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OCTOBER 2021 #205



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Wade Kawasaki is the President and CEO of Legendary Companies, and is the Immediate Past Chairman of SEMA.

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spotlight
ultimate home garage

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View the intricate workings through the exhibition back

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time you look at this timepiece you'll see our nation's bird with its wings spread wide with pride. Those wings represent the best of our nation, our open embrace of freedom, and our indomitable spirit.

The features on this timepiece are stunning, from the beautifully-etched, gold-covered stainless steel case and blue Breguet hands to an exhibition back revealing the genius and beauty of the 19-jewel movement. The heirloom quality of these timepieces is garnering top dollar, many selling for as much as \$16,000. However, after decades in the luxury watch industry, we know how to make remarkable timepieces affordable.

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Gearing Up the Garage

As I rolled around on the hot asphalt, stretching my left arm to try and reach a bolt under my wife's car, I was reminded – painfully – of the part of working on cars I really did not enjoy. This time out, I was just trying to secure a buzzing heat shield that had worked loose on the late-model family truckster. I thought it would be a quick and easy fix and expected to spend just a few minutes under there. There was no need to move the car into the garage, nor to bring it over to the shop to get it up on the lift. I was wrong.

Trying to get to that one, infernal bolt with one hand, awkwardly reaching in from the side (since the car wasn't high enough to really get underneath), brought back some unpleasant memories.

If you ever messed around with cars, even just to keep one running without enlisting professional help, you've almost certainly needed to get underneath it to accomplish something. And with passenger cars made since the 1950s, that all but mandates raising the vehicle somehow. It goes without saying that this must be done safely, and while paying proper attention to lifting and supporting techniques is essential to avoiding injury or worse, it doesn't usually make the actual work go any easier.

I recall trying to help my dad fix the family cars when I was a kid, and all the times we had to get something done on the underside, usually an exhaust system repair. My father had invested in a set of heavy-duty ramps that we used often for such things, but of course, they only raised one end of the car, and it always seemed to be something in the middle that needed attention. Those ramps were fairly robust, and our cars were usually midsize models that didn't tax them much, but there just never seemed to be enough room to do what needed to be done without a lot of contortions, frustration, and pain – usually from bruised and skinned knuckles and the like. I soon came to dread that kind of work.

When I reached my teens and started working in gas stations, I gained occasional access to the lifts, and that triggered a serious revelation. Being able to stand up under a vehicle and use the full motion of my arms to reach up and take care of the task at hand was a marvel.

That lift access sparked the first serious inklings of garage lust I felt – that powerful desire to possess not simply my own space for

working on cars, but one outfitted properly to get real work done. And a lift was at the top of the wish list.

Understand that even in the '80s, having a lift in a home garage was nearly unheard of, save for the seriously well-funded. Most commercial garages in my area had been established decades earlier and had in-ground lifts; installing one of those in a residential garage seemed completely out of the question.

But, before the '80s were done, I started seeing above-ground lifts in some newly renovated car dealership service areas, and that got me thinking. Today, above-ground lifts for use in a home garage can be ordered with an internet connection and a credit card, making my dream far more attainable.

Alas, the garage in my current home hasn't got the available ceiling altitude to accommodate one of those setups, but I do have more space for cars and parts than I've ever enjoyed previously. I've also learned some lessons over the years to make under-car work without a lift a bit more manageable and fruitful, like having a clean garage floor rather than attempting to work on a gritty driveway. Also, a proper floor jack is essential to get the car high enough to be supported on nice, tall, jack stands. That, in turn, makes more room to roll around on a creeper – a good one, not the cheap metal-wheeled ones that were designed in the '40s and remain in production for some reason. And, of course, plenty of light makes all the difference, and that's far easier to achieve now with modern LED work lamps, which also eliminate the frequent burns that traditional droplights delivered via their explosion-prone 100-watt glass bulbs.

Yes, we're fortunate today to have access to garage equipment and gear for personal use that was once only accessible to – and priced for – the pros. My dream garage has yet to be realized, but plenty of enthusiasts have achieved their own versions, as this month's special feature illustrates. A good work space is essential to enjoying classic cars for most of us, and there's probably never been a better time to create one for yourself. Let us know what you're working on and give us a glimpse of the space where you're getting it done. And know that if you have a lift, I'm jealous. 🙄

//
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to stand
up under a
vehicle and
use the full
motion of
my arms to
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take care of
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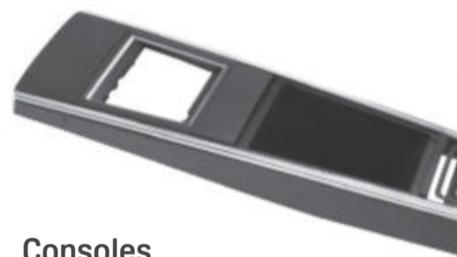


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LAS VEGAS CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE



Las Vegas Concours d'Elegance

THE LAS VEGAS CONCOURS d'Elegance returns for its second year, with more than 100 collector

cars planned for display at the Las Vegas Ballpark in Summerlin. "We initially set out to ensure that our inaugural event would earn its rightful place among the famed concours showings and competitions from around the world," notes founder, Stuart Sobek. "Now we are focused on elevating our second year to even greater heights."

The show will mix concours celebrations with upscale special events. Expect to see more than 15 classes of cars, dating from 1903 to the modern day.

The recently completed, \$150 million ballpark boasts nearly 4,000 ft² of visual display space, perfect for close-up coverage of rare and beautiful cars from exclusive private collections and automotive museums. The show will benefit Miracle Flights, a nonprofit that provides free air transportation for children and adults who need help reaching specialized medical care far from home.

The concours will take place from October 21-24, and tickets are available at lasvegasconcours.com.

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THE PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM HAS ANNOUNCED THE OPENING OF ITS NEW

ADV: Overland exhibit, which will highlight motoring adventures on Earth and beyond. The unique exhibit consists of 23 vehicles, including touring motorcycles, race vehicles from 1930 to the present, as well as sci-fi and NASA off-world exploration vehicles.

"We are proud to partner with Motorcycle Arts Foundation to gather this impressive display of vehicles in the spirit of adventure," said Petersen Executive Director Terry L. Karges. "*ADV:Overland* is an important retrospective of the freedom of exploration, to go where no one has ever gone and accomplish things that no one has ever accomplished."

Among the motorcycles and off-road vehicles on display are a 1903 California, the first motorized vehicle to travel coast to coast; a 1912 Henderson Four, used in the first motorcycle trip around the world; the 1933 Puch 250SL that was the first vehicle to travel from Europe to India; *Big Oly*, the 1969 Ford Bronco in which Parnelli Jones won the Baja 1000, Baja 500, and Mint 400; plus several others.

Exhibit curator Paul d'Orléans explains, "Most of these extraordinary machines have never been publicly displayed, and absolutely radiate the spirit of adventure: Some even retain their original accessories, 90 years later."

The exhibit will run until March 27, 2022. Visit petersen.org/overland for more information or to purchase museum tickets.

OCTOBER

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carlisleevents.com

3 • All Ohio Parts Spectacular

Randolph, Ohio • 800-553-8745
allohioparts.com

9-10 • Michigan Antique Festivals

Davisburg, Michigan • 989-687-9001
miantiquefestival.com

6-9 • AACA Eastern Regional Fall Meet

Hershey, Pennsylvania • 717-566-7720
hershey.aaca.com

14-16 • Chickasha Fall Swap Meet

Chickasha, Oklahoma • 405-224-6552
chickashaautoswapmeet.com

21-23 • Norman Swap Meet

Norman, Oklahoma • 405-651-7927
normanswapmeet.com

21-24 • Las Vegas Concours d'Elegance

Las Vegas, Nevada • 702-992-0512
lasvegasconcours.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.

Hershey Shows and Celebrations Return

ONE YEAR AFTER ITS FIRST-EVER CANCELLATION, THE AACA Fall Eastern Meet at Hershey will return with a full half-week of activities. The vaunted swap meet, car corral, flea market, show, and auction will all take place October 6-9 at Hershey Park. Also happening on October 6 will be the annual "Night at the Museum" at the AACA Museum. The fundraising event will feature country music, while honoring National Depot Parts founder Jim Schmidt with the AACA Museum Automotive Heritage Award. The associated RM Sotheby's auction will run at the Hershey Lodge on October 7-8. This is a great chance to bid on cars and classics that go back as far as the brass era. For those who are still lingering in the area, the 10th edition of the Hershey Hangover Tour, centered around Denver, Pennsylvania, is scheduled for October 9-12. Registration is currently open, and the tour is limited to 40 cars. For more information, visit hershey.aaca.com, rmsothebys.com, aacamuseum.org and svrhcca.weebly.com.

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| 165HR14 | CA67 | \$179.00 | 255/60WR15 | CN12 | \$499.00 |
| 185/70VR14 | CN36 | \$159.00 | 285/40YR15 | P7 | \$555.00 |
| 205/70VR14 | CN36 | \$269.00 | 345/35YR15 | P7 | \$599.00 |
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Cliff Car Emerges

WHILE THE SAGA OF THE DALE AUTOMOBILE and its promoter, Liz Carmichael, has received renewed attention thanks to the HBO documentary miniseries *The Lady and The Dale*, until recently few people knew whether Dale Clifft's original three-wheeler that started the whole episode still existed. But now the hand-built, Honda-based, Naugahyde-covered reverse trike that Clifft called the Commutercycle has emerged from hiding for its first-ever public display.

Starting with a 1963 Honda CB77 Super Hawk, Clifft removed the front fork, seat, and rear fender, and then welded to its frame a birdcage structure

made out of 1/2-inch electrical conduit, according to an interview with Clifft's coworker and biographer, Richard Smith. The windshield came from a Volkswagen, and Clifft built the cabin around the shape of the windshield.

When a \$2,000 check from Carmichael to Clifft bounced, the two had a falling out. The Commutercycle remained with Clifft, however, and sometime in the late 1970s, as Carmichael's headline-generating fraud trial came to a close, Clifft hid the prototype away in the garage of his next-door neighbor, Ruth McCarthy. When the Clifft family stopped paying rent for the garage, McCarthy and her daughter, Marie Coleman, took possession of the car.

More recently, Coleman has removed it from hiding and loaned it to the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, where it'll be on display for the next several months.



Van Ness Jag

WHEN CLIVE WILKINSON AND HIS buddy drove through San Francisco, California, in October 1971 as part of a cross-continent road trip, they probably expected to see all sorts of strange sights. But they assuredly did not expect to see a Jaguar E-type modified to look like it just barrel-rolled through a Spanish galleon docked in San Francisco Bay.

It's not too difficult to determine that the car's customizer started with a Series 1 E-type Open Two Seater built prior to 1967.

Clive, however, couldn't tell us much more about the car than what we can see in the photo shown here.

Given that Series 1 E-type OTS roadsters now regularly sell for six figures and that restoring them has put many a shop owner's children through college over the last few decades, it's highly unlikely this one has survived the last 50 years in this condition. But if anybody happens to know of an E-type that shed a set of big rear fender flares during



its restoration process—or better yet, if you also spotted this E-type roaming San Francisco at the time—let us know so we can try to piece together the history of this car.



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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It's a cruel fact of life, as we age, gravity takes over. Our muscles droop, our bodies sag and the weight of the world seems to be planted squarely on our shoulders. We dread taking a fall, so we find ourselves walking less and less—and that only makes matters worse.

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MATTHEW LITWIN WROTE IN ISSUE

#202 about his experience with the Chevrolet Citation. I'd like to add my story.

In 1981, I had cash and knew what I wanted. After being ignored at four local Chevy dealerships, I found a young woman, both salesperson and undergrad, who listened to my desires: a Cream-colored X-11 with four-speed and no other options. It took her two days to find one in Reno. She got my price approved and said she would go there to pick it up. After the drive downhill on U.S. 80, the excitement in her voice was astounding.

"How did you know about this car? What a blast to drive—this is a muscle car! No one here at the dealership had any idea." Kinda made me feel proud as a shopper.

For the next 22 years, it served as the family everything: Autocrossing, hauling cement or lumber, towing a trailer—the fat Goodyear Eagles in front made towing a breeze. Not to mention, the Citation provided overnight accommodations at many West Coast race events. The only upgrades were Konis and Air Lift bags in the back.

In 268,000 miles, the engine was never opened, with dealer servicing up to that point, though four clutch jobs were necessary (damn unequal-length half shafts!). Sucker sure did like nailing right-hand corners.

Alas, a red-light-running taxi took out the engine space beyond repair.

I still miss that ride and would gladly give my '68 Camaro restomod in a minute to have the X-11 back.

I subscribe to all three Hemmings pubs and so greatly appreciate your work.
Rod Morgan
San Francisco, California

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN THE JULY

issue of *HCC* on the first-generation Monte Carlo. The article mentions that the small-block 400 was discontinued after 1970. It may have been discontinued in the Monte Carlo, but GM still built them because I had one in my 1972 Impala two-door hardtop. It had a two-barrel carburetor and developed 250 hp, and it could smoke the tires if you weren't careful. It even got decent gas mileage (about 16-18 mpg) as I remember driving 30 miles at 80 mph, every day, to and from Saginaw Division of General Motors where I worked as a designer.

Stanley Howey
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

THANK YOU FOR THE INTERESTING

article by Bob Palma about the history of the Borg-Warner overdrive (*HCC* #202).

My experience with the Borg-Warner overdrive came when I brought back to life a long-dormant 1951 Studebaker Champion business coupe that I bought back in the 1970s. The car had been sitting behind a barn for many years and was what you would now call a "barn find." When I got the car running again, I didn't really understand the function of the handle marked "OD" at the lower left corner of the dashboard. Some of my friends joked that I shouldn't pull it because it might cause a drug overdose! The first time I drove it over about 30 miles an hour, I wondered why the engine was revving so high. When I lifted my foot off the accelerator, I got a big surprise when the car shifted up into overdrive and the revs dropped way down!

One thing that Bob didn't mention in the article was that the overdrive was equipped with a "free-wheeling" mechanism that would allow the transmission to disconnect from the driveshaft when the car was coasting. This was not such a great thing, since it would not allow you to use the engine to help slow the car during braking when the overdrive was engaged. I learned this the hard way when I almost lost my brakes descending a series of steep hills on a mountain road. After that, I always remembered to pull out that OD lever on slower mountain roads! I sold the car many years ago, but still have fond memories of driving the three-on-the-tree with overdrive!

David Nesbet
San Francisco, California

REGARDING THE JIM RICHARDSON

"Auto Maintenance 1A" column in the July issue: In 1953, my parents traded their 1941 four-door Plymouth for a new two-tone blue two-door hardtop Mercury with straight shift/overdrive, making this 16-year-old most happy. I remember my dad observing the "breaking in" driving speeds per the owner's manual. In 1956, a new orange-and-white two-door hardtop Mercury was bought, this also with straight shift/overdrive. I inherited the '53, which, within two years, I had mildly customized: 2-inch lowering blocks, dechromed, all black, long California bubble fender skirts, ¾ cam, high-compression aluminum heads, and three two-barrel carbs. It was driven mercilessly with 2,000-mile oil/filter

changes. Cooling system never flushed. Universal joints never touched. Only one valve job.

Coming home late one night, while crossing railroad tracks the engine died. I hit the starter button, but the battery was evidently too low to restart. I shifted into third gear and let out the clutch, but the freewheeling of the overdrive kept that from working. Only thing left was gritting my teeth and pulling out the T handle to disengage the overdrive. Third gear now caught, no damage, the engine started, and I drove home, no problem. The clutch slipped just a little when speed shifting by the time I traded the Mercury in 1960 for a '57 Chevrolet Bel Air two-door hardtop. It was then sold by the dealer to a local family and driven for several years before I lost account of it. That old flathead V-8 and transmission were evidently indestructible.
Larry Dutton
Lawrenceville, Illinois

I READ WITH INTEREST PAT FOSTER'S

editorial in the latest issue of *HCC* (#202). I am a real enthusiast for the Avanti. My hope is your hope, as I would love to see the car come back. I just sold a very old Mercedes-Benz, and I am looking to get an Avanti as I learned to drive on a 1953 Studebaker Champion—a great car in my memory. If you have more information about [the Avanti's return], please send the information or the website for [us] to examine. I, for one, would buy it, if available.
Bill Witham
Dover, Delaware

I PARTICULARLY ENJOYED THE

Chevrolet issue (*HCC* #202) as I am a Chevy nut, having driven 15 Chevrolets out of a lifetime of 30 vehicles owned. My first Chevy was my high school ride, a 10-year-old 1931 two-door deluxe model, with two spare tires in the fender wells. None of my cars were outstanding, just daily drivers such as Chevilles, Cavaliers, a Nomad, three S-10 trucks, and two Malibus. My current driver (and probably my last) is a 2017 Cajon Red Malibu, bought off a Hertz lot without a lot of the modern doodads, but with the small turbo four and black interior that I think is just fine.

We once had a 1959 Traveleze trailer, which we pulled with our 1958 Chevy Yeoman two-door station wagon. The Traveleze was ordered with cream and tan two-tone paint to match that of the Yeoman. On that endless desert highway between

California and Utah, I would “kick in” the overdrive and we went sailing along almost forgetting the trailer was back there. Incidentally, I’ve also owned five Fords, five Volkswagens, a Buick, a Plymouth, a Dodge RV, a Citroën, and a Hyundai.
Lescher Dowling
Sunnyvale, California

NICE TO SEE FOREIGN CARS IN your magazine. I have owned both foreign and American cars. My first car, in 1963, was an Austin-Healey 100-4, and most recently I purchased a 1985 BMW 635 CSi, which joins my Ford Bronco and two Mustangs. Keep up the good work!
John Sanchez
Hanford, California

READING THE AUGUST 2021 ISSUE of *HCC* brought back memories. In college in the early 1960s, I drove a 1960 Nash Metropolitan. I ported and polished the head, with the help of a man who had worked for BMC in England, and added two SU carbs. I learned a lot from that car, not the least of which was when brake work had to be done and the replacement fluid caused the seals in the system to swell and lock the brakes. I learned that the Girling brakes required special fluid, approved for Girling systems, to prevent the swelling and the rebuilding required. Later, I did a lot of work on 1960s Triumph sports cars, when they could be bought for less than \$200 each. I still used the special brake fluid to prevent issues, and never had the swelling problem again.
Harold A. Schwartz
Red Lion, Pennsylvania

THANKS FOR INCLUDING MORE foreign cars in the August issue of *HCC*. Hopefully you’ll get more favorable comments than negative (though there will always be some that think only U.S. cars should be included). I was fortunate to have my ‘67 Alfa Romeo Duetto (pictured top right) chosen for an article titled “Lifetime Love” or “The 300,000-mile Alfa” in the February 2009 issue of *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*. The car now has over 332,000 miles, as I continue to drive approximately 4,000 miles a year in New England—Irv Gordon, wherever you are, your record is not in jeopardy! As many before me have stated, “Keep up the good work,” as this is now the only car mag to which I subscribe!
Gary Venable
Via email



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...when I

get tired of

tripping over

extension

cords, I go

through fits of

reorganizing

to create

a vibe that

matches that

of my family.



Organized Chaos!

My brother and I learned early on that the garage was a dynamic space attached to the family abode. It was a hybrid zone that combined odd elements of the seldom-used, never-mess-with-it dining room, the family room, a new-car showroom, and a storage shed.

