

SMOKE SIGNALS

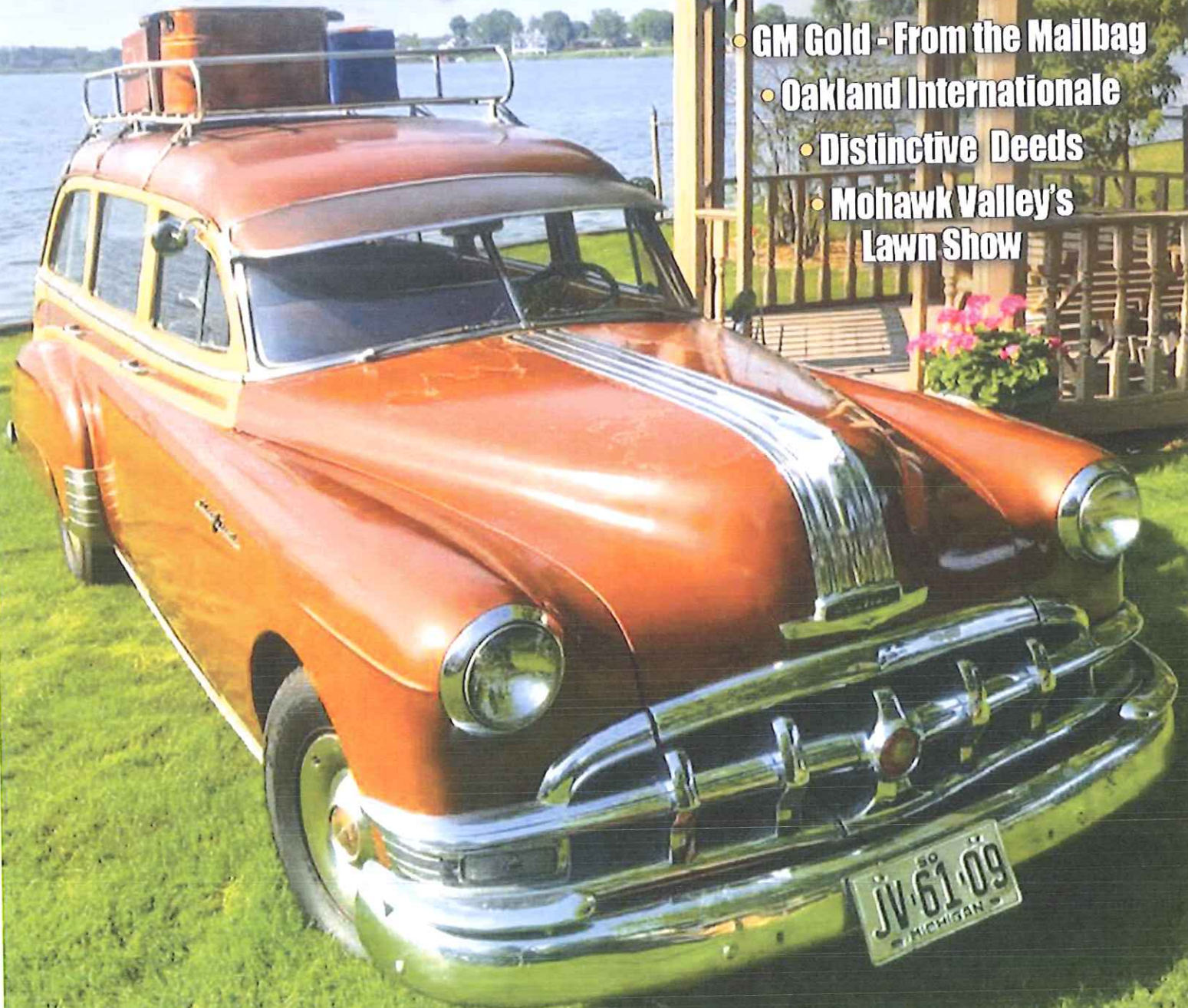
Pontiac - Oakland Club International

Est. 1972 • August 2021

1950 Pontiac Tin Woody

In The Shadows A Look Back at GM's 75th Anniversary

- GM Gold - From the Mailbag
- Oakland Internationale
- Distinctive Deeds
- Mohawk Valley's Lawn Show



Two-Lane Blacktop's 50th Anniversary Continues!

1950 PONTIAC TIN WOODY STATION WAGON

WAS IT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?

BY BRUCE ANNETT



Growing up in Pontiac, Michigan during the 1950s and '60s, the automotive "home teams" were, of course, Pontiac and GMC Truck. Many of the kids I knew had at least one parent employed by those GM divisions, and everyone else in the community had an economic stake in the success of those brands.

As a result, my love of Pontiac cars was deep and early. I still own my first car — a 1969 LeMans purchased new. However, I've also always had an affinity for the 1949-'51 "tin woody" station wagons.

