

FOR SALE

1971 VOLVO 145 EXPRESS

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If you have attended any of our local Volvo Club of BC meets you have probably seen our good old 1971 Volvo Blue 145 Express with its magnetic Volvo Club of BC decals. We kind of take it for granted because we have it, but it is probably the rarest Volvo in Canada and one of the nicest examples of the Express anywhere. The reason for including this article is to see if any individual or group would like to take over ownership of this neat van and keep it in BC or at least Canada, otherwise it will probably be sold to the US. Here is its story.

In 1969 Volvo ceased pro-



duction of the PV445/210/ Duett series; a full 4 years after the last PV544 rolled off the assembly line in 1965. The Duett was an incredibly versatile vehicle and had seen duty

as a family wagon, farmers utility vehicle, ambulance, undertaker's hearse and commercial van. It was available as a panel van (with metal sides or a window van, retaining the side windows) Without the Duett, Volvo had nothing to offer the commercial van market and the 145 Express was introduced from 1969 to 1974 to continue the tradition.

The Express was constructed on the same body as the 145 station wagon, but was factory modified by installing a raised fiberglass roof from the back of the drivers position to the rear of the wagon. The portion of roof over the front seat position was standard steel and carried a short roof rack. The tall rear cargo door was also constructed of fiber-





glass but carried the standard rear window glass and opened upwards like all 145 wagons, only much higher. Inside there were no rear seats and a cargo screen was fitted just behind the front seat line. Wooden slats protected the sides and deck of the cargo area. The rear passenger doors were fitted and functional but had sheet metal in place of windows. The cargo area also had sheet metal instead of side windows. Mechanically the Express is identical to the standard 145S.

The Express was not mar-



keted in North America so the example owned by Volvo Club Directors Gregg Morris, Dave McAree and Bob Cuthill. is an extremely rare bird. It is believed to be one of 2 in Canada and perhaps 4 in North America. The story of our Express starts with Clarke Simpkins Motors Volvo Dealership, located on Kingsway near Fraser in the '70s. The story goes that in 1971 the owner of Clarke Simpkins Motors was talking to the Volvo Canada Rep and mentioned that the Express

would make an interesting parts truck for the dealership. The Volvo Rep must have agreed because a "Volvo Blue" Express was soon delivered to the Clarke Simpkins dealership. How long it continued in service there we do not know.

Its next owner was the old Richmond Imports Volvo Dealership, the predecessor of Ben Jacobson Motors. About 30 years ago when Richmond Imports stopped selling Volvos, Ed Schram Motors the famous Volvo-only wrecking yard, bought all their parts inventory and that included the Express. In Ed and Brian Schram's ownership the van has served as a delivery vehicle, mobile bill board, and Len Lee's part time commuter vehicle. About 12 years ago it was treated to a vacation at the Ed Schram Motors body shop and spa. There the various dents and bangs of years of service were repaired along with some rust removal and it received the nice coat of its



original Swedish Blue paint, that it still wears today. After the restoration it seemed a shame to put it harness again so Brian Schram decided it would be best to sell it to an enthusiast who would finish the restoration and use it as the specialty vehicle it is.

At that time we considered buying the Express as our “Volvo club vehicle” but a check with ICBC informed us that it could not be owned by a Club but had to be owned by

then a VCBC Director, who in turn sold it to the 4 other directors, namely Gregg Morris, Bob Cuthill, Dave McAree and Glenn Little in



an individual or individuals.

In the meantime Brian sold the car to Mike Handfield,

his share to the remaining 3 directors. Since then the car has been used as a runabout

for club activities in Vancouver and Vancouver Island and even as a motor home at the Vintage Races in Mission. It never fails to draw attention both due to its uniqueness and its exceptional condition. The car is not being used enough so after 10 years of ownership it is time to pass it on. If you are interested in this rare and very useful piece of Volvo History call Bob Cuthill in Victoria at 250-658-0126, Dave McAree at 604-530-6097 or Gregg Morris at 604-469-1216.

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