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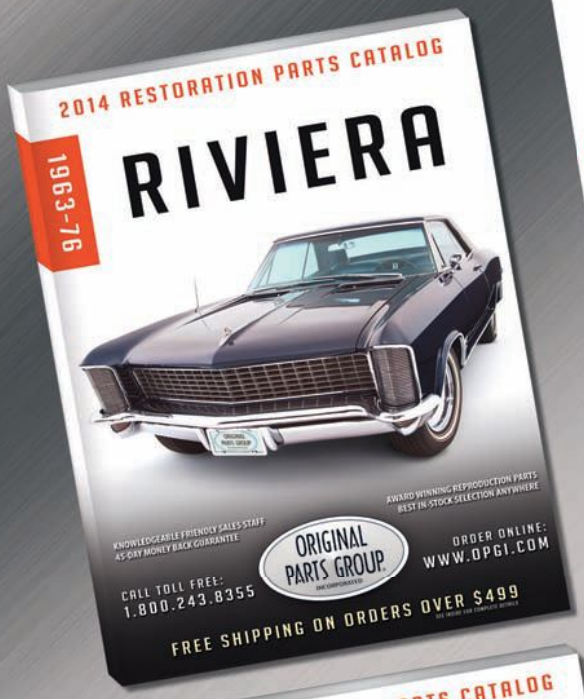

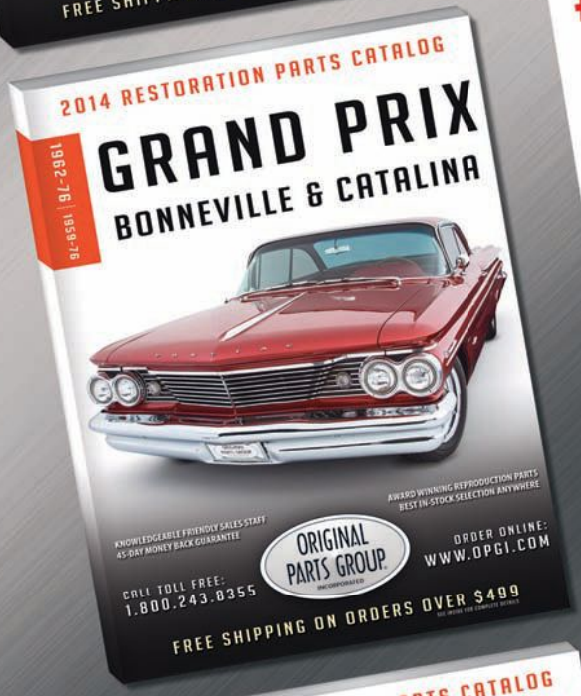

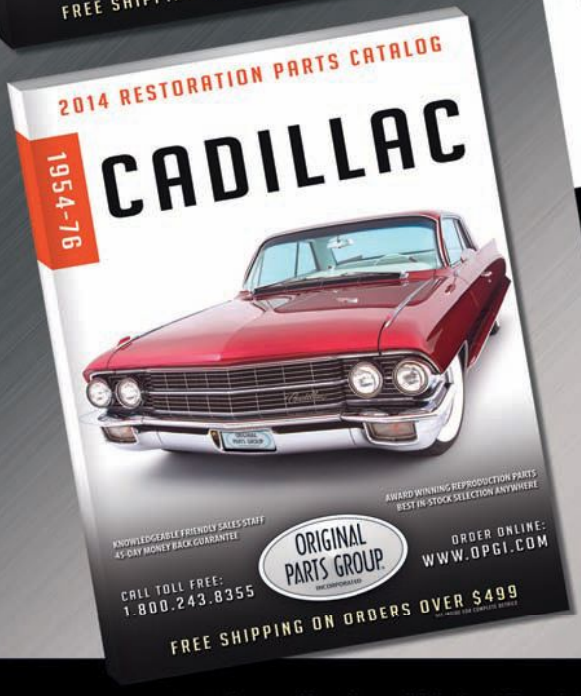

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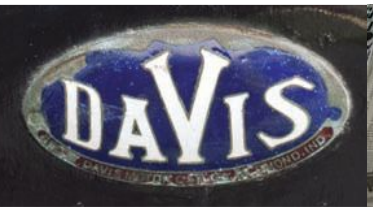

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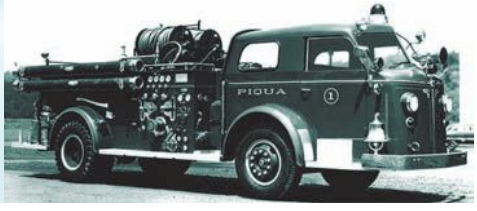

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We found our most important watch in a soldier's pocket

It's the summer of 1944 and a weathered U.S. sergeant is walking in Rome only days after the Allied Liberation. There is a joyous mood in the streets and this tough soldier wants to remember this day. He's only weeks away from returning home. He finds an interesting timepiece in a store just off the Via Veneto and he decides to splurge a little on this memento. He loved the way it felt in his hand, and the complex movement inside the case intrigued him. He really liked the hunter's back that opened to a secret compartment. He thought that he could squeeze a picture of his wife and new daughter in the case back. He wrote home that now he could count the hours until he returned to the States. This watch went on to survive some harrowing flights in a B-24 bomber and somehow made it back to the U.S. Besides the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, my father cherished this watch because it was a reminder of the best part of the war for any soldier—the homecoming.

He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at $42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.

The hunter's back

The Ritorno watch back opens to reveal a special compartment for a keepsake picture or can be engraved.

We wanted to bring this little piece of personal history back to life in a faithful reproduction of the original design. We've used a 27-jeweled movement reminiscent of the best watches of the 1940s and we built this watch with $26 million worth of Swiss built precision machinery. We then test it for 15 days on Swiss made calibrators to insure accuracy to only seconds a day. The movement displays the day and date on the antique satin finished face and the sweep second hand lets any watch expert know that it has a fine automatic movement, not a mass-produced quartz movement. If you enjoy the rare, the classic, and the museum quality, we have a limited number of *Ritornos* available. We hope that it will remind you to take time to remember what is truly valuable. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price.

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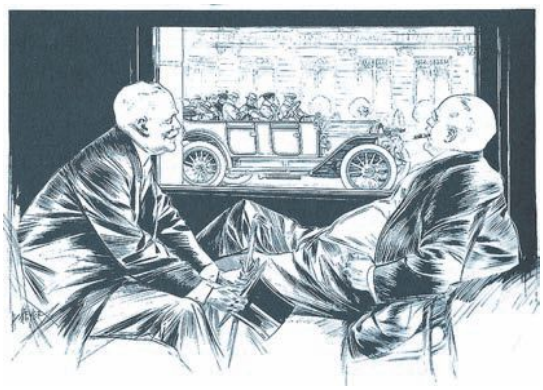
"Our country's automobile industry is part of our heritage, and is just as important as documenting our art and architecture, political history and wars."

richardlentinello

Documenting History

Be it people, places or events, the history of everything is of paramount importance to our existence. We need to know what has been done in the past in order to better understand how to plan for the future. The same applies to our beloved automotive field.

Even if you believe that the past has no bearing on the future, reading about the hows and whys of automobile production, the reasoning behind a car's styling, design and engineering, and how particular models came about, makes for fascinating reading. That is why we instituted the column "I Was There." Our goal with that department is to document as much of America's automotive history as possible, and directly from those workers who lived it day in and day out, before they pass on.



Our country's automobile industry is part of our heritage, and is just as important as documenting our art and architecture, political history and wars. For car enthusiasts, and for all future generations, we need to record as much of our automotive past as we can, while we can. Already we have lost too much, the result of not taking the time to interview those engineers, designers, line workers and past company presidents when we had the chance to do so.

The same lost opportunity happened when all the brave soldiers who fought in World War II, as well as WWI and the Civil War, passed on. Some of their stories were documented, but certainly not enough of them were; thousands of insightful tales will never be known. I sincerely hope our many historians take the time to interview those remaining soldiers from the Korean War, Vietnam and Desert Storm before they too are gone. And with so many of these great soldiers being car guys, there are some worthwhile and compelling stories to be had that center on the cars that they bought once they made it home.

So, no sooner had my column on Crestline books appeared in *HCC* #115 than I received a call from an old car friend of ours, Geoff Hacker, asking if I would like to meet Crestline founder and publisher George Dammann. Knowing that this was a great opportunity to interview George and discover how his line of automotive books came about was too good to pass up. With George retired and living in Sarasota, I almost immediately hopped in my car and made the three-hour drive to Florida's west coast to meet with George. Rare chances like this, one doesn't pass up.

Why I felt it was so important for us to feature George as a Personality Profile was that he, more than anyone else, was instrumental in documenting America's automobile history. By George devoting years, time and money to writing, photographing and assembling each Crestline book, making sure that each auto company's history featured a photograph of every model of every car that the company ever made, was not only a huge undertaking, but it was one of importance to our heritage. These are the only books ever published that have gone to such length of profiling each and every American model car ever made. An amazing effort no doubt, and all because of George Dammann's dedication to American history.

Before it's too late, I would relish the opportunity to be able to interview every single person who played a role in the design, production and manufacture of American-made automobiles. Even cars that were built in the 1990s, as they too will soon become old and collectible. Maybe not all of them, but quite a few will.

So here's where we can use your assistance. If you know of any person who had a career in the automobile industry and feel that he or she played a significant role in it, we would appreciate knowing who they are, and, if possible, be provided with their contact information. We are interested in interviewing engineers, designers, stylists, illustrators, photographers, company presidents, CEOs and top-level management, production supervisors and line workers, as well as those responsible for marketing and sales. Their stories, and the information that they can provide us with, will prove insightful, interesting and important. It's America's history, and we need to know it.

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

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BY TOM COMERRO

William Clay Ford 1925-2014

WILLIAM CLAY FORD, THE YOUNGEST SON of Edsel Ford's four children and grandchild of Henry Ford, died March 9 at the age of 88 from pneumonia. W.C. Ford would spend 57 years as an employee and board member of the Ford Motor Company. He was elected to the company's board of directors on June 4, 1948, where he would share his unique childhood stories about being taught to drive by his grandfather Henry Ford and his first airplane ride with Charles Lindberg in a Ford Tri-Motor.

W.C. Ford would go on to set the company's design direction and serve as chairman of the design committee for 32 years. Among his greatest designs was the 1956 Continental Mark II. He also held many different titles within FoMoCo's corporate offices including director emeritus, which he was named after his retirement as director in May 2005. He was a great philanthropist and a pillar of the Detroit community, donating to various hospitals and museums. He was also owner of the Detroit Lions since 1963. He was the last surviving grandchild of Henry Ford.

Father's Day Celebration

***HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS* IS CALLING** on all car clubs to join in the 15th annual celebration of the Old Man and his Old Car. Be sure to plan your own car show, cruise-in, tour, parade, rally, picnic, ice cream or breakfast run, or visit to a local nursing home this June 13-15. It's a great tool for clubs to promote membership and strengthen our hobby in your community as well as a great dad-and-family activity. Hemmings will gladly support your Father's Day event by providing, for a modest fee: vehicle ID signs, window decals, "Do Not Touch" signs, plastic bags, free door prize, free promotion in the "events" section and online, and commemorative magnets. Sign up today to place your order; call 800-227-4373 ext. 79644.

Bantam Jeep Festival

BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA, is the sight of one of the premier Jeep-only events, taking place June 13-15. The Bantam Jeep Heritage Festival attracts loyal Jeep enthusiasts from all over the country, ranging from those with rare military Jeeps to those who want to test their Jeep's off-road capabilities on wooded trails, in mud pits and over obstacles. Also available is a show and shine and a corral for those looking to sell their Jeep. For a full list of the weekend's activities, visit www.bantamjeep-festival.com.

JUNE Calendar

May 31-June 1 • Greenwich Concours d'Elegance
Greenwich, Connecticut • 203-618-0460
www.greenwichconcours.com

6-8 • Carlisle Ford Nationals
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

7-8 • Manchester Antique & Classic Car Show
Manchester, Vermont • 802-362-6313
www.manchestercarshow.com

8 • Peotone Swap Meet
Peotone, Illinois • 630-200-0755
www.peotoneswapmeet.com

12 • Hemmings Motor News Cruise-In
Bennington, Vermont • 800-227-4373
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13-15 • Pittsburgh Parts-A-Rama
Butler, Pennsylvania • 412-366-7154
www.pittsburghparts-a-rama.com

14 • Air-Cooled Gathering, Gilmore Car Museum
Hickory Corners, Michigan • 419-358-4651

15 • EyesOn Design Exhibition
Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan • 313-824-4710
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20-22 • Carlisle GM Nationals
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Wellesley, Massachusetts • 774-420-8811
www.concoursonthecharles.com

26-28 • AACA Central Spring Meet
Lincoln, Nebraska • www.nraaca.org

26-28 • Vintage Thunderbird Club International Regional Convention • Minneapolis, Minnesota
763-781-813

Chrysler 300 Meet

THE CHRYSLER 300 CLUB is holding its 44th annual spring meet in Mystic, Connecticut, from June 11-14. The club is dedicated to the Chrysler 300 letter series built from 1955-'65 as well as the 1970 300 Hurst. This year's meet will have a special celebration for the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Chrysler 300K. This show is a must for anyone who loves the letter cars. For more information visit www.chrysler300club.com.

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BY DANIEL STROHL

Four-Eyed Pride

CONTINUING OUR RECENT FASCINATION with mid- to late-1950s Cadillacs with mix-n-match styling elements, we came across this 1956 Cadillac Eldorado Seville in the catalog for the recent RM Auctions event in Phoenix, Arizona.

As we all know, 1956 Cadillacs arrived from the factory with dual headlamps, not quads, but the auction description for this particular Seville (VIN 5662056926) claims that it was a factory design prototype, one of at least three such cars that Cadillac built with quad headlamps before the first production Cadillac to feature the headlamps, the 1957 Eldorado Brougham. In addition, the Seville sports 1957-style soft-tip front bumpers and the window trim scheme of the 1956 Cadillac Castilian show car.

What the auction description doesn't offer is any sort of documentation proving that Cadillac built this car this way. Castilian trim would suggest that Cadillac did—that doesn't seem like an item anybody outside the factory could apply to their car—but the selling price of $49,500 (against a no-reserve pre-auction estimate of $70,000 to $90,000) suggests that not everyone was ready to buy its suggested provenance.

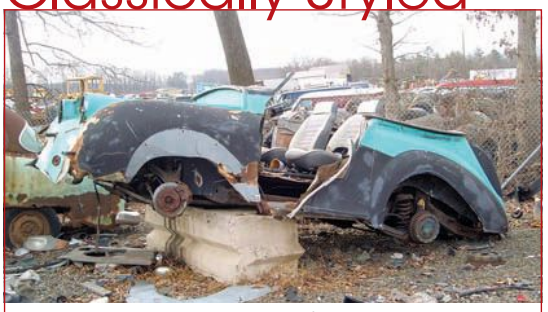
Nutmeg Steamer

WHILE PERUSING THE ARCHIVES of the Stratford (Connecticut) Historical Society, Dave Duggan came across this photo of an automobile with a strangely proportioned man at the tiller and with no information connected to it.

We can't begin to postulate about the identity of the man, but the car looks rather like a steamer, and indeed we know of at least one major Connecticut builder of steam cars: Locomobile started out building derivatives of the Stanley brothers' initial steam car designs until 1905, when it switched to gasoline-powered cars.

This car certainly looks like a circa-1902 Locomobile steamer, with its drooping chain-drive assembly in the center of the car and several other telltales. Still, we're no experts on Locomobiles or early steam cars, so would anybody care to confirm our suspicions?

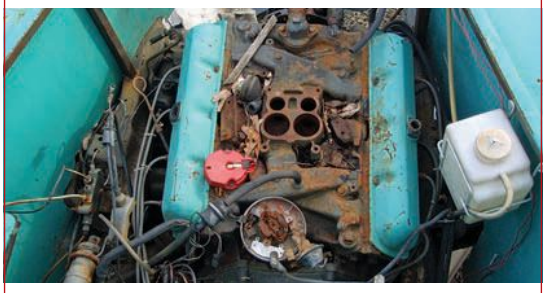
Classically Styled



WHILE OLDSMOBILE'S Toronado contains many an element that calls up the days of the Full Classics and the coachbuilt era, some anonymous builder apparently thought it didn't have enough retro style, resulting in the homebuilt custom that Jeff Archer of New Ringgold, Pennsylvania, spotted in his local U-Pull-It junkyard.

"What caught my eye was the big-block Olds engine, then I realized whoever built it used the whole forward frame and front drive from a Toronado," Jeff wrote. "Body was built from aluminum with a lot of Bondo. A wood boot was fabricated around the rear of the seats. The trunk area was thought to be Cadillac Seville, but was also hand fabricated. Talked to the people that own the yard but nobody knows anything about it."

So, has anybody in the central to eastern part of Pennsylvania seen this car in its pre-junkyard days?



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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BY MIKE BUMBECK

GOODING & COMPANY BY BRIAN HENNIKER

Amelia Island Success

GOODING & COMPANY REALIZED $30.9 million during its Amelia Island Auction, selling 78 out of 88 total lots for an 89-percent sell-through rate and an average price of $396,839 per car sold. One of those 88 lots was this 1932 Cadillac V-16 Madame X Imperial Sedan, which sold above its estimate at $264,000. The V-16 under the long hood was rated for 165 hp, combining both power and luxury in this rare machine. "We were very proud of the outstanding results at this year's Amelia Island Auction. It was wonderful to see the room respond so well, with a strong sale total, which was up 11 percent from last year, and a number of world records," said David Gooding. With Florida in the books, the California-based company is heading for summer in Monterey, as Gooding & Company is the official auction house of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. The Pebble Beach auctions will take place on August 16 and 17. Previews are coming soon. Contact: www.goodingco.com.

VICARI AUCTION

Cruisin' to Nocona

VICARI AUCTION HAS PARTNERED with the City of Nocona, Texas and the Horton Classic Car Museum for the 2nd annual Cruisin' Nocona collector car event, with upwards of 400 collector cars slated for auction May 1-3 in downtown Nocona, which is fast becoming the "Classic Car Capital of Texas." Cruisin' Nocona hosts three days of car shows, a Classic Car Poker Cruise, live music, food and automotive vendors, and daily scheduled fun. There's still time to tank up and head to Nocona. And speaking of tanking up, we can't think of a better Cadillac to cruise across Texas in, or at the very least to stop at the Big Texan and get a steak dinner in, than this unquestionably unique 1976 Cadillac Mirage Sports Wagon car-truck-car conversion, just one of the hundreds of collector cars slated for the auction.
Contact: www.vicariauction.com.

AUCTION PROFILE

RM AUCTIONS EUGENE ROBERTSON

THIS LOCOMOBILE LIVED UP TO its name with an 85-hp, 525-cu.in. T-head straight-six engine and four-speed manual transmission sitting on an imposing 142-inch wheelbase. The solid front and floating leaf-sprung rear axle took care of steering and suspension. Slowing down required planning, with only rear-wheel mechanical brakes. This car is unusual, not only because it was originally coachbuilt as a roadster, but because it later spent time as a tow truck after a wrecking boom was installed aft of the seating compartment.

The Locomobile was returned to its original specifications after a long rest at Levine's Salvage Yard in New Haven, Connecticut. It then passed through a few owners and restorative processes, and even ultimately bested 11 lesser automobiles in the 1988 Connecticut Sport Hill Climb. The Locomobile was presented at the RM Amelia Island Auction as a driveable example of archetypal American automotive aristocracy, which despite its nearly 100 years of age, was reported to be able to maintain modern highway velocities with ease.

CAR	1919 Locomobile Model 48 Roadster by Merrimac
AUCTIONEER	RM Auctions
LOCATION	Amelia Island, Florida
DATE	March 8, 2014
LOT NUMBER	170
CONDITION	#3/Restored
RESERVE	N/A
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	Unknown
SELLING PRICE	$143,000

JUNE Calendar

1 • Greenwich, Connecticut
Bonhams • 212-644-9001
www.bonhams.com
6-8 • Tulsa, Oklahoma • Leake
800-722-9942 • www.leakecar.com
7 • Enid, Oklahoma • VanDerBrink
Auctions • 605-201-7005
www.vanderbrinkauctions.com
14 • Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Silver Auctions • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com
14 • Nashville, Tennessee • Southern
Classic Autions • 615-496-2277
www.southernclassicauctions.com
14 • West Fargo, North Dakota
VanDerBrink Auctions • 605-201-7005
www.vanderbrinkauctions.com
19 • Raleigh, North Carolina
Raleigh Classic • 919-269-5271
www.raleighclassic.com
18-21 Newport Beach, California
Russo and Steele • 602-252-2697
www.russoandsteele.com
20-21 St. Paul, Minnesota
MidAmerica Auctions • 651-633-9655
www.midamericaauctions.com
21 • Greeley, Colorado
Specialty Auto Auctions • 970-266-9561
www.saaasinc.com

Boneyard Blowout and Woodie Weekend

VANDERBRINK AUCTIONS IS GOING for a double feature in June, starting with an entire salvage lot's worth of classic American cars on June 7. The Enid, Oklahoma-based salvage yard was owned by Oliver Jordan until he passed away at 95 years of age in 2003. The sequestered collection of over 250 cars remained in the family and is now being offered in a one-day sale.

The very next weekend, VanDerBrink is heading to the Veteran's Memorial Hall in Fargo, North Dakota, to auction the Lowell Lundberg Collection, all of which will be offered with no reserve on June 14. Along with some sweet woodies in wagon and sedan form, will be a vast array of collector car parts and associated memorabilia. Complete and project cars without wood are also in store. For more information visit www.vanderbrinkauctions.com.

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

BY MARK J. McCOURT, J. DANIEL BEAUDRY,
JIM DONNELLY AND RICHARD LENTINELLO

A Toast to 60 Years

2014 REPRESENTS HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS'S 60th anniversary year, and we're celebrating in many ways, large and small. One of the special anniversary products we're offering in 2014 is this limited-edition, 16-ounce Colonial Tankard, decorated with our special 60th logo. Fill this hefty glass mug with your favorite cold beverage, and raise it in the air. Here's to celebrating the collector car hobby for another 60 years! Cost: $14.95

800-227-4373

www.hemmings.com/store

1971 Lincoln Continental Mark III

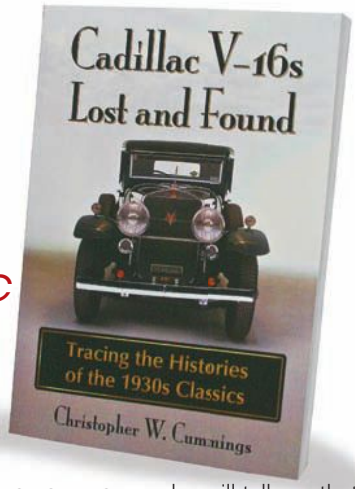
THE CONTINENTAL MARK III WAS A RENAISSANCE for this storied nameplate, which long represented the finest personal luxury vehicles from the Lincoln Motor Company. This car, which was in production from 1968 through 1971, may have been based on the common Ford Thunderbird, but it cut a dashing and exclusive figure. Automodello has created a stunning 1:24-scale model of the final year of Mark III production, 1971, and it is available in two forms: the Tribute Edition, patterned after the example that appeared in the film *The French Connection* (Ginger Bronze Moondust over Dark Tobacco interior; 171 hand-numbered pieces), and the Limited Edition (Red Moondust with Black top over Dark Red interior; 499 hand-numbered pieces).

This hefty collectible is incredible, in typical Automodello style; cast in resin and finished by hand with automotive-quality paint, it features a removable sunroof panel, accurate scale trim, separate lenses and raised chrome foil for emblems. Interior components have realistic texturing, with a legible instrument panel and flock carpeting. They aren't inexpensive, but their quality is such that both editions of this Continental Mark III will be highly sought by Lincoln fans.

Cost: $299.95 (Limited Edition); $371 (Tribute Edition)

847-274-9645

www.diecasm.com



Cadillac V-16s Lost and Found

YOU'LL RUN INTO A LOT OF PEOPLE who will tell you that the single greatest product that General Motors ever created wasn't the Corvette, but instead the 16-cylinder cars of Cadillac. This book started out as an effort to study the earliest V-16 Cadillacs, but it quickly expanded in scope. This wonderful little volume—actually, at 284 softcover pages, it's not so little—is a car-by-car examination of significant V-16s, with more than 40 cars covered by individual chapters. There are lots of big sedans, but there's also a V-16 dry lakes roadster, of all things, and a 1933 Imperial re-powered by 16 Cadillac cylinders. Cool stuff galore. Cost: $45

800-253-2187

www.mcfarlandpub.com

Duesenberg Sweatshirts

WITH THE FAMOUS DUESENBERG EAGLE spreading its wings across the front of this long-sleeved sweatshirt, you'll fend off chills while fellow automobile enthusiasts remark on your refined tastes and appreciation of classic power. Made of a soft, preshrunk 50/50 cotton and polyester mix, these medium-weight sweatshirts are screen printed and available in two color combinations, navy with tan logo (#C1097) and sand with navy logo (#C1117). Cost: $25.95, navy; $29.95, sand

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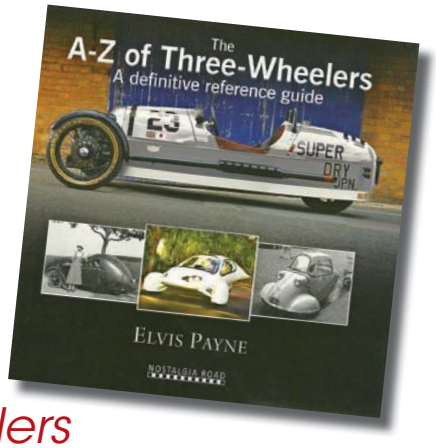
www.automobilemuseum.org



The A-Z of Three Wheelers

THIS "DEFINITIVE REFERENCE GUIDE" profiles all the three-wheel vehicles ever made throughout the world. More than we realized, there are many American-built three-wheelers, with Cushman being the most popular. Among its 304 pages, each manufacturer is profiled along with at least one photograph, usually its most popular car; however, the information provided is fairly brief, with some builders only receiving a single paragraph. As a reference guide and not a history book, that's to be expected. The text is well-written, and the information worthy enough to make this a useful addition to your library. Cost: $39.95

800-551-4754

www.cartechbooks.com

1938 Buick Limited Town Car

THE VENERABLE DERHAM BODY COMPANY was famous for its series custom-built town car bodies, with exposed chauffeur front compartments and fully enclosed rear passenger compartments. The "B. C. 1934 to 1939 Buick Collection" by England's Brooklin Models now includes a fetching 1:43-scale rendition of a Derham-bodied 1938 Buick Limited Town Car. With a black top and front compartment—and tan rear compartment—setting off the body's metallic burgundy Muscovado Poly paint, this heavy, white metal model features fine bright trim detailing and a woodgrain-style dashboard. It's an impressive piece representing the final days of the elegant town car. Cost: $129.50

800-718-1866

www.diecastdirect.com

Fordite Jewelry

PAINTING AUTOMOBILES ON AN ASSEMBLY LINE used to be a messy business, with skids, rollers, hangers and spray hoods quickly becoming layered with colorful enamel, which then got baked with the car parts. Workers tasked with periodically chipping the slag from the equipment noticed that beautifully colored patterns were stored within it and would take pieces home as keepsakes.

Cindy Dempsey, a Chicago-based fine jeweler, is passionate about the material, which some call "Fordite" or "Detroit Agate." She features it in many of her exquisitely hand-wrought sterling silver and stainless steel cuff links, lapel pins, rings and pendants.

"I really love the idea of 'mining your time'" Cindy explains, "and that is what we artists are doing when we repurpose a material like this that represents a little time capsule of history. The remodeling of this material not only salvages a byproduct that, frankly, just looks like junk in its raw form, but it ultimately extracts the incredible beauty out of it. It gives the viewer a peek backward in time…that moment on the paint line…all of those cars. You can get a sense of the sounds, the smells, the feeling of industry. It is part of our country's great heritage." Prices starting at $85.

Urban Relic Design

www.urbanrelicdesign.com

BY TOM COMERRO

Bowtie Bolts

The Filling Station adds new headlamp-bar mounting bolt sets to its inventory. This reproduction set will work for all 1931 Chevrolet passenger cars. The bolts are stainless steel, and polished to a bright, shiny finish. Each set comes with all of the necessary mounting hardware and is a nice finishing touch for your Chevy's restoration. Cost: $69.50/set.

Contact:
The Filling Station
800-841-6622
www.fillingstation.com

Nova Taillamps

Owners of fourth-generation Novas have no doubt noticed that it's becoming a bit more difficult to find trim parts. Classic Industries now offers replacement tail-lamp assemblies and bezels for all 1975-'79 Chevrolet Novas. The parts are built to factory specifications, so they are original-looking re-placements for your damaged or missing parts. Each component fits as the originals did, and you can order the housing, bezels or full assemblies. Bezels are available in SS/Rally (black), Standard (silver), or Concours (chrome). Cost: $80-200 each.

Contact:
Classic Industries
855-357-2787
www.classicindustries.com

Maneuverable Magic

Chicago Pneumatic's new ½-inch impact wrench is designed for power and convenience in confined spaces. At only 4.4-inches long, this is designed to be the perfect tool for transmission, engine and brake work. With 450-ft.lb. of torque, and a light weight of only 2.9 pounds, this impact wrench should easily remove or tighten fasteners in the most cramped quarters. The tool easily changes orientation for either right- or left-handed use, and provides three power settings in both forward and re-verse. The jumbo hammer-impact mechanism provides power and durability at 9,000 RPM. Steel-and-aluminum construction adds to its long-lasting durability. Cost: $140.

