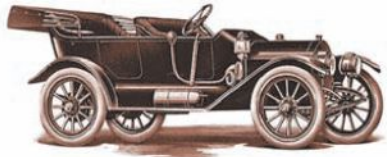


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Your Truck ... Your Story

Over the years, we have received thousands of letters and photos from all over the country. They got us thinking that we should find a way for everyone to share their stories with others who have the same passion for trucks. What we came up with is Imtrucklife.com.

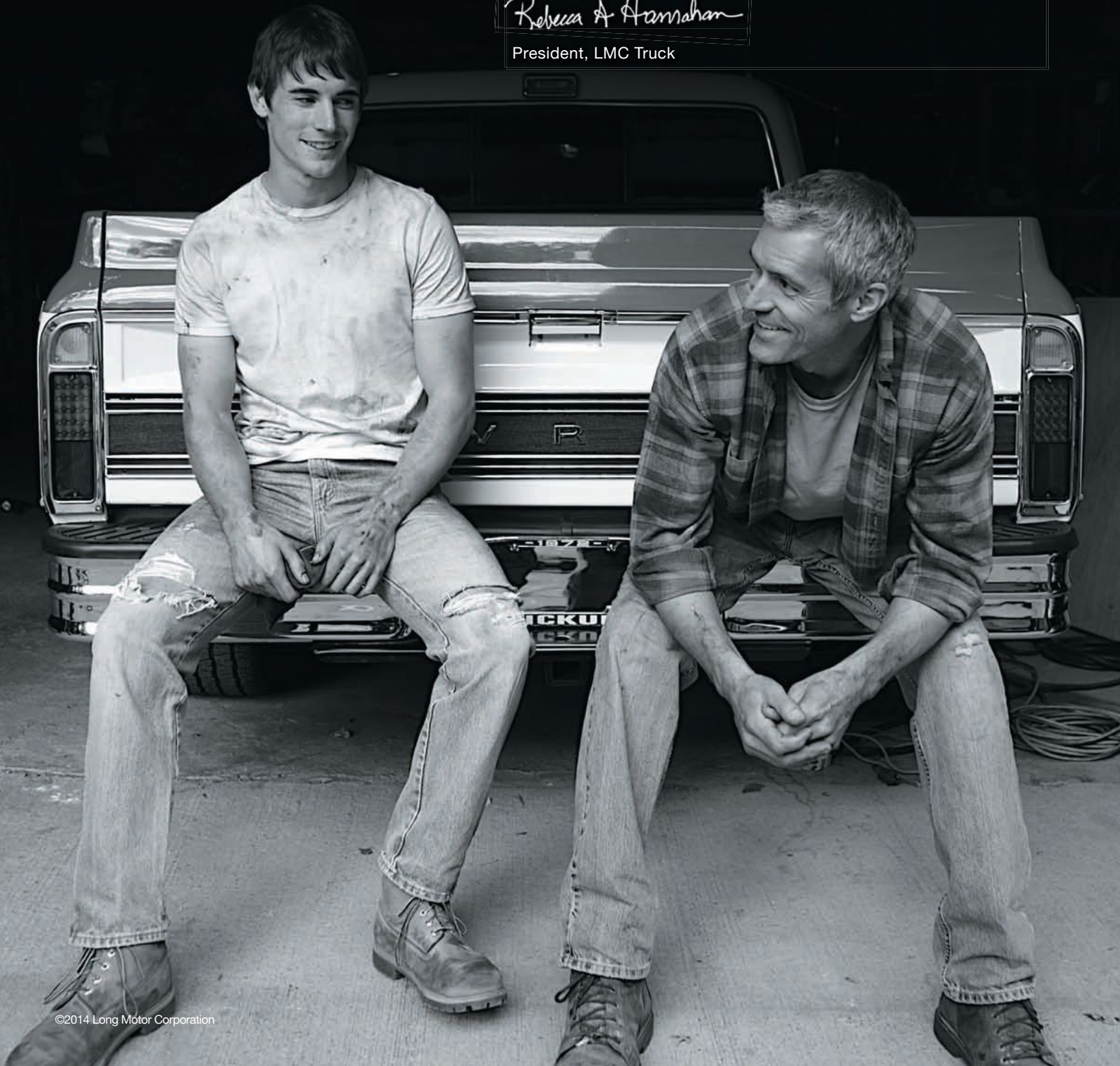
We have shared some of these stories on this site and we were fortunate to meet some of these truck owners. We will add more, but we would like to hear your stories, however you want to tell them.

Your Truck ... Your Story. Share your truck journey at Imtrucklife.com.

Thanks,

Rebecca A. Hannahan

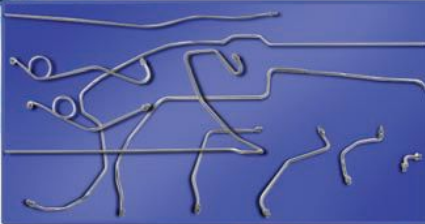
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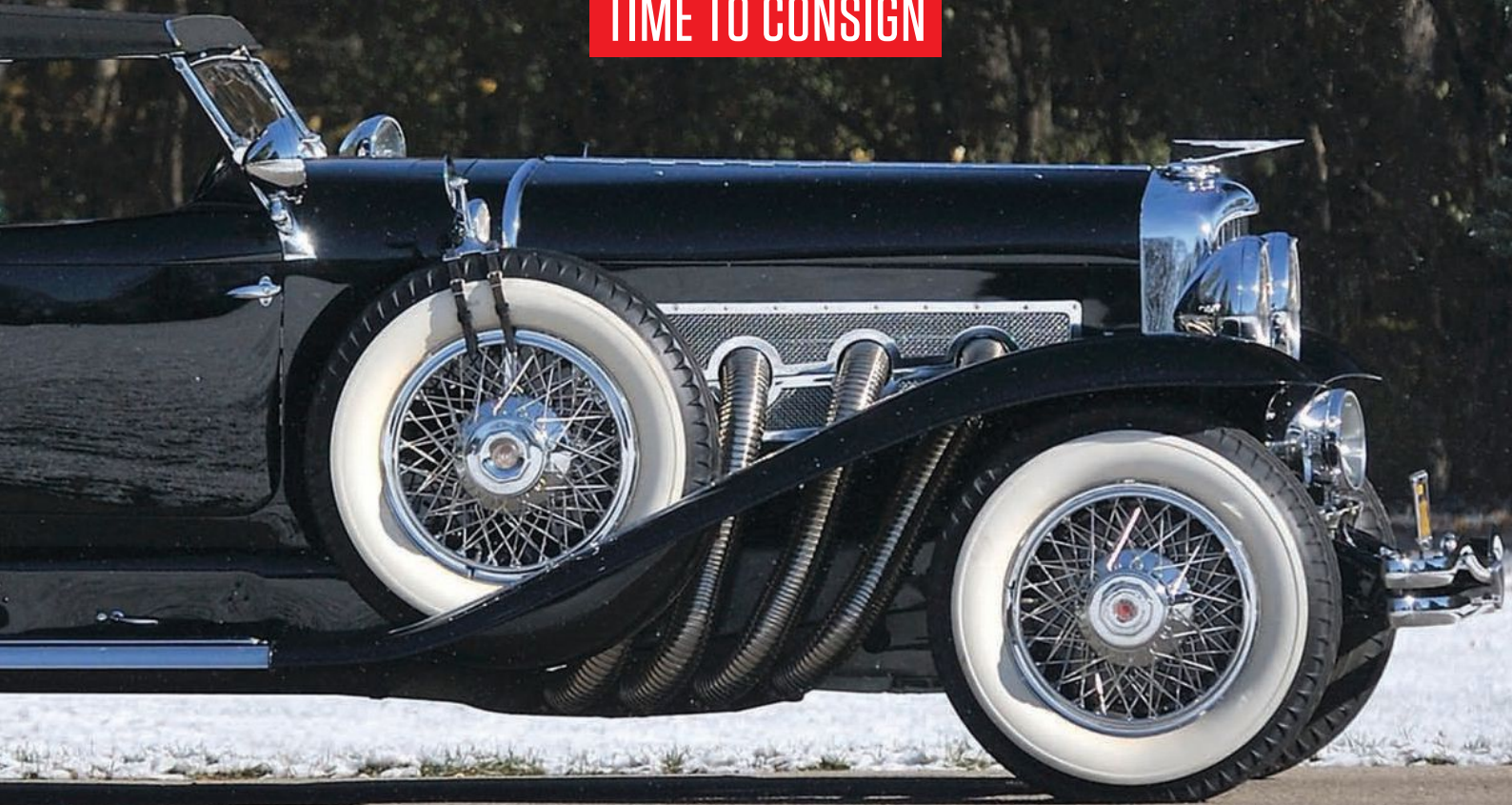
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Crestline Books

The more I read about automobiles, the more I realize just how little I really know. There's so much worthwhile information to comprehend—from the history of the automotive industry, to design, engineering and coachbuilding, to, most importantly, the cars themselves—that increasing one's knowledge is a never-ending task.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't take an hour or two to read about automobiles. Be it books or magazines, nearly all my reading centers around old cars, both American- and European-made; I have very little interest in new cars, mainly because they all seem to be made from the same mold—well-made, yes, but boring in terms of design, nonetheless. I sincerely feel that it's important to appreciate all types of automobiles, regardless of which country they were built in or what their badges may say. To discount reading and learning about certain old cars simply because they were made in a country that you don't respect is foolish and narrow-minded. Remember, American cars were made around the world, with some crafted by the finest European coachbuilders, so you'll be surprised just how interesting it is to read about them.

When it comes to American-made automobiles, there aren't nearly as many books published about them as there are about Ferrari, Jaguar, Porsche or Mercedes-Benz. As for those books that are published about American cars, nearly 99 percent of the time they focus on muscle cars, Corvettes, Mustangs, Camaros and, unfortunately, little else except for hot rods and such.

So, if you consider yourself a serious automotive enthusiast, the most important books ever published about American cars are those known as the Crestline books. When these books were first published back in the 1970s, I didn't buy them because they were done in black-and-white, with little historical information other than photo captions. What a fool I was then, because now I realize just how significant they really were.

More than 24 books were published, and each volume was the most thoroughly assembled automotive book in terms of model-by-model breakdown ever created. Each book showcases just

about every single model car, in every single body style, from every single year that was produced by a particular auto manufacturer. A truly exhausting compilation that will never be surpassed.

Every model listed is illustrated with a black-and-white photograph—many of which were provided by the car manufacturers themselves—

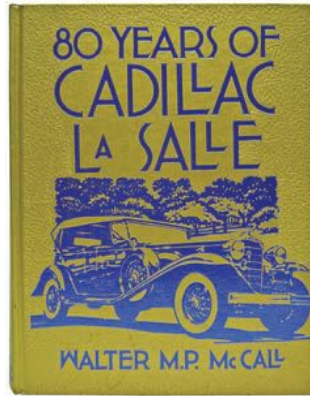
so you can see exactly what its body style looks like. No lavish productions or fancy layouts. Just a basic photograph of every model car, accompanied by an informative paragraph-size caption that includes nothing but hard-core information and facts.

Each book is hardcover, runs several hundred pages in length, is 9½ x 11 inches in size, comes jam-packed with thousands of photographs, and features a

metallic, color, embossed printing on its cover. They were written by a variety of highly respected authors who were recognized as experts on the marques that they wrote about, so the information is guaranteed to be factually correct.

These books were published from the early 1970s through the early 1990s, and none, we believe, were ever reproduced, so Crestline books are fairly hard to find today, some more so than others. Thus, values vary—from \$20 to \$400, depending on the book's title. Only American car companies were profiled, including: Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Buick, Cadillac-La Salle, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Lincoln-Mercury, Hudson, Oldsmobile, Packard, Plymouth & De Soto, Pontiac-Oakland, Studebaker, Woodies & Wagons, International Harvester, American Funeral Cars & Ambulances, American Fire Engines, Steam Tractors & Engines, American Cars 1930-1942, American Cars 1946-1959, American Gas Engines, and U.S. Military Wheeled Vehicles.

While colorful coffee table-type books are nice to look at, most are useless due to their lack of valuable information. But for the complete story on the above mentioned car brands, one that will allow you to see every single car model and body style produced, only the Crestline books will do. 📖



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www.charlotte-autofair.com
- 4-6 • Portland Swap Meet**
Portland, Oregon • 503-678-2100
www.portlandswapmeet.com
- 6 • Ocala AACA Classic Car Show**
Ocala, Florida • 352-873-2512
www.aaca.org
- 6 • Webster Swap Meet**
Bushnell, Florida • 800-438-8559
www.floridaswapmeets.com
- 11-13 • Englishtown Spring Swap Meet**
Old Bridge, New Jersey • 732-446-7800
www.etownraceway.com
- 13 • Brandywine AACA Region Swap Meet**
302-738-4483 • www.aaca.org
- 13 • Monroe Auto Swap Meet**
Monroe, Michigan • 419-579-4845
www.monroeaautoswapmeet.com
- 18-19 • Tulsa Swap Meet**
Kellyville, Oklahoma • 918-371-2437
- 23-27 • Spring Carlisle**
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carsatcarlisle.com
- 24-27 • Pate Swap Meet**
Fort Worth, Texas • 713-649-0922
www.pateswapmeet.com
- 27 • Antique Auto Show, Swap & Sell**
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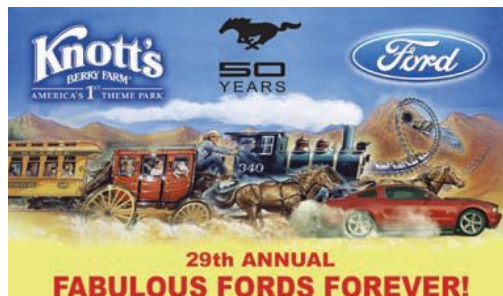
Jim Donnelly Honored

HEMMINGS SENIOR EDITOR JIM DONNELLY (right) is co-recipient of the 2014 Jim Hunter Memorial Award, an honor bestowed by the membership of the Eastern Motorsport Press Association and backed by NASCAR. The award recognizes lifetime achievement in the print coverage of auto racing and is named for the late Jim Hunter, an acclaimed newspaper sportswriter and editor in South Carolina who later became vice president of NASCAR. For the first time, the vote for the Hunter award ended in a tie. The co-winner was Mike Mallett, correspondent for Area Auto Racing News, who with Jim flanks NASCAR's Tim Southers.

Jim also received an EMPA writing award for his feature on the 1909 Alco "Black Beast" in *HCC* #100, one of two known surviving race cars from the inaugural Indianapolis 500 in 1911. Jim also holds close to 50 awards for newspaper, magazine and book writing.

Ford Gathering

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM IN BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, will be the site of the 29th Fabulous Fords Forever show. The show takes place on April 27 and will feature nearly 2,000 FoMoCo-built cars. There is no swap meet or car corral, this is strictly a gathering of Ford fanatics, and there is no fee for spectators. All cars from all years of the Ford Motor Company (Lincoln, Mercury and Edsel) are welcome, with 55 different categories available for show. Be sure to register as soon as possible, as space is limited. For more details and to register online, visit www.fabulousfordsforever.com.



Spring Jefferson

WISCONSIN AREA RESIDENTS, mark your calendar for April 25-27 as the annual Spring Auto Parts Swap Meet is set to take place in Jefferson. This swap meet covers nearly 100 acres and has thousands of vendors, hundreds of cars for sale and show, as well as over 20,000 spectators, making this one of the larger collector-car events in the Midwest. It all takes place at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. For more information, visit www.madisonclassics.com.

Chevy Road Trip

THE VINTAGE CHEVROLET CLUB OF AMERICA announces a tour for all 1955 and newer Chevrolets to take place on April 6-11 in the North Carolina and Tennessee areas. The tour will follow the AACA Spring Meet in Concord, and the Charlotte AutoFair. Scenic routes will include the Blue Ridge Parkway and the twisty "Tail of the Dragon" in Tennessee. Planned destinations include the famous Biltmore Estate, Wheels Through Time Museum, NASCAR Museum, Cherokee Museum, Oak Ridge National Lab and the Steele Rubber factory. Spaces are limited, so be sure to act quickly if you'd like to participate. Contact Franklin Gage at f.gage@hotmail.com, or call 703-869-8434.



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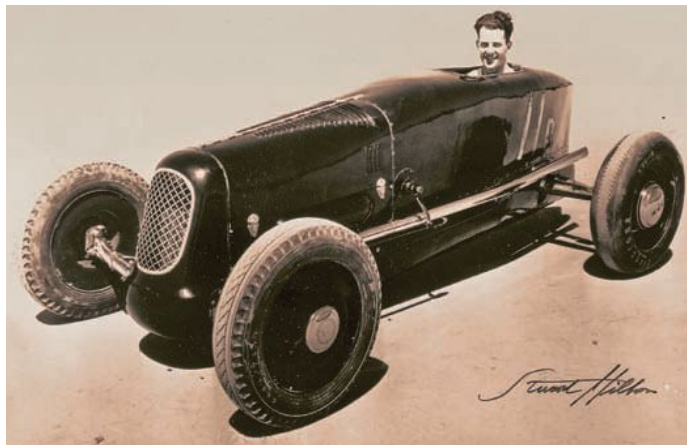
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Hilborn's Hot Rod

WHEN STUART HILBORN DIED LAST DECEMBER at the age of 96, much of the automotive world mourned the passing of a fuel-injection pioneer whose products powered many a high-performance racing machine. But his death also rekindled one of hot rodding's enduring mysteries: Whatever happened to Hilborn's streamliner?

The famed streamliner, on which Hilborn proved his mechanical fuel-injection systems in the late 1940s with 150-plus MPH runs on the Southern California dry lakes, actually originated with another hot rodder, Bill Warth, who sold it to Hilborn in late 1941 minus the Chevrolet four-cylinder engine that Warth used. Hilborn substituted a Ford flathead V-8 and reportedly managed to go as fast as 144 MPH in it before wrecking the streamliner in August 1947. The wreck forced Hilborn to retire from racing as a driver, but his friend, Eddie Miller Jr., rebuilt the streamliner while Hilborn recovered, and Howard Wilson eventually drove it 150 MPH.

According to information gathered by Jim Lattin, who commissioned a replica of the streamliner in 2004, Hilborn then sold the original to Grant Piston Rings, which used it for promotions. It then showed up at a drag strip in Edna, Kansas, sometime in 1954, and Lattin notes that it was reportedly dismantled in the 1960s in Kansas. The only part of it known to still exist is a carbureted intake manifold that Hilborn sometimes used on it.

Chief-T

WE'VE SEEN THIS PHOTO

floating around the Internet without any context for long enough. Who was this merry fellow who combined a Ford Model T frame and front axle with an early to mid-1920s Indian Chief engine, drivetrain, and rear wheel? And whatever happened to his creation?



Chamberlain's Chariot

THOUGH WE'VE YET TO HEAR FROM ANYBODY WHO KNOWS MORE about John Erickson's Studebaker-powered fiberglass car (see *HCC* #113), we did hear from Jeff McKay, the new owner of another homebuilt Studebaker-powered fiberglass car. The difference between the two, however, lies in the fact that Jeff bought his from the man who originally built it in the mid-1950s, Don Chamberlain.

Don actually provided Jeff a 22-page history of the car, which goes something like this: In 1954, inspired by the various fiberglass-bodied sports cars making waves at the time, Don bought a 1936 Willys Model 77 chassis and extensively modified it, shortening the wheelbase down to 94 inches and installing a 1948 Studebaker Champion six-cylinder engine. He designed the body himself and actually pulled two copies from his master mold, one to go on the Willys chassis, another to go on a friend's MG. A number of aircraft components, along with parts from various Lincolns, Fords, Chevrolets, and Chryslers, went into Don's car.

Completed in the spring of 1958, Don's fiberglass car, which he largely referred to as "the little blue car," went on to serve as his daily driver and weekend racer. In 1966, he decided to repower it with a Buick V-8 and make a number of other changes at the same time. He never quite finished the conversion, however, and McKay, who bought the car in January 2013, now plans to restore it to its Studebaker-powered configuration.



Don Chamberlain and the fiberglass-bodied sports car he made by hand in 1954.



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201 or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com. For more Lost & Found, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>



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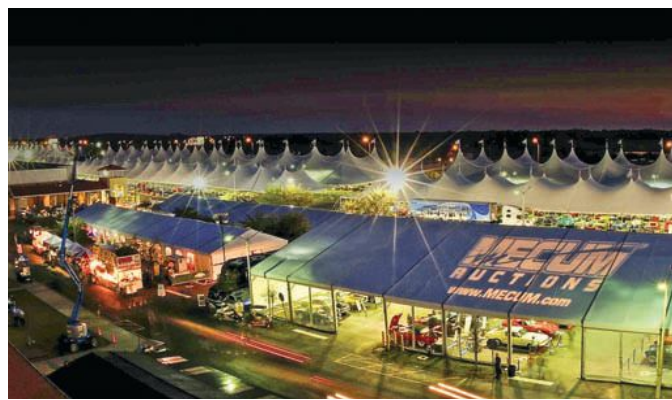
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April is Go Time for Mecum

THE GIANT, WEEK-PLUS-LONG MECUM AUCTION at Kissimmee, Florida, is where the cars were until next year, but Mecum apparently never rests. Cases in point are four auctions in April alone. Over three hundred tractors will plow into the Gone Farmin' Spring Classic, and a thousand collector cars and trucks will descend on Houston, which will be adding a one-day motorcycle auction into the mix on April 13. Then, Mecum will get the show on the road with another thousand cars in Kansas City for quad-auction action in April. Contact: www.mecum.com

Spring Carlisle

THE ANNUAL SEASON OPENER OF car corral, swap meet and collector car auction excitement known as Spring Carlisle is slated for April 24-27th. After three years of working with Auctions America, Carlisle Auctions will head up this year's auction and incorporate some new features to improve the experience for buyers, sellers and spectators alike.

The popular free-unless-sold policy for sellers is just one facet of the new direction, as is the ability for sellers to spotlight a car or truck in a particular time slot. Associated fees are refunded in case of a no-sale.

Carlisle Events co-owner Bill Miller is looking forward to spring after wrapping up 2013 with the Zephyrhills Fall AutoFest. "When we made the decision in 2013 to bring back the Carlisle Auctions brand, we knew that we wanted to do things that would revolutionize the hobby. With our free-unless-sold policy, spotlight cars and simplified registration process, we feel that the experience offered will be unforgettable for all who take part." Contact: www.carlisleauctions.com



AUCTION PROFILE

IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY that every Chrysler section of every self-service junkyard was overflowing with acres of these forlorn front-wheel drivers, and that even \$500 seemed like too much for a white-on-white turbo example of a K-car in the for-sale lot in the boneyard. This LeBaron solidly escaped the crusher and looked as if it must have been encased in Lucite back in 1982.

Say what you will, but this apparently well-preserved and loaded single-owner representative of the K-car lineup fetched a princely price at auction. The fly-in-amber condition of the car—including the amazingly clean, Mitsubishi-sourced, 2.6-liter engine under the hood and the odometer with a reading of less than 16,000 miles—could have been a factor in this sale. Us? We're holding out for the turbocharged Town & Country station wagon.



CAR	1983 Chrysler LeBaron Convertible
AUCTIONEER	Auctions America
LOCATION	Auburn, Indiana
DATE	September 2013
LOT NUMBER	5049
CONDITION	#2/Original
RESERVE	No
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	\$5,000
SELLING PRICE	\$13,750



ADP II Calendar

3-5 • Cave Creek, Arizona • Cave Creek Auctions & Events
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Automotive Photography

"WERE IT NOT FOR SHADOWS, there would be no beauty," writes author Jun'ichiro Tanizaki in his celebrated treatise on Japanese aesthetics, and Michael Furman, Philadelphia-based automotive photographer agrees. "For me, a subject becomes much more compelling," Michael explains, "when it emerges from the shadows. It is as if we are seeing the subject enter our consciousness for the first time, as if it were just created. Shadows—maybe more than highlights—give direction to the light, and that is very important in communicating a thought."

You probably already know Michael Furman's work, which spans 35 years and has been exhibited on two continents. For one, it's featured in no fewer than 15 books—like *American Auto Legends* and *Automotive Jewelry*—and at least as many automotive museum and auction catalogues, mainly for RM Auctions. For another, his work is just so enchantingly beautiful that once you've seen it, you're not likely to forget it.

Photographs of works of art don't often themselves come to be recognized as art, but Michael's studio images, with their hallmark clarity and hush, have achieved just



such a distinction. Every artist's wish is to be able to lead his audience to experience the world differently—perhaps more fully, maybe really for the first time—Michael's photographs do this, and suddenly we understand, and love Stutzes, Packards and Pontiacs like never before.

Prints, starting at \$500:
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Motor News's special collectible die-cast models, banks and ornaments. We're happy to announce that a new Hemmings model has arrived, in our trademark dark green-and-black livery with plenty of original-style chrome accents: a 1941 Plymouth PT-125 pickup. Limited to 1,200 units, this highly detailed, 1:24-scale model features opening doors and hood, a life-like interior and L-head straight-six engine, and working steering. The undercarriage even includes a spare tire under the bed. This handsome Plymouth will make a great display on your bookshelf or mantle.

Cost: \$39.95

www.hemmings.com/store/
800-227-4373

Indianapolis 500 Stamp Art

THE WINNER OF THE FIRST INDIANAPOLIS 500 RACE, HELD ON MEMORIAL DAY IN 1911, was Ray Harroun in the famous yellow Marmon Wasp. The centennial of this milestone victory was commemorated by the U.S. Postal Service in 2011, when noted artist John Mattos created a Deco-style image for a collectible "forever" stamp. That popular and pretty 2011 stamp has been reproduced as a painted steel sign, sized 24 x 15-inches, which is perfect for the den or garage wall.

Cost: \$37.99

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1934 Miller-LaSalle Funeral Coach

THE 1934 LaSALLE WAS ONE OF THE MOST YOUTHFUL, STYLISH DESIGNS TO COME OUT of Harley Earl's GM studios in the early 1930s, and although it wasn't the most obvious choice of vehicle on which to base a hearse, it made for a truly distinctive final ride. England's Brooklin Models has created a sensational 1:43-scale white metal replica—approved by the Professional Car Society—of the Miller-LaSalle Funeral Coach, as part of their Community Service Vehicles Professional Cars line. This vehicle retains the LaSalle's famous tall grille, round hood vents and artful biplane bumpers, while adding impressive, traditional-style carved panels on the rear sides. It's a beautiful, yet hefty piece that will appeal to LaSalle and Professional Car enthusiasts alike.

Cost: \$159.95

www.diecastdirect.com
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Timely Tags

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE Automotive License Plate Collectors Association to see the decorative value of a timeworn license plate. The creative Wendell Pohl and daughter Ruth Hawkins, artists who share their works under the store name 8MileCreekDesigns on Etsy.com, are giving old plates new purpose with their license plate clocks. Made out of standard 12 x 6-inch license plates that exhibit the scuffs, dings and general patina of age, these wall clocks run on one AA battery.

"We welcome custom orders and encourage you to send us your used license tags, to be transformed into a treasure," Ruth says. "We'll make a clock that will remind you of more than just the time." The 8MileCreekDesigns inventory is always changing, so visit the web store to see what pieces are currently available.

Cost: \$24-\$35

785-594-3690

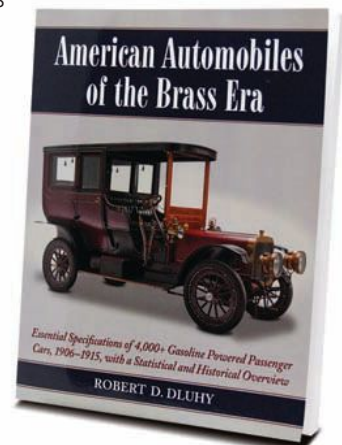
www.8MileCreekDesigns.etsy.com

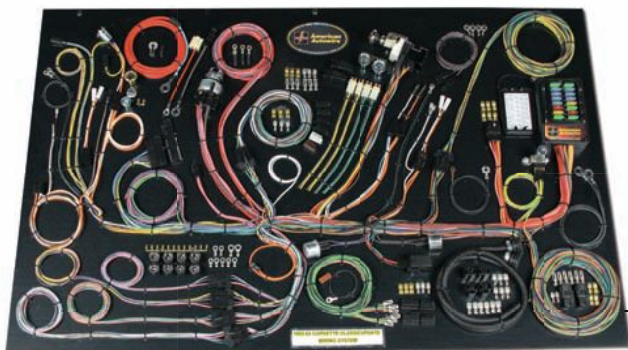
American Automobiles of the Brass Era

THIS IS A VERY PRICEY VOLUME for a paperback that totals 210 pages. But get this: Rather than a narrative, this book is a massive statistical reference on U.S.-produced cars built between 1906 and 1915. That's a very big list, running to 4,300-plus models from 830 manufacturers—a full tabular enumeration of which (including engine data, curb weight, cost and even steering position) consumes no less than 77 pages. Other tables break cars out by manufacturer and year. Want to know how many high-wheelers and cyclecars were built? A graph will lay it out for you. If you're addicted to baseball-voluminous stats on the days of really old cars, this intriguing book will fix your craving nicely.

Cost: \$49.95

www.mcfarlandpub.com
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Corvette Wiring Kit

American Autowire's new 1953-'62 Corvette wiring system is made specifically for a modified/pro-touring Corvette. It will handle upgrades like electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combos and more. The kit includes new ignition/lighting/dimmer switches, as well as new taillamp sockets and headlamp bucket harnesses. Cost: \$795.

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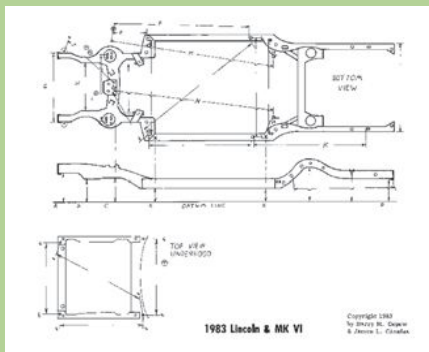
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Combating Corrosion

Rust is troubling, a never-resting enemy that attacks when moisture gathers in the nooks and crannies of your car. It is important to stop the problem early, and now Classic Industries has a new line of chemicals to fight against corrosion. These chemicals fight rust at the molecular level and are specifically designed to remove, treat and prevent rust. Classic Industries says you will be able to bring corroded surfaces to bare metal, convert rust into a paintable polymer coating, or seal out moisture and oxygen to stop the spread for good. Products include: undercoat remover, metal prep, rust inhibitor, rust dissolver, rust converter, metal etch and rust encapsulator, which comes in gloss or satin. Cost: \$17-\$50.

