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CLASSIC CAR

THE DEFINITIVE ALL-AMERICAN COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2014 #112



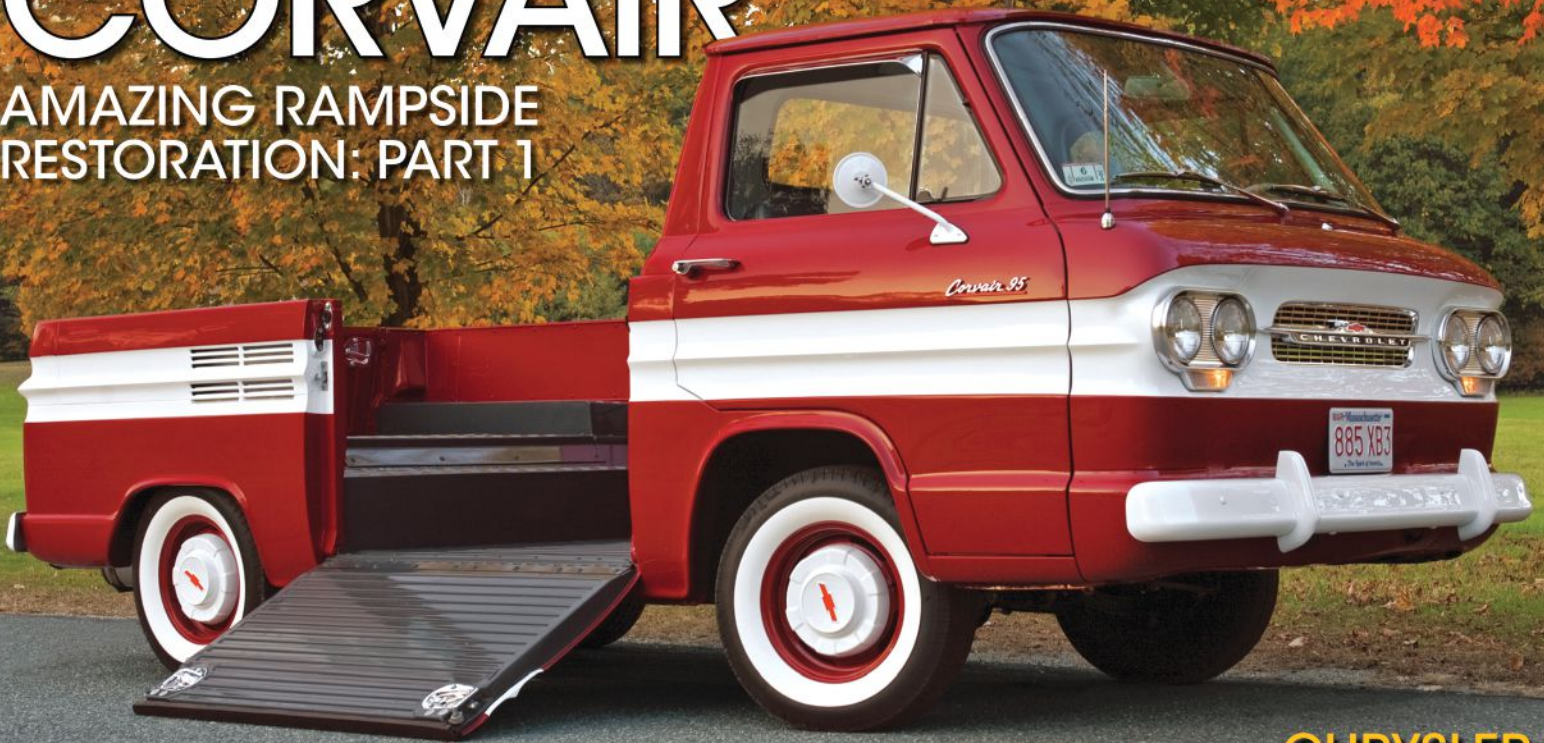
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CONTENTS

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR • JANUARY 2014 VOLUME 10, ISSUE 4



50

SPECIAL FEATURES

20 Well-Off Wagons, Part 2:
Chrysler's Station Wagons
in the Turbulent Sixties

26 **driveReport:**
1932 Studebaker Dictator

38 Comparison:
Three Luxury Convertibles

46 1983 Oldsmobile:
Brougham Beauty

REGULAR FEATURES

08 NEWS REPORTS
10 LOST & FOUND
12 CLUB NEWS
14 AUCTION NEWS
18 ART & AUTOMOBILIA
32 RECAPS
50 DRIVEABLE DREAM
54 HISTORY OF
AUTOMOTIVE DESIGN

58 VINTAGE
LITERATURE
60 PERSONALITY
PROFILE
64 RESTORATION
PROFILE
70 DISPATCHES
FROM DETROIT
72 DETROIT
UNDERDOGS
73 PIONEERS

74 MECHANICAL
MARVELS
77 I WAS THERE
78 TECH TALK
79 PRODUCTS
80 REARVIEW MIRROR
82 REMINISCING
95 ODDIES BUT
GOODIES

COLUMNISTS

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

CLASSIC TRUCK

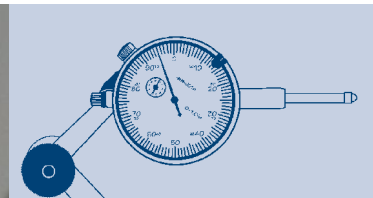
86 1935 INTERNATIONAL
90 COMMERCIAL
CHRONICLE



26



46



74



90

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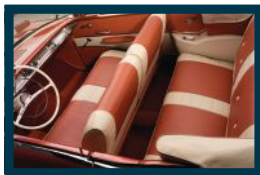
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HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR

is published monthly by Hemmings Motor News

ISSN# 1550-8730

www.hemmings.com

222 Main St., Bennington, Vermont 05201

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E-mail: hmmsubs@hemmings.com

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Subscription rates in U.S. and Possessions 12 issues for \$18.95, Canada

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Periodicals postage paid at Bennington, Vermont and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to

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richardlentinello

Eighties Collectibles

When I wrote my column, “Most Stylish Brand of All Time,” that appeared in issue #110, one very important sentence was deleted; a sentence which, for some readers, had a profound effect on the whole point that I was trying to make. “For the postwar era” was the phrase that I inadvertently cut when I had to reduce the text length in order for it to fit the page. If I was referring to both pre- and postwar eras, then Packard clearly would have been on top, as their innovations and style were unbeatable. But after WWII, the company was just a shadow of its former self, and it was this postwar era that I was focusing on. Had I been referencing pre-WWII, I never would have written, “Mechanically, though, they were followers, not leaders, as Packard introduced few, if any, major mechanical innovations.” For a thorough run down of Packard’s many innovations, go to Recaps and read some of our readers’ letters.

Speaking of Packard, it’s too bad they didn’t survive longer than they did. Imagine a 1980s-era Packard? Can you envision what it may have looked liked? Or an ‘80s-style Studebaker? Or how about a 1985-spec Hudson? While many of these great makes were long since gone by the time 1980 rolled around, having taken their individualistic sense of unique style and innovative engineering with them to their graves, the brands that survived did, in fact, provide us with some special automotive adventures.

Whenever we feature a 1980s-built car, quite often we receive mail from some readers telling us to stop wasting pages writing about these cars, that they were nothing but junk, and they are not collectible. If that’s the case, then why are cars and trucks produced through the 1989 model year now considered “antiques” by our friends at the Antique Automobile Club of America? If the AACA surely accepts and honors ‘80s-built cars, then why wouldn’t you want to read about them in a collector car magazine such as this?

For those who are stuck in 1952, say what you will about ‘80s cars, yet there are many of those cars that today can truly be considered genuine collectors—cars that had distinctive looks and handsome styling, backed by a comfortable

ride, outstanding handling and plenty of power. It’s just too bad that not everyone is open minded enough to see it like that, or to appreciate those cars produced during that fast-changing manufacturing period for what they were, and not compare them to something that they were not.

Sure, those were tough times for the auto manufacturers. With increasing EPA and DOT standards, they were in a hard and fast fight to keep up with the government’s ever-changing demands and regulations. Looking back now, I do think the Big Three did an admirable job, considering what they were faced with.

Years ago, my daily driver was a 1984 Pontiac Trans Am, with the 305HO small-block V-8. Its driving position was perfect, its cornering ability exciting, and it had a respectable amount of power for its time. Although it rode a little too hard, and its fit and finish would never make GM’s top 25, it was fun to drive. Other than its electronic Q-jet carburetor, which could be finicky, its mechanicals were simple and durable. Its four-speed TH700R-4 automatic was bulletproof, and far more long lasting than any electronically controlled six-speed automatic transmission built today, especially those made in Germany and Japan.

If a Firebird or Camaro doesn’t suit your taste, there are many other cars from the Eighties to consider. Some are already collectible, others will soon be. Think Buick GN, GNX and other turbo-powered Regals. These GM G-body models were fine looking cars, perfectly sized and ruggedly simple, and also included the Hurst/Olds and Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS.

For turbo fanatics, Ford’s Turbo Coupe Thunderbird was way cool, as was its Mustang SVO. Then there was the Lincoln Mark VII LSC, as well as the immensely popular Fox-chassis Mustang 5.0. Shelby Chargers and Omni GLHs are a blast to drive, as is Olds’ Quad-4 Calasi and the Fiero GT. For something different, there was Pontiac’s 6000 GTE, or for bustle-back fans, there was Cadillac’s Seville or the similarly styled Chrysler Imperial. All legitimate collector cars today, and highly affordable too. Think about it. 🚗



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Durant Building Razed

ANOTHER PIECE OF AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE

history has been demolished. The former Durant factory in Elizabeth, New Jersey, was razed in September, after it had remained vacant for many years and was subject to a serious fire last year. Local resident and *HCC* reader Ray Homiski sent us this photograph of the partially demolished building; the building was well known in the area as the cookie factory for its fragrant sweet smells. It is believed that this was the old Willys-Overland factory, which Billy Durant purchased in 1922, which was then used for the production of Durant automobiles.

-Richard Lentinello

Lone Star State Packard Meet

APRIL 4-6 ARE THE DATES FOR the 37th Annual Texas Packard Meet, held at the Stagecoach Inn in Salado, Texas. One of the oldest annual Packard meets in Texas, this is a great event to view Packards from all eras. Participants can enjoy an early-bird tour, seminars, swap meet, "People's Choice" competition, banquet and awards program. Viewing is free for the public. For more information, please visit www.texaspackardmeet.com.



2014 Hemmings Concours

HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE the six honored marques for our 8th annual Concours d'Elegance, to be held Sunday, September 28th, 2014. Topping the list is Dodge in honor of its upcoming Centennial. We will also celebrate the anniversary of Pontiac's GTO, which will be accompanied by Lincoln Continentals through 1973 and vintage fire trucks. Alfa Romeo and air-cooled Volkswagens round out the list. Joining them will be our traditional classes, headlined by Full Classics, as well as American open/closed models, muscle cars, European cars, trucks and preservation vehicles. Once again, the picturesque grounds of the Saratoga Spa State Park adjacent to the Saratoga Automobile Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York, is where the Concours will take place.

If you would like to have your vehicle considered for this event, please send photos and a brief write-up about it to concours@hemmings.com. Please keep in mind that while we appreciate modified and customized vehicles, the Concours is reserved for factory-originals in show-quality condition only.

-Matt Litwin



Inaugural Arizona Concours

THE ARIZONA BILTMORE RESORT and Hotel in Phoenix will host the first ever Arizona Concours d'Elegance, which will kick off the annual Arizona auction week. The event will take place January 12, and the featured marques will be Packard and Maserati. An expected 75-100 automobiles will compete in classes that range from vintage and Classic, to sports, racing and exotics. For more information, please visit www.arizonaconcours.com. All proceeds will benefit Make-A-Wish Arizona.





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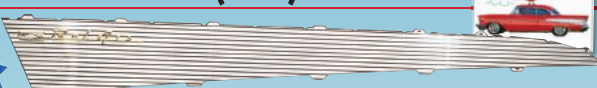
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EARLY FORD V-8 FOUNDATION

RE: Rotunda Sign

IF WE'D HAVE KEPT UP ON OUR CLUB PUBLICATION READING, we might have had a quick and easy answer to Roger Gardner's question regarding the identities of the logos in the Ford Rotunda sign (see *HCC* #111). Instead, after the issue went to press, we came upon the fact that the Early Ford V-8 Foundation now has the restored sign—one of the few remnants of the fire that destroyed the Rotunda—and is using it in front of their museum in Auburn, Indiana.

After the 1962 fire, which spared the sign in the nine-logo iteration seen in Gardner's photo, Ford sold the sign to Jerome-Duncan Ford in Sterling Heights, Michigan, which in turn donated it to the Utica, Michigan, school district, which used the sign to promote school and community events for several years before putting it into storage. In 2010, the sign was then donated to the Early Ford V-8 Foundation, which spent the last few years enlisting volunteers to help restore the sign.

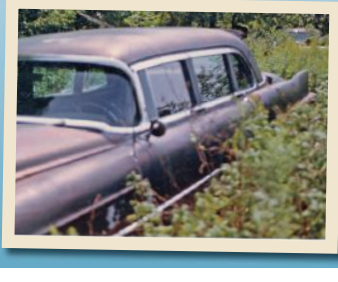
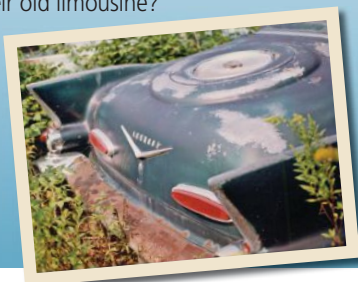
So a simple call to Josh Conrad, trustee at the Foundation, got us our answer: In the southwest part of the sign is the logo for the Ford industrial engines division, and in the southeast part is the logo for the Ford tractors division.

RE: Lost City of Black Gold

FINALLY, IN RESPONSE TO CRAIG WHATLEY'S PHOTOS of a mystery mixed-sheetmetal 1956 Cadillac (see *HCC* #110), we heard from a number of readers who speculated that it's some sort of factory custom, built for a wealthy individual. It's certainly a plausible theory, though we'd like to see some documentation before we accept it.

Meanwhile, reader Bobby Ewing of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, wrote in with some photos of a similar Cadillac he spotted in a junkyard—what appears to be a 1956 Series 75 Fleetwood limousine with Eldorado fins and badging, as well as a toilet seat trunk lid. "It was complete with 36,000 miles on it," Ewing wrote. "The interior looked new. It had Sabre wheels (gold), no rust and no dents." He promised to get us its serial number and body codes next time he visits that junkyard.

We do see that the 1957 Series 75 Fleetwood limousines adopted those Eldorado taillfins, but based on the roofline this one's clearly a 1956. So again, we're left wondering if it's a factory custom or somebody's attempt to update their old limousine?



RE: My New Toy

I'LL ADMIT TO NOT HAVING TAKEN MUCH TIME to research the aluminum-bodied streamliner Geoff Hacker gave me about a year ago (see *HCC* #101 and my column in the March 2013 issue of *Hemmings Motor News*), nor doing much with it other than shuffling it around my garage, but it seems I may have an answer as to who originally built it. First off, thanks to Harold James Kie of Long Beach, California, for suggesting one heck of a name for it: the *Esso Bee*. I probably won't paint black-and-yellow stripes on it as he suggested, but the name has definitely stuck. Second, thanks to reader Bill Keogh, who has taken up the monumental task of researching the *Esso Bee's* history for me over the last year, tracking down every Mynatt family and just about every Esso service station in the country of the last several decades. He's ruled out the possibility of it being at the 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair, as had been rumored, and seems to have found the Mynatt's Esso service station that it advertised—in Knoxville, Tennessee—and the owner of the service station, who very well could have built it—Raymond Thompson Mynatt. And he's not done yet. He's still scouring every imaginable resource for photos of the *Esso Bee* in its original configuration. We'll keep you updated with whatever additional information he comes across.



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



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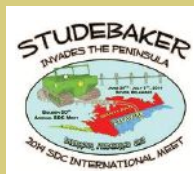
Clubbing in Colorado

TWO NOTEWORTHY NATIONAL CLUB MEETS will take place in Colorado Springs just a few days apart, which will be convenient for owners of Buick Rivieras and vintage Chevrolets. First, the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America will hold its 38th Middle West Meet on June 16-20. Then, on June 24-27 the Riviera Owners Association will hold its 30th annual meet at the base of nearby Pikes Peak. This central U.S. location and its fantastic scenery

should be a real draw for car owners who want to turn these events into their summer vacations. For more details go to www.vcca.org and www.rivowners.org.

Delaware Studebakers

THE STUDEBAKER DRIVER'S CLUB has recently announced that its 2014 International Meet will take place in Dover, Delaware, at the Dover Downs Hotel & Casino from June 29 to July 5. Besides the usual car show, swap meet and Studebaker seminars, there will also be driving tours to nearby Dover International Raceway and the Dover Air Force Museum. With its proximity to several big East Coast cities, this event has all the makings of being a huge gathering you won't want to miss. Additional information can be had at the club's website: www.studebakerdriversclub.com.



2014 Calendar

February 10-14 • Horseless Carriage Club
77th Convention and Tour • Sierra Vista, Arizona
www.hcca.org

May 28-31 • Vintage Thunderbird Club International • National Meet • New Orleans, Louisiana • vintagethunderbirdclub.net

June 11-14 • Chrysler 300 Club
National Meet • Uncasville, Connecticut
www.chrysler300club.com/events.htm

June 17-21 • Pontiac-Oakland Club International • National Meet
Wichita, Kansas • www.poci.org

June 29-July 5 • Studebaker Drivers Club
Golden Anniversary Meet • Dover, Delaware
www.studebakerdriversclub.com

July 8-12 • Cadillac-La Salle Club
Grand National • Lake George, New York
www.cadillaclasalleclub.org

July 23-26 • Buick Club of America
National Meet • Portland, Oregon
www.buickclub.org

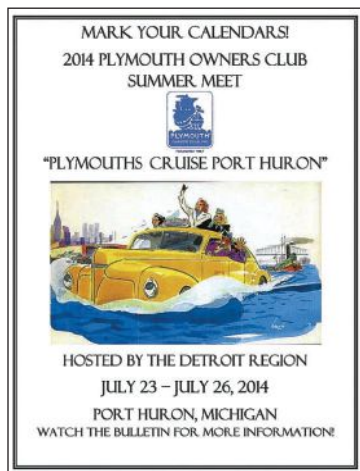
August 2 • H.H. Franklin Club • 61st Annual Trek • Cazenovia, New York • www.franklinclub.org

Franklin Vintage

OWNERS, HISTORIANS AND ADMIRERS of Franklin automobiles will be delighted to learn of this spectacular new book that has recently been published by the H.H. Franklin Club. Written by noted Franklin historian Sinclair Powell, within the hardcovers of its broad landscape format, it contains over 650 photographs spread among its 400 pages detailing Franklin's rich and interesting history. Proceeds of the book benefit the H.H. Franklin Club Library Digitization Project. Cost is \$60, U.S.; \$70, Canada-Mexico; \$100, outside North America. To order your copy, go to the club's website at www.franklinclub.org, or make your check payable to: H.H. Franklin Club, c/o Mark Chaplin, 50 Barrington St., Rochester, NY 14607.



Send details of upcoming events, or photographs and a few paragraphs about recent events to:
Tom Comerro, Club News c/o Hemmings Classic Car, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201. Email: tcomerro@hemmings.com



Plymouths Cruise Port Huron

THE 2014 SUMMER MEET of the Plymouth Owners Club will take place in Port Huron, Michigan, on July 23-26. Hosted by the Detroit Region, this meet is bound to be one of the club's largest.

The club is also offering all 48 years of its club magazine, the *Plymouth Bulletin*, on DVD. This two-disc set is easily searchable and includes every page from issue one. Cost is \$39.95, plus \$1.50 s&h. Contact: Plymouth Owners Club, Box 416, Cavalier, North Dakota 58220; website: www.plymouthbulletin.com.

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Showtime for Barrett-Jackson

THE 6TH ANNUAL BARRETT-JACKSON LAS VEGAS AUCTION at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino on September 26-28 generated \$32 million in gross sales for a 41-percent increase over last year's Las Vegas event. Nearly 70,000 collector car fans were there to witness the celebration of American cars, including this 1931 Lincoln Model K Convertible, which sold for \$352,000. Barrett-Jackson is taking the excitement into next year with its annual winter wonder at Westworld of Scottsdale, Arizona, on January 12-19, 2014. Contact: www.barrett-jackson.com



Windy City Windfall

MECUM'S CHICAGO AUCTION on October 10-12 saw 965 cars cross the auction block, with 615 sold for a 64-percent sell-through rate and a grand total of \$18,634,223 in sales. The unique Corvette of famed designer Harley Earl himself took top spot at \$1.5 million, though there was something for everybody. Mecum's Infonet live video revealed a 1989 Ford Bronco XLT sell for \$11,000 and an original 1970 Chrysler Newport go for \$4,750.

Mecum's next big auction will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, on December 5-7, and then they'll ring in the New Year in Kissimmee, Florida, with a full ten days and 3,000 vehicles worth of auction bonanza at the annual *Where the Cars Are* event at the Osceola Heritage Park from January 17-26, 2014. Contact: www.mecum.com

SAM MURTAUGH/MECUM AUCTIONS

BARRETT-JACKSON



Dusty Chevrolets

VANDERBRINK AUCTIONS drew in Chevrolet fans from around the world with its Lambrecht Chevrolet auction in Pierce, Nebraska, on September 28-29. The auction was an accumulated array of low- or no-mileage Chevrolets, many of which were in irresistible original condition.

This 1958 Chevrolet Cameo pickup, with a mere 1.3 miles on the odometer, sold for an amazing \$140,000, with a layer of dust at no extra charge. For more coverage and photos from Nebraska, head on over to [Hemmings.com](http://hemmings.com) and search all articles for "Lambrecht," or type <http://blog.hemmings.com/?s=lambrecht+cameo> into your web browser.

ROCKY ROTELLA

AUCTION PROFILE

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE about the perfect patina on this 1910 chain drive Schmidt? The truck was offered at the RM Auctions Hershey, Pennsylvania, event and was originally used as a showcase vehicle for the Schmidt Brothers company of Crossing, Illinois. This preservation class award-winning truck was built to drum up future sales for the Schmidts, who began selling their trucks to the public in 1911, yet closed up shop in 1913 with less than 100 trucks manufactured. Proceeds from the sale went to benefit the AACA Museum.



CAR	1910 Schmidt Truck	CONDITION	#2/Original
AUCTIONEER	RM Auctions	RESERVE	Unknown
LOCATION	Hershey, Pennsylvania	AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	N/A
DATE	October 10-11, 2013	SELLING PRICE	\$18,700
LOT NUMBER	119		

RM AUCTIONS

JANUARY

Calendar

9 • Bonhams • Las Vegas, Nevada
415-391-4000 • www.bonhams.com

9-11 • MidAmerica Auctions
Las Vegas, Nevada • 651-633-9655
www.midamericaauctions.com

12-19 • Barrett-Jackson
Scottsdale, Arizona • 480-421-6694
www.barrett-jackson.com

15-19 • Russo and Steele • North
Scottsdale, Arizona • 602-252-2697
www.russoandsteele.com

16-17 • RM Auctions • Phoenix,
Arizona • RM Auctions • 519-352-4575
www.rmauctions.com

17-18 • Gooding & Co
Scottsdale, Arizona • 310-899-1960
www.goodingco.com

17-18 • Silver Auctions • Fort
McDowell, Arizona • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

17-26 • Mecum • Kissimmee, Florida
262-275-5050 • www.mecum.com

25 • Peach Auctions • Byron,
Georgia • 478-956-0910
www.peachauctionsales.com



AUCTIONS AMERICA

Retractions in Red

FROM THE RETRACTIONS DEPARTMENT comes the news that the Chrysler Imperial listed in October's Auction Profile was not a Frank Sinatra edition. While this car was originally represented as a Frank Sinatra Edition based on the information Auctions America was provided, subsequent examination determined that this was not the case. Hemmings and Auctions America apologize for any confusion this may have caused. Contact: www.auctionsamerica.com



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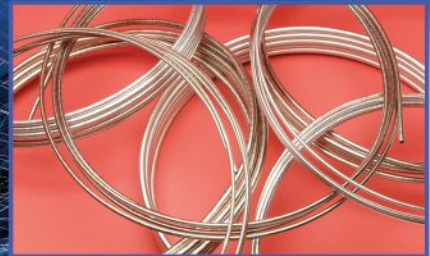
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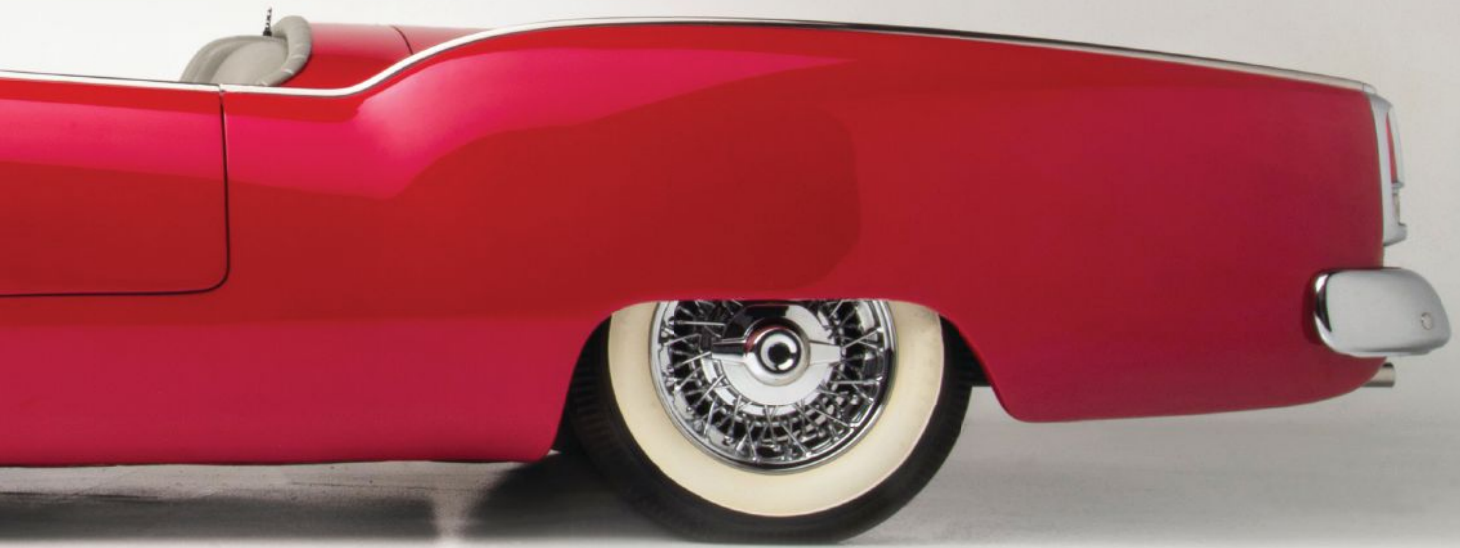
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1954 Chicago Auto Show and New York Autorama Show Plymouth Belmont One-Off Concept Car
This singular example was designed by Chrysler Corporation, under the direction of Virgil Exner.

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1954 Henney-Packard Landaulet

WHAT A WAY TO GO. That's honestly what crossed our minds when we pulled this 1:43-scale version of the impressive 1954 Henney-Packard Landaulet Funeral Coach out of its packaging. The latest piece in Brooklin Models' Community Service Vehicles series of Professional Cars, this hefty white metal replica measures a full six inches in length, and it's accented with handsome brightwork. Officially approved by the Professional Car Society, this Henney-Packard shows off the sleek rear styling penned by former GM designer Richard Arbib. It's a fine collectible for fans of post-war Packards and professional cars alike. Cost: \$159.95

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www.diecastdirect.com



Raise the Hood

THIS SPRING WILL MARK 50 YEARS of Ford's most famous contribution to sporty personal motoring, the eternally youthful Mustang. Show your allegiance, and stay warm, with The Ford Collection's Mustang Contrast Hoodie (item 300762). Made from Heavy Blend fleece, it sports a white inner hood, a gray flat-cord drawstring and a black body with a screen-printed Mustang Pony. The sweatshirt's ribbed cuffs and waistband and roomy front pouch pocket are engineered for comfort. It's available in adult sizes medium through 3XL. Cost: \$39.95 (Medium-XL)/\$41.95 (2XL-3XL)

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It's Mopar Time

FANS OF THE STYLISH AND ADVANCED 1959-1963 products of Chrysler Corporation will want to pick up this cheerful Mopar Arrow Neon Clock for their garage or den. Decorated with the Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler and Imperial nameplates, this 15-inch-diameter clock plugs into a 110-volt wall outlet to run the white neon accent, while the clock's movement runs on AA batteries. The neon light is easily controlled with an on/off switch on the cord. Cost: \$99.95, with free shipping

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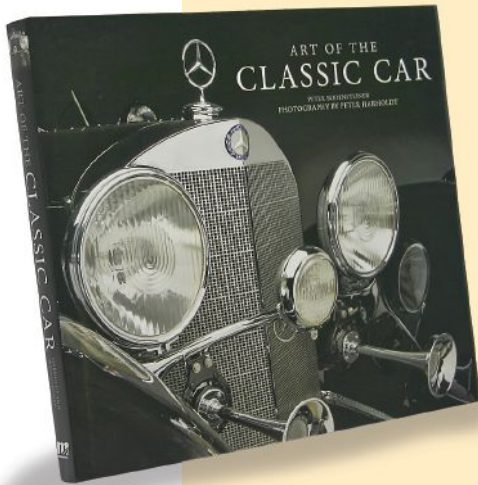
1939 Nash Ambassador Eight

NASH'S ALL-NEW 1939 LINE was one of the most beautiful of the late-1930s streamlined era, with their cars' prow-like center grilles and smooth, fender-integrated headlamps. The Brooklin Collection has modeled the 125-inch wheelbase Ambassador Eight Touring Sedan in the period-perfect shade of solid Brunswick Blue. This spectacular 1:43 model sports tiny bright metal trunk hinges, realistic black running boards and a tan interior with woodgrain dashboard finish. It's an unusual subject for a scale model, and very nicely done. Cost: \$129.50

800-718-1866

www.diecastdirect.com

Art of the Classic Car



LONG BEFORE 1951 when New York's Museum of Modern Art first exhibited the Pinin Farina Cisitalia 202 GT, people had recognized that certain cars were so balanced in their form, so unified in their design, so skillfully crafted of such fine materials, and were so rare, as to be worthy of special veneration. Many of these works of art hail from the Classic Era, and the recently published *Art of the Classic Car* curates 25 of them breathtakingly well.

