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AMERICA'S DEFINITIVE COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

JULY 2021 #202

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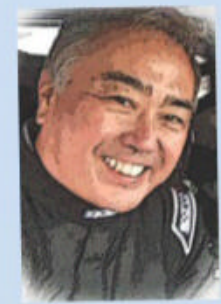
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spotlight
chevrolet classics



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Chevrolet: Aspirational Yet Attainable

I've been accused of being a "Chevy guy" on more than one occasion, and though I don't think that's completely accurate, I also don't mind too much. I have had a long-standing appreciation for the marque and most of the cars and trucks I've had over the years have worn the Bowtie. So, while I've owned and admired many other makes and models, I do think the Chevrolet brand has often gotten it right.

Though it was founded in part by, and named for, a well-known race car driver, Chevrolet would more famously become the entry-level brand of Alfred Sloan's "a car for every purse and purpose" mantra. That could have left its products as sleepy, practical cars that placed low cost above all else. Instead, Chevys have usually offered more than basic transportation through the years by having styling and engineering that placed them a cut above truly basic cars, even in "stripped down" standard form. Those attributes could often be further enhanced with myriad optional features if the buyer explored the possibilities presented on the order form.

Things got particularly interesting at Chevrolet in the 1950s, with the division offering a two-door hardtop body style as the distinguishing feature of its top-tier Bel Air model as the decade dawned. Then GM entered the sports car market with the Corvette, a move that was certainly more about image than profits. Yet, in spite of the new model's racy look and upscale image, it too wore the humble Bowtie.

The launch of the '55 Chevrolets no doubt rocked the industry – their aggressive styling combined with available V-8 engines made for quite a package in a line of cars intended as a starting point for consumers. When Chevy launched the Impala for 1958, it was pushing even deeper into upscale offerings with the highly styled two-door hardtop or convertible. The new model featured even more opulent styling than the earlier Bel Airs and came standard with lots of upscale features, with many more creature comforts and performance hardware as options. Clearly, it was not a model that was conceived for thrift or pure practicality. That's a big part of the Chevrolet appeal: cars that evoke desire while remaining within reach.

Speaking of performance, that had also become a hallmark of Chevys by the time the Impala debuted, which also saw the introduction of the W-series Mark I V-8s, starting with the 348. Racers like Junior Johnson scoring NASCAR wins in Chevrolets was helping to shift its image more toward one of competition prowess while also

driving the development of increasingly potent hardware, available at the consumer level to keep within the rules of stock car racing.

Thus, the stage was set for the '60s, with Chevy perfectly poised for the coming of what we now know as the muscle car era. Meanwhile, as many Americans sought more economical options, Chevy created the Corvair, yielding a practical-yet-sporting alternative to conventional sedans. The Corvette continued to dazzle with outstanding styling and performance, the Camaro debuted to claim its slice of the "pony car" market led by the Mustang, the Caprice blossomed out of the Impala to help the division dive deeper into the luxury market, and the Blazer redefined the emerging sport utility field by being an extension of the light truck line, rather than yielding another Jeep facsimile. When the '70s kicked off, Chevy was ready to attack the rapidly emerging personal-luxury market with the Monte Carlo.

There were missteps, of course. The Vega ought to have been another feather in the marque's cap, as it continued the practice of offering an entry-level car line with styling and technology well beyond basic. Vega had the looks, and its aluminum-block OHC engine was advanced, but we know how that played out, unfortunately. A planned foray into Wankel-powered cars shortly after failed to become a reality, but it showed the enduring philosophy at the division of pushing forward with new technologies without relegating those features to more expensive and therefore exclusive models.

More recently, in the 1990s, Chevy stepped up and completely redesigned its small-block V-8, yielding the Gen III LS-series of V-8s. At the time, the industry was moving toward overhead-camshaft engines with multiple valves per cylinder, but GM chose to again raise the bar, only this time, while dramatically improving a conventional design: one intake valve and one exhaust valve per cylinder, and one camshaft, located in the block, retaining pushrods and rocker arms. The improvements to the details of the architecture of this design incorporated in the Gen III made it an instant success, both in icons like the Corvette and workaday haulers like the Silverado. Today, it remains a darling of the performance aftermarket.

So, we salute Chevrolet this month and take a look at some of the models that helped keep the marque up front, both in sales and in the hearts of car enthusiasts the world over. 🏆

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Petersen Profiles Pininfarina

THE PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM RECENTLY OPENED A NEW EXHIBIT CELEBRATING the Italian design firm and coachbuilder Pininfarina. *The Aesthetic of Motoring: 90 Years of Pininfarina* highlights the impact and evolution of the famous carrozzeria with a curated assemblage of four key cars from the firm's history.

The display includes the 1931 Cadillac 452A Boattail Roadster (the first Pininfarina body mounted on a non-Italian chassis), the 1947 Cisitalia 202 Coupe, a 1966 Dino Berlinetta 206 GT prototype (the first mid-engine Ferrari), and a 2019 Automobili Pininfarina "Battista."

"With its commitment to elegant, aerodynamic design and small-scale production, Pininfarina has created some of the most innovative and revered car designs in the history of the automobile," said Terry L. Karges, executive director of the Petersen Automotive Museum. "The new exhibit will provide visitors with a behind-the-scenes look at the company's design history while paying homage to its innovation through these four rarely seen vehicles."

There are already several Pininfarina designs at the museum, ranging from a 1959 Ferrari 250 GT Interim Berlinetta to a 2004 Ferrari Enzo in the museum's supercar exhibit. The display will run until December 5, 2021. For more information, visit petersen.org.

51st Nash Grand Nashional

THE NASH CAR CLUB OF AMERICA'S ANNUAL GRAND NASHIONAL WILL TAKE PLACE

July 13-18, in Frankenmuth, Michigan, using the Bavarian Inn Lodge as its home base. The show is open to all members and nonmembers and will feature judged car show classes for Hudson, Rambler, Metropolitan, and, of course, Nash vehicles (and more). Three tours are planned to take place during the gathering, including trips to the Durant-Dort Factory, Charles W. Nash House, the Sloan Museum and its automotive collection, the Gilmore Car Museum, the R.E. Olds Transportation Museum, and Durand Union Station, among other stops. Vendors will be on hand at the lodge, selling Nash car parts and memorabilia. The car show will take place Saturday and the events will culminate with a banquet and awards ceremony. Visit nashcarclub.org for more details.



Professional Car Gathering

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at this year's Professional Car Society International Meet in Perrysville, Ohio, from June 29-July 3. All activities will revolve around the host hotel, which is the Mohican State Lodge. The week-long itinerary includes trips to the Mansfield Fire Museum, Bob Smith's personal museum of vintage ambulances and funeral coaches, and The Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum. The show will take place July 2 in the Mohican State Lodge parking lot and there will be an Antique Festival and Car Show in nearby Loudonville, which will be followed by an awards banquet. Registrations for the show and tours are currently being accepted; visit theprofessionalcarsociety.org for more details.

JULY

8-10 • Iola Car Show and Swap Meet

Iola, Wisconsin

715-445-4000 • iolaoldcarshow.com

9-11 • Chrysler Nationals

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

717-243-7855 • carlisleevents.com

9-14 • Model T Ford Club National Tour

Spokane, Washington

509-998-9927 • mtfca.com

11-15 • Pontiac-Oakland Club International Convention

Uncasville, Connecticut

417-737-1469 • poci.org

17 • Founder's Day and Classic Car Exhibit

Paris, Maine

207-743-2980 • hamlin.lib.me.us

18 • Misselwood Concours d'Elegance

Beverly, Massachusetts

978-232-2347 • misselwoodconcours.com

23-24 • Somernites Cruise Truckin' Nationals

Somerset, Kentucky

606-872-2277 • somernitescruise.com

28-8/1 • National DeSoto Club Convention

Brookfield, Wisconsin • desoto.org

30-31 • Vintage Chevrolet Club of America Central Meet • Lima, Ohio

708-455-8222 • vcca.org

Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.



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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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“Hondart” Comes Home

LONGTIME HCC READERS WILL REMEMBER THE CUSTOM FIBERGLASS SPORTS CAR DESIGNED AND BUILT BY AUTOMOTIVE FINE ARTIST KEN EBERTS between 1962 and 1966 (“The ‘Hondart’ Adventure”). This car was stolen in California in 1966, and, because he had driven it cross-country “extra-legally,” Ken felt he couldn’t report the theft without creating other trouble. The Hondart was later spotted on a used-car lot, but he wasn’t able to pursue it at the time and had to let it go.

But he never forgot that car into which he’d invested so much effort and energy. Ken shared *HCC* #156, featuring this car’s story, with hand-built car historian Geoffrey Hacker, and amazingly, the Hondart is now in his garage. “In my wildest dreams, I never thought the car still existed,” he says. “I’d sent the story to Geoffrey thinking he might run it on his website; three years later I received a call from him saying he thought he found my car. It was in the backyard of a fellow in the San Fernando Valley, just a few miles from where I lived when the car went missing. Even with the modifications that were made to the car to make it street legal, I immediately recognized it.”

Ken purchased the now-derelict Hondart last summer, and soon had the roadster running and moving under its own power. This spring, he’ll host a volunteer who will replace the wiring and help with other mechanical tasks. Ken plans to repair the fiberglass, install a new interior, and ultimately, have the car painted. He tells us, “It’s great to have it back in the garage, and though I can’t work on it at the same speed as when I first built it 60 years ago, I’m planning to start driving and showing it this summer!” — **Mark J. McCourt**

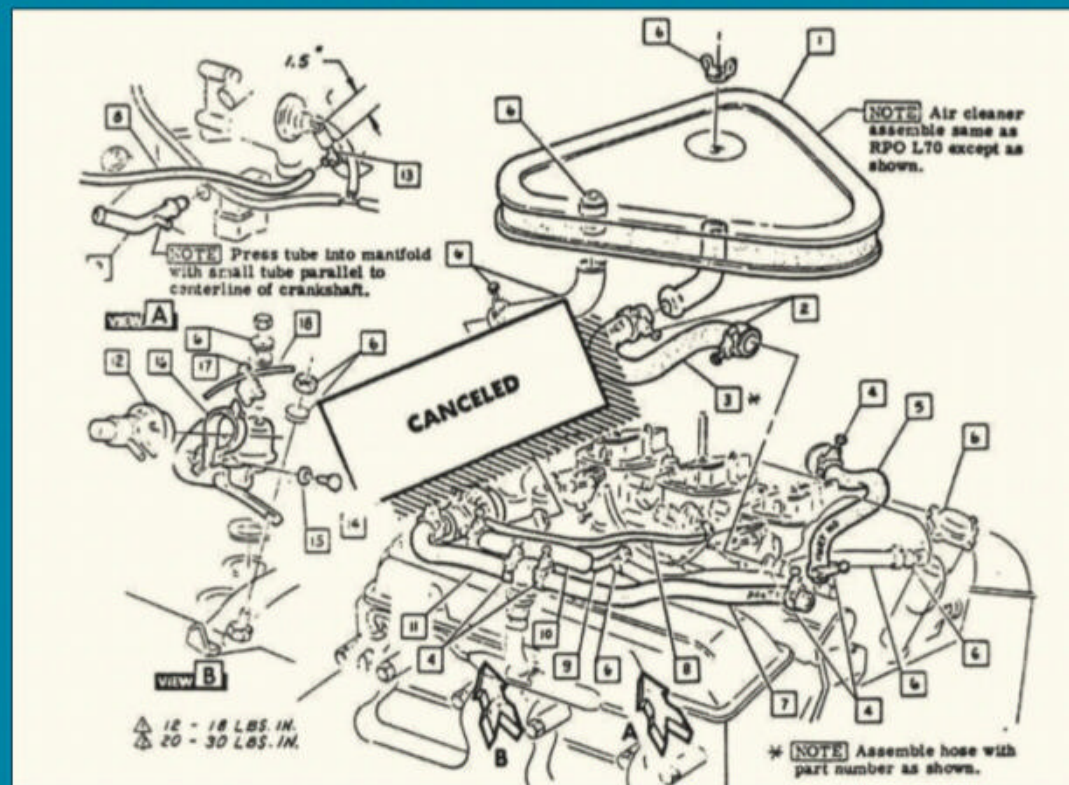
Tri-power SBC

OFFICIALLY, THE L-70 DIDN’T EXIST. CHEVROLET CANCELED THE triple-carbureted variant of the 350-cu.in. small-block V-8 months before anybody could order one, and for many years the only hint that it almost existed came in the form of a diagram in the 1967 Chevrolet Camaro’s assembly manual.

But that doesn’t mean none were built. Reader Lynn Dockey directed us to a question about the L-70’s existence in Philip Borris’ 2012 book, *Echoes of Norwood: General Motors Automobile Production During the Twentieth Century*, in which Borris noted that GM initially intended the 360-hp L-70 as a sort of smaller sibling to the L68/L71 tri-power big-block 427s found in the Corvette.

“Shortly after the first triple-two 350 small-block production prototypes were built, installed, and shipped for evaluation, the RPO was abruptly canceled,” Borris wrote. The Camaro debuted in September 1966 with the four-barrel L48 as the only 350 on the option sheets, and that seemed that.

Except Borris spoke with GM retirees who recalled sending L-70 Camaros down the Norwood assembly line, complete with Z/28-style rally stripes, and he believes those pilot cars could still exist somewhere out there. Given the fact that Camaro enthusiasts have scoured the planet for the cars, we’re skeptical of that latter assertion, but stranger things have happened.



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions, and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com. For more Lost & Found, visit blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found.

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Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

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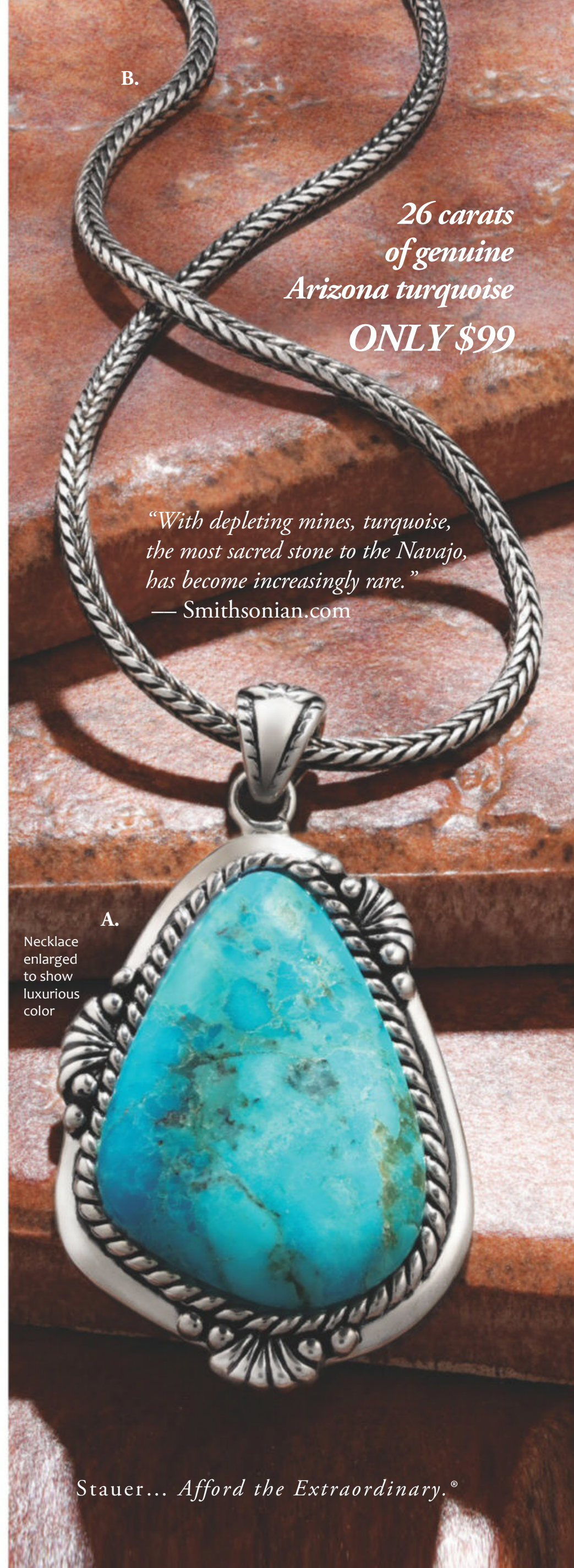
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I LOVED THE MARCH 2021 EDITION of *HCC*. I was pleased to see the article about the 1907 Cadillac. Here is a photo of my great-grandfather George Anspach in his new one, in my home town of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

My own Cad is a bit newer: a 1993 Allanté (photo top). The original sticker price was \$62,300, including a \$700 upcharge for the Pearl Flax yellow paint, one of only 88 finished in that color. It resides in my garage next to my 1947 Hudson Super Six brougham. I am a member of both the Cadillac & LaSalle and Hudson-Essex-Terraplane clubs.