Contact:
Chicago Pneumatic Tool
800-624-4735
www.cp.com

Full-Size Ford Exhaust

Shafer's Classic Reproductions of-fers exhaust systems for 1963-'64 full-size Fords. These aluminized steel, dual-exhaust systems, with turbo mufflers, are designed for the 352 and 390 V-8 engines. Available for the two- and four-door hardtop and sedan, but not for convertibles or station wag-ons, the system is said to be built like the original-style two-inch-diameter assembly. Includes all of the required clamps, gaskets and flanges. Visit Shafer's website or call for more details. Cost: $550.

Contact:
Shafer's Classic Reproductions
813-628-0092
www.shafersclassic.com

Multi-Welder

Miller Electric introduces a new all-in-one portable multi-process welding power source called the Multimatic 200. This welding unit is capable of performing MIG, electric and TIG welding processes in one compact design. The new Auto-Set Elite feature is constructed to allow operators to quickly and easily set weld parameters based on material type and thickness, as well as fine-tune those parameters to match each specific application. Ideal for use in light fabri-cation, maintenance and repair, the Multimatic 200 system has a durable, impact-resistant polycarbonate case that protects the machine from harsh environments and daily use. For more information, please visit Miller's website. Cost for the base model starts at $2,000.

Contact:
Miller Electric Manufacturing
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www.MillerWelds.com

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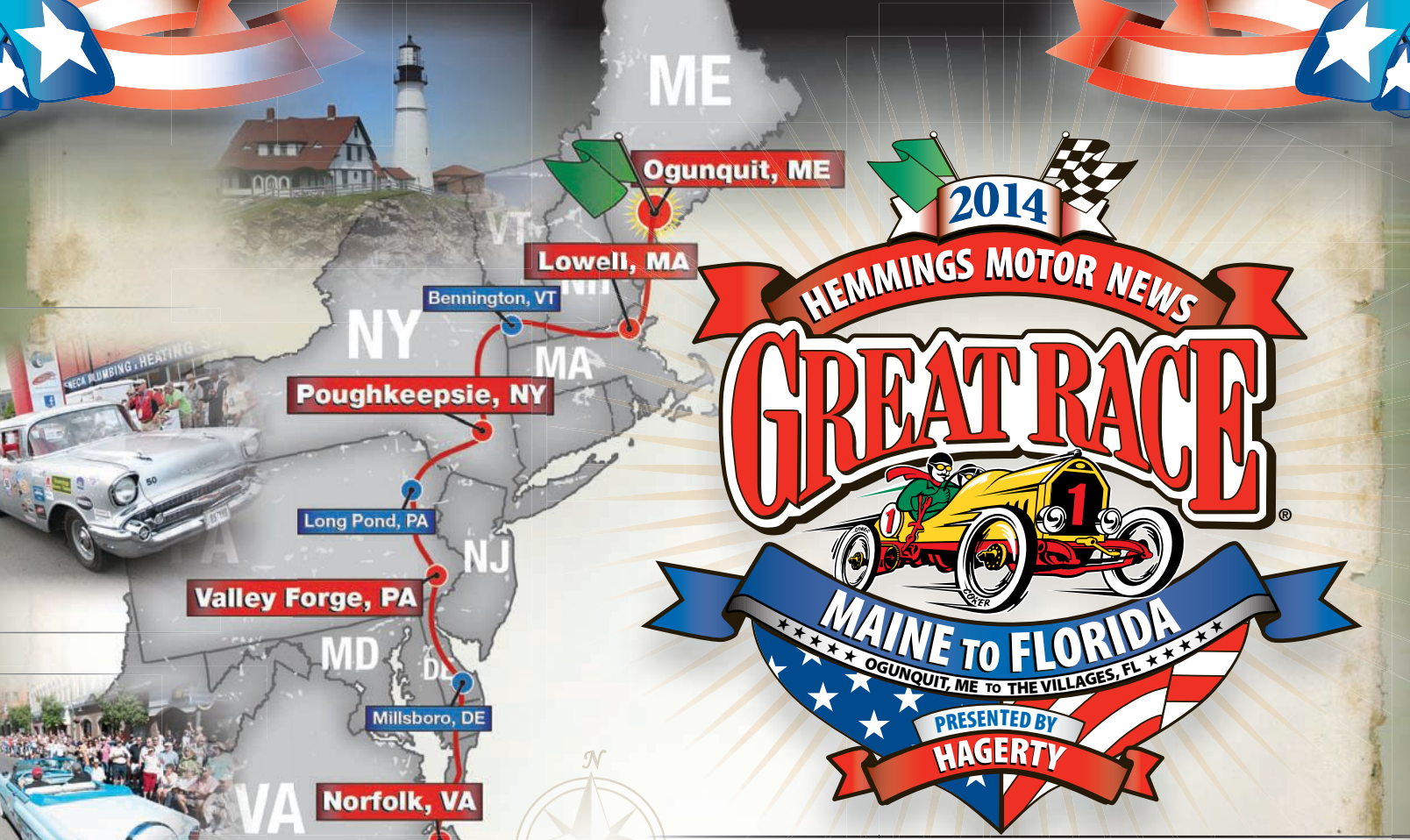

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Overnight Cities
Lunch Cities

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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Wildcat!

A personal luxury car predecessor, Buick's mid-priced mark of the Sixties led a double life as a full-size performance car

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF *HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS*

Buick's new 1962 Wildcat—a sub-model in the Invicta series—was created to exemplify the full-size performance car market, with standard bucket seats, special trim and custom vinyl top for under $4,000. Released in the spring, it's estimated that 2,000 were built.

Buick has always been a symbol of affordable luxury, blessed with noteworthy ride and handling characteristics. The automaker has habitually bestowed its cars with attractive styling, complemented by interiors comparable to upscale Cadillac, and, in some cases, equaling those found in its lavish Detroit rivals. So proficient was Buick with this careful combination that at one point, the division was ranked third in the industry behind volume leaders Chevrolet and Ford.

Discerning buyers from diverse backgrounds have long appreciated not only the status symbol of success the Tri-shield logo represented, but also the power ushered forth by its series of engines, from the smooth and silent straight-eight to the 455-cu.in. big-block V-8 of 1970 that claimed 510-lb.ft. of torque, which reigned as the most powerful domestically produced engine for the next 22 years. Although the 455 is most remembered for powering the intermediate GS during the height of the muscle car era, higher-horsepower versions, and its ancestral brethren, were also called upon to power nearly the entire full-size line of cars, including the Wildcat.

The Wildcat came into existence as a notable member of Buick's concept car fleet of the early Fifties, with several of its styling cues later adapted to the division's existing product lineup. But to understand the Wildcat as a production model and how it fit into Buick's Sixties lineup, one first has to look at its lineage, which can be traced to the 1936 Century, arguably the first example of the high-output engine in a mid-size platform formula that Pontiac would later capitalize upon. Although it was on hiatus from 1946-'53, within a year of its reintroduction, the Century—a direct reference to its advertised top speed—was winning on the NASCAR circuit, helping spur sales to a peak of 158,796 units.

Buick assembled 12,185 Wildcat two-door Sport Coupes for 1963, each with the unique side trim that encapsulated faux venti-ports. This example is also equipped with the optional cornering lamps.

Although similar to the 1963s, the 1964 Wildcats were longer and restyled, featuring racy side trim and model-specific grilles.

After the 1956 recession and the polarizing 1958 redesign, Buick made sweeping changes for 1959. While gaining all-new styling, traditional model nomenclature was abandoned, including the Century model name. In its place was the Invicta, which was the new full-size performance car positioned between the entry-level LeSabre and top-of-the-line Electra. The Invicta came standard with the new "Wildcat 445" 401-cu.in. V-8, Triple Turbine Dynaflow transmission, and upscale trim and appointments, and over the next three years, the 123-inch-wheelbase chassis was constantly improved to enhance performance.

Unfortunately, Invicta sales dropped from 52,851 in 1959 to a staggeringly low 28,733 in 1961, prompting Buick, in part, to follow the lead of its divisional competition. Pontiac and Oldsmobile were about to release specially trimmed, bucket seat-equipped models to chip away at the fledgling personal luxury car market dominated by Ford's Thunderbird. Buick, therefore, recalled the Wildcat name and applied it to an Invicta-based two-door hardtop.

The production Wildcat went beyond the basic Invicta. Though it did share the 325-hp 401 V-8, chassis engineering and 214.1-inch-long body, Wildcats were festooned with standard equipment, including dual exhaust, sporty vinyl bucket seats, a center console enveloping the transmission shift lever, tachometer, special headliner, trim and wheel covers, and white or black custom vinyl top, among other items. The new model was released to the public in the spring of 1962 at a cost of $3,927. *Motor Trend* tested it, recording a 0-60 MPH time of 8.1 seconds, and a quarter-mile run in 17.1 seconds at 81 MPH. These results seemed conservative due to the mandated engine when compared against some of its competition; however, Buick's advertising campaign—"Performance Image Personification"—had left an indelible impression on an estimated 2,000 buyers, which was enough to convince Buick's front office to not only continue the model, but to replace the Invicta name outright with the more direct performance-inspired Wildcat moniker for the 1963 model year. The lone exception would be the one-year-only Invicta station wagon.

Having ousted Invicta, the Wildcat was now available in two-door hardtop, convertible and four-door hardtop guises. Its bucket seats/center console arrangement was still standard equipment in all but the four-door, in which case a bench seat and column-shifted Dynaflow became the standard interior. Although the chassis was essentially unchanged from the previous year, the body—shared with the LeSabre—was updated to a more contemporary look. Wildcat trim continued to

remain unique to the line, including grille, wheel covers and side trim.

Still equipped with the 325-hp 401, the Wildcat had a base price below $4,000, even for the convertible; however, there were some notable additions to the option chart. Along with cornering lamps, a four-speed manual transmission was finally offered—only 346 were installed throughout the entire series—and in the spring, the "Wildcat 465" could have been selected, which was a 401 bored out to 425 cubic inches that, with a single four-barrel carburetor, made 340 hp and 465-lb.ft. of torque. These 1963 models were the first Wildcats fitted with an alternator instead of a generator.

If there was any hint of the Wildcat evolving into a true personal luxury car, it vaporized with the release of the Riviera, which not only stole headlines but sales as well, to the tune of 40,000 cars. Still, total 1963 Wildcat production jumped to 35,725, the most popular model surprisingly being the four-door hardtop at 17,519 copies.

At first blush, the 1964 Wildcats were merely refined; however, the bodies were also lengthened from 215.7 to 218.5 inches, and used the same 123-inch wheelbase chassis. With a four-door sedan added to the line, the new bodies featured a more pronounced W-shaped front-end treatment, while retaining quad headlamps and unique Wildcat-specific grille; the rear panel and taillamps were redesigned as well. Wide, ribbed trim was positioned just above the rocker panels, and Buick's traditional faux venti-ports were vastly redesigned for the series. Elongated, providing the appearance of speed, they were stacked and positioned behind each front wheel opening. Optional chromed five-spoke Road Wheels added a touch of sportiness to the already crisp body lines, and the vinyl top continued as an option since 1963.

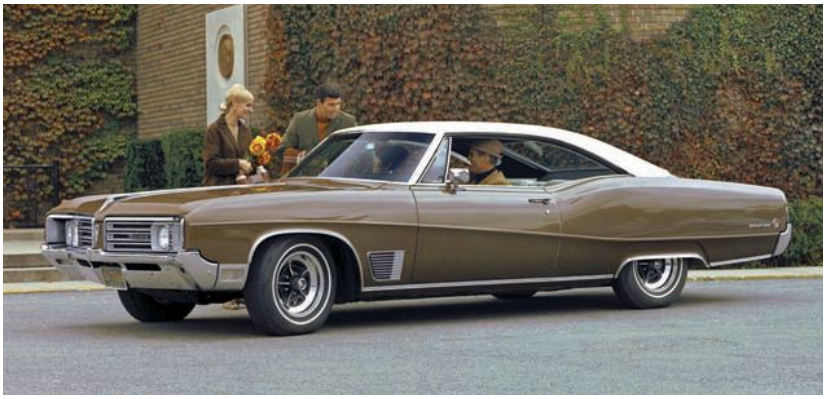
For 1965, convertibles were offered only in Deluxe—as seen here, with optional Road Wheels—or Custom trim levels.

The Wildcat's plush but racy interior appointments remained virtually the same—though model year refinements to trim and the instrument panels were ongoing—however, the bulk of the year-to-year improvements continued to be made under the hood. Hinting at what buyers were in store for, Buick ads state, "The regular engine is 325 horsepower with options up to 360. This should suggest something to you about Wildcat performance. Fifteen minutes at the wheel will suggest a lot more."

That little notation of 360 hp was a direct reference to the newly available "Super Wildcat" V-8: a 425-cu.in. engine with dual four-barrel carburetors, and a specific camshaft and distributor to maximize performance. Available above the base

Attempting to capitalize on the muscle car boom, Buick offered a one-year-only Wildcat Gran Sport in 1966. This example is one of 839 Custom coupes assembled during the model year. Total Wildcat Gran Sport production was 1,245, with 21 of those cars having been fitted with the mighty 360-hp, 425-cu.in. engine.

Now riding on the longer 126-inch Electra chassis, the 1967 Wildcat bodies were restyled yet again with aggressive concave grilles and a fastback bodyline on two-door hardtops. Optional five-spoke Road Wheels completed the performance look with new side trim.



Changes were minimal to the 1968 models, such as a contemporary grille, as the model slid from its performance heritage.

401 V-8 and optional 340-hp 425, it was ordered by just 638 customers, 366 of whom had them installed in two-door hardtops.

Eliminated from the entire Buick fleet was the Dynaflow transmission. Its replacement was a column-shifted three-speed manual. A four-speed manual remained as optional equipment, which was joined by the Turbo Hydra-Matic three-speed automatic. This combination of new equipment and styling, along with new base prices ranging from $3,164 to $3,455, struck a chord with buyers, as sales jumped to a combined 84,245 units.

Two major changes greeted potential Wildcat customers for the 1965 model year. First, an all-new 219.8-inch long body was designed as the series was moved from the LeSabre chassis to that of the Electra. Second, in an attempt to cover the full economic buyer spectrum, two sub-series were added to the line: Wildcat Deluxe and top-of-the-line Wildcat Custom, clouding model distinctions. These sub series were best described as nothing more than trim options. Base prices now ranged from $3,117 for an entry-level four-door sedan, to $3,651 for the Deluxe convertible. The long-standing bucket seat interiors were now standard only in Custom trimmed four- and two-door hardtops and the convertible, although the engine and transmission offerings remained the same as the previous model year throughout the Wildcat series. Yet, in spite of the model designation mess, Buick produced 98,787 Wildcats, the most popular being the Custom subseries that continued into 1966, while the Deluxe models were unceremoniously dropped.

There was finally a sense of stability with regard to the Wildcat body design when the 1966 line finally appeared, with the exception of the typical model year refinements to the front and rear fascia and trim. Still available in four body styles, the model featured subtle suspension changes to improve handling characteristics, and a three-speed manual that was improved for greater durability. As was the case the previous year, base Wildcats received a form of bench seat as standard equipment, while Custom-trimmed editions—the four-door sedan excluded from the sub-series—could have been obtained with notch-back bench or Strato-bucket seats.

True full-size performance cars had already established their own legacy by 1966, and with the muscle car movement in full swing, Buick expanded its Gran Sport package to the Wildcat; it would prove to be a one-year-only package. Available only as a two-door hardtop or convertible, the Y48-coded package included the 340-hp 425 V-8, dual exhaust, heavy-duty suspension, Positive Traction differential, and special white or red stripe tires, which added $263.13 to the list price. A total of 1,224 were built.

Eliminated from the option chart was the 360-hp Super Wildcat 425 engine, but on March 1, it was re-released to the public and available through the W14-coded Wildcat Gran Sport package. Only 21 of the 200 Super Wildcat 425 engines built were installed in W14-spec Wildcats: one convertible, three Custom convertibles, four two-door hardtops and 13 Custom two-door hardtops. The remaining 179 Super Wildcat 425 engines were installed in Rivieras.

Reunited with the smaller 124-inch-wheelbase chassis, the 1969 Wildcats received a more formal roofline, newly sculptured side panels and venti-ports behind the front wheels. Total model year production dropped to 67,453 among four body styles in two trim levels.

Wildcat sales started to slip, hinting at the performance market shift from full-size to intermediate models. As a result, the Wildcat slowly drifted into the realm of a mid-priced full-size car similar in scope to the long-deceased Super series. The 1967 model's body was elegantly restyled with sculptured front-to-rear sweeplines similar to the sweep-spear trim used back in the 1950s. Base Wildcats were offered in four body styles, while Customs could be had as four- or two-door hardtops—and featured bright side trim over the body contour. Mechanically, the Wildcat was simplified with the elimination of the four-speed manual, while a new 360-hp, 430-cu.in. V-8 became the only engine available to the entire series. The new look helped bump production to nearly 71,000 examples, but it was to be short-lived. Model year styling changes were typically minimal for the 1968 editions, which would be the final year in which the Wildcat would utilize the 126-inch-wheelbase chassis.

Returned to its more manageable 124-inch wheelbase, the Wildcat welcomed its last restyled body in 1969 with long, sweeping lines trailing from the crest of each wheel opening and a more formal rear roofline; again, the front and rear fascia were updated for 1970. The addition of side trim visually separated Custom models from base Wildcats in 1969; only the Custom series continued into 1970. Choice of transmission remained unchanged for the duration of the series; however, the 430 was replaced by a 370-hp version of the aforementioned 455 in the Wildcat's final outing in 1970. Only 23,615 were produced.

Much like its predecessors, the Wildcat's story didn't end in 1970. Taking its place was the new 1971 Centurion. With fresh styling, minimal trim and a standard 455-cu.in. V-8, it was once again intended to epitomize the full-size performance-car image. It did not survive beyond the 1973 model year.

In their final outing, 1970 Wildcats were merely refined models; however, they were powered by the legendary 455-cu.in. big-block V-8 engine.

Tamed Wildcat

"Smooth," "powerful" and "quiet" are just a few of the words that can be used to describe Buick's 1963 Wildcat

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

With its clean, robust lines and tasteful decorative trim that lends it an aura of elegance that few cars of its era possess, Buick's sporting Wildcat for 1963 was, and remains today, a truly remarkable automobile. Factor in its well-appointed interior, powerful V-8 engine and the silky smooth performance of its Dynaflow-based transmission, and you have a genuine, unique automobile that, much to the delight of Buick owners and enthusiasts who know a great car when they see it, remains well under the radar.

This 1963 model marks the first year that the Wildcat was its own series; no longer was it a subseries of the Invicta line. All told, Buick produced 35,725 Wildcats for the 1963 model year, with just 6,021 being convertibles. There were 12,185 two-door Sport Coupes and 17,519 four-door Hardtops. Like all of General Motors' full-size B-body models, all three body styles accommodate five or six passengers in absolute luxury.

Granted, the Wildcat's styling may be conservative in appear-

ance, but there are numerous subtle details throughout its exterior that combine to make it a design of notable distinction. The grille assembly is all metal, and the rearmost mesh grille is finished in flat black, giving the center bar a floating-in-space look. The entire grille opening is framed with fluted silver metal paneling that is capped off with a polished stainless steel molding on top; this trim piece is spaced below the leading edge of the hood, thus lending the whole grille area a more pronounced expression. Even the bumper below has shape and style to it.

Inspired by the striking exterior of the 1962 Oldsmobile Starfire, the leading portion of the body is also clad in stainless steel paneling, except on the Wildcat the panel is about three-inches wide and ends mid-section of the door, not at the rear like on the Olds. Within the panel lie three separate horizontal "vents," upholding Buick's characteristic venti-port styling theme. Polished moldings frame each wheel opening and cover the lower portion of the rocker panels, thus adding to the car's sophistication. Full wheel covers, whose design evokes the look of the intake on a turbojet engine—still in vogue back in the early Sixties—disguise the Wildcat's sporting appeal; they are specific to the Wildcat and weren't fitted to any other Buick model.

The styling of the rear is equally elegant with understated tailfins protruding ever so slightly above the trunk lid. The taillamps are set in large, chrome-plated vertical housings, whose pointed tops are the ending points for the adjoining tailfins. The bottom half of the housings' shape is actually part of the rear bumper, with reverse lamps set within. A pair of matching stainless steel panels on the rear valance, which are framed with polished moldings, add greatly to the Wildcat's upscale appearance.

The body sits on the same steel X-frame design that Pontiac used on its 1959-'60 models and that Chevrolet fitted to its 1959-'64 full-size models; Buick put this same frame under all its 1961-

Bucket seats lend the Wildcat's interior a sporting persona. Trimmed in chrome, this seat is equipped with the four-way power option. Seating position is ergonomically perfect.

Adjustable ball vent, left of the speedometer, was only fitted to cars equipped with A/C.

Aviation-style switch panel regulates climate control, courtesy lamps and antenna.

'64 full-size cars as well. Unlike most other full-perimeter frames, this design had no side rails, instead relying on a giant "X" shape for rigidity. The body is suspended front and rear via stout coil springs.

Under the big hood lies Buick's famous "nailhead" V-8 engine. It displaces 401 cubic inches, and with its Rochester 4GC four-barrel carburetor and 10.25:1 compression ratio, pushes out a mean 325 horsepower. More important is its torque rating, which is an amazing 445-lb.ft. at its peak 2,800 RPM. The only other engine available in the Wildcat was the optional 340-hp, 425-cu.in. V-8.

When it came to transmissions, Buick offered buyers two choices, with the Turbine Drive automatic continuing to be the standard unit. For the first time, the series welcomed an optional Borg-Warner T-10 four-speed manual. As one might expect, few selected it. Only 346 were installed throughout the entire Wildcat line, or 0.9 percent of the model year's production. As to the Turbine Drive—used in the Invicta/Wildcat since 1960—it was the final version of the original Dynaflow; this was the last year Buick used it.

The Turbine Drive was based on the same principle as the previous Twin Turbine transmission; here's Buick's description of how it works: "The new Twin Turbine Transmission consists of two turbines, a converter pump, a fixed-blade stator, a variable-vane stator and a set of planetary gears. The first turbine is used for low car speeds. The converter pump, driven by the engine, forces oil against the vanes of this turbine, turning it. The force thus developed is increased through the planetary gears for faster acceleration. The fixed-blade stator re-directs the flow of oil to the second turbine, which is connected directly to the output shaft and takes over at normal speeds. The variable-vane stator changes the pitch of its blades as the driver steps on the accelerator—a low pitch for optimum economy at cruising speeds, a high pitch for optimum performance when needed. The result is an amazing combination of responsiveness and thrift—plus the smoothness only Buick attains."

Like any well-equipped Buick, this Wildcat is loaded with options. It has A/C, AM/FM "BUICK" radio, power windows, remote trunk opener, tinted glass, safety padded lower dash panel, speedometer "speed minder," and power driver's seat. There were actually three different driver seat options: four-, six- or eight-position seats. And in between those wide bucket seats resides a beautifully crafted full-length console that's adorned with ribbed stainless steel paneling. At the head of the console sits a factory-equipped tachometer, which is part of the Wildcat's sporting appeal; its redline is exhibited at the 5,000 RPM mark.

Besides the tachometer, which wasn't available on hardtop models with a front bench seat, the other items that came standard on all Wildcats included a deluxe steering wheel, full wheel covers, license plate frames, center console, padded instrument panel, foam-rubber headliner, electric clock and a courtesy lamp in the trunk.

Our feature car is faithfully owned by long-time full-size-Buick

Console-mounted tach isn't in the best location; trunk release button is in the glovebox. The "P-N-D-L-R" alongside the shifter signifies car is fitted with the Twin Turbine transmission.

All the upholstered interior door panels are original to the car, and still look perfect.

With seating for five, tastefully designed interior is spacious, very comfortable and well laid out. Aftermarket seat belts have been fitted front and rear for safety purposes, as the owner enjoys taking this Wildcat—top down—on long tours with his AACA chapter members.

enthusiast John Giltinan from Palm City, Florida. During the day, John is the associate curator at the Elliott Museum in nearby Stuart, and often drives his Wildcat convertible the 16-mile round-trip—top down, of course. "I have always loved these big Buicks," John tells us. "These cars have always had a good reputation for quality, comfort and reliability, and the styling is beautiful."

Back in 1999, when he lived in Ohio, John decided it was time to replace his 1967 Corvette with an old convertible, preferably a full-size GM model, so that his family could be together when they went out for a drive. His quest for an early '60s Buick resulted in this Wildcat convertible. Although it was, as John put it, "worn out and cosmetically ready for restoration, it was a solid, rust-free car." John goes on to say: "There were still factory grease pencil markings visible on the undercarriage, which was almost completely free of rust. The mystery was solved one day when I removed the clock so that it could be repaired, and attached to its side was a very old service tag from a shop in Huntington Beach, California."

> *"These cars have always had a good reputation for quality, comfort and reliability, and the styling is beautiful."*

Because the Wildcat was in such solid condition during its restoration, there was no need to remove the body from its chassis. The body was stripped to bare metal and repainted in the original Artic White, the red interior was reupholstered to factory-correct specifications, all the stainless trim was polished and the undercarriage painted and detailed. The brakes and suspension were rebuilt, the A/C converted to HFC-134a, and when the engine was removed, the entire engine bay was painted and detailed as well. While the V-8 was out, the cylinder heads were given hardened valve seats, the timing chain replaced, and a new stainless steel dual exhaust system was then fitted.

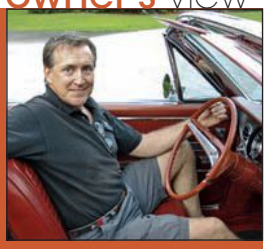
"This is a car that can be driven with modern traffic on I-95 without fear of being run down by a big semi-truck," John says. "On the road, the Wildcat is smooth, powerful and quiet. With the radial tires, it handles well, but with the bias-ply 'show' tires, the ride is certainly better but handling is much worse. The power steering and brakes are sensitive, yet overall it handles quite well for such a large car. And the finned, aluminum brake drums, which were considered state of the art at the time, when properly set up work well with no drama."

As for the acclaimed smoothness of the Turbine Drive transmission, John validates that claim by telling us: "There are no shifts! And it's smooth! When in 'D,' it runs in high range only."

When John allowed me to drive his Wildcat, I discovered firsthand not only the effortlessness of its transmission, but also the relaxed personality driving such a wonderful early '60s convertible

High-quality details are prevalent throughout the interior, such as the stylish metal speaker grille between the rear seats, practical courtesy lamps at the rear of the console and rear armrest, along with stylish stainless steel accents, ashtray and power window switch.

owner's view



My original intention when I bought the Wildcat was to use it as a weekend driver, but as so often happens, once it was restored, it was not used as much as originally planned. However, I do drive it at least once a month, adding close to 2,000 miles annually. I like to use it on club tours, and my partner and I have driven it all over Florida; it never misses a beat, and the A/C is a big plus for a Florida car. It always starts and goes down the road as it was designed to do. It's comfortable and can carry four to five people with lots of luggage. The only negative is its poor fuel mileage, which averages about 12 MPG.

Called the "Wildcat 445" for its torque rating, the 401 nailhead V-8 pushes out a mighty 325 horsepower.

inspires. With the well-crafted convertible top down and out of sight, and with the seat travel set all the way back and adjusted—this was one of the four-position models—there was plenty of room to accommodate my 6'-4" frame. The controls fell readily at hand, bathing me in a welcoming secure comfort that only Detroit-built cruisers like this can provide.

Stabbing the accelerator brought on an immediate response from the torque-happy V-8, with the 4,228-pound car effortlessly surging forward in an unfamiliar manner, as there simply were no upshifts of gears present; just flowing, uninterrupted turbine-like smoothness. It's a remarkable feeling, and it's one that you can easily get used to.

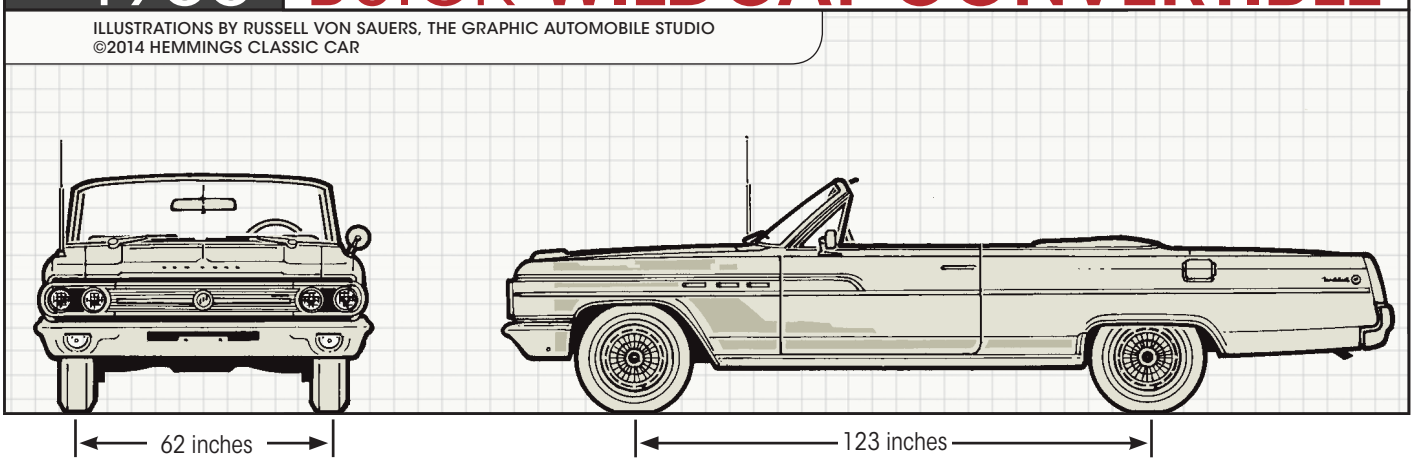
Taking corners at moderate speed was reassuring, as there was little body roll, and the power-assisted steering had just the right amount of looseness to it, which made it enjoyable to steer. And those big 12-inch drum brakes performed flawlessly, stopping the car quickly and without any drama or fade. Overall, I was very impressed with both its comfortable road manners and the quality and design of its interior

Even after more than 50 years, the Harrison A/C unit still looks brand-new, as if it were just installed.

fittings and trim. I now see why devotees of Buicks adore these full-size models so much. They really are great cars, and affordable, too.

