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Varying Motivations

Even before the weather broke here in Vermont, I found myself spending a lot of time out in the shop this spring working on multiple projects, seemingly with a common theme. As it worked out, the Hemmings staff became involved with a few different vehicles being prepared for real road travel, though the motivations were somewhat varied.

The first one was a bit of a surprise: Some old friends who now work on automotive video shows out West let us know that they were heading our way to start their next road trip adventure. The show is the popular *Roadkill* series that appears on *Motor Trend's* streaming service, and the gist is that the two hosts, David Freiburger and, this time out, Steve Dulcich, acquire a vintage vehicle of some sort, patch it together, and then hit the road to see what happens.

Their ride for this trip was a '71 Pontiac T-37 coupe that had been featured on the show previously. It was an actual junkyard refugee, having been pulled from the fields of a Western salvage business a couple years prior. In keeping with the show's usual practices, the Pontiac was treated to some field triage as the hosts attempted to make it run and drive again.

When that same car was dropped off at our facility several days ahead of the video crew's arrival, it was clear that it would need some attention before venturing out for any real distance. I offered to tend to the Pontiac before the hosts arrived, but I overlooked the fact that working on these cars is a major element of the show; doing so without the cameras kind of missed the point. The following week, when the crew arrived, the hosts jumped in, acknowledged the car's issues, and set to work, with some of us on the Hemmings team pitching in.

Over the course of that day, I was reminded of how varied these efforts can be, depending on the situation at hand—repairing a car that needs to run and drive within 24 hours is an entirely different endeavor than building and sorting one over the course of months. The *Roadkill* guys are famous for making their chosen rides good enough to get to the next destination, employing makeshift fixes based on tight timeframes and using whatever tools, parts, and other resources may be at hand at that moment. It's part of what makes the show entertaining, with viewers wondering along with the hosts whether or not the latest improvised solution will get the team to the next stop.

Then, almost immediately after the *Roadkill* crew pulled out and hit the road, our team had to jump on our own project, readying the Hemmings '69 Chevelle convertible for this year's Great Race event. We're fielding a new race team this time out, with a novice driver and navigator, so using a more conventional vehicle than our spartan and finnicky flathead Ford-powered speedster seemed the right way to go; our '69 Chevelle looked to be the best candidate. This car had been the subject of an engine and transmission upgrade project that stalled when COVID shuttered our offices for a time, leaving the Chevelle suffering from 90-percent syndrome. The car lacked that last bit of time, effort, and sorting needed to return it to fully functional status.

This effort could have paralleled the one we'd just been a part of on the Pontiac: We had a deadline and a list of tasks to complete. But in this case, the timeframe was not so pressing—we had a couple weeks rather than a few hours. For help, we recruited local mechanic Bob Bennet, a veteran wrench who agreed to come to our shop for the work.

Over the days that followed, as I bounced back and forth from my desk to the shop to lend Bob a hand, those contrasts between making a car run right now versus making it truly "right" really came to the fore. I'd spent a lot of time on the Chevelle before the pandemic, installing the new, upgraded engine and transmission with the intention of leaving it looking and functioning the way GM might have finished it. But our Great Race deadline and the still-fresh experience with the *Roadkill* car had me amped up, anxious to get the Chevelle together and perhaps leaning toward a hastened effort.

Working with Bob quickly snuffed those tendencies. His methodical approach aims to make things the way they ought to be, not just for now, but for the foreseeable future. Knowing that our 50-plus-year-old Chevy was going to be put to the test on a cross-country jaunt only intensified his discipline.

So, while I wouldn't have committed any outright compromises to the Chevelle, I might have done a few "good enough for now" jobs to get us through, telling myself we could revisit those items later. The experience was refreshing, and in the end, the Chevelle was screwed back together well enough that even the maiden test ride didn't reveal any significant flaws. I came away with a renewed sense of the virtues of good versus good enough, but I have to say the last-minute thrashing with gearhead buddies, trying to get back on the road, still has an appeal all its own. Either way, it's quality time spent in the garage.

> "...those contrasts between making a car run right now versus making it truly 'right' really came to the fore."

Write to our editor-in-chief at tmcgean@hemmings.com and follow him on Instagram @tmcgean.

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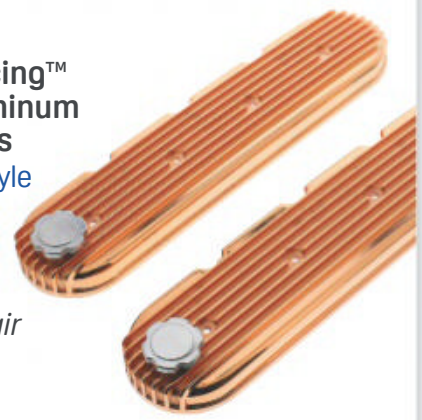

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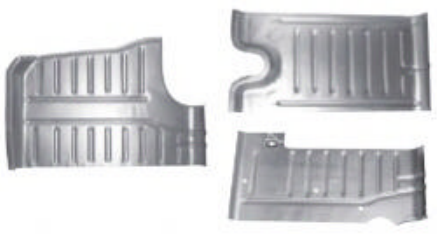

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BY TOM COMERRO

AMO International Convention

AMC CARS OF ALL MODEL YEARS WILL MAKE THEIR WAY to the Motor City this summer for a week of activities celebrating the popular independent automaker. The Motor City Muster will center around the Sheraton Detroit Novi Hotel in Novi, Michigan. Tours of the area include trips to the Yankee Air Museum, the Ypsilanti Heritage Museum, and the Michigan Firehouse Museum. Cruises will venture out to the Willow Run Airport, the Twin Peaks Restaurant in Livonia, and Ford's Garage "burger and beer joint" in Dearborn. AMC vehicles will be featured in a judged car show, and swap meet spaces will also be available. Featured guest speakers include Vincent Geraci, Frank Pascoe, and *HCC* columnist Pat Foster. The convention will run from August 10-14. Visit amo.club for the full agenda.

Sixtieth Anniversary Chevrolet Meet

BOWTIE ENTHUSIASTS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY will get together for this year's Vintage Chevrolet Club of America national meet in Bowling Green, Kentucky. This will mark the 60th meet for the club, and featured events include a swap meet, tours, numerous activities, and a judged car show. The gathering encourages fans of all Chevrolet and GMC-related vehicles and associated products, models, and memorabilia to attend. The week-long event has plans for all family members, including a special ladies' luncheon at the Sloan Convention Center, as well as children's activities held throughout the event. The tours include a Plaque Tour to Franklin, Kentucky, as well as a trip to the National Corvette Museum and NCM Motorsports Park, where you can participate in the road course driving day. Raffle drawings will also take place and meet merchandise will be available. The event will take place July 31 to August 5. For more information and to register, please visit vcca.org.

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11-13 • AACA Central National Meet
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21 • Pebble Beach Concurs d'Elegance
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25-27 • Corvettes at Carlisle
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27-9/3 • Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival
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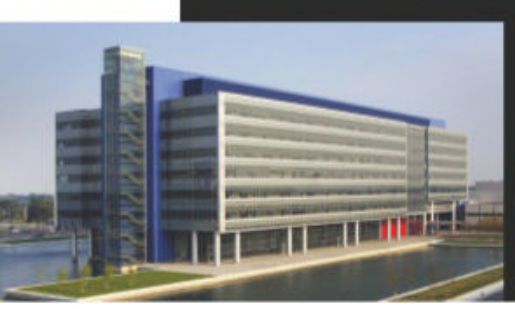
Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.

Education Facility to Open at National Corvette Museum

CONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN ON "A STATE-of-the-art educational experience geared directly to the next generation of Corvette enthusiasts, engineers, designers, and more," according to the National Corvette Museum. The project impetus is a donation from Tim and Melanie McMichael of Gypsum, Colorado.



"It has always been our dream to be a part of an educational experience," Tim says, "that could spark a fire or be the catalyst for a child to see that it is possible to do or be anything in the world — from an astronaut, to a doctor, to a car designer."

The 2,000-square-foot gallery will "be designed for both children and adults to enjoy, featuring artifacts and interactive technology celebrating the unique story of Corvette," says Museum Educator Deb Howard. "The new space will not only serve guests visiting from out of town with youth-centric content for families to enjoy, but it will also serve as a space to engage our local community schools with standards-based STREAM education, learning opportunities, and new educational programming."

The design draws inspiration from the General Motors Technical Center (pictured) in Warren, Michigan. Tom Peters, former Director of Exterior Design for the GM Performance Car Studio and Corvette Hall of Fame Inductee, will take part in the gallery's creation.

Completion is estimated to be between the end of this year and early 2023. For more details, visit corvettemuseum.org.

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BY DANIEL STROHL

High Wireless Act

AT FIRST, THE 1955 ELECTRONIC APPEARS TO BE JUST ANOTHER FIBERGLASS-bodied postwar pie-in-the-sky attempt at breaking into the already consolidating American automotive market. After a press release that got a modicum of traction and exactly one prototype, nothing more was heard from the effort. But there may have been more to the car.

To begin with, the Electronic Motor Car Corporation was based in Salt Lake City, far from any major car-making concern, though it used the Detroit-built fiberglass La Saetta as its basis. Also, as implied by the name, it was an electric car—or more appropriately, a series-hybrid electric with "a small gas- or diesel-powered turbo-generator" charging an 80-cell silver-zinc-peroxide battery system. The "dual-torque" electric motor and the limited-slip "electromagnetic" differential would both provide regenerative braking capability.

Intriguingly, a report on the Electronic in *Motor Trend's* September 1955 issue noted that the company envisioned replacing the hybrid system altogether with a pure electric drivetrain that would rely on transmitted power to charge the batteries. It even showed off a reportedly working prototype system that used a tower resembling an oil derrick and what appeared to be a child's pedal car stuffed with electronics. No mention was made about the distances over which this transmitted power system would work, nor of who engineered and developed it for the Electronic Motor Car Corp., but according to the report, the system could conceivably be operational within two years.

At least a few La Saettas are still around, but the Electronic and its electronics—which would be interesting to study to see how (or whether) the wireless power system would have worked—remain missing.

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THE GRUMMAN LONG LIFE VEHICLE'S LONG LIFE IS SOON coming to an end, more than a quarter century since the last LLV rolled off the assembly lines. That's enough to make them instantly recognizable for perhaps every man, woman, and child served by the United States Postal Service, but they could have been even more ubiquitous, as we recently learned.

Given that the USPS was Grumman's primary customer for the LLV, one has to wonder why the company would even bother to create a brochure for it, a copy of which John Lloyd recently shared with us on the Hemmings Nation Flickr Pool. As it turns out, Grumman apparently had plans to sell the LLV to the private sector as the Commercial LLV, or CLLV, and depicted one in floral delivery livery. Presumably the mail delivery version shown was targeted toward private rural mail carriers, as an alternative to the right-hand-drive Jeep XJ Cherokee.

The brochure touted pretty much everything that made the LLV attractive to the USPS: aluminum body, proven Chevrolet S-10 chassis and drivetrain, a mondo cargo area, a 36-month, 50,000-mile warranty, and the ability to have the van serviced at any Chevrolet dealership.

We can't recall seeing any LLVs not in use by the USPS, though, so this brochure has us wondering whether Grumman actually sold the LLV to non-postal customers and, if so, whether any of those CLLVs are still in service.

Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions, and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car,* P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com. For more Lost & Found, visit blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found.

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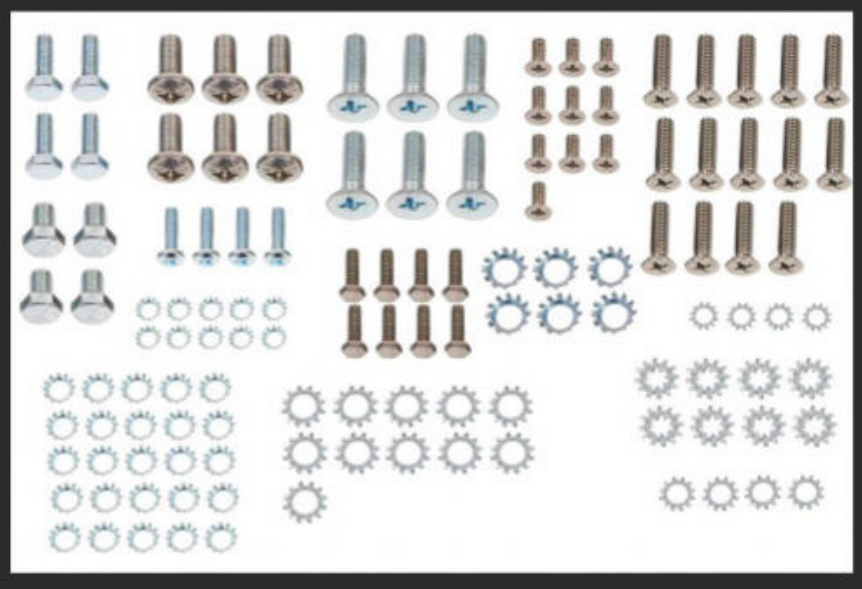

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IN READING ALL THE RESTORATION stories over the years, I have a question that has never been answered. Most work includes a total body restoration and cleaning and painting (or powder coating) the frame, but does anyone ever look inside the frame, or clean and coat the frame inside? Does the tin worm only affect "tin" and not the metal frame? I recall reading about '60s Corvettes suffering frame failure in front of the rear wheels, but does no other frame suffer from metal rot of the frame?
Al Field
Phoenix, Arizona

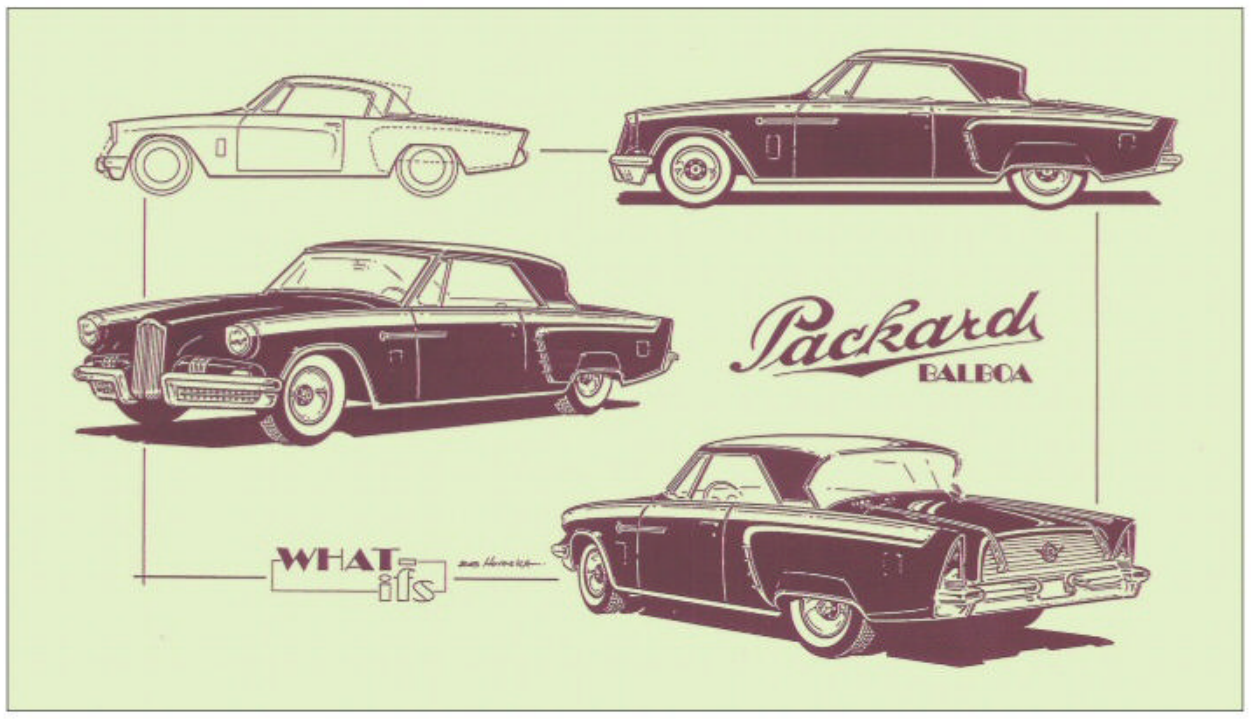
The tin worm does not discriminate and will attack all ferrous metals. Frame sections tend to be made from heavier gauge steel than body panels, but certainly a vehicle's frame may also be susceptible to rot. We've seen plenty of '50s and '60s cars with frame sections that were structurally compromised from advanced rotting. Frame channels do tend to retain dirt, sand, and leaves, which all contribute to holding moisture and accelerating the oxidation process. Certain vehicles, like midyear Corvettes, have particular trouble areas, and the rot usually occurs from the inside out. Make sure to inspect the frame when checking out a vintage car, especially if it's a restoration project.

I READ TERRY McGEAN'S EDITORIAL in the recent issue of *HCC* ("Southern Comfort," *HCC* # 212) and I understand his frustration with the typical rust issues that develop in our Northern climate. From my experience, rust can be controlled almost completely! Yes, you can drive a collectible vehicle all year round.

For many years I have relied on the professional rustproofers. Once per year I take the cars into their shop for the annual treatment. It takes about one hour, including a wash and cleanup afterwards. It works! The only downside is that holes need to be drilled in certain panels so that the special spray can be applied into enclosed cavities. These holes are out of sight and are filled with circular plastic plugs.

