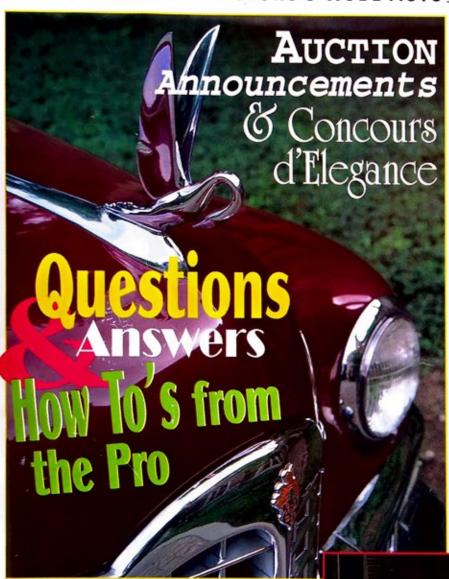
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FEATURES

54 Buick Skylark

57 Chrysler

58 Edsels

48 Packard

33 Statz

Restoration Series





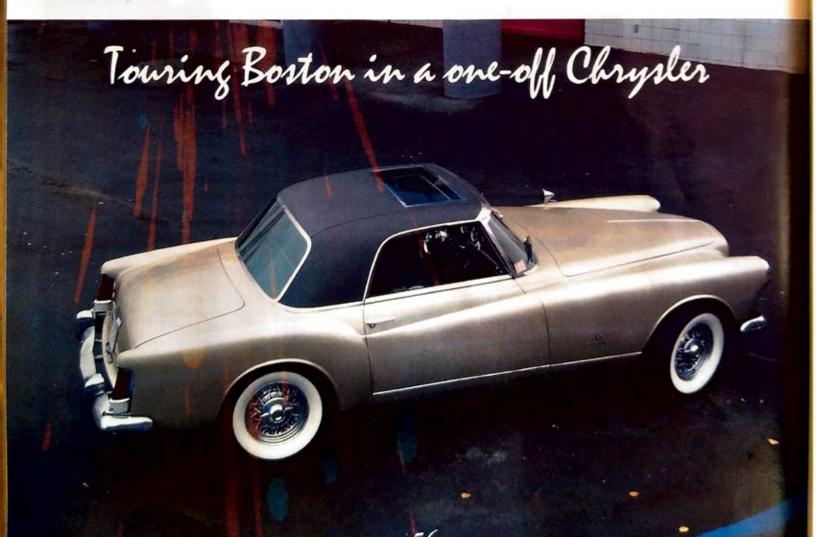




Chrysler Chr

've been told that the worst city in the nation to drive in and around is Boston. I have driven the streets of that city many times and I admit that the meandering layout combined with aggressive drivers makes getting around a challenge. The reputation of the area is sufficiently bad enough to make almost anyone shy about driving their new car through the city let alone a one-off 1957 Chrysler.

BY JED RAPOPORT



I was invited by collector Michael Pomerance to come to Boston and experience his 1957 Chrysler Boano first hand. The particular day we chose for our meeting turned out to be classic early winter New England gloom with light rain falling and a cold, damp chill in the air. Within 24 hours of our meeting the ground will be covered with snow. On account of the weather. I was half expecting Pomerance to excuse himself from giving me the promised ride. I would not be quick to take this car out in the rain let alone in Boston midday traffic if it were mine but Pomerance is one of those colectors who recognizes that cars, unlike fine naintings, are meant to be driven. He generally avoids driving this car in such weather but this time he was going to make an exception.

I met him at the appointed time and he had the car out of the garage and ready to go. My first impression of seeing the car was that understated elegance never goes out of style. The car is very well proportioned. The long hood and short coupe body and relatively short rear deck are aggressive without pushing a performance image. The overall look of the car is reminiscent of the Bentley Continental. In fact, for an Italian custom bodied car it is very English in its overall feel. The elegance is carried right on through the plush passenger compartment. Settle into the thickly padded seats covered in fine leather while pondering the flat dashboard covered in

real wood and you can imagine being seated in any number of plush luxury cars from Rolls-Royce or Jaguar. Clearly designed to be owner driven with a back seat of little use except to put packages or a child, the car is equipped with a rare for the era, power operated moon roof, a feature of interest only to an owner/driver.

Pomerance drives the Chrysler as if were a modern car. Perhaps that

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should not be surprising. The car is based on a 1956 Chrysler 300-B chassis cut down to a wheelbase of 119 inches, versus the original 126 inches, giving the car a very manageable size. Performance is not lacking. The 354-cubic-inch Hemi V8 has been completely rebuilt by Brian Schoener and the performance of the unit is at or above the original specifications.

Pomerance guided the car onto the Massachusetts Turnpike and put his foot into the accelerator. The 350-plus horses came on strong

and flung us into midday traffic in a style fitting of a seasoned Boston driver, passing our fair share of traffic. Traffic did not allow space to properly engage the passing gear but it was clear that there was plenty of power to spare.

