

Photography

## Automotion 2018

August 7, 2018 | Charles T. Low, Photographer

### A Photographer's Vehicular Playground

Your beloved car would look great through my camera lens. Give me a shout. It's what I do (... one of the things).

It absolutely would not be an open-air, mid-day, full-sun shoot, despite most of the photos which follow here, from Automotion in Brockville in early August.



The short version:

- I had a blast!
- the lighting was impossible, but that's when a photographer must bring something to the shoot;
- there were people everywhere, which is good for the producers of Automotion, but frankly it was not always practical to wait for a clear shot;
- I talk a lot about backgrounds, and again there was limited scope here, but again, that's when a photographer must find a way;
- I was not alone, meaning that I saw cameras big and small at every turn - I would love to see the work of some other photographers, much of which I am sure would be spectacular. I wonder about collecting it all in one place in an organized manner.



For a photographer looking for shapes, angles, textures ... everything about composition ... look no further than an automobile exhibition!

The story is that the Thousands Islands Street Machine Association runs a number of events every year, but the crowning and defining moment comes on the Sunday of the August long weekend at Blockhouse Island in Downtown Brockville.. They call it Automotion. They had well over 400 vehicles on exhibit this year, and goodness knows how many thousands of visitors came to see them - quite the day's entertainment for only \$5!

It can overwhelm me with that where-do-I-start feeling, but then of course one just walks around, stopping when interested, or concentrating on specific sections if so compelled, because naturally the vehicles are grouped by theme. The owners in general are very happy to talk.

Sponsors contribute to the event, often in the way of prizes and trophies, there is judging by category, there is food and drink available, and there is a live music band.

But the main thing I'm quite sure for most visitors is of course the vehicles. I present only a small sample of very personal choices.

