

You Get What You Pay For

By Ron Olson

Last year I decided to get a new exhaust system for our 1940 Cadillac. I chose to purchase a ready-made exhaust system instead of taking it to a shop for repair. I searched on the internet, and found a few places that offered the correct exhaust for our model. I now wish that I would have researched the subject more and maybe not have chosen the least expensive company.

The order came in a relatively speedy fashion. The condition of the packages left a little to be desired. They were probably abused by the shipping company though, which is not uncommon to us. We often “hear” our packages arriving as they impact our front porch. I opened and checked the contents for all the right parts and all seemed to be in order. The parts sat around for some time before I had the chance to tackle the project.

It was a few days before we had plans to use the car for a weekend event, so of course my procrastination tendencies told me that it was time that I began to replace the exhaust. I picked up some extra clamps and felt everything was in order. Cutting out the old system wasn’t tough and things seemed to be going smoothly...right up until I tried to put on the first piece of exhaust. The pipe that attaches to the manifold was an impossible fit...not even coming close. Eventually I realized that they had flanged it on the wrong end. It was backwards. I had no time to get a replacement from the company, and my old system was cut off and in poor shape. I cut the flange off of the new pipe and welded it to the opposite end. It was just close enough to fit. The rest of the installation was not much easier, as many of the bends were inaccurate and needed to be heated and re-bent to fit. I did manage to get the job done in time for our weekend event, but was disappointed with the product, company, and myself.

This project reminded me of a few good lessons. First, always fully check what you order to make sure it is what it should be. Second, don't wait until the last minute to start the project. And third, the cheapest parts may not be the best choice. You just might get what you pay for!