

Our 1925 Chevrolet Touring means Family and Fun

Way back in 1957, before I was even born, there stood a tiny house in Anacortes surrounded by a herd of old cars in assorted states of repair (and disrepair). Most of this bunch looked interesting, but when it came time to go for a run they could be a bit finicky, but what do you expect from brand 'X' and others

My dad, Ron Kohl, saw an ad in the local paper for a 1925 Chevrolet Touring and decided a Chevrolet would fit in with the group. At the time car parts were more abundant than dollar bills so he had to sell a Model T to a friend for \$75 and add a little bit so he had the \$125 for the Chevrolet.

The original owner purchased the car in Detroit and drove it across the country to visit his brother in Sedro Wooley. When it came time to return home there was a big snow storm blocking the way, so he left the car with his brother. It remained with the brother until 1956 when he traded it in on a 1941 Plymouth. The '25 sat outside for a year until my dad saw the ad.

At first glance the little Chevy wasn't a thing of beauty, but my dad could see her potential right away. The body was in good shape but needed paint. The top was pretty ragged and the side curtains were there, but sad. The upholstery needed to be redone, but it looked like just the kind of challenge dad needed.

Once the car had a new home, dad spent the next 3 years going over the car. He traded an acquaintance the use of an electric spray gun for a paint job. The same man made a new top using the tattered old one as a pattern. When it came time for upholstery my dad signed up for a class at Skagit Valley Community College to learn how and did it himself.

During this time there was going to be another addition to the family other than cars. My then 2 year old sister Karen found out she was getting a little sister. So the '25 has been a family member longer than I have.

The Chevrolet soon became a favorite because it was almost always ready to not only start, but to continue running reliably. Little by little more of the brand 'X's left the herd for not being as well behaved. In the changing car family, a 1913 Buick appeared and remained a garage mate for the Chevy for many years. The Buick was in very rough shape, but over the years developed into a beautiful car. It's bright red paint and white wheels were accented by brass lamps, horn and radiator.

With the Buick, my parents joined the Horseless Carriage Club, which requires the ownership of a pre-'15 car. Because of it's reliability, the little Chevy often galloped along with these oldsters.

In 1963 my mother saw an ad in Hemming's for a new club forming for vintage Chevrolet owners. She talked my dad into joining, and he still holds his original member #49.

We also belonged to a local Skagit Valley car club that really enjoyed getting their old cars out on the road. We participated in many tours and parades, and somewhere along the road in the mid-60's a hole developed in the '25's engine block. On further inspection it was found that the block had been welded together once before. Dad happened to know a guy (of course) that had a '28 Chev engine waiting for a new home, so to this day the car has a '28 engine under the hood. I always liked the sound of the 4-cylinder coughing to life because it always meant some sort of fun was in store, even if it was just started to shift cars around in the garage or carport.

My years growing up were formed around the old cars, car events and the always favorite 'swap meets'. Not knowing what to expect, my mother dressed my sister and I in dresses for our first swap meet. We attended many more over the years, but never again quite so formally.

I loved all of our old cars as they came and went. The ones that stayed the longest were the Chevy and Buick, which had a twin 'parts' car that looked pretty good by itself, and a '48 Lincoln that I learned to drive in. A few of the other cars included a '37 Chrysler Air Flow and a '56 Pontiac Safari that towed the '25 Chevy on a trailer.

In 1976 when I was a junior in High School, dad was transferred to Seattle. This meant a reduction in the fleet was needed as there would not be enough room for all of the cars. The 2-'13 Buicks found new homes (one to a neighbor of the Johnson's in Poulsbo), and both Lincolns (the '48 had acquired a '47 mate) went their separate ways, but the little Chevy remained with the family in the move to the big city.

Somehow during this change in cars and address I convinced my dad that now that I was 16, I would be needing a car of my own. Much to his horror I was thinking of a F*** Model A Sport Coupe. He managed to get me thinking about a '28 Chev. coupe, but by then I had decided a '55 or '56 Chevy would be a better choice. To my dismay he appeared one day with a sad looking 2-tone green 4-door sedan, which was a far cry from the red and white 2-door I had pictured. I told him it looked like an old mans car, which it turns out it had belonged to an old farmer in Snohomish. Thus I had my first car, which Tom and I still have today.

