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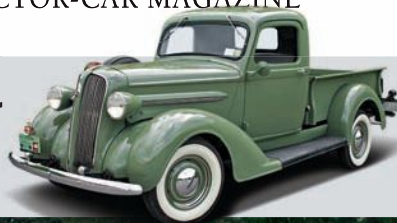
# CLASSIC CAR

THE DEFINITIVE ALL-AMERICAN COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2016 #137



**SCARCE CHEVROLET**  
1958 YEOMAN WAGON



**PLYMOUTH PICKUP**  
RARE PT50 LIGHT HAULER

## CADILLAC PERFECTION

HOW A  
**HOME-RESTORED  
ELDORADO**  
WON SO MANY  
AWARDS



OWNING A  
**1931 FORD  
MODEL A**  
FOR OVER  
65 YEARS



**PLUS**  
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**1967 CHEVROLET CORVETTE 427/435 CONVERTIBLE "MUSIC CAR"**

Very rare, original 427/435hp convertible with 8,000 documented miles and GM documentation. Known as the "Music Car," it is the lowest-mile, best-known red/red 425 in the U.S., with its complete original-from-new drivetrain from the factory.



**1967 CHEVROLET CORVETTE 427/435**

One of the most well-preserved, low-mileage, unrestored 1967 435 coupes in existence. Factory-original 435hp engine, 4-speed close-ratio transmission and much more. One of less than a handful of documented real '67 435s produced in Tuxedo Black with black leather interior.



**1962 CHEVROLET CORVETTE 327 CONVERTIBLE - LAST C1**

Featuring two tops, this is the last C1 solid-axle Corvette. 327/300hp, 4-speed with 39,520 actual miles per past owner, who purchased the car in 1965.

**NO RESERVE**



**1970 BUICK GSX STAGE 1**

360hp and 510 ft/lbs of torque. Gold Winner at the 2007 Gran Sport of America Concours. Older quality restoration. One of 400 GSX hardtop Stage 1s produced, and one of only 118 4-speeds.

**NO RESERVE**



**1970 PLYMOUTH HEMI 'CUDA**

426/425hp original engine and original 4-speed transmission. Visually authenticated and documented by Galen V Govier. Vitamin C Orange High Impact paint with black vinyl top, black interior.

**NO RESERVE**



**1967 SHELBY GT500 FASTBACK**

An extremely rare stripe delete 428/355hp car with 49,000 actual miles. Original rust-free body with factory Ford VIN still intact. Listed in the Shelby World Registry and comes with Deluxe Marti Report.

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**1959 DESOTO ADVENTURER CONVERTIBLE**

Powered by a 383ci V8 offering 350hp with a TorqueFlite automatic transmission, this DeSoto is complemented by a set of virtually impossible-to-find Adventurer wheel covers with unique bullet-shaped centers.

**NO RESERVE**



**1953 CADILLAC ELDORADO CONVERTIBLE**

This is number 288 of 533 produced that year, and features a 322ci OHV V8 with 3-speed automatic with power-assisted features that include steering, brakes, seat, top and antenna. Selectronic signal-seeking radio.

**NO RESERVE**



**1958 DESOTO ADVENTURER CONVERTIBLE**

Powered by a 361ci V8 engine with automatic transmission, the DeSoto Adventurer was one of the best-performing big cars of the 1950s, with excellent handling for its size and a top speed of 140 mph.

**NO RESERVE**



**1953 BUICK SKYLARK CONVERTIBLE**

One of only 1,690 Skylarks produced in 1953. Features rebuilt 322ci OHV Fireball V8 engine known as the "Nailhead" and a 3-speed automatic transmission. Nut-and-bolt rotisserie restoration in 2013.

**NO RESERVE**



**1957 DESOTO ADVENTURER CONVERTIBLE**

One of only 300 Adventurer convertibles built in 1957. Powered by a HEMI 345ci V8 engine with rated 345bhp. Options include power windows, power front seat, power steering and power brakes.

**NO RESERVE**



**1954 CHEVROLET "ENTOMBED" CORVETTE**

The famous "Entombed" Corvette that was removed from a brick vault inside a Brunswick, ME, grocery store once owned by local businessman Richard Sampson. Still has 2,335 miles on the odometer, 28 years after its entombment.

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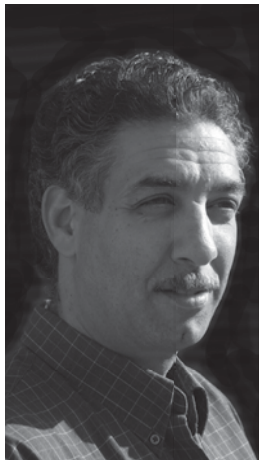
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With the cold

weather now

hitting most parts

of the country,

we're coming

into the ideal

time of year to

catch up on

our automotive

reading.



## Reading Away the Winter Blues

With the cold weather now hitting most parts of the country, we're coming into the ideal time of year to catch up on our automotive reading. Whether you sit in your favorite chair by the fireplace, or alongside the window where the barren landscape reminds you that it's too cold to work in the garage, reading is the perfect, and one of the most enjoyable, ways to pass the time until spring arrives.

Go through the past few issues of *Hemmings Classic Car* and you will soon find a feature that you meant to read when you first received the magazine, but somehow didn't come back to. Just add a piece of paper to mark its page so you won't forget again, and start making a pile of must-read issues. Catching up on your other magazines as well always makes for a gratifying reading experience, as you switch from one topic to another.

If you plan on doing some repair or restoration work on your old car once the warmer weather returns, now's the time to read ahead about how to tackle those mechanical tasks so you will be able to do them quickly and correctly the first time out.

Begin by making a list of all the jobs that need to be done, and start reading the appropriate engine, body or chassis manuals in order to get a clear understanding of how all the parts are assembled. When you're finished reading, reread the information again so you will have a firm grasp of how everything must be done. More important, study the photographs and illustrations closely and repeatedly, because many times it's easier to understand what to do when looking at a drawing as opposed to only reading words.

Non-factory workshop manuals are a lot cheaper than those written by the factory, and their how-to information is kind of generic in many instances. Meanwhile, those manuals issued by the automobile manufacturers, and that are written specifically for your particular car model, are much more detailed, and the step-by-step information within is precisely targeted to the car and its parts in question.

As mentioned earlier, seeing is believing, so what better way to see how things are done than

by watching a video. Just go to YouTube and type in what you're looking for in the search box. For instance, recently I had to replace universal joints and wanted to see if anyone had an easier method than mine. So I typed in "Replacing U-joints" and immediately found more than two dozen how-to videos. Most of the videos are amateurish, but there's still some good advice to be learned. Best of all, you can actually see the work that's being done, and stop and pause it as many times as you like to review the process; and it's all free.

And let's not forget the car clubs that are always a great resource for learning how to rebuild and restore the cars that they focus on. Club members are all too willing to assist fellow members with their projects, and if you can't find a factory shop manual for

your particular car, rest assured that at least one club member has what you need. Also, many club magazines feature how-to technical articles that are an excellent resource of information, which is yet another reason why you should consider joining the club that caters to your car.

Instead of restoration tech, if you just want to learn more about automotive history, racing, the movers and shakers of the automobile industry or the cars of a particular make, there are literally hundreds of books available for you to consider. If you search hard enough, you will also find many, many interesting books on obscure makes and models and on rare coachbuilt cars, too.

If you don't mind reading pre-owned books, then the main sources for you to investigate are the websites of Amazon and Alibris, where you will find hundreds of used books and sometimes even brand-new historical automotive volumes and shop manuals still in the wrappers, with many being sold at reduced rates that make them too good to pass up.

This is another reason why you must attend Hershey in October, so, like a squirrel, you can stock up on reading material for the cold winter months ahead.

So, which is your favorite automotive publication to read during the cold, dark days of winter? 🐿️



Write to our executive editor at [rlentinello@hemmings.com](mailto:rlentinello@hemmings.com).



To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

# But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

**Drivers' Alert:** Driving in fall and winter can expose you to the most dangerous glare... do you know how to protect yourself?

In the fall and winter, the sun is lower in the sky so it rises and sets at peak travel periods. During the early morning and afternoon rush hours many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle or snowy and icy pavement. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

**Not all sunglasses are created equal.** Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

**Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist.**

Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of

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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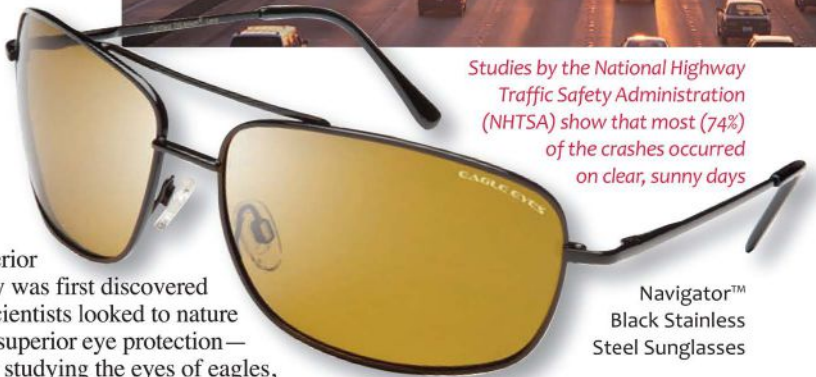
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Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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## Packards in Texas

**THIS YEAR'S TEXAS PACKARD MEET IS SLATED TO TAKE PLACE APRIL 1-3.**

The location has been switched from Salado to Kerrville, about 60 miles Northwest of San Antonio. The meet brings Packards from all around the Texas area and Southwest. Activities include an early-bird tour, an all-Packard swap meet, seminars, people's choice competition, banquet and awards program. If you would like to attend or bring your Packard, visit [texaspackardmeet.com](http://texaspackardmeet.com) for more information.



## Pierce-Arrow Mini-Meet

**THE PIERCE-ARROW SOCIETY** announces a late winter gathering to coincide with its 2016 board meeting this February 25-29 in Palo Alto, California. All Pierce-Arrow Society members are invited, and the festivities will include a visit of six of Northern California's finer car

collections. Stops include private collections, a visit to San Francisco's Academy of Art University car collection (featuring the only 1938 Pierce Convertible) and museums. For lodging and other information, or to join the Pierce-Arrow Society, visit [www.pierce-arrow.org](http://www.pierce-arrow.org).

## FEBRUARY Calendar

**7 • Sumter Swap Meet**  
Bushnell, Florida • 800-438-8559  
[www.floridaswapmeets.com](http://www.floridaswapmeets.com)

**11-13 • AACA Annual Meeting**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • 717-534-1910  
[www.aaca.org](http://www.aaca.org)

**12-13 • Automotive Swap Meet**  
Springfield, Missouri • 573-489-4762  
[www.springfieldmoswapmeet.com](http://www.springfieldmoswapmeet.com)

**12-14 • Winter Extravaganza**  
Bushnell, Florida • 727-848-7171  
[www.floridaswapmeets.net](http://www.floridaswapmeets.net)

**18-21 • Zephyrhills Auto Events**  
Zephyrhills, Florida • 813-312-4009  
[www.zephyrhillsautorama.com](http://www.zephyrhillsautorama.com)

**19-21 • Boca Raton Concours d'Elegance**  
Boca Raton, Florida • 954-537-1010  
[www.bocaratonconcours.com](http://www.bocaratonconcours.com)

**25-28 • Florida Autofest**  
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## Boca Beauties

**FLORIDA'S QUICKLY GROWING BOCA RATON** Concours d'Elegance is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year on February 19-21 at the Boca Raton Resort and Club. The festivities culminate on Sunday the 21st, as 200 collector cars and motorcycles will gather on the show field. This year's special classes and displays will include Packards and CCCA Full Classics. For lodging and ticket information, visit [www.bocaratonconcours.com](http://www.bocaratonconcours.com).



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## Wehr's Wares

**ONE MORE HERSHEY FIND FROM OCTOBER. WE ALWAYS MAKE A BEELINE FOR** wooden patterns at Hershey because we know there's inevitably a good story behind them (and who doesn't thrill at seeing one-of-a-kind items like patterns for sale?), and we weren't disappointed when we came across these patterns for a rotary-valve engine.

Specifically, they're for an engine designed by Rudolph Wehr, who began work on the rotary-valve design in 1918 in New York City and continued to develop it through a move to Los Angeles and then back to NYC all the way through the 1940s. He was able to obtain multiple patents on his work, but he apparently sought validation for the design at Indy, entering at least a couple of times, in 1922 and again in 1932.

The patterns all seemed to be for the engine in the latter entry as well as for his postwar efforts, which involved creating a rotary-valve version of the Crosley's overhead-camshaft four-cylinder engine. They appeared to have remained in the Wehr family up until recently, when they became available after an estate sale.

## Last of the Line

**READER BILL FORNEY** recently shared a photo of a couple Fords he used to own, with particular focus on a

1939 convertible. "It was all very original, but I believe uncommon (maybe even rare)," Bill wrote. "It had a rumble

seat instead of a back seat. I personally have never seen another Ford convertible newer than a 1936 with a rumble seat.



## Mutant Libre, Part 2

**AFTER GARY BERTRAND'S SIGHTING OF A SORTA-** Buick in Cuba (see *HCC* #135), we've received a number of photos of other intriguing Cuban classics, updated and adapted and hacked to keep on the roads.

Take, for instance, the Studebaker—a 1950-'51 Commander or Champion—that Jim Hilton of Kelseyville, California, spotted. In addition to the stilts stance, we see a pickup conversion in place of the trunk, a couple of impressive racks, and apparently a switch to conventional rear doors rather than suicide doors.

"Most of the cars are powered by diesel on Russian jeep chassis," Jim wrote. "Several of the owners told me they have kept the original power plants awaiting the day they can get parts."

Seen something unusual prowling the streets of Cuba? Send us your photos of it.



What do you or your readers think?"

Well, Bill, 1939 was indeed rather late for the Ford rumble seat—in fact, it was the last model year that Ford offered the feature (though a few aftermarket companies tried to sell rumble seats

for the Thunderbird almost 20 years later). But the model on which Ford offered the rumble seat, the DeLuxe Convertible Coupe, isn't particularly rare, with a production run of 10,422. And a quick Googling shows plenty of the cars still around.



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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## Chicago Mecum

**ANOTHER AUCTION HAS COME AND GONE FOR MECUM, WITH THE CONCLUSION OF ITS** Schaumburg, Illinois, event which took place October 8-10 on the outskirts of Chicago. Over 450 cars were sold, for a total just passing the \$11.8 million mark. The top sale was a 2005 Ford GT, but there were plenty of American classics among the muscle and performance cars. For instance, this nicely restored 1936 Buick Century coupe, which had been refinished in its original Trouville blue paint and tan interior. A low-production body style, it included a rumble seat and dual side-mounts. Nineteen thirty-six was also the first year Buick used the name "Century," making this a desirable find at \$48,000. Kicking off in Kissimmee this January, Mecum's 2016 calendar is approaching finalization. For a complete list of sales from the Chicago auction, visit [www.mecum.com](http://www.mecum.com).

## Boardwalk Beauties

**ATLANTIC CITY HAS BEEN KNOWN TO** attract high rollers, including those that have four wheels. The G. Potter King Auction is scheduled to take place February 26-28 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. In addition to the auction, there will be a car corral and several vendors. The Auction is anticipating over 500 cars to cross the block this year, with representation from all different eras. Memorabilia auctions start the day and are followed by the car auctions at 11 a.m. For hotel and ticket information, please visit [www.acclassiccars.com](http://www.acclassiccars.com).



## AUCTION PROFILE

**BY 1958, THE METROPOLITAN HAD BECOME** a popular alternative to the large mammoths that Ford, GM and Chrysler were producing. Though technically an import, as Nash outsourced the production to Britain, the "Met" has distinctively American styling, making it an attractive option for buyers over other small foreign cars in the market, such as the Fiat and Volkswagen.

This Metropolitan 1500 coupe was restored to the correct factory color scheme of Frost White and Berkshire Green. The engine was completely rebuilt with new pistons, connecting rods and rebuilt cylinder head, while the brakes were renovated with new components. New rubber seals were fitted in all channels and doors, and the black-and-white checkered interior brings an authentic-looking original appearance to the interior. Only 69,142 miles were on the odometer, which no doubt made this a desirable Met among the bidders.



**CAR**  
**AUCTIONEER**  
**LOCATION**  
**DATE**  
**LOT NUMBER**

1958 Nash Metropolitan  
RM Sotheby's  
Hershey, Pennsylvania  
October 9, 2015  
248

**CONDITION**  
**RESERVE**  
**AVERAGE SELLING PRICE**  
**SELLING PRICE**

2+  
None  
\$16,000  
\$38,500



# FEBRUARY

## Calendar

3 • Paris, France • RM Sotheby's  
519-352-4575 • [www.rmsothebys.com](http://www.rmsothebys.com)

18-21 • Zephyrhills, Florida  
Vicari Auctions • 813-312-4009  
[www.vicariauction.com](http://www.vicariauction.com)

19-21 • Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Leake Auctions • 918-254-7077  
[www.leakecar.com](http://www.leakecar.com)


26-27 • Lakeland, Florida  
Carlisle Auctions • 717-960-6400  
[www.carlisleauctions.com](http://www.carlisleauctions.com)

26-28 • Atlantic City, New Jersey  
G. Potter King • 800-227-3868  
[www.acclassiccars.com](http://www.acclassiccars.com)



## Sooner Scramble

**"THE BIG FRIENDLY," OKLAHOMA CITY,** will be hosting the Leake Car Auction this February 19-21 at the Cox Pavilion on the OKC Fairgrounds. This year's auction has been extended to three days (Friday-Sunday) and will feature 500-600 cars, trucks and motorcycles that will be up for sale—100 with no reserve. Consignments are still being added, so be sure to contact Leake if you want to sell your car. Visit [www.leakecar.com](http://www.leakecar.com) for ticket information, complete listings and updates.

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If you think being a Mopar enthusiast is exciting with today's SRT Hellcats, you should have been there in 1968, when Dodge introduced its Scat Pack trim for the incredible Charger R/T, Coronet R/T, Super Bee and Dart GTS. Dodge has created a new generation of Scat Pack cars and fans with its current Challenger and Charger, and the speedy bee logo has also returned. This officially licensed Scat Pack Neon Sign is sized 30 x 19 inches and features a colorful silk-screened image accented with hand-blown neon tubing. It's ready to hang on a wall or sit on a shelf; plug into a wall outlet and enjoy.



## 1947 Blue Crown Spark Plug Special

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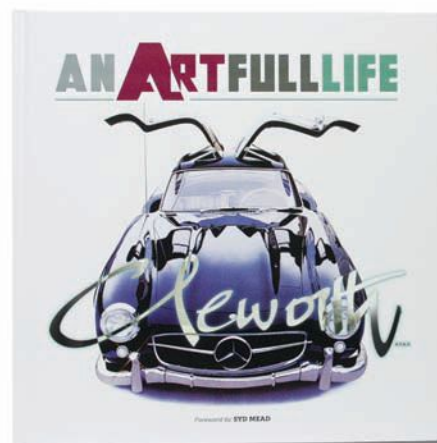
As the Indianapolis Motor Speedway came to postwar life, the most feared team on the bricks was the Blue Crown stable, cars built by Lou Moore with cigar-shaped bodywork crafted by Emil Diedt. The team would score three straight wins. Mauri Rose got his second 500 win in 1947 aboard this car, recreated in 1/18th scale by Replicarz as part of its growing historic Indy car series. While terrific to look at, we note its somewhat unusual construction. It's a full resin model except for a die-cast hood, which pivots open to reveal the wired-and-plumbed 270-cu.in. Offenhauser engine. We loved the delicacy of the wire wheels, the convincing instruments and steering box, and the steering wheel with correct symmetrically curved metal spokes. Like the other entries in this series, Replicarz has absolutely nailed it.

— JIM DONNELLY

## A Legacy on Canvas

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Longtime HCC readers will surely remember the captivating automotive fine art of British-born, Venice, California, resident Harold James Cleworth (Auto Art, HCC #24), which has been lauded for its color, realism and unique perspective for more than 40 years. This Automotive Fine Arts Society member has recently published a retrospective on his artwork, aptly titled *An ARTFULL Life*, and in it, he's brought together more than 150 of his favorite acrylic-on-canvas paintings celebrating domestic and imported cars, motorcycles, trains, planes and more. Harold's 168-page, coffee table (11 x 11 inches) worthy hardcover is peppered with his insights and stories, and illuminates the incredible legacy he's leaving all lovers of cars and automotive art—it's a must-have.





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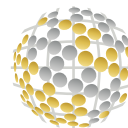
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## 1967 Buick Wildcat

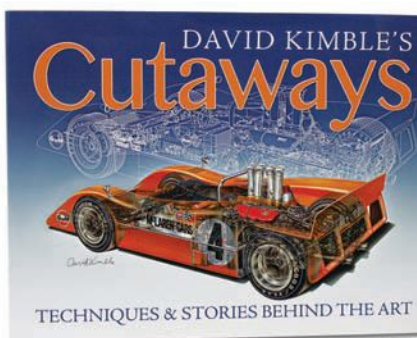
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Buick's long, low and lithe Wildcat hardtop sedan was a handsome high-performance automobile in 1967, when a 360hp, 430-cu.in. V-8 and Super Turbine 400 automatic gave it the go to match its show. This is the model that the Buick lovers at England's The Brooklin Collection have chosen to render in 1:43 scale, and they've painted it in glowing Champagne Mist Poly. It features accurate exterior brightwork and a tan interior with the three-spoke sport steering wheel. The Buick lovers in our readership will find this hefty gem hard to pass up.

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You know how on Thanksgiving, you can walk into a prix fixe restaurant and marvel at the meticulously prepared selection of foodstuffs presented in front of you? That's sort of what this book is like. If you've been reading about cars for, oh, the last 40 years or so, you're doubtlessly familiar with the incredible detailed cutaway drawings of David Kimble, most commonly published in *Automobile Quarterly* and *Road & Track*. The author, who has an aerospace background, is globally recognized for his expertise in penning see-through



views of transportation subjects. Scores of them are presented here, big enough so the nuances can be fully appreciated in this large-format hardcover that totals 192 pages. The subject matter runs from Corvettes to Full Classics such as a 1931 Cadillac V-16, historic race cars like a front-drive Miller 91, and even the original Ford plant at Highland Park. Trust us, you'll savor this feast.

— JIM DONNELLY

## Wheels and Wings

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There's a natural connection between old automobiles and old airplanes, contemporary modes of transportation that used complementary technology and materials. Veteran pilot and talented aviation photographer Tom Pawlesh saw that connection while attending a Waco Fly-In at the Historic Waco Field in Troy, Ohio, and he brought the cars and planes together to great effect.

"The time between World War I and World War II has been called the Golden Age of Transportation. It appeals to me that the aircraft and automobiles from this era not only have a history, but a personality and character all their own," Tom explains. "In today's plastic, throw-away society,

they are like pieces of art. They just don't make them like this anymore.

"Through my photography, I try to recreate the nostalgia of the era by enhancing the images in the computer," he continues. "The owners of these classic survivors spend a lot of time and money restoring and maintaining their machines, so I want to show them in their best light. I not only attend air shows and fly-ins now, but also car cruises, looking for vintage subjects."

Tom's creative collaboration images can be made into wall-ready prints and canvas and aluminum posters, and can be reproduced on mugs, magnets and other keepsake items. Photo prints, sized 8 x 10-inches, start at \$3.



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1928 FORD MODEL A'S AND  
1937 WACO YKS-7



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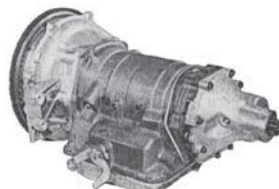
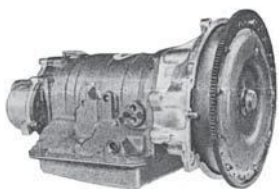
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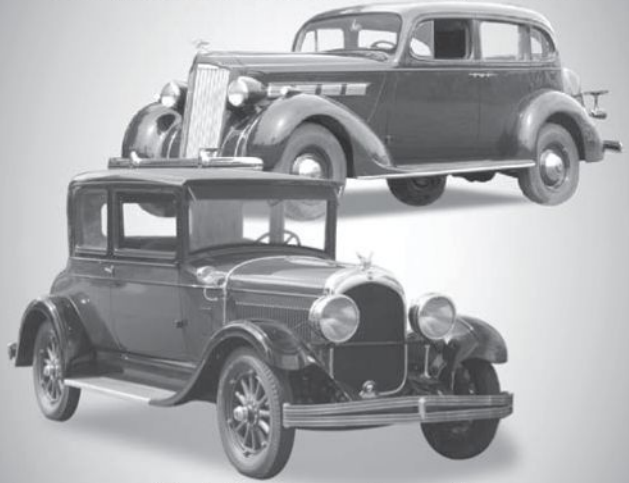


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# Deluxe Held Dear

*One man's 67-year love affair with his first car, a 1931 Ford Model A*

BY DAVID CONWILL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR



**T**he appeal of the Model A Deluxe Roadster has lasted long beyond the end of production. Even as used cars they were sought after, as retired Albany, New York, attorney Frank Mulderry will attest. He acquired this one as a high schooler in 1949 and has held onto it ever since.





After soldiering through the Depression years and World War II, many Model A Roadsters went to youthful new owners after being discarded by their elders in the postwar flurry of new-car buying. Much has been written about the second or third lives of early Fords as hot rods, but some remained what they'd been all along: efficient, stylish and reliable transportation. Frank acquired his after being exposed to a classmate's Model A. "I just

liked the looks," he says, "and I wanted an open car."

An ad in the newspaper led Frank to what he was seeking and at a price he thought he could afford—this 1931 Ford Model A Deluxe Roadster for a mere \$90. That's about \$900 in today's money. Frank's grandmother financed the transaction, and Frank hauled his prize home, only to learn that his father did not approve of his enthusiasm for the 18-year-old car. "He had a





**Deluxe Roadster interiors copied what was fashionable in Europe in the early 1930s. Shift knob contains a photo of Frank's grandfather, who helped work on the car decades ago.**



fit," Frank remembers. "He said, 'Don't tell anyone you paid \$90 for that piece of junk!'"

But Frank was a good kid, and unlike many in that era, he had no interest in hot rodding his Roadster. The brutally cold winter of 1950 gave him the opportunity to prove the Ford's mettle to his skeptical father. One particularly bad morning, when temperatures were in the negative double digits, the elder Mulderry's Cadillac wouldn't start. Frank told his father not to worry, and that he would give him a ride to work on his way to school in the old Ford. Frank says his father laughed. But when the Model A cranked to life? "He stopped laughing," Frank recalls.

No doubt the Ford's reliability and road manners were enhanced above that of many automobiles still plying the roads after World War II through the efforts of Frank's grandfather, an Irish immigrant and the husband of the dear lady who bankrolled the initial purchase. According to Frank, his grandfather was a poor enough driver that he gave up his car in the mid-1930s, but a gifted mechanic. So grateful is Frank for his grandfather's assistance in getting and keeping the car roadworthy, that his photograph graces the shift knob to this day.

The Deluxe, added to the handsome redesign already in place for the 1930 model year, featuring a longer, lower, more streamlined appearance with 19-inch wheels and a windshield that folded flat against the cowl, similar to more-expensive cars. To this, the Deluxe added a shortened windshield, lightweight tan folding top with matching side curtains, and Bedouin grain leather upholstery with narrow piping in the European mode. Ford also made a trunk rack and a welled front fender for a side-mount spare tire, which was standard equipment on the Deluxe.

This approach must have appealed to buyers, because though Roadster production had fallen below 600 cars per month by the time of the Deluxe Roadster's introduction, the 1930 model year finished strong with some 11,313 examples produced—accounting for more than nine percent of total

Roadster production.

For 1931, it was the Deluxe model that would dominate. While total Roadster production fell to only 58,496 units, over 90 percent of those were of the upscale variety. The only changes to Deluxe equipment were the reversion of the trunk rack and side-mount spare to optional equipment—hence their absence on the car shown here—and the introduction of wheels painted to match the stripe color, an addition frequently made by dealers in earlier years.

