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JUNE 2017 #153



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ever. Our new

location is the

reason why.



The “New” Hemmings Concours

If you always wanted to attend the Hemmings Concours but were never able to do so, there has never been a better year for you to join us than 2017. This year's Hemmings Concours—our 11th—has all the key ingredients to be the absolute best one ever. Our new location is the reason why.

Scenic Lake George, New York, will host the three-day 2017 Hemmings Concours festival during the third weekend of September. Like all previous Hemmings Concours, there will be a variety of collector-car activities, and the actual judged concours will be held on Sunday, the 17th. Best of all, the show field is right at the shore of the south end of the lake, thus providing a spectacular backdrop. And with the colorful fall foliage season just beginning, the views will surely be breathtaking.

Historic Lake George is on the outskirts of the Adirondack mountains, just 3½ hours from Boston and New York City, about 4½ hours from Buffalo, and only two hours south of Montreal; the Canadian capital city of Ottawa is barely three hours away. But what makes Lake George such an ideal location is the show field's close proximity to the town itself. In fact, you won't need to drive at all to enjoy it, because the town starts at our show field. It's just a short walk to the many quaint shops and restaurants lining Main Street of this charming village, and if you choose to take a break during the day and enjoy a relaxing cruise on the lake, all you'll have to do is cross the street and hop onto one of the historic ferry boats. Many motels and hotels are in walking distance, too, making this show field the most convenient and accessible concours site in the country.

Lake George has a long history of being one of the most popular vacation destinations in America. Besides its surrounding beauty, it's loaded with old-world charm and a huge array of recreational possibilities that your entire family will enjoy. In addition to all the lake-related activities such as fishing, boating, canoeing and jet-ski

rentals, there's the nearby Fort William Henry museum, local breweries and wineries and cozy, old-style motels to stay at so you can relive those wonderful childhood memories of growing up in the '50s and '60s. Other nearby attractions include the two-mile long Ausable Chasm, which has been dubbed the “Grand Canyon of the Adirondacks,” historic Fort Ticonderoga, and the Six Flags Great Escape amusement and indoor water park.

As in years past, on Friday afternoon there will be a collector-car cruise, although the details

at this time have yet to be finalized. Saturday is what we call the Cruise-In Spectacular, which is a large car show that's open to all makes and model automobiles, including street rods, hot rods, and late-model performance cars, too.

For Sunday's concours, Gullwing Motor Cars of New York City will once again be our presenting sponsor. This year's feature classes are Buick Rivas (1963-1973), Camaros

and Firebirds (1967-1981), Wood-Bodied Station Wagons, Studebakers, Pre-1980 Professional Vehicles, and MGs. These special classes are in addition to the many other regular classes, such as Full Classic, Prewar American, Postwar American, Prewar European, Postwar European, American Muscle, Vintage Trucks and the ever-interesting Preservation class for original, unrestored vehicles.

If you are interested in entering your collector car or truck in this year's Hemmings Concours, all you have to do is submit a photo or two of the vehicle and send it to concours@hemmings.com. For additional information, including a list of area hotels and other accommodations, go to www.hemmings.com/events/concours, or call 800-227-4373.

And, remember, every car and truck that's selected for the Hemmings Concours will be featured in the pages of *Hemmings Motor News* for all the world to see. 📸



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The Elegance at Hershey

THE HOTEL HERSHEY WILL AGAIN BE HOSTING THE ELEGANCE THIS JUNE 9-11.

The concours will be the culmination of the weekend's events on Sunday the 11th, with more than 70 invited collector cars on display, covering a host of different eras. The weekend begins with Friday's Grand Ascent, continuing in the tradition of the Hershey Hill Climb, and goes on through Saturday with an auction, as well as a cars and coffee gathering. Vehicles are still being accepted for the event, so visit theeleganceathershey.com for more information.

Badger State Buick Meet

THE BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA

will host its national meet in Brookfield, Wisconsin, this July 5-8 at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel. Just outside of Milwaukee, the national meet will include car cruising, tours of the Harley-Davidson Museum, the EAA Aviation Museum and the Miller Brewery, as well as a swap meet, all-Buick car corral and car show for both display and formal judging, the latter taking place on



the 8th. There are discounts for BCA members, and early registration incentives are still available. Visit www.buickclub.org/2017-bca-national-meet/ for more.

Rockets to Reading



ALL OLDSMOBILE

enthusiasts will be excited to know that this year's National Antique Oldsmobile Club has announced June 21-24 in Reading, Pennsylvania, as the time and place of this year's national meet. The four-day event will be based at The Inn at Reading and will feature 26 different classes, plus nine preservation classes.

Vendor, swap spaces and cars-for-sale spaces are available for the full four days, with discounts available for NAOC members. Limited tours will also be available around the area, including trips to the AACA Museum in Hershey and the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. For a full itinerary, visit their website at www.antique-olds.org.

JUNE

2-4 • All Ford Nationals

Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

3 • Leesburg Car Show

Leesburg, Virginia • 571-252-2080
kim.yeager@lcps.org

3-4 • Greenwich Concours d'Elegance

Greenwich, Connecticut • 203-618-0460
www.greenwichconcours.com

3-4 • Huntington Beach Concours d'Elegance

Huntington Beach, California • 714-375-8414
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4 • Sumter Swap Meet

Bushnell, Florida • 727-848-7171
www.floridaswapmeets.com

8 • Hemmings Cruise-In

Bennington, Vermont • 800-227-4373
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13-17 • Petit Jean Show/Swap

Morrilton, Arkansas • 501-727-5427
www.museumofautos.com

16-18 • Pittsburgh Parts-A-Rama

Butler, Pennsylvania • 412-366-7154
www.pittsburghparts-a-rama.com

18-22 • Dodge Brothers California Dreamin' Tour

Fallbrook, California
webmaster@dodgebrothersclub.org
www.dodgebrothersclub.org

18-23 • Packard National Meet

South Bend, Indiana • 574-274-8060
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20-24 • Airflow Club of America Meet

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www.airflowclub.com

21-24 • Oakland-Pontiac Homecoming Tour

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22 • Hemmings Cruise-In

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Loewy and the Targa

WHILE PUTTING TOGETHER A RECENT STORY ABOUT RAYMOND LOEWY'S contributions to Studebaker design, Andy Beckman of the Studebaker National Museum sent us this photo of Loewy with a 1953 Studebaker Commander Starlight coupe reworked into a targa-top coupe.

Unfortunately, Andy had little other information about the design study, so he couldn't tell us how seriously Studebaker considered adding the variation to its lineup. However, given that Loewy's standing next to a full-size mockup/prototype and no mere clay suggests that Studebaker officials at least gave it some real thought. Or else Loewy had a production Starlight modified on his own dime.

Either way, that targa top makes for one big blind spot.

RE: Fast Little Back

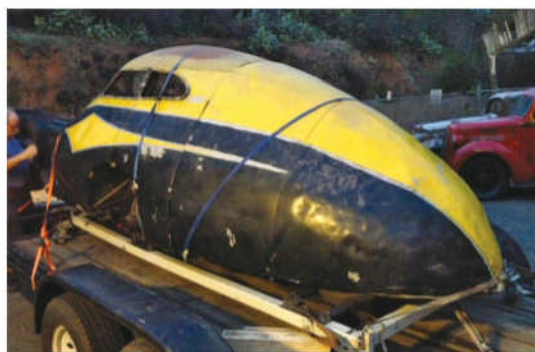
IN RETROSPECT, IT shouldn't surprise us that so many of you who read this column sent us photos of the odd little coupe that Bob Eng shared with us for *HCC* #151: That's because Russ Crumrine of LaFontaine, Indiana, built his *Close Encounter* 1950 Chevrolet to drive, and he did just that, putting more than

200,000 miles on it over the last 50-plus years.

However, the best response of all came from Russ's daughter, Carol, who gave us the car's complete history. Built between 1963 and 1965 from a 1950 Chevrolet Fleetline Aerosedan four-door model bought from a local junkyard, the *Close Encounter* featured a

shortened 96-inch wheelbase, front fenders from a 1949 Oldsmobile, one-piece windshield from a 1950 Oldsmobile, disc brakes from a 1965 Mustang, a 383-cu.in. V-8 from a 1963 Dodge (once Latham supercharged, now topped with a homemade intake manifold that fits four Weber carburetors), and perhaps most noticeable, a flying saucer-shaped trailer to carry tools and supplies.

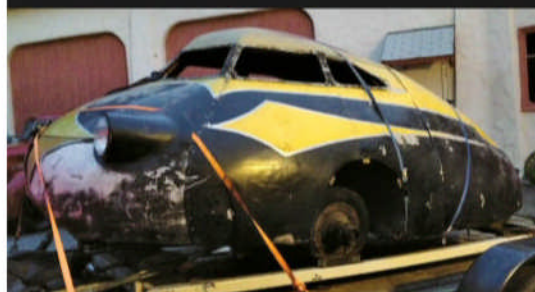
Russ tinkered with it over the years, but, as Carol reported, *Close Encounter* remains on the road today in her hands after Russ's death in 2014.



Douglas/Cord

VINCE MARTINICO OF AUBURN, CALIFORNIA, recently sent us some photos of his latest acquisition, hoping somebody out there might be able to tell him (and us) a little more about it.

As he described the streamliner, it features a Cord front-wheel-drive transaxle powered by a four-cylinder aircraft engine mounted in the rear. The back half of the aluminum body lifts up to reveal the engine, the tube frame, and the two rear wheels. Vince seems to believe Douglas Aircraft had something to do with its construction and that it was built around 1936.