Thanks also for the other very nice Cadillac articles. The comments on the '57 Eldorado front bumper "Dagmars" reminded me of the similar, but all-steel, front bumper of the '53 Mercury coupe that I had in high school. Its bumper guards did a custom job on the trunk lid of a friend's '55 Chevy when he needed a push start at a local drive-in. I warned him, but as his car rolled down the incline to the street, my front bumper overrode his rear bumper, providing a pair of grooves up the back of the trunk lid.

Thanks for the always-great publication.
Phil Waldrop
Jasper, Georgia

THE FEATURE STORY AND COVER OF *HCC* #200 brought back great memories. (Congrats on the milestone issue!)

My uncle, living in the Studio City suburb of Los Angeles, owned (until 1964) a white '57 T-Bird with white and black seats. He had set up a pulley system in the garage to lift the hardtop off when he didn't want it on. His next-door neighbor had a black '57, and he did the same thing, so they could remove and trade their hardtops. The neighbor was Thurl Ravenscroft, the original voice of Tony the Tiger and some Disney characters.

When I was six years old, we went to visit my aunt and uncle in LA, and while there, we went swimming at a friend's place about 10 minutes away, atop a hill in nearby Sherman Oaks. We rode over in the T-Bird, with my dad in the passenger's seat, holding my four-year-old brother on his lap. I sat on the decklid, between my thirteen- and nine-year-old cousins, with our three sets of legs dangling behind the driver and passenger.

Six people riding in a '57 T-Bird! You couldn't get away with that today!
J. Joel Rosenberg, MD
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN, "THE LOW-Down on the Step-Down" Hudsons (*HCC* #200), took me back to a pleasant memory from 64 years ago: prom night, 1957, at Boone County High School in

Florence, Kentucky. Not only was my date the best-looking senior in her class, but I was able to chauffeur her to the dance in the best-looking car of any of her classmates — my 1953 Hudson Hornet coupe.

I've owned 26 cars and the one I miss the most is my '53 Hornet. But it was not trouble-free. Because of the high-compression head, it had a gasket problem. It always blew between cylinders three and four. The gasket failed so often that I could almost replace it with my eyes closed. My uncle, who raced Porsches, solved the issue when he gave me a gasket that looked like it was made from solid copper. Job done.

Hudsons may have been NASCAR winners, but Oldsmobiles always pulled me on the quarter-mile drag strip. So my next car was a 1956 Oldsmobile 88 — one of many.

Bob Thies
Cincinnati, Ohio

MEMORIES FLOWED BACK AS I READ the article on the 1976 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme two-door (*HCC* #200). I worked at an Olds dealer and helped auto body shops repair damaged models.

The white/sapphire interior, intended to match the paint, was one of three similarly themed options. There was also a white/cranberry choice, but the rarest combo was the white/lime to match the lime paint. I cannot recall a white/black interior as being available. Imagine a new hire in the interior design studio having these choices in 2021. Such thoughts of heresy just would not be endured. Today, we ride in vehicles that are either coffin gray or casket black.

That this Cutlass did not have the available body side molding (BSM) — a low-cost option — is odd. In the Seventies, Olds was known for matching the BSM to the vinyl roof color, a nice touch. The striping was likely not factory installed,



Bob on prom night with his 1953 Hudson Hornet coupe.

as I cannot recall having to deal with stripes (color, panel, L/R). GM stripes were always decals that wrapped around to the back of the panel; they were never cut off along the outer body panel.

It would not be until 1982 or '83 that GM put an option label (usually) in the trunk area, among other things. The label would tell you what was factory installed and what wasn't. Today, GM parts "books" — everything is now computerized, mind you — use these options to identify which of three or four possible parts is the correct one for that vehicle.

Back in the day, getting even one of this model (3JS7) for the lot was a cause for celebration. How did Oldsmobile allow this momentum to go astray?

Thomas Radlo

Westfield, Massachusetts

I JUST STARED, AWESTRUCK, AT THE cover of June's *HCC*. The '58 Buick Caballero is one of my bucket-list cars, and this one is just awesome, deservedly winning the Zenith Award. What a great story! So glad it was saved from the scrapper. Like the owner, Joe, I have long wanted a '58 Olds or Buick wagon. I remember riding in the back of my Cub Scout den mother's '58 Buick wagon, hanging out the back window (when you could do that sort of thing) and looking at those amazing taillights, watching the road pass underneath.

I have long predicted that the entire 1958 GM lineup is on its way for a special recognition from the car community. The cars of this model year are singular, as they have it all: style, luxury, performance, stature, exuberance, and all that chrome! They displayed the last of Harley Earl's influence. I have a '58 Fleetwood, so a '58 Caballero (and a '58 Bonneville) would complete my bucket list.

Steve Sieker

North Bend, Washington

I GREATLY ENJOYED EDITOR MARK

McCourt's article, "Rare Air," on the 1935 Packard convertible sedan (issue #199). I may be able to add something to the background of the car for the owners, Allan and Pat Kehrley. I know that the search for origins is a puzzle, and I hope that I might be able to supply a piece or two.

I saw a similar (if not the exact) car in the ownership of Jack Weir of Ridgewood, New Jersey, some 40 years ago. Jack was in the process of restoring a Dietrich-bodied phaeton in an outbuilding at his home in Ridgewood. He also had a restored Packard coupe (model unknown to me) and the restoration process of

the convertible was about 60-percent complete — he had finished installing the car's exhaust manifold, which had just come back from being porcelainized.


Jack was an ad exec (read: *Mad Men*) and was a collector of both cars and prewar Lionel trains. The fact that the car was originally delivered in the New York/New Jersey area (I know that Newburgh is upstate) led me to believe that the car the Kehrleys now own might be the same car — how many Dietrich Super Eight convertible sedans did they build, and how many survive today?

My reason for writing is that if they so

choose, the northern New Jersey (Bergen County) area might be a place to try to further their knowledge of the history of their car. Jack did a lot of the work himself, but I'm sure not all of it, and there might be some shops in the area that recall such a magnificent car. I hope this helps.

Kent Didriksen

Georgetown, Texas

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What might

have been an

overly frugal

let-down for

some, turned

out to be a

free-spirited

windfall for

my friend.



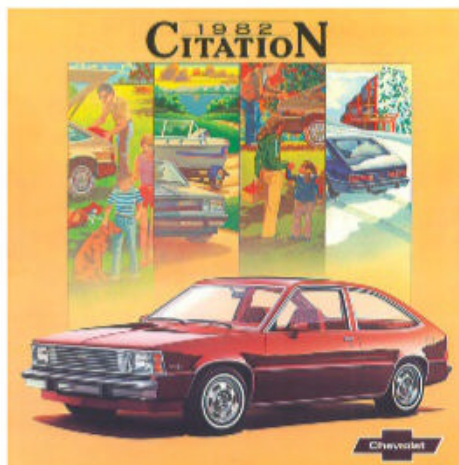
Economical Freedom

Considering the ebb and flow of diverse vehicles that have graced the family driveway over the decades, it's amazing to me that only one carried the Chevrolet logo: the S10-based 1988 Blazer "High Country" edition I previously discussed in detail in issue #191. The spacious-yet-compact SUV turned out to be both visually stunning and mechanically temperamental. Despite our brief time with the Chevy, I must confess that my experience with GM's volume division was hardly limited to a single vehicle.

About a year after Dad started to helm the Blazer with authority on Connecticut's commuter-clogged highways, across town my high school classmate was gifted his first car. Unlike my father, who excelled at loading his special-ordered cars to the hilt with power and comfort options, my friend's father practiced and preached the virtues of simplicity. Crank windows and a bench seat were good enough, while cruise control was merely a path to lazy lack of engagement while piloting a 2-ton car. And why buy a V-8, when a six-cylinder or a little four-banger managed to get you from point A to B just as easily? For my friend's father, negotiations were limited to shaving a few dollars off the bottom line, rather than wrangling a stereo upgrade out of the dealer's hands for the price of replacement wiper blades.

Thus, it was not a surprise when my friend arrived to show off his Chevrolet Citation, a two-door hatchback coupe built during the 1982 season. It was perfectly camouflaged for a newly licensed driver: dark Jade paint with a Jade vinyl interior. The less-than-flashy earth-tone color combo couldn't have been more bland, and the lackluster presentation received zero appeal enhancement from even a hint of creature comforts. Oh, it had a heater and defroster, but the bench-seat cabin lacked musical entertainment or any other form of extras. There was one noteworthy option, but it actually contributed to the Citation's sleepy nature: an automatic transmission. Having a third pedal might at least have made things livelier, helping to practice the shredding of one of its cheap tires to the cords.

Then again, the base 2.5-liter four-cylinder was unlikely to lend much in the way of mechanical hijinks, regardless of transmission. The Citation was also front-wheel drive, arguably a better commuter in winter conditions, yet considerably less entertaining in the hands of adventurous youth.



What might have been an overly frugal let-down for some, turned out to be a free-spirited windfall for my friend. The Citation, as I learned, offered a smidge over 40 cubic feet of space with the rear seats dropped flat—ample room for our considerable assortment of freshwater fishing gear. That meant no more struggling to carry a tacklebox and rod to a local pond while pedaling a bicycle, or waiting for his dad to hitch up the boat and trailer to his Chevy pickup when there was a hint of free time in his schedule. Even better, the Citation doubled down as our own private school bus.

What it lacked in engine output and convenience options was offset by remarkable mechanical reliability. That little fuel-injected 151-cu.in.

four never once left us stranded. The suspension system took everything a long-neglected back road could throw at it, as well as a few rugged lake access roads. Filling the tank was an infrequent occurrence that fit perfectly with our meager budgets. And, perhaps most remarkably, the unit-body platform managed to ward off the effects of New England's winter air/salt/moisture alchemy—one could slam a door and not hear so much as a squeak from the chassis. Changing the oil was a different matter. A screwdriver and hammer always seemed far more effective at removing the filter than a cumbersome wrench designed for the task, a small price to pay for the reliable freedom the Citation provided.

It was a brief summer, though, and so was time with the Chevy. On a rainy fall morning, my classmate was late to arrive for our ritual school commute. While taking a sharp corner, perhaps a little too quickly, the brakes locked, the tires failed to find traction, and the Chevy careened into a mailbox, the base of which was lined with a ring of stones. Barely axle high, those stones still managed to send the Citation to the wrecking yard with a busted radiator and an obliterated oil pan. That damage probably doesn't sound severe enough to total a late-model car, but it probably didn't help that my friend drove the Citation the remaining 3 miles to my house, dispersing every last drop of fluid along the way.

According to the car's 1982 factory brochure, "over 850,000 owners" had "driven more than 15 billion miles" since the first Citations emerged to replace the Nova two years prior. While some might debate that statement for one reason or another, I've often wondered how many more miles that dark Jade gem would have gone, had it not been for a damp, misguided calamity. 🐼

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...no matter

how many

times Avanti

got knocked

down, it

always

managed to

get back on

its feet...



Adieu Avanti?

A few years ago, I worked for an editor who, in the course of a wide-ranging discussion of ideas for articles, remarked that the Avanti was, “The car that wouldn’t die.” I felt pretty good when he said it, because I’ve had a longtime affection for the Avanti and wanted to believe the idea behind what he said—that it would last forever. Over the years, it seemed that no matter how many times Avanti got knocked down, it always managed to get back on its feet and rejoin the battle. For a long time, Avanti seemed like the mythological Phoenix bird: It could always rise from the ashes. But now I’m not so sure. In my heart, I think perhaps Avanti is finally gone for good.

The last new Avantis were produced in late 2006 or early 2007 (there’s some disagreement), in a new facility in Cancun, Mexico. They were based on the then-current Ford Mustang and were actually quite attractive; you can see examples come up for sale occasionally in *Hemmings Motor News*. But let’s face it, 2007 was a long time ago. The company has been out of business for 14 years, its assets sold or scattered, and I don’t believe there’s much left of Avanti Motors, or whatever corporate name it last operated under, except the car brand and some fine memories. Realistically, it looks like it’s over.

Except.

Except that, even as I was writing this column, I heard rumors of a possible Avanti revival. It seems that a gentleman somewhere has acquired the rights to the Avanti name (or possibly an option on the rights), with the idea of bringing out a new Avanti. According to these rumors, the new car would use a variant of the last Avanti series body—the 2006 version designed to fit the Mustang. In this latest plan, the chassis itself would supposedly be new and would feature electric drive.

When I heard that, it gave me some hope, because if Avanti is to compete in today’s luxury high-performance category, it almost *has* to be electric powered. Tesla is the top-selling luxury car these days, and nearly all of the “top luxury brands” (Mercedes-Benz, Bentley, Audi, etc.) are either producing electric luxury cars or are in the

process of developing them for production as quickly as possible. And one needs to keep in mind that luxury these days no longer means a plush, quiet ride—it means lightning-fast acceleration and extraordinary handling. Any new Avanti has got to be prepared for the auto market of the near future, rather than the distant past. Like it or not, the future of performance cars is clearly electric.

According to rumors, the new Avanti company expects to produce about 1,000 cars in

its first year. I believe that’s about what it should aim for (if not more), because the days of selling a handful of luxury cars per year, as Avanti did in the 1960s through the 1990s, are gone forever, at least in my opinion. A company just can’t meet development and



production expenses on the sale of dozens of cars—it has to be hundreds or, preferably, thousands of cars. But when I mentioned the 1,000-car-per-year rumor to a former Avanti Motors employee, he gave me a knowing smile and said, “Good luck with that. We had a hard time producing 100 cars per year.” Yikes!

But, of course, someone who tried to sell electric cars back in the 1960s and 1970s would have told you in 2010 that it’s impossible to sell more than a few hundred per year—except that Tesla proved him wrong. The point is, even though Avanti never sold more than a couple hundred cars a year back in the day doesn’t mean it can’t sell a thousand or more cars a year today. New assembly process technology and electric vehicle production experience mean that any number of new brands could emerge over the next few years, so why not Avanti?

The question remains though: Would people buy it? Will hardcore, longtime Avanti enthusiasts warm up to an electric Avanti? Ford’s experience with early sales of its new Mustang Mach-E, the battery-powered, Mustang-themed SUV, seems to indicate people would. Mustang enthusiasts are lining up to buy the new Mustang electrics. I read somewhere that the company delivered 3,700 of them in its first month on the market!

So despite my doubts—and I have many—I sincerely hope Avanti rises again. 🐉

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idea what

it is...



Borg-Warner Electric Overdrive

What is overdrive? Simply stated, any overdrive transmission turns the driveshaft faster than the engine's crankshaft when overdrive is engaged.

To get underway, the crankshaft must turn faster than the driveshaft; the driveshaft is *underdriven*. This gives the engine a mechanical advantage over the driveshaft. Once cruising speed is reached, however, if the engine could turn a *lower* rpm than the driveshaft, through overdrive, it would reduce engine wear and yield better fuel mileage.

Both automatic and manual transmissions may have overdrive. With today's manuals, though, the driver must depress the clutch and physically shift into overdrive. It wasn't always that way.

Engineer William B. Barnes is credited with designing and mating a secondary overdrive unit to a common three-speed manual transmission, using a planetary gearset to increase the output shaft speed. He shopped it to Borg-Warner's Muncie Gear Division in 1932, where it was further developed and presented to Chrysler Corporation. Chrysler first made it available in 1934 Chrysler and De Soto Airflows to augment their gas mileage.

Barnes' original design required that the unit's sun gear be held in place with a manual control to engage overdrive. Subsequent development added electric components to control that function, resulting in what became known as "automatic electric" overdrive. Simply known as "overdrive" thereafter, it became a popular option on many cars and trucks during the 1930s and beyond.

Transmissions with Borg-Warner overdrive are easy to identify. In the accompanying photo, a straight three-speed (top) and three-speed transmission with overdrive (bottom) are shown. Two overdrive components may be seen on the lower transmission: The canister-shaped unit on the lower side is the solenoid; the small round unit toward the rear is the governor.

By the 1960s, overdrive fell out of popularity against fully automatic, no-clutch transmissions. From what I can determine, 1972 Ford pickup

trucks were the last domestic vehicles to offer Borg-Warner overdrive as an option.

