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THE DEFINITIVE ALL-AMERICAN COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2016 #144



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PART II



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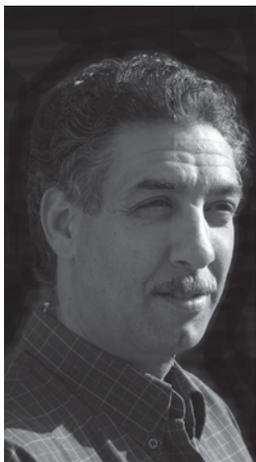
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Gathering Content

One of the single-most popular questions I often get asked is: “How do you find the cars you write about?” Gathering content is a combination of the Hemmings editorial staff attending various car shows and conventions throughout the country and car owners contacting us about the cars they own, although the bulk of the stories that we publish come from, as they say, “being out-in-the-field.”

Using this issue as an example, let me tell you about how the Continental, Crosley, Pontiac and Hudson ended up on these pages.

Last year, editors Matt Litwin and Terry Shea traveled down to Virginia Beach to attend the AACA’s Spring Meet, which was where they photographed the 1951 Crosley Hot Shot on page 38, along with several other outstanding automobiles. Attending AACA meets works best for us as the original-type cars that take part in these events are the focus of this magazine’s editorial content, thus we get a near endless supply of noteworthy cars and interesting stories. That is why Matt and our newest associate editor, Dave Conwill, attended the AACA’s Eastern Spring Meet this past May down in Vineland, New Jersey, while editor Tom DeMauro, who’s based in Western Pennsylvania, just returned from the AACA’s big Grand National meet in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. For us, AACA shows are the absolute best source of content; this is also one of the main reasons we attend Hershey every October.

Out west, editor Jeff Koch, who resides in Phoenix, Arizona, covers the Southwest area of the country for us. Be it an AACA meet, a concours, or other car club conventions, Jeff is always on the lookout for interesting cars to photograph and write about. Having lived in Arizona for about 10 years now, Jeff is known to many of the old-car owners in that area, one of whom sent him an email about his 1974 Oldsmobile (pg. 28). It was that simple.

We also get hand-written letters and photographs from owners about their cars, which is how the 1929 Hudson in this issue came to our attention and was selected. Both its owner and I live in Florida, so this past February I made

the trip across the state to the Gulf Coast to photograph several of his cars, one of which was this mostly original prewar Hudson sedan.

The gorgeous Continental MKII on this month’s cover also resides on the west coast of Florida, in the extensive car collection of National Parts Depot in Ocala. I’ve known NPD owner



Rick Schmidt for many years, and when he told me about all the significant original cars that he and his dad, Jim, have accumulated through the years, and that they were all stored together at their Florida headquarters, I just had to make the three-hour trip to get some of these extraordinary cars featured in these pages. This past March,

I spent a full afternoon on the grounds of NPD’s warehouse photographing 11 automobiles, most of which had very low miles on them. The icing on the cake was this striking blue Continental, which had been modified at the Ford factory for William Clay Ford.

While some cars that we find and hear about get featured in the magazine in just a few months after having them photographed, others take years before they are written about; such is the case with the Canadian-built Pontiac Pathfinder that’s the subject of this month’s Restoration Profile. Its owner and restorer, André Fitzback from St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, contacted me about 12 years ago, telling me how he’d started to restore a 1953 Pontiac and that he was going to document the entire process. Through the years, André and I kept in close touch as the project developed, and when the car was finally finished, he drove it down to Saratoga Springs, New York, to attend the Hemmings Concours, which editor Mark McCourt then photographed the following day. As you will read, the long wait was well worth it.

So, be it a club convention, AACA meet, the Hemmings Concours in Saratoga or our summer Cruise-Ins at our headquarters in Bennington, Vermont, we just never know what we’ll find. There are many great, entertaining stories out there to be told; I only wish we had the time and ability to feature them all. 📷

“
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I spent a full
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the grounds of
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2017 Great Race

THIS YEAR'S GREAT RACE TOOK PLACE June 18-26, and ran from San Rafael, California, to Moline, Illinois, but it's never too early to prepare for the 2017 event, which will begin in Jacksonville, Florida. This annual time-speed-distance rally will work its way from Florida up along parts of the old original Dixie Highway through Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan where the race will end in Traverse City. The event is slated to take place from June 24-July 2, with the schedule of lunch and overnight stops yet to be determined. The nine-day, 2,100-mile route is expected to see over 100 collector cars with teams from every corner of the U.S. as well as Canada, England, Germany and Japan driving automobiles dating back as far as 1916. The total purse will be \$150,000 with \$50,000 going to the winner. For more information on the event, visit www.greatrace.com.

Chrysler Congregation

BELFAST, MAINE, WILL BE THE HOST CITY for this year's annual Walter P. Chrysler Club Meet on September 14-17. This is the 47th meet for the club, and it will feature car cruises all over the mid-coast of "The Pine Tree State," including The Schoodic Peninsula, Acadia National Park, Mt. Desert Island, The Blue Hill Peninsula and Pemaquid Peninsula, among others. Boat cruises will also take place. The Chrysler car show will be at the Owls Head Transportation Museum in Owls Head, Maine, on the final day with an awards celebration to follow. For registration and scheduling information, please visit www.chryslerclub.org.

Nash Grand Nashional News

THE NASH CAR CLUB'S annual Grand Nashional car show is scheduled to take place September 13-18 in Glen Allen, Virginia. The week's

events will feature tours of the area including Virginia plantations and historic Civil War sites, as well as a trip to the home of Reggie and Cindi Nash to see their collection. The show will take place on the 17th at Wyndham, and will be followed by another show and swap meet the next day at Classics on the Green at the New Kent Winery. For a full listing of events and tours, log onto www.nashcarclub.org.



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9 • Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance
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18 • Orphan Car Show • Ypsilanti, Michigan
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Transparent Torino

BURIED IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY'S online digital collections—specifically in its National Automotive History Collection—reside plenty of photographs of Ford Torinos, and among them a handful of photos of a 1971 Ford Torino with transparent panels fitted throughout its body.

According to the caption, the photos were taken for advertising purposes for Ford Motor Company, and indeed we see toward the end of the 1971 Torino brochure one of the photos used to illustrate several Torino features, including its ventilation system. Curious that Ford would go through the expense of building a Torino with such cutouts rather than assigning the idea to an illustrator.

Of course, had Ford assigned it to an illustrator, we wouldn't be wondering if Ford kept the car or if it might still be around today.



RE: Might've Mustang

FINALLY, IN RESPONSE to the photo that Mark Erickson sent us in *HCC* #141, reader Klaus Thielen from Germany dug through his archives for another photo of the Ghia-built Mustang and

told us that Ghia constructed it independently as a proposal for Ford. Still no word on what became of it—maybe it's sitting next to that transparent Torino in a long-forgotten warehouse.

More Like Everycar

READER EARL FRIDAY OF ARISTES, PENNSYLVANIA, sent us these three photographs of a car he spotted at a show in 1977 in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. "Never talked to anyone about the car at the time," he wrote. "I do not know who owned it. Never saw it before that time or after."

Fortunately, Earl, we have an answer for you. As you can faintly make out on the driver's door, this is the Anycar I, commissioned by Manufacturers Hanover Trust bank, which in 1971 introduced a car loan ad campaign promising to provide loans "for any car you have in mind." Customizer Gene Winfield got the nod to assemble the car and used parts from 22 different cars.

Winfield also built the 1973 Anycar II for follow-up ad campaigns, while George Barris built the mid-1970s Anycar III. We also know that the Anycar I still exists, either in Europe or South Africa, with a much different paint scheme.



 Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions and answers should be submitted to *Lost & Found*, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201 or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com. For more *Lost & Found*, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>.

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AUCTIONS AMERICA

Auburn Rising

AUCTIONS AMERICA wrapped up its May event at the Auburn Auction Park in Auburn, Indiana, with total sales of \$7.2 million, an increase of 40 percent from the 2015 sale that saw an 80 percent sell-through rate. Fittingly, one of the jewels of this auction was the 1936 Auburn 852 Supercharged Phaeton Sedan, which was a top-five sale changing hands for \$90,750. ACD certified, the Auburn is confirmed to have its original engine, frame, drivetrain and suspension, as well as original body. You can view the results at www.auctionsamerica.com and see the cars to be sold at the upcoming Labor Day sale scheduled to take place September 1-4 at the same location.

Leake Heads to Detroit

THE LEAKE AUCTION COMPANY is known for its sales in Dallas, Oklahoma City and Tulsa. This September 9-10, Leake is expanding north into the historical hotbed of American cars at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. The auction is expected to have over 300 cars, and should be a great opportunity for those who can't make it to Oklahoma to participate in a Leake event. Consignments are now being accepted and already include this 1941 Cadillac Convertible that will sell at no reserve. For a list of inventory, visit www.leakecar.com or call 918-254-7077.



AUCTION PROFILE

THE THUNDERBIRD DEBUTED IN 1955 IN response to Chevrolet's Corvette. Its sports car styling combined with the elegance of the era to target luxury-minded buyers. As a result, the Thunderbird became an instant success, selling 16,155 examples its first year of availability.

This Thunderbird received a professional body-on restoration and featured the 193hp P-code 292-cu. in. overhead-valve V-8 engine with Holley four-barrel carb and the three-speed Ford-O-Matic. The body was painted in the factory-correct Goldenrod Yellow, which was a late introduction after the Thunderbird made its debut. The black-on-yellow interior featured the optional four-way power seat, telescoping steering wheel and heater and radio delete. With removable hardtop and a set of fender skirts, this heavily optioned Thunderbird was a great deal for a first-year car. Considering the costs of restorations nowadays, the buyer made out well.



CAR 1955 Ford Thunderbird
AUCTIONEER Mecum Auctions
LOCATION Indianapolis, Indiana
DATE May 20, 2016
LOT NUMBER F153

CONDITION Restored
RESERVE None
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE \$45,000
SELLING PRICE \$36,000

SEPTEMBER Calendar

1-4 • Auctions America
Auburn, Indiana • 877-906-2437
www.auctionsamerica.com

3-4 • Silver Auctions
Sun Valley, Idaho • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

8-10 • Mecum
Louisville, Kentucky • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

9-10 • Leake
Detroit, Michigan • 918-254-7077
www.leakecar.com

9-10 • Silver Auctions
Minneapolis, Minnesota • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

10 • Dan Kruse Classics
Austin, Texas • 866-495-8111
www.kruseclassics.com

22-25 • Boardwalk Classic Car Auction
Wildwood, New Jersey • 609-729-7646
www.wildwoodmotorevents.com



Silver Double

THERE ARE TWO SALES scheduled by Silver Auctions for September: Sun Valley, Idaho, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Idaho auction will take place Labor Day weekend at the Sun Valley Resort on the 3rd and 4th, while the Minnesota show will be held on the 9-10th at the Mystic Lake Casino. Over 100 cars are expected at both events, and a nice mix of classic American cars is to be expected. Consignments are still being accepted, so visit www.silverauctions.com for more information.

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



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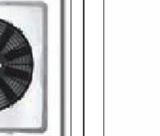
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Sometimes you encounter something clever and ponder, "Now why didn't I think of that?" It took some creativity and a bit of engineering to turn a well-used oil drum into a sturdy and comfortable armchair, perfect for a garage or den, and the credit goes



to Drum Works Furniture (www.drumworksfurniture.com), the North Carolina company that transforms industrial drums into practical seating. These 55-gallon drums are thoroughly cleaned before being powder-coated in bright, durable colors, fitted with removable seat cushions (under which is storage space) and accented with vintage-petroliana logos. Available are a California Car Cover-exclusive red Flying A seat with Sunbrella indoor-outdoor upholstery, a green Sinclair Dino Gasoline seat with Nautolex marine-grade vinyl cushions, and yellow Roar with Gilmore and Polly Gas seats with Nautolex and Sunbrella upholstery, respectively.



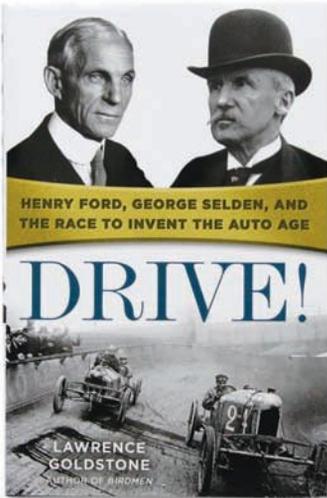
SS Shelving

800-575-1932 • WWW.GENUINEHOTROD.COM

\$99.97, WITH FREE SHIPPING

While it would be awesome to decorate your wall with the nose of your favorite car, that's hardly a simple or practical thing to do. Genuine Hotrod Hardware offers the next best thing in these Light-Up Car Shelves, which are scaled-down depictions of a handful of iconic American automobiles that double as practical wall shelves. This 1969 Chevy Camaro SS is made from cast resin and features a strong, tempered glass shelf perfect for displaying pictures, collectibles, model cars or racing trophies. Add three AA batteries (not included), and the LED headlamps will glow! It measures 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length by 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches tall by 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches deep, and is part number SBL-7580-113.

In addition, GHH offers these Light-Up Car Shelves in the similarly-sized forms of a 1957 Chevy Bel Air, 1970 Ford Mustang Boss 302, 1976 Mustang Cobra and 2013 Shelby Mustang GT500.



Drive!

WWW.AMAZON.COM • \$28.00

The subtitle of this imposing 372-page hardcover reads "Henry Ford, George Selden and the Race to Invent the Auto Age," which doesn't really hint at what the author, Lawrence Goldstone, has pulled off here. It's a round-robin, anecdotal history of the auto industry's earliest stages; Selden, of patent notoriety, plays a pivotal role in the tale for his attempt to monopolize royalties on a product he'd never actually built. The clash between him and Ford is a central conflict of the narrative, which reaches all the way back to when self-propulsion on land first became a toddling reality. The author has produced other acclaimed works on early aviation pioneers and U.S. Supreme Court rulings during Reconstruction. We think the Hemmings Nation will enjoy this look at industrial history.

- JIM DONNELLY

1937 Superior-Pontiac Lawndale Funeral Coach

800-718-1866 • WWW.DIECASTDIRECT.COM • \$159.95



Superior has long been a giant in professional car circles, having been established in 1923 as Lima, Ohio's, Superior Motor Coach Body Company. Starting out building hearse and ambulance bodies for Studebaker chassis, this firm began using Pontiac chassis in 1936, leading to the 1937 Superior-Pontiac Lawndale Funeral Coach that this model replicates. One of Brooklin's Community Service Vehicles collection, this 1:43-scale hearse is officially approved by the Professional Car Society, and sports a conservative dark red interior and curtained rear compartment, along with deftly rendered Silver Streak trim. What a way to go!

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1956 Lincoln Premiere Convertible

800-718-1866 • WWW.DIECASTDIRECT.COM • \$139.95

Lincoln's redesigned line for 1956 was new and fantastic, with sleek, low styling and a powerful new V-8 engine. The flagship was the Premiere Convertible, which the brochure called an "outdoor action car," and that's the one that the Brooklin Collection has modeled in 1:43 scale white metal. This hefty collectible combines a beautifully painted Huntsman Red exterior with a fully visible, stylish red and white interior, and there are plenty of bright metal trim accents to set off both. Lincoln fans will find this worth the price.



Motoring Masterpieces

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We're always pleased to keep up on the portfolios of our favorite automotive fine artists, and Tom Fritz is one of the most respected talents in the business. When we profiled Tom more than a decade ago (*Auto Art*, #4), this Automotive Fine Arts Society member told us how it has been pointed out to him that he creates two distinct styles of paintings: There are quiet, pastoral ones with romantic subjects that use a softer color palette, and there are the bold ones, usually depicting period hot rods and race cars, and featuring bright colors and exciting action.

With a schedule that includes hosting award-winning exhibits at prestigious events like August's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and New Zealand's Deuce Days in November, as well as creating commissioned pieces for private collectors and the U.S. Postal Service—remember the hugely popular series of five Muscle Car stamps from 2013?—Tom remains very busy. But he's shared with us a handful of recent releases we know will appeal to *HCC* readers, as they perfectly capture slices of life from eras gone by. These four pieces, each of which took between 40 and 60 hours to paint in oil on canvas, represent much more than that investment



LOCALS



NO, YOU GOTTA TAKE THE DIRT ROAD



THE GOOD LIFE

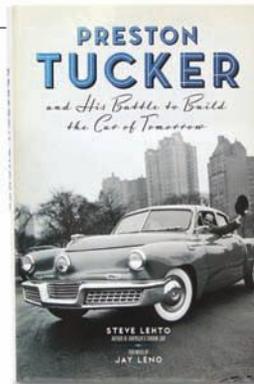
The Tucker Tale

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WWW.CHICAGOVIEWPRESS.COM

\$27.99 (HARDCOVER OR E-BOOK)

As long as there are car enthusiasts, there will be a fascination with the story of Preston Tucker and his star-crossed, four-wheeled postwar hopeful, the Tucker 48. This story has become legend, having been glamorized on the big screen, but the reality was more complex and nuanced. Tucker Automobile Club of America member and *Tucker Topics* newsletter editor Steve Lehto was keenly positioned to put together a historic overview of the birth and death of the Tucker Corporation's most famous product. *Preston Tucker and His Battle to Build the Car of Tomorrow* takes a careful look at the situation surrounding the 48's design, construction, its parent company's financial affairs and the powerful outside forces that stopped it before it could really challenge the establishment. This 254-page book is written in clear language, features endnote citations and a bibliography, and does a fine job of telling the full story of this iconic American underdog. Anyone who has a soft spot for Tucker will enjoy reading this book and pondering, what if...



OUT QUICKER THAN A HICCUP

of time and talent, considering the preliminary work with sketching and capturing live models in period costumes.

These featured paintings—*Out Quicker Than A Hiccup*, *Locals*, *No, You Gotta Take The Dirt Road*, and *The Good Life*—are available as giclée prints on canvas and paper, in various sizes, and in limited and open editions. Sizes vary by piece, typically ranging from 9 x 18 to 21 x 42 inches, with up to 150 printed in each of three sized canvas editions, and every canvas edition includes a certificate of authenticity.

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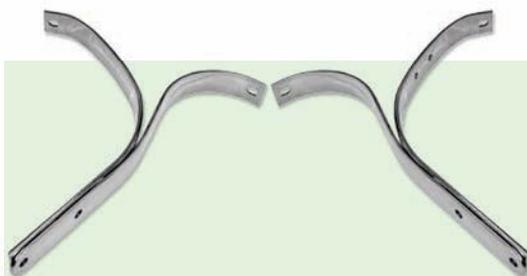
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GearWrench offers two new multi-function ratchets to make work in your shop go a lot smoother. The ratchets are available in 5.75-inch and 12-inch sizes with slim-line heads allowing for access in tight spaces. They will fit comfortably in your hand, yet give you enough torque and access to hard-to-reach fasteners. Each end has a locking flex head for greater control allowing you to stay on the fastener. The 1/4-inch drive incorporates a quick-release design to easily let users to change sockets up to 1/2 inch. Cost: \$56.29 (5.75-inch); \$66.59 (12-inch).

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Blue Oval Bumper Brackets

Mac's has parts for all eras of Ford cars and trucks, and now they've added bumper brackets for 1940 passenger cars and 1940-'41 pickups to their catalog. The stainless-steel brackets are made for the front bumper to the correct dimensions and will align with the stock attachment points. These brackets are substantial enough to withstand normal wear and tear as well as unexpected beatings. Keep in mind the Deluxe brackets are slightly longer than those for the Standard to accommodate the Deluxe grille. Cost: \$299.95.

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THE FILLING STATION
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WWW.FILLINGSTATION.COM

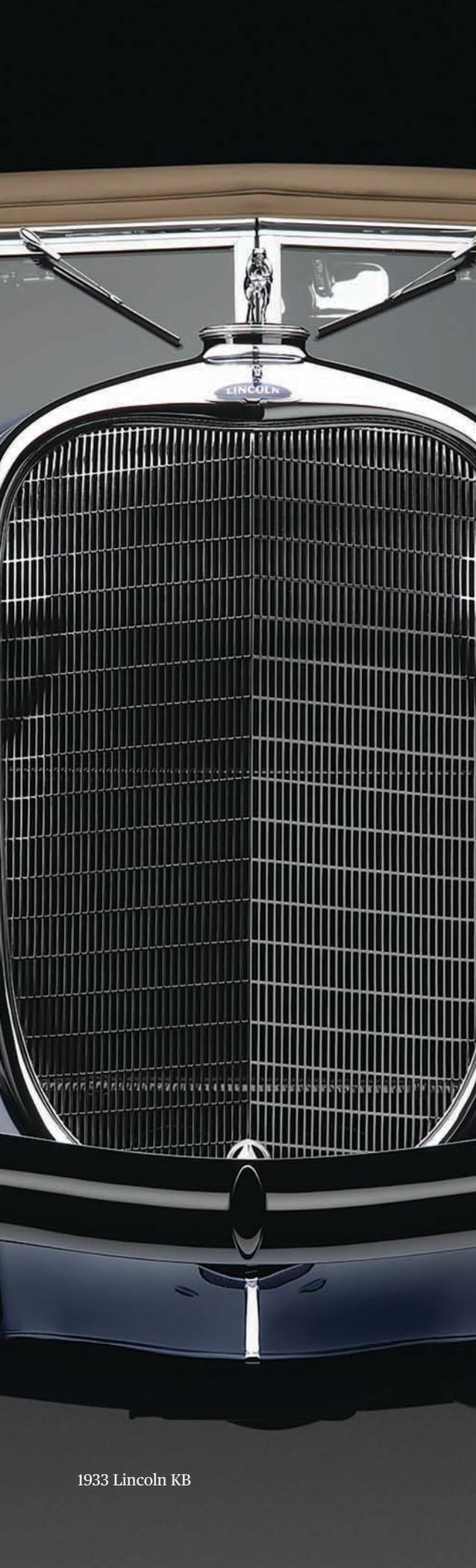


Hose Herding

We've all encountered the nuisance of getting a cord or hose stuck under our tires when working on our cars. Whether you are using a water hose, air hose or electrical cords, removing a jam or kink while working around your car can be bothersome. This new hose slide is quick and easy to place and works with most tires to keep your cords from burrowing under your tires. The polypropylene plastic is durable as well as chemical and UV resistant. This is a great item that will save you time and prevent the hassle of stuck hoses. Cost: \$12.99 (2 slides).

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Lion-Hearted Mark II

Modified for its creator, William Clay Ford Sr's 1956 Continental Mark II reflects the colors of his beloved Detroit Lions

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

William Clay Ford Sr. was settling into his new position heading up Ford's Special Product Operations in the summer of 1952, but the idea of developing a new Continental had occupied his mind for the previous two years. Comprised of stylists and engineers, this new group explored the viability of bringing a new Continental to market.



Developed from concepts that Edsel Ford (William's father) had gathered for building his personal car while on a European trip, the first Continental wasn't originally conceived as a production model. Once it became one, it still was never intended as a profit center. Instead, the Continentals of 1940 to 1942 (25 were built in 1939) and 1946 to 1948 were halo vehicles that had added prestige to Lincoln and its parent company, Ford. They were revered by their owners and by those who aspired to the privilege of ownership.

None of this was lost on William or other members of the group, which included Chief Stylist John Reinhart, Assistant Chief Stylist Robert McGuffey Thomas, Chief Body Engineer Gordon Buehrig and Chief Engineer Harley Copp, among others. They all felt a responsibility to ensure a new model

that wore the Continental badge wouldn't tarnish the reputation of those that came before it.

According to company literature, they asked themselves, "What did the original Continental have that made it so endearing?" They determined it, "filled a gap in the passenger car market by offering a vehicle whose beauty lay primarily in its honesty and simplicity of line ... the concept of the original Continental had stood the test of time and this is because of its sound proportions and the functionalism of its design." Thus, the group's styling strategy would be coined "Modern Formal," defined as, "functional, enduring design, emphasizing an air of distinction and elegant simplicity."

Development of the Mark II also included the philosophy of low, long and wide, and by the end of 1952, the general overall



Various combinations and colors of leather and cloth were available when purchasing a Mark II, but this isn't one of them. The dash, seats and side panels were recovered to match the team colors of the Detroit Lions, yet they retain the stock upholstery patterns.

proportions of the car were confirmed.