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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Oklahoma Roundup

LEAKE WRAPPED UP ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL sale in Oklahoma City with its February show netting over \$10.4 million in total sales. The three-day auction featured 611 lots, with a 79-percent sell-through rate. Among those cars that sold in the Sooner State was this lovely, fully restored 1954 Lincoln Capri finished in Columbia Blue. This desirable convertible found a new home for \$44,250. Full results are now available on Leake's website at www.leakecar.com. Leake will return to Oklahoma, this time Tulsa, June 9-11, at the Tulsa Fairgrounds.



Newport Beach Party

RUSSO AND STEELE RETURNS TO NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, for its annual collector car auction. This year's event will take place June 2-4 at the Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort. Consignments are now being accepted for what is the fifth year of this event, which is expected to host a brilliant array of classics, muscle cars and exotics. Last year's auction recorded over \$6.4 million in sales, with over 400 cars available for bidding. Among those that found a new home were this 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz convertible, which sold for a final bid of \$107,250. For more details, go to russoandsteele.com/newportbeach/.

AUCTION PROFILE

PACKARD'S PATRICIAN WAS BACK in its second year and was the top line offered by the company in 1952. It looked distinguished with its fine upholstery and impressive chrome trim, which included four chrome ports and gravel deflectors adorning the rear fenders. The Patrician saw a very limited production of only 3,975 examples and had a factory price of \$3,797, which would be close to \$35,000 today.

This Packard proved to be an extraordinarily well-preserved original, with just one owner in its history and driven only 1,314 miles since new. It retains its original "Super Squeegie" tires, jack, "Git Um" dust cloth, whisk broom, Travelite and Magnetlite, complete with original packaging. It featured the 327-cu.in. Thunderbolt flathead straight-eight engine, which produced 155 horsepower, backed by the Ultramatic two-speed transmission. The only work done



CAR 1952 Packard Patrician 400
AUCTIONEER Gooding & Company
LOCATION Scottsdale, Arizona
DATE January 20, 2017

LOT NUMBER 37
RESERVE None
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE \$16,500
SELLING PRICE \$50,600

on the car was regular maintenance. The low mileage, along with the accompanying original equipment and literature, made for vigorous and

fiery bidding for this pristine Packard. Considering its low-mileage status, the premium paid for such a rare Patrician was clearly understandable.

JUNE

2-4 • Russo and Steele
Newport Beach, California
602-252-2697 • russoandsteele.com

4 • Bonhams
Greenwich, Connecticut • 323-850-7500
www.bonhams.com

9-11 • Leake
Tulsa, Oklahoma • 918-254-7077
www.leakecar.com

16-17 • Mecum
Portland, Oregon • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

17 • Silver
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

21-24 • Barrett-Jackson
Uncasville, Connecticut • 480-421-6694
www.barrett-jackson.com

23-24 • Raleigh Classic
Raleigh, North Carolina • 919-269-5271
www.raleighclassic.com

24-25 • Auctions America
Santa Monica, California • 877-906-2437
www.auctionsamerica.com



Portland Profile

MECUM HEADS BACK TO PORTLAND,

Oregon, after the success of last year's inaugural sale. The auction will take place at the Portland Expo Center, June 16-17, with consignments now being accepted. Last year's sale featured large crowds with spirited bidding, as 300 cars were sold in two days with final sales exceeding \$9.3 million. Among the deals available was this 1960 Thunderbird convertible; finely restored, it sold for \$28,000. For a full listing of Mecum's consignments for the upcoming show, visit www.mecum.com.



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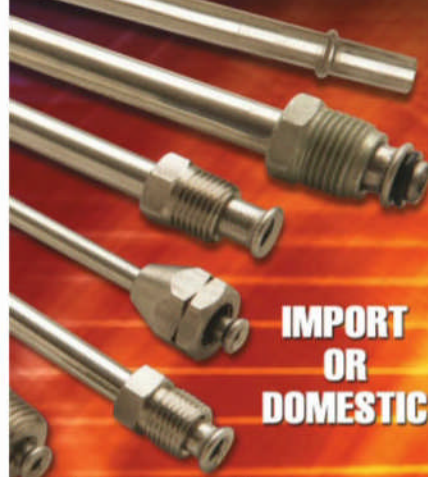
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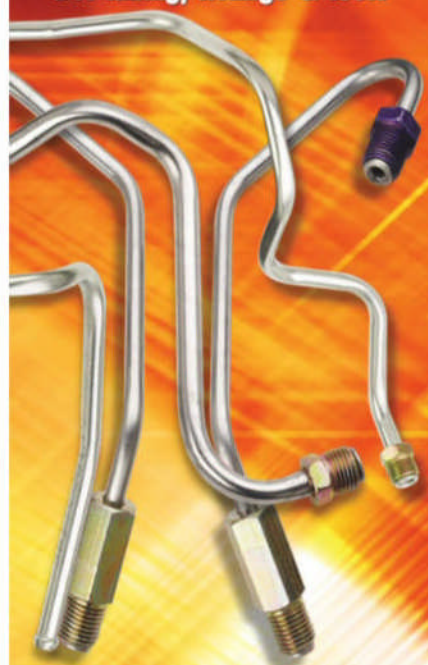
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If you have the patience, assembling a jigsaw puzzle can be a satisfying, and even meditative, pastime. Puzzle-loving automotive aficionados will enjoy this colorful collage of vintage petroliana, created by Lois B. Sutton for White Mountain Puzzles and made in the U.S.A. Called "Fill Her Up" (item #FILLPUZ), it contains 1,000 thick, extra-large, quality pieces, and measures 24 by 30 inches when assembled. Everything you remember from the American filling stations of your youth—uniformed attendants, racks of oil, air pumps, folded paper highway maps—is here. You may even want to glue and frame it when you're finished, as it would look great on the den or garage wall.

Notes from Route 66

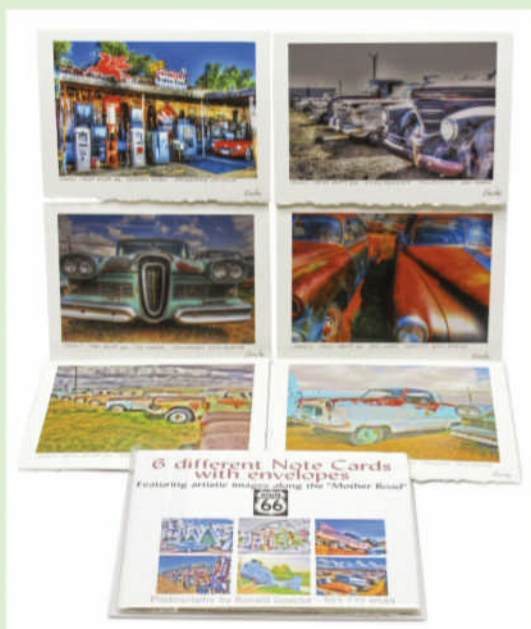
608-325-1442 • GOECKEPHOTOGRAPHY66@GMAIL.COM

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There's something elemental to the American automotive enthusiast about the "Mother Road." Even as we're cocooned in our modern transportation pods, flying down the interstate, we equate that historic route with personal freedom, adventure, even lost innocence. Wisconsin-based photographer Ron Goecke has made his own pilgrimages on Route 66, and pays tribute to its unique place in our culture through the shimmering, evocative images that front his greeting cards, which are blank inside to allow for the sender's personal expression.

"Having been inspired by the lyrics Bobby Troup wrote in "Route 66," I'd long wanted to drive the original route and the portions of roadway that still exist," he tells us. "As an amateur photographer, I desired to document this journey with interesting images of cars and Americana. I made many stops along the route between Chicago and Santa Monica. As we traveled west, I was always searching for old automobiles, trucks and decaying attractions from the heyday of Route 66. Whenever possible, I'd use my eye for composition in landscape photography to add some character and depth to the shot—this ensured the image would be unique, and be much more than just a photo of a car."

Ron captures his images with a Canon digital SLR, using the bracketing setting to take three photos he can merge into one, using the computer program, Photo-matix. "This gives me the opportunity to make my own creative adjustments, or I can select from numerous artistic interpretations of the original image. I have the images printed on Fuji metallic photo paper, and attach them to premium 80-lb. card stock. I write a caption beneath each photo, with a little information about the image. Each card is handmade, and they're packaged six to a set, with envelopes, and sealed in cellophane."



1948 Ford Woody

800-423-5525 • WWW.CALCARCOVER.COM • \$84.99

Sixties popular culture has long associated the wood-bodied, flathead V-8-powered Ford station wagon with the beach, and Road Signature has created what may be the quintessential surf wagon in this handsome 1948 "Woody" (item #FW48BU). Officially licensed by the Ford Motor Company, the

1:18-scale replica enjoys generous detailing, including the use of genuine stained wood side panels. Its hood and front doors open to reveal life-like compartments, and a wood-look longboard that fits on the roof rack is included. Bright body trim is nicely handled, and rear windows covered in scale-appropriate travel and surfing decals are a fun touch. This Ford wagon offers a lot of bang for the buck.



