

AUCTION FEVER

Not to be confused with Saturday Night Fever featuring John Travolta, this features our own Ed Downes doing a different kind of dance and on a Friday Night too. Ed and his friend Gordon from Douglas have been going to Barrett Jackson auction in Las Vegas together five of the seven years it has been held there. Always a fun getaway, in the back of Ed's mind was the nagging desire to one day buy a buy a car at Barrett Jackson. Perhaps it's the mystique of maybe actually winning something in Las Vegas that keeps Ed and Gordon going back each year

Something was different this year however. What could possibly be changed you might ask? I mean an auction is an auction and there will always be dozens of gorgeous cars cross the block, most seeing bids up in the stratosphere. The difference was that this year Ed actually had a few shekles in his pocket to play with thanks to an inheritance from his parents. In past years, Ed's all suffering spouse Pam could be heard to utter "If you buy something you'd darned well better be able to live in it". I'm not going to suggest that Pam told Ed it was OK to come home with another collector car but let's just say Ed wasn't concerned about it needing to have the bed and breakfast option.

Fast forward to Friday, when the nicer cars come out to cross the block and play with the big boys. Ed and Gordon had given a lot of the cars a cursory once over before the auction. Ed was kind of thinking that if a Corvette or Camaro within a certain price range were to catch his eye, well he might just...well he might just..... The bidder number was burning a hole in his pocket as the auction started, and a few of the nicer Vettes and Camaros came and fell under the hammer. Ed decided that the only way to shake the latent uneasiness in the pit of his stomach was to actually break the ice and bid on something for cat's sakes!

And why not something familiar? Why not something you know? Why not a 1957 Chevy? After all, Ed rationalized, "I already own two of them, I kind of have an idea what they're worth, etc." So across the stage rolled this drop dead gorgeous '57 Bel Air Sport Coupe with its fancy billet wheels flashing in the lights of the auction hall and in Eds' eyeballs. The auctioneer opened the bidding at a low price. Too low, thought Ed; but safe. Up went Ed's number. The adrenalin started coursing through his veins. Two other bidders wanted the car too. They each bid twice more. Hey, this is fun, thought Ed, I'll just drop outta here in a minute and at least know I got my feet wet so when something I really want comes across, I won't have cold feet. Ed bid a third time, the top dollar he thought he could spend, and before he knew it, a bidder's assistant came walking over. At that instant Ed turned to Gordon and said; "Oh crap...I think I just bought a car!"

And indeed he had. Painted a bright "resale red" and looking like a French whore on a Paris Friday night, Ed realized he hadn't really even looked the car over. The hood was shut when he first glanced at it before the auction. So he walked on over and was fondling the car when a security guard came and gave him the old eye. Ed assured him that he had just bought the car. Well, the interior looked great, an original replacement, and the auction sheet said it had been driven to the auction from Oregon. However, that excursion had been a year or more ago as the car had sold at the Reno BJ auction in 2013 and bought by a classic car dealer in Bendover Kansas who had it on their lot a year and couldn't get out of it what they wanted, so back across the block it would go.

So, Ed came home to anxiously await the delivery of his 3rd '57 Chevy. It has a 350 LT1 Corvette engine with a 6-speed standard trans and 4.56 gears so it should scream off the car hauler, right? When it finally did arrive in Douglas, it sputtered out of the trailer but there wasn't even enough gas in it to drive home. The old Holley double pumper lacks a working choke. Ed and Gordon made a few cursory adjustments and took it for a ride this week. It sputtered and coughed and then died in the street. The radiator had a bad leak, the radio doesn't work as the antenna is broken, and the wipers don't work either. In Ed's words, "it looks pretty, but it runs like crap".

The car is beautiful as pictures attest, and Ed says the whole experience was wonderful....until he took delivery of the car. His only advice to all of us is to really comb over a car before buying it to avoid the disappointment that could come later. Oh well, the car has a lot of plusses and everything that is wrong can be readily fixed. At this point though Ed isn't sure he really needs three 1957 Chevrolets, so after he gets to enjoy it awhile who knows? It could come up for grabs again, and knowing Ed, it will be all sorted out and ready to rock and roll. Phil Nissen



Ed showing signs of "sticker shock" at Barrett Jackson Las Vegas



The French Whore in all her radiant beauty



Nice Interior just barely roomy enough to sleep, eat, and live in