Classic Industries • 855-357-2787 • www.classicindustries.com



Point-to-Point Data

Historical data can sometimes be difficult to obtain, and if you are a restoration shop, you will need some of this data when working on an older car. Point-to-point measuring is often one of those pieces of data that gets lost in time, but the Tru-Way company has compiled data for cars going back to 1950. With over 10,000 cars and trucks in its database, Tru-Way has amassed a huge amount of data that can provide

users with instant access to a given vehicle's measurement data. This information is also great for shipping and transport companies. Tru-Way's new website has just come online, and you will be able to purchase information as a printed data sheet, per year as a printed manual, or electronically on CD. Immediate downloads are also available. Cost: \$35 (individual data sheets); \$110 (yearly manuals).

Tru-Way Company • 248-669-1588 • www.tru-way.com

Polara Panels

Legendary Auto Interiors introduces new pre-assembled door panels for the 1964 Dodge Polara. The panels feature dielectrically heat-sealed bison grain with carpeted lower section. The original metal trim must be reused with the panels, and some panels include the original-style upper metal rail and window felt strip. Call or visit Legendary's website for your specific application and color needs. Cost: starting at \$450.

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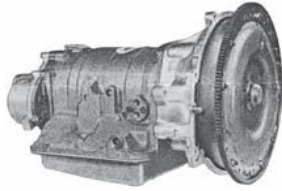
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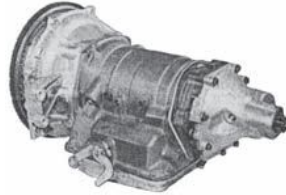
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— C.S. from Fort Worth, TX



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Rare Bird

Factory flaws and other distinctive details remain evident throughout this 1974 Plymouth Road Runner





BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

In our diverse automotive universe, many classifications of owners exist, but few are more apparently diametrically opposed than drivers and collectors. Generally, drivers derive their automotive pleasure from enjoying their classic cars as originally intended, on the road, taking advantage of the visceral design and engineering elements that were built into them.



A high mileage reading on the odometer is a badge of honor to a driver. Conversely, collectors appreciate the appearance, originality/correctness and value of a car, and toil to maintain or improve upon these aspects, which usually means little seat time. Low odometer readings are revered.

The current owner of our feature car, a low-mileage, unrestored 1974 Road Runner, is Steve Wexel, a driver. He has valued the attributes of this particular Mopar for the impressions it provides when he's behind the wheel and for its utility, since he bought his first one in the Nixon era.

Getting his license shortly after the 1968 debut of the budget-based Road Runner, Steve recalls, "I instantly decided that the Road Runner was the coolest car on the road." By 1974, he was able to buy a new one—Deep Sherwood Metallic (green) with dark green interior. "It had a 318, three-speed on the floor, bench seat and AM radio, and it was the cheapest car on the lot." He moved to Florida soon after and drove the B-body for about 20 years, racking up 305,000 miles before the salt air rusted the body.

Undaunted, he removed the engine, steering wheel and column, and extracted other parts. In February of 1995, he installed them in a 1973 Road Runner body that he painted light blue. After

Though there is a little wear on the driver's seat and some staining on the headliner, the white interior is nearly pristine; the ashtray has never been used. The gauges were standard, and the bucket seats and console with the Slap Stik shifter were optional.

about a decade and 115,000 more miles, the Florida salt air struck again, rusting its body beyond repair.

By October 2005, Steve had purchased a 1974 Road Runner for his next driver. He had it painted 1972 Bright Blue Metallic, installed a 1972 blue interior and the steering wheel and column from his first Road Runner. He also had its original 318 engine rebuilt and upgraded.

An avid saltwater fisherman, Steve admits that over the years he treated his Plymouths more like work trucks than cars. "With my previous Road Runners, we would put the canoe on top and drive across fields to get to fishing spots. I'd fit all the coolers, tackle boxes, canoe paddles and five-foot ocean fishing rods in the trunk so nothing had to go into the car."

Don't ask how he knows that the Road Runner is capable of hauling 16 8-foot landscape timbers, or 1,000 pounds of paving blocks. We cringe when we hear these stories, but when a 1974 Road Runner is your preferred transportation, it has to serve many purposes.

Doug Haas, on the other hand, is a collector. According to the paperwork, his dad, John, purchased this 1974 Road Runner in Hammond, Indiana, and the heavily optioned Silver Frost Metallic B-body was delivered on February 28, 1974. Doug was just 19 years old, and sometime later John transferred ownership to him. He then relegated the Road Runner to show and cruise duty near the 4,000-mile mark. It was driven sparingly and stored under a cover in the garage. Not a typical car-care regimen for a young man. We don't know why Doug was so conscientious. Perhaps John had instilled in his son early on the significance that the Plymouth could attain in years to come. Regardless, we appreciate it now, and so does Steve.

The worlds of collector and driver collided in October of





2009, when a corporation Steve created ultimately acquired Doug's Road Runner. Once Steve saw the silver B-body, and realized that the mileage was 5,700, he had to have it. While he anticipated driving the like-new Road Runner, the thought that it may have been too good to be a regular road warrior was taking hold. When it was delivered, all doubt was removed—it was too well preserved. Now Steve drives it sparingly to keep it in good working order.

"When I bought my first Road Runner, I had been driving a 1970 Mach I Mustang, and it handled terribly. I went from the Mach 1 to a bigger car, but the hood actually seemed shorter on the Road Runner from the driver's seat. Speaking of which, the seats are very comfortable. I like to sit closer to the steering wheel than most people, and I can get the seat adjustment just right for my driving style," Steve says. "Everything inside is comfortable. I could drive 20 hours in my green Road Runner with no problem. Of course, I wouldn't do that with the silver car, because I want to keep its mileage low.

"I have never driven a car that I feel handles better than a 1974 Road Runner. To me, its ride is smooth, and it has great cornering ability. With radial tires, it's even better. I have reproduction Goodyear Polyglas tires on the silver car, but my blue car has radials. I can remember when I needed to replace the tires on my green Road Runner. The tire store couldn't get the bias-ply Goodyears, so I had radials put on, and I immediately noticed that the car rode and handled better. Of course, the steering is a bit more vague than in the new cars, but I just don't like the new-car feel. Road Runners are just fun to drive.

"The 318 in my blue Road Runner has all the power I want with a 340 cam, better cylinder heads, higher compression and Flowmaster mufflers. Though the 318 generally runs great in the

Many original details are evident in the engine compartment, but Steve is concerned about the paint on the 318 engine. "It's coming off," he says. "A Chrysler engineer I met at a show said getting a good paint finish on the engine back then was hit or miss."

silver Road Runner, it may be time to rebuild the carburetor, as it idles rough when it's cold. Once it's warmed up, however, it drives just like you would expect a 7,200-mile car to."

Steve gives his Mopar rave reviews, and examining the Road Runner's comprehensive list of standard features will put his positive statements into perspective. Handling was improved over the Satellite model with heavy-duty suspension, a rear anti-roll bar to augment the one in front, Rallye wheels and G70 x 14 raised white letter tires. Standard braking consisted of manual front discs with

rear drums, same as the Satellite's.

The base engine was a 318-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 with dual exhaust and bright tips. Its 170-hp rating was 20 hp higher than the single-exhaust Satellite 318 engine. Optional was a 245-hp, 360-cu.in. V-8, which was new, a 250-hp 400 or a 275-hp 440 engine. Extra-cost engines received callouts on the hood, and the 440 also received GTX emblems. A three-speed manual transmission was standard, and a Hurst Pistol Grip-shifted four-speed was optional, as was the three-speed TorqueFlite automatic.

The fuselage body was upgraded with a Power Dome hood with stripes, side stripes that wrapped over the roof, and a Road Runner graphic on the header panel. Most received a blacked-





Many people who like a car they had when they were young get another to show when they're older, but few just keep driving them. Given my history with the 1974 Road Runner, it's easy to understand why it meant so much to me to have a brand new one to start over again. I wasn't a car guy, and though I didn't go to shows before I had this car, I do now. I belong to the Florida Mopar Connection Car Club in Fort Lauderdale, and I like talking to people who are restoring these Plymouths, since this one can show them exactly what they looked like. I still see things on it I forgot about from 40 years ago when I bought my first one.

—Steve Wexel

out grille (as opposed to a bright one) with bright accents, graphics and callouts on the C-pillars and decklid, and blacked out taillamp trim.

Inside, there's a simulated woodgrain instrument panel appliqué and a Rallye instrument cluster with gauges for oil pressure, water temperature and alternator and a space for an optional tach or clock. The three-spoke steering wheel with horn pad, the Beep Beep horn and a bench seat were all standard.

This Silver Frost Metallic Road Runner with red stripes shares the same exterior color combination with one of the two Road Runners depicted in the 1974 Chrysler Plymouth brochure. It has a raft of options, some of which are 14-inch Road wheels, heavy-duty shocks, interior décor package that features upgraded upholstery and trim, exterior décor package that adds more bright moldings and dual racing mirrors, TorqueFlite transmission, console and the Performance Axle Package.

When a console was ordered with the automatic transmission, it came with a Slap Stik (quick-shift) shifter that featured gates to allow for fast and safe manual shifting. The Performance Axle Package specified a 3.55-geared 8.75-inch Sure-Grip differential and added a fan shroud, a seven-blade torque drive fan and a larger radiator.

Today, this 1974 Road Runner is an unrestored survivor with just over 7,200 miles; the only non-original parts are new radiator hoses, ignition module, and reproduction tires and battery. Steve laments, "Some don't believe it's original because the paint looks so good. One guy said, 'I am a paint and body guy, and I would stake my reputation on



The trunk floor still appears factory fresh, with the paint, seam sealer, and wiring still intact like the day it was first assembled, and most importantly, no rust in sight.

the fact that the car has been repainted.' Since then, the car has become a Bloomington Gold Certified Fingerprint Survivor—original with regard to the engine, paint and interior.

"Factory paint has runs and flaws that a restored car won't have, so the point is to keep it original because it's desirable as a reference car. It also reminds us of how bad the quality was in some areas back then. To me, it brings back memories that a restored car can't."

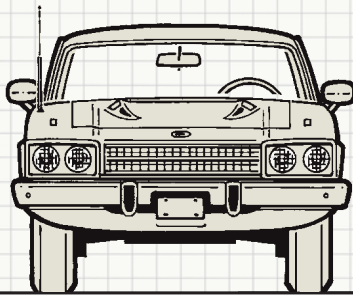
Steve also revealed that the Road Runner has been accepted into the Boca Raton Concourse d' Elegance for three years and won third place in its category in 2010. It has won first place awards at Mopar shows in Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan and Ohio, and has acquired numerous awards at over 160 events.

Called the "barefoot accountant" by friends due to his habit of shedding his footwear, Steve had been a confirmed driver. He has, however, since become a collector, at least with regard to this silver Road Runner. As for his blue B-body, it will probably be spotted in the lot of a large home center sometime soon, getting its trunk loaded with mulch by Steve, who will be smiling all the way home, simply because he's in his 1974 Road Runner. Some things never change. 🐾

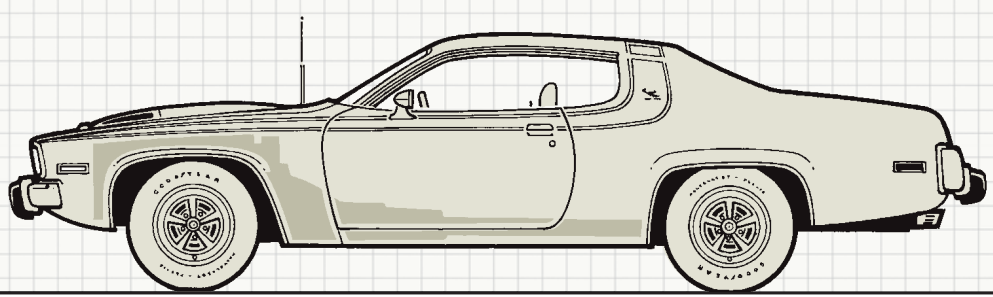


1974 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS, THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO
©2014 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



61.9 inches



115 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

Base price:	\$3,305
Price as profiled:	\$4,498.20
Options as profiled:	Light package, \$38.60; performance axle package, \$84.10; exterior décor package, \$84.55; interior décor package with bucket seats, \$170.40; power brakes, \$46.45; power steering, \$119.70; console, \$59.25; TorqueFlite, \$222.20; instrument panel-mounted hood release, \$10.80; AM/FM stereo, \$220.05; bumper guards with bright base, \$16.55; HD shocks, \$5.30; hood performance tape treatment, \$22.65; and Road wheels, \$32.60; destination charge, \$60.

ENGINE

Type:	OHV V-8; iron block and cylinder heads
Displacement:	318 cu.in.
Bore x stroke:	3.91 x 3.31 inches
Compression ratio:	8.6:1
Horsepower @ RPM:	170 @ 4,000
Torque @ RPM:	265 lb.ft. @ 2,600
Valvetrain:	Hydraulic valve lifters
Main bearings:	5
Fuel system:	Carter two-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
Lubrication system:	Pressure, gear-type pump
Electrical system:	12-volt with electronic ignition
Exhaust system:	Dual

TRANSMISSION

Type:	TorqueFlite automatic
Ratios:	1st: 2.45:1 2nd: 1.45:1 3rd: 1.00:1 Reverse: 2.20:1

DIFFERENTIAL

Type:	8.75-inch Hotchkiss-type with Sure-Grip limited-slip
Ratio:	3.55:1

STEERING

Type:	Low-friction recirculating ball
Ratio:	15.7:1 power (24:1 std. manual)

Turns, lock-to-lock:	3.5 (5.3)
Turning circle:	41.2 feet

BRAKES

Type:	Hydraulic, power-assisted
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Rear:	11-inch drum

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction:	Unitized with separate front K-frame
Body style:	Two-door coupe
Layout:	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

Front:	Independent, unequal length control arms; torsion bars; anti-roll bar; telescoping shock absorbers
Rear:	Semi-elliptic leaf springs; anti-roll bar; telescoping shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels:	Road wheels
Front/rear:	14 x 6 inch
Tires:	Goodyear Polyglas
Front/Rear:	G70 x 14

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase:	115 inches
Overall length:	212.4 inches
Overall width:	79.1 inches
Overall height:	52.2 inches
Front track:	61.9 inches
Rear track:	62 inches
Curb weight:	3,715 pounds (approx.)

CAPACITIES

Crankcase:	5 quarts with new filter
Cooling system:	16 quarts
Fuel tank:	19.5 gallons
Transmission:	17 pints
Rear axle:	4.5 pints

CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.:	0.534
Weight per bhp:	21.852 pounds
Weight per cu.in.:	11.682 pounds

PRODUCTION

318 V-8 w/automatic:	5,421
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PROS & CONS

- + Very well-preserved piece of automotive history
- + Conversation magnet at every car show
- + Treasure trove of factory finishes and procedures
- Cannot drive it without mileage concerns
- Vintage stripes can be damaged by too much sun
- Requires meticulous storage practices to maintain condition

WHAT TO PAY

Low	\$7,000
Average	\$14,000
High	\$24,000

CLUB CORNER

Winged Warriors/ National B-Body Owners Association (N.B.O.A.)

216 12th St.
Boone, IA 50036
www.wnboa.org
Dues: \$30/year;
Membership: 500

WPC Club Inc.

Box 3504
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-3504
www.chryslerclub.org
Dues: \$40/year;
Membership: approx. 3,500

Matchless Motoring

Rare is the 1967 Ford Galaxie 500 that's been optioned with a four-speed such as this authentic convertible

BY MIKE BUMBECK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH



The year 1967 marked the 70-millionth Ford ever built. It was a Galaxie. The combination of full-size comfort, an abundance of available V-8 horsepower and open-top motoring, drew many buyers specifically into the Galaxie convertible and out onto the highways of America, and Ford moved about 25,000 of the mid-trim-level Galaxie 500s and more-deluxe 500XLs in convertible-coupe configuration. There was nothing all that unusual or unfamiliar about a Galaxie 500 convertible, and that's a good thing.



While some of these travelers may have wanted an 8-track cassette player and/or Studio-Sonic sound system for entertainment, few of them cared to row through the gears on a standard transmission. And few ordered our featured car's combination of no-nonsense bench seat with a manual four-speed. Fewer still added a limited-slip rear differential. This unusual combination of features makes this a distant Galaxie, indeed. Only 120 in this powertrain configuration were produced by Ford in the 1967 model year.

Although not an auction buy, this particular Springtime Yellow Galaxie was purchased in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2009, dur-

ing the auction bonanza known as Scottsdale. Business and collector-car partners Joe Ventura and Archie Kuehn landed this full-size Ford convertible at the Pavilions car show and cruise-in. Everything has its price, and this car's price certainly was right for the longtime enthusiasts. Besides, it had been treated to a few modifications in the performance and driveability departments that made for dependable fun on the road.

The four-speed manual transmission and 390-cu.in. V-8 are what makes this handsome Ford so unique. Even more unusual, the four-speed sits on the floor in front of a bench seat. Bucket seats and shifter consoles were the usual realm of the manual



The 390-cu.in. V-8 was returned to stock appearance with the proper factory air cleaner and original Autolite 4300 four-barrel carburetor. A Pertronix electronic ignition hides under the distributor cap.



transmission-equipped, factory-prepared Galaxies. In a modern world, where the manual transmission is heading towards extinction, a big V-8 with a throaty four-barrel carburetor backed by a four-speed transmission makes this Galaxie a car of distinction.

Though purchased with an Edelbrock replacement carburetor and aftermarket air cleaner, Joe and Archie wanted to bring the car back to its original look and performance, so a stock Autolite 4300 four-barrel was rebuilt to factory specifications and returned to its rightful place atop the intake, and the original air cleaner was repainted to complete the look and sound. The big engine with the four-barrel carb had been factory rated at a healthy 335 horsepower.

Start-up and driveability were vastly improved when a Pertronix electronic ignition replaced the old points. The engine had a mild camshaft in it, and as it was installed by the previous owner, the specifications are not known. Unseen is the set of exhaust headers and custom-bent, three-inch dual exhaust. These sensible modifications provide all the more reason to row up through all four of the forward speeds.

As to the big car's suspension, the previous owner had replaced any worn parts with new components and added a complete set of high-quality shock absorbers. Worn ball joints and old tires were also replaced, and the work paid off with new-car handling and improved safety in a car manufactured when the Big Mac was new and Andy Griffith was the king of television.

The rest of the car was in excellent stock condition, with the exception of a repaint in the factory Springtime Yellow color. While the paint was in great shape, Joe and Archie took things a little further with a light color sanding and finish buff in order to remove any traces of orange peel and return the look of the finish closer to the original acrylics used in the Sixties.

The interior was in excellent shape, so no special care was required other than regular cleaning and preservation with Maguire's matte-finish vinyl-treatment product. Though factory seat belts would prevent unwanted sliding around, glossy finish interior products were out of the question given the wide, flat bench seat and the performance capabilities of the car.

General maintenance of the car was regular and uneventful, with an emphasis on quality and frequency of oil changes. Conventional 10W-40 worked for the warm San Diego climate year round. The car was driven at least three or four times a month in what could be considered its natural habitat of the Pacific Coast Highway, but the Galaxie has also taken part in the all-Ford show at Knotts Berry Farm, a slight deviation from the PCH in Buena Park. Although driving just 3,000 miles a year may not seem like much, Joe and Archie have a collection of twenty cars to exercise.

The AM Radio and 8-track cassette option came with stereo speakers and packed enough power to belt out tunes that could be heard while driving with the top down. This is not to say top-down driving was a sonic assault on its own, as the vast expanse of front glass, combined with a few tricks Ford learned from years of making convertibles, made for the conversation and open top traveling together.

At 65-75 miles per hour, when the V-8 is in the sweet spot just above 3,000 RPM, the dual three-inch exhaust encourages regular downshifting into third gear and the accompanying romp on



A dealer accessory tachometer sits to the left of the new-for-1967 energy-absorbing steering wheel. The vast expanse of bench seat makes for easy views of the sweeper speedometer. The AM radio with 8-track cassette player is original Ford equipment.



The 1967 restyle brought flowing lines and a lighter look. A stylized Ford family crest of three lions on red, white and blue sits on the trunk.

the gas pedal. The transmission shifts smoothly, with an earlier reverse engagement problem solved by a simple linkage adjustment. The bench seat presents a bit of a challenge, though, when the driver's side is moved forward and the gearshift lever meets with its leading edge or the knees of a middle passenger on shifts into second and fourth gear. When it comes to getting the big car slowed down from speed, though the four-wheel drum setup is power-assisted, it's a task that requires some forward thinking because front disc brakes were not included in this Galaxie's unusual confluence of powertrain and interior options.



member of Lincoln, Cadillac, Packard, Buick and Pontiac car clubs. He's especially partial to the forward-look cars from Chrysler, the designs of Virgil Exner from the mid-

Fifties to early Sixties, Fifties Cadillacs, and the Wide-Track Pontiacs—1959 and a 1960, specifically. Joe said the wider and lower stance inspired cornering confidence.

Little is known about who ordered this special combination from the factory in 1967 that transformed a competent, yet otherwise average American Sixties-era, full-size convertible into a performance-oriented grand touring machine of rarity and distinction. 🎧

Joe noted that one result of the 1967 restyle of the Galaxie is that the clean lines and sleek design of the car belie the full-size reality of its driving dynamics. From the outside looking in, the car doesn't look full-size, but once inside and behind the wheel, the full-size of the car makes itself apparent. Driving it, the car makes no illusion of its 3,680 pounds, but the full-size body did come with a return to full-sized comfort.

Joe, for one, has no aversion to full-size automobiles and is a



For in-depth driving impressions of the '67 Galaxie by Jeff Koch, type this link into your browser's address bar: <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/2014/02/18/1967-ford/>



These clever flip-up door handles leave that much more leg and knee room up front.



The stereo speakers set flanking the spacious rear seating were required in order to option the AM 8-track cassette and its clear and loud hi-fi sound.

JIM RICHARDSON'S ARTICLE in *HCC* #108 about his "'57 Chevy pickup's fuel pump failure," brought back fond memories of how I dealt with a fuel pump problem. I was in the asphalt paving business and in our early years, we were paving a parking lot when our three-ton roller quit. We had laid about 30 tons of hot asphalt, which was cooling fast. The roller had a VH Wisconsin gasoline engine. After I determined that there was good spark at the plugs, I pulled the fuel supply line at the carburetor, turned the engine over, and had no fuel.

In our work, we used two-gallon garden spray cans filled with diesel fuel, to spray our rakes and shovels, in order to keep them clean. I emptied the diesel fuel from the spray can, filled it with gasoline and attached the hose directly to the carburetor. Two or three pumps of compressed air into the tank, and the engine started. Every five minutes, three pumps in the can kept her running just fine. We were then able to finish the entire job, with no more breakdowns. What a relief! Larry Snyder
Coplay, Pennsylvania

REGARDING THE AIRFLOW in *HCC* #108, they certainly were great cars for their day, but the front end looks sad and droopy. A bolt-upright grille (La Salle or a wide tall 1940 Ford type) and round headlamps a bit higher would have sold the car. Engineering wise, the Airflow was rather advanced for its day, but the grille should stand proud by two inches from the body. The visual increase in hood length would do a lot for the front end's look.

Bob Martin
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I WAS TAKING A SECOND LOOK through *HCC* #108 where Milton Stern's article talks about a Gucci interior available in 1972-'73 Hornets; the tasteful multi-colored striping running down the seatback and onto the seat cushion. My eyes were transfixed. I could barely comprehend such an avant-garde design!

Let's face it: Today's interiors look as if the designers were exiled to a burial vault for inspiration. How long have we been bombarded with monotone dark gray interiors. These have been shoved down our throats for 25 years. And let's not forget the funereal black so often seen today as well.

I can just imagine what would hap-

pen if a designer suggested putting stripes on a seat. Such radical, revisionist thinking would surely result in his banishment to the Outback, some fifty miles from the nearest light bulb. I hope interiors become colorful and creative, but I have little hope this will happen. These banal interiors could quickly put a hyperactive teenager into a soporiferous state.

Thomas Radlo
Westfield, Massachusetts

THE ARTICLE FEATURED in *HCC* #102 on the "Cars of the '60s" really brings back memories of the early domestic compact cars. I owned several when I was in college in the late 1960s. I had two 1960 Ford Falcon two-door sedans, each with "three on the tree," a 1963 Mercury Comet four-door automatic, a 1964 Chevy Corvair Monza coupe, with a four-speed and a 1965 six-cylinder Valiant four-door with standard shift. All of these cars were very economical, with the Falcons able to get it to 30 MPG. All were easy to diagnose and repair whatever went wrong, and simple enough to fix most problems in my backyard. Most controls and functions like steering, windows, locks, seats, etc. were manual. No touch screen "infotainment" or Bluetooth communication crap like we have today. I could reach most of the critical repair parts from under the hood on the Falcons and did not have to go through a jungle of wires, hoses and sensors. The Falcons were the most economical and easiest to repair, the Comet with its small tailfins and deep pleated cloth seats, was the classiest. The Valiant was the most ruggedly built and lasted the longest, and my Corvair was the sportiest and most fun to drive, especially on curvy back roads.

Keary Crim
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

I WAS REALLY SURPRISED after reading Mr. Stern's article about the Dodge Aspen/Plymouth Volaré being lemons. I bought a 1976 Volaré Premier wagon with the Slant Six and TorqueFlite in 1978 with 24,000 miles for the tidy sum of \$2,400. This, of course, is when Chrysler was having financial problems, and their products at the time were selling really cheap.

However, I owned that Volaré for over six years, and beat the daylights out of it, hauling campers and boats,

and driving it through the woods on fishing trips. It never quit, and kept coming back for more. The only parts I replaced during that time were the muffler and tailpipe, front brake pads, tires and a battery. And of course, these are normal-wear items anyway. Oh, yes, and never any rust! I added air shocks and a transmission cooler for the hauling duties.

I had always owned Ford or GM products prior to this, along with a few AMCs (Those really were lemons! Sorry, Pat.). However, I was so impressed by that car's performance and durability, I've been driving Chrysler products ever since. I guess I must have gotten one of the good ones, or all the kinks and flaws were removed before I purchased it.

Bob Testa
Northfield, New Hampshire

THRICE NOW, I HAVE READ and re-read Jim Richardson's inspiring column, "Mastering Mindfulness." As a counseling psychologist, I often encourage my clients to act in mindful ways. Upon reading Jim's piece, I find my enthusiasm for mindfulness renewed when I approach restoration projects, which include both cars and broken people. A few months ago, Peter Egan, in my view the greatest automotive philosopher of all time, announced his retirement from *Road & Track* magazine. I feared there would never again be the mix of car guy and philosophy that was embodied by Peter's writing.

I was wrong. Jim Richardson appears to have taken up the torch, with eloquence and mastery. I eagerly await his next installment of wisdom.

My compliments on an outstanding magazine overall. It is certainly the best automotive publication available today.

Eric Macleod, Ph.D.
Battle Creek, Michigan

I JUST FINISHED READING Richard's column in *HCC* #113, "Accessorized Mania," and while I do agree with most everything, I feel as if I must defend the use of curb feelers. Or as we call them here in Kentucky, "cat whiskers." It's

Continued on page 32

K-Cars

If I were going to start a new automobile company today, I think I'd try my best to make sure the name of the car began with a "K." I'd name it the King, or the Kane or maybe even the Kustom Kutie; anything so long as it began with "K." I figure it would give me a much better chance at success.

Why do I say that? Because it seems that in the postwar period, among American independent car companies anyway, cars with names that started with "K" had a better run than most. Think about it. Although in that period there weren't all that many cars with "K" names, statistically speaking, they have had probably the highest success rate in the industry.

One of the longest-lived of the dozens of post-World War II start-up car companies was Midget Motors. From 1946 to 1970, this bold little company manufactured its diminutive King Midget cars in Athens, Ohio. The company built most of the major components in-house, including chassis, body and interiors. King Midget did go outside for engines, but most of the rest of the car was manufactured in its shop. It even managed to design and tool up four completely different models over the span of the company's decades in business. Did it ever achieve what would normally be called mass production? No, but it survived as a bonafide automobile manufacturer for almost a quarter of a century, and during most of that time, it was profitable while a lot of larger automobile companies went belly up. And with the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration's new "Low Speed Vehicle" designation, I have a feeling King Midget may sometime in the not-too-distant future be back in production.

A small city-car that holds two people and gets up to 90 miles per gallon of gas should find a definite niche in the American automobile market. The LSV law would make it possible, since it takes into account the low-speed limitations of some cars and subsequently allows a lower level of safety gear, enabling small manufacturers to become automakers.

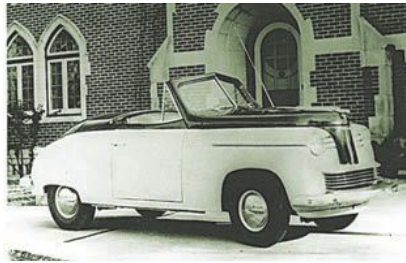
Indy car builder Frank Kurtis also achieved a measure of success with the Kurtis sports cars he

built from 1949 to 1959. With a two-seat fiberglass body and a V-8 engine, the 1949 Kurtis presaged the 1955 V-8 Corvette, and also led to production of the similarly successful Muntz Jet. Kurtis gave sports car building another try in 1954, with a new design. While he wasn't able to make the business a long-term success, he did actually build and sell cars for a few years, and that beats the record of many other non-K start-ups.

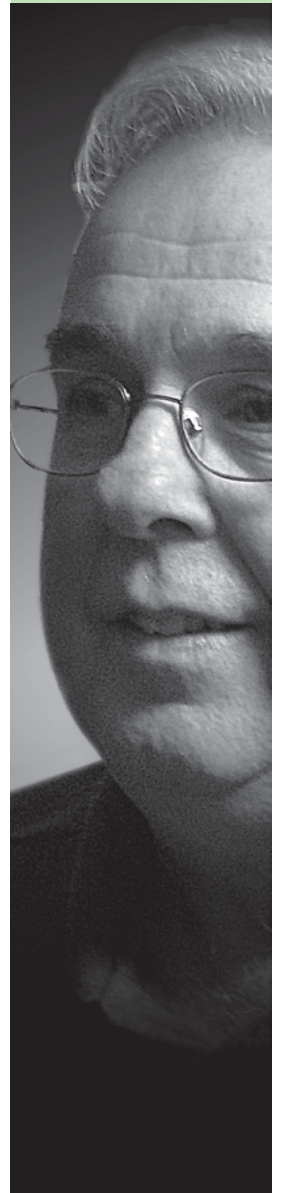
Sure, some K-cars sank without a ripple. According to published sources, only one 1948 Knudson was built, and only one steam-powered 1948 Keen Steamliner. But, apparently, 1948 was a great year for K-cars. Keller was a darned nice little car that nearly made it to the big time and by rights should have been more successful than it was; in a future column, I'll talk more about the ill-fated Keller. There was also a little-known car called the Krim-Ghia in 1966, but no one seems to know how many were built, if any.

