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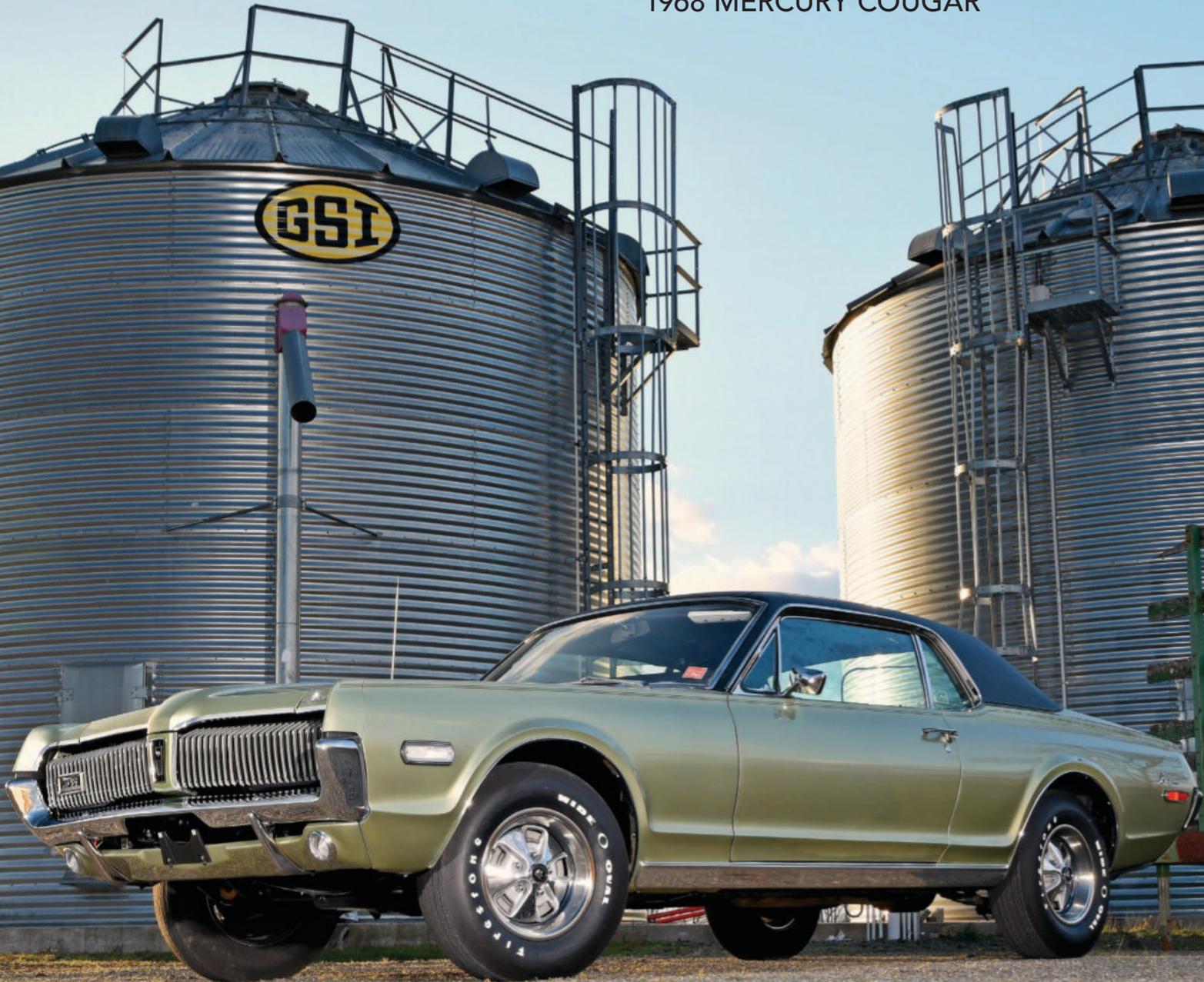
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AMERICA'S COLLECTOR-CAR OWNERSHIP MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2023 #228

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PERSPECTIVE

- 6 Matthew Litwin
- 8 Garage Time
- 10 I Was There
- 12 Recaps Letters
- 30 Pat Foster
- 40 Lost & Found
- 70 Rear View Ads
- 72 Jim Richardson

FEATURES

- 16 Cover Story
1968 Mercury Cougar
- 24 Barn Find
1967 Porsche 911S
- 32 1970 Plymouth Barracuda
- 41 News Reports
- 42 Automotive Design
Lincoln's Designer Marks
- 48 1966 AMC Ambassador
Diplomat

MARKETPLACE

- 14 Hemmings Auctions
- 64 Swap Meet Scores

TECH

- 56 Tech Report:
Return to the Road Series -
HMN 1940 Buick Century,
Part 1
- 66 Product Test
- 68 New Products & Parts



On the Cover: Scotty Lachenauer photographed this Lime Frost Green 1968 Mercury Cougar basking in the late afternoon sun in New Jersey.

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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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Subscription rates in the US and Possessions; 12 issues for \$19.95. Canada \$30.95; (CDN price includes surface mail and GST tax). All other countries \$32.95 in US funds.

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“The notion of students managing a good old-fashioned Saturday morning car show during the school year is hardly a new thing.”

MYTHS HAVE A TERRIBLE habit of becoming mistaken for reality. Examples are bountiful, like that of film comedian W.C. Fields, who was said to have hidden a vast fortune under countless false names around the world—not true. A penny dropped from the top of the Eiffel Tower, or the Empire State Building, could kill someone—also not true. Field mice prefer cheese and houseflies live only 24 hours. You guessed it—neither is a factual statement. Add to that the still-common myth regarding the next generation’s little or no interest in vintage vehicles.

Dispelling such theoretical notions is not an easy feat, despite ample evidence to the contrary. A relevant instance: Hemmings Auctions managing editor Kurt Ernst and I just spent an afternoon with a group of students at Averill Park High School, in neighboring New York, where—upon the invitation from the school’s French teacher, Jeff Brown—we presided over a Judge’s Workshop for APHS’s second annual Import and Domestic Car Show. Allow me to back up for a moment.

We met Jeff several years ago when he attended one of our then-twice-monthly Thursday night cruise-ins with his 1986 Citroën CX ambulance. Though he is drawn to automotive examples from the French firm, he’s long championed the greater vintage vehicle community: From the experience of ownership and driving, to the comradery and learning that binds us all together.

When the APHS International Club began exploring new fundraising avenues for 2022, Jeff developed the idea of hosting an antique car show, the face of which—greeting car owners and judging the event—would be managed by volunteer students. Aside from the potential financial support, Jeff reasoned that it would be an opportunity for students to begin learning professional and social interaction with peers, and their willingness to volunteer would also count towards community service hours required at the time of graduation. Ideally, more than a few would take a greater interest in antique vehicles, too.

It was initially thought only a handful of volunteers would be needed; however, about 10 students quickly signed on, split almost evenly between boys and girls. Only a few had any prior interaction with vintage cars, while a couple students were already enrolled in the school’s three-year Auto Tech program.

(Editor’s note: During a sophomore’s first year in the program, they must complete an Energy & Power class, followed by Tech 1 and Tech 2 in successive years. After completing all three, the students take a written and practical exam to earn CTE-accredited certification — Career and Technical Endorsement—in line with New York certifications, which enables program graduates to immediately enter the workforce.) To further prepare the novice enthusiasts for the many facets and nuances of a judged car show—even with the dozen or so class trophies based on a “favorite” versus a point-based system—Jeff arranged a Judges Workshop to be presided over by his friends here at Hemmings. Suffice it to say, Kurt and I were eager to accept his invitation.

Without going into a tremendous amount of detail, we encouraged the students to first have fun and enjoy the sights and sounds of the variety of vintage rides they may see; to listen to car owners’ stories, discover the diversity of the car culture, and learn a bit of what makes the community tick. The faculty, Kurt, and I must have done something right. Roughly 125 cars descended upon the high school—far more than anticipated—and the students successfully embraced and managed a variety of situations, and every participant left happy. The impactful experience carried over to 2023, bringing us full circle to our most recent visit to APHS. We were happy to see several familiar faces eager to pick up where they left off 12 months prior, including one young alum who said she didn’t want to miss being a part of it.

The notion of students managing a good old-fashioned Saturday morning car show during the school year is hardly a new thing. Over the years, I’ve happened upon more than one such event while “on the road” for Hemmings in central Pennsylvania and on the Gulf Coast of Florida. In addition to Averill Park, I’ll be adding one more to my 2023 schedule: a stop in my native Connecticut to participate in my niece’s high school car show.

This season, seek and support the countless high school car shows organized and managed by eager next-gen enthusiasts, and like the students, take the time to have some fun, learn a thing or two, and encourage them to chase a dream of vintage vehicle stewardship. 🚗

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S is for Speedster

A century-old speedster, built from a **1908 Ford**, is coming back to the road for the first time since the '50s

WORDS BY
DAVID CONWILL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
CLAYTON PADDISON

LORE SURROUNDING this car holds that when teenaged Winslow Pierce (scion of a wealthy Long Island family and a future engineer) started modifying his 1908 Ford Model S, circa 1912, he was also given the family's Stevens-Duryea as a parts donor, and that the front axle and four-cylinder engine from the Stevens-Duryea ended up in the Model S. A good story, but it doesn't fit with the equally interesting realities present on the car.

"There are no Stevens-Duryea parts present," current owner Clayton Paddison of Vancouver, Washington, says. The car hasn't had any engine since sometime in the 1950s, and the front sus-

pension's origins are somewhat murky—though they're definitely not Ford, as the Model S used transverse leaf springs just like the Model T, and every other Ford car through 1948.

The front subframe appears to have been taken directly from the donor car, axle and all, and attached to the Ford frame with bolts and hardwood spacing blocks. With the exception of the rear axle, which is from a Model T, the rest of the chassis is pretty much stock Model S—including right-hand-drive steering, though with a steering box not from Ford, but from Jacox, direct predecessor of what was once known as Saginaw Steering Gear division of General Motors that now goes by "Nexteer."



What's Inside:

1. Fords didn't use parallel front leaf springs, so it's a mystery as to what car the I-beam axle came from. The original builder adapted the Model S wheels to it and did some re-engineering to improve its ride and handling. The mystery axle and related parts will be retained in the rebuild.

2. Modern street rodders have no monopoly on "subframing" a car. Winslow Pierce attached the front frame section from another car to the Ford by using wood blocks as spacers. Its restoration will see fresh wood installed and the substitution of rivets for the original bolts.

3. Later in life, Winslow would be a famed engineer with many patents. The plates attached to the spring shackles and axle are his 1921-patented design for an automotive shock absorber. This was likely his prototype.

4. More distinctively non-Ford elements to the Pierce speedster are the radiator and hood. These weren't taken from a junker but were instead fabricated expressly for this car. Note also the exposed hardware cloth on the cowl that originally lay beneath layers of fabric and padding to form a Weymann-style body.

5. Whatever instrumentation the car had originally has been lost to time, so this period Maxwell panel and associated gauges will be restored and added to the dash as a plausible and handsome substitute.

As for the body of the car, it is another creation by young Winslow. Clayton describes it as a "low-slung, gunboat runabout—with a wooden frame skinned in hardware cloth, batting, and canvas, then painted." The wood frame remains in good shape and Clayton says it just needs recovering. The speedster even has a windshield, taken from another car of its era and built from hardwood with a brass glass channel. Clayton says he intends to replicate it in varnished mahogany or walnut to complement all the brass pieces on the car.

The presence of a Model T rear axle suggests that Winslow may have found it expedient to swap in the entire drivetrain from the next-generation Ford. Clayton speculates that the Model T engine had probably been treated

to some interesting speed parts by the time Winslow died—possibly hastening its separation from the rest of the car at the hands of an unscrupulous museum curator later in the decade.

To replace it, Clayton intends a "good, reliable T drivetrain." He says he's got a line on a fairly stock engine that will receive a camshaft upgrade and an improved cylinder head. Aiding its operation will be a Warford accessory transmission and Ruckstell two-speed rear axle, both Model T-era accessories intended to make the 20-horsepower engine far more versatile through gearing. To that end, he's already acquired the correct "hogshead" transmission cover, to make the T gearbox work with the Model S's right-hand-drive steering. 🚗

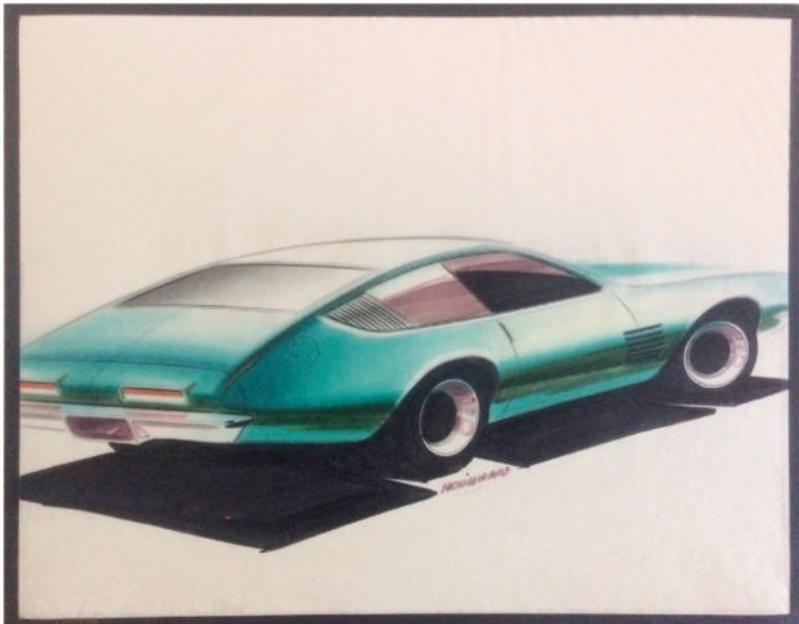


John T. Houlihan

GM Stylist

GM Tech Center

Warren, Michigan, July 1968



How It Came to Be Designing Chevrolet's Vega Kammback

“Young people can’t afford a B-body wagon, and even an A-body wagon is a bit pricey. Young families need the space and capacity of a wagon.”

IN JULY OF 1968, I was in my third year as an exterior designer for General Motors, working in the Styling Department at the GM Tech Center in Warren, Michigan. GM Styling was recognized as the pinnacle of American automotive design, and I somehow managed to escape the draft and land this prestigious job right out of college. My best friend and college roommate, less fortunate than I, entered the Navy upon graduation and had just been reassigned to a destroyer off the coast of Vietnam. Prior to departing, he flew in for a visit. His final night in the States found us commiserating about his fate at my kitchen table, well into both the morning and a case of Stroh’s fire-brewed beer. He had an early flight and I had to go to work. We caught a couple hours of sleep, and around five in the morning, I dropped him at the airport and headed for the studio.

This was an important day for me. I had to finish a full-size airbrush rendering that I had convinced, or so I thought, the chief designer to include in the array of proposals to be presented to GM “brass” later that afternoon. A team of senior executives were slated to tour the access-restricted Advanced Chevrolet Design Studio to review the XP 887 project, ultimately named the Vega.

GM needed another “small” car after the Corvair was derailed by Ralph Nader’s book,

Unsafe at Any Speed. Negative press had unfairly panned the car’s design as inherently dangerous. This new small car needed to be a “world beater,” intended to restore GM’s reputation and enhance our market share in the growing demand for smaller, more economical vehicles.

