

BY CHRIS DUBUQUE (SEATTLE, WA)

CITROËN HISTORY IN THE PORTLAND AREA

INTRODUCTION

In December, 2018, the NWCOC has released a detailed history of Citroën dealerships, repair shops, and personalities in Seattle. Then in April, 2019, the same was done for British Columbia. Now we are doing the same thing for the State of Oregon. The latest version of this article is posted on the website SeattleCitroen.net



THE EARLY YEARS

NORTHWEST LIGHT CAR

Much to our amazement, we found that a company named [Northwest Light Car](#) was selling new pre-war Citroëns in Portland, Oregon! We found advertising literature for Northwest Light Car for as early as September, 1939 (see ad right).

BANTAM—Citroen
TRADE-INS
"We're Proud of Our Reputation"
THESE CARS ARE IN PERFECT
CONDITION.

'34 BUICK 57 Sedan	.....	\$350
'36 PLYMOUTH Sedan, radio, heater	.....	445
'37 FORD 60 Tudor	.....	415
'37 BRITISH Austin Sedan	.....	395
'30 Graham Sedan	.....	98

These cars are not perfect but offer thousands of miles of good transportation.

'29 Pontiac	..... \$55	'29 Ford Rdstr.	..... \$95
'25 Buick	..... 45	'29 Ford Coach	..... 70

Northwest Light Car Co.
722 S. W. 18th. across from Stadium.
BR 2253

Oregonian Newspaper 1939



The Early Years (cont.)

By 1940, a local newspaper article indicated that Northwest Light Car had become a distributor for new Citroën Traction Avants (see article right). We suspect that this was not a factory sponsored activity, so these cars were imported independently.

We believe that Northwest Light Car sold a decent number of Tractions, since Portland-area newspapers from the 1940's and 1950's contain advertisements for a reasonably large number of Traction Avants, some as early as 1939 models (see two examples below). Note that in Seattle, three hours north of Portland, there was only a single Traction Avant for sale in the Seattle Times classified advertisements between 1935 and 1955, and the ad noted that this car was independently imported by the owner from France. In Portland, there were dozens of Tractions in this era. It is reasonable to believe that most of these cars came from Northwest Light Car.

The last paragraph in the newspaper article (right) hints that these cars might have been English-built (from the Slough factory). Several of the newspaper classified ads we found specify that the cars had leather interiors, something typically only delivered on English cars. A few ads even went as far as stating that the car had English origins (see ad below, right).

Citroën USA guru Richard Bonfond has found that the Slough factory produced 317 left-hand-drive Tractions between 1949 and 1954, and that some ended up in North

2 Light Cars Added to Line

Complete coverage in the light car field has been assured the Northwest Light Car company by the addition of two lines, the British Austin and the American-built Crosley, according to J. Kendall Hockensmith, new owner and manager of the concern.

The company is now Oregon distributor for four lines of cars, the French-designed Citroen, the British Austin, the American Bantam and the Crosley. All are on display at the Northwest Light car company showroom at S. W. 18th avenue and Morrison street.

The Citroen, now being built in English factories, is a four-cylinder, front-wheel-drive car with 42 horse-power and independent springing on all four wheels. The British Austin, best-

'39 CITROEN sed. Exc. cond. New tires. \$675. LI 2886.

Oregonian Newspaper 1950

1939 CITROEN
FWD, torsion bar suspension, \$750.
8324 NE Sumner. MU 4863.

Oregonian Newspaper 1952

'50 British Citroen
Phone Vancouver OX 3-4523.

Oregonian Newspaper 1940

Oregonian Newspaper 1955



The Early Years (cont.)

America. Based on all of these clues, evidence is mounting that the Tractions Northwest Light Car imported were English-built.

There are also several newspaper articles about Citroën Traction Avants being used in various pre-war racing competitions in, and around, Portland. (See article below.)

The first address we could find for Northwest Light Car was 722 SW 18th Avenue in Portland. By the 1950's, they had moved a few blocks away to 1503 SW Morrisson. Neither building exists today. By 1953 Northwest Light Car disappeared.

J. Kendall Hockensmith, owner of Northwest Light Car, was prominent in the business community in Portland in the 1940's. His name shows up in dozens of newspaper articles of the era, most of which were covering the introduction of some new car line that he was selling. Many of the car marques he handled were British, but he did handle cars from other parts of the world, such as American Crosleys and French Simcas.

1941 PORTLAND STOCK CAR RACING EVENT USING A PRE-WAR TRACTION AVANT



Oregonian Newspaper 1941



THE 1950's

The introduction of the DS in 1955 is when things started to really take off in North America for Citroën. Surprisingly, Portland got a very early start with the DS!

EUROPEAN MOTOR SALES

The very first Citroën DS dealership in Oregon was in 1956 when *European Motor Sales* of Portland indicated that they would soon become a dealership for the newly introduced DS19, in addition to Panhard and Renault cars. Much to my amazement, European Motor Sales actually had a very early DS19 demonstrator car on their premises on September 28, 1956. The local press covered the event in the next day's newspaper (see article next page).

The year 1956 is very early insomuch as DS production is concerned. According to most sources, a small number of DS's, about 63, were manufactured as model year 1955. In 1956, that figure increased to 5826 cars, and in 1957 the production numbers increased again to 22667 cars. It was 1957 when DS's started to be imported into the U.S. in any measurable quantity. But somehow, as we shall see, more than one of these 5826 cars from 1956 found their way to Oregon!

Just a few years after the demonstrator car shown in the article on the following page arrived in Portland, there is evidence of additional 1956 DS's in Portland. In 1960, and then again in 1961, two different 1956 DS19's showed up for sale in local Portland newspaper classified ads (one listed as black, one white). Does this mean that there were three 1956 DS19's in Portland? This is amazing given the global rarity of 1956 DS's.

'56 CITROEN DS-19
like riding on a cloud with full air
ride in this car. R&H. polar white
with royal blue interior. True for-
- eign styling with real economy.
\$895
Ask for Ron Knuth
GRAND AVE DODGE
107 NE Grand BE 4-5331
OPEN EVES & SUNDAY

Oregonian Newspaper 1961

'56 CITROEN DS-19—Black Htr, defr,
mich x tires, low miles, excel cond.
British Motors, Ltd, 11295 SW Can-
yon Rd, Beaverton, MI 4-2458.

