

HEMMINGS

CLASSIC CAR

AMERICA'S COLLECTOR-CAR OWNERSHIP MAGAZINE

MAY 2024 #236

REVIVED 1940s DRY LAKES RACER

1929 FORD MODEL A "PYLE SPECIAL"



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FORWARD LOOK

1955 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE

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Please see the Ohio Region's Website ORCCA.COM for show visitation and registration information. See CCCAEducationalFoundation.org for further information on the Marques and what determines a Full Classic® Automobile from a Classic Car.



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On the Cover: Photographer Todd Ryden spent an afternoon with this 1929 Ford Model A. The roadster, known as the “Pyle Special,” was turned into a hot rod in Southern California in the late-Thirties and raced on California’s dry lakes and fledgling drag strips in the Forties. Put away in the early Fifties, it was preserved until 2007 and has since been revived to its 1947 appearance using original parts.



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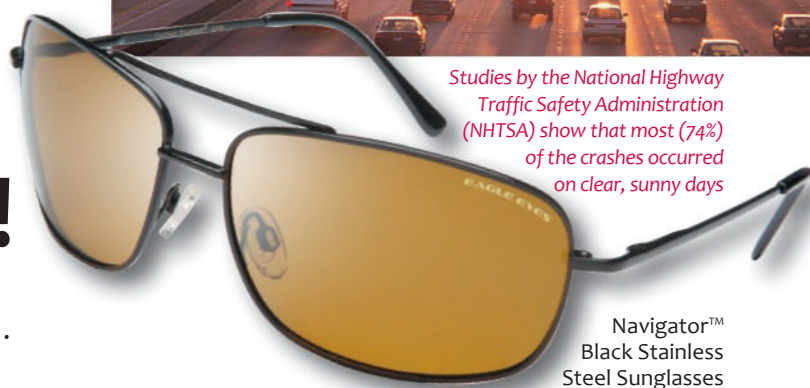
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Brake Time



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“My favorite
job,
however,
was the
relatively
frequent
brake
system
rebuild.”

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS I did fresh out of high school was join a local circle track stock car team. Always into cars, I fancied myself as either a race car driver or a crew chief—I “grew up NASCAR,” after all—but my opportunities to actually work on any car were limited to assisting Dad (or more like providing entertainment for my brother and me) with what were supposed to be simple oil changes. Moving from the grandstands to the paddock was my free course study in automotive basics.

To start, I quickly figured out how GM built fourth-generation Chevrolet Malibus, as they were our optimum donor platform for race car conversions. Stripping one down to the frame was pure joy, thanks in large part to a set of pneumatic tools. So proficient were we that the job was often done in less than two hours, after which a couple of months of fabrication commenced.

Admittedly, welding was something I never mastered, but it wasn’t for a lack of trying. And I found the occasional differential tolerance checks and rebuilds tediously time-consuming during each season, whereas the rare engine rebuild was far more compelling. Mastering chassis setups—by means of legal weight distribution, spring rates, shocks, and tire stagger—took some time, but became a feather in the ol’ weather-worn cap. My favorite job, however, was the relatively frequent brake system rebuild. Initially, I found this daunting, considering the driver was careening into a left-hand turn well over 100 mph, but I swiftly found it to be one of the simplest tasks, and the most gratifying.

Funny then that in the years since, brakes have been a love/hate thing with me. It goes back to when I purchased my 1952 Buick Roadmaster that—as discussed in prior ramblings—required frequent fluid refills...until I nearly mowed down an entire gas station with zero pedal. Two words to remember: curb stops, which were nowhere to be seen when I found myself careening down one of Vermont’s many hills in my ’72 Buick Skylark Custom convertible with only half a braking system—the main front-to-rear line blew out during the excursion. Suffice it to say, both deceleration

conundrums were corrected thanks to my racing experience. I did not, however, put my knowledge to good practice on a rented Chrysler Corporation minivan. Let me explain.

During each August in the mid- to late-’90s, a group of us would hike the slopes of Mt. Washington in New Hampshire, and to help facilitate the trek from the Connecticut shoreline I’d rent a minivan that provided room for six, plus gear, food, and beverages. Most trips were uneventful, but on this occasion my brother happened to be visiting the area the following week. Knowing where he was staying in advance, I left a belated birthday gift at the hotel and continued. In doing the van-building-van sprint, I left the cargo carrier running with the air conditioning on...and the parking brake engaged. You know, for safety reasons.

The act of cooling kindness extended to my hiking comrades nearly submarined the weekend just as it was starting. I climbed back behind the wheel, put the transmission in gear, and took off. Uphill. For miles. I distinctly remember commenting that the minivan suddenly seemed sluggish. Everyone thought I was imaging things, except my office colleague, Jim, who was sitting on the left side of the third row. His reply was, “This seat belt anchor is really hot, and I smell something burning.”

That single sentence jogged my gray matter and in seconds I reached down and released the parking brake. I’m not sure how much smoke was clouding the vision of drivers behind me, but when I pulled into a nearby parking lot, I assumed it was significant, for a stank cloud completely obliterated our vision to the point of having us believe the back end was on fire. For the record, it wasn’t, and thanks to nothing more than sheer luck, the rear shoes didn’t weld themselves to the drums. The incident was never mentioned when I turned the keys in.

Fortunately, my brake system escapades seem to be behind me, as proven by last year’s successful adventure in the 1940 Buick Century. Good thing, as we’ve taken the first step in resurrecting Hemmings’ 1936 Chevy, as you’ll read in this month’s Garage Time feature, in which we plan to embark on many road trips to come. Thanks, in part, to excellent brakes. 🚗

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Retreaux

BY DAVID CONWILL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL
AND MATTHEW LITWIN

This 1936 Chevrolet panel truck has been a street rod since the 1970s; we're going to update the new parts and double down on the original style

"RETREAUX" IS A TERM

that ought to get more traction. It's a blend of "faux" meaning fake and "retro" meaning in the style of an earlier time. The actual meaning is closer "fake vintage," though. There are certain things that weren't available in earlier decades, but that doesn't stop us from backdating those things to blend in with truly historical technology.

That's the philosophy backing our rehabilitation of this 1936 Chevrolet

panel. The Hemmings collection of three green panel trucks is well known [<https://www.hemmings.com/stories/hemmings-panel-delivery-trucks/>], but less well known is that the Chevrolet isn't nearly as original as its Dodge and Ford cohorts. Its original 72-hp, 207-cu.in. straight-six, floor-shift three-speed transmission, and torque-tube rear axle were removed and replaced by their early-1970s equivalents: a 140-hp, 230-cu.in. Turbo-Thrift straight-six, a Muncie SM465 "granny-

gear" four-speed, and a 12-bolt rear axle with a 3.73:1 gearset.

The last time we attempted to use the '36 Chevrolet was at The Race of Gentlemen in 2016, when it refused to run well enough to take it onto the beach. This past autumn, Hemmings Garage shop manager Junior Nevison attempted a tune up, only to discover that the real issue was stuck valves and bent pushrods. Further inspection revealed that the welds holding the spring pads to

What's Inside:

1. In addition to the '70s mechanical parts, there are smaller changes throughout the truck that immediately tell the knowledgeable that it's not 1936—original anymore. Some things, like the firewall-mounted master cylinder and swing pedals, we can't do anything about, so we're leaning into them. The sealed-beam conversion can stay, for example, for those were very common starting in the 1940s.
2. Because the vehicles in the Museum were never formally mothballed, a lot of them have varying amounts of expired gasoline in them. We pulled the tank from the Chevy, cleaned it by tumbling it in this cement mixer, and then re-sealed it using POR-15 products. You can see the process in detail at youtu.be/caoiUPGEiOk?si=cXzqxGcwaZYz8fL
3. Junior found us this 292, which is a near drop-in replacement for the damaged 230, but it's cracked, so we're still trying to source a 292 core. The extra power will be welcome for pulling that overdrive gear on the highway, taking up the slack of a proposed air-conditioning system, and potentially pulling a small camper for some events.
4. The truck 12-bolt rear axle appears completely serviceable, but it has migrated out of position thanks to some failed welds on the spring perches. We'll be re-hanging it, potentially with new leaf springs and with a set of new tube shocks. The truck retains its original Delco-Lovejoy lever shock absorbers on the front.
5. The Muncie SM465 four-speed is virtually indestructible and way overkill for a light-duty application like our '36 panel truck. We are currently exploring the various five-speed options open to us, looking for something that trades our existing 6.55:1 first gear to something more in the 3:1 range and adds an additional gear in an overdrive ratio of about 0.70:1.

the 12-bolt have also failed, allowing the rear axle to shift to the driver's side and resulting in the truck's well-recalled "dog track" stance going down the road.

The plans are still evolving, but we've started pulling apart the truck to freshen it up and of the three routes forward (back to stock, back to the '70s, or update to 2024), we've decided to make the best of the street-rod and overlanding aftermarket to build the ultimate editorial-safari vehicle. We plan to fix up what's broken; swap out the 230 for its big brother, the 292-cu.in. straight six; replace the four-speed with a five-speed hosting a more useful first gear, plus overdrive; update the Huck-style front drum brakes to discs; and

simultaneously keep everything as though it could have been that way in 1940—bias-ply tires and six-lug artillery wheels included.

Other creature comforts will hopefully follow. We've got our eyes on a vintage-style roof rack to use as a photo perch, a back-up camera to supplement the lackluster view out those cargo doors, air conditioning, a hidden sound system, and more! Follow along with the *Hemmings Classic Car* crew as we revive the '36 panel in style on our YouTube series, *Hemmings Garage*. 🚚



Ticket, Sir?

Memories from a valet parking lot attendant in the late 1970s

I TURNED 18 in late 1977. Ordinarily it would have been just another birthday, especially considering I had my driver's license less than a year, but it was significant in that I was hired as a valet parking attendant at The Manor, a well-known fine dining restaurant and caterer—that doubled as a very popular wedding venue—located in West Orange, New Jersey. It also meant I could leave behind yard work, dog care, and the sporadic odd jobs of scooping ice cream and delivering newspapers.

The Manor sat on an extensive mountaintop property adjacent to a wooded reservation and a golf course, so it was a great place to work outside in the fresh air. Visitors entered the property through tall gates and navigated a tree-lined driveway that led to the grand entrance of the pillared Georgian mansion. Valet parking was free and not required. If visitors opted for valet service, vehicles were driven from the main entrance to either an upper or lower lot. The farthest parking spaces were more than a quarter mile away from The Manor's front door.

I had been into cars since childhood, so this was a magical job. I was part of a crew of six or seven that worked for tips, and we wore orange coverall uniforms so that we were easily seen at night. We routinely parked and returned more than 400 cars on a busy Saturday, with parties in the afternoon and then again at night, together with public dining.

Jockeying cars for position in shrinking lanes during return rush times made me a better and more precise driver. Another benefit was that I developed a higher appreciation for well-designed dashboards, budding smart controls, and quality upholstery. I preferred gauges to warning lamps, and I intensely disliked the flashing green and yellow dashboard fuel economy indicators that seemed unwelcome in luxury cars. The only way



to make the annoying indicator stay green was to coast.

As a crew, we elbowed each other to park the hot imports, such as BMW's 2002, Datsun's Z variants, the first Honda Accords, Toyota Celicas, and less frequently, Volkswagen Sciroccos. These were all well-equipped, light, quick, and easy to park. It was also possible to shift them into higher gears for test drives by taking the long way around to the lower back lot. As far as I knew, none of us ever got a Porsche 911 out of second. Our boss knew the joyride risk, so we had to keep numbered dashboard tickets in sequence for assigned spaces that discouraged long drives around the property.

I have many fond memories of the job. To start, the things people left in their vehicles were nothing short of amazing. There were open bills with private information in plain view, and mail of every other conceivable variety, as well as checkbooks, laundry, arts and crafts in all stages of non-completion, sticky food wrappers, and other trash. I also quickly learned that a tip amount didn't always correspond to the expense or condition of the car after one guest left a caged guinea pig in his 1967 Pontiac Le Mans when he arrived late for a wedding reception. Aside from needing to be washed and vacuumed, that car was quite fragrant. It was a dry day, so I lowered the side windows, and we took turns checking the pet as we ran to and from other vehicles. Later, the guest told me he was glad the party was over and was eager to reunite the guinea pig

with his young daughter. Having noticed us checking on the pet, the car owner gave me the biggest tip I ever got to fetch a car.

Another unusual thing happened while parking a 1975 Buick LeSabre sedan. Two people got out and went inside for dinner and as I got in, I immediately noticed the aroma of freshly baked bagels emanating from two gigantic bags that took most of the rear seat, nearly reaching the headliner. After parking the car, I was spooked by a low voice from the far-right of the back seat that asked, "Howee doin'?" I had not seen the slight fellow partially hidden by one of the tall bags, and all I could ask was if he intended to go inside. He said he didn't want a fancy dinner, just a nap. He offered bagels to the entire crew, which were delicious, and stayed in the car and slept for two hours.

Rare cars would roll up on occasion, including one almost everyone guessed was a Maserati, though I recognized it as a Facel Vega. The exhaust growl of the Chrysler hemi V-8 was positively rhapsodic, and the grand tourer had metal surfaces that were hand-painted to look like wood throughout its interior. We parked it in a special spot on an outer aisle near the front door and overheard customers speculate what it was while waiting for their own cars. When the tweedy owner eventually came out, my boss, Ray, was determined to sound smart and amuse himself. He conspicuously and formally signaled, "Christopher, the Facel Vega, please." Seeing where we placed his pride and joy, the owner gleamed. He may have enjoyed that moment more than his dinner.

Another story involved a regular customer's Cadillac Seville during lunch hour, when Ray often let me work alone so he could get a break. Two county sheriff's detectives stopped to tell me they were looking for two inmates who had escaped from the local penitentiary wearing—what else—orange coveralls. They were last seen running on the neighboring golf course. Of course, we always left keys in the ignitions of parked cars. The detectives asked how many cars remained from lunch, and whether I could account for each. To my dismay, the Cadillac (one of only three cars left in my charge) was gone! The owner was very classy when the detectives needed his license plate number and unselfishly said he was glad I had not run into the thieves. Luckily for me, the car was recovered unscratched at a nearby shopping center, but we never heard if the thieves were caught.

I rarely drove a car onto the open road, but one exception was a permanent resident's 1976 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. The dark red sedan was overdue for its annual state inspection and the owner's wife "volunteered" me to drive it to the inspection station in the next town. The engine was so quiet and vibration-free that I had to concentrate to hear it. The interior was beautifully appointed with the finest leather I had ever seen or touched. Intuitive controls were set in burl walnut. In my opinion the steering wheel was somewhat primitive and too hard for an ultra-luxury auto, but it was a minor nitpick since the car was a magic carpet. It seemed to float when put in drive. As expected, there were no buzzes, squeaks, or rattles. It handled well and predictably with adequate road feel, despite its considerable weight. Power came immediately at the slightest touch, suggesting ample reserve, and the Rolls-Royce stopped on a dime.

Admittedly, I was very nervous driving it, even

when it seemed other drivers stayed out of the way once I reached a multi-lane avenue. The inspection station was in a not-so-nice area on a narrow, bumpy street, and being near closing time the station was busy. I had to get in a line that snaked around the block and all I could do was hope nobody hit the darn thing.

As I crawled to the entrance, the inspection staff was laughing and pointing at me, still wearing my orange coveralls: "Hey kid, how did you get out of jail and where did you get that car?" Fortunately, my uniform sported a company crest. Seeking mercy, I said it was the boss' car. Then the Rolls failed its emissions test. Adding to the insult, the dented, oxidized Volkswagen Beetle behind me passed with flying colors. In those days, a sticker with a big red circle signifying failure was affixed to the windshield's lower left corner. You couldn't miss it.

I finally relaxed when I pulled the Silver Shadow into the familiar driveway without incident. To my surprise, the owner's wife was happy to see that the car failed, because now she could get it tuned up without further debate. Apparently, her husband was always working and neglected his cars. We were reminded of that later when we had to jump the battery in his seldom-driven Jaguar XJ12. The next time I saw the Rolls it had a proper inspection sticker.

