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AUGUST 2015 #131



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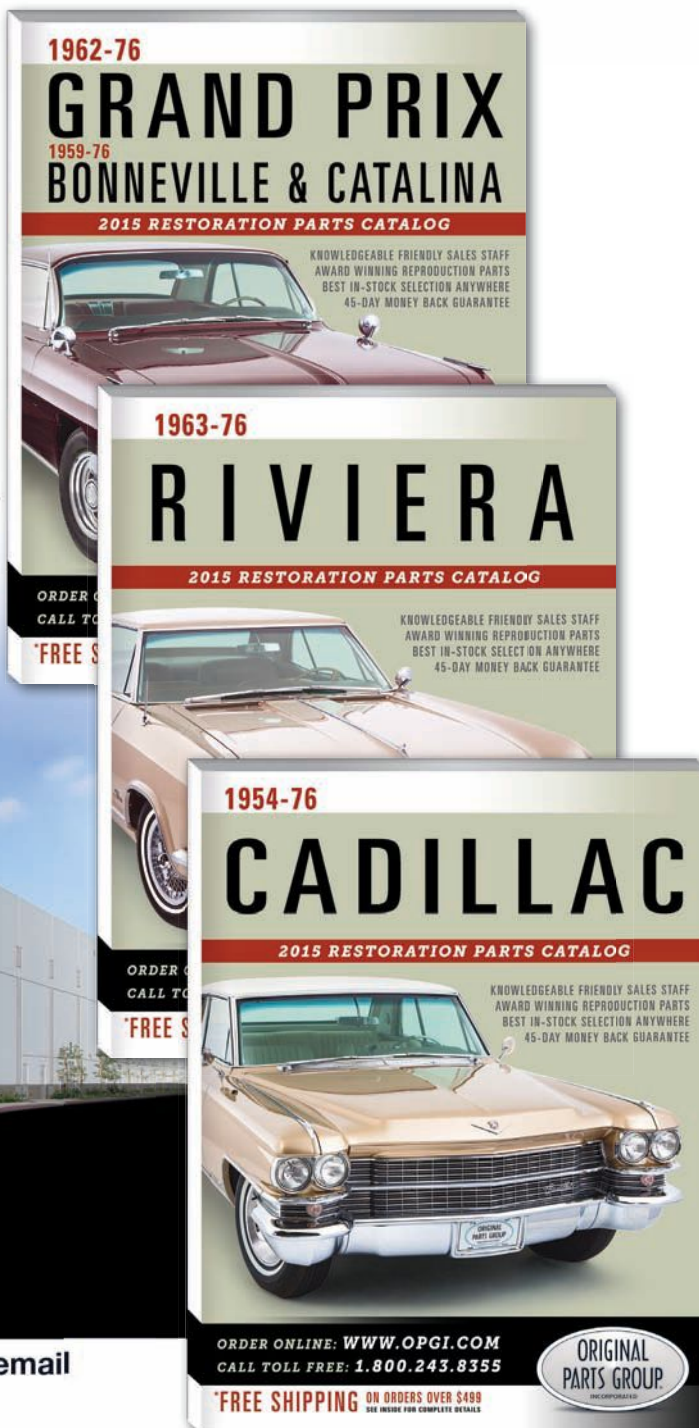
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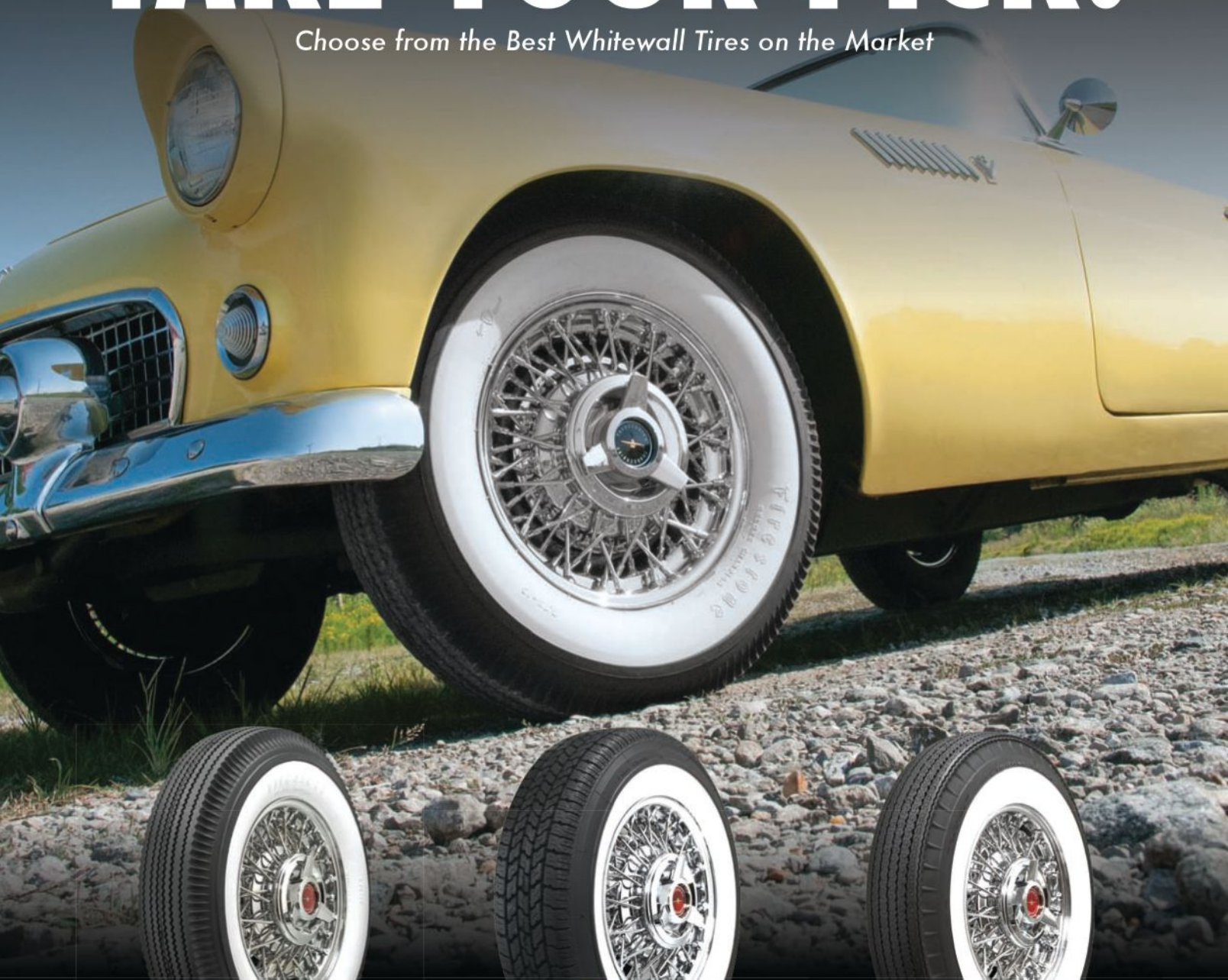
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// ...from the first

moment when

the doctor said

... 'You have

cancer,' I truly

didn't let it get

me down... //

richardlentinello

Conquering Cancer

Unbeknownst to practically everyone, I've been fighting cancer since June 2013. Thankfully, that ordeal is now over. My oncologist informed me on Monday, April 27th, that the previous week's PET scan showed no activity, which means no active cancer cells. Whew, what a relief.

Although, from the first moment when the doctor said those three words no one wants to hear, "You have cancer," I truly didn't let it get me down, nor did I lose any sleep over it. I knew all along that I would beat it, and I did. There really is truth to "the power of positive thinking." Most important, because I went to the doctor when I first started feeling tired and weak, we caught the cancer in its early stage.

In all, I ended up having 26 chemo treatments. I was allergic to the main drug, Rituxan, which is specially designed to treat the symptoms of my low-grade non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The side effects were many, but the one thing that got me through it all was this magazine and my interest in automobiles. Putting together an issue of *Hemmings Classic Car* kept my mind off of the cancer, and allowed me to focus on the job at hand. The last thing I needed was to miss a deadline, which would be totally unacceptable due to the problems it would cause with the staff, the printer and distributors. Most important, I certainly didn't want to disappoint our readers by being late with the magazine. As always, perseverance once again paid off.

Many times, when I was undergoing a chemo infusion, I was doing so with my laptop in hand, editing content for *HCC*. Frequently, I wrote my column in the hospital as well, and that helped keep my mind off of the toxic drugs that were dripping into my veins. I even had several interesting conversations with other patients who'd ask me if I liked old cars because they saw me reading *Hemmings*; it still amazes me how many people know about *Hemmings Motor News*.

So, to all my fellow car fans, listen up: The lecture is about to begin.

The first question the doctor asked me when I was diagnosed was, "How many years

did you smoke?" The cancer was throughout the lower part of my face, my throat and neck, and in the surrounding lymph nodes. My doctor was shocked when I told her that I never smoked a day in my life. So, that started me questioning all the possibilities of how I got cancer in the first place. The one thought that I kept going back to was autobody paint.

Through the years, I have painted a dozen or so cars and numerous chassis and suspension components, and I always used a half-face respirator, with double-carbon cartridges. I also made sure to wear a paint-specific jumpsuit, with a long-sleeve shirt underneath, gloves and a hat. I would also tape my wrists to prevent the fumes from getting inside my suit. Still, I guess that wasn't enough to prevent the harmful vapors from entering my throat. Modern urethane paints that require a hardener, which contains cancer-causing isocyanates, are especially poisonous.

The next car I paint, I'm going back to using acrylic enamel, without adding any

toxic hardener. And you should do the same. Most important, always wear a respirator, even when using a spray can. Also wear gloves, so you don't have to expose your absorbent skin to not only the paint but the thinners and cleaners, too. All those chemicals are very toxic, so please take maximum precautions.

An even more significant precaution: See a doctor at the first sign of being fatigued or ill. Don't be a thickheaded macho man, or as my Sicilian grandfather used to say, a *mamaluke*. And if all your blood work comes back negative, yet you still don't feel well, push your doctor to take more tests. That's what happened to me. My initial blood test results were all negative, but I told my doctor that something was wrong; I could feel it. So it wasn't until I saw a throat specialist that the cancer was discovered. Don't place all your faith in a blood test. In many cases, it won't reveal everything that's wrong. You must trust your own intuition. And most critical: Always think positive thoughts. ☺



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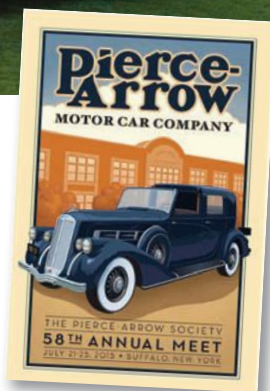
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Pierce-Arrow Gathering



BUFFALO WILL BE THE SITE FOR THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL Pierce-Arrow Meet, scheduled to take place July 21-25. The host hotel is The Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Buffalo, and the week-long tours will include the Niagara Falls area as well as Buffalo's outer harbor and city landmarks. The show will be on July 25th at the Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum, with an awards banquet later that day. For the full itinerary, visit www.pierce-arrow.org/annualmeet.



Stupendous Studebakers

ALL STUDEBAKER AND AVANTI FANS are encouraged to attend the Studebaker Drivers Club's 51st International Meet, which will take place August 16-22 in St. Louis, Missouri. Tours will run during the week to Busch stadium and breweries as well as the Armacost Museum in Grandview, which is made up of Studebaker and Avanti automobiles. Several other tours are scheduled to take you to attractions in the St. Louis area. The event will also have an indoor and outdoor swap meet, car corral and judged car show. For the full listing and pricing of the week's events, visit www.sdcmeet.com.



Mercury Madness

THE INTERNATIONAL MERCURY OWNERS ASSOCIATION will host a show on August 20-23 in Deadwood, South Dakota. As a part of Kool Deadwood Nights, the judged event will take place on August 21st. The host hotel is located in nearby Spearfish, and registration is now open for all Mercury owners. Kool Deadwood Nights features an auction, car show and parade, and Deadwood is home to many historical landmarks, including the Number 10 Saloon where "Wild Bill" Hickok was shot and killed. For more information, visit www.mercuryclub.com.

AUGUST Calendar

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1 • Classic Car & Parts Swap Meet
Sacramento, California • 916-955-8777
www.sacramentoswapmeet.com

1-2 • Summer Auto Parts Swap Meet
Elkhorn, Wisconsin • 608-244-8416
www.madisonclassics.com

4-9 • Hot August Nights
Reno, Nevada 775-356-1956
www.hotaugustnights.net

6 • Hemmings Motor News Cruise-In
Bennington, Vermont 800-227-4373
www.hemmings.com

7-9 • Antique and Classic Car Meet
Stowe, Vermont • 802-223-3104
www.vtauto.org/stowe_show.php

8 • Lake Bluff Concourse d'Elegance
St. Joseph, Michigan • 269-930-0257
www.concoursSWMI.com

11-15 • Hudson International Meet
Colorado Springs, Colorado • 316-838-1126
www.hetclub.org

14-16 • Pebble Beach Weekend
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15 • Woodward Dream Cruise
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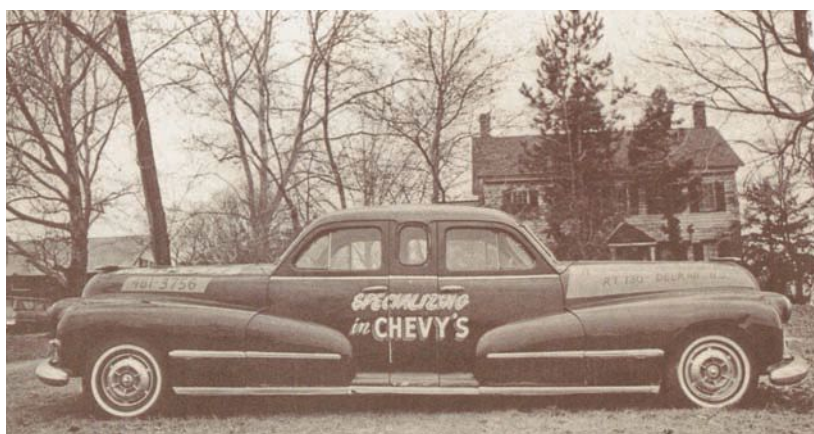
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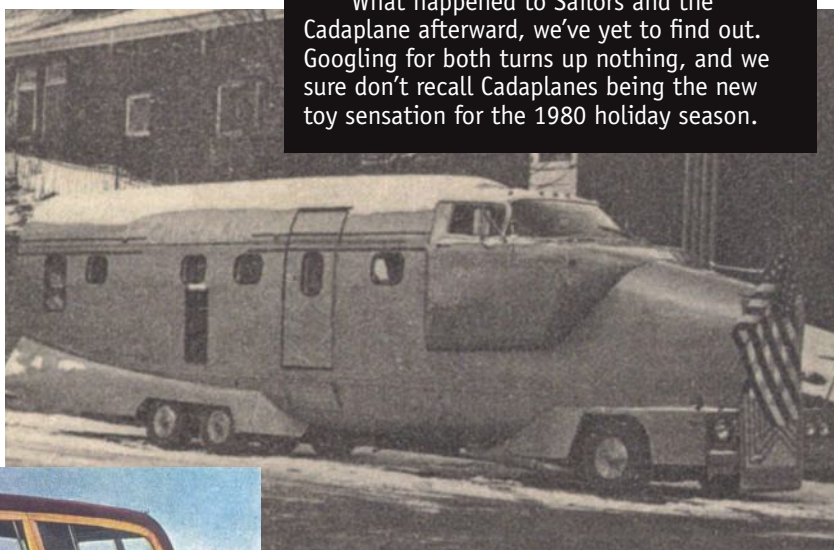


Two-Time Chevrolets

AFTER THREE MENTIONS OF THAT 1957 FORD DOUBLE-ENDER over the previous four months (and more to come), we needed a break. Which is why we were glad to hear from Robert Werner of Dayton, Ohio, and Dick Clevenger of Letts, Iowa, who forwarded us info on a few other double-enders they knew of.

Robert sent us the above photo of a double-ender advertising a shop or perhaps a junkyard specializing in Chevrolets somewhere along Route 130 in Delran, New Jersey. Funny thing, it looks more like a couple of 1948 Oldsmobiles from this side-view. The best we can tell, the double-ender and the business it advertised have both been swept away on the tide of development. Anybody know what happened to them?

Next, Dick told us about a couple of double-enders he knew of from the Fifties and Sixties. One was built for the local Shriners from a pair of 1937 Chevrolets, which, like the 1957 Ford, was fitted with a Jeep front axle to perform tricks during parades. The other, also built for the Shriners, was built from a pair of 1955 Chevrolets. Unfortunately, Dick lost the photos he had of both over the years.



Waxed Woodie

WE KNOW FROM READING OUR KAISER-FRAZER AND TUCKER histories that the United States faced a steel shortage in the post-war years, but the country also faced a lumber shortage, and it very well may have kept Studebaker from building this Champion-based woodie wagon.

Craig Whatley of San Rafael, California, found this Studebaker handout photo among a couple of others in a September 1946 issue of *LIFE* magazine as part of a discussion about the pending

Cadaplane

EVERY LARGE EVENT, WHEREVER IT MAY BE, attracts unusual people promoting unconventional ideas. The larger the event, the more unusual and unconventional the people and ideas. So it's not unexpected that the Cadaplane showed up for the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics.

William Schmidt of Waldorf, Maryland, sent us a few clippings from a January 1980 issue of the *Lake Placid Reporter*, with a photo and a few details on the Cadaplane. Built by Tom Sailors of Tennessee, it uses an airplane fuselage and a section of Cadillac cabin, and Sailors intended to use the exposure from the pending Olympics to market a toy version of his vehicle. He convinced a local service station owner to let him sell tires and car parts out of the Cadaplane, and the village board allowed him to set up shop for a few weeks.

What happened to Sailors and the Cadaplane afterward, we've yet to find out. Googling for both turns up nothing, and we sure don't recall Cadaplanes being the new toy sensation for the 1980 holiday season.



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/>.

1947 models. The magazine wrote that the wagon wasn't yet in production at the time "because of lumber scarcity," but implied that Studebaker fully intended to put it into production when the shortage ended.

Never happened, though.

Studebaker didn't introduce a station wagon until 1954, by which time all-steel wagons had become the norm. Wonder whatever became of that prototype?

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Rocking in Reno



HOT AUGUST NIGHTS TAKES place August 4-9 in Reno, and Barrett-Jackson will be there for the third year in a row (August 6-8) at the Reno-Sparks convention center. Last year's auction featured over 300 cars and vehicles encompassing many different eras and styles. Consignments are being added daily, so check Barrett-Jackson's website for the latest news and information at www.barrett-jackson.com.

Carlisle Conclusions

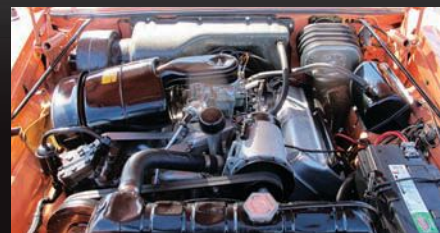
SPRING CARLISLE'S "FREE UNLESS SOLD" AUCTION took place in April and saw a little over 300 cars cross the block at the Carlisle Fairgrounds, with over 60 percent of the cars selling. Among those cars was this 1957 Bel Air Hardtop, which sold for \$66,000. With only over 62,000 miles, the Bel Air still retains its original block, heads, distributor, water pump, starter, intake and carbs, as well as three-speed column shift. To view all results from this spring, visit carlisleevents.com.



AUCTION PROFILE

THE 1957 CROWN CONVERTIBLE was the first Imperial convertible available since 1951. The styling featured wraparound trim above the headlamps, recessed door handles and fabulous fins that incorporated "gun-sight" taillamps.

This car received a frame-off rotisserie restoration and is finished in Sunset Rose, with a matching two-tone interior and new black canvas power-operated soft top. Powered by a combination 392-cu.in., 325hp V-8 FirePower "Hemi" and automatic TorqueFlite with pushbutton control, this Imperial appeared to be clean and restored to high standards throughout. The car is equipped with power four-way seat, windows, steering and brakes; AM radio, wide whitewall tires and factory air.



CAR 1957 Imperial Crown Convertible
AUCTIONEER Auctions America
LOCATION Auburn, Indiana
DATE May 9, 2015
LOT NUMBER 2118

CONDITION Restored/#2
RESERVE No
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE \$65,000
SELLING PRICE \$76,450

AUGUST

Calendar

7 • Des Moines, Iowa

Rich Penn Auctions • 319-291-6688
www.richpennauctions.com

6-8 • Reno, Nevada

Barrett-Jackson • 480-421-6694
www.barrett-jackson.com

13-14 • Carmel, California

Bonhams • 415-391-4000
www.bonhams.com

13-15 • Monterey, California

Mecum Auctions • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

13-15 • Monterey, California

Russo and Steele • 602-252-2697
www.russoandsteele.com

14-15 • Monterey, California

RM Sotheby's Auctions • 519-352-4575
www.rmauctions.com

15-16 • Pebble Beach, California

Gooding & Company • 310-899-1960
www.goodingco.com

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Silver Auctions • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

22 • Owls Head, Maine

Owls Head Transportation Museum
207-594-4418 • www.owlshead.org

29 • Minot, North Dakota

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www.vanderbrinkauctions.com



Pebble Beach Update

FIVE AUCTIONS ARE SLATED TO HAPPEN

in the Monterey, California, area this year during the festivities at Pebble Beach. These shows will take place the second weekend of August, from the 13th to the 16th. Expect to see all kinds of cars, including a number of great American Classics. This 1946 Cadillac Series 62 was recently added to Mecum's show and featured a frame-off restoration in 2012. For centralized coverage of all the auction events that will take place at Pebble Beach, visit our daily blog at blog.hemmings.com.



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

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Protection for Every Season

THE WARMER MONTHS CAN BRING WILDLY UNPREDICTABLE weather, when wind and thunderstorms erupt without warning. It's great to have a jacket that will keep you dry, and as cooler days come with autumn, to keep you warm as well. Hemmings Motor News now offers the "Two-Jackets-In-One" (code: H21JKT) and it's perfect for layering. The navy blue outer shell is woven from tough, weather-resistant 100 percent nylon, and features a matching snap-on hood. The zip-in lining is a navy-gray color and is made from soft, 100 percent polyester fleece. Each piece of this jacket can be worn alone, and both are tastefully embroidered with the Hemmings logo in gold. Cost: \$69.95.

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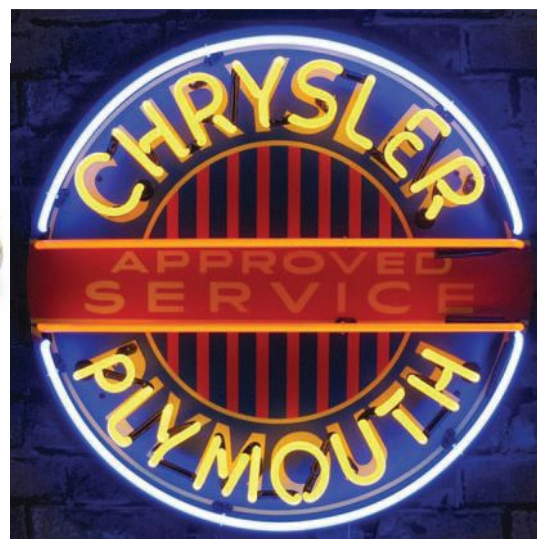


1953 Buick Wildcat Concept 1

ALTHOUGH IT'S LITTLE REMEMBERED TODAY, this Buick Wildcat was one of the original 1953 GM Motorama show cars, then painted black and displayed along with the Chevrolet Corvette at New York City's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Its sporty, production-ready design was rendered in fiberglass, and the front wheels had "Roto Static" stationary hubs with brake-cooling air scoops. By the time noted show car collector Joseph Bortz (bortzautocollection.com) purchased it in the mid-1980s, it was in poor shape. He commissioned a full restoration, and the car has been commemorated in 1:18-scale resin by Minichamps. This GM-officially-licensed collectible is limited to 999 numbered-plaque pieces, and the detailing is fantastic. There are no opening panels, but the interior and trim are perfectly scaled, and it's mounted to a base that looks like a turntable. Cost: \$299.99.

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FEW THINGS ARE MORE COMFORTING to the old-car lover than the warm glow of motoring nostalgia, and nothing provides a warmer glow than a vintage-style neon sign. This Chrysler-Plymouth Approved Service sign allows you to show your Mopar love in a big way. It's an incredible three feet across, and features multi-colored, hand-blown neon tubing from industry leader Neonetics. This sign has a sturdy, commercial-grade black steel housing, and is shipped in a special protective wooden mailing crate. It's powered by an industrial-strength transformer that operates silently, and is ready to be plugged into a wall outlet. Cost: \$1,499.99.

