

## Binder DeSoto Auction In Iowa – Bud & Tom On The Road Again

By Tom Kenney

In the land of DeSoto enthusiasts (in a far-off galaxy?) this was the biggie – a no reserve auction of a Midwest DeSoto collection that included at least one example car from every year of production.

Bud Currey and I used our saved-up frequent flyer miles to fly from BWI to our destination in Spencer, Iowa. The auction was scheduled for October 20, 2007. Arriving the day before the auction, we had a chance to preview the cars. There were a large number of people from all over the country who came in for this event.

Chris and Connie Binder, who farmed 600 acres near Spencer, Iowa, had assembled their DeSoto car collection very quietly over many years. Most of the cars were acquired from the original owners or were restored cars. The Binders did not publicize the size and extent of the collection either locally or nationally. The existence of these cars was pretty much a surprise to everyone when the details came out about a year ago.

The auction list identified 56 cars. Of those, 48 were DeSotos, 6 were other Mopars, and there were 2 other makes. The collection included an interesting mix of cars from the 33 years that DeSotos were made – convertibles, hardtops, sedans, coupes, Airflows, and Airstreams. Many of the model years were represented by more than one example,

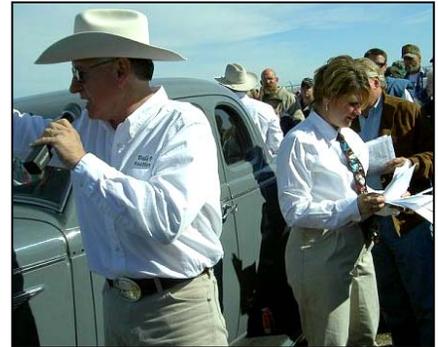
Chris Binder drove his 1929 roadster and a few of the other cars from the collection to DeSoto club meetings. He maintained the cars until his death in 1994. Connie passed away in 2006. The cars, parts, and literature were sold at no reserve to settle the estate.

When we got to the auction lot for the preview, we noticed four rusty parts cars. So our first impression was that maybe we had wasted a trip! But after closely inspecting all the cars, we determined that many could be returned to their former beauty with some TLC.

We had great weather to preview the cars. I proceeded to take pictures of all the DeSotos in the collection. We were allowed to open the doors, hoods, and trunks. None of the cars had batteries and many of them lacked gas tanks, tail pipes, and mufflers.

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*DeSoto*



*From the top, left to right: The auction team in action; rear and side views of the 1949 woody wagon; front and rear of the 1958 Memphis ambulance; two up-close photos of mid 1930s models showing the upscale detail of these cars; and the very rare 1933 rumble seat coupe with suicide doors.*

**DeSoto Auction – continued**



**From the top, left to right: 1934 Airflow sedan, side and rear views; Hernando DeSoto 1950 hood ornament; 1956 Fireflite hardtop; front and rear views of the nicely restored 1938 cabriolet; 1951 Custom coupe; and the 1929 sedan being loaded for the trip to a new home.**

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After the preview, the DeSoto club arranged a dinner at the Prime Rib. We got to meet and talk with DeSoto fanatics from all over.

There were several very desirable DeSotos including the following: 1929 rumble seat roadster, 1933 rumble seat coupe with suicide doors, 1934 Airflow

sedan, 1938 rumble seat cabriolet, 1949 woody wagon, four 1956 Fireflites, 1958 Memphian ambulance, and a 1961 Adventurer hardtop

On the Auction day, there was a field full of empty trailers. You could tell that people came to buy a DeSoto. There were 350 bidders present and 700 internet bidders ready. The action started at 10:30 AM. Yvette VanDerBrink, the auctioneer, was followed around by a cart, which held a cell phone and laptop computer. She announced which cars would start or turn over and which cars had stuck engines. She also told the crowd when she had an internet bidder. On-line bidders bought 8% of the cars.

The first car sold was a 1924 Ford Model T for \$5,500. The next car sold was a low mileage 1961 Adventurer. It went for \$21,000. The car was in very poor condition for a low mileage car.

Other top-dollar sales were the 1958 ambulance, which sold for \$36,000 and the 1949 woody wagon, which sold for \$57,000. Some bidders bought two and three vehicles! The range in price was \$1,000 to \$57,000, with the average price of \$10,000.

Halfway through the sale there was a loud gun shot like noise! It was the battery used to start the cars. It blew up, spraying an attendant with battery acid. He was quickly attended to and the auction continued without further attempts to start the cars.

Saving the best for last, I bought a box of books for \$80 and came away very happy with my Iowa purchase. I was interested in the 1960 Adventurer hardtop until I studied it up close. It was a restoration money pit. It found a new owner willing to spend \$9,000 to purchase it.

The sale was over by 1 PM and most of the cars were removed by 3 PM. It was a lot of fun watching the cars being loaded on the new owners' trailers for the trip to their new homes.

I was glad to be a small part of DeSale of DeCentury.