After parking cars for 18 months, I transferred inside to become a bartender as my college days progressed. I missed handling the cars, but not enduring cold winter nights or donning those orange coveralls. Over the years I have almost always insisted on parking my own car, but when valet parking is unavoidable, particularly in a city, I tip in advance. It's remarkable how a few dollars will often gain a spot close to

the attendant's booth, sometimes with a safety cone next to our car. 🚗

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BACK IN THE AUGUST 2023

issue, Matthew Litwin asked what one would do if you could get your first car again. In my case, I would apologize to that 1962 Ford Falcon that a teenage hotrodder (me) beat to death. It was a hand-me-down from Mom: A four-door, small-engine car with an automatic transmission. Needless to say, the Ford's performance wasn't stellar.

I would love to give it a rebuild with a larger 200-cu.in. six-cylinder. This would enable it to actually accelerate. The little Ford was a nice-looking car—however, one feature was the sound it would make when I floored it, kind of a moaning groaning. I have fond memories of the Falcon. My second car was a 1967 Cougar XR-7. What a difference—but that's another story.

—DON MOORE

Erial, New Jersey

TRADITIONAL FORD

Model A's, modified as classic lakes-style hot rods, or restored to factory fresh, are both cool. Both generate emotions for viewer and driver. Which is better will always generate conversations—and sometimes heated at that. I won't take a position either way, but say I like them both.

Some cars seem to re-

spond well to being modified, like Ford's Model A. A traditional 1940 Willys gasser with a blown Hemi is more exciting than a stock four-banger, but side pipes on a Duesenberg seem kind of strange—all my opinion.

That Pat Foster feels the number of "mutilated" Model A's is depressing is open for opinion. My old '30 Model A Roadster isn't for everyone, and that's fine with me. It was loud, fast, and kind of scary. But my "new" car, a '50 Ford Coupe with a '66 Corvette 327, is comfortable, looks stock, and is a blast to drive. I just hope I didn't mutilate it.

—SCOTT LONGSTREET

Urbandale, Iowa

I RECEIVED A NEW subscription to *Hemmings Classic Car*, and I love reading the great stories about the classics. I have to thank you for the inspiration, because now I know what I want to do for a career. I want to be a restorer. Money does not come very fast at my age (I'm 13 years old), but I have time to save. Thank you again for your help in finding me a job.

—JOSHUA MAGNIA

*Goodman, Missouri
via email*

IN REFERENCE TO PAT

Foster's "Save The Willys" column in the February issue, I generally agree with him and certainly have spent the last 60 years standing by that sentiment. My departure from Pat's viewpoint is calculated to bring exactly that experience of piloting a classic down the road with modern safety features; enough to give me peace of mind when my granddaughter, sons, friends, and others want to enjoy a trip into the past.

I recently lost two 1949 Chevrolet sedans in the

California wildfires and now have acquired another original 1949 sedan out of a farmer's co-op in Nebraska. I intend to modify the vehicle. I have the same qualms Pat expressed, but on balance the car can do more for the cause with some upgrades. No suspension or steering or body customizing—the originality of the vehicle is essential for a genuine Forties experience—but four-wheel disc brakes, electrical wipers, seat belts, 12-volt lighting, turn indicators, side mirrors, and a drivetrain better suited for long road trips. I want the car to be used, enjoyed, and also be safe.

To further, I plan to install an open-drive 1957 Chevy 283 with a three-speed overdrive, the latter operated "on the tree." There should be no indication that anything is not original at first glance. I have had this model in mind since I was 16, along with other older cars, and have always felt an obligation to preserve the beauty, art, and history of those bygone eras.

—BRIAN McWILLIAMS

San Francisco, California

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY,

most summers my parents would send my sister and me to Ruskin, Florida, to stay with and help our grandparents. My Grampy had a really cool 1959 Mercury Commuter two-door wagon, with a big 430-cu.in. engine. Even as a 7-year-old in 1965, I knew this car must be special, since the two-door Chevy Nomads and Pontiac Safaris of '55 to '57 were already coveted. One of my older brothers was given this Mercury wagon when he turned 16. He kept it until 1969 when he traded it to a local car dealer towards the purchase of a 1966 Le Mans Sprint.

Fast forward to 2002 and I have been searching

the internet regularly for a '59 Mercury two-door wagon for sale with no luck. I mentioned this to my brother, and he told me my Grampy had actually purchased a 1958 Mercury wagon but hated it. Lots of problems—so much so that he only kept it long enough to trade it in on the '59 Commuter that I remembered!

With this new information, I expanded my search to include 1958 wagons as well. As luck would have it, I found a '58 Voyager two-door wagon online, located in Hollywood, California. I live in southwest Ohio, so in a huge leap of faith, I bought the car and had it shipped. The story I got was that the car had received a later model 390-cu.in. engine in a swap performed by Big M Automotive in California. Some of the paint appeared original and some had been resprayed. All in all, it proved to be a rust-free, with decent chrome, a nice interior, and a nice driver. I was pleased and kept the car for a few years but had to sell it to purchase some land.

I sold the car to a friend, Bob Elliot (Oldsmobile Bob), who is a reseller of classic cars in Milford, Ohio. Going from my shaky memory, Bob told me he had a buyer for the car in the Pacific Northwest. It was a cool car and very nice, but nowhere near as nice as the one you featured in the January 2024 issue.

—RIC KRUSE

Williamsburg, Ohio



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1980 TRIUMPH TR8



To vintage-TR fans, the firm's last sports car was controversial in looks; time proved its wedge shape was on-trend. Perhaps the aftermarket body kit fitted to this TR8 was a step too far for some, but not for the excited bidders vying for the customized, 3.5-liter Rover V-8-powered convertible. That engine was hopped up with a Holley four-barrel carburetor, electronic ignition, and dual exhaust, and its attendant five-speed manual promised smooth shifts. The blue paint, cloth top, and vinyl seat upholstery all looked nice, although the A/C and tachometer didn't work. Minilite-style alloys supported older radial tires. The seller engaged with interested parties and the Triumph sold extremely well.

Reserve: \$10,000
Selling Price: \$27,300
Recent Market Range: \$8,200-\$13,500

1938 FORD DE LUXE V-8 STATION WAGON



Ford's De Luxe Station Wagon was as pretty as it was practical in 1938, with rounded lines and a capacious cargo area. Of course, the body's structural maple and birch woods were this car's party piece. This example was brought back to full functionality with some minor upgrades that included the fitment of a later, 100-horsepower, 239-cu.in. flathead V-8 under the hood to replace the stock 85-hp engine. The Dartmouth Green paint appeared very nice, although the seller noted a couple of polishing burns; some metal repairs were done to make the Ford fully solid, and visibly cracked tires needed replacement for safety's sake. It was no surprise this woodie sold at the top of its market range.

Reserve: \$43,000
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Three In One

Ray Pile was a part of the immediate post-World War II generation of hot rodders. During the war, he was a waist gunner in Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers attacking Nazi-occupied Europe and afterward he returned to his home in Southgate, California. This is his car, the Pyle Special. Not much is known about its life before Ray got ahold of the Ford. It was just one of millions of Ford Model A's produced for 1928-'31.

Just two years after the end of the war, an uncle got him set up running a gas station. That's when the roadster comes on the scene, and with it, Ken Eichert, the father of current owner Chris Eichert and son of Ray's benefactor-uncle.

"Ray was my dad's cousin on my grandmother's side," Chris says. Ken had survived a bout with polio earlier in life and was prevented from participating in most sports because of a bad leg. He discovered an outlet in the machines found at his older cousin's shop and as an honorary member of his car club, the Gaters (note the intentional misspelling as a nod to Southgate).

"My dad was very active with Ray's roadster. He tore it apart, worked on it, took off the fenders and installed the bomber seat for Ray to race on race day. From 1947 to 1949, Ray was going to the dry lakes



**Back in 1947, you couldn't
have two kinds of race
car plus transportation,
so this **1929 Ford Model A**
roadster hot rod was
all three**

BY DAVID CONWILL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TODD RYDEN
HISTORICAL IMAGES COURTESY
OF CHRIS EICHERT

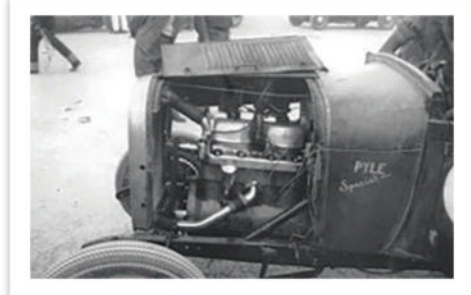




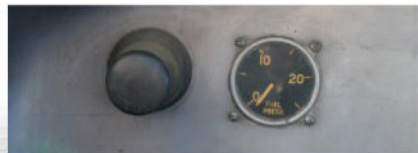
A mild-mannered, full-fendered roadster most of the time, one weekend each month the Pyle Special would transform into a race car bent on going as fast as possible on the dry lake beds northwest of Los Angeles.



The Pyle Special at the lakes. Visible in this shot are the Riley-head Model B engine now missing and the Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels still on the car. Note the motorcycle tires up front—a detail replicated in the restoration.



In period slang, this was “a hot four-barrel.” The 1928-’34 Ford four-cylinder engine series had an impressive career as the budget performance plant of choice from new until the late 1940s. By the end of its reign, a full suite of hop-up goodies was available to build power.



with the Gaters, and the roadster was actually a dual-purpose vehicle: it ran full fendered on the street and was Ray’s get-around car, his family car, and then he would race it every month when they had a meet.”

The late hot rod historian Don Montgomery was adamant that the immediate post-World War II years represented the only pure expression of the hot rod: a true street/strip car that was driven by its owner/builder for transportation Monday through Friday and was stripped for racing on the weekends. Postwar racing for hot rods in Southern California circa 1946-’52 was largely either “the lakes”—meaning the dry lakes of the Mojave Desert, mostly El Mirage, or drag racing. At the tail end of the period, drag racing started to become formalized, on closed strips often comprised of aircraft runway infrastructure built for the war. Before that, acceleration contests were an informal activity done on public roads and facilitated by the popularity of drive-in restaurants (<https://www.hemmings.com/stories/drive-in-diner/>).

That three-faceted nature of post-war hot rods made them special and keeps them relatable today. Most roads

in America are still suitable habitat for 1940s cars—whether they were new cars from 1947 or have been updated to 1940s technology. That ‘40s technology makes for a particularly satisfying operator experience—just automated enough not to be intimidating, but satisfyingly mechanical and interactive in all other respects. The sights, sounds, and smells are pure automobile, and the industrial design of every component says, “built right.”

Small wonder Chris decided to take the roadster back to how Ray had it. It even does a lot to explain why Chris’s father bought it off Ray in the mid-1960s, over a dozen years after it was last raced. It was far out of step with those times. It didn’t even have a flathead V-8. Ray had built the car to use four-cylinder power and its final engine had been a Model B unit, the 1932-’34 successor to the Model A four-cylinder and incorporating many of the popular modifications already done to make Model A engines suitable for high-performance applications.

“The motor that Ray raced with at the dry lakes was a four-banger with a two-port Riley,” Chris says. The Riley was an F-head design, or what the British and Harley-Davidson enthusiasts call “intake



“I’m very generous when it’s out on display. I want people to be able to sit in it, touch it, and drive it if they share the interest. I love that part of it. I love people who are that enthused about things that are that old—especially in the younger generation.”





This is the engine Ray raced at Santa Ana, originally built for him by Cook's Machine Shop. Chris says it's been drilled for full-pressure oiling, has had large valves installed, and had an unmarked but "really big" camshaft installed. It has since had fresh pistons and a milder cam installed. The Stromberg 81 carburetors are a smaller version of the 97, originally intended to equip 1937-'40 Ford 60-hp V-8 engines.



BELOW: "For years, I heard the story that if they went through a town, they'd put a coffee can over the tailpipe to muffle it, but I had no visual reference. Now, I have a proper, '40s-vintage can that I keep in the roadster." That can is found in the lower right of this image.

over exhaust," meaning the exhaust valves retain their stock location in the block, but the intake valves are relocated overhead and actuated by pushrods and rocker arms. Even in flathead form, Model A and B four cylinders were respected for their off-the-line performance while the Ford V-8 was capable of greater top-end speed. An OHV or F-head conversion on a four-cylinder usually meant it was capable with keeping up with a flathead V-8 even at those higher rpm. Chris would love to someday replicate that engine, which he and Ken discovered in derelict condition shortly after Ray's death in 1987 and deemed unsalvageable.

The roadster's final outings were to what was then Santa Ana Airport. The first modern dragstrip began operation there in the spring of 1950 and Ray quit driving the Pyle Special about 1951. It didn't move again until 1964 or '65, when Ray sold it to Ken, who in turn held onto the car more as a keepsake than an active project. As a child, Chris would sneak into the freestanding garage where it was stored and sit in it and later it would provide plenty of father/son bench racing and swap-meet parts buying episodes.

Aside from one brief-but-memorable ride, the car sat in storage until 2007. By that point, it had suffered a couple indignities: its engine was sold off to a friend's speedster project and one fender and splash apron were brutally disfigured in a freak ac-

cident involving a large stack of tile.

"My dad was getting older. I told him I wanted to get the roadster going and he told me to bring it over. I took it completely apart and I cleaned off decades and decades of dirt. I actually saved some of it, thinking it was probably El Mirage dirt. I have two cigar vials full."

That cleaning and disassembly venture was a crash course in postwar-era hot rodding.

"Nothing was precisely done. It was a real trip to see what hot rodders did back then and how they put stuff together. It truly was like going back all those years. Then seeing how it evolved in the late '40s into the '50s in old pictures, as it became what it is today.

"I ended up buying the motor back from the friend with the speedster. I told him what we were going to do, and he did not hesitate to sell it back to us. I had a friend of my dad's rebuild it."

Chris then reinstalled all the speed parts that had come from Ray, plus a few his father had collected along the way, notably twin Stromberg 97 two-barrel carburetors on an Evans intake and a Mallory dual-point distributor. Chris also discarded Ray's rear-only mechanical brake setup for 1939 Ford hydraulic brakes contributed by a friend of his father. "That's the kind of friends my dad had," he says. "All his hot rod

friends knew about the roadster and when I told them I was working on it, they gave him stuff."

Once the roadster was going, there followed a whirlwind of father-son activity with it, culminating in the twin delights of a *Hot Rod* magazine feature story of the still-in-primer roadster, and Ken getting to drive the roadster at El Mirage for the first time ever.



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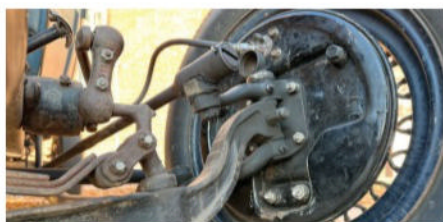
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"It's a rattle can, but the coolest rattle can you could ever be in. I still drive it and have memories of my dad and wish he were there and could share the moments. Even though I didn't know Ray, I think of him. He got this up to 116 mph and that's a feat. I've probably gone no faster than 65 mph and it scared me, I couldn't imagine doing 116."



The front axle was dropped back in the 1940s and installed on the roadster circa 1950. To further lower the roadster, the spring eyes were reversed on both the front spring and in the rear.



Then, Ken died in 2011 and the roadster took another hiatus.

"After Dad died, it sat. I could not get the motor running for snot. I took it to three or four old guys who worked on old Model A's, hot rod guys, they couldn't get it running. I kept spending money to no result, so I mothballed it for another 10 or 12 years, from 2011 to about a year or so ago."

For help, Chris turned to a fellow member of the revived Gaters club, welder/fabricator and hardcore enthusiast of midcentury Americana, Randy Pierson.

