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CLASSIC CAR

THE DEFINITIVE ALL-AMERICAN COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2016 #145



AFFORDABLE AMC
1962 RAMBLER DELUXE



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1949 MERCURY M-47

FRONTENAC SPEEDSTER

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A PERFORMANCE CAR



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670R15	2 3/4	700303	247.00	700312	223.00
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CONTENTS

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR • OCTOBER 2016 • VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1



46

FEATURES

- 20 Frontenac History
- 22 1915 Ford Model T Frontenac
- 28 **driveReport:**
1962 Rambler American Deluxe
- 40 1974 Ford Thunderbird
- 46 1949 Nash Ambassador
- 50 **Driveable Dream:**
1931 Franklin Pursuit
- 54 **History of
Automotive Design:**
Bodies by Budd
- 62 **Personality Profile:**
John North Willys
- 66 **Restoration Profile:**
1953 Pontiac Pathfinder—Part III



10



50



74



90

DEPARTMENTS

- 08 NEWS REPORTS
- 10 LOST & FOUND
- 12 AUCTION NEWS
- 14 ART & AUTOMOBILIA
- 18 PRODUCTS & PARTS
- 34 RECAPS LETTERS
- 74 DISPATCHES
FROM DETROIT
- 76 DETROIT UNDERDOGS
- 78 AUTOMOTIVE PIONEERS
- 80 I WAS THERE
- 82 REARVIEW MIRROR
- 84 REMINISCING
- 95 ODDIES BUT GOODIES

COLUMNISTS

- 06 RICHARD LENTINELLO
- 35 PAT FOSTER
- 37 JIM DONNELLY
- 39 WALT GOSDEN
- 96 JIM RICHARDSON

CLASSIC TRUCKS

- 86 CLASSIC
TRUCK PROFILE:
1949 MERCURY M-47
- 90 COMMERCIAL
CHRONICLE

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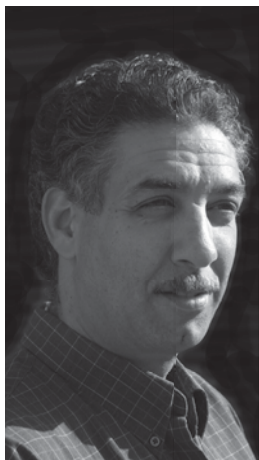
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The Forgotten Rambler

Contrary to what you see on television and read in other magazines, you don't need a high-end, expensive collector car to enjoy the old-car experience. Any old car can and will provide the automotive thrills you seek, regardless of its value or rarity, or whether or not there's a big V-8 under its hood. What the car is worth is insignificant, as are its horsepower and torque ratings.

The whole point of owning an old car is simply to be able to drive a car that's old. The type of car that doesn't have computers or ABS brakes, is fitted with vent windows and a manually operated radio, has a hood that you can actually see while driving, and has

headroom and legroom equal to your living room, not to mention the smell of vintage vinyl and the occasional scent of gasoline and exhaust fumes to excite your senses. That's the old-car experience.

Watching all the collector-car auctions and related TV shows will falsely make you believe that you need \$50,000 or more to obtain an old car that's worthy to own. But you don't. In fact, you don't even need to spend \$25,000, or even \$15,000, to make your old-car dreams come true.

Case in point: Take a close look at the 1962 Rambler featured in this issue on page 28. While it may not be everyone's cup of tea, it's proof positive that you can get into the old-car hobby for about \$5,000, maybe even less. Best of all, it's the type of old car that not only won't cost you a small fortune to maintain, but its mechanical layout is so basic, so uncomplicated, that most hobbyists will easily be able to do the majority of repairs using just basic hand tools. And you certainly won't need an OBDII scanner to read any codes.

Truth be told, since I was a kid, I've always admired Ramblers. I guess that's because my sixth-grade teacher owned a red-on-red Rambler; it was one of the 1961-'63 models. I remember it well, as its distinctive shape was unlike the big Chevrolets, Fords, Plymouths and Oldsmobiles that lined the street where I lived.

While my favorite Ramblers are the rounded 1958-'60s models, it's only been the last few years that I've found the second-generation 1961-'63 models equally attractive, but in a different sort of way. The 1967 Rogue, as well

as most of the 1964-'69 Ramblers, has been a favorite of mine ever since I attended the AMO convention in Pennsylvania back in 1994; that was when George Romney spoke during Saturday evening's dinner.

My attraction to the early '60s models was recently reaffirmed, and further cemented, when



on my way back home from New York City this past June, I made a detour off I-95 to visit *HCC* contributor and author of our monthly Detroit Underdogs column, Milton Stern, in order to photograph his Rambler. I rode shotgun to our photo site and found the car to be far more entertaining and enjoyable than its conservatively styled,

stubby shape would have you believe.

While the compact Rambler can never smoke its tires like a GTO, you don't need to drive fast to enjoy the old-car experience. In fact, cruising along at a leisurely pace allows you to better connect with the car around you, all the while affording you the opportunity to enjoy the surrounding scenery. And the car's lack of insulation, general bare-bones character and the simple fact that you have to work to drive it, make you feel like you're an important part of the machine. It's that kind of connection that makes affordable cars like the Rambler so enjoyable to own.

All too often, Ramblers don't receive the proper attention, and that's because they have never been given the respect that they so rightly deserve. All the Rambler models were blessed with some truly outstanding and unique body shapes. From their distinctively shaped grilles and roof lines to their sculptured body panels and ideal proportions, Ramblers are without question outstanding examples of America's terrific automotive styling of the postwar era.

Today, you can revel in all that's great about the Rambler, and for not a lot of money. For a car this unique, easy to drive and maintain, and filled with so much character, you will be hard pressed to find a more affordable automobile with which to enjoy the old-car experience. 📷

Watching all the collector-car auctions and related TV shows will falsely make you believe that you need \$50,000 or more to obtain an old car that's worthy to own. But you don't.

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www.carsatcarlisle.com

1-2 • Michigan Antique Festival
Davisburg, Michigan • 989-687-9001
www.facebook.com/antiquefestival

2 • All Ohio Parts Spectacular
Randolph, Ohio • 800-533-8745
www.allohioparts.com

2 • Sumter Swap Meet
Bushnell, Florida • 727-848-7171
<http://198.49.74.114/~floridaswapmeets>

5-8 • AACA Fall Eastern Meet
Hershey, Pennsylvania • 717-534-1910
www.aaca.org

8-10 • HCCA Hershey Hangover Tour
Lancaster, Pennsylvania • 626-287-4222
www.hcca.org

13-15 • Fall Swap Meet
Chickasha, Oklahoma • 405-224-6552
www.chickashaautoswapmeet.com

15-16 • The Race of Gentlemen West
Grover Beach (Pismo), California
www.theraceofgentlemen.com

15 • Palm Springs Casual Concours
Cathedral City, California • www.greatautos.org

20-22 • Norman Swap Meet
Norman, Oklahoma • 405-651-7927
www.normanswapmeet.com

28-29 • DFW Swap Meet
Grand Prairie, Texas • 254-751-7958
www.earhartproductions.com

Styling in Palm Springs

GREAT AUTOS OF YESTERYEAR IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE ITS PALM SPRINGS Casual Concours will take place October 15 at the Desert Princess Country Club. This extremely popular car show was last held on the spectacular grounds of the Country Club located in Cathedral City, California, with a dramatic backdrop of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains just a few miles away. Last year's show saw over 125 high quality original and restored automobiles spanning many different eras and brands. All proceeds go to Angel View, an organization that benefits children and adults with disabilities. For more information about the show, please visit www.greatautos.org.

Fall Pennsylvania

CARLISLE AND HERSHEY ARE THE CENTER of the collector car universe, with Fall Carlisle taking place September 28 to October 2, and the AACA Fall meet at Hershey from October 5-8. The Horseless Carriage Club's Susquehanna chapter also has a "Hershey Hangover" Tour that will take place October 8-10, which will explore the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area. Both Carlisle and Hershey will feature car corrals, flea markets,



car shows and auctions that will have something for everyone who enjoys old American classics. Full event directories for the weeks are available at www.carsatcarlisle.com and www.aaca.org, while the "Hershey Hangover" tour information is at www.hcca.org.

Our Big 10

COME JOIN US SEPTEMBER 23-25 FOR OUR 10TH ANNUAL HEMMINGS CONCOURS d'Elegance, set to revolve around the Saratoga Automobile Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York. Friday will include a rally around the Adirondack region with a cruise on scenic Lake George. Saturday will feature a cruise-in open to all makes of cars, trucks and motorcycles, with Sunday culminating in the invitation-only Concours d'Elegance. This year's keynote speaker and honorary chairman will be Lee Holman, of Holman Moody fame. We are still accepting cars, so if you think your car would be eligible, submit photos to concours@hemmings.com. In addition to our annual classes, this year's featured marques include Auburn/Cord/Duesenberg, Triumph (all years), 1966-'78 Oldsmobile Toronado/Cadillac Eldorado, 1955-'62 Tailfin Evolution, 1968-'71 Cobra Jet Ford and pre-1990 Military Vehicles. Visit our site at www.hemmings.com/events/concours for more details.



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Still in Service

READER STEVE JENNINGS RECENTLY SENT US A photo of a Checker Aerobus that he spotted in front of the lodge at Montana's Glacier Park: "Currently licensed and still in service," Steve wrote.

Makes us wonder exactly how many other Checkers remain in livery service today, 34 years after they were last built? And what exactly the folks at Glacier Park have had to do to keep this one running?



Pushmepullyu Two

WE SHOULD PROBABLY start a national registry for double-ender cars, given how many we've learned about through this department. The latest came to us from David Steiner of Roseburg, Oregon, who sent photos of one employed by the local Masonic Hall for parades.

According to information from the *Roseburg News-Review* that David passed on, the car was originally

built in the early to mid-1950s in Klamath Falls, Oregon, from a Plymouth Deluxe and a Plymouth Standard. Unlike some other double-enders we've seen in this space, it has


two steering wheels but only steers from one end. It made its way to Roseburg in 2013 and has been a parade staple ever since.

Got any more we should know about?



Go Fast Nash

FINALLY, IT APPEARS THE HUNGERFORD BOYS ARE at it again, this time using a Nash. Or perhaps it's the JATO urban legend guy. Or maybe he's just a big Beatles fan and forgot the periscope?

 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/>.

A close-up photograph of a classic car's rear end, focusing on the taillight and headlight. The taillight on the left is a deep red with a circular, concentric pattern. The headlight on the right is clear with a diamond-patterned lens. The car's body is a dark, polished color.

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October Classic

THE FALL MEET AT HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA, is always a huge show, and RM Sotheby's will be putting on its annual auction at The Hershey Lodge on October 6-7. Consignments are still being accepted for this sale, and among the highlights is this century-old Pierce-Arrow Model 66 Seven-Passenger Touring Sedan, powered by a mammoth six-cylinder engine. Last year's event saw a 1913 Pierce-Arrow 66 sell for \$830,500, so it will be interesting to see where this one shakes out. For an updated list of consignments and other upcoming auctions, visit www.rmsothebys.com.



DAVID McNEESE

Santa Monica Sales

AUCTIONS AMERICA CONCLUDED ITS SANTA MONICA AUCTION with its impressive selection reining in over \$14.2 million. The auction saw a sell-through rate of 65 percent, with supercars filling the top sales spots. There were options, though, for fans of American classics and for bidders who didn't want to break the bank. This 1948 De Soto Custom Sedan sold for \$8,250 and featured a gray cloth interior with woodgrain trim throughout and a restored pearl white steering wheel. For a full listing of Santa Monica's auction results, please visit www.auctionsamerica.com.

AUCTION PROFILE

CADILLAC MODELS WERE COMPLETELY redesigned and restyled in 1957. The Eldorado models went through the same changes up front as other Cadillac models, with hooded headlamps, low cross-hatched grilles and large wheel openings. The dramatic rear styling set the Eldorado apart with its sharply pointed fins, lower rear quarters finished in chrome that swept around the corners into a rounded rear deck while functioning as a split rear bumper. With its limited production run of just 1,800 cars, the Eldorado Biarritz was the pinnacle of Cadillac ownership.

This particular Biarritz is powered by an optional, rebuilt 365-cu. in. 325-hp V-8 engine, with dual quad carburetors and a four-speed Hydra-Matic automatic transmission. Finished in Elysian Green, the older ground-up restoration featured EZ Eye



CAR 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz Convertible
AUCTIONEER Leake Auction Company
LOCATION Tulsa, Oklahoma
DATE June 11, 2016

LOT NUMBER 467
CONDITION #3+
RESERVE No
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE \$115,000
SELLING PRICE \$90,000

tinted glass, coil spring independent front suspension, factory air, heater, power windows, power top, Autronic Eye automatic headlamp dimmer,

electric six-way power seats and parade boot. Considering its less than perfect condition, it sold for slightly less than market value. Well bought.

OCTOBER

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Portland Report

MECUM AUCTIONS FINISHED UP ITS VISIT TO the Pacific Northwest with another successful show at the Portland Expo Center in Oregon this past June. Mecum saw a sell-through of 81 percent, with sales eclipsing \$8 million. This nice 1948 Studebaker Champion Convertible came complete with original sales invoice, manuals and service policy. It went through an extensive body-off restoration 10 years ago with new red leather upholstery and refinished in the correct Tulip Yellow exterior. It found a new home with a top bid of \$45,000. For a full list of sales results, please visit www.mecum.com.

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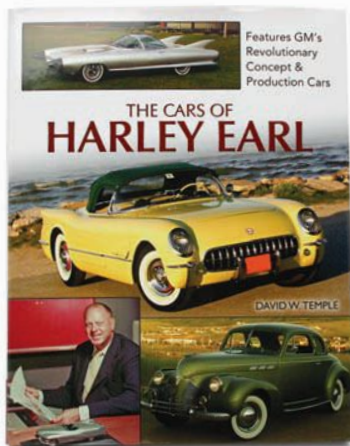
Chevrolet's unique emblem is one of the most recognizable and honored in the automotive industry, and true Chevy fans love to display it everywhere. Goboxes—the American company noted for creating practical, attractive toolboxes bearing officially-licensed logos—now offers a stylish, 1950s-style wall clock that will surely appeal to Bowtie fans. It's made of durable powder-coated steel overlaid with a high-gloss decal; the quartz clock mechanism features metal hands and is powered by a single AA battery (not included). This clock is also available in the modern-style red-and-black coloring, without Chevrolet lettering. It measures 23.5 by 10 inches, and is one-inch deep.

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The world-famous flathead V-8-powered Ford Speedster represents America's best-selling, most beloved collector car publications in the *Hemmings Motor News* Great Race and other historic motoring contests, and it's now a piece of art in the form of a new and collectible display plate. Titled "Beacon in the Night," this stamped and screen-printed aluminum license plate (item #LICSPD) is a colorful, lighthearted way to show your allegiance and to liven up your garage or den wall, or if your state allows, the front of your own classic car.



The Cars of Harley Earl

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When the topic of American automobile design is raised, the name of GM's first, and longest-lasting, head of design, is spoken in reverent tones. Through Harley Earl's European-inspired 1927 La Salle, GM showed that styling sells cars. The automotive designs created for the road and the show turntable under his watch influenced automakers around the world. Historian and author David Temple has created a new, generously illustrated 192-page hardcover that follows Earl's entire tenure at GM up to his late-1958 retirement, and highlights many production and concept cars with rarely-seen styling rendering and photos. For fans of car design, it's a thrill to see what was, and to understand what might have been.



1967 Paxton STP Turbine

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WWW.REPLICARZ.COM • \$249.95

The racing has never been better, but lots of purists bemoan the fact that Indy car racing is largely a spec series today, devoid of real innovation. This 1/18th-scale diecast recalls a wild era, nearly half a century ago, when things were very different. Powered by a helicopter engine, Andy Granatelli's turbine rocked the Indy establishment to its very core, dominating the 1967 race with Parnelli Jones in the hot seat (pun intended) until a fuel pump shaft failed in the very closing laps. This is arguably the most famous car of all time that didn't win the Indianapolis 500. It's beautifully treated here with every pipe, fastener and marking in its proper place, as part of Replicarz's spectacular series of historic Indy cars. This belongs on any racing historian's shelf. Want still more? A 1/12th-scale version is in the pipeline.

— JIM DONNELLY

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The Imperial was an upmarket Chrysler in 1938, riding on a longer 125-inch wheelbase and extending to more than 205 inches overall; much of that length went into the impressively stretched hood. The C19 Imperial Eight Coupe—an “ideal personal car for business or pleasure,” the brochure noted—has been modeled in 1:43 scale by Brooklin Models in the U.K. This hefty white-metal collectible features beige paint and a matching interior, and the 1:1-scale car’s ample bright trim has been recreated faithfully. Brooklin has also rendered this model in Chinchilla Gray Poly, with whitewall tires, and both variants are handsome representations of a rarely seen part of Mopar heritage.

Seagrave Since 1881

734-459-3967 • MATTLEE333@SBCGLOBAL.NET • \$70

When better marque histories are written, will they be about fire trucks? We’re on a firefighting kick this month, so we decided to present this exceptional retrospective authored by fire apparatus historian Matthew Lee. This huge 392-page hardcover tells the tale of one of firefighting’s most august nameplates, Seagrave, going right from the horsedrawn era (on sleigh runners, no less) to today’s powerful, technology-laden rigs. The richness of illustration in this book is staggering, with nearly 1,000 photos, including a sizable number of delivery photos and engineering cutaways. There are

outtakes on major Seagrave customers including Los Angeles and the fabled FDNY. We really enjoyed this classy book, one of several the author publishes, and we bet you’ll like it just as much. —JIM DONNELLY



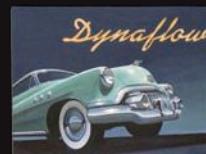
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GUITAR WITH WALL-HANGING BRACKET AND MATCHING PAINTING, \$1,500

Creative and talented automotive fine artist Dan Reed (Auto Art, HCC #23) is always looking for ways to expand his portfolio and express his affection for classic car design. He recently reached out to share his latest project, which combines his art with his lifelong passion for playing music. “Last summer, I got the idea to combine the two hobbies into one by making custom, fully functioning electric guitars with a vintage automotive theme,” Dan tells us.

“This concept came about, in part, because of all the chrome automotive scripts, hood ornaments, badges and emblems I’ve collected at swap meets like Hershey, Carlisle and Macungie, with the intent of working them into my automotive paintings. At some point, it occurred to me that some of these pieces would look cool on a guitar. That thought led to the light bulb moment of actually building my own guitars, designing them from scratch with shapes inspired by vintage automobiles, painting them in



automotive colors and incorporating actual car parts into the design. Each of these guitars will be unique, like my paintings, and each will be designed around the specific vintage car parts that are built into them,” he says.

Dan’s “Overdrive” guitar incorporates a chrome Ford “Overdrive” script, as well as a section of hood ornament that creates an operating taillamp whose toggle-switched LED lamp glows with 9-volt battery power. His “Dynaflow” guitar features a 1952 Buick’s chrome script and one fender porthole that lights up; watch videos of him playing this stylish instrument on the Jason Reed Band website, www.jasonreedband.com.

These individual guitars are teamed with an original acrylic painting that complements the color and design theme of the instrument they’re paired with. He’s created a special wall-hanging bracket for the guitars, and is working on a number of additional guitar/painting pairings, including the themes of Bel Air, Imperial and Starfire; contact the artist for more information.



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Tree shown much smaller than actual size of 12" high. Requires 3 "AA" batteries (not included).

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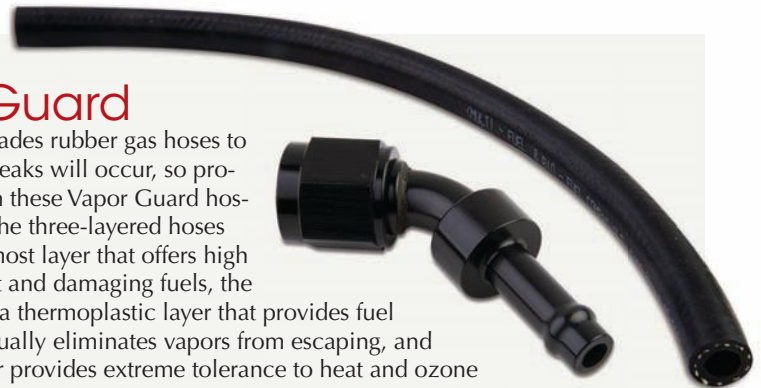
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Synonym for Speed

Back in the 1920s, the name *Frontenac* meant high-performance accessories for the Ford Model T

BY DAVID CONWILL • IMAGES COURTESY OF THE LARRY SIGWORTH COLLECTION

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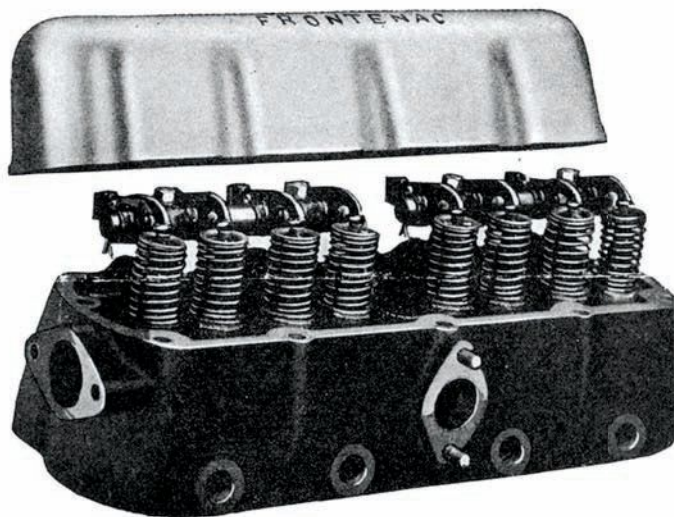
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MODEL S, for Fords Converted into Speedsters
MODEL R, for Racing Cars

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Much like Enzo Ferrari a generation later, Louis Chevrolet had ambitions of turning his prewar Frontenac race team into a producer of road-going automobiles. This venture, undertaken with

younger brothers Arthur and Gaston, was a victim of the postwar recession of 1920-'21 and retired from the business of building automobiles before it started.

The Frontenac automobile company's most significant accomplishments were when Louis captured seventh place at the 1919 Indianapolis 500 and when Gaston took the checkered flag at the 1920 Indianapolis 500 in a Monroe-Frontenac. Gaston, unfortunately, died in a board-track race in Los Angeles only seven months later.

With the economy at large in crisis, Arthur and Louis were looking for quick cash. Harry Miller might famously have dismissed Ford speed fans as having no money, but with more than half of all cars on the road being Ford Model Ts and the proportion of low-budget racing cars being closer to 99 percent, Louis and Arthur recognized an opportunity.

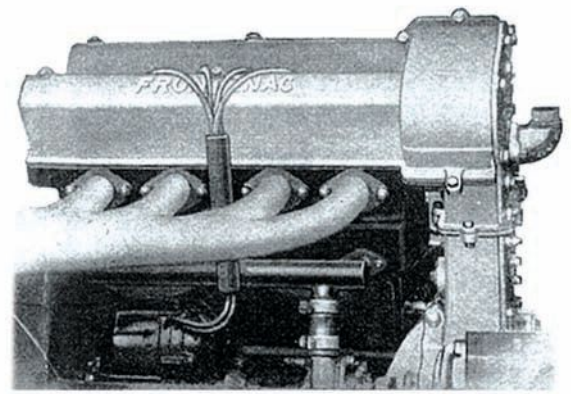
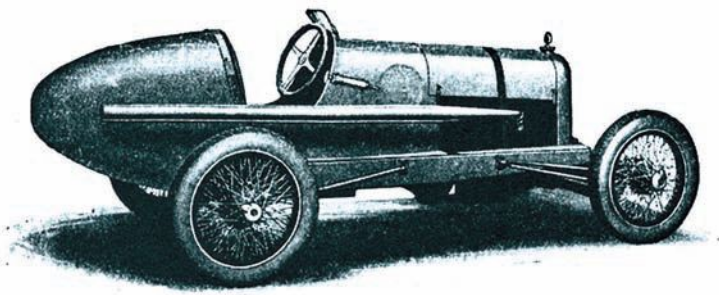
The brothers enlisted C.W. Van Ranst, chief engineer of their road-car effort, to design an overhead-valve conversion for the Ford engine. Van Ranst's engineering talent, which would later gain him distinction with the Cord L-29 front-wheel-drive system, yielded a cylinder head that was both powerful and durable. Coupled with the brothers' reputation, the Frontenac cylinder head was a winning formula.

The "Fronty," as it was dubbed, was hardly the first overhead-valve conversion for Fords on the market, nor was it necessarily the most powerful, but it was the most successful, with around 10,000 Frontenac cylinder heads of all types sold. The original Frontenac head design featured a single intake port and triple exhaust ports arranged in a crossflow design. It came in three varieties: the R, intended for race cars; the S, for road-going speedster use; and the T, designed for touring cars and trucks. The cylinder head castings were differentiated only by their compression ratio. All three types used the same 1:1.5 rocker-arm ratio to actuate two 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch valves per cylinder.

