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AMERICA'S DEFINITIVE COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

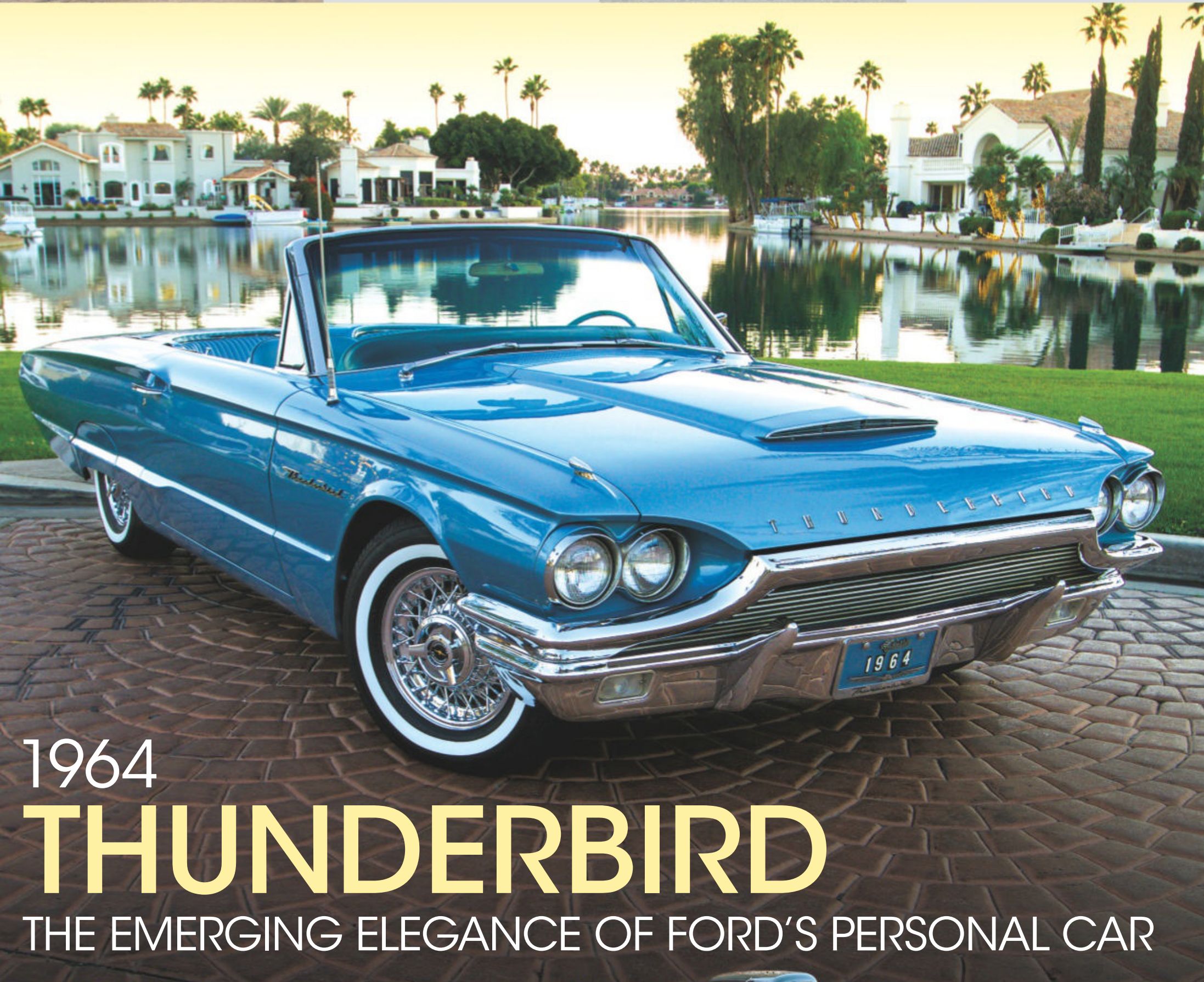
APRIL 2022 #211



TEACHER'S PET
1972 PONTIAC
LE MANS SPORT



MASTERPIECE
1952 CISITALIA
202D COMPETIZIONE



1964

THUNDERBIRD

THE EMERGING ELEGANCE OF FORD'S PERSONAL CAR



HEIRLOOM
1961 FORD
GALAXIE STARLINER



RESTORATION
1937 CHEVROLET
1/2-TON PICKUP



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est 1954

HAGERTY
Drivers Club



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SATURDAY, JUNE 18

START: Rocky Point State Park, Warwick, RI - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

OVERNIGHT: New England Air Museum, Windsor Locks, CT - 4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 19

LUNCH: Clinton Street, downtown Montgomery, NY - 12:15 p.m.

OVERNIGHT: Court Street, downtown Binghamton, NY - 5 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 20

LUNCH: Alfred State College, Wellsville, NY - 12:15 p.m.

OVERNIGHT: Perry Square Park, downtown Erie, PA - 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21

LUNCH: Uptown Park, downtown Medina, OH - noon

OVERNIGHT: Louisiana Avenue, downtown Perrysburg, OH - 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22

LUNCH: Studebaker National Museum, South Bend, IN - noon

OVERNIGHT: Lockport Street, downtown Plainfield, IL - 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23

LUNCH: Angell Park Speedway, Sun Prairie, WI - 11:45 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI - 2:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

LUNCH: North Bridge Street, downtown Chippewa Falls, WI - noon

OVERNIGHT: Bayfront Festival Park, Duluth, MN - 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Brainerd International Raceway, Brainerd, MN - 11:45 a.m.

OVERNIGHT: West Lake Drive, Detroit Lakes, MN - 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

FINISH: Broadway Drive, Historic Fargo Theater, Fargo, ND - 1 p.m.

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Party of Lincoln

LINCOLNS OF ALL ERAS ARE ENCOURAGED TO VISIT PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, this May to be a part of the Lincoln & Continental Owner's Club Western National Meet. It will take place at the Desert Princess Country Club and Golf Course, and the five-day event will be centered on the Double Tree Hotel next to the country club. In addition to the car show, there will be technical seminars with "The Lincoln Whisperer," noted expert John Kiszla, ready to divulge tips and secrets to make your Lincoln perform its best. Convertible tops, A/C systems, and general repairs are on the agenda, as is a Q&A session. Tours are being planned to show off some of the area's private collections and houses of the stars, and there will also be a silent auction and party displaying cars from the area. For those who enjoy nature, there are many hiking trails and canyons nearby and the famous Pioneertown is only a short drive away. Of course, Lincolns and Lincoln themes will tie the week together. The gathering will take place May 4-8 and the itinerary is currently being finalized, so be sure to visit lcoc.org for the latest details.

APRIL

3 • Sumter Swap Meets

Bushnell, Florida
727-848-7171 • floridaswapmeets.com

7-10 • Charlotte AutoFair

Concord, North Carolina
704-841-1990 • charlotte-autofair.com

8-10 • Lincoln & Continental Owner's Club

Tri-Regional Show • La Grange, Texas
713-465-3603 • elforbes07@gmail.com

20-24 • Spring Carlisle

Carlisle, Pennsylvania
717-243-7855 • carlisleevents.com

22-24 • Spring Jefferson Auto Swap Meet

& Car Show • Jefferson, Wisconsin
608-244-8416 • madisonclassics.com

28-30 • Pate Swap Meet

Fort Worth, Texas
713-649-0922 • pateswapmeet.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.

Bugatti and 300 SL Gullwing to be Spotlighted at La Jolla



THE LA JOLLA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE HAS ANNOUNCED THE CLASSES for its 16th annual celebration. Bugatti will be the featured marque and the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL "gullwing" will have a special display. The weekend of events starts off with a free "Ferrari Friday" event, followed up by the tour d'elegance around the San Diego area on Saturday and the concours d'elegance taking place Sunday. More than 150 cars will be showcased, covering all eras and types.

The show will take place April 22-24, and online vehicle display applications are currently being accepted. Tickets are on sale now with discounts available, but pricing will increase as the show approaches. For more information, visit lajollaconcours.com.

The Muppets Take South Bend



THE STUDEBAKER NATIONAL MUSEUM

announced a GoFundMe campaign to restore its 1951 Studebaker Commander "Muppet Car." The hope is to bring the Commander back to its original cinematic condition, as it appeared in the 1979 feature *The Muppet Movie*. In the film, the car took Kermit the Frog and Fozzie Bear on a cross-country adventure, but when the production ended, the Commander sat parked on the Warner Brothers backlot. In 2004, it made its way to the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend, Indiana, where it was gifted to the facility by members of the Studebaker's Drivers Club's Orange Empire Chapter, in care of Richard and Phyllis Holcomb.

To match its on-screen appearance, the Commander will be refinished in its custom paint scheme, and it will be driveable. Special-effects modifications, needed to show the Muppets driving the car, will also be carried out. The goal for the project is to raise \$175,000; visit Studebakermuseum.org for more about the fundraiser.



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SCAN ME

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Southern Comfort

Recently, I came across several videos online showing collections of vintage cars languishing in Texas fields that were being parsed off. In each case, these troves represented years of gathering, some that seemed intended to save the vehicles for later restoration and some that were essentially auto graveyards, aimed at salvaging parts. The degree to which the cars had deteriorated varied but given the age of so many of them – from the early '70s, back to the '20s in some cases – I was astounded to see so much vintage steel still intact.

Much of what was being sold off or scrapped in those Texas hoards would likely be considered junk by the average person, but to many enthusiasts – particularly those of us from the rust belt – this was like discovering lost treasure. To the untrained eye, there was plenty of rust to be seen in those derelict hulks, but really, much of it was superficial. The corrosion was nothing like the heavy rot that claimed the majority of their brethren years ago, in damp, cold places where annual applications of road salt caused the kind of decay that led to the cars' demise. That process has long been a foregone conclusion of daily driven vehicles up here, but those decades-old Texas cars had escaped.

That perseverance still fascinates me, even after having lived in Southern California for a time some years ago. It was my upbringing in New York that conditioned me to expect the worst from ferrous materials. Rust and rot have long been standard elements of messing with older cars in the Northeast, and the anticipation of damaged body panels, floorpans, trunks, and even frame sections, gets ingrained in those of us accustomed to finding it. It's a sort of dread that lurks deep in the mind whenever approaching an aged vehicle, shading the glee that normally accompanies finding some neat old machine.

In my teens, my friends and I were captivated by the models of the muscle car era, which, by the mid-'80s, were almost always full of holes, save for the examples that had been babied from new, and we couldn't afford those. Once, a kid I went to high school with showed up with a '72 Chevelle that hadn't a hint of rot, nor evidence of any body repairs – it had come from down South. I recall marveling at the contours of the lower quarter panel, since all the ones I'd seen before had been rotted away or were constructed from filler. Even then, I was so conditioned to expect the worst that I could hardly believe what I was seeing.

So, it was flatly amazing to me when I got to travel out West for the first time in my mid 20s. By then it was the '90s, and the cars I admired had only gotten older. Yet here were countless examples, still roaming the boulevards, with nary a hint of weathering to be found, save for some sun fading. Locals complained of baked dash pads and weather stripping that would turn to dust, but I'd happily deal with that over rust any day.

Later I'd get to join those folks as a resident of SoCal, reveling in rust-free rides and still getting giddy every time a factory-installed bolt would willingly release without a fight in the local pick-and-pull junkyards. It was a sort of heaven for an old-car geek.

Now, of course, living in Vermont, I see the ravages of winter and the salty slop that exists on the roads here for even more days out of the year than what I had been used to as a teen, a few hours south of here. Most cars from the '80s on back that still exist in these parts are the ones that have been sheltered from winter use or restored to a former state... and then sheltered from further winter use. That's essentially mandatory if you want to keep something older in good shape.

As I write this, the doldrums of January are upon us, and the roads are awash in a briney mess once again, the scars evident across the body panels of all the 10-year-old pickups out doing their chores. Meanwhile, the interesting old cars and trucks are safely stashed away. Just about every year at this time, I harbor thoughts of finding some sort of elder machine to drive around in the cold to provide entertainment during the gray days and maintain a connection with the vintage motoring experience. But I just can't bring myself to subject something that's endured for more than 30 years to the same corrosive fate – even beaters from back then seem like they've earned the right to some relief.

But seeing the footage of all that vintage tin down in Texas left me with some strange semblance of optimism: They're still out there. Decades-old cars and trucks, in dire need of restoration, but not too far gone to bring back. I'm not heading south for any new projects right now, but just knowing that stuff exists warms my heart a touch during these dark, dank days of another Northern winter. 🐾

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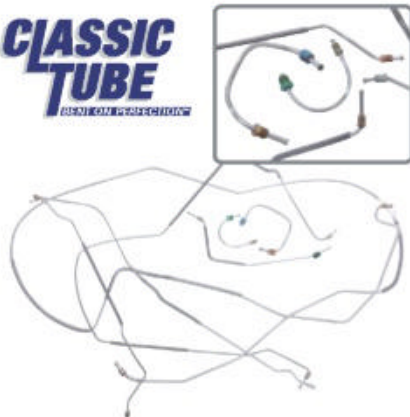


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2022 South African Krugerrand: The Krugerrand continues to be the best-known, most respected numismatic coin brand in the world. 2022 is the 5th anniversary of the first silver Krugerrand. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the South African Mint.

2022 China Silver Panda: Since its first issue, the China Panda coin series has been one of the most widely collected series ever, highlighted by one-year-only designs. This 2022 Panda features its first-ever privy mark honoring the coin's 40th anniversary. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the China Mint.

2022 Australia Wedge Tailed Eagle: Introduced in 2014, the Wedge-Tailed Eagle is the first-ever collaboration between U.S. Mint designer John Mercanti and a foreign mint. With a new design for 2022, it's struck in 99.9% fine silver at the Perth Mint.

2022 Canada Maple Leaf: Since 1988, the Silver Maple Leaf's elegant design has made it a highly sought-after bullion coin. The 2022 coin features anti-counterfeit security technology—radial lines and a microengraved maple leaf with the number “22”. Struck in 99.99% fine silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.

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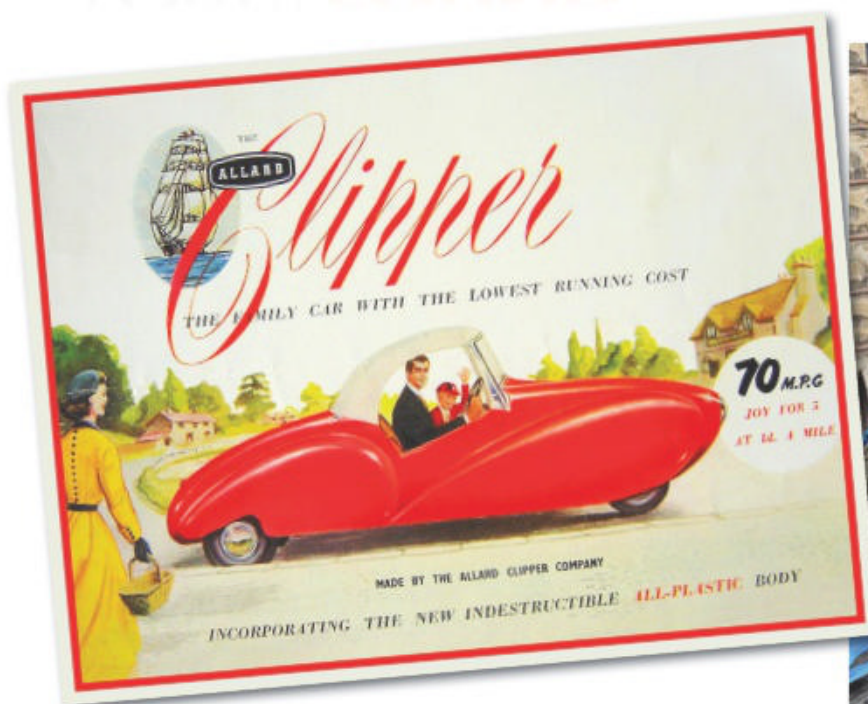
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Clipper Found

AS BEST AS FIBERGLASS-CAR EXPERT GEOFF HACKER CAN FIGURE, THE ALLARD CLIPPER BECAME THE FIRST BRITISH FIBERGLASS-BODIED production car when it debuted in 1954. It also may very well be the last production car offered with a dickey seat (aka rumble seat). It's also the least likely vehicle to bear the famed Allard name and certainly the most poorly received, two prime reasons why the example that Hacker recently unearthed and intends to restore is one of only three known survivors of the odd little three-wheeler.

Based on a design by David Gottlieb and using fiberglass bodies produced by aircraft engineering company Hordern-Richmond, the three-wheeled Allard roadster, with a removable hardtop, used a 346-cc Villiers twin driving one of the 8-inch wheels, with compressed rubber blocks for a suspension. Allard employees did some design work on the chassis, but development of both chassis and body dragged on, leading Allard to cancel the project in 1955 after just 20 cars had been built.

Of those 20 Clippers, two went directly to the United States, but both of those appear lost to time. Instead, the Clipper that Hacker recently bought had been imported by a Pittsburgh collector about 10 years ago, but never restored. Only two other Clippers are known to exist: one in Germany, and one in the Hammond microcar collection in England.

Santa's Rocket Ship

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS TALES HAVE SANTA PILOTING A magical flying sleigh. The Beach Boys envisioned him in a souped-up candy-apple-red hot rod. Chuck Berry thought Santa could get there faster by taking the freeway down. But Lloyd Laster of Tyler, Texas, had an altogether different idea of how Santa Claus got around: rockets.

In the Fifties, rockets and jets captured everybody's fascination, so Laster capitalized on the trend with the first Santa's Rocket Ship, a commercial bus of unknown origin — possibly a Flxible — rebodied in aluminum with a pair of warp nacelles up top, a set of token skis at each skirted wheel, and rows of North Pole portholes for windows. His scheme called for hiring a guy in a Santa suit, a couple of leggy elves, and a driver, then charging shopping centers around the South and Southwest to show up and give kids the chance to take a ride with the jolly old elf.

Laster really committed to it and found that it paid off, up to \$2,000 per day, so he built three more Santa's Rocket Ships as well as Santa's Rocket Sleigh, Santa's Space Sleigh, and Santa's Super Rocket.

These days, Santa's Rocket Ship resides fairly close to the North Pole — at Mukluk Land in Tok, Alaska — and Santa's Super Rocket apparently still exists somewhere in Wisconsin. Where the rest of the fleet ended up, nobody seems to know.



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.

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165HR14 CA67 PIRELLI CINTURATO radial alternative to 560x14 and 590x14 - \$179

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185/70VR14 CN36 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$169

Alfa Romeo Spider, Alfetta, Giulia, GT Junior, GTV; Audi 100; Austin Princess; MGB; Lancia Gamma; Opel Rekord; Volvo 244; Vauxhall VX4; Ventora & Victor.

