

Volume 7, Number 4

Custom Safari Chapter

Where Did All The Color Go??



PONTIAC'S NEW FOUR-DOOR CUSTOM SA-FARI—The Pontiac Star Chief Transcontinental Safari has special design features for the highway traveler—a reclining right front seat with folding

headrest, and a roof-top luggage rack for extra cargo space. It is powered by Pontiac's new V-8 engine with triple two-barrel carburetors and will go on sale at Pontiac dealerships early next year.

Find That Answer and Other Valuable Information in This Edition of The Safari News

Pontiac Oakland Club International

From the President's Garage

By Mark Fetry

"The More Things Change, The More They Remain The Same"

I was just thinking the other day that our beloved Safaris are now at the 50-year mark. Although, sometimes it makes me feel old, I feel fortunate that I can remember when our cars were new. The yearly introduction of the new models was something we really looked forward to with anticipation back then. Unfortunately, this is a tradition long since forgotten.

In the mid 50's, the memories of the Depression and WWII were still fresh in the minds of our parents. The exodus to the suburbs had just begun and the need for station wagons was growing. The "Baby Boom" was starting to create a new phenomenon...the 2-car family.

Many women at the time didn't really understand the roll of station wagons and felt they were more like a truck than a car and trucks were traditionally used only for work and poor people who couldn't afford better. My Mom was one of those women! In 1955, my Dad, brother and I wanted to buy a wagon as our new family car. We had visions of long vacation trips, camping and viewing the world from the cargo area...what an adventure for a kid. But, my Mom said no trucks in our house, so that was that. It wasn't until 1964 that we became a wagon family when my Dad bought a used 1959 Chevy wagon as our second car. Boy, we enjoyed that car.

Now getting back to the 50's, GM introducing the Corvette based "Nomad" at the Motorama show of 1954 could be considered the kickoff point for the current SUV craze. I can recognize some marketing strategies used then that carry over to today. In 1955, the Safari represented the fanciest and sportiest of all station wagons ever produced. The car was meant to be low in production, high in cost, and visually striking both inside and out. I often wonder how many times a family came into a Pontiac showroom to check out a sleek new Safari only to gasp at a sticker price higher than a top of the line convertible. Then eventually buying a more reasonably priced (and mundane) lower line wagon. Today, I guess the same thing happens when a potential buyer checks out a plush, luxurious Cadillac Escalade, gets sticker shock, and winds up with a Chevy Tahoe! Both the modern Escalade and the 50's Safari did their jobs in getting people into the showrooms.

Recently, I had to laugh when I saw an ad touting that GMC had a new innovative option of a sliding rear roof panel on one of their SUV's to be able to carry tall cargo. Innovative...hardly...I can clearly remember sliding roof panels available on mid-60's Studebaker "Wagonaire" wagons. Something to think about...what's old is new again.

So, at a mere 3 year production total of 9,094 units, we are the guardians of some of the rarest, most desirable "dream cars" of an earlier age. My advice is to restore them, love them, show them, and drive them. They are a fascinating part of automotive history.

Thanks, Mark Petry

Reminders: I am still looking for someone in the Ontario, CA area to help me setup the Safari annual breakfast cruise for the 2006 convention. Please contact me at 706-736-3392 or email me at <u>petrymail@yahoo.com</u>

Please vote for POCI Officers by March 31st and remember to write-down Custom Safari Chapter in the Chapter Affliation section. The chapter with the highest ballot percentage return gets \$200 so send in those ballots and put the Custom Safari Chapter name on the ballot! We're a small chapter, but with a large percentage we can get the \$200.

Behind the Wheel in the Editor's Seat

By Rich Fye

Hello Everyone,

Okay, so what's up with an all black and white issue, you ask? Well, two reasons for this issue losing its color. First, I lost the ability to print these at dirt-cheap rates in color and I planned on scaling back to color only for pictures and articles that were originally in color. Secondly, after putting this issue together, there was nothing of importance in color originally, so I thought I'd save the money. In the future an average newsletter will be about 75%/25% black and white/color. The only exception will be the Convention Review Fall Newsletter, which I'll print all color assuming someone sends me pictures when I don't attend.