The addition of a Type T to a standard Ford automobile would increase horsepower from 20 to 33. Naturally, these proved a popular addition to many mostly stock cars and trucks and drove the bulk of production.

The single intake port of the Frontenac cylinder head must have seemed like a step backward compared with the two ports of the stock Ford. While buyers of the original praised its power and reliability, those on the hotly contested dirt-track circuit demanded more power. Once again, the brothers called on Van Ranst, and he produced a revised design: The Frontenac S-R.

The S-R was largely similar to the R but for the inclusion of



two intake ports and spark-plug provisions on both sides of the head. This cylinder head would receive its baptism by fire in the 1923 Indianapolis 500. This was not the first time a Fronty-Ford had taken a shot at Indy, with a pair equipped with the Type R head entered in 1922, one of which finished 14th.

The 1923 effort sported the new and improved S-R cylinder head but was otherwise mostly Ford. Its 85 MPH average speed was sufficient to finish “in the money,” with the Ford taking fifth place behind four handcrafted Miller 122 racing cars and ahead of Bugatti, Duesenberg, Packard and Mercedes entries, among others.

The original R/S/T heads continued to sell alongside the new S-R cylinder head, and the brothers conceived something even better to enter at Indianapolis in 1924. A 16-valve, DOHC cylinder head was devised. The new head, dubbed the Model D-O, gave a good performance at Indy, averaging over 88 MPH for the last 300 miles of the race—sufficient to outpace the fifth-place, S-R equipped car in 1923.

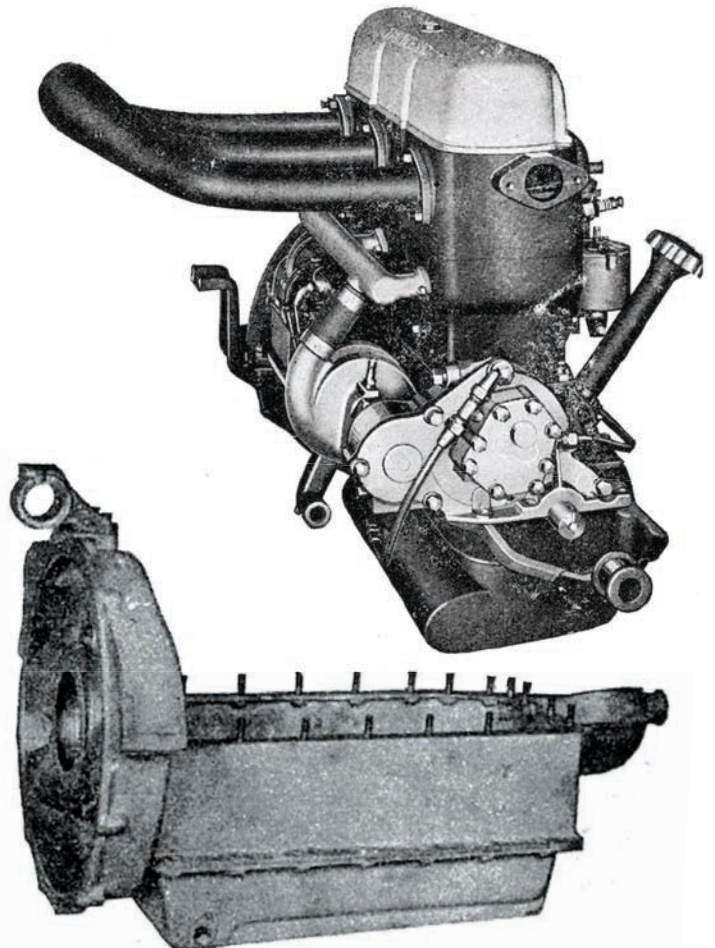
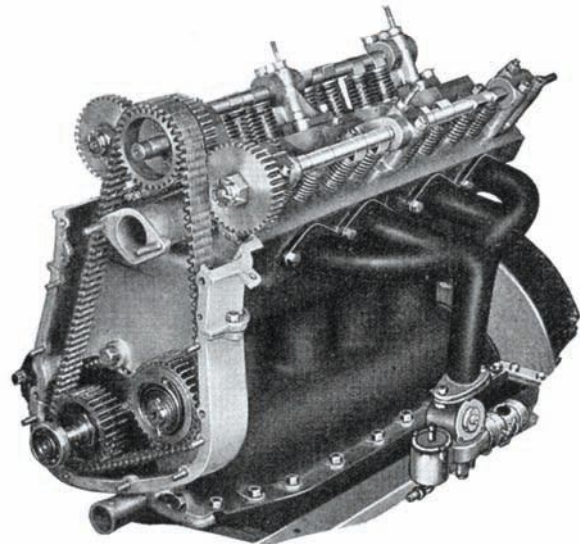
As the 1920s wore on, Louis began to pull back from the racing business somewhat in favor of consulting with auto and aircraft manufacturers, leaving Arthur to run things. By 1929, the brothers had formally parted ways, and the company once known as The Chevrolet Brothers Manufacturing Company was now the Arthur Chevrolet Aviation Motors Corporation to reflect Arthur’s own interest in producing aircraft components.

Arthur did not neglect his speed parts business, however, introducing more equipment for the Model T, which had now been replaced on the market by the Model A but was still the dominant platform on American racing circuits. Ford owners could adapt the transmission of the new Model A to their T with a “Special Fronty Crankcase for Sliding Gear Transmission,” and those with R/S/T and S-R heads could obtain a new SOHC conversion for those units.

By 1930—in addition to the Model T cylinder heads, speed parts and even complete racing cars that had been the company’s staple throughout the 1920s—Arthur had even introduced heads for the Chevrolet four-cylinder, the new Chevrolet six-cylinder and the Ford Model A four-cylinder. The last of which is widely considered to be among the most powerful aftermarket cylinder heads for the Model A, though only five were produced.

The economic troubles that began in 1929, would sadly prove far more severe than those that had spawned the original Frontenac cylinder head business in 1920. Arthur’s company quietly folded around 1931.

Arthur and Louis Chevrolet never found lasting financial success pursuing their passion for speed, but they left an indelible mark on the American automotive scene. So sought after were the Frontenac cylinder heads that in their time that, “Fronty Ford” became virtually synonymous with a hopped-up Model T, whether equipped with a Frontenac head or not. Even today, estimates place the number of OHV-equipped Model T speedsters on the road at around 500, and enthusiasts continue to seek out, restore and place these cylinder heads back into service whenever possible. That is the real Chevrolet legacy. 🏁





Frontenac Flivver

Modified with a Frontenac cylinder head and aircraft details, this 1915 Ford Model T has been transformed into the ultimate speedster

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO





Top: Levers on column control throttle and spark advance. Starter switch has aircraft or marine origins. **Right:** Four pedals intimidate newcomers. **Bottom:** Aircraft seats have powder-coated frames and leather upholstery.



Building a race car is almost as much about what you remove as what you add. Take this 1915 Ford: The original builder, sometime in the 1920s or '30s, got rid of the fenders, running boards, original body and several inches of the frame, paring away a considerable amount of weight and wind resistance. To that, he added a low, sleek body riveted together like a vintage aircraft fuselage; a Ruckstell two-speed rear axle; and a whole slew of engine modifications.

The 176.7-cu.in. Ford Model T four-cylinder engine was officially rated at 20 horsepower for its entire existence, although even owners of restored and original cars will tell you that its real power output steadily declined over the course of its 1909 to 1927 production run. Whatever its original level, the Model T engine was capable of much more thanks to its rugged construction, which not only made for lots of room for improvement but permitted durability even after extensive modification.

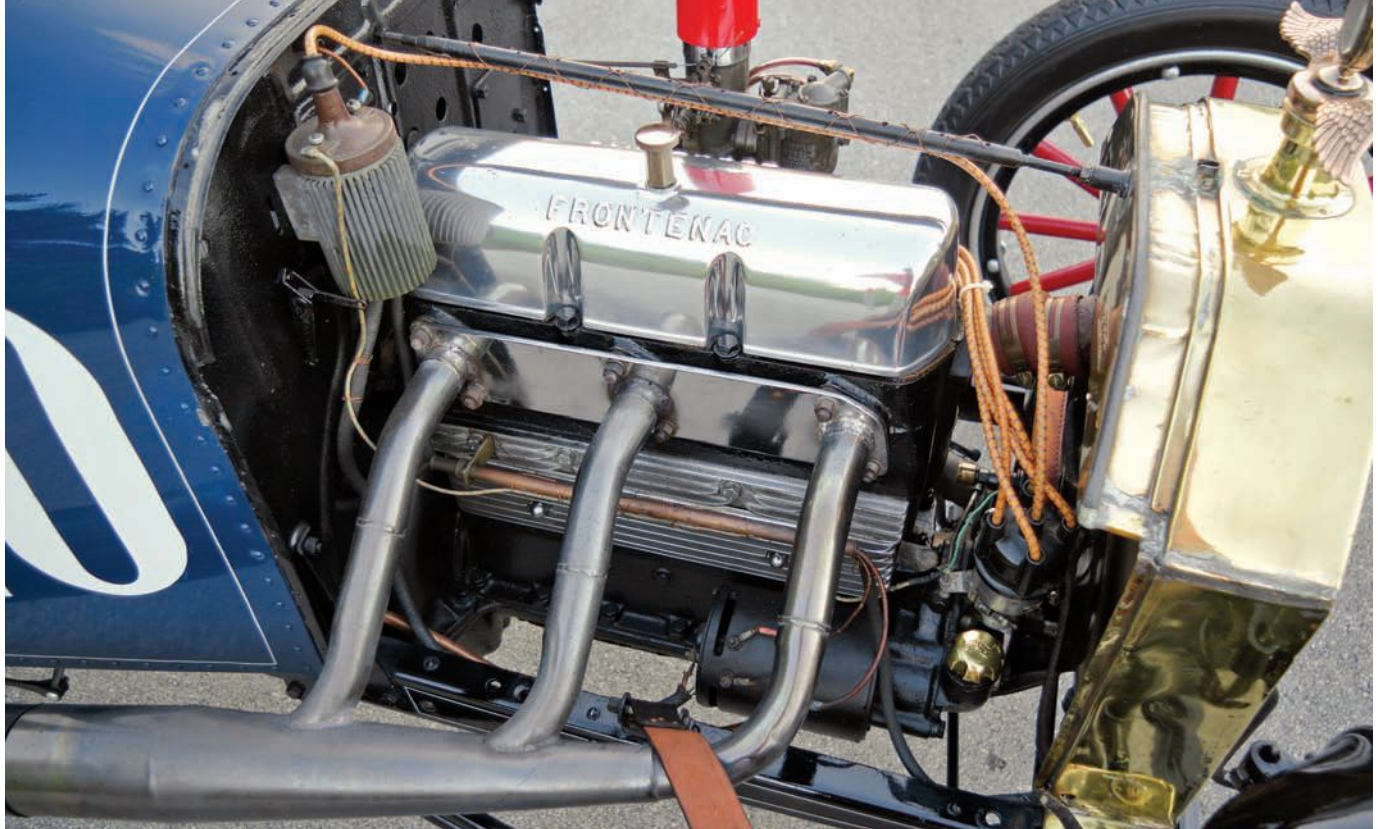
Modifying the Model T engine was in its peak in the late 1920s. A combination of a booming economy, the virtually free nature of used Fords and widespread interest in auto racing combined to make fertile ground for aftermarket parts feeding the speedster and race-car market. From before World War I up to 1934, the Ford Model T was the acknowledged king of American racing.

The introduction of the superior Ford Model A and the legendary flathead V-8, not to mention the Great Depression, served to eclipse the T engine for many years, but as early as the 1950s, interest in T-powered speedsters and race cars was on the rise once more. Part of the phenomenon came from retirees reliving their speedy youth and another part came from the Model T's continued status as an affordable old car—a position it still enjoys today, along with incredible aftermarket support.

There has since been a steady stream of Model T-based hot rods emerging from the garages and workshops of enthusiasts, and many combine the ingenuity of today with the looks of yesteryear in a package virtually indistinguishable from a survivor from the early days. As fun and exciting as a contemporary speedster is (and at this point some of the second-wave cars are old enough to be significant in their own right), it's all the more intriguing to encounter one of the rare originals like this month's feature car, stripped down for dirt-track racing out in California.

As you would expect on such a minimalist automobile, the engine is the star of the show. Equipped with a Frontenac R cylinder head, the over bored engine now displaces 180 cubic inches. The Frontenac cylinder head, designed at the behest of the Chevrolet brothers, was one of the premier pieces of speed equipment both on the road and on the track throughout the 1920s.

The R-type cylinder head's lower-compression, T-type stablemate was capable of boosting the power of a stock Model



T engine by 50 percent. With the R-type head, high-compression aluminum pistons and other modifications, current owner Andy Hagar, of Davie, Florida, estimates his T is producing between 50 and 60 horsepower.

Nearly as sought after as the Frontenac cylinder head was the Winfield Model S carburetor, a down-draft unit developed by legendary self-taught race engineer Ed Winfield, who later went on to fame for his camshafts. The Frontenac cylinder head and the Winfield carburetor were each advertised as adding both power and fuel economy. Appropriately then, Andy says the speedster returns approximately 20 to 25 miles per gallon of regular fuel.

The exhaust manifold is another original piece of Frontenac equipment, advertised to provide “the famous ‘Speedway Roar’” for drivers of modified Fords. It is interesting to note that the three-port design often confuses onlookers. “They ask,” Andy relates, “Is this a three-cylinder engine?”

Although the Frontenac cylinder head was advertised as having large, well-thought-out water jackets that worked with the Ford’s factory thermosiphon cooling system, this car has been equipped with a period aftermarket water pump, also from the Frontenac catalog. Frontenac was truly one-stop-shopping for builders of fast Fords in the 1920s.

For ignition duties in this (relatively) high-RPM engine, the original Ford low-tension magneto, coil box and timer were replaced by a Bosch distributor conversion—something popular both in the 1920s and today. Removing the stock magnets lightens the flywheel, permitting the Ford engine to rev faster, and the distributor provides stronger, more accurate spark at the increased speeds expected of a dirt tracker, speedster or of any car driving on modern roads.

The original builder of this speedster may have been associated with California’s early aviation culture. In addition to the bodywork methods, the instruments and controls (notably that oversized Leece-Neville starter switch) seem to have their origins in period aircraft. Even the red-leather seats look strikingly similar to what you might find in a Ford Tri-Motor or Lockheed Vega airplane from the late 1920s.

The chassis follows conventional construction techniques of



Frontenac-Ford engine boasts doubled horsepower, thanks to plenty of period speed equipment including eight-valve Frontenac R-cylinder head, Winfield S carburetor, finned coil cover and water pump.





Triple-tube Frontenac exhaust manifold reduces backpressure and gives T engine “that Speedway Roar” sought by speed demons.



Ford rear crossmember and transverse spring were raised with Laurel Motors brackets, lowering the car. Ruckstell two-speed rear axle permitted installation of high-speed ring and pinion with no penalty.



Brass radiator and headlamps identify speedster’s origins in a 1915 Ford Model T. Lots of effort goes into keeping it shiny.

the time. In addition to the aforementioned shortening (preferred for dirt trackers where the short wheelbase yielded a more nimble vehicle), Laurel-type lowering brackets were used front and rear. The Laurel Motors Corporation was associated with Robert Roof, best known as a designer of overhead-valve conversions and one of the few designers to remain in the business from the Model T era up through the reign of the Ford V-8 after WWII.

In the front, the brackets relocate the axle in front of the spring in an arrangement popularly known as a suicide drop. In the rear, the brackets move the entire rear crossmember (which doubles as the perch for the Ford transverse leaf spring) up several inches, something later hot rodders would mimic by cutting and welding frames—a process called Z-ing.

Wood artillery wheels are retained, though a Ford owner of means usually would replace them with stronger, lightweight wire units from Houk, Dayton and others. Wire wheels on a road car were more or less an aesthetic choice, but under the severe lateral strains of racing, the wire construction stood up better and were considered to be the safest option.

On the subject of safety, sharp-eyed readers will note that Andy’s speedster, like its assembly line brethren, has no front brakes. In the Model T era, Ford anticipated that braking duties would be handled by a brake band in the T’s planetary transmission, actuated by the right-hand floor pedal, which would stop the driveshaft and therefore the rear axle and rear wheels. Ford owners in the era would often use the reverse pedal, in the center, interchangeably with the brake—the idea being that this would wear down the bands evenly.

Ford did provide pressed-steel brake drums in the rear, but with the idea that these would be used only to keep the car from rolling when parked or in emergencies. In fact, prior to 1926, Ford rear brakes lacked any linings, with bare metal shoes acting directly against the metal drum. A popular aftermarket accessory, known as Rocky Mountain brakes, was designed to supplement the Ford braking system by providing larger drums and lined, externally contracting bands for the rear.

Although his car isn’t equipped with accessory brakes, Andy reports that stopping is more than adequate. “The brakes work really well,” he says, “Pull too hard on the hand brake and the rear wheels lock up.”

That hand-brake lever, incidentally, is one of two levers on the car. There are also *four* pedals on the floor. In addition to the aforementioned brake and reverse pedals, there is a third factory floor pedal on the left which controls the transmission speeds: hold it down for low gear, let it up for high, and half way down is a state generously known as neutral. Many Model T owners will attest that T’s tend to creep if the hand brake is not adequately set.

The fourth pedal, found to the far right, is a foot-feed throttle. Foot-feed was not a feature on Ford vehicles until the 1928 Model A. From the factory, the Model T throttle mechanism was con-



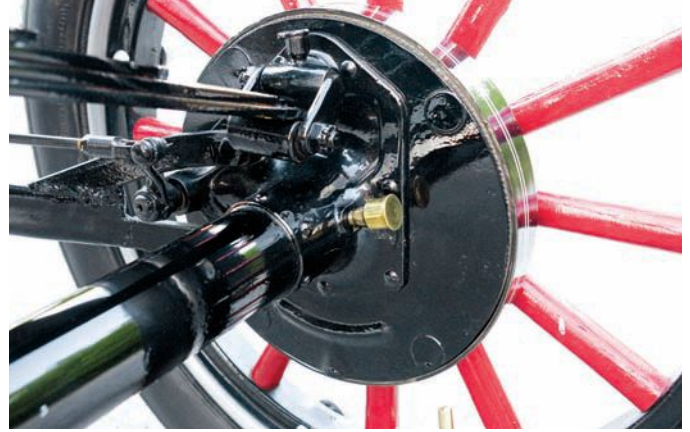
Before reliable gauges, a Moto-Meter was a popular accessory on both stock and modified Fords for monitoring of water temperature.

trolled by a quadrant on the steering wheel. Every self-respecting racer, however, used a foot throttle and many owners of conventional road cars followed suit.

The second lever controls what was probably the single most widespread mechanical accessory for the Model T, one that Henry Ford respected so much that the company authorized Ford Agencies to install them, the Ruckstell two-speed rear axle. The Ruckstell geared down the factory ring-and-pinion when engaged, making the factory 3.63 gears act like a 5.59:1 ratio. This provided an additional range for hill climbing or acceleration, but did not increase top speeds—although it was popular to retrofit 3:1 or even 2.77:1 ratio gears along with the Ruckstell unit for that purpose.

Andy says that while the controls had some learning curve, they're really not all that complicated. "As anybody that has ever driven a Model T can tell you, it requires some thought at first. The added gas pedal just increases people's confusion. They see four

“When I saw this blue Model T listed for sale in Hemmings, I was hooked. This car just spoke to me. My original intention in buying the car was just to use it—and she looks great in the garage.”



Brass grease cups permit regular lubrication of bearings, which is critical on the modified engine, especially when original Ford roller bearings are retained in service instead of upgraded.

pedals and two levers and it leaves them baffled.”

Model T controls aside, driving any speedster is also an experience apart from any other car. With minimal bodywork and no seatbelts, Andy says the sensation is more akin to “driving a really wide motorcycle.” It’s also worth remembering that shock absorbers were an aftermarket accessory for the Model T, and the builder of this speedster saw no need to add such equipment, leaving the car to ride solely on its spring packs.

“You feel every pebble in the road,” Andy says. He also went on to say: “True to its dirt-track origins, the car seems to prefer left turns. And the appeal of the car is in its nostalgia and its looks; this car is something I have always wanted. While it’s not a practical car to drive, it is most fun. Forty miles per hour in the speedster feels like 110 in my Lotus Elise. I’m told she will do 80 to 85 miles per hour, but I haven’t had her that fast.”

That Lotus, incidentally, was a big factor in how Andy ended up with this car. It’s a similar dark blue to the speedster. “I have always loved Model Ts and I have always loved the look of the old speedsters,” he says, “And when I saw this blue Model T listed for sale in *Hemmings*, I was hooked. This car just spoke to me. My original intention in buying the car was just to use it—and she looks great in the garage.”

Andy’s speedster came from Oregon most recently, about ten years ago, from an owner who had “too many projects.” Andy commissioned the seller to complete the restoration for him before shipping the car to South Florida. After taking delivery of the car, Andy tweaked a few things to his liking, including adding the number 10 on the radiator, cowl and fuel tank.

Best of all, Andy, who also owns a 1931 Ford Model A and a 1913 Metz 22, has used the simple and sweet Model T to get his grandkids excited about the hobby. “This is my own little *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*,” he says, “My grandkids adore her. After a ride, my three-year-old grandson threw a fit when we tried to unbuckle him from the car.”

There is one downside to the car, though. That brass radiator? Handsome and old-timey as it is, Andy says “It takes quite some time to keep it polished.” We’re sure it’s worth it, though. 🏆

America's Funky Compact

*What it's like to own and drive an unrestored
1962 Rambler American Deluxe*



BY MILTON STERN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Love them or laugh at them—the 1961-'63 Rambler Americans are now a kitsch classic. An evolution of the original 1950 Nash Rambler, America's first successful compact car, the 1961 Rambler American was an extensive reskinning of the "bathtub" Rambler American of 1958-'60.



The first Rambler American, which was a revival of the discontinued 1955 two-door platform, was the brainchild of American Motors President George Romney to give dealers a car that served as the best alternative to the ever-growing import market, at the time dominated by the Europeans. The inexpensive car also broadened American Motors' market coverage. Nash and Hudson had been laid to rest, and standard Ramblers, also compacts, were only available with four doors, including the wagons. The timing could not have been better.

The first year, with only a two-door sedan in the offering,

45,000 Rambler Americans found loving homes. A two-door wagon was added for 1959, and 90,000 Americans were adopted. The following year, a four-door model on the same 100-inch wheelbase was created and, in a year when competition arrived with the Falcon, Comet, Corvair and Valiant, Rambler sales increased again.

Why? The answer is simple. At the time, the Rambler American was a roomier alternative to the imports and had six-cylinder power, a very low price and proven mechanicals but comparable efficiency and size (other American-built compacts



Front seat, recovered in NOS upholstery, matches original rear seat perfectly. Superior “Weather Eye” heating-ventilation system has simple controls. Instrument cluster, from the 1960 Rambler Classic, and glove box drawer accent the dash’s symmetrical layout.

were introduced with at least 106 inches between the wheel centers). Rambler Americans also enjoyed high resale values due to minimal styling updates and a concentration on engineering improvements.

By 1961, American Motors was already planning to develop an all-new platform to be introduced for the 1963 Classic and Ambassador that would be the basis for all its models, including an all-new American model the following year. However, the 1950s bathtub styling was in desperate need of an upgrade, but styling had to be achieved on the cheap, maintaining the friendly American’s inner structure. Edmund Anderson gets blamed or congratulated for the result. Enter the all-new American, which underneath was still a Nash Rambler. The wheelbase remained at 100 inches, but exterior dimensions came in at three inches narrower and nominally shorter than the bathtub body. While interior room was virtually unchanged, cargo volume increased thanks to a better location for the spare tire and a squarer trunk lid.

The “breadbox” Rambler Americans may look odd to you today, just as they may have looked odd to your parents and grandparents. Consider any of the imported saloons of the time from Vauxhall, Hillman, MG or Renault, as well as the English Fords, and you will find styling that was just as funky.

Arriving with the new style was American Motors’ most extensive model line-up. One could order a Rambler American two-door sedan or station wagon, a four-door sedan or wagon, and for the first time since 1954, a convertible—sans fixed side window frames. In 1963, a sexy hardtop joined the family.

Base power was provided by the 90 horsepower L-head 195.6-cubic-inch six-cylinder, whose

origins dated back to the 1941 Nash 600 with its integrated intake manifold cylinder head and steel-pipe exhaust manifold. Optional power was a 127 horsepower OHV 195.6-cu.in. straight-six and, later, a 132hp version.

Transmission choices were the three-speed manual, manual with overdrive, and three-speed Borg Warner Flash-O-Matic. In 1962, E-Stick arrived, which required shifting but no clutch. Twin-Stick was added to the build sheet in 1963.

The front was still suspended by upper and lower trunnions with high-mounted coil springs, and the rear by leaf springs. The firewall was redesigned, so the master brake cylinder was under the hood and not the floorboard, and pedals were now suspended. Inside, the “Uniscope” gauge was replaced with a more modern instrument cluster, borrowed from the 1960 Rambler Classic, in a symmetrical dash that lent itself well to right-hand-drive conversions. The glovebox was no longer a drawer.