155HR15 CA67 PIRELLI CINTURATO radial alternative to 550x15 and 560x15 - \$219

MGA, MG TF, MGTD, TR2's TR3's; Peugeot 403 and 404. VW Beetle; Morgan; Porsche 914; Saab 99; Alfa Romeo Giulietta, Duetto, Giulia (pre 1969), Lancia Flavia, Appia, Lotus Elite.

165HR15 CA67 & 165/80VR15 CN36 N4 radial alternative to 560x15 and 590x15 - \$229

Alfa Romeo Giulietta Giardinetta, Austin Healey 100/4, 100/6 & 3000; Daimler Sp 250; Fiat 2300 Coupe; Gilbern; Lancia Flavia; MGA, MGC, MG T, MG YB & Midget; Morgan 4/4 & Plus 4; Morris Oxford Traveller; Peugeot 403 & 404; Porsche 356, 912, 914 & 911; Triumph TR4, TR5 & TR6; TVR Vixen & Tuscan; VW Beetle, 1600, K70, 411 & Karmann Ghia; Volvo P1800 & Amazon.

185VR15 CA67 PIRELLI CINTURATO radial alternative to 640x15 and 670x15 - \$349

Aston Martin DB4 after 1962, DB5 & early DB6, Jaguar Series 1 & 2 E-Type and MK1 & MK2 Jaguar Saloons, Daimler V8 saloon. Mercedes 220D, BMW 2600, 3200, Citroen ID and DS. Ferrari 250 GT, 250GTE; Morgan +8; Alvis 3 litre & TE21 51 - 68.

185/70WR15 CN36 N4 PIRELLI CINTURATO low profile alternative to 165R15 - \$329

Austin Healey 100/4, 100/6 & 3000; MGC; Porsche 911, 924, 914 & 944; Triumph TR4, TR5, TR6; Volvo P1800.

215/60WR15 CN36 N4 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$459

Rear Porsche 911, 911 Carrera RS 2.7, 911 Carrera 3L, 911SC, 911E, 911L, 911S, 911T, 911 Targa, 911 Cabriolet.

205VR15 CN72 PIRELLI CINTURATO radial alternative to 670x15, 760x15 and 815x15 - \$474

AC 428, Aston Martin DB6 MK2 & DBS; Bentley T1; Bristol 410, 411 & 412; Ferrari 330 America, 330GT 2+2, 500 Superfast, 365 GT 2+2 & 365 California; ISO Rivolta, Griffo & Fidia; Lamborghini 350GT, 400GT, Islero, Espada & Miura; Maserati 5000GT, 4200 Quattroporte, Mistral, Mexico, Ghibli & Sebring; Rolls Royce Silver Shadow 1.

205/70VR15 CN12 PIRELLI CINTURATO low profile alternative to 185R15 - \$319

AC Cobra; Aston Martin DB4, DB5, DB6; Citroen SM; Daimler Sovereign, Double Six; Ferrari 250; GT40; Jaguar XJ6, XJ12, XJS, E-type; Jensen Interceptor; Morgan +8.

215/70VR15 CN12 PIRELLI CINTURATO low profile alternative to 205R15 - \$399

Double Six; Daimler Ferrari 365GT 2+2, 365GT4 BB 365GT/4 Daytona, 365GTC, 400GT; De Tomaso Deauville, Longchamp 2+2; Jaguar XJ12 HE, XJS HE; Jensen Interceptor 3; Lamborghini Miura, Espada, Islero, Jarama; Maserati Ghibli, Khamsin, Quattroporte, Mexico, Mistral, Sebring.

255/60WR15 CN12 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$499

Lamborghini Miura SV rear, Aston Martin Vantage '79-'84, AC Cobra, GT40.

165HR400 CA67 PIRELLI CINTURATO radial tire (175HR400 ALSO AVAILABLE) - \$229/299

Alfa Romeo 1900, 2000, 2600, Lancia Aurelia, Flaminia, Citroen DS, ID19, Traction Avant, Ford Verdetta & Siata 208.

185VR16 CA67 PIRELLI CINTURATO / 600x16 "STELLA BIANCA" - \$369/\$279

Aston Martin DB2, DB2/4, DB4, DB4 GT Zagato; Jaguar XK120, XK140, XK150, Jaguar C-type. BMW 250, 375. Bristol's 400, 401, 403, 405, 406, 407, 408 & 409; Triumph Gloria and Renown; Pegaso; Riley RM series and Pathfinder; Jensen 541. Daimler DB18. Maserati A6, 300/s, Maserati 3500 GT, Maserati Mistral; Fiat 8V; Ferrari 250 Europa, 250 Tour de France, 340, 375, 410, 250GT Cabriolet S1, 250 GT Ellena, 250 PF Coupe, 250 GT California, Alvis TA14, TB14.

205/50YR15 P7 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$319

Porsche 911 Turbo pre '76, Dodge Shadow Shelby CSX's, Dodge Omni GLHS.

225/50YR15 P7 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$359

Porsche 928 '78 - '82, Porsche 911 Turbo pre '76.

185/70VR13 CN36 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$169

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205/70WR14 CN36 PIRELLI CINTURATO - \$279

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I ENJOYED THE 1969 MERCURY

Cougar article in the December 2021 issue (*HCC* #207). The mention in the piece of the optional CJ (Cobra Jet) 428 engine brought to mind a car about which I have mixed emotions even now, some 52 years after I first laid eyes on it.

In the spring of 1969, while having my 1967 English Ford Cortina GT serviced at Northside Lincoln-Mercury in Minneapolis, I wandered into the showroom to kill a little time. There, among the various 1969 Mercury and Lincoln models, was a 1968 Cougar XR-7 finished in what the window sticker called Lime Frost Poly. First off, it seemed strange to see what was obviously a new 1968 automobile on the dealership floor in April, 1969. But what really caught my eye was a big black air scoop in the middle of the Cougar's hood. Taking another look at that window sticker, I saw, among the listed options, "428 CID 4V COBRA JET 8 CYL ENG." I had read about the Cobra Jet V-8 that Ford had put in the Mustang, starting in the spring of 1968, and that it produced 335 horsepower at 5,600 rpm (what it produced at the car's 6,000 rpm redline was more like 400-plus hp, but Ford didn't want insurance agents to get their undies in a bunch, so...).

What I couldn't figure out was what this brand-new 1968 XR-7 with the monster motor was doing on a dealer's show floor in April 1969. And what about that identical XR-7, in Fawn Beige, being prepped in one of the dealership's service bays? In speaking to a salesman, I learned that it was his understanding that Ford had built less than 100 CJ 428-engined Cougar XR-7s late in the 1968 model year, and these two were among those unsold that year. Both cars, in addition to that big honkin' engine, had functional hood scoops and thus were CJ Ram Air V-8s. Well, Mr. Lime Frost won me over, and I plunked down just north of \$3,400 to make it mine.

Then, to make it even *more* mine, I ordered the 1969 Cougar Eliminator chin spoiler and rear wing through Northside's parts department. The wing took some fancy measurement and precise drilling to get properly positioned on the Cougar's trunk lid (which would no longer counterbalance when opened, due to the extra weight of the wing), but the chin spoiler bolted right up through existing holes in the front pan. I drove that heavy hitter from April through September of 1969

but sold it in October. I had spent nearly every evening that summer tooling up and down Lake Street in South Minneapolis, dragging anyone who was interested (and many were), but became afraid I'd kill myself or, worse, someone else in one of these impromptu races. The only reason for the existence of a vehicle like the Cougar CJ, as with most of the so-called muscle cars of the era, was to go fast in a straight line, and boy, did it. It's my recollection that one of the contemporary car mags reported a 0-60 mph sprint in 5.4 seconds and 13.9 in the quarter-mile (at 101 mph) in testing a '69 CJ-equipped Eliminator. Not too shabby, even today.

Do I wish I still had it? Absolutely, now that I possess, at age 77, some measure of common sense that was obviously lacking when I was 25. But I'll never forget that dang Cat, and often wonder if it somehow survived subsequent ownership. Anyone seen a '68 lime-green Cougar with a big, black hood scoop? Here, kitty-kitty....

Phil Teslow

Marine-on-St. Croix, Minnesota



ENCOUNTERING A TRABANT AT A

local car show, Jim Richardson asks in *HCC* #209, "Why would anyone import one of these things halfway around the world?" He could ask my father-in-law that same question. Visiting friends in Eastern Germany soon after reunification, my father-in-law couldn't help but notice countless quantities of these odd little cars. Many were simply abandoned and tossed aside, as [former] East Germans flocked to purchase cars from [the former] West Germany. The Trabant was the communist answer to every-household car ownership common in the capitalist world, but it was a poor and even embarrassing substitute. My father-in-law asked his friend to find him a Trabant

and ship it to the United States. In 1996, when the car arrived in Houston, he hitched up his trailer, drove to Texas and brought the 1965 Trabi to its new home in Kansas. He occasionally drives it locally and takes it to car shows. Responses range from fascination, to amusement, to astonishment, to bewilderment. In looks, sound, and smell, his Trabi reminds me of the old Lawnboy push mowers; I kid him that it only needs a push handle. My in-laws, Jim and Doris Yoder, are shown [below left] with their Trabi.

Jim Richardson answers his own question in relating the daring escape story behind the Trabant at the local car show. We all get it. Our attachment to a car goes beyond practicality and rationality. Cars drive us straight into our memories, our emotions, our relationships. They take us on a journey down the road to a different time of life and remind us of who we are. *Hemmings Classic Car* magazine gets that.

Randy Smith

North Newton, Kansas

I ALWAYS GRAVITATE TO ARTICLES

of human interest involving cars, and Jim Richardson's column ("A Journey to Remember," *HCC* #209), about the escape from Hungary to Austria, was of particular interest. His observation that Trabis were the only DDR cars available in East Germany omitted the fact that its competitor was the Wartburg, which was manufactured in Eisenach, just inside the DDR border with West Germany. The Wartburg, named after a local castle, was a larger car, also powered by a two-stroke but with three cylinders. A trip to visit friends in Eastern Germany after reunification found us at the local McDonalds one evening, where there was a Trabi race around the parking lot. As they say, you had to be there.

Thanks for a great publication, which I keenly look forward to receiving each month. Keep up the exemplary work.

Phil van Leeuwen

Lawrenceville, New Jersey

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ABOUT THE

1972 Chrysler New Yorker in the most recent edition (*HCC* #209). I immediately thought about Harry Truman's last car [above right], a 1972 Chrysler Newport with about 19,000 miles, which is still housed at his home in Independence, Missouri. When we visited there a couple



of years ago, I practically begged the park ranger to open the garage so I could see it closer, but no luck. Apparently, it only comes out on special occasions.

Truman was a loyal Chrysler fan and owned many both before and after his presidency. If you haven't read the book, *Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure*, you should. It details a 2,500-mile trip that the Trumans took in their new 1953 Chrysler New Yorker several months after leaving the White House.

It's hard to imagine a former president today driving himself on a trip across the country, or one owning a mid-range Chrysler as his only car! Maybe a series of articles on (pre or post) presidential cars would be of interest to others besides me.

Thanks for a great magazine that I look forward to every month!

Greg Stock
Champaign, Illinois

I WAS THRILLED TO SEE THE ARTICLE

about Holley's Sniper electronic fuel injection system for Ford's 144-/170-/200-cu.in. six-cylinder engines in HCC #208 ("EFI for a Vintage Six"). I am restoring my wife's 1960 Ford Falcon with the 144 engine that she received as a present from her parents when she graduated from high school in 1960. EFI is an interesting upgrade that I could easily include in my restoration. The article also mentioned the Pertronix electronic ignition system that I have been considering. In the mid 1960s,

one of my coworkers came across a how-to article for building a capacitive discharge electronic ignition system. Several of us built them, making our own circuit boards and hand winding the required toroid transformers. The units worked very well in providing hotter sparks for our ignitions. However, with the stock coils, the energy supplied to the spark plugs created a problem with the stock ignition wires: Instead of firing the plugs, the spark went down the side of the plugs. When I obtained a wire set with better boots, the problem was solved. After that, the system worked flawlessly, eliminating the problem of ignition breaker-point wear. When I built my system, I included a switch so I could change to the original ignition system if the electronic ignition failed. It never did.

Thank you for an awesome publication. I look forward to each issue.
Duane Sjoberg
Bountiful, Utah



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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Four-Season Dream

Current situation: It's winter. There's no need to explain ground level conditions in detail, since the six-letter word does justice. Traditionally, that means most of the vintage vehicles calling the Northeastern U.S. home – including my Buicks – are hibernating more soundly than black bears, garter snakes, and swimwear.

On the comparatively few dry and “warmer” days – if you consider the thermometer nudging 30 degrees warm – an old ride might occasionally be seen floating across the pavement, driven by the type of owner who bucks the notion that old cars can only emerge on cloudless, sunny summer days.

While many balk at the idea of a vintage steed being used as a frequent all-season driver, I admit the concept had me reconsidering the status of my garage inhabitants, and not for the first time. I had come close to becoming a card-carrying member of the all-season driver club previously, but I haven't quite pulled the trigger yet. Could I really allow myself to jump into one of my sedans on a brisk day and joyride through the snow-covered mountain valleys of southwestern Vermont? The answer may not be that cut-and-dried for my *current* stable, but what if I *added* another to the fleet for such a purpose?

Seeing as this was a hypothetical scenario playing out in my mind while hunkered in with a glass of warming winter spirits, scanning the Hemmings classifieds online, I was plagued by a series of dizzying questions. Should it be a relatively popular make/model I've long coveted, or something that flies under the radar? Two doors, or four? Station wagon or truck? Fixed roof, or convertible? Clearly, a pros and cons, point-based system was needed, and the math – in my mind – needed to equal “practical.” Which could be loosely interpreted on many levels by like-minded enthusiasts afflicted with Dream Garage Syndrome.

I started with the obvious: Hot, postwar factory performance cars were off the list from the start. Prewar cars are still elegant creations to me, so I couldn't justify adding one to my garage just for the sake of year-round excursions. The same applied to anything that had even remote ties to the few postwar Full Classics – think top-of-the-line

Cadillacs, Chryslers, and Lincolns. Also nixed were “iconic” Fifties cars. In other words, almost everything from that epoch.

Despite these cuts, a bevy of cars from the Sixties, Seventies, and dare I say it, Eighties remained, but the herd still needed thinning. A host of slightly more pedestrian but still widely popular Chevys and Fords couldn't make the cut, including an array of Impalas, Chevelles, Mustangs, and Torinos. Station wagons have long held a special place in my heart, no matter the make, and even though I've wanted a variety of convertibles, driving in a double layer of parkas with an electric blanket wrapped around my legs just to get “the wind in my hair” seemed as crazy as diving into icy lake waters on New Year's Day.

What's left but sedans and coupes that are still full of character, but get comparatively little love from collectors? Cars that rekindle fond memories but fail to light the spark of ownership desires at first blush. Vehicles that once roamed the open road in

vast numbers but have succumbed to second-hand antics, or worse, organized destruction matches. Cars like the 1968 Oldsmobile Delmont 88 I had spotted for sale at the 2021 AACA Hershey meet.

Billed as a “true survivor,” the two-door Olds hardtop – one of 18,391 built that year – had rolled across just 24,284 miles of pavement since it left the assembly line. Equipped with an able and easily maintainable 250-hp, 350-cu.in. engine, along with air conditioning, power steering and brakes, an AM/FM radio, and the division's “Anti-Spin” differential, its original Jade Gold paint adorned what had been a slightly redesigned exterior for '68, seen chiefly in the front end, which further accentuated the subtly recessed split grille.

It was a look that evoked style, rather than speed, for the entry-level, full-size Rocket. Still renowned for affordable cabin comfort, the long, low profile and sparsely trimmed flanks oozed boulevard smoothness, even sitting in its static state. Few were admiring its character during the early morning hours that day at Hershey, save for yours truly who, a handful of months later, envisioned a winter cruise with family.

Yet, in the end, I recognized that the Delmont 88 was... a bit *too* perfect. With a sigh, I resumed my dreamy search through the Hemmings classifieds as snow whispered its way to the ground. 🌨



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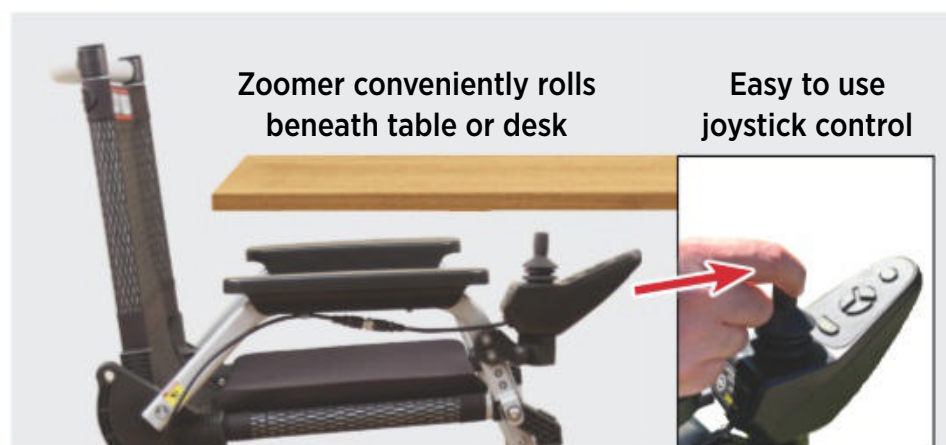
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The design

was never

used,

probably

because the

company's

finances were

stretched at

the time...



The Nash Wisp

Ed Anderson was annoyed. As the head of Nash Styling, his job was to oversee all automotive styling efforts at the company. However, Nash-Kelvinator Executive Vice President George Romney, under orders from CEO George Mason, had hired Italian designer “Pinin” Farina to design Nash’s most expensive automobile, the Nash-Healey sports car. Not surprisingly, Farina ended up doing an excellent job. His 1952-’54 Nash-Healey was beautiful; even Anderson had to admit that, but darn it all, it wasn’t a product of the company’s in-house design studios. So, although no one in management had requested he come up with a design for a “next generation” of Nash-Healeys, Anderson decided to create one to see if he could get it approved by the powers that be. His design would be bold, beautiful, and above all, its styling would be American rather than European.

What’s so amazing about this is that the design Anderson created in 1953 and dubbed the “Wisp” looks so much like a 1962 [note, later 1961] Corvette, it’s scary.

