

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

WHEELS

SECTION F

Short trips
in winter
mean more
frequent
oil changes

TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI

CAR TALK



Dear Tom and Ray: The owner's manual for my 2004 Pontiac Vibe lists two maintenance schedules. The long-trip plan calls for the engine oil and filter to be changed every 7,500 miles (or 12 months), whereas the short-trip maintenance schedule sets a 3,000-mile interval for this service. Although my car meets all the requirements for the long-trip oil-change interval, the dealership where I take it strongly recommends the short-trip schedule in the winter, because according to the service manager, the winters way up here in Maine cause oil to break down more quickly, and this can lead to engine damage if the oil is not changed every 3,000 miles. So tell me, is the dealership just looking for more business, or is it correct? – Wayne

Tom: Yes, and yes. Of course the dealership is looking for more business. But harsh winter conditions can be harder on your oil.

Ray: Most manufacturers now recommend a 7,500-mile oil-change interval for what they regard as "normal" service. That's the way most people use their cars – including you, Wayne.

Tom: Then they have what's usually called an "extreme duty" or "hard service" interval of 3,000 miles for people who make their engines work the hardest. These are folks who use their cars as taxicabs, drive on dirt roads a lot or tow trailers frequently. Normally, spending a winter in Maine is not considered extreme duty. Not for the car, anyway. For me it would be.

Ray: What tends to happen in the winter, however, is that people drive places they usually don't drive. In the summer, you might walk 10 minutes to the store to pick up a quart of vegan peppermint patties. But when it's 2 degrees outside with a 50-mph wind, and your thighs freeze together after you take about 10 steps, you'd probably decide to take the car. And when the car is used for lots of short trips in cold weather, the engine just never really has time to warm up entirely.

Tom: Until an engine warms up and reaches full operating temperature, it doesn't burn its fuel efficiently. That means there's unburned gasoline in the cylinders. Some of that gasoline makes its way past the piston rings and into the crankcase, where it mixes with the oil. That mixture makes for a lousy lubricant.

Ray: So, it's not the winter temperatures themselves that damage the oil, it's the type of driving people tend to do in the winter.

Tom: So if you make a lot of short trips like that in the winter, it might make sense to change the oil a little more frequently. We recommend 5,000-mile intervals to all but the most extreme drivers. After all, it's a decent balance between protecting your engine and not overburdening the environment with all that used oil. That should be plenty often, even in the tundra where you live, Wayne.

Write to Car Talk, c/o the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, P.O. Box 1909, Seattle, 98111. "Car Talk" is heard at 9 a.m. Saturdays on KUOW radio, 94.9 FM, and at 10 a.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays on KPLU radio, 88.5 FM. The "Car Talk" Web site is www.cartalk.com

FORD HYBRIDS

Canada to have assembly plant:

Ford of Canada announced this week that it will become the first automaker to assemble hybrid vehicles in Canada. Hybrid vehicles run on both a gas engine and an electric motor. They provide better fuel economy than a traditional engine operating on its own and produce lower emissions. A plant in Oakville, Ontario, will assemble the hybrid versions of the Ford Edge and Lincoln MKX crossovers. Production of those new models is to start in time for the 2007 model year, with the hybrid versions to be in volume production by 2010.

DODGE MARKETING

Chrysler plans broader sales push:

DaimlerChrysler AG's Chrysler unit expects its Dodge brand to account for as much as 35 percent of Chrysler sales outside North America by 2009, rising from 5 percent last year. Dodge, the unit's top-selling brand in the United States, will gain "significantly more international sales" in the next three years, Chrysler sales and marketing executive Thomas Hausch said this week. Dodge's expansion includes the Caliber small car this year and the midsize Nitro sport utility vehicle and Caliber SRT4 performance model in 2007.

INSIDE THIS SECTION

Dining out in winter doesn't have to be bland. What's Happening samples seasonal ingredients.



COLLECTIBLE CARS

Barrett-Jackson auction racks up huge sale prices

BY EVAN McMULLEN
Special to the P-I

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – As Seattle slogged through near-record rainfall last month, the Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction was shattering records and making big rain in the desert.

Pacific Northwest sellers did well at Barrett-Jackson – again. Well-known collector Gordon Apker's 1952 Chrysler d'Elegance show car commanded a cool \$1,188,000 in an impressive follow-up to last year's record-setting bid of \$3.24 million for his Oldsmobile F-88 concept car.