Today, younger hobbyists may be confronted with a large "Overdrive" knob or T-handle control on a collector car and have no idea what it is or how to use it. For that, a short primer:

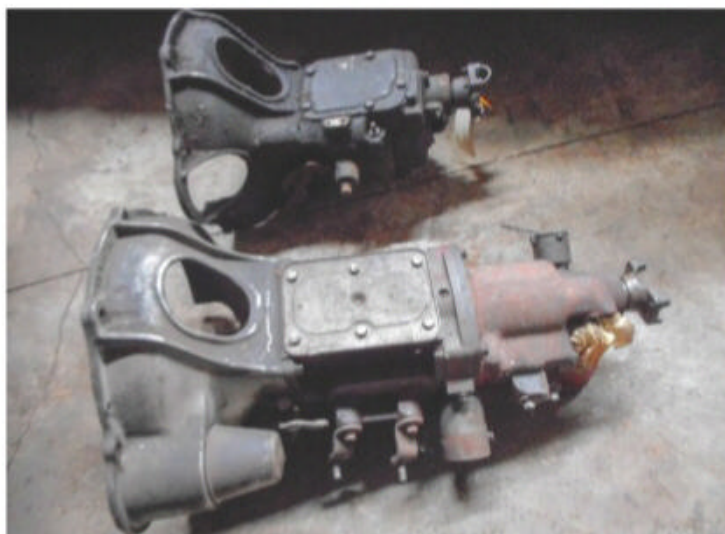
That control normally remains pushed in, against its bracket. In that position, overdrive will be available automatically at speeds over about 30 mph. Let up on the gas and, if everything is working okay, overdrive will engage. There's no need to depress the clutch or pull the control handle. Push back down on the gas and the car will resume speed, but the engine will run slower and quieter.

For extra power to pass or ascend a hill, floor the gas pedal and the overdrive will "kick down," back to straight third gear. It will remain in straight third until you again let up on the gas all the way and overdrive re-engages.

Mathematically, if the engine has enough power, the car will have a higher top speed in overdrive than in straight third gear. (The words, "*I took my foot off the gas and man alive, I shoved it down into overdrive*" in Charlie Ryan's 1955 hit *Hot Rod Lincoln*, can be misleading. "Shoving it down" suggests flooring it hard, in which case the overdrive wouldn't engage until he took his foot completely off the gas and allowed it to engage. Then, pushing the gas pedal *almost* to the floor, but not hard enough to cause it to kick down, would allow the car to attain top speed in overdrive.)

To push-start the car or to have engine braking available for descending hills, pull the control handle out from its bracket. The car must be standing still, with or without the engine running, or "kicked down" out of overdrive (i.e., the engine pulling the car, not in overdrive and not coasting) before pulling the control out. Pulling the control out under any other circumstances may seriously damage the overdrive unit.

Most hobbyists older than 60 years of age fondly remember driving some of the more than 10 million 1934-'72 cars and trucks fitted with Borg-Warner overdrive. Hopefully, younger hobbyists will learn to enjoy it, too. 🏎️



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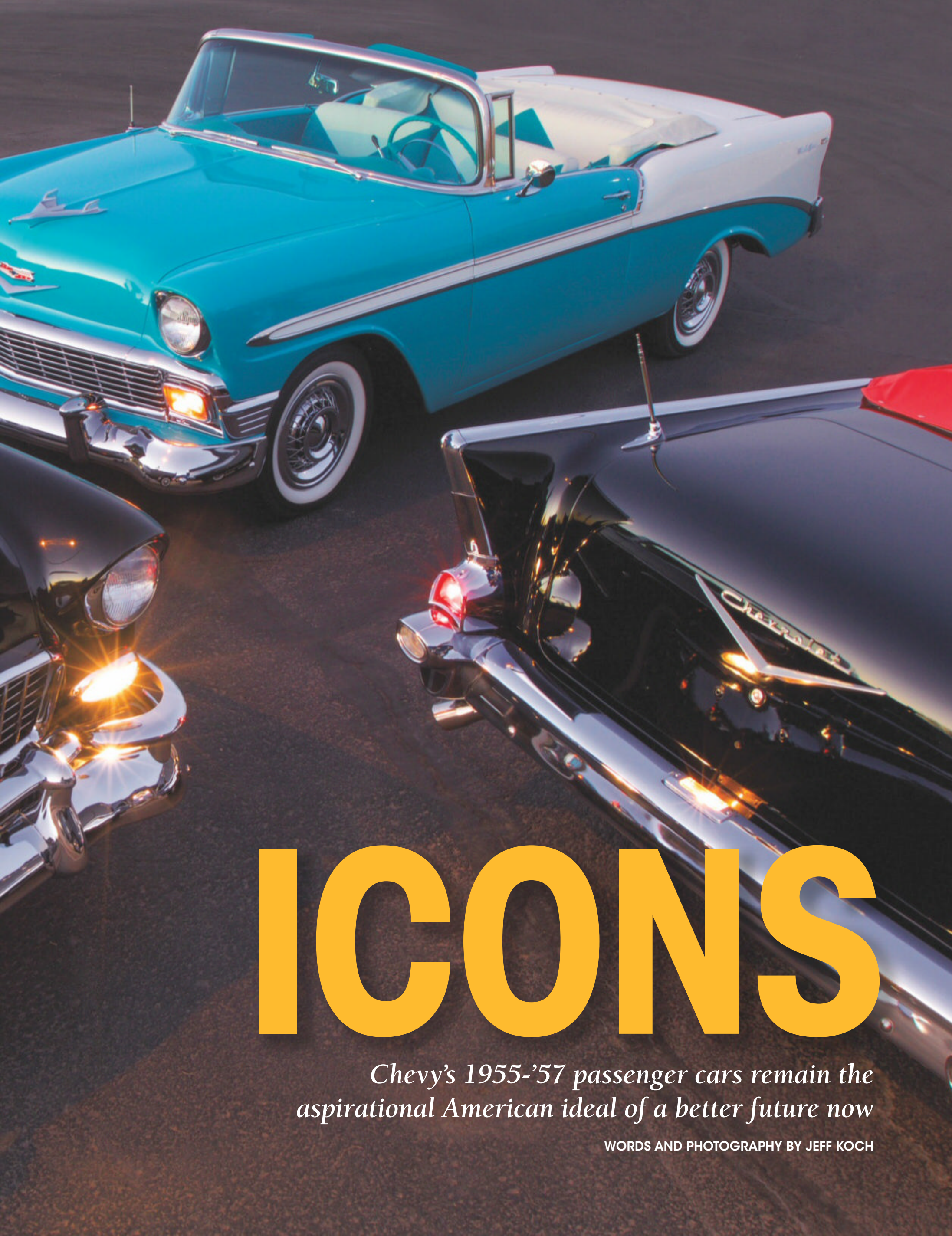
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Chevy's 1955-'57 passenger cars remain the aspirational American ideal of a better future now

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

The idea of a truly all-new car is tempting fate. Each system, each individual component requires so much effort to work properly in concert with a thousand other components, in myriad conditions, that body/chassis and drivelines often see their launches staggered. A newly styled car, or one with an all-new chassis, often starts life with a carryover powertrain; a new engine may show up in an existing chassis years into a model's gestation. Doing it all at once is an expensive gamble.

That said, if anyone could launch an all-new car, it was Chevrolet. Its status as America's best-selling car brand for the bulk of the postwar era brought success and swagger. For 1955, Chevy needed a new car to keep up with the competition's advances—and the division's engineers and stylists delivered; Chevy's V-8-powered 1955 sedan lineup really was as new as it got in Detroit in the '50s. Comparing the 1954 and '55 Chevy lines, virtually the only things that remained were the conventional front-engine/rear-drive layout, names (150, 210, Bel Air, et al), the chassis' 115-inch wheelbase, and the wheel-and-tire combo. All-new body, all-new chassis, all-new V-8 engine, and new optional overdrive behind the (admittedly extant) three-speed manual transmission. You'd scarcely believe a '54 and a '55 Bel Air were built a model year apart.

Visuals first. Chevy's new body was actually an inch narrower than the '54's—but because the '55 convertible was 2½ inches lower (and wagons 5-plus inches lower!), the new car *looked* wider. Yet headroom was comparable, despite the lower roofline. A wrap-around "Sweep-Sight" windshield arrived, as did 18 percent more glass area for better visibility across the lower fenders. Crisp, almost formal lines made for a cleaner profile, with a minimum of filigree: just an elegant spear on 150 and Bel Air models, all the better to outline the optional two-tone



paint offerings. The 1954's ornate grille was exchanged for a tight egg-crate pattern. Fender tops hooded the headlamps; this, the side trim and the rakish rooflines combined to make the Chevy appear to strain against its leash and demand to run at full speed.

Yes, the ancient 235-cubic-inch Blue Flame Six remained—available with manual transmission and 123 horsepower, or 136 ponies with Powerglide. But Chevy's clean-sheet V-8 was the big news. Engineered by future GM president Ed Cole, Corvette-world legend Zora Arkus-Duntov, and a handpicked group of engineers, it was a wonder of high-tech simplicity. It featured a strong thin-wall block, using up-to-date casting techniques; an oversquare bore/stroke that allowed it to rev; five main bearings; forged steel crankshaft; individual stamped-steel rocker arms;



All-new for the fall of 1954, Chevrolet's full-size line was lower, cleaner, lighter, and more powerful than the previous year's Chevrolet. While the Chevy bowtie appears prominently on the hood and hubcaps, the Chevrolet name doesn't appear on the exterior of the car.



interchangeable heads; and self-lubricating hydraulic lifters. Chevy's V-8 started off modest—162 horsepower for a standard two-barrel 265 with 8:1 compression, although the optional Power Pack (with four-barrel carb and dual exhaust) was rated at 180 horses; the rare Corvette-sourced 195-hp Super Power Pack added the famous Duntov cam and higher-compression pistons. Each V-8 block was painted a vivid shade of orange, so that no one could miss it when the hood was raised.

The 1955's low-slung, double-drop chassis was 50 percent stiffer than the '54 frame, Chevy claimed. Engines sat lower in that chassis, for a lower center of gravity, and the front track was 1.3 inches wider. All of these aided handling, despite the carryover 6.7 x 15 tires. The front suspension geometry was

Genesis of the Chevrolet V-8 (not called the small-block until the 348 of 1958 arrived): the 162-horsepower, four-barrel 265 with external oiling; the 1956 version, now painted red and featuring integral oil filter; and the 1957 283, which finally ditched the oil-bath air cleaner. Starting in 1956, Chevrolet moved the fuel filler nozzle to behind the driver's-side taillamp, a clever way to hide a needed, and not always pretty, piece.



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Wraparound instrument panel and windshield, three-spoke steering wheel with 360-degree horn ring, and centrally-located glovebox give this three-on-the-tree Bel Air an of-the-moment atmosphere.



If it ain't broke, why fix it? Save for door panels and upholstery patterns, the '56 interior was largely a carryover from 1955. This example is an automatic with power brakes and aftermarket lap belts.



An all-new instrument panel, with a round speedo replacing the previous seashell shape, backs a two-spoke tiller. Far edges of the dash are now raised; too many complaints of smashed knees?

designed to limit front-end dive during hard braking, making these cars safer as well. New smoother ball-race steering was now available with optional one-finger power assist. Tubeless tires. Available air conditioning. Pedals that moved from the floor to dangling from the instrument panel above. An easily reached, centrally mounted glovebox. Twelve-volt electrics. On wagons, a rear seat that folded completely flat. Thin pillars to help eliminate blind spots. All were new to Chevrolet. There was even weight savings: a 1954 Bel Air convertible had a shipping weight of 3,445 pounds, while a '55 listed at just 3,315.

Bel Air had been Chevrolet's top trim level since 1953; for '55, buyers could choose from two-door sedan, two-door hardtop, two-door convertible (pictured here), two-door Nomad wagon, four-door sedan, or four-door Beauville wagon. Bel Air trim added full interior carpet, stainless trim atop the front wheel openings, full wheel covers, three-spoke steering wheel, and other trim spiffs. Convertibles were exclusive to the Bel Air line.

It's easy to see why Chevy buyers were so impressed—lower, lighter, quicker, better handling, more comfortable... who could argue with improvements like this? It didn't even cost a lot more: at \$2,206 for a '55 Bel Air convertible, it was less than



The gently refreshed '56 features a full-width grille, to make the '56 feel wider than last year's model, as well as a new trim spear that brought the secondary color clear up to the front fenders.

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Bel Air script lives on the leading edge of the rear quarter, in the crease of the V where the horizontal and vertical trim shoots meet. Bumper over-riders and continental kit with bumper extension are popular after-market add-ons.

Hey where'd the gas fill go on the driver's side? Oh right, it's hiding behind the driver's-side taillamp. The Bel Air name moves high and to the rear, near the top of the quarter just ahead of the new larger taillamps.

Raising and sharpening the edge of the rear quarters, and dropping the lights closer to the bumper, give the '57 a more pronounced fin at the rear. This Bel Air wears popular rear-wheel skirts, and displays a bit of a rake.

1 percent more than a comparable '54. Even in high-zoot Bel Air drop-top form, the '55 Chevy felt like a tremendous value. Buyers recognized this and flocked to their Chevy stores. A whopping 773,238 high-line Bel Airs of all body styles sold for '55—a 59-percent increase over '54. A total of 41,292 convertibles were built, a 113-percent sales bump over '54. With total '55 Chevy sales around the 1.7-million mark, the most ever for any carmaker up to that point, Chevy's gamble paid off: Its new car was a smash hit that remains legendary even today. What's more, its sales achievement lasted until 1962—when the first Boomer kids got driver's licenses.

"Don't mess with success" is a wise cautionary mantra, but Chevrolet had already put the finishing touches on its '56 models by the time it realized what a hit it had. Styling was evolutionary: A new full-width grille helped give an even-wider look to the '56, despite its unchanged dimensions. Newly shaped side trim, kicking up to the beltline mid-window and sloping down over the rear wheel opening to the bumper, suggested forward motion even more than the '55s. The gas filler moved from the driver's-side rear quarter to behind the driver's-side taillight. Inside, the Chevrolet Bowtie motif cut into the wrap-around dash was replaced by rectangular slots. And Chevy introduced a new body style: the four-door Hardtop Sport Sedan, sans B-pillar, which had a strong debut season selling 103,000 copies.

The base six and two-barrel 265 V-8 were largely unchanged (save for an integral oil filter added to all V-8 blocks for '56). A new four-barrel, 9.25:1-compression Super Turbo Fire V-8 was rated at 205 horsepower and was shared with the Corvette. Also shared with the Corvette was a 225-hp 265 outfitted with dual four-barrel carbs, a solid-lifter camshaft, dual-point distributor and cylinder heads with larger ports. The high-lift "Duntov" cam was also available, but few were ordered.

Despite the new four-door hardtop, overall Bel Air production dipped 13½ percent, to 669,000 units for 1956. However, convertible sales of 41,268 were nearly identical to the previous season—a negligible percentage loss.

Customers could be fooled into thinking that Chevrolet had eschewed its traditional three-year plan with the '57 passenger-car line—at least Chevy hoped so; it was a significant-enough refresh that some assumed that it was really all-new once again. Cars boasted new sheetmetal, now with tailfins, and a new interior, with reorganized gauge cluster. Headlamp eyebrows helped direct fresh air into the vents that surrounded the lights and into the cabin. The airplane-motif hood ornament became a pair of decorative jet engine-style intakes. But there were functional changes as well: the cowl, for example, was 1½ inches lower, for improved visibility.

Bel Airs were now more obviously separated from their 150 and 210 siblings by a new side spear that started as a trim line on the front fenders and doors, and then quickly spread and triangulated to the back of the car, making the baby fins look even more dramatic. New 7.50 x 14 tires became standard. There was also a name change: The four-door wagon variant was christened Townsman, a name previously attached to the 210-line's four-door wagon; it swapped places with the Beauville appellation.

Powertrains were refreshed, of course. The 8:1-compression Blue Flame Six remained for the miserly, but most plumped for a selection of V-8s: the carryover 265 two-barrel, or one of *four* new 283-cu.in. models: the 8.5:1 compression, two-barrel Turbo-Fire 283, the four-barrel, 9.5:1-compression Super Turbo-Fire, the Corvette V-8 (the Super Turbo Fire engine

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with an extra four-barrel carburetor added on), and — also borrowed from Corvette, and only available with manual transmission — a 283 with Rochester mechanical fuel injection, 10.5:1 compression and mechanical lifters that offered 1 horsepower per cubic inch. Some early 265-cube engines were painted chartreuse, while later 265s and other V-8s were orange.

Sales jumped. For 1957, a total of 702,220 Bel Airs rolled out of Chevrolet factories and showrooms — a 5-percent gain on the year before. Convertible production rose to 47,562 — a 15-percent rise over the '56 season. And yet ... Ford smoked Chevy in the overall sales race by 10 percent: 1.676 to 1.507 million. The Bel Air, that enduring icon, was a sales loser in its day. What's more, comparing sales with Ford's high-line Fairlane Sunliner (and in '57, Fairlane 500 Sunliner) convertibles, the Tri-Five Bowtie soft-top never topped the Blue Oval's cross-town rivals: Fairlane ragtop sold 17 percent better than Bel Air in 1955; 29 percent better in '56; and in '57, when Ford's convertible ascended to the new Fairlane 500 range, Sunliner outsold the Bel Air ragtop by 39 percent.

