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AMERICA'S COLLECTOR-CAR OWNERSHIP MAGAZINE

APRIL 2024 #235

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Matthew Litwin

Ghost of Project Past



Write to our Editor at mlitwin@hemmings.com and follow him on Instagram @[matt.litwin.hemmings](https://www.instagram.com/matt.litwin.hemmings).

“Back then,

my

restoration

ambition

was

vastly

larger than

my budget,

and to an

extent, still

is today.”

AT THE TIME of this writing, we’ve just celebrated another holiday season. It’s hard to believe it was my 51st and, fortunately, I’ve yet to be visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past. That’s not to say I haven’t racked up my fair share of slightly regrettable, misguided shenanigans (such as the parking brake speed test in a rented minivan while navigating a New Hampshire mountain road after a hike nearly 30 years ago). Or that I haven’t been visited by the Ghost of Project Past. It’s happened plenty, and not just during the panic-stricken gift shopping weeks that follow Thanksgiving.

Frequent visits from the Ghost of Project Past started as soon as I began attending the Spring Carlisle Swap Meet in 1996, followed two years later by

my annual trek to the AACA’s Eastern Fall Meet held in Hershey. Back then, my restoration ambition was vastly larger than my budget, and to an extent, still is today. The miles of Pennsylvania swap meet and car corral offerings were akin to feeding an industrial-sized bottle of lighter fluid to an already raging fire. Suffice it to say, that’s a lot of project-car-that-got-away memories, many of which were captured by a succession of cameras for posterity.

If you’re anything like me, the ones that stood out the most haunt me beyond the obvious “what-could-have-been,” the “what became of them” echoes through my dream garage. Full Classics and family cruisers, and even trucks, share that space, as demonstrated by my Top Four offered here:

1929 BLACKHAWK MODEL L6 WEYMANN CHANTILLY

Buick, Cadillac, Oakland, and Oldsmobile weren’t the only companies that offered companion makes. Stutz unveiled its budget-friendly Blackhawk for 1929, though it was also less powerful and luxurious than its parent make. It also had no lineage to the earlier Stutz Black Hawk, which likely led to nomenclature confusion among Stutz clientele. In just two years of production, it’s been reported that only 1,590 were built in total. This example was spotted at the 2007 Hershey meet on vendor setup day, when it was thought to be the only Weymann Chantilly extant. Restoring uber-rare interwar cars can be daunting; however, this Blackhawk looked nearly, if not entirely, complete.



1946 BUICK ROADMASTER

When I crossed paths with this 1946 Buick Roadmaster for sale in Hershey’s 2003 Blue Field, a ’52 Roadmaster Riviera sedan already occupied a garage bay at my abode, so why not add a convertible? The Eighties-era Connecticut license plate hinted at its last road-going excursion, and clearly the Buick had some paint and trim concerns, but familiarity with the brand and its general completeness beckoned me. Unfortunately, I didn’t have the \$16,000 it took to add this to my collection.



CIRCA-1956 DIVCO

Full disclosure: There was a small group of us who would descend upon the vast fields of Hershey cultivating the idea of restoring a Fifties Divco delivery truck in Dewars livery, replete with racks of 12-year-old spirits. Lo and behold, Hershey’s White Field offered a tantalizing reality in 2005, just before the rains arrived and converted the last remnants of grassy field into mud. In hindsight, and regardless of the truck’s condition, the \$500 asking price was a bargain.



1960 CHEVROLET BROOKWOOD

Flash-forward to 2009 Spring Carlisle when my eyes found this Brookwood station wagon up on top of the fair-ground’s hill. It had somehow escaped the championship dreams of a nameless demolition derby combatant, to say nothing of the fact that the Chevy’s trim had not been scavenged. Yes, it had rot, and yes, it needed a ton of work, but it was hard to miss the sign that simply said, “make offer.”



I often speculate, dare I say believe, that a Hemmings reader purchased one I had ogled and has since restored it, if not returned the project to mechanical, roadworthy soundness. If so, drop me a line. I’ll be anxious to hear whether one or more of these ghosts ramble on America’s roads once again. 🚗

1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

Never ones to miss an opportunity, we carefully steadied our glasses of bubbly and climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

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Forlorn No More

A thrice-stored 1956 Packard Patrician finally gets a luxury restoration

BY MATTHEW LITWIN

PHOTOGRAPHY
COURTESY OF
JOE LACEK

RESTORING A VINTAGE vehicle can be broken down into a handful of basic steps, beginning with its acquisition. Thereafter, it progresses through disassembly, repairs, paint, and reassembly. Sounds easy, but most are aware that undertaking a restoration requires time, money, patience, and persistence. Going from start to finish isn't a snap of the fingers. So, imagine restoring the same car twice. Sort of.

"My dad, Tom, started working at Hahn & Sons Studebaker [which later switched to Dodge] in Leighton, Pennsylvania, while in high school.

In the mid-Sixties, this 1956 Packard Patrician was traded in. I've heard that it had transmission trouble. Another story was that it was used as a parts hauler for a few years. Whatever the case, the Packard was parked until the late '80s when the dealership owner tasked Dad, who maintained relationships there, with making it a reliable runner for car shows and such," Joe Lacek says.

According to Joe, Tom rebuilt the suspension, engine, and brakes, installed a three-speed overdrive transmission that had been extracted from a rotted vehicle, and removed the power-steering system. By



What's Inside:

1. The Packard Patrician circa 1932 when its first restoration was completed by Tom Lacek, just prior to being returned to a local dealership that had commissioned the project.
2. That dealership robbed the Patrician of several critical parts to resurrect a same-year Caribbean. It was then left to languish until 2010, when it was returned to the Lacek family in this condition.
3. "The upholstery was in good shape but needed to be scrubbed, whereas the floor carpet needed to be replaced. I also determined that the painted interior surfaces and trim, and dashboard, required new paint. Also, the front door glass needed to be replaced—the driver's side had delaminated and the passenger-side was cracked," Joe says.
4. Although Tom had managed repairs to the brake and suspension systems nearly four decades ago, both systems needed to be rebuilt again. Similarly, the passenger-side rocker panels were repaired once, but new corrosion had set in.
5. "I've test driven it a tad over 400 miles, which revealed a series of small mechanical issues I need to address over the winter, in addition to getting the air conditioning to work, reset the front-end alignment, and install a new headliner," Joe says.

the time he got it running and put it through a couple road tests, the dealership needed an engine for a Caribbean they were working on for a collector.

"They ordered the Patrician to be shipped back, where its engine was promptly robbed, along with several other parts. The Packard was then shoved in a corner until 2010 when they called Dad and told him to come and get it. He picked it up and immediately put it into storage.

"The last time we were on a family vacation I told Dad we would bring it with us on the next vacation. He smiled, which I took as him enjoy-

ing that idea. Unfortunately, four months later he lost his battle with cancer. I was always told all it needed was paint and an engine. I'm sure we've all heard that before. Well, in 2019 I removed it from storage and started the restoration. It needed more than just an engine and paint," Joe says.

As of this writing, the Packard's second restoration is nearly complete. Joe reports that test drives of the Patrician have revealed the need to address a few things before an April 2024 vacation, after which we plan to detail the car's restoration in a future issue. Stay tuned! 🚗

The Colorful Life of Mon Chevette

A coed's practical, copper-colored, coast-to-coast cruiser



MY STORY BEGINS when I moved to Richmond, Virginia, to earn my degree from dental school. I was driving borrowed family cars to use; essentially whatever was available from a motley collection. One was an ancient Mercedes-Benz 220. I was fairly knowledgeable about cars and had already had a lively and intimate history when I met Marybeth. I knew she was special, and she seemed to be interested in me too, but various distractions prevented us from getting serious with each other—by the fall of that year, things had changed, and we were practically living together. The feeling surprised me a little, but I had no doubt she was the one.

Marybeth and I had had multiple adventures with the Mercedes, including just keeping it running. As it became more aged, the only way to start the car was to push it, get it rolling, and pop the clutch in first gear. We carefully chose where we parked, and Marybeth got good at pushing it.

Then, on an April evening in 1982, our life with cars changed. I had just finished a mind-wracking study session and was walking past the library when I saw a little car approaching with someone hang-

ing out of the passenger window. About the time I realized it was Marybeth's friend, Pam, she yelled at the top of her lungs, "This is Marybeth's new car!" So much for keeping a secret.

As the car pulled to a stop next to me there was Marybeth grinning at the wheel, her expression revealing the gist of the tale. Sure enough, Marybeth's dad had bought a car for her to use to get to school and work and this was its debut. The spunky little two-door was a Chevrolet Chevette. It had pleasing copper-like paint and under the hood was a tiny four-cylinder engine. Marybeth looked great in it.

Marybeth's dad, Dr. William Falls, was a no-nonsense, practical guy, certainly not one to fret over acquiring a car for family use. Bill's five kids—Marybeth being the oldest—were becoming more involved in school activities and part-time jobs. Wheels were needed. When he and his wife, Nancy, bought a car from Whitlow Chevrolet, whether for their use or that of their kids, Bill countered salesman spiels by saying, "I just want something that will get me from Point A to B." He would invariably end up with the cheapest, simplest car on the lot. A radio was included only if the car came with one, and he had no concern

"The Chevette was loaded up for our weekend camping trips to the mountains and the sea. We carried all manner of boats and things strapped to its roof. It turned out to be a great all-purpose vehicle."



whatsoever about paint color. Cars without air conditioning, power windows, and automatic transmissions were normal.

The Chevette fit the bill as the most basic car in Chevy's lineup. The go-kart was earmarked for his oldest daughter's use. After all, Marybeth was heading out into the world, working her way through nursing school, and Bill wanted to help her on the path to independence.

The little car immediately began to earn its keep. Aside from Marybeth's school and work, the Chevette was loaded up for our weekend camping trips to the mountains and the sea. We carried all manner of boats and things strapped to its roof. It turned out to be a great all-purpose vehicle.

The spring break after Marybeth and her Chevette came into my life, we took the car to Florida. It was packed to the gills with camping gear and a sailboard was lashed to the roof. It also accommodated two additional passengers—our friend Ron, my sister Ginny, and all their attendant stuff. It was a fabulous trip and the Chevette never complained.

A year and a half after Marybeth and I met, we were married. Not only did the trusty Chevette end up being our wedding getaway car, but my father-in-law officially gave it to us.

Early in our marriage we had a rusty 1972 Toyota Land Cruiser to complement the Chevette but alas it wasn't as reliable

as the little Chevy. The Land Cruiser let us down numerous times, some particularly memorable, but the car we called “*Mon Chevette*” always soldiered on.

That’s not to say that the little car was well-built and without “issues.” It wasn’t. In fact, it collected various quirks as its career advanced. First, the hatchback strut failed and wouldn’t hold the hatch open. Our fix was a 4-foot-long locust stick used to brace the lid open. Then the parking-brake cam spring went kaput. To operate the parking brake thereafter, one had to poke a finger down the narrow slot at the brake handle to finagle the cam to engage. It was hard to explain to someone how to do it.

Another endearing trait—or not so endearing—that the Chevette developed was an unbending radio volume: Full blast or nothing. Turning on the basic AM unit made the single, wimpy dash speaker jump like mad and made it impossible for occupants to hear anything else. There were always books around and we found stacking one or two on top of the speaker reduced the volume to an acceptable level.

Then there was the passenger-side

window. The entire glass panel would be swallowed by the door when least expected. Temporarily closing the window again required prying off the inner door panel to fiddle with the greasy mechanism. Eventually we’d reset the glass into the track and work it back up into the door frame. We got rather good at fixing it but even then, it took a while, and we were invariably anointed with grease in the process. Such was the price of self-sufficiency. The car also gained wear and tear during our time with it. Once, our friend, Mike, fixed a dent in the Chevette’s rear fender by popping it out with a toilet plunger.

Of all the trickery that *Mon Chevette* developed, my favorite was the way the headliner acquired a pronounced sag. It would hang down and cradle your head in an upside-down sort of way. It was almost comforting. It felt like what I imagine the pope might feel under his righteous headgear. When the fabric reached the point where it was getting in our eyes, I pulled it down the rest of the way. With that one quick movement I transformed not only the appearance of the interior but the ambiance and acoustics.



The summer after I finished dental school, we drove the Chevette all over the western states, living out of its cramped confines for a month and feeling at one with the car. Finally coming home involved an interminable drive from Yosemite Valley, stopping only for gas and restrooms. The little vehicle was like a loyal friend always looking after our best interests. We, for our part, took it all for granted.

We finally wore out the Chevette sufficiently to pass it on to a new home. Our newspaper delivery guy became its owner. That may have spelled the end of the Chevy’s life with us, but I bet its adventures continued until there was nothing left of it but a smudge in a driveway. As Neil Young sang about another old car, “With your chrome heart shining in the sun, long may you run.” Godspeed, *Mon Chevette*! 🚗



REMINISCING relates your personal stories and remembrances enjoying or owning a car. To submit your stories, email us at editorial@hemmings.com or write to us at **Reminiscing, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201.**



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THANK YOU FOR THE RECENT

Classic Car issue featuring the Buick Roadmaster Estate Wagon on the cover. I got great pleasure out of reading the article. There is always a lot of focus on the Corvette-engine models, but the very earliest wagons didn't have that engine and usually writers forget they exist.

I am the lucky owner of a 63,000-mile 1991 version equipped with a 5.0-liter. By the size of the oil filter and some other parts it appears it is a 305-cu.in. engine and not a 307. In any event, it isn't speedy. It is a Plain-Jane 9-seat version in silver blue with no wood sides, with a dark blue velour interior and tilt wheel. It has power windows and air conditioning, but no power seat, no cruise control, and no power locks.

The Buick is an outside car so the paint will need to be redone soon. I hung a new exhaust on it last year and the bottom has surface rust but is remarkably free of rot, so it is getting coated in POR-15 flat black. In my retirement I work at Kanter Auto Products (Packard) in New Jersey, and part time at a local auto-parts store, and I am lucky to get just about anything for this Buick.

I get a lot of comments on my wagon. I remember when *MotorWeek* TV first reviewed these cars. They thought it was huge, but its 116-inch wheelbase is the same size as a Skylark Sportwagon's from 1969. The Estate Wagon of

1971-'76 makes my '91 look like a peanut.

These days I am working on my 1962 Buick Invicta Estate Wagon six-seater and a 1976 Electra 225 Limited coupe. The Invicta just received new original-style seats with the correct 1962 embossing. I will not be able to keep people away from that one. My fleet also includes a '65 Chevy Chevelle 327 hardtop coupe, '77 Chrysler New Yorker coupe, and our town's 1948 Packard Ambulance by Henney.

Thank you again for an enjoyable magazine.

—TOM ZAPF

Lincoln Park, New Jersey

WOW - THE DECEMBER ISSUE

took me back to my teens.

A 1957 Dodge was the car I learned to drive in. It was my dad's first new car, although it was a Coronet hardtop and not the jazzy Custom Royal D-500 featured in the issue. Seeing that Dodge brought back memories of Chrysler's no-road-feel power steering. While most folks lust after '57 Chevys, I want a Dodge instead because it has rocket-ship styling. I'll conclude by saying I like the new format. *HCC* just keeps getting better and even more informative.

—DON MOORE

Erial, New Jersey

JIM RICHARDSON'S December column "When Detroit Went To War" reminded me of my own first car experience. Like Jim, I was also born in 1942. My parents owned a 1941 Ford Tudor Custom (with a V-8) that was still pretty new when dad was drafted in October 1943. Unlike Jim's father, my dad didn't put our Ford up for storage. My mother kept using it (as far as one could drive on three gallons a week) throughout the

war, and when Dad returned in October '45 they went right on driving it until March 1950 when our new 1950 Ford Custom arrived.

I shed hidden tears when we left my beloved '41 behind at Parson's Ford of Amsterdam, New York. That '41 never required any serious repair as far as I can remember. It somehow made it all the way to Maine and back every August through 1949, managing the tough Vermont and New Hampshire mountains in those pre-interstate days. The Ford never broke down, which I think is a testament to how well built even low-priced average sedans were back then.