Model designations were “Deluxe,” “Super” and “Custom” the first year, then “Super” was dropped, “Custom” moved down a notch, and “400” topped the lineup for the 1962 model year. The old-fashioned Deluxe and Custom designations were dropped in favor of “220” and “330,” respectively, in 1963, when “400” became “440.”

The biggest news for 1962 was the standard dual-master brake cylinder in all Rambler models; no other American car company offered this safety feature as standard equipment on all its cars.

Our driveReport car is a 1962 Rambler American Deluxe four-door sedan in Elmhurst Green. The only options on the car are an outside rearview mirror, Weather Eye heater-defroster and undercoating. There is no cigar lighter or radio. Under the hood is the flathead, and on the column is the three-speed



AMC reminds you that unitized bodies are sturdy. Codes indicate this car left the factory with roof and body painted Elmhurst Green.



The 1956-cu.in. flathead straight-six engine puts out 90hp and gets 30mpg. Uncluttered engine bay provides easy access to mechanicals.

with synchromesh on second and third gears, but no overdrive. According to the original owners, the white roof was painted by the dealer at their request. The lower body was treated to an Earl Scheib-quality respray in its original color sometime in the early 1980s.

It takes a strange kind of car enthusiast to seek out a 1962 Rambler American Deluxe four-door sedan—I'm that kind of weird, and this is my car. I love base-model survivors. This unrestored Rambler American was a one-family car that was passed on to their son in high school. According to his mother, he hated it at first until his friends told him how cool his car was.

Sold in Kansas, Millie Helper, as I have lovingly nicknamed my Rambler due to my being a fan of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, has travelled a little more than 85,000 miles. The only cosmetic changes I have made were repainting the wheels in their original color. I also had the sagging front seat foam replaced and recovered in NOS fabric from SMS Auto Fabrics. The little Rambler received such good care over its lifetime that the front seat looks nearly identical to the rear, which still wears its original upholstery. The headliner and door panels are original as is the rubber floor mat.

At some point, the family swapped the mechanical fuel pump for an electric unit, but I replaced it with an NOS mechanical fuel pump, which allowed me to attach the lines for the vacuum-boost wiper motor. There is no electronic ignition. Our grandparents drove with points and condensers; so do I.

The Rambler had been sitting for almost 15 years, so I replaced the water pump, thermostat, temperature sending unit, battery, battery tray and hold-down, all the hoses, belts and any leaking gaskets, front brakes, rear spring shackles and, recently (after our photo shoot), the original clutch. The gas tank was dropped, cleaned and sealed, and reinstalled with an NOS fuel filler hose and a new fuel-sending unit.

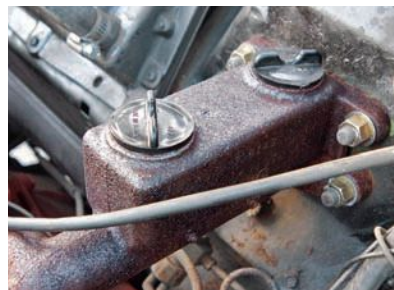
Those freshly painted wheels, including the spare, were treated to new tires. I also prefer blackwalls, especially on a

base-model car with painted wheels and button hubcaps. I don't get slapping a set of fat whitewalls on a car that wouldn't have been ordered with them. I wanted the car to look as it did when the young couple took delivery of it in 1962.

The panel behind the rear seat and the trunk mat had dissolved due to a trunk leak, so I replaced the weather stripping in the trunk. The available aftermarket replacement trunk weatherstripping was too thick, and I couldn't close the lid. At Pep Boys, I found self-adhesive weather stripping that was a perfect fit. Pep Boys also had the correct vacuum lines for the wipers and fuel pump. I replaced the back seat panel with an NOS panel and ordered a new fitted rubber mat from a Rambler parts supplier. That rubber mat and the overflow tank for the radiator are the only items that weren't part of its original build sheet.

The split-back bench seat has all the mechanisms in place for the famous Rambler Airline Recliner seats due to standardized manufacturing processes, but without the levers for actuating the recline function; the seat is stationary. I guess the first owners thought the reclining feature was an unnecessary expense.

What is it like to drive a 1962 Rambler American Deluxe? First, let me address any of the ridiculous things you've heard or



All 1962 Ramblers were equipped with dual-master brake cylinders, a rare safety feature in its day; deluxe gas cap is also original.



When I found this Rambler American and discovered it was a base model survivor in my favorite color that hadn't been modified, I knew I had to have it. While most people look for convertibles or hardtops, I am drawn to four-door sedans, and I think no four-door compact stands out in a crowd more than a "breadbox" Rambler American. I love the way the lines flow continuously from front to back, creating a dramatic rear end, and the grille compliments the angled motif with its upside-down trapezoid shape. America's lowest-priced car had a lot of style. From an engineering standpoint, the Rambler American set the standard for American compact cars with ease of handling, parking and ownership. Even today, there is no easier classic car to drive or maintain. I also enjoy driving by gas stations without stopping.

read about driving one of these flathead sixes. Yes, you can go up hills and maintain your speed up a mountain, and you can drive comfortably at 63 MPH all day long. Can you burn rubber in this car? I doubt it, and I haven't tried. The Rambler American isn't the fastest car off the line, but I have never had a problem keeping up with traffic or merging onto the highway.

I like three-on-the-tree, and the transmission shifts smoothly. You do need to come to a complete stop before shifting into first gear as there is only synchromesh in second and third. We have a lot of traffic congestion in the Washington, D.C., suburb where I live, so there have been times when I just stayed in second for long stretches as we hover between 10 and 25 MPH; the Borg-Warner T-96 gearbox has a long second gear.

The Rambler American's handling is wonderful. The advertising was correct; it was America's easiest-steering car. I don't know why anyone would have ordered power steering. Even parallel parking is a breeze. Without an anti-roll bar up front, it does tend to swing a bit on the curves if you push it too hard, but I know the Rambler's limits. The ride is also very comfortable. I also prefer manual brakes, and the dual-master brake

cylinder really provides a good feel and braking power.

One of the best features is the Weather Eye heating and ventilation system. The knob has a setting for "refrig," but you can't turn it that far unless your Rambler American is A/C equipped. The heater warms the cabin up very quickly, and the defroster is one of the best I've experienced in any car regardless of era. Thanks to vent windows, floor vents and a two-speed fan to force more fresh air into the cabin, the hottest days are not uncomfortable. However, those vacuum wipers are more amusing than useful.



What is the best part of owning America's least-expensive car in 1962? The gas mileage. I average between 28 and 32 MPG on mid-grade gasoline, and with a 20-gallon tank, on long trips I stop only when I need a bathroom break.

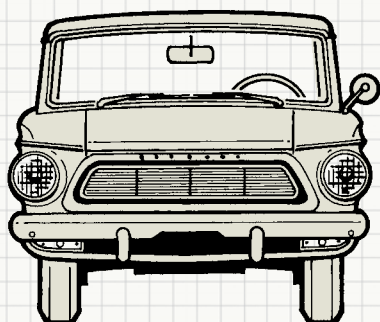
The only future plans I have for my 1962 Rambler American Deluxe is to have it repainted, including the roof, making it a single color car again. Then, it will look as it did when the dealership took delivery.

The 1961-'63 Rambler Americans are fun cars, and you will get a lot of attention when you arrive in this quirky import fighter. 🚗

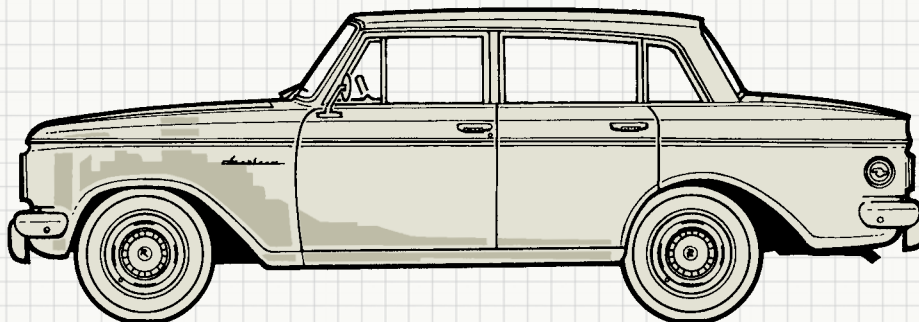


1962 RAMBLER AMERICAN DELUXE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2016 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



← 54.62 inches →



← 100 inches →

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$1,895
PRICE AS OPTIONED	\$1,988
OPTIONS	Driver's side outside rearview mirror, \$3; Weather Eye heater/defroster, \$60; undercoating, \$10; dealer painted roof, \$22

ENGINE

TYPE	L-head straight-six, cast-iron block and cylinder head
DISPLACEMENT	195.6 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.13 x 4.25 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	8:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	90 @ 3,800
TORQUE @ RPM	160-lb.ft. @ 1,600
VALVETRAIN	Solid valve lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Four
FUEL SYSTEM	Carter YF IV carburetor
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Single exhaust

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Three-speed Borg Warner T-96, manual column shift
RATIOS	1st: 2.605:1 2nd: 1.630:1 3rd: 1.00:1 Reverse: 3.536:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hypoid with semi-floating rear axles
RATIO	3.77:1

STEERING

TYPE	Worm and roller, manual
TURNS, LOCK-TO-LOCK	5.5
TURNING CIRCLE	36 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, four-wheel manual with dual-master brake cylinder
FRONT/REAR	9-inch drums

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Unitized, all-steel body and frame
BODY STYLE	Four-door sedan
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Upper and lower trunnions, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, tubular shock absorbers
REAR	Solid axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs, tubular shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Pressed steel disc
FRONT/REAR	15 x 6 inches
TIRES	NEXEN blackwall radials, 165/80/R15

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	100 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	173.1 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	70 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	56.1 inches
FRONT TRACK	54.62 inches
REAR TRACK	55 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	2,454 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts
COOLING SYSTEM	12 quarts
FUEL TANK	20 gallons

PROS & CONS

- + Easy to drive
- + Basic mechanicals
- + Excellent gas mileage
- Explaining who made the Rambler American
- Explaining why the rear wheels are set forward
- Explaining why I bought a four-door Rambler American

WHAT TO PAY

LOW \$2,000 – \$4,000

AVERAGE \$5,000 – \$7,000

HIGH \$8,000 – \$10,000

CLUB CORNER

AMERICAN MOTORS RAMBLER CLUB

77 County Road
Simsbury, Connecticut 06070
Phone: 860-658-0027
Website: www.amrcr.com
Dues: \$25 annually
Membership: 1,100

AMERICAN MOTORS OWNERS ASSOCIATION

12229 Freemont Lane
Raleigh, North Carolina 27613
Phone: 919-795-3530
Dues: \$35
Membership: 1,860

FACEBOOK

"'61 thru '63 Rambler Americans"

THANKS FOR THE JAVELIN ARTICLE

in HCC #143. It brought back memories of the 1969 Javelin SST I had with its 390-cu.in. 315hp., four-barrel carb, 3.45:1 rear gear ratio, glasspack mufflers, Bittersweet orange paint with a black stripe down each side, black vinyl roof, fake black fiberglass hood scoops, the works. Driving it was like piloting a low-flying jet. The American Motors zone manager from Atlanta left it at Bill Whiten Rambler in Ensley, Alabama, and went back home in a Rambler station wagon because his wife was scared to drive the Javelin. I happened to show up at the lot the next day and bought the car.

In 1970, a friend of mine and I were headed down to New Orleans in the Javelin to do some sailing on Lake Pontchartrain while pulling a sailboat. A fellow in a GTO pulled up beside us somewhere in Louisiana on I-20 and indicated he wanted to race. Naturally I took the challenge, and we were a car and boat length ahead and still pulling away when I looked at the speedometer and saw it registered 110 MPH. It then crossed my mind that if a tire on the trailer blew we would probably be spread all over the interstate, so I let him go on by. Anytime I raced anyone after that, I made sure I wasn't pulling a trailer.

The seats that folded down flat were a plus on a date, as any single Rambler owner could attest to. Unfortunately, after a number of years I had to have something else for a daily driver and had to let the car go. My wife from the above sentence and I both miss the Javelin.

Hugh Sager
Hueytown, Alabama

THE MORE I PORE OVER THE ARTICLE

about the AMC Pacer (HCC #137), the more it puzzles me that AMC didn't find a V-6 engine to fit that platform. The relatively short but wide engine bay lends itself to that configuration, and a small power boost might also have resulted. American Motors may not have had an in-house V-6, but with a few phone calls, they probably could have rounded one up.

Alternatively, AMC's engineers could have lopped off two cylinders from an existing in-house V-8, and come up with a V-6 with wide applications for their other models, too.

I mourn the loss of the Rambler/AMC

marque. They made so many interesting and worthwhile contributions to the American automobile experience. I still miss my 1964 Rambler Classic, with a straight-six, torque-tube drive, and an automatic transmission that was smooth as silk.

Henry Smith
Sorrento, Maine

IN HMN #143 JIM DONNELLY

expressed personal interest, but also uncertainty as to the history of the Duesenberg brothers and the Mason motorcar; wondering if it was honoring Freemasonry. I shall briefly answer his query.

Fred and Augie Duesenbergs' first experience with machinery began with agricultural equipment repair in Rockford, Iowa. By 1898, this would develop into a shop manufacturing racing bicycles. According to nephew Milton Duesenberg, the brothers' first foray into automotive manufacture was in 1903 wherein they worked for a brief 42 days at Rambler Motors in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

In 1906, friend George Mason seems to have teamed Fred with his father Edward Mason, a local lawyer. Their mutual love for racing cars would continue through World War I. According to the *Des Moines Register Leader*, on April 1, 1906, Edward and Fred announced their intention to produce motorcars; Edward being the majority stockholder. The motorcars were to be called "Marvel." By May 10th, the same newspaper indicates the company had changed the name to "Mason". These motorcars were powered by a two-cylinder horizontally-opposed water-cooled engine. Not coincidentally, the vehicles bore more than a passing resemblance to the Rambler.

The first significant update to the Mason came in 1908. Increased manufacturing, and thus more capital were publicly solicited. The white knight came in Senator Frederick Maytag, who stepped up to fill the financial need in 1909. The Maytag years were not without drama. The operations were moved to Waterloo, Iowa, followed soon thereafter by a name change to Maytag. Mounting red ink, the rejection of Augie's four-cylinder engine design and possibly the brothers' preoccupation

with racing all led to a split in 1910. The brothers joined Sears Auto Co. selling Hupp-Yeats, Mitchell and REO automobiles. No longer were Duesenberg-designed engines being placed in the Maytag-Masons, but rather Excelsior and Atlas engines; a decision which likely caused the brothers more than a little heartburn.

In 1912, Frederick Maytag cut his losses with divestiture in his namesake motorcars, and chose instead to focus on some dopey idea of washing machines.

Edward Mason resumed control of the renamed Mason Motor Co. Fred and Augie returned, sort of. They maintained a little race shop at the Mason plant in Waterloo, under the new name, Duesenberg Motor Co. John Baeke, MD
Solvang, California



JUST FINISHED DAVE CONWILL'S

story on the 1950 Plymouth Suburban, to my great delight! Both my father and uncle were car dealers, and we lived right across the street from Waco High School's vocational education campus, Waco Tech as it was called, and I was crazy about cars from day one. As a six-year old in 1950, I can remember my father giving me a strange-looking box one day with a stylized "S" on it—when I opened it, it contained the AMT 1950 bulletnose Studebaker Starlight Coupe. I was hooked on AMT and JoHan 1/25-scale models for the rest of the '50s.

Continued on page 36

Jeep

It's hard to believe that Jeep is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. On the other hand, it sometimes feels like Jeep has existed forever, like the dirt and rocks it calls home.

To me, Jeep and its predecessors, more than any other existing automaker, reflect the tumultuous times the American auto industry has lived through. Most of

you know the Jeep story but to briefly recount, when the U.S. military realized around 1940 that the country might soon be drawn into a war, it began to make preparations. One thing military planners quickly decided would be crucial was a light scout car that could transport two or three men along with a heavy machine gun and

ammunition. They contacted 135 manufacturers, mostly automakers and truck companies, that they felt could design and build such a vehicle. But the contract they offered wasn't very appealing; it called for a rugged vehicle with four-wheel-drive and room for passengers and cargo yet weighing only 1,300 pounds. It also had to be able to haul at least 600 pounds, or nearly half its own weight. Those lofty goals were simply beyond the technology of the day. Oh, and once the plans were submitted, the winning bidder would be allowed a scant 49 days in which to engineer, build, test and deliver the prototype rather than the usual two to three years! After that, they'd have 26 days in which to build another 69 pilot models incorporating any changes the military wanted. It was a contract that only a desperate company would even bother with.

The Army was lucky: There were actually two—and only two—automakers desperate enough to bid on the job: Willys-Overland and American Bantam. Willys had been struggling ever since the Great Depression, having entered bankruptcy in 1933. Since then, the reorganized company enjoyed just one year of profit; every year but 1938 it had lost money. For Willys, the addition of a military contract might be enough to return it to profitability.

Bantam Motors was in much worse shape; car production had been discontinued, the firm was almost completely broke and on the verge of closing. Only a miracle would save Bantam, or



perhaps a military contract. With nothing to lose it contacted independent engineer Karl Probst, who agreed to design the vehicle with only a contingency agreement: He'd get paid only if Bantam won the contract. Probst drew up complete plans for a lightweight patrol vehicle of unusual design. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. It would be the first Jeep.

Bantam won the initial contract and eventually got another contract to produce an additional 1,500 units. But soon Willys and Ford got similar contracts for vehicles they designed afterwards, and both were capable vehicles. Before long it became a three-way shootout to see which firm would win the big contracts

that were sure to come. Exhaustive testing proved Willys, with its powerful engine and robust design, outshone the Bantam and Ford products. In the end, the military declared the Willys MB to be the Army standard. Ford eventually was allowed to build copies of it dubbed the Ford GPW—General Purpose Willys.

So by the time of the Pearl Harbor sneak attack, the Jeep was already in production. Once the fighting began, orders poured into Willys and it saved the company.

The Willys scout car earned its reputation in the ultimate testing ground—all-out war. G.I.s came to love the little Jeep. U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall called Jeep “America’s greatest contribution to warfare.” It was all that and more; a cavalry mount for a modern era, a vehicle that could seemingly perform just about any task.

Because Willys Jeep was nearly always profitable, Henry Kaiser bought the company hoping to salvage something from his Kaiser-Frazer venture. Jeep’s lock on the U.S. four-wheel-drive market along with large overseas operations generated consistent profits. Willys saved Kaiser from going bankrupt. After American Motors bought Kaiser, Jeep helped keep that company afloat as well. It later rescued Chrysler. Now it’s keeping Fiat Chrysler in the black.

Jeep is an American legend, a gold-plated icon that provides us all with a great deal of pride. So, happy anniversary, Jeep. We’ll see you at the 100th! 🎉



The Willys scout

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G.I.s came

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In 1950 Product Miniature in Milwaukee introduced a plastic 1950 Plymouth Suburban in slightly larger 1/20-scale. This was a much more detailed model than the AMT version in that it had an interior, both rear windows and tailgate opened, and it had a raised, detailed chassis underneath. Another nice feature was that by moving two toggle switches on the chassis you could lower the rear seat just as in the real wagon. This model sold for \$3 when AMT models sold for 98 cents in those pre-sales-tax days in Texas.

I was immensely proud of it and always held it up when photos were taken during birthday parties, while my friends were assigned lesser AMT models to show off. The windshield pillar was razor thin and was quite often the first casualty, as was the case with mine. Also, since the models were played with by very young children, cracks often occurred at the front of the roof. Mine was still in pretty good condition when I traded it to a friend in the mid-'50s, and I always regretted it. Finally, in the late 90s, I was able to buy an identical tan one, complete with box. They came in several colors including Army green and gray. They also made a version of the four-door sedan, which is actually rarer. They were also made in 1951 and 1952, but then discontinued. I've always loved this model of Plymouth for the very things that were named in the article, their simplicity and beauty of line and function.

Eddie Mitchell
Waco, Texas

RICHARD'S COLUMN IN HCC #143

about the Plymouth Suburban hit a point that bothers me, too. I'd like to see more restored cars look like they did when they left the factory instead of the accessory-bedazzled examples we see so often. No Tri-Five Chevrolet ever came from the factory with fender skirts or a continental kit, so why do so many wear them now and alter what the designers intended?

The column notes that the Suburban's wheels are a refreshing change from the chrome wire wheels and full wheel covers that most cars came with at the time. Here I take exception. I was a car-crazy kid when the Suburban was new, and to my memory no car came with wire wheels in 1950. My best recollection is that the 1953 Buick was first with an option of wire wheel covers, and then of course

the Skylark introduced later that year came with real wire wheels. Wire wheels were dropped back in the 1930s, so it's inaccurate to show a car from the 1940s or very early 1950s with them. Moreover, not infrequently we see a car such as a 1955 Buick Special with wire wheels. While that is a historical possibility, in reality nobody back then would likely have paid for expensive wire wheels on a Buick Special—a Roadmaster maybe, but not a Special.

Fred Bagwell
Richmond, Virginia

THE GO-GO GIVEAWAYS ARTICLE

in the HCC #143 brought back many memories. Your article featured the items Chevrolet dealers gave away during the fall announcement period, which was a big event back in the 1950s and Sixties. We, as Chevrolet district managers, back then were the ones who had to sell those items to the dealers. So, every summer the zone sales promotion manager would assign us objectives for Announcement Materials. Some items were things the dealers really needed such as showroom literature, paint chips and product manuals that included specifications, trim samples, etc. but also included "trinkets and trash" to be given away during the fall announcement period.

The promotional items you featured were sometimes a hard sell with the larger dealers who usually took some just to get rid of us. On the other hand, many of the smaller dealers loved heat pads and yardsticks as long as it had their names on them. In fact, sometimes I felt a little guilty taking their orders—almost.

Those were fun times back in the late 1960s and I recently threw away a worn out "mystic gripper" for opening glass jars from Owen Chevrolet, Ortonville, Michigan.
Dave John
Loudon, Tennessee

REALLY ENJOY YOUR MAGAZINE,

one of the finest in my opinion. What prompts me to write is the latest Detroit Underdogs column. I know that whatever car is featured that someone inevitably writes in to say that it was the worst car they ever owned, so now it is my turn.

The last issue's (HCC #143) feature of the Ford Escort brought back memories of my own 1982 Ford Escort, my first new

car. I treated it with extreme care with the thought that it would last forever—boy was I wrong. My Escort had the HO engine option with a two-barrel carb and headers for a few extra horsepower but not enough to see off any VW GTIs which routinely blew my doors off.

If that wasn't bad enough, at about 50,000 miles the engine blew, not while I was driving it hard either; I was just riding along one stormy night and bang! the water pump froze, breaking the timing belt and destroying the "interference" engine and leaving me to walk home eight miles in the back woods, in the rain at three a.m. I had the engine rebuilt and, soon, the suspension started squeaking everywhere, making even routine drives annoying, coupled with ignition problems and a new thirst for tires and oil, it forced the decision to sell at about 65,000 miles. I was never happier to see a car leave my driveway. Sometimes when my friends get together, we swap Escort stories now that time has passed and we can laugh about it. I think that the reason these are now rare isn't a mystery to anyone who ever owned one.

Bob Brooks
Suffield, Connecticut

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY, FIRSTLY, THAT

I have been an avid subscriber since November of 2009 and have enjoyed each and every issue since then, so much so that I have recently purchased close to 45 back issues to read what I missed before I subscribed. Secondly, I would like to thank Jim Donnelly for his article in the July 2016 edition "Professionally Speaking" for covering professional automobiles.

Being in the funeral industry myself, I was glad to see that someone would take an interest in the growing number of people who own and collect hearses and limousines. These vehicles were part of the reason that I chose to work in the funeral business. There are very few mainstream magazines that will touch upon professional cars. Nothing would please me more than to see more articles in this great magazine diving into the world of professional cars.

Daniel Catherwood
Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

Please note: When writing to Recaps, always include your name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you!

A Model Upbringing

I really like old books. On my mobile device, I'll sometimes surf through a plethora of used-book dealers, searching around for something interesting or worthwhile. I've uncovered a lot of reading from the past, automotive and otherwise, in just this manner. Everything from an original copy of *The Olympian Cars* to Griffith Borgeson's landmark *The Golden Age of the American Racing Car*. You never know what you're going to uncover while spelunking for paper. So imagine my surprise and delight when I came across a relatively unmolested copy of *Gus Wilson's Model Garage* online. I scored it at once.

If you're nodding right now because you know who Gus Wilson was, you're probably dating yourself as much as I am. Let me give you a little background. My Uncle Bill, whom I've written about in this space before, was an inveterate reader of home-handyman magazines—some people call them screwdriver books—as far back as I can remember. You probably know most of them, led by *Popular Science*, which is still being published. And you may know that the dean of American road testers, Tom McCahill, was a longtime staffer at *Mechanix Illustrated*. Gus Wilson stories were a regular monthly feature in *Popular Science*, and the book that I located is a back-pocket paperback by Berkley with 25 Model Garage features lifted from the pages of the magazine. It was published in 1963 with a 40-cent cover price, if you can imagine that today. The author was Martin Bunn, and I wonder if that was a pseudonym used by a magazine staff member, just like I wonder if Joe Gutts at *Science & Mechanics*, who once road-tested a Hells Angels chopper, was a real person.

