

1964 Studebaker Avanti R-4837 History

I decided I was going to buy an Avanti when I saw the first one at the Indianapolis 500 in 1962, where it was the honorary pace car, and read about it in the June 1962 issue of Motor Trend magazine. At 24 years old, with a 2 year old son and a daughter on the way, I wasn't quite sure how, but I knew I would own one somehow.

While substituting on a bowling team in the Spring of 1964, a player on the opposing team made me aware of a 1963 Avanti that would be for sale soon by his company, CTL, Division Studebaker Corp. This car was his boss's company car and he would be getting a new 1964 soon. I took the 1963 R1, automatic, Avanti Gray with Claret interior for a few days test drive. I decided that I didn't want to buy it because it was an automatic and I didn't like the exterior or interior colors. When I returned the 63, there was the 1964 Turquoise/Turquoise 4 speed R1, that had just come off the truck. I told the president of CTL that I did not want to buy the 63 but would buy the 64 when he got another new car.

In September/October 1964 he called, telling me that he had just received a new Mercedes Benz company car and wanted to know if I still wanted to buy the Avanti. He also informed me that I couldn't actually buy the car until after year end, 1964, because of the Studebaker bankruptcy or for accounting reasons. I was so excited to be getting a new Avanti, I didn't pay much attention to the reasons why I had to wait until the new year. They put the Avanti that had been driven approximately 2,000 miles, covered in a garage waiting for me to buy it after the first of the year.

I purchased my 1964 Studebaker Avanti, Serial Number R-4837, from the CTL Division, Studebaker Corp. on January 13, 1965 in Cincinnati, Ohio, for \$4,449 (see copy of original title) that I understand was the depreciated value on the company's books.

R-4837, 1964 Studebaker Avanti Prices and Options:

R1 Base Price	\$4,445
Four-Speed Transmission	189
Air Conditioning	325
Power Steering	86
Firestone 500 WW Tires	14
AM Push Button Radio	85
Electric Windshield Washer	14
Twin Traction	40
Front Seat Belts	15
Rear Seat Belts	15
Front Floor Mats	7
Total Retail Price	\$5,235

The Avanti came with a new car warranty of 12 months, 12,000 miles from the date of my purchase. Little did I realize how important that would be over the next 5 years.

We drove the Avanti as a family car in addition to a 1962 Oldsmobile Super 88 station wagon and a 1950 Ford that I drove to work. The speedometer head had to be replaced at 24,000 miles, so the current mileage shown on the odometer is 24,000 mile less than actual. Another interesting event happened in Winton Woods Park, Cincinnati Ohio. The steering wheel broke off the shaft while driving with my family slowly on a very curvy road. I had to drive it home using 2 pipe wrenches attached to the shaft!

Other than the speedometer and steering wheel problems, I had no problems with the Avanti for the next 20 years, with the exception of the clutch. The clutch plate and pressure plate were replaced at least twice per year from 1965 to 1970, all under the original warranty! Speed shifting from first gear to second gear, at high RPM, caused the clutch plate lining to come apart and jam between the fly wheel and pressure plate not allowing the engine to disengage from the transmission. Needless to say, I learned how to shift without the use of the clutch.

In 1969/1970, while having yet another clutch replaced at Potter Mercedes-Benz (ex Studebaker Dealer) in Columbus, Skip Potter and I decided to replace the clutch with a heavy duty clutch plate and pressure plate from some model of truck. I never had to replace another clutch until the restoration in the late '80s.

However, the amount of pressure required to depress the clutch increased dramatically! So much so, that the clutch adjustable linkage rod began to snap so frequently that I was buying replacements 4 at a time. To solve this problem, I had a blacksmith make me a couple of rods made from hardened steel. That fixed that, but caused yet another clutch related problem. I snapped the clutch pedal assembly. Rather than count on a standard Studebaker replacement, I had the blacksmith make me two of them, one of which is still in the trunk.

The Avanti moved with us to Columbus Ohio in 1969 where we continued to drive it as a regular vehicle until it had over 100,000 miles on it and it began look a bit the worse for wear and was becoming unreliable. In 1987, I decided to have it restored to the point of looking good and performing reliably.

