

1967 MERCURY Cougar XR7- Chris Benis

Written by Double Dragon

Wednesday, 19 March 2014 20:56 - Last Updated Friday, 01 August 2014 15:53

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oneownercollectorcar.com

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In fall of 1966 the new 1967 model year Mercury Cougar was released with great success. The Cougar was based upon the Ford Mustang platform, but Mercury did a good job at disguising this fact. When you see a Pontiac Firebird its easier to spot the family DNA it shares with the Chevrolet Camaro. Similarly to the Challenger concept in 1970 which stretched the Barracuda wheel base, the Cougar used a 3 inch longer wheelbase than the Mustang and emphasized entirely different flavor in its "European" styling. The Cougar seemed a stand alone, more akin to its moniker 'Junior Thunderbird' than 'gussied up Mustang'.

Once the January 1967 introduction of the XR7 package hit the showrooms, Mercury's aspirations to mimic the Jaguar became apparent. The XR7 brought everything together in one stunning car that symbolized success and class. When Thomas Christopher Benis laid eyes on a Gold XR7 he had found exactly what he was searching for.



Thomas Christopher Benis was working as a real estate agent in Seattle, Washington and needed a new car to ferry his clients to various locations. Not only did he need a 'nice new' car to serve practical duty, it had to transmit the proper image for his work. On a personal level the car also signified that he had 'made it'. Thomas was an immigrant from Greece and this was his

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first new car.

Thomas took his five year old son, Christopher Thomas along with him to the dealer lot to find a car. Thomas' son, Christopher remembers his father's negotiation with the salesman and most importantly a promise his father made,

"At age 5, I clearly remember my Dad saying while we were still at the dealership that the car would be mine when I was old enough to drive."

Thomas had chosen Evered Lincoln-Mercury in Bellevue, Washington partly based on Evered's reputation as the largest volume Mercury dealer in the area. See the story on this dealership in the WASHINGTON/ SEATTLE section of the DEALERSHIPS section in this website.

Thomas felt an affinity towards Mercury based on his good experiences with his used 1961 Mercury Comet. The Comet was a nice car; white with red interior, but too small for clients and too old to create the effect Thomas needed to present as a Realtor.

The Gold 1967 Cougar made a real statement, looking much more upscale than its reasonable price suggested. The XR7 option on the car lent that final touch of 'class' Thomas needed to inspire the confidence of clients. The XR7 package adds genuine leather seats, console, fake wood dash with full instrumentation, map pockets in the doors, and an overhead console. The dashboard bristles with toggle switches and map lights and warning lights. Similar to the larger Ford personal car the Thunderbird the interior resembles a jet cockpit. The XR7 option executes all Thunderbird style gimmicks in a Jaguar type aesthetic.



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The Gold Cougar XR7 Thomas and Christopher spotted on the Evered lot was built May 31, 1967, 11 days behind the scheduled build date of May 20th. The backlog in Cougars may be attributed to the great popularity of the car during its first year of production. Unfortunately subsequent years would show a drop in production likely due to the larger number of rival ponycars available for 1968.

The Gold Cougar's factory name for the paint is Cinnamon Frost. The XR7 package coordinates interior leather seat color with the car's paint scheme. This XR7 has saddle leather seats.

The VIN decodes as follows:

7= 1967 model year

F= Built at the Dearborn, Michigan assembly plant

93= Cougar XR7 Hardtop

C= 289 two barrel engine

The significant digits of the VIN are not shown here, but they are quite high as would be expected towards the end of the run. The door tag code DSO 54 means the car was ordered for the Seattle area. The W code indicates the C4 Select Shift Merc-O-Matic transmission. The O code means the rear axle ratio is the standard 2.79:1.

Aside from the XR7 option, console and the automatic transmission, the Cougar is equipped with other options such as power steering and brakes, AM radio, tinted windshield, and rear bumper guards. The tires were 7.35 x 14 whitewalls with 4 ply rating. Below is a copy of the build sheet with the significant digits of the VIN removed.

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The image shows a Mercury build sheet for a 1967 Cougar XR7. The form is titled "PASSENGER" and contains various sections for vehicle specifications, including engine, transmission, axle, suspension, and interior options. The form is filled out with handwritten and printed information.

