

Paul Habicht Tells Us About His First Car, Circa 1947

My first car was a 1932 Chevrolet 6 wheel coupe. I bought the car from a junk yard in 1947 for the whopping sum of \$35.00! New cars were hard to get after WWII.

I drove the Chevy home and started working on it. I checked the main and rod bearings and adjusted as needed. I ground the valves, redid the ignition system. The brakes were in good shape, but I replaced two front tires and tubes. The interior was in horrible shape, the upholstery was gone. I used one of my mother's old bed spreads, with scissors a hammer and tacks, I replaced the upholstery on the inside door panels, headliner and seats. I installed a new muffler, exhaust and tailpipe.

After driving it awhile I had it painted black with red spoke wheels and 'painted' white sidewall tires. The car looked very sharp with the \$35.00 paint job. I drove the car to Hagerstown every other weekend so my brother

could visit his girl friend (later to be his wife). I drove the car for three years with very few problems; two broken rear axles which Chevy was noted for, and a rebuilt water pump. I traded the Chevy for a 1936 Chrysler Imperial Airflow, but that's whole other story.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following are cars that Paul has owned not in order of ownership, but fairly close. 'G' or 'F' equals good or fair.

1932 Chevy coupe, G; 1935 Chrysler Imperial Air Flow G; 1936 Chevy 4 dr., G; 1940 Packard 4 dr., G; 1949 Chevy 2 dr., G; 2-1949 Dodge 4 dr., G; 1955 Plymouth 4 dr., G; 1955 Olds 4 dr.,G; 1959 Hillman 4 dr., G; 2-1960 Hillman 4 dr.,G; 1957 DeSoto Adventurer conv., F; 1938 Buick 2 dr., F; 1963 Hillman wagon, G; 1966 Ford F150 p/u, G; 1925 Dodge 4 dr., G; 1953 Chevy 4 dr., F; 2-1969 Mercury Cougar conv., F; 1967 Mercury Cougar, G; 1965 Mercury 4 dr., G; 1960 Mercury 2 dr., G;

1973 Mercury 4 dr., G; 1932 Chrysler 4 dr., F; 1958 Ford T-Bird F; 2-1955 Olds conv., F; 1955 Olds 4 dr., G; 1928 Studebaker 4 dr., G; 1928 Studebaker, Parts; 1964 Cadillac Limo G; 1959 Cadillac 4 dr.,G; 1960 Cadillac 4 dr., G; 1961 Cadillac 2 dr., G; 1948 Hudson 4 dr., G; 1927 Ford 2 dr., G; 1940 Plymouth Woodie wagon, G; 1932 Dodge 2 dr., 8 cyl. G; 1967 Mustang 2+2, G; 1968 Dodge 2 dr., G; 1973 Opel GT, F; 1931 Chevy Huckster truck G; 1956 Metropolitan h/t, F; 1979 Chevy wagon, G; 1934 Cadillac 4 dr., G; 1953 Mercury 2 dr., G; 1993 Lincoln Town Car, G; 2000 Ford wagon, G; 1984 Buick wagon, G; 1990 Buick wagon, G; 1968 Volkswagen Square Back, G; 1984 Buick 4 dr., G; 1940 Packard 120 4 dr., G; 1953 Chevy pickup, G; 1966 Ford pickup, G; 1963 Ford T-Bird, F; 1932 Chevy 2 dr., F; 1980 Chevy wagon, G; 1979 Chrysler 2 dr., G; 1980 Cadillac Seville, G.

'TECH TALK' with TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, GARY RUBY

This Month, Gary Talks About 'Rare' Cars

Does a car have to be rare to be valuable? Well, if you think about what cars really bring BIG money, they are the old cars like Cords, Auburns and the really rare Duesenbergs. Just to own one you'd better be really well fixed. To get one serviced would bust up my bank account. Yes, they are very valuable and most were owned by entertainers and wealthy business men. At many auction sales today, a million dollar plus price is nearly the norm. Rare

Corvettes, fetching \$100,000 are not uncommon today. Other cars that are rare because of how many were made, just don't bring those high prices.

The reason being, many cars sold in low numbers are not that much in demand. I was asked one time when I was President of the local '55-'57 Chevy club 'why do people love Classic Chevys', most of which were produced in staggering numbers.

My answer to the question was that over the years someone in the family, an uncle or granddad, mom or dad had one and they really wanted that model and the feeling is still there. Every time I take my '55 Chevy out I always get a thumbs up! I've had people nearly wreck trying to get photos with their cell phones while behind the wheel.

The car market does change from time to time. Prices of the two-place, 1955-57 Ford Thunderbirds go up one year and fall the next year, much like the stock market. In today's market can you get a rare car for a reasonable price? Absolutely! Especially if you do some educated shopping. Recently I had an itch for another car; *like I need another car!* I didn't want to spend a lot of money for another toy,

and I didn't want anything that needed a lot of work. So I started looking, not really sure of what I wanted. But, I knew I wanted something you don't see everyday. I found a Pontiac Grand Prix 2+2 AERO Coupe in Connecticut. A very long ride just to look at a car.

Paula and I left early one morning with the car trailer in tow. Got up there, found the car to be just as the owner said it was. We paid the man, loaded it up and made a run for home. This car is a really a rare car.

In the 1980s Richard Petty and some other NASCAR drivers were running Monte Carlos and Grand Prix Coupes with the 'notched back' roof lines, and they complained that at high speeds they would lose traction due to loss of 'downforce.' As the story goes, Richard Petty designed this body in a wind tunnel. It has a streamlined front, with a really large rear window and a oversize rear spoiler. So for these cars to run on racetracks, GM had to produce enough cars to qualify the Pontiac Aero Coupe as a production car.

Only 1,225 cars were built at a GM plant in Canada, of which 1,119 came to the United States. Dealers didn't like them, all the cars were the same, silver with gray interior and only came with identical options, you couldn't order 'T'-tops, power seats or other options. They came one way only. Mine is very clean with only 21,000 miles and always garage kept.

So the answer is YES, you can find a RARE car at a reasonable price. Every time we take the Aero coupe out we hear people say, "I have never seen one like that." We are really having a good time with the car and already put nearly 1,000 miles on the odometer.

Well, I guess I took up enough space in the Bulletin, hope everyone is having a great sum-



Gary Ruby's 1986 Pontiac Gran Prix 2+2 Aero coupe

cars, even though newer do also bring crazy money.

The big 'IF'...

Who would have thought that the Plymouth and Dodge muscle cars with the HEMI motors would bring over a million dollars, at auctions, when as new you could get them for around \$4,000! If we knew then how they would appreciate we all would have purchased one or even two.

Cars that aren't rare can be seen at any weekend cruise in. It's no secret that the 'trifive' 1955-1957 Chevrolets bring really good money as well as high-performance Ford Mustangs and Shelby Cobras; 1950s and 1960s



Since the enormous rear glass is fixed (not an opening hatch), it forced adoption of a dramatically shortened trunk opening.