An old-school hot rod known as the "Avenger," a 1932 Ford coupe built in 1960 by the late Don Tognotti, was sold for \$216,000 for Peter Hageman, the well-known Kirkland collector-car dealer. Bellevue's Park Place Ltd. brought a total of 41 cars to the sale, all at no reserve.

With an estimated gross of more than \$100 million, the annual international event effortlessly topped its previous record take of \$62 million, drew a crowd of more than 200,000 and poured about \$2 million into the coffers of Childhelp USA, the event's designated charitable beneficiary.

Propelled by a billion-dollar buying pool and a 24-hour Speed Channel cablecast, the brilliantly illuminated block featured a number of million-dollar sales and an impressive, eclectic and seemingly unending selection of rolling stock.

For six days, nearly 1,000 muscle cars, street rods, classics and concept cars rolled toward the record, cementing Barrett-Jackson's industry-leading position and confirming the health of the collector market.

Records and rolling history

The top seller of the auction was a 1950 General Motors Parade of Progress Futurliner show bus, which sold for \$4.32 million including bidder's fees. Other highlights included the 1954 Pontiac Bonneville Motorama dream car (\$3,024,000); a 1953 Corvette, the third ever built and the oldest in existence (\$1.08 million); a pristine 1970 Plymouth Hemi 'Cuda convertible (\$2.16 million); and a 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle LS-6 convertible (\$1,242,000). Full results on the Web: www.barrett-jackson.com/auctionresults/common/bj06results.asp.

Red-carpet royalty

Barrett-Jackson isn't just billed as "the world's greatest auction"; it has established an increasing reputation as a leading Southwest "lifestyle event." This year's record-breaking crowds included celebrities such as Carroll Shelby, Edsel Ford II, Sammy Hagar, Bob Seger, Michael Anthony, Alice Cooper, Billy Gibbons, Bill Goldberg, Ian Ziering, Luis Gonzalez, Randy Johnson and Chip Foote.

The annual Scottsdale event serves as a nexus for a constantly growing cluster of meat-and-potatoes auctions – Kruse, Silver, RM, Russo & Steele – that attract thousands more vehicles and millions in sales. Each year, these closely scheduled events largely define the industry's trends.

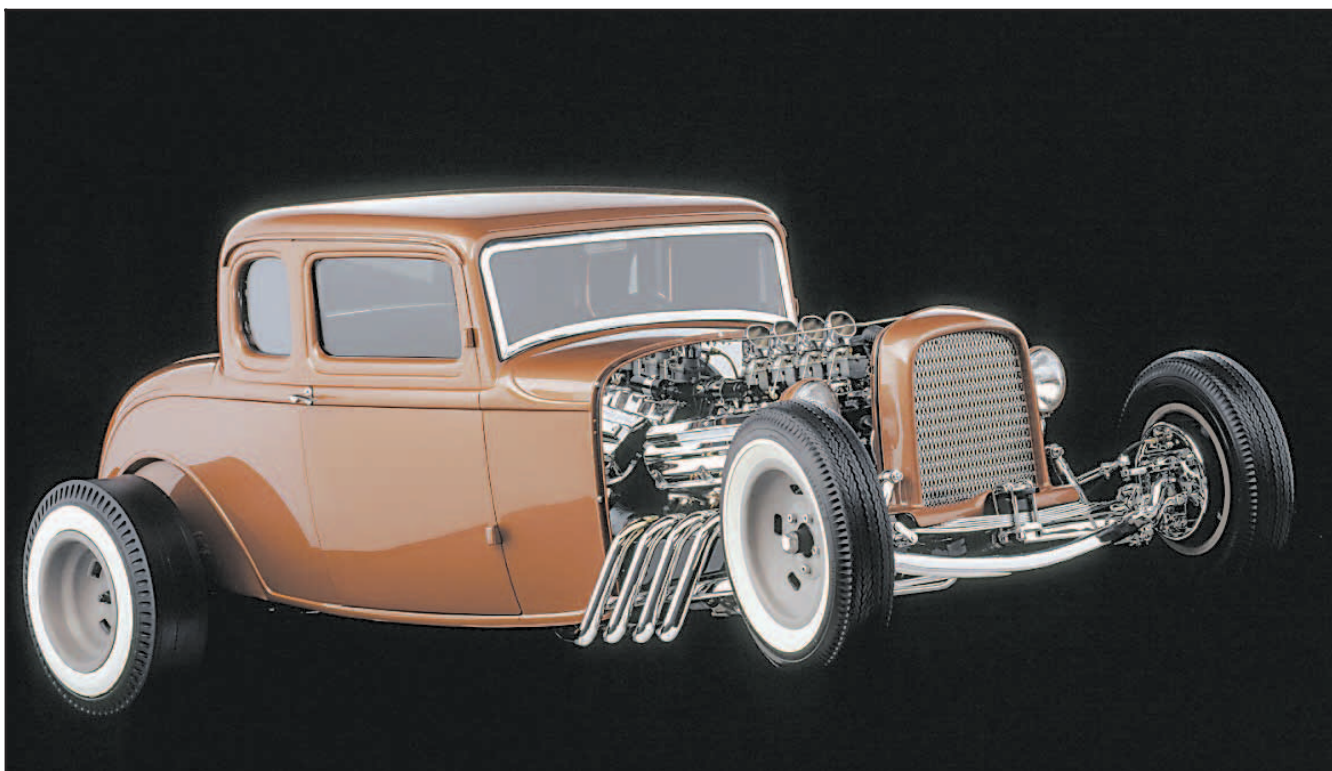
Barrett-Jackson reaches the upper limits of the market, and the competing secondary auctions frame the "real" story of value on the ground.