A styling contest included four outside automotive designers, as well as those from inside the company. In May of 1953, the entry from John Reinhart was chosen as the winner. The long hood, short deck, crisp lines and clean flanks of Reinhart's captivating creation aptly fit the intended design direction. The concept then progressed through scale models to full-size clay, and plaster. Final approval came in late September 1953.

In October of 1953, Special Product Operations became the Special Product Division, and in October of 1954, William Clay Ford announced that the Continental would be produced and the Special Product Division would become the Continental Divi-

sion (separate from Lincoln), and remain under his direction. By December 24, 1954, a handmade prototype Mark II was ready for testing.

The production 1956 Mark II was released in October of 1955. It was built in its own plant and employed painstaking assembly procedures. According to company literature, every engine underwent dyno testing more than once in the car's assembly process. The bodies were pre-assembled and checked for proper fit. Then they were disassembled with the body parts numbered specific to each one and were painted as a group with multiple "double-coats." Each coat of paint was baked and hand sanded before the next coat was applied. Even the wheel covers



The sophisticated dash panel features full gauges. Aircraft-inspired slider switches control the heat and the optional A/C systems, and a signal-seeking AM radio was also standard. William Clay Ford Sr's initials adorn the custom steering wheel center emblem.



To modernize the drivetrain for William Clay Ford Sr, in late 1968, Ford engineers installed a contemporary 460-cu.in. V-8, C6 automatic and rear end. The engine compartment has since been restored four times—in 1974, the mid-1980s, the mid-1990s and early 2000s.

were hand assembled; over 40 inspectors oversaw production at the plant.

High-quality materials were also sourced. The body sheet-metal was hand-selected at the supplier prior to shipping to the plant. Leather was imported from Bridge of Weir in Scotland for the upholstery, or a selection of upscale cloths could be specified. Both were available in various colors and could be used together. Improved plating techniques provided more durable chrome trim. All Mark IIs were subjected to rigorous road testing prior to delivery to Lincoln dealers.

The Mark II was lavishly equipped, leaving A/C as the lone option. Standard were power steering, brakes, front seat, door windows, and vent windows, an AM radio and a heater. Also included were gauges for oil pressure, coolant temperature, amps and fuel, a 140-MPH speedometer with a trip odometer, a 5,000 RPM tachometer and an electric clock. The interior and trunk were fully carpeted, and a nameplate on the center of the floor in the passenger compartment had the owner's name engraved on it.

Under the hood, a Lincoln 368-cu.in. V-8 produced 285 horsepower, and 402-lb.ft. of torque was transferred through the Turbo-Drive three-speed automatic transmission to a Hotchkiss differential with 3.07 gears. Unequal-length control arms, coil springs, ball joints and an anti-roll bar were up front, leaf springs were in the rear and temperature-sensitive shocks, 12-inch drum brakes and tubeless whitewall tires comprised the chassis.

The heightened attention to detail and upmarket styling and materials commanded a premium price to match at close to \$9,700 in 1956 and \$10,000 in 1957. Except for the 1957 Eldorado Brougham, the Mark II was considerably higher in price than the Cadillacs—its market target. Each Mark II also took much longer to build compared to the company's other offerings.

Popular Mechanics tested the Mark II and concluded that it did live up to its luxury status in fit, finish and equipment. It was deemed very comfortable from the driver's perspective. It handled well for its size, and power was satisfactory. The owner's report lamented that ingress and egress from the passenger compartment was difficult, and noted some other quality quibbles. The upright placement of the spare tire at the leading edge of the



The stock vacuum-powered windshield wiper motor was exchanged for an electric one, the battery is a reproduction and the underhood electrical components are shielded from above.



trunk, which fit into the stylish raised tire cover in the decklid, was also called out for reducing trunk space and making loading cargo awkward. Regardless, many Mark II owners raved about its styling and ride, and embraced its exclusivity.

Our featured model was originally assembled with Deep Blue exterior paint and a combination of blue and natural tan leather interior. It was built on a rush order for Mrs. John Olin, wife of the chairman of the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation. In 1968, William Clay Ford acquired it from the Olins, and modifications came soon thereafter. It went to Ford Engineering, where a new Mark III 460-cu.in. V-8 and C6 automatic transmis-

sion were installed, requiring modification to the frame near the front of the transmission tunnel, and the engine and transmission mount areas. The original two-piece driveshaft was modified, and a 1969 Lincoln rear end was installed.

Since the original dash tach was cable driven, the 460's distributor was modified to accept it. The cooling, electrical and air conditioning systems were also revised.

The exterior was repainted in Honolulu Blue using multi-stage pearl Inmont acrylic lacquer as an homage to the Detroit Lions, the pro football team that William owned. Expanding on the Lions' theme, the interior was recovered in domestic leathers



The left taillamp assembly swings open to reveal the fuel door. To achieve a lower roofline without sacrificing passenger headroom, the compartment floor dropped down between the frame rails. Consequently, the dual exhaust system was routed outside of them. Featuring resonators, mufflers and a crossover pipe near the rear axle, it terminates at bright tips through the rear bumper. Each fin of the wheel covers was hand fitted.





in Honolulu Blue and silver, while retaining the factory upholstery pattern.

In 1974, the Mark II was delivered to Desert Classics in Nogales, Arizona, where it was dismantled and restored. After stripping the body and making any needed repairs, it was repainted in Honolulu Blue. Proper Bridge of Weir leather in Honolulu Blue and silver was used to reupholster the interior, again in the stock Mark II pattern. The frame was further modified to improve the mounting of the transmission, and the A/C compressor was moved to the opposite side of the engine. A breakerless ignition system, disc brakes and electric windshield wipers were also installed.

Rick Schmidt and his father, Jim, proprietors of National Parts Depot, a supplier of restoration parts for various make and model vintage vehicles, are also well-known car collectors. They house their expansive collection at their Ocala, Florida, location. The Schmidts possess the three Mark IIs that were once owned by Edsel Ford's three sons, Benson, Henry II and William.

In the early 1980s, Rick's grandfather, Al, had the opportunity to ride in his brother-in-law, Jim Smith's, Continental Mark II, which had been owned by Edsel's wife and the mother of Benson, Henry II and William. He was so impressed with it that he decided he wanted one. His son Jim Schmidt called his friend Roger Hayman, a member of the Lincoln and Continental Owner's Club to help in the search... and this is what they came up with—William Clay Ford's own Mark II! The owner at the time was fellow club member Gene McNeilage of Dearborn Heights.

Despite its worn paint and interior, Al bought the Mark II, and after some work by his son, he enjoyed it for about a decade. Rick explains, "McNeilage passed along documentation that had been provided by Mr. Ford's executive assistant, George Haviland, which outlined the history and modifications to the car." It also included copies of the original production order and the Michigan title in William Clay Ford's name.

Rick continues: "We also own a 1980 Mark VI that was originally built for William—also Honolulu Blue with numerous custom touches from the factory. We purchased it from Dom Pacitti, who had a long career as a Ford illustrator/artist. At the time Dom purchased the Mark VI from Mr. Ford, the Mark II was also available, but Dom was unable to buy both cars, so McNeilage eventually bought the Mark II instead."

"Fast-forward to 2016, Dom has retired right here in Ocala, Florida. Recently, he came to visit, and he had with him a set of the exact same documents for the William's Mark II that we had."

Rick relates, "The Mark II drives beautifully. With the high-compression 460 engine, the power and torque are impressive, as is the smoothness of the driveline—it cruises at interstate speeds without breaking a sweat. It's very roadworthy—tight, no rattles or looseness of any kind. It tracks straight, rides smooth but not floaty. All things are relative, and nothing from the '50s-era handles like modern cars do. But that said, the low center of gravity makes





In the mid-1980s, the engine and engine compartment were restored and the car was repainted. Then in the mid-1990s, we had the interior completely restored, and the mechanicals rebuilt, again with yet-another engine compartment do-over and some paint touch-ups. Still dissatisfied with the overall quality of the work, in the early-2000s, we had Lloyd and Jeff Brekke of Lloyds Auto Restorations in Bartow, Florida, perform a cosmetic restoration of the exterior and engine compartment, including all new paint, and the brightwork/trim was restored. That's how this Mark II is presented today.

the Mark II go through corners with considerably less body roll than a comparable-era Cadillac, Packard or Chrysler.

"It's impossible not to admire the futuristic interior. In the '50s, it must have felt like you were a passenger in a concept car, because it feels that way right up to the present day! And there's no denying that driving down the road with air-conditioning blowing DOWN on your head takes a bit of getting used to. In this Mark II, the horn ring emblem has William's 'WCF' initials in it, which really makes driving the car quite fun; imagining yourself as William Clay Ford Sr, driving to a Lions football game."

For the following model year, Mark IIs benefited from an additional 15 horsepower and some other subtle improvements. Nevertheless, over its two-year run, just under or just over 3,000 examples were sold, depending upon the source, and the Ford Motor Company lost money on each one. The Continental Division was merged with Lincoln in mid-1956, and William Clay Ford moved to corporate product planning and design. Hence, Continentals would become much more Lincoln-like in 1958 with the introduction of the Mark III convertible, coupe and four-door. And they became much more attainable with an approximate \$4,000 price reduction.

Despite the negative economic impact it had on Ford, the Mark II succeeded in adding prestige to the companies from which it came, through the seamless blending of restrained

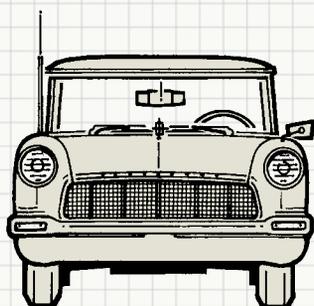


classic styling with forward-thinking design elements, the use of high-quality materials and conscientious assembly and testing practices. And nearly six decades later, those attributes remain evident from behind the wheel of a restored or well-preserved Continental Mark II. 🗨️

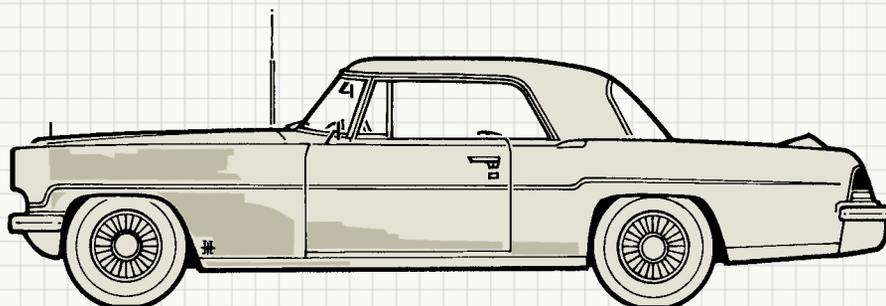


1956 CONTINENTAL MARK II

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



← 58.5 inches →



← 126 inches →

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$9,695
PRICE AS OPTIONED	\$10,290
OPTIONS (ON CAR PROFILED)	Air conditioning, \$595

ENGINE

TYPE	Lincoln OHV V-8, cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	368 cubic inches (currently 460 cubic inches)
BORE X STROKE	4.00 x 3.66 inches (currently 4.36 x 3.85 inches)
COMPRESSION RATIO	9:1 (currently 10.5:1)
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	285 @ 4,600 (currently 365 @ 4,600)
TORQUE @ RPM	402-lb.ft. @ 3,000 (currently 500-lb.ft @ 2,800)
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic valve lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Pressure, gear-type pump
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual with crossover pipe

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Lincoln Turbo Drive three-speed automatic, column-shift (currently a C6)
RATIOS	1st 2.40:1 2nd 1.47:1 Reverse 2.00:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hotchkiss-type, hypoid drive gears, open
GEAR RATIO	3.07:1 (currently N/A)

STEERING

TYPE	Saginaw power steering
GEAR RATIO	22:1
TURNING CIRCLE	45.3-feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, 4-wheel drum, power assisted
FRONT	12 x 2.50-inch drum (currently front disc)

REAR	12 x 2.00-inch drum
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CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Welded and bolt-on steel body panels, separate steel frame
FRAME	Double-drop, ladder-type, square steel tube, multiple crossmembers
BODY STYLE	Two-door hardtop
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; coil springs, double-acting hydraulic shocks, anti-roll bar
REAR	Solid axle; semi-elliptical leaf springs longitudinally mounted; double-acting hydraulic shocks

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Steel with wheel covers
FRONT/REAR	15 x 6 inches
TIRES	Firestone whitewall reproductions of originals
FRONT/REAR	8.20 x 15 tubeless

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	126 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	218.4 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	77.5 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	56 inches
FRONT TRACK	58.5 inches
REAR TRACK	60 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	4,960 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts
COOLING SYSTEM	25.5 quarts
FUEL TANK	25 gallons

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	.774
WEIGHT PER BHP	17.40 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	13.47-pounds

PRODUCTION

1956	2,550
1957	444

PROS & CONS

- + Ford family ownership pedigree
- + Painstakingly engineered and styled
- + Upscale model
- Too rare to drive
- Too valuable to drive
- Customized areas may present repair challenges

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
\$22,000 – \$26,000

AVERAGE
\$33,000 – \$37,000

HIGH
\$77,000 – \$82,000

Values do not reflect a Mark II previously owned by a Ford family member.

CLUB CORNER

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

aaca.org
501 W. Governor Rd
P.O. Box 417
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
Phone: 717-534-1910
Dues: \$35 (annually)
Membership: 63,000

LINCOLN AND CONTINENTAL OWNERS CLUB

P.O. Box 1715
Maple Grove, Minnesota 55311
763-420-7829; www.lcoc.org
Dues: \$48/year;
Membership: 2,500

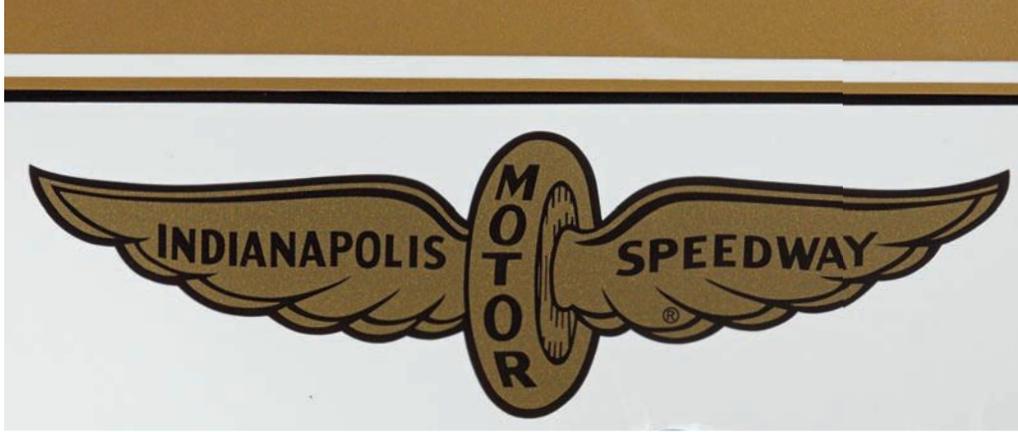


Festival Flyer

This Oldsmobile Delta 88 Royale convertible was one of just 42 produced for the 1974 Indianapolis 500 Festival

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

When a car company signs up for Pace Car duty for the Indianapolis 500, it is also contracted to supply “Festival” cars—a quantity of cars for track officials and other local dignitaries to run around town in through the month of May. The fully lettered-up models act as promotion for the big race.



The day of the event will see them circle the track with a parade of local luminaries—politicians, celebrities and the like—sitting atop the parade boot, but for the rest of the month, their presence is a perk for connected Indy A-listers. Generally, the Festival Cars are replicas of the Pace Cars themselves. But not always.

In 1974, Oldsmobile had the honor of pacing the Indy 500 for the third time in five years; the division chose a custom-built, tweaked Hurst/Olds convertible to lead the class of 33 single-seaters around the 2.5-mile oval. But then there was the question of the Festival Cars. What to do when your Pace Car is a car that isn't really meant for the showroom? How to satisfy expectations? Oldsmobile wasn't about to pay to have the roofs removed from four dozen additional Colonnade Cutlasses, so it substituted the only convertible in the lineup: the Delta 88 Royale.

These special Delta 88s were all equipped with heavy-duty radiators, for the endless low-speed parade duties at the track on the day of the race, as well as trailer-towing-package-grade suspension stiffening. And Hurst painted 'em up like the actual Pace Car: gold striping, Indy 500 and Hurst/Olds logos and badging over factory Cameo White paint.

While having an Oldsmobile convertible to match the Hurst/Olds Pace Car made sense on some level, it was a high-profile assignment for a car whose time had come and gone. It was a big car when it launched—a 124-inch wheelbase, which was huge even by big-car standards of the period. That big car got bigger still, thanks to bumper laws that added a couple of hundred pounds to the very ends of the car in 1973 and '74. And the first OPEC gas crisis offset Olds' promotional efforts. This was just a couple of years after compression ratios dropped and power numbers went from gross to net. The Delta 88's standard Rocket 350-cu.in. V-8 was rated at 185 horsepower, with

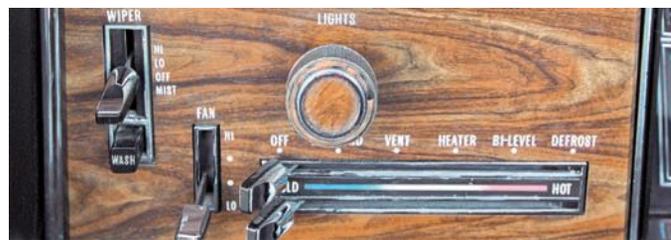
275-lb.ft. of torque in a 4,600-pound Royale convertible. A big-displacement 455 was also available, but who would plump for the big-block in a fuel crisis?

Of course, the Delta 88 Royale enjoyed the usual year-to-year updates: colors and trim, five-MPH rear bumpers now matching the shock-absorber-suspended battering-ram at the front, and a variety of chassis tweaks that included new body mounts, re-valved shocks and larger front upper-control-arm bushings that combined to provide a smoother ride. It also featured a one-year-only "waterfall" grille that wrapped up and over. But this wasn't enough: Just 3,716 Delta 88 Royale convertibles were built for the 1974 model year—about half the number of 1973 Delta 88 Royale convertibles, and half the number of the last-of-its-breed, get-'em-before-they're-gone 1975 versions. Of those 3,716 cars, just 42 were earmarked to be Indy 500 Festival Cars.

Factory records for those Festival Cars still exist. This is the car that wore license plate #23; it was assigned to Rex Fleenor, a longtime board member and vice-president of the Indianapolis 500 festival. After serving its Festival duties, it was sent off to a local Oldsmobile dealer's used-car lot, keeping the

The car as it appeared in 1979, when Nicholas Kalivianakis brought it home from an Illinois used-car dealer. Hubcaps were factory, and the lettering was gone, but the gold Hurst striping remained.





The instrument panel was largely bereft of information beyond your velocity and what gear you were in; the climate controls, unusually, were at the driver's left hand in this generation of General Motors B-body. Wipers activated via toggle switch rather than a knob.

gold stripes but stripped of its lettering, as ex-Indy Festival Cars often were.

The next five years of this car's history are lost, but we know that, in the summer of 1979, this Olds turned up at Jerry's Used Car Sales in Silvis, Illinois, a small town nestled up near the Quad Cities and the Iowa border. Nick Kalivianakis bought it with 49,000 miles on the odometer, with the dealer swearing that it was a Hurst/Olds. Nick's daughter Brenda, a full-fledged Indy 500 fan and car enthusiast herself, knew that the actual 1974 Indy Pace Car was an A-body, and long suspected that her dad got duped.

Duped or not, the Delta 88 remained with Nick for the rest of his life, through the end of 2000. Brenda tells us: "Mostly Dad spent time improving it—new springs and shocks, little things. He babied it and used it as a weekend car. He always had a company car, and so only used the Oldsmobile on weekends. It led an easy life." Brenda inherited the Festival Delta 88, original paint and Hurst-added stripe and badging intact, with 74,000 miles showing on the odometer; it came to her around the time she was moving from Illinois to Gold Country, Arizona. "My mother actually didn't like the convertible, or how old cars smell

like gas," she continues. "At Dad's funeral, Mom said, 'Get it out of here.' And so I drove it all the way back to Arizona."

It wasn't until Brenda's ownership that her curiosity about its lineage was finally put to rest: A letter to the Hurst/Olds Club of America with a photo of the car and the VIN got her a quick response confirming that this was indeed everything that Nick believed it was. Within a decade of Brenda being introduced to the Hurst/Olds Club, she became membership coordinator, then its director. It's not unfair to suggest that this is the car that led her on the path to her current position.

In 2008, she decided to replace all of the engine gaskets, because between their age, the relatively low miles per year, and the desert heat that reaches 120-degrees in the summer, it was time. "The engine was leaking, the transmission had always leaked, so we decided to remove the engine and transmission, and install the new gaskets," Brenda says. "And then I thought, as long as we're doing that, we should look at getting it painted." And that way madness lies. A complete body-on restoration was completed in 2014, done a bit at a time. "One thing led to another," Brenda recalls. "The interior looked perfect, and I was grateful that I didn't have to reupholster it. Well, then you paint



The factory-equipped Oldsmobile 350-cubic-inch V-8 was good for 180 horsepower and 275-lb.-ft. of torque through the column-shifted Turbo-Hydra-Matic 400 transmission in 1974. Not quite the Rocket of years gone by, despite what the air cleaner promised, but, oh, so smooth.



AM/FM stereo radio with the power convertible top switch positioned below, a digital clock, and very comfortable bench seating front and rear for you and five of your friends, were all part and parcel of the Festival cars. Steering wheel featured matching wood trim around its rim.

it, and, wow, the interior looks yellowed. You can't just go in a catalog and buy a correct seat cover for a 1974 Delta 88—I ended up having these all hand-stitched. The door panels, too."

Brenda sings the song of the individualist restorer. "I have a 1970 Indy Pace Car replica now, too, and you can get everything for that car out of a catalog. It's gonna be a breeze compared to the Delta! The front bumper filler panels are one-year-only pieces for the '74 Delta, and no one reproduces them. They took me six months to have made. A guy in Florida took what I had, made molds for me, then made new pieces."

Over the course of the refurbishment, a couple of minor tweaks were made. The biggest one was a wheel upgrade. The original steel wheels and wheel covers have been replaced with a set of polycast Olds Super Stock IV wheels from earlier in the 1970s, and painted gold to match the Hurst stripe; they're not factory-equipped but they certainly do help visually enhance the big Oldsmobile. A set of modern whitewall radials sized 225/70R15 were also installed, along with an HEI distributor to replace the old points distributor, for reliability; Brenda retains all the original parts in her garage.

"Since owning the Delta, I have really come to appreciate

what my father saw in this car," Brenda tells us. "It drives like a dream, rides like you're floating on a cloud, looks great, and is a great conversation starter. It's also like owning a piece of Indianapolis 500 history. It's like a secret handshake between you and the most amazing people you'd ever want to meet." 🗨️

“It drives like a dream, rides like you're floating on a cloud, looks great, and is a great conversation starter.”



THANK YOU, RICHARD, FOR THE courage of your convictions regarding your column in *HCC* #142. I suspect that you will catch hell for not supporting other people's favorites, but that was not your purpose. I agree with you, especially on the 1949 Cadillac Sedanette, Model 61 (and not the over-chromed series 62). And for including the often neglected 1954 Lincoln.

There was one category you missed: Favorite Butterball car. Mine is a 1947 Crosley, two-door sedan. As a second-grader in New Jersey in 1950, it was my first introduction to the identifiable postwar cars.
Steve Kaiser
Cambridge, Massachusetts

HOW ABOUT A FAVORITE NASCAR vehicle? Mine is Richard Petty's 1970 Plymouth Superbird. I think the winged and aero era of the superspeedways featured the most unique bunch of stock cars. Dodge Daytonas, Mercury Cyclone Spoiler IIs and Torino Talladegas were all super-cool!
Dave Harris
Northbrook, Illinois

OKAY, RICHARD. YOU PRETTY MUCH read my mind as far as GM cars are concerned, save one. I just saw a beautiful 1965 Riviera survivor in Palm Springs. Somehow, it seems like a totally different car than my favorite, the original 1963 edition. And thank you for recognizing the intrinsic beauty of the elegantly understated, and timeless appeal of the 1957 Cadillac Series 62 Coupe.
Paul Baker
Walnut Creek, California

I WAS INTRIGUED BY RICHARD'S LIST of favorite vehicles. While I take issue with his choice of Packards, I commend him on his choice of passenger plane: the great Super Connie. If you Google "Save-a-Connie" you will find a picture of our 1937 Packard LeBaron All-Weather Town Car parked beside a Connie.
Bob Supina
Houston, Texas

I AGREE WITH MOST BUT NOT ALL OF Richard's selections and wasn't going to express my disagreements until I saw his selection for favorite steam locomotive. The Alco is certainly a serviceable engine but Richard's East Coast bias surfaced by not selecting the powerful and beautiful Lima

GS4-5 4-8-4 Southern Pacific Daylights of the 1940s and '50s.

