



Lovin' Life After 50

An Ageless Attitude Since 1977

June 2019

Girls on Film

The Sun City Poms' story hits the silver screen

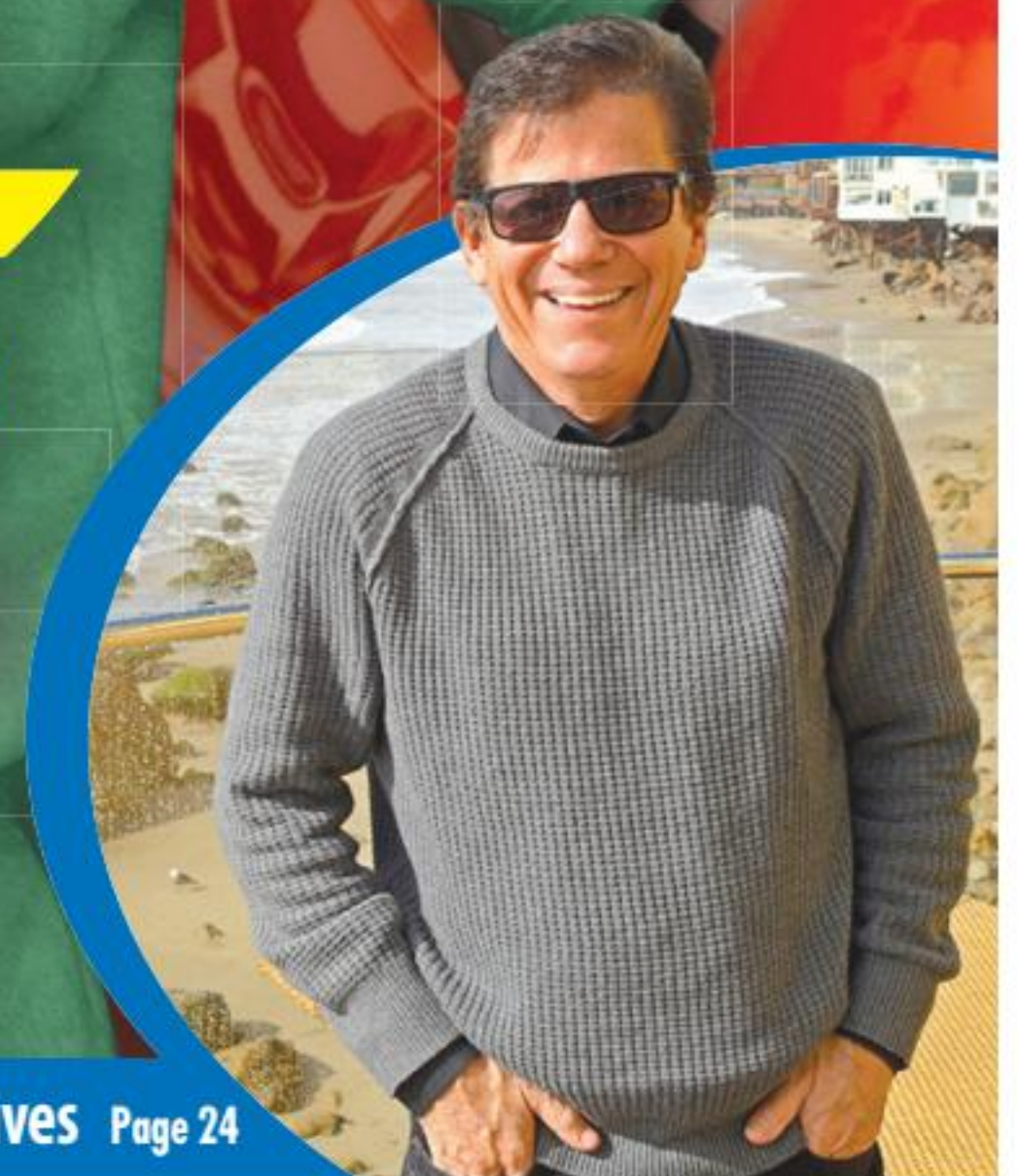
Ghost Ranch

Mexican food done the family way

HOUSE OF CARS

Greg Selvidge's home is a veritable attraction

Phoenix Edition



Happy Days' Anson Williams saves lives Page 24

Local Postal Customer

Mailed to You
Home Monthly

PRST STD
ECPWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX
PERMIT # 1333



Features

HOUSE of Cars

Greg Selvidge's Scottsdale home is a veritable roadside attraction for car nuts

BY JIMMY MAGAHERN

Greg Selvidge pulls up a pair of portable camping chairs and takes a seat on the patio outside of his three-stall, 2,300-square-foot garage, right behind the spot where his beautifully restored 1965 Corvette convertible sits ready for a breezy Monday morning drive.

