

# Cold War Pontiacs

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Pontiacs of Central California member Sam Troncoso has always been a collector of old Pontiac parts but recently decided to try out selling some of them on eBay. So, he gathered up several items that he thought might stir some interest on eBay but then had to figure out how to do it. The easiest route was to ask a fellow club member, Bill Richards, to list them on his eBay seller's account. Several pictures later all the ads were composed and placed on eBay.

Several days after these ads were placed Bill Richards received an email from a prospective buyer who resided in the country of Laos. Although the ads said no international sales, this person was adamantly interested in purchasing a steering wheel ring for a 1956 Star Chief. At first, he was told that this would not be considered but after hearing the story of his old 56 Pontiac that he had in Laos, an exception was made.

In communications with Dr. Bertand Martines-Aussel, it appears that he is a French national expatriated and living in Laos. The car is a 1956, 4 door that he believes to be a Canadian 860 Chieftain Sedan. He also believes this is the only one of its kind in Laos and was told that the car was imported to Laos for the military attaché' at the former US Embassy.



The 56 sedan was found in wrecked condition and being used for wood storage. Without the financial resources to do an original restoration Bertrand stated that his main focus will be to restore the outer portions of the car to look original. However, critical items like engines are very expensive to come up with in Laos, so it was necessary to explore other resources. The car is now equipped with a V 6 Toyota engine! The car is just in the initial stages of body restoration and will also receive new paint.

Toyota powered!



An interesting note is that the sister vehicle, the 1956 station wagon, has been correctly restored by a Swedish owner of a Scandinavian Bakery, also in Laos. This car is believed to have also been built in Canada and factory fitted with a straight 6 truck engine. Designed for use by the US Army, its rugged construction was ideal for the rough roads of Laos. There is evidence that The Station Wagon was shipped to Laos along with a sedan of the same year and model, for use by the US Embassy. It appears that it was common practice for embassies to buy cars in such pairs-the sedan for official use, the station wagon for other uses.

This can only show you that there are Pontiac lovers every where. Not being a 1956 Star Chief or Chieftain experts (we're not even sure the steering wheel ring will work!), we could not offer further assistance on Bertrand's search for parts. We wish him luck and hopefully we will receive updates.

