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CONTENTS

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR • JANUARY 2018 • VOLUME 14, ISSUE 4

54

FEATURES

32

44

78

80

DEPARTMENTS

COLUMNISTS

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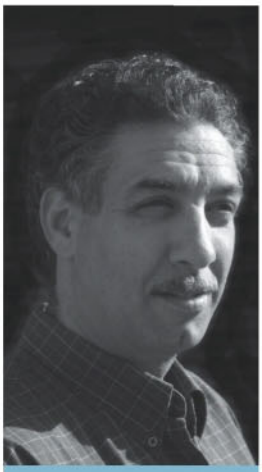

The Economic Impact of Old Cars

Lately in the news I've been reading that many European countries are considering a plan to ban gasoline-powered automobiles by 2040. There are also discussions on possibly banning the sale of gasoline altogether. Could the USA be far behind in doing the same?

If so, these drastic measures may very well render our beloved collector cars useless, and valueless. While we all want clean air, these politicians simply don't realize just how owners of collector cars, hot rods, racing cars, sports cars, low riders, vintage trucks, rat rods, and all the other segments of the collector-car and performance-car hobby contribute to many a country's gross national product. The combined financial contribution of the various collector-car interests and the automotive aftermarket, and those businesses that rely on them, is truly enormous.

Demand for reproduction parts, restoration parts, performance parts, racing parts, street-rod parts, truck parts, motorcycle parts, and off-road parts has generated, and continues to generate, great growth, not only for the companies that produce and sell these components but also for the companies that feed off them. Broken down this way, it becomes clearer to see that the entire automotive industry has had a positive impact on the cities and towns in which these parts manufacturers and suppliers are located. As their businesses have grown, so has their need for warehouse space, which in turn has allowed realtors to profit, as well as the towns themselves through increased real estate taxes resulting from the occupied buildings, some of which never would have been occupied in the first place.

Stocking automotive parts in the suppliers' warehouses also means good business for forklift manufacturers to handle the parts, and the shelving manufacturers upon which the parts must be stored, all the way down to the local lighting and HVAC suppliers and installers who provide the means to which these warehouses are lit, heated, and cooled.

Auto-body supply companies benefit, too, by selling more primers, paints, sealers, sandpaper, tack rags, masks, and spray guns, all of which are needed to refinish all the cars and trucks being restored, rebuilt, and customized. Same goes for tool suppliers, from the big stores to regional truck dealers and swap-meet vendors, which, of course, means that all the tool manufacturers profit as well.

Manufacturers of cardboard boxes, Styrofoam peanuts, and Bubble Wrap used to protect these products during shipping are profiting, too. Paper mills and printing companies make money manufacturing the paper and printing the shipping labels and order forms, as well as all the catalogs and car-related magazines. Which, of course, helps increase the profits of the U.S. Postal Service. Then there are the thousands of graphic artists and I.T. specialists employed to design the websites for these companies, as well as the computers, software, and related hardware required to make each of these businesses function. There's also all the trucking companies such as UPS, FedEx, and many others, who profit from delivering to our front door the parts we order.

All the companies that manufacture these parts and products, as well as garage accessories, lifts, clothing, general maintenance items, batteries, and even something as basic as shop rags, when their work staff are combined, employ several million people throughout the world. And that's a pretty significant number of jobs having been created just to meet the demand for automotive merchandise.

Keep in mind that when you order a lift for your garage, or even jack stands, it positively affects the suppliers of the steel mills that provide the steel needed to produce these products. This trickle-down affect greatly aids all the swap meets and car shows around the country, too, because they rent spaces to small mom-and-pop companies that sell these new and reproduction restoration parts, tools, and accessories.

Most important, old cars, trucks, and motorcycles are an intrinsic part of many a country's history, so they all need to be protected and celebrated for future generations to see instead of being discarded like yesterday's trash.

So, you see, the banning of gas-powered vehicles has a far wider-reaching negative effect than many people realize. Let's hope it doesn't come true.

"Most important, old cars, trucks, and motorcycles are an intrinsic part of many a country's history..."

Write to our executive editor at rlentinello@hemmings.com.

STONE COLD FOX

So good-looking...heads will turn. So unbelievably-priced...jaws will drop.

Every once in a while a timepiece comes along that's so incredibly good looking, masterfully equipped and jaw-droppingly priced, that it stops us stone cold. A watch that can take you seamlessly from the 18th hole to the board room. A watch that blurs the line betweens sports watch and dress watch. We're talking the ***Blue Stone Chronograph***, and it sits at the top of the discerning gentleman's watch list.

Striking in appearance and fully equipped with features, this is a watch of substance. The ***Blue Stone*** merges the durability of steel with the precision of crystal movement that's accurate to 0.2 seconds a day. Both an analog and digital watch, the ***Blue Stone*** keeps time with pinpoint accuracy in two time zones.

The watch's handsome steel blue dial seamlessly blends an analog watch face with a stylish digital display. It's a stopwatch, calendar, and alarm. Plus, the ***Blue Stone*** resists water up to 30 meters, making it up for water adventures.

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BY TOM COMERRO

Drive Home III

LEMAY—AMERICA'S CAR Museum, has sponsored interesting vintage-vehicle cross-country treks the last two winters, ending in Detroit for the annual North American International Auto Show (January 14-28 in 2018). This year's rally, Drive Home III: Driving the Future, will begin in Miami on January 4, and wend its way north, with stops planned in Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan. The final leg will culminate with a trip down Woodward Avenue to the Detroit Auto Show on January 12. For more information, as well as footage of the previous "Drive Home" journeys, visit www.americascarmuseum.org.

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26-28 • Grand National Roadster Show
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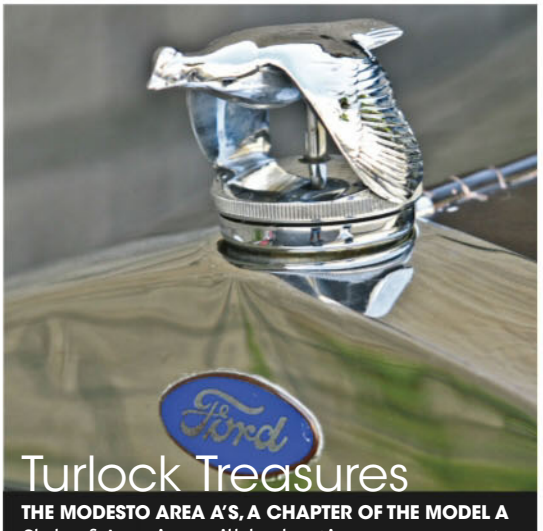
Packards in Palmetto

THE PEACH STATE WILL BE THE destination for Packards on March 24 as the third-annual Packards in Palmetto car show will take place in Palmetto, Georgia. There is no entry fee, and the show will be held 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Wayside Park Pavilion on Main Street. All Packard and Studebaker-Packard products are welcome. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy this non-judged show. There will also be display parking for "Brand X" classic cars. For more information, contact John McCall at jcmdc@windstream.net or call at 229-560-7540.



Turlock Treasures

THE MODESTO AREA A'S, A CHAPTER OF THE MODEL A Club of America, will be hosting a swap meet this January 27-28 at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, California. In addition to the swap meet, there will be a car corral. The show also features RV parking as well as a free "parts shuttle," should you find large items that are difficult to transport. Spaces are still available. For gate and registration fees, as well as for rules and regulations, visit www.turlockswapmeet.com.

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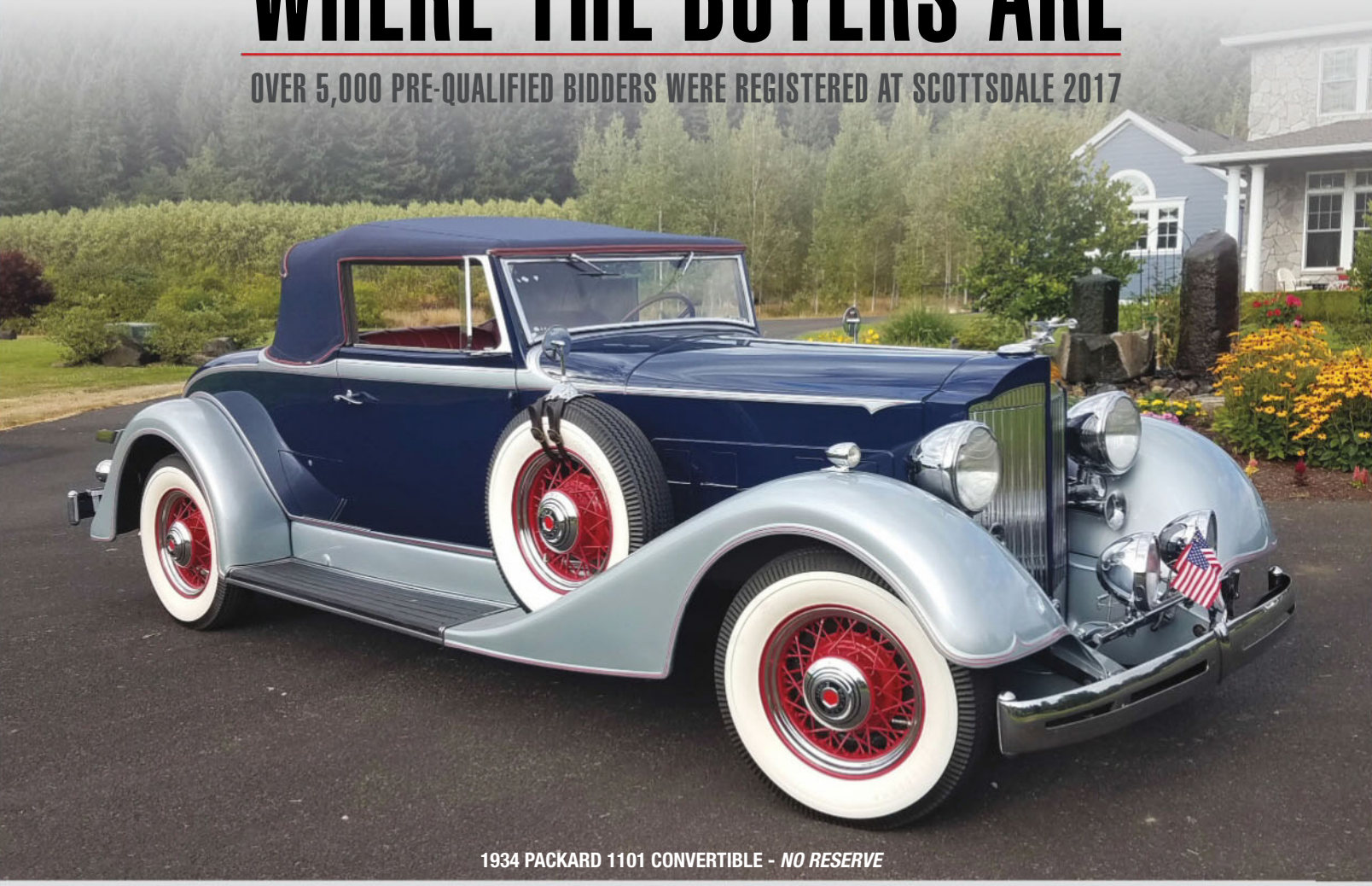

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BY DANIEL STROHL

More Portholes, Vern

STEVE SMALLEY EMAILED US A FEW PHOTOS OF A... CREATION... HE RECENTLY CAME across in Newportville, Pennsylvania, and "was just curious, was this actually produced or was this handmade?"

Well, unless Buick and Packard had a long-forgotten fling and one of the two produced a V-10 at some point, we're going to guess that it's handmade. But—bonus!—we're also going to guess why it was built as it was built. If you'll recall Jim Donnelly's article from *HCC* #49 on a 1947 Buick Roadmaster, you'll also be familiar with the concept of firefighter competitions and the often outlandish cars employed in those events.

That doesn't give us a specific answer regarding this Buickard, so maybe somebody in the Newportville area can fill in the details?

Minivan Might've

BY NOW, WE'VE ALL probably heard the story that the Chrysler minivan originated over at Ford with a late-Seventies concept. But, from this photo that we came across on the excellent Truque blog (www.truquetructruk.tumblr.com), we see that GM wasn't totally off in left field when it came to dreaming up miniature people movers at that time.

Other than a date of 1973 attached to the photo, however, we've come across exactly zero additional details. Was this minivan meant for the American market or some other one where composite headlamps were allowed? What did the badge on the front fender read? Did the designers base this on some existing chassis? And did any of this mystery minivan's DNA make it into the Astro/Safari more than a decade later?

RE: Lannister Lids

GOODNESS. TYPICALLY, WHEN WE GET A BARRAGE of emails about any one item in Lost & Found, there's some sort of consensus (for instance, y'all pointing out that the Bel J from the November 2017 issue should more appropriately have referenced the Chevrolet 210 and Fleetline), but the responses to Ed Beahm's hubcap query included quite the variety.

Suggested sources for those caps ranged from Griffin to Griffith to Lloyd's to something from the Rootes Group of vehicles to optional Dodge caps from the early Fifties. By far, however, the two most popular answers cited Peugeot (based largely on the resemblance to that company's lion-shaped logo) and Lyon, which supplied wheelcovers to the OEMs and to the aftermarket through JC Whitney, Warshawsky's, and all sorts of corner parts stores. We'll have to agree with the latter suggestion.

Thanks to everybody who wrote in with your answers.

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 blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found.

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BY TOM COMERRO

DRAGONE AUCTIONS

Dragone Dealings

THE LIME ROCK HISTORICS FESTIVAL OVER LABOR DAY WEEKEND IS ALWAYS FUN, AND FOR THE first time, Dragone Auctions held one of its events there, on Sunday, during the Lime Rock Concours d'Elegance. The auction saw 85 percent of its lots find new homes, with over $3.7 million in total sales. Despite the gray and rainy day in Connecticut, the sale hosted an impressive array of cars, covering multiple genres, including the Brass Era, Full Classics, and Detroit iron from the 1940s and '50s.

This 1903 Cadillac Model A rear-entrance tonneau featured a 100-point restoration with correct brass lanterns and side wicker baskets, perfect for picnicking; it sold for $80,940. Dragone's full results are now available at www.dragoneauctions.com. Look for a reprise at next year's Lime Rock.

Cactus League Auctions

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, IS THE CENTER OF the classic-car-auction universe every January, and this year will be no different. Six auctions are slated to take place in the Scottsdale and Phoenix area, offering collector cars from all eras and in all conditions. Visit each website in the calendar at the right for an up-to-date roster of consignments, and be sure to visit www.hemmings.com/auctions/ for your one-stop source on all the happenings that will take place during the two weeks of festivities.

RUSSO AND STEELE

AUCTION PROFILE

YES, THAT'S THE CORRECT PRICE PAID FOR this outstanding 1965 Ambassador—and outstanding it is. The Ambassador convertible was only available in the 990 series and saw a modest production run of 3,499 units. But $74,250?

This particular Ambassador is powered by the desirable 327/270-hp optional V-8 engine with a four-barrel carburetor and paired with the Flash-O-Matic three-speed transmission. It was said to have undergone a meticulous ground-up restoration in 2008 that made it nearly perfect in every respect. In fact, some think it might very well be the most flawless Ambassador 900 convertible on the planet.

Owned by the same person since 2006, it featured many optional accessories, including reclining bucket seats with headrests; factory air; power steering, brakes and windows; as well as a power convertible top. Its condition must be seen to be believed, so, no doubt, the cost to restore it to this high level had to exceed the price it sold for. But $74,250 for a Rambler Ambassador convertible? Really?

COURTESY PEAK PHOTOGRAPHY/AUCTIONS AMERICA

CAR	1965 AMC Rambler Ambassador 990 Convertible	**LOT NUMBER**	4128
AUCTIONEER	Auctions America	**CONDITION**	#1
LOCATION	Auburn, Indiana	**RESERVE**	No
DATE	September 2, 2017	**SELLING PRICE**	$74,250

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MECUM AUCTIONS FINISHED UP ANOTHER solid event in Louisville this past September. More than 52 percent of the cars offered were sold, amounting to in excess of $6.7 million. The auction house offered mostly American cars ranging back as far as 1929, with a strong showing of 1950s collectibles. This 1958 Chevrolet four-speed Corvette, with a rebuilt matching-numbers 283/245-hp engine and new paint, was stored for many years and had an original rust-free frame along with a factory hardtop. Its final sale price was $68,000. Mecum's big auction will take place on January 5-14, in Kissimmee, Florida, so be sure to visit www.mecum.com for more information.

View and search through thousands of upcoming auction vehicles in one place at the Hemmings Auction Showroom, www.hemmings.com/auctions/.

ART & AUTOMOBILIA

BY MARK J. McCOURT

1955 Chrysler Ghia Falcon

800-639-1744 • WWW.REPLICARZ.COM • $338.99

As this car's current caretaker relates, Virgil Exner Jr. said that the 1955 Chrysler Falcon, built by Ghia of Turin, Italy, was his father's all-time favorite personal design. Envisioned as Chrysler's response to the Chevrolet Corvette and Ford's new Thunderbird, this two-seat sports car might have changed America's postwar car history, had it been green lighted for production. Instead, the show car was deported to South America after finishing its tour of duty, only returning to the U.S. 30 years later, and it joined the fleet of noted show-car collector Joe Bortz (www.bortzautocollection.com) in 1988.

Joe worked closely with the scale-model experts at Minichamps to create an incredible 1:18-scale resin model (item P107143030) of the 1955 Falcon, which recently joined the 1:18 and 1:43 replicas of two of his most famous General Motors Motorama show cars, the 1953 Buick Wildcat Concept I and 1955 LaSalle II Roadster Concept of the Minichamps series, *The Real Dream Cars — Bortz Auto Collection*. The Falcon has no opening panels, but its body and exposed interior are beautifully detailed, with even paint, exacting bright trim and spoke wheels, and believable lamps and instrumentation. After studying our sample—number 264 out of 1,002 pieces—we can understand why Exner rued it was never series-built. A 1:43-scale version of the 1955 Chrysler Ghia Falcon is promised for release in Spring 2018.

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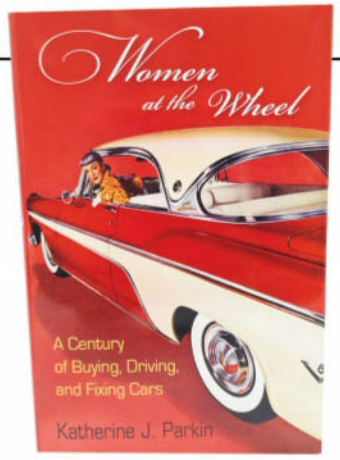

As long as automobiles have been a viable means of transportation, women have operated them: Remember Bertha Benz's famous long-distance road trip in her husband's Patent Motor Car in 1888! And yet, sexist stereotypes have marginalized "the fairer sex" in the 130 years that have followed. In this 272-page hardcover, history professor and author Katherine J. Parkin has examined how the automotive culture that has strongly associated cars with the masculine has—blatantly or subconsciously—kept women from creating their own destiny on the open road. Throughout this title, Parkin points out just how pervasive and misguided the anti-female bias has been in car culture. Her argument is clearly presented, fascinating to ponder, and will be appreciated by enlightened automotive enthusiasts and social historians, alike.

Continued on page 16

Urgent: Special Driving Notice

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory…

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Continued from page 14

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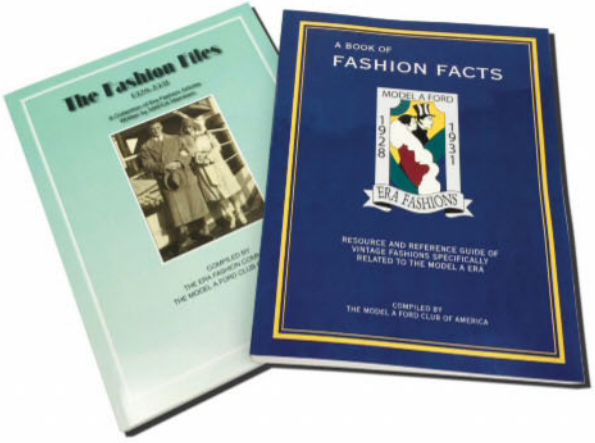
The latest addition to the Hemmings Motor News line of haute couture is this comfortable, casual tribute to your favorite automotive publishing house's founding year of 1954. It's a black, 100-percent cotton T-shirt (item H54T) that is accented with a bold, white-lettered logo on the back that is repeated, scaled-down, on the left front chest. It's available in sizes small to XXXL, and is sure to become a go-to, fair-weather favorite.



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If you want to complement your Interwar automobile by outfitting yourself in period-correct clothing, look no further than *A Book of Fashion Facts: Resource and Reference Guide of Vintage Fashions 1928-1931*, and its companion volume, *The Fashion Files: 1928-1931*. Both are the culmination of exhaustive research performed by members of the Model A Ford Club of America, and utilize illustrations of clothing, accessories, and even hair styles for women, men, and children clipped from primary sources. *A Book of Fashion Facts* goes broad, itself containing over a thousand sartorial examples with captions, short subject introductions, and a glossary of terms, while *The Fashion Files*, much of it in full color, goes deep, with chapters detailing yearly trends, and topics ranging from underwear to uniforms. To look as good as your automobile, learn more about the time it came from, and have even more fun, study these books! *– J. DANIEL BEAUDRY*

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RUSTY AND THE INDIAN GIRL

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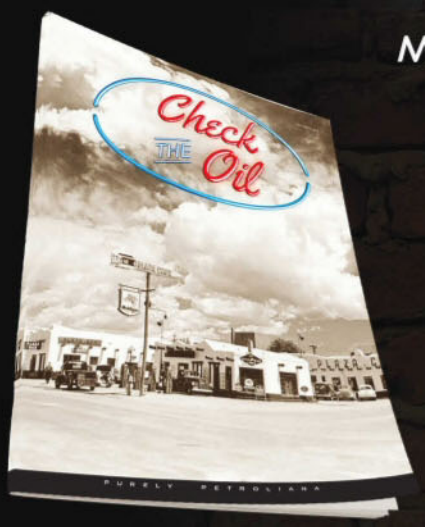
There aren't many fine artists who have the skill to "paint with light," to portray everyday objects and scenes in such a natural and lifelike way as to inspire nostalgia and emotion in the viewer. New Zealand-born, Australia resident Steve Harris is one such talented artist, and his masterful technique is all the more extraordinary for being self-learned. Steve is widely celebrated for his melancholy still lifes and sparsely beautiful landscapes, and, in recent years, he's expanded his repertoire to include delightful automotive themes.

"I have been rather focused on teaching myself the nuances of the automobile in fine art," he says. "It's a learning curve for me, defining a philosophy, while these beautiful old cars are leading me to places I have never been before. I am treating the series with a little bit of theatre and illusion." Steve has interpreted a number of 1930s through 1950s classic cars, along with some well-loved vintage children's toy vehicles, in acrylic paints on canvas, bathing their scenes with his trademark warm light.

Steve's paintings are available for purchase as edition-of-550 giclée prints, and some originals are also available; visit his website for details on sizes and pricing.

Check THE Oil

MAGAZINE



Check the Oil magazine (since 1983) is the longest running publication of its kind geared towards all things petroliana. Written and published by collectors for collectors, it is dedicated to preserving the history of the gas and oil industry while celebrating everything found in and around the service stations since their inception in the early 20th Century. Articles, photographs, and advertisements found in the magazine are sure to relate to all petro enthusiasts.

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BY DAVID CONWILL
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Wally Byam

WHEN WALLACE "WALLY" MERLE Byam was born in Baker City, Oregon, July 4, 1896, camping was a very different matter from how it is today. It was only a few years removed from a matter of necessity, as families crawled west along the Oregon Trail and other overland routes to settle the American frontier. Their conveyance was the covered wagon, and their motive power horses or oxen.

But things were rapidly changing and the automobile affected everything it touched: Camping was no exception. After World War I, auto camping quickly went from a matter of tents pitched alongside cars to special-purpose trailers and primitive recreational vehicles (typically called "house cars" in the contemporary vernacular). In the prosperous 1920s, many denizens of America's urban areas hitched up a primitive camper—often assembled from junk—to the family flivver and took to the newly numbered U.S. highways in search of fresh air and adventure.

Wally Byam was no stranger to fresh air and adventure, having spent his teenage years as a shepherd, living in a wheeled cart set up as a small cabin—a typical accommodation in the profession. Although not designed to be towed very far or very fast, a shepherd cart bears unmistakable similarities with a modern camper.

After taking a degree in history from Stanford University in 1921, Byam moved into advertising and publishing. When he was the publisher of a how-to magazine, it ran a set of plans for a small camper to be towed behind an automobile. Reader complaints led him to test the plans himself, and convinced him that he could do better.

Byam's first attempt, in 1929, at producing a camper involved a tent-like body on the chassis of a discarded Ford Model T, and was something less than a success. Undeterred, he revised his design and began constructing lightweight trailers from Masonite, a molded wood fiber. The semi-flexible building material allowed Byam to streamline his creation.

The aerodynamic nature of his trailer designs led to Byam naming his company, incorporated in 1931, Airstream. His earliest product was dubbed the Torpedo Car Cruiser. Despite, or possibly because of, the worst years of the Great Depression, the Torpedo was a success. In addition to constructing trailers in the backyard of his Los Angeles home, Byam sold plans to other do-it-yourselfers.

By 1935, Byam crossed paths with another camping entrepreneur, aircraft engineer Hawley Bowlus, who had begun applying aviation construction techniques to travel trailers. His riveted-aluminum "Road Chief" camper combined streamlined design with materials even lighter in weight than Masonite.

Believing aluminum construction had great potential, Byam developed his own, similar design, which he dubbed the "Clipper." Between Clipper sales and the continued strength of demand for its Masonite trailers, Airstream managed to weather the second dip of the Great Depression, a fate not shared by up to 700 of Airstream's competitors from the 1930s. When World War II put the kibosh on leisure travel and the use of strategic materials like aluminum, Airstream went on hold, and Byam lent his experience to the aircraft industry, working for Lockheed and Curtiss-Wright.

If the 1920s were a travel boom, the postwar '40s and '50s were an order of magnitude larger. Powerful cars, better roads, and a nationwide enthusiasm for seeing the nation Americans had recently helped defend, meant that demand for travel trailers was virtually insatiable. Airstream tackled the postwar market with aplomb.

With the future of the company well in hand, Byam started to serve as a brand ambassador, organizing camper caravans across the country and around the world. His name became synonymous with Airstream travel, and even today, the 1955-founded club, Wally Byam Caravan Club International, is a testament to his legacy.

Byam died of a brain tumor, July 22, 1962. His company and his name live on.