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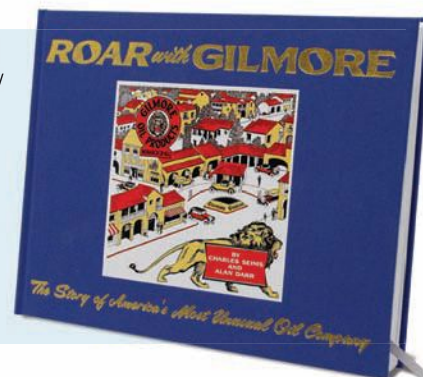
www.calcarcover.com

Roar with Gilmore

AT ITS MOST BASIC, this is a history of a petroleum company whose legend peaked prior to World War II. It's a lot more than that, though, as a flip through its 240 hardcover pages will immediately make clear. Gilmore Oil Company, based in Los Angeles, was a marketing powerhouse as the West Coast took to its wheels early in the 20th century. This is the story of how Gilmore became a landmark business, sponsoring automobile and air races, land speed record attempts, and an armada of brightly lit gasoline stations that dispensed Gilmore Red Lion gasoline into waiting tanks. Every Gilmore station was, quite literally, a beacon that attracted drivers. This is an atypical work of automotive history, and an excellent one. Cost: \$52. —*By Jim Donnelly*

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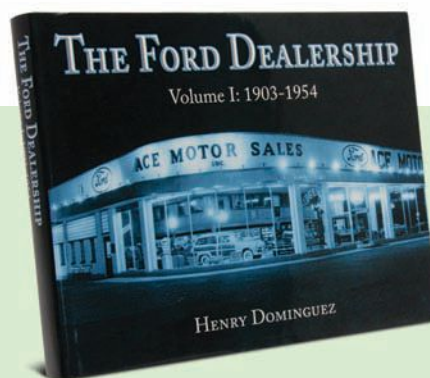


1947 Blue Crown Special

FEW TEAM OWNERS HAVE DOMINATED a decade at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway like Lou Moore did during the 1940s. The great Mauri Rose scored all three of his wins at the Indianapolis 500 aboard the Blue Crown Spark Plug Specials fielded by Moore, with Bill Holland picking up a win for Moore in 1949. Replicarz is now marketing limited-edition replicas of all three postwar Blue Crowns in 1/43rd scale. There have never been Indy cars from this era produced in scale in the past. The recreation of Rose's 1947 winner is of exquisite quality and features real wire wheels, a snap-fit replica of the cockpit leather, a tiny windscreen and even asymmetrical spokes on the steering wheel. If you're interested, move fast: Production is limited to 333 units. Cost: \$89.99. —*By Jim Donnelly*

800-639-1744

www.replicarz.com



The Ford Dealership, Volume I: 1903-1954

CAR DEALERSHIPS ARE, TO MOST PEOPLE, FORGETTABLE PLACES.

They simply display inventory and, if all goes well, provide a place where paperwork can be signed. But automotive enthusiasts, like author Henry Dominguez, tend to feel differently. Dominguez's *The Ford Dealership, Volume I* recognizes that the automaker's success was built as much on the showroom floor as on the factory's, and he honors these places and the people who worked in them with 404 glossy, hardbound pages. The rare photographs of dealership exteriors, interiors and service and parts departments are logically organized, thoroughly captioned and nearly impossible to stop studying. Buy it from the Early Ford V-8 Foundation & Museum, and benefit their important mission. Cost: \$49.95, plus S&H. —*By J. Daniel Beaudry*

260-927-8022

www.fordv8foundation.org

Watercolor Jewelry

LONGTIME HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR READERS will recall the breathtaking automotive fine art of California's Richard Lewis ("Auto Art," issue #48). His preferred subjects are chrome-laden vintage cars, his preferred medium is watercolor paint on paper, and his secrets to success are time and patience—lots and lots of both. Currently the artistic director of the Dana Point Concours d'Elegance, Richard has shared three of his latest American automobile-themed pieces with us, and they highlight the beautiful radiator grille mascots of the Buick, Packard and Pierce-Arrow. As with his other intricately layered watercolor paintings, each of these detailed pieces took more than two months to complete. You can watch Richard's painting process through the stop-motion videos on his website, and can purchase prints in numerous sizes (and original pieces, where available) as well. Cost: \$99.99 to \$999.99 (prints); \$7,500 to \$100,000 (originals).

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Bel Air Brightwork

New stainless steel moldings for the 1955 Bel Air have now been reproduced. The moldings fit the front door and front fender and are available for both driver and passenger sides. They are fabricated to match the original parts, including the rolled backside flanging. These highly polished parts are easy to install and will revive and refresh the look of your Bel Air. Available for all two- and four-door 1955 Bel Airs except for the Nomad.

Cost: \$49.95/each (door); \$59.95/each (fender).

Danchuk Manufacturing

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www.danchuk.com



Ultra-bright Taillamps

Increase your old Chevrolet's visibility with these reproduction taillamps that are now available in an extra bright LED lens, as well as original style glass lenses. Each assembly features a chrome or black housing with a chrome rim and original style cloth covered wiring. Right and left lamps are available with the left side featuring a 12-volt license light bulb. They fit all 1933-'34 passenger cars and 1935 Standard passenger models.

Cost: \$59.50 (black glass); \$69.50 (chrome glass); \$89.50 (black LED); \$99.50 (chrome LED).

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Enchanted

Sometimes, standard creepers have too much ground clearance, which can make it difficult to access the underside of your car unless you jack it up. Plus, they can be difficult to move on rough or uneven surfaces, such as gravel. The new Magic Creeper offers you access under your car with zero ground clearance, thus giving you more room to work and maneuver. The multi-layered material is high-strength and resistant to punctures and tears. It rolls out to five-feet in length, with a width of 28 inches and has extra layers for comfort and easy movement. It rolls up for easy storage and is easily transported wherever you may need it.

Cost: \$89 list.

Magic Creeper

503-303-5320

www.magiccreeper.com

T-bird Trim

A reproduction windshield channel seal for the 1955-'57 Ford Thunderbird has just been released. This formerly hard-to-find part is perfect for finishing your restoration project and will keep the wind and rain from entering your T-bird. It fits just like the original channel seal, and comes with a lifetime warranty. Cost: \$86.

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Mopar Matters

New reproduction centerlinks for full-size Mopar steering systems are now available. These new bolt-in centerlinks will put you back on the road quickly without having to worry about the time and cost of rebuilding your original or exchange/core charges. They are made like the originals, but use modern-day materials and technology. These will fit all Dodge, Chrysler, Plymouth and De Soto full-size cars from the late 1950s to early 1960s. Cost: \$165.

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Motorama Magnificence

*General Motors' limited-production,
show-car-based grand slam for 1953*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

In 1952, Oldsmobile, Buick and Cadillac each sent dramatic restyled one-off styling "dream car" convertibles around the nation's show-car circuit: Oldsmobile's 98-based Fiesta, Buick's Roadmaster-spawned Skylark and Cadillac's Series 62-derived Eldorado. Dream cars like these were usually only meant to suggest the future. Only GM would have the audacity to go out and make them available for production. And they did.



CHEVROLET CORVETTE

BODY STYLE	Two-seat roadster
ENGINE TYPE	OHV straight-six
DISPLACEMENT	235 cubic inches
HORSEPOWER	150 @ 4,200 RPM
FUEL SYSTEM	Three Carter sidedraft carburetors
TRANSMISSION	Powerglide two-speed automatic
SHIPPING WEIGHT	2,705 pounds
PRODUCTION	300
BASE PRICE	\$3,490



Custom styling touches like cut-down doors that receded to the rear quarter panel, then kicked back up at the hip line, Buick's signature side-spear; the Oldsmobile's two-tone paint scheme; and the Cadillac's budding tailfins all hinted at what was to come from General Motors, and indeed Detroit, for much of the rest of the decade.

Each car was distinctive, and each had features that the others did not. The Cadillac and Oldsmobile wore skirts, but the Buick and Corvette had radiused

rear-wheel cutouts. The Skylark lacked the Panoramic windshield that GM would soon have on the other three, as well as just about everything GM built through the end of the decade. The Buick and Cadillac sported Kelsey-Hayes wire wheels, while the Oldsmobile and Corvette used spinner wheel covers. Fiesta and Skylark had conventional snap-on tonneau covers, while Eldorado and Corvette hid their tops beneath a flush body-colored tonneau.

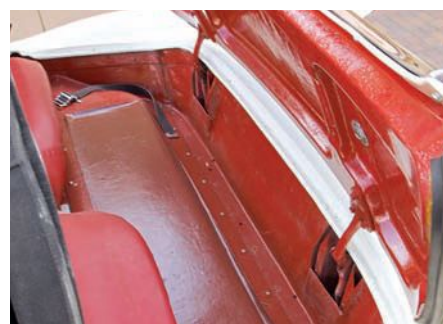
The Corvette and Fiesta came with

hotter engines; Skylark and Eldorado ran the same powertrains as the rest of their line. At 210 horsepower, the most powerful engine available in an American car in 1953, the engine in the Eldorado hardly needed a bump in power, while the new 322-cu.in. Buick "Fireball" V-8 sported 8.5 compression, which was the highest in the industry that year. All used their division's preferred automatic transmission: Powerglide for Corvette, Dynaflo for Skylark, and Hydra-Matic for Fiesta and Eldorado. Each car, save for the Corvette, had a full complement of available options: power steering and brakes, power seat, a heater, wide-whitewall tires and more. Each, again except the Corvette, adopted a 12-volt electrical system to accommodate all of those power options.

Unlike their mass-produced siblings, they were priced outlandishly. The \$3,490 Corvette jarred against a \$2,175 Bel Air convertible; the \$5,000 Skylark was a \$1,500 increase over a 1953 Roadmaster convertible; the price difference between a \$5,715 Fiesta and Super 88 convertible could have bought you a plain-Jane 88 two-door model; and the price difference between a \$7,750 Eldorado and a Series 62 convertible was a whopping \$3,000!

Sales reflected their lofty price tags.





Just 300 Corvettes were built in the model's shortened first season, along with 458 Fiestas, 533 Eldorados and 1,690 Skylarks. Each was largely hand-built, which helped explain the eye-watering prices. Cars were pulled off the assembly line and fettled practically by hand. Even at those prices, GM famously made no money on them.

These four special 1953 automobiles are known as the Motorama cars, and this particular collection has been assembled by Neil DeAtley, who has been into cars

and racing since he first dropped a flat-head into a 1927 Model T roadster back in 1954. The proprietor of an aggregate and concrete business in the Pacific Northwest, Neil has also owned car dealerships, and a DeAtley's Budweiser-sponsored Camaro race team won the 1983 SCCA Trans-Am Championship. Neil has since retired to Scottsdale, Arizona, though his playing with cars has never stopped. He's got about 75 total, including an eclectic mix of stock and hopped-up cars from the 1930s through the '90s.

He assembled this so-called "grand slam" of GM Motorama cars in the last few years, in part because of their historical importance. He was also kind enough to let us loose behind the wheel of each car, so we could experience firsthand how they drive at speed.

Corvette serial number 30 doesn't wear the Bel Air hubcaps of the earliest cars, but is still early enough that the tell-tale fiberglass weave is visible under the paint. Note that there's no external door handle—just a slide lever topped with a





OLDSMOBILE FIESTA

BODY STYLE	Two-door, four-seat convertible
ENGINE TYPE	OHV V-8
DISPLACEMENT	303 cubic inches
HORSEPOWER	170 @ 3,600 RPM
FUEL SYSTEM	Single Rochester four-barrel carburetor
TRANSMISSION	Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic
SHIPPING WEIGHT	4,119 pounds
PRODUCTION	458
BASE PRICE	\$5,715



white ball inside the leading edge of the door. Tug it to the right, and the latch pops easily. From there, you more or less slide in and sit straight down, but be prepared to wiggle: The steering wheel is close enough to your chest and low enough in your lap that only the most diminutive drivers will avoid a legs-akimbo posture behind the wheel. Its scalloped inner door

panels are a clever touch that allows more room than is immediately visible, but it's still more comfortable to hang your left arm out the window.

The real revelation comes when stepping into each of the other three cars. All of them have big, low steering wheels; a long column that points the wheel right at your belly, forcing your legs around it

to reach the pedals; slightly over-stuffed seats that don't go back far enough. While the cabins are certainly wider, there is no more fore-to-aft room in the Fiesta, Skylark or Eldorado than in the Corvette. The Cadillac offers the most space, though we suspect that's because it's an older restoration, with more give in the seat letting us sink down a little. The Buick, the only car here without Panoramic glass, is by far the easiest of the cars to get in and out of due to its conventional A-pillar placement.

The Corvette's cockpit is lovely and symmetrical, though the 140 MPH speedometer seems laughably optimistic, and the tach would be a terrific idea if it were somewhere you could see it. The top of the Panoramic windshield, raked at an aggressive 55 degrees, exactly bisects our vision, and, as a bonus, is gently distorted near the top of the windshield, leaving us to feel a little tipsy as we look through—not an issue in the other three cars.

On first blush, the Oldsmobile Fiesta's cabin feels the most '50s of the lot. The shape of the instrument panel, the organization of the controls, the look





and feel could have worked half a decade on from the Fiesta's build. The Skylark's interior comes across as more ornate and less organized, though the overall effect is quite regal, if not exactly '50s-contemporary. Its centrally mounted radio/climate control cluster and the round 120 MPH speedometer are clear enough, but other gauges are dotted about the instrument

panel, seemingly at random. The wheel, with thin, quadruple "Banjo"-style spokes and personalized hub, offers plenty of brightwork. Much of the instrument panel that's not red or chrome shows a cream-and-gray checkerboard motif. You'd think that, contrasting with red-and-white seating areas and door panels, this would tax the limits of taste, but the effect

is soothing. Also helping reinforce this older-school feel is the Skylark's lack of Panoramic glass; its A-pillars and vent-window frames have never looked so huge as when sliding out of the Fiesta, but it's so much easier to get in and out.

Sitting in the Skylark, which outsold the other three special models combined in 1953, you wonder if Buick didn't have





BUICK SKYLARK

BODY STYLE	Two-door, four-seat convertible
ENGINE TYPE	OHV V-8
DISPLACEMENT	322 cubic inches
HORSEPOWER	188 @ 4,000 RPM
FUEL SYSTEM	Single Rochester four-barrel carburetor
TRANSMISSION	Dynaflow two-speed automatic
SHIPPING WEIGHT	4,315 pounds
PRODUCTION	1,690
BASE PRICE	\$5,000



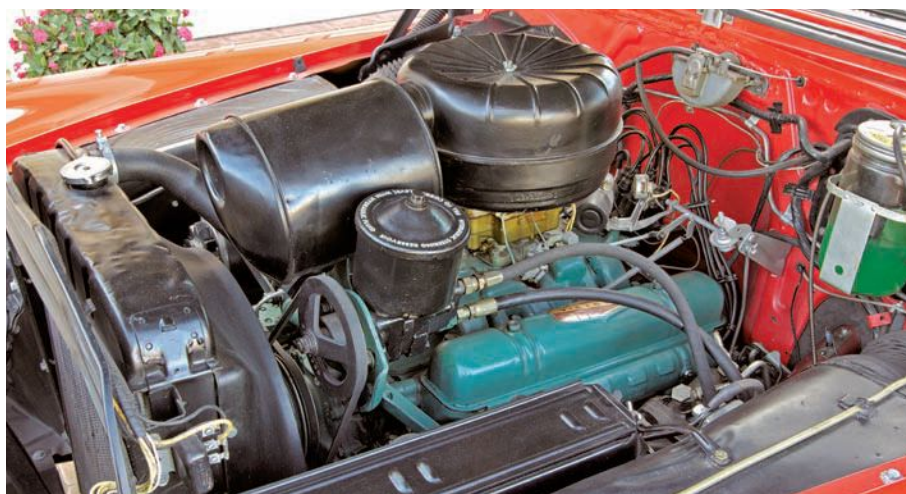
the right idea. Compared to the Buick we drove immediately before it, the Eldorado is subtle inside. Cadillacs are top-of-the-line, which implies a degree of filigree that simply isn't present. There is somehow less to look at here. The Oldsmobile and Buick are visual riots compared to the subtler Cadillac, which has taller glass and smaller visors for better visibility. Dash and door panels seamlessly integrate for an all-of-a-piece feel. The radio and clock are integrated into the band of

stainless that separates the body-colored steel and the black padded dash top. The grab handles on the doors move back and double as door-release mechanisms. The effect is subtle and clean.

On the road, the Corvette alights with some prompting, and quickly settles into a 700 RPM idle. Straight-six engines are supposed to be some of the most naturally balanced engines out there, and so we are a little taken aback by the Corvette's rumpity, stuttery demeanor. The three V-8

cars simmer gently when idling, though only the Cadillac, with its dual exhausts, really has the sound of a V-8 about it. It makes the other two V-8s in this group sound like sixes. The Buick and Cadillac just let us sit there and enjoy the ambience, though the Skylark is noisiest at idle (to be fair, it's not so much noisy as it is less quiet, maybe in part because of its higher compression). At idle, we also find ourselves pogoing slightly in the Fiesta; what engine-feel making its way to the cabin seems to concentrate in the front seat and bounce us up and down gently.

This generation of Hydra-Matic does not have Park—just Neutral (to the far left of the pattern) and a parking brake. (The Fiesta's has a blinking red flasher to remind you when it is on.) Buick's Hydra-Matic has Park to the far left of the pattern, with Reverse opposite, and Drive in the middle. At idle, the Buick's brake pedal sinks to the floor with distressing haste, and even with a firm foot on the pedal, we catch Drive briefly as we shift across the range. The Buick jerks forward toward the back wall of the garage, and our life and career flashes before our eyes. The Corvette's floor-mounted shifter, appearing alongside my right thigh with a





long, kinked linkage that snakes into the side of the transmission tunnel, lets you feel connected to the machinery. Absolutely on-point for a sports car. Pity it's attached to a set-and-forget Powerglide.

It should come as little surprise that the Corvette, helped by a 3.55 final-drive ratio and a curb weight about 1,600 pounds less than the other cars, is the speed king here, despite its two-cylinder disadvantage. There's a terrific exhaust growl when you get into it—a lot closer

to a Jaguar of its day than a Fleetline sedan—and by 50 miles per hour, the combination of engine noise, exhaust and wind is all swirling in your ears, making conversation nigh-on impossible.

As for the Eldorado, it's got the most bulk, weighing around 4,800 pounds, and features a high 3.07 final-drive ratio, but with 210hp and (perhaps more crucially) 330-lb.ft. of torque, the Eldorado isn't afraid to get up and boogie. The Fiesta is a little soggy off the line, much to our

surprise, but finds itself at around 30 MPH becoming far happier at speed. Much was made about Buick's new-for-1953 twin-turbine Dynaflow upgrades, said to boost power by 10 percent, but the Skylark doesn't so much accelerate as ooze forth. Also, you really need your whole leg to press on the accelerator to get it moving.

The Corvette is most comfortable on its bias-ply tires. There isn't a lot of wander as you cruise, and when turning, it simply goes where you ask it. There is a





CADILLAC ELDORADO

BODY STYLE	Two-door, four-seat convertible
ENGINE TYPE	OHV V-8
DISPLACEMENT	331 cubic inches
HORSEPOWER	210 @ 4,150 RPM
FUEL SYSTEM	Single Rochester four-barrel carburetor
TRANSMISSION	Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic
SHIPPING WEIGHT	4,800 pounds
PRODUCTION	533
BASE PRICE	\$7,750



ride trade-off, of course, but the Corvette is firm without being harsh or crashy. Its polar opposite has to be the Fiesta. Now, this is what we think of when we drive a '50s-era automobile. The ride is very comfortable, though there's a lot of wander on those bias-ply tires, and it seems like they fold over in turns above 10 MPH, making a sickening graunch noise as you go; the whole front end just leans over.

Allegedly, the Fiesta came with front and rear anti-roll bars, though there is little evidence of this in our drive. The Fiesta runs the same 8.00-15 wide-white bias-belted tires as the Skylark, but the

Skylark doesn't keel over in corners the way the Fiesta does. Its ride manages the trick of being both softer and less affected by pavement cracks. The Eldorado does feel less floaty and more connected to the road than the Skylark, and, happily, corners without taking a knee like the Fiesta did. That said, our Eldorado is a bit of a ringer: It was equipped with wide-white-wall radial tires, and probably tells us more about the driving improvements that radials bring to the table than whether the car itself feels any different than the Buick or Oldsmobile.

The Corvette's unassisted steering

is as leaden and slow as you'd expect at low speeds, but it doesn't lighten up at all once we get going, requiring as much effort to turn the steering wheel at speed as it did near idle. The other three contenders offered power steering as standard equipment—the Fiesta going so far as telling the driver on the steering wheel itself—but though the assist is there, the ratio is unchanged, so there's just as much hand-over-hand going on. It's smooth and effortless, but it is not quick. The Cadillac's steering ratio is marginally faster than that of the Buick or Oldsmobile, and you can sense the difference. But the narrow confines of the two-seat Corvette mean you're likely to bang the knuckles of your left hand onto the top of the door while turning. Similarly, the trick door latches on the Eldorado's doors are exactly where your hand wants to be while you're turning. Expect bruised knuckles.

Step on the Corvette's unassisted 11-inch drum brakes to stop, and the sports-car outlier of the group again proves its mettle. Of the other three cars, the power-assisted 12-inch vented drums on the Eldorado are the best. They simply do their job with little issue, although the brake pedal rests uncomfortably high, making quick transitions from gas to brake hard to pull off, and the possibility of cracking your knee on the steering



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column a very real one. The Fiesta's power-assisted 11-inch drums require all of the pedal to stop, even from neighborhood speeds. The eye-opener here is the Skylark: Its finned 12-inch drums are famed for their stopping ability, but on the road, our example made the Fiesta feel like the Corvette. We suspect some adjustment may be in order.

Unexpectedly, these four GM beauties didn't sell well, yet it didn't really matter. These were image cars, the bait that brought potential customers into the dealership, giving the buying public something to aspire to while they're put-

ting their name on a loan for a Special Deluxe, an 88, a Super or a Series 62 sedan. Today, 60 years on, how they drive is not quite the point. Each of these four cars represents something beyond the sheer will and might of General Motors to put them into production, despite there being no sound financial reason for it to do so. For Corvette fans, this is genesis, the start of the breed, and an inauspicious beginning to a new type of American car, though one not nearly as far afield as its latter-day reputation suggests.

The Skylark helped launch Buick's V-8, and offered enduring styling cues

that remain today (go look at a new Buick LaCrosse and see echoes of the dipped side chrome). The Eldorado was historic the moment that newly-elected President Eisenhower sat in its back seat and waved hello to hundreds of thousands of well-wishers who witnessed his inauguration. And the Fiesta? To our minds, the Fiesta most accurately predicted the trends, the look and feel, of American cars of the 1950s: brightly two-toned, full of comfort and convenience options, and possessing a rakish style that, despite its "Rocket" nickname, accurately foretold the future without all of the spaceship posturing. 🚗



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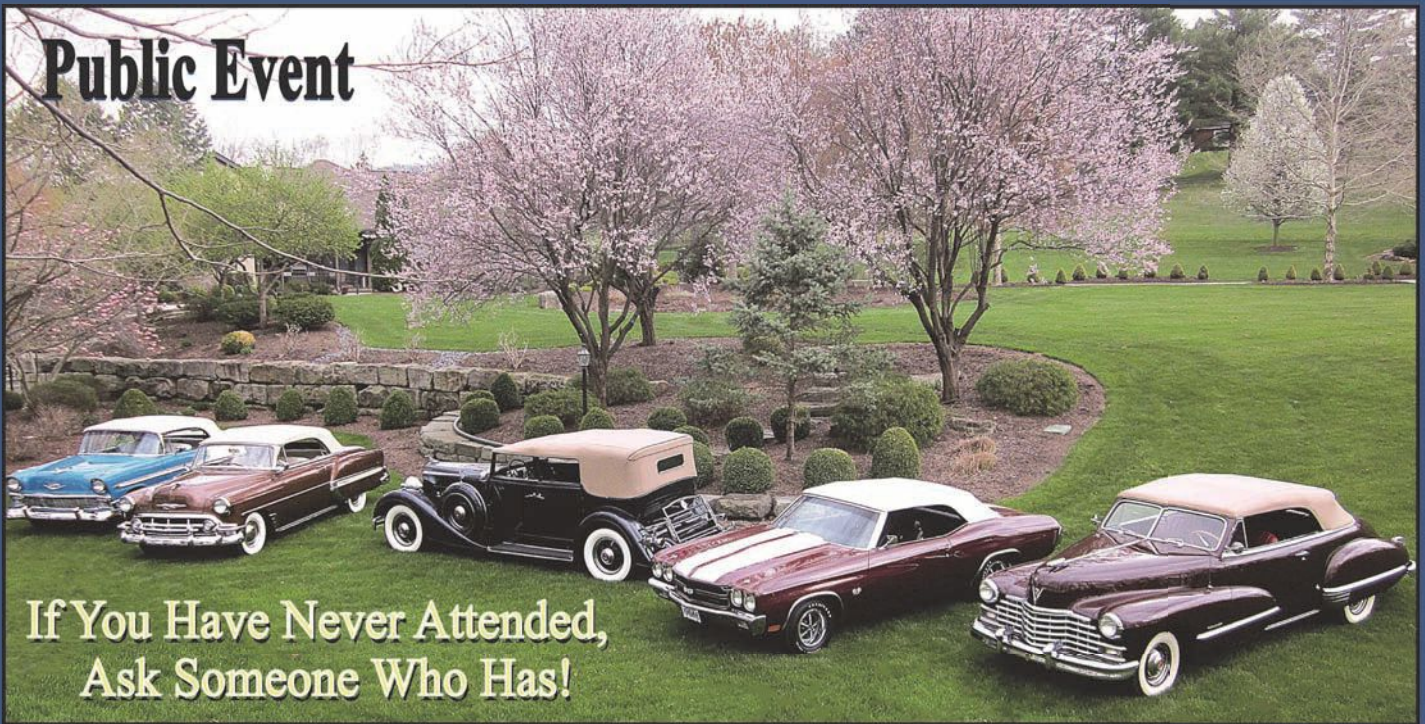
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Deluxe Dreamboat

Chrysler's 1954 New Yorker offers excellent performance and upscale luxury in an unassuming package



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

Within "America's First Family of Fine Cars" for 1954, the New Yorker Deluxe was at the top of its namesake series, but it was the middle child in the ascending order of Chrysler's upscale offerings. Nestled above the Windsor Deluxe and New Yorker and below the Custom Imperial and Crown Imperial, the New Yorker Deluxe maintained a mid-pack price of between about \$3,400 and \$3,900, but unlike its less expensive siblings, it reaped the benefits of the more-powerful-for-1954 standard drivetrain of the Imperials.



The 331-cu.in. FirePower Hemi V-8 was upgraded to a four-barrel carburetor; larger air cleaner, intake manifold, cylinder head ports and exhaust manifold outlets; larger 1.94/1.75-inch valves; a revised camshaft and dual exhaust to increase horsepower from 180 to 235 and torque from 312 to 330-lb.ft. Standard in the New Yorker was a 195hp version of the FirePower engine, and in the Windsor was a Spitfire 119hp straight-six.

Outwardly, the Deluxe featured a second nearly full-length crossbar in the grille, the lower forward stone guard was slightly taller and narrower than the New Yorker and Windsor and there were other minor trim revisions. "Deluxe" script was added on the rear quarter-panels and a license plate light in the rear bumper, and specific wheel covers were installed.