Restoration work, ie. engine overhaul, complete paint job, new brakes, front springs, refurbished or replaced bright work, new am/fm/cassette radio, etc. were completed in June of 1989. (see picture taken June 1989 in Cleveland, Ohio) The engine work was done by Canadian Tire Corp. Re-manufactured Parts Division in Toronto, Ontario. All of the other work was done at "State Road Automotive Services" in Cleveland, Ohio, owned and operated by two ex Joe Erdelac Studebaker Dealership mechanics. Mr. Erdelac, who bought the last Avanti produced, was a friend of my father and highly recommended his ex-employees. As the June 1989 picture shows, my Avanti was flawless, and probably better than new, especially the paint, in many other respects.

I drove the Avanti from Columbus, Ohio to our new home in St. Pete Beach, Florida in September, 2001, where it stayed until we moved back to Columbus in 2011.

While in Florida, I drove it mostly to four or five Car Shows a year and monthly to the Dupont Registry's Cars & Coffee gatherings in St. Petersburg, along with hundreds of other cars. During that period, my Avanti was the only Avanti that ever came to the C&C. I became known as "The Avanti Guy".

During the 10 years in Florida, I installed a new carburetor, that I bought from Lionel Stone in CA for \$1,250, replaced the Studebaker front disc brakes with a kit from Turner, installed new shocks, replaced the brake master cylinder and booster, installed a tankless coolant recovery, new voltage regulator, alternator, water pump, all new power steering hoses, all rubber suspension bushings, and rear differential pinion seal.

The Avanti was trailered from Florida to its new home in Columbus, Ohio in April, 2011. I continued to take it to 2 or 3 Car Shows a year and drive it on nice days with the windows down so I could hear the beautiful sound of the exhaust!

Unfortunately, I must now sell my pride and joy at this time because I can no longer work on it anymore because of a skin condition of my hands and arms. Working on the Avanti has been a major part of the fun of ownership.

As of its sale date, June 23, 2013, it has traveled approximately 128,000 miles in the 48+ years I have owned it.

It is a bittersweet moment as I now hand over the keys to Larry Gibson of Grimsby Ontario, Canada and my love affair with the Studebaker Avanti ends after 51 years. I take great solace in the fact that R-4837 will be enjoyed and well taken care of in its new home.

Gary E. Philbrick
June 23, 2013

Attachments:

- 1) Original Title
- 2) Letter, April 6, 1966, from Studebaker President. E.J. Challinor with enclosed "Parts and Service for Your Studebaker" publication
- 3) Picture of R-4837 immediately after restoration, June 1989
- 4) SDC "Turning Wheels" magazine featuring the 1964 Avanti
- 5) Notes about "Running Changes" relative to R-4837 (page 5)

STATE OF OHIO, COUNTY OF HAMILTON

Previous No. 31467701

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE No. 314956631
TO A MOTOR VEHICLE

This is to certify that

GARY E PHILBRICK & BARBARA PHILBRICK

11561 GERITY CT CINCINNATI OHIO

is the owner of the following described Motor Vehicle:
YEAR 1964 Mfr's Serial No. R 4837
MAKE STUDEBAKER Mfr's Serial No. RQ
BODY TYPE 2 DR HARDTOP MODEL
having acquired title to said Motor Vehicle from

CIL DIVISION STUDEBAKER CORP
1240 GEDDALE MILFORD OHIO

LICENSE ISSUED 1978
TRANSFER ISSUED 1978
TRUCK WEIGHT
Registrar of Motor Vehicles

on which Motor Vehicle are the following liens, mortgages or encumbrances:

FIRST LIEN: Nature of Lien S/A Amount \$ 4449.00
Held by THE PROVIDENT BANK, LIEN CANCELLED
Holder's Address in Full 7TH & VINE STS, CINCINNATI, OHIO
Date of Notation JAN. 19, 1965 Clerk's Signature MAR 24 1965
Above Lien Discharged MAR 22 1965 Date of Cancellation
By The PROVIDENT Bank, ROBERT D. JENNINGS, CLERK OF COURTS
#B 440391

SECOND LIEN: Nature of Lien S/A Amount \$ 2905.10
Held by THE PROVIDENT BANK, LIEN CANCELLED
Holder's Address in Full 7TH & VINE STS, CINCINNATI, OHIO
Date of Notation OCT 28 1966 Clerk's Signature
Above Lien Discharged OCT 3 1968 Date of Cancellation
By The PROVIDENT Bank, Clerk

