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JANUARY 2022 #208



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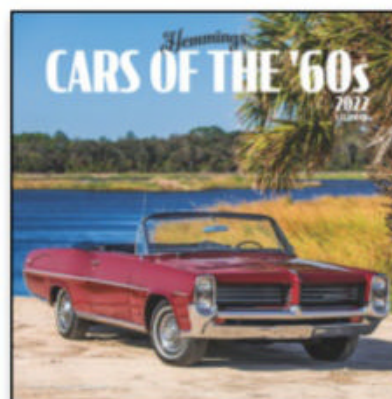
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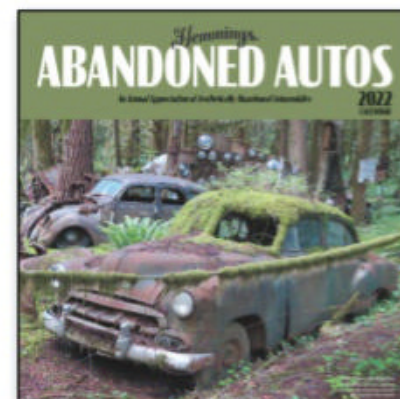
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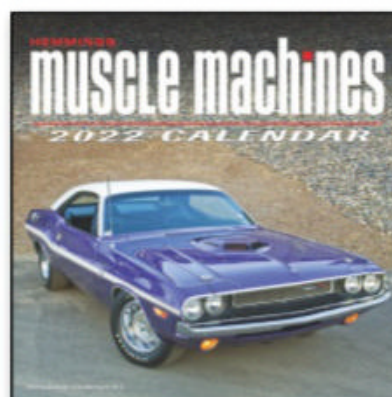
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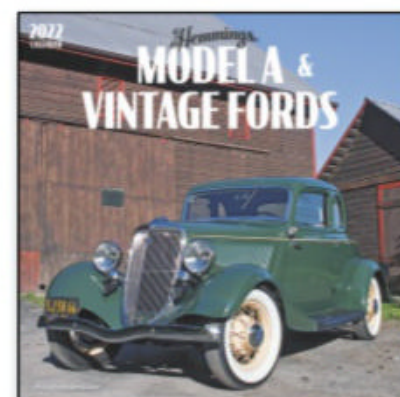
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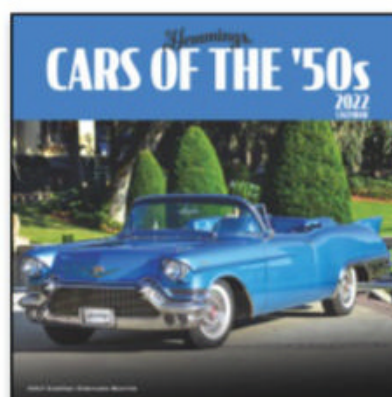
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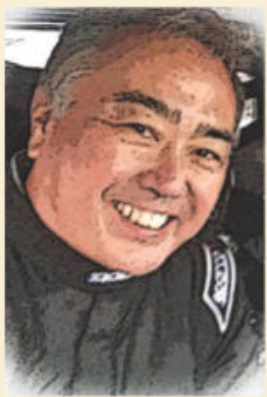
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Car Talk'n With Wade

MAX AIR

The 1962 Chevrolet 409 Bel Air Ushered In The Muscle Car Era

A few years before the muscle car era officially kicked off, the Big Three auto manufacturers in Detroit were already competing in the horsepower wars. The full-size cars of the late 1950's and early 1960's brought along large-displacement engines that rocked the automotive world with stout compression ratios, solid-lift camshafts and multiple carburetors. The example shown here is a 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air, which is actually one of Chevy's lower trim models, compared to the highly-optioned Impala. These stripped-down cars were often equipped with six-cylinder engines, but a select few left the factory with Chevrolet's top-performing engine, the illustrious 409.

This beautifully restored 1962 Bel Air bubbletop features a set of 14-inch OE steel wheels, which are painted body color and equipped with original dog dish caps. The tires come from our BFGoodrich Silvertown product line—they feature a bias ply construction and 8.00-14 sizing, which is the proper fitment for a 409 car. Blackwalls are shown, but we also offer these tires in authentic one-inch whitewalls and wide whitewalls for earlier models. Our American Classic Bias-Look Radial is another great option if you're looking for the original appearance combined with the improved highway manners of a modern radial.

Wade Kawasaki

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

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Enhancing the Experience

I recall driving a friend's 1968 Chevy Chevelle in the mid-'80s and being struck by how unpleasant the experience was. I was a fan of the early Chevelles and owned one myself at the time – a '72 model. I'd driven others examples as well, so it seemed odd to me that two cars with the same chassis architecture could be so different. What was it that made the '68 nearly a chore to drive?

For one, it had a lot less power than my car – the '68 was an inline-six, while my Chevelle had a 350-cu.in. V-8 with a four-barrel and dual exhaust. Mine was no rocket, but it was more than amply powered for the weight of the car. The older Chevelle also had a three-speed manual on the column, which had suffered through many years and miles by that point. It was sloppy and clunky and seemed to amplify the six-cylinder engine's lack of thrust. On top of the wheezy drivetrain, the '68 lacked power steering or power brakes, and it had four-wheel drums. After just a few miles on the road, it was hard to believe this car shared any DNA with my Chevelle.

The takeaway for me was the realization that the right equipment on a car could make or break its performance and road manners. Driving that particular '68 was an unrewarding effort, while cruising around in my '72 was a favorite pastime of mine as a teen. The simple V-8 engine, three-speed automatic transmission, power steering, power front disc brakes, and front and rear anti-sway bars (my car was a Super Sport) made a world of difference. Since then, I've had an interest in bringing together the right bits and pieces for vintage cars and trucks to make my time behind the wheel more enjoyable.

Of course, this practice can conflict with the disciplines of true restoration, where a vehicle is returned to its original form. With rare and otherwise desirable classics, making changes almost always detracts from value, and depending on the model, doing so may miss the whole point of the restoration. Driving classics is often about experiencing those vehicles in the context of their era, for better or for worse. It's a chance to go back in time, to learn what it was like to pilot one of those machines, or, depending on your own history, a chance to relive previous experiences behind a similar steering wheel.

So, I understand that altering the mechanical bits of a vintage car is not for everyone, nor for every car. But, for those of us

who like to drive older cars regularly, fender to fender with modern traffic, certain upgrades can make a lot of sense.

Years after my experience with those Chevelles, I witnessed a good friend arrive at a similar epiphany. His ride was a '62 Ford Galaxie convertible, and it was in quite nice, stock condition, equipped with a 390 V-8, automatic transmission, power steering, and manual drum brakes. The big Ford was a cushy cruiser, with soft springs, a wide steering ratio, and narrow little 14-inch tires. Its shortcomings weren't as apparent on the boulevards as they were on the freeways, and my friend accepted the car's period tendencies as just that – typical behavior for a car of that time and type.

But then his wife bought a brand-new Chevy pickup – I think it was a 2001 model. That half-ton, two-wheel-drive truck was an absolute pleasure to drive by comparison, and before long my friend was struck by the realization that its chassis and driveline were not so different than his old Ford's, yet the Silverado's manners were far superior. If that full-frame, V-8, automatic, rear-drive truck – with a solid axle, rear leaf springs, and rear drum brakes – could drive that well, why couldn't his Galaxie?

He set out to narrow the gap, adding power-booster front disc brakes to the Ford, along with a bigger front anti-sway bar, modern gas-charged shocks, larger wheels with upgraded radial tires, and an overdrive automatic transmission. After all that, the Galaxie looked mostly the same, but its behavior on the open road was vastly improved. As a result, he enjoyed driving it even more – it still had the familiar personality of his old Galaxie, just enhanced.

That's the idea behind this month's theme of "Road Ready," to make the classic you like to drive even more enjoyable. Some of the suggested upgrades may also make it safer, more efficient, and more reliable too. The idea is not to transform a vehicle into something entirely different; instead, the intent is more subtle, involving mostly invisible upgrades that ultimately entice getting out and driving even more frequently. This month's cover car embodies that approach, and its owner is now happily rolling up the miles. Let us know about your vintage driver. 🏁

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Save America's Treasures Grant Awarded to ACD Museum

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HAS AWARDED the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile

Museum a \$500,000 matching grant through the Save America's Treasures program, to restore the museum's National Historic Landmark building. The grant will be used to replace the leaking roof, seal the top half of the building, and install new HVAC equipment before exterior and interior restoration takes place.

In 2018, the museum launched a capital campaign with a fundraising goal of \$5 million to address the needs of the building. The Park Service grant will help the funding effort reach the halfway point of its goal.

"Through the generosity and support of our local, regional, and national donors and partners, we have reached a critical milestone in our campaign to save our landmark building," states Brandon J. Anderson, executive director and CEO of the museum. "We are the caring and passionate stewards of our collections and artifacts. Our building needs to be preserved, restored, and rehabilitated to continue to meet its high standards as a National Historic Landmark and to protect its integrity and its priceless, irreplaceable contents."

The Art Deco building, designed by A.M. Strauss, was commissioned by E.L. Cord nine decades ago and served as the nerve center of the Auburn Automobile Company and Duesenberg, Inc. The campaign's future funding will be used to repair, restore, and preserve all aspects of the popular structure as it was, while adding modern conveniences. For more about the museum, visit automobilemuseum.org

Model A Ford Club 2022 Schedule

A FULL 2022 CALENDAR HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED BY THE MODEL A CLUB OF AMERICA

with events running all year, including the national convention in Texas, which was supposed to take place in 2020. Model A fans and owners from all regions are encouraged to attend the various events, held around the nation. The national convention will take place June 12-17 in Kerrville, Texas, with hosts The Alamo A's welcoming enthusiasts to the San Antonio area. Here is a rundown of scheduled 2020 events:

- January 8: **37th-Annual Winter Swap Meet**, Shepherdsville, Kentucky
- April 5-6: **Central Coast Regional Group Jamboree**, Paso Robles, California
- April 15-16: **16th-Annual All Model A & Model T Parts Swap Meet**, Greenwood, South Carolina
- April 24: **Model A Ford Swap Meet**, Columbus, Indiana
- June 2-7: **Midwest Regional Meet**, Olathe, Kansas
- June 12-17: **MAFCA National Convention**, Kerrville, Texas
- September 16-17: **Model A Day**, Hickory Corners, Michigan
- December 5-8: **MAFCA National Awards Banquet**, Golden, Colorado

These dates are accurate as of publication but be sure to verify each event with the Model A Club before planning to attend. The up-to-date calendar is available at mafca.com.

JANUARY

2 • Sumter Swap Meets

Bushnell, Florida

727-848-7171 • floridaswapmeets.com

14-16 • Auto Mania Indoor Collector Car Flea

Market & Corral • Allentown, Pennsylvania

717-243-7855 • carlisleevents.com

22-23 • Autoparts Swap 'n Sell

West Springfield, Massachusetts

860-871-6376 • apswapnsell.com

28-29 • Winter Carlisle Auto Expo

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

717-243-7855 • carlisleevents.com

28-30 • Grand National Roadster Show

Pomona, California

877-763-7469 • rodshows.com

28-30 • Motorcar Cavalcade

Miami, Florida

305-725-3096 • motorcarcavalcade.com

29-30 • Turlock Swap Meet

Turlock, California

209-571-1232 • turlockswapmeet.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.

"Preserving the Vision" Award Given to Studebaker National Museum

DURING THE EYESON DESIGN CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE, HELD AT

the Edsel and Eleanor Ford house in Grosse Point, Michigan, in mid-September, the Studebaker National Museum was recognized with the "Preserving the Vision" award. The award is given out annually to a museum or individual who preserves and restores historic and significant examples of automotive designers' art. The theme for this year was "Marques of Extinction: Significant Designs of Bygone Brands." The museum put together an exhibit of three automobiles at the EyesOn Design Concours: a 1924 Studebaker Light Six demi-coupe with coachwork by the Shanghai Horse Bazaar & Motor Company of Shanghai, China; the 1956 Packard Predictor concept car; and Brooke Stevens' Studebaker Sceptre concept car. Each exhibition is judged exclusively by automotive designers from various car makers.

The Studebaker National Museum is located in South Bend, Indiana. For more information, visit studebakermuseum.org.

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It took three years of development and \$26 million in advanced Swiss-built watch-making machinery to create the *Magnificat II*. When we took the watch to renowned watchmaker and watch historian George Thomas, he disassembled it and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloché face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$100. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

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Accommodator

THE ACCOMMODATOR WAS NOT A GROUND-BREAKING IDEA. NOR WAS it completely without merit, and likely could have prompted siblings to ceaselessly fight over who got to sleep where on camping trips. However, the person behind it and the reason why it didn't succeed remain mysteries 50 years after its conception.

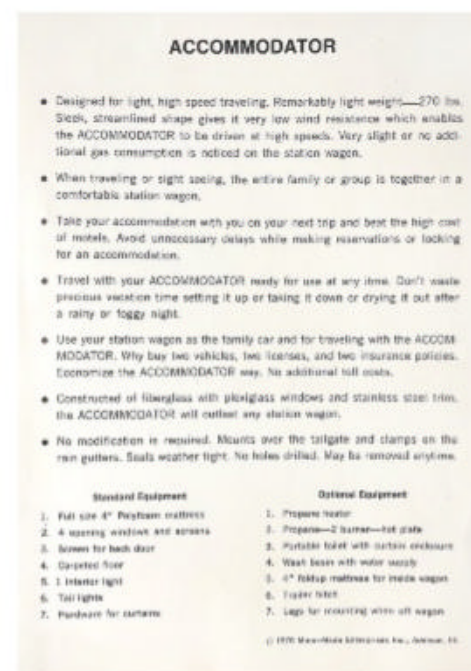
Reader Bryce Frey recently sent us an Accommodator brochure—really just a two-sided glossy handout—dated 1970 and extolling the virtues of the camper. Offered by Mann-Made Enterprises out of Addison, Illinois, the Accommodator was a 270-pound fiberglass unit that rested on a station wagon's open tailgate and clamped to the rain gutters.

The claims in the brochure were numerous: “very low wind resistance which enables [it] to be driven at high speeds,” it “will outlast any station wagon,” and its mounting system “seals weather tight.” Mann-Made pointed out that, unlike a camper, the Accommodator could be easily detached for car-only roaming, but at the same time the Accommodator didn't require the hassle of a separate trailer.

According to Frey, his son-in-law got the brochure from a man claiming to be the originator of the Accommodator, but he did not get the man's name or contact information. Mann-Made Enterprises appears to still exist in some form, though any phone

numbers we've come across for the company have been disconnected, and the businesses at the listed addresses have not heard of Mann-Made.

However, if indeed the Accommodator was meant to outlast the station wagon that it piggybacked, then perhaps the one in the brochure is still out there somewhere.



Field Support Buses

ON SIDE STREETS AND UNDER THE “L,” THEY SAT LIKE DISCARDED props from an '80s post-apocalyptic B-movie, complete with metal screens over the windows, blanking plates, and cryptic stencils. Despite having the look of burned-out hulks abandoned to squatters and street gangs, these field support buses were maintained enough to move around the city of Chicago—though for what purpose, it's not immediately clear.

We came across more than a dozen photographs of these buses in Northwestern's Ronald J. Sullivan collection of digital photographs, with most of the photos featuring these machines dating to the 1990-'94 period. All the buses appear to be removed from regular customer service, but they still served a purpose, as shown by the power cables strung between them and nearby telephone poles, the locking doors, and even a doormat in one photo.

The buses might've been used to service Chicago Transit Authority infrastructure like tracks, switching equipment and transformers. It's possible that they served as inexpensive and easily moved construction trailers. We have a request in with the CTA to see if our hunch is correct. If you have information about these buses and how they were used, please write us at the address listed.



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

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

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

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or

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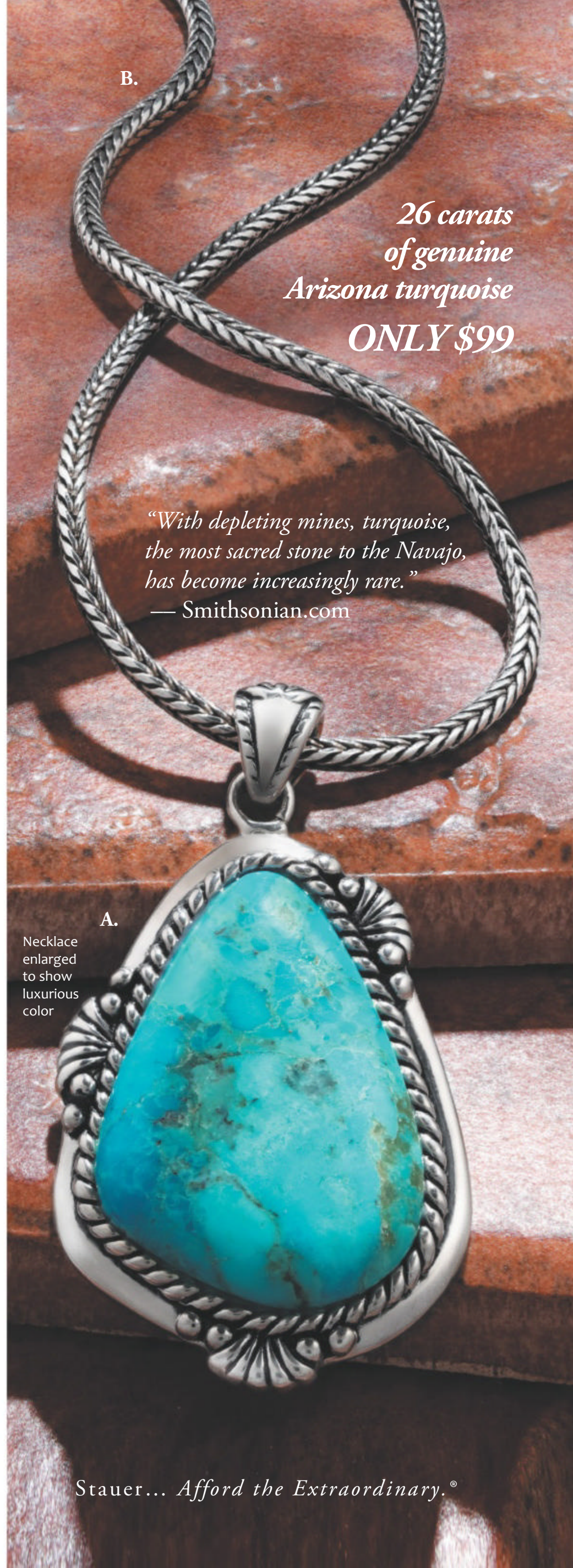
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I JUST READ THE HCC OCTOBER

2021 Buyer's Guide on the 1960-'61 Chrysler 300F and 300G. Owning a '62 Chrysler 300 Sport convertible, I was hoping you included that year, as there are many similarities. Yes, 1962 was the year of the "Plucked Chicken," and the first year of the Sport model. But, looking at my car, it is also unique and optioned towards performance. My car has no power steering or brakes, nor outside rearview mirrors. The car does have the optional 413, leather interior, and the factory three-speed manual transmission. Unfortunately, there are no production numbers that I have found. An inquiry to Chrysler Historical Services did confirm some information on what the car came with. Perhaps an article soliciting owners of this rare transmission could be written. To my knowledge, 1962-'65 Mopars had this transmission, and don't forget trucks. Pete Kaczmariski
Waupun, Wisconsin

AS ALWAYS, I ENJOYED READING

the letters in your Recaps column in the October issue of HCC. Larry Dutton's mention of his '53 Mercury and its overdrive feature brought back fun memories for me, as my first car in 1962 was actually my parents' number two vehicle, a sky blue '53 Mercury Custom coupe.

