



1947 PLYMOUTH SPECIAL DELUXE - OWNER GREG COXSON

1947 PLYMOUTH *Special Deluxe*

CRANBROOK
to Calgary



May 2025 started off like every other year. Snow, rain, sun, wind, tornado, and the occasional car show. So I polished up my 1964 Plymouth Belvedere quad cab and headed out to the show in Drumheller.



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It was on that trip I realized that there was really nothing more I wanted to do to the Belvedere that I was willing to spend a heap of legal tender on. It ran well, it stopped well and it got me from place to place. I thought maybe it was time to look for something different. With the prices for muscle cars, I realized that they were not really what I was looking for anyway. I was talking to an owner of a cobbled together truck and realized I like big fat fenders. He had a 1950 Plymouth for sale, 2 door all original and in excellent shape, with new clutch, new brakes and the engine was running perfect and leak free. The price was really good but I think the original paint choice (in my opinion) was made by Ray Charles. Usually, Mopar's are a classy if not a unique colour or colour combination. This was medium blue with a battleship grey below the beltline combination. The wheels were also the same blue. Knowing a repaint would be needed for me to not look at it and say "blaaaarg", every single time was enough to steer me away. What does that have to do with a 1947 Plymouth Special Deluxe you ask... hang on I'm getting to it.

I did the next part of the quest for a vehicle and posted my Belvedere on Facebook and Kijiji.

Not a process I ever want to repeat...ever... the tire kickers, the low ballers, the lookie loers, the mouth breathers, and the scammers wanting my serial number and having their minds blown when it didn't have a longer than ten digit serial number. A couple of potentials did come in though. One in particular was an out of province area code again and I thought ok here we go, another waste of time. His texts seemed interested and he knew about Polysphere engines. A week went by and I didn't hear anything so I thought we were done. Then my phone rang and he was on the line asking if I still had the car. He had gone to the states to watch NASCAR for a week and I realized he was a real gear head. He asked a couple more questions and asked if he could fly out from Ontario and see it. June 16, 2025, I picked him up from a busy airport concourse in what he thought was a great car. We went back to my place and he bought it right there. He never even drove it. I showed him how the push button automatic worked and





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off he went. I had put some extra stuff in the trunk including a liter and a half of Cam Oil. He headed east and a week later I got a call from him. He had needed the liter of oil over the length of the drive back to Ontario (Bruce Peninsula area) and he had become converted to liking a more door for the convenience.

Ok now getting to the other part. After a couple of days, I was closing down the Kijiji and Facebook listings and thought, what the heck I'll do another quick scroll. Nothing, nothing, nothing, wait a sec, what was that colour? Lookit that! A similar blue, 1947 Plymouth Special Deluxe with Cragers! It was located in Cranbrook and I immediately contacted the seller and asked all the pertinent questions, like does it run? Yes, apparently quite well actually. So, June 23rd I did the best thing a guy could do, took a day off, grabbed my cash, (btw, banks ask lots of questions when you're getting a wad of cash) and booked a one-way ticket to Cranbrook.

We went to his garage, very impressive and he started up the car. Dual exhaust with Thrush glass packs. Nice. I checked it out and tried to look underneath for rust but it was sitting very low. OK, pulled the trigger, bought it and headed to Canadian Tire for the anticipated necessary tools and fluids.

Leaving town was good and was soon very comfortable with the three on the tree. I quickly realized (at a little less than the posted limit) that the carb was sucking air from every possible place and orifice it could, including many places it shouldn't and the road draft tube was pointed straight onto one of the dual exhaust pipes. It looked like a rolling smoke show until all the crud from slower city driving and short trips burned off. No! it's Not on Fire!, Go Around!



After a mostly uneventful drive back to Calgary, the other exception being the crazy eyebrow window visor almost lifting off the car every time a semi passed me it was great! Alright time to figure where the smell is coming from.