Oregonian Newspaper 1960

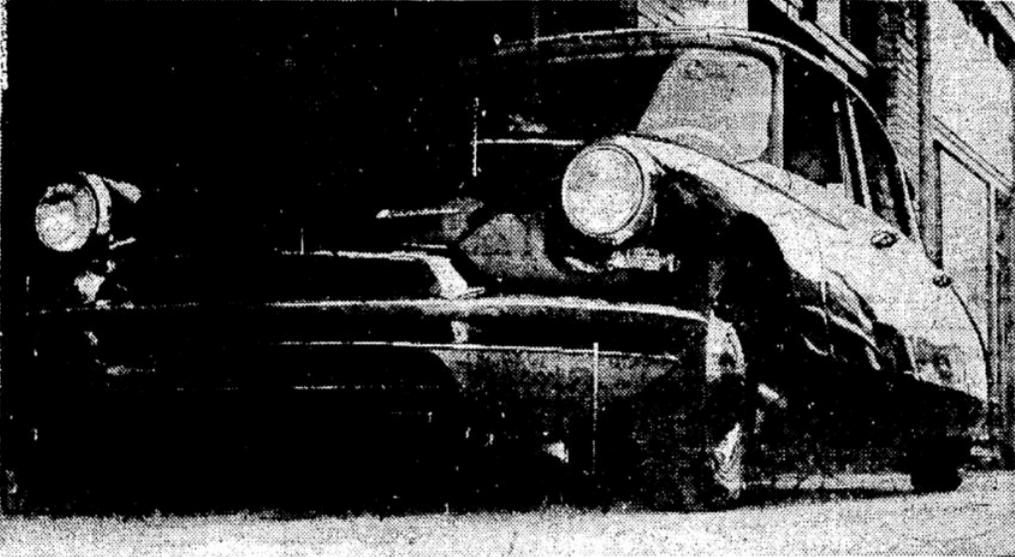
EARLY 1960'S ADVERTISEMENTS IN PORTLAND NEWSPAPERS FOR 1956 DS19's



The 1950's (cont.)

THE OREGONIAN, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1956

European Motors Displays French Car; Citroen DS 19 Has Many New Features



The Pride of Paris, the Citroen DS 19, a four-cylinder car said to be "five years ahead," went on display Friday at European Motors, 1104 W. Burnside street. It has power-disc brakes, hydropneumatic suspension, automatic clutch, power steering in monoshell four-door body

Newest of the foreign automobiles to arrive in Portland is the French Citroen DS 19. It went on display Friday at European Motors, 1104 W. Burnside street, Robert Brown, owner, announced. The car will sell at \$3295 completely equipped here.

The Citroen has several "years ahead" features, said Brown and Mack L. Durning, salesman for the agency. It has front-wheel drive, power disc-brakes, hydropneumatic suspen-

sion, automatic clutch coupled to a hydraulically operated four-speed gearbox, power steering in a monoshell body.

Top Speed 90 MPH

The new car has four cylinders capable of a top speed of 90 miles per hour and mileage of 30 miles to the gallon. The emergency brake is operated by a foot pedal. The steering wheel has no spokes.

The Citroen has independent wheel suspension with an arm and one hydropneumatic suspension unit with shock absorber for each wheel. It also has a push-button leveling device which raises and lowers the car from the roadbed, giving the car low center of gravity. It's a four-door sedan seating five passengers. It has reclining seats, center and side arm rests, with foam rubber cushioning.

Brown announced delivery in Portland will be about mid-October. European Motors also handles the French Renault and Panhard automobiles.

Oregonian Newspaper 1956

1956 NEWSPAPER ARTICLE INTRODUCING THE 1956 DS19 TO PORTLAND



NWCOC

The 1950's (cont.)

European Motor Sales was also there when the ID19 model was introduced in 1958.

New Citroen Car Makes Portland Bow



This is the new Citroen ID-19, making its Portland debut at European Motors, 1104 W Burnside St. Car has self-leveling air-oil suspension system, disc brakes, front wheel drive, four-speed transmission with stick shift. Overhead valve four-cylinder engine provides speeds up to 100 m.p.h. and gas mileage of 25 to 30 miles per gallon. Height of car can be adjusted for road clearance, and car also has automatic jacking. Equipped price here is \$2895. Steel cord tires are standard equipment.

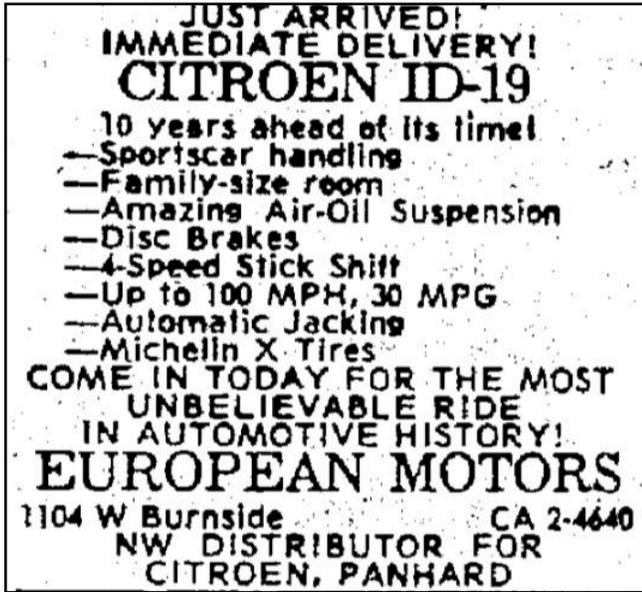
Oregonian Newspaper 1958

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE INTRODUCING THE NEW 1958 ID19 TO PORTLAND



NWCOC

The 1950's (cont.)



Oregonian Newspaper 1958



Google Street View 2018

MAY 1958 ID19 ADVERTISEMENT FOR EUROPEAN MOTOR SALES

EUROPEAN MOTOR SALES BUILDING AS SEEN IN 2018

European Motor Sales was located at 1104 W. Burnside in Portland. While this specific address no longer exists, it appears to be the same building in downtown Portland where the Pantagonia outdoor clothing store is currently housed.

Very little is known about European Motor Sales but advertisements started in late 1956 and disappeared abruptly in 1959 suggesting that it only three years.

