

BY CHRIS DUBUQUE (SEATTLE, WA)

CITROËN HISTORY IN THE SEATTLE AREA

INTRODUCTION

In issue #116 from 1996, the Northwest Citroën Owners Club (NWCOC) devoted an entire issue to a history of Citroën dealerships, repair shops, and personalities in the Seattle-area. In 2010, the article was updated with new information and photos and was released as an NWCOC special edition. It has been nearly another decade and so we are updating this story again as new chapters unfold and more historic information emerges!!



THE EARLY YEARS

There were no formal Citroën dealerships in Seattle in the years of the Traction Avant (up to 1956). However, there were several Traction Avants in the Seattle area at that time. These cars were either imported independently or purchased from Challenger Motors in California (Challenger Motors was importing Traction Avants, renaming them as "Challengers").

The introduction of the fabulous DS in 1955 was a turning point that sparked a campaign by Citroën to sell cars in North America. The Seattle area was no exception. 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 US in any measurable quantity, and this is the year for which our stories in Seattle begin. But for the moment, lets travel back two years....



The Early Years (cont.)

Pick up a copy of the October, 1955 issue of *Road and Track* magazine and look closely at a truly strange advertisement for Panhard cars. After you have “crossed the Rubicon” and finished snickering about the “blast furnace of power” comment, look more closely at the dealer directory listed in the ad (right).

Jack Woods is listed as a Panhard distributor for Seattle. A Panhard dealership in Seattle in 1955? Well...maybe. We traveled to 2225 Eastlake in Seattle, the address shown in the ad, to check out the area where the dealership used to be. Is the building still there? As it turns out, yes. But it is not a commercial building as we were expecting. Instead, it is a small apartment complex, built in the early 1920's. Not much of a “dealership.”

It seems Jack Woods was selling new Panhards out of his apartment. The photo below shows the apartment complex at 2225 Eastlake, as it looks today. We bring up Panhards and Jack Woods for a reason. Read on to see why...



2225 EASTLAKE - A SEATTLE PANHARD DEALERSHIP?

VENI
VIDI
VICI
PANHARD
"DYNA"

You've crossed the Rubicon when you drive the Dyna-Panhard. Every curve, every mountain on the other side will bring you to say: I came, I saw, I conquered. By Caesar's chariot, you'll swear you've never seen the like: under the hood a blast-furnace of power, the flat-twin, 51 cu. in., air-cooled engine; on the road a mere 1435 pounds of rigid, torsion-tested aluminum alloys; on the curves, a road-hugging, double-universal front wheel drive; on the pocket-wallet, a dollar-saving 40 miles per gallon. You'll swear with the engineers the Dyna-Panhard is the "most perfect product of cold logic that has ever been seen on the road."

Bring the family for your demonstration ride; the Dyna-Panhard is not a bucket on midget wheels, but a full-size, six-passenger (and big trunk!) automobile. See you at:

FRENCH MOTORS, INC., 6363 Wilshire Blvd., L. A. 48, Telephone WEBster 8-8550.
SHIDLER MOTOR CAR CO., 9th & Broadway, Wichita, Kansas.
JACK WOODS, 2225 Eastlake, Seattle, Wash.
N. C. MOTORS, No. Lombard St., Portland, Ore.
S. H. ARNOLD, Warsaw, Ind.
F. EDWARD PARKER, 116 Industrial Way, Costa Mesa.
Tom Dillon, Sports Car Clinic, 1302 Montana, Santa Monica, Calif.
Glen St. Louis, Municipal Airport, Hayward, California.
Prices start at \$2245, fully equipped, f.o.b. Los Angeles.

ROAD & TRACK, October, 1955

You've crossed the Rubicon when you drive the Dyna-Panhard. Every curve, every mountain on the other side will bring you to say: I came, I saw, I conquered. By Caesar's chariot, you'll swear you've never seen the like: under the hood a blast-furnace of power, the flat-twin, 51 cu. in., air-cooled engine; on the road a mere 1435 pounds of rigid, torsion-tested aluminum alloys; on the curves, a road-hugging, double-universal front wheel drive; on the pocket-wallet, a dollar-saving 40 miles per gallon. You'll swear with the engineers the Dyna-Panhard is the "most perfect product of cold logic that has ever been seen on the road."

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"DYNA"

The Early Years (cont.)

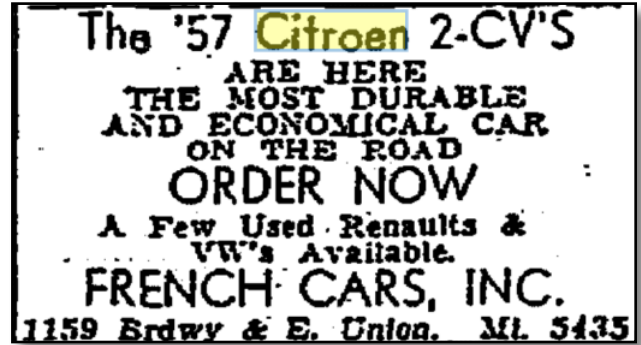
FRENCH CARS INC.

The first business in the Seattle-area to sell new Citroëns was French Cars Inc. located at 1159 Broadway in the Capitol Hill area of Seattle. French Cars Inc. first appears in the 1957 edition of the phone book, then called the Polk City Directory. However, they were advertising Citroën 2CV's in the local papers as early as the fall of 1956 (see ad right).

Business incorporation documents show the names of Jack & Rhoda Woods and Ralph & Betty Gage as the proprietors. Yes, this is the same Jack Woods who was selling Panhards from his Eastlake apartment a year earlier!

City records further indicate a business incorporation date for French Cars Inc. of July 30, 1956, which is actually quite early insomuch as DS production is concerned. But by the time the 1958 Polk City Directory was issued, French Cars Inc. seems to have disappeared!

After reading the first release of this article, NWCOC club member Tom Farrell discovered that one of his acquaintances worked at French Cars Inc. That



OCTOBER 1956 NEWSPAPER AD FOR FRENCH CARS INC.

person was Frank Nashland. Many of those who lived or grew up in the Seattle-area during the '60's and '70's may have come into contact with Frank as he was the 31-year co-owner of *Wheelsport Ltd.*, an excellent bicycle shop in the city of Bellevue, a suburb of Seattle. Frank opened *Wheelsport Ltd.* shortly after the demise of French Cars Inc. with French Cars Inc. co-owner, Ralph Gage.

Frank Nashland passed away in 2005, but club member Tom Farrell had a chance to talk about *French Cars Inc.* with Frank Nashland before he died. Following is a summary of their conversation:

Tom: Did you have any involvement with French cars in general before you worked for French Cars Inc.?

French Cars Inc., I drove DS's, 4CV's, Panhards, and other weird and wonderful cars.

Frank: Well, I had a couple of French cars before working at the dealership. I had an 11B Traction Avant and later, a Renault 4CV, both of which were great cars. Plus of course, during the time I was at

Tom: So besides Citroën and Panhard, French Cars Inc. also carried Renault?

Frank: Well, we briefly carried Renault. But of course the model they had then was the Dauphine



The Early Years (cont.)

which I won't go into since we all know what kind of car that was!

Tom: What was your job description there?

Frank: I was a salesman.

Tom: And besides yourself, Ralph Gage and Jack Woods, who else worked there?

Frank: There was only one other person and that was a full time mechanic - a Dutchman by the name of Rolf - I cannot remember his last name - but he was very good at working on Citroëns and Panhards - or any other car you brought him. The guy was a wonder.

Tom: What sort of interest did cars such as the Citroëns and Panhards create amongst the general public?

Frank: Well, it was scant to be kind. The people who were mostly interested in cars of this type were quite often Boeing engineers, as well as some University types. I guess you could call them eccentrics or those that were drawn towards something off of the beaten path. An interesting thing about this dealership is that it was in a little brick building on Broadway and East Union Street which was originally, sometime in the early part of the century, built as a dealership for Stearns-Knight automobiles! *(A review of Seattle directories indicates Pierce Arrow cars were sold from this building as early as 1910 - Ed).*

Another interesting thing was that across the street (across Union) there was a place that for a short period of time sold Tatra and Skoda cars. They sold quite a few Skodas, but not many Tatras (surprisingly, since the Tatra was a much better car). It was quite an interesting era!

Tom: Do you recall selling many DS's or Panhards?

Frank: No, we maybe sold 2 or 3 DS's and maybe 1 or 2 Panhards and that was about it really.

Tom: Do you recall selling any 2CV's?

Frank: Yeah, maybe we sold 1 or 2 in that time period.

Tom: How about Renaults, did you sell any of those?

Frank: No, not at all.

Tom: Did you have a car supplied by the dealership to drive around?

Frank: Yes, I drove a DS19 around and I also drove a Panhard on occasion. Once I went to a party given by Bill Muncy (a famous hydroplane driver at the time) at his house on Mercer Island. Somehow we got into a conversation about cars and anyway he became entranced about driving this Panhard I had brought to the party. So I said, "OK fine," and we went around Mercer Island. It was an interesting experience. He really enjoyed driving it, but did not buy one.

Tom: When you had the DS demonstrator car to drive around, do you recall having any problems with it?

Frank: Not at all, not for a moment!

Tom: At one time you mentioned that the colors were not the most desirable?

Frank: Yes, at that time the color selections were very scant. I had a drab beige color. It was a real boring color. The last DS we had was a black one with a maroon velour interior and as I recall, it finally sold (after sitting on the showroom floor for months) to a fellow by the name of Bill Wakefield. He had a large Alaskan fishery concern - Wakefield Fisheries - or some such thing. It was a beautiful car!



The Early Years (cont.)

Tom: Do you recall any problems that people had with these early cars?

Frank: The only problem I can recall was when people would occasionally put in the wrong hydraulic fluid, but mechanically they were durable.

Tom: Was there much in the way of support from the factory or training information?

Frank: Not really, besides the brochures (which we had to pay for) there wasn't any support, not even for dealer signs or anything like that.

Tom: When a potential customer came in, did they have much knowledge of the DS and its features?

Frank: As a rule, no. They understood it was a French car but most had very little idea of the mechanical features of the car.

Tom: What kind of reaction would you get when you took them on a test drive?

Frank: Well, they were impressed, but that was the extent of it.

Tom: Were people scared of the complexity?

Frank: Not that I was aware of. At least none of them had related that at the time. People often thought it was strange that the brake was a little button on the floor. I have to relate this tale. The distributor for Citroën was in Portland and one year we had an auto show - I think it was 1957. So Ralph and I went down to Portland to pick up a couple of demos; an ID19 and a 2CV. The distributor has a 2CV truckette - I loved the thing. We all climbed in it and went out for lunch. We ended up taking the truckette and the ID back to Seattle. Ralph drove the ID and I drove the Truckette. I think we left at about 4:00 in the afternoon. Forty-five miles an hour was about the best I could get out of it with my foot stuffed through the firewall! Back in those days Highway 99 was the main route home (a two lane road most of the way). As we were coming up, every once and a while I would have to pull over and let the traffic (that was bottled up behind me) get



1957 SEATTLE TIMES AD



TEMPO MATADOR TRUCKS



The Early Years (cont.)

past. I didn't get home 'til midnight and I think the only time we stopped was once for gas!

Tom: Where was the auto show that year?

Frank: It was in what is now the Seattle Center. It was held in an exhibition hall that was later torn down to make way for the present-day *Opera House*.

Tom: Were there any other activities that French Cars Inc. did to try and promote the dealership?

Frank: No, we didn't have any kind of budget for that kind of thing or for much in the way of advertising. We did take on a line of German trucks by the name of *Tempo*. These trucks were front wheel drive and very well built. They had a Triumph engine* in them and were basically a flatbed with wood sides that folded-up. They were great trucks, but at that time we were going through a bad economic period - essentially a recession - and no one was really buying that type of thing.