Every car has that one unique odor, especially older ones but this car was special. It was like a sea trunk for new rubber boots and a handful of wet chicken feathers. Fun! After looking through all the paperwork I found out it was modified back in the late 70s to early 80s. It was owned by a guy in Courtney B.C. and was stored in a barn. Whoever stored it heard that if you put dryer sheets in a car it keeps mice out. This must be true, but I'm not sure if the 10 boxes of dryer sheets kept the mice out, or if there was really no room anywhere to hide. The owner's son inherited the car but had no interest in it as it wasn't a hotrod. The son then used it as a partial trade on a 32 Ford to the guy I got it from in Cranbrook.



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Once I got it home, I got it on the lift at work. Wow! Not a spec of rust underneath and he must have had stocks in grease. The trunnion boots had holes cut in them to I suppose add even more grease and it found its way back out, in a very spectacular Jackson Pollock fashion.

I very much enjoyed the car and started to fix the little squeaks and rattles an old car gets and cleaned off more grease and went to a couple of car shows. Airdrie was the last show though for the car in that condition. On the way back from the show, the car ran great until I got about a click from home. The engine started making sounds not usually associated with healthy, happy engines and then suddenly locked up. Bummer! AMA time. The rest of the summer was a depressing car-less write off. Once the fall hit and I was on holidays I took the front clip off, the car by this time had become affectionally known as Chubs due to its bulbous proportions. I removed the engine and found more grease.

After getting it up on an engine stand and opening it up I found the culprit, spun bearing and the piston had jammed crookedly into the bore it was in sad shape. Due to its age, machine work cost and parts availability it was really not feasible without heaps o' pesos. I searched online for an engine but since my car was an American model it was the short block. The longer block would require frame mods and was a lot of work for 80 ish horsepower. Therefore, I did what I always wanted to do, and sold the transmission with the Borg Warner, sold some other parts and drove to Salmon Arm in a blizzard to pick up what was advertised as a 273. Turns out it was a factory 318 four barrel. It was running and needed some heavy-duty cleaning. More grease. Yay! I picked up a 727 from a nice guy in Okotoks with a 48 Special Deluxe and the car was coming together. I had found evidence of the car learning to weld by itself, (not good), as I was taking things apart and decided to replace the wiring and do a 12v conversion. I like a music and a phone-charger ok?





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The interior was gutted and sound deadener was installed with the new wiring and bulbs. The clearance lights were removed and modified for dual filament setup for signals and lights. The rear lights were converted for signal and brake lights. With the wiring mostly done I started the process of installing a v8 where a 6 cylinder had been. Motor mounts were made, transmission crossmember made, steering box relocated (greasy) and steering linkage modified, more grease. Many trips to Bucks auto were done looking for things like a rear sump oil pan (greasy), speedo gears, exhaust manifolds with better clearance, etc.

With the engine in I realized that it sat so low in the car compared to the old inline that I had about 2 inches clearance under the oil pan. Not good, so I pulled out the old coil springs, (greasy) they had been heated and cut and put in Aerostar springs which are progressive and some new front shocks, old ones were shot and greasy. Now the car sat level but way better clearance. I was looking at the rear end (hind end my wife called it). I was trying to figure out the gear ratio for the speedo gear. I was turning the

yoke on the rear diff and the tires would turn slow then suddenly turn a little faster and then go all the way back ... Weird. I had heard no noise from the rear diff but maybe some sawdust made that quiet.

On one trip to Bucks a truck with 440 badging was sitting there with the rear axle still in it. I had measured my old one and soon was cutting off old u joints. I could tell from the google machine it was a dana 60 and had Sure Grip. Got it home and it had 3 55s. Perfect. I cleaned it out and resealed it and did the brakes on it, welded on new spring perches and installed it. Turns out it is slightly wider than I anticipated on the old one and had to roll and space the fenders to fenders to get the tires to fit. Now I have lots of back space for wider tires though.

Future plans are front disc conversion, paint and minor body work, stainless polishing and dent removal and possibly a 48RH transmission. *Still can't locate the smell...*