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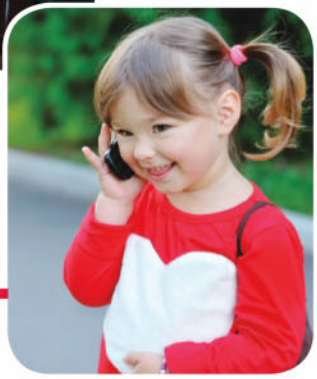

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81135

Autocracy of the Avenues

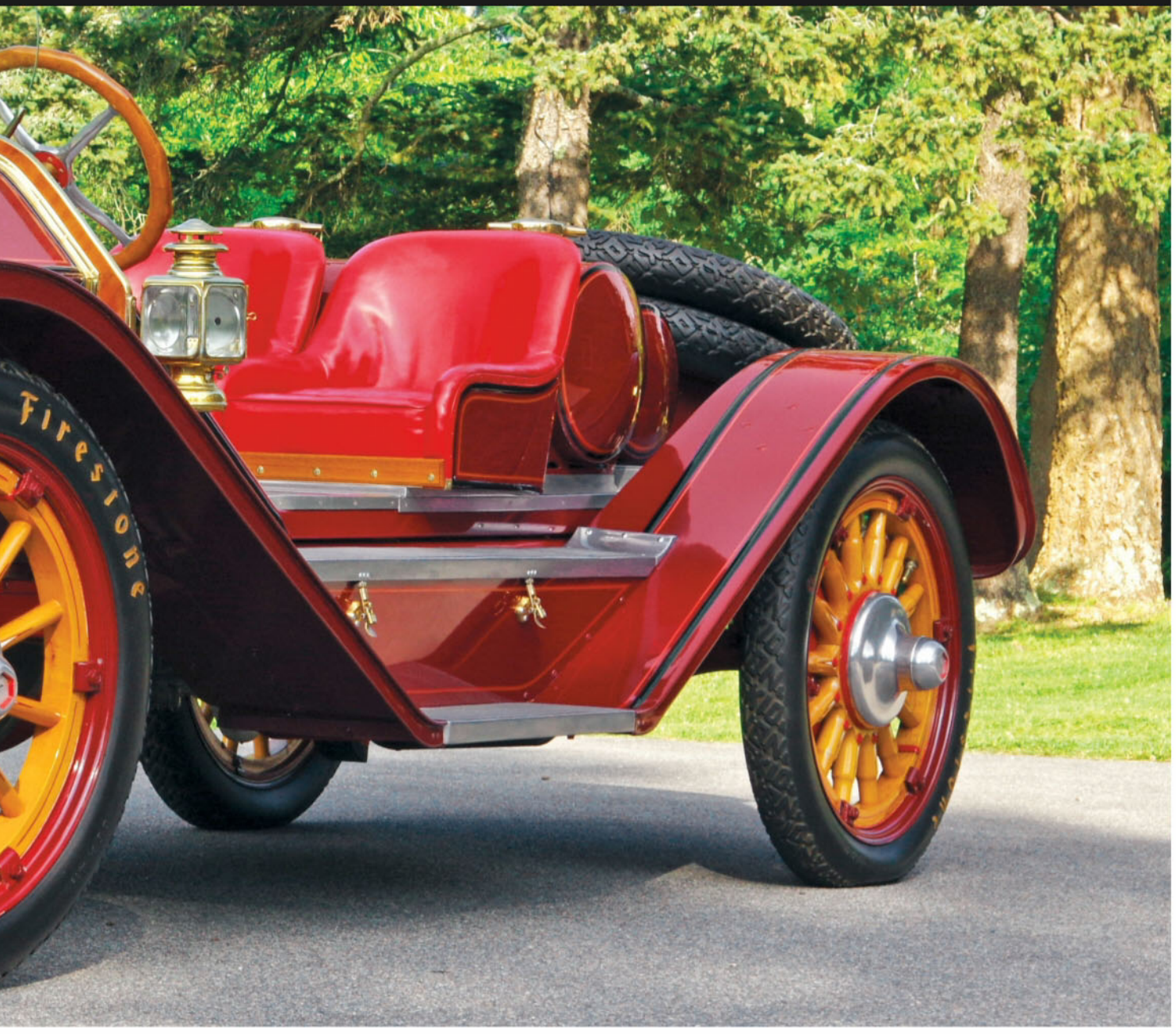
Rarely seen today, the 1912 Oldsmobile Autocrat Roadster is an icon of the early days of American sports-car enthusiasm

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

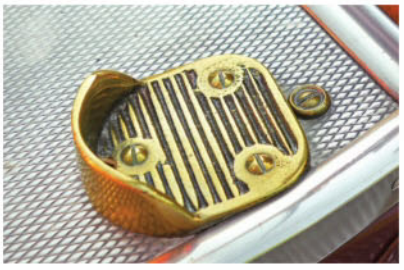
Considering the name "Autocrat" too literally—that is, to refer to a person "with absolute power over others," "who insists on complete obedience from others," or who is "imperious or domineering"—may leave nearly as bad a taste in one's mouth as that of the oft-remembered "Dictator" of the Studebaker line in the 1930s. But think of it more in the vein of Buick's "Roadmaster" moniker, and take a moment to accept the play on words between "automobile" and "autocrat," and you can likely appreciate the model name of this sporty Oldsmobile roadster.

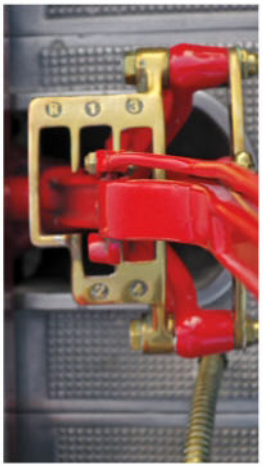
Oldsmobile, between the time of the curved-dash Olds and the division rationalization brought to General Motors by Alfred Sloan, suffered from a kind of identity crisis, alternately building smaller, cheaper cars and larger, more expensive cars, undercutting its divisional siblings at Oakland, Buick, and Cadillac. The Autocrat hints at a formula that would ultimately lead to Oldsmobile's standout years in the 1950s and '60s—a small(er) car with a big engine that was meant to dominate the road and make its operator feel like one who could demand complete obedience from other drivers.

The origins of the Autocrat are in 1910, when Oldsmobile fielded two distinct models for sale: the Special, with a 118-inch wheelbase and a 40-hp, 336-cu.in. four-cylinder; and the Limited, with a 130-inch wheelbase, and a 60-hp, 505-cu.in., T-head, six-cylinder. The latter, which acquired its nickname for having raced successfully against the New York Central Railroad's crack *20th Century Limited* between Albany, New York, and New York City, was a massive, expensive car with 42-inch tires ("the first large car with wheels and tires of adequate size," Oldsmobile claimed in 1911). The T-head engine is a now-unusual type that sought to combine the simplicity of the L-head with the freer-flowing aspects of overhead valves, by placing the intake and



Pump between seats allows driver to pressurize fuel system before starting. Gauges include oil pressure, fuel, and Jones speedo. Switches reveal Bosch dual-coil ignition. Gated shifter for four-speed trans is located to driver's right.





exhaust valves at opposite sides of the cylinders—creating a cross-flow flathead design.

Unfortunately, the staggering price of the Limited series constrained sales ($4,600 for a touring or roadster in 1910 equates to over $120,000 today). Oldsmobile then sought a middle ground for 1911, beginning with a pair of prototypes, piloted by Harry Stillman and Joe Nelson, that would take part in the last William K. Vanderbilt Jr. Cup Race held on the Long Island Parkway, in 1910. The new car, the Autocrat, combined the engineering of the Limited with dimensions closer to those of the Special.

For 1911, the six-cylinder Limited engine was increased in capacity to a gargantuan 706-cu.in., featuring a 5-inch bore and a 6-inch stroke. From there, a four-cylinder version was developed, making 40 horsepower from a 471-cu. in. displacement (not coincidentally, two-thirds of the six's displacement and power), and placed in a slightly scaled-down version of the Limited chassis with a 124-inch wheelbase (the Limited's chassis, meanwhile, had grown to 138 inches) and rolling on 38-inch tires.

Notably, Autocrat engines featured both full-pressure lubrication and an Oldsmobile-produced carburetor with a

Monocle windshield is a sporting touch that puts the viewer in mind of the Autocrat's debut in the 1910 Vanderbilt Cup Race.

float. The fuel system was fed by a novel fuel tank pressurized by exhaust gasses (or by a hand pump when the engine was not running).

The long stroke of the Autocrat engine was touted in period advertising as creating an "easy running motor, with surplus power." It was backed up by a transmission containing four forward gears that Oldsmobile boasted drivers would rarely have to use, thanks to the boundless torque on tap. Because of its massive displacement, the engine featured a compression release to ease cranking throws when starting.

The resulting 1911 Oldsmobile Autocrat was available as a limousine, "Tourabout" (a kind of close-coupled, four-passenger touring car that might have been called a "toy tonneau" just a few years earlier), seven-passenger touring car, and runabout, as seen here. Some sources indicate the production of five-passenger touring cars and suggest that this sporty "Raceabout" model was separate from the runabout. The compact, powerful chassis also lent itself to use under police wagons and fire trucks.

The Autocrat slotted nicely between the Limited and the Special, with a price about $500 above the Special and about $1,500 below the Limited. The runabout, selling for $3,500 in 1911 (around $91,500 adjusted for inflation—in other words, the same price range as a new Corvette), was a worthy competitor to contemporaries like the Stutz Bearcat and Mercer Raceabout.

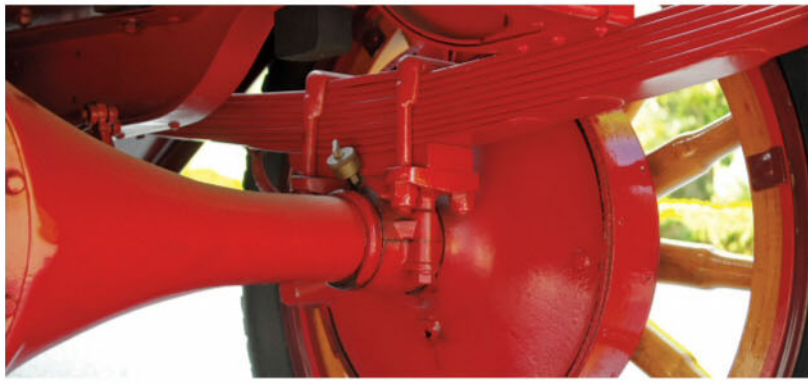
To compare, in 1911, the Mercer Model 35 Raceabout retailed for $2,250, rode on a 116-inch wheelbase, and boasted 34 horsepower. In 1912, the Mercer's wheelbase would shrink to 108 inches, and the price crept up to $2,500. The Bearcat, meanwhile, did not debut until 1912 (though it was previewed at the inaugural running of the Indianapolis 500, where its 11th-place finish garnered it the title "The Car that Made Good in a Day"). Factory price on a four-cylinder 1912 Stutz Bearcat was $2,000, its wheelbase spanned 120 inches, and its T-head, Wisconsin-brand engine pumped out 60 horsepower.

For 1912, the year of our feature car, Oldsmobile lengthened the wheelbase just slightly to 126 inches. That year also marked the replacement of the Special with a smaller, lighter model called the Defender. The Defender was a harbinger of Oldsmobile's immediate future and of the Autocrat's demise. Big, prestigious models would give way to more economical transportation, cementing Olds' place in the middle of the market and abandoning the top end to Cadillac and Buick. The Autocrat and the Limited would both be gone for 1913, replaced by a cheaper Oldsmobile Six.

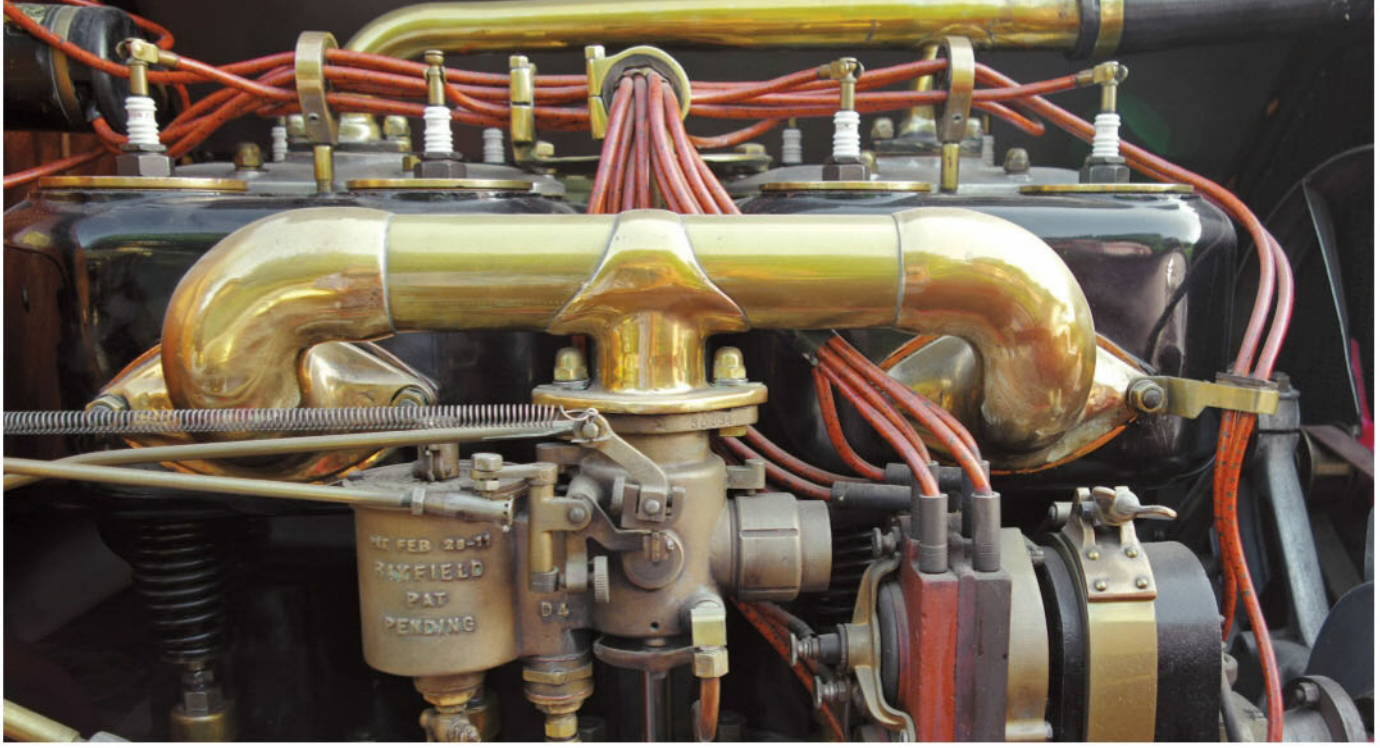
With only around 500 produced, the intervening 105 years have taken their toll on the numbers of Autocrats. Only two in this sporting body style are known to have survived. Our feature car resides in the Heritage Museums & Gardens, in Sandwich, Massachusetts. There, it is one of the many cars collected by founder and pharmaceutical heir J.K. Lilly III.

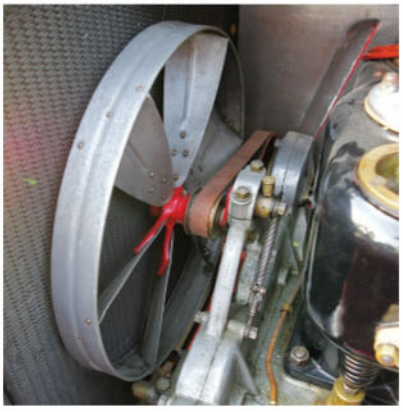
Lilly first learned of the car in 1966, after contracting to have some work done by its owner/restorer, Bud Ley, of Cleveland, Ohio. Letters in the car's accession file reveal Lilly's trepidation at the $30,000 asking price—that's in excess of $225,000 today, adjusted for inflation. But Ley, and Lilly, knew what the car was, and worked out a deal involving payments that spread out into 1967.

Ley had first discovered the car in the possession of a John Cauffiel, of Toledo, Ohio, where it was held in a somewhat decrepit state. So decayed, in fact, that Ley initially was scared off. "The first impression," Ley wrote in a contemporary article, "Was that it was too far gone to restore."



When restored in the 1960s, the Oldsmobile's chassis received new rear wheel bearings and linings, and oversized clevises on the rear, four-shoe external brake system. The large capacity oil sump is made of cast aluminum, and features an external brass oil line for the engine's pressurized lubrication. Alongside its large diameter vented flywheel, the clutch was resurfaced in the 1960s with a new, molded lining.





Cross-flow flathead design is called a T-head and utilizes dual camshafts to actuate valves on either side of the cylinders. The big four-cylinder is a derivative of the six-cylinder engine used in the Limited series. Fed by a large, brass Rayfield carburetor, the Autocrat's engine puts power to a four-speed.

The Autocrat, which had started out as a speedster, had at one time been converted into a "funeral car" (whether this was a hearse, a flower car, or something else entirely isn't clear) and then back to a roadster. "Not too much of the original was left," Ley related, "Except the engine and chassis. It became necessary to obtain a manual from somewhere for specifications and photos." Eventually, Ley sourced an owner's manual in California, and a sales brochure in Lorain, Ohio.

None of the bodywork on the car when Ley acquired it was correct or original, so he stripped the Autocrat to its frame, which was then sandblasted and painted. All shackle bolts and bushings were replaced with new pieces custom made for the project, and the badly rusted spring packs were taken apart, ground smooth, and reassembled. The clutch and brake pedals received new bushings, and the brake system itself was restored with oversized clevis pins and new linings on both the internal and external shoes.

The engine was treated to a full rebuild, including an overbore; new pistons, connecting rods, and bearings; a re-ground crankshaft; new timing gears; new valves; and new valve springs. The transmission contained serviceable gears, but had new bearings installed—a new, molded clutch lining was also added. The differential checked out okay, as did the full-floating axles, but new rear wheel bearings—8 inches in diameter and 4 inches wide—were required.

Despite all the effort that went into restoring the chassis, perhaps most impressive is the time, talent, and treasure that was invested in creating a new body from scratch. Ley used scaled-up measurements taken from the photo in the sales brochure (enlarged to 30 inches long) to create full-size paper patterns, and then new fenders, seats, and lower body. "As you can guess," he wrote at the time, "A few sections of the fenders were ruined before the final ones were made."

With the bodywork finished in light maroon, striped with a gold-and-red ribbon, a red chassis, cast-aluminum running boards, and natural wood wheels, the massive speedster has quite a presence. Although it was not operational at the time of our photo shoot, museum volunteers are slowly getting the whole automotive collection back in fighting shape. Ley himself reported that driving the Olds was a pleasant experience. "The car handles very well. It was quite a speedster in its time, carrying two gas tanks, no doubt because of the 5-inch bore and 6-inch stroke. It is not very economical on gas. The brakes are very effective for so heavy a car."

Although the Autocrat proved an evolutionary dead end for Oldsmobile in the 1910s, it is an interesting foreshadowing of the 1949 Oldsmobile 88, which saw the model 98's big V-8 engine coupled with the downsized 76 chassis. One must wonder if someone in Lansing wasn't thinking of the Autocrat from 30-some years earlier and how it earned the division a place in history side by side with the likes of the Stutz Bearcat and Mercer Raceabout.


Peerless
Autocrat

Golden Milestone

Ford celebrated its 50-millionth U.S.-built vehicle with this specially-adorned 1959 Galaxie four-door sedan

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO • FORD PRESS PHOTOS PROVIDED BY RICK SCHMIDT

Ford wasn't about to let the achievement of manufacturing its 50-millionth vehicle since the company's establishment in 1903 go unnoticed. To celebrate what it christened its "Golden Milestone," the automaker produced a 1959 Galaxie Town Sedan with a large "50 MILLIONTH" graphic painted in gold and black on each side.

A distinguished new series, the Galaxie had been introduced partway through the model year and was positioned above the then top-of-the-line Fairlane 500. It borrowed its formal roofline design with broad sail panels and slightly recessed upright backlite from the highly successful four-place Thunderbird and retained the upscale Fairlane 500 trim right down to the "Fairlane 500" callouts on the decklid and instrument panel.

This historically significant Galaxie was produced on April 29, 1959, at the Rouge Dearborn plant, but most of the company's other manufacturing and assembly plants, as well as outside suppliers, contributed components to the car so that they, too, could participate in its construction.

It was equipped with the standard 200-hp Thunderbird

292-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 and the optional Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic transmission, "Master-Guide" power steering, "Sun Ray" wheel covers, and whitewall tires. The "Torque Tailored" axle ratio is 3.10:1.

This Galaxie also features a Colonial White "Diamond Lustre" exterior finish, and underneath is a "wide-contoured" box-section frame with "swept back angle-poised" ball-joint suspension, coil springs, and a new stabilizer bar up front, "Even-Keel" leaf springs in the rear, and shocks all around. The brakes feature 11-inch drums, and the 7.50 x 14 Tyrex super cord tires ride on 14 x 5-inch wheels.

"Luxury Lounge" interior contains "sofa soft" individually contoured seats, Mylar accents on the seat side shields and door panels, and Rayon carpeting. Upholstery colors include Radiant Gold "Sof-Textured" vinyl bolsters, white, and nylon fabric of Raven "Striped Nub pattern with Silver Strand."

According to company press releases, the Galaxie was displayed at Ford's Rotunda in Dearborn from the day after it was produced through May 20, 1959. It was then exhibited at the annual stockholders meeting at the Ford Auditorium in Detroit on May 21st.

This unique automobile received additional national publicity by participating in a caravan to retrace the route of the renowned 1909 Ocean-to-Ocean Automobile Endurance Contest for the Guggenheim Trophy—an event that aided in ensuring the Ford Motor Company's early success.

Conceived in part to promote the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (World's Fair) that opened on June 1, 1909, the exposition's organizers, the Seattle Automobile Club, M. Robert Guggenheim, and Henry Ford advocated the contest, and it was

The 292-cu.in. engine appears to be virtually untouched since its installation, and even some original hoses and belts remain. A few hose clamps were replaced with a newer design.

sanctioned by the Automobile Club of America.

Ford wanted to illustrate the durability of his Model T and how its lighter weight would enable it to outperform larger, heavier, and more expensive vehicles. The Model Ts used in the competition were also liberated of any unnecessary weight. Guggenheim, a mining magnate and automotive enthusiast, said his intent was to bring attention to the fact that the nation needed new and improved roads.

Though initial interest was high, by the start of the contest, registered cars had dwindled to a mere six. Thus, two Ford Model Ts competed against a Shawmut, an Acme, an Italia, and a Stearns, which was entered by a private owner without manufacturer backing, started days late, and dropped out soon thereafter.

By touching a golden telegraph key in Washington, President William Howard Taft opened the Exhibition in Seattle and concurrently signaled the mayor of New York to fire a golden pistol to start the race. After three grueling weeks, the No. 2 Model T arrived in Seattle on June 23rd ahead of the rest. It was the first car to travel from New York to Seattle under its own power. The Shawmut team placed second and immediately protested the No. 2 Ford. After considering the charges made, contest referee Guggenheim still declared the Ford the winner almost a week later. (The No. 1 Model T had placed Third.)

Months after, however, the Automobile Club of America rescinded Ford's win and declared the Second-place Shawmut the victor after the organization had concluded that the engine in the No. 2 Ford had been replaced partway through the race, which was against the rules. Ford admitted no wrongdoing, and by then had already advertised the win to its great advantage, so the reversal likely did little to curtail sales.

An Intra-Company Communication dated May 5, 1959, stated that the caravan celebrating the 50-millionth Ford, would leave New York on June 1st for the 23-day, 4,100-mile commemorative cross-country trek. Among other vehicles, the Galaxie was accompanied by a Model T similar to the one that arrived in Seattle first in 1909, and there was a Ford history exhibit van.

Stops were scheduled along the route, which were delineated "A" or "B" based on planned activities. "A" city

The interior shows no signs of wear. Comfort and convenience items include a heater, a "Console Range" pushbutton AM radio, and a clock. Note the low 10,168 miles on the odometer.

This 1959 Galaxie's "50 Millionth" moniker includes the total production of Ford cars and trucks and those of its other divisions. The inventory number for the Henry Ford Museum is on the tail panel. Promotional items are still in the trunk.

happenings included city hall or statehouse ceremonies, luncheon or dinner meetings, "and in some cases, old car rallies." As the caravan travelled further west, the A-city activities were expanded to include block parties, street dances, and "old-time barbecues." The "B" cities were single-point dealer stops, or food, fuel, or rest stops that were projected to last 30 to 90 minutes each.

To further commemorate the 1909 contest, Ford reproduced a 32-page booklet called, *The Story of the Race*, which recounted the Model Ts' exploits from a crew member of car No. 1. Also included were photos and a map that showed the original race route west and the return route for Model T No. 2.

A partial list of the cities shown on that map for the race West included New York City, Albany, Syracuse, and Buffalo; Erie, Pennsylvania; Cleveland and Toledo; Chicago; St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri; Ellsworth and Oakley, Kansas; Denver; Cheyenne and Laramie, Wyoming; Granger, Pocatello, Twin Falls, Boise, and Weiser, Idaho; Baker City, Oregon; and Walla Walla, North Yakima, and Seattle, Washington.

For the 1959 reenactment, Ford dealers along the route were notified of the approximate date that the caravan would arrive at their town, and were provided with a suggested showroom window paint color-and-layout treatment to announce the occasion.

Once its official duties concluded, the 1959 Galaxie was placed in the Henry Ford Museum. According to current owner Rick Schmidt, "In the 1980s, the Galaxie went to auction along with other cars from the museum, and was purchased by a Louisiana couple. In 2008, the widow consigned the 50-millionth Ford to the RM Auction at Amelia Island."

Rick and his dad, Jim, bought it for their 210-car collection that's housed at their restoration-parts company National Parts Depot in Ocala, Florida. "We already had the 100-millionth Ford, the 150-millionth Ford, and the 50-millionth Chevrolet at the time, so we were happy to acquire the 50-millionth Ford as well," Rick recalls.

> *We already had the 100-millionth Ford, the 150-millionth Ford, and the 50-millionth Chevrolet at the time, so we were happy to acquire the 50-millionth Ford as well…*

Though the Galaxie required a thorough detailing when it arrived, Rick reports, "It cleaned up amazingly well, and except for the battery and fluids, it remains original down to its tires."

In the years since Ford celebrated the production of its 50-millionth vehicle, the company has continued to surpass notable goals. The 100-millionth Ford built in the U.S. is a 1978 Fairmont Futura, the 150-millionth (built worldwide) is a 1979 Mustang, and the 300-millionth is a 2004 Mustang GT convertible. All are currently owned by Rick and Jim Schmidt. The 350-millionth Ford (built worldwide) is a 2013 Focus.

Though it's been nearly six decades since this 1959 Galaxie Town Sedan rolled out of the Dearborn plant, its condition belies its age. Hence, its style and engineering serve as an unsullied snapshot of Ford's midcentury corporate philosophy and its production milestone.


Hupmobile
Eight
88-353
OHIO-1928

Hodgepodge Hup

With a new model on the way, in 1928 Hupmobile scoured the parts bin for the last of its Series-E cars

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

Though very little changed between the 1927 E-3 and the 1928 E-4, the Hupp Motor Car Company did update a few things, including this exquisite-looking instrument panel, which seems more befitting the car's price point in the higher end of the mid-market cars.

