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JUNE 2023 #225

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On the Cover: Left to languish for nearly seven decades in Kentucky tobacco barns, this rare 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham was captured moments before its long-overdue rescue. Image courtesy of Shawn Coady.





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HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR

ISSN# 1550-8730 • www.hemmings.com

Published monthly by Hemmings • 222 Main St., Bennington, VT 05201

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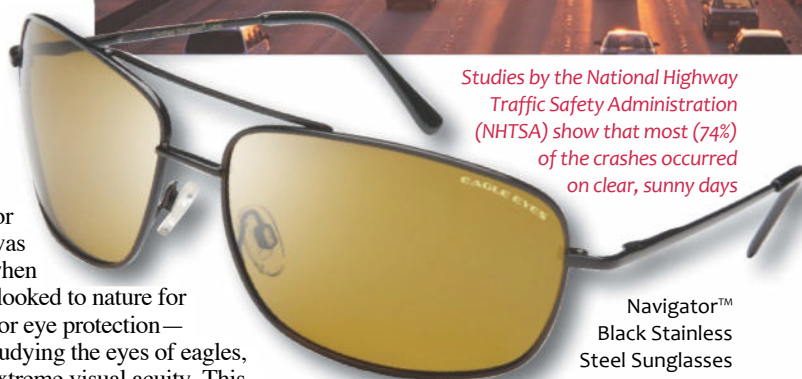
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“Road
trips are
a solid
proving
ground to
confirm
a job well
done.”

ACCORDING TO

the calendar, spring is right around the corner, despite the layer of snow still encapsulating terra firma in the higher elevations of Vermont. While we wait, and as outlined in the April issue (see *Garage Time*), work has begun in earnest on the resurrection of Hemmings’ 1940 Buick Century Convertible Phaeton. Suffice it to say, our team is getting anxious for the intended promise of proposed road trips when the long-overdue mechanical tasks are completed, and the dastardly clouds of winter have officially departed.

Road trips are a solid proving ground to confirm a job well done. In our case—and as you’ll read in updates that will be appearing in future issues—a little precaution will go a long way. A chase vehicle and trailer will be a part of the caravan during our first journey to south-central Pennsylvania in mid-May, if all goes to plan. Rather than take the modern interstate system, we’re going old school in the big, beautiful Buick. Associate Editor—and throwback road trip aficionado—David Conwill is going to map out a far more scenic route that will take us through Small Town America.

It’s something I’m looking forward to. All of my road trips have been across four-plus-lane highways, except in cases where there are no east-west interstate highways in the northernmost sections of New England. Admittedly, some were rather memorable, such as the time a family vacation took us from the awe-inspiring scenery of the Grand Canyon to the then-majestic *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California, courtesy of a route through the vast emptiness of Death Valley in a rented late-Eighties Oldsmobile Cutlass. Unsurprisingly, my mom fell asleep, only to wake and find dad scooting along at 130 on the digital speedometer. She was a little upset, and further irritated by the boisterous laughter from my brother and me. We were keenly aware that our dad had switched the setting from mph to km/h.

The sleight of hand on our speed broke the nervous tension that had hampered the start of our day west. A family relative had offered that a stop at Calico Ghost Town, in California, was a must-see locale. It was an abandoned silver mining city turned tourist attraction perched up on a desert



mountain. As travel luck would have it, an endless chain of strong thunderstorms rolled in just after our arrival, filling both the old silver mine and dry lake bed below in what seemed like minutes.

Dime-sized hail pelted the “town,” while cloud-to-ground lightning threatened to fry anything that moved out in the open in an upright position.

Sensing a tiny break in the weather, we made a beeline for the Olds, only to quickly discover rivers of mud cascading across the only two escape routes to the main highway. Boulders the size of 1970 Honda N600s seemed to float on the rapids. It must have been a normal thing, for moments later a road grader appeared and miraculously cut a path through the temporary torrent of muddy water. The level dropped two feet in seconds and our dad gunned the Lansing Rocket for all its rented worth. Water lapped at the bottom edge of the left-side windows, rocks scraped along the undercarriage, and the rubber clawed for what little traction there was—but we made it. Only later did we discover the trunk floor had been pushed up several inches by the now-silly escapade—fortunately the fuel tank wasn’t ruptured. If the rental car company ever discovered the damage, it had to have been well after we turned in the car.

Other equally after-the-fact-entertaining trips included a fine excursion through Anaheim, California, a place our dad had been to several times on business trips and knew “like the back of his hand.” The hand in question didn’t prevent him from turning into a lane against the flow of traffic. On another excursion, after a week of sightseeing in the Detroit region, rain fell as we negotiated our way to the airport, where we met an untimely red light at an intersection. Not wanting to violate the rules of the road, our dad locked up the brakes and quickly abandoned all hope of stopping when the car broke into a four-wheel drift—the kind mastered by Europe’s finest rally racers.

There were countless others, too. During each, we kept moving right along, cognizant of the moments that left a memory not soon to be forgotten. Memories that we’ll be building upon, and sharing, when we will move right along in our 1940 Buick. Care to join us? 🚗



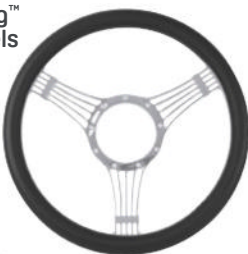
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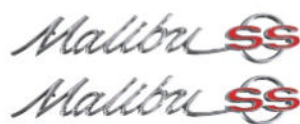


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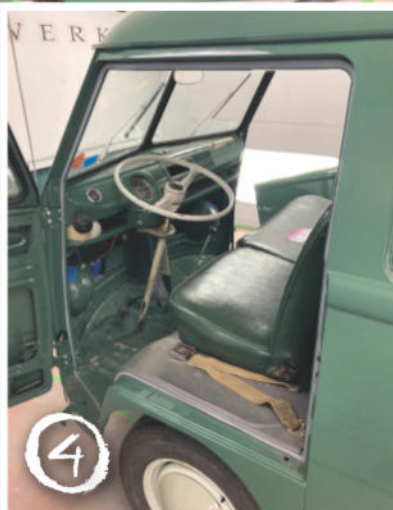
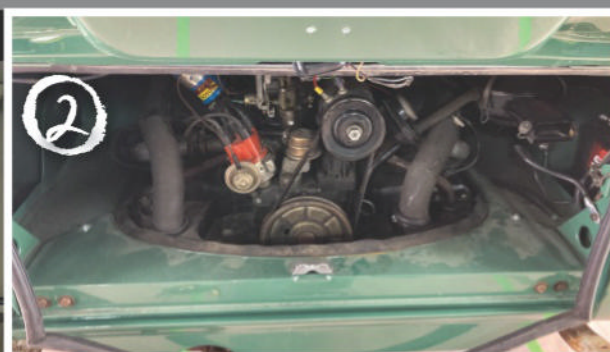
A 1967 Volkswagen Type 2 Campmobile receives a proper restoration

I AM A LONGTIME Volkswagen bus owner and driver who calls the Chicago region home. My current example is a Campmobile painted Velvet Green that has been our escape pod since 1996. I'm just its second owner, and since obtaining it, the icon has been a big part of our

annual fun that provided a connection to the people and places we cherish. Over the years, though, we tried to combat the slow accumulation of Midwest rust bit by bit, given our humble budget and parts availability.

Over the years, I saved and saved,

and sold off all extraneous things and miscellaneous collections so that I would be able to afford the full, quality restoration that the Campmobile deserved. Once I felt I had enough of a budget to get the project underway, I started to shop around for a business that could



What's Inside:

1. The brakes and suspension were replaced several years ago, just prior to starting the unfinished restoration. They have seen few miles since and will stay in place, as will the relatively new trans-axle purchased from German Transaxle of America, in Bend, Oregon.
2. Since taking ownership in 1996, I installed a later air-cooled engine. It was removed during this restoration and, it being a strong runner, may be reinstalled with only detailing. Or, I may have the original rebuilt and installed.
3. Pictured here in the open position, the Campmobile's pop-up top and corresponding mechanism were eventually removed after finding damage around the frame opening.
4. The entire cabin was supposed to have been restored by the previous shop, but that work was never started. Part of the second effort will include the installation of a new wiring harness.
5. All new tires are scheduled for installation once the wheels have been restored, including the spare housed behind the front seats.

manage the restoration. It took a long time, compounded by my desire for it to be done right. It meant there were a lot of small "test projects" that were sent out and later examined when returned. I eventually went with a shop some distance away, but let's just say things didn't work out as I hoped, which eventually had me removing the Volkswagen mid-project. That left me facing the daunting task of finding a new shop all over again and, sadly, starting over—with both the budget and the work.

Time passed, I was able to recoup some of the expense, saved some more funds, and eventually met Randy Sheridan of Das Kaferhaus Vintage Werks in Woodstock, Illinois. I can't say enough good things about Randy—he's a young,

enthusiastic, and positive person, not to mention the quality of his team. I explained what I had endured, and they've taken a step-by-step approach to restoring my Campmobile. It sounds simple enough, but it started with the crew documenting every defect they could see, including incorrect welds, bad fit and finish of what had been new repairs, and a host of other things. Then they began disassembly and uncovered more botched work. Media blasting exposed hidden concerns. The project is now well and truly underway and I'm happy to say that all the defects of the restoration gone wrong are being fixed. Randy thinks he could be done by the fall, which means that I can start reinstalling the interior sooner than I hoped. 🚐

My First Car

"Once, after running out of gas having not realized that the gauge wasn't working, my girlfriend reminded me that German cars have a spare tank."

IT ALL BEGAN

when I was 12 years old and living in southwest Germany. At a rest stop on a highway leading from Switzerland to France, I watched parades of cars coming and going. There were Fiats, Renaults, and Citroëns, along with Mercedes and Opels. It was here where I saw my first American car: A 1949 "bullet nose" Studebaker. Next came a '50 Ford, whose driver opened the hood so I could see its amazing flathead V-8. Not long after that I saw a yellow Chrysler convertible; I was mesmerized by the size and features. I was hooked and dreamed of one day owning and driving such a car.

Years later, while living in Rhode Island in 1956, I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. They ultimately stationed me at Neubiberg Air Base near Munich, Germany. While there, I bought my first car for \$300: a 1937 Mercedes-Benz 230 (W143 chassis). It was a very rare two-door sedan, with a straight-six flathead engine,

four-speed manual, and a spare wheel on each front fender. Some would say it was a classic. It was a pleasure to drive while looking at the three-pointed star, going like hell on the Autobahn.

I was gas happy and couldn't get enough of driving everywhere without reason. With weekends free, gas at 15 cents per gallon, and American dollars—along with my new girlfriend—I toured the mountains, the lakes, and the famous Hofbrauhaus in Munich. Once, after running out of gas having not realized that the gauge wasn't working, my girlfriend reminded me that German cars have a spare tank. Yes, but where was it? A small lever under the seat turned on the reserve. Not knowing how much was left, we hustled back to the base.

Winter came and the snow started flying. The Mercedes didn't have a heater or defroster, but the windshield had a crank-

out feature purposed for summer driving—a sort of air conditioning. That became the defroster; however, it also let the snow blow in while driving. We solved the problem by wearing our heavy wool Air Force topcoats with the collars up.

Members of my family were still living five hours west in the Black Forest. With a three-day pass, and a pair of five-gallon cans of gas in the trunk, I went for a visit and my first real road trip. About one hour out, I picked up a man hitchhiking, for company—the car didn't have a radio. On a long straight, I hit the gas not realizing that the road had gotten slippery from a previous rain. Suddenly, we were fishtailing. What was I to do? I had been told to turn into a skid, so I did. The Mercedes came to a stop after it half-rolled over, lying on the side against a curbstone. We both climbed out, pulled the car back onto all four wheels, got in and drove off as if nothing happened. Some distance later my passenger got out without mentioning the incident.

Driving on, I soon came to the mountains. It was getting dark and a light snow was falling. I knew the tires were not in good shape, but I continued on, slipping and sliding up the highway. The four-speed

manual was helpful, and the Mercedes-Benz soldiered on. It was a good thing I didn't know any better, or else I would not have undertaken that trip. I learned a lesson from it nonetheless.

The new year came with the required renewal of the base vehicle safety inspection. The car didn't pass due to bad kingpins. Since it was a rare model, parts could not be found. The Mercedes factory could have them made, but I couldn't afford it. In addition, its engine had started to burn oil and needed an overhaul. Prior to my buying it, the car had sat in a barn for several years. Crushed, I learned that car ownership was not what it was cracked up to be.

That "first car" magic lost its luster. A newcomer to the squadron bought it for the same \$300 I paid with the intention of rebuilding it. After six months he gave up and sold the car to an officer returning



to the States. He must have recognized the value and had it overhauled, reconditioned, and painted Alpine White. That was the last I heard of it. If it is alive somewhere, I would like to know.

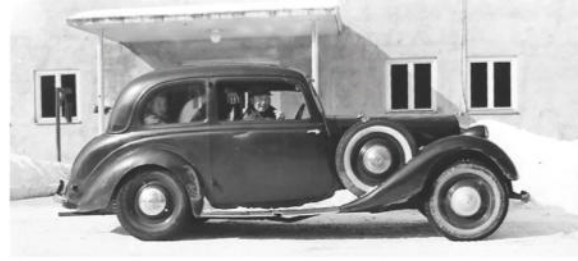
Car number two was a 1941 Opel Käptan convertible painted yellow with a red leather interior. I loved its smell of leather and gasoline. What fun it provided for the following spring and summer, until one night—returning from a wine fest with three of my buddies—the Opel got wrecked. A blue Volkswagen took its place until I returned to the States and was discharged.

With my mustering-out pay, I finally bought my first American car. It was a 1954 Dodge Coronet two-door hardtop painted two-tone green/yellow. With a V-8 under the hood, it was very sporty, and I was gas happy all over again. It was a fun car to drive that served me well while working and going to college. The only drawback was that it didn't like wet weather.

Fast forward, and as a manufacturer's representative, I received my first company

car. It was a 1967 Ford Galaxy 500. It was advertised as "quiet as a mouse," and so it was. For the next 40 years, I was fortunate to have a new car every three years. It started as a standard-issue Ford, Chevrolet, or Plymouth. Later, the choices expanded to include other models such as Mercury and GM's plusher divisions. During that time, I owned a copy of each GM model, most of them Pontiacs.

A couple stood out. First was my wife's 1972 Buick LeSabre four-door hardtop when we were living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was a great road car that we owned for ten years. Five of us, plus a dog, would fit in the car for our vacations to New England. The luggage was on a rooftop carrier and three bicycles were strapped to a rear-bumper rack. Gas stops required me to dismount everything off the back to access the gas cap behind the rear plate. The other was my 1982 Pontiac 6000 LE. It was the first American front-wheel-drive A-body built to compete with the European sports sedans. It was my dealer's first, and the first in my hometown in Massachusetts. It was a sensation.