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	VALUE
A	Rotation number	0291
A	ViN	Carline W
A	Warranty plate code	65B
A	Paint	lower V
A	code	6F
A	Instrument board	1
A	Sales District	54
A	Day	20E
A	Battery amperage	45
A	Check	V
A	Type of order	2
B	Engine	C (289-2 bbl)
B	Transmission	W
B	Axle	LZ
B	Driveshaft	0
B	Speedogear	1
B	Front spring	Z
B	Rear spring	1
B	Shocks	4
B	Radiator	S
B	Tire size	D
B	Type	1
B	Brakes	Power K
B	Wheel covers	full X
B	Seat belts color	6
B	delete	D
B	Tinted glass	W
B	Check	V
C	Console	X
C	Radio equipment	AM X
C	Electric clock	X
C	Power steering	X
C	CD	C
C	CE	X
C	Check	V
D	Blank for taxi equipment, locking gas cap etc.	
E	Engine	296 B
E	Transmission	PEE C
E	Radiator	C7ZE suffix S
E	Driveshaft	C7WW suffix E
E	Speedometer gear	GRAY
E	Muffler	7

The build sheet blank itself is dated May, 1966 one full year before the order was printed out.

The first line A reads Rotation number 0291, ViN, Carline W, Warranty plate code 65B, Paint lower V, code 6F, Instrument board 1 (must signify the snazzy XR7 dash), Sales District 54, Day 20E (May 20th), Battery amperage 45, Check V, Type of order 2

Line B reads Engine C (289-2 bbl), Transmission W, Axle LZ, Driveshaft 0, Speedogear 1, Front spring Z, Rear spring 1, Shocks 4, Radiator S, Tire size D, Type 1, Brakes Power K, Wheel covers full X, Seat belts color 6, delete D, Tinted glass W, Check V

Line C reads Console X, Radio equipment AM X, Electric clock X, Power steering X, CD C, CE X, Check V

Line D is blank for taxi equipment, locking gas cap etc.

Line E reads Engine 296 B, Transmission PEE C, Radiator C7ZE suffix S, Driveshaft C7WW suffix E, Speedometer gear GRAY, Muffler 7

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Line G reads Air cleaner C7ZF suffix C, Axle 7930C, Fan C6AE suffix possibly 8, Steering column E72A 29 V646, Steering wheel EW375 662A, Wheels RA5==,

Line H reads Front spring VIOLORG, Rear spring ORGBLUE, Front shock PURPLE, Rear shock PURPLE, Tires 5, 735 14 Rate 4 Ply 2 Type R

Line I is not filled out.

The Cougar XR7 is an end of the month car. It was built on the last day of May and sold to Thomas June 30th, the last day of June. Thomas traded in his Comet and drove off very pleased with his new Cougar XR7. The image below of the owner's manual information page has the significant digits of VIN, address and key codes removed.

MERCURY COUGAR
OWNER IDENTIFICATION

WARRANTY NUMBER	77930
OWNER NAME	Thomas G. Benis
STREET ADDRESS	
CITY	Herndon Takemate Wash.
VEHICLE CODE	5RB V 6P 203 24 O W
VEHICLE DESCRIPTION	XR7 2D HTP
IGN & DOOR KEY NUMBER	GLOVE COMP. & TRUNK KEY NO.
SELLING DEALER	
DEALER NAME	Evered Motors P & A CODE 13099
CITY	Beltsville STATE Wash.
OWNER SIGNATURE	
DEALER SIGNATURE	<i>Steven S. Spalden</i>
DATE PLACED IN SERVICE	6 30 67

The date placed in service indicates the starting date of your warranty coverage. If you are traveling or move to another location, it is your evidence of coverage during the published warranty period.
Your Ownership is located in the glove compartment and should be used whenever you visit your Lincoln-Mercury dealer for warranty or service work.
ALWAYS KEEP YOUR OWNERSHIP IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

Thank you for buying your new car from Evered Mercury, Inc.