"He's got a period army tent, a period camp stove, he tows his roadster with a '49 Merc four-door. The body on his roadster is all handmade. He is the pinnacle for our group who keeps us true to that era and what we do and what we don't do and what we put our signature on as a club as far as being period correct."

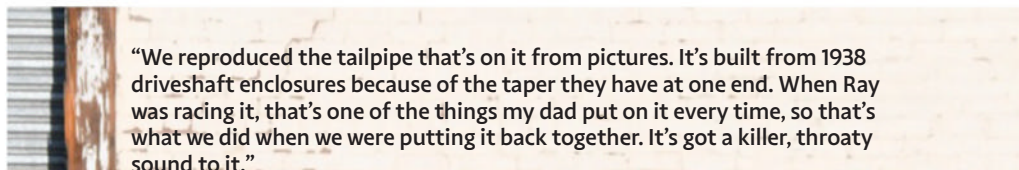
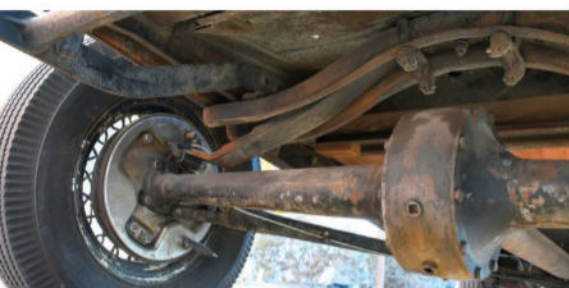
"He did some bodywork (but he said it was one of the nicest Model A bodies

The 16-inch bent-spoke Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels are a stronger, aftermarket equivalent to the OE 1935 Ford wheels. By the mid-1940s, 16-inch tires were the defacto national standard and far easier to get than the older oddball sizes. Tire rationing was over, but its memory remained fresh. These Kelseys have been with the car since Ray built it, but the brakes have been changed from the minimalist race-car setup to four-wheel hydraulic units from a 1939 Ford.

he'd ever worked on). It was all hand welded, hand hammered, hand finished. We stripped off down to the color that was consistently across most of the body. He rewired it with cloth wire as it would have been in period, and he really was meticulous to getting it back to as it was in 1947. We looked at pictures. He kept what he could keep and mimicked what needed to be done to make it true to its 1940s life."

Also mimicking its 1940s life was the scramble to get it ready for race day. In this case, the West Coast iteration of The Race of Gentlemen, which is not a beach race but is instead held at Flabob Airport in Riverside, California, in the style of the original Santa Ana drags.

"We found a bomber seat and just a couple weeks before the race, Randy had started to work on the motor to get it running and he too could not get it running right. He pulled it apart and he's not



"We reproduced the tailpipe that's on it from pictures. It's built from 1938 driveshaft enclosures because of the taper they have at one end. When Ray was racing it, that's one of the things my dad put on it every time, so that's what we did when we were putting it back together. It's got a killer, throaty sound to it."



a motor guy, but he knows enough, and one of his neighbors is an old hot rodder. We changed out the 97s to 81s because the 97s were a lot of carburetor for that little banger motor, especially in duals. Then he still had a hard time. We took out the cam, put in adjustable lifters, and at the very last second, we were trying to find a different cam for it, because we figured there was something going on with the cam. I asked a buddy if he had anything to go in my roadster and he sold me a cam and I sent all that up to Randy, who worked on it feverishly for a week to ship it back down for the races. He got it running and when he got to drive it down the street, he was surprised. 'This thing has got it. This thing scoots.' It runs really strong."

That strong running paid off in a lot of fun at TROG West, giving truth to one more of Ken's old stories.

"My daughter has a video of me racing a T/V-8 and I pass the camera behind the T, but by the time I get to the finish line, I've beat her. It brings back memories of my dad telling me 'Yeah, that motor will beat some V-8's.' It's one of those moments, again, of my dad's stories from all those years ago having proof in their pudding. Those revelations keep happening."

What's next for this old racer? "I



Although it still rides on a Model A frame, at some point the K-shaped crossmember from a 1932 Ford was installed, which stiffens the chassis slightly and provides built-in mounts for the later transmission and floor pedals. Ray apparently lacked the tools to shorten the driveshaft, however, which pushed the engine and transmission forward slightly. During the rebuild, Chris and Randy moved the radiator back to its stock position to run an original-style hood.

never did get it registered when I moved from California to Texas," Chris says, "but I am going to get it registered."

Hopefully, it will be back on the streets soon, paying tribute to that triple-threat nature of hot rodding's golden era. 🚗

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White Steam Cars

MY MOTHER HAD

an old White sewing machine when I was growing up, a big model mounted on its own table; she operated it with a foot treadle. A few blocks away from us, a guy owned an old White steam car. About 25 years later I learned that the two products were related.

I won't bore you with details about the sewing machine. Let's talk about White automobiles.

Thomas H. White originally produced sewing machines in Massachusetts, but after the Civil War, he moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he established the White Sewing Machine Company. It was a profitable venture and in time his three sons, Windsor, Rollin, and Walter, joined the firm. At the turn of the century, these men—like many young men of that time—became enamored with the automobile and began to design a car of their own. They decided on steam propulsion for their new car; it was a known technology offering lots of power. Rollin developed an innovative semi-flash boiler for a prototype built in 1899. By the spring of 1900, four White Model A steam cars had been constructed, and later in the year a White truck was built. From there, production grew to nearly 200 vehicles for 1901. The first cars were all of the popular Stanhope type: small two-seat vehicles with just a folding top for shelter from the elements. Their steam engines were mounted under the body. Like many other cars of the day, they featured chain drive, tiller steering, and wire wheels. The following year a condenser was added to recycle the exhaust steam. In 1902, the factory price for the improved Model B was \$1,200.

For 1903, the company moved upmarket, adding a \$2,000 four-passenger Model C Tonneau to its offerings. The following year the Stanhope model was dropped, and a Model D Canopy Top Touring car added to the line. The Model D was a more advanced design, with the engine up front under a hood, shaft drive, and wood-spoke wheels. For \$2,275, it had 10 hp and an 80-inch wheelbase.

White cars were known for reliability and performance—in 1905, a special racing version nicknamed “Whistling Billy” set a record of 73.75 mph at Morris Park Track in New York. That spurred a nice sales increase, and the firm produced 1,015 cars in 1905 and 1,534 in 1906, the



Pat Foster has been traveling. This month's column was originally published in the July 2022 issue of *Hemmings Classic Car*.

year Teddy Roosevelt became the first president to use a car, a White steamer, in his motorcade. However, 1906 ended up being White's peak production year for steam cars. The ongoing debate between which would be the volume-

selling motive power in America—gasoline, steam, or electric—was just about decided. The majority of motorists preferred gas cars.

Still, White motored on. Until 1906, the automobile business had simply been part of the White Sewing Machine firm, but that year the company separated the auto business from the sewing machine business because automotive had grown so much. The new White Company moved production into a brand-new factory, still in Cleveland. By 1909, President Howard Taft's White House fleet included an elegant White Model M seven-passenger touring car [hmn.com/taft09white], which he used frequently, probably enjoying it all the more because it came from his home state of Ohio. Other prominent White owners included Buffalo Bill Cody and John D. Rockefeller.

Sales of White trucks continued to grow as car sales lagged. Management realized steam cars were becoming outmoded, so in 1910 they added two new series of gasoline-powered automobiles: Models G-A and G-B. That year the company produced about 2,400 cars, split almost equally between gas and steam. Then, in January 1911, the last White steam car was produced. In addition to its trucks, for 1912 the company offered a full range of gasoline cars: Models Thirty, Forty, and Sixty, priced from \$2,250 for a Model Thirty 30-hp touring car to \$6,500 for the luxurious Model Sixty 60-hp Berline Limousine, which even offered a two-way radio set.

But car production continued to waver, while sales of White trucks continued to grow. In 1916, the company underwent a reorganization, but two years later management conceded to reality and ended passenger-car production. In all, White had built some 9,122 steam cars and 8,927 gasoline cars.

That decision saved White, which built commercial trucks through 1980 before closing its doors for good. Volvo Truck acquired White's U.S. assets in 1981. 🚚

“By the

spring

of 1900,

four White

Model A

steam cars

had been

constructed.”



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK

PLYMOUTH PERFECTED



This 1955 Belvedere convertible received a full restoration two decades ago and has been driven less than 6,000 miles since

The earliest post-World War II designs from the Big Three were futuristic looking from a 1940s perspective, but quickly came to look outdated as 1950s industrial design left Streamline Moderne behind for the jet age. Similarly, reliable prewar mechanical designs became hard to market to a public expecting great technological advancements to come out of the war. It was only in the 1955 model year when Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors all finally converged on the full envelope body, doing away with detachable rear fenders, and embracing a look that seems modern, even to 21st century eyes.

Ford had been the first to head in that styling direction with its “shoebox” 1949-’51 models. Later enthusiasts would

tag the 1955-’57 Chevrolets with the shoebox epithet as well, due to their break from the rounder 1953-’54 styling. For 1955, Ford had reskinned its new-for-’54 ball-joint-equipped chassis with dramatic bodywork styled to match the new-for-’55 Thunderbird. Most impressive of all was the Crown Victoria hardtop, which continued the plexiglass roof of the 1954 Skyliner hardtop and married it with a prominent chrome “basket handle” arch from the beltline. With the equally new 292-cu.in. Y-block V-8 (enlarged from 1954’s 256-cu.in. Mercury/Police Interceptor engine), it was a potent performer to boot. Chevrolets also rode atop a new chassis, adopting ball joints for the first time, in addition to the new 265-cu.in. OHV V-8 (first of the long-lived “small-block

Chevy" design) to supplement the traditional 235-cu.in. OHV straight-six.

At Chrysler Corporation, 1955 would be the first year for stylist Virgil Exner's influence, which would be dubbed "The 100-Million-Dollar Look" in advertising, after the purported cost to discard the conservative styling for which Mopars had been known since the public rejection of the 1934-'37 Chrysler and De Soto Airflow models. While Chrysler's 'Forward Look' was more closely associated with the 1957-'59 cars, these corporate styling motifs actually made their first appearance for 1955.

Plymouth, Chrysler's entry-level make from 1929 to 1997, benefitted no less from the Forward Look than corporate siblings Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler, and the newly independent Imperial marque. The 1955 redesign resulted in cars that were longer, lower, and wider with wrap-around windshields, a lower roofline, and hooded headlamps. Plymouth offered three models, in increasing order of luxury: Plaza, Savoy, and Belvedere, each

of which was available in a range of body styles, 13 colors, and an assortment of two-tone options for Savoy and Belvedere.

Complementing the restyling were new engine choices. While Mopars had been known for outstanding engineering since the 1920s, and Dodge Brothers vehicles even before that, Plymouth was late in getting a V-8 engine. The brand had used various iterations of the same flathead straight-six family since 1933, and would continue to do so through 1959, but for 1955 that 117-hp, 230-cu.in. engine was joined by three all-new "Hy-Fire" OHV V-8 engines in two displacements. The basic engine was a 241-cu.in., 157-hp version equipped with a two-barrel carburetor. For added power, a 259-cu.in. version could be specified as either a two-barrel, 167-hp variant, or with a four-barrel

"power pack" for 177 hp. Transmission choices for all three engines included a column-shifted three-speed-manual overdrive or a column-shifted two-speed PowerFlite automatic.

The public responded to the stunning redesign, and the new V-8 engine was a big hit, accounting for over 60 percent of Plymouth sales. Among them was our feature car, a Belvedere convertible owned by retired Toyota dealer and Omaha, Nebraska, resident Jim Dufflack.

"Back in 2003, I spent a lot of time looking for a nice 1950s-era Mopar, and this 1955 Plymouth convertible was the only one I ever ran across," he recalls. "I was the first to inquire. The car was in Vancouver, British Columbia, and had been recently restored. Impressed, I wired the funds the same day. Later I learned that the seller had over 50 inquiries after my call. I was really glad I acted when I did," Jim says.

Buying may have been the easy part, however, as Jim then had to get the car from Vancouver to his home in Omaha:



The original buyer of this car opted for the larger-displacement Hy-Fire V-8 but in basic, two-barrel form: a 167-hp, 259-cu.in. unit with 7.6:1 compression. For 1955, Plymouth cars still used a six-volt electrical system, but 12 volts would become standard the next year.



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nearly 2,000 miles. He preferred to use a reputable transport company that he could trust.

According to Jim, "I contacted a few that I had used in the past but none of them wanted to go into Canada to pick up the car. That was something I hadn't thought about earlier, but every problem has its solution, and I was finally able to hire the seller to deliver the car to a gas station on the U.S. side of the border where a transporter was waiting."

Jim's freshly acquired, freshly restored Belvedere also came with a near-complete history, including the computer punch card from its assembly at Chrysler's Lynch Road facility in Highland Park, Michigan, which had been constructed in 1928 a couple of miles north of the original Dodge Brothers factory expressly

for De Soto and Plymouth production.

That history showed the car left Lynch Road painted two-tone Tampa Turquoise and Bimini Blue with a dark-green top and two-tone turquoise interior. It was powered by the two-barrel, 167-hp, 259-cu.in. V-8 backed by the standard Synchro-Silent three-speed manual transmission. In addition to the Belvedere convertible's standard features, options and accessories included two-speed wipers, a pushbutton radio, heater, full instrumentation, a power top, split bench front seat, full carpeting, front and rear bumper guards, 7.10x15 whitewall tires, and full wheel covers.

A further source of information individual to the car was an "auto-biography" for the car written by previous owner Peter Hastings. That work has the car being assembled January 20, 1955, and then shipped by boat with an ultimate destination of a dealership in Chilliwack, British Columbia, where it was sold to a Chilli-

wack resident named Patricia Cooper.

Cooper owned the car 14 years and put 88,906 miles on it before selling it to a young man in Kamloops, who operated it throughout British Columbia and Alberta for almost four years before the old Plymouth was relegated to off-road status and, apparently, light-duty farm work through at least 1982.

Hastings acquired the car in 1999 after seeing a classified ad in a local newspaper. He had it trucked to a Vancouver brake repair shop for a basic system service. Then, it was driven on blacktop at highway speeds for what was probably the first time in 17 years. The very tired but still complete and attractive car was then left with a Surrey auto restorer to start an 18-month, ground-up restoration.

In May 2000, following restoration of the chassis and drivetrain, the car was trucked to New Westminster for painting and final assembly. Hastings had the car repainted in its original color scheme and



Since a full restoration, the Plymouth has logged only 5,816 on its reset odometer.

The Belvedere's interior features a split-bench front seat with two-tone turquoise "Star" embossed and turquoise "doeskin" interior.



While this car came originally with steel wheels and full wheel covers, Jim has opted to install Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels; he's also substituted 205/75R15 radials for the original-spec 7.10x15 bias plies, though in wide-whitewall form and using whimsical period-accessory, valve-stem caps.



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fitted with a completely new turquoise star-embossed and turquoise doeskin interior. Finally, in November 2000, the completed car was delivered to Hastings' home in Vancouver, where he enjoyed the Belvedere for another three years before selling it to Jim.

Jim's collection is rather eclectic, with a primary focus on nicely restored, U.S.-made, 1950s convertibles. A few standouts include a 1953 Oldsmobile 88, a 1954 Buick Skylark, a 1955 Corvette, a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air, a 1957 Dodge Royal Lancer, and a pair of non-convertibles: two 1957 Chevrolet Cameo pickups, one of which was featured previously in

Hemmings Classic Car (#215). Jim displays a few of his most prized cars in his basement, set up much like a dealer showroom complete with period automobilia.

For the past 20 years, Jim and his wife, Mary Ellen, have enjoyed driving this Belvedere during the summer months, primarily attending local and regional car shows and family outings. "The previous owner did a great job with the restoration of this car. It's a dream to drive. And to think we wouldn't be able to experience it had I not figured out how to get it shipped here. I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time, especially finding a car like this Plymouth." 🚗



Features on this Belvedere include a power top, push-button radio, two-speed wipers, heater, full instrumentation, and a column-shifted three-speed manual transmission.



