

Reatta

Division Newsletter
Buick Club of America



Volume 12 Issue 3

Spring 2009

Winter Driving In My Reatta

Sharon Buchanan

I live in Minnesota and after reading Fran Pasch's comments in the winter edition of the newsletter on residents of Michigan putting their Buicks away for the winter, I wanted to comment on the winter abilities of the Reatta.

My first Reatta was a 1989 silver coupe purchased in May 2001. At the time it was a more reliable car than my 1987 Park Avenue.

Duluth is built on a hill rising up from Lake Superior and is sometimes called the "Little San Francisco". If I knew we were expecting snow, I'd drive the Park Avenue to work - down hill - one mile. On occasion, I'd drive the Reatta to work only to find myself faced with

trying to get home in a snowstorm.

I remember the first storm I drove in the Reatta going up a steep snow covered road to home. I giggled all the

way home because the car was just a little mountain goat!! It just climbed right up the hills.

I've since added a 1990 black/tan convertible to my collection, but that

car gets put to bed as soon as the snow flies. If, forbid, I ever needed it in the winter, I know it would handle whatever Mother Nature dished out.

Luckily the Park Avenue is in better shape now with new tires, so the 1989 coupe is now winter backup. Reattas are truly all weather cars.



View From My Workbench

George Madsen, Assistant Director

The Reatta Division will be hosting our tenth annual Reatta Rendezvous. This year's event will take place during the Buick Club of America's National Meet in beautiful Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Rendezvous will be held on Thursday, July 2, 2009. We will leave the Crown Plaza Hotel at 5:00 p.m., for a leisurely sightseeing trip through Colorado Springs and The Garden of the Gods. We may stop at some places of interest along the way.

After our tour we will head back downtown for our Rendezvous dinner at Jack Quinns Pub and Restaurant. Parking will be on the street and in the public parking tower just south and east of the restaurant. After 6:00 p.m. parking in the tower costs only a buck or two.

Rendezvous dinners will include bread and butter, salad, and non-alcoholic drinks.

Menu choices are as follows:

1. Homemade Chicken Pot Pie \$17.50
2. Shepherd's Pie \$17.50
3. Barbeque Baby Back Ribs \$20.50
4. Grilled Trout Filets \$22.00

Tax and gratuity included in the above prices. Please fill out the enclosed Rendezvous dinner form and send it along with your payment to: Reatta Division c/o Ed Farnell by June 15, 2009.

A Reatta Division technical meeting will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel Friday, July 3, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. Barney Eaton, Reatta Division technical director and BCA vice president and others will be on hand to field tech ques-

tions and hear member comments. Plan to attend. We always have a great time and learn something more about our cars.



The Reatta Division Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, July 4, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. at The Crown Plaza Hotel.

Reatta Division Schedule of Events

Thursday, July 2, 2009 5:00 p.m. Reatta Rendezvous

Friday, July 3, 2009 2:00 p.m. Tech Meeting

Saturday, July 4, 2009 3:00 p.m. Reatta Division Annual Meeting

Reatta Fun Fact

While the window sticker on some mid-production run 1988 Reattas indicated that they had suede seats, some actually came with all leather seats.

How We Became Reatta Owners

Jerry Cover

It's always been a mystery to me as to how we get involved with particular brands of cars. We tend to gravitate toward Ford products; a 1961 T-Bird, a 1963 Falcon and a 1963 Lincoln, all convertibles; but other brands are also in the barn; a 1949 Packard, a 1964 Corvair, a 1949 DeSoto and don't forget the 1980 Pinto.

About a year ago I got a call from the daughter of a former friend and client of mine. She informed me that Chris had passed away and there was a 1990 Buick Riviera at his Green Valley, AZ, house and that they planned on keeping the house but had no use for the older Buick. Would I take a look at it and see if I knew anybody who would be interested? I got the key from a neighbor and found a fairly decent Riviera; cracked windshield, door dings, broken horn button, a small dent in the left rear fender and 70,000 showing on the odometer. The battery was a goner, so I picked up one at Wal-Mart and fired it up. She ran OK but not quite right and a short drive proved it also needed new struts.

