

Air Suckers For Everyone

Everybody knows someone who had a Corvair “just like yours, except it had four doors, was black, and the top didn’t fold down”



1962 CHEVROLET CORVAIR MONZA CONVERTIBLE

Owner: B. Mitchell Carlson, Senior Auction Analyst
Purchase date: November 1989
Price: \$600

Mileage since purchase: 13,154

Recent work: Ordered a rebuilt distributor, due to random acts of timing. “Beta-tested” improved front and rear sway bars, as well as halogen turn signal lighting for Corvair parts vendor The Source.

My ’62 Monza convertible is like a child. We’ve been through a lot together, and it’s cost me plenty of money and emotional strain. But warts and all, I love it. In the spring of 1992, I thought I was done restoring it. Wrong. Two engines later I’m still throwing parts and wrenches at it in frustration.

With only 16,569 built in the first, abbreviated year of Corvair convertible production, I tend to have the only ’62 Monza convertible at any given event, which includes the CORSA national meet. And it seems like everybody had a particular relative who had one “just like yours, except it had four doors, was black, and the top didn’t fold down.”

Luckily, only two people have told me their particular relative was killed driving one.

Sometimes, being the Corvair Q & A point man gets old. God only knows how many times I’ve been told the motors were built under contract for GM by Volkswagen, Porsche, Renault, Trabant, and probably even Elvis. Or let us not forget those who swear up and down that the one their particular relative had was actually the 4-cylinder base model instead of the optional six. Right.

I made a concerted effort this year to bring the old gal out to the Iola Old Car Show & Swap meet, as their special exhibit was Chevrolet. In past years, I’ve driven the 220 miles to central Wisconsin to show it in the Blue Ribbon Concours. However, I had it parked most of last year after it developed a case of erratic idle once the engine was up to temperature. A friend hauled it down for me instead, which meant that, for the first time ever, I had a trailer queen.

1960 PORSCHE 356B CABRIOLET 1600S

Owner: Brigitte Archer (wife of SCM eBay Analyst, Geoff)
Purchase date: July 2006
Price: \$33,500
Mileage since purchase: 1,800, from New Mexico to Oregon through the Mojave. With hard top. In July.
Recent work: Installed a soft top but can’t find the zipper pull for the back window.



I have an addiction you might share. This summer I spent about three hours a night madly searching various regional craigslists using keywords like “Porsche,” “classic,” and “restored.” Two months into this frenzy, I hit pay dirt: a great-looking 356 cab at an appealing price in a very car-friendly climate.

I showed my wife the photos, and she fell in love. Soon she was feeding the fire with gasoline. “Did you email them? Did you hear back? What ever happened with that cute little car? Didn’t you say it was a bargain by at least \$10,000?”

Of course I emailed them. No response. Their ad had no phone number or other clue as to how to get through. Slyly, I found the website domain related to the seller’s email address. It was in Portland. The car was in Albuquerque. The ad was in Phoenix. And there was no phone number. I was starting to think this was a poorly executed Indonesian scam. After two polite emails in three weeks I gave up.

My wife sent them an email, and heard back twenty minutes later.

What?

Turns out the “little old lady” seller had owned the car since 1975, knew she had underpriced it, and had instructed her Internet-capable son to filter out anybody who seemed like a dealer anxious to make a profit. Bluntly generalizing, he just stonewalled men, responding only to my wife, a woman who, like his mom 30 years earlier, has a couple of little kids and will raise them in a soft top bathtub Porsche she will never, ever sell.

1963 CITROËN 2CV



Owner: Paul Duchene, Senior Editor

Purchase date: September 2006

Price: \$3,000

Mileage since purchase: 250

Recent work: New clutch, battery, exhaust, motor mounts, windshield vent (a major enterprise)

Sally is a much-loved, much-traveled “tin snail” with a history like a family tree. This is the sixth 2CV I’ve had, and I appreciate their eccentric (and often very smart) simplicity. I also love the idea of returning

cool cars to the road with appropriate patina—certainly the case here.

Sally was sold first in Germany, then went to England, Greece, back to England, across Canada, and finally to Portland Citroën collector Peter Nathan in the mid-1990s. Sold at a 1998 Rotary auction, she has been snoozing at a Dundee winery for the past eight years, sidelined with a broken clutch.

She started life in German-only “tree frog” green, became orange, and is now tastefully tan with caramel fenders. Extensive records indicate a brand new frame in the mid-1990s (\$2,800), and close inspection reveals many body panels have been replaced, along with the brakes, top, and tires. Think Lafayette’s axe. You can still buy new doors and fenders, but where do you stop?

The later 602-cc engine gives a top speed just over 70 mph, along with 45 mpg. I found a 1963 French export plate (tres charmant), and she has 1963 Oregon Pacific Wonderland license plates. Minor rust, major charm.◆