

Craigslist Special, E-type Update, and a Cross-Country Cougar

I pumped out cardinal car-buying sins like a Gatling gun: I neither started nor drove the car, I paid full price, and I forgot to look at any of the records



1969 Porsche 912

Owner: Geoff Archer, eBay Auction Analyst

Purchase date: May 31, 2007

Price: \$5,000

Mileage since purchase: Ten laps around the block

Recent work: New battery

I found this car on Craigslist in Redmond, Oregon, by searching “tangerine Porsche.” The price was less than half of what Dave Kinney’s *Cars that Matter* price guide suggests for a 5-speed car in #4 condition, so I knew I had to act fast. Geography was on my side, as Redmond is near nothing, really. The Porsche community from Portland had not yet had the time (or a weekend) to make the trip.

I had a scheduled flight to Chicago the next day to meet up with SCM’s Jim Schrager, so with no time to spare, I added an extra five hours to my standard three-hour drive from the coast to the airport. Drifting my proletarian Camry wagon up and through spectacular, mile-high passes with foreboding names like “Tombstone,” I worked furiously to compensate for my own miscalculations.

The drive took so long that I ended up with only ten minutes to look at the car (and later only made my flight by eleven minutes). My harried visit (and accompanying personality) broadcast my hand to the seller, a laid-back cabinet-maker who had been besieged with emails. In my panic, I was pumping out cardinal car-buying sins like a Gatling gun: I neither started nor drove the car, I paid full price, and I forgot to look at any of the service records.

At \$5k, it would have been fine if the engine was seized, which it wasn’t. The car purrs like a Mexico City taxicab. Which reminds me, nothing can prepare a 911 owner for his first 912. I *know* a 912 is a 4-cylinder 911, but still, the experience is bizarre. It looks, feels, shifts, stops, and smells like my ’69 911E, but of course it sounds and goes like a Beetle! So weird. Good weird. But still, WEIRD.

1971 Mercury Cougar XR7 Convertible

Owner: John Scharff, Advertising Sales Executive, Corvette Market magazine

Purchase date: Summer 1988

Price: \$4,500

Mileage since purchase: 150,000

Recent work: Replaced all hoses, belts, interior, but that was a decade ago



In 1988, a friend of mine told me about a 1971 Mercury Cougar XR7 convertible with 50,000 miles that I might be interested in. I had always considered owning one, but I also knew the 1971–73 body was not a popular Cougar.

I also remember one of the most attractive girls I’d ever seen driving a new Cougar in high school, which always gives cars a certain mystique. Although it came equipped with the same 351 Cleveland found in the Mustang Mach 1 and the DeTomaso Pantera, the Cougar really couldn’t be regarded as a muscle car. And while I was a diehard Plymouth Road Runner kind of guy, I paid attention to how luxurious the Cougar seemed compared to other cars.

When I saw the car my friend had unearthed, I couldn’t believe how good it looked. It was medium metallic blue with white leather interior and a white top, a scheme with real pop. Most Cougars of the era came in Tobacco Brown, Robin’s Egg Blue and maroon, and when they got any type of age on them they looked bleak. This one changed everything and I fell in love with it.

I was rebuilding a 1971 Barracuda convertible at the time, a project that was taking far too long, and the Cougar was right there and ready to go. I bought it then and there, thinking I’d paid a ridiculous sum. But what the hell—I wanted it and was tired of waiting for a nice ride to use every day.

Since then the Cougar has taken me from St. Louis to Los Angeles and back twelve times. It has over 200,000 miles and won’t idle at a stoplight unless I put it into neutral, and a bit of rust is now showing in the quarters, too. Currently, it lives under two car covers as a static display in the driveway, but there’s no way I’m ever giving up on this one.

1967 Jaguar E-type Series I 4.2 Convertible



Owner: Rob Sass, VP of Business Development, General Counsel

Purchase date: June 13, 2006

Price: \$12,000 plus a 1962 Daimler SP250

Mileage since purchase: 1,500

Recent work: Changed fluids, new clutch slave cylinder, rebuilt alternator, fixed a vacuum leak, new wire wheels

I feared the worst with my first E-type—which is to say a series of constant breakdowns that would spoil the ownership experience in short order. Plan B? Temporarily remove the large window from the front of my house, drain the fluids and park it on top of the oriental rug in my living room. If it’s good enough for MOMA, it’s good enough for the Sass living room.

As it turns out, the car has been no more finicky or unreliable than any of the other English cars I’ve owned. There have been a couple of minor hiccups along the way; however, SCMer Gary Bartlett and Fred Garcia have been there for support. Fred owns Garcia’s Restorations just over the river from me in Illinois. A four-time Colorado Grandeur, he’s probably the most experienced E-type guy in the region. He’s fair, and he never fails to calm me down when I assume the worst.

The driving experience has been sublime. The Porsche and Ferrari crowd seem to have made everyone think of E-types as lovely cars that just don’t work very well. BS, I say. Even by today’s standards, E-types are supple-riding cars with enough power to surprise a Boxster. I use the car fairly often and believe that has contributed to its surprising reliability. It starts right up, the heater works, the top seals reasonably well, and it hasn’t set itself on fire yet.

Just as my dad dropped me off at school 35 years ago in his SIII E-type, I occasionally do the same for my daughter in the SI. I’m amazed at how many middle-school kids recognize it as “an old-school Jaguar.” There may yet be hope yet for the next generation of collectors.◆

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CLIENT PORTFOLIO 1925 Bugatti Type 35A Grand Prix ● 1928 Lancia Lambda 7th Series Torpedo ● 1952 Ferrari 225 Sport Spider by Vignale
1954 SIATA 300BC Spyder ● 1954-type Lancia D24 Sport ● 1955-type Lancia D50 Grand Prix Single Seater (illustrated) ● 1955 Bentley R-Type Continental Coupe by Franay
1955 Ferrari 750 Monza (illustrated) ● 1959 Maserati Tipo 61 Birdcage ● 1961 Ferrari 250GT SWB Berlinetta (36,000 miles from new)
1963 Riva Supertritone Motor Launch ● 1964 Abarth Simca 1300 Corsa (illustrated) ● 1964 Abarth Simca 2000 Corsa ● 1964 Alfa Romeo Giulia TZ
1966 Citroën DS21 Décapotable by Chapron ● 1966 Ferrari 275GTB Long Nose ● 1968 Ferrari 166F2 Tasman Monoposto ● 1970 Mercedes-Benz 600 SWB
1970 Ferrari 512M/F Sport-Prototipo (illustrated) ● 1971 Lamborghini Miura SV ● 1988 Porsche 959 (ex-von Karajin)

Please note that to respect client confidentiality not all motor cars available may be listed

