



Reatta

Division Newsletter
Buick Club of America



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My Love Affair with the Buick Reatta Convertible

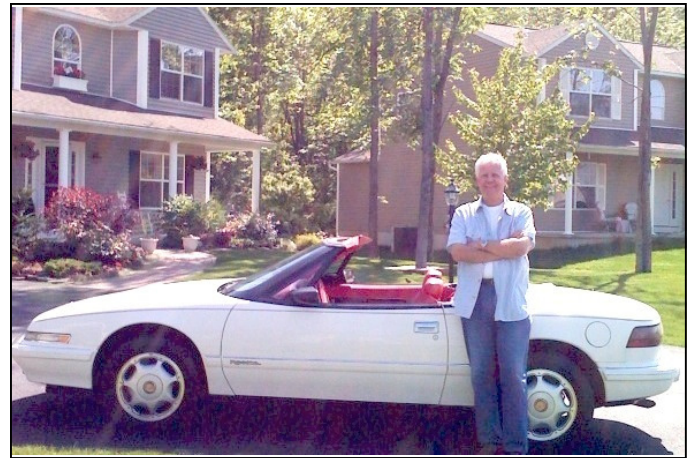
by Bob Popyk

My relationship with the Buick Reatta convertible has lasted over 20 years. I started working with the Buick Division of General Motors in 1986. I was an outside vendor and worked with Buick's marketing and promotion departments. Over the years I wrote more books on sales and marketing strategies than I can remember, spoke at a number of dealer meetings, and produced quite a few videos on selling Buicks at the retail level. Back then I had the extreme pleasure of getting to know Ed Mertz who was Buick's GM at the time. I would fly from Syracuse, NY, to Detroit, and then drive the hour and twenty-five minutes to Flint. I did it so many times I could do it in my sleep. In the dead of winter it was a painful trip.

I remember it was sometime in 1988 that I got a call to come to a preview of the new Buick Reatta convertible at the Stevens Storage Warehouse in Flint. The press was there, and it was kind of a low-key invitation-only afternoon event. I remember the convertible they showed to the media was white with blue interior and the first words out of my mouth were, "I've got to have this car."

The first Reatta convertible was introduced to the Buick dealers the following year, for introduction in the latter part of 1989. I can't remember for sure what city the dealer meeting was that year (either Orlando, Dallas or New Orleans), but I remember the auditorium and where I was sitting when it came on stage. Before the Reatta convertible was revealed, Mr. Mertz told the dealer audience something to the effect: "After many years of extensive

research and testing we told you that the CRT in the dash is what your customers wanted, and your customers replied; the heck we do!" And when he told the dealers they were changing the CRT in the Reatta to a digital dash, they stood up and applauded. So much for what Buick thought was right.



I then bought a red 1990 Reatta convertible as soon as it was available to the public. After I got the car, Brian Boyd, the promotion manager showed me the pictures of the Select Sixty with the white wheels and white interior. He said I should get one of those as well. I told him the winters in upstate NY would play havoc with all the white. I passed. I should have bought one and put it in a vault.

The next year I saw the advance promotional pictures of the 1991 Reatta convertible and told John

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From the Desk of Chuck Kerls Director

Can it be a year since Flint? Not possible. And now we find ourselves looking forward with great anticipation to the national meet in Colorado Springs. How exciting it will be to renew past acquaintances and make new friends as well.

This has proven to be a very difficult year for our economy, our country, and our great automobile company. As I write this, I can't help but think of the many people who have been affected by the collapse of banks and now, General Motors. We still have wars raging in Iraq and Afghanistan, and good people all over the country are facing home foreclosures and financial ruin. Yes, a multitude of hurdles to overcome; however, this is a great country we live in. We have rebuilt our economy more than once in the past, and I have confidence that we can do it again. It is not my desire to use this newsletter as a political forum, but I would like to see our Reatta family take a high road; thinking positive thoughts that our changing world will be on the way to recovery soon.