But facts and history have only tangential bearing on what makes a car iconic. And make no mistake, Chevy's 1955-'57 passenger car lineup is as iconic as it gets. To come up with something all-new, to hit an out-of-the-park grand slam, and for it to remain in our nation's collective memory decades after most of the people who bought these cars new have slipped their mortal bonds? Unheard of. And yet the Tri-Five Chevy era remains iconic — for Chevy, for America, for eternity. 🏆



Facelifted '57 Bel Air is the icon of icons. This trio of ragtop Bel Airs belongs to Rich Fairservis (picture top) of Chandler, Arizona; his extensive collection of postwar Americana leans toward muscle, but then, what collection would be complete without a clean Tri-Five... or three?

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Monsieur Jean's Car

Facel Vega founder Jean Daninos vainly hoped his modified personal 1960 Facellia 2+2 could save the company

BY GÉRALD GUÉTAT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRI THIBAUT AND COURTESY OF ARCHIVES AMICALE FACEL VEGA



This Facellia, initially built as a cabriolet, was personally used by Facel founder Jean Daninos, who adapted it into the prototype 2+2 coupe by riveting on a solid roof. Here it appeared on the Facel Vega stand at the Salon de l'Auto in Paris, October 1960.

The advent of the 1960s was fatal to French luxury and sports cars. The attempts of Facel Vega, driven by the creative energy of Jean Daninos, illustrate this highly specific situation for a country deliberately oriented towards mass industrial production. Daninos championed a sporty new model called the Facellia in hopes of attracting new buyers, but it wasn't able to save the young, prestigious automaker. In a way, this model gave beautiful shape to the end of a dream and an era.

The Facellia was an ambitious attempt at a more mass-market car, but it struggled despite strong beginnings. One Facellia in particular highlighted the turmoil surrounding the model — FA-B136. At the Facel factory at 132 Boulevard de Valmy in Colombes, employees called it “Monsieur Jean's Car,” which earned it special respect, though in a difficult context.

Its course alone sums up most of the difficulties of the project. Released in June 1960, it was then a first-series, FA-type cabriolet. The new car bore the production number 134, but was not delivered to a dealership. Remaining at the factory, it received its first road registration on September 15, 1960, with “1 KG 75” plates and a registration card in the name of Facel SA. In the meantime, it was handed over to Daninos, who, through the careful addition of a nonremovable aluminum hardtop, made it his personal car, as well as the development prototype of the 2+2 version, on which many hopes rested.

But, at the same time, Facel Vega was already in deep crisis because of the Facellia. To appreciate its context, it may be useful to refer to accounts of Daninos on the genesis of his major project, the “little Facel,” and the decisions he had to make to have it completed: “The concentration of the French automobile industry, disadvantageous taxation, and extremely



Ultimately, the cause of Facel Vega's downfall as an automaker, the 1.6-liter DOHC hemi-head four-cylinder, designed and component-produced by Pont-à-Mousson, was trouble prone in its initial form. This example was updated with twin Weber carburetors.

severe competition had created a ruthless selection, especially in the field of sports- and small-series cars. Only manufacturers and products with exceptional characteristics would survive [...] For this reason, as early as 1957, I had the idea to make a small Facel Vega aimed at customers who could not afford our classic model, but who wanted a French car that could line up with the Porsche 90 (356B "Super 90") and the Alfa Romeo Giulietta."

The new, affordable little Facel would draw inspiration from that Italian carmaker by adopting a 1,600-cc engine, first installed in a cabriolet, followed by a 2+2, and finally a four-seater coupe. For an expert coachbuilder and an excellent designer like Facel's founder, this part of the project was an easy ride. Much more difficult was the choice of engine, as the stated ambition of the whole affair was to produce the first 100-percent French sports car of the postwar period. "Made in France" was not only a point of pride, it was a necessity due to French tariffs on imports that made it prohibitively expensive for Facel to buy all the engines it needed from foreign automakers. The tariffs weren't as detrimental to Facel's limited-production high-end cars, powered by American V-8s.

Moreover, no French automaker was willing to sell engines to a competitor, even a very small firm, whether those engines were already in production or would be adapted specially for a project. A new solution was required, but the solution would become the problem.

Facel had a longstanding and excellent engineering development relationship with the Pont-à-Mousson foundries, which already provided gearboxes. As early as 1951-'52, that company had designed a 2.8-liter DOHC inline-six, the project entrusted to engineer Carlo Marchetti, the Le Mans-winning former chief engineer at Talbot-Lago. Between Marchetti and the advice of famed English cylinder-head guru Harry Weslake, the Facellia's new engine looked full of promise. Under the hood of the pretty cabriolet would sit a superb DOHC four-cylinder with a displacement of 1,646-cc, downsized from that never-realized 2.8-liter six. It featured a cast-iron block, aluminum cylinder head and crankcase, an 82 x 78-mm bore and stroke, eight valves, hemispherical combustion chambers, removable wet cylinder liners, a 9.5:1 compression ratio, and camshafts each turning on only two bearings. The result was 115 horsepower at 6,400 rpm. The project would be completed quickly, since the official presentation of the car was scheduled to take place in Paris in September 1959, which left less than a year and a half to





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The interior of the Facellia 2+2 coupe reflected the level of quality that senior Facel Vegas were famed for. The amply instrumented dashboard sported “walnut bramble” décor, a superb hand-painted trompe-l’oeil on metal, as stipulated by Jean Daninos.

study and resolve a manufacturing challenge, before delivery to an impatient clientele a few months later.

Pont-à-Mousson was not prepared for a daily production of turnkey engines, so Daninos would arrange a complete engine assembly unit with a test bench in its Puteaux premises, located about 5 kilometers from his factory. The large-scale Pont-à-Mousson metallurgical unit at Fumel, more than 370 miles away, would only supply kits of Facellia engine parts to be put together. This was a simple and effective combination on paper, so much so that the crucial meeting with the press and public in September 1959 was held with the release of the first Facellia, itself as elegant and well finished as a Facel Vega should be, even a “small” one.

The cabriolet body, designed by the boss, was 163.4 inches long, and mounted on a steel tubular frame. It was equipped with an independent front suspension consisting of A-arms, coil springs and telescopic shocks, along with a solid Salisbury axle supported by semi-elliptical leaf springs. Braking was by four drums, with the option of four Dunlop discs. The four-speed manual transmission — of course by Pont-à-Mousson — used a Ferodo clutch.

Everyone admired and applauded achieving the feat of releasing this novelty with a very compact, light, and powerful new French DOHC engine that would make those who swore by Alfa Romeo think twice. The car’s interior met the expectations of a Facel Vega. And apart from some body and finishing details — including the famous faux-wood dashboard, replaced by a leather fascia on the early prototype, and the twin-carburetor configuration being swapped for a single two-barrel in the initial series — the FA model presented in September 1959 was very close to the first production units delivered in the spring of 1960.

The Paris Motor Show in October confirmed the excellent impression made a month earlier, and the order book was quickly filled. The euphoria would, however, be short-lived soon after the delivery of the cars to their owners; in daily life, the four-cylinder soon showed many signs of weakness. For Facel, the job of being an engine manufacturer turned out to be quite different from that of coachbuilder. Sheetmetal and tube assemblies do not have quite the same material quality, thermal stress, and adjustment tolerance requirements as a sophisticated, high-performance engine.

The production of engines belongs to another category in which the test and development procedures cannot be accelerated without risks, especially at a time when computer-based failure scenarios could not be simulated. For Facel, improvising as an engine manufacturer in less than two years was a challenge, even with a reputable partner like Pont-à-Mousson. The initial flaws of the design of some parts, the steel and cast-iron grade inconsistencies, and the quality control at the Lot-et-Garonne factory, could not be easily handled at the other end of the chain, at Puteaux.

As early as late spring 1960, customers filed numerous warranty claims in regards to overheating due to the cooling system, premature wear of the cylinder liners resulting in overconsumption of oil, and camshafts too flexible in their bearings, leading to subtle altering of valve timing: The list was as long as waiting for a tow truck. Very concerned about the reputation of his firm, Daninos started the fatal process of accepting all the claims that rained down on the factory. The youthful flaws of this still-excellent engine would be quickly rectified thanks to the intervention of the company Le Moteur Moderne, but the damage was done and the Facellia would not recover from such downbeat beginnings.

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The Facel boss, more courageous than ever, did not give up: At the end of September 1960, he created the first in a new series of 2+2 coupes, based on his factory cabriolet FA-B136. Now called “FA-A201” despite its FA-B136 manufacturer plate remaining unchanged, it was production number 1 in the factory records, and was probably exhibited as-is at the 1961 Geneva Motor Show. Monsieur Jean’s Car was therefore equipped with an aluminum roof riveted to the body. The decorative aluminum trim on the lower body was removed, and some details of the prototype tweaked before presentation to the press. This car was followed by the four-seater coupe, all while waiting for the new FA-series 2A with improved mechanicals to be launched in February and March 1961.

It’s easy to find articles on any model published in the press at the time of its release, but having a detailed test of one’s own car is quite exceptional, especially when it was signed by the great journalist and racing driver Paul Frère. A few weeks after his 1960 Le Mans triumph in the Ferrari 250 TR/60 with Olivier Gendebien, Frère was entrusted with Daninos’s brand-new Facellia 2+2, registered 1 KG 75, for a well-written and uncompromising test.

These were the conclusions: “The Facellia is a sporty car, extremely elegant, capable of high performance and with good handling qualities. It offers sufficient comfort and is economical of consumption. Its brakes are efficient and safe at high speeds which the car is capable of [...] However, the car is quite noisy at high speeds. In urban traffic, the brakes require a lot of pressure on the pedal, and the pedal race is too long. The windscreen wipers are insufficient, and the seats do not provide sufficient lateral support. Various details should be reviewed by the manufacturer.”

These criticisms give credit to the content of the long article—very detailed and rather laudatory of a model, given its young age, still to be perfected—published in *Das Auto Motor und Sport* on October 22, 1960. This provided early warning of the long storm that would sweep Facel’s factories, and during which Monsieur Jean’s Car would continue its course to the rhythm of the changes in his career.

Further events leading to the end of Facel Vega are well documented: the state loans; the new majority shareholders with Pont-à-Mousson, Hispano-Suiza, and Mobil Oil; and the resignation of Daninos from his position in August 1961, when he remained vice-president, technical and commercial manager. On July 10, 1962, Facel was placed under judicial administration. Shortly before this fateful turn that would freeze the inventories, on July 4, the FA-B136 factory car legally became Monsieur Jean’s personal car, and it kept the same registration plates. A new registration

card was ceded on July 7 to Pierre Daninos, Jean’s younger brother. The prototype Facellia coupe 2+2 became the property of Jean Clément Daninos on February 20, 1963, with the new plate, 9702 EQ 78.

After several changes of registration and ownership, the car was bought in 2003 by Michel Revoy, currently in charge of car history at the Amicale Facel Vega (facel-vega.asso.fr). His discovery was quite fortuitous: “I fell in love with a Volvo P1800 while I was working in Norway. When I was back in France, a friend suggested that I look at the Volvo-powered late Facellia. I started by buying a Facel III, then my father-in-law came across a small ad in the magazine *Le Chasseur Français*. On the phone, the seller confessed not to know if it was a coupe or a convertible! While inspecting the car, I found it to be the number FA-B136 convertible equipped with a special hardtop and a dashboard in faux wood. It was the prototype of the 2+2 coupe, of which only 46 were made.”

After a few years, Michel entrusted the restoration of this unique Facellia to Vega Passion workshops. Today, the reliability of the Facellia’s beautiful DOHC 1,600-cc engine is no problem, including in its latest twin-Weber-carbureted F2S factory version, developing 126 hp. As far the coachwork is concerned, with all its refinements like those rear lamps superbly inserted in the tip of the fender, it was sprayed in Daninos’ chosen color scheme: “Blue Jean Bart,” with the interior in blue 3015 leather. The dashboard was also restored by a *trompe-l’oeil* artist.

Monsieur Jean’s Car could not fall into more respectful and demanding hands. A clear road opens before her in homage to the engineer with multiple talents—creative and aesthete as a genius of the Renaissance—who accompanied the funeral procession of the defunct French luxury and sports car on several occasions in his career, ending with the Facellia. He always did it with panache, like the conductor of a New Orleans-style jazz funeral with a 1950’s Sidney Bechet tune. 🎷

Thanks to Michel Revoy, proud owner of Monsieur Jean’s Car, for his assistance and patience during all the steps necessary to produce this article.





2021 GREAT RACE ROUTE

SATURDAY, JUNE 19

START: Alamo Plaza (Alamo front), San Antonio, TX - 8 a.m. to noon

LUNCH: Courthouse Square, downtown San Marcos, TX - noon

OVERNIGHT: Santa Fe Plaza, Temple, TX - 4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20

LUNCH: Historic Courthouse Square, Granbury, TX - noon

OVERNIGHT: Horton Classic Car Museum, Nocona, TX - 4:15 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 21

LUNCH: Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum, Sapulpa, OK - 12:15 p.m.

OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Joplin, MO - 5:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 22

LUNCH: Benton Square on East 5th Street, Rolla, MO - 11:45 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Cape Girardeau, MO - 5:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23

LUNCH: Broadway and Water Street, downtown Paducah, KY - noon

OVERNIGHT: Veterans Blvd., downtown Owensboro, KY - 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

LUNCH: Elizabethtown Sports Park, Elizabethtown, KY - 11:30 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: Griffin Gate Marriott, Lexington, KY - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Heritage Station, 11th Street, downtown Huntington, WV - 11:40 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: Word Park, Neville Street, downtown Beckley, WV - 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Main Street, downtown Galax, VA - 11:15 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Mooresville, NC - 5 p.m.

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FINISH: Hyatt Regency, Main Street, downtown Greenville, SC - 1 p.m.

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The Family Truckster

A 1973 Chevrolet K5 Blazer reserved for camping and adventures

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

People had been gathering around campfires for more than a million years before the word “s’mores” was coined in 1934. But, in the decades after that tasty campground treat earned its name, the act of congregating under starry skies, while basking in the flickering glow of crackling, flaming wood, really took off as an American pastime.

A new breed of lightweight four-wheel-drive utilities—descended from World War II military jeeps—made it not only easier, but fun to reach remote places with camping gear on board or in tow. The Willys CJ-series blazed the trail, but the field became a little more crowded when International Harvester and Ford strapped on their hiking

boots in the 1960s. Woodsy consumers, increasingly hungry for these rigs, got their first glimpse of the IH Scout in 1961 and Dearborn’s Bronco in 1966. General Motors arrived last to the campsite in 1969, with its Chevrolet Blazer/GMC Jimmy twins.

The General’s entry into the utility field checked all the boxes with four-wheel drive, a stubby wheelbase, and a removable top.

Bill and Phyllis Dearien bought this 1973 Blazer new through a program set up for GM employees, and used it almost exclusively for road-trip adventures with their two kids and a small camper in tow.



and has never had any paint or body work, other than a resprayed left front fender as the result of a run-in with a sign in a parking lot, years ago.

Despite wanting a '72, Bill must've been satisfied that Chevrolet's revamped '73 Blazer retained the fundamentals of the original, though it was a clean-sheet design. Some of the updates included available full-time four-wheel drive, all-new sheetmetal, more than 8 square feet of additional glass for greater visibility, a roll-up tailgate window, a 2.5-inch increase in wheelbase, longer leaf springs, and a standard stabilizer bar on four-wheel-drives. Inside, there was a roomier interior with a restyled, contoured instrument panel, and an energy-absorbing steering column. A new top-of-the-line Cheyenne trim level—our feature truck was so equipped—added carpeting, woodgrain trim, a choice of leather-grain all-vinyl upholstery (or cloth and vinyl), as well as additional bright trim outside.

When Bill was ready to buy his new tow rig, he acquired this Blazer through a GM program that allowed employees to purchase, at a discount, vehicles that had been used by GM managers. Bill's boss ordered the Blazer, then passed it along to Bill through Lou Grubb Chevrolet in Phoenix, where Bill's dad Alton was a salesman.

"Dad and his boss worked out this deal and it was planned that Dad was going to own the Blazer," Steve says.

Once the papers were signed, it wasn't long before Bill and Phyllis started personalizing the sporty new 4x4 to better suit their tastes and their summer road-tripping lifestyle. Phyllis thought the Blazer's factory steel wheels were dull, so those were swapped for a set of Shelby Cal 500 slotted mags (Steve still owns those, but switched back to the stockers). Phyllis also stitched up a set of black and white checkered curtains for the Blazer's side glass, to keep the sun off the kids while they were riding in the back. Bill later tinted those windows.

Bill was an emissions engineer by day, so he carefully monitored the Blazer's fuel consumption, and took steps to improve it—including swapping in a set of locking hubs and removing the front driveshaft. He also made a couple of modifications to help the truck keep its cool while towing in extreme desert heat.