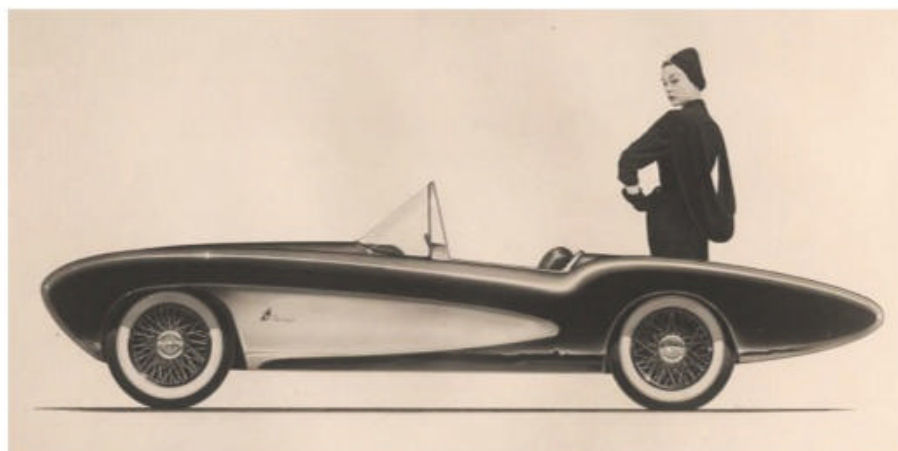
Ed Anderson was a true car guy. Despite his age – nearly 48 at this point in his career – he was a member of the Sports Car Club of America and an enthusiastic racer. After the Nash-Healey debuted, he bought one for himself, and later, when the new AMC 327-cu.in. V-8 debuted for 1957, he replaced the engine in his Healey with the new corporate V-8. And he did all the installation work himself at home. Neighbors were not surprised to see Anderson driving the Healey down the street, hood off, sitting on a milk crate, as he tested the new engine prior to finishing up the job.

So, when he got down to designing a new sports car for Nash sometime around 1953, he knew what he wanted: a low, sleek, and absolutely gorgeous two-seater. Not surprisingly, Anderson didn’t include Nash’s enclosed wheel wells – he always hated those. Instead, he opted for large, rounded wheel openings to show off the wire wheels with knock-off hubs, and modern medium-width whitewalls.

Whether or not he was thinking of a fiberglass body like the Chevy Corvette is hard

to say, but the body shapes he chose for his new design would have been easier to render in fiberglass than metal. The front fender was peaked at the leading edge and rose slightly before beginning a long and gradual downturn as it moved to the rear of the door, where it kicked up dramatically. The body line then progressed back to a slim and gracefully tapered tail that looked

amazingly similar to the Chevrolet Corvette that would debut for 1961 – nearly eight years later! Another remarkably predictive piece of Anderson’s work is the bodyside “coves,” which would later show



up on the 1956 Corvette. On Anderson’s design, the bright molding that surrounds the cove began at the base of the front wheel opening, followed back to the door where it curved downward and forward, following the cove’s outline. Anderson then two-toned the car with white reserved for the cove area – just like Corvette would eventually do. Anderson’s windshield design looks like it came directly from the 1953 Corvette.

Anderson assigned his best modeler, Master Modeler Charl Greene, to create a wooden scale model of the Wisp to show to management. The design was never used, probably because the company’s finances were stretched at the time, and management needed to focus on its volume-selling cars. Anderson asked Pinin Farina for a quote on having one car built for himself, but in the end decided against it, a decision he long regretted.

Interestingly, Anderson created another sports car design for a possible 1957 introduction called the Rambler Glen. It was a sharp-looking two-seater with a built-in rollbar, similar to the “basket-handle” roofline on the 1956 Rambler sedans. The front fenders were pointed, as on the Wisp, but the coves were gone. Instead, Anderson used a two-tone paint scheme in which the upper and lower color separation was defined by a bright molding beginning at the top of the front bumper, flowing along high on the body side, and curving upwards to follow the rollbar. The rear fender shape was similar, though a bit blunter. Sidepipes were featured, along with knock-off style wheel covers. It’s a nice design, but it lacks the pure beauty of the wonderful Wisp. 🏎️

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names!



Holidays and Hollywoods

How many prestigious, high-line hardtop body styles morphed into common, low-price trim levels after World War II... and into the 1970s?

Consider the sales agreement for this 1957 Pontiac. It was my father's Carib Coral (pink) and Chateau Gray demonstrator when he was sales manager at Widdis-Nielsen Pontiac in 1957. When he left, under pleasant terms, he bought his "demo" wholesale, using his residual dealer name and address.

Hobbyists familiar with 1950s models might question the possibility of this car being a Super Chief *and* a Catalina *and* a sedan, but that is the correct nomenclature for a 1957 Super Chief four-door hardtop... and an example of a hardtop body style that became a trim level. That's because Catalina denoted a two-door or four-door hardtop – a fixed steel roof with no B-pillar – from 1950 through 1958. Thus, one could order the car on this invoice, a Super Chief Catalina sedan.

Catalina became so popular and positively associated with Pontiac that the division converted that body style's name to a popular, low-price trim level for 1959 and forward. One could then own a two-door or four-door Catalina sedan with a fixed B-pillar, or even a Catalina convertible.

General Motors launched that new hardtop body style, originally called "hardtop convertible," in 1949. With a fixed steel roof and no B-pillar, that configuration would dominate the industry by 1955. GM's 1949 hardtop convertibles were Cadillac Coupe de Villes, Buick Roadmaster Rivieras, and Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight Holidays, names that denoted both a trim level *and* a body style.

For 1950, GM offered the popular new body style in smaller bodies as Chevrolet Styleline DeLuxe Bel Airs and Pontiac Chieftain Catalinas, as well as Oldsmobile Seventy-Six and Eighty-Eight Holidays, and Buick Super Rivieras. Later, like Catalina, Bel-Air became a trim level.

Oldsmobile used the Holiday name in one form or another as late as 1973 to denote true hardtop models, both two-door and four-door, regardless of trim level. As "no-B-pillar hardtops" succumbed to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards in the mid 1970s, so did the Holiday moniker... only to be resurrected in 1978 as a special trim package for an Eighty-Eight two-door sedan with a fixed B-pillar!

CAR INVOICE		WIDDIS-NIELSEN MOTOR SALES		314 N. Vermilion St. Telephone 717		DANVILLE, ILLINOIS		Nº 312	
For Resale		#54		SOLD TO: Palma Motors		ADDRESS: 230 N. Central		DATE: April 3, 1957	
SALESMAN: House		ADDRESS: Paris, Ill.							
MAKE	MODEL	YEAR	ENGINE	TRANSMISSION	PRICE OF CAR				
1957	Super Chief	Pontiac	Cat. Sed.	N F757H 41586	Same	I 8512	D 8915		
PRICE OF CAR						2115.32			
EXCISE AND FREIGHT						265.45			
SALES TAX						519.53			
TOTAL CASH PRICE						2900.30			
FINANCING						TOTAL TIME PRICE			
DOWN PAYMENT						2900.30			
MONTHLY PAYMENT						50.00			
NUMBER OF MONTHS						60			
TOTAL PAYMENT						2900.30			
TOTAL						2900.30			

From 1950 through 1956, Chrysler fielded Newport pillarless hardtops. Thus, a New Yorker Newport or a Saratoga Newport denoted those respective trim levels in a hardtop body style. For 1961, though, Newport was reincarnated as the lowest-price Chrysler trim level in various body styles, with and without B-pillars.

Plymouth Cranbrook Belvederes and Dodge Coronet Diplomats, both new 1951 models, are similar examples. Belvedere and Diplomat originally denoted top-line two-door hardtop body styles that morphed into trim levels and then, entire lines of cars.

Ford introduced the 1951 Custom Victoria as its two-door hardtop and used Victoria in that manner from 1951 forward. In 1956, Town Victoria denoted Ford's new four-door hardtop. However, it did market two fixed B-pillar Victorias – the unique, top-shelf 1955 and '56 Crown Victorias.

Ford used Victoria for pillarless hardtop models through 1964, an example of which would be a 1959 Galaxie Town Victoria. Ultimately, Ford demoted Crown Victoria to its final series of rear-wheel-drive cars, all of which had fixed B-pillars.

Some two-door hardtop names never became trim levels. Among the independents, for example, all 1951-'57 Hudson Hollywoods were true two-door hardtops in various trim levels, as were all Nash and Nash Rambler Country Clubs and Packard Clipper Constellations and Panamas.

Studebaker never had a Starliner trim level but used Starliner to identify its two-door hardtops, either Commanders or Champions, in 1953 and '54. Ford later used Starliner on a special two-door hardtop in 1960 and '61... still a model, not a trim level.

Catalina, Holiday, Hollywood, Panama... even Willys Bermuda: such carefree names! Is it any wonder that today's ho-hum, nondescript XLR, ZTS, etc. model names will likely never engender the same warm, positive images? 🐼

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spotlight
ford classics

(Re)Taking to Wing

*Fond memories and crystal goblets
lead a nostalgic owner back to a
1964 Ford Thunderbird convertible*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

If you've owned a car for a while—any car—you invariably amass related items. Whether it's spare parts to keep it running or endless collectible tchotchkes that recall the vehicle in question, and whether those parts live in basements, attics, rafters, or on display shelves, often those leftover items remain with us long after the car itself has disappeared from our lives.



Which helps explain the set of wine glasses that are in Ken Nowicki's possession. It's not usual old-car fare, particularly not these days, when any possible combination of drinking and driving (stated or implied) is firmly out of fashion. Even so, these six crystal goblets — each with a Thunderbird logo etched into the glass, placed carefully in a red-velvet-lined hardback case about half the size of a briefcase — are indirectly responsible for the 1964 Ford Thunderbird convertible you see before you on these pages. They served as long-standing reminders of an age long



considered to be gone forever in Ken's life, and as inspiration to get us to the point where we are now.

To be fair, the glasses, with their sand-blasted bird-in-flight logo, are slightly out-of-time with the car. The stemware, a promotion from earlier in the 1960s (collectibles site *Worthpoint* suggests they arrived sometime between 1959-'62), were made by Fostoria—the makers of decorative “elegant glass” from the 1870s through that company's demise in 1986. Per Ken, his parents John and Leona were allowed to choose between tumblers and wine glasses when they bought a new '64 Thunderbird ragtop, and they went with the more social choice. The glasses weren't dated and were received in the spirit in which they were intended: a fun bonus from the Rochester, New York-area dealer, who probably had a gross more taking up space in a back room somewhere.

But in the Nowicki household, these glasses were cherished from the get-go:

John, who owned a piece of the family's box-making factory in Rochester, made a sturdy, bespoke case for the newly acquired quarry, and lined the container with red felt to cushion the fragile glass. For nearly half a century, these glasses were the only tangible memory of the car that helped originally drive Ken's own nascent four-wheeled enthusiasm.

Ken was one of the many tens of thousands who appreciated the new-for-1964 Thunderbird models. The 1964 restyle drove the fourth-generation 'Bird toward more luxurious territory; Ford also sought to build some visual distance between T-bird and Mustang by formalizing the big 'Bird's styling. Thunderbird's base engine was a 300-hp, 390-cu.in. version of Ford's FE V-8, paired to the FMX three-speed automatic transmission. Standard features like the Swing-Away steering wheel (functional only in park, the steering wheel could slide toward the center of the cabin for simpler ingress/egress) only cemented Thunderbird's

exalted status, despite the increasing numbers of competitive models from crosstown rivals.

Ford's new-style Thunderbird was a success: against year-to-year sales gains of 46 percent for the new generation, soft-top sales jumped an even greater 55 percent. Yet Thunderbird convertibles were barely 10 percent of overall production for the year—just 9,198 soft-tops were built, out 92,465 total Thunderbirds for the year. It kicked off an unprecedented run for Thunderbird; with more than 236,000 built from 1964-'66, it became the best-selling generation yet.

And the ads whispered of jet-age elegance. Thunderbirds didn't have interiors, they had cockpits. They didn't have dashboards or instrument panels; T-Birds had flight decks. The trunk was “touring size.” To feel the ride, you needed to be “in flight.” Shell seats in front, cove seats in back. Silent-Flo ventilation, which frankly mattered more on coupes than on convertibles



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1959 Mercedes-Benz 190SL
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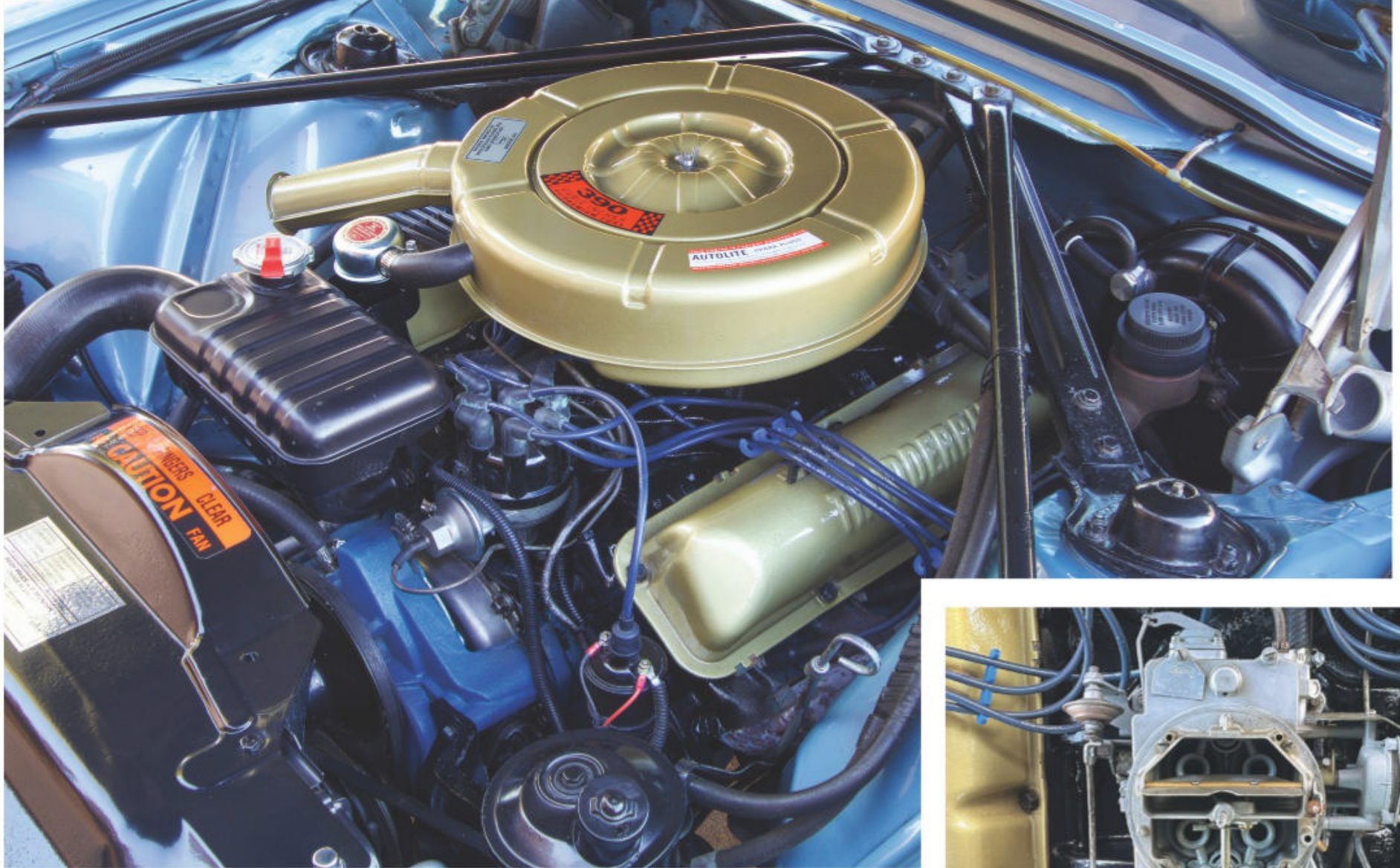
**1932 Marmon 8-125
Cabriolet**
Sold for **\$53,025**



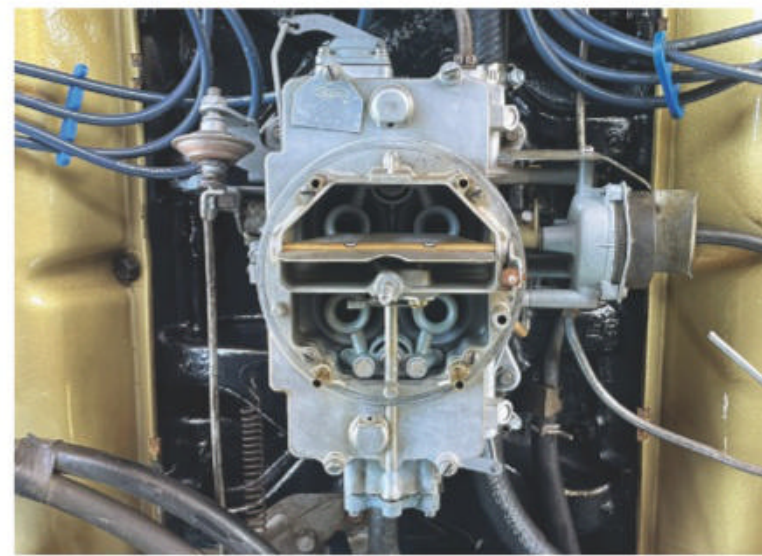
**1979 Volkswagen Beetle
Convertible**
Sold for **\$65,625**



**1956 Packard Caribbean
Convertible**
Sold for **\$73,500**



Thunderbird's only engine choice for 1964 was the 300-horsepower, FE-family 390-cubic-inch V-8. The mandatory four-barrel carburetor ensured ample power, despite the big 'Bird's considerable heft.



that offered unlimited headroom with the top down. The standard automatic transmission, christened Cruise-O-Matic. Pick out a runway. Prepare to soar! The copy even tried to turn Thunderbird into a verb, which didn't quite stick. (As the great prophet Calvin famously decreed to Hobbes, "Verbing weirds language.")

But when you're six, all the ad copy in the world is no substitute for that seat-of-the-pants feeling, and Ken fondly remembers the Thunderbird his parents bought. "Dad was just a hardworking guy, but he loved getting a new car. In 1964, that one stood out. It looked like a jet plane. What he bought was pretty much exactly the same car I'm driving now — color, options, everything jibes with my dad's car. The only option I remember his car having was the rear speaker. Funny how that was an option!" It was a big deal to have a convertible too, as convertibles only had limited appeal in a town like Rochester, where the average snowfall is a hundred inches or more per year. "Nice-weather days weren't that common at home," Ken recalls. He now makes his home in Gilbert, Arizona.

