

IS THIS THE SMART WAY TO BUY A GOLF CART?

In the world of golf carts today there are so many choices out there as far as brands, styles, options like lifted or non lifted etc. Most new or potential golf cart owners have no clue about what to buy or what brand is better than another. With the internet you can google and shop and go down the proverbial rabbit hole looking and researching. So the question lies: do I buy from a big box retailer or a smaller dealership and this is where I'd like to talk about the difference.

My wife and I went out one day to a home improvement big box retailer for a few things and we noticed that they are now selling golf carts. We walked over to them and we checked them out and they are reasonably priced for a new golf cart. They were identified as a brand known for outdoors gear like coolers, camp stoves and tents. The more I looked at these golf carts I noticed scratches, from being outside 24 hours a day in the sun and rain. I also noticed some quality control issues like wires hanging off the bottom of the cart, alignment toed out, blemishes in the paint, nuts loose on the battery terminals, etc.



An associate came out to ask if we had any questions and my first question was about the scratches and wires. He stated they are sold the way you see it. My next question was if there is an issue with the cart, who do I bring the cart to? He stated you probably have to call the manufacturer. So this big box retailer sells the golf cart but won't handle warranty work or maintenance.

We then visited another big box retailer who sells golf carts as well and are comparable in price as well. Same scenario with these carts as well. Flaws and quality control issues from where they were built and shipped. I asked and they stated the same scenario on warranties and associates stated to me at this big box store, what you see is what you get but it's new. We all know that you can buy anything brand new but if you spend thousands of dollars on something and there is an issue you want some warranty and to get it fixed.

So at both of these locations these carts have a brand name or sticker on them.

The company basically slaps a sticker on them and passes them off for their own, where in fact they are an imported brand of cart like Kandi, or others. So I have to believe that customer service and standing behind your product is one of the most important things.

Let's step into the smaller dealers now. A dealer that sells only golf carts and nothing else is an important thing to remember first. No bolts and nuts, no lawn mowers or grills. Just golf carts. They service them, sell them and more at a smaller golf cart dealer. If you have a question you get someone who knows about the carts and 9 out of 10 times when you ask a question they have heard it before and immediately know the answers. So choose

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your dealer wisely. Look at the online reviews and just don't look at the stars, read the reviews, ask someone who owns a golf cart about certain places.

What is important to you in the golf cart you're going to buy? Price? options? brand? How about if you buy a golf cart and have it for a month and then there is a problem. Is that dealer going to be willing to help or just tell you sorry and we can bring it in to see what it's going to cost to fix it. Delivery and after the sale are important factors. Do they offer pickup? Another big thing about buying from a smaller dealer they tend to check things like the side mirrors and make sure they are tight, no loose bolts or that the alignment on a golf cart is correct. Here is another big one, Are you looking for a golf cart on the marketplace? Buyer beware of buying off an individual because if you get that cart home and two days later the cart doesn't run, do you think they're going to stand behind it? No.

In the end smaller golf cart dealers are the way to go. Most and I say most will stand behind their product. That's why I say read those reviews and google a dealer. Go look at the carts they offer. Are they a brand you might have seen or heard of or not. There are a lot of new brands out there and warranty and parts may be an issue if there becomes a problem. Also new isn't always the best option. Pre owned golf carts could be the best bang for the buck depending on how they have been checked over or taken care of. Plenty of small dealers specialize in pre owned golf carts and some new dealers have certified pre owned golf carts. I prefer EZGO, Club Car and Yamaha. There are other good brands like Evolution, Star.

Finally after the sale of the cart and into the future the smaller dealer will remember you and most keep good records and will know the cart from selling it and previous services. You can call most small dealers and they'll always be helpful.

- with John Poluga
for The Magnolia News

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