"It reminds me of cars that I loved when I was a child, such as my neighbors' 1962 Invicta convertible and 1964 Wildcat hardtop," John blissfully recalls. "My Wildcat convertible is stylish and elegant and reflects the optimism of its time with its crisp tailfins and beautiful aircraft-inspired switchgear. And I love the *Jetsons* touches in the interior!"

1963 BUICK WILDCAT CONVERTIBLE



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

Base price	$3,961
Options (on car profiled):	AM/FM radio, Speed Minder, air conditioning, power windows, power seat, remote trunk opener, tinted glass, safety padded lower dash panel

ENGINE

Type	90-degree OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads
Displacement	401 cubic inches
Bore x stroke	4 3/16 x 3 41/64 inches
Compression ratio	10.25:1
Horsepower @ RPM	325 @ 4,400
Torque @ RPM	445 lb.ft. @ 2,800
Valvetrain	Hydraulic valve lifters
Main bearings	Five
Fuel system	Single four-barrel Rochester 4GC carburetor
Lubrication system	Pressure, gear-drive pump
Electrical system	12-volt
Exhaust system	Dual exhaust

TRANSMISSION:

Type	Turbine Drive Dynaflow automatic
Stall speed ratio	3.4:1

DIFERENTIAL

Type	Hypoid
Gear ratio	3.23:1

STEERING

Type	Recirculating ball-and-nut, power assist
Gear ratio	20.5:1
Turns lock to lock	3.5
Turning Circle	45.9 feet

BRAKES

Type	Hydraulic four-wheel drums, power assist
Front	12-inch finned aluminum drums
Rear	12-inch cast-iron drums

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction	Body on frame
Body style	Convertible
Layout	Front engine/rear drive

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent, unequal length A-arms, coil springs, telescoping shock absorbers, anti-roll bar
Rear	Upper and lower control arms, coil springs, telescoping shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels	Front/rear 6 x 15 inches
Tires	Front/rear 7.60 x 15 BFGoodrich Silvertown four-ply

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase	123 inches
Overall length	215.7 inches
Overall width	78 inches
Overall height	55.5 inches
Front track	62 inches
Rear track	61 inches
Curb weight	4,228 pounds

CAPACITIES

Crankcase	5 quarts
Cooling system	18.5 quarts
Fuel tank	20 gallons

CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.	0.81
Weight per bhp	13.00 pounds
Weight per cu.in.	10.54 pounds

FUEL EFFICENCY

City	9 MPG
Highway	12 MPG
Fuel type	Premium

PRODUCTION

Convertible	6,021
Hardtop	17,519
Sport Coupe	12,185

PROS & CONS

+ Turbine-like smoothness

+ Lots of usable torque

+ Spacious and comfortable

– Lousy gas mileage

– Trim parts hard to find

– Slow low-speed acceleration

WHAT TO PAY

Low
$5,000 – $8,000

Average
$15,000 – $20,000

High
$35,000 – $40,000

CLUB CORNER

Buick Club of America
P.O. Box 360775
Columbus, Ohio 43236
614-472-3939
www.buickclub.org
Dues: $50
Membership: 8,000

Antique Automobile Club of America
501 West Governor Road
Hershey, Pennsylvania
17033
717-534-1910
www.aaca.org
Dues: $35
Members: 60,000

I REALLY ENJOYED Jim Richardson's article entitled, "Old Cars Are Better Than Modern Cars" in *HCC* #112, and can't agree with him more. The simplicity, cost, styling, sturdiness and durability of older cars far outshines the virtues of today's modern cars. In my state, we pay an annual personal property tax on vehicles; however, the older the vehicle, the less the tax. Unless the tax law has changed in Virginia and I'm not aware of it, the tax is finally forgiven when the car reaches a certain age—25 or 30 years, I believe.

John Caracciolo
Fairfax Station, Virginia

I GREATLY ENJOYED Mike McNessor's "Shiftless Wanderer" article in *HCC* #114, especially because the truck has Hydra-Matic drive. I own a 1949 Cadillac Sedanet with Hydra-Matic, which I love. The description about how the Hydra-Matic works is excellent.

However, I noticed the statement, "There was no park as in later automatics, just the drive ranges, as well as neutral and reverse." I believe this is the second time I've seen this "no park" statement in your magazine. If the author means there is no "park position" on the transmission selector, he is correct. But, the Hydra-Matic does have park. You drop the selector into reverse, and turn off the engine, and the park pawl drops into place, locking the rear wheels. It works like a charm. I don't know if this feature was introduced after the initial Hydra-Matic introduction on Oldsmobile in 1939-'40, or was there from the beginning, but it would be good to know if perhaps this "park in reverse" feature was eliminated in the truck version.

Once I happened on a 1940 Oldsmobile with Hydra-Matic that had a unique feature. If the Hydra-Matic selector was in reverse, as it would be if you left the car in park, and you went to start the engine without first setting the selector to neutral, then the second you pressed the start button, some mechanism would cause the Hydra-Matic selector lever to shoot up to neutral and the engine started. Unbelievable; what a hoot! Probably trouble-prone and thus not offered for long. Perhaps this letter will help let the "no park in early Hydra-Matics" secret out of the closet.

Ron Roscoe
Northborough, Massachusetts

I WAS DRAWN TO BOB PALMA'S column in *HCC* #114. If memory serves, there were two versions of Ford's flathead six. The original engine had the distributor on the front of the block, directly driven off the camshaft. The postwar version, introduced in 1948, had the distributor on the left side of the block, gear-driven off the camshaft. Though Ford may have dropped the OHV six from its full-size cars in 1972, it was available in trucks into the late 1980s.

Kervyn Mach
Huber Heights, Ohio

YES, I THINK BOB IS RIGHT: the six-cylinder engines Ford produced just didn't get the credit they deserved. I have often wondered, aside from the added power, if the more famous V-8s were really always the best choice. The old flathead V-8s had a tendency to overheat and were prone to vapor lock more than the flathead sixes. Then when the OHV "Mileage Maker" six was produced for the 1952 Fords, there really was a very small horsepower difference. The six was easier to work on and would give slightly better gas mileage. If I were buying a brand new 1959 Custom 300 off the dealer's lot, I wonder if the six-cylinder would have been more durable and trouble-free than the 292-cu.in. Y-block? The Y-blocks were good performers, but were notorious for clogged oil passages and premature wear. The six would just keep chugging along without complaint and with few major mechanical problems.

Then there was the little Falcon 144-cu.in. "thinwall" engine. The early version was a bit underpowered, but in the expanded 170/200/250 versions, these were the engines that were used in Falcons, Comets, Mavericks, Fairmonts, Zephyrs and Mustangs for years later. The small, easy-to-work-on six became known as one of the bulletproof engines of its day; simple but durable.

Neal Ammerman
Crozet, Virginia

RICHARD, THANK YOU for stirring up my childhood memories with your "Plastic Model Kits" article in *HCC* #114. You covered the subject as only one who experienced it could, right down to the artwork on the boxes, the glue, the paint and decals.

Being a preteen in the early to mid 1960s, I give full credit to the role those early model kits played in solidifying my life-long interest in automobiles. In those days, such "automaker" names as AMT, Monogram, Revell, Lindberg and Jo-Han, were as important to me as were AMC, Ford, GM, Chrysler, Packard and Studebaker. While it was true, especially with AMT, that most were cast in white or off-white plastic, I do vividly remember that many of my AMT models were cast in baby blue, gray, black and even red. To this day, I fondly remember the hours I spent building all sorts of model cars, dreaming of someday owning the real thing. Years later, when I first owned a 1957 Bel Air while in high school, I felt already "just a bit" acquainted with the car as a result of having had a scale plastic rendition of one.

Sadly, almost all of the models I owned are gone (fireworks played a part in the demise of many of mine). However, after close to 50 years, I have managed to hold on to a couple that I built, including the original boxes, left over pieces, decals and instructions. My first AMT models cost $1.49, as printed on those early boxes. Now, a hundred times that amount might get you an un-assembled kit of one of those early childhood "dreams in a box."

Bill Van Nostrand
Vincent, Iowa

RICHARD'S PLASTIC MODEL kits article brought back some real great memories. I was maybe nine years old when I got my first one: a 1:25 scale AMT 1960 Corvette. The AMT kits were of the "3-in-1" type, as they could be built stock, custom or competition. Then, there were the Advanced Kits that came with the plastic body sections that you could attach and "mold" in with the body putty included in the kit. I had quite a few of the kits mentioned. In addition to those, I also had the model of the *Ala Kart*, the customized pickup built by George Barris, and Mickey Thompson's *Challenger I* land speed car.

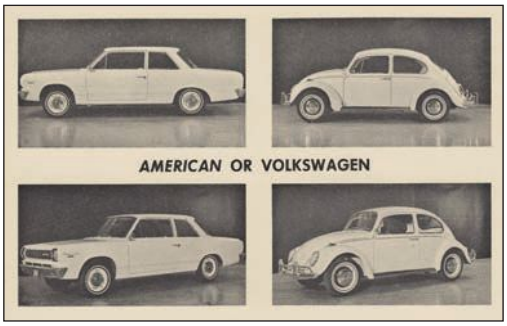
Revell even put out a line of Custom Car Parts that were meant to further customize your models and were compatible with kits from the other manufacturers

Continued on page 34

What Were We Thinking?

One thing that enthusiasts of independent car companies have never understood is why the cars we loved so well didn't sell better than they did when they were new. I have to admit, it's sometimes puzzling.

Why, for instance, didn't the 1952-'55 Willys Aero do better in the marketplace? I feel that overall, it was probably the best designed of the early-Fifties small cars—and I'm even including my beloved Nash Ramblers in that assessment. The Aero was good-looking, adequately sized, roomy, economical and one of the best-handling cars on the road. So, why wasn't it successful?



Other times, it's a little clearer why a brand didn't do well. Some people ask why the 1951-'53 Packards didn't sell in higher volume. Most historians say it's because, by that point, the Packard name no longer had the same magic that it once had. My own opinion is that, in light of the Packard nameplate, the car simply wasn't substantial or elegant enough. It doesn't look as rich as a luxury car should look.

And what about Kaiser? Just about every magazine that tested the big new Kaiser automobile in 1951 loved it, and many said it was flat-out the best-looking sedan on the road. The company racked up pretty good sales during that year, so why didn't it sell after that?

These thoughts came upon me while I was looking through some recently donated materials on the 1964-'69 Rambler American. I read several Product Reports published by American Motors that made some good points. Take 1967, for example. The top-selling small car in the world, hands down, was the Volkswagen Beetle. But why was that? Even in 1967, the little Bug was antiquated compared to most other small cars. Basically a 1930s design, it didn't offer nearly as much comfort or value as the Rambler American, yet it easily outsold the American and all its import competitors.

It makes you wonder what people were thinking back then. The Rambler, roomier both front and rear, was a full six-passenger automobile, whereas the Beetle held just four people, and in pretty cramped quarters at that. The Rambler had more leg, hip, shoulder and headroom than the Beetle. The Rambler also had a far better heater than the VW's, which couldn't even melt the snow off your shoes, and a better ventilating system, too. Rambler's windshield defroster was powerful, whereas in the VW, the defroster was basically your own breath. Rambler's trunk was huge compared to the Beetle's tiny up-front stowage. And the Rambler's brakes were bigger, too. Weighing 2,669 pounds, the Rambler was 905 pounds heavier than the Beetle, so it wasn't affected much by crosswinds, unlike the VW, which if you've never driven one, you should know, becomes a white-knuckler whenever a semi passes by.

The VW was also plagued with wide rear roof pillars and a small rear window, limiting visibility. The Rambler, by comparison, had a wide-open greenhouse with 3,780 square inches of glass area. Lastly, Rambler's dealer network was much larger, so obtaining service, parts or emergency repairs was easier, especially in out-of-the-way places.

It's true that the Beetle had some advantages. Its fuel economy was very good, with up to 35 MPG on the highway and around 21 MPG in town. But the American with a stick shift and optional overdrive was no slouch in the fuel economy department either, with up to 32 MPG over the road and 18 MPG in town. And although the Beetle boasted superior maneuverability, with a short 36-foot turning circle, the Rambler's was actually also 36-foot.

Price was always a big part of VW's advantage. In the early 1960s, when a Rambler American cost around $1,900, the VW was priced at about $1,600. By 1968, the basic Beetle had barely risen to $1,639, while the American was $2,073. But early in the year, AMC lowered the American's price to $1,839, just $200 more than the VW. And the Rambler offered a five-year/50,000-mile warranty on the drivetrain, compared to VW's six-month/6,000 miles. So, you'd think buyers would've rejected the Beetle and climbed on the American bandwagon, wouldn't you?

Nope. Although American sales shot up and the car proved quite popular, it seems that it mostly snagged sales from its U.S. competitors. VW sales actually grew by more than 90,000 units in 1968.

What were we thinking?

"Although American sales shot up and the car proved quite popular, it seems that it mostly snagged sales from its U.S. competitors."

Continued from page 32

such as AMT, Monogram and Jo-Han, as well as their own. Also, around 1972, AMT came out with a series of commercial truck kits.

Nowadays, I collect 1:18 scale diecast models, but I do miss the 1:25 scale cars, getting one home, opening it up, getting the instruction sheet out and mapping out what parts were to be painted to replicate the real thing. You would visit the showrooms and get the brochures and look through the various car magazines to get every detail right. It was a good time.

Martin Villa
Old Bridge, New Jersey

TERRY SHEA'S ARTICLE on the ill-fated Chevrolet Vega in *HCC* #114 was great, but I remember them as even more of a disaster. In 1976, a buddy and I bought a low-mileage pair of Vegas for $650 because they were unmarketable by then. While indicating several of the Vega shortcomings, the article did not mention that a lot of the Vegas became smoke machines, developing severe oil-consumption and oil-burning problems, apparently through glitches in the poorly designed but much vaunted aluminum-lined cylinders. Even worse, you could watch many of the Vegas dissolve into rust before your very eyes—it was as if they were parked each night in saltwater swimming pools. As a result, water would leak in and chrome trim would fly off. No car has ever been as self-destructive. I've always felt the Vega made the Corvair, Pinto and Edsel look good, and GM look extremely bad. Still, the Vegas were actually a lot of fun to drive while they held together.

William McCants
Neptune Beach, Florida

I PURCHASED A 1973 VEGA station wagon with 1,500 miles on it in 1973. I drove it for over 50,000 trouble-free miles. It even survived a collision that sandwiched me between two larger cars. It was the only car to drive away from the accident.

Gordon Campbell
Hillsboro, Oregon

THE VEGA WAS ONE OF MY all-time non-favorite GM cars. I bought a 1971 Vega hatchback, and for the short time I owned it, it was a handy car with its fold-down back seat. Driving home to West Virginia, I had to cross a couple of big mountains, and trouble began with overheating. This little car, rather peppy, made its way swiftly to the repair shop. Then the clutch failed and was replaced on my dime. The front brake rotors were warped, and while descending a hill, the front end did a curious dance. Then strange spots appeared on the fenders. I had thought that something had spilled on the fenders, but the local dealer said, "No, your fenders are rusting from beneath." Remember, this was still a new car. The Vega was thrifty, swifty and ever in the shop. I'm amazed that its descendants did so well with different names.

Lawton Posey
Charleston, West Virginia

IN *HCC* #114 PAT FOSTER did a very good job of educating us about America's cottage-industry automakers. But he missed a very important one: Midget Motors, maker of the King Midget. Claud Dry and Dale Orcutt built thousands of these little puddle-jumpers in their Athens, Ohio, factory between 1946 and 1966, when they sold the company. Production continued under new ownership until 1970.

By the late 1960s, I had seen several of these cars at various locations, but I didn't know much about them until I transferred to Ohio University in Athens. The room I rented was in a house just about a block from the factory, and seeing new King Midgets became a frequent occurrence. The Athens factory closed in 1970; it was a sad day for those of us who liked the offbeat little cars.

Dave Bruce
Ironton, Ohio

MR. FOSTER'S ARTICLE ABOUT the current state of America's cottage-industry carmakers made many interesting and well-thought-out points, but I think he left a big one out. I believe another cottage industry in this country has to do with the huge business of restoration and street rod/hot rod custom shops. The work that these specialty shops turn out every day is of extremely high quality and second-to-none craftsmanship. They can truly be considered works of art. With modern restoration technologies and the plethora of high-quality reproduction parts, their vision of the perfect car or truck is much more easily fulfilled.

I understand that Mr. Foster's focus was on manufacturers that produce at least 100 new units per year; most restoration/custom shops can't do that on an annual basis. However, as a small industry, they collectively probably turn out a few thousand vehicles that can be driven and enjoyed by their owners, much as a new Shelby, for example, can. They bring the classics back to life.

Many hobbyists turn their noses up at professionally restored or built automobiles, but not everyone has the time and necessary space and/or skills to do a project correctly. The pros turn out beautiful vehicles and can assist do-it-yourselfers with fresh ideas and references for correct restorations.

Tom Schlitter
Fort Collins, Colorado

THERE IS A SIMPLE WAY to relieve Bill Noble's concern with readers' Triskaidekaphobia (fear of the number 13) cited in his article "DeSoto or De Soto?" in *HCC* #115. Drop item #9 "Fluid Drive," for as an expert, he got it wrong. All Deluxe De Sotos came equipped with Fluid Drive which was a fluid coupling between the clutch and a conventional three-speed transmission. Custom De Sotos came equipped with the semi-automatic transmission and the fluid coupling he describes as Fluid Drive. The semi-automatic transmission was marketed as "Simplimatic" in 1941 and used vacuum to control the gear changes. After the war, the unit was reintroduced as the M-6 using electrical controls and marketed as "Tip-Toe Shift." But to lovers of these transmissions, they are affectionately referred to as Clunk-O-Matics.

Bill McLin
Annapolis, Maryland

REGARDING JOE RAZUMICH'S letter in *HCC* #113 about Packard taillamp design, the "Sore Thumb" taillamps were not replaced by the "Cathedral" design. The "Sore Thumbs" were used exclusively on Clippers in 1954-'55, while the "Cathedral" design was used on the top-of-the-line Packards in 1955-'56. "Cathedrals" replaced the small rounded double lenses that Packard President James Nance derisively referred to as "Bull's Nuts." The 1956 Clippers had their "Sore Thumbs" replaced with boomerang-shaped lenses that were also used on some of the "Packabakers" of 1957-'58.

Daniel Squire
Roseburg, Oregon

jimdonnelly

Models That Resin-ate With Me

I've tapped away in this space previously about how much I'm fascinated by works of alternative history, either the factual or fictional. Sometimes, the broad speculation about what might have been can spill over into the world of cars, and not all of them fully sized. Sure, sometimes you'll see re-created custom bodywork on a Full Classic at a concours, but you're much more likely to run into an automotive what-if that's been created in scale at a model car contest.

I grew up with some of this stuff. In the old days, you used file, putty and a hobby knife to make your take on an ultra-customized 1940 Ford or a 1957 Chevrolet. Back in the early 1960s, when *Car Model* magazine was pocket paperback-sized, one of the great practitioners of scale automotive modeling was a young guy named Dave Shuklis, who built fantastically detailed hot rods and customs with a whole raft of working features, some impressive engineering given that he had only castoff parts, common household materials and his own muscular dystrophy in his toolkit. In the same magazine, I can recall seeing a fully functional convertible top and working roll-up windows in 1/25th scale and being amazed.

A couple of months ago, I signed up for a latter-day magazine, *Model Cars*, and started flipping through the first issue that arrived in the mail. Got to admit, I was pleasantly surprised by the number of aftermarket parts that are available now to gussy up an off-the-shelf glue kit. For 25 bucks, you can get an OHV straight-eight kit from one supplier–looks a lot like a Buick Fireball, but our own Matt Litwin, an expert on those engines, says the generator's on the wrong side–that you can build either stock or triple-Stromberg rat rod fashion. Another provider makes very authentically glazed headlamps and taillamps, so you don't have to reach for the cherry red bottle of Testors paint. And there's a company that makes fuzzy dice in modeling scales, too.

What really gets me is how the scale auto builders get into creating cars that never were, even in factory-stock condition. At one time, this was a very dicey proposition that demanded really superior scratch-building and customizing skills. I'm talking about the kind of project that, say, saw a builder take a kit of a 1960s Thunderbird roadster and horizontally chop it down to Corvette two-seat dimensions. Trust me, that's hard. Only now, the work's done for you. A whole bunch of whimsical little suppliers have created conversion kits that allow you to build up imaginary production cars. The modelers call them "phantoms."

Traditionally, producing a model car kit from normal styrene plastic required injection-molding equipment that cost millions of dollars. About 20 years ago, in branches of modeling that ranged from trains to scale aircraft, garage-type cottage suppliers developed the ability to cast parts in resin. They were usually done in small numbers, and at first, they were pretty crude, often shot through with air bubbles that had to be filled and filed or with excess resin or "flash" surrounding the part and needing to be trimmed away. But the backyard industries have gotten a lot better of late. Conversion "transkits" are offered that let a moderately experienced modeler put together a credible replica of, say, a 1959 Edsel Villager or a 1957 Oldsmobile 98, cars that a big hobby manufacturer would never produce. They're not cheap. A simple body kit can easily run $85 to $100.

However, they give you a shot at building something really unique, or in some cases, a one-of-none. Ford never made a Ranchero based on the 1960 Mercury, but hey, the Modelhaus does. Jack Davis had a conversion for a 1934 Ford that was half limousine, half sedan delivery. But we really like the stuff that Jimmy Flintstone produces in Wisconsin. What if Pontiac had made an El Camino in 1962? Jimmy, in the form of his El Ponchomino kit, does now. He also makes something improbably cool that we show you here: A 12-buck resin body of a step-down 1953 Hudson Hornet station wagon, basically an independent version of a Ford Del Rio. You've got to love this stuff, and the fact that ordinary people can now bring automotive ghosts to life.

"I can recall seeing a fully functional convertible top and working roll-up windows in 1/25th scale and being amazed."

8th Annual

Hemmings Motor News CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

Sept. 26, 27, 28, 2014

Friday, September 26th
OPENING EVENT & RALLY

12:00 noon at the Saratoga Automobile Museum at 110 Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs, New York.

Enjoy the afternoon Cruise-In, then join in a Rally through the beautiful Adirondack region.

Cocktail reception with cash bar at 4:30 at the Saratoga Automobile Museum.

Saturday, September 27th
CRUISE-IN SPECTACULAR

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. An all-makes car show that's open to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Including: muscle cars, street rods, sports, exotics and classics.

Awards at 3:00 p.m. Cocktail reception with cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner available at 7:00 p.m. at the Gideon Putnam Resort.

Keynote speaker:
To be announced.

Held at:
SARATOGA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM
110 Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs, NY

Sunday, September 28th
CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Open to concours-quality, pre-1973 collector cars.

Master of Ceremonies: Ed Lucas, lifelong car enthusiast, director & chief judge for the Classic Car Club of America & expert commentator for the Barrett-Jackson Auctions.

MORE TROPHIES TO BE AWARDED THAN EVER BEFORE!

Winners also will appear in the pages of *Hemmings Motor News* and *Hemmings Classic Car.*

WELCOME TO SHOW AT THE SUNDAY CONCOURS:

All Full Classic® cars as recognized and listed by the Classic Car Club of America

CONCOURS FEATURED MARQUES:

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- *Alfa Romeo*
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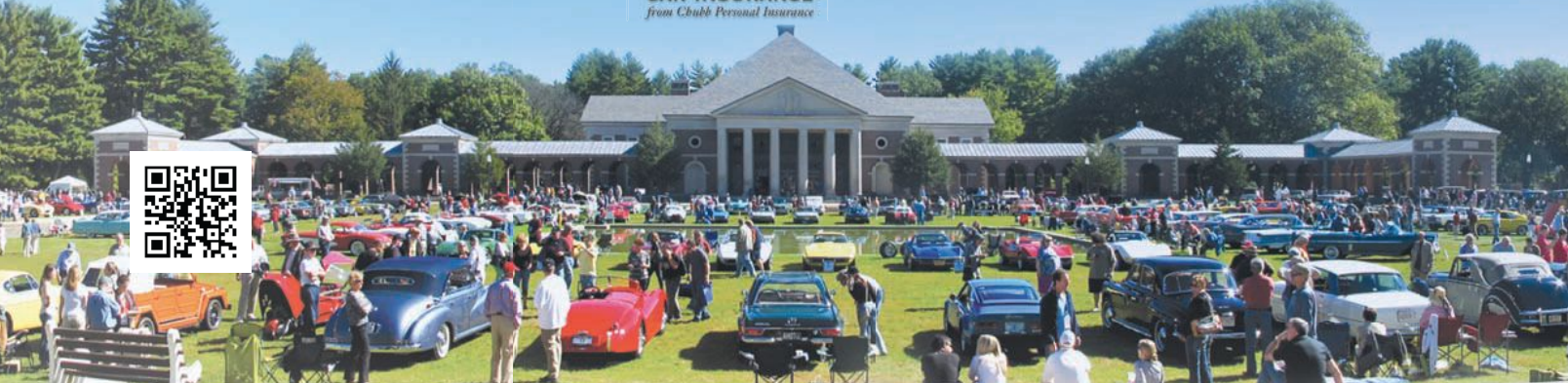
TO ENTER YOUR SHOW CAR IN THE SUNDAY CONCOURS:

Submit photos to concours@hemmings.com Open to concours-quality, pre-1973 collector cars.



bobpalma

Up From the 1970s Malaise

Editor Richard Lentinello made a good point in his column in *HCC* #112 that deserves further attention: Another decade was added to the hobby when the final year of 1980s vehicles, the 1989 models, became "antiques" on January 1. That's good news.

Now, before I lose half my readers this month, kindly bear with me. Please consider three significant pluses before dismissing 1980s cars out of hand.

In the first place, thankfully, the 1970s are over. If the 1930s had been the industry's most brutal decade, the 1970s weren't far behind. Automotive technology frantically dog paddled to keep its head above water during the 1970s. (Might vacuum hose manufacturers have been the most profitable OEM suppliers in the 1970s? Look under the hood of any original Ford Pinto, a supposedly simple car, and see what you think.)

But by 1980, catalytic converters and electronics had reduced the complexity of those rats' nests. The 1980s saw permanent advancements in driveability and fuel economy as engine management was assigned to computer-controlled EFI. Sure, it's intimidating for those of us who like to tinker under the hood, but it must be conceded that it makes cars better for their intended purpose: to transport their owners easily, with the best possible fuel economy, the fewest emissions and least maintenance.

Secondly, domestic manufacturers rightly addressed quality control during the 1980s. The 1970s had seen a terrible erosion of market share to imports, as some customers became weary of quality issues in the face of the import's perceived-better fit and finish.

In my car collection is an original bright-yellow, 17,800-mile 1973 Mustang convertible I've owned for 38 years. I love it, but the fit and finish are poor by today's standards. The factory's decklid alignment alone would flunk the car in a heartbeat if it had been produced during the 1980s, and it was special-ordered for the wife of an Indianapolis Ford dealer.

Finally, the best hobby news from the 1980s was that convertibles came back. After the last 1976 Cadillac Eldorado Bicentennial convertible rolled off the line, many hobbyists feared that their favorite body style was history.

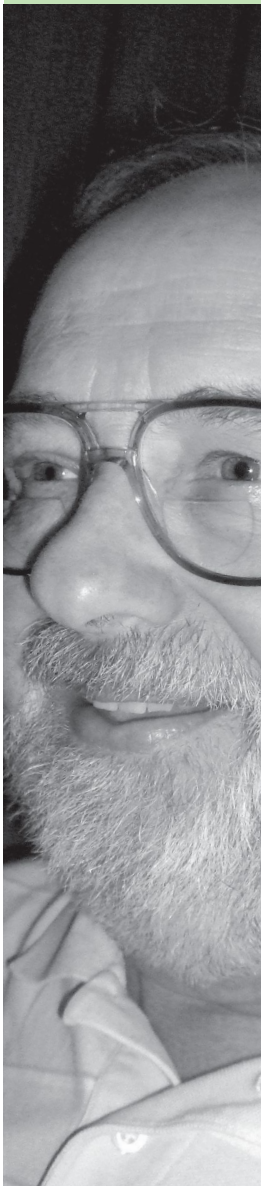
And it was, until master marketer Lee Iacocca saw a light at the end of the tunnel after successfully pulling Chrysler Corporation through its darkest hour. From his autobiography: "Now that we were out of danger, it was time to think about having fun again…I decided to bring back the convertible. I had one built by hand from a [1982] Chrysler LeBaron. I drove it over the summer, and I felt like the Pied Piper. I drove to my local shopping center and a big crowd gathered around…you would have thought I was giving away $10 bills! Back at the office, we decided to skip the research. Our attitude was, 'Let's just build it. We won't make any money, but it'll be great publicity.' Turned out, we sold 23,000 the first year instead of the 3,000 we had planned."

By bringing back the convertible, Lee Iacocca made all convertibles more affordable for future hobbyists, since the number of available convertibles would rise. For example, if you wanted a Mopar convertible, but didn't have $14,500 for the nice 1964 Valiant advertised in the March *Hemmings Motor News*, you could've bought a garage-kept 1989 LeBaron in the same issue for only $3,000, and from only the second owner, who said it had a new top and tires, no rust ever, and only 65,000 miles.

Hobbyists in their early 40s were teenagers in the 1980s. They, too, remember the cars their friends had in high school, and the ones that served them through college in the 1990s. No wonder they'd want to own a 1988 Camaro IROC-Z convertible–it's for the same reasons those of us with a little gray hair might want to own a 1964 Fairlane hardtop, or a 1951 Studebaker Commander Starlight Coupe, or a pretty Iris Mist 1965 Grand Prix with white bucket-seat interior…like the doctor had next door.

Let's welcome those 1980s cars and their owners to the hobby. They'll be carrying the hobby's torch long after we baby boomers are gone.