"Dad used to put me up on his lap and drive up the driveway. The instrument panel had all the levers like a jet, and when I was six, that round seat in back was huge." Rochester was several hours up the New York Thruway from Flushing Meadows

Park in Queens, home of the 1964 World's Fair. Though he didn't attend, Ken was particularly enamored reading about the Disney-engineered Ford Magic Skyway. The ride took guests from the ancient past to the far future — all from the comfort of a Falcon, Mustang, or Thunderbird convertible. The World's Fair hype only cemented his dad's choice of car as a memorable one.

By the time 1970 rolled around, Ken was on the cusp of high school, and the '64 Thunderbird had gotten the family through half a dozen harsh Rochester winters; it was traded in for another T-Bird. The glasses remained on a closet shelf in John and Leona's home, with a "Property of Ken Nowicki" tag taped to the box lid, lest anyone mistake it for junk and accidentally discard it. "They knew that car meant a lot to me; eventually they gave me the glasses and told me to go find the car to match 'em."

Ken did exactly this, but it took a little longer than he had anticipated. Like, half a century between the original '64's departure and the arrival of the new one. "My wife Marie and I were watching the Scottsdale car auctions on TV," Ken recalls. "I watched as a tan '64 Thunderbird convertible sold. I started to talk about my childhood memories of the '64 my parents owned, and she suggested I go look online to see if any were for sale. The first one to

come up in my search was this Brittany Blue convertible — just like the one my parents had." It was located in Boston, but a cross-country plane flight and a test drive later, and Ken had his name on the title of a Thunderbird that was a virtual twin to the one his parents owned five and a half decades previously.

"I haven't traced the history, but I know the previous owner had a paint-and-body shop and had driven it 6,000 miles in the 23 years he owned it," Ken says. "I've put that many miles on in the two years that I've owned it!" And while the car itself isn't the very one that his parents had in his impressionable youth, it's close enough to it that Ken can close his eyes (not while he's driving, mind you) and feel the torque of the mighty



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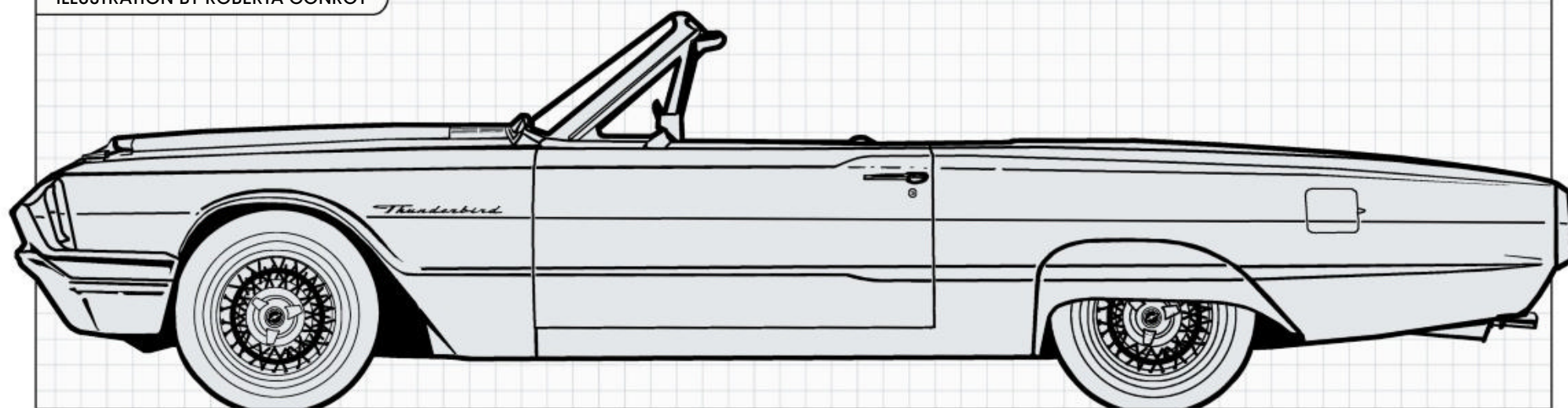
11:1-compression FE engine, the smoothness of the ride, the stopping power of the vacuum-boosted four-wheel drum brakes (no front discs till '65), and the retro-futuristic vibe Thunderbird exuded when it was new in 1964. He's planning a thorough mechanical refurbishment for later this year, and when it's done, it will feel even more like the original that fills his memories.

Those original wine goblets are now proudly displayed with the car whenever Ken shows at a local car meet. How could they not be? That sextet of etched Fostoria glass, combined with Ken's experience growing up in a '64 Thunderbird, led him to seek out and possess another just like it. The glasses are far more than hand-me-down memories of a -gone car, kept in a dusty box in the closet for safe keeping: They are a tangible link to Ken Nowicki's current and forever ride. 🏆



1964 FORD THUNDERBIRD CONVERTIBLE

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTA CONROY



SPECIFICATIONS

WHAT TO PAY

LOW	\$25,000
AVERAGE	\$58,000
HIGH	\$89,000

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$4,953
OPTIONS	Whitewall tires

ENGINE

TYPE	Ford FE-series OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	390-cu.in.
BORE X STROKE	4.05 x 3.78 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	11:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	300 @ 4,500
TORQUE @ RPM	427 lb-ft @ 2,700
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Single Autolite 4100 four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Pressure, gear-type pump
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual exhausts

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Ford Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic with torque converter
RATIOS	1st/2.40:1 2nd/1.47:1 3rd/1.00:1 Reverse/2.00:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Ford 9-inch, hypoid, open
GEAR RATIO	3.00:1

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball, power assist
RATIO	17:1
TURNING CIRCLE	42.7 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, four-wheel manual drum
FRONT/REAR	10-inch drum

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	All steel, unitized construction
BODY STYLE	Two-door convertible
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; coil springs, ball joints, telescoping shock absorbers, anti-roll bar
REAR	Live axle; parallel leaf springs, telescoping shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	15 x 6.5-inch pressed steel, drop center
TIRES	8.15 x 15 four-ply (original), white side walls

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	113.2 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	205.4 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	77.1 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	52.5 inches





Fortuitous Find

A frustrating search for the perfect convertible led to a 50-year love affair with a 1972 Pontiac Le Mans Sport

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL AND MATTHEW LITWIN

When I purchased all of the cars I own brand new, except my truck and 1972 Pontiac Le Mans Sport convertible,” Cathy Stewart confesses as she walks towards an oversize garage that shields her vintage vehicle collection from the elements. A former school music teacher whose retirement is anything but

sedate (she’s currently a big band leader and a respected member of her Guilford, Connecticut, community because of her charitable fundraising activities), Cathy excitedly tells us of the events that led her to purchase the car gracing these pages: an Aztec Gold 1972 Pontiac Le Mans Sport convertible.

“I already had my 1968 Pontiac Firebird convertible, a four-speed 350. But, when the 1972 models were introduced, it was right about the time for my late husband and I to buy a new car. With the new models came news that this was supposed to be the last year anyone was going to make a convertible. Well, I love



convertibles, and I wanted to get another. My husband wasn't crazy about them, but he always acquiesced to me."

"We had a difficult time finding a convertible anywhere," Cathy says. "By chance, my husband and I found a Mustang convertible that was for sale. I drove it, but it was very light on the road—I just couldn't do that. The Firebird is very heavy, and I don't like having a light car. Then I looked at a used Cougar convertible, but I really didn't want a used car. So, we went to Heller Chevrolet-Pontiac down in Madison, where we had purchased cars previously. The salesman we were dealing with quickly found this

Aztec Gold Le Mans convertible for us through his network, down in Bridgeport."

Cathy continues, "That was the good news. The bad news was that the throttle linkage had been stripped from the car, the top had been slit open, and there was a bench seat inside. I thought to myself, 'Please, not a bench, I want buckets,' but we went down to look at it anyway. When we got down there, they had already replaced the linkage and a new top was on order. Even better, it actually had bucket seats, not a bench, so I was really happy to see that. The Pontiac also had an automatic transmission; I would have preferred a manual, like my Firebird, but

since it was obvious that finding a new convertible was going to be a challenge, I decided to purchase the car anyway."

Records indicate that the word "challenge" Cathy used to describe her 1972 search was an accurate assessment. Despite her preference, convertibles had been falling from buyers' favor. Pontiac's upscale soft-top A-body production had slid from 8,820 units in 1968 to just 3,865 in '71, slipping further to only 3,438 Le Mans Sport convertibles built for '72. Available with either a 110-hp, 250-cu.in six-cylinder or a 160-hp, 350-cu.in. V-8 in base trim, Cathy's fortuitous off-the-lot purchase was equipped

not only with standard bucket seats and optional automatic transmission, but also the base V-8 to provide motivation for her daily commute.

As we settle into the comfortable cabin to drive to the photo shoot, Cathy explains, "I taught in North Branford, which meant I was driving on Route 80. Back then, it was a very crowded two-lane road, and let me tell you, the stop-and-go traffic made me appreciate having the automatic as I matured. I drove this car to school every single day. Today, if I take it through town, if any of my former students see me, they say 'Hey, there goes Mrs. S.' They always called me Mrs. S instead of

Stewart. You know what's more interesting about the commute? The engine has never been rebuilt; it has over 350,000 miles on it."

Had Cathy not revealed this, we'd never have guessed. The small displacement V-8 ran as smoothly as a freshly assembled example. Cathy believes diligent maintenance is responsible for its current running condition, which was appreciated during our cruise amid modern Guilford traffic, as the Pontiac needed to be nimble. Despite the car's 3,500-plus pounds, excluding passengers, the two-barrel V-8 had enough response and torque to get us out of highly congested intersections

during rush hour with effortless ease. Equally impressive was the Pontiac's suspension system, which kept the convertible on a relatively even keel during spritely turns. And while we're sure many common wear items have been replaced over this car's life, we were really struck by its overall presentation.

That's another story in itself. Cathy continues, "Every day when I came home from school, I would take the hose out, clean the car with Turtle Wax Car Wash, dry it off, and put it in the garage for the night. I did that every day, for years, because I didn't want the salt and the sand to stay on the body and chassis. But the problem was, it still did anyway; you can only get so much of that off. Well, you know the typical rust areas on these cars develop behind the wheel wells, especially behind the rear wheels, and unfortunately, over time, the body started to rot. By 1995, it was more than a spot or two, and I knew it needed to be corrected. This, after dealing with the top... six times!"

Cathy explains, "The first time I needed to have the top replaced, I found someone who said they could replace it. But the minute I put the top down, it ripped. I went back and they replaced it a second time, and that one ripped. It wasn't cheap. This went on and on before





The Pontiac's original 160-hp, 350-cu.in. V-8 has been diligently maintained since new, helping it accumulate over 350,000 miles without a rebuild to date (above). Upholstery (left) is also original.

a friend of mine, Bill Logozzo, told me to go see Ken Kelly at Redam Auto Upholstery in Newington. Well, Ken saw something wrong with the top mechanism that everyone else had missed and reassured me that his work would last. It was just a matter of scheduling, and that was just before I delivered the car in Decem-

ber 1995 to A & B Auto Body Works, in West Hartford, for rust repairs.

"Since their primary business was repairs covered by insurance claims, A & B would work on my car when they had time [between regular collision jobs], but I had to find the parts. Now here I was—I knew nothing, and I mean

nothing, about finding parts—so I called Pontiac directly and said, 'I'm a little old school teacher here in Connecticut and I have a 1972 Pontiac Le Mans Sport convertible that needs to have some body work done, and I would be willing to let you use it in advertising if you would help me find the parts I need.' I'm sure they





were thinking, 'What, are you nuts?' to themselves, but they said, 'We can't do that, but we can send you a book that will help you get started.'"

The book from Pontiac got Cathy rolling on the parts search. "I found a fella in Rocky Hill who had an NOS wiring harness for \$40. That's how we started, and as the shop needed parts, they would tell me what to get, and we would either need to find a junkyard or someone in the Pontiac community who had it for sale. Merle Green in Massachusetts was a big help, too."

But there were some larger items that wouldn't be so easy to source, like replacement quarter panels to correct the rot. "I wanted full quarters, not patch panels," Cathy says. "To get the quarters, and inner wheel wells, I drove down to Virginia; I used to play gigs with a band in Falls Church, so I knew my way around. I met the seller, inspected the parts, and arranged delivery back to the shop."

This process of searching out and procuring the items needed continued

successfully all the way through the restoration process. "We were able to locate all that stuff for A & B, which has since closed," Cathy relates. She's still pleased with the outcome. "I think they did a pretty nice job with it. You really wouldn't know repairs were done and the body had been repainted."

But there was still the matter of getting that top sorted, hopefully once and for all.

"After A & B finished the body, I took the Le Mans back to Ken Kelly, who sadly passed away not long ago," Cathy shares. "He not only installed the new top, but he restuffed the front bucket seats, too. After sitting on those all those years, your weight crushes the stuffing. But [after Ken's efforts] it's still fluffy today. I don't have to worry about it being redone. I have to say it softly, but Ken's promise about the top still holds true today—it's been on there since 1996 when the car was completed."

Recalling the top finally getting done correctly led Cathy to think of her father, Charles Offredi, who had passed just

before the Le Mans was completed. "He was my pal; that's where I got my love of cars. At one point, he had a Stutz Bearcat convertible. Later, he restored a 1947 Chevy pickup."

By this point in our cruise, the bustle of Guilford traffic had ebbed, and we found ourselves in the rural outskirts of the city. As we skimmed along the pavement in Cathy's beloved Pontiac that crisp fall afternoon, her mind brimming with memories, the soft hum of the V-8 sang a smooth song—fitting for a musician who still practices her trade. And while the intermediate Pontiac sees fewer miles these days, it's still a regular at local cruise nights in communities along the Connecticut shoreline.

As we discovered during our time riding with Cathy, she's never tired of the Pontiac, even after 50 years as its sole owner. It's still just as much fun out on the road. "I love driving it," she shares. "It's the comfort behind the wheel and the sound of the mufflers—the exhaust is still music to my ears." 🎧



I love driving it. It's the comfort behind the wheel and the sound of the mufflers—the exhaust is still music to my ears.

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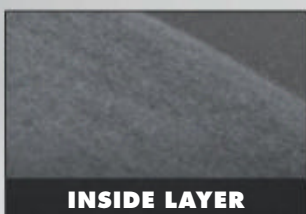
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1983-'88 Ford **Thunderbird Turbo Coupe**

*The sophisticated, high-performance Turbo Coupe
is a surprisingly durable and affordable collector car*

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARRY KLUCZYK AND AS CREDITED



The Eighties were when American automakers affected European accents. A new generation of consumers appreciated the understated styling, buttoned-down road manners, and real or imagined prestige that vehicles from Germany, England, Sweden, Italy, and France offered. Even true-blue American icons like Ford's personal luxury car, the Thunderbird, looked overseas for inspiration, the result being the Turbo Coupe that the company hailed as "A World Class Touring Car." This popular flagship forever changed buyers' perceptions of the Thunderbird, and nearly 40 years later, its surprisingly contemporary driving characteristics make it a modern classic worth owning.

The ninth-generation Thunderbird, which still shared Fairmont-derived Fox-platform underpinnings with the Mustang,

rocked the market upon its 1983 debut. Adding fuel to the fire was the unprecedented Turbo Coupe. Introduced midyear, this top-of-the-line, forced-induction variant attracted well-heeled enthusiast buyers, those to whom its advanced appearance and technical innovations strongly appealed, to Ford showrooms.

While the 1983 Mustang looked trim, even the hatchback version of that pony car was a brick (0.44 Cd) against the new Thunderbird. Surprisingly, its smooth lines were a development of a Lincoln design proposal from Ford's Luxury and Intermediate Studio. Gone were the 1980-'82 model's formal lines, padded vinyl roofs, opera windows, and stand-up hood ornaments. Now we had a downsized two-door whose careful detailing resulted in a 0.35 coefficient of drag, in Turbo Coupe form accented with Euro-style blackout trim and sporting a thrifty



four-cylinder making more horsepower on demand than the traditional V-8 more than double its displacement.

While it would retain exposed quad sealed-beam headlamps through 1986, the Thunderbird featured hidden windshield wipers and wrap-over doors concealing the rain gutters, these working in concert with the high rear deck and subtle lip that managed the wind. Turbo Coupes were further distinguished with dark headlamp housings, a front bumper with integral Marchal fog lamps and deep chin spoiler, and bold 14-inch alloy wheels. Inside, special fascia finishes, comprehensive gauges and diagnostic lamps, articulated front sport seats, and a leather-wrapped steering wheel and gearshift knob set the high-performance variant apart.

The Thunderbird Turbo Coupe evolved steadily, gaining an available automatic transmission in 1984 and a color-keyed grille, redesigned instrument panel, larger wheels, and a more powerful engine in 1985. This model took a major leap for 1987, when *Motor Trend* named it Car of the Year. A planned mid-cycle facelift ended up much more, the Turbo Coupe gaining flush-mounted window glass, a ducted hood, composite front lighting, a “bottom-breather” front bumper, and a smoother rear end. Mechanical updates included an intercooled engine, Programmed Ride Control electronic suspension, anti-lock brakes, 16-inch wheels, and more. A 22-gallon fuel tank ensured impressive high-speed-cruising range.

Ford’s premium two-door was a hot property in its ninth generation, selling nearly 884,000 examples. The

WHAT TO PAY

	Low	Average	High
1983-’84	\$3,500	\$8,000	\$20,000
1985-’86	\$3,500	\$7,500	\$19,000
1987-’88	\$6,500	\$15,500	\$27,000

North American Turbocoupe Organization (“NATO,” online at turbobird.com) distills the Turbo Coupe from that total, suggesting 128,533 units were built over six model years, the final two selling the most copies. This Thunderbird benefits from its mechanical relationship to the Fox Mustang, but its unique body and sophisticated electronics pose more challenges for today’s restorers. Thankfully, these well-engineered sports-luxury cars are notably tough and enjoy a passionate, engaged enthusiast following that help each other with parts and information. Values are starting to tick up, with classic.com listing average sale prices nearing \$12,500 and rising, so if you’ve always wanted a Turbo Coupe, now is your time to soar.