While you are having your new car serviced by our shop, we have available new Rental Cars specifically for the convenience of our new car and truck customers.

We make a very nominal charge of \$3.00 per day and 5¢ per mile over 25 miles for their usage. We sincerely hope you will avail yourself of our fine service facilities.

To help us serve you better, we would appreciate your calling our Service Department (GL-4-0984) for an appointment or to reserve a rental car.

Thomas was never unhappy with his new Cougar or the effect it produced when you pulled up. But in short order the small back seat and lack of four doors proved to be awkward deficits when engaged in real estate duties. His son Christopher recalls,

"Thomas soon found that this was not the most practical car for chauffeuring potential clients, so he switched to a 1967 Mercury Commuter station wagon and the Cougar became my mom's."

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Interestingly, when Thomas eventually traded in the Mercury wagon he moved his allegiance to General Motors for several years. Of the five GM car divisions to choose from, Thomas became a Pontiac man. There is a definite link between Mercury and Pontiac divisions in the relative 'feel' marketers wished to impart to buyers. Pontiac had an option list "as long and hairy as an ape's arm" and Mercury was calling itself "The Man's Car" in 1967.

Mercury and Pontiac both occupied a 'rung up the ladder' from the base Ford and Chevrolet models. Both employed wild feline imagery in advertising. Pontiac built up its reputation with the GTO 'Tiger' and Mercury became known as 'The Sign of the Cat' once the Cougar became successful. Mercury used a Cougar as its symbol for years after the Cougar model had fallen into obscurity. In later life Thomas returned to Mercury when he purchased a Mountaineer and later to Ford with a reproduction Cobra.

Thomas' wife, Helen used her new car to attend church and take the kids to soccer practice. The furthest afield the car went from the small town of Bellevue was to the 'big city' of Seattle, Washington for the occasional movie. The Cougar lived a charmed life. It was garaged from 1968 onwards, and driven moderately.

The one incident with the car occurred in 1973 when the car was rear ended by a 1960s Toyota. The Cougar was grazed along the left rear corner showing damage to the left rear fender extension, quarter panel and tail light assembly. The heavier gauge metal used in the Cougar peeled the side of the Toyota right off as if it were a sardine can. Toyota eventually used better metal and developed higher fit and finish standards than domestic cars but in the 1960s there was no contest as attested to by this accident.

Although Helen 'owned' the car for a much longer period of time than Thomas, the car was still registered in his name for Helen's entire tenure with the Cougar.

For the first year of its life the Cougar was parked outside. In 1968, the family moved into a house with a garage which saved the Cougar from the merciless rain of the Northwest Coast. Young Chris also played a role in the preservation of the Cougar. He eagerly took on some of the chores involved in the upkeep on the Cougar. He washed the car and policed sibling behavior. Chris enforced the 'no gum' rule in the car rigorously as he anticipated the day it would become his car.

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At age 15 1/2 Christopher got his learner's permit using the Cougar and took all of his driver's training in the XR7. On February 28, 1978 the big day arrived. Christopher's 16th birthday! As he recalls,

"My mom drove the car until 1978 when it was given to me on my 16th birthday. Sometimes, parents do keep their promises!"

Thomas retained the title for quite some time after giving Christopher the car, just as he had when it was Helen's car. He finally made it all legal Feb 7, 1989 when he transferred the title to Christopher. Below is the pink slip with Chris' signature, the final digits of the VIN, the address and significant zip code numbers removed. It was a few days past Chris' birthday when the document officially handing over the torch was signed. Note the mileage is 99,928 miles. The car had been frozen at that mileage now for a few years.

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594	VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
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VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594
VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL 1967 MERCURY XR7	VEHICLE YEAR 1967	VEHICLE COLOR Y 259945	VEHICLE TYPE 3 DOOR	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 77594

The pink slip reads, "gift from father". Although Thomas drove the car the least of any of the family members it was in his name for nearly 22 years! Christopher has now surpassed that record by nearly a decade. An interesting point: the family member who drove the car the most (Helen) was never registered as an owner! Now that the car is back on the road Chris will be able to eventually beat his mother's record for miles and years driven.