Earlier designs for the XP 887 project had been rejected by corporate management as being too “GM looking.” The new direction was to be “European” in look and feel. Large photos of the Fiat 124 were mounted all around the studio for inspiration. The engine for the XP 887, well into development for several years, was actually installed in a Fiat 124 for testing at the Milford Proving Ground. We designers were encouraged to research European cars to gain a feel for that aesthetic.

Despite all this effort to “Europeanize” the design, the real influence for the XP 887 was the current design effort for the next-generation 1970 Camaro. That design, underway in another Advanced Chevy studio under the direction of Hank Haga, was quite stunning. I had the opportunity to visit Haga’s studio and view a full-size, perspective rendering of a wagon version of this new Camaro. It was awesome, a truly breathtaking design that left a deep and lasting impression on me. From that moment, I was driven with a passion to create a wagon version for the XP 887.

Convincing the design chief to embrace this excursion was another matter. The company had no plans to tool for a wagon, and he steadfastly marched to the company drum. The basic XP 887 plan called for a hatchback and possibly a sedan, ultimately called a notchback, but a wagon was not even considered. My passion unabated, I persuaded him to let me pursue the idea on my own time. After hours and on weekends, I developed sketches and ideas, and had undertaken my finalized concept in full-scale, which brings us to the fateful morning.

As the rosy fingers of dawn clawed at the dark, summer sky, I shoveled myself—groggy, hungover, and even suffering the stale vestiges of a buzz—into the studio. As I began to remove the masking areas of the rendering and prepared to air-brush the fine details and highlights, I heard a rattling at the tightly secured door. Project designers alone had keys. I went to the door and opened it. There standing in front of me was Edward N. Cole, automobile icon and legendary president of General Motors.

In shock and in less than top condition, I was at a loss for words. Unable to collect any semblance of composure, I erupted with the greeting, “Holy Moley! What are you doing here?”

Mr. Cole graciously overlooked my explosion and told me he wanted to see the XP 887 project without the entourage that routinely trailed him. He wanted to get an uncluttered look at the project, free of the banal editorial and commentary as reviewing executives vied for political posturing.

I dutifully took him around the studio and pointed out the various renderings of the hatchback and notchback, along with the full-size clay model in the center of the room. I answered his questions

to the best of my ability, not having the detailed technical knowledge of the studio engineer or studio chief. Mr. Cole seemed to be satisfied. Then he noticed the partially masked rendering I was completing and asked, "What is that?" I told him it was a wagon version of the project.

"We aren't tooling a wagon," he quickly noted.

"I know," I answered.

"Well, why is it here?" he shot back.

"Well, Mr. Cole, young people can't afford a B-body wagon, and even an A-body wagon is a bit pricey. Young families need the space and capacity of a wagon, and I think they'd really go for a smaller, economical one like this," I reasoned.

He looked at the partially complete rendering, thanked me for my help, turned, and walked out of the studio.

Later that morning, we underlings were relegated to the back room, allowing the high-ranking visitors uncluttered space for the dog-and-pony show. I climbed on a chair, peering over the lockers to observe their comments and interactions. Only the clay model, two full sized renderings, and several smaller perspective renderings of the hatchback and notchback were on display. Questions were asked and answered, and the session appeared to be winding up when Mr. Cole asked the chief designer where the wagon rendering was.

The studio had huge movable boards that served as supports for the full sized renderings.

There were three or four of these boards in bays along one of the studio walls. Each could be raised up into the ceiling to reveal the one behind, allowing multiple designs to be viewed for comparison. The wagon was behind one of the renderings on display for the meeting.

The chief designer cast an embarrassed glance at the floor as he walked over to the bay where the rendering was stashed. He raised one of the boards, revealing my wagon. One of the visiting suits, somewhat familiar with the XP 887 effort, quickly remarked, "There's no wagon planned for this project."

Mr. Cole, addressing the whole gathering, earnestly declared, "Young people can't afford the larger wagons we offer. Young families need the space, and I believe they'll really go for a smaller, more economical wagon. We need to be tooling a wagon."

With that, the entourage filed out of the studio and life returned to normal.

Throughout Vega's seven-year production run from 1971-'77, the Kammback Wagon outsold the Notchback Sedan by more than 49 percent. 🚗



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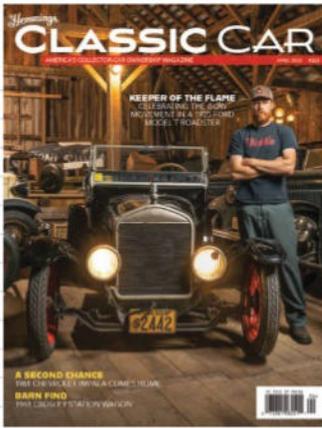


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Recaps Letters

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AS A CLASSIC CAR SUBSCRIBER

since 2004, I wanted to compliment you on the April 2023 issue. It came yesterday and when I finish it again tonight, I'll pass it on to a Model T guy who is not yet a subscriber, who will in return pass it to another early car lover.

This is the best issue in many years with a cover that drew me into reading it cover-to-cover before breakfast. Matthew Litwin's editorial on the Sympathetic Restoration was spot on. Then the story on the Hemmings 1940 Buick convertible sedan drew me in, too. It was photographed next to Hemmings' 1936 Dodge panel truck that was driven by Justus Taylor in several of the 11 Great American Races I participated in. Subsequently, my wife and I visited Justus at the Hemmings filling station and museum when in New England on ACA or VMCCA tours, before his death. Once, we even plugged in our old motor home out at the red barn where the overflow cars from the museum were then stored, and we spent a night there.

Next, David Conwill's "In Search of Period Perfection" story on Zach Suhr's collection of Model T's, A's, and V-8s was awesome and well worth another visit to tell us about some of the other cars seen in Drew Wiedemann's photos. As a Model T, A, and early Ford V-8 guy, I especially liked the whole story.

Pat Foster's tale about the

Kaiser was interesting too, because as a young teenager we had a neighbor kid who was restoring a Henry J in his basement that was shaped similarly to the one pictured.

Then David and Penny Conwill dazzled me with their story on the "Gow Jobs Revealed," a story about people having more fun with antique cars than most hobbyists ever have. I will also share with Ed Daniels David's "Swap Meet" find about the Miller Hi-Speed head for Model A Fords. Ed first raced his Model T and then moved up to a Model A; he's still racing at age 90.

I also enjoyed the articles on the newer vehicles, but my interests that drew me to *Classic Car* are the pre-World War II cars and trucks. In fact I almost didn't renew this year because the old stuff had disappeared from most of the *Classic Car* pages. I owned lots of later cars, too, but they are not my interest now.

In closing, I almost always agree with Jim Richardson's closing article "Being Here." As my tag line on the AACA forum says, "If you don't drive them, you might as well be collecting clocks." Thanks again for the renewed interest in prewar vehicles.

PAUL DOBBIN
Franklin, North Carolina

A BRIEF OBITUARY in my hometown newspaper in Paris, Illinois, alerted me to the death of Bob Palma. I first became aware of Bob through his column in *HCC*, specifically one about his family's Packard dealership in Paris in the early to mid-1950s. I was too young to remember anything about the dealership, but I certainly knew lots of the names and places in the article. I sent Bob an email which started a great exchange of correspondence about our shared experiences growing up in Paris. As if to test

my authenticity, Bob sent a set of ten photos he had taken of former car dealerships in Paris which are longer in existence. I must have passed muster as I correctly identified nine of the ten sites, missing only the former Pontiac store on North Main Street. Subsequent columns often referenced Paris and his family, including his Uncle Milton, who later became the service manager of the local Ford-Mercury dealership that our family patronized. While I enjoy every issue of your wonderful magazine, it was an added bonus to receive the issues that included one of Bob's columns. He will be missed by his family, friends, loyal readers, and the auto brands that he championed.

Keep up the good work. You have a great magazine.

BILL TUCKER
Aiken, South Carolina

I'M VERY SORRY to hear of Bob [Palma]'s passing. We first became acquainted when his passion was collecting the last convertible from each manufacturer. This was back in the mid-1970s and he ran an ad in *Hemmings Motor News* looking for a 1968 Rambler Rebel. We had such a beast; a 343-cu.in./four-speed example, and it was rust-free from Texas. We had brought it up to Michigan and then parked it in 1974. This was long before his interests turned to Studebakers.

We were reacquainted when *HMN* was looking for short stories about how the magazine had helped enthusiasts and changed our lives, which prompted me to write a short story about the Rambler. A friend of Bob's read it and thought the story sounded familiar, and eventually Bob contacted me by email. By then, the Rambler had been sold to someone in Wisconsin, had been restored, won several awards, and had

then been sold to someone on the East Coast where we lost track of it. I grew up about 30 miles from South Bend and gave him some leads about people that I knew who collected Studebakers in the area. Not sure if anything ever came of those leads. Rest in peace, Bob.

BRUCE THOMAS
Congress, Arizona

I ENJOYED MATTHEW'S STYLE

of introducing change to *Hemmings Classic Car* in his editorial (April 2023). I drive a 1967 Corvette which I now consider my Old Reliable after 11 years of ownership. I've explored every square inch of my 'Vette, and know inside and out every nick, scratch, crack, rattle, and sound as part of my relationship with Old Reliable. Following your style, my Old Reliable is a symbol of my life's journey — older, still running, maybe not as energetic as when new, showing the signs of aging with dignity, and every so often getting a "look over" from an admirer that's been along for the ride for half a century, believing Old Reliable is good for many more miles before the journey ends. Cheers,

KELLY LUCAS
via email

ASA VETERAN READER FROM

Day One, I was delighted and pleased to see the writings on gow jobs and traditional hot rods. This recognized the American cultural legacy and significance of these historic activities. We have always been a nation of individuals with strong feelings and actions. With automobiles it may have started with mudflaps and squirrel tails on Model Ts, but it manifested into backyard ingenuity that impacted the early auto industry and continued all the way to the muscle car

era. Keep going on this theme please!

TOM "DOC" NASH

(Former special programs coordinator, Crawford Auto Aviation Museum, Western Reserve Historical Society)
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

I'M SOLD! I just submitted a subscription to *Hemmings Classic Car* after reading the April edition. David Conwill's trio of articles: Zach Surh's T Runabout, "Gow Jobs Revealed", and "Swap Meet Scores" all hit home. I recently acquired a disassembled 1928 Nash Coupe as a transition from antique motorcycles into cars and there, in the midst of the gow jobs article, were not one but two antique bikes! I ended up reading every article, some twice, before I put the magazine

down. Great photos as well. So now I just need to settle on which way to go the Nash and start turning some wrenches while I wait for each new edition of *HCC* to arrive. Thanks for the great periodical.

ANDREW FETCHINA
Rahway New Jersey

WHEN I RECEIVE MY COPY of *HCC* I immediately go to the last page. In response to Jim Richardson's last paragraph in the May 2023 issue, in 2013 I bought my deceased friend's 1957 Corvette from the estate. It was pretty much a basket case, having sat in a garage for 50 years and missing the complete drivetrain. At that point I decided that "numbers-matching" was out of the question,



so I went the "driver" route. Briefly, it now has front disc brakes, a Muncie four-speed manual transmission, and a 327-cu.in. small-block V-8 bored .030 over. I tell people, "Don't bother asking, it's not numbers-matching." There goes at least \$20,000, but I don't care. To the average person it looks like a '57 Corvette. My first and only show got me "Best Stock Chevrolet" (how?) and "Favorite Corvette of the

Show." When someone scolds me for not making it factory-correct, I just show them this picture and ask them if I'm supposed to weld like this too. Keep up the great work.

PAUL DOW
Byron, New York



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1948 FORD F1



The honest character of Ford's postwar F1 pickup has broad appeal, as this restored example proved. Coming out of long-term ownership, the ½-ton was said to be a rust-free West Coast truck with minimally blemished red paint dating to 2004. The varnished bed floor looked great from both sides, and the simple interior was equally well-presented, save for a missing wiper knob on the dashboard. The flathead straight-six under the hood worked in conjunction with the manual transmission, although an oil leak was noted at their seam. Reproduction Coker bias-ply tires completed the F1's period look. This pickup hammered in the heart of its value range, and the result was good for all parties.

Reserve: \$32,000
Selling Price: \$38,850
Recent Market Range: \$29,000-\$44,800



1967 DATSUN 1600 ROADSTER



Sometimes the best intentions can backfire; that was behind this recently surprise-gifted 1967 1600 Roadster's Make Offer sale via hemmingsauctions.com. The little red Datsun appeared to present very well, with minor paint blemishes noted on the rocker panels. Its seller asserted there was no body rust, and that its 96-hp 1.6-liter engine and four-speed manual ran and drove as they should. While the convertible top was said to need replacement, the black vinyl interior and painted gray dash looked very tidy. The undercarriage appeared very clean in photos and the suspension and brakes were called "good." The seller answered bidder questions, and the Japanese two-seater got a happy new home.

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Nine Lives Saved this Cat

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY
SCOTTY LACHENAUER

**An admiring
sibling restored this
one-family-owned
1968 Mercury Cougar**



After decades of use and a period of inactivity, this 1968 Mercury Cougar was restored as close to factory-stock as possible, including its Lime Frost Green paint and black vinyl top.



Unusual stories pertaining to vintage vehicle ownership are plentiful, but just when you think you've heard them all, another materializes in spectacular fashion. For instance, Steven Cognata has had a lifelong attachment to this stunning 1968 Mercury Cougar, which, as strange as it sounds, started prenatally for the owner. Few can boast a relationship with a car that is longer than his actual years on this earth, but somehow this auto aficionado can, so we will let Steve explain the story.

"The Cougar and I were born from the same ether. As my then-18-year-old sister, Patti, placed her order for this car with Darby Lincoln-Mercury in Staten Island, New York, my mother announced that she was pregnant with me. I was born in November 1967 and the Cougar was 'delivered' just five months later. Together, as man and machine, we grew up inseparable."

The Cougar Patti ordered was sensible, considering the era. It was a base trim variant, rather than an upscale XR-7, and was devoid of racy options available at the time, such as the GTE package. Instead, a C-code, two-barrel carbureted 289-cu.in. V-8 was secured to the chassis, paired with a C-4 Cruise-O-Matic auto-

matic transmission that delivered output to a 3.00:1 gearset in the rear differential. Standard bucket seats were covered with black vinyl upholstery, and flanked an optional center console. Power steering and an AM radio were selected, as were white sidewall E70x14 tires, Deluxe wheel covers, and a black vinyl roof that complemented Lime Frost paint. Bumper guards were added at the dealership, along with undercoating. As delivered, the Cougar cost \$3,337.75.

From early on, Steve was obsessed with Patti's daily ride. "My parents said, when I was a 5-year-old, I would play in the driveway and tell them that I wanted a Cougar of my very own."

As the years progressed and his sister's tenure as sole owner came to an end, the car's ownership was absorbed by the family; it was used by the household as a supermarket runner, a personal taxi, and weekend warrior. This kind of second-hand service meant the Cougar's appearance also changed somewhat over time. According to Steve, "When my older brother got his license, the Cougar was then captained by him, and 'customized' to suit his teenage taste. Hubcaps were removed and bumper guards were excised. In their place, Cragars and racing stripes were added."

Some other minor "adjustments" would come to fruition as well. The mildly modified Mercury would soon find itself amid heated street-racing battles, the likes of which were all too common in the New York City boroughs. Furthermore, over time the Cougar was not only subject to the stresses of a typical daily driver living its life out in the elements, but also some technical issues.

"An under-hood fire caused enough damage to have the car totaled by the insurance company in the early Seventies. My dad received a check for its full value—\$950—and then worked out a deal to keep the car. Since my brother had several cars at that point, the Cougar was parked on the side of the house until further notice. That would lead up to my time with the it," Steve says.