Hupmobile and the Hupp Motor Car Company: two names largely lost to history. The Detroit-based automaker pioneered or popularized a variety of innovations throughout its time. One of those was the straight-eight engine. Powerful and smooth, it had previously been the domain of luxury carmakers, but in the hands of Hupmobile, it became firmly rooted in the mid-price segment, barely outpricing Buick, but a substantial bargain compared to the more expensive Packard Six.

Hupmobile's eight-cylinder gamble proved the right move for the small independent automaker, as, by the end of its first model year in 1925, it could claim—legitimately—to be the world's largest producer of straight-eight-powered automobiles. It should be noted that Duesenberg gets credit for being the first American producer of such engines with its Straight Eight model (later known as the Model A) of 1920, although a host of European luxury makers also began producing straight-eights immediately after World War II, but Hupmobile absolutely topped the charts in 1925, producing 14,822 E-1 models.

Hupmobile equipped that first 118¼-inch wheelbase E-1 with a 246.7-cu.in. straight-eight that produced 60 horsepower. While inherently smooth, straight-eights have long crankshafts that push heavy centrifugal forces along the engine's internals. With this potential phenomenon in mind, they built its straight-eight with a beefy, fully counterbalanced crankshaft. With Duralumin (an alloy with a very high content of aluminum) connecting rods and relatively lightweight cast-iron pistons, Hupmobile was able to offset some of that heavy crankshaft's weight.

Despite its success in 1925, Hupmobile did not sit still, increasing the E-2's wheelbase to 125 inches and boring out the cylinders ⅛-inch to a full 3 inches, increasing total displacement to 268.6-cu.in. and 63 horsepower. Overall, the Hupp Motor Car Company reached another new sales record. While displacement and wheelbase remained unchanged for 1927, horsepower increased to 67 for the E-3.

As Hupmobile prepared for the 1928 introduction of the heavily revised Century models, in both Six and Eight versions, the company continued to sell the E series as the E-4, particularly to run out stocks of parts. Our feature car wears the body of a 1927 E-3 mated to a 1928 chassis and driveline, and rolls on wheels from both 1926 and 1928—all just as the factory delivered it. There were a few small changes from 1927 to 1928, perhaps most noticeably in the chrome band added at the leading edge of the cowl, a piece of trim not part of the recipe for 1927. Hupp designers had the cowl lamp moved

The passenger area reflected Hupmobile's ambitious play as a better car for less than what the big luxury makers charged. The mohair interior was complemented by a pair of leather-clad boxes, one for tissues and a makeup mirror, the other for a cigarette lighter.

from the passenger's side to the driver's side for 1928, and minor changes happened inside the car, as well.

Though Hupmobile pioneered all-steel bodies in the U.S. as early as 1911, that experiment lasted only a few short model years, and the E-series models featured conventional bodies made of steel panels over wood frames. Where Hupmobile remained ahead of the curve was in their adoption of Lockheed's hydraulic brake system. Like the straight-eight, Hupp didn't invent hydraulic brakes, but its early adoption set it apart from most other volume manufacturers. Chrysler, of course, had beaten Hupp to the hydraulic punch in 1924, the year before the debut of the E-1.

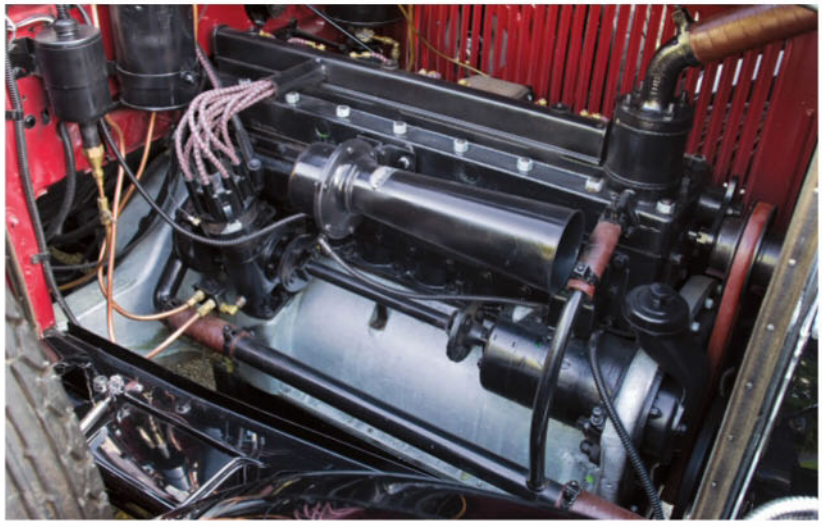
The 1928 Hupmobile E-4 five-passenger sedan featured here shows just exactly what a better mid-priced car offered at the time. Clearly a step above the more utilitarian Ford Model A or Chevrolet, both of which cost a fraction of the larger Hupmobile, the E-4 featured a luxurious mohair interior and such features as a leather-bound tissue holder with makeup mirror on the driver's side in the rear. On the opposite side sat a cigarette lighter in an equally well turned out leather holder. Drivers were treated to an exquisite, chrome-ringed instrument panel with multiple gauges and a clock; this too was an upgrade from the 1927 E-3, which had the gauges set in a much simpler panel.

Hupmobile also used a conventional three-speed manual transmission of their own design, with first gear a 3.11:1 ratio against a final-drive ratio of 4.91:1 and driving it, likewise, is as conventional as any contemporary automobile. Kim Little, a construction manager from Lexington, Ohio, and the restorer and owner of this rare 1928 E-4 explains the process for us: "Once I know that it has fuel in it, it is easy to engage the choke. I hit the starter, push the choke back over to its normal position, and usually it starts right up. The choke lever is on the dash and all of the lighting and everything is at the center of the steering wheel.

"The clutch take up is easy, yet it grinds in second gear a little bit. I have double-clutched it, but it doesn't seem to make that much difference. I'm very seldom into third gear, but I do it. I may be doing 30 mph. I've been told that I should be able to do 60, but I have not attempted that yet. Since I am not going that fast, it does stop fairly well. I never get concerned and grab for the emergency brake."

Kim has owned the car since 1974, though it has only been in this award-winning shape since 2013. Though correct as can be and looking spectacular today, this Hupmobile came out of a barn, found neglected more than 40 years ago. In fact, when Kim took it home, he literally didn't know what he had. "I just wanted an old car," Kim says. "I just had a deep appreciation for them and at that point it didn't make any difference.

"I was looking for a Ford Model A, actually. When I was a paperboy as a young man, there was a gentleman on my route who had Model A's, and I would stop to help him with odds and ends. At the time, I think, the Model A was the thing to have. In doing the construction work that I do as a manager, one of my



In its first year of production, Hupp's straight-eight became the world's best-selling engine of that type via their E-Series sedan. Hupp designed and built the engine for smoothness and reliability.

I thought 'This is going to be easy.' And then I started finding out about the hodgepodge car I had. The body is actually a 1927, the engine is a '28, the frame is '28. I've got '26 bumpers on it. I have '26 rear wheels, which are 21-inch. The front wheels are 20-inch, which was '28-period size. The car was delivered that way. They were trying to get rid of inventory.

There are two other series cars, the A and the M. They changed the design of the car. And that was selling very well. People were looking at the E and said, 'This looks like last year's car.' So, they only made them for four months because the public stopped buying them.

superintendents said of a relative, 'He's got a car in his barn. I think it's a Dodge or a Plymouth.' I said, 'Well, let's go look at it.' It was about the right year."

Kim ultimately made a deal on a car that had been sitting for around six years or more. But it was no Model A! "I did not know what I had. The front of the car was actually missing the emblems and the motometer, so I couldn't readily identify what it was. It had an 'H' on the hubcaps and the first thing I thought was 'Can that be a Hudson? Did they make those then?' Not knowing that, of course. Later on, after I got it home, I found these different little names. One was 'Hupp.' What does that mean? Then, we got into what it was. I had purchased it anyway, because that didn't make any difference to me."

Kim immediately set to disassembling the car in his brother's garage, until his brother told him he was moving and Kim would have to find a new home for the Hupmobile. Though he continued to plug away, Kim's life got in the way, of, well, Kim's life. Kids came along. Health issues proved of far more import to Kim and his wife, Linda. At times, he made progress; at times, the car sat idle.

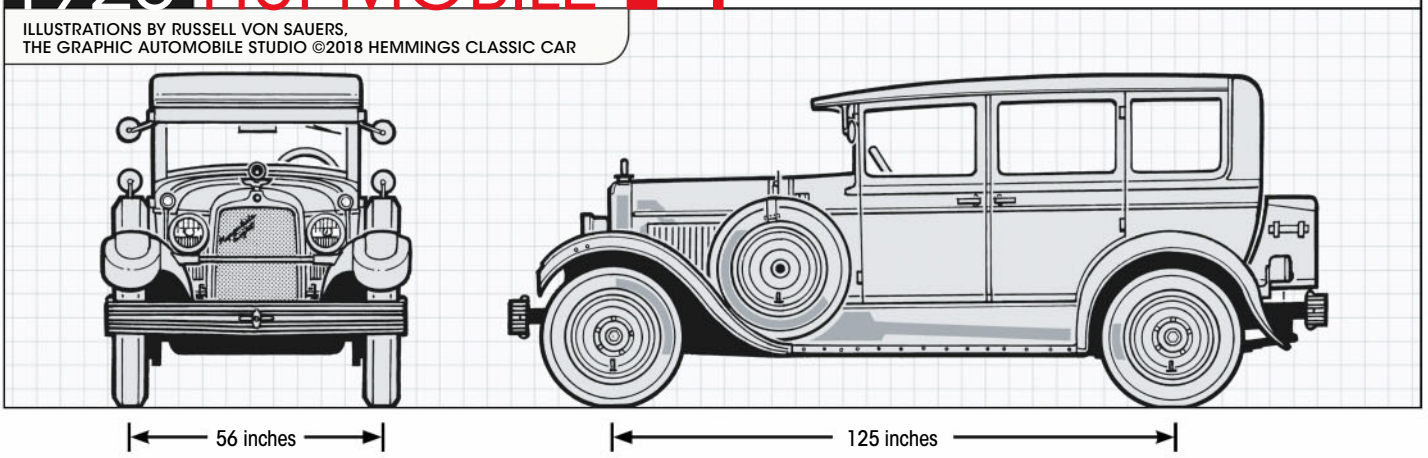
When Kim dropped off that special straight-eight engine for machining, he was nonplussed by the shop's notion that it would be some time before they could get to doing the specialized babbitt work on it. Kim was patient, though. So much so that, when he returned a few years later, not only was the shop no longer there, but its building had been replaced with a parking lot. Okay, Kim admits "a few" was really 20 years. Of course, you can't complete a 39-year restoration without persistence, right? So, Kim eventually tracked down the machinist and reclaimed his engine another two years later. Fortunately, the builder knew the engine was special and kept it around, something Kim calls a "miracle."

Kim did the work he could and farmed out the rest. For instance, he tackled the woodwork underneath the metal skin and stripped down part of the bodywork, while the rest was done by a shop, and the new paint finish he had applied by professionals. The upholstery, too, came at the hands of the pros, though Kim later had to remove plenty of Phillips-head screws and replace them with slotted ones to keep the AACA judges happy. As for the rest of the car, "I just reassembled it myself," says Kim. "That was one of the things I always liked about that time period of cars, the cars were very workable."

The Hupp Motor Car Company survived through 1940. Though not many Hupmobiles remain, a thriving club and the likes of Kim, and his perfectly turned out 1928 E-4, keep the unusually named automobile alive.

1928 HUPMOBILE E-4

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2018 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	$2,195
OPTIONS* (CAR PROFILED)	Dual side-mounted spare tires; luggage rack and trunk; steel disc wheels

*Some optional equipment may not appear on this list

ENGINE

TYPE	L-head straight-eight; cast-iron block and cylinder head
DISPLACEMENT	268.6 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3 x 4.75 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	4.8:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	67 @ 2,800
TORQUE @ RPM	N/A
VALVETRAIN	Mechanical lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Stromberg 1.25-inch updraft carburetor; vacuum-fed
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full pressure to main, connecting rods, and camshaft bearings; oil spray to pistons
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	6-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Single

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	3-speed manual with floor-mounted shifter
RATIOS	1st 3.11:1 2nd 1.69:1 3rd 1.00:1 Reverse 3.78:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Spiral bevel
GEAR RATIO	4.91:1
DRIVE AXLES	Semi-floating

STEERING

TYPE	Ross cam-and-lever; semi-irreversible
TURNS, LOCK TO LOCK	2.5
TURNING CIRCLE	47 feet, 2 inches

BRAKES

TYPE	Lockheed external four-wheel hydraulic
FRONT/REAR	14-inch diameter drums

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Steel-over-wood body-on-steel frame with seven crossmembers
BODY STYLE	Four-door, five-passenger sedan
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	I-beam axle with 2-inch semi-elliptic leaf springs
REAR	Live axle with 2-inch semi-elliptic leaf springs

WHEELS & TIRES

FRONT WHEELS	20-inch stamped-steel disc
REAR WHEELS	21-inch stamped-steel disc
FRONT TIRES	6.00-20
REAR TIRES	6.00-21

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	125 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	182.5 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	69 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	70 inches
FRONT TRACK	56 inches
REAR TRACK	56 inches
CURB WEIGHT	3,525 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	9.5 quarts
COOLING SYSTEM	19 quarts
FUEL TANK	16.5 gallons, including 2.5-gallon reserve

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.249
WEIGHT PER BHP	52.61 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	13.12 pounds

PROS & CONS

+ Silky smooth straight-eight
+ Hydraulic brakes
+ All but unique with a handful left

– Answering the question of "Who made the Hupmobile?"
– Very hard-to-find parts
– Parts from three model years in one car

WHAT TO PAY

Current values for this Hupmobile model are not available

PRODUCTION

1925 E-1	14,822
1926 E-2	11,249
1927 E-3	8,599
1928 E-4	2,153

CLUB CORNER

THE HUPMOBILE CLUB
1203 Kilbourn Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46514-2420
Phone: 203-823-7611
Email: ndrahupp@frontier.com
Dues: $31 (U.S.); $35 (overseas members)
Membership: 470

The Magnificent Bathtub

"Love them or hate them, the Bathtubs were impressive cars."

The 1949-'51 Nash Ambassador/Statesman/600 cars—dubbed the "Bathtubs"—are the Rodney Dangerfields of the automotive hobby. They don't get any respect. That's a shame because, looked at objectively, they're one of the most interesting cars of their era (see this month's Driveable Dream on page 54). So forward-thinking they outshone the competition, they became the best-selling Nashes of all time. Few cars have offered so much unconventional engineering and so many innovative features as the Nash tubs.

Buyers looking for maximum fuel economy could choose the Nash 600/Statesman with its 82-hp flathead straight-six which, though admittedly slow, could achieve as much as 30 miles per gallon, quite incredible for the time. Those wanting power with economy had the 112-hp Ambassador engine, which could still yield an honest 20-plus miles per gallon. Automatic overdrive was a popular option.

The four-coil suspension provided a smooth ride, enhanced by the rubber-mounted torque-tube drive, track bars, and, on Ambassadors, an anti-roll bar. The exhaust system hung on fabric straps for extra silence.

The Nash interior was large and comfortable, with big padded seats and plenty of legroom. The unique front seats could recline for comfort or even fold down entirely to make up a two-person bed, useful for hunters and fishermen. Screens were available to keep out bugs while sleeping, and air mattresses could be fitted for max comfort. Brougham models even offered angled rear seats with a center armrest wide enough to play cards on.

Drivers looked over an impressive array of controls. Mounted on the steering column directly in front of the driver was the innovative Uniscope, which combined speedometer, odometer, oil indicator, engine temperature, charge indicator, fuel gauge, and high-beam indicator in one easy-to-read pod. The "Weather Eye" conditioned-air heating/ventilating system actually filtered cabin air to remove dust and pollen, had rain shedders to reduce moisture, and provided an industry-leading 100 cubic feet of fresh air per minute.

Radios could be ordered with twin speakers for impressive sound. Custom models even offered a vacuum-powered radio antenna with a dash control knob. Thoughtful touches abounded. When the trunk lid opened, a dual-purpose light illuminated the trunk area while also lighting a red safety lens facing oncoming traffic. A rear window wiper was available, along with dash-controlled fog lamps and, in 1950, the first factory-installed seat belts ever offered. Even a remote opening gas cap was an option, plus automatic back-up lamps, a clock mounted in the steering-wheel hub, and a parking-brake warning "whistle." Few cars offered so many innovative features so early. Heck, even my modern car doesn't have as many niceties as a 1950 Ambassador. It was a gadget-lover's dream come true.

Styling was created in a design studio and refined in a wind tunnel, a first for any U.S. car. Once management and stylists decided on the basic shape, engineering mules were taken to the University of Wichita for full-scale wind-tunnel testing where engineers and designers modified the concept, closing gaps, minimizing wind-trapping pockets, and smoothing out the lines to achieve a balance of style and efficiency. Although Nash stylists hated the enclosed wheels, testing showed they reduced drag; besides, Nash CEO George Mason believed they gave Nash a distinctive look, so that settled the matter.

Tests on production models proved Nash was the most aerodynamic full-size American car on the market. Aerodynamic drag at 60 miles per hour, measured in pounds, was 113 lb for Nash, 171 lb for the similar-looking Packard, and 164 lb for a Buick Roadmaster. The big Nash could cruise at 60 mph using less horsepower, achieving better fuel economy, and with less wind noise. The public, by the way, loved the "Buck Rogers" styling, at least for a few years. It was futuristic in a way that appealed to many. It looked like real engineering had gone into it. It had. Nash was the only American make with unitized body construction, offering greater strength and safety, along with less weight—which also improved fuel economy. Nowadays, pretty much every car has a unitized chassis, but in 1949 only Nash had it.

Love them or hate them, the Bathtubs were impressive cars.

EMAIL YOUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS TO: **rlentinello@hemmings.com**

READER BILL FILBERT'S LETTER IN *HCC* #157 suggesting old-time mechanic tips brought to mind my working at Curly's Auto repair in 1953 when I was 18 years old. Curly explained one of the reasons that even new ignition points burn up is that tungsten, in time, forms an oxide which causes resistance. You check for this with an analog ohm meter set on the times-one scale. If there is any resistance indicated, this is how you correct for it: Open up the points enough to place a piece of very fine emery paper between them. Never use regular sandpaper as it can add to the resistance; I use a fine-grade emery cloth, like the kind used when painting cars. Cut a strip about 3/8-inch wide by 4-inches long. Open the points enough to start one end of the emery cloth, then let the points close. Drag one side for about three inches, then do the same for the other side of the points. This does not work on used points. Re-check resistance and repeat the procedure until zero resistance is measured.

Since 1970, I have done mechanical restorations on old cars, mostly those with ignition points. In time, the points may turn gray but they won't pit, provided that proper condenser and voltage is good and there are no contaminants like oil vapor.
David Alden
Burlington, Massachusetts

TERRY SHEA WROTE A GREAT article in *HCC* #158 on a 1956 Continental Mark II. The owner's description of, "falling in love at first glance," with the Mark II at age 13 brought back memories of my own "falling in love at first glance" with the Continental Mark II when I was nine. I promised myself I would someday own a Mark II; little did I know it would take 42 years before I would succeed.

While I always enjoy reading about my favorite automobile, there is a slight inaccuracy in the article concerning the transmission used in the Mark II. It states that the Mark II had a two-speed automatic transmission—this is incorrect. It had a Turbo-Drive three-speed automatic transmission. Most people who have driven a Mark II under normal operation only feel the transmission shift one time at approximately 40-45 mph, because in normal operation, the Mark II starts off in second gear. With the car at a standstill, to utilize first gear, all you have to do is put the pedal to the metal and floor it! It will take off in first gear rather than its usual second gear, or you can simply pull down on the shift lever from drive to low, with low being first gear.
Dean Forbes
Lincoln & Continental Owner's Club
Katy, Texas

IT WAS INTERESTING TO SEE THE article on the 1956 Continental Mark II. I had just re-read an article in an old magazine that I had kept since 1957 that featured both the Mark II and the Edsel. One article was titled "Why the Edsel Will Succeed," and the other "Why the Continental Will Fail." Well, we all know the story of Edsel, even if there are differences of opinion as to why it failed. The Continental, in a sense, succeeded; however the Mark II was a failure as to its capture of a meaningful market share. The reason for that could also create many discussions, such as it being overpriced, overbuilt, or whatever. Personally, I didn't think much of the design, and clearly it was priced out of a mainstream market, much like the Cadillac Eldorado Brougham of 1957-'60. Their quality, and price, made both more like the custom classics of the 1930's.
Pat Jacobs
Snohomish, Washington

DAVID CONWILL'S ARTICLE ON ACD in *HCC* #157 was well done, but I found one error that I can correct with a little twist. The "pre-selector gearbox" was not by any means exclusive to Cord. This transmission, referred to as "The Electric Hand," was available in Hudson automobiles during the two years Cord offered it, but I learned something new about that when I toured the ACD Museum a while back. Our guide informed us that, such was the demand for it on the Hudsons, that there were few or none left over, even for the pitifully small number of Cords built. The answer for Cord was to scavenge the junkyards for serviceable Electric Hand transmissions on wrecked Hudsons. Laying all that aside, it's a tribute to the extraordinary design of the Cords that, even with such a tiny output, the 810-812 models are still mind-blowing to all who experience them.

Thanks for your marvelous magazine.
Preston Stevens
Atlanta, Georgia

IN *HCC* #156, BOB BROOKS ASKED why the 324-cu.in. Oldsmobile Rocket 88 engine from the early 1950s had such a noisy valvetrain. It, like the 303-cu.in. V-8 before it, had hydraulic valve lifters that were not adjustable. The engine was notorious for flat camshafts, dished lifters, and worn rocker arms; usually the lifters were the first to fail. One theory is that the camshaft lobes were too narrow to support the amount of load from the valvetrain. With the introduction of the 394-cu.in. V-8 in 1959, the Rocket 88 was equipped with a longer camshaft, allowing for wider lobes.
Michael Berkin
Oxford, Maryland

DAVID SCHULTZ'S COLUMN, "Behind The Wheel," in *HCC* #158 really resonated with me. I've owned and driven a succession of old cars over the past 40-plus years; all have been "drivers," and there is only one plaque on my wall. Some were easier to drive (and some more reliable) than others, but each in its own way connected me back to an earlier, and what I imagined to be, simpler time.

In 1987, as a pilot for only a few years, I acquired a 1947 Aeronca 7DC "Champ," which is a very basic airplane that could only accommodate two persons. The log book showed it had flown four hours on the day I was born! It was forgiving to handle, but at 85 mph, a trip of 125 miles challenged my backside mightily. More important, however, was that, unlike my old cars, I could never fantasize that I was surrounded by the past while flying it. I was always in the very minute of the present.

With old cars, "restoration" always generates images of a shop with a wrench or grinder in my hands. But there's another kind of restoration involved with my still-original 1949 Suburban—driving it. There is a deep part of my spirit that is always and predictably restored as well.
Chuck Jones
Sulphur Springs, Texas

REGARDING PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN in *HCC* #154, there are many muscle cars that preceded the Essex eight-cylinder Terraplane and 1936 Buick Century. In 1932, along with the Essex was the Stutz DV 32 Super Bearcat, with its exotic 32-valve engine on a very short chassis. It far outclasses the Essex in power/weight and in raw power. Two years prior was the Packard Model 734 Speedster, with a lightweight, narrow body, low profile and an engine with 35 percent more horsepower than the

Continued on page 41

Coincidence?

When does "coincidence" become "weird-eeriness"? While doing some research for future stories for *HCC*, I looked at a hardcover dealers photo album I have had in my archives for several decades. It shows a fairly obscure English coachbuilder's efforts to body Model T and TT truck chassis in the 1920s. There are some absolutely wonderful graphics of coach painters' lettering and signage represented there, all of their work hand drawn and painted on the trucks with that wonderful aura of Roaring Twenties advertising.

I reached out to my good friend Colin Spong of England, who, with his brother Adrian and late father, Fred, have restored their own collection of American cars since the 1970s. I had found little information on the English commercial body builder Wallace-Harmer Motors, Ltd., who had this album of photographs made up to show to its prospective customers the work it had already produced. I can't recall where I acquired the album, but it must have been at an antique shop on one of my trips to England, most likely from a vendor at the London-based Grays Antique Center.

Colin told me he had indeed heard of that coachbuilder, and reminded me of the Model TT Ford truck they owned and had restored that I saw in person on my trip to England in 1984. Colin and his father had pulled the remains of that truck from the trees and brush in 1977, 12 years after he first took photographs of it. To most American collectors, the remains of the truck they rescued wouldn't amount to much more than some really rusty—maybe even salvageable—parts. The Spongs viewed it as a worthy restoration project. Their truck had been parked in that field in 1927 after being driven only 2,157 miles, a fact documented by a device mounted to the front hub that was a form of an accessory odometer that recorded the miles driven.

When I saw their truck, it was in excellent restored condition. They had done the work between 1981 and '83 and had built a standard cab and drop-side body. Due to how much had been missing of the original body and the poor condition of what was there, there hadn't been enough to recreate it. But when I saw the truck, I had thought that it was not only a restoration, but actually a resurrection. It turns out that when the Spongs pulled the remains out from the brush, they also scoured the ground beneath the truck for any bits that fell off over the 50 years it was parked outside. That's when they found the body-maker's plate branded Wallace-Harmer, the same company of my dealers album.

Colin supplied me with what information on the firm he had been able to discover over the decades. Then, knowing that the Spongs had found traces of yellow paint on parts of their truck's box van body, I reexamined the black-and white dealers album. When I discovered a photograph of a van that was a light color, I scanned it and sent it to Colin via email.

He responded: "This is quite incredible that we have known each other for over 40 years, and you can find a photo album of a long-defunct company, and I have one of the vehicles in that album!" In looking at the picture, Colin said: "That photograph is truly amazing, as I am convinced that it is of our TT Ford. Note the name on the side of the panel—'APP Tube'—which is the name of the original owner of *our* TT." This fact had been confirmed by a letter from the Greater London Council in 1965. Other clues and bits of the truck matched up to the period photo, including what could be seen of the original license plate.

What are the chances this could happen? The truck, photo album, and connection of two friends who love old vehicles? Coincidence, or just plain eerie-weirdness!

"Other clues and bits of the truck matched up to the period photo, including what could be seen of the original license plate."

Continued from page 39

Eight Deluxe line sharing the same 384-cu. in. displacement. The 1929 626 Speedster was a forerunner of the 1930 model and less of a muscle car.

If a muscle car is defined as a small- or medium-sized body with an engine from a larger series, such as the 1964 GTO, I believe my above examples are correct. I swear I'm not influenced by my having owned a 1930 734 Packard Speedster for 44 years… honest.

Fred Kanter
Boonton, New Jersey

AS A LONGTIME READER, I HAVE read with amusement how some people take enormous time and effort to restore cars that by all rights should have been junked and forgotten long ago. So, I do indulge your attempts every so often to try to make any 1990s car a "classic." However, while it is your right to publish what you want, you now have gone way too far with the glowing Detroit Underdogs column on the Cadillac Cimarron in *HCC* #158.