The 1950's (cont.)

CONTINENTAL MOTOR CARS

At about the same time that 1956 DS's started being sold at European Motor Sales in Portland, an established dealer in Salem, Oregon picked up the Citroën line.

The business, owned by a man named Richard N. Don, started out in early 1956 as a Renault dealership using the name, "Renault Sales and Service," located at 3040 Liberty Road in Salem. There may have been a brief period in 1956 that they called themselves "Vista Garage." But by September of 1956, they had changed their name to Continental Motor Cars. And in October, 1956, they added Citroën and Panhard.

Much to our astonishment, it looks like yet another 1956 DS demonstrator car appeared in Oregon, this time in Salem (see article, right)!

By the middle of 1958, they had moved to 900 S. Commercial in Salem and there appears to be another move to 990 S. Commercial late 1958. Also in 1958, their company name changed slightly from Continental Motor Cars to Continental Imports Ltd.

New Foreign Car On Display in Salem



New French Auto Appears in Salem

The pride of Paris, Citroën DS 19, a four cylinder car said to be five years ahead, went on display this week at Contentin Continental Motors, 3040 Liberty road. It has power-disc brakes, hydropneumatic suspension, automatic clutch and power steering in a monoshell four-door body.

A third car was added to the models being shown by Continental Motors, 3040 Liberty Rd., owner Dick Don announced Thursday. It is the Citroën DS 19, a four cylinder car which will sell for \$3350 completely equipped. The car is capable of top speed of 90 miles per hour and gets up to 30 miles per gallon of gas, Don said. Other cars now at Contentin Continental include the Panards and Renaults. The 1957 Renault is due in two weeks. Don said he can supply Citroën's on two weeks order.

Salem Capitol Journal, October 1956

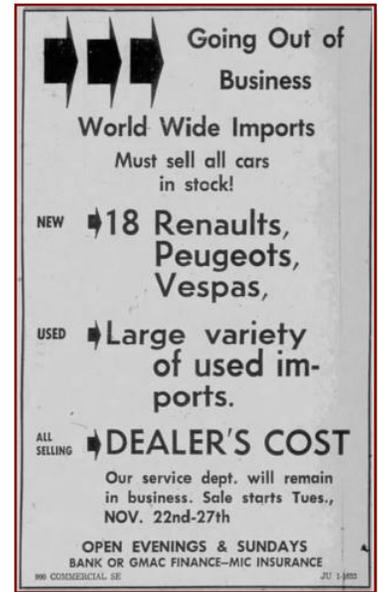


The 1950's (cont.)

Sales must have not been going too well, because in December of 1959, Continental Imports Ltd. was taken over by a Portland Company called, "World Wide Imports." When the takeover occurred, the Citroën and Panhard lines were dropped. World Wide Imports went on try to sell Peugeot, Renault, and Vespa scooters.

But things did not go well for World Wide Imports either. They closed-up at the end of 1960 (see going out of business ad, right).

It looks like none of the original buildings still exist and we were unable to find any period photos.

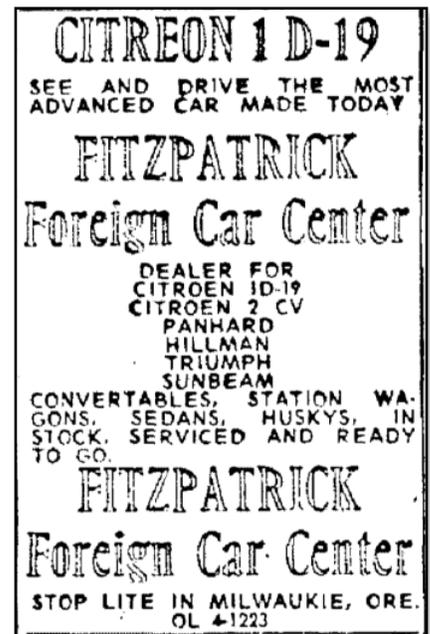


Salem Capitol Journal, October 1956

FITZPATRICK FOREIGN CAR CENTER

The third authorized Citroën dealership in the state of Oregon was in a suburb of Portland called Milwaukie. The dealership was called *Fitzpatrick Foreign Car Center*. In their advertisements from 1958, their address is simply listed as "...the stop lite in Milwaukie..." suggesting that there was only one stoplight back then? As is so familiar with the Citroën dealership stories from this era, Fitzpatrick Foreign Car Center seemed to have only lasted as a Citroën dealer for a very short time, perhaps less than a year.

We also wonder about their commitment to the Citroën marque considering that their newspaper ads spelled 'Citroën' incorrectly and identified the car model "ID19" incorrectly...



Oregonian Newspaper 1958

JUNE 1958 NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT



The 1950's (cont.)

ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS

The next authorized Citroën dealership in Oregon was *Economy Car Imports*. Economy Car imports started advertising in April of 1959 and operated from the address 1022 W. Burnside.

Economy Car Imports was operated by the same people who started a business in the Seattle area (Renton) using the very same company name. A man named Jerry Fleming was listed as the owner of the Portland dealership. The same Jerry Fleming and partner Richard Wald were listed as the business owners of the Renton operation.

A Portland newspaper article from late 1958 indicates that Economy Car Imports was named as an authorized Citroën dealer for both the Portland and the Renton operations. But it looks like the Portland operation started earlier since we can find advertisements as early as 1959. The Renton operation was incorporated as a business in Washington in August of 1961

CITROEN CHANGE—Economy Car Imports, 1022 W. Burnside St., has been named Citroen distributor for Oregon and Washington, and M. L. Durning has been appointed to manage this new foreign car dealership, according to **Jerry Fleming**, owner. On display now are the 1959 model Citroen and Panhard cars, which recently arrived from the Paris factory. The dealership has complete parts and service facilities.