CAT-ALYZED

Banished from the driveway and daily use, the Cougar sat for years, just waiting for someone to breathe new life into it. "I was always interested in the car, and I waited for my turn with it," Steve states.

His turn would come soon enough. When Steve was in his mid-teens, the Cougar was liberated from its storage in the family yard. Needing work, the Mercury quickly became a bonding point



Steven Cognata was obsessed with the Cougar his oldest sister ordered new. Here, he strikes poses at age five.

The Cougar came with a two-barrel 289-cu. in. V-8 that remains in the car. It was rebuilt during the Mercury's restoration. A required overbore enlarged the displacement to nearly 302-cu.in.



between Steve and his dad. "We worked on the car together. I received an education on fuel, electrical, and suspension systems from him. Needless to say, the Cougar had quite a few issues after sitting for more than 10 years. Pretty much everything needed to be gone through before it was roadworthy," he says.

As Steve's driver's license test day approached, the father/son team completed the Cougar's finishing touches. Once he earned the long-anticipated official DMV document, the Mercury was his for the taking. "I drove it to high school during my senior year and I even went as far as to ask a local woman if I could park in her driveway instead of the school parking lot. I didn't want to subject it to those typical parking lot dings and scratches."

As life progressed, the Cougar followed Steve along on his journey, remaining a viable transportation choice. "The Mercury was an integral part of my new

family. It was always part of those special moments; it can be seen in dozens of photos I've taken over the years with my wife and children."

However, as is often the case with many now-classic cars, the Cougar was soon replaced with more economical and modern vehicles in the Cognata household. The car started to sit in the garage and was once again put on the backburner. This time, though, its hibernation would not last as long.

"What amazes me about the Cougar is that every time I start it, the engine sounds exactly like it did when I was a kid."





CAT-ALYTIC

In 2005 Steve made the decision to return the Cougar back to its original state.

"I decided to send the car to a gentleman who restores classics. Mark Cadavero of Metuchen, New Jersey, took on the task of restoring the Mercury. Although it was running and drivable, the car needed a good amount of work due to the neglect it had suffered over the years."

Though it was still wearing its original paint, the Cougar was torn down to its bare bones. Typical Northeast rust was prevalent in all the usual places, most notably the floors and rear quarter panels. Rust had also metastasized around the rear window because of damage to the original vinyl top. Damaged panels received fabricated patches, or were replaced with full reproductions, after which the body was bathed in several coats of primer, followed by Lime Frost Green paint matched to the car's factory color. "The new urethanes really pop and show off the underlying metallic components, adding brilliant depth and shine to its new skin," Steve reports.

The interior was in pretty good shape for being 40-odd years old when the restoration commenced. All the plastic "chrome" components received professional refinishing, a new steering wheel was sourced, and painted surfaces were redone in the correct code-matching hue to give the cabin new life. Amazingly, the door panels and rear seats are original; only the front bucket seats needed to be recovered.

There was a list of mechanical needs, too, starting with the numbers-matching V-8, which was extracted and rebuilt.

It required an overbore that reportedly nudged the block's displacement closer to 302 cubic inches, and rather than swap in a four-barrel induction system, the original two-barrel setup was reused. Both the C-4 automatic transmission and the rear differential were carefully examined and fitted with new seals, while the front and rear suspension systems received new bushings, shocks, and springs. Not to be left out were the steering box—returned to as-new assembly line standards—and the four-wheel drum brake system, upgraded with new stainless lines.

Although Mark managed the majority of the restoration workload, Steve had a hand in seeing the Cougar to the finish line. "I completed the restoration of the Cougar at home in my garage—the sorted detail work and the interior assembly. I was also able to complete the car's history file. Having done a lot of research to ensure the Cougar was returned to as original as possible, I collected all the documentation from the dealership that sold the car to my sister, including the window sticker, sales invoices, receipts, and even a thank-you note from the salesman. I also learned that of the 113,720 Cougars built in 1968, only 2,767 left the factory with this combination of paint and trim codes."

Despite Steve wanting the Cougar to appear as purchased from the dealership, a few liberties were taken. "I did upgrade to dual exhaust instead of going back to the single muffler it came with. This included cutting the rear valence to accept twin exit pipes like the GT Cougars that year." Steve also added a hint of street attitude at the corners. "The car was optioned with

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Much of the Mercury's interior is original. Only the front seat upholstery and steering wheel were replaced; chrome trim was replated or polished.



wheel covers, but I felt it needed an upgrade, so I bolted on chrome styled-steel wheels and added the trim rings. I still have the originals stashed away."

CAT-MAN-DO

Once it was finished, Steve hit the streets with his restored "Cat." To say he's proud of the restoration would be an understatement. "What amazes me about the Cougar is that every time I start it, the engine sounds exactly like it did when I was a kid. It brings back a flood of memories of my father and me. It's both sad and joyous at the same time.

"Driving the Cougar is like going back in time. A wave of emotions flow through me when I stomp on the accelerator. It never fails to get its deserved attention when it's out on the prowl. People stop me everywhere to ask about it. I also like the fact that I'm always the only

Cougar at local car shows; the car has won many awards, including Best of Show.

"None of it would have been possible were it not for Darren from Critter Creek Cougars in Canada, who restored all the chrome, including the grille and taillamp assemblies, window trims, brightwork, and steering wheel. Thanks also to Don Rush of West Coast Classic Cougars for his unsurpassed knowledge and stockpile of parts. Angelo Russo, my best friend and 'brother,' assisted me in finishing the restoration; he spent endless hours in my garage. Of course, a lion's share of credit goes to Mark Cadevero, who meticulously restored the body, paint, engine, and transmission. The best part was the support from my wife and kids, who have also dealt with my lifelong Cougar obsession." 🚗





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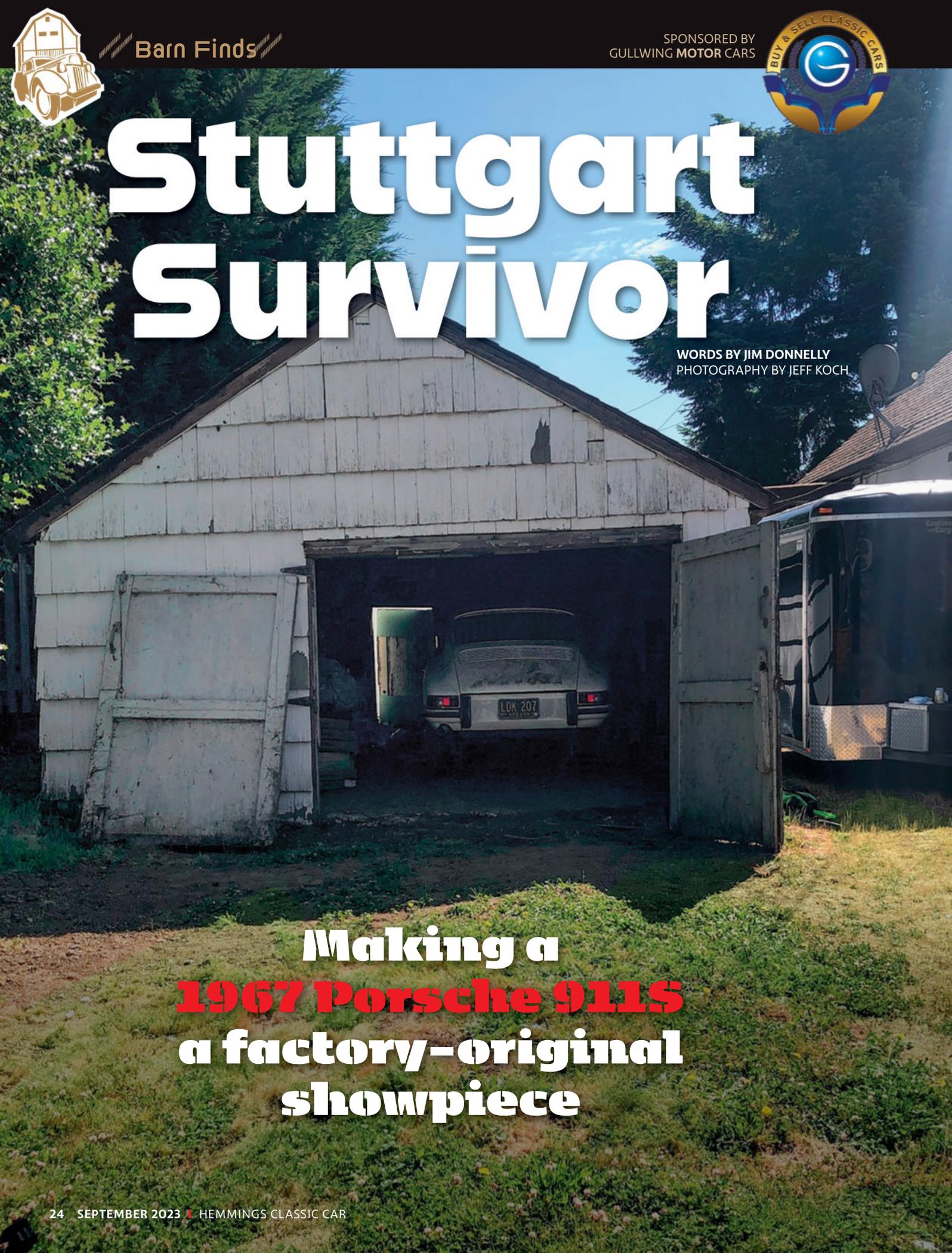


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WORDS BY JIM DONNELLY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH



Making a
1967 Porsche 911S
a factory-original
showpiece

There are Porsche owners, and then Porsche collectors, and then there are those people who flog Porsches on the race track. Some people in that last group are very particular about their cars, in terms of appearance and execution, and are fanatical when it comes to maintenance and such. But not every collectible Porsche is a track-only car with modifications. In some cases, they approach perfection from the standpoint of untouched factory authenticity. That reality exists, even if it's under enough soil to plant snap peas on the hood.

The question of preserving the car becomes more acute when it bears an uncommon degree of exclusivity, historical significance, or untouched correctness. This was the sort of dilemma faced by Karl Durkheimer, who owns this 1967 Porsche 911S that's virtually 100-percent original including paint, powertrain, and interior. Not only that, but the supporting Kardex paperwork of the 911S indicates it was built in September 1966, just after the Porsche works shut down for the month of August for retooling and employee R&R. It may well be one of the first 100 examples of the 911S ever produced, Karl reasons.

And it's a real, legitimate barn find, the kind books have been written about. Originally owned by a rock musician who played gigs around the Portland, Oregon, area more than 50 years ago, and used the then-new 911S as his daily transportation, the car was parked after its owner gave up the starving-musician life once he gained a wife and child. The car went into a dry garage in northeast Portland in 1971. And it sat there, for all of 47 years—untouched, but still facing the relentless march of time and grime.

"The owner, I guess, realized that the Porsche manual has instructions on placing the car into storage," Karl recalls. "So, he drained the gas tank, put silicone on all the rubber seals, put something different—a protectant—on all the chrome. The car was on jackstands, I believe. My close friend is a special interest car dealer in Portland, and he heard about the 911S maybe a year before he was able to purchase it. And I bought the car immediately after learning he had purchased it," Karl says.

That dealer, Matt Crandall, operates the Avant-Garde Collection in Portland, and according to Karl, is the city's premier purveyor of collectible automobiles. Apparently, Matt learned about the Porsche's existence on the other side of town from the musician's daughter, who'd prompted her father's decision to park it in the first place. At the time, Karl was still living in Portland, but contemplating a relocation to the Phoenix area. Before more than a few hours had elapsed, Karl knew about the 911S, too, and immediately bought it. As he recalls it, the flatbed tow truck hauling the 911S from hibernation never made it to Avant-Garde but instead, delivered the car directly to Karl's shop in Portland.

That was in 2018, and by 2020, Karl was ready to move his entire collection to the desert.

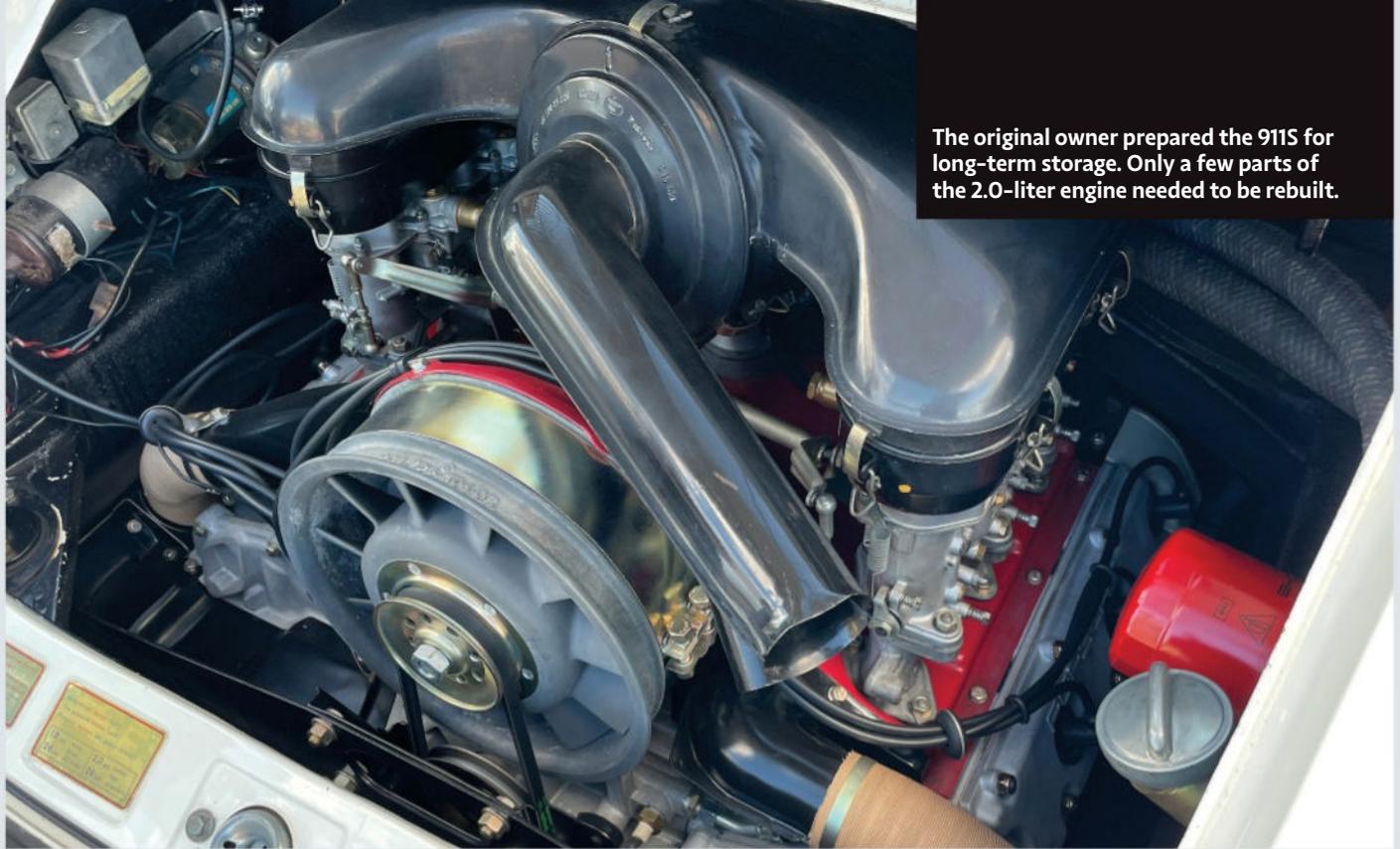


The Porsche 911S was well preserved, hindered only by dust, dirt, and mechanical inactivity. It was stowed sans Fuchs five-spoke alloy wheels.



