

# I Only Went To Look At A '65 For A Friend!

CCND MEMBER OF THE MONTH

By Thomas DiPaola

About ten years ago, my friend Mike, told me about a couple of corvettes he knew about. He told me the guy was going to let him know when he was ready to sell them. I said ok, just let me know.

Seven years later, Mike asked me to look at a '65 corvette coupe near his home in PA and I said sure. He told me the car had been sitting a long time and wanted someone that knew Vettes to help him check it over. I didn't know much about mid years, but I did know a little bit about frame rust and poor bodywork, so we went. I can remember walking into the garage and trying to pull the car cover off. It was dry-rotted to the car. With all the cat hair and spider webs, I knew this car had been sitting for quite some time.

After looking the car over for a few minutes, I noticed another car on the other side of the garage. It too was under a cover. I gently lifted up the side of the car cover, about the area of the front fender and saw the color red and 5 vents. I thought to myself, this is a '67 Vette. I asked the owner what's the deal with this car. Joe, the owner, said "that's a '67 coupe, go ahead check it out". It took me fifteen minutes to get the cover at least half off, it too seemed to be dry-rotted to the car.

I asked Joe when the last time he had the car out, he estimated some time in the '80's, and this was '99.

The car was very dirty with cat hair and spider webs everywhere. There were a few flat tires and the chrome was oxidizing. Inside, the headliner was hanging down and the white interior had yellowed, but not in bad shape. I was in love with this car. I noticed an eight-track player under the dash with an eight track still in it. I popped open the hood and knew it had a big block, but not much more.

I started asking Joe questions. Is it the correct engine? No, he said, the original engine was stolen. He bought the car in 1969 from a car auction. A Chevy dealership had originally owned the car. He thought it originally had a 427 400 hp engine. I didn't know what engines the '67 came or know much

about mid years in general, but I did know the '67 corvette was a much sought after car. This car was optioned with, power brakes and air conditioning. The replacement engine had 3-2 barrel carburetors. I asked Joe what HP the engine was rated, he told me 435 hp. The engine was a complete 427 435 hp out of another 67 corvette. Joe continued talking about getting married and going on his honeymoon in the car. I knew it meant something to him and he would probably not sell it. Remember, I only went to look at the 65 Vette with Mike. I can remember standing next to the car wondering, "Should I ask him or not?" Ok, what the hell, I asked Joe if he was going to sell the car what would he want for it? So he told me! (I had a price in my head, but his answer was way under it) I asked Joe, why sell it so cheap? He told me he knew he could ask for more, but he would have to get it running and clean it up and he didn't want to bother with it. So I asked him the big question, "Would you consider selling me the car?" He stood back and through for a few seconds, my heart was pounding away, he nodded his head and said sure, I'll sell it to you. Questions ran threw my head. I have three corvettes already do I need another one? Will the bank give a loan? Since Mike found the cars should he have first chance on the 67? I asked Mike if he wanted the 67, no, he wanted the 65 small block because they were easier to work on.

After four weeks of sleepless nights waiting for the loan and praying Joe didn't change his mind, the day finally came. A friend let me use his flatbed to pick it up. When I drug the car out of the garage, a few of the brakes were locked up, so I knew I was in for a lot of fun. John, my friend went with me to help get it. I told him, all I wanted to do is get the car on the flatbed and get out before Joe changes his mind.

After a few weekends working on the car, rebuilding three carbs, new battery, oil change and tune up, all eight pistons were pounding again. I have continued to slowly restore the car for almost three years. In the past few years I've met a lot of new friends and yes, I know a little bit more about mid years, thank to Bill Skinner. He allowed me to help him with his cars, which I enjoyed every minute. So with everything being said, I'll see you at some of the car shows.



Tom, thanks for sharing your story. Does your friend have any more mid years lying around? I also want to thank everyone who has sent Member of the Month info. I promise your story will be in an upcoming newsletter... Joe DeSanta