



Even though they live in different states, brothers Rick and Bruce Ehrmann share custody of this 1964 Chrysler 300K convertible.

Sharing true car love

Brothers make mom proud by taking turns

By Vern Parker
Motor Matters

Dolores Ehrmann successfully taught her sons, Rick and Bruce, to share their toys. The lesson must have been well-received, because they are still sharing toys — the latest being a 1964 Chrysler 300K convertible.

Over the years, Rick Ehrmann has developed a fondness for Chrysler products and has owned several Mopar models.

Like most automobile aficionados, Ehrmann and his younger brother, Bruce, were attracted to the legendary letter-series Chryslers of the 1950s and '60s.

The law of supply and demand is illustrated clearly by the limited supply of letter-series Chryslers and the high demand by collectors. Prices of well-preserved or restored letter-series cars tend to be on the high side.

Nevertheless, the brothers

found a way to acquire one of these desirable Chryslers by applying the lesson learned at their mother's knee when they were growing up in Toms River, N.J. By pooling their resources, they could afford to buy one of the cars and share it.

Rick Ehrmann was given the task of locating a solid Chrysler. He investigated several cars that weren't up to the brothers' standards before locating a beautifully restored 1964 300K convertible in Danville, Calif., near San Francisco.

It had been restored in 1991. Only 3,647 Chrysler 300K models were built, and of that total just 625 were convertibles — of which fewer than 100 are known to survive.

Bruce, of Manhattan, N.Y., couldn't make the trip so Rick, of Landover, Md., flew to San Francisco. There he was met by the seller, who took him to see the Chrysler.

As soon as the garage door swung open, Rick was smitten by the beauty of the Roman Red convertible. "It was exactly as he had described it," Ehrmann says.

"It was so clean and free of rust I asked if it was a California car," Ehrmann recalls.

He was surprised when told

the car came from Pennsylvania; both quarter panels had been so riddled with rust that they had to be replaced with rust-free panels from a donor car.

Ironically, Chrysler boasted in 1964 sales brochures that their cars received seven rust-proofing dips.

The purchase took place Nov. 13, 2002. To avoid trucking fees, Ehrmann climbed into the driver's bucket seat behind the squarish steering wheel and began the 3,100-mile drive to the East Coast.

Misfortune came calling in Turlock, Calif., at the end of the first day: A long bolt supporting the alternator cracked off at the cylinder head, which resulted in the alternator dropping down. There, the spinning fan blade struck it.

Ehrmann coasted the disabled Chrysler to a motel that fortuitously happened to be next door to the Turlock Tire Co., a full-service repair shop.

The next day, the wizards at the shop extracted the broken bolt, found a replacement bolt in the back of the shop and re-installed it in the alternator — with a spacer to prevent a recurrence.

Rick was back on the road before checkout time at the motel. With the top down he

cruised into Arizona on the second day of the eight-day odyssey.

Because of the time of year a southern route was chosen which traversed 10 states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland.

On the cross-continent trip, Rick says, "I called my brother every day."

The convertible weighs 5 pounds short of 2 tons and sold new with a base price of \$4,522. Less than an inch shy of 18 feet long, the Chrysler rides a 122-inch wheelbase.

A four-barrel Carter carburetor feeds the 413-cubic-inch V8 at what the brothers call a rate that is "pathetic." They report highway mileage of about 11 mpg.

Bruce is anxiously awaiting his turn with the car when he wants to enjoy top-down motoring in the Hudson Valley hills with his wife, Sandy.

Now the only problem to be solved is who gets the car on the weekends. Remember to share.

If you have a vehicle of interest to "Classic Cars" readers, write to Motor Matters, 4635 Bailey Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808-4109, detailing its merits.