We have several rust-free vehicles as proof of the effectiveness of these applications. My 1984 Dodge 600 ES (with a five-speed) has been driven over 500,000 kilometers (300,000 miles) in what is surely one of the worst cities in the world for road salt. The Dodge is 95 percent rust free. Similarly, our '86 Plymouth Reliant and '05 PT Cruiser convertible are also rust free. The spray keeps brake lines and fuel lines intact, as well as assuring that windows operate smoothly. I sometimes think that my friends subconsciously want their cars to rust, in order to justify buying new ones.

As a disclosure, I must emphasize that I have no connection in any way to either of the two major rustproofing companies. Perhaps a small article on rust prevention would be a benefit to your many readers.
Barry S. Moore
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



I'VE BEEN A LONG-TIME SUBSCRIBER of your magazine and read every page. I've owned a 1932 Ford roadster, '39 Ford sedan, and '34 Ford three-window coupe. Boy, do I wish I still had them. Anyway, I was a World War II veteran and spent my time in the service in the Pacific, from 1944-'45. I was discharged when I came home, in April 1946. I owned and drove all kinds of cars and loved every one of them. Now that I am 95 years old, I just bought a 2021 Toyota Supra! Wow, what a car! I've had it now for three months and I still don't know how to negotiate the controls—there are too many knobs. I've been to the dealer four times to learn how to do things, but it's fast as hell! Does anyone else have one?
Dale Herbert
La Pine, Oregon

IT WAS INTERESTING TO READ THE comments in your Recaps column about the Packard Balboa concept. It seems everyone has a different take on what I tried to do… so I thought I'd send you a copy of the original proposal. I know they closed the Packard plant where engines were made, but what if they didn't?

What if Studebaker/Packard had not tried to turn sedans and wagons, with Studebaker bodies and engines, into imitation 1957 Packard Clippers, but instead, used the money to steer the Hawk line into two distinctly different directions?

One would be the Studebaker Golden Hawk, which in keeping with its 1956 "Now… sports car fun is family fun!" ads, would utilize Studebaker's lighter supercharged V-8 for improved handling, along with fins, door skins, and other styling changes planned for 1957.

The other would be the Packard Balboa, which would retain the heavier Packard V-8, weighing sporty handling against a luxury ride and quality accommodations befitting a Packard. Style-wise, the Balboa would feature its own hood/grille, revised roof, bumpers, trunk luggage straps, and fiberglass rear fender coves, along with Packard style taillamps and hubcaps. A four-seat personal luxury Packard might have made some sense. After all, the following year, Ford's personal four-seat Thunderbird sold over 35,000 cars. Could an elegant Packard powered luxury couple have done as well? What if?
Bob Hovorka
Lagrange Highlands, Illinois

I WILL HAVE TO AGREE WITH TERRY McGean's comments in the March issue ("A Ride Gone By," *HCC* #210) that a Cadillac was the epitome of car ownership

in the 1900s. Practically everyone in my generation aspired to someday move up to that brand. Even the word itself, Cadillac, was magical and would draw everyone's attention.

My first experience with Cadillac was when I was looking for a large GM car to pull a large GM-powered boat. I ran across a 1977 Eldorado but was a little leery of the capability of its front-wheel-drive system. Once I learned that the Eldorado's transaxle was basically the same unit as used in GMC motorhomes, I bought the car. This Eldorado had every option available, including a sunroof, a factory CB radio, and a red leather interior. It was the most luxurious car I've ever owned. It was also my best snow car with that heavy front-wheel drive. Fuel economy? No matter how hard I tried, or how easy I drove, 13 mpg was tops.

Regrettably, it rusted out well before it wore out. I've included pictures from the day I sold the Eldorado. The body was a rusty mess, but the mechanicals were as good as the day it was built in 1977. It was a fun car, even at 200,000-plus miles.

My friend Art had a triple-black 1974 Cadillac Series 60 Special, and whenever I drove it, I felt like I was the ultimate Joe Cool. That Cadillac was absolutely beautiful and drove like a dream.

Some of the best-looking Cadillacs of all time, in my opinion, are the 1948 Series 60 Special, the '57 Coupe de Ville, the '67 Eldorado, and especially the 2003 Sixteen concept. A framed picture of the Sixteen is hanging in my living room.

Terry's column was interesting, true, and yet, sad.

Bob Thies
Cincinnati, Ohio

I HAVE BEEN A LONG-TIME subscriber to *HCC* and I enjoy reading letters to the editor. What has interested me are the articles about the 1940s-'50s independents and their demise. My father was a Willys dealer from 1946-'55, and he recalled a conversation with the area manager concerning the merger of the independents: Packard, Hudson, Rambler, Studebaker, Kaiser, and Willys, into a large auto manufacturing conglomerate. The manager reportedly said the companies were in serious informal discussions. Apparently, after about 6-8 months it fell apart due to egos, investor relations, and financing issues. If the merger had gone through, maybe those automotive names would still be around. My father and his brother had a thriving little dealership in Darien, Wisconsin, population 850, until Willys folded in the U.S. I am always on the lookout for a vehicle he may have sold or any other documentation.

Mike Kempken
Janesville, Wisconsin

To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.

"

The wagon

is uniquely

rare; I hope

we're able

to find out

where it is or

if it still exists.

"

In Search of a "Holy Grail"

I recently had a conversation with Ray Evernham, the former stock car crew chief/race car driver/team owner who entered the NASCAR Hall of Fame following his retirement. As a team owner, Ray was pivotal in returning Dodge to NASCAR's winner's circle. Along the way, he got into collecting and restoring historic hot rods and muscle cars from the Fifties and Sixties, as well as several historic vintage race cars from multiple disciplines of the sport. An overwhelming amount of restoration work was done at Big Iron Garage, his shop in Mooresville, North Carolina.

While the scope and quality of cars within Ray's collection is impressive, our recent discussion focused on his decision to part with a noteworthy portion of it, which may strike a chord with enthusiasts across all corners of the hobby. Ray cited considerations involving the time, space, and money that maintaining a growing collection demands. Space at the facility was at a premium, and he had realized that more and more time was being spent on general maintenance and upkeep rather than the very thing that Ray and his team enjoy most: finding and restoring cars significant to the auto industry and motor racing alike.

That's not to say Ray is bidding adieu to the hobby. In fact, it's quite the opposite: Part of the equity he hopes the sale will generate has been earmarked for relaunching Ray's *AmeriCarna* TV show, while another portion will go into the continued effort to locate, purchase, and restore significant cars. According to Ray, "It's going to take some kicking around until somebody says 'Hey, we found the Holy Grail of whatever.' Then you put your Indiana Jones hat on and go try to find and buy it."

Ray's enthusiasm for the hobby, and his optimism for finding the next "Holy Grail" vehicle, reminded me of a similar conversation I had with another friend, David Kaplan. After spending a day in the vast swap meet fields of the AACA's 2021 Hershey meet, David casually mentioned he was looking for his family's own treasure.

David's grandfather was Louis Horwitz, founder of the Playboy Motor Car Company, which – after a few years of development and assembly of pre-production cars – was set to begin assembly of regular production models in a Tonawanda, New York, facility. Unfortunately, a series of events shuttered the effort after just 95 cars were built (including serial number 100, while serial number 102 was under construction). Two station wagons, including a pre-production model, had also been assembled in whole or in part.

In recent decades, David, his cousin Lee Singer, and other family members have spearheaded an effort to document the remains of the cars his grandfather's company built. The whereabouts of roughly 20 roadworthy cars are known (plus a few others no longer operable), including both the prototype and the last Playboy, serial #102. The Holy Grail Dave referenced was car #101(pictured)–the only completed station wagon that existed at the time the company closed its doors.

"The pre-production station wagon was serial #95. It was based on the convertible coupe that was nearing the end of its development, and like other wagons at the time, the additional bodywork was done with wood," David says. "Access to the back was through a split rear panel, hinged at the top and bottom; two wrapped chains kept the lower half – the tailgate if you will – from dropping too far. The spare was, in turn, mounted to the backside of the single bench seat within the cabin. All we have left are the promotional photographs that were taken after it was built, and the serial tag. We know the car was destroyed."

When assembly of regular production Playboys began, the second unit to be completed was #101, the only other station wagon built. David notes, "It featured all the changes incorporated into the design of the car, including new trim and body die stampings. Just as the company did with #95, the wagon portion was made of wood, but the design of it was slightly smoother, a little more rounded with better transitions. There were other subtle differences, too, like the switch from dual outboard rear gate handles to a single handle mounted in the center. We have no information as to what happened to this wagon, or car #100 for that matter. The wagon is unique; I hope we're able to find out where it is or if it still exists."

Part of keeping the spirit of the hobby alive is finding a Holy Grail, whether it be one that piques your interest, or has personal significance. What's yours?

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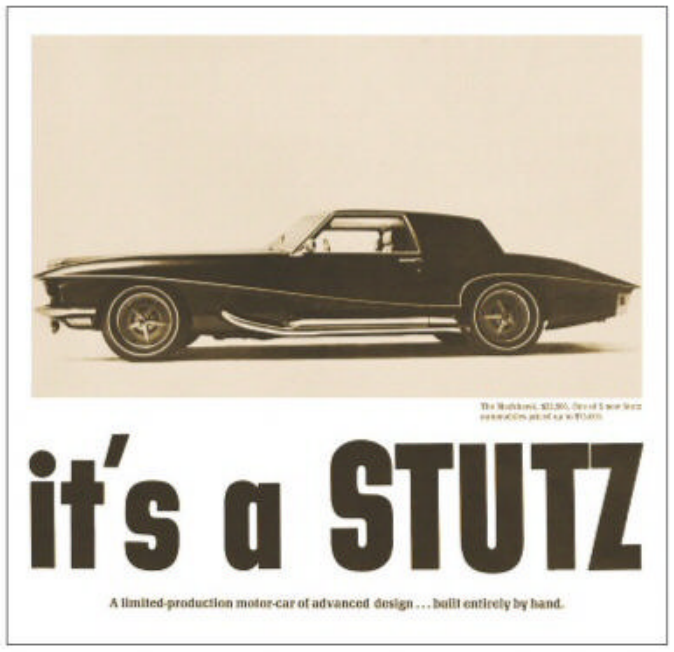
"Indeed, the Big Three car stylists borrowed many ideas from the Blackhawk that later showed up on their "personal luxury" cars."

The Fabulous Stutz Blackhawk

In any listing of legendary American cars, Stutz has to rank among the elite. Starting in 1911, Stutz produced automobiles of tremendous performance, luxury, and beauty. Some model names, including the Stutz Bearcat and Blackhawk, are still admired by those too young to have been around when Stutz was in its full glory.

But as worthy as Stutz was, the company fell victim to the same economic forces that took down Duesenberg, Peerless, Pierce-Arrow, and others—the age of the handcrafted automobile was fading away. The few such firms that survived the 1920s invariably were killed in the 1930s by the Great Depression, or were able to adapt to modern mass production, as Packard did.



Since then, a host of dreamers (And they'd have to be dreamers, wouldn't they?) have tried to resurrect some of the lost car companies. There have been at least two attempts to revive the Duesenberg brand: a plastic-body front-drive Cord 8/10 was introduced in 1964 and produced in small numbers, and a flood of Auburn Speedster replicas that appeared during the replicar fad. But to me, the most successful revival of a lost "classic-era" brand was the Stutz Motor Company of America, which introduced an all-new Stutz Blackhawk in January 1970.

Some background: The December 1963 issue of *Esquire* magazine featured designs for new editions of classic automobiles. Created by ex-Chrysler designer Virgil Exner, they included Duesenberg, Mercer, Stutz, and Packard. Interest proved strong and, in 1966, a Duesenberg concept vehicle was produced with the idea of going into production, which would have made it the most-expensive American car on the market. Alas, the idea went no further than the prototype. A Mercer Cobra show car was built as well, proof that many were interested in reviving the old brands.

Exner's original Stutz concept was a long, low, fastback with bold front-end styling. New York investment banker James D. O'Donnell saw the car and decided to create a company to produce it. Exner created an updated concept incorporating the upright roof line and thick sail panels of his revised Duesenberg, and arrangements were made for its production as the new Stutz Blackhawk. It debuted at New York's Waldorf Astoria hotel in January 1970.

Although the Blackhawk's drivetrain was Pontiac-sourced, its bodies were handcrafted in Italy and thus extremely well-made and very attractive. The long, sculptured nose boasted a classic grille shell flanked by free-standing headlamps and fog lights. Extended rear fenders tapered down as they flowed back, while the trunk lid featured a spare tire nestled in a well. The roofline was long and severe, with wide sail panels and a classic look that would be copied by mainstream automakers a few years later. Indeed, the Big Three car stylists borrowed many ideas from the Blackhawk that later showed up on their "personal luxury" cars.

It was in the details where the styling took a controversial turn. The classic Duesenberg-style side molding added flair, but the fake exhaust pipes sprouting from the front fenders, and the "running boards" added onto the doors were a bit much. Also, the wire wheels on later models looked gimmicky; plain wheels with stylish covers would have served better.

Inside was all wood-veneer trim, plush fabrics, leather surfaces, thick carpets, and gold-plated hardware because, well, it was that sort of car.

The first production Blackhawk was purchased by The King: Elvis Presley. He bought several more, and a 1973 model is part of the Presley Motors car museum at Graceland. Other notable owners included Muhammed Ali, Dean Martin, comedian Dick Martin (of *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* fame), Sammy Davis Jr., Lucille Ball, Wilson Pickett, Isaac Hayes, Willy Mays, Robert Goulet… the list goes on and on.

Several models were produced over the years, including a Royale Limousine, Bearcat and Bearcat II convertibles, plus some four-door sedans. In all, somewhere between 600 and 1,000 Stutz cars were produced before production ended in 1995. The reason? Tastes had changed, and Stutz failed to introduce a more-contemporary product. Too bad, but after all, 25 years is a pretty good run.

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The Gentleman's Truck

Chevrolet's Cameo combined style with substance

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK

The 1950s were an exciting time for the U.S. automotive industry. General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler dominated domestic sales, and their postwar production runs witnessed their highest output in years. With this renewed confidence, manufacturers were willing to take risks and test the market by adding models, options, colors, and even all-new vehicles.

Although passenger cars continued to receive many improvements, innovations, and fresh designs, trucks were still seen as "utilitarian," with few changes implemented from year to year within a platform's generation. As such, the "working truck" remained largely unchanged and lacked anything remotely exciting for the potential buyer.

In 1954, the tide was about to change. Up-and-coming automotive designer Chuck Jordan presented the design for a new "luxury" truck to executives at Chevrolet; it was based on the redesigned trucks about to come online. The new pickup was clearly defined by one major alteration: a smooth-sided bed that extended straight back from the cab, in lieu of the traditional step-side design. This was accomplished via the clever installation of fiberglass skins, which added a streamlining effect by continuing the cab's body contours down the side of the bed. It was then accented with additional trim that outlined a band of contrasting paint. The fiberglass panels were produced by Molded Fiber Glass of Ashtabula, Ohio — the same company that managed construction of early Corvette bodies. Chevy executives liked the concept and gave it a green light for production. By 1955, the newly named Cameo was off to the races. So enamored was GM brass with the fresh design that GMC was given the nod to create its own version, the nearly identical Suburban.

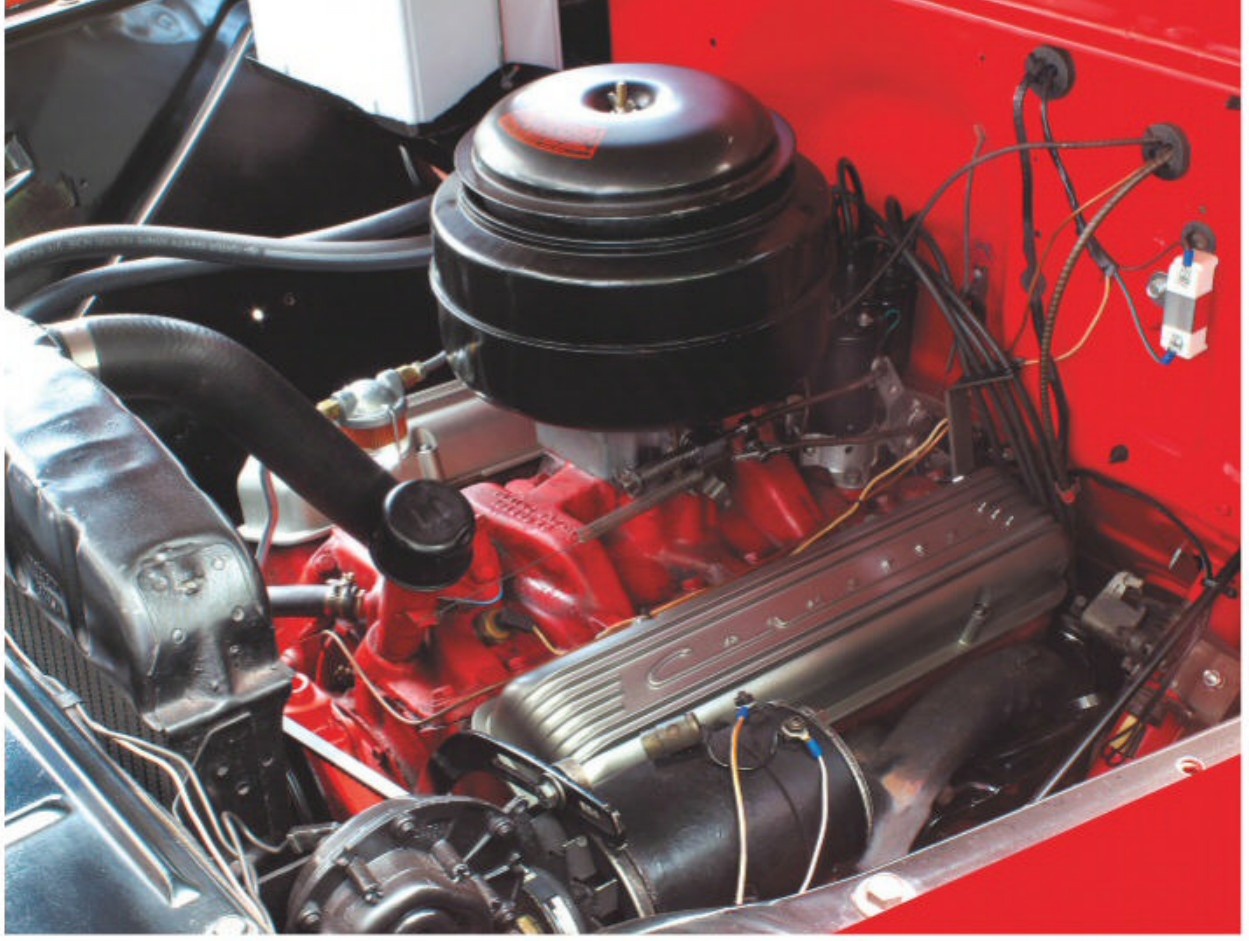
Initially available only in white with red accents inside the box and around the cab, the Cameo's color palette was expanded to eight hues a year later, complemented by a small assortment of contrasting colors on the bedside inserts and around the cab glass. For 1957, some trim changes graced the Cameo, along with the addition of a few more colors. Mechanical enhancements, many of which were available at extra cost, were also a selling point, though Chevy was primarily focused on the truck's visual design and cargo management.