THIRD LIEN: Nature of Lien B618961 S/A Amount \$ 107.00
Held by PROVIDENT BANK, LIEN CANCELLED
Holder's Address in Full 7TH & VINE ST CINTI OHIO
Date of Notation 10 28 66 Clerk's Signature
Above Lien Discharged 2 26 67 Date FEB 26 1967
By The PROVIDENT Bank, Cinti., O. Clerk

Delivered Purchase Price \$ 107.00
Type of Safety Glass if Vehicle
If Dealer's License No.
LISCENSE ISSUED 1974
TRANSFER ISSUED 1974
TRUCK WEIGHT
Registrar of Motor Vehicles

LISCENSE ISSUED 1977
TRANSFER ISSUED 1977
TRUCK WEIGHT
Registrar of Motor Vehicles

LISCENSE ISSUED 1975
TRANSFER ISSUED 1975
TRUCK WEIGHT
Registrar of Motor Vehicles

DATE TO SHIP		DATE WRITTEN		SALES ORDER NO.	ITEM	QUAN.	INST. BOOK	LINE NO.	FACTORY ORDER NO.	SERIAL NO.	
MO.	DAY	YR.	MO.								DAY
			06	07	63				13779	R-4837	
BODY NO.		R-3768		IGN. KEY NUMBER	4290	TRUNK KEY NO.	1444	FINAL ASSY. DATE	/ /	ENGINE NUMBER	R-3305
DESTINATION		SOUTH BEND INDIANA		ZONE CODE		Z		DATE SHIPPED		SHIPPER NUMBER	
SHIP VIA		151									

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT AND EQUIPMENT

MODEL R O 3370 AVANTI
 PAINT 13 P 6332 AVANTI TURQUOISE
 TRIM 14 923 TOY
 20 4 SPEED TRIFLOOR SHIFT
 26A TINTED GLASS W SUN BAND
 34 POWER STEERING
 39 AIR CONDITIONING
 50 TWIN TRACTION
 55 WHITE SIDEWALLS
 72A RADIO & ANT X94 AC 3286 L&R

W 704

INSTRUCTIONS: Prepared by Car Order Dept.
 Distribute as required.

Studebaker
 PASSENGER CAR PRODUCTION ORDER—FINAL ASSEMBLY LINE

CAR INSPECTION RECORD COPY

April 6, 1966

E. J. CHALLINOR
PRESIDENT



Studebaker
AUTOMOTIVE SALES CORPORATION

An Important Message
To Studebaker Owners:

Because of our recent announcement to discontinue the manufacture of automobiles, you may be concerned about continuing service and parts availability for your Studebaker. Parts and service WILL continue to be available - on a nationwide basis - for Studebaker products.

Parts availability will be accomplished through Service Dealers and Studebaker Parts Depots strategically located across the United States. If your servicing dealer does not have needed parts on hand, most parts in most areas are available by overnight delivery from a Studebaker Parts Depot. More than \$20,000,000 worth of parts and accessories are inventoried in our warehouses to protect Studebaker owner investments. It is interesting to note that we are still supplying parts for Packard vehicles although Packard production was discontinued some ten years ago.

Service continuation will be accomplished through a national network of Studebaker Service Dealers. In many cases this will be the dealer from whom you purchased your Studebaker. These Service Dealers have facilities to perform any service your Studebaker may need. In communities where there is no Service Dealer, any independent garage can secure genuine Studebaker parts through the nearest Service Dealer or Studebaker Parts Depot.

If your Studebaker is within warranty (2 years or 24,000 miles on most vehicles), the warranty will be honored by the dealer from whom you purchased your Studebaker or by any authorized Service Dealer. You need have no apprehension regarding this warranty; its obligations will be honored.

~~A folder detailing periodic maintenance services your Studebaker will require is enclosed. I suggest you carry the folder in the glove compartment of your vehicle as a reminder of these services. The folder also lists the locations and telephone numbers of Studebaker Parts Depots. This information may be used to determine the nearest Parts Depot should your servicing garage require replacement parts for your vehicle.~~

The continuation of service and availability of parts is your assurance that your Studebaker can be maintained in good mechanical condition for many years. Because it is - and always has been - fine automotive transportation, I am confident you will continue to receive a full measure of value from your Studebaker.

Sincerely,

President

EJChallinor/rb
Enclosure

SASCO • 635 SOUTH MAIN STREET • SOUTH BEND, INDIANA 46627 • TELEPHONE 289-7111