A few days before we traded in the '41, its horn bezel fell off the center of the steering wheel. I begged Dad to let me keep it—I wanted something that was part of my automotive friend to stay with me—and he granted that wish. I still have it today and sometimes recall those far simpler times when I was a little kid who loved to beep the horn when no one was watching me.

—PETER C. BETZ

Fort Johnson, New York

WHAT A TREAT TO SEE

an article about the 1961 Chrysler 300G and the 1961 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL, two of my all-time favorites. But I do prefer the 300F. Nevertheless, it was a great article about two cars on my wish list. With their current pricing trend, they are getting further and further beyond my reach. Like you, a couple of Matchbox models will have to do. But I don't think there are versions of the 300s.

Your magazine gets better and better every month.

—HERB SATZMAN

via email

Matthew Litwin says: We're happy to hear you enjoyed the Chrysler/Mercedes-Benz



comparison report. Regarding small-scale versions of the Chrysler 300 Letter Cars, GreenLight Collectibles, via its Pace Car Garage series, replicated the 1963 Chrysler 300 Indy 500 pace car. In addition, a small handful of companies offered variations of the 1957 Chrysler 300C; however, I'm unaware of a 1:64 scale 300F or 300G. Happy hunting.

I JUST RECEIVED

my January 2024 issue and in reading the comparison of the 1961 Chrysler 300G and the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL, I was amazed that an inline-six of 183 cubic inches versus 413 cubic inches resulted in almost the same quarter-mile trap speeds.

I bought my first car in 1963, a 1955 Austin-Healey 100-4 with a four-cylinder engine. I had a lot of fun with that car. One of my current cars is a 1985 BMW 635 CSi and I really enjoy it, but I wonder if the six-cylinder in it is related to the Mercedes-Benz fuel-injected six?

I'm glad to see old classic iron and sports cars in your *Classic Car* magazine. Keep up the great work with beautiful cars, regardless of their country of origin.

—JOHN SANCHEZ

Hanford, California

THE WONDERFUL ARTICLE

comparing the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL and the Chrysler 300G

in the January issue mentions Mercedes' well-earned 1-2 finish in the 1952 24 Hours of Le Mans. A lesser-known competitor took third overall in that race: a Nash-Healey. Using a low-drag body and a Nash Ambassador drivetrain beefed up with an aluminum head and increased compression ratio, the Healey's standard 140 hp was raised to 200 hp. That race car, #10, is now fully restored and can occasionally be seen at world-class concours.

—HOWARD MINTZ
Venice, Florida

I ALWAYS ENJOY Jim Richardson's column. I would like to add my experience to his Hot Summer Blues article in the January 2024 issue. His solution for vapor lock of adding a vapor separator fuel filter and a return line to the tank is a great

one. I used a similar setup on my 1936 Packard 120 for several years while participating in The Great Race. The only difference in my system was a three-way pressure regulator instead of a vapor separator filter. A word of caution on using electric fuel pumps: On many cars with a diaphragm-style fuel pump, a broken diaphragm will allow the electric pump to fill the crankcase with gasoline. The electric pump should only be used as a booster on starting and not as a backup for the mechanical pump.

—BILL CROKER
Penn Valley, California

I RECEIVED MY JANUARY issue of *Hemmings Classic Car* and was thrilled to see a local car on the cover! The first time I saw Dave Long's 1958 Mercury

was at a cruise-in. He was cruising with two four-door '58 Mercury wagons. It was quite a sight. Happy that you're noticing the Pacific Northwest has some cars worth featuring.

I'm also a collector of Buick toys and models. I have around 75, including a Tootsie Toy '54 wagon in red and white. I've also had 33 full-size Buicks over the years.

I look forward to many more Northwest car features in my favorite magazine.

—DOUG WOLFORD
Graham, Washington



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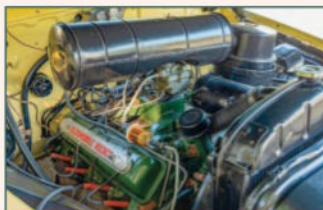
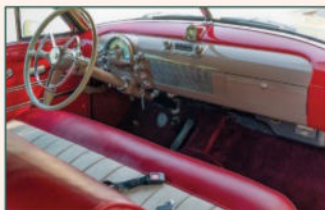
1966 FORD BRONCO



The utilitarian appeal of the original Ford Bronco has never dimmed, and nowhere was that more evident than bidders' reaction to this single-family-owned 1966 Bronco Wagon, whose honest presentation and unimpeachable provenance proved irresistible to the tune of more than doubling the reserve. For the winner's money, they got a functioning inline-six engine, column-shift three-speed manual, and four-wheel drive with a leaking transfer case. Oxidation covered the factory Rangoon Red paint, and some rust was noted on the sheetmetal and undercarriage. Inside the cabin, the materials had held up well. The truck came with service records and extra wheels, and it promised a fine base for restoration.

Reserve: \$15,000
Selling Price: \$38,325
Recent Market Range:
\$15,200-\$25,000

1949 OLDSMOBILE 98



A cream-yellow, V-8-powered postwar convertible was the ultimate indulgence to put the traumatic early 1940s in the rearview mirror. This flagship 98 from Oldsmobile received a body-off restoration a decade ago and it still presented very well in photos, with no reported rust or cosmetic issues in the paint, power soft top, or the two-tone leather and broadcloth interior. All the powered accessories were said to work properly, and the rebuilt 303-cu.in. V-8/Hydra-Matic driveline didn't leak or smoke. Limited use meant the undercarriage remained very tidy, too, despite areas of failing paint visible on the oil pan. This important car achieved a solid price as a Make Offer listing.

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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SCOTTY LACHENAUER

If you were to guess which market segment dominates today's new vehicle sales, we're betting most of you would answer sport utility vehicles. The question, however, is what percentage of sales have SUV captured? North of 30 percent? Perhaps 40 percent? A May 2022 report issued by JATO Dynamics stated SUV sales accounted for 53.5 percent of the market. Pickups accounted for 19.4 percent. Put into perspective, when combined, truck and SUV sales accounted for a whopping 72.9 percent after the first quarter of 2022. At year's end, that figure had jumped to a smidge over 80 percent.

That percentage would have us believe the SUV market came out of the gate white hot, each vehicle festooned with luxury trappings that rival presidential suites at tropical island resorts. How quickly we've forgotten that cultivating those market shares was initially a slow burn.

The catalyst was Willys-Overland's new-for-1946 Jeep Wagon, at a time when "utility vehicle" was the key phrase to a revolutionary multi-purpose platform. As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, the sporty attributes really didn't collide with



**This stunning, one-owner
1987 Chevrolet Blazer
has surpassed 100,000
miles of driving
enjoyment**





Four-wheel drive came in handy for the owners of this Blazer, which managed beach excursions and snowy commutes with ease.

the utility vehicle until 1962, just one year after International-Harvester pulled the wraps off its Scout. Suddenly, the game was afoot, and Ford unveiled its new-for-1966 Bronco. And once Ford recognized and reacted to consumer demands, so did Chevrolet.

In the latter half of 1968, Chevy announced its entry into the any-terrain SUV market with its '69 Blazer. Touted as "The newest way to go almost anywhere," it was built atop a modified half-ton chassis in that the wheelbase measured 105 inches, versus the K10 pickup's standard wheelbase of 115 or 127 inches. The idea behind the compact dimensions was to make the platform nimbler and reduce the probability of high centering during off-road use. Whether on the road or on a trail, its power was derived from a 250-cu.in. straight-six or 307-cu.in. V-8 in base trim, though buyers could've opted for a 350-cu.in. V-8. A fully capable off-road suspension was standard, though it could have been upgraded to heavy-duty status. Four-wheel drive was standard.

Beyond its mechanicals, the Blazer was equipped with a removable, weather-tight, reinforced-fiberglass hardtop that extended from the windshield to the tailgate. A single seat for the driver was standard, though most buyers opted to upgrade the interior with a second front seat; also optional was a three-person rear bench seat. Air conditioning, power steering, power brakes, radio, tow hooks, wheel covers, and a Custom Sport Truck package—which added exterior appearance upgrades, front bucket seats, door armrests, extra cabin trim, cigar lighter, and color-keyed floor covering—were also optional.

The first generation of Blazers quickly garnered a strong following, and the

original design lasted until 1972 when the entire Chevy truck line was revamped. The full-length removable top continued until '75, at which time the division switched to a half-cab design that continued to '91. Naturally, the list of engine choices expanded too, and included—at various times—the original mills and a 305- and 400-cu.in. V-8 engine. Even a diesel-fed 387-cu.in. (6.2L) was introduced in 1982. Of note, fuel injection was added to the Blazer's standard 305- and the optional 350-cu.in. V-8s for 1987, just as Rich Irving began shopping for a new vehicle.

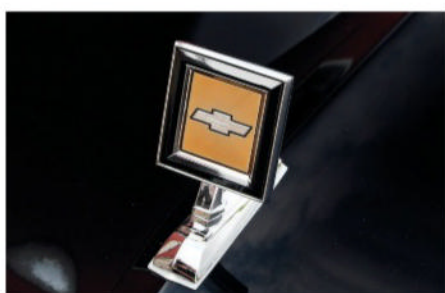
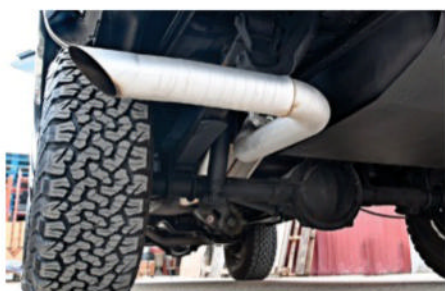
Rich, a resident of Lindenwold, New Jersey, was surrounded by trucks of all sorts when coming of age. "My father worked in road construction, so I would tag along with him to work and see all the various trucks at the jobsite. When I turned 15, I got a job working in a truck repair shop. From there I have worked for several different truck companies. It's something I still do today," he says.

In 1981, Rich bought his first vehicle, a 1971 Chevy C10 pickup. Four years later, he toyed with the notion of buying a new Blazer but instead purchased a more affordable new Chevy pickup. "I ended up retiring the '71 from daily duty, though I did drive it from time to time," Rich says.

Two years down the road, Rich was in a better financial situation and again went to a Chevy dealership to buy the truck he really wanted. "It was April 7th, 1987. I traded in my two-year-old pickup for a new 1987 K-5 Blazer. The dealer had ten Blazers, but only one was painted two-tone red and black, which is what I wanted. Even though it had a base EFI 305 engine, it was loaded otherwise—including an automatic transmission—though it didn't have the trailer towing package; it was something I



This Blazer was fitted with Chevrolet's EFI 305-cu.in. engine. Its diminutive displacement has managed more than 100,000 miles of travel.



"Now that it's become a collectible vehicle, I get a lot of thumbs-up when I take it out. A lot of people will approach me with awe and talk about their Blazer tales."





Despite the high mileage, the cabin is largely original to its 1987 factory build.

originally wanted. That was okay with me, though. When I finalized the purchase, I was told the Blazer had a full tank of gas. When the tech came in, he told the salesman the tank was almost empty, so they had to fill it...all 31 gallons."

Once home Rich went over his new purchase; one of 32,437 built in that year. Overall, he thought his Blazer was a great buy, but unfortunately it had a few fit and finish issues inherent with some new vehicles at the time, which he quickly had the dealership rectify. Rich also installed his first post-purchase upgrade. "I added running boards because my mom was too short to get in the truck," he says.

From there it was off to the races. Rich drove his Blazer everywhere: locally, long trips, and extended vacations from Maine to Virginia. Even into Canada during a 1988 trip to Niagara Falls, New York. Rich reports that he drove it in snow and onto beaches, too, adding, "I didn't have a garage either, so it stayed outdoors in the New Jersey climate. I did wash it constantly, and I always kept up with the maintenance that I did myself."

While the Blazer was Rich's daily driver, he decided to perform a complete restoration of his old 1971 Chevy pickup. When finished, it triggered Rich's interest in making the rounds at local cruise-ins and car shows. Meanwhile, the Blazer was starting to lose its shine. Then in 1998, the Blazer had its first mechanical hiccup just two blocks from home. Realizing it was a fuel issue, Rich dropped the tank. He found the tank baffle had never been mounted and that its jostling over time eventually broke the fuel pick-up tube. When describing it to the dealership's technician, the response was that the baffles were never mounted at the fac-

tory. A swift repair had Rich's Blazer back on the road the same day.

Afterwards, the Blazer successfully completed the 1998 *Hot Rod Power Tour*, and in '99 its odometer recorded 100,000 miles. Rich purchased a new Tahoe soon after, allowing him to retire the Blazer from daily use.

"I didn't want it sitting outside, so I rented a spot at a local car-storage facility so it could live indoors. In 2005, I replaced the inner fenders and radiator support due to rust issues and even rebuilt the front end. I still took it out on occasion and even attended a few events. I decided to take it to the *Super Chevy* show in Virginia, where it won its class. Then in 2011, I took it to Carlisle's GM Nationals. That was the start of taking it to shows," Rich says.

Knowing he wanted to keep up with foreseeable issues that would prevent him from enjoying the Blazer, Rich decided it was time to build a garage where he could expedite repairs. A proper garage was constructed for the Blazer in 2013. Next, Rich decided the SUV needed to be freshened up, so he contacted Bellmawr Collision in Runnemede, New Jersey, regarding new paint.

The Blazer was in good condition overall, the only apparent rust being in the floor by the tailgate. It was quickly repaired, allowing the body to be prepped for paint. According to Rich, "I removed all the trim and bumpers and took off the cap. It was the only time I ever had the top off."

The Bellmawr team was then able to replicate the Blazer's original Bright Red and Black color scheme and applied fresh stripes to the flanks. Once the job was completed, Rich reinstalled the parts he

had removed, along with new bumpers obtained from LMC Truck.

The Blazer's first post-paint showing was at Carlisle's 2014 GM Nationals, where it was chosen for the Carlisle Elite award, in addition to winning first-in-class. In 2019, it was the featured vehicle for Carlisle's 50th anniversary celebration of the Blazer, again at the GM Nationals. What's amazing is that even today the Blazer boasts having its original interior that presents in mint condition. Similarly, the original engine and drivetrain are in nearly immaculate condition. This from a vehicle that is used for more than national show duty.

"I still drive it to the local events and cruises. My girlfriend, Patti, or other family members will sometimes drive it to some of the local shows so I can bring out the C10 pickup as well," Rich says.

When asked what it's like to own and drive a classic Blazer of this magnitude, he reports, "It's fun to drive. Initially I had to get used to the short wheelbase, but now it's very comfortable for me. Now that it's become a collectible vehicle, I get a lot of thumbs-up when I take it out. A lot of people will approach me with awe and talk about their Blazer tales. I will never sell this or the C10 and I have talked to my niece and nephew about taking it over some day when the time comes. I just never thought it would stay in such good condition." 🚗



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Jeep's Maverick Special

FOR YEARS, the Jeep name was associated with military vehicles like the World War II-era Jeep MB. Afterwards, that legendary vehicle was replaced by the Jeep MC. The MC was in turn superseded by the MD that, in civilian form, became the CJ-5. Willys-Overland—renamed Willys Motor Company when it purchased by Kaiser in 1953—produced thousands of military Jeeps during the Korean War and for a short time thereafter. Then, the military took a pause, and Willys didn't build any military Jeeps for the U.S. during 1956.

This worried Willys management since military contracts were lucrative and, prior to 1956, military Jeeps were a big seller. Civilian Jeep sales, as well as passenger car sales, were not growing, which squeezed profit margins. New Sales Vice President Cruise Moss was ordered to get things righted. He put the spurs to Jeep's retail network while also ordering Jeep product planners and stylists to come up with new ideas that could be developed quickly and cheaply as tooling money was scarce.

Under Styling Director Jim Angers, Jeep designers created several vehicles, including a new version of the prosaic two-wheel-drive Jeep Station Wagon. The marketing staff decided to call this nicely trimmed model, aimed at suburban families, the Maverick Special. It was an easy choice; one of the most popular television shows at the time was "Maverick," a tongue-in-cheek western starring James Garner that debuted in September 1957.