(* PCN editor Allan Meyer points out that *Tempo* trucks had a variety of engines including air-cooled VW, Heinkel or a British Austin engine - Ed).

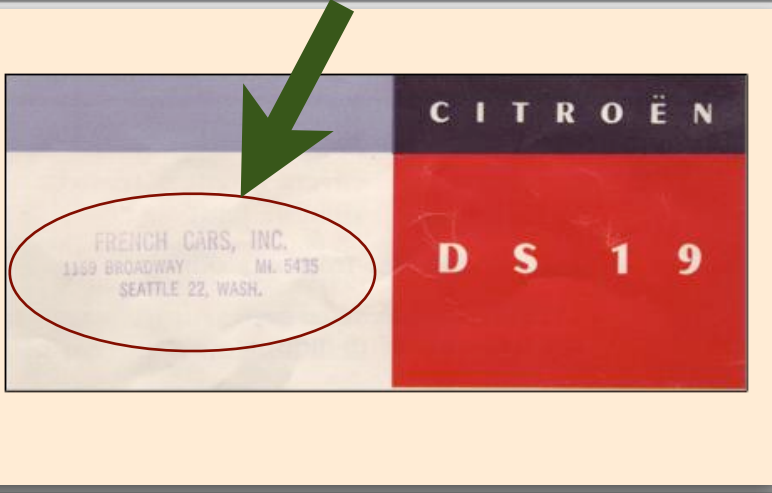
Tom: What sort of memories do you have of the owners Jack Woods and Ralph Gage?

Frank: Well, Jack was an interesting guy. He was not really involved with the business other than funding the operation. He was really a landowner. He had several apartments in the Eastlake area. (Remember the *Panhard* dealership on Eastlake Avenue that we were talking about earlier? - Ed). Jack was a nice guy but wasn't around much. Ralph and I had known each other for a long time and of course later on, after Jack had closed the dealership, Ralph and I went to Bellevue and opened up *Wheelsport Ltd.*

Tom: Did you foresee the end of French Cars Inc.?

Frank: Oh yeah, we could see that there wasn't anything happening at all and Jack was tired of losing money, so he folded it up.

So it appears that *French Cars Inc.* never really sold many cars and only lasted a few years. But surprisingly, Citroën brochures bearing the *French Cars Inc.* dealer stamp still surface from time-to-time. Today, there is no trace of the building at 1159 Broadway, as the entire block was razed to make room for a medical center. We have been unable to find any photos of the original building at 1159 Broadway, but it had a grand history; among other marques, it was a *Pierce Arrow* dealership in 1910 and a *Stutz* dealership in 1917.



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 Seattle in the 1960's.

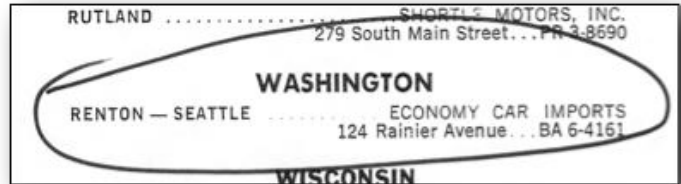
ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS

Following the early demise of French Cars Inc. on Broadway in 1958, a Citroën / Fiat dealership popped up in Renton (the city of Renton is about 10 miles Southeast of downtown Seattle). The dealership was called *Economy Car Imports*, and was located at 124 Rainier Avenue. This location puts the facility very near the Boeing Renton Plant and the Renton Airfield. It is interesting to note that the Boeing 707 was still a new airplane at this time and the 727 Tri-Jet was about to be launched, both from the Boeing Renton factory, a stone's throw away from Economy Car Imports.

Scrutiny of records at the Seattle Public Library revealed that Economy Car Imports was owned by Jerry Fleming and Richard Wald and incorporated as a business on August 15, 1961. Oddly, Fleming and Wald unsuccessfully operated a Citroën dealership (using the very same company name) a year or two earlier in Portland, Oregon.

A Citroën dealer directory printed in April of 1962 listed Economy Car Imports as the sole authorized Citroën dealership in the State of Washington! (See above right.) This left a several year "gap" in the availability of Citroëns in Seattle following the demise of French Cars Inc. in 1958 and the start-up of Economy Car Imports in 1961.

NWCOC member Paul Joos remembers taking a test drive with his parents in a new

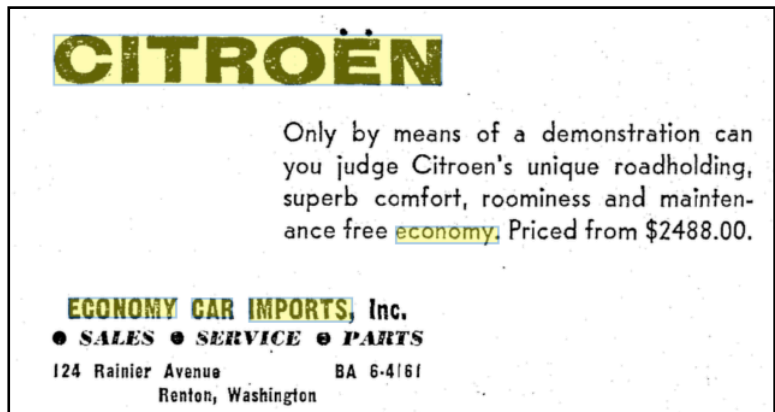


1962 CITROEN DEALER DIRECTORY

DS at Economy Car Imports in 1961. Young Paul and his dad liked the car, but his mom was unimpressed and therefore there was no sale.

The lack of surviving information, combined with my inability to track down information about Flemming or Wald, has made it difficult to know how active the dealership was. It was active enough however to warrant inclusion into the factory authorized directory for 1962.

The building at 124 Rainier Avenue was built in 1958, so it was nearly new when Economy Car Imports was launched. This building is still there, is still an automotive repair facility, and seems not to have changed much at all (see photo following page).



1961 NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT FOR ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS



The 1960's (cont.)



ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS BUILDING AS SEEN IN 2018

ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS
124 FAIRHILL AVE
RENTON WASH

SERVICE PARTS SALES
BA-6-4161

OVERSEAS DELIVERY AVAILABLE
Michelin "X" Tires
FOR ALL EUROPEAN & AMERICAN SPORT CARS

Citroen Cars Corporation
8423 Wilshire Blvd, Beverly Hills, Calif.

RENTON
SEP 28
11-AM
1961
WASH.

LYING BY BOB FLINNETT, M. LOS ANGELES, CA

MR. ROBERT W. DUNN
2525 S.W. 169TH PL.
Seattle, WA

1961 ADVERTISING POSTCARD FROM ECONOMY CAR IMPORTS

French film star Mijanou Bardot and the new Citroen DS-19



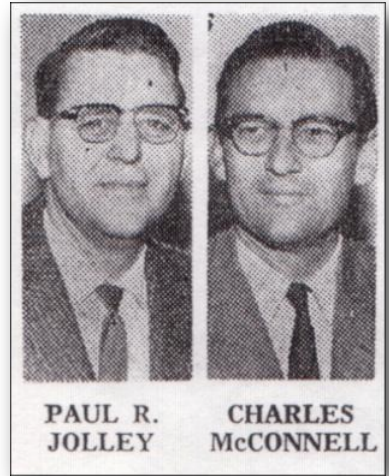
The 1960's (cont.)

AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALE

At the end of 1962, Economy Car Imports lost their Citroën dealership to two motivated and enthusiastic Seattleites, named Paul Jolley and Chuck McConnell. It was these two people who came together and formed *Automobiles Internationale*.

The original formation of Automobiles Internationale was the result of numerous letters between Paul Jolley, Chuck McConnell, and Citroën. Many of these letters are still in existence and are stored in files at Chuck McConnell's West Seattle home. It is interesting to note that Citroën refused to let Jolley and McConnell use the word "Citroën" in their dealership's name (it was stated that this was Citroën's 'policy'). Hence it was decided to call the business *Automobiles Internationale*.

It was early January, 1963 when Automobiles Internationale opened its doors near the corner of SW Alaska Street and Fauntleroy Way SW in West Seattle. The original site was a somewhat modest brick building located at 4603 - 37th Ave SW. The building is still there today and appropriately, is a foreign car repair shop.



PAUL R. JOLLEY

CHARLES McCONNELL



SEATTLE TIMES NEWSPAPER CLIPPING FROM 1963



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALE LOCATION #1 AS SEEN IN 2008



The 1960's (cont.)

In issue number 77 of the California Citroën Car Club (CCC) dated May 1963, Roger Sagner from Portland Oregon offered a congratulatory statement to Paul and Chuck for starting up their new dealership. Sagner, who operated a Citroën dealership himself in Portland, also took credit for planting the seed for a Seattle-area 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."."

A price list was found which shows Automobiles Internationale's prices for the 1963 Citroën line:

Model	Base Price	Price Including Delivery Charges
2CV	\$1295	\$1355
AMI6	\$1695	\$1755
IDI9	\$3245	\$3320
IDI9 WAGON	\$3475	\$3550
DS19	\$3645	\$3720
DS19 CONVERTIBLE	\$5595	\$5685

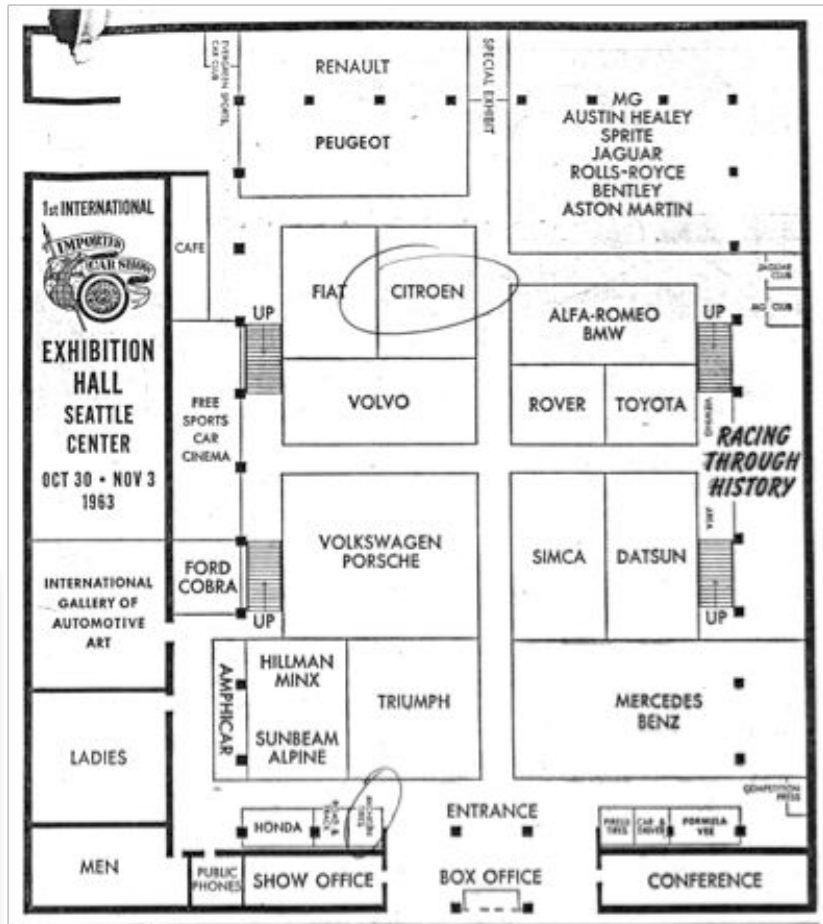


The 1960's (cont.)

Several DS's were shown by Automobiles Internationale at the 1963 Seattle Import Auto Show, held at the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall. The Exhibition Hall, along with the majority of the buildings in the Seattle Center complex, had been newly constructed for the World's Fair, held in Seattle a year earlier. This auto show was billed as, "Seattle's First International Imported Car Show" and included cars from 27 makes with over 100 models on display. (Despite the claim, it wasn't really the first import auto show in Seattle as there was at least one before; in 1957.)