The selection of available colors for 1931 was also pared back from the 12 different body, molding and stripe combinations available over the course of 1930 production, to only four choices for 1931: Washington Blue with Riviera Blue and Tacoma Cream; Stone Brown with Stone Deep Gray and Tacoma Cream; Brewster Green Medium with Black and Apple Green; and Black with Black and Apple Green.

Frank had plenty of fun with the Roadster during his senior year of high school, even while keeping the Model A stock with the 40-horsepower flathead four-cylinder engine, mechanical brakes and 19-inch wheels. No doubt young Frank cut a dashing figure in the sporty Ford with its jaunty folding windshield. He had a girlfriend and the car has a rumble seat, so they and another couple would attend the drive-in movies together.

In the autumn of 1950, Frank had to put his beloved Ford into storage because his college did not permit students to have cars. Remarkably, however, even when Frank's father loaned him a newer Chevrolet for him to keep in a rented garage off campus, he did not part with the Model A. The car briefly re-entered service during his first year of law school as he commuted back and forth.

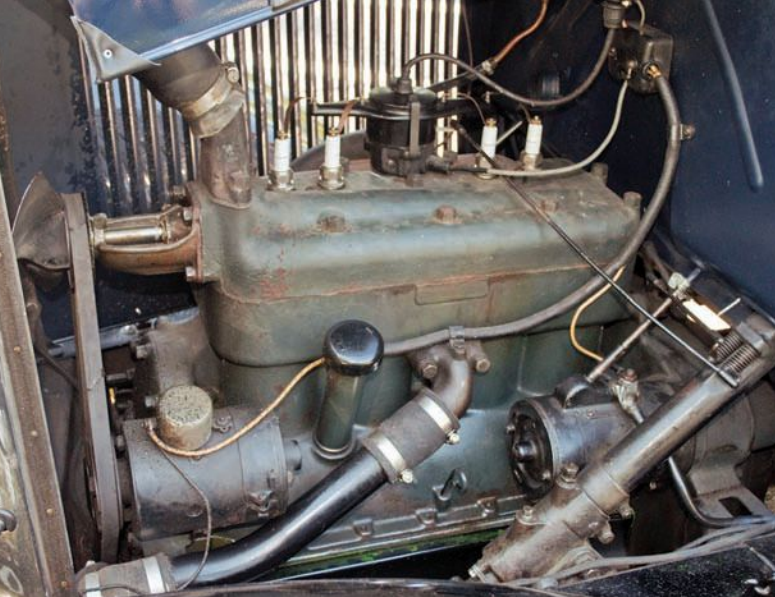
Even when Frank married in 1955 and purchased a newer Ford convertible, he held tight to his first car. It hasn't seen much use since then, but he has always maintained it and driven it around a bit each summer.

A purist, Frank has refrained from modifications like hydraulic brakes or a Model B engine, adding only a set of

*“I just liked  
the looks of it and wanted  
an open car.”*







Despite teenage ownership at the height of the hot-rod craze, the car still has its original 40hp, 200.5-cu.in. four-cylinder engine, which was rebuilt in the late 1990s. The optional rumble seat was used for double dates to the drive-in theatre in the early 1950s and now hosts the owner's twin grandsons on car-show trips.



factory-optional wind wings for driving comfort and replacing a defunct horn. Only in the past 20 years has the Ford required any serious restoration. The original engine had been rebuilt and re-installed in the late 1990s, and subsequently the body had been repainted and the worn upholstery replaced.

The old Ford led to a lifetime of involvement with classic cars. In addition to this heirloom, Frank has owned Packards, Pierce-Arrows and the one that got away, a 1939 Mercedes 540K. All of those Classic automobiles are gone now, largely to fund college tuition for his children. But the Model A has persevered and shows no signs of going anywhere if Frank and his family have anything to say about it.

When his own son was a senior in high school, he was permitted to use the Model A to go back and forth, maintaining a tradition that Frank hopes will continue when his 13-year-old grandsons are themselves seniors. Those boys and their father are the current designated summer operators of the Roadster, and he says they enjoy traveling to car shows with

the top down and the rumble seat open, waving and honking the Ford's "ahooga" horn at folks who smile at the clean old car still plying the streets of Albany.

This is all quite a run for a car that was viewed by many as cheap and disposable when new. The era of the Roadster was rapidly winding down by the summer of 1930. The two seaters are viewed as sporty today, but in the era of the Model A, closed cars had all the panache and roadsters were just inexpensive transportation. Rather than accept this trend as inevitable, however, Ford attempted to change the runabout's image from chicken farm to country club by introducing the new Deluxe Roadster.

Frank still likes the same things about his Washington Blue specimen that sold Deluxe Roadsters when they were new and that drew him to the newspaper classifieds in 1949: Its good looks and mechanical simplicity. These factors have led Frank to keep his first car from high school clear through retirement, and to secure its stewardship with future generations of his family. 🐾





# Touring Tough

*Updated and refined, the 1937 Oldsmobile F-37 Touring Sedan was a popular choice for new car buyers*



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

**Y**ou couldn't call the 1937 Oldsmobile an all-new car, but in truth, you wouldn't be far off the mark if you did. The engine was significantly revised, the frame was all-new, and the all-steel body was re-engineered. Yet, despite the price shooting up nearly 10 percent, Oldsmobile was still able to sell more than 200,000 cars for the year—roughly three-quarters of them like the Touring Sedan you see here.





The newness started with the engine, which dated from the early 1920s. Launched with 169 cubic inches and 42 horsepower, it had been on a comprehensive update regimen ever since, with 55 horsepower by 1928, 65 by 1931 and 90 horsepower (out of 213.3 cu.in. and higher 6.1 compression) by 1935. For the 1937 model year, displacement changed again, to 229.7, thanks to a 1/8-inch overbore. Other improvements included full-length water jacketing, cast-in cylinder-reinforcement rings to reduce cylinder distortion caused by cylinder head and head-bolt stress, and

redesigned camshaft and valve lifters. Additionally, the crankshaft was beefed up by increasing the surface area, and the fuel pump was inverted to help prevent vapor lock. Power was now rated at 95 horsepower.

That power boost was necessary to accommodate what was a larger F-series Oldsmobile for 1937. The suspension was largely carried over, though there was now a stabilizer bar on both ends rather than just on the rear, and it was all attached to an entirely new central-I-beam X-member frame. That frame was two inches





Flat floor is a feature on the all-steel 1937 model; the taller door helps ingress as much as the giant steering wheel and high seat cushion block it. Markings on the bezels aren't always easily read at a glance. The interior is reupholstered in original-type materials; the heater is still not installed.



longer between the wheel centers than the 1936-spec frame, and both stiffer and lighter. The engine was pushed forward four inches from the '36 models, and the body moved forward six inches as well. Rather than having to put passengers atop the rear axle, they could now sit entirely within the wheelbase of the car, making for a more comfortable ride.

The new frame allowed a variety of interesting things to happen to the body. First, because the driveshaft went through the center of the X in the frame, there was no more driveline hump, and the floors were completely flat. The popular "turret top" all-steel construction that showed up in 1935 really just extended to the roof, though. For 1937, Oldsmobile engineers dismissed the wood framing from the rest of the body (just in the sills, at that point), which allowed it to sit 3.5 inches lower on the frame, and they raised the doors 3.5 inches to make it easier for people to get in and out. The forward shift and longer wheelbase also helped, as did the rear doors, which were five inches longer than those on 1936 models. Oldsmobile presented a clean, Art Deco face to the wind, while high-mounted brake lights were an intriguing touch.

There is always a penalty to pay for advancement, and in the Oldsmobile that penalty was twofold: an F-37 (as the division's six-cylinder line was known for 1937) weighed roughly 130 pounds more than a comparable F-36 from the previous season, and the price went up \$75, to \$895 for an F-37 Touring Sedan like the one you see here. Seventy-five dollars doesn't sound like much, but that's a nine percent price rise from year to year, which you'd think would give buyers some concern. Except it didn't. Oldsmobile sold just over 200,000 cars for 1937, a division record; two-thirds of all Oldsmobiles for the year, in both six- and eight-cylinder forms, were Touring Sedans—the difference between a standard sedan and a Touring Sedan was the integrated bustle-back-style trunk, a look later copied on the 1980 Cadillac Seville.

Strangely, despite the litany of improvements year to year, Oldsmobile said almost nothing about any of this in its brochure. Car companies had a habit of calling everything "new" every year, whether it was or not. Was it wanting to avoid this overuse of the term "new"? Was it the knowledge of a public skeptical of engineering advancements, the idea that Oldsmobile's customers may not necessarily understand or care about the division's technical achievements, or simple modesty? Hard to say, but it's difficult to understand what makes a 1937 Oldsmobile special when even Oldsmobile itself was soft-pedaling everything that made it a quantitative improvement over the 1936 models. So we found one to drive.

Herb Mettler of Waitsburg, Washington, has a collection of about a dozen cars, most of which are running. Among the number of Buicks in his collection is this 1937 Oldsmobile—a car that he bought in 1969, and has owned for 47 of its 79 years. This very Oldsmobile started Herb's car collection—the first of hundreds of cars that have come in and out of his garage over time. For that reason alone, because



it was the first of all those that followed, it's not going anywhere.

"The engine and interior were all original when I bought it. I'm the third owner, and so the second owner had some bodywork done—the original owner had it in a carriage house, and apparently he used the fenders as a guide, because both front fenders and one of the rears were scraped up and full of dings. Once the second owner had some bodywork done, he had it repainted black.

"I did have it repainted in 2013. I had a lot of parts off, and almost had it stripped to bare metal, when a friend offered to repaint the whole car and reassemble it for \$2,800. I thought, you got a deal! He took out a couple of dings I didn't even see, one in the door and one in the trunk lid, and finished it back in black." Black shows everything, but pictures show how straight the steel was to begin with. "I also applied POR-15 to everything from the firewall to the trunk so it would never rust. And after a while, the interior didn't look good anymore, so my brother totally redid the interior."

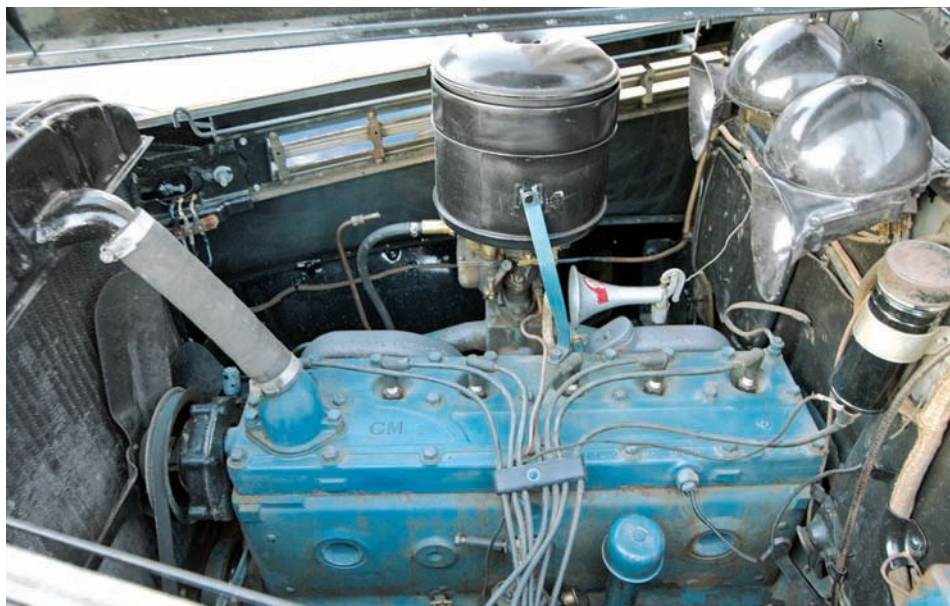
That's it? "Well, one of the valves was sticking once. I guess it had sat for quite a while." The answer to the cure? "A little Gumout. It was only on the one cylinder, anyway. Oh, and I did have to put new wheel cylinders on the front. There's a guy near here who rebuilds them with stainless steel sleeves. I rebuilt the master cylinder, too." The driveline remains unrebuilt. Not bad for a car that now shows 46,000 miles on the odometer and which has gone on classic-car tours extensively throughout the Northwest. "We took that car on a lot of tours," Herb recalls. "It was the only one we had at the time!"

This Oldsmobile suffers from the same collection of ergonomic issues that most four-door sedans of this era do: a tall, narrow door; a high seat cushion and a gigantic steering wheel combine for an awkward squeeze in for all but the most petite and limber driver. That taller door does make life easier, however. It's difficult to tell whether the running board helps, getting you closer to the door opening, or if it's an impediment that must either be stepped over or puts you so high that you have to bend in extra-wiggly ways to slip into the driver's seat. Frankly, scooting across the big bench seat from the passenger's side is more convenient, despite the shifter coming up out of the floor. Luckily, the seat goes back far enough that all but the girthiest drivers are accommodated. There's also terrific headroom once inside—a benefit of the new lower body with the same overall height.

Seated and looking out, you are again very much in a car representative of the era: there's nothing that gives away the idea that it's a relatively high-tech machine. The windows on these first all-steel Turret Tops are a bit on the small side, considering the upright seating position, voluminous headroom and panoramic view the plush driver's seat gives you, and the passenger's-side front fender is all but invisible from the driver's chair. There are some curious interior touches, most of them on the instrument panel: there's a clock and an ashtray in the face of the glove box door, and the speedometer markings



The engine dates from the early 1920s; in 1937 trim as seen here, it displaces 229.7 cubic inches and is rated at 95 horsepower with a single downdraft carburetor. Engineering advancements include 6.1:1 compression ratio, improved cooling and an inverted fuel pump to help prevent vapor lock.







**I** was living in Portland at the time, and I went to see a Packard for sale. It was a rust bucket, and the seller wanted \$2,500 for it. I passed, but on the drive home, I saw this Oldsmobile sitting on the street with a For Sale sign in the window. It had just 22,000 miles on the odometer. The owner wanted \$600, I offered him \$500, he took it, and I drove it home that day. For another \$20, I bought a 1937 Oldsmobile heater for it, which the previous owner was going to install but never did, so I'm into this car for \$520. I never installed the heater either!

are actually molded into the chrome bezel, rather than printed on the face of the gauge itself. The Art Deco font is a treat, but isn't always the most easily read at a glance, despite the markings being picked out in bright red paint; in some light your desired speed is a little tough to see. And that's my excuse, officer.

Once the ignition key is switched on, find the start button—it's on the floor, located above the gas pedal in a position not readily seen from the driver's seat. It takes a novice some fumbling around to find it. Press it with your toe, and all 229.7 cubic inches of flathead power turn over with little hesitation. At idle, the straight-six purrs sweetly, a contented kitty at your feet, with sound well-damped by the plush interior materials so that only a gentle bass hum comes through. There is, in that low note, a suggestion of power.

But once you get going, the idle purr is a bit more strained as you work through the revs, and at road speeds the engine sounds as if it's working rather hard to keep things going. There's little doubt that you're in an automobile motivated by six cylinders as you accelerate; the power is smooth, but there's only so much that 95 horsepower can do to accommodate nearly two tons (curb weight, plus 500 pounds for driver and passenger). This may be why the gas pedal feels so on/off to us. Aggressive throttle tip-in to throw you back in your seat can occasionally be mistaken for

actual power, and in lieu of startling performance, the L-head engine's Carter one-barrel carburetor may have been set up to leave an impression off the line. (The six was responsible for roughly three-quarters of Oldsmobile's sales that year, but the extra power and torque of the eight would have been a dynamite addition.) Whatever the case, it's not a throttle that you casually roll into. Change gear, engage the clutch at the very bottom of the pedal's long travel, and that shifter is a tad wobbly in its moorings but has a surprisingly short throw considering the thing is nearly a yard long.

The downside is that the steering wheel's connection to the front wheels has just enough slop in the system that you're constantly correcting, over-correcting and counter-correcting—and that's just in a straight line. The upside is that the ride, with coil springs in front and both front and rear anti-roll bars, could teach a thing or two to some newer chassis we've driven. It's proof that ride comfort and cornering control need not be mutually exclusive. The steering, in particular, is very light just off idle, despite no power assist, and you can really feel what the road is telling you.

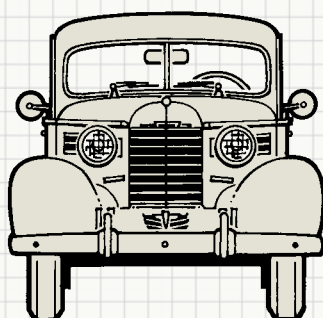
Cars like this helped give Oldsmobile the reputation it enjoyed for the rest of the century as builders of comfortable sedans that drove well, thanks to the built-in engineering benefits, even if they were never called to your attention. 🍷



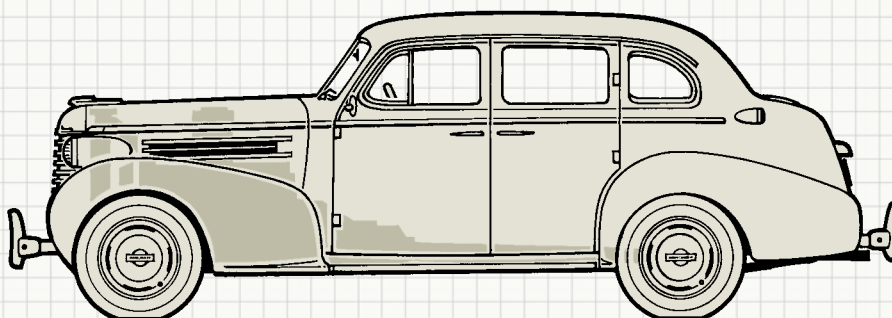


# 1937 OLDSMOBILE F37 TOURING SEDAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,  
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2016 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



← 58 inches →



← 117 inches →

## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

BASE PRICE \$895

### ENGINE

TYPE L-head inline six-cylinder, cast-iron block and cylinder head  
DISPLACEMENT 229.7 cubic inches  
BORE X STROKE 3.4375 x 4.375 inches  
COMPRESSION RATIO 6.1:1  
HORSEPOWER @ RPM 95 @ 3,400  
TORQUE @ RPM 180-lb.ft. @ 1,600  
MAIN BEARINGS Four  
FUEL SYSTEM Single downdraft Carter EE-1 carburetor with automatic choke, mechanical fuel pump  
LUBRICATION SYSTEM Pressure, gear-type pump  
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM 6-volt with generator  
EXHAUST SYSTEM Cast-iron manifold, single exhaust

### TRANSMISSION

TYPE 3-speed manual, synchro on 2-3; floor shift; single dry-plate 9.25-inch clutch  
RATIOS 1st 2.94:1  
2nd 1.66:1  
3rd 1.00:1  
Reverse 3.78:1

### DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE Spiral-bevel, Hotchkiss drive  
RATIO 4.375:1

### STEERING

TYPE Worm-and-roller  
RATIO 19:1  
TURNS, LOCK-TO-LOCK 4.33  
TURNING CIRCLE 37 feet

### BRAKES

TYPE Hydraulic, four-wheel manual drums  
FRONT/REAR 11-inch drum

### CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION Body on frame  
FRAME Rigid girder, with I-beam X-member construction

BODY STYLE  
LAYOUT

Four-door sedan  
Front engine, rear-wheel drive

### SUSPENSION

FRONT Independent, unequal length A-arms; coil springs; telescoping shock absorbers; anti-roll bar  
REAR Semi-elliptical leaf springs; telescoping shock absorbers; anti-roll bar

### WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS Drop center, pressed steel  
FRONT/REAR 16 x 5  
TIRES Balloon-type, wide whitewall  
FRONT/REAR 16 x 6.50

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE 117 inches  
OVERALL LENGTH 190.4 inches  
OVERALL WIDTH 72.1 inches  
OVERALL HEIGHT 65.25 inches  
FRONT TRACK 58 inches  
REAR TRACK 59 inches  
SHIPPING WEIGHT 3,179 pounds

### CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE 6 quarts  
COOLING SYSTEM 17 quarts  
FUEL TANK 18 gallons

### CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN. 0.413  
WEIGHT PER BHP 33.46 pounds  
WEIGHT PER CU.IN. 13.84 pounds

### PRODUCTION

TOURING  
FOUR-DOOR SIXES 70,433  
TOTAL FOR 1937 200,886

### PERFORMANCE\*

0-60 MPH 21 seconds  
TOP SPEED 81.82 MPH

\*Source: *The Autocar*, June 4, 1937

## PROS & CONS

- + Utter reliability
- + Smooth Art Deco style
- + Plenty of technical achievement
- Technical achievement underplayed by quiet styling
- Sounds like hard work when it's moving
- A tight squeeze for bigger bellies behind the wheel

## WHAT TO PAY

LOW  
\$6,000 – \$7,000

AVERAGE  
\$11,000 – \$12,000

HIGH  
\$16,000 – \$17,000

## CLUB CORNER

### OLDSMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

517-663-1811  
www.oldsclub.org  
Dues: \$30/year  
Membership: 6,400

### NATIONAL ANTIQUE OLDSMOBILE CLUB

Lindworth Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63124  
www.antiqueolds.org  
Dues: \$25/year  
Membership: 1,600





# Kenoshan Rhapsody

*A quirky experiment in building a “wide, small car,” the AMC Pacer, like this 1979 example, has become a cultural icon*

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

To anyone else, “Pinto, Gremlin and Pacer” might sound like the start of one of those “Worst Cars” lists that occasionally gets thrown together on slow news days. But to the people who own them, those distinctive compact cars are endearing collectibles.





# Pacer DL

The Pacer was AMC's reimagining of the compact class as an alternative to a full-size car by producing a vehicle of shorter length but with a width comparable to a large sedan. The Pacer shares the 100-inch wheelbase of the 1950 Nash Rambler, but its body is the same 77.3-inch width as AMC's 1974 Ambassador. The result was supposed to be a car that was easier to drive but that didn't sacrifice comfort. Designed "from the inside out," according to AMC, the Pacer featured short overhangs and a large glass area, and was variously described as a jellybean, *Jetsons*-like, or "The Flying Fishbowl."

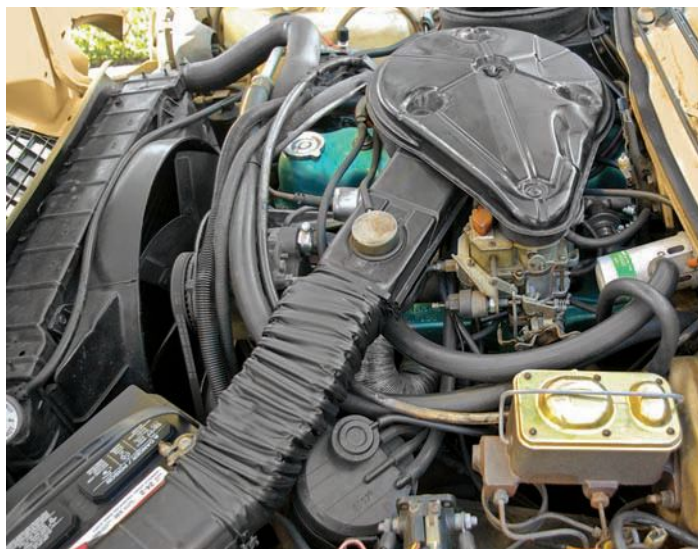
Originally designed for a Wankel rotary engine, and deftly redesigned to accommodate AMC's traditional straight-six and V-8 engines, the initially successful Pacer was hampered by poor fuel economy and was eventually discontinued to free up production space for AMC's next attempt at a revolutionary design—the four-wheel-drive Eagle.

The Pacer still has many fans, one of whom is the owner of our feature car, Ray Maiwurm, a self-described collector of unloved "cars no one else has." While that's a relatively recent development for the Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, dentist, he's no stranger to the old-car scene. "I don't remember a time I haven't owned at least two old cars," says Ray. "I've always loved 'em."

"Always," as in Ray's first car at age 16 was a 1956 Chevrolet, followed a few months later by a 1958 Buick Roadmaster. Since then, he has owned everything from a 1934 Packard to Corvettes to Chevrolet Monte Carlos and Oldsmobile 4-4-2s, but his first encounter with this 1979 AMC Pacer at Mecum Auction's Kissimmee, Florida, sale in 2009 turned him on to the appeal of non-mainstream collectibles. Ray has become so enamored of the unusual, he followed up the purchase of the Pacer with a Chevrolet Vega, a purple 1974 Gremlin project, and a pearl-white 1978 Ford Pinto Squire wagon show car.

Ray says his Morocco Buff-over-Alpaca Brown Pacer DL Hatchback was sitting all alone on the back field at Kissimmee after crossing the block without finding any buyers. The first thing he noticed was that "everybody was smiling" at the

The 258-cu.in. straight-six engine was a staple of American Motors vehicles from 1971; for the 1979 model year, it developed 110hp and a healthy 200-lb.ft. of torque, which allowed the Pacer to reach a top speed of 99 MPH, and take 14.3 seconds to go from 0 to 60. Fuel consumption is about 18 MPG, highway. The rubber-rimmed opening is for the HVAC system.







The plush Caberfae Corduroy seats, cruise control, AM/FM radio and air conditioning make the Pacer an ideal freeway cruiser. The speedometer is a reminder of the national 55 MPH speed limit in place when the Pacer was new.

unusual car. The next thing that struck Ray was how original it was. "I've always been an originality nut," he says, and upon closer observation, he realized that the 59,000-mile AMC had lived such a gentle life that it needed virtually nothing.

Ray quickly contacted the seller and worked out a deal for the tan compact, which is powered by the standard 110hp 258-cu.in. straight-six engine equipped with a two-barrel carburetor transmitting power via a column-shifted, three-speed Torque Command automatic transmission.

Among the perfectly preserved original features—and perhaps Ray's favorite—are the Caberfae Corduroy seats. You can almost hear the luxury when he describes them, and he loves to show them off to interested folks at shows, whom he doesn't hesitate to let sit in the car.

"You just sink into the interior," he says, and further

notes that the power steering and brakes work perfectly on the 37-year-old, unrestored car. Ray says it's "absolutely the most comfortable car I have ever ridden in, including today's modern cars."

Other major options on this Pacer include power steering, power brakes, cruise control, air conditioning, AM/FM stereo radio and tilt steering. Everything works perfectly, save for a temperamental clock that was rebuilt once and quit again. Despite living in Florida, Ray says he doesn't use the air conditioning much—he's just as happy with the windows down.

According to Ray, the handling and steering are as good as or better than those of any other 1970s vehicle he's owned. He keeps up that driveability through a regular service routine consisting of a once-a-year checkup for the air conditioning, an oil change with Mobil 30W-50 and an assessment of other



The Pacer's back seat was narrower than the front due to its position between the rear wheels, but it can be folded down to give the hatchback 29.5-cu.ft. of cargo space. The wide-opening hatch makes loading cargo a breeze.







fluid levels. Ray reports better-than-average fuel economy, although with the same leisurely acceleration for which nearly all Pacers are noted. “It does keep up with modern traffic,” but Ray wryly adds, “Who needs to go fast in a Pacer?”

The only time it seems escape velocities might be necessary is when curious drivers drift a little close on the open road, which is a common experience. Apparently, younger folks, who don’t remember American Motors, tend to linger alongside the Pacer trying to read the badging and figure out what the unique-looking vehicle could be. Perhaps characteristic of the Pacer’s multi-generational appeal is Ray’s encounter with rapper, actor and TV host Robert Van Winkle (better known by his stage name, Vanilla Ice). Vanilla Ice and his entourage discovered the car at a show in Florida and became enthralled, returning multiple times to visit it. More typical are encounters with folks who owned a Pacer when they were new or slightly used cars. “Every nurse, schoolteacher and librarian had one,” Ray says, noting he’s yet to meet a male original owner. Instead, “Everybody’s wife or girlfriend had one.”

And the Pacer is a cultural icon for a younger generation as well. Ray jokes that he has considered having Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” play on a loop in the car at shows in a tribute to the 1992 film *Wayne’s World*, wherein the protagonists drive a 1977 Pacer dubbed *The Mirthmobile* and famously sing along to the progressive-rock hit.

Each weekend, Ray likes to drive at least one car from his small collection, and he says that the same smiles he saw on the field at the Mecum auction in 2009 continue to follow the Pacer around. Regardless of a viewer’s experience or

inexperience with the short, wide car, the reactions are wholly positive. “It’s the ultimate ‘Bubble Car,’” Ray says, “with its huge windows that everyone can see out of as you ride down the road.” As much as the car’s out-of-the-ordinary styling, he credits the car’s uncommonness as a part of its appeal. “It isn’t your normal Corvette, muscle car or big-money specialty car

that is so prevalent at most car shows.”