A lot of people were not familiar with the overdrive feature, and I loved having somewhat gullible fellow teenage passengers back in my hometown of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Merc dashboard featured "wing" extensions on both sides of the speedometer housing, with vertical lever controls on the right for the heater and fan. The overdrive system operation was such that I could start out in first gear

and then, above about 20 mph, ease off of the gas pedal to let it self-shift into overdrive. I would do that while faking out my friends by pretending that I was manually shifting with the heater fan speed control lever, getting a response of, "Wow, that is cool! I've never seen a car that worked that way!"

Another bit of fun related to the non-stock dual exhaust. I had a friend who would follow me on his Allstate motorbike as we left the high school to begin cruising to the drive-ins. I'd wind up a bit in second gear as we went under a railroad overpass, switch off the ignition for a second to let the exhaust fill with a fresh load of fuel/air mixture, then switch it back on to be rewarded with what sounded like a handful of cherry bombs to blast my tailgating buddy. A third memory was when a friend's '55 Chevy stalled at a drive-in and he insisted I give him a push start. The Mercury's "Dagmar" front bumper guards left a pair of custom vertical grooves in his trunk lid.

Phillip S. (Phil) Waldrop
Jasper, Georgia

THE CONTENTS OF TERRY McGEAN'S

column in the October issue of HCC ("Gearing Up the Garage," #205) also returned me to my youth with respect to my love of automobile repair. The chassis work was always a challenge!

One such aid that you failed to mention was a garage pit. While brake, axle, and other wheel work was not necessarily an easy effort, one could stand in a pit and perform those undercarriage repair tasks that required dexterity and strength. I especially recall a six- or eight-bay neighborhood service station, where the entire service area had a "basement" with access

stairs. A two-car garage at one home in my neighborhood was actually built with a pit. This was Chicago, therefore, basements were ubiquitous. A description of the housing in this neighborhood would require far too much space, but the house with the garage pit was of an older design and did not necessarily fit with the other houses on the block. One would best identify it as a Chicago "bungalow." Fortunately for us, the gentleman who resided there was most accommodating to us early stage "wrench turners," and we spent a great amount of time in this location. Remember, this was Chicago, so working in an unheated garage was limited to the summer and fall months. Winters were brutal.

Please be aware that upon receipt of your publication, Jim Richardson's column is my initial read. He is a California resident who I believe feels that "back in the day," everyone could work on their automobiles whenever they wished. I am most jealous of his story about installing a 1957 Olds V-8 in a 1940s Ford, where there was insufficient clearance for the starter motor. The best that my friends and I could do was swap in a gifted third-generation Ford flathead V-8 that we really modified. It was a complex engine, and my neighbor's pit was helpful. Obviously, I digress. Keep up the good work!

John Krasniewski
Charlotte, North Carolina



REGARDING THE "A UNIQUE ROOF" article on Chevrolet Caprice Classic cars, HCC #205, page 39:

The 100,000,000th car built by GM in that picture was first driven off of the assembly line by my father-in-law. After discharging from the Army in 1954, he worked at the Janesville Assembly Plant until his retirement in 1990. He was a GM foreman when the 100,000,000th car was built. According to him (he is 91 years old), the factory assembled three of these cars consecutively, in identical color and

options, for the sole purpose of one of them being the 100,000,000th "production" car.

GM's upper management had determined the Janesville Assembly Plant would be producing the 100,000,000th GM car. The head of GM, the governor of Wisconsin, Janesville's mayor, the head of the assembly plant, and other applicable dignitaries were going to be present for the ceremony when the car rolled off of the assembly line.

The reason for having three identical cars built was that one of them would look really good. Having all three the same color allowed equal comparison of the cars. When these were built, robotics was not the primary means of assembly or painting, so "human factors" could enter the production line that might require rework of the car before its final acceptance. GM wanted a "perfect" car to come off of the line for the ceremony.

The three were completed on the assembly line and then moved to an inspection area. One of the cars was almost immediately disqualified due to a quality problem. My father-in-law wrote down the serial number to ensure the highest quality car was reintroduced into the assembly line, so the photo opportunity of the 100,000,000th car being driven off of the line gave the impression of it being just produced. That was the car my father-in-law drove.

Tom Soerens

St. Charles, Illinois



ENCLOSED IS A PHOTO OF MY 1959 MGA Speedster, right after finishing a nine-year, nine-month build. I've owned this car for 50 years; it was my first. Your magazine is a great read—keep up the good work!

Joe Schandl

New Smyrna Beach, Florida

CONGRATULATIONS, HCC! THE

November issue arrived, along with many mail-order catalogs. Being the thinnest ever, I almost tossed it out, thinking it was just another catalog, but instead noticed a blue Cadillac on the cover.

Driving home, I was steamed up thinking, 'How dare they...' because it was so thin. But, upon reading it, and seeing so many nice photos, I made an about-face: It is thoroughly packed with one great article after another. It sets such a high standard I've even considered not passing it along to nursing home occupants as I normally do. However, living alone at age 77 (six years older than my oldest collectible car) I empathize with those people.

I used to take my old car hobby magazines to the waiting areas of my dentist, local hospital, laundromat, and

two nursing homes. Now, even though fully vaccinated, but with COVID still spreading, I've paid for subscriptions to *HMN* and *HCC* for one nursing home, while another set is delivered to the other nursing home. They'll be overjoyed with the November issue!

Lane Honn, Sr.

Alamosa, Colorado



To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.

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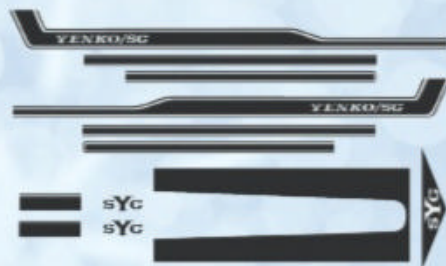
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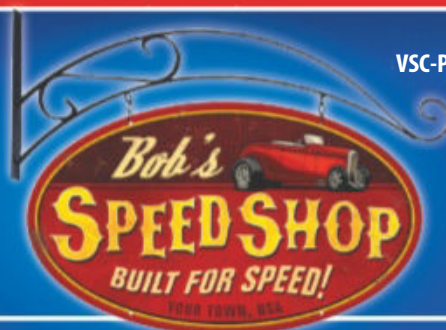


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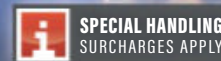
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Road Ready

Ever start working on a project and suddenly find yourself sidetracked by misplaced belongings that, in turn, have you abandoning all hope of crossing the job off the to-do list? Does it completely disrupt the day? That happened to me recently.

It started with the simple task of attempting to recharge the new battery for my 1961 Buick Invicta. While navigating through the sea of stuff in the garage, my peripheral vision failed to notice the mass of twisted

extension cords that then snared my feet. This had me reaching for anything – like the pile of boxes stacked on the table saw, filled with foam packing peanuts – to regain my balance. The boxes went tumbling like a house of cards when I reached to them for support, their contents scattering quicker than dandelion seeds in a hurricane. The boxes did nothing to break what was shaping up to be a hard fall, and the bucket full of scrap wood and sawdust I inadvertently kicked across the floor while stumbling to gain traction didn't help, either.

While the scene unfolded like a Three Stooges short, somewhere in the deepest recesses of my brain, *Powerhouse*, as performed by Spike Jones and His City Slickers, became the soundtrack to the calamity. Thank the folks in Flint for solid fenders; I can attest to my Buick's ability to absorb impacts from large, carbon-based organisms.

In keeping with the slapstick comedy theme of the incident, I recovered quickly enough, and dejectedly swept aside the scattered bits of debris and wiring during my careful attempt to exit the garage. Two items I'd long neglected to dispose of, and another I'd failed to put away properly, had completely upended what had been a pleasant start to the day. But rather than procrastinating and taking a break to sit beside the fire pit with a beverage, I dug in and tore through the mess. By late afternoon, I had a wide, unobstructed avenue to the Buick, and I could see the top of my primary workbench for the first time in four years.

The original point of heading into the garage, before getting derailed by the befuddling mess, was recharging the new battery. How does a new battery lose cranking power so quickly, you ask? Recently, before departing on a trip to

Michigan to cover an event, I had been moving the car around the shop and had presumably shifted the transmission from neutral to park. Several days later, after I had returned home, my fiancé casually mentioned that she had seen an odd light

on in the garage while I was away. Rather than it being a friendly, mischievous specter or the clandestine curiosity of a neighbor, it turned out to be illuminated reverse lamps. The gear lever had been mistakenly shifted into the wrong gate by yours truly, causing a slow electrical death.

It took a bit, but soon after clearing the way, the battery was brought back to

life, at which point my stepson-to-be, Luke, could resume what he'd been itching to do all summer: work on the old Buicks with me. Since getting the Invicta back last year, we had talked about using the hardtop sedan as an occasional high school commuter, as well as driving it on a relaxing road trip during the fall season.

Although the revitalized battery now ensured proper cranking power to keep us rolling, it also helped us to find that the Invicta would not run for long – it kept stalling out after starting. The smell of gas was an obvious clue: The floats in the Rochester four-barrel were sticking, prompting – in part – fuel overflow onto the intake manifold. Already aware of my bad garage habits, we evacuated and let the fumes disperse before progressing further.

Our latest challenge wasn't a hassle as much as it was another opportunity to spend time with a fellow enthusiast who wanted nothing more than to tinker and drive. Tinker we did, both on the car and on the reclaimed and reasonably clean workbench. And drive we have, though not as intended thanks to the sudden realization that the white-stripe radials the Buick currently wears are – wait for it – two decades old.

Which brings me to the theme of this month's issue, "Road Ready," which can be interpreted in many ways. As you'll read elsewhere, reversible hidden upgrades are not an uncommon sight in many regularly driven vintage steeds today. The need to be mindful of safety isn't uncommon, either. As I invest in new radials, I'm also exploring the installation of a dual-circuit master cylinder, both of which would finally make the Invicta truly road ready. 🏁



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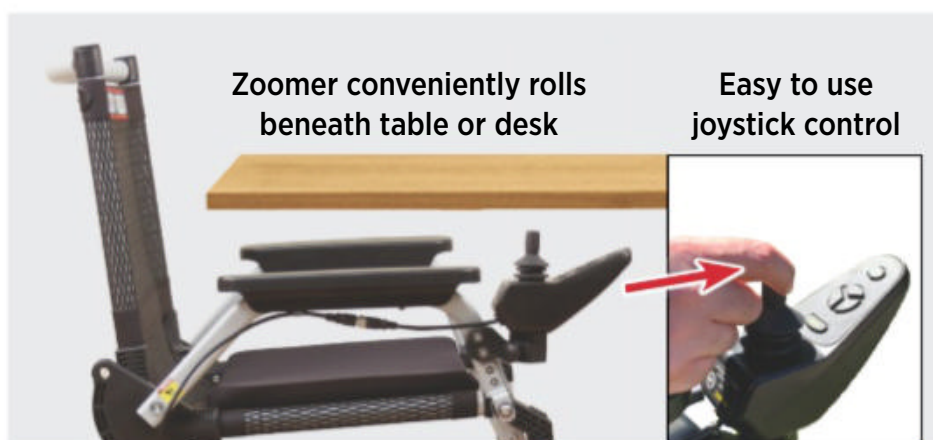
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Zimmer Quicksilver

Remember the song “I Hate Myself for Loving You” by Joan Jett and the Blackhearts? That’s how I feel sometimes about the Zimmer Quicksilver. I don’t want to love it, but I do. After all, it’s sort of a ridiculous automobile, gaudy and of questionable engineering. It’s ostentatious and most people bought them simply to show off their wealth. In other words, the Zimmer Quicksilver stands for everything I’m against. And I badly want one.

For those folks unfamiliar with the Zimmer Quicksilver, here’s a little background. The Zimmer Motorcars Corporation of Syracuse, New York, was founded by Paul Zimmer in 1978 to manufacture neoclassic cars. The neoclassic car movement was quite strong at the time, with several producers building products, usually with fiberglass bodies, which recalled the stylish cars of the 1930s. The movement got its start in the 1960s with the Glassic Model A and Brooks Stevens’ stunning Excalibur roadster, and it really began to take off in the mid-1970s. Zimmer’s Golden Spirit cars were the company’s first automobiles. They used readily available Ford Mustang drivetrains and mechanicals, with styling that sort of mimicked classic 1930s Mercedes-Benz cars. Golden Spirits were big, bold, in-your-face automobiles. They were ostentatious to the nth degree, and they were surprisingly popular.

At its peak in the mid-1980s, Zimmer Motorcars employed 175 people and generated more than \$25 million in annual revenue. That’s a pretty successful company by most standards. Online references claim the company was building as many as 300 cars a year, though some years it produced less than half that number.

In time, the neoclassic market began to decline. The smaller producers went out of business pretty quickly, but Zimmer hung on. For 1988, the company decided to branch out into more modern-looking cars, introducing its all-new Quicksilver luxury coupe, with styling created to appeal to buyers of contemporary high-end cars seeking an extra helping of exclusivity.

Like the Golden Spirit, the Quicksilver was boldly styled, though toned down for more

delicate tastes. It was low and sleek, and if it reminded one of anything at all, it would probably be the Lincoln Mark III. But the resemblance was only slight; the Quicksilver really was its own car.

Having said that, I must add that the Quicksilver was neither all new nor entirely its own car. The Quicksilver was basically a lengthened and rebodied Pontiac Fiero coupe. That long, low hood was achievable because the Quicksilver’s engine was actually situated behind the driver—a mid-engine configuration courtesy of the Fiero donor car. Under the hood was a plush-lined trunk; there was another trunk out back in the usual place. In between were



the passenger compartment and the engine. The center section of the body was mostly Fiero, with the wheelbase lengthened by 15 inches ahead of the cowl.

Front styling featured a low-slung hood, fronted by an elegant Lincoln-like chrome grille and a massive-looking bumper enclosing running light/turn indicators that looked like thin headlamps; the real headlamps were pop-up units. Wide chrome moldings ran along the lower edge of the body sides to a substantial “bow tie” chrome rear bumper. A smoothly curved roofline completed the styling. Visually, it was all pretty impressive.

The cockpit was Fiero-based but dressed up with real wood trim, leather upholstery, and elegant fittings. Everything was top quality.

The Fiero drivetrain was used without modifications, with the 2.8-liter V-6 engine producing 140 hp and 170 lb-ft of torque, hooked up to a GM three-speed automatic transmission. The company claimed the Quicksilver was capable of 0-60 mph in 8.3 seconds and could top 120 mph flat out.

Obviously, the Quicksilver doesn’t have supercar cred, but who cares? I’ve lost my driver’s license twice in my lifetime; I don’t need to be tempted for a third try. The reason I want a Quicksilver is that I consider it good-looking and, with only about 170 built, very exclusive. I don’t have any wealth to show off, so if I’m going to buy one, I’ll have to start saving my pennies. 🐢

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And I badly

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Heavyweight Champion



How does 1964 Hawk power make a 1951 Studebaker Champion Business Coupe go?

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL AND MATT LITWIN

Three-on-the-tree is one of my favorite setups to drive. When I saw the clutch pedal and column shifter in this 1951 Champion, I grinned. You see, I had a '50 Champion with the same arrangement, and I drove it all over Michigan's Lower Peninsula back in 2015.



Well, not exactly the same arrangement. For one thing, although Mark Klinger's bullet-nose is generally similar to a '50, the '51 cars were pretty heavily reworked right from the factory. More importantly, this one is hiding a V-8 surprise.

"Foul!" some purists will cry. "A hot rod in the pages of *Hemmings Classic Car*!" But consider that even the Studebaker faithful love this one, which we discovered back in late August, at a regional Studebaker Drivers' Club gathering in Rutland, Vermont, just an hour or so north of our Bennington home offices. Lucky us, because the car had been driven the four hours

from Auburn, Maine, where Mark and wife Lynn run the Sleepy Time Motel, which itself looks straight out of a 1950s road trip.

A big factor in the acceptance of Mark's car is the Studebaker V-8 used in the conversion. It's a 1964-vintage 289-cu.in. version, which would have been rated at 210 or 225 horsepower, depending on whether it was topped with a two- or four-barrel carburetor. It has a four-barrel now. At first blush, it seems like it would be a pretty straightforward swap, as the Commander used an earlier version of the engine in the same chassis, but the original builder, an engineer, went above and beyond the factory



in making the conversion as dialed in as it could be.

Even barring an engineering background, Studebaker owners from the beginning of the V-8 era have a lot of options to make their cars road ready just by combing through the factory parts bins. The new-for-'51 front suspension design, for example, was essentially the same as that used under the final Studebaker Larks in 1966. The design remained in use in the sporty fiberglass GT, the Avanti, up through 1985.

Thanks to that, rebuild parts for the 1951 chassis, along with brake and handling upgrades, remain remarkably accessible thanks to a large cache of Studebaker NOS items built at South Bend in the days before its 1964 closure. It was the foundation and remains the core of the Studebaker aftermarket. It also helps that Studebaker used the same Carter carburetors, Borg-Warner manual transmissions, and Dana 44 axles as much of the rest of the industry.

All of that is to say we didn't even realize we were looking at a non-stock Studebaker at first. Sure, the blue hue seems a bit brighter than the Maui or Aero Blues of 1951, but you could write that off as variations in modern paint mixes and the bright sun. That's a 1952 steering wheel, but unless you're already an expert on 1947-'52 Studebakers, that's not obvious. It's got bias-ply whitewalls and full wheelcovers, for Pete's sake. And, as hinted above, there's little external difference between a Champion and Commander, which can make them difficult to tell apart.

The big clue ends up being the body style. It turns out Studebaker didn't build a Commander Business Coupe in 1951



Owner Mark Klinger went looking for an Avanti to replace his Golden Hawk but found this Champion instead.

(some records suggest they built *only* one — but this isn't it). That three-passenger lightweight was exclusive to the Champion line with its 85-hp, 170-cu.in. flathead six, barring would-be scorches from the potentially most potent power-to-weight combination. If you wanted a Business Coupe with the brand-new 120-hp, 233-cu.in. OHV V-8, you'd have to build it yourself. Instead, the few buyers thinking that way just settled for the gorgeous five-passenger Starlight coupe with its wraparound rear window and 65-pound weight penalty.

A fellow named Dave Carter, then in California, now in South Carolina, originally put this car together back in 2005-'06. Mark bought it this way, back in April of 2021, after he found it for sale in Tempe, Arizona. Luckily, Mark is from that area originally, and his brother (who owns a 1952 Starlight) was willing to go check it out for him. The modified '51 appealed to Mark for the same reasons it appealed to us: Aside from some non-stock details, it feels just like something Studebaker could have, should have, and maybe would have (had anybody asked) built back in 1951. Right down to the column shifter.

Lightweight body aside, Mark's car ups the ante with what was originally the 225-hp, 289-cu.in. engine in a 1962 Hawk. The Hawk was Studebaker's creative but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to keep its 1953-vintage bodies relevant as a sporty, full-size car into the '60s. This engine has been bored over 0.080-inch, bringing its displacement to over 302 cu.in., but "as far as I know," Mark says, "it's otherwise stock." The engine's

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Gray leather replaces the factory broadcloth. Note lift-latch seatbelts. Despite air conditioning, the car does without a heater or a radio. Package shelf is modified for storage access. Pulling the handle marked “overdrive” locks the unit out of operation.

current horsepower is unknown, but presumably a skosh higher than the original 225, which was already more than double that of a '51 Commander engine. Nevertheless, the 289 is very mildly built, with road manners suited to interstate driving rather than drag racing.

