



5 WAYS TO GET BURNED WHEN BUYING A CLASSIC BRONCO

MAXLIDER
BROTHERS CUSTOMS



I understand the dream you have.

You want to feel the wind blow through your hair on a warm summer day while behind the wheel of one of the most iconic vehicles ever created.... A 1966 to 1977 "Gen-1" classic Ford Bronco!

Your kids love it...your wife (or husband) loves it...and **everyone smiles** and gives you a thumbs up as they see you rolling down the road, wishing they were the ones driving this extremely rare automobile.

For almost 60 years, my family has owned Ford Broncos, and no one knows this iconic vehicle better than we do. In the last 15 years we have helped almost 1,500 customers find the Bronco of their dreams...and I have spoken to TENS OF THOUSANDS of Bronco enthusiasts in the pursuit and purchase of their own classic Bronco.

We also understand how confused you must be... In the last 15 years, the values and prices for the Gen-1 Ford Bronco have skyrocketed, and because your shopping experience is almost always online, it is extremely difficult to see and understand the differences between one classic Bronco to another. Classic Broncos can range from \$50,000 to \$300,000+ but the photos you view online don't help you understand the differences.

Unfortunately, you can't just drive down to your local dealership to see and test drive several Broncos and pick your favorite.

So, you resort to finding a Classic Bronco on Facebook marketplace (BTW...75% of these listings are scams, more on that later), Bringatrailer.com or some general classic car dealer and you have to buy it remotely. The worst part is that you are an unqualified buyer (no offense) and you don't know the right questions to ask during the buying process. So, you must trust the seller, hoping they can lead you through the decision by actually knowing what they are talking about, and they will represent the Bronco honestly/accurately.



Over the years, we have purchased over 1,000 Classic Broncos sight-unseen and have “perfected” the process of making a remote purchase. STILL, 25% of the time, WE EVEN GET BURNED and we end up having to put far more work into the Bronco to get it to a level where we feel good putting it back on the market. We happen to have the most experienced Bronco techs on the planet, so we can fix all of these “surprises”, but it costs extra time and money.

Maybe you decide to minimize the risk of buying a used classic Bronco and instead you commission a (significantly more expensive) brand new custom build from a shop who says they can make your Bronco dream come true. These days it seems anyone who works on classic cars claims they can build high-end classic Broncos. I mean, they have probably been building \$30,000-\$75,000 classic cars for years...so why wouldn't they be able to build you a \$200,000+ Coyote Bronco (are you picking up the sarcasm in my voice - I always joke that someone flipping burgers at McDonald's probably isn't the best option to make your gourmet Wagyu steak dinner!)





Here's a story...

In 2020 (when Bronco values/prices were way lower), I was at a major car auction and saw a stunning Classic Bronco in the staging lane getting ready to hit the auction block. I noticed a gentleman doing a final wipe down to the vehicle and we started talking...

ME: "Nice Bronco, are you the owner?"

OWNER: "Yep! I just had this Bronco built and waited over a year"

ME: "I noticed less than 50 miles on the odometer, can I ask why you are selling it so quickly?"

OWNER: "Aren't you that Maxlider Bronco guy? I almost called you guys for help."

ME: "Maybe I can help now..."

OWNER: "Nah, this Bronco is just not for me...it's a lot different than my other classic cars. I can't steer the thing over 40MPH because it's all over the road, my wife hates it because she smells like exhaust fumes when she rides with me, and the brakes hardly seem to work. I can't believe people buy and try to drive these things!"

At this point, I had walked around the Bronco and quickly noticed that it had a STUNNING paint job but also had several severe mechanical flaws that created the issues he mentioned (and others that he didn't realize were going to become major problems in a year or two).

Quickly, it was his turn on the block and I snuck inside to watch the sale. Bidding was fierce and the hammer finally dropped. The Bronco sold for \$220,000 (back in 2020!) and I saw the winning bidders celebrating their purchase...a nice older couple who had massive smiles on their faces. My heart dropped... I wanted to give them my card (they were going to need it) but I couldn't break their hearts and explain that they were going to need \$30,000 more work done when they got the Bronco home or they would have the same experience as the previous owner! I have seen that same Bronco sell again a couple times since then and I cringe each time.

I have COUNTLESS other stories similar to this one... and the dream of owning a classic Bronco is shattered when the buyer gets it to their house and learns that they just bought a major project, not a worry-free turn-key vehicle like they were promised.





We want to help your Bronco dreams come true!

However, first, I want to give you some real talk about what a Classic Bronco IS and IS NOT. I'm often accused of being the "Anti-Bronco-Salesperson," because I have talked far more people OUT of buying a classic Bronco than I have talked INTO buying one. During my qualification process (I won't sell you a Bronco unless I believe you meet certain criteria) I carefully explain to each prospective customer what it is really like to own a classic Bronco...and some of it will surprise you!