The new Jeep debuted as a 1958 model with an advertised price of \$1,895. Basically, it was the existing Jeep Station Wagon that boasted striking two-tone paint (as seen in the illustration above), the bulk of which was separated by bright trim moldings. The paint scheme was said to be optional, but most—if not all—Mavericks were built this way. Chrome bumpers and a left-side mirror added sparkle to the exterior, and a one-piece windshield replaced the two-pane unit.

Interiors featured contoured seats covered in a handsome vinyl-coated fabric claimed to be as durable and washable as pure vinyl, yet was completely breathable, allowing cooling air to



reach driver and passenger backs. Stylish carpeting covered the passenger floor, while the cargo floor was covered in black Pompano carpet with jute padding for extra quietness. One source claims an AM radio was standard equip-

ment, but sales flyers do not mention it, and I have a hard time believing Willys would be that generous.

The Maverick's base engine was the High Torque Hurricane, a 134.2-cu.in. F-head four-cylinder based on Willys' prewar passenger-car engine. Rated at 75 hp, the engine was cheap to build and economical to drive but was under-powered for the era. Thankfully, Jeep's Super Hurricane flathead six, boasting 226-cu.in. and 105 hp, was soon available. Overdrive was optional, and the only transmission offered to buyers was a column-shifted three-speed manual.

While a four-wheel drum brake system was retained, a coil spring front suspension was new and said to add durability. Also, standard equipment included four new "Captive Air" wide whitewall tires. They allowed Willys to exclude a spare tire and increase cargo space since the tires could be driven up to 100 miles with a blow-out. A specially designed "inner spare" inside each tire—a forerunner of racing's inner liner—meant the outer tire never went completely flat.

Offering the upgraded six-passenger wagon was a smart move by Willys, because station wagons were becoming hot sellers, the equivalent of today's SUVs. Station wagons appealed to families needing more passenger and cargo room. Rambler and Ford wagons were tremendously popular because they seemed smart, and affordable. A stripped Ford two-door Ranch wagon cost \$2,397, while a basic Rambler four-door Deluxe wagon was \$2,370. Willys's Jeep Maverick Special had a substantial price advantage. But alas, it proved a slow seller.

The Maverick Special was produced for 1958 and 1959, though a very similar model with unique "missile" side moldings continued through 1964. These later two-wheel-drive wagons were simply called the Jeep Station Wagon. 🚗

"Station wagons were becoming hot sellers, the equivalent of today's SUVs."

STROPPE COP

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ERIC ENGLISH



Unless you were driving on California's highways in the late Fifties to early Sixties, odds are you've never laid eyes on a car like this before. That's because, according to its owner Roger Clements, this is the only restored example of a genuine 1958 Mercury Monterey California Highway Patrol car known to exist. Not only that, but Roger has also located only one other '58 CHP Mercury—in any condition—since acquiring our featured example in 2006.

"I've been interested in Lincolns and Mercurys ever since owning one of the Bill Stroppe-prepared 1954 Lincolns built for that year's La Carrera Panamericana road race in Mexico,

a car I bought and restored in the 1980s," Roger says. "I had a chance to talk with Bill on several occasions while I owned that car, and I later became intrigued by the idea of owning one of the Stroppe-built '58 Mercury CHP cars. It took me a while, but here it is."

Hold on just a minute. Bill Stroppe was associated with Mercury's CHP cars in 1958? Indeed, he was, and the story is more documented than most.

During the late Fifties, the California Highway Patrol was in the habit of ordering at least several hundred cars annually. That process started with the CHP publishing its required specifications. Interested manufacturers would propose a

Mercury turned to a legendary racer to build its 1958 California Highway Patrol cars



Car owner Roger Clements gets a chuckle when the occasional “person in the know” sees this car at a show and tells him that two-door police cars aren’t a thing.

police package and participate in CHP testing with a prototype. Those tests ultimately determined a winning package.

A five-page story in the October 1958 issue of *Hot Rod* documented part of that testing process, as well as details CHP vehicles required. Some of the important criteria for the '58 evaluation stated that cars had to be two-door sedans (with a center B-pillar), have a minimum wheelbase of 122 inches, and weigh a minimum of 3,800 pounds. They also required an alternator rather than a generator, heavy-duty brakes and suspension, and 15-inch wheels. Mandated engine specifications included a 10:1 compression ratio, a single carburetor, a displacement of at least 350 cubic inches, and no more than 15 pounds of vehicle

This picture was taken in December of 1957, during CHP evaluation tests at Riverside Raceway. This car was a prototype that Mercury and Stroppe presented for testing, not the car that Roger owns today.





This CHP newsletter, dated from the second quarter of 1958, announces the debut of the '58 Mercurys for patrol work.



LEFT: Mercury's police package was called "Patrol King." This image was taken to promote the similar 1959 offering. **On the far right is Bill Stroppe, to the left of him is Stroppe mechanic and driver Vern Houle, and on the far left is Mercury's Fran Hernandez, the head of Lincoln-Mercury's racing programs.**

weight per horsepower. Surprisingly, a "conventional" differential was mandated rather than a limited-slip unit.

The same magazine article provided an overview of the winning Mercury's numerous modifications that we'll discuss momentarily. Yet the article left out one important piece: That the modifications above and beyond a stock '58 Mercury Monterey were performed by none other than Bill Stroppe and his team of mechanics and engineers. Instead, the article made a vague reference of a "special facility" where alterations were made for the CHP fleet that year.

Stroppe was already well known by then, having been the Lincoln and Mercury West Coast "go-to" for special projects throughout the decade (Bud Moore managed East Coast projects). Stroppe had al-

ready left his mark in boat, sports car, Indy car, and stock car racing, and of course in Mexico. Helping develop and build CHP cars was just another project for the Stroppe team. Odd as it was that Stroppe wasn't specifically mentioned, we'd be remiss if we didn't add that the article disclosed the other 1958 CHP test vehicle participants: Buick, Dodge, Oldsmobile, and Pontiac. Ultimately, 325 Mercurys were built for the 1958 CHP fleet. Later in the year, a second CHP order was placed for 287 specially prepared Dodges.

Some might find the two-door body style requirement a surprise, but Roger says this was the CHP standard throughout the Fifties. Four-doors were not considered until 1960. "At the time, the CHP was tasked primarily with speed enforcement, accident control/investigation, and

assisting with roadside emergencies. They didn't tend to arrest people and certainly didn't transport people under arrest. If that was necessary, the police department, or sheriff's office that had jurisdiction in the area, was called to transport," Roger says.

Diving into the Mercury's details, the basic foundation for the 1958 police package consisted of a base Monterey two-door sedan, fitted with FoMoCo's optional 430-cu.in. MEL-series engine and new Multi-Drive Merc-O-Matic three-speed automatic transmission. As the V-8 was rated for 360 hp, the article stated the result was 12.5 pounds per horsepower, meaning the Mercury weighed about 4,500 pounds.

Delivered as such, the Stroppe crew administered several modifications to either meet CHP specs, or help the cars perform better during the December 1957 performance evaluations held at Riverside International Raceway. There, tests were administered to gauge each candidate's acceleration, braking, and lap times on the 11-turn road course.

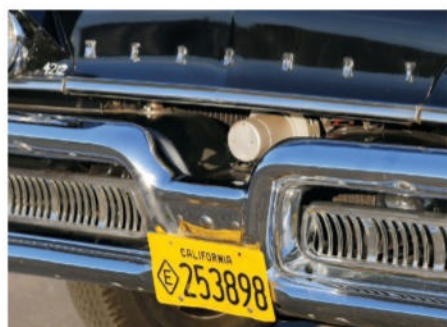
All of the CHP Mercs were built at the Los Angeles assembly plant, which was conveniently close to Stroppe's facilities in Long Beach. Stroppe modifications included fitting beefier Park Lane front spindles and hubs, an even larger heavy-duty front anti-roll bar with revised mounting points, specially valved heavy-duty shocks, "export" front coil springs, and station wagon rear leaf springs. Additionally, rear brake drums were upgraded from 11 x 2.5-inches to the same 11 x 3.0-inch standard front brakes, along with heavy-duty linings. A radiator designed for air conditioning applications was fitted and moved rearward 3/8-inch to provide specified space in front of the radiator, for



The vintage-appearing license plate is actually an aftermarket plate. Roger used a number just a digit off from one of the plates on a '58 CHP car pictured in a period CHP newsletter. Likewise, the hand-lettered numbers near the passenger-side headlamp and driver-side taillamp were duplicated based on a period photo.



Regular 1958 Mercurys don't have a frame-mounted front anti-roll bar seen here, which was installed during modifications done at Bill Stroppe's facility.



the mechanical siren, alternator rectifier, and external radio speaker. A special mechanical cooling fan with a reinforced hub was also used, along with a revised fan pulley.

Interesting as the story of Stroppe-built CHP units is, equally worthy of attention is the restoration Roger lavished on this one-of-a-kind service car. After putting out the word amongst his wide net of car acquaintances, Roger found this example in Northern California, again in 2006. Typically for a retired CHP car, it had been stripped of its unique CHP lighting and radio equipment. The Mercury had also been repainted white. Roger found the car to have plenty of repair challenges due to rust in the doors and floors, but fortunately the bulk of the Stroppe installed parts were still in place, meaning the big spindles and brakes, springs, unique anti-roll bar, etc.

Another bonus was the presence of the original engine and transmission, though they may not have run since 1966. The trim and bumpers were generally



intact and in restorable condition, and Roger realized that if his dream of owning a functional Stroppe-built patrol car was ever going to be fulfilled, this one represented as good an opportunity as he'd likely find. He made a deal and dragged the project home.

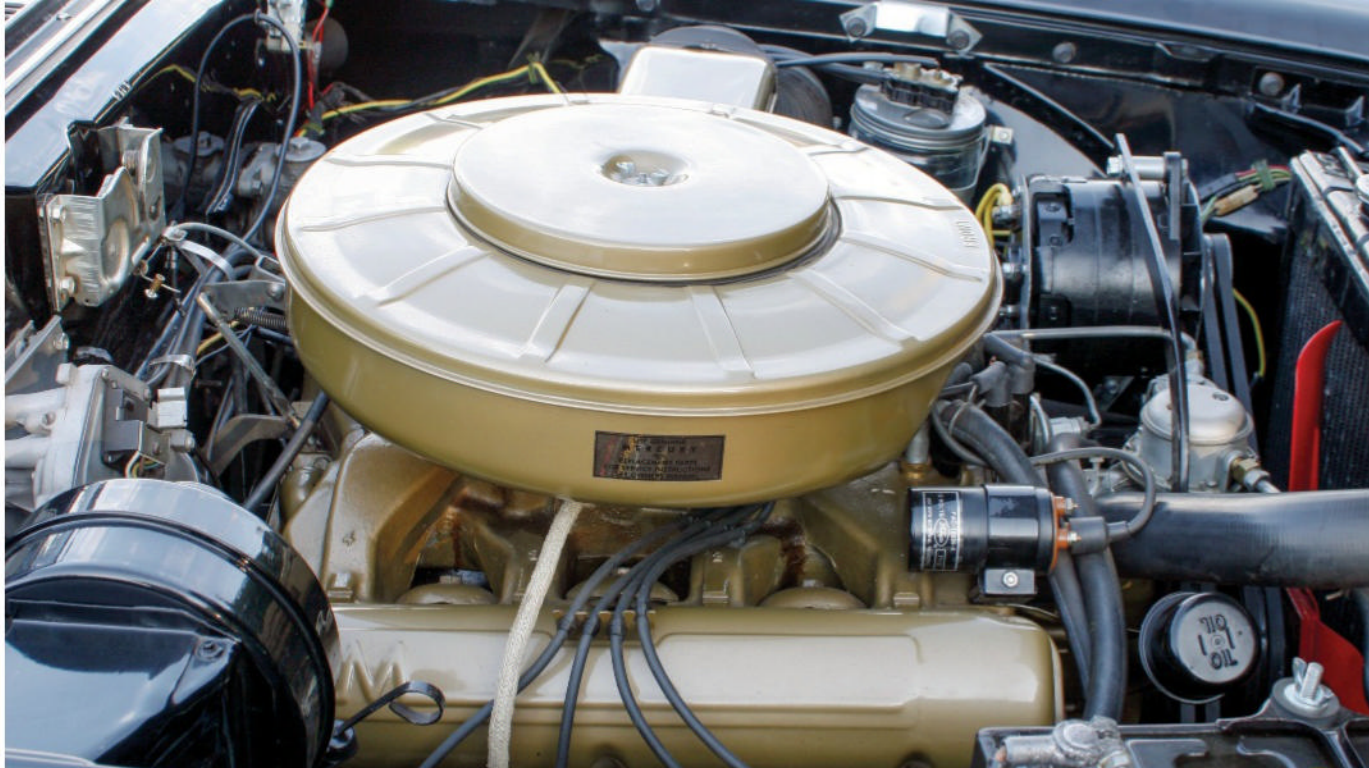
Roger was well suited to take on a project of this scope. In the early 2000s, he operated a restoration shop that specialized in Fifties-era Lincolns and Continentals. Yet the CHP restoration was unique. One of the biggest challenges Roger faced revolved around the original police-spec radio and lighting equipment. Without an original example to compare his car to, Roger had to put on his detective hat to figure out what was right. An invaluable resource was Geoff Fors, a historian of all things related to CHP radio equipment. Through Geoff, and aided by period emergency equipment manufac-



Hubcaps on CHP cars were from a 1956 Mercury, since the company downsized from 15- to 14-inch wheels beginning in 1957. The 15-inch wheels were specified for CHP service and Stroppe fitted special heavy-duty versions with extra thick centers. CHP also required the wheel surface just inside the bead to be machined with a groove on each side, which was said to better retain a tire on the wheel in case of a puncture.



Roger has collected a variety of related law-enforcement bits, including the 1958 California code booklet. He thinks a CHP officer might have kept it handy, as seen here.



Mercury's 430-cu.in. V-8 was a powerful engine, with enough torque (480 lb-ft) that the CHP stuck with the factory 2.91:1 final drive ratio, according to a story published in the October 1958 issue of *Hot Rod*. Interestingly, the domed center lid of the air cleaner is unique to the 430 whether in a CHP Mercury or not, while the 383-cu.in. MEL engine received a flat lid. Likewise, only the 430 received gold-painted rocker covers and air-cleaner assembly—the same components on the 383 were painted red in 1958.

turer catalogs and CHP literature, Roger learned that the '58 CHP Mercurys were fitted with General Electric radio gear, specifically from the company's Progress line. While Roger has since forgotten the source of the head unit and trunk mounted radio transmitter, they're period correct to CHP specs. Roger does remember that the unique alternator and separate rectifier that was mounted behind the grille came from Crain Auto Electric in Los Angeles, which amazingly still had new units on its shelves.

"That was the result of some seri-

ous sleuthing and plenty of phone calls," Roger says.

The restoration was a body-off effort since Mercurys of the era were of traditional body-on-frame construction. The list of work performed could fill a book, not least of which was resurrecting the body. Donor panels replaced originals that were peppered with rot-through corrosion. Once the metal work was completed and prepped for paint, the exterior was finished in the original CHP Tuxedo Black/White hues using single-stage enamel. Roger refurbished the frame



Roger found this correct Leece-Neville alternator as used by Stroppe, still on the shelf at Crain Auto Electric.

and suspension using routine restoration practices of media blasting, repainting, and replacement of worn components. He also rebuilt the 430-cu.in. V-8 himself, after some machine work was managed by Cope Brothers Automotive Machine in Tacoma, Washington.





Upholstery, duplicating that in original 1958 Mercurys, was obtained from SMS Auto Fabrics. Foam Rubber City in Kent, Washington, stitched the seat covers and door panels, while the car owner repainted metal surfaces and installed all the refurbished components.

Not surprisingly, reproduction parts for a 1958 Monterey are virtually nonexistent, and NOS or good used components are a tough find. Roger was fortunate that the original brightwork was almost entirely restorable, including the massive bumpers he eventually had rechromed by Art Brass Plating in Seattle. A variety of stainless or anodized exterior trim pieces were restored by D&L Custom Metal Finishing, and Roger was able to score NOS parts to replace the heavily pitted pot metal castings that are part of the taillamp assemblies.