We, along with most of your readership, grew up appreciating, even worshipping, trains, especially steam locomotives. We also, of course, appreciated cars and trucks. That's our generation. When we were young we had train sets (I had American Flyer), and there was always some "old guy" in the neighborhood who had converted his garage into a train diorama complete with bridges, buildings, people and rolling stock. Can anyone under 40 relate?
John Motroni
San Francisco, California

MY DITTOS ON MANY OF RICHARD'S choices. Here is my list:

Oldsmobiles.....Entire 1950 lineup, 98, 88, 76
CadillacsAll 1948-1953
Buicks 1949 and 1954
Station wagons.....Olds Vista Cruiser andits Buick cousin (1964-'72)
Engine exhaust noteLincoln Zephyr V-12and Buick straight-eight
Small tractorFord 8N
Steam locomotive..... Norfolk & Western J611
Shotgun.....Winchester model 12 pump
Plane.....DC 3
Bob Edwards
Raleigh, North Carolina

REGARDING THE FIRST LETTER IN Recaps in *HCC* #142, my brother Dan and I visited Bruce Clayton in the late '60s and saw his amazing piles of stuff. In the repair garage of the dealership was a particularly remarkable pile of choice parts. I rummaged through it and found a 1941 Packard 160/180 complete taillamp assembly. I had great difficulty trying to extract it from the heap and then noticed it was connected to a 1941 Packard—such was Bruce Clayton. After he passed away, a local businessman, Ray Bernacki, bought everything, and through an intermediary we purchased the entire parts stock and a black 1953 Caribbean which we still have; it had been light blue. Bruce painted everything black, such was Bruce.

If it weren't for Bruce and dozens of other hoarders we have encountered in the past 56 years, we would not have a business. I want to create a National Hoarders Appreciation Day as we are Master Hoarders, too.

Yes, 1956 Caribbeans were available with colored tires to match the bottom color of the three-tone paint scheme. I'm not sure if I saw Bruce's Caribbean, but I have seen others with whitewall brown tires. The other three-tone schemes all had dark gray or black as the bottom colors, so a colored tire would not be needed. For sure they were not a factory option or factory installed, they were offered by U.S. Royal and dealer installed. For years after 1956, U.S. Royal offered bicycle tires in many colors.
Dan and Fred Kanter
Boonton, New Jersey

IN HCC #142 JEFF KOCH WRITES that the 1976 Seville was the first American car designed to have an EFI V-8. The timeline might be debatable; I ordered a new 1975 Coupe de Ville, which was advertised to have the first electronic fuel injection on its 500-cu.in. engine (earlier Chevrolet and Pontiac engines had mechanical fuel injection).

GM kept delaying the EFI availability, and I finally canceled and ordered the standard four-barrel carburetor. The following year, I ordered a 1976 Eldorado coupe with the 500 EFI V-8 and received exactly that. I don't know if any '75s made it out of the factory with the EFI or not. The EFI performed well, but had a slight flat spot just off idle, which felt like a carburetor with a weak accelerator pump. I towed a 27-foot RV trailer with it and was able to achieve nine MPG, which is better than any other RV combo I have had.
Bob Bainbridge
Elyria, Ohio

THE ARTICLE ON THE CADILLAC Seville brought back painful memories of the Bendix fuel injection system. I will never forget the statement in the GM diagnostic manual as how to test a suspected part. "Go to the parts department, obtain a known good part and install it." Both the manifold air pressure sensor and fuel pump relay were internal in the ECU and had high failure rates. Coolant and air temperature sensors were the same and could be reversed for diagnostic testing. Ah, those were the good old days—I don't think so.
Phil Aubrey
Merlin, Oregon

Continued on page 34

I Want a.....

Oh, man. Here we go again! Over this past winter, I had time to think about things, and, as usual, it's been mostly car things that I've thought about. That's consisted almost entirely about what kind of old car I'd buy if I was in the market for one. You see, right now, I'm down to owning just one collector car. And although I promised my wife that I wouldn't buy another old car, I've got to confess that I really, really want to.

Faithful readers of this column might recall that, years ago, I made a similar promise to my wife and then promptly broke it. After swearing that I wouldn't, I bought a Rambler and hid it in one of my garages. When she finally found out months later it suddenly got very quiet in my house; she didn't talk to me for weeks. I don't want to go through that again. And yet....

For some unfathomable reason, I've got a burning desire to own one of those little electric cars that were introduced in the 1960s and '70s. They came about because of concerns about America's worsening smog and pollution problems. There were several makes announced, including Citicar, Elcar, Gilbert Patriot and other even more obscure autos. One of them was an interesting little sedan that was backed by a major U.S. company – Westinghouse. And that's what's got me ready to risk having my wife angry with me all over again. To put it bluntly, I WANT A WESTINGHOUSE!

Okay, so by now most of you are wondering what I'm talking about, because although Westinghouse is a pretty well-known company name, most people have never heard of a Westinghouse automobile. There actually was an early Westinghouse gas-powered touring car built from 1905-'07. But that's not the one that has me bewitched.

The one I want was announced more recently, 1967 to be precise, when the Westinghouse Electric Corporation decided to manufacture an adorable little sedan called the Markette. A fiberglass-bodied two-door, it was a two-seater weighing just 1,730 pounds. Powered by 12 six-volt lead-acid batteries hooked up to two electric motors producing 4½ horsepower, it could

travel up to 50 miles on a charge. One drawback common to electric cars of that era was its top speed of about 25 miles per hour. Well, what do you expect from 4½ horses? The function of the Markette, according to Westinghouse, was "... to provide short-range, convenient, smog-free transportation for urban dwellers."

Although I'd prefer something that could

go a little faster, that low top speed doesn't bother me too much because I live in a fairly small town, and here in New England, traffic generally moves slowly because our roads are narrow and there are a lot of cars on them, so we're basically always in a traffic jam. Besides, the Westinghouse looks so flimsy I don't think I'd want to go much faster – I doubt it can handle much of a crash.

The Westinghouse's styling is one thing that really attracts me. I mean, who on earth would deliberately try to make a car look like that? It's plain, tall and stubby, looking like an International Scout that got left out in the rain and shrunk. And just look at those itty-bitty wheels! Let's face it, this orphan is just begging to be brought home and cared for.

The Markette was related to an earlier electric car called the Marketeer, which was introduced around 1951. A tiny, golf-cart-like shopper, it was produced in a factory located in Redlands, California. The Marketeer Company produced a mix of electric cars and golf carts and enjoyed a measure of success. In 1965, Westinghouse purchased the company and continued building its electric golf cart line. Then on April 4, 1967, it announced the Markette. Westinghouse president Donald Burnham called the Markette "... a small electric vehicle for around-town transportation." He claimed to have orders for 500 cars.

Not surprisingly, the Markette wasn't successful. Apparently, it was produced only in 1967 and part of 1968, and it seems doubtful that even 500 cars were built because they're rarely seen today. Westinghouse sold the Marketeer Company to Nordskog Industries not long after.

I'm going to keep an eye out for a nice, clean Markette. Hopefully my wife will understand. ☺



For some

unfathomable

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burning desire to

own one of those

little electric

cars that were

introduced in the

1960s and '70s.



THERE WERE TWO ARTICLES IN THE

July Issue that really hit home, for me. The first was Pat Foster's column. I learned to drive on a new 1958 Rambler Six Custom Station Wagon. My first real car was a 1957 Rambler. It was a Rebel with overdrive and a continental kit. That 327-cu.in. V-8 ran forever and would cruise effortlessly at 80 MPH. At that speed, the Sun Super tach read just 3,000 RPM. I installed a Hurst SYNCRO/LOC shifter, and I flat-shifted second to third what seems like a thousand times and never had a problem with any of the drivetrain. In the days when all of my friends were swapping their cars out every six months to a year, I kept that Rebel for three and a half years. It still ran and looked great, and I should have put it away and saved it. I only sold it to buy my first new car.

That new car was a 1965 Rambler American 440H as mentioned in Milton Stern's article in *HCC* #142. It was equipped with the new 232-cu. in. straight-six with a Carter two-barrel, Shift Command Flash-O-Matic, and some heavy-duty options like cooling and electrical systems, handling package, and the Twin Grip. That little six-cylinder was a killer on the street. It would stay with 289 Mustangs, and ran consistent low 17s in the quarter-mile in Pure Stock trim. I even won a few trophies with it, running against all V-8s. Not bad for your "Granny's Rambler." The bucket seats were as stylish and more comfortable than any other, and I particularly liked the styling of those Rambler Americans of that era. They were two of the best cars I ever owned.
Larry Blatt
Coatesville, Pennsylvania

I ENJOYED PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN

on Ramblers in *HCC* #142. My dad always liked Nash cars after owning a 1942 Nash 600 coupe with overdrive that would get close to 30 MPG on the highway. He bought a new 1956 "Hudson" Rambler Cross Country Wagon to serve as our family's transportation. The quality of workmanship was better than most people would have expected. All in all, an excellent car. With a Dual-Range Hydra-Matic, it would easily get 22 to 23 MPG.

Some of the '56 models initially came with rear axles that were prone to breaking due to brittle castings; today there'd probably have been a recall. The car handled well, and it was easy to park—not only because it was compact,

but because visibility was excellent (What a concept: design a car so you can see out of it, and you don't need a camera!)

The earlier Rambler hard tops and convertibles were "cute as a button." Reporter Clark Kent (played by actor George Reeves) drove a small but "spiffy" early '50s Rambler as a work car for the *Daily Planet*. Any car good enough for Superman should be good enough for anyone!
Robert Peters
Puyallup, Washington

WHILE I THOROUGHLY ENJOY

Patrick Foster's articles and books, the Edsel article in *HCC* #142 confuses me. He attributes the failure of the Edsel solely to its controversial styling. I have read in many places that, while the styling did not help, there were other reasons—the 1958 recession more so than anything else, as it adversely affected all medium-price makes, not to mention a totally new one. Add in poor placement, as it did not really stand out enough from Ford or Mercury, and there were quality issues.

Ford probably did pull it too quickly in light of its decent sales. But how would it have fared as a stand-alone make with the introduction of compacts and intermediates? Would it have just pulled sales primarily from Ford or Mercury?

A lot of car companies and makes died because they were not competitive and did not have a realistic business plan. Wishing it were different doesn't make it so.
Robert Tugwell
Belton, South Carolina

PATRICK FOSTER'S INTERESTING

and scholarly article about Edsel's early styling concepts adds an important visual and historical addition to Edsel lore. It could have been even more successful had the author included a picture of the Packard Predictor show car which was a springboard for Robert Jones's pursuit of a classic-style radiator concept. As a Packard enthusiast, I can draw the Predictor in my sleep, but I would argue that many of your readers are not that familiar with it. Likewise, they might wish to see a photograph of the earlier Packard Request which was the first styling exercise (by Dick Teague) responding to "owners begging Packard to return to the elegant vertical grille styling it had used successfully for so many years."

Additionally, automotive historians have yet to thoroughly investigate James Nance, formerly head of Studebaker-Packard, and his influence at the helm of Ford's newly-formed Mercury-Edsel-

Lincoln Division. Many of the Predictor's styling cues showed up later in MEL products.

John McCall
Palmetto, Georgia

I WOULD SAY THAT THERE WERE AT

least two other causes of the failure of the Edsel brand besides the styling. Most observers believe that introducing a mid-priced car during the recession of 1958 was bad timing. And, Ford should not have attempted to create a whole new dealer network for this new brand. It would have been better if Edsel had been given to Ford dealers as an upgrade from Ford.

Henry Lawrence
Peoria, Illinois

WHILE I BELIEVE ITS APPEARANCE

was a factor in its demise, the 1958 recession and the fact that new car sales, especially in the mid-priced market, took a big hit, also helped. Had the Edsel been introduced during a booming economy, it might have had a better chance of surviving.

Robert Lyons
Moses Lake, Washington

I VERY MUCH ENJOYED READING

Jim Donnelly's article on professional cars in *HCC* #142. My wife and I were in Havana, Cuba, in 2011 enjoying my 65th birthday and marveling at the many '40s and '50s cars on the island. While in Parque Central, across the street from the Capitol Building, I eyed what appeared to be a 1940's Cadillac station wagon. Having never seen nor heard of a Cadillac such as this, I mentally wrote it off as a one-off or custom model. Only when back stateside, when I happened to see a newsreel on the History Channel of Al Capone's funeral procession, did I realize that he was carried on his last journey by a model identical to the one I had seen in Havana. Confirming Jim's hypothesis—there are still many of these older professional cars still out there doing duty.
Tom Thornell

Lockhart, Texas

BACK IN 1965, MY FATHER SOLD

Kelvinator appliances. Kelvinator was owned by AMC and they decided to offer a special deal to their salesmen. For every Kelvinator appliance sold during a specific period, the salesman would receive a \$100 check from AMC to be applied to a new AMC car. Dad sold 16 appliances, so he got a check for \$1,600 from AMC

Continued on page 36

Daydreaming in the Late Afternoon

Lots of times, I'm too wired to go straight home after work. So, many times, here's what I do: I take a little cruise through the countryside that straddles the boundaries of Vermont, Massachusetts and New York. I can usually wrap it up in about 20 to 25 miles or so. I may stop to look at farm animals, or, like the other night, watch a small flock of wild turkeys strutting across a barren field. Having grown up in a far more urban area, I think it's pretty cool. I can also usually find farm stores or stands open, and I check out everything from sweet yellow melons to homemade cheddar cheese and raspberry preserves.

I know it's weird but that's the way I am, and plus, it gives me a little time to decompress and think. Mostly, I think about what we're doing here at Hemmings. I usually don't have pleasant dreams when I'm asleep, so when it comes down to having to do that sort of mental planning, or simple contemplation, I do it when I'm awake. That's how I started thinking about a car that may not even exist, at least not in the form that I envisioned it.

My thoughts turned to what a fetching car a full-sized Pontiac station wagon would be. You know, from the era of the 1960s when engineers port-matched cylinder heads and camshafts to engines that would be installed in wagons to optimize their towing and torque capabilities. Specifically, I was thinking about a big Executive Safari wagon from 1967 with woodgrain trim, eight-lug wheels, a full raft of options, and a big-bore 400-cu.in. V-8 with 290hp. Actually, I was thinking of a mildly rodded version with a 421 from 1966 swapped in and good for 338 stock horsepower. Maybe load in a little more radical camshaft, pop a Tri-Power setup on top, and fit some Flowmasters so onlookers can guess what's going on. Not completely stock, in other words, but still all-Poncho. All this reverie and ruminating lasted long enough to get me back into my driveway. Heading inside, I took the next step, wondering whatever happened to the great American station wagon, all luxury and



heavy horsepower.

All right, I know that some of the answers here are kind of obvious. When it's all said and done, the first Ford Explorer—it's Hershey-eligible now, by the way—is going to go down in the books as a transformative vehicle, one that redefined what a station wagon could be and more important from the industry's point of view, invented a gigantic new profit center for truck-based vehicles when it first came out. Yes, I know their bad-weather capabilities made them popular and that eventually, sport utility vehicles came to ride on car-based platforms to make them a little less harsh. That, in turn, begat a new generation of crossover vehicles, semi-sedans with big wheel combinations and high ground clearance, some of which are the flat ugliest conveyances I've ever seen. Finally, amazingly, the product planners in Detroit figured out how to make a less fondly remembered Pontiac, the Aztek, actually look appealing. But I generally don't like them, not to belabor the point.

Collectively, however, they managed to kill off the traditional American station wagon except for such things as the Ford Flex (Hemmings Motor News owns a pair of Flexes as company vehicles for event coverage and photo shoots, and as a group, we really like them), which rides on an automobile platform and has front-wheel drive as standard equipment. I fully get it that women make a lot of car-buying decisions nowadays, and that many of them (and not a few men) enjoy the security of all-wheel drive and the higher seating position of SUVs and crossovers. I'm 6 feet 2, so to me, that's not a consideration. I can also tell you that in this part of the country, it's not uncommon to see a spun-out SUV or crossover on a snowy highway, especially one that heads toward one of our ski resorts. To me, that sense of security can be seductive but ultimately false.

My Uncle Joe spent decades working for General Motors including a long stint at the Warren Tech Center. For a lot of years, he drove a 1961 Chevrolet Brookwood wagon with a 348 for power. He knew how to drive when the weather failed.

I'd love to have that kind of endless cargo expanse behind my head and a big honking V-8 under my right foot. The weather issues wouldn't bother me. I've got plenty of junk I could toss in back for traction. See, there I go. Daydreaming again. 🐾



Heading inside,

I took the next

step, wondering

whatever

happened to the

great American

station wagon, all

luxury and heavy

horsepower.



Continued from page 34

made out to him and “any AMC dealer.” The local AMC dealer had a 220 two-door sedan with a sticker price of (I think) \$1,990. It was green and had a 90-hp flathead-six engine with three-on-the-tree. Dad got the AMC salesman to come down to \$1,800 and then handed him the \$1,600 check. We drove that brand-new car home for \$200 cash!

Ben Jones
Bluffton, Indiana

I JUST READ THE ARTICLE ON THE

1928 Gardner in issue #142. A remarkable restoration on a car that has just about faded out of existence. I love it! This is why I subscribe to your magazine.
Charles Bolten
Phoenix, Arizona

I AGREE WITH JIM RICHARDSON’S

statement about using vintage cars. This weekend (and it’s not the only one), we visited family in Connecticut with our Canadian 1953 Pontiac, from Québec. We drove 900 hundred miles in two days. It’s the fourth trip since September 2015 like this. Yes, those old ladies can run a lot.
André Fitzback
Montreal, Québec

I HAVE TO DIFFER WITH PAT FOSTER

and his article “Edsel Concepts” in *HCC* #142. The assertion that the Edsel failed because people hated its styling is an opinion and an oversimplification that denies all the other complex issues in the Edsel story, and they are many.

A couple stylists claimed the design was ruined because their ideas were not accepted intact, but few automotive designs ever have been. To say the end result was flawed because it was changed is an opinion only.

The design was intended to be bold, and unlike anything else on the road. And it was. A car with a bland design may not offend anyone, but neither does it incite a passion to own it. Ford hoped for some buyers with that passion. The final design received a standing ovation from the Ford Product Planning Committee at its unveiling. One of the most effective tools to sign up new dealers was to give a private viewing of the car, and sign up they did. Most dealers loved it. One *Motor Trend* magazine analysis of the car, called it “the sharpest car of 1958.” Even the director of design at General Motors in the late Eighties, David Holls, stated

that it was a “very imaginative car, not laughable at all.”

To be sure not everyone loved it, it was a mixed bag of opinions, and jokes aside, I don’t think its failure can be blamed on its looks. It was not universally disliked as is commonly believed.

Consider inept marketing, political turmoil inside Ford, idiotic market placement, lousy quality, the horrendous economy, and absolutely no support to give it a chance to succeed. Those were the real culprits in the Edsel’s death.

It died but did it actually fail? In 1955 when development began, the target sales were 100,000-200,000 for the first year, or between three percent and seven percent of the medium-priced field at that time. But by 1958, that market had collapsed by 60 percent. Thus the Edsel actually hit the target right on, at about five percent penetration of that 1958 market. It did not fail, it was simply abandoned and according to more than one account, it was abandoned at the time of introduction, before any poor sales numbers were realized.

As far as the 1959 Edsel being a vast improvement, I differ again. To many enthusiasts and historians, the only real Edsel is a 1958 model. For 1959, the well-designed instrumentation, interior features, and all the things unique to the Edsel were discarded. With funding chopped to almost nothing, the 1959 Edsel was little more than a Ford in a Halloween costume. Sales plummeted while the rest of the industry rebounded.
Bob Howell
Maryville, Tennessee

THERE’S ONE THING MISSING FROM

this exceptional publication. Many features are done on station wagons and pickup trucks, however Jeeps are not featured often enough to represent the impact they had on American society. Including features on military vehicles such as the Ford GPW or Willys MB would help tell the story of how U.S. auto makers used ingenuity to assist in the war effort. Including later vehicles such as the Willys CJ-2A could represent how U.S. auto makers prepared for the postwar era by producing machinery needed in industries such as agriculture. Other vehicles featured could include Jeeps used by the fire department and mail Jeeps. Pickups and station wagons were workhorses and kept America strong, just as the Jeep did.

Tate Christensen
Salt Lake City, Utah

I LOVE THE PLYMOUTH SUBURBAN

featured in *HCC* #143, but the article perpetuated an automotive oversight. While it is true that Willys pioneered the all-steel station wagon body on a truck chassis in 1946, Plymouth’s 1949 Suburban was not the first all-steel bodied automotive station wagon.

The distinction of being first (and in a big way!) goes to oft-overlooked Crosley. The Cincinnati manufacturer of small, frugal cars began building an all-steel two-door station wagon with a folding rear seat in November 1947, selling it as a 1948 model. Normally prone to small black-and-white ads, Powell Crosley Jr. introduced his new baby with a splashy full-color ad in the January 12, 1948 issue of *Life* magazine. The wagon quickly became Crosley’s most popular model, with 24,489 examples built in 1948. In fact, a 1949 ad brags that Crosley had the best-selling station wagon in the world.

Alas, quality issues and postwar preference for longer, lower, faster cars sent Crosley to a premature doom in 1952 and most folks have forgotten the many other firsts of this innovative value brand: first popularly-price OHC engine (1946); first modern disc brakes (1949); first sports car (1949 Hotshot); and first utility vehicle anticipating the modern ATV/Gator (1950 Farm-O-Road).
M. Park Hunter
La Crosse, Wisconsin

I VERY MUCH ENJOYED THE ARTICLE

in *HCC* #143 about the 1950 Plymouth Suburban wagon. My parents bought a new 1950 Plymouth Suburban just after my twin brother and I were born. They needed a larger car because my mother had wrecked their 1947 Nash. Because the Suburban rode like a truck, our mother sat on a pillow to cushion the ride.

Bruce Granger
Lapeer, Michigan

IN READING THE LETTERS IN ISSUE

#142, I was taken by the letter from Mario Bartoletti about how wide were the “wide track Pontiacs” really. I looked up the track specifications for 1959 General Motors cars and came up with the following: Chevrolet—60-inches front, 60-inches rear; Pontiac—63.7/64; Oldsmobile—61/61; Buick—62/60; Cadillac—61/61. So the Pontiac was, in fact, several inches wider in its track than the other GM divisions using that body. Even Cadillac was about three inches narrower.

Robert Conant
Bradenton, Florida

Cars That Got it Right

Non-automotive “experts” occasionally subject us to silly lists of “the 10 worst cars ever made” with little research beyond reading *Consumer Reports* and listening to their uncle gripe about his 1971 Chevrolet Vega. But did you ever consider how many cars got it “right” for their time? Many have, so let’s tip our hats to a few of them that got it right in each decade from 1900-1990.

Ford’s Model T. Sure it was crude, but it pioneered metallurgical technology that made it tough, light and cheap; engineering challenges that the industry grapples with to this day. It was stout enough to endure rural markets, endearing itself to millions of customers as their first car and securing Ford’s market penetration for decades.

Hudson’s mid-year 1916 Super Six got it right with its counterbalanced crankshaft. We take counterbalanced crankshafts for granted, but executing the idea must be credited to Hudson engineer Stephen Fekete. He earned a patent by fitting the Super Six’s four-main-bearing crankshaft with eight counterweights. That crankshaft and other improvements yielded 80 percent more horsepower than Hudson’s earlier 1916, 6-40 engine with the same displacement.

Hudson’s 1922 Essex Four (Super Six by 1927) got it right with its new, low-priced coach. The five-passenger coach was the same price as the two-passenger cabriolet by 1923. It sounded the death knell for touring cars; why would anyone buy a drafty open touring car when they could buy a secure closed car for the same money? GM’s Alfred Sloan said the Essex coach’s introduction was, “... an event which was to profoundly influence the fortunes of Pontiac, Chevrolet, and the Model T.”