Sitting by the kitschy, memorabilia-strewn garage, which forms a U-shaped strip mall with two other garages — including one featuring a pair of antique Mobil gas pumps and a compact working car wash — the stocky septuagenarian, in a grey polo, khaki shorts and sneakers, looks like the happy proprietor of the last great Route 66 service station.

Really, this Disney Cars Land-worthy attraction is Selvidge's personal garage, and each of the six classic Chevys parked in the diesel diorama appear to be delib-

erately placed in spots that cleverly tell their stories. The '65 Vette, for instance, is parked in front of a "Dead End" sign and another reading "Hollywood Parking Only." Reading up on the vehicle, it turns out Selvidge picked up the car in Hollywood about 10 years ago, adding to his collection the light yellow 250-horsepower classic formerly owned by actor Gabriel Dell, one of the original Dead End Kids. As if the signs weren't enough of a clue, behind the car stands a goofy-looking mannequin that even bears a slight resemblance to the movie series' star, Huntz Hall.

"This car gets driven a lot, especially when the weather's right," says Selvidge, questioning the day's weather forecast, which calls for rain. Tellingly, the brighter yellow 'Vette parked beside it, a new

650-horsepower Z06 that retails at over \$90,000 for this particular build, has yet to earn the vintage automobilia that might tell its tale. "The new Corvette next to it doesn't get driven much at all," he sniffs, noting that his wife, Sherry Hofler, the car's originally intended driver, has instead gravitated toward the couple's other recent purchase, a Porsche Panamera. "We just bought it because everybody was getting one."

Truth to tell, Selvidge has trouble tallying just how many cars comprise his collection. The dozen or so American muscle cars, roadsters and hot rods parked inside and outside of the three garages wrapped around the concrete lot are just a part of the fleet the former Seattle-ite keeps around the couple's 40-year-old Scottsdale home, located just north of Cactus Road across from the Scottsdale Country Club golf course.

"It's a sickness," he admits, with a slight laugh, pointing to his first soapbox racer hanging on one wall of the main garage that started his lifelong obsession with all things automotive. "I've got another garage on the other end of the house, where I've got some Porsches, and I've got a neighbor who lets me store some at his house — I've got 16 cars over there. Those are Rolls-Royces and Bentleys and different style cars. But mainly, I like the hot rods."

Selvidge glances at the dark rainclouds forming overhead, and considers it might

Greg Selvidge owns a three-stall, 2,300-square-foot garage where he keeps the cars he has acquired throughout the years.



Greg Selvidge got his start in business with his start-up TravelChair Company. Selvidge invented the chair-in-a-bag concept that is very popular today. (Photos by Kimberly Carrillo)

be time to move the 'Vettes, Chevelle SS and Bel Airs (a '57 "Black Widow" and a green '55 Nomad) into covered spaces.

"That's the hardest work I have to do around here," says the long-ago retired entrepreneur, chuckling. "There's a lot of moving cars around. It takes a while to put all these toys away."

Brothers of invention

How Selvidge acquired the wealth to amass such an enviable collection of classic and contemporary supercars is a story in itself — and it starts with the chair on which he's sitting.

"You know that chair-in-a-bag you see people toting at every outdoor event today?" he says, pulling out a long, cylindrical storage bag containing a lightweight, folding nylon mesh chair. "I invented these."

Selvidge's start-up was called the TravelChair Company, which he says was later bought out by a novelty company specializing in outdoor goods. The inventor made out good on the sale. "I patented the bag, not the chair," he says. "So, no matter which chair manufacturer wanted to do a chair in a bag, they couldn't rob the idea from me."

He scored another hit with an invention he named the Original Car Duster, a short-handled dust mop with paraffin wax-infused cotton fiber strands he discovered could lift dust from a car's exterior without scratching the paint. "It was later bought by a California company which renamed it the California Car Dust-



er,” Selvidge says. Today the product is considered a must-have accessory by car enthusiasts everywhere.

Selvidge surmises he was always the maker type. Growing up in a small rural town just outside of Bremerton, Washington, where kids were permitted to drive as young as 13, Greg and his brother Craig began tinkering with cars early, rebuilding a 1940 Chevy convertible while they were both in high school. After attending the University of Washington and serving a stint in the U.S. Army as a chaplain’s assistant, Greg joined his brother in managing a marina, where he quickly learned to become a jack of all trades.