Pomerance piloted the car through turnpike traffic and eventually exited heading for the upscale town of Brookline. It was not a far stretch to imagine cruising the streets of Paris, where the car probably spent most of its life. We eventually stopped to take some photos with

the Boston skyline just visible in the gloom beyond.

Boano is not one of the better known carrozzeria but it was one of the most influential. Felice Mario Boano was responsible for reviving the Ghia company in 1946, at the request of Ghia's









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widow. He started turning out limited numbers of cars mainly on Italian chassis. His designs were an instant sensation on the show car circuit. He favored softly curved lines and bodies that envelop the chassis. His early designs went so far as to enclose the front wheels with removable skirts.

Ghia remained a small company geared toward Italian-







produced chassis until 1950 when Chrysler, in search of new styling and body building expertise, began to establish ties with Pinin Farina and Ghia. These new contacts resulted in the first Ghia-bodied Chrysler, dubbed the Plymouth XX-500. The car was unattractive but the cost of production caught the attention of Chrysler brass and they realized that Ghia could produce one-off cars far more cost effectively than Chrysler could in house. This led to the long line of Ghia-bodied show cars and limited production cars based on Chrysler chassis.

Boano was not convinced that the new ties to Chrysler were the proper direction for the company. He felt that more attention should be paid to the Turinese Companies most particularly Fiat. In 1953 Boano left Ghia and struck out on his own. He and his son, Gian Paolo Boano, designed and produced bodies for many Italian companies with perhaps their work for Ferrari in the mid- to late '50s their best known. In the late '50s Boano closed his shop and he and his son went to work for Fiat thus ending their careers as custom body builders in the Italian tradition.

This Chrysler was one of only two American chassis bodied by Boano. The styling of the car was obviously of the same lineage as the custom-bodied Chryslers produced by Ghia in the '50s. Still many features on the car were clearly Boano. The curve at the front of the rear fenders sweeps over the doors ever so slightly. This seemingly insignificant styling point is important when you consider the extra work necessary to accomplish it. This touch is consistent with other Boano designs of the period and was clearly done to maintain the proper proportions of the design.

Recent correspondence with Gian Paolo Boano has produced a well-documented history to go with this car. Ordered new in April 1955 by Gianni Agnelli, the car was to be a: "2-seat coupe with a powerful, modern mechanical system ... a classic. British-style coupe, not a modern shape." The basic design sketches took just ten days. Mr. Agnelli chose his favorite one, and from that single sketch a "master model" was created. In the mean time, a new Chrysler 300 chassis was ordered, by the fall of 1955 the body panels were welded to the chassis. If

would take an additional two months of nord fabrication work to create the individud components.

foward the end of 1955 the car was completed and on an invitation from Boano, Agneticame to inspect the finished coupe. Agneticame to inspect the finished coupe. Agneticame to inspect with the final result but was bothered by the prospect of being seen in public driving a foreign car while he was vice president of Fiat. Why this situation was not considered before the car was built remains a mystery. Agnetic decided to give the car to his brother Umberto.

Several days later, Gian Paolo Boano delivered the car to Umberto Agnelli "at the Milan tollbooth on the Milan-Turin highway." Umberto took the car to Paris where he was involved with Fiat of France. Umberto remained in France for three or four years apparently leaving the car in Paris upon his return to Italy. The construction of the car and its ownership was kept quiet in respect of "Mr. Agnelli"s wish for privacy and discretion."

Pomerance and I continued our test drive through the center of Boston. The sightly aggressive growl of the exhaust and the elegant shape of the Boano body make this car draw plenty of attention. Even jaded Bostonians recognized this car as something special. In the tight confines of center city traffic the car is as docile to handle as a new Cadillac. Of course, the new Cadillac doesn't have a Hemi engine under the hood.

We arrived back at the garage where the car is stored and carefully dried it off and covered it. The next time the car sees daylight the weather should be much improved. You may wonder what someone who owns such a fantastic car drives daily in Boston? Although Pomerance drives the Boano or one of his other collector cars on Special occasions, he doesn't own a regular car. He freely admits that owning a regular car in Boston is more hassles than it is worth. Now that's a real car collector.

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1922-53 6 & St 8\$145\$425	all dual wires 200 040	Nash/AMC
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1957-74 V8 single	Corvette	1955-74 single V8\$190\$450
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1960-74 dual full sz260740	1951-74 dual all 250750	1955-56 all dual\$260\$740
1961-74 Skylark		1955-56 all dual/res\$340\$940
and Special single190485	Ford	1932-36 V12
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13/30-40 M/182	1952-54 includes res 250 700	as above wires\$330\$940
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1941-48 long w.b160475	1955-57 includes res 320 940	Oldsmobile
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1961-74 single wires240640	1961-69 w/4 mflrs4201100	Cations 446
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