"Who said you can't combine utility and beauty in a half-ton pickup? Chevrolet has done it! Just look at Chevrolet's new Cameo Carrier, which combines dazzling beauty and rugged utility on the new Chevrolet half-ton truck chassis," touted the division's 1957 ad campaign. "The Cameo Carrier features a special Flight-Ride Custom Cab with Sweep-Sight windshield,

The stock stepside bed was used, but with built-out fiberglass panels attached, as shown. The previous owner dressed up the bed with oak slats and chrome-plated rails.

Molded Fiber Glass of Ohio was contracted to build the slab-sided panels and tailgates for the Cameo, which was the most obvious design change.

Full-View rear window, special reinforced plastic outer side and tailgate panels, hooded headlamps, hide-away spare tire, fluted wheel covers, and special two-toned exterior. And this style leader handles a payload of 1,650 pounds with a gross vehicle weight of 5,000 pounds."



The 185-hp 283-cu.in. V-8 is topped by an oil-bath air cleaner. Corvette aluminum valve covers are a nice touch to dress up the engine bay.

Retired car dealership owner Jim Duffack, age 79, is now an antique-car enthusiast who makes his home just north of Omaha, Nebraska. He began seriously collecting cars in 1986 and has been hooked ever since. To date, Jim has acquired about two dozen prime examples with an emphasis on the Fifties and Sixties vehicles from the Big Three automakers.

"Since I grew up in the Fifties, my interest definitely falls into this category," Jim says. "Most of the cars in my collection have been professionally restored or are excellent unrestored originals."

Jim's collection may seem small to some, but many of his cars are rare and highly sought after. A few examples include his '53 Oldsmobile Super 88 convertible, a stunning '54 Buick Skylark convertible, a '55 Chevy Corvette, a '55 Plymouth Belvedere convertible, a '56 Chevy Bel Air convertible, a '57 Dodge Royal Lancer, and a '60 Chevy Corvette. He has even turned the basement of his home into a "dealership showroom" for the display of seven of his most-prized cars. Among the

collection is another rarity: this 1957 Chevrolet Cameo.

"I'd been looking for a '57 Cameo truck for about eight years; this red one came up for auction when the owner had passed away after having ownership for many years," Jim says. "I believe this Cameo had a complete body-off restoration about 12 to 15 years ago and it was resprayed in its original Venetian Red color using a basecoat/clearcoat paint system."

Jim spotted the truck on the Mecum Auctions website just a few weeks prior to the company's 2021 Kissimmee sale in Florida held each January. "You rarely see these trucks come up for auction, so I could hardly contain my excitement when the bidding went my way on this one," Jim recalls. "Crazier yet was another '57 Cameo, one in turquoise, that was a late entry [to the auction] just a day later; I ended up taking that one home, too!" When asked why he decided to pursue the second turquoise Cameo, Jim replies, "Because I could. Passing on the opportunity to acquire two of these perfect examples would have haunted me forever."

Standard equipment on all 1957 Cameos, also identified as Model 3124, included the Thriftmaster six-cylinder engine, 12-volt electrical system, three-speed synchromesh transmission, Hotchkiss drive, tubeless tires, double-acting front and rear shocks, special Flight-Ride custom cab, Sweep-Sight front windshield, front and rear chrome bumpers, high-level ventilation system, concealed safety steps, foam rubber Nu-Flex bench seat, dual sunshades, and full-view rear glass.

As with other Chevys of the era, the Cameo's option list was relatively sizeable. Jim's Venetian Red example included a 283-cu.in. V-8 — which featured an oil bath air cleaner and positive-crankcase ventilation — a four-speed Hydra-Matic automatic transmission, a heavy-duty radiator, heavy-duty rear springs, whitewall tires, dual side mirrors, AM radio, heater/defroster, electric windshield wipers, E-Z Eye glass, and the windshield visor. Upgraded rolling stock at the time of purchase included a set of Diamond Back three-inch whitewall P235/75R15 radials mounted to the stock steel wheels with hubcaps and beauty rings.

The wheels and tires consist of a set of Diamond Back 3-inch whitewall P235/75R15 radials, mounted to stock steel wheels with correct hubcaps and beauty rings.

Enlarged for 1957, the 283-cu.in. V-8 was an overhead-valve design, the cast-iron block providing space for five main bearings and a bore and stroke of 3.875 x 3.00 inches; its compression ratio was 9.25:1. Topped with a Carter four-barrel carburetor (model 3744925), the engine produced 220 hp at 4,800 rpm and 295 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm. The optional Hydra-Matic paired with a 3.7:1 axle ratio made a great

The stock interior, though plain by today's standards, includes a cloth and vinyl upholstered bench seat, padded door inserts with armrests, rubber floor mats, two-tone dash, AM radio, and a heater/defroster.

The instrument cluster includes gauges for temperature, amps, oil pressure, and fuel level, along with a 100-mph speedometer. This truck's odometer was reset to zero at time of restoration, and now shows just 1,541 miles.

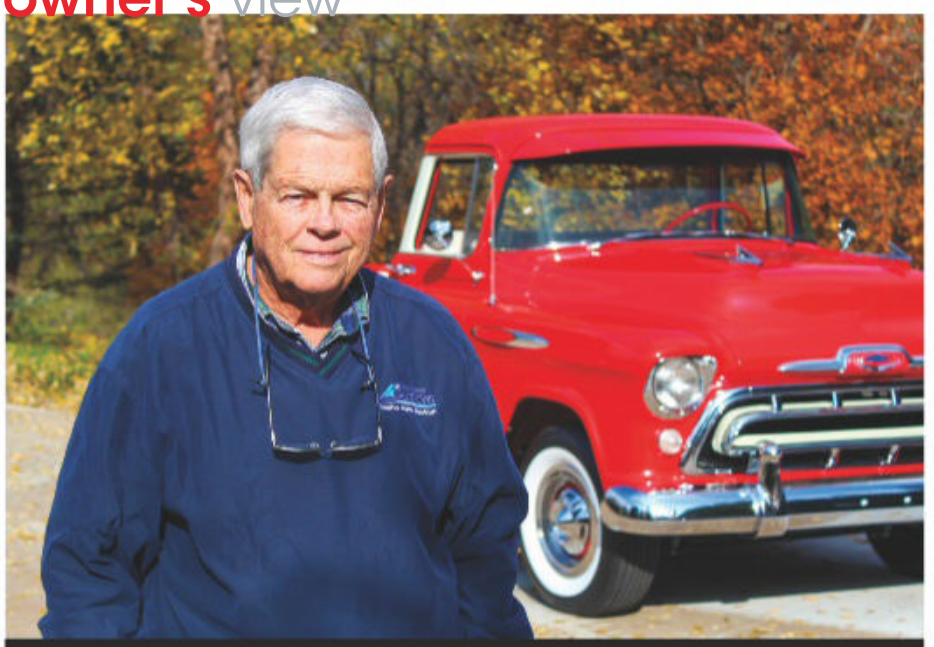
combination. Jim believes it's one of just 2,100 produced with the 283 in conjunction with this transmission.

The Cameo Carrier—or Cameo, as it was later identified—was built in limited numbers, as demand for a luxury truck during the Fifties never truly developed. Production ran from 1955 to 1958 with about 10,320 units sold, many of which have survived.

Shortly after purchasing this Venetian Red example, Jim spent a few weeks giving it the once over, detailing the finish with a buffer and machine compounding and tending to some minor paint work. He also went through the mechanicals, since so much time had passed since the truck's restoration.

"Just to be safe, I installed a new set of brake drums and wheel cylinders, and replaced all of the rubber hoses and a questionable heater core and temp gauge," Jim remarks. "The AM radio still works great and now all the gauges do, too, and the truck runs and drives nicely." Jim has also kept modifications to a minimum: All he added was a pair of dealer-installed Corvette aluminum valve covers and a dual exhaust.

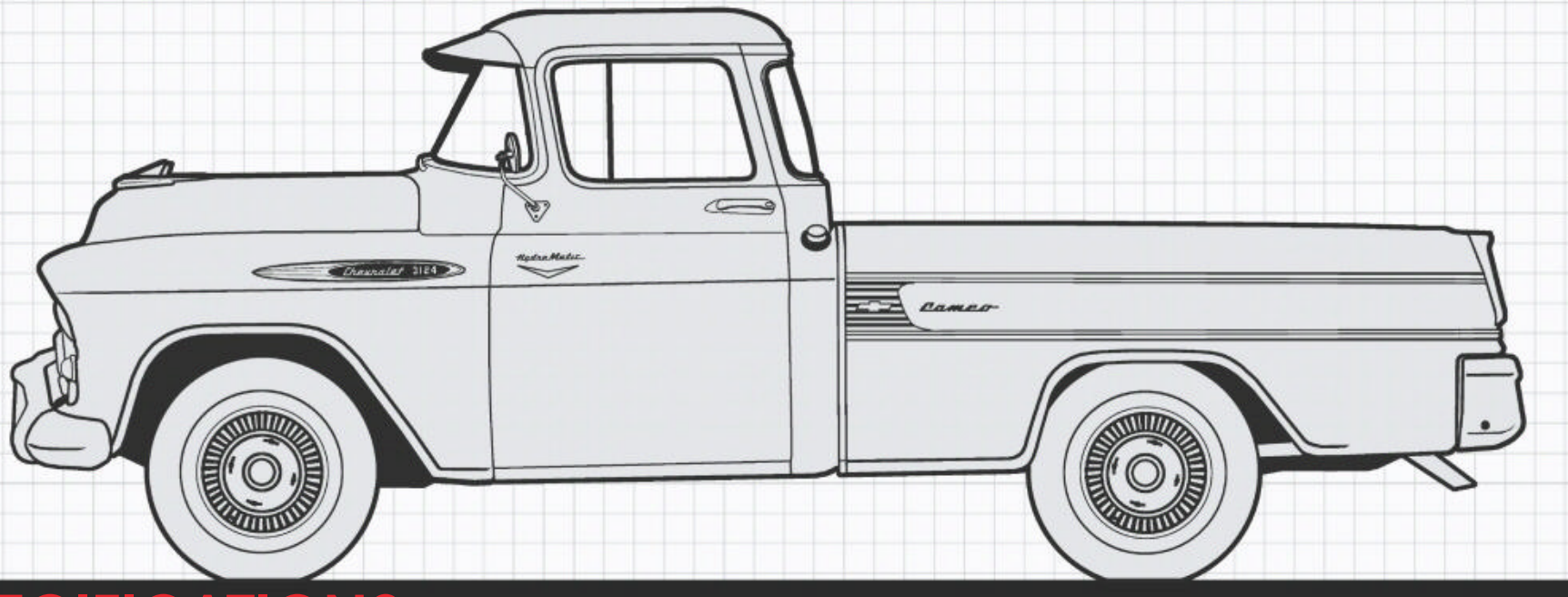
After the mechanicals were attended to, Jim wasted no time in taking his Cameo to a few local shows and began driving it on a weekly basis. "In its first outing mid-season, the Cameo earned a 'Top Pick' at the 2021 Missouri Valley Hot Rod Reunion, selected by the Shrine Children's Hospital.



Most people have never seen a Cameo truck, as they are very rare and only produced in limited numbers. It could be the sharpest 1950s truck there is, and for me the '57 model was the best looking. The fact that I own two of these rare examples makes it even more exciting. — *Jim Duffack*

1957 CHEVROLET CAMEO CARRIER

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTA CONROY



SPECIFICATIONS

WHAT TO PAY

LOW	$28,000
AVERAGE	$66,500
HIGH	$148,500

PRICE

BASE PRICE	$2,273
OPTIONS	Hydra-Matic automatic transmission; 283-cu.in. V-8 engine; heavy-duty radiator; heavy-duty rear springs; dual side mirrors; AM radio; heater/defroster; electric windshield wipers; E-Z Eye glass; front window visor.

ENGINE

TYPE	Chevrolet "small-block" V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	283 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.87 x 3.00 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.25:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	185 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	275-lb-ft @ 2,400
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic lifters
FUEL SYSTEM	Single two-barrel carburetor; mechanical pump
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual manifolds; single muffler and outlet

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic	
RATIOS	1st/3.82:1	2nd/2.63:1
	3rd/1.45:1	4th/1.00:1
	Reverse/4.30:1	

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hotchkiss-type semi-floating axles, hypoid drive gears
GEAR RATIO	3.90:1

STEERING

TYPE	Saginaw, recirculating ball
TURNING CIRCLE	41.5 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic four-wheel, unassisted
FRONT	11 x 2-inch cast-iron drum
REAR	11 x 1.75-inch cast-iron drum

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	All steel, body on frame
BODY STYLE	Two-door, three-passenger pickup cab
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	I-beam with parallel leaf springs, hydraulic shock absorbers
REAR	Live axle; parallel leaf springs, hydraulic shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Stamped steel
FRONT/REAR	15 x 5.50-inch
TIRES	Bias ply (Currently: Diamond Back whitewall radial)
FRONT/REAR	6.70-15 (Currently: P235/75R15)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	114 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	193.5 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	77 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	77.5 inches
FRONT TRACK	60.5 inches
REAR TRACK	61 inches
CURB WEIGHT	3,515 pounds

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.77
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	12.42

PRODUCTION

From 1955-'58, Chevrolet built a total of 10,321 Cameo Carrier half-ton pickups. Production by model year was 1955: 5,220 units; 1956: 1,452 units; 1957: 2,224 units; 1958: 1,405 units.

PERFORMANCE*

0-60 MPH	8.7 seconds
¼-MILE	17.6 seconds

* Listed results are from a road test of a 1955 Chevrolet Cameo Carrier equipped with a 145-hp 265-cu.in. V-8 engine fitted with an aftermarket McCulloch supercharger and stock three-speed manual transmission, published in *Motor Trend's* March 1956 issue.

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Springtime Super

A rare and stylish 1941 Buick Super Convertible Phaeton has led a charmed existence

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

When Mr. Wiley ordered his Convertible Phaeton from Illinois' Bauer Buick in the fall of 1940, he selected a newly released, short-run "Spring Color" hue, his chosen warm, terracotta-like Sienna Rust body paint a striking contrast to the rich green leather inside. The open-top four-door Super was built in Flint in February 1941 and delivered through the suburban Chicago dealership in late March or early April.

The Convertible Phaeton was once repainted green to match this rich factory interior color; the original leather was too far gone and was replaced during the car's restoration.

Over the next 80 years, it would have four additional long-term owners, two of whom preserved it for the latest, who then returned it to its prewar glory.

"I found this car in 2004, in Wisconsin," Michael Stemen remembers. "The ad said, 'Very original; one of 467; runs, drives; last of the four-door Buick convertible sedans.'" The avowed marque enthusiast, then living in New York's Catskill Mountain region, called upon an Illinois-based friend in the Buick community to inspect the Model 51-C on his behalf; upon learning of its high level of originality, Michael negotiated the purchase and set the Phaeton on the road to restoration.

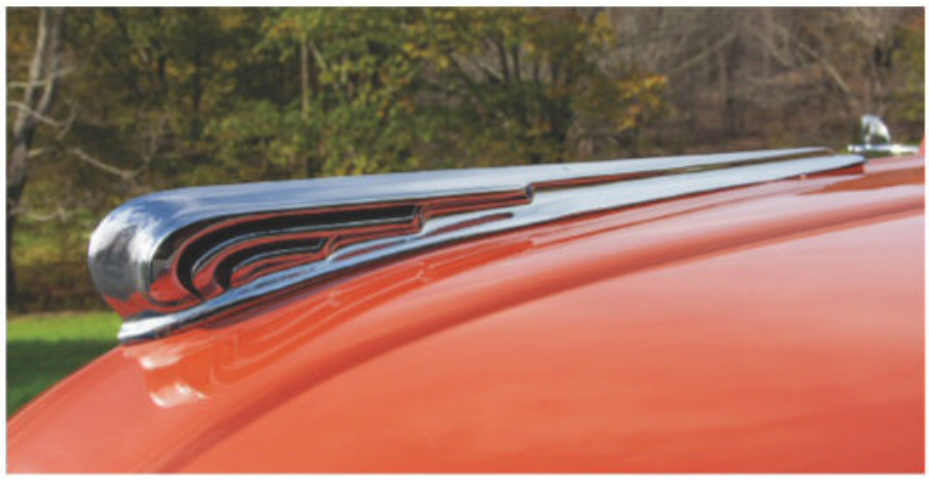
General Motors had discontinued Cadillac's junior La Salle division for 1941, leaving Buick room to expand its territory both within the GM hierarchy and in the marketplace. The Super line hit a sweet spot for affluent middle-class buyers, representing a distinct step up from the wide range of Series 40 Special models. The lowest-production Series 50 body style was this Convertible Phaeton, whose $1,555 list price—just $6 less than that year's average yearly salary—represented around $30,415 in today's money.

