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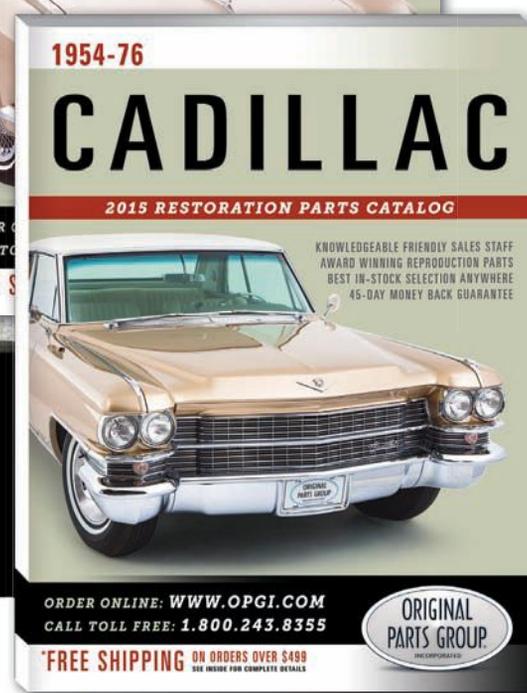
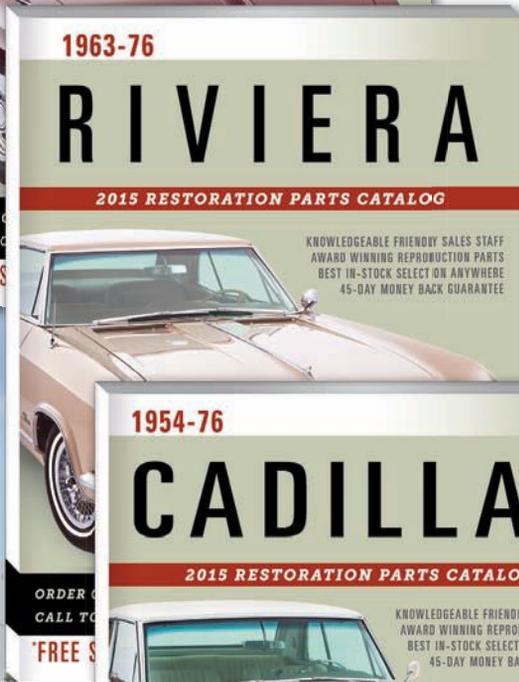
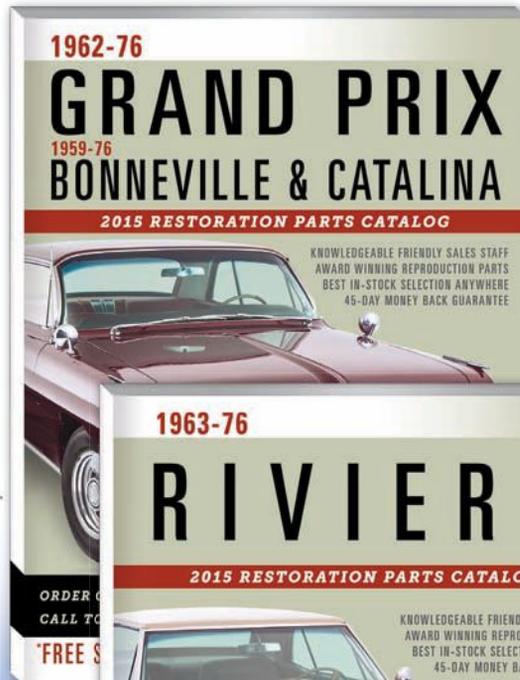
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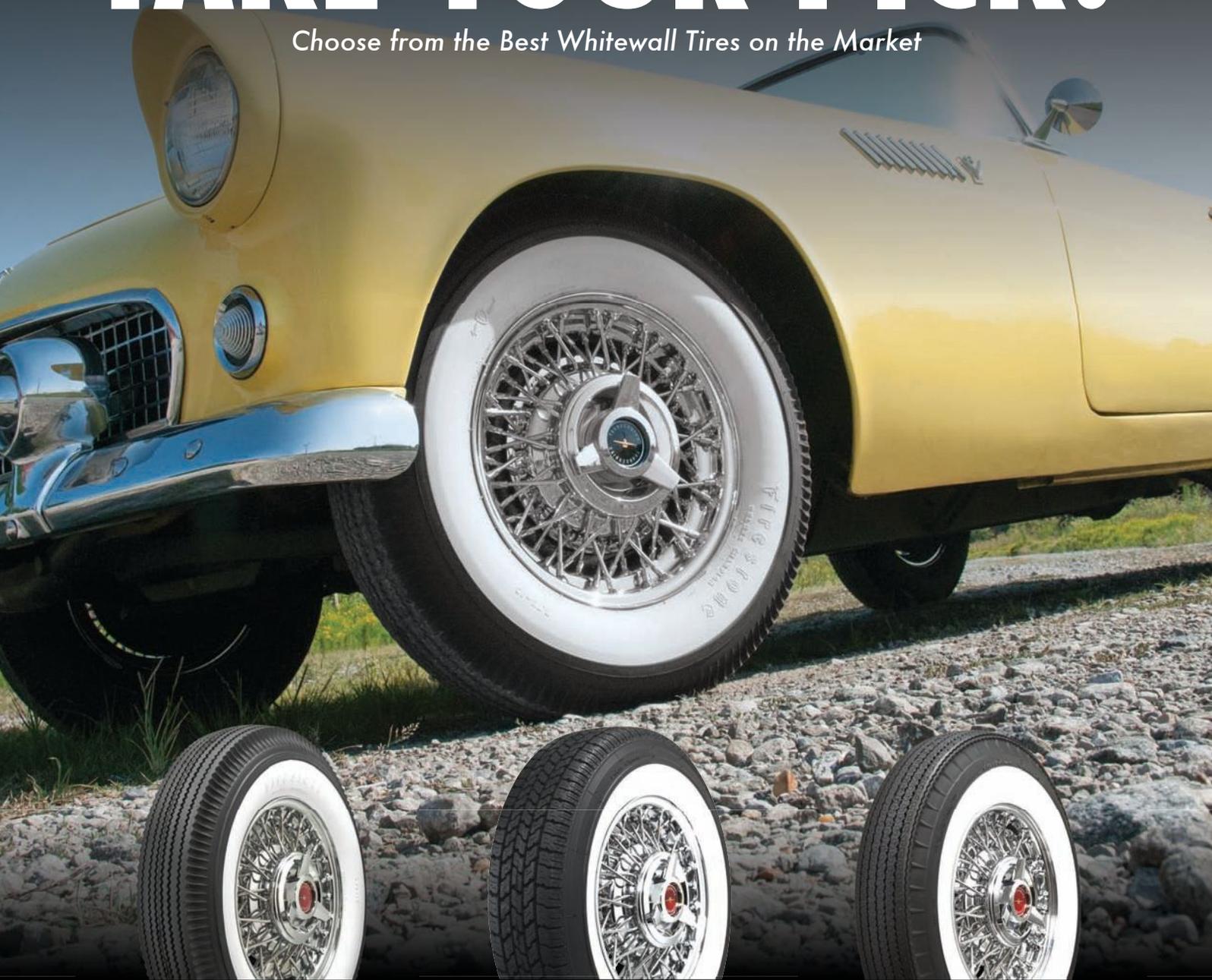
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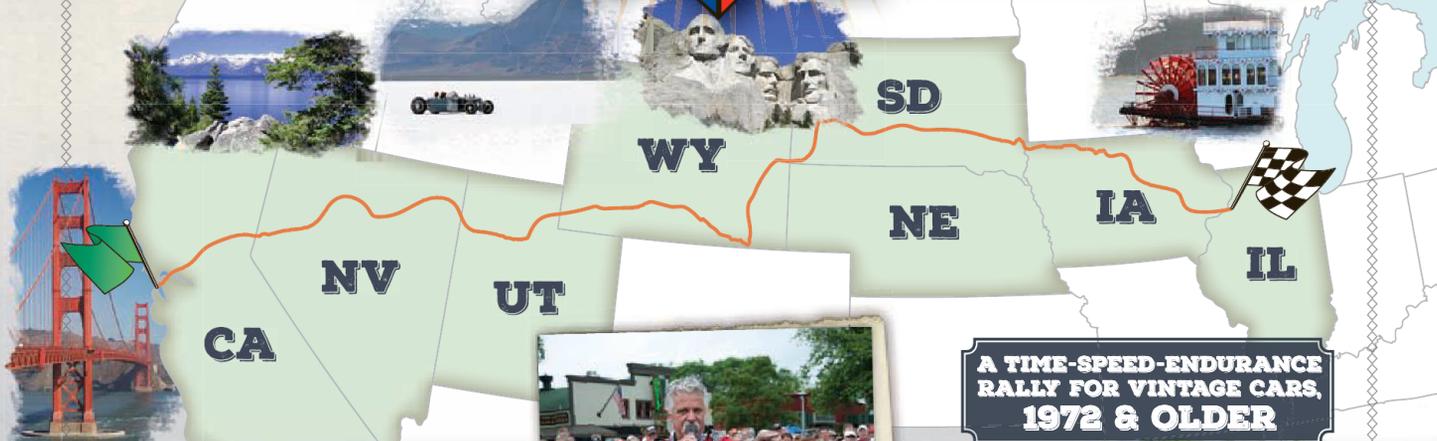
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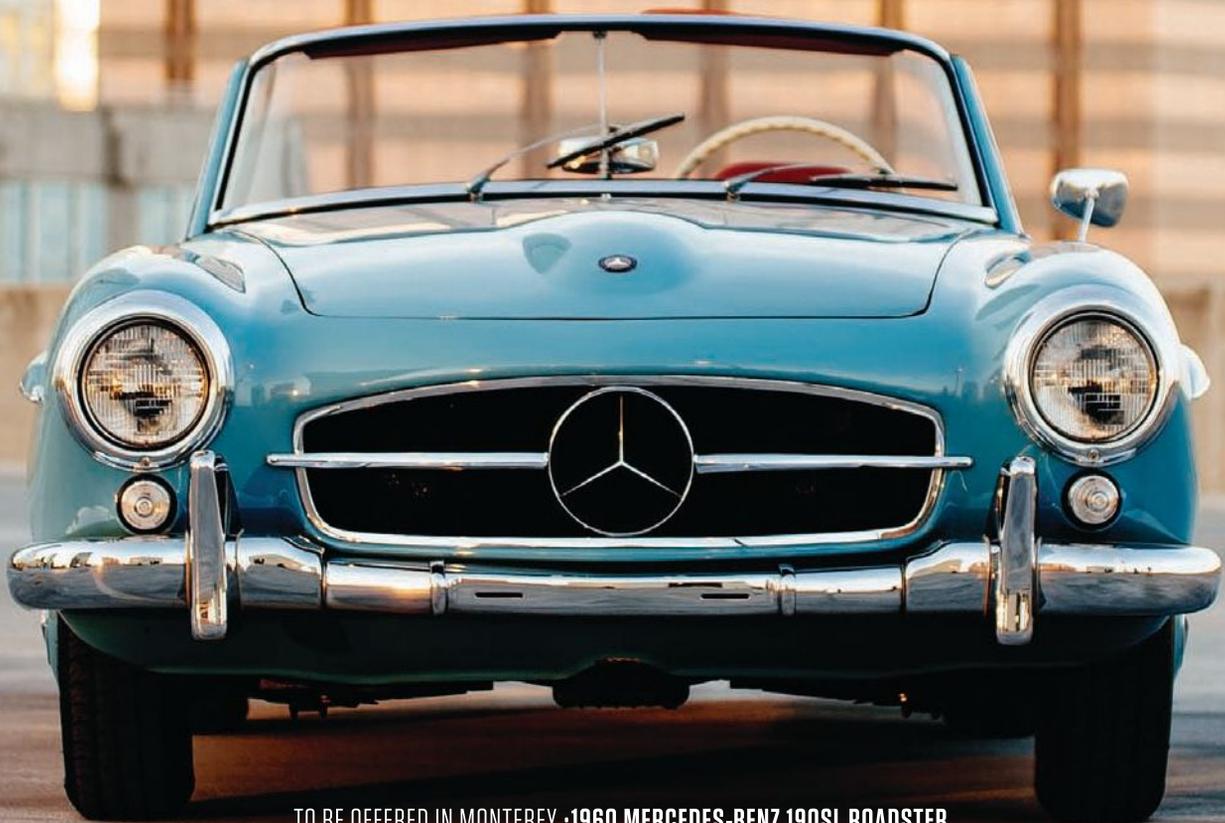
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“Automobiles with four doors simply don’t command the big dollars that the same model with two fewer doors would, and that’s a good thing.”

## richardlentinello

### The Four-Door Advantage

At a time when collector-car prices are rapidly exceeding the budget of what most old-car enthusiasts can afford, there is an alternative to make your classic-car dreams come true. It’s called the four-door sedan.

Cars with four doors, be they sedans or hardtops, offer so much more in terms of practicality and affordability. The extra pair of doors in the rear makes it easier for rear-seat passengers to get in and out of the car without having to contort their bodies in order to get past the folded front seat of a two-door car. And if you have small kids or grandkids that need to be fitted into a car seat, it’s so much easier to strap them in when you have a four-door car, as opposed to a two-door one where you have to lean in and stretch back from the front. And dogs like them, too, because of the larger rear side window that they can hang out of.

Then there’s the value equation. Automobiles with four doors simply don’t command the big dollars that the same model with two fewer doors would, and that’s a good thing. Imagine, you can own virtually the same exact car as a two-door hardtop, with the same front and rear end, the same engine and drivetrain, the same interior and instrument panel, and the same exact view out the windshield, for about half the cost. To me that’s a great tradeoff; 50 percent more doors for 50 percent less money. Makes sense, doesn’t it?

Styling wise, this is where many enthusiasts disagree. Many believe that two-door cars, especially in hardtop form, are simply better looking. To some degree, they are right due to a hardtop’s aesthetically superior proportions. But not all four-door cars are alike. There are some four-door models that actually look better than their sleeker two-door hardtop counterparts. And that’s because in some cases the added length that the two rear doors add to the car’s center section emboldens the car with a far more balanced appearance.

Take, for example, the early model Studebaker Larks. In two-door form, the Lark has a very stubby look about it, but with four doors it appears more slender, with a harmonious aspect.

The same applies to the restyled 1967-’71 Thunderbirds. While the two-door models certainly do have a smoother, more sporty appearance, the four-door models look more

upscale, more regal, and far more expensive. They have an air of high-class swankiness about them that the two-door models lack.

I have long been a huge fan of General Motors’ lineup of 1958 models, and have been since that spring day in 1958 when my parents came home with their brand new Oldsmobile Super 88 four-door sedan in gleaming white. I do admit that the two-door 1958 models, such as

Pontiac’s Bonneville, have a spectacular style about them, as do the Buick Super Riviera and Cadillac’s Coupe de Ville; however, the four-door design extends the roof line several inches more, which is just enough to give it a more equalized shape that, in turn, enhances its proportions.

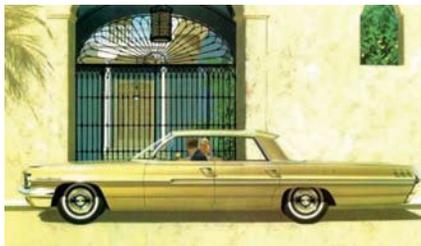
For big cars such as these 1958 models, especially GM’s long-body 1959-’60s cars and most of Chrysler’s Forward Look models of the late 1950s and early ’60s, the addition of two extra doors really does improve the relationship of the cars’ cabin section with that of the front and rear portions of the body for a more equalized silhouette.

Then there are the big square-body Continentals of the early 1960s; talk about a distinctive style. These Lincolns are beautiful automobiles, and with their door handles meeting in the center of the cabin, there truly isn’t a more balanced looking automobile, nor one as well composed.

On a smaller scale, but no less attractive, are the Corvair Sport Sedans. A 1965-’69 Monza Sport Sedan is, just as its name implies, one of the sportiest four-door sedans ever built. I even enjoy looking at the early 1960s Corvair 700 model sedans, with their distinctive vista-styled roof line. Speaking of vista roofs, the 1960-’61 Cadillac four-door vista-roof models are sensational looking automobiles, too, as are all the GM models of that era.

Other four-door sedan favorites of mine include the 1952-’54 Mercurys—especially the ’54 Monterey—and the ’57 Ford Fairlane. Yet perhaps the best integration of using four doors with a hardtop body of them all was that of the 1965-’69 Chrysler New Yorkers; the rear doors matched up to the C-pillar perfectly.

So which four-door sedan do you think looks more attractive than its two-door counterpart? 🐞



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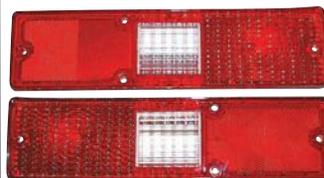
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## Wagon World

**THE AACA MUSEUM IS A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE PLANNING** on attending the Fall Meet in Hershey come October. The museum's special Station Wagon exhibit is about to end on October 11, so it's not too late to get a look at a large array of the wagons made popular in the 1950s when families began to own two cars. The station wagons were the family workhorse, synonymous with grocery shopping, summer vacations and countless car-pooling trips to school and camp. AACA's display features a large selection ranging from the 1952 Nash Rambler to the 1987 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham wagon. For more information, visit [www.aacamuseum.org](http://www.aacamuseum.org).

## Hemmings Concours d'Elegance

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** for September 25-27, as those are the dates of the 9th-annual Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance that will take place at the Saratoga Automobile Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York. This year's featured marques will include Ford Thunderbirds 1955-'71, Hudson, Packard, Chevrolet Mark IV "Big-Block" passenger cars and police cars



up to 1990. There will also be the annual pre-1973 factory-correct concours-quality cars and trucks classes. Visit [www.hemmings.com/events/concours](http://www.hemmings.com/events/concours) for more information.

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**3 • Monmouth County Concours d'Elegance**  
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**3-4 • Michigan Antique Festival**  
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**4 • Collector Car Show**  
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**7-10 • AACA Fall Eastern Meet**  
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**10-12 • HCCA Hershey Hangover**  
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**11 • VCCA All Chevrolet Car Show**  
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## Mid-Fifties Mixup

ALEXANDER ADAMES OF PANAMA RECENTLY SENT us a few photos of a stumper. The station wagon in the photos, which he had considered buying, carried the trim of a 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air, but the only two station wagons in the Bel Air trim level in 1956 were the two-door Nomad and the four-door Beauville. But this two-door obviously isn't a Nomad.

It could be a well-done mashup: Some enterprising enthusiast could have combined the Bel Air/Nomad trim with a model 210 or 150 Handyman to create a never-was phantom car. Or, given that Alexander and the wagon both reside in Panama, the wagon could have been an export-only version that we never saw in the States.

We've asked Alexander to keep us informed should he buy it or find out any more about it from the seller.



## RE: Waxed Woodie

MANY THANKS TO THE DOZENS OF YOU WHO WROTE, EMAILED AND CALLED TO LET us know that the Studebaker woodie wagon in the photo that Craig Whatley sent along for HCC #131 does indeed still exist.

One of a number of prototypes that ended up in Studebaker's graveyard at its old proving grounds, the woodie spent a few decades rotting away in obscurity until 1980, when a group of Studebaker enthusiasts recovered it and subsequently donated it to the Studebaker National Museum. A multi-year restoration resulted in the car now seen on display in the museum.

The longer story of the woodie's rescue and restoration can be found in the June 2012 issue of *Turning Wheels*, the Studebaker Drivers Club's newsletter. And thanks goes to SDC member Larry Metz for sending along the photo of the wagon as it appears today.

## Ford Poplar

OKAY, MAYBE THE PICKUP in this photo that Charles Harrison of Berea, Kentucky, took isn't made of poplar, but we still had fun making the joke. Charles took the photo last year at a car show in McKee, Kentucky, but said he wasn't able to get any details on it.



"I never got around to talking to the elderly gentleman who spent years fabricating this truck," he wrote. "However, word has it he says the two problems he has run into is keeping enough soap

on the wooden hinges on the doors to keep them from squeaking and he thinks insurance could be a problem. Could he be thinking of termites?"

If by chance we have the builder of this Model A among our audience, get in touch and let us know exactly which wood you used.

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](mailto:dstrohl@hemmings.com). For more Lost & Found, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>.

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## Rocky Mountain Highs

**MECUM'S DENVER AUCTION TOOK PLACE THIS PAST JUNE AND SAW A SELL-through rate of over 60 percent, for a total of nearly \$11 million. Several original American classics were present, and two that went home with new owners were a 1960 Nash Metropolitan convertible, with only 400 miles since its restoration and a 1948 Lincoln Continental three-speed, with the 305-cu. in. engine. Both sold for \$21,000. One of the top sales, though, was a 1957 Pontiac Safari Wagon that featured the Tri-Power engine and automatic transmission; the hammer dropped for an impressive \$67,000. For a full report of Mecum's June results in Denver, visit [www.mecum.com](http://www.mecum.com).**

## PA. Autumn Auctions

**OCTOBER IS HERE, AND ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE** Keystone State, as Carlisle and Hershey will both feature auctions. Carlisle's will take place October 1-2 during the Fall Carlisle Show, and all consignments are free unless sold. A week later, on October 8-9 at Hershey, RM Sotheby's will feature an auction at the Hershey Lodge that will run in conjunction with the AACA Eastern Fall Meet. Consignments are still being accepted, and if you plan on selling your car or bidding at these events, please visit [www.carlisleevents.com](http://www.carlisleevents.com) and [www.rmauctions.com](http://www.rmauctions.com) for more information.

### AUCTION PROFILE

**THE HOLIDAY COUPE WAS INTRODUCED IN** 1949 and helped usher in the pillarless door design among the major car producers. 1950 saw the model 88 receive a one-piece curved windshield, and the deluxe models had foam rubber seat cushions, robe rails, stainless steel gravel shields and some extra chrome moldings.

This particular example was at one time a part of Art Astor's collection before it joined the Andrews Collection. It had undergone an extensive nine-year restoration that included new-old-stock components. The engine, one of the "Rocket 8s," is a 303.7-cu.in. V-8 rated at 135hp with the four-speed Hydra-Matic automatic transmission. The Holiday Coupe or "Hardtop," as it would often be called, was among the rarest of the 88s, with only 12,682 produced in 1950. This car is a great example of Americana and was authentic throughout, thus it rightly sold slightly higher than book value.



<b>CAR</b>	1950 Oldsmobile 88 Deluxe Holiday Coupe	<b>LOT NUMBER</b>	207
<b>AUCTIONEER</b>	RM Sotheby's	<b>CONDITION</b>	1-
<b>LOCATION</b>	Fort Worth, Texas	<b>RESERVE</b>	No
<b>DATE</b>	May 2, 2015	<b>AVERAGE SELLING PRICE</b>	\$57,000
		<b>SELLING PRICE</b>	\$60,500

# OCTOBER

## Calendar

### 1-2 • Fall Carlisle

Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-960-6400  
carlisleauctions.com

### 5 • Bonhams

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • 212-461-6514  
www.bonhams.com/auctions/22793/

### 8-9 • RM Sotheby's

Hershey, Pennsylvania • 519-352-4575  
www.rmauctions.com/hf15/hershey

### 8-10 • Mecum Auctions

Schaumburg, Illinois • 262-275-5050  
www.mecum.com

### 8-10 • Vicari Auctions

Biloxi, Mississippi • 504-264-2277  
vicariauction.com

### 11 • Morphy Auctions

Denver, Pennsylvania • 877-968-8880  
morphyauctions.com

### 16-17 • The Branson Auction

Branson, Missouri • 800-335-3063  
www.bransonauktion.com

### 17 • Specialty Auto Auctions

Loveland, Colorado • 970-266-9561  
www.saaasinc.com



## Russo Roundup

**NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, WAS THE SITE**

of Russo & Steele's June auction, which saw a 50 percent sell-through, with \$7.2 million in sales, up 71 percent from the 2014 gathering. This was the third year Russo has held an auction at this venue, and among the American Classics that were on the block was this rare 1948 Willys Overland Jeepster. Meticulously restored, it was equipped with the flathead "Go-Devil" engine and finished in Fiesta Yellow paint with black appointments. It sold for \$29,700. For a full list of results and upcoming auctions, visit [www.russoandsteele.com](http://www.russoandsteele.com).



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

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## Firebird Flair

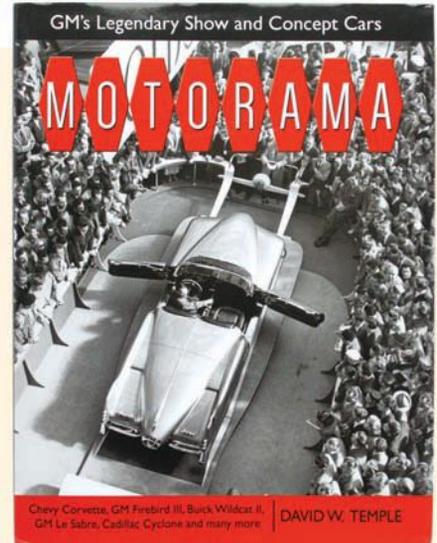
**TAPE STRIPES AND BOLD GRAPHIC TREATMENTS WERE** all the rage from the muscle car era through the late 1970s, and Pontiac gave its flagship Firebird one of the coolest graphics ever: the hood bird, or “screaming chicken.” Hanging a real Firebird hood on your wall isn’t practical, but this 18 x 18-inch sign certainly is. It’s made of durable powder-coated 24-gauge steel, and comes pre-drilled and riveted for ease of hanging. Best part? It’s made in the USA. Cost: \$34.99.

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## Motorama

**ONE OF THE GREAT AUTOMOTIVE** phenomena of decades past was when General Motors pre-viewed the future at auto shows from coast to coast through its Motorama traveling exhibitions. The shows debuted the Chevrolet Corvette (and later, the Corvair, initially a Nomad-ized Corvette coupe), the original GM Le Sabre, the first Firebird dream cars and a lot more. The author, David Temple, lays out Motorama’s heritage in this big, 208-page hardcover volume, illustrated with 370 mono-chrome and color photos, many of which are archival and have never been published. Temple is a recognized expert on the subject matter, and the final result shows why. Motorama was magic, and this book does it proper justice. Cost: \$39.95 -By Jim Donnelly

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## On A Mission

**GO AHEAD, ADMIT IT. YOU LOVED** this movie. In fact, you probably thought it was one of the coolest chase movies ever. We think so. We therefore present this 1/64th-scale quartet of diecast models from Greenlight Collectibles, representing four stars from the original orgy of car destruction that was the *Blues Brothers*. They’re the first Bluesmobile, an ex-police car, a Chicago Police patrol car, another cruiser from the Illinois State Police, and the speaker-mounted Bluesmobile that drew a turnaway crowd to the band’s infamous final concert. For the scale, detail and proportioning are solidly done. The packaging is attractive, reflecting a cinema film reel. Only thing we would have changed here is to add a certain Winnebago and Ford Pinto station wagon to the set. Police Car Models in Carson City, Nevada, sells them. Cost: \$23.95. -By Jim Donnelly

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**THE EARLY 1960S WAS FORD'S ERA OF "TOTAL PERFORMANCE," AND THE RACIEST**

full-sized Ford was undoubtedly the 1961 Galaxie Starliner, with its graceful arched roofline and three C-pillar "star" trims. England's Brooklin Collection has modeled this hardtop in Cambridge Blue Poly over a matching blue interior.

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**RECENT ADVANCES IN DIGITAL IMAGE MANIPULATION SOFTWARE** have opened new avenues of creative expression for technically savvy artists: No longer are they bound to the physical brush and canvas. Photoshop is the playground of Pasadena, California-based artist Steven Erler, who calls the complex images he creates "Auto-Visuals." These pieces include both commissioned automotive portraits based on actual cars, and his fanciful "Cars That Never Were" series of creatively imagined what-if automobiles.

"The average 'portrait,' based on a client's car, takes about 40 hours to create," Steven explains. "It begins with a series of photographs that I upload into Photoshop; I begin by removing the car image from the rest of the photo. I'll drop in a series of lighting directional backings to see which angle I'll use to create the light source on the car; this determines how reflections on glass, chrome, etc. will look when the image is finished. The majority of the time is spent on detail

work, like removing the original reflections in chrome or body panels and touching up or adding realistic-looking shadows consistent with the light source. Three layers are added to create a reflective, 'tinted' look for windows, and interior components will be rebuilt under the glass layers to look correct and realistic."

Steven's appealing "Cars That Never Were" series is created the same way, but he'll stretch a wheelbase, add wood paneling or alter a roofline to complement the original design and period of the vehicle, and finally set them in an appropriate background, or even add contemporary celebrities for fun.

Archive-quality, limited-edition giclée prints are available in image-specific sizes ranging from 14 x 24 to 18 x 24 inches, and private commissions are available. Cost: Prints start at \$275.