Many thanks to Ron Huddy and Harold Cary for their contributions to this month's newsletter. I really appreciate the things you guys send to me! I hope you enjoy this issue with some good vintage articles and the Pontiac Technical Information on the T-3 Headlights. In the vintage newsletter section from the 4th chapter newsletter there are a couple of noteworthy articles that I've reproduced. One was the Motor Trend '55 Safari review if you've never seen it. I particularly got a kick out of the description of the shifting of the Hydra-Matic transmission. Referred to as "lurching" in the article, I've always referred to it as "sliding", "clunking", "slamming", and "slipping". I've ridden in a couple different "Slug-O-Matics" and have even been in one where I had to turn around every time and look in the middle of the road to see if the drive-shaft was laying there after the car slammed between 2nd and 3rd gear.

Another great article was supplied by Bud Stowers back then on minimizing the leak in the tailgate window.....the endless search. In this article there are instructions for bending the chrome frame itself to remove the tweak created by the torque rods in the roof. Man, it sounds like a plan, but I don't know if I have the guts to try that. Have any of you tried?? I know we've talked about a car in California that does it for about \$1500. Does the fix stay? If anyone has tried either approach, let us know and I'll share the information. I may try on a spare pitted frame I have. I also remember someone saying they took the torque rods right out. Any feedback on that ended up working or anyone got an opinion on the merit of that?

I was intrigued by Mark Petry's tips from the last article, especially the one regarding the oil filter housings from later year Pontiac's fitting the '55-'57s. I've seen adaptors advertised in Smoke Signals, and always wondered what they consisted of. I went on a little search in my barn and actually found one like Mark described. It looks doable, so I guess I have another summer project on my hands. So does that make my barn a junk yard? My wife would concur with that!

I received the following information from the Little Rhody Pontiac Chapter: "Our chapter is hosting an Eastern Regional show and Swap on August 11 and 12, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, RI. All profits are being donated to the Tomorrow Fund, a non-profit organization at the RI Children's Hospital that helps children with cancer and provides support to their families. The weekend starts with a block party Friday evening that will include music and food. Saturday includes a show, swap, tours, and an awards dinner. There are 36 classes with a popular vote. There are several special awards, including long distance and chapter participation. Special weekend packages are available with discounted room rates. They are guaranteed through 5/1/06. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact me at 401-934-0663 or frdigi@cox.net." I am trying to get additional information that I can pass on via email if any of you are interested. If you are, please email me rpye@rochester.rr.com to



be part of the distribution list. Maybe we can have a CSC get together if we have enough people.

Well I guess that's enough for now. Enjoy Spring and keep driving your favorite restoration projects!!

Rich

Safari Member of the Quarter

Your Name: Javier E. de la Pena

Children's Names: Gerardo (Jerry), Veronica, Cordelia (Cordy)

Safari(s) Owned: 1956 Custom Safari

When/Where did you acquire your first Safari? Junk yard in 1972 in Laredo, TX

What was your first car? 1949 Ford Tudor

What was your first Pontiac? 1966 Pontiac GTO

Reason for "collecting" Safaris: Looks

Reason for joining the Custom Safari Chapter: Access to parts, info, etc.

Favorite Safari Accessory owned: N/A

Most wanted Safari Accessory: AC - Laredo is hot!

Do you have "other" Pontiacs? If so, list model and year: 1964 Tempest, 1965 LeMans, and of course my 1966 GTO

What are your favorite non-Pontiac hobbies? Outdoor work and relaxation

Least favorite car task: Brakes

Most favorite car task: Keep cars clean and good looking

Best thing about being a Pontiac Custom Safari Owner: You don't see that many Safari's