Mr. Wiley's six-passenger convertible was one of two open four-doors the automaker offered that year, the second being the $1,775 Series 70 Roadmaster that rode on a 126-inch wheelbase, 5 inches longer than that underpinning his Super. These Convertible Phaetons represented the final appearance of a type that dated back to Buick's touring cars of the early 1910s. While the body style moved upmarket through ensuing decades, the Phaetons built for 1941 still used manually operated folding Haartz cloth roofs, rather than the vacuum-actuated tops enclosing both Series' flagship two-door Convertible Coupes. Our feature car's first owner selected a complementary tan top, the color of which was echoed in the optional cream-pinstriped, Prairie Tan painted road wheels.

That light-colored cloth roof was still fitted to this car in 2004, although its body had been repainted dark Verde Green in the early 1960s to match the still-present factory leather upholstery. The change was made by its second owner, who bought the Phaeton from its original selling dealership in 1958 when just 55,000 miles registered on the odometer. "It was probably traded in on a new car," Michael explains. "I learned this from the Buick's next owner, Jim Flaherty, who saw it for the first time on display in the Bauer Buick showroom in 1958—quite an honor for a 17-year-old used car! Flaherty was starting college at the time, and he remembered the Sienna Rust paint looking shiny and the top being down. It was priced around $1,200. It sold after a few weeks on display, and Jim later learned, was purchased by a schoolteacher named Evelyn Evans. She would use it as an everyday driver for 10 years."

This striking four-door left such an impression on the young man that, a decade later, he purchased it from Ms. Evans. "A friend tipped him off on a '41 Super convertible for sale, and when Flaherty looked at the car, he said it was obvious it was the same one he'd coveted at Bauer Buick. Unfortunately, the years had not been kind to it," Michael tells us, recalling correspondence he exchanged with the Buick's third owner, in which Flaherty revealed what he remembered of the car's history.

"The body shop that repainted it did a poor job, so the original Sienna Rust could be seen in several locations where



the green paint had flaked off. The leather was dry and split in areas, and corrosion damaged parts of the body. Flaherty bought the car to save it from further deterioration, intending to restore it. He held onto it for 12 years, never finding the opportunity to begin the work, then sold it to fellow Buick Club of America member Richard Dance. Dance had the same intent as Flaherty, as well as the same outcome, and after storing the Convertible Phaeton for the next 24 years, he sold it to me."

Both of the Buick's interim caretakers divulged all they knew of its backstory and handed over the supporting documentation they had, so this car holds little mystery for Michael. It had rolled through 80,000 miles and was actually in driveable condition, but needed comprehensive refurbishment when Michael bought it on the recommendation of his longtime Buick friend, John Williams.

It was John who would oversee the two-year, ground-up restoration of the 51-C that Michael dubbed *Rebecca* after the contemporary Alfred Hitchcock film. John worked with Larry Hall and a selection of body/paint, interior, and engine-rebuilding specialists in and around his hometown of Charleston, Illinois. As it came apart, the car offered some positive and negative revelations. For the former, removing the rear seat uncovered a 1949 receipt showing a radio repair and voltage regulator replacement, interestingly handled by a Chicago De Soto-Plymouth dealer; that paper is how Michael learned the surname of the Buick's original owner.

The disassembly revealed that significant rust in the Buick's rockers and where the rear fenders mount to the body. This body-work would be handled by Miller's Automotive Services, while an 85-year-old craftsman replaced the interior and top using the intact but unserviceable originals as patterns, that being his final job before retiring. Michael made decisions about every aspect of the work, tracked down NOS and good used parts, and coordinated the replating of the car's ample brightwork.

Returning the Buick to its factory-applied color proved a greater challenge that anyone thought. "It took us quite a while to hit the color," he said. "In 2004, computer-matched paint color technology was in its infancy. There was no formula—we only had the paper color sample that was in the original salesman's book. We had to keep spraying trial colors on metal. Finally, they found a piece of the cowling that was protected by the side of the hood. For the most part, they got a good match to that. In the two months we were working on the paint, we must have mailed back and forth 15 to 20 sprayed-out samples. It was mix, spray, 'Now what do you think?'"

When you put the radials on for touring, that makes it a completely different vehicle. The car is a lot of fun to drive, and it looks spectacular.

Color was successfully applied in 2005, and soon after, during a visit to John's garage, Michael invested sweat equity as he installed the stainless-steel exterior trim along with the insulation going inside the doors, the trunk lid, and on the floors. He opted to fit original accessory rear wheel shields because he felt they improved the car's overall appearance; this meant finding the scarce covers and the special pot-metal trims that accented them, different from the similar-looking decorations originally mounted behind the wheel on this car.

The prewar Buick's mechanical components were likewise rebuilt or restored as needed, including its 248-cu.in. "Fireball Dynaflash Eight." This five-main-bearing straight-eight was fitted with rebuilt twin Stromberg downdraft carburetors; with a 7:1 compression ratio, the engine made 125 hp at 3,800 rpm and 278 lb-ft of torque at 2,200 rpm. That massive powerplant posed few headaches outside of the missing original cast-steel heat shield that protects the generator from an exhaust pipe coming off the manifold. Michael admits it took six months to locate a good used replacement: "It's painted black, and nobody knows it's there. We went to that level of detail to make sure this car again had everything it had when it left the factory."

A rare alteration from the Buick as-built happened in an unseen place. The car sends power through its refreshed, column-shifted three-speed manual transmission and torque tube to a semi-floating rear axle, originally equipped with a 4.1:1 final drive ratio. In a quest to make the Convertible Phaeton more freeway-friendly, Michael chose to have taller, 3.42:1 axle gearing from a 1955 Buick installed by Frank Cwikla several years after completing the restoration. The original four-wheel drum brakes remain behind factory 16 x 5-inch wheels mounting the 7.60-16 raised-letter Firestone bias-ply tires used for show duty; he purchased an alternate set of wheels mounting wide-whitewall radial tires for touring.

And drive it, he has. After the restoration was finished in July 2006, *Rebecca* made its show debut at the Buick Club of America National Meet in Rochester, Minnesota, where the car won a Gold Award; Michael and his late wife, Karen, enjoyed a memorable club tour in it before successfully traveling 1,800 miles back to their home in New York.

"Installing the high-speed differential later made all the difference in the world on the highway because it revs completely different that it did before; it was pretty busy," he explains. "With two one-barrel carburetors, it feels quite peppy. It feels more like a modern car, and you have a longer run in both first and second gears before you shift into third. When you put the radials on for touring, that makes it a completely different vehicle. Driving it with more modern parts has improved that a lot. You're out there downshifting, upshifting, getting blown around. The car is a lot of fun to drive, and it looks spectacular!"

The Model 51-C has won prestigious national-level awards since its completion, one of which was the *Hemmings Classic Car* award during our 2018 Concours d'Elegance. Whether on a show field or on the road, it remains a car Michael loves sharing with others. The possibility of this Convertible Phaeton being the sole example extant—possibly even ever built—wearing its bold, factory Sienna Rust paint and green interior color scheme makes it Super in every sense.

LEFT: Michael added accessory rear wheel shields, which were challenging to find.
ABOVE: The twin-carbureted straight-eight was rebuilt to factory spec.

The Long Hauler

A 1974 International pickup carries on with the same owner for more than 40 years

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

classictruck

Dick Sindlinger wasn't looking for a collector's item back in 1980. He needed a basic pickup, something reliable that could get him back and forth to his job at Borg Warner Air Conditioning (later York International) in York, Pennsylvania, during the week, and cart stuff around as needed at any other time. Today, the Sunburst Yellow '74 International that he bought used more than four decades ago is retired from daily service, and is now winning shows and turning heads. It's the old truck he could just never seem to part with, and it all began with a casual mention from a co-worker.

"A friend of mine and I were walking into work together and he said, 'You oughta buy my Dad's truck—he has it for sale'," Dick says. "I went to look at it and I don't remember what I paid for it, but I ended up buying it."

Dick didn't know much about International Harvester or its light trucks at the time, and his first experience with the local dealer's service department didn't exactly inspire confidence.

"It seemed like it needed a tune-up, so I took it to an International dealer," he says. "They put on new plug wires and changed the spark plugs, but I wasn't very happy with their work—it was shooting fire out of the tailpipe."

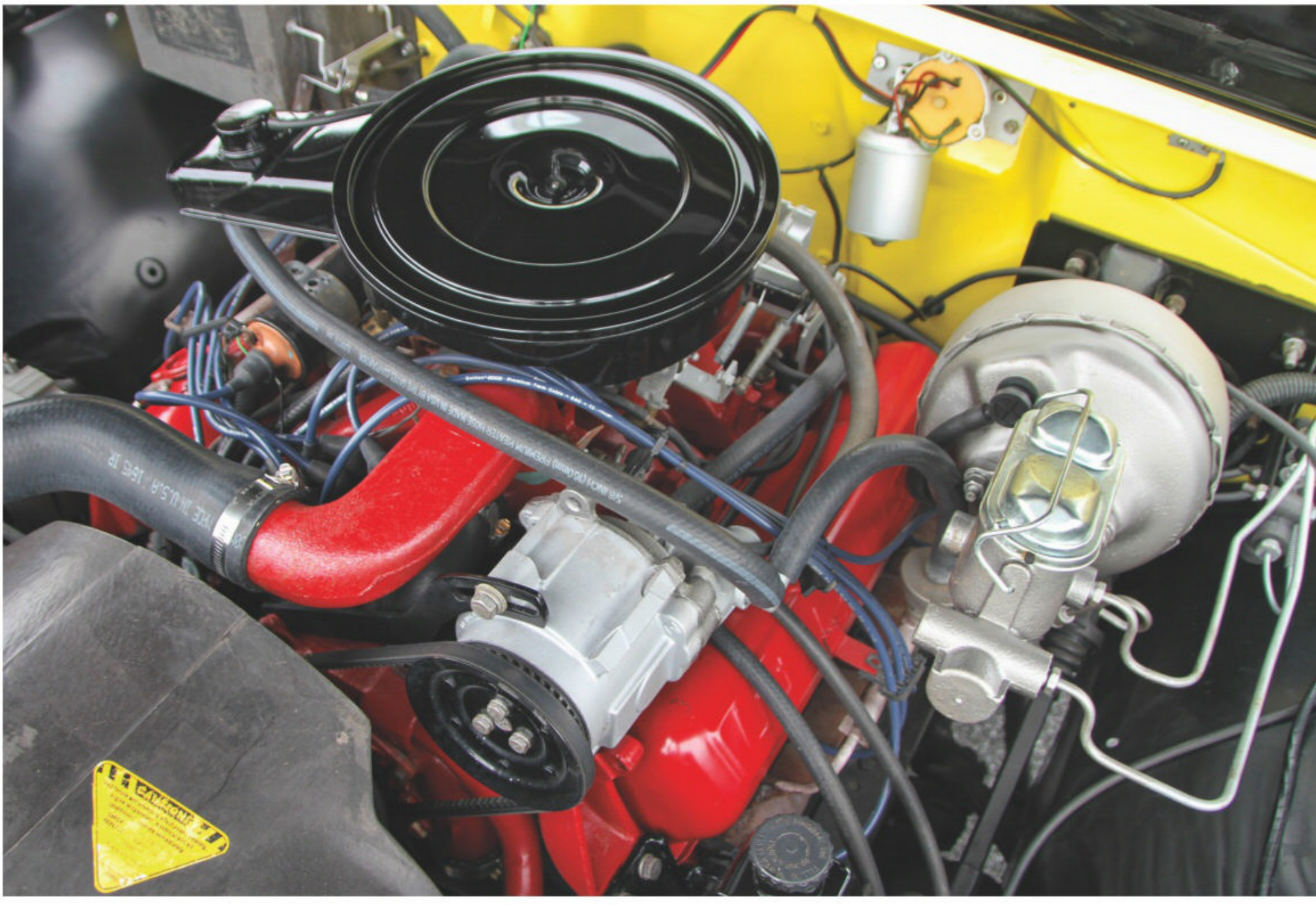
Dick's next stop was an independent shop, Zech's Service Center in York, where the International's 345-cu.in. V-8 got the tuning it needed and was cured of its flame-belching.

"I took it to a garage a block away from me. They redid it and it ran fine," Dick says. "I returned to the International dealer and told them I want some of my money back because I had to take it somewhere else to get it to run properly."

Dick's encounter with IH service was likely an isolated incident, but a lack of dealer support was one of the factors leading to International's decision to stop building pickups in 1975. Not only were there too few International dealers to compete with the Big Three, but many International dealers wanted to focus on farm equipment or medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Pickups were viewed by many dealers as less important.

In 1974, though International pickups were on the verge of extinction, IH was still trying to improve and make a case for its light haulers. The ½-ton and ¾-ton two-wheel drives were equipped with independent coil-spring front suspension across the board, replacing the old forged I beam with leaf springs in the previous year's 1110-series half-ton and the torsion bar front end in the 1010-series half-ton. The two half-ton offerings were pared down to just one and renamed 100 series while the 1210 and 1310 series were replaced by the 200 series. The frame used under the '74 trucks was heavier and the stance was made 4 inches wider for improved stability. Power front disc brakes were standard issue, as were staggered rear shocks to help tame axle windup.

None of this had really factored into Dick's purchasing decision, though, and his 1974 100 served well while he used it daily from 1980-'84. In '84, Dick



A 345-cu.in. International V-8 is rated at about 150 hp but has ample grunt to power this '74 half ton. The engine has been overhauled once, as has the TorqueFlite automatic it's paired with.

switched jobs and began traveling more. The International was beginning to show its age, so it was relegated to occasional-hauler duty.

"I began working for the International Union UAW, so I needed something I could use more for travel rather than just back and forth to work," Dick says. "The truck was starting to get rusty, too. Once, when I was going up to Gettysburg, the tailgate just fell off because its brackets were rusted. So, then I just used it for yard work, moving furniture, or carting mulch. I just kept it for a work truck."

The International's 345 V-8 later suffered an injury when Dick's father was using it to haul a riding lawn mower, but it didn't sideline the truck completely.

"He came walking up to my house and said the truck had stopped on the road and he couldn't get it started. I had Zech's Service Center tow it and they said it was frozen solid and wouldn't turn over," Dick says. "In the morning they went out and it started and ran but it wasn't running quite right."

Further inspection revealed one broken and one bent pushrod. Dick had no plans to tackle a major overhaul, so the International remained in service and was used for occasional chores—albeit running on seven cylinders.

Years passed and Dick considered selling the old truck a few times, but by that point it had earned a place in the family. In 1998, he took it to a local body shop to get a quote on rust repair and paint work.

"The first painter I took it to said he wouldn't touch it for less than $15,000." Dick says.

"He told me, 'Those things are nothing but rust buckets and once you start working on it, you'll just find more and more rust.'"

At his next stop, the stars aligned: Dick's International found someone willing to make the old truck look great again, for very little money.

"I took it to another place in York and a young kid came out. I told him that I wanted an estimate—the job didn't have to be perfect, but I wanted to get the rust fixed and get it painted," Dick says. "He said, 'If you can leave it with me for a couple of months, I could use it to train people who are just learning paint and repair work.' He told me if I'd agree to that, he could fix it for $1,000."

For a $14,000 savings, Dick figured he'd roll the dice and let his truck be a training aid for apprentice-level body technicians. The job turned out to be a little more challenging than anticipated, Dick recalls: "They took the windshield out and found rust that you could stick three or four fingers through. Then they took the back window out and found more rust there." Regardless, four months later and for a grand total of $2,000, the truck was done. That was more than 20 years ago, and the work performed by trainees at Best Finish in York (no longer in business, unfortunately) is what you see on the truck today. With the outside looking great, Dick enlisted Statler's Upholstery in Gettysburg to re-cover the seat and install a new headliner that same year.

With the engine still ailing and a busy schedule to tend to, Dick parked his refinished truck inside a shed and covered it. More time passed and, finally, in 2013, he decided it was time to pull the International out of storage.

"After I had it painted, it sat under a cover for 15 years," Dick says. "I finally said to my wife, if I don't get it out and get it running, I'll be in a nursing home and won't be able to drive it."

Tom Fadely at Fadely's Auto Masters pulled the engine and the 727 Torque-Flite automatic—both were sent out for rebuilding. While the engine was out, Tom Bortner towed the truck to his place, repaired some rust on the inner fenders, and painted the engine bay.

The truck's bench seat (top left) was reupholstered in the late 1990s, door panels are original. Power steering and power disc brakes make hauling tasks easier on the operator. In addition to bodywork and a repaint, the exterior sports restored bumpers and new body side trim.

The gas tank was sent out for refurbishing and the interior was further updated with a new floormat and NOS gauges by Prueitt Automotive Restoration in Glen Rock. The exterior of the International was treated to new side trim, the front bumper was rechromed, and the rear bumper was repainted.