I took it to Royal Buick in Tucson and they said, nice but too old for their bank to finance. Next I went to an old/antique/special interest car dealer and he said he would give me \$600 for it. I took it back to Green Valley and explained to the daughter the results of my efforts and gave her the business cards of the two locations. She asked me what I would give for it and we closed the deal for \$650 plus the cost of the new battery.

A new windshield (\$125), tires (\$400), plus a major tune-up and a set of struts put the Riviera in line for a paint job by my favorite "pintura" (painter), down in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, which is about 50 miles from our home. Mr. Heriberto Leon turns out an exceptionally good paint job for an extremely reasonable price (he has painted five cars for me and others for numerous friends). So now we have a very nice 1990 metallic blue, carriage roof Buick Riviera with the proper pin stripes, and

white walls facing out, in our garage. It's NOW a requirement that we look at the Buick section of the want ads on a daily basis.

A few months after finishing the Riviera there was an ad for a 1990 Buick Reatta coupe for sale in a mobile home park southeast of Tucson. To shorten up the story a bit we drove home in a 1990 red Reatta coupe that ran quite well but needed paint. It had 130,000 miles on it. Back to Nogales, Mexico, and another paint job plus some tune up material and my wife gave me back the Town & Country and took over the Reatta. Last year we entered both Buicks in the all Buick car show (BCA) at Royal Buick in Tucson. The Riviera looked nice



but the Reatta took first place in the Reatta class. The fact that it was the only Reatta in the show did not diminish our pride. The fellow sitting next to me mentioned that if we ever sell the Reatta he would like it for his wife to drive around Green Valley. I said that my wife was sort of attached to the coupe but I took his card just in case.

The next Saturday there was an ad in the Tucson Daily Star newspaper for a 1990 Buick Reatta convertible for sale for \$5000. We called and headed to Tucson. We found a white Reatta convertible with red leather interior and owned by the original buyer. The original owner's manual and build sheet

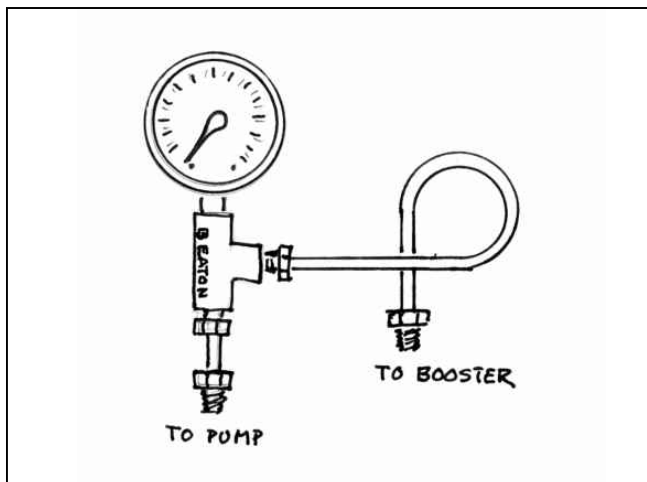
continued on page 7

Technical Stuff

Barney Eaton, Reatta Tech Advisor; BCA Vice-President

I am a strong supporter of flushing the brake fluid. I have ranted about this before so I won't go into it further, except to say there may be an easier way than I have done it in the past. To drain the reservoir, I pull the 90 degree fitting that goes into the pump housing. Jim Finn and I have discussed this and he cuts the line because he is afraid of breaking the 90 degree fitting. Jim says there is enough tubing to replug on the fitting when done.

Our most recent conversation on this resulted in the thinking that the high pressure line from the pump to the booster is easier to remove. It is a normal steel line with a hex fitting. By attaching a hose, then turning on the key, the pump will pull



the fluid out of the reservoir and drain the system. NOTE! Do not pump the reservoir dry. Pull it down to almost the bottom and then add fresh fluid and pump that out. This method results in fewer skinned knuckles and less chance of breaking parts.

