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1961 Belvedere



Four Door
Sedan

1961 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE
RESCUED FOR A GOOD REASON



1961 BELVEDERE FOUR DOOR SEDAN - Stan Johnson

1961 Belvedere Four Door Sedan

Photos by MyStarCollectionCar.com

The 1961 Plymouth spelled the end of the road for Virgil Exner's career at Chrysler. The '61 Plymouth may not have been Exner's career high point, but he left behind a car with an unforgettable presence. Stan Johnson is the man behind the wheel of this 1961 Plymouth Belvedere four-door sedan—a car that stood out at a large car show. He admitted he was a Chevy guy, but there was a reason he took on the challenge of a long neglected '61 Plymouth.



Stan explained how the car hibernated in a field since 1999, so it was a project-in-waiting. He said it was "in good shape—body wise" but it definitely needed work. Stan knew the owner—that's why he gave the car to Stan because he knew he'd do the right things for the car, instead of crushing it. The original owner lived in Ontario, but somewhere over the years, the Plymouth migrated west.



1961 BELVEDERE FOUR DOOR SEDAN - Stan Johnson

This turned into a big project because the Plymouth needed everything. There were problems with the floorpans, so Stan bought some sheet metal and had the panels hand built. Stan said the trim—including the bumpers were in decent shape so that wasn't an issue.

This is a 313 cubic inch V-8 cubic inch car with a generator instead of an alternator because it's a Canadian car. Stan rebuilt it to factory specs because it was seized, but initially, he ran the Plymouth with a rebuilt 318. Stan went back to the factory 313 because he wanted the car to be correct. The 313 has the 318 heads but he's going to reunite the 313 heads to the original block after they're done. The transmission was slipping so that was rebuilt too because Stan wanted dependability—an old car on the side of the road is never a day at Disneyland fun experience.

The interior was also done and so was the headliner because Stan wanted to ride in a car—not a project in mid-process. He found dual mirrors for the Belvedere after a lengthy search plus he had dual exhausts added to the car.

The suspension was completely rebuilt along with the brakes, plus Stan added a dual master cylinder because he's had some hair-raising experiences with a single master cylinder. This '61 Plymouth is a driver, so safety and reliability are big factors for Stan.



Stan has a list of things he wants to upgrade on the car. He'd like to add a four-barrel carb and power steering, plus he wants to install disc brakes on the front for more safety in traffic.

Stan admits parts were hard to find for this car because it's a '61 Plymouth not a '65 Mustang—plus four-doors are very unlikely candidates for restoration if you're looking at an investment. That wasn't the point of this project—Stan wanted to honor the former owner's request.

He summed up his investment this way...

"You never lose money on a project until you go to sell it." - Stan Johnson



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