
How 36 forgotten Corvettes were rescued from a 25-year slumber

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Around 25 years ago, pop artist Peter Max bought a collection of 36 Corvettes - and subsequently left them languishing in a New York garage gathering dust for almost two decades...

One for every year





The fascinating story began in 1989, when US music channel VH1 was looking for a way to boost flagging ratings. One producer suggested a competition that offered the prize of a Chevrolet Corvette from every model year since its 1953 launch; Long Island carpenter Dennis Amadeo won the resulting telephone sweepstake, acquiring 36 'vettes (and a 2.5kg bag of keys) with a combined value of \$610,000 at the time. Even before Amadeo had the chance to savour his win, he was persuaded to part company with the entire job lot by psychedelic artist Peter Max, who paid him \$250,000 cash and another \$250,000 in artwork assets. Max's decision to acquire was a hurried one, supposedly inspired by a dream that involved "cheerleaders, the 36 'vettes, and a stadium full of people yelling 'They're Peter Max's cars!'"

Pop-art project on hold



The decision proved perhaps too hasty: with his work in such demand, Max never found time to complete the art project he had planned for the cars, and the issue of storing them became more pertinent. They spent the majority of Max's ownership in an underground garage in New York, gathering dust and angering neighbours. Sold in one go to a new owner last July, the cars will now be restored and sent to auction as individual lots some time next year. Photographer Richard Prince was able to capture the forgotten Corvettes in their dilapidated state shortly before they were relocated for revival.

Photos: Richard Prince Photography

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