The Cimarron is generally recognized as the beginning of the destruction of a truly classic marque by selling a gussied-up Cavalier as a Cadillac. To let a contributor devote even one page to call out this disgraceful model, is a sacrilege to your mission of providing "The Definitive All-American Collector-Car Magazine." There has to be some limit to what you allow in your magazine, and this article is truly an example of the very worst that you have allowed to be included in an issue.

Mr. Stern ends the article with an observation that he "found a very clean, low-mileage, 1988 model for $3,800." And to add insult to this, he opines that "I'll bet there are those who wish they had picked one up when the original owners started selling them in the 1990s." To me, someone should have paid him to take this monstrosity off his hands, so he could get it destroyed so it would never see the light of day again—or be mentioned in any way shape or form as a "classic"

Len Stillman
Boca Raton, Florida

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE Cadillac Cimarron was very informative. Prior to reading this article, it was very easy for me to "pile on" with everyone else that this car was nothing more than an extreme example of Detroit's "Badge Engineering." It is a delight for me to know that Cadillac went to some effort to improve the ride and handling for this vehicle. A five-speed manual transmission in a Cadillac! Wow! Now I think I want one!

Speaking of "piling on," I also experience some distaste whenever I come upon a list of the "20 worst cars of all time," or such. I grew up with many of these cars that seem to always make the list. I'm not brushing aside their problems; beyond a doubt they had many. Nevertheless, context is everything. These cars always got my friends and myself to where we were going.

Dave Snapp
Brownsburg, Indiana

THAT 1957 CHEVROLET BEL AIR fastback on the Lost & Found page in *HCC* #158 is really beautiful; too bad that Chevy didn't make a model like that. However, I believe the roof and trunk graft that appears is not from a Henry J. I would say it is taken from an A-body two-door fastback GM car manufactured for the 1949-'52 model years. This would include Chevrolet, Pontiac, and Oldsmobile—but not necessarily for all four years. The A-body GM car had a contoured trunk lid, while the Henry J had a relatively flat lid, which, I believe, was an option.

Don Mumford
Warren, Ohio

THERE ARE MANY GOOD THOUGHTS within Richard's editorial, "Paying It Forward," in *HCC* #158. Certainly, there is food for thought in what he wrote when it comes to being custodians of our beloved automobiles, but, importantly, he carried this approach through to include the parts that we have collected.

A year ago, within my president's message for the November/December 2016 issue of our *Antique Studebaker Review*, I penned some thoughts that encouraged members to establish and make known "a plan," not only for their vintage vehicles, but also of "additional significant importance" for those parts "that we took years to assemble in order to restore and/or maintain our Studebakers."

The subject of "a plan" had originally come up in an earlier issue, when our Antique Studebaker Club (ASC) editor, Rick Peterson, had lost an older friend with a collection of Pierce-Arrows, as well as a stash of parts; the friend passed away without any plan or written wishes.

What I hope to convey is that the parts disposition might not have to be implemented by the owner, but rather an organization. The Studebaker National Foundation (SNF) is not only aiding the handling of the future placement/ownership of automobiles itself, but it is equally concerned with preserving and finding homes for those parts on the shelf. That the Foundation has two estate lawyers serving within the SNF board has allowed a level of expertise to be shared. Contacting this organization is plainly a good starting point for friends of our marque.

Serving to address the question of unneeded or excess automotive parts, in addition to those usual "Parts for Sale" and "Literature for Sale" headings one usually sees within club publications, our editor has added a "FreeBees" category. Parts may be listed that just need a good home, with no associated cost, except possibly shipping. One particular member did not wish to retain the sales revenues himself, but indicated that all received monies would be contributed directly to the club, from which all club members could benefit. His concept could easily be extended to indicating a philanthropic contribution be made to a named organization, Studebaker-related or not, in the amount received.

Kent Haberle
The Antique Studebaker Club
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania

RICHARD, I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED "floating along with you" in the 1960 Electra (*HCC* #158); your text and photos were outstanding. What a grand automobile. A family member had a black Electra of the same vintage. When, weather permitting, he'd pull up for birthday parties, I no longer cared about the cake and goodies. I simply wanted to wander out to the driveway and admire the Electra from stem to stern. As a 10-year-old car enthusiast, I was so impressed that I could see over the dash and let my imaginary road trips begin. Birthday parties were often exploratory adventures behind the steering wheel of any number of cars.

Doug Johnson
Dassel, Minnesota

To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.

Looking Back at Forward Control

Go to a weekend cruise-in, and what do you see? Convertibles, sedans, muscle cars, the occasional pickup truck, and maybe a station wagon. Where are the 1960s or '70s vans? I remember going with my mother to an all-customized van show at Newmarket Shopping Center in the 1970s. Most of the vans were Dodges, and there was enough shag carpeting inside to cover the floors in every home in Newport News, Virginia. I don't think I've seen one of those Disco-era custom vans in almost 30 years.

Now that the first-generation Chrysler minivans are considered collectibles, with their wood trim and distinctive features, why don't we see one parked front and center at every car show?

Around a quarter century before the K-car-based family haulers were delivered to showrooms in 1984, a similar series of family haulers, along with popular utility models, was introduced by the Big Three. The Volkswagen Microbus had opened a market for a small, square, easily maneuverable vehicle with forward controls (driver over axle), and Detroit soon took notice.

From 1961 to mid-1965, Chevrolet offered the Corvair-based forward-control vans and trucks. Four body styles were available: Loadside (conventional pickup), Rampside (pickup with a fold-down side ramp), Corvan (panel-side delivery van), and the true family hauler predecessor to the minivan, the Greenbrier Sportswagon (window van).

Chevrolet's newest vehicle featured Corvair's air-cooled, horizontally opposed, six-cylinder with 80 to 110 optional horsepower, a curb weight of 2,800-3,000 pounds, and an optional Powerglide automatic, with the shift lever center-mounted under the instrument panel. A three-speed manual was standard, and in 1962, a four-speed was added. The rear engine allowed for a bench seat and a floor-mounted manual shifter. Most Corvair vans were two-toned, with a white stripe encircling the body at the beltline. A white body with a red stripe was an option when other colors were not chosen.

The Corvan window van with three rear seats was popular as a school bus for many pre-schools and kindergartens. And, the Greenbrier Sportswagon was the next best thing to a station wagon. It could carry an entire little league baseball team with ease and be optioned with all the creature comforts available in other Corvairs. Eight-door models were also available.

The body of the Corvair vans was semi-unitized. There is a load-carrying chassis beneath the vehicles that is an integral part of the structure. The subframe was necessary to alleviate body flex; restorers are all too familiar with this construction. While the rear suspension featured the Corvair swing axles, it was equipped with heavy-duty springs. The front suspension was borrowed from the full-size Chevrolet station wagon models for 1961, and pickup trucks the following four years. The vans have a better weight distribution than the Corvair passenger cars—almost 50/50.

A little less daring, but much more successful, was Ford's Falcon-based Econoline van. Initial offerings were a three-door van and a two-door pickup, both equipped with straight-sixes (144 or 170 cubic inches) mounted between the driver and front passenger. A three-speed column shift and later a four-speed column shift were offered, as well as a two-speed automatic. All were from the Falcon parts bin. A 165-pound counterweight was fitted over the rear wheels to balance the vans, which were quite front-heavy. The Econoline rode on a solid axle up front, with leaf springs at all four corners.

Dodge entered the race in 1964 with the A-100. Like the Econoline and later Chevrolet G-series, the A-100 was also forward control, with the engine sitting between the driver and passenger and similarly rode on a solid axle up front with leaf springs all around. The bulletproof Chrysler 170- and 225-cu.in. slant sixes were the engines of choice, but in 1965, a 273-cu.in. V-8 could be optioned, followed by the 318 in 1967. Transmission choices were an automatic or a three-on-the-tree. The Dodge A-100 also inspired the *Mystery Machine* for the Scooby-Doo gang!

All three of the above, and the later Chevrolet/GMC conventional vans introduced in mid-1965, were available with camper conversions. Find one of those, and you can save on hotel rooms when you attend your next car show.

If you really want attention, arrive in any one of the minivans from the 1960s.

Let's make vans popular again.

"If you really want attention, arrive in any one of the minivans from the 1960s."

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1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT
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6" VARIABLE SPEED DUAL ACTION POLISHER

Customer Rating ★★★★★
$54.99
COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE $119 MODEL: 7424XP
ITEM 62403 ~~$69.99~~ SAVE $64
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2017 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

The world's finest automobiles congregate at the crown jewel of collector-car events

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MATTHEW LITWIN AND
DAVID CONWILL

August 20, 2017, marked the 67th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, held annually at the Pebble Beach Golf Links on California's Monterey Peninsula. By special invitation only, 204 of the world's finest automobiles were driven onto the perfectly manicured, 548-yard 18th fairway, presented by owners and special guests from 15 countries and 31 states.

This year, five special marks were celebrated, the most pertinent to this title being American Dream Cars of the 1960s. Other special classes included: Duesenberg; Packard; and California Specials that Raced at Pebble Beach. Standard classes consisted of American Classic Closed/Open; Antique Closed/Open; Prewar/Postwar Preservation; Postwar Closed/Open; Postwar Racing; and Postwar Grand Touring. All told, 27 classes were arranged for spectators.

Judging was unobtrusive, starting nearly as soon as

On its way to being displayed in the Antique Class is this 1909 Austin Model 60 touring. Owned by Mary and Ted Stahl, of Chesterfield Township, Michigan, this Austin—unrelated to the Austin Motor Company of England—was built in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

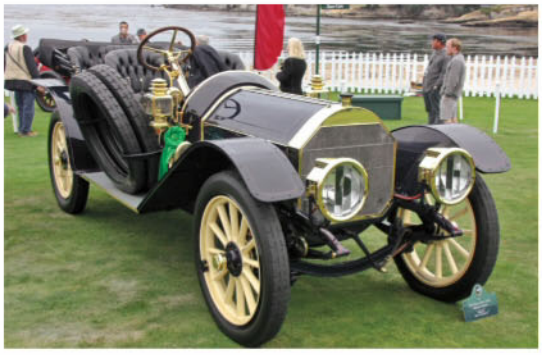
car owners/stewards were given enough time to finish final detailing. After careful deliberation, it was announced that a 1929 Mercedes-Benz S Barker tourer had received the coveted Best of Show prize.

The focus of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is not solely on celebrating exquisite automobiles. Giving back is a tradition, and 2017 saw more than $1.6-million raised that is currently being distributed to nearly 100 local nonprofit programs whose concentrations include youth education and literacy, healthcare, and animal rescue. This year's effort added to the more than $22-million raised over the previous 66 years.

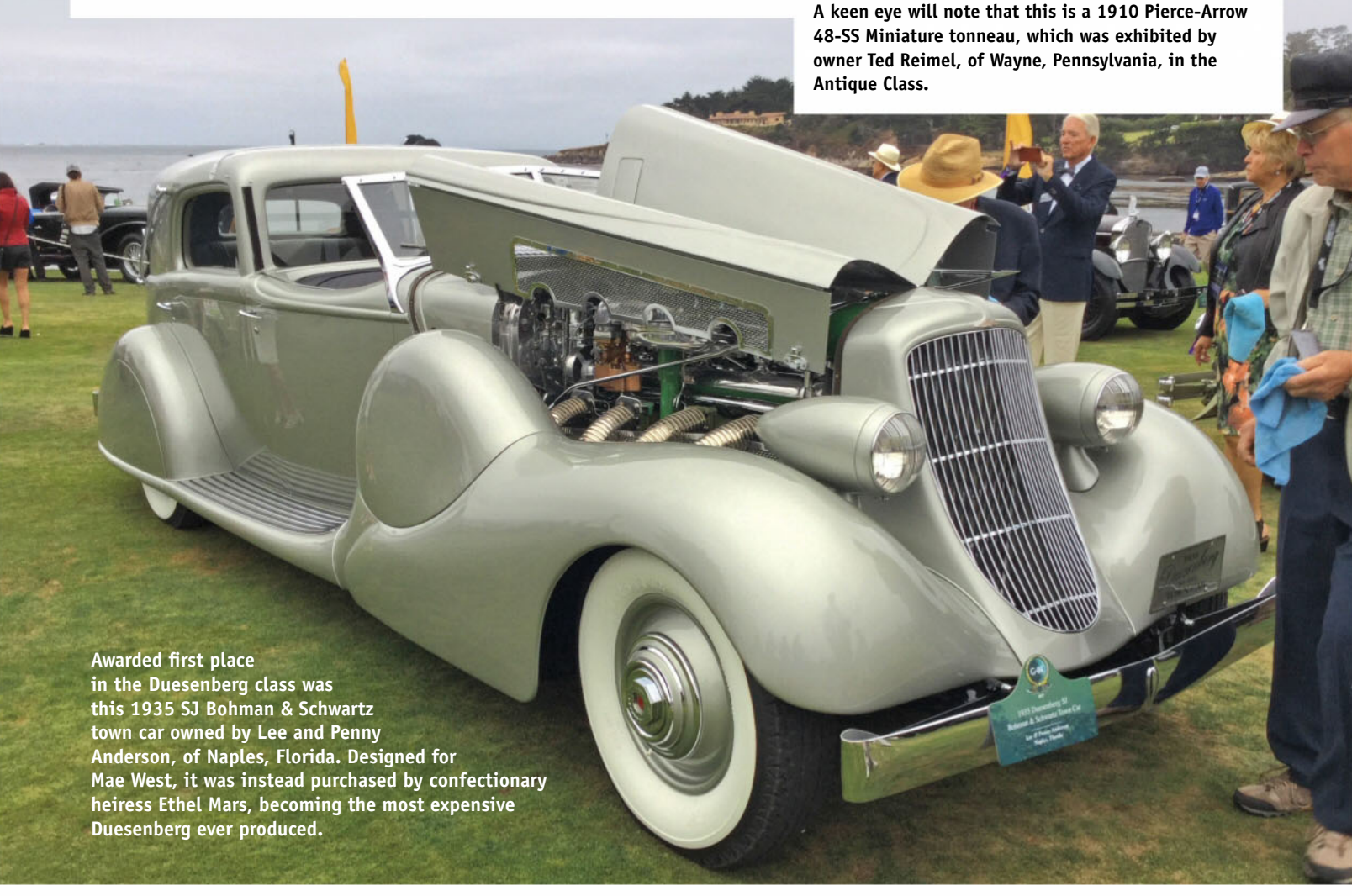
If Pebble Beach is still on your automotive bucket list, mark August 26, 2018, on your calendar before visiting www.pebblebeachconcours.net for more information. This is where you can also buy tickets, and see a complete list of 2017 class and special award winners.

Owned by the Brohard brothers, of Alameda, California, this 1906 Stanley Model H Gentleman's Speedy roadster was once the world's fastest production car.

Historically, Chrysler Airflow sales are best described as "disappointing." For example, fewer than 10 of these CW Imperial LeBaron limousines were built, and this one from 1935, owned by Frank Daly, of Sammamish, Washington, is the only known extant.



A keen eye will note that this is a 1910 Pierce-Arrow 48-SS Miniature tonneau, which was exhibited by owner Ted Reimel, of Wayne, Pennsylvania, in the Antique Class.



Awarded first place in the Duesenberg class was this 1935 SJ Bohman & Schwartz town car owned by Lee and Penny Anderson, of Naples, Florida. Designed for Mae West, it was instead purchased by confectionary heiress Ethel Mars, becoming the most expensive Duesenberg ever produced.

The distinctive fender-mounted headlamps mark this coupe as a Pierce-Arrow, specifically a 1934 840A Deluxe Eight, among the last of only 47 originally constructed. The two-passenger automobile belongs to Paul and Cheryl Petrovich, of Sacramento, California, who had it on display in the American Classic Closed class.

Regular readers may recognize this 1932 Studebaker President Series 91 convertible sedan. Owned by George and Valerie Vassos, of Westfield, Massachusetts, it won Best of Show at our 2016 Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance. At Pebble, it was bestowed with first-place honors in the American Classic Open class.

Presented as an Exhibit-Only display, by owner Dr. Peter Heydon, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, was this 1935 Lincoln K-548 LeBaron coupe. It's one of just 23 two-passenger, rumble-seat-equipped examples built by LeBaron.

Winning second in American Dream Cars of the 1960s was this 1966 Bosley Mark II Interstate coupe owned by Stephen and Kim Bruno, of Boca Raton, Florida. Originally created by Richard Bosley, its monocoque fiberglass body envelopes a racing Corvette SR-2 chassis and 345-hp Pontiac Tri-Power V-8.

There were nine entries in the Prewar Preservation class, including this 1904 Rambler Model H rear-entrance tonneau belonging to Richard Anderson, of Coupeville, Washington.

Among the oldest entries in the Prewar Preservation class was this 1904 Holsman Model 3 runabout. Marta and Henrietta Holsman, of Carpinteria, California, grandchildren of company founder Henry Holsman, are the owners of this exceptionally preserved example, which was bestowed with the Chairman's Trophy.

Robert Hunt, of Paradise Valley, Arizona, was invited to display his 1932 Marmon Sixteen LeBaron sedan. Originally marketed against the Cadillac V-16 and Duesenberg J, 491 were built within three years. This one was entered in the 1974 Monte Carlo Rally.

Rolling onto the show field is this 1935 Packard 1207 Twelve Brewster limousine, owned by Ronald Verschoor, of Beverly Hills, California. The coachwork was originally fitted to a Rolls-Royce phaeton owned by E.F. Hutton, husband of Post cereal heiress Marjorie Post. The Humer-Binder Co. was hired to transfer the body to this Packard, with chauffer and other tasteful modifications, in 1935, at the cost of $6,685.

It's hard to miss the distinct lines of the original Kurtis, often credited as being the first true American sports car. This 1949 example was a gift from Frank Kurtis to his son Arlen, who completed its assembly in 1951. He sold it in 1952 when he joined the Navy, only later to be purchased by his wife and his sister. It was displayed in memory of Arlen by Carol Kurtis, of Bakersfield, California.

Making its first public appearance since the mid-Sixties was this 1965 Pontiac Vivant Herb Adams roadster, fittingly named after its creator and noted Pontiac engineer Herb Adams. Below the body is a space-frame chassis and a 370-cu.in. V-8 engine. Owned by Mark and Newie Brinker, of Houston, Texas, it won first in the American Dream Cars of the 1960s class.

Brent Merrill, of Toronto, Ontario, displayed his 1928 Sterns-Knight H 8-90 Phillips cabriolet in the American Classic Open class, in which it was awarded third. It is said to be the only known remaining eight-cylinder cabriolet on the 137-inch wheelbase.

Based on the original Dodge Fire Arrow concept cars, Eugene Casaroll launched Dual Motors after purchasing the original design. Just 115 Dual-Ghias were built, of which only 36 are known to survive. This one was entered by Tom and Gwen Price, of Belvedere, California.

Featuring Victoria coupe coachwork by Judkins, this 1932 Duesenberg Model J is one of just two short-wheelbase examples ever built. It was displayed by Mark Hyman, of St. Louis, Missouri.

Another Full Classic making a graceful entry was this striking 1930 Duesenberg SJ Rollston Convertible Victoria displayed by Roger Willbanks, of Denver, Colorado. Originally fitted with a LeBaron-built sport-pheaton body, Rollston was later commissioned to make the change.

By 1933, Chrysler's upscale CL Imperial custom line featured six-foot-long hoods, its lines gracefully transitioning into the rest of the LeBaron coachwork. This example, a Close Coupled sedan owned by Larry and Susan Nannini, of Daly City, California, is one of just four extant.

The Tony Hulman Trophy was awarded to this handsomely patinaed 1915 Packard 2-38 Six runabout, belonging to Allen Strong, of Urbana, Illinois. The Packard was originally owned by Carl G. Fisher, and was part of the Prewar Preservation class.

Cadillac introduced its 185-hp, 452-cu.in. V-16 engine for the 1930 model year, intent on beating the Duesenberg Model J in the luxury-car market with models such as this 452 Fleetwood sport phaeton — only 85 were produced, including this 1930 edition owned by John Groendyke, of Enid, Oklahoma.

The lines of a 1933 Auburn 12-165 Speedster will always come to mind when a concours is mentioned. This striking red-and-black example, displayed in the American Classic Open class by Lou and Kathy Ficco, of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, earned the ArtCenter College of Design Award.

Clark Gable and Errol Flynn owned this 1937 Packard 120 Eight Darrin Convertible Victoria, however it's currently owned by noted Packard collectors Ralph and Adeline Marano, of Westfield, New Jersey.

XP-500

The tale of GM's free-piston dream car

BY MICHAEL WORTHINGTON-WILLIAMS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This story originally appeared in* Special Interest Autos *#105, June 1988*

To most of us the term "free piston" conveys little to nothing. But although the car which forms the subject of this article was developed during the Fifties, the concept was already well-known. Most of the development work dates from the pioneer efforts of R.P. Pescara who, although a Spaniard, commenced his experiments in 1922 in France.

The concept upon which his early work concentrated relied upon making an engine whose pistons had no connection with the output shaft and where the exhaust-driven turbine—rather than the non-existent crankshaft—provided the drive. Although research went on in France almost continually, except during the last war, little progress was made until interest was rekindled in the gas turbine.

The Fifties witnessed a good deal of experiment and development work with gas turbines—some of it applied to the propulsion of motor vehicles, notably by Rover—until the point was reached where, before it could progress further, there was a need for supplies of the hot moderate-pressure gas produced by the pressure-charged compression-ignition engine.

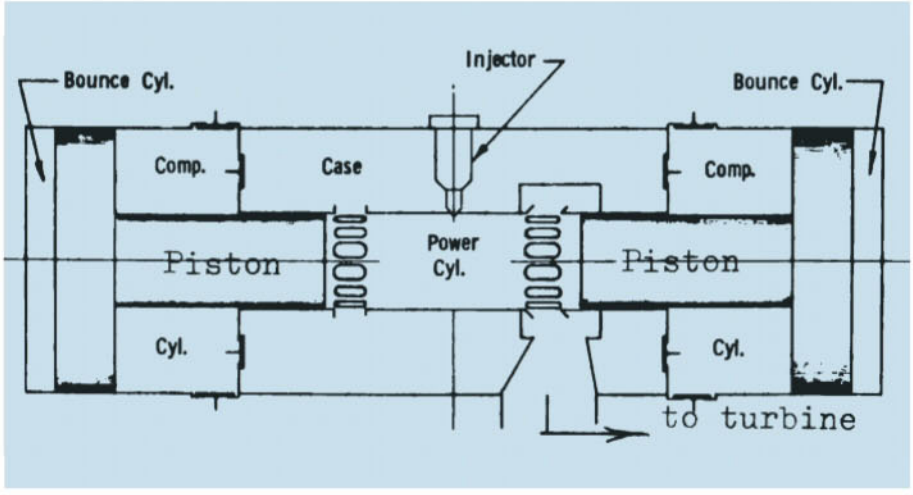
In theory, the free-piston engine provides the ideal solution to the problems associated with the extraction of extremely high outputs from diesel engines, while at the same time obviating the disadvantages of intermittent torque (and limitations on torque backup for traction duties) normally associated with conventional piston engines.

Added to this, however, were a number of other pluses, some of which lent themselves to the possibility of both automotive and military use, but before we examine these, let's have a look at the modus operandi.

While the layout of the free-piston engine varies for, say, marine or industrial application, a typical layout—and the one eventually adopted by General Motors for the XP-500 sports car—employed two horizontally opposed and synchronized pistons in a two-stroke diesel. The combustion area, into which fuel was injected, was sandwiched between the opposed-piston crowns so that, on the burning of the gases, the two pistons were forced apart.

The force of the power stroke was such as to compress air to as much as 50 times atmospheric pressure, and as the pistons moved outwards they uncovered exhaust and inlet ports in the cylinder similar to those found in a conventional two-stroke. The exhaust ports allowed the burnt gases to flow to the power turbine, and the fresh air then entered the cylinder through the intake ports.

All well and good, you may say, but what happens when the pistons have reached the limit of their outward travel in the cylinder? What sets them in mo-



Cutaway view of one cylinder of the Hyprex 4-4 gasifier as used in the XP-500.

tion for the return journey to the center in readiness for another stroke? The solution was remarkably simple, and was effected by means of large diameter air-compressor pistons attached to the rear of the working pistons.

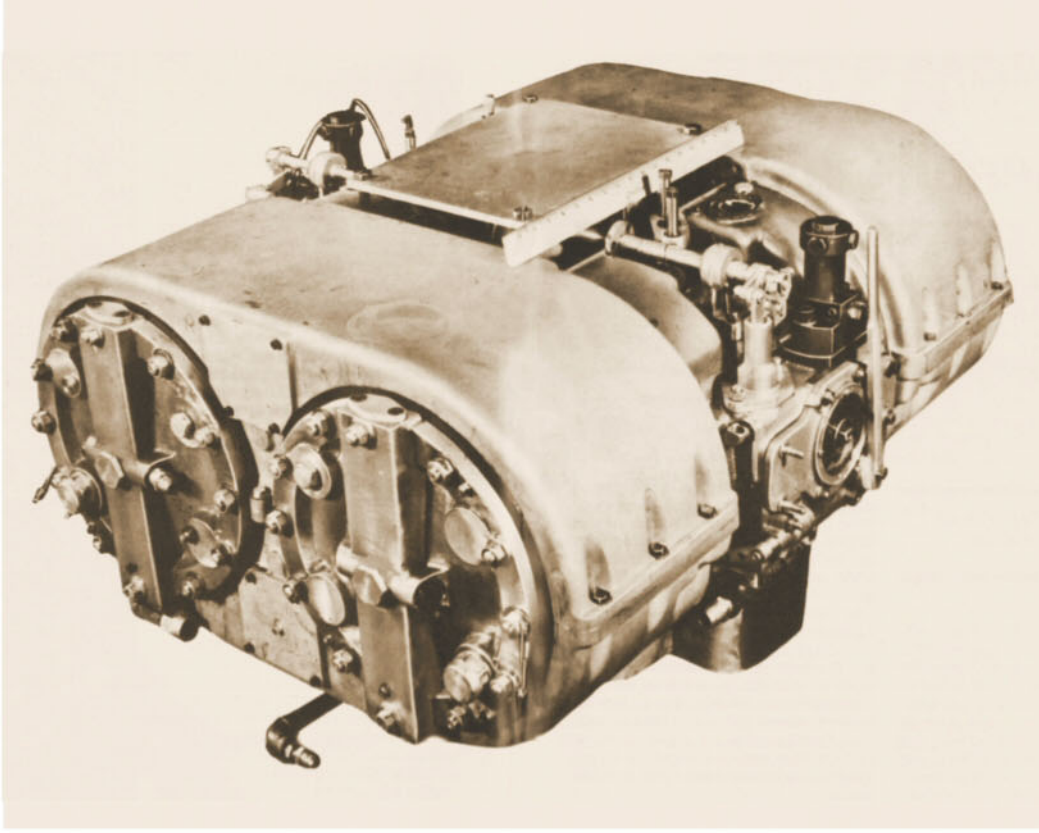
These compressors, traveling outwards at the same rate as (and propelled by) the working pistons, gradually compressed air trapped behind them in a bounce chamber. At the point where the pressure in the bounce chamber exceeded the force of the power stroke, the two pistons would be bounced back together again, fuel would be injected into the space between them and the whole process would commence again. Engine speed could be varied by regulating the amount of air in the bounce chambers; higher pressure effected a quicker return of the pistons to their original position.