And its award history bears that out—the Pacer has taken home numerous awards, especially people’s choice awards.

Cars of the long-maligned 1970s era are starting to gather real interest, and Ray Maiworm is ahead of the curve with his small collection. Prices on Seventies cars are still low, and the restoration market is growing. Ray understands the appeal of the ’70s. It isn’t a glamorous era like the 1930s, and it lacks the wartime grit of the ’40s, the jet-age style of the ’50s or the hardcore performance of the ’60s. It’s the quirk of a decade that saw major technological and social upheaval, and car designs attempted to ride those waves or were swept beneath them. They all have traits unlike the offerings of any time before or since, and people are beginning to appreciate that.

Increasing its appeal, the Pacer’s options list shows that it was designed for a world with very similar driving conditions to today. Seventies cars don’t require 100-octane leaded gas or have 5.13 gears—they are freeway-capable cars with air conditioning and cruise control. They’re the ultimate user-friendly collector cars: capable of driving in modern traffic, plentiful yet uncommon. And we’re hard pressed to think of a Seventies automobile more likely to attract a big grin from young or old alike than the bubbly little Pacer from AMC. 🐸

“...absolutely  
the most comfortable  
car I have ever  
ridden in,  
including today’s  
modern cars.”





**RICHARD, I VERY MUCH ENJOYED** your column in *HCC* #135 having to do with “car spotting” in old movies. As for some of my favorites, and I drive my wife crazy pointing cars out as we view old films, take a look at *Young at Heart* (1954) with Alan Hale Jr. driving a 1955 Mercury Montclair convertible and Frank Sinatra purposely turning the vacuum windshield wipers off while driving in a snow storm in a 1954 Ford Customline. How about *Where the Boys Are?* (1960); it really should have been titled *Where the Cars Are*. Check out the Daytona Beach street scenes as Paula Prentiss and Connie Francis attempt to cross the road to the beach.

The really good movies contain “real” models that they drove back in the day. Everybody didn’t drive Bel Air hardtops and Fairlane 500 convertibles; they drove Chevy 150 and Ford Custom sedans.  
Dave Sotrines  
*Inverness, Florida*

**THERE’S ONE MOVIE I’D LIKE TO** add: *Psycho* was filmed in 1959 and shows many cars including Janet Leigh’s 1955 Ford Mainline that she trades for a 1957 Ford Custom 300, Martin Balsam’s 1959 Mercury and a State Trooper’s 1959 Ford Custom 300. My favorite scene is at the car lot where Janet is waiting to have her trade-in checked out. She walks past a row of 1959 Fords, Edsels and Mercurys. The movie was filmed in black and white so we can only imagine what colors these cars are. Keep watching those old movies!  
Doug Phelan  
*Presque Isle, Maine*

**I HAVE WATCHED OLD MOVIES ALL** my life and have specifically enjoyed those showing cars. I wish that all who restore old cars would also watch the movies to see how they really looked. I am so tired of seeing fender skirts on every car, especially during the ‘50s, when they were not a factory option; they ruin the purity of the design.  
Robert Fruin  
*Portland, Oregon*

**EVEN IF I AM NOT INTERESTED IN THE** movie itself, if it was made during a certain time period and will have a story set in that particular present (‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s) I will record it just to look at the cars.

Frank Capra’s 1959 *A Hole in the Head* features several street scenes with many ‘50s beauties in beautiful Tech-

nicolor. The movie contains 1957 and ‘58 Buicks and Oldsmobiles in “like new” condition on the streets of Miami. *The French Connection* has a Burgundy ‘70 GTO, which was shown prominently at curbside, and the movie had several junkyard/police holding yard scenes with Invictas, Galaxies, Jet Stars, De Villes, and many other late ‘50s and early ‘60s beauties. Susan Hayward and Kirk Douglas’s 1957 *Top Secret Affair* has several scenes with a 1950s Imperial or Cadillac limousine, and her 1958 *I Want to Live* has a few Tri-Five Chevys. *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* and *McQ* both feature a ‘73 Trans Am. Alfred Hitchcock thrillers, and just about any movie set in 1960s San Francisco, are a visual feast, as are gritty ‘50s crime noirs.

Tom Samiec  
*Wake Forest, North Carolina*

**THE DIRTY HARRY MOVIES ARE** also loaded with beautiful examples of shiny new, cheap car models that make me feel like I’m in the prime of life again. I knew I wasn’t the only one, but thanks for bringing this out—I’m positive that lots of us old car guys enjoy slipping back into an earlier time through these movies and TV shows.  
John Funk  
*Scottsville, Virginia*

**I BELIEVE THAT A GOOD CAST OF** featured and background cars can completely redeem an otherwise awful movie and make it worth watching. And a good movie is greatly improved by it. Take a look at *Johnny Dark*, an obscure early-Fifties low-budget road-race flick with Tony Curtis. Lots of rare period sports cars—Allard, Kurtis Kraft; I think there was even a Woodill Wildfire and maybe a Glasspar in the pack. Not much of a story, but the cars and the action shots make the movie worthwhile.

But my favorite film for carspotting is *Two Tars*, a silent Laurel & Hardy short from the late 1920s. A riot, and with loads of great early cars.  
Paul Caviness  
*Baldwin City, Kansas*

**WITH OLD MOVIES, WE GET TO SEE** not only vintage cars but everything from that era’s clothing styles to its language, architecture and advertisements. One movie I would recommend is *Suddenly* with Frank Sinatra. It has a lot of street

scenes and shows off many vintage autos, in particular 1953 or ‘54 Nash police cars, which are the primary police vehicles.

Doug Katz  
*Richmond, Indiana*

**THE BEST CAR MOVIE I HAVE SEEN** has to be *Hot Cars*. I drool when I watch this movie with all the old cars on the car lots. I really have no idea what the movie is about because I’m always freeze framing it so I can take a better look.

Robin Ellis  
*Riverside, California*

**SPOTTING THE OLD CARS,** motorcycles, and airplanes has been a major attraction of old movies for me ever since the early ‘50s when I sat in front of a 12-inch TV and watched Gene Autry fight bad guys in the back seat of a driverless convertible speeding toward a cliff. In *A Slight Case of Larceny* (1953), Mickey Rooney opens a gas station and steals his gas from a refinery pipeline; lots of cars in and out of the station and good close-ups of his buddy’s Indian motorcycle. *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), with Henry Fonda: lots of cars, trucks and police motorcycles. The scene where the family idles in its worn-out converted Hudson truck through a camp full of silently staring migrant workers to the sound of the transmission whining and a rod knocking, is unforgettable. *Gun Crazy* (1953)—a guy and girl go on a robbery road trip: many road scenes with some unique back-seat camera shots in moving cars and the guy climbing all over a transporter full of new Lincolns. *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), with John Garfield. The story is based at a roadside diner with plenty of street scenes and features a 1938 Plymouth and a ‘42 Chrysler with hideaway headlamps. *They Drive by Night* (1940), with Humphrey Bogart: lots of heavy trucks, Buicks and garage scenes. *If I had a Million* (1923) with W.C. Fields: a rarely seen film comprised of four short stories. In the W.C. Fields segment, he plays a diner cook who’s brand-new ‘32 Ford gets T-boned as they leave the dealer. Minutes later, he wins a million

*Continued on page 38*



## Sears Motor Buggy

As businesses go, today's Sears, Roebuck & Company is not nearly as adventurous as it once was. Of course, that may be because it's not quite the all-powerful retailer it used to be. But more than 100 years ago Sears was a mighty corporation for whom all things were possible, even getting into the automobile business.

The story began in September 1907 when a young engineer named Alvaro Krotz built and tested a high-wheel automobile that was so good he decided to ask mail-order giant Sears, Roebuck to sell it through its catalog. After demonstrating his car's outstanding reliability to company officials, he was able to secure a manufacturing contract. During late 1908 he began building production models in a plant in Chicago. Some months later, in early 1909 when a sufficient supply was on hand, Sears sent out a "Special Motor Buggy Circular" offering the new cars at the bargain price of \$395 equipped with fenders and a top, or \$370 without those items. Acetylene lamps were \$12.95 extra. The Motor Buggy was powered by a 14hp two-cylinder engine and featured full elliptic springs and hard rubber tires. Top speed was 25 MPH. Standard equipment included Timken roller bearing axles, a storm front, three oil-burning lamps and a horn. The cars were shipped in a crate that even included a gallon of engine oil.

At first glance, that seems like a pretty good deal for a pretty good car. But if you think about the date—1908—you'll probably remember that was also the year when Henry Ford introduced his Model T, an advanced car that would revolutionize the worldwide automobile industry. In 1908, high-wheelers like the Sears Motor Buggy were already on their way out. So why introduce a new one then? After all, just about any infant automaker in the country would have been thrilled to be chosen by Sears to produce its car.

But the decision to go with the Motor Buggy rather than a more modern conveyance was a deliberate one for Sears. An early advertisement stated "We have not made any attempt...at copying the automobile. We do not believe the average man desires to go whirling through the country at

40 or 50 miles an hour. We furnish...a practical car for use everyday." Sears knew its customers well. Many, if not most, were rural dwellers, living on farms or in remote communities, and they tended to be on the conservative side. Many were farmers just getting used to the idea of replacing horse-drawn buggies and wagons with motorized

ones. To appeal to them, Sears wanted a car that resembled the horse-drawn vehicles they were used to. In addition, the high-wheel design would be appreciated on the deeply rutted, usually dirt country roads where these buyers lived. Lastly, there was the matter of price. The Ford Model T might have been a much better automobile than the Sears Buggy, but it also cost more. Introduced in October 1908, the Model T was priced at \$825 for a Runabout, or more than twice the price of a Sears Motor Buggy. For thrifty farmers, that was a powerful argument in favor

of the Sears. The Motor Buggy became a regular catalog offering in 1910, by which time it was referred to simply as the "Sears Automobile."

Sears might have been influenced by a competitor in the rural vehicle market. In early 1907 International Harvester introduced its first automobile. Like the later Sears, the IH Auto Buggy was a relatively simple high-wheeler powered by a two-cylinder gasoline engine. The Auto Buggy was tough, sturdy and well made. It could be ordered as a two-passenger vehicle with storage behind the seats, or it could be fitted with a rear seat for carrying extra passengers. It was tough and reliable, and, since International Harvester had dealers in just about every farm town in America, when service was needed it was easy to find.

But ultimately, neither one of these vehicles was entirely successful. Sales of the Sears Motor Buggy never quite matched its high expectations, and manufacture was discontinued in 1912.

International, on the other hand, soon found out that what farmers really wanted was a sturdy truck-type vehicle. The company eventually decided to leave the car business in favor of trucks. They're still around today, of course, though the firm is now called Navistar. ☞



More than  
100 years ago,  
Sears was  
a mighty  
corporation for  
whom all things  
were possible,  
even getting into  
the automobile  
business.



dollars and decides to buy every car on a used car lot, hires drivers and then the caravan drives around town crashing one car at a time taking out "road hogs." A great one if you like spotting obscure 1920s makes.

Dan Brizendine

Indianapolis, Indiana

## IN THE MOVIE, WHERE THE SPIES ARE

(1965), there's a surprising number of American cars in the plot, including a 1937 Cord and a '37 Packard. David Niven plays the "spy," and the British government gets him to go undercover with the promise of securing a "Cord LeBaron" as payment. *If I Had A Million* (1932): If you like old movies for car watching, this is a great one. The scene with W.C. Fields and the cars he buys is classic. It will make you sick, however, when the cars are destroyed. In *Bullitt* (1968), if you watch the cars parked along the curbs instead of Steve McQueen and his Mustang, you will get a great glimpse of San Francisco and the car culture there in the late 1960s. In the three minutes before the chase begins, you can see an early Falcon, a 1963 Galaxie station wagon, a '56 Chevrolet, a '57 Ford Country Sedan station wagon, a '56 Mercury and a '65 Bel Air station wagon, just to name a few.

Jeff Stumb

Chattanooga, Tennessee

## ANOTHER INTERESTING CAR IN

*It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* is the 1960 long-wheelbase Buick ambulance at the airport (along with a '55 De Soto sedan).

In *North by Northwest*, there's also a '58 Cadillac limousine, and the Chevrolet Handyman wagon was actually two different cars; at Mt. Rushmore it had a swing-up one-piece tailgate and in the forest, a two-piece regular tailgate. And there was the rare Mercedes 220S convertible they tried to send over the cliff.

Another movie favorite is *Good Neighbor Sam* with Jack Lemmon and Dorothy Provine and a wild drive through San Francisco in an ice blue 1964 Thunderbird convertible. *Sex and the Single Girl* has a terrific scene for car lovers on the freeway, with everything from a classic Bentley to a new Lincoln convertible. *What's Up, Doc?* has an epic chase through San Francisco with a VW, a '68 Dodge Coronet taxi, an early '50s Cadillac limousine, and a '69 Cadillac convertible. A lesser-known movie

is *The Running Man* from 1963, with Laurence Harvey and Lee Remick and a 1962 Continental convertible driven through Europe excessively fast.

L.R. Foster

Chico, California

## I COULDN'T AGREE WITH YOU MORE

about the joys of spotting old cars in vintage movies. These movies may not seem mainstream, but they aren't too obscure, either. *Detour* (1945): About an identity switch, but really stars a Lincoln convertible. There's also a swell used-car lot in Los Angeles. In *Raw Deal* (1948), an escaped convict makes his getaway in Plymouths and Dodges, plus a Willys Jeep station wagon. *Gun Crazy* (1949) is about lovers who rob banks. At one point, they use separate getaway cars: one drives a bathtub Packard and the other a Buick. *Tomorrow is Another Day* (1951), there's a scene when the lovers on the lam hide in a 1951 Mercury, on a car carrier loaded with '51 Mercs! In *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), it opens with Jaguar versus Cadillac. Later, private eye Mike Hammer cruises Los Angeles in an early Corvette.

Dennis Lloyd

Claremont, California

## I'D LIKE TO SUBMIT GOOD

*Neighbor Sam*, featuring the fabulous Jack Lemmon, as another great old flick with a few fun moments for car guys. One of my favorite scenes is the ad agency's unsuccessful attempts to film the "Let Hertz Put You in the Driver's Seat" commercial that was popular at the time.

Paul Davis

Grants Pass, Oregon

## ONE FAVORITE THAT COMES TO

mind is the 1958 Alfred Hitchcock movie *Vertigo*. Shot in the fall of 1957, the film has several minutes that's dialogue free where Scotty, the detective, drives his 1956 De Soto through the streets of San Francisco. There must be at least a hundred cars to spot on the streets; it's great viewing.

Jeff Nygren

Santa Barbara, California

## MON ONCLE (1958) BY JACQUES

Tati is a French movie filled with French cars, American cars, bikes, trucks, architecture and wild fashion. This is the perfect movie to show on a large screen in the background at a party. There is not a lot

of dialog, mostly music and images, and does not necessarily have to be watched from beginning to end. Very colorful 1950s modern French entertainment!

Barry Power

Santa Rosa, California

## I HAVE FOUND THAT THE OLD

B-horror movies are a great place to spot cars: *Attack of the 50ft. Woman* or *Them* come to mind. Another place would be crime dramas. Watch *Borderline* and see Fred McMurray ditch his Buick. You will scream "Nooooo!" I did.

Marvin Granger

Flint, Michigan

## THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR

article about old cars in old movies.

*It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* is also my favorite car movie. It's all about the cars, especially the 1963 Imperial Crown convertible! I also love the Doris Day and James Garner movie, *The Thrill of It All*, when Garner drives his 1958 Impala convertible into the swimming pool full of soap suds.

Bill Golden

Atlanta, Georgia

## THE DETECTIVE MOVIE NAKED CITY

is a typical murder mystery and was filmed in 1948 New York City; at least 60 percent are street scenes. The car most prevalent is a 1942 Studebaker Commander or President Land Cruiser used as a Detective car. The street scenes are unbelievable.

Leo Seicshnaydre

Gulfport, Mississippi

## IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD

*World*: I've seen the movie so many times, I associate the actors with the cars they drive in it. The Chrysler products seem to predominate, and I don't recall many of the newer Dodges, Plymouths and Chryslers in the film sacrificed for dramatic reasons, except, perhaps, for the slamming scenes involving Dick Shawn's '62 Dodge convertible. Always got a kick out of Ethel Merman's loud complaint early in the film about "We've got the Imperial, and we're running last?"

Karl Piepenburg

Oakford, Illinois

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## Five Breakthroughs That Made a Difference

We have a regular discussion on Hemmings Radio that you can stream by going to our website, [www.hemmings.com](http://www.hemmings.com) and using the “Publications” pulldown to access it. The broadcast is actually recorded here in Bennington at WBTN-AM, with our advertising account executive, David Nutter, serving as host and emcee. A week or so ago, Senior Editor Matt Litwin and I were in the studio talking with Dave about things that included whether stock or modified cars are best. And then Dave turned to me and asked me to name five advancements that really changed the auto industry.

Jeez. It's not as if I was blindsided by the question, because I'd actually written down a list of suggestions before we went on the air. But to some degree, as is inevitable with radio, you're always winging it. And I riffled back through my memory circuits to come up with a list of really industry-changing advances. If you want to hear the broadcast, and I hope you do, go to our website and you can listen to it as a streamed audio file. If you'd rather just hear my picks, read on. I can't guarantee that you'll agree with them, but I genuinely believe that these were major, far-reaching strides forward in the world of cars. Here they are, in no particular order:

**Detachable tires.** They were originally invented for bicycles. John Boyd Dunlop created the world's first workable pneumatic tires, a huge step forward from the hard-rubber boneshakers that existed previously. Then in 1891, Édouard Michelin came up with a practical, detachable tire, using a clincher-type rim and an inner tube. Before that, to “change” a tire required stripping it off the wheel, usually with a knife, and then trying to make a secure seal between the tire and the rim. Without this innovation, which was passed on to the auto industry, it's hard to see how cars could have ever been viable.

**High-strength steel.** In December 1876, a passenger train was crossing an iron Howe-truss bridge over the Ashtabula River in Ohio when the span abruptly gave way. Ninety-two people died when the train plunged into the riverbed. That was when engineers and planners first realized that cast iron wasn't always strong enough to use in that kind of severe service. The metals industry began searching for new alloys that could be blended with high-tensile steel for significantly increased

structural strength. One such alloy was created when the element vanadium was combined with steel, making a metal that was both lighter and stronger than steel itself. Henry Ford found it from a French source in 1905. Especially in their early days, cars would have been pounded to pieces if they were built from anything else.



**Rise of mass production.** Ford obviously gets a lot of credit here, even though it was Ransom Eli Olds who first moved cars along an assembly line simply using rope. Olds, Ford and others realized that speeding up the assembly process would chop production costs dramatically. More than anything else, mass production

put cars into the hands of regular people who could now afford them. The Model T became so cheap that it drove some potential competitors, including the early cyclecars, right into extinction.

**The Art and Colour staff of General Motors.** To refer to Ford once more, its early fame was built on durability and fire-sale pricing, but not much else. At GM, with Alfred Sloan in charge, things went differently. Sloan came up with an entirely new way of selling cars by changing their appearance on a regular basis, along with a price-positioned hierarchy of makes and models. Buyers who wanted to one-up their neighbors finally had a way to do so, just by buying an annually updated car, even if nothing mechanical had substantially changed. Retailing cars was never the same again. And the products of Harley Earl's designing vision were uniformly spectacular.

**Safety and emissions regulations:** All right, wait a second and hear me out on this. Back in the 1960s, when the federal government first started kicking these rules around, the buff books parroted the industry line that the regulations couldn't be met, they'd go out of business, and so forth. The truth is somewhat different. We love cars from the 1950s, but in most cases, occupant protection was ignored. If you got hurled into the metal dash, you usually died. And at the same time, Los Angeles and other places were made ghostly by choking smog. As the number of cars sharing the road grew, it was inevitable that they had to become cleaner and more crashworthy. The public, and the body politic, wouldn't accept less. And guess what? Today, the air's cleaner and passenger safety is a major selling point in the car business.

So that's my five cents' worth. What do you think? ☺



More than

anything else,

mass production

put cars into the

hands of regular

people who

could now afford

them.





## THE MOVIE *CRY DANGER* (1951) HAS

good shots of an old Nash's "cyclops" instrument cluster. In *The Big Steal* (1949), with Robert Mitchum, the main cars are a '51 Mercury coupe, with the Scotch-plaid upholstery; a '46 Buick and a '35 Buick convertible. In *Monolith Monsters* (1957) there's a 1956 De Soto Firelite convertible, and a '56 De Soto station wagon. *Monster on Campus* (1958) has a '59 De Soto convertible and a Plymouth, if my memory's correct. Another favorite is *Bachelor in Paradise* (1961) with Bob Hope and Lana Turner. Lots of good shots of Chrysler products, many convertibles. And *Wheeler Dealers* (1963) with James Garner and Lee Remick features Chrysler cars again. There are some good scenes with them travelling in an Imperial convertible.

Robert Tugwell  
Belton, South Carolina

## I LOVE OLD MOVIES AND OLD CARS,

but being a fan of 1941 Buicks and Film Noir, almost any 1940s Warner Brothers movie is a feast for the eyes. A 1941 Roadmaster convertible coupe appears in *George Washington Slept Here*, *In This Our Life* and *Conflict*, to name just a few. I'd also give a shout out to *The File on Thelma Jordon* (1949), in which Barbara Stanwyck drives a postwar Chrysler Town and Country four-door sedan.

Don Van Deusen  
Troy, New York

## IN THE LATE '50S, A B-FLICK CALLED

*Guns Don't Argue* was so bad, they didn't even list it in the movie guides. It starts out with the title: "Chicago, 1933..." and then a 1948 Packard roars by with tommy guns shooting out the windows. And then what about the movies with a car chase on dirt roads with the tires squealing, and every time a car goes over a cliff, it explodes in a tremendous ball of flames? Sometimes it's not the same car! Then there's the times when a movie is set in the 1950s, and a '63 Chevy goes by. And from inside a diner you'll see the same car drive by many, many times. Criticize movies like this, and it'll drive your spouse crazy!

Dave Crocker  
Mashpee, Massachusetts

## NO CAR FILM CAN RIVAL THE

original 1969 version of *The Italian Job*, in which Michael Caine and his lovable band of Cockney rogues engineer the

biggest traffic jam in Turin's history to hijack a Fiat company bullion shipment. L'Équipe Rémy Julienne is responsible for the astounding stunt work once the gold is moved to three Mini Coopers that are driven across Turin's roof tops and through its sewers to an equally-wild rolling rendezvous with a seatless Bedford VAL tour bus during the final escape across the Alps to Switzerland.

All this bookends an opening reel where a Lamborghini Miura is thrown over a mountainside after colliding with a bulldozer the Turin Mafia purposely left in a tunnel, plus intermediate delights that include the Aston Martin DB4 Drophead driven by Michael Caine, and the sweet-sounding Ferrari-powered Fiat Dino Coupe that carries his chief Italian antagonist. It helped a lot that, growing up, I had suitable die-cast cars from Corgi, Dinky and Italy's Politoys to recreate the robbery and chase scenes in scale!

Gregg Merksamer  
Warwick, New York

## THE ONLY TWO MOVIES THAT I'M

aware of in which John Wayne drives a car was *In Harms Way* (1965), where he drives a '41 Plymouth, and then a 1940 La Salle convertible coupe in *A Man Betrayed* (1940).

Tom Boehm  
New Albany, Indiana

## SUDDEN FEAR WITH JOAN

Crawford and Jack Palance (1951) debuts the spectacular 1951 Packards. Another great one is the original 1957 Gregory Peck and Robert Mitchum movie, *Cape Fear*, where the real stars are the new Virgil Exner Mopars. And, of course, the best of the best is *Christine*, although watching them destroy all those beautiful Belvederes is painful to see.

Jerry Ramsdale  
Dallas, Texas

## I WAS RECENTLY MADE AWARE OF A

movie that starred a young Kirk Douglass, titled *Ace In The Hole*. It was filmed in the desert of New Mexico in about 1950. There were many scenes that involved up to 100 old cars coming and going that range from '50s models down to the '30s.

Rex Grothusen  
Scott City, Kansas

## BULLITT, AND NOT JUST FOR THE

Mustang and Charger. There were Buicks

and Cadillacs—including an ambulance, Fiats, BMWs, a Porsche, VWs and lots of Fords. There's even my longtime friend Joe Faccenda, standing outside his dad's garage watching the filming.

John Motroni  
San Francisco, California

## MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE IS MARLENE

Dietrich's 1935 Auburn 851 in the 1936 film, *Desire*. It's an entertaining movie as well.

John Cantu  
Huntsville, Texas

## HUMPHREY BOGART DROVE A 1938

Plymouth coupe in two movies, perhaps more. One was *High Sierra*, and in *The Big Sleep* there is a close-up of Bogie reaching under the dash for a revolver. Accurately shown, it is, sure enough, a 1938 Plymouth instrument panel.

Patrick Tobin  
Nevada City, California

## IN IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD

*World* was Don Knotts ever going to take that 1956 Ford Sunliner out of Park? One could argue it was in second gear, but I do not think the throw on the column shift would be that high!

Frank Hughes  
Minden, Nevada

## ANOTHER EXCITING CATEGORY IS

the modern period movie. These are new movies set in past decades using collector cars. Filming these is a stimulating and fun activity for members of the collector-car community to show off their cars, meet new people (sometimes movie stars) and get paid for doing it. Movie companies advertise for extras, including period cars and their drivers before coming to town to start filming. If you apply and are accepted, you will get a period-correct haircut and wardrobe, then you begin driving as directed.

In 2014, I participated with my 1954 Buick in the filming of three movies set in the 1950s and '60s in my home city of Cincinnati (it supposedly still looks like New York of that time period). Watch for these movies set in the past to open soon at a theater near you: *Carol*, *Miles Ahead*, and *The Blunderer*.

Steve Applegate  
Cleveland, Ohio



## Greatest Generation of Classic Cars—and People

One of the benefits of being involved in the classic car hobby for many years was the opportunity to meet some genuinely interesting people. While I was fortunate enough to meet famous personalities such as Gordon Buehrig, Ray Dietrich and Peter DePaolo, it was sometimes the not-so-famous individuals who proved to be the most interesting.

When I moved to Massillon, Ohio, more than 35 years ago, I had to find not only a new physician and dentist but—equally important!—competent mechanics to help me keep my vintage cars on the road.

Within a few months of landing in my newly adopted city, the generator on my 1933 Packard Super 8 needed repairs. I was referred to Priest Auto-Electric, operated by Frank Moesle.

Frank had worked there continuously since 1937, with the exception of his World War II service from 1942 to 1945. They rebuilt carburetors, starters, generators and magnetos. Originally, the company had several men on the road who collected starters, generators, carburetors and magnetos from area garages. Frank and Priest rebuilt them, and they were delivered to the garages. After getting to know Frank, I had no doubt that he could repair or rebuild anything.

He served in the U.S. Army as a Tech 3, the equivalent of a staff sergeant, keeping Third Armor vehicles running. His unit landed on the Normandy beaches shortly after the main invasion and proceeded through France into Germany. In Germany, they liberated the horrific Nordhausen concentration camp.

In the 1950s, Frank bought his first Classic car—a 1932 Auburn. Eventually, he sold it and bought a 1932 Franklin coupe, then a 1923 Cadillac phaeton. Frank never kept more than two or three cars at a time. He also owned a 1914 Monroe, a Model T and a Model A. At the age of 89, he bought a beautiful 1931 Lincoln LeBaron convertible coupe in Dayton, Ohio.

I'd connected Frank with the seller and learned several weeks later that Frank had driven to Dayton with his 90-year-old wife and grandson, intending to drive the Lincoln home. The seller offered to deliver it at no charge and Frank wisely accepted.

Frank eventually got behind the wheel of the Lincoln and drove it on several local car tours,

including one 90-mile tour.

From 1980 onward, Frank worked on the components of every Classic car I owned: Chrysler Imperial Airflow, Locomobile 48, Cord 810 and all my Lincolns—1922, '30, '31 and '37 models. As is often the case with Classic cars, there were interesting twists with each one.