Early on, Dad had added a half loft, which immediately became the catch-all for old family heirlooms, too-good-to-get-rid-of furniture, and boxes of trinkets, all destined to be yard-sale fodder. The exposed wall studs and a handful of nails transformed the dead space into yard equipment and tool storage, the latter aided by a massive pegboard. The bays, obviously, were considered red-carpet space for our parents' ever-changing tastes in vehicles. That meant when said cars were home, goofing off with our bikes and toys, and occasionally some of the yard equipment, became a strictly outdoor activity.

Like most garages, our two-bay unit also served as a part-time workspace, where we learned how to chuck an open-end wrench in frustration with heightened precision, flinging with one hand while reaching for another projectile with the opposite appendage. It's where a can of polish could have easily been mistaken for a brewski on a steamy day, had one not glanced to confirm the label ahead of time. And it's where an improperly secured ladder or hastily positioned bicycle could have easily sent one of us to purgatory after its unintended collision with a car.

In a manner of speaking, our two-bay unit was our ultimate home garage. It wasn't pretty, but it wasn't a hoarder's safe haven either. There was an old stereo in a corner, rigged up to a speaker in the space, and a pair of less-than-waterproof speakers tucked under the roof eaves outside. The electric garage-door openers—a marvel of self-lifting engineering to a couple of daring kids—meant we had our own carnival ride, free of charge, by simply holding onto one of the door's handles. The trip to new heights was tortuously slow entertainment, but the challenge to “ride it to the stops” had been thrown down. Our garage was also where dad proudly displayed some of his prized old-car memorabilia.

My parents' garage hasn't been the same since. Moving helped. With the junk gone and the tools now neatly organized in a two-part containment system, we were able to sheetrock

the walls in the new place. We then painted and decorated it with an assortment of memorabilia collected from swap meets. It was this version of Dad's ultimate garage that continued in his most recent downsized residence, and my brother exercised similar sprucing techniques when he got his own unit. The visual organization and attention to detail is virtually second to none.

It's a trait I've strived to master since moving to the Green Mountains 15 years ago. The “ultimate” part of my detached, oversized three-bay garage is both the size—it contains a full loft accessible by a conventional set of stairs—and steel-beam construction, a fortunate bit of forward thinking by the prior owner responsible for its construction. There are three built-in work benches, space for my bead-blasting cabinet and air compressors, a trio of rolling toolboxes, and so on. Built-in cabinets and floor-to-ceiling shelves are nice, as are the ample windows that allow me to trim the wattage coursing through the meter on the side of the house.

However, the “garage” aspect is still that. Though the painted sheetrock walls provide sanctuary for the assortment of automotive ephemera that I've been fortunate to collect or inherit over the years, the structure also keeps my two vintage Buicks, as well as a daily driver, protected from the elements. It's also where I embark on woodworking projects and sorting antiques, while everything from skis to lawn trimmers are propped wherever it seems convenient. Tubs of stuff tend to migrate in and out. And often, when I'm done with a project for the day, I have a habit of leaving the tools where I put them down, knowing full well I will need them again in 24 hours (or should have put them in their designated static storage space). It's probably why, like my uncle, I've lost no less than six tape measures in the garage.

To put it another way, when I get tired of tripping over extension cords, I go through fits of reorganizing to create a vibe that matches that of my family, then I slip back to the horror of *Three Stooges meets the Keystone Cops*. That level of chaos, though, usually means other people might leave me alone for at least 10 minutes while I mumble incoherently about needing a tape measure. Which reminds me that the definition of an ultimate home garage often lies with how you utilize yours. 🐞

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— R., Lacey, Washington

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REO's Longevity

I think a lot of old-car people are like me: We have a handful of car brands that really fascinate us, a larger group we're sort of interested in, and a whole bunch of cars we almost never think about. The Big Three makes and the larger independents have many strong advocates, but unfortunately a lot of lesser brands have become an afterthought, at least in my humble opinion.

Among these latter brands, REO comes to mind, because I recently saw a photograph of a good-looking, obviously mid-1930s American car and I couldn't figure out what it was. It was a REO, of course – a 1936 Flying Cloud to be exact. When I discovered its year, I was surprised. I either never knew or had forgotten that REO was still building automobiles that late in the game. I'd thought by that point it had morphed into being strictly a truck builder. REO is one of those independent automotive companies that survived longer than most people know.

The reason Ransom Eli Olds used his initials as the brand name for his cars and trucks was because his former partners at Oldsmobile threatened to sue him if he called his new car or company the R.E. Olds Company, as he wanted, or any other name with Olds in it. Rather than risk the hassle of a suit, Olds settled on REO – it was a good name for a very good car.

Production at the new REO Motor Car Company began in October 1904, and the new REO car was displayed at the New York Automobile Show in January 1905. A two-cylinder, 16-hp, five-passenger detachable tonneau priced at \$1,250, it proved an instant hit. A second model, a one-cylinder, 7½-hp Runabout priced at \$650, soon joined the line.

From there it was almost straight up, with success following success. By 1906, REO was outproducing Oldsmobile by a good margin. In 1917, REO produced more than 25,000 cars. But once the Great Depression began, sales dropped precipitously. According to the industry trade paper *Automotive News*, in 1930 the company sold just 11,449 cars. REO had begun selling trucks in 1914 and had immediate success there

as well, selling nearly 15,000 units in 1919. Trucks were very profitable, and although light truck sales sank during the Depression, REO's heavier models continued to sell at a reasonable pace.

In the final decade of REO passenger car production, the company built some of the finest cars America has ever seen. The 1931 Royale 8-35 rode a stately 135-inch wheelbase and was powered by a big 358-cu.in. straight-eight engine generating 125 hp – more than three times what the Ford Model A produced. In 1932, the Royale was joined by a long-wheelbase sedan and a limousine on a 152-inch wheelbase. Just a handful of these breathtaking machines were built, because many wealthy



people had lost all their money; the ones who hadn't eschewed driving in ultra-expensive cars while their fellow Americans were standing in bread lines. Meanwhile, sales of the lower-priced REO models – key to maintaining sufficient sales volume – continued to drop, and the company's car operation dripped red ink. Thankfully, REO's heavy trucks continued to sell well, though light-duty truck sales fell as sharply as cars did.

By 1936 the end of the road had clearly been reached. The Royales were dropped and REO offered just two series of automobiles: Flying Cloud and Flying Cloud Deluxe, with prices beginning at \$795. These were solid, well-built cars, as REOs had always been, but the public had no confidence in REO's ability to survive as an automaker and few people wanted to buy a car that would likely become an orphan. Only about 3,200 1936 REO cars were produced before the line closed down for good.

But REO remained in the auto industry as a truck builder, and the onset of World War II reinvigorated the company, as it had for other independents, because the army ordered thousands of REO's heavy trucks for the war effort.

In 1957 REO's vehicle operations became a subsidiary of White Motors, which soon merged it with Diamond T to form Diamond REO Trucks. But growing competition eventually drove Diamond REO into bankruptcy and it was taken over by Volvo, which made little effort to keep the name alive. That said, REO's run – from 1905 to 1975 – made it one of the longest-lasting independents. 🐾

...REO's run—

from 1905 to

1975—made

it one of the

longest-lasting

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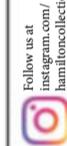
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Six-Seat 'Vette

*For sporting style, power, and capacity,
it's hard to beat this 1968 Buick Riviera*

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT LITWIN



It has a 7.0-liter V-8, hideaway headlamps, and exclusive, swoopy styling. If we're talking late-1960s General Motors products, that sounds a lot like a third-generation Corvette. Not everyone can daily drive a two-seater, and if you were going to drop \$4,600 on personal transportation back in 1968, there was another option.



It came not from Chevrolet, however, but from GM's founding division: Buick.

"The automobile you drive must be more than a machine that takes you from one place to another," Buick said in Riviera promotional materials. "It must be as exciting to drive as it is to look at and as exciting to look at as is reliable to drive. Obviously, Riviera is your automobile."

That may have been obvious five decades ago, but the second-generation Riviera is often overlooked these days. That's a mistake. You see, if you wanted a big-block, A/C-equipped vintage 'Vette with an automatic transmission now, you'd best be prepared to spend around \$60,000. A similarly optioned Riv, meanwhile, can be had in like condition for about a quarter of that.



We drove this example not long ago and can tell you: Unless you want to attend track days on the regular, you'll have just as much fun in the Buick. Maybe more if you have some friends you'd like to bring along, or just prefer some extra room to stretch out.

The Ivy Gold Mist example on these pages belongs to John Scheib (no relation to Earl, in case you were wondering) of West Hartford, Connecticut. Just to look at his car, you immediately realize a Riviera of this era was more than mere transportation. Take that curvaceous styling, for instance. It's a clear departure from the sharper, more vertically oriented, Ferrari-meets-Rolls Royce looks

of the 1963-'65 first-generation Riviera. At first glance, you could be forgiven if you mistook the Buick for an Oldsmobile Toronado, but look closer and it's a more conservatively styled car.

That conservatism extends to the chassis. While the Toronado and the Riviera, along with the Cadillac Eldorado, shared GM's E-body platform, only the Riviera adheres to the traditional American approach of a front engine and rear-wheel drive. The decision to retain what was tried and proven good not only means it's a more straightforward car for the modern owner to service and find parts for, but its driving manners are familiar and predictable.

In the Buick's cruciform X-frame chassis are nestled such well-respected parts as a division-specific differential, Super Turbine 400 transmission (that's a TH-400 with a Switch Pitch torque convertor, in case you don't speak Buick), and 430-cu.in. V-8.

The 430 was only in its second year in 1968, having recently replaced the 425-cu.in. "nailhead" engine found in earlier Rivieras. It shares its stroke with the later 455-cu.in. V-8, but uses a slightly smaller bore. The engine in John's base-model Riviera was rated for 360 hp at 5,000 rpm and 475 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm, thanks to 10.25:1 compression and a Quadrajets four-barrel carburetor.



The 360-hp, 430-cu.in. V-8 has enough torque (some 475 lb-ft at 3,200 rpm) to run an A/C compressor and a power-steering pump while leaving plenty to spare for accelerating all 4,222 pounds of Riviera.

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Standard rear gearing was a long-legged 3.07:1, perfect for road tripping like John's visit to the GM centennial in Flint, Michigan, back in 2008. Along on that trip was his wife, Bea, with whom he was celebrating 40 years of marriage—a perfect coincidence with the age of the Riviera. Back in '68, leadfoots also had the option of more aggressive 3.42:1 gears with a limited-slip differential as a part of the Riviera GS package.

Even with the milder gearing, the Super Turbine transmission, coupled with the torque of the 430, means acceleration is plenty snappy. The swiveling vanes of the torque convertor (a development from the Dynaflo era) add even more gear multiplication when needed, an advantage Buick products had over other brands with similar three-speed automatics.

The doors on the Riviera are the first sensory input that strike a first-time Riviera driver. They have real heft when opened and they close with a satisfying click—like the proverbial bank vault. The steering wheel is large, but not oversized, and it's no effort at all to get behind it. Vision from the driver's position is excellent, the wide C-pillars notwithstanding. The Riviera was clearly intended to be a car for people who enjoyed the drive.

Despite the exterior view and the ample interior room (38 inches for your head, 41.1 inches for the legs, and 58.7 inches for your shoulders), the cockpit of John's car feels remarkably intimate. Perhaps it's the soothing, darker color palette, which brings to mind a den or private study.

If you've been inside any mid- to late-'60s GM product, the appointments will seem simultaneously familiar and fresh. Buick designers managed to put a special stamp on the interior, despite numerous parts sourced from the same bins as other makes and models within the corporation. It's a boon, really, which helps the controls fall readily to hand when underway.

Twist the key and instantly a bass rumble pervades the cockpit. John says the previous owner, a drag racer with a Buick-powered Chevrolet Vega, added an aftermarket exhaust. We're not complaining, because the performance mufflers add attitude without being deafening. It's no cammed-up Chevrolet 427, but that wouldn't be nearly as easy to drive anyway. John says it's even possible this engine has been hopped up slightly, though it looks completely stock.

Pull the column shifter down into gear (a floor shift and bucket seats were options) and the car rolls out with zero fuss. As it glides along, you can feel the



Surprisingly for such a sporty-looking car, column shifter and bench seating for six were standard equipment—buckets, console, and floor shift were optional. Quality materials are evident throughout.



weight and solidity of the Buick, but it's not ponderous thanks to the power assists.

John tells us he's not completely satisfied with the steering on his particular car, though we've certainly driven worse. "On some cars," he says, "you can just hold it in place with your thumb." Using five to ten fingers, we found it easy to keep the car on course, though there is perhaps some slight wander with the wheel on-center. This, John tells us, is an improvement from when he bought the car.

"I tried to tighten up the steering to correct it. It is certainly not like my 2005, which floats. I got the last set of NOS steering pieces from The Buick Farm, in Delaware." Installation of those items took care of the worst of the meandering.

Stopping, courtesy of Buick's distinctive finned drums (aluminum in front, cast iron in rear), is likewise effective and without drama. One could option four-piston discs on the Riviera, state of the art in 1968, but we're not surprised that most elected to stay with the familiar drum system. It's just great for anything short of stop-and-go traffic or mountain driving.

If there is any negative to this car, it may be that the suspension errs on the side of ride at the expense of handling. The modern driver is used to a car that

deadens the outside world yet stays flat in the curves. Back in the late '60s, it was necessary to choose one or the other. The softer ride on this car means it heels over in corners somewhat more than is comfortable, but that is largely a matter of adjusting one's expectations than any kind of serious safety issue. What are you doing throwing a personal luxury car like this into turns anyway? The modern radial tires never threaten to lose their grip, at least, and it's likely that a driver sufficiently familiar with the car could extract considerable performance if desired. The handling is, at any rate, quite predictable and thus confidence inspiring.

John's assessment of his car is very similar to our own. "It's good on all roads," he says. "It does okay on the highway as long as you don't go too fast and it's composed around town." Which is good, since he wasn't originally even looking to purchase a second-generation car. Instead, back in 2004, he was looking for a sixth-generation Riviera, first of the front-drivers.

John, who also owns a 1932 Buick 57S (see *HCC* #93), is naturally a member of the Buick Club of America. The director of his local chapter saw this car for sale and called John, suggesting he take a look.

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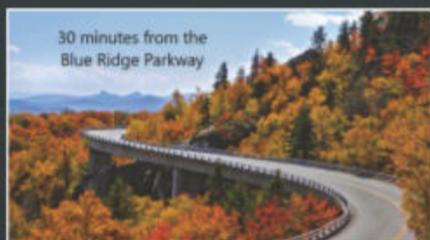
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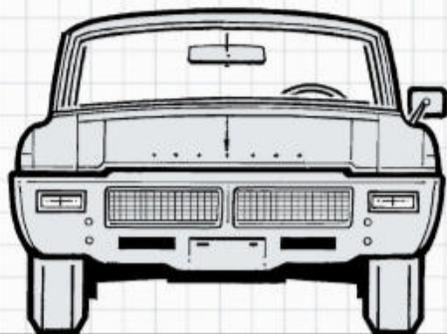


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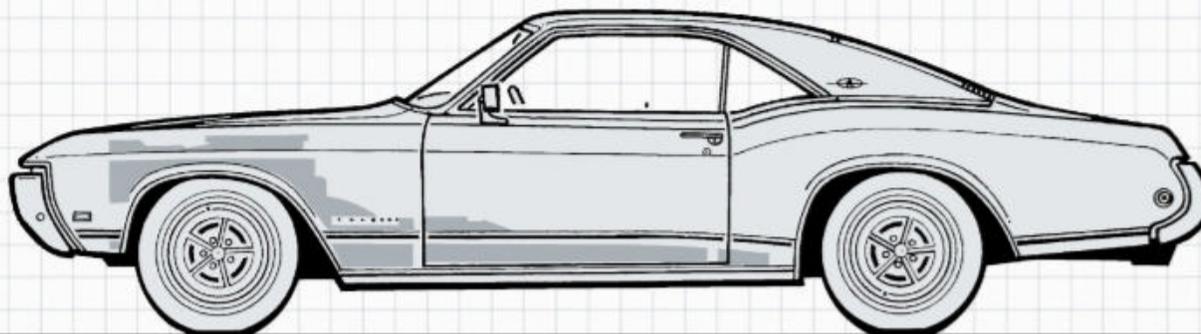
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63.4 inches



119 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

WHAT TO PAY

| | |
|---------|---------------------|
| LOW | \$8,000 - \$11,000 |
| AVERAGE | \$14,000 - \$17,000 |
| HIGH | \$25,000 - \$28,000 |

PRICE

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| BASE PRICE | \$5,245 |
| OPTIONS | Whitewall tires; air conditioning |

ENGINE

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| TYPE | Buick "big-block" OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads | |
| DISPLACEMENT | 430-cu.in. | |
| BORE X STROKE | 4.1875 x 3.9 inches | |
| COMPRESSION RATIO | 10.25:1 | |
| HORSEPOWER @ RPM | 360 @ 5,000 | |
| TORQUE @ RPM | 475 lb-ft @ 3,200 | |
| VALVETRAIN | Hydraulic lifters | |
| MAIN BEARINGS | Five | |
| FUEL SYSTEM | Rochester Quadrajets four-barrel carburetor | |
| LUBRICATION SYSTEM | Full pressure; gear-type pump | |
| ELECTRICAL SYSTEM | 12-volt; breaker-point ignition system, alternator | |

TRANSMISSION

| | | |
|--------|---|----------------|
| TYPE | Super Turbine 400 three-speed automatic | |
| RATIOS | 1st/2.48:1 | 2nd/1.48:1 |
| | 3rd/1.00:1 | Reverse/2.07:1 |

DIFFERENTIAL

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| TYPE | Semi-floating; hypoid drive gears |
| GEAR RATIO | 3.07:1 standard |

STEERING

| | |
|----------------|--|
| TYPE | Saginaw recirculating ball with power assist |
| RATIO OVERALL | 19.4:1 overall |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 46.6 feet |

BRAKES

| | |
|-------|--|
| TYPE | Hydraulic, self-energizing, power assist |
| FRONT | 12 x 2.25-inch finned aluminum drum with cast-iron liner |
| REAR | 12 x 2-inch finned cast-iron drum |

CHASSIS & BODY

| | |
|--------------|--|
| CONSTRUCTION | Steel body, separate steel cruciform frame |
| BODY STYLE | Two-door hardtop |
| LAYOUT | Front engine, rear-wheel drive |

SUSPENSION

| | |
|-------|---|
| FRONT | Independent; coil-springs, dual wishbones, hydraulic shock absorbers, link-type anti-roll bar |
| REAR | Live axle; coil springs, three-link, hydraulic shock absorbers, track bar |

WHEELS & TIRES

| | |
|--------|---|
| WHEELS | 15 x 6-inch steel |
| TIRES | 225/75R15 radial (originally H78-15 bias ply) |

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| WHEELBASE | 119 inches |
| OVERALL LENGTH | 215.2 inches |
| OVERALL WIDTH | 78.8 inches |
| OVERALL HEIGHT | 53.4 inches |
| FRONT TRACK | 63.4 inches |
| REAR TRACK | 63.0 inches |
| CURB WEIGHT | 4,222 pounds |

CAPACITIES

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| COOLING SYSTEM | 16.7 quarts |
| CRANKCASE | 4 quarts |
| FUEL TANK | 20.9 gallons |

CALCULATED DATA

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| BHP PER CU.IN. | 0.84 |
| WEIGHT PER BHP | 11.73 pounds |
| WEIGHT PER CU.IN. | 9.82 pounds |

PRODUCTION

| | |
|-------|--------|
| TOTAL | 49,284 |
|-------|--------|



At that time, it belonged to a dealer in Camden, New Jersey, and was on display at an indoor car show in the wintertime.

