

# NOTE

## Riding into the Future in a Yellow Convertible

In 1965, cowboy legend Roy Rogers bought a used 1964 Lincoln Continental Convertible – baby blue, white top and interior, suicide doors. He decided to have it painted pale gold, the color of his horse Trigger. His son, Dusty Rogers (Roy Rogers, Jr.) tells a great story of the ensuing paint job, the bottom line of which is that the



Roy's 1964 Lincoln Continental Convertible in the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum, Branson, MO

car, with the help of Roy's colorblind friend Pete, is painted a gleaming, canary yellow. Roy must not have minded too much though, the car is still that same color today, 45 years and nearly 100,000 miles later.

Roy Rogers' Lincoln will be sold at auction this June at Brian Lebel's 21<sup>ST</sup> annual Old West Show & Auction in Denver, Colorado. Except for the paint job and mechanical maintenance, the car is nearly all original and has spent the past 30-plus years in the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum, which closed this past December for economic reasons. The Old West Auction is one of three selected by the family to sell the bulk of the Museum's extensive collection. Along with the car, Lebel's auction will be



Dale Evans & Roy Rogers

offering Roy's personal firearms and hunting collection – including famous film and television guns and rigs – along with other items from the Museum.

This year's auction will also feature other fine Western art and collectibles, and is just one part of a larger, weekend-long event. Those who know it, know it as the Cody Old West Show & Auction, or the "Cody Show," or, if you're really in-the-know and the context is right, simply, "Cody." Held for 19 consecutive years in the classic Wyoming town, the show outgrew two Cody venues before moving in 2009 to another iconic Western locale: Denver, Colorado.

Brian Lebel started the Cody Show as nothing but a small group of like-minded people passionate about the trappings of the



The Cody Old West Show in the early days



The Cody Old West Show, circa 2000

American West. They gathered together to buy, sell and trade merchandise, share knowledge and enjoy each other's company. But Brian believed the historic and beautiful art and antiques of the Cowboys and Indians would appeal to a much broader public if only people knew what was out there. So he decided bring it to them, and has been working tirelessly at that goal ever since.

Now held in the Expo Building of the Denver Merchandise Mart, the three-day show boasts over 200 dealers, and the Saturday night auction is a highly anticipated, award-winning event. But Brian never stops searching for ways to get the message out to more people, to bring new life into the community. He knows that the business of collecting and selling Western arts and artifacts must evolve. But evolution is sometimes difficult in an industry that prides itself on

And you can bet that reaching these future generations will require new ways of thinking. "We've always counted on museums to be the keepers of our American culture," Brian says. "But it's clear that, for right now anyway, museums are in big trouble. We need to fix that in the long term, but, in the meantime, we need to pick up the slack."

Brian hopes that the sale of the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans collection will help to bring attention to the fact that we, the people, may have to step up and become the guardians of our past. To do that though, we must value our shared American culture (young as it is) and vow not to let it disappear. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans – for many, many reasons – had an enormous impact on that culture and Brian is humbled by the opportunity to be part of this historic sale. "I am honored and proud to have been entrusted by the Rogers family to share their legacy," he says. "Like Dusty, and many of Roy and Dale's fans, I am saddened by the loss of the Museum, but hope the auction will benefit the collecting audience – both individuals and institutions – and especially the Rogers family."

To order a full-color auction catalog, or for more information about Brian Lebel's Old West Show & Auction, the sale of the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum collection and the arts & artifacts of the American West, please visit [www.denveroldwest.com](http://www.denveroldwest.com) (or still at [www.codyoldwest.com](http://www.codyoldwest.com) for you purists). Better yet, plan to attend this year's festivities in scenic and historic Denver, Colorado, June 25 -27, 2010.



The Old West Show & Auction – Denver, 2009

historical authenticity, which sometimes breeds a fear of change.

Brian, however, doesn't see progress as a threat. Though the objects may be old, the interest in them must remain fresh and new, and must be nurtured in subsequent generations.



Artist Dave Powell is a frequent exhibitor at the Old West Show