

A VENT WINDOW VIEW, (Wheel Love)

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At what age do kids form an opinion about the car they hope someday to own? That's really a trick question for in many cases the make and model is locked in before kids have the birthday that makes them old enough to drive. This tends to make one wonder what events or circumstances lead to those early choices of marques, styles and colors that become instilled firmly enough to carry over until the kid reaches an age when he or she can obtain a license to drive. The one possibility I can offer is that a car was involved in some event or occasion that affected the kid's mind and, whatever that was, it had more staying power than the flavor of an all-day sucker.

In conjunction with that reasoning, however, one must remember that different experiences and sexes may result in a wide variation of recall. This becomes obvious when a child encounters an object that he or she has not before seen. In this, age and sex are again major factors. A five year old boy's reaction to a new *Betsy-Wetsy* doll will probably vary considerably from that of a girl the same age. Change the test item from a doll to a set of GI Joes and reactions may reverse. Honestly, ladies, I'm not being sexist here because I'll be the first to agree that this is not an absolute, 100% sure thing. My boyhood world included ten sisters; they, and my three daughters taught me that females of any age are creatures man is not meant to understand. Therefore the examples above are generalized to an extreme when I point out that more often than not it will be love at first sight of the Betsy-Wetsy for the lass while that five year old boy will lead his army of GI Joes into combat against the doll. Of course, an hour later, one might discover that the two kids have switched toys.

During the late Forties, well before I was old enough to drive, I fell in love with cars. In truth, my romance with them came not from close up familiarity, but from the colorful pictures found in period magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, and *Colliers*.

With memories of the depression years still fresh in their minds, my parents did not spend any money on subscriptions to such publications, but when I was in fourth grade, my family moved onto another farm. There, in the attic of our new home, a creaky old two-story farmhouse, my brother and I found 20 plus boxes of those magazines mentioned above. It was the mother lode of true pleasure for my brother and me because that ten years' worth of magazines contained hundreds of pictures advertising cars, most printed in full color.

For many months, when chores, school, or other duties did not demand our presence, we lived in the gloom of that attic. My brother became enamored of the various convertibles that seemed to be the most popular style shown in the ads; I, on the other hand, remembered my father's frequently voiced comments suggesting that "convertibles are a good way to end up minus your noggin in a rollover wreck." His words planted a horrible vision in my mind, one that lasted until I was a retiree in my sixties. At that point I restored a convertible, a 1959 pink and white Ford. It served us well for a few years. Along with participating in many parades, we drove the car on several CHVA car tours.

The magazines so much enjoyed by my brother and me never exhibited a car with a pink paint job; to my knowledge, pink showed up on few (if any) production autos until the early Fifties. Had I seen one in those magazines from the Forties, it is doubtful that I would have believed my eyes. Certainly, I would not have coveted a pink convertible if one *had* shown up in one of those magazine pictures. In truth, as I think back upon those ads, I am fairly certain that all my selections were coupes. Those few that I had ever ridden in had a single-seat that made them seem "snug." How much I would have enjoyed a long ride in a car with such limited seating is a question that my wife answered by describing her experiences as a kid when her folks made her ride on the package shelf of their 1939 Ford coupe!