First, you must remember that the Gen-1 Bronco was designed back in 1965, and standards were WAAAAY different back then. The Bronco was a crude utilitarian vehicle, and it was built to be a workhorse. People ran them through fields, plowed snow with them and bounced them off trees. They were abused, neglected and eventually discarded...left to die a slow, painful, rusty death in some junkyard. Only around 225,000 units were built from '66- '77 and I guesstimate that only around 135,000 survive today. This was a much different scenario than the classic fastback Mustangs of the '60's...people took much better care of those cars and then often paid to restore them later in life.

On top of that, the roads were very different back then. Classic vehicles were designed to run on two-lane highways with 55MPH speed limits (the 65MPH speed limit wasn't introduced until 1987). These Gen-1 Broncos only had 3 gears, and top speeds were limited to around 60MPH.

Many of the Broncos in this era had manual steering and manual drum brakes. They were also very underpowered (by today's standards) maxing out around 160HP. You may also remember when it was common to have cardboard laying underneath 60's & 70's automobiles...because you needed something to catch the oil/fluid drips that were common with these archaic drivetrains.

Today, speed limits are 70mph+, you can drive your car as fast as your nerve will allow, your daily driver doesn't leak on your garage floor, and it probably has creature comforts/technology you have come to expect. With that said, modern vehicles ALL KIND OF LOOK THE SAME...they have been designed in wind tunnels, and their bullet-like shapes lack personality & nostalgia!

I'm guessing that's why you want a classic Bronco...because its different...its nostalgic and it's just plain COOL. So, let's help you shop for the perfect classic Bronco...and not get BURNED in the process! I have put together 5 common ways I see buyers get in trouble while trying to make their Bronco dreams come true...





1. Buying from General Car Shops

Broncos have grown in popularity and values have caught up to other high-end classic restomods like Mustangs, Corvettes & Camaros. As a result, it seems like every car shop in America is trying to flip a Bronco and/or build a Bronco for quick profit. Unfortunately, most of these general car shops don't understand what buyers are really looking for and they definitely do not know how to customize or build a classic Bronco to meet their expectations. (Remember the auction story I told earlier?)

More than other classic vehicles, Gen-1 Broncos are very tricky to build. They have to be built in a certain chronology and with a very complicated assembly process. Heck, it took us YEARS to hone our own build process as we battle-tested countless combinations of parts to determine which ones worked best to achieve the premium steering, handling, braking and ride quality we are known for. We consistently receive calls from folks who have purchased a classic Bronco from another shop/builder and now they want to send it to us to fix properly!



2. Buying on Facebook Marketplace

I know it's tempting.... just maybe you can find one of the few people left who haven't been paying attention to the classic Bronco marketplace and they are selling their Bronco way under market values. 10 years ago, you certainly could find a few! Sorry...the secret is out and everyone knows what they are worth. So, if you see a classic Bronco for an uncharacteristically good price, there's a reason... it's either JUNK or it's a SCAM. Let's talk about both...

JUNK – just like you are probably an unqualified buyer (once again, no offense), you are working with an unqualified seller on Facebook Marketplace. Most of the lower-end Broncos (\$40K – \$100K) are owned by DIY type guys. They have probably done some of the work themselves and have had other smaller work done by various shops over the years. These sellers subconsciously have what I call, “it's good enough for me” mentality. There are numerous things on their Bronco they just live with...carb issues, fuel injection issues (hot soak problems, intermittent hiccups, high idles, etc), rattles, rust (often in places you don't know to look), poor braking, death wobbles, terrible steering, rock-hard ride quality, inaccurate or dysfunctional gauges, etc, etc, etc. This is extremely common as the DIY crowd often doesn't pay to have true experts/professionals work on their Broncos. They do it themselves or have a local generalist get it “just good enough.” I don't believe these owners intentionally deceive buyers, they just don't know any better... and they don't realize that you want NONE of those issues on your Bronco!