Anyway, the cover art shows the quiet, preternaturally competent Gus Wilson sorting through a handful of feeler gauges as he stands over the open hood of an OHV Austin, of all things. He's wearing a peaked cap and, naturally, a leather jacket. The stories follow Gus and his loyal, hardworking assistant, Stan Hicks, as they tackle automotive mysteries that find their way

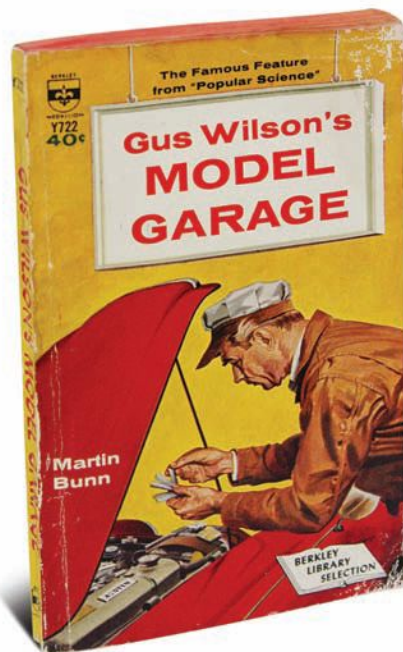
to the Model Garage. There's a tale about Gus's troubled nephew, a ducktailed hot rodder who wants to be a mechanic but has problems with self-esteem, just for openers. A French teacher bobbles into the garage with an expired inspection and a non-functioning horn. A judge, the courtroom kind, struggles with repeatedly burned-out points.

Gus and Stan come to the rescue, often with their trusty tow truck.

Really, it's a nice little thumbnail guide to ethical business practices in the art of repairing cars after smartly diagnosing what's wrong. Typical for the era, each one of the Wilson stories closes with a little moral, which I kind of like. Bromides such as don't cheat customers, don't shortchange a repair job, be good and respectful to your fellow man, the sort of life lessons that could stand to be retold a time or two today.

Gus Wilson was the guy, even as an effigy, who introduced me to cars. I was an only child and when we went over to see my uncle and aunt, it was my unassigned job to stay out of the way while the women labored in the kitchen and my father and uncle quaffed Old Bohemian and railed about the high cost of new cars, gasoline and New York property taxes. There were always piles of screwdriver books around, usually stacked next to my uncle's jar of pipe tobacco (Gus Wilson smoked a pipe, too) and I buried myself in them, learning about the flying cars of tomorrow, color TV circuitry and oil viscosities. And for light fiction, I always came back to the door of the Model Garage and its sometimes corny writing. I really enjoyed it. Just think, a wrench twister who was the hero and conscience of his own little town, with a cast of characters to match.

You know something? Old Gus Wilson was a pretty good role model for an impressionable young kid. Taught me some really basic stuff about honesty and doing good work in the community. That's always worth learning. Thanks to Martin Bunn, whomever and wherever you are. Or maybe I should be thanking Gus and Stan instead. They really did a lot for me. 🐶



Just think, a

wrench twister

who was the hero

and conscience

of his own little

town, with a cast

of characters

to match.





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It's the Sizzle That Sells the Steak!

Awards for salesmen who excelled in their efforts to sell as many new cars as possible, for the most part, took the form of a lapel pin, tie clasp, or even possibly a ring. I had never seen nor heard of more tangible rewards earned by a car salesman of the prewar era until recently. Apparently in 1940, the Buick Motor Division of General Motors thought it would be wise to present the opportunity to those who were selling their cars a way to earn prizes of a more useful nature.

The “Spring Fever, or Sell ‘Em While We’re Hot” contest started at 12:01 a.m. March 11 and ended midnight May 10, 1940. Every Buick salesman in the employ of an authorized Buick dealer at the time the contest was going on was eligible. Contest forms were filled out in quintuplicate; these copies went to the Buick zone office and to the contest manager at the Buick factory in Flint. A huge contest booklet was provided with a minimum of 1,000 points earned during the contest period required to qualify for a prize. There were a lot of rules and regulations that had to be strictly followed

The points were scored for new car deliveries—with Buick trade-ins and non-Buick trade-ins—and used cars were also included. The more expensive models of Buicks earned more points for each one sold: Every series 90 Limited delivered earned 1,600 points, and on the other end, the series 40 Special earned 300 points. Dealer and salesman-owned Buick demonstrators could be included in the contest when they were also sold. The “Grand Prizes” for the “high” salesmen in each of the contest areas were United States Savings Bonds. To qualify for the U.S. Savings bond prizes, salesmen had to deliver 50 percent or more of their sales to non-Buick owners. There were reasons for disqualification, as well. The salesman couldn’t get points for a car sold by a sales manager (new or used), or a dealer-owner or partner. “Pooling of delivery

points is Forbidden. We mean Business!” stated the rules.

“It’s the sizzle that sells the steak!’—So keep on sizzling!” was what Buick told its salesmen. That phrase would continue to be used up into the 1970s.

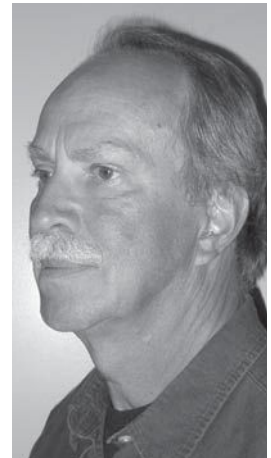
There were over 500 different prizes that



could be had for points illustrated in the huge prize catalog that had a total of 48 pages. Just about anything you could imagine was in there waiting for you to win, if you secured enough points. Some examples of the items that could be earned were: A swank yellow-gold-finished watch chain for 134 points; 50 cans of assorted food, among this lot was six cans of Spam and three cans of Ham a La King (*Yum!*) for 2,650 points; a Hamilton gold pocket watch for

7,700 points; and ladies faultless no-belt pajamas of pure silk for 1,150 points. That last item could possibly be interpreted as being pretty risqué for the era, but it was immediately followed on the next few pages by prizes such as an ironing board, cookbook, and an automatic electric egg service cookery and poaching dish that included four cups. There were numerous other prizes from sports equipment and furniture to toys for kids, rugs and Colonial-style eight-day chiming hall clocks.

Was this contest unique for Buick at that specific time? So far, my research to locate other car manufacturers that offered such an elaborate reward program has turned up nothing. I don’t have any evidence that Buick ever offered a similar contest prior to, or since, the Spring 1940 event mentioned here. My inquiries of former salesmen and dealers in the auto industry and fellow automotive historians have not revealed any other promotions for salesmen such as this one, with its substantial goods as rewards for car sales. I would welcome any readers’ comments with further information concerning contests like this from any era. 🐾



The ‘Grand Prizes’

for the ‘high’

salesmen in each

of the contest

areas were

United States

Savings Bonds.



Top Flight

Ford's ultimate performance luxury car: the 1973 Thunderbird

BY JEFF KOCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT STIPE







Color-keyed comfort was the name of Thunderbird's game in 1973. A clock and a 120-MPH speedometer are the gauges facing the driver; the AM/FM stereo cassette was an extra-cost option.



Starting with the 1966 model year, a recurring magazine-ad motif for Ford's personal-luxury Thunderbird centered on pilots, air travel, the freedom of the open sky, and endless possibilities ahead. Then for 1970, they dispensed with all subtlety and just placed a Thunderbird on the airport tarmac in front of a couple of Pan Am 747s, a pilot and flight attendant strolling toward the white coupe.

Ford's message was clear: Thunderbird was for people who liked to aim for the horizon and revel in wherever the journey took them. Never mind the more general metaphor of birds and flight: Anyone behind the wheel of a Thunderbird was automatically a pilot.

Now, we can't know for sure that this affected Bob Reandeau. But Bob, a truck driver and pilot who spent his years near Sequim, Washington, admired friend Robert Martinez's 1973 Thunderbird from the first day he bought it. Martinez bought the car new, but he soon got into some financial straits, so Bob took over the payment book from his friend. It was one of 87,269

Thunderbirds built for the 1973 model year, making it the third-best-selling Thunderbird ever.

You could see why. In a post-muscle age, when personal luxury was the way forward and the first gas crisis had not yet imposed its will on America, the car itself was substantial. New for the 1972 model year, the sixth-generation Thunderbird offered the same size, heft and presence as the Lincoln Mk IV it shared underpinnings (and powertrains, and body panels, and more) with. What's more, Thunderbird cost nearly \$3,000 less to start. Landau and four-door versions were excised from the lineup, leaving only one body style.

For 1973, Thunderbird enjoyed a series of firsts and lasts: first of the federally-mandated 5-MPH bumpers making this the biggest Thunderbird yet (the 1974-'76 models, with the federally-mandated rear bumper, lay claim to being the longest and heaviest Thunderbirds). The '73 models were the last of the 429-powered Thunderbirds, and last of the cars that used leaded fuel. That big bumper demanded a new front-end treatment, including an



Leather seating was optional for 1973—and four narrow-hipped children could easily fit across that back seat. By the time this second-half-production Thunderbird was built, opera windows (with the silhouette of a bird, its wings outstretched) were standard.



Four-barrel 460-cu.in. V-8 produced just 219 horsepower, but its stock in trade was creamy-smooth torque rather than outright power.

egg-crate grille, spring-loaded hood ornament, and individually placed quad headlamps. Opera windows that opened up the wide B-pillar and replaced the landau irons became optional and gave an edgy flair to the porthole windows of the early two-seat T-Birds. In fact, these opera windows became so popular that they were made standard-issue late in 1973. Power was delivered by Ford's 385 family of V-8s: the 429-cu.in. engine was standard, with a 460-cu.in. V-8 optional. By 1973, thanks to the net-to-gross power ratings drop and lower compression ratios to accept the upcoming unleaded fuels, the A-code 460 V-8 was factory-rated at 219 horsepower.

That 460 engine, a \$76 option, is what powers this Los Angeles-built Medium Blue example. As a second-half 1973 Thunderbird, built in March of that year, the feature car has a number of standalone options that had become standard-issue: power windows, vinyl top, tinted glass, air conditioning and the opera window all combined—at a cost. Thunderbird's base price



had been bumped from \$5,577 to \$6,414. The remote passenger's-side door mirror was a \$26 option, and the original owner also opted for blue leather interior with split-bench six-way power front seats (with reclining passenger's seat), AM/FM stereo with cassette (\$311), power locks (\$54), tilt wheel and interval wipers. The total price topped \$7,000—the equivalent of nearly \$38,000 in 2016 money. A lot of cash, but to be fair, it was a lot of car—and it still came in way cheaper than an equivalent base Lincoln Mk IV.

Once Bob's life with the Thunderbird began, the original steel wheels and color-keyed full wheel covers were removed in favor of a set of aftermarket Prime Wheels and a set of Michelin whitewall radials, and stayed with the car ever after, the majority of the big 'Bird's 109,000 miles. The original tires, wheels and wheel covers remain in storage, as the way it is now is how his family remembers the car practically from new.

And for the next couple of decades, the Thunderbird was the Reandeau family's ride, and it made trips as far afield as Reno, Nevada, and Disneyland. Family photos, with siblings and far-flung cousins gathered 'round it, are thick in the family album. And far from looking like an old car in the late 1970s, this Thunderbird was well-kept: garaged at all times, maintained by Bob himself and never seeing anything even resembling an accident.

A trip in Bob's Thunderbird was an event: floating down the freeway in unparalleled comfort, seats as big as sofas, memories etched indelibly with each mile passed, and all with a genuine airplane pilot behind the wheel. The notion that travel by Thun-



Period-aftermarket Prime 15-inch wheels traded the color-keyed elegance of original wheel covers for a more sporting demeanor.



*Now, there is a time
in a car's life, if it's lucky,
that it transcends its
status as a mere machine.
It ceases to be a car, a
useful transportation
device, and becomes
something else entirely.*

men. Alas, Bob passed away in early 2010. Daughter Kim Smolinsky, also of Sequim, is now the keeper of the Thunderbird, and has maintained it since.

Now, there is a time in a car's life, if it's lucky, that it transcends its status as a mere machine. It ceases to be a car, a useful transportation device, and becomes something else entirely. It ascends instead to something greater: an object that crystallizes the focus and goodwill and love and memory of family and friends. Once Bob passed, his Thunderbird took on a new air. It moved from beloved automobile and builder of memories, to a family heirloom and a keeper of memories.

derbird was exotic, much less in one that was so popular for its year, could be chalked up to youthful inexperience... but even within the course of a decade, this Thunderbird saw the world radically change around it. Two oil crises, and two generations of downsized Thunderbirds that followed this sixth-generation 1973 model, ensured that its like would never be built again. A decade after this car was manufactured, the Thunderbird was two feet shorter and more than 1,500 pounds lighter.

That said, once the odometer turned over, this Thunderbird's life started to slow down; a mid-1990s repaint in the original Medium Blue hue brought a factory-like luster back to those endless stretches of body panels. Little else but cleaning was necessary. The blue leather remained largely untarnished despite years of use, the carpeting remained fluffy, the engine needed little more than a detailing to look new, and with the odometer starting from zero you'd be hard-pressed to tell that the recorded miles weren't original. The years marched on, even if the miles didn't.

We mentioned earlier that Thunderbird was for people who liked to aim for the horizon and revel in wherever the drive took them; pilot Bob Reandeu was clearly one of those

As a monument, it remains frozen in amber and shall remain largely untouched beyond cleaning and a visit to the occasional local car show.

It's a question of preservation, rather than shyness: Kim and her extended family are proud to tell Bob's story and the story of the Thunderbird, and want to maintain it in as near a condition as Bob enjoyed it as possible. Preservation often conflicts with rigorous regular driving, and the chance that others on the road are not as careful as Bob's heirs remains great. Kim is understandably loathe to change anything about the car, and at roughly 200 miles per annum, barely pushes a tank of gas through its system on a yearly basis. It's not going anywhere, in both a literal and metaphorical sense. Irony and understanding must be apportioned equally for this 1973 Ford Thunderbird, a car built to spread its wings, yet which today remains largely caged. 🐦



For a review of some vintage Thunderbird ads as referenced in this story, go to blog.hemmings.com and search "Thunderbird" and "advertising."



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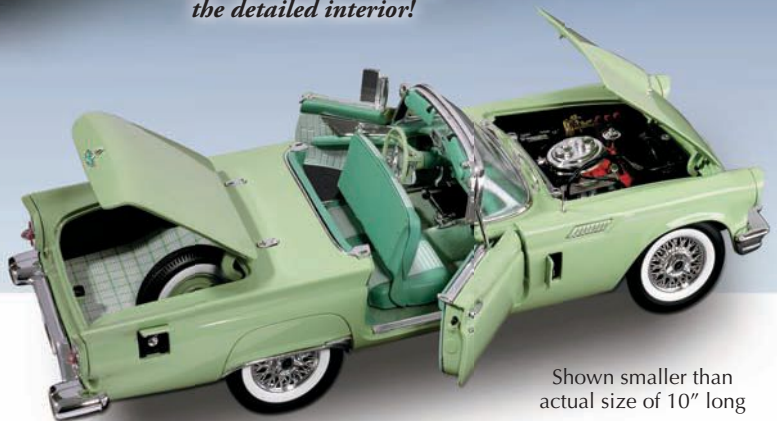
Introduced to compete with the Chevy Corvette, the Ford Thunderbird was Ford Motor Company's first auto to be marketed as a "personal luxury" car rather than a sporty two-seater. The daring strategy worked, and it outsold the Corvette from 1954 through the release of its most popular model in 1957.

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The Diplomat from Kenosha

Outstanding Nash quality served the owners of this 1949 Ambassador Custom for more than 67 years



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

In March of 1949, Mrs. Pauline Sordet of Meridian, Mississippi, drove her 1947 Nash 600 four-door sedan back to her local dealer, Hobbs Auto. Between her trade-in of the '47 Nash and some cash, she was able to drive off in this oh-so-distinctive and highly optioned Ambassador Custom. It should be noted, however, that she did not tick

the box for that most notable of Nash options—the seats that folded into a bed. Yes, those seats that gave the car quite the reputation back in the day.

While Mrs. Sordet is no longer with us to verify the story, a subsequent owner once relayed her opinion. He asked why she had not gotten that option, and was met with what he called a

“steely eyed stare,” from the lady, who responded, “And just why would I want a car that made up into a bed?”

Although she only had the Nash 600 for a short time, that steely eyed lady kept the Ambassador for 26 years. And who can blame her? For a total of \$2,938.89, she had a high-quality car that proved worthy and durable, despite her only driving 27,000 miles



in those 26 years.

Never selling cars in the quantities that Ford or Chevrolet were used to, nor at bargain-basement prices, Nash instead distinguished its wares with unique designs and occasional ahead-of-the-curve engineering that made its cars stand out from the crowd.

Like many other manufacturers, Nash began rolling out its first all-new postwar designs for the 1949 model year. But Nash was already a bit ahead of the game, having been an early adopter of unit-body construction even before the war, starting with the 600 model in 1941. The 1949 Ambassador rode on a rather large, 121-inch wheelbase and was some 17.5 feet long, overall. In addition to that unitized structure, which became industry standard within a couple of generations, Nash pulled out all the stops with the Ambassador's body, dubbing its wind-tunnel tested aerodynamic bod-

ies "Airflytes." Critics chimed in that they were more akin to upside-down bathtubs, but, fortunately for Nash, critics don't buy cars.

In order to make the cars more slippery in the airstream, the wheel arches of all four wheels were partially covered. Unfortunately, this restricted the movement of the front wheels, which necessitated a narrower track in front and the entire car turning on a rather large radius. Another disadvantage of that bulbous body, at least for 1949, was that the narrow rear window significantly restricted visibility for the driver. For 1950 and '51, Nash made the window opening larger.

The Ambassador's one-piece curved windshield was also highly unusual in 1949, as only a tiny number of other manufacturers offered such a thing—and certainly not on any other middle-class cars. With an independent front suspension—complete with an anti-roll bar—and coil springs all around, the solidly constructed Ambassador



With all of the gauges clustered above the steering wheel in a single pod, Nash's Uniscope seemed ahead of its time and made for a clean, simple dash.



also offered a smooth ride above its price class.

Under the hood, Nash's modern 234.8-cu.in. straight-six engine with overhead valves also performed smoothly, its seven-main-bearing crankshaft also more than sufficiently supported for a long life. *Popular Mechanics*, in its November 1948 review of the new Ambassador, pointed out that those seven bearings were "more than any other U.S. car now in production." Our 67-year-old feature car, clearly well cared-for, sports an engine that has never been out of the car, and even today requires only routine maintenance, at that.

With a 7.02:1 compression ratio and a one-barrel Carter carburetor, the overhead-valve six-cylinder rivaled some eight-cylinder competitors with its 112 horsepower. Similarly styled, but lower-line Nash models, riding on a shorter wheelbase, made do with an 82-horsepower L-head engine. The Ambassador's engine featured an intake manifold cast as part of the cylinder head. Open at the top, the intake manifold used an aluminum plate to mount the carburetor. A swap of that plate would allow future upgrades, such as a different carburetor or even a multi-carb setup, but the manifold itself remained part of the cylinder head.

Standard fare for the Ambassador was a column-shifted, Borg-Warner three-speed manual transmission. Rather than overdrive being turned on by driver action, the electrically actuated system was on by default and would engage automatically. Likewise, if the driver accelerated hard, the system would disengage during acceleration, akin to kicking down into a lower gear. The knob labeled "cruising gear" on the left of the steering column allowed the driver to disable the system if he wanted to, perhaps on rougher roads or with lots of hills to cover. Nash advertised gas savings of "up to 20%" with the overdrive, which also supported freewheeling.

On the interior, Nash took the full-on futuristic route with the Ambassador's instrument panel, eschewing a traditional gauge cluster by introducing the "Uniscope," an aircraft-inspired single-gauge pod mounted directly to the steering column. The Uniscope incorporated the speedometer with its main needle sweep and also included secondary gauges for fuel level, oil and water temperature. Pop your head inside an Ambassador and, at first glance, it looks like a tach mounted muscle-car style. The Uniscope gauge gave the Ambassador a modern feel and a dash of aerospace styling—perfectly in line with the car's wind-tunnel-tested exterior shape. Ergonomically, it kept the driver's eyes in front of him; coupled with the one-piece windshield sans blocking center post, the Ambassador afforded excellent visibility—at least for the driver looking out the front.

Nash had long been a pioneer in incorporating fresh air into its water-to-air heating systems, which they referred to as the "Weather Eye Conditioned Air System." This used a high-volume fan and an entirely concealed system enclosed in the dashboard, as opposed to recirculating systems that attached below the dash. Thermostatically controlled, the Weather Eye was so revolutionary that General Motors purchased the systems from Nash for use in its cars, while GM provided Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic transmissions to Nash in return, beginning in 1950.

Of course, Nash was also famous for its optional seats, which folded flat to create a bed for car camping, frugal travelers and, well, perhaps spirited lovers on the road. Notwithstanding the lady from Mississippi, the bed was a very popular option. The split seats could be partially folded, allowing for the passenger to catch some Z's while the driver carried on. A folding mattress for the twin-size bed was an additional option.



With the intake manifold cast into the cylinder head, different plates atop the intake could be used for different carburetion.



Nash advertised its first all-new, postwar cars as Airflyte models, though the name did not appear on any badging on the Ambassador Custom line, as shown here. The aerodynamic name was given to both the larger Ambassador and smaller 600 lines, the latter similar in design, but shorter overall, particularly in the front end. Fortunately for Nash-Kelvinator, the combined automotive/appliance parent company of the automaker, the Airflyte cars were a hit, and the company enjoyed a significant increase in sales and profits, easily recouping the \$15 million investment it made to design the new cars and tool up the factory.

Despite the seemingly conservative Mrs. Sordet's distaste for the Nash's bed, she did opt for the relatively racy hood ornament, a large, cast figure of a curvaceous, nude woman with wings, a.k.a. the "flying lady." Nash commissioned renowned pinup artist George Petty to create the iconic ornament in 1945. Petty was noted for his images of leggy women in *Esquire* magazine, including one drawing that inspired the nose art on the famous B-17, the *Memphis Belle*. Though the flying lady disrupted the overall aerodynamics of the Ambassador's shape and the Airflyte concept, the ornament also added a level of distinction to the big Nash.

Reggie Nash, who shares a name but no known relation to the company's founder, Charles Nash, has had an interest in the cars that bears part of his signature since he was a teenager. His first car, at age 14, was a 1922 Nash Sport Touring model that he has owned for 49 years. All it took the Richmond, Virginia, resident to get it was a \$40 loan from his father, paid back a few dollars a week from Reggie's newspaper route. "Well, my name is Nash, which is why I started out with that '22 Nash when I got it," recalls Reggie. "I just thought, 'Hey, you know, this would be a nice, little car to go around with the guys with the Model T's in my area.'"

Perhaps Reggie's rationale was pretty simple back then: get a cool, old car with his name on it that was a bit different from his friend's old rides. But he soon took a liking to the legendary Nash quality and engineering innovation. "They were neat cars and they had a lot of firsts," says Reggie. "In 1941, they had a crossflow radiator with an expansion tank set above it. And that's the same thing as on a 1949 model, which is basically what modern cars have today. You really got quality for your money when you bought a Nash." Quite a few Nashes later—not to mention a couple of early 20th century, pre-Nash Ramblers, Reggie added this Ambassador Custom to his collection about six years ago.

Our original owner, Mrs. Sordet, sold the car in 1975, with just 27,000 miles on it. Reggie is now the fifth owner, and the mileage remains in the range of some 41,000 miles. The engine has never been out of the car or rebuilt—a testament to those seven main bearings, regular maintenance and overall Nash ruggedness and reliability. Reggie did notice that one of the owners after Mrs. Sordet had replaced some of the wiring with the correct type. Seat



“They were neat cars and they had a lot of firsts...”

covers installed when new have preserved almost all of the original upholstery.

Just how beefy was Nash's "Girder-built Unitized Body and Frame"? Reggie shares with us the story of the car being used as a promotional tool for a Jackson, Mississippi, AMC dealer in the late 1970s. When some miscreant vandals shot through the dealership's plate glass window, a bullet dented the front passenger door and bounced off. The dealership employees found the bullet on the floor next to the Nash. That's not exactly an engineering metric for a car's body integrity, but other than a small dent to remove and some paintwork on the door, the bullet proved no match for the Nash's steel.

Reggie, who regularly shows his cars and even more regularly drives them, puts about 500 to 600 miles per year on the Ambassador, taking it in place of the older, open cars "if the weather's going to be questionable... because it's just a driver. It's not a show car."

It might not be a show car, but the 1949 Nash still turns heads and stirs lots of memories—and generates some new ones—when Reggie takes it out, be it for an afternoon's drive, to a cruise-in or to more formal shows. "Some of the older people might say, 'Oh, I remember those.' But the young people are just curious about it because it's so strange looking."