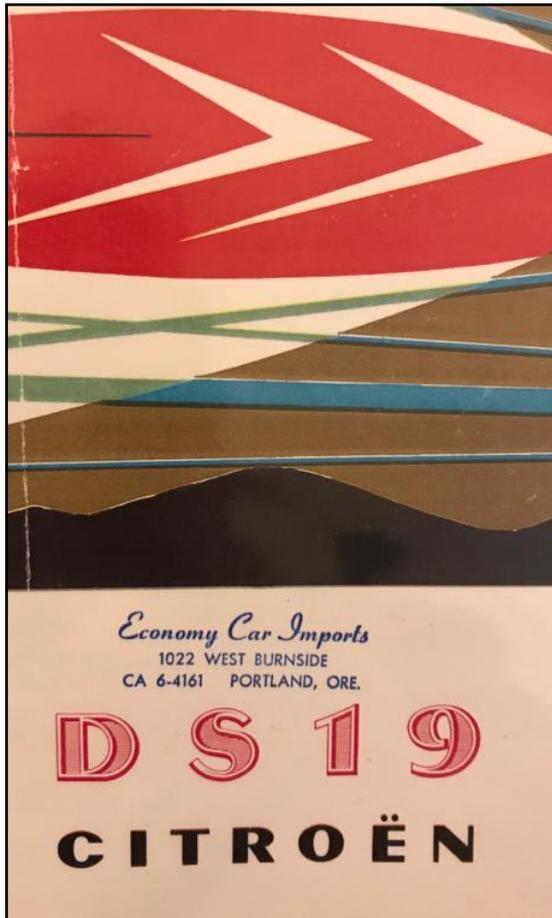
* * *

NOVEMBER 1958 ANNOUNCEMENT

Oregonian Newspaper 1958



The 1950's (cont.)



ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS
BROCHURE

NEW
Citroen
 STATION WAGONS
 AND
Morgan

	Trade-ins	
'59 Citroen, as new	-----	\$2195
'55 Semca V8	-----	\$ 695

Economy Car Imports
 1022 W Burnside
 CA 6-4161

Oregonian Newspaper 1961

CITROEN TRADE-INS	
'58 OPEL, R&H, wsw	\$1695
'57 K-GHIA, new X tires	2095
'57 DKW hrdtp, R&H, X tires	1195
'54 CITROEN-11, perfect cond.	995
'59 CITROEN DS-19 demo	2995
'59 PANHARD dem, low mileage	1695
'59 CITROEN 2CV demo, 55 mpg	1255

Economy Car Imports
 1022 SW Burnside CA 6-4161
 Michelin X tires for all cars.

Oregonian Newspaper 1959



The 1950's (cont.)

It seems that Economy Car Imports had no better luck in the Seattle-area than they did in Portland. The Portland operation seems to have shut down in about 1961. The Renton operation closed-up shop in 1962. Despite trying to sell other marques as well as used cars, both locations of Economy Car Imports ultimately failed.

The building that Economy Car Imports operated from (1022 W. Burnside) is still there and is currently a Danner Leather store. (See photo below.)



Google Street View 2018

ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS BUILDING AT 1022 WEST BURNSIDE AS SEEN IN 2018

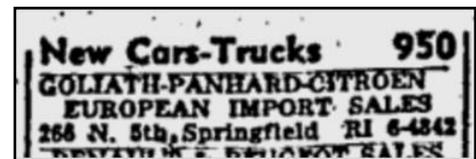
EUROPEAN IMPORT SALES

The 1959 Eugene Register-Guard newspaper has a handful of ads from a company called *European Import Sales* in Springfield, Oregon that handled Citroën for a brief time. We have been unsuccessful finding much about this company,

European Import Sales operated from 264-266 N. 5th street in Springfield.



Eugene Register-Guard, August 1959



Eugene Register-Guard, June 1959

The 1950's (cont.)

VINTON AND LARSEN

There is some scant evidence that a dealership in McMinnville, Oregon called **Vinton and Larsen** sold Citroëns briefly in the late 1950's. Citroën USA expert Richard Bonfond had them listed on some official paperwork from Citroën for the year 1959.

We worked with the library in McMinnville to understand more about Vinton and Larsen. We found that in the 1930's, a man named Herm Larsen went to work for Gale Vinton at Vinton's Shell gas station on the corner of Third and Baker streets. They soon teamed-up and formed Vinton and Larsen, initially handling Buick, then adding Pontiac and GMC trucks.

By the late 1950's they had expanded their line further to include Opel, Hillman, Triumph, and Studebaker. No mention of Citroën in anything we could find. But it seems relatively common that in the late 1950's and early 1960's, many established dealerships in the USA took on many different marques, sometimes with little or no fanfare or advertising.

Vinton and Larsen operated from two other locations after the initial Shell gas station. The first was 211 N. Evans Street and the second move was to 830 N.E. Highway 99W in 1958. The business is still at this final location, albeit in a brand new building. The business was sold in late 2018 and will lose the historic company name.



Images of America - McMinnville



THE 1960's

The 1960's were really the heyday for Citroëns in the USA and perhaps in France too. Read on to see what was happening in Oregon in the 1960's.

FRENCH MOTOR CAR SALES & SERVICE

For a very brief period in 1960, a business called *French Motor Car Sales & Service* in Eugene, Oregon sold the usual French marques; Peugeot, Renault, and Citroën. We found advertisements in the local paper starting in early 1960 and ending in late 1960, so it appears to have been yet another short-lived business. French Motor Car Sales & Service did manage to last long enough to be included in Citroën's 1960 dealer directory.

OREGON

EUGENEFRENCH MOTOR CAR SALES & SERVICE
 1501 West 7th Avenue... DI 5-8554

PORTLANDECONOMY CAR IMPORTS
 1022 West Burnside... CA 6-4161



Enjoy your 1965 car today!

- AIR-OIL SUSPENSION
Self leveling, world's smoothest ride.
- FULL FOAM RUBBER INTERIOR
- MORE MONEY-SAVING MILEAGE
- DISC BRAKES
Lifetime, fade-free, self adjusting.

CITROËN as low as only \$2595! P.O.E.
 up to 35 miles per gallon!

FRENCH MOTORS
 1501 W. 7th AVE.
 TELEPHONE DI 5-8554
 OPEN DAILY 'TIL 9:00—SUN. 12 to 5

1960 ADVERTISEMENT FROM EUGENE NEWSPAPER

Eugene Register-Guard, May 1960

C
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T
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N

Stand Sports Cars, Inc.
 1930 LINCOLN WAY, E.
 TE 2-9866 MASSILLON, OHIO

LIST OF
Dealers
 AND
Distributors
 THROUGHOUT THE
United States
 AND
 Canada

www.citrowagon.fr



The 1960's (cont.)