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WWW.AUTO-VISUALS.COM



1956 CADILLAC ELDORADO



1956 CONTINENTAL MARK II



1970 FORD MUSTANG MACH 1



1941 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL  
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1954 PACKARD CARIBBEAN ESTATE



1956 CHRYSLER IMPERIAL  
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solar radiation light. This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

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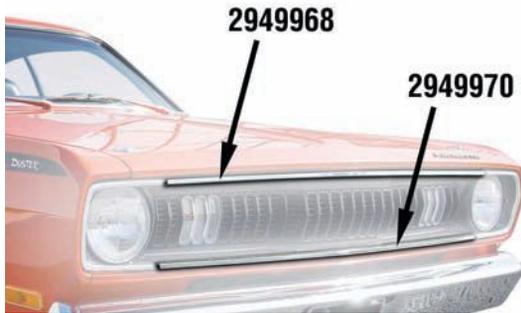
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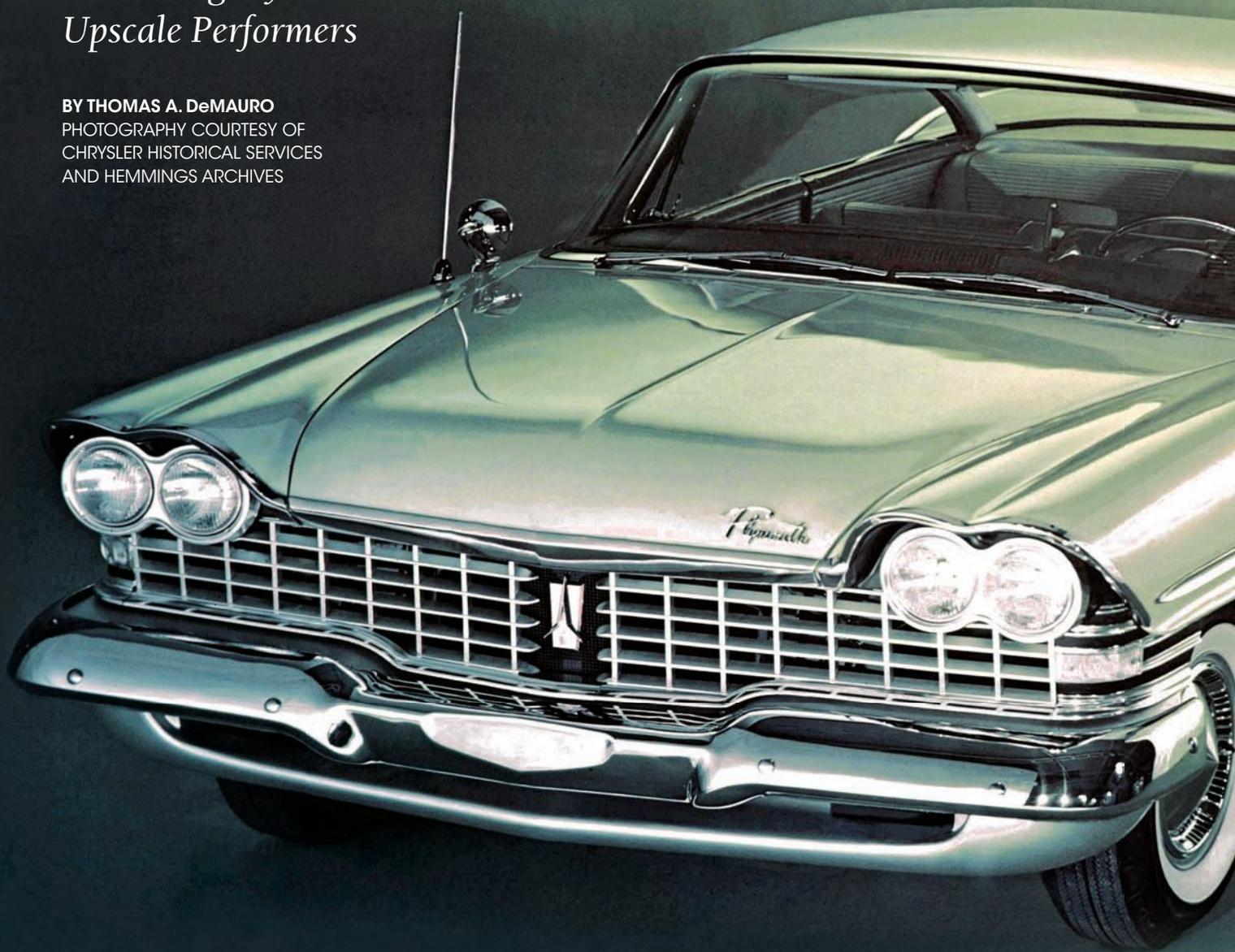
# Forward Look Furys of the '50s

*Examining Plymouth's 1956 to 1959*

*Upscale Performers*

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF  
CHRYSLER HISTORICAL SERVICES  
AND HEMMINGS ARCHIVES





1959

A poor sales year for most automakers, 1956 was especially disappointing for Chrysler following the success of Virgil Exner's Forward Look 1955 models. Having slid from its third-place spot in industry sales a few years before, Plymouth, Chrysler's top-selling division, was intent on regaining it.

For 1956, "Flight-Sweep" styling showed consumers that Plymouth was more than just a manufacturer of low-priced models. The mid-season introduction of the Fury would further cultivate a new image aimed at buyers who were "Young in Heart," as the ad copy read.

The diligent effort to field its own luxury/performance limited-edition model, despite corporate resistance, finally came to fruition, and in January of 1956 the Fury was introduced at the Chicago Auto Show. Offered in a single paint color and with gold side trim and grille, a special V-8 engine from Canadian Chryslers, heavy-duty suspension, dual exhaust and a standard in-dash tach, the Fury was a statement for this builder of normally conservative cars.

Also in January, a Fury broke the U.S. "flying mile" speed record for its displacement class at Daytona, running 124.01 MPH under NASCAR supervision. Though during its abbreviated inaugural model year just 4,485 Furys were built, positive press and buyer acceptance paved the way for the next.

"Suddenly, its 1960!" was the 1957 Plymouth tagline, and the division certainly appeared to have broken the time barrier when its models were compared to its taller, boxier competition. Exner's Forward Look really hit its stride with heavily revised lower, longer and wider models. The fins grew, and the company maintained that those "Directional Stabilizers" aided stability at highway speeds.

Chrysler redesigned its bodies and introduced Torsion-Aire ride and the three-speed automatic TorqueFlite (Imperials got it





1957

not to mention premature rust problems. The damage to its reputation haunted Chrysler for the next few years. Overall market share dipped to near 14 percent, and though Plymouth retained third place, its sales pace was off by over 300,000 units. Fury sales dipped to just 5,303 cars.

To close out the decade, the Fury became its own line in 1959, with a two-door and four-door hardtop and a four-door sedan offered. High horsepower and distinctive styling were

in the latter part of the 1956 sales season), and the gamble paid off—initially. Road testers gushed over the styling, handling and sure-shifting optional transmission, and GM designers hurried to revamp their 1959 proposals.

Chrysler's first-quarter earnings were its highest ever, and overall market share rebounded to over 18 percent for 1957, its highest since the early 1950s, while GM receded to its lowest in the last few years. Plymouth recaptured third place, and with the benefit of a full sales season and its styling and engineering upgrades, Fury production rose to 7,438 units.

The rejoicing didn't last long, however. Most automakers' sales suffered in 1958, but Chrysler's reversal of fortune was both swift and decisive. According to a 1958 *Fortune* magazine article, the automaker's first-quarter earnings were the lowest in company history. In the span of one year, it had its record-setting best and worst quarters.

An economic recession was partly to blame, but the rush to market with so many innovations resulted in build-quality issues,

maintained in the new Sport Fury in the familiar two-door hardtop and a new convertible—the first since the 1956 introduction. By model-year end, Chrysler's overall market share hovered in the low teens, Plymouth held onto third place in sales, and the Sport Fury exceeded 23,800 in sales.

Now let's take a closer look at what Furys of the Fifties had to offer.

### 1956

With a then-premium price for Plymouth of \$2,866, the upscale Belvedere-based Fury was only offered in Eggshell White, and unique exterior visual cues included a gold anodized aluminum color-sweep along each side and a gold accent in the grille.

Plymouth mostly retained the frontal appearance of the highly successful 1955 models. The 1956 incarnations had a new hood ornament, and "Plymouth" block lettering was added to the leading edge of the hood. The center of the grille area now featured a small rectangular grille with a box pattern in gold and a "V" emblem to denote V-8. Though there was a subtle hint of tailfins for 1955, for 1956 they



1957

became more pronounced with a distinct upward sweep. Tail-lamps grew taller and thinner, and backup lamps were larger. The new Fury was 204.8-inches long, 74.6 inches wide and 58.8-inches high—about an inch lower than other Plymouths.

The 303-cu.in. displacement V-8 employed polyspherical combustion chambers that realized some of the benefits of the hemispherical design offered in the Imperials, Chryslers, De Sotos and Dodges, but instead employed a single rocker shaft on each cylinder head to allay the higher production cost and weight of the hemi's dual rocker-shaft valvetrain.

The 303 featured 9.25:1 compression, a 3.81/3.31-inch bore/stroke, domed pistons, a high-performance solid-lifter cam and heavy-duty valve springs. Fuel was provided by a Carter WCFB four-barrel carburetor, dual-breaker distributor and a low-restriction dual-exhaust system. The result was 240hp at 4,800 RPM and 310-lb.ft. of torque at 2,800 RPM.

Later, a dealer-installed package became available for the 303 that added dual four-barrel carburetors, new air cleaners, an aluminum intake manifold and a hot camshaft. Output was boosted to 270 hp.

The remainder of the drivetrain consisted of a heavy-duty clutch for the standard three-speed manual transmission and an optional PowerLite two-speed automatic transmission with new pushbutton actuation. The rear end housed 3.73 gears and other ratios were optional.

Built on a 115-inch wheelbase and featuring a 58.8-inch front and 58.9-inch rear track, the Fury was developed for "superior handling at all speeds and in cornering." It had heavy-duty front coil and rear leaf springs and a "high-rate" front anti-roll bar. Beefy 11-inch "Safe-Guard" drum brakes, which employed two wheel cylinders in each drum up front, were paired with conventional single-wheel-cylinder brakes at the rear, and 15x5.5-inch Safety-Rim wheels with 7.10x15 nylon cord tires.

Though oddly placed just to the right and above the steering column but low in the instrument panel, a 6,000 RPM tachometer with "Fury" and cross-flags on its face was standard. Since it

claimed the real estate for the ignition switch, it was moved to the left, thereby displacing the wiper switch, which was relocated...to the passenger side!

Foam rubber seat and back cushions were treated to "woven luxury fabrics." Beige bolsters were upholstered in "breathable"-grained vinyl and the carpet was black. Tan and black cloth panels with gold metallic thread adorned the seats and door panels and the armrests were integrated into the latter.

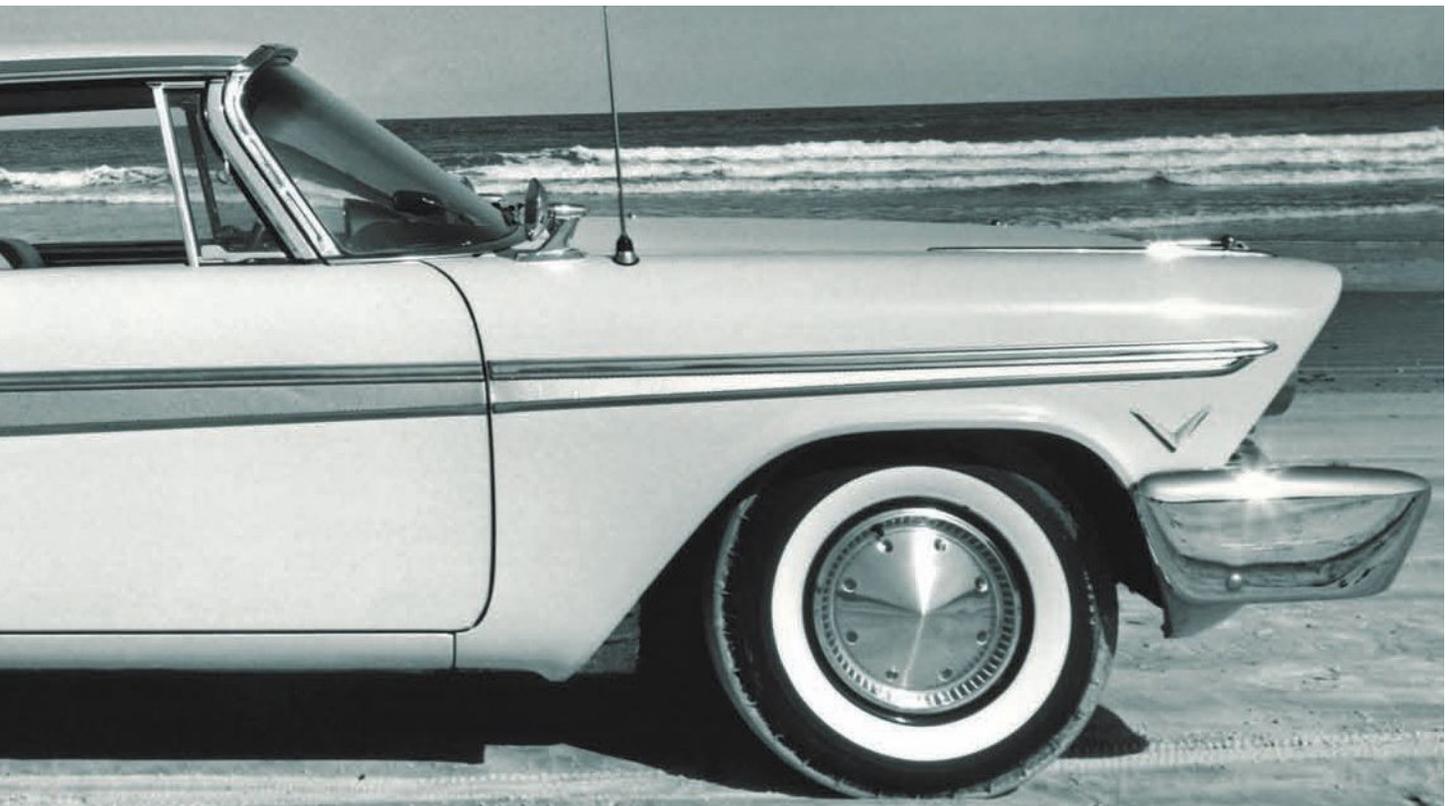
Rounding out the Fury's comprehensive standard-equipment list of body, interior, engine and chassis enhancements came backup lamps; variable-speed windshield wipers; rain shields; rear bumper guards; bright drip moldings; dual exhaust deflectors; windshield washer; prismatic-type rearview mirror and dual outside rearview mirrors. Power steering, brakes, seat and windows comprised some of the available options.

## 1957

This year, the Forward Look took the lower, longer, wider philosophy to the extreme and the public adored it. The Fury's all-new body was longer at 206 inches, nearly 5 inches wider at 79.4 inches and over 5 inches lower at 53.5 inches, and it rode on a 3-inch longer wheelbase at 118 inches.

Sand Dune White was the only color choice, and revised versions of the familiar anodized gold grille and aluminum side sweeps returned. Hooded "Double Header" lights provided the impression of quad headlamps, but the inners were parking lamps/turn signals. The horizontal-bar grille ran completely across the front end and wrapped into the front fenders. The bumper kicked up in the middle and also at either end with "wing guards." The valance beneath it featured vertical air intakes. An emblem was centered in the grille, "Plymouth" block letters embellished the hood, and bright ornaments rode atop the fenders. The heavy brow, raised bumper center and wide grille gave the Fury an angry scowl, which implied that it was prepared for all competitors.

A "V" on the front fenders denoted V-8, the graceful wheelwells were revised. Flight-Sweep styling, with its continuous line





1958

from the forward-angled nose to the upswept larger fins, remained evident. The Fury's side trim accentuated the lowness of the body, but also the height of the rear. Its roofline was simple and elegant with thin A- and C-pillars that provided "Control Tower visibility" with 29 percent more glass area.

"Fury" script returned to each rear quarter panel, and though the taillamps were similar in shape, filling those fins made them larger than those of 1956. Backup lamps were mounted in chrome housings beneath them. Somewhat like the rakish roof, the deck lid descended in a gentle slope to meet the concave rear panel. Like the front bumper on Furies, the wing guards on the outer ends of the rear bumper were standard. The center of the bumper dipped down to accommodate the license plate, and that area was decorated with vertical lines.

The Fury's new 318 cu.in. V-8 featured 9.25:1 compression, Poly cylinder heads, high-performance camshaft, two four-barrel Carter carbs, dual-breaker distributor and 290hp at 5,400 RPM and 325-lb.ft. of torque at 4,000 RPM. The famed TorqueFlite three-speed automatic transmission became an option and connected to 3.36 rear gears, but 3.54s were used with the standard three-speed manual. Other ratios were optional.

The new "Safety Power" boxed-steel perimeter frame was stronger and wider. Tread width was increased to 60.9 inches and 59.6 inches (and would remain the same through 1959). Torsion-Aire suspension replaced the front coil springs. Control arms, torsion bars, ball-joints and an anti-roll bar comprised the system in front. New "outrigger mounted" rear leaf springs also located the rear end more toward the front of the springs to reduce axle hop. The revised suspension was designed to decrease squat on launching, dive on braking and sway in the turns. It also had a lower center of gravity.

Overall steering ratio was 26.8:1, with 4.8 turns to lock but was reduced to 19.8 and 3.5 turns to lock with optional power steering. The diameter of the wheels was reduced to 14-inches, but widened 1/2-inch with 14x6-inch wheels becoming standard with 8.00x14-inch Nylon 4-ply tires.

Wider "lounge chair" seats were upholstered in new patterns, and the instrument panel was revised. Along with all the standard Fury items from 1956, except for the tachometer, this year's model added the two-tone steering wheel, safety padding for instrument panel, padded sun visors and "sweep-second self-regulating watch." The base price for all this Mopar was just under \$3,000.

## 1958

Buckskin Beige and trimmed in gold, the 1958 Fury was subtly revised visually.

Actual quad headlamps were introduced, and the parking lamps were incorporated into the turn signals above the head-



1958

lamps. The "V" moved to the center of the grille, an emblem replaced the hood letters and the fender-top embellishments were revised. The lower valance air-intake insert resembled the grille.

Rear quarter-panel "Fury" script moved into the aluminum panel and replaced the three bright trim lines of 1957. Taillamps became smaller and round, but they protruded far enough to be seen from the side as well. Plymouth lettering replaced the decklid emblem, and the backup lamp was moved to the bumper.

The Dual Fury V-800 engine was last year's two-four-barrel 290-hp 318-cu.in. V-8 and was standard in the Fury. Optional was the new 350-cu.in. Golden Commando V-8, which featured a deep-skirt block, 4.062 x 3.375-inch bore/stroke, wedge chamber cylinder heads, a 10:1 compression ratio, a high-performance hydraulic lifter cam and two four-barrel carbs. It developed 305hp at 5,000 RPM and 370-lb.ft. of torque at 3,600 RPM. A 315-hp version of the 350 with Bendix Electrojector fuel injection was a \$500 option. It was offered briefly, few were built, and they were later recalled. Most of the fuel-injection units were replaced with carburetors.

The differential was fitted with 3.73 gears when paired with the standard three-speed manual and 3.31 gears with the Torque-Flite transmission. Other ratios were optional, as was the new Sure-Grip differential.

In the cabin, the speedometer was updated for 150 MPH, and a new star pattern was used on its bright surround. Interior featured multi-tone brown and beige appointments with a brown carpet. The base price of the Fury rose to just over \$3,000. The 1958 models regained notoriety, thanks to the Stephen King novel and the movie *Christine* both of which were released in 1983.

## 1959

For 1959, the Fury was expanded to its own line, so the new Sport Fury perpetuated the traditional luxury/sport model in a two-door hardtop and a new convertible. For the first time, the Fury and now the new Sport Fury were available in a variety of single and two-tone color combinations.

The revised anodized aluminum grille now had an egg crate-like pattern that was split via a new emblem floating on a black

background. It featured a rendering of the Mayflower to depict Plymouth's tradition with a stylized missile above it to represent its "pace setting styling and engineering."

New "double-barrel" fenders featured contouring around the headlamps that gave the subtle impression of shotgun barrels. The shape of the front wheelwells was also revised, thanks to the wraparound grille with parking/turn signal lamps that were now visible from the side as well. A new "airscoop" front bumper and lower valance provided a jet air-intake effect according to Plymouth. Identifying script on the driver-side of the hood replaced the central Plymouth lettering and emblem of the previous year.

The Fury had double full-length side molding, with the lower portion wrapping around the back of the car. Optional Sportone added an anodized aluminum panel between the two trim pieces, and a contrasting color could be had on the roof if desired.

The Sport Fury trim differed from the Fury. Its revised side spear (now silver anodized instead of the previous years' gold) widened and curved upward at the rear quarter panels to follow the airfoil fin line, but it did wrap around the rear like the Fury. A Forward Look medallion was also added to each rear quarter panel of the Sport Fury.

Recontoured rear quarter panels featured "airfoil" fins that were thinner, more upright, had a somewhat gentler upsweep, were laid back and dressed with fluted molding. Chrome-housed "Ovalight" clusters featuring the taillamp, brake lamp and backup lamp (optional) were set into a concave rear panel. The decklid and bumper were completely different, and the former now carried the central ridge of the hood to the rear, while the latter was thinner and included twin vertical guards. "Plymouth" script adorned the driver's side of the decklid in place of the previous year's central block letters. A gold "V" denoted V-8 power.

The sport decklid tire-cover stamping was standard on the Sport Fury and optional on other models. And buyers of Sport Fury convertibles had a choice of top colors: blue, green, white or black.

Now that the Fury became its own model line, its standard V-8 was the 230-hp, two-barrel, single-exhaust version of the Fury V-800 318-cu.in. engine. The standard Sport Fury engine was the dual-exhaust, 9:1 compression 318, now with a single four-barrel

and 260hp at 4,400 RPM and 345 lb-ft of torque at 2,800 RPM, down from the 290hp dual-four-barrel version of the previous year.

Though the standard engine took a step back in power, the optional 361-cu.in. Golden Commando 395, the further development of the 1958 350 wedge-type cylinder head engine, moved forward. It maintained the 305hp rating of 1958, but achieved it at a lower 4,600 RPM. Torque increased to 395-lb.ft. at 3,000 RPM—hence its name, and it did it with new camshaft timing and single four-barrel carburetor.

The two-speed PowerFlite transmission was offered optionally for the base V-800 318 engine; the TorqueFlite was matched to 2.93 or 3.31 rear gears; and cars equipped with the standard manual transmission had 3.54 gears.

Torsion bars were shortened about 2 inches, and the anchor points moved forward for 1959, which helped increase passenger foot space. An eccentric adjusting cam replaced shims for dialing in front-end alignment and the balljoints were revised.

Swivel front seats were new for 1959 and came standard on the Sport Fury, as did the deluxe two-tone padded steering wheel. A new instrument cluster was employed, and various revised interior colors and textures were available. The Sport Fury also featured a dash nameplate mounted on the glovebox door on which the owner's name would be engraved. It said "Sport Fury Built Especially For ---- By Plymouth."

To keep the car level with heavy loads, optional Constant Level Torsion-Aire augmented the rear leaf springs with rubberized nylon air springs, a low-pressure reservoir and height control valve added to the rear suspension. The air springs were inflated via an engine-driven compressor through a high-pressure reservoir in the engine bay. It could only be ordered on V-8 automatic transmission-equipped Plymouths.

The optional Mirromatic rearview mirror dimmed when it picked up the bright lights of cars in the rear, and the automatic beam changer dimmed the headlamps when oncoming headlamps were detected.

The Fury two-door hardtop was priced at \$2,714, Sport Fury two-door hardtop at \$2,927 and the Sport Fury convertible at \$3,125.

The dawn of the 1960s would bring unit body construction and dramatic styling changes to the Fury, but that's another story for another time. 🚗

1959



# Sport Fury Sensation

*The Forward Look beauty  
of the 1959 Plymouth Sport Fury*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



**T**hey had an air of freshness about them unlike any automobile design that came before it. They were long and low and had bright cabins, due to their slim C-pillars and large expanse of glass. And they were given the most sensational-looking tailfins ever created. These were the Forward Look models by Chrysler.

Introduced for the 1955 model year, and ending with the 1961 models (although the 1962 models looked about the same), the Forward Look designs were a huge hit with the public, especially when the very modern 1957 models were released. In fact, it was the striking 1957 cars that caused such a stir within General Motors that all five divisions scrambled to redesign their entire lineup of cars with a similar Forward Look style, with the resulting outcome being the equally long, low and wide 1959 GM models.

But nothing could compare to the contemporary extravagance of the Forward Look designs.

Under the direction of creative genius and father of the Forward Look, Virgil Exner, one of the best-looking Plymouths of all time was the 1959 Fury. It embodied all the advance styling features of the Forward Look fashion without being over the top. It was advanced by design, yet somewhat conservative in style, especially when compared to the more flamboyant 1959 Dodge.



Like the other 1957 Chrysler, De Soto and Dodge models, the equally contemporary looking Plymouths helped propel Chrysler's star of the low-priced field back into the number-three overall sales slot, a position it held firmly from 1932 to 1954. The 1959 models strengthened Plymouth's number-three ranking, with a total production of 458,261 automobiles; no doubt that sales figure was aided by their elaborate yet clean, cutting-edge shape.

Another component of Plymouth's sales increase for the 1959 model year was the introduction of a new model, the Sport Fury. This was now Plymouth's top-level model and was available in only two distinct body styles: a two-door hardtop and a convertible. By the end of that year's production cycle, some 17,867 Sport Fury hardtops were produced, and 5,990 convertibles. Plymouth clearly had another winner on its hands, as many buyers felt it was worth it to pay the \$213 premium to drive around in a Plymouth that was embellished with additional

trim and a powerful V-8 engine.

The Sport Fury's engine choices were either a 317.6-cu.in. V-8 (commonly referred to as the "318") or the Golden Commando 395. The 318 had a 3.91-inch bore and a 3.31-inch stroke, which helped it develop 260 horsepower. The 395 (better known as the "361") displaced 360.8 cubic inches due to its larger 4.12-inch bore and longer 3.38-inch stroke, which resulted in a mighty 305 horsepower. Its name is derived from its torque rating of 395-pound feet of twisting muscle. The 395 is known as a Mopar B-series, or "Wedge," engine, due to the wedge shape of its combustion chambers. Both engines were equipped with single Carter AFB four-barrel carburetors and higher lift camshafts; however, the Golden Commando 395 was also fitted with a dual-breaker distributor, super-strong forged connecting rods, forged camshaft and a deep-skirted block for added strength.

One enthusiast who always loved the Forward Look Plym-



The Sport Fury for 1959 was outfitted with several distinct features, including the unique upswept exterior side trim and the half-padded steering wheel. Besides the Deluxe radio, pushbuttons were also used to engage the three-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission.

mouths is Richard Koch of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. We featured the restoration of Richard's 1959 Belvedere in HCC #128 and #129. In addition to the Belvedere, he also owns a red-and-white 1959 Sport Fury and a 1960 De Soto Adventurer four-door sedan. As we said, Richard loves '59 Plymouths. "I like all the finned cars designed by Virgil Exner," Richard enthuses. "Their low profile and Forward Look have always intrigued me. And with the 1959 Sport Fury, I have a special fondness for its swivel seat, the Sport Deck trunk lid and the power of the 361-cu.in. engine."

Riding on a 118-inch wheelbase, the Sport Fury hardtop hit the scales at 3,475 pounds. Its suspension featured Chrysler's excellent-riding torsion bar system up front and a solid axle in the

rear, suspended via leaf springs. For the 1959 models, Chrysler engineers shortened the length of the torsion bars, which resulted in better handling and flatter cornering. There was also the option of an air suspension system fitted to the rear only; called Constant-Level, it cost an extra \$88.

Of course, one of the Plymouth's most interesting mechanical components, one that fascinates onlookers today more than ever, is the pushbutton control for the transmission. Although a three-speed manual was standard, the original owner who ordered this car paid an extra \$227 and went with the bulletproof three-speed TorqueFlite transmission.

So just what makes a Sport Fury look different from a standard Fury? Well, truth be told, not much. The Sport Fury did not have any special "Sport Fury" emblem or stylized script badging; only its distinctive and larger side trim made it stand apart from a standard Fury. Perhaps the best way of knowing if a car is a Fury or a Sport Fury is by its VIN tag. The Sport Fury's official factory code was "MP2P," with the letter "P" indicating that it was a premium model. The standard Fury model was an "MP2H," with the "H" signifying it as a high-line model. This model designation is stamped on the VIN tag under the word "MODEL."

When looking at the 1959 Plymouth from the rear, the addition of the Sport Deck, which is nothing more than a fake spare tire cover in the center of the trunk lid, really adds to the car's distinctive character, which is why it featured prominently in Plymouth promotional material. They wrote: "Rear Sport Deck is another fine car feature entirely new to low-priced cars! This is but one of many advances that distinguish the new, youthful Plymouth for '59. Modern Fury styling emphasizes the longer, lower look and gives every '59 Plymouth a dash and distinction never before seen in cars priced down in the low-priced field!"

All of Chrysler's Forward Look models are held in high regard today, not only because of their striking shapes but because



Equipped with the Golden Commando 395, this 360.8-cu.in. V-8, with its wedge-shaped combustion chambers, produces 305hp.

there are so few of them remaining when compared to GM and Fords of the same years. Yet, what makes our feature car extra special is the fact that it's mostly original, and had been very well preserved by its previous owners. Yes, that gleaming Emerald Green Poly paint—code “FF”—is the very same paint that the Plymouth painters applied to the car when it was being built.

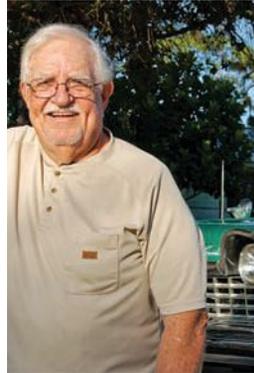


**The original two-tone upholstery faded to brown, so it was replaced with an authentic duplicate, then protected with plastic covers. The swivel seat was standard on the Sport Fury. Emerald Green exterior paint is original.**

Our feature Plymouth came out of the dry climate of Fort Worth, Texas, where Richard bought it back in 2005. He proudly tells us: “It’s an excellent rust-free survivor, a very nice #3 condition car. But besides this Plymouth’s well-preserved condition, it had been driven only 43,000 miles, and had originally been built in California. I already owned a 1959 Sport Fury with the 318 engine, so this was a great opportunity to have a very nice original car with the 361 engine.”

The only really negative aspect of this car when Richard bought it was the condition of the interior upholstery. “When I first got the car the green cloth fabric on the seats and door panels had turned an ugly dark brown, so that had to be replaced. The carpet was worn very badly, like they usually do after 46 years, so that was replaced as well. But nothing else on the car has been touched. The engine has never been removed or taken apart, nor have any other mechanical systems been replaced.”

On the road is where this Sport Fury really excels, as it has plenty of power to match its handsome looks. “The 395 Golden Commando engine runs very smooth and strong,” Richard tells us. “On take offs from a standing start, it will easily spin the tires, and it even chirps the tires when shifting into second gear. That’s a huge thrill, one that I never get



“It’s an excellent rust-free survivor; a very nice #3 condition car.”

tired of experiencing.”

Today, all Richard does with his Sport Fury is take it to a variety of car shows and cruise nights in and around South Florida so others can enjoy looking at its distinctive shape. And, of course, he drives it, taking it on short trips with his wife, Yvonne. Richard tells us, “When I bought this Sport Fury, it had been driven just 43,100 miles since it was new, and I’ve already added another 16,648 miles, which averages out to about 1,600-1,700 miles per year. I try to drive it at least twice a month, in order to keep all the fluids flowing and everything lubricated. I plan on fitting radial tires soon, to make it steer and handle better, and safer, too.”

As for maintaining and preserving the car’s originality, Richard says, “I do not find it difficult at all. It still has the original factory paint, but it is starting to wear thin in some areas. More importantly, this Plymouth needs to be kept as original as possible for its historical value, and as a sample of how it was done so other 1959 Plymouths that do need to be restored have something to go by.”

Perhaps the best description written about the 1959 Plymouth Sport Fury was the factory’s own crafty, college football reference to the series: “Combining Ivy League smartness with Big Ten performance.” Now, isn’t that the truth. 🐾





# Hoosier Proud

*Living in Indiana with a virtually original 1949 Studebaker Land Cruiser*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM DONNELLY



The first things that enter your mind are the old bromides that supposedly describe the experience: “blast from the past,” “time warp,” “turning back the clock.” And yet the car is the strongest statement of all. This is a Studebaker, and not just any Studebaker. It’s a large family sedan that represents the most impressive re-engineering of the marque and its image in a lifetime.



You really want to know why we like Studebakers so much? Take a gander at that dashboard. The premium quality of the components and instruments is impressive. And everything is original, including the paint, upholstery and even the carpet. This is what you call a survivor.