Continued on page 16



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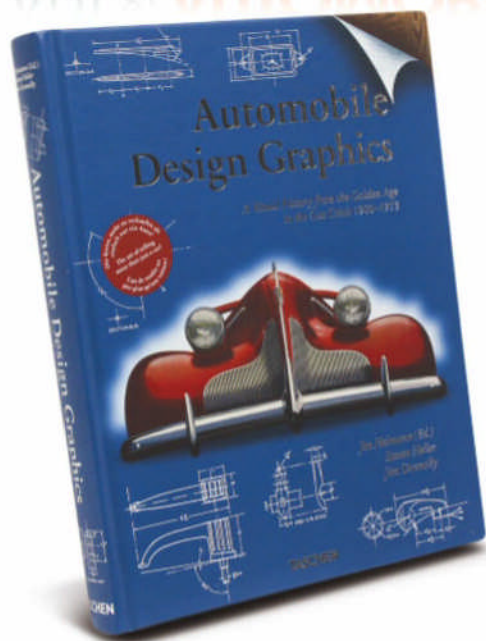
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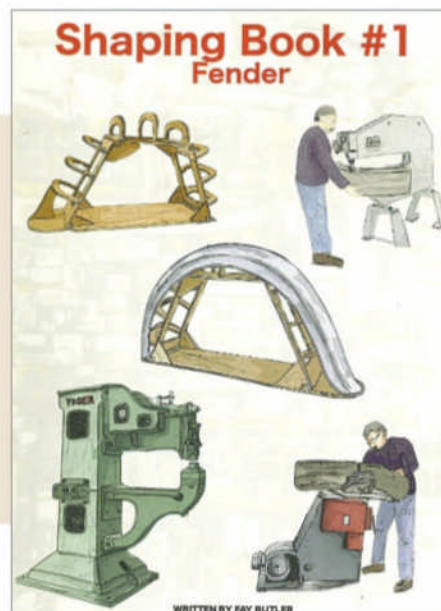
Automotive ephemera—dealer showroom brochures, magazine advertising images and the like—are among the most coveted and collectible pieces we car nuts seek out, for they not only inform us of our vehicles' features and specifications, but put those cars in context, illustrating how their marketers hoped they would be perceived in the period: They sold a dream of motoring. The editor and authors of this text, including the esteemed Jim Donnelly, have put together a large scale, art-quality, 368-page hardcover that examines how automakers sold us their latest and greatest cars, from the earliest days of motoring through the gas crisis of 1973. Along with text printed in English, German and French, it's absolutely filled with full-color reprints of some of the most beautiful and influential automotive advertising pieces ever created. Whether you're fascinated by the psychology behind the brochure's sales pitch, or simply love contemporary automotive fine art, *Automobile Design Graphics* is a treasure.

Shaping Book #1

413-477-6449 • WWW.FAYBUTLER.COM • \$100

If you had the chance to read about the metal shaping philosophy of Fay Butler in the April 2017 issue of *Hemmings Motor News*, and would like to discover exactly how to create a fender from flat sheetmetal, you'll need to read this book. All the step-by-step details are carefully outlined between the covers of this 128-page spiral-bound softcover manual. The entire fender fabrication process is lavishly illustrated with three color photos per page, along with in-depth captions describing what's being shown. From start to finish, you'll learn about the required tools, pattern making, shaping, trimming, edging and welding, plus how to make a wooden buck, and a whole lot more of truly insightful metal-shaping information and advice.

— RICHARD LENTINELLO



1930 GMC Model 6 Taxi

800-718-1866 • WWW.DIECASTDIRECT.COM • \$179.95

Even before you turn over this hand-built-in-the-U.K. Brooklin white-metal replica and note the bright metal "Limited Edition December 2016" plate on its chassis, you'll see there's something extra-special about this 1:43-scale, Buick straight-eight-powered 1930 GMC Model 6 taxi. It's not only the fine detail it exhibits, but the distinctive livery. Yes, movie buffs, this is a replica of Ernie's Taxi, from the heartwarming 1946 American classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Brooklin did a nice job on item #BR-BML-19X, accurately capturing the cowl-mounted headlamps and special door graphics, while treating the entire model to delicate details like that distinctive radiator shell and the delicate door handles and bumpers. The interior is rendered in black and brown, as well. It's a sentimental favorite.

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Cadillac Reflection

Driver's-side mirrors for the 1967 Cadillac have now been reproduced. These will fit all models except the Eldorado. They are cast, chrome plated and assembled just as they were 50 years ago. Each mirror is triple-chrome-plated for long lasting durability. This exact reproduction of the GM mirror comes with the appropriate hardware and is part number CA65155. Cost: \$139.99.

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800-243-8355
WWW.OPGI.COM

Beyond Clean

Griot's Garage introduces a new Iron & Fallout remover that targets iron brake dust particles and fallout on multiple exterior surfaces including paint, wheels, glass and chrome. The unique gel formula clings to vertical surfaces so it can really dig in and break down bonded ferrous (iron) contaminants that, once inside, introduce corrosive compounds that eat into the finish's sub-layers. Mechanical solutions, like clay, typically remove surface contaminants, leaving the embedded below-surface particles intact. Iron & Fallout Remover penetrates the paint or metal to produce a truly deep-cleaned surface. The acid-free, pH-balanced formula is also safe, and the liquid emits a pleasant citrus fragrance. Cost: \$22.99 (22 oz.); \$79.99 (gallon).

GRIOT'S GARAGE
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WWW.GRIOTSGARAGE.COM



Signal Solution

Chevs of the 40s offers a new turn signal with toggle switch that operates on all Chevrolet cars—6 or 12 volts, positive or negative ground. The switch comes with a self-cancel feature that uses time and lack of brake signal to know when to cancel. Time-out is user adjustable for 15, 30, 45 or 60 seconds, and the turn signal will not time out with the brakes applied. Easy installation features included instructions, wiring diagrams and terminal labels on control. Capable of sharing front parking or fog lamps for front turn signal and can operate with combined brake and turn signals or separate rear brake and turn lamps. Available in black column switch (pictured), plain column switch or toggle switch. Cost: \$250 (black/plain); \$140 (toggle).

CHEVS OF THE 40S
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Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to

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

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

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Harry A. Miller



SOME ARTISTS WORK WITH PAINT

or clay or voice or instrument, Harold Armenius Miller worked with steel and aluminum. His artistry dominated race tracks during his lifetime and beyond. Even today it is in high demand with connoisseurs who treasure and use his automotive creations with the reverence of the most dedicated collector of Rembrandt or Picasso.

Miller was born in Menomonie, Wisconsin, December 9, 1876, to Jacob and Martha Miller. Jacob, a German immigrant, was an artist in the traditional sense—a painter and musician. Harry gravitated toward mechanical things at an early age, and might best be described as restless.

Miller was 5 ft. 6 in., with blue eyes and black hair, his fair complexion interrupted by ruddy cheeks and red lips. Generally, he was known as shy, silent and contemplative without much to say

except on the topic of machinery—especially engines. His nervous energy showed in the fact that he often lay awake at night, thinking.

Against his parents' wishes, Miller left school at age 15 to work in the machine shop of Knapp, Stout & Company, a lumber concern. After just two years, he left Wisconsin entirely—first for Salt Lake City and then Los Angeles.

Miller found his first job out west performing bicycle repair—fertile ground for many of America's early automobile engineers. Returning to Wisconsin briefly, he began to experiment with internal combustion engines, fitting one to a bicycle and another to a boat. In 1897, Miller returned to Los Angeles where he opened a machine shop.

Much like Harley Earl, Miller himself was first and foremost a

creative force. To ease the transition from idea to finished product, Miller hired skilled machinist Fred Offenhauser. Soon Miller and Offenhauser built a reputation repairing race cars for the numerous L.A.-area board tracks and upgrading them with their superior parts.

In 1909, Miller began offering aluminum pistons and a barrel-type performance carburetor of his own design. In 1915 he reworked the heavily damaged engine in Bob Burman's Peugeot, dramatically improving the design. This would attract the attention of Barney Oldfield and lead to the famed *Golden Submarine* racer.

With the newfound attention, Miller elected to make yet another hire: Leo Goossen, a mechanical engineer, formerly employed by Buick, who had left Michigan for the drier climes of the Southwest.

In 1920, Miller, Goossen and Offenhauser would collaborate on their


most lasting contribution to racing history: the 183-cu.in., straight-eight, four-valve racing engine. The Miller 183 won the Indianapolis 500 in 1922 and was sufficiently flexible to adapt to the 122-cu.in. formula that arrived in 1923. Miller remained the foremost design at Indy for the rest of the decade.

The Miller designs of the 1920s are the absolute expression of his artistry, particularly the front-wheel-drive race cars that combined engine, coachwork, chassis and driveline into one elegant whole. Their prices reflected the craft, with a front-drive Miller costing \$15,000 from the factory. As the Twenties roared, however, Miller had no trouble finding customers.

In 1929, Miller sold his business and retired mere weeks before the beginning of the Great Depression. It was also right around this time that E.L. Cord would use Miller's elegant front-wheel-drive system on his L-29 passenger car.

Miller just couldn't stay away, though; he revived his business in 1930, designing, among other things, a V-16 engine he proposed for use in the Cord and an OHV conversion for the Ford Model A. He also redesigned the Miller engine once again, with an automotive version of a 151-cu.in. four-cylinder boat unit he created in the 1920s.

Unfortunately, Miller had little enthusiasm for the types of economy products that he could sell in the early years of the Depression and attracted few customers for the grandiose designs he wanted to produce. The frustrated genius was forced to liquidate his company in 1933, and most assets would go to Fred Offenhauser, who would parlay the 151-spec engine into the famed Offy powerplant that dominated Indy racing up through the 1960s and remained competitive a decade beyond that.

Miller himself moved to Detroit, where he became an associate of Preston Tucker, heavily influencing the latter's plans for a road car. Miller's best-known contribution to racing during his Detroit years is probably the well-funded but overly rushed 1935 effort by Ford Motor Company. Miller died of cancer May 3, 1943. 

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HARBOR FREIGHT

QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

WARRIOR **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL DRILL BIT SET

ITEM 62281/61637 shown

SAVE 83% **SUPER COUPON \$999**

~~\$1999~~ Compare ~~\$59.98~~

20560223

LIMIT 9 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM

SAVE 65%

SUPER COUPON \$1999

~~\$2999~~ Compare ~~\$57.55~~

ITEM 62515 66911 shown

20482221

LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRALPNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

SAVE 67%

SUPER COUPON \$1299

~~\$1899~~ Compare ~~\$39.99~~

ITEM 60568/62541/91753 shown

20536900

LIMIT 6 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

TILTING FLAT PANEL TV MOUNT

ITEM 62289 61807 shown

SAVE 73% **SUPER COUPON \$2499**

~~\$55.82~~ Compare ~~\$1499~~

20605394

LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PREDATOR **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINES

ITEM 60363/69730

SAVE \$290 **SUPER COUPON \$999**

~~\$389.99~~ Compare ~~\$1199.99~~

20533715

LIMIT 3 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

20% OFF

ANY SINGLE ITEM

Limit 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: Inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jacks, saw mills, storage cabinets, chests or carts, trailers, trenchers, welders, Admiral, Bauer, CoverPro, Daytona, Earthquake, Hercules, Jupiter, Lynxx, Poulan, Predator, StormCat, Tailgator, Viking, Vulcan. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17.