Of course, the biggest and most successful K-car was the Kaiser. When Henry Kaiser joined with Joe Frazer to create Kaiser-Frazer, the two men had the bold idea of becoming as successful as the Big Three by offering a more modern car at a competitive price. The big sedans they built seemed marvelously new compared to the carryover models from the Detroit companies. But Kaiser didn't keep a close enough watch on his costs—he was always a big spender—so the company was never able to match the Big Three on prices, and the big Kaiser ended up competing in the medium-price segment, which was much smaller than the standard car market. And when Kaiser overrode Joe Frazer's advice to retrench for the 1949 model year, he effectively killed the company. Although Kaiser-Frazer recovered enough to produce what is arguably one of the best-looking sedans of the 1950s—the 1951 Kaiser Special and Deluxe—the company had lost so much money it was unable to maintain a competitive position. Kaiser did continue on until 1955, but in reality, the passenger car operations were in a death spiral from 1952 onward.

Maybe I'd call my new automobile the Kissel Kar—but that, too, has already been used. ☹



“It seems that in the postwar period, among American independent car companies, cars with names that started with ‘K’ had a better run than most.”



true that they are ugly and detract from the car's beauty; I won't argue that for a second. However, I own a 1935 Packard four-door touring sedan. It's a very nice looking car, but it's a daily driver. I own several antique cars, and I drive all of them during the summer and winter, rain or shine—even my 1917 Ford roadster. This is how I get my enjoyment from these cars. Dust-collecting trophies mean nothing to me.

I try to keep my cars looking nice and mechanically sound, as well as road worthy. So, with this in mind, here's my question to you because I don't think you have given this much thought. What do you think these beautiful white sidewall tires would look like if they were rubbed up against a rough concrete curb, even just one time? Do you know what it would cost to replace a set of these tires because they were scuffed and nasty looking? I think in some cases you have to decide which is the better of two evils. Would you want to go with the cat whiskers, or would you rather have chewed and scuffed up white sidewall tires? They're not much for cars you are going to show, but they are sure great for cars that go.

Roger Stephan
Louisville, Kentucky

Blackwall tires not only make a car look better, but they save you from having to add those unsightly cat whiskers, compounding the ugliness problem of having whitewalls in the first place. – Richard

I AGREE, WHOLEHEARTEDLY on all items, with of course one exception: wire-laced wheel covers. Ugh. Very few (if any) vehicles look "better" with fake wire wheels. Actually, no American car, or truck, post-1934 (or so) looks right, looks better with "wire" wheels, much less with fake wire wheels.

Whitewall tires do not look right, especially on base-model cars. Through the end of the late Fifties model years, whitewalls only belonged on Cadillacs, Lincolns, Chrysler Imperials, and the biggie Buicks and Chrysler New Yorkers. No whitewalls on anything else. No truck ever built should have whitewall tires, period.

Fender skirts dramatically detract from the lines of almost every vehicle. Wheels are meant to be seen. With proper stock hubcaps, the wheel will

enhance the lines and flow of the car. I especially hate fender skirts on cars that were never meant to have them. I do understand that some cars were designed with fender skirts as an integral part of the overall styling (See small list of cars in my whitewall rant above).

Marion Bartholomew
Federal Way, Washington

COULDN'T AGREE MORE with Richard about Continental kits, although I do like them on a 1956 Ford convertible—can't explain that. A good friend in POCI has owned a gorgeous 1958 Bonneville coupe for years, and it's got a kit; such a nice car until you see that kit. But I'm surprised that I didn't see fender skirts on his list. When I was a kid back in the '50s, skirts were cool on shoebox Fords and Mercs, and that's all. We ridiculed guys who put them on their Pontiacs, Chevys, etc. Today, most '58 Impalas have skirts (and those stupid fake exhaust ports behind the rear wheels). You even see skirts on sedans at car shows. I'm 72 and can only assume that these owners are about my age and their brain is turning to oatmeal.

Jim Heidenway
Brentwood, Tennessee

OOOOOH, RICHARD, I had the feeling that you must have pinched some part of your anatomy in a Continental kit at one time to take off on such a lashing. As you said, "clearly it's the most grotesque looking-useless-accessory of all time." You also stated that, "I like my cars just the way they originally rolled off the assembly line, because that's the way I can appreciate how their stylists and designers intended them to look."

We have a 1956 Thunderbird, and the stylists and designers sent it out with a Continental kit. Ford was in such a hurry to get the T-Bird on the market to compete with the Corvette that they had to improve several things. People that bought the '55 Bird were complaining that there was not enough space in the trunk for luggage; Ford had just placed the spare flat in the trunk. The next year the designers decided to put the spare tire on the outside and make some room for luggage. In 1957, they got smart and put a wheel well in the trunk so the spare could stand up; I'm sure it saved them a great deal of money also. So is the '56 T-Bird butt ugly or not?

When we bought this Thunderbird,

it was a basket case without an engine or transmission and a number of things. Thanks to Hemmings, we found a Continental kit near Boston and front bumper guards in Wisconsin.

Keep up the fun editorials.

Richard and Bonnie Taie
Baker City, Oregon

RICHARD'S COLUMN TOUCHES

on a subject that has bothered me for quite a while, and it was spot on. When he said that Continental kits were the worst accessory ever conceived, I believe he was being too kind. They were and are hideous and completely ruin what otherwise is probably a beautiful car. I attend a number of shows a year, and I have never spoken with anyone who thought they looked good. The old adage that "less is more" has never been more appropriate.

The men who designed these cars never intended for them to be ruined with a three-foot-long panel protruding from the back of the car. I used to own a 1941 Lincoln Continental, and the spare tire on that car was beautiful because it was an integral part of the overall design, and, like the entire car, was a masterpiece of simplicity. The add-ons from mostly the 1950s were not part of the overall design and stand out like a sore thumb.

I know that the owners of these cars can do whatever they want with them, and I respect that, but I don't believe that Leonardo ever intended for the "Mona Lisa" to have a mustache added to his painting, or earrings or anything else. To me, automobiles are like a completed canvas by talented artists: Love it or leave it, but don't add or subtract from it.

Robert Storey
Via email

I'M CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR readers' opinions about door-edge guards. You made your opinion clear about Continental kits, but how about designed-in Continental spares like on mid-Fifties Nash & Hudson cars?

Rich York
Rohrersville, Maryland

RICHARD IS RIGHT ABOUT Continental kits being the all-time worst. I never understood their appeal. All they do is ruin

Continued on page 34

Eggplant and the Great Speckled 'Bird

We called him Eggplant. He was a transfer student into our college out of New York City. In his leisure hours, Eggus Plantus (as we alternately dubbed him to bequeath upon him a measure of nobility, or something) did not really fit the part of rural Pennsylvania, circa the middle 1970s: He had scraggly receding hair, a Fu Manchu mustache, soft voice with a Noo Yawk accent, and was given to padding around our trash-strewn dormitory in a visibly used set of greenish surgical scrubs. Normally, two fingers of one hand held a cigarette while the opposite hand clenched a beer mug.



Specifically, Eggplant—his nickname referred to his tendency to vegetate in his dorm room—hailed from Kew Gardens, a leafy neighborhood just about in the middle of Queens. Eggplant came out of his streets as a car guy, which is very unusual for that particular place, known as it is for its flora and architecture.

He rasped his way into polka country wheeling a Pontiac. Not just any Pontiac, but a 1967 Firebird coupe, armed with the 400-cu.in. big-bore V-8 topped by a four-barrel Rochester Quadra-Jet, the engine spinning a floor-shifted Turbo Hydra-Matic.

Ride-wise, the Firebird was no featherweight. That engine was a slightly detuned version of the standard Pontiac GTO powerplant, edged back to 325 hp. Road tests when it was new showed that a Firebird 400 hardtop could snap off quarter-miles in the high 14s on standard rubber. Unlike Chevrolet's Camaro, which debuted the same year, the Firebird didn't exactly boom out of the gate when it came to buyers. Most figures show that only about 15,000 standard Firebird coupes were produced with V-8 power in 1967, meaning they were optioned with either the 326 or 400 V-8s. If we assume that most buyers preferred the 326, that means that a base 400 coupe wasn't often seen even when it was new.

That goes double for Eggplant's coupe. As it came from the General Motors assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio, his Firebird was red with a white painted roof—only, by the time he got it out to Pennsylvania, the Firebird looked as if it had

terminal leprosy. I think he bought it off a used car lot on Queens Boulevard. The number of fender-rappers he'd had it in couldn't have been counted by a Univac. Unlike the spiffy exemplar of a 1967 Firebird we've depicted here, his boasted replacement body panels in seemingly every factory color, and several shades of blue. It was like a quilt with a roof and a dangling, belching muffler.

Gotta admit, we had a blast with that muscular, though aesthetically challenged, little F-body. I remember one frigid night: We are rolling back to campus from the local Laundromat on a narrow street heading to the rear entrance of our school.

Eggplant kicks the Firebird up to around 70 MPH, and then hits a big swath of glare ice. Around we go. Three times. Heading straight for the front door of a house owned by a commuter-student friend of ours. Eggplant plants the Firebird, after at least three full spins, on the side lawn, having cleared not just the house, but also a fire hydrant. Later, he reprised the feat on a side road a few miles away, as we returned from an Italian restaurant that sold a "veal parmigiana" dinner for \$3.95. This time, we were lucky enough to end up backed into a snowbank right between two substantial trees. The capper, however, had to be when a bunch of us took a couple of cars to York U.S. 30 Dragway, the Woodstock of eastern drag racing, for an opening-day bracket event. We got up at 4 a.m. on Sunday, a theoretically impossible happenstance following a Saturday night at our alma mater, and headed for the Pennsylvania Turnpike by 5, in total darkness. Plant announces his intention to dial in for Heavy Eliminator—with a couple of skinny whitewall snow tires from Korvette's still mounted on the rearmost rims.

Ultimately, Eggplant chose to leave our college and instead became a (very well compensated) air freight handler at Kennedy Airport. I believe he wiped out the Firebird one night on the way to his shift in a pileup on the Van Wyck Expressway in Queens. I saw him a couple of years later in a late-1970s Firebird Esprit, which, compared to the 400 coupe, was worthy of the lawn at a concours. 🍷

“Gotta admit, we

had a blast with

that muscular,

though

aesthetically

challenged,

“little F-body.”



the rear proportions of the car. This is also why I never liked the Ford Skyliners. Yes, they are engineering marvels, but their butts are too long.

Don Moore
Erial, New Jersey

I HAD A GOOD LAUGH when Richard accurately described the typical windshield-visor car owner back in the day. You know, the old guy who'd come running out of his house yelling if you trespassed on his property to retrieve a ball. The car would be fuddy-duddy, like a 1949 De Soto or maybe a four-door '47 Pontiac. If I ever get an old car and it has a windshield visor, it will be the first thing to come off. Funny stuff!

Mark Simendinger
Via email

RICHARD, YOUR COLUMN hit the nail on the head, again! Paint protectors are great; I even had some for the keyholes on my 1967 Cadillac convertible. Actually quite necessary, but haven't seen anyone selling them anymore. Spotlamps? Just a nuisance, and could not agree more about so-called "Continental kits." Ugh! They totally destroy the lines conceived by the designer, and must give original designers a great feeling of disgust whenever they see these travesties added to their great creations. I have never been able to understand why anyone would install them. Okay on cars for which rear-mounted spares were designed. Others, no way.

Pat Jacobs
Snohomish, Washington

YOU EXPRESSED PERFECTLY what I have felt for so long. Growing up in the '50s, seeing the 1955-'57 Fairlane 500s and Bel Airs of the same years fitted with these ugly extensions, I just didn't get it. If they wanted added length, the Detroit designers could have added a couple inches to the quarter panels and done it gracefully. Those ugly extenders, especially on a 1956 Lincoln or Cadillac, were particularly ugly, as they had to extend the exhaust housing in the bumper.

The Continental kit was magnificent where it belonged... on the 1940-'48 Lincoln Continental, where provision was made within the trunk and bumper assembly, so that it was a natural design element, not a protrusion as a result of being an afterthought.

The one exception I can allow, where the add-on was gracefully incorporated, was on the 1961-'63 Lincoln convertibles. It worked well there, as demonstrated on the '61 Presidential limousine.

Joshua Weiss
Hewlett Harbor, New York

I HAVE JUST READ RICHARD'S column on maps vs. GPS in *HCC* #114, and as my old science teacher used to say when one of us stumbled on a correct answer: "Amen and three hallelujahs!!"

I agree wholeheartedly.
Larry Huffman
Piqua, Ohio

ENJOYED THE ARTICLE on the low-line Chevelles in *HCC* #113. Not too often the base model strippers are profiled. Did you know that here in Canada the 300 series included a convertible model for the 1965-'67 model years? Don't know why, but it was there, along with the Pontiac-equivalent Acadian Beaumont model for the same three years.

Wayne Janzen
New Westminster, B.C., Canada

I'VE BEEN HOPING FOR an article about the Chevelle, and your editorial staff must have read my mind, because you gave me dinner and dessert, all in one issue. Back in the 1970s, I ran a small auto repair business, and cars ran through my fingers like water—until I stumbled onto a 1964 Chevelle four-door station wagon. That car stuck with me, and I with it, for many years.

Dressed in Chevrolet blue, with a 230-cu.in. straight-six and a three-speed column shift, it was one of the most reliable cars I've ever owned. If only I'd known then that someday my pedestrian little Chevelle would become a classic. I let go of it thoughtlessly, and I still kick myself for selling it. It's one of the best-looking cars ever to roll off anybody's assembly line.

Henry Smith
Sorrento, Maine

THANK YOU, RICHARD, for a most provocative column in *HCC* #110. Instead of initiating or continuing a brand war, I will submit a different angle for your consideration. I don't disagree with any of your observations about any brand's sense of style. My contention is that if you look at any company, especially a multi-gen-

erational entity, you have to acknowledge that it is only a snapshot reflection of the men's personality at the helm.

I'm most familiar with Oldsmobile, so I will use that company's history as my primary example. Ransom E. Olds pioneered the concept of an assembly process, he then moved on. Kettering moved Olds from postwar to Rocket V-8 power. Here is the prime example of my assertion: John Beltz. He was an engineer, a true car guy, a great promoter. Under his management, Olds introduced the Toronado, performance across the board and a myriad of engineering advances. He lobbied for an Olds F-body, and they were preparing to introduce a hemi-head 455-cu.in. V-8. He heralded the European touring suspension trend. I bonded with John Beltz's Oldsmobile.

After Beltz's untimely passing, the Oldsmobile Division's sales shot to their zenith on the foundation he built. Then post-1977, other less-imaginative personalities managed to lead a slow decline into oblivion. The Oldsmobile Aerotech was set to reintroduce Oldsmobile as America's Mercedes. Then corporate thinking squandered the opportunity. Ultimately, John Rock simultaneously drove a stake through both their loyal customers and potential youthful buyers with the "It's not your father's Oldsmobile" campaign.

The greatness of the other two divisions you discuss were also a reflection of the great automotive men running them at the times in question. Cadillac's "style" was in large part due to Harley Earl's influence. Pontiac's 1960s to 1980s personality was primarily John DeLorean. Before then, Pontiacs consisted of lower-end cars with a chrome strip down their hoods.

The best contemporary example is Lee Iacocca's Chrysler turn-around. The minivan concept/multi-platform car idea. While not stylish, it was a financial success and returned the company to profitability. The sheer force of his personality is the reason Chrysler survived.

Another change Lee brought was the idea of actually building concept cars. What other company ever followed through after the auto show? Viper, Prowler and PT Cruiser to name a few.
Ed Gonfindini
Marion, New York

Note: When writing to Recaps, always include the name of the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.

O Say Can You "C"

In the pre-WWII era, the debut of the next year's cars was usually featured in the annual "show number" of the leading popular automotive magazines. In the USA, *MoToR* magazine's annual show number cost \$1.00 and was an inch-thick oversized edition with wonderful color artwork of a great, stylized car on the cover. Up until 1935, these issues came out in January, but by that time most of the major car companies in Detroit were having their cars make their debut in September or October. Occasionally, circumstances would delay an offering of a particular model or body style.

In 1940, the "C" body shell was introduced by General Motors in one or more models in all of its makes of cars, with the exception of Chevrolet. Its design was inspired by the spectacular Cadillac Sixty Special of 1938, designed by Bill Mitchell. The C-body coupe and sedan were well received, and sales were good. Due to the totally new shape and stance, no open body styles were available as GM had focused on creating the body dies to stamp out the body styles they knew they would sell the most of—sedans and coupes.

The C-bodied convertible coupe and convertible phaeton (as GM called them) would not make their debut until *six months later* at the end of the first week in March 1940. These would appear in the La Salle "Special" Series 52, Cadillac Model Sixty-Two, Olds Series 90 and Buick Roadmaster Model 70 and Super Model 50.

The announcement of the new open cars was not done with a tremendous amount of exuberance or fanfare. Let's focus on Buick as an example. The C-bodied convertible coupe was featured in magazine ads on the Roadmaster chassis. Newspaper ads showed a Super convertible phaeton, which depending upon the city they were printed in, could see the hood louvers airbrushed and increased from three to four and the car relabeled a Roadmaster. The general public viewing the newspaper ads probably didn't notice

that the considerable extra length of the hood the Roadmaster had over the Super wasn't there. One decent announcement of "four new ones" of the Super and Roadmaster C-bodied open cars was in the March 9, 1940, issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine. Buick also issued a simple, color



This is the Buick ROADMASTER 6-passenger Convertible Phaeton, with 141-hp. engine, five-foot hip-room in front seat and underseat heater, defroster and fresh-air intake.

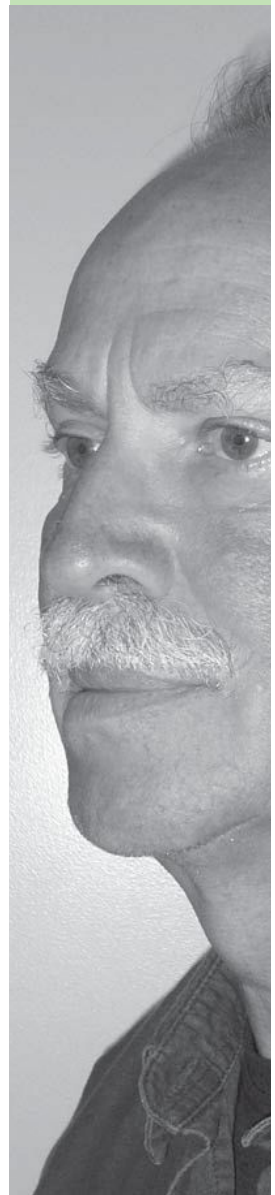


sales folder touting the quartet of new body styles, but that was about it. I have yet to discover any factory publicity photos specific to these new Buicks. The Roadmaster convertible phaeton was the most neglected body style of all, so far as period images go, and the only view of one with the top up was a tiny photograph in that *Saturday Evening Post* advertisement.

These new torpedo-shaped open-body styles in 1940 saw a brief few months sales before GM was tooling up for the new 1941 cars and production was halted. The same C body shell was used for the open cars for 1941, but the Buicks looked heavier, as larger bumpers were added and abbreviated the wraparound look of the torpedo-shaped fenders that tapered down and wrapped under on the 1940 cars. All in all, a sales range of about 16 months, total, for 1940-'41 open cars. The convertible phaeton was not offered by GM in 1942. In retrospect, it seems to me they went to a lot of effort and expense to make a new two- and four-door open body style with such a small window of time for sales. In 1940, the Buick Super saw very healthy sales of 4,764 convertible coupes and 1,351 convertible phaetons. The more expensive Roadmaster, by comparison, seems almost exclusive, sales only amounting to 606 convertible coupes and 235 convertible phaetons.

The convertible sedan (convertible phaeton) body style was already archaic by the late 1930s, as the convertible coupe added additional seating in the form of a bench seat behind the front seat. Like the roadster and phaeton body styles before it, the convertible sedan would disappear by 1942, only to see a slight revival postwar by Kaiser in 1949-'50 and then Lincoln for 1961-'67. 🐞

“...they went to a lot of effort and expense to make a new two- and four-door open body style with such a small window of time for sales.”



All in the Family

1967 Oldsmobile Delta 88 Town Sedan, unrestored with only 11,300 miles, has remained in the same family since new



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

“Our most bitter enemies are our own kith and kin. Kings have no brothers, no sons, no mother!” the French realist playwright Balzac told us. And, though there’s certainly no chance that Balzac ever went for a spin in Great Aunt Irene’s 1967 Oldsmobile Delta 88 Town Sedan, he certainly had a sense of the difficulties of family life.

It’s commonplace for relatives to will automobiles to their loved ones, to ensure that a beloved car finds a new appreciative home or to help out a family member who doesn’t already have transportation of their own. Though the stories are legion, they nevertheless remain special—so much so that at Hemmings, we’ve come to put single-family-owner cars in the same category as original-owner machines. The clear lineage, a knowledge of the car’s history from new, and frequently but not always, the same last name on the title from owner to owner, represent a continuation of sorts, a life beyond the life of the original purchaser that often carries with it significant personal meaning. But these stories can sometimes still prove complicated.

Fay and Irene Strang of Mount Vernon, Ohio, took delivery of their new



Pewter Oldsmobile Delta 88 Town Sedan on July 14, 1967—one of 22,270 Delta 88 Town Sedans Oldsmobile built that year. It was a striking and well-optioned machine: white vinyl top, air conditioning, power steering and brakes, AM radio and power trunk release; the two-barrel, 425-cu.in., 310-hp V-8 was standard-issue. This model was restyled at the start of the model year to capture some of the essence of the Toronado. More pronounced wheel openings and largely de-chromed flanks were among the otherwise evolutionary styling changes from the 1966 models that somehow still had a taste of Toronado about them. The Strangs had another car for day-to-day drudgery, so the Town Sedan only made it out for the Sunday church run and the occasional joy ride.

Well, Great Uncle Fay passed in 1972, and Great Aunt Irene simply parked the car—with all of 9,500 miles on the odometer—hung the keys on the hook, and let it sit. For 22 years, that Delta 88 didn't turn a tire. Their great-nephew, Curt Zeller, caught wind of it and was intrigued. Now, Curt actually worked for Oldsmobile from 1966 to 1972,

as a district manager out of the Buffalo, New York, sales office, where he got to try out a new demo model every couple of months, but had long since left that position and moved to Southern California. Still, he had come to appreciate Rockets; he still has a 1972 4-4-2 and an '82 Toronado with more than 300,000 miles on the clock. The opportunity to add such a low-mileage car to his collection piqued his interest.

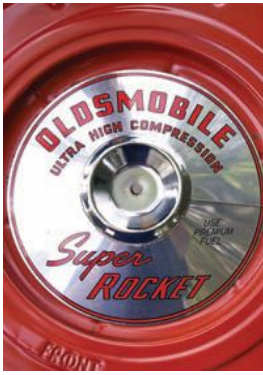
Though he'd heard tales of Great Aunt Irene's 1967 88, he'd never seen it. Curt lived 2,500 miles away, after all, and trips back to Ohio were few and far between. Sometime in the early 1980s, though, he managed to take a trip back to Ohio. "It was in an unheated garage and was covered with cardboard boxes, newspapers and egg cartons. I wasn't able to see the entire car at that point, just the rear end of it, but I knew I was interested. I told her that if she ever decided to sell it, to let me know first, and if the price was right, I'd buy it."

The conversation continued for a few years, and then "She told me I could just have the car. I didn't have a place for it at the time, so I asked

For a four-door car, the Town Sedan has nice proportions with a pleasing conservative style about it. Minor hood rub is a testament to unrestored originality; red-and-stainless motif of the tail panel has echoes of the 1967 Toronado.



The two-spoke steering wheel offers a terrific view of the gauges and commands the 88 Town Sedan's bulk with dispatch. Wood and brushed aluminum infuse the cockpit with an Oldsmobile-level of class. Accelerator pedal is comically oversized compared to others of the era. That odometer, reading 11,113 miles, has never turned over.



Oldsmobile's two-barrel 425-cu.in. V-8 was standard on the Delta 88 in 1967; it was rated at 310 hp with automatic transmission. It's only ever needed a new water pump, regular 10W-40 oil changes, and a bit of effort to get it running after its extended slumber.

her to keep it in the garage, and I'd make arrangements in the future to get it when I had a spot for it." As time went on, things changed. "After a couple of years, she asked if I still wanted to buy the car from her. Now it was no longer mine for the taking! We agreed on a price of \$1,000." But Curt's second cousin would receive the low-mileage Delta 88 instead of him. Then fate intervened when Irene passed away, in her late '80s, in 1994. "When I went back for her funeral, my cousin the executor took me out to the garage. There sat the Olds. Prior to Irene's death, the car had been pulled from her garage, cleaned up, and was in running order. He asked if I still wanted it. I said, 'yes.'"

Curt claims that what you see here is more or less what he received nearly two decades ago.

"Before I got it, the shop redid the basics—brakes, new muffler, all new fluids, complete tune up, oil change, filter—and nothing major beyond that." They even left it on its original tires, though for driving and safety purposes those tires now sit on a shelf in his Culver City, California, garage, and a more modern set of whitewall radials now lives in the wheel wells. "What a difference in the ride and handling they made. No more wobbling down the road." The sole mechanical issue? A water pump gave out sometime early in Curt's ownership, and he had the original rebuilt.

Maintenance has also been a snap, Curt tells us. "It's all original including paint, top and interior. To clean it, I mostly just use a sponge and water—no soaps, no car washes. I'll apply a soft paste wax once





Oldsmobile introduced the turn-signal-splitting-the-headlamps motif in 1967 on both the Delta 88 and the mid-size Cutlass line.

or twice a year, but that's it. Under the hood, I just use a conventional 10W-40 oil. Nothing special."

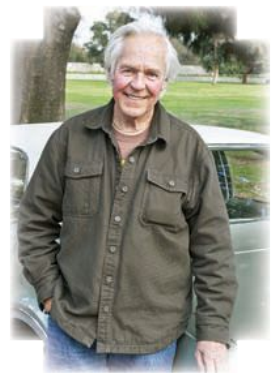
The oil may not be anything special, but the car itself is, particularly as seen through younger eyes. "I took my great nephew for a ride one day, and he was blown away by the ashtrays in the front and back seats. He told me that he'd never seen ashtrays in a car before!" However, those miles are few and far between; this 88 Town Sedan had barely turned 11,000 miles when we photographed it, and it remains at just over 11,300 miles at press time.

We were lucky enough to put a few of those miles on ourselves one afternoon. It was exactly what we would have expected of an Oldsmobile from the era: plenty of room, an aversion to over styling the interior, a seatback that smacked us right in the shoulder blades, fine quality materials in-

side, an idle so smooth you have to stop and think whether you've started the car or not, an endless wave of big-block V-8 torque floating us to our ultimate cruising speed despite its two-barrel carb. And yet, the front seat back could have stood to go back another click or two, for those of us on the large side, and the engine's 10.25:1 compression ratio demanded better fuel than it was getting, as a samba pinged from under the hood at anything resembling moderate acceleration. Also, the brakes grabbed mightily at first touch but seemed to relax their grip slightly as you pressed further on the pedal, and the gas pedal was about the largest we'd ever seen.

While driving this handsome Oldsmobile, the sense of the road never truly leaves you. The steering is relatively feel-free but just enough of the outside creeps in through the suspension that you remember you're driving a car, not a living room sofa. Overall, a thoroughly competent automobile for its day, and one that we probably taxed harder in our 20 minutes behind the wheel than Irene or Curt ever had.

Speaking of Irene, we wonder what she would have thought had she known Curt ended up with her Oldsmobile anyway—without paying for it! "I don't know what she would be thinking, and I'm not sure I would really want to know," he says, laughing. "I would hope that she would be pleased, happy that the car has survived as it has, is still in the family, and will be well cared for by me for a long time to come." Balzac may have had it right after all, but when it comes to an old car falling into the right hands, sometimes simply outliving everyone has its benefits. 🐶



“I would hope that she would be pleased, happy that the car has survived as it has, is still in the family, and will be well cared for by me for a long time to come.”



De Soto or DeSoto?

13 Most-Common Mistakes People Make About De Sotos

BY BILL NOBLE



After reading (again) a common mistake about De Sotos in an antique automotive magazine, I decided that it's time to set the record straight. So I've put together my list of the 13 most common mistakes people make about De Soto automobiles. Hopefully, you're not triskaidekaphobic. (Yes, I did have to look up that word in order to spell it correctly.)

13—Spelling of De Soto

Speaking of spelling things correctly, do you see the letter "a" in the name De Soto? Neither do I. And yet many people continue to end this name with the letter "a"—De Sota. I've even seen members of the National DeSoto Club (NDC) spell it that way. I don't know why they do this; perhaps they're spelling it the way that they're mispronouncing it. But I tell them that *de sota* is *da drink you get out of da vending machine*. Also note that, officially, there is a space between the "e" and the "S" in the name De Soto. Frequently, as in the name of the NDC, this space is omitted, which is okay.

12—FireDome vs Firedome

The question regularly comes up of how to correctly spell Fire-dome: Is it with a capital "D" or is it with a lower-case "d"? Well, that depends. When De Soto first came out with its hemi V-8, the FireDome, in 1952, it also named the model these engines went into the FireDome, with a capital "D." The FireDome was the top-of-the-line model for De Sotos from 1952 through 1954. But in 1955, De Soto introduced the Firelite as its new top-of-the-line model. So, not only did the Firedome get downgraded in rank, it also got its "D" reduced to a lowercase "d." So whether it's a capital "D" or a lowercase "d" depends upon which model year you're talking about: 1952-1954: FireDome, 1955-1959: Firedome.

11—DeLuxe vs. Custom

From 1939 until the FireDome was introduced in 1952, De Soto had Custom and DeLuxe models, with the DeLuxes being the

bottom-of-the-line models. A De Soto Custom does not mean that the car has been customized or modified. "Custom" is the name of the model. And DeLuxe is always spelled with an uppercase "L." All 1949 De Soto station wagons were DeLuxe models. (We're talking about De Sotos sold in the USA, not the Diplomats that were sold outside of the USA.) The confusion comes about since some of the 1949 station wagons came with Custom trim, and this causes people to think that the station wagon is a Custom station wagon when it's really a DeLuxe station wagon. Why De Soto put Custom trim on a DeLuxe model, I don't know. But even with the Custom trim, it's still a DeLuxe.

10—The S-11 Model

All of the S-11s have only one brake lamp, and it's in the center of the trunk lid. The S-11s are De Sotos built from 1946 through the first series of cars for 1949. There are very few differences between these years, and the best way to tell for certain what year a car was made is to check its serial number. (The reason that the first series of 1949 De Sotos were still S-11s was due to labor issues that delayed the production of the S-13s, the new series for 1949.)

The Chrysler Corporation decided that all of its post-WWII cars (Chryslers, De Sotos, Dodges, and Plymouths) would have only one brake lamp, and that it would be in the center of the trunk lid. There are still two taillamps toward the rear corners, which are the turn signals, and they come on when you turn on the parking lamps. This led to some confusion, not to mention some collisions,

when a Mopar car stopped and was hit from behind by a driver claiming that the Mopar's brake lamps didn't come on. Of course, the brake "lamps" didn't come on since there is only one brake lamp!