The car was born in Indiana and spent its entire life there. When you work the age-versus-mileage equation, you realize quickly that it's been scarcely driven in its 66 years of existence. And it still rolls, ghostlike, through the countryside of northwestern Indiana today.

This, to use its full appellation, is a 1949 Studebaker Commander Regal Deluxe Land Cruiser. It was an august name at Studebaker, dating back to 1934, when the Land Cruiser first emerged from South Bend as a swoopy, Streamline Moderne large sedan. It was in the first rank of Studebaker's shocking restyling of 1947, which produced some of the first true American postwar car designs. And the model name was certainly apt. This was Studebaker's physically largest car, with honest room for six adults inside. A few more than 14,000 examples were produced for the 1949 model year, so they're not seen often today. We found this example competing in the Preservation class during the Studebaker International Meet. We knew we had to photograph this car. And the tale only got better as we kept researching it.

"The story starts out back in 2008. I was really looking for a 1950 bulletnose, because that's what I learned to drive on, my grandfather's car, a 1950 Champion, so it was one of those nostalgia things," says A.J. Paul, who lives in Granger, Indiana, not far from South Bend, and who now has the Land Cruiser in his custody. "I finally had a place to store it, so I went out looking for one. Then I read a classified ad in the *South Bend Tribune*, offering this 1949 for sale, all original, all that. So I figured I'd go down and take a look at it."

A.J.'s trip took him to the tiny suburb of Twelve

“Twelve Mile’s Lions Club presents a riding lawnmower race each July 4th, and Karl routinely drove the Land Cruiser in the race’s parade every year. And not much more than that.”

Mile, so named for being exactly 12 miles from both Logansport and Peru, Indiana. As he recalls, “When I got there, I saw that it wasn’t a barn find, but it was close to it. It was parked in a garage, all covered up, and they uncovered it, and I thought, ‘Boy, I don’t have a lot of mechanical ability, but all it needs is a little cleaning up, maybe some new tires,’ and I could handle that. I rented a car hauler, and my son and I went down to pick it up, and the story went from there.”

Not much was needed, as things turned out. The first thing A.J. did was to send the Studebaker’s combination fuel and vacuum pump out to be rebuilt. “That made the engine run a lot better, and also, the windshield wipers were finally working again,” A.J. tells us. Next up, he bought a rebuild kit for the single-barrel Stromberg carburetor and had his local mechanic in Granger do the work. Reproduction bias-ply whitewalls were also substituted; at least one of the tires on the Land Cruiser when he got it was factory original, with a bulging sidewall. He’s also replaced the water pump with an NOS unit from Studebaker International, the huge parts warehouse in South Bend, which also yielded a tune-up kit.

As we’ve noted, Studebaker was coming off a huge reinvention of its car line for 1947, so subsequent changes tended to be evolutionary.

Studebaker offered two lines for 1949: The Champion, riding on a 112-inch wheelbase, and the Commander, whose wheelbase stretched 119 inches. While the Land Cruiser was firmly a part of the Commander line, it was the only 1949 Studebaker bequeathed with a 123-inch wheelbase, very





That fetching dual-tone striped upholstery on the enormous rear seat is just as it was installed at the factory. We really like the contrasting colors on the door panels. With the center armrest folded, the rear seat easily sits three across. The Land Cruiser will seat a total of six.

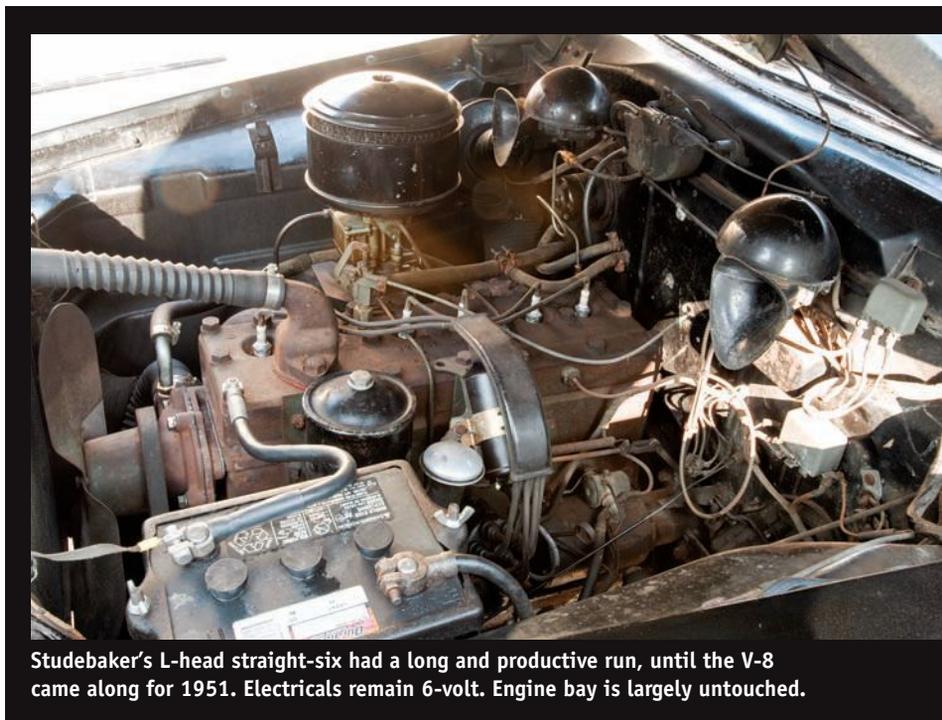
substantial for the era. The Commander lineup had factory code 16A, and although some erroneously considered the Y-body Land Cruiser as a standalone model, it's still designated as a 16A.

The Commanders got new grilles for 1949, but the most noteworthy updates were beneath the hood. For 1949, Studebaker took the venerable L-head straight-six engine and increased its stroke by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch. That boosted its displacement from 226.2 cubic inches to 245.6, and also upped the Commander's output from 94hp to an even 100. The engine also got a stiffer crankshaft, bigger main bearings and a standard oil filter. The Land Cruiser also got a standard rear anti-roll bar, which led Tom McCahill to praise the car's handling in a *Mechanix Illustrated* road test. The Land Cruiser's long model nomenclature reflects the fact that it's a Regal Deluxe, which can be distinguished by its stamped stainless-steel rocker panels, something that the base Regal lacked. Eventually, Studebaker simplified things and called the upper range the Regal line. In any case, sales of Land Cruisers dropped an estimated 50 percent in 1949, but that figure is somewhat misleading, because Studebaker was so amped to get its restyled bulletnose models into the showrooms for 1950 that it ended 1949 production before the end of July, meaning the actual model year lasted only seven months.

A.J.'s Land Cruiser was one of the last built that year; its production order declaring that it went down the assembly line on July 7. It was shipped to Logansport and Will's Motor Sales, where dealer Elmer Will used it as a demonstrator for its first thousand miles before selling it to Lawrence Blacksten. Blacksten's stepson, Karl E. Smith, bought the Land Cruiser in 1968, by which time it had amassed just 15,000 miles. Lawrence was fanatical about maintaining the car, replacing its Quaker State 10W-30 every 2,000 miles, always garaging and covering it, and never driving it in winter. It never suffered accident damage, and other than a few paint chips—no rust—it's as clean as new today. The upholstery and carpeting are both original. How much did it get driven? Twelve Mile's Lions Club presents a riding lawnmower race each July 4th, and Karl routinely

drove the Land Cruiser in the race's parade every year. And not much more than that.

The same's true for A.J. He tries to drive the Land Cruiser once a month—only in the summer—but with just 36,988 actual miles, preserving the originality is a priority. He still uses 30-weight oil, and with 6.5 compression, the Studebaker flathead percolates nicely with unleaded regular. You slide behind the huge steering wheel and press down on the clutch; the starter button is beneath it, a standard Studebaker practice at the time. The L-head straight-six burbles into life, and has enough torque to get the Land Cruiser moving on level ground just by easing off the clutch. If the ground's undulating, you can use the Hill Holder, which prevents the car from rolling backwards, even if you release the brakes. As A.J. describes it, "You take your foot off the brake, and the car will stay on the hill; then you lift off the clutch



Studebaker's L-head straight-six had a long and productive run, until the V-8 came along for 1951. Electricals remain 6-volt. Engine bay is largely untouched.

## owner's view



**I** like this Land Cruiser because of the nostalgic value of having something very close to what I drove as a 15-year-old kid. I love heading down the road and getting the nods and thumbs up from other drivers. It's fun having the neighbors over to look at it, and the kids like to be near it. It's just a fun car, and to have it all original is that much better. I actually considered painting it, but thought about it, and decided not to do it. And living in this area, it's great to have a Studebaker.

and away you go."

A.J. figures he upshifts out of first gear at 10 to 15 MPH. Second will get you up to about 30. At that point, you can either engage the optional overdrive in second gear, or change gears to third and let the overdrive engage then. He says, "You just ease up on the accelerator and listen for the little clunk, and then it's in overdrive." That didn't work when A.J. got the car, so he took it to a local transmission shop that works on Studebakers, where the mechanic replaced a solenoid. A.J.'s never had the Land Cruiser out on Interstate 90, the Indiana Toll Road, but he has taken it onto two-lane divided highways in the South Bend area where it cruises comfortably at 55 to 60 MPH. It'll reach 65 in overdrive, but A.J. admits that, given the age of the car and the bias-ply tires, going that fast makes him antsy. "It just purrs right along at 55 to 60," he tells us.

There's a moderate amount of free play in the steering, as you might expect, but A.J. says the Land Cruiser nonetheless tracks straight on the highway. In a curve, the manual steering works with the anti-roll bar to keep the car relatively flat, although tighter corners make a lot of input from the helm essential. "It's like any other car from the Fifties or Sixties: If it doesn't have power steering, you've got to put some effort into it," A.J. says.

Here's something interesting: According to A.J. the Land Cruiser stops well enough in normal



around-town driving, but he still uses an old-school, outside-the-window hand signal to warn following traffic that he's coming to a halt. "The reason I do it is because the taillamps are small, and not as bright or visible as today's are, so I'm always aware if there's someone following closely behind me in case I have to stop quickly." A.J. continues, "For the same reason, I try to time the traffic lights so I don't have to come to a sudden stop. But the

brakes are good, and the emergency brake still works well, too."

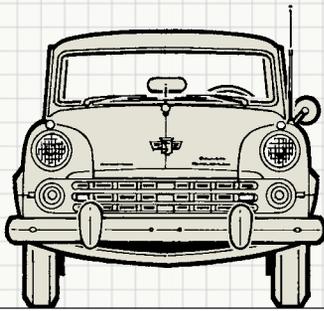
Someone at Studebaker was smart when they chose the Land Cruiser model name. The passenger cabin is simply cavernous, especially when you're talking about the rear seat. You sit high behind the wheel, but the bench seat has a height adjustment. "I remember my grandmother driving the 1950, which was set up about the same, and I recall that she had to look through the steering wheel," A.J. reminisces. With the standard center rear armrest folded out of the way, the Land Cruiser will easily accommodate six people without making them feel like canned herring.

Ultimately, most desirable to A.J. is that it's a Studebaker, his hometown car. "I've always had a soft spot for them," he says. "It's an eye-catcher, and I like original cars. This car had only been owned by one family since new, so I want to keep it original." 🐞

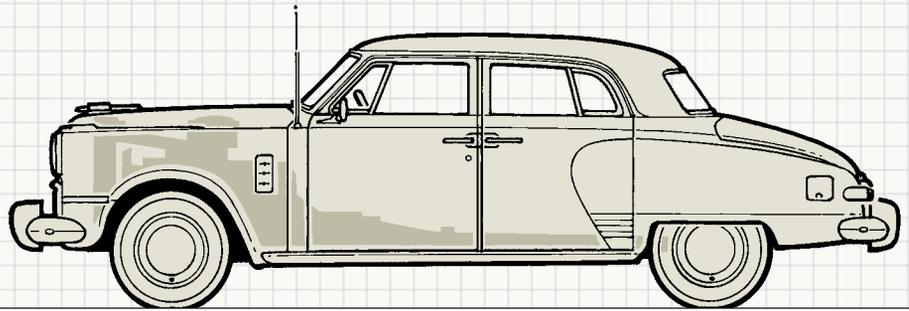


# 1949 STUDEBAKER LAND CRUISER

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



← 55 inches →



← 123 inches →

## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$2,328
PRICE AS OPTIONED	N/A
OPTIONS	Overdrive, Climatizer heater, whitewall tires, chrome wheel discs, AM radio

### ENGINE

TYPE	L-head straight-six, cast-iron block and cylinder head
DISPLACEMENT	245.6 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.312 x 4.750 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	6.5:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	100 @ 3,400
TORQUE @ RPM	200-lb.ft. @ 1,600
VALVETRAIN	Solid lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Four
FUEL SYSTEM	Stromberg BXOV single-barrel carburetor
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	6-volt, positive ground
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Single exhaust

### TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Three-speed manual with Borg-Warner electric overdrive
RATIOS	1st 1.55:1 2nd 2.57:1 3rd 1.00:1 Overdrive 0.70:1 Reverse 3.48:1

### DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hypoid, semi-floating axles
RATIO	4.09:1

### STEERING

TYPE	Cam-and-lever, manual, variable ratio
RATIOS	24:1 to 33.8:1
TURNS, LOCK TO LOCK	5.5
TURNING CIRCLE	41 feet

### BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic expanding drum, manual, self-adjusting
FRONT/REAR	11-inch drums

### CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Steel body on ladder-type frame
BODY STYLE	Four-door, six-passenger sedan
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

### SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent with single transverse spring with king pins and Houde vane and lever-arm adjustable shocks
REAR	Live axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, Houde vane and lever-arm adjustable shocks, anti-roll bar

### WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Pressed-steel discs
FRONT/REAR	5 x 15 inches
TIRES	Bias-ply
FRONT/REAR	6.50 x 15 inches

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	123 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	208.4 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	69.8 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	61.3 inches
FRONT TRACK	55.12 inches
REAR TRACK	53.54 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	3,325 pounds

### CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	6 quarts
COOLING SYSTEM	13 quarts (without heater) 14.5 quarts (with heater)
FUEL TANK	18 gallons

### CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.407
WEIGHT PER BHP	33.25 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	13.53 pounds

## PROS & CONS

- + It's completely original
- + Capable highway manners
- + Very obviously a Studebaker
- A little difficult to steer
- Trim parts are hard to find
- Not reassuring at high speeds

## WHAT TO PAY

LOW.....\$6,000

AVERAGE.....\$15,000

HIGH.....\$25,000

## CLUB CORNER

### STUDEBAKER DRIVERS CLUB

c/o Cornerstone Registration  
P.O. Box 1715  
Maple Grove, Minnesota  
55311-6715  
www.studebakerdriversclub.com  
Membership: 11,800  
Dues: \$24, USA/\$32, Canada

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# QUALITY TOOLS

**SUPER COUPON**

**27 LED PORTABLE WORKLIGHT/FLASHLIGHT**

LOT 67227 shown  
69567/60566/62532



**SAVE 62%**

**\$2<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$7.99

Batteries included.

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**WOW SUPER COUPON**

**RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON ALUMINUM RACING JACK**

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

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

LOT 69252  
60569/62160  
62496/62516  
68053 shown

**SAVE \$60**

**\$5<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$119.99

93393884

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**SUPER COUPON**

**MOVER'S DOLLY**

HaulMaster

LOT 60497/61899  
62399/93888 shown



**SAVE 40%**

**\$8<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$14.99

1000 lb. Capacity

93397776

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**WOW SUPER COUPON**

**3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS HOT DOG STYLE AIR COMPRESSOR**

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT 69269/97080 shown



**\$3<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$89.99

**SAVE 55%**

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**WOW SUPER COUPON**

"Impressive Accuracy, Amazing Value" - Car Craft Magazine

**TORQUE WRENCHES**

PITTSBURGH PRO

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

**SAVE 60%**

**\$1<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$29.99

YOUR CHOICE!

• Accuracy within ±4%

93376428

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**SUPER COUPON**

**6" VARIABLE SPEED DUAL ACTION POLISHER**

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT 62403  
69924 shown



**SAVE \$72**

**\$5<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$129.99

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**SUPER COUPON**

**SAVE \$50**

ELECTRODE WELDING

**90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER**

LOT 61849/62719  
68887 shown



**\$9<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$149.99

No Gas Required

WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF WELDING WIRE

93438768

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**SUPER COUPON**

**US\*GENERAL PRO**

**30", 5 DRAWER TOOL CART**

LOT 69397  
61427



**SAVE \$180**

**\$16<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$349.99

95272 shown

- 704 lb. Capacity

93424038

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**SUPER COUPON**

**HARDY NEW**

**MECHANIC'S GLOVES**

MEDIUM LOT 62434 62426

LARGE LOT 62433 62428

X-LARGE LOT 62432 62429 shown



**SAVE 60%**

**\$3<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$9.99

YOUR CHOICE!

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**SUPER COUPON**

**NEW**

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

STORM CAT

LOT 69381 shown  
66619/60338/62472



**SAVE \$80**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$179.99

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**SUPER COUPON**

**PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE**

**3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL JACK STANDS**

LOT 38846 shown  
69597/61196/62392



**SAVE 55%**

**\$19<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$44.99

93424677

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**SUPER COUPON**

**SAVE 66%**

**6" SELF-VACUUMING AIR PALM SANDER**

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT 60628  
98895 shown



**\$19<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$59.99

93404295

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**SUPER COUPON**

**PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE**

**2 TON FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE**

LOT 60388  
69514 shown



**\$17<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$299.99

**SAVE \$120**

Includes Ram, Hook and Chain

93388908

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**SUPER COUPON**

**SAVE \$45**

**20 GALLON PARTS WASHER WITH PUMP**

CENTRAL MACHINERY

LOT 60769/94702/7340 shown



**\$84<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$129.99

93440978

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**SUPER COUPON**

**SAVE \$160**

LOT 62443  
68751 shown

**45 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT**

THUNDERBOLT solar

**\$139<sup>99</sup>** REG. PRICE \$299.99

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### WOW SUPER COUPON

**Customer Rating** ★★★★★

**44", 13 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET**

**US\*GENERAL PRO**  
• Weighs 245 lbs.  
LOT 68784 shown  
69387/62270  
62591/62744

**SAVE \$330**

**\$369<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$699.99**

**AWARD WINNING QUALITY**

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93485775

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**FREE**

**WITH ANY PURCHASE**

**PITTSBURGH**

**1" x 25 FT. TAPE MEASURE**

LOT 69080 shown  
69030/69031

**\$6<sup>99</sup> VALUE**

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93491543

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY SUPER HIGH TORQUE IMPACT WRENCH**

• 700 ft. lbs. Max. Torque  
LOT 62627  
68424 shown

**SAVE \$55**

**\$74<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$129.99**

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93459390

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**NEW**

**29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL DRILL BIT SET**

LOT 5889/62281/61637 shown

**SAVE 60%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$24.99**

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93483769

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**12 TON SHOP PRESS**

**CENTRAL MACHINERY**  
• Pair of Arbor Plates Included

**SAVE \$100**

LOT 33497/60604 shown

**\$99<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$199.99**

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93491433

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**10 FT. x 20 FT. PORTABLE CAR CANOPY**

LOT 60728  
69034 shown

**SAVE OVER \$90**

**\$109<sup>88</sup> \$149<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$199.99**

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93447255

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**2 PIECE VEHICLE WHEEL DOLLIES**

• 1500 lb. Capacity

LOT 60343  
67338 shown

**SAVE 37%**

**\$49<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$79.99**

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93471167

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**5 PIECE PLIERS SET**

LOT 69352/62823/69351 shown  
PITTSBURGH 69353/62597/62598

**SAVE 55%**

**\$8<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$19.99**

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93464400

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**MECHANIC'S SHOP TOWELS PACK OF 50**

LOT 46163 shown  
68442/69649  
61878/61837

**SAVE 50%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup> \$12<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$19.99**

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93470795

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER**

**drillmaster**

LOT 60625 shown  
95578/69645

**SAVE 50%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$19.99**

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93478883

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**PITTSBURGH 2000 LB. FOLDABLE ENGINE STAND**

LOT 69522 shown  
69521/67015

**SAVE \$50**

**\$109<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$159.99**

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93480610

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**110 LB. PRESSURIZED ABRASIVE BLASTER**

LOT 69724/95014  
60696 shown

**SAVE \$150**

**\$99<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$249.99**

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93483667

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

**20 OZ. PROFESSIONAL HVPV GRAVITY FEED AIR SPRAY GUN (600 CC)**

LOT 68843

**SAVE 40%**

**\$47<sup>99</sup> REG. PRICE \$79.99**

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93448981

### WOW SUPER COUPON

**RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 50 FT. HOSE**

LOT 93897 shown  
69265/62344

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## REGARDING HCC #131 AND THE

Five Reasons why the Buick Skylark may have outsold the Oldsmobile and Cadillac: Styling, styling, styling and price.

From the top down: chopped conventional windshield, less bulky looking hood and grille, beautiful rendition of the "Darrin dip" doorline, clean-flowing side body shape from headlamps to taillamps (no portholes or rocker trim), classic sweep-spear, open wheel wells and long spoke-small hub wire wheels.

An "altogether" styling of the rather bulky GM C-body.

The Oldsmobile, a B-body at 15 percent more money, or the Cadillac at 50 percent more money, was a big price to pay for the nameplate. Perhaps the three GM divisions never planned on building more units than they did.

Production limited, rather than order limited?

James Brothers

Camano Island, Washington

## THAT WAS A NICE ARTICLE ABOUT

the Kaiser Carolina in HCC #132, but Jim Donnelly writes the Hydra-Matic was a two-speed Dual Range transmission. I believe the Dual Range refers to the selectable speed you get out of third gear; the Hydra-Matic is actually a four-speed transmission. I have the same transmission in my 1954 Willys Aero Eagle Custom. Les Langenderfer  
Shelby Township, Michigan

## THE HYDRA-MATIC WAS ALWAYS A

four-speed transmission. "Dual Range" refers to a major update to the Hydra-Matic that was first available as an option in 1952 concurrently with the older design, then became the only Hydra-Matic available until a major redesign, which included a Park position for the 1956 model year.

Dual Range is indicated by hash marks on either side of "Dr" in Pontiacs and Cadillacs, and by "S" between "Dr" and "Lo" on Oldsmobiles. Placing the quadrant in the right hash mark, or "S," allowed the four-speed transmission to shift up to third gear and remain in that gear until manually moved to the left mark, or to "Dr" in Oldsmobiles.

The one complaint about Hydra-Matics was their jerkiness caused by the three shifts—it was such a positive trans-

mission with none of the slippage of the torque converter units (H-M used a fluid coupling instead) that you were bound to feel each shift, but that also contributed to its good economy and much more positive off-the-line dig than the others. It was suggested that for in-town driving you place the shifter in "S," or the right marker, to eliminate one shift, which also aided in braking.

Dynaflow and Powerglide started out much the same in their operations, although I'm sure the Dynaflow was a bigger unit since it was in heavier cars behind eight-cylinder engines. Through 1952, they were both simply torque converters unaided by any mechanical gearing, except for the one accessible in the "Lo" range. However, they were so sluggish in Chevrolets that drivers often placed the shifter in "Lo" for a more positive start. In 1953, Powerglide was given an automatic low gear start, which became the two-speed Powerglide so familiar through the years. However, Dynaflow was never given a gear start capability, even as powerful V-8 engines were taking the place of the straight-eights.

In 1955, to give Dynaflow the equivalent of a passing gear, the stator in the torque converter was made to be movable, allowing the converter to change from low stall to high stall upon accelerator pressure, thus it was called Variable Pitch Dynaflow, and remained Buick's only automatic transmission through 1963. The variable-pitch stator was so successful that it was adapted first to the two-speed units used in intermediate-size Buicks and Oldsmobiles in 1964 and 1965.

The Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 three-speed was introduced in the large cars for the 1964 model year, and from 1965 to 1967 the variable-pitch stator was also adapted to the transmissions in Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs with engines ranging from 400 to 430 cubic inches, after which it was replaced with a fixed stator. These were such good transmissions that the Kenne Bell performance company began salvaging the units and adapting them to racing applications.

It always amazed me how the 1940 Hydra-Matic transmission was such a fully fleshed out, completely automatic unit from the very beginning, while Mopar soldiered on for 13 years with

variations of its semi-automatic, which always seemed to me to have all the disadvantages of both standard and automatic transmissions with none of their advantages. Of course, developments during wartime use made the Hydra-Matic an even better transmission once production of civilian cars resumed in late 1945.

Eddie Mitchell

Waco, Texas

## Jim Donnelly replies:

*My fault. This was the second Kaiser Carolina that I've written about, and both owners remarked that the transmission only upshifted once during normal driving. The Dual Range allows the car to be held in an intermediate gear, but it is indeed a four-speed Hydra-Matic. Object lesson: Check the facts, don't assume.*

## I OFTEN WONDER JUST WHAT IT

was that drove me to a career in automotive design. Could it have been the never-to-be-produced studio exercises that the head of Kaiser-Frazer design drove to my home town when he visited his sister? Parked on the street just two houses down, I'd just study those cars for as long as I could. Or was it when, at age 13, I rode in a Playboy prototype? I think it was the Playboy, as it was real; the Kaiser-Frazers were out-of-sight wild.

The article on Playboy founder Louis Horwitz in HCC #127 brought back vivid memories. It was a cold January winter day in 1947, and a close buddy and I were walking down one of the main streets. Suddenly, I heard a car working its way through the snow. I shouted, "It's a Playboy." Ah, the virtue of reading *Popular Mechanics*, as I recognized it instantly.

The red Playboy stopped, the driver lowered his window and asked, "Can you boys tell me how to get to Kitson's Garage?" After a minute or two, and maybe being confused, he suggested that we get in and lead him to Kitson's. Quickly, we kicked off as much snow as

*Continued on page 42*

## A Possible New Market

Are you folks familiar with the LSV laws of the United States? Maybe you don't even know what an LSV is.

LSVs are Low Speed Vehicles, i.e. vehicles designed for low-speed, non-highway use. They come under a special heading in motor vehicle laws. Most LSVs are electric powered, although they can be gas powered (usually by a one-cylinder engine) and most of them are used on the links as golf carts, or on the street as personal transportation "golf cars" in communities that allow them.

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 500 requires LSVs to be configured with four wheels, be capable of a maximum speed of 25 MPH and be rated at a maximum gross vehicle weight rating of 3,000 pounds. In addition, FMVSS 500 specifies that the LSV must be equipped with headlamps, stop lamps, turn-signal lamps, taillamps, reflex reflectors, parking brakes, rearview mirrors, windshields, seatbelts and vehicle identification numbers. States regulate the operation of these vehicles on public roads. Most allow operation of LSVs on secondary roads with speeds not exceeding 35 MPH.

The purpose of the law is to allow certain motor vehicles, low-speed ones, to skirt existing rules for regular cars, including such requirements as airbags, vehicle crash standards, emission standards, etc., in an effort to make LSVs affordable to more people. After all, if 100,000 electric golf cars are replacing gasoline cars, the impact on air quality is significant. They're actually quite popular in Florida and other retirement havens.

So what's this got to do with classic cars? Just this: The LSV law makes it possible for manufacturers to build and sell small gas-powered vehicles that otherwise wouldn't be allowed. That could mark the return of the vintage replica cars we saw back in the 1960s.

Remember those interesting turn-of-the-century buggy replicas? There was a company down in Florida called Horseless Carriage that built a replica of the famous 1901 Curved Dash Olds. So did a company called American Air Products;

it called its replica the Merry Oldsmobile and built them from 1958-1962. Another company, owned by my friend Carl Chakmakian (pictured) built a neat replica of a 1902 Rambler in the early 1960s, and sold quite a few to Rambler dealers for promotional purposes. There were several companies that built other replicas.



None were built in the 1970s and '80s because by then safety and emission regulations had stifled most efforts to start up new car companies. After all, it's pretty near impossible to make a 1901 Oldsmobile pass the same crash and safety standards as a modern car. But FMVSS 500 gives hope that someone may begin building old cars

again. After all, the replicas had single-cylinder engines—just like the originals—and most of them struggled to reach 30 MPH. So they meet the main part of FMVSS 500 almost by nature. All anyone needs to do is add the requisite lights, signals, etc. to meet the standards. Putting in a more powerful engine would make them a little more fun to drive.

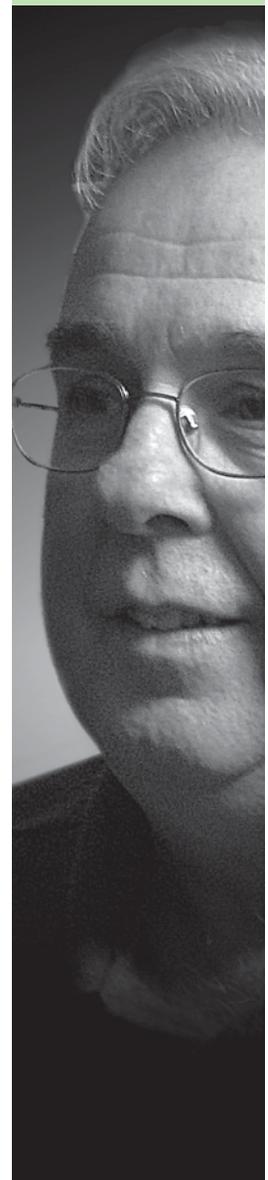
And who wouldn't want to drive one? How many times have you wished you had an interesting small car for putting around town in? Lots of people in Florida already do, and they end up driving golf cars on city streets. Don't you think they'd be happier driving a 1901 Oldsmobile replica? For myself, I can see me buzzing around some 55-plus retirement community in a one-cylinder 1902 Rambler. They'd make great parade cars, too.

We might even be able to get someone to reproduce the Model T—and that would be a lot of fun. Since the Model T's top end was somewhere around 40 MPH, offering one that's limited to 30 MPH wouldn't be too difficult a proposition for people to accept.

Perhaps we can get states to boost the speed limit for LSVs to a more realistic 38 MPH, so they wouldn't slow down traffic on country roads, and also so they wouldn't get rear-ended by speedier drivers.

What do you think? Are there any car people out there who would buy a replica like a 1901 Olds or 1902 Rambler? Are there any entrepreneurs out there who would build them? 🐞

How many times have you wished you had an interesting small car for putting around town in? Lots of people in Florida already do...



we could and got in the car with a couple of hundred questions in our minds. That was the first time I'd heard the word "prototype." The driver explained that he was driving a Playboy prototype and needed to call upon Mr. Kitson, the Willys dealer, to sign him up to sell Playboys. What a thrill for two teens to be riding in a Playboy. We'll never know if that brief experience influenced our future lives or not; however, my buddy Gene Wagner went on to manage a Mercury Marine test station, and I had a 41-year career in automotive design. Howard Payne  
*Northville, Michigan*

## REGARDING RICHARD'S COLUMN

on music in *HCC* #130, here are my selections:

**Dave Brubeck:** 1961 Continental. Both are so simple, so elegant and so unique. Hey, if the car's now good enough for Maroon5...