"My wife liked it," John says, "so we made a deal on the spot." Since then, John has driven the car while simultaneously undertaking small improvements and repairs as necessary, including the installation of a Pertronix points-eliminator kit, which took care of a knocking issue for him, and conversion of the air-conditioning system to modern refrigerant. It also includes the occasional emergency repair, such as when a 310-mile trip to the AACA show in Canandaigua, New York, was interrupted by a rear tire blowing out and taking the shock absorber with it. A

friendly Firestone dealer replaced both and sent them on their way—a testament to the serviceability of the 53-year-old Buick chassis.

John seems so pleased with the car, we couldn't help but press him to ask what, if anything, he might change on it. After some consideration, he admitted that he wished he had the chrome side-marker lights and rocker adornment from the plusher 400 trim. That's an awfully small quibble, we think, and says a lot about just what an enjoyable time John has had with the car.

"My son uses it mostly," he says of these days, but "I've got limited time left. I'm going to drive it more. I'm very satisfied with it." 🐶

Even after 17 years of stewardship, owner John Scheib is eager to put more miles on his 1968 Riviera.



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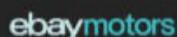
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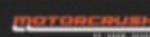
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Talking Shop

HCC readers offer glimpses into their great-looking garages

COMPILED BY MIKE McNESSOR

Ever wonder what's going on inside other enthusiasts' shops? Recently we put out a call to *HCC* readers and asked for a look behind the overhead doors. What we discovered was an eclectic blend of style and function, creative use of space, and ambitious builds that combined comfort, convenience and creativity. These readers inspired us to want to get going on building or finishing our own home garages and we hope they inspire you, too.



Don Dear, New York

AFTER SELLING HIS AUTO PARTS BUSINESS IN 2005, DON DEAR DECIDED he needed to build a place to store his boat and — at the time — his one collector car.

"I found a vacant lot near my home, not far from my old business, and had a good friend help me plan out the building, line up some help to clear the lot, and lay out the foundation," Don said.

With the permits in place, and the footings in, Don ordered his first lumber delivery and then started framing up the walls.

"I figured I could get my buddies together to help stand them up — well, that didn't work, so I had to call my friend to have his crew come and help." Don said. "Next I had another friend in the crane business bring his machine over to do the roof trusses."

The new building's footprint was 40 feet wide by 80 feet deep — plenty of space for future storage as well as some creature comforts. Don's garage is heated with radiant heating in the cement slab, has an in-ground lift and an office.

"The heating system has three zones: one for the front, where I do most of the work; the rear half is set at a lower temperature; and the third zone is for my office area," he said. "In the winter months I keep it set at 50 degrees — a nice temp to do some minor repairs if needed.

"The lift was installed at the time we did the floor. It's a Rotary

unit — all we had to do was dig a hole 10 feet by 4 feet wide and lower it into the hole. There were side braces that came out to anchor when we poured the floor around it. Then we ran 4-inch plastic tubing from the box that houses the lift to the side wall for an air line and a hydraulic line to the pump unit mounted on the wall."

To keep the climate controlled, Don went heavy on insulation — a must in the Northeast.

"One thing I found is, when it gets hot outside, above 80 for a period of time, if I keep the doors closed and have a small fan just to move air around, it will only get to about 70 inside. If I need to move a car around and I have to open the doors, then it will get warm in there."

All of that new space demanded to be filled, so Don added a 1987 El Camino Choo Choo Custom and a 2002 Thunderbird that his wife drives, as well as some others.

"We have a 1956 Ford Fairlane, a 1968 Mustang convertible, a 1997 Mustang Cobra, a 1964 Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt, and a 1965 Ford Falcon Squire wagon," he said. "These are cars I have wanted, and that we enjoy driving. As they say, a man and his toys.... As we get older, our toys just get bigger and more expensive."



Joel Justin, California

JOEL JUSTIN FINISHED BUILDING HIS DREAM SHOP IN 2016, THOUGH he really could've used it more than 40 years ago.

"In high school in the mid-'70s, most everyone was into muscle cars, but my friend and I loved sports cars," he said. "My first car was a 1963 Triumph TR4. My dad knew I was mechanically inclined, so he let me buy a fixer-upper before I had my license. He may have regretted it as I took over his three-car garage for the next two years, tearing the engine apart and replacing the car's wiring."

But when Joel met his soulmate, Pam, the Triumph sort of became a third wheel—though Joel never forgot about his first (automotive) love.

"I kept my TR4 through my junior year of college. It wasn't running great at that time, I'd met my wife-to-be and needed money to buy a wedding ring so, off the Triumph went. Like most people, life (marriage, getting a job, buying a house, having kids, etc.) got in the way, but when we sent our youngest off to college, I started looking at Triumphs again."

In 2011, Joel found a nice 1961 Triumph TR4 and bought it. He didn't realize it at the time, but it boasted a low production number—254 of over 40,000 total. He tucked it away in his existing garage, but soon a stablemate came along.

"Our house garage was fine initially, but I was bitten but the sports car bug (Triumphs in particular). So, we bought a '71 GT6 in early 2013, for my wife, but the car needed a complete body-off restoration," he said. "The house garage was still okay as I had two bays available. But I wasn't done."

In 2013 he bought a TR6, then in the spring of 2014, a Triumph 10 Estate Wagon, then... "Wait! I'm out of garage space," Joel said. "Fortunately, I have a neighbor who has a 12-car garage he added on, and he allowed me to keep a couple of cars there for the time being. But his garage was my inspiration."

In the fall of 2015, the Justins planned their four-car garage with a few important features in mind.

"Since I do (almost) all my own car work, several things were a must, and at the top of the list was a lift," Joel said. "The shop also needed to be deep enough to allow for a workbench in the back and storage along the sides. And most importantly, it needed to have a lounge in the back corner where we could sit and enjoy

the garage and the view. My neighbor had something similar, and my wife insisted that if we built a garage, we'd have to have the same thing. It is now affectionately called the Pam Cave."

The building's footprint was 22 by 35 feet, with two 16-foot overhead doors and a walk-in side door. The ceiling was opened up to allow for a Bend Pak two-post lift, the floor was finished in speckled epoxy, and LED shop lights were installed to brighten the workspace. There were also plenty of 120-volt outlets as well as 240-volt circuits for the lift, a compressor, and more.

"I did much of the design myself. My shop's footprint was smaller than most because Triumphs are only 12-13 feet long and about 5 feet wide," Joel said. "Since I live in Southern California, not too far from the ocean, heating and A/C were not a concern. I did over-insulate the garage and used the highest-insulated garage doors. Speaking of garage doors, to accommodate the lift and not have them roll into the garage and ruin the spaciousness, I had custom tracks made so they roll up along the ceiling angle. I also had side-mounted openers installed so the openers were out of the way as well."

The new shop was outfitted with a 20-gallon parts washer, a MIG welder, and a media blasting cabinet. A workbench top was fashioned out of 8-foot solid-core oak door slabs with slight blemishes that made them unsuitable for use as doors. After rolling in his tools, Joel also rolled in a caster-wheeled hardware storage bin, which he filled with nuts and bolts.

"It's so nice not to have to run to the hardware store every time I need something," he said.

The Justins' new shop was completed in the spring, so there was plenty of time left in the year to fill it with a few British cars and give the place an appropriate name.

"In the meantime, I'd purchased a TR2 followed by a TR3A. Six cars was the perfect fit—two in the house garage and four in the Paddock. Yes, Paddock. We couldn't call it the garage as that would be too confusing, and Paddock was perfect," Joel said. "In the evenings after work, if I'm not in the house, my wife always knows where to find me. She'll often bring out a glass of wine and a book and sit in the Pam Cave reading while I'm wrenching. We love our Paddock. I've helped countless Central Coast British Car Club members with projects that needed a lift."



Robert Krauss, Iowa

A DRIVE-IN BASEMENT CAN MAKE A GREAT CAR CAVE FOR ANY enthusiast. Robert Krauss's cellar was his subterranean garage long before he built a dedicated shop, and today it's still keeping his collectibles safe from the elements.

"I am fortunate to have two separate spaces for my vehicles," he said. "The basement garage was used just as storage when my grandfather owned the house. It now houses my wife's grandfather's 8N Ford tractor, a 1937 Buick Special, and my 1967 Mustang G.T. 500 recreation — all of which I restored."

The renovated basement is also a great place to display trophies he's won, as well as vintage automotive artifacts.

"I had lots of advertising and automobilia purchased from years of going to swap meets," he said. "I painted the walls, built shelving, added new lights, built a furnace and storage room, and painted the floor with epoxy before carefully finding a spot for all my treasures."

When it came time to redo his '37 Buick's interior, Robert turned the cellar into an upholstery shop.

"I decided that I needed to learn upholstery work because I wanted my Buick's interior done and there were no options for aftermarket coverings," Robert said. "I purchased an industrial sewing machine and began that large task."

Those years in the basement gave Robert a lot of time to mull things over, so once he decided to build a garage, he was sure what he wanted.

"I knew I needed a bigger space for multiple projects — the biggest thing was a paint or wash bay and a clean area to work," he said. "I accomplished that with an industrial curtain that separates the shop part of the building. I also wanted to have vaulted ceilings with angled tracks and side openers. This allowed me to have a lift and not worry about ceiling height. I wanted the garage deep enough that I could have a bench, tool cabinets, and other items across the back wall."

In addition to the workshop, there are also two stalls in the

building for storage that are separated by a bathroom and a utility room.

"I included a four-post lift on the storage side, so I am able to maximize the number of vehicles I can fit," he said. "Along with that, there's over 100 square feet of heavy-duty shelving. In between the two separate areas I have the bathroom and an enclosed spot for my compressor, welder, plasma cutter, engine hoist, torch... the tools that are not used every day."

The lighting and electrical throughout was carefully planned, too: "When building the shop, I wanted it bright, so many lights were included along with three ceiling fans. Multiple 220-volt outlets were strategically placed within the shop," Robert said.

The walls were paneled in OSB finished with more than 50 gallons of paint; plastic sheeting was used on the walls in the paint and wash bay area for water resistance, and epoxy coating was brushed on the floor.

"I also took what was left of my automobilia and scattered it throughout," Robert said.

Today the shop is used for anything from small jobs to complete vehicle restorations.

"I even built some furniture and a Christmas pyramid, but it's mainly to work on cars," Robert said. "I am just finishing a Honda SOHC 4 café racer, and this winter I plan to start a nut-and-bolt restoration on my 1964 Volvo P1800."

Overall, Robert said he's pleased with his new digs, and advance planning was the key.

"I had planned for some time what the outcome would be in detail, and I did not stray too far off that path," he said. "There are very few things that I would have done differently other than the size. But the bigger you build it, the more you will accumulate. The best start is to figure out what type of work you want to do in the garage and start planning from there. Have everything on paper before the build or remodel."



Tony Yantos, Arizona

WHO SAYS A GARAGE HAS TO BE ALL VEHICLES AND TOOLS? NOT TONY Yantos—he's turned his shop into a showcase for interesting collectibles and made it an inviting place just to hang out.

"My garage serves as a man cave that displays a combination of vintage items and modern reproductions," he said. "Vintage items include a 1974 Murray Stingray bike (that has never been used), a 1961 Tonka Mobile Clam Shell Bucket truck, and more. The inspiration came when my wife and I started to remodel our house—the garage was the first room to be done. Our house is too small for an interior cave, so the garage is it."

There is a car in Tony's garage of course, but it's the only one allowed: "It's the crib for my low-mileage 2010 Corvette," he said. "No other vehicles are kept in there and at 18 x 20-feet, nothing else fits!"

Tony figures he spent about \$2,000 for flooring, cabinets, paint, a ceiling fan, and the addition of an electrical outlet.

"My planning was spontaneous, and I have an additional \$3,500 in décor. No major tools occupy the space and no serious repairs are done there. It took me two days to lay down the floor, paint, and assemble the cabinets. I'm pleased with the results."

Not surprisingly, Tony's garage is the envy of the neighborhood but the pampered 'Vette isn't the main attraction.

"People who walk by often ask if they can look inside. Kids ask me to turn on the neon lights, and visitors often tell me they have never seen a garage like this," he said. "Interestingly, the item that gets the most attention is the Stingray bike. The nice Arizona weather makes the garage a year-round hang out—even in the summer, thanks to the mobile air conditioning unit."

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Dennis McNamee, California

LS V-8 SWAPS ARE COMMONPLACE TODAY, BUT THEY WERE STILL unusual in the late 1990s. Undaunted, Dennis McNamee attempted to shoehorn a Gen III Chevrolet small-block into his Chevelle and discovered, among other things, that job would've been a lot easier in a dedicated shop.

"I decided I needed a garage after I tried to put an LS in a 1967 Chevelle back in late 1998," he said. "What I thought would take a couple of weekends took six months because everyone was telling me it couldn't be done. No parts for this. No parts for that. After two weeks, my wife wanted her side of the garage back and the front clip out of her garden."

With no space for an expansion or another building on his property, Dennis started shopping for a place that would suit his needs.

"We had no room to expand our garage at home, so I bought a garage in a small commercial complex," he said. "It was 1,500 square feet, so I got the space I wanted, the lift, air compressor, storage, and security I needed (my rear walk-in door opens up into a police department parking lot). The bonus was, I was out of my wife's hair. It was difficult at first to explain to my non-car-enthusiast wife how this garage investment was going to be good for both of us. I was getting ready to retire and I think the thought of having me around the house all day finally pushed her into the 'yes' column."

The shop was a blank slate when Dennis took it over, so he got busy personalizing it for his future project builds.

"It was just a rectangular box when I bought it, so the first couple months were spent improving the lighting, adding

electrical outlets, installing the air compressor and lines, building a 500-square-foot mezzanine, and having the lift installed," he said. "We also built workbenches, shelves and racks, and so on, to make it feel like a real shop. Besides the lift and air compressor, I have since added a metal brake, a 20-ton press, welder, plasma cutter, bandsaw, drill press, belt sander and grinder—all of which I use all the time. The amount of small power tools and hand tools is off the charts."

In the days, nights, and weekends since, Dennis has tackled swaps even more ambitious than the LS install that inspired him to buy the garage.

"So far, a buddy and I have installed a 3.8-liter V-6 in a 1956 Willys wagon, an Acura V-6 and six-speed in the back seat of a 1961 Mini Cooper, and a GM LFX High Feature V-6 in a 1966 Chevelle. We are now putting a 4.3-liter EcoTec V-6 in a Jeep and adding power steering and fuel injection to a 1965 Mustang convertible. I've also done multiple wood and metal-fab projects and my four-year-old grandson and I will be converting his Berg pedal car to electric."

Though his garage is serving him well, Dennis sees some room for improvement.

"I use the two-post lift a lot, but there are times when a four-post lift would be better for a particular project, so, if I had to start over, I would rearrange a little and put in both," he said. "I'm also contemplating moving some of my larger but seldom-used tools to the mezzanine. The blast cabinet, metal brake, and a lot of stored items may not warrant space on the main floor."

Dan Shields, Ohio

YOU MIGHT'VE SEEN DAN AND PAT SHIELDS' HOMEBUILT FORD

Model T and Model TT featured in the pages of this magazine. The Shields own four Tin Lizzies in total, as well as some other cars. What might surprise you is that Dan is a retired builder, but didn't have a garage where he could store and work on all of his vehicles under one roof. The pandemic changed that.

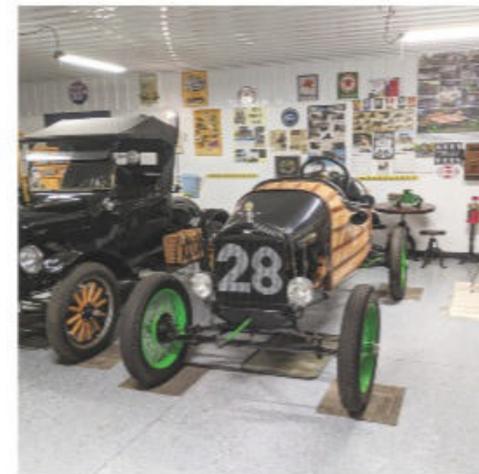
"My vintage sanctuary—the home of my four Model Ts, other collector cars, automobile memorabilia, and work area in one location—became a reality with the COVID-19 lockdown," Dan said. "With car shows and swap meets a thing of the past, being in zero contact with people, with extra time on our hands, a vision began to appear in my head. I chose to build a 28 x 56-foot garage with two insulated overhead doors with openers and one walk-in door, all tied to my security system."

Dan first dug out the area with a loader. Several truckloads of stone were hauled in, leveled, and compacted. He then enlisted the help of friends from the local Amish community to help with the framing, installation of the roof trusses, and to attach the metal roofing.

The concrete floor was poured over foam insulation and a vapor barrier, while the interior walls were coated with spray foam. After running the wiring, the walls were covered with plywood topped with white paneling.

"The electric work was finished with outlets every 8 feet, plus plug strips and LED lighting," Dan said. "I wanted power at my convenience everywhere, with no need for extension cords!"

The interior ceiling was covered with metal and the attic insulated with blown-in insulation. The floor was coated with two-part epoxy with grit and flakes added to prevent slips and falls.



Once the work was finished inside, Dan began adding his personal touches.

"My bookshelves are filled with every single issue of *HCC*, from the first to the current," Dan said. "You will also see trophies, awards, and ribbons from various car shows, along with calendars and magazine articles my vehicles have appeared in."

The exterior of the garage was sided in cedar and decorated with a 5 x 8-foot aluminum silhouette of Dan's 1923 Ford Model TT truck that is illuminated at night. It looks great, but the builder in him wasn't quite satisfied.

"I am in the process of adding on a 48-foot addition with one overhead door and one walk-in door," Dan said. "I need to move the portable scissor lift to be able to keep it in one place and not have to move it. This will also enable me to have more room for my other classic cars."

"Recommendations I'd have for others would be to double the size of whatever you decide on, and use plenty of insulation in floors and walls—especially the spray-foam insulation. Then, of course, you can never have too many electrical outlets!"



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Roy Vaillancourt, New York

ROY AND NANCY VAILLANCOURT WANTED TO BUILD A 24 X 26-FOOT garage on their property back in 2009. Unfortunately, their town's property-line setback requirements got in the way, and they settled on a building that measured 22 x 22 feet.

"I contacted the contractor and renegotiated a price for the smaller building, then showed him the revised location where the garage would go in the yard," Roy said. "He was scheduled to start digging on Sept 9, 2009 — almost a full seven months from the first time I had him visit us. Once we got started, things moved along nicely."

Roy received some bad news around the same time, however. His company was downsizing, and he was being let go. But he managed to take the news in stride and look on the bright side.