While Roger subscribes to the ideology that a car is never entirely

finished, he debuted his restored CHP Mercury in 2011. He's still on the hunt for a few details, such as a different model of the mechanical siren that sits in the front grille. "It's a Sireno and it should be a particularly hard to find Federal model instead," Roger explains. These are the issues that a detail-oriented owner sweats regarding originality. Roger makes no apologies for his pursuit of excellence. The rest of us just appreciate what he's already done and enjoy hearing a story that's been largely lost to time. It's a tale of two legends: the California Highway Patrol and Bill Stroppe. 🚓



It's possible that the 360-degree horn ring is the most unusual piece on this car. All other '58 Mercurys had a 270-degree ring, but a CHP specification required a ring around the inner circumference of the steering wheel. The cars were wired so the horn ring could activate the siren or the horn, depending on the position of a toggle switch on the dash. The idea was that an officer could activate the siren at any point during turning the wheel. Fortunately, this rarity was still on the car when Roger bought it.



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GAME CHANGER

BY BILL ROTHERMEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHAN DEREMER

Jeep's Super Wagoneer, including this 1967 example, is the godfather of today's luxury SUVs



Using the word “rare” to describe some vehicles built in the postwar era, particularly after the mid-Fifties, usually conjures the adage, “It’s rare because nobody wanted it when it was new.” While it may apply to select vehicles of then-questionable styling, it certainly doesn’t apply to all rare postwar vehicles. One such instance is this 1967 Jeep Super Wagoneer.

You’re forgiven for not knowing of it. Many don’t, even among the Jeep faithful. When the name does surface, casual and veteran enthusiasts tend to assume Super Wagoneer is spoken in error, and that the Jeep of discussion is actually a Grand Wagoneer. The reality here is that the Wagoneer Limited, renamed Grand Wagoneer in 1984, was introduced in ’78, long after the Super Wagoneer had made such a splash that it reigns as the most significant vehicle to carve a path for the modern luxury SUV.

To understand, one must look back to when Jeep—under Willys-Overland ownership—was credited for introducing the first all-steel station wagon in 1946. Aside from providing room for seven passengers, the wagon was offered with four-wheel drive, for the first time, in 1949. Styled by Brooks Stevens, Jeep’s new wagon was bold considering the brand had but one vehicle to offer: the CJ-2A. Yet the wagon was still a basic utility vehicle.

Therein lies the charm, and success, of the Jeep wagon: It wasn’t like other sophisticated station wagons on the market. It was unique in offering the security and superior all-weather performance of four-wheel drive. Plain and simple. What’s more, the formula remained when Jeep marketers and product planners realized, like all manufacturers, that Americans were demanding more features, options, power, and style in everyday vehicles. Jeep—now part of Kaiser—satisfied that demand with the October 1962 release of the two- or four-wheel-drive Wagoneer.

Longer and roomier than the outgoing wagon, and available in two- and four-door guise, the Wagoneer became the first four-wheel-drive wagon to offer an independent front suspension and, more significantly, the first four-wheel-drive wagon offered with an automatic transmission. The Wagoneer still boasted Jeep’s superior ground clearance, despite a lower step-in height for six passengers, and it had more features and car-like styling, the latter thanks to last-minute design tweaks by Stevens.

What Jeep’s front office likely didn’t see on the horizon was the SUV market’s popularity boom, or the demand for more luxurious versions. The need for a high-style version of the Wagoneer made itself apparent soon enough, and Jeep’s answer was the Super Wagoneer. Introduced for the 1966 model year, it was billed as, “The most unusual luxury wagon ever built.” That was hardly an exaggeration.





When unveiled, there was nothing like the Super Wagoneer. Standard features included a 270-hp 327-cu.in. four-barrel "Vigilante" V-8; GM's Turbo Hydra-Matic automatic transmission with floor-mounted shifter; bucket seats and a center console; carpeted passenger compartment, lower door panels, and cargo area with chrome skid rails; chrome bows in the interior headliner (on later models); a vinyl roof covering; seven-position tilt steering wheel; heater and defroster; power tailgate window; roof luggage rack; E-Z Eye tinted glass in all window frames; AM radio with antenna; power steering and brakes; air conditioning; unique wheel covers with spinners; and a glovebox lamp. Options were few: electric clock, limited-slip differential, and four-wheel drive.

The Super Wagoneer's color choices were restricted to Empire Blue, Glacier White, Indian Ceramic, and Prairie Gold, complemented by "fashion-styled" vinyl interiors in Marlin Blue, Charcoal, and President Red. Front bucket seats had an elongated embossed Jeep emblem on the back. Exteriors were highlighted by gold-anodized panels with stainless-steel trim and Super Wagoneer front fender emblems.

The new Jeep oozed luxury, but it didn't come cheaply. Super Wagoneers started at \$5,980 (\$55,391 according to [usinflationcalculator.com](https://www.usinflationcalculator.com)). To put that in perspective, the SUV sat in the same 1966 price bracket as a Cadillac Sedan de Ville, Chrysler Imperial Crown two-door hardtop, and Lincoln Continental sedan.

The first example was produced in October 1965, and although the dealer publication, *Jeep News International*, stated that "The Jeep Super Wagoneer . . . will make its debut in U.S. dealers' showrooms during December," an official press release from Kaiser-Jeep announcing the new vehicle didn't occur until March 30, 1966. Understandably, the Super Wagoneer's first year on the market was abbreviated. Its status as a bona fide rarity today was further cemented by the Super Wagoneer's scant two-year production run that preceded its cancellation early in the '69 run.

Jeep's celebrity ad pitchman, Danny Thomas, had one (number 37). So did Kaiser-Jeep Corp. Chairman Edgar F. Kaiser (number 487), but they were among a small number of actual owners. According to Danielle Szostak-Viers at Chrysler Historical Services, production records were never kept at Kaiser-Jeep on just how many Super Wagoneers were built. Among the experts, there is some disagreement, too, but based on vehicle identification numbers, it's generally believed 1,485 were built in total: 1,299 Series I examples fitted with AMC's 327-cu.in. V-8; and 186 Series II units equipped with Buick's 350-cu.in. V-8. Series I VINs begin with "141D 100001" and Series II VINs with "141D 300001."

Mount Dora, Florida, resident Mike Adams knows his Jeeps. Aside from owning several late-'60s Wagoneers within his 30-Jeep collection, Mike has extensive



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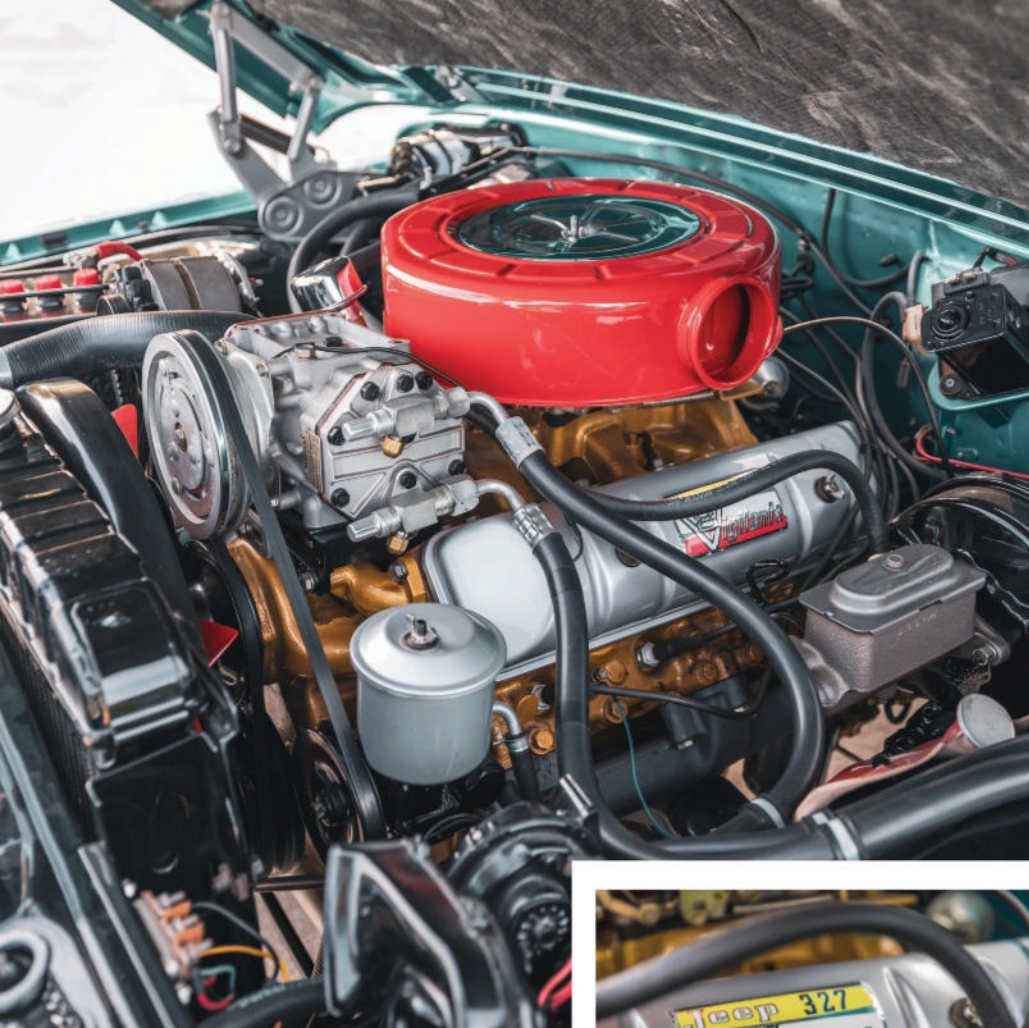
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experience restoring an array of Willys-Jeep vehicles. So, when Mike found this rare 1967 Jeep Super Wagoneer advertised online, he jumped at the opportunity. The caveat was its location—stuck in an Eastern Tennessee cow pasture—and its condition.

According to Mike, “It was practically buried up to its rocker panels and had rusted quarter panels, floors, gutters, and cowl. It needed everything. The good news was that it was 95 percent complete, had a clear title, and it was a real Super Wagoneer—number 736—loaded with extras.” And, it just happened to be Empire Blue, Mike’s preferred color of the four available.

The Jeep also had two compelling features that Mike never expected to see on a Super Wagoneer: a factory PTO Ramsey winch with winch bumper, and a factory delete of the standard vinyl roof. “This was no suburban hauler. It was a work vehicle that ran the backroads using its 4x4 option in the winter with an occasional winch recovery, before it was finally parked,” Mike says. “It was the first Super Wagoneer I had ever seen,”



he adds. So, \$1,500 later, the Jeep was loaded on Mike’s trailer bound for Florida. “It was probably one of the worst vehicles I’ve ever purchased,” he admits.

How did Mike know the Jeep had the vinyl top delete option? Only on the Super Wagoneer were the rain gutters shortened four inches to accommodate the vinyl roof. This vehicle not only had shortened gutters, but it also lacked evidence of any trim at the bottom of the C-pillar where the vinyl covering would have stopped.

Once back home, Mike fully assessed the Jeep and carefully tried to determine a budget for its restoration. That idea quickly dissipated, and reality set in. “It was a roller, so that was a good start. But you can’t pick up a catalog and order Super Wagoneer trim, or a padded dash. So, I told myself it was an investment in a very rare and distinctive SUV that would overshadow every other Wagoneer I’ve seen,” he says.

To accomplish this, Mike worked with Dan Stiteler of Leesburg Auto Body in Leesburg, Florida, on what would prove to be a four-year project. Dan and his staff managed the exterior restoration. This was pivotal. According to Mike, “Some of the stainless-steel trim on the sides and rear, along with the anodized textured die-stamped trim panels, are unique to the Super Wagoneer, and the right and left sides are not interchangeable. Good luck finding them. It’s very rare to find even one piece, much less the set. If there were 1,485 Super Wagoneers made, that trim must have only been made 1,485 times! It’s very thin and extremely fragile.”

Dan’s team also rebuilt all of the mechanical systems, including the engine, transmission, front transfer case, and rear differential. Ongoing simultaneously was Mike’s unwavering quest for NOS parts, as well as refurbished OEM parts from other Super Wagoneer donors. That’s right, Mike found two more Super Wagoneers during the first six months of the project and purchased both for parts. With so few



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Super Wagoneers were finished with specific side trim adorning the corner panel above the taillamp. (left). Interiors were festooned with luxurious accoutrements including a full-length console between bucket seats.

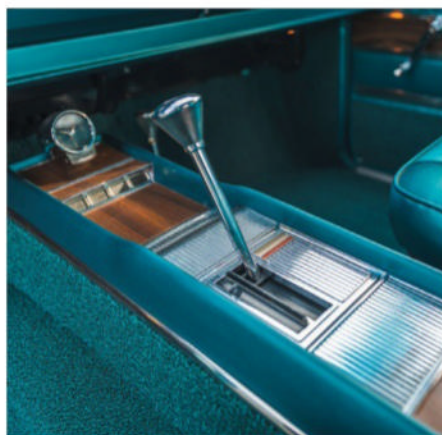
survivors, Mike found himself using what he could to make one complete, authentic example.

"One of the best days of my life was finding five NOS Super Wagoneer hubcaps and a pair of front fender gunsights in Texas—in the original packaging," Mike says. "The interior has a new custom molded dash patterned after the original; seat and door vinyl are NOS, as are a majority of the impossible-to-find interior items. I hunted for parts for three years to make this happen."

All the hard work paid off. Mike's Super Wagoneer debuted in 2019 garnering AACA First Junior and Senior awards during the year, followed by an AACA National Award in '20. Not only is the luxury SUV a showstopper, it's also an attention-getter and the subject of curiosity wherever it appears. It should also be noted that Mike has used his Super Wagoneer beyond the show circuit.

"Admittedly, I'm nervous as hell driving it. It's one rock chip away from tragedy. This is a piece of history and deserves the best. But it's really enjoyable to drive, has great power with the AMC 327-cu.in. V-8, and is surprisingly a good handling vehicle," Mike says.

When asked if he is crazy enough to restore another, Mike smiles. "I have a 1968 edition in much better condition that's about 80 percent there." 🚗





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On March 24, 1936, this Autocar was part of an epic 48-tanker-truck effort to refill Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's flood-emptied reservoir that, on the morning of the 25th — and despite that effort — measured only 14 inches deep, or roughly 9,000,000 gallons. It sounds like a lot, but city officials stated that supply would last a single day; less if a major fire had occurred. The truck was displayed by Robert Schultz of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

2023 AACA Eastern Fall Meet

The annual Hershey event continues to serve a delightful all-things-automotive platter

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN AND DAVID CONWILL

Whether it's called Hershey, the Hershey Meet, or by its formal title of AACA Eastern Fall Meet, the annual all-in-one vintage vehicle festival has been a staple of the hobby for generations. Few events boast anything like Hershey's more than a dozen miles of swap meet vendors, in addition to a car corral and a one-day car show that tickles the 1,000-vehicle mark. It's so big, it engulfs almost the entirety of the Hersheypark amusement park's parking lots for five October days. The only cost to attendees is day parking (food, lodging, and travel expenses notwithstanding), making it one of the best "free" events in the continental U.S.

On the surface, the 2023 event was not unlike those from recent years past, save for the fact that it marked the second anniversary of a titanic date shift (Tuesday to Friday versus the long-traditional Wednesday to Saturday). Just below the surface,

however, veterans found the atmosphere to be, well, different. More vendors were noticeably absent, swap meet rows were less congested, and there was a murmur of concern regarding future event dates: Only two were announced on complementary wooden nickels versus four.

Cast that all aside and it was business as usual, though. Rare items were discovered, deals were struck, the high-wheeler race continued, millions of steps were logged by digital devices, tons of fried foods were devoured, thousands of pictures were taken, and several hundred descended upon Friday's car show field to ogle everything from nearly forgotten grocery-getters to rarely seen Brass Era beauties spread throughout 110 classes.

Here's a sampling of what your intrepid *Hemmings Classic Car* team cast their eyes upon. If you like what you see, dates for the 2024 AACA Eastern Fall Meet are October 8-11. More details can be found at aaca.org/events.



