

A BROTHER REMEMBERS . . . CARS

by Robert Ferré



Would you let your not-yet-old-enough-to-get-a-driver's-license son buy a car at age fifteen? For some reason, our father did exactly that. David bought a 1949 Studebaker with its famous bullet nose. Let me just say that David pushed the boundaries of what was legal. After his first accident, the nose was pointing toward the ground.



My father answered the doorbell one evening to find a police officer there. Normally, you would be worried that your son may have been in a serious accident or something. However, knowing David, my father's statement to

the policeman was very telling: "What now?"

David owned dozens of cars. Living at home while going to Rochester Institute of Technology, he rebuilt the engine of his Volkswagen beetle on the kitchen table. Another time, living in an apartment and having no garage, he replaced the engine in his van out in the parking lot. David bought vehicles at auctions: cars, buses, trucks, and made them run. I especially remember the blue school bus that had a VW engine as a generator.

I bought my first car from David, a Nash Rambler, for one dollar. It wasn't a good deal. It couldn't turn left or go backwards (it's a long story).



Later, I bought other cars from him, including a Triumph TR-4 sports car, a Citroen DS-21, and a Ford Escort wagon with righthand drive. (The last two I drove while living in France in the 1980s. David had purchased them in England.)

All of the cars came to unfortunate ends. A junkyard refused to take the Nash Rambler until I begged them. As David and I were rushing away we saw the junkyard attendant start the Rambler and put it in reverse, thinking he was going to go backwards. Big mistake.

I blew the engine in the Triumph.

I left the Citroen at my house in France where, in my absence, someone stole so many parts that it wasn't feasible to restore it.

During my returning-to-the-United-States going away party in 1987, I made a quick run into the nearest town (Lavelanet) in my little Ford to get some more drinks. In a hurry, I pulled out of the driveway of the supermarket into the main street and was hit by another car. I was not injured, but the car . . .

Years earlier, in 1971, in Rochester, New York, David and I went together to a fly-by-night used car lot to get me a cheap car. Buyers weren't allowed to test drive the car off the property. I was attracted to a white 1965 Nash Ambassador Convertible. The engine started, but ran very poorly, coughing and sputtering. "No problem" said David. So I bought it.

When we got the car home, David discovered that the spark plugs were installed in the wrong order in the distributor. These days cars don't have distributors, they have computers. Back then, the distributor initiated



each spark plug to fire. The correct order for the cylinders, starting toward the front of the car, is 1-8-4-3-6-5-7-2. In the wrong order, the cylinders tried to run out of sequence, fighting themselves. David arranged the wires properly and the car ran very well.

Susan Ferré and I drove the car from Rochester, New York, to Texas, where it served us for a number of years. A decade later, the car was long gone and Susan had remarried. She was driving in Dallas one day with her young son in the car when an Ambassador convertible went by. Out of the blue, her son said, “Mommy, you had a car like that.” Hm-m-m-m.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Details about the memorial concert being planned for David in Karlskrona, Sweden, in October of 2022:

www.andretchaikowsky.com/concertpdf.pdf.

Details about the historic city of Karlskrona and the GoFundMe campaign to pay for the memorial concert:

www.andretchaikowsky.com/GoFundMepdf.pdf

The David Ferré and Kathy Childs family website:

www.davidandkathy.com