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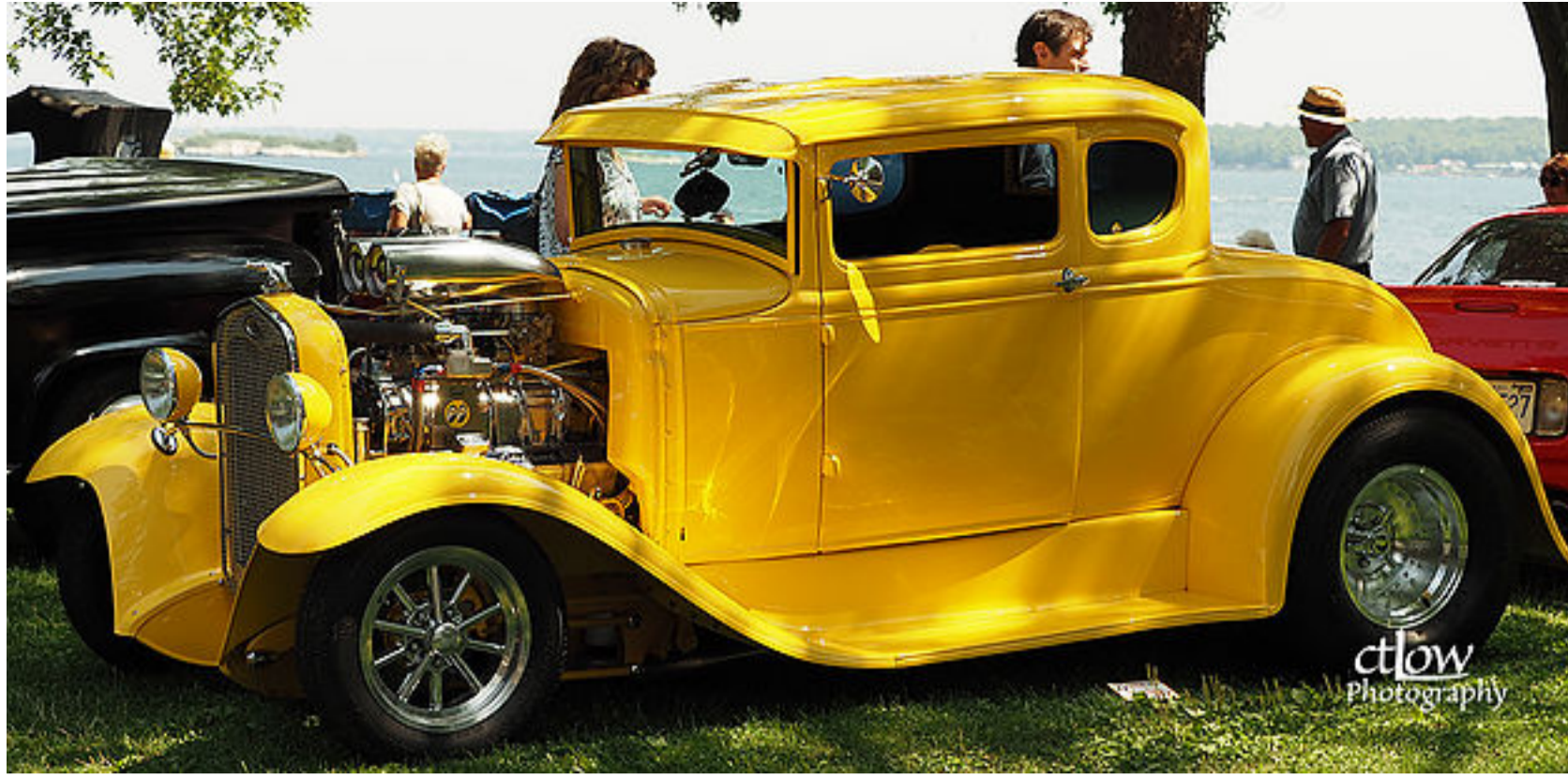
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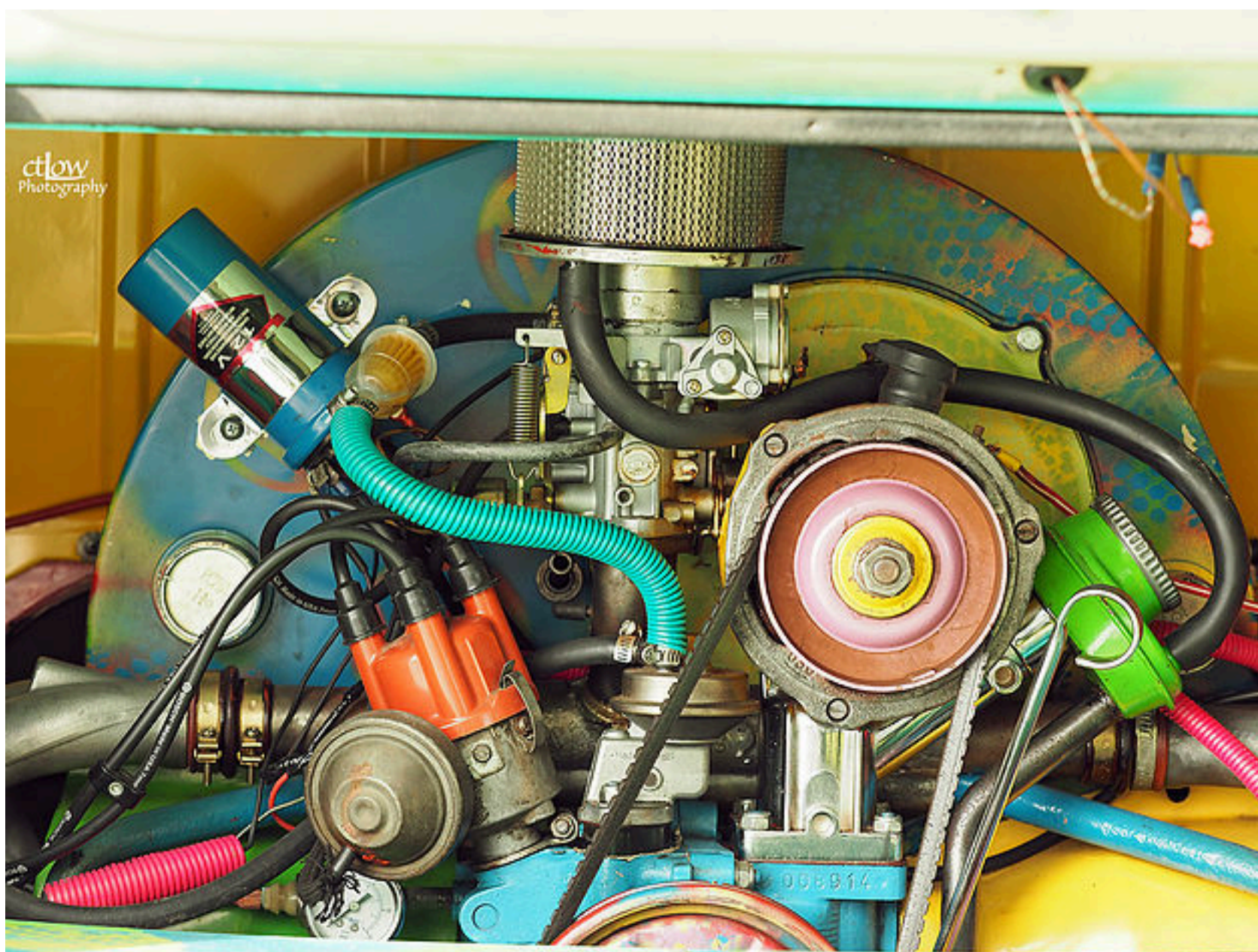
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This is representative, not that there is any vehicle is necessarily like any other, but the owner has taken an old car and put a wild engine in it - and had it painted and then polished to within an inch of its life! Gorgeous? I think so. Interesting? No question.