Perhaps the most memorable involved the Chrysler Imperial Airflow.

I bought it with its original carburetor in the trunk and a substitute Buick carburetor in its place—with no choke linkage. The engine ran poorly. I visited Frank and told him the previous owner described the Chrysler carburetor as “a piece of crap.” Frank surprised me by asking me to leave the car in one of his garage stalls. He was what I call a “bench mechanic” and did not work on individual's cars. Components were brought to him, thus my surprise.

A few days later, he called and asked me to come to his shop. “Go start your car,” he said, which I did. It started immediately and idled smoothly. “Not bad for a piece of crap, eh?” said Frank. His rebuild had included fabricating all of the choke linkage.

Perhaps the most memorable car Frank worked on was a 1928 Minerva with a Saoutchik body owned by Massillon's Gen. Jacob Coxey, a labor rights advocate who led a protest march on Washington in 1894.

Frank attended the annual AACA Fall Meet in Hershey for years, eventually with his grandson, Brian. During those years, he used to dazzle us with his ability to identify vintage car parts. “Don't know what it is? Ask Frank.” But he stopped going a few years ago when the walking became too much.

He was 60 years old when I met him in 1980. He closed his business in 1995, but moved several key pieces of equipment and many parts to his home basement, so he could continue to repair and rebuild components for friends. A few weeks ago, at age 95, he rebuilt the starters on both of my 1931 Lincolns.

Over the years, we've gone out for breakfast. I tell Frank about what's happening in my world of Classic cars and Frank reminisces about cars and people. It's never boring.

When newscaster Tom Brokaw described our World War II veterans as “the greatest generation” I know he had men like Frank Moesle in mind. ☺



“

Over the years,

we've gone out

for breakfast.

I tell Frank

about what's

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world of Classic

cars and Frank

reminisces about

cars and people.

It's never boring.

”



# The Art and Colour of GM

*Starting in 1927, General Motors' styling department revolutionized the art of mass-produced automobiles*

BY MARK J. McCOURT • IMAGES COURTESY GENERAL MOTORS 2015, AND FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

"I think that the future of General Motors will be measured by the attractiveness that we put in the bodies from the standpoint of luxury of appointment, the degree to which they please the eye, both in contour and in color scheme, also the degree to which we are able to make them different from competition."

— Alfred P. Sloan Jr., in a letter to Fisher Body Corporation president William A. Fisher, September 1927





From the earliest days of automobiles, the wealthiest buyers could always choose to have their cars built to their individual taste. Volume-produced cars, especially in the low-price field, were designed for ease of manufacture, rather than to please the eye. A shift would happen in the 1920s, though, as automotive engineering had progressed to the point that cars were largely reliable and user friendly for all drivers, and closed models were becoming more popular than the open-top versions that had been the standard since the days of horse and buggy. Henry Ford's Model T had made motoring accessible to everyone, but its stripped-to-basics persona was wearing thin on an increasingly sophisticated and well-to-do motoring public. General Motors executives had a new idea, and with the founding of the "Art and Colour Section" in 1927, they were ready to give people what they wanted, and to foster a new demand for style.

While independent coachbuilders were well established as the arbiters of car design and maintained their own talented design staffs, a few medium- and high-priced automakers formed internal custom-body design departments in the second decade of the twentieth century. As authors and



Visionary General Motors president Alfred P. Sloan Jr. felt that an automobile's aesthetic appeal could be a selling tool.

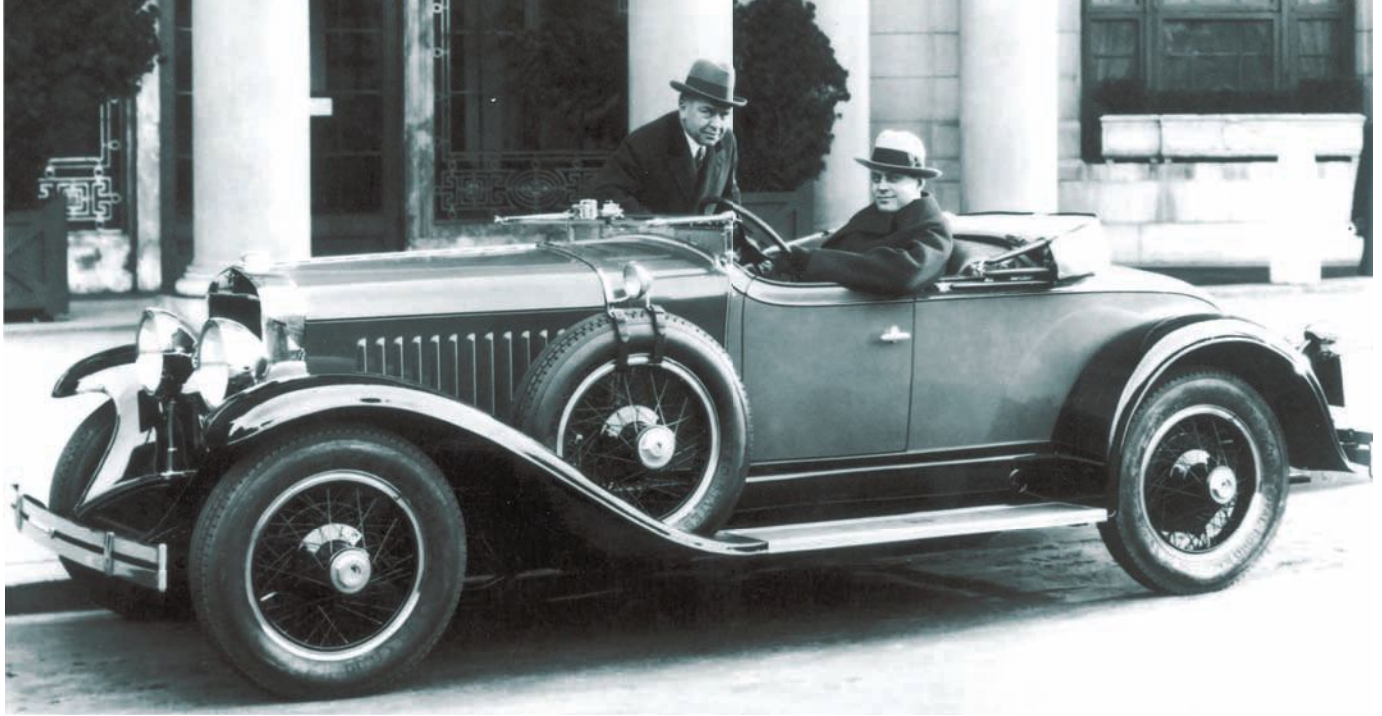


Stylists sculpt the surfaces of a full-scale clay model of the beautiful, advanced 1933 Cadillac V-16 Aerodynamic Coupe, which would eventually see limited production.



California designer Harley Earl was only 33 when he moved to Detroit to lead GM's unprecedented Art and Colour Section.



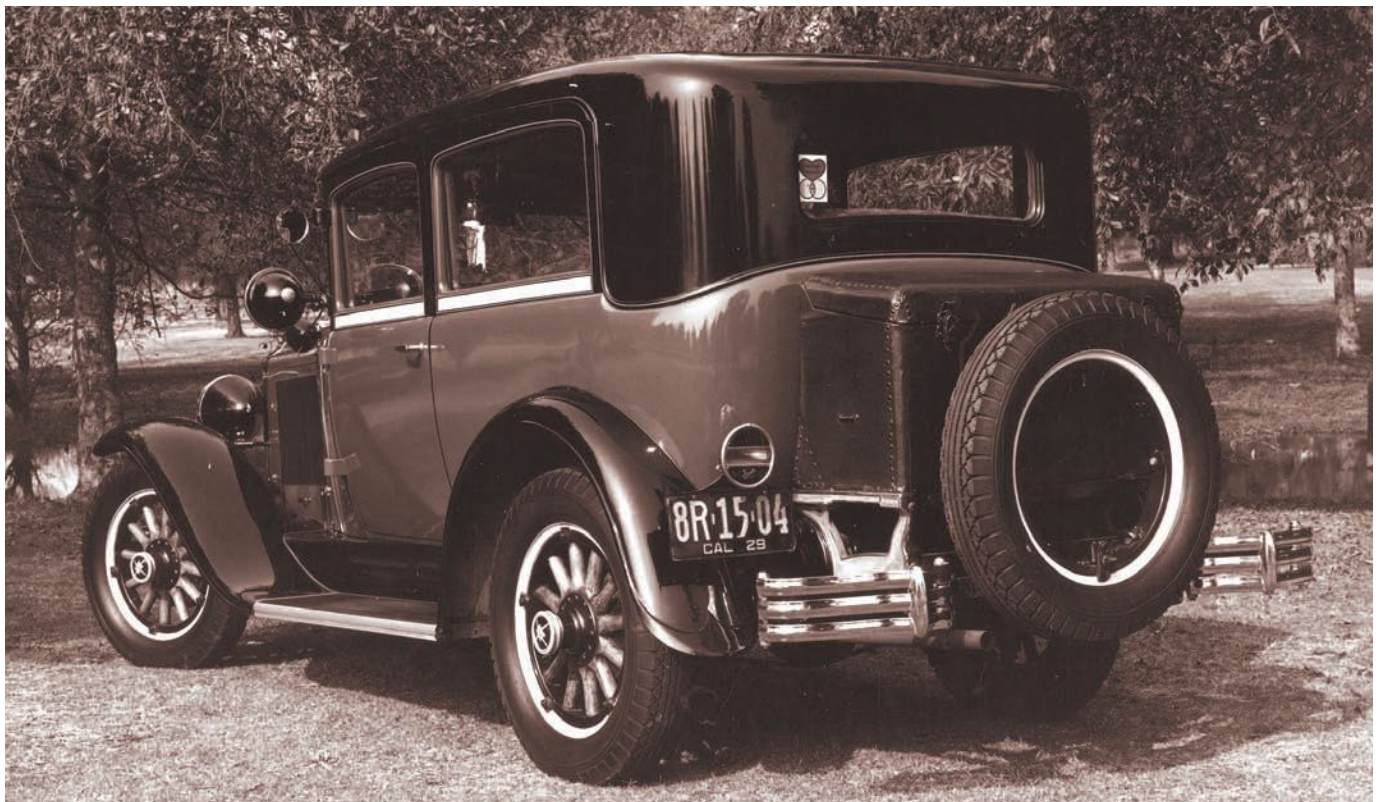


Cadillac's new companion car line, the 1927 La Salle, was styled by Harley Earl (driver's seat, shown with Cadillac president Larry Fisher) to resemble the ultra-expensive Hispano-Suiza H6B. La Salles used integrated moldings and paint colors to great effect.

historians Michael Lamm and Dave Holls discuss in their seminal book, *A Century of Automotive Style*, Locomobile hired J. Frank de Causse, an American designer who had been working for Carrosserie Kellner Frères in Paris, to run its custom body department in 1914, the same year that Frenchman Leon Rubay would do the same for the automotive division of White. And Studebaker founded its own custom body division two years later, under J. H. Bourgon. Indeed, within a decade, many automakers had small styling staffs on

their payrolls.

Alfred P. Sloan Jr. (Personality Profile, HCC #124) became president and CEO of General Motors in 1923, and he was well aware that a car's pleasing appearance could be a strong selling tool. At that time, outside of the most expensive and fashion-conscious Fleetwood-bodied customs, the ultimate appearance of GM automobiles was dictated by the engineers that designed the cars' various systems and made them ready for mass production. Sloan knew the gas-fueled automobile



Upon its introduction, the 1929 Buick was derided for its unorthodox body. The noticeable outward curve below the beltline molding made the car look puffy, something Earl claimed happened at the hands of the production engineers after the car left the studio.





**For 1932, the Art and Colour Section purposely styled the Chevrolet line to resemble the Cadillac. Grille shape and texture, hood vents, fenders and other key elements were similar, leading to the popular-priced Chevrolet being fondly called the “Baby Cadillac.”**

was a relatively mature product, so pricing, prestige, appointments and appearance—including a choice of paint colors—would be the newest marketing tools.

As the nation’s center of business, New York had long influenced Detroit, but it would be the West Coast—specifically a fabled young designer from Hollywood, California—that would inspire a new direction for this corporation, and in turn, the entire auto industry. Harley Earl (Automotive Pioneers, *HCC* #111) had attracted the GM brass’s attention with the stylish, colorful custom bodies he was designing for use on Cadillac and other domestic and imported car chassis at the behest of the Hollywood glitterati, and which were garnering lots of comments at the auto salons of the day.

Fred Fisher, cofounder of the Fisher Body Corporation, befriended Earl in the early 1920s and introduced him to his brother Larry Fisher, who would become president of the Cadillac Motor Car division in 1925. That December, Larry Fisher approached Earl with an assignment to create a sportier, more youthful companion car for Cadillac, something both

Cadillac and Fisher Body designers were struggling to achieve. The 33-year-old Californian spent the first three months of 1926 working as an independent design consultant in Detroit, leading the creation of what would become the 1927 La Salle. His inspiration was the exclusive, expensive Hispano-Suiza H6B, and the custom-look coupe, four-door sedan, rumble seat roadster and touring car design variants he created were a hit. The La Salle would be introduced to great acclaim at the Boston Auto Show in March 1927, and would represent the first regular production car to be fully “styled,” in the modern sense.

Harley Earl would be called back to General Motors in the summer of 1926, and it’s believed that he worked with talented Fleetwood staff designer Jules Agramonte on the 1928 Cadillac’s styling, as well as custom designs for the Fleetwood catalog. Earl was already in Detroit when, in June 1927, Alfred Sloan established the GM Art and Colour Section and placed the young man at the helm. In his 1963 memoir, *My Years with General Motors*, Sloan wrote, “Fifty persons would make up the department, ten of them designers, and the rest





Earl separated his stylists from different GM divisions to encourage the development of unique brand identities. New hires were often assigned tasks like focusing on drafting individual items like hubcaps, instrument panels, radiator grilles and fender trim.

shopworkers and clerical and administrative assistants... Mr. Earl's duties were to direct general production body design and to conduct research-and-development programs in special car designs. The section was made a part of the corporation's general staff organization, even though it received its funds through the Fisher Body Division."

Many senior GM engineering and production executives didn't react favorably to Harley Earl and this department that

was taking design authority out of their hands. Indeed, the Art and Colour Section was sometimes derogatively called "the beauty parlor!" But this new creation had the full backing of the president's office—something Earl often used to his advantage—and it had the help of Howard O'Leary, Earl's new administrative assistant and a well regarded Fisher Body employee who broke through barriers at the car divisions.

The first car line to reach production that represented the full work of Art and Colour was the instantly controversial 1929 "Silver Anniversary" Buick. After the runaway success of the original La Salle, there were big expectations for the restyled Buick. This would be one of the first at GM to be designed using a full-sized clay model, a more advanced process than the traditional plaster over wood, and one that Earl had used to great advantage with his custom bodies in California. The production model featured a 1¼-inch wide bulge below the beltline that the public deemed less-than-attractive.

Of this, Earl himself later said: "Unfortunately the factory, for operational reasons, pulled the side panels in at the bottom more than the design called for. In addition, five inches were added in vertical height, with the result that the arc I had plotted was pulled out of shape in two directions, the highlight line was unpleasantly located, and the effect was bulgy... Of course, I roared like a Ventura sea lion, but it was too late to keep car buyers from having a



P.A. Meyer was the artist behind this proposal rendering of a mid-1930s, Streamline Moderne-influenced taxi cab for the General Motors Truck Company of Pontiac, Michigan. Notice the cab wore no specific GM division branding.

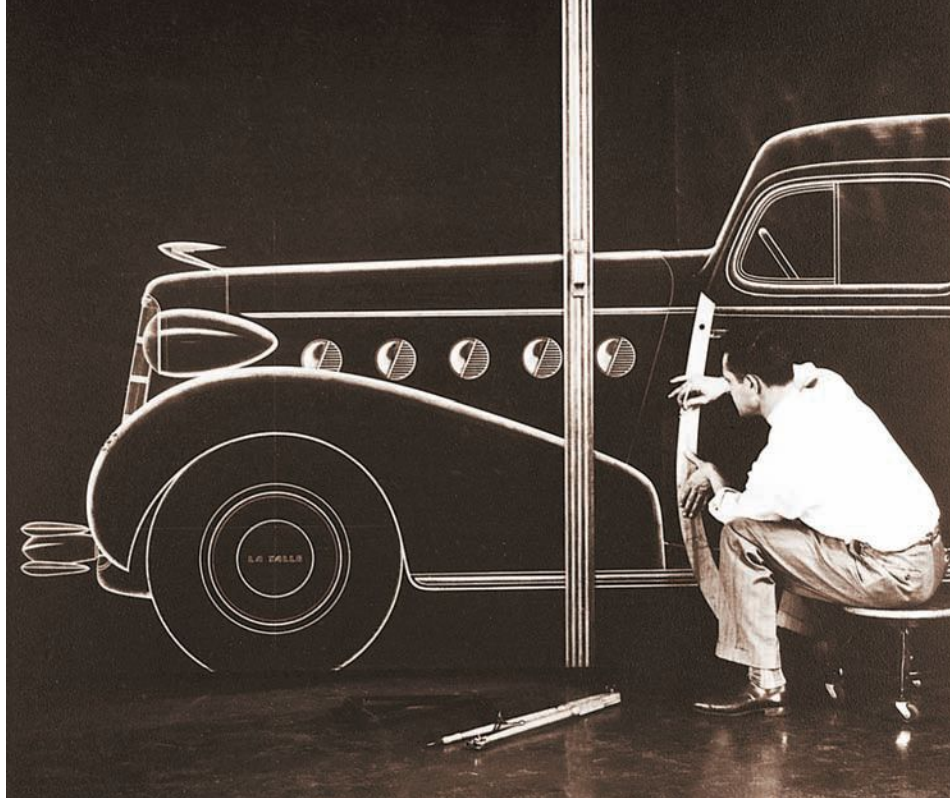


lot of fun naming the poor *enceinte* ['pregnant,' in French] Buick." Although Buick sold 25,000 fewer cars in 1929, it maintained its sixth place industry sales ranking from 1928, and its sleeker 1930 models were considered much improved.

The Art and Colour Section ("A&C") proved itself to be more than just window dressing when, in 1931, engineer Vincent Kaptur Sr. made a discovery that would ultimately save GM countless sums. Kaptur worked under Earl as the body development supervisor and liaison with Fisher, and he determined that the standard bodies for Chevrolet, Pontiac and the smallest Oldsmobile had virtually identical dimensions, with the same being true of the large Oldsmobile, the standard Buick and smallest Cadillac.

Lamm and Holls wrote, "Harley Earl showed Kaptur's conclusions to Fisher Body and suggested that all GM cars share four basic body shells. He designated these A-B-C-D. The A-body would be used for the Chevrolet, standard Pontiac and small Oldsmobile. The large Pontiac, mid-sized Oldsmobile and small Buick would use the B shell. The C-body accommodated the big Oldsmobile, big Buick, La Salle and small Cadillac. And all Cadillac and Buick limousines used the D-body. The A-B-C-D body system became one of A&C's great early contributions to General Motors' profitability, and the corporation continues to use an expanded version of the idea today, as do all other U.S. automakers." When this system was put in place, it became the job of Art and Colour to differentiate those standard bodies for each marque using unique grilles, fenders, moldings and more.

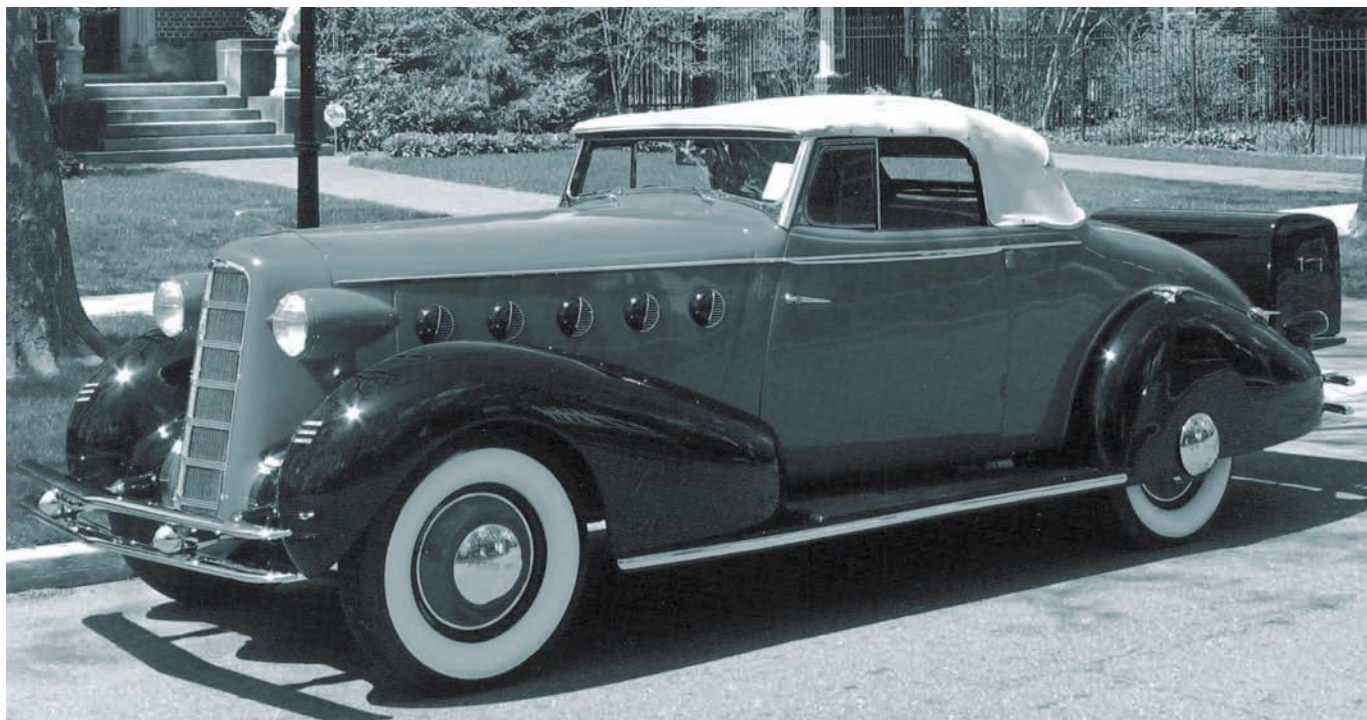
By 1932, Earl's expanding team had moved from its original office on the 10th floor of the GM building to a larger open space on the third floor, which he'd divided into



The 1934 La Salle design is projected in actual size on a blackboard to check chassis clearance, passenger accommodations, ease of entry and more.

division sections with seven-foot-tall, movable blackboards. That year, he was able to bring to life Alfred Sloan's concept of offering cars in every price range that truly showed a trickle-down effect of prestige. Much like Ford had done when the 1928 Model A wore Lincoln Model L cues, the 1932 Chevrolet line was styled to directly recall the 1932 Cadillac line. It borrowed elements like the outline and texture of the grille, hood louver doors and fender shape, and this family resemblance proved beneficial to Chevrolet sales.

RM SOTHEBY'S



Depression-damped sales figures cast La Salle in jeopardy for 1934—its Marquette and Viking counterparts having already been dropped—but the talented Jules Agramonte created a truly iconic knockout design that wowed GM executives and saved the marque.





Detailed quarter-scale clay models were used to ensure correct proportions between body elements, and even tested for streamlining in a wind tunnel.

The “A Century of Progress” 1933 Chicago World’s Fair gave General Motors the opportunity to show the buying public its present and future. In the GM building, Chevrolet had a running assembly line that actually built cars, while Cadillac displayed

an incredible 16-cylinder coupe that would represent the automaker’s first concept vehicle and a new design direction. That visually (if not practically) streamlined black beauty was called the Aerodynamic Coupe, and it incorporated fresh features that would soon be commonplace like aircraft landing gear-style pontoon fenders, an integrated fastback trunk with hidden spare wheel, chrome-framed windows, draft-less ventilation and an all-steel Turret Top roof, the latter forecasting a company-wide 1935 innovation.

With the exception of the successful Pontiac, GM executives weren’t happy with how the companion marques were doing, and by 1934, Buick’s Marquette and Oldsmobile’s Viking had been canceled, as had Pontiac’s parent firm, Oakland. There was talk of folding La Salle, which upset its original designer. The solution—which would become one of the most iconic designs of the Streamline Moderne era—came from Earl’s esteemed stylist Jules Agramonte, who created the 1934 La Salle’s “face,” including the tall, slim grille that paid tribute to the British land speed racers then contesting on U.K. beaches, while its unmistakable round hood vents came from the pen of John Morgan. A full-sized model blew the GM executives out of the water when they were presented with the 1934 Art and Colour styling proposals.

The future of General Motors styling walked through the door in December 1935, when the 23-year-old William “Bill” Mitchell joined the Art and Colour Section; in a year’s time, he would be named head of Cadillac design, and would



The Art and Colour Section stylists sometimes embellished their designs with detailed figures and backgrounds to help sell them to Earl and other executives, as this P. Zampol rendering of a sleek, full-sized panel truck, dated August 14, 1936, shows.





The 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair "A Century of Progress" inspired research V.P. Charles Kettering to create GM's "Parade of Progress." This self-contained mobile technology show traveled in eight GM Streamliner buses; all were lost to WWII scrap drives.

eventually succeed Harley Earl himself. Another important happening that took place in 1936 was the creation of GM's "Parade of Progress," a traveling show of General Motors technology and future-focused research. Conceived by GM vice president of research Charles Kettering—who'd been inspired by the Chicago Century of Progress—it was a self-contained show of eight GM Streamliner buses that drove from town to town, setting up a tent and animated exhibits for the public's education and enjoyment.

Nineteen thirty-seven was another important year for the Art and Colour Section, as Bill Mitchell was designing the car that would become the hugely influential 1938 Cadillac 60 Special, and Earl himself was directing the design of the Buick Y-Job, another innovative experimental car (considered by many the first corporate "concept" vehicle) that would be the department head's personal transportation for more than a decade. And it was this year that Art and Colour was renamed the General Motors Styling Section, a title change that happened concurrently with the department's physical move to the top four floors of the GM Research Annex B building, where the design teams for each GM division—Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, Cadillac, Truck and Coach, plus advanced design—finally got separate, private studios.

By its sheer size and prominence and the volume of automotive sales its products represented, General Motors Styling would continue to exert an unmistakable influence on the American automotive industry. Alfred Sloan—himself made chairman of the board in 1937—would appoint Harley Earl a vice president of the corporation in September 1940, later writing, "He was the first stylist to be given such a position, and indeed, I believe, the first designer in any major industry to become a

vice president." Together, the genius vision and incredible leadership that Sloan and Earl put forth in the decade of the Art and Colour Section changed the automotive world forever. 🚗



Future GM Styling head William "Bill" Mitchell joined Art and Colour in 1936; his first major project was the influential 1938 Cadillac 60 Special.



With support from Buick president Harlow Curtice, Earl created his own company car in the 1938 Y-Job, an experimental model with advanced features.



driveable **dream**

# One Hit Wagon

*Chevrolet's 1958 Yeoman station wagon was built to last, as this original-paint example confirms*



BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

**D**ating back to medieval times, yeomen served as assistants in the houses of noblemen, as farmers or, later, in the military. Over the ensuing centuries, the term “yeoman’s work” has come to describe any type of valuable, difficult labor.





Chevrolet aptly named its entry-level 1958 station wagon series Yeoman, knowing that it was built to be a rugged, no-frills workhorse for farmers, outdoorsmen and tradesmen. Playing off the U.S. Navy's rank of yeoman (an enlisted person whose main duties are clerical), the copy in the dealer brochure boasted, "You can swab this deck!" Thanks to its vinyl upholstery, rubber floor mat and linoleum platform in the cargo area, Chevrolet said, its interior was completely washable with water and a sponge. As you may imagine, its appearance was somewhat austere. Though the multi-toning added some flash, the absence of door armrests still reminded the owner of its entry-level standing in Chevrolet's model lines. This six-passenger station wagon was available as a two-door at \$2,520 or four-door at \$2,574. The 1100 series was equipped with the straight-six-cylinder engine and the 1200 series the 283-cu.in. V-8.