The auto show was sponsored by the Import Car Distributors Association, and was headed by a man named Kjell Qvale who was head of British Motor Car Distributors, Ltd. and later instrumental in the formation of the Jensen-Healey brand.

The Citroën display, assembled by McConnell and Jolley, was situated adjacent to the Fiat and Volvo displays.



FLOORPLAN FOR THE 1963 INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW IN THE SEATTLE CENTER EXHIBITION HALL



The 1960's (cont.)

The 1963 Seattle Import Auto Show must have seemed like a triumph for Automobiles Internationale and photos still exist! (See right.) Standing to the right of the photo of the DS cutaway is a young Chuck McConnell. Chuck, the technically savvy half of the partnership, explained the eccentric inner workings of the DS19 to astonished passers by.



Automobiles Internationale, under the leadership of Paul and Chuck, rapidly gained a good reputation among local Citroën owners. In the November 1963 CCC, an obviously pleased local DS owner named David Middleton wrote:



"After reading about the problems in getting good service in some of the hinterlands in your last few issues, I can only advise these poor unfortunates to migrate to the Seattle area and let their sick vehicles recuperate at Jolley-McConnell's Automobiles Internationale. I found that Paul and Chuck were Citroën owners long before they were dealers, and having suffered the familiar woes at the hands of unscrupulous and scheming agents, they are determined that their customers will get a fair break."

Unfortunately, only about a year opening, Chuck McConnell withdrew from the business. His decision to leave was due to differences of opinion with Paul Jolley over the future direction of the company. Paul wanted grandiose and Chuck thought it best to keep the business simple with low overhead. In retrospect, Chuck probably had the right idea.



Chuck left *Automobiles Internationale* and went on to continue his career as a Boeing engineer. See Chuck's business withdrawal notice from a 1964 Seattle newspaper (following page).



The 1960's (cont.)

In early 1964 Paul Jolley, now on his own, made the decision to move Automobiles Internationales to a new and much larger location, just around the corner from the first. The second building, located at 3801 SW Alaska Street, looks like a "proper" dealership including a large showroom, huge plate glass windows, and several large service bays. The July 1964 CCC quotes a Seattle newspaper as saying that the new 10,500 square foot location of Automobiles Internationales was "luxurious" and a far cry from the "30 by 40 hole in the wall" of the first location.



As can be seen in this rare photo (right), Jolley added the Fiat line to Automobiles Internationales at the "luxurious" new building. Also, notice a subtle spelling difference in the company name that was incorporated by Jolley after the split with McConnell (an "s" was added to the end of "Internationales").



If you look closely at the 1964 photo, you can see an H-Van, a 2CV Truckette, a DS sedan, several Fiats and a new DS wagon in the showroom.

But Automobiles Internationales' stay in the building at 3801 SW Alaska (location #2) was even shorter than its stay in the first building. Automobiles Internationales would have to move again.

The area of West Seattle where Automobile Internationales made its home had historically been an 'auto row' with several different dealerships on adjacent blocks. Eventually, nearly all of them seemed to be owned by the Huling Brothers for their West Seattle automotive empire.



The 1960's (cont.)

So it is fitting that after Jolley vacated location #2, the Huling Brothers used the building until the Huling empire itself collapsed in the early 2000's. To the right is a 2001 photo of 3801 SW Alaska Street (location #2) at the end of the Huling era. Following the Huling Brothers, Thrifty Car Rental occupied the building for a number of years. Currently, the building has been nicely restored and is a Les Schwab Tire Center (see below).



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #2 AS SEEN IN 2001



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #2 AS SEEN IN 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

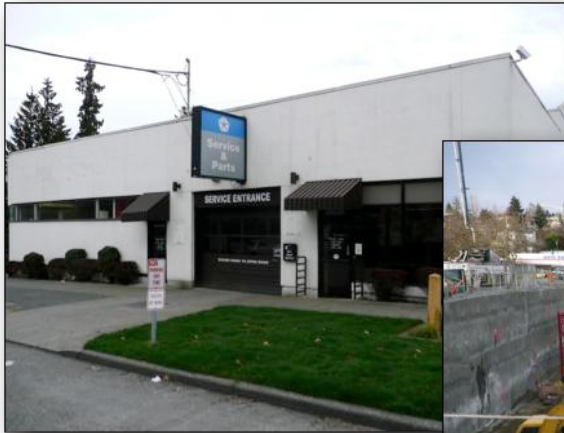
Automobiles Internationales' third location was directly across the street from location #2. The address of location #3 was 4550 - 38th Ave. SW.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to see what this third building originally looked like since it had an unsightly "facelift" from the 1970's (see below photos). As one looked from a distance, the original curved glass roofline was still visible, suggesting that the original form of the building was much more interesting than the '70's form.

It is clear that this third location was not as nice as the "second" Automobiles Internationales location. Nevertheless, the buildings at the second and third locations were much larger than the first building

and must have generated an upgrade for Automobiles Internationales as a credible automobile dealership (not to mention a significant upgrade in overhead costs!).

In 2008, the location #3 building was vacated and scheduled to be demolished along with the rest of the buildings on the block for a mixed-use condo project. The economic crash of 2008 stalled demolition of the building for a while. In 2010 however the entire block was razed. The new building complex is now complete, thus erasing any trace of Automobiles Internationales location #3.



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #3 AS SEEN IN 2008



HOLE IN THE GROUND IN 2010



LOCATION #3 IN 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

In 1963 in the small building (location #1) and 1964 in the two larger West Seattle buildings (locations #2 and #3), Automobiles Internationales had as many as 10 employees to serve their customers; 5 mechanics, 2 to 3 salesmen, a service manager, etc. One of the mechanics who logged some hours at the first location of Automobiles Internationales was named **Romi Lucas**. Romi had completed Citroën factory training at the Los Angeles facility, and was hired by co-founder Chuck McConnell to perform service and maintenance on the newly sold Citroëns. However, Romi Lucas and the volatile Paul Jolley did not see eye-to-eye and thus Romi's employment at *Automobiles Internationales* was brief. There will be more about Romi Lucas later.

The third location of Automobiles Internationales was not to last very long either. Lease 'problems' with the building would arise in 1964 and force a repeat of the situation that occurred twice in the previous year and a half. *Automobiles Internationales* would again have to search for a new location. We can only guess the tone of discussions that must have taken place between the short-tempered Paul Jolley and the landlords of all these buildings!

This time, a location closer to downtown Seattle was chosen in lieu of West Seattle. Paul Jolley chose the fourth location of Automobiles Internationales to be 1124 Pike Street, in a Seattle neighborhood called *Capitol Hill*. The auto-related part of Capitol Hill was mainly in a narrow rectangle defined by Pine Street, Pike Street, Broadway, and Minor Avenue.

It is worth noting that this small area was Seattle's original **auto row** from the early 1900's and the home of dealerships of many marques of foreign and domestic cars, including; Alfa Romeo, Austin Healey, BMW, Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Citroën, Dodge, DeSoto, Detroit Electric, Essex, Ferrari, Fiat, Hudson, Jaguar, Jeep, Kaiser-Fraser, Land Rover, Maserati, MG, Mercedes Benz, Mercury, Packard, Peugeot, Pierce Arrow, Plymouth, Pontiac, Porsche, Renault, Saab, Studebaker, Triumph, Volvo, and scores of more obscure marques from the early 1900's.

The building chosen by Paul Jolley for location #4 was constructed in 1920, originally custom-built as a

Packard dealership. It was designed to be one of Seattle's most elaborately ornamented auto dealerships, befitting of Packard's luxury image. The building is nicely sited to take advantage of a key intersection in Seattle; that of Pike Street, Minor Avenue, and Melrose Avenue, just a few steps east of the downtown core of the city. The following pages have some additional information and photos of this historic building.

As with their second and third locations, Fiat cars were also sold from this fourth location, side-by-side with the Citroën's. It is very difficult to see, but if you look closely in the 1965 photo (page 18), you can see the roofline of a DS sedan in the corner window of the showroom.

The 1124 Pike Street location of Automobiles Internationales remained in operation until 1968 at which time financial problems, which had existed from the beginning, led to the liquidation of business. All of the parts, tools, equipment, and paperwork were seized by the bank and either auctioned off or discarded.

You have to give Paul Jolley credit for trying. He advertised in the local newspapers virtually every day and managed plenty of local press coverage. He even offered free trips to Disneyland! (See newspaper ad right.)

When Automobiles Internationales closed its doors for good in 1968, Romi Lucas and Chuck McConnell (both names we have already mentioned) ended up with some of the leftover inventory of parts and tools. As a result of the business liquidation by the bank, no original records concerning the business still exist.

**DISNEYLAND
ON US . . .**

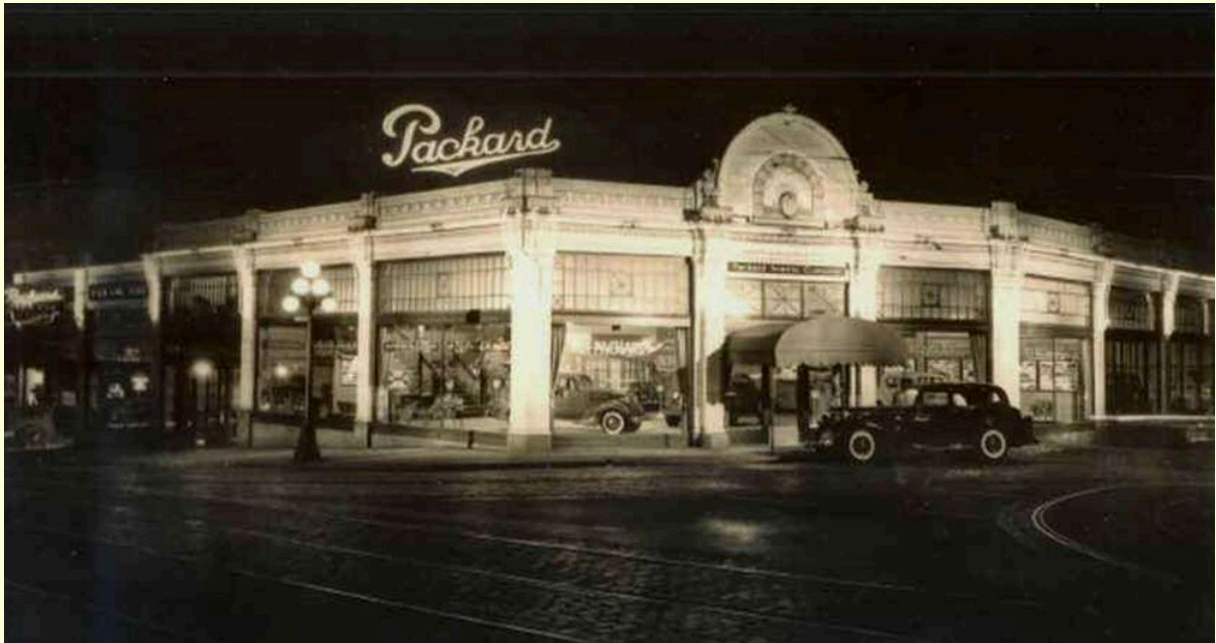
The boss is away—the overhead is down so . . . anyone who purchases an ID-19 Citroen during the month of June will be flown to Hollywood and will spend 2 days at Disneyland all on us. We pick up the tab. Go now! Before the boss comes back.

AUTOMOBILES
Internationales

3801 W. ALASKA WE. 2-1886



The 1960's (cont.)



