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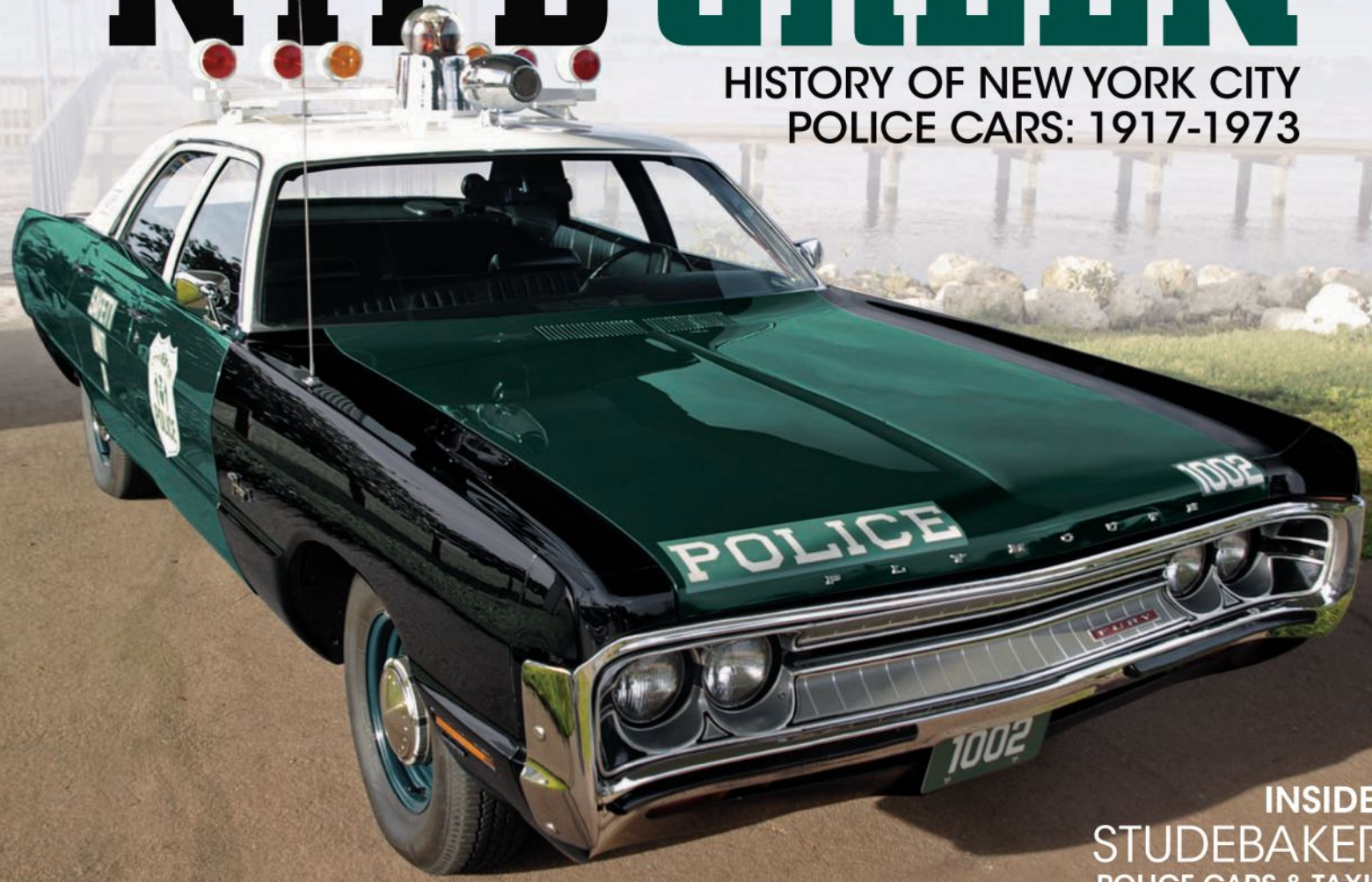
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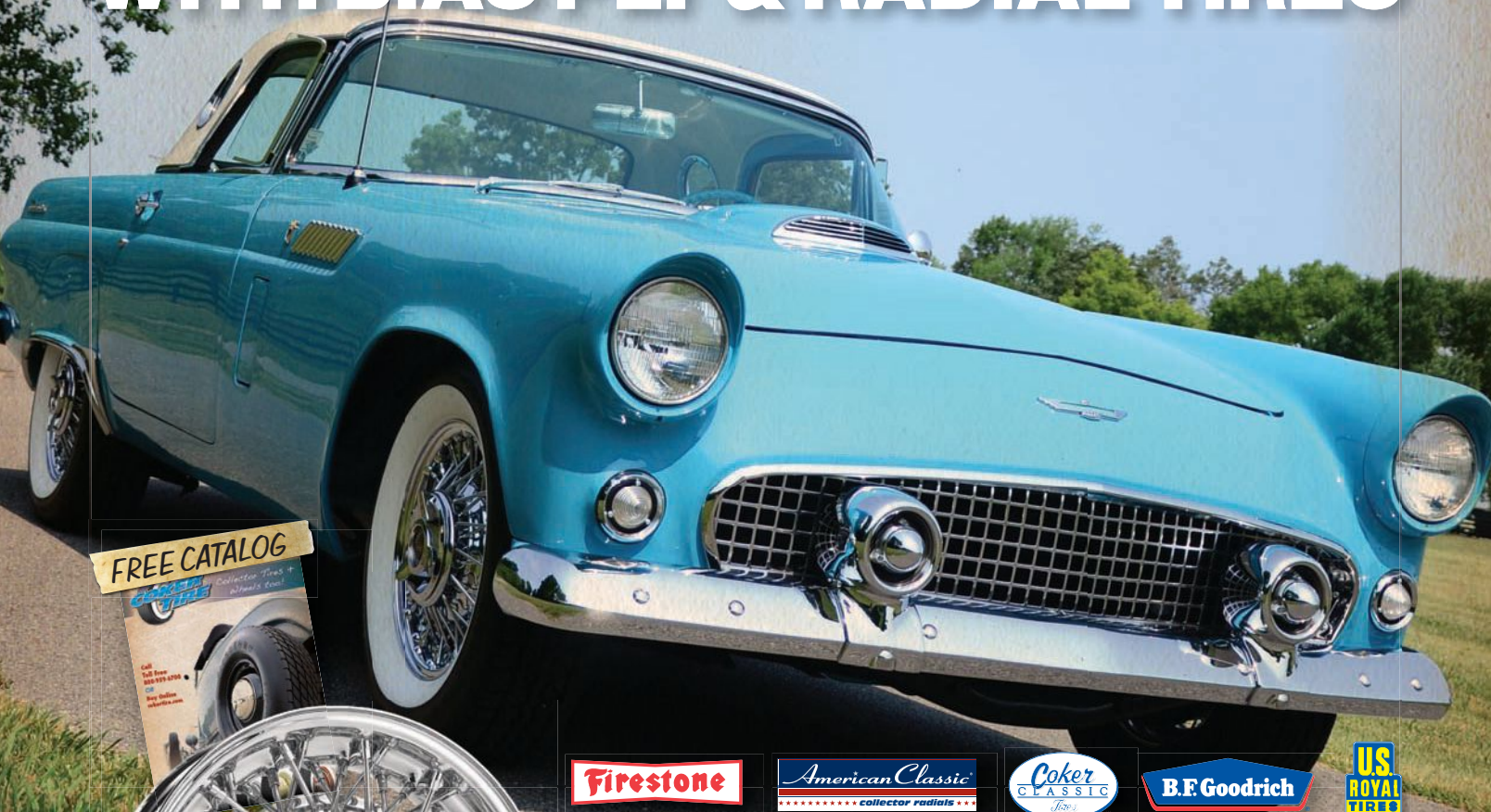
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Thunderbird,

on the

other hand,

has always

driven on its

own path. //

And the Most Stylish Model Is?

Our discussion in *HCC* #110 regarding the most stylish automotive brand of all time generated numerous responses, with some readers agreeing with my assessment that Cadillac has been the most stylish American automotive brand of all time, yet others disagreed completely. It seems that everyone enjoys discussions that center on style and design, with each person having strong opinions on which brand they prefer.

So, let's take this "most stylish" assessment to the next level.

Which car model do you believe has been the most stylish in all its transformations through the years? It can't just be one particular year style, or one style pertaining to a specific generation of that model; rather we're talking about the absolute most stylish model over all.

After giving this many hours of deep thought and serious consideration, the one model car that I kept coming back to over and over again was one particularly noteworthy Ford: the Thunderbird. And the more I thought about it, the more I convinced myself that there's no question about it that the Thunderbird is the most stylish and perhaps most distinctive car model line ever created.

During the Thunderbird's 46-year-long production, a run that has spanned six different decades, 11 different designs were offered. While the Corvette has been in production for 61 years, and the Mustang has just reached its 50th birthday, just seven different Corvette designs have been created; the Mustang is now on its sixth. While longevity and style don't necessarily go hand and hand, if it were not for the Thunderbird being so stylish, with a history of giving the buying public a fresh, exciting look every few years, it never would have remained in production for as long as it did.

All automobiles have style; some are conservative while others are dramatic, yet nearly all follow the current design trend of the day. The Thunderbird, on the other hand, has always driven on its own path. The highly creative Ford designers and stylists consistently gave the Thunderbird a matchless blend of unique form combined with great beauty, and with a touch of grandeur to boot.

The early 'Birds of 1955, '56 and '57 are just

as popular today as they were when introduced nearly 60 years ago, and all because they have a welcoming, fascinating shape that connects with people—style that is as timeless as the first day they were made.

The second-generation Thunderbirds of 1958-'60 retained the early Birds' presence, but did so with much more stimulating detailing throughout their larger bodies. They had that "Thunderbird" look, yet were as diverse as anything on the market at that time, with



an exclusive appearance thanks to their highly distinctive front grilles and rear-end treatments.

Truly spectacular were the "jet age" models that spanned the years of 1961-'63. Talk about a distinctive look...wow! With their sleek, slender profile and striking jet-inspired taillamps, if ever there was a car that conveyed the public's positive pursuit of modern-age America, these Thunderbirds were it.

When the restyled 1964 models appeared, they brought even more sophistication—albeit a bit more conservative—to an already classy, energetic-looking car, thus continuing the Thunderbird's unmatched tradition of sporting elegance.

Proof of the Thunderbird's design leadership and its inimitable sense of style came in the form of the astonishing 1967 model. Here was a car that was very modern for the time, yet had a sense of coolness about it. Refined, but sporty. Sleek yet muscular. Aesthetically, it was light-years ahead of anything on the road.

Although the Thunderbird started to lose its individuality in the early 1970s, which only got worse in the later part of that decade, in 1983 the Thunderbird surprised buyers once more with a very aerodynamic and contemporary, cutting-edge-looking shape that once again was totally different than all other automobiles then on the market.

Regarding the Thunderbird's style through the years, it can be summed up best by using the line "The I's have it." Individual, innovative and idiosyncratic. 🐦

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www.lawrenceregionaaca.com
- 2-4 • Pinehurst Concours d'Elegance**
Pinehurst, North Carolina • 910-973-6594
www.pinehurstconcours.com
- 2-4 • Rhinebeck Swap Meet & Car Show**
Rhinebeck, New York • 845-876-3554 (6-9 p.m.)
www.rhinebeckcarshow.com
- 4 • AACA NJ Region Car Show and Flea Market**
Florham Park, New Jersey • 908-534-9069
www.njaaca.org
- 4 • Moon City Swap Meet**
Wapakoneta, Ohio • 419-394-6484 (evenings)
- 4 • Sumter Swap Meet**
Bushnell, Florida • 800-438-8559
www.floridaswapmeets.com
- 8-10 • AACA Spring Auburn Car Show**
Auburn, Indiana • 717-534-1910 • www.aaca.org
- 8-10 • Chickasha Spring Swap Meet**
Chickasha, Oklahoma • 405-224-6552
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- 14-16 • AACA Eastern Tour**
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- 15 • Hemmings Cruise-In**
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- 23-25 • Springfield Swap Meet & Car Show**
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- 31-6/1 • Greenwich Concours d'Elegance**
Greenwich, Connecticut • 203-618-0460
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THE FORD OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF THE CAROLINAS will hold its annual Blue Oval Classic on May 3 in Mooresville, North Carolina. Expect to see hundreds of Fords, Lincolns, Mercurys and Edsels, representing the Ford Motor Company from the Model T era to present day. The FOAC will highlight 50 years of Mustangs, and the Classic will once again host a Fairlane Club of America mini-meet. All kinds of Ford cars are welcome, and pre-registration is suggested to guarantee your place in this gathering. For more information, visit www.foacarolinas.com.



GM Collectors Converge

THE ANNUAL PEACH BLOSSOM BUICK-OLDS-PONTIAC-CADILLAC Show and Swap Meet will take place May 2-3 in Marietta, Georgia. Friday night's festivities will include a "BBQ & Bluegrass" event, along with a display of new Cadillacs. Saturday will be the main show, featuring over 200 Buicks, Oldsmobiles, Pontiacs and Cadillacs of all eras. Over 25 classes will compete for trophies, and there will also be a marketplace featuring a car corral and swap meet. Be sure to register before April 15 for the best possible rates. Contact Peach State Cadillac & LaSalle Club if you have any questions. For more details, visit: www.BOPCShow.com.

Great Race 2014

THIS YEAR'S GREAT RACE

will make its way down the East Coast on June 21-29. The starting point will be at 10 a.m. in Ogunquit, Maine, with the finish at The Villages near Orlando, Florida. The race will travel over 2,100 miles along and around the Atlantic Coast, covering 13 states in nine days, with 17 scheduled stops. The public is welcome at all stops, so if you'll be near the East Coast this June, be sure to check out the itinerary at www.greatrace.com.



Durant Virtual Museum

THE DURANT MOTORS AUTOMOBILE CLUB has recently opened the doors of its virtual museum on the Internet. The museum captures the history of William Durant and the cars manufactured by the Durant Motors Corporation from 1922-1932. Durant also had a hand in other marques such as Star, Flint, Locomobile, Rugby and spin offs such as DeVaux, Frontenac and Continental. No museum exists today that solely honors Durant, but the Durant Club hopes this is an initial step to a physical structure. Explore the online museum here: www.durantmuseum.org.

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Colorful 'Cuda



BROWSE THROUGH ENOUGH OLD CAR BROCHURES—especially from the 1960s—and you're bound to see images of cars painted stripes of every color that manufacturer offered that year. Via reader Alden Jewell comes this photo of a 1965 Plymouth Barracuda that appears to have actually been painted each of the 17 colors that Plymouth offered that year.

According to Alden, Chrysler's Canadian arm, which issued a postcard with the image of the Barracuda on it, appears responsible for the multi-hue paint. He doesn't know, however, whether the fastback kept its paint scheme after the publicity photos, or, if it did, whether it's still around today. Does anybody know more about it?

RE: Flip-Top Goddesses

WE RECEIVED PLENTY of responses to Bob Nash's inquiry about his flip-up radiator cap (see *HCC* #114, March 2014), and while a few makes we hadn't considered popped up among the answers (Dodge, Graham-Paige), most of the respondents agreed with us that it was for a Chevrolet, specifically a 1929-1931 vintage Chevrolet.

What's more, a few readers pointed us to the Chevrolet accessory catalogs from that time, which list this particular radiator cap, which it described as the "Winged Viking," for \$3.50, installed. Doug Newberry even sent along a photo of the same cap on his 1931 Chevrolet Sport Roadster, which he said has worn the radiator cap since new.



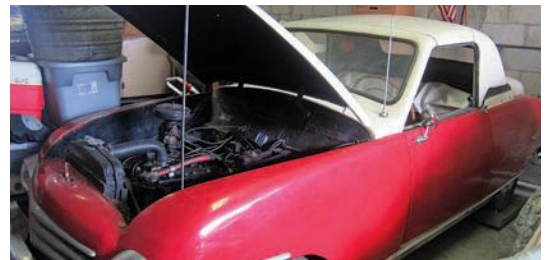
Perfect Topless Car


READER MICHAEL COHEN has owned a couple of Ford Skyliner retractable hardtops in his life, but never figured he'd ever get the opportunity to own one of its hardtop convertible predecessors until he recently stumbled across a 1948 Playboy in a south Florida warehouse.



"Sometime in mid 1986, the previous owner drove this Playboy 'Convertible Coupe' into his warehouse, where the car then sat covered in blankets for the next 26 years," Michael wrote. "This was a 98-percent totally original and functional automobile when stored, and with only mandated safety and precautionary maintenance to the fuel, oil, water and braking systems, plus a new battery, this unique vehicle is traversing South Florida again."

In fact, by the time most of you are reading this, Michael will have already shown it at the 2014 AACA National Winter Meet in Port St. Lucie, Florida, and in the preservation class at the Boca Raton Concours.



 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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Duesenbergs Move Out at Scottsdale

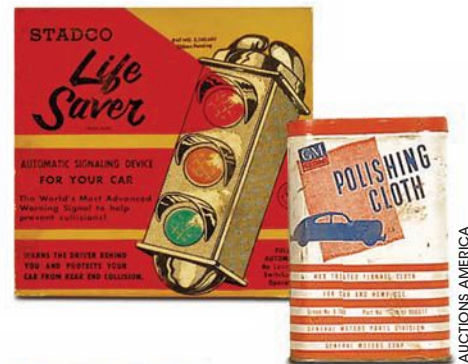
IT MAY COME AS NO GREAT NEWS FLASH that blue-chip cars sold for correspondingly blue-chip prices during the Scottsdale auction week. While top-10 lists are typically populated by exotic machines from Italy and/or Germany, a trio of absolutely American classic Duesenbergs made for a multi-million dollar hat trick across Barrett-Jackson, Gooding and RM Auctions in Arizona.

A 1929 Duesenberg SJ LeBaron Dual Cowl Phaeton for \$1,430,000 helped make the 2014 Barrett-Jackson event its most successful ever; Gooding hammered a 1929 Duesenberg Model J Dual Cowl Phaeton formerly owned by John Duval Dodge at \$2,090,000; and a 1930 Duesenberg Model J Convertible Coupe, shown in imposing profile here, sold for \$2,200,000 at RM Auctions. For more information, visit: www.barrett-jackson.com, www.goodingco.com, or www.rmauctions.com.

Auburn Memorabilia Remembered

PROOF THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND a million bucks at an automotive auction was this collection of vintage car-care products sold at the Auctions America Auburn Memorabilia auction for just twelve bucks. We don't know if the wax products were still liquid, but we do like the idea of a polishing cloth in its own can with lid.

Another unique item was this mint-in-box Stadco Life Saver, which sold for just over two hundred dollars. The traffic light in miniature was designed to be mounted in the rear window and connected to the car's brake wiring. Would-be tailgaters and leadfoots were warned with standard traffic signals. Visit: www.auctionsamerica.com.



AUCTIONS AMERICA

AUCTION PROFILE

JUST ONE OF THE 3,000 or so cars that rolled through Mecum's Kissimmee auction was this deceptively plain Plymouth Duster. Plymouth, as you may remember, was once known as the budget performance brand. With a 240-hp, 340-cu.in. V-8 engine, four-speed manual transmission and Sure-Grip limited slip rear axle, this Duster looked like an everyday runabout, but packed a potent punch.

This car sold for about \$2,750 in 1972 brand-new, which, adjusted for inflation and time, amounts to well over \$15,000 in today's dollars. The car's condition appeared excellent, which, combined with



CAR	1972 Plymouth Duster	CONDITION	#2+/Original
AUCTIONEER	Mecum	RESERVE	Yes
LOCATION	Kissimmee, Florida	AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	\$19,750
DATE	January 19, 2014	SELLING PRICE	\$14,500
LOT NUMBER	L39		

the compliment of factory-stock performance in an unassuming green-on-green package, makes the decades-


old Duster look far more attractive than what you might get spending equivalent money on a modern car.

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Tin Tribute

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1960 Pontiac Catalina

THE WIDE-TRACK PONTIAC LINE OF 1960 was lauded for its crisp, fuss-free styling, comfortable ride and available power, to the tune of 389 cubic inches and 303 hp. The aptly named Vista hardtop sedan, with its pillarless design and massive wrap-around greenhouse, was one of the most popular models of the year, and that's the one that England's Brooklin Models chose to recreate in 1:43 scale. Handsome in Regent Black over Stardust Yellow, this weighty piece features finely detailed brightwork, wide whitewall tires and distortion-free glazing. Pontiac fans will fall for it. Cost: \$137. 540-375-3750 <http://dominionmodels.com>

Dodge Centennial

THE DOUBLE RED SLASHES (CALLED THE "RHOMBUS") that now serve as the Dodge emblem are only a few years old, a speck in the brand's timeline considering that it is now celebrating its 100th anniversary. But Dodge fans with longer memories can now sport heritage-branded men's and women's clothing and other personal items bearing crests that date back to the original pre-Chrysler Dodge Brothers firm. A new 100th anniversary logo—and vintage Dodge imagery—can be found on everything from key chains and stainless tumblers to T-shirts and a commemorative leather jacket; explore the options at the online store. Accessories start at \$2.95; clothing starts at \$14.95. 877-832-2002 www.life.dodge.com



1970 Oldsmobile Cutlass SX

SUBTLETY IS AN ASSET when it comes to speed, and the Cutlass SX was probably the finest sleeper in Oldsmobile's 1970 lineup. Combining traditional notchback Holiday Coupe styling with plush luxury appointments and a torque-laden 455-cu.in. V-8, the option "Y-79 Performance Package" SX was a 4-4-2 for mature enthusiasts.

Ertl Collectibles has made an impressive 1:18-scale die-cast replica (product code AMM904) in its American Muscle series. This Burnished Gold model features an opening hood with scale hinge springs, a highly detailed engine bay and interior (down to realistic seat belts), and even legible jacking instructions in the trunk. It's an amazing model for the price. Cost: \$59.99.

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Lincoln Convertibles 1939-1959

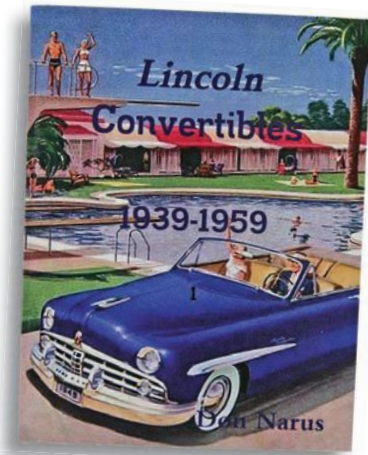
FOR A GREAT PORTION of its 97-year history, Lincoln automobiles have been among the finest and most understated luxury cars built in America. Many consider the original, hand-built Continental-era examples up through the popular cars of the 1950s hugely desirable, especially the open models. Automotive historian Don Narus has created a fine tribute to these Ford Motor Company flagships in his latest effort, and he goes beyond the book's title to include related products from fellow premium nameplates Mercury and Edsel.

Like his other automotive history books, Don's latest is a 125-page softcover filled with black-and-white photographs and advertising reprints. Interspersed between more than 200 images is his typically clear and concise factual information, including equipment, specifications, production and pricing. This is an affordable, fine primer for new fans of Lincoln, and a nice overview for dedicated enthusiasts.

Cost: \$22.95, plus shipping.

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American Motors Corporation

HERE'S A BOOK THAT ALL ADMIRERS of AMC and independent automakers alike will want to read and then display in a visible spot in their library. Penned by *Hemmings Classic Car's* Pat Foster, it details the entire existence of AMC, from its formation back in 1954 to its demise in 1987.

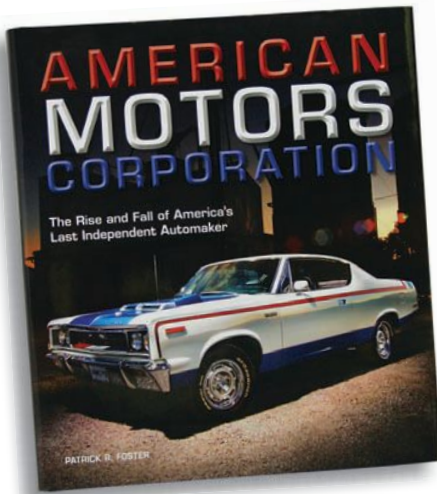
Within the 208 pages of this hardcover tome resides all the insightful information about AMC that you will want to know. Starting with the merger of Hudson and Nash, then the huge success of the Rambler, all the men responsible for the company's cars, their designs, and AMC's successes and failures are outlined in a clear, concise, easy-to-read manner that will prevent you from putting the book down until you finish reading it. Yes, it's that informative, and entertaining.

The book's pleasing layout and design make it a treat for the eyes. Included are hundreds of mainly factory-issue photographs, many of which have never before been seen. Most are in color and their reproduction quality is excellent. We especially appreciate the inclusion of many proposed styling and design illustrations that show what could have been, underlining AMC's major role in the American auto industry. It's a must-read. Cost: \$45.

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—By Richard Lentinello



Reflections

WHAT DO WALT DISNEY, BUDWEISER, PARAMOUNT PICTURES, the Rolling Stones, Hasbro, Avon Books and the QVC home shopping channel have in common? They have all commissioned pieces from fine artist and photographer Mark Watts. Mark has built an enviable reputation through his skill in rendering reflective subjects in acrylics, oils, airbrush and with digital media. Lucky for us, one of his favorite subjects is classic cars, which he skillfully brings to life in settings that range from realistic to surreal.

"I am attracted to classic cars because that is the era I grew up in, with my dad having some great cars," he explains. "I remember his 1957 Ford Fairlane. It was black and red, with gold trim, a great car. Classic cars have real personality—I love to paint them because

of all of their heavy chrome, great colors and style. I also love to paint reflections in the old cars so the cars become part of their environment, that I artistically place them in."

Through his Mark Watts Studios, Mark now offers limited-edition giclée prints on canvas, in addition to his hand-signed giclées on archival paper; a special development is his Fine Art Aluminum prints, which are brighter and more luminous than the LCD display of an HD display screen. He welcomes commissions of classic car portraits. Cost: \$35 and up for 11 x 17-inch archival giclée prints.

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Packard Fuel Tanks

New production fuel tanks for the 1951-'56 Packard are now available from Kanter Auto Products. These new tanks are designed to be perfect replacements for your original, aged tank. As the tanks get older, more rust and debris builds up, increasing the odds of damaging your fuel pump or carburetor. Each 18-gauge steel tank is built to OEM specs to provide convenient installation and perfect function, just like when they rolled out of the factory. The tanks are available in a deluxe kit that includes the tank, straps, sending unit, T-bolts, vent tube, gas cap and clamps, or you can order without the sending unit and gas cap. Cost: \$459 (deluxe kit); \$349 (no sending unit or gas cap).

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Door Panel Details

Hubbard's introduces new 1965 Chevrolet Impala Super Sport interior door panel reflectors for the hardtop sport coupe and convertible. The reflectors are reproduced with top-quality materials and are designed to have the same fit and look as when they were assembled in the factory. For more information, please visit Hubbard's website. Cost: \$39.99.

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NYPD Green

Police transportation in the Big Apple's golden years



Ford made history in 1958 with the NYPD's first four-door patrol cars.

BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGES COURTESY NED SCHWARTZ AND JIM SERRA

The undyingly powerful emblem of law enforcement in New York City has always been the cop on the beat, by which we mean police officers, alone or in pairs, pounding the pavement on forlorn, frigid nights. For a very long time, vehicles had next to nothing to do with policing the city. They were antithetic to the job. In New York, the street cop on foot owned his beat, and its denizens, in a personal way unknown to police in other places.

It was the 1950s before that mindset, that undeclared policy, began to change in New York. Until that time, police cars were largely reserved for the “bosses,” supervisors like the sergeant who rolled out from the precinct station house, wheeled by his chauffeur, driven around the area a couple of times each tour to give officers on foot their “see,” signing their notebooks, thus ensuring they were walking their beat, or “post,” and not trying to get in out of the weather somehow. For a lowly patrolman, getting an assignment to drive the sergeant—or any assignment that involved using a car—was highly prized. Get one, and the other cops would ask you to “name your rabbi,” NYPD slang for a higher-up who had taken an interest in advancing your career, or just in making you more comfortable.

New York was one of the last major cities to embrace cars in any serious way. Notice that we didn't say “vehicles.”



A 1949 Ford RMP rolls in on a call. NYPD was a big customer for them; detectives probably drove the other Ford sedan.



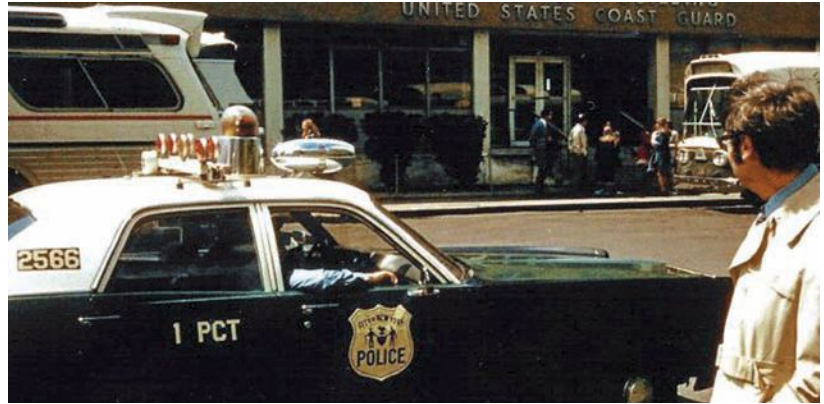
Police brass, including Commissioner Mike Murphy (pointing), examine a new 1963 Plymouth RMP.



The middle 1960s saw the adoption of high-rise lights, hinged on either side of the roof, which could be swiveled upward for better visibility.



By the early 1960s, a badge-shaped door shield had been adopted, plus reflective markings.



This Plymouth from the 1st Precinct, at the southern tip of Manhattan, has the high-rise lights in a lowered or stowed position.

Over the years, the department employed horse-drawn patrol wagons, made good use of bicycles, boats and horses, and came to employ motorcycles. Regarding the last, New York even had a specialized Gangster Squad during the 1920s that used Harley-Davidson and sidecar combinations with mounted machine guns, intending to instill terror into the likes of bootlegging kingpin Dutch Schultz.

Even though policing was based on grinding up shoe leather and smart deduction, the NYPD did inch its way into using cars. The first, in the era of World War I, were Ford Model T roadsters, about 30 in total, spread over the five boroughs and, in all likelihood, restricted to the use of supervisors while uniformed cops pounded the sidewalks and detectives traveled to crime scenes by mass transit or huge

touring car. Very early on, the NYPD adopted dark green as its signature color for its vehicles. How come? As with many of its practices, via tradition. From the earliest days of professional policing, which predated the five boroughs' consolidation into a single municipality, police stations had green lights by their front doors that remained illuminated to assure the public that the watch, as the department was first called, was on the street and keeping vigil. To this day, NYPD precincts still have those glowing green beacons out front. The green cars quickly became as emblematic of the NYPD as brass buttons on the uniform.

Well into the 1930s, the cars continued to match the green signs. A change occurred around 1935, when a new order of two-door Ford coupes suddenly sported black front fenders.

Even units that didn't do street patrol in the commonest sense got RMPs, and in the late 1960s, that usually meant a Plymouth Fury I. This one was assigned to the NYPD Aviation Bureau Unit, then and now located at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn. Image shows the extended skirt base that elevates the warning beacon above the level of the Pulsator siren.





“MT” stands for Midtown Traffic, but this wrinkled-up 1968 Fury I is outside the 103rd Precinct’s station house in Queens.

We spoke to NYPD Officer Andrew Thayer, who collects and restores police cars, and he did a lot to dispute a common conception that the black fenders were selected solely because they could easily be repainted if they got dinged, a common consequence of New York traffic even that far back. Instead, Andy told us, “It had gotten to the point where people could spot the green paint as the car came out of the intersection. With the black fenders, you could get maybe a half-second drop on a guy before he made it as a police car. Sometimes that’s all you need.”

It was in the same time period that the department began installing radios, which at first could only receive messages. Detroit had already become the first police department to put a citywide radio network into effective operation. The NYPD began calling its cars Radio Motor Patrols, or RMPs, an abbreviation that remains in the agency’s common vernacular to this day. We also ought to point out that the NYPD had by now established a highly specialized unit called the Emergency Service Unit, a combination heavy rescue squad and SWAT-like tactical team, equipped with heavy tools and submachine

guns. They responded initially in what were essentially open-body fire trucks, which were also painted NYPD green. As the city grew, so did the unit, whose officers were sent out on patrol in light trucks equipped with utility bodies, rescue equipment and today, a variety of counterterrorism tools. Those light trucks (initially cars, beginning with 1948 Plymouths and in the early 1950s, Ford sedan deliveries) became known, and still are, as REPs, for Radio Emergency Patrols.

NYPD RMPs initially had extremely simple warning systems. The aforementioned 1935 Fords had motor-driven sirens mounted to the front bumper bracket. Above the windshield was a forward-facing red blinker mounted within an upright metal sign stamped with a painted “POLICE.” Then, in 1937, the street appearance of RMPs changed radically. The department accepted a large order of new Plymouth P3 coupes with the 201.3-cu.in. L-head straight-six and 82 hp. The NYPD shops dramatically modified their color and graphics scheme. The top surfaces of the Plymouths, including their hoods and trunk lids, were painted white—the roof included—to provide the officers using the cars a measure of summertime comfort.



Fords were favored by the NYPD in 1969 and 1970. This 1969 Custom 500, with high-rise lights, is on a 10-6 standby assignment in Manhattan.



New York City had a separate Housing Authority Police agency until it was merged, along with the Transit Police, into the NYPD in 1995. This 1969 photo shows a new Housing RMP, a Chevrolet Biscayne, powered by a 250-cu.in. straight-six.



New York City police cars led rough lives, as evidenced by the loosened grille of this 1970 Ford Custom 500.



Another forlorn-looking Ford, this 1970 Custom 500 was assigned to the 122nd Precinct on the south shore of Staten Island.



Motoring in the Big Apple can get unruly. This 1971 Plymouth traffic unit has a PA speaker alongside the siren.



Nothing fancy, this was your basic NYPD RMP in 1971, a Plymouth Fury I, handling a call within the 103rd Precinct.



By 1972, the NYPD was experimenting with electronic warning systems. A Federal TwinSonic light bar adorns this Fury I.

The rear fenders were painted black to match the front ones. On either side of the center-hinged hood, facing outward, was lettered "POLICE N.Y." On the doors was the car's precinct assignment. This look would endure for some two decades with little change.

Also, these Plymouths got an updated warning system, after a fashion. At the forward edge of the roof was a metal box with an electrically lighted forward-facing "POLICE" message, white letters against a red background. Too many years have passed for anyone to say precisely how and when they were used, but the "light box," as it was called, was most likely illuminated en route to emergency calls or during chases, and the lighting may have blinked rather than glowed steadily. By the war years, at least some RMPs had a bidirectional blinking red light bolted atop the light box.

World War II restricted the NYPD in a variety of ways. Besides losing officers to wartime service, the department was limited in its ability to acquire cars. The white top color disappeared, and several 1942 Nashes were delivered in plain military gray. Near the end of the war, several Hudson 600 sedans were in service. Plymouths were again preferred until 1949, when the NYPD accepted a huge order of six-cylinder Ford two-door sedans. The white top paint and light boxes, both of which had been on hiatus during the war, returned. As the 1950s ensued, the NYPD went back and forth between Fords and Plymouths, the latter including a run of P-19 business coupes during 1950. The last cars to carry the traditional NYPD light boxes were an order of Ford Mainline sedans, with the 223-cu.in., 120-hp straight-six, that were delivered in 1955. The following year, the department took delivery of new 1956 Chevrolet 150 two-door sedans, with the base 235.5-cu.in., 140-hp Stovebolt six for power. These were the first NYPD cars fitted with a rotary roof beacon, the Federal Beacon Ray, with a red dome.

An even bigger change occurred in 1958. While the



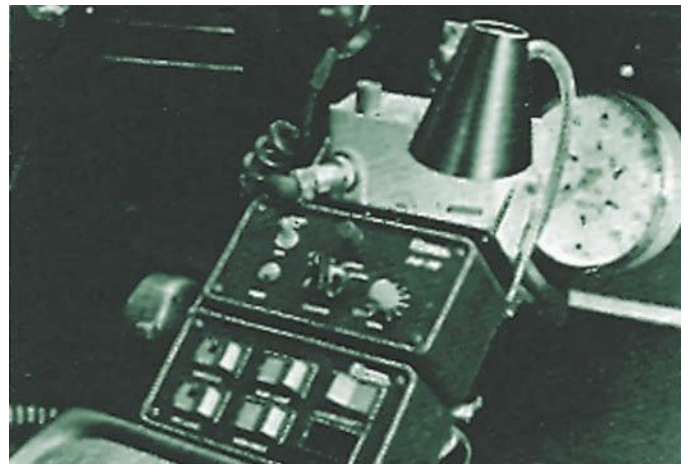
Another of the ubiquitous 1971 Fury Is, this RMP is at work in the 107th Precinct, which patrols northern Queens.



On the job in eastern Queens, this 1972 Plymouth sports a flat-domed Signal Stat beacon with red and amber beams.



Patrol officers stand by as a 1972 RMP fitted with a TwinSonic warning setup undergoes electronic testing.



Nowhere near as complex as today, a 1970s control console incorporates light and siren switches, plus a lamp.



The red turret light marks this Ford Custom as assigned to the Housing Authority Police, here in a Midtown parade.



Another warning setup under evaluation was this rack with a pair of rotary beacons and an electronic siren.

NYPD would never abandon foot patrols—indeed, after 9/11, officers on foot posts seem to be everywhere—there was a new emphasis on high-speed response by officers in cars, mimicking the proactive philosophy of policing that grabbed a firm hold in places like Los Angeles and Dallas. In the NYPD, patrol cars weren't primarily for roving supervisors anymore. The average cop on the beat newly found himself with a partner patrolling a "sector" within a precinct. Ford got the distinction of delivering both the final two-door patrol cars and first four-doors used by the NYPD, the 1958 Ford Custom 300.

Beginning in 1960 and continuing for years, most NYPD cars were six-cylinder Plymouths, although the department also evaluated the compact Rambler Classic in 1962. Modifications were also made to the livery: In 1961, the NYPD adopted a new badge-shaped door shield for its cars, and the precinct

assignment was relegated to a sticker on the back door. That same year, the "POLICE N.Y." signage was removed from RMP hoods. Also, it had been decades since cars had removable back fenders, but the department continued to paint part of the quarter panels black, usually aft of the wheel openings. Retired lieutenant Jim Serra, who created the 1971 Plymouth RMP seen elsewhere in this issue, said the rearmost black paint served more than just tradition. The cars were fitted with tire chains during the winter, and if one snapped, it was comparatively easy to Bondo the damage and repaint it without having to match colors. As he put succinctly, "Black is black." This scheme endured until 1973 when the NYPD switched to a new department insignia and the white-over-blue paint, which became so emblematic of the next generation of New York's Finest. 🐾



A very common sight, an RMP that got "busted" ends up at the Motor Transport Section garage for repairs.



Blue-and-white colors were adopted in 1973, which adorn this restored 1980 Plymouth Volare that patrolled Brooklyn.

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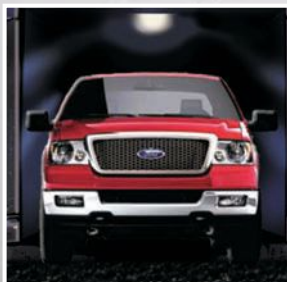
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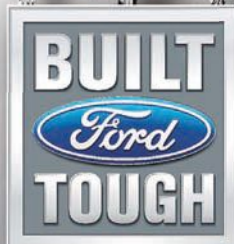
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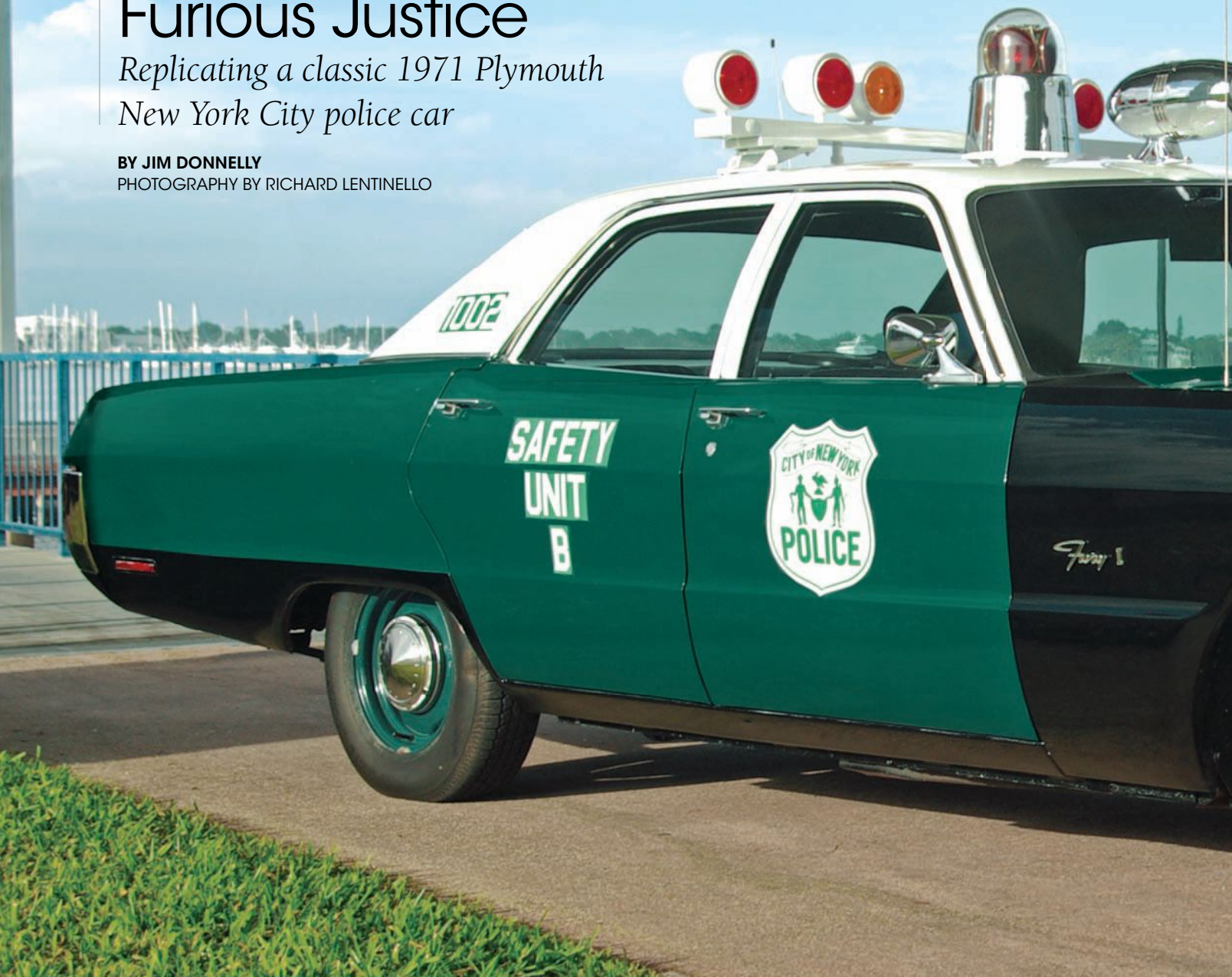
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Furious Justice

*Replicating a classic 1971 Plymouth
New York City police car*

BY JIM DONNELLY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



John Vliet Lindsay was in deep trouble in 1971, which meant that the city he governed as mayor, New York, was doing even worse. Municipal strikes had halted mass transit and left mounds of stinking garbage clogging the streets. Members of the Weather Underground had blown themselves to bits when their clandestine Greenwich Village bomb factory exploded.

A smoke-blackened firefighter named Dennis Smith was about to publish a best-seller about the warlike danger he and his brother firemen faced in the South Bronx. Lindsay was preparing to switch parties and suffer a humiliating repudiation as a presidential candidate. The New York Giants, which were still actually in New York, finished dead last in the NFC East. And a

group of self-styled revolutionaries was fatally ambushing officers to make some point about Leninist or Maoist philosophies.

Amidst all this turmoil, one constant endured in the great five boroughs. The Police Department of the City of New York still patrolled its streets in navy blue, double-breasted tunics with brass buttons, and did so in vehicles painted green, black



The owner (right) always wanted a car that replicated his first RMP after he joined the NYPD. The donor car was a very clean 1971 Fury III that was downgraded to a Fury I, with new badges and smaller taillamps. The vinyl roof was likewise shorn.





All this gear still exists if you know where to look for it. Telephone handsets were standard for NYPD radios. Switch panel allowed driver to activate siren with the horn buttons. Speedometer was salvaged from a Highway Patrol RMP wrecked during a Parkway pursuit.

and white. Despite a historic corruption scandal in 1971, most NYPD cops did so proudly, defiantly, bravely. This Plymouth Fury I four-door is a tribute to that era.

Right up front, it's a replica, albeit a strongly authentic one. If you're a collector who's into the history of motorized police transportation, a recreation might be your only option, as we'll examine in a moment. Suspended disbelief is a necessity. But for the guy who built this Fury, it's as powerful a piece of nostalgia as could possibly exist.

Jim Serra wanted a talisman to remember his entry into the nation's largest law enforcement agency, which when he accepted his shield in 1970 was some 22,000 sworn officers strong. Jim rose through the ranks to become a sergeant and a lieutenant, serving mostly in Manhattan precincts before retiring and moving to coastal Florida. He wanted to re-create one of the patrol cars—a Radio Motor Patrol or “RMP,” in NYPD-speak—from an early duty assignment, a specialized Manhattan precinct known as Safety Unit B. As Jim explains its mission, Safety Unit B was located at 6th Avenue and 30th Street in Midtown, a few blocks away from Madison Square Garden, and covered all of lower Manhattan from 96th Street south, and from river to river. Its police officers were tasked with “responding to incidents including crane collapses, building collapses, fires, demonstrations, presidential visits, the Democratic National Convention and managing big events like the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade and the New York City Marathon,” Jim explains.

The majority of officers in the unit handled calls, and when they weren't, did normal proactive police stuff like patrolling the

streets, conducting motor vehicle stops and making “collars”—arrests. In terms of having a patrol car, you didn't need much, and NYPD uniforms didn't get it. There were never any “police package” cars in the NYPD per se, certainly not in the sense of the North Carolina Highway Patrol, or any other agency for which long-distance pursuits and emergency runs were commonplace.

When malefactors were chased in New York City, including by Safety Unit B, it was usually by a cop on foot or maybe perched astride a little Lambretta or Vespa motor scooter. In almost all cases, a full-on brawny patrol car—think a Ford Police Interceptor with a 428, or a 440-cu.in. Mopar—made no sense whatsoever for the NYPD. Most RMPs patrolled at 10 to 15 MPH. The cars were denuded: zero options, no prisoner cages, six-cylinder power with automatics (eventually). They were taxis that were painted green instead of yellow.

That's why many “restored” police cars, especially those from the NYPD, are actually replicas. To re-create his Safety Unit B car, Jim located a 1971 Plymouth Fury III sedan in Tennessee that had logged only 27,000 actual miles. For an RMP, it was wrong on several counts, the most obvious being that as a near-top-of-the-line car, it was way too luxurious. Adjustments were made cosmetically as Jim issued it new badges for a Fury I, a process that required changing the rear bumper to one with the more severe-and-simplified Fury I taillamps.

“Being that I used to work in that unit, and we'd work all the parades, like the St. Patrick's Day parade, a lot of police departments would bring their own (restored) vehicles into the city



High-mounted Federal beacon with two-colored lamps was standard, like the shrieking Pulsator siren. Each was positioned on the Fury III using measurements from the NYPD shops. Patrol car's number, 1002, comes from the sergeant's badge number of the owner.

and run them in the parade," Jim recalls. "I never had the time, the money or the space to work on them until I retired and moved to Florida. I've wanted to do it for about 30 years, but was never able to try until then. I thought about a 1971 Plymouth because when I came on the job and first got into a patrol car, that was the kind of car we had. I also wanted a car that was built after 1968, so it would have a dual master cylinder. Plus, my Fury has front disc brakes."

The other major departures from "real" on Jim's Fury, for a normal precinct RMP, are its factory air conditioning and the new-for-1971, two-barrel V-8 displacing 360 cubic inches, slotting it between the 318 and the 383, an upsized 340 that was part of Chrysler's LA engine family. As Jim explains, those engines might have found their way into a few Fury sedans assigned to NYPD Highway Patrol precincts, those being the most likely to be involved in serious pursuits. Speaking of which, the circular calibrated speedometer in Jim's car was salvaged from a Highway Patrol unit that got flipped during a chase along the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn.

Jim's Plymouth replicates an RMP that would have been well-equipped for 1971. The standard siren at the time was a bi-tone electromechanical Federal Signals Pulsator, and was so deafening it was eventually banned under city noise-abatement codes. Jim bought his from a collector and dealer named Joe Dorgan from Tucson, Arizona. Behind it is a Federal Beacon Ray Model 175H with a clear dome, red and amber bulbs, and a raised chrome base so the light clears the siren. That piece was a gift from a fellow former officer also living now in Florida. There are also hinged "high rise" blinkers for visibility at accident scenes, long a common warning system on NYPD cars that handled traffic



“I thought about a 1971 Plymouth because when I came on the job and first got into a patrol car, that was the kind of car we had.”

work. The Motorola radio and speaker came from an online collector. Jim figures he has about \$400 in the authentic emergency gear.

Jim's a car guy, having owned and restored other eye-poppers ranging from an International Harvester high-wheeler to a Willys Aero. As a Fury III, the Plymouth had a vinyl roof that was in perfect shape but still had to be removed. So were the excess body moldings that a police car would never sport. The decals were furnished by an Illinois shop that had the correct fonts and color capability to custom-produce them. The most critical part of the conversion, however, was getting the color codes right. White and black are no big deal, but the green's got to be dead on. The current match is Envision Green, a Du Pont color that was originally used on Suzuki automobiles. It's perfect for NYPD green going all the way back to the 1930s.

"The black is never a problem," Jim says. "Driving in the city, the part most likely to get scraped or banged up were the front fenders. That paint was easy to match. Black is black."

An NYPD RMP had a short and thankless existence back in '71. Cruise past a precinct house and RMPs would be parked haphazardly, sometimes on the sidewalk, fenders and quarter panels mottled from countless dings and/or close encounters with cabs. Other than the paint scheme, about the only concessions to the RMPs' status as police vehicles were the warning lights, roof-mounted siren and a simple Motorola analog radio. "They ran 24 hours a day. Basically, after four years, they were completely used up and sold for scrap, or taken down for parts. The only restored ones around now that actually were original New York City police cars might be the ones in the NYPD Museum, and I can't even verify that."



THANKS, RICHARD, for giving voice to those of us with an enduring affection for maps (*HCC #114*). For me, it all started back when I was just a little guy and Dad would pack us all in the Pontiac station wagon and take us halfway across the country to see Grandpa and Grandma. Dad always kept the relevant section of countryside displayed on a neatly folded Texaco road map, which got refolded repeatedly as we covered the miles. It was sheer fascination for me to correlate the names of the towns on the map with the green highway signs as we drove past. For a little kid, it was an awesome revelation to grasp that I was actually part of a much larger picture, and I could move around in that picture and know exactly where I was.

But what really sealed my devotion to maps was my high school geography class back in the early 1970s. Our teacher, Mr. Learned, would hand out to each student a map of a particular section of the world that we were to study together for the next couple of weeks. These maps were highly detailed, except for the fact that nothing was labeled. Mr. Learned pointed out mountain ranges, seas and lakes and rivers, island groups, countries and cities, while we carefully penciled those names on our maps and learned something of their significance. Thanks to Mr. Learned, I know precisely where Afghanistan is, I know the difference between the Baltics and the Balkans, and I can easily picture the geographical relationship of all 50 states.

I suspect that many of us will agree that traveling from point A to point B without any broad mental visualization of the how and the where, robs the journey of its interest. A map puts the joy back in. A map lets me put my finger on it and say "I am here." What else could possibly be more useful to have in that glove compartment anyway?

Russell Fahlberg
Dunlap, Illinois

I SAW AN AD IN A LOCAL

NEWSPAPER: The medicine faculty at McGill University in Montreal was researching unmedicated senior citizens (a rare breed...) for a study concerning Alzheimer's disease, so I volunteered. There were four sessions with a multitude of tests, a lot of them being on orientation. Dr. Véronique Bohbot

explained the reasons and means for the different tests. Alzheimer's disease is related to a specific part of the brain, the hippocampus, the site, among other things, of orientation. One of a numerous set of recommendations to retard the disease is to find your way by yourself: Don't use your GPS! Read maps, set your way mentally and look for the markers and landmarks. It keeps your brain in top shape.

François Dugal
Brossard, Quebec

I BOUGHT MY FIRST RAND McNALLY ROAD ATLAS in 1982, and I've bought a new one every two years ever since then. It usually takes that long for the pages to start tearing apart because I do my road trips in a convertible.

On my first serious Route 66 trip, I got hopelessly lost in Missouri. Don't laugh until you've tried it yourself! It was the middle of the day, but totally overcast, with no shadows, so I could not tell which direction I was traveling. I finally found my way back to Route 66, whence I promptly stopped at the first tourist trap I could find, and bought myself a nice Army surplus compass. I still have that compass in my convertible. And I never go on a road trip without that compass, or my latest *Rand McNally*.

Joe Razumich
Portage, Indiana

BEING A TRUCKER FOR 35 YEARS,

a map was our only means of finding the best route around a scale, oops, I mean, to our destination. I depended greatly on the *Rand McNally* "commercial driver's" edition. It not only provided locations of scales, but had low bridge locations, weight restrictions, and highlighted truck routes. We called it the "road bible." I too have no use for GPS doodads. On a trip in Florida one year, we had my girlfriend's godchild with us, and she insisted on bringing her GPS.

On a day trip to an attraction, I knew a back way to save a little time, and this GPS kept freaking out, "Error, recalculating, error, error." I finally turned around and said, "Will you shut that damn thing off!" Call me old-fashioned, but I still like a map.