Long story short, around the same time, he became acquainted with the organizers of the Arizona Concours d'Elegance, who asked him to consider displaying a car from his collection. After some thought, Karl began seriously considering the unrestored 911S for the Preservation class. At this time, the 911S was still largely untouched.

"This is a 75,000-mile car, with 100 percent original paint, unmodified, and it's a barn find," Karl declares. "The headliner, carpet, door panels, and seats were all original and in nice shape. In Oregon, it's a wet climate, not snowy roads with salt on them, so cars from Oregon are usually in pretty good shape as they age. I had the car, still with all the dirt on it, and we were asked by concours to display it. I asked, 'Do you want the dirt on it?' and they said they preferred it clean."



The original owner prepared the 911S for long-term storage. Only a few parts of the 2.0-liter engine needed to be rebuilt.

Karl, therefore, was caught in the old conundrum faced by so many owners of original cars: Keep it as-is, or attempt a restoration. He decided to go halfway, to undertake a careful cleaning along with a minimum of necessary mechanical refurbishment, largely done in his shop, to make the 911S safely roadworthy.

But first, let's discuss the car. The 911S was the first serious upgrade of Butzi Porsche's landmark sports car, which

debuted at the 1963 Frankfurt Motor Show as the Type 901. New for the 1967 model year, the 911S formed the summit of a three-tier Porsche hierarchy, which ranked from the four-cylinder 912 to the base 911 and the higher-performing 911S. Its 2.0-liter flat-six was enhanced by better breathing and more rpm capability, with its compression ratio boosted to 9.8:1. Larger-diameter intake and exhaust valves were fitted, 42 mm on the intake side.

The engine's ports were enlarged accordingly. Porsche next asked Weber to tool up a specific three-venturi carburetor for the 911S, with two of the new 40IDS3C units utilized per engine. This boosted its output to 160 horsepower, while net torque red-lined a full 1,000 rpm higher than the base 911 engine. A five-speed manual transmission was standard, another advance. The 911S was instantly recognizable by its five-spoke Fuchs alloy wheels, which masked improved disc brakes with ducted cooling. Anti-sway bars were fitted at both ends, including the first such rear bar ever used on a Porsche. According to the *Porsche 911 Red Book*, 1,823 copies of the 911S Coupe (and 483 911S Targas) were produced in its inaugural year.

The first thing Karl did was hire a professional photographer in Phoenix to take some 300 "before" photos, thoroughly



The interior is completely original, having been painstakingly cleaned after Karl agreed to display the Porsche at the 2023 Arizona Concours d'Elegance.





Owner's View

"I'm a race driver. I've driven in the 24 Hours of Daytona three times. I drove a Porsche 911 in the GTU class, and my family has always had at least one 911 in it since 1974. I still have my 1974 race car, plus a 1973 RS and a 1957 Speedster. So, I'm a Porsche collector, and this is the first short-wheelbase 911 I've ever owned. I think my plan is to sell it to buy a car that was raced in period. I'm totally paranoid in that I've got this original-paint car, and you know, there's going to be some kid who's on his cellphone texting, and he ends up backing into me. There's been no body work and no rust repairs on this car. This 911S sat for close to 50 years. I don't want anything to happen to it."—Karl Durkheimer

documenting the car's untouched correctness. In his shop, he undertook a mechanical rebuild of the 2.0 engine, the Weber carburetors, and the transmission casing—the latter a three-piece assembly with paper gaskets that needed replacement. The shocks and struts went to Koni Classic for a rebuild, and the brake components were freshened by PMB Performance of Murray, Utah. The silt-laden fuel tank was replaced.

Next, Karl hired someone to make it all presentable. It fell to Scott Nichols, who operates Distinct Detail in Phoenix, and who has a record of accomplishment preparing automobiles for the lawn at Pebble Beach. Scott was getting a Bugatti ready for that gathering when Karl told him about the 911S and showed him the images. Scott agreed to take the job.

"The Porsche was in complete filth. It just had tons and tons of dirt, grease on the brightwork, spider webs everywhere, and some of the grease had run down onto some of the paintwork," Scott remembers today. "We began washing the car—which took two and a half to three hours among three people. Then we started dismantling. We took all the lights out, got behind them and got everything cleaned out. We took the bumperettes off and cleaned behind them. After that, we removed the emblems, as well as the grille on the engine cover and got all the dirt out from underneath. We took the doors off the hinges so we could clean up the inside of the jambs. Once we had all that off, we polished everything inside the jambs, cleaned all the door hardware, and

reassembled everything."

Scott then undertook a two-stage paint correction process that began with meter-measuring the finish's depth. He used a cutting microfiber pad with Oberk Supreme Cuts to get through the grime that was embedded in the paint, then stepped up to an Oberk medium polishing pad and Oberk Supreme Polish. "We have a kid up in Minnesota, whose family are chemical engineers, and he's been formulating his own wax for different-colored vehicles. We contacted him, told him we were doing a mid-'60s, single-stage on a car that was white. He made up his own formulation for that car and time period," Scott says. After the car was waxed, the brightwork was polished and reattached.





Rather than subject the Porsche to a restoration, Karl had it professionally cleaned inside and out, which preserved subtle wear accumulated by the original owner.





Next came the interior, which on a 911S featured a leather-wrapped steering wheel and high-quality vinyl across the dashboard instead of the 911's wood inserts. The vinyl was liberally treated with Geist cleaners and a protein conditioner resembling the consistency of Vaseline, which Scott said can soak into the vinyl, still supple from years of Oregon dampness. The rest of the interior and gauges required only basic cleaning. Everything remained functional. For authenticity's sake, Scott didn't attempt

to touch up the stone chips at the edge of the hood, or the light surface rust embedded in them. He estimated the entire cleanup took some 240 man-hours.

The 911S indeed made it to the show field at the 2023 Arizona concours, where it copped second in the Preservation class behind a 1931 4.0-liter Bentley, reportedly one of three built. For his part, Karl has never actually driven the car, not on the street. Its originality makes it too valuable. And Scott is thrilled that this Porsche is now perfectly preserved.

"I think the car came out the best it possibly could have," Scott says. "The result was very satisfying, especially for us. Karl is a new person when it comes to showing vehicles, so it was really gratifying to be able to deliver a victory at his first concours, ever." 🏆

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Pat Foster

The Saab-Nash Connection

“The rare

Saab 92

is highly

sought

after by

collectors

today.”

HAS THIS EVER

happened to you? A few months ago, I was driving around town when, out of the corner of my eye, I thought I spotted a two-door 1950 Nash Statesman in a small parking lot. “Wow,” I thought, “a two-door ‘Bathtub’—now that’s a rare sighting!” In the 1949-’51 period, when the fastback Nash “Tubs” were being produced, the majority were four-door sedans, so seeing a two-door, especially in my rust-producing New England seaside town, is extremely rare.

I immediately began searching for a place to turn around so I could go back and look at the rare find. Who knows? If the owner was there maybe I would have made an offer to buy it. I’m currently sans Nash, a situation that certainly could stand remedying.

It ended up I was wrong. What I saw was not a Nash Statesman, but a mid-1960’s Saab 96 two-door sedan. I’d seen it from the back, and the similarly shaped rear half of the little compact fooled me into thinking it was a big Nash. (It was out of the corner of my eye, remember?) A Saab 96 is also a fairly rare sight, but not so much around here as in other parts of the country, because for years, the North American importer of Saab cars had its headquarters in nearby New Haven, Connecticut, and after that in the town of Orange; the next town over from me. Every month, Swedish cargo ships would unload hundreds of new Saabs on the docks of New Haven Harbor. Back when front-wheel-drive was a rare feature, Saabs were a favorite vehicle of New Englanders because they were so good in the snow.

I used to wonder why Saabs and Nashes looked so similar. Then, about 25 years ago, I met a man who told me about his career at Nash-Kelvinator, and his opinion as to why the two brands look so much alike.

After World War II, Saab—a Swedish airplane maker—was looking for a new manufacturing business to expand into. Its management had the fortitude to realize the world was glutted with decommissioned warplanes, and the likelihood of seeing new orders was virtually nil. Asian and South American militaries were snapping up



inexpensive war surplus planes rather than ordering new ones, Europe already had more planes than they needed, and the rest of the world wasn’t buying.

So, company executives decided to get into automobile

manufacturing. New vehicles were in short supply, and small, inexpensive examples were especially needed for Europe’s war-ravaged economies. However, having no experience making cars from the ground up, help was needed. Frugal Saab engineers scouted local junkyards to find examples of small automobiles to study for ideas. Other engineers turned to America to learn about designing and manufacturing vehicles. Saab decided to go with a modern unit-body design to save weight and increase safety, and in America there was only one company building unit-body cars: Detroit’s Nash-Kelvinator Corporation. Saab asked Nash if it could spend time talking with designers and engineers and visit the production plants.

One man who recalled Saab’s visit was clay modeler Charl Greene. Nash’s styling team, part of Nash Engineering, was working on what became the 1949 Nash Ambassador and 600 Airflyte; the “Bathtubs.” Saab engineers no doubt saw them and learned about the advanced aerodynamics of each. Apparently, Gunnar Ljungstrom had sketched a fastback Saab car in May 1945, and the visit to Nash may have reinforced Saab’s plans. Indeed, the first Saab 92s were noted for low wind resistance and excellent aerodynamics.

Charl Greene was an enthusiast with a great admiration for European cars. Sometime after the new Saabs’ debut in 1949, he bought one for himself. I can’t imagine how difficult that must have been since Saab had no organization in the U.S. and its cars were not imported here at the time. Greene somehow imported a new Saab 92—a model never sold here—and drove it for years. Besides looking like a baby Nash, it was even more economical to drive than a Nash 600 since its engine was a tiny two-stroke two-cylinder.

We don’t know whatever became of Greene’s Saab, but if it survived it’s probably worth some money. The rare Saab 92 is highly sought after by collectors today. 🚗

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PICKED SIX

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SCOTTY LACHENAUER



This 1970 Plymouth Barracuda has managed to retain its original “Leaning Tower of Power”



Most of us dream of finding the one car we consider our Holy Grail, haunted by a “can’t live without it” mentality. While many suffer endless summers of searching in vain, others are more fortunate. One is Randy Kallensee of Howell, New Jersey, whose admiration for early E-body Barracudas had been set in stone because of older brother Scott, who drove a black-over-black 1972 ‘Cuda hardtop when Randy was a teen. It left such an indelible impression that Randy vowed to have one of his own. Randy also remembers the fateful day he spied a car that would become the mainstay of his family garage—a Holy Grail.

“The year was 1992, and I was working for an overnight delivery company. At the time, I owned a ‘73 Plymouth Barracuda hardtop. It was powered by a 318-cu.in. V-8 and was painted Rallye Red with a black vinyl top. I loved the car, but I always wanted to get my hands on a ‘70 or ‘71,” Randy says.

When he was making deliveries, Randy remained on the lookout for a “new to him” ride. “My route was around Maplewood, New Jersey. I was always searching for that great discovery: taking alternate routes, driving down residential side streets, and peering into driveways while making my rounds, hoping for that one car that would check off all my boxes.



“The excitement of driving it never gets old.”



One day it happened. I hit the jackpot,” he remembers.

What Randy saw alongside a house seemed to be a Plymouth Barracuda. It wasn’t concealed by a cover, but it was partially hidden from view. “It was hard to see, but the In-Violet metallic paint was obvious from my vantage point. Then I realized it was a convertible. I couldn’t believe my eyes. I wasn’t going to let this rare opportunity pass me by.”

Randy says that from that moment, it became a waiting game. “Every day, I made it a point to drive past that house in hopes of seeing someone outside I could talk to. It took a few months, but finally that day came when I noticed a woman out on the property. I quickly pulled over, approached her, and asked if she had any interest in selling the Barracuda. Surprisingly, she answered, ‘possibly yes,’ but the car belonged to her husband and she needed to verify.”

Phone numbers were exchanged, and then...more waiting. Randy kept an eye on the Plymouth during his daily drive-bys. Weeks and months passed with no communication. Then one day it was gone. “I was rattled, thinking it had slipped away. However, a few days later I spotted it at the local gas station. I was excited to see it still with the owner, but I was also very anxious because that meant the public was seeing it, too. There was



no 'For Sale' sign on it, so I thought to myself, maybe there is still hope. Soon enough, it was back in their driveway."

Then it happened: Randy received a call from the owner. According to him, "They were ready to sell. I jumped up, grabbed a friend and a license plate, and made my way to their house."

His arrival was also the first time Randy got to really examine the Plymouth from top to bottom, as well as under the hood. Looking at the High Impact exterior—the name Chrysler Corporation applied to wildly vibrant colors available on select Dodge and Plymouth models, such as In-Violet—one could be forgiven for assuming the convertible was built with one of Chrysler's equally high-impact

drivetrains. "However, this was a Barracuda, not a 'Cuda, so I figured the engine choice was a little more understated, and I was right," Randy says.

Lifting the hood exposed a venerable 225-cu.in. Slant Six; not a V-8, but still powerful enough to help this Barracuda keep up with traffic, even today. "That was fine with me. I mean, I was just enthralled with the fact that I scored an E-body drop-top," Randy says. When he finished examining the car, he struck a deal on the spot.

The convertible Randy purchased was compelling. The 1970 model year ushered in Chrysler's all-new corporate E-body platform: a unit-body design featuring well-chiseled, aggressive body lines, even in base Barracuda and mid-

priced Gran Coupe trim levels. Offered only in two-door hardtop or convertible guise, the pony car continued to flaunt Mopar's everything-for-everyone mantra, equally capable of welcoming the Slant Six all the way up to a street-legal racing V-8 we know as the 426 Hemi. Though the E-body would prove to be a stylistic success, base Barracuda convertible production numbered 1,554 units in its first year. Of those, just 223 were built with the Slant Six.

"When I met the owner, I learned it had originally belonged to his mother. She purchased it new for \$3,034 and only used it for local errands and as a basic grocery-getter. It had just over 50,000 miles when I bought it," Randy says.



It's likely nobody had an inkling as to how rare this 1970 Plymouth Barracuda would be when it was ordered with a 225-cu.in. Slant Six engine and painted the eye-catching hue of In-Violet.





Basic blackwall tires trimmed with Deluxe 14-inch wheel covers remain on this as-ordered convertible, one of just 1,554 built during the model year.

The Plymouth had a little rust here and there, but otherwise the car was relatively solid, repainted its original In-Violet years ago by a big-box auto body outfit. It also featured a white interior, which to many Mopar muscle car fans completes one of the most covered color-combinations Plymouth offered. Being only 23 years old at the time, Randy didn't have the time or finances to embark on a full restoration.

"I chose to drive it as it was. Since it wasn't my daily, it was just a cool patinaed hot rod to take out when the occasion saw fit. It was my weekend cruiser, a fun ride to drive with the top down on a warm, sunny day."

One issue Randy had to contend with was the constant pressure to clone the car into something more desirable in the eyes of the adoring muscle car fanatics in the area. "Knowing it was 1 of 223 Slant Six-equipped Barracuda convertibles, I simply didn't have the heart to do it. With all the big-block clones out there on the street, it's probably rarer than a Hemi 'Cuda convertible these days."