"Hobbyists in their early 40s … remember the cars their friends had in high school, and the ones that served them through college…"



"Built of the Best"

Davis automobiles of the 1920s might have been built from parts made by others, but the cars were every bit the sum of those parts

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LaCHANCE

The history of the George W. Davis Motor Car Co. of Richmond, Indiana, reads like that of many other competitors of the day: It started as a carriage builder of some renown, and decided—rightly so—early in the 20th century that the days of horse-drawn travel were coming to an end. The company was founded in 1902 to cater to the higher end of the carriage market, but it made the switch to automobile manufacturing in 1908, and never looked back.

Being a carriage maker with no expertise in engines, transmissions and related equipment, Davis did what so many other companies did and acquired all of the components necessary to assemble a quality car. Unlike many of them, Davis remained entirely transparent about the sources of its cars' components. One 1922 advertisement for Davis, under the specifications box, prominently lists the following: "Continental Red Seal 7R Motor, Timken axles (front and rear), Warner Corporation transmission and steering gear, Delco starting-lighting-ignition, Stromberg Carburetor, Peters universal joints and drive shaft, Hotchkiss drive, sturdy 6-inch


THE FLEETAWAY
$1895

1922—Greatest Davis Year

For 1922 we are producing our finest car

SPECIFICATIONS

LAST year was a great year for the Davis—for the Davis Company—for Davis distributors—and for the constantly increasing number of Davis owners.

1922 will be a greater Davis year!

The Davis challenges your comparison.

Never before, in our experience or our knowledge, has a car of Davis character or Davis quality been sold for a price so low. Always the Davis has been a sound investment—because it has always been extraordinary value.

Now—at the new low prices for 1922—the Davis is actually without a parallel in sheer dollar for dollar value.

You must see this car and compare it point for point with others to appreciate the extraordinary quality and value that we have built into it.

You owe it to yourself to see the Davis before you decide!

A Smaller "Six" Coming Soon

GEO. W. DAVIS MOTOR CAR CO., Richmond, Ind.

DAVIS
"BUILT OF THE BEST"

Davis was not unique among carmakers that assembled their automobiles from components made by other manufacturers, but Davis made a point in its advertising of sharing the names of every maker, noting that it used only high-quality suppliers.

Early tilting wooden steering wheel, a.k.a the "fat man wheel," allowed for easier ingress and egress for the Model 51's driver. Padded instrument panel was a rather simple affair, including a Stewart speedometer/odometer and gauges for amps and oil pressure.

frame." Proud of choosing the best quality components the company could get its hands on, Davis proclaimed its cars as "Built of the Best."

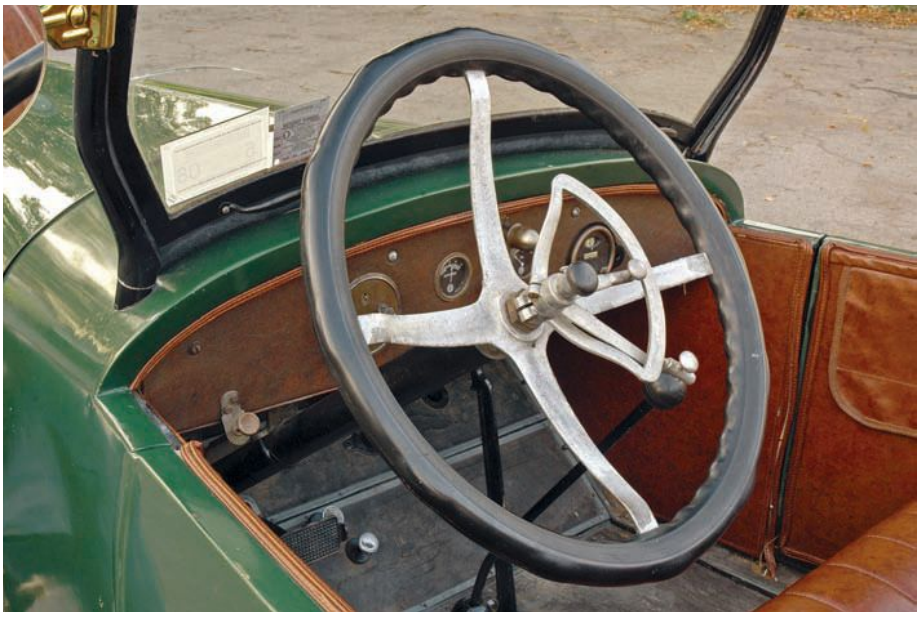
Its first automobiles used four-cylinder Continental engines before adding a six-cylinder, and by 1915, all Davis cars were powered by Continental Red Seal straight-sixes. Until production ended in 1929, when the company was just beginning to offer a straight-eight, the Red Seal remained the mainstay powerplant of the company. Providing powerplants for over a hundred manufacturers over the years, including the likes of Anderson, Hanson, Moon and Stanwood, to name but a few, Continental was the most popular engine choice for assembled cars.

Jim Davis Jr. and his father, Jim Davis Sr., of the Rochester, New York, area have just the right surname for collecting the now extremely rare Davis, though they have no known familial relation to George Davis, the car company's founder. Instead, when the elder Davis decided to get into vintage cars in the 1970s, he turned to the pages of a familiar magazine to find one. Jim Jr. tells the story: "Once he had heard they existed, my dad wanted a Davis, so he bought the 1920 car about 40 years ago. It was in North Carolina, and he got it through an ad in *Hemmings* from a dealer down there. We kept looking, and, maybe 10 to 12 years ago, I bought the 1922 Davis."

That 1920 Model 51 was in pretty good shape. Not a concours car, it was a driver, and Jim Jr. reports that Jim Sr. drove it without too many worries, and the car has proven very reliable since he bought it. "When he got the 1920 car," recalls Jim, "it was a driving car, and my dad drove it for quite a few years. Eventually, he had it painted because it needed some work. But it was never intended to be a restored car. It was intended to be a driven car. It's probably 20 years since work has been done to it, with the exception of having a valve job a couple of years ago to put hardened seats in it."

Priced at $1,985 when new, the Model 51 five-passenger touring car was nearly four times as expensive as the $500 Ford Model T, with plenty of other models in between, making the Davis somewhat of a higher-tiered car, although in line

There was nothing unusual about the Model 51's five-passenger touring body, composed of metal panels over a wooden frame, though its Disteel wheels were typically found on more expensive cars; removable, collapsing luggage rack was a common period accessory.



Davis changed little with the instrument panel from 1920 to 1922, with the same gauges available to the driver on the Model 71. Though this 1922 Davis does not have the tilting wheel, it continues to have the hand throttle and spark advance mounted on the steering column.

with other assembled cars, such as the Moon Victory, which was $100 less for a similar bodied-vehicle. The Model 51's Continental 7R engine featured a 3¼ x 4½-inch bore and stroke, displacing 224 cubic inches, good for 38 horsepower. A rather conventional car, this Davis's most distinguishing characteristic might be the Disteel stamped steel wheels, normally reserved for higher-end automobiles at a time when wooden artillery wheels were the norm. Given the rugged nature of the developing road system at the time, the more durable steel wheels must have certainly appealed to customers.

The second Davis the father-and-son team acquired needed more to be done to it to make it the driver that it is now. "It was in original condition—original, tired condition," says Jim. "It took us a week to make it driveable. It wasn't bad at all, but we knew going in that it wouldn't take much to get it going. It really needed help in every area, and we decided to restore it. It took four or five years, probably. We did everything on that except for the engine work, which was done in Rochester by a very skilled guy named Tom Stewart, who does a lot of Model T, Model A and V-8 Ford work. This was a little different for him, but he did it for me."

Though the 1922 car is smaller than the 1920 car, its Continental 6Y Red Seal engine is rated at a more robust 50 bhp at 2,600 RPM, despite displacing just 196-cu.in. with its 3⅛ x 4¼ –inch bore and stroke. Given the greater power, smaller size and incremental engineering advances in the years between the models, the 1922 car remains more driveable in modern traffic, though that doesn't deter the duo's appreciation for both cars.

"Davis kind of made a big car and a small car frame every year. The 1920 car is big—it's a huge car. It is maybe 10 to 12 inches longer. Visually, there is a set of lamps underneath the headlamps. The backseat, you can't stick your leg out far enough to reach the front seat. There are footrests in all of the cars. The 1922 model is the smaller-framed car, so it's just not a big car. They were toning down a bit and trying to get market share. When Davis first went into business, they tried to go in with a very expensive car. And they ended up producing a

Having had to restore the 1922 Model 71 "from the ground up," the owners opted for a more durable vinyl seat covering, considering that they did not have a top at the time (they have restored the top since these photos were taken) and that they planned on driving it.

Originally blue and purchased by the current owners in red, the 1920 Model 51 has worn this shade of green for some 20 years or so.

nice car, a distinctive car, but an affordable, reliable car, which is how they marketed it."

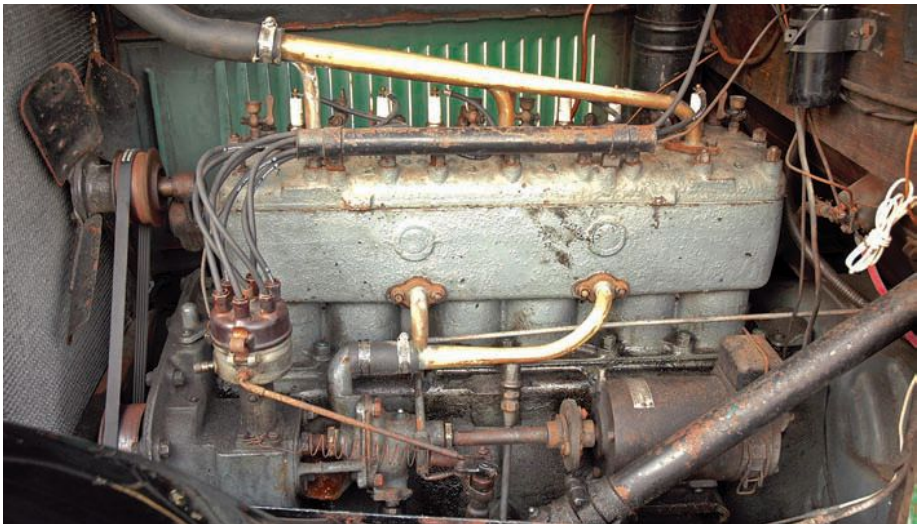
Fortunately, the 1922 car was largely complete, leading to a relatively straightforward restoration. And, despite being used in so many different automobiles, Continental engine parts have also become scarce. So, what's an owner to do with a car that has zero parts reproduced and whose common parts are hardly common? The answer is simple: Drive it!

"The problem with the Davises," Jim explains, "was that you were always afraid to drive them because if a part broke, then you couldn't drive them. For a long time, we didn't drive them a lot. Then, I bought my father a Model T for Christmas about eight years ago, and we ran into some problems. The Model T people are the most wonderful people in the world. They jumped in, helped us fix the car, put us on tours with them and gave us the confidence we needed that, if the car did break, we'd just fix it. We were afraid before and now we're not."

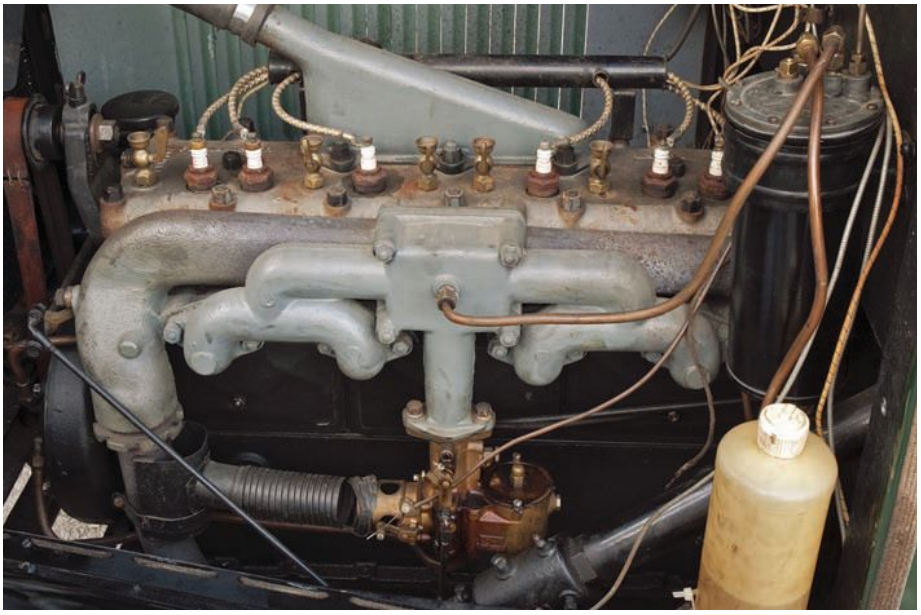
Simply by virtue of its better condition and capacity to tackle speeds greater than 35 MPH, the 1922 Model 71 gets driven more, says Jim, "only because that one I restored kind of from the ground up. We did it ourselves. And the engine has been rebuilt. It's an extremely driveable car. We put probably 500 to 800 miles a year on it. And then we also have a 1926 Derby—which is a Davis car also—which we also put probably 500 miles a year on."

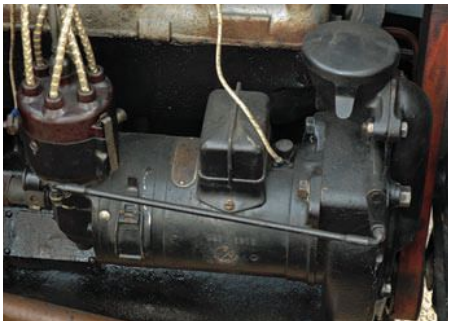
The driving varies—from touring to, well, just getting to work. "We're not show car people," asserts Jim. "We're driving people. And the 1922 Davis is very capable of going 45 to 50 MPH. We try and tour with it quite a bit in the summertime. I work about 20 miles from home, and I drive to work at least once a week in it. All of the cars we have—Davises, Ts—we drive them as much as we can."

"The 1922 Davis is a nice driving car," Jim continues. "It's so much tighter than the '20. It was about the time, I believe, that the cars could go a faster speed. The problem with the '22 is stopping it. It still has two-wheel mechanical brakes. The



Billing itself as "America's Standard," Continental supplied its 38-hp 7R straight-six engine for use in Davis's 1920 Model 51. The 7R was a workhorse favored by many companies that assembled "component" cars. Engine plate warns that "Cheap oil should never be used."





With its Continental 6Y Red Seal straight-six engine rated at 50 hp, the 1922 Model 71 remains more driveable, owing to better construction and a lighter weight that affords enough speed to keep up with most traffic—assuming you avoid the Interstates.

'25 and the '26 both have hydraulic brakes. Davis's first year with hydraulics was '25, and the '26—the Derby—which was a Davis anyway, that has hydraulic brakes, but that thing will only do about 35 or 45 MPH." On top of the performance, Jim says, "I really like an open car—a touring car, a roadster. That's how I like driving."

The Davis company made a pretty good run at it, surviving in the car business all the way to 1928, when it was one of the last of the assembled cars being made. Though the automotive portion of the company was bought out, and future models were promised by the new owners—the New York-based Automobile Corporation of America—production essentially ceased by the end of 1928, with just a handful of cars made for 1929.

After that, the Davis company began producing airplanes, as George Davis's son, Walter Davis, flew planes for the U.S. Army during World War I, rising to the rank of captain before being honorably discharged after the Armistice. As the airplane business proved difficult, the company turned to lawnmowers, and the name Davis hung around for a while, the cars all but forgotten. And, yes, the Jim Davises of Rochester own a Davis lawnmower as well.

The George W. Davis Motor Car Co.—not to be confused with the Davis Motorcar Co. of Van Nuys, California, that briefly manufactured three-wheeled cars in the late 1940s—in some 20 years in the car business, made as many as 15,000 cars, with sales of about 1,800 in the company's peak year of 1920. Today, the number that survives is a scant fraction of those that came out of Davis's Richmond, Indiana, factory. Fortunately, there are the likes of the Davises, Jim Sr. and Jim Jr., in their upstate New York outpost, to uphold the good name of their namesake car.

Though both cars still get driven regularly, the 1922 Model 71 gets more miles per year due to its ability to handle modern traffic.

Aunt Jane's Time Machine

Sixty years of fond memories flood back each time this 1952 Studebaker State Starliner is taken out for a drive.

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

What do you remember from when you were knee-high to a grasshopper? If you were a car kid, what were your first automotive memories? Jim Schultz remembers being knee-high to a special Studebaker, owned then by a special lady, and he's since become that same car's lifelong caretaker. Jim has enjoyed decades with this original 1952 Commander State Starliner, and every drive is a trip back in time.

A maladjusted TV rod made the Borg-Warner automatic kick into drive early, sludging the OHV V-8 and scoring the bearings. A replacement set made it run like new.

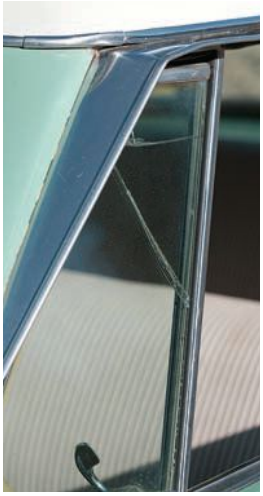
Although he has called Chino Valley, Arizona, home for the past 30 years, Jim's Starliner was originally an upstate New York car, having had roughly 52,000 of its near-60,000 miles put on in the winter-salt-crusted Binghamton area. This makes its survival—as one of fewer than 15,000 built in Studebaker's centennial year—a delightful rarity. It's not only a special car for its handsome and seldom-seen body style, but also for its very personal history with Jim and his family.

"I've known this Studebaker almost all of my life. My first memory of this car is of looking up at the door handle—I was so little, about five years old at the time. It was parked in the seven-car garage of Jane's apartment building," he recalls. "I had the car gene. I was one of those kids who could name every car coming down the road, and I remember thinking, 'This car is different. I don't see too many of these Studebakers!'"

This pillarless hardtop coupe—a one-year body design for 1952, the year that the South Bend, Indiana, automaker celebrated its centenary—belonged to a dear friend of Jim's family, his Aunt Jane. She had recently inherited the Commander State Starliner when it caught little Jimmy Schultz's eye. Jane's brother, a salesman, had bought it new and put most of the miles on it, but when he lost his battle with leukemia, the car came to her. She would drive the car for 16 more years. "Every time I went to visit my grandmother, Aunt Jane was there. In later years, Grandma moved into an apartment in Aunt Jane's building, and when we'd go out to her Oldsmobile, the Studebaker was next to it in the garage," Jim recalls.

This car represented something new for Studebaker, in that it not only had a new hardtop body—available in both Champion and Commander lines—but was powered by the company's first V-8 engine, which debuted the year before. This modern 232.6-cu.in. OHV V-8 featured a Strom-

This Studebaker is covered in visual delights like the stylish door handles that Jim remembers. Its pitted Korean War-era potmetal chrome is irreplaceable, but the move from New York State to dry Arizona has arrested the rust.



This top-of-the-line, one-year-only State Starliner hardtop body style was optioned with a column-shifted Studebaker Automatic Drive transmission, but a radio was never installed. Every drive behind that steering wheel brings up fond memories.

berg two-barrel carburetor and 7:1-compression, and made a respectable 120 hp at 4,000 RPM, and 190-lb.ft. of torque at 2,000 RPM. It delivered its power through a Studebaker Automatic Drive transmission, also known as a three-speed Borg-Warner automatic with Studebaker's trademark "Hill Holder" anti-roll function.

Jim inherited his technician father's mechanical aptitude, and as a teenager, he maintained the Starliner for Aunt Jane. "I kept it going for her, changing the oil, replacing the brakes. Aunt Jane didn't drive it all that much, just two miles back and forth to work. She drove the car until 1971, when she asked me, 'Jimmy, would you like to have my Studebaker?' I said I would be honored, and would cherish it.

"A couple of years later, Grandma and Aunt Jane moved into the same nursing home in Binghamton. I had cleaned up the Stude and put wide whitewalls on it, so it looked better than when my aunt had it. I would drive up to the nursing home and pick them both up, and we'd ride around Binghamton, seeing the sights and getting a history lesson of the area, what it looked like 50 years earlier," he remembers with a smile.

Years of short trips had taken their toll. "It was loaded up so bad," Jim says. "You'd drive it down the road, and it left a big fog behind it. I found out later that the transmission's TV rod was adjusted wrong, and it would shift into drive at 18 MPH. The V-8 was hardly ever revved up. After driving the car for a while, and then making the adjustment to that rod to make it stay in second gear longer, it started to come alive again, and ran much better."

Binghamton's weather was left behind forever when Jim moved to Arizona in 1982, the Studebaker following two years later. "When I got it out here, it started having a bit of rod knock. I pulled the pan, and at least an inch of sludge had accumulated on the bottom. There's a four-inch-diameter oil pickup screen for the pump, and there was just a one-inch round hole in the center where the oil was getting through, so one of the rod bearings toward the front of the engine was being starved. I cleaned the crankshaft—luckily it wasn't scored—and put in new standard-spec rod bearings. There was no more noise, the oil pressure was good. Other than that, it hasn't needed much—I rebuilt the fuel pump about 10 years ago, replaced the master cylinder and did the brakes a second time."

Arizona's climate literally saved Aunt Jane's Starlight from dissolving into a pile of rust. "It hasn't deteriorated any further. It's got some holes in the trunk and in the floorboards here and there, and the hog troughs are eaten up a little bit. It's got some rust around the fender vents, and on the bottom of the quarters. Still, it looks pretty good," Jim says. The original Sahara Sand over Tahoe Green paint was factory-applied, save for the driver's door,

which was repaired in the 1950s after a minor hit. "That paint faded worse than the factory paint, and it looked awful," he says. "I have a painter that I use here, and he was able to match the original paint pretty good; he painted the door about two years ago. This car is the way it's been all these years—it's otherwise untouched, a crusty New York State Studebaker. But considering how badly Studebakers rusted in that part of the world, it's a cream puff! I get guys here in Arizona who freak out when they see a bit of bubbling. My reaction is, hell, you don't know what rust is," he says with a grin—"Rust is when you can see the window regulators from the outside!"

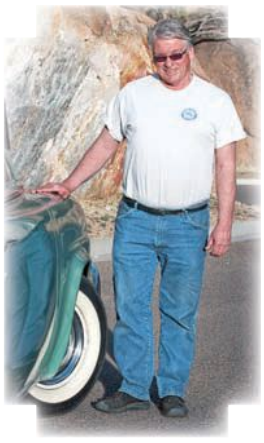
He maintains the car's appearance with periodic applications of Jax Wax. "When you're dealing with original-paint cars, you want to be as nice to that paint as possible, because you're removing some paint each time you wax it. I don't have to wax it often; with this climate, I don't have to worry much about humidity or driving on wet roads."

As part of a sizable car collection, this car doesn't get a ton of exercise, but Jim does drive it locally, adding about 200 miles to the odometer each year. "It has a rear main seal leak that I have to take care of, but it runs quite well. And it's great on gas. In fact, in 1952, Studebaker won the six-cylinder and V-8 Mobilgas Economy Runs—the V-8 got almost 26 MPG. I should put tires on it—the whitewalls on it now, I installed in 1973. They're a bit weather-checked, but they still run smoothly. For as little as I drive it, it's been fine the way it is."

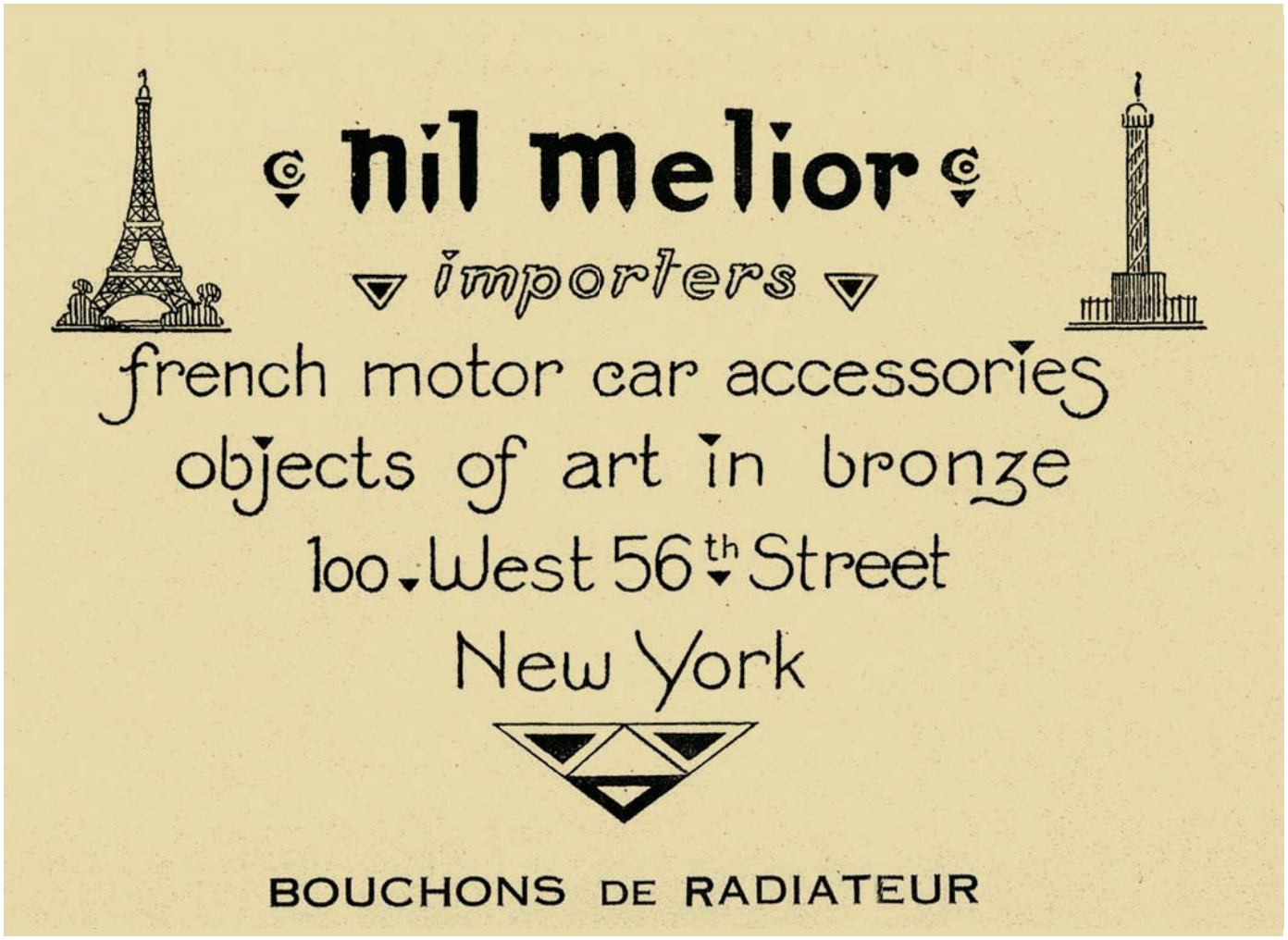
We asked the Studebaker's caretaker to take us for a ride. "You're not going to win any drag races at the traffic lights, but once it gets going, it's a real nice cruiser. It's really stable, quiet, and it rides remarkably well. It goes 65-70 MPH without any problem, and doesn't appear to be working too hard. I think the gearing is pretty tall—that's probably how they were pulling that gas mileage."

So, after 16 years of admiring it, and another 43 years of ownership, this Starlight coupe is understandably special to Jim. "People always tell me that they've never seen one like it, and I say, 'There's a good reason for that!'" he laughs. "Members of the Studebaker Club here in Arizona have told me it's the only running example they know of in the state. A Studebaker like this is, as my good friend in Texas would say, 'rare as chicken lips.'

"Everybody tells me not to touch it. I won't… I'd have to take out a bank loan just to re-do all the pitted, anemic Korean War-era potmetal chrome on that car. It would be hard for me to change the car's appearance at this point, because it still looks the same as it did the last time Grandma and Aunt Jane saw it," Jim muses. "It's truly a driveable dream, because each time I get in that car, I think of those two ladies… it's like they're in there, riding with me."



"Hell, you don't know what rust is. Rust is when you can see the window regulators from the outside!"



Nil Melior

The Premier prewar accessory store of New York

BY WALT GOSDEN

The 1920s didn't really start to roar with prosperity until 1923. Economic recovery after The Great War was slow. Factories had to retool to resume production of consumer goods, and this took years. But once manufacturing was back in full swing and income on all levels was on the rise, happy days were here again.

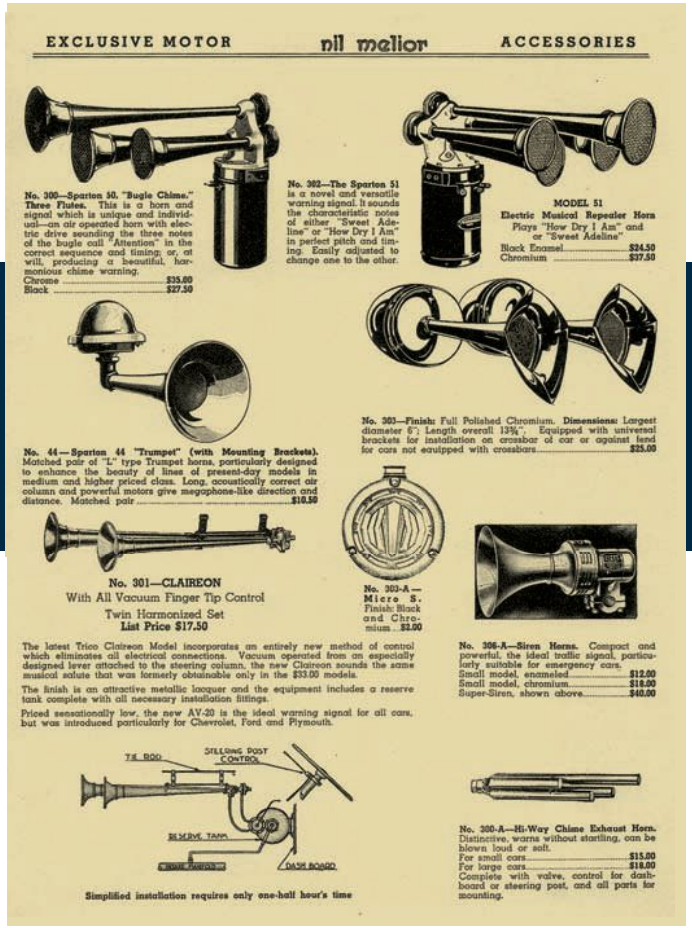
Automobile production and sales took off, and the carefree attitude of the public, especially the younger population, was reflected in language, dance and motorcars. The rather plain, unadorned aesthetics of car styling of the Teens and early Twenties, with painted everything (radiator shell, headlamps, bumpers, etc.) would start to change as more plated parts on cars were making them look brighter, smarter.