As a result of pioneer work by two French organizations—the Société d'Etudes Mécaniques et Energétiques (SEME) and Société Industrielle Général de Mécaniques Appliquées (SIGMA), the free-piston engine attracted more and more users, so that between 1948 and 1960 free-piston horsepower rose to a total of 407,000-hp powering generating sets in compressors, oil pipeline and water pumps, ships, and locomotives.

Such activity could not fail to attract the interest of an automotive giant like General Motors, and throughout the Fifties the company's research laboratories developed, installed, and began evaluating free-piston units of different shapes and sizes in road vehicles, ships, locomotives, and power generators. The XP-500 experimental automobile was unveiled in 1956.

The world's first free-piston-engined car—it was code named the Hyprex 4-4 and its 250-hp engine built by GMR—boasted two power cylinders siamesed, instead of one. These cylinders were deliberately out of phase so that one delivered gas to the turbine while the other was compressing.

In operation, the Hyprex 4-4 proved to be extraordinarily tolerant of a wide range of fuels. It ran perfectly satisfactorily on kerosene, No. 2 diesel oil, whale oil, peanut oil, and cotton seed oil(!) or on gasoline of varying octanes up to 100. Admittedly, it was not tested to destruction, and we do not know, therefore, what the long-term effects would have been as a result of using the more eccentric of these fuel sources. Horsepower



The GM XP-500 dream car was powered by the GMR 4-4 Hyprex free-piston gasifier which drove the turbine which powered it. Unveiled in 1956, it proved a failure in automotive use. The concept was more successful in marine and stationary power plants.

outputs, however, varied according to, and in direct proportion to the heating value of the fuel employed.

Smoothness of operation was another feature in which the Hyprex scored over conventional diesels. All the free-piston engines require perfect balance, of course, so that the only stipulation necessary was to ensure that all reciprocating parts were of equal weight.

The term "engine" is of course something of a misnomer, because the Hyprex was in reality a gasifier, but its total absence of torsional movement meant that, even when the free-piston gasifier was used as a stationary power plant, there was no necessity to bolt it to the floor! In the car, this enabled engine mountings to be located where they would give proper support to the unit without strain from expansion or distortion of the chassis frame. Engineers were able to balance a nickel on edge on horizontal surfaces when the gasifier was in operation.

On the question of thermal efficiency, the Hyprex also proved itself superior, being capable of operating at a compression ratio of between 30:1 and 50:1; throttle response was, if anything, better than in conventional cars, provided the speed controls were so designed as to operate quickly, and power-to-weight ratio compared favorably with that of a highly developed modern internal combustion engined vehicle.

Yet, there were disadvantages. Although specific speeds were never mentioned, the free-piston engine operated over a considerably narrower range of speeds compared with a crankshaft type, and this meant that the idle speed could not be reduced to as low a value in the gasifier-turbine combination.

For all its apparent simplicity, the engine proved more complex to manufacture, and noise levels in operation were unacceptably high (although the five-stage turbine at the rear of the car kept exhaust noise low and obviated the need for a muffler).

Emission problems in 1956 were not, of course, as high on the list of priorities as they would be today, but in any event, the GM engineers took a leaf out of the French book—the French Navy was operating minesweepers fitted with free-piston gasifiers and turbines—and decided that the idea was best applied to marine and non-automotive uses. Under contract to the U.S. Maritime Administration, they fitted six free-piston gasifiers totaling 6,000 hp to a converted Liberty ship, the *William Patterson*, and some experimental railroad work was undertaken. The GMR Hyprex 4-4 engined XP-500 dream car remained just that—an unfulfilled dream, and the nearest the concept came to production was in the Typhoon tractor developed by... Ford.

Airflyte Appeal

Making dreams come true with a well preserved 1949 Nash 600 Super

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

The bright metal handle feels solid and reassuring in the hand, and, with a twist, it opens up a vast interior, with broad benches in striped mohair, a three-dimensional plastic fascia, and an intriguing instrument pod. Step over a broad sill, settle into the couch-like seat, thread the key through the wheel into the ignition, and, after two pumps of the accelerator and a hearty shove of the clutch onto the floor to actuate the starter, this mid-century transportation pod smoothly grinds to life. Our eyes have not deceived us: The unusual barrel-back shape of this four-door family sedan indicated we were in for a fascinating motoring experience, and this unrestored 1949 Nash 600 Super did not disappoint.

As is the story related by many classic-car owners, our feature Driveable Dream embodies the culmination of a teenage dream for its long-time caretaker, Charles Gould. This Nash—representing the company's first postwar design, arguably the boldest one in the 51-year history of the innovative automaker—recalls a similar car that got away decades ago, Charles tells us.

"When I was 14 years old, I saw a derelict Nash in a fenced-in area of a Marlborough, Massachusetts, printing company. The engine was disassembled, but I loved the 'bathtub' shape of it," he remembers. "I tracked down the owner

and asked if he would sell it. He wanted $35 for that car, and I talked him down to $25. I found a guy who would tow it for $20, so it was a total investment of $45, an amount I didn't have at that time, so I talked a friend into going halfsies with me.

"We had it towed to the garage of a friend who had a salvage yard, and he let us work on it there, at night. Being young and irresponsible, we would meet there to do the work, but we'd end up goofing off, rather than working on the car," Charles says with a smile. "I was never able to get it running; I couldn't get the parts, and didn't have the skills to do an engine rebuild back then. But I used to sit in the driver's seat, and I drove that car thousands of miles in my mind!"

While other independent firms like Studebaker and Kaiser-Frazer were first to market with new models after World War II, Nash Motors joined Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors in debuting its new lineup for 1949. The Kenosha, Wisconsin, automaker already had a jump on the low-priced competition thanks to the unit-body construction, Weather Eye fresh-air heating/ventilation system, and the clever seating and sleeping arrangements it had pioneered before the war; but the new Nashes—available in entry-level 600 and upscale Ambassador forms that year—added functionally aerodynamic styling to their list of superlatives.

This Nash 600 came with a large stash of original dealer paperwork, including the informational hanging tags that were on the dash upon delivery to its first owner.

Like Ford with its new "shoebox" design, Nash did away with traditional separate, bulging fenders for 1949 models, calling its new design "Airflyte" styling. Packard had introduced a similar clean-side, sloped-deck styling motif the

Fewer than 42,000 miles register on the odometer in the column-top Uniscope instrument pod. The Concertone AM radio still works, its vertical dial glowing softly when on. Nash's infamous folding seat bed could be topped by an accessory mattress.

previous year, but Nash's version took it still further with shrouded rear and front wheels; a one-piece, curved windshield; and rounded rear design with no hint of a separate trunk. This look caught the eye, but not the breeze, as wind tunnel testing proved the Nashes created notably less drag than did their contemporaries. Their "no fenders" look even inspired purple prose from *Mechanix Illustrated* automotive tester Tom McCahill.

Considering the price range in which they competed, Nash's cars also offered more sophisticated underpinnings, including a coil-spring/tubular-shock suspension at all four wheels, torque-tube drive connecting the transmission and differential, and the availability of L-head and overhead-valve straight-six engines. Our feature 600 Special represented this firm's bestseller for 1949, with 31,194 examples of these $1,811 four-door models leaving showrooms, and their MSRP equating to a bargain-priced $18,682 in today's dollars. The 600 also came in two-door form, and in Super Special and Custom trim levels costing up to $2,000, while the longer-wheelbase Ambassador echoed these three levels and cost between $2,170 and $2,363 (now $22,386-$24,377).

A four-main-bearing, 172.6-cu.in., L-head straight-six is under the hood of Charles' sedan, and its 7:1 compression ratio and one-barrel Carter Uniflo-Jet carburetor contribute to making 82 horsepower at 3,800 rpm and 138 lb-ft of torque at 1,600 rpm. This output seems meager by modern standards, but when the column-shifted three-speed manual transmission is actively exercised, this 2,846-pound car has no problem keeping up with 21st-century suburban traffic, we learned firsthand at its owner's urging. Sitting in the passenger seat, Charles continues to tell us the story behind the purchase of this amazingly preserved example.

> *The ride is very compliant, and it feels competent and stable at speed.*

"That first Nash left an indelible impression on my mind, and I always loved those cars. Around 1992, we found this one from Washington state advertised in *Hemmings*; its owner had recently moved from Oregon, where the car was from, and it was still registered on its first plates. He sent me photos, and I couldn't believe the original condition and the gorgeous patina it had. It came with a lot of dealer paperwork from the first owner, and even included the hang tags for the heater and lighter. We struck a deal, and I had it shipped home. When it arrived, I was thrilled. It brought back all those memories, and the condition was very much as he'd described it."

A mere 34,000 miles showed on the odometer when this car came to stay in

600-series models were powered by an 82-hp, 172.6-cu.in. L-head straight-six fed by a single-barrel Carter carburetor, while upmarket Ambassadors used an OHV straight-six engine.

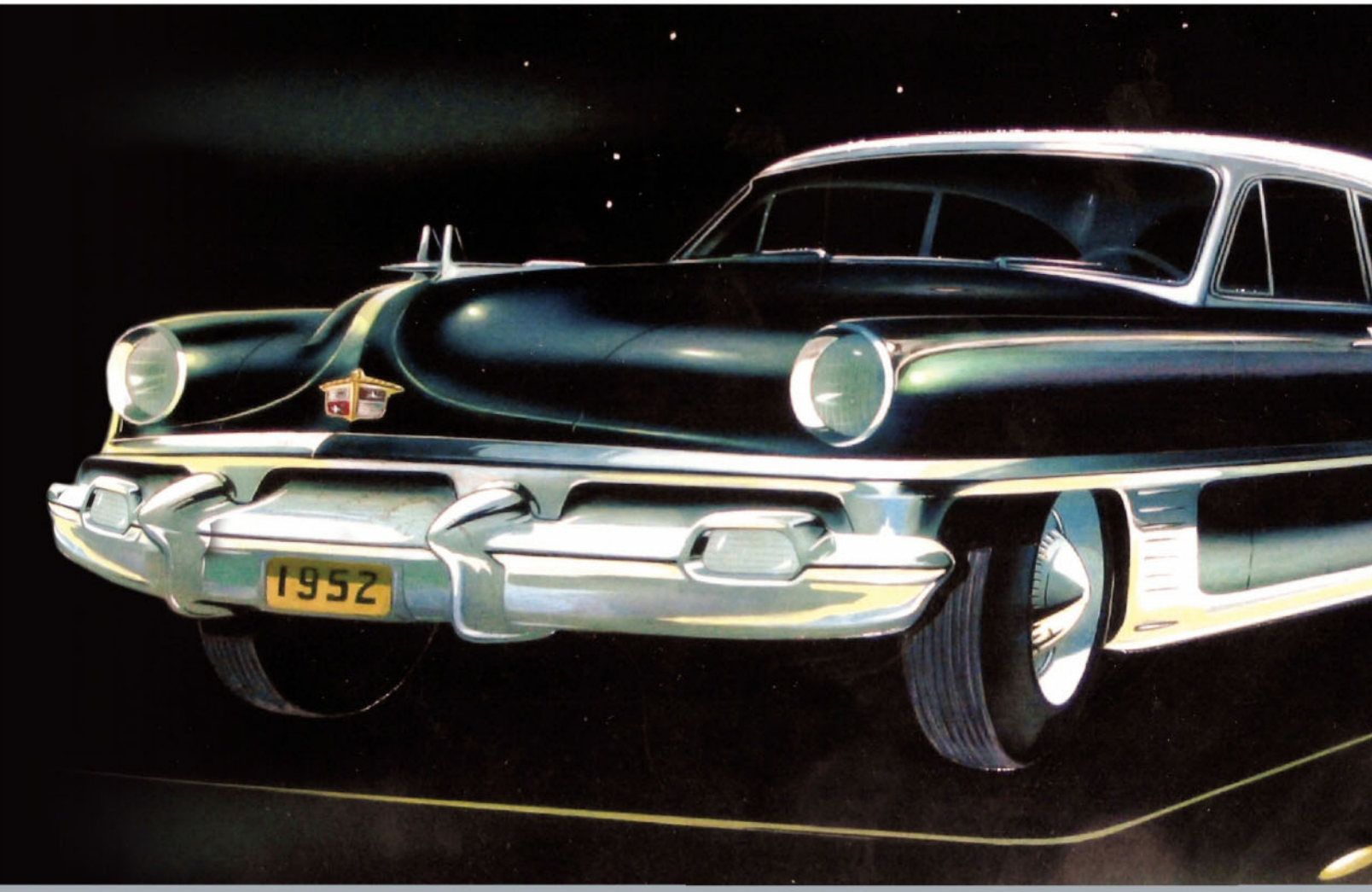
its new home in Massachusetts. Charles found this sedan in a fine state of preservation, with its factory-applied Ashland Green paint almost fully intact over never-perforated body panels. Indeed, aside from a bit of surface corrosion on the undercarriage and in spots of thin paint on the hood and front fenders, no rust could be found on the then 43-year-old Nash. Its interior fabrics were not moth-eaten nor notably stained, and the optional AM "Concertone" radio, with its accessory foot-operated seek button and desirable rear speaker was soon fixed and working. Charles loved once again sitting behind that new-for-1949 "Uniscope" steering column-mounted instrument cluster, which period advertising claimed offered "Cockpit Control" by combining the speedometer and oil pressure, fuel level, and engine temperature gauges into an easily read single dial.

Although it had been used fairly regularly, the 600 Special did require repairs to the carburetor and four-wheel drum brakes to make it run and stop reliably. "I would drive it to work, do errands in it, and my wife, Nancy, and I would use it to visit friends and take some weekend road trips," Charles explains. "When I took it to car shows, it would really draw a crowd. Because these Nashes were such plain-Jane cars in their day, nobody collected or preserved them. Outside of Nash Car Club of America events, you really don't see them anymore."

Charles and Nancy's daughters arrived shortly after this Nash, and their father tells us how this car contributed to great family memories when the girls were old enough to enjoy it. "When they were seven and five, I distinctly remember putting them in their PJs and taking them to the drive-in in Mendon, Massachusetts, because I wanted them to experience what I think is a rite of passage. We would park the car far back on the hump, so we were really aimed up at the screen, and I'd fold the seats down to form a bed. The four of us would cozy up inside with a lap-full of popcorn. The kids would inevitably fall asleep before the end of the film, but it was wonderful."

Although the Goulds haven't added a ton of miles to the 600 Super in the past quarter-century—it's part of a large automotive collection primarily populated with European microcars, and nearly all are regularly exercised—the Nash is still a favorite for Charles and Nancy to drive. "This car is oddball and bizarre, and that's right up my alley; when people tell me my cars are weird, strange, and ugly, I'm flattered," he laughs.

"I love the rounded bathtub shape and the cheeky jowls of the skirted fenders, even though they give the car a turning radius of four city blocks. I also love the inboard taillamps, the Uniscope instruments, and the station-seeking radio. The shifter has such a positive feel, a very nice pivot on the ball that was shared by Nash and American Motors cars, and the performance is impressive for the period, displacement, and horsepower. The ride is very compliant, and it feels competent and stable at speed. It's kind of delightful to drive," Charles muses. "It really is a time capsule, so well-preserved and not modified, not even from repairs it's received along the way. I've gotten offers to buy it, but we really like this one… I have no intentions of parting with it."



FoMoCo Concept Cars

Fabulous '50s-era show cars from Ford, Lincoln, and Mercury

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

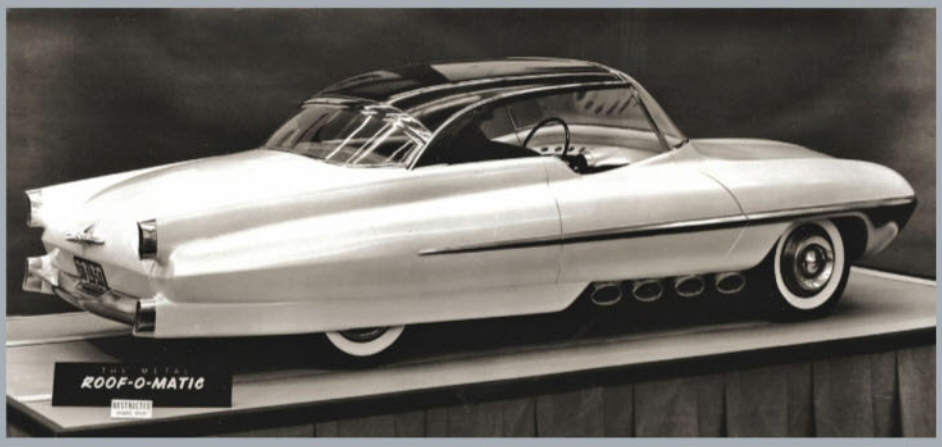
Enthusiasts often refer to General Motors as the design leader of the 1950s because of the many fantastic production cars it introduced during that decade. GM also won acclaim by unveiling a veritable flood of fantastic dream cars covering each division and a wide array of themes. Remember the Waldorf Nomad, Buick LeSabre and Wildcat, Pontiac Club de Mer, and so many others? GM also sponsored the fabulous Motorama series that brought show cars to various cities across America. GM was a styling dynamo, no doubt about it. But sometimes we forget that other companies were producing dream cars, too.

Ford, for one, certainly wasn't sitting on its hands during the 1950s. As a matter of fact, the company unveiled a surprising number of concepts and show cars, and many of them were among the most futuristic and exciting cars of that exceptional era. Like GM, these fantastic cars represented each division and a variety of design themes. What we'd like to show you now are some of the greatest concept designs from Ford, Lincoln, and Mercury from the fabulous Fifties.

Back in 1950, Ford's design efforts were handled by in-house Ford Styling designers assisted by a team of "outside" designers under the direction of the affable George Walker, a talented independent designer. Walker had previously held a styling contract with Nash-Kelvinator in the mid-1930s to around 1946 and served now as a styling consultant to Ford Motor Company. Walker's team included Joe Oros, who oversaw Ford cars and trucks, and Elwood Engel, who took care of the Lincoln-Mercury side of the house. Notable designers on the in-house Ford Styling staff included chief stylist Frank Hershey and his assistant Bob Maguire.

Richard Arbib's concept sketch of a big Mercury for 1952 apparently never got beyond the drawing stage, though it's an attractive car.

The Ford X-100 was loaded with far-out features. In addition to the power retractable top section that closed automatically when it began to rain, the X-100 boasted built-in hydraulic jacks to make changing tires easier, heated seats front and rear, memory power seats, power-opening hood and trunk lid, a center console with both telephone and Dictaphone, thermostatically controlled fans to cool the front brakes, hot and cold windshield washer sprays—even an electric shaver!



The Ford Syrtis was one of a series of experimental designs that Ford built only scale models of. Its main boast was a hard roof that disappeared completely into the trunk, à la the later Ford Retractable. Syrtis is an important concept because it proved that such a thing was possible to do without spoiling the good looks of the car.

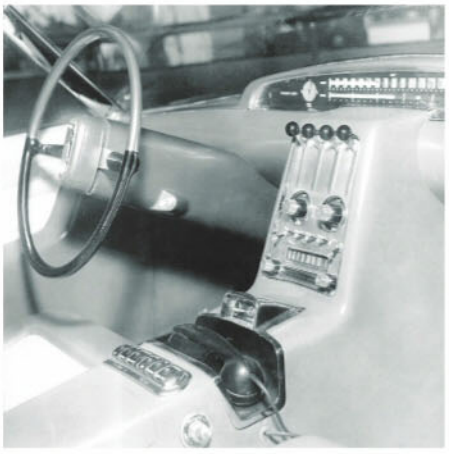
Despite being an outsider, Walker was given a fairly free hand by Ford management and was supposed to make recommendations on all Ford products. He decided the best way to show off Ford's design capabilities (while also market-testing new ideas) was to produce a series of dream cars, much like GM would do.

The first major Ford concept car of the 1950s was also the one that had the oddest history—the "X-100." The car itself was a Walker project. Work on it reportedly began in 1949 as a Ford idea car, but as it progressed into 1950, there was some discussion about badging it as the "Continental 195X." Apparently, it wore Continental badges when it made its first appearance at an auto show in 1952 but was soon rebadged as the Ford X-100, and that's how it appeared in subsequent showings. An excitingly futuristic design, it featured a front bumper with large pod-like projections and wide air intakes, a sloping hood line, and rounded, almost tubular fender shapes front and rear. Tail lamps, adapted from a design by Gil Spear, were the rounded "jet exhaust" type that later became one of Ford's most recognizable styling trademarks. The roof line was especially attractive, with a retractable glass front panel and elegant "basket handle" rear section with wide formal quarters. The styling was so advanced, and so "right," that Ford reintroduced the X-100 in 1957, with almost no changes, as a Lincoln dream car.

Independent designer Richard Arbib, whose mind seemed to dwell in the future, penned an interesting proposal for a 1952 Mercury. It featured recessed headlamps and long, low bodylines that remind some of a Hudson Hornet, complete with enclosed rear wheels. But apparently Arbib's idea never got beyond this one drawing.

Ford Muroc was one of the best-looking Ford concepts of the 1950s. Low-slung and sporty, it still looks great some 60-plus years after it was created. One interesting touch—a speedometer that spanned the bottom of the windshield!

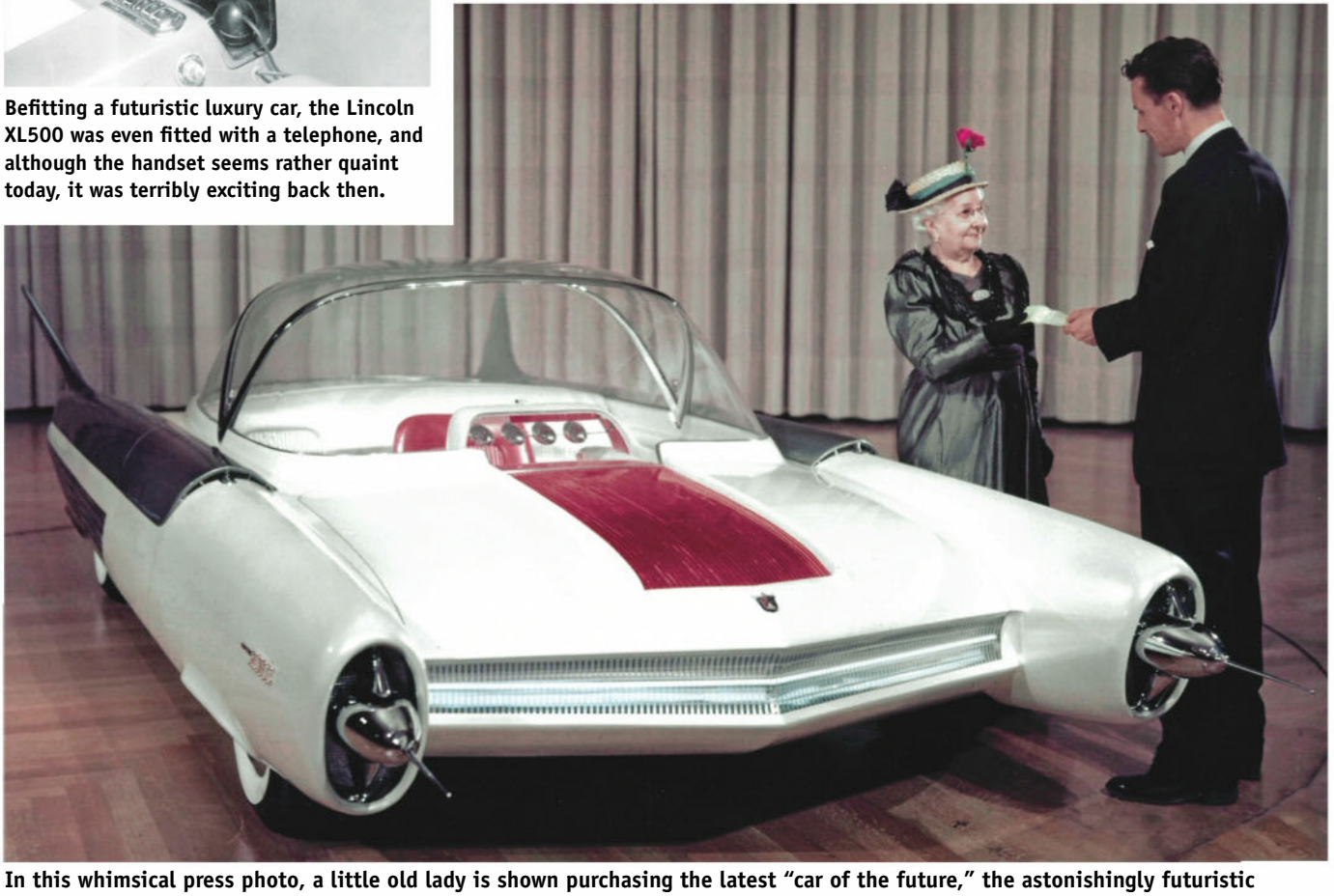
It's surprising how similar the XL500's front end is to the 1953 Studebaker's, but it's most likely just coincidental; the "European-look" was on everyone's mind just then. Note its raised rear fenders and forward-slanting B-pillar.



Befitting a futuristic luxury car, the Lincoln XL500 was even fitted with a telephone, and although the handset seems rather quaint today, it was terribly exciting back then.

The 1953 Ford Syrtis concept, on the other hand, progressed as far as the scale-model stage, which gives us a clearer idea of what the designers were trying to achieve. It's a nice design with a short, fast front, rocket-tip door shapes with a recessed top line incorporating the start of a long fin running from the back of the door clear to the taillamps. Four exhaust tubes reside under each door, looking very "Buck Rogersish," and they must have attracted a great deal of yearning from teenagers aching to drive such a fast-looking car. Syrtis was one of the more forward-thinking and predictive of Ford's concepts, because it boasted a completely retractable hardtop roof, which would go into production on the 1957 models. In some photos, the Syrtis is even shown with a pop-up windshield for rear-seat passengers, making it a sort of modern "dual-cowl phaeton." We wonder if Ford still has this model in storage somewhere.

The Ford Muroc is another interesting concept, because although it seemed



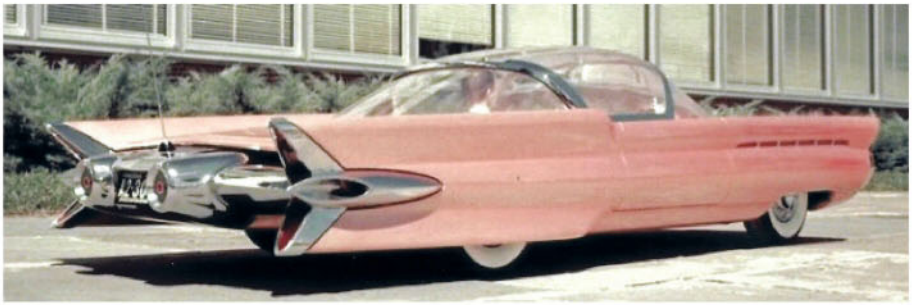
In this whimsical press photo, a little old lady is shown purchasing the latest "car of the future," the astonishingly futuristic Ford FX-Atmos coupe. Paging George Jetson!