But, rather than build an entirely new vehicle from scratch, GM chopped about 11 inches out of the overall length of its shortest full-size pickup and merged the bed with the cab, creating a vehicle that was roomier than its rivals. The approach paid dividends, particularly at Chevrolet, where production of the first-generation, four-wheel-drive Blazer soared from 4,935 units in 1969 to 44,266 by 1972.

One of the tens of thousands of buyers interested in a '72 Blazer was the late William Dearien, a General Motors engineer who worked at the Desert Proving Grounds in Mesa, Arizona. Bill and his wife Phyllis, who has also passed, enjoyed taking their two kids on summer-vacation

road trips towing a 1968 Starcraft camper behind the family's '68 Chevrolet Nova. The car got the job done, but Bill figured a light utility vehicle would handle the work more effortlessly and give the kids a little space to stretch out in the back. Bill was never a big fan of four-door vehicles though, so a Suburban or a crew-cab truck wouldn't have been his first choice.

The first-generation Blazers had ended their run by the time Bill decided to buy, so instead he wound up with the redesigned second-generation 1973 truck featured here, now owned by Bill and Phyllis' son Steve. It looks nicely restored, but it isn't. The Dearien family Blazer has 67,000 original miles on the odometer

"Dad kept logbooks and he used to write everything down," Steve says. "When he first got the Blazer, he wrote in this oil change book that it was getting 10-11 mpg. He started working on tweaking the Quadrajet carburetor — I remember it coming off and on the car a lot. He also tweaked the timing, blocked off the EGR valve, and took the A.I.R. [air injection reactor] pump off. After all that, it still passed emissions and still does perfectly."

"He extended the fan shroud by riveting aluminum to it to increase the efficiency of the fan," Steve says. "But one of the big things that made a difference was a spoiler he added to the front. His notebook showed he got the mileage to 14.9 or 15.1, and that was even dragging the trailer."

While towing that well-used Starcraft camper, the Deariens set out on many adventures in the Blazer and created a lifetime of memories.

"Dad had a couple weeks off in the summer, so we'd typically take a road trip," Steve says. "We went through Idaho to Yellowstone National Park. Dad was from Arkansas, so we'd make trips back there to visit family and see everything along the way. We went up and down the West Coast, we went to San Diego a lot — my parents really liked California. My dad made a good living, but we weren't rich, and it was a way to economically move the family around. Plus, it was a cool way to travel. I remember catching my first fish at a campground in Colorado and we were camping when Elvis died. My mom was upset, and it seemed like such a downer on the trip."

Though he worked for GM, Bill was not a believer in Alfred P. Sloan's concept of "Dynamic Obsolescence." Bill maintained his vehicles and held onto them, which is why he still owned this Blazer when he died in 2013.

"He was really nostalgic," Steve says. "He was around all the newest cars until his retirement from GM in 2003, but he drove a 1965 Nova back and forth to work for years. He got tired of the air conditioning not working so his upgrade was a 1986 Buick LeSabre. The Blazer never was a regular driver, so it sat in the garage. He would drive it occasionally around town to keep the fuel fresh. It sat so much sometimes that he put a drain plug in the fuel tank to drain the gas out."

While the Blazer's mission has changed from family road-trip truckster and vacation workhorse to pleasure driver under Steve's caretaking, it still leads a charmed life. Steve drives it sparingly and has made a few personal touches of his



LEFT: The Dearien family went on many adventures in their 1973 Chevrolet Blazer. Here, the late Phyllis and Bill (rear), and Steve and Kristine (front) stop for a quick snapshot in 1976 on their way to visit Bill's family in Arkansas. **RIGHT:** Steve and Kristine, all bundled up, lean against the back of the truck while visiting the snowy mountains in Arizona, circa 1974 or '75.



The Blazer's four-barrel 350 has never been rebuilt, nor has the Turbo Hydra-Matic 350 transmission or any other drivetrain component. Notice the lip pop-riveted around the inside circumference of the radiator shroud, which Bill installed to increase the fan's efficiency.



The top-level Cheyenne package added brightwork to the outside of the rough-and-ready Blazer, plus it civilized the cockpit with carpeting, simulated wood trim, and more.

own, but maintained his father's modifications and his logbook.

"I have done a few things to restore its originality, but most importantly left in place my dad's unique efforts," Steve says. "I love owning cars that are personal and that can tell a story. We created a lot of family memories in this Blazer and it's just kind of cool that this was the vehicle that got us to all those destinations." 🐾



Today, Phyllis and Bill's son Steve is the caretaker of the unrestored one-family truck.

The trailer hitch used to pull a camper remains on the Blazer today. Bill tinted the rear and side glass to help keep the rear seat and cargo areas cooler.



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EXECUTIVE RARITY

*A 1966 Lincoln Lehmann-Peterson limousine
resumes its role as an exclusive cruiser*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

We're all familiar with the story of a kid who coveted a particular 1:64-scale car. Later in life, he finds an example of the actual car, though one needing restoration. Driven by nostalgia, it's purchased, work begins, and a parts car is soon acquired to help the project. But the parts car turns out to be too good, or too rare, to scuttle. Instead, it becomes a second project.

Binghamton, New York, resident Robin Alpaugh followed this trajectory to vintage vehicle ownership. In his case, the small-scale car that held his fascination was a blue/green 1964 Lincoln Continental sedan produced by Matchbox. It left such an indelible impression that during the summer of 1996, while attending the Norwich Car Show in New York, he stopped in his tracks after spotting a 1964 Lincoln Continental convertible for sale in the car corral.

"I had to buy it," said Robin. "The seller was a retired doctor who was downsizing his collection; it was too good to pass up. Afterwards, I read everything I could find. Flash forward to 2012: I found Dave Cline's Lincoln Lehmann-Peterson limousine website, and I reached out to him to see if he knew of any '64 Lehmann-Petersons [L-P] for sale, thinking that one would look good parked next to my standard convertible. He replied



something to the effect of, 'Good luck—there's only seven left in the world and one of them, which was used in the opening scene of James Bond's *Thunderball*, is in New Zealand.' Ironically, he emailed me a day later to say that a guy in Texas contacted him with a '64 L-P for sale that was just used in the film *Sin City 2*. I contacted the seller, made the deal, and the car was trucked to Binghamton a couple weeks later."

Lehmann-Peterson had a humble beginning that could best be described as a giant leap of faith. Early in 1963, in Chicago, Illinois, George Lehmann and Robert Peterson—who, after meeting, envisioned a line of custom-built limousines—cut a 1963 Lincoln Continental in half, added 34 inches of steel to the frame, crafted a new center section of bodywork, and arranged the plush rear cabin in a manner that allowed for face-to-face conversations. When completed, this prototype was presented to Ford, which accepted the stretched Lincoln for further testing.

Nearly a year and 40,000 miles later, Ford Motor Company and Lehmann-Peterson came to terms that would—over the next six years—lead to the conversion of anywhere from 429 to 594 vehicles before L-P suffered fiscal concerns; it was absorbed by Moloney Coachbuilders (now Scaletta Moloney Armoring) after 1970. The number of known survivors is less than 130.

"The L-P needed a restoration that I began almost as soon as it was delivered. When it became apparent that I needed parts specific to the limo, I started searching in spring 2013. Simultaneously, the Lincoln Continental Owners Club magazine featured a story on a Pennsylvania-based member and his collection of Lincolns, Edsels, and Mercurys, several of which were Lehmann-Peterson limos. One of those was a 1966 model painted white, so I called to get more information. While most of the cars had been left outside, this car had been put in a barn when it quit running. Ultimately, I arranged a road trip to further explore the opportunity," said Robin.

"The first word that came to mind when I saw it was 'distressed.' When it was parked, the windows had been left down and it had become home to dozens



Originally painted black, the Lincoln wore white paint by the time it was purchased in 2013, when it was living in a Pennsylvania barn.

of four-legged critters over the years. The leather had turned color from black to a moldy brown, and there were animal nests and corn kernels in every nook and cranny, including in the air cleaner, headliner, vents, and door panels. The smell was pretty bad, too. I decided to buy it anyway because I needed parts, and it was in the best condition of all the L-P cars that were available on the property.

"I remember thinking that I probably should have paid closer attention to what parts carried over from 1964 to '66 as soon as I got it home and compared the two. The answer was virtually none. In just two production years, nearly everything was restyled, and made larger and/or more refined. After more research, I discovered that of the 159 built in '66 (the company's high-water mark for production), just over 20 were known to exist," Robin says.

"Since nothing carried over, I felt like I needed to get something back out of this 6,000-pound car. So, I decided to see how easily we could get it going again before determining its fate. It was towed to my friend's garage where we added a new battery, some fresh gas, and new oil, plugs, and wires—all basic items. Much to our surprise, after being dormant since the late Eighties, the Lincoln fired right up and ran great! I think we got lucky; after many winters of sitting, there were no issues



The Lincoln's original 430-hp 462-cu.in. engine didn't crack during decades of storage; a basic tune-up had it running like new.

with the block from freeze/thaw cycles. It was at that moment that I decided to save it from the scrap yard — it ran too good to give up on it."

As work began, Robin tells us he was only able to piece together small snippets of the car's past. It had originally been painted black and was one of just two L-Ps delivered to Clark & White Lincoln, located on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

"Unfortunately, the original build sheet didn't reveal more. We found two small holes drilled into the front bumper on both sides near the headlights, possibly used for flags. Given its expense, \$14,667, the car had to have been owned by a major company, part of then-Governor Volpe's motor pool, or perhaps [the property of] another elected official. It was built with the optional electric divider window, silver mouton carpeting, and an 8-track tape deck.

"While cleaning out the cabin, I found a repair receipt from the early Eighties in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and an undated parking receipt from Atlantic City, New Jersey. Even more interesting, when I was

cleaning out the dashboard ashtray, I found \$278, in older bills from the Eighties, rolled up and hidden inside. Of course, I applied that windfall to the restoration. It was either emergency gas money or maybe the proceeds from a prom or wedding that the driver forgot to pocket!"

Lack of history and windfall aside, the limo was remarkably complete; only a pair of new-old-stock "Lehmann-Peterson Executive Limousine" front fender badges were needed, which were fortuitously discovered for sale through a known Lincoln parts supplier. Conversely, two small parts of the floorboard needed to be repaired because of leaky ice bins built into the passenger arm rests; outside, the bottom sections of three doors, and both quarter panel doglegs, needed to be addressed. The rest of the car was spared further damage thanks to a layer of undercoating it received after its conversion. New Brilliant White paint, padded roof, and intense interior leather upholstery cleaning and repairs completed the rebuild. Only the engine and transmission were untouched at



the time of our visit, given the like-new performance of both units. The rare Lincoln was completed in the summer of 2018, and Robin has been enjoying the car regularly since.

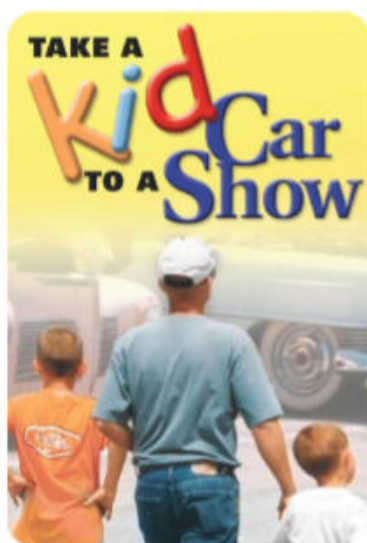
"I enjoy owning and driving cars that are truly unique, cars that no one else has. This Lincoln, for instance, has a timeless design, and is slightly different from the classic 1964 Lincoln style that takes us back to President Kennedy. I like the fact that there are only a few left and that I have never seen another one in person. It has a million-dollar ride quality—you don't feel any bumps in the road. It is almost too easy to drive—you have to regularly remind yourself that there is an additional 3 feet of length tacked on to an already huge car by today's standards. In addition, the leather is incredibly thick and supple even after years of neglect. The hand-built quality of this vehicle is beyond comparison, easily in the league of Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullmans, and they cost as much as a new Rolls-Royce in 1966. The still intact, original rear opera window was made by Corning Glass, which is just over an hour away from Binghamton, so there's a hint of a local tie. I am happy to have had the opportunity to save this piece of L-P history." 🐞



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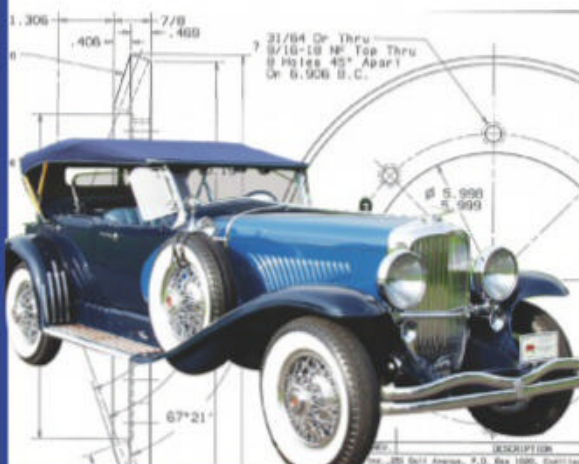
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1970-'72 Chevrolet **Monte Carlo**

The right balance of luxury and performance, plus decent support today, make the first-generation Monte Carlo a good buy

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES



Because it was derived from the Chevelle, the Chevrolet Monte Carlo remains an easy car to own today. Mechanical parts, in particular, are readily attainable, and the cars themselves are affordable. Popular pricing guides suggest that a small-block powered '71 in top condition can be obtained for right around \$30,000. Those who don't mind a fixer-upper can find bargains down in four-digit territory.

Fixing one up isn't too bad, either. We spoke with Rob Peters, president, newsletter editor, and storekeeper for the First Generation Monte Carlo Club, and Sam Michaels, the club's treasurer, to get some insight on what to look for when evaluating a potential purchase.

"I'd say that probably 70 percent of the parts are shared with the Chevelle," Sam says. That's a two-way street, however, as back in the 1980s, when investor interest in Chevelles was really taking off, the less-valuable Monte Carlos were sometimes stripped of parts to improve Chevelles. Disc brakes, for example, were standard equipment on the Monte Carlo, and the spindles interchange with the Chevelle. Likewise, the Monte Carlo dash is the same as in a Chevelle SS, with the addition of woodgrain veneers, so not a few of those were gobbled up to produce clones.

The complete interiors of the Chevelle and Monte Carlo will interchange, and their problems are shared as well.

"The clocks rarely work," Sam says, and Rob adds that many cars have been hacked to install a later radio. Additionally, dash pads crack, as does the original piping on the seats and the trim on the quarter panel, where passengers tend to brush against when getting in the back. Rob also points out that the special gauge package on Super Sport models was an option, so don't discount an SS just because it doesn't have one. Conversely,

since that gauge package is reproduced, you can now add one to a vehicle not originally equipped.

The Monte itself could be spec'd out as a decent performance machine if the buyer was so inclined. Most coveted are the SS 454 versions from 1970 and '71, followed by the 402/four-speed cars. Oddly, it seems GM never built a Monte Carlo with a four-speed behind the 454, which came mated only to the TH400 three-speed automatic. Nor has anyone authenticated factory installation of the vaunted 450-hp LS6 454 into a Monte Carlo, though a few dealer-built examples of both 454/four-speed and LS6 cars exist.

The 350-cu.in. small-block V-8 is nothing to scoff at, however. In 250-hp, two-barrel form, it's a capable motivator that will easily keep a Monte Carlo up with modern traffic. The 300-hp four-barrel 350, Rob says, "will smoke tires." He also says the small primaries on the Quadrajet mean that the four-barrel cars are capable of slightly better fuel economy than those with two-barrels. He ought to know, as he bought a 300-hp car new in 1970 and owns a clean 250-hp '70 today. He also points out that the ride of the small-block examples is somewhat nicer, due to the reinforced suspension on big-block cars.

Authentication can be a real challenge with vintage Chevrolets. It wasn't until 1972 that Chevy finally put a code in the VIN to indicate the engine originally installed at the factory. Owners of earlier cars are left looking for paper trails to establish the proper equipment: Protect-O-Plates are useful and build sheets are especially coveted. Unfortunately, the club has yet to discover any Flint-built cars with a build sheet left behind inside.

If you've got a real hankering for a 100-point restoration, the FGMCC website (firstgenmc.com) is an absolute wealth of information. The club has

been especially involved in determining how to authenticate SS 454 cars, but the membership is highly knowledgeable on all iterations of the first Monte Carlos, and a forum is available to ask questions. There are also several Facebook groups devoted to these cars.

If, instead, you're more interested in owning or restoring a Monte Carlo simply for the sake of doing it, evaluating the condition of a potential purchase is more important. Thanks to the Chevelle tie-in, mechanical parts aren't much of a worry, but rust is. Both Rob and Sam called out the vinyl roof as a rust vector.