Shortly after his 16th birthday Christopher took his driver's license test with his new Cougar. At

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this point the 11 year old car was bone stock showing only 92,000 miles. The factory original appearance didn't last too long. As Chris recalls,

"No one wants to drive a mom car."



The original musclecar era had been over officially since the early 1970s, but that didn't stop kids from diving cool cars. In fact, the collapse of the musclecar scene and the fuel crisis devalued the classic cars to the point where high school kids could buy them used for reasonable prices. In 1980 you'd never know the musclecar era was dead if you looked at what the teens were driving. Chris recalls the scene back then,

"By then, I was attending Newport High School in Bellevue (Class of 1980). There were all sorts of 1960s and 1970s muscle cars in the school parking lot. I remember a great orange GTO Judge, some killer Mustangs, an unbelievable blue Dodge Charger and a Grabber Orange 1970 Cougar Eliminator. It was sort of an unwritten rule that all the hot cars parked in the 'upper lot'. In fact, the cooler you were, it was sort of understood that you could take up more parking places. So, kids usually parked in at least two spots on top of the line. If you were really 'cocky', you would park right down the dividing line between six parking spots. If your car justified it, no one would hassle you. I don't think I ever tried that!"

Chris balanced his desire to keep his car mostly stock with the youthful need to inject a little bit of fire into it,

"Since I wanted to park in the upper lot where all the "hot rods" were kept, the first thing I did was put some mag wheels and wider tires on the car.

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Chris's dad was now a landlord. Someone abandoned a set of Cragar S/S Mach 8 mags in one of his rental houses. Chris saved them in anticipation of getting the Cougar. Thus he owned his tires and rims before he owned the car. They were slightly oversized for the Cougar, but with free mags, who's complaining? The rims had "Road Hugger" 60Rx14 tires mounted. Once the new wheels were mounted Chris recalls,

"To fit the very wide tires under the rear end, I had air shocks installed, which I thought at the time to be a better approach than the raised shackle bars that were common (and ugly). The air-fill for the shocks was at the top of the rear valance, just below the rear bumper to hide it from view."

Sticking with his resolve to preserve the car mostly stock, 'just a little quicker and cooler', Chris left the interior alone. Today it is with relief that he recalls his restraint during those years when everyone around him was hacking apart the interiors to accommodate stereos, speakers, aftermarket gauges and Grant racing steering wheels,

"Although "back in the day" everyone was pulling their factory AM radios and replacing them with the latest Kenwood offerings (with Jensen triaxials in the rear), I left the factory radio and mono speaker in the dash. Something was telling me not to cut up the dash or the rear package shelf. I somehow made it through three years of high school listening only to XJR-AM."

Despite keeping some things sacred, a teen needs to move out properly and the 2 barrel 289 with single exhaust wasn't doing it for Chris,

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"On the motivation side, I wanted my 289-2V to make a little more power, so I removed the stock intake and carburetor, and installed an Edelbrock aluminum intake manifold and a Holley 600 CFM four barrel carburetor. I was sure to keep the original intake, carburetor and air cleaner for the future. I also installed dual exhausts on the car. Rather than running straight out the back with the standard chrome tips of the era, I kept them high up and turned them down just in front of the rear valance for a more stock looking appearance. I never got the Holley carb dialed in quite right, and the car was never as fast as I wanted it to be."

After watching his MPG plunge from 14 to 8 MPG with the new intake/ carb combination, Christopher had enough. In 1979 he re installed the stock intake/ carburetor. The other changes remained. See the GAS LOGS section of this website for further details about the Cougar's miles per gallon.

"I did have a lot of fun in High School and was well known for cruising around Bellevue and Renton in the car (yes, they were still cruising in Renton and Crossroads when I was in high school)."

Christopher wasn't totally satisfied with the mags and "Road Hugger" tires on the Cougar which among other things rubbed the front fenders on hard cornering. He coveted the Goodyear Wingfoots his friend Randy had on his Dodge. These were the 'traction tire' of the time period. The Goodyears came with the Mopar mags as part of the deal. Christopher was amazed to discover that the Chrysler factory mags fit perfectly.