9—Fluid Drive

From 1941 through 1954, De Sotos had some version of the Fluid Drive transmission. This was a semi-automatic transmission in that you didn't have to use the clutch once you were moving forward. You had the choice of either using the low range or the high range. Once the car got moving, around 12 to 15 MPH, you let up on the gas pedal and the transmission would shift automatically. When slowing down, the transmission would also downshift automatically once the car got below 10 MPH. The mistake that people make is in thinking that they have to put in the clutch when the car comes to a complete stop—you don't. You just come to a stop. And when you want to go, you just push down on the gas pedal; you don't need to put in the clutch and shift any of the gears, unless you want to use the other forward range or to put the car into reverse.

Years ago, someone was saying that he had a problem with getting the car out of reverse and straight down into first gear. That's because there isn't a "first gear" with Fluid Drive. Shifting out of reverse, you move the gear lever forward and either up or down into one of the two forward gears.

8—De Soto Airflows

In July of 2013, the Airflow Club of America held its 50th annual meeting. That meeting was held near Dayton, Ohio, and set a new record for having the most Airflows at a meeting, with over 50 cars in attendance. Not bad, considering that Chrysler built Airflows for only four years, from 1934 through 1937. But what most people don't remember is that De Sotos built Airflows, too. Indeed, approximately 25 percent of the cars at this Airflow meet were De Soto Airflows. And yet, the local media coverage never even mentioned the De Soto Airflows, only the Chrysler ones.

7—1937 De Soto Airflows

Staying with the Airflow theme, while Chrysler did build Airflows for four years, De Soto built Airflows for only three years, 1934 through 1936.

6—1928 De Sotos

There are no "1928" De Sotos. Yes, production of the De Sotos did begin during 1928, but the Chrysler Corporation considered them to be 1929 models. Some states, however, insisted that if a car was made in 1928, then it was therefore a 1928 model. So, that is why some of the first De Sotos are titled as being 1928 models, even though Chrysler considers them to be 1929 models. (And it's the same story for Plymouths too.)

5—End of Production

Just as there is confusion as to when De Sotos were first built, there's also confusion as to when De Sotos were last built. For some reason, it seems that most people think that 1959 was the last year that De Sotos were produced. I don't know why; perhaps it's because the 1959 models were more popular than the 1960 and 1961 models. Production numbers for the 1959 models were 45,734, as compared to 26,081 for 1960 and only 3,034 for 1961.

The 1961 models didn't even have names—you had a choice of either a two-door hardtop or a four-door hardtop—and were made only for one-and-a-half months from mid-October to the end of November, 1960.

Most reports indicate that the 30th of November was the last day De Sotos were made, but at least one report states that production ended a day earlier than planned, on November 29th. So, when people ask me when De Sotos were made, I tell them that the model years were from 1929 to 1961, but that the production years were from 1928 to 1960.

4—Who made De Sotos?

Some people think that De Sotos were made by Dodge. I've seen them listed as Dodge De Sotos and even as Chrysler De Sotos, as if they were a Chrysler model, like a New Yorker or a 300. De Soto was its own division of Chrysler, just like Dodge and Plymouth. When Chrysler had five divisions, De Soto was right there in the middle as you went up the cost ladder: Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler, Imperial. Some think De Sotos were made by Packard or Studebaker, or even Chevrolet. At least those who think that they're Chrysler De Sotos have the right family.

3—Horsepower Rating

What was the first production car to have an engine generating one horsepower per cubic inch? Some believe that it was the 1962 Oldsmobile Jetfire, or that it was the 1957 Chevrolet or the 1956 Chrysler 300-B. While it is true that the 1957 Chevys and the 1956 300-Bs could have one hp/cu.in., it's my understanding that those engines were optional and not standard equipment.

So, what car was the first to give you an engine with one hp/cu.in. as standard equipment? The 1957 De Soto Adventurer, with its 345-cu.in. hemi V-8 and two four-barrel carbs producing 345 hp at 5,200 RPM. There was no other engine option for the 1957 Adventurer. So, if you bought one of the 300 Adventurer convertibles or one of the 1,650 Adventurer two-door hardtops that were made for 1957, you automatically got an engine that gave you one horsepower per cubic inch. Unfortunately, 1957 was the last year De Soto had hemi engines, and thus the only year that De Soto could make this claim.

2—The Sportsman

A post-WWII Sportsman is not a standalone De Soto model. This fact is what inspired me to write this article to begin with. Too many times I've seen a post-WWII De Soto listed as being a De Soto Sportsman. In 1940, a Sportsman was a De Soto model with a special two-tone paint scheme and interior. In 1941, a De Soto Sportsman was a Custom club coupe with a special interior. But after WWII, if a De Soto was a Sportsman, then you had a hardtop! So, you either had a Custom Sportsman, DeLuxe Sportsman, FireDome Sportsman, Powermaster Sportsman, Firelite Sportsman, or Firesweep Sportsman; but you didn't have just a De Soto Sportsman—it had to be one of the above.

Part of the confusion about this is because on some of the De Sotos, the 1959 Firesweep hardtops for example, the only script you'll find on the exterior will read "Sportsman." The car is still a Firesweep Sportsman, but the "Firesweep" script was left off to save money. To add to the confusion, while all post-WWII Sportsmans were hardtops, not all post-WWII De Soto hardtops were Sportsmans. In 1956, De Soto came out with a lower-priced hardtop in the Firedome model line that was called a Seville, not a Sportsman. And the 1960 and 1961 hardtops weren't called a Sportsman at all. Also, none of the Adventurer hardtops were ever called a Sportsman—they were Adventurer hardtops. And the 1956 Adventurer hardtops lead me to the #1 mistake people make about De Sotos.

1—Indy 500 Pace Car

The 1956 Indianapolis 500 Pace Car was not a De Soto Adventurer. All 1956 Adventurers made by De Soto were two-door hardtops, and therefore were not considered for the job. For some reason, De Soto didn't make any Adventurer convertibles in 1956, only two-door hardtops. And the Indy 500 pace car was definitely a convertible. As a matter of fact, the pace car was a special version of the 1956 Firelite convertible, of which De Soto released a limited number (exact number unknown) of replicas called Pacesetters. But don't feel too bad if you've made this mistake—even the "Official Program" book published for the 100th anniversary of the Indy 500 has the 1956 pace car listed incorrectly as being a De Soto Adventurer. 🐞

A Century of Progress: The 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair

Chicago's World's Fair was as much about the American automobile industry as it was about celebrating the Second City's first 100 years



BY TERRY SHEA
PHOTOS AS CREDITED

In the first three decades of the 20th century, the American automobile business had grown into a colossus of industry even as the car itself became almost ubiquitous throughout the land, transforming—truly transforming—the way we lived. American automakers were defining what it meant to be “in business” in the 20th century. And nowhere was that fact on display with more fanfare, glory and self-aggrandizement than at the 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair, *A Century of Progress*.

The “century” in that title refers to the 100 years between Chicago's incorporation as a city in 1833 and the fair itself. Chicago's growth, from a small outpost of some 4,000 souls on Lake Michigan (formerly known as Fort Dearborn) into the fourth largest city on the planet in just 100 years was unprecedented in world

history. With 3,376,438 people counted on the 1930 census, only New York, London and Paris were larger.

Just as unprecedented as Chicago's growth those first 100 years remains the growth of the automobile industry, from its infancy in the 1890s to its place at the very top of the industrial food

In addition to having a showroom with the latest from its many car lines, GM built a working assembly line inside that snaked 400 feet in each direction in a large hall in its pavilion where two and four-door Chevrolet sedans went through final assembly, as many as 30 per day. Up to 1,000 people could stand on the balconies and watch as production automobiles were built right below them. The exhibit proved immensely popular and also probably prompted Ford to join the fair in its second year. But GM had exclusive rights to any on-site assembly line, and Ford, its name synonymous with bringing assembly lines to the American people, had to come up with something else.

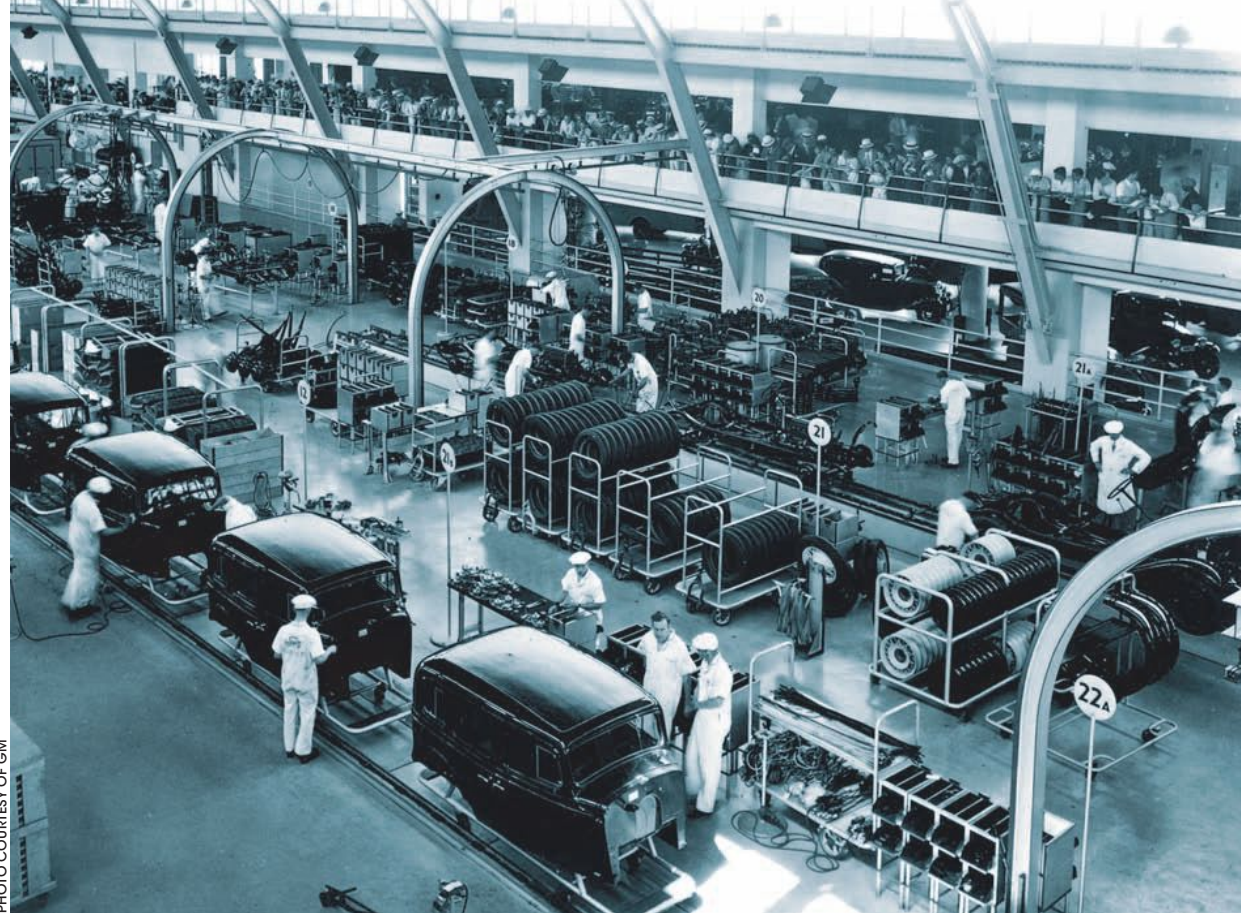


PHOTO COURTESY OF GM



PHOTO COURTESY OF GM

The 1932 Cadillac Aerodynamic Coupe was one of GM's first dedicated show cars and the centerpiece of its vehicles shown at A Century of Progress.



Modern as the "Century of Progress"

Two motor cars entirely new and different in every aspect of design—brilliantly interpreting the styling, the appointment, and the type of performance most favored today.

The very spirit of modern achievement is expressed in Science Hall, the magnificent building erected for Chicago's great Century of Progress Exposition. What more fitting than to picture before that splendid structure two completely modern automobiles which have won acceptance by artist and layman alike as style leaders for 1933! No single feature of design overrides itself in these splendid Oldsmobiles, yet literally every line and contour is new. The total effect is one of brilliant modern American—the authentic styling which adds so much to a car's value today and sustains that value longer.

When we talk about styling, however, our engineers point out that Oldsmobile has built its proud reputation mainly on mechanical excellence. This always has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental Oldsmobile principle. Let us make it clear, therefore, that the 1933 Oldsmobile Six and Straight Eight are as advanced in performance as they are in appearance—the latest, most powerful, most dependable cars in all Oldsmobile history. The Six is capable of 75 to 80 miles an hour, and the Eight will do 80 to 85—actual top-notch speed. Both the engines operate very quietly and without perceptible vibration.

And let us say just this about price... you simply can't evaluate Oldsmobile that way, because never before in this price field has any car offered a combination of style, performance and quality so closely comparable to that of high-priced cars. A sweeping statement and a large claim for Oldsmobile—but we make it boldly and feel confident you will agree with us, once you have seen and driven the splendid new Oldsmobile Six or Straight Eight.

Your nearest Oldsmobile dealer will gladly place one of these cars at your disposal, in order that you may personally test it and fully appreciate the unusual qualities we have built into it.

THE 1933 OLDSMOBILES

Featuring Fisher No Draft Ventilation

Two General Motors Values

SELECTED BY A CENTURY OF PROGRESS FOR 1934

Scarcely it is a tribute to outstanding quality and service to again be selected by A Century of Progress to represent the Rubber Industry at the World's Fair. The Firestone Factory and Exhibition Building and the scientific rubber exhibit in the Hall of Science have been remodelled and enlarged to include many new interesting features.

See how rubber is gathered from the trees at the Firestone Plantation in Liberia, Africa; how it is milled in the large mixing machines. See how the rollers of various sizes in Firestone high speed mills are automatically cooled and coated with liquid carbon for the Firestone patented process of Gum-Dipping, producing greater strength, safety and longer protection, than the new Firestone Low Pressure Air Ball tires in use, have the story of the rubber in the finished tire, as "General" rubber.

Before you enter the Fair have the Firestone Service Dealer or Service Store in your community inspect your tires, set your valves, balance and pump them, that you may have an enjoyable and trouble-free trip. There is no charge for this service.

Not to be outdone by the automakers' exhibits, Firestone had its own building and its own on-site production demonstration, manufacturing tires from raw rubber at the World's Fair.

chain by the 1930s. The auto business had become an economic powerhouse whose size few could have predicted in 1900, but by the end of the 1920s, from Wall Street to Main Street, it defined American business. And each company did its best to outshine the competition from the cars they made to the glamor associated with

them. And what better way in the years before television to reach more people than at a World's Fair? The grand exhibition, held on 427 acres along Lake Michigan, ostensibly focused on science and industry. Hundreds of companies participated, quite a few nations showed up with their own



A panoramic view of the massive fairgrounds, covering 427 acres of land adjacent to Lake Michigan.

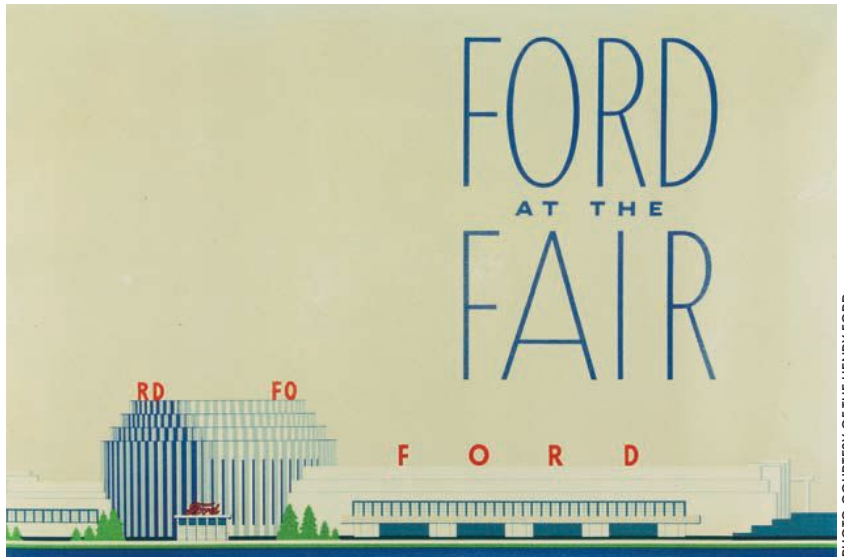


While taking up a fraction of the space of the Big Three's exhibit halls, test tracks and assembly lines, Nash's neon-topped Tower of Value featured "an endless chain of cars in a tower of glass," decades before today's Mini dealers began building similar, but static, displays.



Although pitched as a "proof of safety," Ford hung three new V-8 two-door sedans from a single, unmodified wheel to demonstrate its strength. Though the connection to how this makes a car safer may not have been clear, it made for one heckuva chandelier inside Ford's massive building.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HENRY FORD



The cover of Ford's commemorative brochure from the fair featured an elevation view of its long hall and rotunda, designed to look like the cogs of a gearset. As with GM's building, the Ford building was from the hand of Albert Kahn, the architect behind Ford's Highland Park and massive River Rouge factories, as well as Packard's Detroit factory.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HENRY FORD



Ford's exhibits included an exacting reproduction of Henry Ford's workshop and his first car, the Quadricycle.

venues and dozens of massive, ornate and temporary buildings went up. The organizers had originally sought a more focused agenda on science, but the financing proved difficult while corporate participation was flourishing. Each of Detroit's Big Three created massive palaces to their products and history. Chrysler had a test track, GM, celebrating their own 25th anniversary in 1933, had a working assembly line, and Ford's building was bigger than any other at the site when they showed up for the fair's second year.

Even the independents had a place in the fair, mostly in the building dedicated to transportation, though none had quite the footprint that each of the Big Three's venues displaced. Perhaps the most impressive of the independents' displays was mounted by Nash, whose "Tower of Value" presented an "endless chain of cars in a tower of glass." Stacked nine to a side, Nash Sixes and Eights rotated vertically in a plate-glass, 80-foot-tall tower topped by a neon sign.



Ford's massive exhibit hall was added in 1934 after Henry Ford realized that GM's assembly line and Chrysler's test track were wooing the fairgoers. One of the few all-new exhibits for the second year and by far the largest, it was regarded as the most popular corporate attraction of the second year and included a demonstration of how a farmer could "industrialize" his farm by extracting oil from soybeans. Ford handed out soybean shift knobs that showed the Albert Kahn-designed rotunda in a medallion mounted on top of them. The rotunda itself had a steel framework with Indian limestone over the top. Ford had it disassembled, rather than dismantled and scrapped, and re-assembled in Dearborn, where it became a top tourist attraction. Between 1936 and when it was destroyed by fire in 1962, more than 18,000,000 people visited the rotunda in Dearborn.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HENRY FORD

In tune with the entire fair's notion of man using science to extract materials from the Earth to manufacture goods that in turn have changed man, Ford featured a cutaway sedan on top of a globe that showed the various raw materials being extracted from the Earth before they are processed to become part of that car.

During the show's two-year run (in both 1933 and '34, the fair ran from May through November), more than 40,000,000 people visited. Yet, despite massive investments (GM reportedly spent \$3,000,000 building its display and assembly line, including the commission of dozens of unique artworks), the entire fair was removed by 1936, all of the colorful buildings and neon gone as virtually all vestiges of its massive presence were removed. By opening a second year, fair organizers were able to turn a small



Chrysler pavilion at night.



Ford pavilion at night.

profit, all of which was distributed to various cultural institutions in Chicago. Decades later, memories and images of a fair that celebrated industry and consumerism mark the irony that some of Detroit's best and most-revered work came at a time when many people were at their worst financially and in no condition to buy a new car. Still, the celebrations of America's auto industry, still young and still seeing the sky as its limit, were enjoyed by millions. 📷

Satisfaction Guaranteed!

Must-have parts and accessories that work, or your money back

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

One of the most interesting features of old car magazines is the ads for aftermarket parts.

It's amazing the variety of parts and accessories that were sold back then and all the incredible ways in which companies claimed they would make your car run, perform and even look better.

Some of these contraptions actually did work, but most were just snake-oil-salesman stuff that did absolutely nothing. At the very least, they must've resulted in some interesting and entertaining conversations with the neighbors when these "gas-saving" and "power enhancing" devices were proudly showed off. So come clean, which ones did you buy? ☞

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FROM
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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRIES

MART



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SAVE THAT TAIL PIPE!**

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SAVE 5%
3 or more
SAVE 10%**

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For your Car



For your Den

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Low-priced Shrunken Head
For bargain-hunting Head-Hunters. This economy priced Shrunken Head measures about 4 inches high including hair. \$1.00. Item 17. Ppd.



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STOP WHEEL WOBBLE! Micro-Lok Spindle Nuts hold front wheels perfectly in line. 10 times more accurate than bearing nuts. Tires go straight . . . get up to 6,000 miles extra wear. Saves brakes and bearings. Tough steel—15 times safer than ordinary nuts. \$2.95 per car. Item 14. Ppd.

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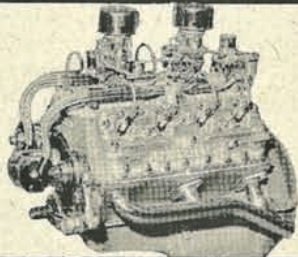
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Boost Power, Pep, Mileage!

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STOP Gas Waste & "Sucker" Repairs

The gauge Detroit Forgot... Amazing new "DYNO-METER" Car Test Instrument (not a vacuum gauge) mounts on dash to give INSTANT CHECK on condition of engine, brakes, wheel alignment, TROUBLE-SHOOTS, saves repairs. SAVES GAS—shows most economical driving speed, best gas to use. Measures acceleration, horsepower, road grades, hill-climbing ability, brake safety, motor tune. Indicates when repairs are needed. Compares performance before & after tuning or overhaul. Easily mounts on dash or windshield in 5 min. Colorful CHROME dial beautifies car's interior. Lasts lifetime, transfers from one car to next. Full refund if it doesn't pay for itself in one month. Easy instructions included.

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Saves you money! Lets you drive up to 10,000 miles before changing oil. Amazing porous bronze element lasts forever! ONLY filter that removes all harmful particles, yet leaves protective additives. Large thick walls filter out dirt particles as small as 39 millionths of an inch. Has Magnesium ACID NEUTRALIZER that chemically destroys harmful acid. Keeps out moisture. Purifies oil. Saves repairs. Never needs replacement — washes out in kerosene. Transfers from one car to next. Guaranteed 10 years. FINEST filter of its type on the market. SAVE 1/2 — Conversion element for most cars (was \$6.95) NOW \$3.95 "Full-Flow" Type \$7.95 (Element with Housing \$10.95)



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"WORLD'S LARGEST DISTRIBUTOR OF QUALITY POWER EQUIPMENT"

Peerless Packard

Celebrating 45 years with a well-preserved 1931 833 Club Sedan



BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

There's truth to that old saw about time healing all wounds. It wasn't long after Phoenix, Arizona, resident Raoul Jacques bought this largely original 1931 Packard Club Sedan that he came to learn that the car he had was not the model he thought it to be. The passage of decades, and the special car's inherent excellence, have replaced that initial sting of disappointment with a warm glow of pleasure that's proving to last a lifetime.



It's been in Raoul's care since 1969. "I've always liked cars, but had never had an old one," he explains. "I'd saved up some money, and was going to buy a new car. Then I saw an ad in the local paper for a big, mid-1920s Studebaker touring car. I decided to go look at it. I didn't like that Studebaker—I didn't think it was a very attractive car. The seller also had a few other cars around, including an early 1930s Cadillac, a Stutz and, in the garage, this 1931 Packard, which wasn't for sale"... at least not at first.

Raoul was drawn to the Packard Club Sedan because of its lines and condition. "My then-wife and I walked around, and she said, 'What about that one in the garage?' I knew Packard was a good marque, but I didn't know anything about older Packards. We talked about it, and decided to buy it on the spot. The seller came up with a price of \$3,500, and I had no idea if that was a good figure or not. He represented the car as a Super



Age has checked the walnut finish of the symmetrical instrument panel, and the glass covering the North East-branded speedometer and odometer has broken, but the driver's compartment remains inviting and functional.

Eight, and it had DeLuxe equipment, so I bought it."

As Raoul would later learn from local marque experts, this particular 1931 five-passenger Club Sedan was not a Model 840 DeLuxe Eight, built on the 140½-inch wheelbase, but an unusually accessorized Model 833 Standard Eight, which used a 134½-inch wheelbase. Part of its instant appeal was its fetching color choice, which Packard's 1931 catalog listed as "Paint Scheme 'F.'" This brought black fenders, rocker panels and splash guards, topped by a two-tone combination of darker Peasant Blue body moldings and roof, over the brighter Bluebell Blue lower body, window reveals and steel wheels, all accented with Cream Color Deep striping. And while this car's black panels were repainted at some point, all of the blue paint and striping remained as applied at the factory.

While a DeLuxe Eight would have a 120-hp, 384.8-cu. in. L-head engine under the long hood, this car's 320-cu.in. straight-eight featured a 3⅜ x 5-inch bore and stroke and a Packard-designed, Detroit Lubricator-built single-barrel, 1½-inch carburetor. It made 100 hp at 3,200 RPM and 84-lb.ft. of torque at 1,250 RPM, with incredible smoothness, thanks to the nine main bearings supporting its forged crankshaft. The select-shift four-speed manual transmission was operated via a single-plate clutch, while four-wheel, 16-inch-diameter drum brakes hid behind Packard's distinctive 19-inch steel disc wheels.

This ritzy Club Sedan's body was framed in a combination of ash, birch, maple, oak and laminated fir, and it wore a

number of upscale features that made it unique. In addition to this body style's standard niceties like a body-color leather trunk and recessed smoking/vanity sets for rear seat passengers, it was embellished with extra-cost accessories like headlamp-matching front fender lamps, a DeLuxe radiator emblem, Packard-branded running board step plates and a folding extra trunk rack.

Inside, the new-for-1931 instrument panel sported a walnut finish and bright nickel trim. And everywhere you might also expect to find the era's typical wool broadcloth—the seats, door and interior panels, and the headliner—this car sported factory-original leather upholstery. This "hand-crushed Colonial grain" leather was a material only used in the Model 833 seven-passenger Sedan-Limousine and in Packard's open cars and Convertible Coupe, so these special trimmings have led to speculation





Closed-body Packards of this era typically had wool broadcloth-upholstered seats, interior panels and headlining, but this special 833 Club Sedan was built with dark blue Colonial grain leather, now maintained with Lexol. The wood-trimmed inset smoking/vanity set was exclusive to this upscale body style.

Super Eight. From all appearances, it looks original here—could it have been upgraded by Packard in 1933?”

Raoul continues, “I don’t know how many miles the car actually has—the odometer reads about 72,000, but it may have been rolled back—but it’s had good care. The repainting of the fenders wasn’t done very well, because you can see scrapes that were painted over, rather than rubbed out... but I can’t find any other evidence of renewal.”

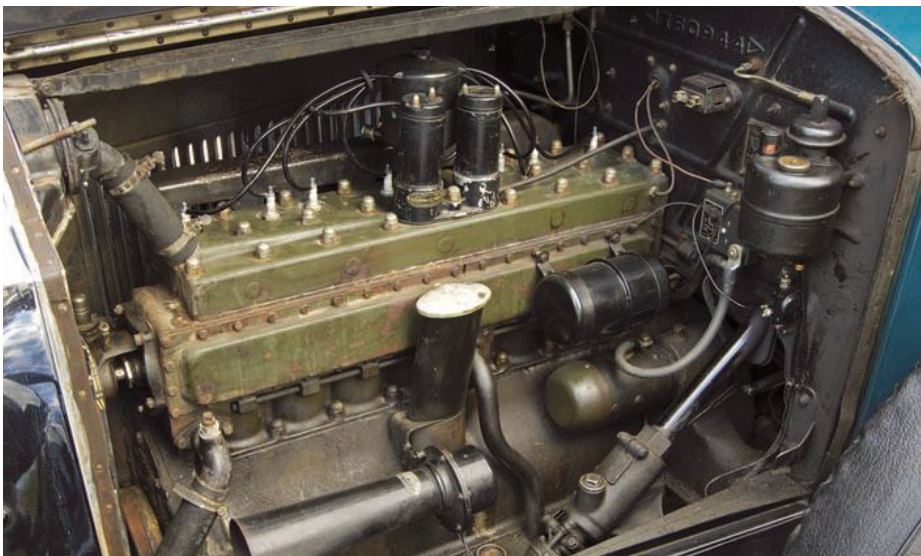
that Raoul’s car was a custom order by its original purchaser.

The Packard appears virtually the same today as it did 45 years ago; it has not had frequent use, and has been carefully maintained and stored. “When I bought it, it still was wearing old red rubber fan belts,” Raoul recalls. “The engine has never been rebuilt or modified to my knowledge, although there’s one odd thing: The 1931 manual shows a single coil, while this car has a dual coil, branded ‘North East.’ By tracking the numbers, that was used on the 1933 Packard

Aside from that paint, there are no signs that the car has received anything more than regular, non-invasive maintenance. “I took the radiator out many years ago, and at that point, it had never been removed. That’s been true of whatever I’ve done—none of the components seem to have been disturbed. Most of the time, people will leave evidence of having been there.” It’s not only the mechanical components that present nicely: “The carpets have leather edging that matches the interior upholstery, and the running boards are still in such good shape,” he says.

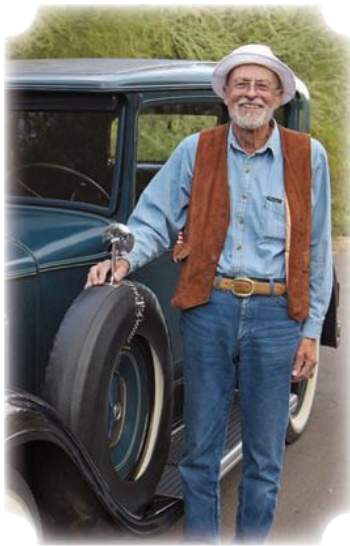
This longtime steward has developed a good system for maintaining the car’s originality. “It’s held up extremely well because it’s been garaged. I do annual oil changes with non-detergent oil, as I have been since I bought it. I treat the leather with Lexol once a year, and I pull the seat cushions out to do it. I’ve observed how those seats were built. They haven’t been replaced, and the leather doesn’t cover upholstery. That’s it. I’m always concerned that the leather headliner—made from a single hide—will get dry enough to fall down, so I’m careful to condition it. And the Packard gets cleaned as needed. Since it is not out in bad weather, it almost never gets washed; water tends to streak the old paint. The engine and surrounding areas haven’t been cleaned... I figure, why disturb original wiring?”

This Club Sedan hasn’t been a road warrior in recent



Although it’s lost some compression, the nine-bearing, 320-cu.in. straight-eight remains smoothly tractable. The carburetor was rebuilt once, while the circa-1933 specification twin coils appear to be original fitments; did Packard retrofit them?

