



Reatta

Division

Buick Club of America

Newsletter



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The 1988 Reatta

As many of you know, I was able to visit the archives at the Sloan Museum prior to the Flint National Meet. I was able to find some additional information on the 88 Reatta including some preproduction details. To cover everything about the car in this limited space would be impossible, so I will attempt to bring out some things you didn't know mixed with some basic information.

The design was first started in the early 80s but was shelved for several reasons, one being the Cadillac Allante. Luckily the designs and seating bucks had been put into storage so all was not lost. As 1988 was the first year of the Reatta, the car was announced mid-year on January 15, 1988 and available in late January. Production of the 1988 model had actually started in October 1987 and was continued through August 1988. A total of 4,708 were built as 1988 models.

The exact numbers have temporarily escaped my files but one of the design goals was to use about 70% Riviera content as demonstrated in many places throughout the Reatta.



Find the "Service Parts Identification" label on your car. This little label contains the DNA of your car and is located in the trunk on the right side of the spare tire. You must lift the insulation to find the label. Copy or photograph the label and keep it with the other documents on your car. This can be a handy reference to identify the options and colors for your car. Early 1988 Reattas had the label on the inside of the deck lid. This changed somewhere around VIN number 900900. It would help to validate my research if you could send your VIN number if your label is found on the deck lid. (barney@texas.net)

The almost fully equipped base car was \$25,000. with only two extra cost options. The seat that Buick advertising called the 16 way was \$ 680.00 option. The seat option, originally used on the Riviera, had a power headrest and was referred to in the parts book as the "Hoover" seat. No, I don't know where that name came from. The power headrest was dropped but sales/marketing continued to call them the 16 way option. Originally, the car was to have cloth seats with leather as an option. Marketing decided an "upscale" car should come equipped with leather standard. Therefore, the car was released with leather seats with suede bolsters. For some undocumented reason, the suede was later replaced with slick matching leather beginning around VIN 901800 where the phase out began. Tan, being the most prominent color, was depleted first followed by red (more of a burgundy), grey and blue. Some speculate this was done because of wear on the suede. Buick had experience with suede in Rivieras so this was not a revelation. I would rather think it was a cost issue.

The second option was the solid metal sunroof at a cost of \$895. Many Reattas have had an aftermarket sunroofs installed, but the original is fairly easy to document. A fairly accurate statement would be, 'If the sunroof section is metal, painted the same color as the car with no metal or plastic trim on either the sunroof panel or the roof of the car, it is probably original.' This can also be verified by the CA1 code on the service parts identification label. Database information indicates the sunroof was not available at the beginning of production and do not appear until around VIN 902500..

The sunroof for the Reatta was made by Wabasco and they furnished an almost identical unit for the Mazda RX-7. GM does not carry sunroof parts but Mazda dealer does. Some owners have transferred the entire unit from a RX-7 into their Reatta. Only minor changes need to be made, but you must use the Reatta metal sunroof panel as the Mazda unit has a different contour.

The bump molding which circles the car is called the body side molding. Black was the recommended choice on the order form, but the dealer could order it in the body color at no extra charge.

The pinstripe color was also on the order form to be selected by the dealer. There were eight colors and the form suggested it should match the interior color whenever possible. There was no known restriction for ordering any color pinstripe on any body color. For 1988 it has not been documented, but in later models, the pinstripe could be deleted for a \$45 credit.

One exterior difference on the 1988 Reatta was the hood emblem. It was slightly under 2 inches in diameter, smaller than later year cars. That leads me into a "sort of" special 1988 Reatta. Many of you know about the 1990 Select Sixty convertible. There was also a 1988 Select Sixty.

'Select Sixty' refers to the top 60 Buick dealers in overall performance for any given year. For the 1987 Select Sixty dealers, a 1988 Reatta was the "prize". This gets complicated and some of you former Buick employees know much more about this than I, but I will give it a shot.

As I understand it, the dealer was not given a physical car, but was given a Reatta in their allotment.

6th Rendezvous

The 6th Reatta Rendezvous needs your reservation. Jim and Linda Finn have arranged a very interesting, area-historical and just plain fun evening leaving the Holiday Inn (host hotel) at 3:30 pm on Thursday, July 7, stopping at Ridge Road Station, the largest independent toy and Christmas store in NY state, and ending at Tillman's Historic Village Inn about 25 miles northeast of Batavia. Ridge Road Station features all kinds of toys, specializing in toy trains and Christmas gifts. If Christmas in July is too soon for you, there is a lake area nearby or a little further down the road is Tillman's which is a part of the Cobblestone Museum Complex. We have made arrangements for them to extend their open hours.

You will have three entrée choices, each includes a garden salad, potato, bread, dessert and beverage. A cash bar will also be available.

Prime Rib, au jus

Broiled Haddock Almondine

Lemon Garlic Chicken Breast

The cost per person is \$16.25. Send your check, along with your entrée choice, before June 30 to ED FARNELL, 440 Langford Rd., Blythewood, SC 29016. Tickets will be distributed just prior to leaving the hotel. You will also receive an easily completed quiz which, depending how well you answered the questions, will make you eligible for the door prizes.

Extensive research and two different trips to the area yielded NO ice cream parlors. As this is usually a full-fledged requirement for a Rendezvous, we'll make sure Jim gets it right for next year. The 7th Rendezvous will be held in Rochester, MN. We might even show up at his door.

Be sure you are registered for the National Meet. I understand the Batavia area hotels are fully booked. As the Buffalo suburbs are not that far away, give them a try before you give up. Another thing to remember is that some people over booked their reservations thinking to make sure their party of friends were together and their friends also booked. Some hotels have waiting lists. Keep checking.