In 1923, the Broadway show *Runnin' Wild* would make its debut, and the song "The Charleston" would inspire a dance that was lively and peaked in 1926-'27, reflecting the general attitude. People were happy and wanted what they drove to match their upbeat spirit. Cars started to be personalized with aftermarket accessories, and businesses were created to offer items to meet the demand.

In New York City, the borough of Manhattan had more luxury car dealers, both domestic and foreign, than any other city in North America in that era. Imported cars arrived via steamships with and without coachwork. Automobiles arriving without coachwork had lower import tariffs than those with, and could be upgraded here. It was in this carefree

For that streamlined look, adding a pair of Aroflo fender guards would cost $12. A Stewart-Warner tach for a Ford V-8 cost $17.50, while a steel radiator protector finished in enamel was just $2.

This display ad appeared in magazines and proudly states as the headline that Nil Melior accessories were luxury items from France. The fender guides (far right) had a spring base and cost just $5 each.



Aftermarket horns were very popular, and came in a variety of styles and sounds. Trumpet horns started at $10.50, and the Sparton horn, which played either "Sweet Adeline" or "How Dry I Am," cost $24.50.

environment that America's premier motorcar accessory store arrived in 1927.

The store was named Nil Melior, which is French for "none better." It proclaimed it was "the source" for "what the well-groomed car will wear." From day one, the company promoted itself in upper-class society magazines and was voluminous in its publishing and distribution of flyers, folders, and catalogs illustrating the items it had for sale. Nil Melior always asserted it was an importer of only the finest goods, especially those made in France. In April of 1928, its advertisement in *Golf Illustrated* magazine noted that "The hallmark of things that are distinctive and better" came from France. Most of the items the company had on offer were for

An accessory-clad 1931 Cadillac V-8 is on the cover of the 1932 sales folder. Among the decorative accessories is a radiator stone shield for Packards and a bronze eagle radiator mascot for $40.

Lalique and Crystalix glass mascots started at $22.50 each. For an additional $2.50, they could be illuminated. A switch would be mounted on the bottom of the instrument panel or on the steering column.

automobiles, but it also sold objects of art, such as desk sets with subjects like the bull and bear of stock market fame. All of these were cast by the same French companies that made the mascots.

Nil Melior was started by former actress Adele Smith, who in her travels to Europe in the theater saw that fine car accessories were popular, but lacking on a similar level in the United States. She organized her company in New York, hired at least two women sculptors to design mascots in addition to those she imported from France, and then seems to have evaporated from the scene. G.B. Warmen is the name on all of Nil Melior's paperwork that I have looked at, and he remains a mystery despite my extensive pursuit of information over the past quarter century.

The material the company issued describing the items it had for sale was very well written, and could be quite humorous in a gentlemanly sort of way. A 1929 magazine ad states that in addition to the motor mascots of art bronze, objects of art and St. Christopher shields, it also sold "How dry I am tooters"—electric/mechanical horns that would play the tune referring to the Volstead Act's restriction on the sale of alcoholic beverages.

When it was first in business, Nil Melior called its premises at 100 West 56th Street "The Mascot Shop." It was at this location, in a stately building three blocks south of Central Park at the corner of 6th Avenue, from spring of 1928 to December of 1931. For 1932-'33 the showroom relocated to 119 West 57th Street, today the home of a bicycle sales and rental shop. In 1934, Nil Melior moved to its final location, where it would remain until 1941: between 49th and 50th Streets and Park and Lexington Avenues on the ground floor of the Waldorf-Astoria hotel. Yes, the elite Waldorf-Astoria Hotel's claim to fame for car enthusiasts was that it would have an auto parts store, albeit a high class one! Composer Cole Porter lived at the Waldorf-Astoria, and one wonders if he ever wandered in to look at the accessories on offer. One neat item sold by Nil Melior was the Ki-Yi "Barking Dog" horn that was described as having different barks, yelps and growls and was mounted on the intake manifold.

In the 1920s, Nil Melior's French accessories included mascots by Bazin, Darel, Marvel and Lalique, with lamps by Marchal and Grebel. Business was good, and its store locations were in the prime areas where most of the showrooms for cars were located—Park Avenue, 5th Avenue, and 57th Street. The stores were not large, but they didn't have to be. Mascots and hood ornaments were the jewelry of motorcars, and ornamental radiator guards (stone shields) and headlamps didn't require a lot of display space. When Marchal lamps were imported, Nil Melior would affix a small brass tag inside the lamp with its name and address on it to note where the lamps were purchased. Despite a huge selection of mascots to choose from, it also offered a service whereby clients could have them custom made in France according to their designs and specifications.

Automotive editors and writers who were active in the New York City area received a stream of letters and copies of the latest brochures and catalogs with a friendly request for a mention in the periodicals they worked for.

As sales progressed, Nil Melior expanded its line of merchandise, and the trade listed beneath its name on the masthead of its stationary went from "Importers" in 1928, to "Auto-Marine Accessories" in 1935 and to "Distinctive Motor Car Accessories" by 1940.

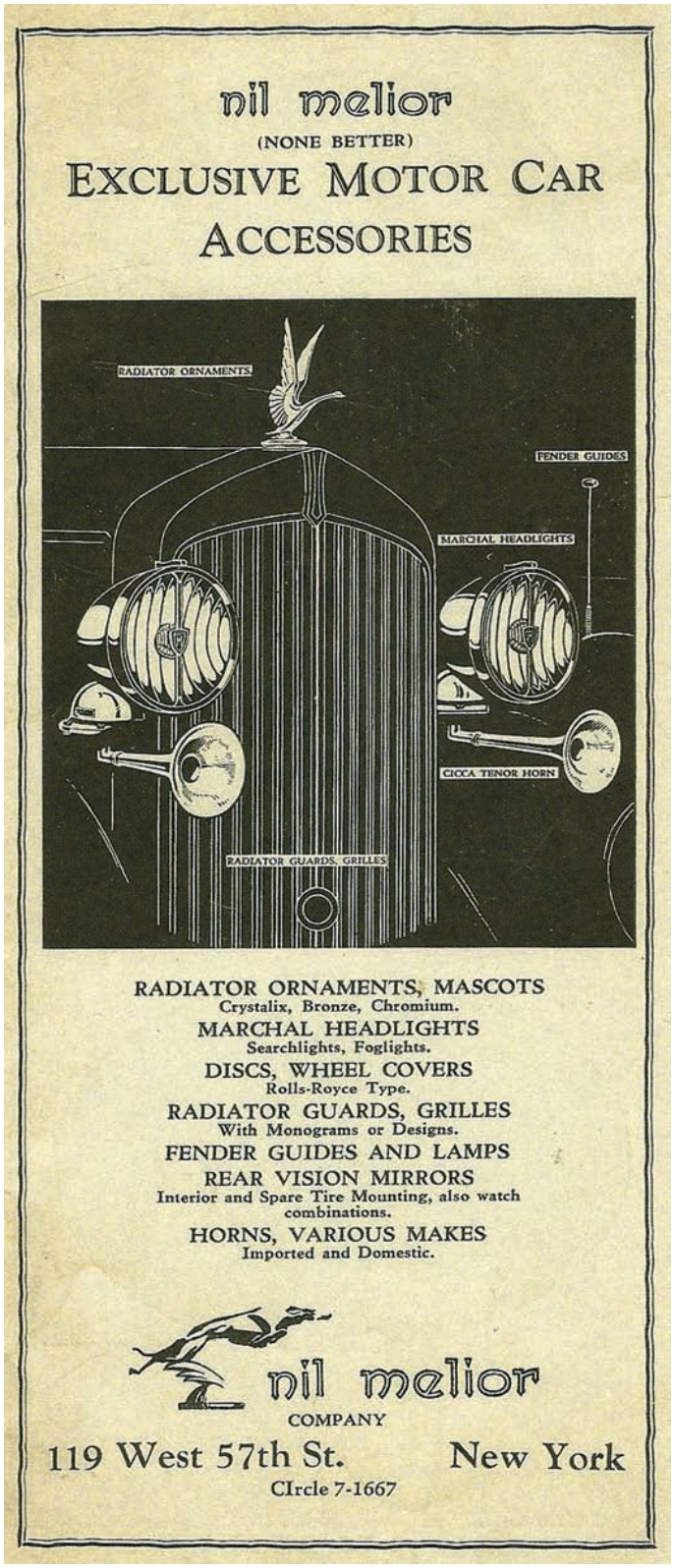
Although it relied on luxury car owners as its customer

Wheel discs to cover wire wheels were vigorously promoted. They were available in copper that was chrome-plated, highly polished aluminum and aluminum that was suitable for painting the body color.

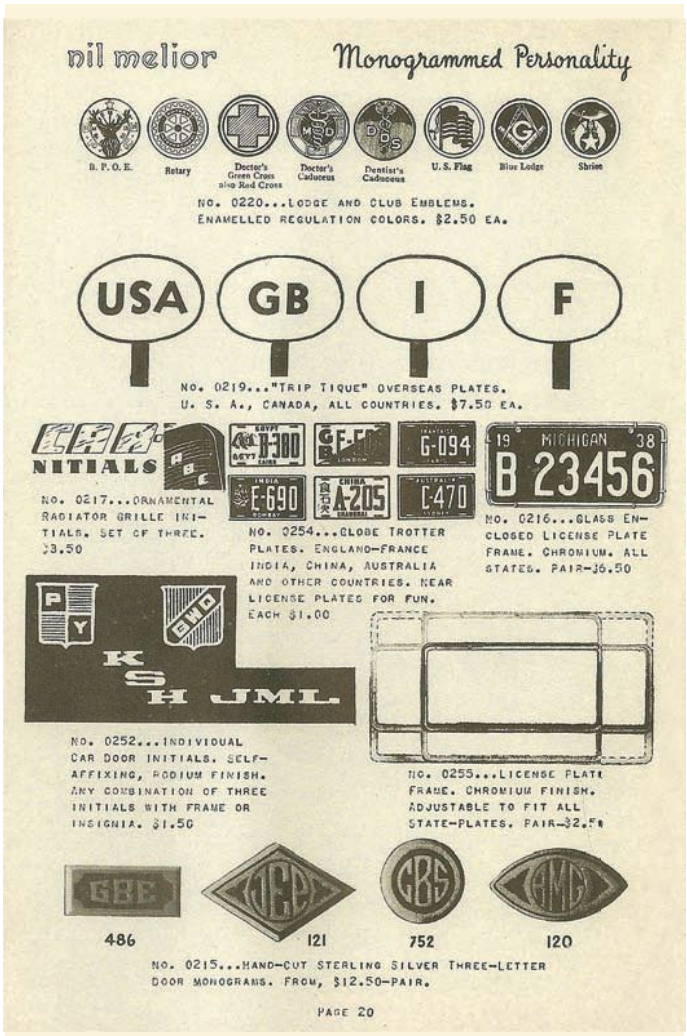
base, once the Great Depression took hold, it began offering a few more accessories priced so owners of Reos, Nashes and Studebakers could be enticed to make a purchase. The largest catalog I have seen that Nil Melior issued, in 1936, notes on the cover that it has "Everything for your car be it Ford or Rolls-Royce." The company supplied accessories to custom body builders in Manhattan as well as car dealers who had their showrooms nearby. For the convenience of its patrons, it went on to explain that "Nil Melior accessories are displayed on sale with: Abercrombie & Fitch (Madison Avenue), Packard Motor Car Co. of New York (Broadway & 61st Street) and the Chrysler Salon (Lexington Avenue & 42nd Street—the Chrysler Building)".

One of the larger and more unique items available from Nil Melior in the 1934-'40 era was the Normandie ocean liner horn. Prior to 1915, when cars used a rubber bulb to pump air into a snail-shaped brass horn to sound a honk to warn people they were coming, there were also exhaust whistles that, with the pull of a wire, would divert the car's exhaust to make a loud, shrill sound like a train whistle. Many of these were made by the Aermore Mfg. Company of Chicago. Most of them were about a foot long.

The Automarine Normandie horn sold by Nil Melior was noted to relieve current drains from the battery common to other types (i.e. electric) of horns. The advertisement states that it "produces a tone effect similar to an ocean-going vessel's whistle" and the "tone can be modulated from a low, courteous 'warning' to a deep sonorous pitch, audible well



Radiator mascots were available in Crystalix, bronze or chromium, and Marchal lighting accessories included headlamps, searchlights and fog lamps. Rolls-Royce-type full disc wheel covers were also offered.



Bumper-mounted Euro plates—Nil Melior called them "Trip Tique"—were $7.50 each. Car door initials such as these hand-cut sterling silver three-letter monograms (bottom row) started at $12.50/pair.

Auto gadgets from 1940 included a novel key holder and chain in pig, alligator, calf or snake for 75 cents, as well as humorous license plates for $2.50 that could be made according to a customer's design.

over a mile!" The deluxe model was $40 and two inches in diameter and 44 inches long.

The most expensive item I ever saw listed in a Nil Melior catalog appeared in 1931. It was an imported electric horn made by Cicca that played four different notes and was priced at $125. By 1936, Nil Melior was including a page in the back of its catalog, "For Fords, Chevrolets and other small cars," where you could get a Stewart-Warner tachometer for your Ford V-8 for $12, black-enamel primed fender guards (skirts) for $12 per pair, and a windshield-mounted compass for $2.50.

In May 1941, a letter to a customer explained that the "company has undergone a slight reorganization," but G.B. Warmen was still in charge. At that time, external supercharger "trim" in the form of four phony exhaust pipes that mounted from the hood side to the fender were on offer at $12.50, and sealed-beam headlamp conversion kits were $10 the pair.

With the eruption of the Second World War in Europe, all importation of fine bronze and glass mascots, headlamps, etc. ceased, and those items accounted for at least one-third of the accessories Nil Melior had listed for sale. The final catalogs still offered some Marchal lamps and mascots that the company had stockpiled, as well as Sparton musical horns, and a lot more American-made accessories such as a McCulloch Supercharger for 1936-'40 Fords and car-related souvenirs for the 1939-'40 New York World's Fair. Soon, the premier auto accessory store at the Waldorf-Astoria had closed its doors.

But that may not be the end of the story. One of its final prewar catalogs announces, "Here's new fun for Auto Gadgeteers"; note the last word. In 1946, Nil Melior Gift and Gadget Shop was located on East 52nd Street with a phone number that was very similar, but not exactly the same as, the prewar auto accessory store. I know of no other store that had used the Nil Melior name in that era for anything. Did this postwar business, located just a few blocks away from the Waldorf-Astoria, have a connection to the prewar store that gave "that final dash of swankiness" to luxury cars from 1928 to 1941? I have yet to find evidence to confirm this, but one can only wonder if the two weren't related.

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1941 Plymouth Pickup diecast model

1/24th scale model
(limited to 1,200 consecutively numbered units)

BEFORE 1939, Plymouth pickups had been built on car chassis and had almost a delicacy to their look. All this changed in '39 when Plymouths were styled to match the Dodge trucks and a more brawny Plymouth was born. This essential model continued through '41 with only modest styling changes made to the grille (chrome was added), and to the bumper which was given a modest "V." It's a handsome vehicle, worthy of being made into a diecast model with *Hemmings* branding. This model's doors open to reveal the sparse interior typical of trucks of the era. The louvered hood panels lift to show an L-head straight 6, and the steering works, making it road worthy just in case you decide to take it out for a spin.

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George Dammann

Crestline Books' driving force

BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

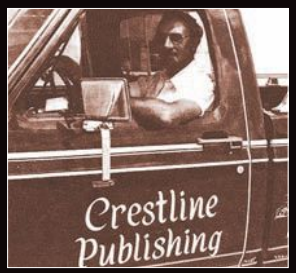
You want to be a journalist, huh? That's a noble objective. Given the right assignment, you can explore issues and stories that those condemned to sate the 24/7 information cycle can only dream about amidst their drudgery. Position yourself in the right place, and you can delve and dive into matters that matter to you. In the world of cars, especially ones from the distant past, the possibilities for scholarly research know no limits. Also boundless are the opportunities to share newfound knowledge.

Perhaps more than anybody else in recent times, George Dammann has lived that kind of esteemed existence. He took his street reporter's skill set and applied it to publishing automotive histories that are still acclaimed—the standards in their field—still prized and extensively employed by other researchers, even though many of the titles are long since out of print.

If you order a Crestline book today, which could be an intensive photo history of anything from Ford to Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg (with tractors and heavy equipment thrown in for good measure), you need to cultivate a few expectations. First off, be prepared to pay more than the cover price that got charged when the Crestline titles were new, beginning in the 1970s. Second, be ready for a very pleasant surprise. In newspaper-speak, the Crestline stories have legs. They've held up. They're definitive photo histories that tell the stories of bygone automobiles in ways few standard guides can fairly manage.

George can trace his fascination with automotive books to his days as a working daily journalist. Before that, however, he grew up on a farm in Montgomery, a small town in the Hudson River Valley of New York. George's father, by his own characterization, was an indifferently skilled mechanic, but still loved cars

"I said somebody ought to do a book on Ford that showed every single model that was ever produced."



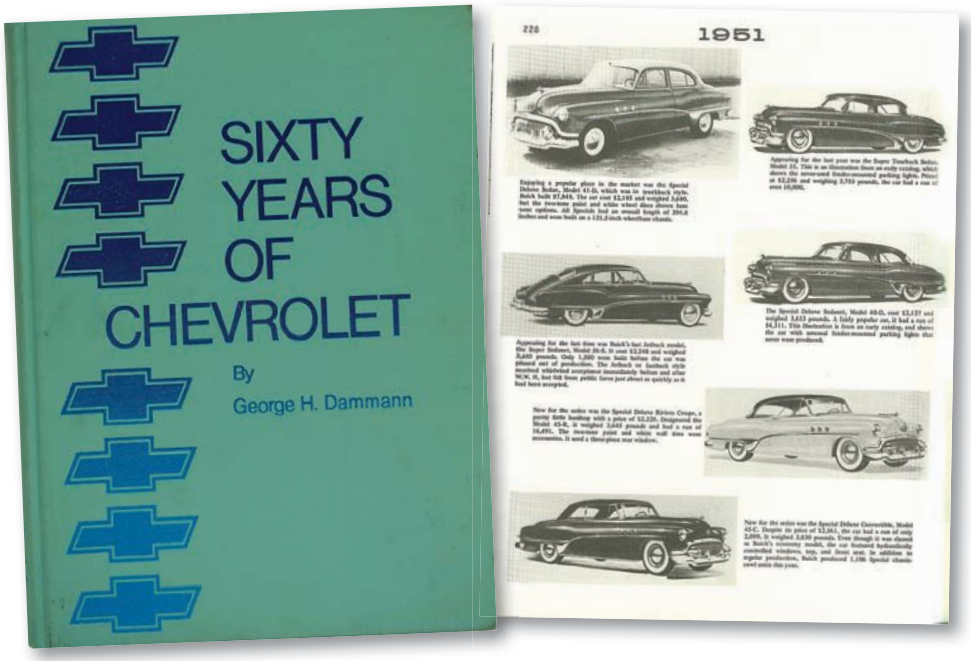
and practically anything else that had an engine for power. The family acreage was crowded with cars, trucks and tractors of sundry vintages. And George's wife, Gloria, as it happens, came from a family of hardcore car enthusiasts.

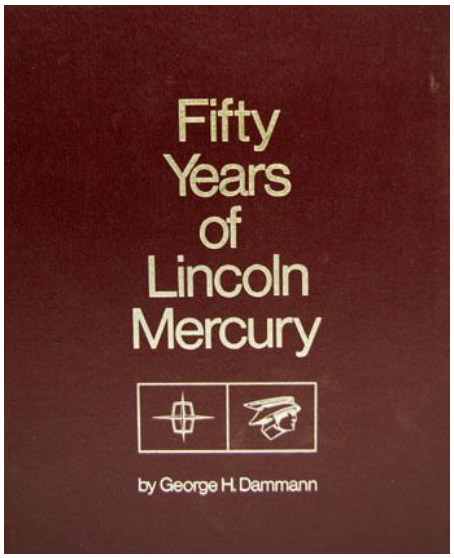
It was then that George acquired his first car, and in doing so, entered the world of antique automobiles in spectacular fashion. It was a 1936 Lincoln Series K, a Full Classic with custom brougham coachwork by Brunn of Buffalo, New York, which he bought in around 1952 for the almighty total of $10. It was in a similar situation as any number of other cars of that era in the years following World War II, a castoff that had somehow avoided being swallowed up in a wartime scrap-metal collection drive. "It was just a big play toy, with a 36-gallon gas tank, and I still couldn't get 100 miles out of a tank," he laughs. "I bought it from a farmer who had stuck it behind his barn and was using it for storing sacks of chicken feed in the back seat. I picked up my then-wife-to-be from work in it a few times and embarrassed the hell out of her."

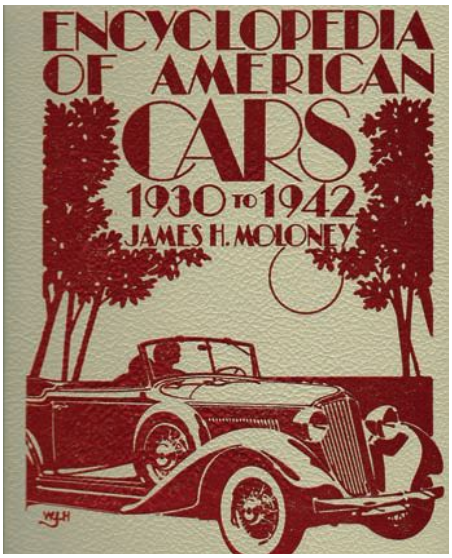
The coachbuilt Lincoln got sold for much-needed cash about a year after George and Gloria were married. But get this: When they were visiting their daughter in the Pacific Northwest decades later, George heard about a Brunn-bodied Lincoln that was allegedly in the neighborhood. He set out to track it down, wondering if it might have been his old car, located the Lincoln and lo, indeed it was. George proved as much to himself when he pulled out the car's ashtray and found a rolled-up copy of the daily newspaper from Middletown, New York, that he'd put there when he owned it to keep the ashtray from rattling loose while the Lincoln was in motion, still tightly securing the tray.

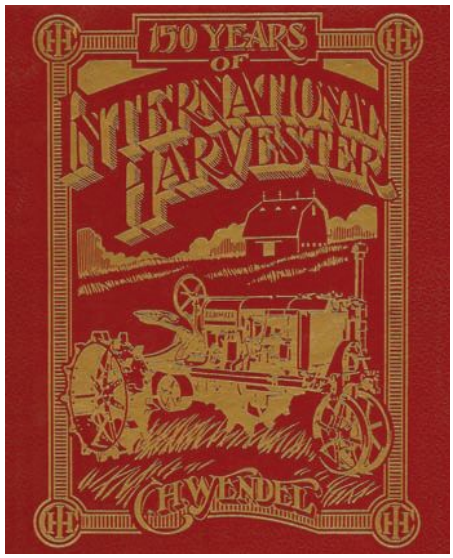
George started out as a reporter and editor for a printing concern in Washingtonville, New York, that published three local weekly newspapers, before switching to the same Middletown paper that he had once shoved under the Series K's ashtray. That was the *Times Herald-Record*, a well-known daily in Orange County, New York. It was about 1953, and NASCAR was trying to establish a drag racing circuit in the Northeast, organizing drags at the airport in George's hometown of Montgomery. After a tryout, NASCAR hired him as the strip's announcer before the track fell victim to neighbors' noise complaints. A new strip then opened in Great Meadows, New Jersey, called Island Dragway. George signed on there as announcer and remained until moving near Chicago in 1962. In the course of his mic duties, George got to know Don Garlits, who, via his booked-in appearances, was one of Island's biggest spectator draws.

In Illinois, George became an assistant editor for National Underwriters, producing publications for the insurance industry. That was where he got acquainted with Henry Paulman, editor and publisher of the *Automotive Red Book*, a value guide aimed at dealers. Henry was also interested in publishing works of automotive history, but had only approached those projects tepidly. Long story short, George ended up taking over those projects, while amassing a hoard of cool old cars that included a trio of Model T Fords, several Corvettes and a host of Thunderbirds. It got to the point where George had so many cars that motor vehicle officials demanded that he get himself an Illinois dealer's license. George never did, but later, he cut a deal with a distributor who circulated the Crestline books in Scandinavia to become his partner in exporting old-school convertibles from the United States to Sweden. As he recalls today, "We did it for about three









years. We never made any money at it, but we had a whole lot of fun."

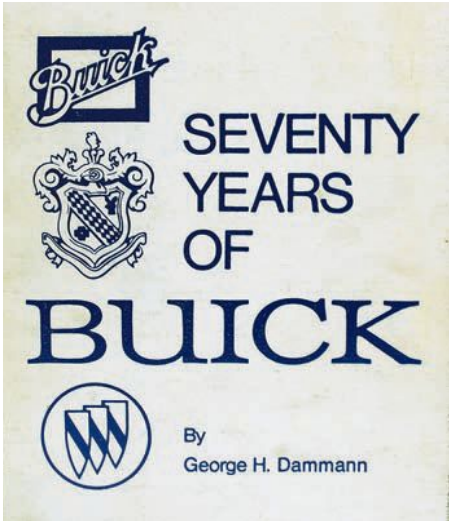
Henry would invite George to lunch at his private club in Chicago, when the discussion turned to a classified advertisement in *Hemmings Motor News*. It purported that a center-door Model T sedan offered for sale was a 1923 model. George knew better, intrinsically aware that the final center-door Ts were produced in 1922.

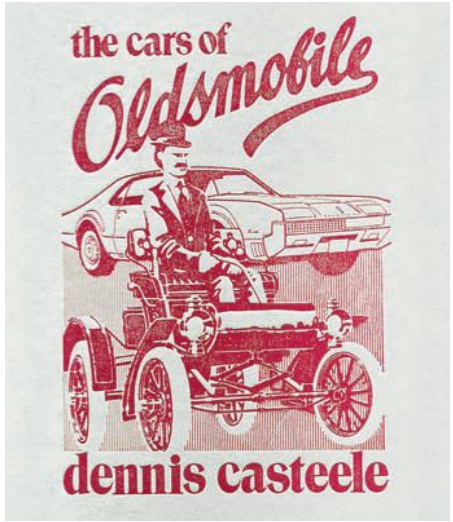
"The next day, I said somebody ought to do a book on Ford that showed every single model that was ever produced," George remembers. "A definitive book, full of facts, not something where you'd just be guessing at it. Henry listened and said, 'George, that sounds like a great idea. You write it and put it together, and we'll publish it.'" That Ford history became the very first Crestline title, and established the familiar format for the historical works that followed. A typical Crestline book was a hardcover volume, running to about 500 pages, organized year to year, with a narrative on each year's history preceding a model guide with half a dozen photos or more, generally speaking, on each following page. Many, but not all, of the images are factory publicity shots, acquired through painstaking work with the car companies, many of which were more accommodating to researchers when George was doing the bulk of his work. One key ally was Hank Edmunds, who then ran the Ford Motor Company's archives. He not only provided photos, but also directed George to in-house artists who could give advice on layout and design.

George had *The Illustrated History of Ford* ready to go when Henry tumbled into bankruptcy. It was Edmunds who convinced George to publish the book himself. A local bank provided a $10,000 loan, while also directing George to local printers. The money covered a 1970 press run of 5,000 copies and advertising through *Hemmings*. "The rest is history," George tells us. From there, he produced a similar historical title on Lincoln-Mercury. Chevrolet came next, despite a general lack of cooperation by the brand's PR staff. By then, George had become friends with Thomas Warth, the founder of Classic Motorbooks, providing a key retailing point. Thomas also directed George to internal Chevrolet historians who provided the needed photos to get the book published. George's *Sixty Years of Chevrolet* became the Crestline series' biggest-selling title. It doesn't just include cars, but also trucks and specialty vehicles. The war years are addressed with photos of military vehicles and the products of other government contracts that came Chevrolet's way.

Titles followed on Buick, Dodge, fire trucks, military vehicles, Hudson and more. Crestline was clearly ahead of the curve in more than one way, coming out with some of the very first histories on farm and logging equipment ever published, predating today's cornucopia of farming titles by decades. There were 36 Crestline histories published in all, plus one more volume on Dodge trucks that came out after George sold the operation to Motorbooks. Since every book was published in minimum runs of 5,000 copies, that means 180,000 Crestline books, at the absolute least, made it to print; both the Chevrolet and Ford books sold over 100,000 copies each. George retired and now splits his time between homes in Sarasota, Florida, and outside Carson City, Nevada.

"The Chevrolet book put us in business, and Tom made sure we stayed there," George says. "The whole idea of the Crestline books was to have a photo of every model made in every given year. When you have over 1,000 models, you better be able to find those photos. The books involved research, research, research. And remember, this was all before the Internet."