BODY

Fuel economy was a key part of this generation Thunderbird’s design brief, but it was handled so as not to compromise the Turbo Coupe’s comfort or performance. The 4.4-inch reduction in wheelbase and 2.8-inch-shorter overall length still left a roomy cabin, and the all-steel unit body was sturdy and



RICHARD LENTINELLO



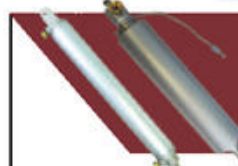
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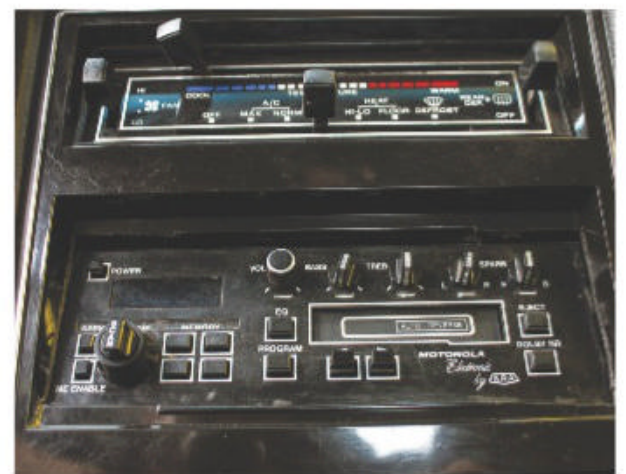
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The dashboard of 1983 and '84 Turbo Coupes was held over from the 1982 Thunderbird, albeit enhanced with a different finish and instrumentation. Multi-adjustable "articulated" sport front seats were shared with some Mustangs, and replacement seat foam is available.

aerodynamic. Because it shared the Fox platform, this car is susceptible to corrosion in the same areas as the contemporary Mustang. We spoke with Dominic Zanella, 1983-1988 technical advisor for the International Thunderbird Club (intl-thunderbirdclub.com) and original owner of a five-speed, 159,000-mile 1987 Turbo Coupe, to learn what it's like to live with a ninth-gen model.

"The shock towers are key on this car," he explains. "It's primarily the fronts that rust out from underneath due to salt corrosion; the rears are fairly well protected. The rear quarter panels can rust from the body molding, down." If you're looking at one that's spent years in moist or wintry climates, you'll want to inspect the rocker panels, floors, wheel arches, and around all the windows. Check around sunroof drains in Turbo Coupes so equipped.

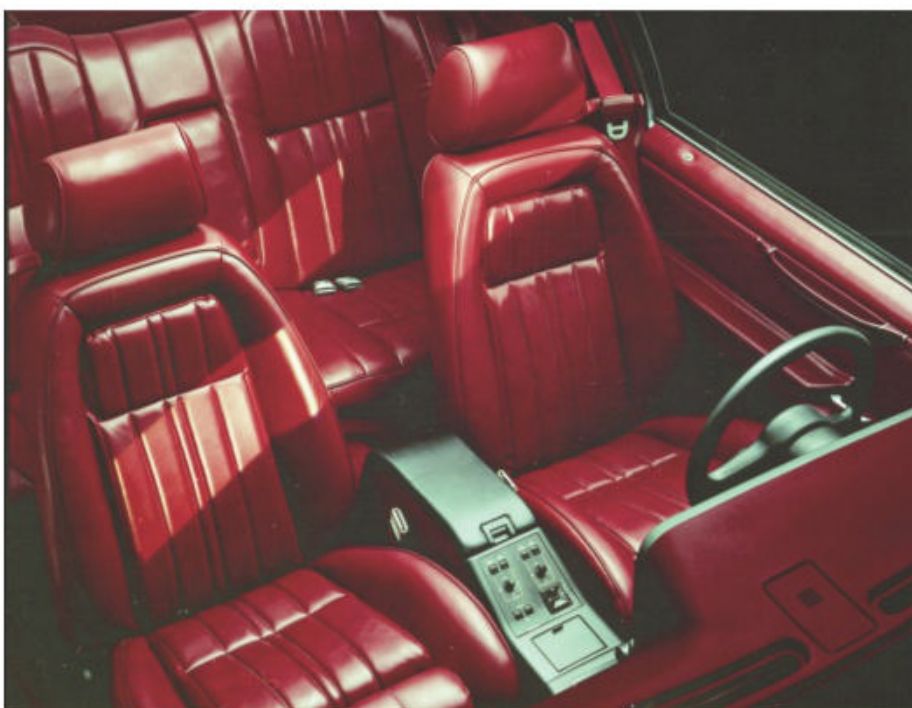
Be warned that, unlike the aftermarket-darling Mustang, Thunderbirds of this era don't enjoy many reproduction body or

trim parts. Compounding this, Turbo Coupes have many unique components you won't find on lesser variants. Sheetmetal, glass, and exterior lighting can all prove challenging to source.

INTERIOR

Ford's investment in bringing the 1983 Thunderbird to market didn't stretch far enough to include a new dashboard, so the '83-'84 models retained the rectilinear unit of the eighth-generation car. In 1985 it got a more curvaceous dash that would be retained through 1988. Turbo Coupes received sportier-looking trim and multi-adjustable "articulated" front bucket seats shared with some 1980s Mustangs. "Luckily you can still buy new foam for these seats at Late Model Restoration [lmr.com]," Dominic advises. Upholstery is no longer available, but a good restoration shop should be able to repair or replace seat covers in the correct style.

He tells us he installed a genuine Ford Motorsports accessory 140-mph speedometer in his own Turbo Coupe to replace the



Thunderbirds received an updated dashboard for 1985 that was retained through the major 1987 revamp. The electronic systems in Turbo Coupes are largely reliable, but replacements are rare.

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The Turbo Coupe grew sportier with a body-color grille, fully blacked-out trim, and 15-inch wheels added in 1985; certain paint colors featured a complimentary charcoal lower body finish. The 1987 exterior update brought composite headlamps and a TC-specific front bumper fascia, flush side glass, a reprofiled C-pillar, redesigned taillamps, and 16-inch "snowflake" alloys. Integral foglamps and a deeper chin spoiler identified this performance variant through all six years of production.



FORD MOTOR COMPANY



This page: Between 1983 and 1986, the fuel-injected 2.3-liter SOHC engine relied on an AiResearch T3 turbocharger. Next page: In 1987 and '88 it used an IHI turbo and a top-mounted intercooler.

85-mph-marked factory unit. Long out of production, those Ford Motorsports speedometers are coveted and can bring upwards of \$500 on today's market. A more attainable alternative is a replacement speedometer face that apes the 140-mph piece; online tutorials show how to recalibrate the speedometer so the modified unit reads fairly accurately.

Speaking of instrumentation, Dominic modified the fuel, temperature, and oil pressure gauges in his '87 Turbo Coupe to use solid-state senders, eliminating the potential for the factory voltage regulators to fail: "I put the voltage output right where it should be, so my gauges are pretty accurate."

ENGINE

The Fox Mustang offered a turbocharged "Lima" 2.3-liter four from its 1979 launch, and Ford continued to develop it through the 1980s, creating a port-fuel-injected high-performance variant that would, in varying tunes, power the Thunderbird Turbo Coupe (1983-'88), Mustang SVO (1984-'86), Mercury Cougar XR-7 (1984-'86), and Merkur XR4Ti (1985-'89). This all-iron engine was famously overbuilt with five main bearings, forged aluminum pistons, and an oil cooler. The 1983 Garrett AiResearch T3 turbocharger made a maximum 10 psi of boost,



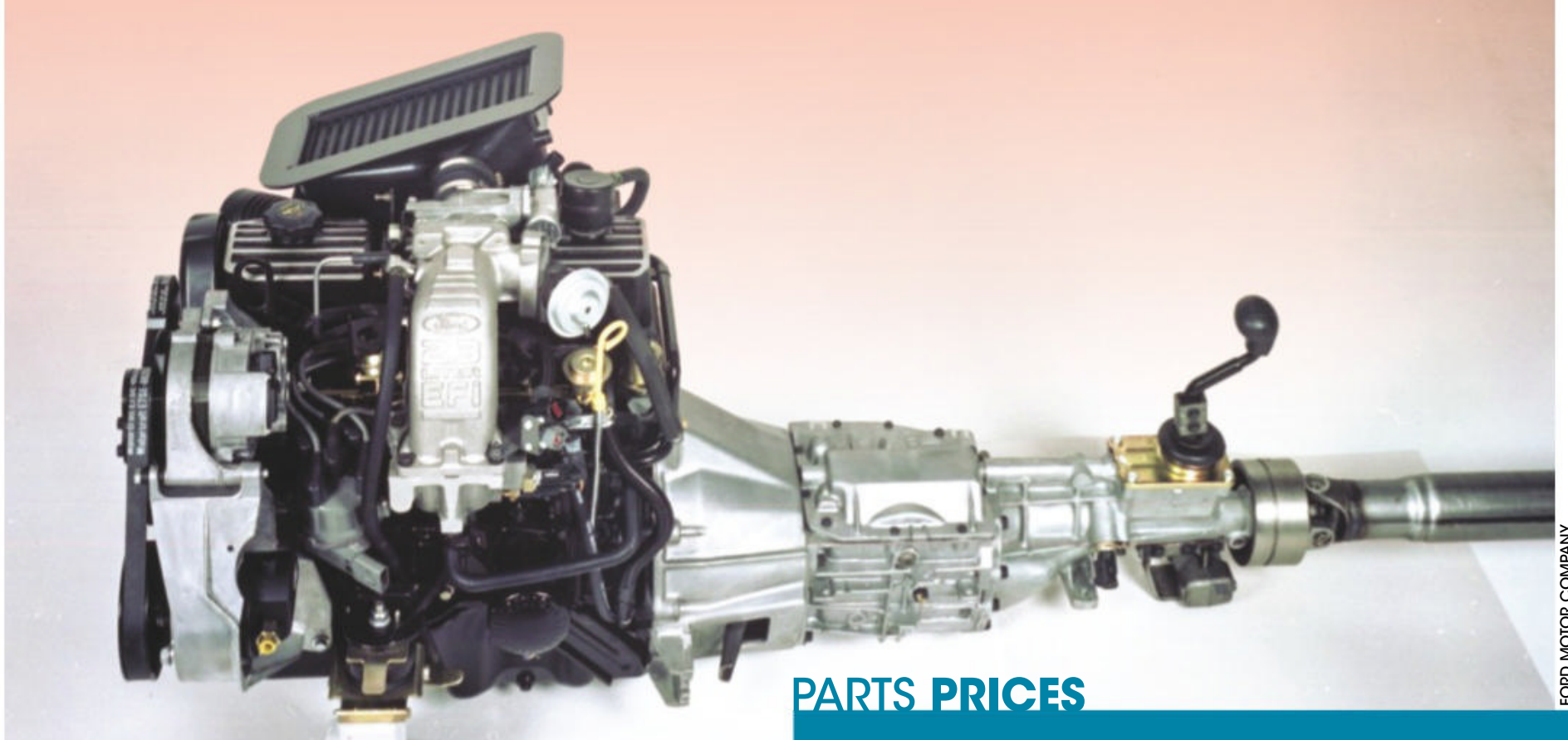
equating to 142 hp at 5,000 rpm and 172 lb-ft of torque at 3,000 rpm. This edged up annually in manual transmission cars to 145 hp at 4,600 rpm and 180 lb-ft of torque at 3,600 rpm, then 155 hp and 190 lb-ft; automatic versions retained the 145-hp tune. In the final two model years, a smaller IHI turbocharger spooled up to 15 psi and a top-mounted intercooler increased charge density, bringing 190 hp at 4,600 rpm and 240 lb-ft of torque at 3,400 rpm in manual form or 150 hp at 4,400/200 lb-ft at 3,000 in automatics. For 1987, Ford limited boost to 10 psi in the first three gears, but that limiter was removed for 1988.

"This is probably one of Ford's most bulletproof engines," Dominic explains. "It's very fuel-efficient: Mine regularly gets 31 mpg on the highway at 70 mph with the A/C on. And if a head gasket blows, you pull it apart and install a new gasket."

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Cam lobe wear is an issue, though, because it's a flat-tappet design. You can replace the camshaft and followers and be back to original; I recommend using full synthetic oil with a lubricating zinc additive, plus changes every 5,000 miles or less. You can also fit the roller cam from a Ranger engine, which is more efficient and causes less wear," he says.

The 2.3 uses a timing belt, rather than a chain, and while Ford recommended a 60,000-mile change interval, Dominic urges 30,000 to be safe. "If your car doesn't have any cam seal or crank seal leaks to tend to, you can probably stretch it closer to 60,000 miles," he muses. "But if the belt breaks, you're okay—it's a non-interference engine, so you can [replace the belt and] set the [camshaft] timing and be back on the road in no time.

"Watch for overheating issues," he continues. "The original radiator is small and not very efficient in hot climates, so it's recommended to upgrade to a Mustang aluminum three-core unit. You also want to check that the two electric fans work: the first goes on at 210 degrees, the second at 220 or if the A/C is on, regardless of temperature."

Engine parts for this four-cylinder are readily available from brick-and-mortar sources, as well as online at rockauto.com. Ford's online marketplace, parts.ford.com, lists various mechanical components, along with electrical and brake parts, and some hardware. The D-port head, unique to the turbocharged 2.3, can be purchased through Esslinger Engineering (esslingeracing.com) and BoPort Racing Heads (bo-port.com).

TRANSMISSIONS AND AXLES

True to its enthusiast focus, the Turbo Coupe debuted exclusively with a short-throw five-speed manual transmission that sent power to the rear wheels through a limited-slip Traction-Lok differential with a 3.45:1 final drive ratio. A three-speed SelectShift automatic transmission joined the option list from 1984 to 1986; it was replaced with the Automatic Overdrive four-speed for 1987-'88, when the rear axle was upgraded from Ford's 7.5-inch ring gear differential to its 8.8-inch unit. These transmissions and differentials were shared with other Ford products, and parts and knowledge are plentiful.

The Borg-Warner T-5 is famously stout and is considered the more desirable choice among aficionados because examples so equipped received full engine output. Its hydraulic system, with external slave cylinder, is considered easy to service, and replacing a clutch in a Thunderbird is no different than doing so in a Mustang. The Automatic Overdrive ("A4LD" to enthusiasts)

PARTS PRICES

Brake drum shoe, OEM	\$66
Carpet, molded- reproduction.....	\$138
Coolant temperature switch, OEM	\$41
Engine mounts, reproduction	\$175
Fender molding trim piece, NOS.....	\$95
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HVAC blower control switch, OEM.....	\$24
Ignition control module, OEM	\$165
Starter motor, OEM	\$97
Windshield washer pump, OEM	\$151

is more troublesome, Dominic says: "It's a weak transmission. Ford limited the power in cars so equipped because they would overheat badly. A good transmission specialist can beef up the internals, though."

SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

High-performance suspension components ensured the Turbo Coupe would handle well and be stable at the high speeds it could achieve. The original front MacPherson struts were gas-pressurized ("Nitra-Cushion") units, while the four-bar link rear suspension shared the pony car's Quadra-shock vertical/horizontal damper layout; anti-roll bars were fitted at both ends. The 1987 update brought the microprocessor-controlled, selectable Programmed Ride Control system that optimized damping for handling ("Firm") or ride ("Automatic"). "It's amazing how well this system works," Dominic tells us; "The 'Firm' setting helps it handle the same or better than a Mustang GT, but at the expense of comfort.

"Pay attention to the [1987-'88] Tokico two-position struts and shocks to be sure they work. If they don't, there are no replacements available. You'll have to fit non-electronically controllable KYB units—they're good, and you can set the stiffness yourself—and deactivate the PRC system. The originals last a long time, so if you find a low-mile car, it's possible they're fine." Regardless of model year, Dominic warns that Mustang shocks and struts are not direct replacements for Thunderbird units, which are longer.

Turbo Coupes used power-assisted front disc/rear drum brakes up to 1987, when four-wheel discs were enhanced with a sophisticated Teves anti-lock braking system. Unsurprisingly, remanufactured ABS components are expensive compared to the earlier system. These four-lug cars can be upgraded to five lugs by using the front spindles and axle shafts from a Lincoln Mark VII. 🏁

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Admiral's **Flagship**

Cisitalia's founders contested the 1952 Mille Miglia in this one-of-five 202D Competizione, now restored to its original glory

BY GÉRALD GUÉTAT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRI THIBAUT



Promoted to the rank of masterpiece almost since its inception, the Cisitalia 202 was born with a modest four-cylinder Fiat engine. Shortly before it disappeared, Piero Dusio's firm launched a rare version using a much more powerful racing-boat engine. It was that 202D, a car that still fascinates us today and which appears on these pages, that the Dusio father and son team took to the Mille Miglia in 1952.



The fate of Cisitalia is unusual because, in spite of its very brief existence—less than a decade—and limited production, the company still managed to leave a unique mark on automobile history. The *Compania Industriale Sportiva Italiana* was born in 1944 from the desire of a wealthy Turin industrialist to mass produce a small grand touring car. At the time, textile magnate, former professional sportsman, and owner of Turin's Juventus soccer team, Piero Dusio saw himself following in the footsteps of Fiat's principal shareholder, Senator Agnelli. Indeed, Dante Giacosa, one of the most prolific Fiat engineers and father of the "Topolino" 500, was contracted by Dusio to design the specifications of the future model he conceived to mark the country's return to peace and prosperity. With the approval of his Fiat bosses, Giacosa stayed in his original job while accepting the new mission. However, with only his free time in which to work, Giacosa convinced Dusio to recruit the talented Giovanni Savonuzzi as technical director of the project.

The first Cisitalia, the D46, was a single-seat racing car that achieved numerous successes. Then, in September 1947, after several prototypes—some of which were run in competition—the little GT 202 berlinetta officially appeared. In fact, in the spring of 1947, Tazio Nuvolari drove a special 202 "Spyder" variant, coachbuilt by Carrozzeria Garella, to fourth place at the Mille Miglia.

The production 202-series berlinetta, also powered by a 60-hp Fiat 1100 engine, received a very sleek body designed by Pinin Farina. That car caused a sensation and was immediately hailed as a design icon, which took it from the routes of the 1948 Mille Miglia to the picture rails of the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1951, via the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este and the Palazzo del Arte in Milan. Indeed, from its first appearance to the present day, the



The 202D Competizione on these pages was driven by Cisitalia founder Piero Dusio and his son, Carlo, from Rome to Brescia in the 1952 Mille Miglia. The car was forced to retire when its clutch failed.



Above left: Driver Piero Taruffi joined Piero Dusio and Cisitalia's technical director, engineer Giovanni Savonuzzi. Above right: Carlo Dusio at the door of this car, with number 621 and different fender vents, at the Mille Miglia. Below: Aluminum coachwork is by Carrozzeria Stabilimenti Farina, founded by Giovanni Farina, brother of Battista "Pinin" Farina.