Google Street View 2018

SAD LOOKING FRENCH MOTORS BUILDING IN 2018



NEW CITROEN — French Motor Car Sales and Service has received the 1960 Citroen, the four-cylinder French car for which it is the agent in Lane County. The cars feature air-oil suspension.

Eugene Register-Guard, May, 1960



EUGENE OFFICE of the Aluminum Builders Supply Co., distributors for Timber Structures has opened at 1501 W. 7th Ave. Designed by manager Robert J. Cole, the new building utilizes Timberib and Aluminum products distributed by the firm.

Eugene Register-Guard, July, 1952

1501 W. 7th IN 1952 SOON AFTER BEING BUILT



The 1960's (cont.)

ROGER SAGNER'S MOTOR MART

With the demise of Economy Car Imports, the next Citroën dealership in Portland was Roger Sagner's Motor Mart. Roger Sagner had staying power since the business lasted 20 years.

Roger Max Sagner was the son of Max Paul Sagner, a pioneer in the automobile scene in Portland. The father, Max Sagner, started in the auto business in 1921 as a used car salesman. In 1929 he opened his own dealership selling Marmon cars. In 1935 he started selling Chrysler cars under the business name, "Sagner Motor Company." Later on, he took on other marques, such as Nash and Rambler. Clearly the father's interest in cars was passed onto his son Roger since by the time Roger was in his mid-30's, he had opened up his own car repair shop and within a few years, he was an authorized Citroën dealer.

From about 1957 on, Roger Sagner had prolific advertising in the local newspapers for car repair and for used cars. Real change occurred in 1961 when Sagner became a Citroën dealer (see newspaper announcement below).

Roger Sagner, owner of the Motor Mart, 206 NE Grand Ave., has been appointed Citroen dealer in Portland, it was announced this week by Citroen Cars Corporation. Sagner, who has been in the import car business for a number of years, will handle five different Citroen models, including the station wagon. The Citroen is the French car with the amazingly different lines. Sagner said parts and service department for the Citroen will be at 726 SE Sixth Ave.

Oregonian Newspaper 1961

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE FROM SEPTEMBER 17, 1961 ANNOUNCING ROGER SAGNER TO BE A CITROEN DEALER

Imported & Sport Cars 692
'62 CITROEN AMBULANCES
Specially designed station wagon. Will go anywhere, adjustable suspension, up to 12" road clearance, Positraction front wheel drive

Oregonian Newspaper 1962

APRIL, 1962 ADVERTISEMENT BY SAGNER FOR DS WAGON AMBULANCE MODELS



The 1960's (cont.)

CITROEN
POWER WITH ECONOMY

CITROEN
ADJUSTABLE ROAD CLEARANCE

CITROEN
UNSURPASSED COMFORT

CITROEN
CHAIR-HIGH RECLINERS

CITROEN
SPORTS CAR STEERING

CITROEN
DISC BRAKES

CITROEN
NO-SPOKE STEERING WHEEL

CITROEN
LARGE LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT

CITROEN
MICHELIN "X" TIRES

CITROEN
FRONT WHEEL DRIVE

CITROEN
AIR-OIL SUSPENSION

CITROEN
DETACHABLE BODY PANELS

CITROEN
TREMENDOUS SEATING AREA

CITROEN
4-SPEED TRANSMISSION

CITROEN
YEARS-AHEAD DESIGN

CITROEN
100% WARRANTY

CITROEN
DRIVE IT AND SEE

★ ★

ROGER SAGNER'S MOTOR MART

NEW USED

726 SE 6th
BE 5-2300

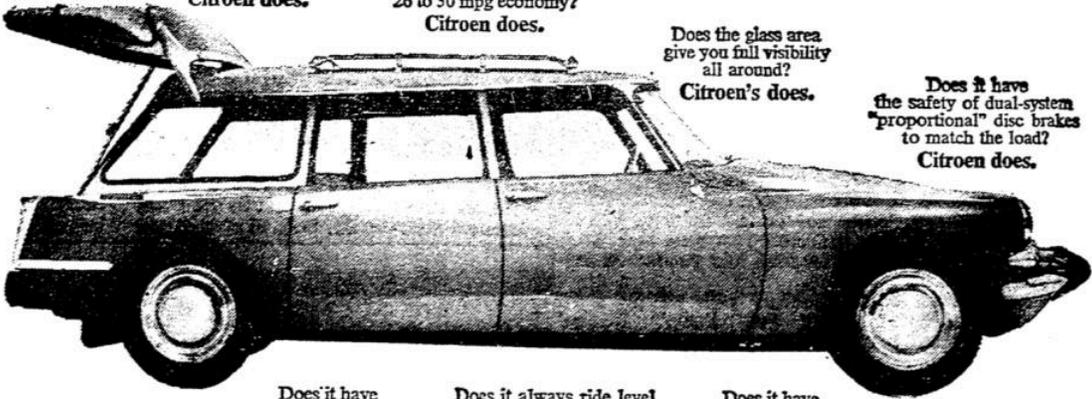
Oregonian Newspaper 1963

1963 NEWSPAPER AD FOR SAGNER'S MOTOR MART



The 1960's (cont.)

Does your wagon have any of these "wagon" features?



Does it have the fatigue-free ride of Air-Oil suspension?
Citroën does.

Does it deliver 26 to 30 mpg economy?
Citroën does.

Does the glass area give you full visibility all around?
Citroën's does.

Does it have the safety of dual-system "proportional" disc brakes to match the load?
Citroën does.

Does it carry things like a big wagon, but handle like a sedan and park in tight places?
Citroën does.

Does it have Adjustable Road Clearance for driving over any terrain?
Citroën does.

Does it always ride level and at the same height—even with a full ¾ ton load?
Citroën does.

Does it have the sports car control of power rack-and-pinion steering?
Citroën does.

Does it have the traction and road holding of front-wheel drive?
Citroën does.

Citroën has them all!

Before you buy any wagon—compare! When you look at Citroën's features, you'll see they are "must" features for wagons, but only Citroën has them. They all add up to this: Citroën makes more wagon sense with a combination of features for comfort, performance, economy, and safety no other wagon has in the imported or domestic field. Proof? See for yourself. Test-drive Citroën over any road you choose. Call soon for your appointment.