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #4 AS SEEN IN 1937 IN ITS PACKARD DAYS

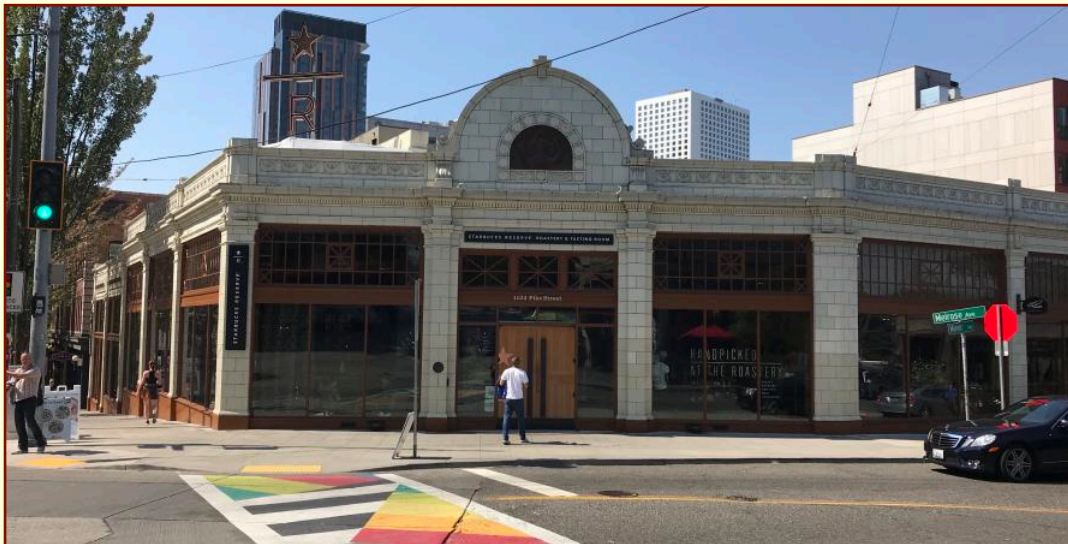


STREET VIEW OF LOCATION #4 (PHOTO BELIEVED TO BE TAKEN IN 1921)

The 1960's (cont.)



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #4 AS SEEN IN 1965 IN JOLLEY'S CITROEN / FIAT DAYS (NOTE DS ROOFLINE IN THE WINDOW)



AUTOMOBILES INTERNATIONALES LOCATION #4 AS SEEN IN 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

MORE ON THE 1124 PIKE STREET BUILDING

The Packard dealership remained in the building for about 25 years, but left in the mid-1940's as Packard's star was fading. For the next half a century, the building experienced a succession of various car dealerships.

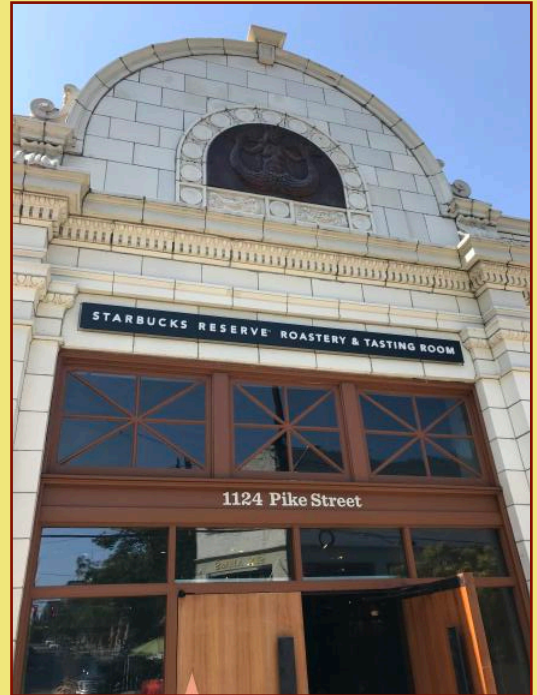
After Packard left, the building was a dealership for Kaiser cars called *Hawthorne-Wilkins Motors* which appeared in about 1946. Shortly after that, there is a listing for *Western Motors* selling Kaiser-Fraser cars. In 1954, the Seattle phone books list it as *The Auto Warehouse* selling used cars. In 1959 a business called *Import Motors Co.* occupied the building. In 1963 and 1964, the building is listed as vacant which is sad considering its grand heritage.

In 1965, Paul Jolley leased the building for *Automobiles Internationales*. Unfortunately, Jolley's endeavor only lasted three years. After Jolley's Citroën/Fiat dealership collapsed in 1968, the building remained in use as various automotive dealerships, including *British Motors* in 1968-1969, *Downtown Datsun* from 1970-1977, and something called *Metro Imports* in 1979. In the mid-1980's, the building housed *Metro Mazda*, followed by *Bayside Jeep Eagle* in the late 1980's.

In the 1990's and early 2000's, the main part of the building was no longer in the automotive trade and instead contained an *Utrecht Art Supply* store with *Seattle Volvo* in the west side of the building.

The building has recently gone through perhaps its biggest transformation. In 2014, it was taken over by the Starbucks Corporation and converted into the swanky *Starbucks Reserve Roastery & Tasting Room*. While the exterior of the building has remained intact over the last 100 years, the interior has changed dramatically. Fortunately, Starbucks's architects made an attempt to save and restore parts of the original interior, such as the Terrazzo floors and to re-expose the wooden beams in the ceiling.

The Starbucks Roastery is a place where you can experience coffee production from the un-roasted bean all the way through the roasting process until it pours into your coffee cup. Food and Starbucks promotional items are also available. It is quite striking. Go visit sometime.



The 1960's (cont.)

Today, no data has been found that details the number of Citroëns ultimately sold by Automobiles Internationales, but it is clear that most of the DS's in the Seattle area were sold there.

Automotive News Magazine from 1964 reports that a total of 905 Citroëns were sold in the USA in 1963 and 739 in 1964. By today's standards, these numbers seem awfully small, don't they? No wonder these local dealerships had difficulty keeping their doors open.

Capitol Hill, where Automobiles Internationales location #4 was located, was very active in the automotive world until the 1980's when gentrification and the resulting rising land costs drove nearly all of the automotive businesses out. Today, only one automobile dealership remains on Capitol Hill - Ferrari of Seattle (formerly Grand Prix Motors).

What became of Chuck McConnell and Paul Jolley? By 1995, the last of Chuck's DS's was at the end of the road. Out of the blue, Chuck bought a derelict SM and so at 78 years young, Chuck embarked on a massive restoration project. He stripped the entire interior out and removed every bolt from the engine compartment. It looked a daunting project, but Chuck was a talented mechanic and as a retiree, he had the benefit of time. Chuck remained sharp as a razor and remarkably agile despite his years.

Within a few years, the SM was back on the road and looked great. The first road trip was a 1000-mile drive to *SM World* in California where Jerry Hathaway helped Chuck fine-tune the finicky triple Weber carburetors and the SEV Marchal dual point ignition.

Paul Jolley, the other original founder of Automobiles Internationales, lived for many years in a West Seattle home just down the street from Chuck McConnell. In the late 1990's, he suddenly disappeared from sight, leaving behind a tired CX wagon and a rusty Traction Avant parked on the street. His disappearance is sort of a mystery, as he did not tell any of his friends where he was going. The cars have long since disappeared as well, most likely towed away by the city.



Citroens Arrive by Ship

Paul Jolley, president of Automobiles Internationales, Inc., surveyed some of the 20 1956 Citroën automobiles recently unloaded in Seattle. This is the first time Citroëns ever have been shipped to the dealer in Seattle by water, Jolley said. Automobiles Internationales is the dealer for all of Washington State. Most of the French-made cars are sold before they even arrive in Seattle, Jolley said.

SEATTLE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - DECEMBER 1965

745 Cars, IMPORTED & SPORTS CARS

C C C

CITROEN-FIAT

The West Coast's highest volume Citroën dealer.

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

1965 SEATTLE TIMES ADVERTISEMENT



The 1960's (cont.)

INTERVIEW WITH CHUCK McCONNELL

(This interview has been edited from the original version to shorten its length)

I was born 8 July 1917 in Garden Grove, California, USA. I moved to Utah in 1926 where I attended public school when in session. During summer vacations I helped in the family lead and silver mining operations under primitive conditions. All very good, but I decided I was not about to spend my life in a dark hole in the ground dodging rocks. So, beginning in 1935, I studied mechanical engineering at the University of Utah. The USA was in "The Great Depression". I was finally able to find employment in the engineering department of Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, California, in June, 1941.

There I thought to learn the lore of aircraft design so that I could go to Detroit and revolutionize my true love, the automobile industry. (I will say right here, that that did not work. I wound up applying what I knew about automobiles to aircraft design!)

I went to Northrop Aircraft in 1942 where I had the privilege of working directly with J.K. (Jack) Northrop and started my career as a preliminary design engineer. I contributed to the P-61 Black Widow and the B-35 Flying Wing among others. Moved to Seattle in 1950 and designed and built our home while continuing in preliminary design at the Boeing Co. until retirement in 1981.

In 1959 the family car was a used 1953 Buick Roadmaster sedan. The Buick could go like the mill tales of Hell, but one could neither steer nor stop it! I became thoroughly determined to replace the Buick with a vehicle that could be driven. Mind you, 1959 was the year of the fins and other outlandish styling. There was nothing made in the USA that could fill my very simple requirement.

After much research, the field was narrowed to the Mercedes 220, the Jaguar Mark 7 and the Citroën DS-19. I test drove these and thought the Mercedes to be a well-behaved truck. The Jag was better, but even then reliability was an issue. The Citroën was a designer's dream come true, everything that could be desired at half the cost of the others. So the Citroën became the family car and the fun began!

There were no qualified Citroën repair people available in the Seattle area. I had always done all of the maintenance and repair work on my cars, so I bought the manuals and learned the car by reading and doing.

The '59 DS was pretty well civilized. The gray body color became black, but the turquoise top remained. All quite striking with the double Robri side trim. The car was driven 375,000 miles with only one engine rebuild. It met a sad end in 1974 when it was attacked by a Ford and reduced to a pile of rust flakes.

Two dealerships had failed in Seattle (*French Cars Inc. and Economy Car Imports...Ed*) and the orphaned car owners needed more support than I could provide after work. So in 1962 I took a partner* who was also an enthusiast and established a franchised Citroën dealership (**this partner was of course Paul Jolley,...Ed*). I lasted



The 1960's (cont.)

a couple of years until my partner wanted more expansion than I thought wise, so I sold out to him. He went broke (*to be fair, Jolley kept it going for 5 years...Ed*).

In 1972, I drove an SM on the local raceway track and was not particularly impressed. It did not seem enough better than a D to warrant the cost and the reduced room and creature comfort. I was content to let it be and let somebody else deal with the Italian monkey cage under the bonnet!

As I got older, I must have lost a few marbles on the way because, on 5 April 1995, I saw an ad in the local newspaper: "1973 Citroën SM – 3.0 L, 5spd, needs work. \$2,500" and went to have a look. The engine had been disassembled for a long time and was in various boxes and heaps. The interior appeared good with the black leather near perfect. Many layers of peeling silver paint. The engine compartment a total shambles, loose hydraulic tubing wrapped around the axle shafts and so on.