Along with all the standard features of the New Yorker, inside, the Deluxe also added front and rear center armrests, folding Lava-lie window control handles, horn ring and two-tone broadcloth upholstery. The 1954 New Yorker was available in four body styles; our Deluxe example is the six-passenger four-door sedan. Like the New Yorker below it and the Imperials above it, the PowerFlite automatic transmission and power brakes were standard.

Proud of its Hemi engine's continuing evolution since its 1951 introduction, Chrysler boldly stated, "...literally billions of miles of driving by Chrysler owners have proved that this is unquestionably the most efficient, most powerful, greatest performing engine in any standard production car in the world today."



The “Safety Crash” instrument panel is padded top and bottom, and the steering wheel is oversized to ease turning sans power assist. Since there’s no “Park” position for the transmission, using the “Easi-Lock” parking brake (chrome handle, lower left) is imperative.

Touted advantages of the hemispherical combustion chambers included: a central spark plug location, for shorter flame travel; increased thermal efficiency; a lateral valve arrangement that provided space for larger valves and straighter and larger ports; the promise of less carbon buildup. Despite the increase in power, the Hemi engine still maintained a low 7.5:1 compression ratio, so regular fuel could be used.

The Corporation also boasted that the Power-Flite transmission’s (actually introduced later in the 1953 model year) “planetary gears have a 1.72:1 [first-gear] torque ratio, and the torque converter has a ratio of 2.6:1, which gives the PowerFlite a torque multiplication of 4.47:1 when starting in the Drive position. This is greater than any other automatic transmission, which ensures breakaway-performance of exceptional swiftness... and with as much as 110-fewer parts than the most complicated of competitive transmissions.”

Containing subtle exterior styling revisions and moderate to major interior and engineering

“ I like
the power;
it’s easy to
drive and it’s
unique.”

advancements when compared to the 1953 models—built during a record-setting year for Chrysler in overall production (including all divisions)—the 1954 models should have sold quite well. But the post-Korean War recession of 1953-’54 and the decision not to follow much of the rest of the industry with lower, longer and wider styling until the Forward Look for 1955, among other possible factors, conspired against the 1954 models.

Whatever the causes, Chrysler’s overall sales dropped precipitously from 1.27 million units to just under 800,000, and precious market share was lost to Ford and General Motors. A bright spot, however, was the New Yorker Deluxe line, which increased to more than 34,000 in sales over the 27,184 of 1953. The largest gain was in the four-door, six-passenger sedan, like our feature car, with 26,907 examples sold in 1954 versus 20,585 cars for 1953.

U.S. Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Greg Pavick, the commander of the 458th Engineer Battalion in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, is well versed



A new chrome-trimmed engine-turned instrument panel, a trip odometer, a centrally located clock and ornate dash trim elicit an air of opulence. The switchgear has a pleasing positive, heavy metal feel that was lost on later cars that began using plastic parts.



in the attributes of the 1954 Chryslers, as he owns this New Yorker Deluxe.

Born 16 years after this Chrysler was built, the Sewickley, Pennsylvania, resident is not the typical age of a fan of a car from this era. He explains, "I've been a lifelong Chrysler aficionado, and one of my first cars was a 1954 New Yorker Club Coupe. Although I ultimately sold it, I have always appreciated the innovation and superior performance of the first-generation Hemi cars. Since selling that first one, I had a strong inclination to own another, as they are unique, fun to drive, and always spark strong interest from casual observers and other motorists."

Currently, his eclectic collection of Mopars also includes a 1948 New Yorker, 1964 Imperial Crown Coupe and 1965 Plymouth Sport Fury, which he and his wife, Rebecca, enjoy on the road whenever they have some free time.

When this two-tone Flagship Blue-over-Alpine Blue 1954 New Yorker Deluxe surfaced for sale in August 2010, Greg's interest was piqued. Thinking that he finally might be able to replace his first car with this four-door model, he went to Syracuse, New York, to see it and was immediately impressed with its "fantastic condition and original equipment. It was complete and it had just 85,600 miles on the odometer." The seller, John, was only the second owner. It was sold new near York, Pennsylvania.

John told Greg that he had done some work on the New Yorker shortly after he bought it in 1980. The body was repainted and the bumpers were rechromed; the two-tone blue broadcloth upholstery and the carpet were replaced; steering-wheel cracks were filled in and the wheel was repainted.

Regarding the exterior colors, Greg explains, "The cowl tag paint code says '01,' which would seem to indicate a black finish, though I have no indication and do not suspect the car was ever black. With the firewall, jambs and interior appointments all the correct shade of blue, I believe that was the color combination from the beginning. Why the tag doesn't say '64' [indicating two-tone Flagship Blue over Alpine Blue], I really don't know.

"Another tag attached to it states, 'CUSTOMER DRIVE AWAY,' [meaning the customer chose to take delivery at the plant]. I wonder if the car was some sort of special order... very odd for a New Yorker Deluxe to not have power steering, power windows or a radio originally... It really has no options other than what came with the Deluxe line."

To the best of Greg's knowledge, the original 235hp, 331-cu.in. Hemi V-8 has never been rebuilt. Thus, it retains its original long-block Carter WCFB carburetor, dual-point distributor and exhaust manifolds. A newer dual-exhaust system features 2¼-inch pipes with Walker mufflers, and Greg did install a new water pump last year.

Backing the venerable Hemi is the factory two-speed PowerFlite and torque converter, and the original 3.36-gear rear end that has only required a pinion seal replacement. The suspension and manual steering—all attached to a frame that was stiffened over the previous year's offering—remains stock. Though Greg assumes that wear items had been installed as needed over the decades, he hasn't had to replace any hard parts in the last five years. He simply has the suspension lubed each year.

Chrysler's Safeguard Hydraulic Brakes, which feature two wheel cylinders per front wheel, were rebuilt. The 12-inch drums were turned and new hardware, shoes and hoses were installed. The power brake booster, which is located on the frame side-rail beneath the driver's side of the seat, was also rebuilt, with all the brake parts provided by Andy Bernbaum Auto Parts and Karp's Power Brake Service.

With all that the Chrysler New Yorker Deluxe had to offer the buyer in 1954, the proof of whether or not it lived up to its expectations is in the driving, so we drove it.

The unique chrome handle pulls straight out to open the door. Once seated inside, it quickly becomes evident that this is a luxury car. No utilitarian upholstery here—the seats, headliner and door panels are instead finished in plush fabric. Attention to small details abounds, such as window crank handles that fold out of the way when not needed and the red high-beam



The 331-cu.in. Hemi V-8 gained 55 horsepower via induction and exhaust enhancements for 1954. This example has yet to require a rebuild.



owner's view



I don't show the New Yorker, as I'd rather be driving it. Despite owning several antique vehicles, I enjoy driving this one the most. Every so often, I take it out on the interstate and exercise the FirePower engine. It's amazing to watch the other motorists' expressions when this 60-plus-year-old car passes them, as it can easily exceed the modern traffic speeds. In my view, it's the best compromise between old and emerging newer automotive technology and performance. It really is just an amazing car, one I plan to own for a long time to come. I even like its deep, bellowing "Fifties" horn.

indicator that's integrated into the Chrysler emblem on the instrument panel. Just don't close the driver's door if you want to adjust the seat, as the chrome handle becomes inaccessible. Thoughtfully, though, as the seat moves forward, it also rises to aid shorter drivers.

Overall, the driving position is satisfactory, yet typical for the era. The color-keyed tri-spoke steering wheel is large, thin and tilted more upward than in 1960s cars. Its chromed horn ring and spokes can sometimes block the two small warning lamps for amps and oil pressure, depending upon wheel position, but the large, round 120 MPH speedometer and the fuel and coolant temperature gauges to its right are clearly visible.

The bench seat is sumptuous and offers average thigh and back support, but not surprisingly, since it's a bench, no lateral support. Glass area is ample, with unimpeded visibility out of the front and sides, though the passenger fender can't be seen due to the height of the hood. The rear view is terrific side-to-side, with the new "Clearbac" one-piece wraparound rear window having nearly no three-quarter blind spot, but the roof does dip pretty low.

With my foot on the brake pedal, a turn of the key easily awakens the Hemi, which idles fairly smoothly. I release the parking brake with a twist and push of the chrome handle, and move the column-mounted "Safety-Selector" lever from Neutral to Drive.

The engine pulls well upon acceleration for



its era, but the sound is a muted whir, as the exhaust remains quiet at all times, keeping in step with the New Yorker Deluxe's station in life. There's, of course, only one upshift with the PowerFlite, and it was smooth.

As expected in a car of this size and weight equipped with

manual steering, turning effort when stopped is high and less so under way. The slow steering-gear ratio employed to keep the effort manageable results in six turns to lock, so there's lots of wheel cranking in the corners. Conversely, the lack of power assist ensures ample feedback as to what's happening at the wheels.

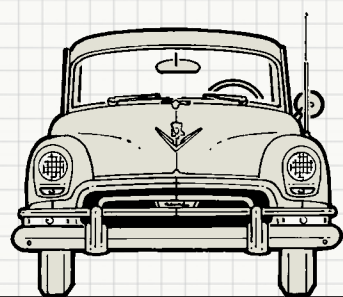
The suspension absorbs bumps well, but the body leans in the turns, given its relatively soft luxury car spring rates, ensuring a smooth, if a bit wallowy, ride. Braking was acceptable, with moderate pedal effort, but the pedal sits quite high, and it had a lot of travel. When I placed my foot on it in a natural position, my size 10½ shoe also rubbed against the steering column. Minor quibbles aside, nothing diminished my enjoyment of experiencing 331 cubic inches of Hemi V-8 power, 1954 style, in this Chrysler luxury car.

Since our photo shoot, Greg has rechromed the hood ornament and taillamp housings, and plans to replace the non-stock radio and have a more few trim pieces restored. Those tasks won't get in the way of driving the New Yorker 200-300 miles this summer, however. Greg says, "I like the power; it's easy to drive and it's unique." What more could one ask for in a driveable collectible? 🐾

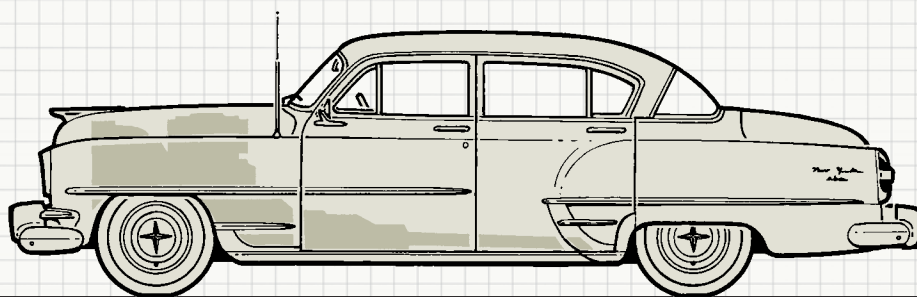


1954 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER DELUXE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2015 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



← 56 5/16 inches →



← 125 1/2 inches →

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

Base Price	\$3,433
Price as Optioned	\$3,433
Options (on car profiled)	None

ENGINE

Type	OHV Hemi V-8, cast-iron block and cylinder heads
Displacement	331.1 cubic inches
Bore x Stroke	3 13/16 x 3 5/8 inches
Compression Ratio	7.5:1
Horsepower @ RPM	235 @ 4,400
Torque @ RPM	330-lb.ft. @ 2,600
Valvetrain	Hydraulic valve lifters
Main Bearings	Five
Fuel System	Carter four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
Lubrication System	Pressure, gear-type pump
Electrical System	6-volt
Exhaust System	Dual

TRANSMISSION

Type	PowerFlite two-speed automatic
Ratios	1st 1.72:1 2nd 1.00:1 Reverse 2.39:1

DIFFERENTIAL

Type	Hotchkiss; hypoid drive gears; open
Ratio	3.36:1

STEERING

Type	Center arm equal-length tie rods
Overall Ratio	25.8:1
Turning Circle	N/A

BRAKES

Type	Hydraulic, 4-wheel drum, power assisted
Front/rear	12-inch drums

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction	All steel; separate body and frame
--------------	------------------------------------

Frame	Double-channel box
Body Style	Four-door sedan
Layout	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent; control arms, coil springs, direct acting Oriflow shocks, anti-roll bar
Rear	Solid axle; semi-elliptical leaf springs with interliners; direct-acting Oriflow shocks

WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels	Steel "Safety Rim"
Front/rear	15 X 5.5 inches
Tires	American Classic Radial
Front/rear	235R75-15 (stock 8.00 x 15 bias-ply)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase	125 1/2 inches
Overall Length	215 5/8 inches
Overall Width	77 1/2 inches
Overall Height	62 3/4 inches
Front Track	56 5/16 inches
Rear Track	59 5/8 inches
Shipping Weight	4,065 pounds

CAPACITIES

Crankcase	5 quarts
Cooling System	25 quarts
Fuel Tank	20 gallons

CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.	.709
Weight per bhp	17.29 pounds
Weight per cu.in.	12.27 pounds

PRODUCTION

Six-passenger, four-door sedan	26,907
--------------------------------	--------

PROS & CONS

+ Affordable collectible
+ Upgraded Hemi power
+ Upscale model and details

- Overshadowed by the Forward Look models
- Not particularly rare
- Restoration cost could exceed value

WHAT TO PAY

Low
\$4,000 – \$6,000

Average
\$9,000 – \$12,000

High
\$17,000 – \$20,000

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WOW SUPER COUPON

90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER
CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING
LOT 61849
68887 shown



\$9999 REG. PRICE \$149.99

SAVE \$50

• No Gas Required

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SUPER COUPON

12 TON SHOP PRESS
CENTRAL MACHINERY
• Pair of Arbor Plates Included
LOT 33497/60604 shown



\$9999 REG. PRICE \$199.99

SAVE \$100

21447065

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PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE 1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT
LOT 69904
68892 shown



\$29999 REG. PRICE \$699.99

SAVE \$400

21448761

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WOW SUPER COUPON

2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR
CENTRAL PNEUMATIC
LOT 67847 shown
61454/61693



\$14999 REG. PRICE \$219.99

SAVE \$70

21450157

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WOW SUPER COUPON

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER
drillmaster
LOT 60625 shown
69645/95578



\$999 REG. PRICE \$19.99

SAVE 50%

WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF GRINDING AND CUT-OFF WHEELS

21463108

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SUPER COUPON

4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWNS
HaulMaster
LOT 60405/61524
62322/90984 shown



\$799 REG. PRICE \$19.99

SAVE 60%

21488643

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SUPER COUPON

3/8" PROFESSIONAL AIR RATCHET WRENCH
CENTRAL PNEUMATIC
LOT 47706/60631/47214 shown



\$1499 REG. PRICE \$27.99

SAVE 46%

• 50 ft. lbs. max. torque

21530057

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WOW SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating
★★★★★

RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON ALUMINUM RACING JACK

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT 69252/68053 shown
60569/62160/62496/62516

"The Undisputed King of the Garage"
— Four Wheeler Magazine

AWARD WINNING QUALITY

• 3-1/2 Pumps Lifts
• Most Vehicles
• Weighs 27 lbs.

\$5999
REG. PRICE \$119.99
SAVE \$60

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WOW SUPER COUPON

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE
PITTSBURGH 6 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

LOT 61313/62570/62728
62583/47770 shown

\$499
VALUE

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 10/5/15. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

21593963

WOW SUPER COUPON

SAVE \$72

NEW 6" VARIABLE SPEED DUAL ACTION POLISHER

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT 62403
69924 shown

\$5799
REG. PRICE \$129.99

21540778

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WOW SUPER COUPON

TORQUE WRENCHES PITTSBURGH PRO

"Impressive Accuracy, Amazing Value"
— Car Craft Magazine

1/4" DRIVE LOT 2696/61277
3/8" DRIVE LOT 807/61276
1/2" DRIVE LOT 62431
239 shown

SAVE 66%

• Accuracy within ±4%

YOUR CHOICE! \$999
REG. PRICE \$29.99

21576943

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WOW SUPER COUPON

1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY SUPER HIGH TORQUE IMPACT WRENCH

SAVE \$55

\$7499
REG. PRICE \$129.99

LOT 62627
68424 shown

• 700 ft. lbs. Max. Torque

21591195

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WOW SUPER COUPON

1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT 69445/93840
61858/69512 shown

• Includes Ram, Hook and Chain

\$9999
REG. PRICE \$249.99

21534288

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WOW SUPER COUPON

SAVE \$80

8", 5 SPEED BENCH MOUNT DRILL PRESS

CENTRAL MACHINERY

LOT 62390/62520
60238 shown

\$4999
REG. PRICE \$129.99

21558532

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WOW SUPER COUPON

900 PEAK/700 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) 2 CYCLE GAS RECREATIONAL GENERATOR

SAVE OVER \$84

\$95
REG. PRICE \$179.99

LOT 66619/60338/69381/62472 shown

21554962

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WOW SUPER COUPON

2 PIECE VEHICLE WHEEL DOLLIES

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT 60343/67338 shown

• 1500 lb. Capacity

\$488
REG. PRICE \$79.99

21560333

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WOW SUPER COUPON

350 LB. CAPACITY 30" SERVICE CART WITH LOCKING DRAWER

US*GENERAL

LOT 61161/90428 shown

SAVE \$92

\$5799
REG. PRICE \$149.99

21564646

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WOW SUPER COUPON

10 FT. x 20 FT. PORTABLE CAR CANOPY

HFT

LOT 60728
69034 shown

\$11999
REG. PRICE \$199.99

21576550

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WOW SUPER COUPON

NEW HARDY MECHANIC'S GLOVES

MEDIUM LOT 61235
62434/62426
LARGE LOT 93640
60447/62433
62428
X-LARGE LOT 93641
60448/62432
62429 shown

SAVE 60%

\$399
REG. PRICE \$9.99

21535988

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WOW SUPER COUPON

3 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP DRILLS

WARRIOR

LOT 91616 shown
69087/60379

• Drill 28 Hole Sizes

\$799
REG. PRICE \$19.99

21545151

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WOW SUPER COUPON

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

BADLAND

LOT 61256
60813/61889
68142 shown

SAVE \$300

\$29999
REG. PRICE \$599.99

21551593

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WOW SUPER COUPON

5 PIECE PLIERS SET

PITTSBURGH

LOT 69352/69351 shown
69353/62597/62598

10" 8" 6" 4" 2"

SAVE 55%

\$899
REG. PRICE \$19.99

21594704

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ALBERT POPE WAS AN AMAZING

fellow and did a lot to advance the car culture of the United States. But one thing that Jim Donnelly totally forgot to mention in his *Pioneers* column in *HCC* #129 is the fact that Pope built cars and bicycles in Hagerstown, Maryland. The Pope-Tribune and the Pope high-wheel bike were built here, as part of the Pope empire. Historians and collectors of things Pope have long forgotten that, in central Maryland, cars and bikes bearing the Pope name were produced in quantity; you can still see today the factory where they were built.

Currently, there are two Pope-Tribune automobiles in the Washington County Rural Heritage Museum (a part of the University of Maryland Ag Center Educational facility) at the northern end of the Antietam Battlefield. They can be viewed for free at the museum on Saturdays and Sundays. Here in the Maryland area we take the Pope contribution very seriously.

Eric Kirk
Winchester, Virginia

I WAS PLEASED TO SEE THE

recognition you gave to Charles Jasper Glidden in *HCC* #128 for his promoting what he called "automobiling." Unlike many Eastern millionaires, Glidden did not see racing as the automobile's future. He sought to promote family travel by automobile, thus, his world travels and his Glidden Trophy award. Mr. and Mrs. Glidden were the first couple to travel for pleasure by automobile across the North American continent, back in 1904.

Very little is published on Glidden; most of what I have read on him is full of errors. Unfortunately, your article contains errors also. I have been researching Glidden's world travels for close to 20 years and have secured and am transcribing his own detailed newspaper travel accounts, developing a chronology of his travels.

Glidden did not go to the Arctic Circle in 1901; he crossed it on August 16, 1903, and that day only. The Gliddens were always accompanied by their mechanic, and often by friends of theirs, especially when traveling in Europe. They did not drive through Malaysia and Japan in 1902; they toured Fiji and Java in 1905 and Indochina, China, and Japan in 1906. Technically, the global loop was done just once, but it covered several years, interrupted by trips home to Boston.

Finally, Glidden's travels were always

done in one of two Napiers, not the White steam car illustrated, in which he is riding during a Glidden Tour.

Carl Larson, Ph.D.
Dickinson, North Dakota

I JUST HAD TO WRITE AFTER READING

Richard's column "Senseless Stashing" in *HCC* #129. He hit the nail so hard on the head, he drove it thru the 2x4. I have two of Ralph Nader's favorite cars, a 1963 Monza convertible and a '61 Lakewood. I have found that I like to drive and use them as much as possible, allowing that I still have a full-time job. I have had to do work on them, replacing seals, etc., that had to have deteriorated due to the previous owners not driving them regularly. The gentleman I bought the '63 Monza from has four other Corvairs, and it never fails that, though they are all good looking cars, when he brings them out to a couple of parades a year, he inevitably has issues with them not running well. Only now am I comfortable getting in either of them like we did a few weeks ago to drive 200-plus miles to Greenville, South Carolina, for the Cars and Coffee monthly morning cruise-in. The '63 Corvair ran great and folks couldn't believe we came that far for a simple cruise-in. The only issue I can see is having time to drive everything I own!

Ed McClintock
Cleveland, Tennessee

RICHARD, I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER

to laugh or cry when I read the paragraph in your column about owners of convertibles and not "dropping the top." I inherited a beautiful, all-original 1972 Buick Centurion convertible from my father, who purchased it brand new. Every chance we got, we had the top down... until the fateful summer day in 2005, when I was to lead a car cruise around beautiful Presque Isle on Lake Erie, here at Erie, Pennsylvania. In front of more than 100-plus people, as I was putting the scissor-design top down, we heard a strange noise; the top went sideways and then the rear glass window blew out all over the interior and exterior. Needless to say, after the insurance company spent \$3,000 repairing the damage and with the warning that they would not replace it again... I never put that top down again as I didn't trust it anymore. Thankfully, the car was sold to a GM service manager in Ohio who knew all about GM's

finicky scissor-design tops of that era. Hopefully, it has served him well.

Doug Bethune
Erie, Pennsylvania

I THINK, IN MANY CASES, THE

cars aren't driven as much because we tend to pour a lot of money and time into them. So, they're pricey investments to us. I admit, that sometimes holds me back from driving my cars as often as I should. No need to drive them more than necessary and risk someone hitting my car on the road. Many people buy convertibles exclusively because they're more collectible, not necessarily to access the "blue sky above." Perhaps that's why the tops aren't brought down, as Richard noted. A problem with having a lot of cars is you simply don't have enough time to drive them as often as they should be driven.

Dave Harris
Northbrook, Illinois

RICHARD, YOU SAID IT ALL.

My sentiments exactly. I could not add another word.

Bob Jacobs
Gastonia, North Carolina

I AM A MEMBER OF THE ARIZONA

Classic Thunderbird Club, which has over 225 members. Of this number, only less than 10 percent drive their little T-Birds more than 500 miles per year. My wife and I, along with five other couples, have driven across America four different times, to New Orleans and Branson, and across Route 66 in Arizona 14 times. We once drove into California and up Interstate #101 into Victoria, British Columbia, over to Lake Louise in Banff, Alberta, then down into Montana, Utah, Nevada and then home. These trips alone probably totaled 30,000 miles. The few problems were a fuel pump, stuck carb float, a couple of flat tires and a rubber gas-line rupture. All were repaired on the spot or in the next town. We are proponents of driving these classics while we can. Do people think they will live forever?

Thanks for your great article about "driving" your classic.

Ken Falkenberry
Tempe, Arizona

Continued on page 44

The Perfect Car

The first time I saw a Knox automobile was about 25 years ago. I knew something about them because I was an avid reader of old car magazines, devouring *Special Interest Autos* and *Automobile Quarterly* when they arrived in the mail.

My wife and I were at a car meet when I spotted a Knox runabout. Although I was familiar with the name, in all my years in the hobby I had never actually seen a Knox “in the metal.” I pointed it out to my wife and said, “Now here’s a rare car that you hardly ever see.” The Knox’s owner heard me and, glaring down her nose, declared that the Knox was not rare. “There’re actually lots of them around,” she sniffed. Naturally, I felt like an idiot in front of my wife. After all, a complete stranger had just told her that I didn’t know what I was talking about.

Besides revealing herself to be a bit rude, that woman was quite wrong. Knox cars are actually pretty rare. Even when new, they were fairly uncommon. Yearly sales in the firm’s first 10 years didn’t top 727 cars, according to the industry trade paper *Automotive News*. Despite that distasteful meeting, I have continued to be fascinated by Knox automobiles because, in some ways, they were groundbreaking cars.

A little background: The Knox Automobile Company was founded in 1900 in Springfield, Massachusetts, by Harry Knox, a Springfield Technical Institute graduate who had worked briefly for Frank Duryea. This was back when Springfield was still one of the centers of the American auto industry. In its first year, Knox produced 15 cars, all of them three-wheel runabouts noteworthy for their quality of construction and unusual reliability. They featured an air-cooled, single-cylinder engine. Some historians claim the Knox was the first air-cooled American car produced in significant quantities, and I think they’re probably right.

An especially unique feature of its air-cooled engine was its particular method: Instead of incorporating traditional cooling fins the Knox used dozens of threaded rods, each $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch diameter, screwed into the block to provide, the

company claimed, “thirty-two square inches of heat radiating surface per square inch of outside surface.” Apparently, it worked pretty well, and owners began to refer affectionately to the Knox engine as the “Old Porcupine” because of its unusual appearance.