"You might think this was a bad thing and that the timing couldn't have been worse, which was my immediate response... for about 15 minutes," he said. "There was a severance package tied in and it wasn't too far off from my original plans — so I turned it into retirement. This allowed me to be home all during the garage construction and I took a ton of pictures."

The building was based on 10-inch-wide poured footings and a 5-inch-thick slab reinforced with rebar. A block wall was built along the back of the building and partially up one side, due to the slope of the property. The frame of the garage was stick-built with cut rafters, rather than trusses, and then closed in with OSB. The roof was covered with shingles and the exterior sided in vinyl.

"The final inspections took place in October, and we could almost call it home!" Roy said.

"Almost" being the key word. An oversight caused the garage to be built one foot too close to the property line.

"This required another round of variance applications, neighbor notifications, town meetings, and a fine for not building according to the approved plan," Roy said. "Finally, we got through all the mess, eventually got a valid certificate of occupancy, and we were 'allowed' to start putting things in it."

One of those things was a 1951 Chevrolet pickup that the

Vaillancourts had bought and wanted to get busy restoring.

"Well, by the time all this smoke cleared, it was getting close to real winter here again," Roy said. "The garage sat empty while we waited for the hearings and so on, and the truck sat in the corner of the yard through all this waiting for her turn to move in. That whole summer I really didn't do much as I was hoping to get her in the garage before taking more parts off. Before moving the truck in, I coated the floor with epoxy and had to wait two weeks for it to cure. Then I started doing all the wiring in the building. I finished all the outlets but still had to add lights. I tried to do all this in the cold and managed to get pretty far."

With snow on the way and the inside of the garage ready enough, the Vaillancourts, with their two Labrador retrievers, ventured outdoors to push the pickup into the building.

"When the heavy stuff was forecast, we decided that the truck should not spend another day outside," Roy said. "So, Nancy and I pushed and pulled and prodded it until we had the truck in its new home. It was tough to move the old pickup around considering there are no brakes and it doesn't run, but we did it. Just a few days later we got hit with 28 inches of snow. This stuck around for a few weeks and then we got another 13 inches. Yikes. Glad we got it undercover."

Since then, Roy has continued to outfit and add tools to the new garage.

"The 'motor pool' as we call it, is coming along nicely," he said. "I have completed all the work benches and added a sandblasting cabinet. I even picked up some old vises and an old kerosene lantern, all of which I have restored to working order, but I still have the lighting to do."

"I also have acquired another lathe and a milling machine just for the garage. Both machines are vintage, too, and they will also be treated to some restoration work. After the garage lights are done and all the benches and shelves are set up, I can really get serious on the truck." 🐾

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Hemmings

the DIY guide from the folks who actually make the stuff you need



The home garage lift for a new era of collector cars

A next-level aspiration for any home garage owner is an automotive lift: double your floor space by suspending one classic over the other, and that means more space for another! Not only will a 4-post lift maximize the unused vertical space it occupies, but it allows ease of access to the undercarriage of your cars, too.

Backyard Buddy has been designing and selling American-made lifts for every type of collector for decades. From standard-size, 4-post units to taller and wider lifts that accommodate the oversized footprint of trucks, exotics and even trailers, the Backyard Buddy line is built by enthusiasts who understand your unique needs and know how to create the safest, most reliable home garage lift on the market.

There are three decisions to make when you're ready to transform your garage with a new lift. Design, construction and materials are the most important factors to consider when you're keeping three tons of classic vehicle in the air, but size matters, too. For example; if your classic boat and trailer take up precious floor space most of the year, find the lift that can safely get it out of the way while you're not using it!

1. Quality. Design is everything. Posts should be made of four-sided tubing. Ramps, locking hardware and hydraulics must be engineered to wear evenly and prevent lateral movement. You're asking these parts to not only work together and bear the weight of your classic, but protect you, too.

2. Safety. One of the most important and obvious differences between lifts is what they're made of. Thin steel, plastic sliders, inferior welds, cheap hardware and casters and poorly-made hydraulic pumps are sure signs of shortcuts that are more expensive in the long run. High-quality materials are a must.

3. Strength. Own exotics? A classic A SUV or Truck? These types of vehicles can't be accommodated by cheap, one-size-fits-all, foreign-made lifts. Look for a wider, taller, American-made lift that can reliably hold vehicles or other equipment to maximize your garage.



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Give your home garage a makeover, starting with your new car cover

When it's finally time to turn your garage into the ultimate home shop for you and your classics, it's also time to right some wrongs you've been living with for a long time. New tools, floors, workbench, electric service and machinery are all worthwhile considerations, but don't forget the new car covers.

Covercraft has not only been making the best car covers in the industry, but we're classic car nuts, too. Which means we understand the unique needs and demands collectors put on their covers. We understand why a custom paint job costs so much. We know that classics can be wider, longer or even much smaller than modern cars. And we know our covers protect some rare vehicles that aren't easy to replace.

As you start thinking about your remodeled home garage, put new car covers at the top of the list. Here are some guidelines when choosing a cover:

1. Custom fit. Will a generic, one-size-fits-all cover for your classic be satisfactory or do you want a snug, custom-fitted cover that's made specifically for your make and model? A perfect-fit cover for each ride in your collection turns a garage into an ultimate home car collection destination.

2. Materials. Think about the finish, paint and condition of your classic and what should protect it, before deciding what your cover should be made of. Are you preserving factory-original paint? Maybe you'd like to cover your car, but still see its one-of-a-kind paint job, at the same time? You might even have the perfect patina finish on your ride that you'd like to keep the dust off of. There's a cover made specifically for each of these needs and they all help your garage makeover reach next-level status.

3. Personalization. Your classic is unique and says a lot about what kind of collector you are. So, your cover should only reinforce the statement your car makes. Choose the cover maker that offers customization with personalized embroidery, color panels and trim.



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A Unique Roof for GM's Bestseller

BY BILL ROTHERMEL • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY GM HERITAGE CENTER OR AS CREDITED

Chevrolet introduced the new Caprice Custom Sedan in February 1965 at the Chicago Auto Show. The GM brand took a page from its own playbook much like it had in 1958, when it introduced the Impala, an upmarket trim level for the existing top-of-the-line Bel Air. The Caprice, a jazzed-up Impala, was Chevrolet's answer to the new Ford Galaxie 500 LTD, introduced at the beginning of the 1965 model year. Like the Caprice, Impala, and Bel Air, the LTD was an upmarket version of Ford's popular Galaxie 500, which was itself one step beyond the Fairlane 500 starting in 1959.

Rumors persist that the car was given its moniker by then-Chevrolet General Sales Manager Bob Lund, who reportedly named the car after an upscale New York City restaurant he frequented. Another origin story states that the car was named after Caprice Chapman, the daughter of automotive executive James P. Chapman.

Offered as an option exclusively on the Impala four-door hardtop sedan, the new Caprice cost just \$242.10 more than a

comparable Impala's \$2,850.00 base price. For the extra cash, option code Z18 netted deeply cushioned seats in premium cloth and vinyl, with a fold-down center armrest for the rear seat passengers. Real wood accents highlighted the instrument panel and door panels, and deep-twist carpeting covered the floor and lower door panels. A special headliner and side-trim panels, along with woodgrain accents on the steering wheel, added to the upscale interior.

Outside, hand-applied dual pinstripes—color coordinated to the interior—and a black-accented grille and rear trim panel came from the Impala SS, as did the three-spoke spinner wheel covers, albeit with Caprice badging. Decorative fleur-de-lis Caprice emblems were affixed to the C-pillars to remind you what lie inside.

Beauty was more than skin deep, too, as Caprices featured a heavier-duty steel frame than other 1965 Chevrolets. Full-length rocker panel reinforcements and a stronger underbody crossbar added structural rigidity. Revised body mounts and softer suspension tuning made for a quieter,

smoother ride than other full-size Chevrolets.

The venerable 283-cu.in., 195-hp V-8 was standard, with three other engines (including the new "big-block" 396-cu.in. V-8) available at extra cost. Chevrolet's full array of options and accessories from lesser models were also offered on the Caprice, enabling buyers to customize the new Chevy to suit their individual tastes. With sales of 37,518 units—rather remarkable considering the short model year—the Caprice trim proved a resounding success, and contributed to a banner sales year for Chevrolet.

It seemed Chevrolet could do no wrong, despite the market segmentation of the 1960s that added compact, intermediate, and specialty models to the dizzying array of cars available. The division hit a high-water mark in 1965, selling 2,383,504 cars in total, including 1,647,614 full-size models. Chevrolet, and the Impala in particular, were America's favorite cars. Nearly two-thirds of the full-size cars sold that year were more expensive Impala models, ensuring the return of the Caprice for the 1966 model year.

Nonetheless, product planners saw the writing on the wall and recognized the shift



1965 CHEVROLET CAPRICE
FOUR-DOOR HARDTOP SEDAN



The Chevrolet "convertible" that doesn't convert

4 door. The new roof covering available for your 1966 Chevrolet Caprice makes the impression of a convertible. But Caprice is really a four-door hardtop with all the advantages of Chevrolet Hardtop. From front to back, Caprice gives you choice.

like front-cushioned seats, thick carpeting and padding to help hold down. Padded dash and seat belts, front and rear, for added safety. Want to see the Caprice? There's one. See all as whether you want the Walk or the Big one's best value.



The unique roofline played prominently in Chevrolet print ads for 1966. Typically, a white Caprice Custom Coupe with black vinyl top and blue Strato Bucket Seat interior (available only on the coupe) was featured. Interestingly, the special interior highlighted the optional four-speaker multiplex stereo controls and fully instrumented console. It makes one wonder, just how many (or few) cars were so equipped?

If you hear a squeak in this car it's probably the piccolo player on your FM stereo

The pleasant sounds you hear, the unpleasant you don't. That's one of the luxuries of riding in this new Caprice — with its acoustically insulated body by Fisher, quieted by a jet-weather ride. Take the road noises you hear in ordinary cars, for instance. The closest thing to these you're likely to pick up are the sounds of Bourbon Street and Tia Pan Alley — coming in loud and clear over the 4-speaker multiplex AM-FM stereo radio you can order in any of the four special new Caprice models. Other creature comforts include Strato-bucket front seats and a fully instrumented console available in the Custom Coupe. Why not have a quiet talk about a new Caprice with your Chevrolet dealer.

Caprice—elegance the Chevrolet way



GM'S 100,000,000TH CAR BUILT,
A 1967 CHEVROLET CAPRICE
CUSTOM COUPE

1966-1968

The Caprice returned for 1966, no longer an option on the Impala four-door hardtop sedan. It became a stand-alone model for 1966, comprising four versions: a four-door hardtop sedan, a two-door Custom Hardtop Coupe, and two- and three-row station wagons. The new Custom Hardtop Coupe, designated internally as Model 16647, featured an exclusive formal notch-back roofline not shared with other GM marques. This began a tradition (through 1979) whereby Chevy coupes offered a unique body style distinct from its Pontiac, Olds, and Buick siblings.

Aside from the new roofline on coupes, Caprices received their own variation of the full-size Chevrolet taillamp lens and special wheel covers, as well as other interior and exterior trim details to differentiate it from lesser Chevrolets. For

PRODUCTION

| IMPALA SS | |
|-----------|---------|
| 1961 | 453 |
| 1962 | 99,311 |
| 1963 | 153,271 |
| 1964 | 185,325 |
| 1965 | 243,114 |
| 1966 | 119,314 |
| 1967 | 73,932 |
| 1968 | 1,778 |
| 1969 | 2,455 |
| CAPRICE | |
| 1965 | 37,518 |
| 1966 | 181,009 |
| 1967 | 124,500 |
| 1968 | 115,500 |
| 1969* | 166,900 |

*includes station wagon models

in consumer tastes. Intermediate or midsize muscle cars carried the performance banner for most manufacturers, and Chevrolet led the trend. Smaller, lighter cars with big engines (Chevelle, Camaro, and Nova) were the new norm as the full-size cars moved in a more luxurious direction. The precipitous drop in production totals of Impala Super Sports verified the shift from performance to luxury, while sales of Caprice models more than made up for the drop in SS sales.

COLLECTION OF BILL ROTHERMEL

BILL ROTHERMEL



1968 CHEVROLET CAPRICE CUSTOM COUPE

the first time since 1958, the big Chevys did not have round taillamps; models still used triple taillamps, but in a rectangular layout, and in one cluster wrapping around the edge of the fender in line with the bumper. While Chevrolet sales overall were down from the year prior, 1966 netted 210,515 Caprices sold, including 107,047 coupes, giving the model a strong foothold as the top Chevrolet for years to come. (Chevrolet did not always break out Caprice coupe sales from 1967-'76. Some years also included wagons in Caprice sales totals.)

For 1967, the Custom Coupe remained unique to the Caprice lineup and rear fender skirts became optional, further adding to its luxury appeal. A Nantucket Blue Caprice Custom Coupe became GM's 100,000,000th vehicle, built on April 21, 1967, at the Janesville, Wisconsin, plant. Today the vehicle resides in the Sloan Museum Collection in Flint, Michigan. Like every year before and through the 1970s, the big Chevy received the then-obligatory annual styling changes to keep it in the forefront of buyer's minds.

Chevrolet expanded the use of the distinct coupe body to the Impala line for 1968. Dubbing it the Impala Custom Hardtop Coupe, it was identified as Model 16447. Caprice added a wide side molding and distinctive wheel covers to set it apart from lesser models, and new for 1968 were optional concealed headlamps first shown on the Concours concept car in 1965. Comparisons to the styling of the contemporary Cadillac were commonplace and certainly the intention of Chevrolet designers.

1969-1973

Once again, full-size Chevrolets featured all-new styling for 1969. The formal, upright roofline remained, but the flat rear window was replaced with a unique concave full-width rear window and trunk lid



with a dip in the center section on Caprice and Impala Custom Coupes. The specific decklid was shared on the 1969 and 1970 models only. The unusual rear window was not shared with any other GM divisions, remaining a styling constant on big Chevys through 1976. Most notable of the design changes were a loop-style front bumper and a very Cadillac-like eggcrate grille. Overall, the new models looked even more like a luxury car, exactly Chevrolet's intent. Concealed headlamps were once again optional on Caprice. The Impala fastback coupe was eliminated from the Chevy model lineup, further eroding the Impala's sporty image that had been fading since the introduction of the midsize Chevelle in 1964.

Despite still another restyle for 1970, the big news at Chevrolet was not the full-size Impala/Caprice models. It was the introduction of the new midsize Monte Carlo. Though smaller than the Impala/Caprice, the Monte Carlo had a big-car appearance exaggerated by its 6-foot-long hood. No other Chevy ever matched it. In base form, it offered considerable style

and luxury for just under \$3,000, quickly ascending to Chevy's top-selling model. Unlike the Impala/Caprice, it was never offered in another body style, always remaining a two-door coupe. While the big Chevy coupes continued to sell well, their sales were dwarfed by the new model. Things would never quite be the same for the big Chevy coupes, as sales numbers continued to decline.

The 1971-'76 full-size Chevrolets shared still another redesign with an even further emphasis on luxury. The resemblance to Cadillac remained a fundamental connection in the big Chevy's styling. The center dip on trunk lids was now flipped and a raised center portion of the trunk lid, with louvers on either side, signified improved flow-through ventilation on GM's big cars. The louvers made a one-year appearance and were gone after the 1971 model year. Caprices also received standard rear fenders skirts beginning in the 1971 model year, a styling practice that continued through (and included) the 1976 models. The final Caprice two-door hardtop coupe was offered in 1973.



The concave rear window was first used on 1969 Chevrolet Caprice and Impala Custom Coupes. The depression in the trunk lid was unique to 1969 and 1970 models.



The concave rear window used on 1971 Caprice and Impala Custom Coupes shown here on a 1971 Impala. The rear decklid louvers were used as part of a flow-through ventilation system appearing only on 1971 models. Notice the center of the decklid is raised compared to the 1969-'70 models.

1974-1976

Styling changes were again evolutionary from 1974 to 1976, though 1974 models were given a bigger and bolder upright grille. While continuing the convex rear window introduced in 1969, the 1974 Impala Custom and Caprice coupes no longer used hardtop styling. Rear windows were fixed, including a wide B-pillar: Call it a 1970s opera window on steroids. Yet again, the roofline continued until the



Caprice Classic Coupe

1974 Caprice Classic.
The luxury car you can do more than just dream about.

Not only is Caprice Classic an attainable luxury car, it's a luxury car that understands what you mean by luxury.

That, in part, explains the car's spacious and handsome interior, its impressive new grille and its distinctive new rear windows designed for both looks and increased glass area.

But Caprice Classic luxury goes beyond that.

You see, we designed this elegant new Chevrolet on the theory that, for some people at least, the best luxury of all is driving a car where the car does most of the work.

The 1974 Caprice Classic was designed for you to steer, and for it

to do most of the rest, which it does beautifully because of standard power front disc brakes, variable-ratio power steering, Turbo Hydra-matic transmission . . . plus improved sound insulation for a quiet ride.

1974 Caprice Classic. You might not want to look any higher.

Chevrolet

Chevrolet. Building a better way to see the U.S.A.

If your car isn't popular new, it certainly won't be popular used.

1974 Impala You know the story. It's a car worth something to you when you buy it. It's worth something to someone else when you sell it. It's perhaps especially true with the Chevrolet Impala.

Traditionally, the Impala has been a remarkable value to match its look more than 30 million of them have been sold since its introduction in 1958. All you had to look out for was its price. America's love for the automobile that would have to be the Impala in the car world. America's love story.

This year is no exception. With improvements all around, from the new front disc brake wear sensors to the improved bumper system, to the new, bolder styling, to the improved new grille, to the availability of steel-belted radial tires, so that you'll feel this year's Impala isn't just new, but refreshingly, Impala has been worth more at resale time. In fact, for the past 16 years, Impala has consistently had higher resale value than its nearest competition.

To look at it this way, if a car buyer's got it now, it won't leave it sell.

Impala. It's still the great American value.

Chevrolet

Building a better way to see the U.S.A.

There's no such thing as too much comfort. 1976 Caprice Classic.

1976 Chevrolet makes room for America.

There comes a time when you think, "I deserve it, and so does my family." That's the time for Caprice Classic. It comes with the kinds of features that expensive luxury cars do. At a Chevrolet price. There's the comfort of beautiful surroundings: deeply padded seats, instrument panel courtesy lights, rosewood vinyl accents on the instrument panel and trim. There's the comfort of being blanketed from outside noises with a special sound insulation package. There's the comfort of city-driving features like power steering, power disc brakes, automatic transmission and steel-belted radial ply tires. All this and so much more, in a car with room for six and lots of luggage. The 1976 Caprice Classic. You deserve it.

Chevrolet

The New Chevrolet Landau Coupe.

We've topped ourselves.

Last September we introduced The New Chevrolet Coupe—a beautifully contemporary car with clean crisp lines, a smooth quiet ride, more rear-seat leg room, more head room, more trunk room, and more ease of entry and exit than last year's full-size Chevrolet Coupes.

Quite a car. But instead of sitting around congratulating ourselves, we went right to work on an exciting new version of that exciting new coupe—a sporty new number we call The New Chevrolet Landau Coupe.