**Three Dog Night:** 1971-'72 Riviera. Preferably playing "Liar"; they are the quintessential 70's rock band.

**Julie London:** 1957 Eldorado Brougham. That sexy, voluptuous voice requires the same in a car.

**Bobby Darin:** 1965 Imperial Crown convertible. Imagine you're driving out Cape Cod on Route 6, and his rendition of "La Mer" comes on your favorite FM channel. Only Sinatra in the Continental Mark II can top that.

**Count Basie:** If Duke Ellington gets a Packard, then Mr. Basie gets a 1967 Cadillac Eldorado. Like his music, it's impressive, but proof once again that "less is more."

**Glenn Miller:** 1941 Cadillac Fleetwood Sixty Special. Needs no explanation.

**Earth, Wind and Fire:** 1976 Ford Elite, and the song has to be "Boogie Wonderland." Great disco car (any 1975-'79 Chrysler Cordoba is a close second).

**The Beach Boys:** Any Corvair convertible.  
Jeff Clark  
*East Rochester, New York*

## I HAD TO SHAKE MY HEAD WHILE

reading Gary Porter's comments in *HCC* #130 on what vintage automobile is acceptable at car shows. What makes him think a young adult is really interested about spark advance and the use of three

pedals to operate a Model T? Heck, I'm 80-years old and lost interest in that years ago. Why not welcome them and show an interest in their cars. Then you would have a chance to educate them on the older vehicles. Nothing can kill our hobby faster than this kind of attitude, because it discourages and chases away potential new members.

As far as sounds go, I prefer listening to the purr of my 5.7 liter Hemi more than that of a Packard. I know what they sound like—I've driven plenty of them in my day. Joe Proctor  
*New Albany, Indiana*

## I HAVE TO TAKE EXCEPTION WITH

the Mechanical Marvels article in *HCC* #130 about the rotary engine. In the Storied Level of Commitment section, author Ray Bohacz states, "It was common insider knowledge that, though the American Wankels from both companies were so superior to what was on the market from Japan..." I believe this to be an erroneous and poorly researched comment. There were also comments about the Wankel having problems meeting emissions standards; another error.

There were a number of reasons General Motors shut down the rotary program; primarily GM ran into issues of reliability. While Mazda had made the rotary reliable, and long-lived (I know, since I put over 100,000 miles on a warranty replacement engine with the new-style apex seals) GM could not duplicate Mazda's durability at the GM cost target. Simply put, the GM rotary design was unable to meet both the build cost and durability targets. The GM's reliability issues contradict Mr. Bohacz's comment that the American rotary designs were superior.

While I have no information about the Ford Wankel/rotary program, it is common knowledge that the ability of the Mazda rotary to easily meet emissions standards (at the time) with just an air pump was very attractive to GM and Ford, at least until GM made the catalytic converter cost effective. Compact size, modularity (one to four chambers), and to some degree reduced weight, were also attractive rotary attributes.

Yes, fuel mileage was an issue, but at the time, the rotary produced more power per vehicle weight compared to a Toyota or Datsun four-cylinder car. When

you compare the Mazda rotary car's performance to cars with similar performance, the mileage is comparable, at least according to the automotive magazine articles of the time that performed real-world testing.

Bob Nichols  
*Los Angeles, California*

## THE WANKEL ROTARY ENGINE NEVER

lived up to its promise for several reasons. Mr Bohacz correctly points out almost all of them, but a lack of low-RPM torque was just as much of an issue. The early rotary engines did not work well with automatic transmissions. Also, AMC designed the Pacer to use GM's rotary and had to scramble to shoehorn in its straight-six at the last minute. And GM had shown both two- and four-rotor Corvettes on the show circuit at that time as well.

One last thing: In Detroit Underdogs, when considering the 1980-'82 Thunderbirds, you have to look at the competition at the time. Everybody was downsizing. I think the T-bird looked at least as good as the competition. I think only the Cutlass Supreme looked better. But when you look at what bookended this series, it doesn't look as good. Ford tried to transfer the style of the 1977-'79 Thunderbirds to the new models, and it came out appearing stubby. Then the 1983 models came out looking gorgeous.

Mike Chambers  
*West Chester, Ohio*

## ONE OF MY FAVORITE COLUMNS IS

Detroit Underdogs, by Milton Stern. I certainly have agreed with his selections since inception, and I would like to add some commentary on the "Over-the-Top Thunderbird" article in *HCC* #130. As he indicated, sales for the 1977 Thunderbird increased sixfold. One of, if not *the* main reason for this, is because the Thunderbird was demoted and moved downmarket from the previous generations. The Thunderbird name had prestige associated with it, and there were people who longed for one but could never afford one new. Ford moves the name downmarket, takes some of the previously standard equipment and

Continued on page 44

## Confessions of a Car Junkie

Here's how it all started out: I was outside a Cadillac dealership near Trenton, New Jersey, talking to a salesman. I explained to him that the newspaper that I worked for wanted to start an automotive page and wanted me to road test a car. So what does the guy roll out? A 1982 Cadillac Cimarron with four-cylinder power. C'mon, you remember those. It was a spin-off of the 18 bajillion J-cars that General Motors sold for years, only primped a little and badged as a Cadillac. I drove it around city streets and on U.S. 1 for probably 20 minutes. It was as painful as a Southern Comfort hangover. The thing was awful.



I couldn't believe that GM had the gall to put a Cadillac crest on it. You know what? I covered the Cadillac-La Salle Owners Club national meet outside Boston a couple of years ago, scoped out every car, and amid the Eldorado Broughams, Sixty Specials and not a few Sevilles, not one Cimarron was to be seen. That's saying something.

My next adventure in road testing involved a Dodge Aries, again from a local dealer. I actually wrote that the K-car's 2.2-liter engine lacked the snap of a Street Hemi. Honest, I really wrote that. The dealer canceled his advertising. By that time, I'd discovered that I'd get a lot less grief from the PR professionals that represented the car companies, who were sanguine if you occasionally ripped a car in their press fleets, assuming the criticism had some basis in fact. Then, finally, I was on my way.

As the Grateful Dead memorably put it, it's been a long strange trip that's brought me here. Started out when I was a kid, having graduated from Matchbox and Corgi cars to glue kits by AMT, MPC and Revell. I needed research materials to make my models at least somewhat accurate, so I started buying car magazines. Lots of them. Enough to be stacked up in my family's garage almost to the rafters. I was intrigued by the occasional salon-type articles that some of the road test magazines would publish from time to time. I can remember reading once about a Mercedes-Benz that Rudolf Caracciola had driven, and another time when a Cord 812 sedan was the article's topic. It jazzed me to the point where I

started attending local car shows, went to Carlisle and chased races across the Northeast.

My long-suffering father didn't know what to make of any of this. In 1984, I was trying to return one of the first delivered Chrysler T-vans, a landmark vehicle if there ever was one, to a dealer office outside Philadelphia in the middle of a snowstorm. My father, who was kind enough to follow me so I could have a ride home, accidentally locked up the brakes on his 1978 Chevrolet Nova Concours and hit a guardrail en route. I began to cry. Same thing when a loose expansion plate ripped both right-side tires off my Dodge Daytona press car while I was

crossing the George Washington Bridge when I was coming back from Connecticut's Thompson Speedway at some ungodly hour. My father had to drive up to Fort Lee, New Jersey, and rescue me.

To me, going to Carlisle was better than hitting F.A.O. Schwarz when I was a kid. The library downstairs in my house is full of automotive books that I bought there, including a collection of Mercury road tests, the kind of cars my father preferred before he bought a Chevrolet. There were turkey legs and fantastic lemonade at Carlisle, still a terrific place.

You know what? I still love this world. In a society where we celebrate human downfalls and venality too much, I continue to be rocked by the enthusiasm and sheer niceness of people I meet through the world of old cars. It's been great, too, to be empowered by good people whom I've had the privilege to encounter at various points in my career. My newspaper exes are family. So are the editorial crew at Hemmings, the best staff I've ever worked with, anywhere. What I'm getting to is the fact that one of my best friends and mentors, Ron Martin—the guy who taught me everything I know, or ever will know, about this business, and who broke me in as a newspaper editor—died a couple of days ago, claimed by pancreatic cancer. Coworkers are one thing, but teachers and lifelong allies are another. I am devastated by his loss. Maybe one day, I'll be able to pass down my knowledge to a new generation, like he did. Semper journo, Ron. I will never forget you, and that's a guarantee. 🐾

“...I continue to be rocked by the enthusiasm and sheer niceness of people I meet through the world of old cars.”



moves it to the options list, thus reducing the price of admission, and voila, sales take off. This move opened up a whole new market for those who wanted a Thunderbird. It was a marketing no-brainer, and I think it was a vastly more attractive car than the previous generation.

I agree with Mr. Stern in that Ford could have tweaked this generation Thunderbird and milked more sales out of it for a couple more years, but instead came out with the Fox-chassis 1980 model. I'm not sure what Ford was thinking, but this iteration was a disaster and, thankfully, short lived. Ford soon realized this and even went as far as creating advertising that said, "the thunder is still there," which showed a vintage Thunderbird in the background. There was, however, no fooling the buying public. Ford again got it right with the "aero-bird" and sales took off once again.

Patrick Curran  
Monroe, North Carolina

**JIM DONNELLY'S COLUMNS AND**

stories are well written and entertaining, but as a collector of Art Deco for over 40 years, and a dyed-in-the-wool Buick fan/collector since I was about seven years old, I have to mention a couple of flaws in his columns in *HCC* #126 & #127.

In #126, "An Era of Stunning Beauty," re: Art Deco/Moderne, he states that the term "Art Deco" "...didn't even exist during the era, having first been added to the lexicon during the 1960s." Not true. As Art Deco expert Eva Weber states in her beautiful 1989 volume *Art Deco*: "Taking its name from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris in 1925, Art Deco was a new style celebrating a new era. Art Deco essentially spanned the first four decades of the twentieth century."

Also, while the 1933-'34 Chicago Century of Progress World's Fair was spectacular with its early Art Deco displays, the penultimate exhibition of the style happened at the 1939-'40 New York World's Fair, featuring *The World of Tomorrow*...which was truly mind-blowing with its pre-WWII Deco buildings and exhibits. A fascinating, rare, documentary was produced in 1984 entitled *The World of Tomorrow* featuring early archival color footage. All major automobile manufacturers were represented there.

As for the Deco/Moderne themes of the automobiles, yes, the 1935 Hupmobile, and the featured 1937 Studebaker with the slightly "Slanted Back/Heading into the wind" front ends, are beautiful on their own. But, I much prefer the Forward Look front clips of the later-'30s cars like the 1939 Plymouth, and my dad's 1939 Studebaker Champion. Note that the 1940 Dodge restoration in issue #126 would, naturally, carry on that same front end theme.

Thanks again for publishing great issues, and coverage of all makes and models...never stop. And, Mr. Donnelly, you do great work, too...don't you ever stop either!

Jonnie King  
St. Louis, Missouri

**RICHARD'S EDITORIAL ON MORE**

modern cars being accepted at car shows struck a chord with me. As a 51-year old lifetime mechanic, I have had to live through the dark ages of automotive technology. Struggling through the advent of FWD and EFI, not to mention computer-controlled carbs, sometimes are memories I want to forget. Although, when I walk amongst the sea of cars at Daytona's Turkey Rod Run and come across a Chevrolet Citation, I am drawn to it like mice to cheese. Why? Maybe because it is unique and also because I am amazed someone has taken the time to save one, actually getting it to run and maintaining all that crappy plastic inside.

Young modern day "mechanics," have no idea what we went through before OB-DII or 100,000-plus bulletproof engines and transmissions; I feel I have forgotten more than most of them will ever know. Having said that, I believe the 1970s are the new '50s. Detroit had so many interesting designs, trying to cover up all the EPA restrictions, it's no-wonder they even made them.

A close friend recently purchased a 1976 Lincoln Town Car; it was a one-owner doctor's car. He has had so much fun with it that his 1967 Firebird 400 convertible is collecting dust. He can load the whole family into the Lincoln and go cruising in style. Similar models, such as a Chrysler Imperial, with the crushed velour interior, also have massive appeal to me. You just don't see these cars anymore.  
John Tomorowitz  
Orlando, Florida

**REGARDING THE "MISSING THE**

Mark-et" piece on the Hudson Jet, I'd like to set the record straight about the design of the 202 engine. It has long been an accepted myth that the 202 was a design somehow related to that of the venerable Hudson Eights, but nothing could be further from the truth. Hudson had it right when it represented it as "a scaled down H-145 Six." It was not, as some say "an eight with two cylinders lopped off." There is no mechanical design relationship between those two engines; the eight-cylinder being a design implemented in the early 1930s and carried on, ad nauseam, until 1952, while the Jet/Wasp 202 is nearly identical to the senior Hudson Sixes of 1948 and onward. The full-pressure lubricated 202 is a vast deviation from the splash-and-gravity lubed Eights and Sixes that preceded it. Heck, if you wanted to draw parallels, the "Splasher" Sixes would be a more likely comparison... at least they had the same number of cylinders!

The list of mechanical design differences is too long to include here, as are the similarities of the 202 and the Hornet 308. There are no parts interchangeable between the 202 and the Eight (save for the piston itself, and that's only in the aftermarket), whereas the 202 and the 232-262-308 family share a handful of components and, more significantly, the basic designs are, in fact, very similar in nearly every respect, truly deserving of the claim that it's "a scaled-down H-145 Six."  
Frank Hughes  
Shelton, Washington

**THIS IS DIRECTED TO THOSE OF YOU**

who own a classic car that has worms. Just lift your hood and let me point out those awful worm-drive hose clamps—those disgusting things that probably never came from the factory. I have seen too many decent restorations where the owner spent thousands only to skimp on the hose clamps that cost peanuts. Cars that should have Corbin clamps, long slotted flat band clamps, or screw tower clamps have been "cowbirded" with worm drive clamps—sidewinders, just like the rattlesnakes they resemble. Restorers unite: Let's run those intruders out of here, good and quick!  
Keith Ogden  
East Jordan, Michigan

## All Through the Night

I was watching a favorite prewar black-and-white movie the other night. It was a typical Runyonesque story of the era just prior to World War II, with Humphrey Bogart in the lead character role. It is full of gangsters (but kindhearted ones “from the neighborhood”), gamblers, Nazi saboteurs and some great Series 90 Buick Limited sedans, as well as a terrific De Soto taxicab in film noir night scenes. The title of the movie is *All Through the Night*, and it made its debut in theatres in New York City at the end of January 1942.

It got me thinking, how many of you who are reading this and own older cars, drive your cars at night? Have you ever driven them at night? If you haven't, you are missing out on another chance to access a portal to what it was like to drive the cars when they were new.

I drive one of my cars after dark at least once a week to a local cruise night about five miles from my home. This “Dogwood Ave.” cruise usually has about 50 cars of all types from 1925 thru 1980 show up. Sure, the majority of the cars are street rods and muscle cars, but weekly attendees include friends Marc, in his 1948 Lincoln Continental convertible; Bob, in his 1932 Cadillac V-16 town car or 1934 Lincoln sedan; and Bob and Dick in their Model A Fords. I usually park next to my buddy Frank in his slightly modified 1953 Dodge.

For those of you who question how it's possible to see with bulb headlamps on a 6-volt system, my answer is “quite well, actually.” One of the treats of driving at night is seeing the soft yellow glow of the instrument panel gauges lit up. My 1936 Packard Eight Club Sedan is especially fun. The four levels for selection of light are controlled by a lever at the hub of the steering column next to the horn button. Moving the lever up changes the setting, which is indicated by words that are stamped out and backlit with a bulb so you can see them clearly.

To the left of the amp/oil pressure gauge,

“PARK” will light up, and a flick of the lever and “CITY” will appear on the right. If you are “driving in the country,” as the Packard instruction book tells it, “DRIVE” will light up to the left of the gas/temperature gauge and “PASS” will light up on the right if you choose to do that. I always like to take friends along and don't tell them about this feature. Their reaction to the illuminated words when they see them for the first time is priceless.

The beam thrown by the bulb headlamps isn't as good, of course, as sealed beams, nor anywhere near the modern LED units, but they do their job. Although my Packard has had a complete rewire, on occasion the left headlamp doesn't go on when I turn it on; this is quickly pointed out by spectators before I start to drive off from the cruise night. I get out, look to see that it's not working and those

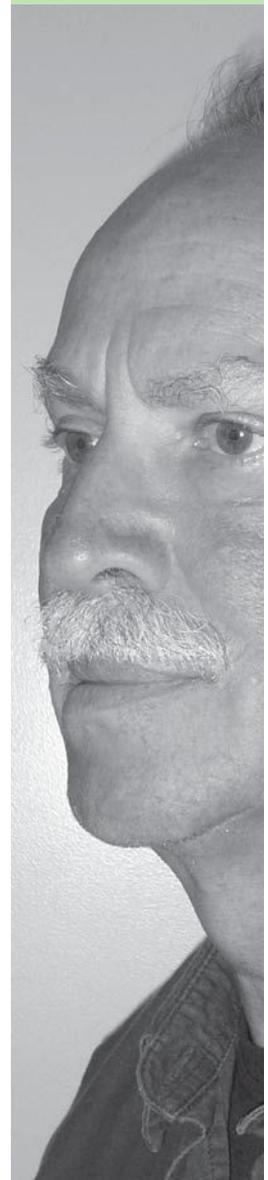
standing around are waiting to see what solution I have to get that headlamp to work again. I am not very dramatic, but I usually scratch my head then walk over to the lamp and, with the open palm of my hand, slap the top of the headlamp and it always turns on. This changes the expressions of the crowd—from concern to smiles and laughter.

I keep my cars on battery tenders, so any juice drawn off is recharged overnight when I get home. Several people at the cruise night ask if the car is still on the 6-volt system and are surprised when I tell them that it is. The cars worked well on that system when new, and I have never had any problems—ever—for the last 50 years I have been driving my old cars. If you keep the battery terminals clean and a tender connected to the battery to keep it fully charged when not in use, there will be absolutely no issues with a 6-volt system.

So why not drive your old car after dark and give someone the experience of a ride at night? Cruise nights are an excellent opportunity to share your cars with other enthusiasts. 🐾



“ One of the treats of driving at night is seeing the soft yellow glow of the instrument panel gauges lit up. ”







## Air-Cooled Heirloom

*After more than 60 years and 28 coats of paint, this 1923 Franklin 10B is still making new stories for one family*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

While we've seen plenty of vintage cars passed down from father to son, we now have the pleasure of seeing more and more cars reach a third generation, or at least promised to that youngest set until the time comes when they can reach the pedals on their own.

Don Briggs drives this 1923 Franklin 10B sedan, but technically his father willed it to Don's son. Even better for the now four-year-old Colby, grandfather Larry willed him the car before Colby had ever entered this world. Much like the "player to be named later" that often accompanies baseball trades, Colby was named as "the unborn son" of Don in that will. With a vintage 1960 Studebaker Hawk that served as the family car through the mid-Eighties going to Don's daughter, Zoe, the kids are set up to be a part of this hobby for a while.

Founded in 1901 by Syracuse-based industrialist Herbert H. Franklin and led by engineer John Wilkinson, the Franklin Motor Company manufactured automobiles with air-cooled engines until 1934 when it was done in by the Great Depression, a



An early adopter of the type, Franklin production heavily favored the closed sedan in an era when touring cars were all the rage. Franklin's simple elegance came from its high build quality and from its chief engineer's focus on light weight for performance and economy.

too many companies could not avoid. But despite that ultimate demise, Franklin was successful almost immediately in its early years, several times appearing in the list of top-10 auto manufacturers by volume in the first decade of the 20th century.

Along with air cooling, which became a company signature when other experimenters largely abandoned the concept for water-cooled powerplants, Franklin also focused on light weight and other technical advances pioneered by Wilkinson and his engineers to keep the company ahead of the competition. Fully elliptic springs were standard equipment, as opposed to more conventional semi-elliptic units found on most cars, leading to Franklin's reputation of having comfortably riding cars in an era when moving around by automobile wasn't exactly smooth.

Franklin's list of automotive firsts marks the company as a standout at a time when the innovations came fast and furious. In 1902, it produced the first four-cylinder overhead-valve engine for an automobile; in 1905, the first such six-cylinder engine. In 1907, Franklin was the first manufacturer to offer a form of automatic spark advance, and in 1912, the first with a recirculating, pressure-feed oil system. Along with these developments, Franklin made a name setting city-to-city speed records and also achieving enviable fuel mileage, both feats likely owing to Wilkinson's focus on light weight. The lack of a liquid-cooling system certainly helped keep the pounds down, as did the use of aluminum for the body panels hung on a wooden frame.

While that lack of liquid cooling gave function to a form

unlike almost any other car on the road in the literal shape of the grille, which swooped forward at the bottom, Franklin's dealers clamored for something more conventional with a radiator in front. Franklin's board listened and requested the change. Engineer Wilkinson, aghast at the new-look Franklin, which included a dummy radiator, left the company for good. In 1923, the first full year of this Franklin with the horse-collar grille and faux radiator, sales rebounded back over the five-digit mark.

Don's 1923 Franklin 10B five-passenger sedan features Franklin's six-cylinder engine, as unique a powerplant as ever served under the hood of an American car. Displacing 199-cubic inches, it produced around 25 horsepower. Franklin cast the crankcase and bellhousing in aluminum. Attached to those lightweight components were six individual cast-iron cylinders, finned for cooling and with fixed cylinder heads. A cooling fan channels air from the grille up and over the top of the cylinders via a massive duct that covers the entire front and top of the engine. With its three-speed transmission, the overall drivetrain is largely standard beyond the air-cooled mill. As was common at the time, the Franklin had rear-wheel-only mechanical brakes.

Fortunately for Don, his father Larry knew what he was doing when he reassembled the Franklin. "He got the car back in the early-to-mid-Fifties," Don says. "He would have been around 30 years old. That's when he restored it and started taking it to shows and whatnot.

"From what he always said," Don continues, "it was fairly rough. It was in running condition, but it had some rot holes in the fenders, which he reworked with lead, fixed that. It has an aluminum body, so that was in okay shape. Some of the wood framing around the doors was a little bad, so he rebuilt that part and had her done up. He had to have the interior all redone."

At the time Larry owned a do-it-all service station in their hometown of Hemlock, New York. Briggs Garage and Welding was equipped to do bodywork, so when it came time to apply the final coat of paint, Larry prepped the Franklin and had the shop all "warm and ready," as Don puts it. Larry was prepared to apply a coat of maroon to the body and black on the fenders, as the car was originally finished. But, to his surprise, when he opened the gallon of "maroon" paint, he was treated to a can full of fire-engine red.

Not wanting to waste the opportunity as the night was getting late and he was ready to paint,



The 10B ducted its engine-driven fan to cool the air-cooled cylinders; maintenance information and electrical schematic were included with chassis plate.

Larry began mixing the black and red until he had an acceptable maroon hue. Don told us that “by the time he got done, he had a whole lot of dark reddish maroon paint and not enough black to paint the fenders. So, that’s how the whole car got the maroon finish. And he had a lot of paint, so he ended up putting 28 coats of lacquer on it.”

Perhaps we are used to modern two-stage enamels that feature ultra-smooth and deep finishes with a few coats of color and an additional few coats of clear. But...28 coats? “It was close to 60 years ago he painted it,” Don explains. “But that old lacquer, you mixed it pretty thin so it didn’t go on real heavy anyway. He said that that lacquer was such a soft paint that you had to put a lot on, so there was plenty you could polish. Still now, when you polish it, you can see the paint come off on the rag, that paint is so soft.”

With the car finished, Larry began taking it to shows. He also owned a bigger and much heavier 1938 Cadillac convertible. Larry’s solution would probably shock the faithful at an AACA show today, but flat-towing the lightweight Franklin—it was listed at just 2,750 pounds curb weight—proved no problem for the beefy Cadillac. Don explains that the handy Larry built a custom tow bar for the Franklin and that they would simply unhook the car when they got to shows and just drive it to its appropriate corral.

Don enjoys plenty of memories of those trips together, though his father did ultimately sell the Cadillac. Together, Don and his father restored Don’s first car, a 1965 Thunderbird, a project that started in the late 1980s, when Don was just 14 and finished when he was 19. “The last few years that Dad was alive,” Don recalls, “one of the things he wanted to see before he died was the Franklin rebuilt and roadworthy. We just never got it done before he passed away. But, that’s still on my list.”

“The Franklin still runs pretty good, but the engine is tired. We can only drive it about six miles and then it just



“We’re going to set aside enough money and get things lined up so we can get the engine rebuilt and the car driveable again.”

gets weaker and weaker and loses compression as it gets hot; then it just stalls. After it cools down, it then fires right up again.”

The task of rebuilding the unconventional air-cooled powerplant is no mean feat. For that, Don will be joined by his nephew, Adam, who is well into the car and has been a big help to Don. “It’s a lot of nut-and-bolt work to get the engine out and apart,” says Don. “We’re going to set aside enough money and get things lined up so we can get the engine rebuilt and the car driveable again.” Don says that he will likely tackle other mechanical needs at the same time, such as the clutch and the brake system, along with a new set of tires.

Don still takes the old Franklin to shows, furiously working over the paint before each event. “That old paint doesn’t stay that shiny that long. Every time it comes out, you’ve got to polish it. I ended up buying like nine different waxes and polishes. It was just that the paint was so soft and most waxes were too abrasive. It would tear the paint up and leave it rough.” The solution ended up being an inexpensive brand-name wax.

As for doing his part passing down his love for the Franklin, Don will take his kids out for short rides, though his wife, Amy, is not always the biggest fan. “My wife won’t let me take them very far because it doesn’t have any seatbelts, but the car doesn’t go very fast or very far anyway.” Still, we think taking the kids out for a drive in a 1923 Franklin 10B sedan does indeed take them very far away. Perhaps back to 1923 or even 1955, when Larry first started putting it back together. 🏁



driveable **dream**

# College Cruiser

*Six decades melt away behind the wheel of this all-original 1940 Buick Special*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY MARK J. McCOURT

**N**o matter what it may have been, an enthusiast's first car is always memorable because of the personal freedom it represented

and the adventures it likely accommodated. There are few of us who haven't thought, at one point or another in our later lives, how fun it might be to find a similar car to our first, so we could try to recapture those youthful feelings—but few have actually done so. For those who have—like the owner of this incredible unrestored 1940 Buick Special Four-Door Touring Sedan—the reward can last a lifetime.

In the mid-1950s, Williamstown, Massachusetts, native Steve Bullock was attending Williams College locally. Four days of working on campus, during a 1956 parents' weekend, earned him \$27, and as he explains, he had a plan for that paycheck. "My friend Dan had run an ad in the campus newsletter saying he wanted to sell a 1940 Buick sedan for \$25. I called him and asked about it," he remembers.

"He said, 'It runs good, but it doesn't stop very well and it's hard to steer, so I think I'll have to sell it for \$15.' I said, 'Gee, well, I'll buy it. If it doesn't run well as a car, my dad may need a tractor for his farm—Do you think it would make a good tractor?' He said, 'I don't know, but it has a big engine—I'll bring it out to your farm.' Dan drove it over, and it surprised my dad," Steve recalls. "He said, 'My gosh, that's a Buick!' I asked if they were any good, and



Fellow college student Phil Perry poses with Steve Bullock's first 1940 Buick Special in 1956.

he said, 'Oh yeah, Buicks are good cars.'"

That \$15 outlay bought Steve a 16-year-old Special Four-Door Touring Sedan, painted black. The Buick received a lot of polishing over the weeks the student saved up for insurance, and its problems were soon sorted. "We added some brake

fluid, and that took care of the brake problem, while the front end was fixed with replacement kingpins," he says. "It used a ton of oil, getting about 60 miles to a quart. This was a real deterrent, until my buddies at the local garage started giving me their used oil. I kept two eight-quart cans in the trunk, and



I'd put in four quarts of oil with each tank of gas. It smoked like crazy!

"I wanted to find out the gas mileage, so I enlisted my friend Andrew, who later became a NASA scientist," Steve continues. "We drove the car from South Williamstown up to Bennington, Vermont,

and on the way back, I coasted as much as I could. We backed up to the gas pump and filled it up again, to find out precisely how much gas it'd used. Andrew said, 'You got 12.1773 MPG!' I thought, 'Oh, I can't afford this car,' even though gas was 19 cents a gallon. I got over that with every-

body chipping in for rides. I drove the thing for about 20,000 miles, going all over the place—down to Washington, over to Boston and Rochester, up to Maine. It was a lot of fun!" After he graduated and joined the Navy, Steve would replace the Buick with a Volkswagen. "What a change—gosh, the



While the 75-year-old plastics have aged, the Canadian-spec broadcloth upholstery has proven incredibly durable. Since it's a short-trip, nice-day car, Steve doesn't mind that the speedometer, clock and radio don't work, and he has no need for the Deluxe heater.

VW got 28 MPG when the Buick never did more than 13!"

The Volkswagen might have been a fine, efficient little car, but it didn't stay with Steve like the classic Buick. By 2012, he had the itch to find another 1940 Model 40 Special, and turned up the incredibly original Touring Sedan on these pages. Having traveled just 63,000 miles in the past 75 years, it's a virtual time capsule. "I think I'm the fourth owner," he muses. "While my first Buick came from Detroit, this one was built in Canada."

Buick was a major player in the medium price field in those prewar years, and this most practical Special variant cost \$996 in 1940. Riding on a 121-inch wheelbase and stretching to a generous 204 inches overall, the Fisher-bodied, 3,660-pound Four-Door Touring Sedan sported newly integrated sealed beam headlamps and clean, attractive styling. It was powered by an overhead-valve, 248-cu.in. straight-eight engine that used a 6.1:1 compression ratio and two-barrel Stromberg carburetor to make 107hp at 3,400 RPM and 203-lb.ft. of torque at 2,000 RPM. A column-shifted three-speed manual helped direct power to the rear wheels.

Those sealed beam headlamps were one of a number of new-for-1940 features introduced in this GM division's highest production year to date. 1940 was also the year Buick built its four-millionth vehicle. Also standard equipment on both of Steve's 1940 Specials were a dual-diaphragm fuel pump offering improved vacuum function for wipers, a "Kleer-Kleen" engine oil filter and "Fore-N-Aft Flash-Way" turn signals, replacing 1939's rear-only signals. These

niceties made the Four-Door Touring Sedan quite popular, to the tune of 67,308 built—and Steve's latest acquisition meant he could personally account for two of those.

Our feature Driveable Dream bears a "General Motors of Canada Limited" plaque under the hood, indicating it's a Model 44-19. And one of the items that was found in the car's glovebox was a neat bit of historic documentation: the original Owner Service Policy card, which the purchaser would show to receive warranty service. It indicates that this Touring Sedan was delivered on May 31, 1940, and that its selling dealership was Lawson Motors Limited, in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. This "import"

*“I've had very good luck with it; it runs very well and steers very well...it's been very well tended to.”*



is nearly identical to a U.S.-built version, although different hubcaps and upholstery patterns are distinguishing identifiers.

"The first owner of this blue Sedan was a Canadian who, I think, used it as a summer car on the Canada/Maine border. He stored it well, and no mice got into it. The second owner was an older man in northern Maine, and I think he'd tried for years to get a hold of the car. He, in turn, sold it to the guy I bought the car from, in the Springfield, Massachusetts, area, and that man could tell me very little about its background, save for the town it came from."