Along the line of the Teves (1988-1990) brakes, while most owners will never need to do brake work, the service manual shows a pressure tester that is helpful when diagnosing Teves brake problems. The factory tester design is not easy to duplicate, and while not tried or tested, I have an idea that I will be happy to share with you.

Why not make a tester that goes between the pump and booster? By removing the steel line (1989-1990) and making up some brake line fitting plus a fitting for a gage, a test device could be fabricated using parts from the junk yard or auto parts store.

I am attaching a sketch.

Bigger brakes for your Reatta

Those of you that read the Reatta discussion page will know about the work that has been done by others to put bigger brakes on the Reattas. They have found rotors that are larger in diameter and caliper units that bolt in place without adaptors or machining. These parts are from later model GM cars and can be purchased new or picked up in salvage yards.

There is a front brake conversion and a rear conversion. According to the people doing the changes, when doing the front brake change you must have 16" or larger rims, so this would work on a 1991 Reatta without changing rims.

On the back, the larger brakes can be installed and keep the 15" rims. The reason for this is the factory rotors are smaller in the rear, so they can be increased in size without going to larger rims for clearance. According to those that have made the change, it does not require any changes to the system and everything (ABS) works normally

I mentioned this, without details, because only a few of you might be interested. Plus the actual details will take more space than I have, and it is detailed on the discussion page (at reatta.net) with pictures.

I am going to do the front conversion on my 1991 when I find time (which may be years away), when I do then I can give my experience with the change

Great Lakes Regional Buick Meet

Chip Aeppli, Akron/Canton Chapter

The Akron/Canton Ohio Chapter of the Buick Club of America invites YOU and YOUR REATTA to the 2009 Great Lakes Regional Buick Meet. We are hosting it, August 14th and 15th, 2009, in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Look for our ad in the Bugle, and feel free to contact me for further information. We're planning a nice Buick Show. I would LOVE to have a great turnout of Reattas there.

While I am not new to the Buick scene- I grew up with Buicks, and have always driven Buicks – it took until 2007 for me to at last purchase a Reatta – a 1990 coupe. I had wanted one for 18 years or more. I just love driving it! And I love this group. I was fortunate to be able to attend the Reatta Rendezvous in Flint, MI, in 2008. I enjoyed meeting so many wonderful people who love their Buicks. Our local Buick Chapter now has three Reattas, which is significant because we are not a big chapter, and up until a few years ago we didn't have any. It's wonderful picking up new members, and people who are passionate about their collectible Buicks.

We are planning for a nice size show in August, with all years of Buicks represented. Our Chapter is stepping up with many volunteers to make this a success. Classes are still being finalized, but I would love to have enough Reattas to have them in a class by themselves for our peer-judged show. You can make that happen. It will be a full-fledged show with hospitality room, banquet, awards, and swap meet area; all in a great setting that's easy and neat to walk around.

Again, you can contact me for further details and registration information and please see our ad in the Bugle- Coming Events. You should of course attend the National in Colorado, but if that's too far from home, I hope you can come see us in Ohio in August at the 2009 Great Lakes Regional Buick Show.

Special Reatta Issue December 2008 Bugle

Barney Eaton

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who participated in, or provided information and pictures for, the 2008 December issue of the Buick Bugle. I was pleased with the end result but would have been more delighted with more pages. Starting out I was worried about filling up all those pages and then wondered what happened to all that space.

It won't be long before the next National Meet is upon us. I'm looking forward to returning to a gorgeous venue to enjoy our Reattas. More Reattas than ever are showing up to be seen and/or be judged.

This point reminded me of an old Reatta Div Newsletter (June 2002) story written by Dom Clemente about making the decision to "Judge or be Judged". As our newsletters are not archived back that far, I'll quote, "To serve as a judge one must participate in a mandatory 3-hour seminar. Seems like a long time but it is so interesting; especially if you intend to show your car; before you know it the class is over and you are still hungry for more information."