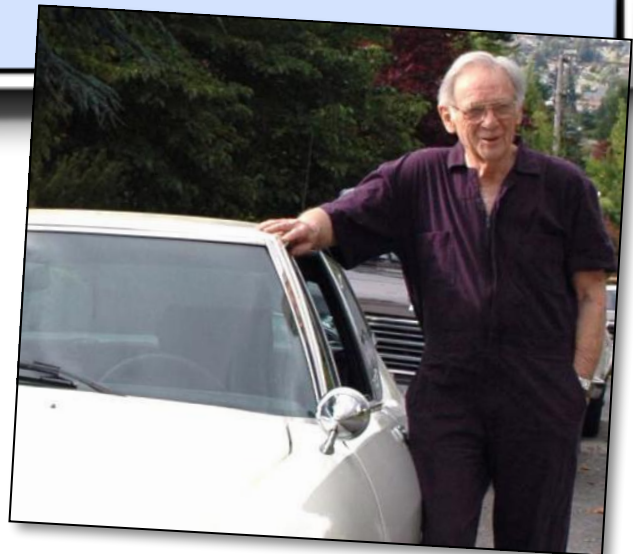
Well, there never were very many SM's and the person who had this one was in way over his head, so after a little haggling, I bought the mess. Took a year to get the title cleared and then the work started, to the complete detriment of my other Citroëns. So why did I buy the SM? I guess I felt sorry for it!

The best of the SM is the elegant appearance, interior appointments and drivability. The worst is the somewhat temperamental, delicate and usually unreliable engine.

The restoration is a long and tedious story of mangled components, corrosion, mold, rot, rat and mouse nests, damage from improper jacking and so on. Most of the damage resulted from very poor storage conditions since 1982 when the engine blew at 59,000 miles with a failed oil pump drive shaft. The car had been liberally dinged in traffic mishaps, to say nothing of the bottom looking like it had been dropped on a heap of cobblestones. This is under control now with preparation for painting underway. The good news is that the SM is mechanically complete and could be driven.

Chuck McConnell

Chuck McConnell passed away on August 18, 2007, at the age of 90. He is survived by his daughter in sprit, Leti Barr. Chuck was a wonderful, friendly, and talented man. Chuck, wherever you are, we miss you.



CHUCK MCCONNELL STANDING NEXT TO HIS SM IN 2005



The 1960's (cont.)

ABC MOTORS

Another visible Citroën dealership in the Seattle area was *ABC Motors* in the city of Tacoma, about 40 miles south of Seattle.

The location of ABC Motors was originally a hamburger joint built in the late 1940's. The restaurant's claim-to-fame was their *3-Decker Billy Burger*. And yes, this really was the name of a hamburger they offered! After about 10 years as a drive-in restaurant, a man named Tom Hawkins arrived on the scene and turned it into a used car dealership. About 5 years later (in 1963), Tom Hawkins had the original structure town down and replaced it with a new building intended to be his new Studebaker dealership (see newspaper clipping, right).

Even though Tom Hawkins repaired and/or sold cars in this location since the late 1950's, very little shows up in the Tacoma phone books for ABC Motors until 1969, when suddenly a full-page ad appeared (following page) with the motto:

"ABC Motors, Inc. - Fine cars the world over."

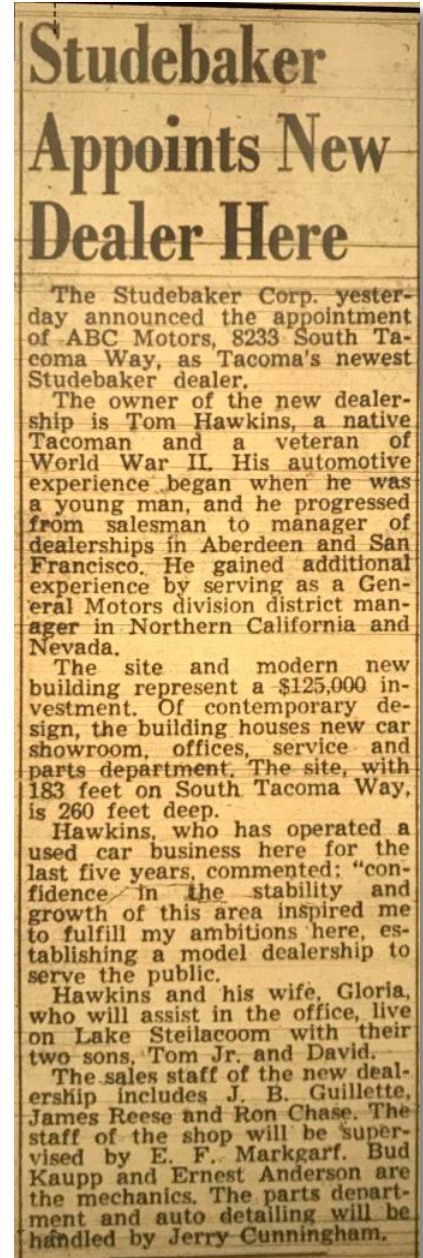
ABC Motors was quite an ambitious operation under the leadership of Tom Hawkins in the late 1960's. They sold eight different makes simultaneously, including cars from France, Italy, and England. They also continued their support for the now defunct Studebaker marque. Their advertising was prolific in the late 1960's and indicated that they offered many other services, including the following curious item:

"ABC Motor Air Lease - Leasing Aircraft and All Makes of Cars"

If you look closely at a ABC Motors license plate frame (photo below), you can see that they have graphics for air, sea, and road travel, suggesting that they might have been involved boats as well as cars and airplanes.



1969 LICENSE PLATE FRAME FROM ABC MOTORS WITH AIR, SEA, AND ROAD GRAPHICS



TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE MARCH 3, 1963

The heyday of ABC Motors was not to last. In the 1963 Tacoma News Tribune article on the previous page, Tom Hawkins indicated that he had enough “*Confidence in the stability and growth*” of this area that he felt safe to invest his money in his new Studebaker dealership.

Unfortunately history was neither kind to the Studebaker marque nor stretch of road where the ABC dealership was located. By 1967, Studebaker called it quits and stopped producing cars. To make matters worse for Tom Hawkins, the stretch of road that he had so much confidence in, went into decline and to this day has not recovered.

By 1971, all traces of ABC Motors had vanished from the phone books, thus leaving ABC motors to exist only in history.

Currently, an auto parts store occupies the building. If you look at the 2018 photo (below) and the historic phone book advertisement from 1969 (right), the building has changed a bit, but is still clearly recognizable as ABC motors.

ABC MOTORS, INC. FINE CARS THE WORLD OVER

DEALER FOR:

- FRANCE** RENAULT PEUGEOT CITROËN
- ITALY** ALFA ROMEO MASERATI
- ENGLAND** TRIUMPH ROVER AND LAND ROVER
- U.S.-CANADA** STUDEBAKER PARTS • SERVICE

WE OFFER THE NORTHWEST'S MOST COMPLETE AUTHORIZED FACTORY SERVICE FOR THESE FINE CARS IN OUR OWN TECHNICAL SERVICE CENTER

SALES DEPT. OPEN 'TILL 9 P.M.—EVERY WEEK NITE
ALSO—QUALITY SERVICE FOR DOMESTIC AUTOMOBILES

3-D BUDGET MASTER FINANCE PLAN
Buy - Sell - Trade - Refinance
VISIT OUR NEW USED CAR CENTER AT
7833 SOUTH TACOMA WAY TEL. Greenfield 5-1600

Check These ABC Extras

- EXECUTIVE LIMOUSINE TO AND FROM SHOPPING CENTERS
- LOW COST RENTALS IF NEEDED
- ALL MECHANICAL REPAIRS
- COMPLETE TRANSMISSION REBUILDING
- GLASS SHOP
- FRONT END SHOP
- ENGINE REBUILD

MILITARY PERSONNEL MOST WELCOME
ABC MOTOR AIR LEASE-LEASING AIRCRAFT AND ALL MAKES OF CARS

8233 South Tacoma Way (Off 84th St. Freeway Exit) Tacoma Juniper 4-4400




ABC MOTORS BUILDING - AS SEEN IN 2018



The 1960's (cont.)

ABC MOTORS ADVERTISEMENTS FOR FOR VARIOUS MARQUES FROM THE LATE '60's




"World's Toughest Rally Car"
EAST AFRICAN SAFARI

1967 First Overall Winner	1964 First in Class
1966 First Overall Winner	1963 First Overall Winner
1965 Second Overall Winner	1962 Second Overall Winner


PEUGEOT "THE TOUGH ONE"
ABC MOTORS, INC.
8233 S. Tacoma Way Tacoma, Wash. JU 4-4400
60 Seconds Off the Freeway
"COMPLETE TECHNICAL SERVICE CENTER"

Over 75 Years of Quality

MASERATI — "World's Finest Automobile"



ABC MOTORS, INC.
8233 SO. TACOMA WAY
TACOMA, WASHINGTON
TACOMA — JU 4-4400 • SEATTLE — MA 3-0969
60 SECONDS OFF THE FREEWAY
NORTHWESTERN UNITED STATES DISTRIBUTOR



Alfa improves the breed—again! Look at those lovely lines another Pininfarina styling masterpiece, the perfect statement of a true sports car.

ABC MOTORS, INC.
8233 SO. TACOMA WAY
TACOMA, WASH. JU 4-4400
60 SECONDS OFF THE FREEWAY
"Complete Technical Service Center"

ALFA ROMEO

THE 1970's

KOLAR'S

The decade of the 1960's was pulling to a close when an already established Seattle business, *Kolar's*, took on the Citroën line to follow-up where *Automobiles Internationales* had left off. Specifically, it was January of 1969 when Kolar's started selling Citroëns.

Otto Kolar started working on cars on Capitol Hill as early as 1937. In a 1957 advertisement for Kolar's, they described themselves as "a complete automotive service," located at 1205 E. Pine Street. Initially they just performed maintenance and repairs on used cars. By 1960, Kolar's started selling new cars; Jeeps and German DKW's.

As noted earlier, a small neighborhood on Capital Hill served as home for many automobile dealerships throughout Seattle automotive history. The Kolar's building on E. Pine Street is in the heart of this neighborhood, and was located diagonally across the street from another once-popular dealership called L.E. Belcourt. L.E. Belcourt sold many marks over the years, including Studebaker, DeSoto, Peugeot, and Renault.



The 1970's (cont.)



THE KOLAR'S BUILDING IN ITS EARLY YEARS (PHOTO PROBABLY FROM THE LATE 1930's). THE BUSINESS AT THE TIME OF THE PHOTO WAS 'MCALPIN-SCHRIENER CO.' WORKING ON AUTOMOTIVE BRAKES AND CARBURETORS



THE KOLAR'S BUILDING AS SEEN IN 2008 BEFORE THE EXTENSIVE REMODEL.



The 1970's (cont.)



1959 AD FOR KOLAR'S

The Kolar's building is a somewhat stylish building dating from 1910. On the main floor facing 12th Avenue was the Kolar's showroom with service bays in the back. There was also a large upstairs room with a wood floor where many new and used cars were parked. In the late 1970's, I remember looking around upstairs and routinely seeing a few Meharis, an SM or two, several DS's and an occasional 2CV

mixed in with a contingent of Jeeps. This second floor was accessible by a steep wooden ramp off of Pine Street. Inside a garage door on the main floor was another steep ramp, this one leading down to the parts department in the basement.

After Kolar's, the next long-term Tennant of the building was the Foley Sign Company which remained there until 2009 when the building was substantially modified to add three additional stories (yes, more condos). This type of building remodel, where a brand new building is erected behind a historic facade, has become common practice on the old automotive buildings of Capitol Hill and has gained the pejorative term *façadism* or my favorite, *façadomy*.

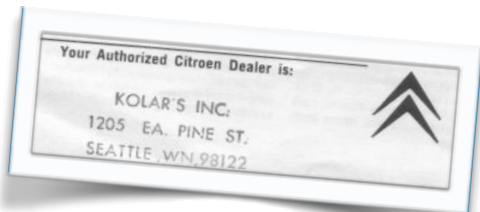
The building is now called the **Packard Building** but the building has no direct relation to the Packard automobile brand or the Packard dealership in the same neighborhood that we have already discussed. We therefore presume the name is nothing more than a marketing decision based on the automotive roots of the neighborhood.