And here it is. With its very own elk-grain vinyl landau top, four very believable wire wheel covers, a pair of spot mirrors, accent striping, distinctive Landau nameplates, and a personality all its own.

You can order it as a Caprice or an Impala. If you like, you can order it with our available F41 Sport Suspension for a little extra flavor on the road. But first, go see it. Your Chevrolet dealer is the place.



Caprice Classic Landau Coupe

Now that's more like it. 

1977 CAPRICE CLASSIC LANDAU COUPE

PRODUCTION

| | |
|---|--------|
| 1977 Impala Sport Coupe | 55,347 |
| 1977 Impala Landau Coupe..... | 2,745 |
| 1977 Caprice Classic Sport Coupe..... | 62,366 |
| 1977 Caprice Classic Landau Coupe | 9,607 |
| 1978 Impala Sport Coupe | 33,990 |
| 1978 Impala Landau Coupe..... | 4,652 |
| 1978 Caprice Sport Custom Coupe..... | 37,301 |
| 1978 Caprice Classic Landau Coupe | 22,771 |
| 1979 Impala Sport Coupe | 26,589 |
| 1979 Impala Landau Coupe..... | 3,247 |
| 1979 Caprice Classic Sport Coupe..... | 36,629 |
| 1979 Caprice Classic Landau Coupe | 21,824 |

next redesign in 1977, remaining unique to Impala Custom and Caprice coupes.

Caprices were given exclusive new front ends for 1975, while Impalas made do with a repeat of 1974 styling shared with that year's Caprice. The Impala Sport Coupe (two-door hardtop model) made its final appearance for 1975. In 1976, Caprices received the at-last-approved rectangular headlamps, while Impalas made do with the 1975 Caprice front-end treatment. Both Impala Custom and Caprice coupes offered an optional Landau model, with a vinyl top covering just the rear portion of the roof and windows for 1976. These were the final big Chevrolets, as downsized models appeared for 1977.

1977-1979

For 1977, GM's full-size models were subject to a dramatic downsizing from the previous model year. At Chevrolet, the new Caprice and Impala were named *Motor Trend's* Car of the Year. Coupes and sedans shared a 116-inch wheelbase (down from 121.5) and cars were 10 inches shorter overall as well as 4 inches narrower. Weight was reduced significantly, with coupes dropping over 600 pounds from their predecessors. Once again, the big Chevy B-body coupes were given a roofline unique to Chevrolet and not shared with other GM divisions. The new design included an attractive wraparound semi-fastback rear backlite.

GM, in conjunction with PPG, used a new technology to bend a single sheet of glass via a wire embedded within. Known as hot bent wire technology, it enabled the glass to be shaped into unusual forms and angles previously impossible with the thickness required of automotive glass. Rather than using sheetmetal, the glass became a stylistic element of the automobile's new design.

Despite the sales success of the new full-size Chevys, the writing was on the wall as buyers' tastes shifted yet again. Large coupes like the Impala and Caprice fell out of favor as shoppers opted for sedans. The explosive growth in popularity of imports such as the Honda Accord had its effect, and the burgeoning SUV market was beginning to take hold. The 1981 model year marked the final run for the Impala Coupe with 6,067 produced. Just six years later, 1987 closed out sales of the Caprice Classic Coupe with just 3,110 made. The era of big Chevy coupes was gone, never to return. 🚗

Why would we put an Impala ad in a magazine like this?

We would admit there are other Chevys more apt to enthrall an enthusiast "but why?"

Imagine for a moment your past conceptions of what an Impala is or isn't, and take a good long look at the photograph below. This is what an Impala is today. The classic styled, a thoroughly delightful car to look at

and to drive. Yes, drive.

You see, this particular Impala is equipped for the particular driver underneath that shiny sheet metal. Like our luxurious F41 Sport Suspension—a beautifully tuned team of components which includes a rear stabilizer, an up-size front stabilizer, stiffer springs, special shocks and rear wheel available

GM's 15 white stripe radial tires.

The result is exhilarating "you could?" Take an F41 Impala or Caprice over the ripples and through the turns, and judge for yourself. Our hunch is it will elicit at least a knowing grin if not an out-and-out "I'm damned!"

The new Chevrolet Impala or Caprice with F41 Sport Suspension. Call your dealer soon and see if he has one on hand.

If so, go drive it. And take along some friends. This is one "driver's car" that leaves plenty of room for riders. You, come.



1977 Impala Coupe with available F41 Suspension

The New Chevrolet 

1977 CHEVROLET IMPALA SPORT COUPE

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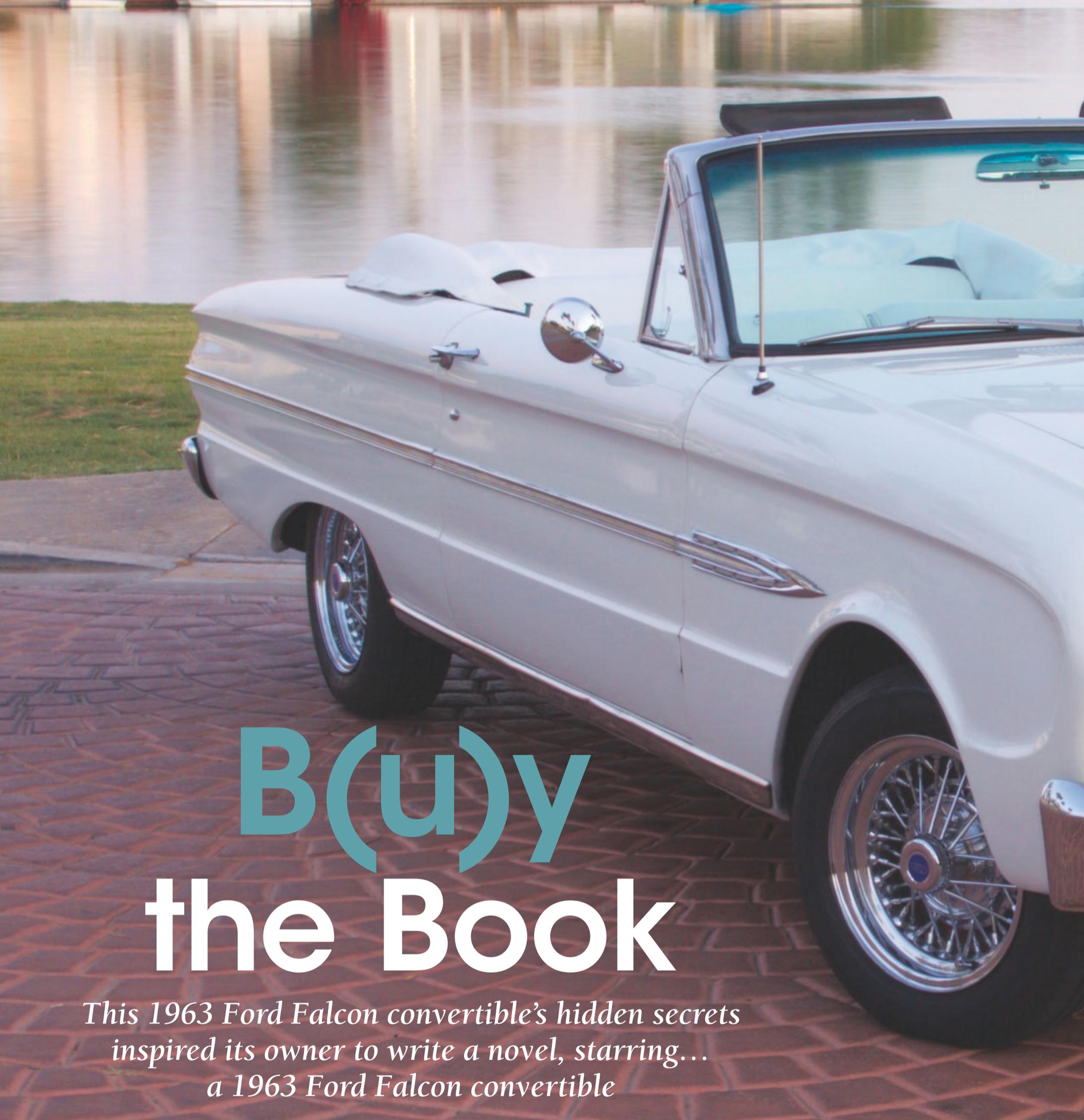
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B(u)y the Book

*This 1963 Ford Falcon convertible's hidden secrets
inspired its owner to write a novel, starring...
a 1963 Ford Falcon convertible*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

*“A n artist’s duty is rather to stay open-minded and in a state where he
can receive information and inspiration. You always have to be ready
for that little artistic epiphany.” — Nick Cave, Australian musician*



Ken Blaisdell, now of Gilbert, Arizona, didn't realize he was soon to have an artistic epiphany when he found this 1963 Ford Falcon convertible for sale online locally. "It was a true 20-footer—rougher than I expected. All of the plastic dash knobs were deteriorated and broken from the Arizona sun; the seller had replaced the top, but left the original gaskets in place; he removed the old door gaskets but didn't install new ones. The original engine had been swapped out, and while the evaporator was still under the dash, the original York compressor was gone. I told the

seller that it was rougher than I had expected, and that I was going to pass." A month later, however, "I went back and bought it."

Inspiration for finding this Falcon came from Ken's salad days in the early '70s, when a used '61 Falcon sedan was his daily driver. "It was 'just an old car' that served as cheap transportation," he says. "I paid \$50 for it, and drove it until the rear end gave out. I used to work on that one because I had to; now I own one and work on it as a hobby! The style brings me back to the days when I first became interested in cars, and it's so



A replacement 170-cubic-inch inline-six, rated at 101 hp, now shines between the shock towers; a contemporary A/C compressor is hidden low beside the block.



simple to work on that it's actually enjoyable. It keeps me in shape; I refer to all of the crawling around beneath it, the bending over into the engine compartment, and the twisting to reach under the dash as my 'restoration yoga.'"

It was during one of Ken's restoration-yoga workouts, cleaning out his new ride as he prepared it for restoration, that he found what would amount to a small pile of items from the trunk, from under the seats, and from every nook and cranny. A movie stub. A penny, dated 1962. A couple of beer-can pop tops. A St. Christopher medal that had mysteriously worked its way into the instrument panel. A switchblade knife. A small collection of dime-store molded-plastic little-girls' hair ties, made to look like properly tied cloth bows. A round yellow charm with a simple smiley face. Most of us might have seen these items as detritus, the sorts of items that get lost, momentarily mourned, and ultimately forgotten about—the debris of lives lived, trips taken, and memories made.

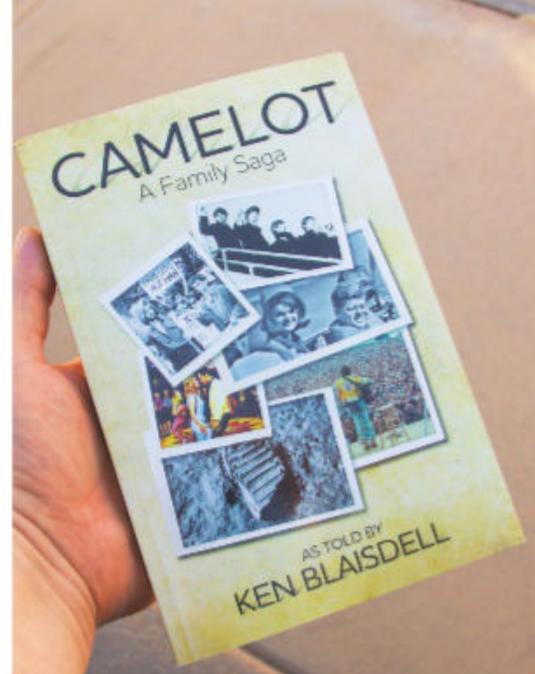


This Wimbledon White 1963 Falcon ragtop is a curiously optioned, special-ordered machine: the 101-horsepower, 170-cubic-inch inline-six fronts the two-speed column-shifted Ford-O-Matic transmission, and its options include front seatbelts, pushbutton AM radio, tinted windshield, and air conditioning. Air conditioning makes a certain amount of sense in the desert, despite the common (and incorrect) thinking that simply dropping the top and driving would accomplish the same thing. It also came with wire wheel covers, which had at some point been

replaced with period-aftermarket real-wire wheels. After ordering the Marti Report for his car, Ken was astounded to see that the Falcon rolled off the Lorain, Ohio, line on January 31, 1963, but for reasons unexplained, wasn't registered until June of that year.

To Ken, a writer of several novels over the last 20 years, these items that he charmingly refers to as artifacts, combined with his need to answer the unanswerable (why did it take so long for a special-order car to get registered?) served as inspiration for him to write *Camelot: A Family Saga*, a fictionalized account of this car's life in the 1960s. "WWII veteran Paul Addison bought the first new car he had ever owned—a 1963 Ford Falcon convertible," reads the back-cover summary. "Its simple elegance, its gleaming white color, even its very openness all reminded him of the decade that was just beginning with such hope and promise...." The novel goes on to tell the tale of three generations of Addisons, and the epoch-defining events that would unfold around them. There are





Items found inside the car during pre-restoration teardown inspired the owner's novel, and go on display with it at any car show Ken attends.



faint echoes of another car-centric piece—the 1965 film *The Yellow Rolls-Royce*—but *Camelot* keeps the action within multiple generations of a single family rather than across multiple owners.

Or is it a novel? Most of Ken's books are listed as "A novel by..." but *Camelot* is "As told by...". Ken explains: "It's still fiction, but I wanted it to come across more as a story that I had been told and am retelling." And while the writing of the book and the restoration didn't happen absolutely simultaneously, time spent in, on, around, and under his Falcon gave Ken time to outline things in his head. "As I was working on the car and discovering the artifacts, I was thinking about a book and how I could apply the things I was finding to some sort of fictional story. I was done with the car when I started writing it, but I had a lot in my head."

Before the writing started in earnest, and during the restoration of the car itself, Ken made a couple of functional changes to his Falcon. The interior was entirely reupholstered locally in turquoise and white, using factory Falcon shapes but changing some of the colors and details. The cloth in the doors and on the seats wasn't originally part of this very base Falcon's package, and generally was not found in convertibles of any stripe (lest the car get caught in a downpour with the top down and the seats absorb all that moisture and start to mildew). But for Ken's purposes, living in a town where the sun shines 350 days a year and where he keeps his car inside a garage whenever it's

not being driven, sitting on a cloth chair—even a part-cloth bench—is a lot less likely to induce thigh-fry than an all-vinyl treatment would.

Ken also installed a contemporary air conditioning compressor using modern R134a refrigerant. "I finally gave up on finding an original York and had a new compressor installed, down low enough in the engine compartment that if you don't know what you're looking for, you won't see it," which, he assures us, keeps things blowing cold. He didn't see the need for a disc brake upgrade: "It's not very highway friendly," Ken said. "The straight-six is revving pretty high to cruise at 65 mph, and you keep waiting for the two-speed Ford-O-Matic to shift one more time as the engine revs come up. I won't even take it on one of the 75-mph freeways. It's perfect on surface streets, though!" He did add a power brake booster to up the oomph to those little 10-inch front drums. "The booster is from a '92 Geo Tracker, and I modified it so that I didn't have to make any irreversible changes to the Falcon." Ken also has the Falcon's original master cylinder in storage.

Some changes he kept, like the aftermarket wheels—although he freshened the tires. "One of the wheels continuously leaked air," Ken said, but he liked the look of them better than the factory-style wire hubcaps, and so he searched and searched. "Those real wire wheels were made in Brazil," Ken recalled. "They made 'em for Thunderbirds and Mustangs and man, finding a replacement set with the

Falcon's four-bolt pattern was a trick." He haunted online auction sites for more than two years before he found a set that would fit. "I was able to replace the one wheel, I have one with the spare tire in the trunk, and I have three more sitting in the attic."

We don't normally peek in trunks—as one colleague described it, shrugging, "it's just a hole"—but this one sports a set of what appears to be period-correct luggage. But what seems to be a quaint show piece that encouraged the symmetry of opening both hood and trunk at car shows, holds a slightly grimmer purpose: "Because it's an older car, I carry tools and spares with me. Rather than have them floating around the trunk, I decided that a suitcase would be nice to hold it all in place."

Though he didn't mean to in the moment, Ken Blaisdell did exactly as Nick Cave suggested—he stayed open-minded and in a state where he received information and inspiration. That's the thing about epiphanies; you rarely see them coming. Ken's artistic epiphany came in the form of an unassuming little white Falcon convertible. We should all be so lucky to have a machine that inspires our minds and souls even once in our lifetimes. 🐉



Shop Savvy

Safety and efficiency improvements for your workspace

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM SMART

Through years of covering the classic car world, we've seen a lot of restoration shops, and it's remarkable how many of these professional facilities — be they machine shops or all-out restoration/body shops — fail to keep an organized and safe environment. Often these places are a disorganized mess, which can also make them unsafe as a result. Beyond safety is the issue of efficiency — in a business where work is measured in terms of hours spent, technicians shouldn't have to struggle to find what they're looking for.

The first order of business in any shop, be it home or a business, is organization and neatness: A place for everything and everything in its place. This, in



turn, improves safety. Parts left on the floor can be a cause of falls and other personal injuries, not to mention damage to the part itself. Any equipment left in a poor state of repair, with missing safety shields, tooling, or other parts on the edge of catastrophic failure can be problematic, as can power equipment that's not properly grounded.

So, if plenty of professional shops are disorganized, home garages and other workspaces are likely to be even worse. Most of the home garages and workshops we've seen are frustrating places to photograph technical articles, because so much time is spent searching for parts and tools. Due to the very nature of repair shops and



This is a textbook-perfect engine assembly clean room at Roche Racing Engines in Baltimore, Maryland: organized, and everything in its place.



Don Lee Auto Service in Southern California is undoubtedly the most organized shop we've ever seen. This is another great example of good housekeeping.

home garages, there's rarely the time to organize and clean up. For many, it isn't even a priority.

How tidy and safe is your shop? Begin your evaluation with organization. A sloppy, cluttered shop is an accident waiting to happen. It is also a huge time suck because of how much effort is wasted in search of missing parts. Cars are stripped and the parts tossed to the four corners, with no idea of where these items go when it's time for reassembly.

Whether you're doing a simple remove-and-replace procedure or a full-scale restoration, all parts must be labeled and cataloged to make reassembly easier to accomplish. And don't kid yourself: You're never going to remember how something came apart months or years later. Under optimum circumstances, parts should be cataloged, stored together, and properly identified while the assembled car is fresh in your mind. Pictures of the assembled vehicle or component should be taken beforehand, even if you have a shop manual to refer to later.

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

It is challenging to keep an organized shop because the focus is always on getting a job done. Most of us struggle with it at one time or another. We get involved in a project, then tools and parts pile up on the workbench or floor. Next thing you know, the shop is buried in clutter. Projects tend to snowball, and we wind up wondering how it got this bad. Then, time is wasted organizing when it never should have gotten so out of hand to begin with.

As a starting point, maintain a discipline of putting tools back in their proper place the minute you're finished with a specific step and are positive you won't need that tool again. Take a similar approach to the parts that are removed—they either need to go immediately in the trash or recycle bin, or they should go into organized storage if you intend to use them again. We've seen so many shops with huge piles of worn-out, rusty parts, and wondered why these old relics had remained. Are they being saved for a rainy day? Forget it. This is where discipline comes into play again. You have to recognize that you're probably never going to need those pieces. If nothing else, pass them along to a buddy who may be able to use them.