Summing it all up during these years, I owned 57 cars. Among them were a 1953 Hudson Hornet, a 1957 De Soto Firedome, a 1970 Ford Country Squire LTD, 1977 and 1978 Chevettes, and a Plymouth Duster (for my teenage sons). The last company car was a 2002 Mercedes C240, back to where it all began. Now in retirement, I drive my first Honda Accord. It's been quite a ride. 🚗



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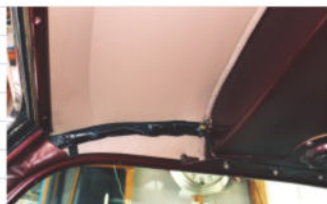


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GREAT ARTICLE IN February's issue on that gorgeous 1954 Chrysler Town & Country station wagon with factory air conditioning—it's a very rare option. During that early '50s era, Chrysler, GM, and then eventually Ford started off with the system's evaporator core located behind the rear seat in the trunk, with the chilled air being directed towards passengers either with ducts in the rear deck or via plastic tubes into headliner outlets. I have examined multiple cars from that era with A/C, but they were always sedans—only sedans had trunks to locate the evaporator core. In-dash A/C outlets didn't start until 1956 or 1957 for most makes. Barry Kluczyk included some great pictures of that Town & Country, but nowhere was there any discussion or images of A/C ducts inside the vehicle. Since that wagon has no trunk, where did Chrysler put the evaporator core and the passenger vents?

—CHRIS SMITH
Conroe, Texas



you could print retroactively of this extremely rare air conditioning in a station wagon?
—TOM ASHLEY
Nashville, Tennessee

WOW—A CAR LIKE MINE on the February cover (except for the color)! But I thought A/C was available only on sedans, coupes, and hardtops. The evaporator was under the rear package shelf, in the front of the trunk. Where would it have been placed within a station wagon? Also, I don't see any condensers—this system used two: one in front of the radiator, the other down low, horizontal, in front of the radiator crossmember. I see the compressor, so it must have A/C. Also, this one has a four-barrel carbureted engine like mine, so it has 235 hp. The two-barrel version was rated for only 195 hp. I wish my wagon was as nice as this one!

—MICHAEL J. BENARDO
Vallejo, California

Barry replies: *The Town & Country's air conditioning*

system was mounted in the roof, as seen in these photographs. It's a large unit, comprised of two fans and the vents for them seen at the outer edges and a large grille in the center. The owner presumes this is the air intake, drawing ambient air from the interior for cooling. The sedan models, of course, had external air intakes, but the wagon does not. The weight of the elaborate system plus the enormous engine-driven compressor siphoning off power means this was certainly not the most fuel-efficient car of its era. Also, note the included photo of the car's "build sheet," which shows the "refrigeration unit" marked as ordered on it.

I JUST RECEIVED MY MARCH 2023 copy of *Hemmings Classic Car* and I rushed to my laptop to send this in response to Pat Foster's report on the Apperson Jackrabbit. I never thought anyone would review this wonderful machine! Mr. Foster did a very insightful

review, but he left out one very important fact about the 1907 model: it had a very famous supporter who had nothing but good things to say about it. In fact, he used it in *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*. In at least one episode, Bullwinkle J. Moose was driving with Rocket J. Squirrel riding in the passenger seat; they were trying to get away from Boris and Natasha, their archenemies. I distinctly remember that the Jackrabbit was very accurately portrayed and recall Bullwinkle responding to Rocky when asked about the car, saying "Isn't it a beaut!" I just thought I would enlighten the automotive world with that little bit of history. Thanks, and a big shoutout to Frostbite Falls!
—ROBERT BOTTA
Salem, Oregon

AFTER READING PAT FOSTER'S article about the Jackrabbit in the March issue, I thought I would share an unfortunate story. In the mid-1960s our parents bought an old

Continued on page 14

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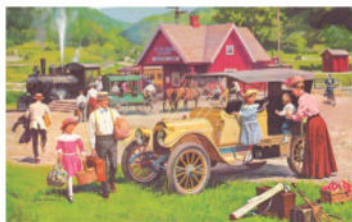
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hardware store; our mom had to manage it until dad retired. In the store was an old printing press with individual type. There was also a page-sized lead printer's block to be used in the press advertising the Jackrabbit car with pictures and information. Even as youngsters we were old car buffs, and we had no intention of letting anything happen to this treasure.

One day, my mother had an antique dealer in to purchase antiques from the building and he tried to get the Jackrabbit advertisement block, but she took it back and said it wasn't for sale. As the dealer was leaving, a customer came into the store and my mom waited on them. The Jackrabbit block was never seen again.

—STEPHEN SHURSKY

New York

OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF years, I've always gone directly to Terry McGean's column when I received *Hemmings Classic Car*. It always seemed to provide something insightful, and his January column also provided a reminder of a thought I had not dug up in many years.

I, too, began following cars well before my teens; once I got the opportunity to dip my hands into the magic elixir of grease and oil I never looked back. I'm still excited when I look under the hood of virtually anything and those fumes...ah! Now that is heavenly.

But what really struck me is how much has changed in the past 20, 30, or 40 years when it comes to working on these metal steeds. Terry reminded me of my journeys into

body work; painting; engine, suspension, and transmission rebuilding; and wiring replacement. Those trying experiences showed me just what I should not try again and gave me an appreciation for the kind of effort it takes to do rebuilding/restoration correctly.

We all marvel at the pro shops that are creating automotive artwork, the speed emporiums that are creating ever more powerful drivetrains, and the restoration companies that are not only saving our collective history, but in many cases giving us vehicles that top anything the factory production lines could have provided excited buyers back in the day.

Our local community college has one of the few automotive technology programs in the country that is still teaching collision technologies (refinishing, rebuilding, etc.) and drivetrain/systems applications that are getting a younger generation out into professional operations. The college is eager to get these students working in the industry.

A project that has been started is a restomod 1972 Chevy C10 that the program's students will be handling, with a total disassembly; refinishing of all components to show car standards; installation of a contemporary drivetrain, suspension and steering system; and final touches including all the creature comforts we've come to expect from the best restomod builders out there. I've attached a rendering that was provided to the Hawkeye Community College project by Ben Meissner at Street Rod Designs (<https://www.facebook.com/streetroddesigns/>) and the

project has attracted assistance from all sorts of professionals like The Ring Brothers, Yogi's Street Rods, and LMC Trucks, among others.

Getting these students immersed in the total rebuilding experience is what needs to happen to keep all those great memories Terry recounted alive for years to come. Once the C10 (dubbed *inTENse*) hits the event schedule and eventually is sold to raise funds for the next major project, these students will have memories of their own, hopefully matching all the great moments Terry described.

—JIM VOLGARINO

Cedar Falls, Iowa

PAT FOSTER'S STORY ABOUT

the 1971-'74 AMC Javelins in the March issue was a long-awaited article for me, a long-time Javelin AMX owner. In 1972 I purchased my first "Humpster" while driving through Somerset, Pennsylvania. She was looking down on me from the front of a car lot above the road. Even from 50 yards, the Admiral Blue AMX was impressive. The contrast of its bright white accent T-stripe and split vinyl top and interior against the dark paint was striking. I had never seen anything like it. One walk-around and a test drive of the Rally Pack and 401-cu.in. equipped car sold me immediately and my search was over. My girlfriend—now my wife of nearly 47 years—and I headed back to Frostburg, Maryland, in our beautiful Javelin AMX. Besides the aforementioned accessories, the car was

loaded with A/C, AM/8-Track radio, rear window defroster, and E60-15 raised letter tires. There was nothing like it in our Tri-State (Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia) area. The crowds of people that would gather around her while parked at a shopping center, theater, or ice cream stand—long before it would have been welcomed at car shows—was without equal. It was a personal car show at nearly every location we stopped. With only a small AMC badge on the top of the trunk lid near the rear window, few observers had any knowledge as to what company even produced it. Unfortunately, like so many young men's sports cars, my Javelin went the way of marriage and children just four years later. Though I have looked in all the possible forums and classic car websites for that or a similar Javelin, I have not found a trace of her in all these years.

Pat Foster stated the 1973 Javelin "eliminated the twin canopy recesses" and, therefore, the split vinyl top roof, and "replaced the full-width" taillamps with "sharp new twin pod" lamps. Yes, these were changes, but improvements? In my opinion, they were certainly not. The split vinyl top, the width-wide taillamp assembly, and its only-for-1972 chrome "egg crate" covering was truly sharp. In addition, though the "volcano center" wheels and rims were certainly sporty, they could not compare to the Kelsey-Hayes built Machine Wheels that were still available on some '72 AMX models.

In 2012, after having restored two other classic cars—a 1966 Mustang (now in Tulsa, Oklahoma) and a 1966 Ford Thunderbird convertible (now in Milwaukee, Wisconsin)—I searched in



Continued on page 16

The Watch for When It's a Million O'Clock

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When traveling the globe, my friend Cynthia has a term for that slightly delirious, unmoored feeling of jumping time zones and not being sure what hour it is: "It's a million o'clock."

I found myself in such a situation this past summer while changing planes in Jakarta. My phone had run out of juice, and I'd somehow managed to pack my phone charger in my checked bag. I had a long layover and might have missed my flight entirely if it weren't for my In the Nick of Time Watch. This sturdy chronograph has a precision movement that oscillates an incredible 32,768 times per second. With a 24-hour dial, 60-second dial, 60-minute dial and a date window, this timekeeper will help you stay on top of whatever your travels throw at you.

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vain for my 1972 Javelin AMX. My exhausting search for a '72 like my first also came up empty. Then, in 2014, a retired NYSP officer messaged me through the AMC Forum stating he was selling his '72 AMX and, though it met nearly all of my expectations, it was Hunter Green and Gold with a 360-cu.in. engine. Though I balked at first in considering this car, my original co-pilot and I took one trip to Staten Island for a test drive, and we were on our way back to Frostburg, Maryland, in a Javelin again, 40-plus years later. Thanks for the wonderful article and fond memories for us!

—MARTY AND SHERRI GREEN
Frostburg, Maryland

THE STAR OF THE 1972

Syracuse Auto Show was a bright red AMC Javelin. Instead of being loaded with options, this one had virtually nothing. It had a black two-panel vinyl roof, whitewall tires, and a big black "C" stripe on each front fender—and that was it. It was a six-cylinder engine, three-speed manual, no A/C, no-power-anything car. The interior was striking, though: black bucket seats with red inserts, and a black dash with bright red carpeting. So how was this basic car a star? It had



a sticker price of just under \$3,000, which was painted in huge letters on the windshield. Everyone was shocked that such an attractive car had such a low price, and I'll never forget this brilliant marketing move by AMC and/or its local dealers. So many options have almost no value on an auto show static display, and this car certainly proved it.

—JEFF CLARK
Safety Harbor, Florida

HAVING JUST RECEIVED MY

March edition of *Classic Car*, I felt I had nailed the trifecta. First, on the cover was my dad's 1962 Bonneville—or at first glance, I thought it was. My dad had the very same Bonneville: same colors and everything, except he had a Tri-Power engine. He had five Pontiacs through the years: a '58 Star Chief, '62 Bonneville, '65 Bonneville, '69 Bonneville, and a '73 Grand Ville. So, the cover car brought back a flood of memories. Second, I spotted the picture of the '57 Safari. Boy, this issue was really hitting my heart, as I also had a '57 Star Chief while in college. I really loved that car, up until the engine blew because of a fraternity prank that went bad. Then, in '63, I bought a beautiful '58 Bonneville from the original owner. That Bonnie took me all over the U.S. while I was in the service, including Long Beach, California. When I returned from my second tour in 'Nam in '68, my now ex-wife insisted on a newer car that will remain unnamed here. However, next to that vehicle sat a beautiful maroon '63 Grand Prix; I won that particular war but never got over the loss of my '58 Bonneville. Then, on pages 54-55, my heart



really jumped for the third time: there was another great Pontiac gracing your pages. Not only was it a Firebird, but an Esprit as well, and with California license plates.

I've attached a couple of photos of my original, one-owner Esprit, as verified by P.O.C.I., that I purchased new at Jim White Pontiac in Santa Monica in September 1970. As you can see, it still has its original California plates, with dealer frame. Since California insurance rates were so high and I loved the style of the Firebird, a GTO or Trans Am was out of my financial reach. When I arrived at Jim White Pontiac, I didn't see anything that just jumped out at me at first, so I was about to get in the Grand Prix and leave. But as I looked around the corner of the dealership, there it stood out in the most beautiful color combination I had ever seen. I immediately fell in love with this Esprit, mainly because of the half vinyl top and the Castillian Bronze color. There just wasn't anything like it anywhere; I knew because I had been Pontiac shopping all over southern California for several weeks.

The dealer explained that just a few select Pontiac and Chevy dealers in the greater Los Angeles area were treated to the half-top installations by "Pops Tops" in Santa Monica, and only on Firebirds and Camaros. I've heard some folks refer to the top as "opera." That doesn't fit the Firebird name. The top is a saddle color, which matches the interior. On the same lot were a handful of Formulas and I just went wild over the hood scoops. To keep this long story a little shorter, after much discussion

on the purchase of the Esprit, the dealer agreed to install the non-functioning Formula hood for \$450. I always thought the hood came from a recalled or wrecked Formula, but never questioned the dealer about its origin. The extra cost was big money in 1970, but I had to have the hood, so the deal was made, and I've had it ever since.

As your article stated, there are many Trans Ams and Formulas out there, and most are commanding high dollars. What's on your pages and in my garage are indeed a couple of rare Birds. I've attended several P.O.C.I. conventions over the years and have only seen a handful of Esprits, but not one from 1970. Mine is showing its age, but even with 174,000 miles on the odometer, it's still a pleasure to drive. The Pontiac was subjected to a partial dealer respray in 1976 due to acid rain but the car still sports its original 350-cu.in. drive train, saddle interior, A/C, AM/FM radio, 180-mph speedometer, and the other "luxury" features your article mentioned. My only regret is that I should have had the dealer install all the gauges. Thankfully, the idiot lights have never failed me. Thanks for a great magazine and making this old car guy feel good. Keep up the wonderful work you guys do.

PS: Do you think I might just bleed Pontiac?

—NOEL RICHARDSON
South Charleston, West Virginia



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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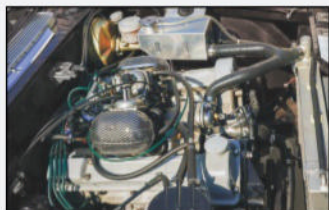
1931 BUICK MODEL 56



A 2010 AACA National Senior First Prize badge on this stately Buick business coupe spoke to the quality of its 1995 restoration. The car's condition was said to remain top-notch, with only minor paint blemishes and a small crack in the windshield glass. LED brake lamps were added for safety. The mohair-upholstered interior looked inviting, although the fuel gauge was noted not to work and there was a tear in the rubber floor covering. This Buick's 220-cu.in. inline-six and three-speed manual were touring veterans, a small leak at the rear main seal being their only flaw. The undercarriage appeared clean, and tires were seven years old. The seller answered questions and the Buick got a new home.