After its makeover, this former work truck made the trip to the IH Scout and All Truck Nationals in Troy, Ohio, in 2014, where it collected a first-place award in its class. That same year, it nabbed second-place honors at the Carlisle Truck Nationals. Dick still drives the truck regularly and uses it for occasional light chores.

While Internationals like Dick's have stood the test of time, International Harvester—once a leading independent maker of trucks and agricultural equipment—didn't. The pickup and full-size Travelall lines were discontinued in 1975. The popular Scout carried on and, in 1976, was available in three versions: the short-wheelbase Scout II, the full-figured Scout Traveler, and its pickup adaptation, the Terra. In late 1980, the last Scout rolled out of Fort Wayne, Indiana, beneath a pall of labor strikes, failing dealers, and waning consumer enthusiasm. International Harvester folded altogether in late 1984, selling off its name and the agricultural business. The truck division was reorganized as Navistar.

SUNSET STEP-SIBLING

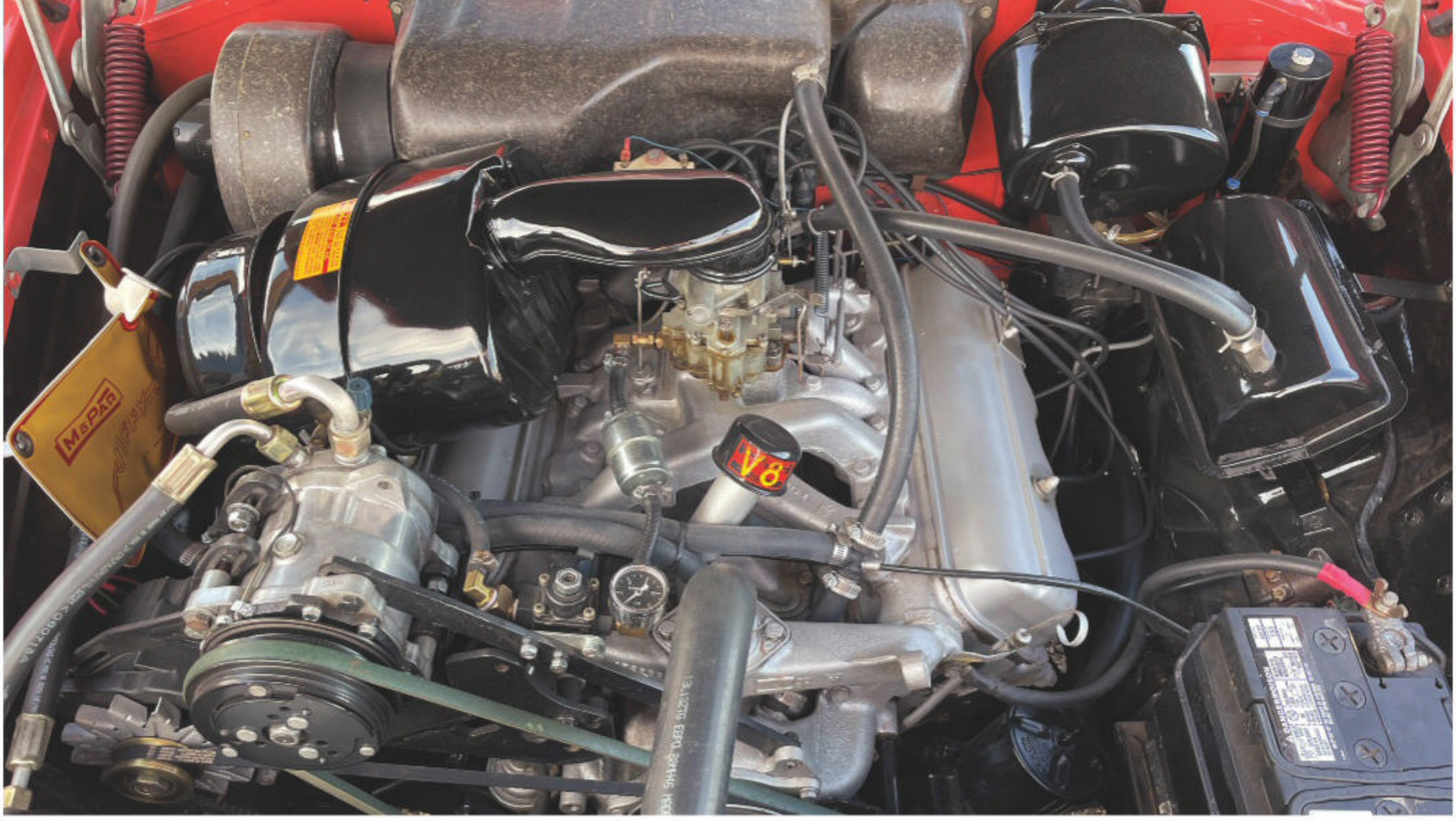
Part De Soto, part Dodge, and all Forward Looking, the 1957 FireSweep was a momentary bright spot in De Soto's downward spiral

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

When you're a mid-level car division without a ton of excitement happening, what do you do to spur sales? One popular answer: Move downmarket, make a go of it with the plebes, and hope that a rush of sales makes up for whatever suffering of reputation your company may endure.

There are plenty of examples, but the most prominent two are Packard and Cadillac/La Salle. In an era when Packard sales were unsustainably low, they dreamt up the lower-line 120, a smaller, less expensive car that got the rub from Packard's good name. Short-term, the ploy worked: For 1937, Packard sold 122,000 cars, the bulk of them the 120-series — enough to vault Packard all the way into to eighth place in the year's sales figures. (Whether this staved off or encouraged the inevitability of the marque's demise 20 years later is another conversation altogether.)

Meanwhile, Cadillac's companion marque, La Salle, nearly doubled Cadillac's sales for 1940, a year that would turn out to be La Salle's last one in business. Yet when La Salle was dissolved and Cadillac's new Series 61 arrived in '41 to take up the slack, sales grew 44 percent over 1940's combined Cadillac and La Salle sales figures. Cadillac suffered little, if at all, by



Since the Firesweep was Dodge-based, it received the Coronet's 325-cu.in., two-barrel, 245-hp polyspherical-headed V-8 as standard.

introducing a lower-line car, and the marque went from strength to strength for decades afterward.

Doubtless it was Cadillac's success that played into the minds of De Soto's bosses when they launched the marque's entry-level FireSweep line for 1957. While most De Sotos were based on Chrysler's 126-inch-wheelbase chassis, the new entry-level FireSweep was based on Dodge's new 122-inch chassis. And when we say new, we don't mean just its length: The Torsion-Aire front suspension incorporated torsion bars to maximize both cornering ability and ride comfort.

Because the FireSweep was Dodge-based, it received Dodge's engine as well: the polyspherical-headed, 325-cubic-inch V-8, in 245-gross-horsepower two-barrel or 260-gross-horsepower four-barrel form. (De Soto's 341- and 345-cube engines, and their commensurately higher horsepower ratings, were reserved for the larger De Soto models. Alas.) A three-on-the-tree transmission was standard, but Chrysler's new TorqueFlite three-speed automatic transmission helped models across the board, from the meanest Plymouth to the fanciest Chrysler, to become paragons of smoothness and comfort.

Even the style suggested a hybrid of marques. That tail, the triple lights within the of-the-moment tailfin, stacked atop the exhaust pipe. That feature was De Soto's signature in '57. Those fins helped visually sharpen what otherwise seems like a blunt nose. Speaking of that schnoz, does it look familiar? It should: It shares steel with Dodge's Coronet. While other '57 De Soto models flirted with four-light noses for the year, in advance of 50-state legislation allowing such a styling extravagance, the FireSweep was available with two, and only two, lights for the year, as was the Coronet. No half-year hedging here.

And so, between the style and the technical innovations (spearheaded by the TorqueFlite and the torsion-bar suspension), *Motor Trend* named every Chrysler Corporation car built for the year as its "Car of the Year" for 1957. Perhaps in part because of this, De Soto's gambit with the FireSweep was successful: The division stepped up from 11th to 10th in the national sales race, with sales up nearly 20 percent from 1956. Of the 133,000 De Soto sales for the year, more than 57,000 of them — 43 percent — were FireSweep models. The two-door Sportsman, the model seen here, sold 13,333 examples, starting at $2,836. Four-door sedans, four-door hardtops, and wagons in six- and nine-passenger configurations were also available.

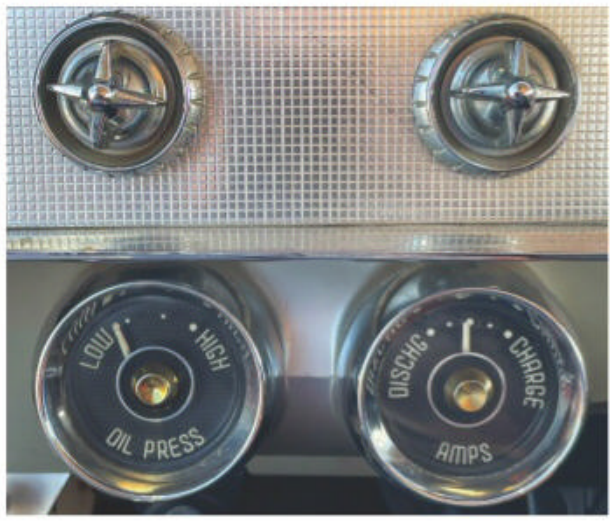
Surely much of that success could be laid at the feet of Virgil Exner's longer/lower/wider iteration of the Forward Look, which took America by storm. Everyone, from buyers who lined up to purchase a Chrysler Corp. car in previously unseen numbers, to the GM designers who ripped up the '59 facelifts on their new-for-1958 cars and got back to work, went mad for them. So what if the FireSweep was part Dodge, part De Soto? It was new, different, and far more stylistically exciting than anything the other two of the Big Three had cooking.

It also caught the imagination of Dennis Kerry, formerly of Detroit but now residing in Phoenix, Arizona. His dad worked for Chrysler and was involved in the lighting end of styling — ensuring legality and such. (And pushing it, as was the case when the four-light '57 models arrived.) Dennis' formative years were spent in the back of a '56 De Soto, and then a '59 Imperial. The bulk of his car collection has been muscle-themed mid-'60s Plymouths, but as the years rolled on, the siren call of a Forward Look machine hooked him.

Dennis was looking for a ’57 or ’58 Fury, but soon discovered that he didn’t want to spend the kind of cash that a solid example brings these days. So, he went another way to find his dream combination of torsion bars and fins: He checked the completed listings of an online auction site to see what did or didn’t sell, and for how much. “And if they didn’t sell,” Dennis says, “I had a chance of making a deal with someone.” Chryslers and lower-line De Sotos were bringing a fraction of Fury money, and this FireSweep popped up in Houston. “It was ridiculously cheap, in the 20s [thousands],” Dennis allows. After contacting the owner, Dennis sent his cousin (who, by chance, lived in town) to look at it. “He called me and told me, ‘Dennis, if you don’t buy it, I will!’ So, I made the deal.”

It was a single-family car out of Iowa into the early 20-teens and had been repainted in its original Dusty Orange and White combination. It was nicely optioned with whitewall tires, full wheel covers, power steering and brakes, heater, AM radio, a clock (but not one in the steering wheel), snazzy dual antennae, and—perhaps surprisingly—air conditioning. That alone was a deal-maker for the full-time Phoenician. “Besides it being almost all finished, it had air conditioning and none of my muscle cars have air. I could drive it in the summertime!”

The second owner, who was in possession for four years through Dennis’



Even low-line De Soto models like the FireSweep received ancillary gauges that other marques would have left out of their lower-line machinery.

2017 purchase, took pains to make minor (if helpful) mods that would be largely invisible. "He put disc brakes up front, probably Aspen/Volare brakes, and he changed the master cylinder to where you could fill it with fluid through a canister, so you didn't have to remove the brake booster." The brakes were doubtless as much to combat modern, distracted drivers in far more modern machinery than to cure the heat-and-don't-repeat front drums. "He took the fan off the pulley and installed an electric fan. The radio in the dash works, but there's a Bluetooth head unit in the glove box. He added a dash light to indicate when the emergency brake was on. But it's still a two-barrel 325, and the ignition still runs on points."

There is also a bit more chrome than may have come from the factory. "On the FireSweep, the upper door frame (where you lay your arm when you drive) was always painted. He chromed all of that. All the stainless was redone too. The seller told me I bought the car for the money he had in chrome and stainless alone." Additional brightwork comes courtesy of the new wire wheels and the wide-whitewall BFGoodrich Silvertown radials that Dennis added.

One look at Dennis' FireSweep could tell you that Virgil Exner's plan would resonate with the public. And along with De Soto, other Mopar brands did well in 1957: Plymouth gained 155,000 sales (but slipped into third place), and while Dodge gained just 47,000 sales over 1956, other marques did poorly enough that Dodge moved into seventh spot. But product planners soon figured out that, rather than gathering new sales, FireSweep was simply eating into Dodge's Coronet sales; De Soto's reputation, as with Packard two decades earlier, suffered a hit as a result of the lower-line model. The 1958 recession hit every car company hard, but De Soto simply never recovered.

Not helping was that all of Chrysler's car divisions hobbled their long-term success by pumping '57s out of the factories too quickly: Rattles, squeaks, leaks, myriad quality-control bugaboos that had to be handled at the dealerships, and (eventually) rust issues meant that Chrysler's long-earned reputation for durability evaporated seemingly overnight. After 1959, the FireSweep was done, and in the waning days of 1960, so was the entire De Soto marque. Does a rising tide float all boats? It depends whether there's a hole in your hull.

Sixty-two years after the final '61 De Sotos rolled off the line, Dennis is busy enjoying his FireSweep. "I'm using it more than some of my muscle cars. It runs and drives fantastically. It's a full-frame car; it rides like a De Soto, which is just as good as a Cadillac, but it costs less money. I'm 70, so I don't need another muscle car. At this point, there's not much else to do with it but drive it. Everything works perfectly, the tires and wheels don't have 2,000 miles on them, and I just drive to shows. I'll say, the guys in the De Soto club have all been nice people—and there are a lot of younger guys in the club now, too! And if there's a national De Soto meet within a thousand miles of Arizona, I'll throw it on the trailer and go."

If only that sort of enthusiasm was around when De Soto was in business.

spotlight
vintage trucks

Active Retirement

driveable**dream**

This 1972 Land Rover Series III SWB has traded off roading for back roading

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL AND MATTHEW LITWIN

Vintage 4x4s are a bit of a conundrum. Using the vehicles as they were intended tends to be rather rough treatment. It also frequently results in modifications to counter the issues unique to exploring increasingly arduous terrain.

On the other hand, with overbuilt chassis, low-geared differentials, and no factory overdrive, they aren't exactly road-trip machines either. Jack and Stephanie Gosselin, of North Stonington, Connecticut, seem to have hit on the perfect solution with their 1973 Land Rover Series III Short Wheelbase. They treat it as a durable driver suitably unfussy to use for unhurried drives with their golden retriever, Etta.

"We found a car that fits into our lifestyle," Jack explains. "Our kids are local. We also have a classic catboat sailboat. We like these slower-paced lifestyle recreation opportunities."

In the '30s, the U.S. Army had decided that a ¼-ton truck was superior to a ½-ton truck for battlefield purposes. For civilian users, however, the resulting jeep and the Civilian Jeep versions built by Willys after World War II proved a bit on the small side. That was true not only here in the United States, where Willys offered a larger alternative in the proto-SUV Willys Wagon and its successor, the Wagoneer, but also overseas, where the fleet of WWII-surplus jeeps was modified beyond measure and a whole industry of jeep replacements spawned.

Likely the most famous of the early jeep-inspired sport utility vehicles are the Japanese Toyota Land Cruiser, which dates back to 1954, and the British Land Rover, introduced in 1948. The Land Rover was introduced by the Rover Company, which got its start as a bicycle manufacturer in 1885 and began producing automobiles in 1901. When car production ceased for the war, Rover was primarily a manufacturer of luxury types—hardly an in-demand item in austerity-stricken postwar Britain and not a suitable item for export at a time when overseas sales were the only sure ticket to raw materials.

The first Land Rover was partially prototyped from war-surplus jeep parts and rode the same 80-inch wheelbase. Like the early Willys CJ, it included such agricultural elements as a power-take-off drive. By virtue of having a fully boxed steel frame, aluminum bodywork (to keep the center of gravity lower), and a 50-hp 1.6L F-head four-cylinder engine (shared

with contemporary Rover cars), the 1948-'51 Land Rover Series I differed considerably from a contemporary CJ-2A and -3A, which used a conventional C-channel frame, pressed-steel tub, and a 60-hp 2.2-liter flathead four-cylinder.

The Series I continued in production through 1958, gaining a 2.0-liter displacement version of the original gasoline-fueled engine for 1952 and, in 1954 and 1956, two wheelbase extensions: to 86 inches and to 88 inches, respectively. The increased wheelbase was to accommodate an optional 2.0-liter, four-cylinder diesel engine beginning in 1957. A long-wheelbase (107 inches) Land Rover was introduced for 1954 and it too received a wheelbase extension, to 109 inches, partway through 1956. By comparison, the new-for-'55 Willys Jeep CJ-5 grew its wheelbase over previous models only an inch, to 81 inches, and the long-running Willys Wagon never deviated from its 104-inch span.