Over the years, Randy held out, deciding not to touch the car. He strove to keep its history intact. He eventually settled into a new career and felt the time was right to take on a full restoration. "I was dead set on keeping it original. Not knowing the exact number of high-impact, In-Violet, six-cylinders that were made, I knew that number had to be

extremely low. This car deserved to stay the way it was built."

The Barracuda was torn down by Randy, and the pertinent parts were safely stored. The shell was then sent to a restoration shop that sat on the car for years, without making much progress. After losing hope, Randy brought it home for reevaluation. By sheer coincidence, he met local Mopar enthusiast Joe Louis—who had several restorations under his belt—at an area car show. After describing the restoration nightmare, they talked about the possibility of working together and eventually came to an agreement.

Upon reassessment when the Plymouth was delivered to Joe, only a pair of quarters and a trunk pan were needed to repair the unit-body and prepare it for primer. Next, the car was painted its original (code FC7) In-Violet. Attention then turned to the cabin, and new seat upholstery and door panels were obtained from Legendary Auto Interiors. Amazingly, the dash pad was in excellent shape and free of cracks—a major "Mopar Miracle" for Plymouth enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, Joe had the numbers-matching drivetrain sent to Jimmy's Auto, in nearby Elizabeth, which oversaw the rebuild of the Slant Six, TorqueFlite automatic transmission, and the rear differential. Nothing was altered from factory-stock, and the axle only needed a quick check to make sure it was ready to roll. The suspension was also returned to





The Barracuda's striking white factory interior was replicated during the car's restoration.



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stock specifications. Likewise, the original 14-inch steel wheels were media blasted and repainted, and the original turbine wheel covers were reused.

"We banged out any dings on the wheel covers and buffed them. They look like new-old-stock. I had Cooper Cobra 225/70-14 radial tires installed, though, and I toyed around with installing front disc brakes, but I balked at the last second and retained all four stock drums," Randy reports.

There was one part that was difficult to locate: the single exhaust system. Randy tossed it out early in the restoration and was eventually forced to have a system custom-made by a company in Detroit. One-year-only emblems were also difficult to locate and purchase. After a long search, an NOS set popped up for sale. The bumpers were rechromed by Tri-City Plating in Elizabethton, Tennessee, and Vans Auto supplied fresh miscellaneous parts, such as chrome mirrors, sun visors, door handles, lock levers, window cranks, and the antenna. After starting the restoration for a second time, it took about a year to complete the Plymouth, and Randy couldn't be happier with its presentation, reception and drivability.

"With the flat hood, High Impact color, and hubcaps, some may see it as

odd, but that is how it was factory built. I have no regrets about keeping it original, and I enjoy every bit of it. None of it would have been possible without my wife, Meryl, who's been there since the day I picked up the car, always supported my decisions, and never once told me to get rid of it.

"When I take it to various events, I often keep the hood closed until someone approaches, curious about what's underneath. They usually expect to see a big-

block but are surprised when I reveal the Slant Six. Their expressions of amazement and admiration are gratifying. I enjoy it when a fellow enthusiast respects that I kept the car original."

"The excitement of driving it never gets old. At the request of my son, I still get it out on the road, early on a weekend morning. We roll out with the top down, and we don't even speak. There is something about the low hum of that six-cylinder. It's a peaceful ride." 🚗





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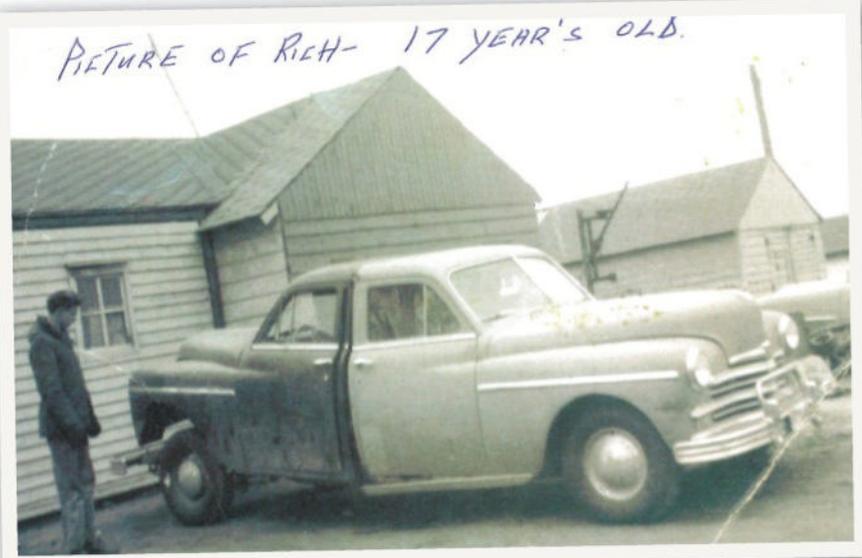
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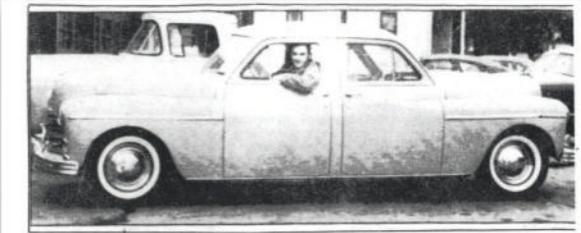


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BY TOM COMERRO



Below: Neatly joined front halves of two 1949 Plymouths form eyecatcher driven by Dick Gernscheid of St. Peter, Minn. Gas tank hides under hood of rear half.



Dick Gernscheid drives a double fronted Plymouth owned by George Trimbo. The car was built by Curtis Noyd, & his son Rich.

DOUBLEHEADER

Many of you might recognize this newspaper clipping of a 1949 Plymouth in which it was hard to tell whether the car was coming or going. The Plymouth appeared in the Jan/Feb 1977 issue of *Special Interest Autos* (#38) as a part of an article about double-ender cars. This one was built in the late 1950s, intentionally designed to turn some heads on the streets of St. Peter, Minnesota. The Plymouth was painted light blue and used to promote the then-St. Peter Texaco and the St. Peter Speedway. According to the newspaper clipping, the

owner and speedway promoter George Trimbo remarked that the Plymouth was used in many local parades, often driven in reverse without anyone noticing. The image and clipping were sent to us by Richard Noyd, son of Curtis Noyd; both were builders of the unique Plymouth. Curtis was also kind enough to send us a picture of himself with the Plymouth at age 17 during the customization in the fall of 1959. The last word on the Plymouth is that it had been restored and was residing somewhere in Ohio.

RE: MOVIE CAR?

Marty Martino contacted us to possibly shed some light about a mysterious custom car that appeared in the March edition (*HCC* #222) of "Lost & Found." Marty noticed a piece of Lincoln Futura plexiglass used as a windshield and it jogged his memory of time he spent with late California car builder Bob Butts. A friend of George Barris, Bob was a creator of Batmobiles and he was in possession of the complete original canopy. Apparently, the windshield and rear of the canopy were cut into sections and Bob had used the rear portion for a custom car that was to be used in a movie. Marty thinks the L&F vehicle was more than likely that car, but he's not sure if it ever saw any screen time. If it never graced the silver screen, it's possible the car may have spent some time at the Fantasy Cars Ranch in El Cajon, California, which Bob had founded and managed. Let us know if you've seen it before.



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.

BY TOM COMERRO



UNSER RACING COLLECTION MOVES

The Unser Racing Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has closed its doors; however, the collection will not be liquidated. Instead, the more than forty race, pace, and Pikes Peak cars, as well as trophies, artwork, helmets, drivers' suits, and other racing memorabilia, will be transferred to the Speedway Motors Museum of American Speed in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Founded by Al and Susan Unser in 2003, the 20,000-sq.-ft. Unser Racing Museum had plans to keep the Unser legacy alive prior to Al's death in 2021. The Speedway Motors Museum is a natural fit for the collection: the famed Johnny Lightning Special—Al's 1970 Indianapolis 500 winning car—and a 1971 Gurney Eagle, driven by his brother Bobby, were among the Unser cars already on display.

"The Unser family are one of the most storied families in automotive and racing history," Carson Smith, director of the Speedway Motors Museum of American Speed, says. "We've had racing partnerships with members of the Unser family for over 38 years and are honored to welcome the Unser collection to our museum."

The constantly growing Speedway Motors Museum recently added 90,000 square feet of display space, which should have the Unser collection available for viewing sometime next year. For more about the Unser Racing Museum, visit unsermuseum.com, and for more about The Speedway Museum, visit museumofamericanspeed.com.

NEWPORT CAR MUSEUM CONTINUES TO GROW

Now celebrating its sixth year, the Newport Car Museum in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, continues to make changes and expand its collection. Most recently, the Porsche Pop-Up Exhibit—the unofficial seventh gallery in the museum—is now a permanent display. The group of luxury and high-performance icons, including Speedsters encompassing all five generations ever built, are among the best examples to come out of Stuttgart. Also new is a special unveiling of a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Mille Miglia Recreation, a factory-authorized replica of the original car driven by Stirling Moss when he set a record that still stands today. In addition to the recent changes, the popular "Hoods Up! Weekend" takes place the second weekend of every month, allowing visitors a chance to see powerplants that were used in the more than 90 cars that populate the facility. Visit newportcarmuseum.org for more information.



DES MOINES D'ELEGANCE



Celebrate the art and design of the automobile in the Hawkeye State at this year's Des Moines Concours d'Elegance, scheduled to be held on September 8-10. The event will host more than 150 invited vehicles that epitomize the best in automotive authenticity, rarity, design, engineering, and historic significance. Weekend festivities will also include a Heartland Driving Tour that will take participants along historic and scenic highways through Iowa's

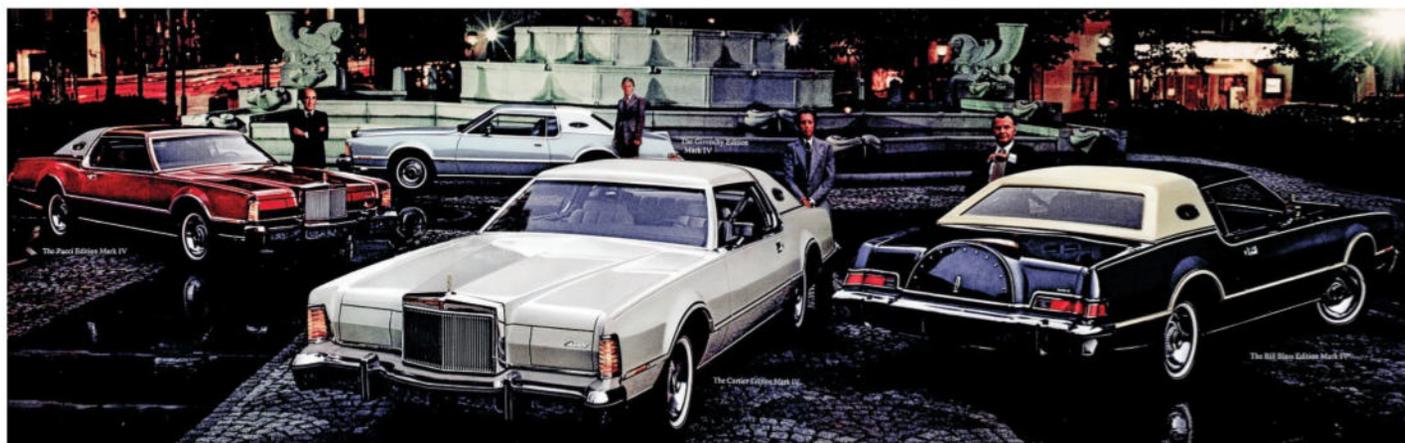


towns and countryside. Taking place Sunday at the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, the concours will be comprised of more than a dozen classes, including special celebrations honoring Buick Riviera's 60th anniversary (spotlighting examples from 1963-'73), eight generations and seven decades of the Corvette, and the 70th anniversary of the Nash Metropolitan. For more information, visit desmoinesconcours.com.



The Designer Edition Continental Marks

Lincoln's legacy of plush luxury, courtesy of celebrated names in style



DESIGNER AUTOMOBILES

are really nothing new. If we turn the clock back far enough, we'll find that stylists have always been given credit for great automotive designs, but it's rare to have their names physically attached to their work. There are noteworthy instances, though.

During the prewar era, coachbuilding firms affixed nameplates to cars touting a design as theirs while simultaneously developing a signature style, but perhaps the earliest renowned individual stylist to be rewarded with his eponym as part of a vehicle's official name was Howard "Dutch" Darrin, who crafted what ultimately named the Packard Darrin of 1940.

The notion of recognizing a stylist resumed after the war, albeit briefly. For its 1952 models, Packard hired fashion and design consultant Dorothy Draper to create colorful new interiors, notably two-tones, throughout its model lineup. Draper's name, however, never graced the automobiles, but she was given credit in period advertising. Kaiser followed with its KF-161 in 1954, known as the Kaiser Darrin, and Howard's surname was, once again, a part of the car he designed.

Motorsports had gained a foothold in the Fifties, though, and before long some of the world's most celebrated race car drivers became a promotional gold mine that resulted in a rash of special edition vehicles through the early Seventies. Briggs Cunningham and Carroll Shelby



Bill Blass editions of the 1977 Continental Mark V were painted Dark Blue Metallic that was complemented by cream of gold pinstripes and a cream Landau vinyl roof.

are two that come to mind with ease. Mark Donohue Javelins, Jim Clark Lotus, Yenko Chevrolets—these are but a few examples of successful efforts at using a name to promote a line of automobiles. Others quickly followed, like Nickey and Baldwin-Motion Chevrolets. If it wasn't a name attached, then it might be a form of pop culture. Cartoon and fictional char-

acters graced high-powered Plymouths, Dodges, and Pontiacs.