Christopher drove the Cougar about 8,000 miles during his high school cruising years. The only time the Cougar was out of King County in its life was in 1979. Thomas bought a new Cadillac for Helen and Christopher drove his father to Moses Lake, Washington to pick it up.

The next stage of Christopher's life reduced the use of the Cougar down to weekend duties,

"In fall 1980, I started school at the University of Washington, living as a freshman in a Fraternity on Greek Row. I knew the car would get totally trashed being parking in the U-District, so I left it home during my first year of college. I would drive it on weekends for the next year, but it was back home safe in Bellevue."

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"By the end of my freshman year (1981), however, my need for wheels led a roommate and I to buy a 1967 Ford Econoline Pickup (yes, one of those "van-trucks"). After two years of driving the Econoline it was deemed 'unsafe at any speed' by my parents. They bought me a 1983 Mazda B-2000 for my 21st birthday."

Chris has managed the rather unique feat of receiving a car for his birthday not once, but twice! But the second birthday car was the final straw for the Cougar. Chris explains,

"With the Cougar now not even being driven on the weekends, I followed an article in Hot Rod Magazine on how to get a car stored for extended periods. I left the magazine on the rear floor mat with the page turned to the part of the article that described how to bring a car back to life."

The magazine stayed open on that page for a lot longer than anticipated. The Cougar XR7 had traveled 99,924 miles when it was permanently stored during 1983. The Cougar was 16 years old and had averaged 6,245 miles per year. Christopher had no idea how long the car was going to be dormant back in 1983,

"I put my Cougar up on blocks and let it sit quietly for the next few years, waiting for the day I had the time and money to get it back on the road."

As we all know, once adult life intervenes the best laid car plans go into an almost permanent ice age,

"I stored it away in 1983. In the intervening nearly 30 years, I towed the car to new homes no less than seven times."

As the years unrolled, the late 1980s saw the first wave of collector interest in musclecars followed by a dip when the 'blue chip' investors burst the bubble. But the core of musclecar fans soldiered on and gradually the collector car hobby became very sophisticated. Chris noted the growing emphasis on factory originality and correctness and weighed this against his personal

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agenda for the car,

"Back in the day, I had always kept the car very stock looking, but now I had to balance what sort of modifications to perform if I was to begin driving it again."

Judging the car, there were obvious things that had to be addressed due to age and lack of use. Christopher reports that the car weathered it's downtime without serious problems,

"Overall, the car survived its internment quite well. It was in storage from 1983 till 2012 and was in a garage the whole time. I expected that the engine would need to be replaced. The interior never got infested with mice and overall the car remained undamaged. One exception was that there was a small dent in the left rear sail panel when a garage door fell off the track in about 1984."

A coincidence here is that the only two accidents to befall the Cougar involved the left rear quarter panel area. The Toyota that rear ended the car also hit this area. Below is a photo of the garage door ding.



Thinking about restoring the car doesn't stop time from rolling past unimpeded. Christopher got serious as mid life came racing towards him,

"Staring directly at my upcoming 50th birthday, I began researching my car's resurrection in late 2011. I was quite shocked to hear the prices being quoted for professionals to work on the car."

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For example, I thought I put a real nice paint job on the car in 1978 for around \$450. Now, I was hearing quotes of \$10,000+ for a "nice" paint job. The good news was that the sail panel repair and knocking out a few door dings ended up costing about \$1,000. The paint blended in well and I don't think these repairs are noticeable at all."

There was never a question of changing the stock color or the stock interior. The only deviation from the original exterior is the inclusion of 15x8 reproduction Magnum 500 wheels and new BF Goodrich tires. But in many ways, this is a valid revisit of the past. For his entire time driving the car, Chris ran aftermarket wheels. In this case, the wheel style is actually correct for the car.

The factory style mags done on a larger rim size provide an opportunity to run larger modern rubber on a car without noticeably distorting the proportionate relationship between the wheel wells and wheels. Best of all, the design of the spokes match the design style of the car. Too often modern spider spoke 20 inch wheels are clapped onto a 1960s car and the result is two separate things that do not integrate in size or style.