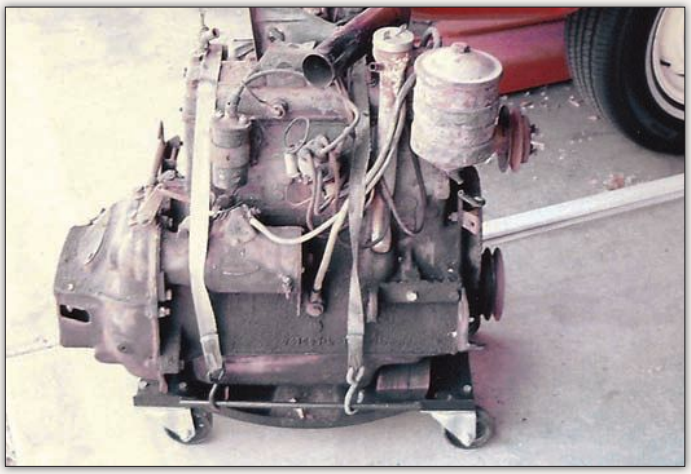


Overland Ovation

After 26 years in storage, a 1949 Willys-Overland VJ3 Jeepster is restored

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

With the bumpers, front body panels, interior, convertible top and frame, engine and transmission removed, the Jeepster was loaded on a trailer for delivery to the body shop. The body and paintwork would take just four months to complete.



The engine was rebuilt in 1974. After this photo was taken, Morrison Auto Machine disassembled it, checked the tolerances, honed the cylinders, balanced the reciprocating assembly, installed new piston rings and bearings and reassembled it with new gaskets.

The passenger-side floor is one of precious few areas to reveal rust. Thankfully, it was only minor surface scale that was easily removed when later sanded to bare metal. No holes were found, so the entire area was easily primed and repainted.

In general, the front fenders, grilles and hoods are mostly interchangeable between the station wagons, trucks and Jeepsters, but body panels from the firewall back are body-style specific. Fortunately, solid steel was under this fender's surface rust.

The words "Jeep" and "sports car" have rarely been spoken in the same breath, let alone applied to the same vehicle, yet beginning in 1948, Willys-Overland did just that in an effort to soften its Jeep line's work-truck image and broaden its customer base by offering a sporty rear-wheel-drive phaeton—the Jeepster.

"It's the new Jeepster. America's greatest value in sports cars!" announced a 1949 brochure—the year of our featured model. It played up the vehicle's dual personality for city and country driving, touting its "delightfully quick steering response; balanced weight distribution; exceptional (8⅛-inch) road clearance; short body overhang; independent front suspension; airplane-type shocks," and more. The copy also addressed the Jeepster's "Amazing gasoline economy! Owners report up to 30 miles or more per gallon."

Standard was a 134-cu.in. "Go-Devil" L-head four-cylinder engine, backed by a Borg-Warner T-96 three-speed manual transmission, overdrive (standard in early 1949, optional later in the year) and a 4.88:1-geared Dana/Spicer 23 rear axle.

Attached to the 104-inch-wheelbase chassis was a Willys Planadyne independent front suspension system and longitudinal leaf springs with a solid axle in the rear. Bendix 9.9-inch drum brakes were used at the four wheels.

By 1949, the Brooks Stevens designed Jeepster was in its sophomore model year,

Like the rest of the body, this passenger-side front fender was rust-free. Since few reproduction body parts are available, if this fender had required replacement, Jim would've sourced a used one from one of the other models previously mentioned.

The outer shell and bolt-on body parts were media blasted, but the inner shell and the inner doors would be sanded prior to repainting. Note the overall lack of damage on all the parts—a testament to the care the Jeepster had received since 1949.

Something fell on the cowl while in storage—the other minor dent's cause is unknown. Once the metal was straightened, a thin coat of Evercoat Rage Gold body filler was applied, worked with a body file and block sanded with grades of paper up to 220.

Before the color coats were applied, two coats of PPG ESU461 Epoxy Primer were applied over the body and block sanded with multiple grades up to 220. Then PPG ESU440 High-Build Primer Surfacer was sprayed and block sanded with multiple grades up to 320.

and despite the attributes already discussed, plus adding an optional 148-cu. in. six-cylinder engine and introducing the slightly decontented VJ3 to provide a lower-priced alternative to sell alongside the VJ2, Jeepsters were still slow to draw new buyers. Relatively high price, low performance and the lack of roll-up windows were some of the sticking points.

Regardless of offering more engine choices the next year and readjusting the optional/standard features, by the end of 1950, production at the Toledo, Ohio, plant had ceased. Only 19,132 units total were built, with just over half in 1948 alone. The lowest production year was 1949, and leftover 1950 models were sold as 1951 Jeepsters.

Jim Sullivan of Glendale, Arizona, is well aware of the plight of the Jeepster and its selling points. The 66-year-old retiree has owned five of them, purchasing his first, this Fiesta Yellow and black model on Christmas-eve of 1972. "It was sitting alongside Cave Creek Road in Phoenix with a '4 Sale' sign," he remembers. "It was dirty, but had no rust, and it had the factory engine and overdrive transmission." Additional options included the front beauty bar assembly, heater and step plates.

Offered by the estate of the original owner, the 40,000-mile Jeepster found its second owner in Jim. It's the 81st four-cylinder VJ3 Jeepster produced by Willys, according to Jim's friend and noted

Three coats of Fiesta Yellow, in PPG's Delfleet Essential single-stage urethane enamel system, were applied. The paint was wet sanded using 1200, 1500 and 1800 grades of paper, then thoroughly polished to a mirror-like finish using 3M products.

PPG describes Delfleet Essential as "a simple, single-stage, compliant system that delivers a quality finish at an economical price." Usually used in the fleet industry, it provides a very durable surface and is less costly than some other PPG paints.

The rebuilt three-speed transmission with overdrive was detailed in black with a gray bell-housing prior to reinstallation. Jim feels that the engine, bell-housing and transmission may have all been painted black at the factory, but he hasn't been able to confirm it.

Once the bodywork and paint were completed, the shell was moved to the lift in preparation for being reunited with the chassis. Jim had taken the chassis home to restore it and had sent out the transmission for a rebuild and the engine to be inspected.

Jeepster historian Colin Peabody. He also recalled, "Paperwork in the car indicated it had been sold new in Phoenix by the Tovrea Implement Company, the local Willys-Overland dealership."

Always treating the Jeepster as a collector vehicle, Jim drove it sparingly for parades, car shows and cruises. In 1974, it was given a cosmetic restoration, but in 1982, the Jeepster was packed away in the garage after Jim and his wife, Chris, welcomed their second child. Its interior, which had been restored in 1975, was removed and stored in the house. The Jeepster would remain in restful slumber for the next quarter-century.

By 2006, Jim had retired from the phone company, and his two children were adults. Colin and another friend, Greg Bowles, began prodding Jim to restore the Jeepster and even offered to help. Given his mechanical knowledge of these vehicles, Jim felt that he could handle many of the restoration tasks, but that the body, paint, engine and transmission work were best left to professionals.

In January 2008, Jim and his friends began removing the bolt-on parts. In March, he trailered the rolling shell to Award Winning Restorations in Phoenix to have the body and paint work performed. First, the body was removed from the chassis, which then enabled Jim to bring the chassis home.

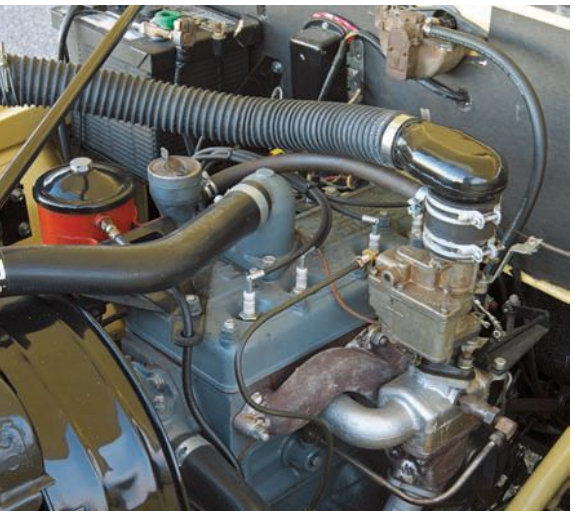
He restored the frame, suspension and brake systems. The unique Planadyne

He delivered the chassis with the engine and transmission reinstalled. The body was lowered onto the frame with 24 new rubber mount bushings in place, and most of the body bolts were installed to secure it. He completed the job once the Jeepster was home.

With engine unwrapped, its cosmetic detailing is revealed. The block was painted gray, and the accessories are black. It's possible that black is correct for the engine, however. Jim says that the orange oil filter canister with black top is factory-correct.

He reinstalled the convertible top frame, featuring oak top bows and a tack strip from Paul Barry at Willys America in Cazadero, California. However, like the body and paintwork, he concluded that making a convertible top from scratch was best left to a pro.

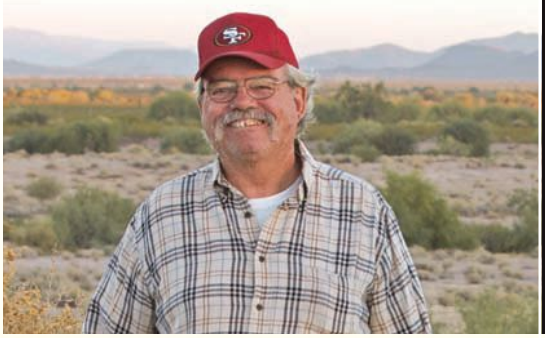
Jim, shown here, commissioned John Armenta of John's Custom Upholstery in Phoenix to make and install a new black convertible top. It has a 1948-style small rear window and the side curtains' vinyl windows are slightly different than the 1949-style's.



front suspension features a transverse multi-leaf spring, solidly mounted to the front crossmember. Spindles are attached via kingpins to the support knuckles that connect to the spring eyes, and frame-mounted upper control arms. Shocks are bolted to the upper control arms and the leaf spring eyes. A Ross cam-and-lever steering system handles turning. The Jeepster's suspension was still in very good condition, despite its age.

With all the parts unbolted and the frame sandblasted to bare metal, high-build primer was applied, followed by two coats of single-stage black urethane. The reusable suspension and brake parts were prepared the same way, except for the paint color in some instances. Wear items were replaced as needed. Jim added Monroe shocks and had Coker BFG reproductions of the optional 6.70 X 15 bias-ply tires mounted on the restored stock 15 x 5-inch wheels.

While working on the chassis, Jim had Morrison Auto Machine in Glendale, Arizona, refurbish the Go-Devil engine. Having proven itself in Jeeps back to 1941, the four-cylinder produced 63 hp at 4,000 RPM and 105-lb.ft. of torque at 2,000 RPM. Its iron block features a 3.125-inch bore and a 4.375-inch stroke cast crankshaft, with cast-iron connecting rods and cast-aluminum pistons; the compression ratio is 6.48:1. Air and fuel are mixed in a Carter one-barrel carburetor on an iron intake manifold and an Au-



I love Willys vehicles, especially the Jeepster. This restoration was definitely a labor of love. If you do the majority of the work yourself, you get satisfaction from that and you have the opportunity to get good friends to help you out. Fortunately, all the original parts were with the Jeepster, making it much easier to restore. Even so, at this stage of my life, if I wanted another one, I would buy one that was already finished. I have been a member of the Willys Overland Jeepster Club for 40 years, and I belong to the Kaiser Frazer Owners Club. My Jeepster won a Silver award at the Kaiser club's meet in 2011 in San Diego. I take it to local events, too, and it's been reliable and fun to drive.

tolite distributor, working with a six-volt negative-ground electrical system, ignites it. Exhaust exits via an iron manifold into a single pipe, muffler and tailpipe.

The three-speed manual transmission was rebuilt by Gentry Transmission in Phoenix, and the differential was examined and only required a new pinion seal. Once the chassis was completed, Jim bolted in the engine, a new Borg & Beck clutch and the transmission.

When notified in July 2008 that the body and paintwork were finished, Jim brought the chassis to the body shop where they bolted the body onto the restored chassis. Jim then trailered the Jeepster home and completed the project with help from his friends.

In Jim's garage, the Jeepster received a new wiring harness from the Jeepsterman and the interior, front body panels, convertible top frame and the front beauty bar and bumpers were reinstalled. Walck's 4 Wheel Drive in Bowmanstown, Pennsylvania, provided a reproduction steering wheel and the Jeepsterman a new rubber floor mat. Jim decided to add the optional stainless T-bar on the grille and a factory radio.

By July 2010, Jim's 1949 Willys-Overland VJ3 Jeepster was ready for cruising. "On the road it's awesome!" Jim exclaims. "In fact, the restoration turned out so well that I'm a little gun-shy about driving it." Nevertheless, Jim can attest to good mileage figures, achieving 24 MPG on the highway at 50 MPH. No doubt, the .70:1 overdrive taming the steep 4.88 rear gears to an effective 3.416 has helped retain fuel efficiency.

Though the Jeepster may not have been as successful as Willys-Overland had hoped, today, it enjoys a loyal following, ensuring that mid-century "America's greatest value in sports cars!" will not soon be forgotten.

1966 Cadillac

STANDARD OF THE WORLD IN MOTORING PLEASURE AND OWNER LOYALTY

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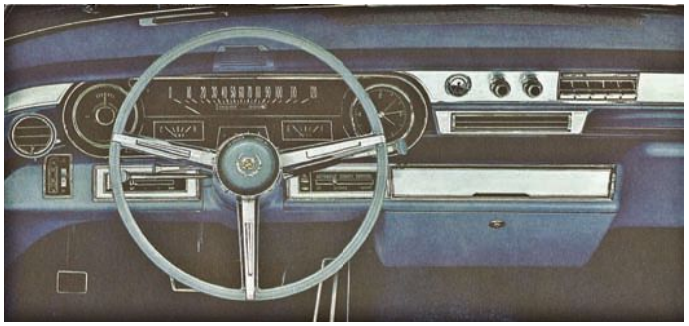
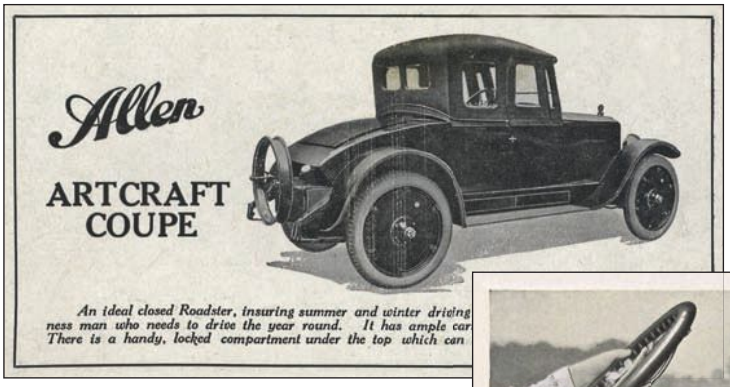
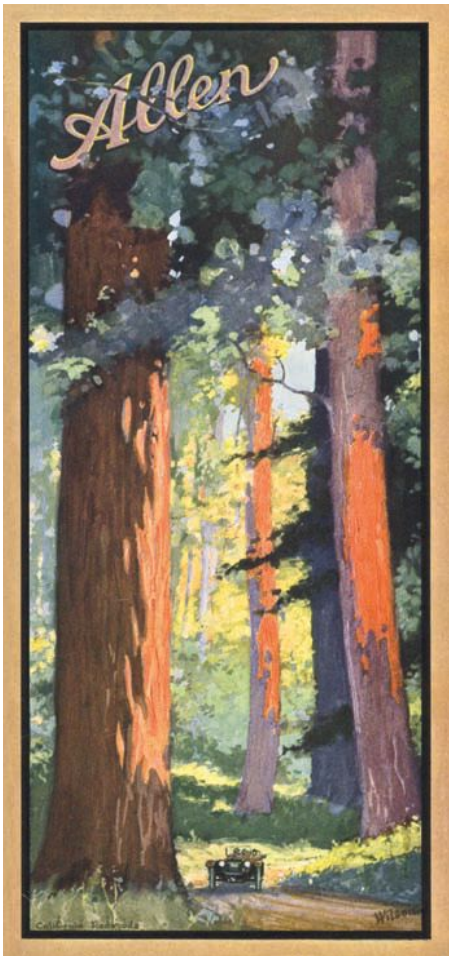
No wonder that Cadillac, in terms of elegance, excellence and excitement, remains the unchallenged Standard of the World and is universally accepted as the finest of fine cars.



BY CHRIS RITTER
ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE AACA LIBRARY

Allen Automobiles





LIKE MOST CAR PEOPLE, I've been curious about early car companies that have the same name as me. Before I was born, my parents decided on my first and middle names. My first name was chosen because it has been popular for at least a billion years, but my middle name was planned to be the same as my father's middle name. The middle name I have is Alan, so my parents had unwittingly made my initials spell "CAR."

When it came time to give my information for the birth certificate, my father was not in the hospital room, so my mom dutifully entered my middle name as Alan. Unfortunately, my father spells his middle name as Allen, and so, there being no "Alan" car companies…

The Allen car got its start in 1913 when the Peabody Buggy Company reorganized in Fostoria, Ohio. The company's first car, the "Allen 40" was a 27-horsepower, five-passenger touring car on a 118-inch wheelbase. It featured a full-floating rear axle, an Autolite electric starting and lighting system and "nothing else new or radical."

By 1915, Allen would offer four models with two different engines: the same 27-hp unit used in 1913 and a smaller, 21-hp engine used in smaller models that were being offered for as little as $875. Sales for each year during the mid-teens approached 2,000 cars.

When you read news articles about the Allen from its start in 1913 through the late Teens, it would appear on paper that all was well. During the company's first seven years, Allen absorbed Sommers Engine Manufacturing, built a new plant in Fostoria in 1917 and acquired the Columbus Buggy Corporation in 1919. The reality for the Allen is that sales started to dwindle as early as 1918, and the company landed in receivership in 1920. It simply couldn't compete in a poor economy by offering cars that didn't evolve or improve much. The company would cease to exist by late 1922, but not before one last-ditch effort was made in 1921 and 1922 with "Artcraft" models that offered vivid body colors "named after the precious stones they resemble—Sapphire, Garnet, Turquoise and Amethyst."

Sales literature for the Allen is, for the most part, quite nice. The company regularly used color, provided extensive illustrations and, in addition to specifications, provided great detail on interior upholstery and exterior paint details. The Allen stylized logo is elegant and appears extensively through all sales pieces.

Created to sell the Series 41, the most beautiful piece of Allen literature is from 1918 and measures 4½ x 9⅝ inches. The front cover shows the Allen 41 driving through a redwood forest, and the back cover depicts the Series 41 in the shadow of New York City's Woolworth Building. The catalog folds open to 13⅝ x 9⅝ inches and provides full-color illustrations of the Series 41's body styles, chassis and special features, like electric controls on the steering column and floating rear axle.

While Allen effectively used color in sales literature early on, the company failed to capitalize on that tool with its Artcraft models in 1921 and 1922. Likely because of the company's failing financial health, these late catalogs employ only simple black-and-white illustrations of the Artcraft bodies and a list of basic specifications. Had they been introduced during the earlier days of Allen's life, these Artcraft catalogs could have been spectacular.

Finding information on cars with the same name as yours can be fun. Start by looking through a copy of *The Standard Catalog of American Cars,* but if you can't find anything that matches your name, fall back on the name you were supposed to have—it worked for me!

BY MILTON STERN

The Other Monza

WHEN YOU ARE A BIG COMPANY like General Motors and you have a big division like Chevrolet, you can afford to have your share of dogs—I mean, underdogs. This month's selection is no exception, and its origins make it even more interesting, to say the least. It was offered as basic transportation or an inexpensive sporty subcompact. These little throwaway cars also made great sweet-sixteen birthday presents.

Based on the four-year-old Vega platform, the Chevrolet Monza, not to be confused with the very desirable Chevrolet Corvair Monza, was first offered to the public as a 2+2 hatchback in 1975. While it shared the Vega's platform, the Monza was originally supposed to use GM's Wankel engine, but poor gas mileage and difficulty meeting emissions requirements canceled further development of the rotary engine. This also caused difficulties for AMC, which had planned on using that engine in the Pacer. AMC ended up performing patchwork engineering to shoehorn a straight-six longitudinally into its new cab-forward platform.

The Vega's 140-cu.in. four-cylinder powertrain ended up in the Monza's engine bay, but an optional 262-cu.in. V-8—Chevrolet's smallest V-8 up to that time—could instead be fitted for a whopping 110 horsepower.

Ironically, the Monza was aimed directly at Ford's Mustang II, which after being shrunk to sub-compact size, was no longer directly competing in the pony car class it had created, particularly against the Camaro.

John DeLorean apparently nicknamed the Monza "The Italian Vega" because he thought it looked like a Ferrari 365 GTC/4. Excuse me while I giggle. Granadas mistaken for Mercedes and Monzas mistaken for Ferraris. Seriously?

The Monza 2+2 had a urethane nose and tail, which was a development I have never particularly liked. I have yet to see a modern car whose body-color bumpers aren't nicked, scratched or discolored. Replacing those plastic bumpers costs a fortune. Am I in the minority missing cars with real bumpers?

Along with its Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac siblings, Monza was the first to use the torque arm rear suspension, which also appeared under the Cosworth Vega in 1975, then in 1976-'77 Vegas and Astres, and eventually Camaros and Firebirds.

In April 1975, a Towne Coupe was added to the lineup. The coupe shared the doors, windshield and front fenders with the 2+2, but little else, and it had bumpers. Soon after, a Towne Coupe Cabriolet with a half vinyl roof and opera windows was also part of the family.

I remember the Towne Coupe in high school because it was the sweet-sixteen birthday present of choice, especially when equipped with a four-cylinder. One evening, there were three of us riding around in a Monza coupe, and as we pulled up a driveway that had a slight incline to pick up a friend, the driver asked all of us to grunt because her car could hardly make it to the door.

In 1976, the Chevrolet 305-cu.in. small-block V-8 replaced the smaller 262 V-8, and that same year, the "Dura-built 140," a Vega engine with hydraulic valve lifters and other improvements to help alleviate oil consumption and overheating problems, became the base engine.

Reaching back to the Corvair legacy, a Spyder package joined the build sheet in 1977 at $274 for performance options and $199 for appearance options. This included upgrading to the 305 V-8, round gauges in a brushed aluminum instrument panel, center console and other doodads. That same year, the Towne Coupe Cabriolet was eliminated, but if one desired, she could still order a half vinyl roof with opera windows for that elegant 1970s touch for her 16th birthday.

An interesting aftermarket option was the Monza Mirage, which featured a white 2+2 body with red and blue racing stripes, flared body panels, an air dam and a spoiler. Michigan Automotive Techniques created the modifications for GM, and around 4,000 Mirages were ordered in 1977.

In 1978, Pontiac's 2.5-liter "Iron Duke" four-cylinder replaced the Dura-built 140, and the Vega station wagon became a Monza model. With wood trim, you had a Monza Estate Wagon. Other engine options were the 3.2-liter V-6 from Chevrolet or the Buick 3.8 liter V-6 for California and high-altitude destinations.

The 1979 and '80 model years offered the Monza 2+2, coupe and Spyder. Then, the platform was mercifully retired.

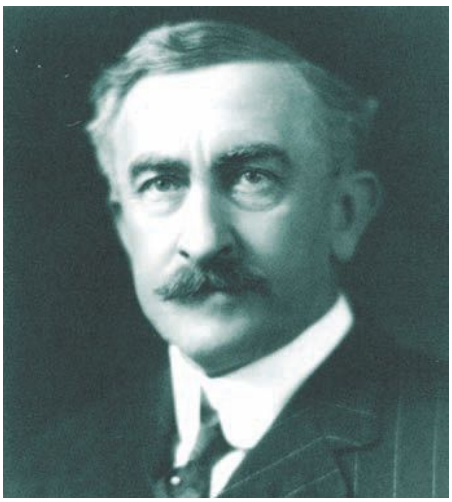
Do any Monzas exist? Yes. Brian Shorter of Waynesboro, Virginia, owns a 1977 Chevrolet Monza Mirage.

Brian's first car was a Monza 2+2, and he missed it. One day, a friend called him about a Monza with "some strange body kit and fender flares." He told his friend, "I'll send you a check. Go buy it!" Brian is presently restoring the Mirage, which came equipped with a four-speed stick and 305 V-8.

A quick Internet search found a few forums, a parts-and-accessories page and other resources for keeping your Chevrolet Monza in tip-top shape. No matter what the car, somebody's first car was one, and that somebody will eventually look for one.

BY JIM DONNELLY

Henry Joy



HIS NAME MAY NOT HAVE ADORNED the headquarters or its factories, but Henry Bourne Joy did more to make Packard into a global success than anybody—one might suggest strongly, maybe even more than the grand marque's founding siblings, James Ward and William Doud Packard. Quite an impressive feat, given that when Joy first burst happily into the Packard universe, he didn't even know how to operate an automobile.

Joy, however, had enough interest to overcome that handicap, in very much the same way as the birth of Packard was an act of defiance (as the story goes, James Ward Packard was fed up with the laggard performance and unreliability of his first automobile, a Winton, and decided to build his own car). Joy and a like-minded, well-moneyed pal, John Newberry, were carousing about New York City in 1901, looking to acquire a car, when they watched two men burst out of the Manhattan showroom, clamber aboard two Packards and begin to chase a clanging fire engine down the crowded street.

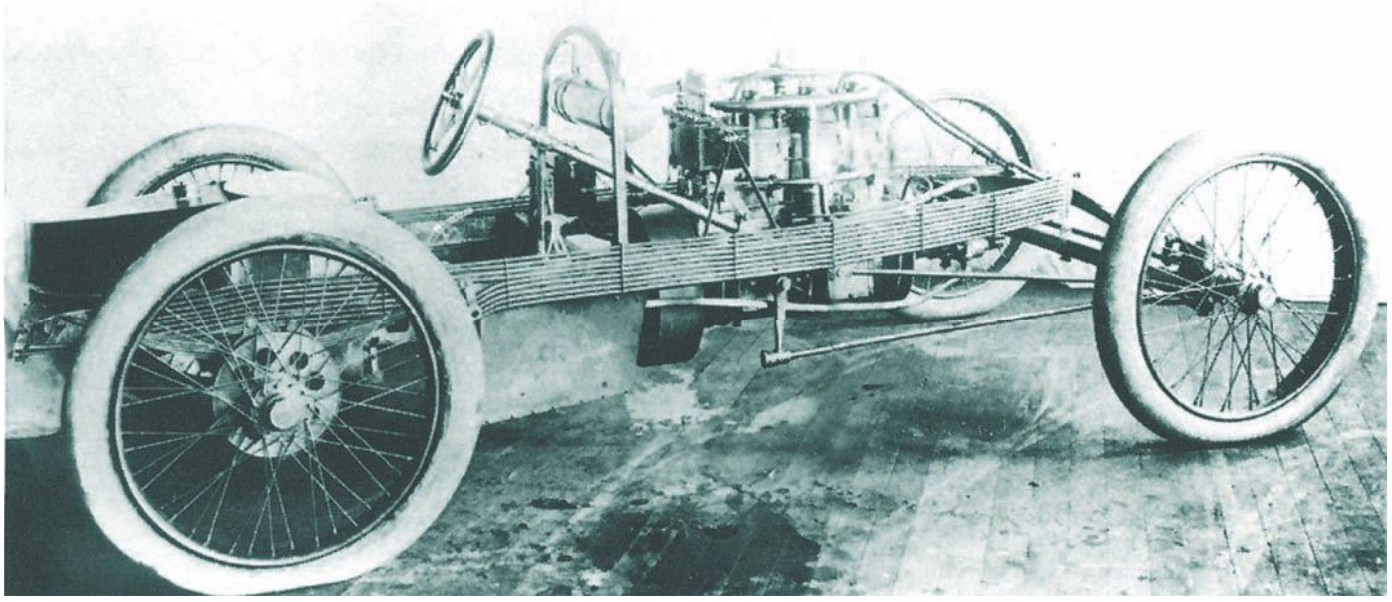
That did it. Joy slapped down the money on a new Model B with upgraded bodywork, the only Packard available for purchase in the entire city. That was his first step in a journey that saw him eventually rise to Packard's presidency, chairmanship and status as, likely, its most unshakably loyal believer.

His lifetime began in 1864, when he was born in Detroit to James Joy, a wealthy tycoon who had run three different railroads at various times—the second of which, the Illinois Central, he pushed into Missouri with help from his friend and corporate counsel, a young attorney named Abraham Lincoln. Educated at elite New England schools, the younger Joy held a variety of railroad-related jobs, including a top management post at the towering Michigan Central Station in the Corktown section of Detroit (it's still standing, and the elder Joy had run the Michigan Central Railroad).

Then he spotted those Packards in New York. Back home in Detroit, Joy boasted about the quality of his Packard, and got five men with money to invest in the toddling automaker, then based in Warren, Ohio. All the investors, including Joy, had served in the Navy together aboard the cruiser *Yosemite* during the Spanish-American War. The deal established Joy as Packard's majority shareholder. When city fathers in Warren balked at approving a major expansion of Packard's manufacturing plant, Joy and his financiers, the "champagne brigade" as they called themselves, persuaded the Packard brothers to move the entire operation to Detroit in 1902.

Packard's new home base was a cutting-edge factory, which became one of the most fabled industrial edifices in Detroit. Located on East Grand Boulevard and designed by the esteemed architect Albert Kahn, it was the world's first factory to be constructed entirely of reinforced concrete. It inspired other Detroit plants, some of them also drafted by Kahn, including Henry Ford's factory in Highland Park, where the Model T was first built in great numbers. Speaking of Ford, he enjoyed a major ally in Joy when it came to backing litigation to fight the infamous Selden patent, which could have prevented the fledgling auto industry from getting off the ground at all.

One could fill a book with the ways in which Joy, by all accounts a rollicking, confident executive, improved Packard. He green-lighted its entry into the truck market, recruited Jesse Vincent as the company's chief of engineering, authorized the V-12 engine that Vincent created, laid the groundwork for the subsequent Liberty aircraft engine, and pushed Packard into its post-World War I identity as a premium car frequently clad in prestigious custom coachwork. Joy remained at the helm of Packard until he left in 1926 to help Carl Graham Fisher promote and complete the Lincoln Highway. Joy died in 1936.



