

CHEVROLET, BUICK DRIVER, SAYS HE'S GOING TO RETIRE

Louis Chevrolet, a picturesque Frenchman, invaded the American motor speedways about three years ago, and today is ranked as one of the best and most intrepid drivers of racing automobiles in the world. Yet his racing career is said by those who know him best to be nearing its end.

A remarkable man is this Chevrolet, and his ability seems unlimited. Some would refer to him as the greatest of living motor pilots.

During his three years as a winning driver of the Buick racing and stock cars Chevrolet has proved his fearlessness, mechanical skill and track generalship.

Chevrolet and his mechanics are now preparing his machines for the great Vanderbilt Cup race and other events this fall, and it may be that the great Franco-Swiss pilot will end his career at the wheel when the finishing line of the Vanderbilt is crossed by his big white bonneted car.

Chevrolet was born in Switzerland. His first job was leading a blind man. This man was a wine buyer, and young Louis was assigned to take him to the various wine establishments in Paris and other cities in France. While winning a living he also acquired a knowledge of rare wines. There are few better judges of Burgundy than Chevrolet.

The man who owned the shop had a one and one-quarter horsepower single-cylinder motor tricycle. But the thing would not work for him, and he finally became disgusted and made Louis a present of the machine.

This misunderstood machine really started Louis on his career. He was poor, and this motor tricycle was a bit above his financial reach. So he spent his evenings studying the machinery trying to find out the cause of the trouble. After much experimenting he located it, fixed it and rode the machine, something which his employer thought impossible.

Automobiles attracted him, and he served for a short term with the Mors Company in Paris. The automobile game was booming in this country, and he came here. For seven and one-half years Chevrolet drove automobiles in New York, and during that time he did not have a single accident.

The automobile racing game became more and more appealing to him, and he secured a job with an automobile firm. The Buick people saw in him an invaluable man, and he entered the employ of the Michigan firm.

This man knows probably as much about machinery as any man in the automobile game. When not racing or exhibiting machines he is working in the factory doctoring the machinery that drives automobiles. He improves it constantly, making slight changes

here and there, increasing the worth of the autos.

On the track, in actual racing, Chevrolet often carries a mechanic with him, but when a break really occurs nine times out of ten it is the driver and not the mechanic who mends it.

"I guess this is the last year on the track for Louis," remarked a member of the firm. "He's too valuable a man to take chances on. We can use him in the factory, and I guess he will stay there after the next Vanderbilt Cup race. We are making three cars for him to run in this event, and he expects to win this year. After that he will be turning out automobiles instead of racing them."

It is rather remarkable that a genius like Chevrolet should be risking his life every week on the track when he could make as much money, and possibly more, sitting quietly at a desk designing and planning. This condition was suggested to the French driver, and in reply, with his white teeth glistening beneath a stubby brown mustache, he said:

"I couldn't sit at a desk unless the desk had tires and a motor. I am used to going fast and seeing the world reel backward beneath the wheels of my car. I feel it would be very much like caging a wild bird, for I never could stand a life of inactivity now."

When Chevrolet prepares his car for a race it is much like a mother dressing her favorite daughter who is programmed to deliver an address before the kindergarten class. Not a bit of the machinery escapes his touch; he tries every part of it; he tightens a screw here, loosens another there; he tears out a few old wires and inserts new ones; then the machine undergoes a thorough examination and general readjustment. His mechanics become mere helpers; Chevrolet always is the master.

All this is only part of the reason why Chevrolet stays in the racing game rather than return to a life of quiet work; the rest of the reason is told readily when the gun sounds and his steel steed dashes through space in one of his performances.

"Why don't I quit racing? Why do I risk my life when I could make more money doing something else in the auto line? Well, it's hard to say."

It seems that Chevrolet always has reserve speed, and seldom does another driver pass him once he gains the lead. As he crosses the wire and the checkered flag waves him the victor, on Chevrolet's face again appears the smile that has won him thousands of followers in the ranks of motor enthusiasts through the country. He brings his car back to the paddock, releases his clutch and lets the motor hum merrily.

"Hear that! It sounds like music doesn't it? It sounds grand! That is why I do not quit the game."