Test drive it and see
ROGER SAGNER'S MOTOR MART
"We Will Arrange All Details For Overseas Delivery"
726 SE 6th AVE. Phone BE 4-0909

Oregonian Newspaper 1965



NWCOC

The 1960's (cont.)

Roger Sagner was acquainted with Paul Jolley, the owner of the Seattle Citroën dealership of the time, and it appears that they collaborated on various issues.

One sign of Sagner's and Jolley's collaboration can be found in issue number 77 of the California Citroën Car Club (CCC) newsletter from May, 1963. In this issue, Roger Sagner offered a congratulatory statement to Paul Jolley and Chuck McConnell for starting up their new Seattle dealership. An excerpt from Sagner's letter is repeated as follows (questionable grammar and all):

"Add my congratulations to Paul Jolley and Chuck McConnell. I am sure glad that things up north was taken on by enthusiasts instead of just

automobile people. I will never forget the look on Paul's face when I suggested that he set up a Citroën palace in Seattle. I wasn't kidding and by golly, as it turned out, neither was Paul, who said, "Nothing could please me more.."

Another sign of this collaboration might be seen in advertising. Look at these two 1965 advertisements; one for Sagner's Motor Mart in Portland and one for Jolley's Automobiles Internationales in Seattle. Exact same wording except for a typo in the Automobiles Internationales version!

**"USED...NO MELLOWED"
ADVERTISEMENTS FROM 1965
AUTOMOBILES
INTERNATIONALES (LEFT) AND
SAGNER'S MOTOR MART
(RIGHT)**

Used

No . . . mellowed.

We now have a good selection of trade-ins. Citroen owners handled these cars with expert care and devotion. Citroen owners are like that. That's why Citroens mellow with age.

We have just recently taken in trade four immaculate 1962 Citroen ID-19's on new '65 models.

See us today for guaranteed used Citroens and many other fine used cars.

**AUTOMOBILES
INTERNATIONALES**
1124 Pike (Cor. Melrose) MA 4-3737

Seattle Times 1965

Used?

No . . . mellowed.

We now have a good selection of trade-ins. Citroen owners handled these cars with expert care and devotion. Citroen owners are like that. That's why Citroens mellow with age.

See us today for guaranteed used Citroens and many other fine used cars.

'65 Citroen ----\$2298
Low miles.

'64 Citroen ----1898
2 to choose from.

'63 Citroen DSM 1498

'62 Citroen ----1298
2 to choose from.

'61 Citroen SW 1198
Nice car

**Also Other Funny Cars
To Choose From**

'59 Citroen ----\$198
Do it yourself

'58 Citroen DSM 398

'58 2CV ----498
One owner. Service records available.

ROGER SAGNER'S
MOTOR MART
1300 SE Grand 234-0909

Oregonian Newspaper 1965



The 1960's (cont.)

Roger dealt with several marques including Citroën, Peugeot, Saab, and Morgan, although it is our understanding that very few Morgans were actually sold or maintained there.

One person who had several stints working as a parts manager at Roger Sagner's Motor Mart was Bill Lonseth. There will be more about Bill later. Another employee of Sanger's was C.J. Felt. Read the Seattle article for more information on C.J. Felt.

MORGAN
"first of the classics"

LOS ANGELES Lew Spencer Imports, Inc. 2042 So Sepulveda Blvd GRanite 7 6739	SAN FRANCISCO European Motors, Ltd. 1740 Van Ness Ave. ORdway 3-9109	PORTLAND Roger Sagner's Motor Mart 726 S. E. Sixth BE 4-0909
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ROGER SAGNER (right) of Roger Sagner's Motor Mart, 1300 SE Grand Ave., studies details of the Saab automobile engine with Saab Service School Instructor Philip Elderbaum at Saab's U.S. headquarters in New Haven, Conn. Sagner's Motor Mart is the Portland area dealer for the Swedish-made Saab automobiles.

Oregonian Newspaper 1966

'68 CITROEN

If you didn't recognize it as the new Citroen, you've probably never driven the world's greatest road car.

TEST DRIVE THE '68 CITROEN AT:

**ROGER SAGNER
MOTOR MART**

**1300 S.E. GRAND
234-0909**

Oregonian Newspaper 1968

Imported Cars 692

**CITROEN
PEUGEOT
SAAB**

ROGER SAGNER'S MOTOR MART
233 N.E. GRAND 234-0909

Oregonian Newspaper 1965



The 1960's (cont.)

By the late 1970's, Sagner's operation was starting to ramp down. He stopped advertising in the local newspapers by 1978. By the mid-1980's the business was pretty much stagnant and Roger was in semi-retirement.

In 1989, Peter DeBoldt, an NWCOC member from the Seattle, went down to Portland and bought Sagner's remaining stock of Citroën parts. Pete recalls:

"...There was no active work being done on the site anymore, or any cars being sold. There were probably 20 cars parked on the lot, many in pretty poor shape. Henry Reed (also from Seattle) got the 1972 D Special that was pretty decent, and there were a few other cars that could have been brought back to life. Most of the cars as I recall were LHS2 models. The '72 that Henry came home with, and a few others, were under cover. Most were out in the open. We ended up getting quite a few parts, many of which were in an outbuilding with no heat, so many of the metal parts were rusting. I got a few Citroën tools, not much though, as I they had already been picked through..."

Pete goes on to describe Sagner:

"...I did get a chance to meet him when Henry (Reed) and I purchased the remains of his inventory. He seemed to be a decent fellow, not much interested in what he had left. I felt him to be easy to work with..."

Over the years, Roger Sagner operated out of seven different locations and all but the last one were on the east side of the Willamette river, just east of downtown Portland:

132 NE Grand Avenue (1957 - 1959)

This address still exists and is still an automotive facility (see photo right).



Google Street View 2018

132 NE GRAND AVENUE IN 2018

The 1960's (cont.)

206 NE Grand Avenue (1960 - 1962)

There is no longer a building at this address and instead it is now a parking lot for an automotive business called Powell Motors.

726 SE 6th Avenue (1961-1965)

In 1961 Sagner moved again to this charming building, which is currently a tavern/restaurant called Trifecta (see photo right).



Google Street View 2018

1010 NE Grand Ave (1964 to the mid-1970's)

In April of 1964, Sagner opened a lot at 1010 NE Grand Avenue for new and used cars. A 1973 photo exists of this lot. Today, the lot is gone and currently is a vacant lot. The Denny's restaurant is still there however. See "then and now" photos below. It is not clear when Sagner shut down this location.