Completely revamped for the 1958 model year, the lower, longer, wider Chevrolet featured quad headlamps, a larger panoramic windshield and "sculptured" body styling. The anodized aluminum grille and the bumper were also new. A "V" on the hood and tailgate denoted a V-8 under the hood.

By the late 1950s, a handy aid in quickly identifying ascending sticker prices was to simply compare the amount of bright body trim from model to model, since it seemed that they were nearly directly proportional. And Chevrolet's station wagons were no different, with their side trim treatment additions the most easily noticed.

Being the entry-level wagon series, the Yeoman escaped the designer's drawing board with a tastefully modest side spear (with a small addition near the front that extended down to the front wheel-well) that dipped just before the rear wheel well and split the upper and

lower sections of the flanks, providing the division between the colors in the available two-tone paint schemes. Above where the trim turned down was a companion piece to complement its shape, so as to highlight an upper character line of the "gullwing" rear quarter panel. Four simulated vents were featured near the leading edge of the front fenders on all the wagons.

The mid-line Brookwood added bright trim on the drip rails and a thin section just under the main spear that mimicked it on the front fender and door. This thinner piece extended back and flowed into the trim turndown.

Having a unique wider spear as compared to the lower two models, the top-of-the-line Nomad's (now a four-door) had no turndown and sported an

additional "S" molding—a narrow section that ran diagonally up the rear quarter panel to intersect with the upper quarter trim. Bright A-pillar, belt reveal and roof reveal moldings were added, as was a set of four bright metal trim pieces to the lower rear quarter wind-split that flowed to the bumper. Even the tailgate received vertical bright trim strips. An aluminum insert adorned the spear when two-tone paint was specified for the Nomad or Brookwood. Chrome fender-top



**The front seat bottom of the Gunmetal and silver interior was reupholstered, but the gauges, radio and remainder of the cabin are all original.**







ornaments were standard on the Nomad, but optional on the Yeoman. Station wagons employed one taillamp per side, but other models got two, and the Impala sport coupe and convertible had three.

Changes were more than just skin deep, however. This body by Fisher was designed for a lower look without sacrificing space inside and was reinforced in the rocker panel areas among others. A new "Safety Girder" X-frame was employed that was promised to provide a 30 percent increase in torsional stiffness. Coil springs were employed to control the rear, replacing the previous years' leaf springs, and the Level-Air suspension was optional.

The Yeoman was only available for one model year, as was the all-new 1958 body, and it just so happened to coincide with General Motors' 50th anniversary. Though Chevrolet production numbers don't break down far enough to determine specifically how many Yeoman station wagons were built, it's a pretty good bet that these workman wagons quietly contributed—in the wake of the introduction of the striking and highly coveted new Impala coupe and convertible—to Chevrolet's regaining of the number 1 sales position from Ford.

Bob Daschofsky of Walla Walla, Washington, purchased this Silver Blue over Snowcrest White example of Chevrolet's workaday wagon in June of 2005, from the estate of his neighbor, Johnny Schneidmiller, but he had known of the Yeoman's existence for the 15 years that he had lived next door.

Bob and his wife, Marcia, had actually cared for their elderly friend for 10 years. Schneidmiller had owned Johnny's Market in Walla Walla, and originally bought the 1200 series, four-door, six-passenger Yeoman wagon brand new to deliver groceries. Yes, it was a "grocery getter" in the most literal sense. It also had no optional power steering or brakes, but it did have an extra-cost automatic transmission and pushbutton AM radio.

After making deliveries for decades, it was retired from its yeoman's duty,

stored in the garage and driven by Schneidmiller just a few times per year in good weather—on many occasions, it was to the golf course to play a round with friends. Bob has since found three perfectly round dents in the body that he surmised came from errant golf balls.

After buying the car and promising Schneidmiller's son he would not turn it into a hot rod, Bob soon learned that Johnny had kept meticulous maintenance records on the wagon since day one, and among those receipts, happily, none were for major overhauls or repairs. It had, in



A linoleum covering made for easy cleanup of the cargo area floor. The blue dot in each tail lamp and the chrome headlamp covers are not stock but period-correct custom add-ons.





The repainted original 283-cu.in. V-8 engine has yet to require a rebuild; with its two-barrel carburetor, it produces 185hp.



fact, remained a reliable original station wagon, albeit with an oxidized paint finish and some minor rust, but it was still in solid driver condition.

Bob's intent was to preserve what he could, restore what required it and enjoy the Yeoman on the road and participate in cars shows. "I spent four days buffing out the paint and chrome to remove the oxidation," he recalls. "Once finished, I realized that for their age, both had held up quite well, so I didn't feel that it was necessary to have the car repainted."

Equipped with the 185hp 283-cu.in. V-8 that features a Rochester two-barrel carburetor, hydraulic-lifter cam, 1.72/1.50-inch valves, 1.5:1-ratio rockers, cast alloy aluminum pistons, drop-forged steel connecting rods a forged-steel crankshaft and an 8.5:1 compression ratio, the engine only required a tune-up and the replacement of a broken valve spring since Bob purchased the car.

The optional two-speed Powerglide automatic transmission finally warranted a rebuild three years ago, however. The coil spring suspension and four-wheel drum brakes still perform satisfactorily with regular maintenance.

According to Bob, the largest hurdle thus far has been finding 1958 station-wagon-specific parts. He laments, "Since most 1958 wagons were scrapped, parts are difficult to find, and reproductions cover the front of the car, as it's the same as the more popular two-door coupe models, but not the back of a wagon. No one makes a gas tank for it." The 17-gallon fuel tank was specific to the

station wagon, and was formed to wrap around the spare tire. Other models were equipped with a differently-shaped 20-gallon tank.

Fortunately, he was able to locate reproduction lower-quarter patch panels at Auto City Classic in Isanti, Minnesota, which specializes in 1958 Chevrolet parts. Bob had a local body shop weld them in on both sides and then blend the new paint into the existing finish. He jokes, "Now I tell people the paint is 98 percent original." Bob also added the full wheel covers, fender vent trim and amber parking lamps.

Having just turned 99,000 miles, the Yeoman still operates as designed and engineered. Even its optional AM radio still works. "Who'd have thought 58 years after it was installed you could still listen to the Mariners games on it?" Bob says. Next on the to-do list is some carburetor work and the installation of a set of B.F. Goodrich 8.00 x 14 tires with 2.25-inch-wide whitewalls.

"If you want to preserve a piece of American history, then I feel that this is the kind of car to preserve," he says. "Not many are left for the public to see and enjoy." And enjoy it Bob does, putting about 2,000 miles per year on the Yeoman, participating in car shows and weekend car club gatherings with the Walla Walla Cruisers.

No longer performing Yeoman's duty, this durable Chevrolet station wagon is now relishing retirement and the accolades it receives at local events—nearly six decades after it first hauled groceries. 🐾

“If you want to  
preserve a piece of  
American history, then I  
feel that this is the kind of  
car to preserve...”







Seeing the USA in a 1958 Ford!  
Airstream owners tend to do  
more traveling than owners of  
other trailer brands.

# Airstream Trailers

## *The Formative Years of America's Aluminum Icon*

BY PATRICK FOSTER • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER ARCHIVES

In the travel trailer industry, one company stands above the rest, famous for its timeless styling: Airstream. It's also the oldest brand in the business.

Airstream came about because of one man's determination to bring a new idea to market. His name was Wally Byam. Born on the 4th of July, 1896, in Oregon, Byam was 12 when his uncle decided he was old enough to shepherd a flock of sheep during the summer at a pastureland high up in the mountains. He set the boy up with a small two-wheeled, canvas-topped wagon pulled by a donkey and outfitted with blankets, bed mat, cook stove and food. Byam spent

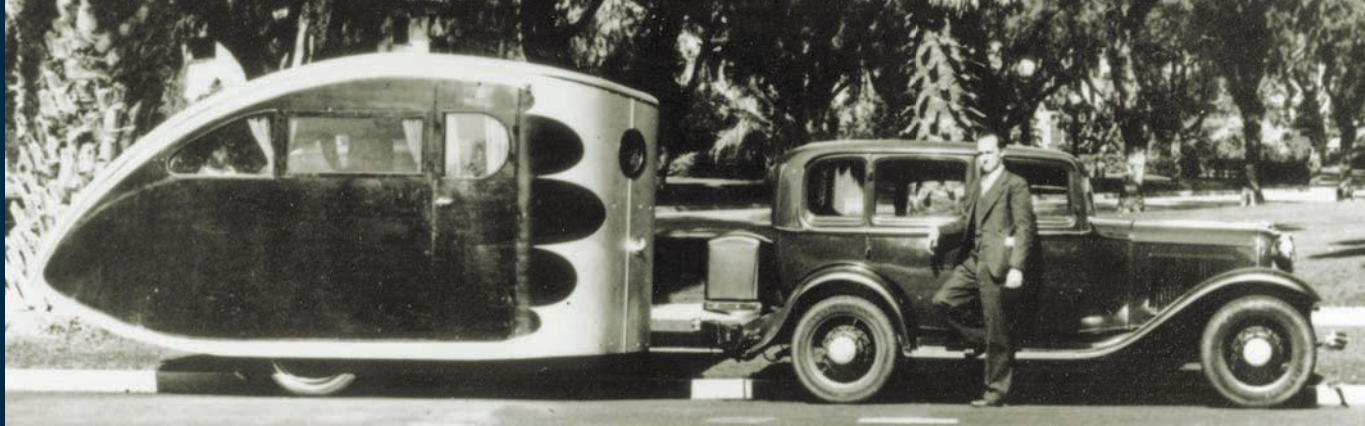
the entire summer working alone, sunup to sundown. At night he would let down the wagon's tailgate to provide room for sleeping. The experience was transformative; it led him toward a life and career in trailering.

In 1921, Byam graduated from Stanford University with a bachelor's degree in history. His original plan was to stay on and earn a degree in law, but his restless, foot-loose nature got the best of him. He wanted nothing more, he said, than "to get out of that place." He decided to move to Hollywood and become a famous motion picture director. When that idea didn't work out, he

started his own business publishing magazines about Hollywood, the radio business, and handyman how-to topics. In the meantime, Byam met a beautiful young woman named Marion James.

Byam loved camping and took his new wife on several trips using a tent, but Marion found sleeping on the ground not to her liking; it wasn't all that romantic, and it certainly wasn't comfortable. To appease his wife, Byam built a wooden platform on a used Ford Model T chassis, on which he erected a tent each time they stopped for the night. But erecting the tent every night was a pain, so Byam next hit on the idea of building a small room on the chas-





Wally Byam with one of his earliest trailers; Byam founded Airstream trailers in 1931, and today it's the oldest trailer manufacturer in America. The original Airstreams were made of wood and featured aerodynamic teardrop styling.



Another Airstream trailer, this one circa 1935. The uplifted tail was designed to provide ground clearance when exiting driveways, or coming off steep hills.



A very early Airstream parked in front of a newer model, circa 1950s, shows the radical change in the design over the years.



One of the later, larger Airstream trailers from the late 1930s early '40s, parked in Tombstone, Arizona.



The interior of an early teardrop shows the efficient use of space, and nice wood paneling. The dinette converts into a bed.

sis. He designed a teardrop-shaped 13-foot trailer that was modern, light and strong. For Marion, it was a major improvement.

In late 1929 when the stock market crashed, Byam's magazine business was in trouble. He eventually had to shut it down. Now unemployed, the couple decided to pack up and move to Oregon. But before they got going, a neighbor asked Byam to build him a trailer. Byam and a hired man built the new trailer in his backyard—and then "No sooner was it finished when the fellow next door wanted one," Byam recalled. So did another person, and before long, "I began to think that this might be

a pretty good business to get into." Byam built more trailers, but soon neighbors began complaining about the constant noise of sawing and hammering, so he rented a small commercial building.

Luckily, trailer manufacturing was one of the few growth businesses during the Depression. For thousands of families forced to move in search of work, a trailer solved the problem of sleeping accommodations. Byam began producing a small, teardrop trailer he called an "Airstream," because it traveled down the road "like a stream of air." With an Airstream, a family could follow farm work through the various growing seasons and always have a





The 1936 Airstream Clipper introduced the classic aluminum construction and aero shape that became Airstream's hallmark.



The 1935 Bowlus-Teller Road Chief, the trailer that became the template for future Airstreams. One drawback of the Road Chief was its front-mounted door, which restricted floor plan options. For Airstream, Wally Byam relocated the door to the side.



A 1938 Clipper in all its glory, being towed behind what appears to be a Packard. Airstream boasted fully insulated bodies and propane heat, allowing owners to use them in the winter.



The interior of the Clipper was much larger and more luxurious than prior Airstream trailers.

place to stay. And of course, every trailer owner realized that if luck ran out and he couldn't find work, at least his family would have a home, one he could move to wherever opportunity would lead him.

The first production Airstream was the Torpedo Car Cruiser, featuring a low floor created by building it between the frame rails rather than atop, providing greater headroom inside, with a lower, more

aerodynamic exterior height. The uplifted tail (where the bed was) made it less likely the trailer would bottom-out when exiting driveways, while also providing a sleek Art Deco appearance. They were not, however, the aluminum trailers for which he'd become famous. Those were still in the future.

Buyers had options for purchasing an Airstream: fully-built units or a build-it-yourself kit that included parts and materials

needed to build a trailer, along with comprehensive plans. A third option was a five-dollar assembly instruction booklet detailing how to build an Airstream from scratch.

For Byam, becoming a trailer manufacturer was the answer to a prayer. As owner, manager and chief test engineer, Byam would go on long trips in an Airstream, and if anything broke, he'd be on the phone with engineers ordering them to correct the problem. He rode

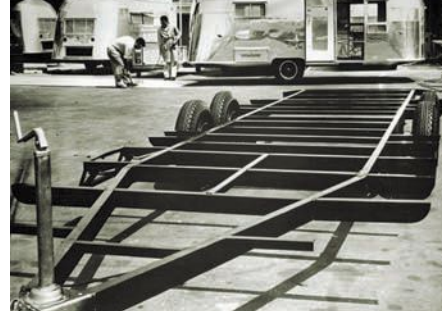


A late 1940s Studebaker hauls a big Airstream so the family can vacation somewhere in the South.





Wally Byam at the door of a large Airstream trailer with the sign “The World’s Most Traveled Trailer.” Note the early 1950s Willys Jeep tow car.



In early years Airstream bought its frames from other companies, but by the 1950s it was building its own, and they were sturdy indeed.



Mated to the rugged Airstream frame was an aluminum alloy body so light that two men could carry it easily.



Just how light is an Airstream? Byam arranged for an expert bicyclist to demonstrate how light by towing it single-handedly with his bicycle.

inside Airstreams being towed so he could check for air and water leaks, and to listen for squeaks and rattles.

In 1934, Byam introduced a second model, the Silver Bullet, made of Masonite to reduce weight. The Silver Bullet was wider, providing enough interior room for a sideways-mounted bed. Then, in 1936, came the debut of the Airstream Silver Cloud, the most luxurious Airstream trailer to date, with interior fittings rivaling fine hotels. The kitchen galley featured a three-burner stove, a sink with a hand-pump and an icebox, and neat countertops. The interior boasted fancy curtains, premium hardware, and silver and blue leatherette upholstery for a plush, luxurious look.

A competitor, the Bowlus-Teller Company, produced an 18-foot Road Chief trailer with an exterior skin made entirely out of duraluminum (an alloy of aluminum, copper and magnesium) and aircraft-style monocoque construction for light weight with exceptional strength. When Bowlus-Teller went bankrupt in 1935, Byam purchased the tooling, inventory and rights to the design for pennies on the dollar. The Road Chief became the basis for the iconic Silver Bullet Airstream. Byam redesigned it to incorporate his own ideas. He felt the front-mounted entry door inefficient, so he moved it to the side. He also installed insulation between the interior and exterior walls, creating a quieter interior that was warmer in cool weather and cooler in hot weather.

Priced at a lofty \$1,200—a new Ford

cost as little as \$520—the redesigned Road Chief was introduced as the 1936 Airstream Clipper, borrowing the name from the famous Pan Am Clipper flying boats. Airstream’s Clipper featured a steel-framed dinette that converted into a bed, fancy electric lighting throughout the cabin, elegant cedar-lined closets, an enclosed galley and full ventilation along with dry-ice air conditioning. Clippers carried their own water supply, unusual for the time. To create a larger interior the Clipper had asymmetrical ends, with a smoothly rounded front and an aerodynamically sloped rear. Clippers also boasted a row of windows on the side, giving them the look of a modern airliner sans wings.

In mid-1937 a sharp recession hit the country, forcing dozens of trailer manufacturers out of business. Of the 400 makers existing in 1936, only a handful would survive to 1940. Airstream survived, albeit on a vastly reduced scale, into late 1941 when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, plunging the nation into war. Aluminum, indispensable for warplanes and other military products, became a strategic material, unobtainable for non-essential usage, so Airstream went on hiatus for the duration of the war. Byam

went to work for one of California’s many aircraft builders.

When the war ended, Byam was ready to get back to building Airstreams. But lacking sufficient money to revive his dormant company, he partnered with a man named Curtis Wright (no relation to the aircraft company Curtiss Wright) to introduce the Curtis Wright Clipper, essentially the Airstream Clipper with a new name and some improvements. In 1947, the partnership split up and Byam moved operations into another building.



Airstream owners in the 1950s were able to take long caravan journeys, with Wally Byam leading the way. One epic trip was a month-long tour of Europe, including Paris, where these Americans stopped by the Arc de Triomphe.





One important job at the plant was to polish out the aluminum skin prior to shipping the new trailer to its owner.



As demonstrated here, Airstream cabinets were riveted in place rather than screwed, for a better, longer lasting fit.



This Airstream was driven down the Avenue of the Sphinxes in Egypt.



In the mid-1950s, Airstream offered this high-end model with extra windows by the dining table for a brighter, airier interior.



The lady is not identified, but the man in the beret is Wally Byam. The other gentleman is Neil Vanderbilt (yes—those Vanderbilts) and they are getting ready to take a trip in an Airstream trailer custom-built for Vanderbilt. It featured two bathrooms, a library, and telephone connection with the tow vehicle.

He then introduced the Airstream Liner, which was lighter than the old Clipper and less expensive to produce, due to their use of identical front and rear sections rather than the unique end caps used in the prewar design. The Airstream lineup also included a small 16-foot trailer whimsically dubbed the Wee Wind. Airstreams were generally higher-priced than the competition, but buyers could readily appreciate the differences. Byam liked to say, "Conversion is cheap and Airstream is not."

The company introduced the handsome new Airstream Flying Cloud 21-footer for 1951, featuring a modern ladder frame, and end caps flattened out a bit to improve interior space. The growing line-up of Airstream trailers now included the 24-foot

Cruiser, 32-foot Liner and 18-foot Clipper.

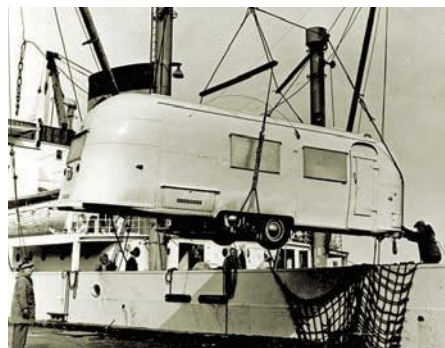
By 1952 it was time to expand. Byam purchased an abandoned bazooka plant in Jackson Center, Ohio, and in August 1952 the first Ohio-built Airstream trailer rolled out its doors. But when it took the inexperienced workforce an entire week to complete a second trailer, Byam promised them a five-cent-an-hour raise if they could produce two per week on a regular basis. The third week they did. After that, production continued to grow.

In 1953, looking for ways to promote his products, Byam organized a caravan of 38 trailers down the west coast of Mexico to sunny Acapulco, one of the hot spots of that decade. Feeling expansive, in 1955 he led 500 trailers to Mexico. In ensuing years,

Byam would lead four more caravans to Mexico, five to Canada, two to Central America and one to Cuba. He would also undertake a six-month Grand Tour of Europe and an epic Capetown-to-Cairo journey.

Over the years, Airstream engineers introduced a continuous stream of new ideas. One, a fiberglass-bodied travel trailer, didn't catch on because Airstream loyalists wouldn't accept anything but aluminum. Another idea, brightly-colored trailers mimicking the flashy colors of 1950s cars, didn't work out because the attractive finish soon oxidized to a dull sheen. There was also the Airstream Holiday, a basic, inexpensive 15-footer. Too many compromises were made in the name of cost-cutting, and customers complained that the Holiday looked like a canned ham.

For 1956, Airstream introduced the Overlander International, with a fashionable interior divided into three main areas—a spacious living room and galley up front, roomy bedroom in the middle (with choice of a double bed or twins), and a bathroom at the rear.



This luxury Land Yacht is being lowered into the hold of a ship bound for Europe.



Wally Byam tended to prefer smaller Airstreams for his personal use, as seen here just prior to departing on an extended trip to Africa, The Holy Land and Europe. Byam also showed a marked preference for International trucks for his tow vehicles.





To be on the safe side, these Airstream caravanners were going over this rickety looking bridge one at a time.



With their trusty Airstream, this happy couple could park right next to the waterfront. Looks like they had a good day deep-sea fishing.

Keenan Wynn (left) and Bob Mathias starred in 39 episodes of the television adventure show *The Trouleshooters*. They played construction workers who move from job site to job site in their Airstream trailer.



A late 1950s Airstream Land Yacht out in the American West, near Manitou Springs, Colorado.

In 1957, after 26 years building Airstream trailers, Wally Byam was finally ready to hand over the reins to someone else. His closest lieutenants Andy Charles and Art Costello became, respectively, president of Airstream Trailers of Ohio and Airstream Trailers of California. In 1958 they introduced a new trailer, fittingly named *Sovereign of the Road*, with a commodious interior and four trailer wheels for better balance and easier towing.

Under the direction of Airstream's new presidents advertising was ramped up, with a six-figure advertising budget. An Airstream trailer even "starred" in a short-lived weekly television series in 1959-'60 called *The Trouleshooters*, about the adventures of a globe-trotting construction crew—the Airstream was their on-the-road headquarters.

America went on a vast building spree in the 1950s, constructing the Interstate Highway System that triggered an explosive

increase in road travel. With thousands of miles of bright, new highways beckoning, millions of Americans hit the road. Airstream sales took off. By the end of the decade, the company was building 55 trailers per week, and couldn't keep up with demand.

During the early 1960s, Airstream continued to be extremely busy, with orders pouring into its two factories. Output soared to 85 trailers per week by 1962, yet the company was still barely able to keep up with orders.

In retirement, Wally Byam and his second wife lived in a comfortable hilltop bungalow in Los Angeles' Mount Washington section. If anyone wanted to stay over, the couple had three Airstream trailers parked in the yard to serve as guest quarters.

These were quiet, reflective times for Byam. He could look back on all the good he'd accomplished in his life: "We feel that

we have spread more honest to goodness, down to earth goodwill in the countries we've visited, than all the striped-pants ambassadors put together."

Unfortunately, the good times didn't last long. Byam was ill with cancer of the brain. He underwent several operations, but he eventually succumbed, dying on July 22, 1962, 18 days after his 66th birthday.

Before his death, someone asked Byam what they should do without him to lead them on caravans. Byam didn't hesitate. "Don't stop," he said. "Keep right on going. Hitch up your trailer and go to Canada or down to Old Mexico. Head for Europe, if you can afford it, or go to the Mardi Gras. Go someplace you've heard about, where you can fish or hunt or collect rocks or just look up at the sky. Find out what's at the end of some country road. Go see what's over the next hill, and the one after that, and the one after that." 🐾



At the White Sands Missile Test Site in New Mexico, Airstream trailers were used as temporary hospitals. Here we see President John F. Kennedy inspecting one.

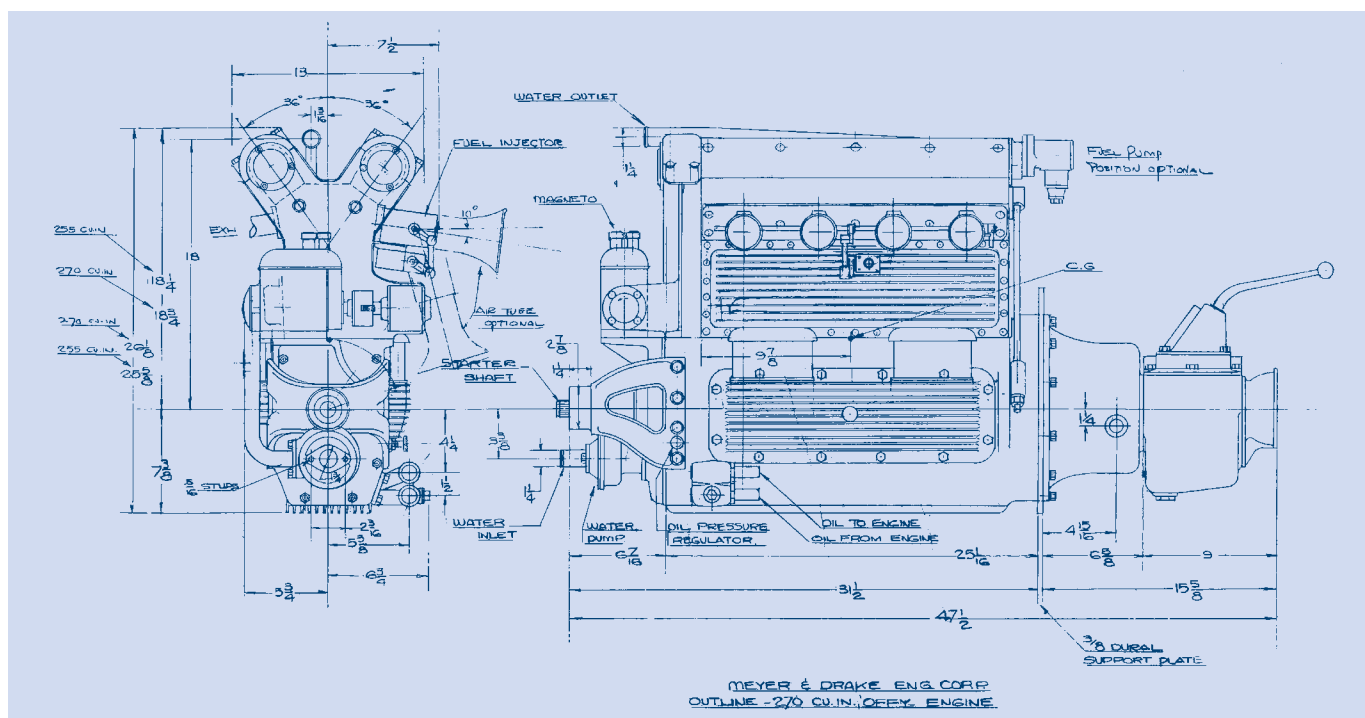


The Bambi trailer, specifically for people who owned compact cars, became popular in the early 1960s.



# Leo Goossen

*The engineer who brought Harry Miller's visions to life*



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE GORDON ELIOT WHITE ARCHIVES

The Teens and Twenties marked the era when the design of American racing cars began catching up with the rest of the world. The process of doing so had consumed a decade and then some. Long, deadly open-road races were all the rage in Europe for a time, and their racing cars reflected the speed and distances to which they were subjected. It was 1905 when Delahaye of France came up with what many believe to be the world's first double-overhead-cam engine. Then Peugeot took that basic architecture and enhanced it for racing. By 1913, a twin-cam Peugeot had won the Indianapolis 500, over American iron that was generally heavier and more ponderous than the European invaders.

One of those brawny American cars was Oldsmobile, whose Vanderbilt Cup race team was managed in 1906 by a native Wisconsinite named Harry Arminius Miller. After a time, Miller left, headed for Los Angeles, and set up a factory that produced carburetors of his own design.

When Eddie Rickenbacker grenaded the engine in his racing Peugeot in 1915, Miller eagerly bought the remains and tore them apart to see how it worked. He rebuilt the Peugeot, the first in a line of engines and cars that were not only incredible performers but also aesthetically wondrous, a largely unbroken chain of innovation that stretched from World War I through the Vietnam years. Only, Miller was a somewhat flighty artisan with generally poor business skills. He didn't create anything on his own.

