



Photo courtesy of Alyn Edwards, Peak Communicators, Ltd. Vancouver, BC

Brian Beard has restored two rare 3/4-ton, 4-WD Mercury M250 pickups, including this 1967 model he worked on when he was just 18 years old.

Rare Mercury 4-WD Pickups Restored

Brian Beard has two rare 3/4-ton, 4-WD, Mercury M250 pickups that are fully restored. One is a 1967 model Beard bought new in 1968. It was one of only 125 built that year. The other is a 1966 model and it's even more rare because fewer were built. Almost as unusual as the trucks themselves are the journeys they've been on and the fact that they ended up in the same garage.

One reason the trucks are so rare is that Mercury branded pickups were sold only in Canada and only until 1968. The other is that 4-WD models were priced at twice that of 2-WD trucks. At the time, it was worth it to Beard, who caught four-wheel fever at age 14, after riding in his neighbor's Dodge Power Wagon.

Beard earned money hauling supplies to Edmonton, Alta., area oil fields after school and weekends. He ordered the 1967 M250 when he was just 18. Outfitted with a 352-cu. in. V-8, 4-speed transmission, two-tone paint, cab lights, AM radio and bush bar, the truck stood out at the time.

"Wherever I went with it, people would remark that it was the prettiest truck they had ever seen," says Beard.

Once Beard left home for college, he discovered keeping up on payments was too much. He worked out a deal with his cousin Buck, who put the truck to work on his farm. By 1979, it had been beat up and worn out.

In 2009 Buck called with an offer to restore

the old truck. It took two years, parts from another 1967 Mercury pickup and a total redo. The truck was disassembled, the frame sandblasted and painted, and the engine rebuilt along with the running gear. Rusted and damaged body parts were replaced with transplants from the second truck, and repainted. Even the original bush guard was repaired and reinstalled. It had been twisted out of shape towing tractors out of the mud in years past.

Since bringing it home, Beard, who now lives near Vancouver, B.C., has taken it to car and truck shows. "It's wonderful to be able to tell people how rare and special she is," he says.

When Beard heard about a 1966 M250 in northern Saskatchewan, he decided to check it out. The original owner's son-in-law had restored it. Though it had a completely different body, it too had 4-WD. The engine and running gear were identical.

"The odds were one in a hundred to find a second Mercury pickup from that time, with 4-WD and a V-8 engine," says Beard, who bought it. "Like mine, it had been a special order. Most pickups had V-6 engines and 2-WD. It's neat to have a matched set to take to shows."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brian Beard, 6872 229 St., Langley, B.C., Canada V2Y 2J7 (ph 604 888-7967 or 604 953-2321; b.beard@shaw.ca).



Robert Jones 2 corkscrew with an 1842 English registration (left) sold for \$36,780 at a recent auction. An 18th century Irish corkscrew called the "Read's Coaxer" sold for \$35,555.

Rare Corkscrews Sell For Top Prices

You won't believe the prices paid for antique corkscrews at a recent online auction conducted by ICCAuctions, a volunteer organization that's part of a corkscrew collecting association.

An 18th century Irish corkscrew called the "Read's Coaxer" sold for a record price of \$35,555. It's a vertical handle corkscrew mounted on brass, with an ivory plaque with inlaid crest in the handle.

The Robert Jones 2 corkscrew – with an 1842 English registration – sold for \$36,780.

It has a brass barrel marked "Robert Jones & Son, Birmingham". Two steel spikes on the barrel assist in removing the cork.

One of the sellers at the auction sold a rare Philos Blake corkscrew for \$5,000, after finding the corkscrew in a Los Angeles thrift shop for just \$39. It was the first corkscrew patented in the U.S., with the patent dated March 27, 1860. It was patented by the nephew of Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, and is considered one of the rarest of U.S. patented corkscrews.

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A new kind of cattle dog competition called "Rodearing" consists of the rider and dog riding and cutting out 3 to 5 cows.

Cattle Dog Competition Catching On

A new kind of cattle dog competition is showing up at rodeos and horse shows. "Rodearing" tests the ability of dog, horse and man to move cattle through an obstacle course.

"Rodearing is an alternative for folks who no longer participate in cutting competitions," says Merle Newton, Crystal Rose Cow Dog College. "It requires special training for the dogs above and beyond regular cow dog competitions."

Rodearing originated with cowboys using dogs to circle and hold groups of cattle without the aide of a corral. This allowed the cowboy to work them wherever the need, according to Newton.

"In Rodearing competition, we start with sorting and separating, which runs counter to a cow dog's instinct and training," he explains. "Their instinct is to gather and hold the cattle together."

Newton notes that cow dog handlers used to working on the ground may have to learn new tricks as well. He offers training videos on picking a horse for rodearing and what a

rodearing dog needs to know. He also offers other online training videos (Vol. 36, No. 5) on sorting and working cattle with a dog from horseback.

"People who are dog savvy may not be horse savvy, but rodearing takes both skills," he says.

Rodearing competition consists of the rider and dog riding into a herd in a sort pen and cutting out 3 to 5 cows. This smaller group is then brought out into an open arena or field and put through a series of obstacles. The team receives a point for each cow passing through an obstacle within the time limit; with the fastest time breaking a tie if two or more gather the same points in the allotted time.

"It's really enjoyable to do and to watch," says Newton.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Crystal Rose Cow Dog College, 14200 Red Bank Rd., Red Bluff, Calif. 96080 (ph 530 529-3700; crcdc1@gmail.com; www.cowdogtrainingonline.com).

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