

Gary and Betty DiVecchia's 1931 Model A Ford Deluxe Rumble Seat Coupe

By Gary DiVecchia

My first car was a 1931 Model A Ford coupe, purchased for \$75 in 1954, when I was a senior in high school. The owner was anxious to sell and, even though the car was painted baby pink and blue, I was equally anxious to buy. I drove this car to school and for pleasure until I went off to college and had to part with it.

The idea of ever owning another Model A Ford never entered my mind since I had other priorities and urgent needs when I was younger. However, when I turned 75, I decided if I am ever going to own another Model A Ford, it has to be now, while I still have the energy and time to enjoy it.

It was 2012 when I began my quest, scouring classified ads, classic car auctions, and search engines such as Ebay. I wanted to see the car in person and not just from photographs, so I looked for local listings. After two years of searching, I found an old inactive add on Ebay for a beautiful, fully restored maroon Model A Ford Rumble Seat Coupe located in Maryland.

The car had been for sale, but the bids were too low. By the time I called about it, the owner told me the car was still for sale, but was stored in his barn and probably would remain there over the winter. I let him know how much I would love to see it, but he said, "maybe in a few months I'll bring it out."

So, I was surprised when he called the next month and asked if I was still interested. Wasting no time, the next day Betty and I drove to Middletown, MD, to see the Model A. After a tour of his home and antique pinball machine collection, the owner took us to the barn.

Even though the Ford had been in storage for a month, it was clean and beautiful, just as it appeared in the photographs on Ebay. The owner started it and handed me the keys. "Take a ride and let me know what you think," he said. It had been a long time since I last drove a Model A, but I didn't hesitate to take the wheel. With Betty beside me, I drove down a gravel road to the paved highway.

The Ford handled nicely and the engine sounded good. When we returned to the owner's home, I did an overall check of the car and made an offer that was a little more than what others had bid on Ebay. The owner knew I was serious and accepted my offer. I firmly believe the sale was not about money, but his knowing I was going to pamper and care for his car, just as he did.

So, on October 14, 2014, we became the proud owners of a Deluxe 5 Window 1931 Model A Ford Coupe with Rumble Seat. We named him, "Little Red."

While Little Red is garage-kept and pampered, he does get out on the road just for fun and on special occasions. And we do attend shows where Little Red often scores well.

A Brief History of the Model A Ford

Ford manufactured its Model A from 1927 to 1931. It replaced the Model T, which had been produced over the previous 18 years. The Model A was the first Ford to use a standard set of driver controls with conventional clutch, brake pedals, throttle and gear shift. It was also the first car to have safety glass in all windows. It is considered the forerunner of today's modern automobile.

By the time production ended in March of 1932, 4,849,340 Model As had been sold. Prices for the Model A in the 1930's varied from \$385 for the basic models to \$1,400 for the top of the line. The basic models were the coupe, roadster, sedan, and station wagon. There was a variety of styles in each model. In 1931, Ford sold 26,067 Deluxe Coups.

The Model A engine is a water-cooled, L-Head 4 cylinder, displacing 201 cubic inches. It produces 40 hp and gives a top speed of 65 miles per hour. The transmission is a conventional manual 3-speed sliding gear type with a single speed reverse.

All Model A's have mechanical four-wheel drum brakes and an emergency lever brake. The dash includes an ignition switch, fuel gauge, voltmeter, odometer and speedometer. The steering wheel houses the headlight bright and dimmer lever, ahooga horn, idle speed control and spark advancer. Tires are 4.75 x 19x2.58 inches on spoke wheel rims. Fuel capacity: 10-gallon gravity-fed system. Heat, air, power steering, and turn signals were not available.