Packard got it right with the 1935 One Twenty. Its possible contribution to Packard’s ultimate demise is immaterial because it was planned and executed when the country’s economy threatened the company’s immediate survival. It was the right car at the right time to enable Packard to survive the 1930s stock-market bloodbath.

Willys-Overland got it right by producing the civilian 1946 Jeep CJ-2A. What popular,

current motor vehicle can trace its roots directly to one marketed 70 years ago, as can today’s Jeep Wrangler? (Okay, the Chevy Suburban.)

Coming in on a wing and a prayer was Studebaker’s 1959 Lark. True, its king pin front suspension and base flathead straight-six had dinosaur DNA, but it was as cute as a button and got it right for both its market and its manufacturer. It produced Studebaker’s highest calendar-year

profit to date and single-handedly bought the company another seven years of automobile production.

What’s not to like about the full-size 1963 Ford? Although the seats didn’t have enough thigh support, and the small-block V-8s were a little weak, the car’s overall style, materials, and build quality were exceptional for a low-priced car. The new bear claw door lock mechanism rendered a higher-quality “thunk”

when closing the doors, a significant improvement over earlier rotary door latch designs.

The clean sheet redesign of General Motors’ 1977 full-size cars got it right. Chevrolet’s 1977 brochure proclaimed, “Now that’s more like it!” Customers agreed; every car in the line was a sales success. Even Cadillac, a marque seemingly susceptible to negative reaction if downsized, posted a sales advance. While some lines experienced a few mechanical foibles, The General’s overall design and execution was spot-on.

Chrysler’s 1981 Dodge Aries and Plymouth Reliant got it right. The marketing department goofed by shipping dealers loaded cars at first, but once they adjusted model and equipment production to market realities, they sold well. Plebeian they were, but they saved Chrysler and provided the platform on which convertibles returned to the showroom, and the basic architecture for the successful minivan that created a new market and then dominated that market for a generation.

Remember Buick’s claim, “When better automobiles are built, Buick will build them?” Corporate lawyers may have pulled back on that once they realized that every manufacturer gets it right from time to time. 🍷



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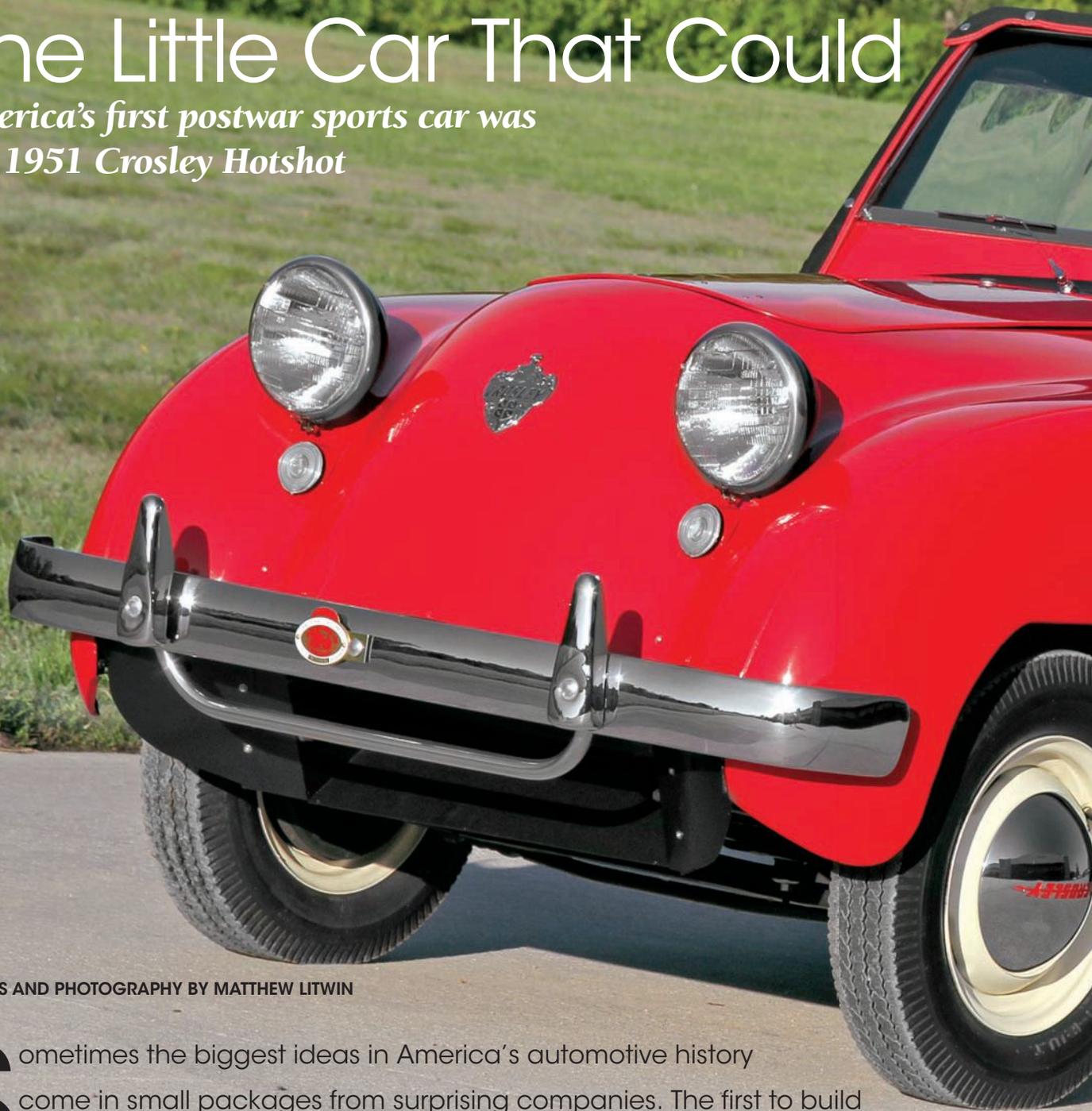
can today’s Jeep

Wrangler?”

”

The Little Car That Could

America's first postwar sports car was the 1951 Crosley Hotshot



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

Sometimes the biggest ideas in America's automotive history come in small packages from surprising companies. The first to build compact economy cars were such noteworthy visionaries as Bantam, Keller, Playboy and Crosley, the latter of which began producing vehicles

in late 1938 as 1939 models.

First to incorporate slab-sided styling? Crosley, on May 9, 1946. First to issue a sport utility vehicle? Crosley, in late 1947. First all-steel station wagon? Again, Crosley. First domestic company to install four-wheel hydraulic disc brakes as standard equipment? You guessed it—Crosley; May 1949. Get the idea?

So it should be no surprise that Crosley was also the first to reintroduce the American sports car to the postwar market—not Chevrolet.

Say it ain't so?

On July 13, 1949, the Crosley Hotshot was unveiled during a

New York City hotel reception before it was placed on display at both Macy's and Fine Cars the next morning. It was a small, two-passenger automobile designed with a low ground clearance and well-balanced chassis dynamics that allowed for quick responses and easy maneuverability under high-speed driving conditions.

Those design points were the very parameters used to define this species of automobile as early as 1935. It was a market segment that was—until 1949—occupied solely by several of Europe's legendary automakers and that had, since the late 1920s, been largely ignored by Detroit. Reasons for such abandonment were numerous, not least due to a dramatic sales slump of



speedsters—the evolutionary forerunner of the sports car—that had been produced by Mercer, Duesenberg, Stutz and a handful of others.

So, what inspired the Crosley brothers—Powel and Lewis—to take what some would consider to be such a large gamble on a perceived novelty in the postwar years? The answer, at least in part, may have been residing in Powel's driveway.

It's no secret that many returning GIs had become thrill-seekers while stationed overseas. Both racing and hot rodding were traits that had existed before the war, but they were pursuits fueled by experiencing a spirited drive in an MG or Jaguar and the like—cozy, open cockpit, low-profile sports cars with spritely engines. When they were unable to obtain one of the few import makes that had trickled into the States after V-E and V-J Day, the same men, and in several cases, women, took to severely modifying prewar domestic cars to satisfy their needs. As

demand grew, so did import numbers. And while Detroit continued to view the growing sales-stealing threat as inconsequential, others took notice, including Powel Crosley who, by 1948, had himself purchased a 1948 Jaguar XK-120.

The ability to exploit the market held ample potential for a small firm like Crosley, even though it remained focused on the economy compact segment. Coupled with the comparative success of its 1948 sales, which culminated in a Crosley-best 30,543 units—including an industry-leading 23,489 station wagons—the timing couldn't have looked better.

While there's some speculation as to who penned the Hotshot's initial design, what is known is that it did not employ the standard Crosley 80-inch wheelbase chassis; the Hotshot's foundation was stretched to 85 inches between the wheel hub centers. It was a small modification, but by retaining the company's standard 40-inch front/rear track width, the new sports car



Removing the Hotshot's hingeless hood is as easy as twisting the keyed lock and lifting, exposing the 44-cubic-inch CIBA four-cylinder overhead-valve engine rated for 26.5 horsepower. Contemporary road tests regularly achieved speeds in excess of 70 miles per hour.

would have better weight distribution—and overall balance—during high-speed cornering.

That balance was achieved in large part by a unique suspension arrangement. Up front, it was comprised of semi-elliptic leaf springs—six-leaf springs on the left side, five on the right—while the rear components consisted of both leaf and coil springs. Hydraulic shocks were installed at all four corners, and, collectively, the arrangement provided seven inches of ground clearance.

As one would expect from a small automaker, Crosley exacted cost-saving efficiency, thus the Hotshot was fitted with the company's new CIBA (cast-iron block assembly) 44-cu.in. four-cylinder, replacing the COBRA (copper-brazed) engine that had been in use since 1946. Featuring a 2½ x 2¼-inch bore and stroke, 7.5:1 compression ratio and a Tillotson single-barrel carburetor, rated for 26.5hp at 5,200 RPM, it was used throughout the entire Crosley line of vehicles. Mated to the 150-pound engine was a Warner three-speed manual gearbox linked to a Spicer differential. The aforementioned hydraulic brakes and 12-inch steel wheels completed the underpinnings.

Enveloping the chassis was a 136.5-inch-long slab-sided body featuring a sloped nose that eliminated the grille while providing a somewhat aerodynamic look. The removable top was made of fabric, as were the side curtains; there were no doors but rather low-cut side panels. To further trim expenses, the Hotshot's hood was small and unhinged (and thus removable in a flash), while its front fenders were a modified version of the 1946-'47 Crosley Pickup rear fenders. Interiors were sparse: two simple bucket seats and basic instruments. A radio, heater and even the ashtray were optional.

The Hotshot targeted not only the sports car enthusiast, but

also John Q. Public as a whole, thanks to its initial price tag of less than \$1,000. Without modifications, it tipped the scales at just under 1,100 pounds, making it quite nimble; contemporary tests regularly achieved top speeds at or very near 73 MPH. What made it particularly enticing to sports car aficionados was that the Hotshot could be stripped down for racing quickly without special tools. Bumpers, top supports, all exterior lighting pods, spare wheel/tire and windshield were on the nix list, and eliminated over 100 pounds of gear. Coupled with aftermarket engine upgrades, the Hotshot could boast more than 80 MPH with ease, and all this amounted to 752 examples being produced during the midyear run.

The Hotshot made headlines well beyond its initial release. In December 1950, the little sports car was entered, on a whim, in the first six-hour Sam Collier Memorial Grand Prix of Endurance—now known as the 12 Hours of Sebring—and, based on a handicapping system, finished first. A year later, a Hotshot recorded second place podiums at races in Tokyo and Switzerland, and were it not for a faulty generator, it's been theorized that a Hotshot was on pace to win its class in the 1951 Le Mans. At local racing venues, the Hotshot made waves, as did the CIBA engine installed in other makes. But it was all for naught.

The year 1948 proved to be Crosley's high-water mark, and by the conclusion of the 1952 sales season, vehicle production had ceased; the firm was quickly sold thereafter. The catalyst seems simple: Detroit as a whole finally met pent-up demand. During its four-year run, Crosley built 2,498 Hotshots—as well as the Super Hotshot, Super Sports and Super Sport incarnations that followed—including this 1951 Hotshot owned by David Anspach of Blandon, Pennsylvania.



Designed as America's first sports car, the Hotshot was light, which was imperative in achieving spritely performance and handling. Interiors were very plain: two bucket seats, speedometer and an auxiliary gauge cluster, kept costs low as well.



“Any Crosley is a neat car to own and drive, but the Hotshot is just plain fun.”



It's one of 300 Hotshots believed to have been made that year (production records were tossed during Crosley's acquisition), and it features one of the few running changes made to the line: the switch from what turned out to be problematic disc brakes to drums.

David found it for sale in Gilbert, Arizona, during the summer of 1998, as he explained to us recently. "I was looking for a hobby to keep me off the street after raising four kids, and I remembered a conversation with a good friend of mine—we were both in college at the time—while I was working on an MG Midget. I had casually stated that it was a shame that no American company made a real sports car. His instant reply was Crosley, adding that their Hotshot had won the first race at Sebring. So I looked specifically for a Hotshot by posting my desire for one on the Crosley Automobile Club's forum. I received a reply from a member pointing me to an online listing for the car in Gilbert."

The seller happened to be the Hotshot's original owner; however, the car was in dire need of attention. The family had used it as a service vehicle at the Silver Dollar Drive-In in Phoenix until its clutch failed. Left outside, the driveline was partially disassembled to attempt repairs before the transmission was finally removed and used to gear down a horse walker. After leaving the car to the elements for roughly 10 years, the family agreed it would be better to sell the old Crosley to someone who would restore it rather than let it continue to rot. Both parties

quickly reached an agreement and the car was shipped east.

According to David, "I had never owned a Crosley, and other than some repair work I had never undertaken a full restoration, but I was determined to learn about it, bring it back to life and enjoy it. Looking back, it was quite an undertaking as both side panels had begun to rot along the floorline, and there were several key parts missing, including the proper transmission."

Through the Crosley Club, David was able to talk to experienced members about solutions while locating parts, all while managing the car's restoration. He did most of the work, with the exception of some of the body repair and the paint process, in addition to the guidance he received during the engine rebuild. David had a target completion date in mind: the 2000 Crosley Nationals, which he was able to meet. His effort netted top honors in the Roadster class.

While other accolades at several national-level events have been bestowed upon his Hotshot since, David has not lost sight of one of his original goals when he first obtained the car: to enjoy it. "Any Crosley is a neat car to own and drive, but the Hotshot is just plain fun. It doesn't sound like much on paper, but properly tuned the engine will make this lightweight sports car run, and it always turns heads wherever I take it. It corners a lot better than you would think and is pretty peppy if you let it get going. A lot of people forget about Crosley's accomplishments, and I enjoy discussing its history and the car's prowess." 🐾



Packard Revival

How the Elliott Museum got its 1914 Packard running after its long hibernation



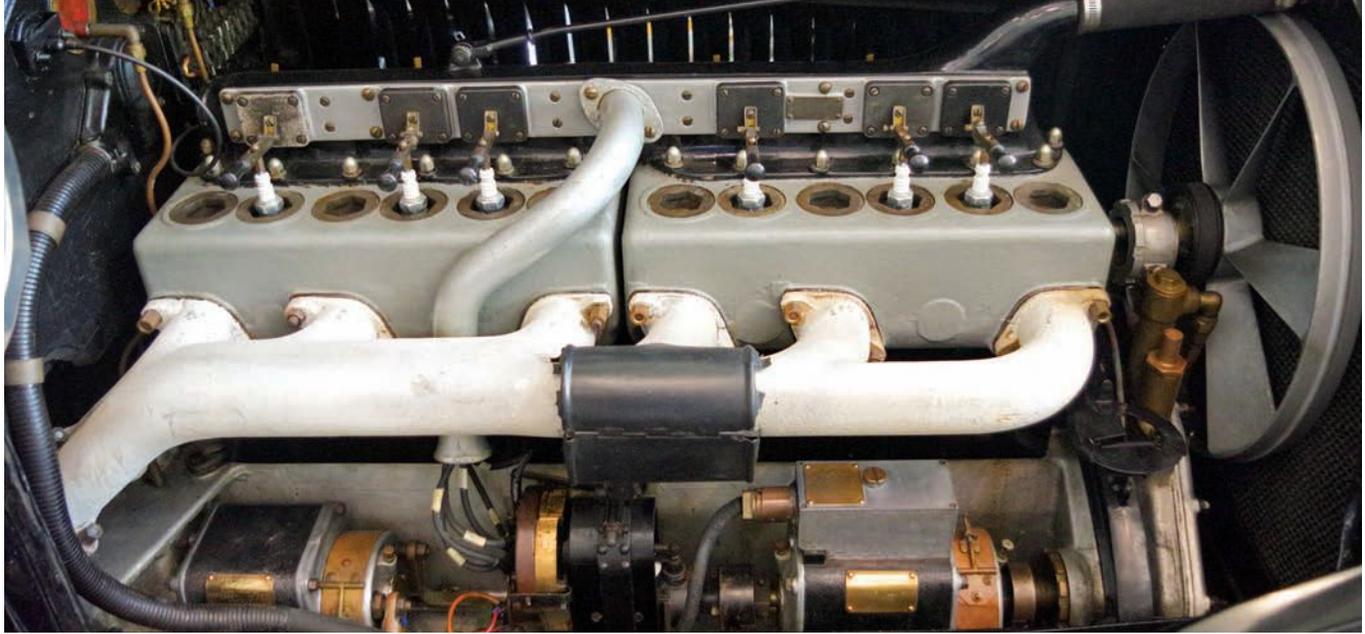
WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Long-term storage has its shortcomings. Although an automobile may be safely stored out of the elements, protected from the harsh cold, corrosive rain and the damaging rays of the sun, that doesn't mean that it's immune to other problems that long-standing inactivity causes. So, just what's involved when you want to get an old car running again after it has been dormant for 10 years?

While there are several ways to go about the rejuvenation process, we spoke with the staff of the Elliott Museum to discover just what was involved when they recently brought back to life a car in their collection. The museum is located on Hutchinson Island in Stuart, Florida, and is well known among Ford Model A enthusiasts as being home to one of the largest and most significant Model A collections in the country. Yet,

many other noteworthy collector cars have been donated to the museum over the years, including this 1914 Packard Model 2-38 seven-passenger Phaeton.

The Packard was donated to the museum in 1972 by Ralph Evinrude, the manufacturer of boat engines. Evinrude bought the old Packard back in the 1950s to replace the one he remembered that his dad once owned. The car had always been well



Straight-six engine features bronze screw-in inserts on the top of the cylinder heads to permit access to the valves; manual levers flip up to disconnect spark plugs; glass fuses and cloth covered wiring make up the electrical system; fuel priming cups ease engine start-up.

maintained and was largely original; it had been kept in dry storage awaiting its recommission. Last year, the decision was made to get the Packard running again so it could be displayed at shows throughout Florida to help give the museum exposure. We spoke with the museum's associate car curator, John Giltinan, to learn just how they did it.

"The car didn't run or move under its own power for about a decade," John tells us. "And there was no oil in the transmission, only grease." So, to get the rejuvenation process started, the first thing they did was remove the gas tank. Assisting with the majority of the mechanical work were the museum's volunteers: Joe Vicini, former GM employee and past president of the AACA and Bill Yunger, who once owned a number of gas stations on Long Island. Don Gilbert, who is the museum's other associate car curator and a talented hands-on restorer of both American and European collector cars, also contributed greatly to the project. With the gas tank removed, Don took it to a specialist

to be boiled out and thoroughly cleaned. Once the tank was re-installed, all the rubber fuel lines were replaced, and everything was tightened down. The air cleaner was removed, but the carburetor wasn't touched as all looked well; a few squirts of carb cleaner were all it took to wash away any residue in the throat.

The oil sump holds 10 quarts of oil, all of which was thoroughly drained then refilled with fresh oil. The same process was applied to the radiator; it was flushed, the water pump was lubricated, then refilled with plain water. "It's just basic knowledge that we have," Bill says. "But this Packard has stuff that we never saw before, so we just had to figure it all out." Joe states with a smile, "Everything was trial and error!"

The wiring harness, especially the section that goes through the steering column, is quite complex, so before each wire got sorted out, the engine was run only on the magneto. The engine starts on the battery, then gets its electric current from the magneto. After they made sure the magneto produced spark, the

The black electrical box on the steering column is fairly complex and allows the driver to control the engine's spark timing; note ignition lock on top, and the buttons on left which control the lights. The nickel-plated taillamp has a burner and a reservoir for kerosene, as well as an electric bulb for the brake "stop" signal.





Associate car curators Don Gilbert (in the driver's seat) and John Giltinan put in many hours to painstakingly restore life back to the Packard's upholstery and paint. The museum's two most knowledgeable volunteers are former AACA president Joe Vicini (left) and Bill Yunger.

team set the points in the distributor at a gap of .015.

When the time came to start the engine, fuel was added to the priming cups, then extra fuel was squirted directly into the spark plug holes. With the spark retarded, the engine cranked over for about 10 seconds, and presto, after all those years of quiet slumber, the big 415-cubic-inch L-head straight-six started right up! Don tells us that "Once the engine fired, the spark had to be advanced. Then we slowly adjusted the air-fuel mixture until it was running as smooth as can be."

Because the Packard had always been well maintained, the brakes required only a thorough cleaning with an adjustment of the shoes and lubrication of the cables and other moving parts to ensure smooth operation.

Regarding the body, the entire underside was painstakingly cleaned by hand. Although the Packard had a partial restoration back in the 1950s, the undercarriage remained largely untouched, so the underside was cleaned by hand using nothing more than gasoline. "Basically we used gasoline to remove stubborn grease deposits on the chassis and suspension," John says. "The gas worked great; it was very effective, and it dried fast. We safely parked the Packard outdoors to clean it, but during the process, the gas melted the gloves that we used, so we ended up using about 30 pairs of gloves before we were done."

Back in the late 1950s, the Packard received a new coat of lacquer paint, which by now had turned dull. To restore the shine, the team, working very carefully and slowly to ensure the old finish wouldn't be ruined, painstakingly hand rubbed the lacquer with Race Glaze Polish & Sealant, and then applied 3M Professional Formula paste wax. The result was amazing, giving the old Packard that period-correct patina for an authentic appearance. Routine maintenance and dusting are handled using a quick-detailer spray.

John, who takes great pride in rejuvenating old objects while maintaining their genuine appearance, labored over the car's original upholstery for many days. He explains his process: "To clean the button-tufted leather upholstery, I used Fiebing's Horse & Leather Care glycerine saddle soap. This is a clear bar soap that gently loosens dirt without drying out the leather. After cleaning the leather, I then conditioned it with Voodoo Blend Leather Rejuvenator from Surf City Garage."

Starting the engine is a 20-step process, which is outlined on a sheet of paper that's kept in the Packard's interior door pocket so future workers at the museum will know what to do. When all of the adjustments are correct, and the fuel pressure is set at 2.5 pounds via the steering column-mounted manual pump, the

engine will crank over about 10 revolutions and fire right up, settling into a smooth idle.

"The Packard has a conventional pedal arrangement with the clutch to the left, the brake in the center and the throttle to the right," Don tells us. "The shift lever is mounted to the driver's left. It does not use a traditional 'H' pattern. Rather the gears are arranged in a gated straight line '1-N-2-3,' with reverse to the right and back from neutral. While not quick, the car is very capable and will easily cruise at 50 MPH. Steering is heavy but direct with very little slop or wander. The car is quite large, and the driver sits up high with a commanding view of the road.

"The brakes are mechanical, with 16-inch-diameter rear drums featuring 2.5-inch-wide internal expanding shoes for the service brake as well as external contracting shoes for the hand brake. The wheels are 36-inch-diameter wooden artillery style wheels, which have 12 heavy spokes with the brake drums bolted directly to the spokes; the front wheels have 10 spokes. Considering that the tires are only 4.5 inches wide, the brakes work well. They are direct and do not grab or pull. When driving a car of this era, one must always leave plenty of room to stop, but the museum's staff has never been alarmed by the performance of the brakes on the car. When compared to some of the museum's Model A Fords, with their four-wheel mechanical brakes, the museum's staff prefers the two-wheel brakes on the old Packard!"