Howard Arbiture
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY RECREATIONAL MAP READER

out there. One thing, though, has made me crazy for years. As a lifelong train guy, it amazes me just how many maps show no railroad lines whatsoever. Even a gas company highway map, admittedly geared to road travel, will show every tiny creek by name, as well as the boundaries of every political division, towns, counties, parishes, names and elevation of every mountain, and more. Yet more often than not, railroads are conspicuous by their absence. The very nature of railroads means that a great deal of earth moving often goes into their construction, often leaving huge embankment, cuts, fills and monumental structures behind as permanent features of the environment long after the actual railroad itself is gone. Yet such obvious features of the land are often ignored, leaving one to navigate by looking for the three-foot wide creek passing 40 feet below the road in a concrete culvert. Why?

Lou Pane
Howell, New Jersey

AS A CHILD, I ALWAYS LOVED MAPS AS WELL.

I possess an internal GPS, a trait my sister shares. When I became a long-haul trucker in the '80s this talent always allowed me to get my loads through on time and with very few congestion-related delays. When the Qualcomm systems were first installed in my rigs, I attempted to utilize the recommended routing, but always found fault with the "required" route! They were invariably longer and gave one greater exposure to urban traffic hazards. Thus, using my own routes, I was able to see a more varied view of the country and go places with a semi one would not expect a semi to be, but is legally permitted (Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky and Tennessee is a great example).

Another example is a run I made often: from Rumford, Maine, to Dallas, Texas. I could shave almost 80 miles off the trip by heading west through Ohio and down into Kentucky, Missouri and Arkansas, as opposed to using I-81 to I-40. My company at first was opposed to my routing practices, but since I never got a load through late or had

Continued on page 30

The Battleship

People give me things. Nice people. Most are readers who send in old brochures and photos of vintage independent American automobile makes. They call Hemmings and ask for my home address (as a non-staffer, I work out of my home in Connecticut rather than at the main offices in Bennington, Vermont), so they can mail me interesting items of automobilia. Other donors are people who see me at swap meets or car shows and drop off brochures and other items.

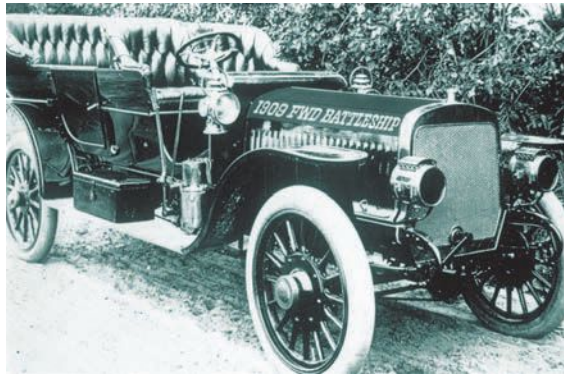
Recent presents include some pretty neat Checker brochures, a stack of Rambler factory photos and a handful of Jeep literature. One guy even gave me a vintage Nash metal toy car that I treasure. All this stuff helps me in my work. For example, when I wrote about Stevens-Duryea in a column last year, it came about because a generous donor had sent me a brochure on the make that piqued my interest.

One collector recently contacted me about some old slides he had of Willys, Jeep and AMC styling concepts, the extremely rare stuff I thrive on. I went to his house, which was on the way to a car show I was attending, to pick them up. The box he gave me had 280 slides in it—quite a nice gift. But to my surprise, when I went through the box slide by slide, there were a few that didn't fit the overall category. The most interesting one showed a car with a name painted on its side: 1909 FWD Battleship.

What the heck was that? I wondered. Sure, I've heard of FWD, an old-time maker of trucks. (The company survives today as FWD-Seagrave, a well-respected maker of fire trucks.) But this was an automobile, and I wondered why they would call it "Battleship." So I did some research. I wanted to find out if there was anything significant about the Battleship. Turns out, there was.

FWD founder Otto Zachow is credited with coming up with the double-Y universal joint with ball and socket that made four-wheel drive possible. A machinist in Clintonville, Wisconsin, he and his brother-in-law William Besserdich patented the idea, and in 1908 built an experimental car incorporating that device, along with a steam engine. The machine didn't

work very well, so they then substituted a 45-hp four-cylinder Continental gasoline engine hooked up to a three-speed transmission. This second car worked fine and is considered the first four-wheel-drive automobile built in America. The two men dubbed it the "Battleship" because of its ability "to go where no car could go" and because seemingly



nothing could stop it.

Zachow and Besserdich established a firm they called the Badger Four Wheel Drive Automobile Company. They put the Battleship into very limited production as the Model 100-F, a seven-passenger Touring car weighing 3,800 pounds and carrying a whopping \$4,500

price tag. Despite its heft, the car reportedly could reach a top speed of 55 MPH. Initially called the Badger, or Badger F.W.D., in time the corporate name was shortened to Four-Wheel-Drive Automobile Company, and later just FWD.

According to a company pamphlet, only 10 of the four-wheel-drive cars and chassis were built between 1909 and 1911, though it doesn't say specifically how many were cars and how many were just chassis. Another source claims that eight complete cars were produced, but it doesn't mention chassis. It appears that two of the FWD cars have survived.

When it became apparent that the four-wheel-drive passenger-car market was almost non-existent, Zachow and Besserdich began using the Battleship to demonstrate how four-wheel drive could serve the military. The company was soon building military and commercial four-wheel-drive trucks and became a major success doing so. FWD served the U.S. military through two World Wars, along with many other smaller conflicts. Over the years, the company grew and acquired other firms, including Seagrave Fire Apparatus and Almonte Fire Trucks.

According to Internet sources, 50 years after it was built, the Battleship traveled around the USA in celebration of FWD's half-century and even bested Jack Benny's 1914 Maxwell in a drag race down Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood.

Like many early automakers that switched to trucks, FWD never went back to building cars. That's probably why it's still around. 🐞

“ FWD served

the U.S.

military through

two World

Wars, along

with many

other smaller

conflicts.”



any DOT hassles, they came to condone my practices.

Bill Westerlund
Snow Hill, Maryland

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO ESCAPE INTO A DREAM world just by reading a map and thinking about the towns and the people who live there.

Chuck Barrett
Wilmette, Illinois

RIGHT ON, RICHARD! Being born in 1932, I clearly started out on maps, but I also was part of the Air Force GPS System Program Office in 1976-'77, so am well versed in that technology. I am gratified to see all the applications GPS is now supporting, but for me, there is nothing like a paper map for all the reasons you mention. Both my car and my boat have GPS units stored away for an emergency, but I would much rather reach for the map and the compass when wondering where I am and how I got there.

Ted Sundin
Naples, Texas.



I ENJOYED READING PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN in HCC #114, but thought I could help clarify information regarding the Powell reference. Both the wagons and the trucks were manufactured in 1956-'57, but they were based, mechanically, on 1941-'42 Plymouths. There were 1,020 Powell trucks built and 300 wagons in total.

Dan Corrigan
Volunteer, LeMay Family Collection
Tacoma, Washington

I LOVED THE ARTICLE IN HCC #114 on the 1931 Hupmobile. My grandfather in Beckley, West Virginia, had the only Hupmobile dealership in his area during the 1920s and '30s. His name was T.J. Harper, and he sold Hupmobiles out of his garage at the top of Prince Street. He always talked about how great those cars were and how he liked both selling and servicing them. His dealership failed in the 1930s, like many during the

Depression, as did Hupmobile, but he talked a lot about it and how much he liked the car. He was quite a guy, and your article made him come back to me time and again.

Thanks for all you do in producing such a wonderful and valuable magazine for me and others to read. You make it a joy to grab it out of my mailbox and immediately go down memory lane!

Dr. Gary Wray
Lewes, Delaware

MILTON STERN'S REMARKS ON AMC's oft-unloved Matador hit right on the nose. I have always wondered why, after 1974, the Ambassador name was retired, and the Matador name was kept on both the new, swoopy coupe and the boxy old sedan and station wagon. It seems to me they ought to have kept the Ambassador name and front-end styling for the sedan and wagon, and let the very different-looking coupe be the only Matador. If Gremlin was a separate model from the very closely related Hornet, the same logic should have dictated naming of the larger cars. That would have given the big cars an air of distinction and left fewer people having to ask, "What's a Matador?"

Chad Quella
Central Garage, Virginia

I WAS BORN IN 1984, and so I grew up surrounded by '70s and '80s cars. At the time, they didn't interest me, much like today's cars don't interest me much. In fact, I was under the belief that there were no good cars post-1972 for a very long time. But now, as I have gotten older, arguably wiser and more mature, and they have disappeared, I miss them. I have such great memories of the 1974 Torino wagon and the 1980s Ford LTD wagons we had that I always get a big smile whenever I see one. I hope that someday I'll be able to get one for myself, but they just don't seem to be around. What prompted me to finally write, however, was the driveReport on the 1958 Edsel Villager in issue #114. I love it! That four-door wagon is my all-time dream car. I don't know of anyone else who has listed an Edsel as their dream car while still in their teens, but that car topped my list for years.

Billy Kingsley
Wappingers Falls, New York

AS A YOUNGER MAN WHO GREW up surrounded by mid-to-late '70s and '80s cars, I have a soft spot for these malaise-era machines. I wanted to take the time, then, to thank you for Milton Stern's "Detroit Underdogs" column and the regular articles spotlighting various malaise-era cars in general. I understand the older generation may loathe these cars, but I hope they can come to appreciate that a younger generation of classic car aficionados exists with no memory of, and thus, no emotional attachment to, the more popular classics of the '50s and '60s (as beautiful as they are).

I came into the hobby without much money to spend, but with an appreciation of the cars of my youth. As others have pointed out, it's refreshing to see these cars starting to show up at events, if only as a counter-balance to the dozen (or so) models ubiquitous at all car shows. It's also satisfying to subscribe to a magazine that covers such a wide cross-section of classic cars. So, thank you again for featuring these (mostly) unloved classics alongside the more popular ones, and please keep up the excellent work!

Brian Combs
Mt. Vernon, Missouri

I ESPECIALLY ENJOY "MECHANICAL MARVELS," and the article "Controlled Chaos" in HCC #114 was especially good. It was mentioned the air/fuel mixture in the Chrysler Hemi engines followed a different motion. Sources say the Hemi combustion chamber may not have provided enough turbulence, and other sources say the Hemi was just too expensive. Whatever the reason, they didn't live very long. The Chevrolet 235-cu.in. straight-six had a very unusual combustion chamber. Wasn't it touted as the "million-dollar combustion chamber"? Million dollars in development money?

When Chrysler moved away from the early Hemi, they designed the polysphere. The polysphere looks good, but must not have been too powerful. I don't remember many fast polysphere Mopars. Perhaps the Mopar polysphere cylinder head was not too bad, although International Harvester V-8s adopted the design. I have seen International Harvester cylinder heads at swap meets marked as Mopar poly heads; they do look similar but, surprise, they don't fit.

Harris Cannon
Myakka City, Florida

What Would Arnold Drive?

Aha! You probably figured this column would speculate on Arnold Schwarzenegger's choice of a collectible car. Given that he's shown a marked predilection for Hummers and Harley-Davidsons, I'm guessing you figured that he'd want something that matched his once-formidable physique, like a coachbuilt Duesenberg or a Bugatti Royale. But he's not the Arnold that I'm talking about. Neither is my subject the other Arnie, as in Palmer. But you've gotta think, all those years around country clubs surely must've given him a taste for 1950s Cadillacs. And it's not Arnold the Pig from *Green Acres*, although he probably inspired the acerbic boar that's in the Geico commercials.

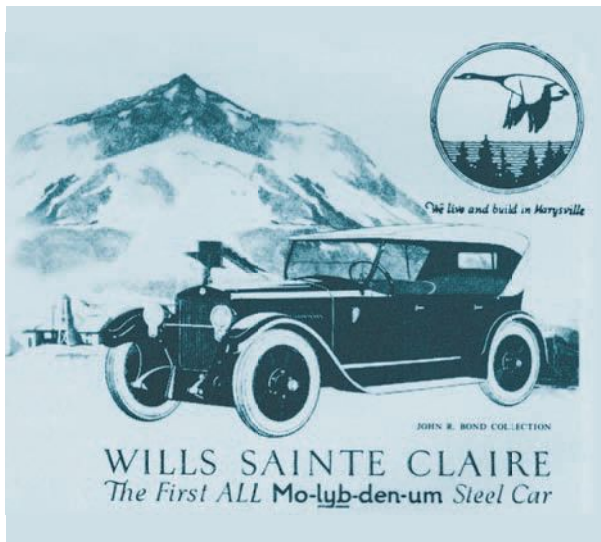
No, no. I am talking about one of the most prolifically published historians of the 20th century, the Briton of such great social effusiveness named Arnold Toynbee. He authored more than 40 books, one of them his magnum opus, the 15-volume work collectively titled

A Study of History, whose massiveness has been considered exhaustive, or at least exhausting, to innumerable scholars. Toynbee, who died in 1975, still gets historians steamed for his writing style, which could be more florid and lyrical than hard-focused on facts. Perhaps the most famous Toynbee quote, and we're abridging here, is that societies die of murder or suicide, not natural causes. But he believed all history was intertwined with the most basic interactions between humans and their spiritual grounding. Great movements followed individual beliefs.

For this reason, I'm convinced that had he been into the history of cars, Toynbee would have sidled right up to Childe Harold Wills and scored a Wills Sainte Claire as his personal conveyance. How come? Because Wills and Toynbee were hewn from the same stone that produces demonstrably flawed geniuses. Before he designed his doomed, groundbreaking technological masterpiece of a car, Wills

practiced artistic flourishes as a professional calligrapher. Improbably, he soon found himself as a shop manager for Henry Ford before striking out on his own. And before he left, he earned credit for designing not only the Model T's planetary gearbox, but also the Ford script that resides inside the blue oval.

Toynbee would have certainly appreciated the devotion to excellence, at any cost, against any criticism, that Wills's car represented. It's not a stretch in the least to claim that the motoring public was stunned when the first Wills Sainte Claire was unveiled in 1921. Its engine was the very first overhead-cam V-8 designed expressly



for automotive use, and was inspired by the series of aviation-use OHV V-8s that Wills had helped to create during World War I. Costly molybdenum steel was used throughout the engine, which had crossflow architecture and a block and heads cast as a unit. It was wild, controversial stuff. It also cost a ton of money to buy, another ton to fix, and lost even more

for Wills's company.

Where I really think that Toynbee would have found common ground with Wills was his commitment to creating a copacetic work environment for his employees. Out of whole cloth, Wills created Marysville, an industrial village near Port Huron, Michigan, where workers could harmoniously build the incredible Wills Sainte Claire. It was a planned community that would still be attractive today, with worker housing, recreational facilities, its own school system and business district. Wills's gesture represented the sort of paternalism that had gone decidedly out of fashion in the Gilded Age and remained so after the period was broomed into history. No wonder the car lost a ton despite its enormous price tag. I can easily picture Arnold and Childe Harold lounging together, extolling the utopia that existed to build the perfect automobile, and wondering aloud why the whole thing flopped. ☹

I'm convinced that had he been into the history of cars, Toynbee would have sidled right up to Childe Harold Wills...





2014
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JUNE 21 - 29, 2014

● Overnight Cities
● Lunch Cities

- Saturday, June 21, 2014**
START: Beach Street, Downtown Ogunquit, ME - 10:00 a.m.
FINISH: Middle Street, Downtown Lowell, MA - 4:45 p.m.
- Sunday, June 22, 2014**
LUNCH: Main Street, Downtown Bennington, VT - 12:05 p.m.
FINISH: Waryas Park, Downtown Poughkeepsie, NY - 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, June 23, 2014**
LUNCH: Pocono Raceway, Long Pond, PA - 11:40 a.m.
FINISH: Valley Forge Casino Resort, Valley Forge, PA - 5:15 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 24, 2014**
LUNCH: City Hall, Downtown Millsboro, DE - 11:15 a.m.
FINISH: Harbor Park, Downtown Norfolk, VA - 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 25, 2014**
LUNCH: Waterfront Park, Downtown Elizabeth City, NC - 11:30 a.m.
FINISH: Middle Street, Downtown New Bern, NC - 5:15 p.m.
- Thursday, June 26, 2014**
LUNCH: Expo Center, Downtown Clinton, NC - 12:15 p.m.
FINISH: Water Street, Downtown Wilmington, NC - 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, June 27, 2014**
LUNCH: North Kings Highway, Myrtle Beach, SC - 11:30 a.m.
FINISH: Patriots Point, Mount Pleasant, SC - 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 28, 2014**
LUNCH: River Street, Downtown Savannah, GA - 11:15 a.m.
FINISH: The Landing, Downtown Jacksonville, FL - 5:25 p.m.
- Sunday, June 29, 2014**
LUNCH: National Parts Depot, Ocala, FL - 12:15 p.m.
GRAND FINISH: Lake Sumter Landing, The Villages, FL - 3:00 p.m.

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**Hemmings
Motor News**



It's a Matter of Appreciation

Not surprisingly, my wife is not as interested in Classic automobiles as I am. That is not to say that she is uninterested. She just has a different perspective. One evening, while having dinner with friends, she impressed me by referring to a car she'd recently seen at an automotive event as "rolling sculpture." She admires automobile design, and she enjoys hearing stories about the original owners and the eras when the cars were new. And she thinks it's interesting when I "find" another car that I just have to own.

Car publications arrive in our mailbox on a regular basis—magazines, car club publications and historical journals. *Hemmings Motor News* occupies a place in our home equal to other publications we receive such as *The New Yorker* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

One can never have enough good reading material.

My wife once thought that if I didn't receive any more publications, I wouldn't be interested in buying any more cars. Not true. Classic cars sometimes have a way of finding new owners, sort of like a puppy who follows you home.

A few months ago, another Classic automobile arrived in our garage—a 1931 Lincoln Convertible Sedan with a body by Dietrich. As is sometimes the case, this car found me—or, at least, its owners did. Long-time Classic car enthusiasts know many cars are never advertised. The buyers and sellers find each other in ways that are sometimes quite interesting.

This car had been in the same family for more than 50 years. It had received a modest "restoration" in the late 1950s or early '60s, just as the Classic Car Club of America was being launched. It retains its original leather interior, which we will make every effort to save.

The owners shared an especially significant story with me as we were finalizing the sale of the car. They told me how their father, after finishing his work on the car, had taken them in the car to a car show in the early '60s. As the father arrived and was getting out with his sons, one of the show organizers told him that the colors on his car were incorrect. The father said, "Boys, get back in. We're going home." According to one of the sons, his father never attended another show. How sad.

Unfortunately, some car show organizers as well as car owners can be a bit snooty. That, in fact, was one of the raps on the Classic Car Club of America during its early years. Some of these own-

ers must have assumed that by virtue of owning the great luxury cars of the 1920s and '30s that they had been elevated to the status of the cars' original owners. I'm embarrassed to admit that I encountered this myself when I joined the CCCA nearly 50 years ago.

Today, the CCCA has worked hard to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The emphasis is on a shared enjoyment of these wonderful automobiles.

I remember a conversation I had with the son of the original owner of my 1931 Lincoln Town Sedan. His father had purchased the car new in Queens, New York, when both he and his wife came into a significant inheritance. The car was part of the family throughout the 1930s and was driven round-trip to the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago.

"My father would polish a part of that car every day," he recalled. "I actually came to resent that car somewhat," adding that if the CCCA had existed in the 1930s, his father certainly would have been a member!



The son also remembered that, during World War II, their neighbors chided his father for not donating "that old car" to the scrap drive. His father and the car grew old together, with the Lincoln eventually ending up on blocks in the garage. In the 1950s, after his father's passing, the Lincoln moved on to a new owner who sold it to the man from whom I bought it about 20 years ago.

It took me nearly 25 years to buy that Lincoln after spotting it at a CCCA Grand Classic in the mid-1960s. I lost track of how many letters I wrote offering to buy the car. One Christmas, I received a card with a photo of the car. On the back was written, "Throughout history, many a beauty has had two lovers." How true.

A few years later, the Lincoln was in my garage.

Along the way, my wife has come to enjoy all of the stories that surround these cars—their history, the lives their owners led, the discovery of these old machines and their resurrections. And that makes for true Classic appreciation. 🐾

Author's note: My column in HCC #113 states that only the Super Eight and Twelves are considered CCCA Classics. That is incorrect. All eights built from 1924 to 1934 are considered Classics. From 1935 to 1941, the Packard 120 and the 1942 Clipper junior series are the only eight-cylinder models not considered CCCA Classics. My apologies for the confusion.

“Long-time Classic car enthusiasts know many cars are never advertised. The buyers and sellers find each other in ways that are sometimes quite interesting.”



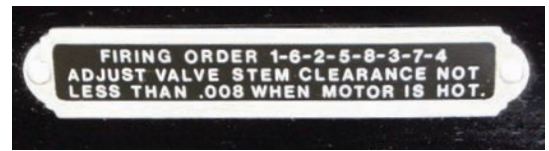
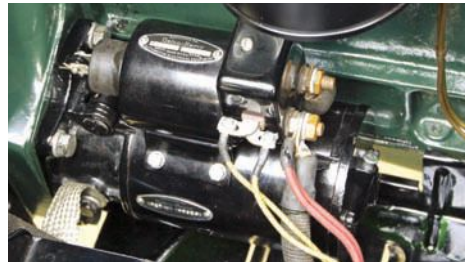
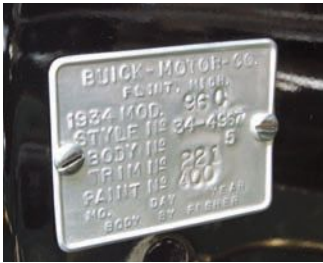
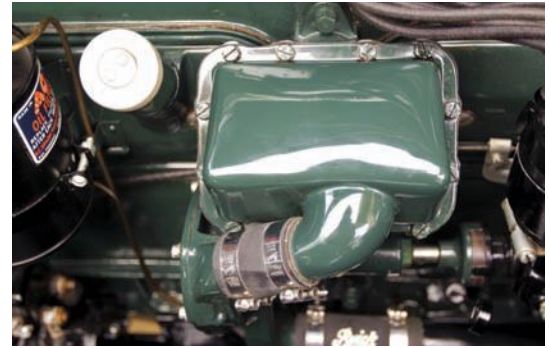
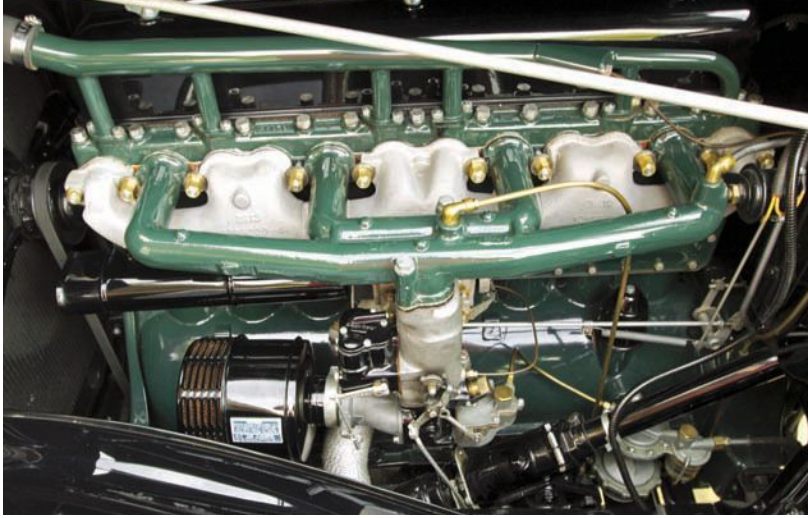
Classic Convertible Coupe

Prewar 90-series Buicks, like this majestic 1934 Series 96C, are among the few of Flint's flyers to be given Full Classic status.

BY JEFF KOCH



At HCC, we generally subscribe to the AACA's rolling-25-year definition of what makes a classic car. The Classic Car Club of America, however, has other ideas. Their strict list of Full Classics reads like a who's who of prewar car builders. American entries include the usual suspects: Lincoln (and Continental), Cadillac, Chrysler Imperial, Packard, Peerless, Pierce-Arrow...and Buick.



Wait, what? Buick? It's true: All of the marque's long-wheelbase Series 90 models from 1931-'42, and select Series 80 models from 1931-'40, are considered Full Classics. Those Series 90 models crept into Cadillac territory through the 1930s, even sharing a 136-inch wheelbase with Series 20 Cadillacs of the era. (Yet, a Cadillac Series 20 Convertible Coupe, for example, ran some \$700 more in base price than the Buick Series 90 Convertible Coupe seen here.)

For decades—dating back to its 1904 Model B—Buick's overhead-valve technology (or "valve-in-head" as Buick called it) increased performance and power. Cadillac's and Oldsmobile's V-8 engines adopted an OHV head arrangement in 1949, which means that in 1934, 30 years after Buick developed OHV power, the division remained 15 years ahead of its time. It was natural for Buick to adapt this technology to its straight-eight engine, developed during the start of the Great Depression and launched for the 1931 model year. Division heads hoped that the eight would help start a turnaround—but it was the wrong move at the wrong time, and sales plummeted from 221,758 units in 1928 to barely 41,000 by 1932.

Poor sales didn't stop the folks in Flint from making constant improvements. Buick introduced a variety of upgrades for the 1934 model year, including standard safety glass all around on Series 90 models, the concealment of the radiator entirely behind the grille, a Rear Stabilizer (Buick's caps) anti-roll bar for the leaf-spring rear suspension, and the most noteworthy change: independent front suspension. Called "Knee-Action," it's essentially a short-long-arm design with a coil spring, not unlike the vast majority of rear-drive American cars built to this day. The Series 90 Buick coupe came standard with a rumble seat, with a special

luggage space between passenger compartments accessible through a small door just forward of the rear fender. Also, with the dissolution of the Series 80 line after 1933, the Series 90 line integrated a number of former Series 80 body types, including the Convertible Coupe seen here.

Harlow Curtice came in as division head in late 1933 and pushed hard for a lower-priced Buick; the division went from 40,620 units in '33 to 78,757 a year later, mostly on the back of the new low-line Series 40. Series 90 production remained anemic: a total of 4,914 Series 90s were built for the year, and just 68 of the \$1,945 96C Convertible Coupes were built.

The early history of our featured Convertible Coupe is shrouded in mystery—reports that this very machine was once owned by the governor

Buick offered three different straight-eight engines in 1934; 136-inch-wheelbase Series 90 models got the 344.8-cubic-inch version, which was rated at 116 horsepower and, more crucially, 266-lb. ft. of torque practically off-idle. Electric starter was activated via flooring the gas pedal, a longtime Buick trait that began here.





Supple tan leather on seats and door panels adds more than a whiff of class. Chrome parking brake handle requires some leaning to squeeze and release. Steering action is surprisingly easy for a car of its size and age.

Laminated safety glass was standard on all Series 90 Buicks starting in 1934. The convertible coupe didn't use much, with only the windshield, side glass and soft-top back window.



of Pennsylvania (possibly Gifford Pinchot) have eluded confirmation by the current owner—but it ended up in the collection of the late Dr. Barbara Mae Atwood. The former *Vogue* fashion model and doctor of psychology kept a dozens-deep classic-car collection, predominantly Full Classics; a string of six Pebble Beach wins in eight years was a testament to Dr. Atwood's pursuit of the best. Her collection remained largely private until her passing in 2008, at the age of 87.