As consumer tastes for 4x4s steadily increased pressure on manufacturers to add luxury and power to previously utilitarian vehicles, so too did buyers demand a visually appealing product. While the Land Rover had proved quite capable as a machine, its slab-sided looks were the antithesis of "design" as it existed in the late '50s. Thus, Rover enlisted its in-house stylists to create the Series II with its now-iconic "barrel-side" bodywork (along with curved side glass and a rounded rooftop) to drape the familiar, leaf-sprung 88- and 109-inch chassis. That move also helped integrate the 5 extra inches of width added to improve lateral stability for the trucks.

The commencement of Series II production also saw the introduction of a 70-hp, 2.25-liter four-cylinder gasoline engine with overhead valves that was related to the existing diesel-engine design. It would remain the standard Land Rover engine until the 1980s. The Series II also saw the replacement of the original

The 70-hp, 2.25-liter four-cylinder OHV gasoline engine was derived from the diesel. Introduced for the Series II, it would remain the standard Land Rover engine into the 1980s.

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The Series II was quickly replaced by the Series IIA, for 1961, which looks nearly identical in its early years to the Series II. Improvements in the Series IIA era included enlargement of the diesel to nearly 2.3 liters, which increased its output to 62 hp. In 1966-'67, the LWB Series IIA could be had with Rover's F-head 2.6-liter six-cylinder, rated at 83 hp, though four-cylinder engines continued to predominate, especially in the home (British) market. A special, 110-hp version of the six was offered in North American LWB station wagon models but was unable to meet emissions regulations that took effect starting in 1968.

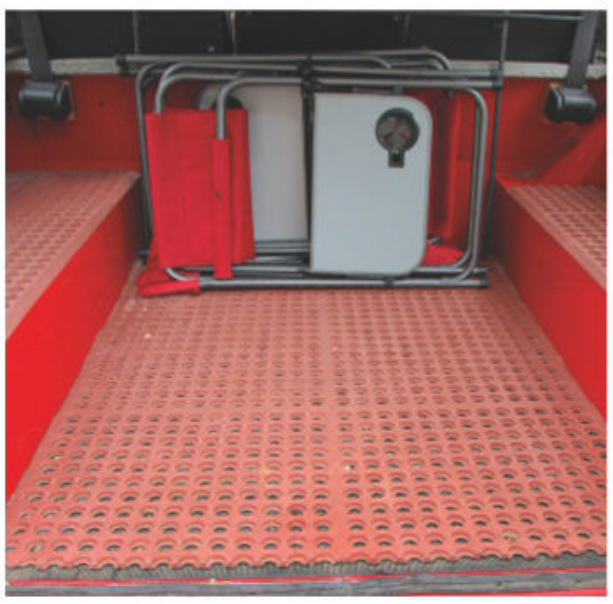
Overseas markets, meanwhile, drove perhaps the biggest cosmetic change in the years of Land Rover Series production. In 1968, the headlamps were moved from their original jeep-like location in the grille out into the front fenders, a move said to have been prompted by evolving U.S. safety regulations, along with similar laws in the Netherlands and Australia.

The IIA was by all accounts a massive success, with sales of 60,000 units worldwide in 1969 and '70. It also established the popular image of a Land Rover, which persists to this day.

"Everyone loves it," Jack observes of his own III, which he attributes to the IIA being something of a pop-culture icon when new thanks to film and television. "It's immediately recognizable even if you don't know exactly what it is. Sometimes I think it's the spare tire on the hood that does it. There aren't many cars that you'll see with the tire on the hood. When you see the Rover it's a happy vehicle."

Improvements started in late IIA models were consolidated across the line starting in 1972, leading to the Series III seen on these pages. While the model did not record the same year-on-year sales numbers as the late IIA, it remained in production through 1982 (importation to North America stopped in 1974, though),

Stephanie, along with the Gosselins' golden retriever Etta (center) and her late brother Henry, demonstrate the canine appeal and the capabilities of the truck in less-than-ideal conditions in this shot by Jack. The Gosselins have been 4x4 enthusiasts since the 1970s.



Form follows function inside the Landie, with a plastic instrument panel (actually an upgrade over previous metal units) and a utilitarian, yet pleasant, air throughout.

making it the most common of the classic Land Rover models, with over 400,000 constructed—not counting similar vehicles like the Spanish-built "Santana" versions.

Like previous Series models, the III evolved throughout its life, including many changes never seen in the North American market. Substantial revisions from the IIA seen on our featured 1972, however, include the plastic dashboard and driver-centric instrument panel. Previous models had used a utilitarian (and less crash-safe) metal panel with centrally located instruments. Not visible, but arguably more important from an operator's perspective, the Series III also featured synchronizers on all four forward gears, though Jack reports first gear can be a bit cantankerous on his.

"You've gotta be pretty slow to get first gear," he says, though it's not a compound low as you might expect in a truck four-speed. Jack also adds that there are a few other foibles that make driving even the most advanced of the Land Rover Series vehicles an experience, especially as they've aged.

"It's got a four-speed manual, old-style locking hubs, and it needs a little steering box work. It wanders a bit. It can take a lot of effort, between keeping it on the road, shifting gears, with the dog slobbering down your back. It takes forever to go anywhere, and we stay off the interstates. The car belongs on back roads anyway. We don't do a tremendous amount of off-roading with it. I only use the 4x4 when I get stuck."

Getting stuck, you'll note, occurs only when in two-wheel drive. The combination of updated, yet on-theme rubber and the classic 4x4 system is unbeatable. "It came with bias-ply tires but now we have some pretty aggressive LT6.5x16 radials on it, so it will get out of anything. We live out in the country—it's about a mile of dirt road and in spring it turns to mud season, just like in Vermont."

You can see the appeal to someone in the Gosselins' situation. Something lower, less rugged, and intended for smoothly paved roads wouldn't fit into their way of life.

"It gets dirty, so we wash it," Jack says. "It's a beautiful representation," but "it's not concours by any means. It's got some drips underneath it; it's got a dashboard that needs to be replaced but they're hard to find. What keeps bringing us back to this car is that we can say 'Let's hop in the Rover and take a little ride.' We'll put the dogs in the back and go out to Bar Harbor or wherever."

That's a freeing experience, especially if you're coming from something with immaculate paint and interior. "We've always enjoyed that type of car. We've had Fiats and stuff, but nothing is better than this. In the spring and summer, we're out there about twice a week at least."

Don't let the knockabout condition of this truck fool you, however, as it was fairly comprehensively rebuilt in recent years, before Jack and Stephanie acquired it.

Take that fully welded, box-section frame that was a literal strong point when the Land Rover was new and ultimately a longevity issue. "I understand that the weak point is really the frame," Jack says. "Rovers North, up in Burlington, Vermont, is an amazing resource. They sell galvanized frames for the Series III. Somebody in the past put one on ours and rebuilt the aluminum body. They put on new brake lines and went through the drivetrain. We haven't done a lot of renovation. We bought it probably 85-percent-restored condition and we've only done minor things: door gaskets, distributor, a rebuild of the transfer case, etcetera."

That's a good thing. Jack wasn't looking for a project and he's not primarily a mechanic, itching to get dirty. The minimalism of the Land Rover, however, means that when issues do arise, he's confident in his ability to address them.

"You open the hood, it has a carburetor and a distributor cap. I'm 69 years old and I feel very comfortable working on this stuff because of my vintage. I open my wife's brand-new Volvo and I have no idea what I'm looking at. If the Rover skips, knocks, or whatever, I know how to do all that stuff."

Long-Term Wrenching, Part 1

A 1932 Ford Model B Standard Tudor Sedan undergoes a three-plus-decade resurrection

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY BUD BLOSE

The Model B had been stored in the owner's home shop in pieces since the early '80s; the project resumed in 2008.

Some projects take an exceedingly long time for myriad valid reasons, but many are worth the wait. This Ford's restoration ranks as one of them. Foster Blose purchased the '32 Model B for his son, L. Eugene "Bud" Blose, in 1954 from a Hillsdale, Pennsylvania, dealer. Bud was just 17 years old at the time and he recalls, "It was runnable and complete. My plan was to drive it for a few years and then restore it."

He remembers cruising in his Tudor sedan to high school and having some fun driving through snow drifts with it alongside a friend and his '34 Dodge. The '32 even stood in as his father's daily driver for a five-week period after the family car was in an accident. However, the Ford went into hibernation in 1957, when Bud married his first wife, Arlene Harbrige, and moved to Commodore, Pennsylvania, to start a family.

Following a 10-year stint installing chalkboards and cabinets in schools across as many as 13 states, which often kept him away from home, Bud started a business in 1974 with his brothers-in-law, repairing coal mine electrical equipment. He and Arlene now had four children and he was no longer traveling, so he periodically worked on the Model B. After dismantling the car, he began hunting for replacement parts. A major milestone on the Ford's road

Bud decided to save his back by building this rotisserie from scrap steel tubing that allowed the shell to be suspended completely upside-down. The center pole passes through the firewall area and the rear window opening, and was fitted with pieces of wood to attach it to the body. A recycled steel panel (see text) is welded to the pole and flat steel straps are bolted to the inner body (see photo below).

Sandblasting revealed the extent of the rust in the inner rear wheelwells and other lower body areas, but the rear floorpan and the metal cross-members (not shown) that support the wooden front floor sections were surprisingly clean.

Once the shell and bolt-on metal body parts were sandblasted and cleaned, Gary Goss applied a coat of PPG epoxy primer in black to protect the bare metal from rust. PPG gray high-build primer would follow. (Here you can see the aforementioned load center metal panel that's part of Bud's shop-built rotisserie.)

To repair rusted areas, Gary cut some patches from reproduction panels and fabricated others using a metal brake at WyoTech and by hand forming.

Many of the patches were butt welded into place. To keep the heat from warping the metal, welds were placed about 1 inch apart. With each successive pass, a new weld was applied between each of the previous ones until a bead was formed. This patch is partway through that process. Plug welds will be used in the small holes shown on the underside of the panel.

The driver's- and passenger's-side rear inner wheelwell tops required long patches, which were welded from the outside and also inside the interior. The passenger's side (shown) also received a patch on the bottom. At this stage, their welds have been ground down. PPG gray high-build primer was applied after sections of bodywork were completed.

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Both doors needed their lower portions completely repaired with new metal. Shown is the replacement piece welded in with the old cutout rusted section sitting on top for comparison.

The body filler was sanded with 80-grit paper, then a glazing putty with a hardener was applied to fill minor imperfections and the areas were sanded with 180-grit paper.

Bud transported the shell to WyoTech where Gary used the school's spray booth after hours to apply multiple coats of PPG high-build primer. Bud then brought it back to his shop.

The body was reunited with the chassis and preassembled a few times to check and correct panel and fender fit. Afterward, the shell was block sanded/wet sanded from 220 grit up to 600 grit (not shown).

Back at WyoTech, after cleaning the surfaces, masking the window and roof openings, and wiping down the body again, Gary applied a single coat of black sealer followed by three coats of PPG paint in black and then three coats of clear. He repeated the process on all the body parts.

Once the paintwork was completed, these front fenders, like the rest of the body, were wet sanded with 1,000-, 1,500-, and 2,000-grit paper. Next, the finish was buffed and polished using 3M products to reveal the shine.

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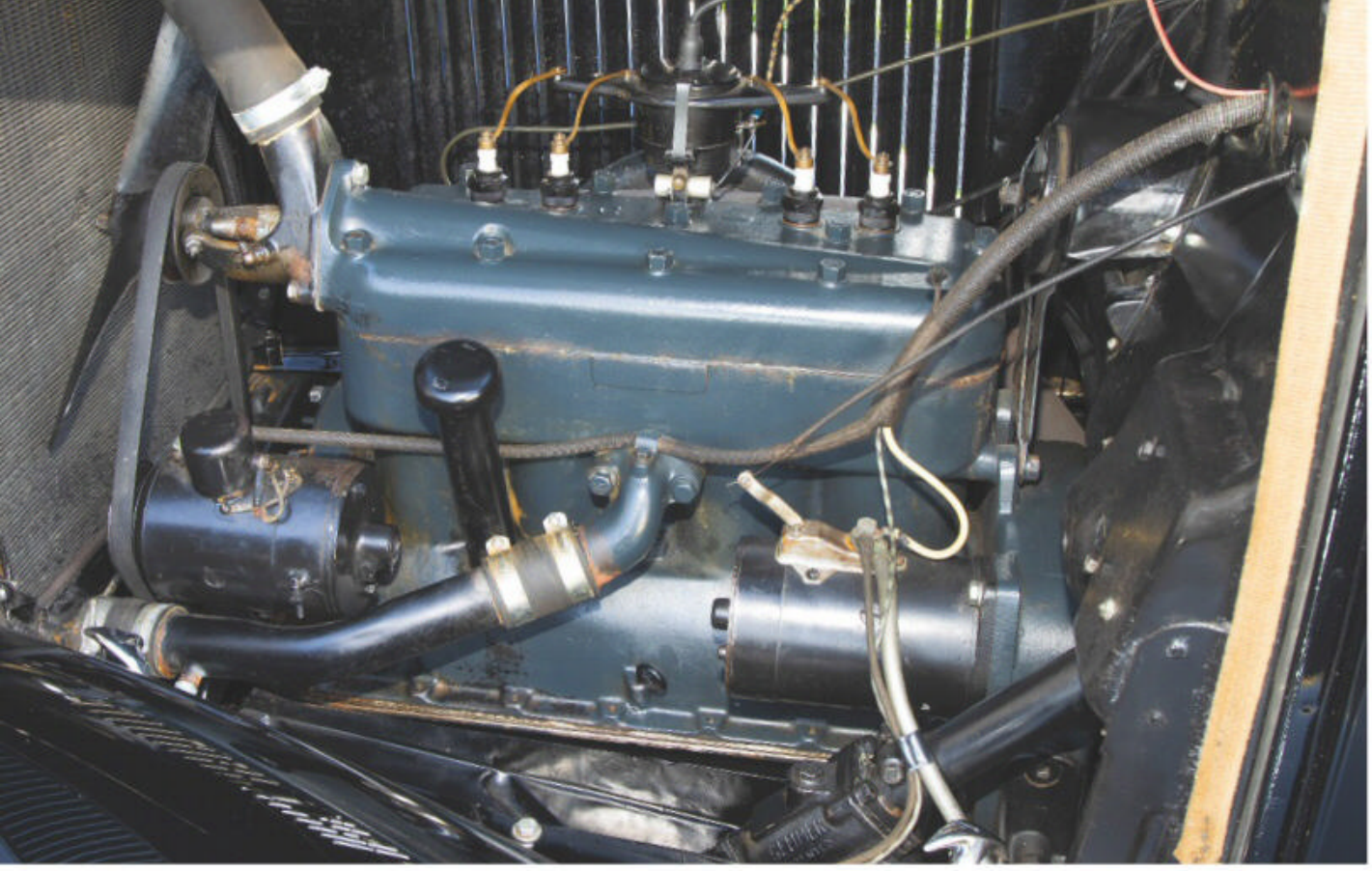
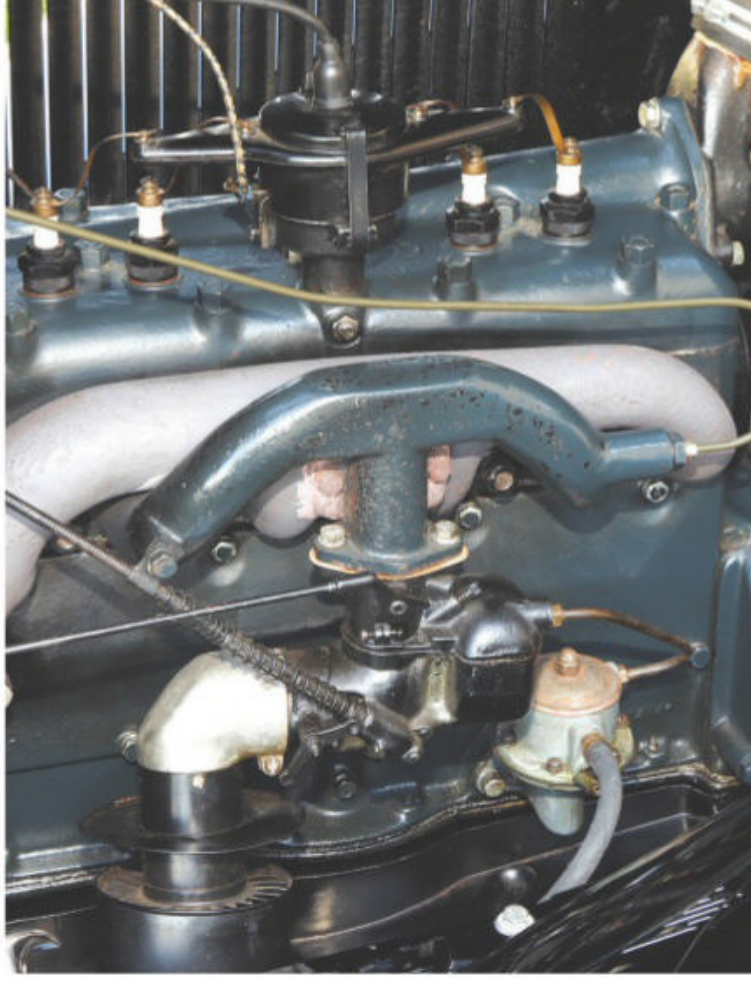




Professionally rebuilt 43 years ago and detailed about a dozen years ago, the original 50-hp, 200.5 cu.in. L-head four-cylinder Ford engine still runs strong.

to recovery was reached in 1979, when Bud had the engine rebuilt by Edward Rishel of Rishel's Repair Shop in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.