Reserve: \$19,500
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Recent Market Range:
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1973 TRIUMPH STAG MARK II



Triumph's star-crossed Stag was ahead of its time, a car that didn't always deliver on the good things its engineers intended. This example smashed its reserve because it was not only beautiful, but it also included a factory hardtop and promised to be fully sorted and free from the issues known to plague the model. The cosmetics looked very nice both outside and in, with a few small visual changes from stock. Also, the undercarriage was similarly clean. The rebuilt 3-liter V-8 was paired with a TR8 five-speed manual transmission and an upgraded cooling system; a minor oil leak was divulged. A video and many detailed photos, as well as a communicative seller, helped push this Stag to a great result.

Reserve: \$16,000
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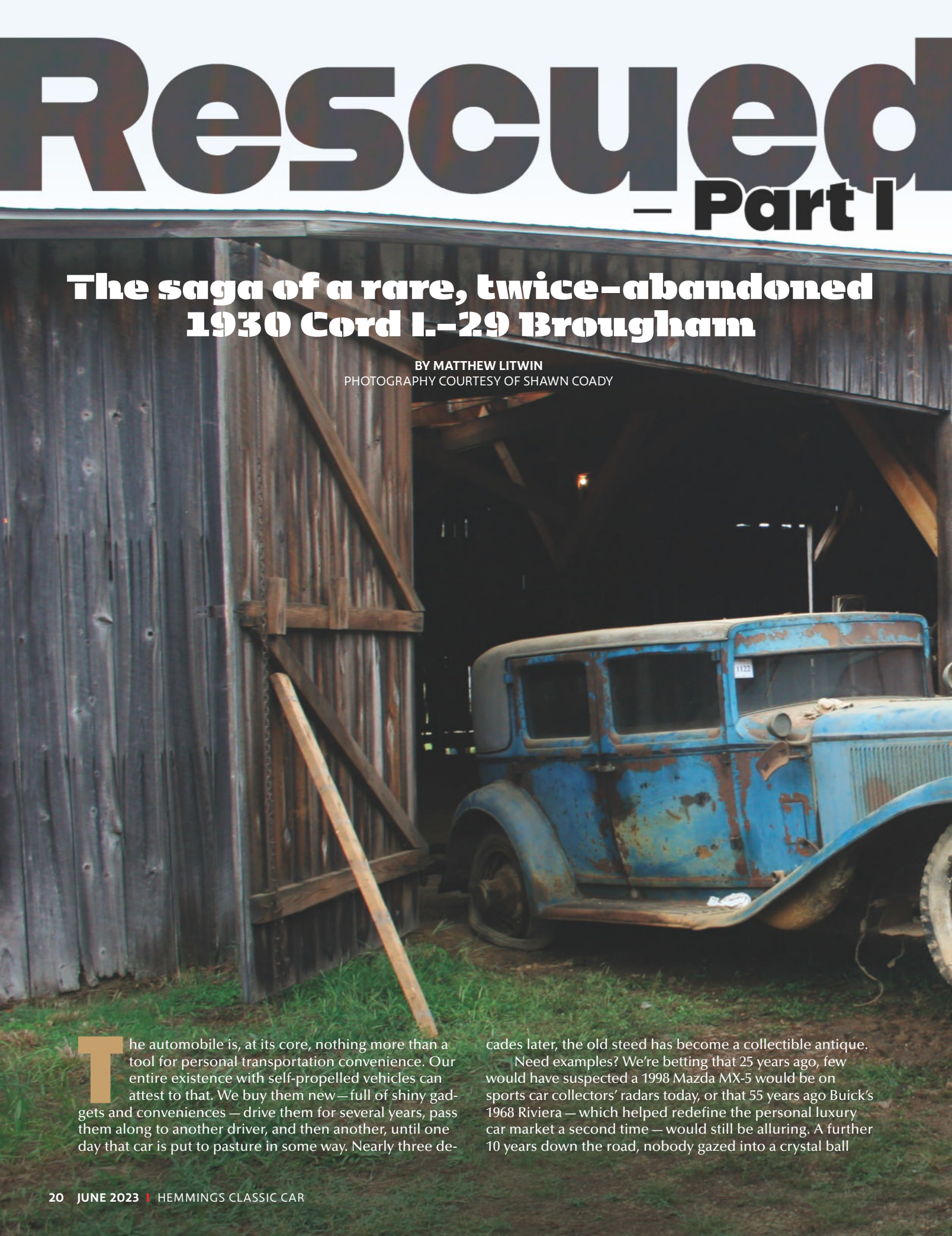
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Rescued — Part I

The saga of a rare, twice-abandoned 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham

BY MATTHEW LITWIN

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF SHAWN COADY

A photograph of a blue 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham car parked in front of a wooden barn. The car is in poor condition, with significant rust and peeling paint. The barn is made of dark, weathered wood. A wooden plank leans against the barn door. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

The automobile is, at its core, nothing more than a tool for personal transportation convenience. Our entire existence with self-propelled vehicles can attest to that. We buy them new—full of shiny gadgets and conveniences—drive them for several years, pass them along to another driver, and then another, until one day that car is put to pasture in some way. Nearly three de-

CADES later, the old steed has become a collectible antique.

Need examples? We're betting that 25 years ago, few would have suspected a 1998 Mazda MX-5 would be on sports car collectors' radars today, or that 55 years ago Buick's 1968 Riviera—which helped redefine the personal luxury car market a second time—would still be alluring. A further 10 years down the road, nobody gazed into a crystal ball

Elegance



seeking the future desirability of the newly minted 1958 Chevy Impala. Admit it — they were transportation tools. They were eventually cast aside by owners. Which explains, in part, how the modern “barn find” came to be. Even extravagant luxury cars such as a 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham met this fate.

Unveiled by E.L. Cord in 1929, the Cord L-29 was intended to fill a price gap between his Auburn line and upscale Due-



The Cord L-29 Brougham was sold as part of a liquidation auction “as-is, where is” – in the exact spot it had been pushed to when purchased by its third owner in 1975.

senberg Model J. It was offered in just four body styles—Sedan, Brougham, Phaeton, and Cabriolet—with prices ranging from \$3,095 to \$3,295. Cord tapped into his modest luxury car empire and chose his Lycoming company to motivate the new series with a smooth and reliable 298.6-cu.in. L-head straight-eight engine rated for 125 hp.

As conventional as the arrangement sounded, however, the L-29 was revolutionary for its front-wheel-drive system. A novelty in both Europe and the States prior to the first World War, the unusual drive system had found new favor with several Indianapolis 500 race car designers, most notably Harry Miller. Cord secured Miller as a consultant and was the first to bring front-wheel drive to market as a commercially viable mass-produced automobile (ahead of Archie Andrews and his Ruxton).

The unconventional arrangement, strapped to a substantial X-braced frame, in turn allowed for incredibly dramatic styling. With the entire drivetrain up front, a long, elegant hood flowed into a body with a low roofline, which provided the illusion of a radically lowered profile despite then-typical ground clearance. The combined mechanical and styling effort began to amass concours d’elegance awards across Europe’s finest shows, hinting at commercial success that was sure to follow—were it not for the stock market crash two months after the L-29’s debut.

Prices were reduced to entice sales, and plans for improvements that were to be unveiled on the future L-30 were instead administered, in part, to the last of the L-29 models built in 1931. The last 157 examples were titled as ’32 models. The L-30 was, in

turn, nixed. In total, 5,010 L-29s were built, interestingly just 10 more than what Cord had anticipated selling. Today, it’s estimated that 175 remain; the rarest and arguably most elegant is the Brougham, of which 10 are believed to have survived.

“This 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham is one of those 10.

Honestly, it was a bit of a known car, but it was still technically a ‘barn find’ in that few people had seen it for many decades,” Shawn Coady says. Shawn is primarily a resident of Champaign, Illinois, though he winters in Florida. He has become intimately familiar with this “Full Classic” thanks to a fortunate chain of events that began when the L-29 was still in production.

“The best guess among marque experts is that the car was purchased new by a couple from an Iowa dealer in 1930. They didn’t own it very long, though. Apparently, the couple decided it would be a good idea to drive it from their home in the Midwest all the way to Florida a year later; as they approached Mayfield, Kentucky, the car broke down, at which point it was towed to J.T. Hail Cadillac in town. Cord didn’t produce a lot of extra parts, so after a day or two of looking at the L-29 the dealership mechanics told the owners they couldn’t fix it. So, the couple traded it in for a new Cadillac and went on their merry way,” Shawn says.

Unable to fix the Cord, mechanics pushed it onto the dealership’s back lot where the L-29 was soon spotted by local resident Galen Hargrove. Although his formal education concluded in fourth grade, Galen had earned a handyman reputation with a knack for fixing just about anything he crossed paths with.



The original Lycoming engine was still wearing Ford carburetors and custom intake manifold created by the car's second owner.

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Slidebar radio in 1967-'73 Mustang



USA-630 in 1955 Chevy

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Galen inquired about the languishing, nearly new Brougham. The dealer staff made several attempts to dissuade him, but to no avail; they relented and sold the ailing car for a price somewhere between \$25 and \$60.

After securing the car, Galen returned on a bicycle with a toolbox in hand and went to work. Initially amused, the dealership staff was then dumbfounded when, 90 minutes later, Galen put his bicycle on the back seat of the Brougham, started the car, and drove off.

According to Shawn, "We know Galen drove the wheels off the car after he fixed it. The only known modification he did was swap the factory Schebler carburetor for a twin Ford Model A carburetor setup mounted to a cast-aluminum manifold that he fabricated. He would tell people the Ford system gave him about 8 more horsepower. He was also known to race the Cord between Murray and Paducah, Kentucky, on bar bets, boasting he could set all kinds of time records. Galen won all the time."

Galen drove the L-29 until 1939, at which point he parked it in the tobacco barn on his Farmington, Kentucky, farm next to his private airstrip. It turned out Galen was also a private pilot. During World War II, Galen served the country as a military aircraft mechanics instructor, which left him stationed elsewhere. With the property unattended—and tire rations still strictly enforced—someone broke into the barn and removed the Cord's two spares by sawing through the corresponding locking bars, which secured the spares to their fender-mounted positions.

After the war, the Cord remained stowed in Galen's barn, untouched, until 1975. That's when another local resident, Howard Brandon, approached with an offer to purchase the L-29, along with a few other cars and planes stowed on the property.

"Howard had a used car lot in town, but he also had a penchant for collecting low-mileage cars. It didn't matter if it was an Oldsmobile or a Cadillac. If he came across something he liked, he would buy it and put it in his barn. When Howard saw the Cord, the odometer read 53,000 miles, but it's likely the odometer had rolled over considering how much Galen drove it. Regardless, Howard bought it, but he did nothing with the L-29. He simply moved it from one tobacco barn to another and that was it. There may have been an intent to get it back on the road because he purchased a complete set of L-29 hubs, drums, and wheels. Instead, there it sat, with a whole bunch of other cars, until one day it occurred to him that he was getting older and none of his kids wanted the cars. So, he decided to liquidate the entire collection during a three-day sale in August 2007," Shawn reports.

Like so many others, Shawn can attribute his appreciation for vintage vehicles to his father, Tom.

"My dad was a college kid in the Fifties living in Miami, Florida, so he was in the heart of everything European sports cars. Once the Seventies rolled around and those Fifties sports cars were approachably priced—and when he had a little bit of money—he started buying cars he liked and ended up with a significant collection. Several of his cars were displayed at concours events, including Pebble Beach.

"About 25 years ago, I attended the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance black-tie dinner with my parents and I was seated with Eric and Vivian LaVine, who founded LaVine Restorations in Nappanee, Indiana. I talked to them all evening about their business and whatnot, and left with their business card in my pocket," Shawn recalls.



After rescuing the now-rare L-29 Brougham from a second tobacco barn, closer examination revealed nearly all the factory upholstery, and its elegant patterns, were intact. Original parts were on the back seat.



"Like my dad's, my collection favors European cars, though it's more eclectic than his was. I like a variety of makes and have restored several. So, when I saw the auction ad listing the L-29, it caught my attention. From an aesthetic and mechanical standpoint, I've always really liked them. The roofline is about eight inches lower than your standard Cadillac, because there isn't a driveshaft or rear end hump. They turned a straight-eight backwards and stuck the transmission and rear end in front of it, so the L-29 wound up with a long, elegant hood line. I like it better than a lot of the other classic-era automobiles, so the L-29 was always

one for me. I called the auctioneer, asked for more details about its condition, registered as a bidder, and bought it sight-unseen."

Next came the task of retrieving the car, sold as it sat inside the barn.

"The auctioneer took a few creative liberties in describing the condition of the tires and wheels on the car. I sent my dad, along with a guy who works for me, to pick it up with an enclosed trailer, but when they arrived, the car was nearly buried to the axles in the dirt with tires that wouldn't remotely consider holding air. They stood there trying to figure out how to extract

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The trailer's winch, and a little finesse with a tractor, made loading possible.



it and load it up. Fortunately, Howard was there. He marched off to the other end of the farm, got his tractor, threw a chain around the Cord's front bumper, and dragged it out of the barn. He was good with the tractor; my dad said Howard lined it up and between the tractor and the trailer winch they got the Cord inside without too many difficulties. My dad told me after, 'I'm not going to pick up any more crap for you if you're going to send me on missions like that,' but I know he thoroughly enjoyed the venture," Shawn says with a laugh.

Rather than ship the car out for an immediate restoration, Shawn embarked on a careful plan that consumed the next 10 years.

"I've restored enough cars to know that it's not a good idea to hand something to somebody without all the parts, because you'll be paying a lot of money for someone to sit online trying to find a door handle or something almost unobtainable. I knew what I was going to be getting into and fortunately the L-29 Brougham was a nearly complete, unrestored example. When my dad came back with the car, the original Schebler carburetor was in the back seat, and the spare set of wheels, hubs, and such were included. The car was still wearing the cut spare tire locking bars, too. I took my time to find correct replacement



The true nature of the Cord's tires was discovered the day the car was retrieved from the barn. Fortunately, a tractor remained on the seller's farm, making its extraction considerably easier.



parts for anything that was broken, or for the very few that were missing. I also took the L-29 parts book and dumped it into an Excel spreadsheet that became a road map that said what every fastener and part was supposed to look like, and how it was supposed to be finished. I also took a lot of pictures of two other original unrestored cars that could be used as references. When

I had everything ready in January 2016, that's when I retrieved the LaVines' business card. I knew exactly who I was going to call as a 'Full Classic' is a little out of my wheelhouse. This was a great car that needed to be saved, and done right," Shawn says.

Join us next month as we explore the 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham's comprehensive restoration. 🚗



After purchasing the Cord in 2007, the new owner spent 10 years making sure everything was in place before hiring LeVine Restorations to manage the next phase of the L-29 Brougham's new journey. Join us next month for the conclusion.



Pat Foster

The Chalmers Story

“Chalmers-
Detroit
cars were
often
owned by
wealthy
and
prominent
families.”

THE CHALMERS

automobile played so large a part in America’s automotive history that it’s a wonder many people have never even heard of it. Mr. Chalmers and his automobile company touched many manufacturers and historic figures.