The all-new 1955 Plymouth line was dramatically restyled compared to 1954, reflecting Virgil Exner's jet-age "Forward Look" styling.

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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SCOTTY LACHENAUER

Riviera



**Stashed away
for more than three
decades, this dual-quad
equipped **1964 Buick Riviera** is
prime for a luxurious reawakening**

If there's one thing we've learned about automotive barn finds, it's that such discoveries are not always the cut-and-dry variety. You know, the classic image of some rarity being pulled from a structure so dilapidated any hint of wind might bring it crashing down. There are the well-used, truly original vehicles that have spent their hours of static existence in dusty, century-old abodes, handed from one family member to the next. Some barn finds were never really lost, rather just left to languish under the auspice of an idyllic restoration that never seems to happen. And then there are barn finds that have a habit of migrating home.

A case study is this 1964 Buick Riviera. It's never really been lost, technically contradicting "find," yet its decades-long dormancy in more than one storage facility, and with more than one owner, makes this first-gen GM E-body a prime barn find candidate. More so when the car's known history, and relative desirability, can be recited with ease by current owner Tim Lynch.

Tim, a resident of West Deptford, New Jersey, is well versed in the legacy of Buick's Riviera, thanks largely to his dad, Gene Guarnere, who has had a penchant for the personal luxury car since he was a teen. "My dad has been into first generation Rivieras since he came home from Vietnam in 1967. That's when he got his first '64 to drive back and forth from South Philadelphia to Fort Dix, to finish his draft requirement," Tim says.

Since then, Tim says his dad has owned too many Rivieras to count, through a combination of having driven, collected, parted out, and rebuilt



A lack of clutter stacked around this 1964 Buick Riviera has been a benefit to the original body panels.





The 1938-'39 La Salle grille is said to have inspired the Riviera's vertically stacked running lamp grilles.

many for resale. Though the Riviera nameplate lasted for eight generations of production, and 36 years as a standalone model, the 1963-'65 editions will always be Gene's favorite. "There's something about those Rivieras. There was really nothing like them on the market at the time," Gene says.

The Riviera name had a long history with Buick. It first appeared in conjunction with the revolutionary true hardtop design unveiled within the 1949 Roadmaster lineup. The car's missing B-pillar ushered in Flint's "Riviera styling." That design moniker evolved slightly through the mid-Fifties, provoking thoughts of elegant open-road motoring for a modest price, and it even survived Buick's model name revamp of '59, when it became a trim level in the Electra 225 series though '62.

Right about the time the dust was settling from the Buick renaming buzz, GM Advanced Styling guru Ned Nickles had already created a sketch of a new car that—according to later interviews with Nickles and GM Styling boss Bill Mitchell—was

based on Mitchell's foggy visit to London, where he spotted a custom-bodied Rolls-Royce in front of the Savoy hotel. Mitchell is famously quoted as saying, "make it a Ferrari-Rolls-Royce."

Coincidentally, Cadillac was considering the introduction of a junior line to bolster sales, helping prompt the development of the XP-715 project (Mitchell is also quoted as saying GM didn't take kindly to Ford attending the Motorama events to study concept cars, which led to the four-seat Thunderbird, prompting development of the XP-715). Unofficially, it was dubbed La Salle II, but by the time a full-size clay mockup had been created, Cadillac had reversed its sales slump and was having trouble filling orders. It didn't need a new car complicating matters.

The XP-715 might have been forgotten had Buick's general manager Ed Rollert not learned of its unclaimed status. He made a pitch for the project but would have to fight for rights to it with Oldsmobile's and Pontiac's management. The latter was lukewarm on the idea of adding



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Small trim items remain, including this low profile hood ornament.



another series, while Olds wanted to modify the existing design, something Mitchell was dead set against. By April 1961, the XP-715/La Salle II concept mockup was photographed wearing Buick emblems.

In the fall of 1962, Buick rolled out the Riviera on a new E-body platform. The car was a departure for Buick, with “knife edge” body lines, minimal trim, a Ferrari-like egg-crate style grille flanked by running lamps/signal indicators behind 1938-’39 La Salle-inspired grilles, and kickups over the rear wheels designed to hint at the car’s power (helping conjure the “Coke bottle” design nomenclature). It was an amalgam of styles, fitting in somewhere between a sports car and luxury car, all rolled up in one breathtaking package.

Speaking of power, the Riviera was equipped with Buick’s four-barrel equipped 401-cu.in. V-8 that boasted 325 hp and 445 lb-ft of torque, though in early December, the division started to offer the 340-hp, four-barrel 425-cu.in. engine as optional Riviera equipment. Just 2,601 examples of the latter were produced.

Backing either engine was Buick’s Twin Turbine Dynaflow automatic in its final year of production.

A year later, Buick management elevated the 340-hp, single four-barrel 425 engine to standard power team status, paired with a new Super Turbine 400 automatic transmission. Peppy as the engine was, a dual four-barrel version of the 425 became available, known as the “Super Wildcat.” Aside from its eye-opening 360 hp and 465 lb-ft of torque, it looked the part of a performer too, due to finned aluminum rocker covers and a twin-snorkel chrome air-cleaner assembly. Despite its low production—only 2,122 of the 37,658 Rivieras built for ’64 came equipped as such—this engine became the cornerstone of Riviera’s Gran Sport package for ’65, cementing Buick’s legacy as a luxurious personal muscle car.

Although any first-gen Riviera is a great score to Tim and Gene, some examples are better than others, whether due to overall condition or a car’s born-with options. So, when this 1964 Riviera popped up on Gene’s radar 30-plus years

ago, he quickly made a deal. “The history between my dad and this car is a long one. He first bought this car in northeast Philadelphia for \$1,450 in the early Nineties,” Tim says.

The reason Gene wanted it more than any other that previously crossed his path was that not only was it in reasonably good shape, but the Buick also turned out to be one of the relatively rare dual-quad 425 examples. But like many of the Rivieras that came Gene’s way over the years, the Buick didn’t stick around too long. “The car was sold and/or traded multiple times for the first 15 years my dad knew about it,” Tim says.

However, all good things somehow find their way home, and this car is no exception. “For some reason, the Riviera always ended up with us some way or another. I finally ended up buying the car from the last owner in 2009. He had it stored in my dad’s barn during his ownership, so we knew it was in a safe place for a long time. I now have it tucked away in one of my garages waiting for the next phase in its lifeline.”

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What makes this 1964 Buick Riviera desirable among collectors is the optional dual-quad 425-cu.in. V-8, which boasted 360 hp. It would become the foundation of Gran Sport option a year later.

What Tim has in his possession is an interesting example beyond the power team. "This Riviera is typical of the examples built in '64. It's just chock full of options that cater to the upscale buyers who would have had the funds to purchase one of these high-end rides from the dealership."

Present within are many of the accoutrements that catered to the posh consumers in the luxury sports car market. Options here include the Deluxe vinyl and cloth interior, tilt column, and power seats. Power windows and power vent windows add to the lavishness of the Buick's equipment,

while its front seat belts, rear armrests, wood ornamentation, and rear defroster only add to the upscale aesthetic.

Though it's seen better days, the condition of the interior is remarkable, considering its lengthy journey since it was taken off the road circa 1980. The upholstery is dirty and moldy but with a good washing it will probably clean up nicely. The dash is also in great shape, though since the V-8 has not been started in years, there's no way to determine what gauges and switches are functional. Underneath the carpet, the floors are solid

as well, owing to its life mostly indoors.

Under the hood it looks as if the engine has barely been touched. Its "KX" code stamped on the block is still visible, the original Carter carburetors are present, and the wiring and plumbing still appear usable. The air conditioning looks to be intact as well. Finally, power brakes and power steering round out the luxury amenities.

Outside, the body is in excellent shape for a car of this vintage. The last 30-plus years of indoor storage has helped keep the metal intact, though minor bodywork will be needed on the quarter panels to get it up to snuff. The original Claret Mist paint has turned to a satin finish under all the dirt, but a good cleaning and buff could bring it back to life. Most of the trim is also in great shape, and the car appears to be relatively complete, save for a few pieces of rear window trim.

As for the mechanical functionality, the condition of the Buick's drivetrain remains a mystery, however no one is really sure of the condition of the instrumentation. "My first order of business would be to send the engine to 'Nailhead' Matt Martin in California, who is an artist who works in the nailhead medium; he's the ultimate authority in these V-8s. I believe the rest of the car deserves a nut-and-bolt restoration, too. That time will come soon," Tim says. 🚗





Although the cabin is in dire need of detailing, it looks otherwise complete.

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Malaise Set **ABLAZE**

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO



A turbocharger, custom body mods and paint, and Recaro seats transform a 1981 Oldsmobile Omega into a sizzling PPG Pace Car



Imagine discovering a one-of-a-kind PPG Indy Car World Series Pace Car while shopping dealers of pre-owned vehicles for a daily driver. In early 2020, that's exactly what Mike Blaze did. Then he bought it!

The production engineer from southwestern Pennsylvania recalls, "I was looking for an SUV at Marion Motors in Connellsville, when talk turned to cars. The owner had an AC Cobra (kit car) in his garage and asked if I would like to see it. While walking through the six bays, I saw something under a cover and asked about it." It was this 1981, GM X-body-based, front-wheel-drive, Oldsmobile Omega PPG Pace Car showing just under 14,000 miles. "I'd never seen anything like it," Mike admits, "so I looked it over inside and out."

Once back home, "I did some research, but found very little beyond a brief writeup on ppgpacecars.com," he remembers. Only one photo was available then, and this car was believed to have been crushed. Mike went back to convince the owner to sell, and he quickly agreed. It was later learned that "he was retiring," Mike recalls, "so I happened to be in the right place at the right time."

For the 1981 race season, PPG developed, financed, and participated in a pace car program where the four major American automakers—GM, Ford, Chrysler, and AMC—were challenged to apply advanced aerodynamic exterior design principles and forward-thinking powertrain and chassis engineering to a production model. Consequently, PPG Pace Cars from Chevrolet, Mercury, Dodge, and AMC were built for the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART)-sanctioned PPG Indy Car World Series.

It appears that this Omega may have replaced the Chevrolet later in the 1981 season, and it was used for 1982. The Cavalier Type-10 was included in a two-part article in *Hot Rod* magazine (August and September 1981) that introduced each of the different automakers' PPG Pace Car offerings, but the Oldsmobile wasn't in it.



Senior Creative Designer Glen Durmisevich, at Oldsmobile Exterior Design Studio 2, styled the rear of the Omega PPG Pace Car.

GM Design Archive and Special Collections provided a rendering of the Omega dated June 15, 1981, by Glen Durmisevich, a senior creative designer at Oldsmobile Exterior Design Studio 2, which was headed by Chief Designer John Perkins. Glen explains, "We had a really good working relationship with Jack Schwartz, who ran the PPG Pace Car program. This car was sort of a quick job. My rear design was chosen, and I was part of a team along with Assistant Chief Designer Ed Welburn, and Senior Creative Designer Dave Rand, that developed the overall design."

He concludes, "The car was built by an outside firm, but I don't recall which

one it was." No documentation has yet surfaced from other sources on that subject either. The Omega was photographed with the aforementioned pace cars for the back cover of the 1982 *PPG Indy Car World Series News Media Guide*, but the Cavalier Type-10 wasn't in that photo.

To draw attention to the race series, PPG, and Oldsmobile, the Omega was fitted with a custom fiberglass front end with integrated air dam and revised grilles, tinted headlamp covers, wheel flares, lower body kit, and a rear spoiler, and the car was repainted in metallic gold and brown hues from PPG's Automotive Finishes Group. "Omega PPG Pace Car" and "1981 Indy Car World Series"

graphics were applied on each side, as were "PPG Pace Car Team" decals (soon to be replicated) on the quarter-panels. An "Oldsmobile" callout was added to the top of the windshield, and the exterior rearview mirrors were swapped for a sleeker design.

According to the *Hot Rod* article, maintaining 120 to 125 mph on the track with a lightbar mounted on the roof was a pace car requirement. To that end, the Omega's transverse-mounted, Chevrolet 2.8-liter, two-barrel, V-6 was modified, but Mike has been unable to confirm who did the upgrades or determine the extent of them.

From his under-hood investigations, he learned that a turbocharger from Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries Co. of Japan (IHI) was installed. Driven by exhaust gases, it blows compressed air into the engine through bright tubing, a fabricated aluminum hat, and a 500-cfm Holley two-barrel carburetor. An electric fuel pump and regulator augment the fuel system, and the GM HEI lights the spark. Aluminum full-roller rockers were discovered when he peered through the oil-fill hole in one of the chrome GM rocker covers.

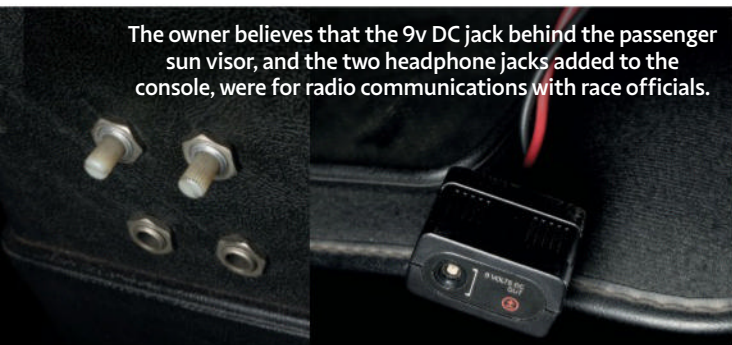
Revised manifolds, a 2.5-inch down-pipe, a single head-pipe, and a single-inlet/dual-outlet muffler comprise the exhaust system. Mike mentions, "I had the oil pan off and confirmed that it was modified with a larger capacity sump and baffle and plumbed to supply oil to the turbocharger. Grinding marks on the rod caps, for the purpose of balancing, were also visible." The three-speed automatic transaxle remains.

A larger 1.25-inch diameter solid front anti-roll bar was installed, and Mike believes that the spring rates were increased in the MacPherson strut front-end and beam-axle-with-trailing-link rear suspension, as well, but the power rack-and-pinion steering and power front disc and rear drum brakes appear to have been left stock.

The inside was fortified with articulating Recaro bucket seats, black and tan custom



The owner believes that the 9v DC jack behind the passenger sun visor, and the two headphone jacks added to the console, were for radio communications with race officials.





ABOVE: A turbocharger installation and exhaust, valvetrain, and carburetion upgrades (and possibly more) increased the output of the 2.8-liter 60-degree V-6 engine for track duty.

Recaro seats and custom upholstery throughout the cockpit add sporty and plush accommodations to this Oldsmobile Omega PPG Pace Car.



cloth upholstery, and audio jacks and wiring for on-track communications. A brace of stock-appearing instruments, as well as an aftermarket oil pressure gauge were added. Mike had the sagging headliner replaced, but believes that the dash pad, carpet, and AM/FM/cassette stereo are original.

This pace car headed the pack at various PPG Indy Car World Series races, and there's even online video of it in action during ESPN coverage back in the day. Following their track use, many of the PPG Pace Cars were thought to have been destroyed, but this one was instead returned to Bendik Oldsmobile in Pittsburgh, and later sold to a private party.

Before the previous owner purchased it in 1994, the car was repainted in the PPG hues, and Mike notes the newer gold appears to be lighter than the older, which remains in the engine bay. (Code-11 on the body data plate reveals that this car was originally white.)

Soon after Mike took ownership, he replaced the Oldsmobile banner on the windshield with one that matches the banner shown in historical photos. He also purchased a period-correct lightbar through a Facebook group dedicated to that subject. Gold BBS aluminum wheels were shown in some vintage photos, but he learned from the company that they were

likely one-offs. Thus, Mike turned to JNC Wheels for an upsized set of 16x8-inch machined-lip aluminum wheels shod with P225/50R16 tires.