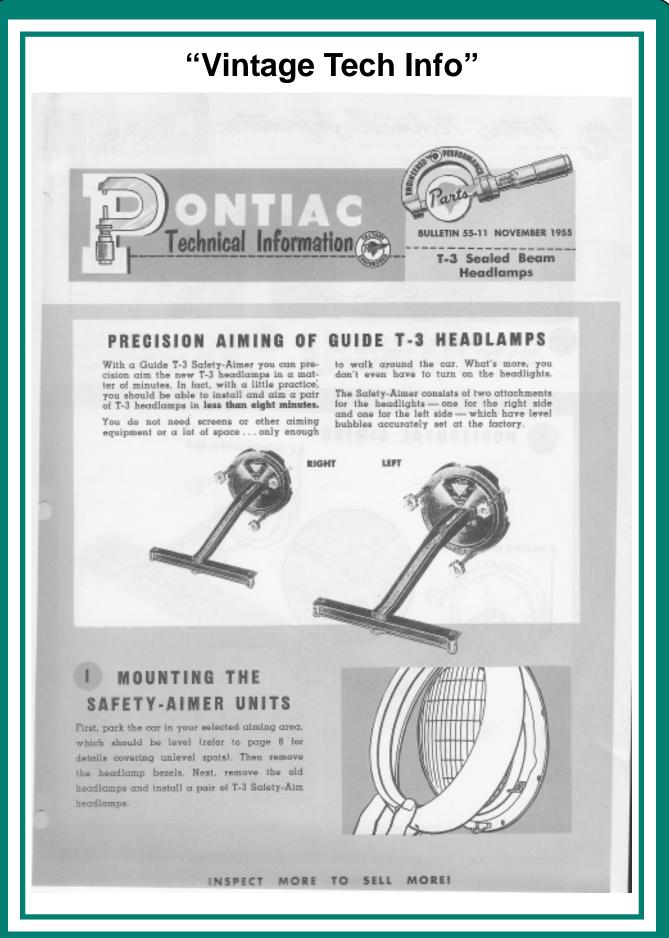
Favorite non-Safari car: 1966 GTO

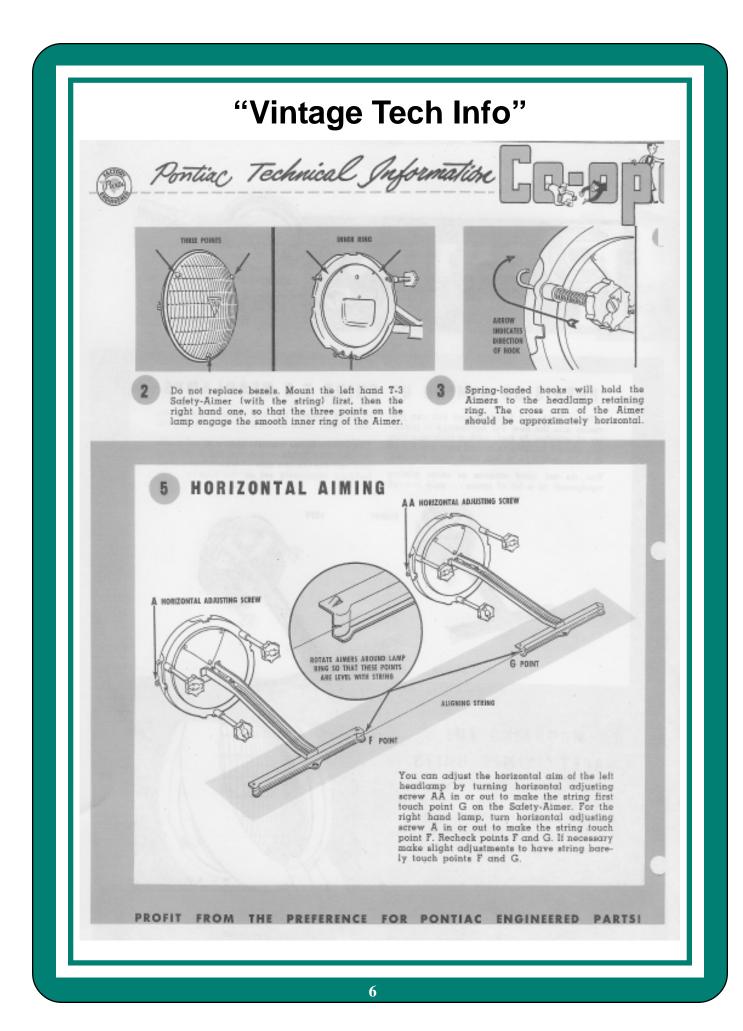
Favorite car-related web site: www.performancepontiac.com