The hippy owners of this VW Peace-Love-Happiness van should just get jobs and start contributing something to society!!! Oh wait, am I old enough to be that grumpy? I didn't meet them, but I'm sure they're very nice people and they certainly have the gumption to have gussed this number up imaginatively and expertly! I loved the homage to the '60s (I guess).



Even the engine in this VW van was psychedelic (and the lid open, definitely part of the visual feast!).

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And this is what happens in my photo-editing software when I apply "Glowing Edges" - much I'm sure as that generation saw it when they were on a "road trip"!



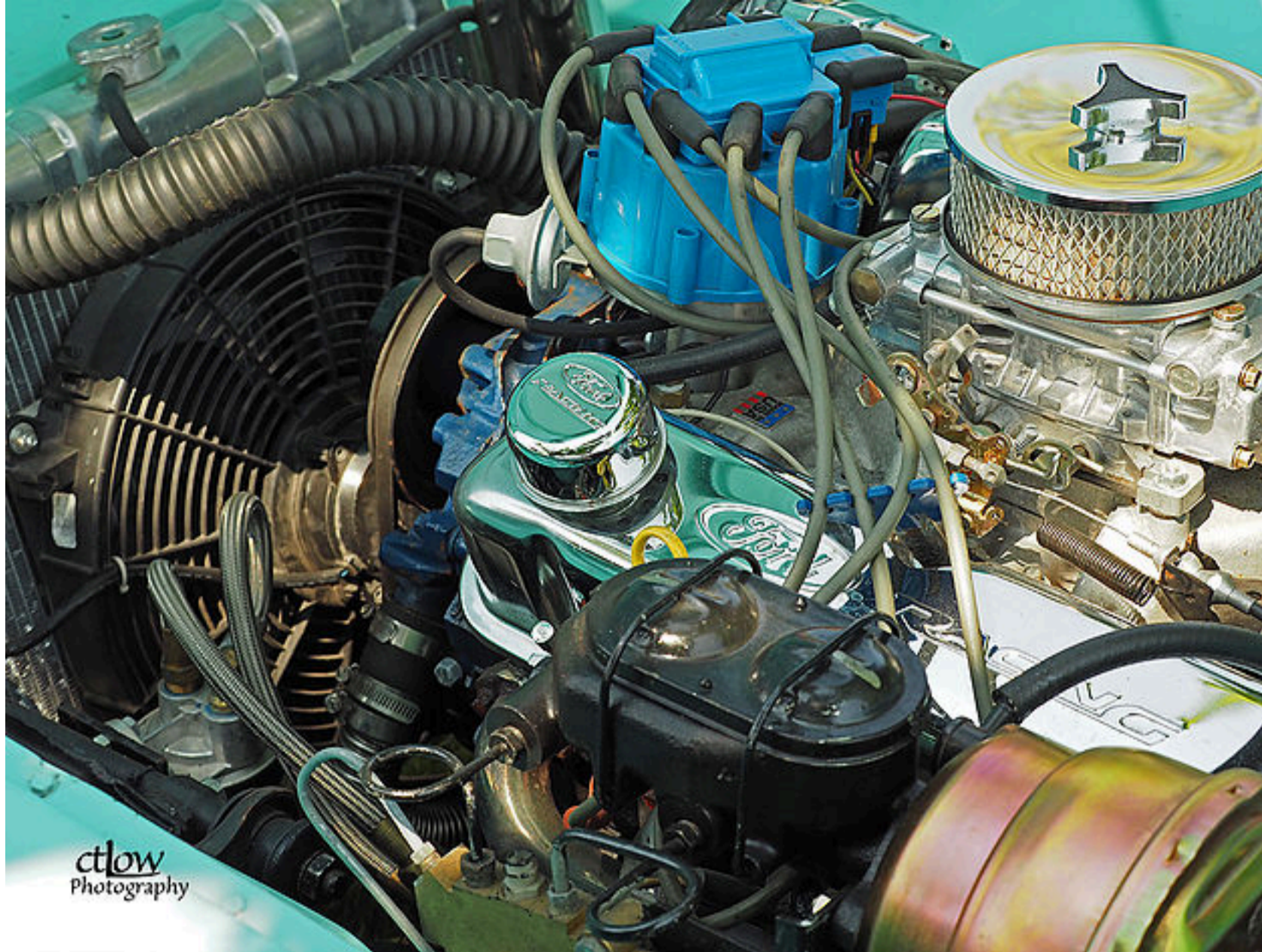
This owner apparently didn't have room on the dashboard, or didn't want to deface it, so added in all of the extra gauges, which he or she thought that the pumped-up engine deserved, on the outside of the car, just in front of the windshield wipers.



I gotta' get me one of those! (Step-ladder not included.)



Every self-respecting car show needs a few staples, such as a Lamborghini.



"Why," one of my favourite people asks in a state of minor desperation, "would you take a picture of a ... a ... a car engine?!?"  
Because they're beautiful.



Another staple: the Chevy Corvette. There were many of them there, old and new. Only one had quite the drama of this paint job.

Speaking of graphics, there was a lot of death around. I don't quite get this, but the following represent only a fraction of what I saw. Granted, the artistic prowess in all cases was impressive.



Ram's skull.



Really well-done graphics of ... human skulls.



Not all of the graphics had such a dark theme.



This was by no means the only BMW in the show - but I think it was the only Isetta!



Lots of BelAirs - all really nice. Technical photography note: this is one way to cut through some of the clutter, isolating the subject from an overly-busy background of other cars and people, and capture some of the essence of the lines and the gleam ... but it does require cooperative knees.



A very old pickup truck, again from ground level.





Again, there are many compelling details, which also helps with clutter, and this for example shows part of the engine, body graphics, a reflection including a shy owner ... and more!



This is the whole vehicle whose fender is shown in the previous picture. I pale to think of the work (and money) involved to get a vehicle looking like this. "Catfish", they call her. And ... there's the owner. Shy or not, I told her, you bring your vehicle to an event like this, you're going to get into the photo! (I'm sure she'll get over it.)