In the summer of 2020, the pace car began accumulating accolades, including "Best Car 1980 to 1989" at a Memorial Day cruise; "Best of Show" at the inaugural Northside Coffee and Cars at Commonplace Coffee in Pittsburgh with an accompanying writeup by *obscure-cars-daily* on Instagram; and an article on *hotcars.com*. Recently, Mike was interviewed about the car for *radridespodcast.com*, and the Omega was featured in the NPD "Malaise Era" display tent at the 2023 GM Nationals in Carlisle.

Regarding the pace car's road manners, Mike notes, "It was built more for top-end, of course, considering its duties, yet its acceleration isn't overwhelming." To be fair, it could be that his benchmark for "quick" is influenced by the capabilities of his 1966 Pontiac Bonneville's 389 four-barrel engine or his street/strip 1972 Le Mans's modified 455.

He adds, "It drives as expected for early 1980s technology, but the steering is tight, it goes exactly where you want to, and it handles very well with little body



The owner sourced a correct light bar that he mounts on the roof of the pace car at events.



roll thanks to its suspension and wheel/tire mods. It brakes like vehicles of the day since no upgrades were made there."

Currently, the Omega has about 14,800 miles on it, and Mike exercises it for about 200 miles each year, driving it to shows that are within 30 minutes of home. He trailers it to distant venues. The only mishap thus far is "its lightbar flew off on the highway," he laments. "I mount the bar magnetically when at shows, and I thought it would be fine for a short trip, but it wasn't. It has since been repaired."

He concludes, "I enjoy pulling into a show and seeing the looks as folks try to figure out what this car is. Doing the detective work and bringing to light some of its forgotten past has been satisfying. I do feel privileged to be the current steward of a car that shared track time with some of the greatest names in racing, like A.J. Foyt, Bobby Unser, and Mario Andretti—just to name a few." Mike went out looking for a used SUV and came home with "a piece of automotive history."



The Sport steering wheel, engine-turned instrument panel trim, and some of the gauges were factory options, but the 6,500 rpm redline, 8,000 rpm tach, and the 140-mph speedometer with the Oldsmobile logo are likely one-offs for the pace car. 🏎️

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BY TOM COMERRO



DEMO DAYS AT THE SIMEONE

The schedule for Demo Days at the Simeone Museum has been announced featuring a full slate of gatherings planned for select Saturdays from May to November. Each event kicks off at 11:15 a.m. and will include a brief presentation on the technical specs, historic context, and pedigree of each of the museum's featured event vehicles. After, a driving demonstration around the Simeone's three-acre tarmac will commence where you can see, hear, and experience up close the various cars.

Leading off on May 25 will be Brass Era Racing at Fairmount Park in nearby Philadelphia. Learn how the largest sporting event in the history of the city was banned due to safety concerns despite no serious injuries occurring. Among the cars to be shown will be a 1911 Mercer 35J raceabout, a 1912 National Speed Model 40, and a 1916 Stutz Bearcat.

Further Demo Days, and their associated cars, are listed here. For more about Demo Days, visit simeonemuseum.org.

June 15: Little Le Mans: The Simeone 12 Heures—various Simeone Museum cars.

July 13: Die Deutschen Ingenieure, Ferdinand Porsche, Fritz Fielder, Rudolf Uhlenhaut—1927 Mercedes-Benz Sportwagen, 1937 BMW 328, 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL.

July 27: British Designers; Laurence Pomeroy, William Heynes, Ted Cutting—1921 Vauxhall 30/98E, 1938 Jaguar SS-100 3.5-litre, 1958 Aston Martin DBR1.

August 24: The Advent of Aerodynamics, Going Faster!—1956 Jaguar D-Type, 1967 Ford GT40 MK IV, 1963 Corvette Grand Sport.

September 28: Speed Records, Ormond Beach, Jabbeke, Bonneville—1936 Bugatti Type 57G Tank, 1953 Jaguar XK120 FHC, 1908 Stanley Model K, 1964 Shelby Daytona coupe.

October 26: Alfa Romeo, 8C Piloti—1933 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 MM Spyder, 1933 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Le Mans, 1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900A.

November 23: Team Shelby; Remington, Brock, Olsen, Miles—1964 Shelby Daytona coupe, 1964 Shelby Cobra roadster.



COMPETITION CLASSICS AT THE LANE

Vintage race cars will be on display in an updated Competition Classics exhibit at The Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tennessee. The exhibit will showcase vehicles that were made to compete since the dawn of racing. Examples include two- to four-wheel racing vehicles, open-wheel, and full-body cars, and even those that were human powered without motors. There is plenty of time to catch the tribute to racing history as the exhibit will be open to the public until January 20, 2025. Visit lanemotormuseum.org for more information.



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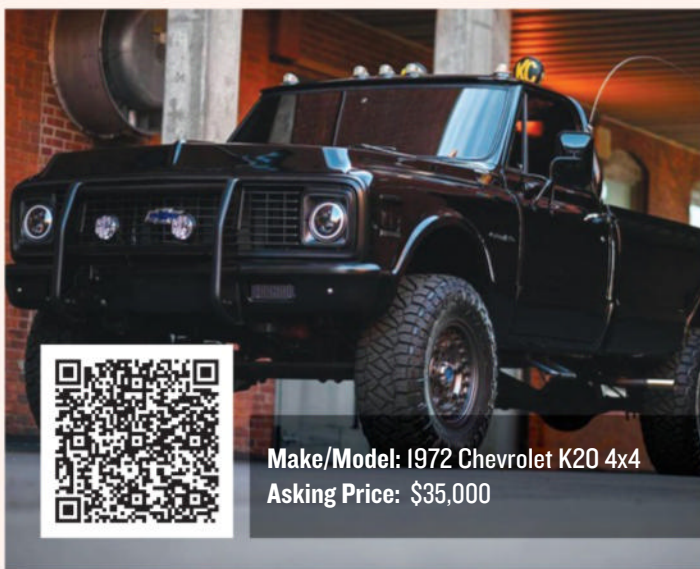
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Make/Model: 1950 GMC 100
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Make/Model: 1972 Chevrolet K20 4x4
Asking Price: \$35,000



Make/Model: 1963 Chevrolet
Impala Coupe
Asking Price: \$65,895



Make/Model: 1968 Pontiac GTO Hardtop
Asking Price: \$39,000

BY TOM COMERRO

PROFESSIONAL CAR SOCIETY



ANOTHER "PONY PACER"

Gregg D. Merksamer, publicity and media relations chair of the Professional Car Society, dropped us a line after reading about the Chrysler mobile barrier used at Yonkers Raceway in the December issue of *HCC*. Being just 15 miles from the world's oldest active harness racing circuit, he's seen his share of track cars at the Goshen Historic Track in Goshen, New York.

Gregg writes: "The thing I remember most about my visits to 'The Cradle of the Trotter' was that the start of every race around the half-mile oval was once handled by a 1971 Cadillac Series 75 nine-passenger



sedan fitted with huge, wing-like swinging gates. As just 752 Series 75 sedans (designated Model 69732) were produced by Cadillac that model year (plus another 848 partition-equipped Model 69733 limousines that shared the D-body shell and 151.5-inch wheelbase chassis), I endeavored to keep tabs on this car as time passed and was distressed to lose track of it after it was auctioned off about a decade ago."

As fate would have it, Gregg rediscovered the car on August 31, 2020, behind an auto repair shop in New Hampton, New York.

"The shop's supervisor graciously allowed me onto his property to take these photos, which highlight the rooftop 'second story' viewing booth and the swiveling chairs that were added to the rear compartment without removing the original factory jump seats and carpeted footrests. This Cadillac had been used at the New Jersey Meadowlands horse track before Goshen ended up with it, and the car's owner—at the time I rediscovered it—had recently taken it out of storage for a refurbishment preceding its donation back to The Meadowlands."

Gregg says the car had some corrosion issues and the odometer was showing 84,757 miles, but the shop owner told him it was "not bad at all" mechanically and it could still be moved around the facility under its own power. Unfortunately, he has not seen it since and was curious whether it was back at The Meadowlands or if it had found another home.



HISTORIC GOSHEN RACEWAY

COMMERCIAL CAR CONUNDRUM

Dave Crocker, from Mashpee, Massachusetts, sent us this photo of an old delivery vehicle from the World War I era. The Cobb Bates & Yerxa Company is no mystery for Boston-area historians, as the



PROVIDED BY DAVE CROCKER

popular grocers were among the most successful companies of the time, but Dave was curious to know more about the vehicle. We're leaning towards a prewar Autocar but Dave wonders if it could be a Federal. Occasionally one of these will pop up in our classifieds like this "Find of the Day," from 13 years ago, highlighting a 1912 Autocar Type XXI Omnibus, but vehicles from this era are becoming more and more scarce. The photo (left) was taken by one of Dave's relatives in Wellesley, Massachusetts, on June 3, 1915. Let us know what you think it is and if you've seen one recently at your local car show.



1912 Autocar Type XXI Omnibus



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car or vehicle? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to tcomerro@hemmings.com.

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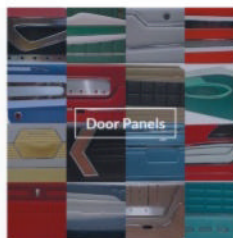


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Favorite Family Flyer

BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL



Nearly 60 years of life with a muscled-up **1962 Ford Falcon wagon**

Maybe you rummaged around in a drawer and found your grandfather's ancient cereal-premium decoder ring. Or maybe it was a cardboard box in your attic, where you rediscovered your very first G.I. Joe, the 12-inch variety. The simple things that serve as gateways to a flood of a lifetime's worth of happy memories. And they don't necessarily have to be toys and trinkets. As a case study we direct your attention to this 1962 Ford Falcon two-door station wagon. It's been in the same North Carolina family for close to 60 years now, a period crammed with good feelings, from giving it a wash outside the carport to heading for the coastline with the whole brood piled in back.

That's why this Falcon wagon is still in the Cannon family, which plucked it off a used-car lot in Charlotte and not just maintained it, but also made it a measurably better car. How so? By having a new engine built around a larger, 200-cu.in. inline-six block that used the top end of the Falcon's original engine. In Cannon family history, the Falcon only lasted five years as a daily driver, but it was an unassailable part of that heritage by then. It's been maintained carefully in a mostly pleasant climate. The Falcon retains its original paint today, along with its original pasted-on pinstripes. It's been upgraded, cosmetically, with fender skirts and a set of higher-trim wheel covers for its 13-inch wheels. And it's still driven, mainly to shows. You see, in the Cannon family, the patriarch is a diehard Falcon fan.

"It's a base car, with factory paint, an NOS interior and headliner, and the bottom end of a 200 engine," says Jeff Cannon, who now preens the Falcon from his home in Granite Quarry, North Carolina. "We bought it in June 1965, and it was our daily driver until 1970, when my father got a Ford Crown Victoria. It was my first car in 1983 when I got my driver's license."

We can learn two things from this quote: The Cannon family is strongly pro-Ford, except for the fact that Jeff briefly owned a Chevrolet while in a dispute with his father over the proper care and use of the Falcon. And that when it comes to Falcons, it's Jeff's father, Wayne Cannon, who has the final say, very much befitting a car guy who just turned 84. Make no mistake: The Falcon's at Jeff's house but Wayne, from Kannapolis, North Carolina, is the reason it's there in the first place.



Owner's View

"Mom drove us back and forth to school, and I think of her hands on the steering wheel. And Dad drove us around for several years, using the knob on the wheel. There are a couple of little dings on it from things hitting it when my brother and I were playing outside and it was sitting in the carport. We used it for going to the beach; going to ball practice; diving into the back through the tailgate. It has an 'ahooga' horn that the guys thought was nerdy, but the girls liked it. It just has a lot of memories for me. The thing Dad's most proud of is the exhaust tips that came off a 1940s Cadillac. It doesn't have dual exhausts. We keep the other tip painted inside." —Jeff Cannon

"In 1965, I was driving a 1951 Chevrolet and a 1950 four-door Plymouth, and I decided to get rid of the Plymouth and get another vehicle," recalls Wayne. "I was living in Charlotte, and I found this wagon sitting on a used car lot. I purchased it and sold the Plymouth at a Ford dealer. The Falcon had belonged to a guy who was a truck driver and it had 30,000 miles on it, so it was a local car.



"We were a family then, so I needed a family vehicle, plus the Falcon was a nice-looking car that caught my eye," continues Wayne. "I bought it for \$950 with \$300 down. I still have the documents for that. I had never owned a station wagon before. Other than the wife taking the kids to the beach, that's about as far as we drove it once we moved to Kannapolis. We'd make a big pallet in the back with blankets, put the kids back there, and lower the back window; it wasn't a problem until you stopped and exhaust fumes started coming in through the back window."

Today, the car's a star—it's been featured in the catalog of Falcon components from Dennis Carpenter Ford Restoration Parts, located just down U.S. 29 from Kannapolis. But it didn't start out that way. For 1962, Ford produced 396,129 copies of the first-generation Falcon in the third year of the model's production, with no breakout available as to trim and body styles. In 1962, the Falcon was offered with two sizes of Ford's third-generation OHV inline six-cylinder engine, displacing 144 and 170 cubic inches, respectively, with a maximum of 101 horsepower.

"I'm not mechanically inclined, and I started having some kind of trouble with the engine," Wayne says. "So, I took it to a

mechanic, and he said that whatever was wrong with it, he'd have to rebuild the bottom part. That was in 1970. He said I could get a 200, and he put that in there and used the top part of the 170 that was in there at first. I have no idea where he got the 200, and I have a copy of the work order, but now, there's a lot of difference in the horsepower."

How much? The 200 was introduced in 1963, in time to be installed in the first-generation Ford Mustang, with slightly bigger bore and stroke measurements than its 170-inch sibling. It is an impressively robust engine, with a cast crankshaft that ran in seven main bearings beginning in 1965. The Cannons' engine has never been on a dyno, but when the 200-inch version was produced by Dearborn, it was factory rated at 120 horsepower. Today, the bigger six has no trouble motivating the Falcon through its Ford-O-Matic automatic transmission. "I'm pretty happy with it," Wayne says.

Over the years, Wayne gradually became a Falcon fan, and passed the wagon on to Jeff to drive. As Jeff reminisces, "I got my license and drove the car for maybe six months. A 21-year-old station wagon was not a cool car for a teenager at that time, plus parents didn't like a guy picking up their daughter in a station wagon.





Aside from the aftermarket chrome rocker cover, there are few clues that the Falcon's original 170-cu.in. short block has been swapped for a 200-cu.in. version.

One day, after about six months, a hubcap fell off and I didn't know it. And Dad said, 'You're not driving that car anymore because of that hubcap,' so I went out and bought a 1969 Camaro."

The disagreement emerged because at that time, the Falcon was still decidedly Mom and Dad's car at their home. Wayne unfailingly washed the Falcon every week, waxed it on schedule, and generally kept it spiffy even as the base upholstery started to deteriorate. In 1996, Jeff and Wayne obtained a supply of NOS vinyl materials and fully restored the interior, adding a new headliner at the same time, with Jeff saying that the interior's condition remains "perfect" today. The work was done at George's Trim Shop in Kannapolis. The interior door panels remain original, the knobs were replaced with Dennis Carpenter pieces about two years ago, and a set of engine gauges now reside beneath the dashboard. Under the hood, the 200 boasts a chrome rocker cover, also from Dennis Carpenter.

Wayne still has the original Falcon hubcaps from 1962, which he replaced with units from a 1962 Falcon Futura that he grabbed once he became a Falcon enthusiast in earnest. "The pinstripes are actually tape," Wayne explains. "I found the skirts from a person in Winston-Salem who messed in Falcon parts, and I bought them from him. I was trying to find accessories that would fit on the car. I put the

little chrome half-moons, we call them, on the headlamps."

"Dad was in the Navy, and he's always been very particular about the cleanliness of things, so there wasn't a lot for me to do with the car," Jeff says. "Later on, Dad had a big building constructed out back, and he stored the Falcon in there for a number of years. Then he brought it out, had it on the road a few more years, and then it went back into storage for another 10 or 12 years. It still has original paint thanks to Dad's great care."