It’s hard to believe today, but at one time the electric cash register was one of the biggest growth industries in the world, and National Cash Register was a dynamic company that made many people wealthy. One person who benefited was Hugh Chalmers, Vice-President of National Cash Register, who in 1907 was earning the unbelievable salary of \$72,000 a year. Anxious to possess his own company, Chalmers jumped at the chance to become a partner in the Thomas-Detroit Company, which built Thomas automobiles in Detroit under an agreement with the E.R. Thomas Motor Company of Buffalo, New York. This was the same company, by the way, whose Thomas Flyer would later win the now-legendary 1908 New York to Paris race.

To gain entry into the auto industry, Hugh Chalmers bought E.R. Thomas’s stake in Thomas-Detroit, which was renamed Chalmers-Detroit in July 1908. The other existing partners in the company included co-founders Howard Coffin and Roy D. Chapin, former Oldsmobile employees anxious to move up in the auto business.

Chalmers-Detroit cars sold in the \$1,500—\$2,800 range. When Coffin proposed an under-\$1,000 car that he’d designed, Chalmers proved unenthusiastic. So, Chapin and Coffin convinced Detroit department store magnate J.L. Hudson to invest in their new car which, aptly enough, they named Hudson.

Since Chapin and Coffin wanted to go in one direction, and Chalmers another, it wasn’t hard to predict what happened next. Coffin and Chapin bought out Chalmers’ investment in Hudson, and Chalmers bought out Chapin and Coffin’s investment in Chalmers-Detroit. Chapin and Coffin’s Hudson Motor Car Company went on to great success.

Hugh Chalmers now had his own company. It had an outstanding reputation, having won several races in 1908-1909. In addition, Chalmers-Detroit cars were often owned by wealthy and prominent families, including the Vanderbilts and



the Rockefellers. In 1910 Chalmers’ line of automobiles included six models in the Thirty (30-hp) series and three models in the Forty (40-hp) series. Prices ranged from \$1,500 to \$3,000.

In late 1910 the company was reorganized as the Chalmers Motor Car Company

and the car’s name was shortened to Chalmers. That year, a Chalmers won the coveted Glidden Trophy. The brand grew in popularity, with sales climbing slowly, though steadily. But Hugh Chalmers wasn’t satisfied with that level of success. He proposed setting a goal of 60,000 units in annual sales and calculated that lowering prices across the board would bring that about. Chalmers also added the Model 6-30, a six-cylinder, 30-hp touring car offered at the bargain price of \$1,050, lower than any Chalmers had ever sold prior.

But he made one fatal mistake. Chalmers decided to ship cars to dealers regardless of demand, which yielded two results: The company reached peak sales of 21,408 cars for 1916; and its dealers were clogged with thousands of unsold examples. Naturally, these had to be carried over to the following year when sales fell nearly in half. With dealers now ordering fewer cars—they had plenty on hand—finances were stretched to the breaking point. In 1917, Chalmers was rescued by the Maxwell Motor Company, which leased Chalmers’ plants for five years for \$3 million. Chalmers began producing Maxwell cars in its Detroit plant.

That might have saved the company had a severe post-World War I recession not hit in 1918. By 1919, both Maxwell and Chalmers were in financial dire straits and in 1922 they agreed to merge. But losses continued until the banks finally asked Walter P. Chrysler to step in and try to save them. In the end, Chrysler didn’t save Chalmers but did save Maxwell, then used it to launch a new brand, Chrysler, which became an instant success.

Some people still wonder: Did Walter Chrysler really try to save Maxwell-Chalmers, or did he use it merely as a stepping-stone to owning his own company? Maxwell certainly prospered under his control.

The last Chalmers cars were 1924 models built in late 1923; the new Chrysler debuted in January 1924. 🚗



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**This 1971
Ford Torino
Brougham is
a reminder
that not every
Nixon-era
intermediate
was a muscle
car**





Perhaps nothing is more symbolic of the democratization of luxury in the late '60s and early '70s than this 1971 Ford Torino Brougham. Built the same year that Rolls-Royce went bankrupt and was purchased by the British government, the Torino marries the mass-market Blue Oval badge, made famous by the ubiquitous and utilitarian Model T, with the kind of high-end trappings long associated with far more expensive and prestigious marques like Rolls. Ultra-luxury and high wealth were out—comfort and style for the masses were in.

Ford itself may have kicked off the so-called “Brougham epoch” that lasted through the 1980s with its introduction of the full-size LTD for 1965. After equipping its standard Galaxie models with special trim and upholstery, plus so much sound deadening that contemporary advertisements called out Rolls by name, it was only natural that the midsize Fairlane/Torino line would offer something similar in an easier-handling, thriftier (or sportier, depending on one’s bent) package. The first Torino Broughams appeared for 1970.

Today, it would be easy to forget that Ford produced any variety of Torino beyond the muscular GT and Cobra models. In fact, it was one of those for which feature-car owner Mike Bednar, of Dallas, Pennsylvania, was looking when he found this Brougham for sale online back in October 2016.

“I liked it immediately,” Mike says. “I thought, ‘Hey, this is a cool interior!’ I

generally like Fords and there are not a lot of ’71 Brougham models out there. I like the less common cars. I actually prefer the roofline over the GT.”

The paucity of Broughams becomes glaringly evident when you look at the production numbers. While Ford built 31,641 GT Sport Coupes and sold them for \$3,150 apiece, the Brougham two-door hardtop, which cost just \$25 more than the GT (\$3,175; or about \$24,000 adjusted for inflation—less than the MSRP of a new Ford Escape compact crossover), was only produced to the tune of 8,593 units. That makes the Brougham coupe rarer even than its station-wagon equivalent, of which Ford cranked out 15,805 examples.

Model year 1971 was a variation on the styling introduced for 1970, with a wasp-waisted “Coke bottle” design language borrowed from supersonic jets. Ford intermediate cars were now in their fourth generation overall, with the Torino nameplate in its second. The Fairlane name, along with Falcon (temporarily promoted from the compact leagues to be the cheapest Ford intermediate in 1970) were both retired after 1970 and even the entry level midsize Ford was now called “Torino”—the native spelling for the city of Turin, Italy, bringing some Continental flair to a series previously named for Henry Ford’s Dearborn estate.

A base 1971 Torino two-door hardtop, with the standard 145-hp, 250-cu.in. six-cylinder and three-speed manual transmission, had a factory price of \$2,706.



"I like the fact that it's a 'formal roof' which some folks consider a semi-fastback design; plus, it's a Brougham and has this sort of 'wild' upholstery. I do get teased on the Brougham interior upholstery with remarks such as 'Is that your grandmother's sofa in the car?' or 'That's sort of psychedelic!' I like that, and it does remind me of an early series Jerry Garcia art tie I have," Mike says.

Mainstream psychedelia (versus its more freewheeling, colorful counterpart

seen in Haight-Ashbury during the previous decade and in period Mopar advertising) isn't the usual retrospective automotive take on the era, but it's spot on with a lot of other cultural trends going on at that time. You're supposed to tune in Andy Williams on the factory-installed AM radio, not Rod Stewart. The Gray Gold cloth-and-vinyl bench seat's pattern and color scheme coordinate very well with the aspirational suburban home design of the period—Grandma's couch

Upgrading to the 210-hp, 302-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 raised that figure to \$2,801. The next step up was the Torino 500 for \$3,291 (with the V-8), which shared its fastback roofline with the Torino GT Sport Coupe. Above both the GT and the Brougham was the Torino Cobra, which came standard with the 285-hp, 351 Cleveland four-barrel V-8 and had a factory price of \$3,295.

Even the Brougham could be optioned with the 285-hp Cleveland, its milder two-barrel sibling with 240 hp, or the potent 370-hp, 429-cu.in. Cobra Jet big-block. That last would be an unusual sight and, frankly, overkill in combination with the Brougham trim. The 210-hp 302 that came standard in the Brougham, the GT, and the Squire wagon is plenty to move around the 3,390-pound Sport Coupe. Like 3,461 other cars (according to the Marti Report), Mike's Brougham pairs the solid small-block (predecessor of the 1980s' much-beloved "5.0") with the equally respected and eminently serviceable C4 three-speed automatic, or, as Ford marketed it, "SelectShift." As the base V-8, the 302 was available only with the standard Ford three-speed manual or SelectShift. To get the muscle era's beloved Toploader four-speed, Torino buyers had to step up to at least the four-barrel 351.

Although the Brougham Sport Coupe shares its profile with the thrifty Torino and middle-of-the-road Torino 500, it's suited to the more reserved character of the top-trim Torino and its decorative appointments like the distinctive floral upholstery.



All Broughams came with a V-8. This car has the standard engine, a 210-hp, 302-cu.in. Windsor small-block.



"I thought, 'Hey, this is a cool interior!'"



if she was of the World War II generation and had made it in life a quarter-century past V-J Day. The Morning Gold paint and black vinyl roof, likewise, are standout examples of period middle-class American tastes and Mike appropriately cherishes them as a part of the car's original fabric.

"I've resisted getting a totally new paint job," Mike says, but "Fran Elmy, of Nantocoke, Pennsylvania, did a great job touching up and blending some panels where the original paint was flaking off. He looked at it and in no time had it touched up. Very few folks can tell." We certainly didn't notice when we spotted Mike's car at the AACA Hershey meet back in the fall of 2021, though in part that may have been because of the incredibly well-preserved interior, which is a refreshing change from the black-vinyl bucket seats usually encountered in the racier cars of the late '60s and early '70s. Taking care of that and the other Brougham-specific pieces is a big part of Mike's ownership experience. The car was fortunately complete when he bought it, but he's still on the lookout for a few pieces of trim to replace worn bits on his car.





While Mike admits to enjoying modified cars, too, he says he's a purist at heart and has resisted most urges to aesthetically personalize the Brougham, even eschewing such common adornments as a chrome air cleaner or valve covers. He's attempting, he says, to stay "as original as possible while still trying to improve on areas such as suspension and safety. When I purchased this car it had the factory-original hoses, belts, spark-plug wires, battery cables, spare tire, et cetera. I did eventually replace all of those, due to in part to a leaking hose, but with reproduction parts from Marti Auto Works and other vendors that look original." As a guide to keeping the Torino as close to an as-produced appearance as possible, Mike also obtained one of Marti's famed Deluxe Marti Reports and a reproduction window sticker reflecting the car's original equipment.

Improvements for the sake of safety and driving enjoyment haven't been entirely lacking, however. After all, Mike makes the best of a short old-car season in Pennsylvania, adding about 1,000 miles each summer.

"I needed to improve the ride and handling," he says, so he turned to Chad Washesky of West Wyoming, Pennsylvania, who he describes as "a great suspension guy" who "grew up in that end of the business and was very helpful in helping me with design and installation of new front coils and rear leaves, roller spring perches, a heavier front anti-sway bar, Energy Suspension Poly anti-sway bar bushings, and end links." The springs, from ESPO in Danville, Pennsylvania, Mike notes "were heavy-duty plus an inch. This helped handling a lot, gave it a little more

aggressive appearance, and got it off the ground. These cars were low from the factory, and after 45 years of settling, the original springs were even lower."

Taking full advantage of the upgraded suspension, the Brougham has also exchanged the original 14-inch steel wheels, Brougham-specific wheel covers, and E78-14 bias-ply whitewalls for 15 x 7 Magnum 500 wheels shod in 225/75R15 BFGoodrich Radial T/A raised-white-letter tires. The wheels were available in-period and the tires have been a favored upgrade for '60s and '70s cars since their introduction in the 1980s. Wearing them is a clear sign an owner intends the car to see the streets on a regular basis.

The future certainly holds more driving for the Torino, plus a handful of projects that are the constant companion of old-car owners. "I would like to get the dealer-installed air conditioning working, install a rear-window defroster fan, put in a factory AM/FM radio, and I'm considering a factory ribbon tach as there's not a lot of room for an aftermarket one and I think that would make it appear cluttered." Oh, and Mike may decide to forgo a bit of highway speed in favor of acceleration, swapping out the factory 2.79:1 ring-and-pinion for something lower.

The Brougham is alone in Mike's collection for now, but as a guy who "generally likes Fords" and is "always looking," he says that the future may find him acquiring an LTD II with Sport Appearance Package, a Granada, or even a 1971-'73 Mustang. If you think you're noticing a theme here, you're right: Ford knew how to do those '70s Broughams. They are, as Mike puts it, "a pleasure to own." 🚗

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POWER

Meets Elegance

BY BILL ROTHERMEL

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Chrysler's relationship with Carrozzeria Ghia during the Fifties and Sixties produced a spectacular array of concept cars, Chrysler Specials and, later, the Imperial Crown Limousines that even most casual enthusiasts can identify. But the Chrysler/Ghia partnership spawned lesser-known one-off creations with Mario Boano—thanks to several events involving key players from various companies during the same time—that left us with the car gracing these pages: the 1956 Chrysler Boano Coupe Speciale. How it came to be, and why it still exists today, requires us to turn the clock back.

The President of Chrysler throughout the late 1940's was K.T. Keller. It was Keller who claimed that a man should be able to wear a hat comfortably while sitting in a car. Admittedly, this led to rather stodgy, upright styling despite Chrysler's prowess in engineering advancements. Following the marketing disasters of the Airflows of 1934-1937, the company was not taking any chances.

Regardless of his conservatism, Keller knew things needed to change. The longer, lower, and wider mantra was just around the corner. On November 3, 1950, Keller moved up the ladder to become Chairman of the Board at Chrysler and Lester Lum "Tex" Colbert was named President. Along with Fred Zeder (Vice President of Engineering), they went about changing the image of the company and its conservative products. First, they needed to secure a new designer to lead the Chrysler Design Studio while simultaneously securing an Italian coachbuilder to construct a car for them to portray the new image.

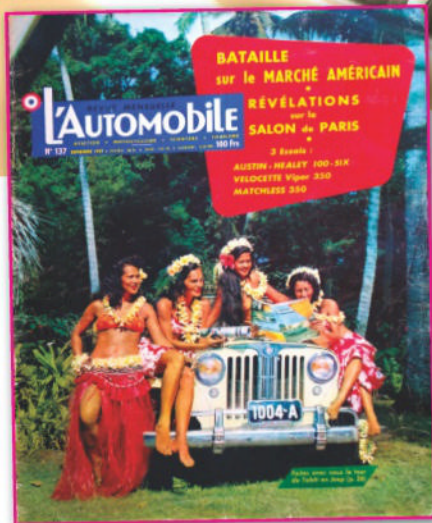


**The early relationship between Chrysler
and Ghia resulted in this one-off
1956 Chrysler Boano Coupe Speciale
built for a future
Fiat president**





Under the hood is a powerful 340-hp, 354-cu.in. “FirePower” Hemi V-8 paired to a TorqueFlite automatic transmission.



September 1957 issue of *L'Automobile* in which the one-off Chrysler appeared.

In Valerio Moretti's history of Ghia, he notes that Fiat was in the middle of a reorganization, and using money from the Marshall Plan following World War II, the company had formed an alliance with Chrysler. The two companies exchanged visits and some plans for integrated production were discussed—to no avail. When Chrysler looked for someone to build its research prototypes, Luigi Gajal de La Chenaye of Fiat gave C.B. Thomas (Chrysler's President of Export) two names—Pinin Farina and Ghia.