Barrett-Jackson is a no-reserve auction: Everything sells. Desperate sellers are frequently forced to buy back their cars (and pay 16 percent of the hammer price for the privilege) to prevent them from evaporating at a fraction of their acquisition value. Beneath this year's bullish run, there were more than a few quiet complaints – mostly from mainstream sellers – that buyers were tight and squeezing for a deal.

Other auction results:

Kruse International

Dean Kruse again gets the record for the greatest distance from the rest of the events with his sale in Avondale, nearly an hour from Scottsdale. Staged the weekend after all the other craziness, and located at the Phoenix International Raceway for the third year in a row, the event drew nearly 500 cars, and many were more exotic than spectators might have guessed. From a 1960 BMW Isetta micro car sold for \$18,200 to a 1935 Auburn Boattail Speedster sold for \$375,000, Kruse's selection was eclectic and mainstream. Sales totaled \$6 million.



An old-school hot rod known as the "Avenger," a 1932 Ford coupe built in 1960 by the late Don Tognotti, was sold for \$216,000 at the Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction in Scottsdale, Ariz., for Kirkland collector-car dealer Peter Hageman.

Silver Auction

The intimate setting and friendly staff made this auction more approachable and bidder-friendly than others. Significant sales included a 1954 Buick Skylark convertible (\$185,500), a 1970 Dodge Challenger Hemi (\$125,000) and a fabulous custom 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air (\$95,400). Total sales: \$5.8 million.

R-M Auction

Not just meat and potatoes, RM tops it off with crème fraiche and black truffles. RM has taken over the bulk of the high-end European sports cars and big American classics from the '30s and '40s. Though smaller than Barrett-Jackson, its event is consistent, with all sales being strong and the average buyer or participant more sophisticated than many of the "first-timers" who flock to Barrett-Jackson. Sales totaled \$37 million.

The highlight of the show was the sale of the 1965 "James Bond" Aston Martin DB5 coupe used in the movie "Thunderball." One of four built for the movie, this car still has its movie modifications in place, including the rotating number plates, retractable bulletproof shield behind the rear window and radar tracking screen in the center console. It sold for \$2.09 million.

Other significant cars were a 1930 Duesenberg Model J long-wheelbase dual-cowl phaeton (\$1,001,000); the 1954 Packard Panther Daytona roadster concept car (\$363,000); a 1938 Bugatti Type 57C Aravis drop-head coupe, one of six produced (\$1,045,000); and a 1941 Chrysler Thunderbolt show car, one of five concept cars built by Chrysler that year (\$1.21 million).

Russo and Steele

Located near the Barrett-Jackson site, Russo and Steele continued to focus heavily on 1960s and 1970s cars. Four hundred cars were offered, with sales topping \$20 million. Highlights: A 1971 Plymouth 'Cuda (\$715,000), a 1967 Shelby 427 Cobra (\$605,000), a 1965 Chevrolet Chevelle Z16 (\$412,500), a 1970 Plymouth Super Bird (\$379,500) and a 1967 Ferrari 330 GTC (\$195,800). This makes the sixth year for Russo and Steele, founded by former Barrett-Jackson manager Drew Alcazar. Drew's wife, Josephine, is known to put on the slickest presentation and catering in the industry. This year was no letdown.