Cars like this get noticed, especially once the owner turns into something of an authority of the marque. Time passed,

and Wayne kept acquiring early Falcons. One of them was a 1962 Ford Ranchero that, according to Wayne, "went to pot." Next came a 1961 Falcon that went to Wayne's brother-in-law, who crammed in a 289-cu.in. V-8 with much more power than the little bird had stock. He bought that car back, but it eventually experienced an engine failure. Undaunted, Wayne then got a 1963 Falcon Futura hardtop, which he personally restored, and which has been a show winner in North Carolina for years. So, it's no surprise that Wayne headed to the huge AACA AutoFair show at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

"The wagon was just a car that I





liked to start with, but in 1999, I took the car to AutoFair and accumulated some old car parts," Wayne says. "When I came back, there was a little sticker on the windshield. Someone who represented the Falcon club put it there, so I joined the club. It's the Carolina Chapter of the Falcon Club of America, which is now based in Lincolnton. I was the chapter president for seven years."

Fast forward a couple of decades, and the Falcon, still riding on impossible-to-find 13-inch whitewalls, was back at the speedway, where Jeff and Wayne had taken to showing the Falcons together. "The AutoFair officials came by and started looking at Dad's '63, which was in contention for Best Restoration by Owner. Then they started talking about the wagon. So, they ended up giving the wagon the Most Original Unre-

stored for the meet, because they couldn't award two cars from the same club.

"The wagon is excellent to drive," Jeff says beaming. "We had the carburetor rebuilt last year and it starts right up, runs like a top. It has manual steering, which is why there's a knob on the wheel."

"When I get in the wagon and mash the gas, the 200 is faster than my '63," Wayne says. "Plus, it's bulletproof." 🚗



Period accessories abound, including fender skirts, Futura wheel covers, decals and pinstriping, aftermarket gauges, and even an underdash tissue dispenser.





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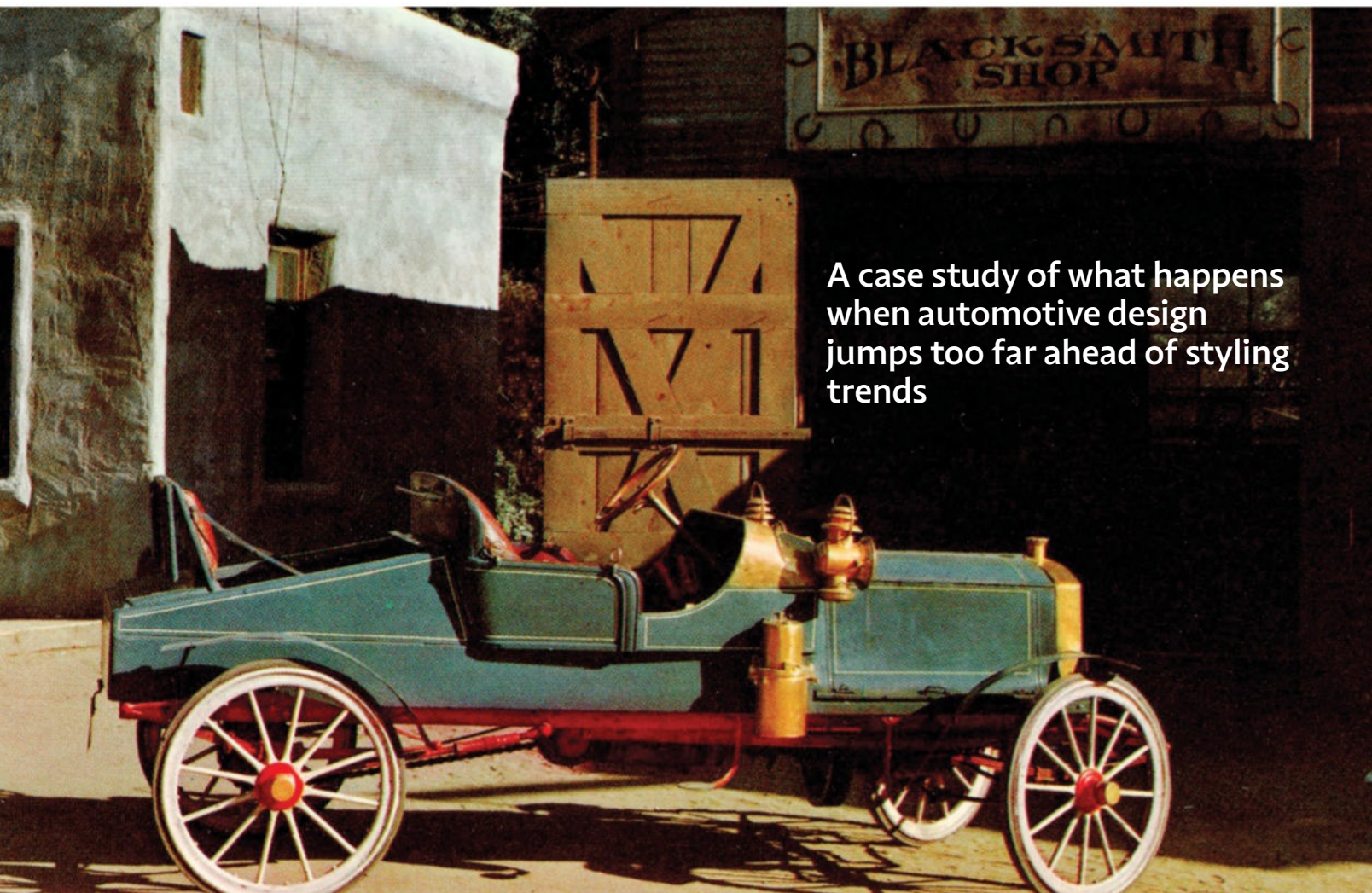








Mitchell Automobiles



A case study of what happens when automotive design jumps too far ahead of styling trends

One of the first products of the Mitchell Motor Car Company was the small runabout seen here. Although the photo is identified as a 1903 model it appears to be of later vintage, possibly 1904/1905.

THERE'S AN OLD saying in the automobile business: You never want to be too far behind styling trends, or too far ahead. Finding that sweet spot between styling that's too conservative and too advanced is critical, and the Mitchell automobile is a good example of what can happen when a design is too far ahead of trends.

In 1919 the Mitchell Motor Company of Racine, Wisconsin, was considered a veteran automaker. It had begun producing motorcars in 1903, one year after Rambler and the same year as Ford Motor Company. Mitchell was profitable, a picture of success and prosperity, yet five years later the company was out of business and its plant sold to another carmaker. It proved a cautionary tale for other automobile companies.

The Mitchell saga began in 1838 when Scottish immigrant Henry Mitchell moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin, and established the Mitchell Wagon Company, a manufacturer that became known as "The first wagon maker of the Northwest." Successful almost from the start, in 1854 Mitchell moved his business to larger quarters in nearby Racine. It continued to expand and in time son-in-law William Lewis joined the company. Lewis eventually headed the firm and changed its name to Mitchell & Lewis Wagon Company. During the Gay Nineties, Mitchell & Lewis established another business, the Wisconsin Wheel Works, to produce bicycles, and for a while was manufacturing light motorcycles too. Thus, established in the transportation field, the

idea of producing automobiles was the next logical step.

In a major change of company direction, Wisconsin Wheel Works sold its bicycle business and was succeeded by the Mitchell Motor Car Company, a subsidiary of the Mitchell-Lewis Wagon Company. The former's first models were two small runabouts: one powered by a 7-hp, single-cylinder two-stroke engine, the other by a 4-hp, four-stroke single. Reportedly, sales were modest, despite prices that began at a mere \$600 for the 4-hp model. It seems the company initially had difficulty reaching high-volume production due to problems acquiring sufficient parts and components, but when resolved sales quickly improved.

For 1904 a new 7-hp two-cylinder runabout on a 72-inch wheelbase chassis,



ABOVE: This 1907 Mitchell Model D 24/30-hp five-passenger Touring car rode a 100-inch wheelbase and was priced at \$1,800. Note the stylish flared front fenders and large brass headlamps.

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If you want a car for your own use mail this coupon today.

Don't fail to read Motor's Classified Advertising on pages 6 and 7.

This 1909 Mitchell ad appeared in industry trade papers and was aimed at dealers looking for a new product to sell. Mitchell bragged that its cars came equipped with "... a double ignition system, using both a battery and a \$150 magneto for which no extra charge is made."

and a 16-hp four-cylinder touring model on a 90-inch wheelbase, replaced the previous one-lungers. The two-passenger runabout was priced at \$750, while the five-passenger touring car started at \$1,500.

In the years that followed Mitchell cars grew bigger and more powerful. In 1906 a 24/30-hp five-passenger, 100-inch wheelbase Model D-4 Touring car joined the expanded lineup priced at \$1,800. The company reportedly sold 663 cars that year. For 1907 Mitchell offered three distinct series: the Model E, a 20-hp two-passenger Runabout on a 90-inch wheelbase; the Model D 24/30-hp five-passenger, 100-inch wheelbase Touring; and the Model F seven-passenger Touring on a 108-inch wheelbase. Prices ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and total sales

more than doubled.

By 1910, Mitchell was offering five models: two- and three-passenger runabouts and a Runabout Surrey in the Model R series, each powered by a 30-hp four-cylinder engine and priced at \$1,100; and two touring cars, a 30-hp four-cylinder Model T for \$1,350, and a 50-hp six-cylinder Model S priced at a lofty \$2,000. That year's sales totaled 5,733 units. (There was even a jaunty little song titled "Give Me a Spin in Your Mitchell, Bill," a recording of which can still be found on the internet.) The same year, Lewis retired, and Mitchell Motor Car Company and Mitchell & Lewis merged to form the Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company with Lewis's son, William Mitchell Lewis, named president.

BELOW: Mitchell's 1910 cars were priced from \$1,100 to \$2,000. The company said of its car, "It is rakish, smart, refined, solid, comfortable and luxurious. It is silent in running - absolutely silent - and it will last and serve you faithfully for years to come."

CYCLE AND AUTOMOBILE TRADE JOURNAL. 155

Mitchell

SILENT AS THE FOOT OF TIME

THE whole world is fast coming to know that the Mitchell is the low-cost, high-class car. America, France, England, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Norway, contribute in share of praise for Mitchell beauty and construction.

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It is low-cost, because it is not puffed on the hysterical basis, and because our facilities are so complete that we can keep down the cost of construction to where it belongs.

It is high-class because it is made of the same highest-class materials that the world's highest priced cars are made of, and quality is never sacrificed for quantity.

It is beautifully designed, finished and equipped. It is rakish, smart, refined, solid, comfortable and luxurious. It is silent in its running—absolutely silent—and it will last and serve you faithfully for years to come.

What more can there be to an automobile, and why should any car on earth sell for more money?

THREE MAGNIFICENT MODELS

The Mitchell Six Cylinder, 50 horse power, 7 passengers, \$2,000.
The Mitchell Touring Car, 30-35 horse power, 5 passengers, 1,350.
The Mitchell Runabout, 20-25 horse power, 3 passengers, \$1,100.

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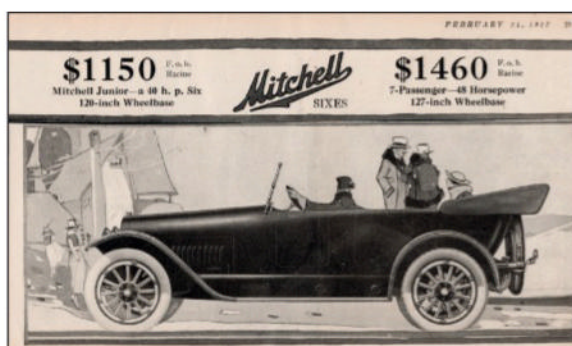
This photo is labeled “Gotch and his Mitchell Demonstrator,” so we believe the man is probably a Mitchell salesman. The car appears to be a circa-1911 model.

The big news at Mitchell for 1916 was the new line of touring and roadster models known collectively as “The Six of ‘16.” Riding a 125-inch wheelbase chassis, the three-passenger roadster and five-passenger touring were priced at \$1,250 each; the seven-passenger touring was just \$35 more. A demountable sedan top for winter usage could be added for \$165. Midway through the model year the wheelbase was increased to 127 inches.

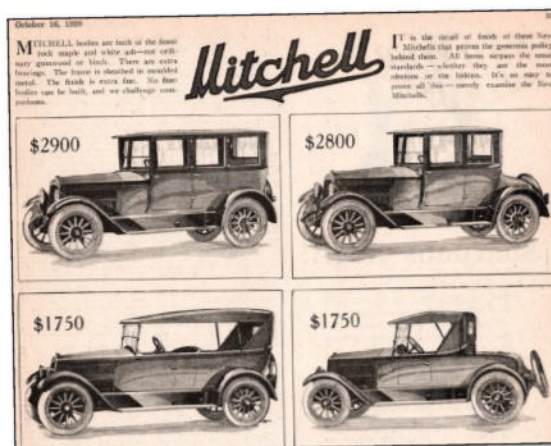


In 1912 a stylish \$2,500 four-cylinder Limousine joined a line-up that included a budget-priced 25-hp Runabout for \$950 and a \$1,150 Touring car, both of which used a four-cylinder engine and a 100-inch-wheelbase chassis. Also available was a \$1,350 four-cylinder Touring, while a Model 5-6 34-hp Baby Six Touring and Roadster were available on a 125-inch wheelbase, each costing \$1,750. Finally, there was a big seven-passenger Model 7-6 six-cylinder Touring on a regal 135-inch wheelbase for \$2,250. Sales for the year were 5,145 cars.

Unfortunately, sales were just 3,087 cars in 1913 and William M. Lewis left the firm to start a new company building the so-called Lewis car. Banker Joseph Winterbottom took over as president and the firm was reorganized as the Mitchell Motor Company. Only 3,500 Mitchells were sold in 1914, perhaps a result of the company's emphasis on higher-priced models. For 1915 new lower-priced Light Four and Light Six models seemed just the



The Mitchell line of six-cylinder cars for 1917 saw lower prices, with the Mitchell seven-passenger priced at \$1,460 and the Mitchell Junior priced at \$1,150.



Mitchell's troubles began in 1920 when it introduced radical new styling features that included a forward-placed windshield center post and angled windshield glass on its closed cars, as seen here. Combined with the backward slanting radiator shell, it produced a look that startled people and earned the nickname “The Drunken Mitchell.” Touring cars and roadsters also got the sweptback radiator but were spared the ungainly-looking windshield.

thing to spark a revival, and some 6,174 Mitchells were sold that year.

Mitchell sales manager Otis Friend then took over as president. Believing that offering more cylinders was the way to go, for 1916 the company dropped its four-cylinder models in favor of value-priced six- and eight-cylinder cars. It was the right move; sales climbed to 9,589 units, its highest total yet.

The company continued to flourish, selling 10,069 cars in 1917, but in '18 Otis Friend left to start his own car company in Pontiac, Michigan. Replacing him was former General Electric executive D.C. Durland. Things initially went well, and by 1919, Mitchell prices ranged from \$1,275 to \$2,850; some 10,100 cars were sold. While the company was profitable, it seems management might have been feeling overconfident because for '20 it was decided new Mitchells would feature unique styling touches to help them stand out.