Chrysler commissioned two research prototypes, one each from Ghia and Pinin Farina. Two Plymouth chassis were sent to Turin, Italy, both with identical sets of designs to provide an appropriate apples-to-apples comparison of the builders. Mario Boano was head of Ghia at the time. He

looked over the design and immediately felt there was room for improvement. He contacted the powers that be at Chrysler requesting authorization to make substantial modifications. Thomas allegedly replied, “Do whatever you think best.” Pinin Farina, on the other hand, built its car as instructed.

Virgil Exner joined Chrysler as Director of the Advance Styling Studio in late summer of 1949 when both commissions at Ghia and Pinin Farina were already in progress. Previously employed at General Motors and Studebaker, Exner collaborated on the breakout designs that quickly moved Chrysler to the leading edge of automotive styling. Much like Harley Earl at General Motors, Exner was given free rein to establish and execute his revolutionary “Forward Look” styling introduced in the 1950's.

The two prototypes were reportedly ready at almost the same time and were sent to America together. While Pinin Farina kept true to the design request, Ghia had re-interpreted the car along the lines of an Alfa Romeo 6C 2500, which wowed both the judges and the public at the September 1949 Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este. Both cars impressed Chrysler executives by their quality and low cost to build, which was reported to have

been less than \$10,000 each. The styling executed by Ghia convinced Exner this was the place to go to have his forthcoming idea cars built. What followed were numerous styling and design studies on Chrysler chassis that showcased both Exner's style and Ghia's masterful coachwork.

Fast forward to 1955 and Chrysler's debut of Exner's now legendary “Forward Look” styling. Quite literally overnight, Chrysler became Detroit's styling leader causing everyone else to play catch-up. What the company needed, however, was a place to showcase its powerful hemi engine—first introduced in 1951—while providing itself with a “halo” car, much like Chevrolet's Corvette and Ford's Thunderbird. Chrysler lacked the financial resources of GM and Ford, so it went to its existing product lines to create a new sports touring car. Chrysler cleverly used the New Yorker bodyshell, an Imperial front clip, Windsor rear flanks, and a racy “300” checkerboard badge inspired by Cunningham sports cars, as well as a New Yorker interior and dash, to create an automobile of imposing appearance and exhilarating performance.

The debut of the C-300 became the first mass-produced automobile to offer a 300-hp engine. It was announced on



January 17, 1955, combining power, style, and superb handling for what was quite a large car. At a base price of \$4,055.25, 1,725 were produced—enough to ensure its place in the Chrysler hierarchy. In its first year of production the new C-300 won both the NASCAR and AAA stock car racing series titles in more powerful race trim. It was also the start of a new performance legacy. Over the next 10 years, a new 300 “Letter Car” was introduced.

Italian industrialist and Vice President of Fiat, Gianni Agnelli, took notice. In April 1955 he contacted Mario Boano—who, along with his son, had left Ghia in 1953 and struck out on their own (they eventually worked for Fiat in the late Fifties)—about building a “two-seat coupe with a powerful, modern mechanical system, a classic British-style coupe, not a modern shape.” Ten days later, Agnelli was presented design studies from

which he chose his favorite sketch. From that single sketch, a master model was created. In the meantime, a new Chrysler 300B chassis was deemed appropriate to supply the underpinnings for the new car. According to Chrysler historical records, chassis number 3N561171 was built by Chrysler on February 1, 1956, and shipped to Italy five days later.

To better suit the two-seat layout of the vehicle, the frame was shortened, which in turn reduced the wheelbase from 126 to 119 inches. The 354-cu.in. Hemi V-8 and three-speed TorqueFlite automatic, along with all mechanicals, were retained in stock configuration. Power windows, a power-operated glass sliding sunroof, and an AM radio with power antenna were included. By the fall, body panels had been welded in place, though two additional months of hand-fabrication were required. The exterior was finished in a variant of Grigio Ingrid

with a leather roof in English Hunt Club Green. Motor Wheel chrome wire wheels, as used by Chrysler in-period, were fitted with wide whitewall tires. Meanwhile, the interior was completed in English Ivory leather and light green Wilton wool



The original keys rest on fine English Ivory leather upholstery. Typical of most Italian coachbuilt automobiles, Boano's signature was placed on the fender. Motor Wheel accessory wire wheels were installed.



carpeting, accented by leather on the package tray and a rosewood trimmed dash. The vehicle was completed in the latter part of 1956.

Agnelli previewed the completed car, and he was quite pleased. However, he rationalized that it would not be good for a man who was ascending to the presidency of Fiat to be seen driving a foreign car (Agnelli served as President of Fiat from 1966-2003). Why that hadn't occurred to him prior remains a mystery. Agnelli instead gifted the car to his brother, Umberto. Days later, Gian Paolo Boano (Mario Boano's son) delivered the car to Umberto, "at the Milan tollbooth

on the Milan-Turin Highway." Umberto, who was involved with Fiat of France, drove the car to Paris, where it remained for several years, largely in secret. The construction of the car and its ownership were kept quiet in respect for Agnelli's wishes for both privacy and discretion.

The truly unique car was initially titled in suburban France in 1957 and remained with two subsequent French owners over 30 years. It came to the U.S. via Los Angeles, through California dealer Irving Willems in 1989. Michael Pomerance, of Massachusetts, acquired the vehicle that same year and during his ownership, the car received a partial freshening.

Pomerance kept the car until 2006, when he sold it to the Ramshead Collection of Sacramento, California. Its current owners, Stephen and Kim Bruno, purchased the car in December 2018, after which it was immediately sent to Jon Dega of Rare Classic Restorations, LLC, in Boca Raton, Florida, who was commissioned to perform a complete forensic concours restoration of the highest level.

Following its restoration, the one-off Chrysler debuted at the 2019 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where it received a second in class. It has also been honored with Best of Show at the Cavallino Classic Sports Sunday, Eyes on Design, and Vintage Weekend, along with best in class at Amelia Island and the Villa d'Este Concours.

Jon Dega, who restored the car, has many interesting footnotes to add. Typical of coachbuilt cars, more than 150 pounds



Genuine rosewood accents the dash, which includes the radio and instrument panel gauges. A vestigial jump seat, also upholstered in English Ivory leather, rests behind the thickly padded bench seat.






of lead were removed from the vehicle while doing the restoration. "The car has lots of 'Chrysler' in addition to the engine, transmission, and chassis," Jon says. "The door handles, the gauges, the pushbutton controls for the transmission—all Chrysler. Even the motor for the electric sunroof is a Chrysler power-seat motor!" However,

he points out that, "the front seat tracks are stamped 'Fiat.'" Jon adds that the data card that came with the car has lots of markings that have remained indecipherable by Chrysler 300 experts. "It makes one question just how much of the car was actually sent to Italy. It was clearly a car marked for export," Jon notes. 🚗



Scenes from the 2019 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where the Boano Chrysler won second in class. Center top left - Owner Stephen Bruno (center) and restorer Jon Dega of Rare Classic Restorations (right) are conferring with Class Judge Dr. Paul Sable about the Boano Chrysler.





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TERRY SHEA

PACKARD PARTY

Sonoma County will be the perfect place to ask the many men who own one about their Packards as the famous independents make their way to Rohnert Park, California, for the 56th Packard Automobile Classics National Meet. This is a perfect opportunity for Packard enthusiasts to show off their rides, attend swap meets, and explore the San Francisco area. Members and non-members of the Packard Club are encouraged to attend and participate, and tours will include visits to San Francisco, Healdsburg, the Napa Valley, the Russian River, and the Pacific Coast. The car show will take place on the final day with various awards given to the finest Packards at the meet. The show is scheduled for June 25-30. For registration, host hotel, and meet information, visit packardclub.org.



MAFCA NATIONAL TOUR

The Model A Ford Club of America has finalized the itinerary of its annual national tour. This year's "Backroads to the Classics" event will be a circle tour that begins and ends in Auburn, Indiana, home of some of the most beautifully designed cars in the world. Model A's will work their way around northern Indiana and parts of southwestern Michigan with trips through Indiana's Amish community. Stops along the tour will occur at several museums, including the Early Ford V-8 Museum and North American Automotive and Truck Museum in Auburn, as well as the Recreational Vehicles and Motor Home Museum in Elkhart, Indiana. Also on the schedule will be a trip to South Bend for a visit to the Studebaker National Museum, and a jaunt to The Gilmore Car Museum Campus in Hickory Corners, Michigan, which houses the Model A Ford Museum. The tour will take place July 16-21, with early bird registration available until June 15.

Visit southeasterntouringgroup.com/2023-mafca-national-tour for more information.

AUTOMOTIVE HALL OF FAME 2023 INDUCTEES ANNOUNCED



Ford designer McKinley Thompson, Jr.

The next batch of car personalities to be honored for leaving their mark on the automotive industry has been announced for this summer's ceremony by the Automotive Hall of Fame. Each inductee is recognized for noteworthy achievements in various automotive fields including motorsports, research and development, design, and much more.

Sarah Cook, president of the AHF, says, "This group includes trailblazing innovators and leaders who have left an impact globally on the automotive industry, and we couldn't be more pleased to recognize their achievements and welcome them into the Hall of Fame."

Some of the names that stand out include McKinley Thompson, Jr., who, during his 28-year career as a designer at Ford, was a key contributor to popular Blue Oval models including the Thunderbird, Bronco, and Mustang. Joining him will be Larry Wood, also known as "Mr. Hot Wheels." Wood joined Mattel in 1969 and spent five decades designing small diecast models for the popular toy company. Also inducted will be the first female CEO of an automotive OEM, Mary Barra, who started at GM at 18, inspecting fenders and hoods, before working her way up to leader of the company in 2014. Rounding out the class will be Fred Bauer, founder of Gentex; five-time F1 champion Juan Manuel Fangio; and Honda co-founder Takeo Fujisawa.

The AHF is located in Dearborn, Michigan, and the induction ceremony will take place nearby at The Fillmore Detroit on July 20. Visit automotivehalloffame.org for more details.

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BY TOM COMERRO

BUCKEYE BEASTS

Subscriber Paul Watts of Clovis, California, sent us a photocopy of the January 1946 edition of *Chilton's Motor Age* trade publication, which touted the Eisenhower twin-engine truck (top and bottom right), out of Van Wert, Ohio. Boasting five axles in total, the two standard Chevy stovebolt six-cylinder 235-cu.in., 93-hp engines were featured below the hood and underneath the cab, with the front engine connected to the third axle, and the cab engine to the rearmost axle. Another unusual feature was the four front wheels steering together, said to provide greater handling and improved load capacity through better distribution. Speaking of capacity, the vehicle was rated to handle about 20 tons with a specialized frame and suspension, but all other parts were compatible with 1 1/2-ton truck parts of the day for easier servicing and maintenance. It's unknown what happened to this twin-engined, front-four-wheeler. Hemmings' own Dan Strohl reported that a military tanker version



was built years later (bottom left); it was ultimately rejected by the Army. Known as the X-2, it used twin GMC 302 sixes and sat at the Eisenhower facilities where it was eventually purchased for the tank. Whether they were scrapped, parted out, or put out to pasture in rural Ohio, we'd love to know if you know.



This illustration shows the four front-steering wheels, one of the features of the new twin engine truck developed by the Eisenhower Manufacturing Co., Van Wert, Ohio.



MPD AUTO FORT

Paul Stuhmer, of the Milwaukee Police Historical Society, sent us some photos of one of the earliest known armored police vehicles of its time: the Milwaukee PD's Auto Fort. With the rise of bootlegging, bank robberies, and tough times during the Depression, police departments needed to stay ahead of the curve. Engineered and built sometime around 1936, the Auto Fort measured in at 22 1/2 feet long, 9 feet 8 inches high, and 8 feet wide, and it's said that it could transport 25 of Milwaukee's finest. The body was made of bulletproof metal that included mesh screens to protect the tires and radiator, and all glass was shatterproof; the windshield featured extra bulletproofing. Intermittent slots wrapped around the entire vehicle allowing for the use of weapons while bunkered inside. Repairs to the engine, were they needed, could have been done from

inside in case of an emergency; there was enough room for "revolvers, rifles, machine guns, tear gas bombs, and ammunition," too. When it was first delivered by the manufacturer to the Chicago area and driven to Milwaukee, the weight of the vehicle was so massive that all four tires gave out before reaching the city. It would serve the city faithfully in a limited capacity until the mid-1940s. The Auto Fort has otherwise proven to be a mystery to Paul and the Historical Society, which would love to know more about its fabrication, design, drivetrain, engineering, and what happened to it.



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car or vehicle? 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 tcomerro@hemmings.com.

OVERNIGHT

LUNCH STOP

Colorado Springs, CO

Pueblo, CO

Lamar, CO

Garden City, KS

Wichita, KS

Great Bend, KS

Emporia, KS

MO

Joplin, MO

Eureka Springs, AR

Russellville, AR

North Little Rock, AR

Memphis, TN

Birmingham, AL

Tupelo, MS

Auburn, AL

Tifton, GA

St. Augustine, FL

FL

SATURDAY, JUNE 24

START: Francis Field,
St. Augustine, FL – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street,
Tifton, GA – 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Toomer's Corner,
Auburn, AL – 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Uptown at Protective
Stadium, Birmingham, AL – 4:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Lee County Courthouse,
Tupelo, MS – noon
OVERNIGHT: Guesthouse/Graceland,
Memphis, TN – 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 27

LUNCH: Argenta, Downtown,
North Little Rock, AR – 11:45 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Russellville Depot,
Russellville, AR – 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

LUNCH: BW Inn Of The Ozarks,
Eureka Springs, AR – 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street/Historic
US 66, Joplin, MO – 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

LUNCH: Lyon County Fairgrounds,
Emporia, KS – 1 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Mosely Street/Old Town,
Wichita, KS – 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

LUNCH: SRCA Drag Strip,
Great Bend, KS – noon
OVERNIGHT: Main St./Stevens Park,
Garden City, KS – 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

LUNCH: Colorado Welcome Center,
Lamar, CO – 11:00 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Pueblo Union Depot,
Pueblo, CO – 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

FINISH: Tejon Street,
Colorado Springs, CO – 1 p.m.

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Preserved Pontiac Pleasure



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

There are roads in Bucks County, Pennsylvania—more than you might realize—that were first scraped from the soil in the late 1600s, especially along the county's meandering creeks, back when the followers of William Penn were carving the country from thick forests. Even today, Bucks County belies its just-north-of-Philly location, thanks to its abundance of narrow, high-crowned roads dotted by

stone bridges that are close to semicircular as they arch across the streams.

Remember, these roads were built for primitive carts pulled by draft horses and oxen. You're reminded of that every time you take on one of these lanes in any kind of internal-combustion vehicle. They're narrow, undulating, and meandering. You'd get that point if you were wheeling something as tiny as a Yugo.

Rolling colonial roads in a rough-and-real 1972 Grand Ville convertible



So, imagine what it's like traversing this terrain in an American convertible that tried to out-big practically everything else on the road. You're forcefully reminded, every time you approach a bridge, that your car is positively gigantic.