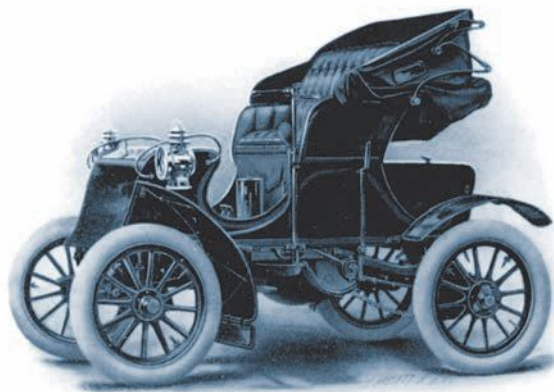
They were reliable. In 1902 in the New York to Boston Reliability Run, Knox cars won two of the four cups, and three first-class certificates. That year, Knox offered a four-wheel model in addition to its three-wheel runabout and three-wheel commercial car, and produced some 250 vehicles in all. By 1904, some Knox production vehicles were powered by twin-cylinder engines; the company offered six passenger-car models and six commercial models. It began offering water-cooled cars in 1908, and by 1910, all Knox cars used that cooling method.

The company had some interesting slogans. “The Waterless Knox” was one; “Pass Them All” was another. “The Car That Never Drinks” is my favorite. But for boldness you can’t beat, “The Perfect Car,” used in 1910.

Yet, for all its success, Knox went into receivership (for the second time, no less) in 1912. The company’s fate was battled in the courts until 1914, when its assets were purchased by one Edward Sutton. Production of Knox cars ended with the reorganized firm focusing only on commercial vehicles. The revived company survived into the mid-1920s.

But why did such a successful car company fail? After all, it produced sturdy, reliable automobiles that were attractive as well. So why did it go bust?

The cause was the familiar one with independents—lack of capital. As the company expanded, it needed more cash to pay for machinery, workers and to pay suppliers. It didn’t generate enough profits to keep up with its increasing capital needs, and its inability to pay everyone on time forced it into receivership. The revived company focused on trucks, mainly because trucks were much more profitable back then. Even so, the market eventually knocked Knox down for a third—and last—time. ☞



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automobiles

because, in

some ways,

they were

groundbreaking

cars. //



I ENJOYED THOMAS DeMAURO'S

article on the Pontiac 326 in *HCC* #129. I remember that engine well, and the first time I drove one, I realized how understated it was on power. As to the cubic-inch designation from 336 to 326, I read somewhere that it had something to do with Chevrolet's introduction of their 327-cu.in. V-8; Pontiac was held back on one upping Chevy. I wonder how many rebadged Le Mans into GTOs are out there running these 326 engines.

Phil Aubrey
Merlin Oregon

YOUR PROFILE ON DAVID DUNBAR

Buick in *HCC* #129 grabbed my attention when I read the origin of his name. I have many interests besides being an admirer of classic cars and this magazine, one of which is an interest in the history of words and names. I don't know why I never noticed it before in all my years, but when I read that his family added a "c" to the name, it hit me like a ton of Buicks. Old English? Well, maybe. But one thing for certain is when I read "Buik", I immediately recognized it as a Dutch word meaning "belly." The "u" and "i" are pronounced as one syllable in Dutch, somewhere between the sounds of a long "i" (as in "idea") and a double "o" (as in "school"), and even that is a matter of opinion.

The British Isles were quite often frequented by the Dutch and vice versa, so it's quite possible he has Dutch roots. (Can you tell I'm proud of what my native country has contributed to the American Dream?) I'm sorry, but there really is no comparable English sound for the "ui" just as there is no comparable magazine to *Hemmings Classic Car*. Great writing!

Hans Schippers
South Jordan, Utah

AS DEPICTED IN ISSUE #128, BOB

Gregorie must've winced when he saw his elegant Continentals violated by Messrs. Wright and Loewy. Wright's town car is an above-the-beltline abomination. The cut-down windshield seems perfectly designed to run right across the driver's eye level (unless the driver is a giant or a midget).

Unlike Loewy, Wright had the good sense not to touch the front end. Apparently, Loewy thought he could do a better job than Gregorie by changing the grille and adding a lump of trim to the hood

nose. He shortened the front fenders, too, the purpose of which eludes me. Also, instead of letting the rear fender skirt flow with the fender line, as Gregorie intended, Loewy mistakenly thought that a rectangular skirt would improve the design. I'll give Loewy one thing, though: He picked a good color. As for Wright's choice of color? How about "Hooker Lipstick Red"?

Ed Koporc
Fowler, Ohio

I HAVE TO AGREE WITH MILTON

Stern's opening paragraph in Detroit Underdogs in *HCC* #129. I am often amazed when people with little or no knowledge about a specific vehicle somehow have decided that the car is a bad car and will share their uninformed opinion with anyone who will listen. I had, and have, such cars, and the AMC Gremlin featured in the same issue was one of them.

I often hear people state that Gremlins were bad cars. I drove a 1977 Gremlin for four years. It had the 232-cu.in. straight-six engine. I'm not going to say that this was a great car, because it wasn't. If you drove it as it was intended, like an economy car, it was fine. It never failed to start, drove through some of the worst Midwest winter weather and delivered decent fuel economy. I can't remember that car ever needing a repair in the four years we owned it. The best part was that after driving it for four years, we sold it back to the dealer for almost as much as we paid for it when we purchased it new.

The other car, which I still own, that I find myself defending occasionally, is the Pontiac Fiero. I still run into people at car shows who will speak of the Fiero as being a terrible car, and yet when I ask if they owned one, or have even driven one, they reply that they haven't. So, I wonder what makes them feel they are an authority on the car?

And thanks for publishing the well-written and unbiased article on the Fiero back in issue #126. I'm the original owner of my 1985 Fiero that I have driven more than 107,000 miles. I can tell you that, like the Gremlin, the Fiero is an extremely reliable car. In fact, it is one of the most reliable, fun-to-drive cars I have ever owned.

Christopher Sass
Highland, Michigan

I TRULY ENJOYED YOUR ARTICLE ON

the 1973 Gremlin, more so because I myself bought a new 1973 Gremlin. But I have to address a few discrepancies on its options. First, it came stripped down, with a six-cylinder, stick shift and a price of \$1,800, and you had to add the options. When you bought A/C, you got the heavy-duty radiator; when you ordered bucket seats, it came with an upgraded steering wheel and a under-dash shelf. The dome lamp and lighter were also options.

I ordered mine with the 304-cu.in. engine and posi rear; also the special wheels came as a package; plus you had to add power steering and brakes; the total price was about \$3,500. So you were not getting A/C and automatic transmission for \$1,800. I waited three months for my car to be delivered, and I had to argue with the dealer to leave off the "X" decals. It came without a radio, and it was a real fight to get anything repaired.

On the first day out, one of the spark plugs broke and the engine ran rough. Then a few weeks later, the driver's window would not go up. So I sold the Gremlin after two years and took a loss. Now for the funny part: I bought a used Gremlin a few years later and drove it until it fell apart, with every panel rusting out, then junked it.

Tony Di Pietro
Paterson, New Jersey

I ENJOYED BOB PALMA'S ARTICLE

on the demise of Oldsmobile in issue #129. Working within General Motors dealerships for 35 years, I have some of my observations to add. I agree with Bob: Disregarding core customers can be fatal. Remember "The Merry Oldsmobile" and the TV ad with Dad driving his daughter home with a goldfish in a bowl on the front seat? The core group was the average "American Family." One final straw toward the end was the "It's not your father's Oldsmobile" commercial. This statement insulted the core group and did little to attract a new customer base. Model-name elimination or platform change using the same name is not a good thing, either, nor was the "Rocket" decal on the air cleaner of a Chevrolet-powered 1977 Cutlass. Buick stumbled several times after 1959 and '60, but made a recovery in 1991 with the Park Avenue.

Phil Aubrey
Merlin, Oregon

Gears, Gears, Who's Got the Gears?

Today, car manufacturers like to brag about their transmissions. Specifically, about how many forward speeds they can jam into the casing. Depending on which import or domestic you select, you can specify up to eight forward speeds. Eight. Attribute it to a need for fuel economy, and the need to keep the engine within a very narrow power band. That makes sense in Formula 1, where peak power comes in a range that's skinny as a ruler, and incessant gear-changing is essential. Personally, I have a hard time seeing how you need that many gears on the street. I wonder whether the transmission is intended to last longer than the typical automotive leasing deal.

It's a remarkable contrast to the way things used to be. Case in point: Check out the article elsewhere in this issue about the 1953 Kaiser Carolina, which was optioned with a General Motors-built Hydra-Matic transmission. The first question that came up in an interview with the owner was, how many speeds? That's where the great void first makes itself evident. When you're researching these things, there's precious little information out there—of the library variety, at least—into how the early automatics or semi-automatics shifted, or how many gears they actually boasted. That's one of the challenges we face here at Hemmings. You've got to research this stuff. I remember doing a Driveable Dream feature on a 1955 Ford with a Ford-O-Matic transmission, and saying it was a two-speed automatic. Some of you good people in the Hemmings Nation called me on it, explaining that the Ford had something of a low-low granny gear to get everything moving. In any case, the Kaiser turned out to have a two-speed Hydra-Matic as one of its very few options.

I cut my teeth on driving when the standard transmission was just that, either a three- or four-speed manual or a three-speed automatic. In the 1966 Ford that I learned on, it was easy to count the gears, just listen for the pause and the clunk as the Cruise-O-Matic upshifted. It was almost too easy, to say nothing of driving with the

multi-speed automatics that are now common. That's one reason why I wonder about what it must have been like to drive a Buick Dynaflo, for instance. Honestly, how many forward speeds does a Dynaflo really have? There's a low gear, but usually, you push down on the accelerator and wait for the primitive slush box to gradually

get you up to speed. Or look at the early Fluid Drive setups from Chrysler. They had no torque converter to multiply the engine's power, and the first ones required the use of a clutch pedal for getting under way.

Maybe the sheer novelty of having a car that changed its own gears was so powerful at the time that a lot of buyers really didn't pay attention to the number of gears. When the average highway speed was maybe 50 MPH, it didn't really matter that

much whether you had a Powerglide or a four-speed Hydra-Matic. So it fascinated me to see and hear the product names associated with the early automatics: Jetaway, Super Turbine, Flightpitch, Turboglide, Roto Hydra-Matic. The nomenclature evoked flight on pavement. It didn't explain a great deal about how the things actually worked. For that, I guess, you had to get a shop manual or find a transmission shop to explain the whole process to you. Which, I can tell you, would be a very valuable research tool here in Bennington. It would be fantastic if someone would author an omnibus guide to early automatics from Fluid Drive forward to the Turbo Hydra-Matic: Capacities, ratios, number of speeds, type of stator and torque converter.

Look, all I can say is that this kind of minutiae floats my boat, big time. I'll keep checking with the owners and clubs to learn more about this fascinating technology that nearly relegated the manual floor shifter to the annals of the past. It's magic to have a car that shifts for itself, especially as you advance in years and develop a greater appreciation for relaxation. I just want to learn more about the mechanical wizardry that makes these gearboxes work like they do. Call it natural curiosity. 🐞



When the average highway speed was maybe 50 MPH, it didn't really matter that much whether you had a Powerglide or a four-speed Hydra-Matic.



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It's Official: CCCA Expands to 1915

The Classic Car Club of America is going back. Specifically, it is extending the date of the earliest cars it will accept as Full Classics to 1915. A recent membership vote, announced at the club's annual meeting in March, made it official. That is a significant change and, in my opinion, long overdue.

I've been a club member for 50 years and served as a national board member, head of the classification committee and national president. For many years I attended, in addition to CCCA-sponsored Grand Classics, other vintage automotive events where I would see automobiles built before 1925 by such manufacturers as Lafayette, Daniels, Winton and Templar, and wondered: Why aren't these cars considered Classics by the CCCA? The answer, of course, was because they weren't built in 1925 or later. That was the arbitrary year the club came up with when it was founded in 1952.

Why had 1925 been chosen? One must consider the context of when this decision was made, that is, 1952. The Antique Automobile Club of America and Veteran Motor Car Club of America were focused on much earlier cars. In 1952, a 25 year-old car was a 1927 model. Many of the cars being deemed Classics by the founding members of the CCCA were still considered used cars by many people. A 1939 Packard Twelve was a 13-year-old car in 1952. And I've been told that it was not uncommon for "the big Classics" to be used as tow vehicles for the early antique cars!

When the CCCA was founded, it defined a Classic motorcar as having been made between 1925 and 1942 and being "distinguished for their respective fine design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship."

Subsequently, the club expanded the later cutoff year to 1948, but held to its 1925 cutoff until a few years ago when "cars built before 1925 that are virtually identical to 1925 Full Classics" were accepted.

Luxury automobiles such as the Lafayette, Daniels and Templar had the misfortune to cease production before the magic year of 1925. A post-World War I recession had wreaked havoc on the U.S. economy, claiming a number of automobile manufacturers (in all price ranges) along the

way. Many closed their doors; some found buyers such as Henry Ford, who acquired Lincoln, and William Durant, who purchased Locomobile.

Other already-approved Classics, such as Mercer, Kissel, Marmon and DuPont changed models prior

to 1925, and thus did not qualify under the "virtually identical" rule. The Series 6 Mercer was built from 1923-'25, but the equally deserving Series 5, which differed from the Series 6 and was built from 1920-'23, did not qualify under the old rule.

Among the marques likely to be considered by the classification committee for Classic status is the 1922-'24 Richelieu. To my knowledge, none of these cars survive, but that doesn't mean this grand marque doesn't deserve Classic status. And, who knows? One may yet be found.

The classification committee will also be reviewing *specific models* produced by a marque prior to 1924, such as the 1921-'24 Paige 6-66 and 6-70 and the larger series cars produced by Haynes between 1919 and 1924.

As I said in my previous column, these pre-1924 motorcars embody all of the qualities of what CCCA defines as a Classic. By the early 1930s, many of the top custom coachbuilding companies were gone or in the process of closing their doors. The coachbuilt automobile—and the great designers—began making their mark after World War I.

I hope this decision by the CCCA will result in many of these rare and unique automobiles—the first great Classics—being seen not only at Grand Classics, but also at concours d'elegance and other car events in the years to come. 🐾



"The coachbuilt

automobile—

and the great

designers—

began making

their mark after

World War I.**"**



Classy Carolina

Kaiser's ideal entry-level collector car for those who seek something different



BY JIM DONNELLY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

If nothing else, this story ought to demonstrate to everybody that it's never too late to get oneself into the glorious hobby of old cars. All you've got to do is find something that really grabs you, lay down your cash and start driving. You can go with just about anything your wallet can handle.



When it comes to a high level of creature comforts, a Kaiser Carolina didn't really make the cut. This one does have an optional Hydra-Matic transmission and an AM radio. Kaiser insisted on safety as a selling point, hence the standard padded dashboard.

And in this case, for this couple, it turned out to be a beautiful, simple four-door sedan that was nearly the final spasm of an American independent that had started out with enormous promise.

We're talking about the 1953 Kaiser Carolina, conceived and built during that year only as a grasp at straws that ultimately didn't save the company, which in 1953, wasn't even called Kaiser-Frazer anymore. The auto industry was evolving at spin-top pace, with the Big Three readying to offer overhead-valve V-8 power in entry-level cars along with other conveniences. Kaiser-Frazer, meanwhile, had bled cash to the tune of a \$4.7 million loss in 1952, with the books predicting more of the same. Nevertheless, the irrepressible Henry J. Kaiser sank \$50 million into buying Willys-Overland in 1953, along with the struggling manufacturer's debt. That was enough to drive his partner, Joseph Frazer, out of the company, which moved to Willys-Overland's hometown of Toledo, Ohio, and renamed itself Kaiser Motors.

Kaiser, the man, reacted to all this by

expanding the lineup of Kaiser automobiles for 1953. The first was the Dragon, the most expensive Kaiser ever, which resulted in just 1,277 copies being built. Having covered the top end of the market, Kaiser then rolled out the Carolina, the Dragon's opposite number, intended to attract shoppers into showrooms so they could then be steered (as surreptitious company bulletins to dealers made clear) into more expensive Kaisers such as the Manhattan and, yes, the Dragon. It didn't work. Kaiser lost \$10 million in 1953, and both the Dragon and the Carolina were dumped at year's end, while the vultures began circling the remains of Kaiser's car-making operations in North America.

Records indicate that 1,812 Carolinas were built in total. Cindy and Greg Endres, who gave this Cardinal Red example a happy home, said registry numbers from the Kaiser-Frazer Owners Club International show that only 17 Carolinas are known to still survive. They know it was sold new in Missouri, then went to two subsequent owners in upstate New

York, before they acquired it and brought it down to Homestead, Florida.

"We had sort of retired—decided we were ready to stop working—so we went and bought a restaurant here," Greg explains. "And in order to promote the restaurant, we hosted a couple of car shows. My wife fell in love with the car show atmosphere: fantastic people, and she had grown up around old cars. She



"Plain" does not equate to "cheap." Premium materials are used throughout the interior.



just had to have one."

Growing up in South Carolina, Cindy Endres recalled watching her father, brothers and brother-in-law working on the old stuff. "I always loved cars, especially from the Fifties, and when I was a teenager, I could identify them all." Rather than buy her a Ford or Chevrolet, Greg decided to buy an orphan make. He bought the Carolina—it's now called *Miss Carolina*—sight unseen. As Cindy recalls, "It was a 20-footer when we got it, and the only thing we had to do was repaint it and redo some of the chrome. The hood had been chipped, and since we wanted to show the car, we decided to repaint it, but the interior and most everything else is all original. But I fell in love with the way it looked. I love the heart-shaped windshield, with that little dip at the top of it."

"When we first found it, and decided we were going to buy it, I called my father in Saratoga Springs, New York, and told him, 'I've got a car here that I bet you never heard of,'" Greg says. "When



Lack of money to develop a V-8 helped seal Kaiser's fate. The engine, and engine bay, are very much original, including the build plate and voltage regulator.

I told him what it was, he said, 'Heard of it? I used to walk past a Kaiser-Hudson dealer on my way to school every day.' When he came down to visit us last summer, he got to drive it: 87 years old, big Panama hat, one hand on the steering wheel, elbow resting on the door, with an ear-to-ear grin on his face."

So, while the Carolina may have been something of a contrivance as a price leader, don't misconstrue anything: This is not a cheap car, either in terms of quality or execution. Kaiser built distinctive automobiles that were carefully assembled, and uniformly used high-quality materials. The Carolina was the result of trying to equip a Manhattan more like a Henry J, even to the point where the Carolina used the J's plain, unadorned headlamp rings and, Greg tells us, its door handles as well. It also had a single sunvisor for the driver and a single cour-



tesy lamp inside. The interior furnishings, however, are premium quality, as a look at the vinyl-and-cloth seat covers and door panels will make clear.

Given its rapidly deteriorating financial position, Kaiser lacked the resources to develop some of its own mechanicals. Those included an in-house automatic transmission. So Henry Kaiser decided early on to lock down the installation rights to the Hydra-Matic from General Motors. It's a two-speed variant called the Dual Range, column shifted, and while real numbers are elusive, it's safe to assume that a minority of Carolinas were so optioned. It transforms the behavior of the car, so far. "It's kind of like driving an old truck where it just goes aaaaah-aaaaah when it shifts into high gear at 25 or 30 MPH," Cindy says. "It's a little clunky. It's not going to come off the line like you're in a drag race, that's for sure. On the turn-



pike, it runs good at 60 or 65. We had it up to 75 MPH one time, just to see what *Miss Carolina* could do. It's like being in a wrestling match when you're going slow, but the effort eases up once you're going faster. We have Firestone radial tires on it, and it's very comfortable to drive. The manual drum brakes perform well, as long as you have enough leg strength to push the pedal."

Miss Carolina gets to stroll along the roads of South Florida on a weekly basis: As Cindy puts it, "You can't let it sit too long. You've got to run them. We don't trailer it; we drive it everywhere we go." That's included trips up Florida's Turnpike and along the coast up to Jupiter, a journey of several hours. Greg and Cindy tend to stay away from the chaotic conditions along Interstate 95, preferring less crowded local roads, even though the Kaiser's 226-cu.in. L-head straight-six, with 118hp, is more than capable of keeping up with freeway traffic. This Kaiser probably accumulates about 1,000 miles a year. She'd been sated with unleaded regular for a long time, but Cindy said that to protect the fuel system, the Kaiser has since been getting a steady diet of ethanol-free unleaded or "sport gas," as she calls it. The engine oil is 30-weight Pennzoil, appropriate for Florida heat. To keep it show-ready, Greg and Cindy detail the car once a month, using Meguiar's products for the paint



“When we drive the *Carolina*, we both feel like rock stars, because people always wave, blow their horn and give us the thumbs-up...”

and Blue Coral Dri-Clean Plus for the interior fabrics.

Since acquiring this handsomely styled Kaiser, Cindy and Greg have also gotten a 1952 Crosley Super, underscoring their affection for American orphans. Cindy says they're on a mission to edify the motoring world about these long-departed nameplates. "I like the unique history of Kaiser-Frazer, and we like educating people about both Henry Kaiser and about this particular model when we go to car shows. We're usually the only Kaiser owners at the shows, so we tend to get a lot of attention.

"When we drive the *Carolina*, we both feel like rock stars, because people always wave, blow their horn, give us the thumbs-up," she continues. "We've been invited to concours-level shows, but our car is a driver and more suited to local events. I remember that, one time, we took a trip to Home Depot to get a bolt for the license plate. I came out of the store with several bolts and one store employee, and before you knew it, all of the employees were coming out, just to look at our Kaiser. The employees were missing in action, which, as you can imagine, caused some chaos in the store."





Family Holiday

Three generations have cared for this low-mile original 1962 Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

Although we don't typically think of them this way, the automobiles that we drive—and, as they get older, that we collect and preserve—are every bit as ephemeral as the salesroom brochures that were used to help sell them. Did the engineers who drafted a car's component blueprints, or the workers who pieced it together on the assembly line, really plan for it to remain in daily service for 50 years, 100 years, or even more? Not likely.

That's what makes a consumable item like a 1962 Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight, which retains all of its factory-applied finishes and mechanical parts, all the more extraordinary. It shows how, with care, even an item whose projected lifespan was eight years or 100,000-miles, can have true lasting value.

Lockport, New York, resident Roger Criswell purchased our feature Oldsmobile in 1962, for the use of his wife, Loraine. This flagship Ninety-Eight represented the most stylish four-door available that year, being the pillarless four-window Holiday Sport Sedan. It was also the most popular version, with 33,095 built, followed by

the traditional six-window Town Sedan, of which 12,167 were produced, and the six-window hardtop Holiday Sedan that saw just 7,653 examples roll off the assembly line. The Ninety-Eight Holiday Sport Sedan was also the third-priciest car in Oldsmobile's lineup after the Starfire convertible and Ninety-Eight convertible,



Loraine and Roger Criswell used this Olds to tow son Tom's 1930 Chevy to college.

a pushbutton AM transistor radio and the Safety Sentinel speed warning device. Indeed, the only major item it was lacking was optional air conditioning, which had a then-steep cost of \$435; its "Summer Ventilation" system, whose dashboard-mounted controls open footwell vents, was an adequate substitute.

Being this GM division's flagship model, the Ninety-Eight received some of its best mechanical equipment. The standard "Skyrocket" V-8 engine displaced 394 cubic inches through its $4\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$ -inch bore and stroke, and it was fueled through a Rochester 4GC four-barrel carburetor. Oldsmobile trumpeted its engines' ultra-high compression ratios in 1962, and the 10.25:1 of this V-8 helped it make 330hp at 4,600 RPM and 440-lb.ft. of torque at 2,800 RPM. Channeled through a column-shifted four-speed 4-S Hydra-Matic transmission, it moved the 4,465-pound sedan with surprising verve. The full-sized hardtop's "Guard-Beam" frame allowed a 126-inch wheelbase, and offered solid mounting points for the smooth-riding coil-sprung independent front and live-axle rear suspensions. Servo-boosted four-wheel drum brakes hid behind 14-inch wheels, while the recirculating ball steering offered "Roto-Matic" power assist.

The Oldsmobile wouldn't be the only new member of the Criswell family in 1962. Tim White—a grandson of Roger and Loraine and the Sport Sedan's current caretaker—had his first-ever ride, in this car, in October of that year. "My grandpa picked my mom up from the hospital after I was born. She must have sat in the back, as I always heard how they laid me across the back seat. There were no seat belts, of course.... Boy, you'd get arrested for doing that now!" he says with a laugh.

Tim grew up with this car always being around. When he and his, brothers Danny and Brian, were boys, their grandfather sat them on his lap and let them steer as they drove around a



This 330-hp, 394-cu.in. "Skyrocket" V-8 is still factory-fresh, having traveled fewer than 60,000 miles in 53 years. It got new hoses and belts as a precaution against dry rot.

and its \$4,256 base price represents about \$33,300 in 2015 dollars.

Loraine's new Oldsmobile was bordering on Cadillac-plush, striking in single-tone Sheffield Mist Metallic silver paint, with a complementary silver-gray interior upholstered in two handsome fabrics and trimmed in matching

Moroccan vinyl. The Ninety-Eight's standard features list included power windows, a power front bench seat, a folding rear-seat center armrest and a cigarette lighter—mounted in the back of the front seat—for rear passenger use. This car was also built with a rear defroster, a glovebox-mounted vacuum trunk release,



This Ninety Eight's interior remains in surprisingly good shape, and it's loaded with features like power windows, a foot-level "Summer Ventilation," an AM transistor radio and an electric clock; the dealer-installed floor mats and vanity mirror are also still intact.

parking lot. The Ninety-Eight was even called into tow-truck duty in May of 1967, when Roger and Loraine used it to flat-tow the 1930 Chevrolet coupe belonging to their son Tom, from their home near Buffalo to the University of Massachusetts campus, where the undergrad planned to drive it around. "My grandmother didn't drive the car much," Tim says. "She died in 1969, when I was seven. My grandfather would drive it after that, although it was always a 'second' car. I remember him bringing it to family functions in the summertime."

Our feature Driveable Dream led a quiet, sheltered life. It's never been involved in an accident, and while it had one small patch of rust by a rear wheel repaired in the 1970s, Roger kept corrosion at bay in a novel fashion. "My grandfather had a bucket of old motor oil and a paintbrush, and he would hit any rust that he spotted with an oil bath. The oil attracted dirt, but didn't let air get to it, so there was no more rust. If you crawled under the car, you would find it hard not to get that combination of oil and oil dirt on you," Tim says. The mileage

accumulated slowly, as a service sticker in the doorjamb indicates the car had been driven 46,155 miles in June 1983.