This book should come with white cotton gloves, as readers will be reluctant to finger the 222 pages, many of which are piano black—a hallmark of noted automobile photographer Peter Harholdt's studio technique. Because Harholdt's subjects rest in the hush of an all black distractionless space, their swelling and sweeping coachwork, richly saturated colors, streaks of chrome, burl wood dashes, engine-turned panels, supple tanned hides—are all more fully realized by the viewer.

Each automobile is classified into one of four sections (Open Cars, Convertibles, Coupes and Sedans) where it is thoroughly explored over 8-10 pages using a combination of sumptuous photographs, some stretching to the full 24-inch width of the book, and text written by Peter Bodensteiner. The writing is efficient, providing just the most relevant and tantalizing explanations of each car's history, design and specifications—ensuring that every encounter with a Delage, Duesenberg and Packard remains the aesthetic experience it was meant to be. Cost: \$37.50

800-458-0454

—By J. Daniel Beaudry

www.motorbooks.com

Southwestern Sunshine

IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN TO THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, you will agree that there is something uniquely beautiful about the way that that region's light spills over objects and illuminates them with a warm, soft glow. New Mexico resident and noted Southwestern landscape artist Joyce Dant has developed, during the course of 30 years, an amazing technique for capturing that light over the area's many varied textures, be they natural or man-made.

While the ancient Native American ruins, rare desert flowers and rock formations of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona are among Joyce's favorite painting subjects to capture on location in *plein air* style, she has recently been inspired by vintage vehicles and rusting earth-moving machinery. She photographs these machines in detail on location, and then sets to work in acrylic paint on canvas in her Santa Fe studio: "The colors are more subtle than any photograph can convey; the light is constantly changing; and I am capturing an impression of a moment. I want you to smell the earth and feel the breeze when you look at my paintings.

"I was drawn to paint the cars, trucks and road machinery because of their wonderful design and character," she continues. "Because they are so beautifully designed, they become pleasing abstract shapes and patterns when examined in close detail." Joyce's original, uniquely photo-realistic machinery paintings range in size from 18 x 18 inches to 40 x 40 inches, and prices range from \$1,600 to \$7,500.

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joycedant43@q.com



Makin' Tracks



Old Yeller



Red Tail Lights



Nash



Chevy Truck

Well-Off Wagons

Chrysler's luxury-laden station wagons successfully navigate the fast-changing turbulent Sixties

PART 2: 1960-1968

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY CHRYSLER HISTORIC

There are probably very few among us who can't recall traveling down the Interstate during the "We" decade and noticing pre-teens peering out through the tailgates of behemoth station wagons. Quite possibly you were one of those precocious kids who would smile or make faces and wave at other motorists or use hand signals to urge truck drivers to honk their horns.

By 1960, station wagons were firmly entrenched in the American family's way of life, and Chrysler had been providing luxury models to serve that market for 11 consecutive model years. Socially, this coming era would best be described as tumultuous, but through it all, the Chrysler Town & Country flourished in sales.

There were dramatic advances in design and engineering at Chrysler during this time period, so let's take a closer look at how they were expressed in the corporation's top-of-the-line station wagons.

1960

For the dawning of the decade, Chrysler designed a new body and platform. Fresh Windsor and New Yorker Town & Country six-passenger and nine passenger pillarless hardtop station wagons appeared low and wide, continuing in the corporation's latest design trend.

Tailfins grew larger but were now angled out from the body. The Golden Lion emblem was centered in a trapezoidal grille, and its lower portion was shaped to incorporate a wide V-shaped bumper that curled up at its ends, akin to a villainous smile. Standard quad headlamps were accentuated by an eyebrow crease that contributed to the aggressive countenance. This design feature ran the length of the body, where halfway through the door it began to widen and ultimately created the tailfins. Taillamps were cut into the ends of the fins, and, like the front, the rear bumper featured kick-ups at either end. Backup lamps, standard on New Yorker and optional on Windsor, were in round bezels.

The New Yorker differed from the Windsor wagons in grille pattern, bars instead of small boxes, and side trim where it lacked the Windsor's longitudinal bright spear but gained wheel well and rocker moldings.

Body-on-frame construction had given way to a unit-body structure for 1960 in all models save the Imperial. Chrysler's "Unibody" consisted of a stamped steel body shell welded to boxed steel frame members to create a single unit. It promised more structural strength (less twist, squeaks and rattles) and potential weight savings.

The multi-leaf-spring rear and the differential would be located by the welded-in frame-members. However, to improve servicing, Chrysler's design wasn't completely

unitized. Instead, the Torsion-Aire front suspension and the engine would be mounted via a bolt-on sub-frame.

According to Chrysler, "Special stress machines prove Unibody 100% more resistant to twisting, 40% more resistant to bending." Additional benefits were higher seats and flatter floors. The Unibody Windsor Town & Country wagons rode on a 122-inch wheelbase and the New Yorker's was 126 inches. And for increased comfort and shoulder support, the new High-Tower driver's seat featured a taller seatback.

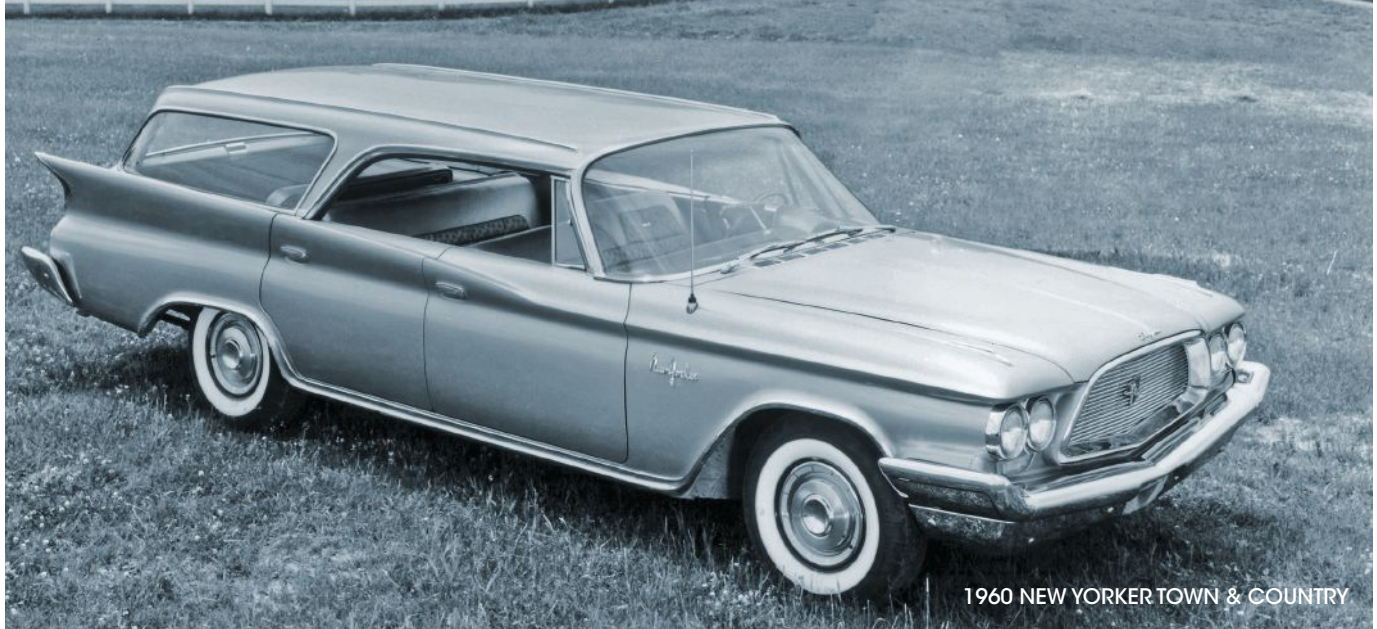
Since maintaining the body shell's structural integrity was now paramount, body rusting was of more concern. Insurance was provided via a seven-step dipping process involving phosphate coating baths and a paint adhesion promoter bath, among others, for the body shell.

Inside was also new for 1960, including the seat and door panel upholstery designs and dashboard layout. The AstraDome instrument panel was, according to the dealer brochure, "An exciting array of instruments housed in a three-dimensional setting—bathed in a restful, glare-free glow by revolutionary Panelescent lighting." As stated in *The Complete History of Chrysler Corporation 1924 to 1985*, the electroluminescent lighting used, "electrical current that passed through conductive surfaces to light a layer of phosphorescent ceramic material. A sprayed-on coating covered an opaque plastic film containing the dial markings, which made them stand out brightly."

As was true for 1959, the Windsor's standard engine was the 383-cu.in. wedge head V-8 with a two-barrel carburetor that developed 305 hp. The New Yorker retained the four-barrel-equipped 350-hp 413-cu.in. wedge head engine. The TorqueFlite was standard on all the wagons, as were "Total-Contact" 12-inch drum brakes with "Cyclebonded" linings. Rear gear was 2.93. Power steering and brakes were standard on New Yorker and optional on Windsor Town & Country. "Safety-Rim" 14-inch wheels were fitted with 8.50 x 14 tires on the Windsor and 9.00 x 14 tires on the New Yorker wagons.

Standard features of note were a step-on parking brake, a lockable storage compartment under the cargo area floor in two seat wagons that added 10.2 cubic feet of storage space to the already cavernous 95.3 cubic feet of cargo area and a power window for the tailgate.

Carryover options of interest from previous years include:



A/C Deluxe Dual unit, the Automatic Beam Changer, Auto-Pilot cruise control, electronically operated self-dimming inside mirror, six-way power seat, vacuum power door locks and Sure-Grip differential.

There were 1,120 six-passenger Windsor wagons and 1,026 nine-passenger models built, along with 624 New Yorker six-passenger and 671 nine-passenger wagons.

1961

A facelift brought canted quad headlamps flanking a grille that was now an upside down trapezoid over a straight front bumper that curled up at either side. Though the rear quarter panels appeared largely unchanged, except for model trim updates, the door sheetmetal had to be revised, since the front crease that ran from the headlamps to the rear fin was eliminated for 1961. These fins remained when the rest of the industry was phasing them out.

Newports featured horizontal bars in the grille and bright side trim that ran across the fender sides into the doors and accentuated the transition to the tailfins. The tailgate featured two transverse bright trim pieces. Conversely, New Yorkers added seven vertical bars to the grille, bright wheel well and rocker moldings, larger bright trim pieces for fender tops and doors that had a lion emblem, nine chrome slashes on each quarter and a bright panel between the tailgate trim.

Model offerings also changed. In 1960, there was

Windsor, Saratoga (no station wagon) and New Yorker, in ascending order of luxury, power and price. For 1961 a new model, priced lower than the Windsor and using its 122-inch wheelbase, was introduced with the revived Newport nameplate, and the mid-level Saratoga was retired. Pricewise, the Windsor did not increase to fill the gap left by the Saratoga, thereby leaving two low-priced wagons and one high-priced one.

Newport used a smaller 361-cu.in. Firebolt V-8 engine with 265 hp, a two-barrel carburetor and 9.0:1 compression to run on regular fuel. The New Yorker's 350-hp 413 was carried over from 1960. The TorqueFlite remained standard on the New Yorker, used a 2.93 rear gear, and was optional on the Newport. A three-speed manual transmission was standard on the Newport with a 3.23 rear gear.

Beneath the rockers remained much the same for 1961, but alternators were now standard, and unlike the generators they replaced, the electrical system produced current at slow engine speeds and even at idle to keep the battery charged.

With close to \$190 savings over the 1960 Windsor Town & Country, sales for the six-passenger and nine-passenger Newport Town & Countries jumped to 1,832 and 1,571, respectively. Despite the fact that New Yorker Town & Country was now over \$1,200 higher in price at more than \$4,700 and \$4,800 when compared to the Newports, production still increased to 676 and 760, respectively.





1962 NEWPORT TOWN & COUNTRY

1962

Tailfins were retired, and the new quarter panels revealed a horizontal protrusion that integrated with a new tailgate and thin wraparound taillights. The rear bumper no longer curled up at the edges.

A small box pattern characterized the Newport's grille with an emblem in the upper driver's side. New Yorkers had a fine crosshatch meshwork, with an emblem in the center of a large crosshair trim piece. New body-length beltline molding and three small crowns graced each side of the Newport. The New Yorker's fender-top trim was more refined and narrower than 1961; thin beltline rear quarter trim was added, and wheel well and rocker moldings were retained.

Standard Newport 361 and New Yorker 413 engines were carried over from 1961, with the latter renamed FirePower 340, which reflected its 10-less horsepower output.

Chrysler removed 60 pounds from the TorqueFlite by replacing the cast iron case with a smaller aluminum one that also allowed a reduction in transmission floor hump size to gain more legroom. The engine fan, radiator and starter were more efficient and lighter. Brakes, rear gears and tire sizes were carried over from 1961.

The Town & Country wagons were listed as having special torsion bars and shocks. New sealed suspension components needed no lubrication for 32,000 miles. The fuse box was

moved to the glove compartment for easier servicing and featured a removable cover.

Sales continued to grow. The Newport six-passenger wagon sold 3,271 units and the nine-passenger, 2,363. New Yorker Town & Country wagon production reached 728 and 793 units.

1963

The 1963 Chryslers were completely redesigned with the only recognizable vestiges of the previous model being a few styling cues, the general grille shape and station wagon's roofline. The grille was straight at its top to better match the new hood, and there was a new bumper beneath it. Horizontal quad headlamps bulged into the fenders, and an eyebrow ridge began over the headlights and wrapped around the fenders to become the body side beltline in the subtly sculpted panels.

Though the rear bumper looks much like the 1962's, the taillamps were changed to large round units with bright trim, and the tailgate no longer had bulges to meet the 1962's contours.

The Newport's grille had many vertical bars split by three thicker crossbars, and bright trim accented the beltline. New Yorkers employed a split-grille look with a rectangular egg crate design and also used bright beltline and fender-top trim, and six chrome louvers on the front fenders under the gold anodized "New Yorker" script (the latter was also on the tailgate). "Chrysler" script was used on the Newport.



1963 NEW YORKER TOWN & COUNTRY



1964 NEWPORT TOWN & COUNTRY

Inside, the AstraDome was replaced with a conventional dial-gauge setup with a large speedometer flanked by two smaller gauges on each side. Pushbuttons for the TorqueFlite remained to the left, but were now in a vertical pattern. Heater controls were to the right of the gauges and echoed the appearance of the transmission buttons. The steering wheel was a rounded square shape to provide more legroom beneath it. Interior panels and upholstery designs were also new and varied between Newport and New Yorker.

A 122-inch wheelbase was used for both the Newport and New Yorker Town & Countrys. With the redesign, cargo area was reduced to 91.9 cubic feet, and the Newport's cargo floor was covered with Vinoleum, and the New Yorker's with carpeting.

Standard 361 and 413 engines and transmissions were carried over from 1962, as was the 3.23 rear gearing for Newports with the three-speed manual, but the ratio was revised to 2.76:1 for TorqueFlite-equipped models.

The suspension systems with Town & Country wagons again received special torsion bars and shocks. An anti-roll bar was mentioned (specific to nine-passenger wagons), and seven leaf rear springs were employed. Brakes featured a new duo-servo setup, and drum diameter was reduced to 11 inches from 12, but they were wider, as lining area increased. Tire size was reduced from 1962 to 8.00 x 14 on a 14 x 6-inch wheel for Newport and 8.50 x 14 on a 14 x 6.5-inch wheel for New Yorker

Town & Countrys. A new parking lever lock for the TorqueFlite immobilized the driveshaft for parking on grades. Most options were carried over from 1962.

Buyers responded positively to the new design, and the new 5-year 50,000-mile powertrain warranty. Chrysler built 3,618 six-passenger Newport Town & Countrys and 2,948 nine-passenger versions. New Yorker Town & Country production increased to 950 and 1,244.

1964

It was a year of refinement with bright trim added to the leading edge of the hood and a new bumper that dipped beneath the grille, making it look slightly taller. Also new were large bright headlight bezels to further integrate the front-end styling elements. Taillamps were changed to a near diamond shape and were housed in thick chrome bezels.

The New Yorker's grille was split once again, but now used thin horizontal bars in each section, a chrome center rib was added to the hood, as were bright wheel well and rocker moldings. Beltline trim for both models was new, now widening at the back door and quarter panel.

The standard 265-hp 361 V-8 for Newport and 340-hp 413 engine for the New Yorker remained. Transmission and rear gear ratios were carried over from 1963, as were the chassis specs.



1965 NEWPORT TOWN & COUNTRY



1966 TOWN & COUNTRY

Notable options for 1964 included AM/FM radio, seven-way tilt steering wheel and adjustable headrests.

Production continued to increase, as Chrysler built 3,720 six-passenger and 3,041 nine-passenger Newport Town & Country's and 1,190 six-passenger and 1,603 nine-passenger New Yorker Town & Country's for 1964.

1965

The Town & Country's shape was all-new, with sharper creases and the appearance of more size. Even the roofline was new, and the hardtop styling was retired. Its grille was wall-to-wall with quad headlamps set at the edges. Newport's and New Yorker's used different grille patterns, and New Yorker's added rectangular bezels for the headlamps and transparent covers. Bright beltline trim further accentuated the design on both models, while New Yorker's also had bright wheel well and lower body trim. Taillamps were much larger and extended from the quarter panel into a cove in the tailgate and were divided to appear as three lights per side.

The instrument panel was redesigned with a near 180-degree sweep speedometer that was similar to that used in the AstraDome era, but on a single plane and modernized. Other controls were updated but placement remained similar. The pushbuttons for the TorqueFlite were retired for a conventional column-mounted shift lever. Upholstery and panel patterns were also new.

Unlike the other 1965 Chrysler models, the wagons rode on a shorter 121-inch wheelbase, yet were still 219 inches long and 79.5 inches wide. The redesign resulted in a larger 97 cu.ft. of cargo area, and two-seat models retained the additional 10-cu.ft. of lockable storage space beneath the floor.

To make loading easier, the tailgate was specially hinged to swing it beyond the bumper and flatter to the floor; hinged filler panels covered the gaps between the tailgate and floor and those between the folded-down seats and floor to create a smoother surface.

Newport Town & Country's changed to a regular gas 270-hp Firebolt 383 two-barrel V-8, and the New Yorker retained its FirePower 340 413-cu.in. four-barrel engine. Transmission choices were carried over, and the TorqueFlite featured a "Park" position.

The suspension was revised for a softer ride, and tire sizes were increased to 8.55 x 14 for Newport's and 9.00 x 14 for New Yorker's. The 11-inch brakes remained.

New fender-mounted turn signal indicators were standard on New Yorker, and an optional towing package allowed up to 5,500 lb. hauling capacity.

Sales moved upward for Newport Town & Country's with 4,683 for the six-passenger wagon and 3,738 for the nine-passenger wagon. For the New Yorker Town & Country, totals were 1,368 and 1,697.



1967 TOWN & COUNTRY



1968 TOWN & COUNTRY

1966

This year, the Chrysler Town & Country station wagon was marketed like its own series and took styling cues from both the Newport and New Yorker lines. The front end was restyled for all Chryslers, with a new bumper and more aggressive forward jutting grille and fenders. Taillamps for the station wagon were slightly revised, and a bright panel was added to the tailgate cove. The grille was from the Newport; fender mounted turn signals and 9.00 x 14 tires came from the New Yorker, as did the wheel covers. Side trim was revised, and "Town & Country" emblems were affixed to the rear quarters; textured aluminum tailgate trim featured "Chrysler" lettering.

Now standard were the TorqueFlite, power steering, power brakes and a carpeted cargo area. The 270-hp 383 V-8 was augmented with an optional 325-hp 383 four-barrel and a new 365-hp 440 TNT four-barrel engine with dual exhaust and a dual-snorkel air cleaner. Standard rear gearing was 2.76 with 383 two-barrel, and 3.23 gears with the 383 and 440 four-barrel engines.

The suspension and drum brakes were carried over, but 11.875-inch power front disc brakes (required 15-inch wheels) were a new option. Other interesting ones included: Tilt-A-Scope tilt and telescoping steering wheel, HD suspension, bucket seats with reclining passenger seat and headrests, power vent windows, multiple AM and AM/FM radios, and Safeguard Sentinel lighting.

By model year-end, 9,035 six-passenger wagons were built and 8,567 nine-passenger wagons were sold.

1967

New grille, bumper and fender cap shapes were less aggressive, but the quad headlamps were retained, and the front end had more dimension. The sculpted body sides were updated, and the trim was changed to bright wheel well and rocker moldings. New triple-tiered taillamps now wrapped around the quarter panels and highlighted a new tailgate and bumper.

The instrument cluster was redesigned and employed a horizontal speedometer with smaller gauges contained in the same housing on either side. The slim rectangular shape of the gauges was mirrored in the glove box door of the passenger side, and the radio rode high in the center of the dash with air ducts, HVAC controls, and dual ashtrays beneath it. Toggle switches and thumbwheels were used for the controls.

Carried over were the standard 270-hp 383, the optional 325-hp 383, and the standard TorqueFlite, which now gained torque capacity when used with the 440 engine. The optional 440 engine was now rated at a lower 350 hp.

A 2.76 rear gear was standard on the 270-hp 383 and optional for the 325-hp 383. A 3.23:1 ratio was standard for the 325-hp 383 and 350-hp 440, and optional for the 270-hp 383.

An energy-absorbing steering column and dual-circuit braking were new safety items. The dealer brochure lists disc brakes and 15-inch wheels as standard on Town & Country for 1967, but the *Chrysler Data Book* states they were optional. Other interesting options included a 3-in-1 divided bench seat and cornering lights.

Town & Country production reached 7,183 for six-passenger wagons and 7,520 for nine-passenger wagons.

1968

For 1968, the front end was redesigned and again shared with the Newport. The grille was no longer divided at the center, and the new one came to a more distinctive prow at the front. Headlamps were further recessed and the new bumper was contoured to accentuate the changes, and the air intakes near the marker lights were eliminated.

Though the side sheetmetal contours remained the same, light mahogany-textured woodgrain paneling, trimmed with dark walnut wood textured moldings, was added. Side marker lamps also debuted. In the rear, a bright applique on the lower portion of the tailgate further incorporated the taillamp design elements into it. On a thin band of trim rode the "Chrysler" lettering.

The standard 383 engine's power increased by 20, to 290 horsepower, and the optional 383 four-barrel increased to 330 hp, thanks to new freer flowing induction, dual exhaust and new cylinder heads, while the optional 440 remained at 350 hp. The TorqueFlite was once again standard, and rear gearing for the 290-hp 383 was 2.76 with 3.23 optional; and for the 330-hp 383 and 350-hp 440, it was 3.23 standard, with 2.76 optional.

Power front disc brakes were listed as optional, once again with drums standard, and the tire size for non-disc cars was 8.85 x 14.

To meet federal emissions standards, the Clean Air System, which was introduced for California cars in 1967, was used across the board for 1968. Seatback latches for front and second seats were employed.

New options of note were the Golden Tone AM radio with stereo tape player and multiple speakers, and a simplified turn signal stalk-mounted Automatic Speed Control.

Production for the six-passenger wagon crested at 9,908, and the nine-passenger wagon sold an impressive 12,233 units.

In our next issue, Part 3 in our discussion of Chrysler station wagons will take us from 1969 through 1981. 🐾



Sovereign Studebaker

Eighty-two years on, this 1932 Dictator Coupe is still in the care of the same family

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

When it comes to the class of '32, the most popular star is the Ford. Yet the Studebaker Dictator makes for a strong challenger, as its striking design is equally bold. Even though the Dictator was Studebaker's lowest-priced model, look closely and you'll see that it's adorned with many more intricate details and decorative enhancements than most other similarly priced cars that year, all of which give it a much more upscale appearance.

Studebaker built approximately 5,900 Dictators of all chassis types in 1932, a year that marked some subtle changes to the model and a year that would see company sales drop to just 37 percent of the previous high-water mark set in 1929. But it wasn't just Studebaker suffering a bad spell; the entire market reached its nadir in 1932. The Great Depression may have hammered car sales and caused



other fiscal tragedies, but it did little to slow down the designers and engineers creating America's cars. The Dictator was transformed into Studebaker's base six-cylinder model for 1933, but its name was used again for the 1934 model year.

In an evolutionary nod to the first implementations of aerodynamics, the windshields on the 1932 models were slightly canted back compared to previous model years. Designers also rounded off the corners of the body. Although they made no fuel mileage claims, Studebaker advertised that these improvements allowed for top speeds of as much as three miles per hour faster than previous models. Other body changes included wider front doors that helped add additional legroom while making it easier to enter and exit the cabin. Wider and deeper front seats surely also contributed to a more comfortable interior.

The Dictator Eight shared its 117-inch wheelbase with the entry-level Six, but instead of a straight-

six engine, it used a 221-cu.in straight-eight. Its 85 horsepower represented a 5 horsepower increase over the slightly larger six-cylinder, while both engines were L-head formats. Based on the Barney Roos design that first appeared in the 1928 President Eight, the 1932 Dictator Straight-Eight also benefited from Studebaker's contemporary fling with Pierce-Arrow, having gained a total of nine main bearings a couple of years previous, just like the superior Pierce-Arrows. By 1931, all

Studebaker eight-cylinder engines had a crankshaft with oil passages drilled to lubricate each of those bearings. Studebaker had built a sterling reputation as a car with the high quality of a Cadillac, but with a price much closer to Ford or Chevrolet, and its well-designed engines were a large part of earning that reputation. Studebaker enhanced its quality and driveability another degree in 1932 with the adoption of synchromesh for its three-speed transmission, which required the engineers to move the engine wear-saving freewheeling mechanism to the tail end of the gearbox.

Studebaker offered the Dictator, the company's lowest-priced eight-cylinder car, in no fewer than five different body styles, including this coupe. The coupe itself was sold in several trim levels: the basic coupe, the Sport Coupe, the more luxurious Regal Coupe and, if you were looking for something sporty as well as luxurious, there was the Regal Sport Coupe. The Regal option included chrome wheels,

For me, this car is a lifetime keeper. The family history and trust placed in me by my grandfather to have his most-treasured and beloved car makes this car a real honor to own.





The Dictator coupe's interior features simple round gauges set in a wood dash that matches the extensive wood around the window frames. Transitone radio (top right) was a \$74.50 option.

a pair of side-mounted spares (and the fenders to accommodate them), a rear luggage rack, a chromed radiator mascot and a pair of chrome salon horns mounted under the oval headlamps.

