

WAY STATION

Driving through **North Carolina's Great Smoky Mountains**, New York-based photographer Justin Bettman stumbled upon this midcentury Sinclair gas station in Cherokee, a town of 2,000 on a reservation west of Asheville. After chatting with owner Donald "Hoppy" Ferguson, Bettman discovered the building was in fact an old farm equipment shed that Ferguson spent two years transforming into a garage for his antique car collection. He was restoring the 1955 Chevy Bel Air pictured here when a local service station owner asked him to help remove some 1940s gas pumps. Ferguson kept them, outfitting his garage in vintage Sinclair style—and creating the scene that inspired Bettman to pose his friend Toon as a driver and Ferguson as a gas station attendant. "When I see a place," Bettman says, "I'm able to build a story around it."

BY CATHLEEN CUSACHS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN BETTMAN



