

The Washington Times



Times | June 20, 2008

Buying 1927 Chevrolet Sport Cabriolet was easy

Owners of vintage Chevrolets evidently enjoy touring in their antique vehicles. The owner of a 1927 Chevrolet Sport Cabriolet lived in Kerrville, Texas and often took his car on nearby tours.

That's how Franklin Gage of Greenbelt became acquainted with the man and the car. The blue car stands 5-feet, 10-inches high and has yellow pin striping and black fenders. In the autumn of 2006 Mr. Gage was taking part in a Chevrolet club's southern tour and learned that the restored 1927 Chevrolet was for sale. He knew the owner took great care of his cars so he purchased the car without hesitation. A trailer to haul the car was included in the deal.

"I wasn't even sure how to drive it," Mr. Gage says.

The plan was that Mr. Gage would return home and come back to Texas with a truck for the spring tour in 2007. Then he would tow the 1927 Chevrolet home. When spring arrived, the transmission in Mr. Gage's truck failed, thus ruining that plan. The truck was repaired in time for Mr. Gage to take it to Texas for the autumn tour in 2007.

On 4.50x21-inch tires Mr. Gage rolled the 12-foot, 8-inch-long Chevrolet onto the trailer and towed it to Mountain View, Ark., where the tour was to take place. "That's where I learned to drive it," Mr. Gage says, "In the hills of Arkansas."

The 171-cubic-inch, four-cylinder engine developed 26 horsepower with the eight exposed push rods working furiously.

The two-bladed fan behind the radiator is sufficient because, Mr. Gage says, "It doesn't overheat, even in traffic." The 16 vertical louvers on each side of the engine hood also help dissipate heat from the engine. "With this car you have to be patient," Mr. Gage explains.

Mr. Gage towed his Chevrolet home and began looking over the paperwork that came with the car. He discovered that 1927 was the first year of production for the Sport Cabriolet model with a total of 41,137 manufactured. The appearance of the tan canvas top with Landau bars indicates the top can be lowered, but that isn't the case. The 2,135-pound Chevrolet when new had a

base price of \$715. Optional extras on the Chevrolet include:

cMotometer.

cOutside mirror.

cWindshield awning.

cSpare tire and cover.

cRunning board step plates.

The headlights are in buckets while the cowl lights are miniatures of the headlights.

At the rear of the car is one combination taillight/brake light mounted in the center of the spare tire. The rear bumper is split into two parts to allow room for the spare tire. At the rear of the car is the 10-gallon gas tank and mounted on it is the gas gauge, making it easy for the driver to run out of fuel, which Mr. Gage has done. "The car isn't mine until I run out of gas," he says.

Now that Mr. Gage has become familiar with the car, he says "it's really a fun car to drive." Still, it takes a bit of getting used to the idiosyncrasies. The battery is secure under the floorboards beneath the driver's feet. The gear shift lever to operate the three-speed transmission sprouts from the floorboards beside the hand brake. Stopping chores are handled by the two-wheel mechanical brakes. "If it had four-wheel brakes," Mr. Gage says, "It would just be two more brake shoes to replace." The windshield can be pushed out at the bottom to allow fresh air into the cabin. A single wiper is ready to clear the driver's portion of the windshield.

Seated behind the four metal spokes supporting the wooden steering wheel, Mr. Gage nods toward the revolving 85 mph speedometer and comments, "I haven't got that high yet."

While driving his nimble Chevrolet on its 103-inch wheelbase Mr. Gage confesses, "This is the most impractical thing I've ever owned." However, he isn't posting any "For Sale" signs in the window.