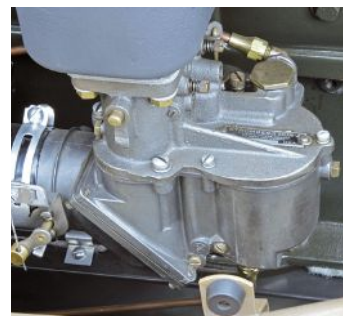
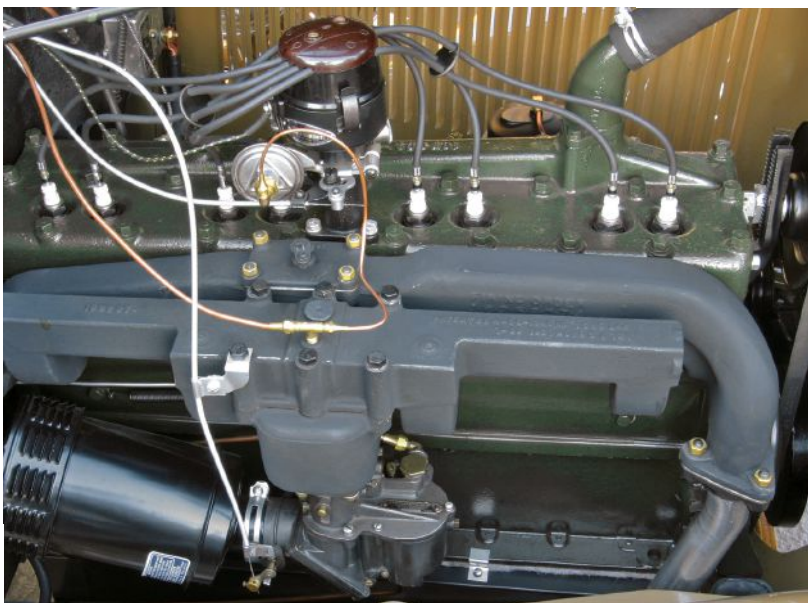
The brown over tan paint scheme, accented with a cream stripe and those shiny chrome wheels, remains somewhat unusual, but mimics the more expensive—and more powerful—Commander and President lines. Designers were at the top of their game in the 1930s, which is evident by the brown accent that runs back along the hood hinge, and at the base of the new-for-1932 canted windshield, divides, continuing along the waist line as well as to the top of the A-pillar, where it covers the roof and flows down over the trunk, again meeting the waist detail. Optional side-mount covers in body color, too, add elegance to an already well-balanced design. The Coupe models did not include a rumble seat and thus were made for only a driver and a pas-

senger: a cozy way for a couple to travel in style.

The owner of our feature car, Roy Asbahr, has very distinct memories as a child sitting at the wheel of his grandfather's 1932 Studebaker Dictator Regal Coupe, his small hands wrapped around the giant steering. "My grandfather bought this car new," Roy proudly tells us. "He special ordered it from the dealer in Bellingham, Washington. His first two cars had been Studebakers. He had a 1921 model and a '27. He got into an accident in the 1927 Studebaker in 1932, and decided it was time for a new car. He was superintendent at a mine, a job that provided him with perks, including a garage. He needed a new car, and the factory rep was at the dealer when he came in. He told the rep that he wanted something fancier than what Studebaker had on offer, and the rep told him that if he let them build it, he wouldn't see another car like it on the entire West Coast. They had a new color combo that season, Fawn Tan and Coffee Brown. Then they added every accessory they could sell, including the chrome artillery wheels. It was a totally optioned-out car, and by Depression-era standards,

At 221 cubic inches, the L-head straight-eight engine produced a respectable 85 hp at 3,200 RPM, with a compression ratio of just 5:1.

Optional side-mount covers in body color, too, add elegance to an already well-balanced design. The Coupe models did not include a rumble seat and thus were made for only a driver and a pas-





it was unique.” James took delivery of this Dictator Regal Coupe in June of 1932.

Young Roy’s fascination with the car caught his grandfather’s attention, and Roy found himself getting driving lessons in the Studebaker at age 11. James rewarded Roy’s fascination four years later when, still too young for a driver’s license, Roy received the Studebaker as a gift from his grandfather in 1952. Some heavy rod knocking on the way home from his grandfather’s house incited Roy’s father to have the engine replaced. A mechanic tried to persuade him to install a more modern Pontiac engine in the Studebaker, but Roy insisted that doing so would be the wrong move and was ultimately able to convince his father to get the Studebaker engine fixed instead.

When Roy bought a 1951 Chevrolet Bel Air, the Dictator began spending more time off the road than on it. Years turned into decades, and finally, in 2001, after nearly 50 years in his possession and all 70 years since new in his family, Roy started the full restoration of the Dictator Coupe. He took pains to make sure the car was as close to original as possible, though he did finally retire the original tires. He made sure to use the proper corded Bedford cloth for the interior and was adamant about painting it in the same shades of Fawn Tan and Coffee Brown, a low-volume color combination for Studebaker that had been introduced just weeks before the car was purchased.

When it came time to restore the old Studebaker, there was no question in Roy’s mind that he wanted to get it right yet still make the car drivable. Roy estimates the restoration took about 2,500 hours. “We carefully documented and photographed the car before disassembly. This was a must for it to be

properly re-assembled.” Among the more difficult aspects of the restoration was the proper re-refurbishing of the chromed artillery wheels. Wishing to do it right, Roy had the wheels disassembled, stripped completely and then re-chromed before being straightened. The look is simply marvelous.

In the interest of driveability and reliability, Roy substituted the original three-speed, freewheeling transmission with an over-drive unit out of a 1951 Studebaker. The newer gearbox allows Roy to keep up with traffic without significantly raising the RPM of the straight-eight engine.

Our West Coast editor, Jeff Koch, had the opportunity for some seat time in Roy’s faithfully restored coupe. “We were able to take Roy’s 1932 Studebaker out for a few miles in the hills around Spokane, Washington.” Jeff recounts. “You shut that solid door behind you with a reassuring thunk, and take stock. Cabin architecture was clearly developed in the days before ergonomics, or for far smaller people than my six-foot, one-inch frame. Headroom was generous, thanks in part to a bench seat that you sink into, but the steering wheel and column leaned right, which threw me off-center. The throttle pedal felt as if it was sprung with a suspension coil—no pedal misapplication here, if you’re going to go anywhere, you’re darned well going to mean it. The smattering of gauges—speedometer, water temp, amps, gas gauge and oil pressure—were clear enough, and looked dashing in their elegant straked bezel, but they were mounted a little low for better visibility.

“The Studebaker optional Transitone radio was mounted to the left of the gauges on the steering column and was easily-enough fiddled with, thanks to the thumb dials. A less elegant solution was the speaker: Its positioning under the instrument panel and straddling the steering column hampers access to the pedals, particularly the brake. I was constantly worried that I’d kick the speaker in as I was go-

New features on the 1932 Studebaker Dictator included a slightly rear-slanted windshield (said to be good for 3 MPH additional top speed) and a distinctive V-shaped radiator.



owner's view



I received the car when I was 15 on my birthday and was totally surprised at being given my grandfather's keepsake car. I knew it was a treasure. It was not something that I took lightly, which was one of the reasons I never modified the car. He would have been very disappointed with me if he had come back and seen that it had been modified and played with.

It drives quite well. It's quiet. It doesn't rattle, and it has always been well maintained by my grandfather; and when I got it, I did my best to maintain it, too. I have always kept it in a garage so that it was not exposed to the rain. As a result, it was quite a solid car when I went to restore it some years ago." —Roy Asbahr



ing for the brakes. The shifter also sat a little close to my knees for comfort, but other drivers might have no quarrel. The clock in the mirror wasn't an uncommon option in those days, and it may take a second to focus on while you're driving.

"The mighty straight-eight engine was already idling and warm when we got in, its industrial-strength clatter is a couple of notes deeper than its four-and six-cylinder contemporaries. You could feel the engine idling most prominently through the brake: Put your foot on it and your whole leg vibrates. Engage the clutch, and you discover that there's plenty of torque to keep up around town. There's no doubt you're working hard—the long shifts, the awkwardness of the floor-mounted pedals, the sensitive steering—but it's all the more rewarding once you get a rhythm down. It's even more rewarding out on the back roads, where the pressure

Instead of the rumble seat found on most 1932 Dictator Coupes, the single-seat two-passenger model made do with a relatively commodious trunk, supplemented by a luggage rack.

of traffic isn't so great. Once you're out cruising at speed, it's tremendous fun. We found the ride firm, but not so bouncy that it threatened to send you airborne over bumps; there was enough cushion in the seat that it helped take the edge off some of the harsher messages from the suspension.

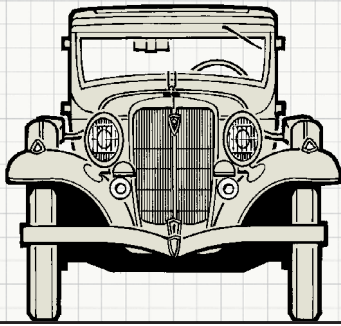
"The revelation here was in the steering—quick and direct, no slop anywhere in the system, with enough road feel that you are always deeply aware of what's going on, without it becoming tiresome. Of course it's heavy at low speeds, but it unweights itself nicely once you're under way."

Beyond those rewards of driving, Roy has a greater reward in a piece of family history, something that not only connects him to his grandfather but to his own youth. As Roy says, "For me, this car is a lifetime keeper. The family history and trust placed in me by my grandfather to have his most-treasured and beloved car makes this car a real honor to own." 🐾

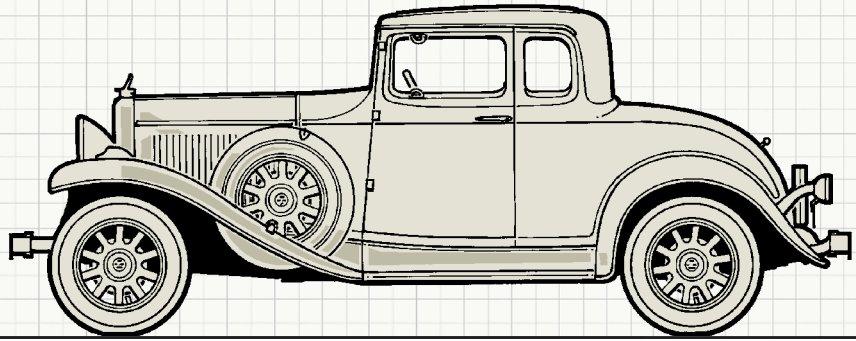


1932 STUDEBAKER DICTATOR

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



59 inches



117 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

Base price: \$980
Price as profiled: \$1,466
Options on car profiled: Regal equipment package (\$105): two spare wheels mounted in front fenders, salon horns, luggage rack and chrome-plated artillery wheels; white wall tires, \$13; painted side mount covers, \$20.50; chrome beauty rings, \$12; bumpers, \$25; Philco Model 7 Transitone radio, \$74.50; interior clock mirror, \$3.50; right-side taillamp, \$8; destination and delivery, \$225.50.

ENGINE

Type: L-head straight-eight, cast-iron block and cylinder head
Displacement: 221 cu.in.
Bore x stroke: 3.0625 x 3.75 inches
Compression ratio: 5:1
Horsepower @ RPM: 85 @ 3,200
Torque @ RPM: 165 lb.ft. @ 3,200
Valvetrain: Mechanical lifters
Main bearings: 9
Fuel system: Stromberg UUR-2 updraft carburetor
Lubrication system: Full-pressure, gear-driven pump
Electrical system: 6-volt, positive ground w/Delco-Remy ignition
Exhaust system: Single, with cast-iron manifold

TRANSMISSION

Type: Three-speed manual transmission
Ratios: 1st: 1.864
2nd: 1.646
3rd: 1.00
Reverse: 3.437

DIFFERENTIAL

Type: Semi-floating with spiral bevel gears, open differential
Ratio: 4.73:1

STEERING

Type: Cam and lever
Turns, lock-to-lock: 2.75
Turning circle: 19.3 feet

BRAKES

Type: Bendix mechanical service brakes
Front/Rear: 12.1 x 1.5-inch drums

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction: Body on full ladder frame
Body style: Two-door, two-passenger coupe
Layout: Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

Front: Semi-elliptical leaf springs, 8 leaves, 36 x 1.75 inches
Rear: Semi-elliptical leaf springs, 7 leaves, 54 x 1.75 inches

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels: Chrome-plated ten spoke steel artillery
Front/Rear: 18 x 4 inch
Tires: Firestone
Front/Rear: 18 x 5.5-inch (original)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase: 117 inches
Overall length: 183.2 inches
Overall height: 68.9 inches
Front track: 59 inches
Rear track: 60.3 inches
Shipping weight: 3,190 pounds

CAPACITIES

Crankcase: 7 quarts
Cooling system: 14 quarts
Fuel tank: 14 gallons
Transmission: 3.5 pints

CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.: 0.38
Weight per bhp: 37.5 pounds
Weight per cu.in.: 14.4 pounds

PRODUCTION

Total (all body styles): 5,900 (approx.)

PROS & CONS

- + Original family owner
- + Understated Studebaker elegance
- + Straight-eight smoothness and power
- Seats only two passengers
- No rumble seat
- High-maintenance chrome wheels

WHAT TO PAY

Low \$10,000 – \$12,000
Average \$17,000 – \$22,000
High \$25,000 – \$28,000

CLUB CORNER

Antique Studebaker Club
P.O. Box 1743
Maple Grove, MN 55311
763-420-7829
www.studebakerdriversclub.com
Dues: \$30.00/year (for first-time members)
Membership: 1,400

ASTONISHED, AS ARE ALL Packardites, at Richard's comments in his column, "Most Stylish Brand of All Time," in *HCC* #110. Let's think about this. Packard had more firsts for its size—or twice its size—than any other automaker. Most of Packard's firsts were unseen refinement, not glitz or marketing ploys, which is perhaps why you don't think of Packard in terms of engineering firsts. Try automatic spark advance, a Packard first and in their first series: the Model A, 1899. First car to have the H-gearshift pattern? A Packard patent, 1900. How about the steering wheel? First seen on the 1901 Packard Model C, another company patent. Spiral bevel differential gears? 1913. World's first volume production V-12? Packard's Twin Six, 1915. First production automobile to use aluminum pistons? 1915. World's first volume production straight-eight? 1923 (Isotta-Fraschini's 1919 Tipo 8 and the 1921 Duesenberg Model A being extremely limited-production.) Hypoid rear axle? 1926. Air conditioning? 1939. Power windows? 1940. Direct-drive, lock-up torque converter? 1949. Four-wheel torsion-bar suspension? 1954 (for the '55 models). Twin Traction limited slip rear axle? 1955 (for the '56 models). Power door locks? '56 models.

Mike Scott
Packard, the Complete Story
Walnut Creek, California

LET'S SEE: Packard introduced power windows, power brakes, lock-up clutch automatic transmission, limited-slip differential, automatic spark control, air conditioning, electric overdrive, pushbutton transmission selector, tubeless tires, 10:1 compression ratio, sun visors, interconnected torsion-bar suspension, the H-pattern gearshift, spiral-bevel differential gearing, the three-way-tuning radio, hypoid gears, at-hub interchangeable wheels, the diesel aircraft engine, central chassis lubrication, aluminum pistons, the X engine—plus several U.S. firsts, like the steering wheel, the V-12 engine, the production straight-eight. Perhaps you were thinking of some other make, yes? Panhard, or something along those lines?

George Hamlin
Clarksville, Maryland

ANOTHER PROVOCATIVE question—good! I think the style crown shouldn't factor in technical design work, and your examples miss the mark in this area

anyway (Packard introduced the steering wheel, hypoid axle, air conditioning, lock-up torque converter, and auto-leveling torsion-bar suspension—but did have conservative styling). I tried to consider a marque's "batting average" and the length of its influence. For batting average, I think the king is Cord—only two designs in their short life, but both (L-29 and 810/812) stunning and original. For the long run, Buick. Rarely truly cutting edge, but up-to-date and sharp across many decades. I agree that Pontiac's 10 or so glory years were better, but before the late fifties, they were often a bit dowdy or generic GM, and after the later 60's were often the land of the strange proboscis. Cadillac? More often loud than elegant. So Cord and Buick.

Bryan Kazmer
Grand Rapids, Michigan

IT'S HARD TO ARGUE with the assertion that Cadillac has long been the leader among American brands when it comes to style, despite some forays into wretched excess. However, throughout the 1970s, '80s and '90s Cadillac merely tried to live off of a reputation earned in prior decades. They didn't focus on reasserting style leadership until the Art & Science initiative took hold in the new millennium. It has taken awhile for that effort to work for Cadillac in the marketplace. Leadership is harder to regain than maintain, it seems.

Chrysler briefly exhibited style leadership in the late 1950s with the Forward Look, significant in that it is said their 1957 models shook up design direction at GM across all brands. Chrysler reached for style leadership again at the end of the 1960s with the Fuselage Look, but it didn't have the same impact. Still, there was enough residual Chrysler style credibility to validate the recent 300 models as a design statement for the brand. Pontiac had style (and lots of it) in the '60s, period. Sadly, Pontiac merely repeated "design cues" thereafter until they became irrelevant, along with the brand. No other American brand has stood for style over a substantial period of time with one possible exception.

If you side with those who consider Corvette to be a brand that stands apart from the parent Chevrolet brand, then a case can be made for Corvette

being a style leader from day one. Even acknowledging certain European influences over the years, Corvette designs have always been perceived as very "American," too—not unlike Cadillac—and enduring. Corvette has mostly stood for performance, of course, but style has always been a key part of the package, even during those decades when GM management was more concerned about cost than the underpinnings of brand leadership. In fact, Corvette style can be said to have saved the brand during the dark days following the energy crisis when performance was de-emphasized.

Dan David
Chester, Connecticut

MY PICK FOR THE MOST STYLISH CAR is the Cord 810-812. The Cord has an advanced streamline design that inspired the Torpedo-style cars of the 1940s. That square coffin-nose hood and matching wraparound grille, set it apart from other cars in the 1930s. The colorful interiors and the airplane styled, engine-turned instrument panel—with more instruments than the average car—along with the streamlined front fenders with hideaway headlamp covers had an expensive custom look. Truly an outstanding car design.

Ben Parks
Austin, Texas



EASILY OVERLOOKED, but understandable, the 1964 Cadillac was not the "last finned American car." The 1971-'73 Oldsmobile 98 had fins, and they could scarcely be called anything else. No, fins didn't start and end with Cadillac (though with the 1971 98 using the same body, it could be argued as such). With all due respect, they ended in the 1970s with Oldsmobile.

Dave Gregory
Tucson, Arizona

Continued on page 34

Johnny Jeep

He was a legend, a no-nonsense guy; a man's man, as they used to say. And he was tough, voluntarily serving three tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter gunship pilot. He was smart, fearless and one of the most interesting persons I've ever known. With thinning blond hair, piercing blue eyes and a big fluffy beard, he was an enigma in some ways. His real name is unimportant, but he called himself Johnny Jeep.

I first met him in 1978 when he was about 34. I'd just left a lucrative job as a salesman at an Oldsmobile/Volvo/Mazda dealer a block from my home to go to work miles away at an AMC/Jeep/Renault dealership in Derby, Connecticut; a salesman for the slowest-selling domestic car in the smallest town in one of the country's smallest

states. Johnny Jeep was the dealership's top salesman, though to be completely honest, he seemed more than a little bit ambivalent about AMC cars and had an intense dislike for the Renaults. His forte was selling Jeeps and at that he was a master.

See, John knew everything about Jeeps. He could take a Jeep apart nut by bolt and put it back together better than it was from the factory. He knew which tires were legal on which protected lands and which weren't, also which were the right gears to use for off-road use, on-road use, or a mix of the two. He knew every factory option available, including all the different tops, bumpers and suspension packages, and he had the cost and retail prices committed to memory. John also knew about hundreds of aftermarket items available, from air shocks to Zebra guards, their cost and installation charges, and where they could be procured. He knew his profit margin on every item that went into a Jeep, and that was where he made out.

We received only a limited supply of Jeeps from the factory; our allocation was so low we barely had four Jeeps in stock at any particular time. So every Jeep we sold was a special order, and it seemed like John sold most of them. He would get shoppers excited by taking them on our rugged off-road test course and scaring the heck out of them, then sit them down to talk numbers.



Because he knew all the numbers, John could easily give folks a nice discount off the sticker price of even the least-expensive Jeep, thus becoming a hero to the buyers. Then he would start talking about extra equipment, and he could do so with such authority and genuine enthusiasm that people always loaded up their Jeeps with aftermarket extras. On would go the big tires, spoke wheels, wheel flares, roll bar, side bars, stripes, lift kits, etc. You could always tell a "Johnny Jeep" Jeep because the vehicle would be loaded to the hilt and looking great.

At the time the rest of us salesmen were averaging a gross profit per vehicle of maybe \$400 on each new AMC car we sold, and perhaps \$275 on a Renault. But because of the aftermarket stuff he loaded on, John averaged well over \$2,000

gross profit per Jeep, sometimes reaching as high as \$4,000 on a loaded Cherokee Chief. Like us, he got a percentage of the gross profit, 15% if memory serves me. His paycheck was always thicker than mine. And his customers loved him.

He was almost worshiped by the sales manager. I say "almost," because like many sales managers, ours was kind of bossy and he often asked us to do things that, strictly speaking, sales people aren't supposed to do, like doing car swaps with other dealers, touching-up the paint on new Jeeps (their paint quality was pretty bad)—stuff like that. We toadies would do whatever the boss said, but John refused. No argument, mind you, just a quiet determination to not compromise. And whereas the rest of us held our tempers when customers would say stupid things like, "Since it's an AMC I expect a 50% discount," John would put them in their place. I remember him telling one particularly obnoxious guy to leave, saying "I didn't get up early this morning to deal with a yahoo like you." The boss was standing right there, horrified—but didn't say anything. I think he was a little scared of John, like the rest of us.

Free spirit that he was, John eventually left to start his own business building custom Jeeps. I heard he died years ago, of cancer. Was it the Agent Orange he was exposed to in Vietnam? Who can say? But I'll never forget him. ☺

“You could

always

tell a

‘Johnny Jeep’

Jeep because

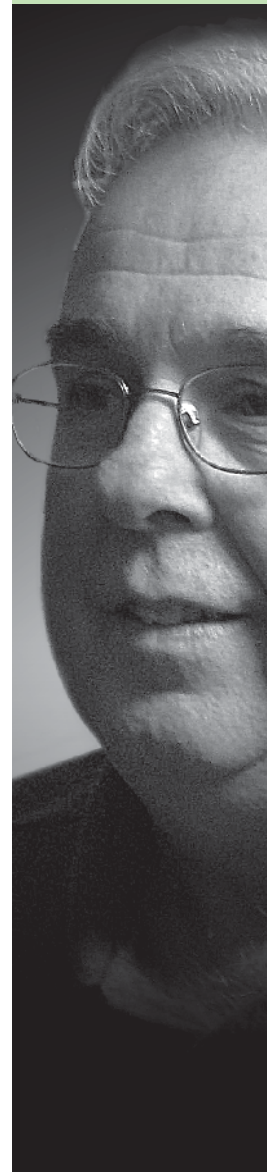
the vehicle

would be

loaded

to the hilt and

looking great.”



THE "COLORFUL COACHES IN QUEENS" (HCC #109) brought back memories, especially when I saw that Mack bus. Queens was not the only borough that utilized them. The Surface Transit Co., nicknamed "The Amsterdam Avenue Bus," for the routes they served in Manhattan, also utilized them. Looking at the paint scheme on the one pictured, I'm thinking that Surface may have gotten them from Jamaica Buses when they made the switch to GMC Coaches. They had quite a few of them.

I was born in Manhattan and lived there until I was 13, when my family moved us to Jersey City. Starting junior high in 1962, I had to ride these buses to and from school, as it was 13 blocks away. As a bus, they left a lot to be desired. Surface Transit had a few GMCs, and you prayed for one when you got to the bus stop. Yes, GMC set the bar high when it came to a transit or suburban coach.

I find that people unfamiliar with bus manufacture will often look at you funny when you mention a Mack bus. Incidentally, usually around the holiday season, the MTA will roll out a few of their restored transit coaches and run them on the M42 Route, which runs crosstown at 42nd. Street. I'm looking to try and get a ride on the Mack that they have, just to remember.

Martin Villa
Old Bridge, New Jersey

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO! Would be my response to the final line in Mr. Stern's recent "Detroit Underdogs" in HCC #110, re: Celebrity station wagon. First of all, I'm no Chevrolet guy, but even I know that comparing a 1982 Celebrity to a '55 Chevy is outright blasphemy. I know from excruciating experience what a horrible vehicle the Celebrity was. I was working in wholesale back in the 1980s, travelling three states; my employer supplied the car. I had three of those damn things in a five-year period. The first two went through five fuel pumps between them. One failed with only 850 miles on the odometer. The third featured a new electronic fuel pump; it lasted less than 20,000 miles.

When I left the job, the guy who got that last Celebrity told me he was driving

down the road one day when the right front wheel came off. These cars were junk, and nearly as bad as Citations. So, I bought a Taurus. I've had seven of them now and have never called a tow truck.

Ron Doll
Strongsville, Ohio



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL rear end ever designed is the Chrysler Turbine car of 1963.

Mark Olson
Proctor, Minnesota

MY FAVORITE REAR VIEW of all time is that of the 1954 Kaiser. The general body shape of all Dutch Darrin-designed second-generation Kaisers (1951-'54) is sleek: from the heart-shaped backlite at the top, and the rear fender "dip" on the side, everything flows down to the peaked rear bumper. But what sets the '54 and '55 models apart is the Safety-Glo taillamps, which are so prominent they double as fins on a finless car. The view is best at night with these spectacular taillamps illuminated.

Dr. Cory Jorgensen
Washington, D.C.

PLEASE THANK MILTON for taking on the challenging work of writing win-somely about '80s cars. In his column on the Chevrolet Celebrity, however, I take issue with the comment about the Pontiac 6000 being a car that nobody wants. In the mid 1980s, when I was a teenager, I wanted one like our neighbor had. They bought a brand new, two-tone brown 1984 6000 STE and really babied it, keeping it for special occasions.

I thought it was a very cool car. So much so that, a few years later while in college, I bought a clean, low-mile, one-owner 1984 6000 LE. It was the

same two-tone brown, but with the four-cylinder engine instead of the 2.8 V-6, so it was thrashy (even "thrasher" than the 2.8) and could not get out of its own way, but it cruised along nicely on the highway and was virtually indestructible.

Not being completely satisfied with its as-it-left-the-factory looks, from a wrecked STE I installed its wheels, leather wrapped interior bits, stereo system, luggage rack-equipped deck lid and just about every other part that could be transferred. For a sedan of its era, I thought it was a pretty good-looking car. It was roomy, comfortable, drove nicely (once up to speed), and it never left me stranded.

If I could find a pristine, low-mile STE today, I'd buy it. The price would certainly be right. I wonder if a super-charged 3800 would fit between the front wheels?

Daryl Diddle
Wilmore, Kentucky

REGARDING THE LETTER from Ken Stubert in HCC #106, in which he said he would like more information on the GM semi-automatic transmission in a 1970 Nova; I had an experience with one of those transmissions when resurrecting a friend's 1968 Camaro with a straight-six engine. The car had sat for 10 years, so I had to go through the brakes, fuel system, etc., and upon a test drive found the transmission would not shift when in "D." Shifting manually worked just fine, so I thought maybe it was just a vacuum modulator.

A parts store sold me the modulator that was supposed to fit, but I couldn't find a place to install it. I even put the car on a lift and sought other opinions on what the problem could be. After speaking with a transmission shop, I was told this was one of the semi-automatics, essentially an older transmission GM had on the shelf and mostly put into base model cars in the '60s, and based on what Ken had, early '70s as well. So shift manually and be happy the car has one less part to break!

Michael Krotz
Clearwater, Florida

I Was Just Thinking. What If ... ?

From time to time, I've said in this space that I'm kind of a fan of a fictional genre called alternative history. Not the Harry Turtledove stuff, where the Confederate army magically comes into possession of AK-47s and wins the Civil War, but the sort of speculation that's rooted in actual events, rather than fantasy. The outcome of World War II is a popular topic. As I type these lines, we're about five weeks out from the 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. So by the time you're holding this magazine, you'll be hearing a lot of alternative history from the media.

I've mused in the past, for instance, on the possibilities about how the Ford Motor Company might have turned out differently if Edsel Ford hadn't died so unfortunately young and instead managed to succeed his father in an orderly manner. Here's a selection of similar hypothetical questions on what might have been in the automotive world if certain things had happened, or didn't happen.

What if Billy Durant had more of an executive's discipline than a salesman's natural fervor? Might Durant's success at keeping General Motors and United Motors Company solvent, thereby avoiding being sacked twice by GM, have blunted the ascension of Alfred Sloan? Remember, Durant was the guy who first hired him. What would a Durant-led GM have looked like in the 1930s and beyond?

Speaking of recklessness, what if the Progressive Era during the early 20th century had taken firm hold nationally, and the Crash of 1929 been somehow averted? Could it be possible that the grand makes of those years might have survived, or at least lasted longer? Can you imagine a grouping of Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Pierce-Arrow and Marmon under a single corporate leadership as a counterweight to Cadillac, Lincoln and Chrysler's Imperial? Just maybe, could V-16 power have emerged as the standard for American luxury cars, even into the 1950s? How about a multi-cam V-16 with supercharging?

What if, God forbid, the invasion of Normandy on D-Day had failed? Dwight D. Eisenhower would have been a pariah instead of a national hero. It's inconceivable that he could have been elected president. Eisenhower had led the torturous 1919 transcontinental convoy that augmented the early Good Roads Movement. One of his signature presidential accomplishments was supporting the Interstate highway system. Had

Robert Taft, Richard Nixon or Adlai Stevenson been elected in 1952 instead of Eisenhower, would the construction of superhighways been pressed with such urgency?