“They used quality metal and real craftsmanship. Everything comes apart easily. The components are easy to work on, mainly because they used such good materials.”



decades. Raoul averages about 300 miles a year, sometimes entering it in local events, or simply bringing the engine up to operating temperature and enjoying a leisurely cruise. While the car has had a few minor issues through the years, the quality of Packard's mechanical systems remains intact.

“It has a Startix automatic starter system. When I first owned the car, it kept engaging while I was driving, so I had a solenoid put in. I later had it rebuilt by a specialist, and now it works perfectly,” Raoul says. “You pull out the choke and turn the ignition on, and the engine automatically cranks. If it's

been sitting, the mechanical pump takes a bit of time to get the fuel up from the tank to the carburetor, but it starts excellently, always. It's the most reliable-starting car I've ever had!” He adds that a mechanic friend has determined that three of the 833's cylinders have lost some compression—and power—through the years, but the Packard remains very quiet and smooth-running, and rides beautifully.

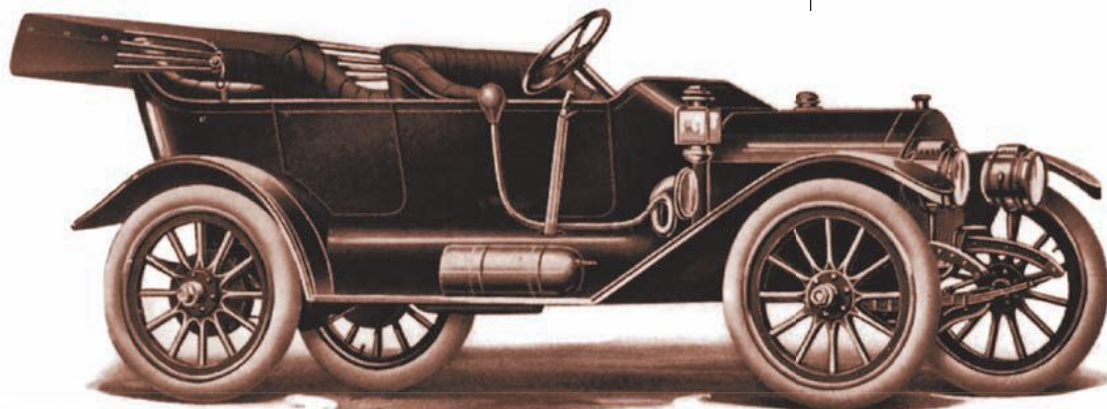
“The brakes were never very good, and they didn't stop the car well, especially on Phoenix's hills,” Raoul confesses. “So I got a roll of brake lining, and my mechanic knocked the shoe rivets out, cut new linings and put it on the shoes. Now it stops straight and true.

“There was no real visible wear on the brakes' internal mechanisms. They don't need replacement now, and they look like they'll be fine in another 80 years! They used quality metal and real craftsmanship. Everything comes apart easily. The components are easy to work on, mainly because they used such good materials.”

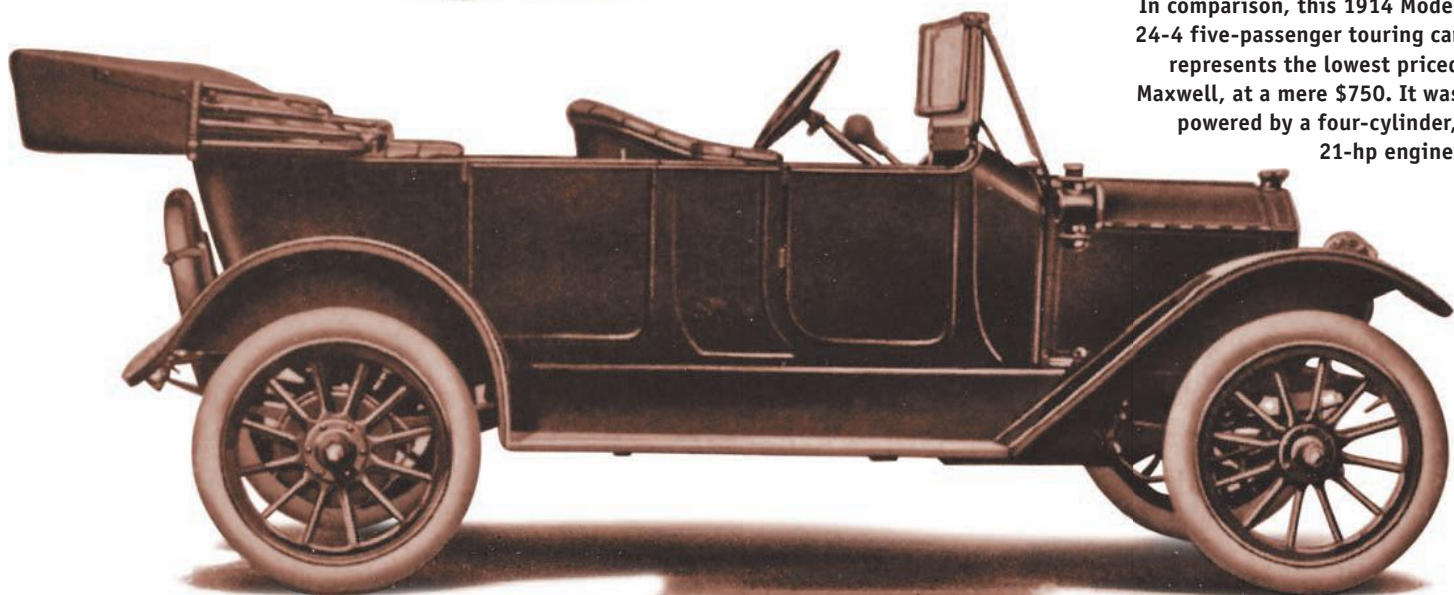
While this car may not be the high-end Model 840 he'd thought he was buying, this unique and special Packard has given its owner great pleasure in the last five decades. “I bought it not knowing anything, and probably paid two or three times what I should have, but in the long run, it's turned out well—it's been a very, very good car. I'm still impressed, after all these years.” 🐾

The Club Sedan differed from the basic sedan by its privacy-enhancing blind rear quarters and standard body-colored leather trunk. This example was highly accessorized with a folding trunk rack, running board step plates and headlamp-matching front fender lamps. The body paint remains original.





From out of the ashes of Maxwell-Briscoe came the new Maxwell Motor Company, which introduced this sporty touring car for 1913.



In comparison, this 1914 Model 24-4 five-passenger touring car represents the lowest priced Maxwell, at a mere \$750. It was powered by a four-cylinder, 21-hp engine.

Maxwell Motor Company

America's well-liked make of affordable, durable and reliable automobiles

BY PATRICK FOSTER

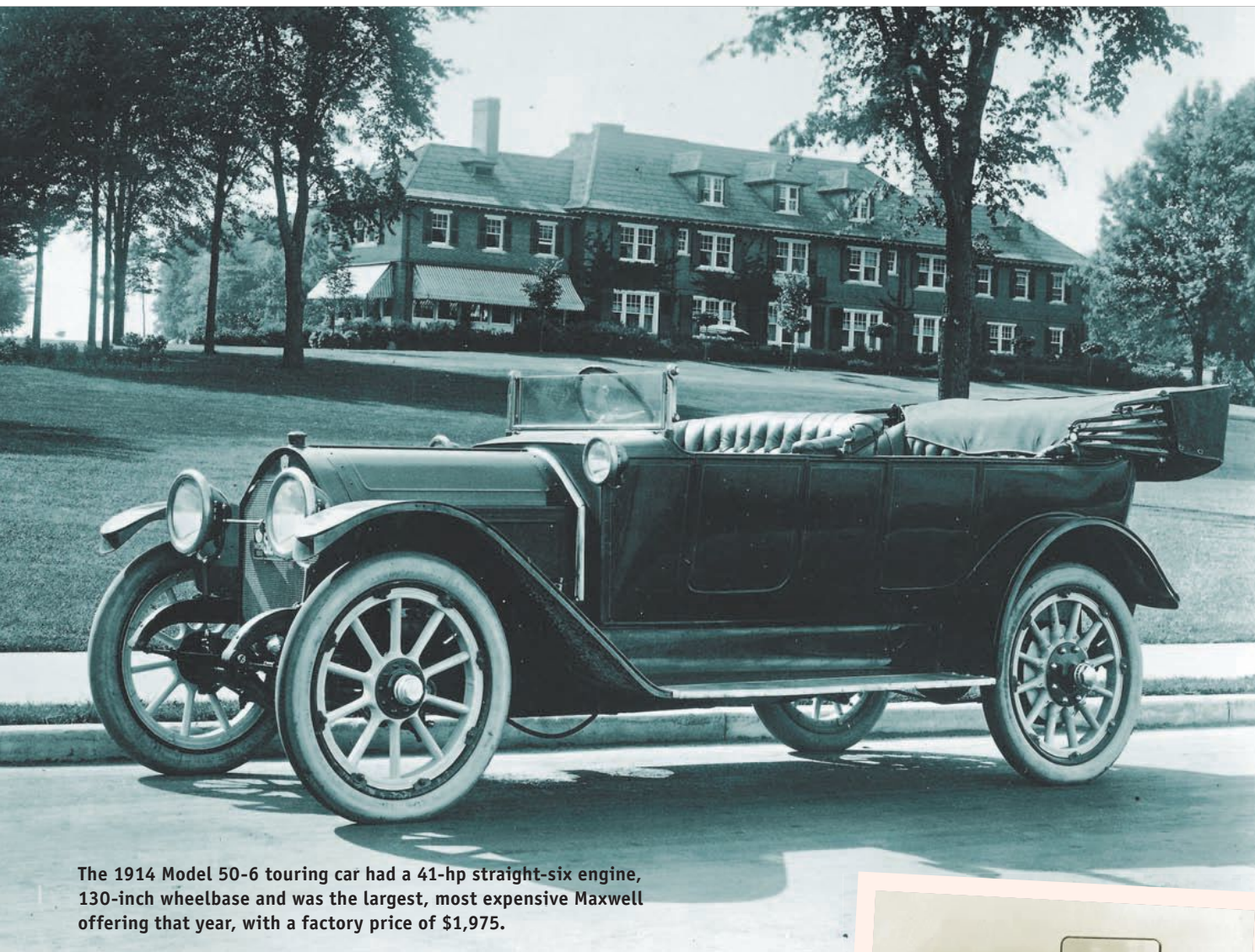
To say that Maxwell has a long history is to make a considerable understatement; the fact is that today Maxwell is one of the oldest, proudest car companies in the world. Of course, nowadays it's known as Chrysler.

The company got its start as Maxwell-Briscoe in 1904 after well-heeled businessman Benjamin Briscoe decided to put some of his money into developing and selling a car designed by engineer Jonathan Maxwell. At the time Briscoe had already invested in Buick, but apparently felt that Maxwell's automobile might hold

more promise. It was an easy assumption, because the car Maxwell designed was very nice; a small machine powered by a front-mounted water-cooled two-cylinder engine mated to a two-speed planetary gearbox. A driveshaft took power to the rear wheels, which was quite advanced over the chain drive used on many cars of the day. All in all, it was a neat package.

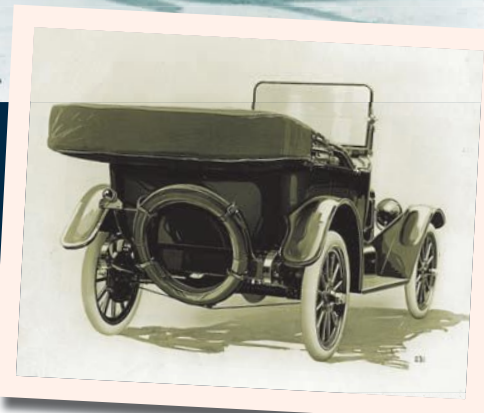
With money from J.P. Morgan also put into the venture, the new Maxwell-Briscoe automobile got off to a good start, with pilot production begun in a big plant in Tarrytown, New York, in late 1904,

building 1905 models. Initially two body styles were offered: a two-cylinder, two-passenger runabout—dubbed the Tourabout—with planetary gearbox, priced at \$750, and a five-passenger, \$1,400 touring car with a more powerful engine and sliding-gear transmission. According to figures from the industry trade paper *Automotive News*, over 800 of the 1905 models were sold; the following year, that number jumped to 2,944, then jumped again to 3,785 for 1907. The Maxwell-Briscoe cars quickly gained a reputation for outstanding reliability, winning or scor-



The 1914 Model 50-6 touring car had a 41-hp straight-six engine, 130-inch wheelbase and was the largest, most expensive Maxwell offering that year, with a factory price of \$1,975.

The Model 25 touring car for 1915 became a very popular model because it offered a lot of car at a very low price, and had a reputation for quality and durability.



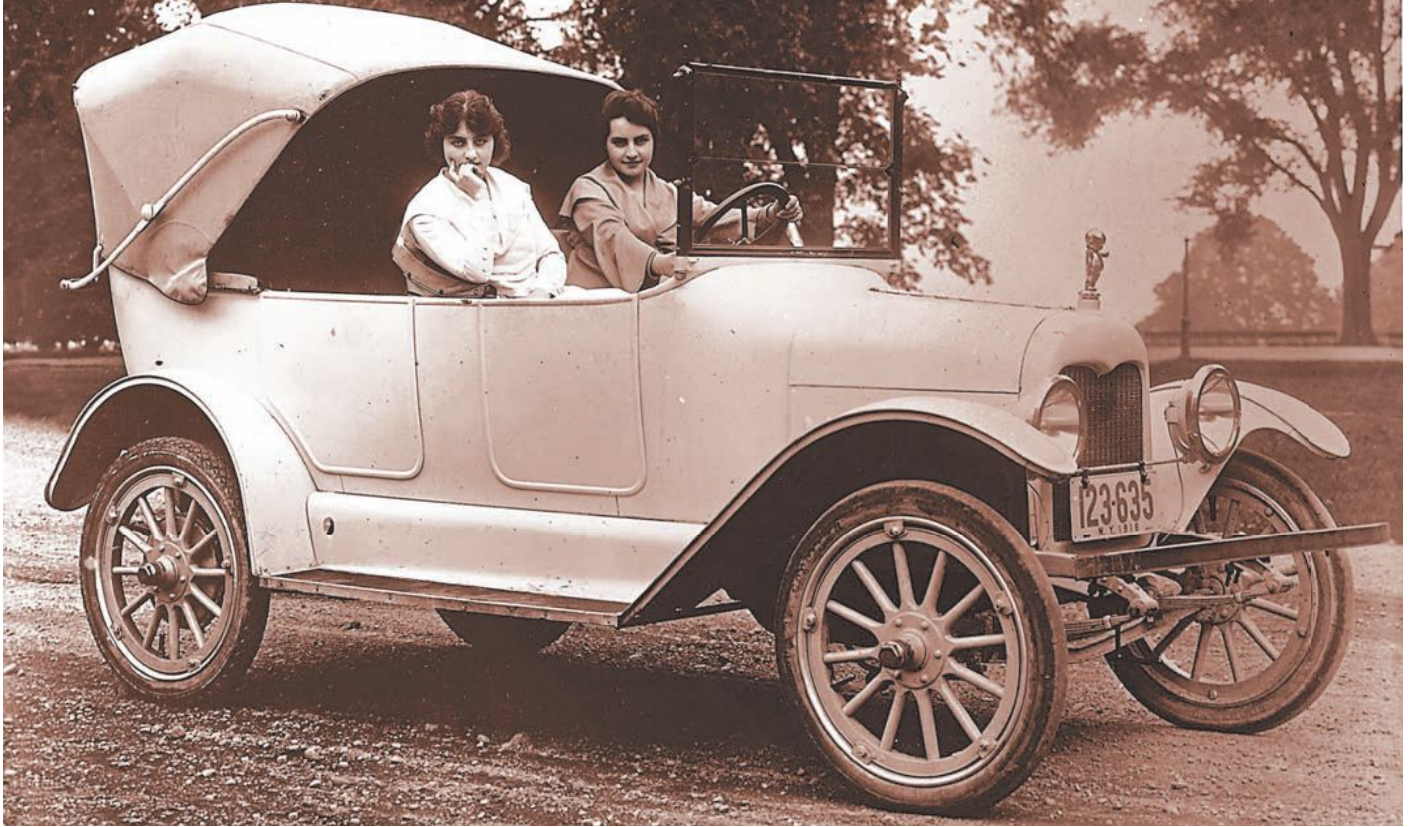
ing high in many endurance contests. By the end of the decade, Maxwell-Briscoe Motor Company was selling nearly 10,000 cars per year and was a substantial success with several factories turning out its cars.

In 1910, Ben Briscoe, no doubt feeling he could follow one big success with a greater one, helped launch the United States Motor Company, which consolidated Maxwell-Briscoe into a conglomerate that included Columbia, Brush, Stoddard-Dayton and several other firms. Combining several makes into one com-

pany made good sense; it was the whole idea behind General Motors, founded two years earlier. But alas, the United States Motor Company was neither well thought out nor well run, and by the end of 1912 it collapsed, taking down Brush, Columbia and Stoddard-Dayton with it. Briscoe dusted himself off and set out to start another car company, this time using just his name. The new Briscoe car would appear in 1914.

Walter Flanders, owner of the Flanders Motor Company (and the 'F' in the former EMF auto company), stepped in to

take over the dying United States Motor Company and promptly scrapped most of the companies it contained, leaving him with the one auto brand that still had a good chance—Maxwell-Briscoe. Flanders salvaged what he could, and ended up selling most of the U.S. Motor plants, including Maxwell's big Tarrytown plant, snapped up by Billy Durant to launch his new Chevrolet. In short order, the Flanders Six was renamed the Maxwell Six, the four-cylinder Flanders 20 became the Maxwell Model 22 and Flanders was able to launch, in 1913, a new firm called



This stylish open car is the 1916 Model 25 Cabriolet. Maxwell advertising often used female models to show how easy it was to drive a Maxwell, and how reliable and trustworthy it was.



Maxwell got updated styling for 1917, and offered this good-looking two-door Model 25 Cabriolet.

Maxwell Motor Company.

The new venture got off to a slow start with only about 6,200 cars sold that year. For 1914, a new line-up debuted, consisting of just four models: an all-new four-cylinder Model 25 touring car on a 102-inch wheelbase, a four-cylinder Model 35 touring car on a 110-inch wheelbase, and a six-cylinder Model 50 available in five or seven-passenger touring cars, both on 130-inch wheelbases. Sales nearly doubled and it was mostly

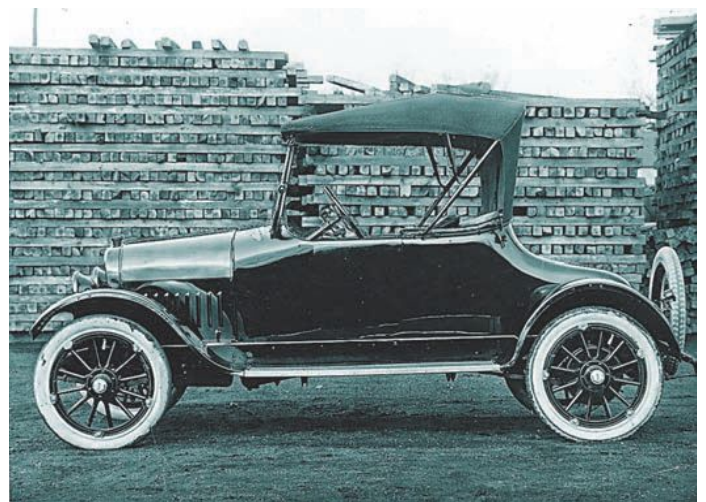
due to the surprising popularity of the Model 25.

Viewing the Model 25's success, Flanders decided to bet the company's future on it, for 1915 keeping the wheelbase at 102 inches, but expanding its body styles to include a roadster, touring car, cabriolet and a town car. All other models were dropped. It was a simple line-up based on a good product, and sales soared to over 44,000 cars.

Maxwell sales kept their upward



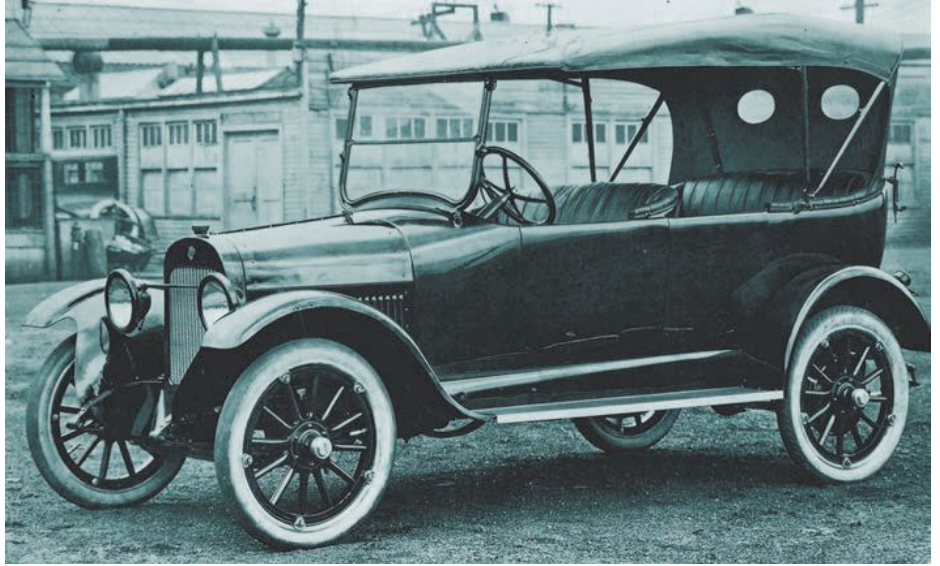
With the introduction of the 1919 Model 25 four-door sedan, Maxwell's sales began to rise this year, and the company had hopes of regaining the high volume it had enjoyed before the war.



For 1919, Maxwell raised its prices sharply due to postwar inflation and falling profit margins. This basic Model 25 Roadster was priced at \$895, a full \$150 more than the previous year.

momentum, climbing to over 69,000 units for 1916, and topping 75,000 for 1917. Feeling squeezed for production capacity, the company made a deal with the faltering Chalmers Motor Car Company to lease the Chalmers operation for five years. Under the deal, Maxwell would manage Chalmers's affairs, splitting the profits on Chalmers's production and using any excess production capacity to build more Maxwell cars. It seemed like a good deal all around until the following year, when World War I came to an end and the world economy went into a recession. Maxwell sales for 1918 slumped to just 37,000 units; the entire U.S. auto industry was down about a third. Suddenly, Maxwell didn't need Chalmers's excess capacity. Chalmers became an earnings drag rather than an asset.

Maxwell sales recovered to 47,408 cars in 1919. But in January 1920, another recession hit. Sometimes referred to as the first depression, it certainly depressed Maxwell sales, cutting them down to 34,220 for 1920. They would fall again to



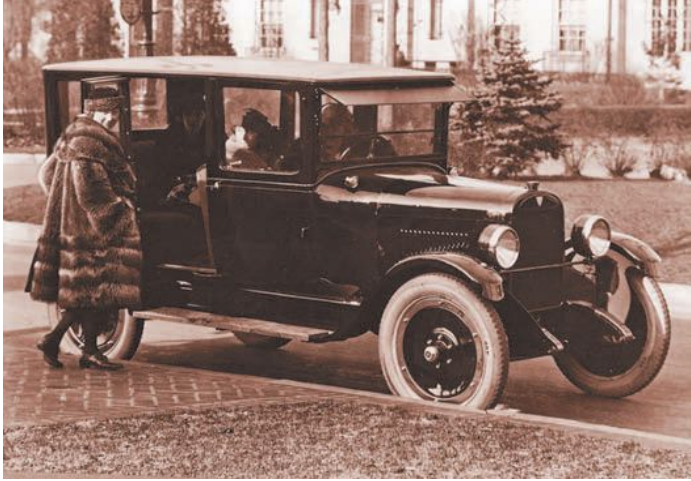
Prices rose again for 1920, with this touring car now \$1,055, up \$160 from the prior year. Maxwell still retained its excellent reputation for quality at this point, and could command higher prices.

less than 16,000 units in 1921 after some poor engineering issues came to light, in the form of rear axles that buckled and gas tanks that fell off, giving the once-sterling Maxwell reputation a black eye. The com-

pany continued building automobiles despite the sales fall-off, and soon thousands of unsold Maxwell cars were piled up in dealer and factory storage lots. Hope appeared when Walter P.



A row of 1921 touring cars is seen parked in front of Western Motors Company, distributors of Maxwell and Kissel cars and Mack trucks.



Maxwell's reputation was tarnished by several problems on the 1921 cars, including axles that snapped and gas tanks that fell off. For 1922, the cars had truss rods to strengthen the rear axles, and extra tank straps. The car was reintroduced as the "Good Maxwell."



Stylish and roomy was this four-passenger Model 25 Coupe. By this point, all the fixes had been put into the Maxwell, and they were decent cars once more.

Chrysler, known as one of the best auto men in the world, signed on to head up a reorganization committee, with a \$100,000 per year salary guaranteed for two years. Before he could begin to restore Maxwell's fortunes, the company desperately needed to dispose of the 16,000-plus unsold Maxwell cars piled up in dealer and factory lots, cars no one wanted. First, Chrysler had all the cars recalled for repairs to strengthen the axles with truss rods and add a pair of straps to hold the gas tanks in place. Then he cut prices to the bone and ordered his dealers to sell them, clearing out the lots in short order. Neither the company nor the dealers made very much money on these transactions—in his memoirs, Chrysler claimed that Maxwell's profit was a mere

\$5 per car—but they did manage to get rid of the inventory, giving the company some breathing room.

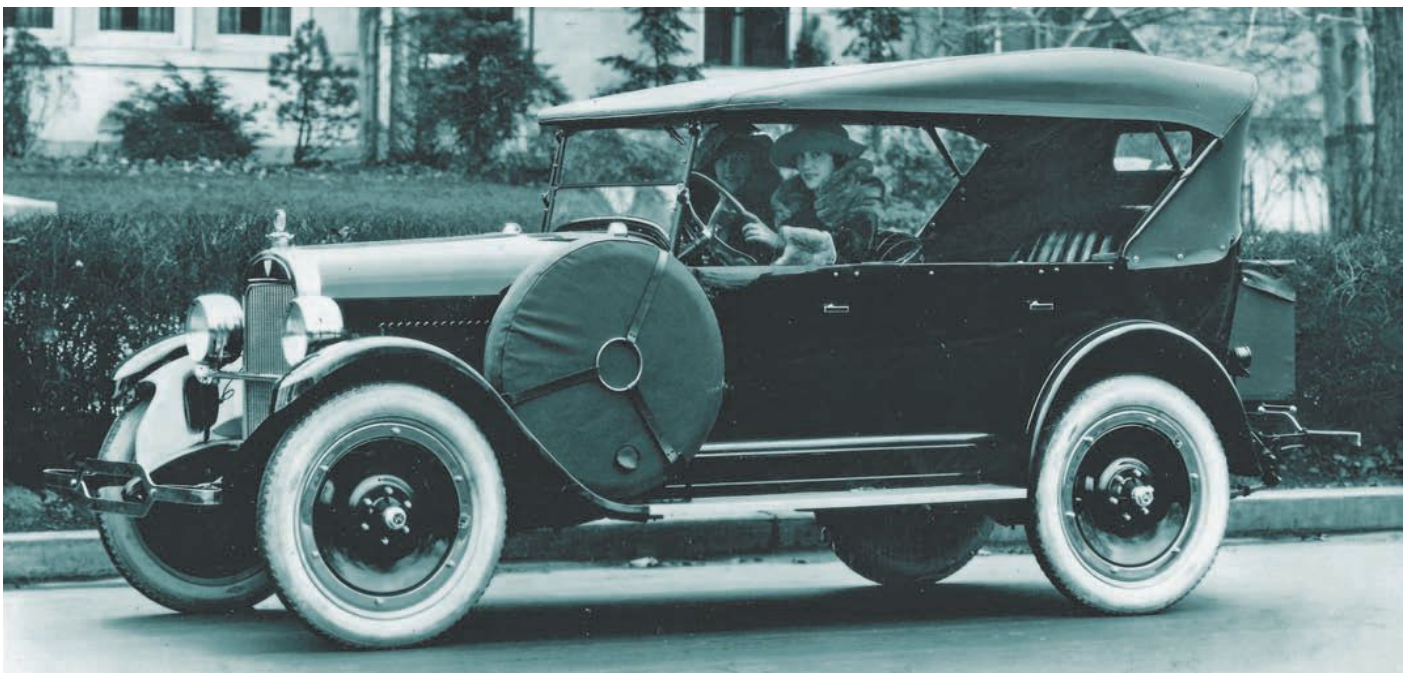
At the New York Auto Show, Chrysler reintroduced the 1921 Maxwell (with the much-needed improvements integrated into the manufacturing system) as the "Good Maxwell," in hopes the marketing push would change the public's opinion of the car.

Financially, things were getting desperate. Between the poor sales and the drag on earnings caused by the rapidly sinking Chalmers, Maxwell's board of directors felt the best solution to the problem was to take the firm through receivership, the idea being that doing so would cancel the leasing agreement made with Chalmers, thereby allowing the company

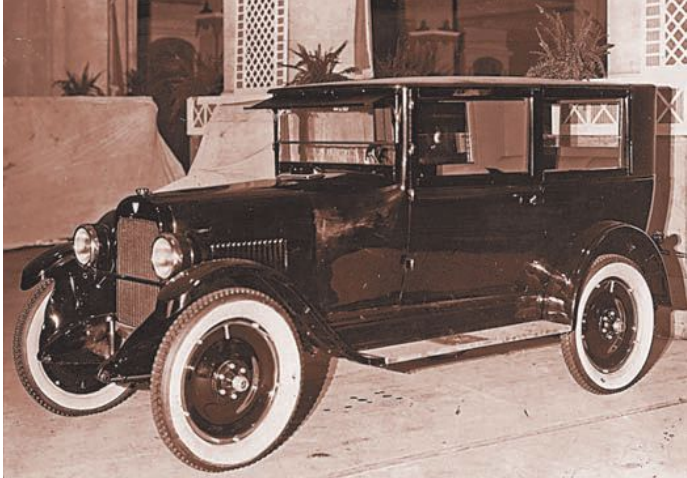
to merge with Chalmers and effect the changes needed to restore the whole company to health.

It was neatly done. On May 7, 1921, the reorganization committee chartered a new company called Maxwell Motor Corporation to purchase the assets of Maxwell Motor Company. For just under \$11 million, the new company bought the physical assets of the old, along with the Chalmers plant.

During the fall of 1921, Chrysler announced an entirely new Maxwell for 1922, one that looked much more substantial. Sales rose strongly. In June the following year, Chrysler signed a four-year contract to serve as Maxwell's chairman. He was given a \$100,000 per year salary plus, more importantly, five percent of the



Debuting for 1923 was this Sport Touring car, a trim, five-passenger model. Note that this car has a travel trunk at the rear.