Picture yourself rolling your way through this verdant old country, which never completely morphed into suburbia, aboard a sprawling 1970s convertible that's close to 19 feet

long and more than six feet wide. The ride is airy. You're navigating across narrow humpbacked bridges with strips of the convertible top waving in the breeze. That's the kind of experience Amy Burbage and her husband, George, have enjoyed in this 1972 Pontiac Grand Ville convertible, one of the last true mastodon-proportion rear-drive convertibles produced by General Motors before its wholesale downsizing commenced



in 1977. As the roadscape of Bucks County quickly makes clear, a Grand Ville is a huge, huge car. In the years after this one was built, the Grand Ville was joined by the equally huge Chevrolet Caprice Classic as GM's only full-size, rear-drive convertibles until the Grand Ville range was dropped after 1975.

What's a Grand Ville? Specifically, it's the name of a sub-model in the Bonneville range that replaced the erstwhile Pontiac Executive, which had been in the lineup from 1967 through 1970. Sold alongside the Bonneville beginning in 1971, the first Grand Villes—meaning those produced through 1972—rode on a slightly elongated version of the GM B-platform for big rear-drive cars, making it an outsized offering that matched the interior dimensions of the rest of the full-size Pontiac line. While generally matching Bonneville proportions in 1972, that

year's Grand Ville featured the same grille pattern as the Bonneville, plus distinctive two-tier taillamps.

The Grand Ville never sold in huge numbers during its lifespan, with Pontiac ringing up 63,411 models in 1972 against a total production of more than 707,000 units. But George enjoys the most scintillating aspect of Grand Ville ownership, which is convertible rarity. His Arizona Gold convertible, with about 96,000 miles, is one of just 2,213 such Grand Villes produced in 1972. Today, the convertibles—perhaps 5,000 were built across the Grand Ville's existence—are the most eagerly sought models in the line.

It makes one wonder, then, how this quintessential summertime automobile ended up being sold new by Nichols Pontiac in Augusta, Maine, optioned from the factory with automatic climate control, which was one of Pontiac's most

expensive accessories, at \$507 retail, in 1972. "It spent its entire life up there until I got it," George recalls. "The guy I bought it from had purchased it from someone up that way. For a dealer in Augusta having a convertible, I found that odd, because how many people have convertibles in Maine? You can only use them three weeks a year up there."

George did take the step of replacing the tattered power top once he acquired the Grand Ville in December 2020, but other than that, the big drop-top Pontiac is almost entirely original. "It has road rash, it has a little sunburn on the hood, and it needs some electrical work, but other than that, she runs fine."

George first discovered the Grand Ville while he was recovering from hernia surgery. "I was poking around on the POCI website, the Pontiac Oakland Club International, doing some window shopping,"





Although it was purchased by George, the Grand Ville is really Amy's ride.



he says. "I was playing around with my laptop and just decided to look over the classifieds. I have a 1972 Le Mans [see *HCC* November 2022] so I was looking for parts. And I saw this Grand Ville convertible that was in New Hampshire. I was looking at it, and the top was torn; it was disintegrating. And the ad was from 2018, so two years old at the time. I looked at the other ads but kept coming back to the Grand Ville. I saw the guy's email address. I contacted him, asked him if the car was still for sale, and he said, 'Well, yes.' He didn't know that the ad was still online."

After about another 30 emails negotiating the initial \$4,000 asking price, George agreed to buy and had the Grand Ville shipped down to the Philadelphia suburbs from Manchester, New Hampshire. "I arranged for transport and got the car right after Christmas," he remembers. "I put the new top on right away because the old one was falling apart. It was so bad that you could tear

it like paper. But other than that, the car was what it is."

We should make clear that George has a really big thing for Pontiacs. He's a fast-talking Philly guy who loves his Philadelphia Eagles and has emotionally embraced the 1972 model year at Pontiac, given that his family owned a 1972 Le Mans four-door sedan. His kids own a pair of Firebirds. His first Pontiac

The Grand Ville's standard 220-hp, 455-cu.in. V-8 has remained untouched, save for a carburetor swap. Despite the top's condition when purchased, Morrokide seats were welcoming.



“The front end is in one ZIP code and the tail’s in another.”



collectible was a replacement for the Le Mans, bought new at a long-gone dealership in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. “I remember sitting in a 1972 Catalina in the showroom and looking over all the 1971 T-37s that didn’t sell,” he says. “I’m pretty much a Pontiac guy. I fell in love with the brand around 1967 because my aunt had a black 1967 Le Mans with the 326 and a red interior, and she also had a 1967 Executive four-door. I always loved the lines of the Executive. I just loved Aunt Laurie’s cars. And I’ve been in love for 50 years.”

The Grand Ville wasn’t the maximum Pontiac—in 1972, the Grand Prix filled that role—but it was lavishly equipped, rivaling its model-range stablemate, the Bonneville. Standard power was provided by Pontiac’s big-bore 455-cu.in. OHV V-8, which was fed by a four-barrel Rochester Quadrajet carburetor, had a compression ratio of 8.2:1, and was rated by the manufacturer at 220 smog-limited horsepower in 1972. The standard transmission was the GM Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 three-speed automatic.

Anomalies abound if you know where to look. A cat, or something small with four legs, evidently walked across the decklid after a cleaner had been applied, leaving tracks in the finish that still

exist. George notes that rust can be eyed in both rockers. “But the sides look good, and they actually clean up pretty nice,” he reports. “That tells me it’s never been in an accident.” The biggest single issue facing the Grand Ville is its taillamp filler panel, which was notorious for rusting out on 1971 and ’72 models. The piece in George’s Pontiac showed some significant rot. “So, I got a donor Grand Ville, a four-door, that I’m going to take the tail panel off the next time the convertible is in the shop so I can get the panel replaced. The replacement has been primed, waiting for me to take it to a body shop. It was cheaper to get a donor panel than it was to rebuild the original. They have to cut the spot welds and reinstall the panel. I’ll probably take it to Feasterville Auto Body, who are masters at blending paint.”

There’s no apparent corrosion on the Pontiac’s box frame, a strong indication that it never saw Maine winters. The major departure from factory stock came when the Maine owner disconnected the Grand Ville’s so-called “Unitized” ignition, a troublesome early electronic setup, and swapped in a non-electronic GM system. The New Hampshire owner then changed it to more modern aftermarket HEI. The previous owner also bolted on an Edelbrock four-barrel carburetor.

The rest is kismet. With its new fabric, the power top works “beautifully,” and George notes that the familiar Pontiac Morrokide interior materials are free of tears, rips, and excess wear. “It’s a little sun faded from being out in the air so long, but it’s otherwise fine,” he reports. The carpeting is original, showing moderate wear. In addition to climate control, the Grand Ville is thoroughly optioned: A remote trunk release, underhood lamp, power windows, AM-FM stereo radio, power locks, and cruise control are also on the Pontiac’s build sheet, along with the Unitized ignition, which cost \$78.99 then. Out the dealer’s door, the MSRP came to \$4,802.89, a considerable sum 50 years ago.

Especially on the side roads around their hometown of Langhorne, Pennsylvania, George and Amy are well acclimated to the realities of driving a convertible whose overall length spans 226 inches and change. “It’s like driving a sofa,” he chuckles. “The front end is in one ZIP code and the tail’s in another. The thing corners like an elephant; it’s not exactly catlike. It’s just a big, heavy car that eats everything that the road presents. I don’t recommend driving it while you’re sleepy. Center City Philadelphia driving isn’t bad as long as you stick to the main roads, but



once you get on the side roads, it's dicey. You have to be careful with your turns." George has rung up another 4,500 miles on the Grand Ville since buying it.

The big Pontiac is in storage right now but George plans to pull it out and replace the Edelbrock carburetor with a correct Quadrajet, which his pal is rebuilding. That will allow him to use the original diaphragm-type cruise control for the first time. "I'm a stock guy, an as-built guy," George says. "I'm ambivalent about what else to do. Some days I want to get the car repainted and done beautifully; some days I want to leave it alone. I keep going back and forth. I take it to car shows and people tell me it's beautiful, it's original, just clearcoat it. There's no way I'm putting clearcoat on it. There's just as many people telling me to leave it alone as there are saying to get it repainted. To me, it looks great beat up." 🚗

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BY DAVID CONWILL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT LITWIN AND EMMA DENNIS
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY GENE CASSANELLI

Restoring Walter Mitty's Convertible

The bullet-nose design, first-year V-8 engine, and folding top all make this **1951 Studebaker Commander** the perfect ride for the midcentury dreamer

Have you noticed how angry all the full-size trucks and SUVs look today? Could they look that way because we've been constantly at war for a couple decades? Even on their commute, people feel more secure in a giant, aggressive-looking, body-on-frame 4x4 that looks like it should be patrolling Kabul or Mosul rather than in a practical little sedan.

Back in the late 1940s and early 1950s, war was on everybody's mind, too. Instead of Humvees and helicopters, though, it was fighter planes flying high above the fray that drew Americans' attention. Studebaker leaned into this, debuting a line of cars for 1947 that took obvious styling cues from the piston-driven planes of the recently finished World War II—most obviously the wrap-around rear window of certain coupe models that recalled the glass canopies of early war pursuit planes.

That 1947 body would remain in production through the 1952 model year. Just as, in that period, the WWII Army Air Forces pursuit planes gave way to new USAF jet fighters like the F-86 Sabre, so too did the piston-engine styling notes of 1947 gradually become replaced by those culled from the jets. Most memorably, this came in the form of 1950's "bullet nose." That styling embellishment immediately brings to mind the nose-mounted intake for the Sabrejet's General Electric J-47 turbojet, and driving one feels like, at least





Gene and his nephew, Alex Bandoski, look over the '51 just after Gene acquired it. The completeness and lack of corrosion are evident, but beneath, past off-road adventures were obvious and a replacement hood, still wearing a "Champion" badge, caused some momentary alarm that the engineless convertible might not have been a Commander. The identification tags checked the panic, however.





Because they don't have the structure of a permanent roof to tie them together, convertible bodies often require extra reinforcement in the frame area. The sheetmetal structures tying body to frame on a Studebaker convertible of this type are known to enthusiasts as "hog troughs" due to their shape. This photo shows the troughs eaten through by rust, despite the otherwise solid nature of the car. Gene replaced them with fresh metal.



Backing up with the door open is a potentially hazardous activity, as evidenced by the strip of replacement metal in this image. Bodyman Leo Martin (who had previously worked on Gene's '54 Champion) replaced the crunched metal ahead of the driver's door with the undamaged part from the 1952 hardtop donor car. For this and other intensive repairs, Gene refers to Leo as "my magician of a body guy."



The body was removed from the frame and sandblasted before repairs—here, Gene and his college friend Jamie Tower prepare to unload it from the trailer. The chassis, meanwhile, was thoroughly rehabilitated by Gene. When the car first arrived, Gene says the extensive damage underneath made it appear someone had taken it off road, smashing up crossmembers by hitting boulders, stumps, or the like. A now-retired Springfield, Massachusetts, firefighter, Gene used his daily hour of equipment training time to use the jaws of Life to straighten out the frame metal.



The convertible top frame, shown here as Gene adjusts its installation, is a rare and delicate part. The completeness of this car's was a factor in the decision to purchase the project. While intact and un-bent, both corners were cracked where they attached to the windshield frame. One was repaired and the other was replaced with a used part. The electric lift motor is still in place—and works—but it is disconnected, as the wiring has baffled even Studebaker experts and Gene doesn't want to risk damage to the top, which he instead operates manually.



Concord Blue is a color that doesn't show up in every paint guide for the 1951 Studebaker line, but as Gene has established to various questioning judges, it was a genuine optional paint tone for the year. It also perfectly complements the jet-plane-like lines of the Studebaker bullet-nose and tapered fenders. Equally complementary, though yet to be installed, are the red leatherette interior by Southwest Interior in Tennessee and the tan folding top.



In 1951, chrome-plated trim wasn't yet the overwhelming force it would be later in the decade, but it is still an integral part of the era's styling. All of the Commander's trim was re-plated aside from the hubcaps and mirrors, which are reproductions. Note the 1951's garage mate: the 1954 Champion that started Gene's journey with Studebaker products way back when it belonged to his college friend.



for the imaginative (like the daydreaming protagonist of James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"), going on a mission north of the 38th parallel in search of MiG-15s to dogfight.

The '50 Studebaker debuted in late 1949, but when the similar-looking '51 came along, America was embroiled in the Korean war—making the bullet-nose an even more relevant theme. Adding more to the resemblance, the sedate, 226-cu.in. flathead six-cylinder that had powered Commanders since the end of the war was replaced by a brand-new, state-of-the-art, 232-cu.in. OHV V-8 influenced heavily by Cadillac's 1949 design (some parts, like the rocker arms, will even interchange).

With 120 hp, the new V-8 engine was a major step up in power from the previous year's 102 hp. Better yet, for performance buffs, the 1951 Commander convertible weighed only 3,245 pounds and rode a 115-inch wheelbase, making

it considerably more nimble than the 3,375-pound '50 Commander with its 120-inch wheelbase. The 1951 Studebakers also featured a heavily revised suspension that would remain essentially the same through the end of Studebaker production in 1966.

Gene Cassanelli of Granby, Massachusetts, wasn't yet around in the autumn of 1950. The Korean war was just grinding to a halt by the time of his birth and by rights, he should have taken a fancy to the cars of the late 1960s or early 1970s, when he was a new driver. Blame his infatuation with Studebakers on his college best friend, who daily drove a 1954 Champion "for four or five years." Although it was just out-of-date transportation by that point, Gene took a shine to its handsome styling and interesting engineering.

"He was not a car guy," Gene recalls, "not a mechanic at all. Every time he needed it fixed, he'd have me fix it. It was

like fixing a lawnmower, it was so basic."

Because of that car, Gene says he's "kind of become attached to Studebaker." As his familiarity with the defunct brand grew, so too did his desire to acquire varied examples of the marque, starting with that very 1954 Champion.

"It was pretty rusty and he was just going to junk it, so he gave it to me. My wife said, 'Either fix it or get rid of it.'" Having fixed the '54, Gene's appetite was whetted for another Stude. The jet-fighter front end of the '50-'51 cars spoke to him, as did the open-air experience of convertible motoring.

In 2010, Gene found the '51 Commander seen on these pages in Glastonbury, Connecticut—but far from the condition in which you see it. Nevertheless, the body and the year drew him in.

"For some reason, I always wanted a convertible. The bullet nose intrigued me, also," Gene says. He warns those thinking



"I always wanted a convertible. The bullet nose intrigued me, also."



about their own Studebaker convertible of this era that they may want to "get a project that does not need as much work done to it," but he recommends it otherwise.

When Gene and his wife, Lisa, first found this car, it was a project car of the most literal sort.

"It was a shell of a car and there was no interior," Gene recalls. But it had "solid fenders and no rust. The chrome and bumpers were present, as were the top bows, although they were cracked in the corners." Nevertheless, it was a feasible project, as the buy "included a 1952 hardtop with engine, transmission, and windows" as well as some other body parts.

Low levels of corrosion notwithstanding, the vulnerable, relatively delicate convertible body required some damage repair, too. Firstly, the so-called "hog troughs" (under-car torque boxes adding rigidity to the roofless convertible body) needed to be rebuilt, as did a door that appeared to have been creased when somebody backed it into a tree with it open.