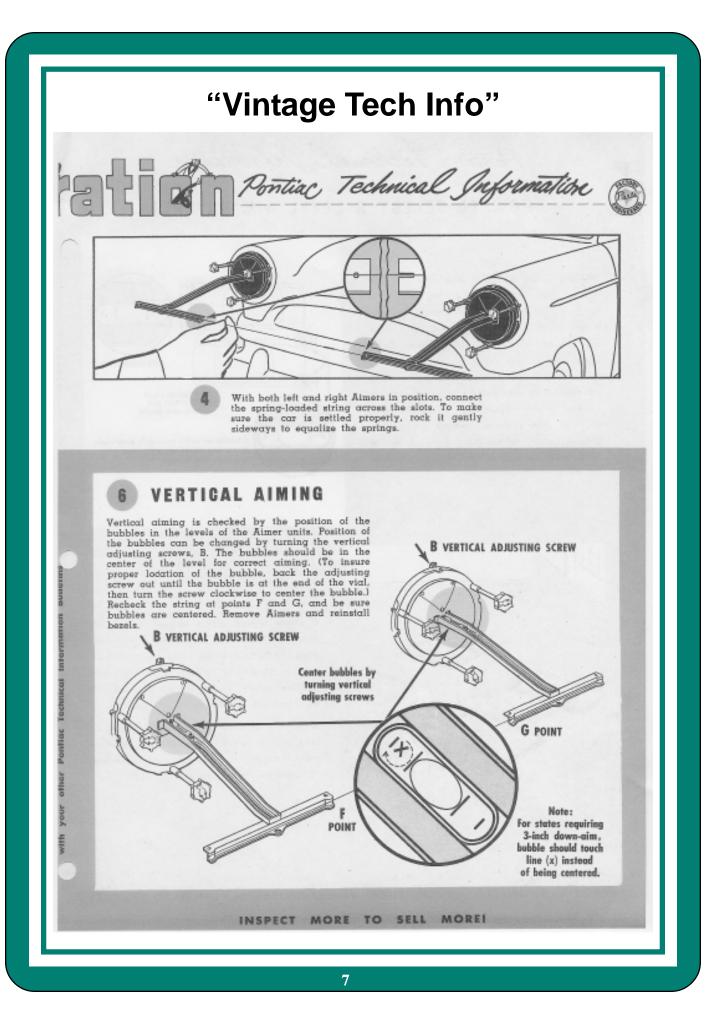
Favorite parts vendor: Frank's Pontiac Parts, Ramona, CA

Best car care tip to share: *Pay your dues on time. OK guys I give, return my 317 and my Strato-Flight Hydra-Matic*

Editor Note: It's always good to pay your dues on time, like right now if you have a RED "X" on the outside of your newsletter envelope.





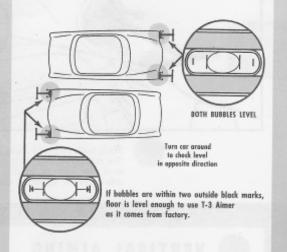


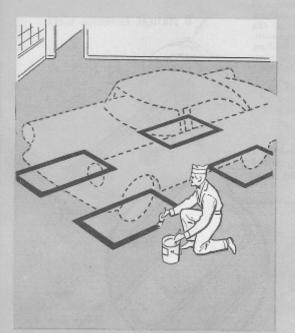
"Vintage Tech Info"

Pontiac Technical Information

HOW TO SELECT A LEVEL AIMING AREA

It's easy to use the Safety-Aimers to help find a level spot for headlamp aiming because of the levels in the units. First, choose by sight a spot which appears to be level. Drive a car onto the spot, and install Safety-Aimers. Then, adjust the vertical lamp adjusting screw so the bubbles in both units are in the center of the vials. With both bubbles centered, turn the car end for end, making sure the wheels are in the same spots as before. Recheck the bubbles. If they are still within the two outside marks in the vials, the floor is level enough to use the T-3 Aimer.





If either bubble moves beyond the outside black marks on the vial, there is too much slant to the floor. If this is the case, drive the car into the area at different angles until both bubbles remain within the black marks, in both forward and backward car positions.

When a level position is found, it is a good idea to paint marks on the floor indicating the position for the four wheels...for future use. (Wheelbases range from 108" to 150".)

PROFIT FROM THE PREFERENCE FOR PONTIAC ENGINEERED PARTS!



