

Black Canyon Classics Car Club Article #2

Bob Gates / 1916 Model T Ford

BCCCC Cruise at Long John Silver/A&W, May 23, 2003

Member Automobile profile: Bob Gates and his 1916 Model T

This car was “Born in 1916 and reborn in 1976” says Bob, the Model T was first produced in 1908 for the 1909 model year and they stopped producing them in 1927. According to Bob, That’s when “he quit making cars and he started making Model A’s”. Henry Ford actually started with a Model A in 1903 (Later started producing what we know as the Model A in 1927, but that’s a different story) and kept on changing the letter designation with major changes until the model T. In this period (1909 through 1927) Bob says, “Ford produced over fifteen million model T’s and they still made the model T engine up until 1941 for replacements”.

The only modification Bob has made to his model T is an added oil pump of his design inside the engine to facilitate pressurized bearing lubrication. There are several period correct ‘after market’ additions that Bob has added including wire spoke wheels, a luggage rack (on the running board), battery and battery box, and coil spring shocks. According to Bob, “Some of the other after market parts available included a ‘pickup bed’ or a ‘mother in law seat’ that you would bolt in place of the turtle deck”. Options back then were, it seems, in reverse of what we see now; Bob stated, “some of them came out with no top, no headlights, or no lights at all”. Other additions Bob made came from later model T’s like an electric starter, generator and electric lights, which were all, added to the model T by 1919, Bob still has the kerosene lamps on it also.



“This model has quite a bit of brass”, Bob said, “somewhere in mid 1916 they stopped using all that brass because of the war effort when they had to have the brass for all the shell casings so everything was black steel after that”.

There were four different models of T in 1916, a roadster (Bob’s model) a touring (Open two seater) a couplet (Convertible closed coupe), and a town sedan (open front for the driver and closed rear for the rich people). All these models ran on the same chassis.

Bob did all the work himself from the ground up and he put it together “a piece at a time” from the many parts he has at his place. He reported that he “did all the scraping and blasting and rust removal, painting and upholstery and polishing the brass and this and that”. Some other facts he reported about the model T are “the cooling system is a thermal siphon system, the engine and transmission are integral together, and the engine oil also lubricated the planetary transmission, which is pretty unique itself. The transverse leaf spring suspension is a three point system which allows the car to go into a terrible twist allowing one wheel to go way up or down on rough terrain while the opposite corner wheel could do the same, this was necessary due to the bad state of roads back then”.



Bob drives his model T quite a bit, he said they “went on a trip to Deadwood South Dakota (trailed from Omaha Nebraska) in about 82, there’s two national Model T clubs, and for the first time, I think ever, they got together at a meet there. When we went from there to Devils Tower in Wyoming that was an all day trip, which may have been the longest single trip I’ve taken in it”.

When riding in the model T you get in on the passenger’s side, there is no door on the driver’s side due to the levers (Parking brake and 2 speed rear end) and steering wheel in the way. Bob gave me a little ride down the road a ways. You sit pretty high in the T, or maybe it just seems that way because of the really short hood. You get a sense of how it may have been back in 1916 pattering around on some dusty road thinking to yourself “Boy howdy, this is so much better than that horse and buggy we traded in”.

Bob is not strictly a Ford man, some of the other cars he’s working on are: a 1930 Chrysler roadster, a 1925 Chevrolet touring, and a 1922 Overland touring. We’re all looking forward to seeing them in the future.



Bob has also attended many car shows and cruises and has won a few awards. Some of the shows he’s attended are: All of the BCC annual shows (except one) where he has won a few awards, the National Model T Club assembly in 1982 in South Dakota, a show in Belleview Nebraska in 1985 and he won a beautiful little plaque at the Ute Trails car show in Delta once.

Thank You Bob for sharing this unique automobile with us! See you all at the next cruise.

Model T Facts and Specs:

Cost:

\$825 in 1908,
\$260 in 1924 (Lowest price?).

Production:

1916-17: 785,432
Total: 15,007,003

Engine:

4 cyl. vertical, 4-cycle
24hp 1800rpm, 3.75”bore,
4”stroke.

Transmission:

Spur planetary, oil bath,
heat-treated vanadium steel
gears

Clutch:

Multiple steel disks in oil,
foot control for two forward
speeds, lever for reverse.

Top Speed:

45mph (stock), 13-21 mpg,

Weight:

approx. 1200lbs.



Sources: Bob Gates, www.mtfca.com, www.automuseum.com,

For more information on this or any other BCCCC member articles contact: Vern Willis, (970)874-4020, 4455 Cedar Road, Delta, CO. 81416, urnwillis@yahoo.com. 5/10/03.