Steve continues; "A few months ago, I was reading the Buick Club's *Buick Bugle* magazine, and saw an ad for a 1940 Buick, placed by a man in that Maine town. I called him up on the off chance that he might have been the previous owner of my current car, and he was! He told me he'd bought it from the original owner, and was sorry he'd let it go. He never had to do a thing to it. I asked if he'd repainted it, and he said, 'No, I didn't need to. It was nice.' That old lacquer paint looks good. The upholstery, floor mat and carpets are original, too. I think the engine's had some work done to it, though, because it's been painted, it runs well and has great oil pressure for 63,000 miles."

While the Special has been largely trouble free, its current owner has done a bit of work to ensure its continued reliability, including replacing the tired factory-installed wiring harness, the voltage regulator and the battery. "Right now, the generator isn't hooked up right, so I've been charging the battery after each use of the car," he explains. "The radio and clock don't



**The 248-cu.in., two-barrel-carbureted, 107-hp straight-eight starts instantly and offers lots of hill-pulling torque. The data plate reveals its GM of Canada Ltd. origins.**

work, the speedometer squawks and sticks, and I've never tried to use the heater. But mechanically, I've had very good luck with it; it runs very well and steers very well, and the radiator and brakes are good. It's not rusty—it's been very well tended to."

And this car's owner is keeping up with the maintenance this automotive septuagenarian requires, ensuring its non-detergent oil is changed and that the chassis is lubricated every spring ("My very good friend Ray Hartman has a lift!"). Steve keeps a shine on the old lacquer paint by using a mild cleaner and polish, and he points out where the finish wasn't protected and is showing age. "It's kind of worn on the hood and the center of the roof. Whoever owned it probably couldn't reach across the top of the car, because you have to get on the running board to do so, it's so tall." Steve jokingly calls himself a "preservationist and cosmetologist," and says with a smile, "I

don't know how to fix 'em, but I can shine 'em up!"

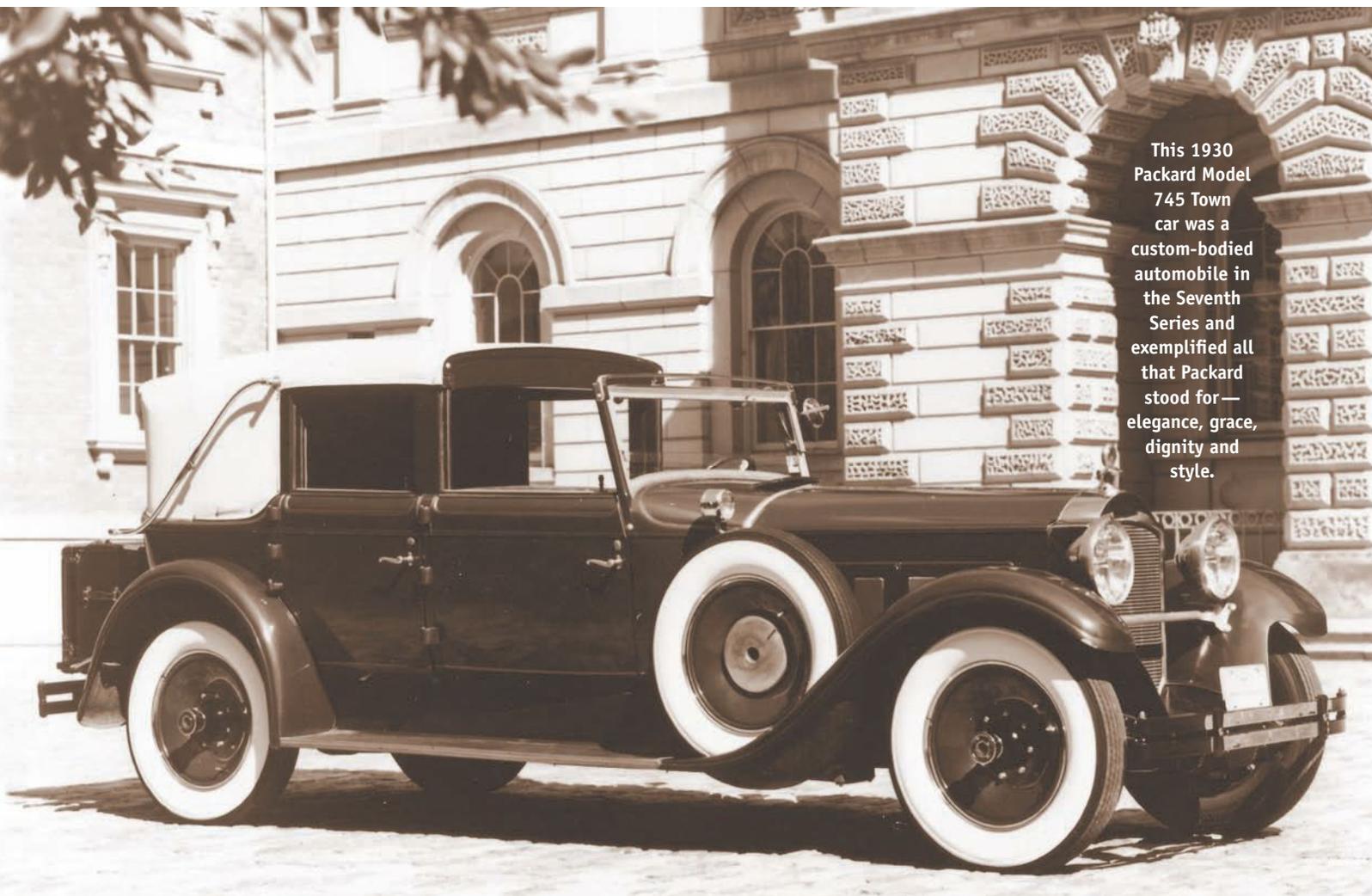
His Special runs beautifully, the straight-eight starting almost instantly and settling down into a smooth, quiet "chuff-chuff" idle. We got to experience its bountiful low-end torque as the car climbed hills in top gear, and Steve noted that this reduced the need to downshift—supposedly a benefit to female drivers—although the

car's non-assisted steering makes low-speed maneuvering a bear for everyone. He adds roughly 1,000 miles a year, primarily taking it to local shows and on short trips around town, and yes, that's a dump permit you see in the window.

"The most fun I have with this car now is when little kids get in and ask all kinds of questions. They want to know about the 'A' sticker and the running boards and how the windows open and why the ceiling is so high. They look at you kind of funny when you explain about gas and tire rationing, about step-in height and ground clearance over rough roads, about hand-cranked windows and how people all wore hats back then," he says with a grin.

While Steve's first 1940 Special likely didn't survive much beyond his ownership, he treasures its many-years-removed replacement. "It's amazing to have something that is 75 years old, but still so operable and good looking. My grandchildren get to enjoy it now, and I plan on keeping it. If the weather isn't nice, I don't take it out of the barn. This way, I suppose it should last at least 120 years..." 🐾





This 1930 Packard Model 745 Town car was a custom-bodied automobile in the Seventh Series and exemplified all that Packard stood for — elegance, grace, dignity and style.

## Packard

*Expanding the model lineup to include V-12 and the entry-level One Twenty — Part II*

BY PATRICK FOSTER • IMAGES COURTESY OF THE PATRICK FOSTER COLLECTION

Fiscal 1929 had been a record year for the Packard Motor Car Company, with sales topping \$107 million and a profit of nearly \$26 million. Stockholders received over \$17 million in dividends. Packard dealers were making money hand over fist. But all that was about to change.

The 1930s would be both glorious and wretched for the Packard automobile. Its styling would reach the pinnacle of grace and beauty during the decade, as the company produced its finest cars ever, fabulous automobiles that even today

leave one breathless. Yet, in the same decade in which Packard was producing its most desirable cars, economic circumstances would force the company to also produce automobiles that were beneath its dignity, cars that would move the company into lower price ranges and on a path that would irreparably damage its image. It was, as Dickens wrote, “the best of times, the worst of times.”

The 1930 Packards, known officially as the “Seventh Series,” were notable for simple yet elegant lines. Designers modified the look of prior models, with

lower lines and a fleetier, more athletic appearance. There were four basic series: the Standard Eight, Custom Eight, Deluxe Eight, and the exciting Speedster Eight. For the most part, sedans shared the same body, with variations in length made up by extending the wheelbase and front-end sheetmetal.

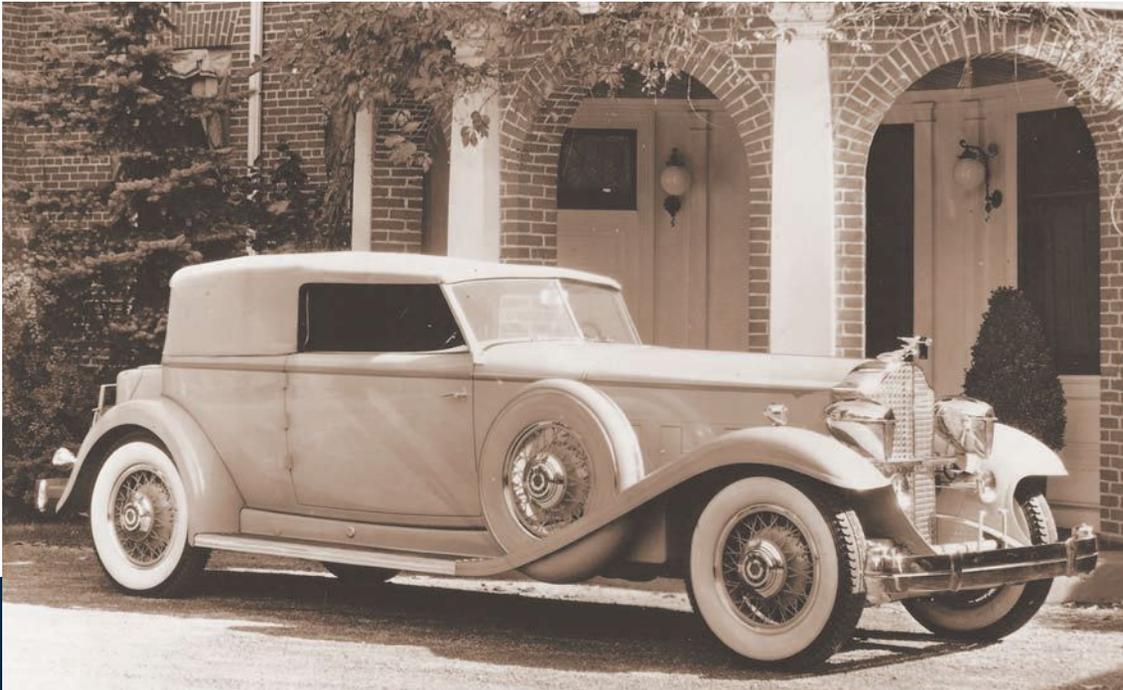
The Deluxe Packards, aka the 745 models, were big, splendid-looking automobiles, with long hoods, long swooping fenders and massive wheels. The Model 745 Town Car shown above is a good example of the sort of elegance and grace



The 1930 Model 734 Speedster Runabout, on the other hand, was Packard's nod to the younger and more sporting Packard enthusiasts. Notice the sloping rear deck, boattail rear, and the bright wheels. This model was introduced in January 1930.



The Derham-bodied 1931 Packard Model 845 roadster has aggressive, sporting lines and the power to deliver on its promise of performance.



The most elegant Packards were usually the custom-bodied models, and this 1932 Model 904 Deluxe Eight Individual Custom Convertible Victoria is a prime example. The modern Woodlite headlamps and bright overlay to the radiator add real distinction to the frontal appearance. Note the wide whitewall tires and rear-hinged doors.

Packard boasted in 1930.

The company offered several sharp roadster models, perhaps best illustrated by the sleek, lovely Model 734 Speedster, with its low, sporty lines, flashy wheels and air of power and authority.

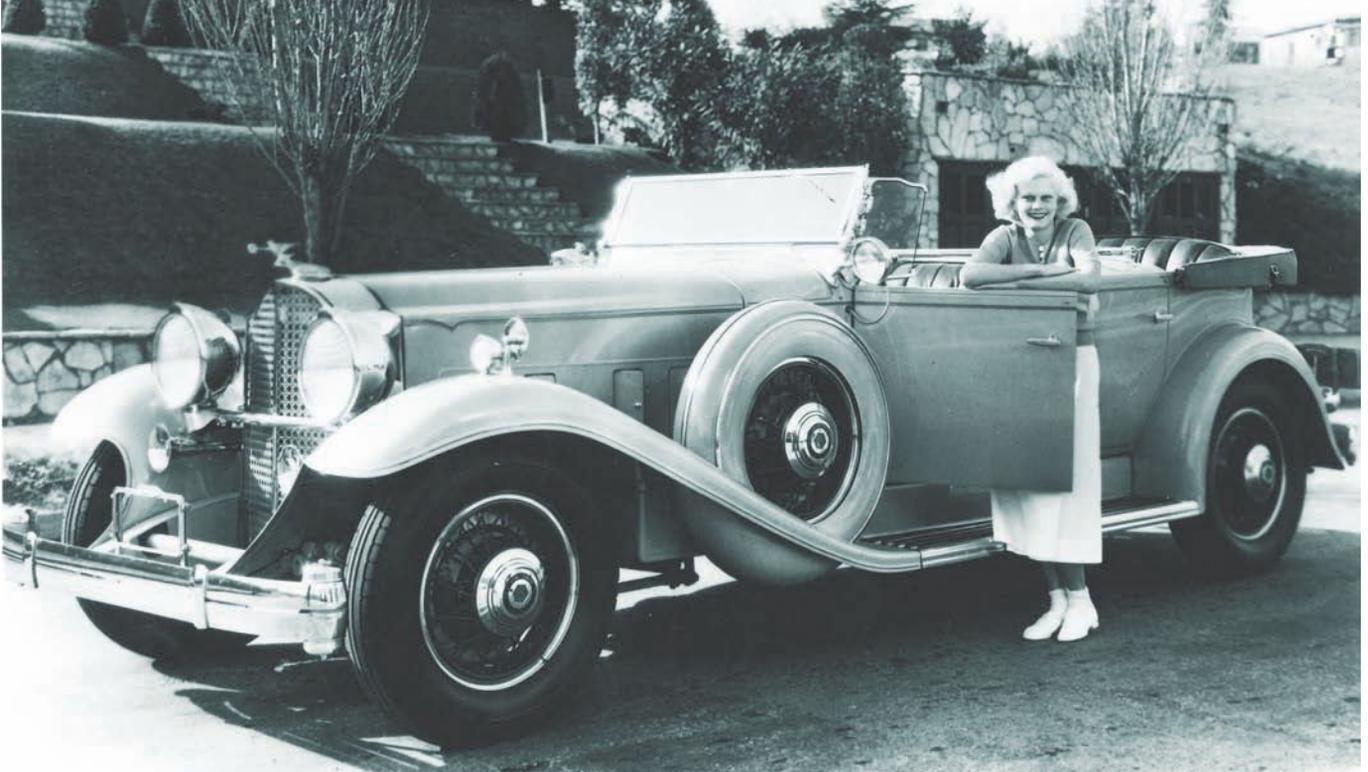
But 1930 was the first full year of the Depression, and despite Packard's stylish looks and inherent goodness, sales fell drastically. In response, the company unveiled its mildly updated Eighth Series models for 1931. The Eight Series cars were offered in Standard Eight and Deluxe Eight models, the Custom series having

been melded into the Deluxe's. Hubcaps were larger, and fenders were fuller. The long, elegant front fenders of the Model 745 were now installed on the Model 840 and 845 Eights (though not the smaller 826 and 833 Eights). The good looks of the line are well represented in the Derham roadster shown here.

However, the Eighth Series proved short-lived. Sales were slow, so the company decided to introduce its Ninth Series 1932-model year cars early, announcing them on June 17, 1931. This created a tough sales situation; there were so many

leftover Eighth Series cars still in stock that the company had to issue special kits to convert them to look more like the newer cars.

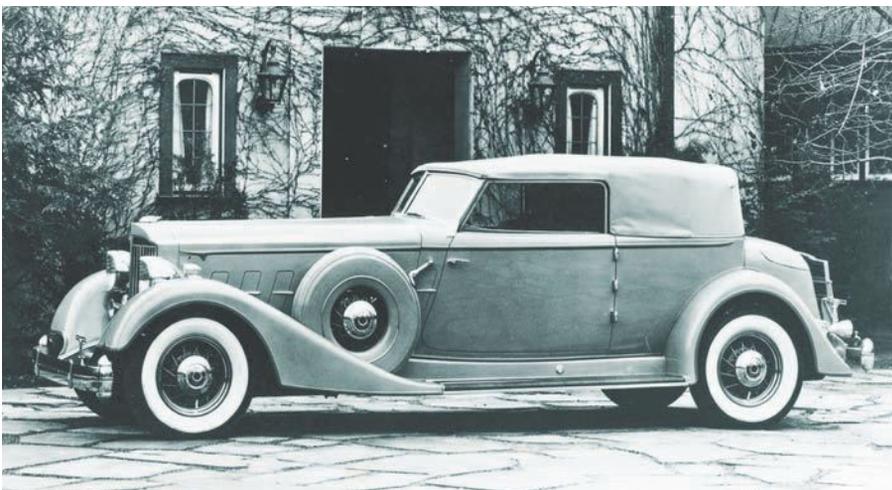
Ninth Series cars sported subtle changes. There was a slight vee at the bottom of the radiator, windows were squared rather than arched and the belt molding had a new contour. Bodies were lower, too, thanks to a new double-drop frame. Standard Eights now featured hood vent doors like the Deluxe models rather than louvers, and all series had more sweeping fenders. Dual trumpet horns



Packards were the choice of kings, presidents and movie stars, as illustrated here with actress Jean Harlow posing with her gorgeous 1932 Packard phaeton equipped with blackwall tires and wire wheels.



Riding a generous 142-inch wheelbase, this imposing 1933 Packard Twelve Model 1005 sedan provided plenty of interior space along with elegant styling.

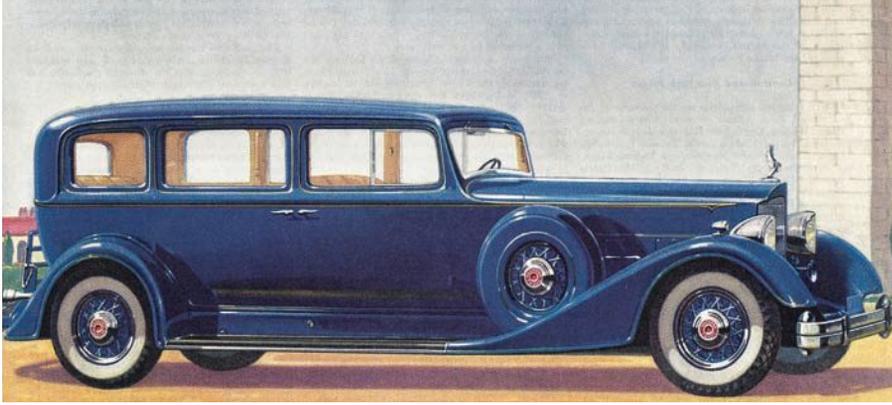


For 1934, the Packard Twelve Model 1108 Dietrich Victoria Convertible only slightly changed from the 1932 version, and still sported its timeless elegance.

mounted under the headlamps were standard on Deluxe models, optional on the Standard Eights. There was also an attempt to move down-market in January 1932 with a car called the Light Eight, with prices starting at \$1,750 for a five-passenger sedan. But the Light Eight was expensive to build and didn't generate sufficient volume; it was dropped within a year.

The star of the Ninth Series was the new Packard Twin Six also debuting that January. Built on wheelbases of 142½ (Model 905) and 147½ inches (Model 906), these handsome boulevardiers were powered by a new 160-hp twelve-cylinder engine. Prices ranged from a bargain \$3,650 up to an eye-popping \$7,950 for an elegant Town Car Landaulet.

In January 1933 the Tenth Series Packard were introduced. The Twin Six was renamed the Packard Twelve, while the Standard Eight became the Eight, and the Deluxe Eight was called the Super Eight. The new cars were lower, thanks mainly to a switch to smaller 17-inch wheels. Hood lengths on the Super Eight and Twelve models were identical while the Eight's was shorter, allowing more prestige for the most costly models. With no 147-inch chassis in the Super Eight series, custom bodies by Dietrich and other builders that had been designed for the previous longest-wheelbase Deluxe cars were now offered only in the Twelve series. Running-board-mounted boxes for the battery and tool kit were removed, and fenders were deeply skirted. Wire wheels were fitted to



This stylish 1934 Packard convertible sedan was said to offer its owner a restful respite: "The worries of the day are forgotten in the pleasure of driving a car that almost drives itself."

A 1934 Packard advertisement focused attention on the company's relatively few styling changes, calling it the company's greatest invention and pointing out that Packard's styling continuity meant the cars suffered less depreciation and thus "...saved its owners millions and millions of dollars."

most cars, although wooden wheels and steel disc wheels were both available to anyone who wanted them.

Pretty as they were, expensive new cars were not what a country worried about the future was willing to invest in, and Packard sales remained in the basement, though dollar volume was up this year, and a small profit was reported.

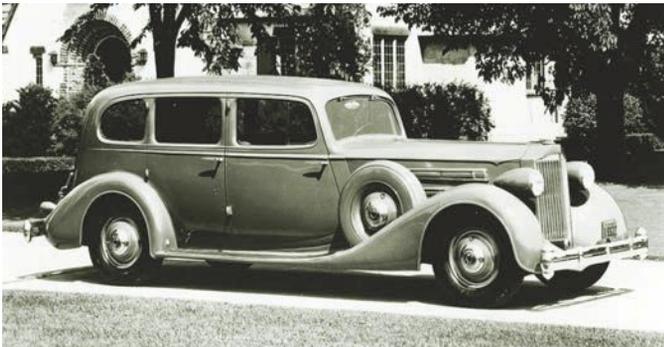
There wasn't a great deal of change for the Eleventh Series Packards, essentially the 1934 models, unveiled to Packard dealers in August 1933. The front fenders extended downward on the leading edge, nearly reaching the restyled bumper. Other detail changes: new running boards, left taillamp combined with the gas cap and taller front seat backs. Model

Eights were available on three wheelbases: 129½, 136 and 141 inches, while Super Eight and Twelve wheelbases were 135, 142 and 147 inches. Custom-built bodies styled by Dietrich were given new hoods and other modifications. New this year, Packard cars were completely engineered for radio installation and offered a Deluxe set mounted in the instrument panel.

The Twelfth Series, introduced August 1934, represented the most sweeping changes in Packard styling in years. Created under the direction of Edward Macauley, son of Packard's president, the design work itself was done mainly by the renowned Count Alexis de Sakhnoffsky and Packard's in-house designer Werner Gubitz. Hoods were widened to

blend into the cowls more gracefully, the trademark shoulders of the grille were extended to create a strong character line running along the body sides, grille shells and headlamp pods were painted, and smoother, more fluid lines were created for the main body. Roofs were curvaceous, and fenders were fuller and more swept back. The new Packard models combined modern good looks with Packard's traditional stylemarks.

More news came in January 1935 when Packard unveiled an all-new car aimed at the medium-priced market, a segment Packard had never competed in but that it had to now in order to grow its sales volume. Dubbed the One Twenty—so called due to its wheelbase length—it was



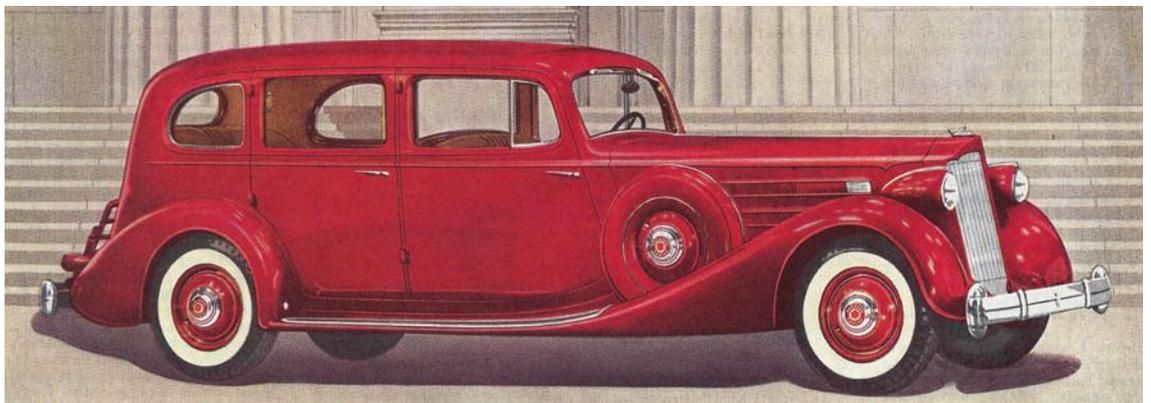
The Packard Twelve Touring Sedan Model 1208 for 1935 was a big, luxurious seven-passenger automobile riding a stately 144-inch wheelbase and selling for \$4,485 at the factory.

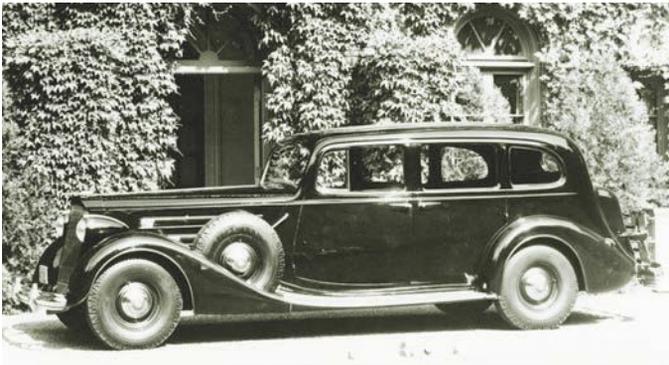


Packard skipped over the number thirteen, going from the Twelfth Series to the Fourteenth Series. Here's a very handsome Fourteenth Series 1936 Packard Model 1404 Super Eight coupe roadster, which could have been bought for a mere \$2,730.

Showing only minor styling changes this year was the 1936

Packard Twelve seven-passenger sedan. The company boasted that it was "...first in the size of its clientele"... "first in fine car registrations in every state" and "first, we believe, in owner loyalty."

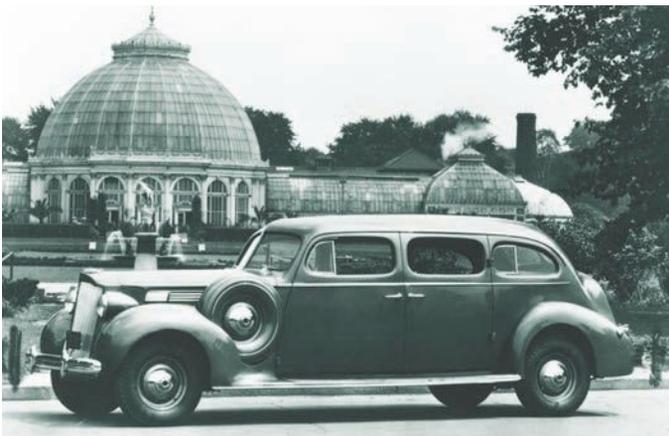




Here's the Packard Twelve seven-passenger sedan for 1937, with styling again only mildly updated. Contrast the size and presence of this fine automobile with its 1937 stablemate, the Packard Six.



For 1937, buyers could purchase a Packard sedan for as little as \$895 and get the same basic styling as the largest and most expensive Packards. While the increased sales volume helped Packard in the short run, over time the application of Packard's name and styling to ordinary, cheap sedans hurt the image of the luxury cars.



A fine car for long-distance travel was this elegant 1938 Packard Eight Touring Limousine, Model 1602, which rode a long 148-inch wheelbase and could be purchased for just \$1,955.



This 1938 Packard Eight Touring Sedan has clean, handsome lines and was well priced, at just \$1,325. This was a down year for Packard, however, as the economy sank into a yearlong slump.

a small car by Packard standards, but a full-size automobile nonetheless. And it was good-looking, with Packard's trademark grille and smooth, modern lines. Priced as low as \$980, the new One Twenty couldn't help but be a smash hit. For many Americans, it was their first chance to own a Packard, and as a result thousands of buyers swamped Packard showrooms. The

company had ten thousand orders, even before any cars were available.

Twelfth Series cars were superseded August 1935 when the mildly updated Fourteenth Series debuted for the 1936 model year. And what happened to the Thirteenth Series? They were never produced; apparently someone at Packard was superstitious.

Unfortunately, Packard's incredible success with the One Twenty encouraged it to reach further down the price scale in 1937 with the six-cylinder Packard Six (later called the One Ten), which offered Packard styling and quality in the \$795 - \$910 price range; the station wagon was priced at \$1,295. Riding a 115-inch wheelbase, the Six was stubby and much too small a car to wear a traditional Packard grille—but it did anyway. Many still feel that with the Six, Packard went down into too low a price range and badly cheapened Packard's image.

The Fifteenth Series senior cars for the 1937 model year were introduced in September 1936. There were now just two senior lines; the former Eight became the Super Eight, while the former Super Eight was dropped, and the Twelve remained much as it was. By now Packard's styling was beginning to look old next to the more glamorous Cadillac, its closest competitor.

The Sixteenth Series of 1938 saw the senior car line consolidated to one chassis length, now serving both the Super Eight and Twelve lines, an effort by Packard to streamline senior car production in light



Demonstrating the depths to which Packard pricing had dropped was this 1938 Packard Six Business Coupe, offered to the public for \$975, making it the lowest-priced Packard that year.

of stagnant sales. Styling was mainly the same, though with pontoon fenders and a split-vee windshield. All the long-wheelbase Twelve models were dropped.

The Junior lines were completely restyled, and 7-inches longer than before, with the One Twenty's wheelbase now the same as the short-wheelbase Super Eight sedan, a hint at further consolidation in the future. However, the new styling proved too conservative, disappointing many potential buyers. It was a bad year to disappoint buyers, because during 1938 the country saw a sharp recession, and automobile sales tumbled.

Packard's 40th year in business, 1939, saw the Super 8 sharing a body with the Junior Eights, though with trim differences, and maintaining separate engines. Prices of the Super Eights were reduced considerably, with the short-wheelbase sedan priced at a surprisingly reasonable \$2,035. However, the similar-looking One Twenty sedan was a mere \$1,295. Most buyers chose the latter, thus sales of the senior line continued to drop.

There were four Packard lines for 1940—The One Ten sixes, One Twenty eights, Super 8 One Sixty and the Super 8 One Eighty, which was the same as the One Sixty, but offered more luxurious trim. The Twelve was dropped because sales were miniscule, and the cost of a much-needed restyle couldn't be justified. Packard prices were again reduced, now ranging from \$867 to \$2,855, with a few custom-bodied cars going for upwards of \$6,300. Many of these finest Packard bore styling by renowned designer Dutch Darrin; his were the first Packards to lose their running boards for a lower, sleeker look.