Excerpts from the 4th Chapter Newsletter, by Steve Cory

REPAIR AND ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE UPPER LIFT GATE ON 1955-57 TWO DOOR CUSTOM SAFARIS.....by Bud Stowers

The problem of water leaking around the top of the lift gate assembly is one that has plagued Safari and Nomad owners since these cars were new. So, don't expect a leak proof solution; I only hope to advise how to keep this leakage down to a minimum. Design engineering on this part of the car was very poor from the practical standpoint.

The lift gate assembly consists of a die cast outer frame, right and left side inner frame, and lower inner frame. The assembly is secure to the body roof by two hinges, which incorporate torque rods to assist in raising the gate. The problem is that these rods have too much torque causing the die cast outer frame to twist and bow as you drive, allowing the frame to work away from the rubber body weather-stripping.

If your upper tailgate frame does not fit flush at the top when closed, or if it touches in the center, but sticks up at the outside corners, the top of the frame is bent. Another way of detecting this is to examine the rubber along the top of the glass. If it appears to be pulled away from the frame, in reality the frame has pulled away from the rubber.

To reshape the frame, remove it from the car and take out the glass. Measure the opening vertically at the center of the frame. The frame should measure 15-3/4 inches all across. You will probably find yours ¹/₄ inch or more off. You will need a large jawed wooden vise to apply pressure to bend the top rail down into its proper position. I found it worked well to clamp the top of the frame in the wooden vise at the center and then to rotate or twist the frame in the opposite direction that the torque rods did.

Further adjustments can be made on the car. To make these adjustments, remove the chrome garnish moulding above the gate on the inside of the car. Detach the headliner from the trim sticks along the length of the gate. The tin strips behind the torque rods will have to be removed in order to reach the hinge bolts. Loosen the six bolts on each side. The hinges may now be shifted slightly for better positioning of the gate. If the gate needs to come in, install shim spacers between the body and the hinges.

Now to keep your tailgate frame from getting into this twisted out of shape condition again, it will be necessary to remove some of the tension from the torque rods. This is best done by playing a torch over both rods until they barely start to move. Let them cool naturally and be careful not to over do it!!

For any of you that don't know be advised that the complete roof and all inside and outside mouldings relating thereto, as well as all gates and doors are identical and interchangeable between the Safari and the Nomad. Also all door inside hardware items are the same.

(This advice is basically the same as that printed in Nomad News.)

Excerpts from the 4th Chapter Newsletter, by Steve Cory

OFFICERS ELECTED

CORY, STOWERS & VAUGHAN

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for their vote of confidence, by electing me as President of the Custom Safari Chapter. The membership also voted Bud Stowers in as Vice-President and Dennis Vaughan as the Secretary-Treasurer. As probably already know, Bud lives in Westminster, CO, where he owns his own business. Dennis lives in Miami, FL and is a tool and die maker. I'm sure that in this next year we will work well together. (It may take the next whole year for me to explain my bookkeeping to Dennis). Next issue we will try and do a profile (more detailed than this) on your officers. Again, Thank You!

In answer to Ron Huddy's question last month about the measurements of the rocker panel mouldings, Bob Brown pulled out his tape measure and went to work. He says that the Series 28 measures 78-1/8", the 1957 2dr Safari measures 76-1/16", and the 1957 4dr Transcontinental measures 60-1/4" long. It's guys like Bob who take the time to help someone else out, that makes this chapter work. Thanks!

Getting To Know You

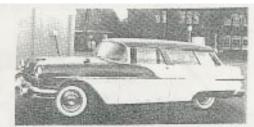
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Name - Jon Braaten	Age 33
Wife - Biorej	Age 29
Kids - Randi (girl)	Age 6
Oleoshar	Age 3
Occupation - Manages	Gulf Service Station in Norway

Name - Peter Keogh Age 32 Wife - Lillian Child - Tracie Age 2 Occupation - Police Officer with Bridgeport Police for 10 years

Name - Gerald Redden Age 34 Wife - Brenda Occupation - Cable Foreman United Telephone Co - NJ Member of POCI, AACA, Mid-Atlantic Nomad Club and the Oldsmobile Club

Name - Bill Walkinshaw Age 27 Wife - Carol Child - Shawn 3-1/2 (girl)

Below are listed our new member ads in this issue. Let's make then	5
helping out when we can.	
Jack Pendzimas - #48	
Javier delaPena - #49	
Joe Altoonian - #50	
	(3) 1956
	1957
Danny Skelton - #51	(3) 1955
	1957
Robert Johnson - #52	
John Cockfield - #53	(2) 1955
Larry Nielson - #54	
Roald Gisvold - #55	