Gooding & Co.

For the first time this year, Gooding & Co. put on a kind of "Scottsdale East" event in Palm Beach, Fla., providing East Coast sellers a chance for action during the Scottsdale auctions. The event was held in conjunction with Cavallino, the Ferrari Club of America's national concours and meet.

Highlights included a 1938 Talbot-Lago T150 SS Teardrop Coupe (\$3,905,000), a 1951 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith long-wheelbase drop-head coupe (\$137,000) and a 1962 Chevrolet Corvette fuel-injected convertible (\$489,500). Surprisingly strong prices were seen for more common collectible cars, too, such as a 1966 Volkswagen Deluxe Microbus (\$44,000) and a 1980 Triumph Spitfire 1500 (\$19,500).



Des Moines collector Gordon Apker's 1952 Chrysler d'Elegance concept car sold for nearly \$1.19 million at this year's Barrett-Jackson auction. He bought it for "considerably less" than \$435,000. Apker says this design "saved the Chrysler."

Des Moines man excels at car-collector restorations

BY EVAN McMULLEN
Special to the P-I

Gordon Apker is perhaps best known for Shakey's Pizza, a company he took over in 1966 and quickly expanded to 45 stores, 292 U.S. franchises and 297 international franchises. But in the collector-car world, Apker's better known for his multi-million-dollar restorations that defy all expectations.

Apker's fascination with cars started at an early age. The Puget Sound-area native recalls going to Coy's Toys in Everett when he was 9 and buying a balsa-wood model of the Harley Earl-designed 1954 Oldsmobile F-88 concept car.

Fifty years after the one-of-a-kind car was built, Apker not only held the real McCoy in hand, but he also flipped the record-setting original at the January 2004 Barrett-Jackson auction for the unfathomable figure of \$3.24 million.

"A bit more than I bought it for," he confided at Scottsdale this year.

Apker found the car about 25 years ago in Tempe, Ariz., in the back of a restoration shop. Though he tried to buy it then, it subsequently passed into the hands of Don Williams of the Blackhawk Collection, who shelled out \$350,000 for it at the time. Time passed, and Apker quietly went about his successful business. And he kept the Coy's Toys F-88 model.

A few years ago, Williams approached Apker regarding purchase of his Bentley Speed Six Corsica. Apker agreed on the sole condition that Williams first cough up the F-88, then owned by a well-known private car collector. After a little wrangling, Williams managed to buy the F-88 back and deliver a package to Apker.

People thought Apker was crazy, including longtime friend and local collector Peter Hageman.

"I remember Peter telling me I'd been had . . . he said he didn't want to hurt my feelings, but that the F-88 was only worth \$50,000." Apker smiles

when he tells the story, maybe every time he tells the story.

This year, Apker brought a Virgil Exner concept car bodied by Italian coach builder Ghia, the 1952 Chrysler d'Elegance. Apker considers the car as important for its history as its beauty. "Exner saved the Chrysler with this design," he says, standing next to the cordoned-off, one-of-a-kind car.

As with the F-88, Apker fell in love with this car as a young lad. He recalls when he first became aware of the car and its trend-setting grillwork, the progenitor of the trademark grilles of the 1957 Chrysler 300 and today's 300C. He pulls a cloisonné key fob from his pocket. "I got this with my Dad when I was 9 years old," he says. The Chrysler d'Elegance was put on key fobs for the national dealers as a promotion. Apker still carries his.

It's probably the reason he tried to buy it three different times.

The important Chrysler had been to Barrett-Jackson as early as 1989 and sold for about \$492,000. Once again, Williams got his hands on it and, through his partner and former Seahawks owner Ken Behring, it was donated to University of California-Berkeley. The university kept it for about 10 years before it returned once again to Barrett-Jackson, this time bought by MBNA credit-card magnate Charlie Cawley for about \$435,000. Ultimately, Apker managed to buy the car "for considerably less." Unfortunately, it was in sad shape, missing many parts, featuring the wrong engine and needing lots of restoration.

Today, it's fully restored to better than new and finished in its original "cranberry" color with blond interior and white top. The car also features matching fitted luggage, and even the original engine has been returned.

The d'Elegance sold at Barrett-Jackson this year for nearly \$1.19 million.

Apker also was a developer in Alaska. He and his wife, Janet, split the year among Scottsdale, Lake Chelan and Des Moines.