20512262

HARDY **SUPER COUPON**

POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 62%

YOUR CHOICE \$599

~~\$799~~ Compare ~~\$15.99~~

ITEM 68498 shown

20560667

LIMIT 8 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

U.S. GENERAL **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

56", 8 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET TOP CHEST

ITEM 62662 61370 shown

SAVE \$240 **SUPER COUPON \$41999**

~~\$629.99~~ Compare ~~\$38999~~

20540576

LIMIT 4 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

9 PIECE 1/4", 3/8", AND 1/2" DRIVE WOBBLE SOCKET EXTENSIONS

ITEM 61278/67971 shown

SAVE 55% **SUPER COUPON \$999**

~~\$1499~~ Compare ~~\$22.48~~

20536640

LIMIT 6 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

#1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA

RAPID PUMP® 2.5 TON ALUMINUM RACING FLOOR JACK

ITEM 62531 62309 shown

SAVE \$60

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SUPER COUPON \$13999

~~\$14999~~ Compare ~~\$199.99~~

20551495

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PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

• Lift range: 7" - 30"

SAVE \$750 **SUPER COUPON \$42999**

~~\$1049.99~~ Compare ~~\$29999~~

ITEM 69904 68892 shown

20501990

LIMIT 4 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRALPNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

17 PIECE AIR TOOL ACCESSORY KIT

ITEM 63048/63133 61449/68236 shown

SAVE 68% **SUPER COUPON \$599**

~~\$899~~ Compare ~~\$18.99~~

20544359

LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

3" HIGH SPEED ELECTRIC CUT-OFF TOOL

ITEM 61944 60415/63023 68523 shown

SAVE 60% **SUPER COUPON \$1999**

~~\$2499~~ Compare ~~\$49.99~~

20514073

LIMIT 3 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRALPNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

2 HP, 29 GALLON, 150 PSI CAST IRON VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

ITEM 68127 shown 62765/61489

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SUPER COUPON \$33999

~~\$35499~~ Compare ~~\$439~~

20584846

LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE WEATHER RESISTANT TARP

ITEM 69249/69115/69137 69129/69121/877 shown

SAVE 64% **SUPER COUPON \$299**

~~\$8.48~~ Compare ~~\$499~~

20537203

LIMIT 8 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NEW LOW-PROFILE CREEPER

ITEM 69094 61916/69262 63372/63424 2745/63371 shown

SAVE 75% **SUPER COUPON \$1999**

~~\$79.99~~ Compare ~~\$2799~~

20534490

LIMIT 6 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

U.S. GENERAL

SUPER COUPON



56", 11 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET

ITEM 69395
67681 shown

LIMIT 4 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

• Weighs 441 lbs.

SAVE \$1077

Customer Rating
★★★★★

SUPER COUPON

\$649.99

\$749.99
Compare
\$1726.99



SUPER COUPON

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE

PITTSBURGH

6 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

ITEM 62728/62583
47770/62570 shown



\$7.97
VALUE

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 1-800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.



PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating
★★★★★

1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

ITEM 69445/61858
69512 shown



SAVE \$169

\$999

\$179.99 Compare **\$269**



LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN

ITEM 47016 shown
67181/62300

Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 79%

\$9.99

Compare **\$49**



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HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

2" x 20 FT. TOW STRAP



Customer Rating
★★★★★

\$9.99

\$11.99 Compare **\$18.35**



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PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

PNEUMATIC ADJUSTABLE ROLLER SEAT

ITEM 46319 shown
61160/61896/63456



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 50%

\$19.99

\$25.99 Compare **\$39.99**



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CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

12 VOLT, 10/2/50 AMP BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER

ITEM 60581
60653 shown



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 57%

\$29.99

\$49.99 Compare **\$69.99**



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BADLAND **SUPER COUPON**

5000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

ITEM 68144 shown
61384/61605



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE \$75

\$169.99

\$179.99 Compare **\$244.99**



LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

6" SELF-VACUUMING AIR PALM SANDER

ITEM 60628
98895 shown



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE \$90

\$34.99

Compare **\$109.99**



LIMIT 6 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

1/4" AIR ANGLE DIE GRINDER

ITEM 62439/69945/32046 shown

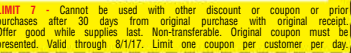


Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 85%

\$14.99

Compare **\$69.98**



LIMIT 7 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

Grant's **SUPER COUPON** **NEW** Customer Rating
★★★★★

MECHANIC'S CHOICE SHOP TOWELS - PACK OF 50

ITEM 63365/63360 shown

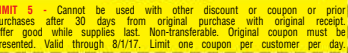


Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 44%

\$12.99

Compare **\$17.98**



LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PREDATOR **SUPER COUPON**

4000 PEAK/3200 RUNNING WATTS 6.5 HP (212 CC) GAS GENERATORS

ITEM 69676/69729/63080/63079 shown



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE \$149

\$339.99

Compare **\$439**



LIMIT 5 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

TORQUE WRENCHES

Item 239 shown

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

Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 77%

\$19.99

Compare **\$44.35**



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PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

BRAKE BLEEDER AND VACUUM PUMP KIT

ITEM 69328/63391/63446/60770 shown

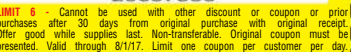


Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 66%

\$24.99

Compare **\$59.99**



LIMIT 6 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

2 PIECE VEHICLE WHEEL DOLLIES

ITEM 60343/67338 shown

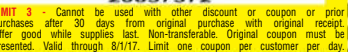


Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE 50%

\$54.99

Compare **\$89.99**



LIMIT 3 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

6" DIGITAL CALIPER

ITEM 61585
62387
63711



Customer Rating
★★★★★

SAVE \$9.99

\$17.99

Compare **\$29.99**



LIMIT 7 - Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 8/1/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.



Flying Low

Ford's amazing Thunderbirds of the 1961-1966 model years

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO • IMAGES COURTESY FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Sleek. No other word more accurately describes the shape of the Thunderbirds that Ford created for the 1961 to 1966 model years, although other adjectives such as “striking,” “alluring,” “fascinating” and “sensational” certainly do apply as well. These are truly fantastic automobiles with a distinct style.

The 1960s dawned with renewed vigor, excitement and hope, and the new Thunderbirds tapped into that positive atmosphere like no other car at the time. They reflected the public’s perception of renewal and a look towards the future. This perception was surely strengthened when a new 1961 Thunderbird took part in John F. Kennedy’s inaugural parade, then further enhanced a few months later when it paced the field at the Indianapolis 500.

As successful and attractive as the 1958-’60 Thunderbirds were, upon the introduction of the redesigned 1961 models, the “squarebirds” instantly looked dated. The new 1961 models

were within an inch the same size as the squarebirds, but they looked lower, longer and wider, with an exciting-looking body featuring all sorts of jet aircraft styling cues. They simply looked fast even when they were standing still.

Known as the third-generation models, the 1961-’66 Thunderbirds have a following all their own, which is usually split into two groups: the sporty 1961-’63 models and the more formal-looking 1964-’66 versions. Under their exterior skins, however, they were fundamentally identical, yet with each year’s models sporting new subtle unique details, each has its own admirers.

1961-’66 THUNDERBIRD PRODUCTION

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
HARDTOP	62,535	68,127*	42,806	60,552	42,652	13,389
LANDAU	-----	-----	14,139	22,715	20,974	-----
SPECIAL LANDAU	-----	-----	-----	4,500	-----	-----
TOWN HARDTOP	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	15,633
TOWN LANDAU	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	35,105
CONVERTIBLE	10,516	8,457	5,913	9,198	6,846	5,049
ROADSTER	-----	1,427	455	-----	-----	-----
TOTAL	73,051	78,011	63,313	92,465	74,972	69,176

* Includes Landau models; no breakout available

1961

FROM THE FAR REACHES OF ITS POINTED FRONT FENDERS rearward to its jet-inspired round taillamps, the profile of the new Thunderbird is spear-like in its form. And just like that man-made tool, it slices through the air like few automobiles have even done before—it begs to be driven.

Stylistically, it has a shape that truly is unmistakably Thunderbird; everything about its design is purposeful. Its lissome stance is sports-car low, and with just the right amount of front and rear overhang, its proportions are near perfect—a veritable masterpiece of design.

Some of this model's many unique features include a grille with a horizontal lattice pattern, two long, raised ridges on each side of the hood scoop, a Thunderbird emblem on the hood's leading edge, door handles that

“Unmistakably new,
unmistakably Thunderbird.”

were part of the side trim, four distinctive, thin horizontal metal strips on the quarter panel, and a flap in the rear bumper that concealed the gas tank filler.

Notable options were the famous Swing-Away steering column for an extra \$25.10, Equa-Lock differential for \$38.60 and Tu-tone paint for \$25.80.

All engines were V-8s displacing 390 cubic inches, and there were four stages of tune available. The ultimate was the Q Code, which sported three two-barrel carburetors and a 10.6:1 compression ratio that allowed it to develop a muscular 401 horsepower and 430-lb.ft. of torque.



1962

THE BODY REMAINED THE SAME, EXCEPT NOW THERE WERE FOUR distinct models to be had: the standard Hardtop, the formal-looking Landau Hardtop, Convertible and the Sports Roadster.