In fact, Mark observed that the current 3.31 final drive ratio (in a '64 Hawk Dana 44 with relocated spring perches) don't necessarily play well with the Borg-Warner R10 overdrive (pirated, along with its siamesed T86 three-speed, from a 1959 Studebaker Lark) and somewhat hamper acceleration from a dead stop. Overdrive cars in the era of 55-mph roads usually came with a ratio in the 4.10s or deeper, suggesting something around 3.90:1 would be suitable today in the flyweight coupe. With the 0.70:1 gearing in the overdrive, the current 3.31s cruise along like a set of 2.32s, while 3.90s would act like 2.73s.

None of this is to say that the Stude's performance was in any way lackluster. Accelerating with traffic was no difficulty at all: with 3.90s it would probably outrun most of today's milder commuter cars from stoplight to stoplight. Front discs, from a conversion kit supplied by Turner Brake in South Carolina, mean the car can stop just as well as it accelerates.

You get the sense that it's a very calm, nice-riding car on the open road. Studebaker didn't offer air conditioning in 1951, but one of the benefits of Dave Carter's exacting work was the inclu-

sion of a Vintage Air unit. From an ergonomic standpoint, the upright seating position and leg room are very comfortable, feeling more like a mid-size pickup truck than a coupe. In fact, Mark told me that he and wife Lynn had essentially traded in their 1957 Golden Hawk because the ingress, egress, and ergonomics were so much better compared to the lower, style-centric cars of later in the decade.

The '57 was an outstanding car that ultimately went back to the original owner's grandson, leaving Mark holding a wad of cash and on the hunt for a replacement.

"I'd been looking for an Avanti," he says, "for about six or seven months. I saw the Champion in a Facebook group." The car was said to have an Avanti engine, though that turned out not to be true. What it did offer was one of South Bend's best-recognized products, upgraded for the demands of modern traffic without sacrificing its identity as a Studebaker.

"I enjoy driving it better," Mark says. "I do miss power steering, power brakes, and an automatic transmission, but overall, I really like it. My wife finds it more comfortable."

It's easy to associate overdrive just with the open road. After all, modern transmissions integrate overdrive gears as fourth or fifth gear, or beyond. Instead, dispel any notions you may have about the Borg-Warner overdrive (typically found as T86/R10 or heavy-duty T85/R11 combinations in 1950s and '60s cars and

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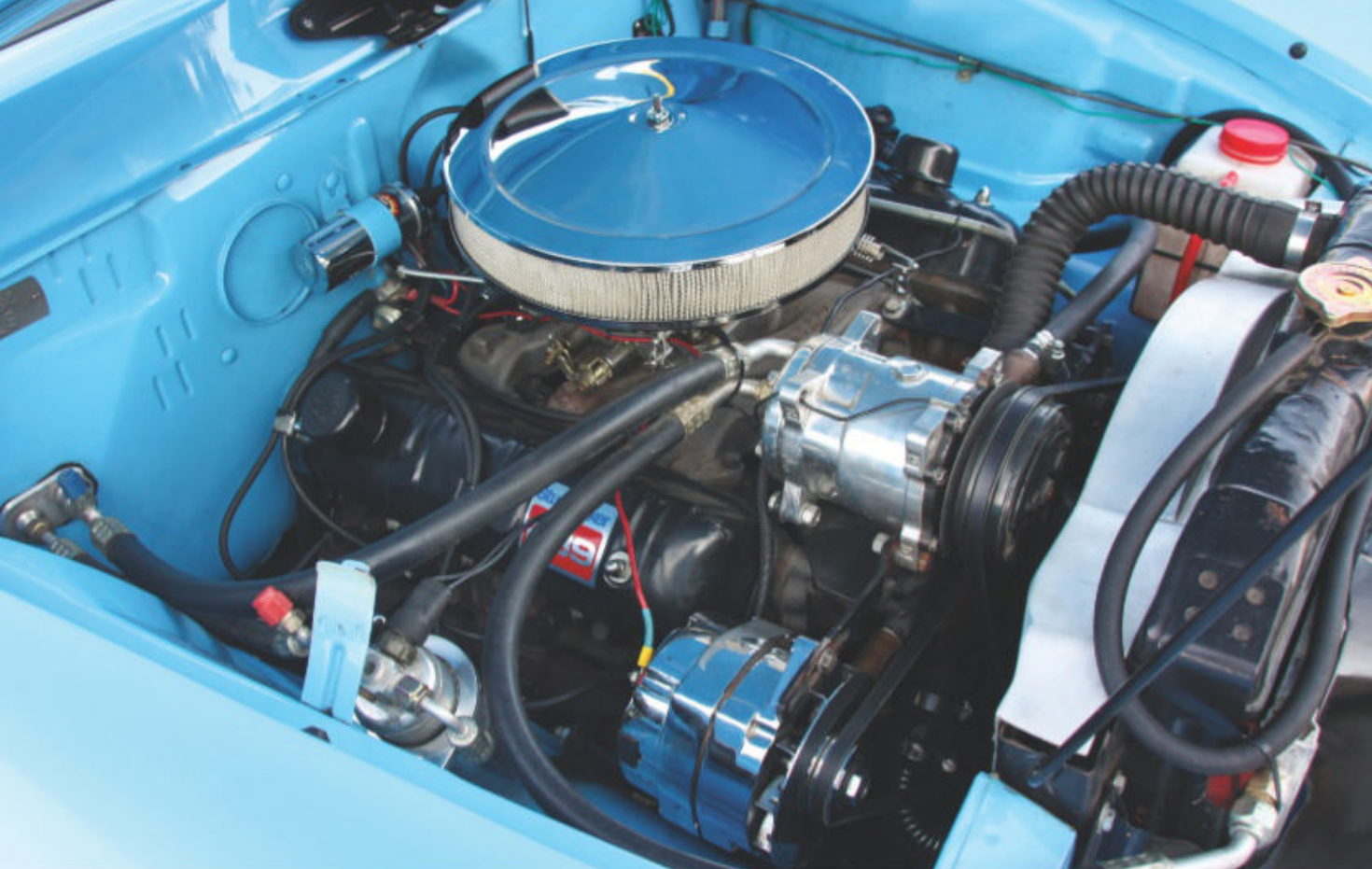
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An engine bay dimensionally identical to a Commander means a '51 Champion accepts a Studebaker V-8. The 289 is over-bored 0.080 inch and wears an Edelbrock four-barrel. Note electric wiper motor.

light trucks) being simply an add-on to a regular three-speed for a fourth gear; it's a fully integrated improvement to the overall driving experience.

The traditional Borg-Warner units used a planetary gearbox on the back of the transmission, which could overdrive any gear by 30 percent. The system of control switches and the governor limited the effect to just second and third gear, though some enthusiasts have wired things up to permit manual selection of overdrive in first as well.

As delivered, one of the 1950s consumer's favorite things about an overdrive transmission was that it would act almost as an automatic around town if the car was left in second gear, as the unit would shift on its own around 25 mph. Flooring the accelerator engages a kick-down switch, shifting the transmission out of overdrive for better pick up, and the freewheeling clutch permits the entire transmission to be shifted into the unsynchronized first gear without coming to a complete stop or double clutching

because the driveshaft (the cut-down original, in this case) will no longer be spinning the internal gears of the transmission.

Mark and Lynn are certainly enjoying the V-8 Champion. The odometer currently reads right around 38,000 miles, with about 1,000 of them put on during 2021. That figure will be higher in future years, but Mark has been tweaking little issues that have come up during the driving season. Before leaving for Rutland, he replaced the distributor. He's also had the fuel pump rebuilt and has made some modifications to the clutch linkage to get it to release completely. In the future, he'd like to reopen the sealed-off cowl vents and stop some rain leaks he's discovered in the cowl, where the wipers pass through.

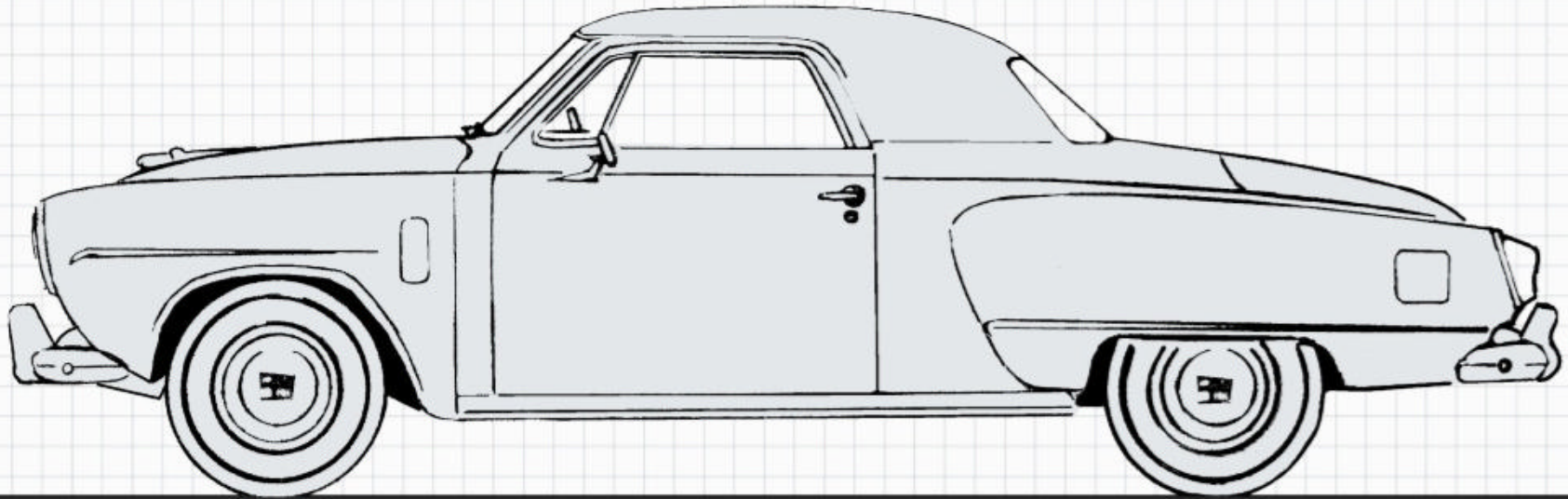
Expect to see the Champion a lot more in the future, as the engine swap has made it into a wholly different machine.

"I like original cars, but I probably wouldn't have bought it if it still had the six," Mark says, but now "it's great running it down the road, shifting it on the column." 🏁



1951 STUDEBAKER CHAMPION BUSINESS COUPE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO © 2022 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



SPECIFICATIONS

WHAT TO PAY

LOW	\$5,500
AVERAGE	\$16,000
HIGH	\$27,000

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$1,561
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ENGINE

TYPE	Studebaker OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads (originally 85-hp, 170-cu.in. Studebaker L-head I-6)	
DISPLACEMENT	302-cu.in.	
BORE X STROKE	3.6425 x 3.625 inches	
COMPRESSION RATIO	8.8:1	
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	225 @ 4,500	
TORQUE @ RPM	305 lb-ft @ 3,000	
VALVETRAIN	Mechanical lifters, gear-driven camshaft	
MAIN BEARINGS	Five	
FUEL SYSTEM	Single Edelbrock 1404 500-cfm four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump	
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full pressure	
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt (originally 6-volt, positive ground)	
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual, cast-iron manifolds; single muffler and outlet	

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Borg-Warner T86/R10 three-speed manual with overdrive	
RATIOS	1st 2.57:1	2nd 1.55:1
	3rd 1:1	OD 0.70:1
	Reverse 3.48:1	

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Studebaker Dana 44 (originally Studebaker Dana 41)
GEAR RATIO	3.31:1

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball, non-power assist
RATIO	13.5:1

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, front discs/rear drums
FRONT	11.3-inch 1968 Ford Mustang rotors; 1979 Chevrolet Malibu calipers
REAR	10 x 2-inch Bendix drums

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Body on frame
BODY STYLE	Two-door, three-passenger business coupe
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; A-arms, coil springs, Gabriel bayonet-type shock absorbers, 3/4-inch anti-roll bar
REAR	Solid axle; parallel semi-elliptic leaf springs, Gabriel bayonet-type shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	15 x 6-inch stamped steel (originally 15 x 4.5-inch)
TIRES	6.70 x 15 bias-ply wide whitewall

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	115 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	198 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	71 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	61 inches
FRONT TRACK	56.5 inches
REAR TRACK	54 inches
CURB WEIGHT	2,615 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts
FUEL TANK	18.0 gallons
TRANSMISSION	3 pints
DIFFERENTIAL	4.75 pints

CALCULATED DATA*

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.745
WEIGHT PER BHP	11.6 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	8.66 pounds

* Based on a 225-hp, 302-cu.in. engine and a 2,615-pound car

PRODUCTION

Total 1951 Studebaker production was 246,195, of which 144,236 were Champions. Of those 3,763, or 2.6 percent of Studebaker production, were three-passenger Business Coupes.



The Sky's The Limit

This 1979 Ford Thunderbird was professionally converted into a ragtop, in an era when Detroit abandoned the convertible

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

American car manufacturers were out of the convertible business by 1977, and America was to blame. Some may point a finger at Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 216, also known as Roof Crush Resistance, which had been discussed since the mid-'60s

but not enacted until the first half of the '70s. Rollovers were an issue in the days of 4,000-pound curb weights and spindly roof pillars, and naturally, convertibles offered the least protection to occupants in such incidents. Porsche's 911 and 912 Targa and the C3 Corvette coupe's removable top sections were both



hedges against the seeming inevitability of the standard — both designs were intended to preserve a measure of open-air motoring while offering more overhead structure. That said, as it was written the standard did not apply to convertibles. So, while FMVSS216 gets pointed at frequently, it's not actually the reason convertibles went away.

It's fair to look toward improved climate-control systems too — namely, the explosion of cars receiving air conditioning as the '60s and '70s wore on. A feature on only the most luxurious models of the mid-1950s, the option was soon democratized and came tumbling down each car maker's food chain, until even the compact lines had a belt-driven compressor beneath the hood. The price difference between an air-conditioned coupe and a convertible was negligible; each added roughly 10-12 percent on top of the base price of a car (depending on manufacturer, model, etc.), so it wasn't a matter of cost. With the quantity, temperature, and direction of cool air able to fill your cabin at the touch of a button, did it make sense to forego the solid feel of a coupe and the security of a steel top instead of cloth?

Increasingly, Americans turned to the set-it-and-forget-it levers in the middle of the dash to cool off as appropriate, rather than the speed-dependent breeze that convertibles afforded, and abandoned soft-top options altogether.

So, while improved cabin-temp control couldn't have helped the convertible's future, the real reason for convertibles disappearing from American showrooms was lack of consumer interest. We just didn't care anymore. (You'll note that all manner of European ragtops — VW Beetles, MGBs, Spiders by both Fiat and Alfa, etc., most of which were engineered in or before the '60s — continued to be sold Stateside with no issues.)

Consider a single example of the convertible's slow, sad slide into oblivion: in 1968, Pontiac built 59,314 midsize convertibles across three lines (Tempest, Le Mans, and GTO); by 1972, just 3,438 Le Mans convertibles were built for the year. What incentive did Detroit have to spend millions on a body style that America seemingly wanted nothing to do with anymore? The buyers spoke, Detroit listened, and we got nothing but tin-roof machines throughout the back half of the '70s.



Upscale Thunderbirds had leather seating areas with matching splashes of cloth on the door panels; more basic models sported vinyl seating, a preferred convertible choice in case the owner gets caught in a top-down downpour.

The times they were a-changin' and the ebullient ragtop, able to channel the sun onto its owner's face at the push of a button, was suddenly out of step with the national mood. Postwar optimism had run its course in the face of societal discord in the '60s, and with it, public interest in the convertible dwindled. Such outgoing machines were anathema to a country that was destined to cruise through the '70s licking its wounds and taking stock of what had just happened.

And while we're totally down with the notion that cars of the personal-luxury '70s were meant to be a steel-and-glass barrier between the angry, weird world outside and you, your Chuck Mangione 8-track, and your velour throw-pillow seats inside, the pivot toward luxury suggests that high-end cars could have incurred the brunt of the development costs thanks to their higher price point. After all, what is luxury but the ability to choose what you want? A roof that goes down, even if the owner never put it down, is but one more option made available to them. Being slightly

noisier and creakier may seem at odds with the mobile sensory-deprivation tank infested personal-luxury '70s. But what greater luxury can there be than the luxury of choice, to harness the sun at a time of your own choosing? Alas. We got power moonroofs and T-tops instead.

And so, Detroit's existing turn-of-the-decade convertible models largely rode out the generation of car each was based on, and then disappeared as newly designed cars for the '70s generally saw the soft-top off the option sheet.

One by one, the old standbys fell away. Chrysler ditched B-body (Coronet, Satellite) soft-tops at the end of 1970; Ford's Torino, available as a convertible in 1971, did without for its 1972 redesign. GM's bread-and-butter A-bodies (Chevelle, Cutlass, and so on) all had steel roofs when the new Colonnade restyle arrived for the '73 model year. The "pony car" models were natural subjects for folding tops, but the Camaro/Firebird twins were restyled to exclude such things for 1970; the Dodge and Plymouth E-bodies were all new for



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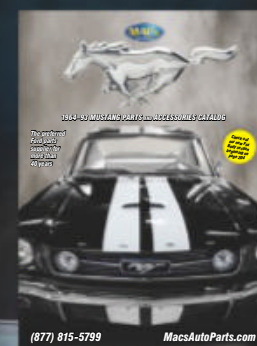
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Burled wood appliqué instrument panel and steering wheel, AM/FM with 8-track player, a clock, and any other Thunderbird option (save for T-tops or moonroof) was available with an ACC conversion.



1970 but lost their convertible option after 1971. Only the progenitor maintained through 1973—the last year of Mustang convertibles until the '80s.

A few lingered: Sales of full-size GM convertibles, which endured through 1975 in the Chevrolet Caprice and its corporate cousins like the Oldsmobile Delta 88, Pontiac Grand Ville, and Buick LeSabre, spiked once the world understood that these would be the last of their kind for the foreseeable future. The 1976 Cadillac Eldorado convertible was the final holdout and thought to be an instant collectible as a result. And then that was it. Nothing new until the far-off year of 1982, which may as well have been the new millennium when you were mired in 1975.

But what Detroit cannot (or will not) provide gives the automotive aftermarket a foothold. Enter American Custom Coachworks, operating out of Hollywood, California, but with a Beverly Hills mailing address. The company had been making limousines (and Cadillac station wagon conversions) since the '50s, had facilities in California, Florida, and (eventually) Arkansas, and converted several hundred cars a year at its peak. When Detroit called time on the convertible, ACC turned from its limo-conversion work and entered the boutique-market soft-top conversion business with a line of convertibles, including models based on Cadillacs and Lincolns, Toyota Celicas, and, as you might have guessed by the

pictures you see on these pages, the 1977-'79 Ford Thunderbird.

History records that the Thunderbird was the first popular “personal-luxury” car; while the two-seater flirted with the idea, it was the four-seat '58 that really made it stick. By 1967, Ford went full-on baby Lincoln with the T-Bird, adding a four-door sedan and, just as crucially, dropping the convertible version. So, by the time the downsized '77 T-Bird arrived, available from the factory only in two-door coupe form, there hadn't been a soft-top 'Bird for a decade (or, in those days, roughly half the Thunderbird's life to that point).