And that brings up Reggie's own taste for the big, round Nash. "When I was a kid, I hated the looks of them," he says, then backtracks a little. "I don't know if I hated them; I did not like the looks of them. Then, as time went on, they kind of grew on me. I said, 'You know, it would be neat to have one of those things—they're strange looking.'" It's that distinctive look and the solid engineering and build quality underneath that continues to make this 1949 Nash Ambassador Custom a winner 67 years on and still going strong. 🏆





Indefatigable

Bought back in 1954, and driven 200,000 miles since, this 1931 Franklin Pursuit Sport Phaeton just keeps on rolling

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM DONNELLY

Briny breezes brush your hair backward as you amble along. Plymouth Rock is a stone's throw away. A little bit farther is the gateway to Cape Cod. A laser-like sun barely reflects off your ride's ancient enameling. The thoroughly used-up muffler blats defiantly, especially upon deceleration. People are probably looking at the spectacle of your passage. Then again, they may not be. This scene's been repeated on a daily basis for, oh, 60-something years already. It's a normal sight in Middleboro,



Massachusetts, to spot a 1931 Franklin Model 151 Pursuit pattering around town, running errands, doing all the same mundane everyday stuff that you'd expect an F-series pickup or a Malibu to handle.

And there's more to it than that. An essential element of the image is Ron Andrew working the steering and gearshift, up high and proud in the shredded leather of the front seat. He's almost a mayoral figure on the street. Ron's been doing this, driving Franklins, for the better part of his adult life and that's a long time; he's into his eighth decade now. But the Pursuit, a sport phaeton with dual windshields, has done some incredible stuff that most people wouldn't attempt in a new SUV with a six-figure powertrain warranty. To wit, Ron has driven this car from Massachusetts to his own wedding in St. Albans, Vermont; bombed it down Interstate 90 towing a trailer full of old Franklin pieces, and been to every single one of the Franklin Treks that annually celebrate the elegant air-cooled cars of Syracuse, New York.

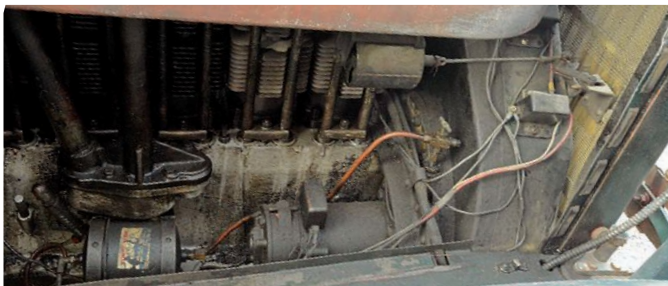
To the best of anyone's knowledge, Ron is the last surviving attendee of the inaugural Franklin Trek, which was held in 1954.

"I'll tell you, I bet I've put at least 200,000 miles on this car in the years that I've owned it," he lilts modestly. And what year was that? Ron acquired the Pursuit from a gasoline station in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, back in 1954, which happens to be the same year that a publication known as *Hemmings Motor News* was founded in Quincy, Illinois. "My family always had Franklins. My grandfather had had a Moon, and he bought his daughter a 1930 Franklin, a convertible coupe, a leftover, as a graduation present and she used it to commute from Lincoln, Rhode Island, up to Boston where she was a student at the New England Conservatory of Music. When I was growing up, our other daily-use car was my grandfather's Nash. My grandfather found a 1931 Franklin sedan that became my daily transportation that I drove to high school and college. Then I got a phone call, and the guy on the other end knew I had a Franklin and told me about the one up the road in Woonsocket, and we drove up there in the Nash."

John's Auto Sales was really a gas station that occasionally sold older cars, usually repainting them first. The Franklin was inside a garage, covered with all kinds of debris, but with paint that



The air-cooled Franklin sounds absolutely great ambling down the road. Owner rebuilt it himself something like 60 years ago. And yes, this car will keep up with modern traffic.





Franklin didn't use "dual-cowl phaeton;" instead, the Pursuit's body style is dubbed a sport touring. Minimal instrumentation includes a roller-type speedometer. The little spoon-shaped lever on the floor is the accelerator. Passenger compartment has never been restored.

was about a year old. His grandfather managed to get it started and they both decided to acquire it. It became a graduation present to Ron in 1954. After a new muffler, it became Ron's daily driver. Sixty-two years later, it still is. The ensuing years saw him do a full engine rebuild with advisory guidance from people in the Franklin Club, using skills he learned in a college-level machine design course to make his own valve guides, add new rod bearings, and change the timing chain, briefly using a used 1951 Volkswagen for transportation until the Pursuit was finished.

It represented a significant, though not altogether pleasant, interlude in Franklin's history. By 1929, its registrations

averaged only 74 percent of factory output. Translation: The economy was killing sales. In 1931, Franklin's total production of 2,851 cars was 23 percent greater than the number of cars it sold and registered. As a result, Franklin had leftover inventory at the end of each model year that it sold at a discount—the 1930 Franklin that Ron's grandfather bought as a gift is a case in point—thus robbing a sale from the following year's production that was already being built. Despite the sales crash, Franklin still listed 25 models in three series in its catalog.

Nineteen-thirty-one would be the final year for the Model 151 Pursuit, built on Franklin's smaller 125-inch wheelbase, and that year would also be

the end for the Ray Dietrich-designed short-wheelbase sport touring bodywork with dual windshields. Mechanically, though, the Pursuit was still a joy, its all-aluminum air-cooled OHV straight-six engine, with Duralumin I-beam connecting rods, producing an even 100hp from 274.2 cubic inches. Ron's car has it linked to a four-speed Detroit manual transmission with overdrive on top gear. That allows the Pursuit to comfortably chase traffic at 60 MPH, or even more.

That 1953 or 1954 repaint that John applied in Woonsocket is the last time paint has touched this metal, by the way. Ron does recall having a discussion with a California collector who wanted to



Pitting on the aviation-themed mascot and other metal just looks wonderful. It is hard to believe that this car was purchased off of a service station lot.





Filler panel behind the front seat flips up for rear-seat access. Owner has been driving this Franklin since 1954.

“I’ll run errands around town, and sometimes, I’ll come out of the market and see somebody standing on the running board or maybe even sitting in it...”



use his Pursuit’s body as a template for creating new bodywork for one of his own Franklins. In exchange, the collector offered to have Ron’s car restored in Mexico. Right there, he decided to keep the Pursuit in as-acquired condition. “I told myself that I didn’t want a restored car,” Ron explains. “I figured, what would happen if I wanted to look at my car while it’s being restored and it’s someplace in Mexico? So, suddenly, I decided I wasn’t going to do it. The guy was really upset, but that’s the way it was. I still don’t know if I would have done it if the car was being restored in Connecticut or something, but not that far away.”

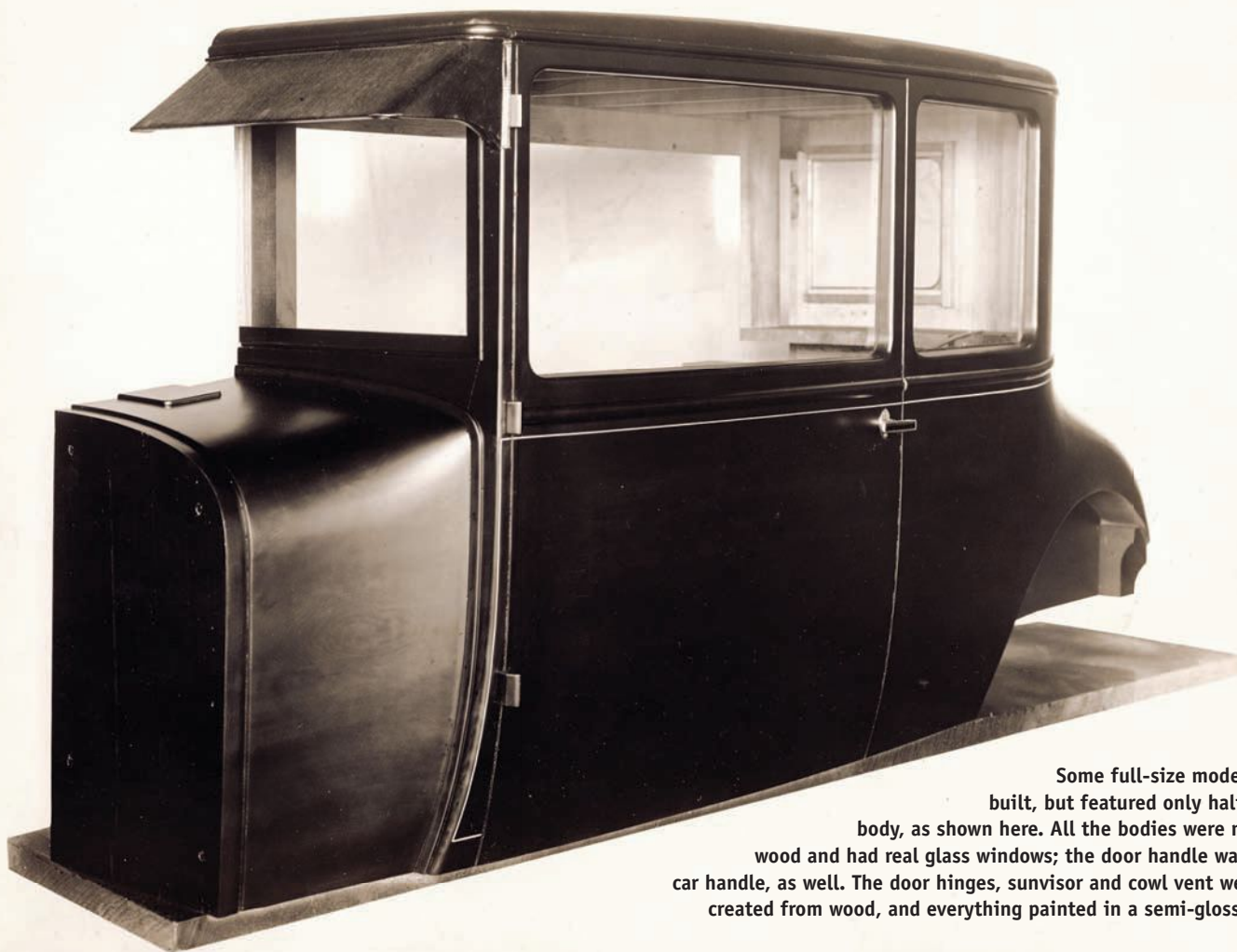
Not to say, however, that the

Pursuit’s never been inside a restoration shop. Some 30 years back—he’s not exactly sure how many—Ron was hit head-on in the Franklin by a lady in an econobox, and he took it to Enfield Auto Restoration in Connecticut for repairs (“Not a restoration,” he made clear. “This wasn’t the same thing.”), whose then-owner had previously operated a body shop. The project involved straightening the frame in three places and replacing a crushed front fender. “The owner told me, ‘Ron, you didn’t wreck it, so don’t touch it.’” No cosmetic updates were made during the repair process. That includes the driver-side rear fender, twisted into a surfboard shape by Ron’s long-ago encounter with an unseen post.

As he points out, chugging along at a mile a minute can wreak havoc on a canvas top, and he guesstimates the Pursuit’s on its fourth top by now, but the bows and rest of the top mechanism are likely as old as its paint. Give Ron a minute, or an hour, and he will effuse on how much of a joy it is to have an unbreakable, totally worry-free collector car.

“I’ll run errands around town and sometimes, I’ll come out of the market, and see somebody standing on the running board or maybe even sitting in it,” he says. “I don’t care. I’ll go up and chat with the guy. It’s no problem. What am I going to do, worry that’s he’s going to rip the leather on the seats? It’s already ripped.”





Some full-size models were built, but featured only half of the body, as shown here. All the bodies were made of wood and had real glass windows; the door handle was a real car handle, as well. The door hinges, sunvisor and cowl vent were also created from wood, and everything painted in a semi-gloss finish.

This Budd's For You

The Budd Body Company styling models of the 1920s

BY WALT GOSDEN • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE WALT GOSDEN COLLECTION

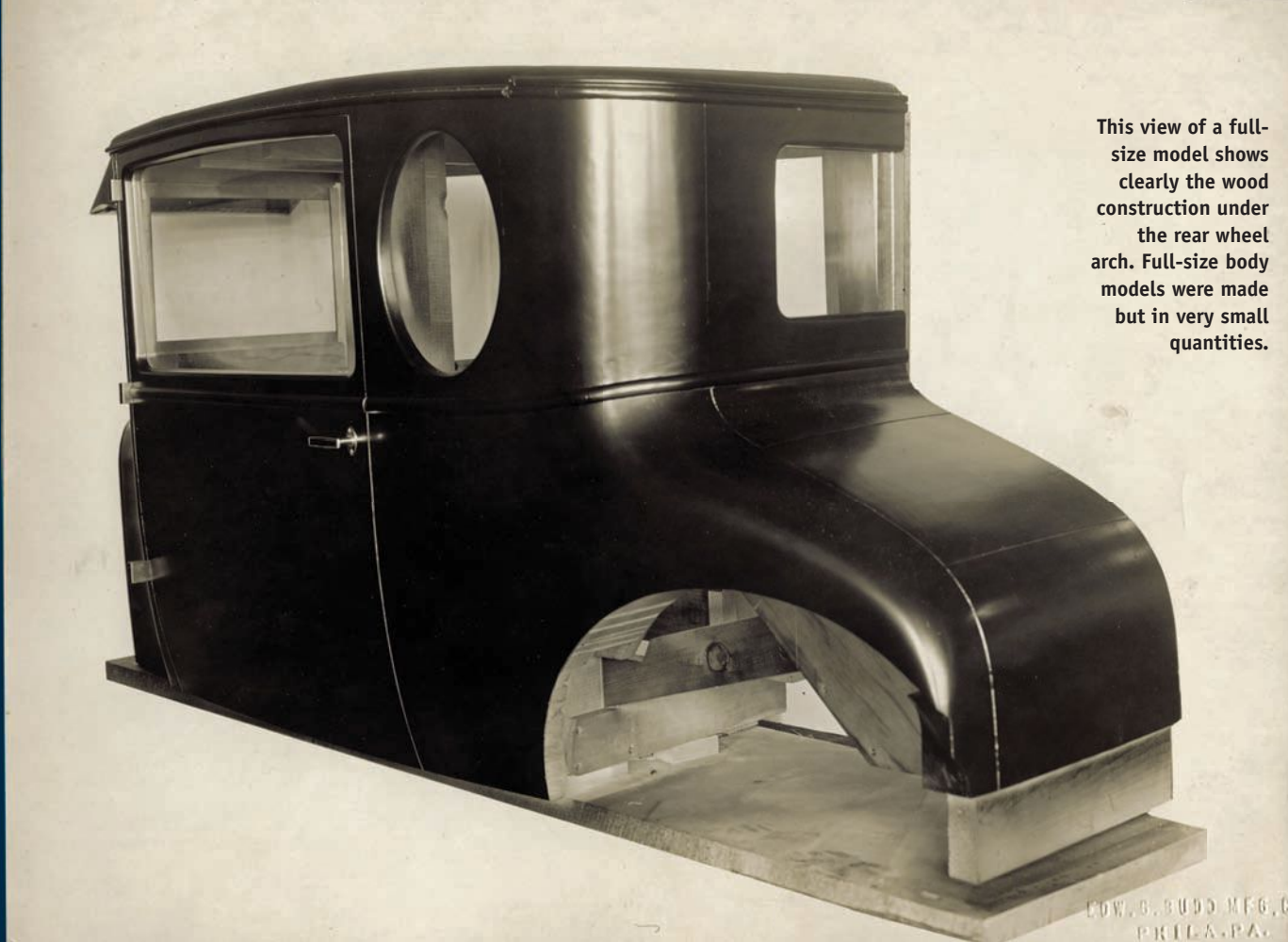
Most car enthusiasts are familiar with the clay styling models that automobile manufacturers create in full scale and smaller, to have a three-dimensional object to be able to walk around and view. Today, most often a foam core is covered in clay, which is then sculpted, where just a short time ago, the clay was applied to a wood-block structure. Three-dimensional imaging on a computer has for the most part replaced the freehand drawings used by stylists of the past, but it wasn't always a digital age.

The use of clay for styling models after sketches on paper had been completed goes back much further than one may be aware of. Clay models were being created over wood bucks prior to World War I. By the mid 1920s, quarter-scale models had become popular at both Packard and Cadillac. With Harley Earl establishing the styling studios at General Motors, the styling models by major automobile manufacturers had become a staple of automotive design.

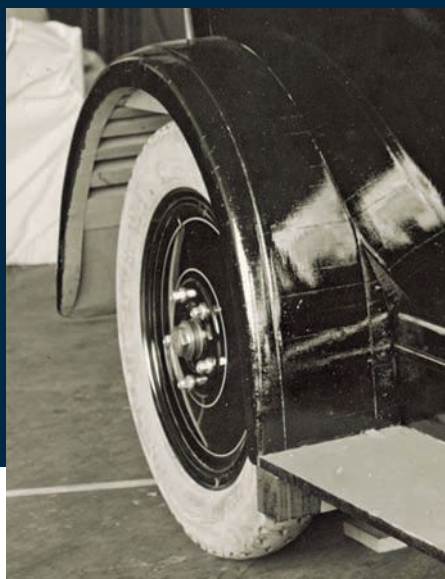
Independent body builders and car manufacturers that were not part of a large

automobile conglomerate (Marmon and Hudson among them) built scale wood models of their cars that sometimes found their way to larger auto dealerships or automobile shows for display.

The Edward G. Budd Body Company of Philadelphia had a very active auto body styling section established by the mid 1920s. Budd was very proactive in seeking contracts to build its all-steel bodies for both major and smaller independent car manufacturers. Although highly detailed two-dimensional renderings of possible body styles were drawn by artists



This view of a full-size model shows clearly the wood construction under the rear wheel arch. Full-size body models were made but in very small quantities.



The full-size model's fender is made up of many pieces of wood to create the compound curve; only the exterior was finished to a high level to resemble a steel fender.



This half-size body model depicts the wood construction as seen looking into the cowl area. Note the two styles of sunvisor split at the center on the same body. Opaque windows were painted a light color to give the impression of glass and were made of heavy card stock or illustration board.

of all the automobile manufacturers, body builders, etc., a three-dimensional scale model would allow the auto executives and staff to get a much better idea of how the real finished cars would look. Models allow light to highlight form, shadow lines define and accent contours, and the real

“look” of the concept being presented is much easier to comprehend.

Pattern makers for foundry work were highly skilled craftsmen with amazing artistry as wood carvers and shapers. From my viewpoint as one who taught art for decades, these pattern makers were on the

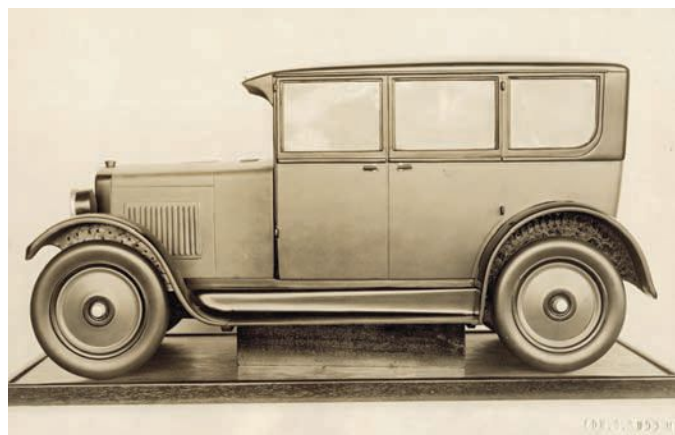
level with the finest cabinetmakers. These same pattern makers would also be employed to become detailed wood-model makers to translate the two-dimensional illustration of the car designers/stylists into a detailed three-dimensional model. As with their work for making patterns



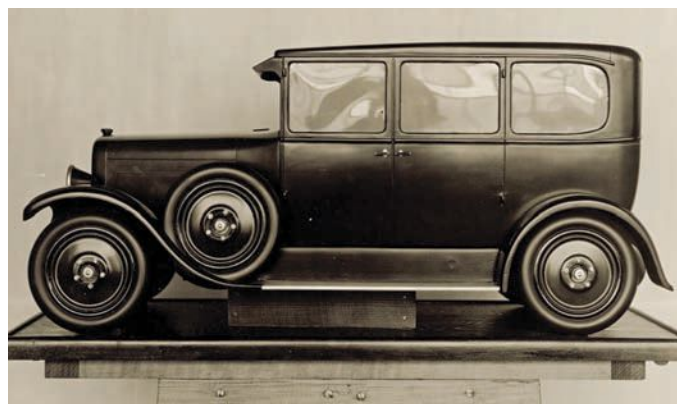
Most of the styling models were made with a generic radiator shell design, but there were exceptions. This particular example has a Hupmobile emblem on the radiator shell and a letter H painted at the center of the hubcaps. The A pillar has the coach lip styling feature at the bottom.



This model had more detail than most, with the addition of cowl lamps, and the front fenders had a more dramatic flair as well. Note the Budd body plate on the base board in front of the radiator and splash apron.



The fenders were made up of laminated strips of wood glued together, and the underside seen here shows this. The majority of the models had plain hood sides, but louver details were added to this example for a more realistic appearance.



All of the models Budd made featured disc wheels, as they were also a product that Budd made. This model clearly shows the celluloid that was glued in place to simulate glass windows. Note the side-mounted spare tires as well, which, by 1925, were just starting to become more popular than the single rear-mounted spare.

to be used in a foundry, they carved and fitted together the puzzle-like parts of a scale car model. Moldings and details were added to give extra detail to an exact miniature version of the body the company was trying to promote for full-scale production in steel.

The artists in wood at the Budd Body Company in Philadelphia in 1925 were in overdrive as far as their production of a vast variety of wood models as shown here. Budd's work for both Dodge and the French-built Citroën cars is well known (see *HCC* #122), but from doing research of that time period, I found Budd in the 1920s was also strongly soliciting Hupmobile, Jordan, Cadillac and Studebaker.

The smaller scale models that Budd had created, like their full-scale examples, did not go into great detail under the fenders; there was no need to. The models were strictly crafted to have the viewer look at them from the side or slightly above. Most of the time, the undersides of the fenders weren't finished or even painted. The inside of the wheels that had been made by turning them on a wood lathe were not detailed or finished either.

The scale models went together somewhat like a puzzle. Fenders were made out of several pieces and glued together; the cowl was a solid piece made up of laminated layers of wood, stacked vertically; the rear corners of the body were joined together by finger joints and glue; the sides of the body were about one-inch thick, door and windshield posts 1/2-inch thick, and roof 1/4-inch thick.

From what can be determined from the dozens of period photographs taken of these models by Budd's in-house staff photographer, there were two types of scale models made. One was of the com-

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The base and stand this model is displayed on seems to be made of 2- x 4-inch planks. On this example, the right half was painted in lighter colors for the hood and wheels, and also had a double belt line under the side windows.



Compare this left side view of the same model that is shown in the illustration opposite left; this side had no beltline that continued into the hood panel, and darker colors on the wheels, with less contrast in color value.

plete car, so that you could walk around it 360 degrees. These were mounted on a wood platform approximately 2 x 3 feet with a Budd body plate neatly mounted at the front. All were nicely finished in subtle colors so that you would focus on the body and fender lines and not be distracted by any flashy paint work. Most of the painted model was also in a matte or semi gloss finish—all done to have the person viewing it focus on the design and lines of the body. Budd was in the business of designing and building bodies, and that's what they wanted their prospective customers to be looking at. All the scale models had disc wheels—another thing that Budd also designed, promoted and produced in massive quantities.

Some of the models had windows that had a shiny surface to simulate the reflection of glass. It is hard to determine exactly what these windows were made of, and no records to give that information have been found, but most likely sheet celluloid was cut to the size and shape of the window openings and then adhered in place to make the model appear even more realistic.

On some of the models, each side would have a slightly different style of belt molding or windshield visor. This was a unique way to show alternatives to the same basic body shape without creating two identical models except for that particular trim.

Budd also made models of half the body, without any fenders, hood, wheels, etc. These were meant to be viewed from one side only, and were either a little larger scale than the full three-dimensional models, or full scale. These models were fitted with glass windows and finished in a semi-gloss paint.

The photographs of these scale models, which give a unique insight into the translation of two-dimensional drawings to three-dimensional reality, were shown



This is the only scale model in the numerous photos taken that has twin rear-mounted spare tires. The raised vertical body lines on the rear body panel represent cast, separate plated trim strips that would have been attached to a real body and were a styling accent that was popular at the time.



The design of the center top of the radiator shell on this model strongly resembles the one Stutz used on its new "AA" series cars of 1926, although this photograph dates from March 1925. Note the lack of detail on the inside of the front wheel.

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LOT 68397/61427

63308/95272 shown

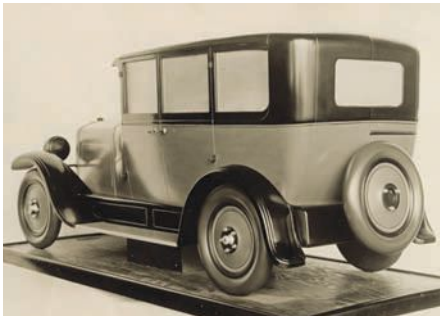
Customer Rating

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One model with two distinct, different halves. This showed customers how adding a belt molding or altering the design of the sunvisor could change the appearance. The radiator shell resembles a Reo or possibly an Oldsmobile of that era.