"The vinyl roof is a big red flag possibly," Rob says. "They'll rust even without one, but vinyl roofs rust worse. Look for the bubbled 'pimples' on the roof." He also advises, and Sam concurs, to open the trunk and look at the rear wheelwells. The rear window is frequently the first spot to rust out (watch for a warped package tray as a telltale) and when that happens, water can enter the trunk and rear quarters, and get under the back seat, compromising the floors.

In fact, the best thing to do is to get under the car if possible, using a flashlight and your fingers to probe for rust and damage. The good news, Sam says, is that "the underside, from the firewall back, is identical to a Chevelle." That means readily available Chevelle floors can be used to patch things up. The frame, however, is a different matter—it's unique to the Monte Carlo and isn't even shared with the Grand Prix.

Front fenders are another touchy spot. They're unique for 1970 but shared between '71 and '72. Currently, none of them are reproduced.

"OPG lists front fenders for sale," Rob says, "but it hasn't had them in stock in years. I keep a pair of NOS fenders in case something happens. It took me three years to find them." Sam is a little more optimistic, saying he believes

reproduction fenders are on the way. That makes sense, as while Monte Carlos of this era are affordable now, they're in growing demand.

"A club member went down to an auction in Florida," Rob recalls, "looking to buy an SS out of a museum. The non-running car went up over \$100,000 — that's crazy, stupid money."

It may also indicate a trend, so if you've ever wanted to own a first-gen Monte Carlo, it may be time to go hunt down one of these personal-luxury machines for yourself.

ENGINE

The base engine for the Monte Carlo was a 350-cu.in. small-block V-8, topped with a two-barrel carburetor. A four-barrel engine was the first step up, followed by two flavors of "400," a two-barrel small-block and a four-barrel big-block (the old 396, bored to 402-cu.in.), and finally the LS5 454-cu.in. big-block. The small-block 400 was discontinued after 1970, and after two years of exclusivity to the SS, the 454 was available in any Monte Carlo in 1972. Horsepower ratings declined each year, most notably with the change from gross ratings to SAE net for 1972.



Of five engine variations documented as original, three used a Quadrajets. The base 350 and the '70-only 400 small-block came with two-barrel induction. **INSET:** SS 454 cars came standard with Automatic Level Control. The self-leveling air suspension was optional for other Monte Carlos. Compressors may be cadmium plated, as shown, or black.

WHAT TO PAY

Body	Low	Average	High
1970/350/auto	\$8,900	\$16,900	\$26,600
1970/402/four-speed	\$9,500	\$17,500	\$27,100
1970 SS 454	\$9,400	\$21,300	\$35,100
1971/350/auto	\$7,800	\$15,900	\$24,200
1971/402/four-speed	\$10,000	\$19,700	\$29,700
1971 SS 454	\$9,100	\$21,000	\$32,900
1972/350/auto	\$6,800	\$12,900	\$22,900
1972/454/auto	\$8,900	\$16,800	\$29,800

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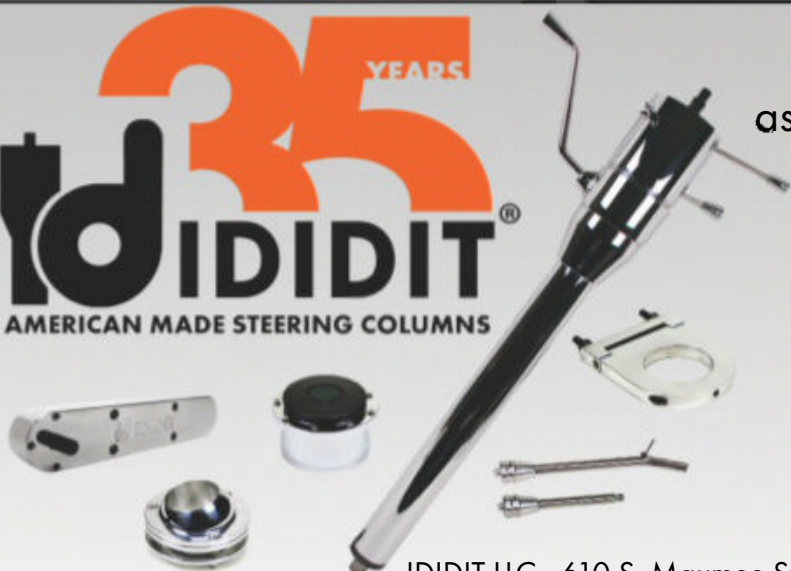
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TRANSMISSION & AXLES

A column-shifted three-speed was standard and available only with the base 350. Powerglide was optional with either 350 in 1970, but only with the base 350 thereafter. Any engine could be optioned with a three-speed Turbo Hydra-Matic (a TH350 or TH400, depending on engine selection). A Muncie four-speed was available behind any engine except the 454 in 1970, with only the four-barrel 350 or 402 for 1971, and not at all for 1972. Both 10- and 12-bolt axles were installed in Monte Carlos, with most small-block cars receiving the 8.2-inch Chevrolet 10-bolt.

INTERIOR

A bench seat was standard in Monte Carlo, but buckets, console, and floor-shifter were popular options. Interior door panels are notably different from contemporary Chevelles, though they will interchange. The dash is the same as a Chevelle SS with a woodgrain veneer added. In keeping with the luxury theme, numerous comfort and convenience options were available, including remote mirrors, air conditioning, AM/FM/stereo, an 8-track tape deck, and extra body insulation. The optional special instrumentation package is reproduced.

CHASSIS

While derived from the A-body Chevelle, the Monte Carlo has a unique frame not shared with anything else. However, suspension pieces do interchange, so in



Monte Carlo interiors physically interchange with those of Chevelles, though Montes got certain exclusive touches, like woodgrain on the dash otherwise identical to the Chevelle SS. Bench seat and column-shift were standard, with buckets, console, and floor-shift optional.



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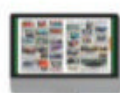
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the past, many Montes were stripped for desirable parts like their standard disc brakes. Today, that means owners can tap into the wealth of restoration and upgrade parts available through the aftermarket. Chevrolet offered the full gamut of options when these cars were new, including power steering and brakes, wider wheels, and heavy-duty suspension, so it's easy to tailor one to your driving tastes.

BODY

Rust is the biggest enemy of a Monte Carlo. While it shares some panels with Chevelle, it has enough unique bodywork that some damage can seriously waylay a project. Some pieces, like bumpers and hoods, are reproduced. Others, notably front fenders, are notoriously difficult to find — though the aftermarket seems to finally be catching up with demand. Vinyl roofs were a popular option that tend to be moisture traps, compromising the rear window area, quarters, and even the floors. Look underneath and in the trunk of any potential purchase.

PRODUCTION

Chevrolet built 145,976 Monte Carlos for 1970, including 3,823 SS 454s and 589 402/four-speeds. For 1971, total Monte Carlo production fell to 128,600 cars, including just 1,919 SS 454s and 349 examples with four-speeds. For 1972, the numbers rebounded to 180,819 Monte Carlos produced. The SS 454 was no longer offered in 1972, nor was a four-speed manual transmission, but 1,268 cars were built with 454s. Only 1,167 Monte Carlos with the column-shifted three-speed were built across all three years, making them rare, though not particularly popular. 🏠

REPRODUCTION PARTS PRICES

1971-'72 headlamp bezels (pair)	\$153
1971-'72 temperature and fuel gauges	\$160
Exhaust system (aftermarket)	\$400
Firestone Wide Oval G70-15 tires (each)	\$285
Front bench seat upholstery	\$300
Front fenders (pair)	\$900
Headliner.....	\$100
Hood	\$550
Rally wheel kit, 15 x 7 inch (includes four wheels, four trim rings, four center caps, and 20 lug nuts)	\$757



LEFT: For 1970, the headlamp bezels have a rounder shape and the signals in the bumper are round. **RIGHT:** For 1971, the bezels were squared up and the signals became rectangular. For 1972 (not shown), the signals were vertical and in the outer edges of the grille.

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Babbitt begone

Tearing down a Ford Model T axle to replace failed thrust washers—Part 1

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

Last summer, our friend Bryan Cady, of Albany, New York, was out on a test drive in his Model T speedster when he suddenly found himself limping home to the unwelcome accompaniment of mechanical cacophony.

“At first, I thought it was in the transmission,” Bryan says, but his friend Wayne Ashton, an experienced T enthusiast from Staatsburg, pointed out that the torque tube funnels that noise forward. Wayne is about 90 minutes south (by modern car), and came up to lead us in diagnosis and repair.

Before we had even arrived to document the process, Wayne and Bryan had pulled the rear axle and torque tube out—a process which required a whopping 30 minutes of effort—and begun investigation.

Opinions vary wildly as to the wisdom of modifying any given component of a T. One point on which every enthusiast agrees is that the original thrust washers in the rear axle need to go at the first opportunity.

To speed production and lower prices, Ford avoided precision machining by using babbitt washers that would wear-in over the course of the first few miles. A century later, that babbitt will eventually come apart, introducing large amounts of unwanted movement inside the rear.

That’s what happened during Bryan’s test drive. The babbitt finally failed and suddenly the axles could move in and out, permitting the ring gear to jump a tooth on the pinion. The rear axle housing was now full of bits of metal, and the sharp gear teeth were a sign that the sudden mis-mesh had taken its toll on the ring-and-pinion.

With that trouble diagnosed, Wayne informed us that the only course was a complete teardown of the rear axle, followed by a thorough cleaning to remove all the stray metal, and reassembly utilizing new consumables throughout—plus a new ring-and-pinion to replace the damaged originals.



1. Divorcing the torque tube assembly from the center of the axle revealed that there was a catch in the driveshaft and sharp metal on the ring gear—neither a good sign. The torque tube assembly was set aside for later inspection. 2. The axle housing cap required some pry-bar persuasion to come off the end of the axle. With it removed, the outer roller bearing slid right out. Note that here are four identical roller bearings that need to be put back in their original locations. 3. Sheared locating pins in the gear case were the next sign of trouble. They would have to be drilled and removed with a screw extractor. 4. There should have been three thrust washers for each axle, but the center ones, made of babbitt, had disintegrated. The other side was nearly identical.





05



06



07



08

5. Bryan's daughter, Mackenzie, removed all the bolts from the ring gear except one, which was blocked by a differential bolt. 6. The roller bearings ride inside sleeves. Ford made a special tool to remove them, and it's reproduced today — which is good, because the job is about impossible without one. 7. Removing the nut from the problematic differential bolt allowed it to be taken out. The other two were left in until the ring gear was off. 8. After we detached the universal joint at the transmission, the driveshaft should have just slid out, but it was reluctant. The pry bar aided our cause yet again. The only real problem was a buildup of rust. With the rear torn down, we planned to reconvene once the new parts (including bronze thrust washers) had been delivered. ⚙️

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PERFECTION ACHIEVED

How an epic makeover earned a 1958 Buick Century Caballero the AACA Zenith Award — Part 2

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARRY KLUCZYK • RESTORATION IMAGES COURTESY OF JOE TONIETTO

There's a level of detail in automotive restoration that, once committed to, can become all-consuming. But breaking each area down into its component parts, then examining and tackling those parts individually—working alone and with trusted specialists—you will eventually have a finished project that has been completed to the finest degree. This was the path taken by Joe Tonietto as he brought his “free” Buick hardtop station wagon back to life, and the result of his dedication made history.

When we last saw our feature Caballero (“Celestial Body,” HCC #201), its owner had decided to undertake a full rebuild to original specifications, rather than simply getting the car roadworthy and using it with the patina it had earned by surviving nearly 25 years of abandonment in the desert Southwest. “I tossed it over a long time,” Joe tells us, “and I

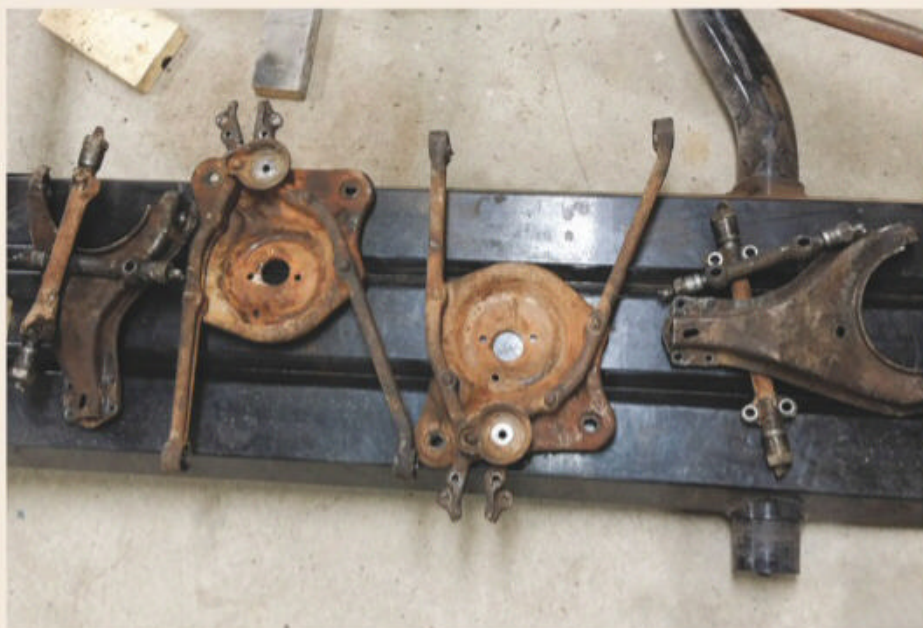
decided it had great bones. I was going to pull the body off and do a frame-up restoration.”

Acquiring a parts car had already proven beneficial as it offered up its correct Dynaflow transmission and numerous other key components, so this seasoned restorer could focus his energy on repairing damage, rebuilding good core parts, and replacing others using correct-appearing materials and factory-style finishes. “My goal was to build a safe, reliable, and fun-to-drive car that was the best I could make it,” Joe says. “As [the Buick] progressed and I realized how great it could be, I kept stretching my expectations, and utilized professional help where I didn't feel I had the skills or knowledge to get the job done to the level I wanted. I admit, the end result was a product of ‘mission creep.’”

How did this project become so much more than initially conceived? It

was a blend of a solid base car, access to proper resources, and Joe's personal talent and tenacity. He would enlist expert assistance in finish stripping, engine machining work and transmission rebuilding, some sheetmetal repairs, upholstery creation, trim polishing, and exterior painting. He personally tackled frame and floorpan repairs, mechanical component restoration, interior panel fabrication, flat-glass installation, and countless other aspects solo, or when needed, with assistance from his wife, Julie, and even his grandchildren. The scarcity of accurate reproduction and NOS replacement parts for this 1958 Buick only added to the challenge, as Joe admits, “It's the most difficult car I've ever done.”

It took four years of solid work to bring the wagon back to as-new, and he put in extra effort to complete it in time to be displayed at the March 2019 Detroit AutoRama. The appearance at that hot rod event didn't result in a trophy, but it did



Suspension control arms were ready for glass bead abrasive cleaning. Upper control arms were factory-painted black, while the lowers appeared unpainted; Joe had the uppers powder coated satin black, the lowers in satin clear, before replacing worn shafts and bushings.



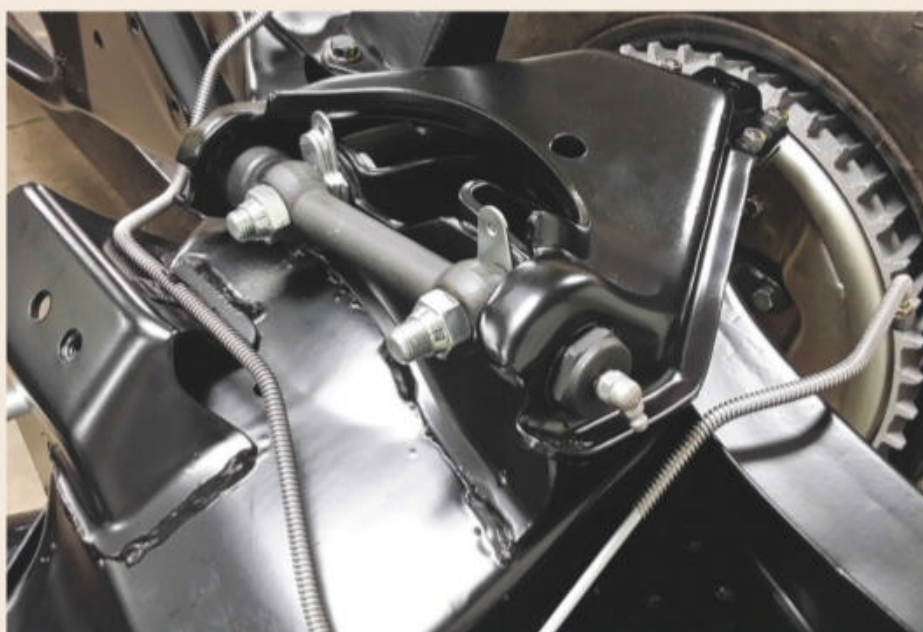
Wherever possible, original fasteners were reused, prepped for replating with original or current equivalent coatings by degreasing and tumbling or glass bead abrasive cleaning. Plating services were provided by Williams Finishing and Mid-States Plating Co. in Michigan.