La Tosca was a scale model of a Ford concept car. Designed by Alex Tremulis and built on a motorized chassis, it could be run through driving maneuvers and even featured a "driver" at the wheel.

very strange when it debuted, its lines actually look very much at home in 2017. Reportedly designed in 1950, it graced the cover of the November 1953 issue of *Cars* magazine. A stylish two-seater with a low-set grille and unique grille/bumper combination that included twin ovals carrying the headlamps, the Muroc's extremely low bodylines were made possible by including highly sculptured fenders that arched over each wheel.

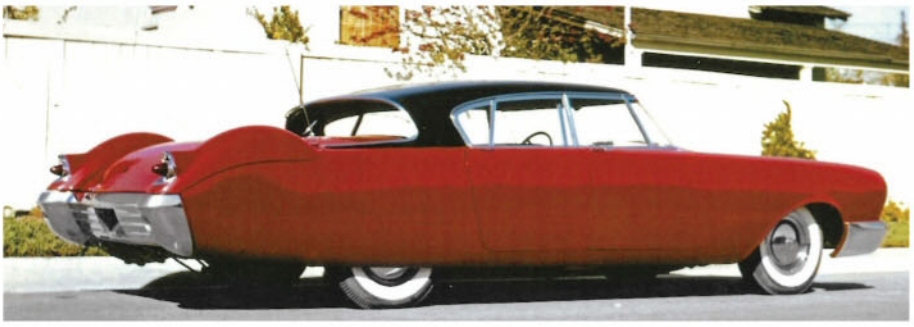
By 1953, Ford had a newly-constructed Advanced Styling Studio under Gil Spears' direction, and it was churning out ideas at a rapid clip. Most of them were drawings and sketches that were considered, rejected or filed as needed, while a small number became the basis of later concept cars.

Like the Muroc, the 1953 Lincoln XL500 concept also used raised fender sections, albeit only over the rear wheels. Up front was a smoothly styled nose with hooded headlamps, twin Dagmar bumper bullets, and a clean "no-grille" look with a drop-down center section similar to the concurrent Studebakers. Front wheels were semi-enclosed à la 1955 Nash, while the rear wheels were fully enclosed. The sloping roofline and forward-tilting B-pillar were predictive of the 1955 Crown



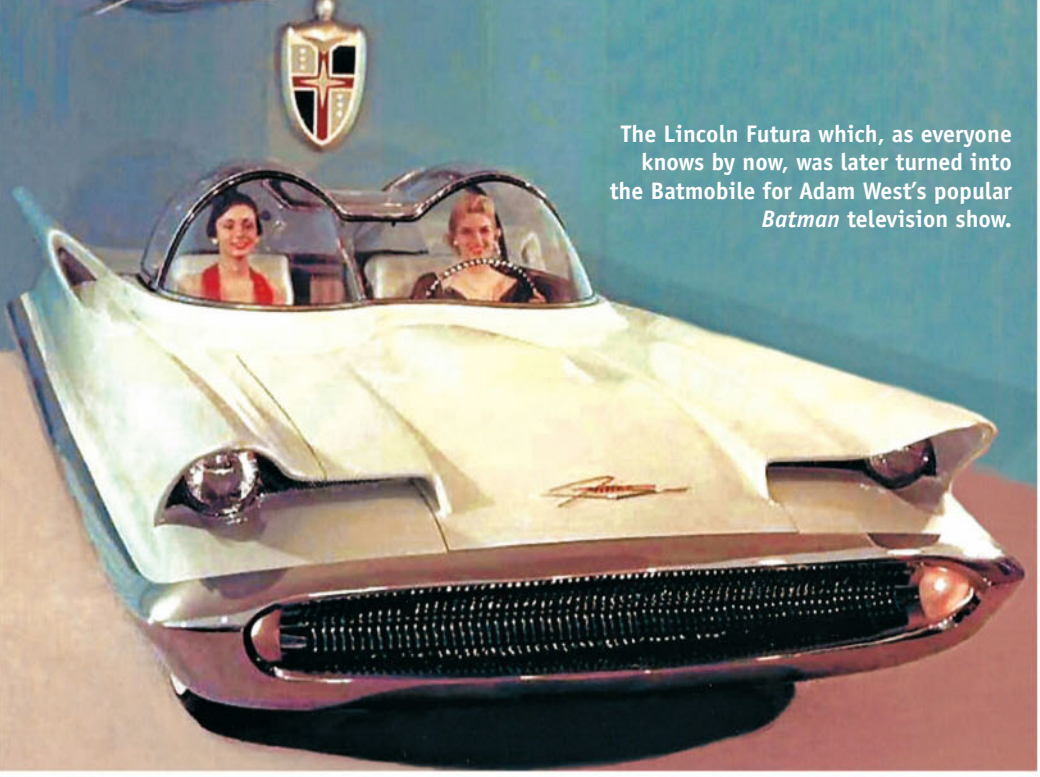
Another view of the La Tosca model. The cockpit-type glass canopy slid back for open-air motoring. Work on the La Tosca began in 1954, though the concept is variably designated a 1954 or 1955 design.

Looking very "European" and ready for production is the 1955 Mercury D-528 concept, also known as the Beldone or D-528 Beldone.



Side view of the Mercury D-528 shows off the unusual rear "fins," though "humps" might be a better descriptor. The reverse angle C-pillar and enclosed rear wheels give this car a distinct Nash flavor.

Interior view of the Mercury D-528 for 1955 shows a modern wrap-around instrument panel, power window switches, and two-spoke steering wheel.



The Lincoln Futura which, as everyone knows by now, was later turned into the Batmobile for Adam West's popular *Batman* television show.

Victoria Skyliner, while the color-coordinated seat upholstery was a nice touch that brought the exterior and interior designs together. The XL500's interior included a factory-installed telephone and aircraft-styled HVAC controls in a center console that blended into the instrument panel—quite forward-looking for the time. All in all, a lovely design.

Things got even more futuristic in 1954 when Ford unveiled the FX-Atmos concept. Looking like it came straight out of some far-out science-fiction movie, the FX-Atmos was a low-riding coupe that the Jetsons would have felt right at home in. Tunnel-like fender shapes flowed from front to back, terminating in canted fins, giving it the look of a jet plane or futuristic rocket car. Instead of mundane headlamps, the FX Atmos boasted a full-width light bar where the grille would ordinarily fit. And nacelles, where the headlamps ordinarily would be, held bumper bullets with twin antenna—or spears—jutting from them. A glass or plastic canopy completed the unusual looks. This surely was one of the most exciting Ford concepts of all time!

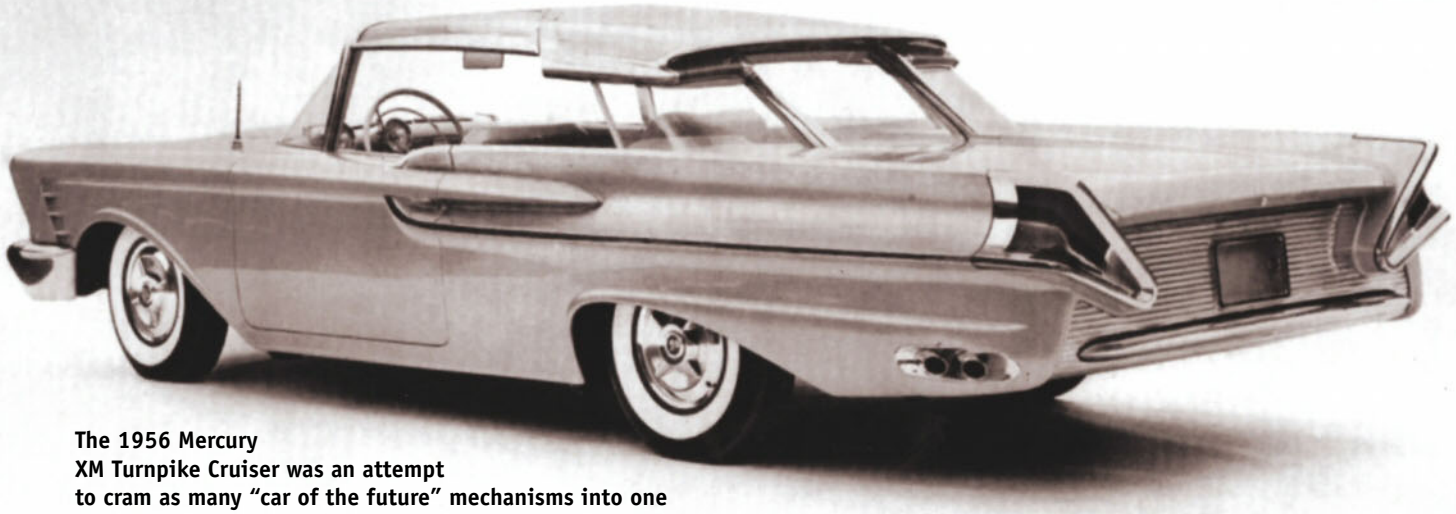
The La Tosca concept car for 1955—apparently named after the opera—reportedly was conceived by Alex Tremulis, and produced as a 3/8th scale model. Featuring rear fenders with "shoulders" and large canted tailfins and large hooded fenders up front, this model's strangest feature, perhaps, was that it actually ran. Built on an electrified chassis that was powered by a car battery, the little car was remote-controlled. Reportedly Tremulis pestered other designers and executives with his antics "driving" the car around the studio. As seen in the photo, the La Tosca even included a scale model "driver" at the wheel.

Another 1955 concept car, this one from Mercury, was the D-528 (aka D-528 Beldone). Created by the in-house design staff, the D-528 was built to test advanced concepts in seating, lighting, and frame design. The rear fender bulges were hinged units, one concealing a spare tire, while the gas tank rested under the other. This gave the car adequate luggage capacity despite the large trunk-mounted air-conditioning system. Other design features include a pillarless windshield and reverse-sloping retractable rear window. The Beldone name was used by Paramount Pictures for the car's appearance in the 1964 Jerry Lewis movie *The Patsy* and wasn't an official Ford designation.

Lincoln also had a 1955 concept car, and it ended up being one of the best-known Ford concepts ever. Everyone remembers the Lincoln Futura, but mostly because it was transformed into the Batmobile by customizer George Barris for the 1960s television show.

Also famous was the 1956 Ford Mystere concept. The Mystere was a full-size concept car, beautifully finished, that exerted a lot of influence on Ford products in the mid-1950s to about 1962. The design was nearly flawless, the execution perfect. Let's begin with the front, where a low hood swept down in a slope between two protruding pod-like fenders containing hooded headlamps. Beneath this was a low, wide fluted grille sitting atop a low bumper with protruding slots containing fluted inserts to match the grille. The side treatment flowed smoothly from the front fender to mid-door where a V-shaped slash motif came off the cowl, dipped down

One of the most exciting cars to come out of the 1950s was the 1956 Ford Mystere show car. With its extraordinary lowness and bold paint and trim treatment, the Mystere was impossible to ignore. Produced without an engine, space was created under the deck for a rear-mounted power plant.



The 1956 Mercury XM Turnpike Cruiser was an attempt to cram as many "car of the future" mechanisms into one car as possible, so it had a rear window that rolled down electrically, "butterfly" roof panels that rose up to permit easier entry and exit, a compound windshield that curved up into the roof as well as around the corners, delayed-action headlamps that stayed on for 30 seconds after being shut off, dual exhaust pipes at each rear corner, and much more.

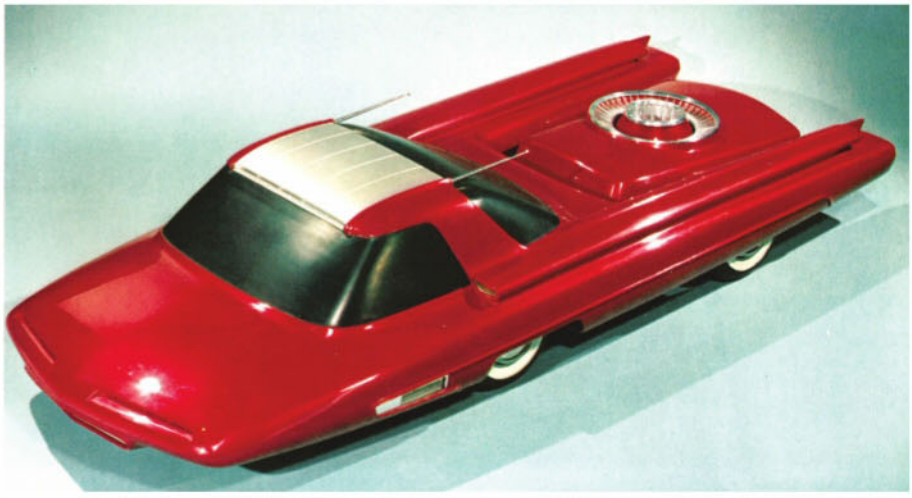
Does this 1957 concept car seem familiar? It should, because it's the 1952 Ford X-100 with a few minor revisions and a new name—Lincoln Typhoon II. Shown during the 1957 model year, it was just as exciting as when it first appeared five year earlier.

to mid-door and then bounced back up to blend into large canted tailfins. Front wheels were semi-enclosed, rear wheels almost fully enclosed. The rear section of the car was long because a proposed turbine engine was to be situated there; luggage space was actually up front under the hood. At the rear was a low-sloping deck flanked by the tall fins along with twin "jet exhaust" taillamp/exhaust pods. The four-passenger cockpit was topped by a glass canopy with a roof-mounted air intake. Compared to the typical tall, narrow 1956 car, the Ford Mystere was an absolute revelation. The fact that its styling was so predictive makes it even more praise-worthy.

Mercury displayed a new concept car for 1957 called the XM Turnpike Cruiser—a name that would be used on production cars minus the "XM" prefix. And like the later production car, the concept Turnpike Cruiser was loaded with lots of gimmicky stuff, both mechanical and style-wise. The overall styling theme influenced the look of the 1958 production cars, but the XM boasted boldly canted taillamps surrounded by heavy chrome castings. Severely scalloped body sides terminated in the open end of each "V."

Looking like it might have been influenced a bit by the Mystere was the 1957 Lincoln Typhoon II show car, which also looked vaguely familiar. That's not surprising, since it was essentially the Ford X-100 concept from 1952 with a few very minor updates.

Then there was the ultra-futuristic 1958 Ford Nucleon concept, an attempt to envision what a nuclear-powered automobile might look like. Rather than build a full-size clay model, Ford stylists, as they had with the Syrtis, La Tosca and other concepts, produced the Nucleon as a scale model, and distributed photos of it to the press. Ultra-low, with a bumperless front end and a frameless, wraparound windshield, the Nucleon was a highly speculative design that left unanswered exactly how scientists would fit a nuclear reactor and shielding into an automobile—we wonder what would have happened in a car crash—along with seemingly no way to actually enter the vehicle. There's no provision for doors, you see. That said, Ford apparently claimed a driving range of 5,000 miles between fill-ups of nuclear fuel—and can you imagine how frightening refueling might have been? Even so, it's still a very interesting design and entirely fitting for the optimistic 1950s, when the future seemed just around the corner.



Looking like Robbie the Robot should be its driver, the 1958 Ford Nucleon was out of this world. Planned to be powered by a nuclear reactor, it was said to go 5,000 miles on a tank of fuel."

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MATCHBOX

England's premiere diecast models got kids worldwide enthusiastic about American cars

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

For millions of kids around the world, over the course of decades, a Matchbox model was their first car, packed with attention to detail that often lacked on other models.

However, the start for one of the world's most storied diecast names was tentative. Unrelated founders Leslie Smith and Rodney Smith began the Lesney Products foundry in England in 1947. "Lesney" was a self-referential moniker that simply blended their first names, as they weren't yet sure what they'd be making. Soon, Rodney brought pal Jack Odell into the fold. An engineer by trade, Odell was a toolmaker with no place to set up. Soon, the company's meager ability to fill orders outstripped its ability to attract new ones. To survive, Lesney began marketing toys under its name in the late 1940s and early '50s. The last of these early Lesney models was a covered wagon, of the sort that was instrumental in the westward expansion in America a century prior.

The Matchbox name dates to 1953, following the success of its model of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Coach. Early models slotted in at roughly 1:76 scale (or OO scale, for scale train enthusiasts), sized to fit in a... well, you know. However, throughout the '50s, Matchbox cars gradually grew; its Land Rover and Daimler ambulance castings were issued in multiple sizes, each a little bigger than the last, in order to enhance play value. They're widely considered to be 1/64 scale (or S scale), but in truth, Matchbox cars have long been made to fit the packaging.

Early Matchbox models were primarily commercial and construction vehicles, which were particularly prevalent in post-WWII Britain as the nation rebuilt from the ravages of war. In 1954, Matchbox issued its first passenger car: an MG TD, number 19 in the series. Matchbox's international scope meant that the company produced models of cars from a variety of world markets, including America. The first American car arrived in 1957—a 1956 Ford station wagon, number 31.

Where other companies offered crude interpretations of popular cars, with rough edges on the tooling and minimal prep work before paint, Matchbox offered crisp tooling, smooth-opening parts, and a fidelity to detail that was second to none. Matchbox cars presented a new level of detail: interiors, chassis, and (in the early 1960s) window glass. (Compared to the crude charm of a three-inch Tootsietoy—with a stamped body, crimped axle stanchions, and little else—Matchbox models were engineering marvels.) These were not mere toys, these were true models that had play value as a side benefit.

Matchbox brought a little bit of the automotive world into everyone's homes. Not every European kid had seen a real live late 1950s Ford station wagon, or '59 Impala, but plenty knew about them from Matchbox's small-scale efforts. For 49 cents apiece, children could own a fleet.

Matchbox packed its models with play value and whimsy: Witness the late 1960s Mercury Commuter station wagon with two dogs sticking their heads out the back, or the Studebaker Wagonaire, complete with hunting figures.

By the late 1960s, Matchbox was producing five-million models per week, three quarters of which were sold overseas. Soon, the Matchbox name was synonymous with quality, detail, imagination, and play value. The brand became so massive, so pervasive, that


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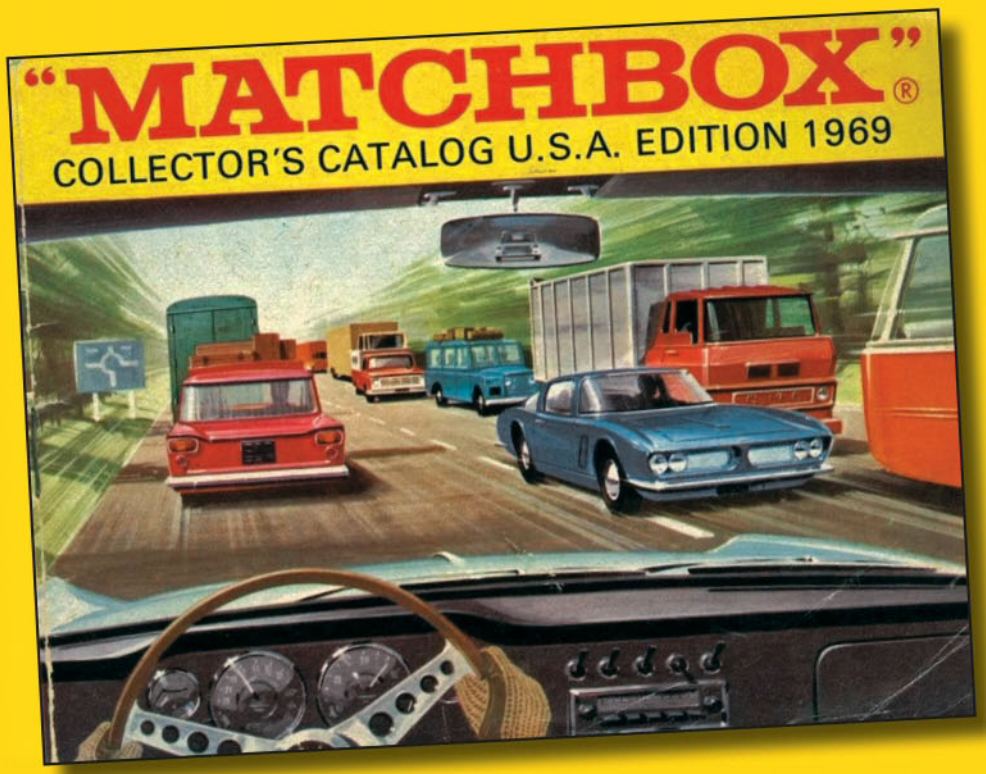


it was in danger of becoming a genericized trademark, like Kodak, Xerox, and Kleenex. And it was an ambassador for American cars to millions of kids worldwide.

As the models' popularity increased, so did the scope of the Matchbox range, until, by the late 1950s, it had expanded to 75 models—a number with great history and tradition in the Matchbox realm. Operational features (opening doors, hoods, and trunks, mostly) were commonplace by the early to mid '60s. Around the same time, the wheels changed from bare grayish-silver metal to black plastic. More than a million a week were sold. And they inspired competition: Impy and Husky are but two of the competitive brands launched in the '60s to compete with the might of Matchbox. Even British diecast-car giant Dinky launched a Mini Dinky line to compete.

Matchbox's American subject matter mixed the obvious and the obscure: a line of late '50s full-size Ford station wagons, '58 Cadillac, and a '59 Chevrolet were all part of the lineup in the early '60s; later models included a 1960 Pontiac Bonneville convertible, Ford "Squarebird" Thunderbird, '64 Pontiac Grand Prix, Cadillac ambulance, a variety of Jeeps (including a Gladiator pickup), a Mustang fastback, Lincoln Continental, the aforementioned Wagonaire, Chevrolet Impala taxi, '65 Ford Galaxie police/fire car, Mercury Cougar, Ford pickups, Dodge tow truck, and much more.

So, what happened? Hot Wheels. Mattel's fast-rolling, Spectraflame-painted fleet captured the imagination of America's youth (and their parents' wallets) in the fall of 1967, and Lesney shifted into defensive mode. Superfast wheels were added to Matchbox models by 1969, a direct reaction to Hot Wheels' piano-wire axles and delrin bushings. Fantasy models, never seen in the world of Matchbox previously, crept in with wild designs like the Toe Joe tow truck, Stretcha Fetcha ambulance, Blue Shark racer, and more. Even so, Matchbox continued to innovate. Witness the Rolamatics subseries of the '70s, where a turn of the wheel could turn the light on the roof of a police car, or spin the cooling fans of a futuristic racer—no batteries required, only kid power.

American subject matter continued to flow in the Superfast era. Witness: the mid-'70s Corvette Stingray; Pontiac Fire-

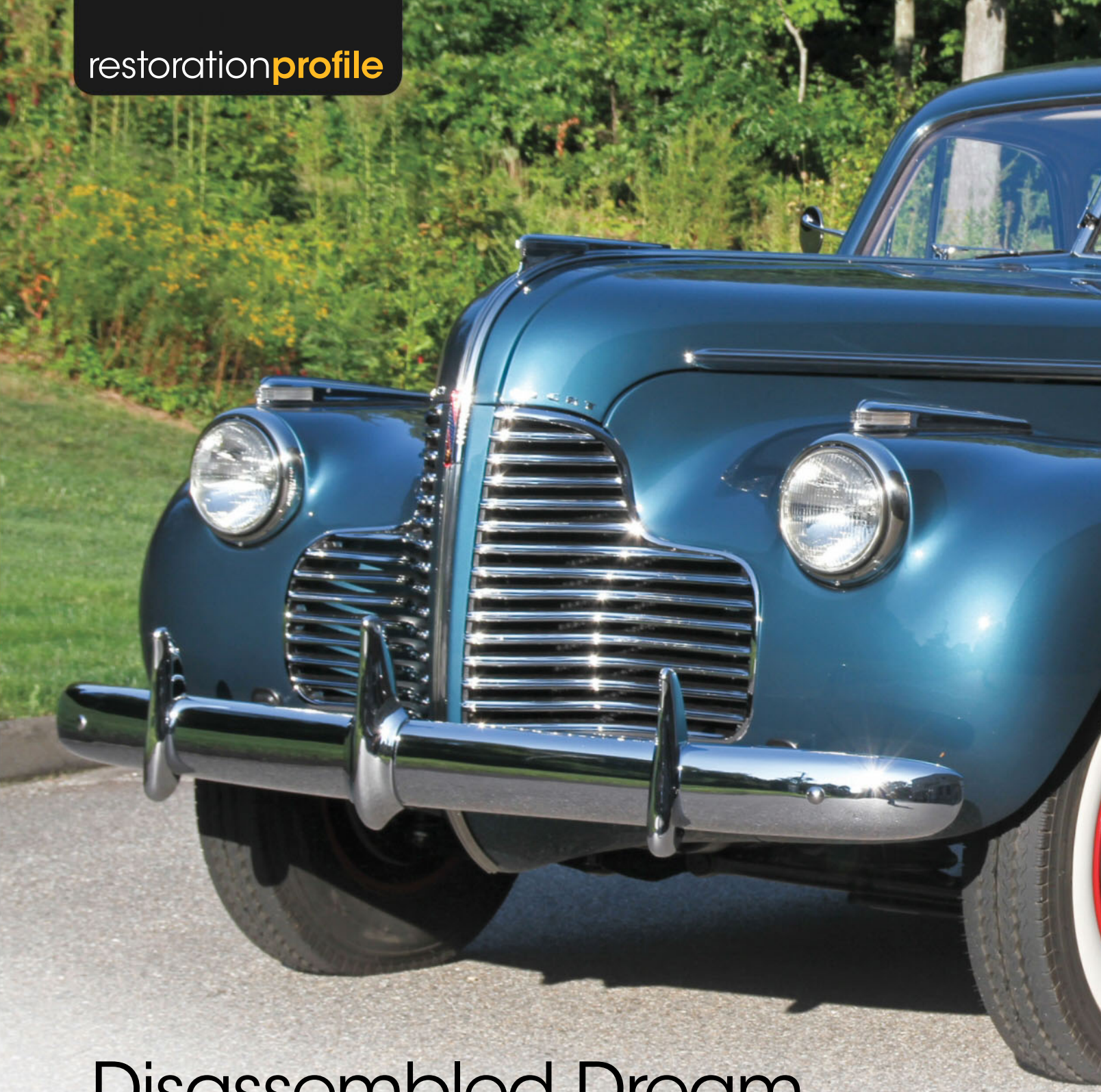
bird Formula from the same era, which was later retooled into a '79 Trans Am; Lincoln Continental Mk V; mid-'70s Plymouth Fury police car; a Chevrolet van. Even a couple of classics arrived: A 1957 Thunderbird, Model A Ford, and '62 Corvette graced the line in the early '80s. But sales continued to slide, and by 1982, Lesney was bankrupt, its assets sold to the Universal Toy Company of Hong Kong.