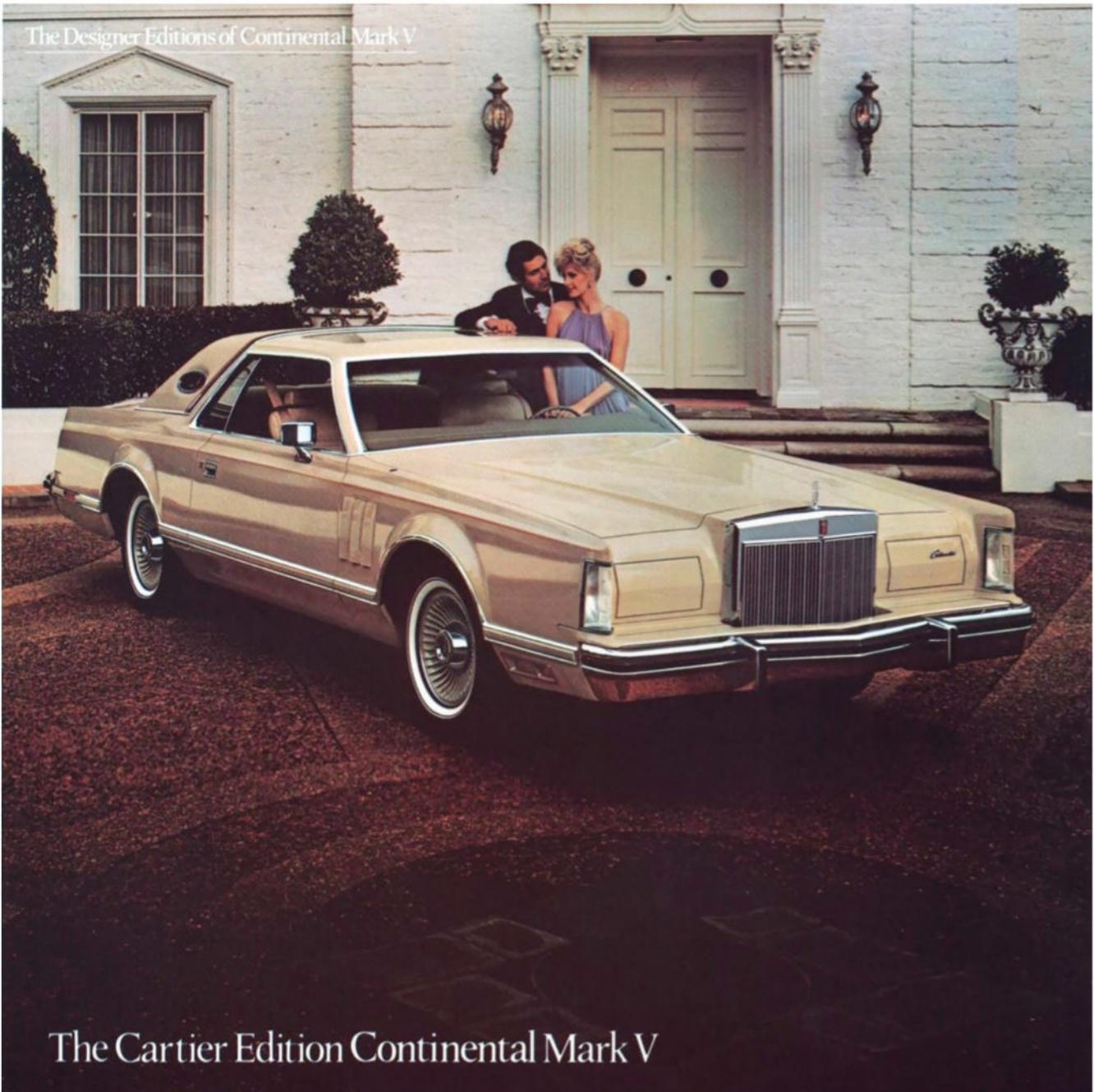
Oddly, it was tiny American Motors that took the bold step of renewing the idea of using designer names to market special editions of its automobiles. Between 1972 and 1973, AMC produced 4,835 Gucci Hornet Sportabouts—including a one-off for Aldo Gucci



1977 Cartier (left) and Givenchy (right) editions were distinguished by equally unique color palettes.



The 1977 Pucci editions were arguably the most striking, painted Dark Red Moondust with a silver Landau vinyl roof.



Designer colors changed from year to year. Here is a 1979 Cartier edition finished in Light Champagne; the color was a popular choice among designer series customers.

himself. Although there was Gucci branding on the exterior, the interior was one of the first examples of high-fashion aesthetics appearing inside a car. The interior featured the brand's signature red and green striping on special beige-colored upholstery fabrics and ivory headliner with Gucci's trademark double-G pattern emblazoned on seats and door panels. So committed was AMC that it also built 4,152 Pierre Cardin Javelins in 1972 and 1973, the Levi's Gremlin in 1973, and 6,165 Oleg Cassini Matador coupes in 1974—and another 1,817 of the latter for 1975.

The person who oddly deserves

a great deal of credit for making the designer interior fashionable is actor Ricardo Montalban. Famous for his good looks and suave demeanor, Montalban was hired as spokesperson for the new "small" Chrysler, the mid-size Cordoba, introduced in 1975. Cashing in on the personal luxury car craze, Chrysler had a winner on its hands. Ads with Montalban's soothing voice gave special emphasis to the car's Corinthian leather interior. It may not have been a Montalban Cordoba, but his connection to the car and the fictitious name for the upscale hides sold thousands upon thousands of cars. America was hooked on the

personal luxury car which became a dominant market segment throughout the remainder of the decade. Suddenly, a line of designer series models sounded luxurious once again, and who better to serve that market than Lincoln.

Just when the Designer Mark series had its beginnings at Ford Motor Company is not known. Prior to Lincoln offering the Designer Series, the Silver Luxury Group was announced in 1973. The \$400 option included an exclusive Cranberry Victoria Velour interior with long-shear carpeting, Silver Moondust Metallic exterior paint with matching Levant Grain vinyl roof, and a carpeted spare tire cover.



The Bill Blass Edition Continental Mark V



The Pucci Edition Continental Mark V

Bill Blass editions sported a “Tu-Tone” finish for 1979 (left), and Medium Turquoise Pucci models were a rarity (right).



Givenchy editions were finished in the aptly named Crystal Blue for 1979.

A Dark Red leather interior became available midyear as a no-cost option. Another midyear offering was the Silver Mark, which included a power sliding moonroof, Silver Moondust paint, a matching vinyl roof, silver leather upholstery, and coordinated interior components.

Special editions continued to be offered for years to come, including: the Gold and Silver Luxury Groups in 1974; the Lipstick and White, Blue Diamond and Luxury Group in 1975; and Cream and Gold, Red and Rose, Light Jade and Dark Jade, Jade and White, Lipstick and White, and Black Diamond in 1976. These packages proved very popular and very profitable for the parent company, Ford.

It's unclear how Ford arrived at using the designers that were chosen. The Cartier relationship was a long-term affair beginning with Edsel Ford. As far back as the 1920s and 1930s, he ordered his personal cards and stationery from Cartier. Much later, Ford approached Cartier in 1967 about a special Continental Coupe to be offered for 1970. The package was to include unique interior surfaces and trim, modified gauges, a Cartier jewelry box, a gold-plated steering wheel ornament, instrument face ornamentation, C-pillar and door monograms, and a dash plaque. The car never made it into production, but a Cartier-branded dash clock was used on the Lincoln Mark III beginning in 1969 as well as on the Mark IV prior to the launch of the Designer Series.

It is apparent that the Designer Series had its roots in 1974 with a Mustang program called “Fashions n’ Wheels.” The program paired the new Mustang II Ghia with accessories and clothing from fashion designer Bill Blass. The program proved successful and by October 1975, Ford’s ad



1982 Givenchy Mark IVs were painted black over Medium Dark Pewter with a Pewter interior.





Even in 1982, interiors were color-keyed to exteriors, as seen on these Bill Blass (left) and Pucci (right) editions.

agency, Kenyon and Eckhardt, was recommending what were then called “Luxury Trim Packages” on the 1976 Continental Mark IV.

The introduction of the successor Mark V had been delayed until 1977 and Kenyon and Eckhardt wisely suggested that Ford should offer something new and different to entice well-to-do buyers to purchase a Mark IV. Four designers were chosen—Bill Blass, Cartier, Emilio Pucci, and Hubert de Givenchy—and corresponding special-trimmed models were offered beginning with the 1976 model year. Interestingly, everything to do with the Designer Series was selected by the staff at Ford’s interior design studio, not by the designers themselves.

Each year, the four designers came to Dearborn to meet with Dave Ash, then director of Ford’s Interior studio, and his staff, to finalize selections. Ford designers

prepared three swatch boards showing a side view rendering of the cars along with color chips, leather, vinyl, and material samples for each special edition Mark. Each of the four designers received a lease of two of their own Designer Series Marks each year as payment from Ford.

Reports indicate that Cartier was easy to work with. The same was not said for Givenchy, Pucci, or Bill Blass. Givenchy requested colors like purple, rose, and blue, to which Ford Motor Company would not agree. All the designers needed to be informed and educated as to the difficulties in implementing the production of specific automobiles in a mass production environment. After numerous meetings and negotiations, the remaining three designers acquiesced, signed off on the details, and the program moved forward.

At introduction, the Cartier Edition included distinctive door trim panels; gray

velour or leather and vinyl upholstery; Dove Gray exterior paint and a matching Valino Landau Vinyl roof; red and white pinstriping on the hood power dome, deck lid, tire and spare tire, and bodyside blades; and Cartier signatures in the opera windows and on the instrument panel plaque. Givenchy models were distinguished by an Aqua Blue Diamond Fire exterior, a matching interior in either leather or velour, light-tone instrument panel woodgrain, a white Landau Vinyl roof, black and white pinstripes, and Givenchy signatures in the aforementioned locations.

Bill Blass Editions featured a Dark Blue Metallic exterior pinstriped in cream and gold, a cream Landau Vinyl Roof, an interior in either navy Versailles Majestic Velour or cream-accented dark blue leather and vinyl, and appropriately located Bill Blass signatures. Finally, Pucci Editions used a Dark Red Moondust

Production Numbers

	TOTAL	BILL BLASS	CARTIER	GIVENCHY	PUCCI	VERSACE
1976 TOTAL MARK IV	56,110	3,213	5,716	*	*	
1977 TOTAL MARK V	80,321	*	*	*	*	
1978 TOTAL MARK V	72,602	3,975	8,520	917	3,125	
1979 TOTAL MARK V	75,939	6,720	9,470	2,262	763	
1980 TOTAL MARK V	38,891	*	*	*	*	
1981 TOTAL MARK VI	36,698	*	*	*	*	
1982 TOTAL MARK VI	26,336	*			(FOUR-DOOR SEDAN)	
1983 TOTAL MARK VI	30,856	*			(TWO-DOOR COUPE / FOUR-DOOR SEDAN)	
1984 TOTAL MARK VII	33,344	*				*
1985 TOTAL MARK VII	18,355	*				*
1986 TOTAL MARK VII	20,056	*				
1987 TOTAL MARK VII	15,286	*				
1988 TOTAL MARK VII	38,259	*				
1989 TOTAL MARK VI	29,658	*				
1990 TOTAL MARK VII	22,313	*				
1991 TOTAL MARK VII	9,299	*				
1992 TOTAL MARK VII	5,732	*				

* DESIGNER EDITION PRODUCTION NUMBERS NOT AVAILABLE



CONTINENTAL MARK VII THE LUXURIOUS DRIVER'S CAR.

The redesigned 1984 Mark VII Bill Blass edition was still a striking luxury car.



Only two designer series were available on 1984-'85 Mark VII's: Bill Blass (painted Silver Sand, above), and Versace (painted Navy, left).



came with a 22-karat gold plaque on which the owner's name was to be engraved. The models proved tremendously popular (and profitable for FoMoCo), accounting for 27 percent of Mark IV sales in their first year.

Lincoln continued the Designer Series on the redesigned Mark V from 1977-1979 as well as on the downsized Mark VI from 1980-1983, though the Cartier Edition was moved to the Town Car in 1982 and the Givenchy to the Continental in 1983.

When the Mark VII was announced in 1984, Lincoln took a much sportier path with its personal luxury car than before, though a Designer Series was included—consisting of a Bill Blass Edition and a Gianni Versace Edition that replaced the Pucci model. While far more subdued than their predecessors, the cars continued to feature color-coordinated interiors and exteriors. For 1986, the Versace Edition was discontinued, leaving the Bill Blass Edition as the remaining Designer Series Mark VII. Beginning in 1988, the Bill Blass Edition became the standard level trim for the Mark VII; this continued through the end of its production for the 1992 model year. With the introduction of the Mark VIII, Lincoln's Designer Editions passed into history. 🚗

exterior accented with silver and red pinstripes, a silver Landau Vinyl roof, a Dark Red Versailles Majestic Velour interior with floating seat pillows, and Emilio Pucci signatures.

The additional cost of a Designer Edition was \$1,500-\$2,000 more than lesser Marks depending upon whether or not a leather or cloth interior was chosen. All four versions of the Mark IV

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LOCAL HISTORY

This 1966 AMC Ambassador DPL has always lived in the same town where it was sold new

BY DAVID CONWILL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN







The original American Motors V-8 debuted for 1957. It was a robust powerplant but looked dated compared to the big-block engines available in competing models.



All history, they say, is local history. As in, events elsewhere in the world matter, then and now, to even the smallest human settlements. Studying the details of everyday life in a town's past not only gives one a sense of place and purpose, but the context also reflects events writ large.

Bangor, Pennsylvania, is the place where this 1966 AMC Ambassador DPL was sold new. The dealership, somewhat ironically, was Ronco Rambler Motors. Ironic because the Ambassador for 1966 was the first car (alongside the Marlin fastback) to wear the new American Motors / AMC branding instead of the familiar Rambler marque, which lingered on the shorter-wheelbase Classic and compact American.

The relationship between the Ambassador model and the Rambler make was

always complicated. For one thing, there was an Ambassador long before Rambler replaced the Nash and Hudson marques for 1958. On the other hand, Rambler as a model name predated Ambassador and the Nash make that had spawned it.

Confused yet? It's an interesting story, but it can be summed up by stating that until very recently, history didn't do much to help sell new cars. American Motors, parent corporation to Rambler, needed to sell cars to make a profit, as that's what corporations do. The Rambler brand had been a hot commodity in the 1950s, but by the mid-'60s it was starting to have stodgy associations. AMC executives, led by CEO Roy Abernethy, elected to phase it out in favor of the corporate name. By 1969 it was all but gone, and for 1970 there were no Ramblers left in the AMC lineup.

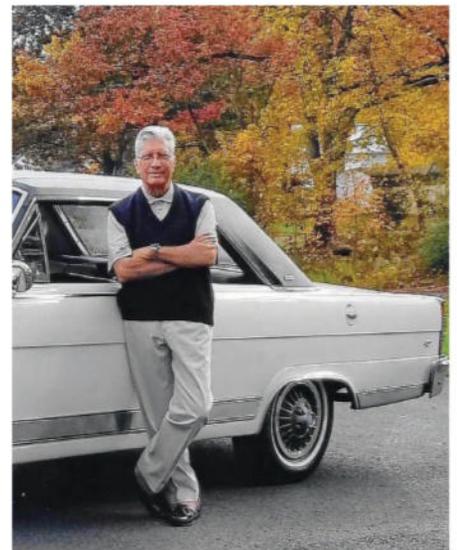


LUXURY FIRST

Although it's easy to think of the '60s as a time when everybody drove a muscle car, there were far more cars sold for comfortable transportation. To that end, it wasn't the Javelin or some Rebel Machine-like variation on the Marlin that AMC executives decided to herald the rebranding with. Instead, AMC Ambassador buyers were treated to a new trim package, pushing the car even further upmarket.

The new Ambassador DPL (the three letters were meant to evoke "diplomat") was clearly named in homage to Ford's new-for-1965 Galaxie LTD. Chevrolet and Plymouth, too, had answered with upmarket versions of their full-size Impala and Fury lines, called Caprice and VIP, respectively. The DPL sported, in the brochure's words, "extra features, elegant appointments, [and] meticulous craftsmanship." For example, AMC's famous (or infamous) reclining seats were standard, as were cushioned center armrests for the front and back seat occupants, and a center console with floor shifter.

While eager to leave behind the Rambler name, AMC was less quick to de-emphasize the actual, practical nature of their cars. The Ambassador was still packed with the same solid, well-engineered equipment used on other American Motors products, like ceramic-coated exhaust; a dual-reservoir master cylinder (not found on most other American cars until government mandated for 1967); primer-dipped, all-welded unit bodies;



“Rather than doing a show-stopping restoration, I opted to keep the car original.”



and coil seat springs. On DPLs, that latter item was supplemented with a rear-seat foam cushion.

If there was a downside to the American Motors approach, it's that some of its equipment looked distinctly dated when examined up close. The AMC V-8 engine, for example, though introduced for 1957, used a heavy casting and techniques that looked more akin to the engineering of 1949-'51 first-generation OHV V-8 engines that had all been retired by 1966.