Among the many revisions that Ford had incorporated into the 1932 200.5-cu.in. L-head four-cylinder engine were improved induction, fuel, ignition, and oiling systems; larger bearings; and a more aggressive camshaft. Rated at 50 hp, the Model B engine produced 10 more than its predecessor and had a slightly higher 4.6:1 compression ratio.

During rebuild, the cylinders' bores were opened up .040 inch from 3.875-inches to 3.915 inches, and the 4.25-inch-stroke Ford carbon manganese steel crankshaft was chrome plated and then ground to standard specs. The forged-steel 7.5-inch-long I-beam connecting rods were retained, .040 inch larger heat-treated aluminum alloy pistons with matching rings were sourced, and the reciprocating assembly was balanced.

The valve seats were redone and the intake and exhaust valves, guides, springs, and tappets were replaced, as were the timing gears for the stock mechanical camshaft, the oiling system parts, and the gaskets. The factory cylinder head and intake and exhaust manifolds were retained, and the stock Zenith carburetor and breaker-point ignition system were rebuilt.

In the early 1980s, Bud disassembled the Model B's 106-inch-wheelbase chassis, sandblasted the frame, and repainted it with Rust-Oleum black enamel. He then restored the transverse leaf-spring front and rear suspension, the front I-beam axle and worm-and-sector steering system, and the four-wheel, 12-inch drum mechanical brakes, and reassembled the chassis.

Bud bolted in the refreshed engine with a new clutch along with the original floor-shifted three-speed manual transmission and spiral-bevel 4.11:1-geared rear axle he'd previously rebuilt. Parts gathering continued over the next several years and was mostly done on trips to annual swap meets. For example, the exhaust system was purchased in 2005 at Carlisle.

Around 2007, while on a mission trip in Haiti with his friend Gary Goss, Bud came up with the idea of trading business services for the bodywork and paint the '32 needed. Gary had owned a local body shop and was then teaching at WyoTech in Blairsville, a trade school specializing in career training for the automotive, diesel, and collision repair industries. He wanted to install a geothermal heating system for his home, which required about six 150-foot-long ditches to fit 800 feet of coiled pipe. Bud had the equipment and ability to do it, thus a deal was struck. Gary initiated the body and paintwork in 2008.

Bud was industrious when it came

Brown mohair upholstery makes the cabin cozy. Details of the interior restoration accompanied by a few dramatic before-and-after photos will follow in Part 2.

I kept my '32 for all this time because it was my first car; I wanted to restore it decades ago but wasn't able to do it until many years later. When reading *Hemmings* magazines, I often see people who tried to go back to find the car they had when they were young, but I only had to look as far as my home shop. I never considered selling it, as I knew that someday I'd get it finished. I'm happy that I finally did, with lots of help from Gary. Now it's a weekend cruiser. My wife, Becky, (pictured here) says that she enjoys riding in the Model B, but she can't drive it. — *Bud Blose*

to getting things done on his '32. Much like his Ford, which recycled crate wood into its products, Bud reused scrap lumber by building platforms to hold the body and temporary framing to accomplish additional tasks during the restoration. After initially working with a wood frame and engine hoist system to tilt the body, he realized that it didn't grant him all the underside access he needed, so he decided to build his own rotisserie using scrap steel tubing and other items he had around his home shop. For this project, he even employed a metal control panel that once held the breakers and receptacles in a load center, a machine used for AC electrical distribution in coal mining. He repurposed it to attach the rotisserie to the inside of the '32's body.

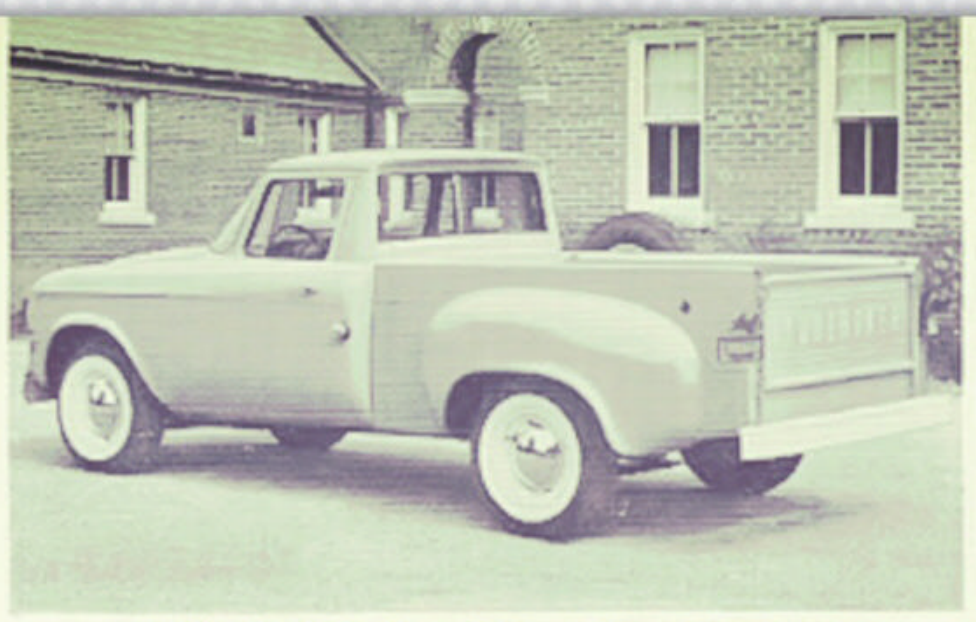
Bud sandblasted the shell and the bolt-on body panels to bare metal and Gary applied a coat of PPG epoxy primer and later, high-build primer. The rear inner wheelwell areas and lower body bore the effects of winters long past and decades in storage, thus requiring rust repair, and the rear fenders were replaced with steel reproductions purchased at Hershey.

Gary notes, "All the panels are original except for those rear fenders. Bud is the kind of guy who likes to repair and save the original panels, parts, clips, and fasteners whenever feasible. This project was a labor of love for him, not a money maker."

Cutting out the rusted metal, grinding the edges, cleaning the exposed areas, creating and welding in patches, grinding those welds, filling, block-sanding, glazing each repaired area, and some more block sanding followed. Bud then transported the shell to WyoTech, where Gary applied additional high-build primer. Once it was back home, the '32 was preassembled to properly fit the body parts and make adjustments. The process of block sanding/priming/block sanding was repeated until all the panels were straight. Once everything was dialed in, the body was disassembled and the shell and other parts were then taken back to WyoTech where Gary did the paintwork.

Since this project spanned more than 30 years, incorporated a ton of work, and generated a significant stockpile of photos, this story will be told over two issues. Next time we'll discuss completing the body, including its unique roof, prepping the previously rebuilt powertrain and chassis, restoring the interior, and final assembly.

NEW PASSENGER CAR COMFORT!



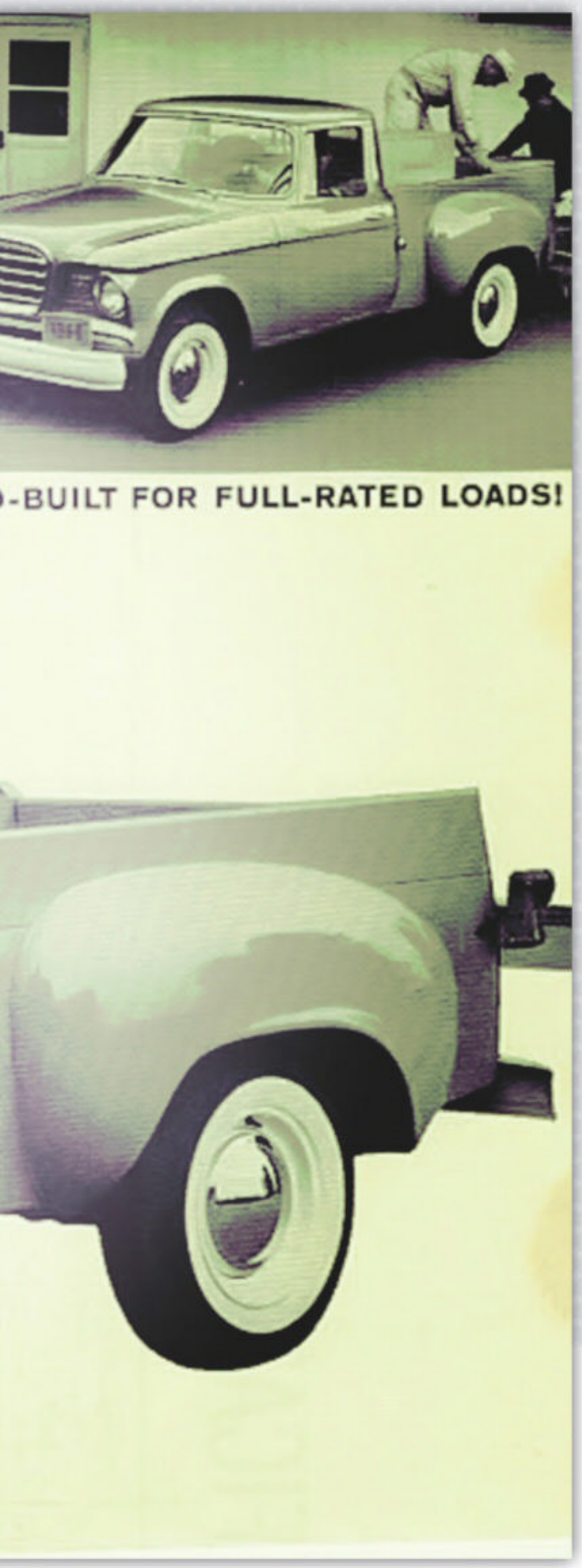
CHOICE OF 6½ OR 8 FOOT BOXES

RUGGED

Hauling into the Sunset

A look at Studebaker's last trucks, 1960-'64

BY PATRICK FOSTER • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION AND THE STUDEBAKER MUSEUM



RIGHT: Champ was Studebaker's new pickup for 1960, with styling that was much more modern than before. **TOP:** This 1960 Champ has a chrome grille, fender moldings, and headlamp rings not seen on the base-price trucks. **ABOVE:** The U.S. military bought a number of Champs, including this unit assigned to the Air Force.

As the decade of the 1960s opened up, Studebaker-Packard appeared for once to be in pretty good shape. After losing money steadily since 1954, the company recorded its largest profit ever in 1959, some $28.5 million, while boasting calendar-year production of 153,823 cars and 7,737 trucks. This surprising success was the result of introducing its new Lark compact. So, heading into 1960, Studebaker seemed to have the right momentum.

The company's passenger-car range was limited to just the Lark series and the aging Hawk coupe. The truck model lineup also was not extensive, but for 1960 it offered plenty that was new. Studebaker's basic truck cab had been in production since the 1949 model year and was looking rather dated by 1960. To correct this problem, the company introduced more modern-looking ½- and ¾-ton models with a new cab derived from the Lark passenger car sheetmetal. The new Champ 5E series featured a simpler, more rugged-looking four-bar

This 1962 Champ is a basic truck with a painted grille, headlamp rings, and front bumper. Even the side mirror is painted rather than chromed.

grille and a brawnier front bumper. It was mounted on a truck chassis and was a quite an attractive pickup. The base price of the bottom-line Champ ½-ton was $1,875, a bit of a hike from the prior year's stripped-down Scotsman pickup, which had been tagged at $1,791. However, the Champ was a better-finished product and looked a lot more expensive. The Scotsman had been not much more than a drab price leader.

The new Champs rode the same wheelbases as the prior-year light trucks: 112 inches and 122 inches. They carried over the same pickup box as used in prior years, too, a flare-fender design that was becoming slightly old-fashioned. The 1-ton and larger Studebaker trucks, called the Transtar models, continued to use the old C-cab, with its aggressive-looking grille/headlamp fascia. For some reason, the Transtar name had been dropped in 1959, but it reappeared in 1960 on 1-, 1.5-, and 2-ton models. Four-wheel-drive models were offered as well, but only in the heavy-duty C-cab Transtar models, not in the Champ series.

The basic Champ 5E5 pickups were powered by Studebaker's trusty L-head six-cylinder engine, with 169.6 cu.in. and 90 horsepower. The higher-priced 5E6 ½-ton trucks, along with the 5E11 ¾-ton jobs, got a larger 245.6-cu.in. L-head six, good for 118 hp. The top-line 5E7 and 5E12 models were equipped with Studebaker's excellent 259-cu.in. V-8, which developed 180 hp in standard two-barrel form, or 195 hp with the optional four-barrel carb. These two models could also be ordered with the optional 289-cu.in. V-8, good for 210 hp with a two-barrel or 225 hp with four-barrel carburetion.

The standard transmission was a three-speed manual with a steering-column-mounted shifter, and synchromesh on second and third gears. A four-speed transmission with floor shifter was optional, as was overdrive. Only the 5E7 and 5E12 models offered the optional Flight-O-Matic transmission.

Other optional equipment included the usual truck extras of that era: painted

New Champ pickups coming off the final assembly line at South Bend, Indiana, in 1963.

Modern camper shells were offered by the factory beginning in 1963. Called the Conestoga, they were attractive units that appealed to families and sportsmen.

rear bumper, Twin-Traction rear axle, power brakes, dual horns, radio, clock, heater/defroster, right-hand taillamp, side-mounted spare tire, heavy-duty springs and shocks, heavy-duty clutch, Deluxe Cab trim, and so on.

All in all, the new Champs were very competitive trucks that would certainly have sold better if only the company had been able to get them into production earlier. As it was, a combination of problems at the plant, along with a steel strike, delayed production until the spring of 1960. According to Andy Beckman of the Studebaker Museum in South Bend, Indiana, production of Studebaker's 5E5-5E12 trucks came to 5,602 units. Considering the amount of effort put into freshening the truck line, that had to be a major disappointment for Studebaker management.

The 1961 Studebaker trucks were known as the 6E series. The big news for the Studebaker truck line that year was the introduction of a "new" overhead-valve six-cylinder engine, actually an upgrade of the old 169.6-cu.in. L-head mill. Now producing 110 hp, it was a significant and well-overdue improvement shared with the passenger car line-up. With the OHV six introduction, the company dropped its aging 169.6- and 245-cu.in. L-head sixes from the line. The number of models in the light-truck (½-¾-ton) lineup shrank to six, down two from the prior year.

Also new for 1961 was a "Spaceside" slab-sided pickup box, the tooling for which was bought from Dodge. It was single-wall construction when double-wall was becoming the norm, but it gave Studebaker something new and modern-looking. The new box was wider than the carryover box and stuck out noticeably on the sides. The truck business improved, with production of the 6E5-6E12 models climbing to 6,592 units for 1961.

Beginning with the 1962 models, dubbed the 7E series and introduced in June of 1961, a Detroit Diesel engine was available in 1½- and 2-ton models, and air brakes could be had on the 2-ton units. A 96BBC truck (meaning 96 inches from bumper to back of cab) was available in both gasoline and diesel-powered models, also beginning in 1962. Engineers achieved the short cab length by deleting the fiberglass grille, flattening the front of the hood, and applying a distinctive flat-nose grille below the hood. This model was produced in response to motor vehicle laws in certain states that restricted the overall length of tractor trailers; these Studebaker modifications permitted the use of longer trailers. Also, for 1962, the Champ six-cylinder trucks could be ordered with the optional automatic transmission.

The compact Zip Van was produced under contract for the U.S Post Office. These were handy, economical units that were a lot more comfortable than the three-wheeled Westcoaster Mailster also used by the Post Office.

The 1962 7E5-7E12 model production rose to 7,325 trucks, Studebaker's highest level in years. The company had worked hard to modernize the truck line and also offered the lowest-priced pickup on the market, but it was plain that Studebaker's dealers weren't expending enough effort selling them; considering the size of the dealer network, the totals should have been much higher. The fact that Studebaker's union went on strike again that year certainly didn't help. It deprived dealers and the company of needed product and caused buyers to lose confidence in Studebaker.

For the 1963 model year the 8E series boasted a host of improvements and upgrades. The steering geometry was all-new and a new type of constant-ratio steering gear was adopted. Front shock absorbers were now mounted in "sea-leg" fashion, for better cornering, and brake and clutch pedals were now the suspended type. The brake master cylinder was moved to the firewall; it had been frame mounted previously. Improved front springs were featured, as were full-flow oil filters, now as standard equipment. Six-cylinder engines got an improved carburetor. The old fender-style pickup box was discontinued. Air conditioning was now available, along with a new "Conestoga" camper shell. Production fell to 5,861 trucks.

The 8E series carried over for 1964. New Service Champ models were available, equipped with fiberglass utility bodies for plumbers, electricians, and the like. Studebaker had one other new truck model for 1964: the Zip Van, a compact stand/drive model on an 85-inch wheelbase, sold only to the U.S. Post Office for delivery service. Studebaker won a contract to produce 4,238 of these sturdy little right-hand-steering units under a $9 million contract, which was big by Studebaker standards. The Zip Van utilized the Champ's six-cylinder engine hooked up to a three-speed automatic transmission, and was fitted with a Champ radiator, front axle and springs, brakes, and wheels. Bodies were produced by Met-Pro, Inc. of Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

Due to the December 1963 shutdown of South Bend production, only 2,509 model 8E5-8E12 models were built.

Studebaker also produced a line of 2½- and 5-ton trucks for the U.S. Army. After South Bend closed, the company transferred the military truck contract to Kaiser Jeep Corporation, which also bought the Mishawaka, Indiana plant they were assembled in. That unit formed the nucleus for what would later become AM General Corporation, which today is the world's largest producer of tactical wheeled vehicles. There's justice in that.

A special thank you to the Studebaker Museum for providing some of the photos used in this article.

Among the last trucks manufactured by Studebaker were the Champ Utility models, which boasted a stylish utility body made of fiberglass. These were sold to plumbers, electricians, and other tradespeople.