This 1924 two-door sedan was a good, solid car for the money, and sales increased as the public began to return again to Maxwell showrooms. However, plans being formulated by Walter Chrysler would soon put the Maxwell name in jeopardy.



For 1925, the Maxwell saw only minor improvements, but it was a pretty impressive car, nonetheless. The wood-spoke artillery wheels on this Model 25-C five-passenger Club Sedan are particularly attractive.

company's net profits.

With all that had been accomplished thus far, Chrysler felt Maxwell was in the clear, so he turned now to another idea near and dear to his heart—coming out with a new car that would bear his name. He'd already tried to do so with Willys-Overland, but the deal had fallen through. Since then, he'd been backing, with his own private funds, the design and development of a completely new six-cylinder-powered car he was calling the Chrysler Six. Now, as chairman of Maxwell, he proposed to bring out the new car as an additional make; the name would be Chrysler, but it would be financed and built by Maxwell. His board of directors agreed.

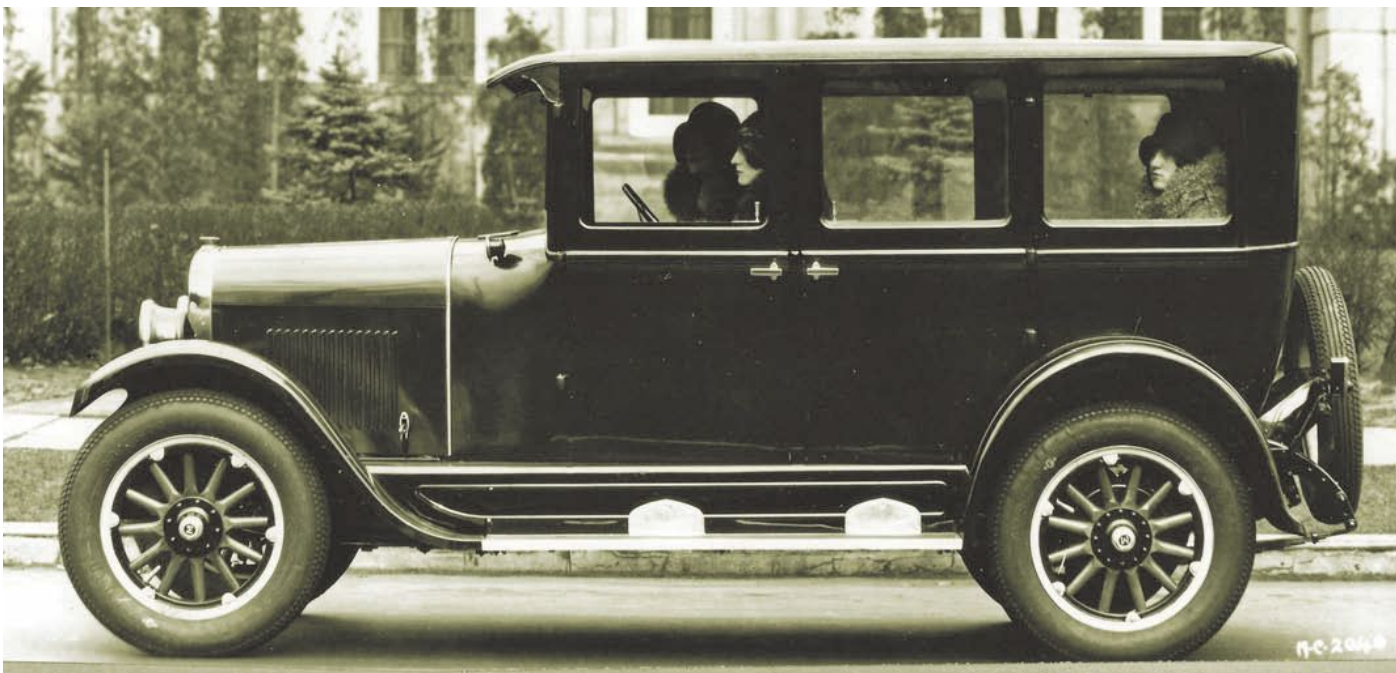
The new Chrysler Six was first shown

in early 1924 at the New York Auto Show, apparently in the space originally reserved for Chalmers, and at a special display at the nearby Commodore Hotel. With the first high-compression six-cylinder engine offered in a medium-priced make, it was a sensation. Capable of speeds of up to 70 MPH, the new Chrysler sold like the proverbial hotcakes, with nearly 20,000 cars finding buyers in the abbreviated model year. The 1924 Maxwells did well too, with sales climbing to 44,006 units for the calendar year.

With his namesake car a roaring success, Chrysler ramped up production for 1925—he was just the man to do it—and sales shot up to 68,793 cars, while Maxwell sales shrank to just 36,236 units. Walter Chrysler knew what he had to do.

On June 6, 1925, Maxwell Motors was reorganized as Chrysler Corporation. Walter Chrysler continued building Maxwell cars to the end of the model year and then had the car mildly restyled and introduced it as the 1926 Chrysler model F-58 Four. Just as he guessed, the renamed car sold better than it would have as a Maxwell; in fact, total Chrysler sales that year neared 130,000 cars. But sadly, that meant the Maxwell name was no more.

However, Maxwell should not be viewed as a failure; until its demise, it had always been within the top ten producers in the industry, often number six or better. And it didn't fail; like the Oakland car, the Maxwell name was simply replaced by a name that would ensure even greater success. 🐾



The final year for Maxwell was 1925. This handsome car is the standard four-door sedan, Model 25-C.

ROB MYERS

Straight to the top with RM Auctions



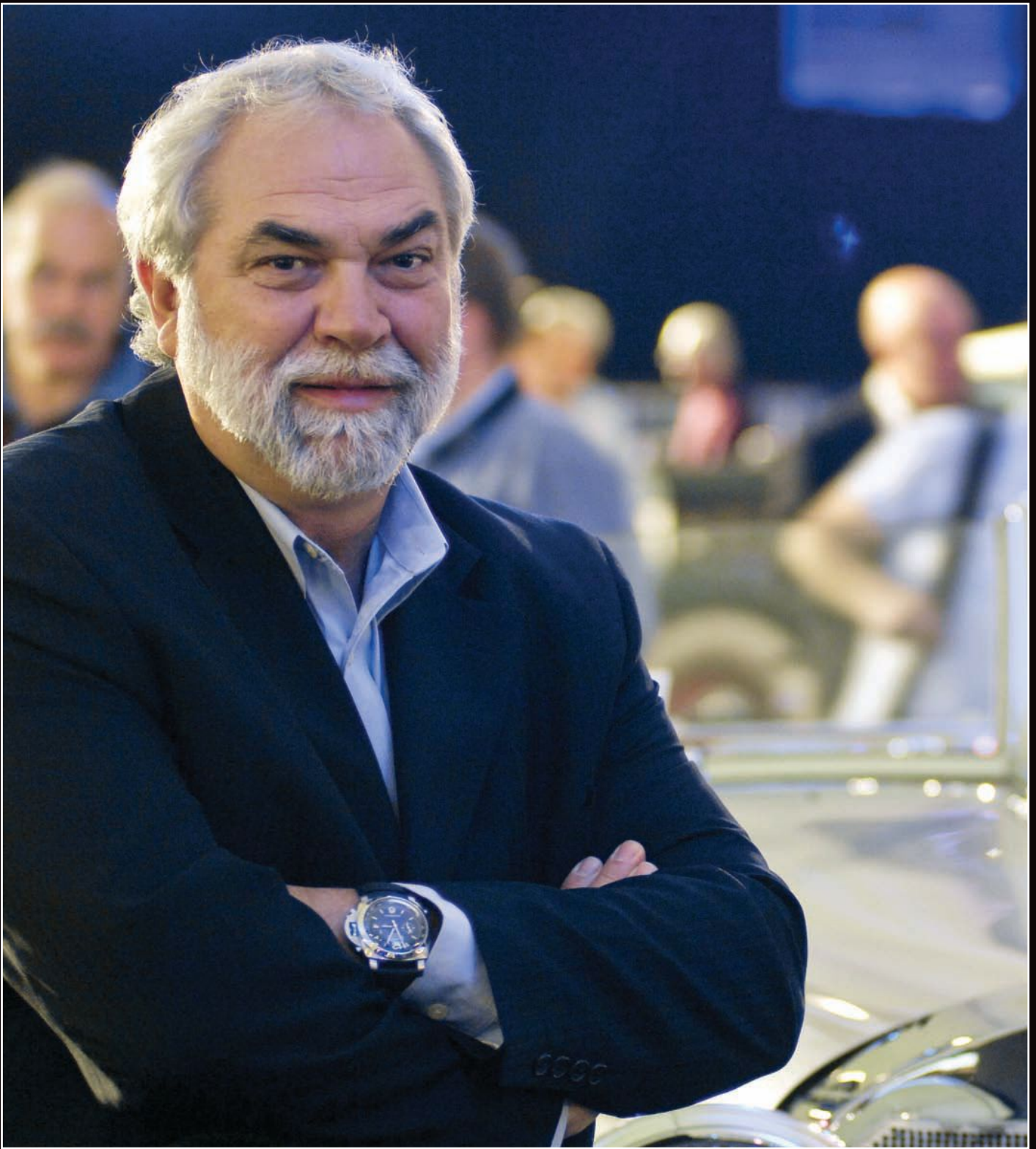
BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGES COURTESY RM AUCTIONS

Officially, on the map, it's Ontario Highway 401. But this is the biggest province in Canada, and the locals are as likely to proudly call it the King's Highway, or the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway—the name salutes modern Canada's founding prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald; and Sir George-Etienne Cartier, who brought today's Francophone province of Quebec into the first Canadian Confederation—as they are to simply use its route number. Though two huge lakes and a legislative boundary separate Ontario from the United States, the bond between those entities is palpable.

So it's perhaps unsurprising that a Canadian kid who grew up less than an hour due east of Detroit grew into a fan of old American cars, and today is a firmly established leader in the realm of restoring and selling them, not just on his side of the border, but in America and Europe, too. Rob Myers is the leader of the Canadian troika that founded a firm in the late 1970s specializing, at least initially, in car restoration. Today, it's RM Auctions of Blenheim, Ontario, whose footprint in the rest of the world is even more prominent than the one it's planted in the Dominion, with a U.S. auction subsidiary, a world-class restoration facility and international offices around the globe. Not even Rob is certain

how many cars the RM group of companies has hammered in its history, but for a snapshot, look at the group's 2013 performance. During last year, nearly 3,000 collector vehicles were sold by RM and Auctions America's auctioneers. Go back to the date of the company's founding, and you can do the mathematical extrapolations yourself. Rob says that the RM group of companies' annual revenues are now approaching half-a-billion U.S. dollars.

It all began, however, with Rob's birth in 1956 in the town of Chatham, Ontario. Chatham-Kent, a past key stop on the Underground Railroad, is the product of a Canadian city-county merger. While still largely rural, the municipality's population totals more than 100,000 and also includes the living center of Blenheim. Rob's family grew up living in a "wartime house" (Editor's note: It's a Canadian term that refers to a small, frame tract house built during the 1940s, most with two bedrooms, much like the small Levitt ranch houses that were staples of the postwar Levittowns in the eastern United States) where his dad brought a parade of older cars to rebuild their engines, repaint them and then sell them. It was there that Rob, while still at a young age, developed his favored practice of repairing body damage. Yes, they do use road salt copiously in Canada, and while Rob's father went out of his way to locate



*“Honesty. Hard work.
Honesty is number one.
You’ve got to know the product, learn it.”*





Right from the outset, RM has always been a family affair, dating to the opening of its first restoration facility in the 1970s with Rob and his wife, Kathy. Daughter Jessica is ready to hit the gas at a vintage rally. At Pebble Beach, Rob is royalty, here posing with his son Shelby—named for the late Cobra creator, a longtime Myers friend—and Judge Joseph Cassini and Cassini's daughter, Caroline.

cars from milder British Columbia, corrosion was an eternal issue on practically everything they took in. Regardless, the Classics grabbed Rob early on.

"I didn't finish high school; I couldn't take it," Rob says today. "I kind of enjoyed the mechanical courses when I took them, but I was not a person to sit in classes. I wanted to make some money. So I went to work at a local shop while doing cars on my own time in Dad's little two-car garage. When I was 19, I bought a wartime house with a single-car garage; I added a bay to it. The neighbors were cool about it, so at that point, I was underway restoring cars by myself. My specialty was paint. I was never really into the mechanical side. I mean, I could do it, but I enjoyed the paintwork and bodywork a lot better. Plus, around this same time, I started doing a whole lot of Harley-Davidsons. I've always had this niche in the business for custom motorcycles.

Rob's first actual restoration project was a 1959 Edsel Corsair two-door sedan. "My dad gave it to me, and he said that if I fixed it up, then I could drive it to school," Rob explains to us. Then it was a 1940 Plymouth four-door sedan, then a 1936 Ford. After that, an enthusiast who lived in the Chatham area rolled in with a Ford Model A sedan delivery and asked Rob to get it running and looking better than it was. That was his first paid restoration job. It was 1976.

The irony here is that Rob was, under the town's zoning laws, running an illegal business, since those



laws prohibited restoration or repair garages in the residential neighborhood. His first major business decision was made in 1978, when Rob took possession of a larger building elsewhere in Chatham. Like his first garage, it was in an area where automotive businesses were severely restricted. Rob needed a zoning variance to open his doors, and despite some neighborhood carping, the local officialdom saw fit to grant him one. As he recalls now, "I got a whole education in real estate and how zoning works. The building was 40 by 80, and I was looking it over after I bought it, and thinking to myself, 'Holy cow, how am I ever going to fill this thing?' But by 1983 or 1984, I was already building an addition for it and hiring new people."

Rob was operating under the name RM Auto Restoration. He had 20 people on his payroll by 1985, mostly doing straight restorations, with a scoopful of collision work on the side to keep the lights lit. A few years rolled by, during which RM started buying and selling cars. Whether individually or as full collections, the car purchases went through RM's shop in Chatham for restoration, or at least refinishing, prior to sale at auction. By the end of the 1980s, Rob was both the largest-volume buyer and consignee of automobiles at not only Barrett-Jackson, but also with the Kruse empire. As he remembers, "This was when I would routinely be taking 125 cars to (the Kruse auction at) Auburn every Labor Day. By the late 1980s, for sure, I was the biggest dealer around. Nobody was doing more volume than I was."

Business, therefore, was booming. Rob had conviction, plus every intention that he could compete levelly with the big players of the collector-vehicle auction industry, despite their being better established and his being located in Canada. He was ready. Around 1988, as he recalls, RM Auto Restoration was fully in the sales business, retailing about 450 collector cars a year, but had no auction presence whatsoever. That was about to change. A car enthusiast named Dan Warrener had been scouting out potential buys for Rob across western Canada, and Rob offered him a piece of his business. They became partners in a new firm called RM Classic Cars, which became the restoration shop's buying-and-selling subsidiary. Dan, a specialist in postwar sports racing cars who'd previously worked in the energy and pipeline business, is still with RM Auctions as a partner.

A few years later, in 1991, Rob sold a piece of his business to another Canadian car guy, Mike Fairbairn. Out of Alberta, Mike had a background that paralleled Rob's, as he had been restoring and reselling vintage American iron since he was a student. Rob brought him in as a partner to take command of RM's restoration operations. By this time, Rob and Dan were bringing 75 to 80 cars to Barrett-Jackson every January.

The big players in the business of collector cars then, besides Barrett-Jackson, included Kruse, Christie's, Sotheby's and the Imperial Palace auctions of Las Vegas under direction of Richie Clyne. Dana Mecum was a relatively new name, and Bonhams had yet to hold its first sale in the United States. In 1990, Rob and his partners bought out a small Ontario auction house and held their first sale, in Toronto, the following year. They quickly came state-side and held an auction in Novi, Michigan, before establishing a sales presence at the Meadow Brook concours, which fast became a staple among prestigious collector auctions. RM Auctions then held another sale in Bloomfield Hills, outside Detroit. In 1996, RM bought out Rick Cole Auctions of California, which had been conducting sales in Newport Beach and, more important, Monterey. It had taken a few years to get there, but now, the upstart firm from Canada was locked into the antique car world's most prestigious weekend of the year.

The brain trust from Blenheim, Ontario, teamed to create a go-to enterprise for those interested in buying premium cars of the past. There are no elaborate formulae that assure success, Rob says, only basic acumen and values. As he puts it, "Honesty. Hard work. Honesty is number one. You've got to know the product, learn it."

RM Auctions describes itself as the specialist when it comes to the presentation of private and estate collection sales. In the past, RM has liquidated numerous private collections, memorably including a fleet of 388 vintage Lincolns owned by a departed Texas oil magnate and the fabled trove of cars and model trains amassed in Michigan by Richard and Linda Kughn. The company's most recent private collection successes include the sale of the Bruce Weiner Microcar Museum and Texas businessman Don Davis's record-breaking 64-car sale. RM remains best known, however, for its high-end sales, ranging from the Arizona Biltmore during Scottsdale week, to Amelia Island, Monterey and Hershey, among others. RM Auctions capped off 2013 with its ground-breaking Art of the Automobile sale, held in association with Sotheby's at its Manhattan headquarters, the first major collector car auction to be held in New York City in more than a decade. It's also hosted a sale in London for the past seven years. Plans for 2014 include an inaugural sale in Paris on February 5 during the Retromobile fest, and a return to Monaco for RM's third biennial sale during the Historic Grand Prix de Monaco.

Yet, as with the automobile industry, the auction business has grown through diversification of its model lineup. RM Auctions will conduct eight of its own sales this year, but the firm now operates a subsidiary auction house, Auctions America, that



offers cars in far greater numbers and more moderate prices, generally speaking, at each of its events. It grew out of an effort to re-establish Auburn, Indiana, as the classic car capital of America, where Auctions America has been based since RM established it in 2010, ringing up an impressive \$13 million-plus at its first-ever Auburn go. The same Auburn fall event in 2013 realized record attendance and more than \$28 million. Longtime auction leader and vintage racer Donnie Gould is Auction America's president.

"Between RM Auctions and Auctions America, we seamlessly serve the entire spectrum of the collector car market—we have a solution for everybody," Rob explains. "We're not going to say, 'We'll take your Duesenberg, but we don't want your hot rods or your Mustang. We'll take all the cars, and if need be, if they need sorting out, we can bring them on our own trucks to our own restoration shop, one of the biggest in the world—40 men in the shop who do 50 or so cars a year—to prepare them for auction. Then we can take the \$10,000 cars to Auburn and the \$10 million cars to Monterey. There's nobody who we don't have a solution for with this."

So, from an obvious expert, what's going to be hot in future years? We ask Rob that question. Some of his answers may cause your eyebrows to raise.

"A BMW M1 is really undervalued today," he says. "It's a bargain. So are big Ferraris. It doesn't make sense that a 246 Dino is valued higher than a Daytona coupe, which you can drive every day. I think Seventies cars from the United States are interesting and also will increase in value, but not the Eighties. There were cars of interest in the 1970s, like a 1979 Camaro Z28, and the Trans Ams from that era still aren't expensive, but are you going to buy a 1984 Chevy Caprice?"

Regardless of what's hot and what's not in the collector car world of the future, it's clear that Rob and his successful team will be glad to be such an important part of the hobby-cum-business he loves so much, "I'm the luckiest guy in the world, surrounded by great people. The key to success in both life and business is to surround yourself with people who are more intelligent than you are." 🐾

Rob is deeply involved in historic preservation in his hometown of Chatham-Kent, Ontario.

He refurbished the King William Block of Victorian buildings, which date to 1888, into the Retro Suites hotel, complete with terrazzo floors and tin ceilings.

"I just love my hotel. It's my baby," Rob says.

Among his other local building projects are his dealership, Duke's Harley-Davidson, a play on his lifelong love for big bikes.



Economical Resurrection

Not all restorations involve stripping a car to the core, as shown in the tale of this 1964 Dodge Dart 270 convertible

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BILL McNAMARA





Protected by a temporary structure from the Southern California elements, the convertible was first relieved of its trim and removable panels, save for the doors. The paint was then removed via chemical stripper and sanding.



Even after removing the fenders, the team of restorers didn't find any corrosion that would need to be eliminated. Here, a little over a year's worth of bodywork is well under way, with the continued application of body filler and hours of sanding.



Once all of the slight imperfections on the body panels had been carefully smoothed out, the engine bay and interior were masked off with plastic. Two coats of two-part epoxy primer were then applied in a professional-grade spray booth.



Using Restoration Shop products, primer was followed by three applications of color tinted to match Signet Royal Red. Proper cure time was permitted between the applications of primer and paint, as shrinking primer can lead to cracked paint later on.



We've all encountered, at some point when we were young, a car that left an indelible impression in our minds. It could have been one of the many muscle cars from the late Sixties, a Full Classic from the early Thirties, a tall-finned icon from the late Fifties, or even one of the hundreds of thousands of simply sedate sedans purchased by the masses. Whatever the case, chances are pretty good that later in life we've all thought about purchasing an example of our automotive obsession. It should be no surprise, then, that a number of us have done just that, including Palm Springs, California, resident Bill McNamara.

Bill's particular automotive desire became firmly cemented when he was

in college, the brief details of which he recalls with ease. "My friend's father was a Dodge dealer then, and in early 1963, he gave his son a Dart GT convertible. The GT was new to the Dart series that year and it just struck me. We had a lot of fun with it; a lot of good memories from our college years were connected to that Dart. Since then, I've always thought about having my own GT convertible."

As it usually does, life dictates other needs, which often conflict with non-essential desires. As the decades passed, however, they didn't keep that vision of bucket-seated, convertible GT ownership from existing in Bill's mind; although he will admit that when he received a call from a friend in Los Angeles about a Dart convertible for sale, he hadn't been



After color, the body was sealed in three carefully applied layers of clearcoat. Again, proper curing time was allowed before the body was wetsanded with 1500-grade paper that ultimately provided a smooth finish. Buffing brought out the rich sheen.



During most restorations, the interior is removed prior to paint. In this case, as the car remained functional, the original shoddy interior and top, sans rear bench seat, were left in place to assist in the car's movement from one location to another.



Back inside the temporary structure, the body panels were slowly returned to the Dart chassis. This replacement hood from a parts car sedan was painstakingly aligned to avoid damage later. Fenders and decklid would soon follow.



Each Dart, regardless of interior trim, carried a standard instrument panel arrangement, controls and decorative trim. The radio was optional. This is also a replacement from the parts car that was refinished to match the Signet Royal Red paint.

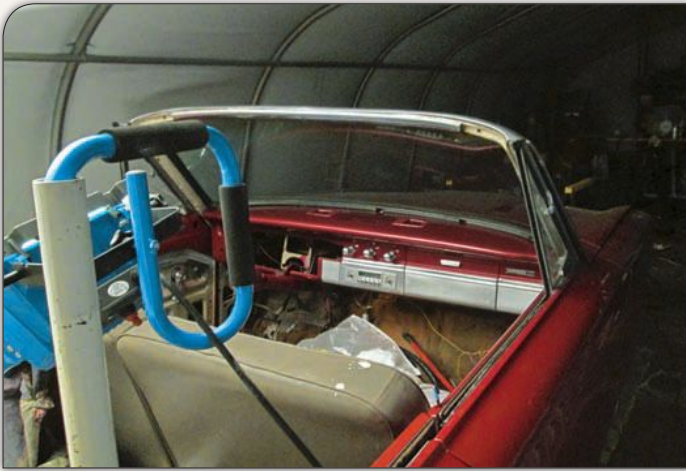


looking to purchase one. "[My friend] was doing a favor for someone who was moving to L.A. from Tennessee, by storing the Dart and two other cars. It didn't take long for him to decide he didn't want to pay for storage anymore, so my friend essentially became an authorized broker to sell the collection, including the Dart. It was a 1964 Dart 270 convertible, and it came with a same-year Dart GT two-door hardtop parts car. Having admired the Dart for so long, I was delighted to get it when that opportunity arose."

In spite of the sudden windfall of Darts, Bill's excitement was tempered by the condition of the two Dodges. By Bill's account, the GT hardtop parts car was horribly rusted, with very few usable parts

actually worth saving. The decision to dispose of the GT, then, was a quick one, but not before removing its front bucket seats. As to the Dart 270, it had been mechanically rebuilt sometime before Bill purchased it, and although it was in good working order, it was aptly described to us as being a cosmetic mess.

"The interior was junk, and of course the top had been cut open. It was a sad looking thing," remembers Bill. "It had a cheap resale-red paint finish on it, and the right-front fender was wrinkled—it was a replacement fender, but it had been damaged and poorly fixed. Overall, it was a rough-looking car. Pretty much right from the start, I knew I was going to have to restore it cosmetically."



Here, the refinished panel has been installed, although the instruments and steering column have yet to be put in place. Note the original interior is still present; the tubing and exercise equipment parts helped keep power cords away from the fresh paint.



Look closely and you will note that the two-spoke steering wheel has several fissures along the rim. This wheel was sent out to be repaired and was then refinished to match the body color. Its chrome horn ring was replated at the time.



Pulled from hiding, a few pieces of trim have already been returned to the Dart's body. If it looks as though the trunk lid is ajar, that's because it is about to be bolted back into position and realigned with the rest of the rear panels.



With its gauges and trim refinished and installed, the dash is complete. So, too, are the steering wheel and column, meaning the Dart is once again capable of moving under its own Slant Six power.

Most of the restoration profiles we've featured have been full endeavors, the subject stripped to a bare frame or unit-body chassis. However, there are countless restorations completed every year that focus on returning a car's interior and exterior visual characteristics back to factory-new condition. Bill's decision to take the latter route was based on the fact that, mechanically, everything in his unit-body Dart was in working order, including the 145-hp, 225-cu.in. Slant Six engine, its TorqueFlite three-speed automatic transmission and drum brake system. This assessment reduced the projected expenses. When, working in a temporary enclosure in late 2011, the Dart's layers of paint were chemically stripped and

sanded away and not a trace of rust was uncovered, the decision to stick to just a cosmetic restoration was justified.

Before stripping away the paint, though, every piece of trim was removed from the body, as were the bumpers, the grille and all exterior lamps and lenses. Both front fenders were then removed, as were the hood and decklid. Although this is standard restoration protocol to help achieve a more comprehensive finish later in the project, there was a secondary reason that, to Bill, was just as important. As fortune would have it, he had been able to locate and purchase a 1964 Dart two-door sedan parts car, the key removable panels of which were in far better condition, thus reducing the amount of





Bit by bit, trim was slowly returned to the back half of the Dart, while making sure the wiring remained functional. Overspray on the convertible top was not a concern, as a new one was going to be installed in due time.



At this stage, body and trim is now complete, including the restoration of the protruding aluminum headlamp trim rings. This is departure day for the Dodge as it was shipped off to Classic Auto Restyling for a reproduction GT interior and top.

labor needed to prepare them for paint and primer.

“My friend Steve Miltimore handled all of the body and paint work. Steve’s a perfectionist, having worked for a high-end collision repair center when he lived in San Francisco. Once the body panels were down to metal, Steve would apply body filler and then sand it off with 80- to 120-grade paper, put filler back on and sand it off again, and just repeat the process over and over. One day, I mentioned to him that when Dodge built the car, it had wrinkles in it; Steve assured me there would be no wrinkles when he was done. Just the prep work took him a year and three months, but it really was absolutely perfect when he was done with it.”

Another one of Bill’s friends, Mike Steiner, offered the availability of the paint booth within his garage in nearby

Palm Desert. This was another important step in attaining a perfect finish since the professional-grade facility virtually eliminated any contaminants in the air once the ventilation and filtration system was in operation.

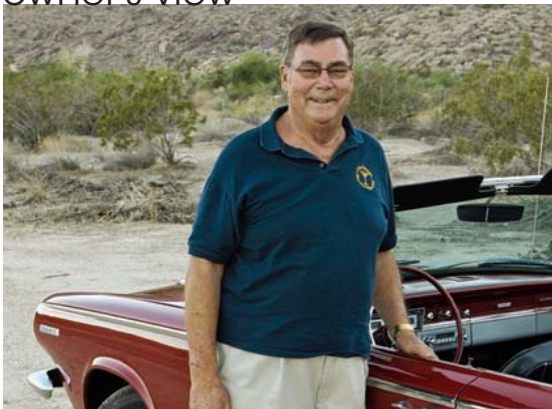
Steve selected Restoration Shop products for both the two-part epoxy primer and the basecoat/clearcoat paint. Starting with the primer, two coats were applied, then sanded with a progression of 180- to 320-grade paper. Signet Royal Red was the hue chosen for the three coats of color applied to the body panels, which was then followed by three coats of clear. The car was wet sanded using 1500-grade paper, and final buffing brought forth an unbelievably rich shine.

As the body was being finished, Bill prepared the GT bucket seats he had set aside to use in place of the factory bench

seat. To prepare them for their eventual installation, he removed the old, brittle upholstery, then wire-brushed the frame and sealed the metal in a fresh coat of black paint. New GT black upholstery and associated door panels were ordered from Legendary Auto Interiors in Newark, NY; Classic Auto Restyling in Cathedral City, California, was selected to handle the upholstery work, as well as the careful task of installing a new top.

“I was delighted to get the factory-matched GT panels. I was also fortunate enough to find a company in Santa Ana, California, that handled the restoration of my front bumper and the aluminum headlamp rings. Those rings on this generation Dart protrude forward further than any other part of the car, so almost every one of these cars has dented headlamp rings. Thanks to the parts car, I had four rings at

owner’s view



It wasn’t just the styling of the Dart GT that struck me; it was the size of the car as well, which seemed to me to be just right. When I purchased this convertible, I knew that it was going to need a cosmetic restoration. Between the convertible and the parts car, we ended up with everything we needed to get it back into shape again. The window regulators were a bit more difficult to obtain than some of the other parts, but the real concern was restoring the headlamp rings. The good news is that, overall, the Dart is a straightforward design and easy to work on, so that helps make a restoration easier than perhaps some other collector cars. Planning ahead and knowing what you will need are also key to a successful restoration.

– Bill McNamara



my disposal; I selected the best two and sent them out to be straightened and re-anodized. It cost me \$80 each, but it was reasonable to me because the headlamp rings are not being reproduced.”

Other areas that needed restoration were the GT steering wheel, along with the instrument panel taken from the parts car; its associated gauges were thoroughly cleaned and reinstalled. Padding was added to fully replicate the factory GT appearance. The original wiring harness was in fine shape and was retained. With the paint process finished, the newly polished trim was bolted back in place, as were the aforementioned removed body panels, followed by the finished dash and steering wheel.

Along the way, it was decided that in the interest of safety and proper operation, the front end should be rebuilt. “All

of the rubber parts had completely deteriorated, so we took the time to rebuild it all using new bushings. Mechanically, that was the only thing we decided to restore on the Dodge,” says Bill.