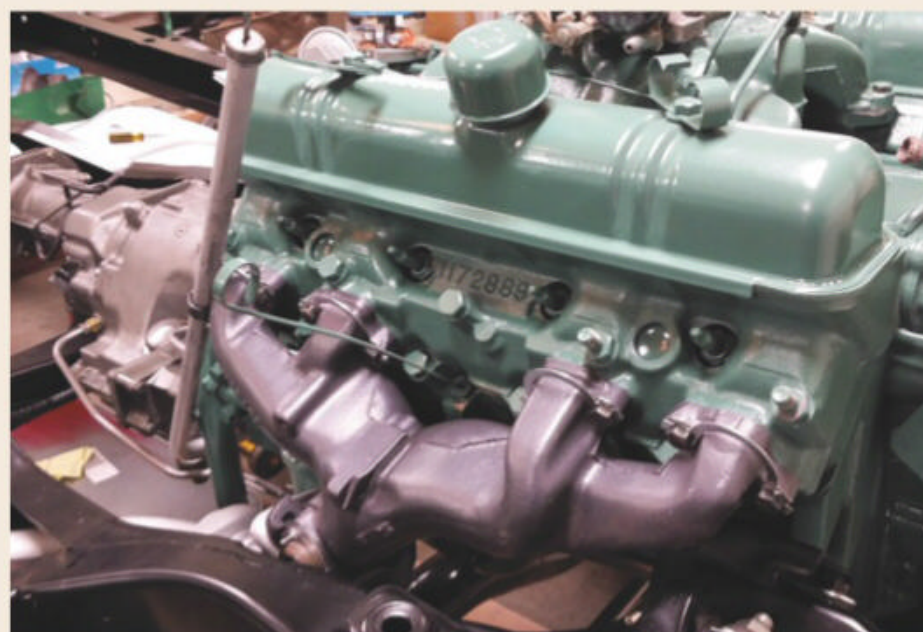
The painted headlamp adapters, located above the headlamps and under the eyebrow of the fenders, were removed and kept as paint master samples. The new paint spray-out panels were an exact match to the car's factory applied metallic Garnet Red color.



The body went to SS Stripping in Sterling Heights, Michigan, for abrasive cleaning and priming; desert notwithstanding, leaves, dust, and debris had rusted areas of the floorpans, wheel wells, and inner rockers. SS Stripping powder coated the frame, suspension, and driveline parts.



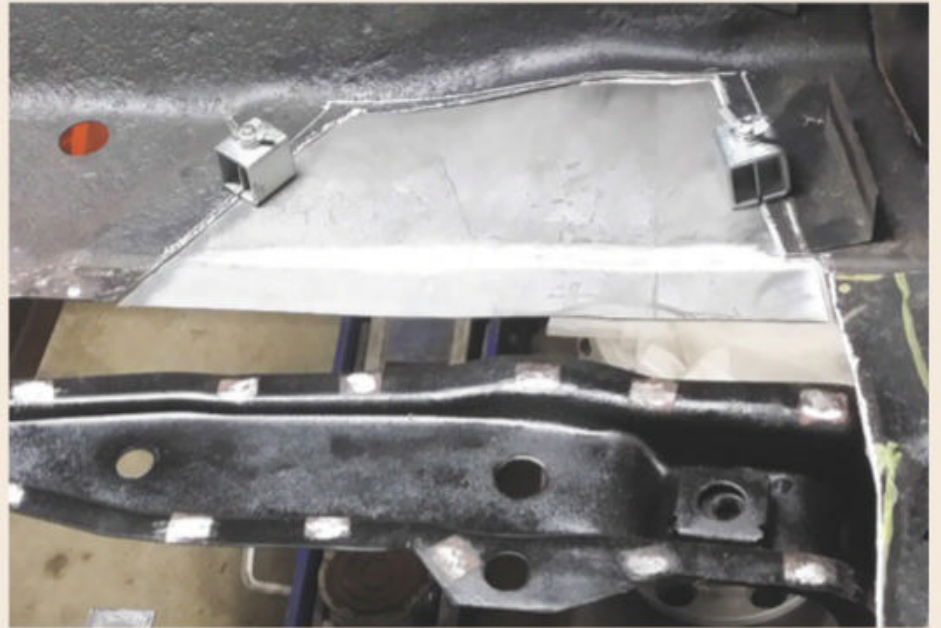
Once home, the finished frame got its front suspension, assembled with correctly plated fasteners, new control arm shafts and bushings, restored aluminum brake drums, and new lines from Inline Tube. All four coil springs original to the car were reused.



The assembled, painted 364-cu.in. V-8 was bolted in the chassis along with the rebuilt Dynaflo automatic and refurbished torque tube and rear axle. Motor mounts, transmission thrust pad, and trans mounts were either new or refurbished with fresh vulcanized rubber.



After the chassis was completely assembled and the engine successfully broken in, the chassis was wrapped in plastic and stored while the bodywork proceeded. The body shell was mounted to a rotisserie to permit easy tool access to all exterior and interior surfaces.



New floorpans are not available, so floorpan repairs meant fabricating and welding replacement areas. Patch panels were butt welded to the original sheet metal and puddle welded to the underfloor reinforcements where factory spot welds had been located.



Todd Reiter of Reiter's Metal Craft made the split rear seat center pivot plus major sheetmetal repairs, including appearance and structural work. The body was fit on the chassis for panel alignment and so metalwork was done with correct body-to-frame attachments.



Masterworks Automotive Services of Madison Heights, did final bodywork and paint, using PPG products. It took six coats of 3055 primer, one coat of sealer, four of DBC Basecoat, and three of Global 8152 clear, the latter wet-sanded with 1000- to 5000-grade paper.



In some cases, Joe had to fabricate new trim clips for exterior moldings from spring steel because replacements were not available. Some stainless-steel trim polishing and all of the aluminum trim panel striping and anodizing was handled by Jerry Worful of Detroit, Michigan.



The instrument cluster and dash assembly were bench assembled and tested before installation. Redundant ground circuits were added for in-dash electrical devices and exterior and interior lamps. Fitting the assembled dash required patience and several helping hands.



The car went back to Masterworks for installation and final alignment of hood and fenders after Joe installed the electrical system, trim, and glass. Brian Hilliwere of B&G Auto Glass, St. Clair Shores, Michigan, installed the windshield and liftgate glass with Joe's help.



Hoping to instill an appreciation for this hobby and foster their love of old cars, Joe enlisted his grandchildren to help at various points in the Buick's restoration. They enjoyed the task of rolling the adhesive-backed insulation and deadener material to the floor.



Joe built a steam box and holding fixture to saturate the formed hardboard headliner panels. When steamed, panels are flexible and bend to follow roof contours; various props positioned them until dry. Extruded plastic retainers were fitted to hold the panel edges.



Rear wheelhouse covers were originally molded, grained material. Jim Pickard and Joe thermoformed and bonded foam-backed vinyl to replicate the look and feel of the original parts. They also created several parts that are not currently available from suppliers.



The 160-square "DynaStar" grille retained factory chrome plating. Patience was required to mask each square before painting the supporting ribs. All die-cast repairs and plating, and most stainless-steel trim repair and polishing, was done by Dan Sommer of Clawson, Michigan.



A final task was overcasting, or serging, the edges of the rear compartment load floor carpets. Joe found a Singer overcasting machine — originally used for Cadillac work in the Fleetwood facility into the 1960s — that duplicated the stitching of the original carpet.



Jet Age influence was seen in Buick's turbine blade-styled lighting and vent control bezels, plus vent control sliders like "T" handle throttles. Carpeted load floors and seatbacks were unique to Caballero.

lead to invitations to show the car elsewhere. "I took it to Hershey in 2019, hoping to get an AACA First Junior, and we did," Joe recalls. "It didn't only receive a First Junior, it won a national award, 'Top Postwar Buick 2019.' I later learned it was a nominee for the 2020 Zenith Award.

"I didn't know what that award was, and had to look it up: it's for the top restored car in the Antique Automobile Club of America, and only 12 to 15 cars a year are selected as Zenith finalists, out of the 3,000 or so displayed at AACA National meets," he continues. "After doing a bit of research, I fully appreciated the significance and prestige of the Zenith Award; it was amazing to be nominated, super exciting. There was no question that I'd take it to the Grand National for the Zenith judging.

"I did not set out to build a Zenith Award contender; that award didn't exist when I began this project. I set out to build the best 1958 Caballero I could build," Joe muses. "I can't explain why our car was the first postwar Zenith winner, but the judging teams were very thorough and well-informed, and we are very proud that they chose our Caballero."

With this in mind, we asked what he considers necessary to perform a restoration to this level of quality. Joe's response was carefully considered: "In my opinion, top restorations always exhibit impeccable workmanship and an unrelenting attention to detail. Among the important features are: all components correct for the make/model/year/era; correct fasteners, no 'hardware store' bolts; correct grains, textures, and materials in the interior; correct component finishes, including correctly plated brackets, clamps, mechanisms, and fasteners; meticulous assembly with appropriate, consistent panel gaps; visually pleasing

and consistent exterior trim and molding alignment; consistent and appropriate door, hood, and tailgate/trunk opening and closing efforts and sounds; functionally correct systems and features, everything operates as intended; and appropriate fit and finish of all appearance and underbody surfaces. Those are the things that are apparent to people viewing the car. And of course, I believe a top restoration must also be capable of being used as it was originally intended."

After two years of being trailered to shows, the Estate Wagon will indeed be used on the road this year. The Tonietto family looks forward to the adventures that will come, while fondly reminiscing

on the experience. "It was a tough car to do, but it turned out great," Joe says with a smile. "I'm so thankful to have the skills and resources to do it, and Julie supports this hobby. There are certain friends and companies that understand your expectations and work to meet them. I'm grateful to have friends like Jim Pickard, Pat O'Malley, and Larry Schramm: We help each other on a lot of projects and see things that maybe the others don't. I couldn't achieve that quality of body and paintwork by myself, so it pays to know what you can do and what you can't, and pick the right people and companies to help. And sometimes, the most important tool in the toolbox is your checkbook." 🐶



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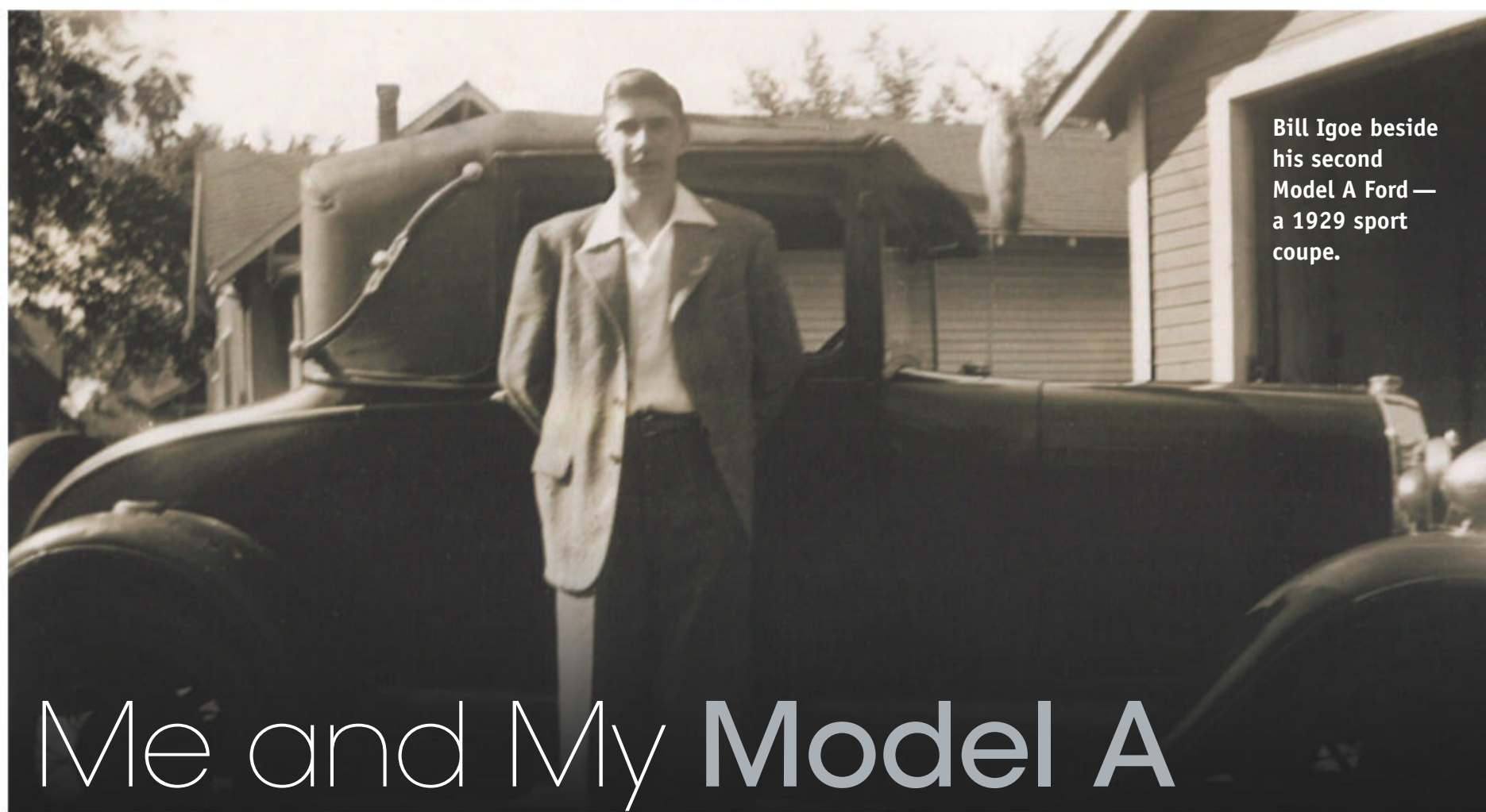
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Bill Igoe beside his second Model A Ford — a 1929 sport coupe.

Me and My Model A

STEALING WORDS FROM A FRANK SINATRA SONG,

“When I was 17, it was a very good year.” For me, the year was 1942, and I’d convinced my parents that I needed a car. I could use it on my paper route, I argued. Plus, I had the money.

The next day, I spotted an ad for a 1929 Ford Model A coupe with an asking price of \$35. I knew nothing about cars, but was determined to learn and, lucky for me, my total savings amounted to \$35. (If this sounds like a low price, remember that gasoline was 18 cents a gallon at the time.)

When I saw this car, I fell in love. It had been brush-painted blue with black fenders, but to me it looked beautiful. I bought it and, when I went to bed that night, I was so excited I didn’t sleep a wink. I laid awake thinking of all the things I could do and all the places I could go in my new car. It was a dream come true.

Ford’s Model A was the ultimate in simplicity. Its four-cylinder engine made about 40 horsepower and used a gravity-feed fuel system that eliminated the need for a fuel pump. The mechanical brakes were its greatest weakness. If the brake rods were not adjusted perfectly, one wheel would grab more than another, causing the car to veer so sharply that it could pull the steering wheel out of your hands. Still, it was the perfect vehicle for a rookie to learn about all of the mechanical parts that made a car tick.

A friend of mine also had a Model A, and one of our pastimes was hill climbing. For our contests, we used the hill where the Bush Lake Ski Jump now stands in Bloomington, Minnesota. We could never get to the top, but the winner was the guy who was closest to the top before his engine stalled. This hill was dangerous, because, if the car got too far sideways to the face of the hill, it could tip over. We would never be able to explain that to our parents.

After a while, my Model A’s engine started to make a loud knocking sound. A mechanically inclined neighbor told me that

the knock was piston slap, and the engine needed to be overhauled. The neighbor told my buddies and me how we could go about doing the overhaul ourselves. I still remember our surprise and awe when we removed the head and oil pan. We were amazed to see all those smooth and shiny parts that were in the heart of this little engine. We learned how to ream the cylinders, grind the valves, and fit the bearings. It was amazing how fast we picked this up. All the replacement parts came from the local Sears, Roebuck and Co., or the Western Auto store.

The neighbor then suggested that shaving some metal off the head would increase the compression ratio, and therefore “soup up” the engine. It sounded like a great idea. I took the head to my high school machine shop, ran it through a metal plainer and removed about 1/8 inch of cast iron.

With the neighbor’s help, we finally figured out how to put it back together, but we had made everything so tight that the car would not turn over with the starter. The neighbor offered to give us a push down the alley with his car. At about 20 mph, I let out the clutch in second gear. The rear wheels dragged for a moment, but then the engine sprang to life. What a sweet sound it was. That rhythmic *tick, tick, tick*, so characteristic of that engine. Needless to say, we were very proud and happy that we had done this by ourselves.