Our Reatta division this year will be presenting the Long Distance Driven awards for prewar and post-war entries to the BCA. I just received a report from registration, and at the current time there are 20 Reattas planning to attend. If you don't have your registration in yet, it's getting late. The forms are on the back of the Bugle for your entry. If you would like a copy of the December Bugle featuring the Reattas, we will have a limited number at the Reatta table at the meet. There will also be a variety of Reatta Wear available. And by all means, don't forget to register for the Reatta Rendezvous - it's always good for a fun time.

Let's meet then, in the Springs with the goal of a few wonderful days of rest and relaxation to meet and greet old and new friends alike as well as to enjoy the fantastic Buicks that General Motors has produced through the years.

Kathy and I look forward to seeing you all there.
Drive safely.
Chuck

CARS FOR SALE

Three 1990 Reatta convertibles for sale. All CA Cars and in great shape.

One White/ burgundy interior/white top
65,000 miles --\$8,995

One Red/tan/tan top
118,000 miles -- \$5,500

One Red/tan/tan top
122,000 miles, customized. \$5,500
Call Bill at 561-732-9426

1991 Reatta convertible, Red/tan
Tan leather, 23,000 miles, one owner
\$23,500
Dean Lauterbach
641-792-6412

For sale, 91 Reatta coupe. Red with tan interior and red rub strips. This southern, no rust car is garage kept, well maintained and in very nice condition. Sixteen way seats and CD player, no sunroof. 111,000 miles. Asking \$4,000. Call Ed Farnell at 803-754-6922 (SC)

Selling my son's three Reatta coupes (two-1988s and one 1990) in Florida. All three are drivable and roadworthy (estimate #2.5--#3 condition). Would like package deal. I think he would take \$6,000 for all three. Call for further info at h) 561-732-9426 w)561-742-6283 Ken Hall
Email: halk@bbfl.us

My Wife Knew Best

By Jim Morrison

Confessing to an incident that happened in 1997 at the National Annual Buick Show in Saint Louis, MO; my wife asked if I wanted to go down the row of Reattas. I told her NO, they were too new and too expensive! I could be placed in that group of older Buick owners that did not give the Reattas their “due”. My outlook has now changed considerably!

I purchased a 1990 Reatta convertible in September 2006. I had owned a 1950 Buick Special from 1972 to 1995 and have had a 1951 Buick Roadmaster since 1992.

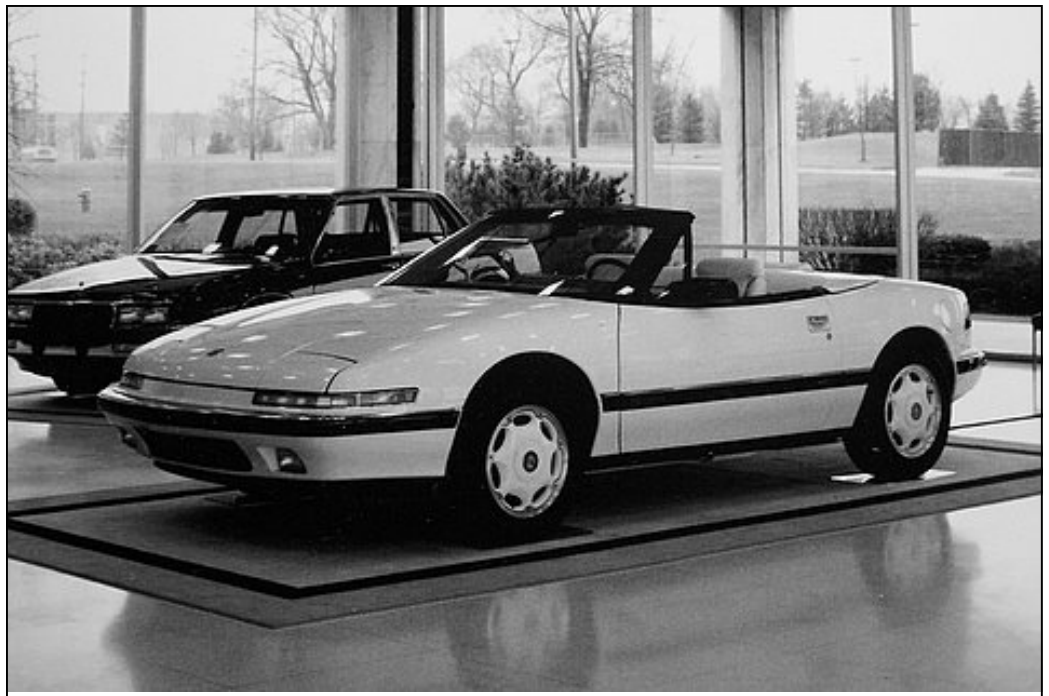
Our Tarheel (NC) Buick Chapter tries to attend an event on a monthly basis and my four windows down and 40 mph A/C did not agree with us in the summer months. I then began looking for an ‘air conditioned’ Buick.