The left side of this model shows the excellent detail to the wheels. Notice the raised crown at the edge of the fenders. It was all carved out of wood to present an accurate, detailed scale model of a real car.



Even the seams where the panels of a real car body were joined together were represented on the scale model, as seen on the rear tub and roof area. Other incredible fine detail points were pinstriping, belt trim, hinges, and valance molding.

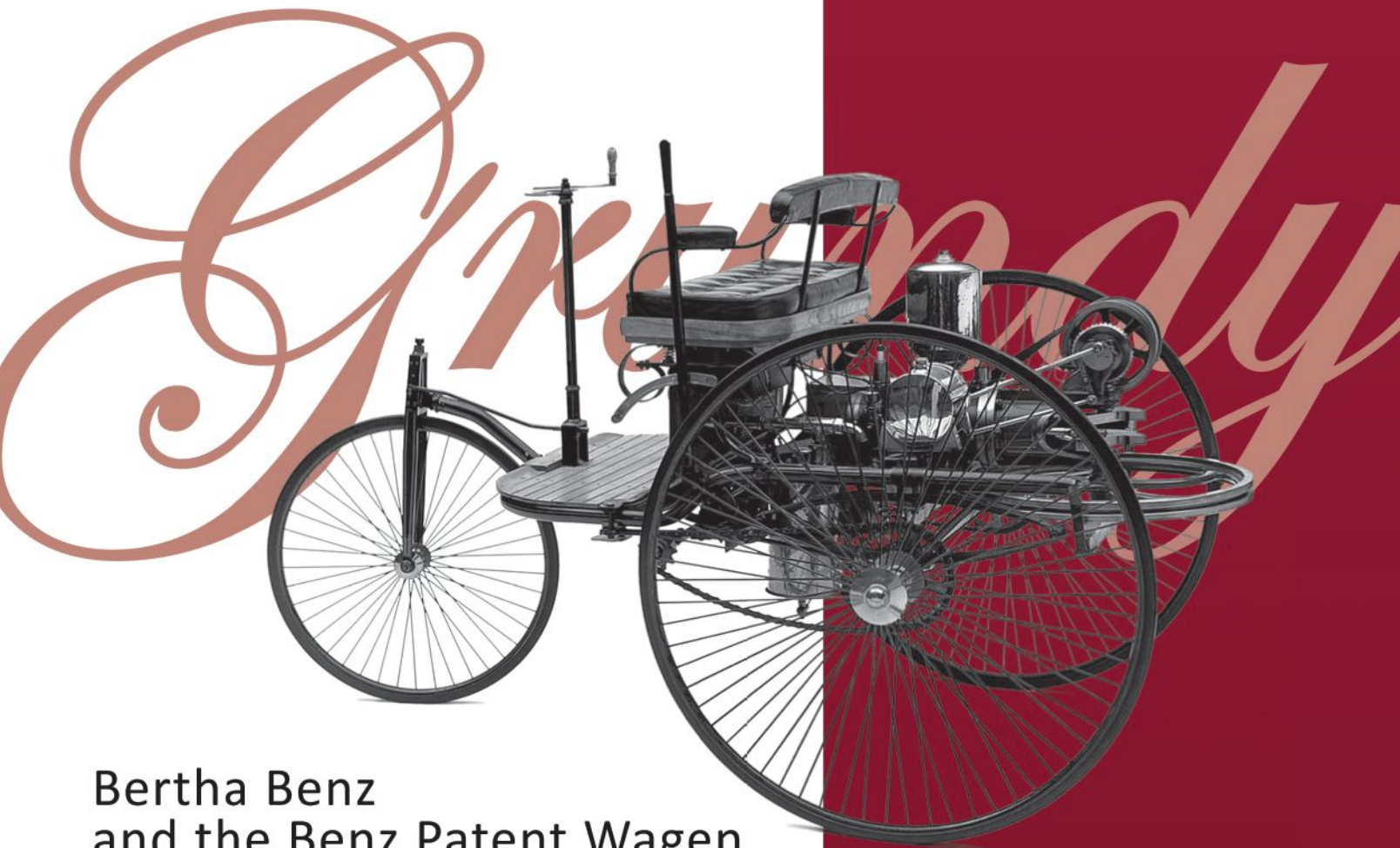


This generic radiator shell featured a crank-hole cover, emblem and radiator cap, and used a textured area to accurately represent the radiator core.

to prospective customers. The effort taken to present and display Budd's product in anticipation of receiving large quantity orders for its all-steel bodies was quite extensive.

Budd was not the only body builder/supplier to use scale wood bodies to cultivate customer interest. We know that the Bela Body Company of Framingham, Massachusetts (which was also a producer of enclosed coachwork in large quantities), created similar scale model bodies in the late Teens.

It is not known if any of the wood models that Budd had made, and that you see here, have survived. I have neither seen nor heard of any that have. Within a year or so of when they were made, the styling would likely have been outdated, so the models, if they still existed, would have been either reworked or discarded. Let's hope that someone thought they were worth saving and stored a few safely away, and they do survive. It would be wonderful to be able to see at least one of these beautifully crafted models in person. 🐞



Bertha Benz and the Benz Patent Wagen.

1888 marked two firsts for the original automobile: it was the first use of a motorized vehicle for a long distance road trip, and the driver was a woman! Bertha Benz, who had financed her husband Karl's invention, decided to promote it by driving the vehicle to visit her mother some 60 miles away. It took two days for her and her two sons to complete the historic round trip! Mercedes-Benz® later gave the car to Henry Ford for his museum where it was displayed for many years. Then, along came a man named Wigglesworth...

To find out what happened to the Patent Wagen, visit grundy.com and read the full story on our blog, Grundy Garage!

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John North Willys

This charismatic entrepreneur was one of the industry's first visionaries



RM/AUCTIONS

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF RM AUCTIONS AND THE W.O.K.R ARCHIVES

How one manages a defining moment in business, as in life, can plot a course to reverence or ruin. For John North Willys, an auto industry entrepreneur who made Willys-Overland a household name and built his own automotive-based empire, it was arguably, the instant that he realized his only way to avert a financial catastrophe was to take control of an ailing Overland in 1907.

Willys had surmised early on that volume was required to make money in the automobile business, the same as the bicycle business in which he'd already been successful.

To that end, in 1906 he created the American Motor Car Sales Co. of New York, and he contracted with the Overland Automotive Division of the Standard Wheel Company to wholesale 500 of its cars—its entire projected production run—to a nationwide dealer network he would create.

Once on the road, Willys was signing up dealers and placing orders for Overlands faster than the company could build

them. When he wired that he would need more than the initial total he'd originally contracted for, the response was sobering.

He learned that Overland was in dire financial straits and the company couldn't fill the orders. Willys was quoted in *Famous Leaders of Industry: The Life Stories of Boys who Have Succeeded* (1920) as saying, "The failure of that company meant the loss of my income, it meant that I must start all over again, but worst of all, it meant that I must break my promise to several hundred customers who expected me to deliver cars."

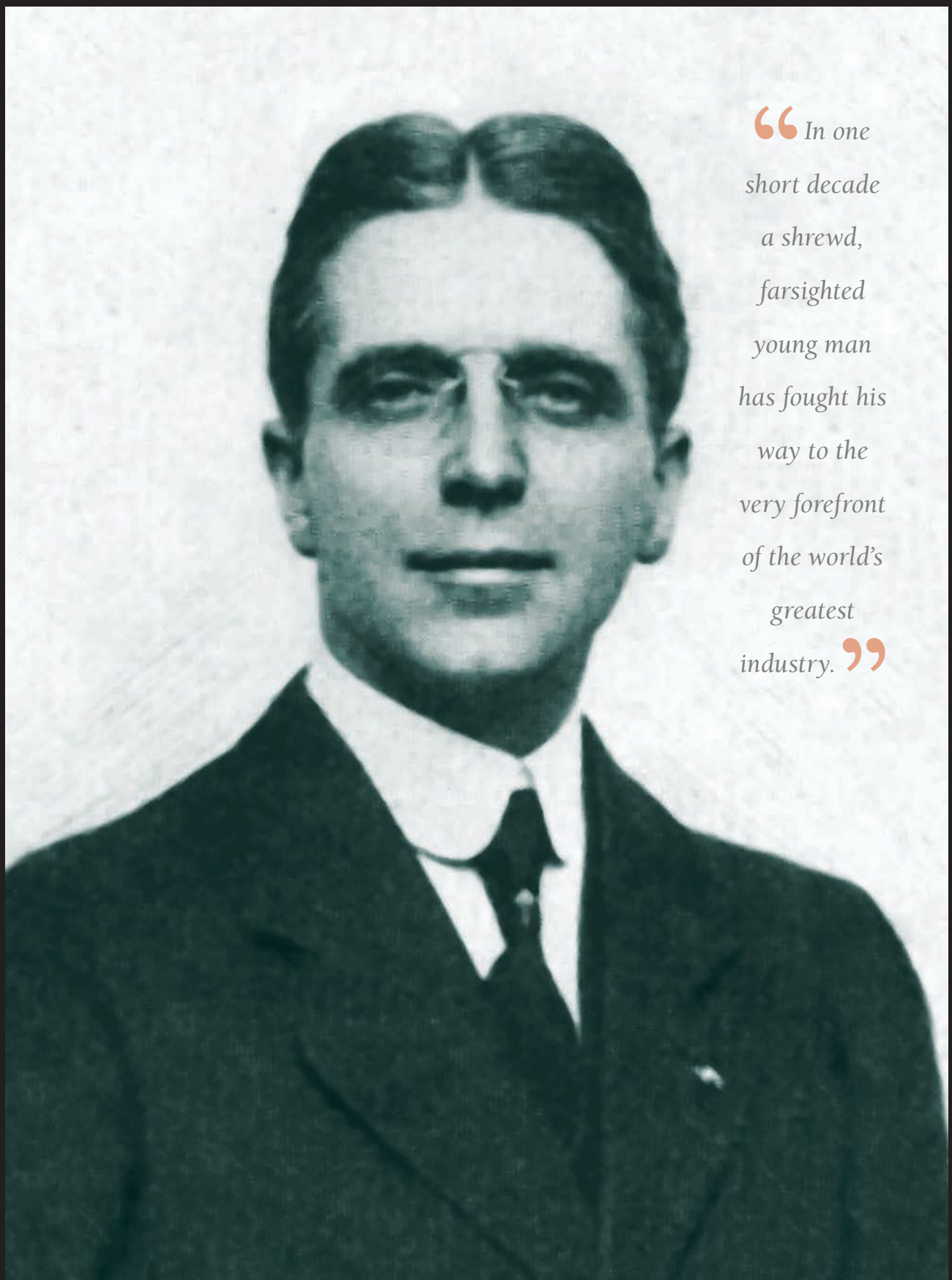
With these responsibilities weighing heavily on his mind, he began crunching numbers in his hotel room. By the time he headed back east to Indianapolis to scrutinize Overland's predicament and convene with the company's executives, he had a plan.

At that meeting, he was informed that Overland was essentially a day away from receivership, and the immediate problem was that it was about \$350 (other sources stated \$450 or \$500) short of making payroll. To add some

perspective, \$350 in 1907 would be near \$8,500 in 2016. To compound the issue, not only did he learn this on a Sunday, since it was also 1907, the year of the "big panic," credit was scarce and banks were perpetually nervous.

As told in *Famous Leaders of Industry*, impressed with Willy's sense of community—wanting to pay the local plant employees despite the fact that he was not an Indy native—the hotel proprietor raised the cash to cover Willys' personal check. Overland's payroll was covered. Willys then immediately went to work on eliminating the company's \$80,000 debt, by negotiating reduced rates and providing stock to pay back creditors.

Willys ascended to president and general manager in early 1908, and over 400 cars were produced that year, followed by over 4,000 in 1909. Two circus tents were erected to augment a plant too small to handle the volume of the orders Willys was providing, and Overland returned to profitability. The Marion Motor Car Company was acquired that same year.



“In one short decade a shrewd, farsighted young man has fought his way to the very forefront of the world’s greatest industry.”



The 1910 Overland Model 38 featured a 25hp four-cylinder engine and two-speed planetary transmission and rode on a 102-inch wheelbase. It could be ordered as a roadster or with a single or double-bucket body, and it cost \$1,000—\$250 less than the 1909 model.



The top-of-the-line 1910 Overland Model 42 cost \$1,500 and featured the larger 40hp four-cylinder engine with a sliding gear three-speed transmission. The 112-inch wheelbase chassis could be had with close-coupled four-passenger or five-passenger touring body.

RM AUCTIONS

In June, Willys characterized the evolution of the automobile industry thusly in the *New York Times*, "There is probably nothing in the industrial world of this country that has surpassed in interest the wonderful growth of the automobile industry. From seventeen makers of motor cars in 1898 to approximately 300 in 1909, and the combined capitalization in 1898 of \$1,000,000 to nearly \$200,000,000 in 1909, is in brief, the history of this great industrial achievement. Ten years ago there were approximately 1,000 persons employed in the manufacture of motor cars, against 200,000 at the present time."

Still short of space, expansion continued when Willys bought the undervalued Pope-Toledo factory in Toledo, Ohio. On that site, he oversaw the building of Willys-Overland's modern manufacturing facility and headquarters. The first year in Toledo, the concern built over 12,000 cars. He also created a supplier network of smaller local companies, and within a few years, all told, about 20,000 people in Toledo drew a paycheck from a Willys-Overland-related business.

Expansion continued with the acquisition of the Fisk Rubber Company in 1911 and the Gramm Motor Truck Company of Lima, Ohio, and Garford Manufacturing Company of Elyria, Ohio, in 1912.

Motor Age reported in October 1912, "In addition to owning 75% of Willys-Overland stock, Mr. Willys has upwards of \$2,000,000 in investments in concerns identified with the motor industry making

his total holdings \$20,100,000." There were also over 2,000 Overland dealers by that year.

The acquisition of the Edwards Motor Co. of New York in 1913 netted Willys-Overland the license to manufacture the patented Knight sleeve-valve engine, and Willys-Knight models followed. A controlling interest in Globe Ballbearing Company of Norwich, Connecticut, was also gained.

The Electric Auto-Lite Company and Kinsey Manufacturing of Toledo were acquired in 1914. Gramm and Garford were sold in 1915, but the Russell Motor Car Company of Toronto, Ontario, was purchased in 1916.

Thanks in large part to Willys' business acumen, from 1912 to 1918 Willys-Overland was the second-largest automaker, behind Ford. In 1916, *The Magazine of Wall Street* described Willys story as "one of the most remarkable successes the modern commercial world has ever seen. In one short decade a shrewd, farsighted young man has fought his way to the very forefront of the world's greatest industry."

Willys' bootstrap story began 34 years before the Overland incident, however. He was born on October 25, 1873, in Canandaigua, New York, where his father, David, ran a brick and tile company. Among other smaller ventures, John bought into a laundry with friends in Seneca, New York, at age 15, turned a profit and sold it within a year. Soon Willys was cashing in on the era's fascination with bicycles via his own store and repair shop.

In 1896, he became a traveling salesman. Developing a keen eye for business opportunities borne of other proprietor's failures, he bought a struggling sporting goods business in Elmira, New York, in 1898 and continued to grow his bicycle business there.

When he spotted his first motor car in Cleveland in 1899, he instantly recognized its inherent sales potential, and foresaw its impact on the bicycle industry. Willys soon opened a Pierce-Arrow and then a Rambler agency, which later inspired the Overland deal.

By 1916, Willys had created an automotive empire. Given his vast business holdings, *The Magazine of Wall Street* stated, "It is estimated that over 100,000 people earn their living in the manufacture and distribution of power vehicles Mr. Willys' various industries produce."

Little did that author know, he was just getting started. The Willys Corporation was formed in 1917 as a holding company to aid in further expansion. He soon bought the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation in Buffalo, enlarged the plant and contributed products to the war effort during World War I.

Willys Corporation then purchased Moline Plow, producer of Universal tractors and Stephens cars, in 1918 and acquired New Process Gear Corp. In 1919, Willys bought the Duesenberg plant in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and another in Poughkeepsie, New York. Willys also acquired controlling interest in United States Light and Heat Corp in 1920.

All was not posies and profits,



Willys-Knight's sleeve-valve design replaced the poppet valves and valvetrain of conventional engines, fitting each cylinder with two alternating sliding slotted sleeves. The slots covered and uncovered the intake and exhaust ports during the combustion cycle.

however. While living and working from New York in 1919, he had to deal with a prolonged strike at the Toledo plant that cost the company millions and damaged labor relations.

Willys had a talent for persuading customers to buy his products and for convincing bankers to have the faith that profits would result. He also had boundless energy and subjected himself to an intense work schedule. But his ravenous expansion policy would take its toll, and he would be forced to rein in spending to placate the bank officials who aided in financing his businesses.

Spurred by the economic recession in 1920 and the debt Willys' companies were carrying, nervous creditors insisted that Walter P. Chrysler, a former vice president of General Motors, be installed as executive vice president and general manager of Willys-Overland and Willys Corp. He was tasked with the reorganization of both.

Chrysler also brought in his own engineers to develop a modern six-cylinder car line that would bear his name, be assembled at the Elizabeth, New Jersey, plant and be a new division of Willys. It was not approved for production, however.

Despite many strides during the reorganization, receivership for Willys Corp. came in late 1921 and consolidation continued, with the New Jersey plant

and New Process Gear two of the more notable casualties. Chrysler unsuccessfully tried to take over the company and then left in early 1922. He ultimately started his own famed automobile company.

Willys was buying again by the mid-1920s. F.B. Stearns Co. of Cleveland, Ohio, was purchased in 1925 and production of its luxurious Stearns-Knight cars continued until the end of the decade.

In 1928, Willy's Overland climbed back to third place in sales. With his company seemingly on a firm footing, John Willys retired in 1929, stepping down as president and selling his shares of the company for about \$25 million—prior to the stock market crash. He did, however, stay on as chairman of the board.

With the dawning of a new decade, Willys, a dyed-in-the-wool Republican, was appointed the United States Ambassador to Poland by President Herbert Hoover. By 1932, however, it became evident that not even the Willys-Overland juggernaut could escape the Great Depression. Willys returned to try and save the company, but in 1933, the corporation entered bankruptcy. It also marked the end of the Willys-Knight.

In 1934, Willys' 37-year marriage to Isabel Van Wie, with whom he had a daughter, dissolved, and he soon married Florence Dolan. In 1935 he was named president of Willys-Overland again, but when the company emerged from bankruptcy in 1936 as the reorganized Willys-Overland Motors, John Willys was

not present to celebrate. While recovering from a previous heart attack, on August 26 of that year, he succumbed to a stroke at his New York home.

Willys-Overland Motors would find further success in developing the Willys MB (Jeep) for the war effort in the 1940s. Following WWII, Willys continued to build Jeep vehicles for the civilian market, foregoing passenger cars until the 1952-'55 Willys Aero compacts. Kaiser Motors bought Willys in 1953, and in 1963 the Willys name was retired.

John North Willys had an instinct for recognizing products people wanted, he manufactured them, promoted them through astute advertising programs and sold them. His business philosophy was to build the best cars possible with more features and durability than the competition, and to manufacture and sell them in quantity to keep prices down. The national dealership network he established was very progressive for its time.

Yet none of this may have come to fruition, had a young, aggressive entrepreneur not found himself contractually obligated to dealers expecting vehicle deliveries from a cash-strapped automaker that couldn't afford to build them. The implementation of Willys' plan to save Overland and his own career and reputation along with it, altered the course of automotive history. Hundreds of thousands of owners of the vehicles built that bear his name have appreciated the results of those efforts. 🚗



The popular Whippet four-cylinder cars were produced from mid-1926 to 1931, and the six-cylinder models from 1927 to 1930. Shown is a 1929 Whippet Six.

An Exercise in Patience

Bodyshop problems slow restoration progress of a Canadian-built 1953 Pontiac Pathfinder De Luxe—Part III



BY MATTHEW LITWIN • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ANDRÉ FITZBACK

As many restorers can attest, most projects suffer a completion date delay due to any number of foreseen or unforeseen problems. Mechanical repairs and correcting body corrosion are just part of the process that—on their own—can set a project back days, perhaps weeks, and sometimes months. However, they pale in comparison to having to reconfigure a replacement frame, a process that, by itself, took André Fitzback, a mechanic living in Saint-Hyacinthe in the Québec province of Canada, a year to complete.

That frame was supposed to have fit under the body of his GM of Canada-built 1953 Pontiac Pathfinder De Luxe—a car he purchased in 1995 and began restoring in 2006—but the

combination of a print error in a factory manual and a design change left André a conundrum as discussed in Part II, which appeared in last month's issue. Daunting as it was, the painstaking effort brought him a step closer to fulfilling his goal. In theory, the rest of the Pontiac's restoration should have proceeded smoothly.

As discussed in Part I (*HCC* #143), the first shop owner he hired had a breakdown that resulted in more body damage in lieu of restoration work. Rescued from the garage, the new frame—in a turn of events that proved fortuitous once it had been reconfigured—could easily be test-fit against the body. Unfortunately, his problems with body repairs were just beginning.

“Although I am a mechanic, the only areas I lack experience in are body and paint,” André tells us. “Here, in Québec, it's difficult to find someone with enough knowledge and drive to see a project through, but in 2010 I found a second shop willing to take it on. But after a year of work, he closed the shop. After more searching, I reached an agreement with a third shop, yet after several months he decided to go back to school having made no progress. I remember telling myself that if I don't find anyone who can finish the body, then I will just sell the Pontiac off in pieces. Fortunately, in 2013, I met the staff at Sauvageau Custom who were determined to complete the body repairs and provide a superior finish; I was really happy with the outcome.” 🗨️



While the search was ongoing for a new body shop to effect the necessary repairs, Jonathan Seney—via the Big Brother/Big Sister program—continued to assist André in the shop with other tasks, such as removing undercoating from the fenders.



In 2010, the body shell was finally delivered to a second shop. The required work turned out to be more extensive than had been anticipated. Here a section of the floorpan has been replaced, as well as the inner rocker panel, both fabricated from sheetmetal.



With the body shell secured to a rotisserie, only small sections of the body that were to receive immediate repair work were media blasted. This system of sectional repair work would prevent the rest of the body from being subjected to flash corrosion.



In all-too-typical fashion, the spare wheel carrier, stamped into the trunk floor, was found to be riddled with corrosion damage once media blasted. Patch panels were carefully fabricated from sheetmetal using the original steel as a template.



As mentioned in Part I of this restoration saga, the body mounts bore the brunt of the corrosion beyond the frame. Using what remained of the originals as a template, each had to be fabricated by different means; this one was rectified on the body.



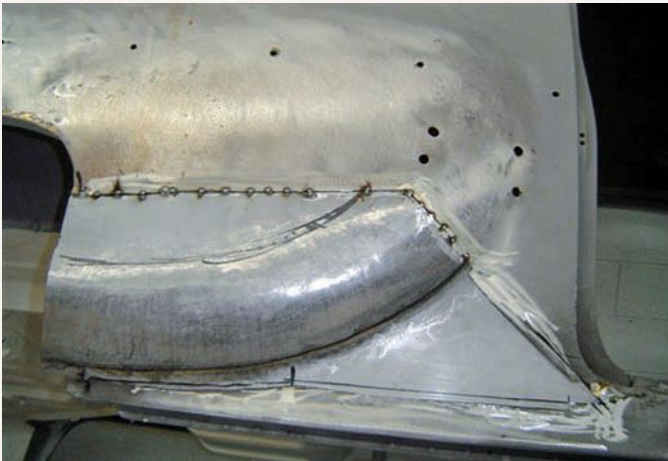
A few of the body mounts were fabricated from templates on a workbench. On the surface, it may seem as though this method could result in less certainty as to proper fit; however, it allowed for far greater control in adjustments and final welds.



After several weeks of careful effort, each of the body's mounting points and bracing has been restored and tack welded into position. Seams are to be welded shut next, which will then be ground smooth; floorboard repairs have also been completed.



Once the numerous repairs had been completed to the underside of the Pontiac's body, its exposed metal was cleaned and given a few protective coats of self-etching primer, which was then allowed to cure before moving on to other sections.



Still bolted to a rotisserie to facilitate repairs, the body had its exterior surfaces media blasted, which exposed corrosion on the lower part of the right-side quarter panel. Here, a patch panel has been fabricated and tack welded into place.



Quarter panel wheel opening lips often take the brunt of water/salt/oxygen alchemy, and those on André's Pontiac were no different. With the aid of templates and a replacement fender skirt, a new section has been fabricated and tack welded into place.



The same kind of damage that affected the right quarter panel also affected the left and had to be repaired similarly. Most of the work has already been accomplished in this image; however, if you look close, you'll see that rot still is present on the wheel lip.



A testament to the amount of metalwork André's Pontiac required is present in this image. Not only had the outer quarter panel needed repairs, but so, too, did the inner fender structure and portions of the rocker panels. Note the temporary use of a wood stud.



Attention was turned to the front fenders, each of which suffered its own series of rust maladies. The entire lower section of the right fender, as seen here, had to be replaced outright, and it had to be done carefully in order to match multiple factory contours.