To avoid the negative effects of today's modern fuel on the fuel system, John tells us that they only use ethanol-free gas. "Using Rec-90 [a 90-octane, ethanol-free fuel originally formulated for recreational and marine engines] avoids the fuel system problems caused by the deterioration of ethanol-containing fuel blends."

"This old Packard is a magnificent piece of American automotive history," John goes on to say. "Don, Joe, Bill and I have researched the car and have learned a great deal about its original design and engineering, especially about the magneto. Playing a role in bringing these historic cars back to life (and having the opportunity to drive them) is very exciting and inspires me to continue my work at this fantastic museum. When you drive a car like this Packard, you understand the high quality of the engineering that went into it. Running the old cars helps us to interpret history in a way that is not possible with more 'static' displays." 🐞

To learn more about the workings at this fabulous museum and the many other unique cars that make up its collection, visit its website at www.elliottmuseum.org.

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driveable **dream**

Superlative Six

Six is greater than eight, as proven by the outstanding engineering on this 1929 Hudson Super Six sedan

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



Stylistically, early sedans are largely fungible. It's in their mechanical attributes where they stand apart. Hudson's six-cylinder engine was always a step beyond the industry standard. When first introduced, the "Super Six" was balanced for high-speed running. Later, when the companion Essex brand dropped its F-head four-cylinder for a flathead-six, the Super Six gained an F-head for itself. In 1927, that six was a technological marvel more than equal to anything in its price range.





Set in an engraved, German silver panel, instrumentation consists of temperature, speedometer, fuel, oil level, ammeter, oil pressure and carburetor heat-control indicator. Controls on steering hub are headlamps, spark advance and throttle. Clock and Watts-Morehouse trunk are original.

That sophistication and its attendant power is why Dave Lanning of Englewood, Florida, sought out the well-preserved example you see on these pages. "These were the Chrysler Hemis of their day, and just as complicated and expensive to build," Dave proudly tells us regarding the engine's intake-over-exhaust cylinder head design. "It's not real fast because it's geared so low, but you can feel the power. I knew I wanted a 1927, '28 or '29 model with the F-head engine."

The public also wanted that F-head, as 1929 was Hudson's best sales year ever, with a combined figure (including Essex) of over 300,000 cars produced, which propelled the company to third place in the industry. In 1930, however, the F-head was gone and in its place was an L-head straight-eight derived from the Essex engine—arguably it was a more prestigious configuration than a six, but it failed to capture sales.

Dave has had later Hudsons with the straight-eight and has experienced a contemporary Packard Eight sedan. But he says that neither makes a better touring car than

the 288-cu.in., 92hp, F-head straight-six with its intake valves actuated by pushrods and its exhaust valves riding in the block like a flathead. "It's quite a powerful car," he tells us. "I had an eight-cylinder speedster, and this is more powerful than that. I prefer the Hudson to the Packard. That F-head is a great engine, very smooth and easy to work on."

Even Hudson recognized the superiority of the F-head Super Six versus the likes of Packard, boasting in a 1928 advertisement that the Super Six possessed "Performance that even higher price can't buy." The 1929 iteration of the Super Six was fully refined with a 6.0:1 compression ratio and an accelerator pump in its Marvel carburetor, both of which must have added considerably to the Hudson's driving manners.

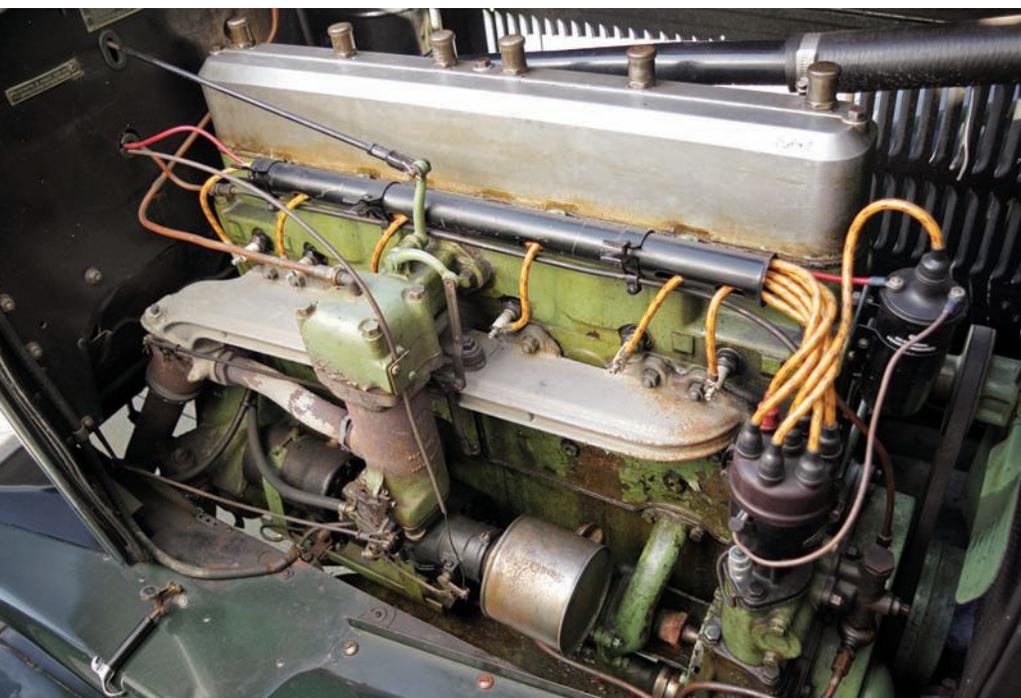
Dave says he didn't necessarily go looking for a survivor, but when he discovered this driveable dream with only 40,000 miles on the odometer through a friend in the Hudson club who was more interested in the 1950s "step-down" cars than Hudson's heyday in the 1920s, it didn't take Dave much deliberation. He loaded

his 1924 Dodge touring car, which had been in his collection for nearly half a century, on a trailer, sold it in nearby Clearwater and continued north to where this pristine sedan awaited.

"I think it's all original other than the tires and the fan belt," he says. And, of course, it has new spark plug wires made by Dave from a spool of NOS cloth wire he bought years ago. A previous owner also replaced the outer layer of the top insert with original material after a mishap attempting to load the tall sedan into a slightly undersized trailer.

"It had a real, real easy life," Dave speculates. He reports that when it entered his possession, all it needed to return to service was a change of fluids and for him to free up one stuck valve. Since then, the Hudson has been in regular rotation with the rest of Dave's 14-car collection, taking tours and attending car shows.

Dave says the Hudson's condition overall complements the power of the impressive F-head straight-six, with a tight chassis, smooth shifting from the cork-faced, wet clutch and outstanding stopping ability from the four-wheel cable-actuated drum brakes. Back in 1929, Hudson boasted the Super Six was capable of more than 80 MPH and would cruise at "70 miles per hour all day." Dave prefers a more sedate pace, topping out at about 50 MPH—still more than adequate for driving around town. "Stopping is wonderful," he says, "This is the one car I really don't



F-head engine is the star of the Super Six. It displaces 288-cu.in., produces 92 horsepower and features a balanced crankshaft for smoothness and high-speed capability.



Original paint retains almost all of its luster, and upholstery and running-board step plates show little use. This old Hudson even has a set of period tools for roadside repairs.



worry about in local traffic."

The Hudson's original mohair interior, designed for owner operation rather than chauffeur service like some contemporary makes of similar size, makes for easy driving as well. Although, Dave points out that an outsized previous owner relocated the tracks of the adjustable seat a couple inches rearward for extra leg room and he intends to return them to their original location. Also, the original "Parabeam" headlamps are somewhat underwhelming on their own, but Dave has found that using the original driving lamps in conjunction makes for excellent illumination during night drives.

Because the Hudson is such a comfortable and worry-free car, Dave says he drives it at least every other week, and around 1,000 miles annually. He particularly enjoys showing it off at local gatherings where it makes a striking contrast to cars 30 or 40 years newer; it really attracts attention when he lifts the hood, showing off the unusual cylinder head design.

Even where the old Hudson exhibits wear, the damage arguably contributes to

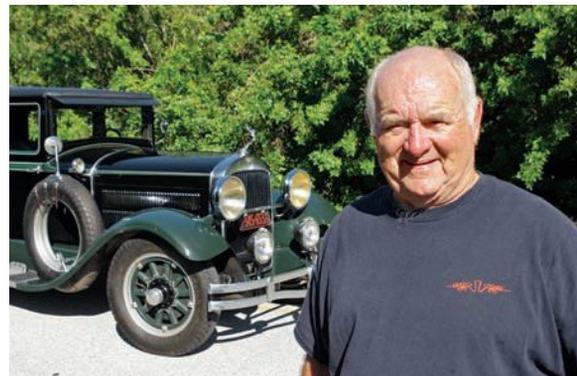
its overall charm. The mechanical clock mounted near the headliner, for example, requires occasional winding. Over the course of almost 90 years the fingers of various owners have worn a hole in the cloth while performing that task. Dave notes it lends a kind of kinship with the car's history to feel his own fingers fall into those grooves while turning the crown of the old chronometer.

That kind of enjoyment and driving are all that the future has in store for this Super Six. Dave carefully maintains its original

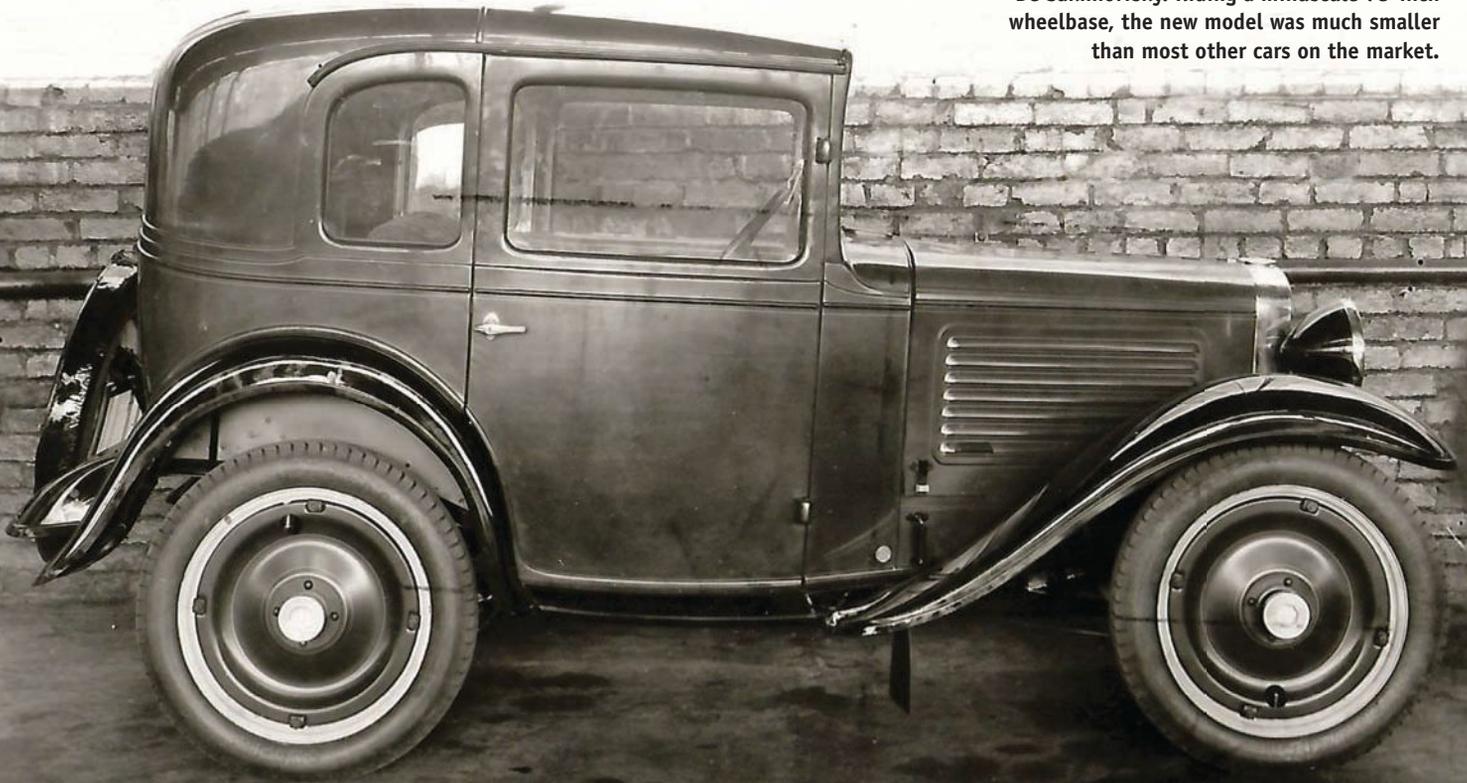
finish with Meguiars products and picks up spare parts here and there when the opportunity arises. He feels no real dread about keeping the car in good repair, however, as Hudson's popularity when new means spares are relatively easy to come by even today.

"The only thing I have to do," Dave says of mechanical maintenance, "is at least every 400 or 500 miles, there's little oilers on top of the intake valves to lubricate the valve stems. Just put some oil in there, and that's it." 🛠️

“It’s not real fast because it’s geared so low, but you can feel the power. I knew I wanted a 1927, ’28 or ’29 model with the F-head engine.”



The new American Austin Coupe debuted for 1930 with handsome styling by Count De Sakhnoffsky. Riding a minuscule 75-inch wheelbase, the new model was much smaller than most other cars on the market.



Tiny Twins

The pint-size American Austin and American Bantam

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

Based on what's generally known about American consumers, we might want to ask: What on earth was Sir Herbert Austin thinking when he decided to introduce the Austin Seven small car to America? After all, the tiny Seven had been designed for the narrow streets and low speeds of his native Great Britain, not the wide boulevards and vast expanses of North America. The baby Austin seemed as out of place here as a chili dog on Queen Victoria's lunch plate.

Sir Herbert was already a success-

ful English automaker when he decided to design an inexpensive small car that could lure thousands of his countrymen off their beloved motorcycles and into car ownership. The Seven, introduced in 1922, was meant to be comfortable for two passengers while providing a little room in the back for luggage or perhaps a child or two. It was not much bigger than a motorcycle/sidecar combo and was cheap to buy and economical to run. Austin's design instincts proved correct, and the new Seven was an instant hit throughout the UK.

By 1928, versions were even being produced in Germany, and Sir Herbert decided it was time for America to have one, too. However, he had no intention of producing it himself. Instead, in January 1929 he showed off his tiny car at the New York Auto Show while advertising in several newspapers for investors willing to put up the necessary capital to build them in America. Austin would provide blueprints, plans and help in getting production underway in exchange for a per-car royalty fee.

It didn't take long to line up a group

PRESENTING

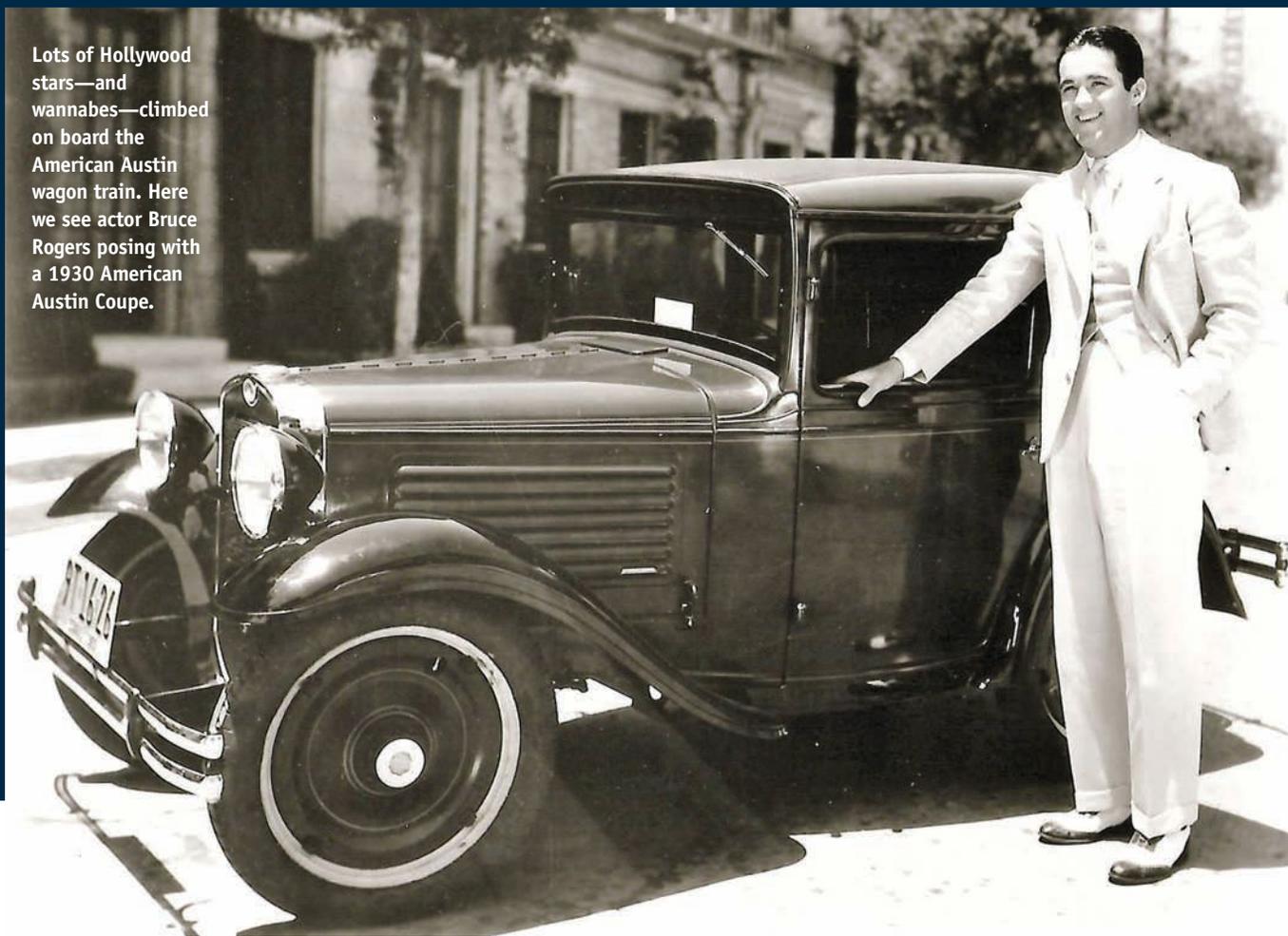
the new AUSTIN bantam
...a car to run around in

This clever ad from 1930 hid the new American Austin coupe from view, hoping to build buyer interest in seeing it in person.



A car for the tiny open spaces
the bantam Austin ~ ~ ~ a smart individual mount for a crowded world.

Rather than a car for "the wide open spaces," the 1930 American Austin was advertised as the car for "the tiny open spaces." Advertising usually showed the car in city locations where its petite size was a notable advantage.



Lots of Hollywood stars—and wannabes—climbed on board the American Austin wagon train. Here we see actor Bruce Rogers posing with a 1930 American Austin Coupe.

of investors hungry to enter the car business. On February 28, 1929, the American Austin Car Company was incorporated, with plans to produce the Austin small car at a plant in Butler, Pennsylvania, once occupied by the Standard Steel Car Company (1914-1923). Former GM executive Arthur Brandt would run the new company. It took time to outfit the plant,

line up suppliers and get manufacturing under way, but by May 1930, the production line was turning out tiny American Austins for shipment to scores of dealers who had signed distribution agreements. Two models were offered initially: a coupe and a roadster.

Along the way, the firm had engaged stylist Count Alexis De Sakhnoffsky to

redesign the Austin's exterior, endowing the tiny car with handsome lines that gave it a somewhat richer, more substantial appearance. However, no amount of styling could disguise how truly small the Austin was: Riding a 75-inch wheelbase—more than two feet shorter than a Model A Ford's—the little car was just 122 inches long and 53 inches wide, and weighed a



With its "Duesenberg" sweep-side color treatment, the American Austin Roadster for 1930 was a very sharp little car, and oh so cute looking. But its price, \$445, was actually higher than a new Ford Roadster, which was larger, more powerful and far more comfortable.

mere 1,130 pounds. It was by far the runt of the road.

Power came from a 45.6-cu.in. four-cylinder flathead engine that had a low 5.0:1 compression ratio which allowed it to develop 14.8 horsepower. It had neither water pump nor fuel pump; thermo-siphon took care of the cooling while

gravity fed the carburetor. "Forty miles on a gallon of gasoline," bragged American Austin. "A thousand miles on a two-quart filling of oil....twenty to forty thousand miles on a set of tires." In colorful print ads the company described its new car as "Smart, comfortable, and efficient....for the modest price of \$445," for the two-

passenger roadster.

That price was a problem, because that same year you could have purchased a new Ford Standard Roadster for \$435, or a Phaeton for \$440. At least the Austin Coupe, at \$465, undercut the Ford Coupe, though only by \$35. To counter its uncompetitive pricing, American Austin



The 1931 Business Coupe was priced at a mere \$330, it featured a single driver's seat. It proved fairly successful with companies.

tried to appeal to those searching for an ideal second car, advertising that its product was "...an auxiliary car to supplement the work of its more expensive brother... the rolling powerhouse that now serves your family." Another ad asked, "Aren't there times when your rolling power house is too much car... too big for easy parking...too cumbersome in traffic...?"

The answer, of course, was, yes. However, this was 1930, and the idea of a two-car family was still somewhat unique and, besides, there was a depression starting, and to most people it seemed like a bad time to purchase a new, unknown automobile, especially one with foreign roots. Although Sir Herbert claimed that more than 50,000 initial orders had been placed, American Austin production was initially pegged at 100 cars per day—or roughly 25,000 per year.

The initial response seemed encouraging, with dealers ordering lots of cars while the press ran numerous articles about the new baby Austin. Singer Al Jolson received the first Coupe delivered to a private individual, and was soon followed by Buster Keaton, actor Slim Summerville (*All Quiet on the Western Front*), actress Charlotte Greenwood (*Oklahoma!*) and, reportedly, even Ernest Hemingway, though it's hard to picture that mainstay of American manhood behind the wheel of an Austin. Many small businesses



There were improvements, but little exterior change to the American Austin Coupe for 1933. In this press photo, the company tried to appeal to families that needed room for the kids, though, obviously, those children had to be rather small to fit in the rear.



The American Austin Panel Truck, a 1934 model shown here, was a tidy little hauler for small businesses and would have sold better if not for the Great Depression.



The American Austin was reintroduced for 1938 as the American Bantam. Company president Roy Evans put through a complete restyling that greatly improved the little car's looks. There were many mechanical refinements, too, and, all in all, the Bantam was a decent little car.



Compare the lines of this 1938 American Bantam Roadster with the earlier photo of the 1930 model and you can really appreciate the extent of restyling that was accomplished—and for a sum of just \$300 for the designer and \$7,000 for tooling!

purchased Austins to help advertise their firms because wherever they went, the cars were always the center of attention.

But alas, not enough individuals could be coaxed into buying one. Too many people considered the tiny Austin to be little more than a joke. Despite clever advertising and lots of media hoopla, American Austin produced only a reported 8,558 cars during its eight months of production in calendar year 1930. And a great many of those failed to find owners, instead sitting forlornly on dealer lots across America.

Distressed about its lack of success, American Austin management put through a price cut for 1931 on both the

Roadster and Coupe, to \$395, while also introducing a one-seat Business Coupe for a mere \$330. A fancier Deluxe Coupe likewise debuted, at \$525, along with a stylish 2/4 passenger Cabriolet at \$550. A roadster pickup had been added in mid-1930, and now a cab pickup and extended-body delivery truck also joined the line.

It did no good. The worsening Depression was sucking the life out of the economy and anyway, Americans didn't really care for silly, peanut-size cars. American Austin production for 1931 sank to a mere 1,279 vehicles, a dismal result by any standard. With 1,500 unfinished cars on the line or stashed around

the plant, the company was forced to shut down. In 1932 a bankruptcy judge appointed a receiver to dispose of American Austin's assets.

Then, suddenly, Roy Evans stepped in with a plan. Evans was a well-known big-volume auto dealer with many franchises. He was also American Austin's largest dealer by far, having sold a reported 80 percent of output. Evans purchased the 1,500 Austins in factory stock, had them finished and shipped to his Southern dealerships and sold them all easily by cutting the price to just \$295. He soon took over the company and got the assembly line going again. For 1932, production rose to 3,846 cars. Even in 1933, at the depth of the Depression, some 4,726 Austins were produced.