VintagePortland.WorldPress.com



Google Street View 2018

1010 NE GRAND AVENUE IN 1973 AND 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

1300 SE Grand (1966-1969)

Of all of Sagner's buildings, this is the silliest. We have no idea the story behind the giant plywood guy in the front.

The building is still there today but is barely recognizable without Sagner's eccentric signage.



NEW HEADQUARTERS for Roger Sagner's Motor Mart, Ltd., is the former Jarvis Jeep building at 1300 SE Grand Ave. Sagner moved from 726 SE 6th Ave., in order to double his sales space. The building, leased to Sagner, contains 18,000

square feet of floor space. Sagner's Auto Shop is located at West Slope and a car lot is located at 1010 NE Grand. The firm is a franchised dealer for Saab, Citroen, Rover, and Morgan automobiles and Isuzu Diesel trucks.

Oregonian Newspaper 1965

1300 SE GRAND AVENUE IN 1965 (ABOVE) AND 2018 (RIGHT)



Google Street View 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

233 NE Grand Avenue (approx 1969-1977)

The building at this address still exists and is now a tire shop called Gateway Tireworld. The *Vintage Portland* website recently uncovered the following 1969 photo of Sagner's car lot at this address. No Citroëns can be seen, but there are other interesting cars, including a Triumph Vitesse, a Triumph TR3, a Mercedes sedan, a MGB-GT, a few Saabs, etc.



Portland Archives, A2011-018.406

Portland Archives, 1969 Photo



The 1960's (cont.)

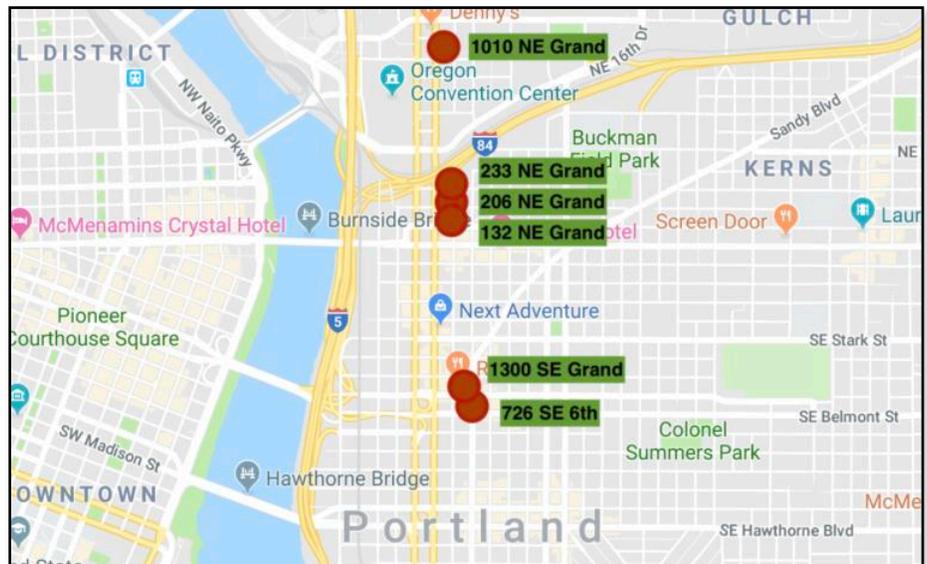
3232 NE Columbia Blvd (approx 1978 to about 1989)

The move to this last address was after the business had more-or-less closed down and Roger Sagner needed a place to store all his remaining parts and cars. This location was a bit north of all of the other locations which were closer to downtown Portland. It has been described basically as Roger's junkyard full of Saab, Citroën, and Peugeot cars and parts. Sagner kept this location for about 10 years but eventually sold off all of the parts and cars. It still looks like a junkyard in 2019.



Google Street View 2019

MAP OF SAGNER'S EASTSIDE LOCATIONS



Google Maps 2019

Roger Sagner died on July 20, 2007 at age 83.



The 1960's (cont.)

S.L. MOTORS INC.

S.L. Motors was a multi-marque dealership in Springfield, Oregon (Springfield is about 2 hours south of Portland) and handled the Citroën marque for a while.

A name that you will hear several times in this article is Bill Lonseth. Bill was interested in cars as a kid and managed to land his first automotive job at S.L Motors in the parts department. Bill remembers that just before he went to work at S.L. Motors in the late 1960's, there had been a big snowstorm in Springfield that caused the roof of the dealership to collapse. We looked through newspaper archives, and sure enough, snow started falling in the Springfield area in December, 1968 and by January, 1969, something like 4 feet of snow had piled up, causing havoc and damage throughout the area. Below is an amazing photo of S.L. Motors in the aftermath of the snowstorm. If you look closely, you can see a crushed Renault R16.



registryguard.com

S.L. MOTORS AFTER THE WINTER 68/69 SNOW STORM



The 1960's (cont.)

S.L. Motors was owned by a Mr. Euvon Sanders of Eugene. Local news reported that Sander's son Jeff, was in the building on a Tuesday in late January, 1969 when the roof collapsed and had to run for safety. Five vehicles were crushed.

Bill indicates that in the mid-1960's, S.L. Motors handled Studebaker, Mercedes, Peugeot, Renault, and Citroën. We were only able to find a single Citroën advertisement from S.L. Motors (see 1965 newspaper ad right).

The address was 863 Main Street, in Springfield. There is a new modern Toyota dealership at this address now



What can you learn in ski school about buying a new car?



Plenty, if you think about it a moment. What's the first thing your instructor said that first frantic day in class? "Keep your weight forward," correct? Seems the weight up there helps keep you going where you want to go.



Remember this lesson next time a CITROEN passes you on the way to the area. CITROEN keeps the weight up front, too. Over 60% of the weight (engine, transmission, spare tire) is up front over the driving wheels.



Now, with your weight forward, the skimeister advises you to *ski in control*. In other words, be able to change direction and stop at will. Good advice.

Weight up front and front wheel drive. That's the CITROEN technique. The wheels *pull* you through corners. You resist the natural tendency to skid that's built into every curve. You are actually in much tighter command of a CITROEN on a snow-slick highway, without chains or snow tires, than in other cars with these artificial traction aids.