Sedans boasted unusual vee'd windshields, with a prominent forward-placed center post supporting angled side panes,

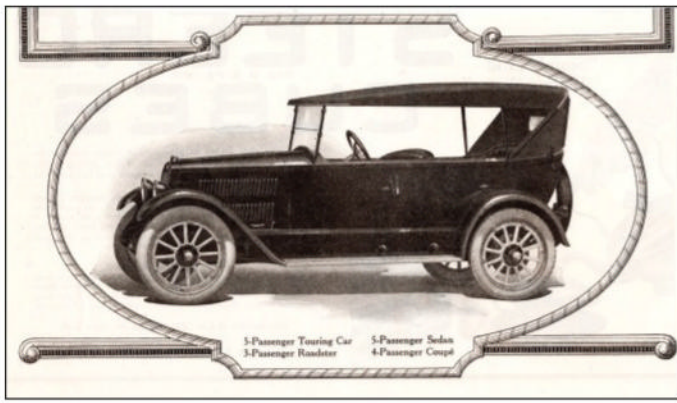
and cowls featured a forward sweep on each side, very much in the style of expensive custom-built cars. The angle of the sweep didn't match the angle of the windshield post, which gave the closed cars a slightly odd appearance. The biggest styling feature, one that was impossible to ignore, was a radiator that tilted back at a noticeable angle. Print advertisements bragged that “Future styling trends...” were “Forecasted by the new Mitchell design.” Ads claimed, “These new Mitchell Sixes bring to motoring America its first accurate example of the coming style [and].... viewed from any angle—from inside or out—the effect is impressive.”

Looking at the 1920 Mitchells today it's difficult to see any big styling problem. In fact, on Touring models the sweptback radiator adds to the sporty appeal, at least in my opinion. But on closed cars the different lines and angles of the split vee'd windshield post, cowl sweeps, and radiator shell offer too much visual conflict. Apparently, they must have seemed even more at odds with convention then because the '20 models soon earned the nickname “The Drunken Mitchells.”

Pundits love to poke fun, so “The Drunken Mitchell” sobriquet stuck. It's easy to guess what happened next.



This Mitchell ad boasts its new styling features for 1920, ironic since they proved too advanced for buyers' tastes and eventually caused the company to fail.



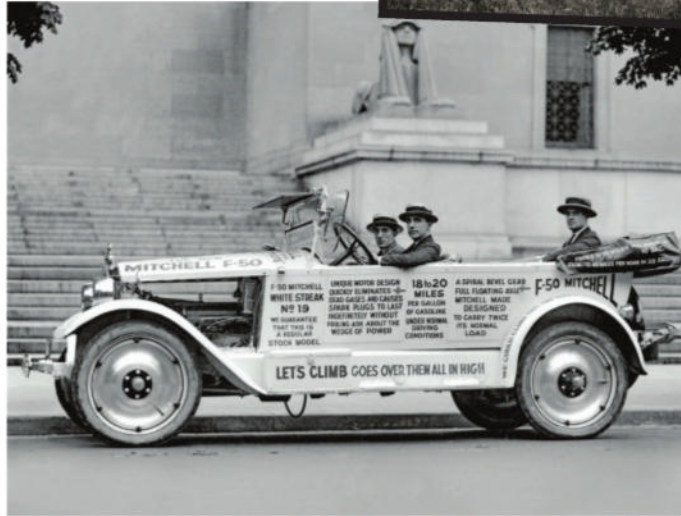
RIGHT: Another 1920 Mitchell Touring, this one with its proud owners. Note the unusual shape of the headlamp rings. Bumpers were an option and these folks decided not to get them.



The 1920 Mitchell Touring car, to my eyes, looks a bit sporty with its sweptback radiator shell, but many buyers didn't like it.

Sales fell 36 percent, with the slump worsening in 1921 when a mere 2,162 cars were sold, this even after a hasty restyle. The '22 model year was about the same. Then in 1923 Mitchell sales collapsed entirely and only about 100 cars were sold. The company had come to the end of the line. Despite a history going back more than 80 years, Mitchell was gone by the end of 1923.

One company benefitted from Mitchell's demise. In January 1924, the Nash Motors Company of Kenosha, needing more production capacity, acquired the Mitchell plant for \$405,000. 🚗



The Mitchell Company tried various promotions and demonstrations to drum up interest in its restyled cars in 1922, including the "Million Mile Test," but to no avail. The company closed its doors in 1923. Its big, well-equipped plant was sold to Nash Motors the following January.



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BUICK'S INNOVATIVE TORTURE TEST

Aircraft-like refueling on the fly at Daytona in 1960

BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BUZ MCKIM FROM THE COLLECTION OF OLIN HOPES





The credit for the technique doesn't belong to the automotive firmament but instead, to the aviation pioneer Alexander P. de Seversky, who in 1923 figured out a way to refuel one U.S. Army Air Service biplane from another one buzzing alongside, filled to bursting with aviation gasoline. Today, nobody does air-to-air refueling better than the U.S. military. In the world of cars, though, it's largely an unknown practice, except for three days at the still-new Daytona International Speedway in 1960, when Buick decided on a novel, and nearly forgotten, way of refueling a car at speed.

It was a unique exercise in durability conducted by Buick, which advertised the test as "10,000 Miles in 5,000 Minutes." It involved a moderately prepared 1960 Buick Invicta hardtop, one of 8,960 produced that year, which circled the superspeedway under the clock with a brace of early NASCAR stars doing stints at the wheel. The objective was to keep the Invicta rolling, at an average speed of 120 mph, an effort that would eventually set multiple international records. But it took a second Invicta hardtop to make everything happen, and to prove that the never-tried trick of fueling one car from another, at maximum speed, would actually work.

Today, the Buick effort is arguably the least-known of several prominent manufacturer evaluations that took place on Daytona's yawning high banks during the track's first decade of existence. According to Buz McKim, founding director of the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, North Carolina, and an authority on early Daytona race history, Rambler held a long-distance test for its new models in 1961, two years after the superspeedway opened, that ended when one of the drivers fatally crashed. Mercury showed up around 1964 with a 100,000-mile run wringing out its new, restyled Comet line.

Buick, however, was the first. The two cars it brought to Daytona were both Invicta hardtops, powered by the Wildcat 401-cu.in. V-8, Buick's brawniest, which thumped out 325 horsepower. The first one, which would do the record run, was mildly modified with Firestone racing tires, reinforced racing wheels (very likely supplied by the Holman Moody stock car skunk works in Charlotte), a roll bar (likely also from Holman Moody), hood tie-downs, and auxiliary gauges that monitored functions like the temperature of the rear end and Super Turbine automatic transmission. What was most unusual was the tubular apparatus on the decklid, which incorporated a wide basket.

The second Invicta was equipped with a similar external system on its side, which held a nozzle and a line leading to a massive fuel tank located where the rear seat used to be. The trick—and in those years, that's what it was—involved getting a running start with the fuel-filled Invicta just as the record runner zoomed into view. The Buicks would match speed and the "tanker" driver would align his car so that the nozzle was captured by the basket on the rear of the record car. The pressurized Pure gasoline would then surge into the test car's ventilated fuel tank, 15 gallons in six seconds, usually while both cars were charging down Daytona's long backstretch.

This car-to-car refueling took place about every half-hour as the test Invicta roared around the track. Doing it right required a disciplined hand, which is why Buick assembled an all-star lineup of driving talent for the Invicta test that included Fireball Roberts, Marvin Panch, Tiny Lund, Larry Frank, and Bobby Johns, with local short track hero Larry Flynn also on the team. Part of the clutch of mechanics who worked the test was Olin Hopes, then a crew member for the famed Daytona Beach race car builder, Ray Fox. Prior to that, Hopes had turned wrenches for the pioneering NASCAR mechanic Red Vogt and the early Hudson Hornet star Marshall Teague. Today, Olin, 87, is believed to be the last surviving participant in the Buick test.

"To be honest with you, I don't even know how I got involved with it," Olin remembers today. "I was just standing around when Buick showed up with these cars, and the next thing you know, I'm involved."

The car-to-car refueling was performed as a way to cut down the amount of time the Invicta spent in the pits. Aside from refueling the car on the fly about every 30 minutes, tires would be changed every two hours, at which time a driver swap would also occur. Even this was anticipated by the Buick engineers. They fabricated a special ramp that the Buick would mount during each pit stop.

"I just jumped right in," Hopes recalls. "Buick had one guy for each tire with their air guns in the pits. They also had a forklift to pick the car up in the air instead of a jack. The car would come in, get up on the ramp to get it off the ground, and then I'd use the forklift to get the car further up just enough so the drivers could get out while the crew changed all four tires and put more fuel in."

The whole operation was coordinated by radio from the track tower. Engineers would track fuel consumption and warn the Invicta driver when a fuel-on-the-fly was

about to happen. Hopes would climb into the second Invicta, which was waiting on pit road for the test car to thunder into sight.

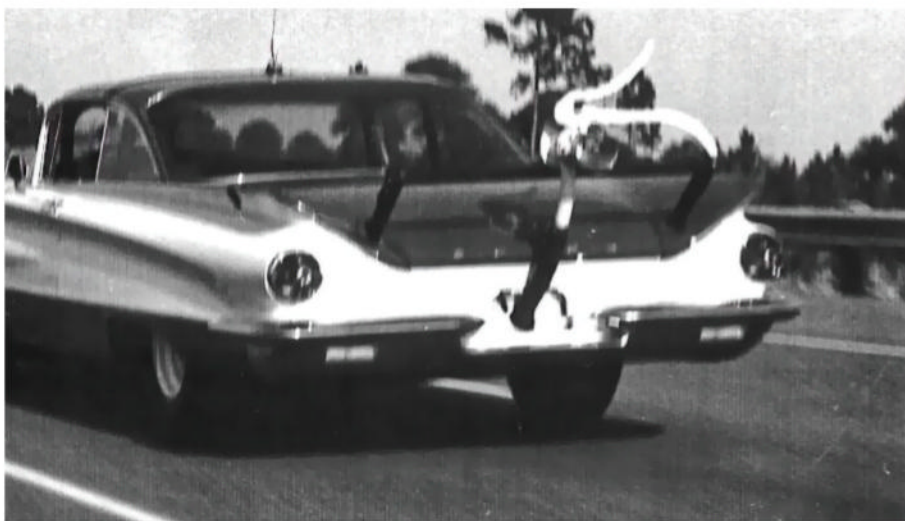
"On the back of the Buick, there was a system that looked like a V," he explains. "It was attached to the back of the car, and the car that had the fuel tank in it, which I called a big diaphragm; we'd fill it up with gas and pressurize it. As the test car would come around the track, we had a certain spot where we'd sit, so when the guy was on the track, we would pick up the car, and then tell the guy driving in the refueling car, 'Go.' I'd be hanging on to the roll bar, no helmet or anything. We'd be on pit road, and I'd tell the driver, go, and we'd take off. The car doing the test would pass us, and we'd get in behind him, and this arm sticking out of our car would slide into the V, and we'd bring the car over hard enough where you could flip the lever, and then bang, the pump would shoot the fuel into the nozzle just like a jet airplane. Six seconds to refuel."

It was a complicated setup, especially so for a team that hadn't tried it before, but the refueling formation worked beautifully most of the time. Hopes recalls that the test had to start over again after one of the drivers struck what was variously called a large raccoon or an opossum, which ripped loose the Invicta's transmission line, forcing a lengthy repair and a redo of the record run. But Hopes still got a prime opportunity to perfect the refueling drill.

"Fireball said to me, 'Marvin and I want to set the fastest refueling.' He got in the car and said to me, 'Start the run another 100 feet sooner.' I talked to Marvin and told him just to keep his foot in it," Hopes says. "Fireball was driving the fueling car, and he floored it. We went into turn one, never lifted. By the time we got to turn two, Marvin was right there with us. We had the nozzle in before we hit the flat part of the track, boom. And we did that refueling run at 128 mph. We had a red light and a green light on the instrument panel, and when it made the connection, you'd hear this whoosh, and it would take less than six seconds. When the red light went off and the green light went on, the lead car never slacked up, and we'd just touch our brakes, the nozzle would pop loose, he'd keep going and we'd head back into the pits to load up for the next refueling."

After the errant-beast episode, the Buick test came off swimmingly, clocking 10,000 miles in slightly more than 83 non-stop hours. It took exactly 4,000 laps around Daytona, the equivalent of 20 Daytona 500 races without a break. Which was exactly what Hopes was looking for when it was over.

"That's when I went home and went to bed," he declared. 🛏



A group photo of the drivers from the 1960 Buick endurance test. Among them were "Fireball" Roberts, Larry Frank, Bobby Johns, Marvin Panch, "Tiny" Lund, and Larry Flynn.



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FIVE-SPEED FOR AN EARLY HEMI

Q: My grandfather gave me the engine he kept out of his old 1953 Chrysler when he learned I was rebuilding my 1958 De Soto into a cruiser. The engine is a 331-cu.in. hemi with an extended bellhousing, and I want to put a modern five-speed transmission behind it. Before I start looking for a donor transmission or a new one, is this something that can be accomplished without having to manufacture an adapter for the 331 block that will accept a stock T-5 or an aftermarket Tremec? I will also need the correct flywheel and a clutch pilot bushing to fit the back of the crankshaft. If I can get the engine and transmission mounted, I can have a custom drive-shaft made to fit the De Soto chassis locally. Any insight you can give would be appreciated. I have heard of several T-5 swaps, so I am assuming there are companies that specialize in these adapters or adapter kits. Thanks in advance.

KYLE LOUDERMILK
VIA HEMMINGS.COM

A: Wilcap Early Hemi Parts offers an adapter for this type of drivetrain swap that allows you to use your existing 331 flywheel and starter. Their part number is 331-FT5 and it's compatible with any 1979-'93 Ford T-5 transmission, as well as the aftermarket Tremec five-speeds. When sourcing a donor T-5 transmission, stay away from the GM F-body or S-10 units for the best compatibility. The kit includes the adapter, mounting hardware, and a pilot bushing adapter; the kit also allows you to use a hydraulic throwout bearing, commonly used in these late-model five-speeds. Wilcap can also supply you with a flywheel, throwout bearing, clutch disc, pressure plate, and starter, if needed. Hopefully, your grandfather still has the starter with the engine as they are very difficult to locate in my experience.

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FORD F-250 FUEL AND STEERING PARTS NEEDS

Q: I'm restoring my 1977 Ford F-250 four-wheel-drive pickup equipped with a 302-cu.in. V-8. I'm having problems locating a few items. My fuel pump has a filter under it inside a can and I ruined the can trying to remove it with a chain wrench. Is

this piece available separately? Also, I'm looking for the accompanying fuel filter that goes inside it. For the power steering, it is a Bendix system, but I need to find a power-steering pump with a reservoir and the small dipstick/reservoir cap that goes with it. Lastly, I am in need of the V-belt for the power steering. Thanks for your help.

RICHIE MOLTON
VIA HEMMINGS.COM

A: A replacement can for the fuel pump is available from Carter as part number 23-96. The fuel filter is a Motorcraft FG-1A or Wix 33271 and it comes with the installation gasket. You should be able to source both items from your local auto parts store. I know that NAPA still offers both items in the same package from marine supplier Sierra as part number 18-7861 because it fits OMC boat engines, too.

The power-steering pump is offered as a remanufactured unit by Lares Corporation, part number 12038, and comes with the reservoir already attached. They also sell the dipstick for this pump assembly as part number 295, available separately. Lares is an excellent supplier for remanufactured Bendix power-steering systems as well. You can purchase their products through suppliers such as National Parts Depot and LMC Truck Parts. They do require a trade-in on all their remanufactured units, so, we would suggest, if you do not have a good unit to trade, you can purchase a brand-new unit outright from A-1 Cardone as part number 816649. You can source the A-1 unit from most auto parts suppliers along with the dipstick (Dorman number 82583) and the power-steering belt (Dayco 17505).

LARES CORPORATION
800-555-0767 • larescorp.com

NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT
800-874-7595 • npdlink.com

LMC TRUCK PARTS
800-562-8782 • lmctruck.com

JEEP CJ DISC-BRAKE SWAP

Q: I have read several articles in Hemmings' publications regarding disc-brake swaps over the years but have yet to see one address a conversion for my pet project, a drum-equipped 1964 Jeep CJ-3B. I hear that kits are available but was wondering if I can acquire the necessary

pieces from any donor cars or trucks where I might purchase them from a pick-a-part-type salvage yard, or a local auto parts store. I know that the Dana front axles were used by several manufacturers. Can you offer any insight into this project? Thank you.