My wife suggested a Reatta, so a six-month search began. I then found one on eBay. After talking with the salesperson at the dealership for three days, he turned me over to the person that had researched the vehicle. I was not willing to bid on the car sight unseen. I was told that they would sell the car to anyone who would give them their reserve. Upon asking where I was in the pecking order of bidders, I was told that I was number one at 3:00 pm on Friday afternoon.

Upon purchasing the car, my son and I trailered the car to Raleigh, NC. The car was a “Select Sixty”,

which had never been titled as the lady that co-owned the dealership drove it as her personal car. Therefore, I purchased a new car with 65,000 miles on it. The dealership gave me service records back to January 1994.

There were sixty-five ‘Select Sixty’ cars built in 1990; five were allotted to Buick Division VIPs



and sixty were allotted to Buick dealers throughout the United States for outstanding achievements for the 1989 year. The dealers were to hold the car for twelve months for promotional purposes. Many dealers held the cars in their dealerships.

The ‘Select Sixty’ was a convertible with a white exterior and a white top, white leather seats with flame red carpet, dash, steering wheel, console cup holder and 1991 white wheels. The side moldings were black and the pin stripe was deleted,

The sticker price for the car was \$36,782. The highest-priced Buick for 1990.

Technical Stuff

Barney Eaton, Reatta Tech Advisor; BCA Vice President

With summer weather here, sometimes our cars get a little hot.

On the 1990-91 Reattas, the temp gage has no numbers. The normal operating condition is with the temp gage indicating straight up or the 12 o'clock position. When stuck in summer traffic and the A/C is keeping us cool, the temp gage often creeps 1, 2 and sometimes 3 notches past the straight up position. While the car is not overheating, I get concerned with it operating in that range.

If you own a 1988 –89 you must bring up the gage screen on the CRT to view the temp and that might scare you, if you keep the radio screen up, you may never notice.

The Reatta radiator cooling is done with electric fans. The control system is a little complex, so I will attempt to explain before offering a solution. There is an electric fan on the front of the radiator referred to as the "pusher" fan. The one you can see on the engine side is called a "puller".

When the water temperature reaches 208 degrees F the puller fans comes on. This allows the engine to get to operating temperature quickly. When you turn on the A/C, the pusher fan comes on, in series with the puller and both run at half speed. This is the 1989-1991 sequence of operation; the 1988 is slightly different.

The above is the normal cooling fan operation until the water temperature reaches 226 degree F. At that temperature, the ECM (engine control module) grounds a relay that gives a full 12V to both fans, this increases their speed and airflow to max. Even when this happens, it takes some time for enough air to move through the radiator and lower the water temperature. That is what bothered me.

The solution; there are companies that reprogram

the ECM chips and change the temperature setting for the fans to turn on. I had this done and they changed the lower setting to about 200F and the full speed kick-in to 218F. This cost about \$50.; you must supply or send them your chip. For more money they will supply the chip. Contact Ryan Gick at Sinister Performance email spl@gmtuners.com

The June 2009 issue of Street Rodder magazine has a good article on ideas and information on suppliers and their products that control electric fans.

