

Automotive News

Lambrecht Chevy auction of rare cars draws \$2.8 million in bids

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Editor's note: A previous version of this story had an incorrect tally of bids from the second day of the auction, which made the two-day tally incorrect. The corrected totals are reflected below.

Last weekend's Lambrecht Chevrolet auction brought 15,000 people and TV's "Top Gear" to a small Nebraska town, where nearly 500 Chevrolets mostly from the 1950s, '60s and '70s were auctioned off to the tune of an estimated \$2.8 million.

The vehicles were the unsold inventory of Lambrecht Chevrolet, which closed in 1996 after 50 years. The vintage cars attracted attention from as far away as Brazil, Thailand and Europe since the auction was announced in June.

The Pierce County Sheriff's Office estimated the crowd at around 15,000, including 3,000 on-site bidders. An additional 3,300 placed bids for the vehicles online.

Day 1 of the auction, Saturday, Sept. 28, saw the **big-ticket vehicles** hit the block, with the first 10 cars selling for a total of \$676,500.

Highlights of the first day included a 1958 Chevrolet Cameo pickup with 1.3 miles on the odometer selling for \$140,000 and a '78 Corvette with 4 miles selling for \$80,000. One sale that stunned "Top Gear" involved a '77 Vega that sold for \$10,000.

Saturday's auction attracted many willing to spend. Vehicles that went for hefty amounts included:

- 1958 Chevrolet Cameo pickup, 1.3 miles, sold for \$140,000.
- 1964 Chevrolet Impala, 11 miles, brought in \$97,500.
- 1958 Chevrolet Apache 31 Series Truck, 5 miles, brought \$80,000.
- 1978 Corvette Indy pace car, 4 miles, sold for \$80,000.
- 1964 Chevrolet Impala, 4 miles, sold for \$75,000.

VanDerBrink Auctions, which held the event, does not release official sales totals. But according to sales figures on online bidding site Proxibid.com, Saturday's auction involved 238 items -- including memorabilia from the dealership -- and brought in \$1,951,030 in bids. The auction on Sunday, Sept. 29, sold the remainder of the inventory and collected \$890,395. The two-day total: \$2,841,425.

Sunday's auction saw more action than Saturday, but the prices weren't as spectacular, with the highest total coming in at just \$27,000. Sunday's sales included:

- 1964 Chevrolet C10 pickup, 3 miles, sold for \$27,000.

- 1966 Chevrolet Impala, 6,549 miles, sold for \$15,500.
- 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air, 72,477 miles, brought in \$14,500.
- 1959 Chevrolet Biscayne, 25,112 miles, received \$12,500 in bids.
- 1966 Chevrolet Chevelle saw the gavel drop at \$11,250.

Day 2 also featured a collection of what some enthusiasts described as oddball cars.

At the auction, Jeannie Lambrecht Stillwell, the daughter of dealership founders Ray and Mildred Lambrecht, told the crowd that it was always her father's plan to have an auction because he never wanted to throw anything away. Instead, he put unsold inventory into storage.

"He knew that one day whatever he stored would be valuable to collectors, so he didn't have a problem keeping them," she told Automotive News before the event. "The new cars that he did not sell were added to Dad's collection of vehicles."

Autoweek contributed to this report.

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This 1978 Chevrolet Corvette Indy pace car brought \$80,000.

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