However, sales nosedived in 1934, with only a reported 1,300 or so cars and trucks built. Production was halted, and for 1935 and 1936 the company mainly consisted of a handful of employees selling replacement parts to owners and doing the odd machining job. But Evans wasn't licked, at least not yet. In late 1935 he put together a deal with the bankruptcy court. The plant complex, appraised at \$10 million, was sold to him for \$5,000 cash. He borrowed a quarter of a million dollars, sold stock to raise more money and prepared to restart production. But, first, Evans hired Alexis De Sakhnoffsky to do a quick facelift of the baby Austin for a flat \$300 fee, with tooling costing a mere \$7,000. The new styling included fuller fender shapes, a rounded nose with painted grille, and smoother body lines.

Evans also had the Austin engine redesigned enough to enable him to forgo the \$10-per-engine royalty due Austin of



The cutest little truck ever made, the 1938 Boulevard Delivery was intended for stores and businesses situated in large cities. Essentially a roadster with a large box added to the rear.

England. The redesigned powerplant was quieter, smoother and more powerful as well, now developing 20 horsepower. A sturdy three-speed Studebaker manual gearbox replaced the Austin transmission. Other improvements were made to steering, brakes and suspension. As a final touch, Evans renamed the company and car; it was now the "American Bantam." Production resumed near the end of 1937, with the introduction of the 1938 Bantams. The line included the two-passenger coupe, business coupe, panel truck and roadster, with prices ranging from \$399 to \$525. Advertisements proclaimed the new Bantam to be "America's Only Economy Car."

With its improved product being sold through more than 400 dealers and distributors, including dealerships in overseas markets, it looked like the company would be able to meet its planned 10,000-unit annual sales goal easily. Unluckily, though, during 1938 the economy suffered a sharp recession, and although small businesses bought the economical Bantam trucks for local deliveries, the bulk of the retail public sat on its hands. Reportedly, only 2,000 Bantams were produced that year.

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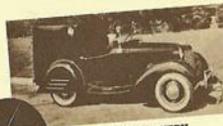
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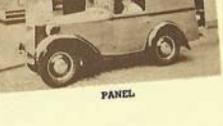
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This page from the 1939 American Bantam sales catalog illustrates the wide range of models the company was producing in an effort to grow its sales volume.

For the 1939 model year, a beautiful little four-passenger Speedster priced at \$497 joined the line, as did a handsome wood-bodied station wagon tagged at \$565. There was even a delightful Boulevard Delivery, an elegant little hauler for in-town package deliveries. With the

economy improving, Bantam production that year climbed to a little over 3,300 vehicles.

But for 1940, sales collapsed, despite the introduction of a beautiful Hollywood two-passenger convertible and stylish Riviera four-passenger convert-



At some point in 1939, the American Bantam line was given updated styling with headlamps now mounted on the fenders.



Here is the restyled Bantam coupe for 1939, wearing optional whitewall tires. Despite low prices and outstanding fuel economy, American car-buying public generally shunned the little cars, preferring to buy used, yet larger automobiles for about the same cost.

ible, and despite a modest increase to 22 horsepower. The improvements and the plethora of model offerings simply failed to capture the imagination of the buying public. Production sank to about 1,200

units for the year. By June, the factory was once again silent and empty.

This should have marked the end of Bantam, but luck was still with it. In June 1940 some officers of the United States

military, which had purchased an American Austin roadster in 1932 and some pickup trucks a few years later, came out to visit the plant. The army had hopes that modified Bantams might be used for light



Stylish and economical, the 1940 American Bantam Pickup was a useful service truck that was ideal for small garages and repair shops.

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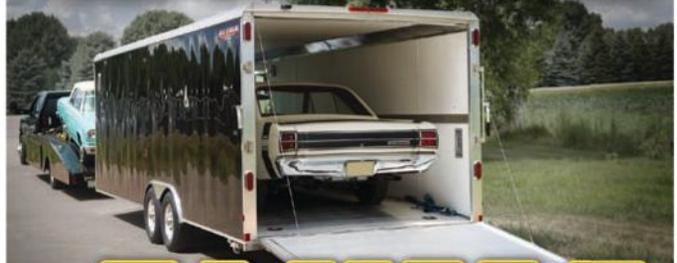


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Cars such as this 1940 four-passenger Speedster proved extremely popular because their fuel economy was so much greater than larger cars.

reconnaissance work. While in Pennsylvania, they test drove some roadsters and trucks off-road and were impressed with their performance. Returning home, they drew up specifications for a new type of military scout car that would be light like the Bantam, feature four-wheel drive and be capable of carrying men and

equipment through just about any kind of terrain. In a three-company shootout with Ford and Willys-Overland, Bantam won the contract to develop the original Jeep, though it would eventually be passed over for the big production contracts; those would go to Willys-Overland and, later, to Ford as well. Bantam had to make

do with small contracts for trailers and machine work. It finally went out of business in 1956. 🐞

Another 1940 American Bantam four-passenger Speedster, this one carrying Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney in a scene from the popular movie *Babes in Arms*.



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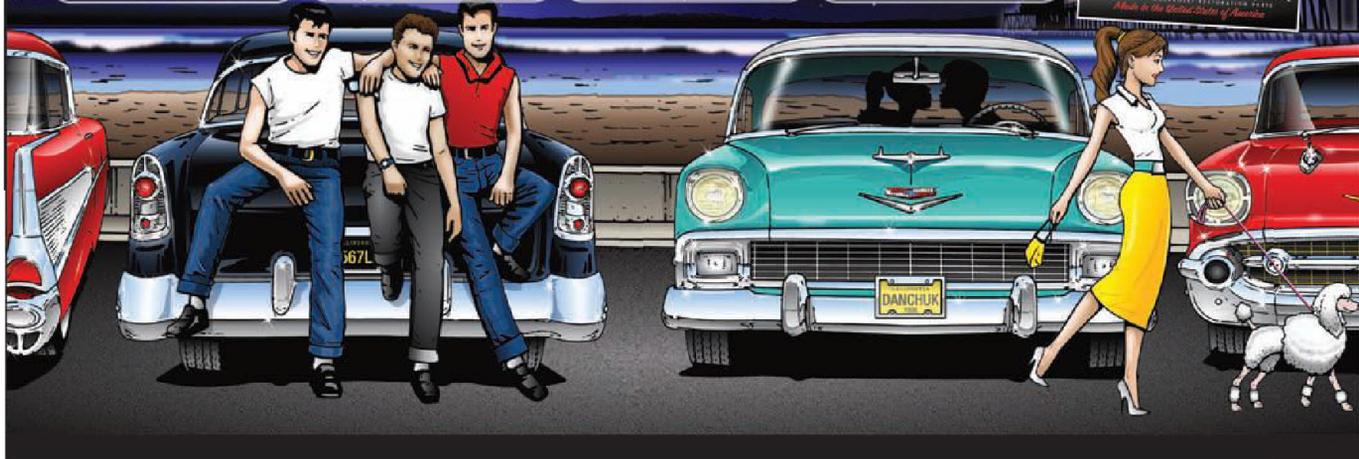
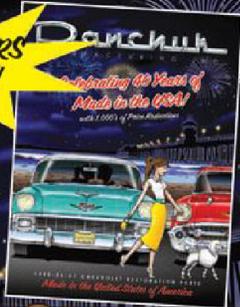
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Yvette VanDerBrink

Bringing the glory of unrestored old cars—and tractors—to the masses



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY VANDERBRINK AUCTIONS

It isn't supposed to happen this way. You understand, of course, that an automotive auction featuring collector cars is supposed to be all about unbridled excitement, pomp, hurrahing the crowd, as cars pass beneath neon and halogen lights that reflect their paint like tumbling gemstones. It's all about the spectacle, as camera booms sweep over the auctioneers while they jazz the crowd. A car auction is supposed to be an event, and as a rule, they deliver. There's always excitement in the air when dollars turn into dreams.

Some dreams are more vivid than

most, and that is where Yvette VanDerBrink comes in. At many of the sales that VanDerBrink Auctions presents, you won't find bright lights bouncing off yards-deep paint because in many cases, there's no glossy paint to be found. That's because the car may have been sitting on a lot or simply on the Midwest prairie for years, or decades, or a generation. It could be a family's private collection or a museum. That's Yvette's specialty. In an increasingly crowded universe of hammer-it sellers, she has found a niche. She's best known for estate and other liquidation sales that involve original, unrestored cars—not exclusively,

mind you; Yvette will sell whatever goes across her auction block—anything that came out of old dealerships or private collections. If you think that's a tiny sliver of the auction market, it is. And it isn't.

Take VanDerBrink Auctions' most famous sale, the Lambrecht Chevrolet auction held in 2013 in tiny Pierce, Nebraska. Scores of Chevrolets, all in original condition, some never titled, some with single-digit mileage showing on the odometer, found buyers in that sale, which swamped the little Cornhusker town. Lodging and attractions? Forget about it. Nothing there but Chevys galore, led by a 1964 Impala

“ We’re not just doing consignments, we’re working with the seller or the family to make the auction all about them, building the marketing around them. ”





Yvette runs the show, but a VanDerBrink sale can play to thousands.

SS hardtop and a 1958 Apache pickup, which garnered \$97,500 and \$142,500, respectively, at the hammer. Like most of the cars that Yvette sells, none were restored; many ranged between number 4 and 5 condition.

Did that bother anybody? We think not, given that Pierce, normal popula-

tion around 1,600, ballooned in size to more than 20,000 during the Lambrecht sale, which generated more than \$2.8 million in revenue, not including buyer's premiums. It also garnered three hours of coverage on The History Channel.

It's the region where VanDerBrink has made its name. Yvette has run sales in 17 states, but it's hardcore heartland—the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Minnesota—where the company and founder made their respective reputations. And it's home. Yvette is a country girl, a true child of the vast prairies, who has never strayed far from her rich-soil roots. Her parents, Art and Marie Nordstrom, ran a dairy farm just outside Garretson, South Dakota, while also building and operating an auto salvage yard.

She worked at a Minnesota hospital for more than a decade while helping out at the family salvage business, but also—and this was her genuine start—began buying and selling old tractors on the side, a potentially lucrative and active business in the upper Midwest. That was when Yvette made what turned out to be a life decision, attending auction school in Montana and gaining her auctioneer's license. But she had a little help, and enjoys relating the tale today.

First came her dad. "I grew up when my dad was a collector. He was into cars and liked Chevrolets; he had collected several '57 Chevys and some Impalas. Then we'd work at the dairy farm all week and on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, it was racing, every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night, because my dad was an official at the tracks. We'd go to Huset's Speedway, Interlake Speedway, Huron Speedway, over in South Dakota. My father had an old Ford tractor that he fitted with a nine-inch rear end and a 390-cu. in. Ford V-8 out of a Mustang, a hot rod tractor, and he used that at the tracks to push-start the Sprint cars. That was what we did, all summer long. It was our life and our entertainment. We'd get home and he'd go milk the cows. I was the trophy queen a couple of times, and I think I'm the first woman to finish a stock car enduro at one of those tracks. I was a tomboy growing up. I was into throwing the ball, working on the farm, working on cars and racing them."

Then came somebody else. In 2001, her mother told her about a traveling minister from Minneapolis, specializing in modern-day prophecy, who was going to be appearing at their local church the following evening. Yvette had just had



some cross words with her father over his collection of cars, and was disinclined to make the services. She went anyway, only to have the minister single her out during his homily and begin asking her questions. One of them was about why she hadn't mailed in some papers that were in the kitchen cupboard. They formed the application to the Montana auction school. He also explained, knowingly, that she had enough money in her purse to cover the cost of the school's tuition. "I couldn't believe what I was hearing," she said. "Crazy story, isn't it? I didn't even know who this guy was."

Convinced that she'd been touched by divine providence, Yvette decided she had no choice but to enroll. She packed up her Jeep and headed to Montana. Right after completing the course, she returned to South Dakota and put on her first sale, while still helping out with the family enterprises and also holding down a position at the local hospital. She went from selling that first tractor to having a successful, much larger sale of farm equipment the following year. A lot of the customers were aware of her work ethic and smarts and encouraged her to do well. Some didn't. When she was starting out, as she tells the story, it was extremely



You never know what's going to turn up at one of Yvette's sales, from little stuff to scores of cars. At the Lambrecht auction of 2013, buyers swamped the tiny Nebraska town that hosted the spectacle.



The auction house cut its teeth by selling unrestored Chevrolets, such as this collection of models from 1957. Original cars are a big part of its stock in trade.

rare to find a woman running an auction of mechanical or agricultural gear on the Great Plains. In 2002, Yvette was tailed by a stalker and said she received death threats that forced her dad to hire a private investigator, who eventually identified her tormentor. She admits to having nearly quit from the fear and frustration, but jumped back in a big way by tackling her first automotive auction in 2003, her father's collection of 1957 Chevrolets.

Auctions, like many businesses, tend to develop a niche. They can be all about glamour, or incredibly rare cars, or a specific category of vehicle. Yvette said her own niche isn't original cars per se—she is a licensed land appraiser and broker now in addition to her auction duties—but rather, approaching each sale individually and tailoring it to the needs of the family that's hired her. And increasingly, a VanDerBrink sale is a family affair, with the Lambrecht event standing now as a case study. The family which had owned all those Chevrolets and related stuff was leaving the auto business after more than half a century, and Yvette offered to take on the entire burden of organizing and conducting the sale so that the elderly consignees wouldn't be bothered. And the Lambrecht sale became one of the gotta-be-there collector car events of 2013. That 1958 Chevrolet Cameo pickup that sold, remember? It had all of 1 mile showing on its odometer. It was named the Third Most Earth-Shattering Auto Auction of All Time by Hemmings and Yahoo News.

Auctioning her father's cars turned out to be hugely successful, and Yvette backed that victory up with another profitable sale in Ohio. VanDerBrink Auctions' brand

began to evolve. One part of that process was Yvette's firm preference that all lots are sold with no reserve; it tends to speed the process up and guarantee that each sale is a total sell-through. Her firm was among the first in the nation of any kind to begin presenting live online auctions. That helped win Yvette a marketing award from the National Auctioneers Association, and getting the media involved in publicizing the sales has always been one of her specialties. In 2010, Women of Business presented her with a Woman of Excellence award in recognition of the barriers she had surmounted in the industry.

Once you get to know Yvette, you'll realize that despite her successes, she has not strayed very far from her Midwest roots. For one thing, she and her husband still live on a farm in Hardwick, Minnesota, not too far from where she grew up in neighboring South Dakota, where they mainly raise cattle and hay. The sales go on. As Yvette put it, "We started small, but started to grow from word of mouth as the word got around that we were just doing things a little bit differently here. We reached out with marketing and the new technology, and were one of the first to have live online bidding in this area.

"It all comes down to personal service," she continued. "We're not just doing consignments, we're working with the seller or the family to make the auction all about them, building the marketing around them. You know how they say that every dog has its day in the sun? Well, we're making sure that when it comes time to sell, they're going to have their day." 🐾



An Exercise in Patience

The marathon restoration of a Canadian-built 1953 Pontiac Pathfinder De Luxe advances to the frame and engine—Part II

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ANDRÉ FITZBACK

It's never good when you learn that the collector car you're driving has been slowly disassembling itself, providing only subtle hints until, one day, something terribly odd strikes you. For André Fitzback, a mechanic living in St. Hyacinthe in the Quebec province of Canada, the moment he knew something was askew with his 1953 Pontiac Pathfinder De Luxe occurred in 2006.

"I really started to notice that whenever I made a turn, everything was moving on the car; I mean everything—the doors, the steering column and even the glass. It was a really weird experience," said André in Part I of his restoration saga that appeared in last month's issue of *HCC*.

To summarize that installment, after André purchased the Pontiac in 1995

and made it mechanically sound, the conspicuous shifting prompted him to examine the chassis, where he found that the body and frame were separating due to substantial corrosion. After disassembling the car, he delivered the body to a nearby shop. Weeks later, he discovered that it had been damaged further there, prompting its emergency rescue. In spite of these setbacks, André methodically restored the front and rear suspensions, while work began on the Pontiac's 239-cu.in. straight-six engine and Powerglide transmission. Unbeknownst to André, more obstacles were on the horizon. We'll outline the first of them in this month's issue: the frame.

Frame corrosion proved far more extensive than initially thought, and while searching for a replacement, André turned to factory manuals, studying overall

design and dimensions. "By now, I was realizing that this was not your typical Pontiac. It was a blend of Chevrolet and Pontiac parts that make these GM of Canada vehicles unique. So I compared both the Chevrolet and Pontiac manuals before I purchased a 1949-'52 generation convertible frame," says André.

Once in his possession, however, the new frame didn't match the original, in spite of factory schematics. "They were clearly different from the firewall back. It turns out that the 1953-'54 manual showed a '49-'52 frame in error. Finding a solid frame was already difficult; I had no real option other than rework the new frame. This would turn out to be the hardest part of the restoration, and it was a big learning experience for me," explains André. 🐾



Before attempting any alterations to the replacement, André documented critical mounting points for suspension parts and body mounts on the well-corroded original frame. Here, he has done so using fluorescent yellow paint.



By the time André had obtained the new frame, two years had already passed since he had decided to restore the Pontiac. In this image, the difference in frame design has been discovered; fortunately, despite corrosion damage, the original remained true to its factory dimensions.



With the mounting points marked, the original frame was flipped over in order to begin to make a jig. To compensate for the frame's undulations, the front and rear mounts were elevated well above the platform using square tubing and plate steel.



More tubing and strips of plate steel. The former was used to provide support for the latter, as the jig was carefully fabricated to match the contours of the frame. A series of clamps was used to hold everything in place while final adjustments and welds were made.



Next was the fabrication of new body mounts to replace the originals that had corroded away over time. These were critical, and making them now would save time later in the process. Note that a small side rail has been welded in place to help maintain frame width later.



Here is a detail photograph of the kind of damage André found throughout the original frame. Continued stress at this and other points would have the potential to cause catastrophic damage to the Pontiac and serious injuries to its occupants.



With the frame jig completed, it was time to drop the replacement frame into position and secure it using C-clamps. Initially, it was thought that the rails could be manipulated simultaneously, so each of the crossmembers remained riveted to the side rails.



Although the center section of the replacement frame was not too far off from the original, the discrepancy was more significant in the aft section. Note that by the time this photo was taken, André had decided to remove the crossmembers to alter one rail at a time.



To maintain pressure where needed during the bending process, a makeshift but very effective clamp was fabricated using box tubing, threaded rods, nuts and washers. This system was employed at several locations along the length of each frame rail.



André and his colleague used propane burners to apply heat evenly to the steel, relaxing the metal in stages in order to slowly manipulate its shape to conform to the jig. This slow process would prevent damaging the frame's overall integrity.



At several key positions, the frame's contours were too significant for the previously described bending method; it was determined that the metal would fracture. To prevent this from happening, they cut sections out of the bottom plate, exposing the channel within.



With less metal to bend, both the interior and exterior surfaces of the frame were evenly heated. Using blocks, threaded clamps, time and a lot of patience, the frame began to conform to the jig—note the difference between the rails.



Blocks of solid steel were cut to assist with the process of bending the frame rails to match the jig, after taking internal measurements of the frame rails. The blocks spread the clamping force over a broader area, thereby preventing the formation of kinks or creases.



After the frame rails were sufficiently re-contoured, the pieces that had been cut from the bottom of the rails in order to facilitate bending without fracturing were welded back in place. The welds were later dressed to make the splice invisible.



Both frame rails received their corrective treatment, then it was time to begin to reattach the crossmembers. Corresponding mounting holes were cleaned using a drill bit; nuts and bolts were used to hold the crossmember and frame rail together temporarily.



Since André wanted to maintain as many factory-built aspects as possible, he opted to reassemble the frame using rivets rather than modern bolts. With a new rivet positioned from below, heat was concentrated on the butt end and then hammered closed.



Creating enough pressure ensures that the heated rivets conform to their iconic conical domes, as well as create incredibly tight junctions as demonstrated here. This painstaking system was used for every connecting point along the length of the frame.



With the frame rails and crossmembers reunited, it was time to make final welds and adjustments to the body mounting points along the length of the frame. This was done with the frame in its normal position on conventional sawhorses rather than on the jig.



The next step was comparing the reworked frame against the corroded original. At first glance, it appears to be a perfect match; however, this was only the first part of the process. Note that threaded rod was used to make mounting-point comparisons.



In spite of the misfortune that befell the body shell earlier in the restoration, its removal from the first shop proved to have some benefit, as it was conveniently on hand to serve as a second pattern for comparing with the reworked replacement frame.



Here, the body has been carefully suspended above the reworked frame, which sits above the original. After a year of meticulous, time-consuming work, the new frame had been reshaped into a nearly perfect match. According to André, that was a huge relief.



As the frame was nearing completion, André focused on other areas of the restoration, including rebuilding the Pontiac's six-cylinder engine. He diagnosed its latest problem as a bearing issue, and his step-daughter Melissa lent a helping hand.



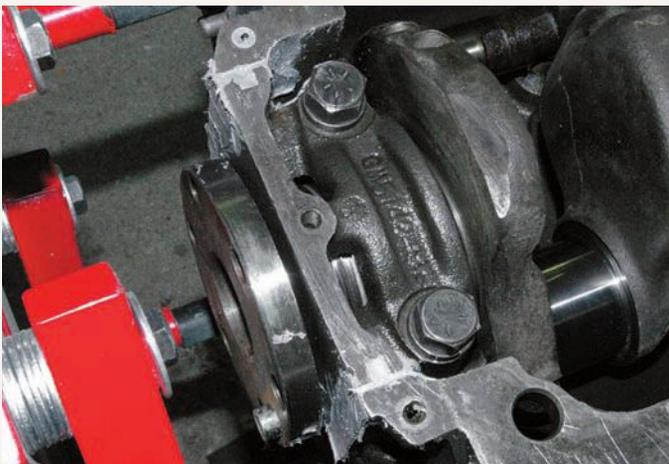
New crankshaft shell bearings have been inserted, and the pistons—installed during the engine's second rebuild in 2005—have been reinstalled, too, after it was ensured that none of the valves needed attention. Here, the new cylinder head gasket has been positioned.



In order to avoid further issues with the top end of the straight-six engine, André had the mating surface of the cylinder head milled. This process provides a better seal between the gasket and head, helping to prevent coolant leaks.



A critical step in any engine rebuild is verifying that all tolerances are within factory specs; here the clearance on one of the connecting rod bearings is being verified with Plastigauge during the assembly process.



An earlier detail image of a critical main seal. Note the close tolerances engine builders have to contend with. Any misalignment here can wreak havoc rather quickly, causing oil loss or worse, crankshaft failure that could damage the block.



Via the Big Brother/Big Sister program, André became acquainted with then-13-year-old Jonathan Seney, who was eager to embrace the hobby in general and the Pontiac's restoration. Each Thursday he helped André; here he is securing the cylinder head.



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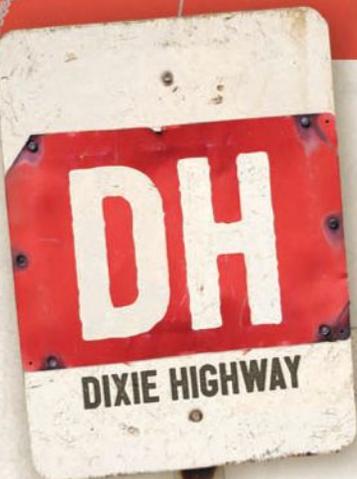


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At this stage, both the engine and transmission have been rebuilt and reunited with one another. Jonathan is assisting the effort in securing them to a sturdy homemade wooden test stand while ensuring that all lubricants are at their proper fill level.



The Pontiac's original gauge cluster was bolted to a piece of plywood, and corresponding connections were made, enabling André to monitor the engine's status during initial break-in testing.



Rebuilt earlier, the differential/torque tube assembly was aligned via sawhorses and bolted to the transmission. Metal flex tubing was clamped to the engine's exhaust manifold and routed out the garage doors in anticipation of testing of the drive systems. Join us in the next issue as we learn about the restoration of this Canadian-born 1953 Pontiac Pathfinder's body.