Packard rebodied its cars for the 1941 model year, but the changes were subtle, though quite attractive. Headlamps were finally set into the fenders, and windows were larger. Wheelbases remained the same as before, but floors were lower. Super Eights and Custom Super Eights offered a range of wheelbases of 127 to 148 inches, and these were some of the greatest Packards of all time: big, elegant cars with a commanding presence. But sales were slow, as salesmen took the path of least resistance and focused their attention on the cheaper One Twenty and One Ten models.

April 1941 was scheduled for the introduction of an all-new and very different Packard automobile. Called the Clipper, it was to be a single four-door sedan priced between the One Twenty and the Super Eight (One Sixty) models, with completely new styling that was sleek, modern and unlike anything Packard had ever done before. Its success would set the course for Packard styling for nearly a decade. 🐾



Towards the other end of the pricing scale was this beautiful 1939 Packard Twelve Model 1707 Convertible Victoria, which sold for \$5,230. Fewer than 500 Packard Twelves were produced this year.



The 1940 Packard-Darrin convertible coupe represented one of the high points in Packard styling, with long, graceful lines and a pleasant mix of American and European styling cues.



Even its stylish wood body has difficulty hiding the lack of elegance in this 1940 Packard 110 six-cylinder station wagon, which carried a price tag of \$1,200, making it the most expensive of the six-cylinder Packards that year.



Packard even got into the taxicab market, with products such as this 110 series four-door model. Although profitable for the company, commercial cars like this greatly cheapened the Packard image and aura.



By 1941, Packard's styling was becoming stale and was overdue for a complete revision. The company had an all-new car coming mid-year as a supplement to its aging lineup.

# George Romney

*Why Studebaker-Packard never merged with AMC, and other revelations*



BY ARCH BROWN • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This is an abridged version of an interview that first appeared in Special Interest Autos magazine, December 1981.*

In the fall of 1945 peace returned to the world, and the automobile industry found itself blessed with an unprecedented demand for its products, the result of a combination of prosperous times and the fact that no cars had come out of Detroit for the better part of four years. The independents—Hudson, Nash, Packard and Studebaker—made the most of the situation; in 1946 the collective market share of the four leaders came to nearly 14 percent.

It would not be surprising if the attitude of the entire industry, both the large companies and the small, was one of complacency; but at least one man saw the handwriting on the wall. To George Walter Mason, president of the Nash-Kelvinator Corporation, it was obvious that if the independent firms wanted to remain competitive, they had better pool their resources to form a new corporation, patterned after the

industry's leader, General Motors. He even had a name in mind for the new organization: American Motors.

Exactly when this concept came to Mason's mind is not clear, for he was one to keep his own counsel. Perhaps it was during the war, perhaps even earlier; we don't know. But by 1948 the proposed merger was the centerpiece of his long-range planning. The evidence suggests, however, that among Nash-Kelvinator's competitors the corporate brass was not yet ready to receive Mason's idea. With their cars selling as fast as they could be built and profits rolling in at an unprecedented rate—for most of them, anyway; Packard was an exception in that respect—nobody really wanted to make waves.

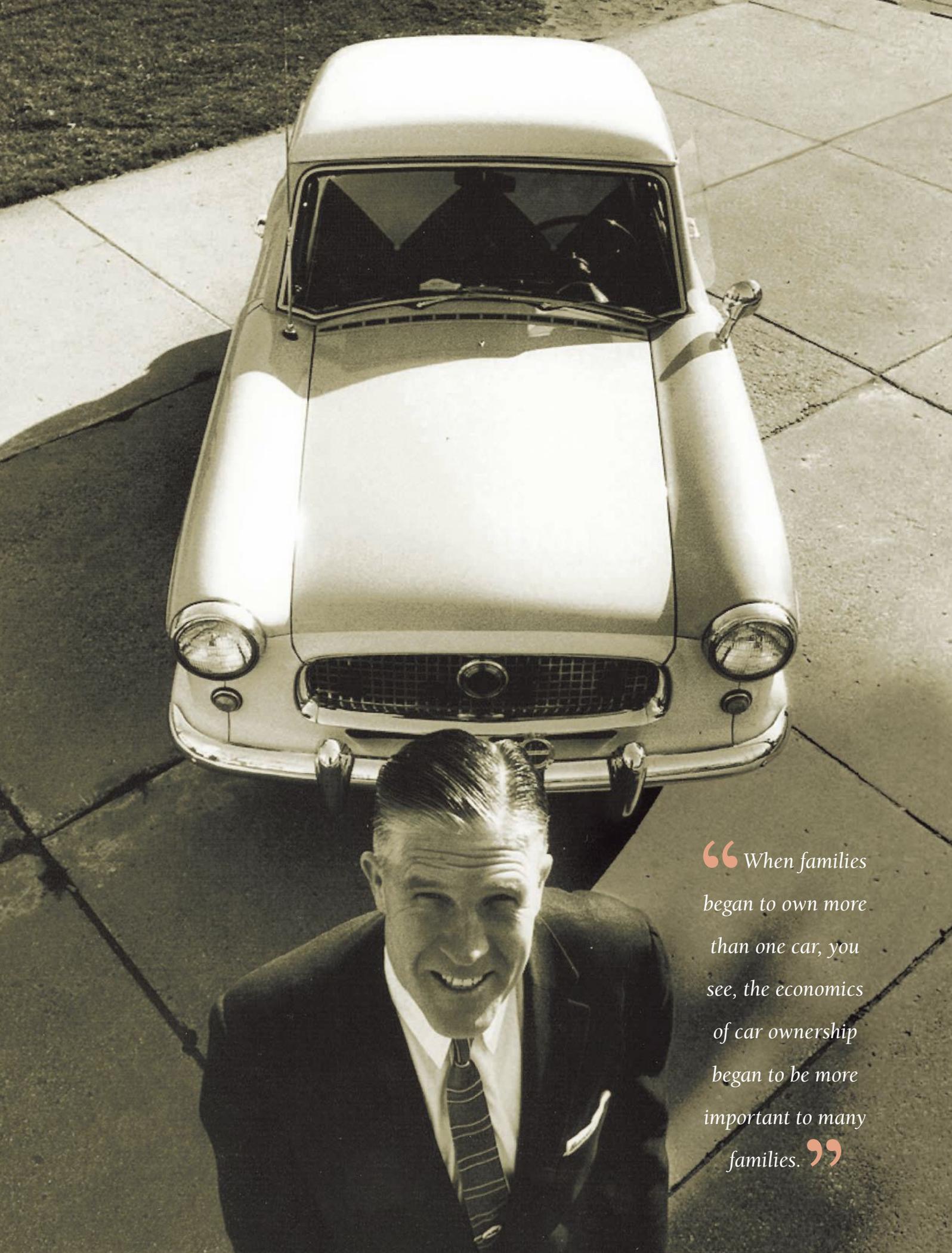
It was not until May 1, 1954, that the American Motors merger took place, and then with only two concerns involved—Nash and Hudson. By that time, of course, the independents had lost their war-born momentum. The collective market share of Hudson, Nash, Packard and Studebaker had fallen to four and a half percent, and all but Nash were losing money. Packard,

meanwhile, was negotiating a merger with Studebaker—or more accurately a takeover, which was effected five months after the Nash-Hudson “marriage.”

George Mason had expected that the next step would be the merger of American Motors with Studebaker-Packard, thus fulfilling his long-time dream. But exactly one week after Packard's acquisition of Studebaker George Mason died suddenly.

There have followed 27 years of speculation as to why the final merger of all four independent firms failed to take place. A number of theories have been advanced, all of them based on guesswork. Only one man, as Dick Langworth has noted, is in a position to know what really took place: George Romney, who succeeded George Mason as president of American Motors; George Romney, who ridiculed the “gas-guzzling dinosaurs” and became the first American industrialist to successfully market what he dubbed a “compact” car; George Romney, who led the Rambler to fourth place in the industry and then went on to become governor of Michigan.

*Special Interest Autos* was privileged



“When families began to own more than one car, you see, the economics of car ownership began to be more important to many families.”



About the Henry J, Romney said: “the Henry J failed because they stripped it to make a car for the poor people, and the poor people didn’t want ‘a car for the poor people.’”

to visit with Governor Romney a few weeks ago, our second interview with him in recent months. We asked if he could confirm that George Mason had planned a merger of the independent automobile manufacturers.

**Romney:** That’s correct. He made an attempt to do that.

**SIA:** Did Willys and Kaiser-Frazer figure in his calculations?

**Romney:** Oh, no.

**SIA:** When did Mason first propose such a merger?

**Romney:**

I can’t say with certainty because I wasn’t there. I

joined Nash-Kelvinator in 1948, and he’d been giving it a good deal of thought before that. So when he first conceived the idea and what his moves were before I joined the company, I don’t know. It was not a new idea in 1948, however.

**SIA:** Did he have in mind including any of the manufacturers of components, companies such as Borg-Warner?

**Romney:** Not that I know of. At least, he never discussed it in my presence.

**SIA:** I suppose in those postwar years the independents must have commanded at least 10 to 12 percent of the market.

**Romney:** Something like that, on a combined basis.

**SIA:** How viable would such a concern have been?

**Romney:** Well, after all, the American Motors situation was very viable as the result of the Hudson-

Nash merger. We had American Motors in a very solid position by the end of the Fifties and the early Sixties. It was just the failure of my successors to follow through on what we were doing that lost them the opportunity.

Now the success of American Motors was partially the result of the merger and partially the result of product development—the Rambler—and being ahead in recognizing the change in the demand for cars. That change in demand resulted from multiple-car ownership. When families began to own more than one car, you see, the economics of car ownership began to be more important to many families.

**SIA:** One of the smartest things AMC did was to bring out that little convertible first, in order to establish the Rambler as a “mini-prestige” car, you might say.

**Romney:** Yes. The Henry J failed because they stripped it to make a car for the poor people, and the poor people didn’t want “a car for the poor people.” The Rambler was introduced in the most expensive models, the convertible and the station wagons, and fully equipped. That was designed to get them into the hands of Cadillac and Lincoln and prestige car owners as a second or third car, and thus establish the fact that nobody was going to look down his nose at you if you bought a Rambler.

**SIA:** That was smart merchandising. Whose idea was it?

**Romney:** That’s difficult to say. In any event it was Mason who was there at the time, and he was responsible for it.

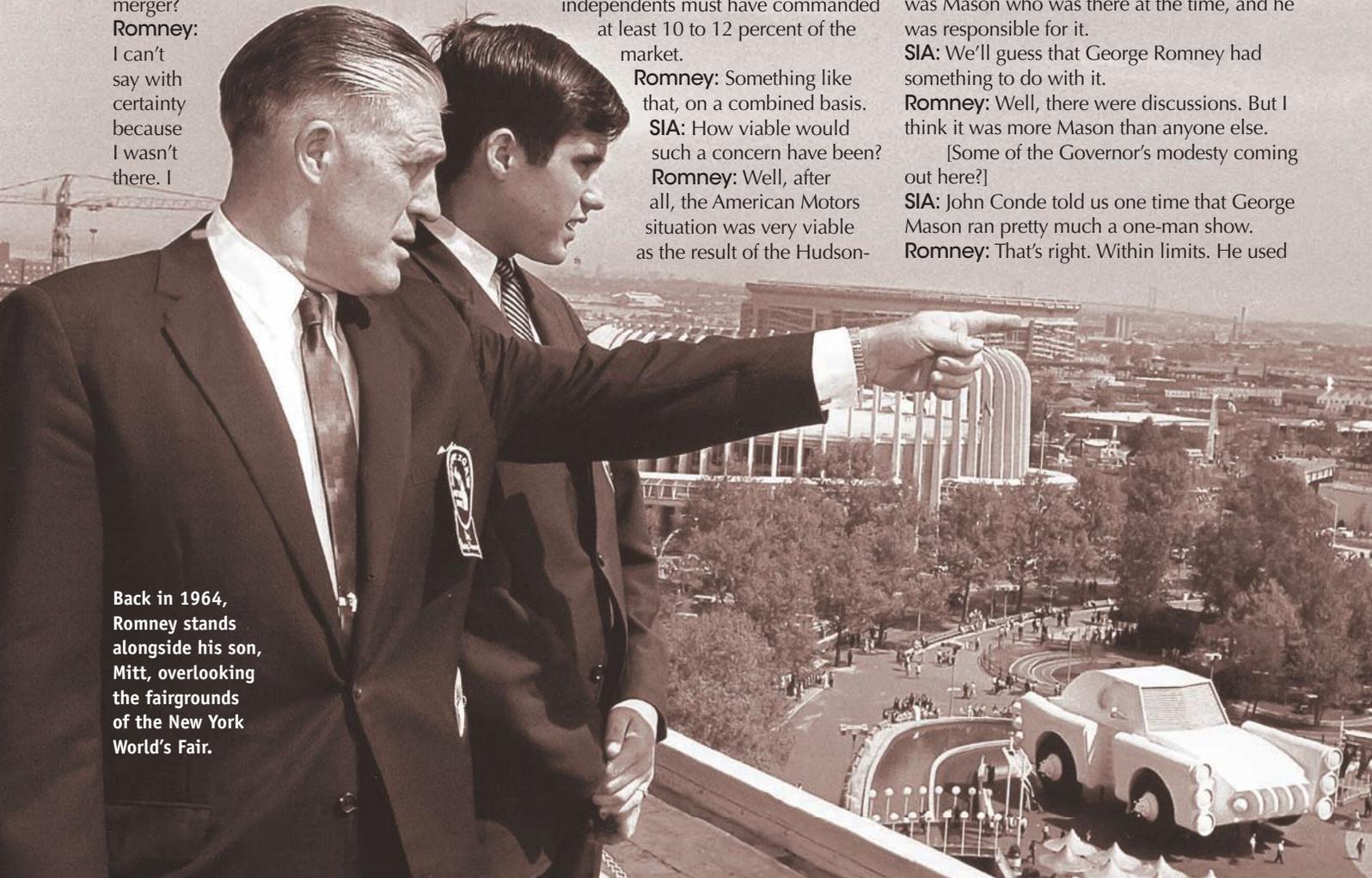
**SIA:** We’ll guess that George Romney had something to do with it.

**Romney:** Well, there were discussions. But I think it was more Mason than anyone else.

[Some of the Governor’s modesty coming out here?]

**SIA:** John Conde told us one time that George Mason ran pretty much a one-man show.

**Romney:** That’s right. Within limits. He used



Back in 1964, Romney stands alongside his son, Mitt, overlooking the fairgrounds of the New York World’s Fair.

to talk a great deal on the side.

**SIA:** It's easy to see the advantage to Hudson in the AMC merger: They were in trouble at the time. What was in it for Nash?

**Romney:** Additional dealers to distribute the Rambler. I think the basic difference between Mason's view with respect to the Rambler and my view was this: Mason saw the Rambler as a supplement to Nash and Hudson lines. I decided that it was a basic car that had a future all by itself. And as you know, shortly after I took over I dropped the Hudsons, I dropped the Nashes and we just decided to sink or swim with Rambler.

**SIA:** You sure swam! Of course, you'd have had to put an awful lot of capital investment to retool for the larger cars.

**Romney:** That's right.

**SIA:** In the original merger proposal Nash-Kelvinator had the soundest financial structure of any of the independents, and as we understand it, the most efficient manufacturing facilities as well. Does this suggest that manufacturing activity would have centered in Kenosha?

**Romney:** If it had been a four-way merger? It never got to that point, so it's difficult to say with certainty.

**SIA:** Would we be correct in guessing that in George Mason's mind the proposed merger with Packard was of particular importance because the Nash and Packard lines complemented each other in terms of price structure—and perhaps because of the Packard prestige?

**Romney:** I think that's right. He had a number of discussions about a possible Packard merger.

**SIA:** With whom? The Packard Board of Directors? Nance?

**Romney:** Well, no. This took place ahead of Nance. Then Nance came in and there were discussions with him. Nance kind of moved away from it. I concluded that he wanted to engineer this four-way merger himself. [John Conde in a recent conversation with *SIA*, commented "I think Nance wanted to run the company."]

Mason and Nance worked out an agreement for a reciprocal buy-sell relationship. The understanding was that we would buy V-8 engines from Packard, and Packard would reciprocate by purchasing approximately an equal dollar amount of stampings from us. We had a new stamping plant over in Kenosha.

Then Nance, shortly after Mason's death, made arrangements to buy the Briggs stamping plant in Detroit. Well, I knew by that, that he wasn't going to honor the understanding with respect to reciprocal purchases. So I wired him within a few days after I took over, and indicated that he was not honoring the understanding. And that was the end of that.



With thoughts on expanding the AMC empire, in this 1955 meeting Romney discusses the various 24 automobile manufacturing facilities that were then located throughout the world.

**SIA:** How did the Packard Board of Directors react?

**Romney:** I don't know, because we had no contact with the Board. I sat in on the discussions with Nance before Mason died, so I was thoroughly familiar with the understanding we had with Nance. But we had no contracts with the board per se. Nance was handling that. And before that, Macauley and Christopher were.

Incidentally, Macauley and Christopher were trying to get me to join Packard when I joined Nash-Kelvinator; offered me more money and the presidency of Packard in two years.

**SIA:** Did you ever have any regrets about that?

**Romney:** No, no, no. I made the right decision.

**SIA:** Did you already, at the time you joined Nash, have the idea of the compact car?

**Romney:** Well, yes. I was convinced that there was a market for a small, economical car. One of the first responsibilities I had with the Automobile Manufacturers Association was to analyze the "first car use" studies that had been made in the United States. The most significant thing that came out of those figures was that most trips were 13 miles or less in length. That meant that this idea that you had to have a car for transcontinental travel just wasn't basically correct. People needed a vehicle for short trips. And so when I was shown the Rambler before I joined Nash-Kelvinator, I was very impressed with the possibilities in it. It was one of the things that entered into my decision to go there rather than to Packard.

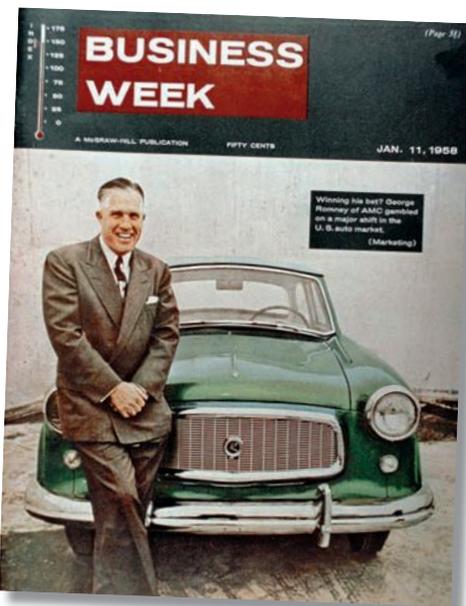
**SIA:** We wondered if that might not have been the case. Obviously, since it was introduced in 1950, the Rambler had to have been on the boards in 1948.

**Romney:** Oh, sure. I saw mock-ups and so on at that point.

**SIA:** Were the merger talks, beyond just Nash and Hudson, dead at the time of Mason's death?

**Romney:** Well, not completely, no. Because this reciprocal buy-sell relationship was viewed as something that might be kind of an interim thing, and it might have led to.... Although Mason sensed before his death that Nance was not really thinking in terms of merger. But it hadn't been completely chilled.

**SIA:** Nance, of course, has indicated that everything was fine as long as Mason was alive, but you walked away from the merger.



*Business Week* magazine recognized Romney's success. The cover caption reads: "Winning the bet? George Romney of AMC gambled on a major shift in the U.S. auto market."



Shortly after the merger of Hudson and Nash, Romney talks about this 1955 Nash that never went into production as a Nash-badged model.

**Romney:** No, no, no, no! No, he was telling people shortly after Mason's death and after I became head of American Motors that I had just been an errand boy for Mason, and I would be out and American Motors would be picked up by Packard within a matter of months. I was told that by several people whom Nance had talked to. I don't think he thought that I was capable of running the company.

**SIA:** When we last talked, you indicated that one of the reasons the American automobile industry is in trouble now has to do with the failure to read the message on the Volkswagen sales charts, back in the Fifties.

**Romney:** The Rambler and the Volkswagen. You look back at the history of it and the Rambler took off before any foreign car in this market. You look at the sales figures and you'll find that Volkswagen was selling just a handful of cars in the late Fifties.

**SIA:** They began to pick up in about 1958, didn't they?

**Romney:** And that's when I brought back the original Rambler. We had shifted from the small Rambler to the "compact" car. That's when I had to coin the term "compact" to indicate that it was different from the first Ramblers, and yet it wasn't just a "small" car. You see, we helped Volkswagen take off, then Volkswagen helped us. That's why I brought back the original Rambler American.

**SIA:** I remember. People at the time said you were crazy.

**Romney:** Well, we had to sell 15,000 cars to break even the first year, and we sold 115,000. The tooling costs were all written off, you see.

**SIA:** Pure gravy!

**Romney:** Sure!

**SIA:** In a recent speech you mentioned that increases in wages have far outstripped increases in productivity.

Are there other reasons, beyond the

misreading of the market and the matter of production costs, which account for the decline in relative importance, worldwide, of the American automobile industry?

**Romney:** The whole economic climate of this country has been antagonistic to successful competitive enterprise on a world scale. The government permitted this conflict to develop in economic policy between competition under the antitrust laws and monopoly under the collective bargaining laws. It's a fundamental conflict. In addition to that, the tax policies have discouraged savings and investment. And then you have had this heavy regulatory burden coming on top of that. And the policies that kept gasoline prices way down, perpetuating the "gas guzzling dinosaur" era, the government was largely responsible for that, too.

Then you move over on the union side, and the unions have used their power to protect the inefficient. One reason that I was able to work out the profit-sharing contract with Walter Reuther in 1960 was that he had concluded that the collective-bargaining pattern in this country had reached a dead-end street, that this pattern of more and more for less and less was a dead end. And it was, and is. The union's use of its power to protect those who were not doing a decent job and who should have been disciplined, contributed to high costs and a decline in quality.

And then on the employers' side, the companies were shortsighted in that, number one, they didn't recognize the change in product demand; and number two, instead of resisting these excessive union demands, following contract settlements that were clearly inflationary they would state in the ensuing press conferences that they were not inflationary. And furthermore, the companies tended to encourage the government's deficit financing and the printing of money [in order to] moderate

the impact of the excessive contract settlements. So, in my book, the business people were partly responsible, too.

The tragedy of it is that the mistakes of the government, the unions and management all hit at the same time, and hit at a time when the Japanese had put themselves in a position to provide the type of car that people wanted on a quality basis and at an advantageous price. So they got hit at the worst possible time with new competition.

**SIA:** What do you see, if anything, that the United States might do to regain its preeminent position in the industry. Or is it too late?

**Romney:** Well, it's a changed situation. The automobile market of the future is going to be a world market, and that means that you'll have to have cars that will basically meet the needs of people around the world. It also means that you've got to buy components where you can buy them competitively. And unfortunately, right now that isn't in the United States.

I don't expect the American automobile industry to ever again be what it was. After all, when I came to Detroit the companies were shipping cars all over the world.

**SIA:** Indeed they were! They dominated the whole scene.

**Romney:** Why, sure! I've seen it shift from that to the point where Japan has taken over. What's happened to our automobile industry and national economy is what happened to Great Britain. In my youth, Great Britain was the number-one nation in the world. Now it's a third-rate power.

**SIA:** We read in the paper the other day a prediction that by 1990 cars will cost \$30,000 and gas will go for \$7 a gallon. We thought that sounded a little rich. What do you see in your crystal ball?

**Romney:** It depends on what happens to inflation. Reagan's having trouble getting what he's trying to get, and what he's trying to get isn't enough to deal with inflation.

**SIA:** One more question, Governor. Just out of curiosity, what kind of car do you drive now?

**Romney:** I drive an American Motors Concord. I've stayed with the company, out of loyalty. And I enjoy it; it's a good car. Doesn't have as much economy as some of the others, but it's a good car.

**SIA:** Thank you ever so much, Governor, for taking time to talk with us.

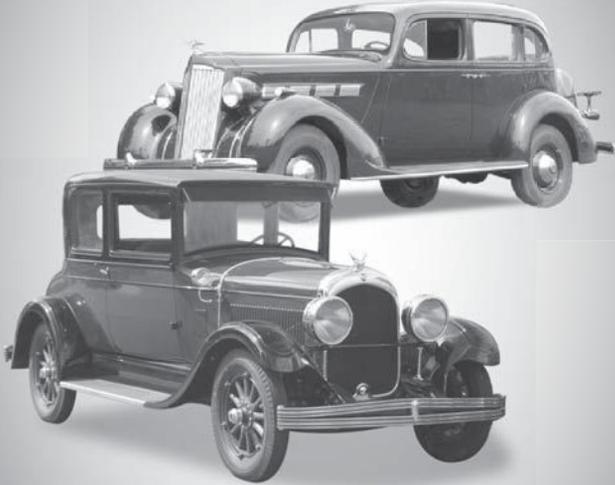
And there for the record, is the story of how the merger of the four major American independents was derailed, along with some pertinent (if somewhat discouraging) observations on the contemporary scene.

Perhaps 1954 would have been too late anyway for a successful merger of Packard and Studebaker with Hudson and Nash. But then again... 🐞

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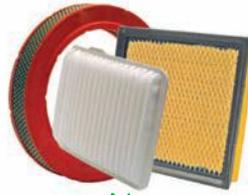
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## Rise of the Thunderbird—Part II

*With the body repaired and paint applied, the restoration of a 1966 Ford Thunderbird Landau culminates with rebuilt mechanicals and a superior interior*



BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH  
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BRUCE MAXWELL

There are 1,000 reasons why someone chooses to restore a vintage car. Perhaps the notion was spurred by a fond childhood memory of a cross-country trek in the back of their dad's sedan, or the thrill they had when purchasing their first new car. Perhaps it was simply because the car they thought they bought needed more than casual detailing. Whatever the case, we all quickly land on common ground once the decision has been made: It takes commitment to see it through.

As mentioned in last month's Part

I, owner Bruce Maxwell of Scottsdale, Arizona, found that his Thunderbird's as-delivered condition did not match the photographs and description in its online for-sale listing. "It had been repainted, but it was far from perfect, looking almost like parts of it had been done with a brush. There was a dent on the bottom of one of the doors, the transmission leaked, the engine ran but it was a little rough," says Bruce. After consulting with his restorer, Ward Gappa of Quality Muscle Car Restorations, who was on hand for the Ford's delivery, it was agreed that in order to

fulfill his expectations, it needed more than a simple cosmetic refinish. The extent of the restoration would have to be determined along the way.

To recap, work on the luxury Thunderbird commenced in July 2012 after isolating the immediately obvious concerns, including a bearing failure that occurred during a brief preliminary test drive. Rather than completely disassemble the Ford immediately, it was taken apart in stages. Exterior trim and body panels were carefully removed and extensively documented via digital media. This was followed by the disas-



To prevent a restoration project from getting bogged down, it's helpful to stay one step ahead. Here, new door panels are in the process of being test-fitted, as the other body panels and main shell receive a second corrective coat of PPG single-stage urethane.



Earlier, an engine specialist stripped the Ford's 390-cu.in. block in preparation for its rebuild. With the cylinders bored .030-over, new pistons and other critical internals were installed. The FE-Series V-8 was also balanced to ensure smoother operation.



After the second repaint had been accomplished, restorer Ward Gappa and his team stripped the suspension from the chassis, including the rear semi-elliptic leaf springs, both of which have been separated to get them ready for media blasting.



It's easy to think you will remember specific measurements and locations, but recalling those details months later can be difficult. Meticulous notes, such as key dimensions and which end goes where, as photographed here, make later installation a snap.

sembly of the interior—which uncovered minor damage behind the instrument panel caused by rodents—the elimination of the original vinyl roof and the extraction of the engine and transmission; the latter two were sent to a specialist in the Scottsdale region for a thorough rebuild.

With the Thunderbird now partially disassembled, the shell and its associated panels were briefly reunited and delivered to a nearby facility to have most of the paint removed by media blasting. One area that was to retain the factory paint was the roof, since upon removal of the vinyl covering, no corrosion or other dam-

age was found. What the media blasting did uncover was a driver's door festooned with dings and dimples along what should have been crisp lines, and some corrosion on the steel battery tray.

After blasting, Ward subcontracted a known local facility to manage the remaining body work. As Bruce succeeded in quickly locating a damage-free replacement left door—as well as the correct intake manifold that the 390-cu.in. engine required—the shop welded in small patch panels to rectify the battery tray. They also addressed other small dimples and applied a skim coat of filler that was then

block-sanded smooth before primer, and then single-stage red paint was applied. As the primer cured, it became obvious that some areas of select panels were not as smooth as originally believed, which led to the application of another skim coat and block sanding.

Concurrent to the body receiving corrective treatment, Ward and his team began to resurrect the countless subassemblies that fill the Thunderbird's voids. This included the cleaning and rebuilding of pedal assemblies, the full-width tail-lamp panel, trim and lenses and the ordering of replacement vinyl roof material. In



Some aspects of a restoration are better handled by experienced specialists. That was the case here with regard to returning the Thunderbird's speedometer and rocket-inspired auxiliary gauge pods to as-new condition; note the unaltered mileage.



Components were sent in batches for media blasting. Having been returned here are suspension and brake system parts, the engine's exhaust manifolds and air-cleaner assembly. Parts requiring paint received treatment quickly to prevent flash rust.



Hundreds of nuts, bolts and other connectors hold a car together, so restorers use the "bag and tag" method of keeping track of them all and organizing them in preparation for eventual restoration. This is only a portion of the Thunderbird's many labeled bags.



Seal concerns aside, careful examination of the differential revealed unwanted gear wear, forcing a total rebuild. Marking compound on select teeth of the ring gear helped determine an acceptable amount of lash. If not set properly, the gearset could fail.



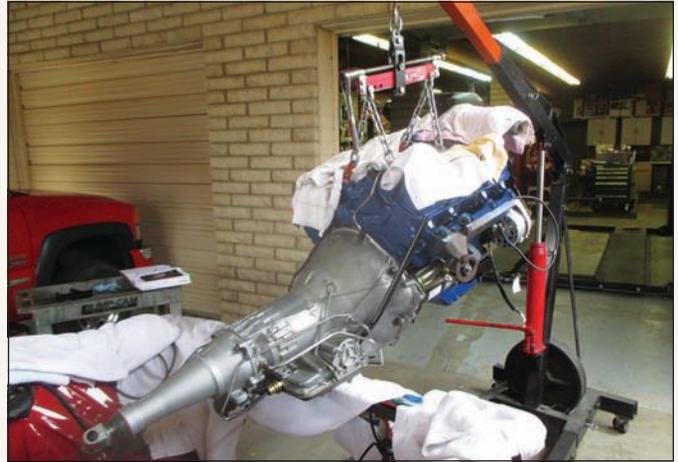
Accompanied by new bushings and ball joints, the suspension and brake systems were rebuilt and reinstalled; the two-piston calipers had also been rebuilt. Note that the front coil springs were refinished to factory color, including paint dab markings.