Purity was preserved in appearance but when mechanical issues needed to be addressed a battle between correct and desirable began to wage a war in Chris' head. Perhaps because of the precedent set by his teenage venture into hopping up the engine, Christopher had already been seduced by the horsepower temptation,

"Never having done this before, but certainly having read lots of articles over the years that always mention a car being "numbers matching," I needed to decide what I really wanted the car to be. I hauled it around for 30 years, without ever thinking of selling it. I sure as heck wasn't going to sell it after bringing it back to life. With that decision in mind, I knew I was building the car solely for myself – not for resale value. This was a really freeing decision – I didn't have to worry about what the buying public would value, what was the best return on investment, etc.... After all, notwithstanding that it was a "nice original" car, what collector would really want a numbers matching 289-2V?"

"So, what did I decide? The guiding principle of my restoration would be, "what would I have wanted the car to be back in high school?" The car was never as fast as I wanted it to be, so I wanted to substantially increase the HP."

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Twenty years ago this would have entailed finding a junkyard big block and rebuilding it, but nowadays drop in crate motors make more power and are easier to live with. As Chris explains it,

"After flirting briefly with dropping in the big block that I had always wished the car had, I ended up going with a 302 crate motor from Ford Racing, with the GT-40 aluminum heads. Since the old engine always had an Edelbrock intake and Holley carburetor on it, those could stay (or more specifically, be replaced). The car never had headers, but I thought getting more exhaust breathing was a smart move, so I also had shorty headers installed and replaced the dual exhaust."

Buying a crate engine is much different than it was 20 or 30 years ago when speed shops sold rebuilds or short blocks. In many ways, waiting so long to revive the Cougar worked to Chris' advantage. Ford racing has authorized dealers throughout North America. Despite a disclaimer from Ford that their engines are aftermarket many of them come with decent warranties. The building process adheres to strict specs using computers to obtain incredible accuracy. Modern crate engines have fit and tolerances beyond anything back in the day.

Chris departed from the silent purr of a single exhaust two barrel 289 by substituting the 302 and headers, so there was no point capping it with quiet mufflers. It made sense to let that cat growl as much as it wishes,

"One question was, what do I want the car to sound like? Sticking with my theme, I chose Flowmasters. Since I always loved the crinkle finish valve covers, I also did the "walking cat" valve covers and oval air cleaner from West Coast Classic Cougars."

Most of the other work done to the car involved age and mileage items that were replaced or restored such as radiator, fuel tank, power accessories, head light canisters, turn signal unit and so on.

Chris carried forth his performance enhancement theme with an upgrade to the front power drum brakes which he converted to discs. The drive train was matched to the new power available from the 302 with a rebuild to the rear end which included adding a lower gear ratio. The original 3 speed automatic C-4 was replaced with a TCI unit.

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Chris' respect for the original appearance of the car has caused a bit of a dilemma regarding his seats,

"My biggest stumbling block was the original leather seats, which have (candidly) seen better days, but remain tear-free. I checked with a lot of upholstery options, but wasn't 100% satisfied with any of the choices. The factory leather seats are not currently being reproduced so I would be relying upon an upholsterer to try and match the pattern. At this point, the only upgrade to the interior has been replacement of the black carpeting and the clock. The factory AM radio and speaker remain at home in the dash."



"If you recall that the car had 99,924 miles on it when I stored it away in 1983. After a bunch of testing by the guys who worked on the car for me, and (eventually) driving it back home after more than nine months in the shop, the moment it got back in my driveway, the odometer showed 99,999! Since I plan to give the car to my oldest son, Christopher, I had him along for the ride when the odometer turned 00,000. To be honest, this was not as exciting to him as it was to me.



Although Christopher's son is also known as Christopher, his full name is Thomas Christopher which is the same name as his grandfather who originally bought the Cougar in 1967. The third generation Christopher also shares the same birthday of July 9th with his namesake grandfather. Some circles will come complete the day the car passes into his hands. I think it is safe to assume that he will receive this Cougar on his birthday!

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For now, his father is enjoying the car the way he wished it had been back in high school. He muses,

"It's hard to imagine that (being almost 52) that this car has been part of my life since I was five."