This 1956 belongs to Roald Gisvold



Excerpts from the 4th Chapter Newsletter, by Steve Cory

DRIVING AROUND WITH WALT WORON IN A 1955 PONTIAC SAFARI...AUGUST '55 MOTOR TREND MAGAZINE......Courtesy of Melvin Reed

ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE we give you a complete roundup of station wagons and the uses to which they can be put, but here I'd like to describe one phase: a weeks tour of Indian country and national monuments (thru Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Utah) in a Pontiac Safari. Aside from its being an interesting and highly entertaining trip, it couldn't have been a better shakedown. After our station wagon trek last year (Sept. '54 MT), I learned lots of respect for this mode of transportation. Now I have even more.

The Safari has the shorter of the 2 Pontiac wheelbases (122 inches), has the 4-barrel carb and manifold (taking it up to 200hp), 2 doors, and is trimmed mush plushier both inside and out. Its desirability lies in its looks (which I think are somewhat of a portent of the future, with its "leaning forward" look); its convenience in town; in and/or crossing the country (because of its adaptability to being a sedan or a "hauling" wagon)l and its ease of handling, coupled with better-than-average roadability. It carries lots of luggage, camping equipment (or just sleeping bags in case you get caught away from a motel), and still leaves plenty of room for picking up the countless souvenirs we Americans seem to go for.

This particular wagon gives the driver and all passengers a comfortable ride and lets everyone see out like they're sitting in a Vista-Dome Greyhound or train. An owner of a station wagon (another make) remarked to me, "This is the nicest station wagon interior I've seen. Someone at last has made a rear seat that's more like the rear seat of a sedan...not like the thin one they usually make that's not comfortable for more than a few miles." Other remarks that I heard constantly were (and this is unusual for people to say about station wagons) "Why this looks as good as (or better than) a car!"

After traveling over some of the ruggedest roads I've taken in any car, it developed no untoward complaints or rattles. Roads like the dirt one to Moencopi, on the edge of the Hopi Indian Reservation, scraped out of a river bed and carved out of rock, with sand incongruously drifting across in great patches, aren't particularly conducive to bringing out the best miles later, thru city and town traffic, around mountain turns and grades, and on stretches thru hot desserts, the Safari averaged 16.6 mpg, and used only one quart of break-in oil (outside of an oil change). Considering that this was a brand new car, always driven right up to legal speed limits, the mileage figure is quite good.

In general, the Safari feels pretty much like the Pontiac Sedan, except that the stiffer springs and shocks make it corner better, with little sacrifice in ride. The Hydra-Matic on this particular car operated smoothly for both upshifts and downshifts, except for the lurch around 20-30 mph when you kick down hard on the throttle and force a shift to 2nd (a fault common to all present Hydra-Matics). With a small amount of weight in the rear, it takes corners handily; with more load the weight distribution gets closer to a 50 percent front and rear and it handles even better. It breaks loose on a rutty corner, but corrects quickly and easily. With a light rear load, it has somewhat the same reaction on a bad dirt washboard road. Over the worst of dips it settles down rapidly with no bounding or leaping sensation. There's some feel of a rough road surface, which should be corrected by undercoating.

Excerpts from the 4th Chapter Newsletter, by Steve Cory

DRIVING AROUND WITH WALT WORON IN A 1955 PONTIAC SAFARI...AUGUST '55 MOTOR TREND MAGAZINE.....Courtesy of Melvin Reedcontinued

Its acceleration qualities are somewhere in between the stock (180 hp) and the hopped-up (200 hp) version of other Pontiacs. From a standing start it got to 60 mph in 13.6 seconds (faster than stock, slower than the power pack), and to the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in 19.3 seconds (again in between). At highway speeds the story was the same: 30-50mph in 5.7 seconds (faster than both), 50-80 in 16.1 seconds (again bisecting the 2). It's logical it would do this, what with a weight of 4130 pounds compared to 4060 for the stock sedan. Unlike the 2 previous Pontiacs tested, the Safari did better, or as well, when it was allowed to shift automatically.