Later that same year, I was able to trade for a beautiful 1929 Ford Model A sport coupe. This car cost big bucks—\$75! It had a fabric top, but it was not a convertible. It also had a fold-down back window, manifold heater, and a rumble seat. I wish I owned that car today.

These cars took my friends and me to school, the Excelsior Amusement Park, and on cruises around the city lakes. I remember one evening I convinced a pretty neighbor girl to go for a ride, and I was rewarded with my first kiss when we returned home. I still remember those first two Model A’s, and that first kiss. 🐾

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GAA Classic Cars Auction, Greensboro

Annual February sale in North Carolina netted \$19.6 million

THE SOUTHEAST CONTINUED TO BE A SOURCE OF STELLAR AUCTION
 action earlier this year, courtesy of GAA Classic Cars Auction, which held its first of a series of scheduled sales at its Greensboro, North Carolina, facility on February 25-27. The sale conformed to social-distancing guidelines; here, only registered bidders and consignors were permitted in person. Online and phone bidders contributed, and spectators streamed a live video feed, throughout the weekend—all witnessed 628 lots (by our count), encompassing all types of collectible vehicles, cross the block.

Two-seat sports cars and iconic muscle cars dominated the top-10 sale positions, led by a 2017 Ford GT '66 Heritage

Edition that had logged only 12 miles and brought \$1,047,600 (all listed sale prices include a buyer's premium). It was followed by a 2017 Acura NSX—serial #2—that achieved \$210,600. A 1959 Dodge Custom Royal convertible landed in third place, having sold for \$189,000, though the rare Super D-500 engine below its hood likely drove that result. GAA went on to sell 571 lots, or 91 percent, for a grand total of \$19.6 million, most of which was amassed by five-figure results, such as the Chevrolets we present here. For a complete list of results from the first Greensboro sale, and an up-to-date 2021 GAA event calendar, visit gaaclassiccars.com.



1958 CHEVROLET BISCAYNE

Reserve: Undisclosed
Selling Price: \$15,700
Avg. Market Range: \$12,000-\$19,500

Arguably, the 1958 redesign of the General Motors fleet was eye-opening, and new model designations at Chevrolet—save for Bel Air—accompanied the fresh bodywork. The upscale Impala garners all the attention today and the Biscayne is almost a footnote, which bodes well for '58 enthusiasts looking for a better bargain. Take this example, for instance: A four-door sedan that, when sold new in nearby Raleigh by Carpenter Chevrolet (according to the original invoice), was equipped with a 283-cu.in. V-8, automatic transmission, power steering and brakes, and air conditioning—all of which were still in the car. The body was reported to have had one repaint.



1988 CHEVROLET CAVALIER Z24

Reserve: Undisclosed
Selling Price: \$4,400
Avg. Market Range: \$1,500-\$5,000

The advent of General Motors' J-car platform ushered in a new era of domestic compact car design—one that, for many, also launched a fresh wave of criticism. While much of it was well-founded, the J-car made from 1982 to 2005, had longevity. Chevy's compact was the sporty Z24 Cavalier, and it was unveiled for 1986. This was an '88 convertible, replete with a then-notable 25-mpg-rated 2.8-liter engine backed by an automatic. The front-wheel-drive cruiser also had a tilt wheel, AM/FM/cassette stereo, cruise control, and air conditioning. Priced at \$15,990 new, it was a relatively hot car. Here it seemed clean. Who said deals don't exist anymore?



1965 CHEVROLET CORVAIR MONZA

Reserve: None
Selling Price: \$10,550
Avg. Market Range: \$14,000-\$29,000

It's often said that color can make or break any sale. A good example may be this Corvair Monza. At first blush, it's a relatively desirable car among certain enthusiasts: a midrange model in the convertible body style, equipped with a 164-cu.in. engine. It also had a four-speed manual and a black vinyl interior. According to the listing, the latter was, "mostly original," suggesting that the Chevy had not been fully restored. But what about that color? Well, the Corvair had admittedly been repainted—in its original shade of Madeira Maroon. Horse of a different color? If that was the only nit to pick, then someone scored a nice deal.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price: What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer's premium)

Average Market Range: Values coincide with current market trends for vehicles rated from condition #2- to #1, respectively

JULY

15-17 • Central Pennsylvania Auto Auction

Lock Haven, Pennsylvania
800-248-8026 • cpautoauction.com

22-24 • GAA Classic Cars

Greensboro, North Carolina
855-862-2257 • gaaclassiccars.com

28-31 • Mecum Auctions

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
262-275-5050 • mecum.com

Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.



BARRETT-JACKSON

pieces of automobilia and charity lots bringing in the rest. "It was wonderful to be back among our friends and family in the collector car community," said Craig Jackson, CEO and chairman of Barrett-Jackson. "The pandemic challenged us all in different ways, which is why it was great to reconnect and celebrate this passion we all love so much. It's also why we curated a quality docket that included some of the very best examples of collector cars."

Among the prewar American collector cars to sell was this 1932 Chevrolet Confederate Deluxe that changed hands for \$56,100. The Chevy was restored in 1975 and remained in a private collection until 2020. The car was outfitted with two spare tires, a spotlight, and a rumble seat. Power was provided by a stock 194-cu.in. six paired with a three-speed manual.

Another highlight of Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale was the first Ford Thunderbird ever sold. Produced on September 9, 1954, VIN 005 came equipped with a 292 "Y-block" V-8 engine; Ford-O-Matic automatic transmission; and power steering, windows, and adjustable seats. The T-Bird was used as a test vehicle in an article that appeared in the October 1954 issue of *Sports Illustrated* and, years later, was meticulously restored to original condition. The car came with documented step-by-step restoration photos and had been a part of a private collection for decades. When the bidding ended, the Thunderbird sold for \$374,000. Full results from Scottsdale are available at barrett-jackson.com.



View and search through thousands of upcoming auction vehicles in one place at the Hemmings Auction Showroom, www.hmn.com/auctioncalendar.



MECUM

Mecum Glendale Hauls in \$42.3 Million

MECUM'S GLENDALE, ARIZONA, SALE, MARCH 18-20, SET A NEW RECORD FOR THE AUCTION

house with \$42.3 million in sales—higher than its inaugural Glendale event two years ago. More than 700 cars found new owners, delivering a sell-through rate of 86 percent. One of the top Chevys to sell was this 1959 Impala convertible. It underwent a full rotisserie restoration and was powered by a 348 engine with triple two-barrel carburetors. The car had power top, steering, and brakes; Continental kit; Autronic eye; paint dividers; spinner caps; and an AM radio. The highly optioned and accessorized Arizona Impala went to a new home after a winning bid of \$200,750. Also among the notable sales was a 1939 Cadillac convertible that changed hands for \$209,000. It was said to be to be one of five known to exist and one of 27 built. The Caddy was first in class at the La Jolla Concours d'Elegance in 2015 and was awarded an AACA Senior. It was fitted with a 346-cu.in. 140-hp V-8 engine, Stromberg carburetor, three-speed transmission, four-wheel hydraulic drum brakes, and wide whitewall tires. Full results of Mecum's Glendale auction are now available at mecum.com.

Barrett-Jackson Eclipses \$100 Million

BARRETT-JACKSON'S SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, AUCTION, MARCH 20-27, HAULED IN A TOTAL OF

\$105 million with more than 95 world records and \$5.8 million raised for charity. When the final figures were tallied, 1,054 vehicles sold for more than \$95 million, with 1,000

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1931 FORD MODEL A

Reserve: \$11,000

Selling Price: \$17,220

Recent Market Range:

\$10,210-\$16,340

“Henry’s Lady” looked prim and proper in De Luxe Coupe form, especially in this car’s era-correct, all-black hue. It appeared to be a well-cared-for driver, with just a few dents and paint blemishes, and good bright trim; a wood trunk sat on the luggage rack behind the open-air rumble seat. The fabric-upholstered interior presented well and included lap belts. The 40-hp, 200.4-cu.in. four-cylinder was noted to run a 6-volt alternator and had some failing paint. The three-speed gearbox had minor weeps, but promised smooth shifting. This Coupe got nearly 19,000 views, and bidder activity saw it handily beating both its reserve and the average market range.



1971 CHEVROLET C10

Reserve: \$14,500

Selling Price: \$16,013

Recent Market Range:

\$13,220-\$19,520

This “Action Line” C10, in Cheyenne trim with Yukon Yellow and White paint, turned heads. It was sold as a running and driving project vehicle that just received a rebuilt 454 V-8 with a 750-cfm carb, headers, and 2½-inch dual exhausts; it sent power through a rebuilt Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 with a shift kit. The suspension was lowered. The paint and chrome were said to be in very good condition, but the bed floor needed finishing. The interior had new upholstery, along with some nonfunctioning gauges; it needed a headliner and seatbelts. The seller responded to comments and questions, and this auction was extended as the final, market-correct bid found the truck a new home.



1984 TOYOTA LAND CRUISER

Reserve: \$11,000

Selling Price: \$24,675

Recent Market Range:

\$10,250-\$17,530

Like the Jeep CJ and Land Rover, Toyota’s Land Cruiser is a legendary 4x4. This claimed-original four-speed manual FJ60 was noted to have minor condition issues with the driver’s seat, but its undercarriage had none of the corrosion typical of vehicles of this age. In mechanical terms, the 4.2-liter inline-six-powered 160,140-mile wagon was said to run well, but leaked some power steering fluid; the seller suggested it may be ready for a suspension refresh, too. Videos showed the FJ60 in motion, and detailed photography gave the bidders confidence that this desert-dwelling Toyota was everything it presented; the healthy selling price more than doubled the reserve.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price*: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer’s 5-percent fee
(*sold as a Premium Classified following the live auction)

Recent Market Range: The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months

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1956 CHEVROLET NOMAD

Reserve: \$55,000
Selling Price: \$59,850

Recent Market Range:
\$78,520-\$98,530

Bright paint colors were hot in the mid-1950s, but this teal 1956 Nomad had much more to set it apart. The restomod was unique, from its shaved handles and body-color bumpers to its modern bucket-seat interior to its Corvette drivetrain and suspension parts. The 300-hp LT1 V-8 and automatic were said to run without issue, while the air-ride-equipped suspension and 'Vette disc brakes and alloys promised notably improved performance over stock. More than 800 photos of the build went with this two-door wagon, which bested its reserve, but didn't reach the average market range; that's always a potential outcome for a highly personalized custom-build like this.



1954 STUDEBAKER 3R5

Reserve: \$7,000
Selling Price: \$10,763
Recent Market Range: \$6,540-\$10,320

Early postwar Studebaker pickup trucks like this 3R5 were genuinely rare compared to their Ford and GM competitors. It was the type of work vehicle that could still be used as such, or be the basis for a comprehensive restoration, considering its seller-described "fair" paint over bodywork with minor rust and dents. The bench-seat interior appeared comfortable and tidy, with a promised-functioning "Climatizer" heater. A non-original two-speed automatic backed a straight-six engine, which ran with an updated 12-volt electrical system; a video showed the engine running. This Studebaker garnered nearly 14,000 views and sold just beyond the top end of the market range.



1991 JAGUAR XJ6

Reserve: None
Selling Price: \$8,301
Recent Market Range: \$4,710-\$7,120

The fourth series of Jaguar's beloved XJ luxury sedan sported classic good looks, a smooth DOHC straight-six engine, and a peerless blend of ride and handling. This XJ40-chassis XJ6 Sovereign appeared a fine example of the breed, being a single-family car that traveled just over 35,000 miles from new, and had cosmetics showing that little use; a small fender dent and driver's-seat leather wear were minor minuses. Nonfunctioning A/C was noted as the only mechanical failing, save for a slightly soft brake pedal after periods of sitting. The more than 30 bids tendered on this British modern classic illustrated its desirability, and it sold for a strong price.

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I enjoy the

routine

maintenance

of my classics,

and I love

the way they

perform

afterwards.



Auto Maintenance 1A

One night, I was driving home on the freeway when an old, neglected 1956 Mercury passed me at a good clip. As it flew by, its left front wheel came off, hubcap, hub, and all. It wobbled crazily out into the fast lane of the highway and bounced over the center divider. Fortunately, no cars were hit. Simultaneously, the Mercury dropped to the pavement, creating a shower of sparks, and then careened off onto the shoulder. I had heard of such things happening, but had never witnessed them before.

I doubled back to see if I could help, but there was nothing I could do. The driver was unhurt, but the car was most likely damaged beyond repair, unless the fellow had a lot of money and knew of a shop that could handle it. Parts for such cars are no longer available at Pep Boys.

Why did it happen? The answer is simple. With cars from the 1960s on back, the front wheel bearings need to be packed with fresh grease every 10,000 miles. If that isn't done, the bearings will eventually run out of grease, get hot, wear out, and even seize on the spindle. And if you are doing 70 mph at that moment, you could lose a wheel, lose control, and destroy your car, and probably not do yourself any good either.

I know this as I did routine maintenance at "service" stations as a lad. They were called service stations, because they did a lot more than just pump gas. You see, cars from the early Sixties and prior needed regular attention. They required oil changes every 1,000 miles, along with a chassis lube. And they needed ignition tune-ups every 10,000 miles in order to run properly.

Also, cooling systems needed to be flushed and refreshed every year. And universal joints needed packing every 5,000 miles, too. But sadly, most people were blissfully unaware, and didn't do all that routine maintenance, with the result that most of what we now call classic cars were neglected to death. The few that were scrupulously maintained, on schedule, lasted nearly forever.

Today, manufacturers know that most people don't maintain their cars, so they have designed them to be almost maintenance-free, with sealed bearings and modern electronics for ignition and so forth. But the problem with this approach is, when new cars wear out, they are usually junked, because fixing everything isn't worth the expense. And

actually, new cars are not engineered to be repaired and rebuilt the way the old ones were. It is wasteful, and ecologically less friendly in many ways.

As some readers may know, I spend a lot of time in New Zealand and down there, as well as in Australia, you see many classic American cars from the 1930s on up to recent times, at shows and on the road. Why? Well, for one thing, cars of any kind cost a lot in those countries and, as a result, they are usually coddled and cared for. Also, many Kiwis and Aussies grew up watching American movies, and fell in love with our big stylish American cars that they call "Yank Tanks." They cherish them, and it shows.

There is an annual show in Tustin, California, that is for original cars only—hot rods and restorations are not allowed. It is surprising how many cars that are 40, 60, and 80 years old that, though they don't look new, are in astoundingly good shape, run well, and are driven to the meet. They are a pleasure to behold, and they evoke memories that even a restored car cannot.

I enjoy the routine maintenance of my classics, and I love the way they perform afterwards. You may not care for routine auto maintenance yourself, but if you check around in your area, you will likely find a mechanic who knows how to do what needs doing. Try mentioning Studebaker around them and look for a spark of recognition. You will enjoy your classic much more if you follow the recommendations in the service manual.

Buying and caring for a classic car is like adopting a puppy. It is more than just acquiring a possession. It is a commitment that requires something from you in return for what it has to give. If you choose to neglect your old car, it will sooner or later need expensive repairs and parts may not be easy to find. Also, sadly, when you mention your dilemma, you will hear people saying, "Yeah, old cars just weren't that dependable and didn't hold up like modern cars do."

And that is a self-fulfilling prophecy rather than a statement of fact. Back when they were built, most people drove their old cars into the ground, unaware of what they needed to keep them going year after year. This eventually resulted in problems, and indeed, sometimes they literally drove the wheels off of them, and that is a dangerous and preventable mistake. 🐾

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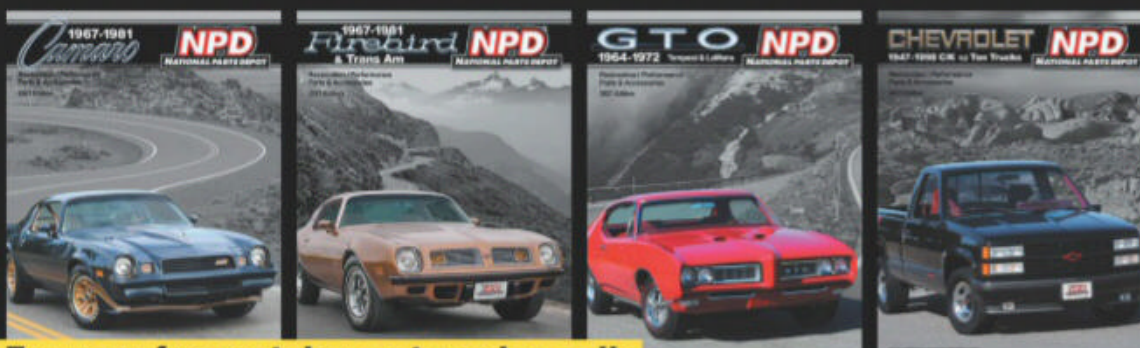
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