You'll also recall that the seventh-generation T-Bird moved onto the midsize Torino/LTD II chassis that had been around since 1972. Today it looks massive, yet the previous model was twinned with the Lincoln Continental Mark coupes, which were larger still. The new-size 'Bird dropped 10 inches in overall length, ½ ton of curb weight, and a massive \$2,700 (north of \$12,000 in today's money) in the bargain, yet interior room remained consistent with its predecessor. Thin pillars, mixed with a “basket handle” B-pillar motif, meant an airier cabin—although not as airy as what blue sky and a Sawzall could provide. The base engine was the 302-cu.in. V-8, but a pair of 351s and even a 400 were all available. Thunderbird soared as never before: With 318,140 sold for 1977, and more

than 955,000 sold over three years, this generation of Thunderbird still sold more units in a single year than it sold over any previous generation's entire lifespan. It's little wonder, then, that ACC wrangled a few for conversion.

You can see why ACC chose the Thunderbird, beyond the model's zeitgeist-bullseye personal-luxury mission. A full frame would be crucial; of course, A-pillar and rocker reinforcements would play a role in removing any steel top, but keeping things on a sturdy perimeter frame was surely easier than looking to unit-body construction. A standard 'Bird was also sufficiently luxurious, with power steering and brakes, a dash full of burled-walnut appliqué, hideaway headlamps, ample soundproofing, and a sufficient drenching of chrome trim visible from all angles. Also, the Thunderbird name and image somehow still had a taste of the two-seater cachet that would allow moneyed clientele to spend extra cash on a mere Ford. (The option list offered plenty more comfort and convenience items to choose from, and lots of boxes were checked on this particular example.) For 1977 and '78, the ACC conversions removed the back seat altogether, in part to incorporate the top well for the folding roof but also so that it could offer customers a brand-new two-seat T-Bird, which no one (including Ford) had been able to do in decades. For 1979, a narrowed rear seat

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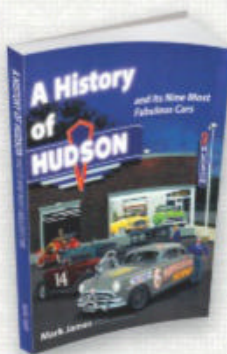
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Above, the snap-in tonneau cover didn't sit quite flush but looked well finished; eliminating the roof amplifies the rear-quarter curves. Below, the erected soft top featured a velcro-clasp plastic rear window and a massive blind spot that didn't exist on coupe versions.



returned, to work in conjunction with the aftermarket folding cloth top and boot.

And you can see why ACC was successful in selling them to select well-heeled clients — everything that appears on this 1979 model looks properly finished. It looks the business, like something Ford might have considered at some point. Oh, the top boot doesn't sit flush with the trunk, but the manually folding roof looks suitably OE in the up position, and the windshield header doesn't look homemade and raggedy. It's obviously professionally executed, and not done by a teen with a hacksaw. This low-mileage Emberglow example belonged to Ken Berger of Scottsdale, Arizona, at the time of photography.

It wouldn't be until 1982 that Detroit got back into the convertible business; Ford would take an additional year to offer a convertible again (a Mustang, but still...) and it wasn't until the 11th and final generation of Thunderbird in 2002 that you could get one with a folding soft top again. During America's soft-top drought, ACC's Thunderbird convertible conversion dared to offer the luxury of choice to its clients. This ACC-converted '79 feels like an evolutionary road not taken, showing what might have been had Detroit stuck it out and continued to build cars with folding roofs. It's enough to make you wish that Detroit continued making drop-tops, cost be damned. 🐦



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EFI for a Vintage Six

A new solution for fuel system woes

BY JIM SMART • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM SMART, DAVE TOTH

For nearly as long as there have been 144-, 170-, and 200-cu.in. Ford inline-sixes, there have been Ford sixes with carburetor problems. The lightweight 144 and 170 engines arrived at the cusp of the 1960s, when Ford was beginning to invest in compact and intermediate-sized automobiles. The results were the Falcon and Comet, the downsized Fairlane and Meteor, and the all-new Mustang. Even the Ford Econoline mid-engine van used the little Ford “Thrift Power” six. With all these applications came a host of fuel system issues.

Early on, Ford fitted its lightweight sixes with a Holley single-barrel carburetor with a glass fuel bowl. By 1962, the nimble Ford six was factory fitted with the new Autolite 1100 single-barrel carburetor, and this was the design that often led to problems.

The late Jon Enyeart was an engineer who understood automobiles and automobile function. He took advantage of this knowledge and founded Pony Carburetors, which became the place to go for authentic Ford carburetor restoration and repair. Jon designed and produced a terrific reproduction Autolite 1100 carburetor for Ford sixes with vastly improved fuel and air distribution. When Jon tragically passed away a decade ago, his carburetor insights and great products and service went with him.

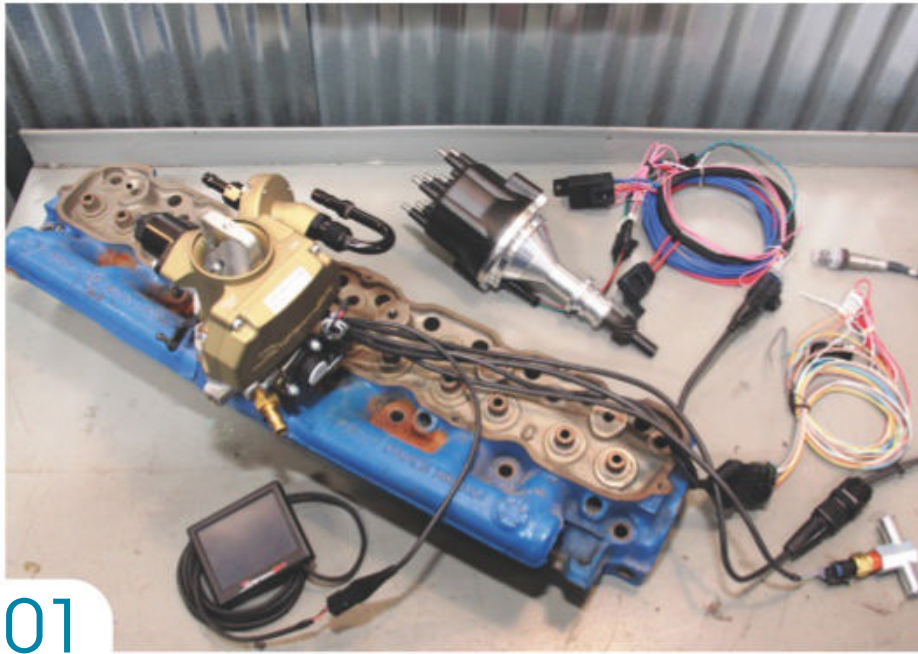
Ever since, Ford six fans have been struggling to build 1100 carburetors that function properly. Anyone who has worked with the Autolite 1100 can probably attest to that carburetor’s frustrating habit of not staying in tune, even immediately after a seemingly successful adjustment. Set the carburetor until all

seems well, drive the vehicle, park it, and when you start it up next, you may find a stumble, rough idle, or hesitation.

Now there’s an interesting alternative for frustrated Ford six owners: Holley’s new Sniper EFI electronic fuel injection for the 144/170/200 engines. After installation, users can set the parameters on a small touch screen before driving the vehicle, allowing the Sniper system to learn your driving style; then—voilà—it starts and runs predictably every time. Like other bolt-on aftermarket systems, the Sniper EFI has made this technology much more accessible to the classic car enthusiast because you don’t need a laptop or engineering degree to add the kits. Install them, punch in what you know about your car and driving habits, and this system self learns. It is wonderfully simple.

However, getting fuel to the throttle body takes some thought. There are three fuel pump options from Holley: a special EFI-specific tank designed for an in-tank pump, an external pump, or the Holley Muscle Car EFI in-tank pump (p/n 12-305), which includes the fuel sending unit. The latter drops in place of the vehicle’s factory fuel level sending unit and is self-returning—there’s no need to plumb a return line.

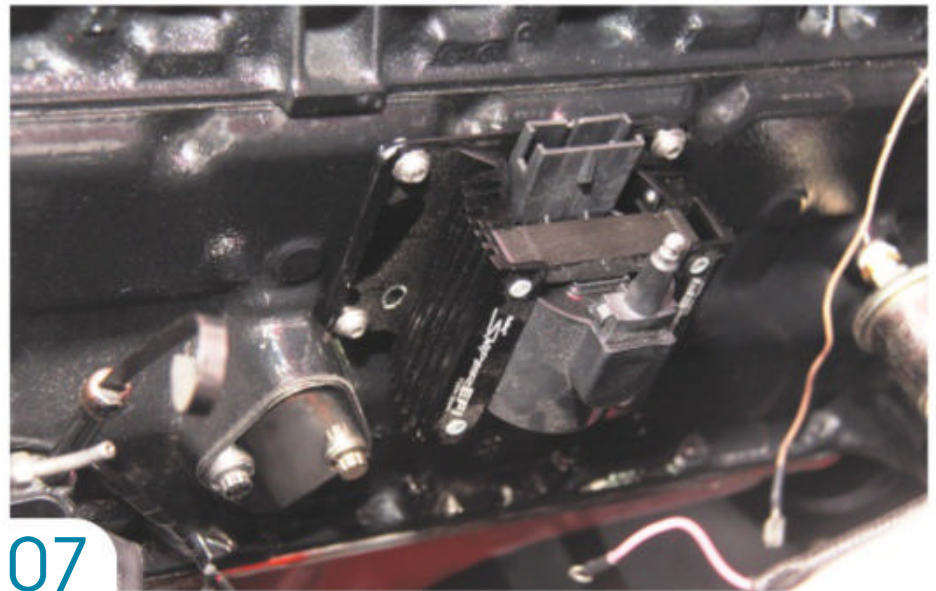
Dave Toth of Mobile Restorations in Escondido, California, helped us document the installation of a Holley Sniper kit. Dave is an intense Ford six guy who prefers the diminutive inliner over a V-8. He grew weary of the issues associated with the Autolite 1100 after spending a lot of time tinkering with the frustrating atomizers, largely without success. When Dave learned of the Sniper EFI system, he promptly ordered one and went to work. We followed along to see what was involved.



1. Holley's Sniper EFI system for the Ford inline-six is a simple bolt-on system that the average enthusiast should be able to install and tune. We're showing you not only the Sniper EFI, but also the Holley Sniper HyperSpark ignition system engineered to give the Ford six a hotter spark. This means no misfires, better fuel efficiency, and even cleaner emissions. **2.** The heart and soul of the Holley Sniper system is this simple throttle body, where the electronic control module and throttle body live — there's no external computer to wire or mount. The only external wiring required is for the fuel pump relay, fuse, and wiring harness. **3.** This is a reproduction Autolite 1100 carburetor. Like the Ford original, it is often problematic. We're going to replace it with the Sniper EFI. **4.** Lower-profile Ford six rocker covers clear the Sniper unit without modification. Dave Toth uses the taller Australian Ford finned aluminum rocker cover, which creates clearance issues with the Sniper throttle body. Dave grinds away the fins, which interfere with the fuel pressure regulator. Once the Sniper is installed, you cannot see this modification.



5. Dave checks the Sniper throttle body for clearance issues. Once the extra-tall rocker cover fins were ground smooth, the Sniper cleared without issues. **6.** Holley's Sniper HyperSpark ignition completes the Sniper EFI system. If you're not concerned with originality, HyperSpark is a great solid-state capacitive-discharge ignition, which delivers a consistently hot, reliable spark. As an alternative, Dave has used the Pertronix Ignitor system for decades with great success. **7.** Dave fabricated an ignition coil bracket for the HyperSpark ignition coil, which makes it look factory installed. **8.** This is the Falcon six's original Autolite distributor. You can run the Autolite/Pertronix ignition with the Sniper EFI system without consequence or opt for HyperSpark. The choice is yours because Sniper works with any ignition system. **9.** The HyperSpark CD box bolts anywhere, including under the dashboard.





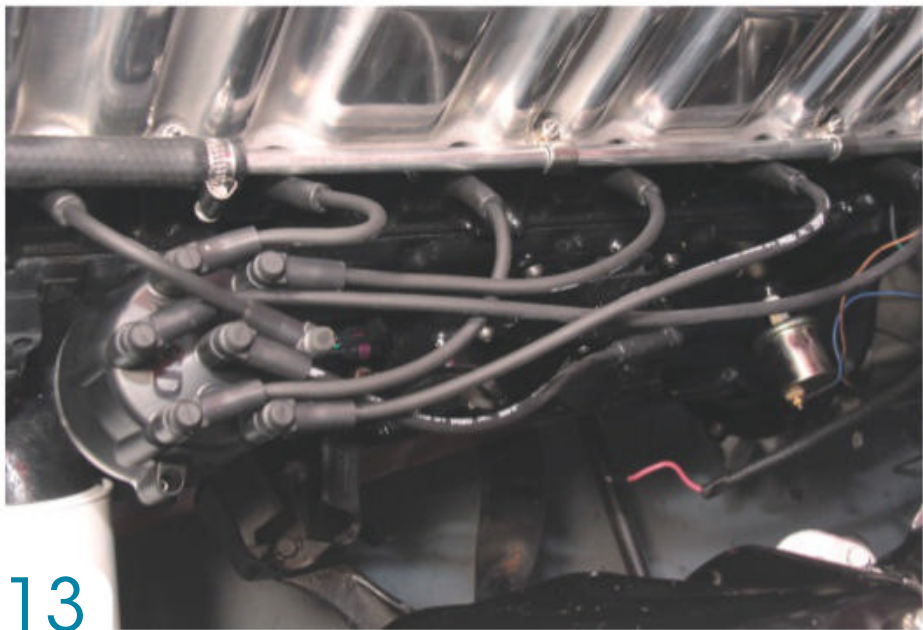
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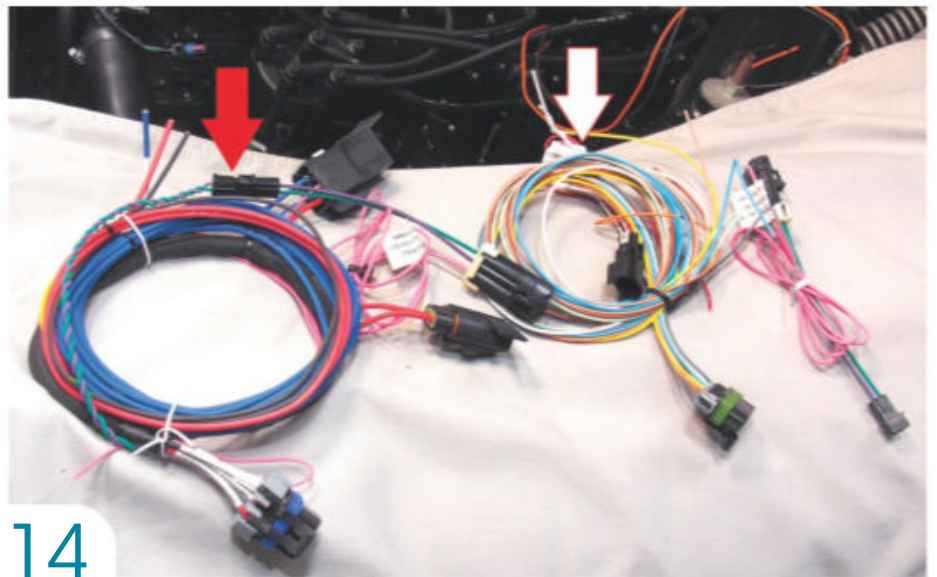


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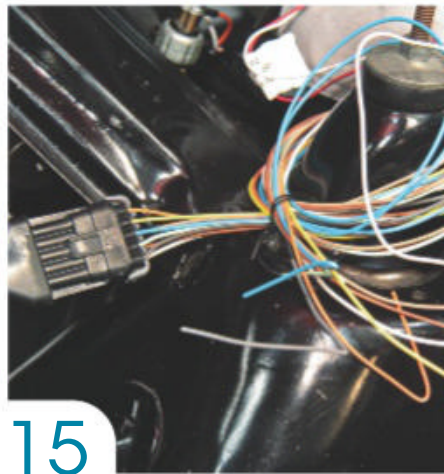


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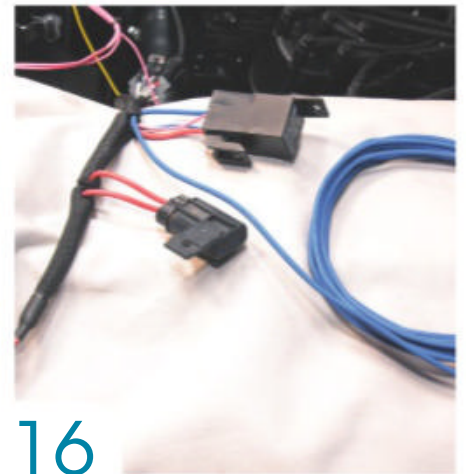
10. The HyperSpark distributor is a simple plug-and-play install when used with Sniper EFI systems. It features a high-quality billet distributor with Hall effect sensor and includes the foolproof, patented clear installation cap. **11.** You can make custom-length ignition wires with the MSD kit, which includes this fitment tool for trimming ignition wires to proper terminal installation. **12.** Pertronix offers this crimping tool for all kinds of terminals and wire ends. **13.** We like this clean, simple ignition wire installation, with MSD ignition leads cut to proper length and separated to prevent potential crossfire.



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14. There are three harnesses in the Sniper EFI system. Main power (red arrow) comes from the main harness, which includes the electric fuel pump relay and fuse. There are two accompanying harnesses (white arrow) that primarily cover accessories, such as cooling fans, air conditioning compressor, and more. If you're doing a simple restomod void of power accessories, you probably won't need this harness. **15.** This accessory harness comes straight off the throttle body. Go through this harness and select the items pertinent to your application. Air conditioning, as one example, triggers a higher idle speed to compensate for compressor load. **16.** A more intimate look at the fuel pump relay and safety fuse. The blue lead runs the length of your vehicle, back to the in-tank or external pump. **17.** The coolant temperature sensor must be located where it gets true coolant temperature; here, it's mounted in the heater hose, ahead of the water pump. Some installers will locate the temperature sensor at the thermostat housing, but this does not give the system accurate feedback as this is where the coolant is at its highest temperature, just before reentering the radiator. The mounting location must yield consistent, accurate coolant temperature feedback. **18.** It's a good idea to review all Sniper leads and mark them to determine which you will use and how. There is switched power that will become "hot" when the ignition key is turned to the start and run positions, and there is constant live battery power. Know the difference and wire accordingly.



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19. These are the heavy-duty leads from the HyperSpark CD ignition box. They must be hot all the time (battery power). Red is to positive and black is negative ground. 20. Here's the Holley EFI-specific fuel tank for the 1960-'65 Falcon. This tank package includes everything you're going to need for installation. 21. This fuel tank vent allows the tank to vent without spillage using a check valve. The Holley in-tank pump also includes a vent, which eliminates the need for this one. 22. Fuel filler neck installation begins with this bolt-on flange. 23. This universal fuel sending unit is fully adjustable and can be modified to fit any tank. For the Falcon/Comet tank, Dave has to cut it short for a proper fit.



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24. Shipped unassembled, here's the in-tank Holley pump put together and ready for installation. The tubes will need to be trimmed to fit, with "baloney" cuts at the return end. 25. In-tank fuel pump power comes from these leads, which run through the fittings on top. Feed the wires through after plugging in the fuel pump, then tighten the nuts. 26. Dave has drilled these two holes and installed rubber grommets for pressure and return fuel lines. You must use the high-pressure EFI hoses Holley provides, and there are also braided stainless steel hoses available. 27. Dave has pre-bent and installed 3/8-inch steel lines from the engine to the tank. Some installers will use pressure hose for the entire span, but steel line adds a measure of rigidity and looks more like a factory installation on a car of this vintage. Rubber-lined Adel-type clamps will secure the steel line to the unit-body. 28. For added security, two hose clamps are used on each high-pressure EFI hose at the fuel tank transition.