When Roger himself passed away, Tom inherited the Oldsmobile. "He still had his Chevrolet, and didn't really want it," Tim recalls. "He gave it to my brother Brian, and I ended up getting it in 2000. Through the years, I don't think it was ever taken off the road. I've always kept it registered and inspected, even if I only put 50 miles on it in a year." This car averages about 100 miles annually, he notes, and is typically exercised on pleasure drives. "The farthest I've driven it was to my cousin's wedding in Rochester, about 90 miles one way. And it was used in my little brother's wedding—I pull it out for special occasions like that."

This car, whose odometer still reads less than 60,000 miles from new, hasn't asked much of its caretaker in the past 15 years, aside from normal maintenance and replacement rubber in the form of new belts, hoses and tires. "I haven't had any trouble getting parts for it," Tim says. "If the mechanic needs a part like a new hose, I'll hunt it down and bring it to him, and he's happy I take care of that."

The sympathetic ownership and care that his Holiday hardtop has enjoyed is evident in its current condition. It's true that the "Magic-Mirror" acrylic lacquer paint no longer has a mirror-like gleam, especially on the car's vast horizontal surfaces, but the exterior brightwork is remarkably preserved, especially considering the car's half-century life in New York's snow belt. Grease pencil assembly marks are still visible under the hood, and a vintage bias-ply spare tire still sits in the fully-lined trunk. The unusual headliner fabric has been the interior's greatest failing, its velour-like material seemingly irreplaceable, but the luxurious cloth upholstery is fully intact, with only minor staining on the driver's door panel and faded loop carpeting giving away their age.

Tim's favorite part of getting behind the wheel of his family heirloom is its



The Holiday Sport Sedan's headliner has fared worse than the interior's other fabrics, and that velour material seems irreplaceable; its owner reports no luck in finding it in NOS or reproduction forms. The Sheffield Mist paint no longer gleams, but it's intact and presentable.





Seat upholstery is two fabrics and Moroccan vinyl, and all have proven durable. The front bench seat has power controls, and the rear has an armrest and cigarette lighter.

ride—"It floats!" he says. "I haven't replaced any of the suspension pieces, only had radial tires installed. The ride is so smooth... the car is so long and so wide that it has a big-boat feeling." Hemmings senior editor Matthew Litwin concurs with this evaluation, as he had the opportunity to climb behind the wheel after taking the photos on these pages.

"This car is one year newer than our all-original 1961 Buick Invicta, and I found it easy to jump from one to the other with amazing comfort," Matt says. "The Oldsmobile's bench seat offered tremendous support, with little need to adjust its position for driver comfort, in spite of the height difference between myself and the owner. With all that glass and narrow pillars at each corner, you'd be hard-pressed to miss anything around you. The thin steering wheel offers a great line of sight to the big gauges."

"The engine fired easily and was soft to the ears, and the power steering and brakes were a snap, especially the steering—I even experimented with two-finger turning when the opportunity arose," Matt states. "The suspension was understandably on the soft side, enabling the car to float over the road, but also lending to some body roll in the medium to tighter corners and perhaps a hint of oversteer if pushed too hard, not something I was willing to try with this car, but have experienced in the Buick. The throttle input was instant, but with this car's weight, it wasn't neck-snapping—it took a bit to get the V-8 up to full song. That was probably an illusion, though, as you reach highway cruising speeds quickly, and contemporary road tests of a 1961 Ninety-Eight saw 0-60 in 10.5 seconds."

This car has already been recognized

“ I haven't replaced any of the suspension pieces, only had radial tires installed. The ride is so smooth... the car is so long and so wide that it has a big-boat feeling. ”



for its time-warp condition, having earned a Historical Preservation Original Features award from the AACA in 2014. While two generations of family members have cared for Roger and Loraine's Ninety-Eight Oldsmobile after them, its cosmetics are now maintained with Zymöl and Meguiar's products, and Tim considers himself a steward for this family car's next generation. "Overall, I'd say it's in pretty darned good shape for being as old as it is," he says with a grin. "It's probably in better shape than I am, and we're the same age." 🏆





COURTESY BARRETT-JACKSON

This 1919 Pierce-Arrow model 66 was built for silent movie star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle.

Cars In Disguise

Different with a capital "D." Meeting customers' specific design requests can take a strange turn

BY WALT GOSDEN • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE WALT GOSDEN COLLECTION UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

It was once said that there was no mistaking a Pierce-Arrow, and that you didn't have to ask the man who owned one what kind of car he was driving. From about 1920 onwards, the styling of the offerings from the various automotive manufacturers became pretty distinctive to their makes. In particular, radiator shells, front fenders and headlamps contained styling cues that let you immediately identify a brand of car, even if it was a fair distance away. A Ford Model T, for example, wouldn't be mistaken for an Essex. Likewise, the design of the radiator

shell for a Cadillac remained very much the same—and recognizably Cadillac—for six or seven years during the 1920s.

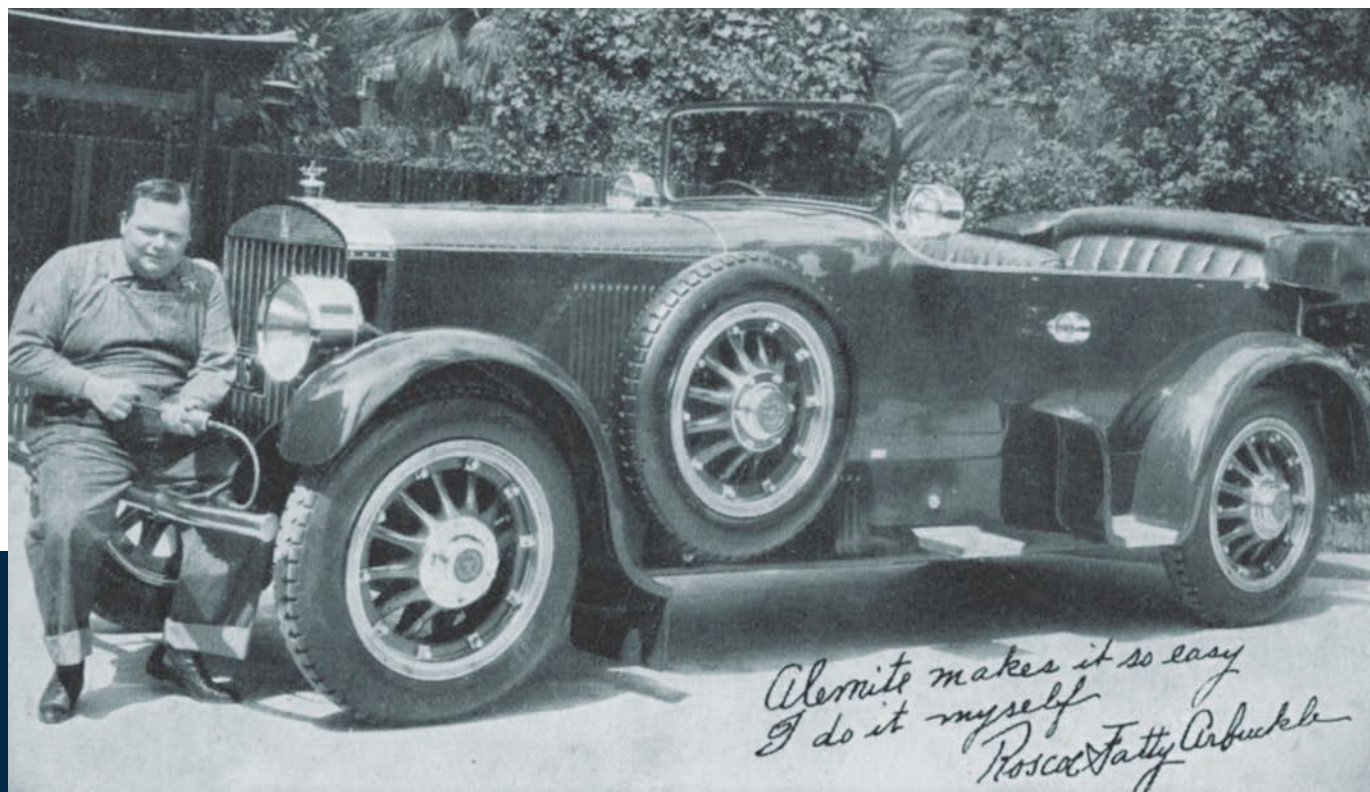
That "instant recognition" factor was a very important part of each manufacturer's strategy for promoting its automobiles to the public. Walter P. Chrysler didn't want his cars to look like Hupmobiles or Chevrolets, and those companies didn't want their cars to look like his, either! This is a different approach from that of today, where it seems one jellybean-shaped car looks so much like another that you can't distinguish what make either of them is.

Despite the vast diversity of styling of automobiles in the 1920s, at all price levels, certain owners wanted their cars to be even more distinctive. It wasn't enough to just add accessory lamps, wheels or a mascot to personalize them. For these owners, it even went beyond the ordering of a custom body. Some desired such a totally different-looking car that they went to the extent of eliminating the brand name from the center of the hubcaps. This small group of car owners wanted their machines to be "one ofs." Different with a capital "D."



In 1918, the Holbrook Company built this body on a Packard chassis; they also designed and built a new radiator shell and hood at the request of their customer.

Fatty Arbuckle was a major movie star in 1919 when he commissioned the Don Lee Body Company to design and build this Pierce-Arrow (below). It was spectacular in all respects; Arbuckle did promotional work with it during the era.



To many at the time, the classic shape of the Rolls-Royce radiator shell held a lot of appeal, as it instantly conveyed the message of wealth and luxury. But, prestige, appearance and cost aside, the fact of the matter is that, in the USA, it was a lot easier and more economical to service the mechanical needs of a car of American manufacture than it was a Rolls-Royce.

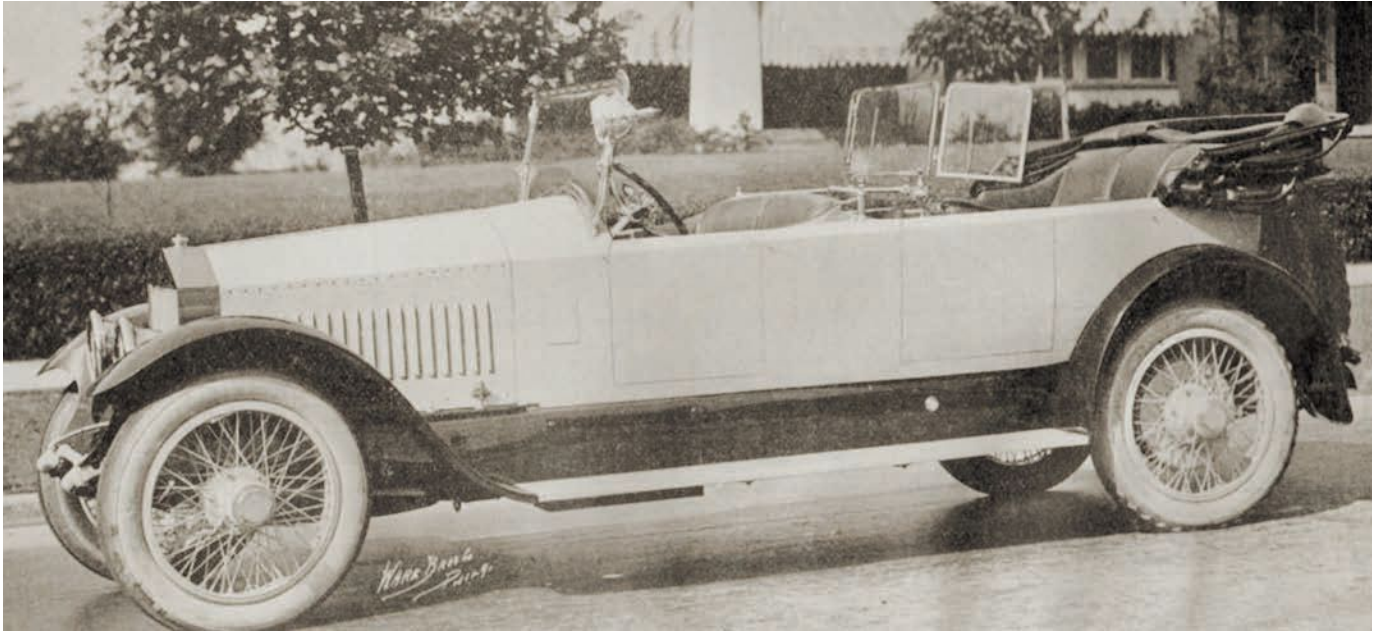
With this thought in mind, customers would occasionally request body builders to transform their domestically made chassis—everything from Fords to

Pierce-Arrows—to look like the motor cars made in Derby, England, and later Springfield, Massachusetts.

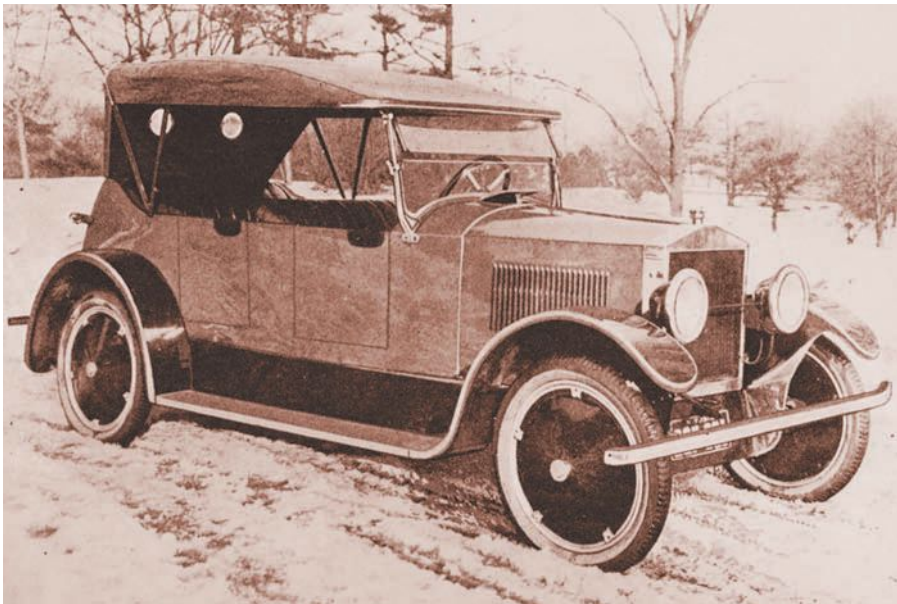
As the illustrations and photographs here attest, some surprising automobiles were made to look nothing like their factory-styled counterparts then on display in car showrooms. Some changes were mild, while a few more were pretty radical, and from what I have been able to learn in my research, the build quality of many of these was fairly good. But then, one would expect a high degree of craftsmanship in cars fabricated by such

respected firms as Derham, Fleetwood, Brewster and Don Lee. For instance, the DeLuxe line of bodies for Ford Model Ts manufactured by Detroit Auto Body Products Company and the Universal Body Corporation of New York City offered buyers revamped styling and high quality at a relatively low cost.

If you wanted your Model T to wear something other than the suit of body panels it would have been given at the factory, these companies specializing in creating new looks for these cars advertised that “all you supply is a Ford

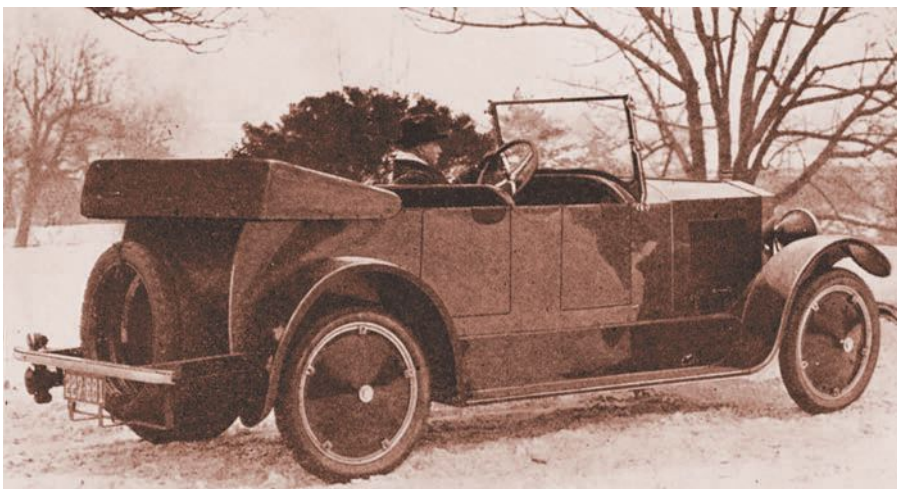


The Rubay Company of Cleveland, Ohio, called this its "Botha" model. Body and wheels were painted cream, while the fenders and frame were painted green. Top and interior were of green leather, as were side curtains. The chassis is a Cadillac with a 145-inch wheelbase.

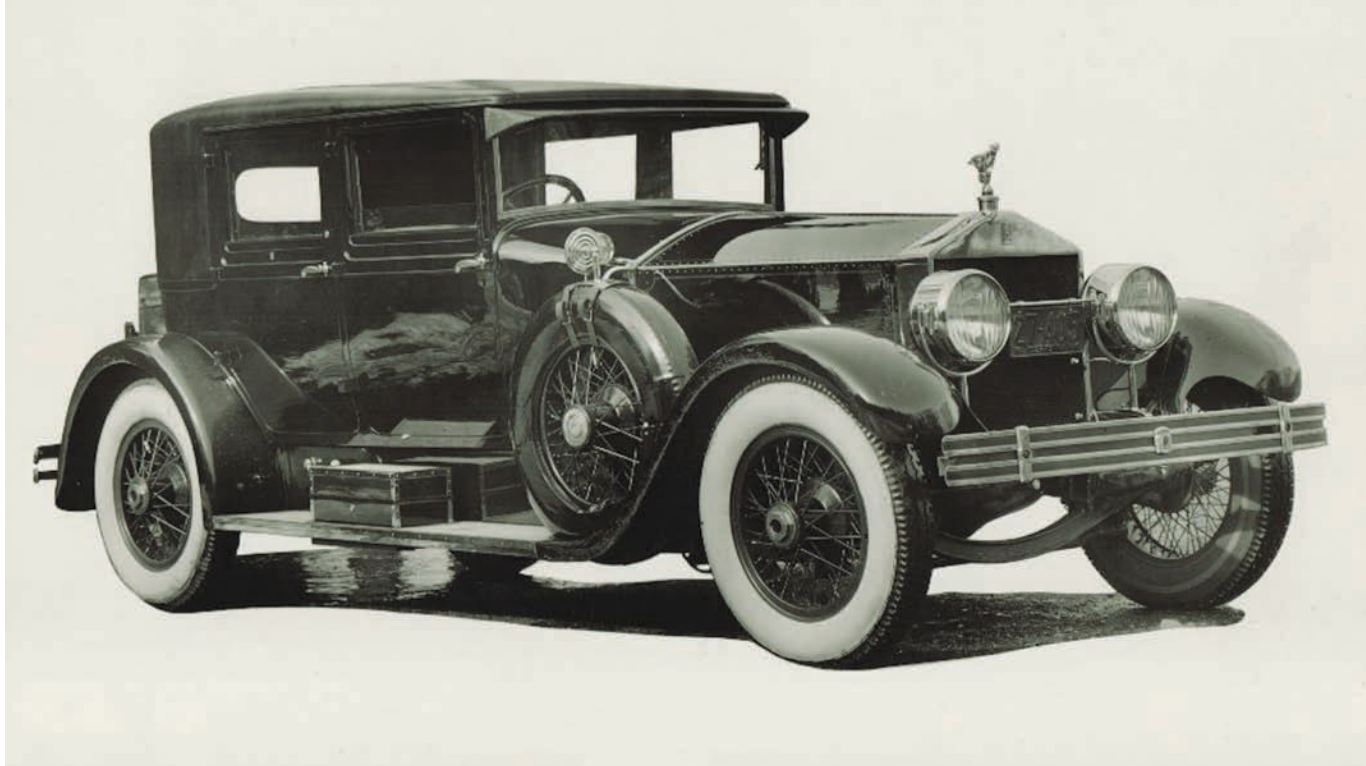


chassis." The cost of a new Ford chassis in the spring of 1920 was \$620. The DeLuxe body brochure explains: "Up to this year, more than a million people had bought Ford cars for the amazing efficiency of the Ford mechanism. A million more would have bought Fords had the body lines met with their entire approval." The DeLuxe's kit consisted of a body, fenders, top, seat, etc. An owner could buy this kit and then swap the components onto his car himself. Prices were \$260 for the touring car and \$197.50 for the roadster F.O.B. Detroit. On the other hand, Universal Body, out of New York City, did the work of transforming the Fords themselves. At a cost of \$500, the modifications included extending the wheelbase to 120 inches.

The Charles Schutte Body Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in its promotional material, claims that it had "A forecast of Future Fashions" for distinctive and original designs for motor car bodies. It built only "open type bodies in exclusive styles" and offered speedsters, roadsters and touring cars. The brochure made it a point to advise customers that the company was "in a position to go a little bit further and, if desired, supply a radiator of special design, a new hood, fenders and running boards."



Featuring a lot of flat panels, Universal Body's offering for Ford in 1920 (left and above left) was not complicated. Factory-issue wood wheels were covered by metal discs. Wheelbase was extended to 120 inches. Standard color was medium gray, with maroon, blue or green costing extra.



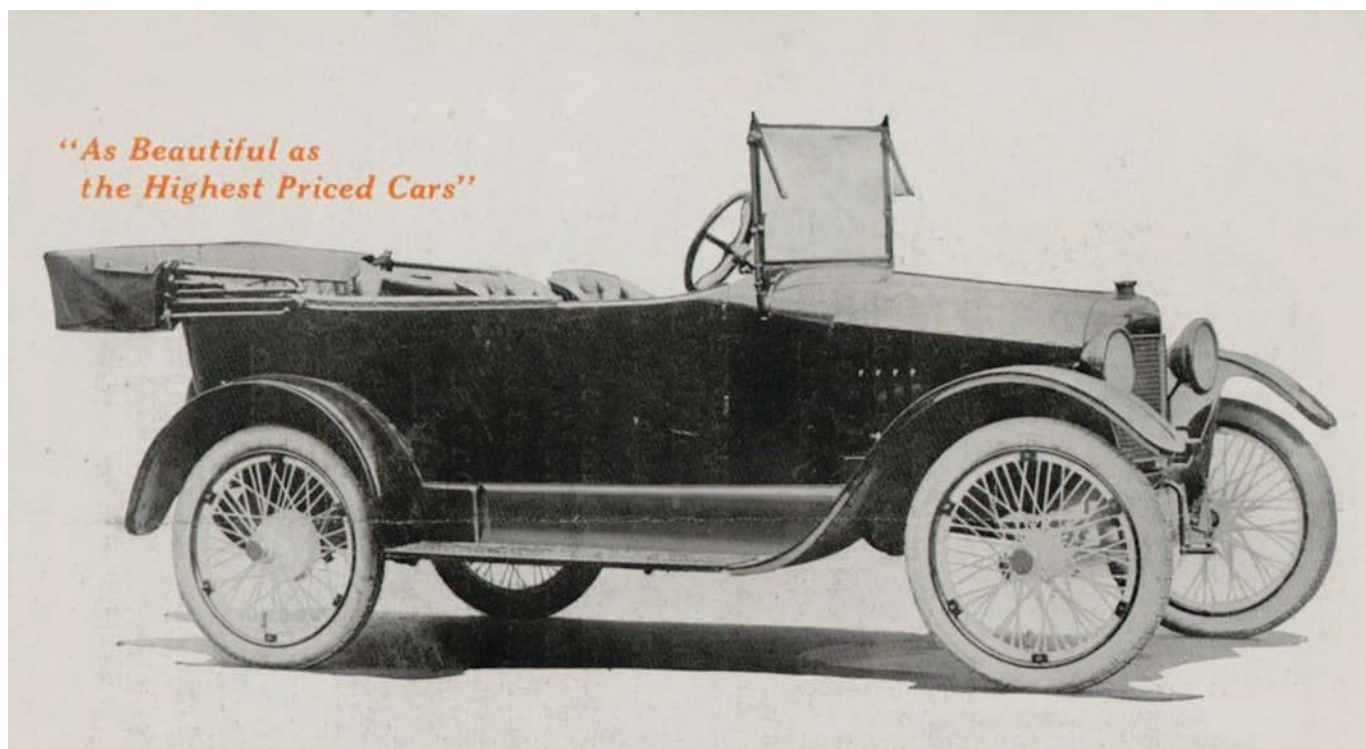
This sport sedan was built by the Derham Body Company of Rosemont, Pennsylvania, in 1926 on a Pierce-Arrow chassis. Looking very much like a Rolls-Royce, the radiator shell featured the owner's monogram as did the rear doors.

Schutte promoted its disc wheel enclosures, as well as the fact that it could shorten or lengthen chassis and provide special gear ratios, lamps, cutouts, etc. All that owners needed to do was to have their choice of chassis delivered to the plant in Pennsylvania, and construction could begin. The Schutte client list was vast, and completed cars were shipped to

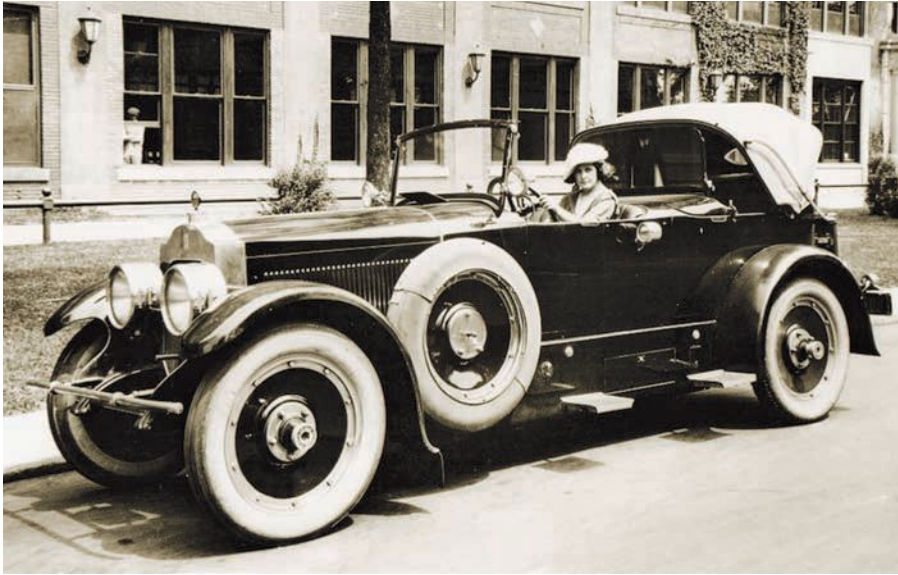
Idaho, Montana and Wyoming as well as Mexico, Cuba, Spain and Portugal. Most of its customers, though, were in New York and Pennsylvania, as would be expected. Schutte designed and built some really fine-looking automobiles.