And speaking of World War II, what do you think might have happened if the Indianapolis 500 hero Wilbur Shaw hadn't introduced Eddie Rickenbacker to Tony Hulman in 1945? I can answer this one: Rickenbacker would have sold the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to developers, who would have razed it. That might have made stock car racing dominant in American motorsports more than three decades earlier than actually happened. Unless ...

Let's say Big Bill France saw his iron-fisted plan to dominate stock car racing fall to pieces. It came close to happening a couple of times. People like the Atlanta ex-bootlegger Raymond Parks, NASCAR's initial champion car owner, had to prop up France more than once when it came to covering purses. No less than Dale Earnhardt called Parks the true father of NASCAR. So let's say both Indy and NASCAR had ceased to exist. Might road racing have become the dominant form of automotive competition in the United States? Or drag racing? How might the auto industry have reacted?

Where might General Motors have ended up, reputation-wise, if it had come to some sort of rapprochement with Ralph Nader instead of sending private detectives to spy on him? Suppose they had hired him as a safety consultant? And let's close out here with something really crazy. One of the issues that staggered General Motors for years was trying to maintain the Sloanist product lineup of overlapping makes and the dealer networks to support them. GM finally dumped both Pontiac and Oldsmobile. Let's say it had happened at least 15 years earlier, when both were doddering with mishmashes like the Firenza and 6000LE. At the same time, the Japanese economy was flush with cash. What do you think might have happened if a more enlightened and less arrogant GM had tried to spin off Pontiac and Oldsmobile in the early 1980s? Might a Japanese suitor have taken the bait? Just maybe, could Pontiac and Olds with their identities intact, become U.S. beachheads for the new world of upmarket Japanese cars, instead of today's rudderless lookalikes such as Acura and Infiniti? And what if Ford had done the same with Mercury, instead of killing it off? You never know: Toyota might be racing Mercury Cyclones in NASCAR instead of fictitious Camrys. 🐞

“Can you imagine Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Pierce-Arrow and Marmon under a single corporate leadership as a counterweight to Cadillac, Lincoln and Chrysler's Imperial?”



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The Quest for Historical Information

The quest car owners embark upon for information specific to the cars they own has grown to the extent that now, for a fee, the Chrysler Historical Services and G.M. Heritage Center (Cadillac only) will supply a “build sheet” for a particular car (limited years only). This document will tell what the car was equipped with and possibly where it was delivered.

While this is a great resource from a technical perspective, the historical aspect as to where it was sold new, when, and by what dealer, can still be really difficult to pin down. Unless the car came with some original paperwork when you bought it, where it came from is a big unknown. This is especially true for orphan makes.

Some cars were well documented when new, so a factory list of who bought a particular car may exist, but this is very rare. The factory records of Rolls-Royce automobiles built in Springfield, Massachusetts, for instance, survive and list who bought which car new and when.

One major prewar car manufacturer did make an effort to provide specific information for each car they sold new, not realizing that this would become the holy grail of provenance for those of us who own their cars 80-plus years later.

The Packard Motor Car Co. in 1923 designed a new identification plate or VIN tag for their cars built after May of that year. The car’s serial number would be stamped on the plate at the factory, and there were additional spaces provided—one for delivery date to the customer (month, day, year), and others for the dealer’s name and city.

In a letter to Packard distributors and dealers, the home office explained that the information would assist in confirming warranty service work and also fix the age of the car regarding insurance and license registration data. The brass “motor carriage name plates,” as Packard called them in 1923, were first mounted to the firewall on the inside of the body, and three years later in the Spring of 1926, started to be mounted on the outside of the firewall facing the engine compartment. Dealers could use their own

letter/number sets to stamp the plate or buy a custom set from the factory.

Abbreviations for names of locations and dealers’ names were often used, as space was limited. Packard included more information on the plates as years progressed. In 1931, the model numbers were added, and for one year only—1936, the prefix 14th was added to distinguish the senior series cars (Eight, Super Eight, Twelve) from the new “120” lower-priced eight cylinder cars. For 1938, Packard would use a decal instead of a brass plate for information, but for 1939, an aluminum or tin plate began to be used.



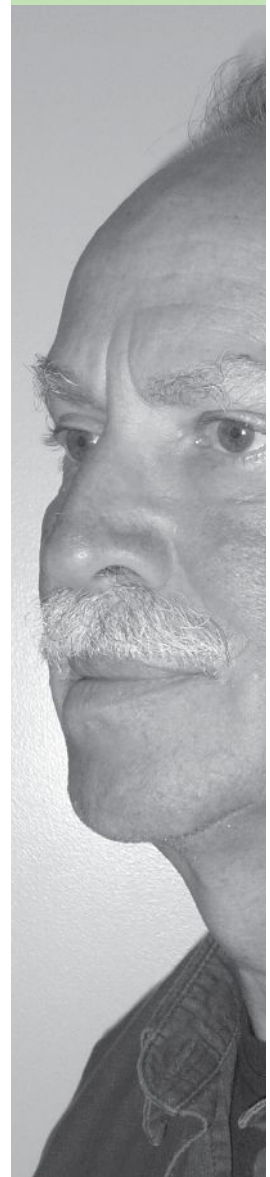
How neatly these were stamped with the dealer’s name and location is interesting to view. If the tag had been removed from the car and stamped on a bench, they were a clear read, but a fair number saw the mechanic lean over the fender and stamp them in place at an awkward angle and crooked letters abounded!

Packard owners who have cars of the 1923-1949 era can know a little more about their particular automobile if the dealer had complied as the company requested and stamped in their information. Another source for owners is the Packard Directory that was issued annually prior to World War II. It’s a rare publication, and it lists every Packard distributor and dealer worldwide, noting their street address, as well as who managed the dealership. If you have access to one of these, you can look up the dealer’s address and then go on the Internet to try to obtain a current street view at that location to see if the original building is still there.

Researching the history of your car can be fun, but you need to be creative when trying to find clues to the information you seek. If the car is mostly unrestored, for instance, look for lube stickers still stuck to the driver’s door post that might list an address. These stickers can be indications of where the car spent some time. Keep your eyes open for all different kinds of clues.

Decades ago, the first thing the general public would ask you about your car was, “What’s it worth”? Now the big question is: “Do you know its history?”

“The historical aspect as to where it was sold new, when, and by what dealer, can still be really difficult to pin down.”





DPC 234

E L D O R A D O

The Lap of Luxury

We compare Cadillac's Eldorado Biarritz, Lincoln's Continental Mk V and Imperial's Crown to see which really rules the rare convertible roost

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

The top of the automotive food chain in America was and still is a lonely place, but in the late 1950s it happened to be particularly so. With the demise of Packard, and Continental being absorbed into Ford's luxury division, only three top brands remained: Cadillac, Imperial and Lincoln. Imperial was just a fledgling division in those days, separated from Chrysler in 1955. Lincoln was hurting in the late 1950s. Yet even with the demise of Continental, it managed to sell twice as many of that model as Cadillac sold Eldorado Biarritz. Still, the Cadillac has remained a legend for decades. Styling aside, does it deserve its lofty perch as an unassailable icon?

Let's take a closer look.

Getting an example of each of these cars together in one place at one time was a feat in and of itself. But for all three to also be two-door convertibles, the most luxurious of all post-war body styles, no one was more surprised than us that it all came together.

Addressing our competitors chronologically: Larry Camuso of San Jose, California, owns this showroom-perfect, completely restored 1959 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz. Purchased as a restoration project in 1980 and completed in just the past few years, this is the car of a million Marilyn Monroe/Elvis montages, and has become international shorthand for the cultural influence of postwar America. Mercifully, it's not Barbie Pink, but rather its correct Persian Sand. A total of 1,320 were built, which is saying something considering its chart-topping \$7,401 base price.

Scott Parker of San Francisco has held title to this largely original, unrestored 1960 Lincoln Continental Mk V since 2002; the interior and top have been replaced, but beyond maintenance, everything else is mostly as it left the factory almost fifty years ago. A whopping 2,044 Continental convertibles were built, each of which started at \$7,056, and holds the record of being the largest-ever production unit-body car. The Continental also has our favorite feature of any of the cars on test: a power rear window for the soft convertible top.

Richard Palmer is the keeper and restorer of the third car in our comparison; his 1961 Imperial Crown convertible is one of many full-size Mopar restorations



Richard has undertaken over the years. This complete restoration was refinished in "Dubonnet"—a striking metallic magenta that was on the paint list for Imperials in 1961, although this particular car wasn't born that color. A relative bargain at \$5,776 new, just 429 were built for the model year. The pricing (nearly \$2,000 cheaper than the Cadillac!) whispers that it may not be in the same class as the other two. Or did Chrysler simply offer better value for the money?

Though our three sample vehicles do not share model years, they do share the mechanical and styling features of models that were all available simultaneously. Model year 1960 would have been the year when all three of them were in the showroom at the same time. The Imperial underwent only styling changes for 1961, though it rode on a frame dating to 1957. Like the Imperial, the Cadillac experienced a facelift (from the 1959 to the '60 model), and its tubular X-frame also dated back to the 1957 model year. The 1960 Lincoln was the last of its style, having debuted in 1958. Trim changes for these three vehicles from year to year are myriad and beyond the scope of this comparison, but the fundamental body and mechanical packages we are evaluating remained more or less intact, resulting in the driving portions of our little get-together being as equal as we could make them.

It seems counter to current thought, the notion that the wildest styling was reserved for the biggest price tags: Detroit's biggest-ever fins on the Cadillac; dramatically canted headlamps and front-quarter sculpturing on the Lincoln.



Headlamps that stood apart separate from the body, on the Imperial. Wide whites. Kelsey-Hayes wires. Colors not found in nature. The very notion of a convertible itself! In our sea of modern, relatively conservatively styled luxury sedans built on multiple continents, the sheer wildness of the details on this Eisenhower-era convertible trio seem 180 degrees out of character with today's attitudes; the amount of flash and filigree on any one of these would fill an entire showroom floor at a modern luxury-car dealership.

Despite separate headlamps, a feature that fell out of vogue sometime in the 1930s, the Chrysler Imperial offers more than a whiff of futurism about it. The windows are cut low for visibility, the top of the instrument panel falls away from the base of

the windscreen, and the firm, pleated, power-activated white-leather bench seat lets you sit on it but not in it—as a result, you ride a little higher than you'd expect in a longer-lower-wider-era automobile, and you are able to see everything with little issue. The TV-screen-shaped steering wheel makes ingress/egress easier—sliding your legs under the wheel is simple.

The electroluminescent gauges are bright and clear for night-time driving such as we did (they really are easier to see than incandescent bulbs), although the canted pushbutton transmission and climate controls seem to echo the upside-down trapezoid face of the sportier 1961 Chrysler 300. Look out the windscreen, and you see that the hood appears to rise up, while the fender-tops lower away—a hint of a previous, more elegant



Highest power, highest torque and best power-to-weight ratio let the Imperial feel close to a Chrysler 300-letter car's performance; square steering wheel defies quick turns, though.



1961 CROWN IMPERIAL CONVERTIBLE

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT413 cubic inches
BORE x STROKE..... 4.18 x 3.75 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO 10.0:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM350 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM495 @ 2,800
FUEL DELIVERY..... Four-barrel Carter AFB carburetor
SHIPPING WEIGHT 4,865 pounds
POUNDS PER HORSEPOWER 13.9
¼-MILE PERFORMANCE 16.9 seconds

OWNER'S VIEW



I found this car in Texas, thanks to a 1993 *Hemmings* ad; it ran, but it was very rusty. I bought it anyway, because it was the only one I could find. It was complete, and I bought a complete rust-free two-door hardtop body for the parts—the hardest part of the restoration was grafting the convertible pieces onto the hardtop bodywork. I love the styling, the rarity and the luxury of it. The only down side is that the value of the finished car is not high enough to support a professional restoration.”

—Richard Palmer

age of motoring, perhaps to comfort the experienced, moneyed driver in the face of the Imperial's technological advances?

Shifting our view to the Lincoln, its door—more than those of the other cars—looks and feels massive. This and the low floor, due to the Continental's unit-body construction, make it easy to slip in and out of, even with the top up. The seats—upholstered with button-tufted panels separated by tuck-and-roll inserts—aren't overstuffed; rather, they allow you to sink in, making you feel all that much more as if you're inside the car. Shut that bank vault of a door behind you, and gaze upon the four gauge pods (temp/fuel, speedometer, climate-control settings and clock) ranging across the dash along the top of a control panel that, at a distance, looks like engine-turned metal.

Some drivers may find the placement of these gauges to be a touch high and blocked by the steering wheel, while others may feel that the two sides of the cabin appear to have been designed by two different people: The passenger's side is slim and metal-straked and flows into the contours of the door, allowing ample leg and knee room, while the driver's side is informative and massive. Once ready to drive, you'll need to manually lock all four power locks (at the touch of a button, of course) lest an angry yellow warning lamp on the instrument panel glows to remind you. Looking beyond the interior, the triple-straked hood leads you to gaze upon the Continental star—the only stand-up hood ornament of the three cars we profiled—and you quickly forget the car's few design idiosyncrasies. The Lincoln is





the sportiest of the three inside, if not the most modern.

Now, the Cadillac, with its roof up as we drove it on that chilly evening, presents a bit of a squeeze getting into the cabin, but once inside, there is the relaxed, moneyed feel of luxury. If you want the ambience of opulence, you've come to the right place. It's got the feel of an upscale lounge in here, with leather seating, elegant trim sans gaudy appointments, and room enough to get comfortable. The door is less heavy than the Lincoln's, though no less solid for it, and shuts without a person resorting to a graceless, muscle-bound yank on the pull. There are power options galore, yet the Cadillac feels gimmick-free; the instrument panel has a deeply-set speedometer, with very little else visible at night. Looking out the windscreen, the

hood is vast and flat—encouragement that, if you're behind the wheel, you could very well own all that you see on the other side of the glass.

Because of timing and traffic, our drives were kept to surface streets around San Jose. No freeway cruising was possible. All three cars idle as smoothly as you please, but the Lincoln is the most silent; the Cadillac is a couple of decibels louder from under the hood, and the Imperial is the least quiet—though it's not noisy—as its closet hot-rod nature keeps peeking out.

The Imperial's bark comes with some bite, as on paper it looks to be the acceleration champion of the three. Between its powerful 350-hp engine (advertised in its day as the most powerful car available on earth) and its light weight (200 lbs.



Two-barrel carburetion helped ensure that the largest engine here had the lowest horsepower rating. Full instrumentation gives a more sporting vibe than Cadillac and Chrysler.



1960 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL MK V

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT 430 cubic inches
BORE x STROKE 4.29 x 3.70 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO 10:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM 315 @ 4,200
TORQUE @ RPM 490 @ 2,800
FUEL DELIVERY Single Carter two-barrel carburetor
WEIGHT 5,176 pounds
POUNDS PER HORSEPOWER 16.43
¼-MILE PERFORMANCE 16.20 seconds

OWNER'S VIEW



Initially I had no interest in the giant Lincolns of 1958-'60, but I suddenly saw one in a different light: low, architectural, aggressive. This epiphany made me re-evaluate my interest in these cars. It's hard to articulate: the Cadillac of the same era seems voluptuous and rococo; the Imperial of the era is likewise a study of swollen curves and fins. To my eye, both seem florid and a bit soft. By comparison, the Continental mirrors the cutting-edge architecture, art and industrial muscle of mid-century America; in the context of the spare art and architecture of the late 1950s, I think the Continental alone has a muscular, purposeful aesthetic that speaks to a forward-looking America."
—Scott Parker

less than the Cadillac, 300 lbs. less than the Lincoln), it should come as no surprise that it feels the spryest. Its near-300G-acceleration and notable exhaust tone under pressure are both present and accounted for.

The Lincoln accelerates admirably, considering its weight, and feels very much in keeping with the smooth demeanor of a luxury car. This said, the Continental in general, and our model in particular, have a couple of things going against it. First, producing only 315 hp, it has the lowest horsepower rating of the three cars we drove, despite sporting the biggest cubic-inch displacement, and also carries the heftiest shipping weight. Second, there's more bore than stroke here, leading us to think that there's more to be had up top on the highway at cruising

speeds than we were able to experience on our trip through the streets. Plus, this is an original 70,000-mile engine, while the other two cars benefitted from power plants that had been rebuilt.

The Cadillac splits the difference: With the smallest size engine, it makes up for its displacement deficit with half-a-point-higher compression ratio and tri-power carburetion, and comes within five horsepower of the chart-topping Imperial. Acceleration is neither sudden nor lethargic; the power is effortless and well-suited to the Biarritz's size, helping it feel feet smaller when trying to get up and go. We can also swear that there is a hint of a growl under full throttle, providing just a taste of the Cadillac's potential in the cabin for the driver to





take notice.

None of these cars were built to take corners with any sort of alacrity. Comfort-tuned suspension, soft bias-ply tires, and two-and-a-half-ton curb weights don't generally translate into excellent handling characteristics. Yet, unlike other 1950's-era automobiles we've driven, none of these leaned so far as to scrape their rocker panels or go up on two wheels like Joie Chitwood when we pushed them around bends quicker than many would have dared. Of the three cars, the Lincoln surprised us most, and we liked it best. The steering, while power-assisted, manages to allow more feedback and feel firmer. The ride, meanwhile, was pillow-soft.

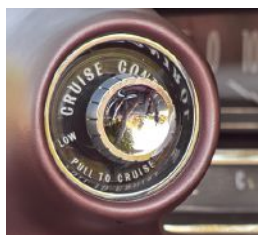
The Imperial is completely the Lincoln's reverse. It's

plagued with the single-finger Chrysler power assist that was in just about every car they built for decades, meaning some on-center deadness, and zero feel. Yet once you're actually committed to the corner, the Imperial seems quite connected to the road. Between the radial tires and the torsion bars, there's more solidity and bite to be had, and feels smaller and tighter than a car this size has a right to. The ride is degrees sportier than the Cadillac and Lincoln, though it could hardly be considered rough-and-tumble.

This leaves the Cadillac, once again, picking and choosing between the two. The steering is almost as light as the Imperial's, but feels more connected; as a complete shocker to us, the Cadillac's in-town ride was slightly fussy, probably thanks to the



390 cubic inches and 345 horses, and—despite triple carburetors—it's not the stoutest here. The interior is comfortable and considerably less flashy than the others.



1959 CADILLAC ELDORADO BIARRITZ

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	390 cubic inches
BORE x STROKE	4.00 x 3.875 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	345 @ 4,800
TORQUE @ RPM	435 @ 3,400
FUEL DELIVERY	Three Rochester two-barrel carburetors
WEIGHT	5,060 pounds
POUNDS PER HORSEPOWER	14.66
¼-MILE PERFORMANCE	15.56 seconds

OWNER'S VIEW



This was a hard car to find even in 1980, when I bought it as a worn, faded original. What was the toughest part of the restoration? All of it! This is probably one of the most detailed cars ever built, and even though

it was a complete car, it was tough. Even so, I wouldn't have done anything differently. It would have been nice to just write a check for a perfect one, though."
—Larry Camuso

air-sprung suspension, yet it remained surprisingly flat through the corners.

The Imperial proves itself the performance-enthusiast's choice. Don't go by the fussy headlamp treatment and the appearance of real wire wheels. The willing engine and torsion-bar suspension give it a real gentleman's-hot-rod ambiance, and the electroluminescent gauges were a breakthrough. It's a sort of letter-car 300 for those who think Chryslers are too plebian. The Lincoln proved a surprise. To be honest, we were expecting Dearborn's darling to feel unresolved, but it proved itself comfortable, capable and competent. It didn't have the sheer power of the Cadillac or the Chrysler, but the feel and information it imparted to an attentive driver made it the sleeper

in the group—and as it's valued less and is more available than the others in this trio, it's not a bad way to go. The Cadillac manages to split the difference in virtually every way. Power is terrific but not startling; the interior has a sitting-room feeling; the handling is capable, all things considered; and removing half a century of pop-culture influence as best we can, the styling seems the smoothest of the three cars.

More importantly, none were the sensory-deprivation tanks that later generations would come to sneer at. All three makers understood that luxury wasn't just about size, materials and cubic inches (although that was part of it ...), it was about letting the driver choose to apply that power as he or she commanded. Looking good while doing it? Why, that was always a given. 🏆



Brougham Beauty

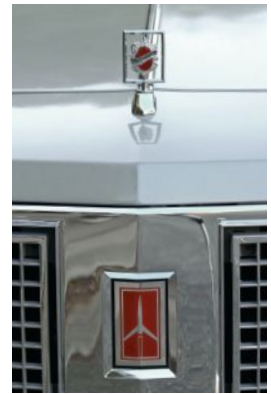
Full-size timepiece of bygone America is what the 1983 Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight Regency is all about



BY MIKE BUMBECK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH



Oldsmobile kicked off the ninth-generation model Ninety-Eight for the 1977 model year with an all-new “downsized” version. Yet, even in the face of an industry in transition, it successfully held onto its characteristic formula: the utmost level of luxury and style, V-8 engine power, and rear-wheel drive, even though it was nearly 800 pounds lighter than previous models.



The rectilinear instrument panel is punctuated with subtle curves and faux wood trim. The interior's plush seating contrasts nicely with the car's crisp exterior lines.

So successful was this version of Oldsmobile's top-level model that it remained in production through 1984 when the 1985 Ninety-Eight broke from tradition with front-wheel drive, as did the majority of the General Motors passenger car lineup.

The 455-cu.in. V-8 was a thing of the past. The Ninety-Eight's optional 307-cu.in. V-8 makes just 140 horsepower, with its full 240-lb.ft. of torque available at 1,600 RPM. It isn't the most electrify-

ing powertrain, but it was typical for the time. Standard features included power steering and brakes, tinted glass, four season climate control, bumper guards with impact strips, power window and door locks, and not one but two remote control rear view mirrors.

Sadly, Oldsmobile ceased production in 2004, which was, coincidentally, the same year Daniel James bought this piece of Oldsmobile history.





The 307-cu.in. small-block V-8 is entirely original and puts out 140 horsepower, so climbing hills can present a challenge even with the four-barrel carburetor, shown here in factory form.



It's like sitting on your living room sofa, pretty much. It's really comfortable, and it's actually really durable too.

Today, it's driven by Daniel (left) and his partner, Mark Tomey, from their San Francisco home base to car shows and meets up and down the West Coast. This lovely four-door sedan is entirely original, right down to the electroluminescent opera lamps. Some parts showed signs of slight wear, so Daniel sourced a new old stock Oldsmobile driver's-side armrest insert, front grille, and set of four full-wire wheel covers to return the car to its current showroom-fresh appearance.

The Ninety-Eight is garage-stored with Meguiars products used for exterior care; its Grayfern paint is a relatively rare color. The interior is maintained with simple vacuuming and occasional use of Lemon Pledge on the wood. Daniel says the interior is plush, yet substantial. "It's like sitting on your living room sofa, pretty much. It's really comfortable, and it's actually really durable too."

Driving the car is everything one might expect. The one shortcoming is that even with the weight loss over its predecessor, the small V-8 is still down on power in certain demanding situations. "It is rough on the freeway on hills," Daniel explains. "I find myself bogging down to 50 MPH and saying 'C'mon! go faster!' The transmission kicks down, but it's still not enough."

Other than a challenge presented by the occasional mountain pass, the Oldsmobile is a real highway hauler with the four-speed automatic transmission. Daniel reports near-25 MPG on the highway: "I can go from San Francisco to Los Angeles without stopping for gas."

Hemmings West Coast editor Jeff Koch got a chance to drive this original Oldsmobile, and recounts the experience firsthand: "We're not only driving this car to get a sense of what it is, we're looking to get a sense of how far GM had come in a fairly short time. We can leave things like condition out of it: This 49,000-mile original looks and feels as new. Slide inside, across the crushed velour seating areas, and immediately you notice the terrific visibility. You sit upright but comfortably, and though the Ninety-Eight is a biggish car, you're near enough to the glass that you can see out easily. This said,

remember how GM once boasted that there was the same room inside as the big, old B-bodies from the first half of the '70s? At least some of that came from headroom, because this is a luxury car for four, and a family car for five. It certainly feels tighter inside the Ninety-Eight than any given Colonnade-styled mid-'70s mid-size car, despite riding on a 3-inch-longer 119-inch wheelbase. Squeezing a third person up front would cost the driver some elbowroom.

"Turnover is instant with the key, and unless you're listening closely, you could be forgiven if you had become distracted and then went for the key again, so quiet is its engine, so smooth the idle. Once you're moving, the ride is smooth without being floaty or wallowy.

The chassis is pleasantly taut—even with those tall white-wall tires gripping the road—but all of the excess has been dialed out. There's some roll in the corners, but that's to be expected, and it's gentle enough that the cloth bench seats do a fair job of holding you in place.

"The brakes stop the car straight and true—no muss, no fuss, and with a lot less nose dive than we would have expected from a car as softly suspended as this Oldsmobile purports to be. In truth, it's a remarkable blend: It's very nearly everything you'd want out of an American car—a *real* American car, not one that's chasing a German or Japanese ideal of chassis control. No wonder GM's B-bodies ate up the American freeways and interstates for a decade. As a long-distance cruiser, it's terrific.

"Note that we said 'very nearly' everything you'd want. If there was an area that singled itself out for attention here, it was under the hood. The 307-cu.in. V-8 just doesn't have what it takes here. Throttle tip-in gives you an initial sense that there's real power to be had, but the sad truth is, after the first handful of yards, the accelerative pace becomes glacial. We're not expecting 455 HO-levels of grunt, but torque is nonexistent. Whole seasons seem to go by and you're still getting up to speed. American torque has been sacrificed for fewer cubic inches, and the rear axle contains Bonneville Salt Flats-friendly gearing, in exchange for half a chance at



Full wire wheel covers were standard equipment on the Brougham and add extra elegance to the exterior as well as compliment the classic lines of the partial rear fender skirts.

meeting the onerous CAFE average numbers. This is less of a Rocket, really, and more of an aerial repeater. What's more, half throttle is all you need to accumulate speed; any more than that is non-reactive and feels wasteful."

This Oldsmobile stands as an example of understated elegance and operational Americana. Daniel says: "When I was a senior in high school in 1983, I remember seeing these Oldsmobiles on the road and admiring them for their formality, elegance and class. I really like the fender skirts. My

mom always drove Cadillacs, and that's how I grew to like big GM cars. When I saw the fender skirts on this Ninety-Eight, I liked it even better than the Cadillac at the time."

As time marches on, the Ninety-Eight is garnering the respect it deserves. "People have admired it ever since I got it in 2004, but the admiration has increased by leaps and bounds recently," Daniel proudly tells us. "I think it might have to do with it being 30 years old now. That gives legitimacy to the classic status of the car." 🐾





Coachbuilt Cruiser

Enjoying the good life in a well-worn, unrestored 1957 Dual-Ghia convertible

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM DONNELLY

It floats, burbles really, down the one-lane highways that caress the backbone of the Berkshire Mountains in western Massachusetts. The top's down, just right to drink in the reds, yellows and auburns of early fall. There's a sheen on the convertible, sort of, more a testament to the afternoon's solar intensity than the inherent gloss of a decades-old repaint.



Other than dashboard paint and new leather seats, the interior is original. That odometer reading is likewise authentic. Power windows, very unusual for a 1950s convertible, remain fully functional. Power steering and power brakes were about the only extras. The Chrysler PowerFlite automatic transmission was standard on early Dual-Ghia convertibles.



Much of the trim and moldings, inside and out, have the glimmer and tone of melted butter. This car obviously gets driven a little, and little else.

It's also one of perhaps 100 ever produced. This weekend country-drive convertible is a first-generation Dual-Ghia, once the most exclusive, and expensive, trans-Atlantic hybrid going. They were so prized and so scarce that even buyers with cash in hand got turned away by the factory—there were no dealers, per se. That's why Dean Martin ended up driving a Jaguar, originally, because he couldn't

My husband liked different cars, especially the rare performance cars, and he just had to have it.

persuade Dual-Ghia initially to sell him a car. Yet this particular Dual-Ghia somehow ended up on a used-car lot in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1962, when it was barely five years old, with a crunched front fender on the driver's side. Stanley Bator, a mechanic and seller of cars from nearby Savoy, liked it, rescued it and fixed the fender. It was no big deal. Stanley, who usually went by "Bud," did that kind of stuff daily. He also resprayed the originally white 1957 Dual-Ghia in a shade of burgundy.

Bud passed away in 1999 after battling cancer.



Huge chromed air cleaner atop the De Soto Hemi comes away by twisting a single wing nut. Aluminum sheet fills gap left by Ghia's huge engine setback. Unsurprisingly, Hemi is topped by a Carter AFB. Chrysler generator is backed by a power steering pump; there's no air conditioning.