However, there will be circumstances where the parts that come off a project car need to be saved, either because they are going back on later or because they are genuinely useful items that will be needed elsewhere. If you are storing parts,



Shop organization applies to car projects, which must be planned and organized with precision. All related parts are boxed and kept with this rolling chassis.



Organization is easy to achieve with toolbox drawer inserts, which enable you to see what's missing immediately.



Tool organizers are designed for strict maintenance of work areas and tools. Using these not only promotes returning tools to where they belong, but also allows for quick discovery of what hasn't been returned.



Whatever it is you do most is where your priorities should lie. Paul Coffee of Modern Driveline just outside of Boise, Idaho, performs hundreds of transmission builds a year, work that calls for a bench and storage access for parts he needs to build Tremec transmissions. This is a good template for any home shop.



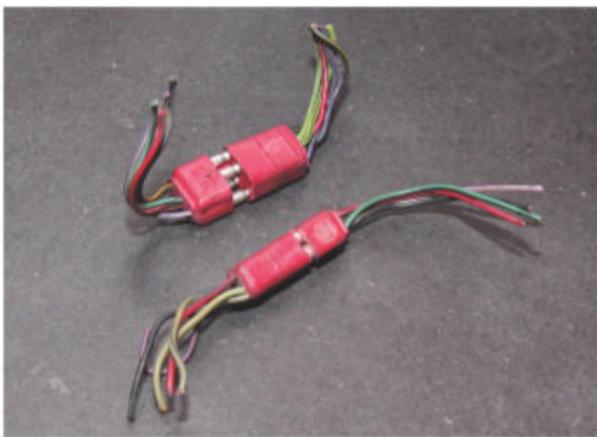
There are many approaches to supporting automobiles — some quite dangerous, like this one. Salvage yards are fond of using wheels for vehicle support — don't try this at home. Use jack stands as a more solid means of support.



Always use jack stands rated for at least 2 to 3 tons and positioned beneath the frame rails (or other solid jacking points), with a backup system in place should the stands fail.



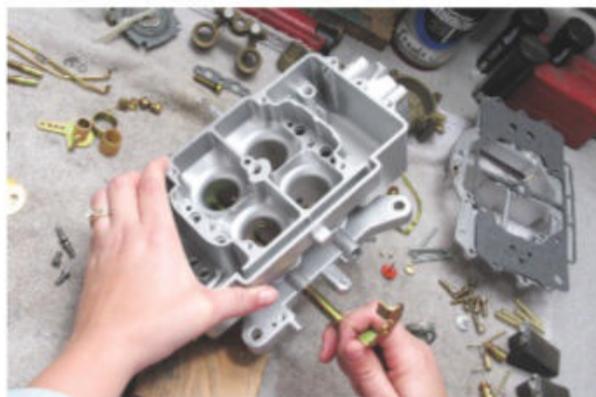
If you do a lot of restoration work, it's a good idea to keep wiring on spools for easy access. You can buy large spools of wire in different colors and gauges from numerous sources, including American Autowire or Summit Racing. You can also find old shop surplus cabinets like this one, or build your own using plywood and electrical conduit.



Instead of throwing an old wiring harness away, cut the plugs from the harness and put them away for safe keeping, especially if you work with a specific manufacturer of vehicle.



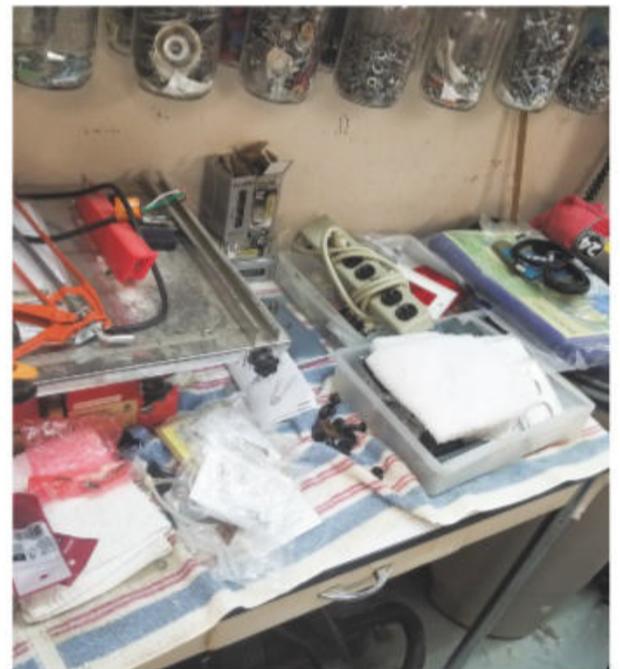
Keeping spare parts is always an organizational challenge. Holley makes it easy with all kinds of parts kits for anything Holley, and with easy storage. The same can be said for any kind of carburetor via Mike's Carburetor Parts. Ditto for Pertronix and MSD for ignition parts.



Here's a quick tip: Whenever you're working with a component that contains a bunch of tiny parts, disassemble it on a large towel or sheet to keep parts contained. If you take it apart on a bare workbench, you run the risk of losing parts. Once the component is stripped, place these small parts in a labeled container.



Can anyone explain to us why stored cars become a catchall for things we need to store? Never use an automobile for storage. You run the risk of dents and paint damage no matter how careful you are.



This worktable makes little sense aside from being a drop zone. Stay ahead of the clutter curve and get things where they belong.

recognize the structural limitations of your shop or garage and do not overload attics, lofts, hanging shelves, or anything else that has to support the weight of those items. Wrap up and protect anything you're putting away for later use, especially if you live in a harsh climate. Hot, dry desert temps are especially hard on soft parts like vinyl, foam, and rubber. Don't leave such parts in direct sunlight, where they will decay quickly. Cast iron and steel parts are obviously prone to rusting in the presence of moisture, and garage floors tend to see damp air, even when not visibly wet. Aluminum parts will also corrode in similar conditions. Soft items, like upholstered seats and door panels, can get mildewed or even moldy in damp storage, so make sure your storage area is sufficiently dry.

AGAIN—SAFETY FIRST

Safety should be the first thing you think of when organizing a shop. The military and aeronautical industries make a habit of inspecting tools and equipment periodically to determine serviceability and safety. Is the tool or piece of equipment safe? You don't want to wonder about the safety of

a hydraulic jack, jack stands, or an engine hoist when you're in a vulnerable position.

Perhaps you've never considered this, but if you live in an earthquake zone, make sure your vehicle has multiple means of support, even if it's a stack of old tires and wheels lying around to place under the vehicle in addition to jack stands. Never trust a hydraulic jack as a sole means of vehicle support—always use jack stands, even if you're going to be underneath a vehicle for a short time. Regularly inspect your jacks to ensure they are safe. Leaky hydraulic jacks must be repaired or disposed of. Never chance your life to an unknown.

Remember, tools are designed and manufactured for specific purposes. If you need a pry bar, go purchase a pry bar. Do not use a big screwdriver.

Inspect power tools and lighting on a regular basis to prevent electric shock, burns, and fire. Do you have cords that are frayed? Melted transformers? Worn out inspection lights? Old fluorescent lighting is notorious for starting fires as ballasts deteriorate. Modern LED tubes used in old fluorescent fixtures can also pose a fire

risk; before you convert to LED lighting, check with the manufacturer to be sure its LED tube is compatible with your ballast. Some LED tubes call for the elimination of the ballast. A hot ballast can start a fire.

Have you inspected your electrical outlets and plugs lately? A loose outlet connection, especially with a high-amp component like a heater or air compressor, can start a fire that won't be prevented by your circuit breakers or fuse box. An overheated connection will set the wall on fire. Do you have ground fault outlets in your garage? If not, make the small investment in ground fault outlets, especially in a garage where a wet floor and a hand on a power tool or plug can get you killed. If you have a demanding garage circuit, you may well be advised to have a licensed electrician add a completely separate circuit breaker panel for your shop and garage.

How well ventilated is your shop? Never start an engine in an enclosed shop—not even for a minute—due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Repeated exposure to carbon monoxide can cause permanent brain and nervous system



Shop equipment should be kept safe and in working order. Many compact grinders for the home shop are not of the best quality; instead, opt for the large industrial grinders, which shake less and are quite durable. Use those face shields and hand rests.



One of the more dangerous automotive service tasks is coil spring replacement. Even if you replace springs once, invest in or rent an industrial coil-spring compressor. We've seen homemade compressors built from hardware-store threaded rod fail, putting a hole in the wall and resulting in serious personal injury. Uncontained coil springs can maim and kill. Never put yourself in the path of a compressed coil spring.



Does your shop have a ground fault outlet? If not, it should, to prevent electrocution. A ground fault breaker outlet interrupts power the split second a ground fault is detected.



Tool abuse is something we see all the time. Wrenches are not hammers. Screwdrivers are not punches, nor pry bars—they're used for turning screws. Torque wrenches must never be used to loosen fasteners, nor should they be jerked to achieve the desired torque. Gently apply torque and do it in one-third values. Once a year, have your torque wrenches calibrated.

damage. Install a good industrial-grade exhaust fan in the attic, or on an exterior wall, to keep your shop well ventilated.

If you do a lot of painting or powder coating, always wear a paint-specific respirator to protect your lungs. We've all skipped this important step: We spray-paint a part, then blow the paint pigment from our noses thinking that hair catches the paint. It doesn't; instead, the paint settles in your lungs and comes around to haunt you later in life. The same can be said for brake dust. Protect your lungs.

Your skin absorbs all kinds of toxins that can cause cancer and other diseases. Wear protective gloves any time you're cleaning parts with brake or carburetor cleaner, or engine degreaser. Even mineral spirits laced with crud is not good for your health. These chemicals can cause or contribute to a variety of medical problems.

Protect your eyes and face with goggles or a face shield, which are cheap insurance when it comes to protecting precious sight and skin. Have you inspected your grinder and cutting wheels? They can fly apart and do a lot of damage to your face, hands, and arms.

We've done a lot of shop improvement articles in our history. Safety and organization are paramount in your efforts to build a better shop; when you have safety and organization on your side, the rest comes easy. 🛠️

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1960-'61
Chrysler
300F & 300G

*The original “businessman’s hot rod”
combined a racing pedigree with luxury trimmings*



Chrysler restyled the 1960 300F with an aggressive front end and grille; the following year would see yet another restyle, this time with distinctively canted headlamps.

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

When people boasted of the performance of Chrysler-branded automobiles during the postwar years, it was usually in reference to the cars' mechanical prowess: smooth and reliable, just like a luxury vehicle should be. Naturally, powerful acceleration was a key element, but it was intended to make premium models more capable on the road, and not meant for speed contests. The corporation's other divisions were better equipped to manage a young buyer's stoplight-sprint antics.

Part of that perspective changed when the division released the C-300 in 1955. Fitted with the 300-hp, 331-cu.in. "FirePower" V-8 capable of pushing it to a top speed of 130 mph, the specially trimmed hardtop coupe broke the mold while redefining the parameters of a luxury coupe. Adventurous CEOs could feel the excitement of raw power while seated in a luxurious cabin, surrounded by coachwork that spoke of edgy — yet not audacious — exclusivity. And it was exclusive: Just 1,725 were built in the first

year, each costing \$4,110 (or \$40,095 today) without options.

More compelling was how the C-300 began to cement its legacy beyond the boulevard. Trimmed for racing, it utterly dominated the NASCAR and AAA stock car ranks, which continued a year later with the updated 300B. For 1957, the 300C set a notable production car speed record at Daytona Beach before the Chrysler division took a bow and left the business of racing to Dodge and Plymouth, prior to the AMA embargo.

Although the on-track exploits may have been put to rest, the exclusive "Letter Cars" remained in production, continuously improved both visually and mechanically. The model's evolution took a significant leap forward when the 300F was introduced in 1960, the basic elements of which carried through to the 300G of '61, with attributes that not only set these cars apart from their predecessors but have attracted both collectors and vintage-car driving enthusiasts alike since. If you've been considering the purchase of one, here are some things you should be aware of.





Both the 300F and 300G came with the “Cross Ram” 413-cu.in. engine that used elongated aluminum intakes, each topped with a four-barrel carburetor. Long ram units had 30-inch runners (above), while the performance version had 15-inch runners (below). Also note swap from generator to alternator.



ENGINES

During this two-year span, Chrysler engineering specified the installation of what was then the corporation’s most powerful engine as standard equipment: the 413-cu.in. “wedge,” so named because of its wedge-shaped combustion chambers. Introduced a year prior, the 413—which had replaced the early Hemi—welcomed a new “ram induction” intake system. The 413 was part of Chrysler Corp’s RB-series of V-8s, bestowed with 4.18-inch bores filled with pistons that traveled 3.75 inches. The crankshaft was forged steel and compression was advertised as 10.1:1, thanks in part to the cylinder heads, which also held 2.08/1.60-inch valves, while a camshaft with .430-inch lift and 268-degrees duration dictated valve action.

The ram induction aspect of the 413 consisted of elongated aluminum intake manifolds, one for each cylinder bank, each supporting its own four-barrel carburetor. Their design was based on resonance principles and their effect on a compression wave of the fuel/air charge. Simply put, intake runner length was tuned so that, when paired with specific camshaft timing, the intake charge would take advantage of resonance waves to improve volumetric efficiency at certain rpm ranges. And since expansion of midrange output was engineering’s target, they calculated that 30-inch runners were ideal.

Referred to as the long ram intakes, they were designed to fit neatly under the hood and crisscross (hence the oft-used “cross ram” moniker) over the top of the engine, each fitted with a single Carter AFB four-barrel at the outboard location. In this configuration, the engine was rated for 375 hp at 5,000 rpm and 495 lb-ft of torque at 2,800 rpm. In other words, the arrangement produced passing power on demand without sacrificing full-throttle acceleration.

Though the long ram 413 was standard, optional was the high-performance short ram version. Visually identical to the

long ram at a quick glance, the separate internal runners within each intake measured only 15 inches in length, raising the engine's power band and enabling it to make peak horsepower at 5,200 rpm, with peak torque at 3,600 rpm. Short ram ratings were 400 hp and 465 lb-ft of torque. Part of the power jump was attributed to other enhancements, such as taller air cleaners atop manual-choke Carter AFB 3048S carburetors, 1.74-inch exhaust valves and adjustable rocker arms, solid valve lifters, a .449/.454-inch lift camshaft with 284 degrees duration, low-tension piston rings, cast-iron exhaust headers, and 2.5-inch exhaust pipes with Arvin low-backpressure mufflers.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Reportedly, the baseline 413 long ram engine of 1960 was equipped with a generator, while the short ram system employed a more efficient—and considerably lighter—alternator. This was the year in which the division began making the part swap, and by '61 it seemed as though every 413, regardless of the intake system, used an alternator.

As to the ram induction system, there are two ways to spot their differences. Long rams featured a visible valley between each pair of runners for the entire length; they also had a seven-digit casting number that began with "19." Short rams only had a partial valley between runners; their seven-digit casting number began with "21." Finally, short ram 413 engines were designed for those invested in all-out speed contests and are therefore the rarer of the two by a significant margin.



Unless you look closely, the 300F and 300G grille emblems appear virtually identical. Save for the C-300 of 1955, Chrysler's Letter Cars received an alphanumeric bump each successive model year, skipping only over "A" and "I" through mid-decade.

TRANSMISSIONS & AXLES

Backing either version of the 413-cu.in. engine was the already-durable 727 TorqueFlite automatic, which was issued as standard equipment. Like other Chryslers of the day, the three-speed unit was shifted via pushbuttons on the dash; it contained first and second gear ratios of 2.45:1 and 1.45:1, respectively.

Unbeknownst to most customers, another transmission was briefly available through the option chart. During 1960, it was a four-speed manual crafted and supplied by Pont-à-Mousson. Originally designed for the Facel Vega, the all-synchromesh unit housed a 3.35 first gear, which had a hand in helping the 300F get a solid jump off the starting line. The problem with this transmission was the simple fact that the Chrysler was not designed to accommodate it as a mass-market installation. A hole had to be cut in the floorpan and a structural reinforcement added, after which a replacement piece was hand-fabricated to fit around the gearbox's contours. Additionally, the console had

to be modified with a shifter, boot, and bezel, while the usual TorqueFlite push-button control pod on the dash required a block-off plate, to say nothing of the need to fit clutch and smaller brake pedal assemblies and linkages. It's been reported that only seven to 15 cars were fitted with the option, six of which were delivered to Daytona for speed trials (which was the real motivation for making the higher-output drivetrain and four-speed available).

A year later, the four-speed was replaced by a Chrysler A745 floor-shifted three-speed manual, again a rarity when new. First and second gear ratios were 2.55:1 and 1.49:1, respectively, and first gear was unsynchronized. Contemporary road tests further complained of a long second-to-third gate.

The final transfer point for the torque was a standard 8¾-inch open differential with semi-floating axles and a 3.23:1 final-drive ratio. Some resources state that the exception to this rule was the four-speed manual option, which dictated the installation of a Sure Grip unit containing a





The basic 1960 300F and '61 300G cabins were identical, with a full-length center console that created front and rear bucket seats with center arm rests. Upholstery was supple leather, with a pattern that changed between years. The front seats automatically swiveled out when the doors were opened. **OPPOSITE:** Push-button controls, elegant deep-dish steering wheel and domed instrument pod were standard; manual transmission is very rare.



2.93:1 or 3.31:1 ratio; a 3.15:1 gearset was installed in the open differential when the three-speed manual was installed. What is definitely known is that the 8³/₄ differential was already renowned for its durability, and dealers were able to provide several highway-friendly or performance-oriented gearsets, whether or not the optional Sure Grip (limited slip) unit was installed.

Contemporary magazines reported an average fuel economy rating of 9-13 mpg with a three-speed/3.23 arrangement, yet in terms of power off the line, *Motor Trend* (which reported a time of 8.3 seconds for the 0-60 mph run) and *Motor Life* (which clocked 8.2 seconds) stated that the 300G had more acceleration potential waiting to be unleashed if geared accordingly.

CHASSIS

Both the 300F and 300G were derived from the New Yorker, and shared the same basic unit-body/subframe platform and 126-inch wheelbase, along with 12 x 2.50-inch hydraulic drum brakes at all four corners; power assist was standard. The 300F and G received unique equipment in the form of thicker torsion bars (44 x 1.08-inches), and these delivered a 40-percent stiffer spring rate. Semi-elliptic rear leaf springs carried a 135 lb-in rating that made them 50-percent stiffer than those on the New Yorker. Heavy-duty shocks were also included. For 1960, Chrysler installed 14 x 6.5-inch wheels fitted with Goodyear nylon "Blue Streak"

9.00-14 tires, but a year later, larger 15 x 6-inch wheels with 8.00-15 Goodyear Blue Streak "racing-type" tires (with white sidewalls) were standard.

BODY

Along with a new unit-body chassis, the 300F bodywork was updated, starting with a crossbar grille design with a slight dip in the bottom of the bezel frame, while new fenders offered crisp brows over quad headlamps. That sharper styling continued into freshly outward-tilted fins, themselves visually separated from the rest of the quarter panel. Trunk lids now housed a faux spare in the center of the panel, a la Imperial, and the tail panel had been updated.

