

## NOSTALGIC MOTOR CARS UNLOCKS THE HISTORY & MYSTERIES OF THE 1963-1985 AVANTIS

### Why Do Some Avantis have bird house holes?

**By Dan Booth**

*Nostalgic Motor Cars*

*Dan Booth has over 46 years of exclusive, hands on Avanti sales, service, collision and parts, not Studebaker cars or trucks, just 1963-1985 Avantis.*

get a lot of questions about some holes that are in the inner aprons of some Avantis. They have asked what was the purpose, and when were they installed?

These holes are in the top of the inner aprons, just in front of the hood lock plate assembly illustration number 1622-65, in the parts manual.



under the hood temperature. It didn't seem to work as well as anticipated. If you think about it, as the car is moving down the road, it seems to me that the pressure from under the front fenders would somewhat block the air from exiting these holes. It might help the hot air to escape the engine compartment when the car was not moving.

I think this idea would have worked better if it was ducted down and open to the back. Unfortunately there is no room for a duct to go down the total height of the inner apron and/or the cowl panel and then face to the rear



s

In about 1979 Avanti Motors called me. They said they wanted to correct a problem. They said if an Avanti went through a deep water puddle or a car wash that sprayed water underneath the car, water was getting in under the hood lock plates, into the fiberglass supports (it forms a fiberglass box with a rubber grommet in the bottom so you can unlock the hood if the cable breaks). When the water would freeze, you could not get the hood open because the hood lock dovetail was in the ice. I was to explain the details to my customers. If they wanted the holes glassed up, the factory would pay me and with no cost to the Avanti owner. I did the repair on quite a few, including my wife, Betty's, 1978. (which she has since 1978 and still has) As the picture shows, I just never found the time to paint the repairs on Betty's late 1978 and she is still waiting after 43 years.

The holes are referred to as "Bird House Holes," Avanti Motors started installing them sometime in the very early 1970s production, and continued until about the late 1970s or early '80s when they were eliminated. When they first started installing the bird house holes, they drilled 4 to 5 holes of different sizes that started with a small hole and progressively got larger. I believe the small hole started at the front and ended with the larger hole just in front of the hood lock plate assembly illustration number #1622-65 in the parts manual. Somewhere, about 1973, they switched to four 1½-inch holes with ¾-inch spacing between the holes. I believe the purpose was to increase the air flow from the engine compartment which would assist in lowering the