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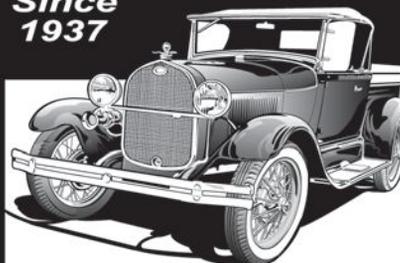
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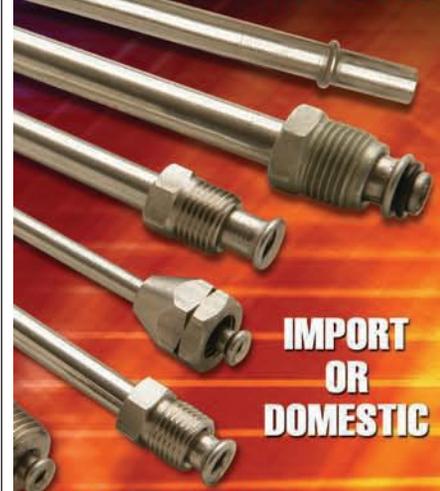
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Packards Within Reach



YOU WON'T GET ANY PACKARD for the same amount of money as a 1970s compact car, but relative to their contemporaries, the Packards highlighted here may put you behind the wheel of one of America's most desirable 1950s luxury cars for a little less money than a comparable Cadillac or Lincoln.

Packard's first major postwar restyle arrived in the high-pocket, three-box bodies of 1951. Buyers in the market for a luxury car considered the new Packards to be too conservatively styled compared to their competition. However, these Packards were all new in a year when few others were. As the brochure says, "Packard's the one for '51!"

Packard's features for 1951 included "new low-to-the-road styling" that was only 62.5-inches tall for "in-the-groove roadability with 'hats on' headroom." Raised fenders had "bonnet lines that cleared the way for close-up visibility," and a one-piece, curved windshield debuted. A "Tele-Glance" instrument panel grouped all the gauges in front of you, and warning lights replaced gauges for oil pressure and ammeter. The rear suspension benefited from a "broad-beam" design for the leaf springs, and the trunk gained 80-percent more capacity.

The medium-priced (and future underdog) Packard 200s included a two-door

Club Coupe, four-door Touring Sedan, and a convertible, all in Deluxe trim. Deluxe meant you were treated to beauty rings on the painted wheels, a simple hood ornament rather than the Packard Pelican, vertical taillamps as opposed to horizontal on the more expensive models, and a sweep-spear that started just ahead of the front wheel arch and ended three quarters of the way into the front door. The two-door "Business Coupe" did not come with beauty rings or turn signals; they were optional.

The Packard 200s were powered by a 288-cu.in. straight-eight flathead engine with five main bearings, generating 135 horsepower at 3,600 RPM, sending power through a three-speed manual transmission with optional overdrive. For a little bit extra, one could order the UltraMatic transmission.

Stand next to a Packard straight-eight while it's idling, what you will hear is the whisper-quiet smoothness of quality engineering—if you hear anything at all.

There were two big developments for 1952. The first was the introduction of "Easamatic" power brakes, a first for an American car. They were designed by Bendix and marketed as a Packard exclusive. The second was related to style. Fashion designer Dorothy Draper was hired to create "Fashion-Keyed" interiors for all Packards, which were now more luxurious with harmonized two-tone fabrics and upholstery that coordinated with body colors. Too bad cars today don't have designer interiors to coordinate with a wider range of exterior colors.

Packard 200s were treated to fender skirts, and the Business Coupe was no longer mentioned in the brochure. A Mayfair two-door hardtop coupe was introduced,

and its trim was also applied to the convertible, which was no longer a 200.

Just like the prior year, the senior 300 and Patrician 400 models were still only available as four-door sedans, so many dealers were applying 300 and Patrician trim to the 200 two-door sedans to make them more appealing. This only disguised the difference between a mid-level and high-end Packard, further eroding Packard's luxury car image.

In 1953, Packard's new CEO, James Nance, wanted to steer the company back to its original place as an exclusively luxury car manufacturer. The 200s were gone, but the current body style would last through 1954 with yearly trim changes.

The good news for you is that even the high-end Packards of 1951-'54 are a little "underdogish" thanks to what followed them with the Dick Teague-designed last true Packards. The 1955-'56 Packards are among the most desirable thanks to Packard's first OHV V-8 and the availability of Torsion-Level suspension not to mention the extensive restyling of an existing platform that was very striking and more modern.

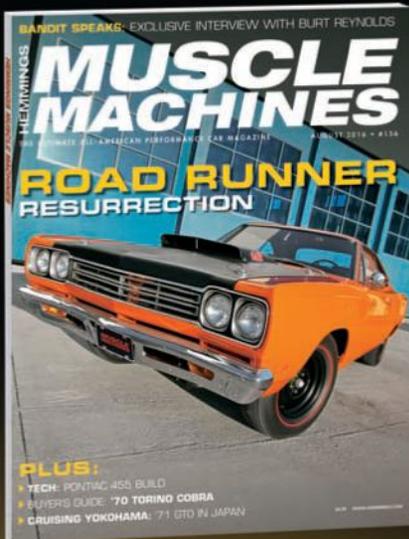
A friend of mine owns a 1953 Packard Patrician, which he let me drive. Although it has manual steering, to my surprise, when I stopped the car for the first time, it has Easamatic brakes; there are still teeth marks in his dash.

Aside from a short stopping distance, his 1953 Packard is one of the most beautifully engineered 1950s cars I've ever driven. The steering is easy, and the ride is as smooth as silk. I'd always read that the UltraMatic was slow off the line and none-too-exciting. His Packard accelerated quite adequately, and the upshift to Direct Drive was luxuriously smooth—much smoother than a 1950s Hydra-Matic.

If you are attracted to luxury cars from the early 1950s but find decent examples to be out of your price range, take a look at the 1951-'52 Packard 200s. Still want something more high end? Just about any 1951-'54 Packard four-door model may also be within your reach. I'll also wager that once you test drive a Packard, you'll be hooked on them.

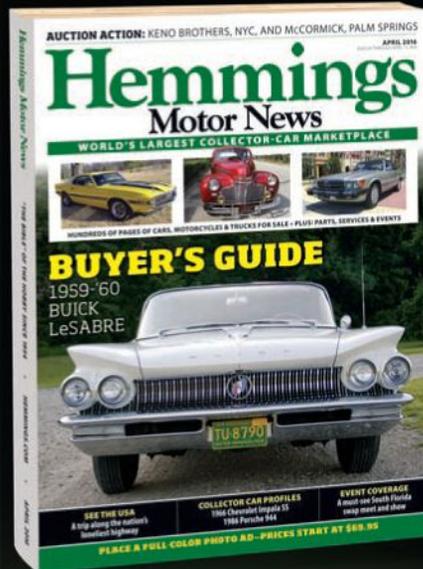
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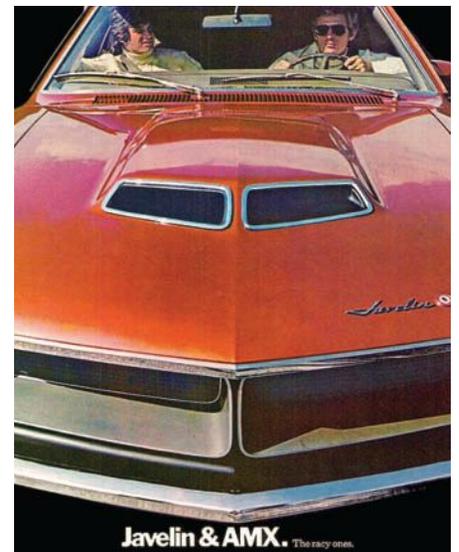
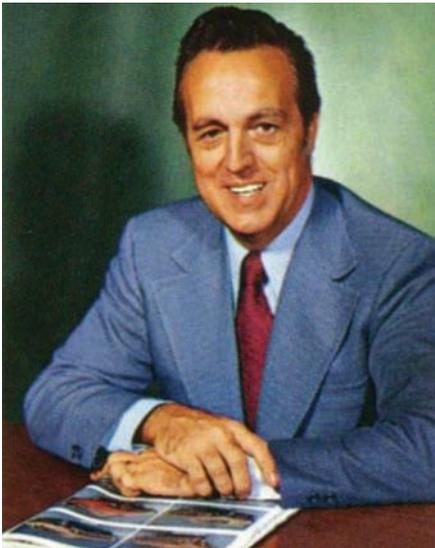
MOST OF US ARE ONLY TOO AWARE that American Motors Corporation's lonely last stand came to an end when it was absorbed by Chrysler in 1987. The Jeep lineup survived the acquisition, but not much else. Lots of enthusiasts still mourn the passing of the last independent, and not a few of them show respect for a guy named Dick Teague for getting the company to hang on for as long as it did. Teague's portfolio of work stretched back to the years that immediately followed World War II, and as time went on, he got credit for some of AMC's most dramatic designs.

It is a pity, nothing less, that the company's eroding cash position and market share didn't allow his work at AMC to be perpetuated—not that Teague disappeared when AMC did, by any means.

He was born in Los Angeles where his mother was a silent-movie figure; Teague also enjoys singular distinction as likely the world's only automotive designer who did some gigs as a supporting actor in the *Our Gang* comedy shorts, playing a girl, no less. Within a few years, however, Teague was gravely injured in a traffic accident, an incident that left him with an essentially

useless eye, the same fate that befell his father a few years later. Creatively, he started out building model airplanes before gravitating to the California dry lakes with high school pals Ed Iskendarian and Stuart Hilborn, who both grew into certifiable speed legends. That was his proper introduction into the car world.

During this time, he had been working as a technical and industrial illustrator for Northrop Aircraft in Los Angeles, where his boss was Paul Browne, earlier a designer at General Motors. At Browne's suggestion, Teague



Two of Teague's greatest design accomplishments were the Javelin and AMX for American Motors.

took up studies at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Teague did so, and was rewarded after the war with a freelance contract to design a pre-Henry J compact sedan for Kaiser-Frazer. Next, Teague accepted an apprentice-level appointment to the General Motors styling staff, but was quickly lured away by Packard. It was there that Teague found his true calling, significantly changing the appearance of cars on a shoestring budget. Before Packard folded, he designed the company's final concept vehicle, the Predictor. In 1957, the Packard styling team moved en masse to Chrysler, where Teague spent the time working largely on non-automotive design projects.

He was nonetheless anxious to get back into styling cars, and jumped at the chance to join upstart American Motors in 1959. Within two years, he was AMC's chief executive for design work. Teague would come to describe his years at AMC as his personal Camelot. He found himself in a situation not very different than the one he experienced at Packard—working for a company with a decided less-is-more environment that was in increasingly pitched competition with the Big Three. Styling changes had to be judicious because the capital to finance them was usually in short supply. Yet Teague rose to the challenges with aplomb and, well, style.

Teague's first foray into AMC design came in 1964, when he used the basic Rambler Classic hardtop as the basis for the fastback Tarpon show car, which made it into production in largely unalloyed form as the Marlin. It wasn't a huge seller, but the Marlin was an indisputable eyepopper executed at minimal cost. He went on to design both generations of the AMC Javelin and AMX sportsters, plus a radical design of the AMC Matador coupe that was a surprisingly agile seller for several years in the middle 1970s. Then there was the redesign of the venerable Rambler American into the AMC Hornet, and naturally, the surprisingly well-received Gremlin and Pacer lines—they may have been the butt of jokes initially, but buyers warmed to them in a hurry, and both were considered successful executions.

He also gets credit for a monumentally successful early SUV, the Cherokee XJ, done in 1983 when Jeep was still an AMC holding. In hindsight, there's scant doubt that AMC would need a savior at some point, beginning with Renault in 1979 and then with its outright buyout by Chrysler eight years later. It's impossible to argue that without Teague's creativity and resourcefulness, American Motors likely wouldn't have lasted as long as it did. 

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Paul Tumolo Assembly Line Worker General Motors

I WAS HIRED AT THE GENERAL

Motors assembly plant in Framingham, Massachusetts, on Halloween, 1972, as a line worker in the body shop for the second shift. This plant built mid-size Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Pontiacs.

My introduction to the assembly line was to be placed into a five-foot-deep pit with a huge spot welder and a pneumatic body sealer gun. I had to apply the body sealer to the quarter panel lip, clamp on an outer wheelhouse, and then maneuver the spot welder to apply between 20-25 spot welds. The spot welder threw sparks everywhere, and despite wearing protective coveralls and gloves, I was burned on almost every car.

The line moved at 60 cars per hour, and I was to perform my duties on every station wagon and four-door car. The work was extremely hard physically, and it was very hot and noisy. The smells of the factory were a mixture of rubber, paint, oil smoke, and some others I could not identify.

I couldn't leave my post unless a utility man came and relieved me. The line was merciless, and it was 60 cars per hour, no matter what. I spent the first week on the spot welding job before I was moved to the door hanging area. The turnover for the jobs was high, with some people only lasting a few hours, and then walking out. In the UAW, the lowest-seniority workers received the hardest jobs. As you grew in seniority, the jobs got better, and you could move from second shift to first shift. The pay was great at over \$7.00 per hour (about \$40 in 2016). There was plenty of overtime, as well. It was a factory job that afforded a nice middle-class lifestyle. I was single and living at home, so with minimal bills to pay, I was cash rich!

In the door-hanging area, I was responsible for hanging rear doors on all four-door cars, and front doors on the two-door models. The front doors were really heavy, weighing about 70 pounds. My station had a pneumatic air wrench, a door-hanging fixture attached to the ceiling with spring-loaded cables, and an alignment jig. As the car came down the line, I would attach the door-hanging fixture to the car with the clamps on it. Be-



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hind me, a conveyor would have the exact door needed, and I would pick it off the conveyor and install it in the door fixture. Once the door was in the fixture, I would attach upper and lower door hinges, and drive in the bolts. The door fixture would be released, and the alignment fixture would be attached to the cowl.

A three-pound hammer was used to adjust the hinges so the door had alignment to the body. You had to be very careful, as the raw body was full of very sharp seams and edges. Even with coveralls, you could get a nasty cut or gash. One night, I found out exactly how sharp the edges could be, as I got a large cut across my right bicep, and it needed some stitches. I ended up in the infirmary, where the GM doctor stitched me up. If you were injured, you were placed on light duty somewhere in the plant until you were cleared to return to your normal job. I ended up in Water Test first, and my job was to sit inside the car while it went through a series of high-pressure water nozzles looking for leaks. I did that for a few days, and then went to the Drive Off area. I drove the new cars from the end of the assembly line to the transport area about a quarter mile away. It was great to get a hot car, like a 4-4-2, GTO or Buick GS with a four-speed.

I returned to my normal job in the door-hanging area, and worked there until early 1974. The first gas crisis was in full swing, and the entire second shift was laid off due to slowing car sales. I remember walking out that night, and the UAW shop steward was at the door telling each of us that we would be called back soon, and to stay near the phone. That call never came, and the Framingham plant, which opened in 1947, would finally close down in 1989 after producing millions of cars.

The facility is now the location of an automobile, truck and boat warehouse and live-auction site. The company claims that the facility is the largest indoor auction house in the world, capable of housing 10,000 autos and 4,000 people. This experience propelled me to go to college, and pursue a white collar occupation. Anyone who could last 30 years on the assembly line deserves a great pension. 🍷



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

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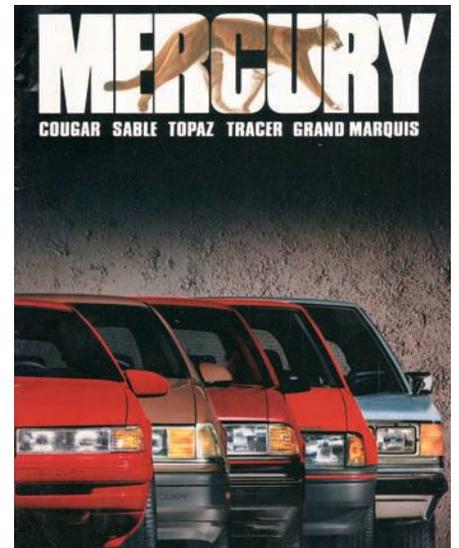
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The Chevrolet Beretta returns and introduces the new GTZ coupe with a high-powered Quad Four dual-overhead-cam engine. The aerodynamic Beretta also boasts a lower coefficient of drag than a Porsche 944. Also look for the soon-to-be-made Convertible Beretta as the Pace Car at this year's Indianapolis 500. The GTZ is available for \$13,750.



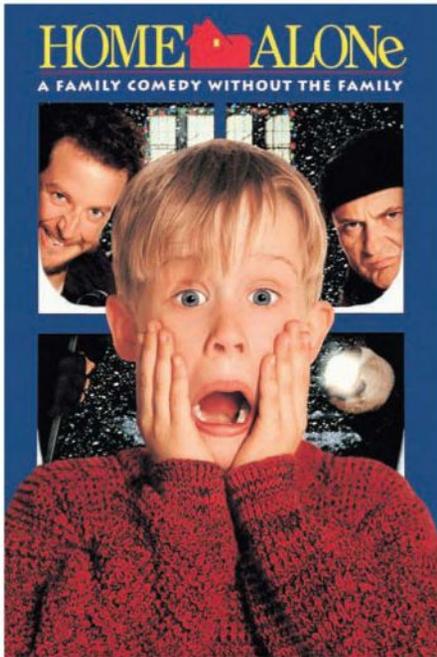
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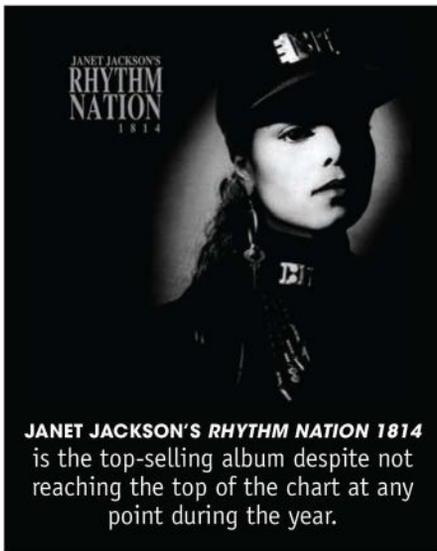
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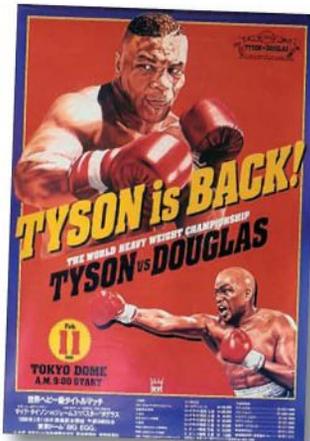
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Our Two Chevrolets

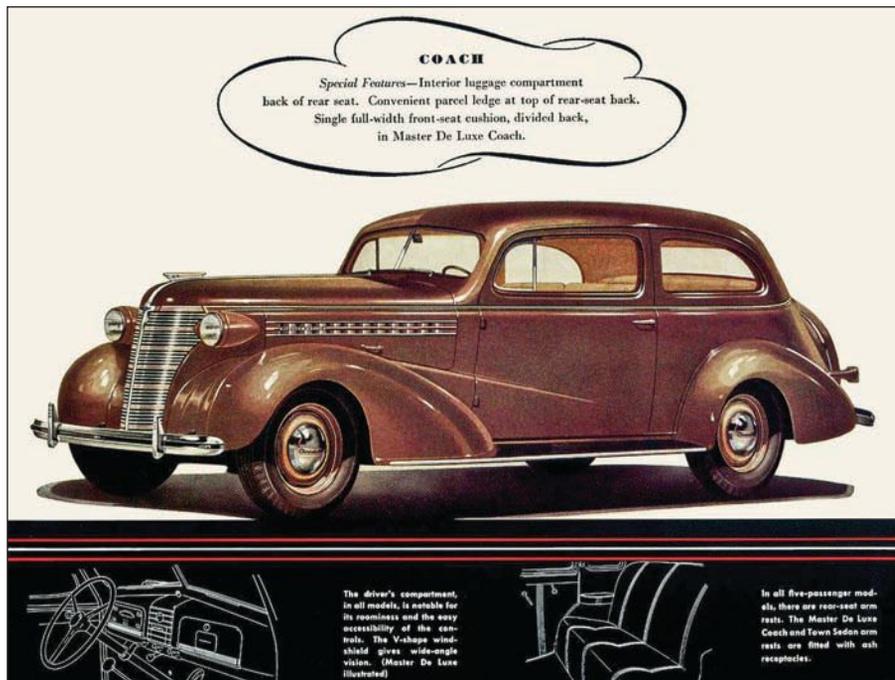
I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A "CAR GUY."

I can remember sitting on the front steps of our house in Davenport, Iowa, on West Locust Street at about age five identifying makes of cars that went down the street. Dad would often be sitting beside me and would gently correct my mistakes. He would tell of automobiles like the Auburn, the Velie (manufactured just across the river in East Moline, Illinois) and the magnificent Duesenberg. He recounted tales of cars that were no longer manufactured but were still held in high esteem. He explained to me that the term "it's a duesy" was a reference to the great automobile.

Although I'm a Ford guy, in my early years my family was strictly a Chevrolet clan. My dad acquired the first car that I can remember, new. It was a 1938 Chevrolet Master Deluxe two-door sedan. This was before he got married in 1943, and I came along in 1944. He drove that Chevy through the war years and late in 1949 determined that it was time for a new car. He decided that he would sell the old Chevy himself rather than trade it in. I'm pretty sure that there was a prominent "For Sale" sign posted in the side window.

My parents parked their old car in the back parking lot of the hardware store that my dad worked at, left me in the car, and went inside the store. This fellow comes up to me and engages me in a conversation about the qualities of the car. I remember telling him that the front seat went backward and forward. I must have been intrigued by this phenomenon. My mom learned to drive in this car and without a doubt used that seat mechanism to scoot herself forward. I probably witnessed this maneuver several times.

This fellow then went into the store and must have related to my dad that I had told him something very negative about the car. My dad emerged from the store obviously quite angry with me, thinking that I had said something to sour the sale. I remember trying to explain that I only told him about the seat. Dad was adamant about my guilt. From my mom I received a lecture about talking to strangers, period. I was mad at the guy for using me and getting me into trouble, and I was equally mad at my dad for not believing me and taking the word of someone who was



cooking up a story to try to get a better deal. I felt betrayed. However, I did learn that when you are a kid and you don't yet have a reputation for veracity, you should keep your mouth shut.

The incident with our family's other Chevrolet happened shortly after the '38 Chevy was sold. In this case, the car was a brand-new 1950 Chevrolet Deluxe Fleetline. It was a beautiful light-green two-door sedan with the reliable "Blue Flame" six-cylinder engine. And although this was the first year for the two-speed Powerglide automatic transmission, this car had the three-on-the-tree manual transmission.

I remember being mesmerized by the sight of Dad pulling into the driveway with the new Chevrolet. I quickly ran up to him; I was there before he even had the opportunity to come to a complete stop. There was a little bit of disbelief that this brand-new car could actually be ours. Just as quickly, the neighbors gathered, and soon there were people everywhere. I was still on my own personal inspection tour, climbing in and out of the car, walking around drinking in the beauty of the shiny chrome and beautiful paint. Now, keep in mind that I was only five years old and considerably shorter than the aver-

age adult. It is easy to overlook a small kid among a group of grown-ups, especially when the kid is not really paying attention either. I was totally preoccupied by the car when "IT" happened. The passenger-side door was open, and I was about to go inside again when someone closed the door on all four of the fingers of my right hand.

I saw stars and even some fireworks. But the immediate pain was nothing compared to the pain that set in a minute or two later. Yeah, I cried, I cried a whole bunch. I don't know if it was because my fingers were small or that the weather stripping on the car was still new and soft, but I didn't suffer any broken fingers. Some ice packs and a few days of healing were all that I required.

Were these incidents instrumental in my becoming a "Ford Guy"? Is it just coincidence that these two unpleasant experiences both involved Chevrolets? Was I permanently scarred emotionally by these events of my youth? Well, the answer is probably, no. But, then again, how come I remember them so well? 🐶

Editor's note: In our haste to get issue #143 to the printer on time, we inadvertently selected the image of a 1949 Buick instead of the correct 1948 model.