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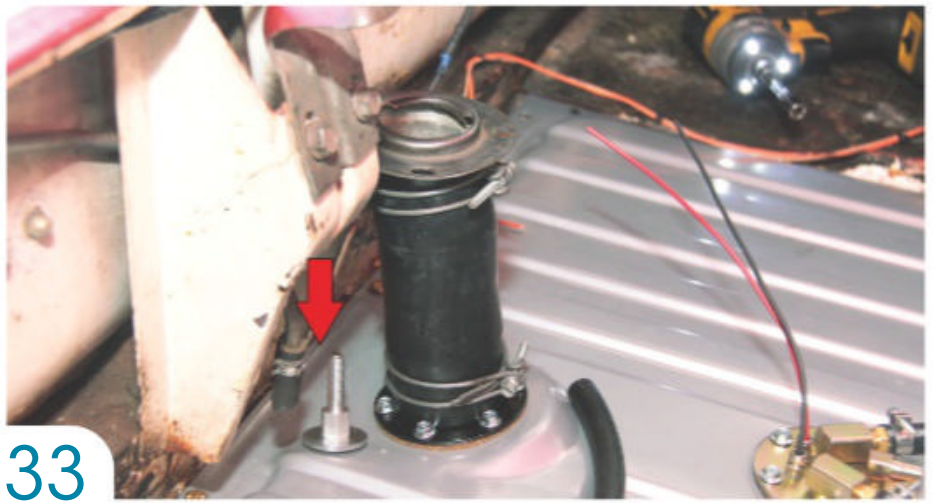
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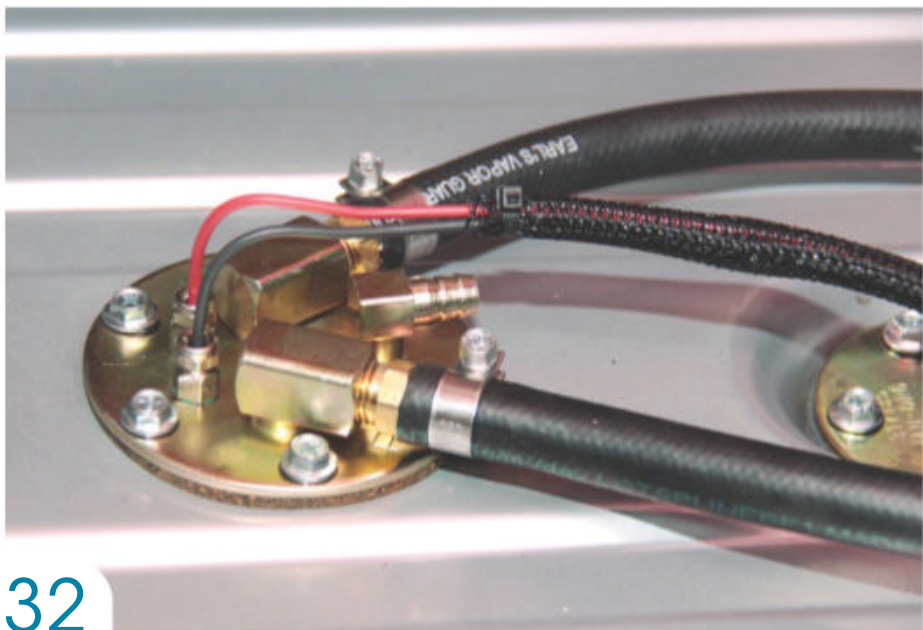
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29. Dave suggests hard lines from engine to tank, with short high-pressure hoses at the transition. John Da Luz suggested rubber-lined Adel clamps to secure these lines and minimize risk of chafing and leakage. 30. Body hard lines arrive here at the back of the engine, where they transition to the Holley Sniper EFI throttle body. 31. Dave drops the new tank into place, using 3M's rope caulk between the tank and body, much like Ford did back in 1962. It is strongly suggested you use bolts, flange nuts, and both flat and lock washers to secure the tank. Stay away from the factory sheetmetal screws. 32. This is the in-tank pump as installed, with both pressure and return lines. Fuel pump power includes both positive (red) and negative ground (black) connections. The 90-degree fitting is the vent, which you may or may not want to use. If not, cap the vent.

33. Dave became so frustrated with fuel spillage from 90-degree filler necks that he went to the in-trunk system shown here. Fuel goes straight in and there's also no risk of fuel theft. Note the factory-installed fuel system vent (arrow). You may opt for the Holley check valve vent or the in-tank pump vent. 34. Dave removes the leads he's not going to need using this tool. If you're not using any of the leads, they are best removed and plugged to protect connections. 35. Fuel pump relay and fuse are mounted on the firewall. However, you can mount them anywhere you desire, space permitting. 36. The high-pressure fuel filter is located on the pressure side, never the return side. ⚙️



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BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN, AND COURTESY OF TOMMY LEE BYRD





The Volvo's roomy cabin and comfortable seats easily accommodate the car's 6-foot-5 owner. The official Great Race Timewise 825 speedometer mounts atop the dash, its face twisted for quick viewing comprehension. Volvo's GT round-gauge cluster replaced the original strip speedometer, and a bank of accessory gauges monitor engine functions.



It's an inalienable part of human nature, the urge to compete. Whether intentional or unconscious, we seek an advantage to procure the best possible outcome in our endeavors.

When it comes to the intense contest of time-speed-distance rallying in a vintage car, it's only logical to select a vehicle whose inherent qualities might provide the best outcome. That's why it was no rookie move for a first-time Hemmings Motor News Great Race presented by Hagerty contestant to opt for a classic Volvo as his race car of choice.

The 140-series Volvos were on Mark Axen's radar decades before he found *Elsa*, the 1971 142S on these pages. The Stony Creek, New York, resident spent his childhood on Long Island, where his family's neighbor in the 1960s was the Swedish-born T.E. "Tom" Fornander, a contributing artist for *Car and Driver* who had a penchant for Saabs and Volvos, including his P1800 that sparked Mark's interest in the cars from Gothenburg. "I got a job as a porter/polisher at a local Volvo dealer, Karp, in Rockville Center," he recalls. "I talked my mom into buying a 1972 142E. It was a good car, but she didn't like it because it didn't have power steering. I got that car when she was tired of it, and drove it until I used it up."

Sporting cars have been an interest of Mark's for decades, and he became fascinated with the Great Race. "I think it's an optimal way to see America, with like-minded enthusiasts. Durability and reliability are key, and it's less stressful on the car than an SCCA rally or race," he muses. "I'd read about it over the years, but couldn't afford to do the Great Race until recently. I was inspired by meeting David Wells and seeing his 1966 Volvo 122S at the 2018 Great Race stop in Troy, New York, and soon after, when he ran the Great American Mountain Rally Revival in Vermont."

Those chance meetings between Mark and David would be the impetus for our feature 142 being reimagined and reworked for competition. Having a sentimental attachment to the model that dates back to that '72 E— "I like their styling, and being 6-foot-5, I can comfortably fit in them!" —Mark purchased this car through an online auction earlier in 2018. He didn't necessarily buy the Volvo with time-speed-distance rallying as a goal,

but his interest in participating simmered under the surface, and this choice proved optimal. "The car was completely stock when I bought it, just a bit worn out and in need of general repair," he explains. "It looked nice, a 20-footer. Like all 140s, it's a bit offbeat but mechanically simple, easy to work on, has good parts availability, and enjoys a reputation for ruggedness.

"David is a Volvo guy, and he's a diesel engine mechanic who'd been a team mechanic for Safari Africa years ago," Mark continues. "He agreed to go through my whole car, to prepare it for competition, so I had it towed over the border to Lakefield, Ontario, where he lives."

As it left the factory, the two-door 142S was a relatively simple package, with overbuilt, under-stressed components contributing to its steadfast character. The 182.7-inch-long steel unit-body, featuring Volvo's famed safety-cage design, was underpinned with a live rear axle supported by coil springs, support arms, and a track rod, plus an independent coil-sprung front suspension with ball joints, control arms, and an anti-roll bar. The driveline echoed that in earlier models like David's 122S, with a "red block" five main bearing, cast-iron OHV inline-four providing motivation. For 1971, the B20B engine displaced 1,986 cc (121 cu.in.) and used a 9.3:1 compression ratio and two Zenith-Stromberg carburetors to make 118 hp at 5,800 rpm and 123-lb-ft of torque at 3,500 rpm. This engine sent power to the rear wheels through a floor-shifted M41 four-speed manual transmission.

While the low-speed rally competition Mark intended this car to participate in did not require the installation of specialty safety equipment like a roll cage or fire suppression, David would address virtually every mechanical and electrical aspect with the intent to improve *Elsa's* performance and reliability. Under the hood, he treated the 3.50 x 3.15-inch bore and

Over the 2,300-mile event that went through California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington states, the carefully prepared 142 performed faultlessly. This old Volvo inspired many comments and conversations during the Great Race's 18 stops.

stroke B20B to a .030 overbore before installing a fuel-injection-spec “D”-grind camshaft from Volvo specialty firm IPD, which boosted low-end torque. David paired this with lightened rocker arms and a taller 1974 B20 “F” head, which breathed through a Weber 38DGV twin-choke carburetor. He also fitted a heavy-duty oil pump with remote oil filter, a sport coil, Pertronix electronic ignition, and a port-matched header leading into a custom-fabricated exhaust system.

The transmission didn’t elude his focus, and fitting an electric overdrive for improved highway comfort and economy was a key task. While the contemporary 1800E was so equipped, the 1971 142S didn’t offer overdrive from the factory. Rather than fit a period Laycock de Normanville D-type unit, David installed a stronger J-type, as found in newer turbocharged 240s and 740s up through 1991. In use, this drops revs notably, making 65 mph a 2,200-rpm cruise rather than a 3,000-rpm buzz. He also adapted the transmission to a remote gearchange, fabricating a tunnel and console mount that moved a shorter stick closer to the driver, another 1800-style modification.

The various systems of a rally car must withstand stresses a standard road car would likely never endure. When it came to additional lighting and other power demands, David went

through the wiring harness, installing relays for the main loads and inserting separate looms for newly added circuits. The power-assisted four-wheel disc brakes received new hard lines and flex hoses, while the suspension was fitted with Bilstein shocks front and rear, and a thicker anti-roll bar. Lightweight 15 x 5.5-inch Panasport-style alloys maintained the original steel wheels’ diameter but were a half-inch wider, and the front ones turned via a new, leather-wrapped Moto Lita steering wheel.

Since tackling the 2019 Great Race was the goal of this build, the car had to be fitted with the official Timewise 825 speedometer, which the rules stipulate is the only speed measuring device allowed. David also installed a three-gauge cluster with readouts for monitoring voltage, water temperature, and oil pressure. Mark would come to rely on these four instruments, as they and the fuel gauge were all he and his navigator—Mark’s brother, Dane—could monitor during the 2,300-mile driving event that started in Riverside, California, on June 22, and ended in Tacoma, Washington, on July 1.

Out of the 120 teams that participated in that year’s event, the Axens’ 142 wasn’t the only Volvo; a yellow 1966 122S wagon also competed. But Mark’s choice of car, carefully prepared to run in the Great Race’s Sportsman division by



veteran competitor David, proved as smart as he'd hoped. "The car ran perfectly. It was simply 'turn the key and go,' every single day," Mark says with a smile. Indeed, the only troubles he encountered were a trunk lock cylinder that fell apart, preventing the luggage from being secured, and, after the event concluded, running out of gas in Los Angeles because the sending unit in the tank indicated a slightly higher fuel level than was really present.

"It was great fun to pull into the towns, under the inflatable arch, with crowds of people waving and clapping and taking pictures. It's a thrill to get all that attention. And because the Pacific Northwest is big Volvo country, people would come up to me and share their stories... 'My uncle, my mom had one of these!' People would walk past the Mustangs and Chevelles and gravitate towards the Volvo, because you don't see many of the 140 series anymore."

This popular Swede has kept busy since returning to New York, taking Mark and his wife Amy around New England in 2019's Great American Mountain Rally Revival, and also touring Delaware in that year's Pumpkin Run Rally. The Volvo has won trophies in car shows, and even been displayed at Hemmings' own Concours d'Elegance. Up to today, Mark has continued to improve the 142, including a paint touch-up that led to unforeseen rust-eliminating repairs by Isaiah at Iron Mountain Automotive in Hadley, New York. He's also sourced rare original Volvo GT components, including the coveted four-dial instrument cluster the car now sports. "GTs were never produced by the factory," Mark explains; "They were created by owners or dealers who installed GT parts and accessories like the round-gauge dash, the special grille with driving lamps, M41-overdrive transmission, center console, badges, wheels, and more."

The competition bug has bitten hard, and Mark has already consigned *Elsa* and *Dane* to respectively run and navigate the 2022 Great Race, driving from Warwick, Rhode Island, to Fargo, North Dakota. This will add another couple-thousand miles



It was great fun to pull into the towns, under the inflatable arch, with crowds of people waving and clapping and taking pictures.

to the roughly 6,000 he's put on the car since his purchase. "I wanted to do this for the pleasure; we weren't really aiming to win anything. We got two 'Ace' perfect stage times by luck, I suppose," Mark says with a laugh. "It was definitely an enjoyable experience, and this is a fun car to drive. I'm glad I picked the 140; it attracts people at shows and stimulates conversation, so I meet new people and hear their stories. That's one of the best parts of the car hobby." 🏆





In preparation for the journey, the 2.0-liter, B20B engine was rebuilt with a .030 over-bore, a torque-enhancing camshaft, and a two-barrel Weber carburetor. Fitting an electric overdrive to the 142's four-speed manual improved comfort and mileage. Added relays and separate circuits were key upgrades to the nearly 50-year-old electrical system.

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Ready for the Road

Invisible upgrades to make your classic car more enjoyable to drive

BY JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

The joy of an old car is in the driving. Take a trip, visit a friend, make a memory. But while many appreciate a stock machine and what it has to offer, there are just as many owners who minimize outings in their classics. Why? The creature comforts aren't there. You need to stick to back roads because it's not pleasant on the freeway. You don't want to wear it out. You don't trust it more than a few miles from home.

Factory-stock vehicles have that authentic feel, but cars of the past were built to a different set of standards. The world that these cars live in has changed. Technology that once felt space-age has become commonplace, even in cars that are more than a decade old. Such advancements only highlight what's lacking on a vintage vehicle, particularly to those who experienced some of today's classics back when they were new.

How do you make your old car more driveable, more set-it-and-forget-it reliable, and more confidence-instilling on long trips without destroying the character that made you fall in love with it in the first place? We have some suggestions.

Some of these modifications will cost you under a hundred bucks, while others will run into four figures. Not all will be right for you or your car. We're not advocating an all-out hot-rodding of your machine. Slamming, chopping, and supercharging are well beyond our purview. Rather, with the myriad parts out there for your old car, navigating the restomodding landscape can feel overwhelming. So we tailored our suggestions to be just that —

suggestions meant to guide anyone unsure about which changes (some little, some more substantial) to make to their car.

Hardly any of our suggestions will take away from your vehicle's classic visual appearance. And as always, we recommend you check car-club message boards, seeking out the model-specific experts who know your car best. If somebody has made a modification similar to one you're considering and if they live in your area, maybe ask to do a back-to-back drive with your car and theirs. That way you can feel the difference without first having to plunk down your hard-earned cash on something you may later regret.

What's more, these mods are ultimately reversible, so you can return your car back to stock configuration if you so choose. For those who want to go the fun-driver route rather than produce a numbers-matching restoration or an all-out fealty to factory correctness, these ideas can make your old car safer, more secure-feeling, and best of all, more fun to drive — all while keeping the spirit of the car alive.



UPGRADE TO BIGGER WHEELS AND TIRES

PROS: More meat on the ground makes for a less wobbly ride
CONS: Not entirely invisible, diameter change may not accommodate stock wheel trim

No one is suggesting you get a set of 18-inch alloys and low-profile rubber for your classic car. That said, many vintage vehicles could benefit from a “plus-one” wheel-and-tire arrangement. This means a car with 13-inch tires could transform itself with 14-inchers, and a car born with 14-inch wheels could wear a set of 15s without upsetting the look or period feel. A steel wheel with an extra inch of width can also work—a 15 x 6-inch rim can mount taller, wider rubber than a 14 x 5, for example—and tires in larger diameters are generally easier to find these days than what came on your car originally.

Manufacturers offered many car lines in a range of trims, some of which had performance or police packages that brought larger wheels and tires. That’s a good place to check specs, as those options will tell you what might be feasible on your own example. Just remember that a larger-diameter wheel will require a tire with slightly shorter sidewalls so that it doesn’t mess up your speedometer reading; your tire shop can help with the calculations. Obviously, if you’re fitting larger wheels and tires, you’ll also want to measure clearances as accurately as possible before making any purchases.

UPGRADE TO A 12-VOLT SYSTEM OR ALTERNATOR



PROS: Provides enough juice to power modern convenience features
CONS: Various systems around the car will need to be updated

Twelve-volt electrical systems came along in the ’50s to handle the barrage of new comfort and convenience options that cars offered as well as to enable the cranking of larger, higher-compression engines. Many see the charm in a 6-volt system, but 12-volt electrics are helpful for the phone chargers, GPS units, stereos, and other accoutrements that vintage car drivers want. By the early ’60s, alternators were supplanting generators as auto electrical systems continued to evolve. For 12-volt cars with generators, converting to an alternator is usually straightforward; you may even be able to use factory mounting brackets from a later model of the same vehicle or engine to position the new alternator. For 6-volt vehicles, it’s a bit more complicated, as you’ll have to either convert the vehicle entirely to 12 volts or use a voltage reducer for things like gauges, HVAC motors, and electric wipers. You may need to change the ignition coil, horn, and lightbulbs to 12-volt pieces.

If you want the benefits of an alternator conversion but don’t want to sacrifice the period look, some companies, like PowerMaster, make units disguised as generators. Six-volt alternators also exist, for those who don’t want to plump for a 12-volt upgrade.



REPLACE BIAS-PLIES WITH RADIAL TIRES

PROS: Improved grip, feel, and ride; less wandering
CONS: They don’t necessarily look right

Radial tires were a major advance for cars in terms of ride and handling, but of course, a lot of classics were built before modern radials were available. Radials may not look right to many enthusiasts, but today, companies like Coker Tire offer them in a variety of sizes with vintage looks and contemporary manners. Be wary, though: We’ve driven a lot of stock classic cars with radials and no other changes, and while their grip is generally superior, modern tires tend to make the vehicle’s handling shortcomings more apparent.

SWITCH FROM OIL SHOCKS TO GAS-CHARGED



PROS: Ubiquitous, relatively inexpensive, more feel to the ride
CONS: More feel to the ride

Gas shocks have been commonplace for 40 years now and are available at your local parts store or from a variety of mail-order sources for most postwar applications. In many instances, you can disguise gas shocks as factory-type with a coat of black or gray paint. Gas dampers—very much tuned for the era of the radial tire—will reward you with a sharper, tauter ride. In something with worn old shocks, the difference will be immediately noticeable and maybe a little surprising. Is that something that you’d want in, say, a vintage Cadillac or Lincoln? Ultimately, you’ll have to be the judge.