To its credit, Universal took a back-to-basics approach. Some of the wilder flights of fancy departed the line, and a range of 1/64-ish cars continued on the world's store pegs for another dozen years. Examples include the Dodge Daytona Turbo Z and Dodge Caravan minivan, IROC Camaro, C4 Corvette (convertible and targa top), Cadillac Allante, Ford LTD police car, Mercury Sable station wagon, and GMC tow truck. Opening features started to disappear, a consequence of cost-cutting.

By 1993, U.S.-based Tyco (famed for its slot and radio-controlled cars) took Matchbox from Universal, and introduced a flood of vintage American cars to the line: 1969 Camaro coupe and convertible, '56 Ford pickup, early Mustangs, and a '70 GTO Judge. In 1996, toy giant (and Matchbox rival Hot Wheels' parent company) Mattel bought Tyco—mostly for its radio-controlled car expertise, it must be said. Matchbox was simply part of the deal. And for more than 20 years, Matchbox and Hot Wheels have existed side by side.

American ownership has not hurt the appearance of U.S.-based models in the Matchbox lineup: As they were new cars, vehicles like the PT Cruiser, Dodge Viper Coupe, Ford and Chevy pickups, and an increasingly truck-and-SUV-centric lineup full of Suburbans, Jeep Grand Cherokees, Ford Econoline vans, Cadillac Escalades, and the like, arrived on pegs. Yet history was not ignored. New tools for vintage-American iron, like a pair of mid-'50s Cadillacs, a '57 Lincoln convertible, a variety of early Corvettes, a Hemi 'Cuda, Dodge A100 pickup, a Hudson Hornet police car, '69 Cadillac Sedan De Ville, and much more, were introduced. Vehicles themed to resemble classic Lesney-era tools turned up, as well. The Willys pickup recalled the Jeep Gladiator, a Cadillac ambulance updated the '64 S&S Cadillac ambulance from the pre-Superfast era, and the new second-generation Pontiac Firebird Formula had more than a whiff of the 1975-era tooling about it.

To celebrate Matchbox's 65th Anniversary in 2018, no fewer than 46 new castings are coming across both the basic range and a couple of new premium lines that will recall the brand's '60s heyday. Among them, as expected, a group of American classics for the basic $1 line: a 1933 Plymouth sedan (possibly as a police car); a 1948 Diamond T pickup; the GMC Scenicruiser bus, famously done by Matchbox in the '60s; a '64 Ford Fairlane wagon; and a Jeep Wagoneer of yet-to-be-determined vintage. There will also be a premium series with opening parts and good old-fashioned play value, just like Matchboxes of old. They'll cost more than a standard Matchbox, but watch for a '64 Pontiac Grand Prix, Willys Jeep station wagon, '63 Chevrolet camper, Tri-Five Chevy gasser, '71 Ford Torino funny car, and a mid-'80s Buick Riviera convertible. By dipping into automotive history, it seems that the future of the storied Matchbox brand has been secured.



Disassembled Dream

The three-year effort to resurrect a 1940 Buick Special business coupe

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF HARVEY MORAN

When Harvey Moran, the owner of this 1940 Buick, decided to get back into cars, he was actually looking for a 1950 Ford F-1 pickup. "It was something I had expressed to a friend of mine, when I was visiting him in Cocoa, Florida," Harvey recalls. "During the conversation, he told me that his next-door neighbor owned an old Buick. 'Some sort of coupe; I don't know exactly what it is,' is what he said, so we walked over and looked at it. I liked the body style of the car and knew there were not a lot of them around. That's how it all started."

It may sound like a potential collector-car ownership solution had fallen into Harvey's lap; however, the

Clinton, Connecticut, resident went on to explain that the Buick was completely disassembled, occupying a vast amount of garage space at the time of the visit in 2011. As it happened, the two-door Special was one of 12,372 business coupes Buick had built for the 1940 season, each powered by the division's venerable 107-hp, 248-cu.in. straight-eight engine. The one Harvey was examining was built without a heater or defroster, strongly suggesting that it had been sold new in a warm southern climate. Although Harvey had an interest in the car, a considerable price gap between the two men hindered any further negotiations; however, that was soon to change.

"I was visiting my buddy again in January 2013 and I went back to look at the Buick," Harvey told us. "It was still sitting in the garage in pieces, and it looked as if nothing had really been done to it. He confessed that his wife was bugging him to get the car out; it had been occupying space for 10 years. He reduced his asking price quite a bit, so I agreed."

Finalizing the sale was contingent upon one thing: putting the Buick back together—albeit temporarily—which would enable Harvey to trailer the business coupe back to Connecticut. By April, that task had been completed. According to Harvey, as soon as the Buick was safely stowed in his shop, the restoration commenced.

After its purchase and temporary reassembly, the Buick business coupe arrives in Connecticut in April 2013. Some work had been started by the previous owner, including minor left front-fender repairs; however, the work ahead would prove to be minimal.

The Buick's second disassembly began immediately upon its arrival. After the body had been placed on a homemade wooden dolly, all attention was focused on the 121-inch wheelbase chassis, which was systematically stripped to a bare frame.

Pictured here is the Buick's frame after being stripped of equipment and sandblasted. With no damage to contend with, it was sealed in primer and finally painted in chassis black paint. All of the work was performed at the owner's shop.

Part of Buick's "Full Float" ride is on display in the image during the chassis' reassembly, which featured, in part, coil springs and lever-action shocks. The rebuilt differential and torque tube assembly were also installed.

The Buick's original 248-cu.in. straight-eight engine has been bolted to the chassis at this stage; rebuilt and repainted a proper shade of gray. A keen eye will also note that the fully synchronized three-speed manual transmission has been installed.

Here is one example of the fabrication work required to correct corrosion uncovered while the body was stripped of paint. This area is located behind the passenger door. The patch panel was created from 18-gauge steel and MIG welded into place.

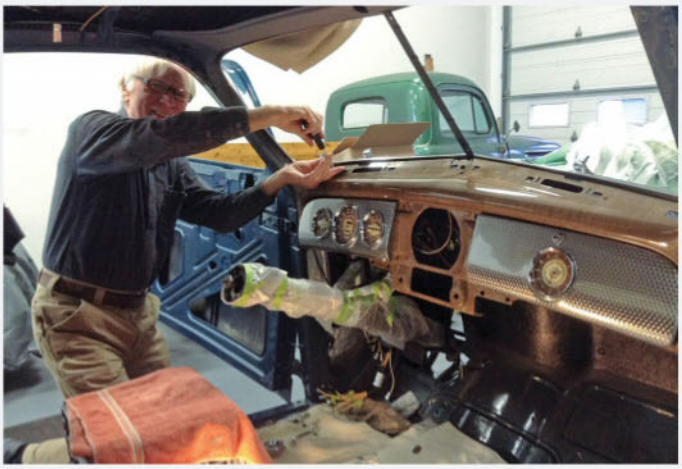
After the patch panels had been welded into place and the joints ground smooth, a skim coat of Evercoat Rage body filler was applied. Using three different grades of paper, the area was then sanded, providing a smooth surface for the next stage.

The Buick's main body shell once all the body prep had been completed. You'll note that while the outer surface is exhibiting two coats of epoxy primer, the firewall—and portions of the interior—have been finished in Bandelier Blue paint.

Prior to the rest of the body being painted, it and the other removed panels were test-fit both to the chassis and each other. Final adjustments were easier to plan and/or accomplish at this stage without risk of marring new paint, save for the firewall.

The business coupe has just been delivered after receiving the rest of the paint process. A basecoat/clearcoat system was used, consisting of three coats of each. After curing, it was wet sanded and buffed, followed by final polishing.

Several smaller projects were underway while the chassis and body were being restored. This included the Buick's instrument panel. Note that at this point new woodgraining had been done, along with the engine-turned applique and rebuilt gauges.



A significant portion of the Buick's final reassembly needed to be completed; however, one of the first critical steps was the installation of the instrument panel as a nearly completed sub-assembly. Note the steering column is carefully wrapped.

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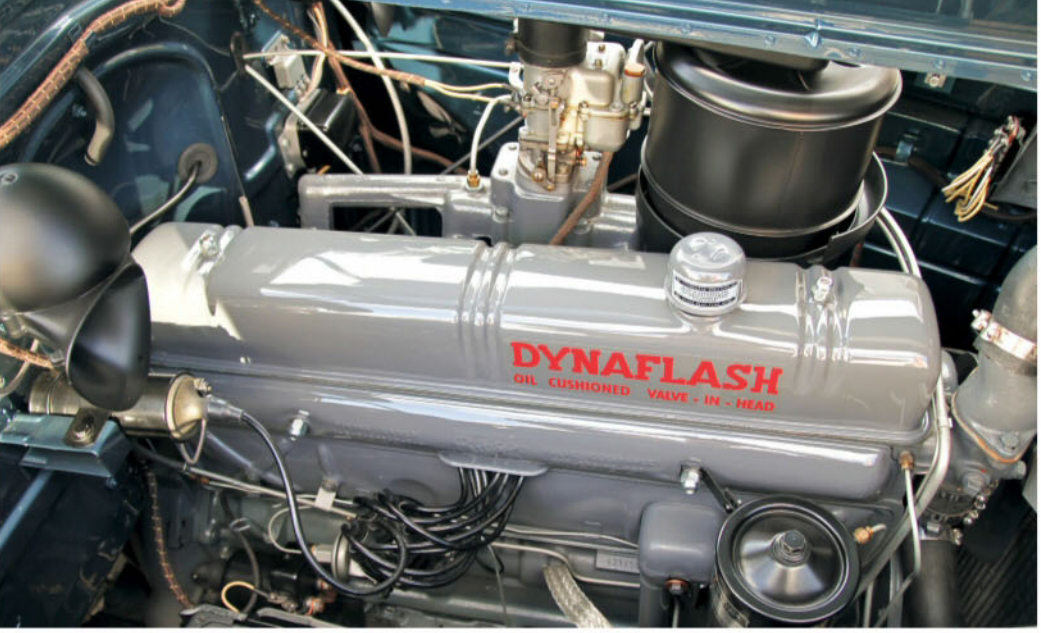
WIN $100,000 OR A NEW CORVETTE STINGRAY PLUS $40,000. Is Your Heart Set on a Vette? $100 per ticket; drawing February 14, 2018; only 2,018 tickets to be sold. Early Bird Drawings: Nov 14 - $1,000; Dec 14 - $750; Jan 15 - $500; $6,000 in additional cash prizes. Raffle sponsored by The Bellevue Hospital Foundation, Bellevue, Ohio; a 501c(3) entity. Will benefit Health & Wellness Programs at the hospital. For additional information call: 800-850-5528. Need not be present to win. See website for rules & details. Buy a ticket now at **www.VetteRaffle.com**



Harvey told us: "As I began the process, I not only took a lot of reference photos—to help with reassembly later—I also compiled a list of parts I was going to need to find. The Buick was nearly complete; in retrospect, all I needed to locate were the seat skirts and handle, the interior door and window hardware, hood hardware, trunk signal-lamp assembly, and both the tool kit and jack. I looked for them at regional and national shows, in several publications, and online when I had downtime."

After the main body shell had been relocated to a homemade wooden dolly, the chassis was stripped of all its bolt-on components. The X-braced frame was then sandblasted, removing light surface rust and decades of grime, until bare metal was fully exposed. The sturdy unit did not require any repairs, permitting Harvey to quickly seal the frame in epoxy primer, followed by chassis black paint. Any suspension parts that were deemed reusable were treated similarly.

While that work was ongoing, Harvey partially disassembled the straight-eight engine before delivering it to A&M Auto Machine in nearby Meriden, Connecticut. There, the cylinder walls were given a slight overbore, then it was completely rebuilt to stock specifications. As to the three-speed manual transmission, Harvey took the time to rebuild the unit himself, stating all it needed was new seals.

"When it came time to strip the body, I would have liked to have had a rotisserie; however, I would have had to buy one," Harvey said. "Instead, I elevated the body 4 feet and stripped the paint off using two DeWalt orbital sanders. I had one in each hand—it was crazy to see, but it worked just fine. Even though all indications suggested it was a southern car, I still uncovered corrosion that needed to be repaired."

According to Harvey, each of the rocker panels required repair or replacement, along with a section of the body behind each door. Patch panels were fabricated from 18-gauge metal and were MIG welded into place. This same method was used on a significant portion of the passenger door, and a section on the decklid. "The trunk emblem assembly had started to rot, affecting the metal it was secured to, and ultimately someone had removed it and installed a couple of crazy lights. I had

to fabricate a patch for that section after acquiring a new assembly," he said.

After the welds were ground smooth, a skim coat of Evercoat Rage filler was applied and sanded smooth using the common step process, in this case 80-, 120-, and 220-grade paper. Two coats of R-M epoxy primer were then applied and sanded with 320-grade paper. After it had been permitted to cure, Harvey selected a R-M Diamont basecoat/clearcoat system—three coats of each—matched to the Buick's original color of Bandelier Blue. The fenders, hood, doors, and other assorted trim panels would be subjected to the same process later. In each case, after curing the panels were wet sanded with 1500- and 2000-grade paper, prior to final polishing.

As that part of the restoration was ongoing, Harvey was also able to devote time to rebuilding the chassis. Restored suspension parts were complemented by new corresponding components where required, while a new brake system was fitted. The Buick's differential, which also only required new seals, was reunited with the chassis, and in short order was linked via torque tube assembly to both the engine and transmission. At this stage, the chassis was ready to accept the body, which was done using new body mounts.

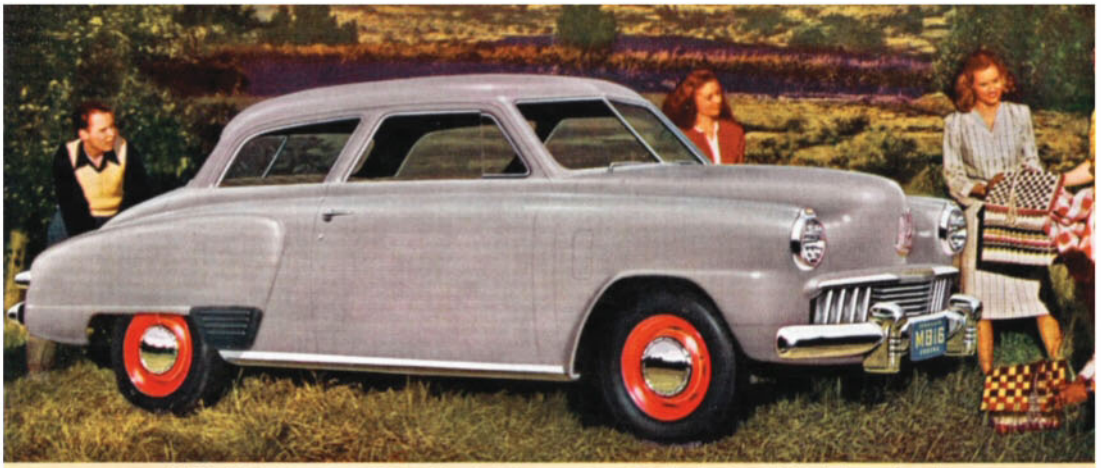
Earlier, Harvey had restored the business coupe's engine-turned, wood-grained dash, including rebuilt gauges, allowing him to install it in the cabin as a completed assembly. Rather than reinstall the rest of the separate exterior panels, Harvey then delivered the coupe to a shop in Vermont that he had contracted to install the interior using a kit he obtained from LeBaron Bonney. After much of the work had been completed, Harvey ultimately brought the Buick directly to LeBaron Bonney for final interior adjustments.

Final reassembly was quickly accomplished thereafter, including the other body panels, replated trim, glass, and completing the electrical system. "A few things took a little more time than I thought, such as aligning the fenders and the hood, but I took my time and I could not be happier about the outcome. Since completing it in July 2016, we've been enjoying driving and showing the Buick."

owner's view

Even though I had originally been looking for a truck, I had always loved the coupe body style, and Buicks in general. It's what drew me to the car right away. I've been asked if I experienced any unexpected surprises along the way, but I don't know how to answer that — this was my first restoration. Obviously, it helped starting with essentially a complete car, but I just took my time and used a lot of reference photos, and I consulted with several friends within the old-car community when I was looking for parts or information.

1947 Studebakers



1947 Studebaker Champion Regal De Luxe 2-door Sedan for six passengers. This body style also available in the Commander model.

1947 Studebaker Champion De Luxe Convertible for five passengers.

1947 Studebaker Champion De Luxe Coupe for three passengers.

You get more than the world's first genuine postwar automobile, when you become the proud owner of a new 1947 Studebaker.

You get a thrilling new car that's a melody in metal — with extra low, extra wide, new bodies styled by Raymond Loewy, internationally famous designer.

You get a car that's newly engineered throughout, from its wheels on up — a car with almost incredible new handling ease — with cradled riding comfort that surpasses anything you've experienced even in much more costly cars.

Studebaker was able to introduce these brand new 1947 cars months early, largely because of the teamwork and competence of the finest group of employees in the motor car industry.

It goes without saying that these 1947 Studebakers excel in quality. They are manufactured to war-production standards of accuracy by responsible, able craftsmen, many of whom are members of Studebaker father-and-son teams.

Studebaker's exceptional operating economy adds its practical appeal to the allure of these distinctive new postwar Champions and Commanders.

All the customary body styles are available — and each excels in roominess as well as in smart appointments.

1947 Studebaker Commander Regal De Luxe Coupe for five passengers.

1947 Studebaker Commander De Luxe Coupe for three passengers.

Revolutionary new riding comfort is engineered into these 1947 Studebakers through lower, wider bodies, redistributed weight, redesigned frames, unique new spring mountings, softer springs. That's the technical explanation. The marvelous result is you relax in cradled ease you've never before experienced in a car.

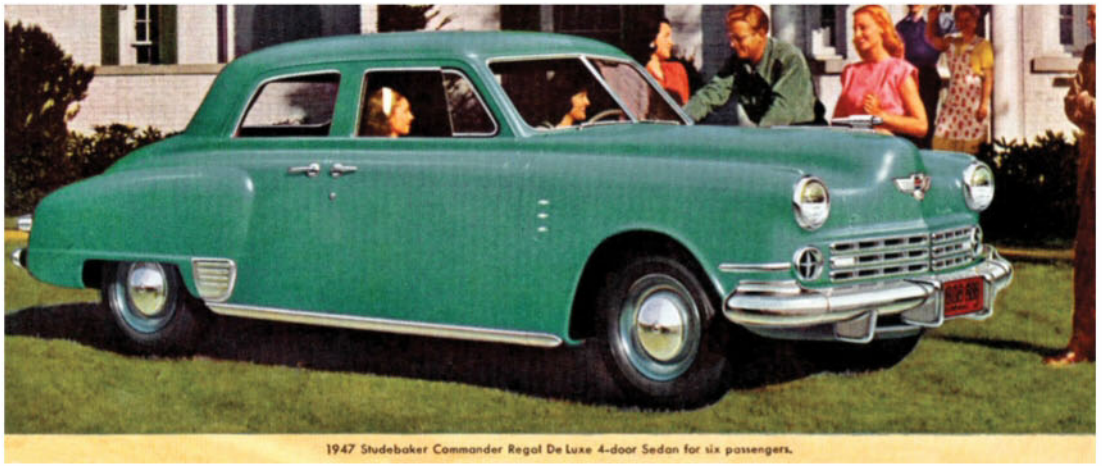
Studebaker's gas-saving automatic overdrive of advanced design is available in these 1947 models. Your engine "works" only two miles of every three miles you glide along in overdrive—and this means you get one mile free. Overdrive quickly repays its moderate extra cost.

Aircraft-type "black light" instrument panels assure you no-glare, full visibility of dial markings at night. A scientific wartime development for the safety and efficiency of U.S. flyers, "black light" instrument panels come to you first in motor cars in these 1947 Studebakers.

You stop smoothly with the full power of the world's first self-adjusting brakes in these 1947 Studebakers. Brake shoe automatically re-positions itself to compensate for the slightest lining wear. This gives you the positive, top-efficiency braking action of a brand-new car.

1947 Studebaker Champion Regal De Luxe Coupe for five passengers.

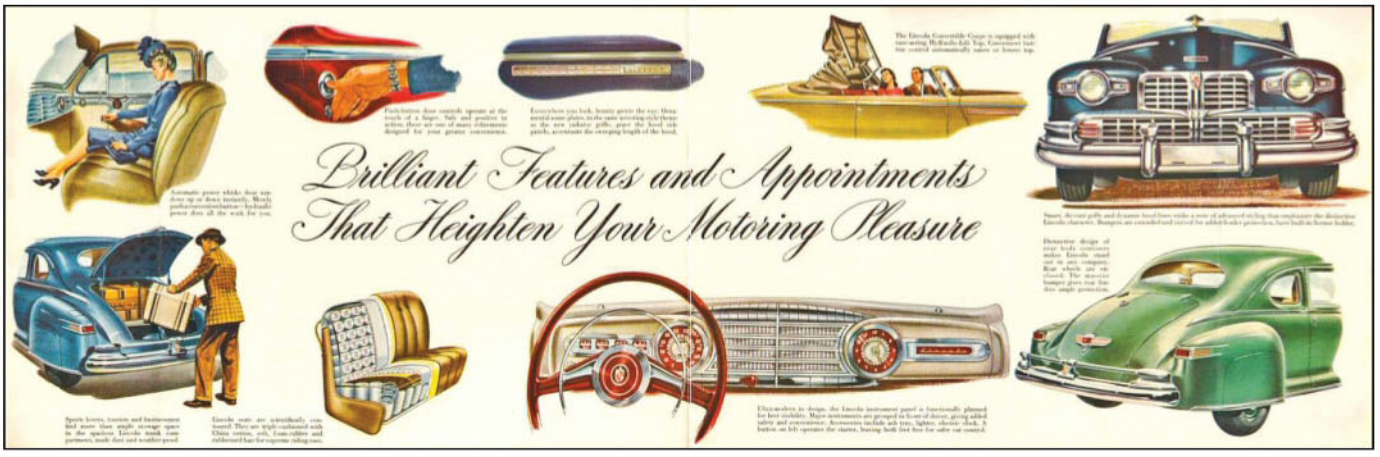
1947 Studebaker Commander Regal De Luxe Convertible for five passengers.



1947 Studebaker Commander Regal De Luxe 4-door Sedan for six passengers.

BY MILTON STERN

Postwar Lincoln Sedans



I LIKE TO POST CARS FOR SALE ON Facebook to gauge my motorhead friends' reactions. If a post just gets a lot of likes and maybe a few "It's gorgeous," "My grandfather had one," or "I would love to have this" comments, the car probably isn't an underdog. However, if the post elicits a heated discussion on high asking price, place in the market, styling, etc., folks, we have ourselves an underdog.

Popularity or lack thereof in its day does not determine underdog status. Plenty of once-highly popular cars have only a few fans today. On the flip side, there are plenty of rare cars that also find themselves in the underdog corral. Add to this reasoning, my intense need to stir the oil pan, if you will.

A while back, I posted a 1948 Lincoln four-door sedan for sale, and the comments were fast and furious. One stated that to restore it would cost three times what it was worth. Another wondered why anyone would want this Lincoln instead of a Cadillac or Packard, while yet another said even a Chevrolet was more desirable. The harshest comments addressed the powertrain and the platform, which brings us to why these Lincolns may never be as popular as their contemporaries. All of this is good news for you if you're in the mood for a postwar luxury sedan with suicide doors but don't have five or six figures to plop down on one.

One of the most beautiful designs to come out of Dearborn was the 1939-'41 Lincoln Continental, with its smooth and graceful lines. A 1942 facelift featured squared-up and more bulbous fenders and a revised, low, sloped grille that extended under the fenders below a center section that was the width of the hood. The grille design was quite involved or "busy," since the lower section was quite obviously a "bolt-on" piece. The rear fenders were accented with horizontal taillamp bezels. The redesign made the cars look both boxy and heavier as a result. The most obvious cosmetic throwback was the windshield, a slightly curved, rather small, one-piece affair that looked to be lifted off a mid-1930s sedan.

These Lincoln sedans were outsold by Cadillac and Packard. Here is another reason Packard, which sold everything it built after the War, should have returned to pure luxury rather than squandering its image with mid-priced offerings.

Of note, the 1939-'48 Continental coupes and convertibles are recognized as Full Classics, making the sedans the strangest underdog of them all.

Lincoln would be the last U.S. automaker to sell an L-head V-12. The 305-cubic-inch 65-degree V-12, which relied heavily on the Ford flathead V-8 architecture, had a reputation for overheating and less than stellar reliability, due to inadequate water passages and

"smallish" pistons. Oil sludge was another issue. Many owners would replace these engines with a flathead V-8 or a later Lincoln OHV V-8 within a year or more after taking delivery.

Here, we have an interesting dilemma. You may find one with a 1940s or '50s Ford, Mercury, or Lincoln V-8 under the hood—its original V-12 discarded decades ago by the original owner. Does this take away from the car's authenticity or originality?

Put one of these Lincolns on a lift, and you will step way back in time. Is that a solid axle up front? Are those transverse-mounted leaf springs front and rear? Yes, the Fords, Mercurys, and Lincolns still bounced around on Model T-era suspensions. Ford was among the last to adopt hydraulic brakes and column-shifted transmissions in the 1930s and, most important, independent front suspensions, which would finally arrive under the bathtub Lincolns of 1949.

Cadillac, by this time, was offering the Hydra-Matic. The Chrysler Imperial came with Fluid-Drive coupled to the automaker's superior straight-eight engines, while Packard offered an Electromatic Clutch and would soon develop the extremely smooth Ultramatic mounted behind the equally-as-smooth and very quiet, low-revving straight-eights.

You won't find a postwar Lincoln sedan with an automatic or even a semi-automatic transmission. Ford hopped on that bus late as well, initially equipping next-generation Lincolns with Hydra-Matics before switching to a beefed-up version of the Ford-O-Matic/Merc-O-Matic.

Open the brochure, and you are told, "Setting a new standard of beauty in every sweeping line, the new Lincoln sedan of 1946 reflects its great heritage of Lincoln craftsmanship and precision engineering." The power windows were mentioned quite a few times in the brochure.

According to several value guides, the average value of one of the postwar Lincoln four-door sedans is $13,000. For a luxury make, that is not a lot of money.

After all I've told you, why should these cars be on your list? To quote a Lincoln owner and founder of Malaise Motors, Bryan Raab Davis, the reason you should consider the 1946-'48 Lincoln four-door sedans is: "Why drive a Tri-Five Chevy when you can arrive in a Lincoln? You get all the comfort, all the practicality, and twice the style for substantially less coin."

Did I mention it has suicide doors?