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

1/64-scale Gems: Playart

THE WORLD OF DIE-CAST is filled with brands that failed to develop the manic following of, say, a Hot Wheels or a Matchbox. But they exist, and the models they produced make the die-cast world all the richer for it.

Take Playart, for instance. Always made in Hong Kong, Playart dabbled in a variety of dime-store toys. Playart launched a line of real-car models in the early 1970s, and drew from international sources, much of it American. For years, Playart was the only small-scale die-cast company to cast a Barracuda fastback, 1961 Oldsmobile 88 sedan, stock AMC Javelin, or the first Chevrolet Mako Shark concept car. Some of the company's model choices are distinctive enough that you can point to their origins: Both its TV Batmobile and *The Man from UNCLE*-derived Oldsmobile sedan mentioned above were copies of Corgi's larger 1/43-scale models, and its Mercury Commuter station wagon was very obviously derived from Matchbox's model—though whether Playart used a 1-75 line car or a Super King model remains uncertain.

Other Playart cars were mastered from 1/24-scale unassembled plastic model kits, with the result occasionally tipping its hand a little too obviously. One model of a Japanese car was launched as the Yamada Discmatic, which was in fact the name of the model company whose kit was used to master the new model, rather than the name of the car being replicated. Later versions got it right.

Other American cars in the Playart line included a 1967 Cadillac Eldorado; 1968 Ford Thunderbird (done, for some reason, in a far smaller scale than other comparable models); an early Mustang that could be built as a sedan with vinyl top or a convertible; a variety of Corvettes, Camaros and Firebirds; a 1977 Chevrolet Caprice done in taxi, police and civilian liveries; the Dodge Omni 024 coupe (with opening hatch!); and a '72 Dodge Challenger that is arguably better-proportioned than Matchbox's fairly squat example; there were even American-powered European cars like the Jensen Interceptor and the Mangusta and Pantera, both by De Tomaso.

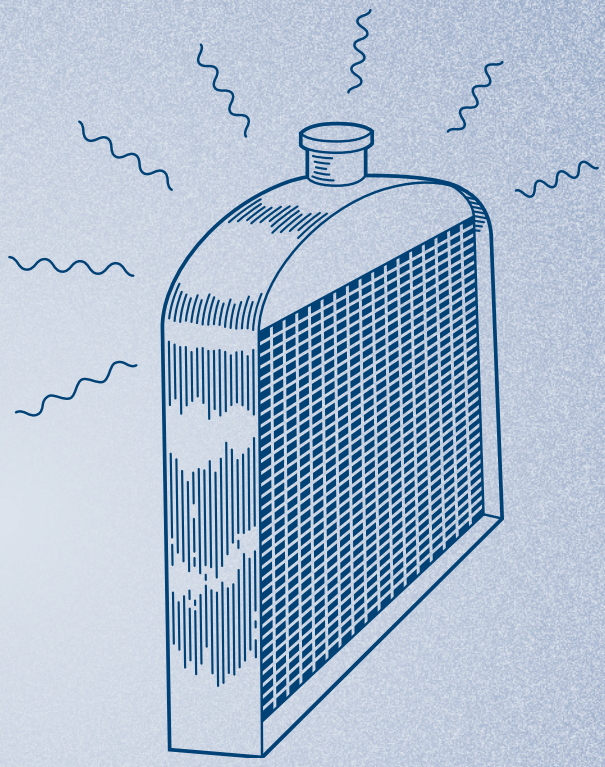
In the States, Playarts were packaged under many different names including Charmerz, Peelers (as Woolworth's in-house small-scale die-cast brand) and Road Mates (the last of the Sears department stores' in-house small-scale die-cast brand). They came on blister cards and in window boxes, singly and in multipacks—and were a staple of five-and-dimes and regional department stores in the days before Walmart's and Target's dominance.

Early Playart cars ran on wheels held on with crimped piano-wire axles, with separate chromed hubcaps that popped on. However, safety regulations dating to about 1973 indicated that the hubcaps were a choking hazard (the same reason Mattel did away with the pull-off redline wheels on its models around the same time), and so Playart introduced a variety of diameters of "flower" or "safety" one-piece wheel and tire. This later changed to a tall, thin tire, with a plain five-slot design heat-stamped chrome on its face. Also, as the '70s rolled on, other concessions were made. Separate steering wheels became molded in with the interiors and dashboards; chassis were switched from metal to plastic; opening components were sealed shut in subsequent re-toolings.

By the middle 1980s, Playart was no more. Some of the latest-produced, hardest-to-find models, such as the Mercedes G-Wagen, Fox-bodied Ford Mustang convertible and VW Golf, have only been known to turn up in multi-packs, and even loose can command nearly three figures. Today, mint-in-package hubcap-era Playarts can bring prices of $50 or more, depending on model.

The Real Deal

Quantifying an engine's fuel usage



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZACH HIGGINS

JOB: Measuring Engine Efficiency

BY RAY T. BOHACZ

IF YOU WERE TO LOOK BACK at the early days of any mechanical invention, you would notice that there are common evolutionary steps. First, the concept of an invention needs to be proved and a prototype made to work; then, a method must be devised for manufacturing the new component, and, finally, it needs to be accepted by the public. Once this happens, the next phase focuses on improving the component's operation in every way possible.

The automobile industry is still going though this "Jacob's Ladder" routine—an aspect of an automobile is improved and improved to the point where it ultimately is discarded in favor of the next level of advancement. A good example of this phenomenon is provided by the ignition system, which began with the magneto, then progressed to the distributor, the electronic ignition, the distributor-less ignition, the coil-on-plug, and who knows what will come next. Automotive engine technology has always been and will be an evolving thing.

However, before an industry can improve something, a metric, or means to assign quantifiable data to that thing's performance, must be created. This separates the real, or tangible, gains from what are often perceived but nonexistent changes in performance. Thus, the first step is to create an accurate metric—a measuring stick, so to speak.

Often a usable metric is itself more difficult to create than an improvement in the mechanical design of the thing whose performance is being measured—a good engineer can feel things that are intangible to laypeople, much like a gourmet chef can assess the qualities of a particular dish. But without hard numbers, it's difficult to express a perceived improvement's meaning.

When it comes to engine design, there is one characteristic that resonates with just about every consumer: the rate of fuel consumption. Fuel economy can prove to be the impetus for marketplace acceptance or rejection.

Growing up, we all heard the term "gas hog" used to describe a certain vehicle or engine. A body could be svelte, the ride luxurious and the mechanicals very reliable, but if the platform got the reputation of being a gas burner, no one wanted it, especially at trade-in time. Fuel consumption became more critical in post WWII America because the demographics of automobile ownership expanded and the public was driving more miles each year.

To the consumer, fuel economy is measured in miles per gallon, but the engineer requires a much more accurate metric that factors out driving style, weather and road conditions, as well as other variables. They also require a means to determine fuel usage across a range of engine sizes and number of cylinders as well as with regard to load applied,

horsepower and torque.

This way, two engines of varying displacement and cylinder count can be compared for fuel efficiency. The engine also needs to be separated from the rest of the vehicle hosting it in order to remove the influence of aerodynamic drag, vehicle weight, rolling resistance and the impact of the transmission.

At first blush, this may seem like a task that cannot be accomplished, but in actual practice it is quite simple—measure the fuel consumed per horsepower created.

AN ENGINEER'S LOOK AT FUEL CONSUMPTION

The internal combustion (IC) engine is nothing more than a converter—it converts chemical energy in fuel to mechanical energy. The chemical energy stored in a given fuel will impact the work an engine can perform using that fuel. Since fuel's energy density varies due to many factors, engineers do not look at gallons of fuel, but instead work in terms of pounds, which is a mass rather than a volume.

The trouble with the IC engine is that it is relatively inefficient in converting chemical energy into mechanical energy. There are three ways through which energy is lost—that is, consumed but not transmitted to the crankshaft—through friction, through heat loss and through pumping. The following are brief explanations of these losses:

Friction: The amount of energy consumed in operating the engine and its ancillary components, such as the oil, water and fuel pumps, camshaft, rocker arms, pistons, etc. Everything that moves in the engine works against some form of friction and requires energy to overcome that.

Heat loss: Do the radiator and exhaust system of an engine get hot when it's running? Of course they do. That's lost energy from the fuel. The amount of heat energy that goes into the engine coolant and out the tailpipe constitutes thermal loss.

Pumping: Did you ever try to turn an engine over by hand with a wrench on the harmonic balancer bolt? If so, you noticed that it is quite difficult to do. But if you remove all of the sparkplugs, the task becomes much easier. The work the engine must perform to fill the cylinders with combustible mixture and then ultimately exhaust it from the cylinders is considered a pumping loss.

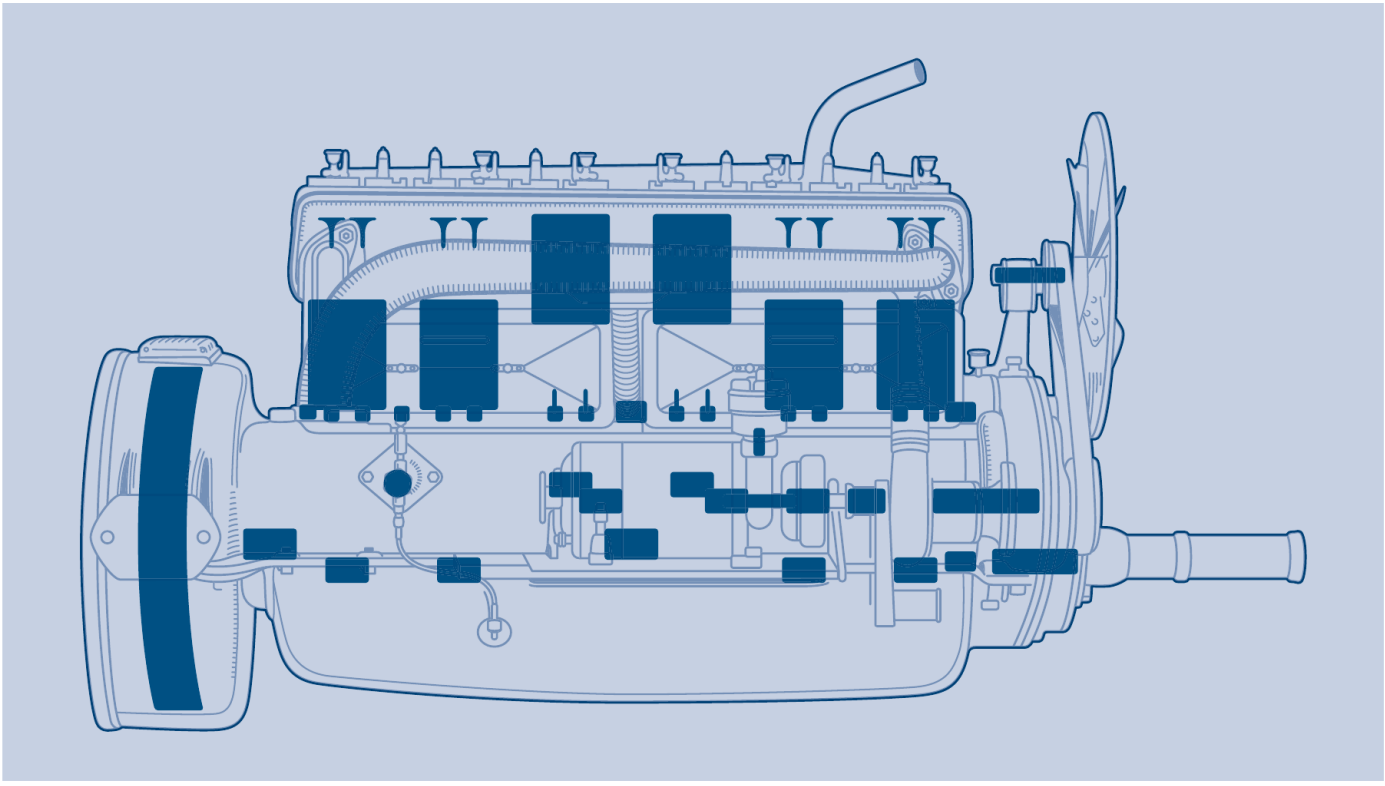
BRAKE SPECIFIC FUEL CONSUMPTION

The standard that Detroit developed, and still uses, to determine fuel efficiency is called "brake specific fuel consumption" (BSFC). It measures the amount of fuel in pounds that is consumed in producing one horsepower for one hour. To determine BSFC, the engine needs to be put on a dynamometer with an accurate fuel flow meter, and the weight or specific gravity of the fuel must be known. All of this data is processed, and a BSFC value is determined.

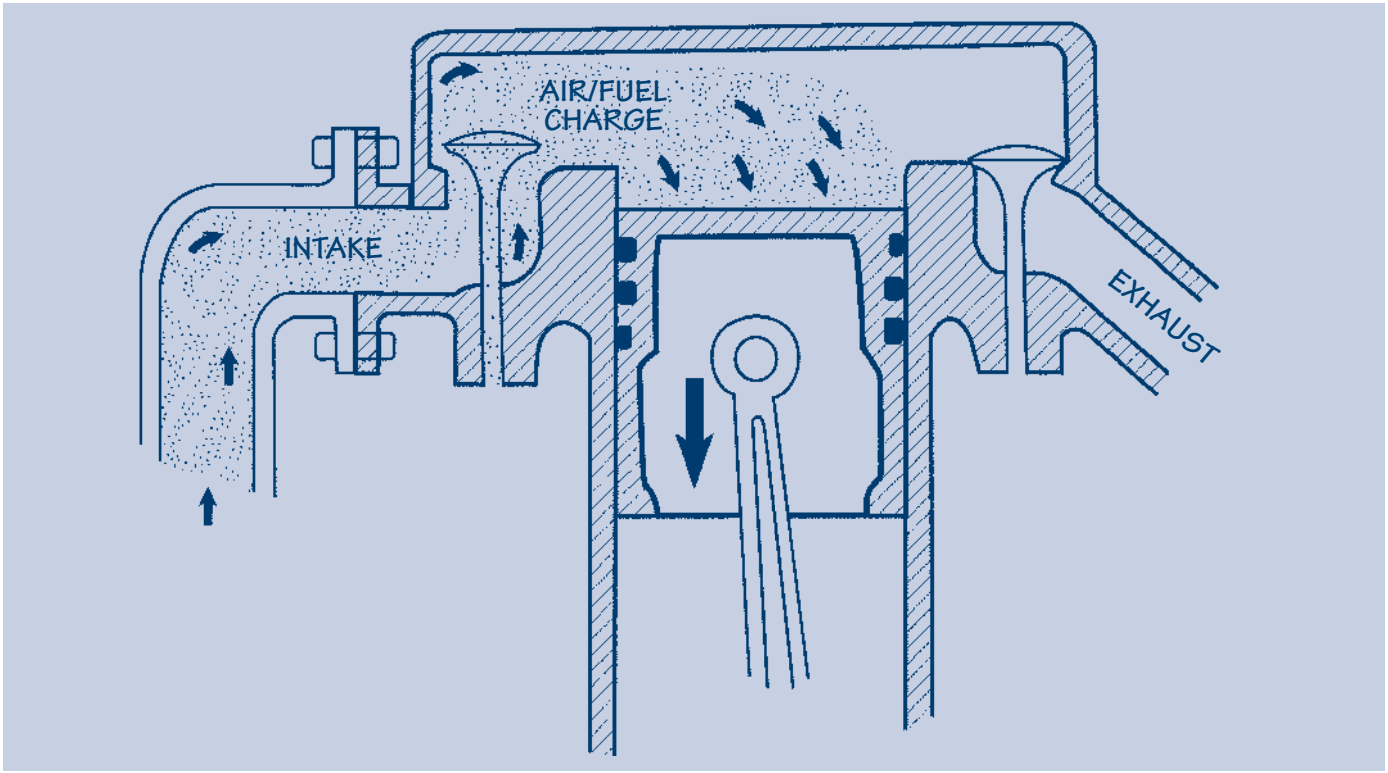
The lower the BSFC is numerically, the more efficiently the engine is at converting chemical energy into mechanical energy. For the most part, a gasoline engine will have a BSFC value that is a decimal. For easy figuring, I'll use 0.50.

A BSFC rating of 0.50 means that the engine will consume one-half pound of fuel in one hour in the production of one horsepower. If that engine is making 10 horsepower, it will use five pounds of fuel (0.50 x 10) in one hour. This means—if we assume the fuel weighs 8 pounds per gallon—the engine will consume a little more than a half-gallon (0.625 gallon).

If another engine produces 100 hp and consumes 6.25 gallons of the same fuel in one hour, it too is just as efficient as the 10-hp design—it just makes 10 times more power, so it uses more fuel, albeit at the same rate. In engineering parlance, this rate is termed "thermal efficiency."



The friction created as all of the various internal components of an engine rotate or reciprocate (here indicated by dark blue) requires energy to be overcome. This leaves less of the fuel's potential energy free to be used in moving the vehicle the engine is powering.



Even though the air/fuel charge naturally moves from the area of high pressure outside the cylinder to the area of low pressure within, the engine must do work—and use some of the potential energy stored in the fuel—to create this depression and then pump the exhaust out.

Each fuel type has a different energy density. For example, diesel fuel has more energy stored per gallon than gasoline, and methanol alcohol, which is used in many race engines, has just about one-half the energy density of gasoline. BSFC values for diesel engines are typically in the 0.20 range, while the BSFC of a methanol engine is more likely to be near 1.0.

A traditional classic car engine at peak torque will have a BSFC of around 0.50, while a modern engine will come in around 0.35 to 0.38 and, in some cases, even lower.

Though the BSFC is a true indicator of the energy conversion rate, it may not be linear through a given engine's load and RPM range. Furthermore, the automotive aftermarket and racing community only measures BSFC at full throttle and load as the engine works against the dynamometer brake. This is problematic because, due to the dynamics of cylinder filling with any engine, the BSFC may improve at a given part-throttle load or it may become less efficient. Detroit, however, has the ability to confirm thermal efficiency through fuel consumption at low power output and fuel flow characteristics.

When designing an engine, attention is given to all three areas of loss (friction, heat loss, pumping) in an effort to improve the amount of potential energy ultimately delivered to the crankshaft in light of the particular fuel used. Often, engineering teams will be seeking to minimize the loss in each of the three areas. Little changes, when looked at collectively, may bring respectable gains. It is this synergy, along with the final tune or calibration, which ultimately determines an engine's thermal efficiency.

The easiest method to increase thermal efficiency and lower the numerical BSFC value is through increasing the compression ratio. A change in compression is the most effective means to increase fuel economy. Most, if not all, modern engines now boast fairly high compression ratios, which not too many years back would have been considered the domain of serious race engines. Increasing an engine's compression ratio requires a synergistic approach that takes into consideration combustion chamber design, heat transfer in the cylinder head and advanced engine management to keep detonation at bay on low-octane fuel. Compression ratios cannot be increased without also addressing what the industry identifies as "octane tolerance."

Additionally, lowering BSFC numbers alone will not lead to stellar fuel economy if a vehicle is very un-aerodynamic, has high rolling resistance or is very heavy. Mass, especially, comes into play during local driving when the vehicle must stop and start frequently; the weight of the car has less impact once it is rolling on the highway. Many will argue that greater mass is an asset because it increases inertia; however, the key to fuel economy is to have an engine that has high thermal efficiency *and* a body that requires very little horsepower to cruise at a given speed. This recipe yields the best of both worlds: a high rate of chemical-to-mechanical energy conversion and a low power demand required to move the car.

Any automotive historian will note that as the evolution of the American car progressed, both aerodynamics and thermal efficiency came to be emphasized in the engineering center, while the marketing men hoped that the resulting designs would resonate with the buying public. No place is that more apparent than in today's vehicles that, for the most part, have the same silhouette and BSFC regardless of who makes them and where they come from. The concept of design freedom is now limited to meet these goals. This is why the collector car market transcends all ages and demographics—because, as they say, they simply don't make them like they used to… and, sadly, never will again.

The Hagerty Education Program at America's Car Museum carries forward the legacy and mission of the former Collectors Foundation.

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Bob Toy

Maintenance Supervisor
Ford Motor Company

I WAS OFFERED A JOB at Ford's Kentucky Truck Plant in the spring of 1978 as a maintenance supervisor, with the understanding that I was to be groomed for a maintenance superintendent's job. I was a degreed mechanical engineer, a certified gearhead since my earliest recollections, and thought I understood how to manage people. I interviewed for the job with the plant-engineering manger, to whom the maintenance superintendents and plant design engineering manager reported. He had an organizational chart of his department on his office wall and caught my attention when he pointed at one of the existing superintendent's slots and said, "This guy came up through the ranks as a millwright, and he is not going any further." He then gestured towards the other super's nametag and said, "This guy is an electrical engineer only three years older than you. He has a brilliant future with the company, but (waving his hand across the maintenance organization) there is no one here now that is promotable. That's what we want you for."

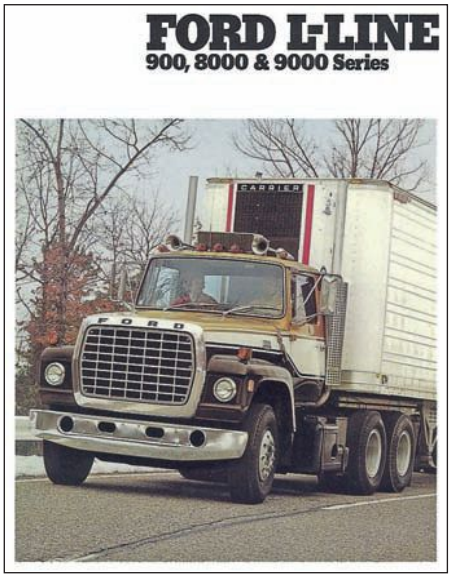
It surely didn't hurt that the superintendents got paid for overtime (there was a lot of it) and therefore made about $70K per year in 1978 dollars. The dealmaker was that, when/if I made it to the superintendent level, I would be eligible for two new-lease Ford vehicles per year, at a very reasonable rate.

The Kentucky Truck Plant went online in 1969. The main assembly building covered over 60 acres. It was the only location in the world where Ford assembled heavy-duty trucks. There were three final lines, running at 13 jobs per hour, each. The third line was for the large CL over-the-road tractors. I would have paid Ford the first couple of weeks I was on the job to just walk around and see how the trucks were assembled and check out all that neat machinery.

After a short orientation, I was assigned to the paint department on the afternoon shift. Major equipment items included the Bonderizer, which cleaned the bare bodies and applied a phosphate coating, the electro coat primer dip, primer baking ovens, enamel spray booths and enamel baking ovens. There were somewhat identical separate lines for the bodies and small parts, such as hoods, fenders, running boards, doors, etc. My time at Ford was just prior to the advent of solid state controls, and I distinctly remember relay cabinets 6-feet high by 10-feet long crammed full of control relays, each with several sets of contacts, any one of which could have shut the whole line down.

One evening, the primer oven for the body line shut down, and the word that it was off didn't get to us until about 50 or so bodies had been through that part of the process. A conference quickly ensued among all the higher-level manager types on duty that evening, and it took them all of five minutes to make the decision to "paint 'em." Remember, this was a few years prior to any admission by the American automotive manufacturers that they had a problem with that little thing called quality.

The hardest part of the job was the war zone-like atmosphere that existed between the production, maintenance and material-handling departments. It seemed as if part of my job description was to stand toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose with a production foreman, general foreman or superintendent, cussing in a manner that would make the most experienced sailor blush, over some problem in the department. My troops could never fix



anything good enough or fast enough for them, while I was quite sure that a lot of the maintenance problems were operator induced. The kicker was, within 20 minutes or so, we would be drinking coffee together or sharing our plans for the weekend. A hard way to make a living, even if the pay and benefits were great.

The old adage about not wanting a vehicle built on Monday or Friday was true. The root problem here was that the line workers just made too much money (about $10 per hour in 1978, plus benefits). That being said, many of them could easily see clear to make themselves a three-day weekend pretty often. Then, when the line was about to start and the superintendent discovered that old Joe wasn't there, he had to scurry all over the plant looking for a surplus worker from another department to fill in on a job he had never performed before. Production folks were penalized for having too many people in their area, so no one wanted extra bodies hanging around. This negatively affected their incentive bonuses.

I had a skeet-shooting buddy who worked near the end of the "L" line where he was assigned the job of setting the driveshaft angle on trucks with dual rear

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.

axles. He was to use a specially developed protractor to decide how many shims to add, and I'd seen him totally ignoring his assignment. When questioned, he said that, he was "saving lives," for when he didn't align the rear ends, it made the trucks vibrate, and this would keep the driver from going to sleep. To properly set the driveshaft, all tires had to be inflated to the proper pressure. My buddy told me that sometimes he would sneak back up the line, to the trucks that hadn't gotten to him yet, and remove a valve core so a tire would go flat, and he would not have to set the angle.

The quality of even the seemingly most insignificant hardware that went on the trucks was impressive. I don't think there was a bolt of less than grade-eight quality in the whole place. The maintenance storeroom didn't stock too many bolts or nuts. When I first asked for a particular fastener there, I was told to "Walk the line—you'll find one out there somewhere."

In the body shop, I had two great guys, who also just happened to be excellent machinists, assigned to me. They appreciated the way I treated them and reciprocated by answering my unending barrage of questions about practical machine work. I was even allowed to "play" on their small, tool room lathe in slack times. Once, I was helping Bill, a paint department electrician, work off a ladder when something slipped, and he injured his hand. Bill was a class guy, and I took a six-pack by his house that Sunday afternoon to help ease the pain. Bill ended up getting the maximum award in the employee suggestion program, which consisted of a new Ford, plus its equivalent cash value for proposing a sequencing method that decreased lunchtime skips or downtime on the paint line.

In the fall of 1979, we had a couple of weeks where production was shut down due to a decline in orders. Another indicator that the pay and benefits situation industry-wide was somewhat out of touch with reality was the fact that the union employees got 95 percent of their pay for not coming to work during these short-term layoffs. It goes without saying that the direct workers gleefully looked at such events as extra vacation, and the more the better. The fact that nothing was being produced and the company could not possibly be making a profit during such times did not seem important. As often happens, these chickens came home to roost. There was, in fact, a little project money to keep a few maintenance workers busy during these shutdowns, and of course we company people had to work.

TECH TALK

BY MIKE McNESSOR

TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT

Q: I have a 1956 Ford Thunderbird with a 292-cu.in. Y-block V-8 and a four-barrel carburetor. I have replaced the points with a Pertronix electronic ignition, and the carburetor was rebuilt by a shop. Since the carburetor was overhauled, I have had trouble starting the engine. I have to double pump the foot feed and hold the pedal halfway down. The carburetor is the original, and I believe it was called "the teapot." Is there another carburetor that fits the 292?

J. Tyler Smith
Savannah, Georgia

A: The design of the Holley 4000 "teapot" has been the subject of a lot of debate, but after a rebuild, it should work just fine. On a carburetor that's been recently overhauled, I'd double check that the choke is hooked up and working and that the flow of fuel hasn't been obstructed: A slightly kinked fuel line, a filter installed backwards, etc. These are things you can easily check yourself, but beyond that, you might want to place a call to the rebuilder for his input. Swapping to the later modular style Holley carburetor, like the 4150, is possible, but it would require changing the intake manifold.

BOOSTING BRAKE PERFORMANCE

Q: I recently purchased a 1956 Ford Victoria. It's in beautiful condition—looks great and runs great. My problem is getting used to its drum brakes. They work fine, but not fast enough to satisfy me. I realize that power disc brakes are an option, but could you give me some alternative ways to go that would be less expensive but still improve stopping?

Rodney Green
Nashville, Tennessee

A: You don't need to convert to disc brakes to give your Ford better braking performance and a more reassuring pedal feel. The safest way to go would be with a new power brake booster and dual master cylinder for your car. Master Power brakes sells a bolt-on unit for $425 (www.mpbrakes.com or 800-472-4181) that will work. It will require some brake line replumbing if your car has a single-circuit master cylinder and some pushrod adjustment to get the pedal functioning correctly, but the results will be worth it.

A STALL ORDER

Q: I have a 1966 Chevrolet C10 pickup with a 525-hp, 468-cu.in. big-block V-8 and a Turbo-HydraMatic 350 transmission. Should I put in a 2,200 [RPM] stall converter? Will it shift better and have more out-of-the-hole power?

Paul Messina
Medford, New York

A: That seems like a simple enough question, but the answer can get pretty complicated. The optimum stall speed for any application is determined by knowing the engine's torque curve, the vehicle's gear ratio and the weight of the vehicle. I'm not an expert in high-performance drivetrain setups, so I would suggest calling the manufacturer of the torque converter you're considering and asking their advice. They are definitely going to want to know the specs of the camshaft you are running in your engine, the vehicle's approximate curb weight, tire size and rear axle ratio. They are also going to want to know what you intend to use the truck for. You're wise to deliberate over the choice of a converter, because a snap decision can result in a vehicle that isn't much fun to drive.

TO BLEND OR NOT TO BLEND

Q: I have a 2003 Cadillac Deville with 72,000 miles, and I would like to put synthetic 5W-30 oil in the engine. Should I use a synthetic blend? What do you recommend? Also, I would like your opinion on tire pressure for different size tires, and could you tell me where I can get more information about the car? I only have an owner's manual and that doesn't tell much.

David Carlson
Corona, Arizona

A: GM recommended using Goodwrench 5W-30 conventional oil in the 2003 4.9-liter Northstar. I'd probably stick with a conventional 5W-30 for that reason alone. GM was well aware of synthetics then—the 2003 Corvette engine specified Mobil 1—so, my guess is they didn't think it was necessary. If it makes you feel better to use a full synthetic oil or a blend in your Northstar, however, by all means do so—it won't hurt anything. As far as the tire pressure goes, there's a label on the rear edge of the driver's-side rear door of your Deville that specifies what your tire pressures should be set at. Originally, the Deville was outfitted with 225/60SR16s on 7 x 16-inch rims, which is the size I would recommend sticking with. For in-depth information about your car, Faxon Auto Literature sells the two-volume dealer service manual for $369. They can be reached at www.faxonautoliterature.com or by calling 800-458-2734.