There's always a wide variety of prewar plate toppers to be found at Hershey, perhaps the most common of which are those that were offered through Mobilgas, the prices of which vary by condition (\$150 - \$250). The Buick safety Legion topper was available for \$350.

If you're adventurous enough to walk every swap meet aisle, you're bound to cross paths with a vehicle that is registered for the car show. A case study was this 1908 Schacht — owned by Mark Radtke of The Salty Dog Museum—that we spotted in the Chocolate South field. This high wheeler was manufactured in Cincinnati, Ohio from 1904 to 1913 and featured a 10 hp two-cylinder engine.



Editor Litwin couldn't resist purchasing these auto trading cards priced \$1 each. They originate from the 180-card World On Wheels set that was manufactured by The Topps Company in 1954.



Vintage signs, both large and small, are swap meet staples at the Hershey meet. This ginormous Ford sign, promoting the company's V-8 engine, was available for \$6,000.





One doesn't have to peruse the car corral to find vintage rides for sale. Although it was wearing easily reversible aftermarket Cragar wheels, this was a nice, 350-cu.in. powered, six-passenger 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass Cruiser somewhere in the Chocolate field. An asking price was absent during our brief encounter.

If you already have all the cars and parts you want, maybe it's time to add collecting petroliana to your repertoire. This 1930s clock-face gas pump was ready for restoration and stickered at \$5,750.



Online shopping is fine and dandy, but it's hard to beat the in-person swap meet when it comes to sizing up and hauling home large and bulky items. This weathered but complete-looking Ford Model T coupe body was from 1926 or '27 and was priced at \$1,400.



Need a complete engine? This unspecified GM straight-eight boasted a "high compression" cylinder head. The entire assembly touted an asking price of \$500.



More than just a place to buy, sell, and trade used parts, the Hershey meet is also where you can find already restored pieces to speed along a project. This restored and running 1930 or '31 Ford Model A chassis had an asking price of \$7,600.

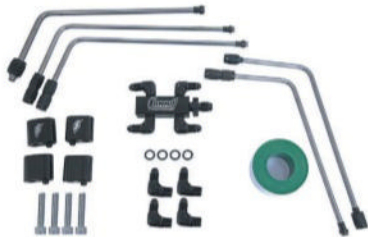




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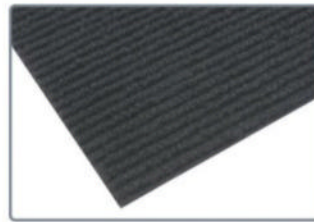
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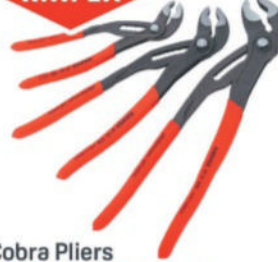
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Owner Richard Wagner of Stockertown, Pennsylvania, had his 1961 Comet in the Historic Preservation of Original Features (HPOF) class. He's only the second owner, having purchased it from the original owners in 1991. The Comet was a stand-alone model in 1961. Originally intended as the compact 1960 Edsel, Comet wouldn't officially become a Mercury until the 1962 model year.



The particular wear on the gearshift clued owner Doug Kennedy, of Parkton, Maryland, that his 1959 Volkswagen Type 1 Sedan (aka "Beetle") was originally female owned. The 40,000-mile survivor is remarkably well preserved, especially given that it lived on a Maine farm until 1988.



Norman Runk has the unusual distinction of having met all the previous owners of his 1940 Ford coupe. Norman is the fourth owner of the unrestored car, which he's coveted since being "a little kid." It took three years of visits to the previous owner before it finally became his.



The 1934-'36 model years were outliers for GM's LaSalle brand. Originally Cadillac-oriented, the Depression forced LaSalle to look instead to other divisions for mechanical parts, including an Oldsmobile straight-eight replacing the traditional V-8. These proved to be relatively popular cars thanks to the combination of style, prestige, and value. The original owner of this 1935 sedan saved enough to purchase the Peterborough canoe on top in 1936. Robert LaBaw of Newtown, Pennsylvania, has owned both since 1964.



When Chevrolet phased out its old 490 series for the modish Superior line for 1923, there was no doubt as to what car the marketing folks felt it was "superior" to. Steadily refined, the Superior K was the final iteration of the second Model T-fighting Chevy model. The next year, Chevy sales finally surpassed those of Ford. This roadster, a reminder of those heady days at GM, belongs to Clair Bleacher of Millersville, Pennsylvania. 🚗

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BY TOM COMERRO

GIRL SCOUTS MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DAY AT THE ACD MUSEUM

The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum in Auburn, Indiana, will host a special day for the Girl Scouts on April 13. Three sessions will take place for the Daisy, Brownie, and Junior levels to explore the automotive history and innovation that shaped the industry, as well as a car design and mechanical engineering adventure. Badges to be earned include the Daisy model car, Brownie race car, and Junior balloon car awards. Registration includes admission to the museum. All troops and groups are welcome, and chaperones are expected to attend. For more about the Girl Scout gathering, visit automobilemuseum.org.



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HEMMINGS ARCHIVE

CALIFORNIA CHEVY MEET

The Vintage Chevrolet Club of America has announced a four-day Chevy meet that will take place in the Sacramento region this May. The "All Cal Meet" encourages "bowtie" owners and enthusiasts to enjoy their vehicles near the Golden State's capital region. Activities include tours to the Galt historical sites, the Sacramento River Delta, and the city's metro area. The event takes place May 1-4 and as a bonus, it coincides with the Sacramento Autorama scheduled for May 3-5 at the nearby Cal Expo. Details and activities are being added, so visit vcca.org for the latest news.



VCCA.ORG

GREENBRIER GATHERING

More than 100 of the finest collector cars will head to The Greenbrier Concours d'Elegance at the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The three-day event, scheduled for May 3-5, kicks off with a "Summit Drive" that will test the power and precision of participants' vehicles at the Snowshoe Mountain Resort. There will be many opportunities to take in the picturesque views and scenery while navigating the mountain road. The second day will feature "Cars & Cocktails" near the Greenbrier's popular Springhouse. Enthusiasts are invited to populate the roads and sidewalks to display their marques from around the world—from classics to modern, vintage motorcycles, and more. Various awards and Best of Show will be presented to lucky participants. There's no cost to spectators for this special Saturday concours prelude. The weekend culminates with the concours. This year's featured class will be "Transportation Workhorses: Light Trucks and Utility Vehicles that Moved the World." Broncos, Blazers, Land Rovers, Jeeps, and other work vehicles will vie for top honors in this special class. Other traditional classes will be part of the event too, including vintage, classics, prewar, sports cars and motorcycles, and others. Visit greenbrierconcours.com for the full weekend details and a complete list of concours classes.



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Owensboro, KY to Gardiner, ME

Saturday, June 22-Sunday, June 30, 2024

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

START: Veterans Blvd., Owensboro, KY - 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Walnut Street, Lawrenceburg, IN - 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

LUNCH: Broad Street, Downtown Lancaster, OH - 12:30 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Front Street, Historic Downtown Marietta, OH - 4:15 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 24

LUNCH: High Street, Downtown Morgantown, WV - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Gunter Hotel, Frostburg, MD - 4:45 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Ken Walsh Farm, Purcellville, VA - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Gateway Gettysburg, Gettysburg, PA - 4:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Market Street, Downtown Lewisburg, PA - 12:05 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Washington Street, Downtown Binghamton, NY - 4:45 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

LUNCH: Clinton Street, Downtown Montgomery, NY - 11:20 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: State Capitol, Downtown Providence, RI - 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

LUNCH: New England Racing Museum, Loudon, NH - 11:30 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, Historic Downtown Freeport, ME - 4 p.m.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 29

LUNCH: Seal Cove Auto Museum, Seal Cove, ME - 11:35 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Owls Head Transportation Museum, Owls Head, ME - 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

FINISH: Water Street, Historic Downtown Gardiner, ME - 1 p.m.



BY TOM COMERRO

CLEVELAND ROCKS

Senior Editor Mark J. McCourt's sister happened upon an interesting architectural find with automotive history in Montana. Mark writes:

"My sister is the historic preservation officer for the city of Butte and county of Silver Bow in southwestern Montana, and she's often turned to me when street-parked cars could help date vintage photographs. The black-and-white image of 39 East Galena Street she recently shared was all too easy: a 1958 Edsel sedan sat under banners celebrating the "All New Edsel" that was a fresh offering by the building's long-term tenant, Leskovar Auto Sales. She called the building the Cleveland Block, a long-held moniker inspired by the concrete "CLEVELAND" nameplate below its stepped parapet.

"This two-story brick structure—an inventoried part of Butte's famous National Landmark Historic District—was built in 1916 to serve as an automotive garage and repair shop. Its first floor featured three overhead-opening garage doors and large glass show-room windows, and the distinctive features visible in the 1958 photo can still be seen today.

"She explained no one seemed to know what that name meant or how it might be related to the building's longtime use. I recognized the distinctive nameplate as the emblem of the Cleveland Automobile Company, having written a Driveable Dream feature about a 1919 Cleveland Six (hmn.com/clevelandauto) that ran in the August 2003 of *Special Interest Autos (SIA)* magazine. Cleveland was a sub-brand of the Ohio-based Chandler Motor Car Company, and from 1919 through 1926, the Cleveland Six was a lower-priced companion car to the Chandler. This building must have housed a Cleveland dealership in its first decade after construction, and evidence of that franchise remains, a century on."



CARLY LESKOVAR



RICHARD LENTINELLO



KATE MCCOURT

Surviving architectural details that mark long-gone automotive dealerships aren't rare, but this one may be unique—is anyone aware of another branded Cleveland dealership building outside of this one in Butte?

A SKYLARK STRIKES BACK

Richard Sisson of Walkersville, Maryland, shared an interesting Buick story with us. At the age of 25 in 1968, he traded in a Cadillac Eldorado for a Terrace Green Skylark that was only 15 years old at the time. Richard writes:

"The gold anodized 'customized for' plate in the center of the horn button had never been engraved with the original owner's name by the delivering dealer, so I had my name engraved on it. After parting with the Skylark, I often wondered whatever happened to it over the last 50-plus years.

"In July 2023, a friend attended an antique car auction in north central Pennsylvania. Sitting there was a beautiful '53 Skylark that did not meet reserve. He was looking it over when he noticed my name engraved on the steering wheel. He called me right away to report his discovery. I was shocked and he gave me the owner's name and number in Buffalo, New York. I couldn't believe it looked like I might have a chance of reacquiring the car. I contacted the owner, and we negotiated a deal. I didn't feel the need to inspect it because my knowledgeable friend assured me it was a strong number two car. When I received the pictures, I was surprised it was now Majestic White instead of green.

"The car was totally restored about 15 or 20 years ago and I have to admit the white-on-white is pretty with the teal green and white leather interior. I'm thrilled to have it back after all these years and look forward to many miles of pleasurable driving."



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Make/Model: 1968 Plymouth
Barracuda Convertible
Asking Price: \$44,995



Make/Model: 1947 Lincoln
Continental Cabriolet
Asking Price: \$49,000



Make/Model: 1981 Ford F-150 Pickup
Asking Price: \$16,900



Make/Model: 1947 Wolseley Oxford
Asking Price: \$39,500



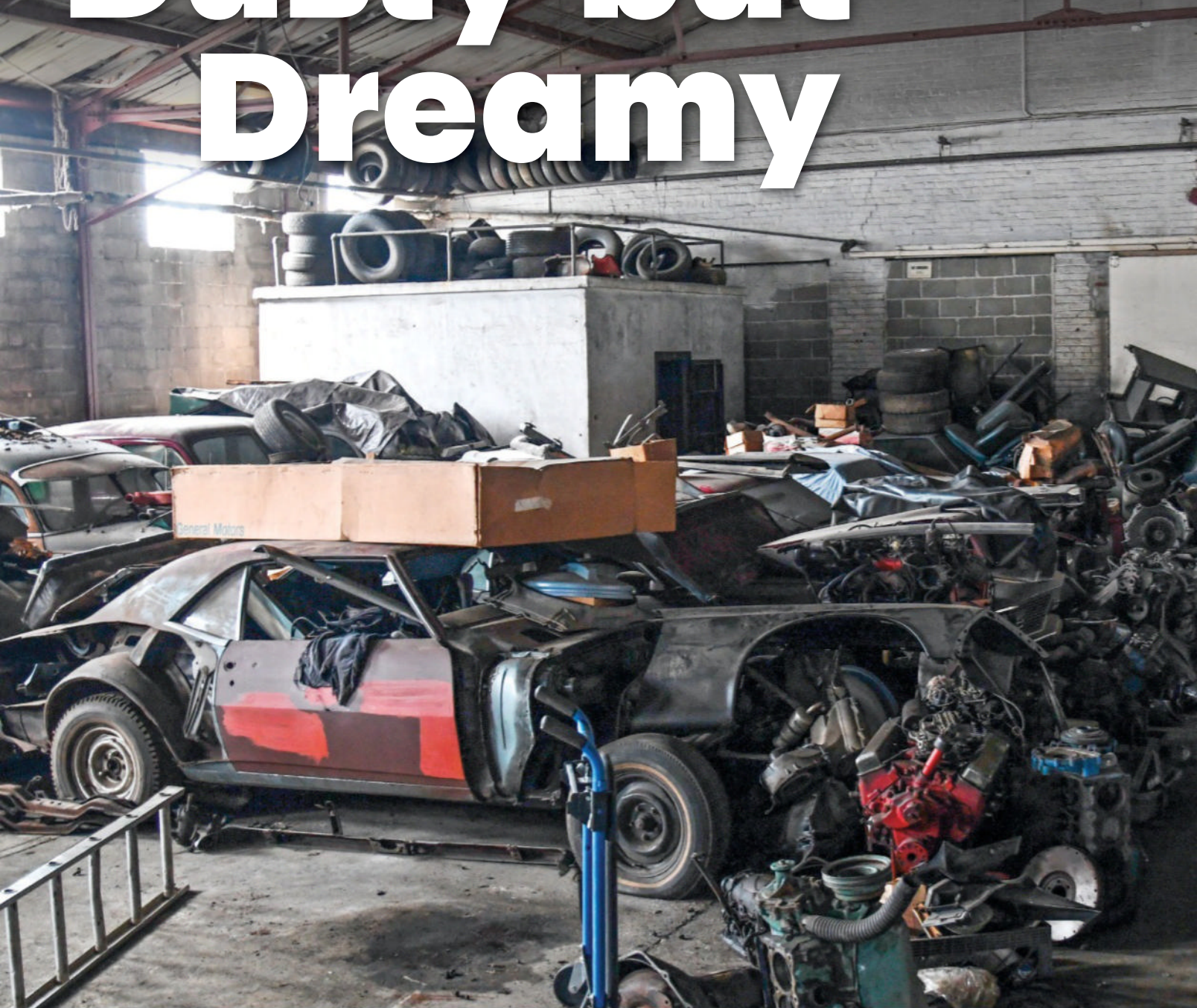
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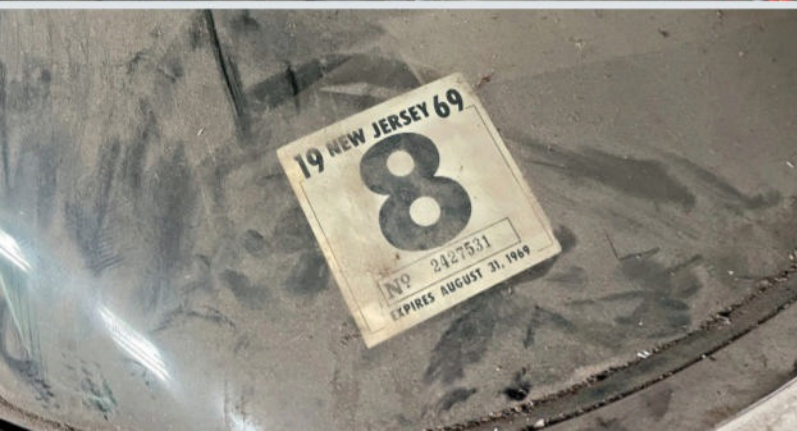


Dusty but Dreamy

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SCOTTY LACHENAUER



**This 1961
Pontiac Catalina
convertible
hadn't moved in
40 years until it
got in the way of
a Hemi**



When barn-find aficionado supreme John Fardone was summoned by his good friend Rich Riley of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, to help dig out a prized Plymouth muscle car stashed away over four decades previous, he was amazed to see what was blocking the one way out of the storage facility.