Dr. Atwood had located this Buick 96C in June of 1993, and immediately sent it to noted restorer Steve Babinsky's Automotive Restorations in Lebanon, New Jersey. It was completed in 1995. Then, as now, it was believed to be the only remaining 1934 Model 96C convertible coupe. Once completed, it was awarded the AACA President's Cup for 1995; in 1996, it took Grand National First honors. And then it was stored until Atwood's passing in 2008. Current owner Lee Gurvey, himself the custodian of a few Full Classics, including a variety of prewar Lincolns and Packards, bought it at auction in 2009 and has since shown it on both the lawn at Pebble Beach and at the inaugural Arizona Concours d'Elegance, where it won the Full Classic American Open award. It has traveled nearly 1,000 miles since Lee put his name on the title.

Against his better judgment, Lee let us go for a spin behind the wheel.

“Listen, a combination of torque and a stiff final-drive ratio can only do so much when you're rocking a power-to-weight ratio approaching 40 pounds per horsepower.”

The front-opening door makes ingress something less than graceful—the Haartz cloth top in the up position doesn't help matters—although getting back out again is a snap. But once you're inside, there's ample room for all body types, including the taller and more rotund among us: All but the biggest bellies will avoid scraping the bottom of the steering wheel, and headroom should satisfy all but NBA veterans. You do need to take care though: The top up comes with a gigantic blind spot, the petite oval back window is of little use, and no side-view mirrors have been installed as this car did not come with them.

Inserting the key into the ignition only unlocks the steering column; a switch next to the keyhole needs flicking before you mash the gas and engage the starter (a long-term Buick feature that was introduced the year this car was manufactured). Model year 1934 was the first year for automatic choke in Buicks, and while the system can be finicky, it starts right up from cold the day we go for a drive. The idle is so smooth as to be imperceptible, and the exhaust pipe so narrow (and its exit so far away from your head) it sounds like a car has started in the driveway next door, rather than your own.

While the engine warms up, you have time to take stock of your surroundings: The aromatic leather is supple and buttery-smooth, of course, but it's the instrument panel we're looking at. The white-faced gauges are ringed with a black band



Clockwise from top left: ammeter, water temp., oil pressure, speedometer and gas gauge are all highly legible; filler panel is so lovely it makes you forget there's no radio; clock is integrated into the glovebox door; you won't forget what you're driving; how bad was gas in the '30s that you'd need an octane selector with 5:1 compression?



and gold numbers, then again with a chrome edge. It sounds busy, but the effect is both classy and perfectly legible at speed. The instrument bezel is gold-stripped and also chrome-edged, then set into a wood dash. It feels elegant without the rococo fripperies and excessive fonts you might expect of other marques; it's contemporary and smart, not quite Art Deco. An elegant trim panel in the center resides where a radio would, were this car born with one.

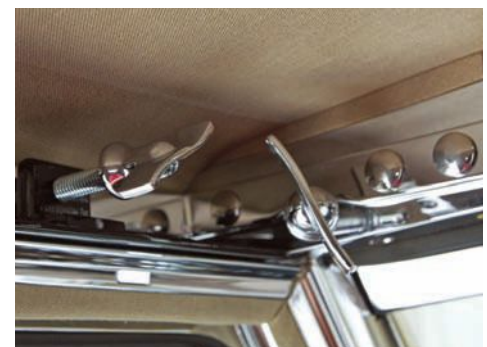
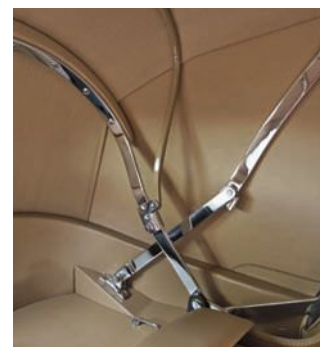
Release the handbrake, that chrome lever sticking up out of the floor to the right of the shifter, drop it into first, and you're off. First is a dogleg and doesn't have synchromesh, so you need to be at a complete stop to get that stick to rub against your right leg. Listen, a combination of torque and a stiff final-drive ratio can only do so much when you're rocking a power-to-weight ratio approaching 40 pounds per horsepower. You've got presence in spades, but if you're expecting the snap of,

well, anything built after about 1965, you've got another thing coming.

Second and third, both fully synchro-equipped, are (eventually) easy enough to find with that yardstick of a shifter, despite the lack of a spring action; you feel as though you have to walk it from gear to gear.

Thing is, though, you don't need to: Buick's straight-eight has seemingly endless torque, and you can start accelerating in second if you're not paying close attention. At neighborhood speeds, we chug around a dead-end roundabout in third, without lugging or chugging. Part of that, surely, is the 4.36 final drive, which limits over-the-road fun to about 55 MPH. Presumably off-the-line acceleration was more important than long-legged cruising—highways of the day, such as they were, were largely two-lane affairs. That said, you feel like a different final-drive to give this machine legs would be amply rewarded in a modern context: It

Putting the top down is a 15-minute affair, involving chrome latches and tonneau covers and such; our photos and drive were done with the top remaining in the up position. Glass backlite is small, but crystal clear.



owner's view



I own a KB Lincoln and a Packard Super 8, and this car is as nice to drive as anything I've owned. The steering is very easy—even without power steering, you can park it easily—and those vacuum-boosted brakes will throw you out the window. The engine is a lot easier to work on than Cadillacs of the same age, I find, and I like this better than its Cadillac contemporaries. Plus, the Cadillac overheats—this one has a 180-degree thermostat and never gets hot. Of all of my cars, if I had to keep only one... well, my KB Lincoln Coupe is in contention, but otherwise this might be the one.



The mother-in-law seat naturally takes away some trunk room, but with just two seats on a 136-inch wheelbase, legroom is plentiful back there; indeed, the passenger's side offers an access door that accepts a set of golf clubs (or two, if you don't care where your mother-in-law puts her feet).

really is an open-road cruiser from an era before there were interstates.

While you're out there, you'll have other things on your mind. From your perch behind the wheel, the far-side front fender and spare disappear, and the spare, front fender and headlamp bucket on your side are rendered as a series of semi-abstract half-circles in the corner of the windscreen. Luckily, the tapered hood (and the Buick Goddess perched upon it) points the way forward. It's also good news that the steering is as easy as in any '30s car we've encountered. Despite nothing so modern as power assist, the massive Buick's front wheels steer easily. You can't one-finger it, obviously, but even at idling speeds, you're not going to break out in a sweat if you need to round the corner, and at 20 MPH or above, you'll be



Clockwise from top left: Taillamp glows brightly, despite 6-volt power; one of two steps to aid entry into the mother-in-law seat; crest on luggage rack won't let the guy behind you forget what you're driving.



tempted to rely on just one-hand around a turn.

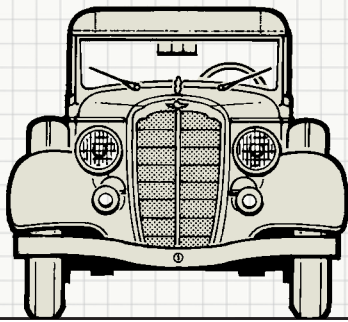
The other surprise is the power-assisted mechanical braking system: It requires a positive push on the pedal—it's not one of those "breathe-on-it-and-you're-through-the-windshield" systems—but man, do you grind to a halt.

As the '30s went on and the economy improved, Buick took an ever-larger chunk of Cadillac's market, including selling bare chassis for luxury body builders like Brunn. Cadillac put its foot down, and post-WWII, the Limited (formerly the Series 90) did not reappear until the late 1950s, but Buick's determination left a handful of high-zoot full-luxury machines that are seen in the same light as contemporary Cadillacs, 80 years on. Examples like Lee Gurvey's '34 Buick Series 96C Convertible Coupe are the reason why. 🏎️

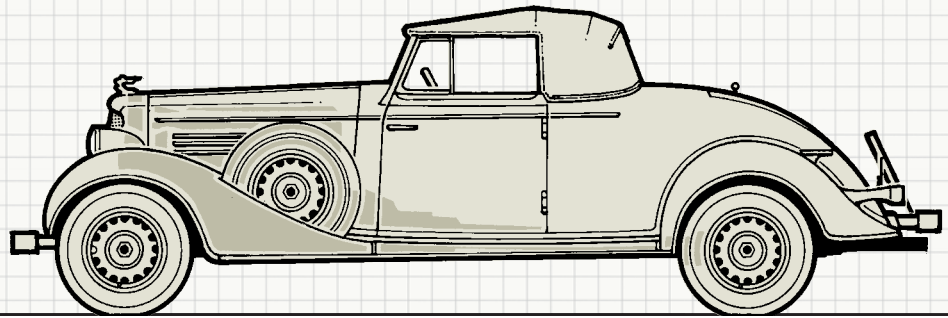


1934 BUICK SERIES 90 CONV. CPE.

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



56.75 inches



136 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

Base price	\$1,945
Options	Twin side-mount spare tires

ENGINE

Type	OHV inline-eight, iron block and head
Displacement	344.8 cubic inches
Bore x stroke	3.3125 inches x 5.00 inches
Compression ratio	5:1
Horsepower @ RPM:	116 @ 3,200
Torque @ RPM	266-lb.ft. @ 1,500
Valvetrain	Mechanical valve lifters
Main bearings	5
Fuel system	Single Marvel ED3S updraft carburetor, mechanical pump
Lubrication system	Pressure, gear-type pump
Electrical system	Delco-Remy 6-volt
Exhaust system	Single exhaust

TRANSMISSION

Type:	Three-speed manual with synchromesh on 2nd and 3rd; 9-inch double-plate dry-disc clutch; torque-tube drive
Ratios:	1st 2.86:1 2nd 1.24:1 3rd 1.00:1

DIFFERENTIAL

Type	Solid axle, floating hypoid-type bevel gear
Ratio	4.36:1

STEERING

Type	Worm-and-roller
Ratio	22:1
Turning circle	48 feet

BRAKES

Type	Mechanical four-wheel power-assisted drum
Front/rear	14-inch drum

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction	Body on frame
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Frame	Rigid girder X-frame with double drop
Body style	Two-door convertible
Layout	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent, unequal length A-arms; coil springs; "Knee-Action" shock absorbers
Rear	Solid axle; semi-elliptic leaf springs; "Knee-Action" shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels	Artillery-type all-steel, drop-center
Front/rear	16 x 6.25
Tires	Low-pressure Firestone bias-ply
Front/rear	16 x 7.50

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase	136 inches
Overall length	213.25 inches
Overall width	72.1 inches
Overall height	68.5 inches
Front track	56.75
Rear track	57.81
Shipping weight	4,511 pounds

CAPACITIES

Crankcase	9 quarts
Cooling system	23 quarts
Fuel tank	22 gallons
Transmission	5.5 quarts

CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.	0.336
Weight per bhp	38.88 pounds
Weight per cu.in.	13.075 pounds

PRODUCTION

Buick built 68 Model 96C two-door Convertible Coupes for the 1934 model year.

PERFORMANCE

0-60 MPH	N/A
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PROS & CONS

- + A proper capital-"C" Classic
- + Effortless big-car steering
- + Good luck finding another one

- Gearing limits top speed (and highway driveability)

- Doesn't enjoy Caddy-like status

- Good luck finding another one

WHAT TO PAY

Low: \$23,000-\$28,000

Average: \$42,000-\$47,000

High: \$62,000-\$67,000

CLUB CORNER

Buick Club of America
P.O. Box 360775
Columbus, Ohio 43236
614-472-3939
www.buickclub.org
Dues: \$50/year
Membership: 10,000+



Chrysler Juggernaut

The brief, fabulous tenure of the C-300 race cars

BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGES COURTESY CARBON PRESS, DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

Let's face it. Stock car racing evolved on its home turf in the absence of most other sports, or a moneyed clientele of people to support them. It's almost hackneyed to claim that it grew largely from moonshining, although its connections to liquor runners early on have been thoroughly documented.

And while factory support for competitive teams was not unknown—think the Fabulous Hudson Hornet era, or Ford's efforts to boost car sales in the South via the Peter DePaolo-run team that later became Holman-Moody—even the upper echelons of the sport had their feet firmly grounded in red clay. Teams were run and backed by garages, auto dealers and other local enterprises. The participants, and their fans, were plain-old country folk looking for an inexpensive diversion from the drudgery of farming or millwork.

That explains why it was such a profound shock to NASCAR, and stock car racing in general, when Carl Kiekhaefer first arrived from Wisconsin during the 1950s, bringing a new kind of game that nobody else was playing. His cars and haulers were spotless, his mechanics drilled with military precision to execute blazing, flawless pit stops. His drivers were among the best of their time. Almost to a man, they railed against Kiekhaefer as a person and a boss. He was a relentless perfectionist, an absolute control freak, given to bursts of anger, narcissism and paranoia. Elmer Carl



The general issues marching orders to his troops. Even stars like Tim Flock (center) had to wear Kiekhaefer's immaculate driving uniforms. In 1955, Flock won Daytona.



Kiekhaefer got his introduction to top-level stock car racing by entering a pair of cars in the Mexican Road Race. He hedged by running a Lincoln in 1952 alongside a Chrysler Saratoga, but Ford sued when he named his outboards “Mercury.” The boating magnate was incensed.

Kiekhaefer, born in 1906, who never used his first name professionally, was the living embodiment of the modern entrepreneur, a daringly self-made man. It wasn't accidental, or particularly surprising, that Kiekhaefer found his way into auto racing. He made his fortune in recreational boating, but loved cars, constantly buying the newest ones, and he had grounding in making automobiles.

Born in Mequon, Wisconsin, Kiekhaefer studied mechanical engineering and became a draftsman at Nash while continuing his studies. He then went to work for Stearns Magnetic, which produced huge electric motors. In 1938, his father mortgaged the family farm so Kiekhaefer could buy the bankrupt Cedarburg Manufacturing Company, whose products included the Thor outboard boat engine. Incidentally, there's another connection here: Many historians credit Wisconsin native Harry Miller, the early genius of racing car and engine design, with inventing the detachable outboard engine for light watercraft, something he created while working in a machine shop with a guy named Ole Evinrude, who would later become Kiekhaefer's primary industrial competitor. For his part, Kiekhaefer reorganized Cedarburg Manufacturing into two divisions, one producing automotive components such as brakes and superchargers, and the other marketing an improved version of the Thor outboard engine. Soon, Western Auto came calling, asking Kiekhaefer to design an outboard engine, improving on the Thor design, that it could sell under its Wizard brand. That two-stroke, two-cylinder engine became the nexus of Kiekhaefer's new brand, Mercury Marine.

Mercury Marine boomed after World War II. People were interested in going faster on both lakes and highways. The horsepower race was under way in both worlds. Kiekhaefer, who was in intense competition with Evinrude, became interested in auto rac-

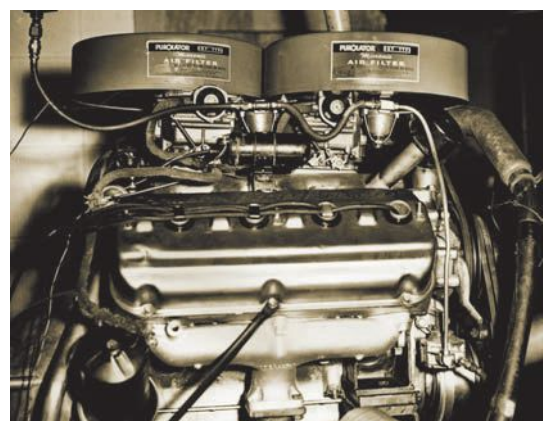
ing around this time, and in 1951, he was walloped by the notion of competing in the second running of the Carrera Panamericana, the Mexican Road Race, running on primitive highways, 1,912 miles over eight stages from Tuxtla Guterrez near the Guatemalan border to Juarez, across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. Facing an international field, the ultimate prize for Kiekhaefer would be publicity. Or, perhaps not.

He headed to Mexico with a pair of Chrysler Saratoga two-doors, with premium driving talent: Indy veteran Tony Bettenhausen and SCCA champion John Fitch. Mercury Marine's chief engineer, Charlie Strang, learned during testing near the firm's plant in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, that the Chrysler rear ends were too weak to handle the sustained Hemi torque, so he hand-mixed a batch of severe-service grease for the race. Despite only three weeks until the race, Kiekhaefer's crew put in more than 500 hours of preparation time. Part of that involved installing a tank of liquid carbon dioxide in each car, so dry ice could be sprayed at the hot brake drums. Fitch was stopped by a blown Hemi, but Bettenhausen managed to beat the times of two works Ferraris during two legs. Despite losing overall, Kiekhaefer was uncharacteristically ecstatic.

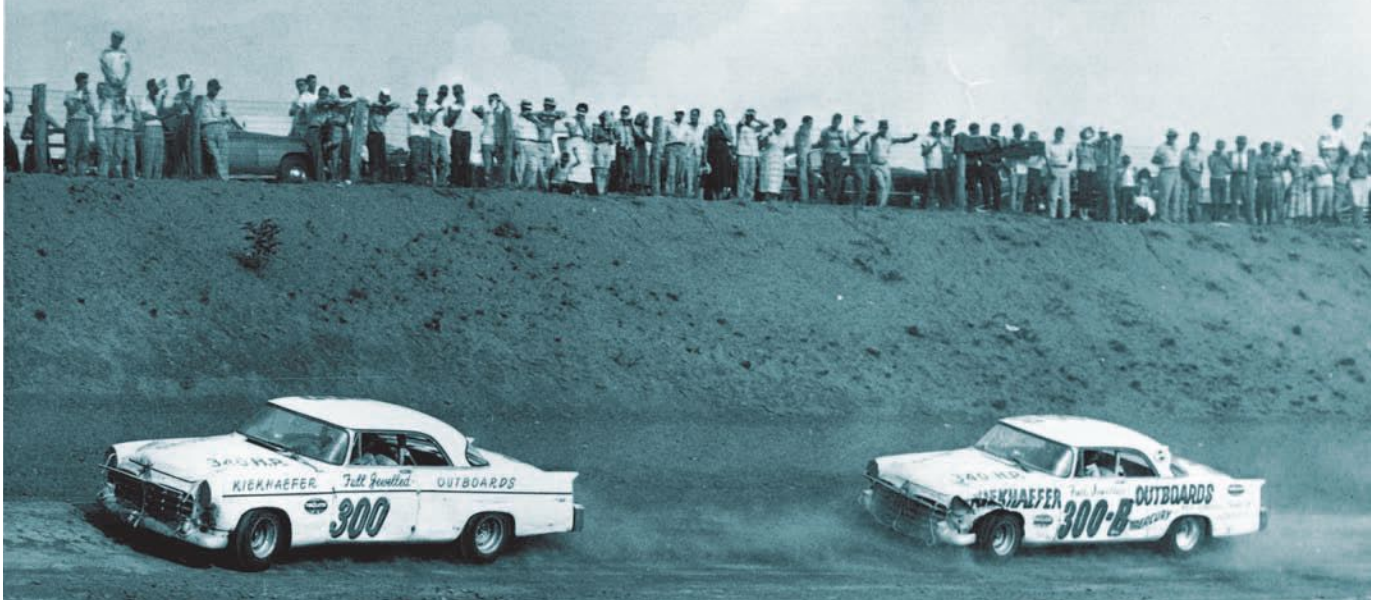
Enough so, in fact, to return to Mexico the following year. He had one of the Chryslers, but this time, brought a new 1953 Lincoln Capri, with the goal of publicly humiliating the Ford Motor Company. How come? Because in 1939, when he named his outboards “Mercury,” Kiekhaefer was instantly slapped with litigation by Ford, who considered it an infringement on its new mid-priced nameplate. He never forgave Ford, and when he learned it was planning a Carrera assault with Lincolns, he was determined to upstage Dearborn. The Ford-backed Capris were prepped in California by Bill Stroppe and the engine wizard Clay Smith. In the



This level of professionalism was extreme, but you couldn't argue with the results. The C-300s were driven to a NASCAR title by Tim Flock (left front) and the AAA championship by Frank “Rebel” Mundy in the same year.



To keep the huge Hemis from eating dirt, Kiekhaefer's crew got Purolator to produce paper air filters and fabricated its own air cleaners from cans.



NASCAR competitors and fans saw a lot of this in 1956. New team leader Buck Baker, leading Speedy Thompson, won the championship after the Kiekhaefer Chryslers swept 30 of the season's 56 races—stunning dominance. And just that quickly, the team was gone.

end, they swept the stock car division 1-2-3, trailed by Kiekhaefer's Lincoln and Chrysler. The Mercury magnate angrily accused race officials of ignoring illegal cylinder head and intake porting to avoid embarrassing Ford.

Kiekhaefer then persuaded Chrysler to give him a pre-production 1954 Chrysler for the 1953 race, which race organizers ultimately prohibited. Undeterred, he entered a quartet of 1953 Saratogas, none of which finished, as factory Lincolns again swept the stock car class amid a rash of driver and spectator fatalities. Kiekhaefer skipped the 1954 and final running of the Carrera, but then began drifting toward stock cars. He was persuaded by Bettenhausen, who urged him to join the AAA stock car circuit, and by Bill France, the NASCAR founder who was clearly aware of the publicity and aura of professionalism that Kiekhaefer's arsenal of immaculately prepared cars, haulers and uniformed crew members

would bring to his traveling tin-top circus.

Today's era of multi-car mega-teams in NASCAR makes it a challenge to appreciate the shock that was visited on the rural Southern sport when the Mercury Marine team's fleet of trucks began unloading on the sands of Daytona Beach in February 1955. Remaining close to Chrysler's engineering team, Mercury Marine knew what they were planning to unleash for 1955. It was the first Letter Car, the Chrysler C-300. Appearance-wise, it mated a New Yorker hardtop body with Windsor side trim and an Imperial grille. Its name came from its horsepower rating, delivered by a dual-carburetor, 331-cu.in. Hemi V-8 engine. Only the M-6, two-speed automatic transmission was used, but this was an extremely serious performance car, even in stock trim.

The C-300 was almost massive, with an as-delivered curb weight of 4,310 pounds. Kiekhaefer built a full R&D laboratory in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, installed an engine dynamometer, and immediately set to work lightening the C-300, stripping out its leather interior, removing the trunk hinges (too heavy), installing aluminum roll bars (perhaps not legally) and working with Chrysler to create "legal" heavy-duty parts, including Lincoln-derived spindles, experimental disc brakes and an Iskenderian camshaft grind. It made them legal by getting Chrysler to stamp catalog numbers into the parts. They also developed a camshaft-testing machine, which NASCAR used to check the legality of other racers' lobes. The team also came up with an Indianapolis-type gravity refueling system, based around a homebuilt 10-gallon vented can. It power-slammed racing gasoline into the stock Chrysler fuel tank forcefully enough to bow out its bottom, boosting fuel capacity surreptitiously by perhaps two gallons. It was the precursor to today's now-standard dump cans on pit road. Yet, despite all this and the huge investment by Chrysler in his race team, Kiekhaefer also fielded a 1955 small-block Chevrolet, an arrangement that would be unthinkable today.

In the end, it was the C-300, with a Steel Curtain-type bevy of driving talents, that proved to be the Hot One. The first was Tim Flock, steeped in Georgia moonshine running and a former NASCAR champion for Hudson. Flock won the 1955 beach race at Daytona after Fireball Roberts was disqualified when illegal pushrods were discovered in his Buick's engine. Then the Grand National series moved to dirt ovals and problems immediately struck. With their huge Carter WCFD carburetors, the C-300s were ingesting double the dirt of other engines, more than the oil-bath air cleaners could handle. Kiekhaefer obtained soil samples from every track NASCAR ran, then began experimenting with paper air filters, using a cut-up garbage can as a fabricated housing. The



Mundy plows the Carolina clay on a very heavy track in a 1956 Dodge D-500, which Kiekhaefer ran in NASCAR's Convertible Division, an expanded presence.



The NASCAR office in 1955. The interior is totally stock other than a few extra gauges and, uniquely, an onboard fire-extinguishing system. No side seat support, either.

problems ended and the wins started rolling in.

That year, Kiekhaefer's C-300s won 22 of the 45 Grand National races, and Flock easily swept the championship even though the team didn't contest the entire schedule. Flock's brothers Bob and Fonty also drove the white behemoth C-300s, along with Speedy Thompson and AAA standout Norm Nelson. Some accounts say that Kiekhaefer's first choice as a driver was Hershel McGriff, who'd scored an outright win at the first Carrera Panamericana in 1950, but McGriff turned it down to focus on his Oregon lumber business. Speaking of the AAA, Mercury Marine's Chryslers swept that series, too, with Frank "Rebel" Mundy becoming the 1955—and final—AAA stock car champion, the AAA abandoning race sanctioning after 1955 following a bloody year in American open-wheel racing and the catastrophe at Le Mans.

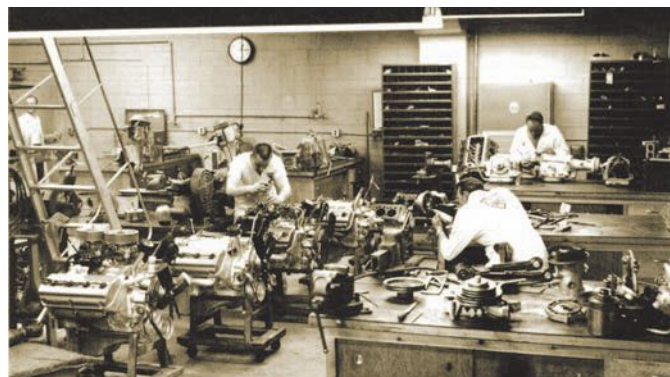
All that would pale before the next season's accomplishments. Kiekhaefer struck a side deal with Dodge to race its 1956 D-500s alongside a stable of new Chryslers, for the Grand National and Convertible divisions. He also had a Chevrolet for Herb Thomas, who angrily quit at mid-season over perceived favoritism shown to the new lead driver, Buck Baker. By this time, Tim Flock had also defected, citing unrelenting stress from the mercurial boss—no pun intended—and incipient ulcers. If anything, the Kiekhaefer team was becoming even more regimented. There was a new race prep shop in Charlotte. Part of the staff was a team meteorologist. Another was a very young kid from Florida named Bobby Allison, starting out in racing as a mechanic. At the races, Kiekhaefer would commonly book an entire hotel, segregate team members from their wives, and enforce curfews, including bed checks. On one level, it paid off. The white cars won an incredible 30 of the season's 56 races, including 16 consecutively. Baker held on to win the NASCAR title over Thomas, with a little help: Kiekhaefer had leased the Cleveland County Fairgrounds in Shelby, North Carolina, and got NASCAR to sanction a 100-mile race that was abruptly added to the schedule late in the season. During that race, Thomas, now driving for Smokey Yunick, had his Chevrolet hooked by Thompson, his erstwhile teammate, and was savagely pummeled by the onrushing pack. Thomas was grievously injured. Baker won, securing the title.

And with that, the supernova flamed out, vanished into its own black hole. Kiekhaefer didn't return for 1957. He was already having conflicts with Bill France, who was displeased with the team's victory romps stinking up his show, to use a phrase that came later. Crowds at the races were booing the Kiekhaefer team after the increasingly inevitable wins. France's inspectors were scrutinizing the cars much more closely. A side issue, you could say, was the imminent slashing of Chrysler's effort in NASCAR, which was reduced to a single Plymouth. The Automobile Manu-

Build, test, evaluate, win. The Mercury Outboards team relentlessly ran its Chryslers to gain even more of an edge over the already pummeled competition. Mechanics attached a fifth wheel to Tim Flock's Letter Car, seeking acceleration and top speed data on the paved portion of the Daytona beach course. This sort of thoroughness all but crushed the rest of the field.