SCAM – what I’m going to tell you is absolutely heartbreaking... and I have personally almost fallen prey to this particular scam more than once over the years. The majority of the classic Broncos you see on Facebook Marketplace are SCAMS!!! Here’s another story.... In Q4 2024, we had 13 different people wander into our shop wanting to pick up a Bronco or another classic car from “Stellar Motorcars”. Every one of these poor folks had either already paid a \$10K deposit or had paid for the entire vehicle in full (\$35K– \$45K or more)! Each time, we had to break the terrible news to them that they had been scammed out of their hard-earned money. We added up over \$250,000 in scammed money in just a 3-week period!!! Here’s how they did it... they set up a very professional looking website showing dozens of gorgeous classic vehicles being sold at prices that were hard to believe. Each vehicle had lots of information and photos, so for a casual shopper, they looked like real vehicles at a real dealership. When the shopper would contact the dealer, they were given a very convincing description of the vehicle along with a polished sales pitch about the dealership & owner. Eventually, the “deal/price” was just too good to pass up and the buyer would wire funds to the scammer. The phony dealer found one of our buildings that had not been registered on Google (it’s just a production shop), and they would claim it for themselves on Google and attach their name to the building. When the customer did a Google search, there they were... “Stellar Motorcars” on the map! The scammer would even set up a time to “meet up” at the dealership so the customer could fly in and pick up their new classic vehicle...only to find no sign, no dealership and just some of our Maxlider technicians working inside.



3. Trying to “get a deal”

Unfortunately for buyers, the secret is out on these old Broncos. They are so coveted that I can't seem to go anywhere without seeing this iconic vehicle. Walmart, Target & other stores sell T-shirts with Broncos on them, every time I turn on the television I see a Bronco starring in commercials, then, anytime I open a magazine I see Broncos featured in numerous ads.... they are everywhere! Because of this, Bronco owners know they have a valuable asset on their hands and when they sell it, they will want to get every possible dollar they can in the sale. If you as a consumer you will absolutely get what you pay for and if you think you are getting a deal because the price seems low, I can guarantee you will be disappointed as the surprises begin to reveal themselves after you take ownership!

4. Buying from an anonymous seller

It is becoming more and more popular to buy a classic vehicle at a major live auction or an online car auction. Here's the problem... You are buying in a high-pressure environment against other buyers in just a few short moments before the hammer drops, auction ends, and a "winning bidder" is named. This shouldn't be a contest... This should be a natural process where you make a decision at your pace based on complete, accurate information and confidence in the seller. We have helped countless buyers who bought a classic Bronco in one of these competitive anonymous auctions and were forced to call us for expensive repairs or a complete retooling of the vehicle they just purchased. In the end, they spend way more money than anticipated and the frustration sucks all the fun out of finally having a classic Bronco of their own.

Story Time –

A few years ago I was at a large public auction, and a gentleman approached me asking me to look at the classic Bronco he had just purchased on the auction block. He had paid right at \$200,000 and wanted my recommendations on some modifications to personalize the vehicle. I did a quick inspection and had to break the news to him...UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE SHOULD HE DRIVE THIS BRONCO!!! I discovered that the welds on the rear spring mounts had broken, and the rear axle was barely attached to the vehicle! He could easily be killed if the rear axle comes off that Bronco while driving and it was bound to happen within the next few miles. On top of that, the Coyote engine and transmission that had been installed was bound up so badly in certain places he was going to have significant mechanical issues in the first 2000 miles. He was another \$100,000 away from having a classic Bronco on the road that he could enjoy without fear or concern!



5. VIN Issues

For decades builders and owners restored classic Broncos using random parts from several different donor vehicles. Often, they would take the frame from one Bronco and a body from another Bronco, and they would combine them. Most of the time, they were unaware that there was a VIN stamped on the frame itself which accompanied the 2 VIN locations on the body (door tag inside the door and VIN plate riveted inside the glovebox door). Unfortunately, when you take the frame of one Bronco and combine it with the body of a different Bronco, that reassembled classic Bronco then has two different VIN's. If you don't have a title for both VIN's, that vehicle CANNOT be registered in numerous states (like California, Florida, Colorado, etc) across the U.S.! Could you imagine buying a classic Bronco from another state and then being denied at the DMV when you tried to register the Bronco in your state? It happens all the time! There are 8 states (and more coming online) that do VIN verifications on the frame before they allow registration. Unfortunately, there were TENS OF THOUSANDS of Broncos that were assembled with 2 different VIN's over the last several decades. On top of that, I have seen "professional Bronco builders" who do not understand these rules and have built expensive classic Broncos in this fashion! I just tried to help a customer who owns a \$200,000 Coyote Bronco and is now unable to sell the vehicle because the frame VIN does not match the body (and the original builder has skirted responsibility). He's stuck with it.



These are just 5 of the ways YOU can get burned when shopping for a classic Bronco...

But there are plenty more. More than ever, it is important that you work with a professional who can help you understand the type of classic Bronco you should buy based on your use case, timeline and budget. Then, they can work with you to build a plan that removes the risk and ensures that you have a great experience buying and owning the classic Bronco of your dreams. At Maxlinder Brothers Customs, we specialize in doing just that. We would love to help you with your search, and we are just a text or phone call away.

Schedule a time to work with me or one of our Bronco buying professionals by texting or calling **309-605-0753.**