His wife, Joan, has continued to drive and maintain the Dual-Ghia in his memory. The car is just as Bud refurbished it, including a new top and seat covers. By its serial number, it is the 40th Dual-Ghia convertible ever built. "My husband liked different cars, especially the rare performance cars, and he just had to have it," she said. "Bud could do anything. He repaired cars, sold them, had a garage, moved mobile homes, and put up double-wides. He was pretty much a man of many trades. I don't remember much about the dealer, but it was a person who sold used cars. I have no idea how the Dual-Ghia ended up there. The dealer seemed like he was just happy to sell it. It was functional, except for the damaged fender. There were no mechanical problems, and I don't think there was even any rust."

Incredible. Among the Driveable Dreams we've featured in *HCC* since our inaugural issue, this is by far the most intriguingly exotic, a hypercostly meld of Chrysler mechanicals and Italian coachwork from Carrozzeria Ghia of Turin. The true ancestor of the Dual-Ghia is actually a Virgil Exner styling exercise for Chrysler, the Firearrow roadster that made the show and salon circuit beginning in 1952. As it existed, the Firearrow was compelling to view but didn't run. To a guy from Detroit named Gene Casaroll, it didn't matter, he bought the rights to the Firearrow design from Chrysler anyway.

Under differing circumstances, Casaroll might have become an upstart American auto manufacturer on the order of Preston Tucker or even Henry J. Kaiser. He owned a Detroit-based haulaway firm called Automobile Shippers. The fleet boasted more than 100 car carriers, all of them crammed with new autos destined for the booming post-war market. Casaroll had money and enthusiasm in abundance. He had been entering cars under his trucking company's name at the Indianapolis 500 since the 1940s. Casaroll had a marked tendency to hire young gassers off the nation's short tracks, including Henry Banks, Jack McGrath and the one-legged Midget star from the East Coast, Bill

Schindler. Another, Troy Ruttman, came close to a second 500 win aboard one of Casaroll's cars in 1954, urged on by the boss's offer of \$1,000 cash for every lap he led.

By 1955, Casaroll was already in the business of automobile manufacturing, or nearly so. He had submitted a bid to the Pentagon on a next-generation tank transporter that would have replaced the well-known M-26 "Dragon Wagon" of World War II. Casaroll's design had engines mounted at the front and rear, hence the name of his company, Dual Motors. Before any serious production could get underway, the war ended. Next, Casaroll made a serious bid to get race car-building legend Frank Kurtis's two-seat sports car into volume production. By this time, he'd walked away from owning race cars and focused his efforts on building a specialty, high-luxury sports car.

Chrysler already had an alliance with Ghia, which had bodied several of its show cars, including the Firearrow. Casaroll came up with a plan to buy chassis and powertrain components from Chrysler, ship them to Turin for new custom bodies, then perform final assembly and pre-delivery inspections at Dual Motors in Detroit. Two prototypes were built; the first one that ran, a two-place roadster dubbed the Firebomb, came stateside in June 1955. The chassis and running gear were basic Dodge items, the frame sectioned and reinforced for added strength, the front and rear frame halves attached to a central belly pan (essentially making the Dual-Ghia a step-down design) with a wheelbase shortened to 115 inches. The engine was the 230-hp version of Dodge's new polyspheric OHV V-8, set back in the modified chassis six full inches for improved weight distribution and handling. Body panels were hand-shaped from steel over aluminum dies. By the time full production was approved for 1957, the car's name had been changed to Dual-Ghia. It had also grown into a four-seater, and Ghia, under direction of Luigi Segre, had added subtle tailfins and vertical taillamps.

The story of Dual-Ghia exists in two distinct

chapters, the first embodied by the 1957 roadster that Bud Bator first spotted in Pittsfield. For this, Joan directed us to her friend Dr. Paul Sable, a professor of business at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania who founded and operates a Dual-Ghia registry. Paul explains that the first-generation Dual-Ghia convertibles built from 1956 through 1958 were virtually all different in minor details, such as lighting and accessories, and that both polyspheric and Hemi engines were used. Some Dual-Ghias used the vaunted D-500 performance engine from Dodge. Joan's car is a little different, having been built with a 315-cu.in. De Soto Hemi V-8 rated at 260 hp. As with all the first-generation cars, it's mated to a standard two-speed Chrysler PowerFlite automatic transmission.

Speaking of standard equipment, the only options were power windows and brakes. The list price, accordingly, was \$7,656. To provide some perspective, in 1957, that was more than a Mercedes-Benz 300SL coupe, a Facel Vega FVS, and was just barely edged by a Pegaso with Saoutchik or Touring bodywork. Among U.S. cars, the Dual-Ghia's price was surpassed only by the Lincoln Continental Mark II and the Pinin Farina-bodied Cadillac Eldorado Brougham. Still, Casaroll viewed the Ghia bodywork as a cost-saver: Had the coachwork been attempted stateside, the Dual-Ghia's price would have likely doubled.

All of the Dual-Ghia's production records are gone, but based on extensive interviews with Casaroll's son and Dual Motors' vice president, Paul Farago, the true number is likely either 99 or 100. They went to an exclusive clientele, including Hoagy Carmichael, Peter Lawford and eventually, old Mr. "That's Amore" himself. Sales were so slow that Casaroll stopped production in late 1958, and

*Bud and I
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I love it.
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But now, she
loves it too.*

began designing a new Dual-Ghia. That car, the 6.4-L coupe, is the better-known Dual-Ghia, thanks in large part to a popular Corgi model of it. The very first one produced went to Frank Sinatra. Even more expensive, only 26 were built from 1960 through 1963.

"They went out of business for two reasons. First, trains were starting to move more cars across the country than trucks, and next, Gene Casaroll got sick and eventually died," Paul said. "Right now, there are 72, total, of the first 99 or 100 known to still exist, and 20 of the 26 that were built beginning in the 1960s."

Paul has been helpful to Joan as a source of parts, most recently a fuel pump, although she has the car serviced locally. She drives it infrequently and moderately. She was only barely aware of the Dual-Ghia's cachet in Hollywood when she and Bud spotted it. "Back then, we didn't think anything of it, what with the movie stars and whatever. We thought it was just another 1957 car, only it was a Dual-Ghia.

"I'm not a fast driver, so I don't usually go over 50 or 60 MPH. The steering doesn't vibrate and despite the power assist, you can still feel the road, although there's a little play in it. The brakes never tend to lock up or fade. It accelerates well, upshifts at about 1,800 RPM. Bud and I drove it a lot. I love it. One of my daughters didn't like it at all. At the time, she was young, and said, 'I don't want to be seen in this car.' But now, she loves it too."

Before he passed away, Bud made Joan promise that if she sells the Dual-Ghia to anyone, it will be Paul. "He keeps saying that if I want to sell it, he'll buy it," she said. "But I don't know if I will. It has a lot of sentimental value to me, so my kids will get it." 🐾



Hood badge reflects Dual-Ghia's intercontinental breeding. Unlike early Firebomb predecessor, Dual-Ghia grew tailfins. Wire wheels are incorrect, but were common substitutions by initial owners.



The 1951 Buick LeSabre was a fascinating study in classic 1950s futuristic styling. Looking like a jet without wings, the LeSabre was low, sleek and powerful.

Buick Concept Cars of the 1950s

BY PATRICK FOSTER

Whenever enthusiasts talk about the glamorous concept cars of the past, the talk seldom turns to Buick. Yet Buick built what most authorities consider the first concept car in the industry: the fabulous Buick Y-Job that appeared in 1938. That singular automobile influenced the look of cars for the next 15 years.

And in later years, Buick followed up the Y-Job with a string of concept cars, the revealing of which grew into a nearly annual event by the mid-1950s. Some of these Buick concepts were sneak peeks at future design features; others were merely eye candy, impractical cars designed to make people salivate. One or two could be classified as somewhere in between. So let's review the important Buick concept cars of the 1950s.

After a twelve-year pause following the 1938 Y-job, Buick intro-

duced two concept cars for 1951, the LeSabre and the XP-300; each representing very different ideas.

The LeSabre, with its low lines, high, central 'intake' grille and modest taillfins, was a two-passenger concept car that was a very futuristic looking, rocket-shaped projectile, almost like a postwar rendition of the Y-Job. Built on a 115-inch wheelbase, it was powered by a specially made all-aluminum supercharged 215-cu.in. V-8, featuring hemispherical cylinder heads and a pair of special Bendix-Eclipse carburetors for its dual gasoline and alcohol fuel system. This relatively lightweight engine weighed 550 pounds complete, which was about 250 pounds less than the Roadmaster's cast-iron straight-eight engine. Though it was installed in the LeSabre, the engine shared the XP-300 name with the other 1951 Buick concept car profiled here. With a target power rating of 300 horsepower to



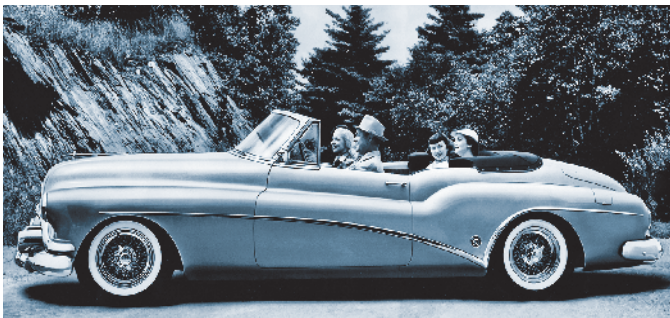
Note the minor differences between this photo and the first. Here, small grilles flanking the central grille have been added, and the wheel covers are more ornate.



Debuting the same year as the LeSabre was the stylish XP-300. A more conventional-looking front end capped the low-rider body lines. The 1954 Kaiser copies the grille and headlamp themes.



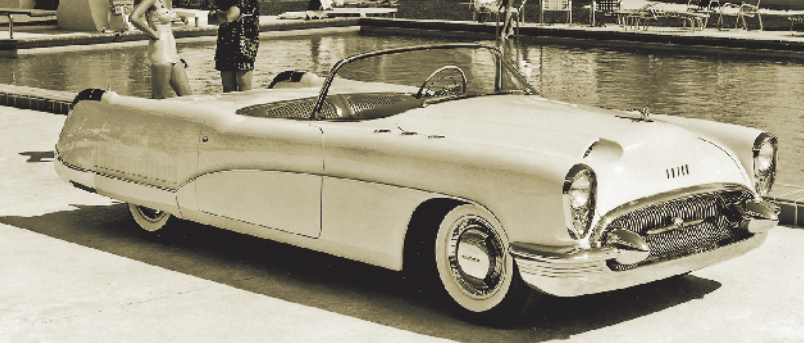
The 1951 XP-300 with its creator, engineer Charles Chayne seated in a 1910 Buick that towers over the concept car. With Chayne is Ivan Wiles, Buick general manager.



The car that inspired the limited production Buick Skylarks was this 1952 Skylark show car. Note the full wheel cutouts, wire wheels and stylish side molding.



The 1952 Buick Ranger was more a show car than a concept and used a Western theme, complete with a holstered rifle attached to the driver's-side door.



The two-seat 1953 Buick Wildcat was Buick's take on an American-type sports car, and featured V-8 power and great styling.



The Buick Wildcat II debuted for 1954 and came closer to the sports-car ideal. Its fiberglass body and four-carburetor V-8 power made this one very fast concept.



Rear view of the 1953 Buick Wildcat shows sloping rear deck and dual exhausts.



Another view of the 1954 Wildcat II shows off its interior. Note the hood ornament and dual spotlamps.

coincide with the "300" in its name, in reality that little aluminum engine actually made 335 hp at 5,500 RPM when Buick engineers tested it on the dyno. This was not the same production-based 215-cu.in. V-8 that would be installed in the 1961 Buick Special, but rather a one-off experimental powertrain.

The LeSabre employed a two-seat roadster-type body made entirely of aluminum and magnesium and featured additional technological innovations, such as a moisture sensor that would actually raise the convertible top if it began raining while the owner was away from the car. Design chief Harley Earl was so pleased with the jet-like LeSabre that for a time he used it as his personal car.

The 1951 Buick XP-300 concept car, released in February 1951, looked much more conventional. An aluminum-bodied two-seater like the LeSabre, "XP" stood for experimental, and recall that both cars shared the same 300-horsepower supercharged V-8 engine.

Engineer Charles Chayne and Harley Earl were the two primary movers behind the XP-300; they loved low, sleek, fast cars, and at 39.1 inches high at the cowl, the XP-300 was low. Top speed was a reported 150 miles per hour. Interestingly, the teardrop headlamp surrounds and wide oval 'electric razor' grille later found their way on the 1954 Kaiser production models. Seems Henry J. Kaiser was so smitten by the XP-300 that he told his designers to copy it.

The following year brought a new concept car that at first

glance appears to be a stock 1952 Buick convertible, until we notice that the body lines seem lower, the side moldings take a daring dip down to the rear wheel, and the rear wheel cutout is fully open. This rarely seen car was called the Skylark and it spawned the limited-production Skylark models of 1953.

Another Buick concept appearing the same year was known as the Buick Ranger. Both concept cars have interesting side profiles, but the Ranger has the stock four 'VentiPorts' (or portholes, as many people call them) on its sides that the sportier Skylark lacks, as well as an interesting accessory mounted in the notch just below the door line—a holstered rifle, according to accounts we found. How impractical was that? The Ranger, which featured a Western theme, appeared at several auto shows.

For 1953, Buick introduced to the public its new Skylark limited production models. Although they were called 'sports cars,' the Skylarks were rather large for that designation. But the experimental Buick Wildcat (aka Wildcat I) of 1953 was more like a sports car, being a two-seater with a fiberglass body, 114-inch wheelbase,



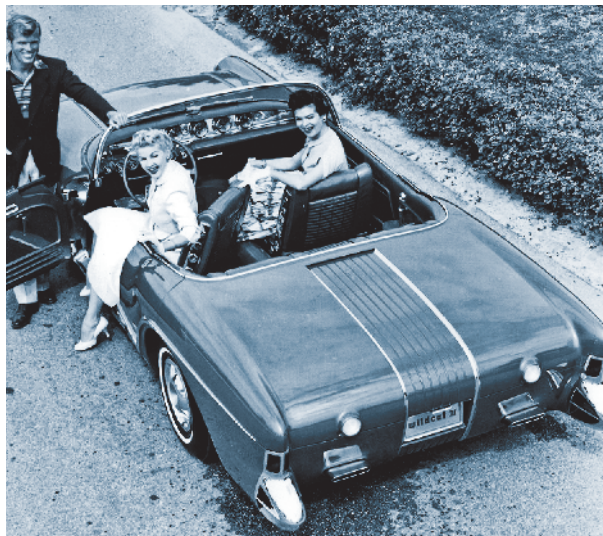
Unlike the first two Wildcats, this handsome 1955 Wildcat III had room for four passengers.

and 188-hp "Fireball" V-8 engine hooked up to a 'Twin Turbine' Dynaflo transmission. The body color of this handsome sports machine was white, and the interior was green leather. Built primarily to test the use of fiberglass in body construction, its styling previewed the look of the 1955 Buick production jobs. One very interesting feature of the Wildcat was its scooped "Roto-Static" hubs, which remained fixed in place while the wheels spun around, providing cooling air to the brakes. Notice too the 'VentiPorts' atop the front fenders.

For 1954, Buick traveled even further into the sports car genre with the Wildcat II, which at a casual glance appears to be a re-bodied Corvette but actually was much more than that. The Wildcat II was small; its luscious fiberglass body spanning just 170 inches overall on a 100-inch wheelbase, and holding two passengers. Like any good show car, it was low, a mere 35 inches high at the cowl. And rather than a humdrum Chevrolet straight-six under the hood the Wildcat II was fitted with a four-carburetor 322-cu.in. V-8 good for 220 hp. Unusual features included the 'flying wing' front fenders lined with chrome inner panels containing air scoop louvers, a tilt-nose hood with VentiPorts, dual spotlights mounted on the doors, and bumper-mounted headlamps.

Clearly on a roll with the Wildcat name, for 1955 Buick unveiled the Wildcat III. More conventionally styled than the Wildcat II, the Wildcat III could hold four passengers on its 110-inch wheelbase, though rear seat room was tight. It was painted a sexy 'Kimberly' red hue. Overall length was 190 inches, and as can be seen, several of its styling details influenced the look of the 1957 Buicks.

On the other end of the design spectrum was the new Buick



Birdseye view of 1955 Wildcat III illustrates the tight rear seat room available. The high-mounted back-up lamps are unusual.

Just above the decorative 'bullet' was a rear view camera that sent images to the driver in lieu of a rear view mirror. Twin pods at the lower end of the rear fenders served as bumpers and also held the taillamps and exhaust ports. All in all, the Centurion was an outstanding automobile and one of GM's greatest concept cars ever.

The following year, Buick had a concept of a different sort. Italian design master Pinin Farina created a beautiful European-style sport coupe dubbed the Buick Lido. It combined the low rakish lines of a continental sports GT with front-end styling that was more typically American. With big wheel cutouts, a squared-off roofline and a beautiful bucket seat interior, the Lido was a visual triumph.

The final Buick concept of the 1950s is a bit of a mystery. A 1959 four-door hardtop with a pronounced rear fin set in the center of the rear deck, it certainly is hard to ignore. But what name it was given escapes us. Although we've seen other photographs of this car, at this time we don't know what it was called. Are there any sharp-eyed readers out there that can help us out with details? 🗨



The fabulous 1956 Centurion was perhaps the most futuristic-looking of the 1950's Buick concepts and is a breathtaking design.

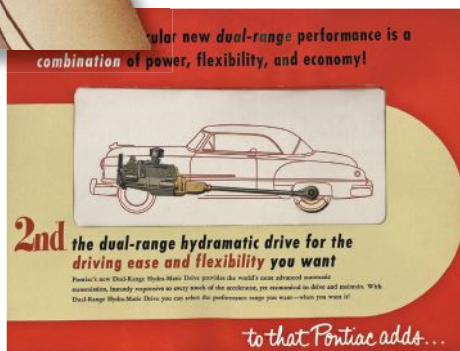


For 1957, Pinin Farina designed this handsome European-style Gran Touring coupe dubbed the Buick Lido. Where is this car today?



This 1959 Buick concept car sported a large central fin with integral antenna fitted to the top of the trunk lid on a four-door hardtop body.

Selling the Dual-Range Hydra-Matic



IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE DRIVING automobiles safer and more convenient, engineers of the 1930s started getting serious about automatic transmissions in mass-produced vehicles. By late 1939, the fully automatic transmission was a reality, introduced on 1940 Oldsmobiles as the “Hydra-Matic.” While a few hundred thousand vehicles were running with Hydra-Matics by 1942, it would be refined and (literally) battle tested during World War II. By 1950, over a million cars relied on the Hydra-Matic transmission, and the first major upgrade to the system was introduced on 1952 Pontiacs: the Dual-Range Hydra-Matic. For the first time, drivers could choose to operate their vehicles with either three or four speeds, and Pontiac advertisers were quick to trumpet the new dual-range feature in the division’s sales literature for the year.

Our first piece of literature encourages consumers to do some research on their own. It is a 4 x 4¾-inch triangular shaped announcement card asking if the reader has driven the new Dual-Range Pontiac. The triangle represents a teepee and features a Native American woman peeking out of the door to “ask” the ques-

tion. No transmission specifications are given, and the Dual-Range concept isn’t defined. It is simply a teaser encouraging deeper investigation.

A second sales brochure for 1952 provides extensive details on the Dual-Range Hydra-Matic. In this catalog, readers are finally given transmission specifics. They learn how the driver can select to drive the car as a three-speed, thereby yielding greater performance in heavy-traffic conditions. If the driver prefers, a fourth gear can be incorporated for high-speed economy. The catalog also describes how the driver can even shift between the two settings whenever the vehicle is travelling less than 60 MPH. To handle the demands of Dual-Range Pontiac engines for 1952 saw compression ratios increase to 7.7:1.

Our last piece of literature highlighting the Dual-Range Hydra-Matic is actually a spiral-bound dealer binder. In addition to providing details, specifications and color and fabric samples on all of Pontiac’s model offerings, nearly half of the 62-page binder addresses the high-compression Pontiac engine and Dual-

Range transmission. For those of you who are like me and enjoy interactive literature, this piece has one cardboard page that features a moveable gear selector. As you “shift,” pictures and features change to match the selected “gear.” When the lower driving range is chosen, three advantages to this setting are emphasized: flexibility in congested traffic, increased engine braking and spectacular acceleration. When you shift to the high range, the benefits described include cruising at highway speed with lower engine revolutions, quieter operation, longer component life and a feeling of effortless coasting. Of course, photographs are worth at least a thousand words, and other areas in the binder include Mylar pages that can be peeled back to reveal even more engine and transmission features.

The Hydra-Matic transmission was not new in 1952, but it was certainly more convenient. That year’s offering of a dual-range selector was another luxury feature that contributed to a growing trend in American cars. More than 80% of Pontiac’s 271,373 cars produced included the improved Hydra-Matic. Dual-Range sales literature was clearly a success! 🐾

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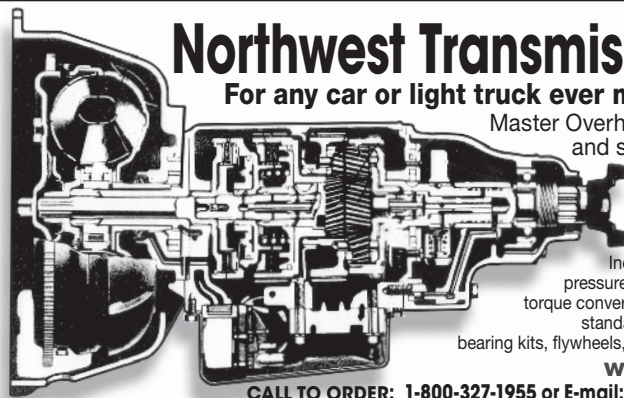
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Classic

ALICE PRESTON

Hired as a mechanic by industrial designer Brooks Stevens in the early 1960s, she keeps his dream of Excalibur alive



BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL STROHL • ADDITIONAL IMAGES COURTESY ALICE PRESTON

By the early 1960s, it could be said that industrial designer Brooks Stevens had strongly influenced the American way of life. For decades, his popular product designs could be found in kitchens, bedrooms, garages and garden sheds; in some cases, his design was the building itself. One of this lifelong automotive enthusiast's personal projects had been a series of sports cars called Excalibur. After an unlikely start, the Excalibur concept would be brought to series production by his sons, would inspire an entire genre of cars, and would remain beloved by individualists around the world five decades on. That car owes its reputation and continued survival to Brooks' trusted and tenacious longtime associate, the self-appointed "keeper of the sword": Alice Preston.

Brooks began collecting and restoring vintage automobiles, both American and European, in the late 1930s, but it wouldn't be until September 1959

that he created the Brooks Stevens Auto Museum, located on a site of his own design in Mequon, just north of Milwaukee. One of the 34 cars on display during that grand opening was a white 1928 Mercedes-Benz Type S phaeton that had originally belonged to entertainer Al Jolson; this car would influence the Excalibur SS, a project that grew out of Brooks' work with Studebaker.

Conceived as a concept car to drive traffic to the struggling automaker's 1964 New York Auto Show stand, styled to recall the late-1920s Mercedes SSK and built at the Museum on a re-engineered Lark Daytona chassis by Brooks' sons William ("Steve") and David, the first Excalibur SS almost wasn't shown when Studebaker executives feared it was too far removed from their product line. Brooks called in a favor with the show's organizer, and the "Mercebaker" was displayed as a standalone product of Brooks Stevens Associates; it caused a huge stir and generated a flurry of orders.



“Everything was made in-house. We made the frames in-house, we made the bodies in-house, interiors and upholstery. There was a huge fiberglass department—we did our own mold-making and everything.”





This customer-owned Series I Excalibur was personally restored by Alice in 1997.

Alice was working at the Brooks Stevens Auto Museum while the “Studebaker SS”-badged Excalibur SS prototype was being built. She remembers being hired in 1963, at age 17: “In those days, many women wanted guys’ jobs, but didn’t have a clue how to do them. I lived on a farm as a kid, and I learned that you fixed the tractor, or walked back. I had to take everything apart to see how it worked. I’ve always liked cars!

“I was interviewed, and was told that if I could adjust the tappets on their International Harvester Travelall, I could have a job. You have to adjust the tappets while the engine’s running, and I was doing that, sitting on the wheel well in the engine compartment, when Mr. Stevens came in. He was talking to employee Ron Paetow, and Ron said, ‘This is going to be our new mechanic around here.’ I had really long hair at the time, and was wearing a cowboy hat. He could only see my back. He said, ‘Well, if he’s going to work around here, he’s going to need to get a haircut,’” Alice says with a laugh. “Ron said, ‘No, Mr. Stevens, I want you to meet Alice Preston!’ He said to me, ‘Oh my God, call me Brooks.’ And we were friends from that point on.”

The first three Series I Excaliburs—which Brooks had dubbed “contemporary classics,” because of their vintage appearance and modern amenities, reliability and performance—were built in the David Stevens Research and Development building at the Brooks Stevens Auto Museum. Assembly moved to permanent dedicated facilities by 1966. The production Series I Excaliburs rode on Studebaker frames, had fiberglass bodies, and were powered by Chevrolet V-8 drivetrains; later Series rode on custom-built chassis. Through the 1960s and early 1970s, Alice helped maintain

the Museum’s expanding collection, and watched the Excalibur operation grow from six employees to 82. She and her husband also ran a machine shop that fabricated parts for the Excalibur.

“I went to work at the factory in 1973,” she recalls. “They had some paint problems, and I was hired by the plant manager to solve those issues. We were building about a car a day back then, and we needed to bake the fiberglass to get all the solvents out because the solvents were permeating through the primer and paint, causing bubbles and crazing. We ended up getting a big oven in there.” The mechanically-minded Alice would soon assist David Stevens in Excalibur’s research and development office. “We decided to make more things in-house, so we built another section on to the building to have a machine shop. I ended up running five departments, including fabrication, welding, grinding, polishing and machining. I was also chief mechanic for Ecurie Excalibur, Brooks’ race team.”

The increasing popularity of the Excalibur through the 1970s saw a sharp rise in production, and Alice kept the shop organized, establishing the stockpile of part numbers and blueprints that she still refers to today. “Everything was made in-house. We made the frames in-house, we made the bodies in-house, interiors and upholstery. There was a huge fiberglass department—we did our own mold-making and everything. When you job things out, you’re not in control of when you get your pieces, so the more things we did in-house, the better we liked it. We used a lot of Chevrolet Corvette running gear parts, but most were modified with permission from GM, who still warrantied them.”

The Excalibur Automobile Corporation, still owned by David and Steve

Stevens, had more than 20 dealers around the country in the early 1980s, and began struggling to make money during the recession. Excaliburs were always hand-built, high quality automobiles, and their low production figures had opened the door for the “kit car” movement. “We probably spawned it. Everybody tried copying us, but we weren’t a kit car. We were actually a factory-built automobile, unlike Zimmer and Clénet and all those that used somebody else’s frame and engine and slapped a fiberglass body on it. We built our own chassis, we built our bodies, we did our engineering, built our own steering system,” Alice notes. She was a manager by 1982—“They had to hire five people to do what I was doing before, because each department got a supervisor,” she said—but times were tough, and she was let go. In 1986, the Stevens brothers sold the Excalibur business to the Illinois-based Henry Warner group.

Alice ran her own home remodeling business for the next few years, but it wouldn’t be long before she was drawn back into the Stevens family fold. “In 1987, Dave called and said, ‘We’re building new Oscar Meyer Weinermobiles!’—Brooks had redesigned the famous Weinermobile in 1958, and his sons were commissioned to build the next generation—“And I really can’t do this project unless you come on board.’ Dave and I had worked together closely, and well, in the past, so I agreed,” she explains.

Brooks was having trouble with the curator of his museum at that time, and he told Alice that if she didn’t take over that duty for him, he would have to close it. “Brooks wasn’t the chauvinistic type that most men were. And I didn’t want to disappoint him. He’d say, ‘Do you think we can do this?’ and I’d think, I can’t do that, but I’d find out that yes, I really could do it,” she reflects. After assuming her new duties back where she’d begun her career 25 years earlier, Alice expanded the Museum’s operations to include a garage, where she added revenue by working on customers’ cars, specializing in Excaliburs. Brooks Stevens died in 1995, and Alice maintained the museum until 1999, when it was closed and his car collection sold.

“When the museum was closed in August 1999, I thought, ‘Well, if I can make money for them to keep the museum open, I can probably do it for myself,’” she explains. The formation of Camelot Classic Cars—a collaboration with former Brooks Stevens designer Adrian Bonini—in Milwaukee, followed. “I took my savings and rented a building. Most of my clients came with me, because I’d been taking care of some of their cars for 35 years. We started



in the cars remains strong. "I just got a call from the organizers of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Auto Show, and they want to feature Excalibur as the marque for the year because it's our 50th anniversary. I've been in talks with the Milwaukee Master-piece concours about possibly displaying one Excalibur of each Series in August, and there will be a huge 50th anniversary party with approximately 100 cars in Paris this summer."

