

## TWIN WILDCATS

This article came from the International Desk of WA Buicks - friends in Canada sent this clipping, which was featured in the Vancouver Sun, 18 November 2005, written by Allan Bencze.

“The interest in Buick’s first Wildcat models began in May 1962 when my twin brother Doug and I were playing hockey at Kerrisdale arena. Rather than just watch us play hockey, our dad decided to go across the street to Phillipson Motors to look at the new Buicks with his best friend Bill, who also had two sons playing hockey with us.

When they returned to pick us up, Dad raved about this new Buick Wildcat he had seen in the showroom.

Fast forward to 1997: Dad is slowly being taken from us by Alzheimer’s disease and I decided to look for one of these 1962 Buick Wildcats to restore as a permanent reminder of the car he had wanted so long ago. I looked for a year and discovered how rare they are. I finally found an American built model for sale in Delta. After a full restoration, I displayed the car at a series of car shows.

Three years later in 2000 while my son was restoring a Corvair, we responded to a classified ad for Corvair parts.

We contacted the seller in Langley and as we were buying the parts, he asked me if I was into Corvairs as well. “No”, I responded. “I am into Buicks. I have a 1962 Wildcat.”

He then told me his girlfriend had one and it was for sale. I questioned if it was really a 1962 model because the first-year Wildcat is so rare. But the man reassured me it was and gave me the lady’s phone number.

When my brother Doug and I travelled to Campbell Valley near Cultus Lake to have a look at this car, we saw a sorry looking Buick sticking part way out of a barn.

Opening the door, we noticed the VIN plate marked “General Motors, Oshawa”. That was odd because there were only 2000 Buick Wildcat models made the first year and we thought they were all made in the US. Mine was built in Southgate, California.

Doug bought the car. I had gotten all the build date details for mine, so Doug decided to write to GM in Oshawa to get build dates and shipping info for the car he had just purchased.

Two weeks later, my astonished brother called me to say that the derelict car from the barn near Cultus Lake was the very same Wildcat that our father had seen in Kerrisdale and pined over for so long. This was THE car!

The information provided by GM shows the white Wildcat two-door hardtop was built May 1962 and shipped to Kerrisdale on May 17. So this definitely was the very car that our dad saw in the showrooms.

When Doug started to restore the car, he noticed the radio had chrome push buttons. Stock radios for Wildcats had black buttons. He asked Carter GM's Joe Mitchell, who had worked for Phillipson's about this anomaly: Joe recalled that the car came into the dealership with no radio so they installed a radio they had in stock out of a Buick 1961 Electra.

Doug thought about replacing it with an original 1962 radio but decided to restore it the way Dad saw it in the showroom.

After 14 months the car looked just as it did on that May afternoon in 1962 when Dad spotted the car he wanted but never got.

Doug and I take our "Twin Cats" to car shows and enjoy sharing the story about Dad's fondness for the Buick Wildcat.

It seems the car was destined to be in the family - albeit 38 years later."

*Submitted by L Haime (WA Buicks)*



Doug (left) and Allan Bencze with the restore Canadian built '62 Wildcat



Allan and Doug Bencze stumbled on the very Wildcat their father had fallen in love with in '62