“When you work in a marina, it’s a little like being a farmer, as weird as that sounds,” Selvidge says. “You know, if something breaks down, you just figure out a way to fix it. Probably 80% of our customers were Indian fishermen, whose livelihoods depended on them being out on the water every day. If they had a motor burn out, you had to figure out a way to fix it the same day. A lot of the time, we had to actually make our own parts.”

With Craig at the helm, he helped start Craig Craft Powder Coating in the North Seattle area, building a facility to wash and paint boats using a statically-charged powdered polyester material great at protecting watercraft from salt-water corrosion. Selvidge quickly discovered other uses for the equipment, powder coating flip-style poster display racks that he manufactured and sold to art supply and other retail outlets, which found the slick coated surfaces ideal for displaying posters without scratching or creasing the artwork.

“I named that company Wings Inc.,” he says, capitalizing on the wing-like swinging panels soon made famous at every Spencer’s Gifts in America’s shopping malls during the ’80s. “After a number of years, I sold that company to an arts and craft company out of New Jersey.”

Not everyone in Selvidge’s orbit fared as well: the entrepreneur names two former partners, the Wings co-founder and a brother (he doesn’t name which), who each suffered mental illness severe enough to be institutionalized. “The guy I started the poster company with went nuts — literally,” he says. “They had to put him in a straitjacket, and he went to the goofy farm. Eventually I had to buy his wife out of the partnership.”

For Selvidge, however, life’s been



Having retired 33 years ago, Greg Selvidge spends his time traveling the country buying, selling and showing off his dream cars.

good. “Thanks to all these inventions, I was able to retire 33 years ago,” says the now 72-year-old full-time Scottsdale resident (he finally sold his “mini-mansion” in Seattle two years ago, after maintaining dual residences since 2004). “The money was coming in whether I got out of bed or not.

“But you never stop working,” he adds. “Now I just put all my work into my cars.”

Generation next

In some ways, Selvidge seems busier than ever, traveling around the country buying, selling and showing off his latest customized dream cars. With Sherry, he’s often on the road, taking in custom car shows, collector auctions (they’re habitual attendees at the Barrett-Jackson events) and car-themed rockabilly concerts from coast to coast.

“It’s a cool lifestyle,” admits Selvidge, who locally belongs to the Over the Hill Gang hot rod club. “We were in San Diego three weeks ago for a car show, and as soon as we got home, we were off on a trip to Austin for the Lonestar Round Up vintage hot rod show. We’re leaving in a couple of weeks for a cruise to Alaska, and then there’s a big car show over the Memorial Day weekend in Pomona, California. The week after that, I’ll be taking one of my woodies up to Woodies On the Wharf in Santa Cruz. That’s where we always have a full week of fun.”

Unfortunately, while Selvidge has a 44-year-old daughter and three grandkids, no one else in his lineage so far shares his passion for collectible cars.

“No, they’re all little geniuses who are more into computers than classic cars,”

laments Selvidge of his grandchildren. “The oldest is 11, and his IQ is like 185. His old man (Matt Winkler) works as a group engineering manager for Microsoft up in Redmond, so that’s what they’re into.”

Nevertheless, Selvidge admits he’s a doting grandpa, egging the grandkids on to their own endeavors — particularly when he sees them charting their own unique paths to success. The 11-year-old,

Landen Scott-Winkler, is already a gifted cook who qualified as a contestant on the upcoming season of “MasterChef Junior,” the Gordon Ramsay-led competitive cooking show. And Selvidge plans to be glued to his TV.

“He went through four auditions on FaceTime, showing them what he could cook, before they finally accepted him,” Selvidge says. “He’ll start taping that in June, and he’s all excited.”

Selvidge admits he’s a little envious of the tools available to young entrepreneurs today. “Back when we started making the chairs-in-a-bag, we had to send a chair to Taiwan so they could know how to size the bags, and then get up at 2 in the morning to talk with them. Today you could just snap a photo on your cell phone, send it to Taiwan, and in 12 seconds they’d have everything they needed.”

He sits back in the folding chair his invention popularized, looking out on his life’s reward of classic Chevys as a light rain begins to fall. “Imagine,” he muses, “how much easier this all would have been with the technology we have today.” ■



Dementia & Aging Specialists



cypresshomecare.com | 602-264-8009

- transportation
- medication reminders
- meal planning & preparation
- lighting housekeeping
- respite for families
- and much more!

Call today for a free in-home assessment