Up front, the grille was changed to a lace-type design incorporating small squares; gone were the raised ridges on the hood, a Thunderbird script was now placed on the leading edge of the front fenders and the decorative quarter panel trim was changed to three rectangular bars that simulated a jet's exhaust. The Swing-Away steering column was now standard.

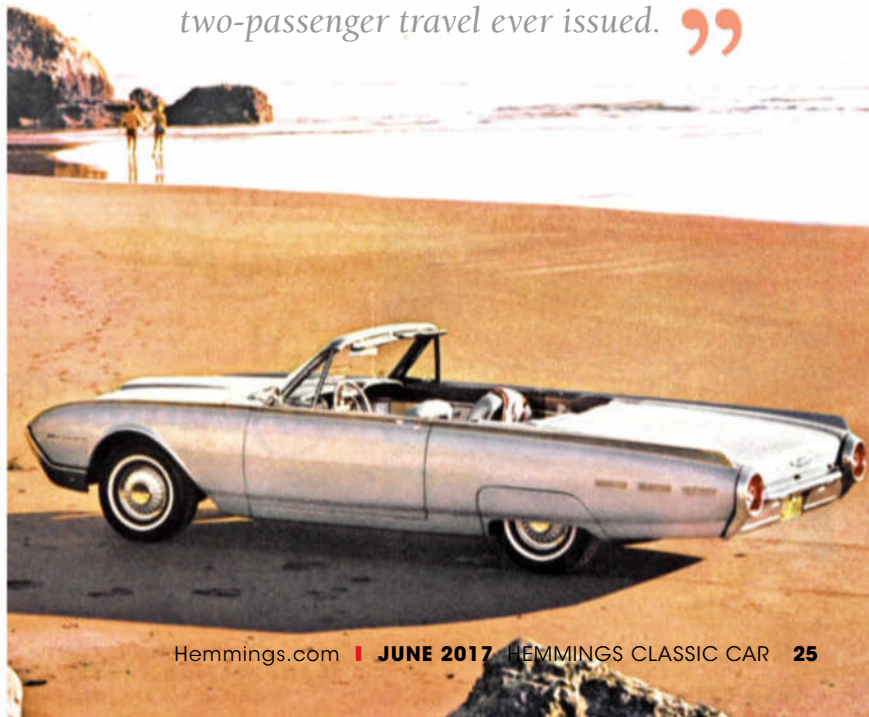
The new Landau Hardtop model gave the Thunderbird a more upscale appearance, with its black leather-grained vinyl top and S-shape landau bars. But the model that stole the show was the sexy Sports Roadster. With its fiberglass tonneau cover sporting twin headrests that matched the outline of the adjoining seats ahead of it, its appearance was that of an exotic high-performance sports car. The tonneau cover was removable to permit use of the rear seats below.

All Sport Roadsters were equipped with Kelsey-Hayes chromed wire wheels, which did not allow use of the rear fender skirts due to clearance issues.

Engine choice was now down to two: the base 300hp, 390-cu.in. V-8 and the tri-power-equipped version that put out 340hp.

One new interesting feature was a small brass plate that was to be affixed to the instrument panel with the buyer's name inscribed on it, yet not many cars were so fitted. And the remote-controlled driver's-side exterior mirror was now standard.

“Sleek as a racing hydroplane,
arrogantly individual in its gleaming sweep
of deck, this is the most exciting invitation to
two-passenger travel ever issued.”



1963

FORD STYLISTS TWEAKED THE THUNDERBIRD'S EXTERIOR WITH A subtle reference to the old squarebirds by adding a similar-looking sculptured line down the side. Other changes that differentiated the '63 model from the two prior years were the addition of three decorative metal hash marks on the door, a new grille with an intricate vertical pattern, and a small chrome grille guard in the center. Other than those minor updates, plus the deletion of the "Thunderbird" script on the front fender, the 1963 model was essentially the same car.

Four models were available just as in 1962, with this being the last year for the Sports Roadster. There was also a Limited Edition Special Landau model honoring the Principality of Monaco; only 2,000 examples were built with each car fitted with a brass nameplate with the car's serial number inscribed on it. All were painted white with a maroon vinyl top and white leather interior.

Mechanically, an alternator replaced the old-style generator, the windshield wipers were now hydraulically operated via the power steering pump, and a mechanical hood latch replaced the old cable mechanism. Other changes included stylish metal-clad brake and

“ Find one that's standing still.

In full flight this is a most elusive species—

with a rare talent for disappearing

from the view of lesser cars. ”

accelerator pedals, courtesy lamps on the interior doors, and revised upholstery patterns; leather upholstery was an option. One of the most popular options was the new AM/FM push-button radio.

The base 390-cu.in. V-8 was unchanged and put out the same 300hp as before, as did the M-Code tri-power V-8 with its 340 horsepower rating; this was the last year that the six-barrel powerhouse was offered.



1964

THE FIRST MAJOR RESTYLE OF THE THIRD-generation Thunderbirds was introduced on the 1964 models, giving them a more formal, upscale appearance. With the body-length chrome strip running atop the fenders and doors now gone, the hood was raised to match the flattened fender tops, and standalone door handles were added. The headlamps, now trimmed with chrome bezels, were relocated towards the outer edge of the fenders, like most other cars of the day, and small bullet-shaped ornaments were added to the top of the front fenders. The hood scoop was now wider and a bit lower in profile, and individual letters spelling out "THUNDERBIRD" were fitted to the leading edge of the hood.

In the rear, wide rectangular taillamp assemblies replaced the signature round taillamps, with the trunk lid's shape mimicking the taillamp's "bowtie" outline. It was then capped off with a bumper surround that frames it all. In the center of each taillamp there's a Thunderbird emblem, and the name is spelled out in the center panel, just above the license plate.

The interior had some big changes too, with the primary change being the replacement of the three round gauges with

a horizontal speedometer, and the ancillary gauges fitted within four small round balls. The Swing-Away steering column remained standard, but the bucket seats were given new contours that were slimmer looking. The top of the console between the seats was padded and seatbelts were now standard. Rear seat passengers now had the luxury of a center armrest with the

seatbacks curving into the door, and the optional radio speaker was positioned at the top between the seat backs.

Engine choices were now down to one: the same 300hp four-barrel 390-cu.in. V-8 as the year before; the Cruise-O-Matic automatic transmission was unchanged, too, although larger 15-inch tires replaced the 14-inch tires of the previous three years.



1965

MINOR EXTERIOR DETAILS SEPARATED THE new 1965 models from the prior year's version, with the most obvious being the addition of stylized simulated fender vents aft of the front wheels. At the front of the hood, a Thunderbird insignia replaced the individual letters, and a redesigned insignia with a rectangle in the center was attached to the hardtop's pillar. The "Thunderbird" script was relocated to the far end of the quarter panel, and the previously optioned rear fender skirts were now standard. Another option offered for the first time were power-operated vent windows.

In the rear, the horizontal taillamps now incorporated six individual square lenses on each side, and were sequential in their opera-

“ People who Thunderbird escape from the crowd . . .
elegantly. ”

tion. The small center panel between the taillamps now featured the Thunderbird emblem in place of its name being spelled out.

The interior remained essentially the same apart from some very minor changes, such as the metal trim surround on the brake and accelerator pedals, and the instrument panel was now trimmed in vinyl that had a ripple grain to it; Landau models were given walnut-grained trim. Another first was the optional reclining seat for the front passenger, and a vacuum-operated release

for the trunk lid.

Power was provided by the identical 390-cu.in. V-8 as in 1964, and still with the same 300 horsepower. The Cruise-O-Matic automatic transmission was the same as well.

One new model this year was the Special Landau; a standard-looking hardtop model with what Ford called an Ember-Glo exterior finish, which was also applied to the instrument panel; only 4,500 examples of this bronze-colored model, with its parchment-colored vinyl top, were produced.



1966

BEING THE LAST YEAR OF THE THIRD-GENERATION SERIES MEANT CHANGES were few. Up front, the thick bumper that framed the grille was deleted, giving this model Thunderbird a cleaner, sharper appearance. The grille itself was of a new mesh design featuring little rectangles, and a flat decorative metal panel replaced the individual chrome headlamp bezels. The hood scoop was lower in height and had a sharper point to its shape.

The rear taillamp lenses appeared as a single lens, yet still functioned sequentially when the turn signal was activated. The previous small panel in the center was deleted, making the entire rear taillamp assembly look like one large single unit; the Thunderbird insignia in the center was redesigned as well. The "Thunderbird" script on the rear section of the quarter panel remained the same.

Although the seat upholstery pattern was changed, as it had been every year, for the most part nothing was really new. There were modified brake and accelerator pedals, and this was the first year that a stereo tape player was offered as an option. There was an overhead Safety Panel in the ceiling that incorporated warning lights such as "low fuel," "door ajar," and a seat belt reminder, and six-way power seats were now optional.

The big and welcome news was the addition of front disc brakes. Replacing the old-style drums were 11.87-inch-diameter ventilated discs with four-piston calipers.

For the first time, there were two different size V-8 engines available. The standard engine was the 390-cu.in. V-8, which now made 315 horsepower, but to compete with the popular muscle cars of the day, a 345hp big-block V-8 displacing 428 cubic inches could be had for only \$64.77. The Cruise-O-Matic remained the sole transmission.

This was also the last year for a convertible model Thunderbird, at least until the retro-looking Thunderbird of 2002 came out.