This was Dom's first year to participate and you see how involved he has become. His 1990 coupe received a silver award the first year and, with the knowledge learned and a lot of polishing, the next time he won a senior gold. Of all the Reattas shown/judged since then, only 25 or so have received that status.

I encourage every Reatta owner to participate in some way, whether you judge, be judged or just find a shady spot to enjoy talking about Reattas, you'll spend a few days or hours with very interesting people.

The Rendezvous is not to be missed. For those who see another Reatta very infrequently, you will stand and stare at the many Reattas in one place at the same time. You get your chance to wish you had this one or that one or just admire all of them. If you try, you may even entice someone to sell.

Retirement Advantages

*Suzanne and Larry
Sherman*

After a year and a half we are still learning the advantages of being retired. One of the best advantages of not having to be in one place is the ability to go anywhere at any time.

Recently, we were in Virginia Beach, VA, to welcome home our daughter, grandson and son-in-law who had been in England stationed in the military. We helped them find a house, a school, doctors, etc. After our visit we were ready to return to Michigan when a friend from our Buicktown Chapter called to say he had found a windshield for our Reatta.

This friend is also a member of the Reatta Division and had been in the "used auto parts" yard looking for a wheel cover for another Buick when he came across a Reatta in Lakeland, Florida. He asked about it and was told they would guarantee they could remove it without damage.

This is where the freedom from a job comes in. Instead of returning to Michigan, where another Buicktown Chapter member had told us it was minus 18 degrees F, we headed to Florida, where it was a cool 74 degrees F.

The windshield was the right price and was in perfect condition, right down to the encapsulate. It fit perfectly in our back seat and after visiting for a couple days, we headed north.

One of the things I find extraordinary is that none of our friends find it at all unusual to go from Virginia to Florida just to get a windshield. Of course, most of them are car people and all those familiar with Reattas know how difficult it is to find a replacement windshield.

When you see us next year, we will be the ones no longer looking over the crack.

Yours for Happy Driving,

Reatta Marketplace

*Cars and Parts
For Sale*

PARTS FOR SALE

Perfect ABS injection molded in color replications of the convertible sun visor clips. Stock Garnet Red, Saddle, Blue and Gray, Flame Red by arrangement. \$55@. HKBJR @yahoo.com
Kingsley 310-476-0191

Wheels and caps (4 each) \$100. plus shipping.
Lee Craft. h) 410-757-1408, c) 443-223-5771

Grills: 1 new and 1 used—for all years
Tail light lens—would need work if used for show
Wheels for 88,89,90
Car cover—never been used
Contact Don Kinas: phone:920-893-3913 or
Email: dkinas@wi.rr.com

Reatta Parts—Large Inventory. Reasonable prices.
Jim Finn jfinn@cpinternet.com

Reatta Parts—Parting over 50 cars. You name it, I should have it. John 810-730-9230

CARS FOR SALE

1989 Coupe—white, moon roof. Perfect parts car.
\$1000.00 or by the piece.
Call Barbara Petersen at 201-529-2556 or email
JEAN5089@aol.com

Three 1990 Reatta Convertibles:
1 White/burgundy interior/white top
65,00 miles Price \$12,000

1 Red/tan/tan top 118,000 miles Price \$8,500

1 Red/tan/tan top
122,000 miles, customized \$8,500
Call Bill 951-283-6776

Three Reattas, selling as a package deal, 88-89.
Phone 561-732-9426

How We Became Reatta Owners

(continued from page 3)

Jerry Cover

were also in the proper place. He had purchased a Porsche Boxster and needed the space for it so the Reatta was on the block. We were not the only potential buyers as a fellow in Florida saw it on the internet and would pay via PayPal sight unseen. We wrote the check but being Saturday afternoon the banks were closed so we finished the deal on Monday morning. The Reatta was left in Arizona when the owners returned to Minnesota, I believe that's where they were from, and thus it sat for about 6 months of each year. It had a few electrical problems that about drove us crazy but with enough advice and quite a few dollars most any problem can be resolved.