It was at this point that Bill delivered his Dart to Classic Auto Restyling. The staff there brought the 270’s interior back to life, albeit in upscale GT trim. This included new black floor carpet, reupholstered front bucket and rear bench seats, and door panels. One of the more intensive tasks they tackled was the careful installation of the new convertible top. In August 2013, after less than two years, Bill’s Dart was returned, and the project officially came to a close.

“The Dart turned out absolutely beautiful to me. The paint, interior—everything looks as new again. Everyone who was a part of this project did a

magnificent job, and I am so pleased with it; I can’t thank them enough. It really hit home when I took it to a car show in October where the Dart won its class—against a 1964 Thunderbird that had thousands of dollars of restoration work done. I was humbly surprised, to say the least, and very proud of the results.”



The 1949 Kaiser

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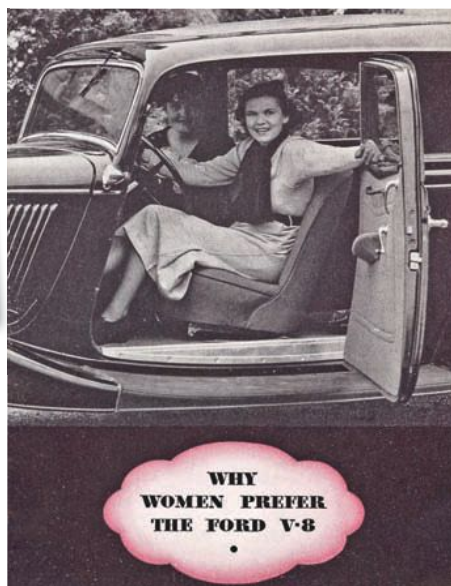
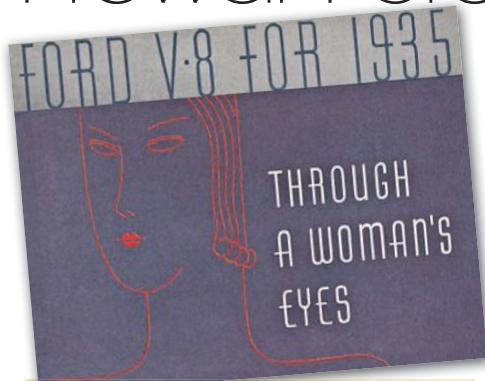
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Prewar Ford Sales Literature Part 3



IN TERMS OF SALES LITERATURE FROM the 1930s, high-end manufacturers like Packard, Cadillac and Pierce-Arrow spared no expense. For these manufacturers, catalogs that featured hand drawings on high-quality paper within elaborate colorful covers were the norm. It appears Ford recognized this and, on a smaller scale, produced a similar catalog in 1935 called *The Economy Way to the Fine Car Field*. The catalog includes two gorgeous color illustrations on tissue paper. The first scene shows a group of women exiting a Ford as they arrive at a theater. The second illustration shows a couple next to an ocean liner with their baggage. In that second scene, the driver remains in the car—perhaps he was their chauffeur? The text of this catalog points out that a “V-type engine of eight or more cylinders is the first modern motoring essential.” Ford didn’t get too carried away with snob appeal, as it states with pride that “What Henry Ford has done is to bring this fine-car engine within the reach of the average family.” Within the remaining pages of the catalog are the mechanical safety and comfort features of the 1935 Ford: “Center-Poise” ride, mechanical brakes (Ford wouldn’t introduce hydraulics until 1939), all-steel body, and styling that was

“fresh and modern but not bizarre.” Interesting among Ford’s prewar sales literature is a group of four catalogs that addressed women consumers. Certainly, other manufacturers would occasionally direct ads or a few pages within a catalog toward women, but those pieces usually were quite simply a message about how easy their car was to drive, and often contained plenty of, by today’s standards, politically incorrect statements. What sets Ford’s brochures apart is the fact that the company recognized women as a legitimate segment of the market.

In 1924, Ford targeted women from high-income households with a catalog called *Ford Closed Cars*. Here it notes that “so many women of wealth...prefer the Ford” because “with no gears and easy steering” women can drive without fatigue, and the car’s “power, endurance and simplicity” make Ford the most dependable woman’s car. The catalog also explains that while many similar households still maintained a larger car for the family, the lady of the house would often select a Ford for her convenience.

Ford’s 1925 catalog *Her Personal Car* is an 8½ x 11-inch, 16-page catalog with black-and-white photographs. Each photograph depicts a different scenario and shows how Fords, specifically closed-bodied ones, would improve women’s lifestyles. An eyebrow-raising statement in the

catalog describes how the Ford will bring the “woman of athletic tastes” to her destination, “fresh, immaculate and dainty.”

In 1934 and 1935, sales catalogs showed readers the Ford V-8 *Through a Woman’s Eyes* and *Why Women Prefer the Ford V-8*. These catalogs were written from the perspective of women who have just purchased new Fords. In the 1935 catalog, the woman starts the tour with a description of the car’s design and works her way through the powerful engine, roominess and standard equipment. Throughout, she talks about the great value she received when buying a Ford. She also states that she was once “the most timid driver in the world,” but thanks to the power of the Ford V-8, she “makes no odds of any driver.” Ford beauty also allows her to park her car “along the drive of the Country Club—right in sight of the big veranda any afternoon—and make just as good an entrance as the grandest lady there.”

Ford produced an overwhelming amount of sales literature between 1903 and 1942. While catalogs initially relied on written words and technical descriptions, they evolved into colorful tools that used emotion and social competition to sell cars. Throughout these prewar years, one thing remained constant—Ford would use its position as value leader to sell cars and the Ford brand to the general public. ☞

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Marvelous Mid-Size Meteor

I HAVE OBSERVED THAT THE CARS

of the 1960s garner the most positive responses at car shows, which is why finding what I consider a Detroit Underdog from that decade is nearly impossible—but not completely. While a few of the cars we have featured here could be considered less than stellar, this month's feature car would make anyone a proud owner.

The Mercury Meteor came at us in a flash, but couldn't outsell another flying object. So short was its time here on our planet that I will wager most of you have never seen one up close and personal. While it was a decent, well-built and attractive car that should have been right for the times, it was too closely related to one of its popular siblings.

In 1962, Ford taught us that something between a compact and full-sized car could be successful, and we were introduced to the Fairlane. Ford managed to be one step ahead of everyone in the 1960s. Within a short period of time and through no fault of their own, some compacts like the Rambler Classic became de facto mid-sizers, and some standard-size cars, like the downsized offerings from Dodge and Plymouth, would also join that team. Mid-size cars would prove themselves to be the most versatile. That is why GM's second-wave compacts became mid-sizers mid-decade (say that three times fast). You could fit your family in one, park them anywhere, and maneuver in traffic with ease. You could option them up like luxury cars, muscle them up with performance and handling packages or pretty them up by taking the top down. You could even order a station wagon with a third row seat and take your kid's baseball team to the ice cream parlor.

The Meteor name was already in use at Mercury on a car that sold better than the Monterey, so why didn't they call their new car Monterey? Based on a stretched Falcon chassis that also held up the Mercury Comet (a car once planned for Edsel—some of the key blanks on the first-year Comets have the middle line of the E filed off to make a C), the Meteor, like the Fairlane, measured between the wheel centers at 116.5 inches. The Comet's wheelbase was already five inches longer than the Falcon's at 114 inches,



approaching mid-size itself. From the rear, the Meteor looked very much like a full-size Mercury, but from the front, it was similar to the Comet.

Buyers were treated to a base or Custom model in two- or four-door sedans. Like the Fairlane 500 sport coupe, the Meteor S-33 featured bucket seats, center console and a fancier interior. The following year, the Meteor offered a four-door wagon in base and Custom and a two-door hardtop in Custom and S-33. The luxurious Mercury Meteor Country Cruiser wagon was available with a rear-facing third-row seat.

The engine choices were a 170-cu. in. straight-six, offered in the Falcon and Comet, and two V-8s. Three-on-the-tree was standard, and overdrive and Merc-O-Matic were listed on the build sheet. In 1963, a four-speed was added to the option list.

The following year... Oh wait, that's it.

What happened to this middle child? Quite simply, the Meteor was not distinct or even large enough to entice people to jump to a higher class than a Comet. Why pay more for a car that is only two inches longer and offers basically the same powertrains and options? If the Meteor could talk, it would have said, "All I hear all day is Comet this and Comet that. Comet, Comet, Comet!"

The Meteor was definitely a sign that Mercury couldn't survive with "me-too" cars if they didn't make them distinctive enough. Can anyone say 1970s Monarch, Bobcat, Comet, Zephyr, etc.?

Since we tend to feature rare cars,

I try to make it a point to find someone who owns one whenever possible. So, are there any mid-size Mercury Meteors out there, you ask? Tom Melech, who lives in Bismarck, North Dakota, has a 1963 Mercury Meteor Country Cruiser wagon. "I am intrigued with the more unusual and obscure cars—the oddities, the orphans," Tom says of his interest in the Mercury Meteor. "I've always thought the Mercury body lines of the '60s were unique and space-like."

He found his Detroit Underdog for sale in Colorado. It had been sitting in a barn in Wyoming with around 40,000 miles on the odometer. His is one of 1,485 Mercury Meteor Country Cruiser wagons produced, of which 740 had the rear-facing third seat. Powered by the 260-cu.in. ("Lightning") 164-hp V-8, it is equipped with an automatic transmission, power steering, power tailgate window, padded dash, radio, two-speed wipers and back-up lamps. Sadly, a previous owner painted the wood trim white, which Tom is in the process of restoring.

Usually, when you pull into a show in a Detroit Underdog, people crowd around it and get excited to see one. Tom says that with the Mercury Meteor, people either mistake it for a Fairlane or ask, "What the hell is it?"

I, for one, am not surprised they ask that. If more car collectors looked further than the dolled-up luxury models to the more basic, less-memorable offerings from their favorite marques, they would find many interesting, desirable and enjoyable cars. 🐾

James Gordon Bennett Jr.

IT'S CORRECT TO DESCRIBE

James Gordon Bennett Jr. as one of this country's earliest enthusiasts and benefactors of auto racing, among a number of other high-risk pastimes. It's also correct to say that, on some level, Bennett viscerally identified with daredevils and lionized them. And likewise correct to suggest that Bennett was probably crazy. Along with William K. Vanderbilt, a fellow rich guy at the pinnacle of society, Bennett Jr. was among the first to dangle big money and prestige in front of early racers, thus guaranteeing them a powerful helping of respect instead of simply the specter of death in a cloud of choking dust.

By putting up his money, Bennett assured his place in racing history and indirectly encouraged broader acceptance of the automobile amongst otherwise normal people. Bennett's life is a cipher in the 21st century; researchers are relegated to the florid prose that chronicled his exploits during a wild lifetime of action and copious wealth. Bennett was born into huge money, the namesake of his father, an immigrant from Scotland who made a fortune in newspapering as publisher of the *New York Herald* and gained respectability by endowing a medal that today remains the New York City Fire Department's oldest and highest award for bravery.

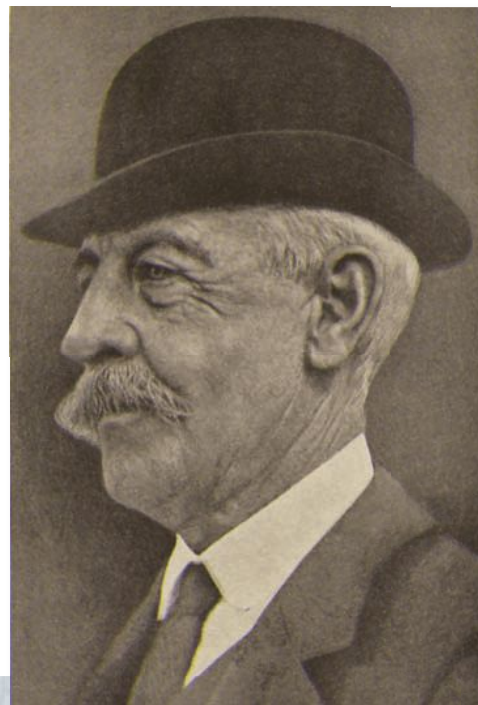
Bennett Jr. was educated in Paris, commissioned as a U.S. Navy officer during the Civil War, but fled to France after killing a man in a duel, according to some accounts. When the war ended, Bennett's father relinquished control of the newspaper to him. Even flusher, Bennett proved generous, especially when it came to sporting matters. He

poured cash into purses for yachting, claimed to have introduced polo to the United States (He didn't. Expatriate Britons working as Texas cowpunchers did.) and while in Europe, filled the prize chests of the city-to-city death races, including Paris-Bordeaux. An American-French rivalry that grew from a stillborn match race involving Alexander Winton against a Frenchman led Bennett to commission a trophy in 1898 named after himself.

The James Gordon Bennett Cup was among the most prestigious awards in motorsport during the first decade of the 20th century. Bennett's intent to draw American teams into international racing ended largely in disappointment, although Winton, Peerless and Premier did compete, the last by the hand of Carl Graham Fisher, who built the Indianapolis Motor Speedway a few years hence. The first great British victory on a global stage came in 1902 when a Napier won Bennett's Paris-Vienna contest.

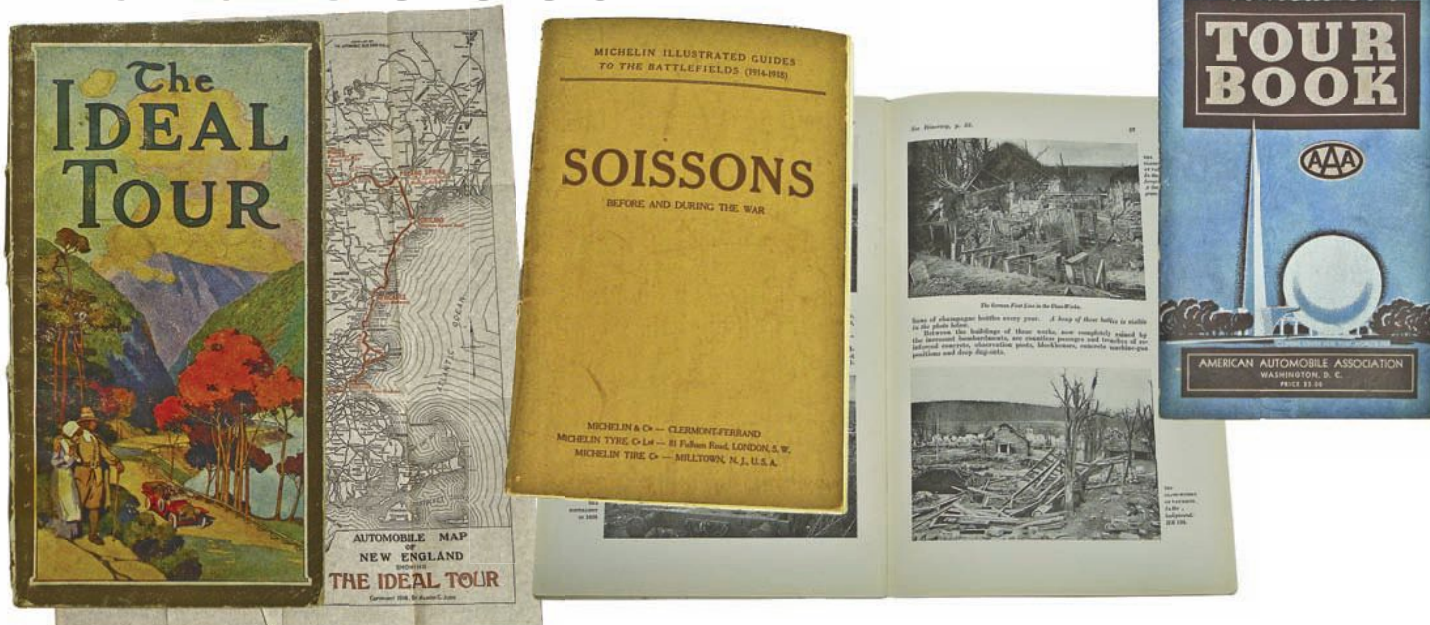
Bennett lost interest in racing after 1906 and went on to bequeath trophies for aviation feats. He was a voracious

consumer of both women and booze. Bennett died in 1918 at age 77, never receiving the recognition he deserved as a groundbreaking patron of racing during his lifetime. 🍷



Bennett was a true fan, including at Homburg, Germany, where this James Gordon Bennett Cup event was run in 1904.

Travel Guides



THE TRAVEL GUIDE stuffed in your glovebox, with its directions and descriptions of sites, services, hotels and restaurants, actually has some pretty venerable forebearers. In the 5th century BCE, the Greek Herodotus chronicled distant lands in his *Histories*, and in the Middle Ages, guides were made for Europeans on pilgrimages. The first travel guide-like work to be published about America was the *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588) written to attract future colonists and investors.

In Europe in the 17th-19th centuries, “strangers guides” were created for traveling businessmen, while in America “immigrant guides” began being published for pioneers going west by wagon train. When steam-powered locomotives and ships made travel to ever distant locations ever more affordable, the travel guide entered the modern era. In America, this, along with cheap land out west, led railroad companies to publish guidebooks enticing people to travel more by train. Travel guides by independent publishers were also being offered at this time, notable among them are the German Karl Baedeker’s guide books (1832) and the American Daniel Appleton’s *Railroad and Steamboat Guides* (1847). Today, some volumes of the former are considered among the most exquisite and valuable examples of the genre, while the latter are some of the most rare.

With the advent of the affordable automobile, people increasingly took up traveling, and the number of guides proliferated. One of the first was the *Michelin Guide* (1900), which brothers André and Edouard, following a page from the old playbook, hoped would make travel more appealing and lead to increased consumption of their company’s product. Along the way, the “red book” established the now-famous system for recognizing excellent restaurants, awarding its first stars in 1926; to this day, two stars still denote an eatery whose food merits a detour, and three stars, one whose cuisine is so exceptional it’s worth a special trip—hopefully on Michelin tires. Interestingly, as The Great War was being fought, Michelin attempted to chronicle the cataclysmic changes occurring to both land and cityscapes in a special series

of *Illustrated Guides to the Battlefields*. Especially discomfiting are some of the turn-by-turn directions: “Take the Rue du Collège on the left, devastated by incendiary bombs from aeroplanes...”

Though among the first travel guides published by early motoring enthusiasts, the *Official Automobile Blue Book* (1901) and the Automobile Legal Association’s *Green Book* (1920) are less well known today than AAA’s perennial *Tour Books*. First published in 1926, many of the travel resources we have come to expect in the *AAA Tour Books* appeared separately prior to this date, namely street (1905), strip (1911) and transcontinental maps (1912); north-south trip-planning guides (1912); and hotel (1917) and campground directories (1920). The *Tour Books* also contain sections detailing geographical and historical information, tolls and relevant state motor laws and customs regulations—all enhanced with regional and local maps, photographs of sites and hotels, a mileage chart and advertisements.

We consulted with Kenneth Gloss, proprietor of the oldest antiquarian bookstore in America, the Brattle Book Shop in Boston, and guest appraiser on PBS’s *Antiques Roadshow*. He made us aware of another collectible set of guides prepared by the WPA during the Great Depression. The *American Guide Series* ran from 1935-’43, employed 6,000 authors, is packed full of photographs, and, unlike many other travel guides at the time, gave one whole (often hefty) volume to each state.

Travel guides appeal to collectors for several reasons. For one, they’re fairly prevalent. Check yard sales, swap meets and antique dealers; we found our examples at auction online, but the independent booksellers at www.abebooks.com list many. Secondly, travel guides offer a range of investment levels. Kenneth explained that *AAA Tour Books* typically sell for \$25-\$75; Baedekers, for \$50-\$300; and the WPA’s *American Guide Series*, for \$3-\$300. As car people, we especially like collecting travel guides for their period advertisements and the unique window they provide on a particular place or era. Following one of the old routes with one of these in hand is like traveling through time. 🚗

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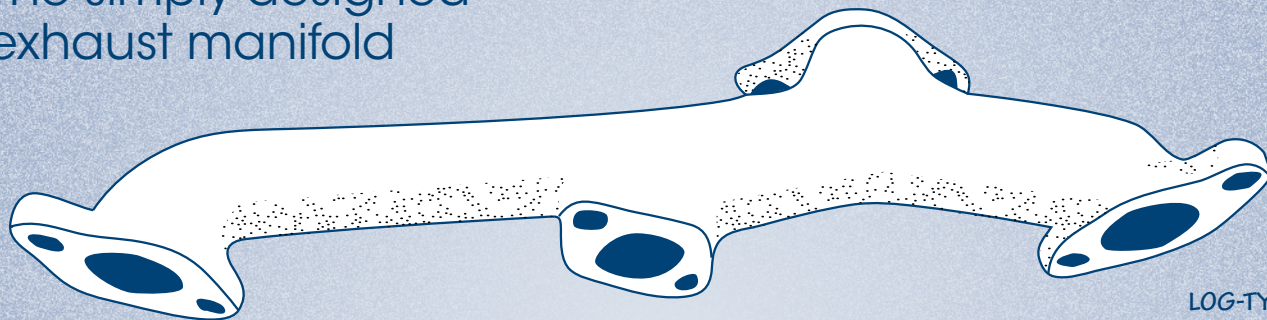
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Logjam

The simply designed exhaust manifold



LOG-TYPE EXHAUST MANIFOLD

JOB: Emptying the cylinder bore

BY RAY T. BOHACZ

IF YOU WERE TO SHOW the cylinder head of any engine to someone who knows nothing about it, they might very well ask the question, “Why are these two parts (valves) not the same size?” The casual observer may also note that it is apparent that more thought and design effort has gone into the intake port of a cylinder head than the exhaust port, and they would be correct.

So, what is it about the exhaust side of the internal combustion engine, and especially the exhaust manifold, that garners so little respect? The answer is rooted in the simple but flawed belief that if the charge can get into the cylinder head, somehow it can find its way out. This logic produced the very common log-type exhaust manifold.

Make it Simple

It is well understood within the engineering community that the mass and volume of the incoming charge are greater than that of the outgoing exhaust. The combustion process that creates a flame that expands and travels across the cylinder bore while working against the piston consumes most but not all of the fuel and air mixture.

It is accepted that the exhaust flow is only 20 percent of the intake flow, and this is usually the logic applied to the difference found in the intake and exhaust sizing. Measure most engines’ intake valve diameter and multiply that figure by 0.80, and you will come very close to the diam-

eter of the exhaust valve. For example, the standard-bearer 350-cu.in. Chevrolet V-8 is factory fitted with 1.94-inch-diameter intake valves and 1.56-inch-diameter exhaust valves; 1.94 multiplied by 0.80 equals 1.552. Of course, as with anything in the auto industry, there will be exceptions to this general rule.

The valves in any cylinder head need to fit into the combustion chamber because it’s thought that increased induction breathing, rather than exhaust efficiency, better serves the engine because it improves the amount of burnable mixture in the bore. The engine’s ability to fill the cylinder in a normally aspirated design (no turbocharger or supercharger) is strictly dependent on the low-pressure region created in the cylinder bore by the movement of the piston, minus the fractional flow lost through the intake system. This includes the air filter, carburetor, intake manifold and the intake port of the cylinder head. There are no mechanical means to aid it. In contrast, the piston moving toward top dead center on the exhaust stroke will help push out any residual exhaust gases that did not vacate the bore when the exhaust valve opened.

In engineering parlance, the condition when the exhaust valve just cracks open but the piston is still stationary at bottom dead center is identified as “blow down.” When this occurs, the pressure and temperature in the cylinder are much higher than those in the exhaust port of the

cylinder head and exhaust manifold, so by the laws of nature, the spent gases flow to the cooler and lower-pressure region. Once this pressure/temperature difference equalizes, the flow stops. Then it is up to the piston as it sweeps toward TDC on the exhaust stroke to push out the remaining spent gases. This takes power from the other cylinder that is now on the expansion (power) stroke. There is probably no worse means of exhausting a cylinder than a log-type exhaust manifold.

In Defense of the Log-Type Exhaust Manifold

Any automobile, and especially its engine, is a potpourri of conflicting goals. Cost, performance, manufacturing, service access and many other factors are constantly being balanced. The log-type exhaust manifold was born from such compromises, along with the earlier-stated mindset that if the mixture got into the cylinder, it would find its way out.

The log-type manifold style received its name because it resembles a log, connecting all of the exhaust ports of the cylinders on that side of the engine (V-configuration) together. Continuing the same naming theme, the parts that connect the log to the exhaust ports of the cylinder head are the “branches.” The shorter the branch, the closer to the cylinder head the log resides.

The log exhaust manifold does, in fact, offer many advantages over a more

efficient header-type design. For one, it provides better access for service to the spark plugs and can be placed either above the plugs or below them for different engines and installation applications. Also, it is easier to route the secondary ignition wires to the spark plugs and keep them away from the extremely high heat of the burnt gases. This greatly improves the life and performance of the ignition wire. Most people do not realize that even with a brand-new secondary wire of the highest quality, the insulating ability degrades when heated due to molecular expansion. The wire will not be visually burnt, but the insulating ability will be weakened, and under load, the engine will misfire.

Another benefit of the log design is that it hugs the engine, leaving more room under the hood for airflow to keep the engine cool and increase the lifespan of engine parts and other components such as the brake master cylinder, power steering, alternator and battery, etc. The constant thermal cycling under the hood degrades components. If the amplitude of the cycle can be reduced, the component life goes up exponentially.

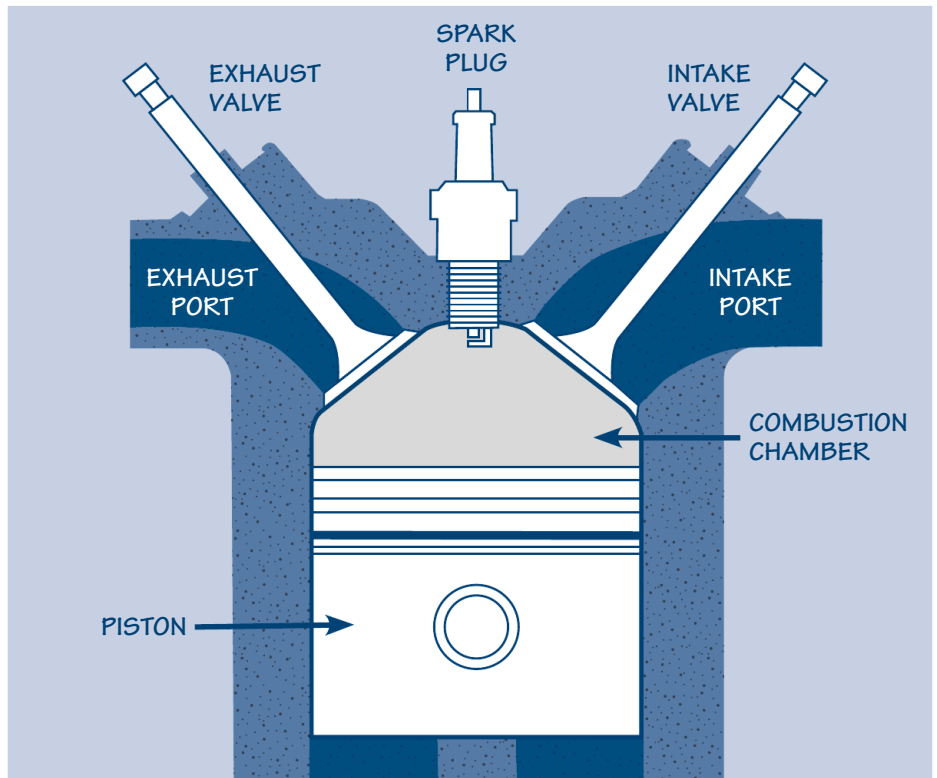
The ability to seal the exhaust manifold to the cylinder head effectively and for the life of the engine is another advantage of the log-type manifold. The rigid and short branch length does an excellent job of this with little expansion or movement during thermal cycles.

The log-type exhaust manifold also offers a myriad of connection possibilities to the rest of the exhaust system, especially when the same engine is fitted to different car lines.

Finally, the log-type exhaust manifold is inexpensive and easy to manufacture. It is normally made from cast iron and does not need to be smooth on the exterior unless it's desired to be so for aesthetic reasons.

All of these benefits do not negate the fact that the log-type exhaust manifold, with its short branch length and restricted flow, is a poor method of expelling spent gases. This said, though, the log-type's weakness only comes into play for most engines when they are operating under heavy load and under the RPM of full power.

As explained many times before in *Mechanical Marvels*, the amount of cylinder fill an engine experiences is only a percentage of the total volume of the bore. The cylinder is the most filled (about 80 percent) at peak torque. The metric used to identify cylinder fill is "volumetric efficiency" (V.E.). At idle, light load and cruising, the V.E. of an engine is very low, and thus,

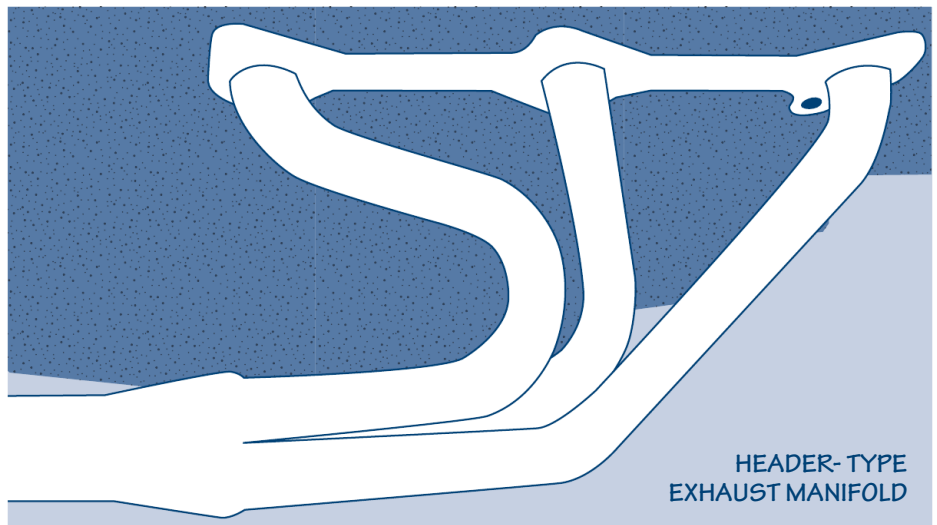


Though exhaust valves in most engines are about 20 percent smaller than intake valves, efficiently evacuating spent gases is still important to engine operation.

the amount of spent exhaust gases follows in lockstep. The average 1950s to 1970s American full-size car needs only about 35 to 50 horsepower to cruise at highway speeds, so the amount of spent exhaust gas that needs to exit via the log-type manifold is low too, and well within its ability to perform the task efficiently. When full power is demanded, the log-type exhaust manifold does restrict flow and costs the engine some power. In actual practice, a passenger vehicle may very well be operated for 100,000 miles and only require full power a few times during that period. In light of this, a more efficient exhaust manifold design that compromises every other

criterion for the sole purpose of increased high-RPM power would be a poor choice for most consumers.

