a look at this preview of
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122 pages and over 200 photos and
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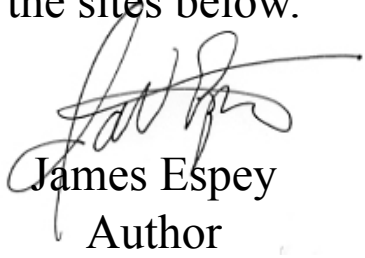

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