Keeping Excaliburs alive has not been hugely profitable for Alice and her team—"You put more money in than you get out!"—but she does it for the love of the marque, for the network of friends that Excalibur owners have become, and out of respect for Brooks Stevens. "I've spent most of my life, more than 40 years, doing this," Alice says with a smile. "This is an homage to him; that's really the reason that I do it. He was more a father to me than anything, and my friend, and we just got along great. It's a way to carry on what 'The Boss' started." 🐾

with repairs and storage." In the meantime, the Excalibur Automobile Corporation had gone through some troubles; it was sold to a German businessman, Udo Geitlinger, who bought it for his son Jens to run. Jens branched out beyond the contemporary classics, extending the brand to cover an AC Cobra replica, motorcycle side cars, and even trucks and motorcycles were in the works.

"Geitlinger kept dumping money into it until he pulled the plug and said no more. I had started purchasing all of the old parts from them in 1999-2001. Then Jens disappeared and abandoned the building," she remembers. "I knew the guys who held the note for the Geitlingers. They knew I'd started purchasing [the business] and had invested every nickel I had, about a quarter million, before Jens took the money and ran. They asked if I was still interested in the stuff? I said, 'Yes, but I have no money left.' They said, 'That's alright, we'll make you a deal because we know what you already have into it.' They made me a very nice deal, about ten cents on the dollar—I spoke with the Stevens boys, who felt I was the right person to do this—and I begged and borrowed what I could to buy the rights to the Excalibur trademark and name, the records and prints, Ecurie Excalibur and everything that was in the building."

Excalibur luxury sports cars were built for roughly 40 years, in four Series, and total production was 3,268 units. The vast majority of those cars remain on the road today, she explains: "I know we lost seven cars to Cash for Clunkers, but they wouldn't give us information about VINs; I don't know why people did that for \$5,000, when we would have paid five grand for the cars for nothing more than their parts. There have probably been a dozen cars lost to accidents and fires. It takes a fire to destroy one, really, because the frame is all quarter-inch thick 4 x 4-inch and 2 x 4-inch steel tubing. They don't really get damaged in accidents; whatever they hit gets damaged. The chassis on these cars are absolutely massive; Series IIs and IIIs weighed 3,700 pounds, and Series IVs weighed 4,700 pounds!

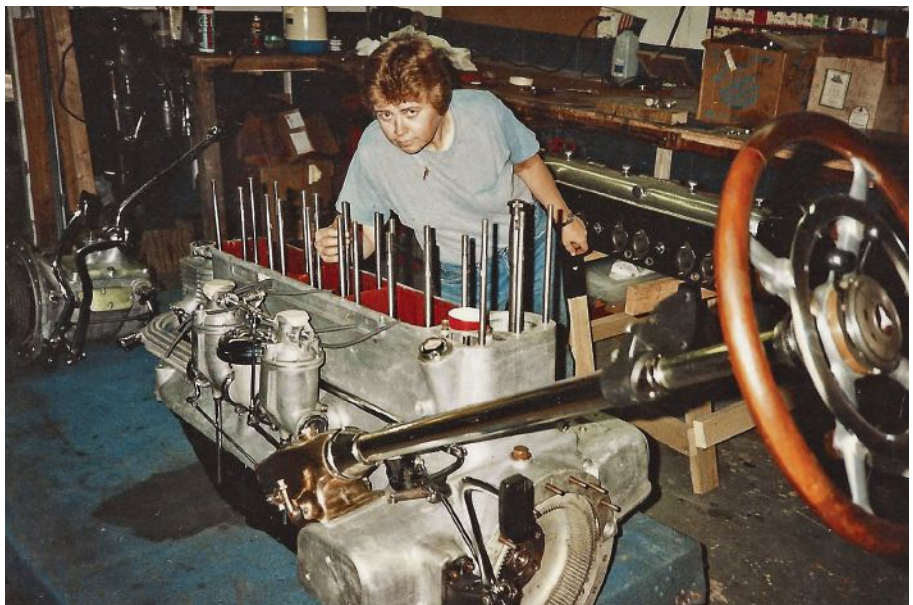
In her decade-plus years of owning Camelot Classic Cars, Alice has worked hard to restore the brand's reputation for individualism and heirloom-quality work-

manship. "We try to keep the cars alive," she muses. "We do storage, repairs and restorations, ship Excalibur parts around the world, and sell cars on consignment for our customers. The owners that have them now tell me they plan on passing them down to their children, they don't plan on selling them. They pretty much know where to find us internationally. I got an email the other day from a customer in Perth, Australia, who is so excited about his car. It's nice when people appreciate what you've done."

The 50th anniversary of the Excalibur SS Series I is in 2014, and although you can't buy a new Excalibur today, interest



Brooks Stevens posed in the Studebaker SS prototype on the Museum grounds in 1964.



Alice rebuilt the engine of the Excalibur-inspired Al Jolson 1928 Mercedes-Benz S.



Rejuvenated Rampside

Part 1: Though most have been forgotten, this 1961 Corvair 95 Rampside pickup gets treated to a ground-up restoration worthy of a trophy-winning Full Classic

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CALVIN CLARK, JR.





With the Rampside disassembled, it was mounted on a rotisserie so that it could easily be moved around the shop and worked on. The original Omaha orange paint had been the fleet color for the first owner, who had bad luck with the Rampside.



Proper restoration meant removing any and all components from the Corvair's unit-body chassis, including all doors, glass, lighting, wiring, suspension and undercarriage, the entire interior and all decorative trim.



Despite being stored indoors for over 20 years, the Rampside still continued to corrode in some places. Though the rot was largely confined to the lower extremities, it also included the integrated frame pieces.



With substantial holes in the floor and no suitable reproduction or used panels to weld in, the restorers had to fabricate appropriate pieces to complete the body. Reproduction side panels, however, were available from his company, Clark's Corvair Parts.

Trucks are for work. Period. Or at least they used to be anyway. Before there were Denali editions or King Ranch versions or fancy cowboy-sounding names like Laramie, pickups were asked to come to the loading gate or the work site ready to roll. Plain and simple.

Cal Clark, Jr. brought home this 1961 Corvair 95 Rampside in 1974 with very low miles on the odometer, but also with a big hole where the engine once sat. "We were checking through *Hemmings*," says Cal, "because we were looking for a Rampside, and I saw one advertised that said 'no engine,' and it had very low mileage. So, we called the guy and his story was that he ran a trucking operation. He had bought this Rampside in the Omaha Orange of his fleet. He drove it for less than a year and the crankshaft broke.

"He took it back to the dealer," Cal continues. "They took the engine out. Chevrolet would not do anything. The dealer would not do anything. He was so upset about it that he parked it in one of his buildings. That's where we picked it up in 1974. It still had his trucking logo on it and was sitting there in near-perfect condition, except it had no engine."

While the lack of its rear-mounted, air-cooled powertrain might deter most folks, Cal was in the Corvair business. And by being in the Corvair business, we mean well on the way to making Clark's Corvair Parts the largest supplier of Corvair parts in the world. (Clark's Corvair Parts was previously profiled in *HCC* #21, June 2006.) With an engine and associated parts available and the expertise to get it all back into the Rampside, Cal turned the once-abandoned truck into a



When restoring the ramp, which had to be disassembled, precise alignment of the guiding pin was critical, as the closed ramp provides an important structural component for the bed that would otherwise flex substantially when the pickup was moving.



Though most trim components had held up well, the ramp latch had taken more than its fair share of weathering and hard use. The rechromed component shines better than new and operates flawlessly when opening the restored ramp.



The engine bay, easily visible here with the bolt-in engine covers removed, sits high in the bed and behind the rear axle. It was largely solid, but much like the rest of the lower extremities, did require some work due to so much salt exposure.



The Rampside's unique, mid-bed door gave the chassis an obvious weak point, the rocker panel essentially the only structure holding it together. More than a dozen locking pliers were required to keep the piece straight when welding it back together.

workhorse for his rapidly growing business.

"We used the Rampside for picking up boxes," recalls Cal. "We used it as our work truck. We parked it in 1985 or 1986 because it was in need of a full restoration. They were rust prone anyway, and driving it for 10 winters just really did it in. It was to the point that we couldn't drive it any more. It was parked inside, but unless it's really heated and really dehumidified, things continue to rust inside."

Those New England winters had taken their toll on the truck, but Cal's and his wife, Joan's, faith in the charming and very useful Corvair had not run out—not by a longshot. Though Cal had junked a handful of other Rampside's over the years for his parts business, there was no doubt they would eventually give it the restoration it deserved: "We really figured that we owed it to it

since we had pretty much used it up."

In 2009, with the business doing well and Cal and Joan enjoying a bit more freedom from it, the time had come to do right by the Rampside. Cal had a rather expansive shop, complete with a lift, paint booth and plenty of space to work on the Corvair. Knowing that he wanted to tackle the job at home, he hired a body man to come to the site, instead of bringing the car to a commercial shop in the more conventional manner. "Really, with a project this big," says Cal, "it's virtually impossible to send it to a body shop and have any control. And I like to have control."

In June of 2009, work commenced with the teardown of the once mighty truck, and the Rampside's condition came into sharper focus. "I knew it was rusty," says Cal, "but until we started really looking at it, I didn't know how rusty.



Organization is key to any successful restoration, but particularly one when a car is completely disassembled. Parts were organized onto heavy-duty roll-around shelves with each component labeled and organized accordingly on the appropriate shelf.



New England winters spare no steel. Even the doors required removal of some surface rust and complete disassembly and re-assembly. After removing all glass, polishing compound was used to brighten up each piece before re-installation.



Three coats of Martin Senour 2K Primer Surfacer were each smoothed down with up to 600-grade paper. A final coat of sealer was applied before base colors were laid down. Very little body filler was used, no more than $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch at the most.



With its 360-degree access, the rotisserie allowed the undercarriage of the Rampside to be painted in a detailed manner, giving the once forgotten pickup a truly top-notch, bottom-up restoration.

There were places where you could almost put your fist through. But, a lot of it was seams and places that you knew the rust was in there, and if you didn't get it out, if it wasn't a hole now, as soon as you sprayed it, it was probably going to turn into a hole."

Cal had been down this road before with a 1957 Chevrolet convertible, so he knew the ropes. Anything and everything that came off the Rampside was labeled. Parts were grouped, such as for the interior, wiring, lighting and so forth, and those parts were all organized on heavy-duty rolling shelves that could be moved around the shop as needed. Any components that could be removed from the body were removed, including the cab doors, deck lid and ramp door, and all glass. Only the windshield, taken out years ago to test a gasket, was missing.

After setting up part of the large main room in his shop as a blasting space, Cal used plastic media to remove all of the paint from the body and bed. After sufficiently removing as much of the finish as possible, he then used aluminum oxide, in both fine and coarse grains, to attack the rusted metal. Once they had the existing metal cleaned up, Cal and his body guy took stock of what was salvageable, what needed to be replaced and what needed to be fabricated.

As the owner of a Corvair parts business, Cal had access to and had squirreled away some panels that were needed, but not everything was available, either as used, NOS or reproduction. "The external panels I had saved over the years, but I never found a side panel; however, we sell those as a good reproduction anyway," Cal explains. "And then the front wheel openings are



Despite Cal's insistence that working with doors is perhaps his least favorite aspect of restoring old cars, the Rampside's doors turned out as perfect as the rest of the body and continue to close properly after very careful alignment.



Three coats of Martin Senour Crossfire Platinum base were used for the white-and-Romany Maroon two-tone before they were top-coated with four layers of clear. All were painted at the owner's well-equipped home shop paint booth.



Matching the correct gray of the bed was no mean feat. It required finding an original bed that had been kept from too much exposure to the sun and other elements, and careful mixing of two GM paints: charcoal green and charcoal gray.



With the seats still removed, it is possible to see the extent to which the owner went to properly restore and refinish each and every surface of what was once merely a delivery vehicle, a working truck, but now is a bona fide concours Corvair.

very convoluted and complex panels made up of multiple panels, and luckily I had saved some of those. But, when it got into sections of the floor and sections of the frame underneath—that just all had to be fabricated. The wheel wells were okay. It's pretty much the floors and frame unit and braces underneath that had to be made."

One of the first people Cal had to help him out was a body man from Portugal with old-world skills that represent the best in craftsmanship. "He just made some fantastic little brackets and things that went underneath that nobody will ever see," Cal recalls. "He would start with a piece of flat metal, a chisel, a hammer and a thick piece of steel, and he would just start pounding on it. And he would do that with pieces that had 90 degrees but that also had a little quarter-inch flange along them." Although health issues forced Cal's gifted assistant

in the restoration to move on, the components he created remain with the Rampside.

Cal then hired Brandon LeBlanc of Westhampton, Massachusetts-based Big B's Autobody to assist with the completion of the bodywork. But Cal insisted on handling the DeVilbiss GTI spray gun himself. He first laid down three coats of Martin Senour 2K Primer Surfacer. Having block sanded on previous projects, Cal handed that job off to Brandon, who smoothed the surface with up to 600-grade paper. After applying a coat of sealer, he then laid three coats of Martin Senour Crossfire Platinum Base, first in the white for the side stripes and then in a shade that most closely matched Romany Maroon, an original Corvair color. After four coats of clear, Brandon finished flattening the surface with 1000- and then 2000-grade paper.

Fortunately for Cal, most of the chrome was in good shape, but he did have to send the ramp and tailgate latches to D&S Custom Metal Restoration of Holyoke, Massachusetts, for replating. For the inside of that ramp and the rest of the bed, Cal wanted to have it as close to the factory hue as possible. "I got that color," he says, "by going back to my other 1961 Rampside that hasn't been on the road since 1971 and has always been inside in a dark environment. And that's the paint that I went by to try and match. It's a gray that has a tint of green, which is the way I mix it. I take a GM charcoal with a GM charcoal green and mix the two together."

Despite very intimate familiarity with the Corvair and all its variants, final assembly of the body was not without its pitfalls. Not a big fan of working with doors, Cal reports that getting them hung properly was not an easy task: "I think my wife and I worked on the final door adjustment for hours it seemed. You would move it the absolute minutest amount, and the bottom would be out too much or in too much or back too

much or forward too much. I just don't get along too well with doors."

"The thing I cannot understand is that these guys doing the level of restoration of Pebble Beach or something of that caliber, how do they do it without scratching something? I have never been able to do a restoration where maybe I am tightening a bolt or something and not scratched somewhere. And I just don't know if they immediately take it off and restore it all over again. I defy anybody to do a full restoration and not have something that gets damaged while they are doing it."

The result of the very thorough body and paint process is a stunning two-tone Rampside with an absolutely rich and deep finish that defies the Corvair's humble economy-car roots. Though the workmanlike orange color is gone, no one can deny the hardy appeal of the now maroon pickup.

Next month, we'll look at the drivetrain, interior and finishing touches of this high-caliber restoration. 🚗



Buick Celebrates 90th Anniversary In 1993

FLINT, Mich.—Buick Motor Division, which claims one of the most dramatic and important chapters in the history of the American automobile, celebrates its 90th anniversary in 1993.

The division's founder, David Dunbar Buick, was building gasoline engines by 1899, and his engineer, Walter L. Marr, apparently built the first automobile to be called a Buick in 1900. But Buick traditionally dates its beginnings to 1903. That was the year the company was incorporated, refinanced and moved from Detroit to Flint.

The division's history has been exciting from the beginning. Buick recovered from near-bankruptcy in 1904 to become the No. 1 producer of automobiles in 1908—surpassing the combined production of Ford and Cadillac, its closest competitors.

Buick was the financial pillar on which General Motors—today the world's largest automaker—was created.

And Buick has been a product innovator from Day 1—starting with its creation of the valve-in-head engine, which earned an unsurpassed early reputation in competition around the world.

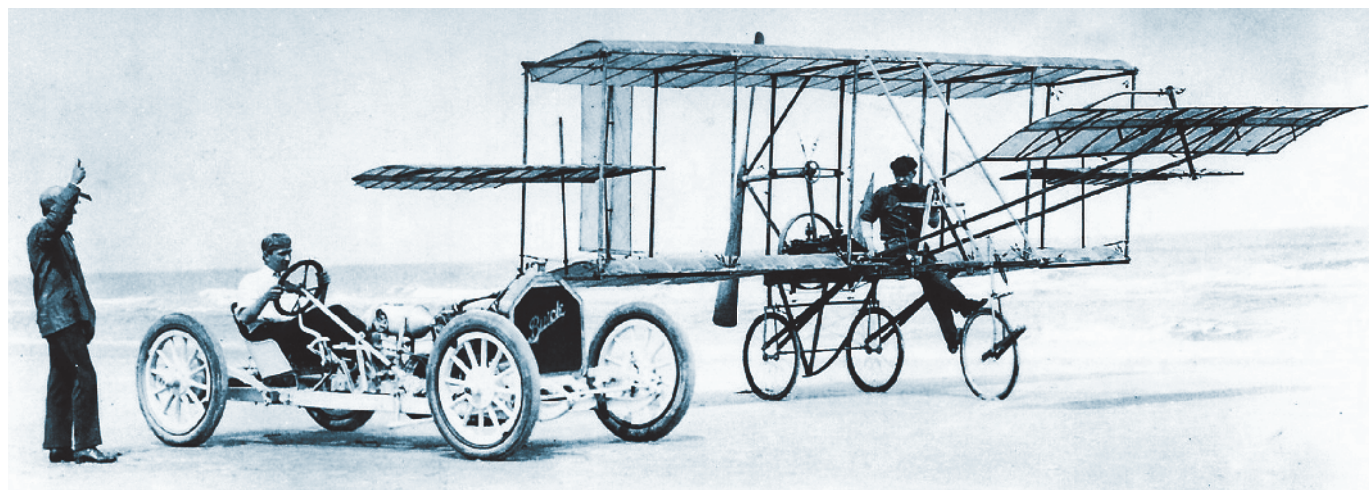


BUICK'S CHIEF ENGINEER,

Walter L. Marr (left), and Thomas D. Buick, son of founder David Dunbar Buick, in the first Flint Buick as it ended its successful Flint-Detroit round trip in July, 1904.

LOUIS CHEVROLET

at the wheel of a Buick Model 10 racer in 1910.



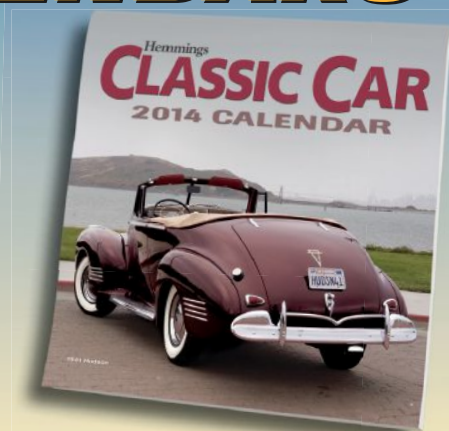
"WILD" BOB BURMAN posed in a Buick for a race against an airplane at a Daytona Beach, Florida "Speed Festival" in 1910.

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At Least It's a Pontiac



WE WERE RECENTLY INFORMED

by a reader that we had featured a car (or two) that no one would want, be able to find, or have the ability to repair. Well sir, this month, you may be right, but at least it's a Pontiac.

On April 1, 1970, America's first subcompact, the Gremlin, was introduced by AMC and was soon followed by the Ford Pinto and Chevrolet Vega, all highly desirable economy cars. For years, not many collectors wanted these three gems, but now if someone brings one to a car show today, any one of them becomes the most talked about car there.

If you think the first three American subcompacts are at the bottom of the barrel, the Pontiac Astre may take you one step lower, but ironically, with more upscale furnishings.

Pontiacs are always desirable cars—when they are real Pontiacs and not just chargrilled Chevrolets. Sometimes, “me-too” cars are fine, like the Firebird and even to some extent the Ventura—at least, that is, until Oldsmobile, Buick and even Cadillac jumped onto the Nova bandwagon.

When considering the Astre, we find ourselves forty years later still asking: “Of

all the cars to copy, why the Vega?” What can I say about Vega that hasn't already been said?

The early Vegas with their mock-Camaro grilles and thin bumpers were the sportiest and perhaps prettiest looking of the American subcompact triplets, so we can't blame Pontiac for wanting one of their own. In 1973, the Pontiac Astre was introduced in Canada, and in 1975, Americans were treated to the Pontiac of subcompacts. As with the Vega, the Astre was available in hatchback, notchback, wagon (called Safari) and panel delivery body styles and was equipped with the ill-fated aluminum block 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine through 1976.

The Vega/Astre did have some advantages, though, over its Gremlin and Pinto competitors, namely that you were treated to coil springs at all four wheels. Am I getting close to convincing you to give it a second look?

To make it more Pontiac-like, they sweetened the deal by offering the intriguing Li'l Wide Track package in 1975, which included a front air dam, rear spoiler, wire mag wheels, window louvers, a chrome exhaust tip, and custom stripes for the hood, body sides, rear spoiler, door handles and center caps. Dealers thought the \$400 it added to the modestly priced Astre was worth it. Apparently, buyers did too. Around 3,000 Li'l Wide Tracks were built, and it eventually became a dealer-installed option. A Formula package similar to the Firebird Formula was added later in the Astre's lifetime, and one of these was recently listed for sale. See, they do exist.

For 1976, the infamous aluminum engine, then named Dura-built 140, was refined for improved cooling and given a 5-year/60,000 mile warranty. The Sunbird's box section front crossmember was installed along with larger rear drum brakes and a torque-arm rear suspension to eliminate wheel hopping. The Astres were also given badly needed anti-rust improvements.

Beginning in 1977, the tin foil engine

was replaced with the rugged Pontiac Iron Duke 2.5-liter four-cylinder power plant. In 1978, the Astre hatchback and station wagon became part of the Pontiac Sunbird line and lived on for a couple more seasons.

I could stop here, and some of you wish I would, but I was determined to find an individual who owns a Pontiac Astre. And I did. His name is Paul Prinizing of North Muskegon, Michigan. He owns a 1976 Pontiac Astre Safari Wagon with 26,000 miles on the odometer.

Paul says he was drawn to the Astre for a number of reasons: “First and foremost is that it is a Pontiac. I've been a lifelong owner of Pontiacs.”

His father and grandfather were also lifelong Pontiac owners, and he also has a fondness for station wagons. Paul is someone we appreciate because as he puts it, “I enjoy collecting and owning the somewhat offbeat or odd cars. Over the years, I've owned a 1973 Ventura hatchback, a 1974 GTO, a 1978 Sunbird Formula and a Phoenix SJ.” Paul's third reason for buying the Astre was that it was a low-mileage, original car.

When he drove it to his first show—an all-Pontiac event—he couldn't even make it to the registration area without people crowding around it. Driving it onto the show field was equally as difficult, as people wanted to see it up close. When was the last time a Bonneville, even one that was driven by Dr. Bellows, got that kind of attention?

Now that Paul has been to a few shows with his fantastic Astre, people seek out parts for him. When he first bought the car, it needed new rear shocks, but online searches were futile until he searched for Vega. There is another advantage to having a “me-too Pontiac.”

Paul's Astre Safari wagon is equipped with power steering, air conditioning, AM/FM radio, and a luggage rack, and a prior owner added a clock. Paul is the third owner.

As you can see from this eyewitness account, when you show up in a Detroit Underdog at an event, people get excited, and they remember you. They will even help you find parts.

I see a Pontiac Astre in your future. 🐶

Phil Hill

WE'RE GOING TO DISCUSS the other Phil Hill here, the one from the lifetime that followed his career as one of the greatest racing drivers the United States has ever produced. Given the carnage that ravaged the sport during the height of his driving career, Philip Toll Hill, Jr. was exceedingly fortunate in that he survived long enough to have any second act in life. He made the most of it, and became an acclaimed proponent of vintage-car restoration and the American concours movement, at a time when relatively few people were interested in either.

Born in Miami in 1927, Hill migrated early to Southern California, where his father became a postmaster and lived most of his life in Santa Monica. Hill Jr. dropped out of USC to begin working on cars, especially sports cars, and began to race. Hill's family owned a succession of future Classics, in which he learned to drive, including a 1918 Packard Fleetwood Cabriolet and a Pierce-Arrow. At that time, such cars were considered by most to be wasteful relics of a bygone and needlessly extravagant era. Only a few innately grasped their potential historical significance. The antique car world, to the extent it then existed, was centered on cars from the horseless and early Brass Era. Newer vehicles of the 1930s, for instance, were thought useful only for towing the older ones.

It's inaccurate to assert that Hill underwent a transformation following his racing career. Those who knew him well say he clearly enjoyed older cars and

automotive history even before he began driving competitively. His epiphany with Classics began when he was becoming established as an international racing star. It was 1955 when he came to Pebble Beach and swept the sports car races there. The affiliated Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance was in its fifth year, and Phil entered the car he'd driven long before, a 1931 Pierce-Arrow 41 LeBaron Cabriolet, which he'd restored himself. One Pebble Beach judge was Lucius Beebe, the San Francisco author, historian and man-about-everywhere. Hill didn't expect his car to win, but another judge, Peter DePaolo, the 1925 Indianapolis 500 winner, lobbied that it be picked for Best in Show because of its authenticity. Hill, still wearing greasy trousers from working on his race car, was shocked, given that Pebble Beach winners had typically been new cars, in the European fashion. The award determined his future in the hobby.

"Phil felt that he could take one of those cars and restore it, and show people that it really had a reason to be maintained," Pebble Beach media director Kandace Hawkinson says.

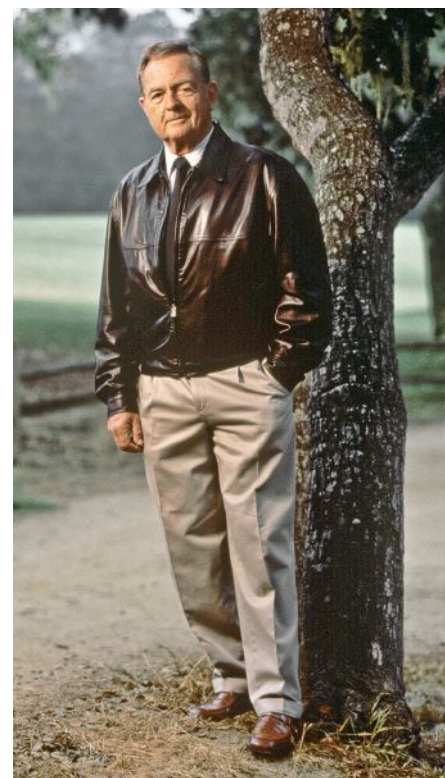
Hill joined the works Ferrari team the following year, won Le Mans three times, and in 1961, became the sole American-born driver to win the world championship in Formula 1. He continued racing in several disciplines through 1967, in the process achieving the distinction of having won the first (Carrell Speedway near Los Angeles, a dirt track, aboard an MG TC) and last (the BOAC 500 at Brands Hatch,

England, with a winged Chaparral 2F in 1967) races of his career. Retired as a driver, he established a restoration shop, Hill & Vaughn, with his partner Ken Vaughn. Cars that emerged from the shop regularly rolled onto the lawn at Pebble Beach, and other concours that were established in North America as the great European gatherings slowly died away. He also served some 40 years as a Pebble Beach judge until he passed away in 2008 while en route to the Monterey Historic Races.

"Phil's win in 1955 really convinced everyone here to take a look at collector cars, and it was only after that Pebble Beach became a car show focused on collector cars," Kandace tells us. "And now, concours around the world are equated with collector cars. So that win had very widespread and long-term implications. Phil not only raced here, and showed cars here, and restored cars that were shown here, but he was our longest-serving judge. He is right at the top of the Pebble Beach pantheon." 🐾

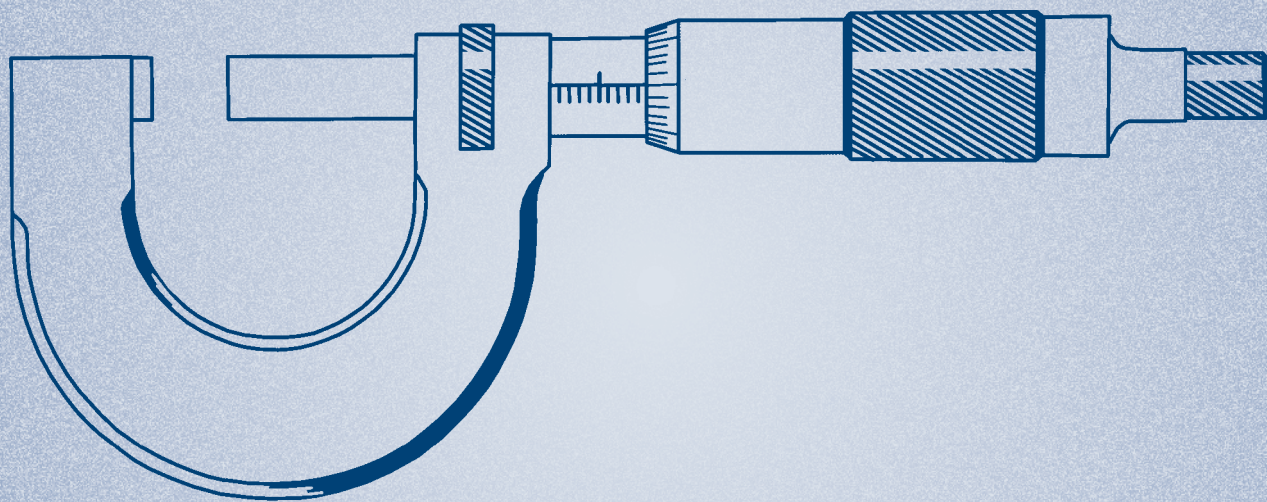


Aside from winning Best in Show, Hill was a singularly influential figure in transforming the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.