Surprisingly, the doors, once media blasted, were devoid of corrosion. Nevertheless, each was test fitted against the body shell repairs in order to help confirm that any work that had been done matched factory contours, panel gaps and eventual trim.



As the body was being corrected, André turned his attention to the chassis. Several steps have occurred by this point, including the application of black enamel to the chassis, and the installation of the differential, suspension and now engine/transmission.



With a proper engine-to-differential alignment confirmed once connected, André could then fit a new exhaust system and begin the process of installing the remaining brake and fuel lines, as well as the transmission cooling lines.



There was still a litany of small projects that required attention as late as 2011, including the restoration of the Pontiac's original 16-gallon fuel tank. At this stage, it has already received a protective coat of self-etching primer at André's shop.



Fast forward to 2013: André has secured a fourth shop to complete the body repairs and facilitate the primer/paint process. Two items of note here: The mapped-out area needed sill repair and filler work to correct a contour in conjunction with original trim.



Having taken care of the remaining metal repairs left by the third body shop, final preparations could be made for final primer and paint, beginning with several skim coats of filler. Careful sanding removed several layers, resulting in a smooth surface.



Each of the front fenders received the same filler/sanding treatment as the left-side quarter panel. Guide coats of primer helped determine the high and low areas that required extra effort to bring forth an impeccably smooth surface throughout.



Some areas required more filler than others, as demonstrated here. Note how thin it has been sanded at the forward end of the quarter panel compared to the trailing edge. Also of note is the original trim used to help maintain factory contours.



The interior and firewall were masked off, then multiple coats of high-build primer were applied, followed by hours of block-sanding to get the sides straight.



This is a perfect time to test fit trim against the efforts put into correcting the body. Although the last coat of primer has cured and been sanded—and the body is ready for paint—making fine corrections now is far easier and less costly.



Although progress on the body was a slow and steady process, other aspects of work were not abandoned. To help expedite final assembly, items such as these inner fender panels were finished in primer and a factory-correct layer of chassis black enamel.

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A simple project may consume far more time than necessary. As with the inner fenders, a replacement forward hood support was sourced, carefully refinished and installed by the body shop during downtime.



By late summer, the first coats of red paint had been applied to the main body shell. According to André, "At the time, I was getting tired of the factory green. Coupled with my affinity for red, I went with one of the two shades available in 1953."



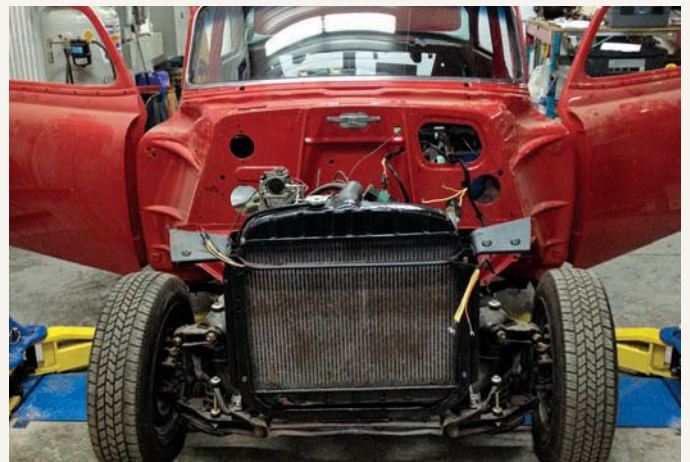
Red was also to be the primary color of the interior, so while the body shell was receiving its treatment it was extended to the passenger compartment. Like the rest of the body, it would later be subjected to wet sanding and final polishing.



Each of the body panels, along with the main shell, received the same number of coats, wet sanding via the common step process, and final buffing and polishing. The exact details of the process are not known to André; however, it was a time-consuming procedure.



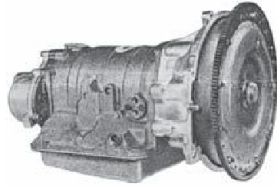
This photo was taken in April 2014. After a dozen years of work by André, his family, friends and no fewer than four body shops, the Pathfinder De Luxe had finally returned to his own shop, where, finally, assembly could commence.



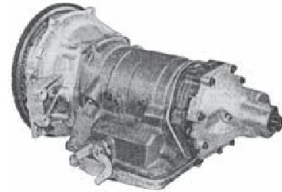
With the body reunited to the frame with proper hardware, the front windshield, weatherstripping and corresponding trim were installed along with a new forward wiring harness and restored radiator. Join us next month for the conclusion.

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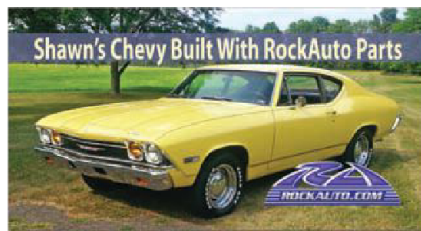
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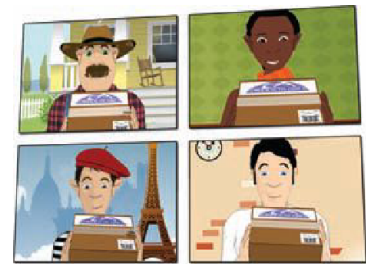
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Second Wave Malibu

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL FIRST wave downsizing of their full-size cars, it only made sense for General Motors to immediately downsize their mid-size models, which for their final year as Colonnades were a tad larger in exterior dimensions than Impalas and Caprices.

The Malibu was the top seller in the Chevelle line-up, so the new mid-size Chevrolets were all Malibus for 1978, except for the one model that is not an underdog—the El Camino.

The new Malibu was more than a foot shorter and more than 500 pounds lighter than its predecessor. However, trunk space, leg room, and head room were more plentiful on a trim new wheelbase of 108.1 inches, around the same as the first generation Big Three compacts of 1960 and '61. Ford, Chrysler and American Motors were still selling mid-size cars with wheelbases ranging from 116 to 118 inches, equal to or more than the one-year-old Chevrolet full-size cars. Now, let the confusion begin.

There were three trim levels: Malibu, Malibu Classic, and a Malibu Classic Landau series that featured two-tone paint and a vinyl roof. Under the hood was the new Chevrolet 90-degree 200-cu.in. V-6, mated to a three-speed manual transmission. I wonder how many of these so equipped base motivators still exist. In California, a 229-cu.in. V-6 was standard with automatic transmission. The tried-and-true 305-cu.in. small-block V-8 was optional in all 50 states.

When you visited your Chevrolet dealership, you could choose a station wagon, four-door sedan or two-



door coupe, all body styles shared by the Pontiac version. Oldsmobile and Buick adopted fastback rooflines for the sedans that would prove less than popular.

The new G-bodies were body-on-frame and suspended by coil springs at all four wheels. Standard features included front disc brakes, high energy ignition, Freedom battery, carburetor outside air intake, column-mounted headlamp dimmer, and dual mode ventilation system with picture windows. What, you may ask, are picture windows? If you have a friend who is prone to car sickness, you didn't let him ride in the backseat.

In the summer of 1978, I took the driver's ed "On the Road" course at Todd Stadium in Newport News, Virginia. In those days, local dealerships loaned cars for the students to drive. I was lucky to be assigned to a baby blue 1978 Chevrolet Caprice two-door coupe with that really

Malibu Classic Models.

The new Malibu Classic is a fresh new size of coupe and station wagon that you'll love. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive.

First, take a look at the Malibu Classic Sedan. Its clean, uncluttered and simple lines are just a little different. So ahead. Get on, sit back and relax. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive.

Then take a look at the Malibu Classic Station Wagon. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive.

Finally, take a look at the Malibu Classic Sedan. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive. It's got a new look, a new feel, and a new way to drive.

Malibu Classic Landau Coupe shown in available Custom Two-tone beige and dark brown metallic with available sport mirrors, deluxe body side moldings, tinted glass, bumper rub strips, and guards and white stripe trim.

This brochure depicts the models that the Chevrolet Malibu was available in in 1979.

cool bent backlite. I remember a friend of mine was assigned a Malibu four-door sedan. When it was his turn to ride in the backseat while his partner drove, he discovered something very odd. I can still see him getting out of the car and yelling, "This is ridiculous. The rear windows don't open!" If you've ever spent a summer on the Lower Peninsula, you know that it gets very humid, and we weren't allowed to use the air conditioning.

Apparently, the picture windows were a cost-saving measure. I have owned, and still own, some very cheap base-model cars, and the rear windows opened on all of them.

The brochure stated the dual-mode ventilation system "allows the use of a rear door design with large, fixed picture windows. The door/window design allows for easy entry and exit and gives you recessed rear door armrests. Behind the rear windows are swing-out vents to give rear-seat passengers draft-free ventilation." If you ordered power windows, the rear vents were also power assist. I want to know what happened to anyone with a full load of passengers who accidentally drove into a lake.

The 1981 models benefited from a new formal roof line for the four-door sedans. The four-door models were also popular for fleet service. Once the 1979 Nova platform was retired, the mid-size 9C1 police package was offered. The Malibu 9C1 usually came equipped with a Camaro LM-1 350 4-bbl Z-28 engine. And, no criminal ever escaped through the rear vent window.

The Malibu Classic was last marketed in 1982. Malibus continued as four-door sedans and station wagons until 1983, at which time it was fully replaced by the front-wheel-drive Chevrolet Celebrity with roll-down rear windows. I am always fascinated by the short-lived models introduced by American automakers in the late 1970s—truly a sign of the changing fortunes of the American automobile industry.

I searched around to see what one could expect to pay for a 1978-'83 Chevrolet Malibu, and what I found were quite a few cars in rough condition with custom or mag wheels and eye-rolling asking prices. However, in the crowd were a few "this was my father's" four-door sedans that were original and selling far below \$4,000. While not a show car per se, a Chevrolet Malibu would be a delightful daily driver with plenty of room for you and your groceries. Just don't let anyone who gets queasy sit in the back seat. ☺

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Chet Krause



WHEN CHET KRAUSE PASSED AWAY on June 25, the event that made him most famous was just about to come off. And it did, right on schedule. The big car show at Iola, Wisconsin, nearly dead center in the state in Waupaca County, happened without a hitch, though not without a little sorrow. Iola's a small place with maybe 1,100 people, and Chet's big shindig for gearheads put it firmly on the national map. He was a lifelong resident and indisputably Iola's favorite native son.

Chester Lee Krause was born in late 1923. He grew up studying in a one-room schoolhouse that his father, a locally famous stonemason, had erected next to the family farm. As a boy, he learned the building trades in hand-me-down fashion directly from his father. Then at 19, Chet was drafted into the Army, where—appropriately—he served as automotive mechanic with General George Patton's Third Army as it rolled through Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

At some point around this time, Chet developed a very keen interest in numismatics, the collecting of both coinage and paper currency. Mustered out of the Army, he returned to Iola where he worked the family farm and started a second career as a builder. Through the 1950s, his work in Iola included two dozen dwellings, two churches and even

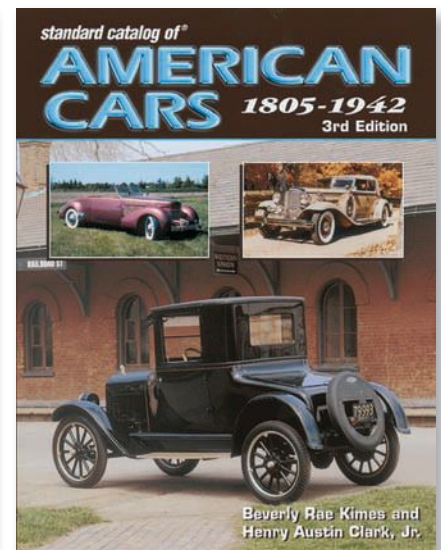
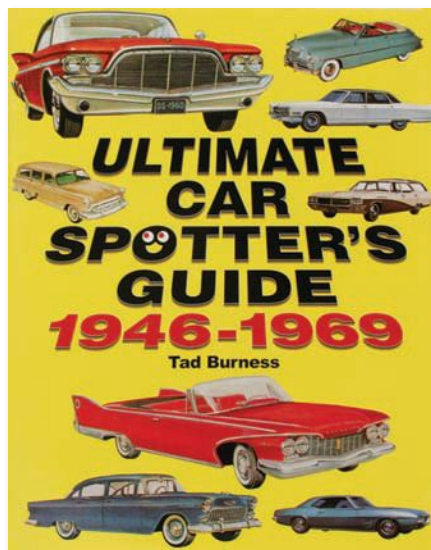
a ski jump. Meanwhile, his father sold the farm and moved the family into town. In 1952, Chet made another entrepreneurial leap, publishing the first issue of *Numismatic News*. The newspaper was aimed squarely at people just like himself: coin collectors who had a deep enthusiasm for the hobby, but who lived in rural areas where coin shops just weren't that commonplace. It grew strongly in both circulation and advertising revenue, a trend that continued for more than a decade.

Then, amidst other upheaval in the middle of the 1960s, coin collecting suffered a serious downturn and those revenues began to wane. Chet realized he had to do something and in 1971, founded *Old Cars*, the first in a line of automotive enthusiast books and periodicals aimed at that hobby. Chet had been interested in old vehicles, and during his lifetime, he amassed one of the biggest collections of World War II-vintage U.S. Army vehicles

in private hands. The number of titles on cars he published included a landmark *Standard Catalog of American Cars* dating from 1805 to 1942, perhaps the single most-used reference guide in the hobby. Other *Standard Catalogs* focused on individual makes, imported nameplates, trucks and vans.

An innocuous encounter with the local Lions Club led to what would become Chet's undying legacy. Long active in local philanthropy, Chet invited two dozen owners of antique cars to display their rides at a pig roast and auction in the summer of 1972. The event was a hit, and soon morphed into the annual Iola Car Show, which draws thousands of attendees to that part of Wisconsin each year. It's still one of the major events on the nation's automotive calendar.

During the 1980s, Krause Publications moved into more than a dozen disciplines of collecting and outdoor activities, growing to more than 400 employees, which resulted in Chet being honored as Wisconsin's Small Business Person of the Year. At age 63, he stepped down from day-to-day operations of the firm, which was ultimately sold to an outside investment group. In his later years, Chet suffered a stroke and then fell hard on the ice while using his walker. That accident revealed the existence of congestive heart failure, which was found to be irreversible and which claimed him at the age of 92. 🐾



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SEPTEMBER 23, 24, 25, 2016

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- 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration at the Saratoga Automobile Museum, 110 Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs, New York.
- 12:00 noon – Join in a Rally through the beautiful Adirondack region
- 2:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m. Cruise scenic Lake George, Queen of the Lakes, aboard the Adirondac Shoreline cruise – w/luncheon buffet (boarding promptly at 2:00 p.m.)

Deadline to purchase Lake George Cruise tickets: 9/2/16

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th CRUISE-IN SPECTACULAR

Gates open at 8:00 a.m. An all-makes car show that's open to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Including: muscle cars, street rods, sports, exotics and classics.
 Awards at 2:00 p.m.

Cocktail reception with cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner available at 7:00 p.m. at the Courtyard Marriott. Keynote Speaker/Honorary Chairman: Lee Holman, President of Holman & Moody.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Open to concours-quality, pre-1974 cars, by invitation only.

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Jeff Silver Safety Lab Engineer General Motors Proving Ground

MY AUTOMOTIVE CAREER BEGAN AT

least in the late 1950s when I was in high school building and driving what could loosely be described as “hot rods.” My daily driver was a 1950 Oldsmobile that I transplanted a later-model engine and manual transmission into. In college, I did the same thing with a 1949 Oldsmobile. I was always a General Motors fan, although my family drove Studebakers and Packards.

That early love of things mechanical led me to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering, which I received from the University of Wisconsin in 1966. At the time, the University had a professor with ties to the automotive industry and who offered courses in automotive testing. That also meant recruiters from the Big Three, and especially the General Motors Proving Ground, paid regular visits to the school.

I was recruited to intern at the GMPC in Milford, Michigan, about 40 miles northwest of Detroit. This 4,000-acre facility is like a country club setting with 100 miles of all kinds of roads and test facilities designed to extract every ounce of performance and durability from new vehicles under development, as well as competitive makes for comparison purposes. For a young engineer it was living a dream.

At that time, the first Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) were introduced, and the automotive safety movement was just gaining momentum. I saw this as an opportunity to get in on the ground floor and chose to work at the Safety Lab. This proved to be a momentous choice as, in the succeeding 50 years of my career through four employers, I have participated in various aspects of car crashes.

I got involved with many aspects of the early effort to develop elements of crash safety that we take for granted. In those days, test equipment and measurement devices were crude by today's standards. One very sophisticated device for its time and still in use today, was the Impact Sled. The Federal Standards called for a complete car to be run into a solid concrete barrier at 30 miles per hour and various parameters measured on the vehicle and its occupants, the crash test dummies.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GENERAL MOTORS

Obviously, this was a very expensive test, and could not be used to develop various sub-systems that had to be tested multiple times during development. The Impact Sled provides that capability. It is powered by high-pressure air and can accelerate a car body from rest to 30 MPH *in reverse* in a tenth of a second. This simulates a car crashing into a barrier at 30 MPH and can be done repeatedly under controlled conditions. It's the tool of choice for developing many safety systems, including seat belts, instrument panels, steering columns, air bags and child safety seats.

From 1966 to 1973, I was actively involved in many safety initiatives, including restraint systems, child safety seats, crash test dummies, injury causation and repairability after accidents. I spent many hours in the field crawling through wrecked cars in salvage yards to establish the cause of occupant injuries. I would compare injury reports with interior vehicle contact and make the connection between contact and injury. This led to recommendations for changing interior design and reducing injury potential. As a part of this effort, which was highly visible within GM, I authored the *Collision Performance and Injury Report*. This booklet of documentation, and the photos that went with it, was required to be completed by Motors Insurance Corp. (MIC) appraisers in every injury accident involving a GM vehicle. The MIC people hated it, but it provided an unequalled body of injury causation information. An offshoot of this type of investigation led to studies of how to reduce repair cost for collision damage.

Test equipment and measurement tools were fairly crude for the time. One of the key measurement tools is the crash

test dummy. These devices, with Vince and Larry being the “spokes-dummies” for the Federal government, were keys to establishing injury potential in crashes. They are rubber and metal simulations of the human body that can repeatedly be involved in crashes and provide data on crash severity and how to reduce injury. In the 1960s and early '70s, they mostly had rubber skins and metal skeletons and were instrumented with accelerometers that measured impact force to the head and chest. Because of the metal skeletons and joints, they often gave readings that were not representative of the real world. As a result, the Federal government was looking for improvements in accuracy and repeatability in crash test dummy readings.

At the time, I was supervisor of the Anthropomorphic Test Dummy Laboratory at the Proving Ground Safety Lab; this team set out to remedy the situation. We experimented with many different combinations of dummy parts and finally discovered that if the metal joints in the dummy's neck and back were replaced with molded rubber, the results were much more realistic and repeatable. This new dummy, dubbed the Hybrid II, became the worldwide standard. An updated version, Hybrid III, is still in use today. There is an excellent video on YouTube produced by the BBC that chronicles the history of crash test dummies, including the Hybrid II.

Although I had the dream job for a young engineer, I began to realize that my career would not take me to the top of General Motors. While answering available job advertisements, I came across one for an engineering/product manager in a company that made auto-

mobile frame straightening equipment. I got the job and took the next step in my automotive career.

Shortly after I began working at the frame straightening equipment company, we experienced the first oil crisis. This triggered the car makers to begin development of lightweight, fuel-efficient front-wheel drive cars. Until that time, domestic cars were body-on-frame construction, and repairs were conducted much like they had been in the blacksmith days. A frame straightener was a frame straightener. Measurements were not precise and brute force was more important than finesse. Imports, on the other hand, were of unibody construction, which is the way most cars are made today. They are welded together from many pieces of sheetmetal, to very close dimensional tolerances.

In 1979, the domestic autobody industry began to realize it was ill-equipped to handle the new generation of unibody cars such as the Citation, Escort and Omni. Insurance companies and industry observers were concerned that this would lead to more total losses and substandard repairs, because the existing group of collision repair technicians didn't have the knowledge and training to repair the cars properly. At that time, a group of industry leaders from all segments of the industry—collision repair, insurance, car manufacturers, suppliers and related industry services—got together in a historic meeting and created an organization called I-CAR, the Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair. The purpose of this groundbreaking organization was to create and deliver training programs on the new technology of collision repair to all the technicians working in autobody shops so they could keep up with the rapidly changing repair techniques.

The first program on repairing plastic bumpers, which were just being introduced at the time, was produced and donated by Ford. GM contributed a nine-part program on unibody repair, which ultimately became the focus of the early days of I-CAR. For the first time, all segments of the industry could get together in the same room and learn a common body of knowledge. 🐞



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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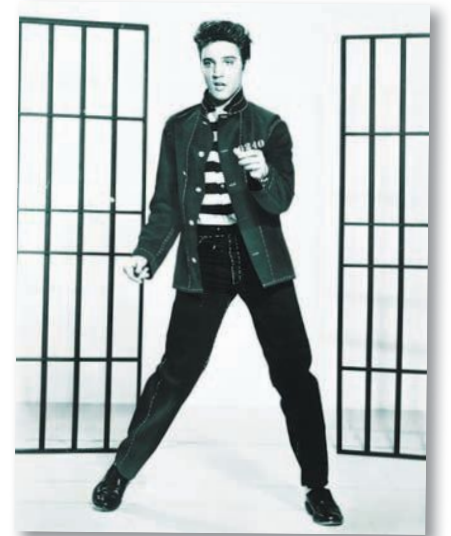
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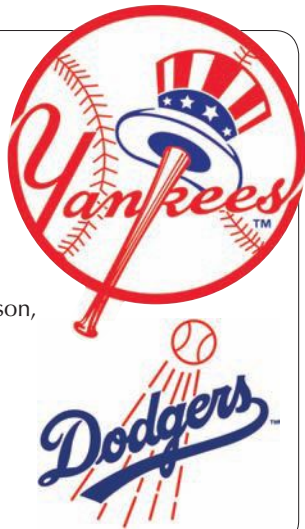
MUSICIAN, ACTOR AND CULTURAL ICON Elvis Presley is found dead in Graceland on August 16 at the age of 42.



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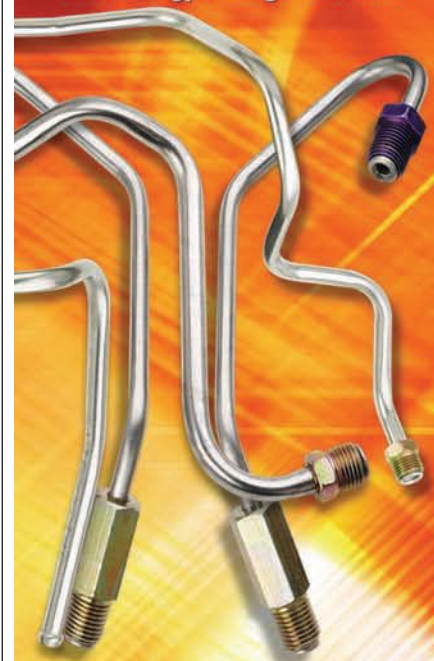


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Buying and Selling

I ALWAYS WAS AN OLD-car guy; genes inherited from my dad caused it. He was an excellent mechanic who ran his own shop in the 1950s and beyond.

My dad was an old-car guy too. Our family car from when I was born until the mid-1950s was a 1940 Packard sedan. It was a wonderful car that I wish I had today. I also remember as a toddler riding shotgun with my dad in the 1929 Durant which he drove as a work car.

My first car, which I got when I was 15, was a 1947 Cushman motor scooter, which I decorated with the moniker "Rudy Rodent." Before I could legally drive at 16, I had sold the scooter to a friend, and before long I had spotted a 1951 Ford Victoria, the first two-door hardtop model with Ford's first automatic transmission, sitting in the back row of a Nash dealership. The blue paint was badly faded, and the inside smelled like spoiled milk. I loved it.

We bought it and after I had gone through six quarts of oil in 50 miles and had dropped a driveshaft in the busiest intersection in town at rush hour, I figured it was time for a restoration. Oh, and then there was the time the steering failed while I was driving it. My dad and I rebuilt the engine, seat covers cured the unsightly interior, and I redid the door panels in black Naugahyde. A newly painted white-over-red exterior and swapping out the tatty twin-bullet grille for a 1952 Plymouth grille completed the transformation into a high school kid's dream.

However, one car didn't satisfy me. I wanted an old car. I cruised the back roads in my spiffy Victoria, and one day spotted an old Buick sitting in a caved-in barn. Talking to the owner, I discovered that it was a 1921 touring car with something like 850 miles on the odometer. And



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it could be mine for only \$30! It was a rust bucket, which we hauled home on a trailer. My mom cried when she saw it as we backed into the driveway. After a year of restoring the chassis and rebuilding the six-cylinder engine, which roared with a purr when first started, I decided the body work was too much of a challenge with all the wood rotted and sold the car to a body and fender instructor at a local community college.

The departure of the Buick left a gap in my stable, so I found a 1930 Cadillac V-8 sedan sitting next to an abandoned house. I always watched the sheriff sale announcements in the local paper, and one day the Cadillac came up as an auction item. I talked my dad into going to the auction while I was in school and

he picked up the Cadillac for \$38. Of course, it didn't run. A buddy of mine and I got it going and we tooted around the block a few times and then I sold it. I had really wanted a V-16, you see.