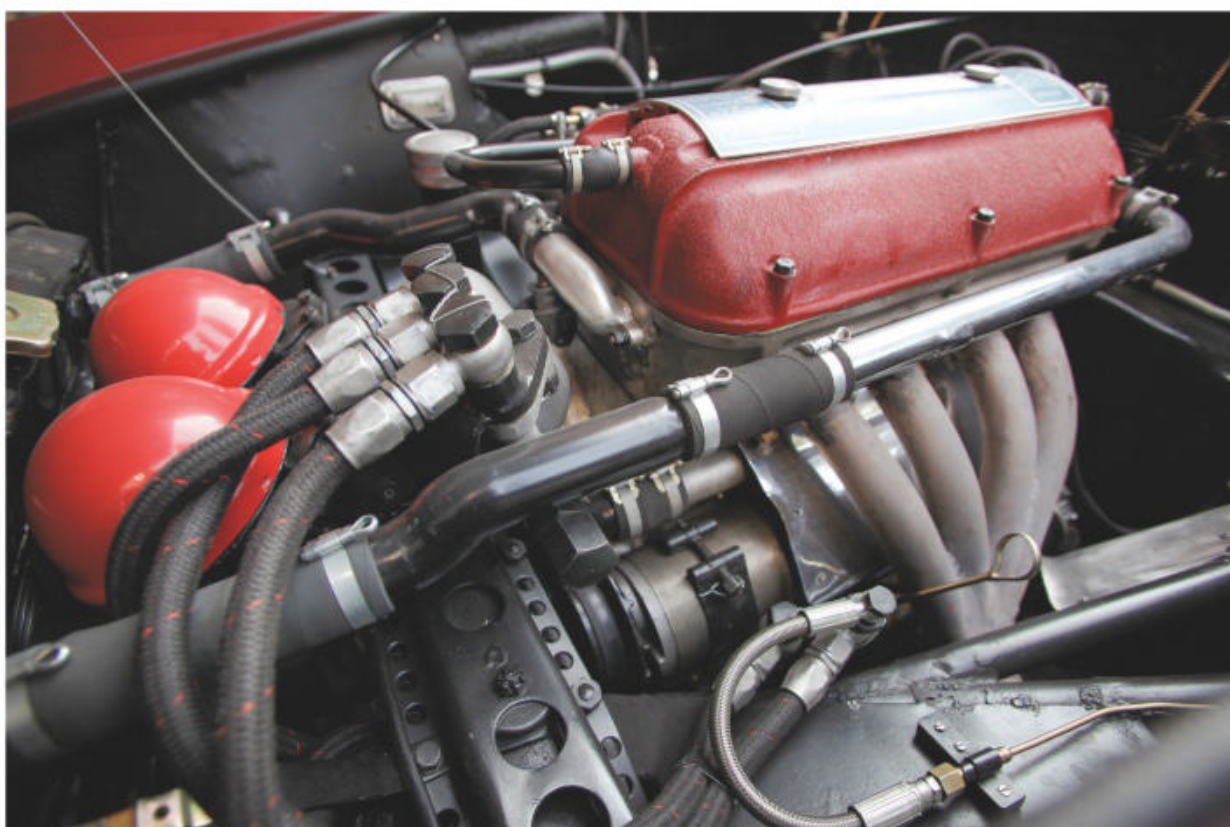


Cisitalia 202 continues to be displayed as artwork, akin to the *Mona Lisa*. But, just like some great work of art from the Renaissance studios, it trails in its stylish wake the inevitable mysteries surrounding its origins and the identities of its true creators, including Alfredo Vignale.

Entire books have been devoted to the subject and others are probably still to come. Without repeating a detailed history of the firm as a series manufacturer and its endeavors, successes, and failures, we'll merely recall some of the circumstances surrounding the origins of the 202, which is regarded as the archetype of the modern automobile due to the incorporation of its front fenders and radiator into a single shell with a low hood. Beyond a purely aesthetic expression, this car also featured an innovative technical design with a lightweight tubular steel chassis constructed to support the hand-formed aluminum body that covered it.

Nino Balestra, erudite president of the Cisitalia International Club, has spent years collecting countless testimonies and documents, not only from the Dusio family but also from engineers, technicians, and drivers who participated in the Cisitalia venture. According to Balestra, the 202 was not the beginning of a new era; rather, it was the culmination of a decade of research that had started with, among others, the 1937 Fiat 508 CS and the 1940 Alfa Romeo 2500 SS Touring Mille Miglia. In 1947, Vignale and Battista "Pinin" Farina took over for Giacosa and Savonuzzi, whose combined talents had carefully prepared the way for Farina to complete the work, with a very successful outcome. This brilliant designer and coachbuilder from Turin attracted significant international praise. He was also able to develop the initial creation of the 202 according to its successive versions, of which just 170 copies would be produced in a shared market with Vignale, who had left Farina to start his own coachbuilding workshop.

The 202 had enjoyed limited success, in part due to its expense and the lack of power from its small engine. In 1952, Cisitalia launched the 202D model in an attempt to reinvigorate the rapidly



The 202D Competizione ditched the 1.1-liter Fiat engine for a 2.8-liter four built by racing-boat engine firm BPM Motori Marini. This 160-hp OHV unit had a crossflow head and twin-choke Weber carbs. So outfitted, the car reportedly topped 130 mph.

declining brand. Following serious financial setbacks, Piero Dusio moved from Italy to settle in Argentina, leaving his son Carlo the difficult task of saving what he could of the company at home. Clearly, the 202's 1,100-cc engine was not robust enough to meet the growing appetite of fans of the *gran turismo*. Choosing a new more powerful, yet still affordable, engine was not easy when Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, and Maserati dominated that field with their expensive and higher-output, if delicate, engines.

It was French champion driver Charles Pozzi, well versed in the world of motorboat competition, who suggested sourcing engines from BPM Motori Marini, the best Italian manufacturer of rugged race-boat powerplants. The Botta Puricelli Milano company, founded in 1932, already had an outstanding track record with several world records and masses of victories. The first swap of an engine from the water to the ground was attempted with a 2.0-liter four-cylinder BPM into the D46. Cisitalia followed this with the 202D, which housed a 2,772-cc MS Sport four-cylinder, built for the automaker under license; this OHV unit featured an 89 x 110-mm (3.50 x 4.33-in) bore and stroke, hemispherical combustion chambers, and an 8.5:1 compression ratio. With two twin-choke Weber 40 DCO 2SP carburetors, it made 160 hp at 5,300 rpm, that power sent to the rear wheels through a four-speed manual transaxle.

Cloaked in light alloy coachwork by Giovanni Farina's Carrozzeria Stabilimenti Farina, this streamlined two-seater rode on a 96.45-inch wheelbase. Its four-lug, 15-inch steel wheels mounted Pirelli 165 x 400 tires whose movements were controlled by an independent wishbone front suspension and De Dion rear axle, with a transverse leaf spring and two telescopic shock absorbers damping the former and longitudinal leaf springs and four telescopic shocks the latter. It was notable that this car was manufactured using an Aurelia B20 rear axle, so Dusio's latest creation shared that Lancia's 50.59-inch rear track measurement. The 1,873-pound berlinetta *Competizione*





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(competition) had a claimed maximum speed of 220 km/h, or 137 mph; it was presented at the 1952 Geneva Motor Show, and a few weeks later, taken to the Mille Miglia.

To emphasize Cisitalia's new ambitions, Carlo Dusio teamed up with his father, who had returned from Argentina to support the Cisitalia effort. The 202D Competizione factory model, with a body modified in several areas compared to the Fiat-engined 202 by Pinin Farina, wore the race number 621. This car looked good in its category, but while contesting a fleet of Ferraris, it was forced to retire when its single-disc clutch failed; that part was probably undersized to handle the torque of the rugged marine BPM engine. Indeed, the engine had been designed to run at full speed for hours and developed great torque even at low revs, as needed to turn the race-boat propeller slowed by water as the buoys were rounded. However, despite having to drop out of the race without losing face, this engine would extend the life of the newest Cisitalia 202 variant by a few months.

This latest version is extremely rare because just five BPM-powered 202D's were ever produced. Of those three coupes and two open-top spiders (one of which won several races with Swiss driver Pierre Didisheim at the wheel), only two examples survive today, including the one presented here: none other than the personal/factory car that Piero and Carlo Dusio used in their ultimate challenge of the 1952 Mille Miglia. To underscore its uniqueness, it's important to note that this chassis, number 189, with BPM engine number 1815, has only had few owners, the penultimate one being the aforementioned Nino Balestra, the most demanding researcher and historian of the firm. The remarkable documentation that accompanies this special model further strengthens its authenticity and originality.

This berlinetta Competizione, perfectly accomplished in both finish and performance, brought the short career of Cisitalia to a beautiful and elegant end. Arthur Drexler, who served as director of the Museum of Modern Art when a 202 was displayed there for the first time in

1951, described it as "sculpture in motion." In putting the 202 on a pedestal so early in its life, Drexler recognized the timeless nature of the masterpiece which, more than 65 years later, still charms with its delicate lines. In addition, it drives perfectly in its 2.8-liter "D" version, thanks to its engine created by the BPM firm that already held more than 40 world speed records when the Dusios took to the roads of the Mille Miglia. Here, art and sport came together in one pleasurable, refined gesture, touring behind the wheel. 🏁



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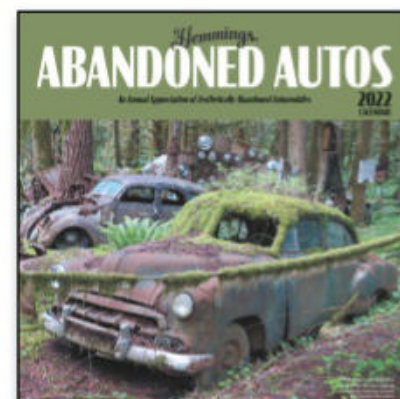
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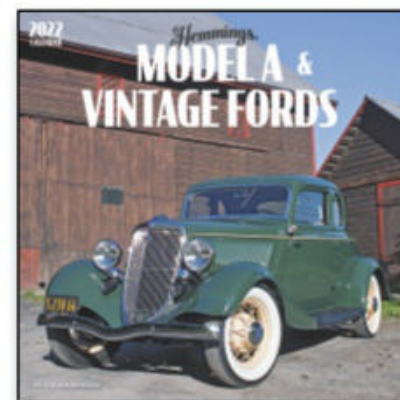
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Shining Star



Ordered new and later restored, this '61 Galaxie Starliner has become a family heirloom

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK

In the late 1950s and early '60s, it was the full-size cars offered by the Big Three manufacturers that kept enthusiasts coming back for more. By 1960, the intermediates were still a few years away from entering production and Ford was now offering the less-than-thrilling compact Falcon, but with models like the Galaxie Sunliner and Starliner, there was still plenty to get excited about within the Blue Oval camp. When Robert Fuchs, a self-employed farmer from Arlington, Nebraska, first began seeing ads for the Ford Starliner, it was love at first sight.

"I graduated from Arlington High School in May of 1961 and decided to treat myself to a graduation present by ordering a new Starliner," Robert recalls. "Dad and I went to Diers Ford in Fremont, Nebraska, and we were told that the assembly plant was ending production, so they probably would not be able to fill any more orders for the remainder of the '61 model run. I was really disappointed!"

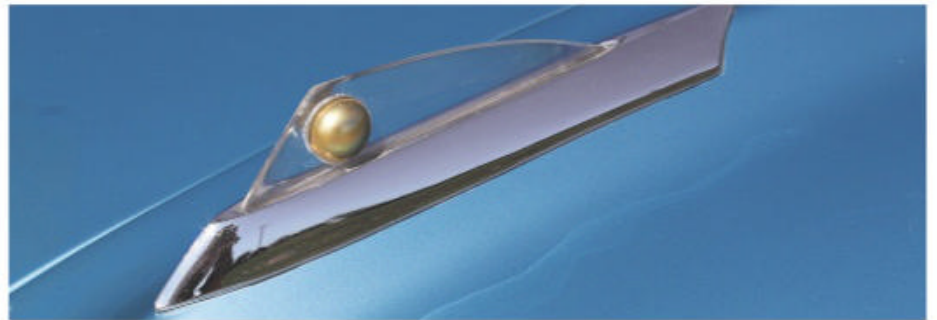
Not to be deterred, Robert and his dad pushed harder on the salesman, who soon said that the dealership had placed an inventory order for one in white with a red interior and that he might be able to make some last-minute changes. "I wanted a blue one instead, and the salesman said he would call the Twin Cities plant and call us back later in the day," Robert says. "True to his word, the salesman called back in an hour and said they had six Starliners left on the assembly line, and he had made arrangements that mine would be the last one assembled and as I had ordered it, in blue with a blue interior."

As promised, this 1961 Ford Starliner was the last car off the assembly line at the Twin Cities, Minnesota plant for the 1961 run, and Robert took delivery on July 3 of that year. The Starliner came equipped from the factory with the 352-cu.in. V-8, three-speed column-shifted manual transmission, 7.50 x 14 Goodyear white-sidewall tires, hub caps, backup lamps, cloth and vinyl bench seats, padded dash and visors, full carpeting, tinted glass all around, cigarette lighter, clock, push-button AM radio, and the all-important Cambridge Blue exterior paint. Base price was \$2,730 and with options and destination charge the final MSRP

was \$3,056. Robert was given \$600 in trade for his 1952 Ford Victoria, his high school car.

With all-new styling for 1961, the Galaxie Starliner (a two-door hardtop with semi-fastback roofline) was more rounded, sleeker, and much more cleanly styled than the previous year. The model retained a few of the 1960 design cues such as the lower beltline trim, bright-metal rock guards behind the rear wheel openings, and the signature trio of star emblems on the C-pillars. Although the Starliner still had rear quarter fins that were popular in the late '50s, they were much smaller and clearly understated.

The car's real beauty, however, stood out in the rear, with jet-age-styled taillamps that contained backup lamps centered within. All Starliners rode on a 119-inch wheelbase and used upper and lower A-arms and coil springs up front and a live axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs at the rear. Just 29,669 Starliners



Robert scored these NOS fender emblems years ago, but they still set him back \$500 for the set.



A major styling cue on the Starliner was these star emblems running down the C-pillar.





In the summer of 1962, Robert installed a Borg-Warner four-speed kit from Ford and was running bare steel wheels, which were in style at that time.

were produced in 1961, making them a rare sight today.

Engine choices for the year included a 223-cu.in. inline-six (with 135 hp), a 292-cu.in. V-8 (with 175 hp), a 352-cu.in. V-8 (with 220, 235, 300, or 360 hp), and the all new 390-cu.in. V-8 (with 300, 375, or 401 hp). Only two transmissions were available: the three-speed manual and the three-speed Cruise-O-Matic automatic, and both were column shifted only.

"Shortly after delivery, I was told that Ford was offering a

dealer-installed four-speed, which sounded pretty good to me," Robert says. "Borg-Warner was unable to maintain the expected demand if offered as a regular factory option, so it was only offered as a dealer-install or available in kit form for just \$235."

So, in July 1962, Robert purchased and installed a kit himself. It included the new Borg-Warner transmission, four-speed shifter, backup lamp switch, "dummy" tube to replace the column-shifted unit, and a new housing for the floor-shift

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The original 220-hp 352-cu.in. V-8 did not require a major rebuild, even though it had over 213,000 miles on the clock before the restoration began.

location. "Aside from the four-speed, the only other additions I have made since purchase were a factory reverb and rear speaker and a set of trim rings for the wheels," he says. "Seems I have always resisted the temptation to do any major modifications and instead kept it stock, as-built."

Robert's fast Ford soon became he and his wife Cheryl's date car, prior to their marriage in 1967. "She didn't know what kind of car I drove until our first date, but once she saw the Starliner, she said that I was a keeper," Robert recalls. "We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in 2017 at our local church. The car was parked outside, and it was a big hit!"

The Fuchs continued using the Starliner for frontline duty until 1971, when it officially became the family's second car, eventually driving it less and less but still racking up nearly 200,000 miles on the odometer. Not long after it was stored away in their shed, and Robert decided to keep and eventually fix up the old Ford. It was at this time, in the early '70s, that he also started searching for various components he would need for the restoration. Over the next couple of years, several parts were located through *Hemmings Motor News*, including a set of rocker panels and a few patch panels. Robert was also able to purchase several NOS pieces, like the lower rear quarter rock shields, three-piece rear tail panel, front grille, taillamp buckets, front parking lamps, and a set of upper front fender emblems, which set him back \$500 for the set.

Finally, in 1975, Robert began the three-year body-on-frame restoration of his beloved '61 Starliner, starting with disassembly, which he did himself. "I took the car to Gene Witthen's body shop, in my hometown of Arlington, for the body and paint work," he recalls. "The body was in pretty good shape with only some rust in the usual places, like the lower rear quarters, door bottoms, and lower front fenders."

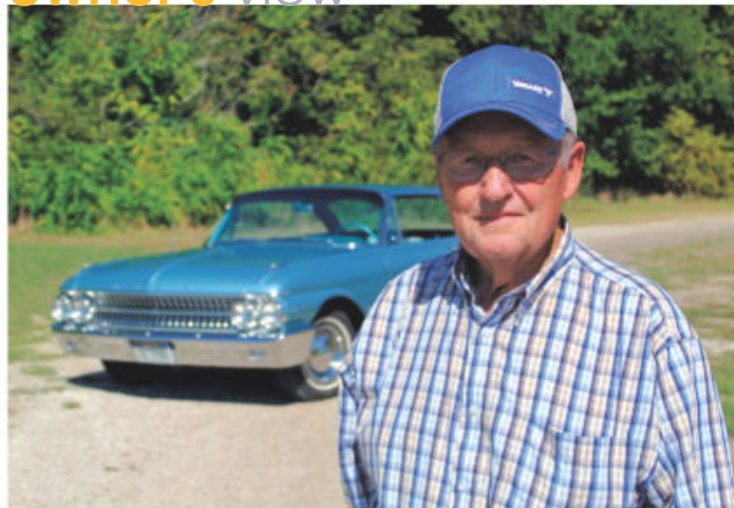
Gene went to work replacing the rocker panels and sectioning in the patch panels that Robert had collected, repairing other miscellaneous body issues he came across. Once all the bodywork was completed and it was straight, primed, and blocked, multiple coats of DuPont lacquer were sprayed in the original Cambridge Blue, then lightly sanded



and sprayed with three coats of clear. After sufficient cure, the clearcoat was machine compounded and polished. "It's amazing how well this lacquer paint job has held up in the past 45 years or so," Robert remarks. "It looks as good today as it did the year it was painted."