The big, heavy AMC V-8 engines are hard to break, however, and to the consumer of 1966, the DPL's standard 198-hp, 287-cu.in. V-8 would seem equivalent on paper to the Caprice's 195-hp 283, the LTD's 200-hp 289, and the VIP's 230-hp 318. The big-bore 327-cu.in. version, making 250 or 270 hp depending on carburetion and compression, though, was a far cry from the available 396- and 427-cu.in. Chevrolet; 352-, 390- and 427-cu.in. Ford; and 361-, 383-, and 440-cu.in. Plymouth big-blocks.

Accordingly, AMC buyers tended to

be folks who appreciated a lot of value for their money, without having to have the absolute latest thing. Even today, a well-preserved American Motors car is still a value proposition. They're inexpensive to buy, yet they last and they're fun to drive—even if they don't come with bellowing big-blocks underhood.

A LINK TO THE PAST

Edmund "Chip" Turtzo likes cars. Over the years he's had a 1941 Chevrolet, a 1946 Ford, a 1949 Ford, a 1954 Ford, a 1957 Chevrolet, and a 1957 Corvette. You may notice a distinct lack of AMCs, Ramblers, or Nashes on that list. This Ambassador is his first. He's also a resident of Bangor, Pennsylvania, where Pasquale "Pat" Ronco opened his Rambler dealership in 1959. Pat Ronco was the cousin of Chip's father and a well-known race car driver at the nearby Nazareth Speedway dirt track (open from 1910 to 2004) in the 1950s and '60s. Not coincidentally, Nazareth, Pennsylvania, is also the hometown of world-famous racer Mario Andretti.





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Interior appointments, more than anything else, set the DPL above lower-trim variants of the Ambassador.

That's why, when Chip discovered this DPL was sold new in Bangor and still resided there, he sought to make it his own. At the time he found it, the original owner had died, and the previously garage-kept car had taken up residence outdoors with family members who were "well intended but not really car enthusiasts," as Chip puts it.

"They knew me and wanted a good home for their family car, so they agreed to sell it to me. Ronco Motors no longer exists, and this car is likely the last survivor from that dealership that 'never left' Bangor." Chip puts the "never left" in quotes,

because while it's gorgeous in these photos, with over 100,000 miles on the odometer when acquired, it had clearly seen the world outside Bangor a few times.

"The car was in need of a good clean-up, detailing, new tires, and an engine rebuild," Chip says, "but was otherwise very straight and original with an excellent interior and the factory spare tire. The car had one repaint by the original owner some years ago and was lovingly cared for. Rather than doing a show-stopping restoration, I opted to keep the car original, giving the viewer a glimpse into the past with a distinct story of how its owners

cared for their car, how it transported them to work, vacations, weddings, et cetera, as a part of their family. Apart from a few dings and imperfections, she is still a grand old lady."

Chip reports the driving manners are just as advertised from AMC and that there's plenty of power on tap from that "obsolete" 287-cu.in. engine.

"The brakes and steering are good. It rides like a cloud. It has power steering, but manual brakes, so they take a little pressure. If I go down I-91 with the gas pedal halfway down, before you know it, you're doing 65." 🚗



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Return to the Road

SERIES
Part 1

BY MATTHEW LITWIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEMMINGS STAFF

Long-dormant 1940 Buick Century Sport Phaeton

During the last 20 years, regular visitors to Hemmings' museum, maintained at our headquarters in Bennington, Vermont, will likely have noted that few of the vehicles on permanent display rarely—if ever—moved under their own power. Reasons for their static existence were as varied as the number of makes and models one could gaze upon within the old brick edifice. Suffice it to say, prior to the new millennium, decades of widely varied use had taken a bit of a toll. Late last year the decision was made to revive each vehicle beyond basic mechanical functionality—they had to be made roadworthy for non-static event use.

The decision was the easy part. Next came the difficult task of prioritizing vehicles. Each boasted some level of significance, whether due to rarity and/or prior rally service, compounded by the fact that some would be far easier to return to the road than others. Several quickly ascended to the top of the list. After consideration, the *Hemmings Classic Car* staff opted to start with our stylish 1940 Buick Century Model 61C. In Buick vernacular, that translates to a four-door Sport phaeton (or convertible phaeton in company sales literature) of which just 194 were built during the model year.

The Buick's selection coincided with a date/location announcement from the Eastern Museum of Motor Racing (EMMR) for its one-day Hot Rod Annual: May 13, 2023, at Lincoln Speedway in Abbottstown, Pennsylvania. Formerly known as the Jalopy Showdown, it celebrates performance cars that existed prior to the mid-Sixties advent of "muscle cars;" the event is comprised of a swap meet, car show, and vintage racing. Buick's Century was a veritable factory hot rod; a smaller chassis fitted with the division's largest displacement engine meant 100 mph speeds were achievable for daring motorists.



01

1. To help expedite the process, in early December a preliminary analysis of the Buick's condition and needs was managed by Associate Editor David Conwill and Senior Editor Matt Litwin. Neither had ever seen the top in the "p position, which left us wondering if it was too brittle to unfold. Fortunately, when we carefully put the top up for its inspection, it was pliable.

2. Stowed conveniently in the trunk were the Century's removable B-pillars. We later learned from our friend, Skip Boyer of Boyer's Restorations, that these two pieces do not interchange with the larger Buicks or Cadillacs, and as a result are incredibly hard to replace.

3. When it comes to tires, "when in doubt, swap them out." Though there was plenty of tread life left in our whitewalls, 20-year-old rubber can and will fail. Our first purchase would later be a new set of 7.00-15 bias-ply whitewall tires from Coker Tire.



02



03

Therefore, we felt our Century would be a perfect car in which to attend the Annual and, following discussions with the EMMR staff, agreed to use the Century as the racing segment's pace car. To further, we decided that driving the Buick to Pennsylvania would prove its roadworthiness. It meant our repair work had to be thorough.

As outlined in the debut of the "Garage Time" feature (April 2023), the history file on our four-door phaeton was extensive enough to reveal its path to extended dormancy. It had been purchased in 1987 as a visually restored-to-stock, running and driving car, and it was immediately pressed into service, including weddings and parades, as well as "pace car" duty in The Great American Race circa 1998 (now officially called the Great Race). In the ensuing years, a mechanical refurbishment was performed, some exterior trim was replated, and the top was replaced. Additionally, a minor low-speed collision necessitated a bumper repair, several unspecified bearings were replaced, and the forward top bow was damaged and subsequently replaced. Of note, the three-speed manual transmission's gear cluster failed at least twice. Parts had been ordered, but the file did not indicate whether the transmission had been repaired. Its last outing occurred prior to October 2001.

This is the first installment covering the work required for our Buick's return to the road. It did not go without complications that had us questioning both our 400-mile conquest and whether we'd even complete the work by our May 11 deadline. The Century's revival is also the subject of a video series produced here at Hemmings, which will be available to watch on the Hemmings YouTube channel ([hmn.com/youtube](https://www.hemmings.com/youtube)) by the time you read this issue. We'll have more to share about our return to the road adventure in next month's issue.



04

4. After the Buick's last outing over 20 years ago, the six-volt battery was never disconnected; this led to an excessive buildup of corrosion.



05



06

07



5. Tucked behind the radiator was a contemporary alternator. There was also a small electric fan mounted to the forward side of the radiator, and a 6-volt electric in-line fuel pump mounted to the underside of the front floorpan. The undocumented aftermarket upgrades made sense considering the Century had seen rally duty. We opted to remove these items prior to embarking on a full mechanical analysis with our mechanic and Hemmings Garage Shop Manager Junior Nevison.

6. There were some indications that led us to believe the 320-cu.in straight-eight engine may not be original to the 1940 model year. The engine number initially led us to believe the block was a replacement circa 1951-'52.

7. Pressure testing the cooling system revealed a small but concerning radiator leak. According to Doug Seybold Restorations, Buick radiators of this era are model-specific—one does not fit all—and those used in Centurys are a rare find today. We reached out to US Radiator, which is making a replacement unit as this goes to print. Due to the lead time, which was beyond our trip deadline, we had Empire Auto Radiator make quick repairs to the original unit.

8. The water pump also had a leak, compounded by internal corrosion that affected the performance of the thermostat. A replacement for the latter, along with a complete tune-up kit, was obtained from our friends at Fusick Automotive Products, while a new water pump was obtained from Doug Seybold. Lo and behold, the early '50s pump didn't match the '40s-style unit bolted to the engine, which had us questioning the engine's origins a second time. Doug expedited a correct pump based on this photo.



08



09



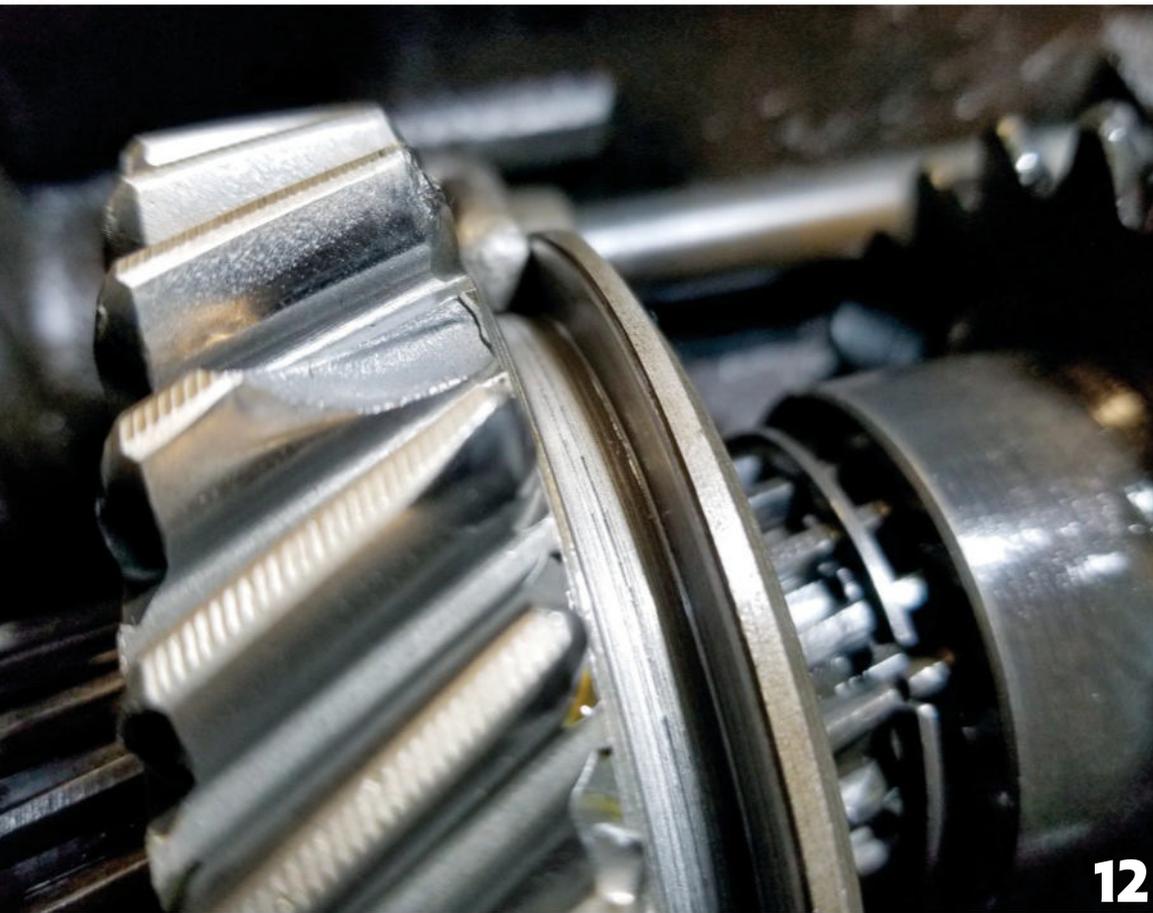
10

9. & 10. A complete rebuild of the hydraulic drum brake system, with parts obtained from Fusick Automotive Products, was already in progress when we discovered the right-rear brake assembly had suffered an epic, unchecked failure that caused enough heat to embed a retaining spring into the shoe lining. Three of the four drums merely needed to be turned; however, we felt replacing the right-rear drum was a wise decision. A 1940-correct replacement was purchased from Doug Seybold, but here again another undocumented change had been made: the rear drums on our car were from the 1941 model year.

11. Considering the number of wear and tear discoveries, we scrutinized the entire suspension system. The passenger side drag link had been mangled, probably during a haphazard repair with a pipe wrench. We straightened and welded the damaged link. Interestingly, Buick felt a rolled rod was sufficient in 1940.



11



12

12. As we suspected, the primary reason the Buick had not been driven for so long was damage to the gear cluster—a chipped tooth, visible thanks to a removable floorboard panel that allowed access to the transmission inspection plate—in the three-speed manual. The damage likely occurred when downshifting from second to first before coming to a complete stop; only second and third gears are synchronized in this unit.

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13. Considering all the prior parts swapping that had occurred, we sent this image to the Seybolds, who were able to confirm that our Buick had a correct 1940 transmission. The bad news was that '40 transmission parts have been unobtainable for about a decade. We had two options available to us: send our '40 case for a complete rebuild using easily obtainable '41 components, or swap in a complete and almost identical '41 transmission. The latter would be an easy bolt-in process and easy in that we would not have to modify any support brackets or the torque tube assembly.



13

14. The lead time needed to rebuild our transmission put its delivery right against our deadline, so we opted to purchase a rebuilt 1941 unit. It would look "1940 stock" yet would be more reliable and easily repairable in the future. While we waited for the unit to arrive, we kept our Buick's finish protected between tasks thanks to our friends at Covercraft. Join us next month for the conclusion. 🚗



14

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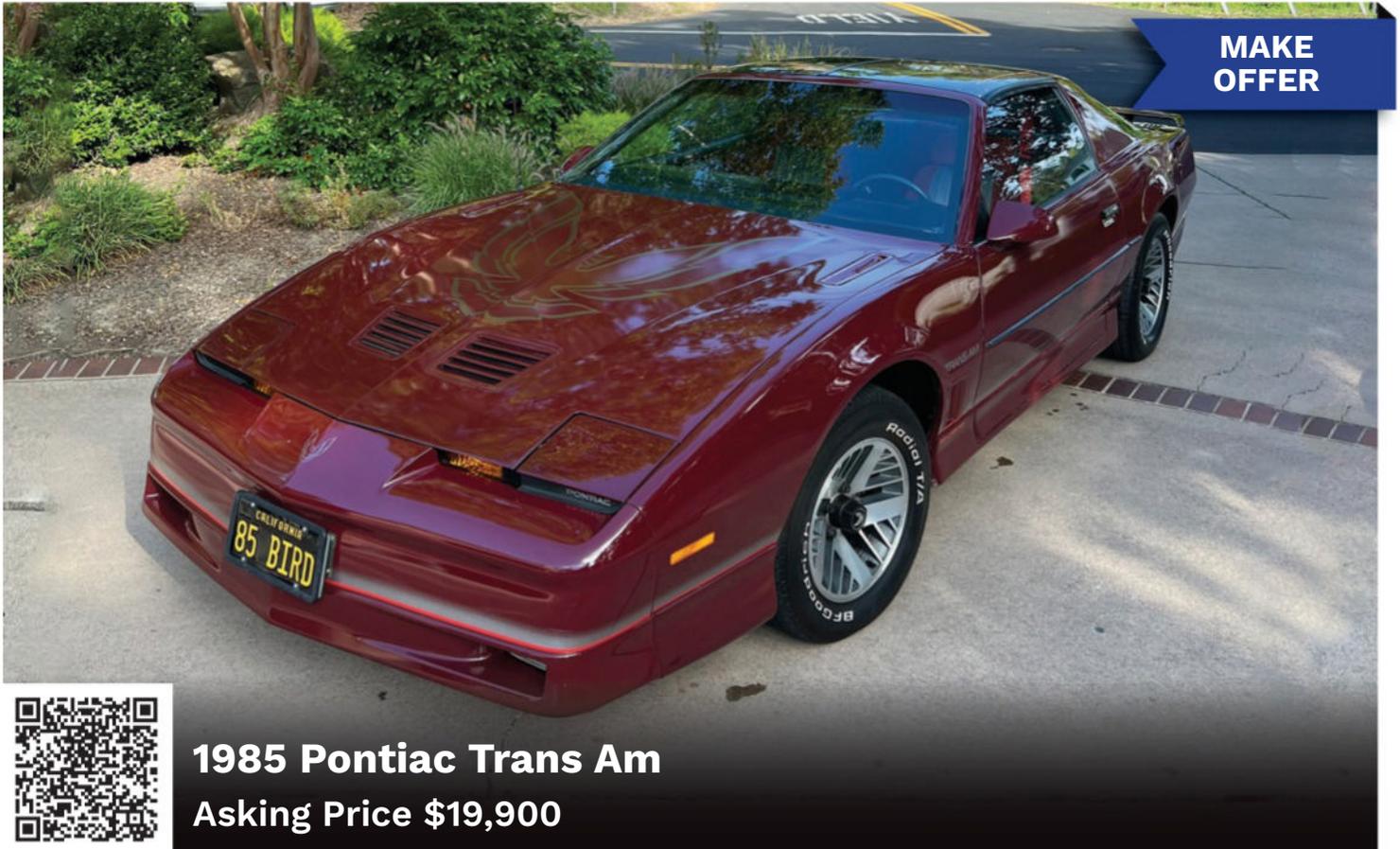
One of the few vintage photos of Hemmings' 1940 Buick Century convertible phaeton was this image taken after completing the Great American Race circa 1998.