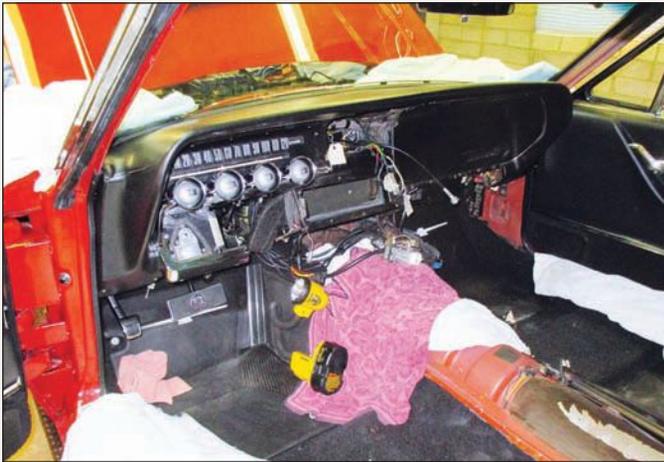
With the chassis rebuilt, the Thunderbird was another step closer to completion. Work could now progress to resurrecting the exterior, including the installation of a new black vinyl top. Protecting the new paint are a number of microfiber towels.



Rather than break in the rebuilt V-8 while it's bolted in the chassis, it was done on a special engine stand. In this setup, it would be easier to correct any problems that might arise without having to remove it from the chassis, risking damage to the new finish.



After testing, the engine—reunited with the C6 three-speed automatic earlier—were returned to the chassis as a subassembly. Though it looks cumbersome and requires careful guidance, they are easier to install together than as separate units.



Focus next shifted to the interior. Installed first was the rebuilt instrument cluster, followed by the refinished pedals and floor carpet. The restored padded dash came after much of the wiring harness had been reconnected to key components.



Look closely and you'll note that, along with the front bucket seats, most of the interior has been completed, including the C-pillar trim, rear seats, restored center console and steering column. Note the exterior top trim has also been returned.



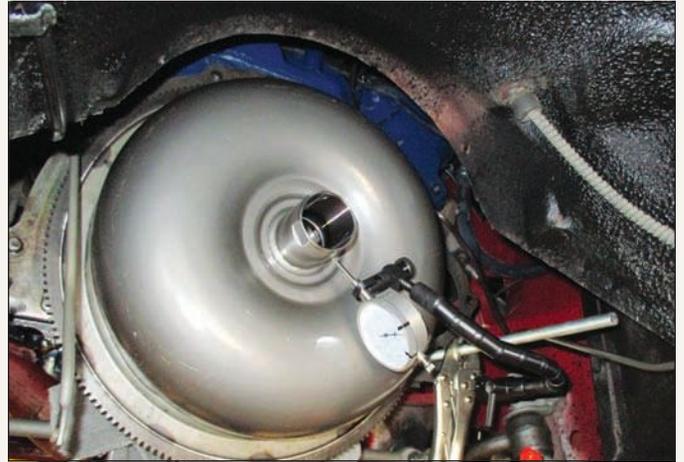
In spite of the installation of the front fenders and the related bumper and grille, there was still a long list of tasks that needed to be accomplished, including adjusting panel gaps, refitting the hood and finishing the electrical system and remaining trim.



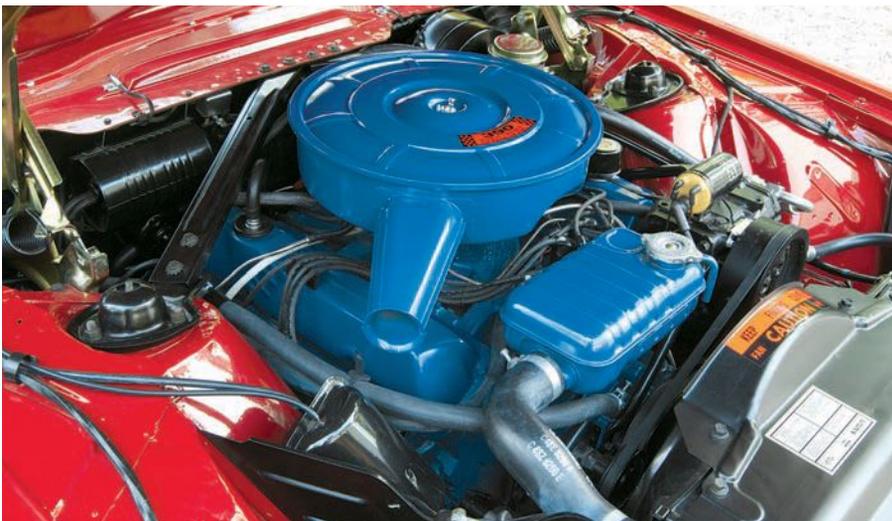
An important step in most restorations that's rarely discussed is the proper alignment being performed here. Regardless of how carefully the steering geometry is set during reassembly, a few degrees of error can lead to poor handling and premature tire wear.



Before turning the restored Thunderbird over to the owner, the restorer subjected the car to a couple of shakedown runs. After some adjustments, a fairly serious vibration developed during another test drive; the transmission had to be removed to investigate its cause.



Everything from the flywheel to the tiniest of tolerances were checked. The cause of the vibration was discovered to be pieces of walnut shell that had been used to clean the radiator; several small bits had passed through the cooling lines into the transmission.



In addition, the front bucket seats needed to be recovered so they were delivered to another local specialist. Likewise, brightwork that could not be polished to a like-new luster was sent out for replating.

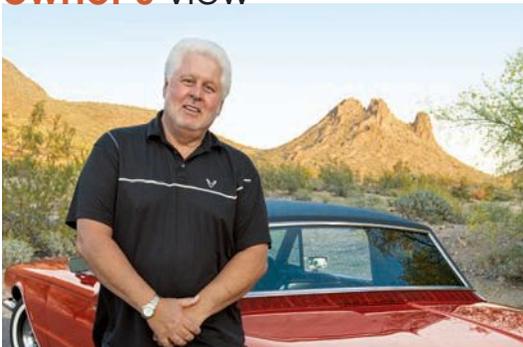
By August 2013, the body and paint work had been completed; however, when it was inspected, enthusiasm for the

perceived progress waned. The facility's effort fell short of expectations, leaving, for instance, exposed primer along some door edges. Rather than return the Thunderbird to the same shop, another was contracted for an extensive rework and reapplication of PPG paint. It would delay the project, but the extra time was put to good use,

as a superior exterior emerged within a couple of short months.

In this issue, we bring you Part II of Bruce's restoration saga. Having been returned to the restorer, the Ford's restoration work quickly progressed to the suspension and brake systems bolted to the chassis. In due time, the engine and transmission were ready to be reunited with the Thunderbird, and the interior and trim work was scheduled to round out the effort. But there would be yet another gremlin to contend with before the project was officially completed. Join us as we explore the nuances of this award-winning restoration and see it to its conclusion. 🏁

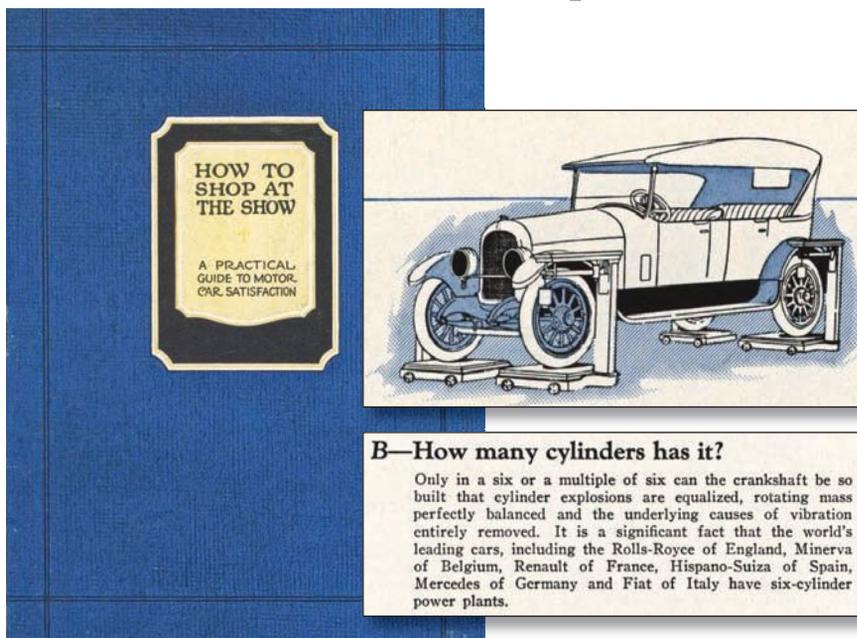
## owner's view



There were parts of the restoration that required a fair amount of patience. For instance, while some O.E. replacement parts were pretty easy to locate, others were far more difficult, such as those needed to fix the power seat. We also had to be careful with some reproduction parts that, although appearing correct, were just off enough to create some fitment issues. In the end, however, the time and effort were worth it; the result is everything I expected and more. It's a real joy to drive. I've added several hundred miles to the odometer since it was finished in March. The Thunderbird is very comfortable on back roads or the highway. In fact, I would not be afraid to take it on a long road trip.



# How to Shop at the Show



**IN 1924 THERE WERE MORE THAN 80 manufacturers selling passenger cars in the United States, ranging from the \$350 Ford Model T to the \$14,500 Rolls-Royce.** Competition was fierce, and the industry sold more than 3,750,000 cars in 1923. Imagine yourself at the grand opening of the 1924 New York Auto Show, eager to buy a new car but overwhelmed by your options. To help navigate the event, the Marmon Company produced a catalog titled *How to Shop at the Show*, and it helped prospective buyers analyze all of their options using 12 different criteria.

Let's "shop" the show using just a few of the criteria in the Marmon catalog. Our first consideration will be the body. The catalog instructs us to ask vendors the following questions: "Do you make your own bodies? What materials are used? How high is the floor level? How is the body mounted?" The catalog then explains why you should ask these questions and quickly points out that Marmon cars have bodies made by Marmon; feature aluminum fenders and hoods; ride only 24½-inches from the ground, providing a low center of gravity; and state that Marmon open bodies are mounted directly upon the frame in replaceable sections.

The catalog also instructs a potential buyer to consider balance and weight by asking, "Is your car balanced? Where is the gas tank located? Where is the transmission located? How much does your car weigh?" The catalog answers these questions for the Marmon by providing an illustration of an automobile placed on four scales with a caption that states there is only a 30-pound difference between front and rear axles. Marmon is also proud to show that its gas tank rides in the cowl, the transmission is carried at the forward end of a torque tube and the weight of a Marmon ranges from 3,608 to 4,343 pounds. In Marmon's opinion, this is a perfectly balanced and suitably heavy vehicle.

A major consideration for any new car buyer would be the vehicle's powerplant. Here the catalog recommends a buyer ask representatives, "Do you make your own engines? How many cylinders has it? Is the crankshaft large and strong enough to eliminate torsional vibration?" Marmon made their own six-cylinder engines in-house, and the catalog emphatically states, "Only in a six or a multiple of six can the crankshaft be so built that the cylinder explosions are equalized, balanced and free of vibration." Obviously they would change their tune about six-

cylinders in just a few short years but, for 1924, they were clearly proud of their Six.

The catalog ends with an interesting last consideration for a buyer and that deals with the company's clientele. It asks the reader to consider this: "Are the people who own it [the motorcar] of a type which will reflect credit on you? When you buy a house you insist upon a good neighborhood, and the same element of pride enters into the selection of a motor car." This snob appeal was not unique to Marmon in the high-priced automotive field. Several other manufacturers asked similar questions in period advertising, and as Marmon uses it to close its catalog, I like Marmon's swagger.

Naturally, all of the questions in this catalog would lead the "discerning" buyer toward a Marmon. The catalog presents a tremendous amount of technical and general information in an easily digestible and interesting format. What better way to get your message across to the buyer than a guide loosely disguised as a map to navigate the Auto Show. A map that leads them back to the Marmon display every time. Marmon produced around 4,000 cars in 1924, reached its peak in 1929 with 29,216 cars built, and then became another victim of the Great Depression in 1933. ☞

## 1963 Chevrolet Corvair

### CORVAIR KEEPS THE ZEST IN DRIVING

The Corvair package of elegance, thrift and fun on the road has always been hard to beat. And for '63, it's more so. Corvair's good looks and clean design show all the way around. A clean, bright metal double bar sweeps between the dual horizontal headlights. Safety-vision amber front parking lamps and directional signal units are easier for others to see. From the side, Corvair's familiar form takes on new grace with distinctive new trim that includes ribbed rocker panels on Monzas and 700 models. There's great handling to match the styling, too. Proved and acclaimed, Corvair's rear engine design and excellent weight distribution offer superior traction and maneuverability with no sacrifice in gas economy. Corvairs are more carefree, too. There are new long-lasting self-adjusting brakes and a new longer lived exhaust system. Four styles of Corvair driving pleasure await your choice: the popular Monza, the family-favorite 700, the extra-economical 500 and the Greenbrier Sports Wagon. Sportsters, by the way, have only to sample the new Monza Spyder with its 150-hp Turbocharged 145 engine to become Corvair converts. So check out the '63 Corvair. It's another reason to go CHEVROLET for '63 – IT'S EXCITING!



# 500

SMART TO OWN ONE  
FUN TO RUN ONE

Maybe you've a mind for pure driving pleasure, generous seating and rock-bottom initial cost and upkeep. Look no further than the new Corvair 500 Club Coupe. The inside certainly belies the low initial purchase price of this beauty. New colorful fawn, aqua or red all-vinyl interiors (with black all-rubber floor mats) come keyed to exterior colors. For your rear engine power team, select any Corvair combination (except the Turbocharged version) plus Positraction\*. It's not only smart to own and economical as all get-out, it's fun to drive. Like its brethren, the 500 has fully independent suspension, superb traction, finger-light steering, dual sun visors, cigarette lighter and front armrests.

\*Optional at extra cost.



CORVAIR 500 CLUB COUPE in Ember Red.



### 500 SMART TO OWN ONE FUN TO RUN ONE

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## Everyday Cutlass Ciera

### OF ALL THE GENERAL MOTORS CARS

that I have tried to park in your driveway, the majority are from my favorite division, Oldsmobile. Where I come from, and probably you, too, in the 1970s and '80s, you couldn't spit without hitting an Olds. Everyone knew someone whose family was loyal to Oldsmobile.

So, it boggles me that we don't see more Oldsmobiles at car shows. They were comfortable, stylish and dependable.

I always joke that in the 1980s, every middle-aged Jewish woman in Newport News, Virginia, drove a white, four-door, Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera. My mother had three friends who did.

Recently, I witnessed a beautiful Cutlass Ciera station wagon with all the bells and whistles and a third row seat sell for less than \$2,000. A steal!

The Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera was part of the GM A-body family that included the Buick Century, Pontiac 6000 and Chevrolet Celebrity. Olds was rumored to have considered the Celebrity name since that was one of its models in the 1960s.

The Cutlass Ciera included a two-door coupe, four-door sedan and the Cutlass Ciera Cruiser station wagon, once it moved from the rear-wheel drive platform to the front-wheel drive A-body in 1984.

The Ciera was born on September 28, 1981, at Doraville Assembly in Georgia, as a 1982 model. There were two trim levels, base and Brougham. Over the years, engines ranged from the 2.5-liter four-cylinder Tech IV (the old Pontiac Iron Duke) to the 2.8-liter V-6, 3.8-liter Buick V-6 and the 4.3-liter Oldsmobile V-6 diesel.

The Cutlass Ciera was given updated styling for the 1985 model year with a new grille, headlamps and taillamps, and the coupe received a less-square roofline. Composite headlamps debuted in late 1987 on some models and were a permanent fixture for 1988, which was the final year of the Brougham models. Other models in the 1980s were the Holiday Coupe (1984-'85), ES and LS (1984-'86), GT (1986-'87), S (1987), and the SL (1987-'88).

An interesting model was the Cutlass Ciera convertible manufactured by Hess & Eisenhardt between 1983 and 1986; the coachbuilder produced 814 convertible



Cieras. I saw one of these at a show a few years ago, and it was a nice looking car.

The sedan roofline was revised in 1989, and hood ornaments were eliminated. Chrome was minimized to give the cars a more modern look similar to the direction European cars were taking at the time.

Build quality for the Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera always rated high. J.D. Power and Associates ranked it "Best in Price Class" and the "Top-Ranked American-Made Car" in 1992.

Cieras were also popular in the Persian Gulf. Apparently, you still see them in traffic there. Who knew? A 1987 model figures prominently in the movie, *Fargo*.

Production ended in 1996.

I was determined to find someone who owns and enjoys a Ciera. I did, and his name is Scott Sigethy of Durham, North Carolina. Scott owns and drives a 1990 white four-door Cutlass Ciera. No, he is not one of my mother's friends. His Ciera, a base model, is equipped with the Iron Duke 2.5 liter four-cylinder engine with throttle body fuel injection and the Turbo Hydra-Matic 125C three-speed transmission with lock-up torque converter, A/C and an electric rear window defroster.

Standard equipment includes cloth bench seats "that are reasonably nice" and haven't "ripped or deteriorated," Scott says. "None of my passengers have ever complained about having a bench seat." Also standard are power steering and brakes (front disc, rear drum), manual roll-down windows, manual seat adjust-

ment, and manual door locks. Think of it as fewer things to go wrong.

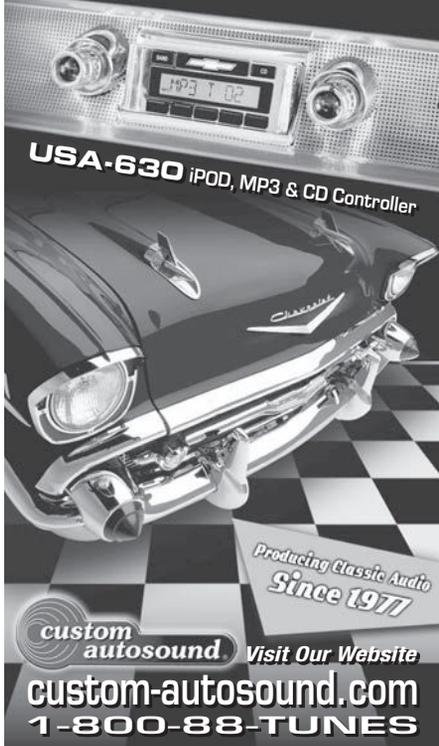
While Scott wasn't particularly seeking a Ciera, this one dropped into his lap. Having been bought by his parents when he was in high school, the Olds remained in his family for 11 years. His parents had been looking for a fairly inexpensive and economical car, such as the Calais, but the dealer had his father test drive the Ciera since it was larger and had a four-cylinder engine. Scott says his father was a "fairly tall person, and he fit a lot better in the Ciera." The car also had room for five people and a decent trunk. The senior Mr. Sigethy bought it new for \$9,800 in September 1990, a \$700 savings due to it being near the end of the model year.

Scott purchased the car from his mom in 2001, with 137,000 miles on it. Scott was grateful since his own daily driver was almost 20 years old, and he didn't have a lot of money. He only hoped it would make it to 200,000 miles. The Oldsmobile has exceeded his expectations. Today, it has 295,000 miles on it.

Imagine that, a "vintage" car you can drive with peace of mind for miles and miles. You can also enjoy it as a daily driver. Prices for Oldsmobile Cutlass Cieras never achieve anything approaching astronomical, so even if you have pennies to spend, you can find one to suit your tastes.

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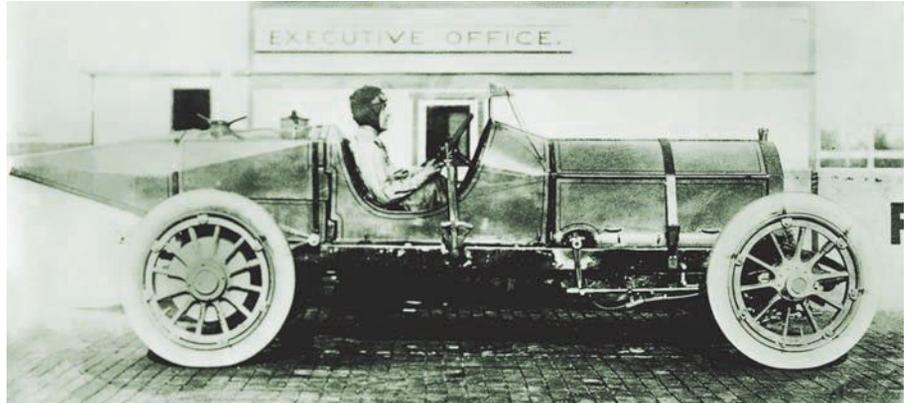
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## Ray Harroun



### THE UNINITIATED WRONGLY THINK

that Ray Harroun, a preternaturally talented mechanic from rural Pennsylvania, got famous for winning one race. On the surface, that's true enough. He won the inaugural running of the Indianapolis 500, but to limit his accomplishments to that victory really doesn't start to do him justice. Harroun was a lifelong figure in the auto industry on a number of levels, from designer to test driver to racer to aftermarket supplier. Today, both he and the car he drove—and designed—for his win in 1911, are two of the immortals of American motorsport.

Harroun was born in 1879 in Spartansburg, Pennsylvania, not far from the northwestern city of Erie. By most accounts, he was, at best, an indifferent student. He began gravitating toward cars in early 1903, when he took part in several record runs from Chicago to New York City, setting a time record that stood for several years, driving a Columbia. By 1905, he had built his own car and challenged all comers in races. Record keeping in early American auto racing was decidedly spotty, but it is known that Harroun drove in at least 60 races sanctioned by the American Automobile Association, which was then racing's governing body in the United States, before his Indianapolis triumph.

Or, make that “triumphs.” The Indianapolis Motor Speedway opened in 1909, and hosted several events that turned chaotic due to its disintegrating surface. Harroun managed to win, or survive to win, seven of these events, in addition to a preliminary contest associated with the Vanderbilt Cup Races on Long Island. His victory in the first Indy 500 was actually his eighth at the 2.5-mile speedway. But before that, he became acquainted with Howard Marmon, who ran the eponymous company that built premium motorcars in Indianapolis. Impressed by his technical and driving prowess, Marmon told Harroun to design and build a car that would win the forthcoming 500-mile extravaganza.

At the time, most pure racing cars had a pair of seats, one for the driver and one for the “mechanician,” who was practically hanging out of the car most of the time as he watched for overtaking traffic and worked manual pumps. That meant that the racing car had to be wide enough for two. Harroun was determined to avoid this. He designed a single-seat Marmon, a radical concept at the time, that would be narrower and punch a smaller hole in the air. It was a strategy that would be exploited to the hilt within a decade by the Duesenberg brothers and Harry Miller. Since he had no mechanic, Harroun had to devise a way to check on the cars behind him. He settled on a glass mirror mounted on

a stout steel frame above the cowling. Was Harroun the first to put a mirror on a car? Who knows? He was, however, the first to win a major race with one, and thus gets credit for the invention. According to lore, he copied the mirror after one he'd seen on a horse-drawn hansom cab in Chicago while he was making his record runs. More important, his victory in the Marmon Wasp made the company's reputation, which manufactured glorious cars until the Depression claimed it in 1933.

Flush with his success, the 1911 running of the 500 was his last win and major race. AAA records showed that he made his final start only a few months later in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He went on from Marmon to run the Maxwell racing team in the years before World War I, and became well known as a producer of aftermarket carburetors, one of which was designed to burn kerosene. He ran his own automobile company in Michigan after the war, but the Harroun only lasted until 1922. Harroun stayed active in accessory manufacturing until he died in the car town of Anderson, Indiana, in 1968. 🏁



9th Annual  
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**CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE**  
 SEPT. 25, 26, 27, 2015



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**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th**  
**CRUISE-IN SPECTACULAR**

Gates open at 8:00 a.m. An all-makes car show that's open to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Including: muscle cars, street rods, sports, exotics and classics.

Awards at 2:00 p.m.

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

Keynote speaker: Peter Brock, automotive designer.

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## Ed Johnston

Freight Department  
Ford Motor Company, 1956

**IN THE SUMMER OF 1956, I GOT A** job at the Ford assembly plant in Mahwah, New Jersey. At the time, this was the newest and largest assembly plant in the country. It was a great experience.

My primary job was as a part of a three-man team that unloaded raw sheet-metal station wagon sides from freight cars. These were the entire sides, from the rocker panel up to the drip rail, and from the firewall back to the tailgate opening. The doors were included, mounted on their hinges and tied through the window openings to keep them in their closed positions. The sides came in the freight car, mounted on removable "shelves," right side up, side by side. Our three-man team would pull them back off the shelf and carry them out to a rolling rack on the adjacent platform. One man carried the tail, one the middle and one the front.

From the end, the rack had an "A" frame shape with a low shelf running down the length of each side. The nose of the station wagon side was placed down on the shelf, and it took at least two of us to lift it into the air until it stood on its nose, a little bit beyond upright. When one side of the rack was full, we spun it around and filled the other side. The units on opposite sides were slightly offset from one another so that the window openings of the upright units on each side overlapped each other, in the middle of the rack. When the rack had been filled on both sides, a stick of wood about the size of a 2x4 was inserted lengthwise through the overlapped window openings, locking them in place on the rack. I seem to recall that a rack held about 10 units on each side.

I'm not sure how many units we unloaded each day, but I do recall that we unloaded five rail cars. Sometimes I unloaded front fenders, which were nested five to a group and tied together through the headlamp opening. On the high upper shelves in the freight car, we would slide the heavy group partially off the shelf and then pull downward to let the package slide down off the high shelf and into our arms. Tipping the heavy package on the hard edge of the shelf tended to put a crease in the bottom fender. So, if you've ever seen a 1956 Ford with a shallow, vertical dent in the front fender between the



wheel and front door openings, now you know how it got there!

I didn't think I would be able to last the summer doing this boring, strenuous job. Fortunately, when assembly workers failed to show up for work, management would draw from our freight department for temporary replacements; I was always quick to volunteer. Although not as strenuous, assembly work can quickly become very boring. After about two hours at an assigned process, you think you can do it in your sleep. Fortunately, there was a kind of unwritten rule that "fill-in" assembly workers cannot be assigned to the same situation for more than one day. That's the feature that kept my interest and made it a fantastic experience. I got to spend a day in many different areas of the assembly process.

Here I was, a future mechanical engineer, and I got a firsthand look at the whole assembly process. One day, I installed the fiberglass trim frames on the doors of Country Squires with what looked like chrome-headed carriage bolts, put glue around the door edges for the weather stripping and ran a cabled wire package from the dashboard, down along the floor and out the left rear taillamp opening. You are kept very busy, and it seems like the cars are going by at 10 MPH and your air hose and glue gun is only about 15 feet long. Foremen would tell you that if you miss something, "someone further down the line will get it." Later, I learned that "someone" is another name for customer.

I also assembled the combination of front fenders, grille and radiator of Mainlines, Customlines and Fairlanes. This sub-assembly front end was created upside down on a circular line, much like a miniature merry-go-round. At the point of tangency with the main assembly line, the sub-assembly was picked up by a hoist, flipped over and lowered onto the car that was passing by on the main line. If all went well, the color of the front fenders would match the color of the car.

Such synchronization was created by an assembly order that specified the model, color, engine options, etc. The as-

sembly order was created in some central location and duplicated at several key points throughout the plant. It was created by someone using a ball point pen and writing on a paper roll in a waist-high device. The top of the pen had a linkage that allowed its movement to be duplicated at similar machines at all the other locations. By today's standards, it was a very crude device, but it worked.

I also had a day at assembling pickup beds. Again, the wood planks and chrome divider strips were laid out in a jig, upside down. The straight side panels were then attached, and the whole bed was flipped over and sent to mate with the chassis.

Another day, I was assigned to the truck disassembly line, and my job was to go into an outdoor storage area, find specific trucks and drive them into the building. I drove them in and parked them up against a wall, where someone else would begin the process of disassembling them by removing the tops of the through-floor brake and clutch pedals and undoing the speedometer cable. Then they were put onto a conveyor line for more removals. Ultimately, the cab was taken off and two chassis were strapped together, one upside down and front to back with the other one underneath, ready for shipment overseas. When originally assembled, these units were labeled "KD" so assembly personnel would know that certain connections could be left loose, easing disassembly.

All in all, it was a great experience, and I still have a special fondness for 1956 Fords. Not long ago I spotted a '56 Sunliner at a show, and its young owner saw my interest, and started to tell me all about it. He seemed stunned when I said that he didn't have to tell me because "I built it." 🍷

 **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](mailto:editorial@hemmings.com) or write to us at **I Was There, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201.**

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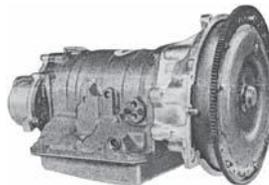
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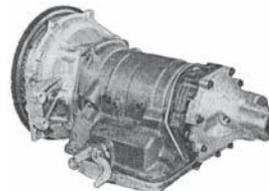
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## RETROFITTED FILTER

**Q:** I have a 1951 Pontiac Chieftain with a straight-six flathead engine. It does not have an oil filter on it (it has an oil cleaner in the oil pan). I have seen photographs of cars that have an oil filter installed, and I would like to install one on mine. Do you know how this can be done, or can you put me in touch with someone who knows? The car has 59,488 miles on it, and it is a great car. I would feel better if it had an oil filter.

Danny Kreger Sr.

*Prichard, West Virginia*

**A:** For those unfamiliar with the design, rather than employing a conventional filter, Pontiac installed a “cleaner” in the oil pan with a settling chamber that trapped solids in the oil. The oil would enter the cleaner at the base, travel up through the center through a passage, then make a hard 180 degree turn where it would strike a baffle, reverse direction again and then continue into the engine’s oil passages. When the oil struck the baffle, dirt suspended in the oil would be thrown out and drop into the settling chamber. To get the sludge out of the cleaner, you had to drop the pan, but once that was done, with regular oil changes it’d take a long time to fill up again. Many owners of these engines espouse changing the oil very frequently (less than 3,000 miles) to avoid ever having to do the job again once the settling chamber has been cleaned out.

Pontiac put a lot of faith in its oil cleaner, didn’t recommend adding a filter and many of these engines are still running without one. However, if you want to adapt a filter to your engine, it’s possible. You can mount the filter body on the cylinder head and plumb the pressure feed line into one of the oil gallery plugs on the right side of the block. (There should be a row of four pipe plugs on a six-cylinder, one of which might already be used for the oil pressure gauge.) The return line can be plumbed into the valve cover or the oil filler tube. This can require drilling and a little fabrication work to install a nipple, but many filter kits come with a hollow threaded fitting that can be installed without welding. If you can find a complete kit, (the old Fram units are getting tougher to find new) it will have installation instructions.

## HEATED HESITATION

**Q:** Since I purchased my 1969 Thunderbird four-door Landau last December, I have had a problem with the engine losing power, sometimes recovering and other times stalling. This forces me to take my foot off the accelerator in hope that it will recover; or if it stalls, pulling off the road and restarting the engine. Once it hesitates and starts to lose power, if I press the accelerator, it always stalls. Backing off is better. Before I drive, I always let the engine warm up for awhile.