"Rich had collected a lot of cars over the years," John says, "filling two warehouses. This building was chock full of killer rides, with the Hemi-powered Road Runner sitting in the back corner. When I got there to pull it out, this wicked cool 1961 Pontiac Catalina drop-top was in our way."

It was no surprise there would be some issues getting the Plymouth out of its four-decade resting spot. Rich had amassed a mega collection of '60s and '70s rides and the warehouse was stuffed like a Christmas stocking.

"There were cars everywhere, and parts, lots of parts. We needed to clear a path out of the building and everything in the way had to go. The last piece to get out was this Catalina. I figured we'd get it out in the open and see what condition it was in," John says.

Once the scattered parts were removed from the narrow path out of the building, John sized up the situation. He knew it would be a tight fit getting his flatbed into the warehouse and so he continued to push parts off to the side. Then he carefully checked for clearance around a 1957 Continental project car pushed up against one wall. Rich says the owner "disappeared" after the restoration was started.

"He wouldn't answer any calls and never came back." Nevertheless, he says, "someday it will be finished."

With a path cleared to the Pontiac, John maneuvered his truck close enough to get the convertible up on the flatbed and then out into the daylight. The Catalina had been off the road for 55 years in total, as attested by its most recent inspection sticker, dated 1969. The car had spent less than a decade on the streets before entering long-term storage.

The Poncho's known history is sparse at best. "I heard about this car from a friend of mine up in East Orange, New Jersey," Rich says. "I don't think it was even for sale. I met with the owner and made a deal on it anyway. It wouldn't run but I knew a drop-top Pontiac was worth the asking price."

PONCHO PAST

The Catalina nameplate lasted over three decades at the Pontiac Motor Division of General Motors. It first appeared as a name for the newly introduced hardtop body style of 1950 and in 1959 was promoted to model status (the same transition Chevrolet's Bel Air name had made in 1953). Over 22 years of production, Pontiac made five distinct generations of Catalina.

As a model name, Catalina generally represented the least expensive full-size Pontiac, but it was still a step up in the GM hierarchy and offered the usual selection of Pontiac engines for a given model year, beginning with flathead sixes and eights in 1950-'54 and then the range of Pontiac V-8 engines introduced in 1955 and lasting through 1980.

Unlike other GM divisions, Pontiac eschewed big- and small-block designations, basing all engine development on the original 287-cu.in. architecture as displacements rose over time. The 1959 enlargement to 389-cu.in. would make for a legendary engine of the muscle car era, especially in the groundbreaking 1964 GTO, which made use of that full-size engine in a mid-size package. Enthusiasts also fondly recall



the 421-, 428-, and 455-cu.in. iterations of the 1960s and '70s.

In addition to a larger standard engine than similarly sized Chevrolet cars, the Catalina also offered purchasers a better transmission and a broader range of available options. The Catalina line included a variety of body styles, as well, including two- and four-door hardtops, convertibles, and Safari station wagons, plus the standard two- and four-door pillared sedans. The four-door sedan was the top seller of the period.

For the 1961 model year, a new generation of Catalinas

hit the market. The long-and-lean profile had been restyled, featuring a more squared-off body and a return to the popular split grille motif which also protruded slightly, a call back to the Pontiac designs of the 1930s. The wraparound windshield of 1959-'60 was likewise dropped in favor of a flatter design for easier entry and exit of the vehicle. The redesigned Catalina was also slightly smaller and lighter than its predecessor, while still retaining a full-size appearance on the new GM B-body platform.



The Catalina's door panels and instrument panel remained in very good condition despite five-plus decades of storage.



Power came by way of the rugged 389-cu.in. V-8, which came standard with a two-barrel carburetor and a 215-hp rating with the standard three-speed manual transmission. Optioning the three-speed Roto-Hydra-Matic automatic transmission mandated the installation of a 267-hp 389. Beefier options were also available, like a four-barrel version that helped create 303 hp, or a 318-hp Tri-Power engine fitted with three two-barrel carburetors. Further performance variants included 10.75:1 compression versions of the four-barrel and Tri-Power engines, rated at 333 and 348 hp, respectively.

The majority of 1961 Catalinas, though, were built with the bulletproof two-barrel engine. Sales figures dipped that year, but overall, the Catalina would be a top seller for Pontiac throughout the 1960s and into the '70s. Its popularity is still seen today, as many of these "Big Cats" are still rolling through car shows and local cruise-ins. If you wanted a bud-

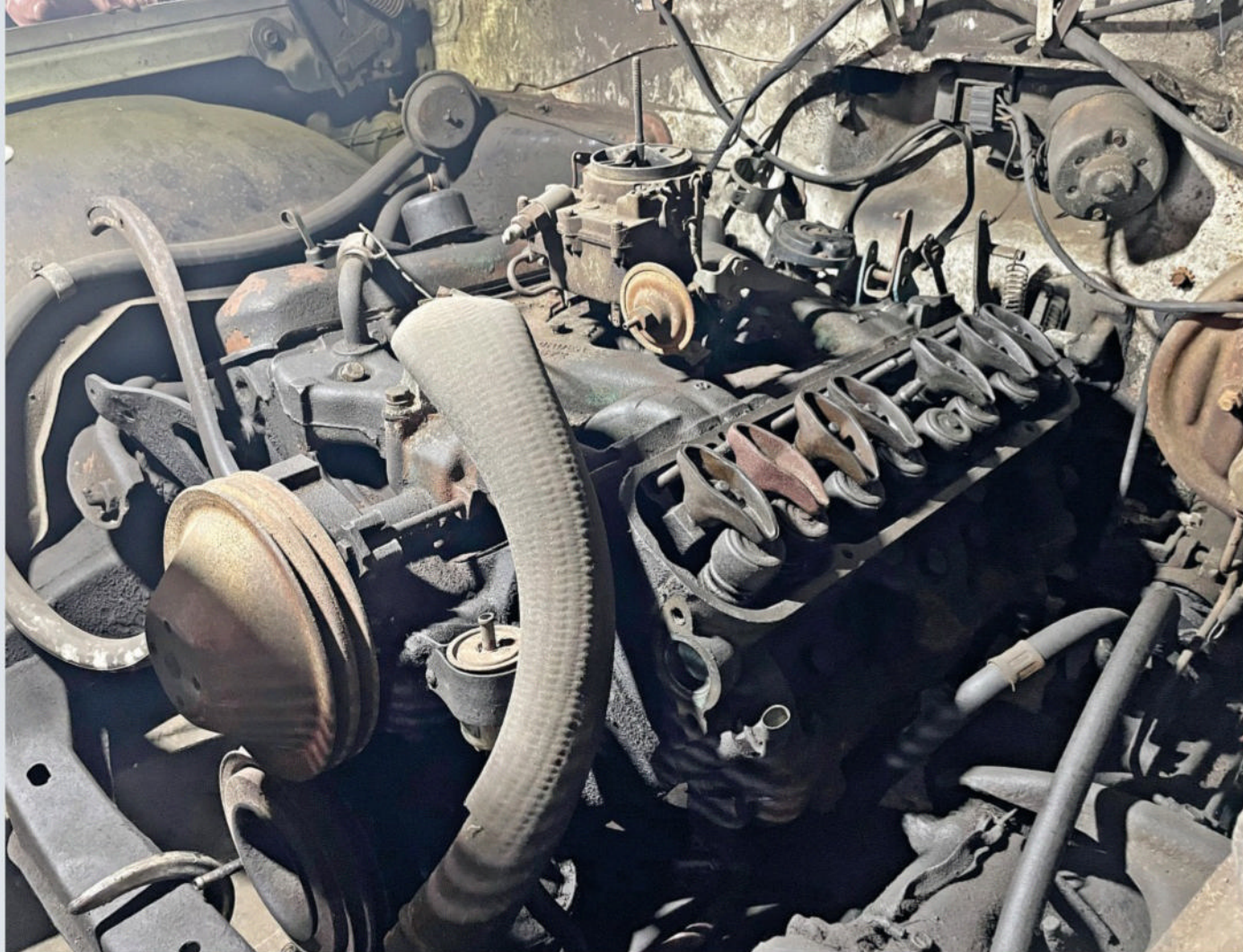
get Pontiac built with some oomph, and one that could fit a small army inside, the Catalina was created with you in mind.

FULL-SIZE DREAM

Once out in the light, the guys finally got a chance to look at the Catalina. Overall, the body was in relatively good shape, with the lower passenger quarter being the worst spot. The original Shelltone Ivory paint was in pretty poor condition, however, and some of the trim will need to be sourced and replaced, along with the rear bumper. As a 60-year-old car, it could have been a lot worse, especially given that it had lived its short life on the road in the Northeast.

Convertibles tend to succumb to floorboard rust issues on and degradation of the interior parts and pieces. However, since this car existed for nearly 50 years indoors, it's much more solid than one that had been out in the elements. The padded





Despite missing a rocker cover and a variety of accessory drive items, the base 389-cu.in. engine remained intact.

dash is in relatively good shape, as are the floors, although the original teal-green upholstery—while still in place—has seen better days.

The original owner of this car may have bought the junior model, but they must have still wanted some of the luxuries found in Pontiac's senior models. The Catalina was equipped with power windows and brakes with a remote side mirror. Naturally, with the size of this convertible, power was also deemed necessary. "For a Catalina, this car came loaded," Rich says. "You don't see many Cats with this many options. Usually, people just went for the upscale Bonnevilles."

Under the hood, this '61 seems to possess the base-version 389. For some reason, probably not good, one of the rocker covers is off, but the rest of the engine bay looks untouched. While 267 hp and the automatic transmission likely didn't make the big Catalina into much of a sports car, it would still be a nice driver for sunny days.

What is the future for this Pontiac? Rich says he's not sure yet, but "I'm figuring sooner or later it will be passed on to someone who wants to get it going. Right now, I've got way too many projects to deal with it. This Poncho needs to be on the road where it can be enjoyed." 🚗





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1980-'86

FORD BRONCO

BY MIKE McNESSOR •
PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES



**These
1980s-era
4x4s are fun,
affordable, and
easy to own**

A red and white 1981 Ford Bronco is shown from the side, driving through a sandy, hilly landscape. The vehicle is a two-door model with a white body and red accents. It has a white fiberglass rear top and is equipped with Goodyear Traction A-T tires. The background shows a dry, hilly terrain with some sparse vegetation.

1981 Ford Bronco

This 1981 XLT edition wears a bold Deluxe Tu-Tone paint scheme in Candyapple Red and Wimbledon White. Its fiberglass rear top—which was available in six colors—is painted Wimbledon White. Styled steel wheels, painted white, and shod with Goodyear Traction A-T tires, complete the package.

Sporty four-wheel drives are hot with Gen Xers and millennials. Among the hottest? Ford's iconic, boxy, Bronco.

About a decade ago, prices for the already popular 1966-'77-vintage Broncos went skyward. That triggered a surge in demand for the 1978-'79, second-generation trucks, which have also shot up in popularity and price. Meanwhile, the 2021-model-year introduction of the new (two- and four-door) sixth-generation Broncos created waiting lists at Ford dealers nationwide and the number of eager buyers has continued to easily match or outstrip supply.

But one nice thing about Broncos of any vintage is that they're plentiful (except maybe the new ones for the moment). So, if you're flexible and patient, you can find something in your price range. Among the more affordable, and still plentiful, are the 1980-'86 third-generation Broncos. These "bullnose" Broncos, as they're called among their fans, are also significant trucks because of the innovations they ushered in—like independent front suspension and port fuel injection.

The 1980 Bronco might not have looked completely different, but it was a ground-up redesign as a result of stricter government standards and consumer demand for more car-like road manners.

For some insight into these third-generation trucks, we talked to Todd Zuercher, a longtime Bronco owner and author of the 2019 book, *Ford Bronco: A History of Ford's Legendary 4x4*. Todd is also a contributor to enthusiast magazines, including *Bronco Driver*.

Todd says he doesn't predict explosive price increases for third-gen Broncos in the immediate future, despite a smattering of mid-to-high five-figure auction results for these trucks in recent years. For instance, a recent high-water mark was set at Mecum's Dallas sale last year when a 1986 Bronco with 7,439 original miles changed hands for \$72,000.

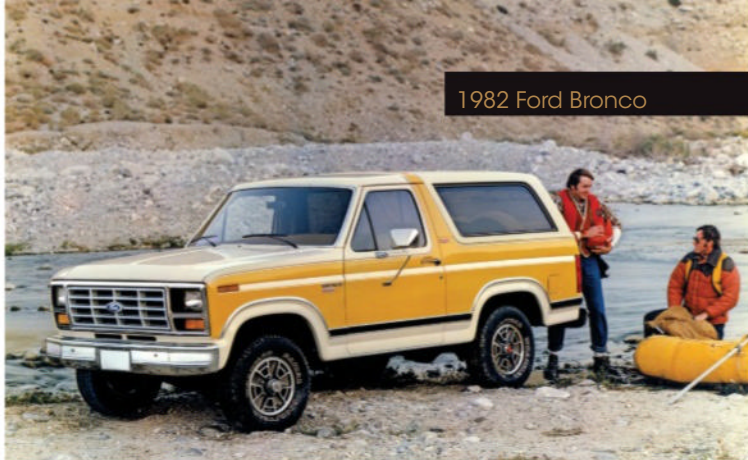
"I think that low-mileage truck is a real outlier in the dataset," Todd says. "I don't have a very clear crystal ball, but I think we'll see prices slide on these a little bit—as a reflection of the overall market these days."

Todd maintains that the earliest of the third-generation examples suffered from teething pains as designers worked to increase fuel efficiency and lower emissions, while giving customers a rugged-looking rig that was as capable on road as off. But, by the end of the run, the Bronco had

1981 Ford Bronco



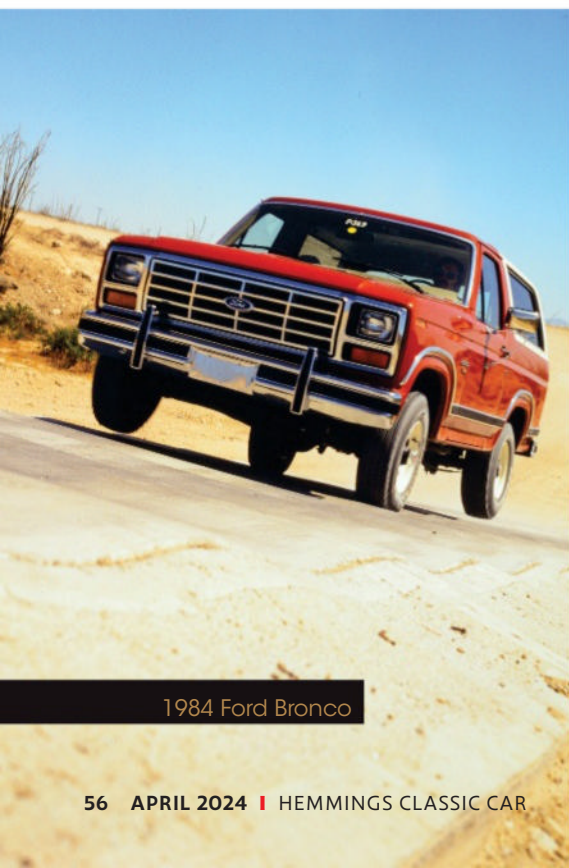
1982 Ford Bronco



For '82, XLT Lariat was the top-of-the-line offering. This truck wears two-tone paint and cast aluminum wheels. Ford's 300-cu.in. inline six (below) joined the lineup in '80.



1983 Ford Bronco



1984 Ford Bronco

evolved into a better, more modern truck.