Kiekhaefer knew no loyalties other than to outright victory. He got a Ford for Speedy Thompson to run against teammate Norm Nelson in the Letter Car, here at a NASCAR dirt show.



NASCAR had never seen a multi-car super team before the Mercury Outboards operation, which was run from this research laboratory that Kiekhaefer commissioned in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

facturers Association banned factory support for racing in June 1957. The factories pulled out. Many of Kiekhaefer's drivers, including Baker and Thompson, ended up in Chevrolets.

Historian Russ Hamilton's fascination with the story of Mercury Marine in stock cars led him to author *Full Jewelled*. He never met Kiekhaefer, who was all but estranged from the sport until he died in 1983, but interviewed his contemporaries, including Allison, Tim Flock, Fitch and Strang. At least one of the Chrysler C-300s that they built is known to survive.

"I actually did see them race a couple of times back in those days, back in 1955 at Langhorne, Pennsylvania, and Tim Flock won," Russ recounts. "Then Buck Baker won for them the following year. I remember they created this huge cowcatcher-type arrangement on the front of Speedy Thompson's car to keep the dirt off. When I was talking to the people doing the book, I learned about the preparation of the cars, how Kiekhaefer was so far ahead of everyone else. Bobby Allison told me that being involved in that level of preparation helped him when he was getting started in racing." 🐾



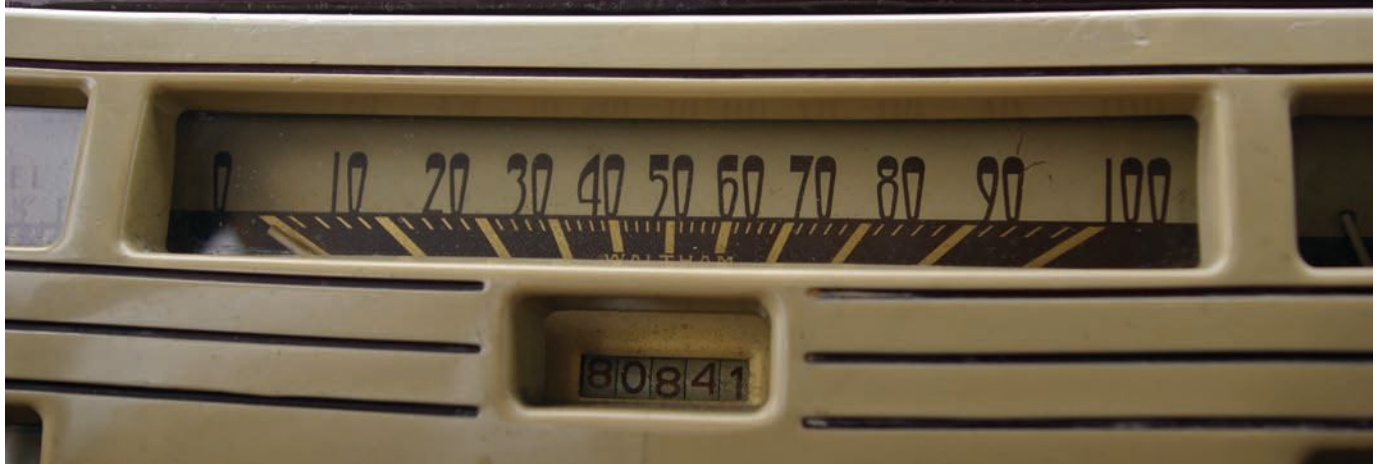


Fine Grain

Celebrating more than 60 years with a special 1940 Ford DeLuxe Station Wagon

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Is it possible to “forget” a car? How about if you have something as rare and beautiful as a wood-bodied prewar station wagon? It’s an unusual situation, but it is what actually happened with this month’s Driveable Dream, arguably Ford’s finest and most desirable model for 1940: the DeLuxe Station Wagon.



Having been in Gavin Ruotolo's family since 1953, this car has a unique story. He shares the tale: "At that time, we were young and crazy. My brother-in-law owned a Ford dealership in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. He had this come in; it was traded for a new 1953 Ford station wagon. It was in excellent condition, having only been used in the summers by a camp in Plymouth. It was a genuine 'station wagon,' used to pick up and drop off children at the train station. It only had the one rear bench, leaving room for luggage in back. If you were to look at the back door on the passenger side you would see where the camp's name was sanded off."

He continues: "He knew I was into customs and hot rods, so he called me to tell me about this woodie—he thought I might want to rod it up. It was too nice. He paid practically nothing for it. He had a place to keep it in New Hampshire, on Lake Winnepesaukee. We used it for a couple of years. After a while—we had young families and other obligations—it was stuck in the

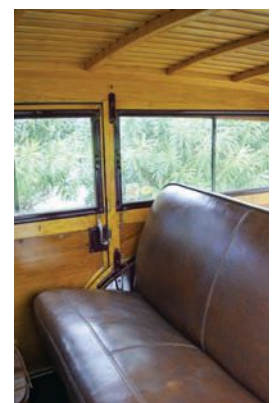
garage, and it sat there for 30 years! We didn't do anything to keep rodents out of it, no long-term storage preparation... We just parked it and forgot about it. When my brother-in-law was selling that lake house 30 years later, he called me up. He said, 'Gavin, you've got to get that car out of the garage.' I said, 'What car?' He said, 'That wooden car we stuck in there all those years ago!' I said, 'My God, now I remember!'"

Model year 1940 came with a number of changes to Ford's station wagons, which, just two years prior, had their internal classification shifted from commercial vehicles to passenger cars. Riding on a carry-over 112-inch wheelbase, their wood-intensive bodies were no longer built by the Murray Corporation of America, but were now assembled in-house by Ford's Iron Mountain plant. These wagons sported a flatter roofline and two-piece tailgate, and each car incorporated 445 board-feet of lumber, primarily maple or birch for framing, mahogany for panels, and basswood for the roof slats. The fact that they were largely

Despite decades of unprepared storage, the Ford remained free of mice and other pests.

The only damage to the interior was some loose stitching in the factory leather seats.

While it was never fitted with a radio, a period accessory heater remains under the dash, and the original rubber flooring has been covered with carpet for protection.



The 221-cu.in. flathead V-8 has not required a rebuild in 74 years and 80,850 miles, although the fuel pump and two-barrel carburetor have been renewed. An 8-volt battery replaced the 6-volt original for added cranking power in hot conditions.



“I said, ‘What car?’ He said, ‘That wooden car we stuck in there all those years ago!’ I said, ‘My God, now I remember!’”



hand-built explained their \$947 cost, the highest in the Ford line at the time. And the cost explained why no more than 8,730 DeLuxe Station Wagons were built for 1940, despite Ford’s total domestic production of nearly 600,000 automobiles.

While features like the “Finger-Tip Gearshift” column shift mechanism for the three-speed manual transmission, the sealed beam headlamps and tailgate-mounted spare wheel were new for 1940, the car’s 221-cu.in. V-8 was a familiar feature. Following past practice, it had a 3.062 x 3.75-inch bore and stroke, and two-barrel down-draft carburetor, and made 85 hp at 3,800 RPM and 148-lb.ft. of torque at 2,200 RPM. Also proven were hydraulic 12-inch front and rear drum brakes behind 16 x 4-inch pressed-steel wheels.

On the day that Gavin made the 60-mile trip to the lake house, pulling his single-car trailer, a thick layer of dust and grime hid the Ford’s original blue paint. “Of course, the tires were flat, and it wouldn’t start. I pulled it onto the trailer and got it back home,” he recalls. “The first thing we did was put plugs and points in it. We drained the oil, replaced the battery... and even though it’d been sitting for so long, it started!”

In spite of the car’s decades of unsympathetic storage, it was in remarkably good condition. Its factory-installed wiring and genuine leather upholstery hadn’t been damaged by pests, but some of the seat stitching would require re-sewing, since it had come apart. Although a leak in the garage roof had allowed water to drip on the tailgate window, damaging the board between the glass panels, the body’s metal panels had not rusted. Time had dried and stiffened the rubber floor coverings, yet they remained intact.

When he re-commissioned the Special DeLuxe

in 1983, Gavin had it repainted in the year- and model-correct, single-stage color Mandarin Maroon. After repairing the tailgate, he gave the wood a fresh coat of varnish. Some of the car’s chromed potmetal trim was badly oxidized. Small components were left alone, but the very visible grille and headlamp rings were replaced with polished stainless steel reproductions; the originals hang in his garage today as a decorative tribute. And the wagon’s factory-installed rubber mats were simply covered with carpeting, for protection.

Hemmings Classic Car editor Richard Lentinello met up with its owner to photograph the Ford in Vero Beach, Florida, where the wagon is currently housed. “We brought it down from our home in Scarborough, Maine, to participate in a few shows, and we’ll probably keep it down here for three or four years,” Gavin explains. Although the wagon was transported down the East Coast, it is no garage queen. “I’ve been putting about 500 miles on it each summer, and it has 80,850 now.

“When I got it going again, I didn’t install an oil filter, because it didn’t have one originally,” he says. “I change the oil every thousand miles, which is typically every couple of years. And every few years, I change the other fluids, too. I installed a modern coil because when the car heated up, it wouldn’t re-start, an issue that most flatheads have. Last fall, I rebuilt the carburetor, and I’ve installed an 8-volt battery and re-set the voltage regulator, so it now gives enough juice to start the car when it’s hot. I had to rebuild the fuel pump a few years ago, but I’ve found a source for non-ethanol gas, which has solved that problem. It has only required normal maintenance, and I keep it on a trickle charger, so I can go out and start it at a moment’s notice.”

The traffic in Florida, and Gavin's desire to avoid highway travel, have limited the wagon's recent trips to distances of about 50 miles, he notes. But back in Maine, this New England-native vehicle was no stranger to longer drives down the seacoast to Kennebunkport or Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a few times each summer. "It's not a very comfortable car to drive, but it's a fun car to drive," he says with a laugh. "It doesn't like traffic or hot days, but otherwise, it performs very well. Because it's an old woodie, I rarely take it out in the rain—it leaks, like my 1957 Thunderbird, on the left side, right into my lap! And this old-timer has vacuum [-operated] windshield wipers, so when the vacuum is used for the wipers, the car doesn't run very well. I just keep Rain-X on the windshield."

Family responsibilities may have pushed the 1940 Ford off of his radar back in the 1950s, but that same car is now a great source of entertainment for Gavin's clan. "I am very lucky to have a wife who enjoys the car hobby, as well as two of my three daughters who are involved. My grandkids enjoy it, and now my great-grandkids do too. They love it because it doesn't have car seats; they sit next to me like little statues as I drive them around the block. We'll take this and some of my other collector cars to shows, and we'll drive them in a little parade, filled with husbands and wives and kids. When one of my granddaughters was married five years ago, the bride and groom used this woodie, while the rest of the bridal party traveled in my other antique cars. We call that a fun time!"



Wood-bodied station wagons have always been special, and this one has a special place with the Ruotolo family. "In 1940, they built so few of them, and this is one that really survived. All of the metal in it came from the factory, and all of the wood, save for that one tailgate piece. I'm proud that it's an original car, and I got lucky with that storage," Gavin muses. "You can park it next to fancier and more valuable cars, and it will still get all the attention. Many can't believe the craftsmanship—it's a piece of art." 🐾

A leak in the garage where this Special DeLuxe was stored caused the board between the tailgate windows to rot. Its replacement, done by the owner when the car was recommissioned in 1983, is the only non-original piece of wood on the car.



Although Studebaker put extra emphasis on fleet sales beginning in 1956, the company had long built police vehicles. This Rockne coupe wears Indiana State Police insignia.



Studebaker Police Cars and Taxis

Entry into the fleet sales market was quite successful, but too late to save the company

BY PATRICK FOSTER

It's a phenomenon that's been repeated time and again in the auto industry. When an automaker finds itself struggling through an extended period of poor sales, it invariably turns to the fleet market to try to gain extra volume. Fleet business generally isn't as profitable as retail, but it helps boost unit sales, which in a volume business like automobiles is important. During the past two decades, the lure of fleet sales has caused several car companies to overindulge in sales to rental car fleets—to their enduring regret.

But in the 1950s and 1960s, it was usually the police car and taxicab markets that lured troubled automakers. Police cars were a good, steady business, and taxis, if not high-profit items, had fairly substantial sales. During the 1950s and 1960s, they represented a real opportunity for smaller companies. But gain-

ing that business took the right combination of specifications and price.

Studebaker, struggling with poor sales since 1954, began to focus more attention on commercial car markets in 1956. Prior to that, the company's high labor costs and low productivity had made it difficult to compete against Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth. But a tough new labor agreement made Studebaker more price-competitive, giving the company a better chance of successfully bidding for municipal and taxi business. In time, Studebaker's fleet business became a fairly important percentage of its overall business.

It's not that Studebaker hadn't offered commercial cars before. The company had been selling taxi and police cars for decades. But when the automobile market turned against the



1956 police car used the same body as the taxi, and was outfitted for pursuit and enforcement duties.



Many police departments would include one or more station wagons in their fleets because they could double as an emergency ambulance. This handsome 1957 Parkview wagon served the South Bend, Indiana, police force.

STUDEBAKER TAXI CABS

**STAMINA
STYLE
ECONOMY**



Optional all-vinyl upholstery*



After careful research into the requirements of taxi cab fleet operations, Studebaker announces new special taxi cab models—in choice of performance-proved Six or V-8. Designed to more than meet the heavy duty requirements of heavy daily schedules. Styled for distinctive good looks that make a hit with customers. Built with all of Studebaker's long-famed economy of fuel, oil, operation and maintenance.

Attractive long-wearing interiors are built to "take it", yet keep looking fresh and smart even after many thousands of miles of service.

Extra heavy gauge body metal, rugged box-section body and frame construction, extra-capacity clutches and drive lines, jumbo size brakes and a wide variety of heavy duty equipment keep Studebaker taxis "on the job" and "out of the shops" more hours every month—mean more "in service" hours for high profit operation month-in and month-out.

Yes, any way you look at it—costs, stamina, styling, economy—you'll be customers ahead and money ahead with Studebaker taxi cabs.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR STUDEBAKER TAXI CABS

GENERAL:

Wheelbase 116.5"; overall length 200.75"; overall width 71.31"; overall height (hooded) 60.0" (59.75" Champion). Standard upholstery charcoal and white cloth-and-vinyl.
COMMANDER—56B-W2. (Also available in 56B-W4 model)
 Tires: 6.70-15 tubeless. Engine: Sweepsixes 259 V8; bore and stroke 3.56" x 3.25"; displacement 295.2 cu. in.; max. h.p. 170 @ 4500 r.p.m. (185 with opt. power kit); max. torque 260 ft. lbs. @ 2800 r.p.m. (285 with power kit); compression ratio 7.8 to 1 (8.3 with 1); 2-barrel carburetor (4-4B4, carburetor with opt. power kit); oil capacity 5 qts.; cooling system capacity 17 qts.—18.5 with Commanders; 12 volt electrical system with 20 amp. hr. battery (60 amp. hr. battery opt.); 140 amp. hr. early cut-in generator or 55 amp. hr. heavy duty generator with alternator equipment opt.; Transmission: 3-speed synchromesh std.; (Overdrive or Flightomatic opt.); Rear axle ratios: with std. transmission 4.10 to 1 (4.56 opt.); with Overdrive 4.56 to 1 (4.10 or 4.88 opt.); with Flightomatic 3.54 to 1. Heavy duty brakes optional*. Heavy duty clutch optional*.

compression ratio 7.8 to 1; oil capacity 5 qts.; cooling system capacity 11 qts.—12.5 with Commanders; 12 volt electrical system with 20 amp. hr. battery (60 amp. hr. battery opt.); 140 amp. hr. early cut-in generator or 55 amp. hr. heavy duty generator with alternator equipment opt.; Transmission: 3-speed synchromesh std.; (Overdrive or Flightomatic opt.); Rear axle ratios: with std. transmission 4.10 to 1 (4.56 opt.); with Overdrive 4.56 to 1 (4.10 or 4.88 opt.); with Flightomatic 3.54 to 1. Heavy duty brakes optional*. Heavy duty clutch optional*.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OPTIONS*

Heavy duty shock absorbers; heavy duty springs; heavy duty springs for seat cushion and back; foam rubber seat pads (front std. on W4 model); reinforced front seat frames; all-vinyl upholstery; zippered headliner for installation of top sign; special wiring kit for roof top sign; ash receiver in front seat back (std. on W4 model); door-operated automatic dome light (standard on W4 model); rear door pull handles; child straps; front door arm rests (std. on W4 model). Other items of optional equipment or accessories available as for comparable Champion and Commander sedans.

*Optional at extra cost.

To continue its program of quality and design improvement, the manufacturer reserves the right to change specifications, designs or prices at any time without notice and without obligation. Information herein is from data available when final approval for printing was given.

PD 1003

Printed in U.S.A.

1956 Studebaker Taxi Cab could be ordered in six-cylinder Champion or eight-cylinder Commander guise. Both feature "Extra heavy gauge body sheetmetal, rugged box section body and frame construction, extra-capacity clutches, jumbo-size brakes."

independent car companies in 1954, Studebaker went into a tailspin. A hasty merger with Packard kept the company afloat, but by 1956 the corporation was nearly bankrupt. Car sales were in the dumps, and management frantically searched for ways to increase volume. With their wage and cost structure in better shape than it had been in years, fleet sales offered a good opportunity to sell more cars.

It was a good time to make the push. Studebaker cars were restyled for 1956, abandoning the low-slung European look for more mainstream styling. Although the basic body shell was carried over, the revised Studebakers looked larger and more impressive than before. Consisting of a six-cylinder Champion series and two V-8 lines—Commander and President—the Studebaker lineup was able to offer many different

combinations of features and performance.

In 1956, a new taxi brochure featured hopeful words about a new entry. "After careful research into the requirements of taxi cab fleet operations, Studebaker announces new special taxi cab models—in choice of performance-proved Six or V-8." Based on the Champion, an acknowledged fuel economy leader, the 185.6-cu.in. six-cylinder cab offered substantial fuel savings in a stylish package, while the 259-cu.in. V-8 models offered more power along with decent economy. In addition, the Studebakers featured large doors for easy entry and exit, plus increased trunk space over the prior year, an important consideration. This year, Studebaker had 12-volt electrical systems, an especially desirable feature in taxis. In addition, Studebaker's quality was much improved over prior years,



The new taxi from Studebaker in 1959 was this Lark-based Econ-O-Miler. Well-built and very economical, the Lark taxi was popular with cab companies.

In mid-1958, Studebaker was on the verge of collapse, but thankfully, the new Lark compact car arrived that fall to revive the company. Studebaker placed all its hopes on the Lark, dropping all its senior cars such as the Scotsman, Champion, Commander and President, to focus on the Lark (and, to a much lesser extent, the Hawk). But the company had come to appreciate the extra volume of fleet sales, so the new Lark was offered in several commercial variations.

The Econ-O-Miler taxi and Marshal police car returned for 1959, both now based on the Lark. However, since Lark was essentially a Champion with both ends sawed off, most of the special equipment produced for the prior fleet cars fit the new ones as well. And since the Lark weighed about 200 pounds less than the Champion, fuel economy and performance were even better. Taxi owners appreciated Lark's easy handling and ability to zip in and out of traffic, while the cops enjoyed the V-8-powered Marshal's outstanding acceleration and cornering ability. As before, the police departments could order sedan and station wagon models.



The 1959 Lark Econ-O-Miler cab had a compact exterior size, but a generous, full-size interior.

The same models were offered for 1960, bragging that Lark offered "Lowest first cost, lowest operating cost, lowest maintenance cost, insurance cost and also the lowest depreciation of any six-passenger car in general fleet use." A four-door wagon was introduced, useful in both police and airport taxi use. Although the commercial focus was on police and taxi vehicles, Studebaker offered other fleet models, including Lark station wagons that fire departments used as

**THE PROVEN
ECON-O-MILER
BY STUDEBAKER**

129¢ MORE PROFIT PER MILE NOW BEING AVERAGED BY TAXI COMPANIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

THE ONLY CAB THAT CUTS COSTS AND PICKS UP MORE BUSINESS!

As in 1959, the 1960 Lark taxi boasted large doors and a roomy interior. The company claimed Lark was cheaper to buy, cheaper to run, and cheaper to maintain than other cars.

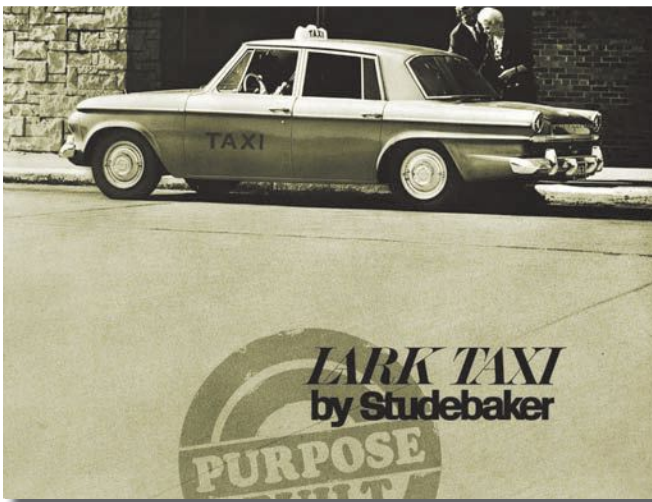
THE IDEAL FLEET CAR

PROVEN BY 750 MILLION MILES OF FLEET AND OWNER OPERATION

Besides taxi and police fleets, the Lark was an ideal fleet car for utility companies and business fleets. This brochure details the 1960 Studebaker line of fleet cars.



Lark Wagonaire for 1963 made an ideal airport taxi, since its sliding roof meant even the larger trunks and packages could fit.



Lark taxi brochure for 1963. The company was struggling with a sharp downturn in retail sales this year, making fleet sales all the more important.

first-response vehicles, and fire-chief cars. Florists and delivery services purchased Lark delivery wagons too, and several telephone and utility companies placed large numbers of plain-Jane Lark sedans in their business fleets.

For 1963, Studebaker Marshal police cars offered new

power—the Avanti Jet-Thrust engine. Although its 289-cu.in. displacement was the same as prior years, the Avanti engine featured a high-lift camshaft and could even be ordered with a factory supercharger. With horsepower ratings up to 290 hp and optional disc brakes, the Marshal made an outstanding pursuit car. Studebaker even offered a heavy-duty four-speed manual transmission, turning the little Lark into a match for law-breaking muscle cars. Model offerings this year included two- and four-door sedans and the new Wagonaire with a sliding rear roof section.

A new standard feature on Marshals was a split hydraulic brake system with tandem master cylinder for great safety and reliability. Also new this year were self-adjusting heavy-duty drum brakes with labyrinth-sealed drums. The company bragged, “Lark police cars can now be custom built to peak performance service as patrol, pursuit or emergency vehicles suitable for all types of terrain.”

Standard heavy-duty police engines featured chrome-plated top piston rings, Silchrome inlet valves, Stellite-faced exhaust valves, an aluminum timing gear and extra-rugged connecting rod bearings and main bearings. A new viscous fan drive, standard on the Avanti Jet-Thrust engine, cut out at 2,500 RPM to reduce horsepower drain. The 112-hp Skybolt OHV six-cylinder engine (introduced in 1961) was also available.

The 1963 Lark Taxi—apparently the Econ-O-Miler name



With the new sliding roof, Wagonaire Studebaker continued to pitch the versatility of its station wagon as a police and emergency vehicle. Shown is a 1963 model.



The Studebaker taxi for 1963 featured a new greenhouse and continued to offer surprising room in a compact, efficient package.



With its glamorous front and styling and newly reworked greenhouse, the 1963 Marshal was a very good-looking police car—and fast too.

had been retired—had greatly improved styling and a number of new features. Brooks Stevens was hired to update the Lark's styling, and the result was a handsome sedan that looked more substantial than before. The wraparound windshield was deleted; door openings were squared off, as were the frames on door windows, giving the interior a lighter, airier feel. The new Wagonaire was pitched as ideal for airport pickup and delivery service. Unusual options this year included a Sky-Top sunroof and floor shift for the three-speed manual transmission. In addition to the Skybolt Six engine, a 259-cu.in. V-8 was available.

Studebaker claimed its Larks were used by more than 250 cab companies, which reported that they were "More profitable to operate... easier to maintain... longer [lived]... under all conditions." One Midwestern cab operator reported saving 14.6 percent on gasoline bills.

The 1964 Studebaker fleet cars should have sold better, but when the company announced in December 1963 that it was ending production in the U.S., cars sales fell like a stone. It was a shame; the restyled Larks were very attractive, and continued to offer the same potent engines. But once car production was

shifted to Canada, Studebaker's fleet efforts effectively ceased.

Although any municipality or business could order a Studebaker, the company no longer made special efforts to market police or taxi vehicles. In fact, the stripped Challenger series was dropped when U.S. production ended. And beginning with the 1965 models, Chevrolet engines replaced the Studebaker units, so the high-powered Avanti engines were no longer offered.

For 1966, the company announced it would "...continue to build a single taxicab model as a special-order, rugged-duty vehicle, available to any buyer"—a curious statement, since they hadn't mentioned taxis during the 1965 announcement. But even though a taxi model was technically still available for 1966, as the company noted, it was a special-order job—and probably few were produced. Studebaker automobile production ended for good in March 1966.

In retrospect, Studebaker's attempt to grow a fleet business was probably a classic case of too little too late, but the cars themselves were well-built machines and proved themselves in millions of miles of service. There's something to be said for that. 🐞



1964 Marshal police car at speed.



Offering muscle car performance and even a factory four-speed or floor-mounted shifter, the 1964 Marshal was the last great police car by the company.

Mostly Mustangs, Inc.

Small Connecticut shop creates big dreams for hundreds of Mustangs, three at a time



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE BUMBECK

Bill Fioretti's interest in cars began early. His passion first manifested itself in building scale models and later moved into full-size pursuits. An automotive-technician cousin had sparked a young Bill's interest in the latest models, which coincided with the halcyon days of American muscle and pony cars. That same cousin took Bill to a few drag races, which only fueled the fire. Bill is still building, and rebuilding, cars today as founder and president of Mostly Mustangs in Hamden, Connecticut.

As a high school student in good standing, Bill was promised a new car upon graduation. A Chevrolet Corvette was his first choice until Bill saw a new Mach 1 Mustang on the showroom floor

in 1968. That car was a game changer. "All thoughts of Corvettes went out the window at that point," says Bill. A few weeks later, Bill was the proud new owner of a 1969 Ford Mustang Mach 1, a car which he still owns today.

Bill turned mid-13-second elapsed times with the 351-cu.in. Windsor V-8 and an automatic transmission at the drag strip. He stopped driving the Mustang regularly in 1971 when he went off to college at the University of New Haven for mechanical engineering. His flame for Ford and Mustangs nonetheless burned on. "I've always had the automotive passion. That little bug worked its way into my bloodstream and stayed there," says Bill.

Along the way, Bill got involved

with Ed Prout and still proudly displays a photograph of him launching a wicked Boss 429-powered A/Altered off the line at Connecticut Dragway in East Had-dam, Connecticut. Bill campaigned a series of drag-racing Fords himself, and that monster 429-cubic-inch Ford engine became the keystone in the foundation of Mostly Mustangs. In one sense, the company was quite literally built around that storied Ford racing engine.