ADD ANTI-ROLL BARS

PROS: Flattens the curves
CONS: May be visible under the car, may dial out some of that old-car feel

Many classic car owners revere old cars for their plush rides, their soft suspension, and that distinctive lean in corners at virtually any speed. Anti-roll bars are designed to help flatten out that roll. Most modern cars come standard with anti-roll bars, but prior to the 1960s, they were rare. One of the primary benefits of the torsion-type bar is its ability to reduce body lean without necessarily firming the ride—so, in theory, even a softly sprung luxury cruiser could derive cornering improvements from an anti-roll-bar install without sacrificing ride quality. Anti-roll bars are most often found on the front, but some vehicles also have one in the rear. For period-correct parts, check to see whether a



police suspension or towing package was available with anti-roll bars. Also look at aftermarket companies such as Addco, which has been making anti-roll bars for half a century.

CONVERT FROM DRUM BRAKES TO DISCS



PROS: Excellent stopping power with repeatable results
CONS: Costly, requires additional mods

More than any other listed here, this change might save your life. Four-wheel drum brakes are fine for bumping around back roads, but their associated braking distances (particularly from freeway speeds) can get you in trouble quick. In addition, braking distances will increase dramatically after a few aggressive stops thanks to the drums retaining heat. For more than 50 years, disc brakes have been the OE-approved answer, and many chassis that started out with drums saw disc brakes added as an option before becoming standard equipment. Because of this, whole-spindle swaps can be relatively simple, and the aftermarket has engineered systems for many popular applications. The difference in feel will be immediately noticeable. In addition to the front discs you'll need a dual-reservoir master cylinder, sized appropriately for the setup, as well as a proportioning valve.

CONVERT FROM POINTS TO ELECTRONIC IGNITION

PROS: Reliable, not that expensive, no maintenance required
CONS: None, really

Breaker points in a vintage ignition system require maintenance, and it's tough to source reliable replacements now that trusted aftermarket companies have stopped producing them. An electronic ignition conversion won't make you more power, but the electronic triggering enables the use of a hotter-voltage coil resulting in hotter spark, and an electronic system will provide more consistent performance while also eliminating the periodic maintenance. Basic conversions are not expensive — Pertronix systems start around \$75 — offering cheap insurance against another Saturday morning under the hood of your car rather than driving it.



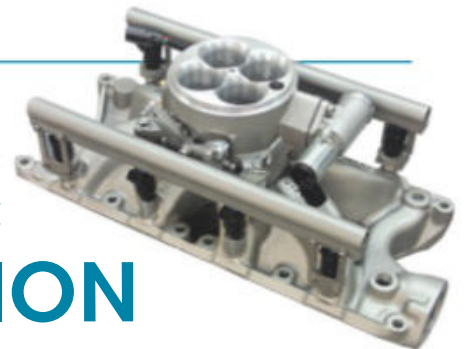
SWITCH TO AN OVERDRIVE TRANSMISSION

PROS: Allows higher cruising speeds with less engine stress, enables better fuel mileage
CONS: Pricy, other things will need changing in conjunction

Various forms of overdrive gearboxes have been available in cars on and off for more than 80 years, and the principles (and

benefits) remain the same: longer-legged cruising and lower revs on the highway, particularly important if you choose to take your car on long trips. Conversion bellhousings exist for many manual-transmission applications, and most modern factory overdrive automatics have their bones in gearboxes that have been around since the '60s, enabling retrofitting. Still, an overdrive swap is often not cheap, and it's not a change you'll want to make in isolation—you may need to shell out for a shortened driveshaft and newly fabricated shift linkages, and you might want to consider a different rear-axle ratio. But the outcome could be worth the effort and expense for those who enjoy road trips.

UPGRADE TO ELECTRONIC FUEL INJECTION



PROS: Smooth starting and power delivery, better fuel mileage
CONS: Adds complexity, not cheap

Aftermarket fuel-injection systems have come a long way in terms of reliability in the last 20 years. What's more, wiring and fuel delivery are easily enough disguised, and throttle bodies can be hidden under period air cleaners. An EFI upgrade is perfect for someone who just wants to twist the key and go, or for anyone who doesn't like to fuss with carburetors. While these systems can be adapted to most engines, and plenty have onboard computers that learn as they go, they are relatively expensive compared with the humble carburetor (though the price gap between the two is narrowing as EFI technology continues to evolve). Does the ease of the fuel-injected life justify the investment? Only you can make that call.

CHANGE THE REAR-END GEAR RATIO



PROS: Dramatic performance gains possible without ever popping the hood
CONS: Low ratios could dent fuel mileage, higher ratios may blunt acceleration, changing speedometer gear required

Final-drive ratios — determined by the gears in your car's drive axle — are often a compromise. They need to be robust enough to help multiply the gearing in your transmission to get the car going, but they also need to propel you to speed. In the 1970s, final-drive ratios as high as 2.41:1 were common to keep engine revs down and boost fuel economy. Not long before that, manufacturers were spitting out muscle cars with 3.90:1, 4.10:1, and lower (numerically higher) ratios with the intent of scorching the street from stoplight to stoplight. Prewar vehicles, particularly trucks, tended to have low gearing to help their low-output engines move a lot of weight. Depending on the era of your car, the factory may have offered a variety of gear ratios — favoring economy, towing, or performance. Today, swapping to a ratio that better suits your intended use can enhance your driving experience. The aftermarket has solutions for many applications, and marque experts can help locate usable vintage parts where new ones aren't available. 🏁

2022



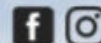
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The 2021 Pontiac-Oakland Club International Meet



*Celebrating one of GM's
most revered divisions*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN AND DAVID CONWILL

It's been more than a decade since General Motors bid adieu to the storied Pontiac division, but fondness for the nameplate hasn't seemed to diminish a bit. As they have for nearly five decades, dedicated enthusiasts still gather in mass annually to celebrate everything there is pertaining to their beloved brand, including its predecessor, Oakland. That's only the tip of the proverbial iceberg that is the Pontiac-Oakland Club International (also known as POCI) Convention, which was hosted by the sprawling Mohegan Sun casino complex in Uncasville, Connecticut, on July 11-15.

After a year of disappointing cancellations, this year's gathering (the 49th such event) was well attended, with

members—eager to emerge from social seclusion and share their cars—coming from as far away as Florida and North Dakota. Freshly finished restoration projects shared space with well-preserved original cars. Vehicles competing in the point-judged section were displayed in the air-conditioned convention center, while a neighboring outdoor parking lot served as space for the people's choice "Road Warriors" gathering (similar to the AACA's Driven Participation Class), a swap meet, and car corral.

By midweek, Pontiacs from the earliest 1926 examples to the last of the 2010 models were represented, as were a few examples of the former parent brand, Oakland, each carefully arranged into several classes. Organizers took care

to space each vehicle in such a manner that permitted ready access for photography and enthusiastic scrutiny from all. This summer's gathering featured several vehicles that quickly became the talk of the event.

Perhaps the single most notable happening of the week was the final-day gathering of 1958 Pontiacs, staged for a group shot at the end of the meet. It was memorable to see so many of the final Harley Earl-influenced Pontiac models in one place.

The 2022 Pontiac-Oakland Club International Annual Meet is currently scheduled for July 12-16, 2022, at the Hard Rock Hotel in Catoosa, Oklahoma. For more information and registration, visit poci.org.



This pair of outstanding 1957s were on display courtesy of Wheeler Bradley from Middletown, Rhode Island. They represent the beginning of Bunkie Knudsen's refashioning of the division into a performance brand.



Pontiac boss John DeLorean badly wanted to build a two-seat Pontiac roadster called the Banshee, going so far as to commission this 1964 Banshee XP 883 dream car with overhead-cam six-cylinder power. Even though it was planned as a much-cheaper and less-capable car, General Motors nixed the project as too big a threat to the Chevrolet Corvette, ultimately giving Pontiac the Camaro-based Firebird instead.



One never knows what will appear at a POCI gathering. Take, for instance, this 1986 Grand Prix 2+2, offered for sale by Mike Hust of Connecticut. The sleek nose and fastback rear window were part of the unique equipment designed in the wind tunnel—in cooperation with Richard Petty—to homologate the new aerodynamic profile for NASCAR competition. Just 1,225 were built, and three attended this year's convention.

Widely believed to be a true one-of-one car was this fascinating 1958 Star Chief, recently restored by David Rogalla of Grand Forks, North Dakota. Documents and other information indicate that it left the factory with Jubilee Gold paint, a manual transmission, and Tri-Power induction.





There were several station wagons in attendance this year, including this stunning 1966 Catalina owned by James Mattes of Palmertown, Pennsylvania. Pontiac built 34,047 six- and nine-passenger examples combined during the model year, most featuring an automatic transmission.



Le Mans Sport convertibles were somewhat uncommon—Pontiac sold 4,670 during the 1970 model year. Even rarer is this example owned by big-band leader Cathy Stewart of Guilford, Connecticut, which was equipped by the factory with a 250-cu.in. straight-six engine. Look for a feature story about the Pontiac in a future issue of this magazine.



Surviving Oaklands were few at this year's gathering. Pictured here is an appealing Model 8950 owned by Noel and Starr Evans, of Washington Depot, Connecticut.



Naugatuck, Connecticut, resident Connie Luciano arrived at the meet with her 1967 Pontiac Firebird convertible. Connie ordered the car new, complete with a two-barrel-equipped 326-cu.in. V-8 engine, and traded in a 1960 Ford Falcon on the Pontiac.



Proving that the 2021 POCI convention wasn't a purely regional celebration of all things Pontiac was Bob Lefferts, who arrived from Pace, Florida, with his 1964 Bonneville convertible.



One of the most discussed cars in attendance wasn't inside the convention center but parked outside in the "Road Warrior" section: this unusual 1951 Sedan Delivery, owned by Charles Huntington of Newcastle, Maine. The jury is still debating whether it was originally used as a hearse or a flower car, as well as whether or not an aftermarket company installed the panel side glass.

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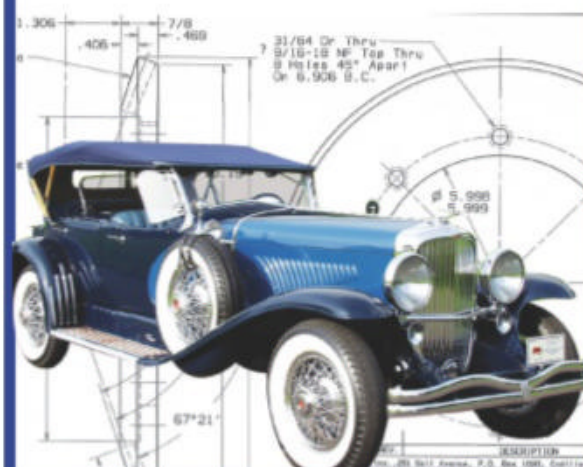
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Amazingly, the only representative of Pontiac's 1961-'63 Y-body compact, the Tempest, was this superbly restored 1963 Le Mans convertible, belonging to Ralph and Jean Catalano, of Delanson, New York. When new, the upscale model received the cast-iron 326-cu.in. Pontiac V-8 instead of the earlier, Buick-built aluminum 215-cu.in. engine.



Interestingly, this 1947 Streamliner, owned by Jerry Plante of Candia, New Hampshire, was the only representative of a 1940s Pontiac at the meet. While 1946 and '47 cars were very similar, '48s can be identified by the absence of the distinct "speed-line fender treatment" seen here.



Another highly desirable Pontiac owned by Wheeler Bradley was this unrestored 1933 coupe, equipped with its factory-installed 77-hp, 223-cu.in. straight-eight engine.



One of the most striking Pontiacs on display was this 1969 Firebird convertible, presented for judging by owner Paul Zito, of Johnston, Rhode Island. The division built 11,649 examples during the year, and this one was fitted with a four-speed manual.



Pontiac's version of the Chevrolet Vega was called the Astre. This 1975 Astre SJ Safari Wagon belongs to Charles Huntington of Newcastle, Maine. Like the Vega, Astres had engine issues and were plagued by premature rust, but those that have survived are handsome, fun-to-drive cars.



In the Colonnade era, General Motors dominated the intermediate market through the Oldsmobile Cutlass, but Pontiac's Grand Prix wore the pillared body style particularly well, too. Michael Ford, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, brought this especially nice 1977 example. 🏆

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Going Drum to Disc

Improve classic car braking (and safety) with a disc brake and dual-circuit system conversion

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM SMART

The relationship we have with our classic cars tends to be a love/hate affair. We love the styling and the nostalgia of cool American iron from more than a half-century ago. However, suspension and braking systems are below par when you consider what's sitting on showroom floors today. Drum brakes have their place, and obviously this arrangement is appropriate on a concours-restored show car where originality and show judging are paramount. However, if you drive your classic on a regular basis, maximizing your own safety and the safety of others depends upon getting your braking system up to date.

There was a time when you had to rummage through salvage yards to find a suitable disc brake package. These days, there's a wealth of new disc brake kits for a wide variety of classic cars, from the Model T all the way up through the cars

of the mid-20th century. Your decision should be based on what meets your personal needs and tastes. If your classic ride is a completely stock example, all you need are OEM-style front disc brakes, a dual-circuit master cylinder, new brake lines, and rear drum brakes.

If you have a performance-oriented model, or you'd just like a measure of braking performance beyond what the factory offered, the aftermarket may be able to assist. You may be surprised by the breadth of applications covered today, for both front and rear disc brakes.

Particularly important is the decision to convert your single-circuit hydraulic braking system to a dual system, meaning two separate circuits for the hydraulics fore and aft. American cars had single-circuit hydraulic braking systems prior to the 1967 model year, when dual braking systems became federally mandated.

A dual-circuit braking system includes a two-chamber master cylinder, split between front and rear systems. The purpose of this is to maintain partial braking should there be a hydraulic system failure somewhere—a single leak should then affect only one circuit, not both as it does with a single-type system. In factory dual-circuit systems there is usually a pressure differential valve of some sort and a warning light to let you know you've lost either system. The pressure differential valve used on many vehicles has an internal "shuttle" valve that must be recentered once the trouble is corrected to turn the warning light out and enable proper bleeding of the system.

Why opt for disc brakes? Drum brakes are prone to fading under hard use and, when wet, will often become seriously compromised. Disc brakes, on the other hand, are very effective stoppers.



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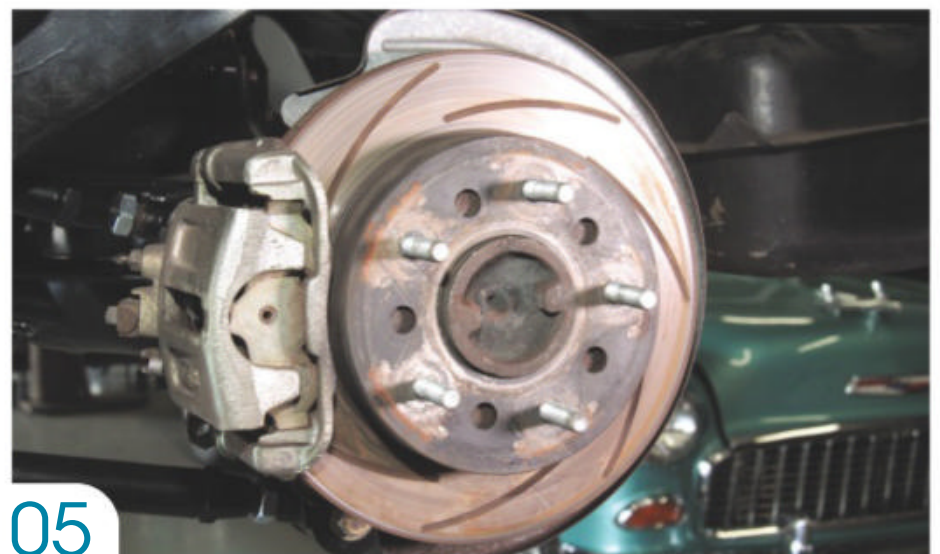
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1. Drum brakes have long been the mainstay of automotive braking systems. They perform quite well in rear axle positions yet are prone to fade when they get hot. When they get wet, friction is compromised and drum brakes can become unsafe. They also tend to lock up during hard braking. 2. The humble drum brake is little more than C-shaped shoes/linings within a rotating drum. Because the front brakes do most of the work, the rear drums are there more as a backup for the fronts. 3. Most mainstream classic cars need little more than these cast-iron caliper, OEM-style disc brakes, and having them only in the front is usually a sufficient upgrade for normal driving. This is a Kelsey-Hayes four-piston front disc brake on a classic Mustang.



04

4. For a long time, six-cylinder Falcon, Comet, and Mustang owners couldn't get front disc brakes. Only V-8 cars were available with them, and those models used five-lug wheels as opposed to the four-lug hubs found on six-cylinder models. However, given the intense demand in more recent years from six-cylinder owners, aftermarket companies answered the call with disc brake conversions for the inline-powered models. This example from SSBC-USA is a simple bolt-on kit you can install in a day. 5. Affordable OEM-style disc brake kits are available for Ford, GM, Chrysler, and AMC classics from SSBC-USA (pictured here), CPP, Brake Performance, and LEED Brakes. They yield a factory-original appearance and will improve braking performance. 6. Those with muscle cars and restomods have the option of stepping up to a high-performance disc brake system from SSBC-USA, Baer, CPP, or Wilwood, among others. Some of these companies offer performance braking systems that fit behind stock 14- or 15-inch wheels.



05



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7. As a side benefit, some high-performance aftermarket disc brakes can make brake pad changes easier. What's more, you get to choose the right brake friction material compound for your driving technique — everything from organic to ceramic. 8. Right Stuff Detailing offers disc brake conversion kits, available from Summit Racing Equipment, that are designed to fit within a factory 14-inch wheel, including OEM steel wheels. They fit 1967-'72 GM A-bodies, 1967-'69 F-bodies, and 1968-'74 Novas without modifications. The 1964-'66 GM A-body applications call for the two lower holes in the drum spindle and steering arm to be bored out to 1/2-inch. 9. Baer offers a high-performance disc brake kit for 14-inch wheel applications. These four-piston disc brakes are offered in a wide variety of colors and look terrific poking out from behind period-style aftermarket wheels on vehicles with the '60s accessorized look.



They provide excellent braking force but are also more effective at dissipating heat, enabling them to endure severe use with good resistance to brake fade — the compromise in friction that occurs when the braking components become overheated. Even a front disc/rear drum system, with the split circuitry of a dual system, can offer a substantial improvement in braking performance and safety.

When you're considering a disc brake upgrade, first determine if your car was ever available with disc brakes; if you determine it was not, investigate further to see if a system from a later version of your model offered discs. For example, a 1963 Plymouth was not offered with front disc brakes, but the parts from the right 1973 Plymouth could be adapted.

Of course, the aftermarket can simplify that process by providing whatever you might need for a disc conversion in kit form, eliminating the need to search out vintage parts from a salvage yard and the guesswork that can be involved in attempting to merge those items with your car. If you go this route, bear in mind that brake pad friction materials should be chosen based on the kind of driving you're going to do. The daily commute or week-end getaway doesn't call for hard friction materials designed for racing.

BRAKE FRICTION MATERIALS

Some years ago, asbestos was commonly used in brake shoes and pads, but when the health risks became clear, the material was phased out. When working on a vintage car, use caution with unknown friction materials — the brake shoes on a 50-year-old car may well be old enough to contain asbestos.

These days, we have three basic types of brake friction materials: Non-asbestos organic, semi-metallic, or ceramic for high-performance driving. Non-asbestos organic compounds are the most common type of brake friction material and are made from bonded organic fibers that retain shape by a resin or glue. Organic brake linings are made from a combination of several proven plant-derived fibers. Non-asbestos linings have a small amount of metallic content in them, typically brass to dissipate heat while contributing to abrasiveness (friction) for better stopping.