This car has spent many days in a mechanic’s shop being analyzed. The car has 76,000 miles on it and I’m the third owner. The carburetor is rebuilt, the fuel pump is less than three years old, the fuel filters, fuel lines and gas tank were checked out, and I replaced the battery. I added dry gas and new fuel.

Some test drives proved the car ran just fine. Others, not so well.

Needless to say, the car is too unreliable to drive. I have a different mechanic looking at it this week. Your thoughts would be appreciated.

Steven Foote

*Springfield, Virginia*

**A:** There are dozens of reasons that this could be happening. Fuel delivery is one possibility and a fuel pressure test is probably a good place to start.

Assuming that the fuel lines and hoses are in perfect condition (not cracked, crimped, collapsing, leaking at junctions and fittings, etc...) the fuel pump is okay, the sock on the fuel sender is clean and the fuel filters are new, the problem could be something you haven’t hit on, like a slightly worn fuel-pump push rod that causes the pump to not operate fully. Vapor lock and carburetor icing, while unusual on a car like yours, produce similar symptoms and can be elusive to diagnose. If the fuel line is routed too close to a heat source or a heat shield is missing on the engine, the fuel could be vaporizing before it reaches the intake. Conversely, if the weather during which this problem occurs is damp and cool and the heat tube on the air cleaner snorkel is missing, then ice can form in the carburetor.

The problem could also be ignition related but behaving in a way that causes you to think it’s a fuel delivery problem. A faulty coil can become erratic when hot, then seem to operate normally once it

cools off. It might even pass coil tests, but then fail intermittently under a load.

## COLD-STUMBLING CADILLAC

**Q:** I have a 1978 Cadillac Eldorado, with the 425-cu.in. V-8 and the Quadrajets M4ME carburetor. After letting it fast idle for a minute and then a minute more after unloading the choke, the engine bogs and sags on a cold driveaway, but the problem gradually goes away as the engine warms up. The choke is set properly at two notches rich, and the front vacuum break works fine. The car has only 15,000 miles on it. Near as I can tell, the carb has never been off the engine. The car was not driven for a year by the previous owner, due to health problems. I suspect the problem is a deteriorated accelerator pump due to stagnant gas and ethanol. I’ve also heard that the 1978 Quadrajets can present problems after they’re rebuilt. Your advice is appreciated.

Paul Jacobs

*Huntington, New York*

**A:** The accelerator pump is a possibility and easy to check. Just look down the carburetor throat and work the throttle — you should see a couple of shots of fuel pumped into the primaries. The choke, too, is a possibility. If it’s not opening or closing fully, or releasing too quickly, this would cause a cold stumble. This, too, is easy to check: Work the choke by hand with the engine turned off and make sure nothing is binding. Have a helper depress the accelerator, and watch the operation of the choke, then start the car and make sure the plate opens slightly. Then observe the operation of the choke as the engine warms. It should gradually open to vertical. A couple of other possibilities to investigate: The air door in your air cleaner isn’t functioning, and it’s allowing cold air to enter the intake before the engine is at operating temperature; the exhaust heat riser isn’t functioning and the manifold isn’t getting a supply of hot air; or a combination of the any of the above.



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](mailto:mmcnessor@hemmings.com).



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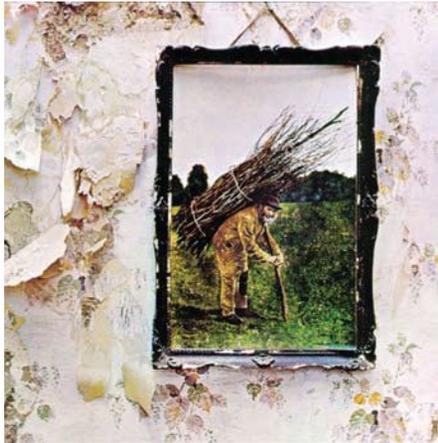


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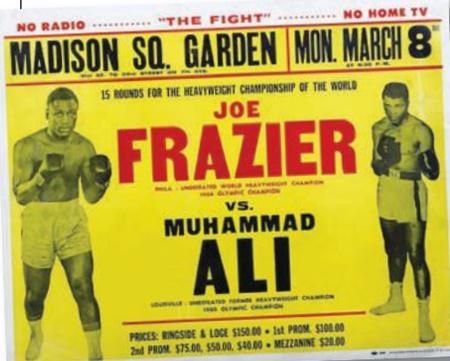


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# The Fastest Car in Akron

## PONTIAC HAD ASTOUNDED THE

country in 1957 with its pre-muscle-years muscle. Our family lived in the small town of Akron, Indiana, population 946, and one of the two highlights of my young life then was going to the Indianapolis 500. In 1958, Pontiac paced the field at the Brickyard. That was all it took.

Dad had been talking for several months about trading in his old 1953 straight-eight Chieftain for a newer model. It wasn't six months until he was sitting in the office at Bud Hartman Pontiac talking a deal on a 1958 Bonneville. He brought the car home, and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was beautiful. It had more chrome on it, both inside and out, than any car I had ever seen before except for maybe the 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz. Being a 12-year-old car kid, I had to see what it was packing under the hood.

Whoa! There it was, a 370-cu.in. powerhouse sporting three two-barrel carburetors. I read the details of the manual from cover to cover and found that this V-8 had 10.5 compression, producing 330hp. In my years to come, I was to understand why the orange-colored "GRRR" front license tag had become a de facto association with fast Pontiacs. My dad's car was, in fact, a tiger and the fastest car in Akron.

The first vivid memory I have is of a late afternoon, headed south out of North Manchester on State Route 13. We were behind a slow-poke, jacked-up, Baby Moon-adorned '55 Chevy. My dad pulled out into the passing lane to go around this guy. When we got door-to-door with him, the driver of that Chevy unwound that thing to where it forced my dad to hit the brakes and pull back in behind him. The Chevy poked along again and the same scenario repeated itself for the second time. On the third attempt, the road was straight and long and my dad said to my mom, "Imo, sit tight." The way was clear, dad pulled out, the Chevy poured it on, and my dad put his foot flat down... and the progressive linkage of those "final two" of the Tri-Power kicked in like nothing I had ever witnessed in all my years. We left that V-8 '55 Chevy so far back that he needed a periscope to see us! I was grinning from ear to ear. Imo was mad.



INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

After I got my license, the need to show off to my friends with my dad's mighty Bonneville had worsened. "GRRRR!" It was in my blood. This car could impress kids and adults as well. I couldn't imagine having a Kaiser-Frazer or a Nash and saying, "C'mon guys. Let me show you what this baby will do." Instead, I asked three of my buddies if they wanted to go down to the Bunker Hill Dragstrip on Saturday night and watch 'em run. I had no trouble finding three takers. I was one of the older boys in my class, and most of them hadn't gotten their licenses yet.

We watched the drags all Saturday night long in rapt attention. I knew not to race my dad's car or that would be the end of me. But after the drags were over, the testosterone in all of us boys that night was racing, and we were ready for some action, car action, mind you. I raised the hood of the Bonneville and took the three pots off the carbs and put them in the trunk. You talk about a mean sound. When I pulled out onto U.S. 31 North and put my foot in it and the two end carbs kicked in, it sounded kind-of like, "Waaaah aahHHHHHaaahhHHHHH." Mercy! The problem was, I left my foot in it.

This blue and white Bonneville was rocketing northbound like nothing I had experienced before when one of my buddies said, "Tuck, you'd better let up a little bit." I began slowing down, and not more than 10 seconds after my buddy had uttered these words of concern, I glanced into my rearview mirror only to see the stomach-sickening sight of whirling red lights. Ugh. I pulled over to the side and the state trooper came to my door and said, "You wanna step back to the cruiser with me, son?" I got in and sat down. He said, "Do you have any idea how fast you were going?" I said, "No sir, I don't." (And

I didn't). He said, "Well, I clocked you at 96, and I'm pretty sure you were in the coasting portion of your episode. Wanna tell me why you were going so fast?" I said, in a crackling, teen-aged, boy-man voice, "I have a curfew, sir, and I was trying to get home in time to beat my curfew," knowing full well that was a blatant lie, which would later cause my mother to cry more about that than my excessive speeding. The trooper replied, "What would you rather have, a spanking from mommy or a night in jail?" What a way to end a Saturday with my buddies.

To my mother, speeding in a car was about growing up and sewing some of my wild teenaged oats. Telling a bold lie, on the other hand, was a reflection of her character, and was against positively everything that I had been taught. It pained me that I hurt my mother so much that she cried. It pained my dad so much that I abused his Bonneville and broke the law that his pain (on me) caused *me* to cry. I lost my privilege for driving any car for two months.

My dad kept that Pontiac for 12 years. He got rid of it when I was on tour in Vietnam.

There was a book out at the time by then-well-known crooner, Pat Boone, entitled *Twixt Twelve and Twenty*. It was about the teen years and all the strife therewith. When I think of *Twixt Twelve and Twenty*, the thing that was with me the entire span, other than my wonderful parents, was this mighty 1958, chrome-laden, Tri-Power, 370-cu.in., positraction, blue-and-white Bonneville.

And if my dad and dear mother could echo from Heaven anything at all about that Bonneville, they would say: "It was the fastest car in Akron... and Tom knew it better than anyone." 🍷

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## Little Giant

*The tiny quarter-ton 1947 Crosley pickup had big ambitions*



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

If you wanted to buy a new light hauler approximately the size of a 1947 Crosley “round side” pickup today, you’d probably head to the nearest powersports dealer where there would be several parked among the rows of snowmobiles, ATVs and dirt bikes. But even today’s off-road-conquering Utility Task Vehicles or “Side by Sides” would tower over a Crosley, larger in almost every dimension except perhaps overall length.

UTVs for work and play have become popular with Americans in recent years, but road-going mini trucks have never been able to get a lasting toehold here, at least, not the way that full-size trucks have endured. Modern “mid-sized” trucks are enormous by postwar standards and practically as large as full-size trucks of the 1980s-’90s.

This is because U.S. truck buyers want it all: interiors as spacious as sedans, passenger-car road manners, generous

towing and hauling capacities and thundering torque ratings. Subsequently, today’s pickups are big and heavy, with sticker prices north of \$30,000, yet they seem to be selling better than ever. Go figure.

Powel Crosley Jr’s vision for American motoring looked vastly different than the reality of our present day. Crosley believed that postwar American vehicles were too big, too heavy and too expensive for average people to purchase, operate and maintain. A minimalist vehicle,

he reasoned, capable of outstanding fuel economy with a low purchase price would find a market, particularly as a second car or in urban settings where parking could be scarce and expensive.

Though building automobiles had been an almost lifelong preoccupation, Crosley, with his brother Lewis, made a fortune innovating and manufacturing consumer appliances. It was not an automobile, but a device that could transport the user in a different way—an inexpensive radio—that



The Crosley pickup's interior is spartan, but boasts a full compliment of gauges and a speedometer. Power comes from Crosley's 44-cu.in. cast-iron four-cylinder, backed by a T-92 Warner three-speed gearbox.



made Crosley a household name.

Before Crosley developed the sub-\$20 radio, circa 1920, radios were prohibitively expensive—something Powel discovered when he set out to buy one as a gift for his son. The Crosley Radio Corporation sold millions of its new receivers in about two years, which led to the development of the Crosley Pup radio in 1925. The Pup cost less than \$10 and was an even bigger sales success. If you imagine it as the iPod of its day, you begin to get a real understanding of the Crosley brothers' brilliance. Like Apple, Crosley also provided the programming for its pint-sized audio device through a radio station it purchased, WLW. And if there were any baseball fans tuning in to this Crosley-owned radio station on their Crosley radios, Crosley also owned the Cincinnati Reds and broadcast the team's games.

With radios and, later, household appliances like refrigerators generating a steady cash flow, Crosley turned its attention to getting America into sub-compact cars. The company first offered both a convertible sedan and convertible coupe in 1939, for \$350 and \$325, respectively, both powered by a 35-cu.in. air-cooled two-cylinder Waukesha engine. A station wagon was added in 1940 and garnered national attention when Cannonball Baker drove one across the country, averaging 50.4 miles per gallon. A convertible pickup that shared its chassis and body panels with Crosley cars, joined the lineup in 1941, with a retail price of \$399.

During World War II, Crosley automobile production ceased along with the rest of the industry, and the company shifted into manufacturing war matériel. One of the company's wartime developments would become a hallmark of Crosley's postwar automobiles: the 44-cu.in. CO-BRA (Copper BRAzed) overhead-cam four-cylinder engine, used during the war as a stationary powerplant. Crosley resumed building cars in 1946, and the pickup model returned for 1947, again based on the sedan body, selling for \$1,007. Crosley built 3,182 of the little trucks that year, and Crosley vehicles remained in production through 1952, but the numbers dropped following Crosley's peak in 1948.

Today, Crosley vehicles enjoy a devoted following, and one of the marque's most ardent evangelists is David Anspach of Blandon, Pennsylvania. David currently

owns a small fleet of Crosleys, including examples of the brand's roadster-body Hot Shot and Super Hot Shot, the utilitarian Farm-O-Road (truly the UTV or Side by Side of its day), as well as station wagons, sedans and the smart-looking pickup featured here.

David, who is also president of the Crosley Automobile Club, has had the audacity to restore his thrifty Crosleys to near-perfect condition and show them at high-profile concours events where multimillion-dollar automobiles are normally the focus. "I've been fortunate to get Crosleys into some really big shows," he said. "When I took over as club president, I wanted to help bring respectability to Crosley as a marque. They've always been considered clown cars, but they are wonderful little vehicles, and a lot of people don't know that they exist."

He purchased his 1947 pickup at Auctions America's Auburn Spring Auction in 2014. The truck was intact and at least superficially presentable, but he bought it intent on performing a complete teardown and restoration. "It was an 80-footer," David said. "But the 1947 round side model is a little more unusual and quaint, and I always wanted one."

The pace of the project was shoved into overdrive when, on the way home from Auburn, David received a call from the Hilton Head Motoring Festival and Concours d' Elegance in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Show organizers were





seeking entrants for the event's Pickup Trucks class and were hoping that David could deliver. With Hilton Head in November, that left only the months of August through October to give the needy pickup a complete show-worthy makeover.

David tore the truck down in his garage and sent the CIBA-based engine (Crosley Cast Iron Block Assembly) to Crosley engine specialist Barry Seel. The truck's original engine would've used the "tin block" COBRA, but these engine blocks, made of individual sheets of steel stacked like layers of plywood and then treated to a unifying layer of copper brazing, had a reputation for failure and were frequently replaced with the later cast block.

After rebuilding and refinishing the engine in the correct factory color, Barry also went through the original T-92 Warner three-speed manual transmission.

While the powertrain was taking shape, the body was stripped, repaired and repainted by Mervin Zimmerman of Hamburg, Pennsylvania. The truck's body was largely intact, but the inner bed rails needed to be replaced and some small patches fabricated. Crosleys don't have trim tags divulging their original color, so David selected a blue-gray metallic from the factory color chart, which Mervin applied in single-stage urethane.

David handled the restoration of the Crosley's chassis himself at home, stripping the frame, axles and leaf springs with abrasive wheels on an electric grinder, then topcoating everything with POR-15. He also rebuilt the truck's brakes, steering and suspension. Robert Gilbert of Fix It All in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, handled the Crosley's upholstery work, and final assembly of the truck's components fell

back to David.

The whirlwind restoration wrapped up in time for the Hilton Head concours, and for his efforts, David scored one of the event's Palmetto Awards.

"We ended up finishing second to a 1930 Model A pickup," he said. "It came down to a tie on points and they broke the tie by giving the Model A the edge for historical significance."

David's Crosley pickup has since won an AACA Senior Award, and it's scheduled to appear at the Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance, September 25-27 in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Powel Crosley would probably be surprised that one of his humble sub-compact pickups is now in the business of hauling home car-show gold, but David believes it's the best way to honor the man's legacy. "I realize that these cars aren't Duesenbergs—they're not even Chevrolets, but they are important," he said. "People don't recognize them, and it's a shame because it's a significant part of American history."

David's enthusiasm for Crosleys is infectious, and he recommends the plucky American independent brand for first-time restorers and young people just getting into the hobby. "Crosleys are great for anybody interested in an entry-level project," he said. "They're simple to work on, and parts are available and inexpensive. Also, I guarantee you, when you take a Crosley to a show, you will have a crowd standing around you." 🐾



Crosley had to keep it simple in order to offer a diverse model lineup, so the "round side" pickup was derived directly from the sedan. The back half of the car body was cut off, then bedsides and a gate were added. Even the fuel tank filler pipe (above) remained in the original location.

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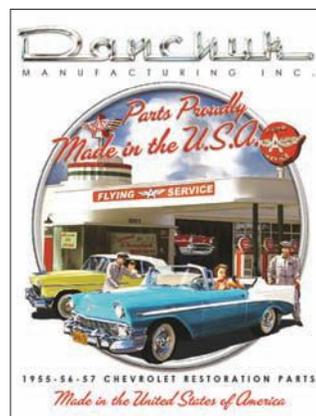
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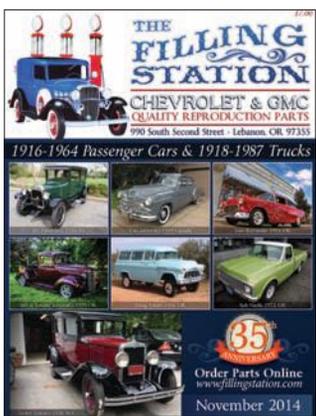
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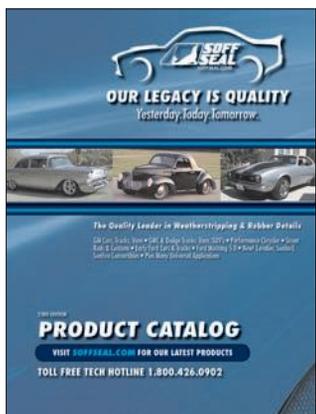
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## Checking on Down the Line

*Adventures in motor carrier enforcement*



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY INTERPRETED BY FRED GRUIN JR, FROM HIS ARCHIVES

**W**hen we contacted truck historian Fred Gruin Jr, about doing this story, we were first smitten by the blur he executed on a diesel-burning White 3000 tractor and trailer combo on U.S. 40 in Perryville, Maryland. We thought the composition of the photo was cool, showing the speed and diesel smoke that marked an over-the-road rig in 1958.

A single stack, a skinny sleeper and a short trailer by today's standards. However, it's important to note that Fred, after graduating from then-Tri State University in Angola, Indiana, was working a summer job for the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission, which then regulated long-distance trucking.

Fred has just returned from England, where his father was a correspondent for *Time* magazine and where he'd attended high school. When his parents moved back to the States, Fred's father was assigned by *Time* to Washington, D.C., and owned a farm in New Jersey. Three years later, he was one of eight transportation-management seniors from Tri-State hired by the Interstate Commerce Commission as summertime motor-carrier inspectors. Fred was assigned to a floating unit that plied Maryland, Pennsylvania and Vir-

ginia, looking for trucks in violation. That's how he found himself in Perryville, right where U.S. 40, the National Road, crosses the Susquehanna River as it empties into the Chesapeake Bay. The ICC operated a set of scales on the highway for catching overweight rigs. That's partly how Fred, who now lives in East Aurora, New York, managed to take this photograph.

As he recalled it, Fred told us that, "I was heading back down to the scales on U.S. 40 when I saw this truck parked by the side of the road. I stopped up ahead of them and went back to see what the problem was. It was a truck just like this White, a 3000 with diesel power, and there were two drivers. It turned out there was an air leak somewhere near the compressor, and they could hardly get the air pressure up without the trailer brakes coming on automatically. So I went down to the

scales and waited for them, then went back down to the truck, inspected it, and put it out of service for a couple of things. The two drivers were from Arkansas, and I remember that they were hauling a load of bagged rice that they had taken up to New York City. And they picked up a hot load. This trucking firm was an exempt carrier and had no operating authority from the ICC. When I was checking them, they'd since picked up a load of Ann Page cookies from A&P—remember those?—and they were so happy about getting put out of service that they both got out—I'll never forget, they had a carpetbag, the first one I'd ever seen—and the last thing I saw was them leaving and hitchhiking back to Arkansas. They just left the truck there. It sat there all summer on the side of the road, full of Ann Page cookies."

Most of the time, things were a little

less hectic, allowing Fred to pursue his passion of snapping photos that depicted trucks in action. This image was shot from a moving car, the family De Soto, rolling on U.S. 40 near the Susquehanna. It depicts a scene from when U.S. 40 was the primary north-south truck route through Maryland, in the days before Interstate 95 existed. As we said, the tractor is a White 3000, with its familiar rounded tilt cab, diesel horsepower and an integral (but narrow) sleeper. Besides the exhaust stack, there are a pair of visual cues that identify the White as a diesel: First, the air cleaner mounted on a pedestal near the corner of the sleeper, and second, the fender skirting above the front tires, which a gasoline-fueled 3000 would have lacked.

The tractor belonged to Cooper Motor Lines of Greenville, South Carolina, which was a wholly owned entity of Great Southern Trucking Company of Jacksonville, Florida, as the trailer proclaims. Great Southern's operating authority ended at Greensboro, North Carolina, but Cooper's authority extended into the northeastern United States. Therefore, in ICC parlance, the Cooper-Great Southern alliance was known as an "interline." The way it worked was that the originating line's trailer was hauled to its destination instead of physically handling the freight at the transfer point.

"I used to ride in the passenger seat of my parents' car so I could photograph trucks," Fred explained. "I had a pretty decent camera by this time, and I shot this while the truck was coming down the road in the opposite direction. The camera was an Ansco, which I'm pretty sure used 120 film. You pushed a button and the lens popped out, and it had a little bellows. When I folded it, it would fit in the back pocket of my pants."

A common commodity that Great Southern hauled was taxed cigarettes en route from the Carolinas to the New York metro area. Great Southern's name, coincidentally, was changed in 1959 by its owner, Jim Ryder, who had formed his first trucking operation as a young man in 1933. The renamed company was called Ryder Truck Lines, the famous rental and leasing outfit that ended up on the Fortune 500 list, with annual revenues of more than \$6 billion. 📷

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

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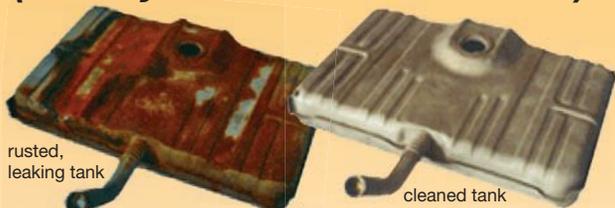
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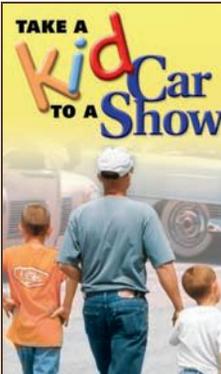
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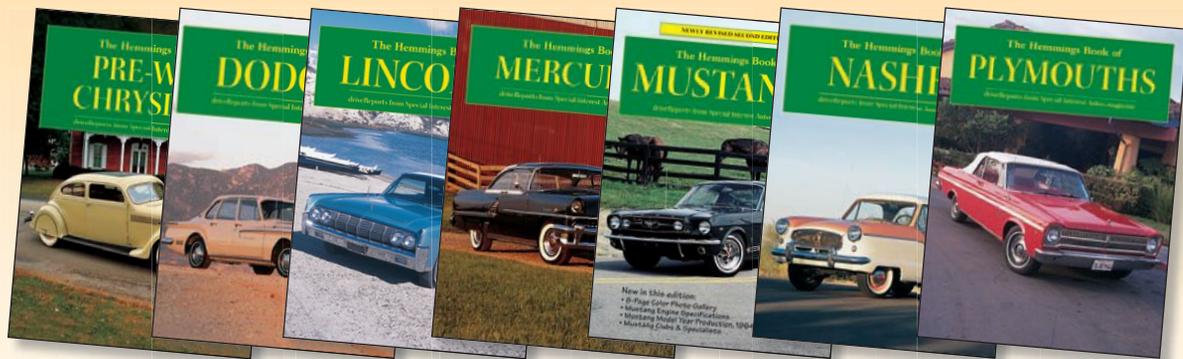
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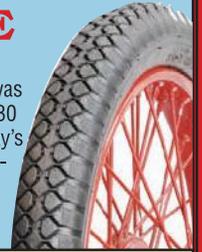


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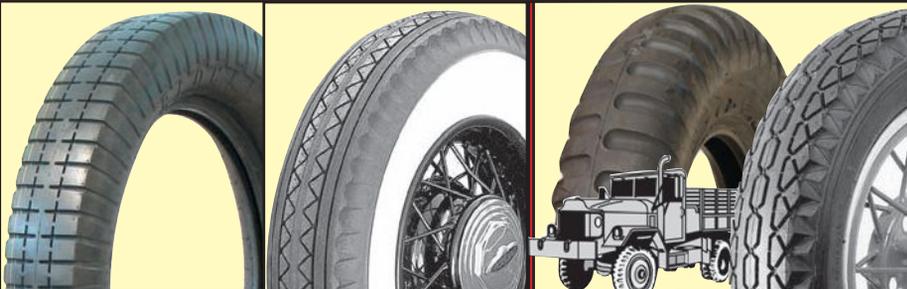
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### 1950s Stylin’

We were at the 1953 Los Angeles County Fair and it was late afternoon. I was 11 years old, and had experienced an overload of domestic animal fragrances and blazing sun. I really wanted to go home, but then I saw it. It was white and low and gorgeous. I fell in love. I was face-to-face with the 1953 Corvette in the Felix Chevrolet Display. I had never seen anything that beautiful before. It changed my life forever. I had no idea whether it was fast, comfortable or even dependable. All I knew was that it was beautiful, and I wanted it.

As it turns out, the first Corvettes were too expensive for what they offered. They were not really race cars, with their inline-sixes and Powerglide two-speed transmissions, and they were not particularly comfortable, thanks to their removable windows that had to be clipped in. But they were dependable as long as their side-draft carbs didn’t leak. But none of that mattered to me. I wanted one then, and I want one now.

The reason I mention this car is because I think good styling reveals a non-verbal truth much like a great piece of music such as Beethoven’s “Fur Elise” does. And that feeling is so strong that it overcomes any lack of power from the engine. Besides, it sells cars even if they aren’t spectacular otherwise.

Another Fifties design tour de force was the 1953 Studebaker Starliner coupe. Its sensuous shape is reminiscent of Constantin Brancusi’s sculpture, *Bird in Space*. The car’s design is truly brilliant, and as it turns out, aerodynamically clean. So much so that it was used for years in land speed record events.

There is an early 19th century design dictum stated by sculptor Horatio Greenough, which is: Form follows function. If an object’s form is dedicated to, and harmonious with, its function, a self-evident visual truth is achieved. You only have to look at a modern airliner or a shark to see what I am talking about.

I named two cars from 1953 that I regard as styling masterpieces, but that year was actually pretty mundane. In fact, the automakers were coming off a period when cars tended to be bulbous

and bloated. Many 1949 through 1951 offerings appeared as if someone had thrown a grenade into them and slammed the door. They were great cars, but they looked like potatoes with grilles, bumpers, lights and windows. What started to change things was when the postwar Ferraris, Alfa Romeos and Maseratis began coming into the country. These



European marques had embraced the form-follows-function concept because there is no place for meaningless ornamentation on race cars, which was what they essentially were. Big, bulbous, and heavy were out.

Clean and understated were in—briefly.

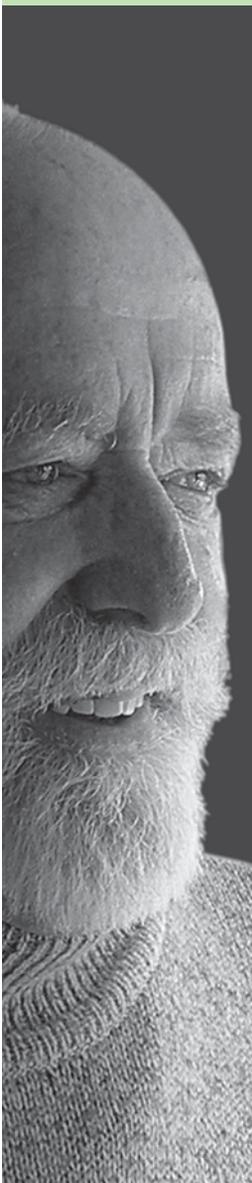
The next year, 1954 saw the beginning of the shoebox look. The designers took a brick and pasted on pointed front ends, fins and air scoops found on jet aircrafts. Problem is they applied them to a box instead of their previous potato, so they were a bit incongruous and aerodynamically absurd.

Out of all the jet fire and chrome cacophony of the late Fifties emerged a couple of masterpieces though. The first was the 1956 Continental Mark II. It was elegant, understated, clean and impressive. It was a harmonious blend of conservative styling and functional beauty. It has stood the test of time, and looks as good now as it did when it was new.

If you wanted to impress your friends, the Continental would do it, but then a 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham might upstage you. It speaks a little louder, though just as eloquently, to those of us who are suckers for a pretty face. And behind that pretty face is a very opulent machine indeed.

Science fiction was big in the 1950s, with such movies as *The Thing*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Forbidden Planet* playing to sold-out audiences. Anything was possible. We were excited by the future, but it scared us, too. It seemed that science and technology would inevitably build a better world if it didn’t blow it to bits.

We live in more cynical times today, and the future doesn’t seem quite so marvelous. Our cars and our movies—though better in many ways—don’t inspire us. We have turned more to fussy self-conscious introspection and neurosis in our movies, and gone away from creative styling in cars. Quite a few years have passed since I saw the 1953 Corvette, but I am still in love. 🐾



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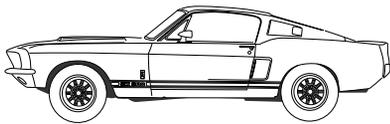


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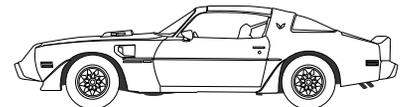
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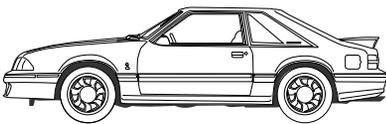
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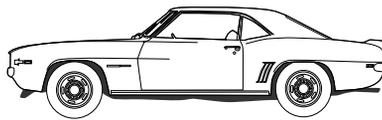
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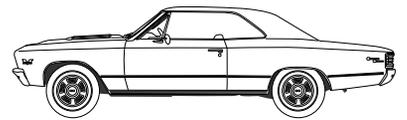
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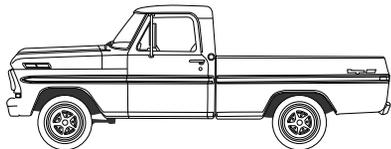
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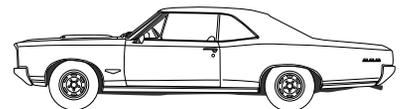
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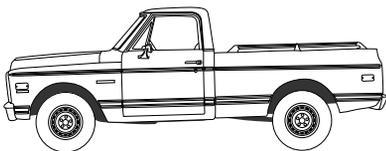
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