But, never fear, one of our customers who sold fuel oil asked me to come to his place of business one day, and he took me into a shed to view a very nice 1926 Oldsmobile two-door sedan up on blocks. He didn't need it anymore, and would I like to buy it, he asked. The Olds cost a little more, a couple hundred as I remember. It had been painted with a broom, so my dad had me sand it down and he sprayed new blue paint on the body and black on the fenders. It was a fun driver, but you had to plan ahead for stopping with the rear-only mechanical brakes. I drove this Oldsmobile on some old-car tours and generally had fun with it. When I left for college, the old Oldsmobile got sold.

In the mix somewhere was a 1924 Dodge sedan that a buddy and I bought together, got running and sold. There was a 1939 Ford coupe that came as a result of trading some of the Model T parts that I had accumulated. Upon graduating from high school, I moved up to a 1955 Mercury Montclair two-door hardtop that was a present from my parents, and the Ford was handed down to my sister.

So, in three years in high school, I had a lot of "first" cars and several of them were old cars. I've always been an old-car guy, and I've always been an old-Packard guy as well.

I don't own any old cars now—unless you count all of those that I've digitally painted. You can view these at www.royehughes.com. You'll see some of this artwork if you go to the LeMay America's Car Museum in Tacoma. 🐾

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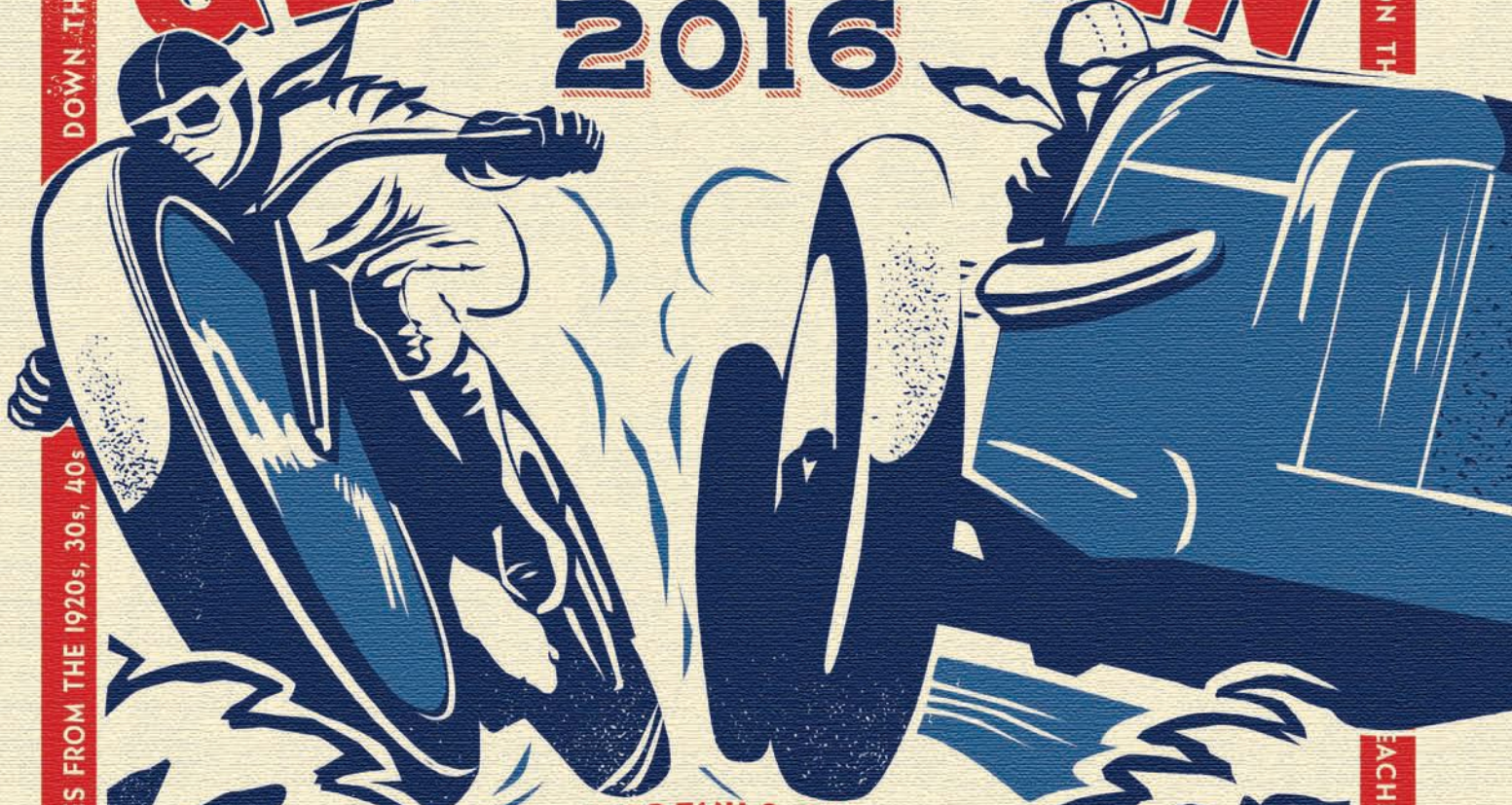
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Family Resemblance

Exclusive to Canada, Mercury trucks, such as this 1949 M-47, are an uncommon treat in the U.S.



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

In Mexico, Ford's best-selling F-150 is called "Lobo" —the Spanish word for wolf. For enthusiasts north of the boarder, those Lobo badges can be a little startling, like meeting an old friend's twin for the first time.

From 2005 to 2014, the F-150 series pickups were even disguised as Lincolns and sold in the U.S. and Canada (2005-2008) as well as in Mexico (2005-2014) as the "Mark LT." This fooled absolutely no one, of course, and quite possibly caused Edsel Ford to spin in his grave.

Prior to that, the Lincoln Blackwood grew roots on Lincoln dealer lots around the U.S. until it was felled after one model

year—2002. Turns out not many truck buyers wanted a \$50,000 two-wheel-drive-only pickup with a carpeted, stainless steel-lined bed and artificial burlwood siding on the outside. Just 3,356 were built.

The point is, for better or for worse, Ford is no stranger to thinly disguising the F-series truck as something else and shopping it around to other countries or customers of its other divisions. One of the

more famous attendees of Ford's light-truck costume party? This great looking and uncommon hauler, the Mercury M-47. Yes, it's a Ford F-1 with different badges, like the Mark LT or the Lobo (and others) that followed. But Mercury trucks are a welcome sight among truck collectors as they're often loaded with more shine than their Ford counterparts and they're unusual, particularly in the U.S. where they



were never available new. The fact that the Mercury brand is now defunct might even strengthen their appeal.

Ford's history of manufacturing cars and trucks in Canada dates nearly as far back as its history of building vehicles in the U.S. In 1904, Ford Canada began production in Walkerville, Ontario, which is now part of Windsor, Ontario.

But this was not Henry Ford's endeavor. Ford Motor Company of Canada was founded by Gordon Morton McGregor, president of the Walkerville Wagon Company, who obtained the rights to build and sell Fords in Canada and in other British Territories. Realizing that horsedrawn wagons might not be the wave of the future, McGregor began building Ford's two-cylinder Model C and four-cylinder Model B at

the site of the former wagon works in October of 1904. In its inaugural year, Ford of Canada built 117 cars. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Ford of Canada continued producing models similar to those being built by Ford in the U.S.

After World War II, Ford of Canada set up separate Ford/Monarch and Mercury/Lincoln dealerships. To give all of its dealers light haulers to sell, Mercury was given its own line of trucks.

Mercury pickups were virtually identical to Canadian Ford trucks aside from differences in trim. The Mercury haulers, however, sat just upmarket from their Ford counterparts and were priced slightly higher. To postwar buyers who'd grown accustomed to painted trim due to wartime demands for chrome, these Mercury trucks

The well-dressed interior of a 1949 Mercury M-47 might've featured an optional heater (not a bad idea for a rig native to Canada) and even a radio. Extra ventilation came courtesy of wing windows and a cowl vent.

must've looked opulent with their bright grilles, hood and fender trim.

The nomenclature used to identify Ford and Mercury trucks in Canada was different than the U.S. model designations. In the U.S., Ford trucks began with the ½-ton F-1, then progressed up the GVW ranks: F-2 for ¾-ton, F-3 for 1-ton etc.

In Canada, Ford used the first two digits of the GVW in the model name. So the ½-ton, with a 4,700-pound GVW, was known as the F-47. Mercury trucks simply swapped out the "F" for an "M" and its



Six-cylinder engines weren't available beneath a Mercury truck hood ornament until 1957. This M-47 is powered by a 239 V-8.



lightest haulers were known as M-47s. That changed in 1951 when Canadian trucks switched to the U.S. nomenclature and the Mercury trucks became M-1, M-3, M-4, etc. Production of Mercury trucks ended altogether in 1968.

Another interesting departure among Canadian Ford trucks was that they were powered only by V-8 engines until the 223-cu.in. six-cylinder was made available to buyers in 1957. There were two flat-heads V-8s used, both 239-cu.in. engines. One was for light-duty service, while the other, designated the Mercury 188, was intended for heavier rigs. The engine used in light-duty trucks was rated at 180-lb. ft. of torque at 1,850 rpm, while the more powerful version for medium-duty trucks was rated at 188-lb.ft. at 1,400 rpm.

Drivers of all Ford and Mercury trucks found improvements in the cabs of the new 1948 trucks: The seat rose upward as it was adjusted forward, the fuel tank was moved from below the seat to behind the seat, and there was a tool box located back there as well.

The windshields in the new postwar models were one piece, the glass was two inches taller and angled to help reduce glare and reflections. The new trucks also had wing windows added in the doors as well as a cowl vent for some additional air circulation in the cab.

This month's 1949 Mercury M-47

feature truck is owned by Chris Koch of Palm Coast, Florida. It would've been considered loaded in its day, as this 1/2-ton sparkles with chrome, plus it has two-tone paint, a radio and a heater. Under the hood is the 110-hp Mercury 239-cu.in. flathead V-8 with a three-speed shifter on the floor.

The restored truck appears mostly as it might've in Mercury showrooms in Canada, though the whitewall tires and the natural wood color bed floor are gentrified touches.

Chris is a retired Ford dealer, so he has an affinity for Fords in general, but likes the extra trim and the uncommonness of his Mercury 1/2-ton. "It's sharper than the American F-1, in my opinion," he said. "There are very few Mercury trucks in the U.S., and there are very few survivors because they were mostly farm trucks, used to death by farmers."

He bought this truck back in 2008 at an Auctions America sale and uses it only occasionally today. He reports good road manners around town, though the ride benefits from having a little weight in the bed. Chris said he especially enjoys the comments the truck draws from people unfamiliar with Ford of Canada's unique makes and models. "People at shows will tell me, 'Mercury didn't make a truck!,'" he said. "I thank them for the information and smile." 🐞



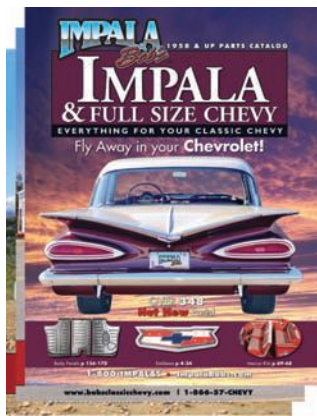
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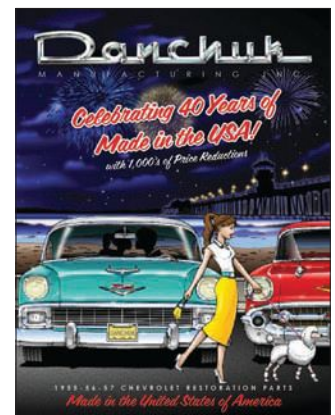


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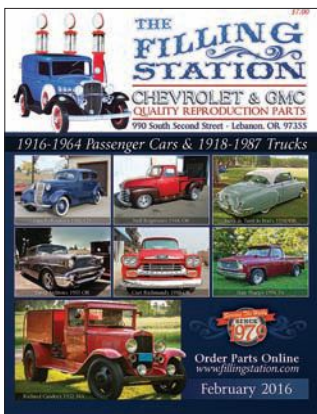


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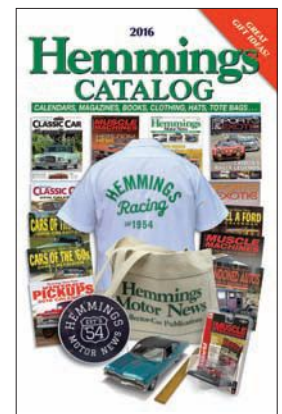


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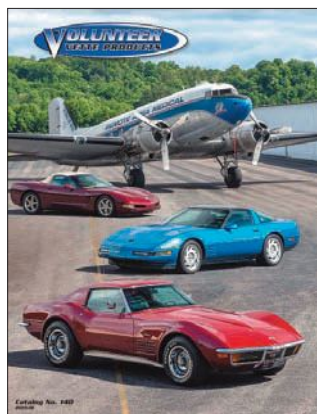


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The Ultimate Weapon

New York's Super Pumper, the most powerful fire engine in history



BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGES COURTESY WALTER McCALL

In New York City's borough of Brooklyn, there was a massed area of old warehouses next to piers along the New York Bay. With growing frequency, they became obsolete as just-in-time deliveries (mostly by trucks) obviated the need for long-term stocking.

Some of the temperature-controlled warehouses of the old days had their walls lined with cork that became tinder-dry. Occasionally, one of these behemoth buildings went up in a roaring column of flames.

Who you gonna call? In the Big Apple, you ran to the nearest alarm box, pulled the handle and telegraphed the emergency to FDNY, the fabled New York Fire Department. And among the rigs that came racing to the blaze were the two totally distinctive pieces of fire apparatus that you see here. FDNY's Super Pumper System, which actually consisted of five separate Mack trucks, served the city from 1965 through 1982, and it's still the most potent land-based pumping device ever conceived in this country. Even by New York standards, which takes a back seat to no place when it comes to bigness, the Super Pumper's num-

bers were staggering: The tractor-drawn pumping station that formed the heart of the system was capable of rocketing 8,800 gallons of water per minute onto a fire with 350 pounds of brick-shattering pressure. For the aforementioned, hypothetical warehouse fire, it would use a crane to dip into the Hudson for its water supply via a hose that was a foot in diameter.

Big, big stuff. It came from the fertile brain of a guy who was neither a firefighter nor a truck designer. William Francis Gibbs was, however, a devoted fire buff and perhaps the most accomplished and respected marine architect of his time. He'd been toying with the idea of a land-based fireboat since he was a young adult, his first actual plan for such a rig conceived to use zeppelin engines. After a stellar career on water, Gibbs presented Mack Trucks with

a plan to build a Super Pumper, as it was quickly dubbed, along with a supporting hose tender (this page), along with a trio of wagons with huge water guns that were called satellites.

The most important day in the system's history came before it was even built. On April 20, 1963, the FDNY was confronted by its busiest day of fires in its then history, the combination of long springtime dry spell and a chronic city water shortage. More than 2,000 fire alarms were received that day, including a wildland conflagration on Staten Island that destroyed at least 100 buildings while the department battled a dozen extra-alarm fires simultaneously in the rest of the city, which wasn't yet connected to the island borough by the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Gibbs used the disaster to directly pitch his idea to city



officials, who agreed to the project in short order. The cost of the pumper and tender would be an amazing \$875,000.

Both trucks were drawn by short-wheelbase Mack F715FS highway tractors using V-8 diesel engines and semi-automatic six-speed Allison transmissions. The heart of the system was the pumper's turbocharged, 18-cylinder Napier-Deltic T18-37C diesel engine, mounted on the trailer, and ordinarily used by locomotives and ships. It powered a De Laval pump that could deliver a stream of water with incredible force. Additionally, the tender's tractor could be uncoupled to position the tractor in tight places, and bring its Stang Intelligent nozzle, of the kind normally used on the city's fleet of fireboats, into immediate play. Tactically, one technique for stopping a major fire was to park the pumper on a pier, and either draw water from the river or be fed directly from a fireboat. The tender's myriad hose lines would then feed water to other rigs, including the Stang-topped satellites, which then undertook a massed attack against the flames.

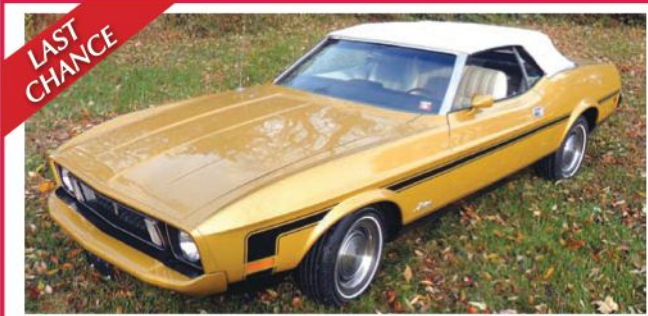
It was all too much to last, really. As New York City skidded toward financial oblivion during the 1970s, the system's trucks were used less and less to minimize the cost of keeping them repaired. Despite the system's raw power, not every fire chief was enthralled with it, as the impact of its water against a fire-weakened wall was enough to lead to a potential collapse. Eventually, all of the rigs were sold off. Fire apparatus historian and author Walter McCall of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, furnished us with the photos you see here, which demonstrate that these historic rigs still indeed do exist and were saved from the scrapper's torch. The pumper and tender are now in the hands of private collectors in Michigan and California, respectively, and still turn out for musters at which antique fire trucks are put through their paces. The FDNY reverted to a fleet of more standard 2,000 G.P.M. pumpers for high-value areas; it was initially known as the Maxi-Water System. 🚒



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Advertisers
in this issue

ADVANCED PLATING.....61
 AMERICAN EAGLE..... 57
 ANTIQUE AUTO BATTERY 92
 AUCTIONS AMERICA..... 19
 AUTOMOTIVE INTERIORS 83
 BARRETT-JACKSON.....15
 BIRD NEST.....91
 BOB'S SPEEDOMETER SERVICE, INC.....81
 THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE.....17
 CARLISLE PRODUCTIONS.....13
 CHUBB.....11
 CLASS-TECH91
 CLASSIC TUBE 83
 COKER TIRE.....1
 COOL CRAFT13
 CUSTOM AUTOSOUND.....71
 FATSCO TRANSMISSION PARTS71
 firstSTREET/JITTERBUG.....inside front cover
 FRIENDS OF THE NORWALK FOUNDATION.....91
 GRUNDY..... 77
 HAGERTY CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE3
 HAGERTY EDUCATION PROGRAM.....75
 THE HAMILTON COLLECTION..... 45
 HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS..... 59
 HEACOCK CLASSIC COLLECTOR CAR
 INSURANCE.....7
 HEMMINGS CATALOG DIRECTORY 89
 HEMMINGS WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE... 92-93
 HILL'S AUTOMOTIVE 77
 BILL HIRSCH AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATION
 PRODUCTS..... 83
 HYDRO-E-LECTRIC 13
 J.C. TAYLOR ANTIQUE AUTO INSURANCE.....61
 LARES CORPORATION..... 93
 LARRY'S THUNDERBIRD & MUSTANG PARTS..... 93
 LEAKE AUCTIONSinside back cover
 LeBARON BONNEY CO..... 83
 LUCAS CLASSIC TIRES..... 94
 MECUM AUCTIONS5
 NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT back cover
 ORIGINAL PARTS GROUP, INC81
 ROBERTS MOTOR PARTS.....81
 ROCKAUTO LLC.....71
 SMS AUTO FABRICS81
 STAUER9
 STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS.....61
 THUNDERBIRD HEADQUARTERS 92
 UNIVERSAL VINTAGE TIRE CO.....4
 VIAMEDIC 93
 WOODWARD-FAB / HECK INDUSTRIES..... 92

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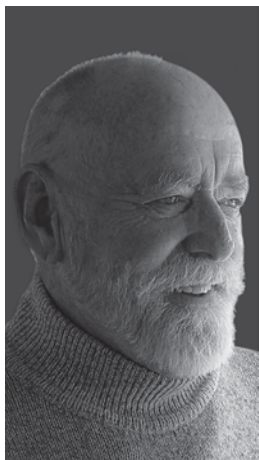
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Automobile Trade Journal
 November 1934
 Courtesy of the Matt Litwin Literature Collection



Keeping America Great

I had lunch the other day with a friend named Joe Guthrie who has the most perfect 1957 Corvette fuelie I have ever seen. It has come within a point-and-a-half of the highest score possible at an NCRS (National Corvette Restorers Society) judging competition, and that is saying something. The NCRS has the toughest judging standards imaginable.

I had to ask Joe what drove him to the titanic effort it would have taken to score so well in such a tough competition, and he said: “We have to preserve our automotive heritage. Our classic cars are what we in America are known for around the world. And we need to get more younger people involved to keep it going.” The truth of what he said was immediately self-evident to me.

Egypt has the pyramids; Greece has its Acropolis and the distinction of being the first people to try thinking rationally. Italy has Rome, the Renaissance and pasta primavera; and France has the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral, not to mention wine and cheese that is second to none in the world. So, what are we internationally famous for?

Well... mostly our cars. Oh yeah, and we have freedom, opportunity, prosperity and the hot dog, but in terms of extraordinary artifacts that the rest of the world admires and envies, we have our classic automobiles. I am not talking about contemporary offerings. The Japanese have taken that domain, leaving us as an international automotive also-ran these days.

It's true, the Japanese have topped us and every other developed country at making and selling cars. However, the global multitudes also grew up watching our movies and admiring our great cars. As a result, there are museums in Europe and Asia that feature American automobiles exclusively; and the Aussies are buying up what they call Yank tanks like crazy. Our classic cars represent our country very well.

That is why in Guthrie's mind and mine, we must preserve our illustrious automotive past. No other country in the world ever built anything like a 1956 Continental, or a 1957 Eldorado. Sure, other countries built big cars for their elites, but they

generally looked like fat dowager queens dressed in black for a funeral. The Continental and the Cadillac were just as luxurious if not more so, and they were also sporty, sexy and handsome.

Even our ordinary low-priced cars were worlds ahead of the foreign competition not many years ago. Climb into a 1956 Ford Victoria or

Chevrolet Bel Air. Both of them are much bigger, faster, better looking and more reliable than any middle-class car built in Europe or Japan during that same period. Picture yourself crossing the United States in a Hillman Minx, Renault Dauphine or Fiat 500. And the communist-bloc countries were even worse off. Can



you imagine exploring the open spaces of the Southwest in a Trabant, Lada or Moskvich? I snicker at the thought.

And then there is Joe Guthrie's classic Corvette. Sure, there were European cars that could compare to it, but they were handmade and cost many times as much. They were also usually equipped with small, complex, highly stressed temperamental engines that required a ride-along mechanic to keep them on the road. In contrast, the Corvette was brash and beautiful and had a big, rugged under-stressed all-American V-8 brawler under the hood that could be fixed at your local Chevy dealership for a fraction of the cost of the high-strung neurotic European prima donnas.

We Americans cherish these golden age cars largely because we lived it, and we never thought it would end. That was also back when our auto industry was more into making cars and less into making money.

I am optimistic that one day America will have another automotive golden age, but meanwhile I think Joe Guthrie is right. We need to preserve our heritage and our image. And we need to get younger people into the process, too. When I go to car shows today, I see too many old silverbacks like myself, and we are not going to be able to keep up the good fight forever. It would be a shame to lose our knowledge and appreciation of such a major source of American pride. So, I say, take care of your classic, and take a kid to a car show this summer. America's reputation depends on it. 🐞



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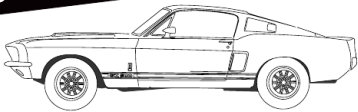
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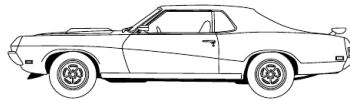
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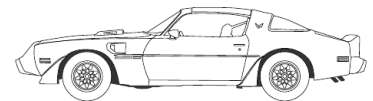
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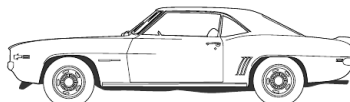
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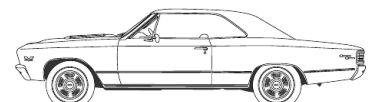
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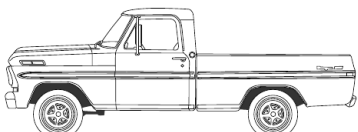
79-93 MUSTANG



67-81 CAMARO



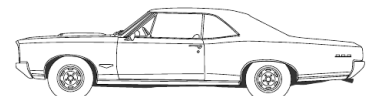
64-87 CHEVELLE
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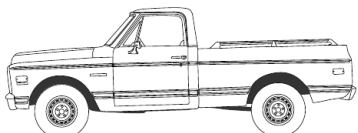
48-96 F-SERIES TRUCK



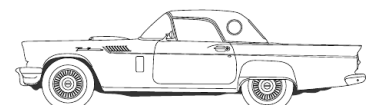
66-96 FORD BRONCO



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