



Jamie Cox in his 1963
Oldsmobile Starfire
convertible.

CRUISING IN CLASSICS

North Saanich couple hits the road in vintage Oldsmobile cars

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North Saanich residents Jamie and Sherrill Cox socialize and have fun in ways that might seem unusual to some. Their “good times” involve entering car shows in Victoria and traveling to Oldsmobile club meets in places like Olds, Alberta and Lansing, Michigan, where the Olds Motor Vehicle Company was founded by Ransom E. Olds in 1897.

Sherrill is busy making a quilt out of the dozens of T-shirts purchased over the past 30 years at Oldsmobile car meets across North America. It's at these meets that fellow owners display their cars, have them judged and share restoration tips.

Jamie, a retired plastics engineer, bought his first classic Oldsmobile in 1980. It was a top-of-the-line 1963 Oldsmobile Starfire hardtop with a white exterior and antique-rose upholstery.

“I had never seen a Starfire in my life before and I got hooked on it,” he says.

JAMIE PLACED THE ORDER FOR ONE OF ONLY 45 OF THE FINAL 500 OLDSMOBILE AURORA MODELS AVAILABLE FOR DELIVERY IN CANADA.

First introduced in 1961, the Starfire was Oldsmobile's entry into the personal sport luxury muscle car field. The Starfire was the most expensive Oldsmobile available. It came loaded with options including leather trimmed bucket seats, the industry's first centre console with floor shifted automatic transmissions, full power options and a 345 horsepower V8 engine with dual exhausts.

Jamie retired at 60, joined the Northern Lights Oldsmobile Club in Edmonton and immersed himself in all things Oldsmobile.

He discovered that the ultimate Starfire was the convertible model.

While living in Calgary in 1997, Jamie found a one-owner, 1963 Starfire convertible for sale. The widow of the original owner had stored the car for 24 years and — driven mainly on summer holiday trips — it had only 55,000 miles on it.

Jamie bought the car and steadily refurbished it over the years to bring it back to new condition. It is one of only 507 Starfire convertibles built in Canada in the 1963 model year. The sticker price was a whopping \$7,300 with rare options like tilt steering, full power including trunk release, “wonderbar” scanner radio with reverberator and the most unusual extra — a “rain top” automatic convertible top closer.

Since moving to North Saanich in 2008, Jamie and Sherrill Cox have driven their beautifully restored Starfire on regular spring and fall trips to California and other points south to meet with owners of other Oldsmobile classics. Their car has been awarded 991 points out of 1,000 in show judging.

Learning that General Motors would no longer manufacture Oldsmobile cars after 2003 and already the owner of a luxury Aurora model bought new in 1996, Jamie Cox became determined to get one of the “Final 500.”

Even the local dealer didn't know that General Motors would mark the passing of the Oldsmobile era with a limited number of special edition models. The last of the Aurora sedans to come off the assembly line in late spring 2003 would all be custom painted, dark cherry metallic, with a taupe interior featuring embroidered “Oldsmobile”



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Jamie and Sherrill Cox with their 1963 Oldsmobile Starfire convertible.

front seats, special body and engine badging, chrome wheels and a 250 horsepower Northstar V8 engine.

Jamie placed the order for one of only 45 of the Final 500 Oldsmobile Aurora models available for delivery in Canada. When the car arrived at the dealership, the price was \$54,000 — exceeding the cost of a Cadillac and more than he wanted to pay.

A month later, the dealership notified them of a price drop and the deal was made.

Jamie and Sherrill now have very special Oldsmobile models to drive to car shows. They have collected a full set of literature for each of their cars including brochures, shop and training manuals and sales handbooks as well as the Aurora presentation case and artist's proof painting.

Their next major trip south will be driving the 1963 Starfire convertible to the Oldsmobile Club of America national meet in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

A special passenger will be Serena, their 16-year-old granddaughter from Ontario, to introduce her to the Oldsmobile culture. She has already expressed interest in carrying on when Jamie and Sherrill are ready to pass the "good times" torch.



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