On our cars, depending on the unit you choose, you might need to mount an additional water temperature sensor and splice into the fan circuit. Some of these units can be programmed for the temperature you want the fan(s) to turn on. The simple ones are factory set and have no adjustment.

Bottom line is the reprogramming of your ECM chip is the simplest solution. If you are a gadget person you might want the unit that allows you to adjust the temperature when the fans turn on.

Below are the names and web sites of the companies that sell various fan controllers. If you have a summer cooling concern you might want to make this change to your Reatta.

Zirgo = www.thehoffmangroup.com/zirgo
Dakota Digital = www.dakotadigital.com/sr
Hotronics = www.hotronicsproducts.com
Flex-a-lite = www.flex-a-lite.com
Ron Francis = www.ronfrancis.com
Vintage Air = www.vintageair.com
Southern Air = www.southernrods.com

Stay cool!
Barney

From the Secretary/Treasurer's Corner

Ed Farnell

Another year has flown by since our meeting in Flint. I am sorry that I will not be able to make it to Colorado this year and will miss seeing those of you that can make it. It sounds like it will be a terrific meet.

This year has been good for our membership rolls. The Reatta Division has gained 57 new members since last July and on behalf of the officers, I would like to welcome each and every one of you to our group. New members breathe new blood into our club and serve to keep us viable and dedicated to our cars. Although we have always received new members each year, we also lose a number and over the past several years our membership had remained constant at about 275. This year, however, our membership has risen to about 325.

The dynamics of our new members has also changed somewhat. In the past most of our new members were not previously BCA members, but over the last year over half of our new members were already BCA members. It seems like maybe some owners of older Buicks are also seeing value in owning a Reatta. Maybe it is the style, maybe the air conditioning, or maybe it is a belief that they are on the way to becoming a classic. For whatever reason we are really happy to have new members who appreciate other older Buicks.

Another piece of good news is that with a little cost saving effort the Division will be able to mail out the normal four newsletters and dues receipt letters as well as fund the small administrative costs for the Division without a dues increase next year. It is pretty amazing that a club can function for well over ten years with no increase in dues.

I hope you all have a great summer with your Reatta and I look forward to serving as your secretary for another year should you decide to vote me in again. My goal this year is to sell just a couple of my Reattas and get more realistic since garage space is becoming a premium, spend a little more time with my

grandchildren and get ready to the 2010 meet in Iowa.

Wishing each of you the best this year,
Ed

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
Taillight lens—would need work if used for show
Wheels for 88, 89, 90
Car Cover—never been used
Don Kinan: 920-893-3913
Email: dkinan@wi.rr.com

Reatta Parts—Large inventory. Reasonable prices.
Jim Finn
Email: jfynn@cpinternet.com

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

Parts car location near North Carolina NEEDED, would be willing to share parts in exchange for storing my car there. Please contact Tim Dugan at 919-704-6167. RDiv#1011

Reatta Division Annual Meeting July 2008

The annual meeting of the Reatta Division, BCA, was called to order by Director, Bill Parks, at 3:00 p.m. at the Wingate Inn, Flint, Michigan.

The minutes of the 2007 annual meeting, which had been published in the most recent Reatta Division newsletter, with a minor change about the correct title for April and Ron Gill as curators for the "National Miniatures Trust Museum," were approved by majority vote of the members present.

The FY 07/08 Treasurer's report reflecting a balance of \$8,730.00 was distributed to and approved by all members present.

Director Parks called for any additional nominations for the election of officers. None being received, the nominations were closed and the ballots that had been mailed in and those received at the meeting were given to members Cal Dewhirst and Martel Gibson to count. The total of sixty-three (63) ballots was counted.

A few minutes were taken for all members to introduce themselves to the group.

Under new business was the motion to approve, and subsequent discussion regarding, the proposed amendments to the Reatta Division by-laws, which had been published in the summer 2008 edition of the newsletter. George Madsen made a motion to further amend the by-laws by adding the word "education" to Article I as one of the purposes for the Division. Carole Madsen made a motion to change the RDiv fiscal year from September 30th to June 30th. Both motions to further amend were passed unanimously.