Measuring Up

How Detroit ensures accuracy



COMPANY: Detroit Incorporated

JOB: Determining Size

BY RAY T. BOHACZ

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE AUTOMOBILE, many concepts, skills and theories that were not normally applied in everyday life became essential to Detroit. It was one thing to take a young man from an agrarian lifestyle and put him on an assembly line, but more was required than a good work ethic. When designing and building automobiles, and especially engines, specialized skills and training are required, and few skills are more essential than the ability to accurately measure length, width, depth, thread or any other dimension.

Proficiency in measuring is an essential element in almost every aspect of automotive manufacturing and maintenance. There may be the instance when there is a need to precisely determine the clearance in a bearing, or to make a straight-line measurement of a non-straight item, such as a brake or fuel line. Or perhaps something less critical needs to be measured, like the size of

a heater core outlet being fitted with a length of hose.

In some applications a go-no-go gauge may be employed. Such a gauge is a simple tool made to a single defined dimension; if that which is being measured matches up to the calibration on the gauge, it goes, and if it doesn't, it needs to be reworked or discarded. After the 1930s, simple apparatuses like this had increasingly limited use, especially as automobiles became more sophisticated and tolerances were made tighter.

This installment of Mechanical Marvels is meant to provide an overview of practical measuring tools and techniques Detroit required and taught its workers.

The following are some of the common measuring tools found in an auto factory or engineering center:

- Micrometer
- Depth micrometer
- Vernier or dial caliper
- Dial indicator with magnetic stand

- Machinist's steel ruler/straight edge
- Feeler gauges
- Accurate tape measure

There are many other measuring tools, such as radius gauges, snap or telescoping gauges, dial bore gauges, small-hole ball gauges and dividers, as well as engine-specific tools and those used by a tool and die maker.

Today, many measuring tools have been supplemented with digital versions that offer the ability to read a dimension the old-fashioned and proper way (on the scale of the tool) but also allow novices to get started quickly in the measuring field. What the digital tool does not supply as readily as the scaled design is the feel for the instrument and for the component being measured. The combined tool itself is often clumsy, especially in the case of a micrometer. Though some may argue this point, most in the industry believe a better learning experience is gained from a traditional scaled tool than from the

modern electronically enhanced version.

The key element in making accurate measurements lies in the sight and especially the touch of the operator. The quality of touch or feel varies with each individual and must be cultivated. A skilled machinist will have a very highly developed sense of feel that can detect the slightest change in the tool's contact with the piece being measured. In the human hand, the sense of touch is the most prominent in the fingertips. Thus, contact-measuring tools should be properly balanced in the hand and held lightly and delicately in such a manner as to bring the fingers into play in handling and moving the tool. If the operator is clumsy or grabs the tool with too much authority, the operator's ability to feel will be greatly diminished.

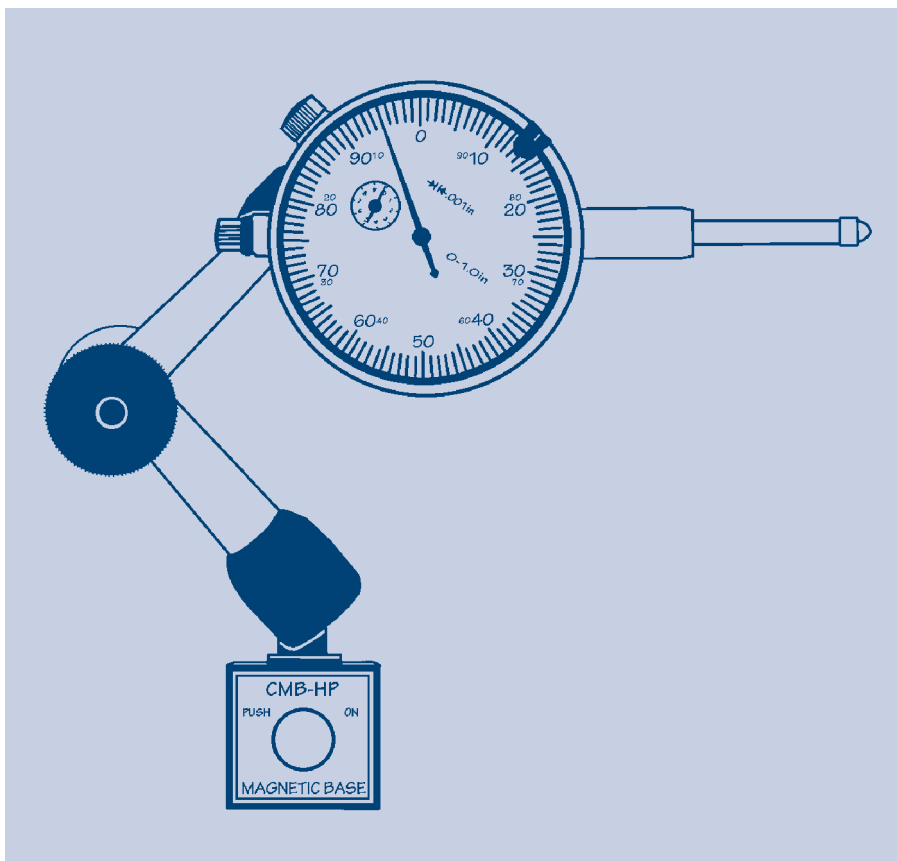
Micrometers

Micrometers fall into three categories: inside, outside and depth. The most common micrometer for automotive use is the outside version.

Outside micrometers are usually produced with a measuring range of one inch and will be cataloged as a 0 to 1, a 1 to 2, a 4 to 5, etc. model. The size of the object you intend to measure will dictate the size micrometer needed. If there were, say, a need to measure pistons in most American V-8 engines, then a 4-5 inch micrometer would be required. A standard small block Chevy 350 and a 302 Ford both use a 4.00-inch bore piston with the common over bore being 0.030-inch. The instrument used to measure pistons in these engines, however, would not be useful for checking a piston in a Buick V-6 with a 3.800-inch bore. For this reason, many tool rooms have a myriad of micrometer sizes.

When measuring much smaller parts, such as a valve stem, a 0-1 inch micrometer will be a better choice. Many teachers of measuring suggest students get a 0-1 inch micrometer first and practice measuring things, such as ball point pens, pencils, steel tubing, etc., so they can learn the proper feel, instead of working with a clumsy part and a rather large micrometer.

Regardless of their range, all micrometers are read and used the same way. A standard micrometer is scaled in thousandths of an inch. One-thousandth of an inch is the approximate thickness of the cellophane in a pack of cigarettes and is read as 0.001 inch. To read the



The dial indicator when attached to a magnetic stand offers a myriad of measuring opportunities.

micrometer, multiply the number of vertical divisions visible on the sleeve by 25. Then add the number of divisions on the bevel of the thimble, counting from zero to the mark that coincides with the long horizontal line on the sleeve.

In some instances, there may be a need for a more accurate measurement that is read down to 0.0001-inch (1/10,000). To accomplish this, the micrometer must have a Vernier scale. The Vernier scale lines are all mismatched with the thimble scale except for one. The number that one matches is the ten-thousandths value.

When gripping the frame of an outside micrometer, the thumb and forefinger need to be free to operate the thimble. Very light pressure of the thumb and forefinger is all that is required when contacting the item being measured. Some better micrometers have an internal ratchet stop that will help the user determine when the proper contact pressure has been reached. Some useful tips for the beginner micrometer user:

- Wipe the micrometer clean of dust

and oil after every use.

- Do not open or close the micrometer by holding onto the thimble and spinning the frame around the spindle axis.
- Never drop a micrometer, as this can spring the frame and cause misalignment between the anvil and the spindle faces.
- Make sure the spindle face does not touch the anvil when storing, since temperature changes can spring the micrometer.
- Do not touch the anvil and spindle faces with your fingers. Moisture and oils from your skin can promote corrosion.
- Prior to using a micrometer, clean the measuring surface by sliding a piece of paper between the anvil and spindle faces.

Calipers

Slide calipers are either of the Vernier or dial design. They are very useful tools since they can measure round and flat surfaces while also acting as a depth gauge

but with less accuracy than a dedicated depth micrometer.

Vernier or dial calipers are easier to use than a micrometer for obtaining a quick measurement and usually provide a much larger range, such as 0 to 6 inches or even beyond. The tool is excellent for measuring bolt-hole depth when a depth rod is employed at the end. This is done by placing the bar of the caliper on the outside of the surface and sending the depth rod down into the hole. When the depth rod stops, simply read the scale for the maximum bolt length.

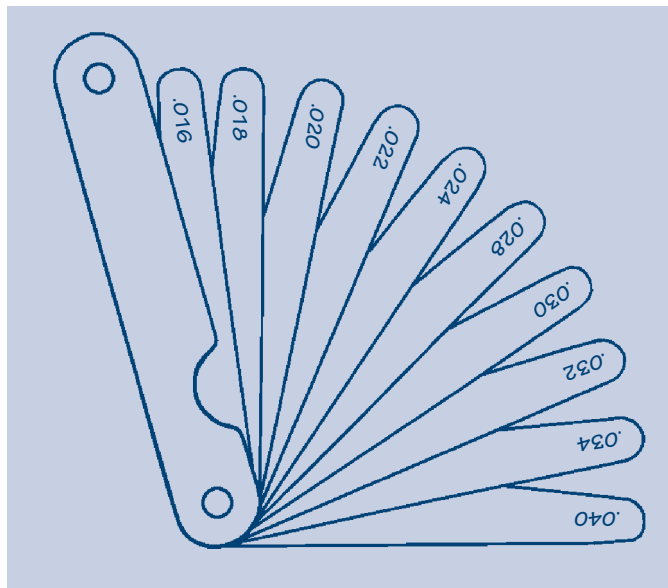
Dial Indicator

Another useful tool is the dial indicator with a magnetic stand. This tool allows for accurate and fast measurement of movement, such as the backlash in a differential gear set, the free play in a crankshaft or camshaft and the lift of a valve. The dial indicator and magnetic stand can also be used to determine runout on a surface, such as a flywheel or brake rotor.

Measuring with Other Tools

The straight edge and feeler gauge are essential in determining if there is any warpage on a flange, such as where the intake manifold mates to the cylinder head. They can also be used to check the straightness of a cylinder head or block deck.

To check for warpage on any part, stand the edge of the straight edge up on the surface, and then, using the thinnest feeler gauge you have, try to slide the



A simple feeler gauge may be employed to measure warpage in a flat surface and determine the necessary gasket.

gauge between the two surfaces. Keep increasing the feeler gauge thickness until it can no longer slide between the two. Once you have the maximum amount of deviation recorded, use either your caliper or micrometer to measure the feeler gauge to determine the thickness of the gasket necessary to ensure the parts will seal. For example, if the flange being worked with has a 0.20-inch variation but the gasket is 0.45-inch thick, it will seal with no problem because the gasket is more than twice as thick as the greatest amount of warpage.

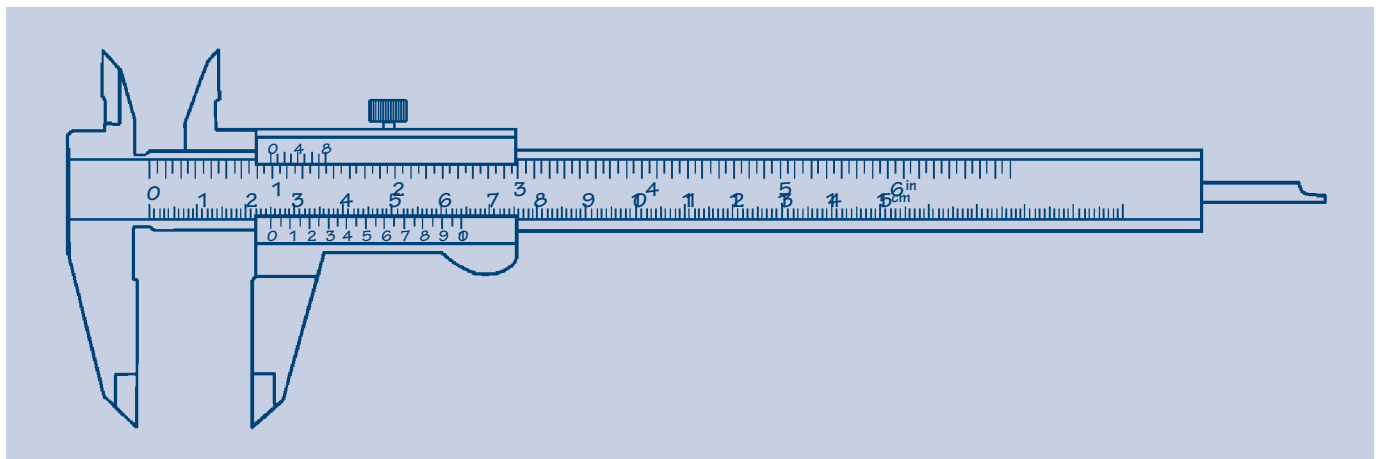
Occasionally, there will be cause to measure components such as fuel or brake lines that have kinks and bends in them. The best way to accomplish this is by following the contour of the object

with soft welding rod, thin electrical wire, or string. Keep feeding the measuring material along the line, and when done, straighten the material out and use a tape measure to determine the entire length.

Certainly, there will be times when precise measurements are not necessary and rough ones will suffice, for example, when doing a cursory inspection of a part, such as a brake drum or non-critical bolt. A good worker will measure and remember the length of one of his fingers and will commit to memory the lengths of other items frequently at hand for ad hoc measuring, remembering, for instance, that a dollar bill is six inches long, and that his size-8 Red Wing work boots are just shy of 12 inches long.

Even if you do not mentally catalog the things you have for improvised measuring, estimation can still be employed. Let's say that you are comparing the backspacing of two different rims. Simply stick your hand in one, and with the other, hold the length on your arm. Then compare that "saved" dimension to the other rim. It will not be a precise measurement, but it will allow you to quickly determine if the part has a chance of fitting in an instance when no measuring tools are available.

Measuring is not just informative; it brings you into harmony with the mechanical object you are measuring since you have become intimately familiar with its dimensions. And a machine that you are at one with always runs the best. 🧐



A Vernier caliper, when equipped with a depth rod as seen at the right of this illustration, allows for quick and accurate hole depth measurement.

John Jones, PE

Tire Racker

Seiberling Rubber Company

IN THE SUMMER OF 1968 I was hired by the Seiberling Rubber Company in my hometown of Barberton, Ohio. At the time, I was a mechanical engineering student at the University of Akron. I had been interested in cars and mechanical things in general as far back as I could remember. My dad was a sheetmetal worker at Goodyear Aircraft in Akron. He had lots of tools and I guess I picked up my love of mechanical things from him.

Seiberling was founded in the 1920s by the same Mr. Seiberling that founded Goodyear Tire & Rubber. As I recall, Seiberling was taken over by Firestone sometime in the 1960s.

Since Seiberling was a union company, new hires were started on the toughest jobs and the worst shifts. As workers gained seniority, they would "bid" on better jobs and better shifts when they became available. As a result, the older guys would have the easier jobs and most likely be on one of the day shifts. My first job was as a "racker" in the cure room on the midnight to 6:00 a.m. shift. The qualifications included weighing at least 160 pounds and being able to lift a 60-pound barbell over your head. We worked six-hour shifts six days a week with no lunch break.

Tires are assembled by hand with uncured rubber on a tire building machine. After assembly, the builder would put the "tire" on a conveyor hook where it traveled upstairs to the cure room. The tire would be automatically removed from the hook and fall on a roller conveyor where it rolled to a stop. There were two rackers. We had four-wheel hand trucks for each size of tire that was currently running. When a truck was full, one of the rackers would wheel it to the press that was set up for that tire size. The racker would then slip each uncured tire onto an arm on a rack that would hold the tire until the cureman unloaded his mold and needed another tire to insert into the press for curing.

After unloading the truck, the racker returned to the conveyor. By then, his partner had another full truck and he would then take his tires to the rack. We alternated back and forth racking.



And since we got a new tire every seven seconds, it was hectic.

Tires are cured for 18 minutes with steam. The cure room averaged over 100 degrees with 100% humidity. It was literally a steam room. This was a young man's game, for sure. However, one night, my 19-year old partner took out a load to the racks and never came back. I figured he had to go to the bathroom, but in the meantime, I had tires piling up everywhere. The cureman, who was paid by the number of tires he cured, was mad as heck because he was running out of stock. After a short search, we found my partner passed out from heat exhaustion. And the conveyor kept running. Pretty soon the foreman showed up. He called for help and then jumped in to help me with my mess. That plant did not shut down.

In September, I went back to school and left the plant. However, they let me come back and work whenever I had a break from school. Since I was supporting myself, the \$3.75 per hour pay, not to mention time-and-a-half for

overtime, was a dream. However, in 1971 the workers went on a strike that lasted for months. Finally, one day an official from Firestone showed up and told the pickets the company was closed. He wasn't joking. Those workers, and many others in the Akron area, soon were unemployed in the business that made Akron.

I went on to finish school and go into construction engineering. In my spare time, I enjoy working on my 1964 Hemi Plymouth and my wife's Corvette. I guess once a gearhead, always a gearhead. 🏎️



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.



PULLING PONY

Q: I have a 1966 Mustang that I bought new in November of 1965. It is garaged in New Mexico, and therefore I drive it only once in about three months. The problem is in its braking. When I first drive it and stop it with no hands on the steering wheel, the right front wheel will lock and the car will make a right turn. But as I drive it to run errands, the brakes behave normally. In about 2008, I took it to a local mechanic and he could find no leakage or anything that could account for this. I took it to him again in September 2013, and we took a test drive, and he told me to put on the brakes and the car braked straight as an arrow. Later, he had all the wheels off and personally took me on a tour of each wheel, rears as well as the front, and again he said there is nothing which could account for this.

However, he said that the flex hoses looked pretty old, and they can crack on the inside as well as on the outside. So we have an appointment when I am in New Mexico again to have the hoses replaced. Are we on the right track or is there something being overlooked?

George Maguire
Oak View, California

A: Yes, a collapsing brake hose could cause a brake pull, as could many other things—a lazy wheel cylinder or worn brake hardware—many of which might not be visible by pulling off the drum and looking. Start with the hoses; if they look old, they probably should be changed anyway. If that doesn't cure the pull, maybe you should find a mechanic who is interested in solving the problem instead of convincing you that there isn't one.

CONTAMINATED COOLANT

Q: I have a 1964 Chevrolet Biscayne with a 230-cu.in. straight-six and a Powerglide automatic. Recently I noticed oil on the ground beneath the radiator. The overflow tank was filled to the top with oily antifreeze and it had spilled out. It's obvious that there is oil mixing with the coolant but how is this happening?

Richard Williams
Detroit, Michigan

A: Check the engine oil level and the transmission fluid level to determine whether it's engine oil or automatic transmission fluid that's getting into the coolant. (One or the other should be low on the dipstick.) If it's automatic transmission fluid, it means that there's a hole in the transmission cooler, which is inside the radiator, that's allowing fluid to escape. If its engine oil in the coolant, you either have a blown head gasket or an internal crack in the block or head casting that's causing the problem. A trip to a radiator shop or a replacement radiator will cure the oil cooler if it's indeed the problem. If the problem is in the engine, you're going to have to tear it down to find the answer.

PROBLEM OF THE CENTURY

Q: My 1974 Buick Century 350 that I bought 20 years ago has always run perfectly, but it has suddenly developed a skip and a stalling problem that seems to come and go randomly. The engine will sometimes run fine and then stall for no reason and restart only after sitting and cooling off. Other times, it will act like it's running on seven cylinders, either from start up or while it is idling. It's made the car unpredictable, and I'm afraid to drive it anywhere.

James Thomas
Via email

A: There's most likely something amiss with the HEI distributor. I've seen a broken lead from the coil or bad connections where the coil leads plug into the distributor cause this sort of thing, so, first check the coil connections as well as the connections at the module. If everything looks good, you can test the coil with a multimeter (your shop manual details the procedure) or replace it. There really isn't any way to test the module, so if the coil checks out, I'd suspect that. If it's been awhile since you've replaced the coil, module, cap, wires and plugs, you might want to consider addressing everything at once—all of these pieces have a lifespan and can cause considerable, often mysterious, grief when they break down. While the cap is off, check to make sure that

the distributor shaft doesn't rock in the housing. A high-mileage distributor with worn out bushings is sometimes prone to acting strangely.

HUMMING BIRD

Q: At highway speeds there's a humming noise coming from the rear of my 1966 Thunderbird, usually somewhere between 50-60 MPH. It's only been happening for the last few months; prior to that, the car drove very quietly. Any suggestions as to what might be causing this?

Francis Ryan
Boston, Massachusetts

A: This is something that's a little difficult to diagnose from a couple hundred miles away, but I'd start by checking the air pressure in the rear tires and the fluid level in the rear axle. If the axle oil is lower than the recommended level, you need to top it off. This might also be a good time to remove the brake drums and look for signs that the axle seals are leaking. (If the seals are bad, the shoes and brake hardware will likely be coated with oil.)

Getting back to the tires, if they were properly inflated, try switching the front tires with the rear tires and see if this changes or eliminates the noise. If you want to be really methodical, first switch the driver's-side tires and test drive the car; if there's no difference in the noise, switch the passenger's side tires and go on another test drive. A tire that's occasionally noisy isn't necessarily unsafe, so if there isn't any visible damage to the sidewall and tread, and if the tire isn't losing air, it's probably OK to drive.

Finally, if the tires pass muster and the fluid level was up to snuff, you might have a bearing going bad inside the axle, at the pinion, differential or one of the axles.



Send questions to: Tech Talk, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201; or email your question to: mmcnessor@hemmings.com.

BY TOM COMERRO



Compact Compressor

The Maradyne Junior Jet 150 is a portable air compressor designed to supply 150 psi of air to tires and other inflatables. It can be charged with the included cigarette lighter adaptor and a 9-foot power cord allowing you to use it pretty much anywhere. The Junior Jet has a low noise, high airflow design to quickly deliver air through a 27-inch high-pressure air hose that is equipped with a quick-release thumb twist valve connector. The average fill rate is 7 psi per minute on a 16-inch tire. The compressor comes with a built-in pressure gauge and flashlight as well as assorted needles and nozzles. Cost: \$100.

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www.maradynehp.com

Shade Vision

HTP America offers a new helmet with CSV (consistent shade vision) technology. The Striker Stealth helmet eliminates the shade inconsistency that often plagues a welding helmet. You won't see any light areas in the corners or stripes through the lens. It's fairly large at 2.4 x 4.0 inches, allowing for 9.6 square-inches of viewing area. The photo diodes detect a DC TIG arc when you are welding below 5 amps, which is the hardest arc to sense. The lightweight shell only weighs 9¼ oz. and includes a fully adjustable, ratcheting headgear that can be adjusted in and out to determine how close the lens sits to your face. Cost: \$139.95.

HTP America
800-872-9353
www.USAWeld.com



AMC Anchors

AMC owners who are looking for a huge improvement over their car's original brakes should consider this Wilwood front brake conversion kit for 1971-'76 AMCs. The lightweight kit features forged billet Dynalite calipers designed to work perfectly with the aluminum hats and 11-inch vented rotors. Base kits are available with plain face rotors and black anodized calipers. Optional items include red powder coat calipers and SRP drilled and slotted rotors. The kits come with everything necessary including: calipers and brackets, hubs, rotors and adaptors, brake pads and all necessary hardware. Cost: \$820-1,030.

Wilwood Engineering
805-388-1188
www.wilwood.com



Wagon Lenses

Hubbard's Impala Parts introduces new authentic-looking taillamp lenses for the 1964 Impala station wagon. These reproduction lenses are made to original factory specifications and include the chrome inner trim ring. Installation is said to be quick and easy, and the perfect touch to complete your wagon's restoration. Cost: \$19 each.

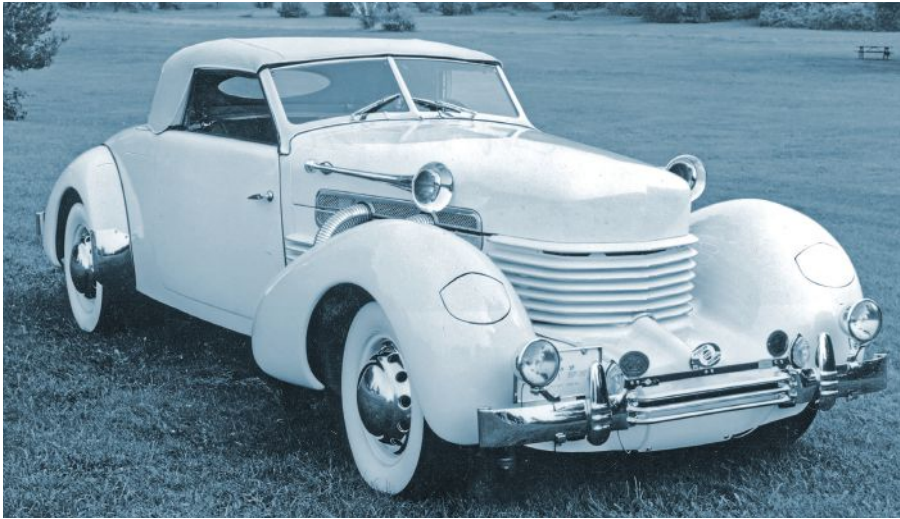
Hubbard's Impala Parts
800-826-8050
www.impalaparts.com



Vulcanized Vent Window

The pieces of weatherstripping that tend to break down first are those by the vent windows and rear side window division channels. Sunshine, cold, heat, repeated opening and closing, plus time, all take their toll on these fragile pieces. Now Metro Moulded Parts has introduced reproduction vent window and division channel seals for the 1953-'54 Chevrolet and Pontiac, and they perform and fit just like the originals. The seals will fit two- and four-door sedans and station wagons, including the Chevrolet 150, 210 and Bel Air models, plus Pontiac Chieftain and Star Chief—they do not fit hardtops or convertibles. Cost: \$124.95/pair.

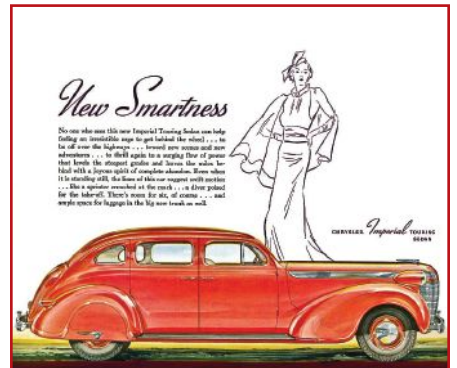
Metro Moulded Parts
800-878-2237
www.metrommp.com



THE FINAL CORD comes off the assembly line, marking the official end of the Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg.

Dollars & Cents

- New house – \$4,000
- Average annual income – \$1,260
- One gallon of gas – \$0.15
- Average new car – \$750
- Push lawn mower, 16-inch, 4-blade – \$5.35
- Ticket to the movies – \$0.23



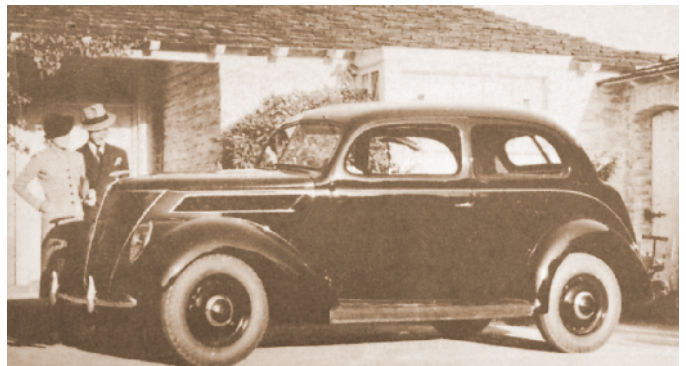
CHRYSLER'S IMPERIAL is no longer an Airflow, sharing styling similar to the Royal with a longer hood and cowl. Several different body styles are available with the four-door Touring Sedan becoming the most popular at just under 12,000 units of production. Imperials are equipped with the new built-in defroster vents, insulated body mountings, and seat safety padding.



CHEVROLET'S NEW "DIAMOND CROWN" STYLING features safety glass in all windows and straight side fenders. The wheelbase is increased to 112-1/4 inches, and the new tire size is 6.00 x 16 inches. The completely re-engineered six-cylinder engine features a larger bore and shorter stroke. Model year production will exceed 825,000 total Masters and Master De Luxes.



WAR ADMIRAL becomes the fourth horse to win the Triple Crown.