Gene did some of the required bodywork himself, but otherwise farmed much of it out to Leo Martin of Granby, Massachusetts. "He's been an auto-body guy his whole life," Gene says. Leo did outstanding work, though Gene admits he should have done more of the body on his own just for the cost savings.

That said, Gene certainly contributed extensively in other areas. He hunted down hard-to-find missing pieces like the rear window and throttle linkage, and even straightened frame crossmembers using a borrowed hydraulic rescue tool—something he had access to through his career as a Springfield firefighter and seemingly appropriate given that the tool, popularly known as the Jaws of Life, was invented by famed car-guy George Hurst.

The finished product, stunning in its Concord Blue paint, red interior, and tan top, took seven years to get on the road, plus another three to approach Gene's standard of perfection. "It's an excellent-driving car," Lisa says. "He loves to drive it."

"It is nice to drive," Gene says, noting that the V-8 (rebuilt by Dave Thibeault of Maynard, Massachusetts) makes it "peppier" than his '54 Champion. "But it's a 1951," he cautions, "so you have to anticipate things." Anticipate things as in stopping. Gene tells us that the original drum brakes are perhaps his only disappointment with the car. Equipped as it is, with an overdrive transmission, it's certainly otherwise capable of keeping up.



Instrumentation helps distinguish the Commander from the cheaper Champion, which used a sweep-style speedometer.





The 232-cu.in., 120-hp V-8 engine was Studebaker's first and a worthy competitor with GM and Chrysler designs.

"Not that I take it on the highway," Gene notes. "Everybody's doing 86."

Kept at reasonable speeds, however, Gene says the car is both competent and reliable. "It's never let me down."

Although it's an excellent driver, the '51 also sees some trailer time, as it has also been Gene and Lisa's introduction to judged car shows. Their first experience came at 2018's Misselwood Concours near Boston, Massachusetts, where the

freshly restored car was picked for the Misselwood Award (second place) in its class. Not bad for a car that was hauled there on an open hay trailer!

"That's when he got serious about car shows," Lisa observes.

In 2020, Gene joined the Antique Automobile Club of America. Judging at AACA events has taught him much about refining the car for even greater correctness and it now holds Junior and Senior

awards from that organization.

"The COVID winter put me over the top and I went crazy on the engine," Gene says. Now, only a very few items, like the proper wiring for the convertible-top lifts, stand in the way of having the car 100-percent as it left the factory. And what then?

Why, we suspect that Gene's probably going to have to find another Studebaker on which to lavish his efforts. And we can't wait to see it! 🚗



The Straight and Narrow

A simple bearing replacement transforms the steering performance of a vintage Ford truck

Ignoring little issues in a vintage vehicle can lead to bigger problems, and that was exactly the case with the 1969 Ford F-250 that's the subject of this story. It was an issue with the steering system that was put off simply because of the perceived hassle in removing the steering column to diagnose and correct it.

The two-wheel-drive truck had power steering and ran and drove well enough. Recently, however, a noticeable gap that had existed between its steering column and steering wheel had grown. In fact, the gap meant the turn signals would no longer self-cancel after completing a turn, while the wheel itself could be moved fore and aft on the column by an inch or two. Even worse, it was apparent the lower column bearing had become dislodged and would periodically get jammed within the column, causing a notchy feeling when turning the steering wheel.

Driving conditions with the steering weren't just annoying, they were potentially hazardous. Rather than being a hassle, the procedure turned out to be surprisingly straightforward, while the collection of replacement bearings and supporting components cost very little.

It's worth noting, too, that while the procedure outlined in the accompanying photos was for the 1969 Ford truck, the steps are largely universal for other Ford steering systems—and even those of other makes. Of course, some systems are more complicated than others and there are different components with different systems; regardless of the make, there simply aren't that

many components involved with the steering shaft.

That's an important nuance, because bearing replacement in the column and replacement of shaft hardware is vastly different from issues associated with column-mounted shift linkages. That's an entirely different basket of mechanical kittens to deal with and, fortunately, the nature of this project meant the entire steering column and shift linkage didn't require dismantling.

Even better, it's a project novice enthusiasts can complete at home with a steering wheel puller—which is the most exotic tool required. It can be rented at most auto parts stores, but it's not a bad idea to make one a permanent part of the toolbox. Of course, the removal, repair, and installation steps outlined here will vary for different models, but as we mentioned, most of them are largely universal.

As for the cost involved, the parts investment for this project totaled only about \$50 from National Parts Depot—and that included buying a couple of extra parts to cover all possible bases after the steering column was removed. It was also a project that could be accomplished in a day or less. Given the low parts investment and relatively straightforward procedures involved, procrastination was an unfortunate reason to put off the project.

In fact, the resulting smoothness in the steering effort and like-new feel behind the wheel of the repaired F-250 made it all the more enjoyable to drive. Ignoring the problem was a mistake and the chastened owner can be considered steered straight.



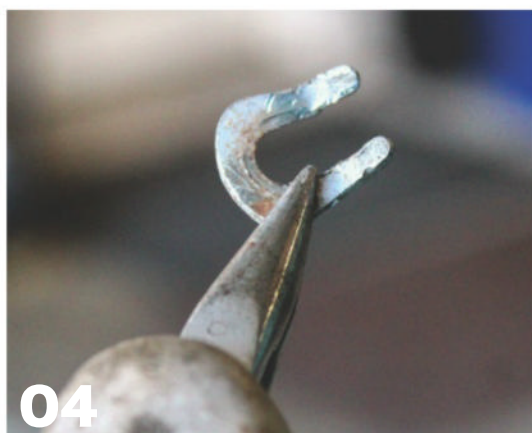
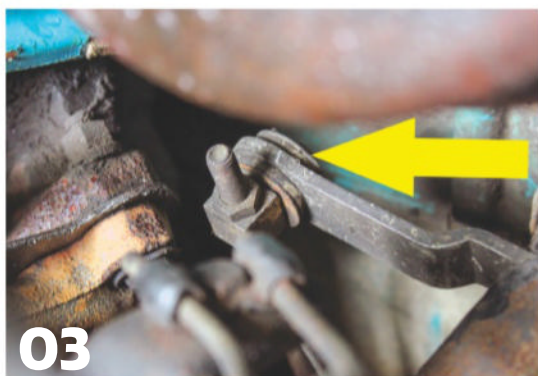
01. The gap between the steering wheel and steering column was the telltale that something was wrong. The steering wheel could be moved fore and aft within the space of the gap and the steering wheel was out of contact with the turn signal canceling cam.

02. At the bottom of the steering column, a dislodged bearing (arrow) created interference issues when turning the steering wheel. Correcting the list of issues would require removal of the steering column and shaft.

03. Removal started with disconnecting the steering linkage between the transmission and column-mounted automatic shifter. This vehicle had power brakes and the brake booster made access to the linkage a challenge, as disconnection required pulling a retaining clip at the backside of the linkage (arrow) for separation. Access was not easy.

04. Here's the clip that held the linkage together. A flat-blade screwdriver was used to slightly pry and bend the top of the clip away from the linkage, while a small pair of needle-nose pliers was used next to grasp and pull it off its perch.

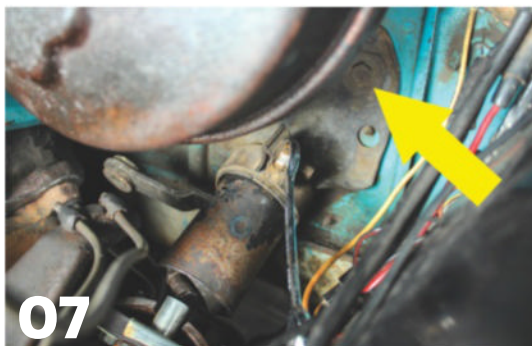
05. Next, the coupler between the steering shaft and steering box—also known as the rag joint—was loosened, which required turning the steering wheel to bring the bolt for it to an accessible angle. The coupler only needs to be loosened where it cinches against the steering box. It can remain on the steering shaft when the column is removed, although this was also a good opportunity to inspect it for possible replacement. This one was only about four years old and didn't need to be replaced.



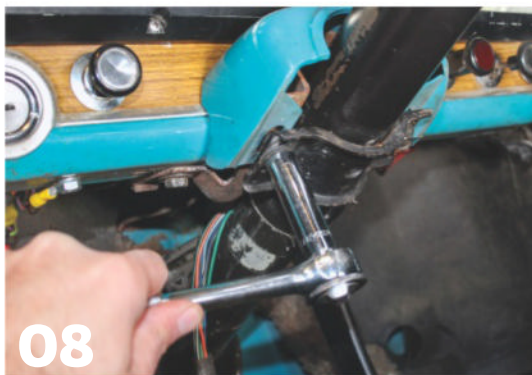
06. To provide a frame of reference for the steering wheel's alignment after the repaired column was reinstalled, a photo was taken of the wheel in the position it was turned to allow loosening of the coupler.



07. On this truck, a support bracket with a band clamp also required removal under the hood. Again, the power brake booster made access difficult; it required loosening and removing the band clamp from the bracket and removal of the bracket itself. This one had three bolts securing it to the firewall. One of them is visible here (arrow). The others are behind the brake booster.



08. Next, work moved to the interior, where the steering column was loosened from the bottom of the dashboard.



09. There was also another bracket at the inside of the firewall that required removal. Getting access to it and its four fasteners required cutting into the original sound-deadening material under the dash.



10. The steering column also had wiring harnesses that required disconnection before it could be removed.



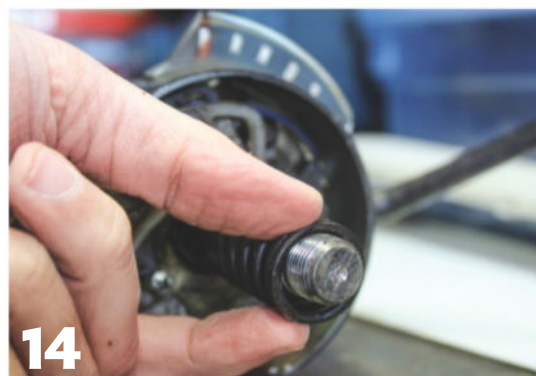
11. In hindsight, it would have been easier to pull out the disconnected steering column with the steering wheel removed, but it all came out with only a little bit of jostling. Generally, removing the steering wheel first makes the job easier.

12. With the column moved to a bench, removal of the steering wheel started with a counterclockwise twist of the horn ring to remove it and the spring behind it.



13. Next, after removal of the retaining nut, a steering wheel puller was used to pull the wheel from the shaft.

14. There's another spring behind the steering wheel that slips off the steering shaft. After that, the shaft slips easily out of the bottom of the column.



15



15. After partially pulling out the steering shaft, the problem was very clear: The bearing assembly was no longer seated in the tube. It, along with the retainer, the nylon bearing sleeve, and spacer sleeve, were moving freely on the shaft. The retaining clamp, too, had slipped down to the bottom of the shaft, with the head of the clamp and retaining bolt bent at an angle, suggesting it had gotten jammed in the bottom of the column and twisted while the truck was turning. In fact, it appeared as if someone had previously removed the steering shaft and got the order of the components wrong during reassembly and the bearing was never properly seated. What a mess!



16

16. Things were much better at the top of the steering column. After removing this retention plate for the turn signal cam assembly, we got a closer look at the upper column bearing. It was still intact, snug in the barrel of the column and spinning freely, so we left it in place. No need to fix what wasn't broken.



17

17. Here's our set of replacement parts from National Parts Depot: Two bearing assemblies, two bearing sleeves, and a replacement bearing spring for the upper part of the column, for a grand total of around \$50 for reproduction parts. A coupler (rag joint) would add roughly \$30, if required.



18

18. We took one of the bearings and drove it into the bottom end of the steering column. We don't have a press in our home garage, but a suitably sized socket and mallet did the trick—although we eventually moved to a vise to hold the column in place when the bearing proved a little tougher to seat than anticipated.



19

19. After the bearing was seated, we gave it a few applications of white lithium grease.

20. Next, we straightened the retaining clamp and, starting from the bottom and working upward, slipped on the spacer sleeve, replacement bearing retainer, and replacement bearing sleeve. It's vital to get them in the correct order for proper fitment—something that clearly hadn't been done previously.



20

21. At the top of the column, the second bearing sleeve was slipped over the shaft and up against the upper column bearing.

22. After that, the bearing spring slipped into place. The original spring appeared in good shape, but we decided to put the new one to good use.

23. The wheel was fitted next on the bench, but only temporarily, because it was necessary to determine whether the installed position of the shaft hardware would permit the previous gap between the wheel and column to be closed.

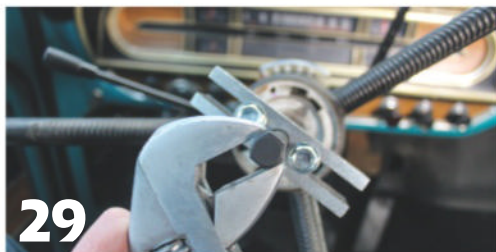
24. Turns out, it was necessary to move up the retaining clamp on the shaft about 1.5 inches, which effectively pushed up the column and closed the gap.

25. After that, it was time to return the steering column to the truck, with the steering wheel removed, but the retaining nut threaded on to hold the spring in place. Installation was simply the reverse of the removal process.

26. Prior to tightening the steering wheel, it was slipped in place in the same position it was prior to removal and the front wheels were straightened. That made the initial installation a lot closer to the mark.

27. The reinstallation of the steering wheel was also the perfect time to remove the gross, old rim cover that had been wrapped around it for decades.





28. After that, it was time for a quick spin around the neighborhood to gauge the position of the wheel. It was off by a few degrees, but not bad.

29. With the steering wheel puller along for the ride, we pulled over and made the necessary adjustment.

30. With wheel straight, the horn ring was reinstalled, completing the project. The wheel was now feeling firmer and more precise in turns, while the turn signals now canceled themselves as they should. It was a satisfying conclusion to a surprisingly straightforward and inexpensive repair project. 🚗

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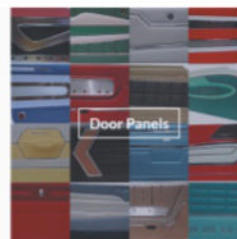
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Cities Service Miler Tires



Two well-preserved service-station-branded replacement tires are a reminder of when gas stations sold parts and not just snacks

CITIES SERVICE MILER TIRES

ASKING PRICE: NOT MARKED
FOUND AT: CARLISLE FORD NATIONALS SWAP MEET



MILER TIRES WERE A REPLACEMENT

available at Cities Service stations and are one collectible that will likely never be reproduced. This pair, seen in the swap meet at the Carlisle Ford Nationals, were the correct size to fit a 1933 or '34 Ford. While too old and oxidized to ever see service again, the deep tread and well-preserved sidewall detail means they were perfect for display.

WHAT WAS CITIES SERVICE?