We found the fellow that lived west of Tucson, Mike of buickreataparts.com, that does nothing but provide parts and equipment for Reattas. I don't know how many salvaged Reattas he has but it must be a bunch. He fixed my 'bob and weave' headlights, replaced the horn buttons and got me a properly operating automatic radio antenna. Also I wanted an original radio instead of the after-market one that was in the car, and he provided that also. He did all the work in my driveway in Green Valley.

I also got a new dash. I found out later that mine was OK, and three different electronic boxes, the last one of which, the main computer, it's the one that is way up behind the glove box, finally solved all the electrical problems. We had already replaced the one under the center console and the one on top of the glove box. So with new tires, black walls out, it was back to the paint shop in Nogales. It could use a new top but it's not too bad as we drive it mostly with the top down. We sold the red coupe to my car show neighbor for \$4000, so we got into the convertible for an extra thousand. All the electrical repairs, tires, paint, radio, etc., probably has us up to about \$8500. It is a fun car and most people aren't quite sure what a Reatta is; even when they see the Buick logo they give you a faint smile and a quizzical look

Reatta Division

Buick Club of America

Officers & Key Division Positions

Director: *Chuck Kerls*

2206 W MacArthur # 152
Wichita KS 67217
316-655-1099
booreatta@cox.net

Assistant Director: *George Madsen*

14560 South Oakley Avenue
Orland Park IL 60462
708-349-8878
georgemadsen@att.net

Secretary/Treasurer: *Ed Farnell*

440 Langford Road
Blythewood SC 29016
803-754-6922
reataclub@aol.co

Board Members:

Stan Leslie stanleslie@comcast.net
Jim Finn jfinn@cpinternet.com
Herb Morris reatta90@sbcglobal.net

Nominating Committee:

Martel Gibson mgibson33@hotmail.com
Tom Selander Reattaman3@sbcglobal.net
Bill Parks wparks22@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: *April Gill*

7508 W Chadwick Road
Dewitt MI 48820
512-869-5114
wwdhms@aol.com

Reatta Logo Wear Coordinator: *Carole Madsen*

14560 South Oakley Avenue
Orland Park IL 60462
708-349-8878
carolemadsen@att.net

Web Site Address: <http://www.reatta.org>

Web Road Master:

Nancy Taylor
ReattaWebmaster@hotmail.com

BCA Technical Advisor—1988-1991 Reattas

Barney Eaton
20111 Deerfield Drive
Georgetown TX 78628
512-869-5114
barney@texas.net

REATA DIVISION
Secretary/Treasurer
Ed Farnell
440 Langford Road
Blythewood, SC 29016

Membership and Division Information

Reatta Division membership dues are \$10.00 per year. Membership is for a twelve month period.

Please note that a pink highlighter mark on the R-Div number on your mailing list means that your Reatta Division dues are due or overdue. In order to continue receiving the Reatta Division newsletter, your R-Div membership status needs to be current.

Please make checks payable to: Reatta Division, BCA.

Send all dues payments and address changes (please write your R-Div# on your check) to:
Secretary/Treasurer, Ed Farnell, 440 Langford Road, Blythewood, SC 29016.

All Reatta Division members are required to be members of the national organization, the Buick Club of America, of which we are an authorized division. Please note that a blue highlighter mark on the BCA number on your mailing label means that you are not a current member of the Buick Club of America. BCA dues are due or overdue or you never became a member of the BCA, in which case a BCA membership form is enclosed. In order to continue receiving the Reatta Division newsletter, your BCA membership status needs to be current. The national organization can be contacted as follows: Buick Club of America, P O Box 360775, Columbus OH 43236 or by email at bcaoffice@buickclub.org

Please send classified ads and newsletter submissions to:

Newsletter Editor, April Gill, 7508 W Chadwick Road, Dewitt MI 48820 email wwdhms@aol.com

Reatta Division meeting dates: We normally meet once a year at the BCA National Meet.