

A VENT WINDOW VIEW  
**A CAR CALLED "MAVERICK"**  
March 2015-B. K. Showalter

In 1825, a fellow named Sam Maverick was a member of the graduating class at Yale. He wasted no time before he began practicing law in South Carolina. Sam plugged away at that profession until, tiring of the way folks in Washington were running the country (sound familiar), he moved to Texas.

There he found things in even greater disarray—Texas was readying to declare independence from Mexico. This was the kind of thing that a young man out to make his fortune could sink his teeth into and that is just what this one did. Later, as one of the signers of the Texas declaration of independence, he committed to a new kind of order from what he had known in South Carolina.

A short while after the defeat of Santa Ana near Houston, Mr. Maverick settled down on his ranch and began raising cattle. Unlike most ranchers in those days, Sam did not bother to brand his stock. What followed makes one suspect that Maverick was a fairly hardnosed customer because when an unbranded cow strayed onto another's ranch, folks wisely assumed it belonged to Maverick. And, that's when "maverick" became the term used to describe any unbranded bovine found wandering western ranges. Later, long after Sam Maverick died in 1870, the term "maverick" spread into other cattle ranching areas where it still remains in use.

Most folks (guys at least) still remember those "good guy," maverick herding cowboys who populated the silver screens of yore and still, occasionally, show up on late night TV chasing down a gang of black hats. Of course, for some of us, the very term "maverick" brings back memories of a Western TV series titled "Maverick" starring, among others, James Garner.

Garner played the role of a gambler with a roving eye, a character most "guy" guys envied. His character showed us that "maverick" was the perfect definition for a guy who thinks for himself and chooses to go his own way much like Sam Maverick or one of his unbranded cows.

And that brings us to the interesting choice made by the Ford Motor Company back in 1969 when it chose the name "Maverick" for the new compact car it would offer among its 1970 models. It served to take the place of the Ford Falcon in FOMOCO's line up.

The new machine was a leading light in the newly shaped market for an American car that was so different from the barge-like monsters crowding the highways and polluting the atmosphere in our cities. Of course, when OPEC raised the price of a barrel of oil up from \$3.00 to \$10.00 in 1973, the Maverick became one of Detroit's brightest stars.

Of equal importance to America, Ford's Maverick provided decent competition for the onslaught of foreign machines that were grabbing up much of the American small car market. Hondas, Toyotas, and even some British makes were gaining popularity with American drivers.

The Maverick's sleek styling appealed to me, but I'd purchased a new Ford Falcon in 1963 and had no need to replace it. In truth, the same six cylinder engine that powered my Falcon was quite similar to the six-cylinder power plant Ford installed in the early Mavericks.

During a recent grocery store outing I parked my elderly F-150 next to a pond-scum green Maverick that had seen some hard times judging from the dents, dings, and scrapes marking it from stem to stern. It still had its "Maverick" nameplate that more or less still served to brand the car for what it once was.

Now, however, much like Sam Maverick's cows, I'm fairly sure that this machine would be safe no matter where one might choose to park it. There simply are not that many Maverick rustlers roaming our parking lot ranges these days.