

■ **COLLECTOR CARS:** Paul Prince Sr. knows so much about collector vehicles that he now has a sideline appraising older cars

Auto buff's sideline true labour of love

As a kid, Paul Prince Sr. loved visiting his grandparents in North Carolina.



Christopher Clark
ENTERPRISE

Sure, he loved the warm weather and the way they doted on him. But his fondest memory has little to do with his grandparents at all.

"I remember seeing all the old Ford Mustangs on the roads. Cars don't rust down there and I saw a lot of beautiful Mustangs."

That was in the early 1970s, just about the time Prince turned 16 and could start dreaming about driving his own Mustang. He had a brief taste of the dream in 1975 when he and his father purchased a 1968 Mustang convertible. After eight years of blissful ownership, he and car parted ways.

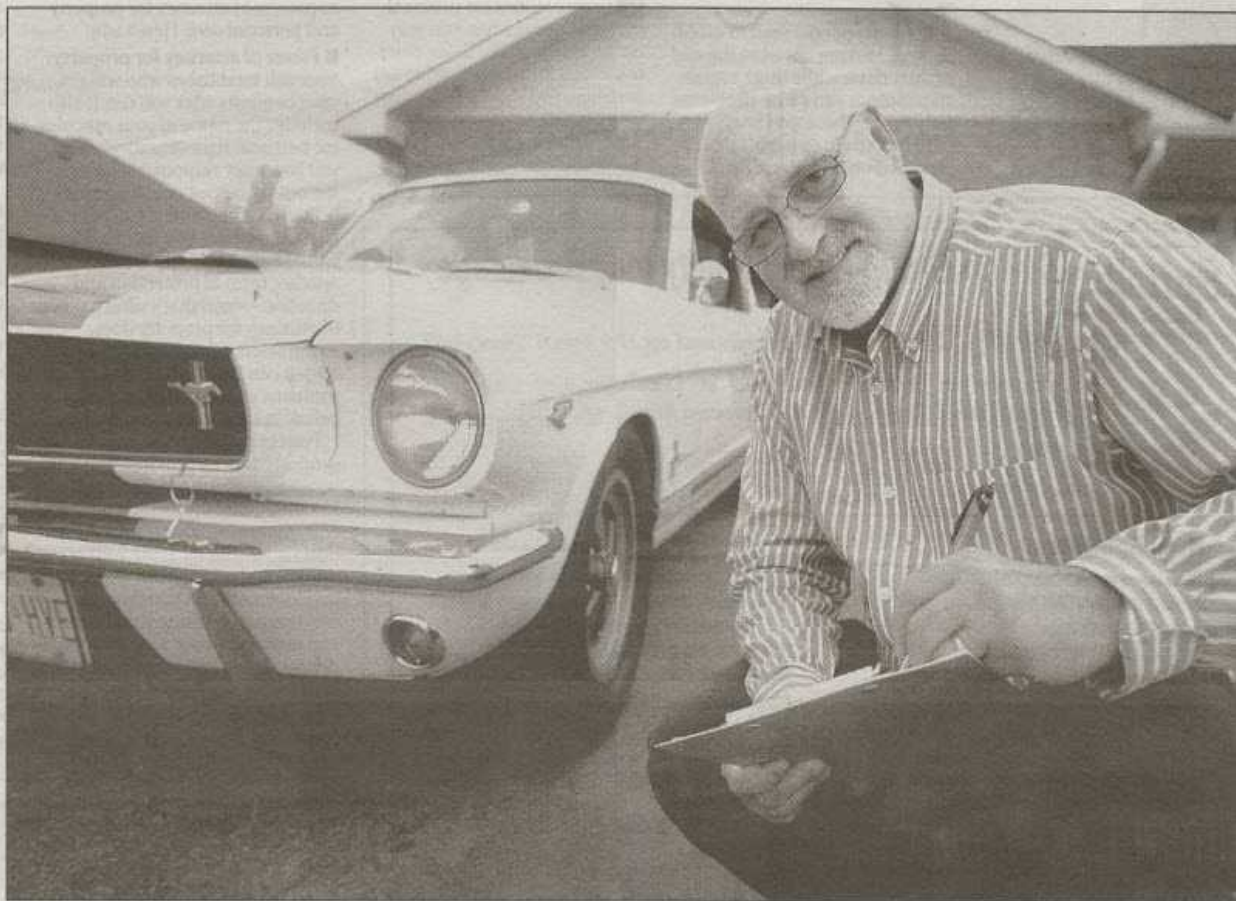
"I got married and sold it," Prince says, with only a hint of regret in his voice.

In 1991, two decades after first falling in love with the car in the Carolinas, he revisited his dream and purchased a 1965 Mustang 2+2 — a blue and white, five-speed fastback that he found, natch, in North Carolina.

He spent a lot of time and more than a few dollars restoring the car, and he gets great pleasure today taking it to cruiser events across the province and beyond. One of his good friends is Peter Faull, who runs Mustang Pony Cars, a London-based shop that specializes in restoring and detailing classic Mustangs.

"I hang out with Pete at his garage all the time, and we talk Mustangs," says Prince enthusiastically. "There are a lot of people who love older cars, but don't know how to restore them or care for them, so they rely on someone like Pete."

Prince, 53, is one of those people who love older cars, but he knows more about them, arguably, than some of the designers who created them.



Paul Prince Sr. of Ilderton not only appraises collector vehicles, but he's also the proud owner of a 1965 Ford Mustang 2+2.

Though he works full-time in an entirely unrelated field — he's a quality assurance manager in the IT department of London Life — he has spent most of his adult life accumulating information about old cars. Mustangs are his favourite, but he hasn't limited his search for information to that model alone.

In fact, he knows so much about older cars that five years ago, he launched a side business appraising collector vehicles. That side business has grown substantially as he's built a reputation for being thorough and meticulous. Last year, he appraised more than 100 cars across Southwestern Ontario.

There are many reasons why

car collectors get vehicles appraised. Often it's for insurers that require updated appraisals to ensure the cars are holding the value claimed by their owners.

"Often it's for insurance, but also it can be because of a divorce or bankruptcy. Sometimes, people just want to know what their car is worth, whether they plan to sell it or not."

For a flat \$135 fee, Prince provides a detailed assessment of a car's value and documents all original body panels and exterior trim.

That last part is important to collectors. If someone has a 40- or 50-year-old car with original body panels damaged in a collision, he wants the replacement

parts to be original, if at all possible. If properly documented as such, the insurer is more likely to spring for the cost of original parts or, at least, the best reproduction available.

Prince gets a kick out of every appraisal he does, whether it's a 1994 Dodge Viper (the newest car he's done), a 1929 Ford Model A hot rod (the oldest), or something just plain odd — like an eight-metre-long 1976 GMC motor home.

Send comments and suggestions for future profiles to Enterprise, c/o The London Free Press, 369 York St., London, Ont. N6A 4G1. A message for writer Christopher Clark can be left at 519-667-5529. He's online at www.christopherclarkwriter.com

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