There are applications when Detroit modified the log-type exhaust manifold to make it more efficient in exhausting the cylinders. Each manufacturer had its own particular modifications, and these were often found on luxury or sporty models where a little more engine power would be appreciated. But for utilitarian applications, the low cost and reliable log-type exhaust manifold cannot be beat. It's a marvel of mechanical simplicity, and for too long has been looked at with disdain by the automotive community. 🚗



Geoffrey Stein

Assembly Line Worker, 1963

General Motors – Opel Division, Germany

YES, HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR IS about “all-American” cars and events. But perhaps you might like to read about General Motors manufacturing outside North America. General Motors acquired Adam Opel Aktiengesellschaft in Germany in the 1920s. Despite the World War II interruption, GM continues to build cars in Germany.

In 1963 and 1964, as an Antioch College student, I spent a year plus abroad. Based in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Antioch was a cooperative college so that students alternated classroom studies with short-term jobs. Before I went to Europe, for example, I spent nine months as an assistant to the transportation curator at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Then Antioch arranged for me to work at the Opel factory in Rüsselsheim before my first semester at the Eberhard-Karls University in Tübingen.

I had no idea what I'd be doing at Opel. Since I had no experience building cars, I thought I might give English-speaking tourists a talk about their look at the factory. Well, that was not the case. After I arrived at the plant, I was taken to the assembly section of the Opel Rekord engine. There, the crankshaft, flywheel and clutch were put together as a unit to go into the engine later. The foreman told me that if I didn't like that job, he'd give me another.

It didn't take me long to decide the work was hard and ugly. Asbestos and wires projected from the clutches. Unlike hanging parts added from a passing line, the assembly of the crankshafts meant picking up and carrying heavy things all day. I quickly decided I wanted a different job. The foreman, when I had a break to speak to him, told me I needed to stay where I was for one week, and then I could go to another spot. My guess is that new people were given one of the worst jobs to see if they would stay. I did not.

The U.A.W. and manufacturers likely provided many benefits for workers in Detroit in 1963, but things were very different in Rüsselsheim. For example, at Opel there was no toilet paper, no soap and no towels in the bathroom facility; bring your own was the arrange-

ment. Lunch was provided, but pay was, to my idea, modest at the best. Interesting for me was that pay was delivered in cash, i.e., bills and coins in an envelope. I still think of the account section at Opel counting out bills and coins to put into envelopes instead of writing checks.

There were two alternating crews at Opel, and the work schedule was a real challenge for me. One week, I started a shift at 6 a.m. for six days. The next week, my work started at 2 p.m. for five days. So, every week I had to adjust to getting to work at a different time as well as to fitting in whatever else I wanted to do in the two months I spent in Rüsselsheim.

On the job after the first week, I was at the exit of an oven that dried freshly painted engines as they moved to me on the assembly line. My job was to remove dust covers over distributors, spark plugs, etc. and tighten four bolts. That was much easier compared to the crankshaft job I had previously.

One reason I was sent to Opel was to improve my German in Rüsselsheim before I went to the university. But speaking with worker colleagues unfortunately wasn't possible beyond shouting simple words. For one thing, it was very noisy. For another, I soon learned that the local German dialect was very different from the school German I knew. And beyond that, many of the workers didn't speak much German since they were “guest workers” who spoke Italian, Spanish, French or other languages.

I did have some good times in Rüsselsheim after I became friends with the landlady and her family in the house where I had a room. With the family or on my own, I went to Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and the nearby Rhine Valley, and I exchanged Christmas cards with the family in later years.

Between university semesters and



1963 Opel Rekord

based on my “career” at Opel, I was then hired to work for Porsche!

There, as I assembled cylinder heads for the 356C engines, I could see the construction of 907 race cars being built a short distance away. Adjacent to my work table, where I helped a more permanent employee occasionally balance valves, I watched the 356C cars being pushed on dollies from place to place as they were assembled. Those were, and are, very nice cars, but when I think about the big prices those old Porsches bring now, I know now, and knew even then, the valves put into the Porsche cars came directly from VW boxes—the valves were identical for VW and four-cylinder Porsche engines.

I like cars, but I never wanted to have a permanent job assembling cars or parts of them. Thanks to Antioch and my Henry Ford Museum internship, as well as a graduate degree in museum studies, I had a 43-year career as a transportation curator at the New York State Museum. I still volunteer there. 🗨️



I Was There relates your stories from working for the carmakers, whether it was at the drawing board, on the assembly line or anywhere in between. To submit your stories, email us at editorial@hemmings.com or write to us at I Was There, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201.



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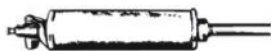
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BOGUS BREAK-IN?

Q: When you put a new camshaft and lifters in an engine, you're supposed to break them in at 1,500 RPM for 15 minutes. Is this really needed? I doubt the factory does that. How could they?

David Donalson
Seattle, Washington

A: I'm not sure what the factory did back when flat tappet camshafts were the norm in new engines. But new cars had warranties and dealer support, so if a vehicle rolled off the hauler with a knock, skip or ominous ticking noise, it would've been repaired by the service department. When you're building your own engine, you're more or less the warranty department and the service department. Are you willing to risk not breaking in the camshaft for the sake of some metallurgy experiment? Please, follow the break-in instructions from the camshaft manufacturer, and use whatever lubricants they recommend on installation and for startup.

GAIN A DRAIN

Q: I'd like to change the differential oil in my 1978 Ford F-150, but it doesn't seem to have a drain plug anywhere in the axle housing. How am I supposed to drain the old stuff out?

James Knowles
Via email

A: Many Ford axles with the removable carrier don't have drain plugs. It might be possible to feed a tube through the filler hole and use a siphon pump to suck the oil out, but you'll likely have difficulty getting the housing totally empty. The most thorough method is to pull the third member (the front of the differential housing), which requires pulling the axles as well. If you think you'll one day be doing this again, you could install a drain while the third member is out. Drill a 7/16-inch hole in the bottom of the housing (off center so that there's room for the ring gear and so that it won't interfere with a jack) and tap it for a 1/4-inch pipe plug. Install a plug with a hex head or an Allen head to keep it out of harm's way, and

apply a little RTV Silicone to the threads to keep it from leaking. You could also install a universal transmission drain plug in the housing. That would eliminate the need to tap the new holes, but it would mean having a fastener on the inside of the housing. When you're refilling, go with a good quality non-synthetic gear oil, and if you have a limited-slip differential, use a bottle of the recommended additive.

FLUID TRANSFER

Q: My 1982 Oldsmobile Delta 88 is using transmission fluid, and it seems to be flowing into the vacuum lines. I noticed it when the vacuum line from the transmission became soft and eventually popped off the nipple at the base of the carburetor. How is this possible?

Bob Wilson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

A: The diaphragm inside the vacuum modulator on the transmission is split, and transmission fluid is being sucked out through the vacuum line into the intake manifold. If you replace the modulator and the vacuum tubing that runs from the manifold to the valve, your problem should end.

DARK MATTER

Q: I have a 1979 Chevrolet Camaro Berlinetta with a 305-cu.in. V-8 and an automatic transmission. I've noticed the engine oil smells like gasoline, and that the oil seems to turn dark in color immediately after it's changed. Is this normal for an older engine?

Sandy Rhodes
Manchester, New Hampshire

A: It's definitely not normal. Something is causing gas to enter the crankcase. A ruptured fuel pump diaphragm can cause fuel to leak into the oil; a blown intake manifold gasket or a cracked valve guide could also cause it. Connect a vacuum gauge to a port on the manifold and run the engine. If the needle on the gauge flutters, it's an intake or valve issue. You

can test a mechanical fuel pump with a vacuum gauge/fuel pressure tester as well by inserting it into the fuel line that leads to the carburetor. It should show 5¼ to 6½ psi.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Q: Back in HCC #110 you addressed a problem with a 1968 Plymouth Fury that didn't start on the first crank and idled low with the air conditioning on. I own a 1961 Dodge Dart Seneca—it's a low-mileage car with 48,000 miles. It has a Slant Six engine and it runs very strong. I get the car out weekly, but it also will never start on the first crank, but it will start on the second round. I don't think anything of it. Owning plenty of Mopars through the years, this is very common. When I bought the car, it came with the old-fashioned air conditioning mounted under the dash. I had it charged, and it works great on these hot summer days in the South. When it's running, it reduces the idle, like it wants to stall, but it never does. I love the car, and it's very different looking. It rides like a dream, and if this is the only problem—starting the car on the second crank—I can sure live with it!

Cary Slevinsky
Calabash, North Carolina

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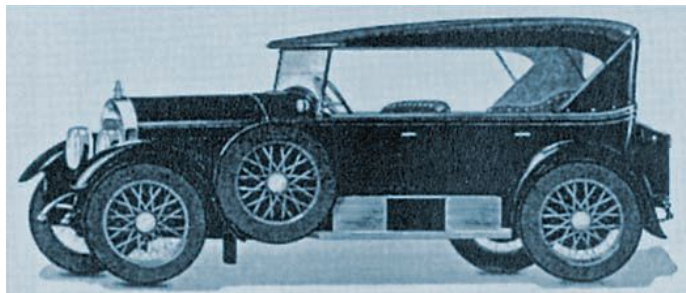
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PACKARD MORE THAN DOUBLES the previous year's output with 32,027 models. The most popular model is the Packard Six, with a displacement of 288.6-cu.in. and a horsepower rating of 60 at 3,200 RPM. Engineering changes include the Bijur and Skinner Oil Rectifier, as well as wider color availability for both interiors and exteriors, which now use lacquer paint. Two different wheelbases are available with some new body styles, making for the most diverse selection of Packards yet.

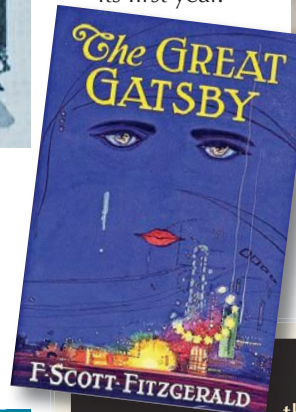
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F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S novel *The Great Gatsby* is published and sells poorly in its first year.



IN THE 13TH RUNNING OF THE INDY 500, Peter DePaolo is victorious despite missing 21 laps due to blistered hands. The Duesenberg he drove is the first car to average over 100 MPH in Indy history.



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and puts the new Standard Six in place of the four-cylinder models as the lower-priced Buicks in the lineup. The Standard Six comes with a six-cylinder, 191-cu.in. engine and a longer, 114.3-inch wheelbase. The factory price ranges from \$1,150-\$1,665 over eight different body styles. The Master Six uses the same six-cylinder 255-cu.in. as the 1924 Buicks and offers 15 different body styles, starting as low as \$1,365.

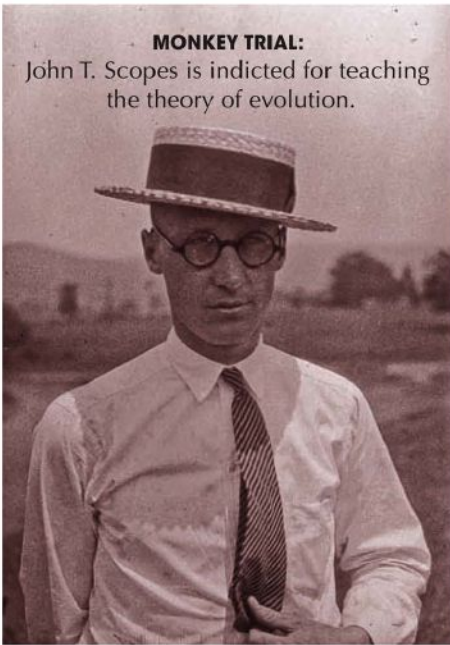


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Tudor Transformation

FROM THE MID-1930s, MY DAD worked for the Quaker Oats Company as a grain buyer. In the early '40s, during World War II, he was transferred to a semi-secret division called QO Chemical Company that was aiding the government in experimental work to produce synthetic rubber. Someone had had the bright idea that soybeans—today considered a “miracle” product, but then used primarily as animal fodder—might be the answer; and Dad was the company’s leading expert on the product. I was only six or seven at the time, and my only recollections of this period are Dad’s frequent absences from home while he was in Washington, D.C. at those Rubber Board meetings.

After the war, and the government’s failure to turn soybeans into rubber, Dad was transferred to Memphis and resumed his old job buying soybeans from southern farmers and grain mills for Quaker Oats. Because he traveled extensively throughout the Mid-South, he drove company cars, and I recall a series of stripped down, base-model Fords, Chevrolets and Plymouths through the late 1940s. In 1950, Dad struck out on his own. I came home from school one day shortly thereafter and saw a brand-new, midnight blue 1950 Ford Tudor sedan in our driveway. We finally had our very own car, the first we’d ever had in my lifetime, and I was beside myself with pride. It didn’t matter that there was no radio, no upgraded interior, and that Dad hadn’t even paid extra for white sidewalls. I’d help my Dad wash the beautiful car every week, and I took great joy in the weekend driving trips my two sisters and I would share with our parents.

By the time I was a senior in high school in 1955, the old Ford had lost much of its luster. That gorgeous midnight blue paint, then faded, looked streaky, and had a multi-colored sheen to it no matter how often we washed and waxed it. The fabric on the interior door panels was worn and threadbare, and the surrounding metalwork had been rubbed to the primer from supporting thousands of elbows over the years. My older sister was now in college, and I was going to enter the following year, and I still didn’t understand why Dad couldn’t afford to buy one

of those spiffy new 1955 Fords with the gleaming, forward-looking side panel chrome strips and the sexy two-toned paint.

All of these feelings of “automobile inadequacy” were probably fueled by the fact that I had just discovered girls, and all my friends’ dads had much cooler cars than we had. Since I had to do with what we had, I decided to take matters into my own hands and make the old Ford more presentable. My mom and dad readily agreed to let me tinker with the old car’s interior, as long as I avoided getting under the hood. That was fine with me; mechanical things have always puzzled me anyway.

Somehow, and even to this day I don’t know how I did it, I managed to get the inside door panels off. That involved removing the elbow rest, the door handle, the window crank and the metal housing that surrounded the window. Neither my dad nor I had any skills with our hands, so his tool kit included little more than a hammer, a screwdriver and a pair of pliers, but somehow I successfully accomplished the first step in my renovation. The rest should have been easy, but somehow the color palette I had envisioned in my mind turned out to be the biggest disaster since the sinking of the *Titanic*.

The cloth panels, I had decided, would be more beautiful and certainly more durable if I used leather, rather than the standard fabric that the Ford people had mistakenly believed would be best. Once I priced leather, I was back to square one. I had no budget for this job—my parents certainly weren’t going to contribute to the cause—so I had only my meager allowance for the task. So I turned to leatherette. I soon discovered that leatherette is to leather like soybeans are to rubber, but I pushed on. I selected what I believed to be maroon leatherette, and set to the task.

Actually the work went well. For the metal around the window, I chose a muted silver-gray spray paint, and, again,



the work seemed to go well. Putting the pieces all back together again was a nightmare, but I was spurred on by a vision of myself sitting next to some cool chick in the front seat of this gorgeous automobile. Finally, after about a week’s work, I was finished.

I’m sure Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso had similar experiences to mine at some

point in their long careers. For hours . . . days . . . weeks . . . they daringly applied blobs of paint to a canvas, believing they were creating a masterpiece. Only upon finishing the work did they stand back and look discriminately at the whole thing and scream . . . “ZOUNDS! What have I done?”

The maroon leatherette was, somehow, no longer maroon. It was a ghastly shade of red. And it looked as much like leather as, well, as soybeans look like rubber. The muted silver-gray metal was as bright as Christmas sparkle, and looked like it had been applied by literally throwing globs of it at the bare metal.

My parents—God love ‘em—never said an unkind word about the job, at least not in my presence. I ended up having few dates for the remainder of my senior year, unless I could double date with a friend in his car. The next year, I went away to college, so I wasn’t at home when my poor dad traded the 1950 Ford in for a 1956 model. 🐼



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FINISH: Middle Street, Downtown Lowell, MA - 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, June 22, 2014

LUNCH: Main Street, Downtown Bennington, VT - 12:05 p.m.
FINISH: Waryas Park, Downtown Poughkeepsie, NY - 5:00 p.m.

Monday, June 23, 2014

LUNCH: Pocono Raceway, Long Pond, PA - 11:40 a.m.
FINISH: Valley Forge Casino Resort, Valley Forge, PA - 5:15 p.m.

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

LUNCH: City Hall, Downtown Millsboro, DE - 11:15 a.m.
FINISH: Harbor Park, Downtown Norfolk, VA - 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

LUNCH: Waterfront Park, Downtown Elizabeth City, NC - 11:30 a.m.
FINISH: Middle Street, Downtown New Bern, NC - 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, June 26, 2014

LUNCH: Expo Center, Downtown Clinton, NC - 12:15 p.m.
FINISH: Water Street, Downtown Wilmington, NC - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, June 27, 2014

LUNCH: North Kings Highway, Myrtle Beach, SC - 11:30 a.m.
FINISH: Patriots Point, Mount Pleasant, SC - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 28, 2014

LUNCH: River Street, Downtown Savannah, GA - 11:15 a.m.
FINISH: The Landing, Downtown Jacksonville, FL - 5:25 p.m.

Sunday, June 29, 2014

LUNCH: National Parts Depot, Ocala, FL - 12:15 p.m.
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CLASSIC TRUCKS

After the Graveyard Shift

1947 Studebaker M16 makes an unusual career change from cemetery worker to show truck



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR

After supplying nearly 200,000 trucks to the Allied effort during World War II, Studebaker was eager to take on America's postwar demand for haulers.

South Bend's medium-duty 1½-ton M16 helped lead the civilian charge—ruggedly built out of a mix of proven Studebaker and aftermarket components, these trucks were down on power, but earned high marks from operators for their reliability and economy.

For on-road duty, a flathead-six-powered M16 would've been showing its age by the late 1950s, when Detroit began offering powerful overhead-valve V-8 engines in trucks.

But as a yard truck, a postwar Studebaker could soldier on indefinitely: always starting, idling contentedly for hours on end and easily repaired with basic hand tools and basic mechanical knowledge.

This month's feature truck worked its entire life at the Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford, Connecticut, lugging around barrels of water for the groundskeeping crew, hauling a tent used at burial services, and performing any other odd jobs asked of it during its 50-year tenure.





The truck's interior received a makeover with a used replacement steering wheel, fresh seat and floor covering, weatherstrip, glass and reproduction kick panels and door panels.

"They bought it new, so I'm the second owner," said the truck's current caretaker, John Gasper of Bloomfield, Connecticut. John bought the truck in 2004, and at that point it hadn't been used since 2002. It wasn't running and looked tired, but with 42,000 miles on the odometer and a history of indoor storage at the cemetery, John knew better than to administer last rites.

"I just thought it was cool—my dad and I are into Studebakers, so I thought it would be fun to fix up," he said. "It had almost no rust except the cab floor, and though it had been sitting, I changed the oil, filter and battery, filed the points and had it running in about 15 minutes."

John, a full-time engineer who restores fire trucks in his spare time, immediately began tearing the truck down for a much-needed overhaul, which wound up taking about four years to complete. He finished the racks on the body just in time to

bring the truck to the 2013 Hemmings Concours d'Elegance in Saratoga Springs, New York.

"I'd had it for about five months when I just tore it apart," he said. "I don't mess around fixing this and fixing that, piecemeal—it never works."

So, off came the doors, the hood and fenders, as well as the bed.

"I was working in a barn, so I got a bunch of my buddies together and we tilted the bed up and leaned it upright against the wall—like an Amish barn raising," John said. "Eventually, I got the truck all the way down to just the frame and rear end."

The original 245-cu.in. Commander straight-six was sent out to a local machine shop for a complete rebuild, as were the original starter and generator. John stripped the chassis and axles by hand, using sandpaper and wire wheels mounted on an electric grinder. He then applied a coating of black POR-15 to the truck's underpinnings with

The Spicer rear boasts a stout 6.66:1 gear ratio that gives the truck a top speed of about 50 MPH. It cruises nicely at about 40 MPH, according to the owner, and gets 15-16 MPG.





The 245 Commander six was rebuilt to stock specs and runs like new. Fifty-mile jaunts are no problem, as long as you've got the time. The bed was refloored with Douglas fir planks.

The racks are made out of white oak, custom cut at a local saw mill and painted with house paint matched to the cab. The cab and fenders were sprayed with acrylic enamel; the yellow is a Ski-Doo snowmobile color.

a brush. The front axle was treated to new kingpins and a set of shocks, while new brake shoes with rebuilt wheel cylinders were installed fore and aft.

While shopping at a Studebaker swap meet in Pennsylvania, John happened on an NOS Borg-Warner T-9 four-speed transmission for the truck and decided he had to have it. "The seller said he'd been dragging that transmission around for 25 years, so he was happy to get rid of it," John said. "The drain plug was worn at a 45-degree angle from being slid across the ground."

John fabricated and installed his own floor panels for the cab and welded patches in the Studebaker's cab corners. He then had the truck finished in PPG Omni single-stage acrylic enamel—the cab and wheels were painted in a shade of yellow used on Ski-Doo snowmobiles, while the fenders, bumper and running boards were sprayed gloss black.

The wood bed floor was planked in Douglas fir, planed at a friend's factory, and then the boards were finished with a few coats of polyurethane. The truck's wooden racks were milled from white



oak, then primed and painted with yellow house paint before being assembled. The bed is a Ford unit that the cemetery installed on the Studebaker when they purchased it—most likely taken from the truck that the Studebaker replaced.

During the restoration, the truck's minimalist interior also got a makeover with some fresh coverings and hard parts. "The steering wheel I bought from a guy in Kansas because the truck's original wheel was destroyed," John said. "The door panels are reproductions, and the seat was done in a thick, heavy-duty material."

The M16 was also outfitted with new glass, six new tires, a new wiring harness, new weatherstrip and an assortment of new rubber parts. For the finishing touch, John had the doors lettered with the name of his restoration business to make the Studebaker a rolling calling card.

With 6.66:1 rear gears, it has a top speed of about 50 MPH, but the truck can squeeze an impressive 15-16 MPG out of its stingy six-cylinder engine with a one-barrel carburetor. "I'll drive it anywhere 40-50 miles away," John proudly told us. "At 40 MPH, it hums right along." 🏍️



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Bicoastal Bubblenose Boogie

Playing it loose with both a Peterbilt and federal regulations



BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGE BY NEIL SHERFF, INTERPRETED BY RON ADAMS

It came down off the front range of the Rocky Mountains, headed eastbound, sometimes on four-lanes, sometimes not. It was running hard out of Denver for the place where the United States runs out of land. Heading for the coast. Loaded up with green stuff, looking to put green stuff of another kind in the owner's accounts. Facing the sunrise, trailing smoke, it was an early Peterbilt cabover pulling fruits and vegetables, threading its way at highway speed through an obstacle course laid down by the solons of Capitol Hill.

We'll explain who threw up the barriers, and how, in a minute. But first, let's look over the photo. It depicts a Peterbilt known as a "Bubblenose," the better to distinguish it from its close cousin, the Kenworth Bullnose cabover. Specifically, it's a Model 350, the first of which appeared in 1950, visually distinguished by its squared grille opening, semi-separate front fenders and that bulbous front, the same sort of thing that Freightliner was doing around the same time. Peterbilt got a strong start in cabovers by building them just before World War II for the future Consolidated Freightways before offering customer trucks. One of their best buyers was Ringsby Truck Lines, out of Denver, which had federal operating authority east to Chicago. Only it went farther east than that.

Ringsby was named for its founder, J.W. Ringsby, who went by "Bill" and started out with an REO Speedwagon in

1928, at first hauling coal around Denver. The line grew in scope and the number of trucks it operated, many of them built by Peterbilt. Fact is, Ringsby ran a couple of the most unusual Peterbilt highway trucks ever made, a wild Model 352 cabover with twin steerable front axles, a huge dromedary box, long wheelbase and a tiny sleeper perched directly atop the cab, rather than behind it. Most Ringsby Petes, however, were more ordinary cabover rigs such as this one, many of which were powered by Cummins NHB-600 diesels displacing 743 cubic inches, backed by duplex or Fuller Roadranger transmissions. They were painted in Ringsby's standard livery of orange cabs with black lettering and trim.

This photo comes out of the collection of trucking author and historian Ron Adams, of Lenhartsville, Pennsylvania. He's one of not very many individuals who can coherently explain the various operating authorities that were granted to trucking firms

while the industry was regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission, which was arguably at the zenith of its power in the 1950s. In essence, it was tasked with making sure that no trucking company, especially given the fact that many were unionized, grabbed too big a piece of the industry or "competed unfairly" with the railroads. To provide balance, the ICC had authority to approve what truckers hauled, and where.

Which, in turn, brings us back to this photo. Ron guesstimates that it may date from around 1957, and that photographer Neil Sherff may have snapped it at either Mike & Ricky's Truck Stop in North Lima, Ohio, or at the Toledo 5 Truck Stop not too far away, both of which were locations where Sherff was known to photograph working trucks. Note that both locations are well east of Chicago, Ringsby's supposed operating limit.

Note also that there's another operator's name, Long Transportation, lettered below the Peterbilt's full-width fuel tank. The tractor is pulling a refrigerated trailer. Ron suggests that since Ringsby had terminals in both Chicago and Omaha, his rigs would load up with freshly butchered meat and head for California. After unloading there, they'd reload the trucks with produce from the San Joaquin Valley and head east, aiming for New York City, where a lot of produce came in those days to distributors who accepted wholesale deliveries on the street, rather than going through the enormous Hunts Point Market in the Bronx.

Ron explains that Ringsby owned a cartage firm in New York that it used to deliver the produce to retail outlets. The Ringsby truck would then be loaded with general freight for the return trip west. Only, since Ringsby lacked the operating authority to make the run, Ringsby relinquished its operating authority on a per-run basis to Long, which was based in Detroit. This subterfuge was known as "trip leasing," by which Long ostensibly rented the truck from Ringsby for a single run. Ron tells us that Sherff lived in Michigan at the time and saw the ruse in operation several times while making trips together. "It was very unusual at the time to see a company truck that also had an owner-operator's name lettered on it." 📷



We enjoy publishing period photos of authentic, old-time working trucks, especially from the people who drove them or owned them. If you have a story and photos to share, email the author at jdannelly@hemmings.com.

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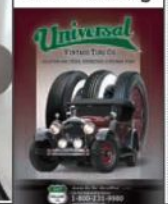
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Life Magazine
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“For the most

part, old cars

are neglected

to death.

Those who don't

let that happen

deserve special

recognition.”

jimrichardson

All in the Family

While playing “three flies up” in the street after school, we would often have to suspend the game so Mister Levine could drive by in his 1929 Chevrolet coupe. This was in the late Fifties, and by that time, such cars were rare, but what made this one special was that it was pristine and original in every way. Granted, my heathen, duck-tailed buddies and I wanted that car so we could do vile things to it like drop in a Chevy small-block V-8 and modern running gear, but nevertheless, we appreciated it immensely.

Mr. Levine never seemed to drive it at more than 20 miles per hour, and when he got home from work each day, he would pull the old Bowtie into his garage and wipe down the body and engine. The car was a gunmetal gray with a black insert in the top, and yellow pinstriping, but we would have painted it red and chromed everything. It's a good thing none of us got our hands on that car. Mr. Levine was elderly at that time, so I am sure he is gone now, but I hope whoever ended up with that old coupe gave it the respect it deserved.

Today, there is a lady nearby who has a pea soup green 1950 Ford two-door sedan she drives wherever she needs to go, and that car looks only a couple of years old, too. When I first tried to speak to her, she cut me off with a rather curt, “It's not for sale.” But then when she was thoroughly convinced that I was not going to try to pry it away from her, she warmed up. She told me she had bought it new, and that she could see no reason to sell it because it ran fine, and she had a good mechanic who took care of it for her.

And then there is another remarkable lady featured on YouTube who was 101 years old in 2011, who has a 1930 Packard Standard Eight roadster that she still drives and maintains! Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMdi8NZUscY. The lady's name is Dorothy Dunning, and she lives in Michigan. She says she loves taking friends out in it, and explains, “I've always maintained it, and I can still change the oil and the spark plugs and polish it.” Most amazing of all, though, is the fact that she has owned it since new.

I must say that I really admire such people for several reasons. First off, they have proven that

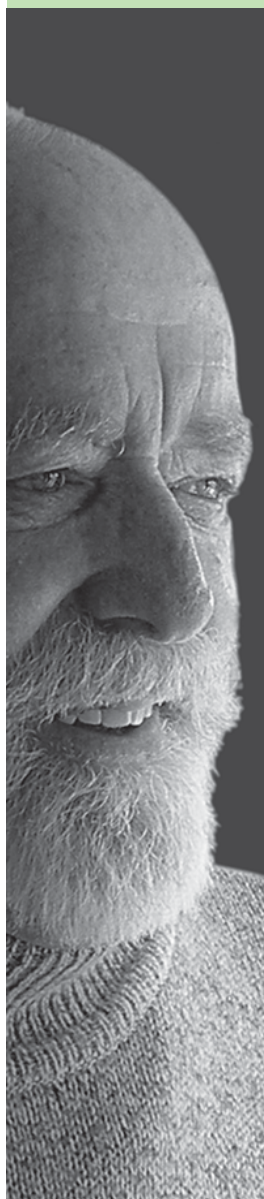
most old cars will last a lifetime if properly cared for. Secondly, they aren't spending big bucks every few years to buy new and more eco-friendly cars with the delusion that they are somehow helping “the environment.” The people who do are not taking into account the costs, pollution and natural resources required to manufacture the new cars they are buying—ostensibly, to further the common good.

Besides, since I love the classics, old car owners are preserving my environment very well. Who doesn't like to see an ancient car in outstanding condition come driving by? They are the best, most accurate artifacts from our automotive history when they are preserved rather than restored. In fact, at major car shows, I would have a special trophy for individuals who have preserved cars from new and still drive them. The trophy would not be to recognize the car, but the owner.

I confess, I have not practiced what I preach, but then I have owned only one new car and that was a 1967 Volkswagen Beetle. I kept it for a couple of years until a fellow offered to trade me a gleaming red 1966 MGB roadster for it. I have no doubt that with proper care and maintenance, that Volkswagen could be on the road today, and maybe it is. On the other hand, I have spent a good deal of my time here on earth resuscitating derelicts from the past, and restoring them lovingly, as penance for my checkered past.

Meanwhile, I miss seeing Sam Levine's '29 Chevrolet coupe meandering along, its big disk wheels flashing when turning a corner. And I would love to hear its exhaust note again, as well as the little ritual Mr. Levine went through to shift it to the next gear without benefit of synchromesh. And I take my hat off to anyone who keeps and preserves cars from new.

Such people have made good use of the earth's resources, and have provided all of us a window into the past. Keep that old car, take care of it, and drive it at least now and then so those of us who have not been so frugal and rational can see what you have accomplished. No old car needs to wear out and be junked. For the most part, old cars are neglected to death. Those who don't let that happen deserve special recognition. 🐾



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