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Junkyards, Gearheads, and Rust

David N Lucsko

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What happens to automobiles after they are retired but before they are processed as scrap? In this fascinating history, David N. Lucsko takes readers on a tour of salvage yards and wrecked or otherwise out-of-service cars in the United States from the point of view of gearheads—the hot rodders, restoration hobbyists, street rodders, and classic car devotees who reuse, repurpose, and restore junked cars.

Junkyards, Gearheads, and Rust is a nuanced exploration of the business of dismantling wrecks and selling second-hand parts. It examines the reinterpretation of these cars and parts by artists as well as their restoration by enthusiasts. It also surveys the origin and evolution of gearhead-oriented yards that specialize in specific types of automobiles; dissects the material and emotional appeal of the salvage yard and its contents among enthusiasts; and examines how zoning and nuisance ordinances have affected both salvage businesses and hobbyists.

Lucsko concludes with an analysis of efforts during the last twenty-five years to hasten vehicular obsolescence at the expense of salvage yards, mechanics, and enthusiasts. By examining how cars are salvaged, repurposed, and restored, this book demonstrates that the history of the automobile is much more than a running catalog of showroom novelties.

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