Milford Sprecher

Plant Janitor
General Motors

GROWING UP IN MY SMALL Maryland hometown adjacent to the Delaware state line, many of my schoolmates and their families worked in one of two automobile assembly plants in nearby Delaware, either the Chrysler plant in Newark or the General Motors plant in Wilmington. I had worked at a full-service Exxon station as a teen and had a keen interest in cars, buying my first antique car, a Model A Ford, while I was still in high school. Once I went to college, I was looking for a higher-paying job and obtained a summer job as a relief janitor at the GM plant.

This plant produced Chevrolets and Buicks. The wages were union scale, and the work was not terribly demanding, as we were filling in for other janitors who were on vacation during the summer, so we had a set area to work. Our duties included keeping the floor along the line clean and swept, emptying trash cans, and cleaning bathrooms in our areas. Janitorial positions were among the more desirable jobs in the plant and were reserved for those who had the most seniority, as the jobs were fairly easy and not on the assembly line.

The plant was divided into areas, including the body shop (where I spent most of my time), hard trim, soft trim (interiors), paint, chassis, and the like. Production was key, so GM went to great pains to keep the line moving at all times. The plant had its own fire department and millwrights whose job it was to get the line back up and running if there was a problem. I would have some firsthand experience with the former.

The regular line workers would make fun of us college kids who were learning the ropes. I had friends who worked on the line, so I would visit occasionally while on break.

I was given a variety of jobs during my time there, including picking up rubber body-mount grommets that had fallen through the assembly line floor into the chamber under the moving assembly line and cleaning up the lead grindings off the floor of the lead booth. The seams where the roofs of the cars were spot welded to the side panels were sealed with lead, the excess of which was ground off in the grinding booth. I also cleaned the body shop and was responsible for cleaning the bathrooms, which were located on a second level above the assembly line floor.

The workforce of U.S. automakers is much maligned; I found that most people wanted to do a good job. However, the pace demanded by management gave you just enough, or not enough, time to complete your task, and if you didn't get finished, there was no stopping the line to fix it. Assembly line work, while good paying, was often hard and monotonous. The body shop, where I often worked, was hot and noisy. The difference in soft trim, where you just heard the whirring of power screwdrivers and it was much cooler, was remarkable.

A breakdown in the line was a chance for a rest, so if there was a problem, like a small fire or other mishap, there was little incentive to report the problem or address it yourself to keep the line going.

Smoking was allowed in the plant in those days, and I recall a fire in a trash can that had the line shut down and the plant fire department, with its small motorized vehicles, going to put the fire out. No one reported the smoke until the flames were very high, and it could not be ignored any longer.

I was working in the body shop in hard trim, where the brightwork, outside mirrors, and the like, were installed. The bodies were on dollies that would move them along the line and would then, using clamping mechanisms that would attach to lugs at each corner of the dolly, be taken overhead for assembly with the chassis. One task in hard trim was to use a jig to drill holes in the roofs of station wagons to install roof racks. In order to reach the roof to drill the holes for the rack, the workers stood on metal platforms that ran parallel to the line. They would walk along these platforms to drill the holes while the car moved down the line.

I worked the second shift, 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. It made kind of a hash of your life, because you typically slept in and then had to leave for work around 3 p.m., so you didn't have a full day to do much. It messed up your schedule for weekends, too. I had never made so much money in my life, so I was not complaining.

Every summer, the plant would have model-year changeover. I was there for the transition from the 1971 to 1972 model year, which was not a year of significant change for the GM lineup. The plant would close to make whatever changes in the production line were necessary, and the janitorial staff would give the plant an extra good cleaning. We worked seven days a week and often had overtime, but plant management often didn't know what to do with us, so we would go to one location and wait and then get moved to another location and wait and maybe would do some work before the shift was over, but not always. I was making time-and-a-half and double time, so it was great money, but we were not organized enough to be productive. As someone who likes to give a good day's work for my pay, I felt a bit guilty for sitting around so much and getting paid so well for it, but it was not my choice.

We janitors typically could complete our shift's work in six hours, but we were there for an eight-hour shift. Sometimes we had big messes to clean up, particularly to-

ward the end of our shift, where there had been more time for the work areas, and particularly the bathrooms, to get messy. We had to clean the bathrooms, replace toilet paper, and replace the towels, which were the continuous rolls of cloth towels, the kind you don't see much anymore.

The bathroom detail was probably my easiest, as I could finish up early and read for the rest of my shift. The janitors tended to be older and were sometimes those who had been injured, so they may have had a reason to be slower. I remember one guy who had worked in the lead booth. There had been a hole in his breathing apparatus and suit that he wore, so he had gotten lead poisoning from breathing the lead dust. He was just skin and bones, but was still working.

At one point during the summer, I had the job of cleaning up the lead dust on the floor of the lead booth while the guys were on dinner break. I don't recall whether I had a respirator or not. I hope so. But I do remember lifting the dust pans of lead dust and how heavy they were. I had to dump the lead dust into drums for removal and recycling. I also remember cutting my hand on the jagged edge of some body metal while cleaning the booth and ending up in the infirmary where my cut could be tended to.

This was just about the time that foreign cars started to really pick up in sales. Given the way our plant was geared to production, quality was an afterthought. The plant later went on to produce Saturns and then was closed. It was sold to Fisker to produce an electric car, but those plans never came to fruition and the plant closed for good. The Chrysler plant in Newark closed, too, and was torn down, so after decades of auto production in Delaware, the plants no longer exist. They were the source of good incomes for thousands of employees over the years, and certainly made for a good summer job for this college kid, and an education in manufacturing that I have not forgotten.

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.

REARVIEW MIRROR 1967

BY TOM COMERRO

SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Chevrolet	1,900,049
2. Ford	1,730,224
3. Pontiac	817,826
4. Plymouth	636,893
5. Buick	562,507
6. Oldsmobile	548,390
7. Dodge	426,951
8. Mercury	354,923
9. AMC/Rambler	302,945
10. Chrysler	218,716

CHEVROLET'S NEW CAMARO IS available in coupe or convertible with an impressive spectrum of engines, ranging from the six-cylinder to the optional SS 396. The Camaro is an exciting and aggressive car with all the standard safety features, such as dual-master-cylinder brake system, passenger-guard door locks, and GM energy-absorbing steering column. Look for the SS Convertible as a pace car at this year's Indy 500. Available for as low as $2,466.

FACTORY PRICES

(trucks excluded)

AMC	$2,073-$3,143
Buick Skylark	$2,665-$3,167
Cadillac (no 75 series)	$5,040-$6,277
Chevrolet	$2,442-$3,413
Corvette	$4,141-$4,353
Chrysler	$3,579-$4,487
Dodge	$2,224-$3,646
Ford	$2,441-$3,064
Imperial	$5,374-$6,661
Lincoln	$5,553-$6,449
Mercury	$2,284-$3,989
Oldsmobile	$2,552-$4,869
Plymouth	$2,117-$3,418
Pontiac	$2,341-$3,819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PARTS PRICES

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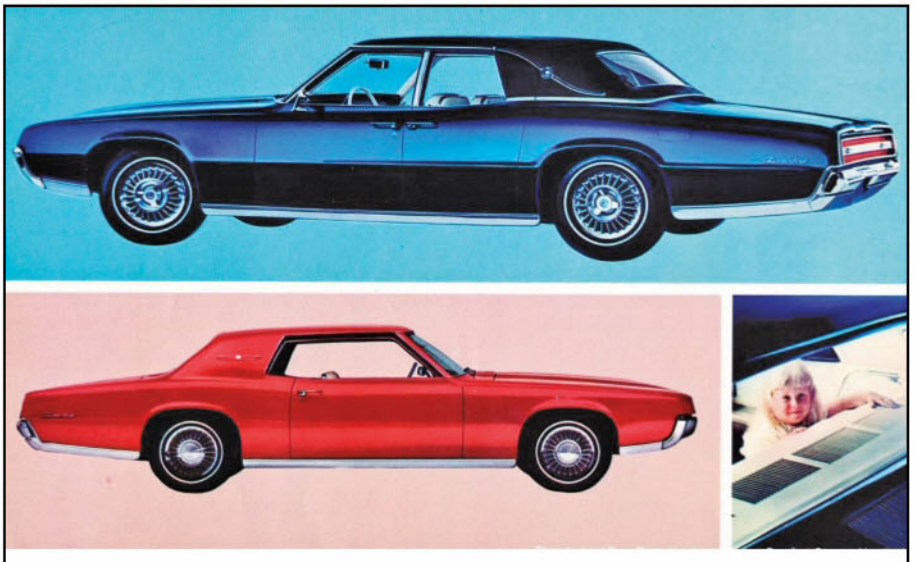
Battery	$12.88
Car wax	$0.99
Dimmer	$26.95
Radio	$84.95
Seatbelt	$12.45
Seat cover	$24.45
Spray paint	$1.49 (6-oz.)

CHAMPIONS

Indy 500	A.J. Foyt *(151.207 mph)*
Daytona 500	Mario Andretti *(146.926 mph)*
Formula One	Denny Hulme *(51 points)*

AMC'S MARLIN RETURNS AND COMBINES luxury with a fastback. Six inches longer, four inches wider, the 118-inch wheelbase Marlin features more cabin space and more comfortable bucket seats. The six-passenger sports car offers options such as sports steering wheel, Typhoon V-8 performance, four-on-the-floor, electronic tachometer, and power disc brakes. Reel in the new Marlin for as low as $2,766.



THE FORD THUNDERBIRD IS BACK WITH AN ALL-NEW DESIGN, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME ever, a four-door version is available. Powered by a 390-cu.in. or optional 428-cu.in. V-8 and backed by the Cruise-O-Matic transmission, the Thunderbird offers impressive performance. Of course, luxury has not been sacrificed; many interior options and deep bucket seats give you a comfortable and spacious cabin. The hardtop, and two- and four-door landau are all available at a starting price of $4,603.

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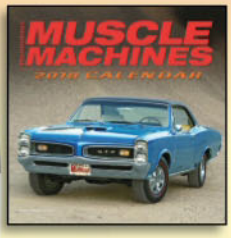
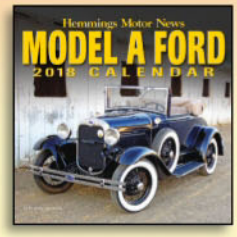
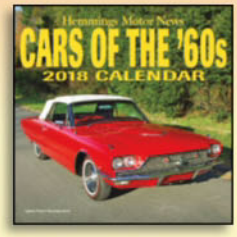
Classic Car **CC18**



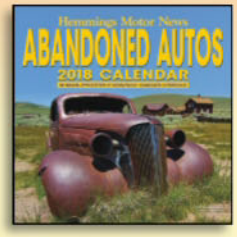
Muscle Machines **CM18**



Model A Ford **CF18**



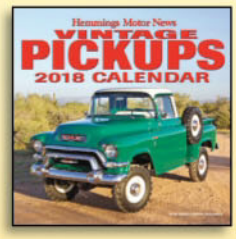
Cars of the '60s **C618**



Abandoned Autos **CA18**

Only Available Through Hemmings Motor News!

Cars of the '50s **C518**



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CF18		Model A Ford	$14.95 ea	
C618		Cars of the '60s	$14.95 ea	
CA18		Abandoned Autos	$14.95 ea	
C518		Cars of the '50s	$14.95 ea	
CP18		Vintage Pickups	$14.95 ea	

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BURT RICHMOND
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Farm Accidents

BECAUSE "HOME" WAS ON A FARM, it was not unusual for youngsters to learn how to drive. By the time I was 13, one of my chores was to take out the trash after dinner. The second part was to drive my parents' cars into the main barn from in front of the house.

We had an old barn that was beginning to implode from heavy snowfalls. In the spring, Dad felt we should tear it down before it fell down. The idea was to hook a chain to the upper corner of the weakened structure then attach the chain to the back of Dad's green 1950 Plymouth station wagon. I was the driver while Dad directed the demolition. Well, with the back of the car attached to a chain 18 feet higher than it, as I drove forward, it lost traction with one wheel spinning. It was a simple lesson in loss of traction.

The solution was easy: Just turn the car around with the heavy end facing the barn. We reconnected the ancient chain to the front suspension of the Plymouth. Again, Dad was directing the action. He had me back up and put some tension on the chain. Once the slack was gone, I continued to back up. The barn was intractable and did not move at all. We began a series of rocking movements without much progress. "Okay, roll forward a bit and then back up with more force," he said. On the third jerk, the chain broke free from the elevated perch and was like a machine gun: Rat-tat-tat, as it hit the hood, windshield, and roof of the station wagon. After the windshield was replaced, the hood and roof held the scars of our little experiment for several years until it was traded in.

What about the derelict barn? Well, the barn was at least a century old and was built with hand-hewn oak timbers that were mortised and tenoned with 1½-inch wood pegs that held it all together. While the roof was rotten, the structure was not. We removed all the aged barnwood siding, got up on a ladder, and, with a mallet, drove out the wood pegs one by one, which allowed us to dismantle the underlying structure. Like they say, they don't make 'em like they used to.

Dad's Plymouth went into the center part of the main barn, which had a 25-foot-high roof with a mechanism that picked up bales of hay and swung them over the "hay loft." The barn had huge sliding doors on vintage cast-iron hangers and a steel rail. I drove up the ramp one night to put his car away. Our hunting dog lived in a feed barrel with old burlap sacks as his padding. He was happy to see me, and was jumping around on his leash. Being the clever kid, I turned off the engine, put the car in first gear, unrolled the driver's window, and got out of the car. With one arm, I held the dog away from the car, while I used the starter to just inch the car forward so I could close the barn doors. Oops, the car started and drove itself right out the back of the barn! I watched in horror as the rear sliding doors blew off their tracks. The back of the barn was about waist high above the ground. The car was now suspended on the rear bumper guards, with the nose of the Plymouth in the dirt behind the barn. I sheepishly went into the house and told Dad that I had a little problem and needed some help to rescue his car. Ah, another lesson in basic physics. He used a crow bar to lift each side of the rear bumper off the barn floor until the car was levered off the barn floor and was back on the ground.

I never got yelled at, but when I was racing Formula Vee and Formula Ford, it would not take long before Dad would tell everyone within earshot of our pit area about my teenage vehicular exploits. Isn't this learning from experience?

Off the Rack

Ford's fashionable 1937 half-ton platform stake made hard work look glamorous

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

In a 2017 University of Michigan study, 69 percent of light-truck owners surveyed said they use their haulers for "general transportation," while just 10 percent cited "moving cargo" as the primary reason for owning their truck.

Truck manufacturers have made it easy (and profitable) to eschew bed space for four-door-sedan-like cabin room and to pile on unlimited luxury-car amenities. Trucks these days are big, comfortable, and handy to have—even for occasional chores. It's easy to see how the lines have been blurred.

But in July 1917, when Henry Ford introduced the one-ton TT, he never would've imagined that a century later, millions of Ford trucks would be used first as people movers and second as cargo haulers. Talk about your bare-bones work truck: The first TTs came with no cab and no bed. For $600, buyers purchased a running chassis with a hood, radiator shell, and front fenders—the rest was up to them to provide. The cheapest and easiest way to set that chassis up for hauling cargo would've been to build a deck out of lumber, then outfit it with simple ladder-style racks that could be slipped on and off for loading or unloading. Farm wagons had been built this way for generations and worked well for hauling hay and produce.

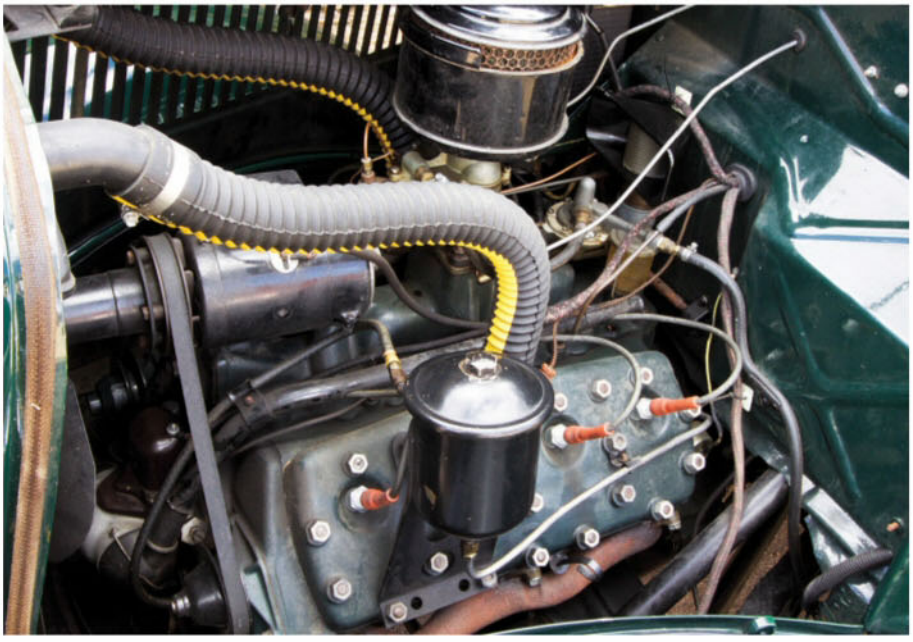
Ford eventually offered its own platform stake bodies and, of course, third-party builders have been making them for years—particularly for trucks 3/4-ton and larger. In 1937, however, Ford introduced special, stylized platform stake bodies for half-ton trucks that incorporated fenders and raised the deck to make it easier to load and unload from docks. It was a stylish yet functional take on the reliable, practical old rack body. Ford's short, 6½-foot platform stake body (though the fancy fenders disappeared) stuck around as an available option on half-ton trucks until 1968 when it was quietly dropped—though it was still available on larger haulers. Cynics might point to this as the moment when Detroit began to gentrify light trucks, marketing them strictly to people looking for "general transportation" with a tailgate. The reality, however, is that the factory platform stake half-ton had become an answer to a question that no one was asking. Dearborn sold just 98 of them in 1968. The only body type that was less in demand that year was the platform without the stakes—a factory flatbed-equipped half-ton. If you own one of those, you've got a rare truck, as Ford built just 16.

Unfortunately, we couldn't track down production numbers for the new-for-'37 half-ton stake-body-equipped Ford trucks. We do know it was available on the Series 73 with the 136-cu.in., 60-hp, flathead V-8. Or, like this month's feature truck, as a Series 77 powered by the more potent 221-cu.in., 85-hp V-8. The styling of Ford light trucks was also new for 1937 and noticeably different than the styling of its passenger cars. Up front there was a redesigned grille with horizontal bars and a new cab with a split windshield, as well as safety glass all around. Front and rear bumpers became standard issue for the 1937 models, and Ford offered its trucks with either Deluxe or Standard appointments. Standard trucks made do with painted trim, while deluxe rigs boasted a smattering of polished bits, including a chrome grille, bright windshield frame, and chrome horns.

Inside, Ford's 1937 commercial rigs were outfitted with rubber floor covering and durable vinyl seat coverings. The dash surface was painted, and the instrument cluster featured a full complement of gauges—speedometer, fuel level, oil pressure, amps, and coolant temperature. On warm days, operators could cool off with a crank-out windshield and a cowl vent. One wiper was standard for rainy outings, but a second for the passenger's side could be ordered at extra cost.

The nicely restored 1937 Ford shown here has remained with the same family for 46 years. It's current owner, Tom Holden, of Prescott, Arizona, purchased it from his father, Roy, in 1972—just shortly after Roy bought it from the original owner. It currently has 65,941 original miles on the odometer and relies on its original drivetrain parts, as well as its original 6-volt electricals.

"In 1971, my dad was living in Connecticut working as a carpenter," Tom said. "He began buying and selling horses. After accumulating a large number, he decided to start a riding stable. He needed a place large enough to board the horses and have land to ride on. He found a farm in Durham, Connecticut, that was for lease. While the owner was showing my dad the farm, he opened one of the sheds,



and the truck was sitting inside. The owner offered to sell my dad the truck for $350. It had 34,000 miles on it at that time."

The Holdens and the truck wound up leaving the Northeast and heading back to the South, eventually deciding to pass the truck on to Tom. "Dad brought the truck from Connecticut to South Carolina in the back of an enclosed cattle truck," he said. "The Ford was a little too tall, so he let the air out of the tires for some extra clearance and drove it up in the back of the truck. Dad knew I had an interest in old trucks—I had helped a friend restore a '35 Chevrolet pickup—so he asked me if I wanted it."

At the time, Tom was living in Arizona with his young family. The Ford was too good to pass up, but not exactly comfortable for long-distance motoring, so he worked out a way to drive it part way and tow it the rest. "I was living in Phoenix, so I flew to South Carolina in July 1972, with my pregnant wife and four-year-old daughter," Tom said. "The tires were in bad shape, so I put a set of retreads on it. I had the oil changed, then we got in it and drove it 860 miles to Arkansas, where I had my car waiting. From there, we towed it back to Phoenix."

A complete overhaul wasn't in the cards then, so Tom maintained the Ford and used it occasionally as a pleasure driver. "It had a lot of surface rust, a few tears in the fenders, and a little rust where the rear fenders met the running boards," he said. "I drove it occasionally—I didn't show it, I didn't restore it, but I always kept it in the garage."

In 1988, an acquaintance offered to help get the body in shape and give it a new coat of the original green finish, but that plan ultimately backfired. "A guy offered to paint a few parts at a time if I'd bring them to him. So, I disassembled the truck and began taking him parts," Tom said. "Two years later, he'd lost a fender brace and a fender mount, but had done absolutely nothing."

Tom collected up the parts, and after another false start with another body man, decided he'd tackle the project himself. "I rented a store room and put everything in it except the chassis," he said. "I stripped the frame, had it powder coated, and cleaned or replaced every nut and bolt. I rebuilt the engine and repainted it. It still has all of its original components, but I did replace one head. When it came time to do the bodywork, I had a nephew who was a manager at Maaco. They had a really good body man and painter, so I took them a few pieces at time and they did all the work. They really did a great job."

The wooden beams supporting the bed are original to the truck, and Tom cleaned, sanded, and painted them, then slid them back on the chassis. The stakes were fabricated by a specialist that Tom found in a club publication. "I was going to give the stake sides a custom treatment, but I belong to the Early Ford V-8 Club, and I was looking at their magazine, where I found a guy advertising replacement wood. I ordered it from him unfinished, then sanded everything, and put on umpteen coats of marine varnish, steel wooling between every coat."

The bed hardware is also original to the truck, but Tom sent it out for chrome plating, just to add some bright details to the rear of the truck.

Today, this handy prewar half-ton Ford lives a life of leisure. Tom, who is a member and past president of the Prescott Antique Auto Club, likes to take it to events, where it tends to draw a lot of attention. "I'll take that truck to shows and never drive away without a trophy," he said. "I've spent seven years and thousands of dollars on my 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air, and I can't win a trophy with that car."

The Ford's clearly a family heirloom now, so at some point it will be passed down to the next generation. "It basically just goes to shows, and eventually I plan to give it to my son or my granddaughter," Tom said. For now, my new Ford F-150 is parked in the driveway, but the '37 is in the garage."

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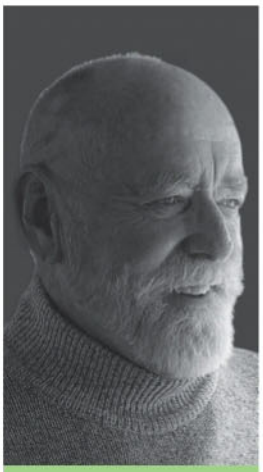

Remember Store-Bought Cars?

In 1952, I remember being at the local Sears department store with my mother. She was off doing whatever women do in such places, and I scurried to the basement to wander the tool section. They do sell other things at Sears, but to this day I am not sure what, except that at that time, next to the tool section, were two new cars.

They were small, and wore an Allstate badge. One was baby blue, and the other was black. I found out later that the Allstate was actually a somewhat gussied up Henry J, which was a compact car that went into production after Kaiser-Frazer bought Willys, and that the cars were largely a Willys under that Howard "Dutch" Darren hairdo.

The thing that was unique about these cars was that they were sold through Sears, not traditional dealerships. Henry J. Kaiser had intended to compete with Ford and Chevrolet when he debuted his Kaiser line of cars in 1947, but he could not match the economies of scale enjoyed by the Big Three, and ended up with a somewhat more expensive line of automobiles with his Kaisers and Frazers.

After Kaiser and Frazer wound up being mid-priced cars, Mr. Kaiser felt unfulfilled, hence the Henry J. In order to keep costs down, it was as basic as a car could get. It had no trunk lid, and the upholstery was paper coated with plastic. "Spartan" would spring to your lips, even in the early Fifties, if you compared them to just about any other car except the Crosley. The Henry J was a minor player in the 1950s, but not successful in the end, and the Allstate was hardly a factor in sales at all.

The Allstate could be had with a 134.2-cu.in. flathead four, or a 161-cu.in. flathead six in the more expensive models. These days it is rare to see a Henry J or an Allstate with its original engine, though. Likely as not, you will find a Chevy small block and an all-Chevy driveline set up for drag racing.

The Crosley was an even less expensive and more basic car than the Henry J, and it, too, sold through appliance stores. Our next-door neighbors had one in 1953, and I remember the fellow bragging that it got 50 miles to the gallon of gas. Indeed it did, though you paid a price in comfort and performance for that.

The Crosley had the face of a sea turtle, and was high and narrow, with little wheels. It could seat two abreast, but your shoulders would be touching. It did sport a number of innovations, though, and was the first American production car to offer disc brakes all around.

The reason these little cars were so narrow was that Powel Crosley, the company's founder and successful manufacturer of cheap radios and refrigerators during the Depression, wanted to be able to ship them two abreast in boxcars, and have them be capable of fitting through the front doors of appliance stores. The company began production in 1939, using a two-cylinder generator engine, but after the war they bumped up to their Cobra four-cylinder, which was originally designed for aircraft utility purposes.

It was actually a copper-brazed engine made of sheetmetal, and it was light and powerful, sporting a gear-driven overhead camshaft. But the Cobra engines developed rust problems quickly, so, in 1950, the company switched to a cast-iron version of the same engine.

Crosleys could be had as two-door sedans, convertibles, station wagons, and 1/4-ton pickups, and sold well at first. They also offered a sports roadster called the Hotshot that out bugeyed Austin-Healey's Bugeye Sprite; it was smaller, lighter, and even more bugeyed. It was nothing to laugh at, though, because it won its class at the Sam Collier Memorial Sebring Grand Prix of Endurance in 1950. Alas, Crosley, too, eventually went down in 1954 during the great automotive extinction of the 1950s.

However, the idea of selling cars through department stores has not gone away. Tesla, the electric car company that keeps knocking our socks off with its fast, stylish machines, has just signed a deal to market their cars through Nordstrom's. Actually, it seems like a good way to reach out to women. A stylish, clean electric car just might appeal to the fair sex in a big way.

Besides, who cares for the tradition of having to run the gauntlet of the greeter on the car lot, the salesman, and the turnover man, all trying to chisel you out of a bit more of your hard-earned money, when you could just pop by your local shopping mall and buy a car over the counter from a charming sales person who doesn't smell of Old Spice, and with none of the haggling and wheedling that have become endemic to car sales? Makes sense to me.

> "The thing that was unique about these cars was that they were sold through Sears, not traditional dealerships."

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