Rear Wheel Drive Front Wheel Drive

Steering is the ultra-positive power rack and pinion type found on the most expensive sports cars. This design can't be beat for quick, certain control. Brakes too, are power operated (standard equipment); discs up front to bear the brunt of the job . . . drum brakes out back. There's a separate hydraulic circuit for each. Good. But get this! A "hydraulic brain" doles out braking effort to the four wheels as it is needed.



40% 60% 50% 50%

This means that wheels carrying lighter loads resist the temptation to lock under heavy braking. And you resist the tendency to skid. With CITROEN you DRIVE in control.

In all humility we must admit that these features make CITROEN undoubtedly the world's safest, sanest ski transportation.

Roger Sagner's Motor Mart Ltd.
1300 S.E. Grand Ave., Portland
Phone: (503) 234-0909

S. L. Motors, Inc.
863 Main St., Springfield
Phone: (503) 747-3374



Oregonian Newspaper 1965



The 1970's

COOTY'S GARAGE

As noted in the previous section, the only authorized dealership in all of Oregon in the '70's was Sagner's Motor Mart which started in 1961 and remained operational until the late '70's. There were however a few independent repair facilities that worked on Citroëns. One of these was **Cooty's Garage** in Portland which frequently advertised Citroën repair capability.

Cooty's was run by a man named Paul Nuttal who still lives in the Portland area and was a Citroën owner himself. In the 1970's Cooty's wanted in on the Citroën repair work in Portland and specifically advertised as such. Cooty's Garage seemed to wind down in the late 1970's.

Cooty's operated initially from 8503 SW Terwilliger and later from 2244 E. Burnside, which is now a pet food store.



Oregonian Newspaper 1974



Google Street View 2018

**1974 NEWSPAPER AD FOR
COOTY'S (ABOVE) AND 2244 E
BURNSIDE AS SEEN IN 2018**



The 1980's and Beyond

BILL LONSETH

By the late 1970's, the Citroën scene in Portland was sadly winding down. Way down. After Roger Sagner's Motor Mart came to an end in about 1980, the only real Citroën support network in all of Oregon was from [Bill Lonseth](#).

Bill was interested in Citroëns from an early age and by the late 1960's, he had landed his first automotive job working for a Citroën dealership in the Oregon city of Springfield. The dealership was called S.L. Motors, which handled several marques, including Citroën, Peugeot, Renault, Studebaker, Mercedes, and Datsun.

Within a year so of working for S.L. Motors as a parts manager, Bill was asked by Citroën to move to Los Angeles to help run the much larger parts department for Citroën LA.

By about 1974 or so, Bill moved back to Portland to work for Roger Sagner as parts manager.

Throughout these various jobs, Bill's skills dealing with parts books, ordering, and stocking parts for cars, especially French cars, was finely honed. His skills even landed him a job in London for a few years.

Bill was also good at working on cars and so throughout the 1980's, 1990's and early 2000's, he helped local Citroën owners repair their cars. If there has been a constant personality in the Oregon Citroën scene (after Roger Sagner), it would be Bill Lonseth.

Bill has now retired from car work but he still lives in Portland and still has Citroëns.

Bill was very gracious to help us prepare this article.



BILL LONSETH ENJOYING A BEVERAGE IN THE 1990'S



The 1980's and Beyond (cont.)

We can't help but be a bit disappointed in what has become with the Citroën scene in Oregon. Portland in particular had a rich history of the Citroën automobile and got a substantial head start on Seattle, Portland's larger neighbor to the north. But there seem to be very few Citroëns left in Oregon.

What has happened to all those cars that were sold by Northwest Light Car, European Motor Sales, S.L. Motors, or Sagner's Motor Mart? This author is only aware of one surviving car that has Oregon roots; that car is Chris Middleton's 1965 DS19 Pallas. This car migrated from Oregon to Washington and 55 years later it runs great and is safely sitting in Chris's garage in North Seattle.



**CHRIS MIDDLETON'S 1965 DS19 PALLAS, ORIGINALLY SOLD
FROM SAGNER'S MOTOR MART**



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SPECIAL EDITION

JUNE 2019

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This NWCOC special edition presents a summary of the Citroën dealerships, independent repair facilities, and personalities in the State of Oregon over the last 80 years. We would love to have feedback about this article, and we would especially like to have any relevant stories or photos. Future updates to this article can be found on the following website: SeattleCitroen.net

We would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the preparation of this article; Richard Bonfond, Peter DeBoldt, Stan George, Bill Lonseth, the librarians at the Seattle, Eugene, and Springfield Public Libraries, and the wonderful Vintage Portland website.

The **Citroën Car Club, Inc (CCC)**, is a non-profit organization founded 1956 to support Citroën, PSA Group & Panhard Owners.

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Events are held semi-monthly, or more often, throughout Southern California. The club shares hosting of the West Coast Rendezvous with the San Francisco club, alternating years. Annual membership is \$15.

Please address any questions, address changes, ideas or suggestions to: club@citroencarclub.us

Citroën Car Club, Inc; 28345 Foothill Dr, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 USA

Visit us online at: <http://www.citroencarclub.us>

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Classified ads limited to 75 words and one photo; ads run 2 issues.

Address letters to your Club's Editor. Info and images may be submitted electronically by email. Text: MS Word (.doc) iWork (.pages); TextEdit rich text format (.rtf). Images: JPEG (.jpg) files at 300 dpi resolution or higher.

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Should you see or hear an interesting bit of Citroën news, please email it to the editor or mail it to the NWCOC PO Box shown below. Members are encouraged to attend board meetings, held the second Monday of each month at 7 PM in the Seattle area. Contact a board member to confirm the meeting time and location.

Classified and business card advertisements are free for members, space permitting, and US\$15 per month for non-members. Back issues are \$1.50 as available. Permission to reprint original material is granted to any nonprofit membership publication on a single use basis if full credit is given to the author. While we make efforts to insure the accuracy of information and advice given in this newsletter, the clubs accept no responsibility for such advice.

Send membership questions, address changes, ideas, etc. to our P.O. Box.

Northwest Citroën Owners Club, P.O. Box 16185 Seattle WA 98116 USA

Please send membership renewals to the P.O. Box. Worldwide annual membership dues are US\$20 for Electronic Edition (an email address is requested).

Club email is: NWCOC@earthlink.net

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