ROBERT MELENDEZ
VIA HEMMINGS.COM

A: Converting the 1941-'71 Jeep to front discs can be done with donor parts, but we aren't sure we would recommend it in this case. Because the Dana front axle was also used in International, Chevrolet, Dodge, and Ford trucks, you can swap parts around among these applications. For starters, you would need to convert to a dual-circuit master cylinder for a non-power-boost application and you will also need to use an appropriate proportioning valve. A master cylinder from a 1977-'78 Jeep CJ-7 is a good candidate (Raybestos p/n MC39808). You can find/acquire backing plates, calipers (Cardone p/n 18-4126 and 18-4127), and caliper mounting brackets from 1971-'78 Chevrolet K5 Blazers or 1/2-ton four-wheel-drive GMC/Chevrolet pickups, but the rotors will not interchange. The single-piston calipers use the popular #D-52 pin-hung disc-brake pads. Hubless front rotors would have to be located for a 1977-'80 CJ-7 (Raybestos #85645), but you would have to modify them to your existing hubs using longer wheel studs. This conversion would also require some grinding on the steering knuckles for caliper clearance, and the oil fill plugs on the steering knuckles need to be changed to flush-mount pipe plugs.

However, because you would have to locate all these items and then would still need to grind and fit to complete the installation, we would suggest you consider going with an aftermarket changeover kit like the ones offered by Kaiser-Willys, Inline Tube, or The Jeepsterman. These kits would include all new parts, saving you lost core deposits on rebuilt items because you won't have trade-ins. Plus, everything needed is included in the kits, such as hoses, hub adapters, steel brake lines, and so on.

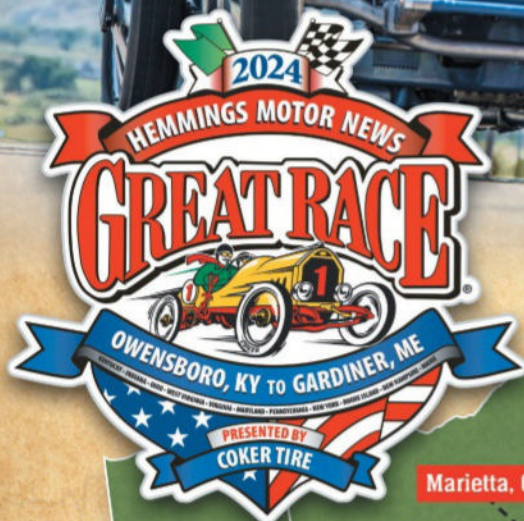
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All discussions in this column pertaining to repairs, conversions, part swaps, etc. are offered as suggestions. Performing any such work should be accompanied by thorough research to verify proper parts compatibility and procedures to achieve a safe, functional result.



#1
VINTAGE RALLY!

2024 Great Race Route



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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GREATRACE.COM

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.



Rare Induction

Pontiac's nearly forgotten, bred-for-NASCAR, 1956 dual four-barrel setup

1956 PONTIAC DUAL FOUR-BARREL INDUCTION SETUP

ASKING PRICE: \$4,500

FOUND AT: 2023 AACA EASTERN FALL MEET (HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA)



AMERICANS REDISCOVERED

factory performance thanks, in part, to NASCAR's first official Strictly Stock (quickly renamed Grand National) race, held on June 19, 1949, on Charlotte Speedway's 3/4-mile dirt oval. What made the 200-lap contest compelling to the 13,000 attendees was a relatable starting field of 33 factory-stock cars (with minor provisions allowed for safety). Of the nine makes that took the green flag—Buick, Cadillac, Chrysler, Ford, Hudson, Kaiser, Lincoln, Mercury, and Oldsmobile—Jim Roper and his 1949 Lincoln were declared victors following the disqualification of Glenn Dunnaway and his 1947 Ford, the latter's rear spring having been modified for its day-to-day life as a moonshine hauler.

By the end of the 1955 season, Buick, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth, Ford, Mercury, Hudson, Nash, Studebaker, and even Jaguar, had been added to the list of race-winning manufacturers. Absent was Pontiac, though not for a lack of effort. Thirteen drivers had entered Pontiacs that ran a combined total of just 25 races. Freddie Lee provided the best result, a fourth, at Carrell Speedway in Gardena, California, on June 30, 1951.

Race wins touted in national headlines were not lost on manufacturers, so by the start of the 1956 season nearly every major domestic brand had invested performance resources into NASCAR. Pontiac initially supported two teams: Jim Stephens (Stephens Pontiac), and A.L. Bumgarner (Brushy Mountain Motors). Each was armed with a new-for-1956 engine designed for racing: a 316.6-cu.in. V-8 fitted with dual Rochester four-barrel carburetors that, along with a high-performance camshaft, dual-point distributor, specialized valley cover, and 10:1-compression cylinder heads, conspired to produce 285 hp (in street trim, mind. It's well-known that racers knew how to make more horsepower).



A Pontiac win looked favorable, beginning with the sixth race of the season at the Daytona Beach/Road race, where Stephens' two-car effort—with Ed Kretz and Cotton Owens—qualified 3rd and 4th, while Junior Johnson, in Bumgarner's Pontiac, qualified 26th in the 76-car field. None saw the checkered flag. Johnson crashed, and the Stephens effort was met with mechanical woes. It was a sign of things to come. Strong as Pontiac was, bad fortune and mechanical reliability were its Achilles' heels. Pontiac attained just 17 top 10 finishes with a best of 3rd recorded by Pat Kirkwood in a Stephens' Pontiac.

Going winless, coupled with poor streetability of the dual-quad 316.6 V-8, spurred Pontiac to develop Tri-Power and fuel-injected 347-cu.in. engines for 1957. They became instant hits on the track—the brand notched two wins prior to a June rule change that mandated a single four-barrel induction system—and on the street, leaving the dual-quad 316.6 a nearly forgotten footnote of Fifties factory performance.

Rare reminders, however, still exist, such as this bred-for-NASCAR 1956 Pontiac twin Rochester carburetor and intake manifold assembly spotted for sale at the 2023 AACA Eastern Fall Meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Also included as part of the \$4,500 package price was the system's specific air cleaner assembly, which looked similar to that of Cadillac (the two reportedly would not interchange without modifications). Save for rebuilding the carburetors, it looked ready to install on a specific "HY" stamped block. 🏎️

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1



2



3



4

1.

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Fix unwanted holes or add strength to mounting hole locations with these new weld-in patch kits. Each 200-piece kit features 18-gauge steel repair disc patches of eight different sizes, ranging from 3/16-inch to 1 1/4-inch diameters. They're recommended for filling holes from body trim shaving, firewall smoothing, and rust spots in body panels, among other applications. These are also great for shimming, should the need arise. Use them for the body, frame, dash, firewall, and more. Ask about p/n HR-1580 for more information.

\$46.99

bobdrake.com

2.

PARKING PART

THE FILLING STATION 800-841-6622

New rear parking brake cables for the 1953-'54 Chevy and GMC 3/4-ton long bed trucks are now available. The cable mounts to the rear brake backing plate like the originals, and has an overall length of 49 3/4 inches. It maintains the look of originality as the cables have a GM-style metal housing, as they did seven decades ago. The cable replaces GM# 3697451 and #3708844 for most 1953-'54 Chevy and GMC 3/4-ton pickups. For more information about your application, ask about p/n FS-958.

\$65

fillingstation.com

3.

WIRE WRANGLING

STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS 800-447-0849

New door jamb wire loom grommets are now available for Chevy and GMC trucks. These grommets are perfect for hiding wires for any number of OE-style or aftermarket upgrade projects, including stereo installs, power window kit installations, and shaved door kits. Just run the new equipment wires and cables through the grommets for any job that takes place between the door and door jamb. Each pair of rubber parts is an OEM direct replacement, and they feature metal mounting plates for easy installation. Applications will fit most 1973-'91 Chevrolet and GMC truck and SUV models. Hardware is not included. Ask about p/n 70-4870-70 for more specifications.

\$36.99/PAIR

steelerubber.com

4.

SPILL CLEANUP

SUMMIT RACING 800-230-3030

Deal with spills, leaks and other messes that plague your workspace with these new Pig absorbent products. The basic absorbent mats are made of multiple layers of thermally bonded polypropylene that won't rip or tear, even when saturated with solvents. You can even wring them out and incinerate them when done to reduce waste.

Barrel-top absorption mats are available for 55-gallon shop drums. The eight-ply mats have precut holes for 2-inch and 3/4-inch pump bungs.

Finally, a new universal spill kit is available for accidents up to five gallons. The kits have two moldable, absorbent boom socks to contain spills by surrounding equipment, drums, tanks, and more. The kit also has 20 15 x 20-inch pads to soak up and retain most fluids, including battery acid and grease. Plus, two waste disposal bags and resealable storage bags are included.

Inquire about p/n 25101 (mats); 25102 (barrel mats) and 45300 (spill kit) for more details.

\$18 (SET OF 15); \$18 (BARREL MAT SET OF 5); \$69 (UNIVERSAL SPILL KIT)

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Prices shown are presumed accurate at the time of printing. Please confirm with seller prior to purchase.

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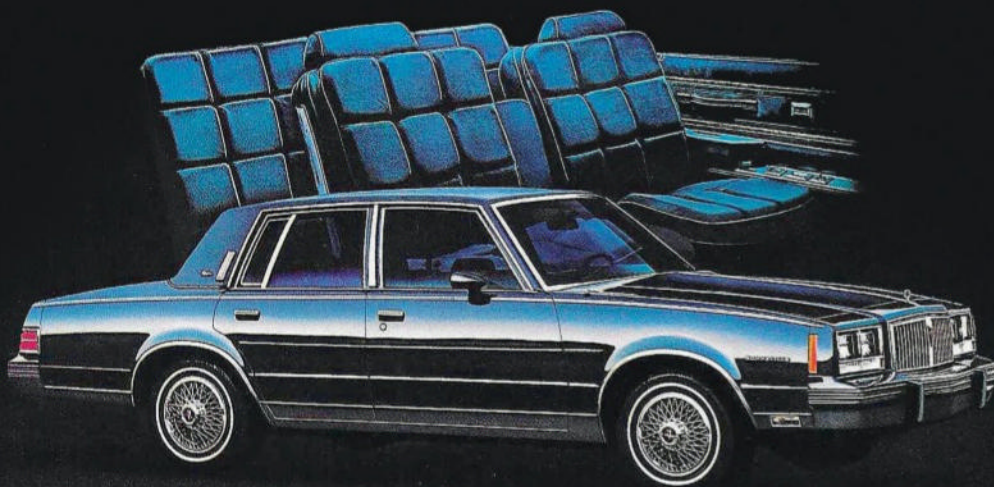
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see the real beauty of this exciting four-door sedan. And experience how smooth, responsive and comfortable our 1983 Bonneville really is.

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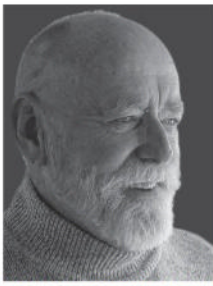
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Jim Richardson

No Place Like Home

"If you
find
yourself
looking
into the
gutter,
you're
in the
wrong
lane."

DANG, I did it again! I inadvertently folded myself into the front passenger seat of my restored 1966 Morris Minor convertible. It happened right in the middle of a town

on the Coromandel Peninsula of New Zealand where we have a house. Neighbors were waving hello, I was not paying attention, and after many years, I once again absentmindedly climbed in on the wrong side of the car. To avoid humiliation, I pretended to rummage through the glove compartment as if I intended to get in on that side of the car all along. I did my best to make it look purposeful, and then, when I thought no one was looking, I got out and sauntered casually around to the driver's side, got in, and sheepishly drove away.

You see, New Zealand—having been part of the British Empire, along with India and Australia—drives on the wrong side of the road. The Japanese, who copied the British auto industry in the early days, drive on the left too, with the steering wheel located on the right in their cars.

Before the turn of the last century, autos were steered with tillers in the center of the car. That is until 1900 when James Ward and William Dowd Packard were out in one of their machines and hit a pothole, causing its tiller to smash James' knee, before flipping the car on its side. The brothers righted the vehicle, drove it back to their factory, and told their engineer to come up with something better. The solution was the steering wheel placed on the right side of the car. Packard was cutting edge at the time and were the first to offer a taillamp that year, too.

Putting the steering wheel on the left eventually became standard in the U.S. thanks to Ford's Model T in 1909. The Model T became such a dramatic success, dominating the industry, that it set the trend. Reo converted to left-hand steering in 1912, and then Buick and Hudson switched in 1914. Cadillac opted to go with the flow in 1915, but luxury automaker Pierce-Arrow held out with right-hand steering until 1921. Packard astutely offered owners a choice during the Teens, and even advertised that fact.

Unfortunately, knowing this history has done me little good when driving overseas. Besides get-



ting in on the wrong side of the car, I still inadvertently spray my windshield washers when trying to signal for a turn because the indicator lever on British cars is on the left side of the steering wheel, with

the window washer lever on the right. Making this little mistake always gets a laugh from passengers.

Staying on the correct side of the road takes mindfulness in the British Empire, especially when you are out on a country lane with no centerline. I discovered that the easiest way to tell if you are on the wrong side of the street in any country is to look out the side window. If you see the center of the road next to you, you're fine, but if you find yourself looking into the gutter, you're in the wrong lane.

A couple of years ago, soon after arriving in the land down under, I took my Morrie out for a spin and encountered a big van coming straight at me. I started to jig to the oncoming lane but then realized I was on the correct side, and my opponent was in the wrong. Luckily, he realized it and made a frantic lane change just in time to avoid transmogrification. I found out later that the van driver was a German tourist on holiday, and he got confused. It's easy to do after a lifetime of driving on the other side of the road.

Unfortunately, I don't think the former British Empire will change its driver's configuration anytime soon, so if you decide to import a classic MG, Triumph, Morris, Railton, or Riley, I recommend you take the time to learn to drive from the wrong side of the car. Take your chariot to a big empty parking lot and get used to the situation. On an American road in a British car, left turns are particularly challenging, and though the clutch, brake, and throttle are all where they should be for us, other controls may not be where you expect.

Should you choose to rent a British classic on your next overseas holiday to the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, or India, I suggest you not drive at all for a couple of days while recovering from jet lag. While you are off the road, brush up on local traffic laws before venturing out. And once you do sally forth, if you find yourself climbing into the car on the wrong side, you needn't be too embarrassed. It happens to the British when they are in our country too. After all, there is no place like home. 🚗



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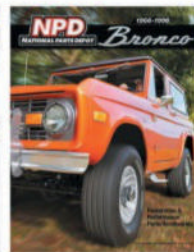
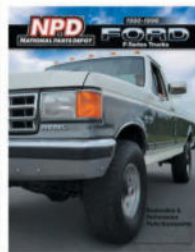
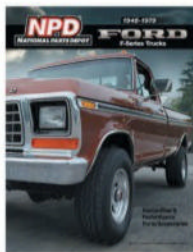
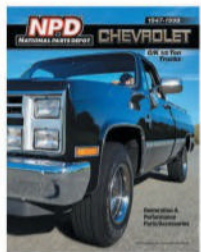
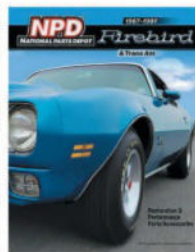
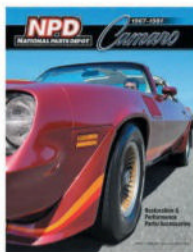
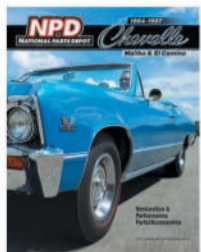
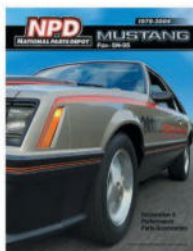
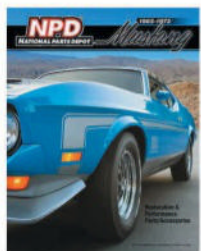
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