Not too far north from where Schutte had his body company in Lancaster was the Fleetwood Body Company, located

in a town of the same name. Where Schutte promoted the alteration of radiator shells and modifying bodies for a new appearance, Fleetwood focused mainly on custom coachwork. Fleetwood was much better known as a body builder, and New York City was not too far east, so Fleetwood received a lot of orders from the auto dealers there, including



The DeLuxe body for the Ford Model T had compound curves at the cowl, rear body and hood. Front seats swiveled, slid forward and back, and could even be removed for "sleeping room on tours." Colors for touring cars were Cadillac green or Beaver brown. Wire wheels cost \$37.50.



Not a total disguise, as the radiator shell gives a slight hint to the chassis beneath this sporty dual-cowl phaeton with a Victoria top—it's a Packard. The shell is deeper, but still reflects the cathedral style of the standard Packard.

those who imported chassis from Europe and represented those makes in the USA. Fleetwood did build cars for owners who did not want the stock front-end styling offered by a particular auto manufacturer. There is no evidence that it encouraged this total transformation, but it did not refuse to accommodate a customer's desires, either.

The Don Lee Coach and Body Works of Los Angeles, California, noted in 1920 that, "For those who have been accustomed to the distinctive carriage of former days, there is now the individually-built custom motor coach." Cadillac chassis were a favorite of Don Lee's to have its "artisans build a coach of exclusiveness." The company made it clear, though, that its customer's choice was not confined to any particular make of motorcar. Although Don Lee created some pretty radical looking cars for the era, which included new fenders as well



This 1918 Cadillac by Fleetwood was ordered by a customer in Maryland. It has dual spare tires and is one solid color, except for the wheels. Nickel plating is limited to the hubcaps, headlamp and mirror bezels and motometer.



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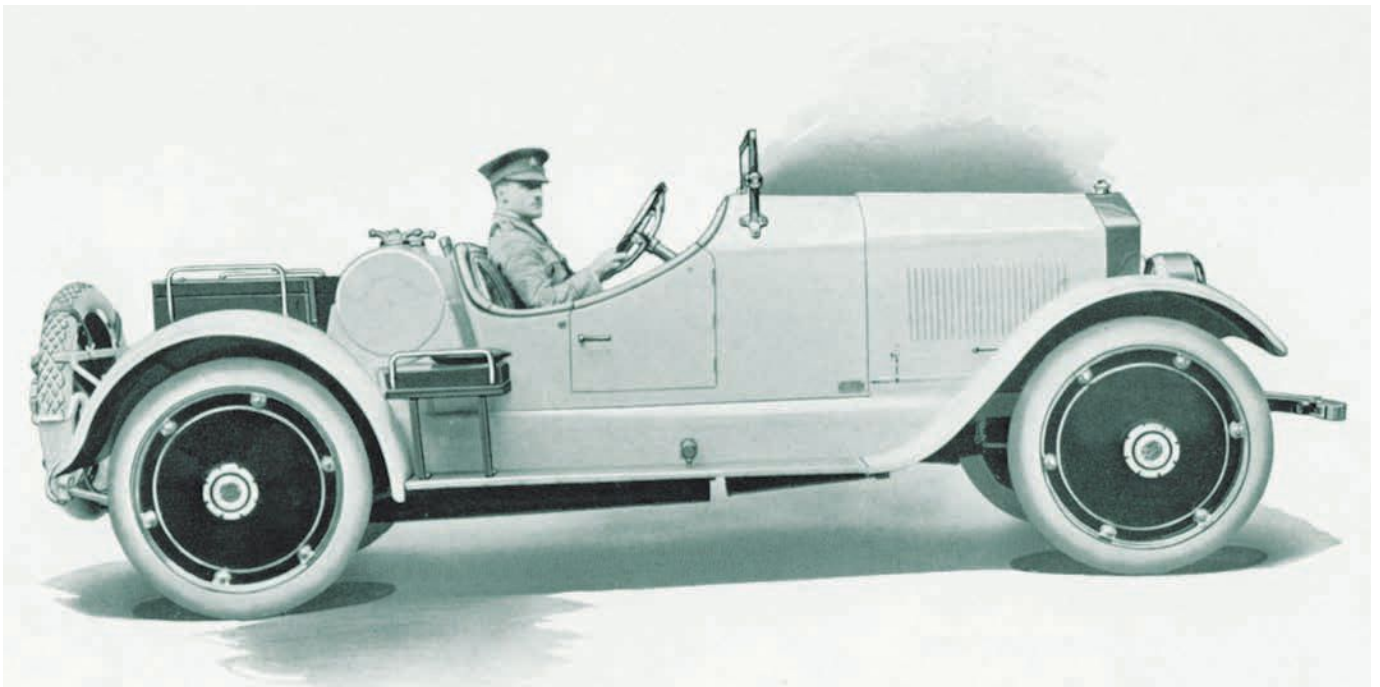
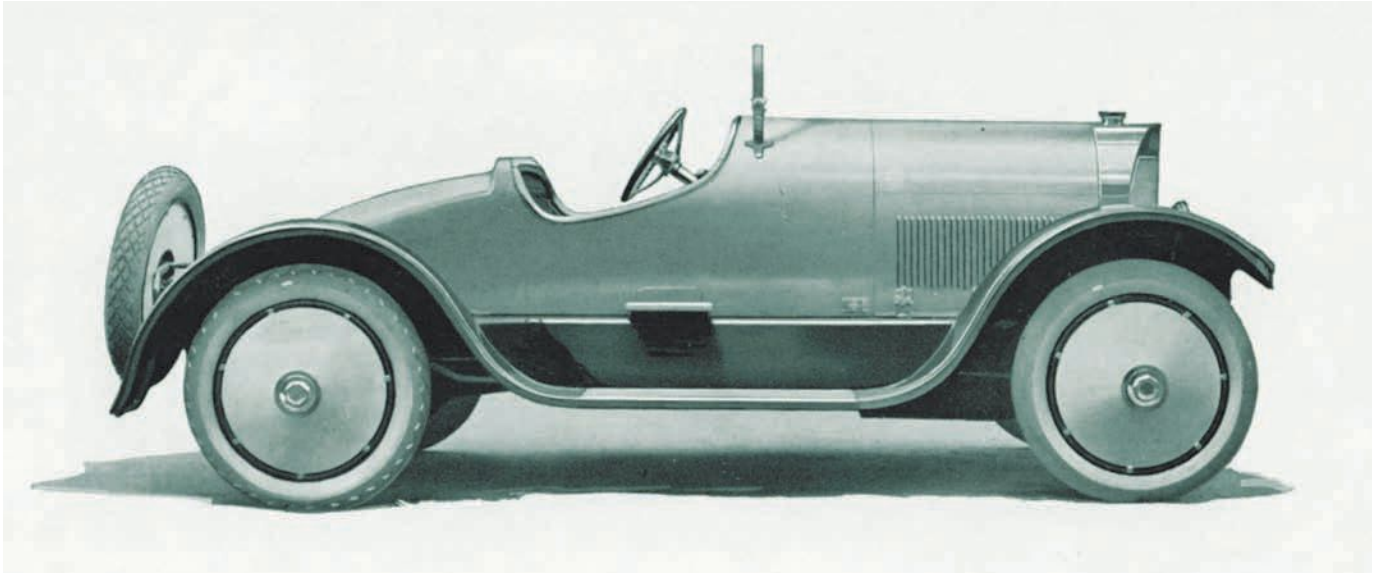
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The 1919 Cadillac Eight (top) has wire wheels covered over with "Schutte discs." Its turtle-deck body was also made by the Schutte Body Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Note the special styling of the radiator and hood. The Charles Schutte Body Company specialized in open-body styles; this Military sport model (above) used an Oldsmobile Eight chassis and again features "Schutte discs" over wood wheels.

as custom bodies, the factory-styled and equipped radiator and shell were usually left unmodified; however, there were always exceptions. Among the customers who had their cars completely redesigned and built so that they did not resemble the stock factory models were Henry Lehrman, whose Packard was made to look like a Rolls-Royce, and silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, who had a very special Pierce-Arrow touring car built. The Arbuckle Pierce-Arrow exists to this day, though it has been restored with gobs of plated parts and a very bold color choice.

This masquerade of motor cars continued on into the 1930s, but on a much smaller scale. At least three Duesenberg Model J cars, for instance, were designed and built to reflect the style their owners wanted. A bulbous looking three-window coupe (car no. J554) was built in 1934 by body builder A.J. Walker, and the Swiss coachbuilder Graber designed and built a swoopy convertible coupe. Rollston of New York built a town car for customer Rudolf Bauer (car no. J397), which was completed in 1940. All three cars survive.

One make that also fits the description of a car in disguise is the Brewster

cars of 1934-'35. The majority of the cars constructed used a Ford V-8 chassis; they were distinctive in appearance because of their sharply heart-shaped radiator shell, blade-like bumpers and bird-wing front fender styling.

The individuality expressed by the cars that had one-of-a-kind styling from bumper to bumper cannot be denied, but the cost to make that statement was high and never became a full-fledged trend. The effort lasted perhaps 15 to 18 years before it disappeared, and the general public was no longer viewing cars in disguise. ☞



✓Yes



✓Yes



xNo



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes

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Tom White

Giving up a noteworthy engineering career to repair cars was a leap of faith that ultimately led to Whitehall Auto Restorations

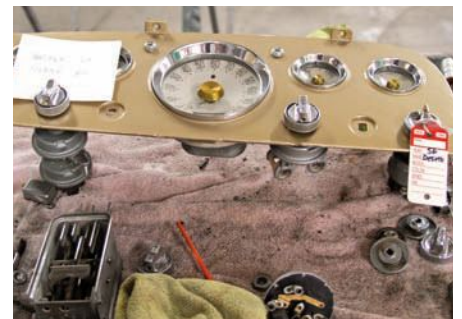


WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

Geographically, Hopkinton, Massachusetts, could be considered a suburb of greater Boston. A quaint New England town, it's situated less than 30 miles from the state capital to the east; enough distance for an easier commute to work but also to leave the big city vibe in the distance. Like Beantown, Hopkinton is steeped with history. Waters that flow into the Whitehall Reservoir were believed to have healing powers, which spurred the development of a mineral spring resort that drew in vacationers via stagecoach from far and wide. Although the resorts closed, since 1924 Hopkinton has been the official starting point for the Boston Marathon. And for collector car enthusiasts who want to have their cherished rides restored to an exceptionally high standard, they have turned to Hopkinton's Tom White, founder of Whitehall Auto Restorations.

Tom's passion for automobiles started early. Born and raised in nearby Wayland, Tom had purchased and sold three used cars before he had even earned his driver's license, and by the time he had graduated from high school a year later he had shuffled through another three vehicles. "I always played with cars. I performed my first valve job at age 13 on a 1949 Lincoln. The first car I registered—on the same day I got my license—was a '39 Oldsmobile. I kept fixing and flipping them, working my way up to something a little better each time. When I graduated, I was driving a '49 Chrysler New Yorker, though I really yearned for a Town & Country," remembered Tom.

With so much automotive tinkering already on his young résumé, it would seem obvious that Tom would move into a four-wheeled career path; however, he found himself immersed in the engineering field beginning in 1957. "I



Restoration of the 1956 De Soto Fireflite's instrument panel is well under way.



One of the smaller jobs Tom still enjoys doing is rebuilding early Chrysler alternators.

had the ability to read schematics very easily. One of the best jobs I had during that time was when I worked on the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle. Back in 1963, the *USS Thresher* went down, and we had no way to get to it, so the



*“In 1961, I spotted a car that got wrecked,
and I said to myself ‘I could probably fix that.’”*



The heart and soul of the Whitehall Auto Restorations team: from left to right are Larry White, Tim Foster, Ken Wilcox and Tom White Jr.

government had a big push to develop a submariner rescue vehicle. I was working at Raytheon, and they loaned me to MIT for two years to help them develop the first rescue vehicle. Over the years, I ended up working on several programs, including the Apollo moon mission and Hawk missile system," said Tom humbly.

Yet as Tom embarked on his engineering career path, the idea of tinkering with automobiles never wandered far from his mind. According to Tom, "In 1961, I spotted a car that got wrecked and I said to myself, 'I could probably fix that.' Well I didn't have a tool; I didn't have a place; nothing—having just married. But on a whim, I went out and tracked down where and how that car would be disposed of by the insurance company, and ended up buying and fixing it—a brand-new Cadillac convertible that had rolled over. It was something to do. I knew that it would take me just as long to put a fender on a Cadillac as it would a Chevy, and the Cadillac was worth more. That one car turned into an extremely good relationship with another gentleman who had one of the larger salvage operations in New England; we worked very well together for many years."



Waiting patiently for rebuilding is a Chrysler Hemi V-8 from a Dual-Ghia.

In 1966 Tom relocated to his current Hopkinton address, and the relationship established with insurance companies on a national level landed Tom a number of exotic European and domestic luxury makes, from Rolls-Royces to Ferraris, Austin-Healeys to Jaguars. Cadillacs and Lincolns were the tip of the proverbial domestic iceberg as well. "I was the 'nut' that was buying those exotic cars, and it turned out that I ended up leaving engineering in 1970 and started playing with cars full time. At the same time, my sons—Tom Jr. (Tommy), Chris and

Larry—were just getting old enough that they got involved at a very young age, because there was always something here. So Whitehall started back in 1972 as a Massachusetts dealership licensed by both the state and the town. Whitehall Auto Sales was issued license number one for the town, which I still have today.

"During the Seventies I primarily focused on the Lincolns: Mark III, Mark IV and Mark V. I would have five or six at a time in stock, all with less than 5,000 miles on them—or considerably less—with all the work warranted by us. We were very successful for a long time; business really picked up in the early Nineties. In fact, at one time most of my neighbors, the police chief and the town officials owned Whitehall cars. What's interesting is that never once have I run an ad—anywhere. The same remains true today. All of our business was, and is, by word of mouth," said Tom.

In spite of a booming business, regulations tied to cars released by insurance companies changed, as did customer attitudes towards cars carrying a "salvaged" title. It was a pivotal time for Whitehall; however, the tight-knit staff had an epiphany that stemmed from a key acquisition in 1976.

According to Tom, "That summer, my friend said he knew of a garage full of two-seat (1955-'57) Ford Thunderbirds, and he asked if I thought we could sell them. Without hesitation, we went over and ended up buying five of them, one of which, a '56, I kept. It was the first vintage car Whitehall restored, and I hate to say this, but we did a body-off restoration in just two weeks. To do that, I shut the shop down from repairing new cars. When it was done, we took it to the Bennington Car Show and it won a trophy; then we started to get invited to other shows throughout the region. Our work was getting recognized more and more, and when some guys learned a car we restored from my collection was not for sale, they would bring me a car they purchased.

"Tommy would do one car a year for us until, as I said, the regulations



Hanging in the metal shop/paint booth is the dash from a De Soto ready for paint; Tom Jr. is preparing other small parts for paint.





Nearing completion is this one-of-none 1948 Town & Country Roadster for a customer, modified from a regular production model.

changed. Coincidentally, the guys in the shop decided they would just assume work on restoring the old cars rather than continuing to repair the new ones. So that's when we made the conversion to full automotive restoration. That Thunderbird got us involved with old cars again, and it blossomed from an initial hobby of doing these cars for myself into what Whitehall is today," said Tom.

In spite of the recognition Tom has received in the ensuing years, he's quick to point out that there's far more to Whitehall than Tom White. The business can be summed up as a small family of employees who work exceptionally well together, each bringing with them a lifetime of automotive knowledge. "Some will call us the clubhouse," laughed Tom, "but I trust the guys; they know the quality of work we built our reputation on and they take great pride in the final result. It's really their work that deserves recognition today."

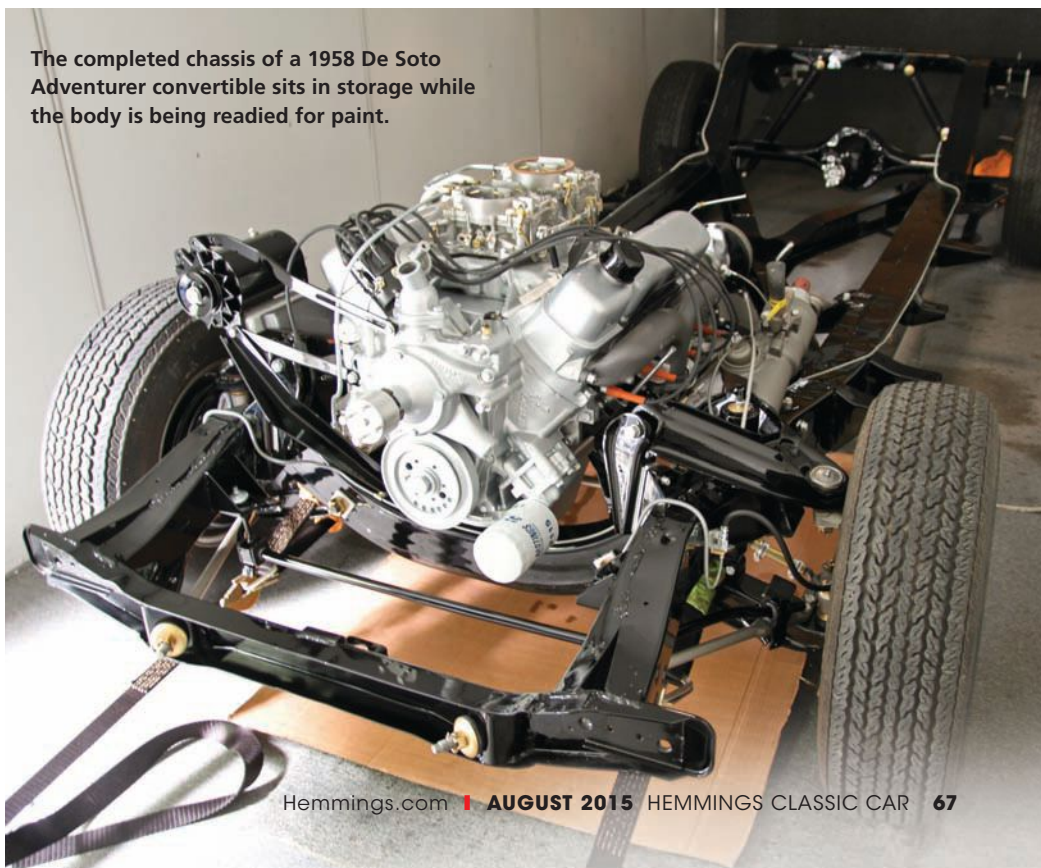
While son Chris has since opened his own facility that specializes in Chevrolet Chevelles and Camaros in nearby Upton, both Tom Jr. and Larry remain intricate members of Whitehall. Working closely with them are Ken Wilcox, who also left an engineering job of 22 years for the love of the collector car hobby, and Larry's childhood friend Tim Foster, who joined Whitehall roughly seven years ago after running his own restoration shop. Upholstery work is managed by Rocco Mastercola, a former bicycle racer who has been employed by Tom for decades.

"Whitehall will restore any make, although in recent years we've been

known for our work with the postwar Mopar brands. It's only a small family business, so we try to limit the number of cars we have in the shop in progress; we try to keep it at three, but we've had up to five in here. Nothing leaves without it being perfect, and so we average about two completed projects per year. With the exception of machine work and chrome plating, most everything is done on the premises; it allows us to manage quality control much easier because, if something isn't quite right, we can fix it right away instead of sending it out and waiting. That

includes cars that come back to us for maintenance service," said Tom.

Now, at age 75, Tom is taking a step back from the business he founded. "I will still be a part of Whitehall no matter what, but I now focus on the things I like to do, like rebuilding carburetors, radios and such. It's hard to let go of it, I suppose, but I'm blessed in that I know that it's in very capable hands. Whitehall has been an extremely good business for me, but I am eager to get back into other aspects of the hobby, and that's tours and just having fun with the cars." 🐾



The completed chassis of a 1958 De Soto Adventurer convertible sits in storage while the body is being readied for paint.

From Sawdust and Iron

A husband and wife team turn a 1928 Graham cemetery work truck into a masterpiece



BY TERRY SHEA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY
OF BARB AND ED JOYCE





Having an overhead crane in their garage in Pennsylvania, where the restoration began (they later moved to a smaller space in Florida), the Joyces were able to remove the body from the frame without too much heavy lifting on their part.



Having likely been stored inside for decades, the Graham's steel frame was relatively free of rust. Here, Barb continues the job of smoothing the surface before any final coats of protective paint are applied to the frame.



Restoring a wood-framed vehicle requires an entirely different set of tools than when working solely in steel or other metals. From the table saw shown here to the jointer to the shaper, having the right tools makes the job far easier to complete.



In disassembling the vehicle, the couple carefully documented and marked every part that came off the car. The wood spokes were in good enough shape to be refinished, but were marked in sequence for proper reassembly.

We often write in these pages about how it's the cars that attract fans to this hobby, but it's the people they meet that keep them coming back. Vintage cars have an incredibly disarming way of bringing people together.

Ed Joyce has been playing with old cars since his days in high school. His wife, Barb, watched him restore several cars over the years, probably considering putting his face on a milk carton for the countless hours and days he spent in the garage working on his machines.

A little over a dozen years ago, a unique opportunity came along that Ed didn't want to pass up. At the time, Ed was the owner of a 1936 Dodge dump truck that he restored personally. He met

John Biery Jr. and James Biery, owners of a complete, but non-running 1928 Graham Brothers Canopy Express truck, who had a special request.

Originally purchased by their grandfather as a maintenance vehicle for the Ridgelawn Cemetery in Mount Troy, Pennsylvania, the Graham held a special place in their hearts, as their father, John Biery Sr., had attempted to restore it in the Seventies. While their father's effort literally left the Graham in pieces, the younger Bierys had resisted many advances by enthusiasts who wanted to turn the charming little truck into a street rod. A chance encounter with Ed, then living near Pittsburgh, and out with his '36 Dodge, led to a conversation. That talk led to a visit to see the Graham and an offer

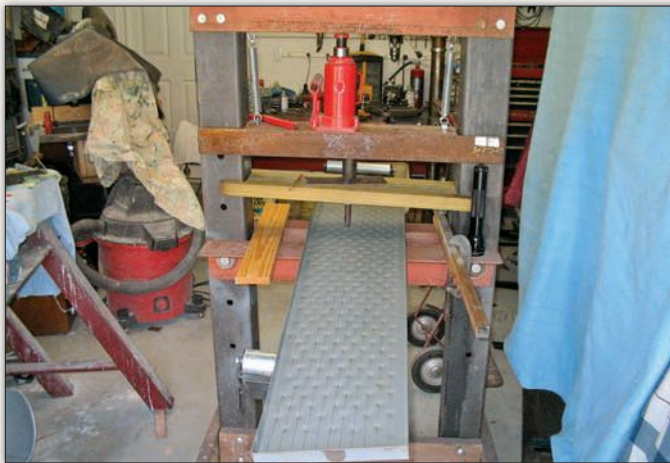




Shown here next to the original piece that came out of the car, the floor recreated by Ed was made from solid red oak. For the wooden pieces, Ed measured carefully and machined and worked each piece until the fit was perfect.



Graham Brothers trucks have largely been lost to history, so with so few spares available, beyond the Dodge running gear, the Joyces went so far as to mold rubber pieces in their home shop by creating molds from wood.



One of the few areas where sheetmetal had to be refabricated was the running boards. With the indentations literally worn out from decades of use, the Joyces used a shop press and a wooden jig to replicate the dimpled look of the steel.



Though Barb and Ed put a considerable amount of their own time, effort and elbow grease into the Graham's extensive restoration, they had a professional handle the upholstery for the seats and covered top.



from the brothers to sell it—an offer that included the caveat that they wanted to see the truck restored to original.

Now, Ed was intrigued by the idea, but smart enough to know that he needed Barb to sign on first. "When my husband came home and told me about the truck," recalls Barb, "I said, 'No, we're not going to restore any more vehicles. That's enough. No more putting any money into that.' And he described it to me and said, 'Come on, let's go look at it.' I went with him and said, 'Under one condition, we'll buy this: It's going to be my truck because it's a smaller truck. You can't restore another vehicle, but that doesn't mean I can't restore one.' The truck's really my truck, in my name, but I share the glory with him."

More than just having offered her approval for another project, Barb was as involved as Ed in the restoration. "We were both working full-time," says Barb, "and our kids were in college at that time. We lived in Murrysville, Pennsylvania, which is east of Pittsburgh. What was really neat is that we came home from work and we went down to our workshop and we just worked on it. It was a husband-and-wife project, and it's something we did every evening and weekend."

With the team in place, getting started on the Graham meant doing plenty of research to start and also getting an inventory of available parts and components that they had in possession to begin with. For Ed, who was familiar



The top frame is shown here being test-fitted into place before final assembly. Note the extensive use of wood throughout the body and frame. From the door jambs back, wood is used extensively throughout this Graham truck.



Here Ed is shown attaching the many long runners that complete the wooden roof structure. Given the repetitive nature of the task and the size of the boards—long and narrow—Ed had a local mill fabricate the individual pieces to his specifications.



