

VanDerBrink — The Baus Collection

Some ran, others wouldn't, and none had or were sold with a battery. Yes, it was a BYOB auction



Bring lots of trailers, and/or batteries

Company

VanDerBrink Auctions

Date

May 28, 2016

Location

Hoven, SD

Auctioneers

Yvette VanDerBrink, Dale Pavlis, Aaron Williamson

Automotive lots sold/offered

31/31

Sales rate

100%

Sales total

\$272,074

High sale

1960 Cadillac Series 62 convertible, sold at \$36,720

Buyer's premium

No onsite buyer's premium, 8% for online bidders, included in sold prices

Report and photos by B. Mitchell Carlson
Market opinions in *italics*

Located in the middle of South Dakota — barely east of the Missouri River — the small farming community of Hoven is usually known for its ornate Gothic-style Catholic church (known as The Cathedral on the Prairie). However, collector-car enthusiasts made a pilgrimage of their own on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend to attend the liquidation auction of Harvey Baus.



Before retirement, Mr. Baus had the only body shop in Potter County and did well enough with it to start buying cars. Most came from the local area — including the local priest, in several instances, as well as fellow parishioners from the church.

It was pretty easy to discern Mr. Baus' automobile profile as a devotee of post-war American luxury cars. It was also pretty easy to tell that he couldn't leave them alone. Like a lot of guys from the immediate post-World War II era, he liked to personalize and add extra trinkets — especially St. Christopher medallions and pinstriping. In some extreme cases, he created several vehicles that never existed — such as a 1978 Chevy pickup with a 10-foot Fleetside box.

To make room for the cars, he built a 40-by-120-foot pole shed next to his home and a block south of the church. (Did I mention that this was a predominantly Catholic community?) To augment the cars, he also had

eight engines painted up and on display, along with nine pedal cars and 16 pedal tractors. (Did I mention this was in South Dakota?)

However, for the past several years, the now elderly Mr. and Mrs. Baus have been in a nursing home. To pay the bills, the family decided to sell off the entire building full of cars — and even the building. Yvette VanDerBrink and her auction company were consigned to sell everything related to the collection, also utilizing Proxibid for online bidder access.

Yvette started the auction promptly at 10 bells (literally — did I mention the Catholic church in town?) with the usual boxes of miscellaneous tools and parts. By 10:40 a.m., they started on the first car, a 1960 Cadillac Series 62 convertible. With copiously applied pinstriping along almost every body contour, the car sold to an online bidder for \$36,720. It proved to be the high sale of the day.

Since the cars had been sitting for years — in some cases decades — most needed brake work. Some ran, others wouldn't, and none had or were sold with a battery. Yes, it was a BYOB auction.

Not that anyone would prudently consider driving any of these cars further than to a trailer. Even that was a challenge, as the city had decided 2016 was the year to tear up the main road through town, from welcome sign to welcome sign.

At 11 bells, the Almighty wrought His vengeance for being usurped, and it started raining. Initially light sprinkles, but within a half hour, it was a deluge, with Yvette invoking my first-ever rain delay at a collector car auction. By 12 bells and a carillon rendition of Franz Joseph Haydn's *Die Kaiserhymne* (did I mention that this is a German Catholic community?), the storm passed and the auction continued, with all 31 cars and the building sold by one bell.

I've learned years ago that I never take my Corvette to a VanDerBrink auction, since it will inevitably involve either driving in mud or parking in a cornfield. I left Hoven Saturday afternoon slinging mud, thanking the Good Lord that I took my pickup with four-wheel drive instead. ♦