My complaints are minor and few: Once or twice I was bothered by the feeling of being cramped by the Safari – in getting out (I sometimes bumped my head on the door opening) and while squatting on the rear floor, arranging luggage.....This is a concession to esthetics in that the roof is one inch lower than the 4-door wagon; I can see the time in the not-too-distant future when ALL doors will be cut into the roof (a la Pontiac's Strato Star). Driving such as car in sunny climate I was bothered by the inside windshield trim, which was highly chromed; that's one of the first things I would take off of the car. On the other end of the weather chart, it's inadvisable to have the quarter windows (for the air circulation to keep the windshield from clouding up). If they are, the water from a driving rain will wrap around the windshield, slurp over the post, hit the window vent and splatter the inside of the windshield and dash, then drip on the floor. In all fairness to Pontiac, this is a fault common to all General Motors cars. Because of the forward-slanting side post, each time I looked to the left rear to see if a car was in that lane, I had to crane my neck; it also somewhat hampers entry and exit for the rear seat passenger.

It seems to me that there's hardly a better mode of transportation than a station wagon for going thru the country I did, unless you want to go off the beaten path and hunt for uranium like the 2 fellow Californians I bumped into in Utah. They had a jeep and had just been to a section country where they couldn't even drive their four-wheel-drive car!

On the Navajo Indian Reservation and later in Zuni Country, I saw some newer cars that apparently belonged to the Indians, but the majority mode of transportation was the pick-up. In these the men carried their families and wares, and their supplies to and from their houses or Hogan to the trading posts. Not once did I see an Indian woman driving a pick-up.

Whenever I stopped at a trading post (and I stopped at many that were old-fashioned and typical of what they're supposed to look like) in or near a reservation, the younger set would look over the Safari with varying degrees of curiosity. At Tuba City, in Navajo country, quite a crowd of youngsters gathered around looking over the car and commenting on the sign on the side. I found out why when I entered the trading post: on the magazine rack was a copy of MOTOR TREND.

If you like Indian arts and crafts and get up toward southern Utah, don't miss the Museum of Southern Utah, in Kanab. I spent hours there looking: poring over blankets, relics, vases, jugs, etc., brought in from Indian pueblos located far and wide. Not only were the relics interesting to look at, but Andrew Johnson (archaeologist and curator) and his parents, Stephen and Ethel, were highly interesting to talk to. If you're ever in the mood for a trip thru Indian country in that vicinity, they'll be glad to help you plan an even better trip.

Safari Search

Cars for Sale

1956 Safari, nearly complete, asking \$4000.00. Located in central Texas. Contact George Green (682) 465-5134



Parts for Sale

1957 Pontiac: Front Brake Drums complete with Backing Plates, Shoes, Wheel Cylinders and Wheel Bearings, \$100 each; also Two Radios with Speaker Boxes, one Maroon and one Green, \$150 each; Complete Rear End Differential with 3.23 Gears, \$100; 5 Hub Caps Good Condition, \$100.....just call **Bill Hanners @ 239-543-3510, FL.**

Place your part ads here and also get them on-line @www.customsafari.org.

Wanted

1957 Safari: Stainless Spear, front of gas door. Trim under the tail lights. Call Donn Fallenbuchel, (928) 855-5494.

1956 – 58 Safari Photos and Literature. Editor needs more photos and literature regarding the 1956 through 1958 Pontiac Safaris. Send copies or e-mail scanned items to Rich Pye.

To place a free ad to sell a car or parts or to place a want ad, send your request to Rich Pye. Your ad should be related to 1955-58 Pontiacs, and it is recommended to include photos (electronic or paper). Ads are also welcome, send a business card for Pontiac related items or services to Rich.

POCI Chapter #10

www.customsafari.org

The Custom Safari Chapter is an official international chapter of the Pontiac Oakland Club, International, Incorporated. The POCI headquarters address is: 2017 Manatee Avenue, West, Bradenton, Florida 34205

Annual Dues are \$18.00. Renewals are due January 1st of each year. New member dues are prorated quarterly from January 1st. Applicants must be a current member of POCI prior to joining the chapter. Send payment to Starr Evans.

The Safari News is a quarterly publication produced by the chapter. Volume 1, Number 1 was distributed in December of 1993. A limited number of back issues are available. Write for further information.

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33nd Annual POCI National Convention June 27-July 2, 2006 Hosted by the Southern California Chapter

