

## **History of the Chrysler “Plainsman” with body by Ghia**

This car is one of a series of design idea cars commissioned by Chrysler Corporation to Ghia Studios in Torino, Italy. In late 1955 a Chrysler chassis and engine were sent to Ghia with the instructions to build the “dream” station wagon of the future. It was Chrysler’s lead show car at the 1956 Paris Auto Show.

Ghia proceeded to build a unique car based on the “old west” United States Theme thus the name “Plainsman”. The theme was set by using brown and white unborn calfskin as the upholstery material. This was accentuated by the use of tanned brown leather as edging material. The interior has controllable air vents for the rear seat passengers. The instruments for the first time in the industry were concentrated in a pod and elevated from the dash for easy visibility.

An internal body innovation was the industry’s first rear facing third seat which has been incorporated in many Chrysler Corporation station wagons. One exclusive feature of this seat in the Plainsman was that it raises and lowers by remote control from the dashboard. The rear glass lowers, the tail gate comes down and a step comes out of the rear bumper for passengers to step up into the seat.

The exterior body includes the first “step down” roof over the front seat. The first Chrysler production model to incorporate this feature was the 1958 Imperial. The rear ¾ of the roof is covered with white sailcloth making it the first of the luxury padded tops.

The Plainsman was owned by the Parrish family. Mt. Parrish acquired the car as Vice President of Latin American Marketing for Chrysler International Corporation. At that time the Parrish family resided in Havana, Cuba. When Castro took over Cuba Mr. Parrish was forced to flee to Puerto Rico. He then arranged for the Plainsman and Mrs. Parrish to be picked up by a Spanish ship and transported to Puerto Rico.

The Plainsman received a complete restoration completed in 2018. This car has appeared once in public since the restoration, as a member of the Pebble Beach car show. It is currently held in a private collection.