A year later, Virgil Exner's FlightSweep design made its last appearance, just as the front end was completely restyled yet again by simply inverting the grille. The top-to-bottom inward canted grille flanks were

harmoniously complemented by equally canted quad headlamps, running lamps, and bumper ends, which also matched the angle of the refined rear fins. Meanwhile, the faux spare tire decklid inlay was eliminated. Little else appeared to change on the Chrysler's 219.8-inch-long body; its greenhouse and rear fenders were carryover items, except for the leading edge of the tailfins on each door.

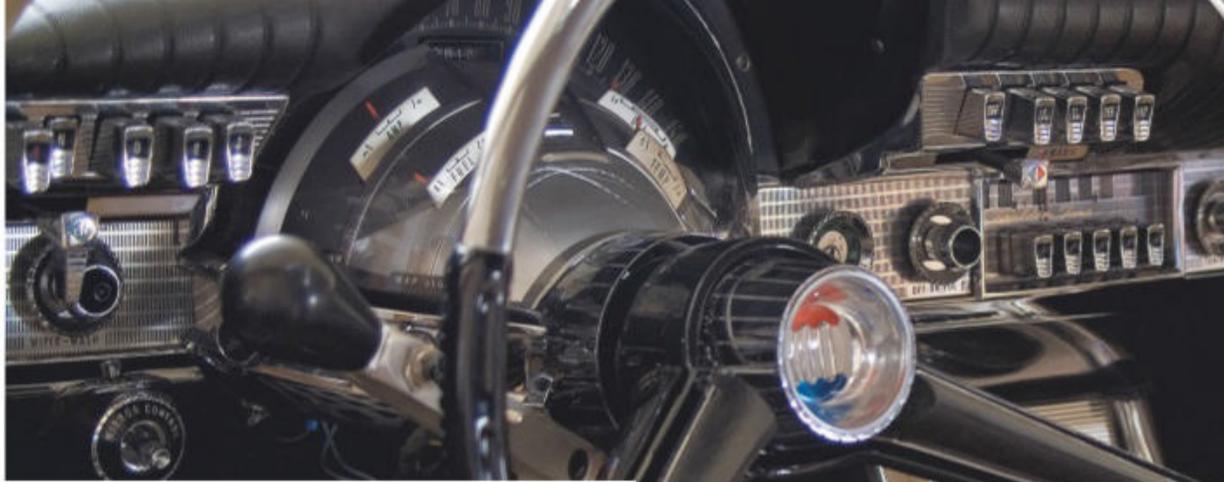
INTERIORS

Letter Car interiors during this two-year span were noted for their front leather bucket seats that swiveled towards the door when the latter was opened, part of the model's extensive list of standard features. A full-length, front-to-rear tunneled center console divided the cabin, which in turn created rear bucket seats. The console, extensively trimmed in chrome, was capped with padded armrests and housed a tachometer, optional power window controls, and

WHAT TO PAY

| Year / Body style | Low | Average | High |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1960 – 300F hardtop | \$30,000 | \$61,000 | \$100,000 |
| 1960 – 300F convertible | \$75,000 | \$125,000 | \$180,000 |
| 1961 – 300G hardtop | \$30,000 | \$55,000 | \$95,000 |
| 1961 – 300G convertible | \$55,500 | \$90,000 | \$155,000 |

Add: Factory air conditioning, 10%; three-speed manual transmission, 10%; 400-hp 413-cu.in. engine (1960-'61), 25%; four-speed manual transmission (1960), 25%.



ashtrays. The primary instruments were contained in a dome-like, easy-to-read bubble; a matching padded dash arch helped eliminate potential glare. Comfort and convenience options included power seats, power antenna, rear window defroster, and air conditioning.

PRODUCTION

As mentioned, Chrysler Letter Cars retained their exclusive stature, and the 1960 300F upheld that tradition. By now, the model was offered only in two body styles: a two-door hardtop, of which 964 were built, and a two-door convertible, of which a mere 248 were built. The mechanical and visual refinements made to the 1961 300G, again offered in the same two body styles, likely had a hand in the bump in output, albeit a slight one. The division built 1,280 hardtops and 337 convertibles. 🚗



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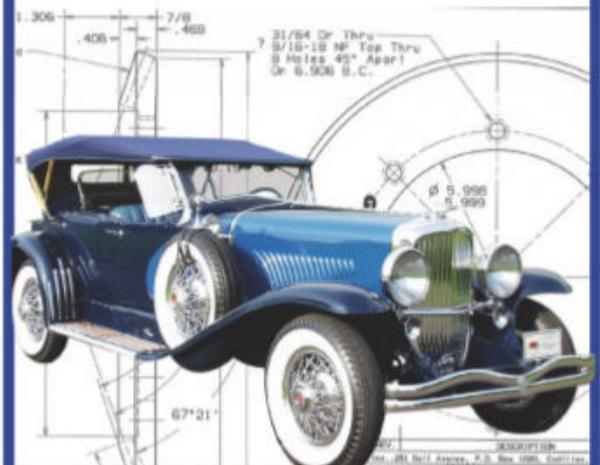
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London **Calling**

A British 1958 Beardmore Mark 7 Paramount taxicab finds new life in the Colonies

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LaCHANCE • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF STEVE AND BILL RULE

When someone mentions the words “London cab,” we typically picture the black Austin FX4 that was so ubiquitous in England’s capital city for decades. It may have been the 500-pound gorilla, but Austin wasn’t alone in the taxi market; from 1919 through 1966, Beardmore built sturdy and stylish cabs that culminated in its final, the Mark 7 Paramount. Fewer than 20 of those genuinely rare people-movers are known

to have made their way across the pond, and “Hack,” a 1958 model that enjoyed a thoughtful cosmetic and mechanical systems refresh, is among the very finest.

The Mark 7 represented the ultimate generation of the Beardmore Paramount, a highly regarded line of innovative, quality-built taxicabs. The parent company originated in 1886 in Glasgow, Scotland, as William Beardmore & Co. Ltd., a steel- and iron-forging industrial concern that would eventually branch out



into shipbuilding, locomotives, aircraft, automobiles, and motorcycles. Between the World Wars, Beardmore made cars for private sale, as well as commercial taxis that earned the firm its positive reputation. Upon its 1954 introduction, the body-on-frame Mark 7 was a fascinating blend of old and new: It combined wood-framed aluminum coachwork with steel hood panels and a fiberglass roof and fenders, and used off-the-shelf English Ford driveline components. It’s believed that



The Paramount's unusual aluminum- and fiberglass-intensive construction meant there was no rust to deal with. The Rules found a period-correct fare meter for it, and decorated it with their coat of arms, along with the county in which their family originated.



around 700 were built before Beardmore's automotive production ended.

Nothing is known of our feature Paramount before it came to America in the 1960s, but it was said to have been put into service by the Arlington, Virginia, based Red Top Cab Co. in 1969. "They had one particular guy, an older man, who was the only person in the company that drove it," explains co-owner Bill Rule. "After he passed away, it was parked around 1980, and sat outside until 1985, when it supposedly just 'disappeared.' Red Top didn't know what happened to it, and it was out of sight until it was bought at auction by the person we bought it from."

Bill and his father Steve, residents of Concord and Bow, New Hampshire, are avowed British car fans, having owned and renovated numerous vehicles through the years, some of which have appeared in the pages of *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*. They're no strangers to performing ground-up restorations on cars built with

traditional methods, so despite its atypical material choices, the Beardmore held no real mysteries. "Throughout the course of my work, I'd ridden in a lot of British taxis—they were great," Steve recalls. "I saw one in this country and said, 'Gee, that would be fun to have.' I was looking online and spotted this one in York, Pennsylvania. I really liked the huge grille, and when we researched it, we were attracted to the Mark 7's rarity."

When their acquisition arrived in June 2014, Bill remembers it put up a fight that would, in some ways, prove predictive: "It didn't run; we had to drag it off the transport trailer with a rope, using my work van. One of the rear wheels had a frozen brake drum, so I had to take the wheel off before I could get it onto our trailer and bring it to my garage." Once it was safely sequestered, the Rules began assessing their purchase. "We quickly discovered parts for these cars are very hard to find. Luckily, Kip Motor Company in Dallas,

Texas, has a good selection of stuff for unusual British vehicles."

This dynamic duo found their former London hack—the nickname they've since given it—was a blend of the good and not-so-good, but thankfully more of the former. The men discovered substantial rot in some of the body's wood framing, and all the fiberglass fenders were damaged. The car was complete, though; its driveline didn't need major work, the aluminum body panels were intact, and the seat upholstery was in surprisingly fine shape.

Pulling the engine and transmission gave good access to the components on the firewall, the front suspension, and some of the chassis. That frame, and its attendant solid front axle, leaf springs, and steering arms, were all cleaned and treated to fresh high-gloss black Rustoleum. "The chassis was fine, there was no rust, and we replaced the front shocks and rebuilt the drum brakes," Bill recalls. "We had to have custom fittings made for new brake



Not only was the original wiring harness in poor condition — the Rules were shocked to discover this taxi had carried paying fares with ¼-20 bolts in its fuse boxes. Both of these bolts were reused elsewhere, as fasteners, in the Mark 7 during its restoration.



The large, lightweight fiberglass roof panel was held to the body with nearly 100 screws. It would be stripped, prepared, and repainted off the car for ease of access; Bill wet-sanded and buffed the roof while it rested on his garage workbench table.



Ash wood was originally used to frame the aluminum body, and a number of sections were rotted. Bill laminated maple boards together and cut replacement pieces for the posts, doors, trunk lid, and rear window supports using templates of rosin paper.



As was typical of the era, Beardmore created an open luggage platform opposite the driver, which left the B-pillar more exposed to the elements. The original ash pillar was beyond saving, so a replacement was handcrafted out of harder maple wood.



Fiberglass was a new material in the mid-1950s, and as used in fenders, it proved not to have the durability of steel. Bill stabilized the cracked sections with strips of metal that he riveted in place before laying fiberglass and smoothing with filler.



One fender had a corner that was completely broken off and missing. A cardboard pattern was cut to replace that section, mirrored from the other side. Bill subsequently laid fiberglass over that cardboard to begin the repair; this was most expeditious.

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The steel hood panels were sanded bare, skimmed with lightweight filler, sanded with 80-grit paper, and then treated to two coats of Nason primer, sanded with 400-grit. Finally came four coats of base and clear paint, wet-sanded with 1,500 and 2,000 paper.



The two-tone paint treatment was time-consuming and took careful masking of the interior. The black upper section was completed first, followed by the burgundy lower panels. The doors, fenders, and roof were painted and finished separately from the body.



No vendors sell Beardmore Mark 7 wiring harnesses, so the Rules made do with a replacement intended for an Austin FX taxi. It was a laborious process to wire in modern safety items like an aftermarket direction indicator system for the steering column.



The Ford Consul engine and transmission were painted and reinstalled after the aluminum-covered $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch plywood firewall received a fresh coat of paint. A new exhaust system had to be fabricated, from the flex pipe off the manifold through the muffler.



While the vinyl seat upholstery and some interior side panels remained in good, usable condition, the original headliner was beyond saving. Steve and Bill opted to have it professionally retrimmed by Superior Interiors in Hooksett, New Hampshire.



When they bought this car, the steering wheel's plastic was gone, leaving a bare metal hoop; it was restored by a specialist. The gearshift knob from an electric forklift stood in for the missing piece, and was epoxied to the lever with a perfect fit.

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The driving position of this cab is fixed, and therefore not comfortable for those of taller stature, like its owners. The steering wheel's plastic rim was restored, but the seating upholstery in the rear cabin—which comfortably fits five—was in good condition.

lines by a machinist, because we couldn't find them."

He continues, "We had the engine's head done. It was lucky we didn't tear it down further, because that's when we learned parts were not readily available." Their Beardmore shared its four-cylinder and column-shift three-speed manual with a contemporary Dagenham, Essex-built Ford Consul Mk II. That 1.7-liter (103.9-cu.in.) OHV engine used a single Zenith carburetor and made 59 hp and 93 lb-ft of torque. "We got really lucky and found a new head gasket online; I had to create two ports for the coolant to flow through, but knock on wood, it's worked fine," Bill says. He would also fabricate an entirely new exhaust system for this

vehicle. And despite it having been rebuilt, the carb that came on the cab would prove problematic; happily, Steve was able to source a NOS replacement from the U.K.

Turning their attention to the body—which was built by the same Windovers coachworks that crafted prestige bodies for Rolls-Royce chassis in the 1920s and 1930s—they took it down to a skeleton, but left it on the frame. Removing the fiberglass roof panel exposed damaged wood around the rear windows, as well as in the trunk and the B-pillar between the open luggage area and left rear door. Bill would tackle these repairs himself, making his own laminated hardwood replacement pieces patterned off the originals. The fiberglass fixes would prove a learning

experience, as he hadn't previously worked with this material; his improvisations got the job done, and the finished panels are indistinguishable from new.

Like most other aspects of the restoration, Bill tackled the body paint in his detached home garage. The Mark 7 must not have been refinished often during its decades in service, since he tells us it wasn't challenging to strip back to bare aluminum, fiberglass, and steel. Steve and Bill chose to retain a two-tone treatment rather than going all black. "I'd seen a picture of one that was dark blue and cream. We thought that was a nice combination, and kicked it around before picking this burgundy and black, with cream powder-coated wheels," Steve





People really respond to this car, they're really interested in it. And to bring more attention to it when we show it, we've made a customer for the back seat. "Nigel" is a mannequin that we dress in the leather pants Bill wore when he was in a rock-n-roll band in the 1980s. He wears a shirt from an old Halloween costume, along with a wig, some funky sneakers, and we set him up with a bottle of Jack Daniels—filled with iced tea—and an electronic cigarette for his finger. Nigel has helped Hack win a prize every time we've entered it in a show. —Steve and Bill Rule

remembers. "It was a nod to originality, but made the car stand out a little more." He noted that, while the impressive grille was cleaned and reinstalled, the bumpers, overrides, and hubcaps were rechromed at great cost, due to the environmental regulations surrounding this process.

Inside, the good condition of the vinyl upholstery took another big, potentially expensive job off the table.

The driver's seat, along with the two rear-facing jump seats and the forward-facing rear bench, would simply require cleaning before being reinstalled. Bill did recover some interior panels, and they had a new headliner—another major job—professionally installed. The original steering wheel, which was in very poor shape, was restored by a specialist, and a perfectly fitting replacement shift-lever knob came from an electric forklift.

The taxi's restoration took 27 months and more than 400 man-hours, the Rules recall, and they were both happy with the result. It's challenging to drive, though; "I'm six-two, and Bill's about six-three. The driver's seat is fixed, and our feet have to go almost straight down to reach the pedals, making it very uncomfortable... if you're shorter, it would be fine," Steve says. Bill adds, "It's got enough power if you're driving on level ground, in city conditions, although the clutch is fairly hefty, and you need to shift deliberately, or the column linkages will jam. I've done that three or four times—you have to hop out, open the hood, and push both linkages back to neutral. It will turn on a dime, and it drives down the road comfortably at 35 mph... 60 mph would be a real adventure."

"Hack" has brought this father-and-son team a lot of enjoyment in the last five years, and strengthened their engagement in the old-car hobby. "It's a tough old bird," Steve muses. "Who knows how many miles it's done, or who has been in it. This cab is the perfect example of, 'If only this thing could talk.'" 🗨️



Beardmore used contemporary Ford Consul running gear in the Mark 7 Paramount, which meant a 59-hp, 1.7-liter OHV four and a column-shifted three-speed manual. The head was rebuilt and a new gasket fitted; the wiring harness was adapted from an Austin FX4.



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The Life and Times of a Car Person

I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD OR SO

when I first began thinking about cars. As I recall, it was while riding in my family's light blue 1941 Ford two-door sedan. When nestled in the front seat between Mom and Dad, I would watch my father operate the column-mounted shifter (three on the tree, as it's known now). I watched him shift from gear to gear using his feet to work the clutch and gas pedals. There was virtually no speed change as the manual transmission went from first, to second, and then into third. After studying my dad awhile, I told him that when I grew up, I was going to invent a car that you did not have to shift. He chuckled and explained that there were already cars that shifted on their own. Later, while learning to drive this same car, I would understand how important it was to my dad that the car move smoothly from a stop to highway speed. Lurching and jerking simply was not allowed.

The first car I drove on my own was my sister's boyfriend's 1936 Ford sedan, with a three-speed floor shift. I was 13 years old at the time. He said I was a natural driver, but I think he was just saying that to get on my sister's good side. I was hooked then, and later began to drive my sister's 1949 Chevrolet sedan on a regular basis.

I grew up in a small town in downstate Illinois, where the local police force and my neighbors were quite tolerant. If we didn't misbehave, everyone looked the other way when we kids drove around town. However, as you can guess, all good things do come to an end, and the local police asked me to stop driving—at least within the town limits—until I got my driver's license.

It was about this time that I discovered girls, or they discovered me. My first true love (as felt by a 15-year-old boy) came into my life one evening, while I walked home from the local hardware store where I worked. Out of nowhere, just like you'd see in a movie, a blue and white 1955 Oldsmobile 98 two-door hardtop came around the corner, with a pretty girl at the wheel, and stopped right next to me. I fell in love on the spot... with the car of course. Its driver began picking me up after work, in her dad's Olds, on a

regular basis. Later, my sister would tease me about my loss of appetite and weight. She told Mom that I was lovesick. I still think it was the car.

Since the local police had asked me to stop driving in town, it was necessary for me to walk to the city limits, where I then borrowed my friend's car to go to my girlfriend's house; yes, she was the one with the 1955 Olds.

On my 16th birthday, my sister and I were waiting at the driver's license examining station when it opened. I passed my tests with flying colors and received my license—the inspector suspected I had been driving for quite some time. As I drove home, I cruised right past the local police car. He pulled out, turned on his lights and siren, and followed me to the local teen hangout. The policeman just laughed when I showed him my brand-new driver's license. I think he was as happy as I was.

Later that year, I bought my first car, an Ivy Green 1949 Olds 88 (shown in the photo below, taken in 1956) which, by the way, had GM's Hydra-Matic automatic transmission. As I recall, the car cost \$350. My high-school friends and I had a lot of fun in that car. In the evenings,

when not working, we would cruise the downtown area, heading from one Steak-n-Shake drive-thru restaurant to another. Those were happy days, and I still had this car when I joined the U.S. Air Force in 1957.

When I was discharged from the USAF in 1960, my Olds 88 was gone, so I began saving for a Ford Thunderbird. Money was very tight then and it wasn't until much later in the 1990s that I finally bought a 1965 Ford Thunderbird 10th Anniversary Special Landau. It was in very good condition, but the California sun had played havoc with the paint and rubber on the car. I ended up repainting it. It was a real eye-catcher until I totaled it when I slid through a red light and broadsided a UPS van.