"The 1980-'86 trucks represented the biggest sea change between generations of Broncos," Todd says. "The 1980 Broncos were lighter, shorter, more aerodynamic, more fuel-efficient, and they handled and rode better than their 1979 predecessors. Ford also sold a lot fewer trucks in 1980 than in 1979, thanks to the second oil embargo and an economy in worse shape.

"This generation of trucks began truly as 'malaise-era' rigs with underpowered engines and driveability issues as Detroit's engineers struggled to make carbureted engines meet ever-more-stringent emissions requirements. Consequently, not many trucks from the early years (1980-'84) have probably survived. Those from the last years, particularly those with the Eddie Bauer package and the EFI 5.0 engines, seem to have survived in greater numbers due to their higher-level trim packages and increased reliability that came with the introduction of electronic fuel injection," Todd says.

If you're seeking more comfort as well as more towing and hauling capacity than the original Bronco, but don't want to pony up for a brand-new truck, the third-generation Bronco is a good alternative. They're affordable, easy to own, and nice to drive on road or off. Here are some points to keep in mind....

ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

For 1979, the 351M V-8 was the standard Bronco engine. The 400 was optional and no six-cylinder was offered. But with the 1980 redesign, the 119-hp 300-cu.in. inline-six joined the lineup alongside the 137-hp 302 and 138-hp 351M V-8s. In '82, the 351 Windsor V-8 replaced the 351M.

According to Todd, the early engines were underwhelming, and Ford heard about it.



"These Broncos had the largest variety of engines offered of any generation. The earliest years were, frankly, quite lousy," he said. "Finicky carburetors and emissions systems produced trucks with low power output and engines that often didn't run well. Magazine road tests were not kind to these Broncos, with many commenting on their low outputs and driveability frustrations."

In '84, Ford raised the ante with the 210-hp 351 H.O. For '85, a port fuel-injected 302, worth 185 hp, brought EFI to the Bronco for the first time.

"The first salvo across the bow of mediocrity was the intro of the 351 H.O.," Todd says. "With a Holley four-barrel carburetor and revised intake manifold, along with a few other engine modifications, the H.O. pumped out 60 more horsepower than the regular 351W. The H.O., along with the 300 six-cylinder, also received Ford's first EEC computer engine controls in 1984. The other big change was the addition of port fuel injection to the 5.0/302 during the 1985 model year. Healthy increases in horsepower, torque, and driveability resulted, and suddenly the Bronco's 302 was performing how those first testers



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That 1985 Bronco with the mid-level XLT package, two-tone paint, and white styled wheels kicks up some airbrushed dust in a Ford publicity photo.

in 1980 had wanted it to perform.”

Fortunately, engine swaps are simple in these trucks, so repowering an earlier Bronco with a later or stronger engine is a straightforward job. Rebuild and repair parts for Ford inline-sixes and V-8s are widely available, so keeping an old Bronco on the road isn’t a problem.

Transmissions for this series Bronco included the C6 automatic, the T-18 or NP 435 four-speed manual, the T-170 four-

speed manual overdrive (fourth gear was the overdrive), and the AOD four-speed automatic (paired with the fuel-injected 5.0). Of those gearboxes, the T-170 is probably the least desirable today, due to its lack of a compound low gear, though it’s a rugged transmission from a reliability standpoint. No matter which transmission was chosen, it was paired with a New Process 208 transfer case. The 208 was a part-time T-case with an aluminum housing and chain drive. It was used by GM, Ford, Dodge, and Jeep during the 1980s because it was lightweight. It isn’t necessarily sought after today, but for normal use, it’s a reliable unit.

CHASSIS AND BRAKES

The Bronco rode on a perimeter frame with coil springs up front and leaf springs in the rear, as it had since the model’s inception. The 1980-’81 trucks had a series of large holes punched into the frame rails, presumably as a weight-saving measure. (These are sometimes referred to

as “Swiss cheese” frames among enthusiasts.) What might actually be more of a problem with these rails though, is that they had unboxed front frame sections that could be prone to cracking at the suspension and steering-box mounting points. On later trucks, the frame rails didn’t have the holes and the front sections of the rails had some inner reinforcement.

The big news under third-generation Broncos was Ford’s new Twin-Traction Beam front end, which was an ingeniously simple way to deliver independent suspension using conventional drive axle components. Twin Traction Beam often gets a bad rap, but it’s a proven setup and problems typically arise when parts are worn out or the front end has been modified.

“A lot of Broncos have lift kits installed. The versions that retain the stock radius arms and utilize drop brackets should be avoided because they place additional stress on the frame and associated bracketry,” Todd says. “If you must have a lift kit, utilize a kit from Rancho, Superlift, or other manufacturers that include longer radius arms for the front end. They increase suspension travel, which aids handling in rough terrain.”

Todd also noted that the earlier Dana 44 front axles are more sought after because they’re easier to repair.

“The 1980-’82 trucks had a front differential with a bolt-on driver’s side axle assembly that is highly prized among four-wheelers,” he says. “The bolt-on version makes axles a lot easier to change—the later versions have axles retained by a C-clip, which requires the differential to be removed from the axle housing for the axle to be pulled.”

Broncos all used 9-inch Ford rear axles through 1982—these axles are prized for their reliability, parts availability, and simplicity. Beginning in 1983, the 8.8 was also used in Broncos. The 8.8 is a stout unit but lacks the 9’s removeable third member.

Broncos used front disc and rear drum brakes with standard power assist. In stock form they’re adequate, as long as everything is in good condition. Parts needed to keep a third-gen Bronco’s brakes in top form are available, including preformed replacement lines.

Twin-Traction Beam used a split housing with a joint in the center to allow for axle movement. It was an ingeniously simple way to offer independent front suspension with traditional 4x4 axle components.



1986 Ford Bronco





Inventory Updated Daily



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Sold for **\$31,000**



**1966 Lincoln Continental
Convertible**
Sold for **\$51,000**



1956 Chevrolet Corvette
Sold for **\$65,500**

BODY

All of Ford's light trucks went on a diet for 1980 and were slightly lower, shorter, and narrower than the prior year. The new bodies were designed to be more aerodynamic than their predecessors too, in a further effort to boost fuel economy. To provide some rust protection, the front inner fender liners were polymer, and galvanized metal was used in the rockers, sills, and areas of the cowl. Zinc-coated steel and zinc-rich primers were also used on the Bronco's sheetmetal. The efforts paid off... somewhat. Todd says: "Although these trucks didn't rust as quickly as the early Broncos, rust can still be a big problem, particularly in the rear fenders/fender wells and the tailgate."

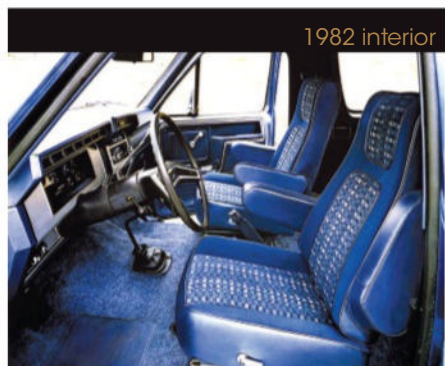
In addition to rust, Todd says that the power rear windows in the tailgate are often a source of headaches.

"Inspect the tailgates carefully when looking at a prospective purchase. Verify that the (window) motor works from both the key in the tailgate and from the switch in the dash. Removal and replacement of the window motor in the tailgate is a laborious and time-consuming process."

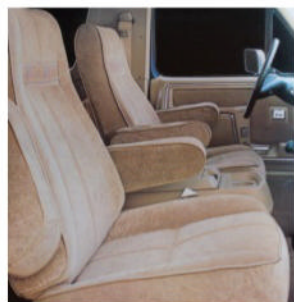
Since the exteriors of these Broncos remained the same throughout the production run, body parts interchange and there's also good support from aftermarket sheetmetal suppliers.

"The bodies changed very little from 1980-'86," Todd says. "The FORD letters on the leading edge of the hood in 1980-'81 gave way to the familiar Ford oval in the grille for the 1982 model year."

INTERIOR



1982 interior



1986 interior

Third-generation Broncos could be ordered new with cockpits ranging from work-truck basic to luxury-sedan plush.

"The Bronco offered an interesting array of trim packages during the 1980-'86 model years," Todd says. "As usual, the Custom/Standard and Ranger XLT/XLT Lariat/XLT packages were the standard-bearers."

The Custom or Standard Broncos had vinyl upholstery and floor coverings and low-back buckets or bench seats, while the XLT offerings were better appointed with cloth seating surfaces, carpet, and more—including upgraded exterior trim. The Free Wheeling packages in 1980-'81 added sports instrumentation with a tachometer, odometer, oil pressure gauge,

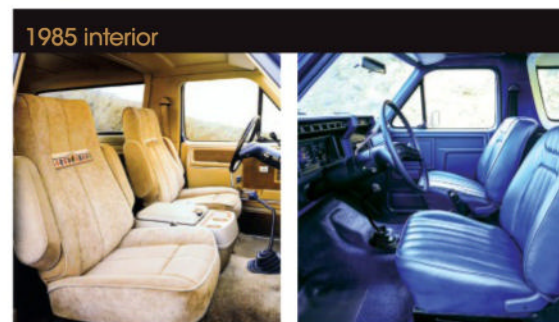
and ammeter, as well as a soft-wrap steering wheel. In 1982-'83 the XLS package replaced Free Wheeling as the sportiest offering. Then, in '85, the Bronco rolled out with a new designer edition.

"The biggest news for this generation, of course, was the introduction of the Eddie Bauer package," Todd says. "These trucks, particularly those equipped with the 5.0 EFI engine and AOD four-speed automatic transmission, are the most civilized and most collectible rigs from this generation."

The Eddie Bauer package added unique two-tone exterior cues and first-class accommodations that included reclining captain's chairs, air conditioning,



There was a wide variety of seating, trim, and upholstery options offered in 1980-'86 Broncos. The well-dressed XLT dash (top) included faux wood accents, a soft-wrap steering wheel, and an AM/FM stereo as standard. The sporty XLS package (below left) could be ordered with optional captain's chairs that had folding armrests and reclining seat backs. The Eddie Bauer package (bottom left) included captain's chairs, in unique cloth trim, plus a center console with cup holders. The XLT (below) had cloth and vinyl seats.



(above right) The Bronco standard interior was easy to maintain with vinyl bucket seats and rubber floor covering.



An Eddie Bauer badge was prominent on the center stack.



tilt column, AM/FM stereo, a center console, and an upgraded lighting group.

Many replacement interior parts are available for third-generation Broncos, like carpet, sun visors, dash pads, and reproduction door panels. There are also upholstery kits available, though not every factory combination is reproduced and offered in kit form.

The third-generation Bronco might not be a darling of the collector-car market yet, but there's plenty to like about these trucks. They're affordable, easy to

maintain, and can make fun, reliable all-season, go-anywhere drivers. 🚙

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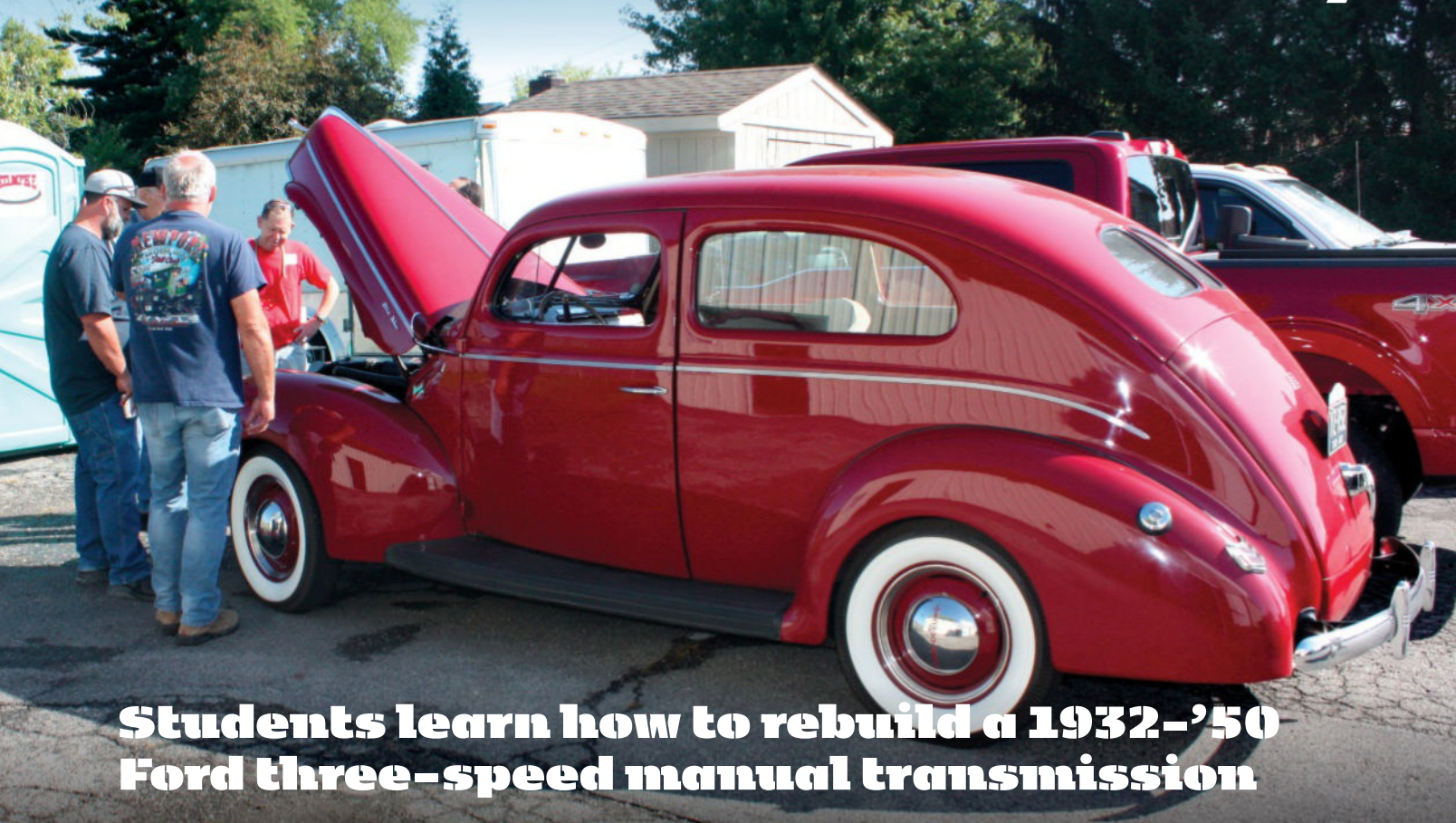


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For the Good of the Hobby



Students learn how to rebuild a 1932-'50 Ford three-speed manual transmission

Transmission class participants look at George Elbel's 1940 Ford Deluxe Tudor that he drove to the shop. George works for VanPelt Sales and was one of the instructors for the class. The 1940 model year marked the first for column shifters in Ford passenger cars. Many later-model owners have retrofitted the 1939-style of transmission, though, because they like the sportiness of the floor shifter.

Plenty of people would pay good money to have an experienced expert from “the old days” walk them through rebuilding of a vintage subassembly. VanPelt Sales, in Milford, Ohio, recently gave away that experience for free. In just over 20 years founder Mac VanPelt has gone from inquisitive enthusiast to sought-after expert, and he's built a business around early Ford parts—especially the era's three-speed transmissions.

“Early Ford” is a slightly nebulous term associated variously with pre-1954 Ford products, and in this case specifically means the Warner-designed gearbox. It debuted with the 1932 Ford line and was steadily refined until its discontinuance as the light-duty transmission in F-1 trucks of the early 1950s. When someone says “1939 Ford transmission” in a context other than a 1939 Ford or Mercury, they have some iteration of the floor-shift Warner three-speed in mind.

As the nearly inseparable companion of the Ford flathead V-8, the '39 Ford transmission has been used in everything from Model T's to dragsters. For many years, they were also found adapted to the powerful overhead-valve V-8s of the 1950s: not just the Ford Y-block, but the Oldsmobile Rocket, the Cadillac, the Chrysler FirePower hemi, and countless Chevrolet small-blocks. Many

street rodders have moved on to robust muscle-era four-speeds, overdrive-equipped five-speeds, and even automatic transmissions behind their early engines, but the hard core of traditional hot rodders, vintage racers, and early Ford V-8 owners remains dedicated to the eternal '39 transmission and its variants.