GUTTED KOLAR'S BUILDING DURING THE CONDO CONVERSION IN 2009



KOLAR'S BUILDING AS SEEN IN 2018, NOW CALLED THE "PACKARD" BUILDING FOR NO REASON WE CAN FIND

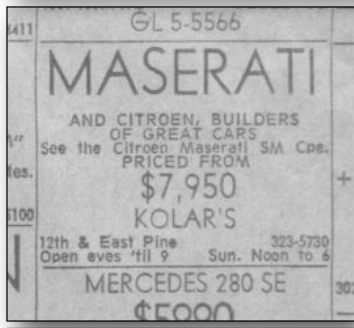


The 1970's (cont.)

From about 1971 to 1976, a quiet but friendly man named *C.J. Felt* worked at Kolar's as service manager. C.J. originally operated a Citroën dealership in the 1960's in Berkley, California, called C.J. Motors located at 2566 Telegraph Avenue. C.J. then moved to Oregon where he put in a short stint at Roger Sagner's Citroën dealership in Portland, called Sagner's Motor Mart. In about 1971, C.J. moved to Seattle and became Kolar's Service Manager for Jeep and Citroën as well as handled the parts department for the Citroën line.



GREG LONG'S BEAUTIFUL, UNRESTORED DS21 PALLAS WAS ORIGINALLY SOLD BY KOLAR'S



SEATTLE NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIED AD FROM 1975

SEATTLE NEWSPAPER AD, JANUARY 12, 1969



Otto Kolar, president of Kolar's Inc., discussed the latest addition to his line of import automobiles the Citroën four-door sedan with the firm's sales manager, L. O. Curley. Kolar's Inc. will have their grand showing starting Wednesday.

Kolar's Inc. Named Dealer For Citroën Automobiles



The 1970's (cont.)

Kolar's started selling Citroëns in 1969; DS's, Meharis, and SM's. They continued to sell right up until Citroën stopped importing cars to the United States in 1973. Kolar's continued to supply parts and repairs up to about 1979, mostly under C.J. Felt's leadership.

By the end of the 1970's, Kolar's occupation of the building at 1205 E. Pine was coming to an end. Kolar's sold off all of their Citroën parts and the Jeep business moved to 17037 Aurora Avenue in North Seattle. This author remembers buying boxes of new Citroën parts for pennies on the dollar as they were winding down on the Citroën business.

The business's long-time owner, Otto Kolar, died in May of 1981 and the dealership was shut down completely about a year later. The final blow to Otto Kolar's legacy was that his business had to suffer the indignity of a public action to get rid of the last few cars, tools, parts, and dealership fixtures.

After Kolar's folded, C.J. Felt moved to another Seattle-area business called Rainier Beach Imports located at 9245 Rainier Avenue South in Seattle. Rainier Beach Imports was briefly a Renault / AMC dealer. C.J. served as their service manager until he retired in the early 1990's.

C.J. passed away in 2004. C.J.'s daughter Pam Felt lives in Seattle and has been active in the local Citroën and Peugeot scene for many years and helped prepare this article. Pam wrote the following about her father shortly after he passed away:

"...Though I was not much beyond the typical confused teenage years, I amazingly recall my father sitting back on occasion and fondly uttering, "A thousand Frenchmen can't be wrong" when referring to some point pertaining

to the Citroëns, Peugeots, or Renaults. He was always so passionate about them; he loved their simplicity, he loved their lines. Everything about their design had a reason, he felt, and thus to me his proclamation, "A thousand Frenchmen can't be wrong" was an obvious show of support to the designers, the French engineers of these cars! Yes, even confused teenagers can grasp such impressions (at least upon repetition)..."



C.J. FELT



The 1970's (cont.)

C.J. Felt's Amazing Car!

C.J. Felt owned a very interesting Citroën that has spent decades in the Seattle area. It is a **1957 DS19** that was originally purchased new in California, but shortly afterwards, it was traded in to C.J.'s car dealership in Berkley, California. C.J. liked the car enough to have kept it for himself. In the mid-1960's, the car followed C.J.'s migration to Roger Sagner's Citroën Dealership in Portland Oregon (Sagner's Motor Mart). Eventually, both C.J. and the car ended up in Seattle, where C.J. landed a Service/Parts Manager position at Kolar's Citroën/Jeep Dealership in Seattle as discussed above and later Rainier Beach Imports.

C.J. finally sold the car in about 1978 to a Seattle-area man named George Levin who apparently was never able to drive it very much since the last license tab was also dated 1978. The car languished - not running - in George Levin's Seattle-area garage for quite a few years.

In 1985, another Seattle-area Citroën owner named Tom Kaiser bought the car from George Levin. Unfortunately, Tom let the DS sit outside deteriorating at his Green Lake home. During Tom Kaiser's ownership, he also allowed valuable new-old-stock (NOS) spare parts (which had been following the car from owner-to-owner) to start rusting and deteriorating by keeping them in his wet, dank basement or in the equally dank trunk of the car.

Apparently, Tom Kaiser was an optimistic man, because we found a temporary travel permit in the glovebox dated from 1986. As it would turn out, Tom would never be able to drive the car. Too many serious mechanical and hydraulic problems had developed after C.J. sold the car in 1978.

In September of 1990, a fellow named Greg Bruninga bought the car from Tom Kaiser, for \$200.00. Greg will be discussed more in later paragraphs. While Greg never did start a restoration on the car, Greg's ownership did offer contributions; the car was kept in a warm, dry garage that prevented any further deterioration and over the 7 years in which Greg owned the car, he tracked down additional New-Old-Stock (NOS) parts for it.

Between 1957 and 1978 when it stopped running, the DS clocked up a total of only 46,000 miles!

In the late 1990's, the DS was purchased by Dr. Paul Joos, a local collector, and a huge restoration began. In 2000, the car was finished. Take a look - it is amazing!



The 1970's (cont.)

RALLI-ROUND

Among the independent shops that have worked on Citroëns was *Ralli-Round*. Ralli-Round, founded in 1965 and specializing in Alfa Romeo, was a small shop located at 1512 Fairview Ave. East, near Lake Union in Seattle. Romi Lucas (remember this name?) was the founder of Ralli-Round and based on Ralli-Round's incorporation date, it appears that Romi Lucas started Ralli-Round soon after he parted ways with Paul Jolley at Automobiles Internationales.

Ralli-Round worked on Citroën DS's on-and-off for a number of years. There were even brief periods of time in the late '70's and early 80's when Ralli-Round ran advertisements in the Seattle Times Newspaper seeking the Citroën repair work that was no longer being performed by the defunct Kolar's.

Ralli-Round changed ownership several times since the days of Romi Lucas. Keith Magnuson followed Romi Lucas and operated it from 1978 to 2003. It was then sold to a Ralli-Round alumnae named Ben Howe who kept it in business, primarily working on Alfa Romeos, until mid-2018 when the building was vacated and scheduled to be demolished.

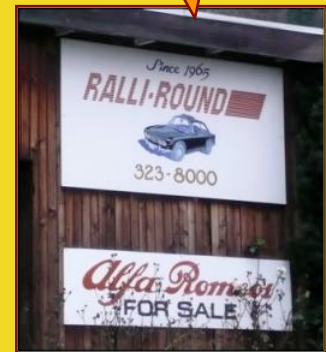
But by the fall of 2018, Ben Howe re-opened Ralli-Round in a new location in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland, where they are still working on Alfa's and other makes. We wish Ben Howe good luck in the new location.

It is rumored that there once was a fairly good stock of Citroën parts and special tools at *Ralli-Round*, but these seemed to have disappeared with time and multiple changes of ownership.

SAD END TO RALLI-ROUND'S EASTLAKE LOCATION (2018 PHOTO AFTER THE PREMISES WERE VACATED AND WEEDS WERE TAKING OVER)



RALLI-ROUND AS SEEN IN 2008



IC	79 CAPRI 4SPD, RS PKG, 35200,	
	365-4982	
77	CITROEN SERVICE Mon-Fri 9-6	
75	at RALLI ROUND	323-8000
78	STEAL 1977 Corvette, 12,000 mi,	
44	loaded. \$8900 244-7859	



THE 1980's

The 1980's was the first decade with no authorized Citroën sales or parts outlets in the Seattle area. However, several independent shops performed repairs on the remaining and aging DS's and SM's, including the previously mentioned Ralli-Round.

THE CITROEN WAREHOUSE

This author, along with Jens Vik, performed much of the Citroën maintenance in the 1980's, originally from a very large and very old warehouse on Harbor Island, an industrial area near downtown Seattle. This warehouse was said to have been used to build wooden coffins in the early 20th century and was in a terribly dilapidated state by the 1980's.

JENS VIK IN 2005



THE CITROEN WAREHOUSE ~1980

Part of the warehouse housed a roofing company owned by Seattle-area Citroën owner Bob Norsen. The larger half of the warehouse was empty for several years and evolved into a fabulous DS repair facility, courtesy of the Norsens. The "Citroën" side of the warehouse was so large that one could perform circular test drives inside! The warehouse eventually became well known as the **Citroën Warehouse** by many of the local Citroën owners. The above photos show the interior of the small side (the roofing side) of the warehouse, apparently at a time when a thorough cleaning was warranted! Notice two DS's and an SM being worked on. Unfortunately we do not have any photos of the 'large' side of the warehouse.



The 1980's (cont.)

Bob Norsen, the owner of the roofing business in the warehouse, had a fleet of Citroën DS's in the '70's and '80's. I remember he had about 9 or 10 of them at any one time. Some were used by his family, but others (typically the station wagons) were used in the roofing business. As you can imagine, they saw a very hard life. It was on Bob's fleet that I learned to work on these cars.

Long time Citroën owner Harry Figg operated the roofing company's machine shop. Harry was a machinist at Boeing who moonlighted at Bob's roofing company. Harry was quite a character. Harry and his family lived in an old house in Renton, WA and he spent the better part of the time I knew him trying to invent a perpetual motion machine; yes that is right - a perpetual motion machine. Harry passed away in October, 1999 with his dream of perpetual motion unfulfilled.

Eventually, the large part of Bob Norsen's warehouse was leased to a pet food company called Pilgrim Pet Supply, and thus the Citroën Warehouse had to move. The dilapidated warehouse was demolished in the 1990's.

A small two-stall workshop in Issaquah, Washington was chosen as the replacement for the warehouse. This small shop in rural Issaquah was quite a contrast to the huge warehouse near downtown Seattle. The location in Issaquah was near the corner of Interstate 90 and Highway 900, in an anonymous-looking industrial complex. Zoning laws for these buildings prohibited certain businesses and therefore, the Citroën work had to be performed 'discreetly.' Fortunately, the owners of the complex were happy to look the

other way as long as the rent checks cleared.

After the demise of Kolar's in the late 1970's, there were no Citroën parts available in the Seattle area, so it became necessary to start stockpiling parts to keep the Seattle-area Citroëns running. These parts were purchased from many sources, including a new business in Santa Cruz, California called *Western Hemispheres* and from a Dutchman named Andre Pol who was (and still is) selling parts out of his home in Holland. By the mid 1980's, the parts stock at Issaquah had grown quite large.

The Issaquah shop remained open until 1989 when marriage and an engineering career at Boeing took their toll on spare time and so the Issaquah shop was closed.

This author still has some DS parts, still has a Citroën, and still dabbles in rebuilding components for local DS's.



CHRIS DUBUQUE AND FAMILY IN 2005



The 1980's (cont.)

BARCLAY STUART AND FOURNET 2CV's

Another Citroën chapter in the Seattle area in the 1980's was Barclay Stuart's sales of Michel Fournet's remanufactured 2CV's.

Barclay was an eccentric retired Bellevue school teacher, sporting a big gray perm and flamboyant mannerisms. Barclay lived in a strange hand-built house on a huge inherited waterfront lot in one of the most expensive suburbs of Seattle, called Mercer Island. Barclay's grandmother had bought the large waterfront lot during the great depression for a few hundred dollars and willed it to Barclay in the 1970's.