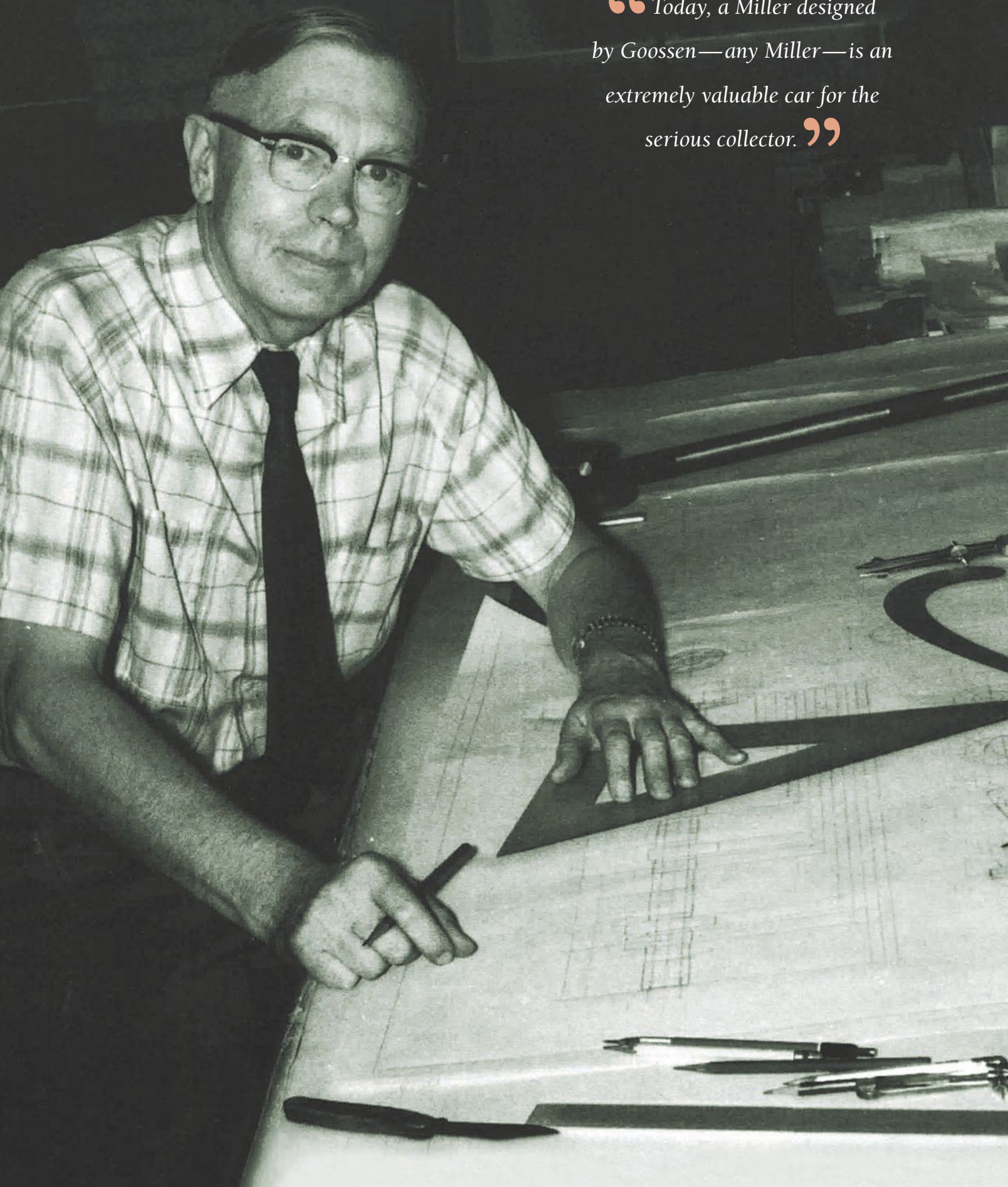
Miller believed in clairvoyance and, by many accounts, claimed that his designs were supernaturally inspired. We're in no position to argue with him. But somehow, he lacked many of the basic skills to turn his soaring concepts into reality, although he was a talented foundry operator. The success of Miller's designs can be traced to a trio of men—Miller himself, the fabulously gifted draftsman and engineer Leo Goossen, and Fred Offenhauser, who went from being an

apprentice at the Pacific Electric Railway shops in Los Angeles to a toolmaker and ultimately, a master of machinists.

Miller, Goossen and Offenhauser formed the legs of the stool upon which the great age of racing creativity rested through the 1920s and beyond. Goossen, in particular, is responsible for turning the supercharged Miller straight-eight engine, awesome as it was, into the four-cylinder Offenhauser racing engine after Miller's prized little screamer was outlawed and his company went bankrupt. Goossen, therefore, is the true father of the modern American racing engine as it then existed. The Offy's record is nothing less than astonishing. It won every single Indianapolis 500 from 1947 through 1964, a time span during which the entire field in some years used Offy power. Then, as Ford invaded Indianapolis during its Total Performance campaign of the 1960s, Goossen did the drafting and design work that gave the Offy a second career, thanks to forced induction. With no restrictions on turbo-



“Today, a Miller designed  
by Goossen—any Miller—is an  
extremely valuable car for the  
serious collector.”







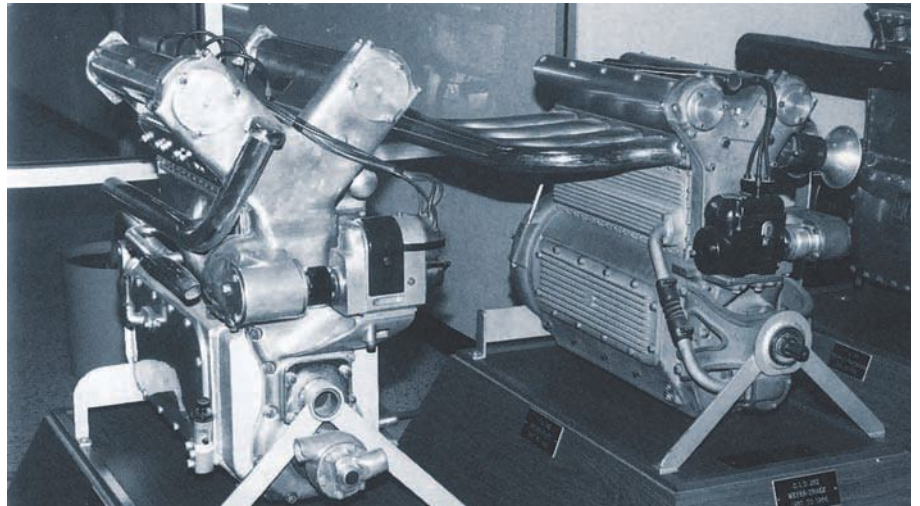
**For a guy who produced some of the most influential racing designs of all time, Leo Goossen was a shy, reticent character.**

charger boost levels or concerns about fuel consumption, the Goossen-massaged Offenhausers routinely thundered out more than 1,000hp and led the charge to the first 200 MPH lap at Indianapolis during the 1970s.

By necessity, the Offy is the biggest part of this story because of its decades of dominance. What compares to it? Well, we would first suggest the small-block Chevrolet V-8 in all of its iterations from a longevity standpoint. Same for the generations of turbocharged Porsche racing engines. The Chrysler Hemi and, yes, the flathead Ford V-8 also belong on that list. But the Offy rocked it longer than anything.

Who was Leo Goossen? He was born in 1892 to Dutch immigrants who lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and later moved to Flint, which became Buick's famous hometown. When Goossen was 16, family finances forced him to leave school and find work. He signed on with Buick around 1908 as a clerk in the engineering blueprint room while taking courses in math and mechanical engineering at night. No less than Walter Marr, Buick's first chief engineer, took note of Goossen's prodigious drafting skills. Goossen's first steps into auto racing came when Marr assigned him to make drawings of parts for the Buick Bug, a streamlined race car from 1910, two of which were built. When World War I erupted, Goossen volunteered to join the U.S. military, but was rejected when examining physicians found a spot on one of his lungs.

It turned out to be tuberculosis. After several months in a sanitarium, Goossen moved to Silver City, New Mexico, where he pursued the cowboy lifestyle enthusiastically in the dry Southwestern air. With him, he carried a letter of recommendation and introduction from Buick general

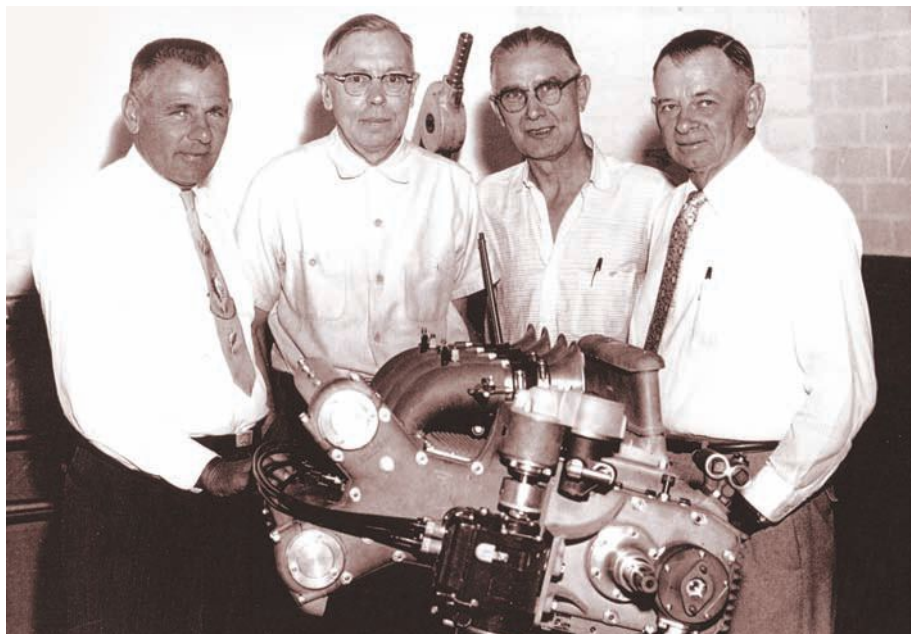


**These engines show the path between the Miller marine engine (left) and the original 255 Offenhauser. Note the barrel crankcase under the Offy and the tighter cam housings.**

manager Walter Chrysler, who had met him through Marr. His tuberculosis improved enough by 1919 that Goossen was able to move on to Los Angeles and begin seeking work. He found it with Miller at the Miller Carburetor Company, where he was hired on the spot.

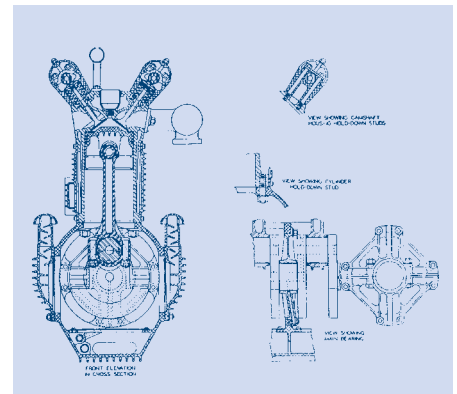
It's difficult today for some to appreciate just how profoundly the cars of Miller, Goossen and Offenhauser changed the face of motorsport. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway had been bricked over by then, and a series of wooden speedways with dizzyingly high banked turns sprung up in locales that included Beverly Hills, Atlantic City and outside Miami. Miller's great legacy was building race cars that were low and narrow enough to

take maximum advantage of aerodynamics, at least as it was then known. The board speedways were utterly lethal and insanely fast. With Goossen's drawings and Offenhauser's machining aptitude, Miller produced a lineup of rear- and front-drive cars with straight-eight power, eventually using centrifugal superchargers, ranging in displacement from 91 to 183 cubic inches. The cars were exquisite, taking more than 6,000 hours to build, truly rolling sculptures. Their performance was amazing. Millers won the Indy 500 four times during the 1920s, making up 83 percent of the starting fields between 1922 and 1928, and never had fewer than six cars in the top 10. They also won national championships and set international



**The Offy was packaged as a "laydown" design for better weight distribution. From left are Louis Meyer, Goossen, chief machinist Walt Sobraske and Dale Drake, who took the engine into its next era.**





**Fred Offenhauser's successors:** From left, Louis Meyer, Goossen and Dale Drake at the drafting table, 1947. Goossen's drawing shows the "pentroof" design of the original 220 Offy.

decades-long heritage of all three men, after Offenhauser revived the shop with Miller's erstwhile machining gear. Following Miller's bankruptcy, Goossen worked as a freelance designer, occasionally coming onto Offenhauser's payroll before joining the company fully in 1944. The commonality among all Miller and Offy engines and their successors was that they all used a cast-iron block with the head integral to it—with no need for a head gasket—bolted to a separate, barrel-shaped crankcase. One such engine was a 151-cu.in. marine inline-four that Goossen designed in 1926. Offenhauser adapted that crossflow, long-stroke four-cylinder for auto racing beginning in 1934, first as the Miller/Offenhauser, before he dropped the Miller name for 1935, when Offy-powered cars swept the top two spots at Indy. With the coming of the Midget craze, Offenhauser enjoyed strong success. Displacements commonly ran from 220 for sprint cars to 255 and 270 cubic inches at Indy, depending on the displacement rules at the time. Racers came to love the engines for their bounteous torque, very handy on restarts.

Fred Offenhauser retired just after World War II, selling the business to three-time 500 winner Louis Meyer and his former riding mechanic, Dale Drake. Goossen went on to create designs for a variety of racing engines, including the famed Novi V-8, Thorne and Lencki straight-sixes, and even worked on a desmodromic (no valve springs) version of the Offy. The Offy itself strongly dominated Championship-style racing for some 20 years after the war. When he died in 1974, Goossen was working on an entirely different version of the Offy. He didn't live to see Drake-Goossen-Sparks close five years later, or the last Offy-powered car attempt to make the Indianapolis 500 in 1983. 🏁

speed records. Today, a Miller designed by Goossen—any Miller—is an extremely valuable car for the serious collector.

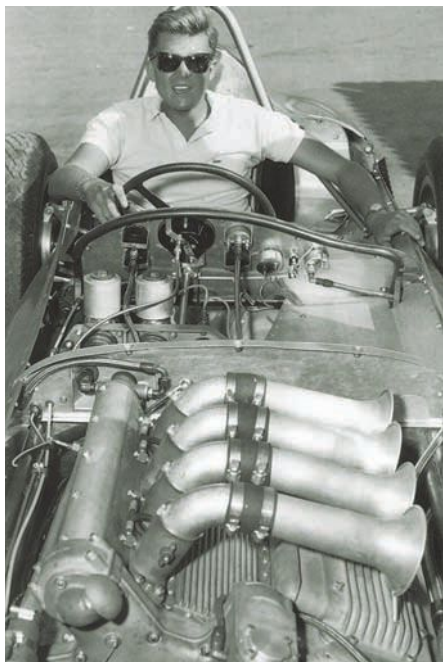
To gain perspective on Miller and his men, we turned to longtime author and racing historian Gordon Eliot White, a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist and auto racing advisor to the Smithsonian Institution. In 1996, Gordon authored the landmark history *Offenhauser* (now being reprinted and available from the author; write to the author at P.O. Box 129, Hardyville, Virginia 23070), and shared his opinion that none of the three men could

have accomplished as much as they did without the other two.

"Before Leo got there—and Offenhauser had gotten there before he did—the stuff that Harry Miller designed didn't last very long," Gordon explains. "He had some ideas that just weren't practical. But Leo, who had worked with a fairly brilliant designer in Walter Marr, knew how to make Miller's plans work. He understood how to approach them from a stress-analysis standpoint, knew how to use fasteners properly, pressures of the valve springs, bearing sizes. He could tell Miller, 'Harry, this isn't going to work.' Miller was a dreamer, but he had to have a team. When Miller went back east, he did things like have a decorative bunch of tubing as a radiator with no fins on it. Some engineers thought that Miller walked on water. Leo and Fred knew he didn't."

Miller took on a variety of projects, some more successful than others. Today he gets credit in some corners for designing the front-wheel powertrain of the fabled Cord L-29, but Goossen actually did the drawings that ensured the radical system would function. By this time, Miller—whose small-bore blown eight-cylinder engines were legislated into obsolescence by Rickenbacker once he took control of Indy—had sold his business to the Schofield Corporation, but in 1930, set up his own engineering business again with Goossen as head designer. But the Depression sapped many of Miller's high-flying projects, and within three years, he was bankrupt.

Regardless, another creation from Goossen's drafting table ensured the



**A laydown Offy** went into Lance Reventlow's Scarab, one of several sports car uses.





# Biarritz Beauty

*Just two years in the making, a home-restored 1956 Cadillac Eldorado convertible went from rusty hulk to concours winner*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

**H**aving an upscale automobile like a Fifties-era Cadillac restored by a professional shop is a relatively easy task for most car owners—just pay the bill and drive the car away when it's finished. However, to restore one by yourself in a two-car garage behind your house while working a full-time day job is a truly impressive undertaking. More than that, to have that car score 99 points out of 100 at the Grand National meet of the Cadillac La Salle Club, and at its first showing no less, is a remarkable achievement that few will ever experience.

If you're a member of the CLC ("Cadillac & La Salle Club") and live on

Long Island, then you probably know Lou Commisso, a long-time and active club member. For years, Lou took part in many Cadillac shows on Long Island, throughout the New York City region, and at Hershey with his 1956 Fleetwood, a car which he also restored himself and which was equipped with factory air conditioning. But this Eldorado Biarritz is a car that is truly special to Lou as it's the one that he always wanted. He tells us: "I have been a Cadillac fan since I was a kid. At 16, my first car was a 1970 Coupe de Ville, but the first 1956 Cadillac I saw up close was a Series 75 limousine. I later convinced the owner to use his car for my wedding. Thank God

the factory air worked—we were married in August. Next to my beautiful bride that day, all eyes were on the limo. I knew that a '56 Cadillac would be in my future after that. Yet the main aspect that I find so special about this Eldorado Biarritz is the miles and miles of style. It was the last of the tri-five years and the most refined. It represents the ultimate in Fifties motoring, with a limited production of only 2,150 examples to boot!"

So, with the intention of buying and restoring a 1956 Eldorado Biarritz convertible, Lou knew he had to sell his beloved Fleetwood in order to finance the Eldorado's purchase and restoration. After the Fleetwood was sold, Lou found this Eldorado in Omaha,





Nebraska. It was being sold by its second owner, was totally original and mostly complete, and sported its matching-numbers engine and drivetrain; however, the body had some severe corrosion problems.

"After I bought this Cadillac, my original intention was to take everything I learned about cars over the years and put it to the ultimate test by fully restoring it." But, before Lou began the car's disassembly, he and his wife, Dorene, had a discussion about how the Cadillac's restoration would proceed. Lou tells us: "I had very clear instructions from my wife—'get it done.' She did not want to lose me to the garage for years and years. We wiped everything

from our schedule for two years, and I used all of my vacation and sick time in that span to complete the restoration."

Also prior to beginning the Eldorado's extensive rebuild, Lou had to find a place to store all the Cadillac parts as they were being removed. "When you take a big car like this apart, it eats up lots of space," Lou advises. So just how did he prepare for that impending pile of removed Cadillac parts? Lou went out and bought a 22-foot enclosed trailer to store all the parts in. He parked the trailer in his driveway, and as the parts were removed from the car, they were tagged then stored inside. It turned out to be a very efficient way to store the liter-

ally hundreds of parts that make up a disassembled car, and a safe one, too, as the door to the trailer could be padlocked. Best of all, after the restoration was completed, Lou then had an enclosed trailer to transport his Cadillac to all the various shows that he attended that weren't on Long Island—no sane person would take a chance driving a just-restored, show-quality 1956 Biarritz on the Cross Bronx Expressway, now, would they?

Before the car was disassembled, Lou took inventory of everything that had to be done, the parts that had to be replaced, and those that were missing. Of all the parts that were absent, the absolute hardest to find also happened to be the smallest—it was the





Although its interior upholstery was all ripped and rust bubbles were evident along the bottom of the fenders, it was still an Eldorado Biarritz convertible with an accident-free straight body and inclusive of all its important trim pieces and Sabre wheels.



With the Cadillac now parked in Lou's Long Island backyard, the disassembly began. After the interior was removed, work began up front with the removal of the hood, fenders, radiator support and inner fenders, so the entire engine bay could be easily accessed.



Working in a standard-size two-garage car proves you can restore a car to a high quality, if you really want to. Now that the Cadillac's body has been supported on heavy-duty jackstands, the removal of all the engine's ancillary components began in earnest.



Most of the main floor pan was rusted beyond repair, so a replacement floor pan out of a Cadillac parts car was used to ensure all the depressions in the metal would be correct like the original. A Hobart MIG welder was used to attach the replacement pan.



With the body still on the frame, the inner and outer rocker panels had to be replaced on both sides. Reproduction rockers came from Classic Fabrication in Wilmington, Massachusetts; the outer rockers cost \$55 each, and the inner rockers were \$45 each.



In order to access the inner quarter panels and repair the metal correctly, the outer quarter panels were removed on both sides. The body remained on the frame, and was comprehensively supported from below so it wouldn't distort after the quarters were removed.





After the repairs were made to the inner quarter panels, they were well protected against future corrosion with the application of several coats of a rust-inhibiting primer. This same primer was sprayed throughout the trunk compartment and surrounding areas.



Before the original quarter panels were reattached to the body, they were primed and painted on their inner side. Once back on the car, the rusted lower sections were cut out then replaced with patch panels that Lou fabricated, then MIG welded in place.



With the work on the quarter panels now completed, it was time to lift the body off the frame. Heavy-duty jackstands were used to hold the heavy Eldorado body so the rotisserie could be attached, which would then allow total access to the undercarriage.



With the replacement of an original floor pan from a parts car now completed, the Eldorado was thoroughly sanded down then given several coats of a rust-inhibiting primer. Then an application of seam sealer coated all the seams before the top coats were applied.



Having a rotisserie makes repairing and refinishing the undercarriage easy, which results in a high-quality restoration. After the primer dried, the entire undercarriage was then given several coats of the same white urethane enamel used on the body.



After the Cadillac's frame was stripped of every part and fastener, it was sent out for a thorough sandblasting down to bare metal. It was then given two coats of epoxy primer, followed by several coats of Eastwood's 2K Semi Gloss Black urethane enamel.





With a combination of chemical stripper and a D-A sander, it was painstaking work to remove all of the previous finish. Evercoat Rage Gold lightweight body filler was applied where needed and was followed by three coats of PPG Direct-to-Metal 2K urethane primer.



Assembling the chassis with all the new brake lines, suspension, brake, engine and powertrain is always one of the most enjoyable parts of a restoration. The chassis and suspension components were both refinished in the correct semigloss black enamel.



During a ground-up restoration such as this, every single component is removed from the body, including all the interior panels that can be unbolted. The seat frames and springs were sandblasted and refinished in black enamel before being reupholstered.



Both rear armrest assemblies had vinyl coverings that were beyond saving, so they were reupholstered in new, matching material with the correct vertical pleats sewed in. The ashtray and cigarette lighter assembly was rechromed, as was the horizontal trim strip.



A new date-code-correct tinted windshield came from Auto City Classic, then it was carefully fitted with a new windshield gasket from Steele Rubber. Putting the gasket on the glass is easy, but installing the windshield on the car takes lots of patience.



If you've restored a car from the 1950s, then you know all too well how much chrome trim they were fitted with. All these newly plated trim pieces just came back from Graves Plating and Sandy's Bumper and look brand new. Reinstallation is a slow task.





Each body panel was painted one at a time, then sanded down within three days of being painted to avoid the paint becoming too hard to sand. Lou wet sanded the urethane single-stage paint with 1500 grade paper, then went direct to compound and polish.



Adjustable industrial jack stands were used to hold the body high prior to rolling the restored chassis underneath for reattachment. Even without the front clip on, a 4-inch by 4-inch piece of timber ensured that the heavy Cadillac body wouldn't come crashing down.



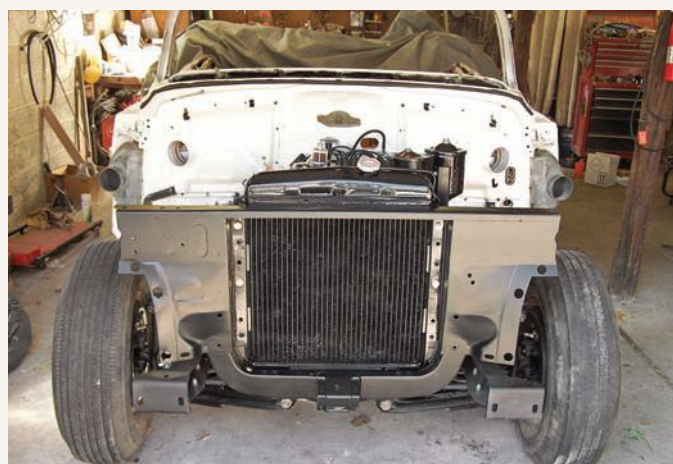
Wheel dollies made moving the heavy frame so much easier, allowing it to be positioned in the exact location under the body. Looking like the day it was first built at GM, the frame rail features production marks that were replicated for that authentic look.



Before the body was lowered onto the frame, small pieces of white tape were placed where the body bolts go so nothing would mar the newly painted finish. Although the doors are off, note the piece of steel across the door jamb to prevent the body from flexing.



Before the inner and outer fenders were bolted back on, all the ancillary components were attached, along with the wiring harness and brake and fuel lines. The carburetors were to be installed later on, so tape prevented dirt from falling into the intakes.



The radiator support was also stripped and refinished in the correct semigloss black enamel. The original radiator was rebuilt, and all the fasteners were finished in the correct yellow zinc plating. Every detail is just as Cadillac originally built it.





**Every component on the Cadillac looks brand new, including the glovebox's interior. All the instrument-panel brightwork has been either polished or re-plated.**

fasteners that hold the convertible boot in place. These unique fasteners were used only on Eldorados, so finding replacements today is very difficult. Perhaps this is why Lou recommends: "Buy the most complete car you can find, because some Eldorado-specific parts are near impossible to locate."

While body-off restorations are certainly a daunting task, and can be very intimidating, Lou held a very pragmatic view of it all; an outlook that was the cause of the project's completion in a timely manner. "The most important task is scheduling everything, the same as a general contractor would do," Lou advises. "Don't think of the car as a whole project; rather, think of it as a bunch of small projects that need to be completed in the right order. Example,

if you have the engine being rebuilt, work on the chassis to make sure it's ready to go once the engine is completed."

So, you're probably asking yourself, 'How could a hobbyist perform a show-winning, ground-up restoration in a little over two short years, even when the car he started out with had a rusty body?' As Lou tells it, "The biggest time saver is that I performed most of the work. I didn't have to spend time bringing the car from here to there. There was no waiting around until a shop was ready to work on my car. Most important, make sure during the restoration that you try and do something for the car every day. It could be something as simple as researching a source for hardware. This is a good way to

ensure the project is always progressing."

One of the biggest tasks that Lou himself performed was all the painting, interior and exterior. Because he used a single-stage, non-metallic color, he was able to paint the car piecemeal, doing one or two panels at a time. The body shell was mounted on a rotisserie, which allowed it to be thoroughly painted inside and out. Then it was mounted on the chassis, which had already been sandblasted and refinished in the correct semigloss black enamel. Starting with the two doors, followed by the front fenders, as each panel was painted it was installed back onto the body.

But prior to painting the body, it took Lou about eight months to repair the body and get it ready for refinishing. The hardest part was fabricating patch panels for the bottom of the quarter panels and front fenders, followed by replacing most of the floor pan and inner quarter panels, which he took off a parts car. The inner and outer rocker panels were also replaced, with Lou welding everything together with his MIG welder.

For the rebuilding of the powertrain, Lou brought the car's original engine up to Fitzgerald Automotive in Beacon Falls, Connecticut, to have it completely rebuilt. The block was machined .030-over and fitted with new pistons from Egge, along with all new bearings, seals, valve guides and gaskets. The crankshaft was balanced to eliminate any trace of vibration, then the completed assembly was refinished in the correct navy blue enamel, with the valve covers painted gold.

