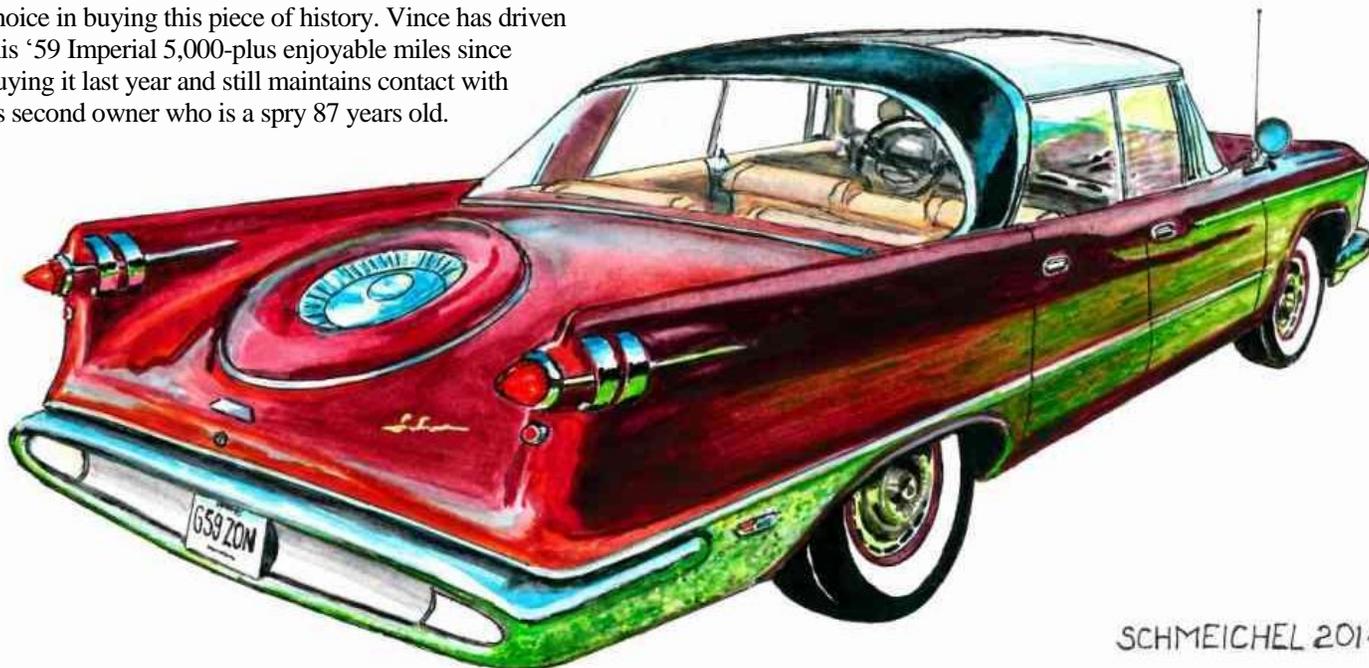


Becoming Extinct

By Bob Schmeichel

Over the years, proven theories have shown that after an asteroid hit Earth millions of years ago, a shroud of dust covered a large majority of Earth in the atmosphere. Because of this heavy shading of dust that lasted for years, the weather changed and Earth cooled. Plant life ceased to exist and most really big land dinosaurs died off leaving only fossil remains of what once was. You are probably wondering what this has to do with cars. Well, maybe nothing and maybe everything at the same time the way things evolve and disappear as time goes on. In the late 50s and early 60s, the Big Three automakers (GM, Ford and Chrysler) were trying to make an impact in this country with creating new models of their cars. Many of the certain model divisions within each of the Big Three automakers were trying to break away and create their own identity building a more blitzed-up (fancier model) and a larger size wise than the competitors version. Lincoln was trying to break away from Mercury and the Ford division. Imperial was trying to do the same within the Chrysler division. Larger, longer, heavier with fancy leather interiors all done with the intent to make a person riding in one of these cars feel like they were at home sitting in their favorite sofa. And for those of you who have never ridden in one of these cars from that era, they do make you feel like you are riding on air compared to today's cars. The outside styling of these cars tried to go in a spaceship or futuristic sort of direction with their fins, tail lights imitating jet engine fire, headlights, lots of chrome both front and back, accented by loads of stainless steel trim on the sides to draw attention to the lines of the cars. Doing this made the cars identifiable from blocks away, which was the main idea for the directions automakers went when they were designing. Pushing this identity picture created big, expensive cars in this timeframe that not too many could afford. So, consequently as it turned out, these big cars with their high costs, with rising gas prices, as with the dinosaurs, are disappearing in favor of smaller more efficient models today.

In 2013, while looking through an auction advertisement that was happening in Wakonda, Vince Jones noticed a 1959 Imperial that was coming up for sale. Because of growing up and working in his dad's Chrysler dealership, Vince had an instant allure to this old Chrysler knowing how rare they are becoming. So the day of the auction, Vince got himself there earlier to check this '59 Imperial LeBaron to see what it really was. As it turned out, this 19-foot-long piece of history with 104,000 miles on it was pleasantly quite nice and original yet, based on what he remembered of the cars from then. It was totally complete with quite a few options from the year that included the 413 engine, a push button 727 Torque Flite transmission, like-new mauve interior, power windows, tinted glass all around, air conditioning, stereo radio, power steering and power brakes. The outside of the car is what really sets it off from others. Besides the designed styled rear end and the rear tail fins with the speared tail lights, the back half of the black vinyl top is widow peaked half ways forward with the rest of the roof being brushed stainless steel. That with the dark maroon color the car was painted, made it a standoff from that era that Vince wasn't going to walk away from. Once the car was on the auction block, Vince stood back and watched as the bidding began and waited 'til it slowed, then jumped in towards the end with the winning bid. After the bidding was done, the second owner approached Vince and proceeded to tell him the history of the car back to its beginning. After hearing the whole story and having most all the original paper work pertaining to the car since it was new, Vince knew he had made the right choice in buying this piece of history. Vince has driven this '59 Imperial 5,000-plus enjoyable miles since buying it last year and still maintains contact with its second owner who is a spry 87 years old.



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