“ Of the world's
great luxury cars, only Thunderbird
is so completely dedicated
to the idea of personal luxury. ”





The Personal Touch

Ford offered the Thunderbird as its “personal” luxury car in 1966, but one owner has shown how it can be the perfect family car

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



Ford's Thunderbird started out as an American interpretation of a European sports car, but within a few years, it began evolving into a very American statement in the form of a personal luxury car with big V-8 power. Those early, sporty two-seat "small birds" gave way to the larger, more substantial "squarebirds" by 1958—cars that sold in far larger numbers than the first Thunderbirds. By late 1960, the Space Age-



Rectangular seat pattern is unique to 1966, and the Swing-Away steering wheel's color matches the interior—hard-wearing upholstery and carpeting are original to this car. Racy-looking chrome-trimmed console incorporates a wide armrest for added driving comfort.

inspired 1961 “bullet birds” arrived and spent three years on the bestseller’s list. With the Mustang set to take the mantle as Ford’s sportiest models, the Thunderbird grew yet again for the 1964 to ’66 model years.

The 1964 to 1966 models took a turn away from the rocket-nosed 1961-’63 models, looking more square than previously. While overall dimensions for the various Hardtop coupe, Town Hardtop, Town Landau and convertible models remained the same, weight went up substantially, reaching a listed curb weight of 4,692 pounds—but Ford loaded them with luxury. Ford’s sales brochures of the day touted the T-Bird’s “Personal Touch,” calling the vehicle “America’s Personal Luxury Car.”

Though the 1964-’66 Thunderbirds are largely the same,

Ford’s designers did a bit of a nip and tuck for the 1966 models, changing the body panels up front, removing the last vestiges of the bullet nose. They also reduced the level of chrome quite a bit on the front end, giving the car a more contemporary look. It’s hard to argue that the 1966 Thunderbird did not deliver on Ford’s promise of personal luxury, just a bit more understated than in previous years, with a matchless appeal that continues to this day.

All Thunderbirds in this generation had three-speed automatic transmissions, and a couple of engine options, depending on the year. Standard power for 1966 was Ford’s Thunderbird Special 390-cu.in. FE V-8, which produced 315hp, thanks to its higher 10.5:1 compression ratio. For the rather heavy Thunderbird, the torque figure was more reassuring: 427-lb.ft. at just



With its signature rounded seat backs, the 1966 model saw the debut of rear seatbelts and a warning lamp. Silver ball gauges include oil pressure, fuel, water temp and amperage. Wipers, air controls and clock housed in this aviation-style console located below dash top.



The power-operated folding convertible top is a mechanical marvel as it goes through eight distinct operations when in motion, including locking and unlocking; there is an electrical relay for each of those operations. When lowered, it stores completely and entirely under the rear deck, emphasizing the open-top Thunderbird's remarkably clean lines and offering buyers a sophisticated, if subtle look.



2,800 RPM—the sort of low-end, big-block grunt that a large car truly benefited from. As Mike Behrens, the owner of the 390-equipped 1966 convertible featured here attests, “You can’t go around corners too fast, but it certainly has enough pickup and go. It’s very smooth.”

Mike, a financial advisor from Glastonbury, Connecticut, went looking for a collector car in 1997, with his first stop being the fall AACA meet at Hershey and its massive car corral. He wanted something distinctive, reliable, affordable, something that he could drive, and, if possible, something largely original.

Fortunately, Mike took a tactical approach to finding the right car. “I went with very experienced people that go to Hershey all the time,” says Mike. “And I had a couple of these Motorola walkie-talkies, and we did the car corral. And I said, ‘Just call me if you see something nice.’ I wanted something from the Sixties. We went back and forth, and my brother-in-law said, ‘I got a really nice ‘66 Thunderbird. You gotta see it!’ As soon as I saw it, I really, really liked it. And then when I heard the story on it, I liked it even more.”

That story included details on relatively new paint applied in 1992 and a folding top of similar vintage, with the rest of the car remaining largely original. The 390-cu.in. V-8 had never been removed from the car, and the interior’s originality included the carpets still in place, a rarity in a then-31-year-old convertible and a feature that Mike remains proud of preserving to this day. With just 40,000 miles on the odometer and plenty of documentation on the Thunderbird, Mike had found a gem and struck a fair deal with the seller.

With such a driveable and affordable Sixties-era classic Thunderbird now in his possession, Mike had also found a wonderful way to incorporate his family into the hobby, beginning with the day he took the Thunderbird home. “I had to drive it home, six hours back to Connecticut,” Mike recalls. “I didn’t

want to drive on the highways, so I drove through the Poconos with the top up, just super cautious. It was probably some of the best six hours of my life. Just driving in my new Thunderbird, nice and slow. My wife, Lin, didn’t know what I had bought. She had wanted something with four seats, because we had two kids.

“I got home that night without a single problem, and Lin said that my daughter was at a sleepover. So, I said, ‘I’m going to go pick her up.’ I put the top down—of course, it was October—and I picked these four girls up and that made it even better, what I had bought. They were just going crazy over this car. That first day really was a great experience.”

Mike also enjoys the shared time the Thunderbird has given him with his son, Michael, who has Down syndrome. When



Ford’s muscular 390-cu.in. V-8 made a solid 315 horsepower and 427-lb.ft. of torque in Thunderbird Special guise as shown here.



This is a luxury car. It's got a lot of room, and I really like the look of the '66 styling, plus it was the last year of the convertible, which is why you don't see many of them today. To see that convertible top go up, and the way it then disappears into the trunk is amazing—it's freaking magic. I love to watch people's reaction when they see the top in action—it is just fantastic. This Thunderbird is a real symbol of luxury.

Mike bought the Thunderbird 20 years ago, Michael was just 12, but the two found going to shows to be a pretty special time. "The unselfish part," says Mike, "was having my son and having something to do with him as a hobby on the weekends together. Going to a car show with him was a blast. He really got to know a lot of people in the Thunderbird group. They knew him. I could trust him to walk around because that's a trusting group."

Within a short time, Mike started going to bigger shows and having the Thunderbird judged more thoroughly. Though he didn't know it when he bought it, Mike's highly original Thunderbird would catch the eye of other T-Bird fans who encouraged him to run the gauntlet of the trained judges at an AACA show. About the only change Mike needed, at first, was to remove the aftermarket wire wheels and tires and replace them with factory-original wheels and covers with the appropriate whitewall and redline tires the car originally came with. "And that's where it started being more of a serious hobby for me," Mike says.

No longer did he drive to shows, but instead contracted

with a driver to trailer his Thunderbird to events in various parts of the country. When a judge questioned the whitewall-redline tires, Mike had the original window sticker to show the option on the car when it was new—the judge having balked at first when presented with a photocopy of that document. While Mike laments the judge busting his chops, he admits that he enjoyed

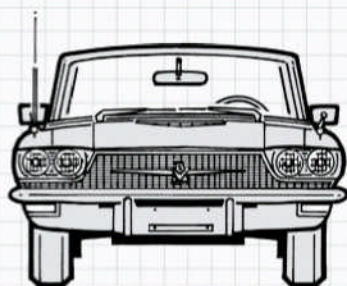
that level of scrutiny, particularly as he has earned his Senior Grand National badge. He did have to track down some original hose clamps to finally make those awards happen. Fortunately, the Thunderbird community is strong, and suppliers are out there helping people like Mike fill the gap.

While Mike appreciates the sleek lines of his striking 1966 Thunderbird and the car's originality, his family, too, has enjoyed the car. With the shows around the country in recent years, they've turned the trips into something more than car shows. "Everything we've done, we've done as a family and we've turned the trips into family vacations." A classic Ford Thunderbird convertible, a car show and family time all rolled into one. What more you could ask for? 🍷

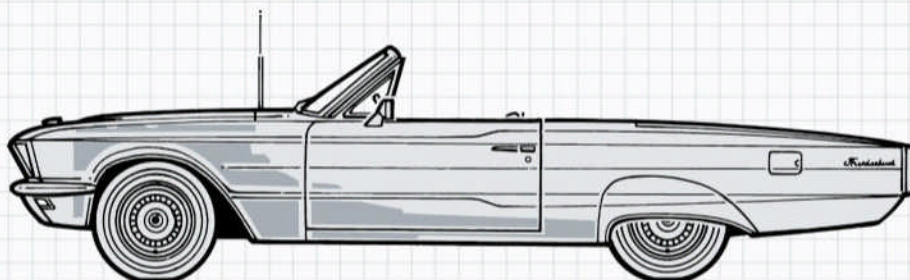


1966 FORD THUNDERBIRD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2017 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



61 inches



113 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$4,879
PRICE (AS PROFILED)	N/A
OPTIONS (AS PROFILED)	AM radio with Stereo-Sonic 8-track tape system, \$127.56; white sidewall tires with red band, \$42.93

ENGINE

TYPE	OHV V-8 with cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	389.6 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	4.05 inches x 3.78 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	315 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	427-lb.ft. @ 2,800
VALVETRAIN	Overhead valve
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Ford 9510 four-barrel carburetor
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full-pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Ford Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic
RATIOS	1st 2.40:1 2nd 1.47:1 3rd 1.00:1 Reverse 2.00:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hypoid
GEAR RATIO	3.00:1
DRIVE AXLES	Semi-floating

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball; power-assisted
TURNS, LOCK TO LOCK	3.5
RATIO	17.0:1 gear; 20.4:1 overall
TURNING CIRCLE	42 feet, 8 inches

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, power-assisted
FRONT	11.9-inch diameter discs
REAR	11.1-inch diameter drums

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	All-steel unitized construction
BODY STYLE	Two-door, four-passenger convertible
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	A-arms, coil springs, shocks, anti-roll bar
REAR	Solid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, shocks

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	15 x 5.5-inch stamped steel
TIRES	8.15 x 15-inch white sidewall- redline

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	113 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	205.4 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	77.3 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	53.3 inches
FRONT TRACK	61 inches
REAR TRACK	60 inches
CURB WEIGHT	4,692 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts (with filter)
COOLING SYSTEM	20.5 quarts
FUEL TANK	22 gallons
TRANSMISSION	23 pints

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.81
WEIGHT PER BHP	14.90 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	12.03 pounds

PRODUCTION

1966 THUNDERBIRD CONVERTIBLES	5,049
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PROS & CONS

- + Affordable luxury
- + Very reliable drivetrain
- + Power-assist convertible top
- Potential complications
if power top fails
- Heavy compared to
first-gen T-Birds
- Cornering and handling

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
\$8,000 – \$15,000

AVERAGE
\$25,000 – \$40,000

HIGH
\$55,000 – \$70,000

CLUB CORNER

**INTERNATIONAL
THUNDERBIRD CLUB (ITC)**
PO Box 24041
Pepper Pike, OH 44124
Phone (216) 375-2808
gebart@ameritech.net
www.intl-thunderbirdclub.com



Ingratiating Imperial

Chrysler's Full Classic 135-inch-wheelbase CH Imperial was a one-year-only delight for 1932

BY JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

As the Roaring Twenties gasped their last, collapsing into an economic depression so great that a decade could not contain its impact, great plans were afoot. Riding high on new and ever-more-luxurious models, car companies were looking to expand into high-end territory. Cadillac, Lincoln, Packard,



Auburn, Stutz, Pierce-Arrow, Duesenberg and many more had done well enough in the 1920s, and things were due to get cooking in the '30s. Big plans were made. Twelve-cylinder engines. Sixteen-cylinder engines. Excess on a colossal scale.