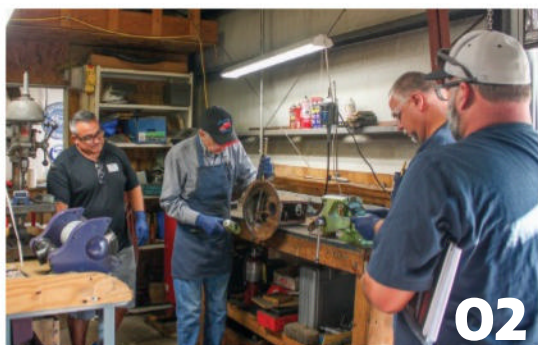
Yet while interest in early Ford technology is still strong, the knowledge isn't as widespread as Mac would like. In fact, he says there's a lot of partially true or downright incorrect information floating around on the internet. He's written a book, *The Ins and Outs of Early Ford Transmissions*, and he maintains a trove of early Ford mechanical lore online at vanpeltsales.com, but it's hard to beat hands-on experience. Mac and his wife, Shelly, (his business partner and one-time owner of the fordbarn.com forum for early Ford enthusiasts) had been kicking around the idea of holding a class on rebuilding the early Ford gearbox since before 2020.

“Selling the book enhanced my side of the parts business,” Mac says. “I'm not the only guy or the only company that can build these—there are shops all over the country—I'm well aware of that and I'm happy to support them. Our phones are always busy with inquires on transmission parts, it's nonstop. We're constantly trying to reload on cores, parts, and have parts



01

01. Will Kimble, another VanPelt Sales employee, tears down a transmission while David Irving, Tom Higgins, Robert Davis, George Elbel, and Henry Otto look on. Mac VanPelt refers to George and Will not as employees, but as “good friends/helpmates.”



02

02. Although the parts on hand were pre-cleaned, there are still some tricks to disassembly worth knowing, such as Mac’s recommendation that you wait until the transmission is totally disassembled before removing the bushings, since the empty case is easier to move around. Here, George demonstrates this process to Tim Avery, Scott Shepherd, and Doug Davis.



03

03. The tables are loaded with all the possible variations of transmission parts so instructors can show the class participants the differences and how the parts work (or don’t work) together. Roughly, the early Ford V-8 transmission can be lumped into 1932-’37, 1938-’39, and 1940-’48 versions. Close relatives include the 1932-’34 Model B four-cylinder transmission, the open-drive 1942-’50 truck transmission, and the 1940-’48 Lincoln-Zephyr V-12 transmission.



04

04. Scott, George, Tim, and Doug inspect sample gears set out on a table. A big advantage to using 1938-up parts is Ford’s improvement of synchronizer rings for the later transmissions. The later gears (and their good synchronizers) can fit into the early case, and a popular early trick was using Lincoln-Zephyr gears in the 1939-style transmission for closer ratios, though this has some disadvantages for a street-driven car.



05. Mac explains the transmission rebuild process that is used in his shop to Dale Kiser, Scott, Bob Walls, Tim Brown, Doug Smith, Andy Forelli, and David. An important part of the class was to spread the know-how far and wide since VanPelt Sales can't keep up with worldwide demand for rebuilds on its own.

06. Jody Clark checks the end play of a partially assembled transmission while Dale, Ian Hackett, and Mark Shertzer look on. This is another place where hands-on experience beats communicated knowledge, as not all specifications are numbered in the early Ford world. Sometimes you have to understand whether an assembly feels right or not.

07. With a closed-drive transmission, the universal joint is part of the final assembly. It's important to check that piece for slop, as replacing it requires separating the transmission from the torque tube. Here, David turns the tailshaft and u-joint while Robert, Tim, Scott, Henry, and Tony Price look on.



made. I want to have what people need when they call, it's not always possible, but I want to. The first thing they find out when they call is that we know what we're talking about."

The book was good, but not everyone is a reader. Video is hot right now, but Mac says his sense of production values would mean too large an investment in creating something worthwhile. A seminar seemed like a happy medium and even then, cramming 20 years of knowledge about 18 years of variations into a two-day course proved a considerable challenge.

"I have done some technical training schools in my life, but for other products that had nothing to do with old cars. For 32 years, I was a manufacturer's representative for a handful of different companies making construction equipment in the United States," he says. A seminar he'd given at an Early Ford V-8 Club of America meet had been similar, but without the hands-on component. Conducting an old-car technical training class seemed a natural extension of those experiences.

"I've had people asking about it over the years. It's something I'm comfortable doing and thought it would be good to do. None of us is getting any younger and I don't want this knowledge to disappear, so I wanted to teach people who are interested in doing it as a hobby or as a business. It brought in a mix of people from individuals to businesses.

"I like that people are comfortable working on the transmission because they've got my book and they know that if they call and buy parts from us, they're going to get support," Mac says.

That's right. Although VanPelt sales will rebuild a transmission (they stopped counting at 800, but Mac says he's confident they've done over 1,000 at this point), as shown here, Mac sees the future as more collaborative and less competitive. He's happy to supply parts to builders across the globe and he's gained a reputation over the years for backing up his parts sales with friendly and helpful advice. That's why Mac and Shelly decided to offer the course itself for free.

"The only thing the attendees had to do was pay their travel costs, hotel bill, and the meals we didn't provide; we provided lunch both days. It did cost us, and I don't know if I want to look at the numbers of what it cost just to set it up, do it, clean

08. George treated the class on day two by riding to the shop in his 1929 Ford Model A Tudor. The Model A transmission was a scaled-down version of the 1920s Lincoln gearbox, originally including a multi-disc clutch. It lacked synchronizers and is frequently replaced by floorshift V-8 units in Model As used for touring, although that requires an adaptor that accommodates the factory brake and clutch pedals.

09



09. With the transmission assembled, students could compare the early and late style of shifters and their setup. Before the 1938-'39 transmission, a single spring-loaded detent was used. The latter, double-detent design is considered a superior driving experience. Here, Tom, Henry, Scott, and Robert observe a double-detent shifter with the elegant swan-neck 1938-'39 stick.

CONTACT:

VanPelt Sales

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the shop up, prep the parts, and pay the guys who were there."

Another unique aspect of the course was that all the training was done with parts already on hand. Tearing down and cleaning up an old transmission is

a messy, time-consuming affair, that is virtually unique each time. Instead, VanPelt Sales supplied clean pieces from its inventory for inspection and assembly.

There might not be another transmission rebuild class at VanPelt Sales, but

there are now 18 more folks out there who know how to rebuild and service the early Ford three-speed. Keeping that tribal knowledge alive is critical to the long-term survival of the old-car hobby and we salute VanPelt Sales for furthering it. 🚗

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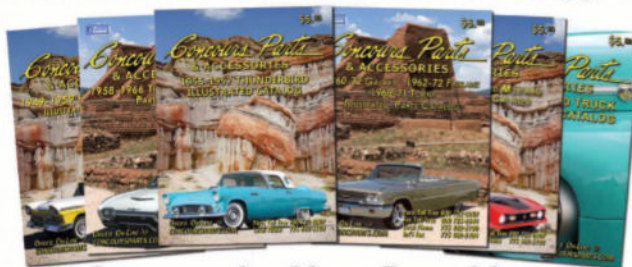
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WHEN SOMEONE MENTIONS

“slot car track,” what comes to mind? The once widely popular 1:24 and 1:32 scale tri-lane-and-up super tracks that were erected in warehouse-sized buildings? Perhaps the two-lane HO-scale Tyco and AFX layouts countless kids yearned for during the holiday season? Thinking small, there were other HO-scale companies too, but the basic track system designs were essentially all the same, though not often interchangeable: Snap-together sections of track that featured a center groove and twin metal power strips, along with two controllers and two cars fitted with electric motors.

Exciting as the racing action could be, the common at-home HO-scale sets did suffer from some limitations. Just two lanes notwithstanding, observant racers likely noticed whoever was fastest on the trigger often had the quickest out-of-the-box slot car. That was due to a subtle voltage drop that occurred as soon as the second controller was activated. Exacerbating the amperage anomaly was the amount of service draw elsewhere in the house (dad using corded power tools in the workshop, for instance) or by extending the overall track length beyond what the box set provided. Such limitations were of no concern to those lucky enough to receive Matchbox Motorway No. 12.

Never heard of it?

Matchbox Motorway hit stores in the late Sixties. Produced by K Arnold & Company in West Germany, and then distributed by Fred Bronner in the States, its design combined then-conventional and unconventional slot car set elements. In the former category were a pair of thumb-activated track controllers, along

with a requisite power pack. The rest of the set was about as unique as one could get in the slot car industry.

It began with 14 feet of simulated concrete over-and-under track, which indeed featured a molded slot in the center. Absent were twin power strips. Instead, a channel under the track slot was wide enough to capture and retain 28 feet of continuous loop spring, or 14 feet for each slot car lane. Activating the power rotated the spring at a desired speed via the thumb controller, which in turn would motivate a car via its pin.

Then there were the set's cars. Two were provided, which seem to have varied from one set to the next. That's because the cars were conventional Matchbox vehicles. Several plastic pins, which were larger than those on other traditional slot cars, were included with Matchbox Motorway. The pin's temporary mounting design made it possible for track users to switch from one Lesney scale car to the next. If one tired of, say, a Jaguar that had been included with the set, it was easy to substitute an AMC Javelin. It also allowed users to parade multiple cars on both tracks at the same time.

Matchbox Motorway would prove to be a short-lived venture. As of this writing, it seems the set was off the shelves by the early- to mid-Seventies. Today, complete sets can be found online in various conditions. We found our featured set at the 2023 AACA Eastern Fall Meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania, sporting some shelf wear, though the contents were in excellent condition. It was one of three Matchbox Motorway sets we spotted during the Hershey Meet. 🚗

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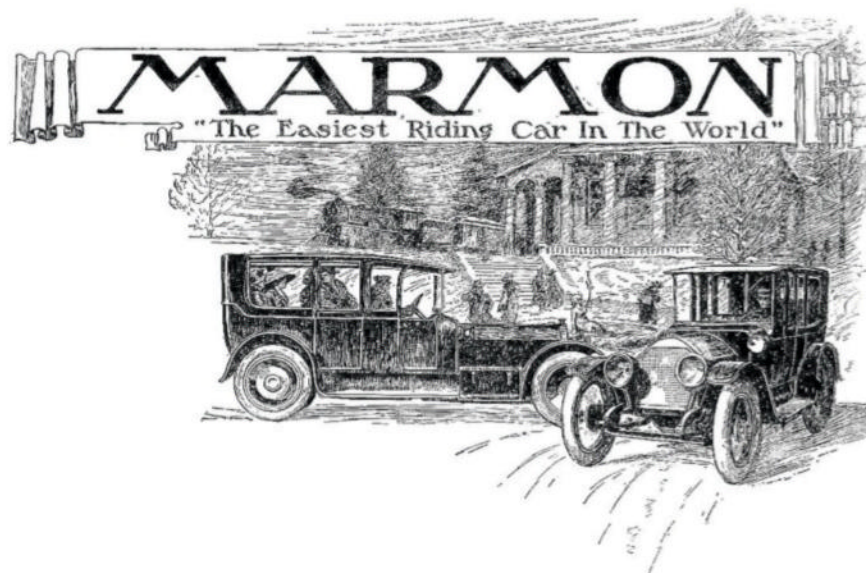
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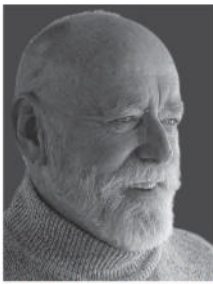
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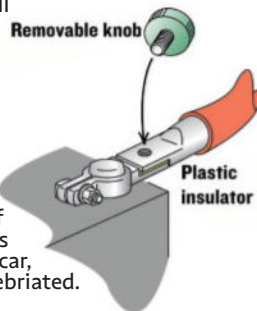
IN MY LATE teens I aspired to become a musician. Some friends had formed a band, and they needed a bass player, so I borrowed an old, full-size bass fiddle, and learned to gut tub it. We called ourselves the Paragons, and our first big gig was at the Teen Canteen in Lakewood, California. I saw it as a stepping stone to a star-studded future.

There was a great crowd, and we played our hearts out. Afterwards, we left the building tired but elated just in time to see our transportation—the drummer's 1954 Ford station wagon—speed off into the night. Two minutes sooner and we would have caught the thief, but here we were, standing at the curb with our instruments and no way to get home. We called the police, but the thieves were long gone.

Our saxophone player's father collected us, but my bass fiddle wouldn't fit in his car, so I walked home—about a mile—wrestling the giant instrument as I went. That ended my musical career and taught me a valuable lesson: To theft-proof my car for whenever I had to leave it in a questionable place. I have been doing it ever since, especially on my classics. Theft-proofing your vehicle is as easy as employing one of these four techniques.

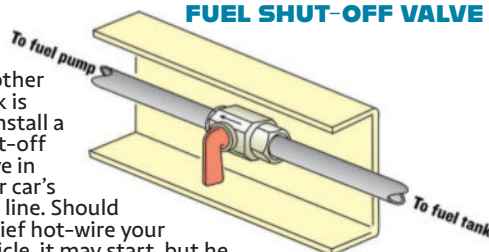
THEFT-PROOF BATTERY CABLE CONNECTOR

The simplest way is to install a two-piece battery cable terminal with a knob on it that allows you to quickly disconnect the battery. Take the knob with you when you leave the vehicle. It's also a convenient way to cut off your battery when working on the car. Of course, if the thief brings his own knob he will have your car, but it might confuse the inebriated.



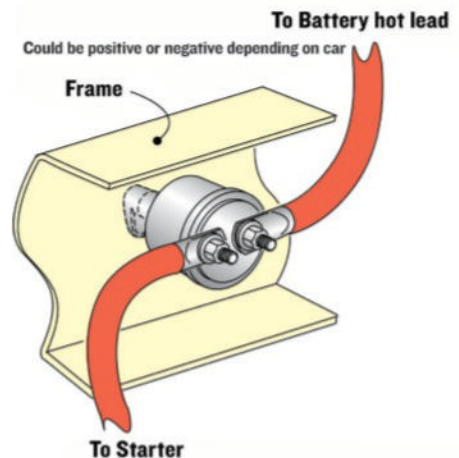
FUEL SHUT-OFF VALVE

Another trick is to install a shut-off valve in your car's fuel line. Should a thief hot-wire your vehicle, it may start, but he will only drive a few feet with the valve closed, and he will not know what to do next. Be sure to double flare both ends of the fuel line to make sure the connection to the shut-off valve is leakproof.



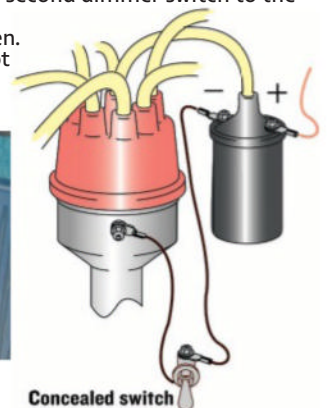
BATTERY CUT OFF SWITCH

The next option is to install a heavy-duty battery cut-off switch on one of the battery cables and mount it in a hard-to-find location. Ideally, that location could be in or under the car, which would require terminal wire extensions. It could take precious minutes for a thief to figure out why the vehicle won't start, during which time you could bust a bass fiddle over his head.



THE DISTRIBUTOR SWITCH

My favorite solution is to connect a toggle switch to the wire that goes from the negative side of the coil to the distributor. When you flip the switch, it will immobilize the ignition system. The engine will turn over but won't start. The switch could be mounted inside the vehicle's glove compartment, for instance. An even more devious version of this trick is to mount a second dimmer switch to the floorboard of your classic where it can't be easily seen. A simple tap with your foot will disable the ignition system.



These days, car thieves aren't relegated to only questionable areas. They'll strike almost anywhere, any time. Fortunately, the anti-theft systems I outlined are still suitable for my needs, and can help other collector-car owners, too. But I know there are other devices and creative methods that some of you folks use. Let us know. 🚗



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