

THE RIDE OF HER DREAMS

BY RICA KEENUM

Candy Williams has always been sweet on convertibles, including her Ford Galaxie, a boat of a ride in need of repairs. But Candy adored the fixer-upper, deeming it her “dream boat.”

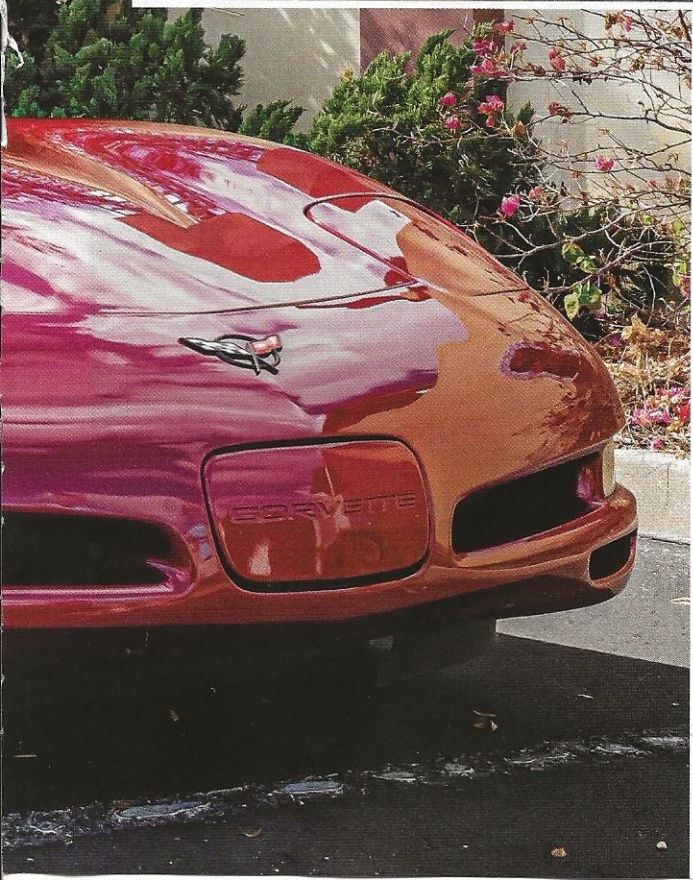
“We had a huge garage back home, and the guys were always working on cars,” she said. “So I had to do all the sanding of the body, had to really work to redo it.”

Candy and her husband Lloyd tackled the job together, enlisting others to assist with various updates.

(Lloyd) painted it for me, and then we had a friend who did the upholstery on our son’s car, and he did my ‘68,” she said. “I loved that car, but it was big. It didn’t have good brakes. It didn’t have great steering.”

As the car aged, Candy and Lloyd talked about retirement and about moving from Seattle to a warmer climate. Lloyd suggested she consider a more up-to-date car, one with airbags and better handling.





"We're going to take a lot of drives," he said.

Candy pondered the possibilities, but quickly dismissed her fantasy of owning a sleek Corvette.

"It was the only car I really wanted, but it wasn't affordable," she said. "But just as luck would have it, we were doing some work on the house and one of the guys that came out said, 'hey, if you ever think about selling that pretty blue car, I'm interested.'"

Candy sold her Galaxie to the man, but didn't have a set of wheels to replace it.

"We started looking, and Lloyd has a friend that had a car shop and car dealership; he happened to have a convertible."

It was the start of autumn, a slow season for convertibles in Seattle — a bad time for the market but ideal for Candy and Lloyd, who could now nab the car at a discount.

"It was a real godsend," Candy said. "So, we went (to the dealership) and I had never driven one before. The most powerful thing I'd ever driven was my first car, a Mustang Mach. But it wasn't anything like the Corvette."

Easing inside the car, Candy clenched the wheel as Lloyd offered a bit of advice.

"Be careful — you realize you've got a lot of power here."

Candy took it slow, cautious yet elated.

"I was an old hag with it," she said, laughing. "But that first drive — yeah, I realized it was going to be a lot of fun."

Candy and Lloyd bought the car and hit the road for their retirement destination: The Villages.

"We drove it from Seattle to here, and I did most of that driving — over 3000 miles," Candy said. "And it did just beautiful, just perfect. It's comfortable, has really good seats. It's meant for being on the on the road and it likes to go fast."

Candy is happy with the model she chose, noting that it offers plenty of storage and is roomy enough for Lloyd, a tall guy.

Now three years into their life in The Villages, Candy and Lloyd spend their days with the top down, cruising to car shows and social club meetings, often sharing the experience with other Corvette fans — human and canine.

"Our nephew's dog likes to sit there," Candy said, pointing to a passenger-side spot. "He likes it fast, but not too fast."

Candy and Lloyd are grateful for the good times yet to come, courtesy of their corvette and many new friends.

"It was kind of a dream coming to Florida," Candy said. "I could get emotional because it's just so perfect."

With their sporty set of wheels on the open road, Candy and Lloyd relish the ease of retirement — the freedom to simply have fun.