I wondered what the Peace Women might have been thinking about this car show erupting all around them.



The motif on this Cadillac shows up once in a while, and I have to discover exactly but it certainly looks intentional. A truly rusty old vehicle like that would be falling apart, and these are all completely intact. Notice the discordantly gleaming wheels. The body-lowering is surely also a refurbishing choice made by the owner.



And just a splash of immaculate graphics around the hood-emblem, on the "rust" of this Cadillac.



Many of the vehicles arrive on their own tires, but the rusty old Cadillac's license - staying within the paint scheme! - is unlikely to be valid, and I imagine that the car was trailed in.

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I was there at Automotion with a friend, and he was very patient and understanding about my photography, plus very knowledgeable about old vehicles, which certainly added to the experience.

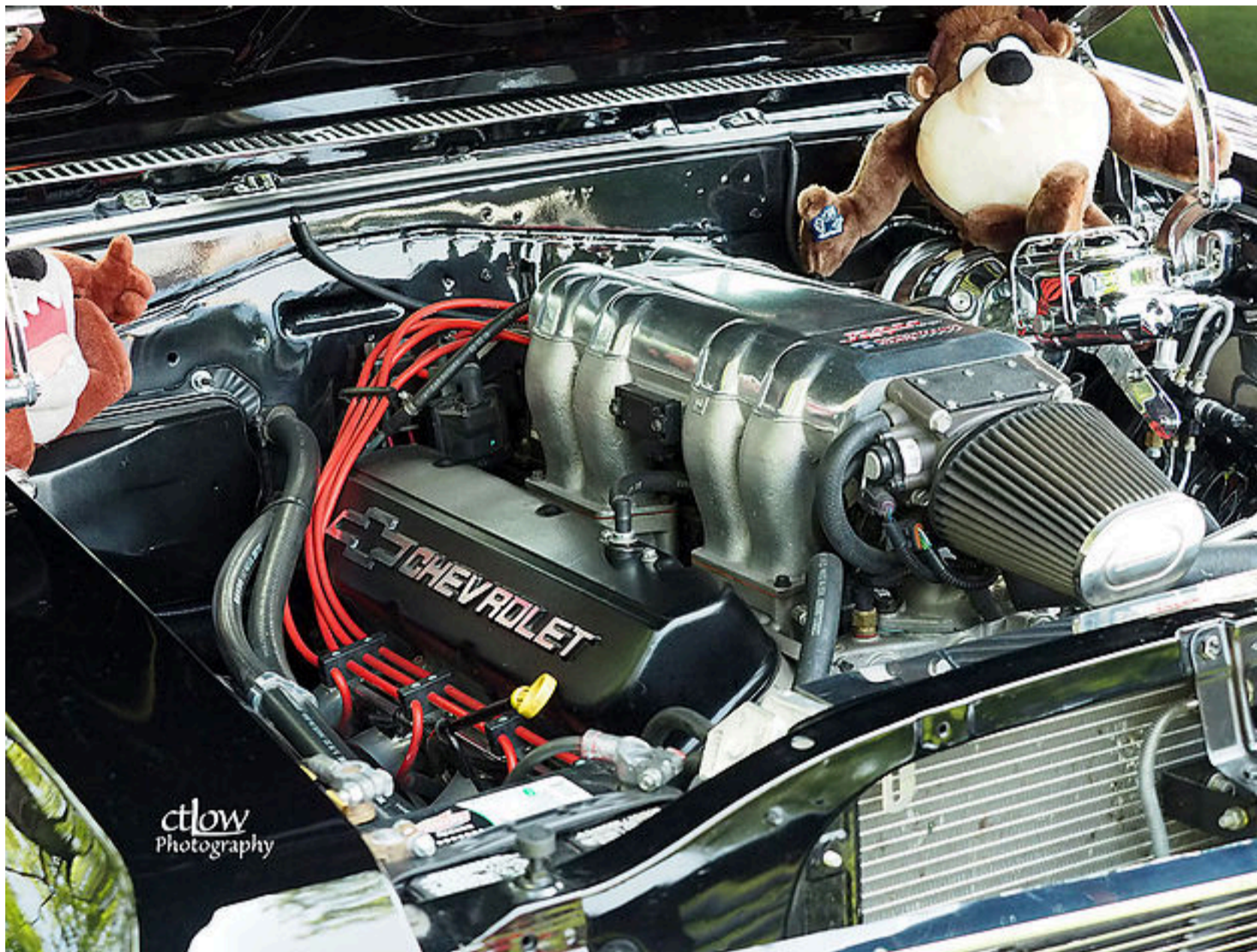
He has a personal connection to the Pontiac Beaumont, a much less common vehicle than some others. There were lots of (lovely) Chevelles and Novas, but he said, "We have a project: we're going to find a Beaumont." It took some searching but find one we did.



