

## CLASSIC CORNER



# Big gift for The Big Guy

So what does "The Big Guy," Jim Gauthier, think about the very special Christmas gift he received this year?

"It's probably the most exciting present I've ever had," said a still thrilled Big Guy to me over the phone earlier this week. "This is just a once in a lifetime thing. I don't know how you'd top this!"

No question, Jim's "surprise" definitely took some doing.

Last week, Jim's family and branch managers presented him with this extraordinary painting of some of his favourite cars, an amazing bit of classic car art designed and

created by the remarkably talented Roger Lusty of Rogers Auto Art Works here in the 'Peg.

"This painting is truly extraordinary," says Jim. "Roger definitely has a gift from God, hands of gold. It's a masterpiece. He didn't miss a thing!"

"He even included the dice on the valve stem of my '55 Chev'!"

Jim's brother Jason Gauthier, one of the masterminds behind the covert Christmas plot, confirms that Roger was meticulous about detail.

"As a matter of fact, the centerpiece in the painting, the

'55 Dodge Royal Lancer, isn't completely restored yet. Roger did a ton of research to know how to complete it on canvas, and it just looks great."

"Now I see what it's going to look like finished," says Jim. "This is really something."

Jason tells me getting the painting designed and completed without Jim finding out was no small challenge.

"First we had to quiz him discretely to determine which cars he likes most, then, through many meetings, decide on final design, framing and so on."

"Timing was very important. There were times when he was leaving the building down one staircase and we were going up another. It took over six months to get this all

done, but mission accomplished, and it was so worth it."

"When we presented it to him, I think he was truly taken aback. He stood examining it for a good five to 10 minutes, picking out details, and just admiring it. Needless to say, we're glad he likes it, and Roger Lusty did an amazing job."

Agreed. Jim tells me the painting, which is now featured in the executive offices at the dealership at 1400 McPhillips will be "a family treasure for a long long time," and will even hit the cars shows occasionally. It's premiere booked for the World of Wheels show this spring.

Jim was pleased to see his '55 Lancer take a starring role

in the painting, as "it's such a rare car, one of only 480 made, and this one has the Hemi motor."

Boys and their toys. If this had been my present, I'd want it on the ceiling over our bed. Way better than a mirror (especially at this age...)

Pretty cool, when you think that Jim has all of these cars in a lower level "classic" showroom at the dealership, and can take one out for a cruise any time he likes. Oh, the joy of owning a dealer plate.

The Gauthier Collection is one remarkable gathering of extraordinary cars, and it's neat to see a family that's made their living selling cars, put a little love and loot back into restoring and preserving them.

LOVE the lines on that Lancer. Applause to Roger Lusty for capturing the soul of these classics for car loving generations to come. Got a vehicle you'd like immortalized? Visit Rogers-Auto-Art.ca, or call Mr. Lusty personally at 885-2656.

Y'know, with a little excavation, and a lot of help from Mike Holmes, I could fit at least one, maybe two of our cars in OUR basement.

What'ya think of that Marly? Mar? Hey look, she's using sign language to tell me I'm #1! I guess that means yes! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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