



ART ON WHEELS

By Kimberly Horg
Photography by Diane Stevenson

If men are judged by what they drive then Almeida's Classic Cars has everything men and women need to look cool. Almeida's purchases and sells on consignment street rods, muscle cars and classics that satisfy the compelling urge to own the car you have always dreamed of.

Almeida's offers some of the hottest automobiles that have ever been made. You can choose from a bright red 1966 AC Cobra 2-Door Roadster, a classy copper 1956 Chevrolet Corvette, a flashy red 1974 Chevrolet Corvette Convertible, or a gnarly green '34 Ford Coupe.

Owners Gary and Cecelia Almeida opened their business in May of 1987 in Turlock, California. Prior to the store opening, Gary restored and built classic cars for Tyree's Classic Auto Restoration. He has worked for some famous car collectors such as Bill Cosby and Merle Haggard and also worked on the Black Hawk Collection, just to name a few.

"I have built cars from the ground up for some of the fussiest individuals so I can look at a car and tell if it is a good car or one that needs a lot of work. I wouldn't sell a car to a customer that I wouldn't buy myself," he said.

Gary and Cecelia have always loved vintage cars. When Gary was a full-time accountant during the day he would then stay up half the night working on cars. Now, his job is to find just the right buyers for

each of the beautiful cars he has on display in his showroom.

"This is a hobby that I turned into a business and I am very fortunate that I am making a living out of doing what I like to do. I get to play with cars and get paid for it! It is fun and I try to keep it fun. I don't engulf myself in my work because I don't want to get burned out," said Gary.

People all over the world buy and sell their cars through Almeida's Classic Cars.

"There are 18 countries in Europe that I ship cars to. Probably 40 percent of the cars go to back East and Europe and the other 60 percent are sold in the western states," Almeida said.

Owning a classic car is a very popular hobby now and a dream for many that Almeida's can easily make a reality.

"Some people are re-living their youth and





getting the cars that they always wanted in high school," he said. "Street rods and muscle cars are the hottest on the market right now because there are not a lot of them left, their muscles were flexed too much."

The Almeida showroom holds about 35 cars at any given time and inventory is constantly moving, either coming in or going out. Gary says it can take a day or two to sell some vehicles, where others may take up to three months to sell. Occasionally it can take up to a year. The more expensive and more rare the

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car, the faster it sells. The red 1966 AC Cobra 2-Door Roadster that just sold for \$395,000 had no trouble getting sold, said Almeida.

Almeida provides a valuable service for car owners and buyers. Sellers bring their fully restored classic, muscle or street rods to Almeida's shop and they take care of everything,

the process of buying and selling a classic car as painless as possible. Sellers bring in the pink slip, tell Gary what they want for their car and he tries to get that price for it. If a different offer is made then he will call the owner to discuss the possibility of a price adjustment so that no misunderstandings are made by either party, he said. When the money is in hand, he sees that the car is delivered to the buyer.

Buyers can be assured that every car is safety checked from top to bottom while it is in Almeida's shop and, if necessary, minor repairs

are made. Only for extremely rare models will they make extensive repairs. The mechanic, Ben Alonzo, who helps do the repairs for Almeida has over 50 years experience in the business.

To see what Almeida's currently has in stock go to www.almeidaclassiccars.com. All the cars have photos that accompany the description,

including all the legalities and paperwork.

"It is frustrating to have to sell a car when you're busy, it's my job to find a buyer for their cars," he said.

Almeida's makes

The cars are sorted by year, make, price or mileage of the particular car the buyer is trying to find. You'll also find directions to their showroom and contact information.

Gary and Cecelia Almeida say, "Business is great! And now we need quality collector cars and street rods to sell!"

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