The '25 didn't see the road too often while my parents lived in Seattle. Traffic was much worse than the quiet back roads around Anacortes. But dad always kept it ready to go, and we would go for a spin around the block when my sister or I would visit with our husbands. Dad had also acquired a '31 & a '32 Chev that he spent these years restoring and took up a lot of his time and interest.

When my dad retired and my parents were looking to move again, the subject of not having enough room for the '25 came up. Dad mentioned selling it one day. I was shocked! This would be like putting my sister or I on the auction block. The car was family!

It was 1995 and Tom and I had moved to Snohomish (the '56 felt right at home) and we just happened to have a garage stall available. After some quick negotiations, the '25 took a ride to the country on the back of a flatbed truck. Country life suits this car well, with quiet back roads to travel once again.

Our first major outing with the car was to trailer it to Rapid City for the 1996 Anniversary Meet. It was great to see so many other 4 cylinder Chevys, with our car lined up with 4 other '25 tourings. The tours in the Black Hills were long, steep and hot and the '25 boiled over several times, but given a chance to cool off it kept on going.

We had similar boiling problems at the meet at Hood River, this time discoloring the paint on the hood. We decided that after almost 40 years it was time for a little refurbishing. Starting in the fall of 1998, we partially dismantled the car and had the paint and upholstery re-done. The paint was done by a shop in Snohomish that was willing to take a few pieces at a time and paint them when it fit into their schedule. Upholstery was done by Trimcraft, a shop 2 miles from our home that has done many older cars and street rods.

The radiator was off the car, so off to a shop it went to have a cracked tank soldered and to be cleaned out, increasing the flow by about 30%. This seems to have taken care of the overheating problems, although we have not been in 100 degree weather with it since. The gas tank got a pesky leak repaired also. The car got new wiring, king bolts, an original set of headlights, running boards and a front floor mat. The rear floor mat is still the original. We had put new tires on before going to South Dakota, which we think were the third set of tires it has had.

With the car back together again, we were on the road for the 1999 Northwest Meet that our region hosted on Whidbey Island. We traveled many of the same roads that the '25 had seen years before, re-living many good childhood memories with an old friend.

This car is still doing what it was always meant to be, a car for family fun and not a show car collecting dust. We hope to continue touring it for many more years to come.



1925 Chevrolet History

After making do with a little changed model in 1924, Chevrolet had a much improved offering ready this season. Still on a 103-inch wheelbase, Series K carried an amply modified version of the familiar 171-cid engine developing 26 horsepower. A single dry plate clutch replaced the obsolete cone clutch, and semi-elliptic rear springs took the place of the former quarter-elliptic units. Chevrolet axles had always been notoriously weak, and customers knew it. So a new semi-floating rear axle with one-piece "banjo" casing was installed, borrowed from the abandoned Copper-Cooled model. New 11 inch brakes still operated only on the rear wheels. Finished with Duco paint that replaced old-fashioned enamel in different colors depending on model, Roadsters (above and bottom) were painted dark blue, as were touring and coach. Sedans came in Aqua-Marine Blue, while all coupes were Sage Green

Series K bodies were a little roomier. Five body styles went on sale: roadster, touring, coupe, coach, and sedan. A touring car cost \$525, Chevrolet versus a mere \$290 for a Ford Model T. To counter that difference, Chevrolet promoted the idea that its cars really were Superior, well worth the extra dollars. Touring cars and roadsters wore wood-spoke wheels. Coupes and sedans got steel-disc wheels with 29x4.40 balloon tires, for a lower look. With the introduction of the Superior, sales rose nearly 70 percent. Chevrolet now sat firmly in the number two spot, as Hudson grabbed third place in sales.

Ana Maria Haley

EDITOR NOTE: Way back in 1969, the VCCA declared a 1925 Series K Touring the best restoration of the Year. It was then (and may still be) owned by Earl Stanton of Baxter, Springs, Kansas.