

It's a Studebaker; No It's a Corvette by Terry Brim

Dave Pritchard like many of us grew up in a family of car nuts. Dave's father was a car nut....a Studebaker nut to be specific! According to Dave, his father had a 53' Studebaker that spent most of the time in the garage in Marquette Michigan. The car would come out occasionally however to go to car shows and parades.



Dave says the he has a few hours behind the wheel of the Avanti and it's a neat car...drives like a mid-year Vette! Who would have ever guessed?



Boy Scout troop leader took him for a ride in his 71' War Bonnet yellow chrome bumper coupe. Dave says to this day, he remembers thinking how "cool" it was. Especially the "high tech" push down door handles! Although Dave remembers that experience very clearly, it wasn't until he was in his late 20's that Dave had an experience where he really fell in love with Corvette's.

Dave was a late blessing to his parents coming along when his mother was 40 and his older brother was 17. That young age however didn't deter Dave from inheriting his father's love for the American automobile.



Again, like most of us, Dave vividly remembers his first

That revelation came when Dave and his wife Heidi were on a family vacation in Colorado. While out dinner one evening at one of Colorado's more fancy restaurants that had valet parking according to Dave, as they pulled up in their 96' Grand Am (feeling very under represented according to Dave), they spotted a Corvette being valet parked.

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Dave's uncle is also a car nut... yep, you guessed it, he's

Studebaker guy as well. Dave says that his uncle has owned many Studebakers through out the years. He currently owns a 58' Hawk and a 64 Studebaker Avanti

experience with a Corvette. At the impressionable age of 11 or 12, Dave experienced his first Corvette ride when his Boy



Dave remembers thinking "I
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want to take my wife to dinner in one of those". That was the moment according to Dave that he decided he had to have a Corvette some day.

I'm getting ahead of myself however, so let's go back to Dave's high school years. While in High School,

Dave drove a 83' Renault Alliance that he acquired from his step dad. That was followed by a Mazda GLC 5 speed, which according to Dave was a little better, but it had rust some issues. Now I know what you're thinking...man how cool was that? The rest of the story, one which many of his current Corvette friends probably don't know, is that there was another side of Dave when he was in High School. You see, Dave also drove motorcycles, how cool was that! Turns out Dave had a number of cycles during his formative years mostly 2 stroke dirt bikes but eventually migrated to a Honda 500 Interceptor and later a Suzuki GSX-R750 Aluminum-framed 130 hp beast that wheeled extraordinarily

well, according to Dave.

After graduating from High School, Dave went to Michigan Tech University. While attending Michigan Tech

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earning his Mechanical Engineering degree, he enrolled in their ROTC program and entered the Air Force after

graduation in 1995.

Dave's tours included Albuquerque, NM where he met his wife Heidi and was married. Next came a year and half at WPAFB where he attended the Air Force Institute of Technology and received his Master Degree in Aeronautical Engineering. That was followed by a tour at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha the old Strategic Air Command Headquarters. Next came time at Las Vegas serving as a flight test engineer on F-22's, F-16's and HH60G PAVE HAWK helicopters. Dave's Flight Test Engineering assignment was not really a desk job. Occasionally, he was able to jump in the back seat of a F-16 (to the tune of about 130 flight

hours-worth) and pull some serious g's. Dave says par-



tially in jest, that it cost him an inch of his seating height....lucky guy! Dave's latest assignment was back to WPAFB in Dayton where he hopes to retire and stay in the Dayton area in 2015.

For a while the idea of owning a Corvette was a retirement dream for Dave. Living on a Captain's salary didn't leave a lot of dollars left over for toys. As luck would have it however, Dave was at the right place at the right time....When he left Las Vegas, the housing market in that area was in a boom and Dave made out

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quite well in selling his house at the time. That deal left Dave with the cash

he needed to move up his dream of owning a Corvette! When I asked Dave what made him decide to buy a

new Vette as opposed to an older one, his answer was two fold. 1)he loved the Museum delivery idea; and 2)he liked the safety fea-

tures of a newer Vette (must be from his motorcycle days). Although, he admitted that he really was tempted by the idea of mid-year collector. In fact, he spent a couple of months test-driving a 65' Blue 350/365hp convertible at a local dealer here in Ohio. It was the fact that Dave wanted to drive his Corvette a lot that finally made the decision for him.

Dave ordered his 07' in June of 2006 and he and his wife Heidi picked it up at the Corvette Museum on 10

Sept 2006 which was just a couple of weeks after their 10 year wedding anniversary. First thing Dave did to the car was to make it louder (must be from all those test rides in

He would love to have a chrome bumper C3 Vette ala maybe a 70" (now you C1 and mid-year guys pay attention here)



high performance aircraft).

According to Dave, C6's are ridiculously quiet! To make this happen, Dave says the car now has 1 and 7/8" long-tube headers non-stepped, Kooks stainless high flow catalytic converter cross over pipe with 3" exhaust all the way back to the Corsa Sport muffler system. Dave has also put a ported throttle body and intake manifold

system plus a Vararam cold ram air kit. According to



Dave, One of biggest improvements he made was when he had a guy out of Florida tune the engine with all the after market improvements Dave had put on car. Throughout the entire process, Dave says that he has kept all the original parts, documentation, tags and etc. In fact, he has a 10" thick file of original pictures and documentation just in case he or a future owner wants to put the car back to the "quite/original" state.

Increased noise is not the only benefit from the



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changes that Dave had made to his Vette. It now generates about 460HP at the crank vs the factory 400HP. Dave says it puts out a



“solid” 390 HP at the rear wheels.

So why did Dave join NCRS? His heart is still with the “older” collectible Corvettes.

He would love to have a chrome bumper C3 Vette ala maybe a 70” (now you C1 and mid-year guys pay attention here). If anyone knows of a nice collectable fully documented numbers matching chrome bumper C3 Corvette for sale, Dave would love to hear from you. He is flexible on the color, but it has to be a Big Block or LT1 convertible.

On a sad note, Dave lost his wife Heidi suddenly last August. Dave says Heidi loved the 07’ Vette and in fact was a big Corvette fan. He has pictures of her in a Corvette when she was a teenager!

The passing of Heidi left a big hole in Dave and Shane’s (his 8 year old son) life but the fellowship and friends he has made in our NCRS chapter, according to Dave, is special and he deeply appreciates all of the support and friendship from our fellow NCRS members.