AUCTION NEWS&HIGHLIGHTS

BY MATTHEW LITWIN AND TOM COMERRO
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MATTHEW LITWIN AND AS CREDITED

BARRETT-JACKSON

Barrett-Jackson Palm Beach Results

BARRETT-JACKSON WRAPPED ANOTHER PALM BEACH AUCTION WITH MORE THAN $60 MILLION in total sales during its April 7-9 no-reserve event. When the final gavel dropped, 676 vehicles changed hands with more than $1.7 million going to support humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine. Among the lots to sell was a 1953 Buick Skylark convertible. The 1999 AACA Senior National award winner, powered by a 322-cu.in. "nailhead" V-8 paired with an automatic transmission, was fully restored and documented, and the engine bay was original down to the coolant warning decal. The Buick featured a power top, along with power brakes and steering. Finished in bright white paint with a fiery red interior, the Skylark was thought to be one of 1,640 built in 1953. When the bidding ended, the highly optioned convertible sold for $137,500. Also selling was a 1957 Pontiac Bonneville convertible, restored a little more than a decade ago with NOS parts and a new paint job. The Bonneville was powered by a Rochester fuel-injected 347-cu.in. V-8, mated to an automatic transmission. The highly detailed convertible, one of 640 made that model year, featured a lot of chrome, deluxe spinner hubcaps, and a continental kit. It rolled off the block on its whitewall tires for a final price of $126,500. Full results from Palm Beach are now available at barrett-jackson.com.

AUGUST

18-20 • Mecum Auctions • Monterey, California • 262-275-5050 • mecum.com

19-20 • Gooding & Company • Monterey, California • 310-899-1960 • goodingco.com

19-20 • RM Sotheby's • Monterey, California • 310-559-4575 • rmsothebys.com

24-27 • New England Auto Auction • Owl's Head, Maine • 207-594-4418 • owlshead.org

Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.

Biloxi Buys

VICARI AUCTIONS FINISHED UP ITS annual Mississippi sale in April with some nice vehicles finding new homes. Among them was this 1957 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser pace car, one of 1,265 produced that year. Finished in its original pace car livery, the Mercury had a power top, power steering and brakes, tinted glass, fender skirts, and a continental kit. The 368-cu.in. V-8 was topped by a single four-barrel carburetor and was paired with a Merc-O-Matic push-button transmission. The production pace car underwent an extensive and detailed restoration before the sale, and it sold for $60,000. Some other cars of note included a '57 Studebaker Golden Hawk, a former museum car in all-original condition, which sold for $35,500; a daily driver 1953 Buick Super Estate Wagon, which sold for $12,000; and a 1955 Ford Victoria with an older restoration, which sold for $17,000. For full results, visit vicariauction.com.

VICARI

View and search through thousands of upcoming auction vehicles in one place at the Hemmings Auction Showroom, www.hmn.com/auctioncalendar.

Up Next

MONTEREY WILL BE THE CENTER OF THE collector-car auction universe in August, with Gooding & Company spearheading the way as the official auction house of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. The Parc d'Concours will see cars cross the block on August 19-20. Last year's auction brought in more than $107 million in total sales, with a sell-through of 87 percent. Topping the early consignments as of this writing is a 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL roadster.

Mecum will return to the Del Monte Golf Course on the grounds of the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel with around 600 cars up for sale. Last year's total sales reached $57.4 million with an 80 percent sell-through. The top American car to sell was a 1929 Duesenberg Model J Murphy-bodied convertible sedan, which went to a new owner for $2.365 million. The Mecum auction is scheduled for August 18-20.

Finally, the Monterey Conference Center will be the venue for the RM Sotheby's Monterey Auction. It will take place August 19-20, and will look to best last year's results of $148.5 million in total sales and a 90 percent sell-through.

Visit each auction house's website for the latest consignment lists and check out our live Monterey coverage at hemmings.com.

Carlisle Auctions' Spring Sale

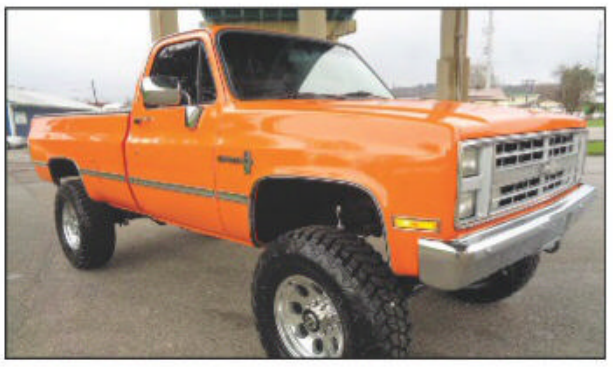
THE MONTH OF APRIL IN SOUTH-CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA MEANS ONE thing to vintage vehicle enthusiasts in the Eastern U.S.: Spring Carlisle. Launched in 1977 as a complement to the original September swap meet founded in 1974, the annual spring automotive swap meet that consumes the entirety of Carlisle Fairgrounds has evolved to include a collector car auction. The first sale occurred in 2006 at the then-new Carlisle Expo Center, located across the street from the swap meet's main gate. After a brief hiatus, the sale was reestablished in 2013 at the same facility, and the 2022 edition offered something for everyone: By our count, 334 vehicular lots were scheduled to cross the block on April 21-22.

When the sale concluded, a 1971 Oldsmobile 4-4-2 convertible took the top spot on the sales ladder after it hammered for $93,000 (all listed sale prices *exclude* the buyer's premium). The Lansing rocket was followed by a tie for second between a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette coupe and a 1965 Sunbeam Tiger, both of which achieved $80,000. Several vintage haulers were also offered, a trio of which we present here, which helped Carlisle Auctions gross $6.5 million, with a 72.5 percent sell-through rate. For complete results, and a comprehensive list of upcoming sales, visit carlisleauctions.com.

1964 FORD F-100

Reserve: Undisclosed
Selling Price: $7,500
Avg. Market Range: $35,000-$60,500

By our count, over 70 vehicles could have been considered for the "truck" category at the sale, including a high number of iconic half-ton pickups like this 1964 Ford F-100. Details were lacking: The oft-seen "runs and drives" was accompanied by "rebuilt carb, new fuel tank, new lights, etc." Also stated was its California origin and "nice patina," which described the Desert Southwest sunbaked wear exhibited by the exterior. An unspecified V-8 engine and automatic transmission were included. Considering that vintage trucks are no longer a niche segment of the hobby, the sale price for this one made it a drive-all-day bargain.



1987 CHEVROLET K10 PICKUP

Reserve: Undisclosed
Selling Price: $22,500
Avg. Market Range: $14,000-$21,000

Eighties pickups are all the rage—again—and survivors are being restored to stock or modified with personal touches, as depicted by this '87 Chevrolet pickup. The Custom Deluxe half-ton wore newer retina-grabbing Tangier Orange paint and sported tinted windows. If that didn't grab your attention, perhaps the 6-inch lift and 37-inch tires did. Below the hood sat a 454-cu.in. engine backed by a four-speed transmission, while the chassis carried a ¾-ton suspension and four-wheel disc brakes provided stopping power. It was enough to send this 4x4 into the sold column, surpassing the "stock" value range.

1965 CHEVROLET EL CAMINO

Reserve: Undisclosed
Selling Price: $16,000
Avg. Market Range: $30,000-$46,000

There's a type of hauler that has traditionally been hard to classify: car-based pickups, like Chevy's El Camino. The blending of passenger-car comfort with light-duty cargo capacity was conceived by the Australians during the prewar era, but it took decades for these "Utes" to gain a foothold in the States. This 1965 El Camino emerged from an era when they were still gaining popularity and exhibiting Chevelle styling. Built in Kansas City, the Chevy boasted a 250-hp 327 V-8, manual transmission, '64 SS wheel covers, and a prior owner who'd held title for 33 years. Amazingly, this clean-looking creation sold below value range.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept
Selling Price: What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer's premium)
Average Market Range: Values coincide with current market trends for vehicles rated from condition #2- to #1, respectively

HEMMINGS AUCTIONS

BY MARK J. McCOURT
IMAGES COURTESY OF HEMMINGSAUCTIONS.COM

HEMMINGS AUCTIONS IS OUR LIVE, ONLINE AUCTION SITE STAFFED BY customer service professionals ready to help bidders and sellers with any questions. A wide variety of classic and specialty vehicles from all eras are up for bid. Auctions run for two weeks, and qualified bidders place their bids electronically. Once a vehicle is accepted into the auction, the seller pays only a $99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Director of Auction Operations Terry Shea: terryshea@hemmings.com.

1959 MERCEDES-BENZ 220 S

Reserve: $87,000
Selling Price: $106,167
Recent Market Range: $83,120-$109,550

Mercedes-Benzes were sold in small numbers in the 1950s; these were expensive, largely hand-assembled cars with connoisseur appeal. That's true today with open-top models like this 220 S cabriolet, which underwent a seven-year restoration. Painted in a factory color after rust repairs were performed, its finishes were claimed near-perfect. The soft top operated and sealed properly, and the interior was completely refreshed with new leather, carpets, and wood veneers; the Becker radio worked. Its 2.2-liter straight-six was rebuilt and mated to a column-shifted four-speed manual, and no driveline leaks were divulged. Receipts totaling $80,000 in work were included, and the car sold strongly.

1958 CADILLAC SIXTY SPECIAL FLEETWOOD

Reserve: $28,000
Selling Price: $32,025
Recent Market Range: $26,800-$42,550

Who doesn't love a pink Fifties Cadillac? The seller of this fin-tastic Sixty Special claimed its Tahitian Coral finish was factory applied. A native of Washington State, the Fleetwood hardtop sedan was said to be rust-free, save for minor undercarriage surface corrosion. Its interior presented very nicely too, with only "sticky" power vent window operation noted as a demerit. The car's mechanical health was good, with a stock-appearing engine bay and typical fluid weeps from the 365-cubic-inch V-8 driveline. The shock absorbers were recently replaced, the brakes adjusted, and new tires were fitted. More than 19,000 views and a good hammer price proved the pastel Caddy enjoyed timeless appeal.

1971 DATSUN 240Z

Reserve: $87,500
Selling Price: $105,252
Recent Market Range: $84,210-$112,340

Fans of Datsun's seminal Z-car were either cheering or booing when the clock ran out on this second-year, single-family-from-new 240Z, for its six-figure selling price cemented the blue-chip collectability of the classic Japanese sports car while underscoring how the best examples are no longer approachably valued. This sub-52,000-mile, matching-numbers coupe had been sympathetically refurbished, its factory-applied paint still in fine shape and refreshed interior looking great. No rust was noted in the engine bay or chassis, and the inline-six/four-speed operated without issue. Interested parties engaged with the seller, and nearly 35,000 views later, the auction result spoke volumes.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept
Selling Price*: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee (*sold as a Make Offer listing following the live auction)

Recent Market Range: The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months

1931 FORD MODEL A

Reserve: $26,000
Selling Price: $39,375
Recent Market Range: $24,650-$37,200

This final-year Model A pickup blew past its lowered reserve and easily bested its top value benchmark because of its head-turning, multiple-time AACA Senior-award-winning condition. The blue-over-black paint scheme was rich and nearly free of damage, save for a few chips noted by the tailgate latch. The interior was as-built, containing a brown vinyl bench seat and door panels, a rubber floor covering, and a crack-free steering wheel. The undercarriage presented very well, and no issues were noted with the running gear or 40-hp, 201-cubic-inch four-cylinder/three-speed manual driveline. The seller answered numerous bidder questions, and this Ford sold after an impressive 14 time extensions.

1957 CHEVROLET BEL AIR NOMAD

Reserve: $48,000
Selling Price: $70,350
Recent Market Range: $45,500-$62,850

This Matador Red '57 Chevy Nomad was largely as-built, having avoided the common street-rod treatment over the past seven decades. Its paint and brightwork appeared attractive despite minor blemishes, and the seat upholstery and door cards were believed factory installed. Non-original (but welcome) upgrades included aftermarket air conditioning and a modern stereo, while the recently rebuilt super Turbo-Fire 283 V-8 with the four-barrel "Power Pac" option sported an aftermarket camshaft, electric fan, and dual exhaust system. The engine and two-speed Powerglide were promised to work well, with minor leaks. This Bel Air blew past its reserve and sold for a strong price commensurate with its appeal.

1947 MERCURY EIGHT

Reserve: $34,500
Selling Price: $41,789
Recent Market Range: $27,740-$43,800

Early postwar convertibles like this '47 Mercury promised optimism for a better future, and the appeal remains today. A full restoration done 12 years ago still presented well, with minor paint scratches disclosed on the body and a bit of surface corrosion on the undercarriage. The power-operated soft top was free from stains and tears, and the leather seat upholstery was taut. Issues noted included an intermittent fuel gauge, inoperative heater, and slight oil leak from the rebuilt twin-carbureted, 239-cubic-inch flathead V-8 with dual exhausts. Two videos and ample photography painted the Merc in its best light, and more than 11,000 views hinted how it might easily surpass its reserve.

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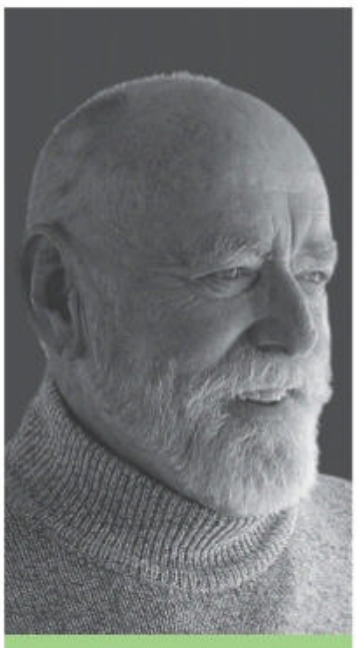

From Inaction to In Action

As with many of us, the COVID pandemic has distracted me from things that are truly important in life, such as hanging out with my motorhead compadres and fooling around with old cars. It's something I have done since my teens, back in the Mesozoic era. To remedy this situation, I threw caution to the wind last Sunday and tagged along with the local vintage car club as they drove to each other's garages to see what members were working on. This was followed by a late lunch at an outdoor café that was a big improvement over the A&W Root Beer drive-in of my youth.

Me and my friend, master restorer Bruce Haye, decided to take his flawless, dazzling-gold '63 Cadillac Coupe de Ville and do the tour in style. It had been a while since I toured in a 1960s land yacht, and I was impressed all over again by how smooth and comfortable the old Caddy was, and how well it accelerated when you put your foot down.

We grabbed cups of coffee at a takeout place and then waited for everybody to arrive at a big supermarket parking lot on the edge of town. First one, then a second, immaculate '90s-era Jaguar rolled up, and on their tail, a 1958 DKW 3=6 pulled in. I hadn't seen one of them since my pump-jockey days in high school. They were rather bizarre three-cylinder, two-cycle-engine compact passenger cars made in Germany, and looked somewhat like World War I German army helmets.

This was my first time out with this group, and I was amazed at what an eclectic collection of cars they had. For example, one member was rebuilding a 1968 Marcos GT with a 1600-cc Ford four-cylinder engine, sporting a crossflow head and a couple of Weber carbs. The chassis was fabricated of welded steel tubing, and the body was fiberglass. Some Marcoses were sold as kit cars but, judging from how the interior of this car was appointed, it was probably built by professionals at the factory in the U.K.

And then, for something completely different, at the next man cave was an impeccably restored 1929 Model A Tudor sedan, done in cigarette cream with black fenders and subtle orange pinstriping. The interior was fresh and correct, and the engine detailed to showroom new. These are pretty basic cars, and not that uncommon even now, but it was still delightful to see one that was correct to the last detail, and then hear it run and see it in action.

However, even more impressive was the fact that this fellow's facility was at a local airport, and next to his Ford was a 1930s-era radial-engine Waco open-cockpit biplane that was just as immaculate as the Model A. It was all white, with red accents, and was flight ready. The combination of the two period machines created a 1930s diorama that was like being transported to another era.

The cherry on the top of this dessert, though, was the gentleman's half-built, all-wood Pietenpol Air Camper. The plans for these do-it-yourself flying machines debuted in 1929, and became popular during the Great Depression. People constructed them at home, out of spruce and ash. They were simple, high-wing two-place monoplanes, powered by the same Ford four-banger that was in the 1929 Model A.

Granted, the old Ford flathead was heavy, but it displaced 200 cubic inches and made buckets of torque. It didn't have a counter-balanced crankshaft and was low revving, but that didn't matter: prop-driven airplanes run at 2,400 rpm on average, and are limited to below 2,700 rpm before the blade tips go supersonic and produce nothing but noise.

There was also a beautiful late-'50s Triumph TR3A in the group, as well as a Wimbledon White Mustang notchback, which sounded good with its all-American 289 V-8 rumbling under the hood. This pony was another fairly common car, but seeing one that was factory fresh was a pleasure.

Nobody offered snacks at their lairs, and it was just as well, since most car guys would simply put out a bag of stale Doritos and some warm pop. Instead, we caravanned to a roadside eatery and communed on the state of the classic car world.

Commiserating about old cars with interesting and entertaining people would have been a standard-car-guy Sunday a couple of years ago, but after having lived my somewhat monastic existence for a couple of years to wait out the plague, it was very special indeed. It made me realize that not only am I a lifelong classic car addict, but also that car people are my tribe. And winding up my day sitting at a table in the woods, eating outdoor oven-baked pizza and quaffing beer with buddies, is about as good as it gets. All I can say is, get out and join the club.

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