Beaumont. This fellow owns an automotive restoration business, so of course doing his own vehicle took close to a decade (customers come first!).



Again, sometimes the beauty is as much in the details as in the entirety.



The Beaumont engine - a Chev! I'm sure that it - as well as the Tasmanian Devils - are not stock.

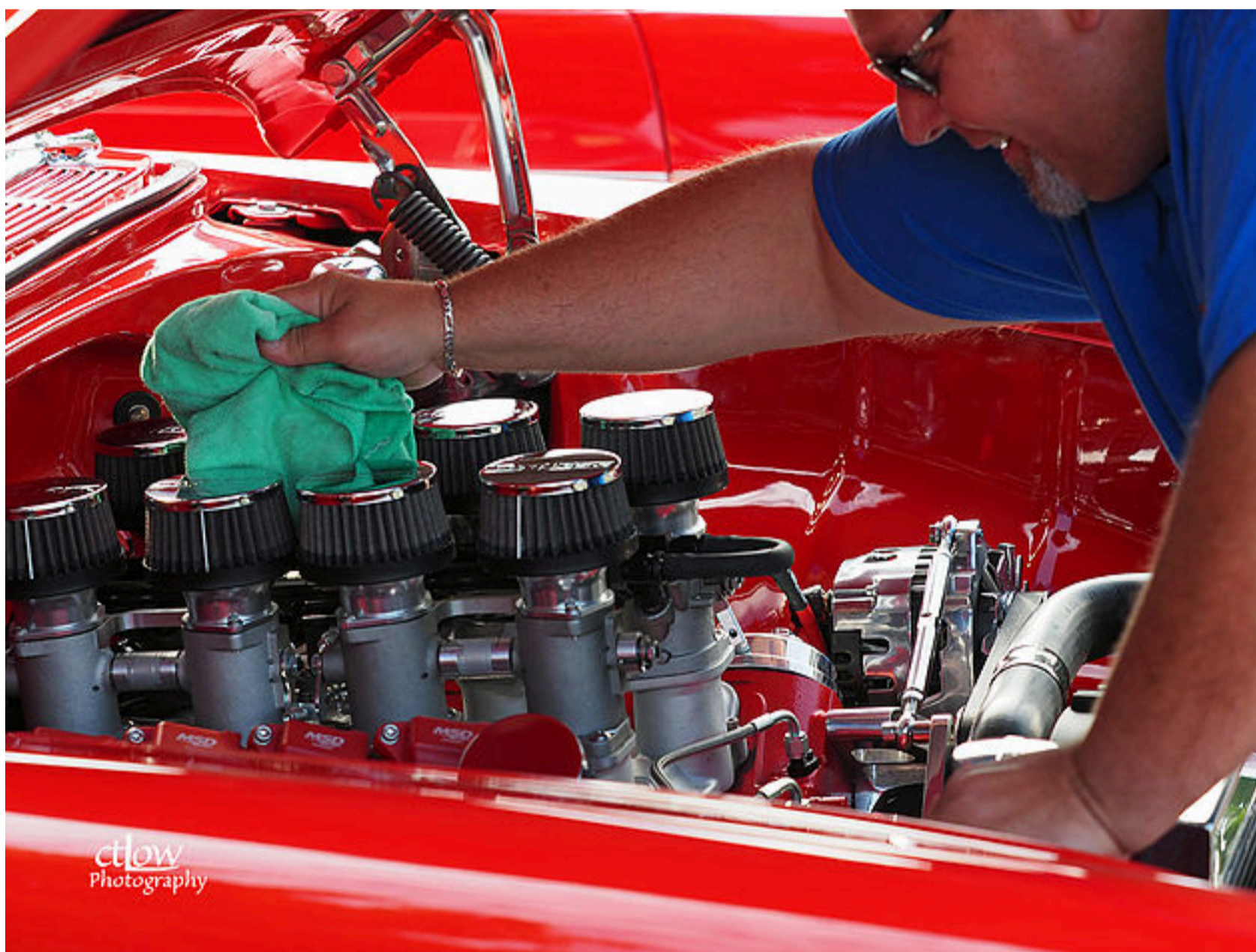
Lots of the owners had their own stories, and often their connection to a particular vehicle would centre on events of their early lives. I didn't find any who seemed reticent to discuss their emotional connections to their cars or trucks. I didn't find any who had no such connection.