In 1983, Bill bought a 1970 Boss 429 Mustang from a Ford dealer in Danbury, Connecticut. He saw the car for sale in *Hemmings Motor News* and was surprised that, having just conducted a multi-state search, it was so close. Bill and his father, Gus, went through the car to undo modifications done over the



“Some of the stuff that comes out of here, people can't believe. The key is the right people. We have the passion. We're all Mustang people... Never have so few done so much for so long!”





A 429-cu.in. V-8 in Bill's fully restored 1970 Boss Mustang dwarfs a 200-cu.in. six-cylinder in a customer's in-process pony car.

years, at which point they struck upon the idea to return the car to exactly the way it was when the Boss left Ford and Kar Kraft in 1969. "We undid all that stuff, put it back to stock and started showing it," Bill explains. "It has done quite well. It has been to close to 100 shows."

The Boss 429 project was completed by Bill and Gus before Mostly Mustangs had come into existence. The car was so well-executed that other owners started asking who restored it, and when they found out the answer, Bill had the eureka moment that established the business he still runs today.

Mostly Mustangs was founded in 1986 by Bill and his then-recently retired father. Bill bought the building, which previously housed his dad's cabinet-making business, and moved Mostly Mustangs into the space his father had worked in since 1949. Gus came along into Mostly Mustangs as vice president. "He had happy hands, even though he wasn't a car guy, so to speak, and that allowed him to do extraordinary work. He was a great craftsman," says Bill.

Gus passed away in 1999, which was when a satisfied former customer came onboard with Mostly Mustangs.

Fifteen years later, Dave Hagopian is still in the house, handling operations and much of everything else at Mostly Mustangs. "He's my left and right arm," says Bill. Joe Campos joined Mostly Mustangs, bringing with him his experience as an automotive body technician, rounding out the crew.

The original mission of Mostly Mustangs was ground-up and partial restorations on classic cars of the Sixties and Seventies. For the first two decades, Mostly Mustangs dealt almost exclusively in Fords. As time passed, a few Mopars moved through the shop, including a 1971 Charger R/T that Bill considers to be at a platinum standard. Bill recalls the Mopar as one of the more challenging restorations, and he was intrigued to see how the other manufacturers built their cars.

A 1968 Ford Torino that required new quarter panels be scratch-fabricated served as another memorable challenge and, ultimately, proud achievement. Fairlane quarter panels were modified into new Torino sheetmetal, which was not available at the time of restoration. The guys at Mostly Mustangs have a reputation for being able to replace rust with factory-perfect metal.

"We're known for our rust busting. We take cars that big shops will turn away. There's a lot involved in doing that. It has to be done right, and we have the experience to do it," asserts Bill.

Along with 100-point restorations, Mostly Mustangs handles everything from heavy structural work for someone who might want to finish a car themselves, to mechanical and interior restorations for daily-driven machines.

In every case, there are never more than three cars in the shop. This ongoing hat trick keeps the operation nimble and flexible, with Ford customers sometimes referring non-Fords to Mostly Mustangs. "We only do three cars at a time in our 3,000-square-foot building. We deal with select customers. A lot of the people that we do non-Ford work for also own Fords as part of their collection. That's what gave them a one-up to get them in the building," says Bill.

Just this winter, a 1973 Corvette was recommended to the shop by a late-model Mustang owner for a mechanical and interior restoration. Mostly Mustangs handled everything except the upholstery, which was sewn up at Hamden Auto Interiors, which Bill has worked with for years. The crew at Mostly Mus-



This 1967 Mustang convertible revealed the horrors of rust on closer inspection. Rotten, rusted metal is removed and replaced.

tangs brought the rest of the interior back to like-new conditions.

One other thing that Mostly Mustangs sends out of the shop for finishing is engine machine work, which is entrusted to Nizen Machine Shop in New Haven, Connecticut. Engine assembly is done in-house, and is one of Bill's favorite aspects of any restoration. Years of drag racing and the lessons learned along the way down the track and back into the pits have taught Bill how to assemble a durable engine.

This experience and passion are shared with Dave and Joe, who have their own Mustangs and accumulated knowledge. "A lot of this stuff is self-taught," Bill explains. "Knowing and being with the right people and asking the right questions, and remembering the answers, that's really the key to experience! I've always been fortunate enough to be in with the right crowd. I had parents that were 100-percent supportive, which was really cool."

Bill is realistic about project scope before any job begins, and is open and honest about the total cost involved in what can often amount to the replacement of most of the car's underlying structure. But passion is ultimately more important than profit, and it's that passion that drives a great deal of Mostly Mustang's restorations, especially if the car holds a family or personal significance, such as Bill's first car.

"The real inspiration was the first car that Dad got me. It never missed a beat," Bill remembers. "We used to do what you might call off-track racing, and it more than held its own against cars



The Mostly Mustangs triumvirate of Bill Fioretti, Dave Hagopian and Joe Campos.

that you may think it was biting off more than it could chew, and it did very well. It was a lot of fun. It was fun growing up. I'm happy to say I still have my first car, and it will be my last car."

Once a year, Bill throws an appreciation party at his house in honor of his customers. Many of his longtime clients become friends and bring back more than one car to Mostly Mustangs. People come in from across the country for the shindig, which has been going on now for about 12 years. "It's a lot of fun. We're all interested in cars," says Bill.

Bill plans to continue going and to keep the "rule of threes" in action. Bill

is proud of everything his team at Mostly Mustangs does. "I'm glad we went in this direction. There are only three of us. It's a small shop. Some of the stuff that comes out of here, people can't believe. The key is the right people. We have the passion. We're all Mustang people... Never have so few done so much for so long!" 🐾

SOURCE:

Mostly Mustangs
55 Alling Street
Hamden, Connecticut 06517
203-562-8804



Finished work: a 1970 Boss 429, restored 1969 Mach 1 and original 1971 Boss Mustang. All three cars have four-speed manual transmissions.



Precious Prix

*Friends reunite after 39 years
to restore a family-owned 1965 Grand Prix*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO
RESTORATION PHOTOS BY BILL BALLON AND TERRY MARSH

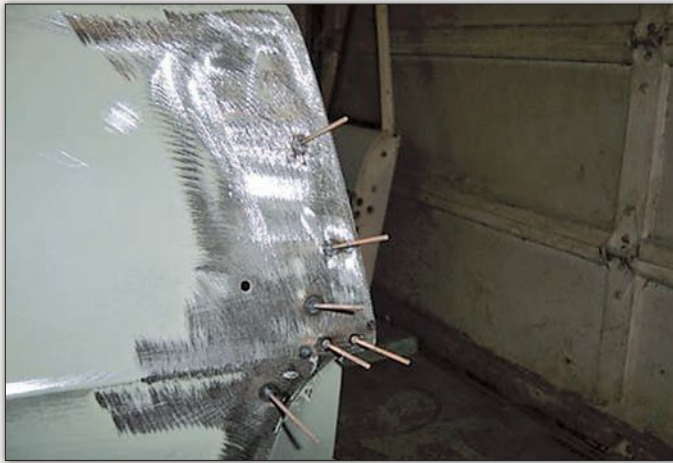




Just behind the driver's-side rear wheel well was a quarter-sized rust hole. When restorer Terry Marsh cut out the section to weld in a new patch, rusty hardware was revealed. Happily, this small area represented the most serious rust in the whole body.



With the shell taken down to bare metal, the absence of rust in the typical areas became obvious and was very encouraging. Unfortunately, various previous war wounds were also discovered. Note the crease in the lower-middle of the quarter panel.



Terry used a stud welder to attach studs to this dent to avoid drilling holes in it. He pulled it via a slide hammer fitted with an attachment to grab each stud. He then cut off the studs and ground the area smooth, so minimal body filler was required.



After applying the green-gray epoxy primer over the entire bare metal body, he used a thin coat of filler where needed and block-sanded. Bill Ballon says, "The quarter panel stampings were wavy, and given the prior damage, it made for a lot of work."

The Grand Prix's Blue Charcoal paint and Parchment interior immediately grabbed our attention as we entered the showroom," Bill Ballon reminisces. "It was in the most prominent location with a spotlight on it. Seeing the 1965 model for the first time was love at first sight—its styling was spectacular!"

On November 28, 1964, Bill's family visited Constantine Pontiac on Forbes Avenue in Pittsburgh. Even though his dad, Izzy, wasn't looking specifically for a Grand Prix, he was so impressed with this one that he ultimately bought it.

Under the hood was the 325-hp 389-cu.in. four-barrel V-8, which was specified for the optional Hydra-Matic transmission—manual transmission GPs received the

333-hp engine. Additional extra-cost equipment included: Safe-T-Track differential with 3.23:1 gears, power steering and brakes, Soft Ray tinted windows, pushbutton AM radio with rear-seat speaker, and a variety of other modest comfort items.

When Izzy decided to let his son maintain his new Pontiac, 14-year-old Bill had no idea that he was forging a lifelong relationship with it. Over the coming years, it would always be garaged, only driven in the snow a few times, and regularly cleaned and waxed.

One summer day, while Bill was working on the Grand Prix, Terry Marsh, a curious 10-year-old from down the block, appeared next to it. "Hey, kid," Bill barked, "Get away from the car! What





While completing the dent repair on the edges of the rear quarter panels, Terry worked in the end caps that Bill had purchased to replace the heavily damaged ones. Another rear bumper would also be sourced, as the original was too damaged to repair.



Terry employed various lengths of sanding boards and differently shaped sanding blocks to help better follow the contours of the body. Note the remnants of a red guide coat he applied to reveal high and low spots on the panels during block sanding.



The passenger side front fender was amazingly clean, given its 40-plus years of living in the rust belt. However, like many of the body panels, this original stamping was also very wavy, so a thin coat of filler would be required on certain sections.



Bill says, "Though the hood was undamaged, the stamping was extremely uneven from the factory. The entire 'nose' area of the hood was sunken-in and needed to be filled to be perfectly flat and straight. It was a Herculean task for any restoration pro!"



are you doing around here?" Being 15 years old at the time, there was an age hierarchy that just had to be adhered to. When Bill was 21 and Terry was 17 and driving a former drag-race V-8 Rambler American, however, the age difference no longer mattered and the two became friends. They later lost touch, and Bill went on to open his own Pittsburgh-based business, Bill Ballon Automotive, which specializes in BMW repair, maintenance and modifications.

In the summer of 2008, Terry showed up at Bill's shop, much like he had done in Bill's driveway 43 years earlier. Not having seen him since 1970, a surprised Bill asked, "So, what have you been doing?" Terry replied, "I operate a car

restoration business." Bill said, "Hmm—I may have a project for you!"

He explained that his dad had given him the Grand Prix in 1997 prior to his passing in 2001. It was in number 3 condition, and he'd like to restore it as a tribute to his parents (his mom, Selma, passed away in 1997). Terry said, "I remember admiring that Pontiac as a kid—it's part of my childhood. I REALLY want to restore it for you."

In January 2009, Bill delivered the GP to Marsh Auto Restoration in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. Since it had been maintained so well, only one small rust hole needed repair, but the car was not immune to contacting immovable objects. As such, the right front fender—



Terry invested 55 hours in the hood—applying epoxy primer and then filler (where needed), sanding, block sanding, applying the Glasurit light-gray high-build primer and block sanding. Note: The hood barely fits in the bed of this full-size pickup truck.



A great deal of time was spent ensuring that all the ancillary components were reworked as-needed to the quality level of the rest of the body. Smaller parts like the cowl grille panel can really detract from a restoration if they are poorly fitted and/or finished.



The underhood parts that should have a semi-gloss black finish were epoxy primed with Glasurit (shown) and then painted with Rust-Oleum Satin Black. Terry feels the appearance compares well with more expensive paints, and Bill says it's been durable.



Suspension and steering components were removed and cataloged by John Marsh. The springs were simply cut, since they would be replaced. Bushings were pressed out of the control arms and the ball joints were removed, as the control arms were retained.

already straightened twice—needed to be replaced. There was also damage to the rear. “Dad’s garage was barely long enough for the car to fit,” Bill laments. “When he was elderly, he backed into the concrete wall a couple of times.”

To remove the old paint from the roof and quarter panels, aircraft stripper, followed by 80-grade paper on a dual-action (DA) sander, were employed. Bolt-on panels, however, were sent to Ameri-Tech International in Bethel Park for stripping via plastic media. Once everything was in bare metal and back at Marsh, after cleaning, two coats of Glasurit 801-1552 epoxy primer were applied.

Upon completion of the metalwork, a skim-coat of lightweight plastic body

filler was used where needed, and after rough shaping with a body-filler file, it was block-sanded with 80-grade paper, followed by 150-grade on the whole body. Then, multiple coats of Glasurit 285-13 DTM urethane high-build primer were applied with block sanding between each, working with 220-, 400- and 600-grade paper to get the GP straight for paint. No sealer was used prior to painting.

The engine and transmission went to Bill’s shop in April 2009, where he installed a new Cloyes double-roller timing chain, and decided to swap the four-barrel for the famed Tri-Power induction system that he purchased online. He disassembled the Tri-Power, took the intake manifold to Pennsylvania Metal Cleaning





Using Scotch-Brite pads, John stripped down to bare metal the front portion of the frame, the steering box and suspension components. He then epoxy primed the frame and control arms and painted them with Rust-Oleum.



Renting a steam cleaner and employing Gunk Engine Brite to degrease the engine before painting, Bill then applied Bill Hirsch engine enamel over the bare iron. He used Eastwood cast-iron exhaust manifold paint on the manifolds, following sandblasting.



The Tri-Power was added to the engine and the Hydra-Matic was serviced while they were out of the Pontiac. Bill snapped this photo of Terry as he lowered them onto the frame. Before starting the 389, Bill allowed the engine paint to cure for a week.



Once Kilkeary's Auto Body finished the paint, the Grand Prix was delivered to Marsh Auto Restoration for reassembly, panel alignment, wet sanding and polishing. Then the bumpers, grilles, lamp bezels, tail panel trim and taillamp lenses could be reinstalled.



in Monaca and had Mike Wasson from www.pontiactripower.com restore the carburetors.

John McConnell at The Transmission Magician in Pittsburgh installed new input and output seals and fresh fluid and filter in the Hydra-Matic. Back at Marsh, Terry's son, John, removed the front suspension and refinished the front section of the frame, the control arms and the steering linkage.

To improve handling, stiffer-than-stock front springs and an aftermarket thicker-than-stock 1.125-inch front anti-roll bar, new ball joints, Delco shocks and A-arm bushings from Kanter Auto Products were bolted in. Bill and Terry then installed the engine and transmission at Bill's shop.

After the mechanical work, in May

2009, the Grand Prix was transported to Kilkeary's Auto Body in Eighty-Four, Pennsylvania, for final prep work and painting by Keith Kilkeary. Using a SATAjet 4000 B HVLP spray gun, two coats of Glasurit base (in Blue Charcoal) from the company's 90-Line Waterborne system were applied to the shell and the bolt-on body panels, which were painted separately. After two coats of Glasurit 923-255 HS Multi Clear from the same paint system were laid down and had baked and dried, the GP was delivered back to Marsh for body assembly.

With the doors and body panels bolted on and aligned, a progression of sandpaper grades—1000, 1500, 2000, 3000—were employed to wet sand the

owner's view



If you are contemplating buying and restoring a mid-Sixties Pontiac B-body, my advice is to pay a little extra up front for the cleanest and most complete example that you can find, because you will be ahead of the game at the end of the restoration. Keep in mind that body sheetmetal and exterior bright trim are extremely difficult to locate for 1960s B-bodies, yet, interior trim and rubber parts are easily purchased from numerous vendors. Make sure you use a talented body man like I did, because straightening out these large bodies with compound curves can be a difficult task. Despite having to overcome these obstacles, I'm delighted with the outcome of the restoration.

finish. The smooth panels were then polished to a brilliant shine by employing the 3M Perfect-It system. A lamb's wool pad was used for compounding, and white foam and blue foam pads for polishing, with a black foam pad for final polishing.

Paul's Chrome Plating in Evans City rechromed the rear bumper, taillamp bezels and tail panel trim. The front bumper is a replacement from another supplier.

Bill brought his GP back to his shop in September 2009, and reinstalled the interior that now features freshly re-covered seats done by Jerry Berberich Auto Upholstery in Carrick, using covers from Ames Performance, which also supplied new door panels. The original headliner remained, and even the carpet was reused after Bill re-dyed it. He adds, "I also replaced many of the exterior stainless moldings with NOS or good-used, and I restored all of the stainless trim myself."

Though it's mainly factory correct, Bill

deviated in a few areas to upgrade his Grand Prix's appearance and performance. For their beauty and increased braking ability, he installed optional 8-lug wheels. Alloy Wheel Restoration Service in Pittsburgh powder coated the rims for a more durable finish. Behind them, Bill installed new wheel cylinders and shoes, 304 stainless brake lines from Classic Tube, and a new master cylinder under the hood.

Other factory options added during the restoration include the aforementioned Tri-Power with individual chrome air cleaners, red line tires and a Rally instrument cluster. (Bill is planning to rebuild the rear suspension in this 37,000-mile Pontiac and add a rear anti-roll bar.)

By October 2009, just 10 months after the restoration started, the GP was ready for cruising and shows, and it didn't take long

for it to be recognized for its quality. "It won Best Restored 1958-1966 at the 2010 World of Wheels show here in Pittsburgh," Bill beams. "As I walked up to the stage to receive the award, my eyes were welling up with tears. All that I could think about was how much I wished that my father could have been there to see it win."

Bill says each time he drives his GP now, it brings back memories of "The Karate Kid experience of applying Blue Coral wax to the lacquer on warm summer days, family vacations to the Jersey Shore, a trip to Detroit for a 1965 Pontiac factory tour and Sunday pleasure drives with my father."

The relationship between Bill and his Grand Prix that began in late 1964 continues to flourish, and it reunited two old friends in a joint effort to restore this personal luxury car to its better-than-showroom luster. The car, its owner and its restorer have benefited from the experience. 🏆





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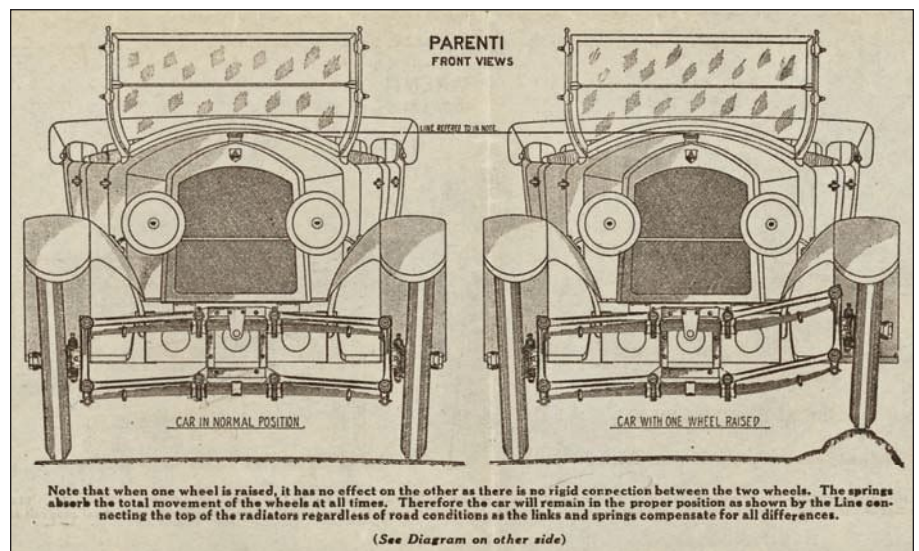
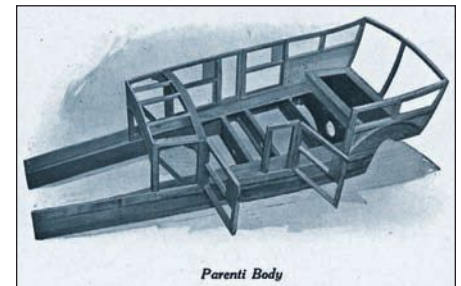
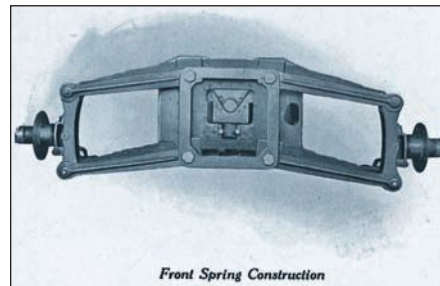
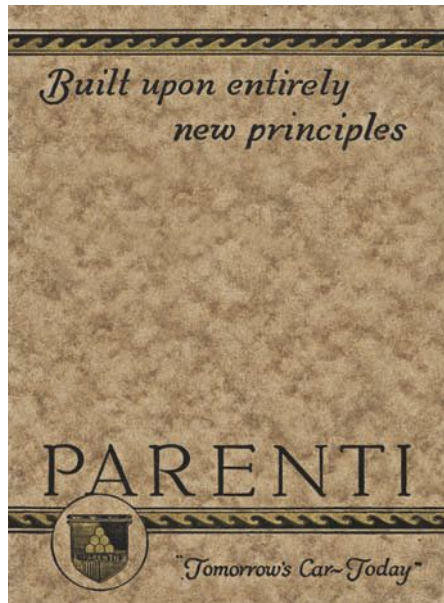
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Parenti Motors



IN THE CROWDED AUTOMOTIVE market of the early 1920s, car manufacturers had to do something special to stand out from the rest of the field. From rock-bottom prices with fuel-efficient engines to luxurious custom bodies and creatively bold paint schemes, innovation was the key. During this time, hundreds of companies would come and go; few would realize their potential or promise. One such company was the Parenti Motors Corporation from Buffalo, New York.

Formed in late 1919 and producing its first car in 1920, the Parenti Motors Corporation boasted innovation and touted its cars that had no frame, no axles, an air-cooled engine and no unsprung weight. According to the company, those features provided “very high mileage on gasoline and tires; unequaled riding comfort; extraordinary ease of handling; and greatly extended useful life.”

The body and frame of the Parenti car were one integral unit. The lower main rails of the unit body consisted of Haskelite plywood that was 12 inches deep and 3¾ inches thick. It was said that the body and frame unit of a Parenti car only weighed 350 pounds! The body was suspended via five transverse leaf springs: three in the front and two in the rear.

Parenti’s most interesting feature was the fact that it did not have solid axles

in the front or rear of the car. It offered four-wheel independent suspension by housing drive shafts within a suspension box created by a set of leaf springs on the top and bottom of the box. This allowed each wheel to rise and fall independently from the others.

Parenti initially offered a 350-pound, self-produced, air-cooled V-8 engine that made 35 horsepower, but the design would prove to be unreliable at best. By August of 1920, Parenti would give up on its own power plant and use a Cameron Six engine.

The lifespan of Parenti was brief, and by late 1922 the company and its assets would be absorbed by the Hanover Motor Car Company in Pennsylvania. It is believed that only 18 Parenti cars were ever manufactured, and it is doubtful that any of them still exist.

Although it only produced a few cars, Parenti advertisers put forth a solid effort with magazine advertising and tra-

ditional sales catalogs. One such catalog for the 1921 model year features a brown cover with black-and-gold embossed lettering. Measuring 4½ x 6⅞ inches with 12 pages, the catalog emphasizes the Parenti suspension, wood unit-body construction and air-cooled engine. There is a centerspread that folds open to reveal the Touring Car (\$2,000) and Sedan (\$3,000). Both body styles had a 123-inch wheelbase.

Three pages of the catalog explain the air-cooled engine in detail, covering its lubrication system, construction and cooling. Cutaway illustrations are included, giving the reader a glimpse into the inner workings of the engine.

Lastly, this catalog also incorporates a pullout sheet that compares conventional automobile suspensions to the Parenti type. While the illustrations are likely exaggerated, they do a great job of highlighting Parenti’s most interesting feature, the four-wheel independent suspension. 🏎️

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Kojak's Buick Century

I LIKE THE DETECTIVE SHOWS from the 1970s, especially when the star drove a cool car. Cannon drove that swanky 1972 Lincoln Mark IV with the rotary car phone. Don't worry about distracted driving; he always pulled over before dialing a number. Jim Rockford always drove a Pontiac Firebird. James Garner, who played Rockford, was a skilled stunt driver and would do most of his own driving on the show. Barnaby Jones drove a Ford LTD two-door model with dog-dish hubcaps, and he drank milk at bars.

Being the Detroit Underdog junkie that I am, I actually preferred Lieutenant Theo Kojak's brown, base model, four-door 1974 Buick Century to all the others. There was something fascinating about a suave, well-dressed New York City police detective wearing a trilby, sucking on a lollipop and driving something other than a Dodge, Ford or Chevrolet.

Before Kojak drove his 1974 Buick Century, in the 1950s, Centurys were featured on *Highway Patrol*, which contrary to popular belief, was before my time.

I never thought I would see a real law enforcement officer in a Buick until I drove cross-country last year. In South Dakota, I encountered an area of road construction on a two-lane highway going around a mountain. One lane would be blocked for 16 minutes—no more, no less (I timed each go around). To keep traffic moving in an orderly fashion, a police officer driving a late 1990s Buick LeSabre lead car guided you through while maintaining a safe speed of 35 MPH—no more, no less. Once through the lane closures, he would make a U-turn and guide the group that was waiting in the opposite direction. I immediately thought of Kojak. I was also impressed with how orderly this was, because where I live, they just block lanes, and traffic creeps along at 17 MPH on the interstate. Rush hour in the D.C.-Baltimore region began in 1954, and we are still waiting for it to end.

One of our lead cars at a funeral home where I once worked was a 1997 Buick LeSabre. It was seven years old at the time and the most dependable car in the fleet, so I am sure Kojak's Buick Century was as much a pleasure to drive and maintain.



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GENERAL MOTORS



GENERAL MOTORS

Kojak's 1974 Century was a perfect example of the GM mid-size design that debuted in 1973 and lasted through 1977. Known as Colonnade styling, these sedans rode the split wheelbases of 112 inches for the coupes and 116 inches for the four-door sedans and station wagons. While the mid-size monikers from the other GM divisions carried on in 1973, the Century nameplate was a revival from an earlier era and replaced the prior year's Skylark.

The most popular of the Colonnades were the Oldsmobile Cutlass models, especially the two-door Supremes with their opera windows and distinctive grilles. Oldsmobile was on fire in the 1970s and early 1980s, which makes it even sadder that they are no longer with us.

The Buicks were no less stylish, but I don't remember seeing as many of them back in the day. The Buicks I did see were those enormous Electra 225s. A friend's father had one that was yellow with a brown vinyl roof. I know we are bored by all the silver, black and white cars of today, but did you ever think you would miss yellow cars with brown vinyl roofs?

The Colonnade styling was intentional to meet new federal rollover standards, so hardtops as well as convertibles were no longer found in the brochures. Out also was true performance; in was a leisurely, boulevard ride. There were a few performance models offered. Apparently, fewer than 100 Buick Century GSs left the factory in 1973 with a four-speed manual

transmission mated to a Stage-1 455-cu.in. V-8 developing 270 horsepower.

In 1976, the Buick Century paced the Indy 500 with a turbocharged V-6; production pace car replicas used conventional naturally aspirated Buick 350 V-8s. They were slightly more popular than the earlier four-speed GSs, selling 1,920 examples.