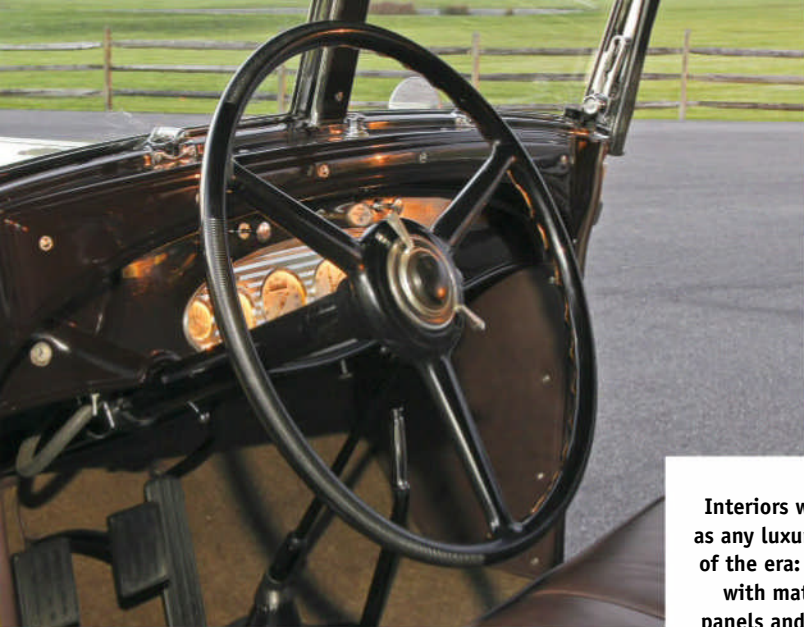
But things didn't go that way. As these big plans for the future were put in motion, as money was being spent to develop new and bigger and faster machines, the bottom dropped out of the economy. In the 1930s, luxury marques shriveled up and died, as smaller independent brands sought refuge in each others' lineups. Many of the survivors did so with so-called "junior luxury" brands.

Now, we've seen junior luxury machines, particularly from Depression-era high-end marques, emerge in an effort to keep sales going in what was a skinflint time. In some instances, the efforts may have saved the company, short-term, while causing irreparable long-term damage to the image (looking at Packard's junior series here). In others, they threatened to overtake the popularity of the established brand (oh, LaSalle, what did you do

to Cadillac to shake their confidence so?). Chrysler established the Imperial 80 in the late 1920s, so named because it would go a genuine 80 MPH given a long-enough stretch of pavement, and it proved a modest success.

Chrysler didn't observe traditional model-year designations, so its revised "second-series" Imperials launched in January of 1932. The 146-inch-wheelbase Imperial (with a "CG" chassis designation) was your standard-issue big Imperial, but for the first time, the marque was broadened with a new, smaller 135-inch-wheelbase Imperial (which wore a "CH" designation). The new, lighter, smaller-but-not-small CH Imperial had all of the features of the larger CL Imperial, and even shared the 125hp engine for better performance than could be had in the larger model.

An eight-cylinder engine was a must-have for luxury cars in those days, and of the four new-for-1931 straight-eights that launched throughout the Chrysler Corporation lineup, the Imperial received the largest. The L-head straight-eight featured nine main bearings, solid valve lifters, 5.2:1 compression ratio,



Interiors were as plush as any luxury automobile of the era: leather seats with matching kick panels and door panels, twin inside sun visors, carpeting in both the front and rear passenger compartments, plus a painted dash with an instrument cluster that was damascened (a process where metal was inlaid with metal) to produce the striped effect seen here. Door pockets were standard also.

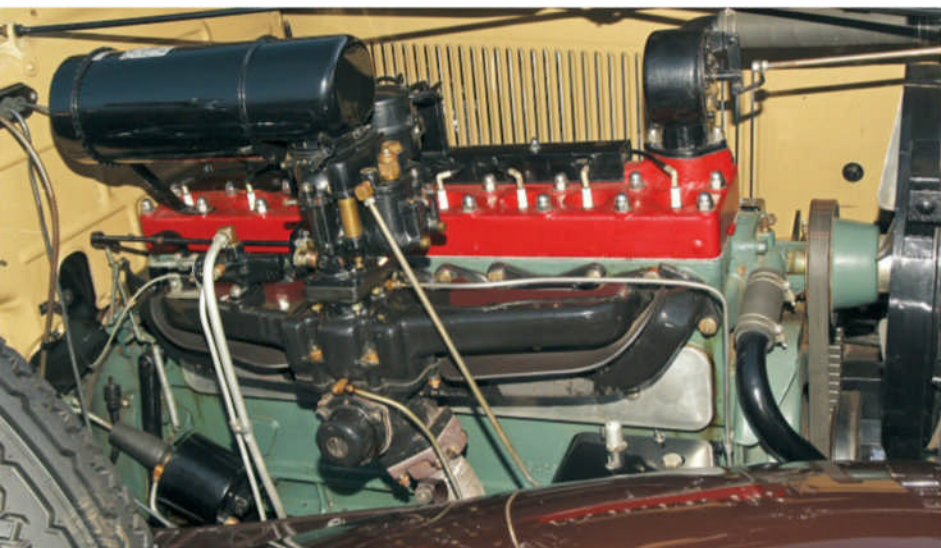


a 3.5-inch bore and 5-inch stroke, for 384.84 cubic inches, a Stromberg Model DD3 downdraft carburetor and Delco-Remy ignition. Beyond the engine's inherent smoothness, durability was also a hallmark. Tested to 200,000 miles, Imperial power also saw Indy 500 duty in a car dubbed *GNH Special*. The 1931 edition qualified at 103 MPH, and finished in 11th place. For 1932, the same qualifying speed didn't even put owner-driver George Howie in the field. That said, Juan Guadino of Argentina started the Imperial-powered *Golden Seal Special* in 36th, qualifying over 107 MPH, but retired mid-race with a fried clutch.

The four-speed freewheeling "multi-range" transmission

(with synchromesh in the top two gears) was really more like a three-speed, with first being a super-low crawler gear.

Floating Power was new across the Chrysler divisions for 1932. Consisting of a pair of flexible rubber engine mounts to absorb and isolate the engine's vibrations from the chassis, along with a leaf spring mounted below the transmission, it really wasn't necessary to dampen the already-smooth Imperial straight-eight—but the feature was prominently mentioned as a showcase to display Chrysler's superior engineering. As a result, the eight-cylinder Imperial ran as smoothly as period 12- and 16-cylinder luxury cars.



Producing 125 horsepower from 385 cubic inches, the L-head straight-eight proved a lively performer in the smaller CH (135-inch-wheelbase) Imperial chassis.

This joined other Chrysler and Imperial features, like "Oilite" rear springs—a porous metal that could absorb more than a quarter of its own weight in oil within its spongy pores was placed between rear spring leaves; the pieces released lubricant when compressed, and reabsorbed it when the pressure was off. Hydraulic four-wheel brakes were standard Chrysler fare from the marque's origins in the mid-'20s, so of course they were on board. And all Chrysler cars moved to bridge-type double-drop frames, with X-bracing. This allowed for a more rakish roofline than some other marques (though not as low as the Cord L29, which was the admitted style target). Hood sides gained ventilation doors.

The combination of high style and advanced mechanicals should have driven consumers batty, and not even the economy stopped Chrysler's relentless hype machine from rolling out the self-congratulatory superlatives. "Talked about everywhere with enthusiasm. Pointed out everywhere for smartness. Praised everywhere for value..."



“ We promise you the easiest, silkiest, quietest ride to be had on wheels ... even if you have a chauffeur, you’ll want to do most of the driving. ”



gushed the ad copy. “Who comes anywhere near to meeting Chrysler in modern engineering? ... What body construction begins to offer the strength and safety of Chrysler’s all-steel body construction? What brakes operate as easily and evenly and responsively as Chrysler’s self-equalizing hydraulic brakes?” Another ad spoke to the well-to-do nature of the target Imperial customer: “We promise you the easiest, silkiest, quietest ride to be had on wheels ... even if you have a chauffeur, you’ll want to do most of the driving.”

Briggs built the CH bodies in four distinctive flavors: a two-passenger two-door coupe, and a pair of five-passenger four-doors in a choice of coupe and convertible form. The coupe started at \$1,925, and saw 239 built. The most common, the four-door sedan, started at \$1,945 and saw 1,002 units produced. And the rarest of the bunch, the four-door convertible, started at \$2,195 and saw just 152 produced. (Nine bare chassis were manufactured for custom coachwork, for a total of 1,402 built.) That’s how luxury cars rolled in the early 1930s, before the product planners were able to catch up with the economics of reality.