Barclay became interested in 2CV's in the mid-1980's after seeing this author's 1984 2CV6 Charleston on a street in Seattle. In 1986, Barclay formed a relationship with Michel Fournet of France and began importing new 2CV's.

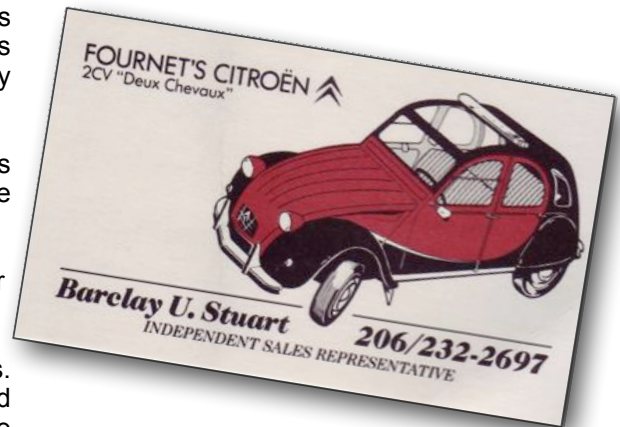
But how was it possible to import these cars that clearly did not meet our USA safety and exhaust emission standards? The answer is that Michel Fournet had a clever idea that was made possible by virtue of the unusual construction of a 2CV. Two important points:

- In the 1980's, it was legal to import *any* car that was identified as model year 1967 or earlier. Importing cars that were model year 1968 or later required that they meet applicable safety and emission standards
- The serial number stamped or mounted on a car's frame is (for all practical purposes) what determines the year of a car

Fournet bought brand new 2CV's off of the showroom floor in France. He then disassembled the cars and removed the original frames - something quite easy to do on a 2CV by virtue of its design, but not practical on other cars. Fournet then installed the entire body, interior, and mechanical parts from the "new" car onto a pre-1967 frame that had been sandblasted and painted to as-new



BARCLAY STUART IN 1987



The 1980's (cont.)

condition. This allowed the 'new' cars to be identified as pre-1967 cars, thus allowing them to be imported as "old" cars.

This approach would never have worked with a car of standard unibody construction, but was simple on a 2CV. Fournet painted the old restored frames bright garish colors so it would be clear to US Customs officials that the cars were indeed assembled on used frames and were therefore 'old' cars.

Before Barclay tried importing any of Fournet's cars, he traveled to the USA-Canada border and spoke with the customs officials there. He explained to them

exactly what he and Fournet were doing and came armed with a meticulously prepared notebook full of photos of each 2CV being assembled on a restored frame along with the required paperwork. After several visits, he convinced them that this method of importing the cars was unconventional, but legal. He eventually gained their trust and they more-or-less waved him through each time he brought in a car.

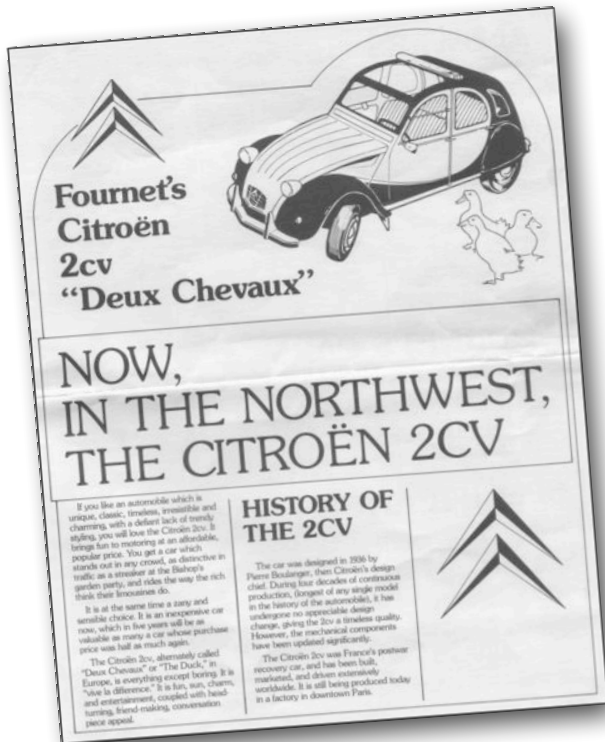
Barclay's meticulous advance preparation really paid off, since many other ports around the country were refusing to let any 2CV's through at this time, in part due to companies like Target Imports that tried to import the cars in a more controversial way (as a kit car) or others who were just plain cheating. It is important to remember that in the mid-to-late '80's, there was a frenzy of 2CV importation at ports all around the country. Some cars made it through, some did not. But all of Barclay's cars sailed through without a hitch.

The first Fournet 2CV sold by Barclay was a maroon and black Charleston sold to Peter and Linda Deboldt of Kirkland, Washington for US \$6900 on December 10, 1986. Barclay's personal car, a beautiful 1987 Rouge Vallelunga 2CV Club, was sold to Paul and Desnee Joos of Bellevue, Washington who still own it.

But within two short years after Barclay started selling his Fournet 2CV's, Barclay's lawyer convinced him that his valuable waterfront property was at risk over liability concerns with the cars he was selling.

"...What would happen if someone gets hurt in one of these cars and you get sued?..."

As soon as these words left the lawyer's mouth, Barclay's meticulously cultivated tan turned pale as snow and he promptly closed up shop. He spent the next year paying his lawyer handsomely to extricate himself from any possible liability concerns over the cars he had imported. This effort included "selling" the business to a drifter named Tony for some



BARCLAY STUART
2CV BROCHURE ~ 1987



The 1980's (cont.)

pocket money in hopes of transferring any potential liability.

As it turned out, Citroën ceased production of the 2CV soon after (in 1990) thereby putting Fournet out of business. So in the end, it would not have mattered much had Barclay not got cold feet about the business. Only about a dozen Fournet 2CV's were ultimately imported by Barclay.

But 30+ years later, some of Barclay's cars are still running around Seattle.



BARCLAY AND CAROLYN STUART AT THE WORLD 2CV MEETING IN PORTUGAL IN 1987

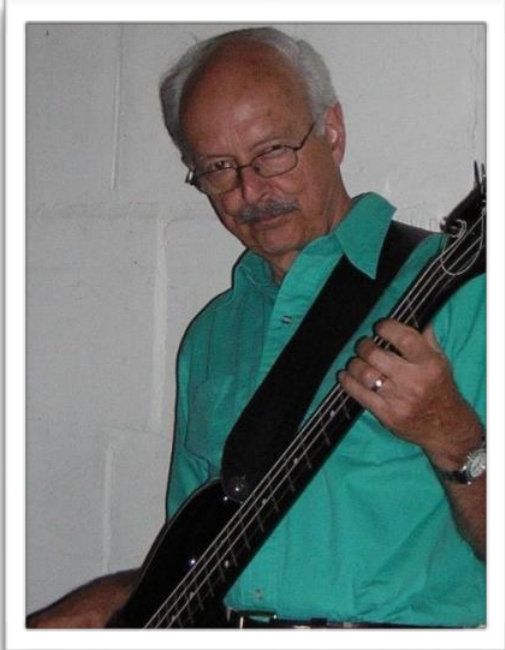
NORTHWEST CITROEN OWNERS CLUB

It was in the mid-1980's when a local Citroën owner named Henry Reed organized the Seattle-area Citroën owners into a formal club, properly registered as a non-profit organization in the State of Washington. This was the beginning of the Northwest Citroën Owners Club (NWCOC).

Not only did Henry create the club on paper, but Henry and his wife Leena were also the social center of the club. They were the heart and soul. In the early days, Henry and Leena held many of the club events at their Lake Forest Park home. We remember a dozen cars wedged at the top of their frighteningly steep driveway for our annual Winter Dinners and other club meetings. We remember huge spreads of food that Leena and others prepared for our club potlucks. Everybody adored Henry and Leena.

Sadly, Henry Reed passed away on November 16, 2018.

Henry was the father of the NWCOC. Because of Henry's initiative, a 35+ year odyssey of events, road-trips, and friendships occurred that made all of our lives richer. Rest in Peace Henry.

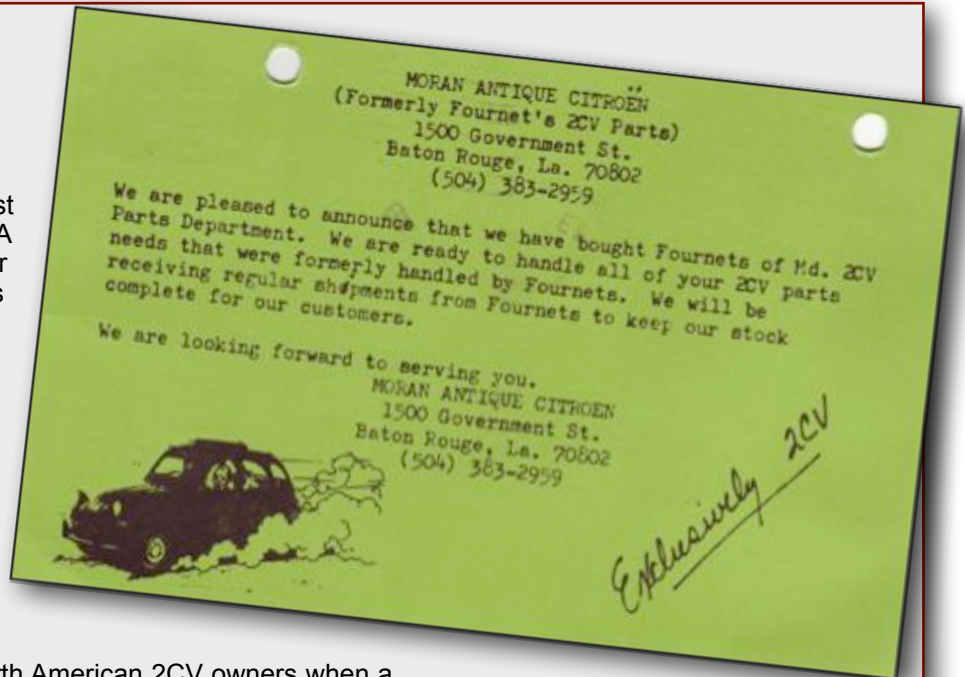


HENRY REED PLAYING AT CHRIS MIDDLETON'S WEDDING

The 1980's (cont.)

FRENCH PARTS SERVICE

During the early 1980's, most of the 2CV parts in the USA were supplied by either Michel Fournet from his business in Glen Burnie, Maryland or from Western Hemispheres in Santa Cruz, California. But in 1986, Fournet closed the doors of his parts business and sold the parts portion to Moran Antique Citroën in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Moran operation only lasted about a year.



1986 MAILER FROM MORAN

Fortune soon reigned for North American 2CV owners when a Seattleite named Ben Morse started up a 2CV parts business out of his house on Bainbridge Island, Washington (Bainbridge Island is a quick and beautiful ferry ride from downtown Seattle). The business, initially called Island Auto Parts, quickly grew. In 1991, Ben moved the business to Poulsbo, Washington and changed the name to French Parts Service. Ben specialized in parts for the 2-cylinder Citroëns, but also sometimes stocked parts for other Citroëns such as the DS and CX. The stock of parts for the 2-cylinder Citroëns at French Parts Service was truly amazing! Not only did French Parts Service do well selling parts to North American 2CV owners, but they also had a loyal clientele in Japan.

Ben set an amazing standard with customer service and ran the business very professionally. But after 10 years, Ben wanted to move on with other chapters of his life and sold his business to Kenji and Marion Yoshino of Seattle in 2001. More about the Yoshinos in a few paragraphs.