Cities Service has been better known since the mid-1960s (and officially known since the early 1980s) as Citgo, and is commonly associated with the Venezuelan government. Before 1986, when resisting a takeover attempt by notorious corporate raider T. Boone Pickens badly destabilized its finances, it was an entirely U.S.-owned company. It was founded in 1910, not as a petroleum-dealing concern, but to supply electricity and natural gas to municipalities—hence the name Cities Service. Within a decade, however, its position in the natural-gas market made it a natural entrant into the gas-and-oil industry and it began exiting the municipal-supply business in the 1940s when forced to choose in response to federal legislation. The familiar triangle-in-cloverleaf logo seen on the sidewall of this tire was first used in 1921, according to company trademark filings.

WHY DID CITIES SERVICE SELL REPLACEMENT TIRES?

In the 1920s, fuel sellers quickly discovered that there wasn't enough money to be made simply filling up motorists' tanks—plus they had a ready supply of other petroleum products available for retail (think lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, etc.). Diversification was the order of the day and Cities Service was hardly alone in selling house-branded merchandise to its customers. Socony-Vacuum's Mobil brand is well remembered as is that of the Atlas Supply Company, a company jointly owned by several Standard Oil successors. Cities Service was marketing Acme-brand tires in the mid-1930s and by 1950 its halo tire was called the Cities Service Airmaster—a riff on the Milemaster moniker the company

had used to label tires (under the Acme brand as Mile-Master), gasoline (or "gasolene" as Cities Service styled it back then), car batteries, and other products as early as 1932.

JUST HOW OLD IS THIS MILER?

It's tough to say just when these tires were made. The size, 5.25/5.50 x 17, was common in the early 1930s, being original equipment on the 1933-'34 Ford, the 1933-'36 Chevrolet Standard, some 1933-'35 Plymouths, and other, similarly sized cars. Because those brands all had mass-market appeal, it meant there was a massive replacement market when they were in service—especially since the Great Depression meant not everyone was ready to re-tire with name-brand rubber like Firestone, Goodyear, or B.F. Goodrich (which was later renamed BFGoodrich in the 1980s). Since Milemaster became a Cities Service brand (directly, rather than as an Acme tire) in the 1940s and lasted through the 1960s as a tire brand, they would seem to be from a rather narrow window of time when Acme tires were sold using the Mile-Master name, leaving Cities Service to turn to something purely descriptive for its high-mileage tire. These are probably no newer than the early 1940s.

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO KEEP AN OLD TIRE AROUND?

Replacement-equipment tires provide a uniquely perishable (indeed, these perished long ago, but would clean up nicely for display) artifact of 1930s Americana. The pie-crust shoulder, Cities Service branding, and vintage tread pattern are handsome bits of design. Most went to the scrap heap long ago, along with the original production molds, and it's unlikely that aftermarket suppliers would be interested in tooling up to reproduce something that was never installed as original equipment. Perhaps nobody would want the cheapskate image of running a service-station branded tire, either, but for the garage or den, they are an interesting and cool-looking reminder of an era when gas stations really were service stations.

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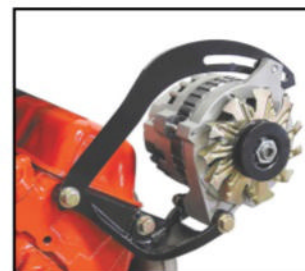
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2



3



4

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TP TOOLS
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New Aircat 1/2-inch composite impact wrenches are now available from TP Tools that provide a combination of power and torque, while allowing you to work in areas with minimal clearance. Despite their small size, the impact wrenches produce 1,250 lb.-ft of torque with an rpm of 8,500 for fast run downs without having to worry about overtightening—plus smooth, hassle-free removal. Fitted on each tool is an easy-operation forward and reverse flip lever that features a safety to avoid unwanted directional changes. The wrenches' noise levels clock in at 86 dBA, they're ergonomically designed for comfort, and they weigh only 4 pounds. Ask about p/n AC-1125 for more details.

\$275

tptools.com

2.

BOOT CAMP

STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS
800-447-0849

Rubber parts on 1964-'69 Lincoln Continentals are approaching their sixth decade and it may be time to replace any of those cracked or brittle pieces. These new wiring grommet boots are made to mimic the original FoMoCo rubber and provide identical fit with renewed durability and function. These boots can be found at the quarter-window pillar on each side of your Continental. The grommet boot secures routing of the wiring for the electric power windows and door locks. Each is said to be made from top quality rubber and no hardware is needed for installation. The rubber pieces replace factory #C4VY-14603-A and are sold in pairs. Inquire about p/n 70-4712-21 for more information.

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3.

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If your Chevy pickup, Blazer, or Suburban has a damaged or missing alternator bracket, these upper and lower brackets are a perfect replacement. They are manufactured like the originals to ensure proper fitment and appearance, and each bracket comes with the necessary hardware to guarantee easy installation. The brackets will also work with the 1972-'82 Corvette 350-cu.in. V-8. Call and ask about p/n 6772ABK for more details.

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MAKING SUDS WITH POORBOY'S WORLD CAR-WASH SOAP



No single brand predominated in the collection of car-wash tools assembled for this test. The Poorboy's World items were purchased by the author.

I'M UNASHAMED TO SAY that I was previously satisfied with dish soap, a bucket, and a sponge—followed by the occasional coat of old-school hard wax. Unsurprisingly, these 1960s methods passed down to me from Dad are just as dated as the lacquer and enamel paints of that era.

If you're new to this title, I own a 1983 Cadillac Sedan de Ville. It has been in the family since new, and while it was always garaged and babied, that didn't stop the paint on the hood and decklid from losing all luster. It also needed a wash, and given that it wears the original paint, I didn't want to risk further degradation.

I assembled a cast of car wash tools and materials, including several products from Poorboy's World: QW+ quick wax; Natural Look leather, vinyl, rubber, and plastic cleaner and preservative; and Super Slick & Suds Concentrated Car Wash.

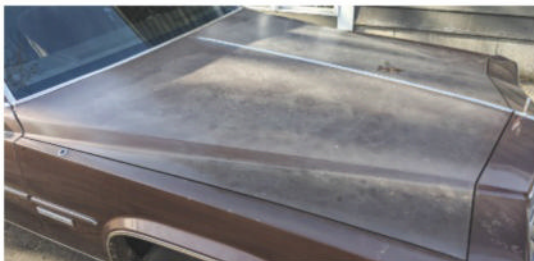
Poorboy's World advertises that Super Slick & Suds contains "superior lubricants, surfactants, and suds" to safely clean "without stripping off wax or sealants." That, along with the promise that the suds will "encapsulate dirt and grime," allowing them to be rinsed right off, seems to fit the bill for a proper car-wash soap.

We first pretreated any heavy soiling present on the car, such as bird droppings, which was as simple as drizzling on some of the concentrated soap and letting it sit while preparing the rest of the wash materials. Next, we administered a thorough prerinse with a firm, but not too sharp, stream of water that efficiently removed the pretreated bird droppings entirely.

The vinyl top on the Cadillac wasn't particularly dirty, but we started there in the name of completeness, and the glass cleaned up nicely using a squeegee dipped in the sudsy water. We immediately noticed the free rinsing action of the Super Slick & Suds worked as advertised, allowing us to simply chase the soap off the car with a sheet of water.

Moving down to the painted parts of the car, especially the sun-damaged hood and decklid, we paid careful attention to (gently) working the suds into discolored and other imperfect-looking areas. This proved worthwhile, as they became slightly less noticeable once clean.

We then switched to a soft-bristled brush and made quick work of the bumpers, rocker trim, wheels and tires, and even the wheelwells. All the mud, bugs, road tar, and other assorted gunk came off with ease. In fact, the wash on the tires was so good, we elected to skip any specialized tire cleaning this time. After the car was thoroughly washed and dried, we treated the whole thing to a coating of Poorboy's World QW+ quick wax, which we'll tell you more about in a future installment. 🚗



Pollen, dirt, bird droppings, cat footprints, and sun damage combined to make the hood of the 1983 Cadillac Sedan de Ville look shabby.



All washed up, the Cadillac is ready for a coat of wax to protect the paint until the next cleaning.

POORBOY'S WORLD SUPER SLICK & SUDS CONCENTRATED CAR WASH SOAP



Price:	\$19.95 (32 ounces)
Where to get it:	poorboyworld.com (and select retail outlets)
What we liked:	Worked great as a pretreatment and left the glass clean and streak-free.
What could be better:	The recommended two gallons of wash water really isn't enough to do a whole 1983 Cadillac.
Overall rating:	★★★★☆

[Editor's note: *Hemmings* occasionally receives products from manufacturers for the purpose of product reviews. In this case we bought this item at the store with our own money.]

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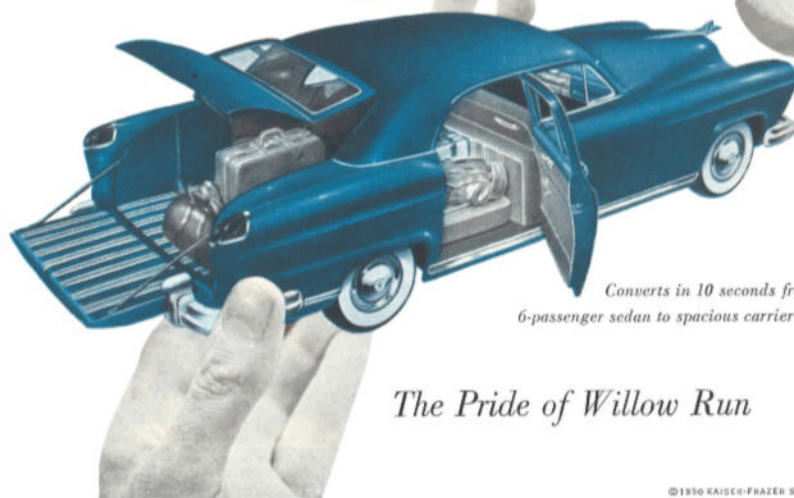


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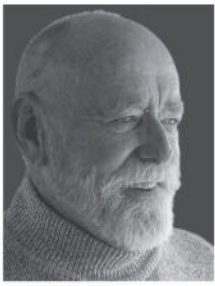
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Jim Richardson

Old and Crude

“Tearing
down and
looking
after my
old cars
helped
bring my
shoulders
down from
around
my neck
and drop
my blood
pressure
below red-
line.”

SOME PEOPLE LIKE

to play tennis, go hunting, or do gardening. Me, I like to drive and work on old cars. Always have. My grades went south as soon as I got a driver's license at age 16; I went cruising in marginally ancient machines in Southern California during the Fifties and Sixties. There was Oscar's drive-in, Harvey's Broiler, and the A&W; after that there was Hollywood, Venice, and Santa Monica.

I discovered early that, though I was not destined to be a star athlete, I had a knack for working on cars and I enjoyed it. I did it for a living off and on through my college years, and even fantasized about becoming a car designer or race car driver. But real life, marriage, and family took precedence, and I wound up writing about cars instead.

I still love driving and working on them as much as ever, as did my good friend Frank. A while back he and I were working on his 1967 Mustang in his driveway using rather earthy language, when his wife walked out of the house, stood with her hands on her hips, and said: “Where I grew up, we paid people to work on our cars.”

This irritated me, but then I realized that I grew up around machinists, aircraft assemblers, and guys that would have considered you a wuss if he had to pay someone to fix your car. But she grew up around people who prided themselves on having the luxury of being useless.

We lived in our cars back in the Fifties and Sixties. We dined and went to movies in them hoping to get into a little hanky-panky, and some of us even went to drive-in churches. According to a wag disk jockey of the time named Emperor Hudson, their slogan was, “Come as you are, but stay in your car.” I didn't go to a drive-in church, but I went through recaps on an annual basis back then.

And when I say driving, I am referring to accelerating, shifting, back-shifting, cornering, and braking—and occasionally, should the opportunity arise, going fast. As Alodius Huxley once said, “Speed, it seems to me, provides the one genuinely modern pleasure.” And when you think about it, not too many years before his day, 40 mph on a horse was about it for most people.

Sadly, in my mind, the golden days of driving cars are behind us. Things started downhill



in 1940 with the Oldsmobile Hydra-Matic transmission that shifted gears for you, though not necessarily at the optimum point. Then came power brakes and power steering. Now, the newest cars drive themselves to let you focus on other things.

I have restored cars and have a den full of trophies to prove it. I built a couple of street rods in my youth; I have never tired of the hobby. I had high-pressure jobs with tight deadlines for years, and tearing down and looking after my old cars helped bring my shoulders down from around my neck and drop my blood pressure below redline.

We have a Hyundai with an automatic transmission, GPS, and an abundance of cup holders that my wife uses, but I don't drive anything with such features. My 1955 Bel Air has a manual-shift Borg Warner overdrive, as does my 1940 Packard 110 coupe. My 1958 Apache parts chaser is equipped with a Mopar Feather Duster aluminum case four-speed, with fourth gear being an overdrive that allows me to cruise at 80 miles per hour at 2,000 rpm thanks to a 3:90 third member. As for GPS, I have maps I got from my local Texaco station that don't require electricity to tell me where I need to go.

I enjoy making old cars run better than new and delight in the process of rebuilding Rochester Quadrajets or antique Stromberg 97s. I take pride in meticulously assembling an engine so it can strut its stuff and last nearly forever. Also, I have done paint jobs that took a year or more, then took home the gold at major shows.

As for driving, I am into controlling my own destiny. I prefer the hands-on process of driving a vintage car, and I like being able to downshift and keep the engine in its sweet spot as regards rpm and torque, allowing me to take corners smoothly and properly. New cars require less maintenance, are probably safer, and are perhaps more economical on long monotonous drives—but they aren't much fun.

So, if you will excuse me, I think I will top up the radiator and check the oil in my tiny 1966 Morris Minor convertible and then throw it around in some nearby hills just for fun, providing those we pay to Protect and Serve don't take exception to my crude imitation of Bobby Unser at Laguna Seca. 🏁

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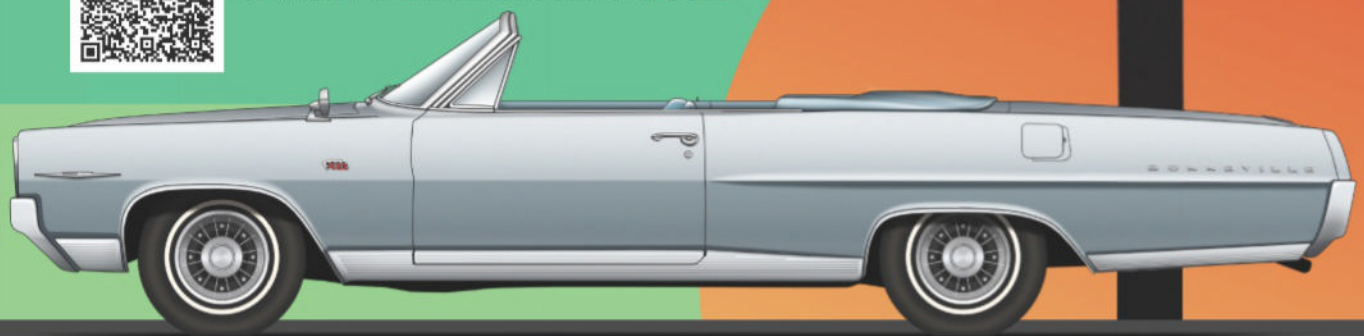
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