For those wanting even more luxury, you could order the Luxus package through 1974, or the Century Custom for 1975-'77. Other models included the Century Special sport coupe, which featured a unique landau roof. Along with the two V-8s, a 231-cu.in. V-6 engine was made optional in 1975. The 455 V-8 was only offered in the station wagon through 1976 and was replaced by the Oldsmobile 403-cu.in. V-8 for the 1977 model year.

The luxurious Regals, Gran Prixs, Cutlass Supremes and Monte Carlos have their followings, but when was the last time you saw a four-door mid-1970s Buick Century or other GM Colonnade? These underappreciated, yet attractive and comfortable cars with decent performance have as much room as any full-size car today. You could confidently use one as a daily driver now and not hesitate to leave it in a grocery store parking lot while you grab the goodies for your next car club picnic.

Do a good deed. Rescue a 1973-'77 Buick Century and give it a good home. Any car driven by Kojak deserves to be saved. 🐾

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James A. Allison

than just a pal, confidant and business partner to Fisher. He was his alter ego, his *consigliere*, the man who shared his most private thoughts. He also considerably outlasted Fisher in the world of transportation, or, more accurately, the businesses he created did. When it comes to cars, trucks, aircraft and motorsports, Allison's legacy is one of the strongest of any industry figure from the early 20th century.

He was born in 1872 in Marcellus, Michigan, and first experienced entrepreneurship as a street-corner newsboy. His parents moved the Allison family to Frankfort, Indiana, whereupon young James immersed himself in two of his father's businesses that also involved communications. One printed coupons and the other manufactured fountain pens. Allison's father died young, and at the age of 18, he found himself executive vice president of the family enterprises. He proved to be a prodigy and gravitated among the business community of Indianapolis. That's where he joined the Zig-Zag Club, a gathering point for local luminaries, and met Fisher. And Barney Oldfield. And his soon-to-be partners in the new Speedway, Frank Wheeler and Arthur Newby.

Allison's involvement in the Speed-

way brought him fame beyond his lifetime, but there's a lot more story to relate. He invested heavily in Fisher's Prest-O-Lite firm, which produced the headlamp systems, and like his pal, earned a ton. Once Fisher liquidated that firm, their paths in life diverged. Allison became president and sole owner of Indy, but was interested in pursuing engineering research, and sold out to aviation hero and ex-racer Eddie Rickenbacker. Allison invested his money in a self-named firm that did basic engine and driveline research, and appointed the early racer Johnny Aitken—seen here leading a 1909 race in a National on the original Indianapolis track surface, and later the first driver to lead the Indy 500—as his executive vice president.

Aitken died in 1918 of influenza. Allison did yeoman work on developing the Liberty aero engine, but its founder died of pneumonia in 1928, aged just 55. Alfred P. Sloan then immediately snapped up the company for General Motors, where it remained, doing major aircraft and commercial-transport work, until GM sold it to Rolls-Royce. A major Allison facility exists today a mere bocce-ball roll from the Speedway. That, friends, is kismet. 🍀

IF YOU'RE READING THIS MAGAZINE, you likely know who Carl Graham Fisher was. Sold cars, especially the Stoddard-Dayton, in Indianapolis. Floated one across the city underneath a hot-air balloon. Made a fortune fueling cars' headlamps with an acetylene gas blend, making nighttime driving practical. Built the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Promoted the Lincoln and Dixie Highways. More than any individual, he developed Miami Beach into a resort city. Pretty much died broke.

One certainly cannot blame James A. Allison for the meager outcomes at the end of his friend's life. Allison was more



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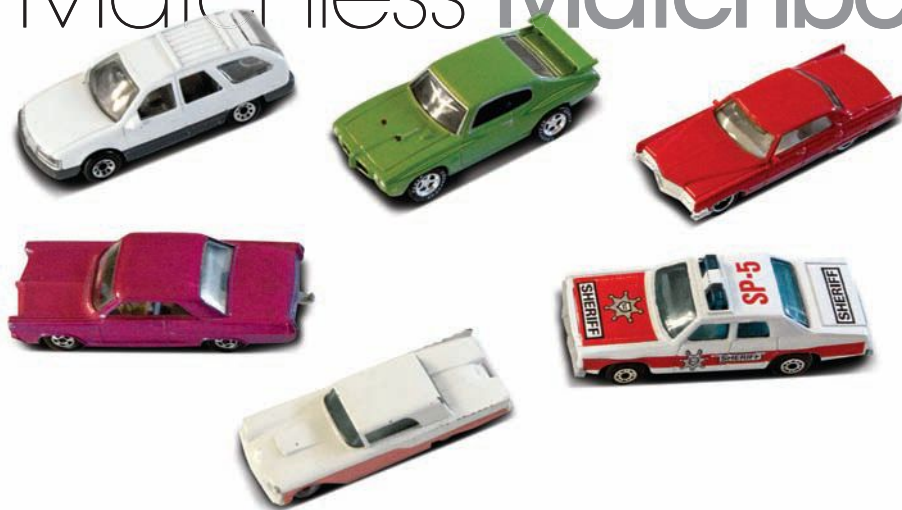
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Matchless Matchbox



DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST CAR?

Many of us do. Mine was a little gold number. Aerodynamic styling—quite futuristic, actually—with five-spoke wheels on too-skinny tires. It was purchased for me years before I could drive—but just being able to pilot it around, wherever and whenever I wanted, stoked a gasoline-fueled fire that has yet to be extinguished. I'd used it and used it hard for five years, and it ended up parked on my parents' property, forgotten about until someone came to clear the place out years later.

I was two when I took possession of my first Matchbox car. It was #56, a BMC Pininfarina 1800, a car that was never put into production, but was quite influential worldwide as an aerodynamic study. For others, their first was a Ford Capri—probably purple, with a chromed-out engine and fat tires. For still others, it might have been a Citroën DS, yellow and streamlined. Still others would claim a Lincoln Continental Mk V, Vauxhall Cresta, Pontiac Grand Prix, VW Beetle, Plymouth Fury police car, a Unimog, a Pontiac Firebird Formula, even a 1960 Ford Thunderbird as their first. For millions of kids around the world, a Matchbox model was their first car, packed with attention to detail that was often lacking on other models.

Though unrelated, founders Leslie and Rodney Smith started the Lesney foundry in 1947, the Matchbox name dates to 1953, following the success of their model of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Coach. Lesney wanted to concentrate on manufacturing, and hired toy distributor Moko to worry about getting them in shops.

Together, they co-owned the Matchbox moniker, so named because the size of the models would allow them to fit in such a container. Early Matchbox models were commercial and construction vehicles, but in 1954, they issued their first passenger car: an MG TD, #19 in the series.

During the 1950s, Matchbox cars started to grow; their Land Rover and Daimler ambulance casting were issued in multiple sizes, each a little bigger than the last, in order to enhance play value. As the cars' popularity increased, so did the range, until by the late '50s it had reached 75 models—a number with a great history and tradition in the Matchbox realm. Detail also increased: By 1960, the closed cars included interiors and window glazing. Around the same time, the wheels went from bare grayish-silver metal to black plastic. More than a million per week were sold. Later into the 1960s would see fun features like opening doors or hoods, and some that did not were packed with whimsy. Witness the two dogs sticking their heads out the back of the late '60s Mercury Commuter station wagon, or the stretcher included in the Binz ambulance. By the late '60s, Matchbox was producing more than five million models per week, up to 75 percent of which were sold overseas.

Matchbox brought a little bit of the automotive world into everyone's homes. Not every European kid had seen a real live late 1950s Ford station wagon, or '59 Impala, or Cadillac Fleetwood, but plenty knew about them from Matchbox's small-scale efforts. Not every American

boy knew of Aston Martin, Wolseley or Hillman, yet for 49 cents, they could have a fleet. And the lines were spot-on! You could count the grille bars, so detailed were the noses; some models had hand-painted details like headlamps and grilles. They were so massive, so pervasive, that Matchbox was in danger of becoming a genericized trademark, like Kodak, Xerox and Kleenex. They were synonymous with quality, detail and play value.

So what happened? Two words: Hot Wheels. Mattel's fast-rolling, Spectraflame-painted fleet so captured the imagination of America's youth (and their parents' wallets) that Lesney went into defensive mode. Fast-rolling Superfast wheels were added to Matchbox models by 1969, a direct reaction to Hot Wheels' piano-wire axles and Delrin bushings. Fantasy models, never seen in the world of Matchbox previously, crept in with wild designs like the *Toe Joe* tow truck, *Stretcha Fetcha* ambulance, *Blue Shark* racer, and more. Even so, Matchbox continued to innovate: witness the Rolamatics subseries of the 1970s, where a turn of the wheel could turn the light on the roof of a police car, or spin the cooling fans of a futuristic racer—no batteries required, only kid power. But die-cast sales continued to slide, and by 1982, Lesney was bankrupt, its assets sold to the Universal Toy Company of Hong Kong.

Universal's stewardship brought back a number of Matchbox's best traits: a high degree of realism, both in choice of subject matter and in detail itself, with opening features for play value. American machines were still contemporary: Cadillac Allante, Mercury Sable wagon, IROC Camaro, a long-lived Ford LTD police car, and many others were available in the lineup. By 1993, U.S.-based Tyco (famed for its slot cars and radio-controlled car lines) took Matchbox from Universal, and introduced a flood of vintage American cars to the line: '69 Camaro coupe and convertible, '56 Ford pickup, early Mustangs, '50s Cadillacs. In 1996, Mattel bought Tyco—mostly for their R/C expertise. And for nearly 20 years, Matchbox and Hot Wheels have existed side by side.

Matchbox celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2013. 🐾

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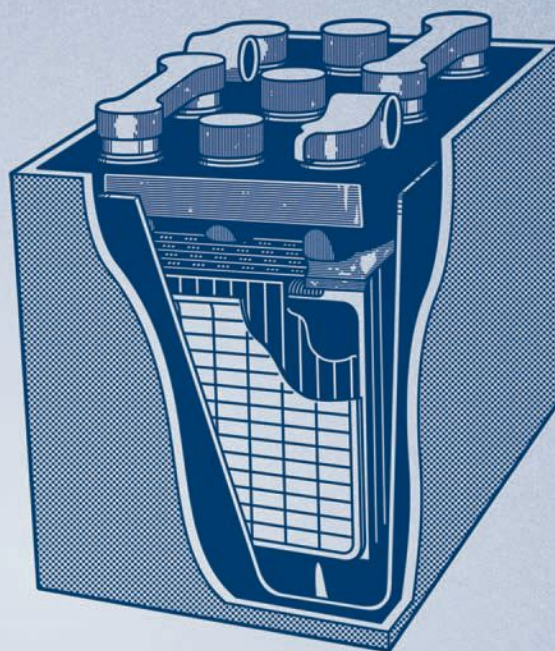
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The Silent Worker

Electricity and the automobile



Illustrations by Zach Higgins

JOB: Harnessing Electron Flow

BY RAY T. BOHACZ

FROM THE FIRST DAYS OF the courtship between the automobile and the internal combustion engine, electricity has been there. It is just as important a component of the engine as gasoline and oil are, yet it never really took center stage—it was like a Cinderella locked in the basement and never going to the ball. The automotive community on all levels fixates on the chemical composition of gasoline and engine oil, but little is discussed about electrons going through a wire to perform a multitude of tasks. The only time any thought is given to electricity is when it is not available. Maybe this is due to the fact that it cannot be seen—only the fruits of its labor are visible.

THE GOOD EARTH

The automotive electrical system works on direct current (DC), whereas households use alternating current (AC).

A circuit in a vehicle has a voltage supply (early systems were 6-volt, but by the late 1950s the industry had transitioned to those that ran on 12 volts) and a ground. Depending on how the circuit is designed, it can function either as a battery looking for a ground or a ground looking for a battery. That is, a component can be wired so that it either has switched

voltage or a switched ground. Examples of these two types of system are: a headlamp that is hardwired to ground and has its voltage supply turned on and off, and a horn (in most applications) that has a constant voltage and the contact turns the ground on and off.

The ground and power supply circuit work together in a team effort. When diagnosing an electrical problem, it is just as important to check the grounding side of the circuit as it is to see if power is available. All too often, the ground circuit is neglected and only the voltage or hot side is confirmed.

This brings us to a term that is often misused: “short circuit.” By proper definition, a short circuit is what Detroit refers to as “copper-to-copper,” that is, two circuits touching one another. If you press the horn button and the dome lamp comes on, this is a real short circuit. In contrast, if a fuse blows due to excessive current flow, such as would occur if a sheetmetal screw pierces a wire, that condition is referred to as an “unintentional ground.” The electrical current would rather go to ground instead of doing work. Since there is no resistance that is inherent in an electrical device, the entire potential energy of the vehicle’s battery

tries to escape to ground, and the fuse blows. A fuse is a sacrificial part of a circuit that is used to protect it from excessive current flow. An unintentional ground is like leaving the gate of a prison open—everyone inside tries to run through it. In this analogy, the circuit and fuse are the guards, and the energy in the battery is all the inmates looking to escape.

Since electricity is lazy, it takes the path of least resistance, always looking for ways to escape and get out of doing work. Thus, wires and circuits need to be insulated using material that is a very poor conductor of electrical current. Rubber, porcelain and glass, along with some other materials are insulators. An insulator is a poor conductor, it needs to be understood, but that does not mean that no electricity can escape through it—almost every insulator will experience leak-through if enough electricity is passed in the circuit.

Secondary ignition or spark plug wires are often identified by a millimeter designation, and contrary to what many believe, that metric does not identify the thickness of the wire carrying the current, but instead the girth of the insulation. Thus, a 7-mm wire has that amount of insulation. The thicker the insulation, the

greater the amount of energy that the wire can pass without having some of it leak through the insulator and look for ground instead of jumping the arc of the spark plug. Historically, as engine power went up, so did cylinder pressure. It then took more energy to bridge the gap of the spark plug—ignition voltage demand is in lock step with horsepower. That is why a Ford Model T ignition system was not as powerful or well insulated as that of a 1955 Chrysler 300 with its high-performance engine.

As vehicle speeds increased from the first horseless buggies, it was found that the tires making contact with the road surface would create friction and static electricity. This static charge, depending on the tire design and rubber compound, along with the material of the road surface, could be so strong that it would pass through the rubber and be stored in the metal chassis, frame and body of the vehicle. The entire car would actually become a huge storage battery. Then, when the proper set of conditions was created, the stored electricity would look to go to ground through an unsuspecting person that either touched the car or exited and placed one foot on the ground. This phenomenon became especially problematic with the introduction of roads such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike, with its high-speed design and tollbooths. Many toll collectors were being practically knocked to the ground when collecting from drivers who may have approached triple digit speeds in their high-powered American sedans. For this reason, many vehicles were factory fitted with a strap that hung underneath and touched the ground to discharge the build-up of static electricity.

REMOTE CONTROL

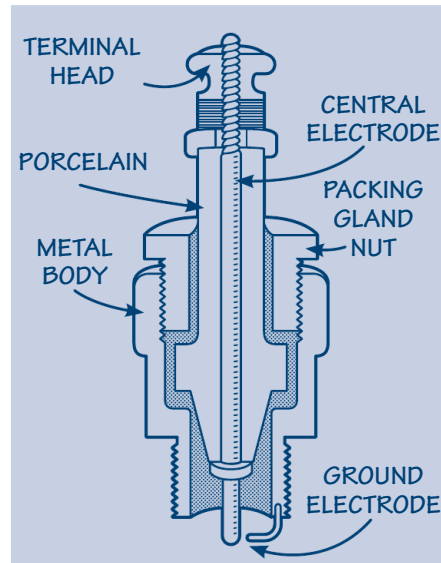
In the automobile, there are a multitude of tasks performed by electricity. Some, like directional flashers, are quite simple and do not require very much current. In contrast, others require a lot of electricity, such as the starter or cranking motor on

the engine. The issue with a high-current drawing circuit is: How can you control it with a switch in the vehicle? The switch and its corresponding wires would need to be robust enough to handle all of the energy that circuit requires. This could be done, but it would fill the dashboard with very heavy-duty wires and components. The simple electrical relay is the answer to the problem.

When looking at a relay, you'll always see thick and thin wires there. A relay is nothing more than a remote switch with an electromagnet inside. The thin wires feed the low current electromagnet from a switch inside the passenger compartment. When the person engages the switch, the relay is turned on and the high current demand for the circuit is supplied. This way, the relay can be placed near its load (the starter) with a short, thick wire from the battery and a thin, unobtrusive wire going to the ignition switch in the passenger compartment. Other circuits like those in electric-grid rear window defrosters, headlamps, and power seats, along with many others, can also use relays.

SPARK PLUGS

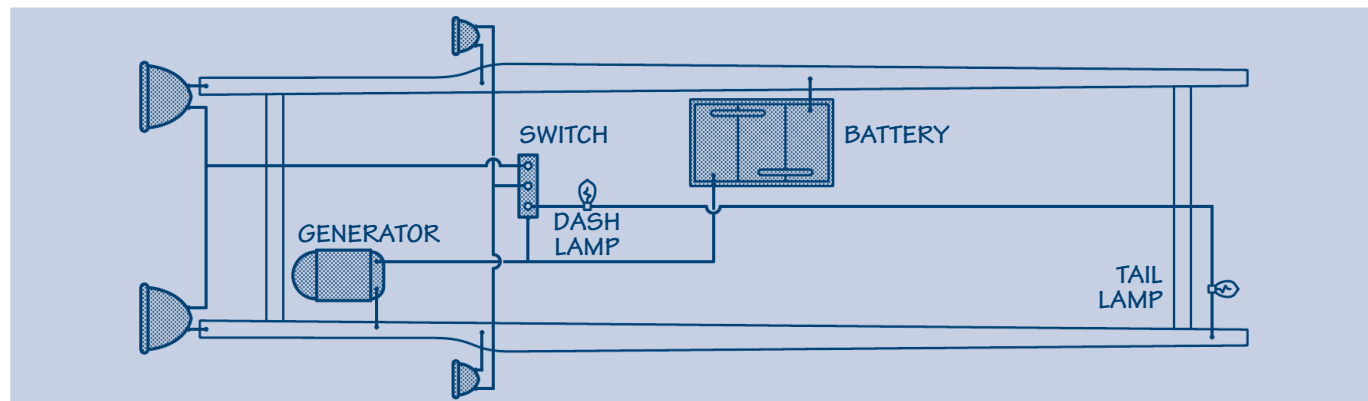
The spark plugs found in gasoline engines are designed to work the most efficiently when the current flows in one direction. When the polarity to the ignition coil is correct (on a 12-volt system with the battery going to the positive and the points connected to the negative), the spark plug fires from the center electrode to the ground electrode, and it completes its path through the threads that connect it to the cylinder head of the engine. If someone were inadvertently to hook up the ignition coil primary wires backwards, the spark plug would fire from the ground electrode to the center electrode. The engine would run very poorly, but it would run. When the coil polarity is reversed, a good deal of energy is consumed trying to find its way through the engine block before it reaches the spark plug, and thus,



the amount of time in crankshaft rotational degrees the plug is arced is very low.

In the middle 1980s, General Motors introduced its distributorless ignition system (DIS). It was designed to have one spark plug fire in the traditional direction and the companion cylinder fire in reverse polarity. Those engines ran very well because the ignition system was designed to provide a strong spark with a long duration, but were very sensitive to degraded ignition wires on companion cylinders. If one wire was weak or of high-resistance, over time it would end up degrading the coil and the engine would run similar to a conventional breaker-point design with reversed polarity.

The wonderful benefit of understanding the basics of automotive electricity is that you can just as effectively diagnose a circuit on a Model T as you can on a 2014 Ford. Though the number of systems controlled by electricity has increased dramatically in the modern automobile, the theory of voltage and ground has remained the same. Though we cannot see electricity as it does its work, it is one of the few aspects of the modern car that should be familiar to an old-time mechanic! 🛠️



Max Lamprescht Nash Line Worker, 1953-'55 As told to his nephew, Dan Hearty

IN CANADA, WE WERE IN World War II from the beginning, in 1939, and after I was turned down by the draft in Vancouver that fall, I went to work for Boeing, building PBVs at their Richmond, British Columbia, plant. I worked my way up to foreman—experience that would help me find work later on after the war.

In early 1953, I was living in Santa Monica, California, looking for work, and I found it at the Nash plant in El Segundo, just south of the Los Angeles airport; they hired me because of my aircraft factory experience. The salary was great at Nash-Kelvinator: over \$2.00 an hour, as I recall—pretty good for the time!

The plant wasn't a very big one; it seems to me that it had perhaps five hundred employees and one line. I think it had only been open a few years by then. It was a mixed line: We built big Nashes, such as the Ambassador and Statesman models, and Ramblers on the same line. My job was to install dashboards in the Nashes, and to install the instruments into the Ramblers' dashes, which were part of the car's body. The dashboards for the big Nashes were assembled on a bench beside the line, and as the cars moved along, there was time to walk over, get the assembly from the guy who had put it together, carry it back and fix it into the car with nuts and bolts at both ends.

When a Rambler came along the line, the job was different. Because the dash was an integral part of the car's body, I had to install the gauges into their respective holes. I would put a small mattress pad down into the footwell to lie on, then, lying on my back, I would reach up and install the instruments. A foreman in suit and tie would walk up and down the line all the time watching what we were doing. Union rules were pretty tight—if the foreman even touched a car on the line, we were to put in a grievance. Sometimes the parts suppliers would slip up somehow, and parts would not be available for the line. This happened fairly often, and when it did, the line had to shut down. We would be paid for a half-day, but we had to spend that time in the factory; we couldn't go home.

Now, I suppose Nash wasn't unique



in getting only marginal work out of their employees sometimes, but I certainly saw many examples of pretty sloppy work going into the cars that came down the line. Many times, the bolt holes for the big Nashes' dashboards were in the wrong places, sometimes just a bit off, so that the dash would go in, but a bit crooked, and sometimes they were way off. The holes had to be re-drilled. The guys who installed the front and rear glass were just before me on the line, and many was the time that I heard the sound of shattering glass as they hit the windshield just a bit too hard, trying to get the big rubber gasket to seat properly. You'd think they'd get better at it, but they never seemed to, or maybe they didn't care. Sometimes, holes were drilled too big, so that the screws or bolts didn't really tighten properly, and the eventual owners of the car had an everlasting rattle in their brand-new car.

The assembly line at El Segundo had a curve or kink in it way back before my station, and every now and then a car would hang up going around; and when that happened, the line would stop with a bang. Sometimes, cars would actually be damaged by this, and would have to be repaired before they were finished. Again, the eventual owner would be left, unknowingly, with a car that had been in an accident before it had ever been driven! Now, this type of thing went on in every car factory, I suppose, but despite all this, Nash had a pretty good reputation for quality at the time.

When I first started in 1953, we were allotted five or six minutes to get our tasks done. I found fairly early on that I didn't have any trouble keeping up; I was lucky in that I have always been able to work with either hand, and this seemed to give me a bit of an edge. Some other fellows

on the line were always struggling to keep up. It could be that I had an easier task, I suppose, but I would assume that the company had the division of labor pretty well thought out.

Later on, into 1954 and '55, it became apparent that sales of the big Nashes were declining: They became more and more scarce on the line until we were building nearly all Ramblers. Our time allotments changed, too, as the line slowed down, and at the end, I had nearly 20 minutes per car to accomplish the same jobs. Although I had a few other things to do, I still had enough time to work back up the line and then lie there in a Rambler's footwell until I was brought back to my station again—very relaxing! Interestingly, although I remember being able to do this fairly often in the last year, I don't remember getting in trouble for it.

Although we got a bit of a discount if we wanted to buy a Nash, I never owned one; I used some of my Nash earnings to buy a nice 1954 Oldsmobile Starfire convertible. I always liked Oldsmobiles, and I wish I had that car now.

Nash closed its California plant in 1955. The company briefly considered reopening it that year, and offered me a job as a foreman if it did, but I had another job by then, and left Nash behind. The plant was sold in 1955 to the Hughes Aircraft Co.; apparently, Boeing has it now—they build satellites there. 📷



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

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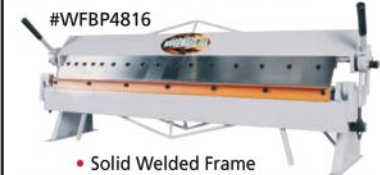
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NOT READY FOR PRIME TIME

Q: I purchased a 1950 Ford convertible about two years ago. It is mostly original, except for electronic ignition and radial tires. If the car sits for three days or more, you have to pour gas into the carburetor to get it started. Once it starts, it runs just fine and restarts easily. I had a retired mechanic completely go through and rebuild the carburetor. He checked and cleaned every orifice and put in a new carburetor kit. He left the carburetor sitting on his workbench filled with ethanol-free gas for three days, and it showed no signs of any leakage. After all that, the car still won't start after sitting three or more days without priming. Do you have any suggestions of what might be the problem? It is a puzzlement. I also have a 1950 Chevy that will start after it sits idle for months.

Jerry Lakes
Coram, Montana

A: Leaving the fuel in the bowl on the bench definitely rules out leaks, but it doesn't account for engine heat and fuel evaporation. Underhood temperatures can rise when a car is parked, causing the fuel to evaporate more quickly. Today's fuels seem to evaporate more quickly than those of yesteryear—particularly the ethanol blends. This might be compounded by a loss of fuel from the line between the pump and the carburetor inlet allowing the pump to lose its prime. Have you ever cracked the line after the three-day period to see if there's fuel there? If none is present, a one-way check valve in the line immediately before or after the pump could help.

But before going after the fuel system any further, are you sure the car is cranking quickly enough to start after it has been sitting? What if you started the Chevy and ran a set of jumper cables to the Ford's battery, just to give it an extra boost? (Assuming they're both 6-volt). I'd be curious to know if it starts more quickly. Or maybe you have a 6-volt charger with a 6-volt boost setting?

Another common sticking point on 6-volt systems: A lot of people just replace the cables with off-the-shelf 12-volt cables from the auto parts store, but you need to run very heavy cable—2-gauge at the minimum. 00- or 0000-gauge is better.

THE OLD WHITEWALL BIAS

Q: I own a 1963 Ford Fairlane 500. I want to put bias-ply whitewalls on it.

Currently, it rides on Uniroyal radials, but I want it to be authentic. Where can I find good, affordable bias-ply tires with a wide whitewall? Would a local tire shop be able to install them? I don't want any damage to them, so the shop would need to know what they are doing.

Jake Stout
Cheyenne, Wyoming

A: Call one of the vintage tire specialty dealers: Coker Tire, 866-708-1271; Lucas Classic Tires, 800-952-4333 in California or 800-735-0166 in Ohio; or Universal Vintage Tire Co., 877-231-9925. That way, you'll be getting new, good quality tires that will be safe to drive around on. Any shop or garage that mounts tires should be able to mount and balance your new tires for you.

HUNTING FOR A COOLER HAULER

Q: I recently purchased a 1963 Ford F-100 "unibody" short bed with only 40,000 gentle miles on it. The drivetrain consists of a 223-cu.in. six-cylinder engine and a three-speed manual gearbox. Living in southern Arizona, where summer temperatures are hotter than the hinges of Hell, I went looking for an air-conditioner. Using my best hunter/gatherer skills, I cannot find a mount and drive kit for the 223, either the old York type or newer Sanden compressors. Can you send me off in the right direction?