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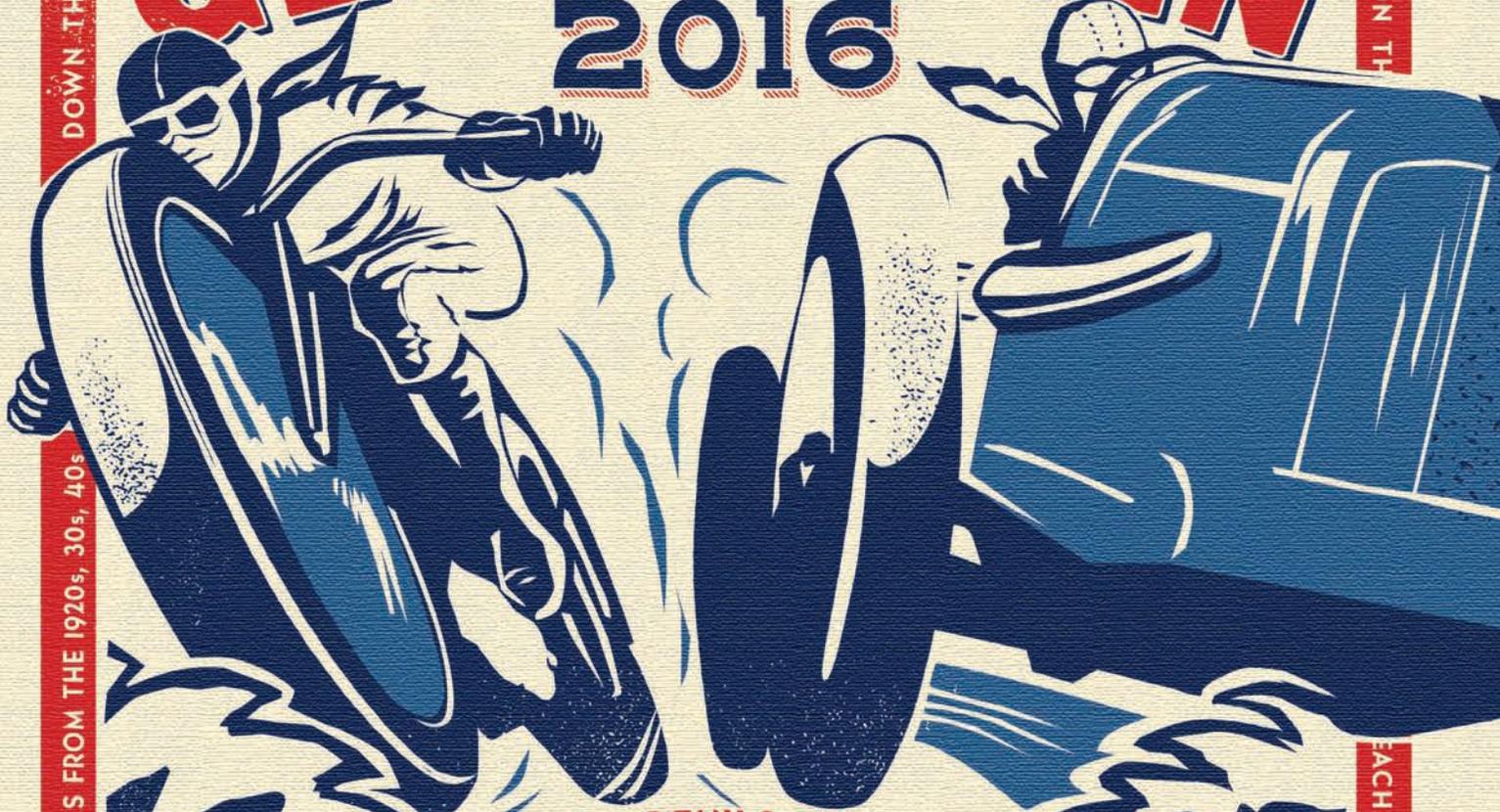
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CONTACT!

A 1922 Ford Model T made for a great platform for prop-starting aircraft

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

Was there anything on wheels—or skis—a Model T couldn't do? By the end of the 1910s, the Model T could lay claim to not only putting the world on wheels by providing a rugged, inexpensive car that any middle-class family could afford; it could also stake a claim for providing farmers, manufacturers, service

people and merchants of all kinds with reliable transportation for their goods as well.

The ubiquity of the Model T supported a vast aftermarket business that saw converted vehicles and an astonishing variety of accessories available. Sure, there were ambulances, farm trucks, custom-bodied hearses and even tracked vehicles with skis in place of the front wheels for snow work. But what about an airplane starter?

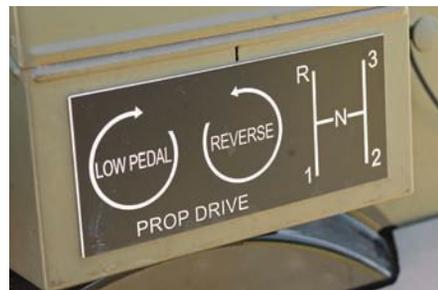
One of the more ingenious conversions that filled an admittedly tiny niche, was that of the Hucks Starter. Like early Model Ts, aircraft of the pioneering era had to be hand cranked. Just as with the Model T, this was no easy task, particularly given the larger-displacement engines found on airplanes.

Enter Bentfield Hucks, pilot and engineer.

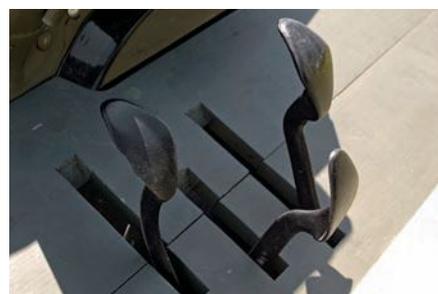
Hucks was one of Britain's earliest pioneering flyers. Born in 1884, Hucks took to driving at a time when driving itself was considered a pioneering feat. Legend has it that Hucks lost his license—along with racking up £50 in fines—to a speeding violation and then turned his attention to flying. Having apprenticed as an engineer, Hucks started first as an airplane mechanic, but earned his flying license in 1911, just the 91st person to do so in Britain. Hucks began touring the U.K. and the U.S. with Claude Grahame-White, another English aviation pioneer, and holder of license #6.

In 1913, Hucks made a name for himself by becoming the first Brit to perform a full loop and fly upside down. Competing in air races and giving demonstrations gave way to joining the Royal Flying Corps when World War I broke out. Poor health sent Hucks home from the Western Front. Joining the Aircraft Manufacturing Co. of London (the predecessor to de Havilland), Hucks became a prolific test pilot.

With all of that testing, Hucks was



A Muncie auxiliary transmission supplements the standard Model T running gear here. The Muncie's power take-off runs the chain drive for the fully functional prop starter, though it has yet to be tested.

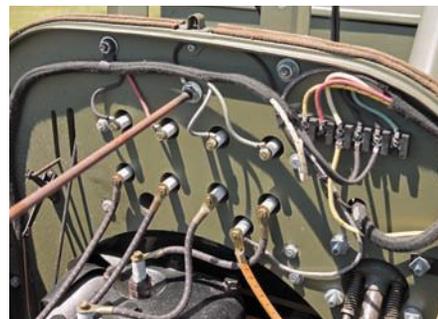


involved in many, many aircraft starts. With the electric automobile starter still in its infancy and likely to add an unwanted layer of complexity and weight to an aircraft, an external starter was a necessity. Hand propping an airplane engine was standard operating procedure and, despite how common it was at airfields, the practice was not without its pitfalls that could prove fatal if not done correctly.

Hucks noted this danger and set about designing a machine that could do the work in a safer manner. Realizing the need to get into and out of place quickly, he decided to base his portable starter on a Model T chassis. With Ford's Trafford Park assembly plant the largest-volume

producer in the U.K. by 1913, the Model T was nearly as ubiquitous there as it was in the U.S. by the time World War I broke out. The Model T provided an obvious basis for Hucks' starter mechanism.

Perhaps drawing additional inspiration from the Model T, Hucks envisioned a system where a motorized crank with a bar on the end, aka the "claw," fit into a dog bolt/starting crank ratchet, at the center of the propeller. Driven by an output from the car's transmission, a small sprocket rotating below the floor of the Hucks Starter turned a larger sprocket, supported well above the driver's head, via a chain. That larger sprocket turned a shaft that terminated in the claw bar that turned the clutched, or



The simplicity of the Model T is on full display under the hood, where a distinct lack of complex wiring and electronics marks a stark contrast to modern machinery.



Though invented in the U.K., Hucks starters were used in many countries. This image shows a Hucks starter being used on a Vought VE-7 at NACA's Langley Research Center. The civilian National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics operated as a predecessor to NASA.

ratcheting, dog bolt.

With a universal joint in the shaft, it could be raised or lowered as needed to meet the aircraft prop. It also featured a telescoping section that enabled the prop man to work the claw closer to or farther from the plane, depending on where the driver positioned the Hucks Starter.

With the claw connected to the dog bolt, the prop man let the pilot and driver know and stepped down from his position on the small platform built in front of the radiator. The pilot then confirmed magneto contact to the driver, who, in turn, started the auxiliary drive to turn the prop. As soon as the airplane engine started, its faster speed, relative to the crank, would turn the dog bolt faster to spit out the Hucks Starter's crank.

Another important tip in the operating procedure includes the proper chocking of the wheels. The aircraft, of course, should be chocked so as to not immediately start moving forward and into the crew of the Hucks Starter. That was a problem Hucks' invention was certainly trying to eliminate—human contact with moving propellers. The Hucks Starter, too, needed to be chocked, but only from moving forward. Certainly, after the aircraft was successfully started, the Hucks operators would want to get out of Dodge, so to speak, as rapidly as possible.

The device proved effective, even as other methods of starting began to take hold, though convenient electric starters were still many years away. Hucks was granted a U.S. patent posthumously on August 19, 1919, more than 10 months after he succumbed to pneumonia related to the flu. Even with the advent of the electric starter in the ensuing decades,



The "claw" of the Hucks Starter engaged a dog bolt on the end of the prop, which engaged the crankshaft to start an aircraft.

external starters remained common with aircraft, either via an externally powered electric or internal combustion-powered device, compressed air or even a cartridge starter, which was effectively a shotgun-type shell that forced a piston down to get the crank moving on an engine.

Various Hucks Starters, or derivatives based on his initial design, were built using both Model T car and Model TT truck chassis—and some other non-Ford products, as well. No known original Hucks starters seem to exist, though there are several replicas in museums throughout the world, including one built in 1952 that now resides in the renowned Shuttleworth Collection in England.

The Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach, Virginia, is a sight to behold. While its collection pales in comparison to the likes of the Smithsonian's incredibly comprehensive Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, the Military Aviation Museum makes a point of pride in flying as many of its aircraft as possible. A privately owned not-

for-profit operation, the museum has seen its founder and biggest patron spend large sums of money restoring otherwise forgotten aircraft and maintaining them in flight-ready condition. Virtually all of the aircraft in its collection are flightworthy. Most are original, with only a few replicas.

Along with those airplanes, the museum has done its best to hangar the aircraft in authentic-looking, and even downright authentic buildings. World War I airplanes, for instance, are housed in a period-appearing building. Likewise for other vintage aircraft. For German World War II airplanes, an actual Luftwaffe hangar, built in 1934, but purchased, disassembled and transported to the museum in 2004, now houses that part of the collection.

The museum wanted a Hucks Starter to go with its World War I-vintage aircraft. Turning to the Model T community, it located Mike Walker, of Fayetteville, Arkansas. A long-time T hobbyist, in recent years, Mike has been earning his living repairing and restoring Model Ts, along with creating a few replica vehicles based on them.

Mike's approach to building an authentic Hucks Starter involved lots of research. But he struck gold when he discovered that he was not the only one building such a vehicle. "One thing that helped me a lot was that an outfit in New Zealand had built one of these," says Mike. "The folks in New Zealand then, who wanted to have one of those—who wanted to build one of those, went to England, took lots of photographs and did measured drawings and went back to New Zealand and did CAD drawings of all the parts that are special to the Hucks Starter

to make the drive work and so forth. They emailed me all of those drawings, so that really helped a lot.”

Still, even with the drawings in hand, Mike’s work was cut out for him. He found a 1922 Model TT one-ton truck. “We decided early on that we’d go with the Ton Truck chassis because it’s a lot more substantial,” recalls Mike. Like the original Hucks Starters, Mike’s recreation features a body largely of wood, beyond the metal engine covers he retained. And, as far as the body goes, calling it minimal would be a bit of an understatement. The body primarily supports the starter mechanism along with a platform in front of the radiator for a prop man to stand on when mating the device to an airplane to start it.

The original Hucks Starter used a dog clutch concentric to the drive shaft to engage the starter mechanism. A lever allowed the driver to shift between engaging the driveshaft or the starter sprocket. In this regard, owing to budgetary constraints and looking to reduce complications, Mike took a small liberty on his replica. “On the one I built for the Virginia museum,” Mike says, “I cheated a little bit and didn’t have those

parts to make the drive itself authentic. I used an auxiliary Muncie transmission behind the Ford transmission. And that auxiliary transmission had a power take-off built into it. They were real popular for Ford trucks back in the day.

“So, I used that and ran a jack shaft off of that and a sprocket. What you see above the floor, the chain drive and so forth, is pretty much authentic. I would have had to have a machine shop make those pieces, which would have been pretty expensive. And this just seemed like an easier way to achieve the same thing for a lot less trouble.” Since creating this Hucks Starter for the museum in Virginia, Mike has also produced another one for a museum in New Zealand (though not the same as the original museum he contacted for the drawings). Mike’s second Hucks Starter uses an authentic mechanism for the starting equipment, akin to the original.

Mike enjoys the comparison between starting the Model T and the aircraft that the Hucks Starter was designed for. “Every time you start a Model T with a crank, it’s the same process. It’s got a dog that’s shaped the same way as the one on the prop. And as soon as the engine starts going faster than the crank, it spits it out.



PTO-connected, chain-driven prop starter proved a relatively straightforward—and safer—alternative to hand-propping aircraft.

“I really enjoyed building it, and I like figuring out how to do things,” continues Mike. “That was a lot of fun for me because there was a lot of head scratching involved. It would be different if we had one right here to see and copy, like the first New Zealand bunch did. I just figured another way to do it using that Muncie transmission.” Sounds like the same sort of ingenuity that Bentfield Hucks would have appreciated. 🐾





Cattle Trucking

A wounded warrior returns home from World War II to haul cattle



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF TERRY SODEN

The insects deep in the Pacific jungle buzzed loudly when Norman Soden finally regained consciousness. He was on his second stint in the U.S. Army, having first been drafted in the late 1930s after he'd spent his life on the Soden family corn and soybean farm in Wisner, Nebraska, a small city in Cuming County, maybe 90 miles

southwest of Omaha. Norman had been born there in 1915 and started driving trucks for a local hauler when he was 16 years old. By 1933, as the Depression set in, he began skinning rigs up Highway 275 to the big city, hitting what was then known as the Omaha Livestock Market. Then, as now, Nebraska's biggest and most cosmopolitan city was a meat-packing town at heart, with major presences by Armour, Cudahy, Swift and Wilson. When

it comes to meat on the hoof, Omaha has always been a busy place.

Then came the draft, a mustering-out, and not long after that, Pearl Harbor. In the national emergency, Norman was recalled to active duty, and ended up in the hard core of Pacific theater action as a heavy machine gunner for the 6th Division. His unit engaged the enemy on a shell-pocked island in New Guinea, where Norman reached across

his body to grab a fresh belt of .50-caliber ammunition. That was when a Japanese sniper's bullet smashed into his left elbow, shattering the joint and adjacent parts of his arm. He spent time in a field hospital before being evacuated to a Red Cross hospital ship, where surgeons realized there was only a limited chance they could save the arm.

Gangrene had set into the devastated elbow, but the doctors decided on a last-ditch effort to avoid amputation. They applied maggots to consume his ruined flesh, thus clearing his infection. That worked, but they told him he would never use the arm again. They gave him the choice of locking it in a straight-up-and-down position or bent at a 90-degree angle. However, they never considered the fact that Norman was a truck driver and always would be. He insisted on the 90-degree option, telling the medics that without it, he'd never drive a truck again. Bending the elbow, even permanently, would allow him to grip a steering wheel while using his good arm to change gears.





An early postwar photo shows Norman back in Nebraska in 1946, alongside an International KB tractor-and-trailer setup that was owned by the Farmers Union Co-Op Trucking Association out of Wisner. He looks serene, casting an almost jaunty pose with his arm bent against his body. The war was over, and he was back to driving trucks across the Great Plains.

It was a lifetime's calling for him. The panoramic photo along the top of these pages shows the lineup of Farmers Union Co-Op truckers arrayed across a field in 1938; a tiny "X" about halfway across delineates Norman's position in the lineup. This gathering was an annual rite for the Nebraska truckers: As summer faded and the gathering snows of winter began to approach, the truckers would fan out across the prairies to visit ranches, where cattle would be herded in off the open rangelands into the trucks for transport to farms where they could be more efficiently fed, without the risk of lost head during the blizzard season. Afterward, it was onto Highway 275 and off to the market in Omaha. That's the way it had been in Nebraska since the Omaha stockyards were founded in 1883, a period of time after an expatriate Irishman had opened the city's first packing house. The market fell into disuse during the 1980s, but its remains were renovated and the Livestock Exchange Building is today a national historic landmark.

Terry Soden, Norman's son, told us

that his father continued to drive cattle trucks in northeastern Nebraska well into his seventies. One of the photos dates to 1952 and shows his father standing in front of a new, narrow-nose White tractor, alongside Terry's sister, Sharon. "Look at Norman's left arm," Terry wrote us. "My sister and I never knew anything different.

One thing I remember is that my dad always told me that a truck driver was a traveler's best friend. Truckers were always ready to help a traveler in need whether it was a flat tire, or an accident, or to give first aid. They were the first responders of the highway back then. No cell phones to call anyone for help." 🚚



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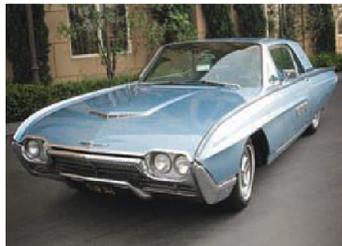
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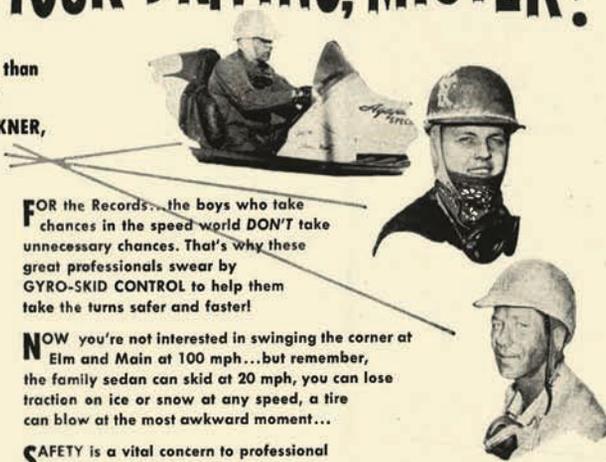
ODDIE? BOI GOODIE?

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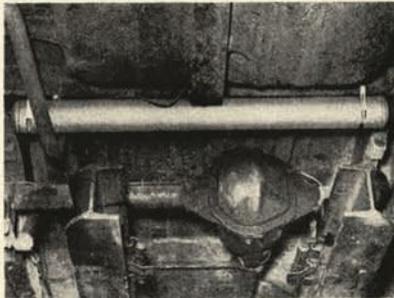
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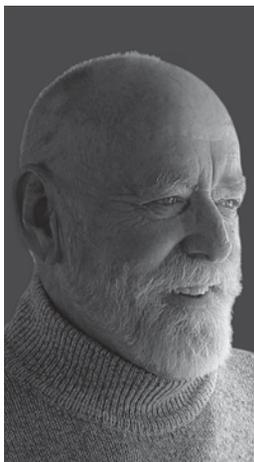
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Fire and Flame

Internal combustion engines come to life when flame and fuel are combined with air under controlled circumstances. However, under uncontrolled circumstances, the results are often unfortunate. In fact, in order to avoid problems, it is wise to keep these three substances completely separated until you wish to combine them. Actually, if not handled carefully, each of these substances can be problematic. Here are a few examples of what I mean:

When I was 16, the fuel pump went out on my pal Charlie's 1940 Ford woodie. We needed to get the car home, so we walked to a service station and got a can of gas. Then we lifted the hood and removed the air cleaner. I ran around, jumped in and started the car while Charlie sat on the fender and slowly poured gas down the carburetor.

We got about 30 yards before the engine backfired and a flame shot up into the can. Charlie panicked and threw it in front of the car, which was slightly uphill. That was the first time I saw a car burn to the ground. Gasoline deserves respect. But then, so does electricity.

You really need to keep your wits about you when working on electrical components. I learned that years ago when a friend attempted to install a new voltage regulator on his Lucas Electric-equipped 1959 MGA. Something went dreadfully wrong when he hit the starter because smoke poured out of it and it never worked again.

Now one might deduce from this incident that electricity is just smoke, and when it leaks out, things stop working. That is a logical enough deduction. But that is not what caused the problem. We had to go further back in the cause-and-effect chain of events to determine the truth of the matter. His mistake was in not labeling the regulator's wires before detaching them; he thought he would remember how they went.

And then a few years ago a woman took out the wall of a neighborhood bar. I live around the corner, so I ran to see if I could help. I asked her what happened, and she said the gas pedal stuck. She apparently went a block at full throttle before losing her brakes and losing control. I asked her why she didn't just shut the ignition off. She replied

that she didn't think of it. Even when flame, fuel and air are combined under ideal circumstances, you still need to maintain control. Shutting the engine off is one approach to doing that.

Sometimes you need to do more than just shut it off, though. If I am going to be working on a classic's electrical system, the first thing I do is

disconnect the ground lead on the battery. I have seen bare wires light up like toaster filaments when touched to the car's chassis at the wrong time.

Disconnecting the battery on a contemporary car can cause its computer to go back to default, so check your shop manual before proceeding. I don't work on newer cars, so I don't have that problem. But

even on vintage vehicles, disconnecting the battery may mess up your radio settings; this problem is more easily remedied than an under-dash fire.

And while we are on the subject, in my life, perhaps the most exciting event involving the uncontrolled combination of fuel and flame was when I worked in a Union 76 station in my youth. A gentleman walked in to get a can of gas one morning; he had run out a few blocks away. Another pump jockey grabbed our loner can and went out to a pump and filled it. And then, since it had been raining, he took it back inside where the cash boxes were.

He sat the can down near the customer and proceeded to get his change. The fellow chose that moment to light a cigarette and then dropped his match on the can, which flamed up immediately. The owner of the station looked up from his paperwork in the office, then came running into the lube room and place kicked the can across the alley and through the big glass window of a fast food joint. This resulted in a fireball worthy of an action movie.

Luckily the diner was closed, but the station owner's insurance company was not pleased. Again, flame, fuel and air were combined in a most unfortunate way. I only relate this story as a warning to those who would be tempted to wash parts in gasoline and puff a Pall Mall simultaneously, or even wash parts in gasoline at all. A trip to the emergency room is a possible consequence shortly thereafter. ☞



I have seen

bare wires light

up like toaster

filaments when

touched to the

car's chassis at

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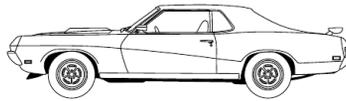
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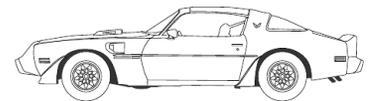
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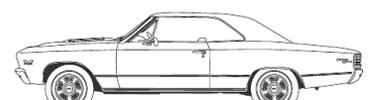
67-81 FIREBIRD / TRANS AM



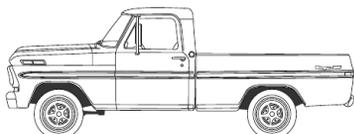
79-93 MUSTANG



67-81 CAMARO



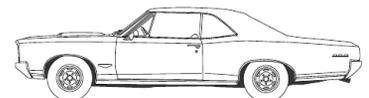
64-87 CHEVELLE
MALIBU / EL CAMINO



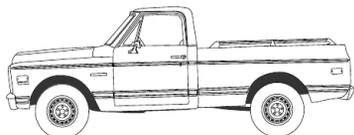
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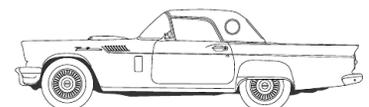


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