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A Ford of a Different Color

1989 FORD YT GARDEN TRACTOR

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This 1989 Ford YT garden tractor at the 2022 Ford Nationals at Carlisle shows you can find anything at a swap meet



IF YOU'RE LIKE US, odds are good that you experience a heightened sense of anticipation when setting foot into a large automotive swap meet. Think “kid in a candy store,” giddy with excitement over the prospect of finding the one thing you need to complete a project or a collection. Imagine, then, you’re a Ford fan attending the annual Ford Nationals at Carlisle (in Pennsylvania), where devotees of the Ford Motor Company products can spend three days in early June scouring row upon row of swap meet space brimming with parts and memorabilia. Or, as we discovered at the 2022 gathering, a rather pristine-looking Ford...lawn mower?

Yup. A lawn mower, proving once again that you can find just about anything at a swap meet, even a self-propelled, green-acreage-manicuring apparatus emblazoned with a famed automotive nameplate. One that looked to be offered in near-mint, like-new condition. Presumably one that, if it were a traditional classified ad, would have a description like “Runs and drives like new. Used only on sunny Sundays. Low, original miles.”

All kidding aside, the Ford Yard Tractor—which really did look to be in near-new condition during our admittedly brief examination—originated from the YT series that, from 1989-’93, featured an 18-hp two-cylinder gasoline-fueled engine, which was joined by a hydrostatic transmission below the blue-and-white two-tone coachwork. Though branded for Ford, this ultimate chassis was built by Gilson, and the pictured example we discovered for sale—unfortunately, sans asking price—sported a 693-cc engine supplied by Briggs & Stratton, making it a 1989 model year unit. Editor’s note: Ford-branded Gilson tractors

were sold with 691-cc engines supplied by Kohler from 1990-’93. The entire “base” platform tipped the scales at 800 pounds, not including an available 48-inch “mid-mount” mower deck or driver.

Gilson was hardly a newcomer to the outdoor market. Founded in 1911, by the early Sixties it was a power player in the residential lawn equipment industry, producing not only its own brand of mowers, but also units for Montgomery Ward, Gearo, Versch, and Burns, in addition to Ford. In 1987, Gilson was purchased by Outboard Marine Corporation—or OMC—which merged Gilson with OMC’s Lawn Boy Group. Two years later, the Lawn Boy and Gilson brands were sold to Toro. Editor’s note: Ford’s larger farm equipment products were manufactured under its Tractor division, the early examples of which bore the Fordson name. Ford eventually sold the division and associated subsidiaries to Fiat in 1991.

Though smaller in scale and scope than the collector car hobby—but not in spirit—vintage residential lawn equipment has a deeply rooted network of enthusiasts who restore, display, and in many cases continue to use, the self-propelled objects of their affection. As for our featured Ford, when last we strolled past the preserved piece of power equipment, it remained available for the taking. 🚗

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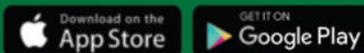
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MILWAUKEE M12 FUEL 3/8-INCH HIGH SPEED RATCHET

ONCE, PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC, I scoffed at the idea of a powered ratcheting wrench. After all, a ratchet and socket set is already kind of magic. Power seemed like cheating, akin to saying you've "read" an audiobook (a practice I also stubbornly refuse to adopt for no valid reason). At best, a powered ratchet seemed like an indulgence—and possibly of limited use given the extra bulk compared to a manual tool. Eventually, I received enough recommendations (mostly second hand) to put it on my wish list.

Now, my only regret is that I didn't get one sooner. It's not quite essential, like ratcheting combination wrenches, but it's close. And my fondness increases the more I use it. Here are some of the reasons why.

IT'S NOT TOO STRONG Anybody who's used an impact wrench—or had to undo the over-tightening that comes with any visit to a tire shop—knows that too much power can be a bad thing. This M12 Fuel 3/8-inch High Speed Ratchet by Milwaukee Tool, according to the specifications, tops out at 35 ft-lb. That's approximately "good and snug" for a calibrated wrist, and close to the actual specifications for many fasteners under the hood of a vehicle. Most importantly, it's a level of twist that's unlikely to break anything. Just don't use the powered ratchet where careful, gradual tightening is necessary, like when squeezing a gasket between two pieces of metal.

IT'S EASY TO USE The Milwaukee powered ratchet works via a big flat switch right where your fingers fall when you hold it, and it has variable speed. Squeeze it a little, and the ratchet moves slowly. Pull it all the way in, and the ratchet spins up to 400 rpm. It's easy and intuitive to moderate the speed. There's also a small LED light that helps illuminate the target, a lock switch, and a four-LED indicator for battery charge. I have two minor gripes: There's no way to tell at a glance which direction the ratchet is set, unlike the labeled "on" and "off" toggle on my Gearwrench ratchets. Second, the finger trigger is easy to activate when handling the tool in a hurry.

THE SIZE ISN'T A PROBLEM My intuition that a powered ratchet would be impractical due to its bulk was totally wrong. At about 11 inches long and an inch and a half in diameter, it fits in more places under the hood and around a car than I expected. The real wizardry, however, is that it doesn't need to move once it's in place; you only need enough clearance to pull the switch. This means that in some cases where you don't have enough room to swing a manual ratchet, the power unit is better.

IT'S FAST There's a reason why all those mechanics on YouTube use powered screwdrivers, drivers, and ratchets. They save time, which equates to money if you're a pro, and for a hobbyist, that means getting deep satisfaction of instant results. Those tight spaces where you get one or two clicks per swing on your regular ratchet? The powered ratchet handles those in seconds. It's even fast enough that if you break a nut loose by hand and switch the socket to the power ratchet, you're still saving time. The seconds add up, especially when you're lying on your back squinting into the dark crevasses of a car's underbody. Heck, I've even taken to using the powered ratchet to snug wheel nuts up before putting on the torque wrench.

PRICES AND OPTIONS I'm advocating that any powered ratchet is a worthy addition to the tool chest, and while I haven't tried any others, their performance is likely close enough that you can stick with the brand of your current battery system. I chose the Milwaukee because I already own several of the company's 18-volt tools, and my chargers also accommodate the 12-volt batteries. The bare tool, part number 2567-20, retails for \$179, while resellers on Amazon currently have it for less. A kit with two 2.0 amp-hour batteries and a 12-volt battery charger, part number 2567-22, lists for \$279 in stores and on Amazon as of this writing. Milwaukee also makes a similar model that spins to 250 rpm and foregoes the brushless motor, 2457-20, which retails for \$119 (also on Amazon). There are also 1/4 inch and 1/2 inch drive options, along with an extended-reach model; for the full lineup and a store finder, visit Milwaukee's website. 🛠️



MILWAUKEE M12 FUEL 3/8" HIGH SPEED RATCHET

Price:	Starting at \$129 (amazon.com)
Where to get it:	milwaukeetool.com, amazon.com, and major retail stores.
What we liked:	Easy to use in tight places; time saved.
What could be better:	Clearer direction-setting markings.
Overall rating:	★★★★★

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



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GARAGE

This 1932 Model B pickup has been sitting in Hemmings' underground garage and museum since it was donated in the 1990s! It was a farm truck in the Northeast, but that is all we know. Will it run? We find out in Hemmings Garage presented by POR-15.



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2.

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New brake upgrade kits for 1969-'89 Porsche 911s are now available. They provide stopping power similar to 1974 RS or turbocharged 930 models. Made with lightweight components using modern manufacturing techniques, each kit has mounting brackets for both 3.0-inch-spaced early-style and 3.5-inch later-style strut mounting tabs. Included are direct bolt-on Superlite four-piston front calipers that have been tested in various street and track conditions and don't require permanent modifications. They are made to work with OEM master cylinders and rear brakes for proper front-to-rear brake bias. Rotors are available in plain or SRP drilled and slotted faces; they measure 310 mm x 28 mm for greater brake torque and thermal capacity. Pads are high-performance street BP-10 units; other friction compounds are available. All kits also come with brackets, stainless flexlines, fittings, and hardware, plus 24 different color combinations are available. Ask about p/n 140-16947-Y (Yellow; 3.5-inch tab; slotted) for more details.

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3.

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4.

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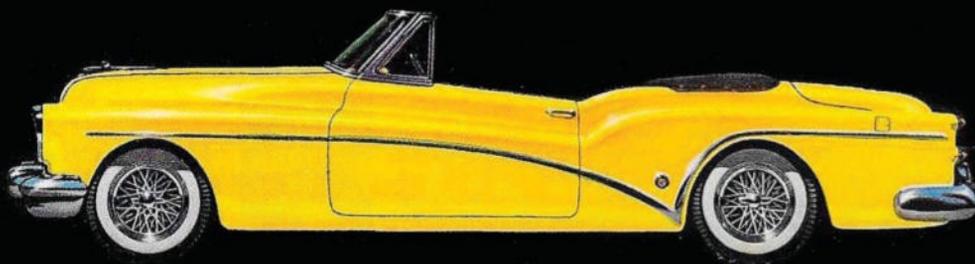
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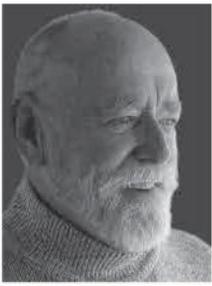
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Stauer.....	7, 15, 21
Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads	37
RPM Foundation.....	55
SMS Auto Fabrics	47
Steele Rubber Products.....	29
Universal Vintage Tire.....	1
US Radiators.....	37
Waldron's Exhaust.....	37



Jim Richardson

Don't Show Up for Work

“Those who can work from home should, because we could stop choking the motorways for those who have no alternative.”

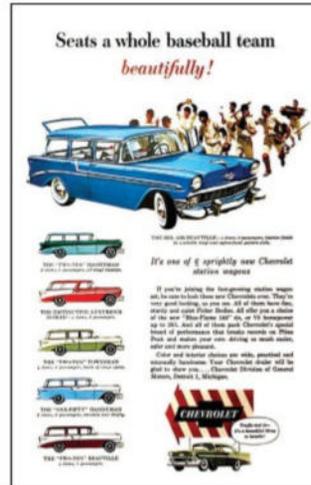
MY SON, who engineers heating and air conditioning systems in big, Los Angeles commercial buildings, tells me that since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, many high-rise buildings remain virtually empty. Faded family photos gather dust on desks alongside withered houseplants, with the only light coming in from distant windows. There is an eerie silence. This sounds like a scene from an apocalyptic science fiction movie, but it is reality—and maybe that’s a good thing.

Over 12 million people live in the Los Angeles basin, and on any weekday 370,000 of them use the 405—just one of several freeways—to get to work. But the 405 is not the most congested. That distinction goes to the I-5, or Santa Ana Freeway, which is responsible for 10 million hours of lost time every year for commuters. That’s because on any workday at rush hour, with luck, you will average 17.5 miles per hour!

All of this contributes to colossal amounts of carbon dioxide belched into the atmosphere, turning it beige, and it affects the Los Angeles basin horribly. Some say that electric cars will solve this problem, and that will transfer the burning of fossil fuels to power plants outside of the city, but it will do nothing to end traffic congestion. The alternatives to driving to work aren’t great in LA either. Public transportation is meager, and you may find yourself sitting next to someone belligerent.

In southern California I am amazed at the absurdity of millions of people in millions of cars burning millions of gallons of gasoline just to get to work every day. Don’t get me wrong: I love to drive, and I love cars. Always have. But these days I like driving classic cars on open roads. It is sort of analogous to the way some of us like savoring fine wines, versus frat boys who glug the cheap stuff from jugs with ears on them.

So, what is the answer? Don’t show up for work. I’m serious. The pandemic offered us a chance to change the way we do business. Maybe we don’t need big office buildings and eight-lane freeways after all. Maybe what we really need is for more of us to work from home. And maybe we need more meandering two-lane roads through scenic areas on which we can drive our classic Pontiacs, Packards, or Panteras.



I haven’t shown up for work in 20 years, and I don’t miss the interminable meetings or the coworkers who want to natter on about some TV show they saw last night. Computers and express-delivery companies have made it possible for me to work from home, and it appears that lots of other people are doing the same these days. Of course, this is not possible for many of us, but those who can work from home should, because we could stop choking the motorways for those who have no alternative.

My prescription for unclogging congested freeways does not involve vast expenditures on research and technology either. It would free funds to build roads we can enjoy while going nowhere fast in our vintage vehicles and see this beautiful country on tours, savoring every minute of the journey.

It’s wasteful to use a nice new car to dawdle along in traffic every day until it is worn out. And doing so is expensive. A basic new car can easily cost \$30,000, and then there is insurance and maintenance on top of that, not to mention the lost hours listening to some talk-show host rattle on about things that you, and they, can’t fix.

I would rather take out my 1955 Chevy Bel Air station wagon for a leisurely spin down the coastal highway, watching the surf roll in and having lunch with friends on the beach. Or head out to the desert to bask in its stark minimalist beauty and enjoy the solitude and Zen-like calm.

My son still maintains the climate-control systems in those big empty buildings downtown, but it appears such structures have proven themselves unnecessary. Maybe they can be repurposed to meet more current needs. And maybe someday in the future we can tour downtown as a historical site, with no traffic to hinder our progress.

So, my advice is: Don’t show up for work. Follow my example. When I wake up in the morning, I slip on a T-shirt, jeans, and socks, go downstairs for a cup of coffee, and then saunter into the den to sit in my Barcalounger with my ancient G4 laptop. I don’t make as much money as I did at the office, but then again, I no longer have to don a suit and sincere tie. Best of all, I don’t have to spend countless irretrievable hours inching along a freeway to do what I do. 🚗

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