The rest of the new and reproduction parts were purchased from a variety of sources: the suspension and steering parts, from Rare Parts; weatherstripping from Steele Rubber; a new wiring harness from Rhode Island Wiring; brake lines from Inline Tube;



**The pair of Carter WFCB carbs has been professionally rebuilt, allowing the Eldorado's original matching-numbers 365-cu.in. V-8 to produce 305 horsepower once again.**





Acres of new red and white leather hides cover the restored seats and door panels, along with all re-chromed trim pieces, which cost a small fortune to have re-plated.



repro Firestone tires from Coker, and new date-coded glass from Auto City Classic. And the components that Lou couldn't rebuild himself were sent to those specialists who deal specifically in rebuilding those parts, such as Valley Wire Wheels in California for the refinishing of the Gold Sabre wheels, Daytona Parts down in Florida for the rebuilding of the carburetors, and Valley Auto Electric in New York for the rebuilding of the original starter and generator. Graves Plating was entrusted with the chrome plating, the upholstery was handled by Carl's Original Interior down in Virginia, and most of the trim pieces and emblems came from McVey's Cadillac Parts out in Kansas.

After the Cadillac was completed, it was entered in a few shows and did exceptionally well. The most significant award was a First Place at the 2013 CLC Grand National, followed by Best Open Car at the 2013 Greenwich Concours, and Best of Show at both the Westbury Gardens AACA show and the Long Island Region Cadillac Club event. And it earned a First Junior at

Hershey back in 2011.

In between attending car shows and club events, Lou enjoys driving his Eldorado throughout Long Island. From behind the wheel, he tells us: "By 1956 standards, this Cadillac drives great. Acceleration is forceful, especially so if you ask the dual quad carburetors to help out. All 305 horses step up and move the big girl quickly. Let's just say that handling and brakes are adequate. One needs to remember it will not take a turn like a modern car, nor will it stop on a dime like one. But there's nothing better



Trunk has been accurately restored, and includes the original jack and spare Sabre wheel.

## owner's view



**R**eflecting back on the car's restoration, I wouldn't change a thing. The entire restoration went as expected. If you restore a car like an Eldorado Biarritz convertible, be prepared for many smiles per gallon, and savor the fact that you are among one of the very few in the world to own one.

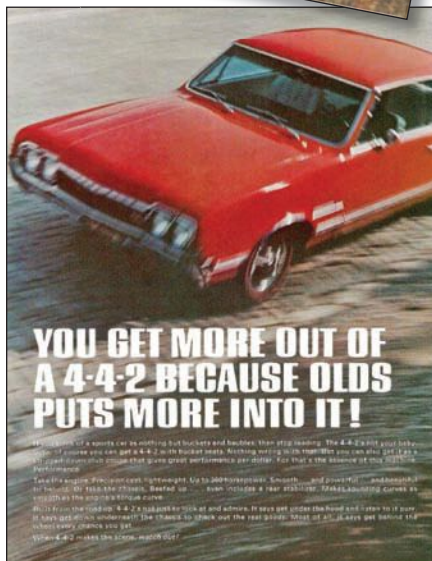
than getting on the open highway with the top down. The sweet spot is right around 65 MPH. With both vent windows cranked open and the AM radio on, changing the stations with my foot control, I throw my right arm up onto the top of the bench seat and drive for miles and miles."

As to that single point that was deducted when the car was judged at the CLC convention, Lou is forthright when he tells us: "Ugh, this one hurts a little. I had newer style ribbed belts on the engine. I knew they were wrong when I installed them during the restoration. A very reputable Cadillac vendor sold those belts to me as correct parts. They were just belts; I didn't want to hold up the restoration for something I could just take off later. That turned out to be a mistake on my part because I completely forgot about them until the head judge pointed them out to me, and my stomach dropped. How could I have forgotten that! To make matters worse, I found out I was in the running for Best of Show. The correct belts may have put me over the top. Live and learn, I guess." 🐾





## 1966 Oldsmobile 4-4-2



If you think of a sports car as nothing but buckets and baubles, then stop reading. The 4-4-2's not your baby. Sure, of course you can get a 4-4-2 with bucket seats. Nothing wrong with that. But you can also get it as a stripped-down club coupe that gives great performance per dollar. For that's the essence of this machine. Performance.

Take the engine. Precision cast, lightweight. Up to 360 horsepower. Smooth. . . and powerful. . . and beautiful to behold. Or take the chassis. Beefed up. . . even includes a rear stabilizer. Makes rounding curves as smooth as the engine's torque curve.

Built from the road up, 4-4-2's not just to look at and admire. It says get under the hood and listen to it purr. It says get down underneath the chassis to check out the real goods. Most of all, it says get behind the wheel every chance you get.

When 4-4-2 makes the scene, *watch out!*

the newest Detroit sound  
comes from a combo  
called 4-4-2



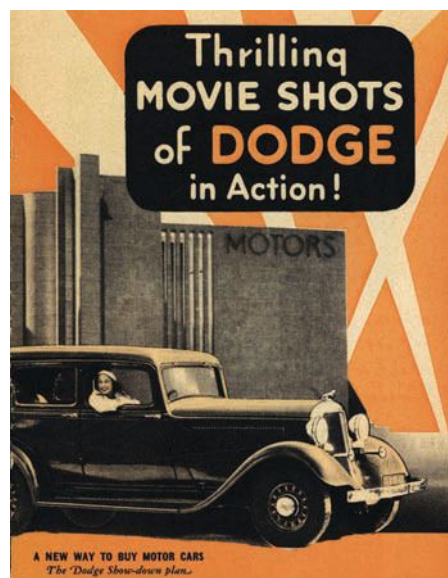
Up-tempo all the way. With a 400-cube V-8 and 4-barrel carb to carry the lead. Heavy-duty front and rear suspension to smooth the beat. Acoustically tuned twin pipes to modulate the sound. And red-line tires to keep the whole score on track. That's 4-4-2. Try about four bars today. It's your kind of music!

LOOK TO OLDS FOR THE NEW!





# 1933 Dodge in Action



## AFTER ENDURING THE GREAT

Depression's sales slump in the early 1930s, Dodge was looking to launch a comeback in 1933. During that model year, Dodge would offer both a six- and eight-cylinder car, but it would mark the last year for a Dodge eight-cylinder car until 1953.

The 1933 Dodge Six (Model DP) offered in the U.S. initially rode on a 111 1/4-inch wheelbase. Then, in April, market competition forced Dodge to stretch the Model DP wheelbase to 115 inches. The earlier mechanical specifications remained, and the extra body length was added in the hood, running boards and sills.

In conjunction with the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, Chrysler Motors had a fantastic display of buildings, road courses and test tracks, where Barney Oldfield and his Hell Drivers would put Dodge cars through extreme tests emphasizing their rough, rugged and capable reputation. To support its presence at the World's Fair, Dodge issued two brochures that used "Movie Shots" of Dodges in action to sell its six-cylinder line.

With the exception of size and cover pages, the content of the two brochures is identical. The first brochure, titled *Thrilling Movie Shots of Dodge in Action* measures 5 1/2 X 7 1/8 inches, with 24 pages printed in black, white and orange ink. The second



brochure, titled *Movie Shots... of America's Thrilling New Six in the Making*, is larger in size, 8 1/2 X 11 inches, but shares the same coloring and number of pages.

Upon opening the cover, the reader is greeted with text, seemingly from a filmstrip, followed by two pages dedicated to images from the Dodge factory in motion. Presses are engaged, workers operate "almost human machines" and the brochures claim that "actual miracles in steel and rubber are performed here in split seconds."

The next pages describe the rigorous testing that Dodge puts its cars through. Movie stills of cars driving on steep banks, sand, mud, deep water and the "Belgian Roll machine" continue to emphasize Dodge's tough, dependable reputation. The brochure explains that surviving this torture testing is possible due to many of the mechanical and safety features of the Dodge.

The first such feature is the "Dodge Mono-piece body, made and braced with

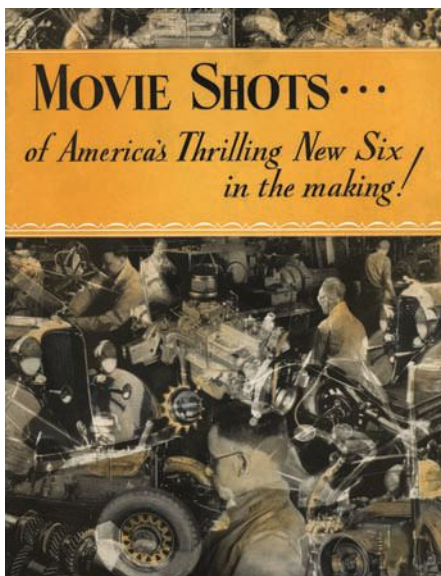
steel and welded together into one solid unit." Movie stills show a Dodge tumbling down a cliff where it "rolled over, spinning in mid-air and hurtling over jagged rocks" and escaped with "only a scratch or two."

The quiet ride of the 1933 Dodge is emphasized below a still of a woman holding her ear toward the bottom of the car. She is listening for transmission noise but can't hear any, thanks to the use of newly adopted helical gears. Several more images also show the Dodge's balloon tires and sealed leaf springs with perpetually lubricated discs. Another movie still shows the driver of the car saying "It's great never to have squeaky springs."

Not only was the '33 Dodge quiet, it was also safe, thanks to its use of "safe, simple and sure" hydraulic brakes at all four wheels that were backed up by a "handbrake operating on the propeller shaft... another real safety feature." The accompanying movie still shows a nervous child, hand raised, in reaction to the Dodge screeching to a stop mere feet away.

Lastly, the smooth ride of the Dodge was emphasized with two movie stills. In the first, a man drives an ordinary car and engine vibration is so bad that the resulting picture is blurry. When the same man drives a Dodge, the picture comes out crystal clear, thanks to Dodge's use of "Floating Power Engine Mountings"—four rubber insulators between frame and engine. The brochure promises that the ride in a Dodge is "like sitting in an easy chair at home."

With the help of the World's Fair daredevils and these brochures, swift sales of the 1933 models propelled Dodge to number four in the industry. From January 1 to June 15, Dodge's sales showed the largest percentage increase in the industry; by the end of the year, it had sold 106,107 cars. For Dodge, this was certainly much-needed activity. 🏁





# My Favorite Mercurys



## ALL OF US HAVE THAT ONE FAVORITE

car our parents owned. Many of us find one like it and buy it. A friend of mine bought a beautiful Mercury Comet exactly like the one his mother drove when he was a little boy. When he brought the Comet to his mother's house to show her, she said, "I never liked that car." Apparently back in the day we were more excited about a new car than our parents were. Of course we were; we didn't have to make the payments.

My father owned some very attractive cars, but the prettiest car he ever owned was a Sea Foam Green 1967 Mercury Monterey. That car was magnificent. I think the 1967-'68 full-size Mercurys were the highlight of their styling. Clean lines, uncluttered grilles, cathedral taillamps and great proportions made these cars beautiful from any angle. They were advertised as "The Man's Car." So beautiful were these automobiles that *Hawaii Five-O*'s Steve McGarrett drove a black Mercury Park Lane from 1968-'73, even while later model Fords and Mercurys were being used by his detectives on the islands.

In 1974, McGarrett was given a brand-new black Mercury Marquis, that more than three decades later, made an appearance on the first episode of the present *Hawaii Five-O*.

While I prefer the 1967-'68 models, I would be proud to drive any of the torque-box frame Big Mercs from 1965-'66 or 1969-'78, as well.

So, why are these cars considered underdogs? We rarely see them at shows or car club events. The equivalent Fords are always in abundance. Ironically, when one of these big Mercury four-door sedans (1966-'78) or four-door hardtops (1966-'74) pops up for sale, the price is usually much lower than a similar Ford. That is good news for you.

If you're in the market for a convertible, two-door hardtop or even a station wagon, the price shoots up beyond underdog range rather quickly, which is why anyone in the

market for a vintage car should really take a serious look at four-door family cars.

The same features and powertrains were available, and you can take five to seven of your friends, depending on their size, anywhere in style and in any weather.

The Marquis debuted in 1967 as the premiere model and would replace the Montclair and Park Lane in 1969 when the Monterey was firmly established as the "entry level" full-size Mercury. That is something you don't hear anymore—"entry level full-size car." The Marquis was essentially the Park Lane Brougham.

I'm surprised they discontinued that great name for a car, "Park Lane." Imagine standing outside a restaurant asking the valet to retrieve your car. "Yes, I drove the Wellington Blue, four-door Park Lane hardtop."

Sadly, the Monterey was laid to rest after the 1974 model year. I guess "entry level" could no longer be applied to a full-size car. Then, as performance took a back seat to luxury in the mid-1970s, the Grand Marquis joined the family in 1975. The grandest of Marquis was marketed firmly between the Marquis Brougham and Lincoln Continental.

With all their road-hugging weight, they lasted two additional seasons after GM downsized its full-size fleet and were replaced in 1979 by trimmer cars on the new Panther platform. Oddly, the smaller Marquis sold no better than its predecessor. I obviously place the Panther Mercs and Fords in a different underdog category.

There is one other fact about the last of the huge Fords and Mercurys you may not know unless you experienced it firsthand.

My father traded the 1967 Monterey for a 1973 Ford LTD. Whenever it snowed, I always managed to be the one who was at work or somewhere far from the house in that LTD. Since 1978, I have driven all kinds of cars in the snow, from rear-wheel drive to front-wheel drive to four-wheel drive. No car was better in the snow than that 1973 Ford LTD, so I'll bet the equivalent Mercurys were just as good. I always joke that I will find an early 1970s full-size Mercury just to have something safe to drive in bad weather. I know I can get one at a good price. I recently spotted a nice, low-mileage base-model 1972 Monterey for less than \$3,500. That's a steal!

In 1972, automatic transmission, power steering and power front-disc brakes became standard on the Monterey. I guess they were entry level if you could still get one with manual transmission, steering and brakes in 1971.

The 1969-'78 full-size Fords and Mercurys were Dearborn's second best-selling car platform—Model T being the first. More than 7.75 million were sold.

Engines, transmissions and just about every other mechanical part were shared with Fords, and with so many sold, keeping one in good running condition should be a piece of cake. As with any orphan car, trim parts may present an issue, but enough of these big Mercs were produced to make the hunt a little bit shorter than with some less popular land yachts from that era.

Turn your gaze from the convertibles, coupes and station wagons, and these full-size Mercury four-doors just may be what you want. Mercurys are cool. I don't understand why more people don't show up in them. 🐶





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# Richard Arbib



## SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE

automotive creations by industrial designers came from artists who designed a lot more than cars. Just for instance, take Raymond Loewy. Sure, his team created timeless cars for Studebaker, including the Avanti, but they also penned refrigerators, the Pennsylvania Railroad's famed GG1 electric locomotives, and even worked on NASA's Apollo and Skylab projects. Brooks Stevens contracted work for Studebaker, too, and built the Excalibur, but also conceived lawn mowers, Harley-Davidson's trademark skirted front fender and even the logo for Miller beer.


That leads to the inescapable conclusion that a good industrial designer can take the most ordinary or esoteric consumer product and make it compelling to the eye. And that, in turn, brings us to Richard Arbib, a guy who cut the natty figure of a stylist but worked his talents on a huge array of goods, including automobiles. He was one of the last people to make a serious stand for reviving the product lines of Hudson and Packard while both spiraled toward oblivion in the late 1950s. Ideally, it should have worked, although economic forces were battering both marques unmercifully at the time.

Richard Arbib, whose father was born in Egypt, entered the world in 1917 in Gloversville, New York, west of Albany. He graduated from the acclaimed Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 1939, where he studied a broad-based curriculum of industrial-design topics and also served as vice president of his graduating class. As the economy clawed its way out of the Great Depression, Arbib found a job immediately, and yes, it involved cars, and in the most august of environments. Arbib became a consultant to the General Motors Art and Colour staff, under the direct supervision of Harley Earl. Arbib served in the U.S. military during World War II, and then, armed with a favorable assessment from Earl, struck out on his own. His first major contract was with the Henney Automobile Company of Freeport, Illinois, which was then the largest builder of hearses and other professional cars in the United States.

Arbib joined Henney just as the firm was beginning to experiment with the revised Packard Clipper chassis as the basis for its vehicles. He worked his design skills with Henney from 1951 through 1954, creating both elegant professional cars and a new, custom-built Packard Super Station Wagon, with distinctive curved rear windows. It's during this period that his professional reputation came to the attention of Packard itself. Arbib

became a consultant to the prestigious automaker, first crafting the dramatic, pillarless Packard Monte Carlo design study, based on a Custom 8 chassis. Next came a more influential concept, the Packard Pan American, based on a Henney-modified Packard 250 convertible that was chopped, channeled and smoothed into a two-seat luxury roadster.

The Pan American became the prototype for the remarkable Packard Caribbean, which for all its cost and opulence, couldn't save the company. Neither could his contracted work for the newly organized American Motors, which had hired Arbib to conjure a new look for the 1956 Hudsons, which were to share the senior Nash body. What he came up with was called "V-line styling," which did give the Hudson a distinguished look, but wasn't enough to keep the nameplate from disappearing into history a year later.

It would take a catalog to list all the products that Arbib designed during his later years. In addition to the Nash Metropolitan-based Astra-Gnome study that envisioned future time travel via automobile, Arbib did work for GM and Simca, and created concept cars for Tidewater Oil. His design portfolio also included wristwatches for Benrus, Gucci and Hamilton. Later in his life, he penned luxury powerboats. Arbib died in 1995. 





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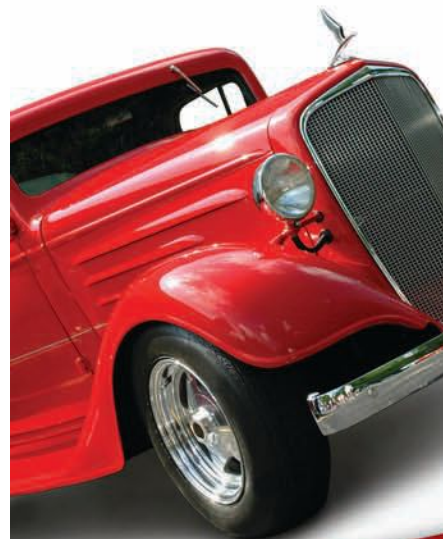
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## Hank Czerwick Design Engineer Ford Motor Company, 1956-1986

**THIS STORY COVERS ONE OF** the most exciting periods during my Ford employment. I started out as a draftsman, then I moved on to become a development engineer and, finally, design engineer at the Manual Transmission Engineering Department. I was hired as a co-op student in 1956. My tenure lasted through development of the Falcon-Comet, Pinto, Maverick, Mustang, Thunderbird and Escort programs. My last years were spent as Ford's only flywheel engineer.

Our department was right in the middle of "Race on Sunday, Sell on Monday." Racing was mandated by the man whose name was on the building, Henry Ford II. He also mandated that our largest engines would fit any car that we built. He got his wish on most things, but I'm not aware of any stock Falcons equipped with 427 V-8s. We did, however, eventually stuff them into Mustangs, which in the beginning were built on the Falcon platform.

We supplied transmissions for stock cars being campaigned by the United States Auto Club at tracks in Clermont and Schererville, Milwaukee and Riverside among others, and for Pikes Peak. Our transmissions were also used in NASCAR, and we supplied transmissions for Broncos that were entered in races on the Baja Peninsula.

Our transmissions were identified by the center distance between the main-shaft and the counter-shaft upon which the cluster gear operated. This was 3.03-inches for all three-speed transmissions, and 3.25 inches for the four-speed models. Thus, these were called the "three-oh-three" and the "three-and-a-quarter" transmissions. Racing requirements called for the 3.25-inch unit. The other popular transmission at the time was Warner Gear's Muncie box. Warner Gear was to eventually build one of our designs, but that was a few years into the future.

Our transmissions were called "top-loaders." That was because they all had a metal cover on top through which all the components were installed. The shifter forks on the 3.03-inch and 3.25-inch



transmissions operated axially on parallel rails. Formerly, Ford transmissions had forks that were operated by a rotating lever-like apparatus, protruding through the case, that swung in an arc.

At the time, Ford was in negotiations with Porsche to license the use of its synchronizers. It was Porsche's suggestion to have the forks mounted on rails for successful use of their synchronizers. Unfortunately, the torque output of our engines was too much for the Porsche design. We returned to conventional synchronizers, but kept the rail design. This was a good thing, as we built one tough transmission, and racing would prove this.

When Enzo Ferrari couldn't make up his mind to accept Henry Ford II's offer to buy his company, Mr. Ford decided to beat Ferrari at his own game; thus the GT40 program was born. The transmission used in the GT40 was a transaxle design, made of magnesium, but with a 3.25-inch center distance, shift rails, synchronizers and gears, which visually couldn't be discerned from those in everyday Ford transmissions. It was this program that brought real excitement to our department, and my draftsman's job.

Although individual personnel in the Manual Transmission Department contributed to varying degrees to the effort, everyone contributed in some way. My small contribution involved the lubrication system of the GT transaxle. The unit had pressure lubrication to the gears and bearings, with excess lube being dumped back through the top cover accomplished

by a gear pump. During development, external lines from the pump were directed to places where testing determined that the most lubricant was needed. These lines, though functional, were unsightly. It was my job to lay out an internal pathway where drilled passages would replace most of the braided stainless steel external hoses.

As we went from test prototypes to semi-production, our storage crib was filled with GT transaxles that were modified. Before the races, and even during, endurance testing continued. The Le Mans circuit was choreographed and replicated with control sole-noids in the dynamometer building at the Research and Engineering

Center in Dearborn. Outside of the Research Center, you could hear the engines roaring and the transmissions upshifting and downshifting, as they powered down the Mulsanne straight... in Dearborn!

The history of the GT program and Ford victories as well as the efforts of car builders Shelby American, Holman-Moody, John Wyer, Alan Mann and Ford-France, is well documented.

It was near the end of the race program that I was promoted to engineer. Upon conclusion of the GT40 program, I was given the duty of clearing our crib. It is hard to believe in retrospect how many dumpster bins I filled with transaxle parts, and eventually, whole transmissions. They were all scrapped!

The people I worked with deserve a book all their own. The things we did and the projects we worked on deserve yet another volume. Whenever I visit the Henry Ford Museum and see the smaller two-seat Mustang show car, the GT40, production Mustang #1, or the other Ford race cars on exhibit, I can picture in my mind's eye when yesterday was today. Did I have a rewarding 30 years with the Ford Motor Company? You bet I did! 🍷



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## RATTLING ROCKET

**Q:** My wife and I own a 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme convertible with a 350-cu.in. V-8. When we bought the car it had a Quadrajet carburetor that leaked fuel, so I installed an Edelbrock carb. When the engine is cold, it starts quickly. But after driving the car and shutting the engine off for about 5 or 10 minutes, the engine will turn over a number of times before it will start. I adjusted the electric choke and made sure it's opening and tried different air cleaners, and still have a hard time starting the engine after warm up.

Another problem is engine pinging when the vacuum advance is hooked up. The maintenance book states that the engine timing should be 12 degrees BTC. I set the timing to 8 degrees BTC and still have the pinging with the vacuum advance hooked up. I run high-octane fuel, yet the pinging remains.

Warren Ludwig  
Orlando, Florida

**A:** The hard starting when hot is likely because of heat soak. Engine bay temperatures rise after a car has been run then shut off, and this can cause the fuel to boil off. This is especially true on hot days and in old cars running today's ethanol-blended fuels which vaporize more quickly than non-ethanol fuels. A wood-laminate or phenolic spacer (not an aluminum spacer) with insulating gaskets on the carburetor and intake mating surfaces will probably help.

The spark rattle you're hearing is very likely making the engine run hotter and thus, contributing to the heat-soak issue, but it could be caused by a number of factors.

Pull off the distributor cap and check to see if the weights are stuck out in the advance position. If they aren't, work them in and out to determine if they are sticking intermittently. The weights are supposed to open gradually and take over for the vacuum advance as the RPM rises and the vacuum trails off. But if the weights are stuck out when the vacuum advance is also advancing the timing, you're going to get plenty of rattle. Also, check that the breaker plate is moving and not sticking. You should be able to make it rotate just by sucking on the vacuum hose connected to the vacuum advance

(if you have a hand vacuum pump, that's better). If you block the end of the hose with your tongue or gently pinch the hose off with your fingers, the plate should not move back. When you release the vacuum draw, it should move back smoothly.

Spark plugs with a higher than recommended heat range might also cause spark knock that could lead to the engine running poorly and eventually to heat soak. Pull out the plugs, make sure they're correct for your engine and inspect them. The insulators should be an even light brown or gray color. Not black or white or bristling with deposits. If they look suspicious, replace them.

Vacuum leaks or a lean fuel mixture can also cause an engine to run hot, rattle and start hard after it's been run. Both will usually create other symptoms that you didn't mention, however.

Finally, heavy carbon deposits in the combustion chambers, usually caused by oil being burned (valve seals, worn rings) can cause hot spots that pre ignite the mixture or even randomly raise the compression ratio. Thoroughly cleaning carbon out of an engine involves removing the cylinder heads, but you might be able to make a difference with GM Top Engine Cleaner or Seafoam, drawn into the engine through the PCV hose. This job results in some nasty, messy exhaust, so you might want to take the car to a shop and ask one of their mechanics about doing it.

Your problems could also be caused by a cooling system issue that's causing the engine to run hot but perhaps not hot enough to boil over. An engine running hotter than normal can exhibit spark knock as the intake charge pre-ignites because of excessive combustion-chamber heat. If you don't have a reliable temperature gauge, hook up a good accessory unit so you can monitor engine temperatures. The trouble could be low coolant, a plugged or inefficient radiator, a collapsing hose, faulty thermostat or a failing water pump. It could also be a head gasket issue.

Something unrelated to the cooling system, like a sticking manifold heat riser, can also cause engine temperatures to rise, possibly leading to spark knock and hot starting issues. To a lesser extent if the door inside the air cleaner, that directs warm air from the manifold into the

carburetor inlet, is stuck closed, it might cause heat-related engine problems. A discussion of detonation and pre-ignition could fill most of this magazine, but I've tried to cover the bases.

## FUEL-TANK TRICKERY

**Q:** I have a 1958 Cadillac Sixty Special. It has A/C, so it has an additional 1/4-inch return line from the fuel pump, in addition to the regular 3/8-inch fuel line. Most of what I have read says that it should have a non-vented gas cap, and the cap that was on the car when I bought it was non-vented. Fuel would prodigiously leak from the fuel cap, so I replaced it a couple times with reproduction caps and new gaskets, but that did not help. Since it didn't appear to be the cap causing the leaking, it seemed more like the neck itself was worn or bent. So I sawed off that portion of the neck and welded on the cap attachment from a mid-'60s Cadillac and put a new cap on it for a 1966 Cadillac. Well it sure seals now, so much so that after driving a bit, or if the car sits in the sun, it would blow fuel all over me when removing the cap, and the tank would audibly relax. I ended up drilling a small hole in the new cap to relieve pressure, somewhat defeating the purpose of trying to seal the leak. Did this car originally come with a non-vented gas cap? If so, why is my tank pressurizing if it is designed for a non-vented cap?

Steve Sieker  
North Bend, Washington

**A:** Steve, you worked for it, but it sounds like you've solved the problem. If gas isn't streaming out of the air hole you drilled in the cap, roll up the welder leads and forget about it. The original cap should be a vented unit, and there should be a breather from the tank that enters the filler tube just below the opening to keep fuel from gushing back when you fill up. Make sure that tube isn't plugged by fishing some fuel hose into it and blowing a little air through it.