Since my 1949 Olds 88, I have owned and sold three Ford Thunderbirds (one was a convertible), two Pontiacs, a '67 Olds Cutlass Supreme, a '69 Buick Wildcat, a '76 Chevy pickup, three other Fords (wagons and sedans), and a Mazda pickup. My daily driver now is a 2012 Ford Fusion, and my classic is a 1977 Jaguar XJ-S. And, my middle son owns a restored 1954 Plymouth Belvedere (parked in my garage). We are car people. 🚗



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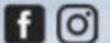
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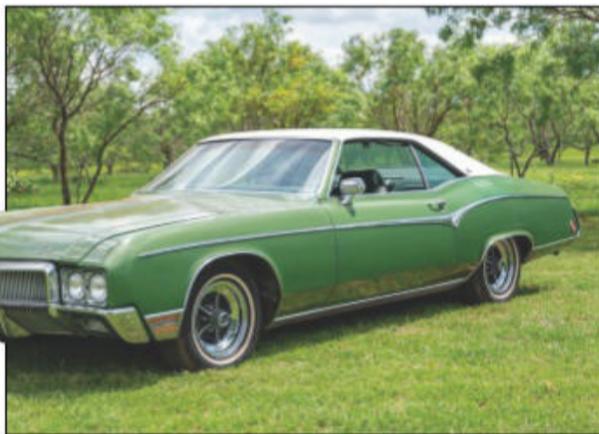
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Mecum Auctions, Tulsa

Inaugural Oklahoma event produced a \$21 million result

AT THE START OF THE CALENDAR YEAR, IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THE COVID-19 pandemic was going to continue to dictate much of the vintage vehicle auction schedule, though to a somewhat lesser extent than 2020. While some “regular” events remain on hold for the time being, others have been added. A perfect example of the latter was Mecum Auctions’ inaugural sale at the River Spirit Expo at Expo Square in Tulsa, Oklahoma, held on June 11-12. The Wisconsin-based auction house put together a catalog of 660 vehicles for Midwesterners eager for gavel action.

Not unexpectedly, a trio of late-model Ford GTs topped the sales chart, led by a 2006 edition that had been driven just 7,000 miles and sold for \$330,000 including fees. Coming home fourth overall was a far older Ford—a 1957 Thunderbird. It was listed as containing a factory F-Code engine and brought \$203,500. Cars from the 1960s and ’70s—three of which we present here—were plentiful and helped achieve a collective total of \$21.2 million after 539 lots (or nearly 82 percent) sold. For complete results and an up-to-date 2021 Mecum event calendar, visit mecum.com.



1970 BUICK RIVIERA

Reserve: None Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$9,350 \$16,500 - \$32,000

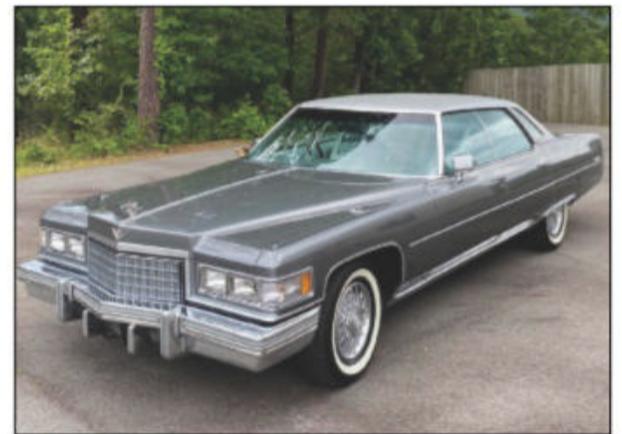
Despite the appeal of the first-generation Riviera, the second-gen models were more popular among consumers. Output jumped from 34,566 in ’65 to 52,872 during ’69, but then dropped to 37,366 a year later. Thus, 1970 examples, such as this one, are known as “the forgotten Rivieras” that bridged the gap between ’69 and the third-gen “boattails” that followed. Billed as “highly original,” the car had all the standard features one might expect, including a crusty-and-dusty 370-hp 455 below the hood. Wear was visible on portions of the body, and parts of the interior had faded, but you could have done a whole lot worse for a running driver, for a whole lot more money.



1965 MERCURY COMET

Reserve: None Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$19,800 \$14,000 - \$21,000

Oddly, Mercury’s upscale Comet, the Caliente, seems rarely remembered among general enthusiasts. It’s possible the midsize model is overshadowed by the muscular Cyclone, yet the Caliente, with its cheaper base price, could have been upgraded with an array of options. Take this 1965 edition, which boasted a spritely four-barrel 289-cu.in. V-8, backed by a C4 automatic. Power steering and an AM radio topped the comfort and convenience list, along with tinted glass. There were receipts dating to 1970, and confirmation it was sold new in Colorado Springs. Restored at an undisclosed time, it sold short of the \$25,000 presale estimate.



1976 CADILLAC SEDAN DE VILLE

Reserve: Undisclosed Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$20,350 \$13,000 - \$23,000

Still think interest in cars from the ’70s doesn’t exist? Let’s take a closer look at this 1976 Cadillac Sedan de Ville. The model year marked the last use of both Cadillac’s 500-cu.in. V-8 engine and gargantuan full-size chassis; the former would be gone a year later, while the latter was simultaneously downsized. Details specific to this four-door were scant beyond two words: “automatic transmission.” Its presentation, however, was reportedly exceptional, and the car seemed to be in largely original condition. Demand for cruisers such as this is slowly increasing and it sold handsomely at the top end of the market range.

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

RM Sotheby's Latest Open Roads Results

RM SOTHEBY'S JUNE ONLINE-ONLY AUCTION SAW a 79-percent sell-through with total sales hitting more than \$3.4 million. The auction company's "Open Roads" sale was the fifth it hosted in 2021. Among the cars to sell was a 1962 Lincoln Continental convertible. The car hailed from the Pacific Northwest and was complete down to the suicide doors. The platinum white over light blue metallic car was powered by a 7-liter V-8 mated to a three-speed automatic. The power-operated soft top and rear decklid were recently serviced, and the Lincoln received a new exhaust system. It was stored in climate-controlled conditions by the seller, who'd owned the car since 1986, and it came with a spare, the factory manual, and service invoices dating to the consignor's purchase. When the bidding ended, the Continental cruised to a new home for \$77,000.

Also selling was a late Buick woodie, a 1953 Estate Wagon, one of 1,830 reportedly built for the model year. At one time part of the Bryan Frank Collection, the Buick—which changed hands for \$60,500—had undergone a full nut-and-bolt restoration that included fresh black paint, highly polished wood, and shining brightwork. The wagon rode on Kelsey-Hayes chrome wire wheels fitted with whitewall tires, and power came from a 322-cu.in. V-8 coupled to a Dynaflo transmission. Full results are now available at rmsothebys.com.

Barrett-Jackson in Vegas

THE WEST HALL OF THE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, hosted Barrett-Jackson's auction in mid-June. When the final lot was sold, the no-reserve event brought in \$48 million while more than 700 vehicles changed hands along with 284 pieces of automobilia. Among the top sales was a 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster, which spent two decades as a part of a long-term collection in California and still had its original numbers-matching chassis, body, and engine. The powerplant was a 3-liter inline-six, mated to a four-speed manual transmission, and the car had undergone a recent service with new anti-sway bar bushings, motor mounts, and serviced brakes. The build sheet also showed that the SL came with sealed beam headlamps, a Becker radio, column-mounted turn signal indicator, and dual reverse lamps within the main taillamp lenses. The silver-gray metallic finish was glossy and smooth. Inside, the red carpet and leather upholstery showed minimal wear and use. When the bidding ended, the Benz was one of three cars from the show to breach the million-dollar mark, raking in \$1,045,000.

Six collections were also part of the auction, with the most American-centric being the Bruce R. Lieberman Auto Collection. One of the highlights included a 1962 Nash Metropolitan that showed 66,500 miles on the odometer, and the coral and white Met sold for \$11,000. Also selling were a pair of 1962 Buick Skylarks, one a two-door coupe with an automatic transmission that changed hands for \$10,450, and the other a convertible with a mere 75,000 miles that sold for \$13,200. The oldest non-customized car of the collection was a 1957 Oldsmobile Super 88, powered by the J2 engine paired to an automatic transmission. The two-tone blue and white Olds showed 28,346 miles on the odometer and sold for \$20,900. Full results from the show are now available at barrett-jackson.com.



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the seller pays only a \$99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Director of Auction Operations Terry Shea: terryshea@hemmings.com



1949 PACKARD SUPER DELUXE EIGHT

Reserve: \$56,000

Selling Price: \$133,350

Recent Market Range:

\$51,440-\$77,640

While Packard's 1949 brochure promised the company's cars had an "Accent on Individuality," its engineers likely couldn't imagine how some creative owners might customize examples like this Super Deluxe Eight convertible, decades later. Bright trim and handles were removed to enhance the car's natural sleekness, and its red-hexagon-accented caps had been traded for wire wheels. The factory straight-eight made way for a fuel-injected 604-cu.in. V-8 and four-speed overdrive automatic, while a custom chassis featured air suspension. Cosmetically, it promised show-quality paint and chrome, and a custom leather bucket-seat interior. A bidding war ensued, and the winning bid more than doubled the car's reserve.



1956 DODGE ROYAL LANCER

Reserve: \$9,500

Selling Price: \$18,375

Recent Market Range:

\$7,650-\$12,420

The cheerfulness inspired by a flamboyantly styled and colored mid-'50s American car is hard to beat. The Royal Lancer four-door hardtop was Dodge's midrange trim, and this example had been given a body-off restoration that was said to largely retain its freshness, with only minor scuffs on the bumpers and a bit of light undercarriage corrosion. The bold, plaid-trimmed cabin looked great, and was fitted with seatbelts. Despite some flaking paint, the 315 V-8 and pushbutton Powerlite promised to work without issue, and the wheels mounted radial whitewalls. Included among documentation was the 1955 bill of sale. The duration of this auction was extended 13 times before a winning bid was reached, which proved that this car was highly desired.



1950 OLDSMOBILE 88

Reserve: \$18,000

Selling Price: \$28,547

Recent Market Range:

\$16,500-\$25,380

Oldsmobile's 88 was ground zero for postwar American performance when new and remains worthy of respect today. This Club Coupe was appealing in black over gray, with ample chrome, red accented wheels with bias-ply tires, and it was said to have been given a mechanical refurbishment. The 303-cubic-inch "Rocket" V-8 was updated with a new timing chain, rebuilt carburetor, 12-volt electric conversion, and more; the fuel tank was replaced, and the Hydra-Matic promised flawless operation. External cosmetic issues were limited to some fender skirt scratches, while the interior presented very nicely, save for a non-functioning radio. Three time extensions proved bidders fought to take this Olds home.

LEGEND

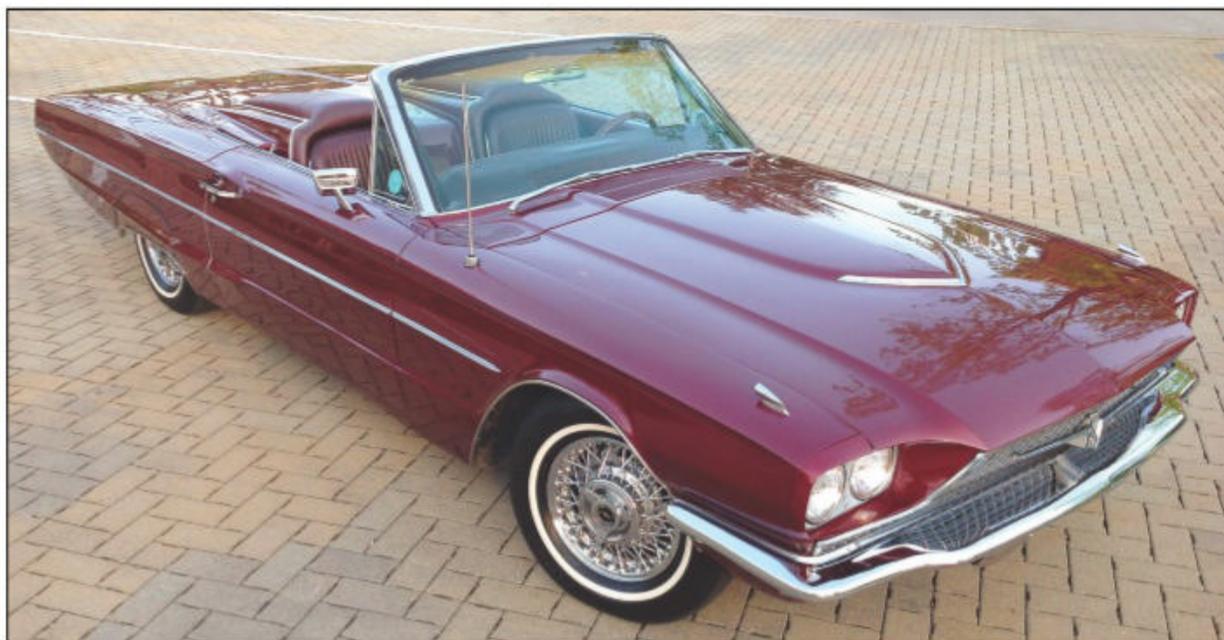
Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

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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1966 FORD THUNDERBIRD

Reserve: \$22,000

Selling Price: \$42,105

Recent Market Range:

\$21,500-\$32,450

Arguably the cleanest styled of the "Flair Birds," the '66 was the first Thunderbird to include the Q-code 428-cu.in. FE V-8 on the options list. This restored convertible sported both that 345-hp engine and A/C, as well as wire wheels and the roadster-style tonneau. The V-8 was rebuilt, as was the automatic transmission, and minor fluid weeps were noted. The burgundy vinyl interior was said to be factory-installed, but the top and its seals were replaced during the restoration. An aftermarket radio had been added, but the original was included. Numerous videos showed the car in action. The seller welcomed third-party inspections, and the eventual outcome was almost double the reserve.



1940 FORD DE LUXE

Reserve: \$36,000

Selling Price: \$52,500

Recent Market Range: \$33,450-\$49,510

It made for a subtle hot rod, this all-steel De Luxe V-8 Coupe. If you missed the radials on widened wheels and the custom pinstripe details at first glance, you might have no idea it sported a 255-cubic-inch Mercury flathead topped with triple Stromberg carbs, 12-volt electricals, and a Borg-Warner T-5 manual transmission. Also modernizing its motivation were Mustang II front suspension, front disc brakes, and rack-and-pinion steering, all promised to work as designed. The hot rod vibe came through more clearly inside, where pleated two-tone vinyl upholstery was set off with more painted pinstriping on the dash, which used aftermarket gauges. After 21 bids, this car sold well.



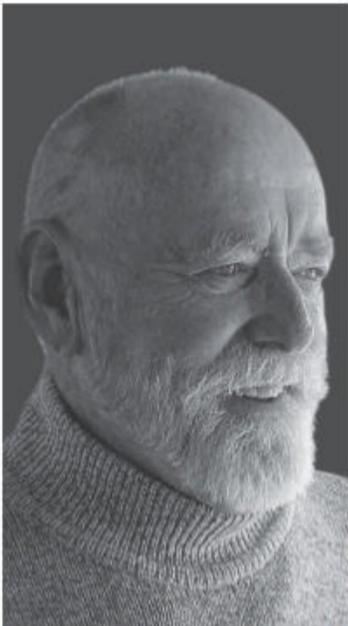
1947 MG TC

Reserve: \$27,000

Selling Price: \$34,650

Recent Market Range: \$25,210-\$38,450

The TC established MG's legend in America, and this example was cared for by a single family since the 1970s. Its restoration was completed in the early 1980s, and was said to be holding up well, with minor stress cracks and some touched-up chips in the paint. Similarly, the interior looked good, with some wear noted in the carpet and small tears in the tonneau cover. The 1,250-cc engine was thought to be a replacement, but it ran well and had an easily fixed weep at the oil pan. The brakes and suspension were serviced in the last decade, while the tires were near the end of their useful lives. Reassuring bidders were six videos and extensive photography of this British classic.



Being There

I climb into the front cockpit of the prewar de Havilland Tiger Moth biplane, put on my leather cap, roll up my collar and snap it, and pull my goggles into place. My friend Brian steps in front of the plane and flips the prop. After a couple of turns, the air-cooled, inline-four-cylinder 145-horsepower engine catches and coughs to life.

Following the warm up, we take off, and as we gain altitude I am ecstatic, with the wind in my face and an incredible God's-eye view of the surrounding hills. At our cruising altitude of a couple thousand feet I can see people on the ground, and even wave to them. The Tiger Moth was Britain's basic trainer during World War II. It only does 130 mph, but it was just a preliminary step to flying a Spitfire in combat during the Battle of Britain.

I have recently flown in a Boeing 747 as well. It was faster, quieter, flew higher and further, and was far more comfortable than the Tiger Moth. I slept for most of the flight, and when I got off the plane it was still in the present rather than a more romantic time in history.

So why do I bring all of this up? Just this: I think it also illustrates why I much prefer driving classic cars to modern ones. I get mail now and then from people who point out how much better new cars are than ones from the past, and they are—as appliances, not as time machines.

New cars take me from A to B, but that's it. They are comfortable, almost drive themselves, and they are equipped with all kinds of largely irrelevant electronic distractions to keep you from getting bored, but new cars require so little of the driver that you almost don't need to be there at all. In fact, driverless cars may be coming soon to a dealership near you, and then you can send your *car* on vacation and you can stay home.

I would much rather stuff myself into Sterling Moss' race-winning Austin-Healey Bugeye Sprite, even though it is cramped and noisy, and go back in time to more exciting days. I once drove Joseph Stalin's 1936 Packard phaeton parade car, too, and I was very aware that he would have had me shot for even getting near it if he were alive. But it let me experience a little taste of that dreadful era.

In essence, old cars (and airplanes) are time machines. I very much enjoy reading history, but living it is even better. Unfortunately, as time goes by, history distills into a few facts and a lot of mythology, but as long as we have tangible artifacts from the time, we can still relive it to a degree, or at least get some sense of it.

I restored my 1955 Chevy station wagon because it takes me back to when running through sprinklers was a lot of fun. And I can put a CD in my hidden player in the glove compartment and hear Bill Haley and His Comets do "Rock Around the Clock," though these days a walk around block is more my speed. My shoebox Chevy also reminds me of the Cold War Conelrad (Control of Electromagnetic Radiation) warning system that you tuned to in case of a nuclear attack, and you were guided by the little triangle indicator on the radio dial.

I bought my 1940 La Salle series 52 coupe because, when I was a toddler, I thought the La Salle was the most beautiful car I had ever seen. It takes me back to the days of the big movie palaces and the fact that the ravishingly beautiful and brilliant Hedy Lamarr drove one. I sometimes feel like I am in a film noir movie, being chased by Humphrey Bogart, aka private eye Sam Spade, as I try to abscond with the Maltese Falcon.

I am not alone in my thinking. The great science fiction writer Harlan Ellison bought a 1947 Packard Super Eight sedan from me for the same reason I purchased it originally, and that was to take him back in time. In fact, his entire home was designed to put him in various periods in the past. His office was set up like the command post in a Flash Gordon movie, and his dining room was done up like a 1950s coffee shop, with chrome and Formica furniture and neon.

If you, too, are tired of coping with the menace of COVID-19 and all of the isolation and uncertainty of the past year-plus, let your imagination, along with your corporeal presence, take flight, and go for a spin in a classic car so you can visit an era when cars had style, and music had melody and harmony. Now if you will excuse me, I need a break from the here and now, so I am going to take a drive in a classic, back to a time when the journey was the reason for going, rather than the destination. 🚗



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