Semi-metallic brake linings have a lot more metallic content than non-asbestos. The semi-metallics became more common beginning in the 1980s, as brake technology improved. Because the front disc brakes do 75 percent of the braking, they must be able to handle the abuse and heat. Metallic particles handle heat

and are far more resistant to fade than their organic counterparts. The downside of semi-metallics is brake disc and drum wear. There's less time between brake jobs with semi-metallic pads and shoes, yet you will get more effective braking performance with the semi-metallics. It is all in what you want from your brakes.

Last, but not least, are the ceramics, which are most suitable for racing, not necessarily the street. Ceramic brake friction material consists of a mixture of two ingredients: copper and high-tech ceramic fibrous materials, which provide rigidity and excellent heat durability/dissipation. Copper dissipates heat very well, and offers flexibility when used in conjunction with iron and steel discs. The beauty of the ceramics is very little brake dust, which can be corrosive and detrimental to the finish on the vehicle's wheels. For the daily driver, ceramics can also be very hard on brake rotors. Plus, they tend to yield a very hard pedal.

BRAKE FLUIDS

There are three basic types of brake fluid. DOT 3, a mineral-based fluid, has been used in braking systems for decades and is certainly the most common type. Because DOT 3 is hygroscopic, it absorbs moisture from the air. It is also quite corrosive and



10. Summit's complete front drum-to-disc brake conversion kits take the guesswork out of building a braking system while keeping costs reasonable; this '60s GM kit lists for \$700 as of press time. These kits are available in standard or Ultra versions. Ultra kits include cross-drilled, slotted rotors and braided brake lines for enhanced performance. **11.** Proper installation of cotter pins is critical, and you'll see them done in many different ways. You should be aiming for something like this. Also, make sure to use the proper size cotter pin — there shouldn't be much excess play inside the keyway once it's inserted. **12.** We see smashed dust caps all the time due to reckless installation. Always install dust caps by driving them in around the perimeter. You can buy a cup driver like this one, or you can gently drive in the edges with a common screwdriver.

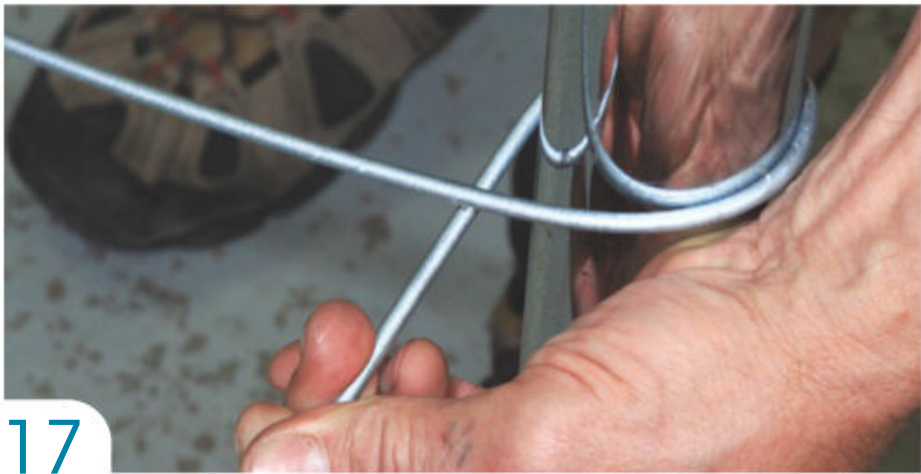


13. Power brake conversions reduce brake pedal effort by using the engine's intake manifold vacuum for assistance. These are easy conversions to make. In some installations, you may have to replace the brake pedal because pedal geometry is different from manual to power brake applications. **14.** Wilwood offers a dual-circuit braking system conversion kit for classic cars and vintage muscle cars. Everything you need is here to get the conversion done. You may need to fabricate your own lines to meet the needs of your vehicle. **15.** Most disc brake conversion kits include a pressure differential/proportioning valve to separate the front and rear braking systems. The wiring (which has yet to be connected here) is for the brake pressure warning light switch that alerts the driver of a brake differential pressure issue, triggered by a loss of pressure in one of the systems.





16



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16. Fabricating your own brake lines doesn't have to be difficult. These types of coils are there to provide a measure of flexibility in the hardlines from the master cylinder. This allows the lines to accommodate the slight movement between the body and chassis that can occur during driving. This approach also makes it easier to connect the brake lines. **17.** You don't always need expensive tools to fabricate lines. For coiling, you can gently wrap the brake line around a metal post or exhaust pipe to get smooth bends and prevent kinking and collapse. **18.** There are some basic brake line fabrication tools you should invest in, like a good quality tubing cutter (this one is from Harbor Freight). When you cut tubing, run the cutter back and forth for a smooth cut and allow the halves to gently come apart. **19.** Successful line flaring requires the right equipment, and there are now a variety of these tools on the market, some that are quite affordable. Brake lines require double flares, which necessitate a flaring tool with the proper double-flare dies. It takes significantly more effort to flare stainless line, so a good tool is a must—some have hydraulic rams or long levers to assist in making the flare.



19

can damage paint. Fresh DOT 3 right out of the container has a boiling point of 401 degrees Fahrenheit, which makes it effective for most applications. Over time, as DOT 3 absorbs moisture from the air, its effective boiling point can drop as low as 284 degrees F. When brake fluid boils, air bubbles form in the fluid, causing a spongy pedal feel and compromised braking effectiveness.

More recently, DOT 4 brake fluid has become more common in OE applications, especially with European automakers. DOT 4 has a higher boiling point (446 degrees F) than DOT 3. Brake fluid manufacturers include additives with DOT 4 fluid to reduce acid levels that come from moisture being absorbed into the fluid. Although you can mix DOT 3 and DOT 4, this is discouraged. And, because there are different types of DOT 4 brake fluid, you really must know specifically which type you are using before mixing the two.

Moving to DOT 5 fluid is a bigger step, as this is a silicone-based brake fluid

with a boiling point of 500 degrees F. It is normally purple in color to differentiate from the typical amber color of DOT 3 and 4. While DOT 5 doesn't absorb water quite like glycol-based brake fluids, it can become foamy, and those tiny air bubbles are more difficult to bleed. Never mix DOT 5 with any other type of brake fluid, including DOT 3 and 4.

Mineral-based brake hydraulic fluids like DOT 3 and 4 should be flushed and bled every two years to keep the system moisture free. If mineral-based brake fluid gets on your vehicle's paint finish, it will lift and damage the paint. Silicone brake fluid (DOT 5) doesn't absorb moisture and poses no risk to typical automotive paint finishes. However, DOT 5 yields a softer brake pedal, which is unsettling to a lot of drivers. Silicone brake fluid doesn't have to be flushed as often as mineral fluids do.

BRAKE LINES

When you're installing disc brakes, it may be a good time to replace all of the steel brake lines and flex hoses in the interest

of safety. Old brake lines can become corroded, leaving them weakened and unsafe, potentially rupturing and resulting in brake failure. There are a number of aftermarket companies that offer pre-bent brake hardline kits that replicate the factory original lines for a wide variety of vehicles. Many of these outfits can also custom make brake lines to match factory parts if a particular application is not in their offerings, but an original line is usually needed to use as a template. We've used kits from some of these sources and have been impressed with the accuracy of the dimensions and bends—OE-level computer-guided equipment is often at work to produce these parts. You'll typically have the choice between stainless steel or mild steel; stainless is highly corrosion resistant and looks nicer but is a harder material, and therefore, more difficult to work with if you need to make any new bends or flares. Mild steel will succumb to moisture and salt spray in time but is easier to bend and flare.

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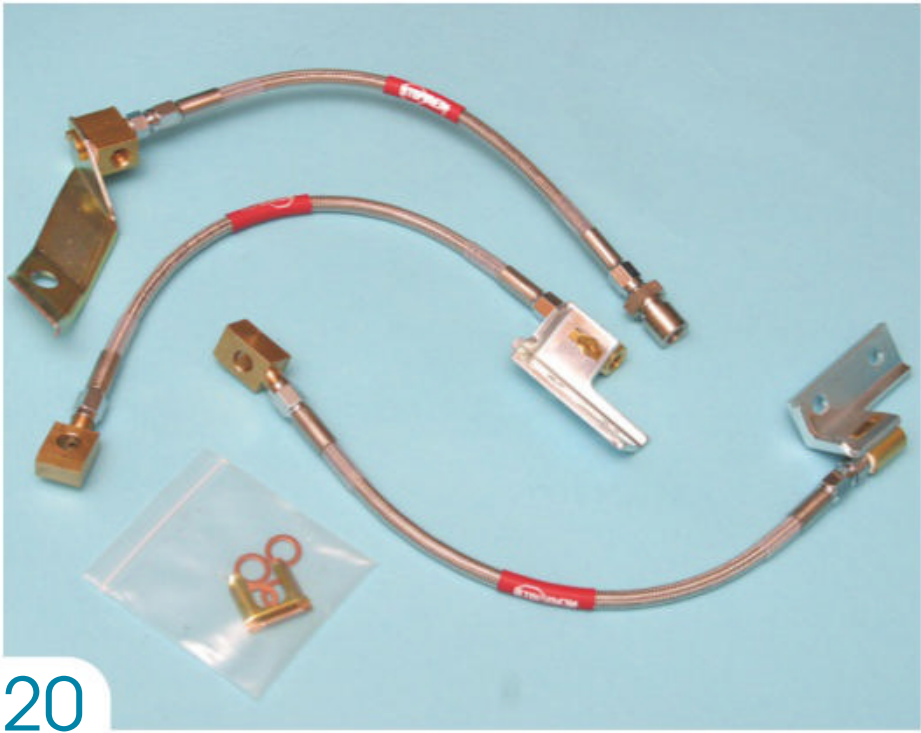
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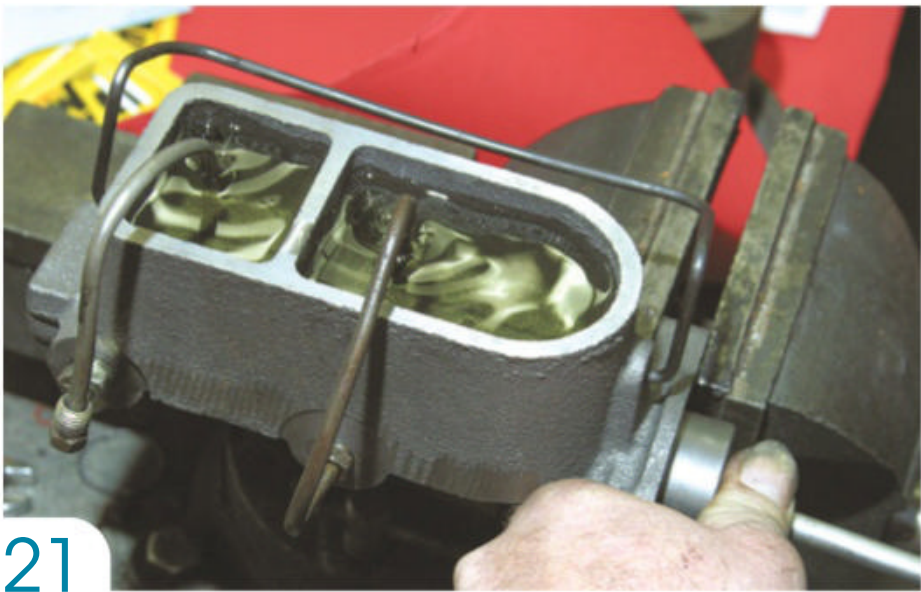
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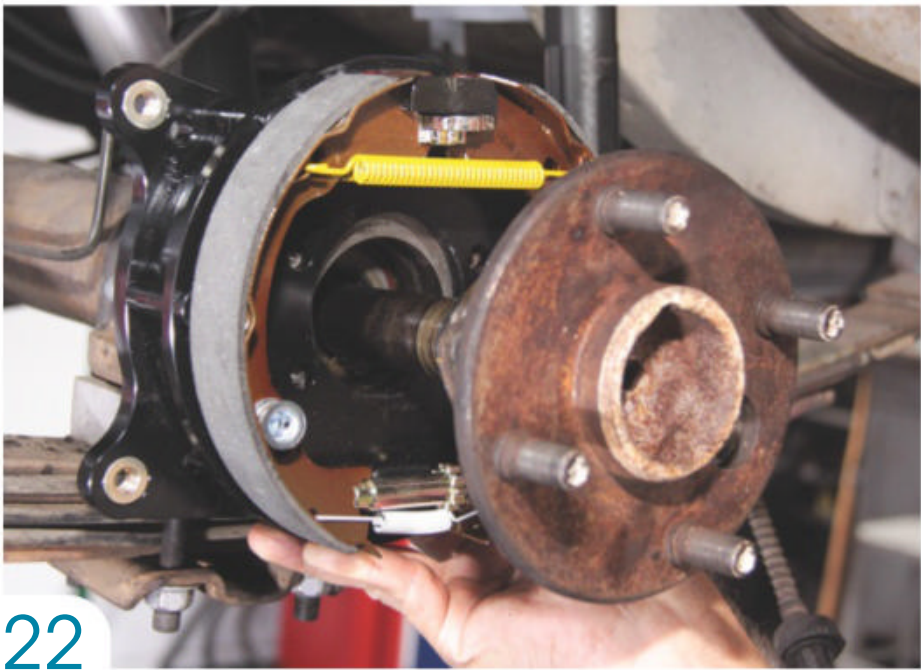
For Ordering Information visit www.hemmings.com/classicoil



20



21




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20. Stainless braided flexible brake hoses were once considered to be purely for race cars, but the aftermarket now has applications for many classic street-driven vehicles, like this set from Classic Tube. Because these hoses are sheathed in braided stainless steel, they don't corrode nor do they expand under braking pressure, which yields a firmer pedal and crisp braking. **21.** Before installing a new master cylinder, you have to bench bleed it to remove any trapped air. A pair of lines hooked to the fittings feed fluid back into the chamber as you pump the piston with a drift or rod. **22.** While you're installing rear discs or even rebuilding rear drum brakes, replace rear axle bearings and seals for added reliability.



23

23. This Wilwood rear disc brake setup fits behind stock-sized wheels and also offers a separate drum brake inside the rotor hub or "hat" for the parking brake. **24.** Wilwood rear discs include specific parking brake cables for your application. This setup functions smoothly and reliably with your classic car's factory parking brake. 



24

SOURCES:

ABS Power Brake

714-771-6549 • abspowerbrake.com

Classic Tube

800-882-3711 • classictube.com

Classic Performance Products (CPP)

714-522-2000 • classicperform.com

Harbor Freight

800-444-3353 • harborfreight.com

SSBC-USA

716-775-6700 • ssbc-usa.com

Summit Racing Equipment

800-230-3030 • summitracing.com

Wilwood Disc Brakes

805-388-1188 • wilwood.com

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1954 Kaiser-Darrin
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1948 Desoto Suburban
Sold for **\$40,691**



1979 Toyota
Land Cruiser FJ40
Sold for **\$46,200**



1940 Ford Deluxe
Convertible
Sold for **\$55,650**



1949 Dodge B1
Power Wagon
Sold for **\$55,125**



1970 AMC AMX
Sold for **\$55,650**



1962 Ford Galaxie
500XL Convertible
Sold for **\$52,976**

BY MATTHEW LITWIN AND TOM COMERRO
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26-27 • Worldwide Auctioneers

Tempe, Arizona
800-990-6789 • worldwideauctioneers.com

27 • Bonhams

Scottsdale, Arizona
415-391-4000 • bonhams.com

27 • RM Sotheby's

Phoenix, Arizona
519-352-4575 • rmsothebys.com

28-29 • Gooding & Company

Scottsdale, Arizona
310-899-1960 • goodingco.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.



BONHAMS

Bonhams Audrain Auction

THE INAUGURAL BONHAMS AUDRAIN CONCOURS AUCTION TOOK PLACE OCTOBER 1 AT THE International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island, and delivered a sell-through rate of 83 percent, with total sales of more than \$8.6 million. One of the big sales, a rare 1913 ALCO (American Locomotive Company) five-passenger touring car, was a hometown hero. Built in Providence, Rhode Island, this ALCO underwent a minor restoration in the early 1960s and still sported its original coachwork, floorboards, fenders, and hood. Many of the components were made of cast bronze, including the steering wheel spokes and top bow hardware. The four-cylinder engine was mated to a four-speed sliding-gear transmission, and the bodywork featured an assortment of brass elements, which, along with the paint and detailing, required extensive work to restore the original luster. The ALCO had the same owner since 2004 and spent more than a decade exhibited in museums. When the bidding ended, the car sold for \$373,500.

Also sold was a 1910 Buick Model 16 toy tonneau, which went for \$95,200, and a 1933 Marmon Sixteen, which brought \$368,000. The top postwar sale, outside of high-performance and muscle cars, was a 1961 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz convertible, which sold for \$72,800. All results from the Bonhams Audrain Auction are now available for viewing at bonhams.com.

Mecum Vegas Results

MECUM RELEASED THE RESULTS OF ITS ANNUAL LAS VEGAS AUCTION, HELD this year on October 7-9, and reported total sales of \$22.3 million with an 86-percent sell-through rate. Both metrics were vast improvements from last year's event, which was greatly hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. When the event concluded, a total of 508 vehicles had found new owners. Delving further into the numbers, American classics from the prewar years to 1959 accounted for \$2.62 million, with a sell-through rate of 81.3 percent. One of the cars to change hands was a 1950 Ford Crestliner, which was restored to exacting specifications with period-correct components. It was finished in two-tone green and black with a matching interior and powered by a 239-cu.in. V-8, mated to a three-speed column-shift manual transmission. It was outfitted with new wiring and hoses, and inside, the reupholstered interior retained its original colors. Outside, it had vintage touches such as windshield-pillar-mounted Allstate spotlights and a period-correct Van Aukening front bumper guard. The Crestliner sold for \$44,000.

Also selling was a 1954 Buick Special sedan finished in Cascade Blue with a houndstooth interior. The Buick was said to be a one-family-owned car since it left the dealership. It received a comprehensive restoration, down to the 322-cu.in. V-8 and Dynaflo automatic transmission. Outside, it had refurbished bumpers, trim, hubcaps, and special badges. Inside, everything was said to be functional, including the Sonomatic AM radio, all gauges, and the heater/defroster. The Special sold for \$15,950. Visit mecum.com for full results from the Las Vegas Auction.



MECUM



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

Worldwide Auctioneers 2021

This year's Auburn auction saw world records and a \$17.6 million result

WORLDWIDE AUCTIONEERS CONTINUED ITS TRADITION OF HOSTING A Labor Day weekend sale at its dedicated home facility, Kruse Plaza, in Auburn, Indiana. This year's auction, held on September 3-4 to coincide with the storied Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Festival, marked the firm's 14th such sale. The event took place in front of online and in-person bidders, who witnessed 119 lots cross the block. Of these, 31 were Packards consigned from the Fort Lauderdale Antique Car Museum in Florida.

Several vehicles achieved record results at auction. A 1942 Packard Custom Super Eight 180 Convertible Victoria by Darrin

sold for \$885,000, a 1934 De Soto Airflow coupe realized \$190,400, and a 1929 duPont Model G Waterhouse convertible coupe brought in \$720,000. Topping the sales list, though, was a 1938 Bugatti Type 57C Atalante Coupé that reached \$1,765,000, followed by a 1934 Packard Twelve Individual Custom convertible sedan that sold for \$1,435,000. A host of other road-touring automotive legends were offered—a trio of which we present here—and helped Worldwide gross \$17.6 million and achieve a 98-percent sell-through rate. For complete results, visit worldwideauctioneers.com.