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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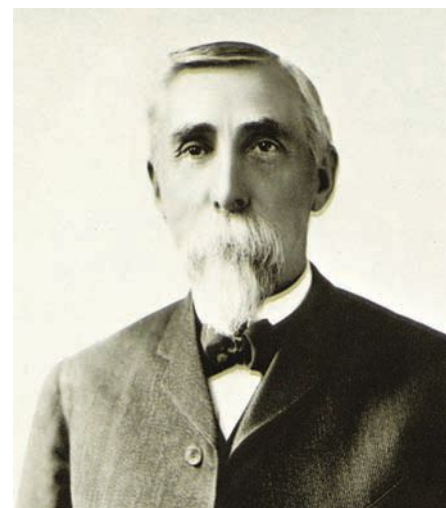
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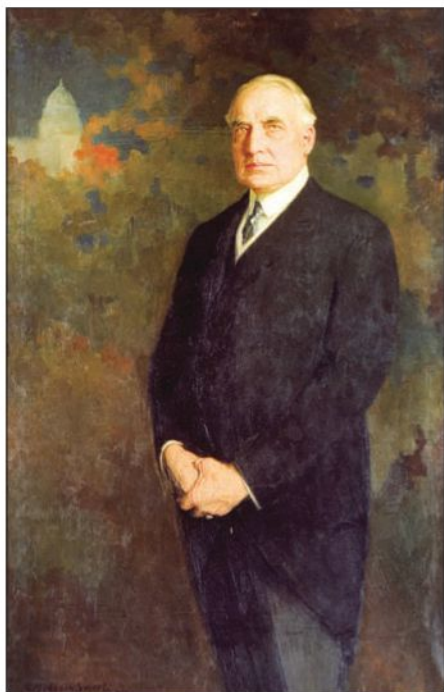


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## That Old Dodge

### BACK IN THE SUMMER OF 1964,

I was 15 years old and already had a keen interest in cars. I eagerly looked forward to getting my driver's license as soon as possible after my upcoming birthday. I was particularly anxious to get my license as I already had a car—actually I had one-third of a car, which I had bought for \$50 with my two younger brothers who were both 14. It was a purple 1950 two-door Dodge Wayfarer with a sloping roof that fell short of the back end, making it a half-fastback.

The color was about the only thing not original, and its exterior and interior trim was intact as was its mouse-hair-gray headliner. It had the three-speed column-mounted shifter and the straight-six flat-head engine with around 90,000 miles on it. This Dodge also had Fluid Drive which allowed you to start in third gear and not shift as long as you were in no hurry to accelerate. It also had one of the first key-in-ignition-only (no-button) starting systems.

Chrysler was known for its strong engineering, and this Dodge, overall, did not besmirch that reputation. It moved out pretty well and was fairly reliable, but as with all of us, age and abuse takes its toll. I guess I didn't help it any by racing it down my parents' driveway and slamming on the brakes at the last moment before reaching the sidewalk, then backing it up and repeating this numerous times. I did that fairly often, and I am amazed that the clutch and brakes held up, but that was where I could legally drive, so that's where I drove. What made matters worse was this was a suburban home's driveway and it was only about one hundred feet long. Only very brave pedestrians walked by my parents' house.

Soon after we bought the car, I got my driver's license and both the car and I were on the road. The Dodge had a few idiosyncrasies such as a stub of a broken-off turn signal that had to be pushed on and off with your thumb (we could never find a part that could fix it). The car had the vacuum wipers all old-timers are familiar with, and they know that you had better not try to accelerate too much in the rain or you would have to ease off the gas to get the wipers working again. The

brakes always seemed to have air in the lines, and no matter how many times we bled the system the air bubble always returned. No problem. Just press the brakes halfway down just before we were ready to stop, then reapply them and they felt really tight for that one stop only. Panic stops had to be avoided.

The rear springs were never up to par, as we always had a problem when two or three people sat in the back. When accelerating, you would hear an annoying metallic ringing as the driveshaft hit the underside of the body. The engine was generally fine, but one day a loud knocking sound began emanating from it and, as an act of desperation, we poured a can of STP into the engine and the sound quickly ended, never to be heard again.

The 6-volt electrical system was often a problem during western New York's winters, but when we couldn't get the engine started by jumping batteries or using ether, we had one radical solution: We pushed the car to a nearby gas station and into the owner's garage so that he would charge the battery. We did this occasionally during the winter months until the owner of the gas station finally figured out that the battery by itself wasn't the only problem, and we merely wanted to give the car warming-up time in his heated garage. Paying for the battery charge was worth it, but the gas station owner eventually felt that he was being used and became very irate.

Driving the old Dodge was often an adventure, like the time my two brothers and I ventured off to a friend's house to go swimming. Before we left, we put a new (old) tire on, and as we drove, we discovered that the wheel was coming loose. We went back home and tightened the lug nuts once again, and the same thing kept happening over and over again.



By the end of the day we finally figured out that it was possible to put the nuts on backwards, and they were unscrewing themselves as we drove.

Another time, the three of us took the Dodge out for a drive in order to scan the streets for a dead cat (a "CAT Scan"?). As crazy as it sounds, a dead cat (in reasonable condition), which would later be boiled down, after which the bones would be reassembled into a cat skeleton, was needed for a high school science project. We found one, carefully parked the Dodge by the side of the highway, recovered the dead cat and placed it into the trunk. A few minutes later as we drove down a country road heading home, I noticed the flashing light of a police car behind us. I pulled over and so did he. In all my years of driving, this was the only time an officer asked me, "Can I look in your trunk?" He took one look and asked, "Are you having cat soup for dinner tonight, boys?" We explained the situation and left with only an admonishment from him about our nearly bald tires. 🐾



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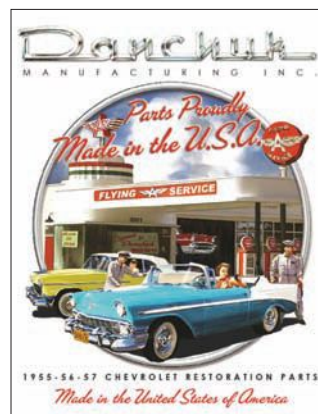
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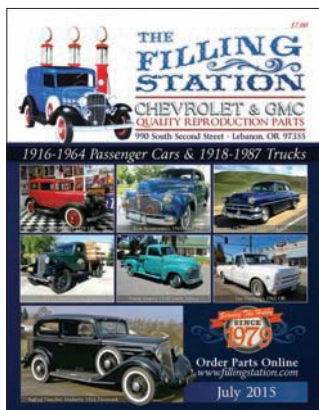
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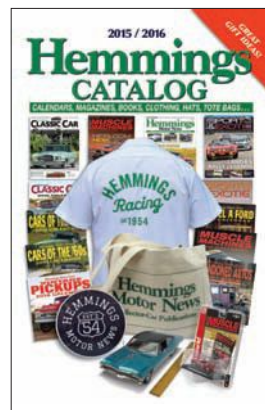
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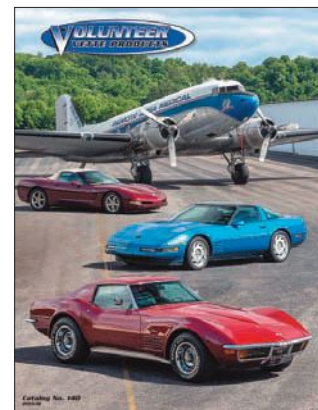
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## Ram's Reclusive Relative

*The many distinctive attributes of the rarely seen 1937 Plymouth PT50 pickup*



BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

**B**efore Plymouth was scuttled in 2001, the Mayflower marque had an on-again off-again relationship with its light haulers. In its role as Chrysler's low-cost leader, Plymouth might have partnered with Dodge to rival General Motors' Chevrolet/GMC twins, but for some reason, that never happened.

Plymouth's last light trucks, sold in the late 1970s and early 1980s, were among the lightest ever offered by any American manufacturer. The 1983-only Scamp was a front-wheel-drive trucklet based on the Plymouth Horizon/Dodge Omni compact cars. It was optimistically rated to carry about 1,100 pounds, but that included the weight of the driver and a passenger. Its body-integrated box was tiny, even by mini-truck standards, at just over five-feet long with 42 inches between the wheel wells.

From 1979-'82, the Scamp was pre-

ceded by a more conventional mini truck, the Plymouth Arrow, which was built by Mitsubishi for Chrysler. The Arrow was rear-wheel drive with a box that was more than 6.5-feet long, riding atop a full-frame and leaf springs. Four-cylinder engines were all that were available in the Arrow, paired with either four- or five-speed manuals or an automatic transmission.

From 1974-'81 Plymouth offered the full-size-truck-based Trail Duster sport utility—its own version of the Dodge Ramcharger—to help Plymouth dealers

compete against the Ford Bronco, Chevrolet Blazer, GMC Jimmy, Jeep CJ7 and International Scout. Most of the Trail Dusters were 4x4s but a two-wheel-drive truck was available.

Plymouth made its debut as a Chrysler brand in 1928, but its first commercial vehicles didn't appear until 1935, and these were basically two-door sedans modified for service as sedan deliveries. In 1936, a unique sedan delivery body was introduced, and at various times Plymouth also offered a small pickup box that could be





slid into the trunk of a business coupe.

Plymouth's most serious foray into the light-truck market came in 1937 with its PT50 Commercial Car, a sister to Dodge's MC pickup. It was offered with a bed for \$525, or as a cab chassis and fenders for \$495. This inaugural year was a success for the Plymouth PT50, and the company built 10,867 units total.

For the 1938 model year, Plymouth changed the truck's name to PT57 and raised the price, but altered little else. Sales of the pickup dropped to 4,620 units, likely due to a national recession.

In 1939, the PT81 rolled out as an all-new truck alongside identical Dodge- and Fargo-branded rigs. The cab and bed were slightly larger, and the spare tire was mounted under the truck, below the bed, hanging from the rear frame rails. The grille was sharpened to a point, with horizontal louvers that spread out onto the lower front fenders. Sales picked up to just over 6,000 units in 1939 and increased to

**Plymouth's 1937 PT50 ("PT" for Plymouth Truck) was powered by a 201.3-cu.in. L-head six-cylinder engine. A three-speed transmission with floor shift was standard issue. Inside was all-business, with minimal instruments and creature comforts.**

6,879 for the nearly identical 1940 PT105. The final edition of the Plymouth pickup was the 1941 PT125, which received some chrome trim on the grille and fender-mounted headlamps.

Today, Plymouth PT series trucks are sought after by aficionados and are an uncommon sight at shows. The few who have restored these trucks can attest that the trim pieces unique to Plymouth trucks can be difficult to locate, though many of the major components are common to Dodge trucks and Plymouth cars.

This AACA Senior Grand National award-winning 1937 PT50 is owned by Nelson Thorpe of East Bloomfield, New York, a town located in the Finger Lakes winemaking region. Nelson has owned

the truck since 1965, when he purchased it from the son of a local vineyard owner. "When I was a kid working in a gas station, the truck's owner would come in with barrels of wine loaded on it. I told him, 'If you ever want to sell this truck, let me know!'"

One day in 1965, when Nelson was 25, the vineyard owner pulled into the gas station driving a new Chevrolet pickup. Nelson was concerned about the fate of the Plymouth, to say the least. "I asked: 'What did you do with my truck?'" Nelson said. "I know I promised it to you," the man replied. "I gave it to my son, though he isn't doing anything with it."

Those words resonated with Nelson, so on a July day, he and his wife Barbara made the 20-mile trip to Naples, New York, at the southern tip of Canandaigua Lake, to see if the little Plymouth truck could be bought. The vineyard owner's son turned down Nelson's offer, but called him in December, undoubtedly hoping to sell the truck and make some quick holiday spending cash.





"I was running a gas station, so any extra money I had went into buying snow tires and batteries that I could sell to my customers over the winter," Nelson said. "But I made him another offer on a Wednesday and told him he had to have the truck to my house by Friday night. I don't think I slept for the next two nights thinking about it, but I didn't want to give him any more money."

The Plymouth arrived at Nelson's home on schedule that Friday and has remained in his care ever since. This is in no small part because it's a favorite of Barbara's among Nelson's fleet of handsome and collectible old cars, including an AACA Senior Grand National-winning 1940 Plymouth woodie wagon.

This attractive truck has accumulated just 53,000 miles from new, and in the 50 years that Nelson's owned it, the PT50 has been driven infrequently. "I was in the garage business, and once in a while I might've used it for a service call or

**In its day, this 1937 Plymouth PT50 was a highly optioned truck, sporting a chrome rear bumper, a right-side taillamp, as well as body-color fenders, splash aprons and running boards—all extra-cost items.**

something," he said.

In 2000, Nelson restored the old Plymouth to its current state, taking just nine months to perform the transformation, working with his son, Pat. At the outset, the truck still wore its original paint, and sections of the original pinstripes were still intact. "It was mostly rust-free except for some tiny holes behind one of the running boards," Nelson said. "It was beat up, though. We used sledgehammers to straighten the box."

The truck was stripped to its basic components, then all of the major body and chassis parts were media blasted. Nelson also rebuilt the 201.3-cu.in. straight-six engine, three-speed transmission and rear. It was then refinished in its original shade

of Rockwood Green, including the fenders and splash pan. (In 1937, body-color fenders were a \$5 factory upgrade over the standard black paint normally used on all but the cab, hood and box.) Inside, the truck retains its original headliner as well as much of the factory trim and hardware. A 1938 Plymouth parts truck donated its speedometer lens.

Outside the truck is a mix of original and new. The grille and hubcaps are new — the stainless grille had to be custom made because a suitable replacement for the worn original proved impossible to find. The windshield and rear window, too, are replacements, but the side windows are original to the truck.

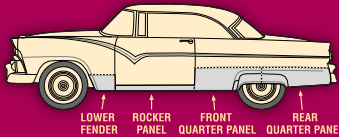
Today, Nelson enjoys the pickup for the same reason he fell in love with it when he was 15: You just don't see Plymouth trucks very often. "There's people to this day who say they didn't know Plymouth made a pickup." 🐾





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## Unknown No Longer

*How a long-ago art class led to memories of an old truck*



BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGE COURTESY OF GLEN HOOVER

One of the nice things about this job is that every so often, you get to provide some usable information to a reader, or readers, who are stumped by a photograph or an advertisement that they've stumbled across. It's gratifying when you can help clear something like that up. Unbeknownst to us, we had a reader

named Glen Hoover from Mount Sterling, Kentucky, who was facing just that sort of dilemma. He had a print of the photo you see here, a dump truck that had obviously experienced a very hard working life during its day. Only Glen couldn't tell what kind of truck it was.

Here at Hemmings, we're into digital photography and page design in a very big way, but that doesn't mean we can't revert to the way things used to be if it becomes necessary. More than a couple of us own

an Agfa loupe, a Belgian-made eight-power magnifier that we used to employ all the time to check photo prints and slides for sharpness and resolution. Not long ago, a letter arrived in the mail from Glen, who initially told us he was having trouble identifying the truck in that photo. Out came the loupe, and we were able to zoom in on the hood side panels, which revealed an International nameplate. We read a little further into the letter, and it turned out that Glen had in fact identified the truck


because of an earlier article in this space, from *HCC* #131, which told the story of a Michigan trucker named Alfred Kosbar and his prewar over-the-road adventures with an International of similar year and model. Glen essentially thanked us for solving his mystery and passed the photo along.

It dates back to 1963, when Glen's brother was attending John Herron Art College in Indianapolis, which is now part of Butler University. As part of a class assignment, the teacher directed his students



to go out in the field and shoot some still-type images with an eye toward content and composition. He caught this ancient International dump truck alongside an even older brick industrial building that appears to have been undergoing restoration. It's a nice photo, definitely worthy of publication, and plenty sharp.

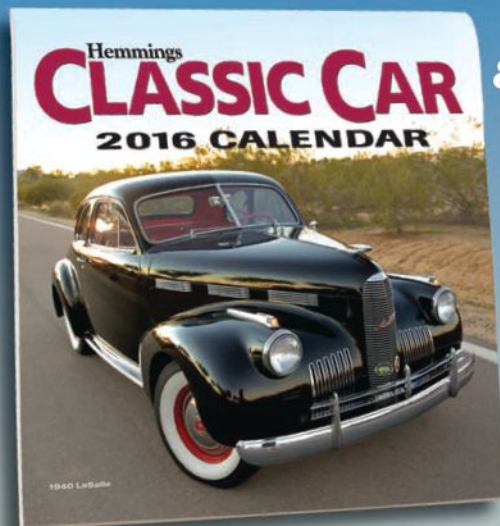
This is an all-Indiana photo. International Harvester was based in Fort Wayne, about 80 two-lane road miles northeast of Indianapolis. And this workaday dump rig, so aesthetically run down in 1963, is a relic of one year during the Depression when International took a flyer on a full-line restyling. It was 1934, a year after International introduced a new half-ton D-1 series, which was actually made by Willys-Overland in Toledo, Ohio. Most of the Fort Wayne-built International trucks received an extensive redo beginning in 1934, an appearance theme that lasted three model years. And that's how Glen came to recognize the truck his brother had photographed so long ago. The giveaway was the closely hatched grille, separated by a vertical center bar that, in the case of this dump truck, was seriously punched at some point. Above the screening, a cap incorporating the International crest tops the radiator shell. This dump truck is beat, but it still retains its handsome front bumper with a rakish dip in the center. How beat? There's a driving lamp on the bumper, and a spotlight above the driver's seat, but as you can see, all the innards and glass are gone from its housing.

In 1934, a medium-duty International truck like this one may have been, for instance, a C-55, with a rated capacity of 3.5 to 4.5 tons. It was available in five wheelbases ranging from 140 to 210 inches. International also introduced a new large-truck engine that same year, the model FBB, a straight-six displacing 298.2 cubic inches, and capable of producing 90hp, plus 213-lb.ft. of torque at 800 RPM. These were stout trucks; the extensive wood framing of earlier cabs was replaced by higher-strength steel. Most of the larger C-series trucks were equipped with two-speed rear axles. As to the rest of the driveline, rear-end gearing ranged from 6.1 all the way to 9.43 for severe-serving trucks with double-reduction rear axles. 



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).

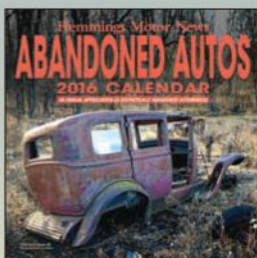
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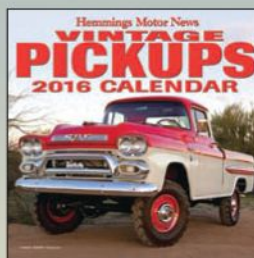
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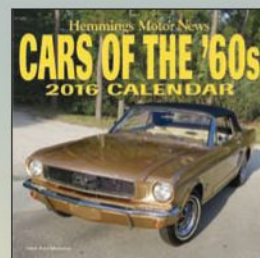
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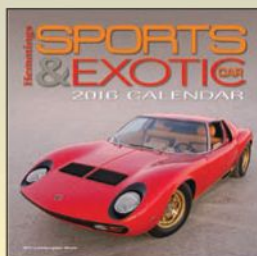
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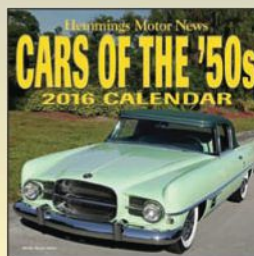
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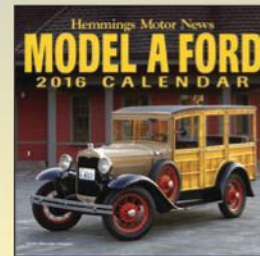
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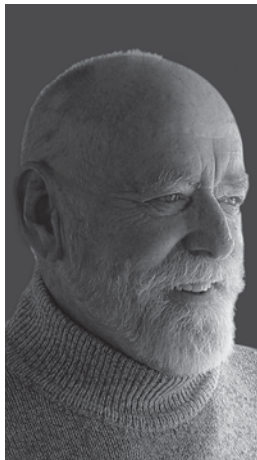
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Motor America  
Spring edition, 1954





//  
Sleeping in  
your ride goes  
all the way  
back to when  
Henry Ford,  
Thomas Edison  
and Harvey  
Firestone used  
to go "camping"  
in specially  
equipped  
Model TT  
Ford trucks.  
//

## The Big Sleep

**A**t 19 years old, I was reluctantly aroused from sleep at about 10 in the morning by kids who were looking in the windows of my 1956 Pontiac. It was the summer of 1961 and already a hot day. There is a line in the original Dracula movie where Bela Lugosi says, "Ah . . . but there are things worse than death," and for the first time in my life I understood. Waking up with a horrendous headache and nausea, with kids looking on and laughing made me long for oblivion.

That was an early experience of sleeping in my car, but not my last. In fact, if you count sleeping in the bed of a 1957 Chevrolet pickup, it was far from my last. You see, I loved auto racing back in the days of Riverside Raceway in Southern California, which was a long way from where I resided. And I was also a man of humble means, so even Motel 6 would have been beyond my budget. So I would just pull over on the shoulder of a side road, get out my sleeping bag and climb into the bed of my truck. One time, I woke up to cows poking their heads through a fence at me expecting to be fed. Those big brown eyes and that fetid breath are terrifying at six inches from your face.

If I had been at all sensible back then, I would have hunted down a 1951 Nash Ambassador or a Kaiser Traveler, both of which were interesting and unique cars that would have been affordable and economical, and were designed to allow you to sleep in them comfortably. They would have been far better than the bed of a truck. Sleeping in one's vehicle has come a long way since then.

How far? My brother-in-law has just purchased a \$130,000 motorhome that sleeps six, and has air conditioning, a shower, three large flat-screen TVs, a microwave and a wireless Internet hookup. He tells me they bought this mansion on wheels so they could go "camping."

Of course, sleeping in your ride goes all the way back to when Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone used to go "camping" in specially equipped Model TT Ford trucks. However, they cooked over an open fire, and they didn't have satellite TV. I imagine they brought along an economy-size bottle of calamine lotion too.

Somewhat later, Pierce, of Pierce-Arrow

fame built beautiful camping trailers that went well with its exquisite automobiles, and included electric lighting and butane stoves, all set in elegant hardwood interiors. Sadly, few were sold because at that time the Great Depression was in full swing, so a lot of people were reduced to pulling under a tree and sleeping on a blanket on the grass.

Springing for a motel when you needed money for potatoes would have been out of the question.

Still, you do occasionally see people sleeping in their cars at rest stops on the interstate these days, but, with the exception of the Toyota Prius, for which you can buy a tent that goes over the open hatch much like the one for a Kaiser Traveler, most

people taking five in their cars at the rest stop don't look at all comfortable. Perhaps it would be okay with a plumber's van and enough to drink...

These days, I tour in my 1955 Chevrolet Beauville station wagon. And I gave up drinking and smoking years ago, so I can now afford motels. But if I needed to sleep in my car for some reason, I could do so in relative comfort, as could anyone with a classic wagon. Big classic wagons are still bargains because they are not at the top of most restorers' lists, but they can make into double beds when required—provided you have an air mattress.

I am even beginning to think a museum showing the evolution of camping trailers, vehicles in which one could sleep, and maybe even early motorhomes is in order. After all, Americans have been spending the night on the road since the western migration, and we are still doing it today, and in rather Byzantine splendor in the case of my brother and sister-in-law and their crowd.

But at the same time, the back seats in modern cars can barely accommodate an organ grinder's monkey, and bucket seats are for sitting, and nothing else. Sleeping in them is not feasible. If my partying days were not well behind me, I would give more thought to how my modern car would be as temporary shelter for the night. I suppose I would have to really scour around for one with room for such inactivity.

However, a classic would have more style, Hudsons had more interior space than most cars in the Forties and Fifties, and a long wheelbase Chrysler or Packard could be made quite suitable with a few foam pads and pillows. ☺





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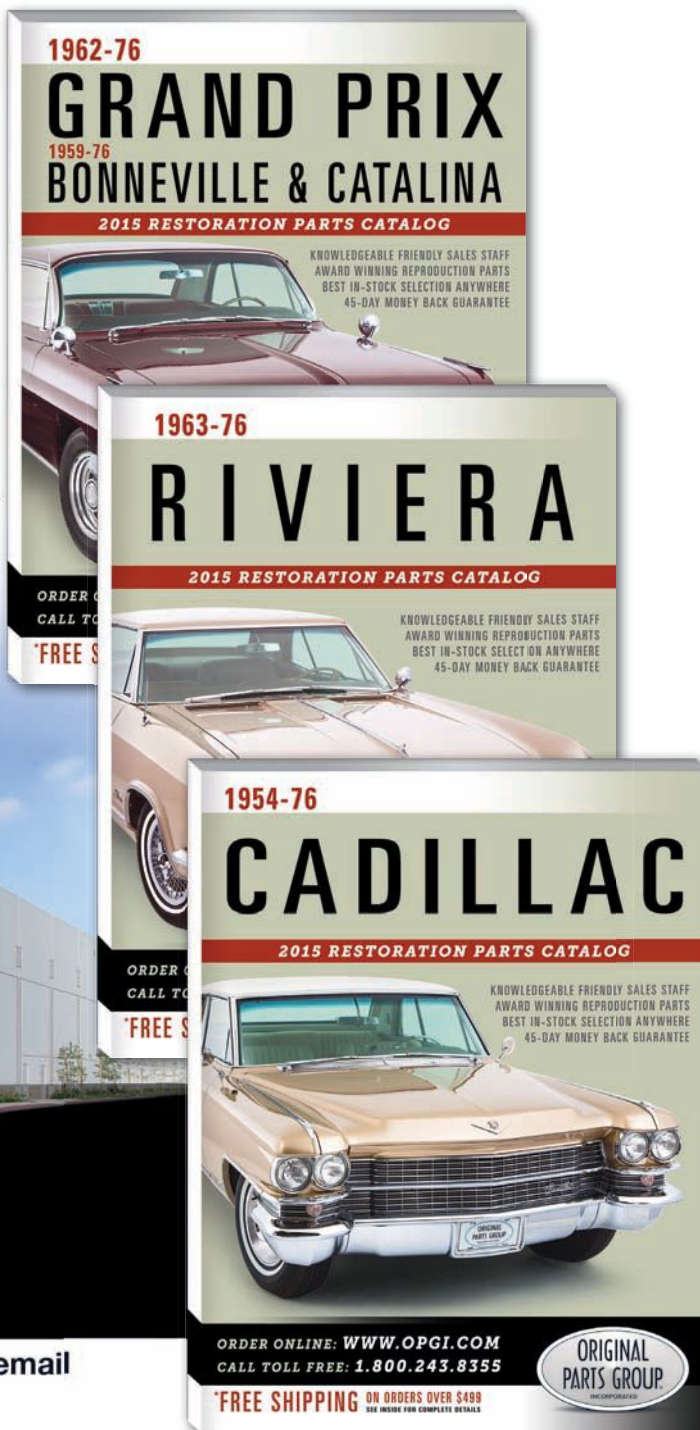
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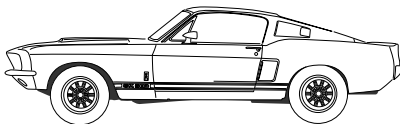


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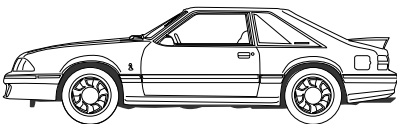
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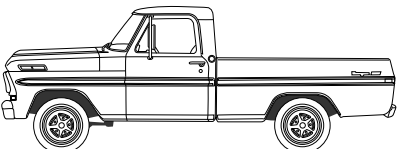
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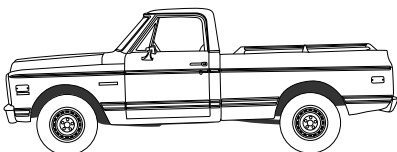
65-73 MUSTANG



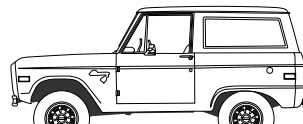
79-93 MUSTANG



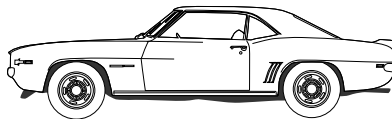
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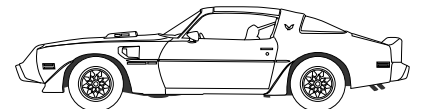


67-81 CAMARO

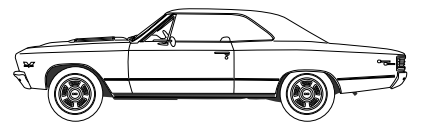


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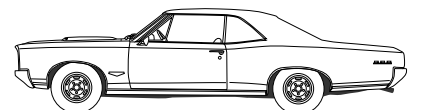
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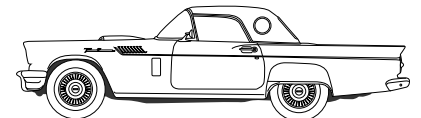
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