Since the car was new, and well hyped, there was actually a demand. All car companies give their dealers allotments of cars with various models. They just can't order and sell LeSabres, they must sell the entire line. So the winners were allotted a Reatta. According to Ed Mertz, Buick wanted to give them a special car, but the new line was just getting started and management did not want to disrupt the flow by doing something special. So the dealer received the allotted car which looks just like any other 1988 Reatta.

Now what we don't know.... We believe all the cars were black with tan interior and 16 way seat. The vin numbers were around 901000 and there were 55 made. The only identifying item is a X22 code on the service parts label. This is probably an accounting code to separate these cars as being special allotment cars. We first discovered a couple of these cars with a special hood emblem. This got us started on our archival search for the reason. The hood emblem is larger in diameter than the other 1988 cars and says " Select Sixty, Buick Dealers"

Back to Ed Mertz.... Because Buick wanted to do a special car but could not, they sent the dealer the hood emblem probably with his Select Sixty plaque. What happened next, varied by dealer. Some dealers actually put the emblem on the car. Tom Payette, Louisville Buick dealer, said his car came with the emblem. Others may have already sold the car and decided just to put it in the drawer. In some cases, they may have put it on a different car (one without the X22 code). Because of these Select Sixty hood emblems showing up at swap meets, we originally thought they belonged to the 1990 model because that was the only Select Sixty we knew about. Recently a lady in California was selling a 1988 as a Select Sixty because it had the hood emblem. Reluctantly she gave us the information from the service parts label and her car was not a true Select Sixty but just another 1988.

If you own or have information on early 1988 cars, please send it to me as this will help define when the suede seats stopped, when sunroofs started and other early history.

All of the information above was accumulated from GM documents, employees, and owners.



Director's Comments -

By the time this article is read hopefully all the snow will be gone and spring will be upon us. Like many of us who live in a cold climate, my Reatta is up on jack stands under a cover waiting for the warm days of spring when salt and sand will no longer be applied to the roads.

Your Division officers are starting to get especially excited about the upcoming 2005 BCA National Meet in Batavia, NY, July 6-9. Along with participation in the National Meet, we, as a Division, have our annual membership meeting, Saturday at 3 PM, along with the Reatta Rendezvous on Thursday where we meet and fellowship with all our distant friends from around the country and do, what else, but talk about our favorite subject, REATTAS.

At the annual meeting last year in Plano, the membership approved the formation of an Advisory Board. As this vote requires a change to our bylaws, this change will be as following:

Section 3, Article 5

The Advisory Board shall consist of three (3) Reatta Division members appointed by the Division officers, one a past officer, acting as consultants to the officers, considering proposed ideas and procedural methods on behalf of the membership and to acquaint potential officer candidates with leadership needs. Potential officer candidates should be encouraged for advisory board positions. Terms will be staggered so that at least one new person would be added each year. If an advisory board member is elected to fill an officer position, the officers should appoint someone to fulfill that person's term on the board.

Last year several people volunteered to be considered for advisory board positions. Unfortunately, we had to wait to make the bylaw change before we could act. This coming year we plan to utilize those chosen at the meeting and communicate on a regular basis. Please contact me if you are interested in being a part of this advisory board.

Now I need to ask for volunteers to assist in a couple of areas. If we have as many Reattas registered as we anticipate, there is going to be in great need for Judges. Say we have 30 Reattas to be judged. Then we would need at least 16 judges. Not all Reatta owners would necessarily judge Reattas, but we must provide judges so all classes can be judged fairly. Please contact me if you have any questions. Judging is fun and educational.

The other area which needs some assistance is helping out at our hospitality table in the host hotel lobby. You get to meet great people, answer a few questions, pass out membership applications and sell Reatta logowear. Two hour shifts are all we need. Let me know how you can help.



The **Bob Peterson Meritorious Award** has been established with the guidance of Barbara Peterson. What better way to honor Bob Peterson, RDiv#3, one of our Division founders, our first official Secretary/Treasurer (1995-99) and Newsletter Editor (until 2000). John Forrette's (RDiv#1) Memorial article in last summer's newsletter noted "one of the most devoted and charming members" and "I am so thankful that Bob was there at the earliest beginning of the Division, I do not know of anyone who could have successfully taken our new group from apprentice to journeyman within such a short period of time." Copies of this article will be available at the annual meeting.

This award will be presented to a member who has gone beyond having a membership number and has done something outstanding to benefit our organization and the preservation of Reattas. If you would like to be considered or nominate someone for this prestigious award, please provide pertinent qualifying information to myself at reatta_div@aol.com, Jim Finn at jfynn@cpinternet.com or Ed Farnell at reattaclub@aol.com along with contact information no later than June 30th. The final selection of the recipient will be decided by the Division Officers and the presentation by Barb Peterson.



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REATTAS FOR SALE

1988 COUPE – Black exterior, black molding, silver pinstripe, grey leather, 16 way seat, 541 miles, original owner, inspected, garage stored, licensed, insured. \$25,000; offer. Paul Cree, BCA#3890, RDiv#72 Scottdale, PA 724-887-4771 pnbc@zoointernet.net
Will discuss !

1991 COUPE - Red exterior, red side molding, tan interior, 16-way seat, CD, new Goodyear tires, 103,000 miles. \$5,000. Joseph Minonno, Fort Worth, TX 817-838-0509

1990 CONVERTIBLE - White exterior, white top, blue leather interior, car cover, owner's manual with items issued to new Reatta purchasers, excellent condition in all respects; 50,300 miles; asking \$16,999. Can be seen in Naples, FL.
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