Also, under new business was the presentation of the fourth annual Bob Peterson Award. The Bob Peterson Award is presented annually to a member who has done something outstanding to benefit the Reatta Division and the preservation of Reattas. Each year the membership is asked to provide nominations for the Award with the final selection being made by the current officers. The Award for 2008 was presented by last year's recipient, Barney Eaton, to April Gill for her unselfish support and service to the Reatta Division including hosting the Reatta Homecoming in Lansing and several trips for Reatta owners to the Michigan International Speedway. The members present gave April a long and well deserved ovation.

Nancy Eaton announced that the BCA was planning the December issue of the Bugle to feature the Reatta. She said that any articles to be considered should be in within the next 60 days.

Finally, under new business Jim Finn suggested that the Reatta Division might take on the sponsorship of the long distance award for postwar cars driven to the national meet. After much discussion about the particulars of the requirements for the award, the members voted to approve the concept of the Reatta Division sponsoring such an award. Barney Eaton was appointed to look into the BCA wording of the award requirements and discussing the prospect of Reatta Division sponsorship of the award.

Members Dewhirst and Gibson reported that the ballot votes, after tabulation, reflected that the officers for the coming year are Chuck Kerls, Director, George Madsen, Assistant Director and Ed Farnell, Secretary/Treasurer. They also reported that the amendments to the by-laws passed by a vote of 87 to 0.

Director Bill Parks thanked the members for being allowed to serve as director for 07/08 and considered that the by-law amendments were a proud accomplishment that was due to the hard work of the officers and several other members.

Bob Neumann announced that the Wingate Inn had decided to give a trophy to the Reatta that the hotel staff liked the most. The award was given for a yellow "Bumble Bee" Reatta owned by Roy Tipps.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Ed Farnell, Secretary/Treasurer

My Love Affair with the Buick Reatta Convertible

(continued from page 1)

Thomson, the marketing manager at the time, I wanted a black one with grey interior. He told me I was nuts, and to keep what I had. He said there was a cowl shake problem and to wait it out. I did wait it out, and a few months later the Reattas were history. They were done. No more were ever made.

Fifteen years later I finally bought a 1991 black with grey interior that I found in Washington, DC. Then I bought a 1991 red/saddle in Virginia, a silver/grey in Maryland, a white/red in Pittsburgh and another white/red in Champlain, NY. Along the way I also picked up a couple of more '90 convertibles as well as a couple of '91 Reatta coupes. I was getting out of control. When I saw the tag line of one of the readers on the Reatta forum that there is a fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness", I knew that enough was enough.



Bob and his neighbor Joe Galutz with the 1990 convertible

The 1991's I owned were all low mileage Reattas, but I was running out of room, and the time had come to start letting them go. The coupes went to Atlanta and W. Palm Beach, the red/saddle went to Myrtle Beach, the black/grey as well as the white/red went to Fayetteville, NY, and the silver/grey went to Port St. Lucie. My original 1990 red/saddle went across the street to my neighbor Joe Galutz. (This is great because I can still see it every day.)

I am now left with just one 1991 white/red with less the 40k on the odometer. I'm the original owner and it is in mint condition. I love driving the car. It was made for Canadian export, and has a factory-installed ac cord over the battery that can be plugged in to warm the engine block on really cold days. (Not that I would every take it out of the garage in that kind of weather.) The owner's manuals are in French as well as English. People follow me into restaurants asking, "What kind of car is that?" Some folks ask, "Is that a new Buick?" I get more attention than some of my friends who own late-model Corvettes, Lexus SC430's and Beemers.

Reatta Division

Buick Club of America Officers & Key Division Positions

Director: *Chuck Kerls*

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REATA DIVISION
Secretary/Treasurer
Ed Farnell
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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 RDiv 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 RDiv membership status needs to be current.

Please make checks payable to: Reatta Division, BCA.

Send all dues payments and address changes (please write your RDiv# 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 Rd., Dewitt MI 48820 email wwdhms@aol.com

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