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It was fairly common, especially earlier in the day, to see owners buffing up their chariots, often in places where I didn't know they had places!



Buffing



Buffing - eight(!) air filters



Buffing spokes. (I'm thinking that car exhibiting is not ever going to be my hobby.)

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I have to mention one other car which caught my attention. I had seen this one before, at a car show in Prescott last year, and so assumed it to be local and asked about the decorative Florida license plate. But no, the car and the owners are from Florida, but have an Eastern Ontario connection, and in the Summer come up to this area and do car shows.

We all have our reasons, but mine are that i) they have done a fabulous job with this car, and ii) I have the same car and sub-model - well, mine hasn't had the post-sales work done on it and doesn't look like this. But the owner knows his car, and was able to give me several useful maintenance tips.



Camaro RS. Like mine, except that the modification list is extensive, so not like mine! Note just at a glance: the aerodynamics kit under the rocker panels, the reverse-opening hood, the scissor doors ... and then there are scores of others, some cosmetic, some functional.



I mean, c'mon - it's just breathtaking, that's all there is to it!

One of the other things I do is live performance photography. Automotion provided a live band.



River City Junction - hard to define, but not so much this millennium's music. They were really good, the choice of music was excellent, and they exhibited lots of energy and joy, and considerable talent! I took a while just to listen - time very well spent.

Note also the long list of sponsors - the event not possible without them! Thank you, sponsors!



vocalist/percussionist

So that's another consideration, as well as commissioning me for an automotive shoot; if you have a performance group which you would like photographed, please get in [touch](#).

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So, that was Automotion 2018: hundreds of cars, thousands of visitors, and at least one very contented photographer.

Think about your special automobile, and remember that I photograph them, and I photograph them well. Cars and trucks are tricky - so highly reflective, prone to glare, irregular surfaces at all angles - and I relish the challenge.





My Camaro. It was not in the show! But I hope that you will agree that this is far beyond a simple snapshot.

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### While you're here:

Remember that I make photographs and that I sell photographs.

Almost everything which you see on this web site is for sale. Prices at the time of writing, for example, for an 11x14" fine-art print with a generous white border would start at about \$50, and you can go up or down from there. Check the [rates page](#). More importantly, check out my [gallery](#).

Book a portrait-sitting - the right frequency with which to commission formal [portraits](#) is a bit more often.

Remember also to leave a comment, or to [contact me](#). Note that on the main [blog](#) page you can sign up for new-blog notifications. I am very careful and respectful with your privacy.

Thank you so much for reading.

**Charles T. Low**  
Photographer










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