1955 PACKARD CARIBBEAN

Reserve: None

Selling Price: \$44,800

Avg. Market Range:

\$66,000 - \$90,000

One of the postwar Packards from the Fort Lauderdale Antique Car Museum was this 1955 Caribbean. Each of the 500 built for that year was a convertible, all finished in eye-catching tri-tone color combinations and powered by a brand-new 352-cu.in. V-8 engine fitted with a pair of four-barrel carburetors that helped bump output to 275 hp. Cost new was \$6,000 (or \$61,000 today), making the Caribbean more exclusive than a top-of-the-line Cadillac. One noteworthy but problematic innovation was the Packard's self-leveling suspension system, reportedly still in place under this example. The car sold for a bargain price.



1958 CHEVROLET CORVETTE

Reserve: Undisclosed

Selling Price: \$121,000

Avg. Market Range:

\$86,000 - \$156,000

Corvettes were well represented at this event, with an even half-dozen examples appearing in Worldwide's catalog, including this 1958 model. Finished in a period appropriate red with white coves, this one boasted a comprehensive restoration that netted the effort a multitude of awards. "Stunning workmanship" was touted in the listing description, which also detailed that the Corvette had been optioned with the 270-hp version (think dual four-barrel carburetors) of the 283-cu.in. engine. Unsurprising, then, that it sold within market range.



1967 AUSTIN-HEALEY 3000 BJ8 MK III

Reserve: None

Selling Price: \$58,800

Avg. Market Range:

\$60,000 - \$116,000

Among the icons of classic British sports cars, the "big Healey" is a favorite, and the famed 3000 sports convertible's final year of 1967 is considered the most desirable. It was the pinnacle of the firm's engineering design, led by a powerful 2,912-cc six-cylinder that was rated at 150 hp. The sprightly Brit hugged the pavement thanks to a well-tuned suspension, while the exposed cabin was superbly elegant. This car was exquisitely restored, the only surprise being that it sold just under the value range.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

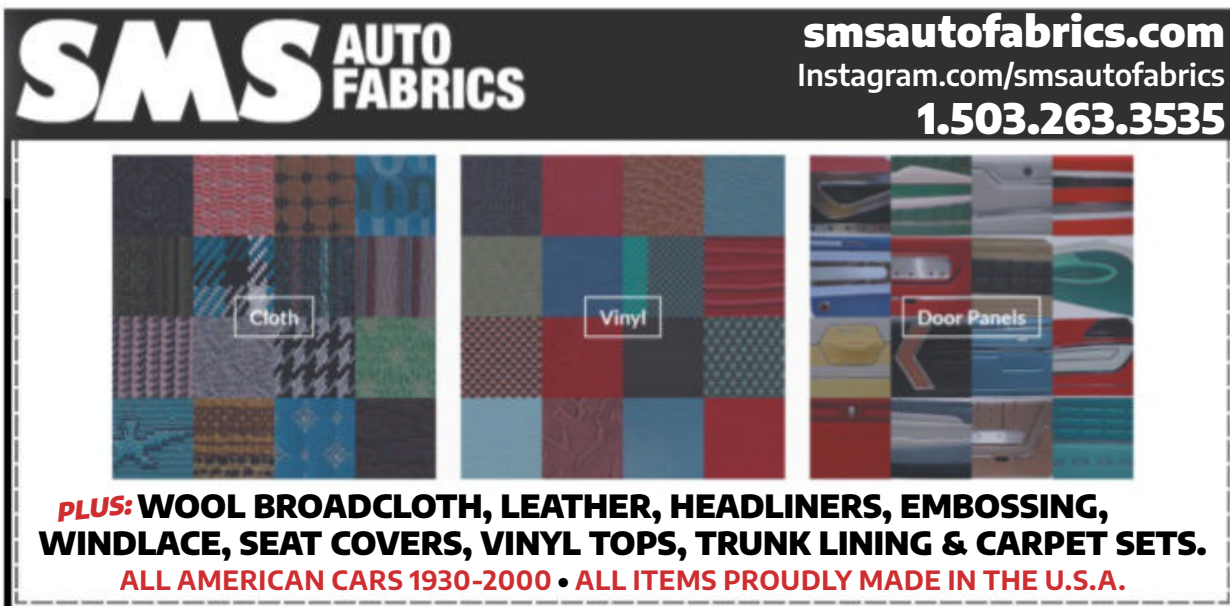
Selling Price: What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer's premium)

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



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HEMMINGS AUCTIONS IS OUR LIVE, ONLINE AUCTION SITE STAFFED BY customer service professionals ready to help bidders and sellers with any questions. A wide variety of classic and specialty vehicles from all eras are up for bid. Auctions run for two weeks, and qualified bidders place their bids electronically. Once a vehicle is accepted into the auction,

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



1954 KAISER DARRIN 161

Reserve: \$99,000

Selling Price: \$102,638*

Recent Market Range:

\$93,110-\$116,450

The first American postwar fiberglass sports car to be shown to the public, the Darrin 161 by Kaiser blended swoopy, deft styling by Howard "Dutch" Darrin with sliding doors, a landau-style folding top, a 161-cu.in. straight-six engine, and a three-speed manual transmission with overdrive. Just 435 were built, and fewer than 300 are thought to remain. This Yellow Satin example, restored some 20 years ago, presented well, with some flaking paint and minor upholstery wear noted in the interior. The driveline was said to operate without issue, and the chassis was tidy, with tires of an unknown vintage. More than 20,000 views and a solid post-auction sale proved the popularity of this unusual two-seater.



1941 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

Reserve: \$30,000

Selling Price: \$36,750

Recent Market Range:

\$28,250-\$43,430

Edsel Ford's aesthetic genius was on display in his "continental-styled" personal luxury Lincoln, which became a production model and established an enduring nameplate for the brand. This coupe enjoyed a six-figure, body-off restoration some 10 years ago, and in the time since, has won numerous awards and been driven around 500 miles. The 120-hp, 292-cu.in. V-12 was said to run without issue, but the overdrive-equipped transmission had a leak and required attention. Also noted were an inoperative radio and heater, although the Continental's cosmetics appeared to be of concours-quality inside, outside, and underneath. Late bidding activity led to five time extensions, concluding with a result that was good for both seller and buyer.



1986 JEEP CJ-7

Reserve: None

Selling Price: \$43,050

Recent Market Range:

\$33,420-\$51,550

A member of the no-reserve Gary Gray Collection, this final-year CJ-7 Laredo was a stunner with fewer than 4,400 miles on its odometer from new. It was said to have never gone off-road, and its clean undercarriage backed up that claim. This 4x4 was well equipped with the 258-cu.in. straight-six and Torqueflite automatic, factory A/C, a roll cage, and a winch. Its cosmetics appeared factory fresh, from the red paint to the black vinyl interior protected under sheepskin seat covers. Aftermarket alloy wheels wore modern tires, and a newer CD stereo was fitted. The original window sticker showed an MSRP of \$14,172; in today's dollars, that's \$35,130, a figure this Jeep's sale handily surpassed.

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



1959 STUDEBAKER SILVER HAWK

Reserve: \$20,500

Selling Price: \$23,625

Recent Market Range:

\$21,150-\$32,250

A Silver Hawk is a rare sight by any measure, so the odds of finding a customized one that was subjected to a \$33,000 rotisserie restoration are slim... yet that's what this car represented. It had a 180-hp, 259-cu.in. V-8 and three-speed automatic under the long hood, the mechanicals all rebuilt and promised to work without issue. This two-door's cosmetics appeared top-notch, and its trimmed tailfins—said to have been done by the factory at the original purchaser's request—gave it a nicely balanced look. Like the metallic blue paint, the gray vinyl seat covers and carpets appeared quite fresh. A non-functional tachometer, its wiring disconnected, was noted, though. The Hawk was a fine, fair buy.



1940 PACKARD 160

Reserve: \$56,000

Selling Price: \$66,150

Recent Market Range: \$53,250-\$78,120

It's easy to imagine an A-list Hollywood movie star behind the wheel of this Miami Sand-painted Packard Model 1803, aka the 160 Convertible Coupe. This CCA-designated Full Classic was refreshed by a series of owners and was complete, save for the rewiring and reinstallation of its transmission overdrive unit. The clean 356-cu.in. straight-eight was said to have been rebuilt and ran well, but a shock absorber linkage was missing, and the tires were of indeterminate age. The paint was promised in very good shape, and the seals and chrome presented as nicely as the leather interior. Bidders relished the idea of getting this Packard back to 100-percent, and it enjoyed a healthy sale.



1966 FORD FAIRLANE 500

Reserve: \$30,000

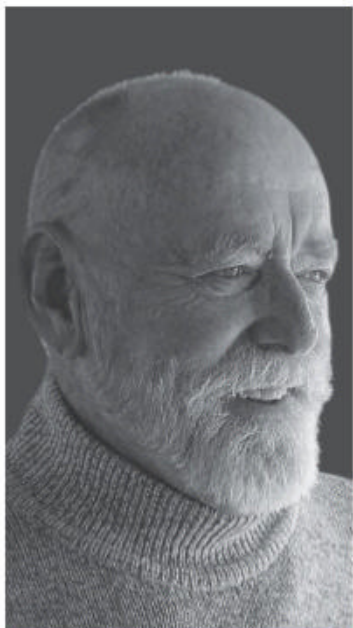
Selling Price: \$36,593

Recent Market Range: \$22,500-\$34,550

Up to the conclusion of its auction, this Fairlane 500 remained the property of its sole owner. She demonstrated the soft-top Ford's easy cold-start performance in a video, one of three that showed the fine shape it remained in since its 1999 restoration that saw it retrofitted with Ford A/C and power steering. The 289 V-8 received an overbore and four-barrel carburetor, and it was noted to have a drip at the rear main seal. The three-speed automatic and four-wheel drum brakes worked without issue, and the paint and interior presented very nicely, being basecoat/clearcoat outside, with lots of NOS and proper reproduction parts inside. Bidders really responded, and this car now has its second caretaker.

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So, You Want to Restore a British Classic?

You've acquired a vintage 1963 Morris Minor, but it needs work, and you want to get started. You've worked on a lot of cars, but this is your first from the United Kingdom. Maybe I can help. I have been in your shoes a couple of times, and I learned some things the hard way. Perhaps I can spare you the confusion resulting from the strange terminology and help you avoid stripping threads and resorting to foul language.

Let's begin with the terms you will find in the driver's manual you found in the glove box. They can be confusing. For example, what we call the hood is dubbed the bonnet by the Brits, and what we call the trunk is actually the boot over there. Also, the windshield is the windscreen. A fender is a wing in the U.K. but a guard (short for mudguard) in Australia and New Zealand. Also, a sedan is called a saloon, though you are not allowed to drink in it while driving.

To get more technical, a propellor shaft is a driveshaft, hydraulic dampers are shock absorbers, and cotter pins are split pins. Also, the wrist pins in the connecting rods are called gudgeon pins, and what we call a generator is a dynamo in British parlance. The oil pan is the sump, and a wrench is a spanner, in case you didn't know.

And then there are British measurements. When you spot the gas mileage touted in your driver's manual, you will no doubt be delighted by how economical your little car is—until you realize that numbers refer to *imperial* gallons, which are more generous than U.S. gallons. An imperial gallon is 160 fluid ounces, whereas the U.S. gallon is a mere 128. And incidentally, what we call gasoline is petrol in old Albion. Also, a quart is 40 *imperial* ounces, whereas an U.S. quart is a scant 32 *U.S.* ounces. So, to make things easy when refilling your engine, just pour in oil until the dipstick reads full.

But the biggest challenge when restoring British cars is with the fasteners used to put them together. We use SAE fasteners in our classics, but the British used Whitworth, or British Standard Whitworth (BSW), British Standard Fine (BSF), Unified National Coarse, and Unified National Fine nuts and bolts, until they went to metric recently. Whitworth and other British fasteners use a different thread pitch than our SAE types,

so our screws and bolts won't work in old British cars. Also, Whitworth wrenches are labeled according to the diameter of the *bolt*, and not according to bolt *head size* as with SAE. Your SAE wrenches will not be correct when working on a vintage British machine.

There are sites on the internet and ads in the pages of *Hemmings Motor News* that sell Whitworth socket and wrench sets, but they can be a bit pricey. If you are only doing something minor, you can get away with using an SAE wrench that is slightly too large, and then wedging a screwdriver in beside it; however, if you are going to be doing any serious mechanical work, you will need Whitworth spanners.

So, what do you do if you damage, or have to drill out, a fastener? There are two possibilities. One is that you acquire Whitworth replacements, or secondly, you can drill out the original threads and tap in new ones with SAE or metric threads. I didn't have to resort to such measures because I was fortunate enough to find an old wrecking yard with lots of British cars in it, and the owner didn't mind if I took things apart and handed him the components in exchange for the fasteners. However, you may not be so lucky. In that case, if you want correct fasteners, the internet or *Hemmings Motor News* can help.

At this point you may ask: "Why did the Brits have to be different?" But actually, we are the ones who are different. You see, the first standardized screw threads in the world were specified by Sir Joseph Whitworth—an Englishman—in 1841, and that became the basis for the more modern variations such as BSW, BSF, and so on.

Finally, I would say join the club for your marque, take your time, and be patient. Also, don't fret about the admonitions concerning British cars that claim they overheat and leak oil. Both are true, but you can remedy oil leak problems by checking the machining on the engine while you have it down, and you can prevent overheating by cleaning the cooling system, changing the coolant, and using a new correct pressure cap. British cooling systems work well in most circumstances, but in Las Vegas in the summer, they need to be at their best. Restoring a British car is not all tea and crumpets, but the final result is most often well worth the effort. Cheers for now. 🍷



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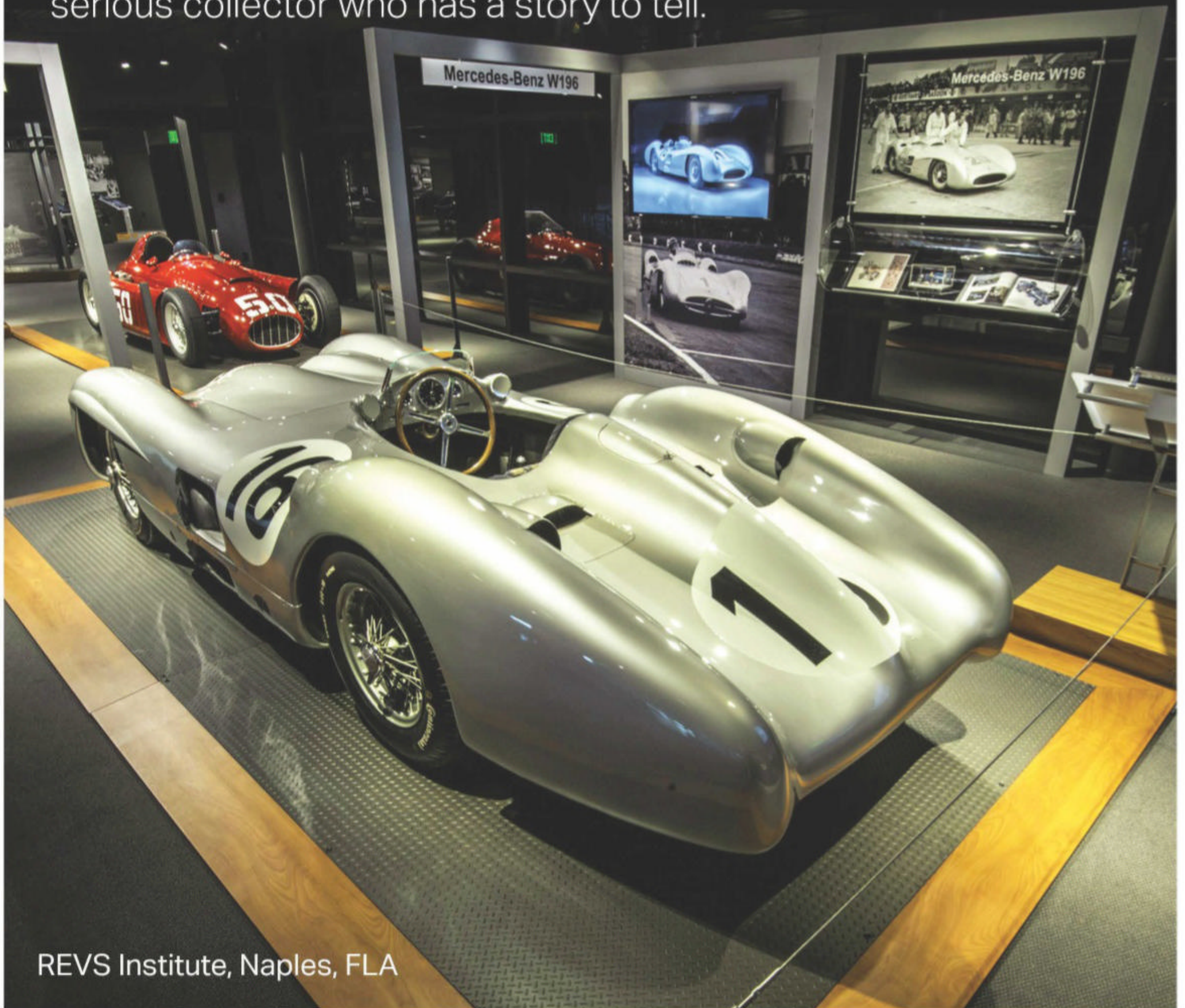
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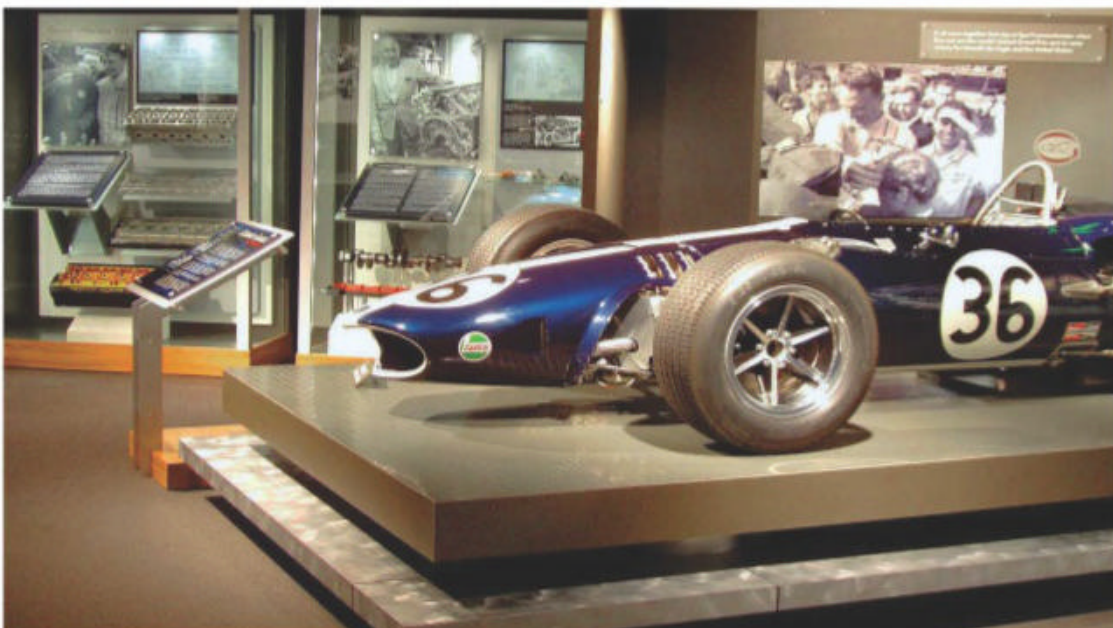


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