It wasn't long before the car was back home in Robert's shop, and he had the original glass reinstalled. "I spent a lot of time getting the car reassembled and finding the necessary parts," Robert commented. "I had Lincoln Plating Company in Lincoln do the bumper rechroming and some trim anodizing; most of the stainless polishing was done by Industrial Plating in Omaha. The car's exterior came together pretty quickly with many of the NOS pieces I had collected."

Even though Robert had decided not to do a full body-off-frame restoration, he still spent many hours under the car painting and detailing the chassis and body underside. Several chassis and suspension components were also replaced, including the coil springs, shocks, brakes, brake lines, and fuel lines. "I was also able to locate an NOS fuel tank and sender from a guy in Minneapolis," Robert recalls.



I've always loved the Starliner, with its great body styling, clean lines, and smooth ride, and it's hard to believe that I ordered it and bought it new and have owned it now for over 60 years. We have had a lot of fun and created some wonderful memories in this car, and it is a big part of our family. Since my wife Cheryl and I dated in it, we also have a great sentimental attachment to the car. — Robert Fuchs



Robert soon went to work on the Starliner's interior. "The first thing I did was remove and clean the factory gauges and switches, then repaint the lower dash, door and quarter caps, and pillar covers in the same exterior blue lacquer," he says. "I was pretty confident in my painting skills at this point, having painted dozens of tractors for an implement dealer in Valley, Nebraska."

The original padded dash, headliner, interior door and quarter panels, and rear package tray were in great shape and next to go back in. "I was also able to source the original date-coded cloth and vinyl seat material from CMS in Portland, Oregon," Robert says. "Sky's Seat Cover Upholstery in Fremont, Nebraska, replaced the front seat upholstery and floor carpeting. The original backseat was in great shape and didn't need replacement."

To put the final touches on the interior, Robert was able to locate (through *Hemmings*) an NOS steering wheel from a guy whose wife had worked at one of the manufacturing plants that

supplied Ford. "He said when his wife had retired from the plant, she was given a dozen different steering wheels as a remembrance of her days working the line," Robert says. "I purchased one that he had in Mint Green, then scuffed and painted it to match. The original chrome horn ring and horn button were still in good shape and look great on the wheel."

As mentioned previously, the 1961 Starliner is equipped with Ford Motor Company's Thunderbird 352-cu.in. two-barrel V-8. First introduced in 1958, the 352 would stay in the Ford lineup through 1966 and was part of the long-running (1958-'76) FE series of engines, said to refer to "Ford/Edsel." The engine had a bore and stroke of 4.00 x 3.50 inches, and in two-barrel form with 8.9:1 compression, netted 220 hp at 4,300 rpm with 336 lb-ft of torque at 2,600 rpm.

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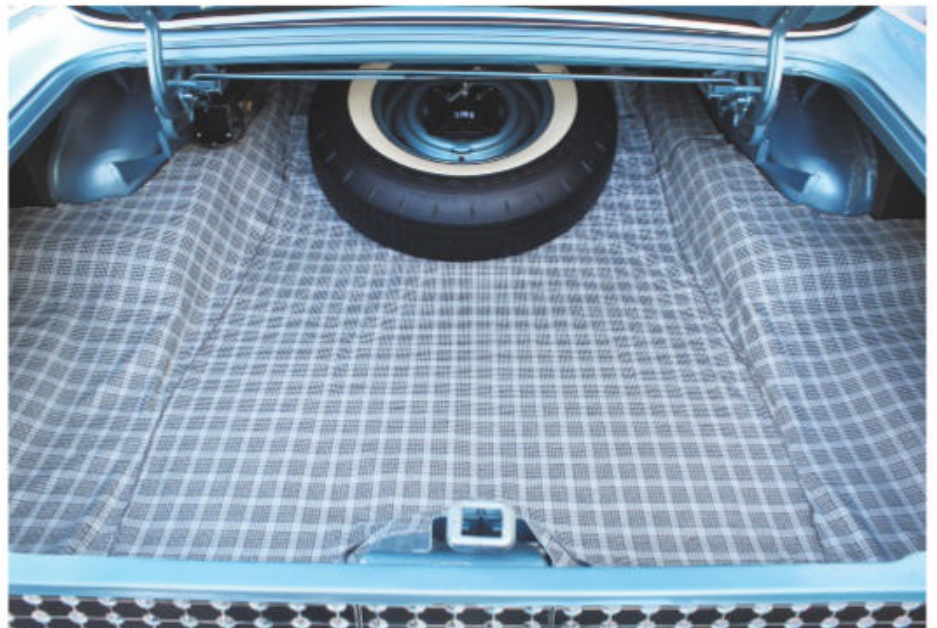


Most of the interior is original, except for new carpeting and new front seat upholstery, which used date-coded materials. An NOS steering wheel was also sourced and painted to match.



Not available at the factory, this Borg-Warner four-speed was a “dealer install” option, but it could also be purchased in kit form from the dealer and installed by the owner, as in this case.

The original engine was carefully torn down and inspected for wear by Robert. “Even though the engine had very high mileage, it was still within tolerances, which was amazing,” he says. “I was always good about following the manufacturer’s maintenance schedule, and perhaps this was the payback!” The engine did not require boring of the cylinders or cylinder head or valve work, and was simply cleaned and reassembled using the original pistons, rods, rod bearings, camshaft, and crankshaft. As part of the reassembly, new gaskets and seals were used when final painting and detailing were performed. The original two-barrel



The original 7.50 x 14 Goodyear spare still resides in the trunk. Robert added the reverb unit (next to the tire) later, along with a rear speaker.

carb was also cleaned and rebuilt. Completing the drivetrain, the four-speed Borg-Warner transmission was also thoroughly cleaned and inspected, and a first-gear synchronizer was replaced. The rear axle was still in good working condition, and required just a thorough cleaning, new fluids, seals, and a bit of detailing.

The Starliner’s restoration was completed mid-summer 1978, and Robert wasted no time taking it to area car shows; over the years he’s collected nearly 200 trophies for his efforts. “I really enjoy going to these shows and cruises, and meeting so many nice people,” Robert says. “I display the car with my original window sticker with the \$3,056 price; the Starliner is always an attention getter.” Seeing Robert’s early-’60s example of Ford Motor Company’s “Total Performance” era was a pleasure. Look closely and you would never know that the restoration was done some 45 years ago. It’s still the “Star” of the show. 🏆

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Second Act

A 1937 Chevrolet ½-ton leaves La La Land to shine like a star

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY KENT ZIMMERMAN



As found via an internet forum, this 1937 Chevrolet pickup was solid but partially disassembled, not running, and in need of a complete makeover.

TV has taught us to expect certain things from Southern California's Beverly Hills: swimming pools, movie stars, and *Real Housewives*, just to name a few.

What you might not expect to find is a scruffy, partially disassembled 1937 Chevrolet ½-ton pickup lying in wait among the mansions and designer handbag stores. But it was there—within the TV-famous 90210 zip code—that old-truck hobbyist and retired pathologist Kent Zimmerman discovered this solid, complete, but (formerly) needy example of Chevrolet's GC series.

Kent and his son Scott, like many Chevy truck enthusiasts, are members of the online community *Stovebolt.com*, which is devoted to pre-'73 GM trucks. Back in 2015, a listing for this pickup popped up on the website, and the Zimmermans wasted no time inquiring.

"I had done a body-off restoration on a 1950 Chevrolet cabover," Kent says. "It was a four-year project that I'd been done with for about three years, and I was looking for something else to do. I frequent *Stovebolt.com* and one of the members of that forum advertised this truck at sort of a giveaway price. I was very interested—I talked to him on the phone and then my son and I made the trip out."

What the Zimmermans found upon arrival was a solid, mostly intact pickup. It was well worth restoring, though a bit of a basket case.

"It had probably sat for six years," Kent says. "(The seller) had taken off the front clip, the radiator had been restored, and he'd painted the engine. All the glass was out, and it had no wiring."

The truck was also missing the original seat assembly—a bench divided into two sections with adjustable cushions and backs. In these pickups, the fuel filler was accessed by raising the passenger side seat cushion and unscrewing a bung on the top of the tank. The original fuel tank, too, had gone missing in action and a replacement was hung off the frame in the rear. To accommodate a filler pipe, a hole was hacked in the passenger's-side rear fender. Someone had also removed the truck's "Monorail" spare tire carrier—most likely to make room for the relocated fuel tank. The sliding carrier was designed to make raising and lowering the spare tire under the truck easier on the operator and is nearly impossible to find today. (Kent has yet to locate one.)

"I knew it'd be a project and it took me four years," Kent says. "This wasn't something for a beginner because you don't really have anything to go by."

Kent and Scott loaded the '37 on a trailer, then filled the bed of Kent's pickup, as well as the rear of the cab, with boxes of parts and headed for his place in Arizona. Once home, first on Kent's agenda was to get the truck's engine running.

From the factory, this pickup was powered by the new-for-'37 216.5-cu.in. six—the only engine offered in the Chevrolet trucks that year. The 216 was a more robust engine than its 206.8-cu.in. predecessor. The block was 2 inches shorter, with full-length water jackets, and its crankshaft spun in four main bearings. The oiling system, however, was still a low-pressure arrangement that Chevrolet described as "four-way" lubrication.

The 216 also had a shorter stroke than its predecessor, at 3¾ inches versus the 4-inch swing of the 207, but a larger 3½-inch bore than the earlier six's 3⅝-inch openings. For extra oomph, Chevrolet boosted the compression ratio a quarter of a point from 6:1 to 6.25:1. (Later 216s would have 6.5:1 compression). The new engine was factory rated at 78 hp at 3,200 rpm and 170 lb-ft of torque. (In passenger cars, it was rated at 85 hp and 170 lb-ft of torque.) The engine in Kent's truck was a 216, but it was a 1940-vintage engine that had been substituted for the original at some point. The six started and ran, but not without issues.

"I got it running, but it seemed to miss," Kent says. "I did a compression test, and five cylinders were good, but one had zero compression. It turned out to be a cracked head through the exhaust valve and it wouldn't seal."

Cracked heads on early Chevrolet stovebolts are a common problem, so finding a good used casting can take some hunting. Luckily, Kent was able to turn a 216 head up in fairly short order.

"I found a 216 head on eBay that was the right era for my 1940 engine," he says. "Since the engine had been replaced, this wasn't going to be numbers matching."

After the compression test, Kent removed the engine from the truck's frame and opened it up for inspection. He decided the short block was in solid condition and could be reused without a rebuild.

"A friend rebuilt the replacement head for me with new valves," Kent says. "After I got the original head off, we pulled the oil pan and looked at a couple of the main bearings. They looked pretty good, so we just buttoned it up and put it back together. My goal was to maybe get 10,000 miles out of the engine and that'd be good enough, but it runs fantastic."

The truck's transmission was the optional GKT-134 four-speed—a "crash



In 2015, father and son team Kent (right) and Scott (left) Zimmerman pause for a photo after loading up Kent's 1937 Chevrolet project truck and before heading back to Arizona from Beverly Hills, California.



A compression test on the truck's 216-cu.in. six-cylinder revealed a dead cylinder, which turned out to be caused by a cracked cylinder head. Kent pulled the head and removed the engine for further inspection.



The truck's engine wasn't the original, but a 1940-vintage equivalent. Kent was able to track down a circa-1940 head that a friend reconditioned. It was then bolted to the short block, which turned out to be in good shape.



The original four-speed transmission was rusty inside from sitting with water in it, but rebuildable. Kent picked up a used four-speed and installed it to get the truck running, then eventually rebuilt this one.



The 216, with fresh paint and a replacement head, fired up, ran great, and passed a vacuum test with flying colors. A stock Carter downdraft feeds the mix. An accessory oil filter is one of the few updates.



With the refinished chassis assembled and new Cunifer brake lines installed, Kent test drove the truck's running gear with a milk crate standing in for a seat and a small gas can providing the fuel.



The original box was deemed too beat up to restore, so Kent purchased a reproduction from Mar-K along with Southern yellow pine flooring and new bed strips.



After welding in new front cab corners and repairing some rust on the rear of the cab as well as the panel at the base of the radiator, Kent assembled the body on the chassis for its trip to the body shop.



The crew at Prescott Hot Rods in Prescott, Arizona, sanded off the truck's paint and primer, then worked all the panels to get them smooth and straight in preparation for paint.



After body work, with the truck assembled to ensure tight panel alignment, the body was torn down for its date in the paint booth. It was shot in single-stage urethane matching Chevrolet Brewster Green.



Prescott Hot Rods carefully reassembled the freshly painted truck, pictured here waiting for a lift home. It was running and driving at this point, needing just final interior and trim assembly.



The dash and all of the metal interior panels were sent out for powder coating in the correct color and wrinkle finish with powder sold by Jim Carter Truck Parts specifically for old Chevy truck cockpits.



By 1937 standards, this was a well-optioned pickup boasting a four-speed manual transmission and a heater. Fuel tank access lies beneath the passenger seat cushion. The seat, it's base and the tank were all missing when the project began.

box" with no synchronizers. Close inspection revealed that it, too, needed some TLC.

"When I drained the transmission, a quart of water came out and almost no oil," Kent says. Eventually Kent would rebuild that transmission but, in the interim, he went with a good used replacement Chevrolet four-speed gear-box of the same period.

As is so often the case with old haulers, the pickup's rear axle told a tale of heavy use.

"The rear differential was so worn out it was ready to fall apart," Kent says. So, he hunted up a replacement and used that axle instead.

With the drivetrain sorted, Kent turned his attention to the body and underpinnings. Chevrolet's half-ton chassis was completely redesigned for the 1937 model year and built rugged enough for light chores. The reinforced frame rails were made from $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch, #1025 hot-rolled pressed steel, measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ by $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Tying the frame together were five stout crossmembers, plus there were beefed-up engine mounts, spring hangers, and steering brackets. Once it was torn down, Kent sent his truck's frame out to a powder coater to be stripped and refinished in semi-gloss black.

While the frame was out for a makeover, Kent also had the '37's eight-leaf front and rear springs reconditioned, and its Delco lever-action hydraulic shocks rebuilt. The front and rear axles he refinished himself in semi-gloss enamel paint. During the reassembly, Kent

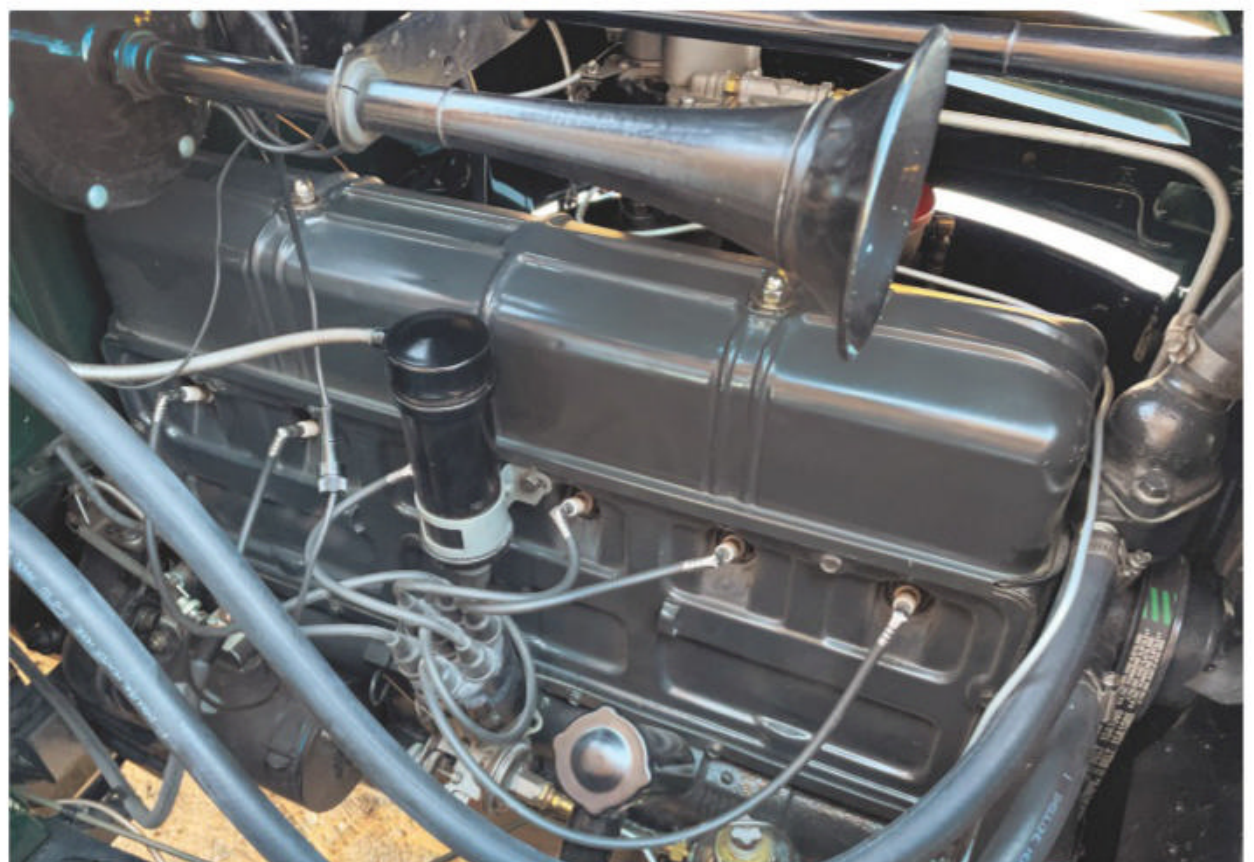


fashioned his own brake lines for the truck using a roll of Cunifer tubing. Cunifer is an alloy of copper, nickel, and iron that is rust resistant inside and out, like stainless, but far easier than steel to shape and flare. For stopping power, Chevrolet's 1937 light trucks relied on 11-inch hydraulic drum brakes, borrowed from the company's passenger-car line, fitted with $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-wide linings front and rear. Kent rebuilt the binders on his truck to driving condition, and to make sure they'd have the grip they'd need, he swapped out the bias-plies for a set of Coker radials.