With the body and paint complete, here is an image that shows, again, how extensively wood is used throughout the truck, the main roof extending from the windshield all the way back through the canopied section.



Before the top vinyl layer was installed, a proper fabric sheet was attached to the large wood roof structure by the upholsterer as part of the process.

with Dodge trucks of the era, the Graham Brothers vehicle was not entirely foreign to him.

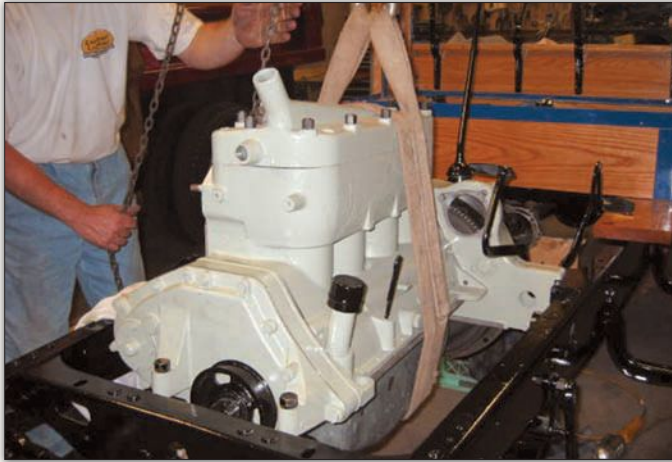
Just as the Dodge brothers, Horace and John, prospered in the automotive business through their mechanical skills and keen business acumen, so, too, did the Graham brothers, Joe, Bob and Ray. Though they came from a wealthy family with significant agricultural land holdings in Evansville, Indiana, the brothers were largely self-made. At the turn of the 20th century, Joe, the eldest, built his first car while still a teenager.

After completing college, Joe convinced his father to invest in a struggling glass company close to Evansville that Joe and his brothers soon turned into the largest independent glass bottle plant in

the world. Selling off that company, and flush with success, the brothers entered the automotive business in 1919 by making truck chassis and bodies that could be used with a variety of powerplants. The Grahams gravitated toward the reliable Dodge Brothers engines and transmission, and soon made a deal for Dodge to supply the drivetrains. It didn't take long for Dodge to buy into the operation, eventually acquiring Graham Brothers outright by 1926.

When Dodge debuted its improved Fast Four 212-cu.in. L-head engine for 1927, the engine soon found its way into the trucks bearing the Graham Brothers label. Having that reputable powerplant, along with an equally reliable three-speed transmission and a rugged chassis, Gra-





Once again, the overhead crane in the shop came in handy when reinstalling the Dodge Fast Four flathead engine. Simple, but effective, the Fast Four was used in a variety of Dodge Brothers and Graham Brothers vehicles.



This closeup of the door jamb shows in detail the techniques used by Graham Brothers and now Barb and Ed: sheetmetal formed to fit over a hardwood frame and attached via small nails.



Working from a corroded and rusted chassis tag, Ed and Barb Joyce had new, blank tags exactly recreated, making sure to match fonts, color and spacing as best as possible, in order to complete the restoration as thoroughly and correctly as they could.



ham Brothers trucks were among the top sellers in the market for 1927 and 1928. Graham's broad catalog of trucks and buses for different uses certainly appealed to buyers, who included delivery companies, farmers, construction workers and even cemetery groundskeepers.

In most cases, the bodies were manufactured at Graham's plant in Evansville, with final assembly in Detroit, but they also operated a factory in Stockton, California, for West Coast distribution. But those bodies in 1928 came at a time when the process of making car bodies was in transition. While all-steel bodies were rapidly becoming the norm, Graham still used the steel-over-wood-frame technique that had served the industry well since the

transition from all-wood bodies that had carried over from carriage-building days.

Fortunately for Ed and Barb, Ed's experience in construction and carpentry served them well. Before the restoration could begin, but after they had hauled three truckloads of parts and spares home with the Graham, the couple began piecing together what they had in the garage, primarily to get an idea what it would look like complete and also to begin assessing what they might need. "We sort of quickly assembled it a little bit to get a picture of what we'd bought," says Ed, "because it was in such pieces at the garage that you really didn't get a feel for what it was supposed to look like."

"After that, we just started taking parts off the frame," adds Barb. Though

the small parts could be cleaned up in their blasting cabinet in their garage, Ed sent the larger frame pieces out to be sandblasted. For the body components, the duo sanded them down to the bare metal, due to a possibility that sandblasting might warp or otherwise damage the relatively thin sheetmetal panels.

Ed describes the mix of wood and metal on the body: "Everything, from the doors forward, other than the floor, is all metal. The doors have no wood in them. Then, from where the door latches and back, it is all wood frame. The sheetmetal is clad around the wood with little nails holding on." Ed carefully removed the small nails holding those pieces of metal to the wood before cleaning up the steel parts and then tackling the wood components, many of which had to be replicated.

Working in red oak, which he was able to acquire in needed sizes from a millwork company he frequently worked with, Ed began fabricating the needed frame pieces. Since the truck had largely been stored indoors over the years, its sheetmetal, frame and wood were rot-free. For repetitive pieces, such as the many long, narrow strips that make up the roof, Ed had his mill partner make the pieces, because they had the appropriate woodworking equipment to get the job done quickly and accurately.

For the pieces Ed made at his home shop, the process was simple, even if the results were not immediate. "I cut the wood big and you keep shaving and planing and sanding—whatever process you are using—to keep narrowing it down slightly. And you keep testing the metal fitting over it to see if it's fitting correctly or not."

During the process of removing the old, faded and dusty black paint, Barb and Ed discovered that the original color was Graham Brothers' standard dark blue. They decided to repaint it in Spanish



Blue, a color from PPG's color chart that closely matched the original.

With all of the body components removed for refinishing, the couple started the process with the bare metal being smoothed using USC Icing polyester finishing putty. They followed with three or four coats (depending on the piece) of PPG epoxy primer, sanding between each layer.

Continuing with PPG products, Ed used a single-stage urethane paint from the Concept 2000 family of finishes. Most of the paint work was done in the Joyces' garage in Pennsylvania, with low dust conditions. The final pieces that were finished in Florida were sprayed outdoors "among the trees." Ed makes this observation: "We're certainly not high-tech, big-time automotive restorers. This is definitely an amateur garage." Fortunately, the results are anything but amateurish, numerous AACA awards attest to the Joyces' handiwork.

As Ed handled the wood and refinishing, Barb handled sandblasting and also fabricated the side curtains for the

"huckster"-style canopy truck. They used an upholstery specialist for the seating, but covered the roof in their driveway.

The couple sent out the engine to Godwin-Singer in St. Petersburg. Specialists in rebabbiting old engines, Godwin-Singer rebuilt the Fast Four in just a few weeks as Barb and Ed were preparing the truck for its first trip to Hershey. At Hershey Ed and Barb hoped to share the completed project with the senior Biery, who had dreamed of completing the project himself.

Not only did Barb and Ed complete the project on their own, but mid-stream, they moved from Pennsylvania to Florida. Setting up house in a new state, working full time and just getting everything in order took some time, but Barb took it upon herself to jumpstart the operation. "We really didn't get discouraged. I know we were down in Florida for like six months and I wanted the truck done, so I pulled out a fender and started putting some Icing on and started sanding and Ed said, 'What are you doing?' and I said, 'We're starting on the truck again.'" 🐾

owners' view



I like the wood. A lot of older people come up and say, 'I recognize this from when I was a kid.' I just think it's a cute little truck. We decided we were going to strip it down to the frame and redo it as original as possible! We did all of the work on it, other than the motor.


—Barb Joyce

It sort of found me. It was quite interesting to me because I had never seen a Graham Brothers in person, in real life. A lot of people like the wood. We like the uniqueness of it. A lot of people call it a huckster truck. That style of truck was used for farming people to sell their vegetables door to door and they were called hucksters. A lot of people recognize it as a huckster truck.

—Ed Joyce

1959 Ford Thunderbird

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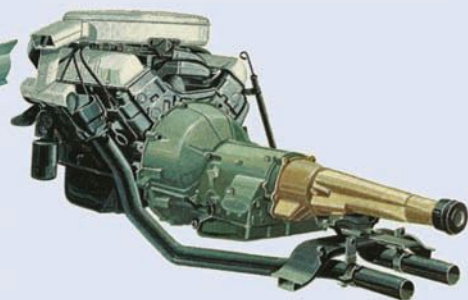
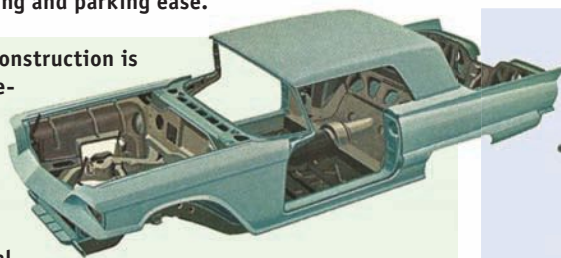
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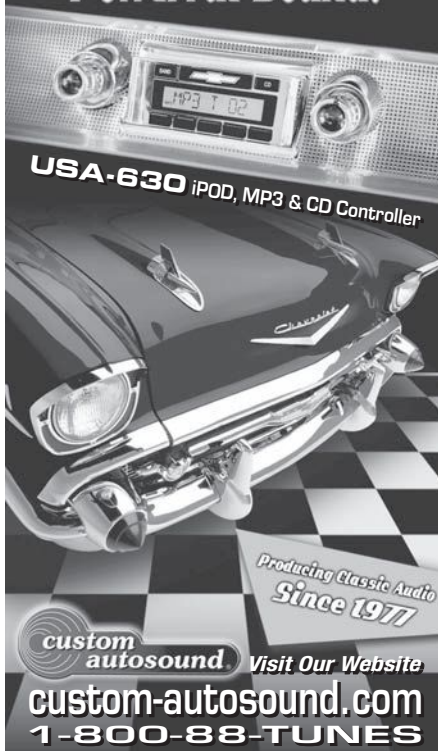
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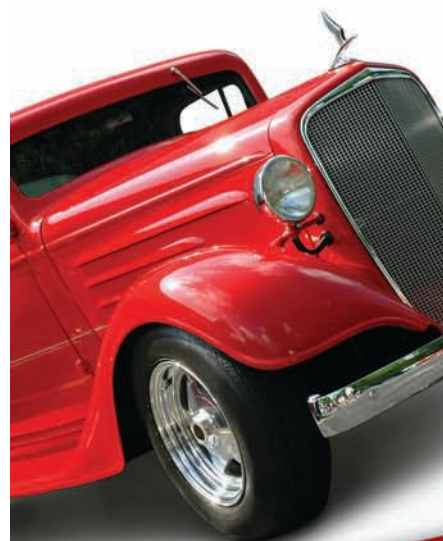
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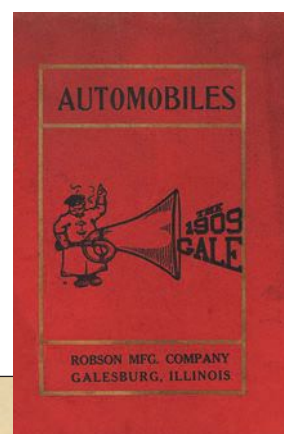
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Gale: A Car with Bite



D.W. COOK WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED

machinist in the early 1900s and, like many dreamers and tinkerers of the era, tested his skills by building automobiles. His earliest creation caught the attention of two prominent leaders of the Chicago Crane Company, who arranged a meeting with representatives of Sears Roebuck & Company to possibly offer the car in their catalogs. Legend (and interviews from the late 1940s) reports that the meeting did not go well and that the Sears representative was chased from the building by wrench-yielding men who were insulted by a lowball offer. With no Sears catalog to sell their vehicles, Cook and his backers set up shop in Galesburg, Illinois, and offered the Gale automobile to the world in 1905.

During 1905, the Gale automobile featured a single-cylinder, 8hp engine that ran on an 80-inch wheelbase. The Gale lineup was expanded greatly in 1906 when, in addition to two single-cylinder offerings, Gale offered three two-cylinder models. The most unusual feature on a Gale car was its tilting body. It hinged at the rear and "provided free access to all the machinery of the car." This tilting body gave Gale owners satisfaction knowing that they would not have to "experience the strange sensation of crawling under the car lying on your back while black drops of oil trickle down upon your clothing and face."

In 1907, Gale trimmed its model offering slightly, presenting a lone

single-cylinder model and a pair of two-cylinder models. The sales catalog for that year is unique, as it is essentially two catalogs in one. The overall dimensions of the catalog are 9¾ x 8¼ inches; however, in its folded position, there is a 3¼ x 8¼-inch preview catalog. This preview catalog is titled *Why the Gale Car is Good* and cites ample power, speed, value and strength. Special consideration is given to their ease of operation. They are marketed to be so easy, in fact, that "Even the youngsters can run them."

The second half of the 1907 catalog includes pictures of each model, engine and chassis details, followed by detailed model specifications. The single-cylinder Model C-7 cost \$600, while the larger K-7 and G-7 could be had for \$1,250 and \$900, respectively. Potential buyers are encouraged by vehicle quality when reading the "Construction" section, since it assures readers that "Gale cars are built on quality bases from gas lamps to taillamp." Here, we also learn that all of the Gale engines are made in-house so the company "can guarantee every part to be perfect."

By the end of 1907, there was financial trouble at Chicago Crane, forcing a reorganization of that company. The new

backing parent of the Gale would become Western Tool Works. Western Tool apparently had very little imagination, because its 1908 and 1909 Gales were practically identical to the 1907 vehicles, with the exception of a four-cylinder model offered in 1909. The same can be said for the sales literature for those two years, because Gale simply used the second half of the 1907 catalog as its sales literature.

Perhaps the most entertaining story about the Gale automobile comes not from sales literature but from an interview with D.W. Cook in 1949 for the *Galesburg Register Mail*. In this interview, we learn many things about the formation of the company, that run-in with the Sears people and a unique advertising gimmick that featured Cook driving a lion around town in 1905. During that drive, Cook accidentally ran over the lion's tail, whereupon the lion "let out a roar heard across town." Following that, the lion repeatedly tried to "steer the car with his giant paws," forcing the lion tamer to beat the lion with a club. Upon exiting the vehicle, the lion was naturally in a bad mood and "lashed out and bit a small girl standing nearby." At least one person would always remember the Gale. 🐾


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Desirable Dodge Monaco

OF ALL THE CARS I'VE TRIED TO PARK in your garage, this one has been treated with the most indifference. No one seems to care if they get the 1974-'77 Dodge Monaco story correct. Too bad, too, because these last of the really big Dodges are rather nice cars to own. So, if any of the information I've gleaned is incorrect, let me know. I tried to find the true Monaco story, and it wasn't easy.

Timing is everything. The 1974 Dodge Monaco may have been similar in size and weight to its predecessor, but its styling managed to make it look bulkier, which was the last thing an automaker needed in its lineup right after the first oil crisis.

Some critics said the cars looked dated. I have to agree that parked next to a 1973 Polara, the 1974 Dodge Monaco looks as if it could be the older design. Speaking of the Polara, it was no longer in the stable. Dodge's full-size offerings now consisted of the Monaco, Monaco Custom and Monaco Brougham.

For 1975, the Monaco Custom was renamed the Royal Monaco, and the Monaco Brougham became the Royal Monaco Brougham, featuring hidden headlamps. This also was the last year of the four-door hardtops. Of course, they still featured station wagons. A friend's father had a plain-Jane Monaco station wagon for his business. No faux wood paneling, no whitewalls, no frills; I really liked that wagon. Surviving base models are my favorites.

A Diplomat Package was introduced for the 1975 model year as a limited option featuring a landau vinyl roof with opera windows and a wide steel roof band. According to several questionable sources, it came in three colors: Cold Metallic, Silver Cloud Metallic and Maroon Metallic.

Before I go on... I checked everything I could, including my 1975 Dodge full-line brochure and a company specializing in vintage automotive paint, and two of these colors do not exist. Yet, everywhere the Diplomat Package is mentioned, which, by the way, I don't see in the brochure either, it states it came in these three colors. Silver Cloud Metallic is an actual color. Maroon is nowhere to be found, but there is a Vintage Red Metallic. Could that be it? Weirder still, no one can tell me what

Cold Metallic is. At some point in the last 40 years, someone wrote "Cold Metallic," and every writer who followed copied it without question. Well, that stops here. Could he/she have meant to write "Gold" as in Aztec Gold Metallic, Avocado Gold Metallic, Inca Gold Metallic, or Spanish Gold Metallic (all actual colors)? If you know, tell me.

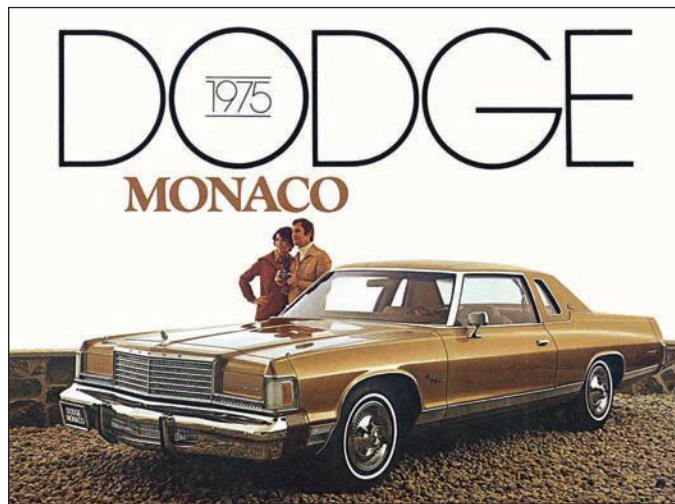
One source said you could order a 225-cubic-inch Slant Six in a Monaco. I don't believe this. The brochure lists the smallest engine available as the 360-cu.in. V-8. If true, wouldn't it make sense to also offer the 318-cu.in. V-8? I also cannot see a Slant Six pulling one of these mastodons.

When ordered with the 440-cu.in. V-8 and a four-barrel carburetor, the Monaco was capable of reaching more than 125 MPH, which brings us to the Monaco's best attribute... They made great police cars!

Full-size Mopars still benefited from the best handling in their class, thanks to their torsion bar front suspensions. In addition, their engines and transmissions were still the most dependable and robust. Mr. Joe Public may not have been snapping up these already dated cars, but the men in blue sure enjoyed them. *Car and Driver* achieved a 0-60 time of 8.1 seconds and a top speed of 126 MPH in a 1977 Monaco with the police package.

Remember *Hill Street Blues*? The show opened with a 1977 Dodge Royal Monaco police car. And yes, the Blues Brothers drove a former 1974 Mount Prospect, Illinois, police car. These Monacos were also the California Highway Patrol cruisers for the first three seasons of *CHiPs*.

In one episode during the first season of *CHiPs*, it was raining, so Ponch and John were given a brand-new Monaco to drive. In one scene, they wrecked the car, and it magically turned into a midsize



Dodge Monaco police car. That must have been some collision.

All 1977s were Royal Monacos, since non-Royal Monacos were now built on the midsize platform. The Royal Monaco was laid to rest at the end of the model year, leaving the non-Royals to carry on for one more year as Dodge's biggest car.

The 1979 St. Regis would be Dodge's final stab at the full-size market, although it would be built on the midsize platform. These are also very nice cars.

Why should you consider these last true full-size Dodges? For many reasons. They came in coupes, sedans and wagons. Can you imagine anyone under 50 buying one when new? They were in the hands of careful drivers. I have seen quite a few of these for sale over the last few years, and each one is in pretty good shape. The best reason is you can get a big car with great handling and acceleration for a really cheap price.

I can see you picking up one of these for \$2,000 and using it as a daily driver without a care in the world. Do tell me if you find a Diplomat Package in Cold Metallic. ☞

Earl Gilmore



BEFORE YOU CAN CONSIDER the accomplishments of Earl Gilmore, you first have to contemplate the wild rags-to-riches life of his father. Arthur Fremont Gilmore was born in Illinois in 1850, took the original transcontinental railroad west, and then migrated to Los Angeles. With a partner, Julius Carter, the elder Gilmore began to operate a dairy farm in what today is the city of Compton. It boomed and he gathered enough capital to acquire another *rancho*, farther west, on land that was known to contain tar pools. One day, Gilmore went out to drill a well.

He struck oil.

Gilmore was now in the petroleum business, and his son, Earl, was born in 1877. As a rule, Gilmore's early concern was focused on paving roads with tar oil dispensed from tanker wagons. Using a homemade rig at Earl's urging, the company began refining oil into gasoline by distilling vapors from heated tar oil. Still a youngster, Earl later recalled loading 5-gallon cans of gasoline into a horse-drawn buckboard and rattling down Wilshire Boulevard to sell them to the few

automobilists that then existed in Los Angeles. Arthur Gilmore died in 1918, and control of the Gilmore Oil Company transferred to Earl. Gilmore was never truly a national company, the bulk of its operations being in California and the Pacific Northwest, but the work that Earl did ensured that its name was nationally known.

Earl Gilmore turned out to be a born promoter. He recognized the enormous potential for growth in the refining business. In 1922, there were more than a million cars in Southern California, a number that would double within a decade. Gilmore specified that its stations would carry four grades of gasoline, color-coded by dyes introduced

during the refining process. The peak grade, Red Lion, was tinted scarlet and became the company's signature, its logos red and cream in color and topped by a roaring lion.

That image would be the centerpiece of a bold campaign, one of the first of its kind, to put Gilmore and its products on everybody's tongue. Doing so involved an encounter between Earl and the early barnstorming stunt pilot and air racer, Roscoe Turner, who'd spotted a giant lion on a Gilmore billboard. Turner convinced Earl to sponsor him in return for guaranteed publicity. Earl bought a used Lockheed, rechristened it *The Gilmore Lion*, and turned Turner loose on the air show and racing circuits, complete with a lion cub as his copilot. It launched—literally—a P.R. blitz that not only made Gilmore a household name, but also transformed the Los Angeles landscape.

In 1934, Earl put up the money to build the Los Angeles Farmers Market in the Fairfax district, part of a huge complex that came to be known as Gilmore Island, surrounding the area of Arthur's

first oil discovery. In quick succession, Gilmore began hosting parades and circuses—with lions, of course—and became deeply involved in motorsports sponsorship. Its dealers, more than 3,600 by the time war broke out, distributed hunting and fishing guides, encouraging motorists to take long odysseys into the countryside. Gilmore Stadium was the first purpose-built track for Midget auto racing, and the company even sponsored an AAA baseball team backed by several Hollywood figures. With Gilmore support, Kelly Petillo won the 1935 Indianapolis 500, as did Wilbur Shaw in 1937.

Advertising was one of the biggest line items in Gilmore's budget. Competitors began relentlessly cutting petroleum prices in order to boost market share, and Gilmore ran into a cash-flow problem. It borrowed money from Mobil, which it collateralized by issuing Gilmore stock to the lender. By the war years, Mobil owned 75 percent of Gilmore. With the coming of gasoline rationing, Earl decided to sell the entire oil operation to Mobil, a deal consummated in 1945.

Earl Gilmore died in 1964. The Farmers Market remains a living part of the Gilmore legacy, to this day a Los Angeles landmark. 🦁



Peter M. Williams
Industrial Engineer, 1974-1987
American Motors Corporation

AMERICAN MOTORS WAS AN

interesting company to work for. When I started working for AMC in 1974, I was an Industrial Engineer (I.E.) before moving on to other assignments. My jobs as an I.E. required that I gain an in-depth understanding of the entire manufacturing process and the multiple plant facilities.

In 1982, I was instructed to provide manpower to support the remanufacture of the 1968 AMX Engineering Merrill Alignment Fixture on the current Alliance assembly lines. This endeavor required the support of many different departments and parts of the AMC Kenosha complexes. Along the way, special facility work was required, as we were then building the much smaller Renault Alliance. This is the story of the factory remanufacturing of a legacy car, a 1968 AMX, on the 1983 Alliance assembly lines.

The white (with red rally stripe and red interior) 1968 AMX Engineering Merrill Alignment Fixture (car) was stored outside on the top floor of the still-existing old AMC building 50 on 52nd Street. The car was frequently driven down the ramps from the third floor to the end of the final inspection and assembly lines. It was positioned on each line to ensure that the front-end alignment equipment, called Merrill Alignment fixtures, were correctly calibrated. When the car was a "tool," it was never titled or licensed and never left the facility.

It was decided by top management that, rather than scrapping the obsolete AMX "tool," it would be remanufactured on the current Alliance assembly line. The AMX was delivered to the Executive Garage where all red interior trim, glass and drivetrain components were removed. Next, it was taken to a vendor to have the white paint stripped down to bare metal; the AMX was not chemically stripped.

When the AMX was delivered to AMC's Lakefront Plant's brand-new state-of-the-art Alliance Paint shop, which was a converted five-floor Simmons Bedding factory comprised of multiple narrow pre-1900 buildings that AMC obtained in 1960, it was loaded onto a special overhead carrier to be run through the brand-new Alliance E-Dip prime paint process. The E-Dip process was new to AMC and basi-

cally electronically "plated" the paint on all internal and external surfaces of the body.

After running the AMX through the dip tank, it was discovered that the 70,000-gallon E-Dip paint had become contaminated by the un-removed AMX body seam sealer, which was boiled out by the electronic E-Dip process. Production stopped, cars were scrapped and the 70,000 gallons of paint were also scrapped and replaced by a new batch of paint in the tank.

The AMX then proceeded to the paint oven to cure the primer. It was placed on a special-body truck (a four-wheel dolly) that could be pulled by the assembly line chain through the color and trim departments. It was painted black. No trim was added by the Trim Department.

At the end of the Trim Department, the AMX was hoisted on to the eight-pack body truck trailer for its trip across town to the main factory. There, the engine, transmission and accessories were obtained from the Milwaukee Parts Distribution Center ("PDC") warehouse. The I.T. department provided a broadcast to sequence the engine and transmission with the body as it came down the final Chassis Assembly line. The Engine Dress Department installed all of the normal accessories on the engine as per the broadcast. It was humorous to see the hulking big V-8 coming down the line in between the little 1.4-liter four-cylinder Alliance engines.