THE 1990's

MIDDLETON-OFF-MAGNOLIA

The late 1980's brought an end to this author's shop in Issaquah as career and family took precedence. Fortunately, the talented son of a Boeing aerodynamics engineer named **Chris Middleton** stepped into the picture to continue with Citroën repairs in the Seattle area.

By the 1990's, routine maintenance on DS's and SM's had largely given way to complicated and extensive restoration work as the cars aged. Chris took on the challenge and in a few short years, managed to be able to perform full restorations, including rust repair, mechanical, and hydraulic work.

Chris rents a large shop with several colleges on the east side of the Magnolia neighborhood, just north of downtown Seattle. Chris has had staying power, since he has been in Magnolia restoring Citroëns for 30 years! He has restored dozens of the local cars, including Dr. Paul Joos' beautiful 1966 convertible. The Magnolia shop is also full of other interesting machinery from France, Germany, Italy and England. Chris' personal cars include a Peugeot 404, a DS wagon, and a rare 1965 DS19 Pallas.



CHRIS MIDDLETON AVEC UNE ROUE ROUGE EN 1997

DR. PAUL JOOS' DS CONVERTIBLE



The 1990's (cont.)

RHINO MOTORS

Another Seattle-area enthusiast who grew up around Citroëns was Greg Bruninga. After owning several DS's in the 1980's, Greg opened a repair shop in Seattle called Rhino Motors. It was briefly located in the Interbay neighborhood of Seattle, but soon moved to its more permanent location at 310 NW 100th St. in North Seattle.

Rhino Motors opened in the early 1990's and specialized in parts and repairs for Seattle's aging fleet of Peugeots, but occasionally worked on some of the local Citroëns. Eventually income from the dwindling supply of Peugeots dried-up and as a last ditch effort to stay in business, Rhino started to work on Jeeps and other cars, but to no avail. After a somewhat controversial decade and a half of working on cars, Rhino Motors closed in about 2008.



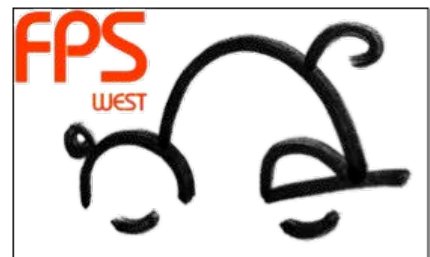
RHINO MOTORS JUST BEFORE CLOSING UP - 2008

2000 AND BEYOND

FPS WEST

As mentioned earlier, Kenji and Marion Yoshino took over operation of Ben Morse's Seattle-area 2CV parts business in 2002. The business was renamed FPS West, a variation of the original French Parts Service name.

Kenji and Marion continued the tradition of excellent customer service that was started by Ben and expanded the business to include internet sales (see www.2cvsource.com). As the stocks of factory 2CV parts dwindled, FPS West started seeking out reproduction parts that are being built in various parts of the world. FPS West has a very large stock of parts and is by far the leading 2CV part supplier in North America.



The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)

Following is a brief history of Kenji and Marion from their FPS website:

"...Kenji, who is native Japanese, owned his first Citroen in Japan as a teenager. Kenji still remembers walking into the car dealership with only two thousand dollars in his pocket at age 19, asking what might be available in his price range. In the far back corner of the lot was an older red CX - it was love at first sight. "It was original, foreign, exotic – as a kid I thought that was just my style." His love for Citroens has never died.

Marion met Kenji in Japan in 1987, while she was working for an advertising company. She remembers their first date in the CX, and the fun road trips that they took, touring Japan in the Citroen. She was impressed that Kenji maintained and repaired the car himself, even though the French language repair manual should have been completely indecipherable to him. "Sometimes it would break down, and my brother and his friend would shake their heads and say "He'll never get it running," but he always did.

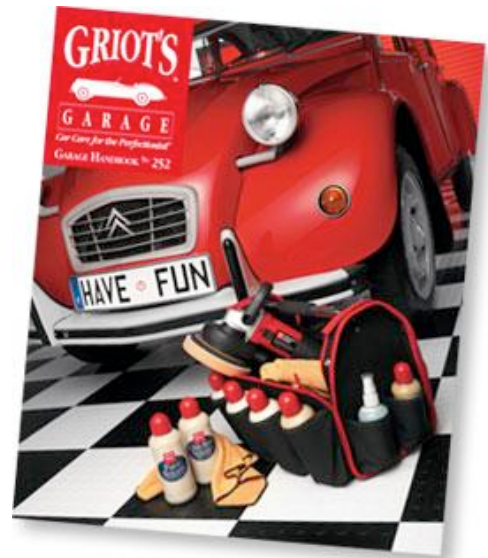
Marion had studied and traveled in France while in college. Visiting foreign countries was high on Kenji's wish list, and after a year of marriage, they decided to move to the U.S. Marion began graduate school, and Kenji got a job as an assistant manager of the Benihana restaurant in downtown Seattle in the year 1990.

One day, Kenji was surprised to see a DS for sale in the newspaper. They bought it and joined the Northwest Citroen Owners' Club. Marion remembers Kenji spending hours and hours polishing up the car for the first club Rendezvous.

In 1994, Kenji began working for the car products catalog company Griot's Garage. It was an introduction to the mail order business. In 2002, Ben Morse approached Marion with the idea of taking over FPS. For the next three years, Kenji continued his full-time job while Marion ran FPS from the large basement of their home in Seattle...."



**KENJI, MARION, AND HENRI-JACQUES CITROEN
- ANDRE'S GREAT GRANDSON**



The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)

FPS West is operated out of the Yoshino's house in the Normandy Park neighborhood of Seattle, and is still going strong despite a major setback in 2007 when a devastating fire severely damaged their house, their belongings and destroyed several of their Citroëns. Fortunately, Kenji only suffered minor burns and the rest of his fantastic family was unharmed. Oddly, one thing that survived the fire unscathed was their stock of 2CV parts!

Kenji's family and the business operated from a rental house while the burned house was being rebuilt, but the original Yoshino house has been repaired and is housing FPS West once again.



YOSHINO HOUSE FIRE IN 2007



MARION YOSHINO MANNING THE DESK AT FPS WEST



KENJI NEXT TO HIS STOCK OF PARTS

The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)

AXEL AND USCHI

A great addition to the Seattle Citroën scene arrived in October, 2001 when Axel Kaliske and Uschi Walter moved to Seattle from Germany. Axel and Uschi brought with them their *unparalleled* enthusiasm for 2CV's.

Axel and Uschi have been importing, restoring, and repairing 2CV's for local owners since the day they arrived in Seattle. They are operating their business under the name **2CVsRus**. (See www.2CVsRus.com.)

Tucked away in Axel and Uschi's personal collection is a 'new' 1955 British built 2CV that was lost in a Thai warehouse for over 3 decades! Remember that story?

Axel and Uschi hold an annual Citroën event at their house in South Seattle every August called *Cit-Chat*. Cit-Chat has become one of the most relaxed and beloved club events held in Seattle and we look forward to it every year.

Axel and Uschi have been a great boost to local Citroën enthusiasm and we are very fortunate to have 2CVsRus here in Seattle.



AXEL'S 2CV GARAGE



AMAZING "NEW" THAI 2CV



The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)

THE FACILITY

Starting in the 1990's, a local club member named Paul Joos started amassing a collection of Citroëns as well as other European cars, such as Fiat, Alfa, BMW, SAAB, and Messerschmitt. But as usual with car collections, storage soon becomes a major problem. Paul had cars stashed in garages and basements all over the Seattle area.

By 2002, he had enough of the storage problems and started construction of a building to house his collection. The original concept for the building was just a big metal box to store the cars. But the original vision morphed into something that is hard to describe; it is a cross between a house, man-cave, and a garage. Paul and his wife Desnee decided to simply call it, *The Facility*.

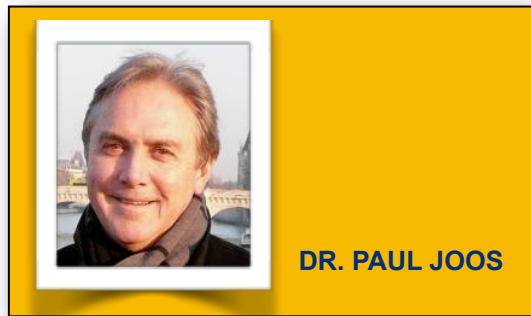
Located in Bellevue at the intersection of Coal Creek Parkway and Interstate 405, construction of the facility started in 2003. Lots of metal, concrete, and sweat later, the first car rolled into the Facility on new year's day, 2004. It was a red and black 2CV Charleston. Several photos of the interior of the Facility are on the following page. But in addition to the upstairs that is shown in the photos, there is a basement, also full of cars!



CONSTRUCTION OF THE FACILITY IN 2003



FIRST CAR BEING ROLLED INTO THE FACILITY ON JANUARY 1, 2004



DR. PAUL JOOS



The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)



UPSTAIRS AT THE FACILITY

THE FOUNDRy

In 2012, a major Citroën enthusiast named Greg Long moved to the Seattle area. Greg recently established a vintage car storage facility in Kirkland that he calls the **FOUNDry**. But before we get to the FOUNDRy, let's look at some of Greg's background.

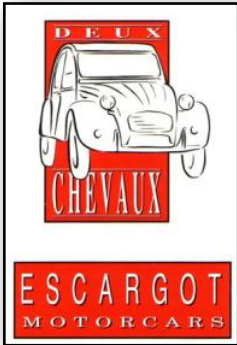
We have already discussed Barclay Stuart's importation of Michel Fournet's 2CV's into North America. There was another importer of 2CV's in the late 1980's called **Escargot Motorcars**, based in Toronto, Canada. Escargot was the product of brothers Greg and John Long. Both Greg and brother John had bought 2CV's from Andre Pol in Holland in the mid-1980's and the love of these cars sparked the notion of creating a business to import them.

Escargot used the same importation method that Fournet used (restoring the 'frame' from an older 2CV and installing it on what otherwise was a brand new 2CV). Each Escargot 2CV received a dashboard plaque indicating that it had been restored by Escargot Motorcars.

Escargot imported 2CV's from 1988-1991, right up to the end of 2CV production. Escargot then branched into Mexican-built VW Beetles and Intermecanica Porsche 356 replicas, but neither had the success of the 2CV. They soon closed up shop and brothers Greg and John Long went on to other career pursuits. It is not clear how many



The 2000's and Beyond (cont.)



2CV's Escargot ultimately imported, but it is estimated to be somewhere between 50 and 100 cars.

Fast forward 25 years and Greg Long ended up moving to a suburb of Seattle called Kirkland. Greg's stable of cars started to grow as soon as he moved here. Among Greg's many cars is a very early 1956 DS19, a Traction convertible, and a perfectly original, un-molested 1971 DS21 Pallas, that was originally sold by Kolar's in Seattle.

As many of us have found out, amassing a car collection quickly reveals the problem of where to store them. In early 2018, Greg solved the issue by developing a classic car storage facility with a partner in an industrial building in Kirkland. Greg calls it the **FOUNDry**, which is a play on the name of a book he wrote in 2014 called **FOUND** (a novel about tracking down long-lost vintage cars). The **FOUNDry** is a place that classic car owners can store their cars, hang out, and perform maintenance.



THE FOUNDry IN 2018



CONCLUDING REMARKS

This special edition presents a summary of the Citroën dealerships, independent parts and repair facilities, and personalities in the Seattle area, over the last 70 years. I hope that the next decades bring about more interesting chapters in this story that myself (or someone else) can document!

We would like to thank the following people (listed alphabetically) for their assistance in the preparation of this article; Tom Farrell, Pam Felt, Ben Howe, Paul Joos, Axel Kaliske, Greg Long, Chuck McConnell, Ben Morse, Frank Nashland, Uschi Walter, Kenji and Marion Yoshino, and the librarians at the Seattle and Tacoma Public Libraries.

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

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

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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.

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