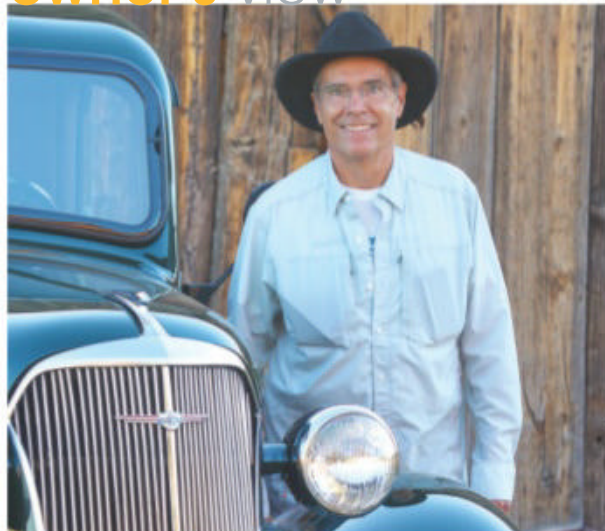
The '37's fenders, hood, and doors were solid, but the cab needed some rust repair. Kent tackled that himself, MIG welding in new lower front corners as well as a section in the rear of the cab. Kent also fashioned a repair panel out of a donor piece to restore the sheet-metal "chin" at the base of the truck's grille (where the hole for the crank start is located). At some point in the truck's life, someone cut a large opening in that panel, most likely so that they could more easily remove the grille. Someone along the line had also installed sealed-beam headlamps in the truck's stock buckets. Kent removed the updated lamps, and purchased a set of used reflectors, which he sent to a local silversmith for replating. He then reinstalled the refurbished reflectors behind correct 6-volt bulbs.

In order to restore the fuel tank to its original location, Kent located another cab and removed the seat riser that houses the tank, then welded that into his '37's cab. Moving to the rear, Kent decided that the box, while rust-free, had hauled a few too many loads to ever look like new again, so he bought a reproduction unit with a new wooden floor, from Mar-K.

"The original box was fairly intact but beat to death," he says. "Someone had welded angle iron to the front panel to strengthen it. It's also a single-wall design, so it would be difficult to make both sides (inside and out of the box sides) look good, so I went with a new Mar-K box. I was so impressed with the quality of the bed. It dropped on and the holes lined up without any tweaking. The bed floor was



Optional dual-trumpet, 6-volt electric horns (one in the foreground, the second is partially visible at the top of the frame) can blare out a mighty two-tone honk when needed.



I do errands in this truck and it's a delight to drive. My theory about these old trucks is that you have to use them. They don't have PCV systems, so the crankcase isn't ventilated well, and the oil gets contaminated by gasoline if they idle too much, so you need to drive them, get them hot and exercise everything. — *Kent Zimmerman*

yellow pine—beautiful wood. It broke my heart to paint it black because it was stunningly straight wood.”

With the truck's sheetmetal in order, Kent reassembled the body on the chassis—which by then was running and yard driving—and delivered it to the crew at Prescott Hot Rods. They hand stripped the paint and primer that was on the '37, repaired the makeshift fuel filler hole that had been cut into the rear fender, and massaged the truck's panels smooth before applying multiple coats of high-build primer. After hours of block sanding to get the truck's panels laser straight, they applied single-stage urethane paint matching the original Brewster Green finish.

"I didn't want to use base coat/clear coat paint because it wouldn't have looked like a finish that belongs on an old truck," Kent says.

While the bodywork was progressing, Kent sent all of the removable metal interior panels and the dash out to be powder coated using a wrinkle-finish powder, in the correct color, supplied by Jim Carter Truck Parts for early Chevrolet

trucks. Kent also purchased a DIY powder-coating kit and refinished all of the heads of the interior screws at home using the same powder, then baked the hardware in a toaster oven.

“When I got the truck back from the painter, I installed the dashboard with the gauges and the rest of the interior panels. It took me about a month to put it back together.”

Today, this former recluse once tucked away in Beverly Hills regularly stars in light trucking tasks around its home in the Southwest. It's far removed from the swimming pools and movie stars, but Kent reports that it does seem to have some pull with housewives.

"I cannot drive that truck into town without getting thumbs ups," Kent says, "or without ladies coming up to tell me how cute my truck is." 🙄



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Mecum Auctions, Chattanooga 2021

Inaugural Tennessee sale yields an \$18.7 million tally

AFTER SEVERAL STELLAR ROUNDS OF SALES LAST SPRING AND SUMMER, Mecum Auctions began early fall with its first-ever event in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on October 15-16, 2021. The auction was held in conjunction with what was effectively—due to the pandemic conditions of 2020—the second-annual Chattanooga Motorcar Festival. Thus, the setting was ideal for in-person bidding and spectating alike, with all attendees witnessing a catalog of 543 vehicles cross the block at the city’s convention center.

Leading the charge to the top of the sales chart was a 2021 Mercedes-Benz G550 “Brabus Edition” that realized

\$302,500, followed by an LS3-powered—albeit stock-ish looking—1958 Chevrolet Corvette that brought \$264,000. Another restomod Corvette, a 1963 split window coupe, netted third overall with a sale price of \$214,500. A fast Ford raced its way into fourth: a 1968 Shelby G.T. 500KR convertible, which commanded \$176,000. Many lots, however, were factory-stock examples from all eras, including a trio of special Fords that helped Mecum gross \$18.7 million, with a respectable 84 percent sell-through rate. For complete results, and a comprehensive list of upcoming sales, visit mecum.com.



1939 FORD V-8 STATION WAGON

Reserve: Undisclosed **Avg. Market Range:**
High Bid: \$50,000 (not sold) \$59,000 - \$120,000

It’s difficult to discuss wood-bodied station wagons without mentioning Ford’s success in this market segment. Ford’s “woodies” are arguably the most iconic, no matter what model year they were constructed. Some have been modified, but others, like this 1939 V-8 Station Wagon, have been restored to an incredibly high standard. When that process was completed went unmentioned within the catalog listing, but the end result did net the owner an AACA National First Place afterwards. Complete with a well-detailed, period-correct engine and seating for eight, there was nary a nit to hold this one back from landing in the sold column. It was a wise choice to uphold the reserve.



1963 FORD FALCON

Reserve: Undisclosed **Avg. Market Range:**
Selling Price: \$36,300 \$15,000 - \$25,000

Well after the use of wood in auto production had become a thing of the past, Ford continued to produce station wagons in all sizes, as depicted by this four-door Falcon Deluxe, complete with optional roof rack, a 260-cu.in. V-8 and Ford-O-Matic transmission. According to the catalog, this cargo carrier was also presented in “highly original condition, carefully preserved by previous owners.” Maintenance items—the fuel pump and brakes—had been replaced, as had the rear bumper; the fuel tank was cleaned. One value guide offered that the best Deluxe four-door wagons fetch \$41,000, so perhaps the price paid shouldn’t trigger sticker shock.



1978 FORD PINTO

Reserve: Undisclosed **Avg. Market Range:**
Selling Price: \$12,650 \$8,000 - \$15,000

Ford’s subcompact Pinto still gets a bad rap among casual enthusiasts, despite the fact that Dearborn sold tons of ‘em, including wagons. And, for a brief time, the factory even gussied up Pintos into Cruising Wagons, which was an attempt to snag hold of a piece of the van craze. Aside from the tinted fishbowl windows on the rear flanks, the package also included sport mirrors, styled wheels, and a front spoiler, along with wild graphics, which were a delete option checked off when this one was ordered from a California dealership. With just 78,000 miles at its consignment and “mostly original paint,” the Pinto also had documentation confirming its authenticity.

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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RM Sotheby's Open Roads Results

THE FINAL EDITION OF RM SOTHEBY'S ONLINE-ONLY OPEN ROADS AUCTION TOOK PLACE IN December 2021, with sales reaching \$2.7 million and a sell-through of 80 percent. More than 60 cars were available, and among those to find a new home was a 1961 Imperial Crown convertible. It was part of a Swedish collection for the last quarter-century, and it was thought to be one of 429 produced that model year. The thorough restoration saw the body removed from the frame and stripped to bare metal. The parts used were NOS, sourced from the U.S., and some of the interior included donated parts from other Imperial Crowns. The 413-cu.in. V-8 engine and TorqueFlite transmission were rebuilt, and the car was finished in period-correct Teal Blue with a black canvas top. Power accessories included the brakes, steering, windows, seat, and top, and the Imperial rode on wide-whitewall tires. The restoration wrapped up in 2011, and the American convertible was a popular draw at several events in Sweden. The final bid was €125,600, or approximately \$142,600 at the time of the auction.

Also selling was a 1935 Auburn Eight Supercharged Cabriolet, formerly owned by Jim Miller and the Blackhawk Collection. The car was thought to be a legitimate cabriolet without any modifications or alterations. It was refinished in a black and red color scheme nearly a decade ago, and the red leather interior was correctly patterned. The correct "Dual Ratio" rear axle, a standard feature on the supercharged Auburns, was also present. It was adorned with an AM radio, wipers, gauges, and turn signals—all of which were fully functional—and it rode on rare, period-correct polished disc wheels. The Auburn spent time overseas in 2014 but had since been returned to the United States. It sold for \$143,000.


Full results of the December Open Roads Auction are now available at rmsothebys.com.

Barrett-Jackson Returns to Palm Beach

THOUGH COVID-19 FORCED THE CANCELLATION OF BARRETT-JACKSON'S 2020 AND 2021 Palm Beach Auctions, the 2022 sale is still a go as of this writing. The 2019 event was a large success, with \$30.18 million in total sales and a 98.9 percent sell-through rate. When all results were tabulated, 632 cars changed hands at the South Florida Fairgrounds in West Palm Beach.

"Last year we postponed our Palm Beach Auction as a precaution for the health and safety of our guests," said Craig Jackson, chairman and CEO of Barrett-Jackson. "We can't express how excited we are to bring the Barrett-Jackson experience back to the Sunshine State with the incredible collector car community in South Florida."

Expect to see larger numbers at this year's auction, which will take place April 7-9. Advance tickets are available at a discount and consignments are presently being accepted. Visit barrett-jackson.com for more information.

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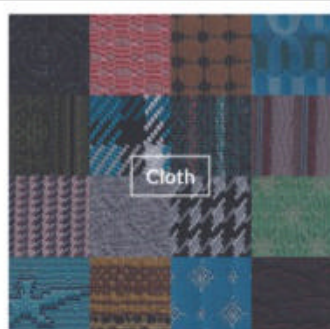
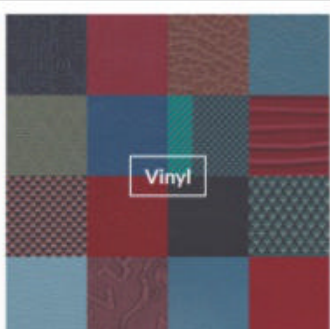

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the seller pays only a \$99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments,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



1959 MERCEDES-BENZ 190 SL

Reserve: \$175,000

Recent Market Range:

Selling Price: \$210,000

\$170,230-\$206,350

This beautiful 190 SL, restored by a noted specialist in Germany, turned out to be a big bell-ringer at auction. Showing a mere 25 miles on its odometer, the Mercedes-Benz was little used after its 2014 restoration and presented like new from every angle. Its paint, top, and leather-trimmed cabin looked showroom fresh, with period-fitted luggage adding an upscale touring touch. Per the seller, the sole interior demerit was a faulty fuel gauge. The rebuilt, factory-installed four-cylinder and four-speed manual looked as they should, and the undercarriage was spotless. Intense last-minute bidding on this baby SL caused six time extensions.



1977 FORD BRONCO

Reserve: \$43,000

Recent Market Range:

Selling Price: \$53,025

\$47,120-\$69,220

The reintroduction of the historic Ford nameplate on a vehicle that recalls the original in looks and spirit has sparked full-blown Bronco fever in America. This 4x4 dates from the last year of first-gen Bronco production and was said to retain its factory-applied finishes and components, from the paint and Special Décor Group graphics to the interior vinyl and removable hard roof. The 302-cu.in. V-8 had 52,120 miles on it, and demerits included minor rust in the front fenders, a bit of failed seat foam and scuffed vinyl, and surface corrosion on underbody surfaces. The seller responded to bidder questions, and bidders prompted no fewer than 10 extensions of the auction action.



1932 MARMON 8-125

Reserve: \$25,000

Recent Market Range:

Selling Price: \$53,025

\$23,220-\$36,250

Survivors of the low-production, high-end Marmon marque are few and far between, especially late examples like this 1932 8-125 convertible coupe, which its seller claimed was one of five known to remain. The car benefitted from ongoing refurbishment that included a fully rebuilt 125-hp straight-eight engine, restored instrumentation, and a replacement wiring harness. Its paint and interior appeared older, with good chrome but chipped lacquer, minor surface corrosion, tired carpeting, and split rumble-seat upholstery. This regal Marmon is prime fodder for a comprehensive restoration, and it sold after an impressive 56 bids, raking in more than double its reserve.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price*: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee
(*sold as a Make Offer listing 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



1950 FORD F-1

Reserve: \$23,500

Selling Price: \$39,375

Recent Market Range:

\$22,750-\$34,140

A beautiful blue brute, this early postwar F-1 pickup was said to have enjoyed a factory-correct body-off restoration more than 20 years ago and was kept in top condition since. The paint was noted to contain only minor blemishes, while the trim remained in fine shape and the bed was lined with finished red oak. The interior presented as original, with an unmarked vinyl bench seat and working heater. The undercarriage contained recently replaced shocks and tie-rod ends and looked virtually spotless, although the bias-ply tires were of indeterminate age. This truck caught people's attention, with bidding extended seven times for a great result.



1935 DE SOTO AIRFLOW

Reserve: \$15,000

Selling Price: \$19,005

Recent Market Range: \$16,750-\$25,900

De Soto's streamlined Art Deco masterpiece, the Airflow, was a slow seller, and few remain. This handsome four-door example had an older refurbishment, which appeared to have held up fairly well. Its factory engine was replaced with a rebuilt one of the correct type and mated to a driveline with minor fluid leaks. Some of the original paint was still present, though rust had bubbled up in spots. The interior, redone in 2018, looked very nice in pictures, and most fascinating was the first owner's trunk graffiti, which noted where and when the car was originally purchased. The seller responded to bidder inquiries, and the Airflow changed hands for a sum in the middle of its value range.



1952 MG TD

Reserve: \$13,500

Selling Price: \$26,250

Recent Market Range: \$12,150-\$19,420

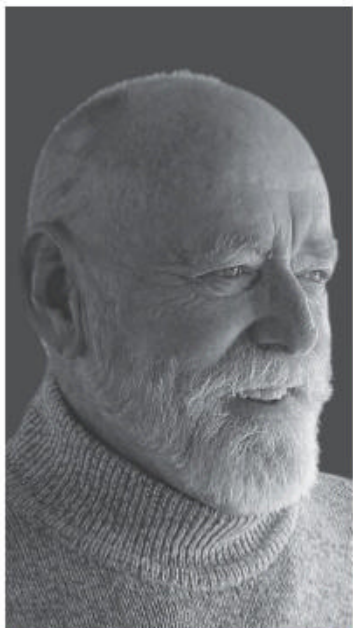
It's not often that a car enjoys seven decades of careful stewardship with a single owner, but that's what this little MG roadster boasted. It was treated to a ground-up restoration in the late 1990s and continually maintained since, with rebuilt SU carburetors and new tires installed two years ago. The paint was described as "very good to excellent," although a small crack in the windscreen was noted. The interior received a custom wood dash and steering wheel, and its leather and carpeting remained in fine shape. The drivetrain had a mysterious oil leak, but a video showed the engine springing to life after a cold start. Bidders appreciated this TD, which nearly doubled its reserve.

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I live in the

past, it is true.

And what's

more, I like to

see it, feel it,

and be

part of it...



Sentimental Journey

I still own a tiny chess set that my father had in World War II, when he was a radioman on a destroyer. The little wooden folding board is about 6 x 6 inches in size, and it has a tiny hole in each square to accommodate the pegs on the bottoms of the pieces. It also has a big coffee stain across the board from when his ship was in a typhoon off of Japan in 1944. My pop was a good chess player. I never beat him even once.

I cherish this memento because it reminds me of him, and it is also an artifact from an important time in history. The past only exists in abstract form for those of us who didn't live it, and there is little concrete evidence – mostly confined to books and old newsreels – that the past ever happened. But to history buffs such as myself, artifacts like my dad's chess set and my old cars are holy because they help explain how we got to where we are in the present, and they allow us to touch, feel, and live the past, if only for a moment.

I feel like that about my 1940 La Salle Series 52 club coupe, too. It was the last year for the marque, and my great aunt Dolly had one. I thought it was the most beautiful car I had ever seen when I was but four years old. I vowed to have one someday, and now I do. And it is just as pretty, powerful, roomy, and quiet as I remember aunt Dolly's being. Its look, feel, and smell take me back to a time when I had to stand up to see over the dashboard. And when I hear it run, I am reminded that two Cadillac engines were put in M5 Stuart tanks during the war.

And then there is my 1955 Chevrolet Beauville station wagon. My father was a Chevy man, and I became one too. When I drive it, I am reminded of the stunning new colors that cars were painted in the Fifties, and all the light and the unlimited visibility thanks to so much glass. I am also impressed with the roominess, and cargo space, and the power of its revolutionary V-8 coupled with the Borg-Warner overdrive. But it also reminds me of how we were worried back then that an atomic Armageddon could occur at any time.

I am reminded of this because of the little CONELRAD (Control of Electromagnetic

Radiation) delta at 640 and 1240 on the AM radio dial, to which we were supposed to tune if the Soviet Union decided to annihilate us. In such an event, the other stations would shut down, and the government would offer helpful hints for dealing with gigantic explosions, mass carnage, and lethal doses of radiation.

I was in junior high school in 1955, and my plan – if the worst were to happen – was to save

a lovely redhead named Linda so she would adore me forever, even though until then I had never had the courage to speak to her. Of course, this was just fantasy, because we lived in an area that would have been ground zero for mass destruction back

then, due to the nearby naval base and several aircraft factories as well.

I also wish I had been able to afford my Beauville wagon in the early Sixties, when I played bass for Mike Martin and the Paragons. I am talking about a bass *fiddle*, not one of those little electric Cracker Jack prizes they call a bass now. It was hard to get a bass fiddle into a full-size American car of the Fifties, and it would be impossible today. Back then, we Paragons wore matching magenta suits and bow ties, and we had fresh haircuts too. It was later that rock bands started dressing like the skinny, homeless psychos who shout at cars at intersections.

I live in the past, it is true. And what's more, I like to see it, feel it, and be part of it, as do most of us who love old cars. Some say there is no time like the present, and that may be true. But there was a past, and I can prove it. Come take a Sunday drive with me in my La Salle and you'll see what I mean. Remember Sunday drives? The journey was the point.

Meanwhile, it is a gray and chilly day, so I have invited a friend over for a game of chess. I will make black coffee and serve it in big, thick mugs, and I will grab a pack of unfiltered Lucky Strikes, and we will do combat on a tiny chess set that was once at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and later Tokyo Bay. I only wish the old man was here to tell us what it was like when madmen interrupted his concentration by trying to crash airplanes into his ship. ☹️



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