In the final Chassis Assembly Department, special tooling was built to install the rear-wheel-drive axle assembly. The assembly line was stopped and extra manpower was used to install the heavy rear-wheel drive axle and driveshaft assembly. Next, the assembly line moved the car on to the engine installation. The engine and transmission were removed from the Engine Dress delivery conveyor and stuffed into the car. The unique AMX brakes, accelerator, steering wheel, gear shift, gas tank, cooling system and all of the fluids were added on the assembly line to get the car running. It was a logistical nightmare.

After the AMX came off the line, a box was added for a driver, and it was driven over the ramps to the building 50



AMC Kenosha Executive Garage. There, the mechanics installed the new black interior from the PDC. Since the PDC no longer had the instrument panel in stock, a panel was sourced from a collector.

When the car was completed, it was shipped to our AMTEK headquarters in Detroit. While there were several rumors about who was going to be receiving the AMX, I was never sure who the recipient was.

Several years later, in 1987, when I was in the AMC's I.T. Administration in Detroit, one of my coworkers mentioned that there was a small collection of historic cars in the basement of the AMTEK facility. I got a tour and saw the remanufactured AMX, with a big dent in the driver's door. Since we were in the middle of the Chrysler merger, I became aware of Chrysler's Historic Vehicle Collection ("CHC"). I was concerned that the small AMC collection would be disbursed or stolen. I contacted the CHC and made them aware of the AMC collection. They had not known about it and were very interested in adding these vehicles to their collection.

In November 2011, I was visiting the Chrysler Museum in Auburn Hills. I found the AMX on display... with the door fixed.

The cost for the special tooling, spoiled paint, employee time, plant logistics, I.T. special broadcast programming, transportation of the parts and car, modification of assembly and body-hauling equipment was significant.

I am glad to have had a part in the remanufacturing of the car and saving the car for the Chrysler Museum. I'd say, that this was probably the most expensive car AMC ever (re)built on its dedicated assembly line in Kenosha. 🍷



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.

PESKY POWERGLIDE LEAK

Q: I own a 1956 Bel Air with a six-cylinder and a Powerglide. I have had it since 1970, when I bought it with 14,000 miles on it. It now has 39,000 miles on it. I have spent a lot to maintain it, but have had one problem that no one can solve. The front seal is leaking a lot of fluid. It was a brand-new seal in April of last year, and it was fine until I took it out of storage this winter.

Robert Hamilton
Troy, New York

A: First consider this: After sitting for extended periods, then being started, Powerglides of that vintage have a tendency to burp out fluid, usually from the dipstick tube, because all of the fluid drains down into the pan, overfilling it. Most often it happens when the engine is started, the car is allowed to run and then shut off. If you start the car and immediately take it for a drive, it usually doesn't burp out the fluid. Moreover, when the car is driven regularly again, it won't do this. So, perhaps if you replace the fluid you've lost and just start driving the car again it will stop leaking.

However, if you're sure that what I described above isn't what occurred and that fluid is indeed running out from under the front of the transmission, the problem could be the O-ring that seals the cover of the torque converter, the O-ring around the front pump or the front seal. Try putting some clean cardboard under the transmission to give you an idea of where the leak is coming from. You should also be able to see that the converter seal or pump seal is leaking by removing the inspection cover.

LINGERING IN LOW

Q: I have a 1958 Dodge Coronet six-cylinder with a PowerFlite automatic. The transmission will shift perfectly from low to high until it's warm, I shut the engine off or shift into reverse then back into drive. Then the transmission gets hung up in low and takes anywhere from a few blocks to a few miles of driving at around 30 MPH, before the transmission will shift hard into high. After the one hard shift, the transmission will shift perfectly until the engine is turned off or the car is put

into reverse, then the process starts over again.

I have changed the fluid, adjusted the bands and verified that the transmission buttons are engaging correctly when pushed in by observing the detents inside the transmission.

I have taken it to several shops and they want to rebuild it, but nobody has been able to point to what part is not performing correctly. I find it hard to believe it needs a complete rebuild when it will shift perfectly all day unless I turn the engine off or engage reverse.

Edward A. Slenk Jr.
New Lenox, Illinois

A: Before your transmission upshifts, the rear pump and the governor must gradually build up fluid pressure to activate the shift valve. Perhaps when the fluid is cold, it's a little thicker and the governor isn't having any trouble building pressure. But when the fluid is hot, it's thinner and the governor and pump must work harder to do the job. Engaging reverse requires a huge buildup of line pressure and a lot of fluid diverted to the front pump, which activates the reverse servo and applies the rear band. When going from reverse to drive when the transmission is hot, fluid must first return to the rear and the governor must build adequate pressure to activate the shift valve. If it can't do this immediately, you get a delayed shift. This would point to a problem with the governor or the rear pump.

To test this theory, when the transmission won't shift, put the car on jack stands and run it while measuring the governor pressure with a gauge installed at the test plug. The shop manual or a vintage Motor's manual describes the procedure and gives the specs. This should give you some insight.

If you've ruled out the shifter not being the problem, then the transmission needs to come apart to some degree. Perhaps it would entail just pulling off the rear portion of the housing to access the governor and rear pump, a job that looks like it would be easiest on a work bench or at least with the car on a lift.

I checked the Services Offered section of *Hemmings Motor News* and found a shop close to you in Batavia, Illinois, advertising antique and classic transmission service. Perhaps you could give them a call, at 630-761-4400,

describe the condition and ask them if they think the governor or rear pump might be a good place to start.

RINGS OF FIRE

Q: The spark plugs in my 1939 La Salle—AC 104, 10mm—are in fine shape, but the steel crush washers are beginning to corrode and, I believe, should be replaced.

Where might I purchase just these crush washers? None of the local auto parts stores carry them. I did buy some 10mm copper washers, but the outside diameter was too large. Should the replacement washers be steel, as the originals, or would copper crush washers be okay?

Lastly, the AC 106 spark plug is listed as being an acceptable alternative for use in the 1939 La Salle. The original OEMs were, as I noted, AC 104. I cannot find a reference that explains the numerical designation. Does that number indicate a heat range? Would you know what the difference is between the AC 106 and 104 plug?

Bob Lapham
Via email

A: The 104 is a four on the heat-range scale (a scale of one through eight), while the 106 is a six. The 106 is a hotter plug, but would be okay to substitute. If you can't find 10mm crushable spark plug gaskets at a local auto parts store, you can find them on the website sparkplugs.com.

NAPA lists the following plugs as replacements for your La Salle: Champion CHA 842, Bosch BSH 7915 and Autolite 3136. The AC M-8 should also work. If all else fails, you could always purchase a set of plugs and use the gaskets. Incidentally, those copper gaskets, which are probably for spark plug indexing, would be fine, if you can find the proper size.



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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The Hot Rod Buick



I WAS DONE. That was the one thing I knew for sure now that I was 18. Done with school, done with part-time jobs and definitely done with driving cars that were nothing more than dull, basic transportation. This was the beginning of the Sixties, 1961 to be exact, and time to move up, to graduate from school into a full-time job and move up to driving a real car instead of the \$100 or less Chevrolet sixes, flathead Fords or Dad's old pickup.

Those of us with more modest resources focused on the Tri-Five Chevs and Fords that could easily be transformed into pretty hot street rods. But my 1954 Buick was a baby-blue two-door sedan with a three-speed on the column and the 264 cu.in. V-8 that was new to the Special Series that year. It was only \$350, yet had a 264-cu.in. OHV V-8. After I added dual exhausts with glasspacks and had a friend with a torch heat the rear coil springs, dropping the back end about two inches, it looked and sounded pretty cool.

I still remember the exact location on a New Jersey highway where a rod bearing let loose. Well, not exactly "let loose," but started knocking enough to freak me out. I saw that as an opportunity to do my first engine overhaul. Even though I had my trusty *Motor's Auto Repair Manual* to guide me through, I still had some reservations. The number one concern was the idea of spending the time and money to rebuild the stock engine only to end up with a stock 1954 Buick Special. I knew the bigger 322 cu.in. V-8 would be a bolt-in swap, and that would bring it up to the performance of the Century, Buick's muscle car of the '50s. I found that big 1956 Buick engine at a junkyard, and though it probably didn't need the rebuild, I needed to do it.

You can imagine how excited I was to install the engine and have it fire up practically on the first try. It sounded great: tight

and solid. Out on the road, I could feel that car had some power, even with the two-barrel carb that I kept on for break-in. I drove it carefully and started looking for a four-barrel manifold and a conversion to turn the stock Special transmission into a floor shifter. Buick manual transmissions from the Roadmasters and Centurys were rugged, with a reputation with hot rodders right up there with Cadillacs, Packards, and Lincolns. The lowly Specials, even the 1954 V-8s, still had the same puny transmission that was used in the old straight-eight Specials, but money was getting tight and fitting a larger transmission from an older Roadmaster would require driveshaft alteration—an added expense.

So I chose to just replace the stock transmission every time I blew one up. And, blow them up I did, especially after installing the four-barrel carb and proving the Buick could run with the best V-8 Chevs. Though plentiful at \$10-\$15 a pop, the inconvenience of having to replace that little transmission so frequently was becoming a little more than inconvenient. I resigned myself to lighten up on the throttle and really "baby" that gearbox. With winter coming on, it seemed like a good idea.

My older brother had moved from our home in New Jersey to Tucson, Arizona. Now that the adventure of my engine rebuild was behind me, I yearned for another conquest. How about driving cross-country in the Buick to visit my brother? I set my sights on new horizons in the West, and I could get a job there if I liked it.

Mom handed me four sandwiches to last me the three-day drive, and I headed south on Route 1 toward Washington D.C. Westward bound on Route 40 was fascinating, with sections of two-lane through rolling farmland with 70 MPH speed limits. Open country and an open road were too much of a temptation; I had to see what the Buick could do. You didn't often get the opportunity to push your car flat out in New Jersey traffic, but there in Missouri, I was about to bury the needle at 120. I started getting concerned that there might be cops around, so I backed off a bit. A glance in the rearview mirror proved no one was around, so I kept a steady 85. With my concentration diverted to the heater controls, I didn't notice what was

closing in from behind.

Remember the front end of the early 1960 Dodges? They were badass and sinister, looking like they were ready to devour anything in their path. That's what I saw when my eyes returned to the mirror. That police cruiser looked even more menacing with its rooftop "cherry" flashing red as if to say, "I got you."

"Son," he said in a Midwestern drawl I wasn't accustomed to hearing, "You know how fast you were goin' back there?" Quick, what do I say? I dunno. Uh 75, 120, 85? Instead, I mumbled something about not being sure and my heater wasn't working so good. "85 miles per hour in a 70 mile-per-hour zone," he said. I was relieved he didn't clock me at 120. He was very polite, almost gracious, as he ordered me to follow him back to town to face the judge. The judge wasn't in the courthouse, so the officer was "nice" enough to take some of my dwindling cash for my fine.

The Southwest had an appeal, but I was still too attached to my home in New Jersey and the friends I had there, so after several months, it was time to pack up the Buick and head back East. Although the transmission was getting noisier with every mile, I had enough confidence to start the journey.

No speeding and good weather made the trip back pretty uneventful... until I crossed the West Virginia/Pennsylvania line. Bam! Transmission explosion. And I was stranded.

I managed to find a towing service, which brought the car to a wrecking yard owned by a likable fellow who put me up for the night in his home. I phoned my father, who then made the several hundred-mile trip to rescue me. I left the Buick with my host, with the understanding that I would return within a week or so with a way to retrieve it or send him the bill of sale and he would buy it for \$150.

Sorry to say, I never did go back to get the car. I felt it was too daunting a task to tow it home or repair it there and drive it home. I sold the Buick, with a hint of regret, and moved on.

"Moving on" required another car. For me, it was full-circle, back to the basics with a straight-six 1950 Ford I bought for \$50. It was nice to be home. ☺

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Rear-Wheels at the Ready

Not all Willys pickups were outfitted with four-wheel drive



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY McGEAN

In the days following WWII, many American manufacturing companies abruptly transitioned from the business of powering the Allied war machine overseas to powering a great economic expansion at home.

Willys-Overland, a struggling automaker before the war, distinguished itself in battle as the maker of the rugged quarter-ton MB jeep (which Ford also manufactured under license.) Willys emerged from the war financially in the black and continued as a defense contractor, but it also wanted to get back to building cars for the American public—especially with the postwar demand for new vehicles soaring. But Willys didn't have the capacity to stamp complex body panels, so building a car to compete with,

say, the curvaceous 1949 Ford, was out of the question. Thus, its first postwar offering was a military Jeep in civvies—the now legendary CJ series.

Not to be left out of the civilian automobile market altogether, however, plucky Willys then hired designer Brooks Stevens and asked him to create a vehicle that was all new, but could draw heavily from the Jeep's parts bins, topped with a body that could be fabricated out of simple sheetmetal panels. In 1946, Willys rolled out its all-new, station wagon—its body

bristling with right angles and riding high atop a two-wheel-drive chassis. (Four-wheel drive wouldn't arrive as an option until 1949). A sturdy-looking little pickup followed in May of 1947, offered with the buyer's choice of either a two-wheel-drive or four-wheel-drive powertrain, and initially known simply as 2T or 4T. With its blunt front end, slat grille and flat-top front fenders, the Willys pickup's kinship to the CJ was obvious, and it shared its boxy all-steel cab with the wagon.

Like the wagon and CJ, the truck was



powered by Willys's Go Devil four-cylinder L-head engine. The Go Devil used in the pickups was identical in design to the engine used in the Jeep, with only minor component differences. It was a very reliable powerplant, but with just 60hp and 105-lb.ft. of torque on tap, it needed deep gears to help it tackle heavy hauling and towing chores. Subsequently, the Spicer 41 axle in the 2T was loaded with a 5.38:1 final drive gear ratio as standard, with 6.17 gears optional. (Taller gear sets were used with more powerful engines in later trucks.) A Warner three-speed transmission was the only gearbox available and initially only offered with column shift, but that was changed to a floor shift in 1949.

Curiously the trucks' rear suspension appears identical, but Willys 4x4 trucks carried a one-ton rating, while the two-wheel drives were rated as 1/2-tons, though a one-ton two-wheel drive was reportedly also available. Up front, the two-wheel-drive trucks rode on an I-beam axle hung from leaf springs.

Willys two-wheel-drive trucks sold reasonably well, but after 1951 the company chose to focus its efforts on building only 4x4 pickups. Two-wheel-drive wagons and deliveries continued until 1965.

While Willys was tooling up for postwar pickup and station wagon production, employees of another American military contractor were changing their focus from

building glider airplanes to building small pleasure boats. When the orders from Uncle Sam stopped rolling in, the staff at Allied Aviation in Dundalk, Maryland, took the knowledge they'd gained building molded-plywood gliders for the Navy and began building molded-mahogany boat hulls. The operation was shifted to Cockeysville, Maryland, where three of the former Allied Aviation employees began making lightweight molded-wood canoes and sailboats which they sold to the military. Soon, the new company, Molded Products, was building its own line of all-mahogany plywood boats for the consumer market under the Whirlwind brand name. By 1952, Whirlwind had a 13-boat lineup including 12-foot, 13-foot, 14-foot and 16-foot offerings.

So other than both being postwar business success stories, what do the histories of these seemingly dissimilar vehicles, the Willys pickup and the Whirlwind boat, have to do with one another? Not much, unless you've met Brian and Lois Smith of Northborough, Massachusetts. The Smiths have owned a 1957-vintage 14-foot Whirlwind boat powered by a period-correct Johnson outboard for many years, but recently decided they needed a truck from roughly the same era to tow it around.

"We go to Bristol, New Hampshire, for the Fourth of July and they have an Independence Day parade," Lois said. "Brian kept saying we should have a period-



1947 was the debut year for the Willys truck. It was offered with four-wheel drive or two-wheel drive until 1951. Early '47 trucks like this 2T had non-operating vent windows, while the windows on later trucks opened.

appropriate vehicle to tow the boat in the parade, and he found this Willys."

Brian had long been a fan of Willys vehicles and discovered this Luzon Red 1947 Willys 2T pickup for sale in Florida. He was impressed with its overall condition and even more intrigued because it was an early two-wheel drive rather than one of the more common four-wheel-drives.

"I wasn't looking for a two-wheel-drive truck," Brian said. "I was just looking for a truck in excellent condition. This was a really good find: 972 is the production number, which means it was built during the first month of production in 1947. It's in remarkable condition, with the original glass and largely original wiring; it also has an early production rubber step pad on the side that's still intact."

When the truck arrived in January 2011, its body and interior were in great shape, but the Smiths decided to perform a mechanical restoration to get the truck driving as well as it looked. Brian removed the Go Devil engine and took it to a rebuilder for an overhaul, but rebuilt the truck's Warner T-90 E three-speed transmission himself. With the engine back from the shop, he reassembled the drivetrain with a new clutch assembly and a new exhaust system, plus he added a period-correct accessory oil filter.

Today, the Willys sees fair-weather road use, making trips to local shows and



The 60hp Go Devil four-cylinder was standard issue on the truck, a transplant from the Willys CJ and military Jeeps. A deep 5.38:1 axle ratio helped when the hauling was heavy.

events. "If the trip is within 50 miles, we drive the truck, but if it's further than that, we trailer it," Lois said.

It's happiest at speeds around 45 MPH, according to the Smiths, and having the added weight of the boat trailer in tow helps smooth out the ride. Unfortunately, when we encountered the Smiths' Willys at a summer cruise-in at Hemmings's Bennington, Vermont, headquarters, the

couple's Whirlwind boat wasn't tagging along, but the immaculate truck was drawing plenty of attention from admirers on its own.

"People's eyes are really drawn to that truck," Lois said. "People come up and tell us, my father had a truck like that or my grandfather had a truck like that. It brings back good memories for people—it's been a good conversation starter." 🐾



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A Knight of the Highway

A chance encounter at a truck stop locates a missing girl



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE COLLECTION OF RONALD WENGER

The tales have long since passed into highway mythology: Stop to eat at a place where there are a lot of trucks in the parking lot; it usually means the food is good, cheap and plentiful. If you have a flat tire or otherwise become disabled at the roadside, wait for a trucker to stop.

He'll help you change the tire or at the very least, summon assistance for you. Long before the CB radio fad turned truckers into latter-day cowpunchers, truckers were known as Good Samaritans, true saints of the pavement.

Which brings us to the story of Alfred Kosbar, who spent most of his adult life hauling cargo out of Benton Harbor, Michigan, which is in Berrien County, along the shores of Lake Michigan. His grandson, Ron Wenger, explained to us that Alfred started driving trucks through

the upper Midwest as soon as he got out of the armed forces. The photograph shows Alfred beaming from the cab of one of his earlier rides, a gas-burning International pulling a single-axle, open-top trailer. If you look closely, you might be able to see that the rig carries 1939 registration plates. Like many truckers, or most of them, Alfred had his share of adventures during his decades of plying two-lane highways. Not all of them could be called pleasant. Sometimes, a chance sighting could be a matter of life and death.

One of them happened sometime in the Fifties. Driving for the Priebe Brothers trucking operation out of Benton Harbor, Alfred was on his way back from a trip to the East Coast when he stopped for a break at a restaurant in the town of Oshtemo, a small burg not far from Kalamazoo along busy U.S. 12. Inside the eatery was a frantic woman. She was from Kalamazoo, and said her teenage daughter had left home inexplicably and was missing for a week. She originally notified Benton Harbor police, saying her daughter might be in that

city, but an investigation came up empty. The girl's mother had stopped in Oshtemo knowing that truckers frequented that meal spot, and she showed her photograph around to the drivers, including Alfred.

Alfred's schedule required him to be in Chicago that night, so he left without eating. Instead, he hit the westbound highway, stopping several hours later in Michigan City, Indiana. This truck stop was known as Bob's Place, and Alfred was pals with the proprietor. A young waitress came up to take his order. Alfred's heart jumped. She looked just like the girl in the photo from Oshtemo, right down to the scar her mother had told the truckers about earlier. Pulled aside discreetly, the proprietor told Alfred he'd just hired the girl three days previously. Alfred had jotted down the mother's phone number and made the call. The grateful parents left immediately for Indiana and were reunited with their daughter. They brought her home and called the Kalamazoo newspaper, whose reporter called Alfred's chance discovery a million-to-one shot.

Ron's grandmother had saved that clipping. Alfred spent years plying U.S. 12, then as now a major route linking Detroit with Chicago. The photo shows him driving for Midway Transit of Benton Harbor, the outfit Ron says he was likely with the longest. The elaborate arrays of operating authorities and interstate permits had yet to come into full focus. Note the total absence of running or marker lights on the tractor and trailer. A single round mirror was all the rear vision Alfred had. Most likely, Ron told us, the open-top trailer was loaded with either broken concrete or gravel. The cab has a hinged windshield and a cowl-mounted vent, about the only gesture toward driver comfort. As to the International, we peg it as a 1934 model, thanks to the capped, split front grille and the dip in the front bumper, which is missing in the case of Alfred's rig.

According to Ron, his grandfather retired from the road before 1960 and passed on around 1972. From the family's history, Ron learned that Alfred's broad smile in the photo wasn't a put-on. He loved to drive and did so cheerfully, helping others in need when circumstances presented themselves, like the runaway girl from Kalamazoo. 🚚



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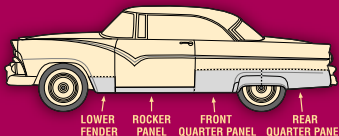
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Flappers on a Peerless, circa 1923
Online Archive of California: Wyland Stanley pictorial
collection of San Francisco Bay Area views

“Kiwis have
always liked
American
classics, and
still import
them in great
numbers.”

jimrichardson

WAY Down South

I take my summer vacation in winter. It's better that way. When it is summertime, the crowds in the States are big and irritating, so I don't go anywhere. But the problem with taking one's summer vacation in winter is that the days are short, and it is cold and rainy at times. That is, unless you go to the southern hemisphere, where winter is summer.

That is why my wife and I go to New Zealand every year. You know, it's that little island country way down and to the right of Australia. We go there because, in February, the days are long and the living is easy, as stated in *Porgy and Bess*. And there are no crowds to speak of, because the country only has about four million people.

So, “What is there to do down there?” you might ask. Well... the usual, I would say, like playing golf or tennis or having dinner in a quaint candlelit restaurant off the beaten path. And, of course, there is hiking, sightseeing, surfing, fishing, and every kind of water sport imaginable.

But that is not what I do. In fact, like most people, I do much the same things I do at home. I hang out with car guys and go to car shows, junkyards and swap meets. I know that is not everyone's cup of tea, but I don't drink tea. Give me coffee, black, no sugar, and none of that fancy four-dollar-a-cup delicate stuff either. Why, a week's worth of java at that price will buy you a rebuilt Rochester for your Bel Air.

So, what kinds of old cars do they have there? Well, it is pretty similar to the States, except they have a few more old British classics. But American cars from every era are everywhere. I have seen more Hupmobiles there than at home. Also, restored Chevrolets from the 1920s and early 1930s are much more common than back home. Chrysler products are well represented, too, from Airflows to Challengers. And there is no shortage of Fords.

Kiwis (that is what they call themselves. It is not a pejorative) have always liked American classics, and still import them in great numbers. But then they always did buy American cars when they could. In fact, I would reckon that they have more old American tin than Cuba, but the difference is, they restore it, cherish it and maintain it to high standards. They have a thing called a Warrant of Fitness there, and to get one for your

classic, it must be in excellent order.

Just as in the U.S., their roads today are infested with modern Japanese cars; but when it comes to vintage transportation, Yank Tanks, as they call them, are overwhelming favorites. You see a fair number of Jaguars, Triumphs, Minis, MGs and Austins, too. And there is the occasional

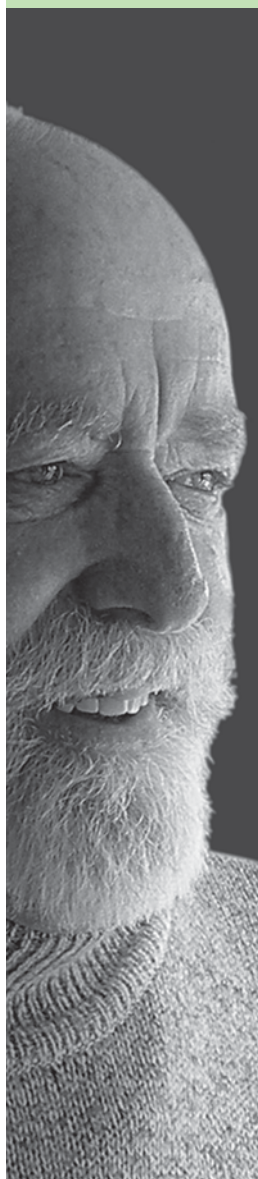
Alvis, Bentley or Rolls-Royce on the road. But you are much more likely to see Mustangs (they are crazy for them), Camaros, Cadillacs, Chryslers and Catalinas than Coopers.

New Zealanders even made their own car in the 1960s. They bought Škoda chassis from Czechoslovakia and added utility bodies to

them, making them look a lot like Land Rovers. The result was called the Trekka and was boxy and practical, and an extraordinary achievement for such a small country. Why did they do that, you ask? It was because—like most non-auto-making countries—they wanted to curb their hard-earned currency from making a one-way trip out of the country. By building domestically, they avoided the tariffs.

It was also because of heavy import duties that Kiwis went to such trouble to keep their vintage American cars in top condition. You hear the word “tidy” there a lot. There is no litter in the streets, things are neat and clean, and even their old beaters are tidy. But a lot of New Zealanders go beyond tidy. The restoration shops there are so good that well-heeled American collectors send their cars there to be restored. Locals are capable of Pebble Beach quality work, and even though it costs a bit to ship your classic there and back, it is still cheaper than having it restored in the United States.

But that is out of my league. Instead, I hit the junkyards, swap meets and car shows and work on my own cars when I am in the land under “the land down under” on my summer vacation each winter. And I have discovered that car people are car people anywhere in the world. They are a good bunch of guys to hang out with, and will help you with your restoration or accompany you to their numerous car museums and collections. And if you are into vintage racing and rallying, there is plenty of that, too. Think about it. Maybe I'll see you down there next summer, which will be our winter, of course. ☺



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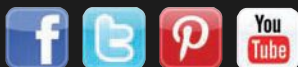
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