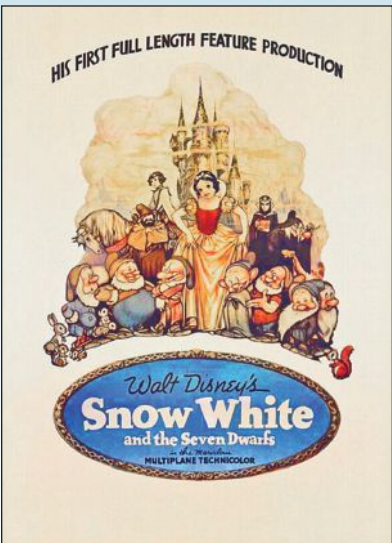


FORDS ARE NOW BUILT WITH AN ALL-STEEL TOP, and new styling includes the headlamps mounted directly in the fenders. Also added, is a new economical series, the "60," which uses a smaller version of the V-8. Displacement is at 136-cu.in. and output is 60 hp, making these the lightest Fords available for 1937. This version is only available among the Standard models.

GENERAL MOTORS RECOGNIZES the United Automobile Workers Union, ending the Flint sit-down strike.



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Walt Disney's
Snow White
and the Seven Dwarfs
MULTIPLANE TECHNICOLOR

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS
premiers on December 21.



THE HINDENBURG disaster occurs in Lakehurst, New Jersey.

AMELIA EARHART and co-pilot Fred Noonan vanish over the Pacific Ocean on their round-the-world flight.



BENNY GOODMAN'S recording of Louis Prima's "Sing, Sing, Sing" tops the charts for 1937.

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La Salle Towing Adventures

IN EARLY JULY OF 1974, my girlfriend and I decided to visit Gainesville, Florida. We lived in Miami at the time and were planning to marry in August. Margaret had gone to school in Gainesville and wanted to visit for old times. I had gone to school in Tampa but had friends in Gainesville, so off we went.

We were invited to stay with an old friend, James, who was a long-time old car enthusiast and belonged to a local club that had promised to participate in a 4th of July parade in the small town of Keystone Heights not too far away. Now, James knew all about old cars—history wise, that is. But he never checked under the hood of his cars, until they stopped running. Anyway, we made it to Keystone Heights with no problems in James' 1939 La Salle four-door and his 1938 Cadillac Sixty Special. Both cars were low-mileage originals, but they had been sitting unused for a long, long time.

Halfway through the parade, and in front of the entire town, the La Salle blew out one of its metal brake lines and dumped brake fluid all over the street. Margaret and I were riding behind the La Salle in the '38 Cadillac, with a U.S. Senator, no less. Well, we jumped out of the Cadillac and pushed the La Salle to the side of the road and continued on. When the parade had ended, we had to try to figure out how we were going to get the La Salle back to Gainesville. Of course, James had made no emergency provisions.

So we borrowed a stout length of rope from the fire department, and slowly drove off with the La Salle in tow. I don't know what it is like there today, but back then there was one long, straight, little-traveled road back to Gainesville. And, around halfway back, there was one lone traffic light at a T-intersection. "Now James," I said, "there is almost no traffic on this road, so I think the best thing to do is run right through the intersection, even if the light is red. However, if there is a car coming the other way, which would be to our left, I'll slow up and you be prepared to gently ease up on the emergency brake."

James assured me that he understood



perfectly, and Margaret assured me that she was more annoyed in this heat, than ever. I was beginning to wonder if I had blown our wedding plans. The traffic light loomed in the distance. Great, I thought, there is no traffic in sight. We've got it made! At the very last moment, however, the situation suddenly changed. The light turned red and a car came speeding along from the left. I slowed the locomotive-like Sixty Special down the best I could, but James panicked and swerved to the right. Off snapped the rope and down into a drainage ditch went the La Salle.

As the La Salle picked up speed, it must have hit something in the ditch and became airborne, sailing right past us at eye level. Margaret and I could see James, his mouth open, his eyes open wide like two fried eggs, and his hands riveted to the steering wheel as the La Salle sailed by.

The object of his terror was two large poles. One was steel and held up the traffic light. The other was a wooden telephone pole. They were just far enough apart for the La Salle to pass between, that is, if you were a crack shot like Annie Oakley. Well, I guess it must be true. God does protect children and idiots, because the La Salle sailed through without a scratch!

Margaret and I then put James in the back of the Cadillac and laughed all the way back to Gainesville. After we sent a wrecker back for the La Salle, we polished off a bottle of Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill in the back seat of the Cadillac.

Most importantly, the wedding went off without a hitch, and we still laugh about the story 36 years later.

Thirty years after all this, a friend up in Maine bought both cars—yes, they still exist. When he was cleaning them out, he found the cap to the bottle of Boone's Farm wine under the front seat of the Cadillac. 🍷



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704 LB. CAPACITY



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**2.5 HP, 21 GALLON,
125 PSI VERTICAL
AIR COMPRESSOR**

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**SAVE
\$70**

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FOLDABLE
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**90 AMP FLUX
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LOT NO. 68887/
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29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED DRILL BIT SET

drillmaster

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12 VOLT, 250 PSI AIR COMPRESSOR

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

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AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET WITH BLUE FLAME DESIGN

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

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1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)

drillmaster

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SAVE 69%

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PREDATOR GENERATORS

LOT NO. 68528/69676/69729

LOT NO. 69675/69728 CALIFORNIA ONLY

SAVE \$200

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MOVER'S DOLLY

HaulMaster

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Item 38847 shown

6 TON HEAVY DUTY JACK STANDS

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 38847/69596/61197

SAVE 62%

\$29⁹⁹ REG. PRICE \$79.99

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SUPER COUPON!



Item 69039 shown

PORTABLE GARAGE

HFT

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SUPER COUPON!



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6" SELF-VACUUMING AIR PALM SANDER

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT NO. 98895/60626

SAVE 66%

\$19⁹⁹ REG. PRICE \$59.99

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SUPER COUPON!



Item 95552 shown

7 PIECE RATCHETING COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

PITTSBURGH PRO

SAE LOT NO. 96654/61396

METRIC LOT NO. 95552/61400

SAVE 55%

\$17⁹⁹ REG. PRICE \$39.99

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Item 68142 shown

12,000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

BADLAND

LOT NO. 68142/61256/60813

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CLASSIC TRUCKS

Special Delivery

An International enthusiast cooks up some family history for his 1935 C-10 panel truck



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE CHESSON



What makes this old bakery delivery truck such a treat for our eyes? Well, for starters it's a pre-war International, most of which were worked hard then scrapped or abandoned once their expiration date had been reached. Even if you can find a restorable example today, old Internationals can be difficult to rebuild, as spare parts are scarce.

Which brings us to this truck's condition. It is said to have less than 5,000 miles on it from new and was first restored many years ago by a well-known restoration shop.

When International truck enthusiast Stephen Benson of Charlotte, North Carolina, found it in 2005, this ¾-ton rated 1935 International C-10 panel truck was languishing in less-than-ideal storage outside a museum. Overall, it was in good condition, but the fabric top had deteriorated, as had much of the wood framing that supports it, and the Waukesha XAH four-cylinder engine was stuck, from sitting.

Stephen shipped the International to Charlotte where it underwent a four-year refurbishing. The body was repainted, the fabric roof replaced



Despite a ¾-ton rating, this C-10 was built heavy duty with commercial truck-type cast iron spokes. A floor-shifted four-speed transmission was standard issue, and pedals were conveniently labeled “clutch” and “brake.”

and a local cabinet maker fabricated all of the damaged wooden components. “The engine required a bunch of things,” Stephen says. “The water pump had perished, and the carburetor had to be overhauled. It needed belts and ignition work, but there was never a complete teardown of the engine.”

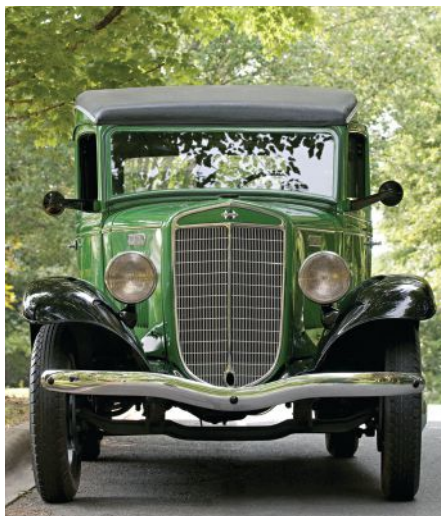
The body was treated to what Stephen, describes as a “Pebble Beach paint job” with modern base coat/clear coat urethane. But the chassis was left alone, as it was in excellent condition when Stephen found it.

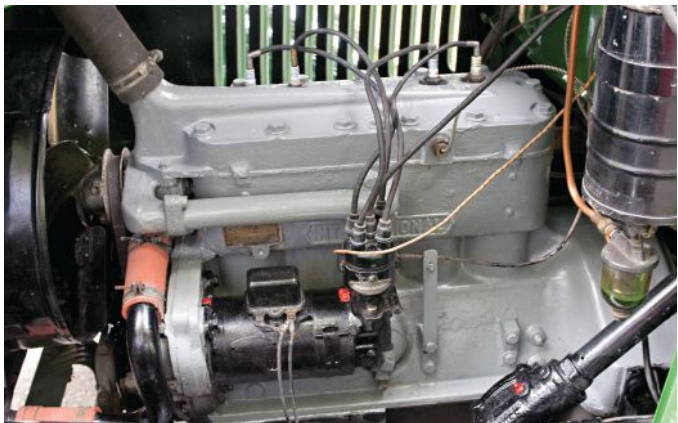
To add interest to the truck and to give it some back story after the restoration, Stephen decided to letter it with the name of his great uncle’s bakery business—an homage to a man who was instrumental in his upbringing. “During the 1940s, when I was growing up, my great uncle Maurice

Hofgard owned a bakery on the far south side of Chicago,” Stephen remembers. “He emigrated from Norway in 1907 where he learned his trade in a professional baking school in Oslo. After settling in to his new country, he opened his own bakery in a Chicago neighborhood known as Morgan Park. On weekends after closing the shop he would drive to the suburbs to visit his nephew, my dad, and help him with various home maintenance projects. Every Saturday afternoon, he came laden with scrumptious cookies, cakes and pies. Maurice had no children, so we were the sole beneficiaries of the baked goodies that came from his heart and his ovens. Uncle Maurice passed on long ago, but his memory is still with me.”

Though the phone number lettered on the truck is fictional, the address is where Hofgard’s Bakery once stood. On the inside of the rear door

C series trucks were introduced in 1934 and received International’s V-shape grille. A 133-inch wheelbase meant plenty of cargo room inside a panel truck body, though the wheel houses intruded into the space.





Waukesha's 185.7-cu.in. four-cylinder engine was reliable but underwhelming, with about 41 horsepower on tap. Top speed in this truck would be about 40 mph.

Owner Stephen Benson, makes a mock bread delivery, dressed in period garb. His International C-10 bears the name of his great uncle's bakery, though it was never used by the family business. The truck is now owned by International parent company Navistar.

are even instructions to drivers reminding them to collect empty bread and cake tins, as well as rates for service outside of the bakery's normal delivery area. "Uncle Maurice never made deliveries, but the address is correct—I found it in a 1930 city directory—and I added the rest," Stephen explains. "I like to have the verisimilitude that fits the era."

Stephen's attachment to old Internationals stems from his 12-year career with the company in the 1960s and early 1970s. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1963 with his MBA, Stephen started working at International Harvester's Fort Wayne factory. From there, he was transferred to other IH plants, including his favorite assignment as the manager of a truck assembly plant in South Africa. He left International after 12 years to become a fast food restaurant franchisee and then got into the mini-storage and Marina business. His time at International stuck with him though, and his success in business allowed him to begin a collection of his favorite commercial trucks.

The 1930s is a significant period in International history because, prior to 1932, light-trucks weren't part of International's lineup. But as Ford and Chevrolet reaped financial success from sales of pickups and truck-based deliveries, International turned its attention to this growing segment of the market. The company's first move was to ink a deal with Willys to sell a rebadged

version of the Willys C-113 and thus the 1933 International D-1 pickup was born.

For 1934, International released the redesigned C series that included a complete range of haulers ranging from the C-1 ½-ton trucks all the way up to the hulking C-60 4-5 ton trucks. The C-series was a step above previous offerings, boasting features such as steel cabs, heavier chassis components with Zerk fittings, thicker frames and more robust electricals.

Luckily for enthusiasts like Stephen, International's parent company Navistar, hasn't forgotten its hauling heritage, and the company has been acquiring exceptional examples of historic trucks for its museum at the revamped Navistar facility in Melrose Park, Illinois. Among the trucks in Navistar's collection is Benson's C-10.

"I don't normally sell my trucks, but Navistar approached me a couple of years ago about buying it for the museum they are starting," Stephen said. "As a former employee, I receive a \$200 monthly pension as well as a newsletter from the company. In a recent issue, there was a photo of my old truck at the museum. Several folks I had worked with at the truck division sent me their newsletters—they didn't know it was my truck in the photo, they just knew I would be interested in the museum. It was fun to tell them that I knew that vehicle very well!" 🐞



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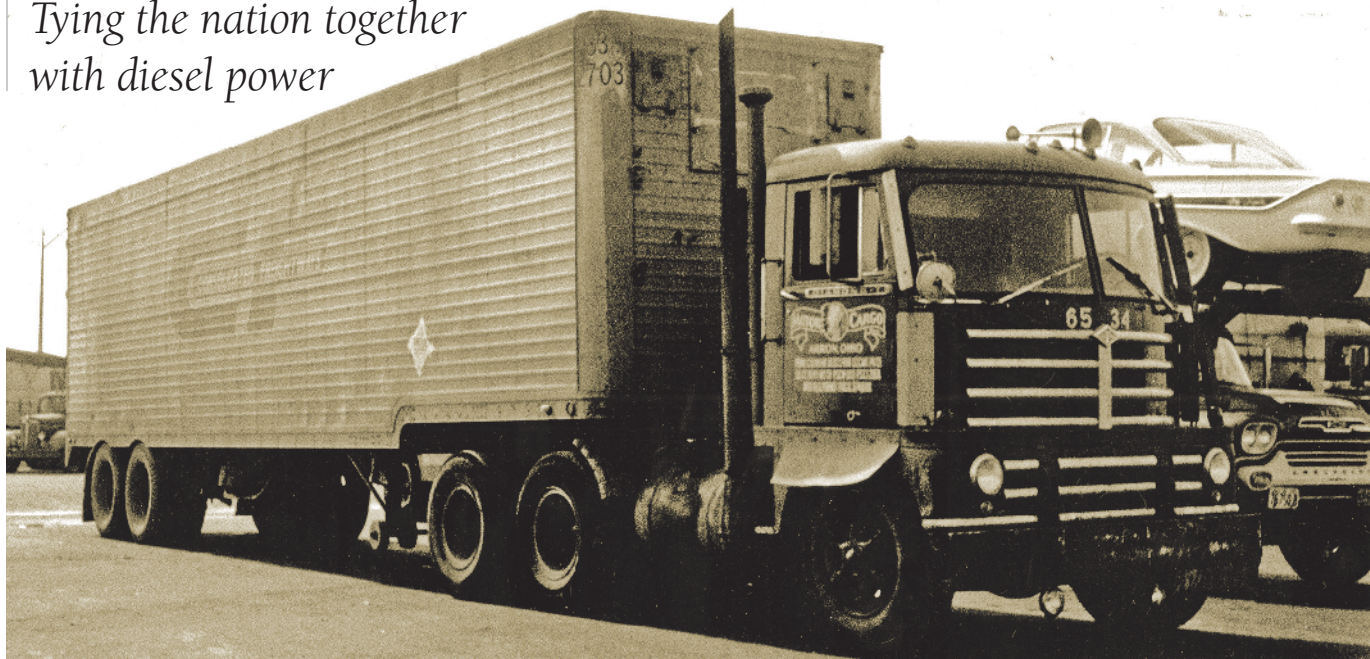
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BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGES BY ROBERT PARRISH AND NEIL SHERFF, FROM THE COLLECTION OF RON ADAMS

With the smoke barely cleared from a ghastly war to preserve the Union, the United States experienced another physical rejoining when the Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Point, Utah, in 1869. Running roughly parallel to the first transcontinental telegraph line, completed at the outset of the Civil War, this linking of the coasts was accomplished at terrible cost – estimates of the number of laborers lost to accidents and attacks from Indian tribes range from the hundreds to more than 1,000.

Generations later, the obstacles to coast-to-coast commerce were mercifully limited to regulation at the federal level. For most of the 20th century, interstate shipping was regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission, a federal agency first created to manage railroad competition, and which later turned its focus to trucking. It had the power to grant operating licenses, or “authorities” to fleet operators that allowed them to run specific routes, territories and cargoes. One of them was Motor Cargo Inc., founded in 1931 by Owen Orr and based in Akron, Ohio. As told by trucking historian and archivist Ron Adams of Lenhartsville, Pennsylvania, Orr’s firm started out hauling coal but prospered as the rubber industry grew around Akron. Motor Cargo then started shipping tires in a very big way.

Motor Cargo boomed just as World War II approached, eventually opening

21 regional terminals that stretched from Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri to northern New Jersey. Business was so good that Orr began hiring independent owner-operators to keep everything clicking. By 1956, Motor Cargo was running the highways with more than 1,400 tractors and trailers and still looking to expand. That same year, Orr signed an agreement with Consolidated Freightways, founded in Portland, Oregon, by a contemporary of Orr’s in the trucking industry, Leland James.

Especially west of the Mississippi, Consolidated Freightways was one of trucking’s great glamour names. It rolled from the Pacific Coast and across the Rockies, assaulting the peaks with the Freightliner trucks it began building in 1939 by mating ultra-light aluminum cabs to Fageol chassis powered by very robust Cummins diesels. They were for in-house use only until 1949, when the first

Freightliner was sold to an outside customer. Within two years, Consolidated Freightways had a marketing deal with White, ushering in the White Freightliner era. It also had terminals in 58 cities reaching to Illinois.

Things generally moved slowly when the ICC was evaluating a deal of this scope. It wasn’t until 1960 that Consolidated Freightways received final approval for the outright purchase of Motor Cargo, making the combined firm, with Motor Cargo’s existing route authorities, the second of the true coast-to-coast truckload carriers (the first, in 1946, was Denver-Chicago Trucking). The first photo clearly dates to 1961—the load of new bubbletop Chevrolet Impalas on the haulaway truck to the right proves as much—with a combined livery that was on the Midwest’s highways during the Consolidated Freightways-Motor Cargo merger. The Motor Cargo tractor is a Diamond T Model 921-C, so identified by its single headlamps, a design that dated back



to the early 1950s and was supplanted in 1961 by the quad-headlamp 931 series. Most 921s destined for over-the-road service used Cummins or Buda diesel power ranging up to 300 hp. This Motor Cargo unit is distinguished by wind deflectors on both sides of the upper and lower cab. The drop trailer is by Brown, and we're assuming it's the one that was located in Spokane, Washington, in the middle of Consolidated Freightways longtime stronghold, whose logo the trailer bears.

Orr's company faded into the realm of trucking's fallen flags. With full coverage of the lower 48, plus Canada, Consolidated Freightways went on to become one of the great, iconic brands in the business, at least until its 2002 bankruptcy. It expanded into divisions that handled specialized cargo, such as tankers, temperature control, household goods and more. The less-than-truckload service it founded in 1996, Con-Way, survives today.

The second photo depicts a White Freightliner tractor of the 1960s, configured to cope with more restrictive overall-length limitations in the East and Midwest. It's an extremely short-coupled three-axle, twin-screw tractor with an abnormally short 50-inch non-sleeper cab. Around the same time, Consolidated Freightways used a series of four-wheel-drive Freightliners called Mountaineers in snowy, mountainous regions. They were fitted with similarly short cabs and oversized Cummins NH-220 diesels, so large that the radiator had to be relocated to the right-rear cab corner. This Freightliner has a louvered panel very similar to those that surrounded the Mountaineer radiators. A conversion, perhaps? ☞



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

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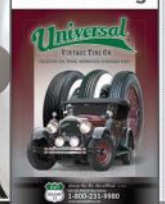
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ADVANCED AUCTION & APPRAISAL SERVICES, INC.....	93
THE ANTIQUE AUTO SHOP	91
AUTOMOTIVE INTERIORS.....	81
BARRETT-JACKSON.....	16-17
BILL HIRSCH AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATION PRODUCTS.....	59
BIRD NEST.....	91
BOB'S SPEEDOMETER SERVICE, INC.	13
C.A.R.S. INC	4
CLASS-TECH	59
CLASSIC AUTO SUPPLY CO, INC.....	13
CLASSIC TUBE	15
COKER TIRE.....	1
COLLECTORS FOUNDATION.....	83
COOL CRAFT	71
CUSTOM AUTOSOUND	13
DAMPER DOCTOR	59
DANCHUK MANUFACTURING INC.....	9
DELTRAN BATTERY TENDER	71
DIECASM, LLC.....	7
EATON DETROIT SPRING	59
ECKLER'S	92
EVAPO-RUST	36
THE FILLING STATION	81
HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS.....	84-85
HEACOCK CLASSIC COLLECTOR CAR INSURANCE	inside back cover
HIBERNIA AUTO RESTORATIONS LLC	59
HYDRO-E-LECTRIC.....	15
J.C. TAYLOR ANTIQUE AUTO INSURANCE	9
KEEN PARTS.....	15
LARES CORPORATION	13
LAST MINUTE GIFTS.....	92-93
LeBARON BONNEY CO.....	13
LUCAS CLASSIC TIRES	94
McVEY'S.....	71
MECUM AUCTIONS	3
NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT	back cover
NORTHWEST TRANSMISSION PARTS	59
ORIGINAL PARTS GROUP, INC..... inside front cover
RESTORATION SUPPLY COMPANY	81
ROBERTS MOTOR PARTS	91
SDC KEYSTONE REGION INC	92
SMS AUTO FABRICS	81
STAUER.....	5
STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS.....	36
TEE-BIRD PRODUCTS	59
THUNDERBIRD HEADQUARTERS.....	93
UNIVERSAL VINTAGE TIRE CO.	36, 91
U.S.A. PARTS SUPPLY	36
VINTAGE CHEVROLET CLUB OF AMERICA....	81
WALDRON'S EXHAUST	91

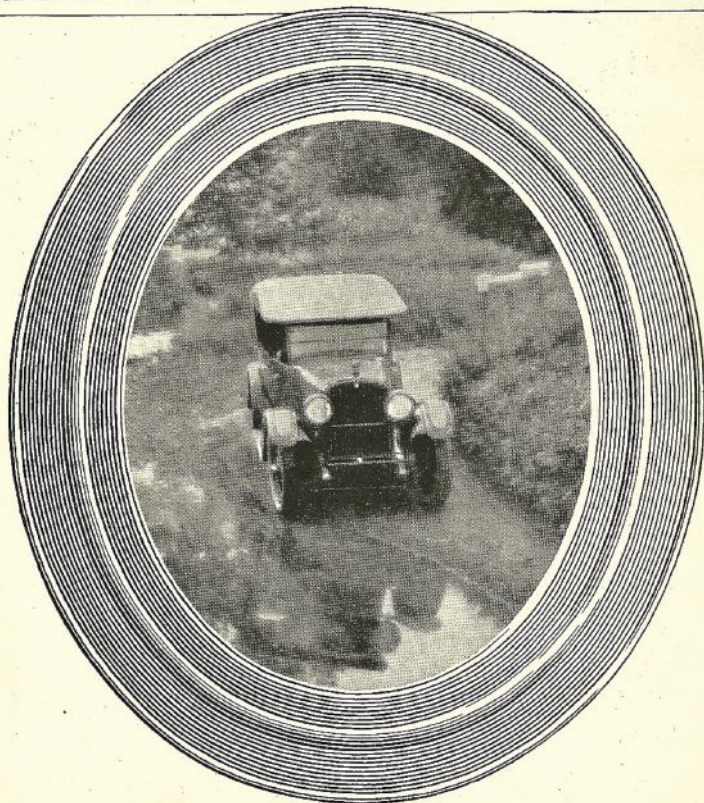


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Look at what any 40-year-old car went for 10 years ago and compare it to what it will fetch today. They are better than money in the bank...

jimrichardson

Old Cars Are Better Than Modern Cars

I occasionally get emails telling me why new cars are superior to old ones and admonishing me to get with the times. I am not sure why. I am fully aware of the technological strides that have been made in the last fifty years, and I have an OMBII engine analyzer and know how to use it.

But I still prefer old cars. I concede that modern cars are safer, faster, more dependable, and more economical than the cars of the past. So what is so special about old cars? Here are four things new cars lack:

At the top of my list is *simplicity*. Modern cars are as complex as the jet fighters of the Sixties. Most of that complexity is electronics, and most of the electronics is concerned with engine management. That's great. Air pollution has gone down thanks to such innovations, and tune-ups are a thing of the past. Trouble is, new cars require extensive professional training to repair.

As an example, two bolts down on the side of the engine hold on the fuel pump on my 1955 Chev. I can change it in less than half an hour. But the fuel pump on my wife's 2006 Saturn is in the gas tank, so I have to drain and drop the tank in order to get to it.

Which brings me to the next virtue that old cars have that new ones don't. And that is *cost*. If I wanted a restored 1966 Mustang V-8 coupe, I could probably find one for \$15,000. That is much cheaper than a new Toyota Camry when all is said and done. And if you finance that new car, you will pay much more than the selling price in the end. New cars are not good investments.

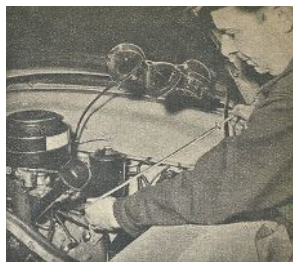
But to return to my example of the 1955 Chevrolet fuel pump, my local parts store sells one for \$45. A complete assembly for my wife's Saturn would cost about \$460 because it has the gas-gauge sending unit built in.

However, we're just skirting around the edges of new car costs when we talk about repairs. New cars lose money as soon as they leave the showroom floor. And the value will keep falling for the next 10 years. But a classic will go up in value. Look at what any 40-year-old car went for 10 years ago and compare it to what it will fetch today. They are better than money in the bank—especially since banks have all but eliminated interest on savings accounts.

Reason number three for preferring old cars is *styling*. I went to the auto show the other day and viewed the new offerings. I couldn't tell one from another. They all looked like pumpkin seeds with wrinkles. I had to look at the badges to determine which was which. The only exceptions were the Cube and other competing tin boxes that are at best, hideous.

Maybe today's stylists all work in the same room and use the same set of French curves. Or maybe the manufacturers eliminated the stylists altogether in a cost-cutting measure years ago and just went with a computer app. The lack of creativity indicates that.

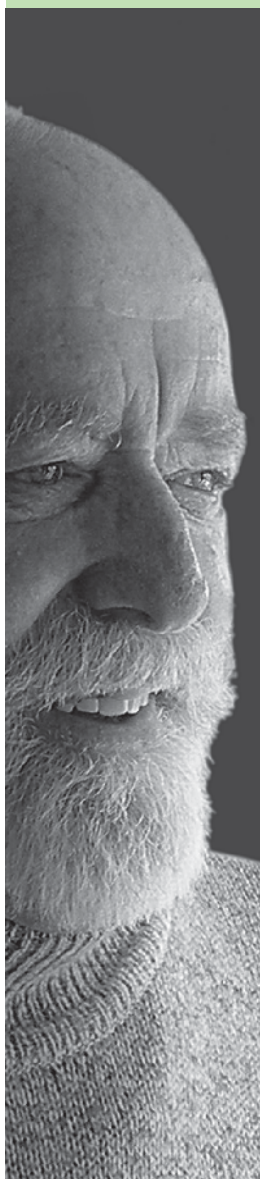
In the old days, there was no mistaking an Oldsmobile for a Studebaker. Cars had individual identities and came in interesting colors. And everyone knew one from another. It mattered that your car was distinctive. Now, the only thing distinguishing your car from your neighbors' is how much you spent for it in the mistaken belief that good taste costs more.



The fourth reason I prefer older cars is *sturdiness* and *durability*. Sure, modern cars last longer, but in the end, they are disposable. That's because they were not made to be rebuilt like my 1940 Packard was. A number of years ago, I drove a 1957 Chevrolet pickup truck all the way down to Cabo San Lucas in Baja, California before there was a paved road. Try that in your new SUV.

Cars in the old days had to contend with different problems than they do today. The interstate highway system wasn't built until the 1950s. Not long before that, the pavement ended at the edge of town. Fording streams was a common problem, as was climbing steep hills that had not been ramped. Potholes and washboard surfaces were the norm. Try a few such roads with your new Elantra and see how far you get.

So are new cars better than the classics? My answer is: for what? I'll just keep on driving my 1955 Bel Air until something better comes along. It is easy to fix, parts are cheap, it gets stares and thumbs ups wherever I go, and it just keeps going up in value. Yes, it needs a lube and oil every thousand miles, but it is almost 60 years old, and it just keeps on ticking. 🐞



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