Tin woody bodies mimicked the look of wood but were



A unique feature on the station wagon models are the taillights. As the tailgate is lowered, the lights pivot so they are always facing toward the rear. As a result, if you are hauling a load with the gate down the lights can still be seen from behind.



the first to have a frame and decorative body accents made of steel. Wood still reigned inside where the door panels and cargo area were lined with varnished plywood and complementary oak trim. Wagons were the most pricey of all Pontiac body styles when new, listing for nearly \$2,500.

After a decade of searching, in 2011, I found my 1950 Pontiac Streamliner wagon in nearby Troy, Michigan.

The basics were all there, and the car did indeed run... mostly. The previous owner had replaced the gas tank and brakes, patched the floors, and acquired many extra parts, including pieces for an elusive third seat that boosts passenger capacity to eight.

Affectionately, if not also predictably, I named my car "Woody." Since buying him, I've enlisted the help of many talented individuals who have helped bring this once stately Pontiac back to life. We've replaced most of the broken window glass, rebuilt the Hydra-Matic transmission, and re-covered the seats.

Firing-up Woody's Straight-8 engine had always been an ordeal, so this past spring he got a rebuilt starter, a new solenoid, starter button, and another new 6-volt battery. So far, so good!

Through Facebook, the owner before last stumbled upon me. He told



Pontiac station wagons in 1950 featured all-metal exteriors, yet a few wooden interior trim pieces remained including door panels such as the example shown here.

me he had moved the car from California to Florida before subsequently selling it to the Michigan owner from whom I purchased it. The wagon's warm-weather youth explains why, after 72 years, it remains relatively rust-free.

At some point Woody was repainted and clear-coated close to its original Solar Gold hue, but now the paint is peeling like a bad sunburn. I've got to decide whether to keep it as-is or repaint it and then forever obsess about chipping a new finish.

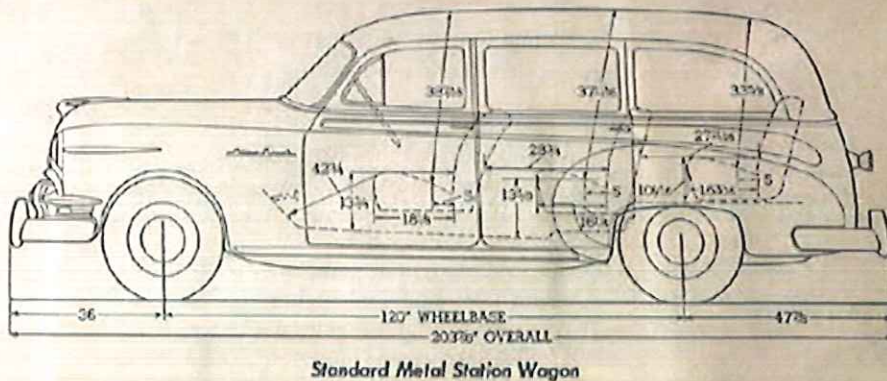
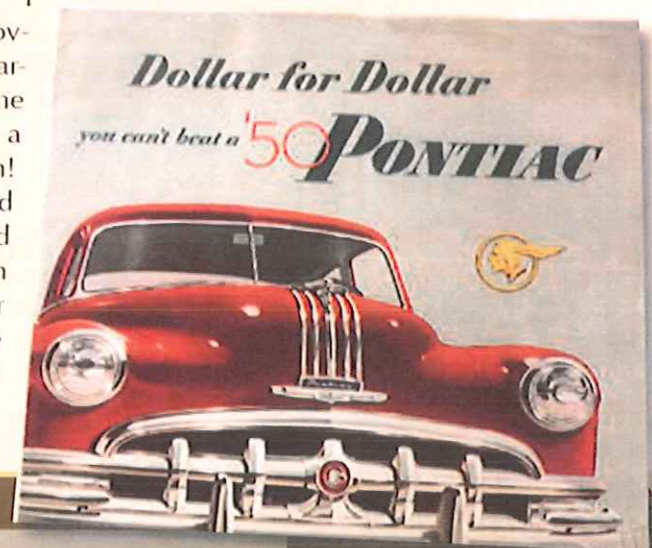
Meanwhile, some of the chrome remains "iffy," and Woody wears a 1951 hood ornament (which I'd love to replace with a correct 1950 illuminated Chief).

The headliner and windlace also need replacing, and I'm considering what floor covering materials to use. Happily, my pending retirement will give me time to begin sorting out those details.



Recently, upon having some vintage 16mm family movies transferred onto digital media, I was startled to discover that in 1952 my parents drove me home from the hospital in a similar Pontiac wagon! Hmmm? It's been said that newly hatched ducklings "imprint" on their mothers in order to remain close while growing up. Like I said, my love of Pontiacs was deep and ear-

ly. Could it be that a Pontiac wagon was the first thing I ever saw? ◀



▶ This is the 1950 full-line showroom brochure.

▶ Line drawings such as this one originated from Pontiac's Engineering Department. They could show up in a variety of places, including showroom brochures and dealer albums. The measurements might be helpful to potential buyers for various reasons, such as, would it fit in their garage!