NOISY NAILHEAD

Q: The hydraulic lifters in the 264-cu. in. nailhead V-8 engine that powers my 1955 Buick convertible are noisy. The noise occurs when the engine is started, after not running for a time as short as one day. The noise lasts about 10 seconds, at which time the engine obtains oil pressure. Not all of the lifters are noisy, instead it sounds like one to three lifters are making the noise.

My thought is that the lifters that are under valve spring pressure when the engine is turned off are bleeding off. The engine has been completely rebuilt, and the lifters are new. I have exchanged the lifters with new ones from the company that supplied the first set of new lifters.

I disassembled one of the new lifters, and the oil hole in the plunger is covered with a small disc backed with a small spring, rather than the ball that the OEM lifters used.

In your opinion, do I have faulty lifters, or do I have a problem elsewhere that is causing the noise when the engine is first started? Any help would be appreciated as I am not comfortable living with the noise, as has been suggested.

Eldon R. Best
Mapleton, Utah

A: It might be worth giving Buick nailhead expert Russell Martin a call at his shop, Centerville Auto Repair, 530-272-1564, and asking for some advice—explaining to him exactly what brand of camshaft and lifters you're using and what valvetrain work you've performed to date. He has a lot of nailhead rebuilding advice, including common problems he's encountered. He also has a website: www.nailheadbuick.com.

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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BY TOM COMERRO

HENRY FORD, WITH A GROUP OF INVESTORS that includes the Dodge Brothers, forms the Ford Motor Company. The first vehicle, the Model A, is powered by an under-floor-mounted, horizontally opposed 100.4-cu.in. two-cylinder engine, producing 8 hp. The Model A is available as a two-seat Runabout and a four-seat detachable Tonneau.

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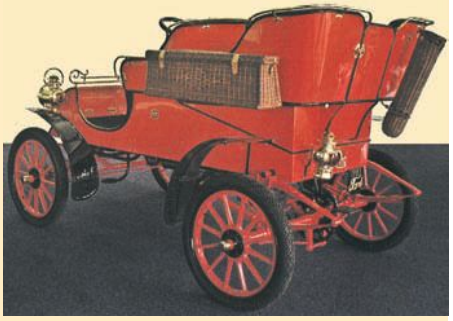
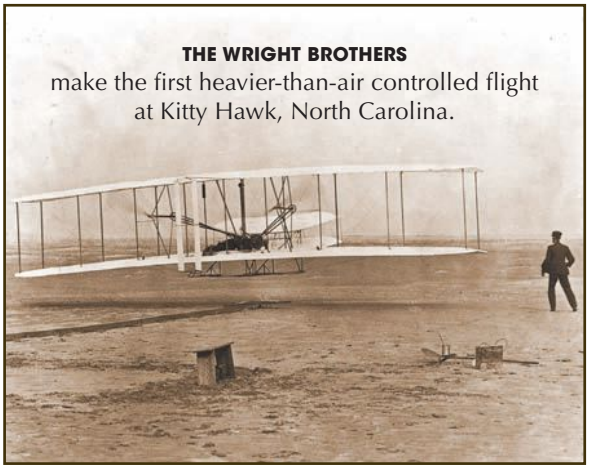
Ford Motor Company



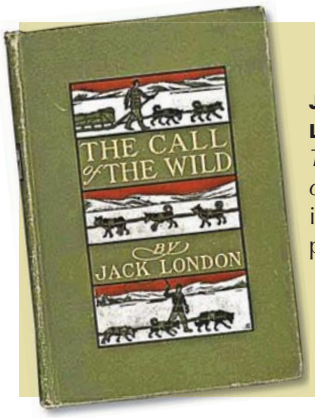
THE NEW STANLEY KEEPS COMFORT IN MIND with the inclusion of a more gently sloped front panel, which folds out to double as a footrest for front passengers. In addition, you'll be hard pressed to notice the noiseless burner and the powerful boiler, which will produce hundreds of pounds of steam in a matter of minutes. Available at a starting cost of $650.

OLDSMOBILE'S CURVED DASH RUNABOUT is in its third year, and 3,924 will be produced in this calendar year. The new models are supplied with a bulb-horn on the tiller, replacing the three-inch bicycle bell. Also available, is an optional buggy top as well as lights supplied by "Neverout."

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS make the first heavier-than-air controlled flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.



THE SILENT FILM *The Great Train Robbery* is released and uses new innovative techniques such as on-location shooting, cross cutting and camera movement.



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MY PREVIOUS CAR WAS A 1970 Porsche 911E German-spec model that I owned in Europe. My wife and I had been married less than a year when I was stationed in Europe. My 911E put out about 10 percent more horsepower than the highest-performance 911 allowed in the States. We had no kids, so we roared around Europe. It was only four hours to Amsterdam and Paris, and 11 hours to the French Riviera. Upon return to the U.S., I had to sell the Porsche because it would have had to be driven in the first three gears only in order to maintain the 55 MPH speed limit then. So, I ordered a 1975 AMC Pacer, sight unseen, as a safety car because of its advanced styling and safety aspects. I ordered through the overseas vendor on base, with all the options on the list, except I chose the three-speed standard with overdrive instead of the automatic. The U.S. dealer I picked up the car from was upset that I had paid less for it than his price on the same car.

The Pacer was lethargic on acceleration, but gave me 24 MPG at 55 and 34 MPG at 75-80 MPH on the highway. At 70 MPH, the engine was only turning 1,900 RPM. My new duty station was on top of a small mountain near my apartment in Saratoga Springs, New York. I bought a used Vega with a new cast-iron sleeved engine and four-speed. It did not take me long to realize how much better the Pacer was. My time to work in the tin-can Vega was an exciting 26 minutes, with lots of wheel spin, chirping the tires in each gear. My time to work in the Pacer was 14 minutes, without the squealing of tires.

As far as cornering, there was only one time when the Pacer slid on a corner. I was daydreaming and went around this corner with wet leaves on the road, and the backend of the Pacer hung out a little, and I barely stayed in my own lane. When I looked in the rearview mirror, I discovered that I had just gone around the tightest corner on the road that had a warning sign for 15 MPH, and I had taken it at 65. My Porsche 911 would have found its rear end somewhere off in the forest, but the Pacer just did a little power slide. The Pacer handled better than any sports car I have owned, including the 911. I would have loved to have the V-8, but they only had the 258-cu.in. straight-six when I bought it.

I flogged this Pacer for 14 years and 180,000 miles. My repairs consisted of fixing a broken retainer on the anti-roll bar at 20,000 miles, probably due to my airborne hijinks on the road to work. At 90,000 miles, I broke a rear leaf spring. I had to replace the exhaust from the header back three times due to rust, and I replaced the single-barrel carburetor at 110,000 miles; the float sank and cost me $26.

We towed a trailer on trips. In the summer, the Pacer's engine ran 2 degrees hotter, and it only returned 24 MPG towing the trailer at 70 MPH. I couldn't tell the trailer was even there. I frequently got calls on the CB radio that the trailer was swaying badly on mountain roads, but I simply could not tell. Later on, we had that same trailer behind a Chevy G20 van and discovered that the Pacer was much better than the van for towing.

My wife had one accident with it. There were two lanes turning left, and a large refrigerated truck turned into the right lane hitting the Pacer's left rear fender. It tore the bumper off the truck. The company president who owned the truck called to get the repair cost, but it only cost $100 to repair the fender and $1,000 to repair his truck. He had a hard time believing his truck had so much damage and my Pacer had so little. He was happy to write me a check instead of reporting it. The body shop heated the fender and hammered out the two-inch cube-shaped dent and repainted it.

I changed the oil every 20,000 miles with Mobil 1. At 140,000 miles, I snapped off the shift lever on a speed shift and had to have the steering column replaced. At 180,000 miles, it needed a new clutch. Everything on the car worked perfectly, from the rear washer/wiper to the radiator. It used no oil. If it wasn't for the Bondo on the rear quarter panels and the lower six inches of both doors, I might still be driving it. I wish I had replaced the clutch and kept the car.

I had several work cars over the years, but we always fought over the Pacer, so we bought a used 1977 Pacer station wagon with the automatic transmission. It had 160,000 miles on it, yet still made 23 MPG at 70 MPH.

My Pacer cornered better than my old Porsche 911 and was practically indestructible as I slammed it through its gears and stood on its excellent brakes. Any new car would probably last about 20 minutes if I drove it the same way as that Pacer. I used to travel for business and most of my rental cars were turned in with funny noises in the engine or transmission after a few days of driving them gently compared to that rugged Pacer that took everything I could do to it.

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The Hauler That Hustled

An embodiment of the 1970s trucker culture, Dodge's Li'l Red Express knows how to boogie

BY MIKE McNESSOR• PHOTOGRAPHY FROM HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

The fashions of the 1970s are chic, thanks to the Oscar-nominated film *American Hustle*. Pleather, polyester, plunging necklines for the ladies and shirt collars as wide as a breakdown lane for the guys—there's no mistaking the dazzling threads of the Disco Era.

All Li'l Red Express trucks had automatic transmissions, but bucket seats were an option. Tuff steering wheel adds a familiar Mopar muscle car vibe inside, but the column-mounted shifter looks straight out of a standard work truck.

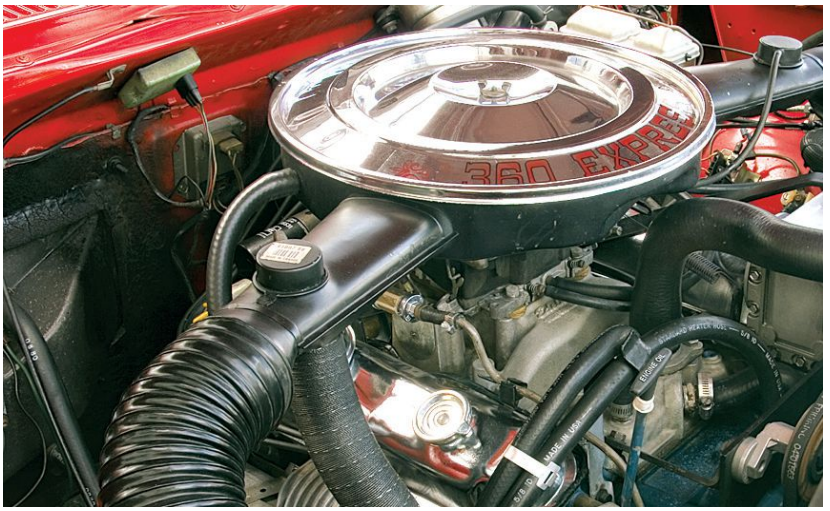
But while some back in the day were dressing up *Saturday Night Fever*-style and stepping out on the town, others in a parallel universe were pulling on cowboy hats, listening to country and western music, and tuning their CB radios to channel 19.

In rural parts of the nation where disco was never alive, truckin' became the pop culture law of the land. Twin stacks, Old West murals, cabovers and chrome were in abundance, and the American long-haul trucker was the hero of the day.

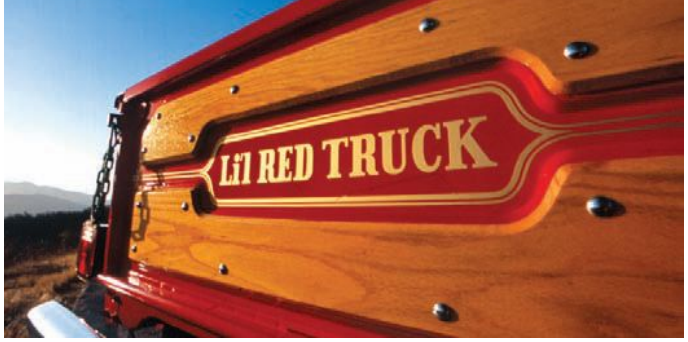
Hoping to ride the coattails of this unlikely fashion trend while trying to whip a little fun into its workaday truck line, Dodge introduced the big-rig-styled 1978-'79 Dodge Li'l Red Express Truck. Li'l Red was a mid-1978 addition to the Ram brand's "Adult Toys" line, which included the Street Van, Warlock, Macho Power Wagon and Ramcharger. The Street Van was aimed at the custom van enthusiast, promising buyers an easy, factory-guided entry into this made-for-1970s pastime. The Macho 4x4 rigs were for the off-road crowd, tough guys looking for personalization without having to thumb through catalogs for aftermarket roll bars, graphics and wheels. Meanwhile, the Warlock was Dodge's standard truck dolled up with special graphics, wood sideboards, fat tires and bucket seats, but nothing more than standard powertrain options to choose from.

That's where the Li'l Red Express Truck came charging in. Li'l Red was built on the standard 115-inch wheelbase Utiline half-ton chassis, but armed with a 225-hp, 360-cu.in. V-8, identical to Dodge's police car engines: aggressive cam, heavy valve springs, an 850-CFM Thermoquad carburetor and a cold-air intake setup. To help uphold the truck's ostentatious image under the hood, Li'l Red's engine also sported unique chrome rocker covers and a chrome air cleaner lid. All Li'l Reds also came with a 9.25-inch rear axle packing a 3.55:1 ratio ring-and-pinion gear set and a performance-modified A-727 LoadFlite automatic transmission. A Sure-Grip limited-slip differential was an option.

Outside, real wood trim, Western-themed stick-on tape graphics, and 15-inch five-slot Western chrome wheels shod with raised-outline white-letter



To give Li'l Red some go to match its big-rig-style show, Dodge outfitted each one with a high-performance 225-hp 360-cu.in. V-8, similar in specification to the engine used in police cars. It breathed through free-flowing mufflers attached to twin stacks. 1978 Li'l Reds (like the model on the facing page) had no catalytic converters, but cats were added in 1979.



Bold Western-themed decals and real wood trim on the bedsides and tailgate let people know in a hurry that this was no ordinary two-wheel-drive half-ton Dodge pickup. Even in the graphics-crazed '70s, this was heady stuff on a factory pickup.

Goodyear tires, made the Li'l Red Express Truck so gaudy that it was cool. Of course, Li'l Red wouldn't have been Li'l Red without those functional chrome stacks made from 2.5-inch pipe and covered with stainless heat shields. Interestingly, in 1978, the stacks were not connected to catalytic converters, due to a loophole in emissions laws, but the 1979 trucks had the restrictive cats.

All of the 1978 trucks were Bright Canyon Red on the outside (the 1979 color was Medium Canyon Red), but the interior could be either black or red with a bench seat or buckets; buckets only came in black. Some standard creature comforts included power steering, a Tuff Wheel spoked steering wheel, AM/FM/MPX, stereo, a 100-MPH speedometer (1978 only) and an oil pressure gauge. A tach, volt gauge and a vacuum gauge were optional, as was a clock. Of course, there was also an optional AM/FM/CB radio, as well as radios equipped with eight-track or cassette decks.

Magazines of the day tested a preproduction Li'l Red, and one of them actually managed a 14.7-second quarter at 93 MPH. When *Hemmings Muscle Machines* lined one up at the drag strip a few years back, however, its best time was a 15.64 at 86.54 MPH.

Despite Dodge's efforts to think outside the conventional pickup box, timing was definitely not on Li'l Red's side. The 1979 Iranian Revolution caused a spike in crude oil prices and panicked American drivers lined up to fill their tanks, driving demand for gasoline sky high. The last thing on anyone's shopping list that year was a thirsty, hot rod pickup truck. With an abundance of 1979 models to sell by year's end, Dodge never built a 1980 Li'l Red Express.

Since they were always viewed as specialty vehicles, many seem to have survived in the hands of collectors, though few were built: 2,188 in 1978, 5,118 in 1979.

Li'l Reds can be had today in serviceable condition for around $10,000, but show-quality examples are trading for around $20,000. The 1978 models are more desirable, probably due to their scarcity and their cat-free exhaust. The 1979 version sports funky quad headlamps, cats and a federally mandated 85 MPH speedometer. Another interesting difference, the '78 model trucks had 15 x 7 wheels up front and 15 x 8s in the rear, while the '79s ran 15 x 8-inch wheels all around.

Most of the few Li'l Red-specific parts needed for a restoration are available, but they can be pricey, and you might have to be patient to get them.

For 1979 (like the truck below), quad headlamps became standard, as did an 85 MPH speedometer.

Bright slotted mag-style wheels were used both years on Li'l Red, but 1978 trucks had 7-inch wheels on the front and 8-inch wheels on the rear, while 1979 trucks had 8-inch wheels all around.

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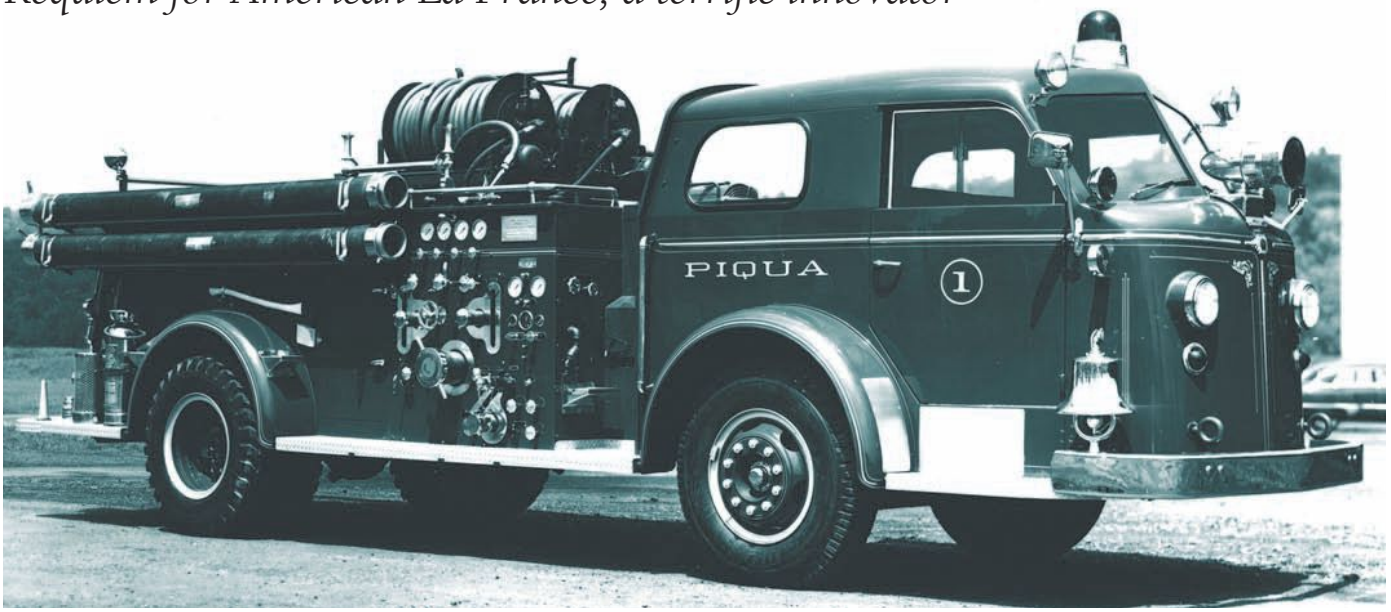

BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE COLLECTION OF WALTER McCALL

An august American brand went down in flames, no pun intended, early this year. It happened when American La France, a company that could trace its origins back to 1832, abruptly shut the doors to its plant in Moncks Corner, South Carolina, the latest in a series of ever-smaller factories, and laid off 150-odd workers with zero warning.

According to reports in the local media, several trucks in various states of completion were abandoned on the assembly floor. To people who fight fires, the company's sudden death was akin to Dale Earnhardt's. It couldn't happen, even though some had been speculating about it for quite some time.

Most of American La France's great legacy stems from its long tenure as one of two manufacturers of fire apparatus in Elmira, New York. The other was Ward La France, a competitor that was spun off in 1918 by the nephew of the aptly named Truckston La France, who founded American La France in 1904. The tale actually began in earnest in the 1830s, when a local craftsman named John Rogers began cobbling together hand water pumps on the banks of today's Erie Canal near Albany, New York. Within two years, Rogers had sold out to a competitor, Lysander Button. Truckston La France came to Elmira from nearby Pennsylvania in 1873 and went into business with his brother, Asa, building steam-powered fire engines with rotary pumps.

In 1891, the La France Fire Engine Company merged with four other manufacturers of steam fire pumpers, including Button, a deal brokered by a Chicago financier named Charles Locke, whose stated intention was to monopolize the American fire apparatus industry. The arrangement proved unwieldy, and the La France brothers broke away. The first motorized fire truck built entirely by American La France (which previously had built trucks on modified Packard and Simplex automobile chassis) was a 1910 Type 5 combination pumper, Registration Number 1, delivered to Lenox, Massachusetts. Incidentally, this truck will be on display at the Hemmings Concours d'Elegance, set for September 26-28 in Saratoga Springs, New York, where it will be competing in our judged class for antique fire apparatus.

That was only the first innovation that American La France could claim. Swiftly having acquired credibility for its rigs' superior quality, the company stunned the industry and the firefighting world in 1931 by introducing its own, proprietary-design gasoline V-12 engine, displacing 754 cubic inches. That prompted industry rival Seagrave, of Columbus, Ohio, to introduce its own V-12 the following year—only it was an acquired design,

the V-12 designed for automotive use by the grand, and grandly troubled, Pierce-Arrow, another New York firm.

We spoke to fire apparatus historian Walter McCall, the author of several authoritative books on fire trucks, including American La France, to discuss the most memorable creations the Elmira pioneers turned out. Walter, a retired spokesman for Chrysler of Canada, was immediate and adamant in his answer. He chose the 700 Series line of fire trucks that American La France introduced in 1945. They were the first American fire trucks to put the cab completely ahead of the engine. American La France had built a striking line of apparatus called the JO/JOX beginning in 1938 that positioned its crew forward, but had its V-12 engine located between the driver's and officer's seats.

Not the 700 Series. It put the engine, transmission and pump drive nearly amidships, pushing the entire crew's position forward and improving the driver's visibility by a claimed 250 percent. That was the practical benefit of American La France's new design. Aesthetically, its radically set back front axle, rounded front fascia and protruding headlamp housings combined for instantly timeless looks. Walter called the 700 Series "the quintessential American fire engine." Its basic layout, with the powertrain aft of the crew cab, became the standard for all custom-chassis fire apparatus, a reality that remains true to this day. To Walter, that made American La France's subsequent demise even sadder.

American La France ceased being an independent firm in the 1990s, when its assets were acquired by Freightliner. The fire truck operation was spun off by a former Freightliner executive before Freightliner was acquired by the then-DaimlerChrysler. Its operations were moved from Elmira, first to North Carolina and then to North Charleston, South Carolina. American La France moved again in the Palmetto State, first to Summerville and then to Moncks Corner, after it was acquired by Patriarch Partners, a New York City-based venture capital firm. Production under the money managers swiftly dwindled, as American La France acquired a new, unwanted reputation for quality problems and poor product support by the new owners.

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

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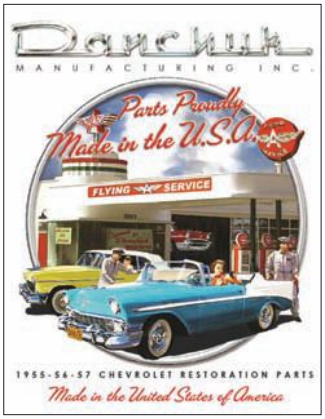

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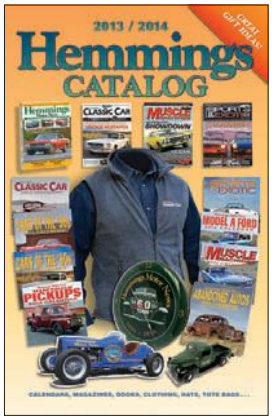

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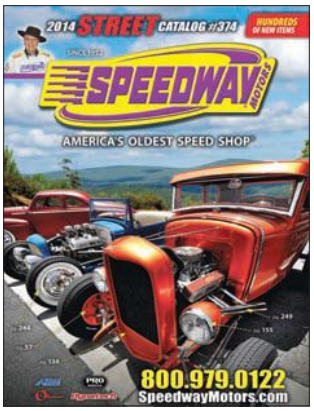

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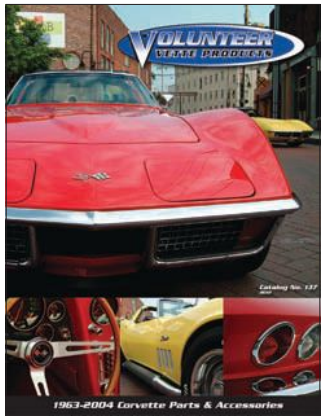

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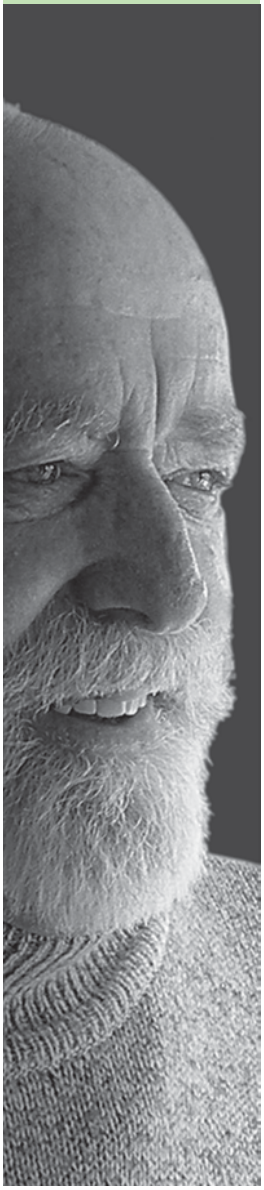
"Indeed, we may have similar interests, but live in parallel universes. In fact, the younger guys may have been through here an hour ago."



jimrichardson

Of An Uncertain Age

A few years ago I was an avid cyclist, and my pal Jack and I were riding a century (100 miles) put on by the Los Angeles Wheelmen. When we got to the halfway mark, we stopped for a quick bite before heading to the finish. While we were munching our sandwiches, one of the other riders looked around and said: "Where are the young guys? Why are there no young guys in this sport?" The fellow serving the sandwiches said: "Oh, there are lots of them. They were through here an hour ago."

I bring up this incident because I hear the same, "Where are the young guys," lament at meetings of the old car clubs to which I belong. As a result, for a while now I've been concerned by the fact that I've been sitting around talking cars with a bunch of old silverbacks. So, I have commenced an unscientific, subjective, purely anecdotal study on why that is. Of course, it may be that the situation is mostly an illusion. There may be plenty of young people who are into old cars. Just not the ones my club members and I care about. And that may be true for a couple of reasons.

To begin with, I know from having edited a consumer research journal a number of years ago that people tend to gravitate to the music of the era when they became aware of the opposite sex. And it's my hypothesis that the same goes for cars. If you grew up in the 1930s, you probably like V-8 Fords, Benny Goodman and Jean Harlow.

If you were an adolescent in the 1940s, you would like many of the same cars as the Thirties people, because you grew up with much the same cars, thanks to WWII. Sure, there were the postwar Cadillacs, Mercurys and Studebakers, but for the most part the cars of the Forties were warmed-over versions of the cars of the late 1930s. And for music you were probably into Woody Herman and Freddie Slack. Also, you may well have had a pinup of Betty Grable or Rita Hayworth taped up in your locker.

Things didn't really heat up in the Fifties until about 1955, but then styling and performance started making quantum leaps forward, and the cars got sexy. This was the period of my youth, so naturally, these days I'm attracted to late-Fifties rides. But back then, I was a weird kid because I really liked the styling of the cars of the Thirties. Most of my contemporaries would have loved a new Corvette or 1957 Ford convertible, but I wanted a 1939 LaSalle, or a 1936 Auburn boattail roadster. As for music, most of my cohorts were into the Platters and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Also, most of my '50s friends were in love with Marilyn Monroe, but I was into Hedy Lamarr, and kept an eye out for her old movies on television. That Austrian accent just sent me into next week.

If the 1960s was your era, Mustangs and GTOs probably consumed you. And you would likely listen to the Beatles or the Stones, and Natalie Wood could upset your ability to concentrate. Of course, you may have been a folk music buff, in which case you drove a Volkswagen Transporter, wanted to live in a geodesic dome, and sang along with Joan Baez.

And then there were the Seventies, when they painted cars Day Glo orange, and we had crushes on Goldie Hawn. I don't have room to describe the '80s, '90s or any of the cars or music from this century, but you get the picture.

I do know that American cars are not as sought after as they used to be, nor as popular. I don't quibble with that, because there are good reasons for the current situation. However, I still have a soft spot for American iron and always will.

Locally, there are the kids called tuners, who are into lowering little Japanese cars, supercharging them and adding big exhaust tips. They are also into rap music, I believe. Either that or their Hondas need new timing belts. The tuners obviously have their own thing going. They don't show up at our Packard or Studebaker events—but then we silverbacks don't show up at their events, either.

Indeed, we may have similar interests, but live in parallel universes. In fact, the younger guys may have been through here an hour ago. If that is so, you young fellas out there, put down your iPhones for a minute and tell me which cars, old and new, that you are into and would want to own or restore. And tell me what kinds of music you have on that iPad or pod, or whatever, and who you would most like to have in your dream car with you.

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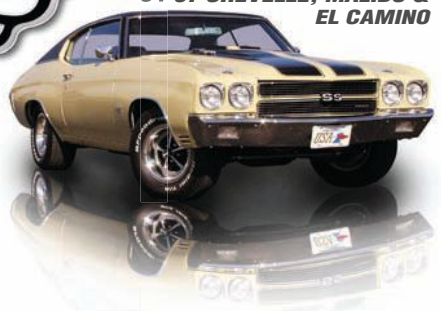

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