Tom Mulligan
Tucson, Arizona

A: Finding a used factory setup will take some serious hunter/gatherer skills for sure, and then you'll have to deal with the refrigerant issues and probably the restoration of used parts. For around \$1,400 you can buy a complete "Perfect Fit" system from Classic Auto Air (www.classicautoair.com) that will fit your 223-powered F-100. Vintage Air (www.vintageair.com) has kits as well.

JOB RATED, NOT SPEED RATED

Q: I have a 1954 Dodge Job Rated pickup with a 230-cu.in. flathead engine, and a four-speed manual, floor-shift transmission. The transmission leaves a lot to be desired in top gear, and since I do take it on the highway from time to time, I wish I could take it out of the slow lane, and enjoy longer trips. I have already swapped out the rear axle gears,

so I do get a little top end from that, but I would like to either swap in a new manual transmission (with adapters and working existing parts) or an overdrive unit (which is expensive, and I'm hesitant to spend the money). Any suggestions on what's an "easy" swap? I've read up on the T-5 and am leaning in that direction.

David Chacon
Culver City, California

A: If you can deal with some of the custom fitting that will need to be done, as well as the expense and parts hunting, a T-5 from a GM S-10/S-15 would be an excellent transmission for your truck—as old overdrive units are getting increasingly scarce. Wilcap Company makes an adapter to fit a T-5 to the Chrysler, Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto flathead and there are some pretty good discussions about the swap on the Internet; simply Google the words "Dodge 230" and "T-5." The T-5 is an excellent transmission: inexpensive, durable and widely available. They shift very nicely as well.

LOOKING FOR A CLEAN BRAKE

Q: I replaced the brake shoes, and all the hardware, as well as the wheel cylinders on my 1972 Chevy Nova over the winter. The drums look pretty shabby as they've never been painted. What should I do to make them look better?

Milt Gerrard
via email

A: Try to find a shop in your area to check the drums and cut them, if necessary. (Shops doing this are harder and harder to find these days.) Then get the drums media-blasted, and paint them with a cast-colored paint designed for brake drums. A wire wheel on an angle grinder will work to take the rust off, too, but it's messy and labor-intensive. You could also spring for a new set of drums, clean them with wax and grease remover, and paint them.



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.

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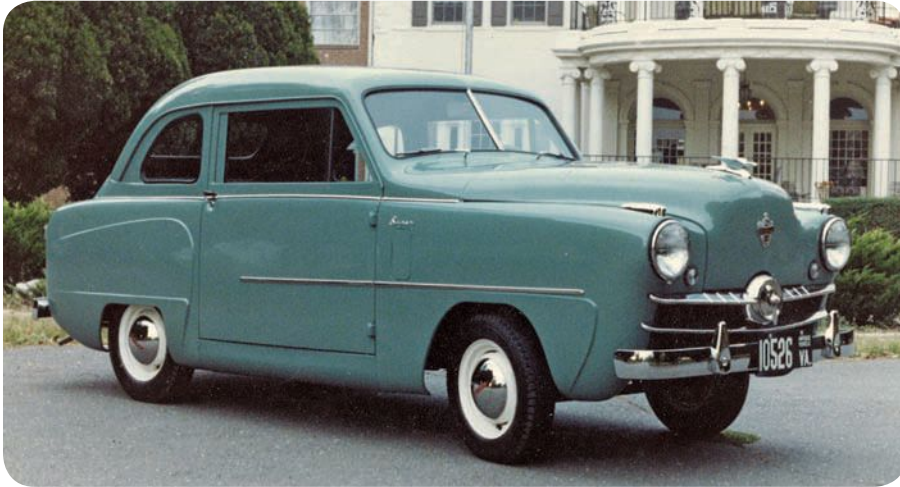
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CROSLY PRODUCTION ENDS ON JULY 3 with a whimper, as only 2,075 cars are produced. The little cars are largely the same as the 1951 models, the primary difference being a new Carter carburetor. Crosley had been in business since 1939 and had reached its pinnacle in 1948, producing nearly 30,000 cars and utility trucks.

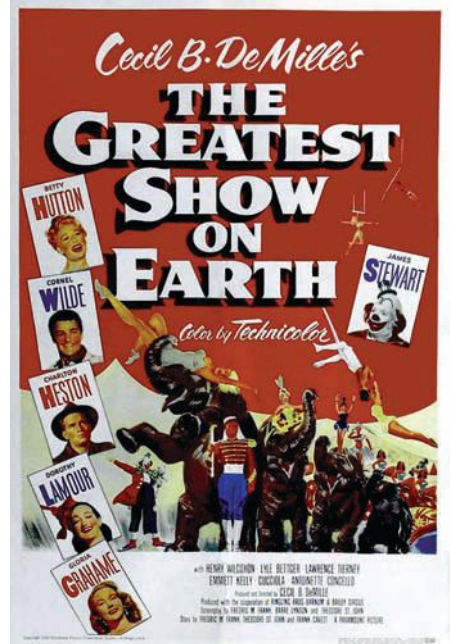


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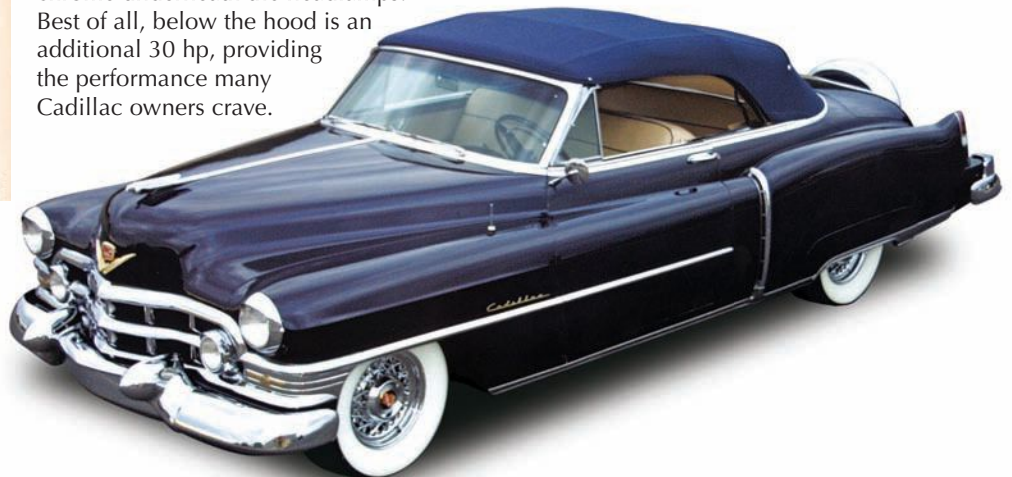


CECIL B. DEMILLE'S *The Greatest Show on Earth* is the top-grossing film and winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture.



AFTER A FOUR-YEAR HIATUS, Ford brings back the four-door station wagon to its line of body styles. The top trim level Crestline series includes the Country Squire, which is an eight-passenger wagon featuring imitation mahogany panel decals, framed with real maple or birch trim. Factory price for the Country Squire is \$2,186.

CADILLAC CELEBRATES ITS 50TH YEAR with production eclipsing 1.3 million units since 1902. To commemorate their "Golden Anniversary," the new Cadillacs feature golden "V" emblems on the hood and decklid, as well as gold on the grille wrap-around and chrome underneath the headlamps. Best of all, below the hood is an additional 30 hp, providing the performance many Cadillac owners crave.

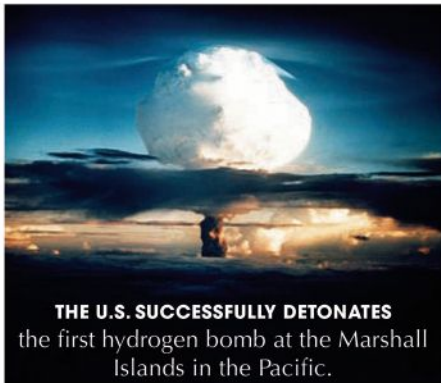




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Black Beauty

IN THE SPRING OF 1963, I was just finishing my junior year of high school, and my older brother, George, had returned home after three years of army service. One sunny Saturday afternoon, we went to Luby Chevrolet in Boston to look at some used cars. My brother spotted a black 1960 Impala Sport Coupe with red-and-white interior. He looked inside and saw it had a three-speed column shift. Then he opened the hood and smiled; the Impala had a 283-cu.in. Power Pack V-8 engine.

I still remember the small crowd of teenagers from our block that gathered around the Impala as my brother pulled up to the sidewalk and opened the hood. The *Black Beauty*, with its sleek fastback roofline and extensive chrome trim, sparkled under the warm sun like a jewel. It was the coolest car on the street.

The first thing my brother did was take it to the local muffler shop and have a pair of glasspacks installed; those glasspacks brought the Power Pack to life. When he drove up the street, the glasspacks would rumble louder with each shift of the gears. And when he let off the gas in second gear, the 283 would rumble like a freight train. All my buddies would stand on the street corner and watch that Impala make sweet music with its pipes.

By midsummer, the novelty wore off for my brother, and he began to let me borrow his Impala on weekends and an occasional weeknight. It was the perfect car to impress a date, and the girls loved its lipstick-red interior. One girl was so taken by its beauty, she called the Impala “sexy.” My big brother got a kick out of that. The sleek Chevy was indeed “sexy,” and looked its best when the windows were all rolled down for a summer night of cruising the burger circuit.

It had a great stance, like a race horse. The rear end sat high, like a California rake, and the front end was low. It always looked like it was ready to leap. And leap it did.

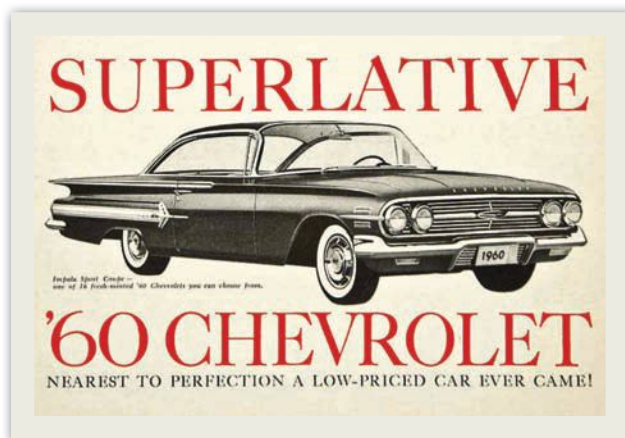
One night, I was out with my buddies cruising through Richard’s Drive-In on Memorial Drive in Cambridge, when they got the idea of driving up to Arlington to meet some girls at the pizza shop. As I drove along the extra-wide Massachusetts

Ave., I stopped at a red light when a brand-new 1963 Impala Sport Coupe pulled up alongside us. The driver and his friend were two young guys about 25; my buddies and I were only 17.

The driver revved his engine and gave me a look that said, “let’s race.” I turned down the song “He’s a Rebel” and shifted into first gear, ready to take off. The light turned green, and I let the clutch out so fast the engine stalled. All my buddies were laughing. I got it running and took off down the boulevard trying to catch up. At the next light, I pulled up alongside the Impala, and the two guys smiled at me. The driver said: “Hey kid, you got a little nervous there. You want to try it again?” With a sheepish grin, I nodded my head and said, “yes.” Again, he revved his engine as I stared at the traffic signal, ready to launch *Black Beauty*. The light blinked green, and this time I was ready. I hooked up traction with little slippage and wound out first gear until it sounded like it was at max power, then I shifted the clumsy column shifter into second gear, and the 283 Power Pack gave me even more speed as I pulled away from the ‘63 Impala.

My buddies were all howling with glee as we pulled up at the next red light. The two guys pulled up and the driver said to me, “Hey kid, what do you have under the hood?” I looked over at him and said, “283 Power Pack, three-speed,” as I shifted into second gear to show him it was a stick shift. He replied: “That’s what I have, a 283 Power Pack. You got a fast car there, kid.” Man, I was on cloud nine. It felt great to win the drag race, but I knew that if my brother found out I was racing his Impala, I would be grounded. So that was my last race with the Impala, as I decided I had better not push my luck.

One of my buddies was crazy about the Impala. He said to me, “I am a diehard Ford man, but this Chevy is one quick little son of a gun.” Coming from a Ford guy, that was the ultimate compliment.



The girls at the pizza shop checked out the Impala and admired its sleek lines. Under the neon lights, it was a movie star, the fastest Impala in town. Driving home with the warm July night air flowing through the open side vents and the AM radio playing “He’s So Fine,” the glasspacks purring like a contented kitten, it was almost as though the Impala was strutting its stuff like a proud race horse after getting crowned “champion.”

We soon pulled into the Big Burger drive-in in North Cambridge to grab a quick Coke and French fries and to check out any cool hot rods that were there. Those warm summer nights between 1961 and 1964 were glorious times. Teenage boys back then didn’t need drugs to get high—we were high on girls, cool cars and rock and roll.

Years later, after I returned from my service with the First Cavalry Division in Vietnam, I bought a 1965 Impala Super Sport with a 327 and four-speed. It was a great car, and I loved driving it, but it was no *Black Beauty*. 🍷

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Scout's Honor

Still revered by enthusiasts, the International Scout was the first serious U.S.-made challenger to the Jeep CJ

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR



The Jeep CJ/Wrangler is the off-roader that refuses to die. Its iconic name and its basic formula—short wheelbase, open top, four-wheel drive—have survived the crashes, burnings and monumentally bungled corporate mergers of multiple parent companies. Willys-Overland, Kaiser, AMC, Renault's U.S. efforts, Chrysler, Daimler-Chrysler (now Fiat-Chrysler) all foundered, but the Jeep bounced onward. Unscathed. Always in demand. Appealing to young, old, male and female alike with its happy owners, all waving to one another when they pass on the road or trail.



This Scout was equipped with a bench seat, but the owner re-covered the buckets from the 1965 Scout he owns and installed them. The original bench, he contends, was uncomfortable and sat him too close to the steering wheel. The truck is otherwise modestly appointed inside with a three-speed manual transmission and an AM radio.

Too bad the same couldn't be said of what was once the Jeep's greatest rival, the quarter-ton Scout, built by one of America's most important independent manufacturers of farm equipment and trucks, International Harvester. What started in 1961 as a monumental success in the history of International Harvester trucks, ended in late 1980 when the last vehicle to wear the Scout name rolled out of Fort Wayne, Indiana, beneath a pall of labor strikes, failing dealers and waning consumer enthusiasm.

The Scout had arrived on the scene more than a decade after the CJ, the short wheelbase Land Rover and the Toyota FJ40, but it was perfectly timed and well executed. The 13-foot-long, 3,000-pound Scout 80 was initially offered to buyers with their choice of a removable pickup cap or removable full-length Travel Top, in two-wheel or four-wheel drive and with a folding windshield. (The steel doors were easily removed as well). For power it relied on a rugged 93-hp 152-cu.in. four-cylinder engine derived by slicing the left cylinder bank off of a 304-cu.in. V-8.

Priced at just \$2,128.84 for the 4x4 and \$1,771 for the two-wheel drive, the Scout was a smash hit. According to *International Truck Color History*, by Tom Brownell, in its first month, IH doubled Scout production from 50 to 100 per day, then increased that by another third. By year's end, Fort Wayne had cranked out 35,000 Scouts, surpassing in number sales of every other vehicle in IH history. While two-wheel-drive pickups typically outsold four-wheel drives in the early 1960s, Scout buyers flocked to the four-wheel-drive version with the Travel Top.

As the market grew, International adapted to the needs of consumers, making the Scout more comfortable in the process. At the outset, only a front bench seat was available, but buckets were

soon added to the option list. A rear seat was made available, as were roll-up windows and a canvas soft top.

In 1964, International installed an optional turbocharger on the 152-cu.in. four-cylinder, boosting its power output to 111 hp and 166-lb.ft. of torque. While it probably thrilled the marketing department, the turbo didn't transform the Scout into a drag race winner, as it still took a leisurely 13 seconds to hit 60 MPH.

For 1965, the Scout 80 became the Scout 800, and a few key features were added. The windshield was fixed in place, windshield wipers were moved to the base of the glass, and where previously only a three-speed was available, the 800 could be ordered with a four-speed.

For '66, the Scout could be ordered with a 196-cu.in. four-cylinder, which was really the IH 392 V-8 with four fewer cylinders. The 152-inch four-cylinder was still the base engine, and the turbocharged version was still an option for Scout buyers.

Perhaps as an answer to Ford's new-for-1966 Bronco, which could be had with 289 V-8 power, International slid its 266-cubic-inch V-8 under the Scout 800's hood for 1967. A significant redesign of the Scout wouldn't arrive until the mid-1971 introduction of the Scout II, so for 1969 and 1970, International dealt with new challenges from the Chevrolet Blazer and GMC Jimmy with the Scout 800A. The 800A was a refresh sporting new blacked-out headlamp surrounds, revised side marker lamps and a new International badge on the grille. The AMC 232-cu.in. six-cylinder also made its debut in the 800A, as did the 304-cu.in. V-8.

Following the Scout 800A, the 800B was built for about eight months beginning in 1970. A few cosmetic details differentiated it from its



The Comanche 152-cu. in. four-cylinder was the base engine in the Scout. It's basically the right half of International's 304 V-8 and shares internal parts with the larger power plant. An oil bath air cleaner ensures that damaging dust never gets sucked into the engine.

predecessor; most notably the black headlamp surrounds were bright. For 1971, the slightly larger, more streamlined Scout II bowed, boasting a host of improvements that seemed to aim it squarely at GM's Blazer/Jimmy cousins.

This month's feature truck, owned by Dick Rhindress of Stephentown, New York, is a 1966 Scout 800 with less than 50,000 original miles. Dick purchased the truck through an online auction in solid, running condition, but in need of some cosmetic work after a run-in with the back of a motorhome.

The front valance/grille surround and left front fender had been replaced with panels from donor vehicles (which is why the truck has the incorrect front marker lamps) and were in need of fresh paint. Also, the hood had been straightened, and there was a dent in the truck's right rear corner. Bob Adler of Adler's Antique Autos in Stephentown

(For more about Bob see the Specialist Profile in HCC #98) made the Scout shine again—good enough to earn it a first place in the Street Stock division at the 24th-annual International Scout and Light Truck Nationals in Troy, Ohio, last year.

This isn't Dick's first Scout, nor is it his only one—he still owns the blue 1965 Scout 80 that he purchased new as a college student. Selecting the International over a Jeep back then was a no brainer, he said, due in no small part to the Scout's five-foot cargo bed.

"I was a graduate student in geology and the Scout was superior to the Jeep because it gave me room to haul my stuff around and even sleep in it," he said. "It was the perfect field vehicle for going back in the woods and mountains, and International even offered an overdrive unit which got me down the highway at a decent speed."

The perfect field vehicle evolved into the perfect daily driver for 20 years. Mrs. Rhindress drove the Scout regularly as well, carting around kids and the family dogs. Getting to the family's hilltop home was never an issue, thanks to the sure-footedness of International's versatile off-roader.

Today, the '65 awaits restoration, but at least its seats are still in action. Dick swapped out the 1966's bench seat for the '65's buckets after having them reupholstered. He also added a set of International Harvester accessory mirrors and an original back seat.

A prostate cancer survivor, Dick takes the Scout to shows with badges for a cancer support group affixed to the truck's doors to help raise awareness for cancer screening and treatment.

"I spend a lot of time talking about the Scout, because they're so rarely seen anymore in the Northeast" he said. "But there are probably a half-dozen people at every show who come up to talk about cancer." 🐾



Manual locking hubs engage the Scout's front Dana axle. The rear-mounted spare on this truck is still shod with the original tire.



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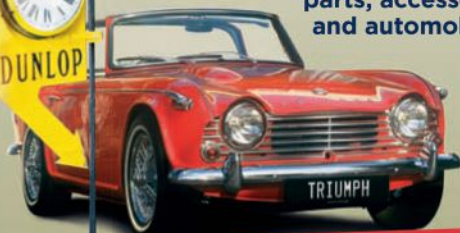
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Cowpuncher With a Camera

*An appreciation of trucking
photojournalist Joe Wanchura*



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOE WANCHURA,
INTERPRETED BY SHIRLEY SPONHOLTZ, COURTESY OF OLD TIME TRUCKS MAGAZINE.

Truck drivers tend to seek out recreation wherever they can find it, given the limited amount of time that their chosen line of work allows for such matters. Joe Wanchura, who died in late November 2013, hauled his way around the American heartland armed with a Brownie box camera. He wasn't taking photos of grain elevators or stacks of hay, either. Instead, Joe was shooting trucks at work.

This somewhat obscure practice—we reckon that for every enthusiast who takes photos of trucks, there are probably at least 1,000 railfans who do the same for trains—established Joe as a premier chronicler of American trucking history, even if he was doing it as a virtually uncompensated amateur. His equipment was a cross-country pull short of being the best around, and to our knowledge, he never had anything resembling professional training, but Joe was as much a photographer as anyone who has ever gotten published in a circulated maga-

zine. All you've got to do is riffle through the huge body of work he left behind. He understood composition. The trucks are cleanly captured in their natural environments, either on the road or parked at a terminal, warehouse or truck stop. There's no clutter in the background, and yet nothing appears to be a formally posed shot. His stuff was good.

Joe had a lot of practice, having first started shooting trucks while an adolescent growing up outside Chicago during the early 1940s. We cannot flatly say that Joe was the only person photographing

trucks for historic-preservation purposes during these years. But it's nevertheless quite clear that he amassed what has to be the largest and deepest visual testimony about trucking during its formative transcontinental years. Look through some of his work, and you'll see how brutish trucking was in the days when Joe unlimbered his Brownie. Just one example shows a prewar International coupled to a 40-foot trailer idling by the side of U.S. 40 in Aberdeen, Maryland, sometime around 1952. It's a W-series tractor, one of the Emeryville-built Western Model



conventionals, with an integral sleeper. The hood side panels were shorn, exposing its gasoline, or butane, powerplant to the elements. Both front fenders are bobbed. There's scarcely a marker lamp in sight, yet the tractor's single air horn trumpet is bolted to the side of the cab right above the driver's window. Wimps need not have applied to steer that bad boy.

Then there is this evil-looking Autocar-pulled combination shot around 1951 in one of Joe's most productive photo locations, the warehouse district of Chicago, where Werner Transportation had a terminal. Werner, of Omaha, Nebraska, is still around today, and known for its sharp colors of two-tone blue. This diesel-urged Autocar tractor demonstrates how long-haul trucking was still very much an individualized affair. Take a look at the cab roof. See those bars that run around the edge of the cab? They not only support the lighted Werner sign, but also help to anchor the early, home-built West Coast mirrors. The single driving lamp underneath the Autocar's front bumper is traditionalist, too. The trailer is refrigerated, only the reefer unit's engine is uncovered. Emergency repairs?

Old Time Trucks magazine editor Shirley Sponholtz told us that Joe left literally thousands of such documentary images at the time he died, in Muncie, Indiana, several of which have been published in these pages. Sadly, near the end of his life, Joe was unable to communicate verbally. He did leave another legacy, though, which we're also proud to share with you. After he came off the road, Joe got a new hobby, hand-carving amazingly accurate scale replicas of Class 8 trucks, starting with a single block of wood in many cases. Check out the GMC Crackerbox, which not only boasts a correct cab shape, but a believable take on a 6V-71 diesel. It's remarkable. 🐞



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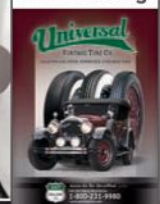
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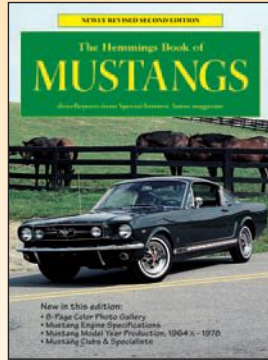
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jimrichardson

Rebuilding Butch's Flathead

In 1947 when I was a tyke, my father took me to see my Uncle Benny one Sunday. When we got there, he was humped over a polished, jewel-like Ford flathead V-8. He had installed this masterpiece in a fenderless black Model A roadster with tall back tires. While I was marveling at that glittery engine, Uncle Benny went around and started it. The sound of it revving put me into a state of fearful ecstasy. It was like some huge Siberian tiger threatening me with dismemberment.

Later, my uncle told me that the engine was bored, stroked, ported and relieved, and had Navarro cylinder heads and two Stromberg 97 carbs. Uncle Benny was my idol. I wanted to be exactly like him when I grew up. In addition to his hot rod, he had an Indian Chief motorcycle. And to top that all off, he fought in New Guinea in World War II and was an actor in the hit movie series, the *East Side Kids*.

My pop and I would go with Uncle Benny and his pal Leo Gorcey to Culver City Speedway in Southern California, which was a block away from where we lived, to watch madmen like Swede Lindskog and Bill Vukovich scream around the track in Midget racers often powered by Ford 60 flatheads. Uncle Benny would carry me on his shoulders so I could see, and I loved every minute of it and vowed to become a racer myself some day.

It never happened. I played around with cars and engines when I was a youth, and I worked in gas stations and garages during my student days, but my first car was a Chevy that I purchased for a mere 25 dollars. Then I put a GMC 270 in a 1949 Chev that I rescued from a junkyard. I got the engine for nothing because it was just junk sitting out behind a friend's shed.

After that, I went on to become a starving student and got married and had three kids, so I never did go racing, and never owned a Ford. But as I grew older and more prosperous, I got into restoring classic cars and never cared much about new cars. Besides, by that time, the cars of my youth were becoming classics.

Uncle Benny died in 1999, but his 53 movies live on because they are shown on Turner

Classic Movies now and then. For most of his life after his flathead period, he drove Cadillacs, but the last time I saw him he was restoring a 1958 Edsel Corsair. I'm not sure what happened to it, but if it were still out there it would be an eye-catcher at shows.

Nowadays, my kids are grown and I'm on my second heart, and I have the time and money to do it, so I am going to do up a Ford flathead V-8 engine like Uncle Benny's. I am not a complete stranger to such engines because I tuned them, repaired them and even helped friends build them, even though I never did one for myself.

I really want to make one better than new. Why? I guess because those engines are such icons. And they are artifacts from my past that can help me relive happy times. The houses we lived in when I was a kid have been torn down, as has the bowling alley where I hung out years ago, and the old speedways have become

shopping malls that now need to be replaced, too. But I can still have a Ford flathead as a time machine to transport me back.

What will I put my masterpiece in? I don't know. Maybe a 1936 Ford three-window coupe. Or maybe I'll put it in the living room as a work of art. Of course my wife may have something to say about that, so for the sake of domestic tranquility it will probably have to remain in my garage.

Perhaps I will just crank it up and listen to it on an engine stand. I have found two solid 1941-'42 blocks, some Navarro heads and the goodies, and I'm ready for action. Time to get out the ridge reamer and the micrometers. After all, nobody who has been a car guy for as long as I have should go through life without building at least one flathead Ford. I'm too old to race, but I can still hear, and I can close my eyes and see Vuky in a four-wheel drift as I blip the throttle.

I think I will keep my creation as homage to Butch, the character Uncle Benny played in the *East Side Kids* comedies. And maybe I can find an Indian Chief like the one my uncle had, too. There is no place left to race, but I can still listen to the music of one of Henry's finest. I'll be living in the past, but then I always have when it comes to cars. 🍷



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