All CH Imperials featured a V-shaped split windscreen, dual sidemounts and an external

trunk, and came standard with plenty of the day’s luxury amenities: leather seats with matching kick panels and door panels, twin inside sun visors, front and rear carpet, top boot, painted dash with an instrument cluster that was damascened (a process where metal was inlaid with metal). Six wire wheels were standard-issue on convertible sedans.

Bill and Tina Sipko of Windber, Pennsylvania, found the CH convertible on these pages while searching for parts for the other CH convertible they have under restoration. Wearing a period-correct Brown/Caramel paint scheme, this Imperial showed up in restored condition. While it didn’t help their need for parts, they now have a running, driving CH convertible sedan to call their own.

The CH proved short-lived, and for 1933 Chrysler introduced the smaller, less-expensive Imperial CQ—basically a gussied-up Chrysler. The result here is that the CCCA recognizes all 1931-’33 Imperials as Full Classics save for the CQ—making the CH Imperial the only “small” Imperial to receive the Full Classic designation. The Imperial CH lineup didn’t take away from the larger cars’ grandeur, and didn’t cheapen the Imperial name. (That would come decades later.) And even though Chrysler must have lost money on each one, it kept Imperial on the minds of luxury buyers in the better times that were to come. 🐾





“

You would

think such an

excellent car

would have

had a better

fate.

”

The Aero Mystery

Something I’ve never understood is why the Aero Willys wasn’t more successful in the marketplace. Frankly, I’m mystified it wasn’t as big a hit as the Rambler. It was such an outstanding car it should have sold better.

Since the end of World War II, Willys-Overland had been trying to reenter the passenger car market. The company was unable to reintroduce its prewar car because it didn’t build its own bodies, and couldn’t find a body builder willing to supply them. After all, with GM, Ford and Chrysler—not to mention Packard—begging for more bodies, who would give up solid business to help out a weak runt like Willys? So Willys-Overland produced trucks and Jeeps instead while waiting until such time when it could reclaim a place in passenger cars.

That time came in the early 1950s when Willys hired former Packard engineer Clyde Paton to design an impressive new car. Riding a 108-inch wheelbase, it was marketed by Willys as a smaller full-size car. It should actually have been considered an intermediate-size model, but that designation didn’t exist in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, the public tended to lump it in with the smaller compacts from Nash and Kaiser (and later Hudson). Debuting for 1952, there were three models initially: Aero-Lark, Aero-Wing and Aero-Ace, each a two-door sedan. An Aero-Eagle hardtop soon joined the line. The base Lark came with a 75hp L-head straight-six engine. The midrange Wing and top-line Ace and Eagle got the more-powerful Hurricane 90hp F-head straight-six, plus upgraded trim. Aero Willys were quite roomy for their size, economical and offered excellent performance, especially with the F-head engine and overdrive. A smooth ride and outstanding handling made a good car even better.

But a shortage of raw materials meant Willys had to restrict production, forcing the company to price the Aero on the high side in order to make a profit. The Aero-Lark’s base price thus was \$1,731 compared to a Ford Mainline tagged at just \$1,485. The Aero-Wing was \$1,989 versus Ford Customline at \$1,570. The Aero-Eagle hardtop’s price was \$2,155 versus Ford Victoria’s \$1,925 price. And this was in an era when smaller cars were supposed to cost less than standard-size cars. However, despite the uncompetitive pricing and the fact that the

Aeros offered only two-door models, the new Willys automobiles sold fairly well.

Road testers of the day praised the Aero Willys’ engineering. Veteran auto-scribe Floyd Clymer, writing for *Popular Mechanics*, called it “... a stylish and formidable contender.” And no wonder—the new Willys’ advanced unitized-body construction provided it with tremendous strength combined with low weight, a better ride and easier handling. Both front and rear seats were a full 61-inches wide, so six people could fit comfortably. Most testers tried out the Wing, Ace and Eagle models boasting the aforementioned Hurricane Six F-head engine. Magazines loved the Hurricane, one saying “The car has scat,” another describing it as “... that rare thing; an economy engine with guts.” In fact, when equipped with the Hurricane engine, the Aero Willys offered the highest horsepower per pound of car ratio of any standard American automobile. Acceleration was good by the standards of the day—0-60 MPH in about 18 seconds. When *Popular Mechanics* took a poll of early purchasers, performance was praised by many. Typical was a truck driver from Connecticut who bragged, “My Willys will outperform any one of the [Big Three makes] in acceleration and top speed.”

Fuel economy, long a Willys advantage, was similarly appreciated, with the poll showing an average of 27.3 MPG in country driving, and 22.9 in city driving—and those numbers were outstanding at the time when big cars often struggled to get 15 MPG overall. Braking was described as “exceptional!”

Handling was greatly admired. *Mechanix Illustrated* commented that the Aero “... hugs the road in a very professional way.” “It took right-angle flat turns at 45 MPH without evident sway,” noted *Popular Science*.

The addition of four-door models helped boost sales for the 1953 model year, but despite its sterling qualities, Aero sales faltered in 1954—it got creamed by the Ford Blitz, and, sadly, it never recovered. But why it didn’t is a mystery. You would think such an excellent car would have had a better fate. 🍷



OFTEN WHEN I GO TO A PARTS STORE

to buy something for one of my Studebakers or a Packard, the clerk will invariably ask, "Who makes that"? If they are younger than age 50, they have no idea what either car brand is. Hopefully, more young people will read more of your wonderful publications and begin learning that there is a world beyond the Big Three, and it is a very exciting and rewarding one.

As a director for the Southeast for the Studebaker Drivers Club with almost 11,000 members, I can tell you that we are very appreciative of how your publications have favored the Studebaker brand. Since we are all getting older, and attrition is working on overtime, we work hard at trying to attract younger members so that our interest and loyalty to the brand can continue for decades to come.

Thank you very much for your broad support, and we, in turn pledge to support your publications.

W. Lanny McNabb
Dunlap, Tennessee

REGARDING THE 1974 BUICK APOLLO

in issue #149, one of the things I've enjoyed most about *HCC* is the fact that you give attention to cars that never made the automotive world's A-List. I've always felt your "all-inclusive" approach was a fun departure from the normal print given to true classics, and I love reading about those "underdogs." However, the Apollo story was a grim reminder from my own past.

I grew up in a Buick household. In early 1975, my parents came home one afternoon and proudly said they bought a new Buick. I asked, "What did you get? A new Electra?" "Nope," came the answer. So, I proceeded to guess LeSabre or possibly another Riviera. Again, the answer was "No." Going down Buick's lineup, I think I started to utter "Regal" when Dad proudly announced, "An Apollo."

"Apollo!" I cried, with the same tone one might use when they find out the dog just pooped on the carpet again. NO! It couldn't be. But sure enough, it was a pea-soup-green-colored four-door Apollo—with matching cloth interior. And to round out the downgrade, it even had manual windows and an AM radio.

It was a massive blow to my teenage pride. It was the kind of car that you parked far away from other cars not because you wanted to protect it, but so you wouldn't be noticed getting out of it. I

don't recall what engine it had, but I know it didn't have enough power to pull the hat off your head.

In the summer of 1976, my parents, by now unhappy with their Apollo, traded it in for a new red LeSabre Custom with white vinyl top and interior that was drop-dead gorgeous. They readily admitted to their poor choice from a year before, so much so that in 1979 they further atoned by purchasing a Sedan de Ville. Talk about repentance! No further need to "Apollo-gize."

Jim Willis
Lees Summit, Missouri

I HAVE A 1936 CHRYSLER CARLTON

Foursome Coupe; it's based on a Plymouth P2 chassis along with the fenders and hood, but with a coachbuilt body. The original registration document, dated 29 April 1936, describes it as a Chrysler Air Glide. Unlike the Buick Carlton that appeared in *HCC* #109, this car does not have a factory instrument panel; instead it has a nicely done wood panel, which uses the original instruments, knobs, etc., plus



a starter button—being a right-hand-drive car, using the foot starter pedal would be rather uncomfortable.

The firewall is a flat steel panel with no pressings. It's described by the Dodge factory at Kew Gardens, London, in their 1936 catalogue for the 3/4-ton truck chassis as "cowl flat faced body builders standard."

There is a similar 1936 P2 Carlton on one of the Spanish Islands, but it's different because it has the same twin side mounts and quarter vent windows as a Carlton Richmond Foursome Coupe, which was different on what looks to be a De Soto base.

M.V. Hitchens
Wilmington, Dartford, England

I RECENTLY BOUGHT A 1929 DE SOTO

two-door sedan that has, by far, the lowest serial number of any De Soto uncovered to date. As the 121st De Soto, "Your

vehicle could have been built on the first day of De Soto production," according to the FCA Historical Services. Previously, the recognized "oldest" De Soto bore a serial number of around number 6,000.

Not only is this car unrestored, but it is also historically important. Thus far, I haven't even cleaned the windows, however I could replace the incorrect bucket seats with a very nice pair of original buckets I already own. Likewise, I could replace some rotten structural woodwork (or not), and so forth. I'm hoping you could direct me to some of the people from whom to get advice.

Curt McConnell
Denton, Nebraska

I AGREE 100 PERCENT WITH WHAT

Richard said in his column in *HCC* #133 about the "Four-Door Advantage." Back in 1959, when I drove my just-assembled 1959 two-door Buick on a test drive at the Framingham plant in Massachusetts, it had to be a sedan. The low roof line of the more popular two-door hardtop was so out of proportion to the body that it looked like it was chopped. But more important to me was the stronger "post" sedan that had to carry our two-man submarine.

Three years ago, I bought a 1959 Buick four-door in the same color and trim level as my original '59 Buick. Because the four-door model is so affordable and available, I didn't break the bank, and I'm now reliving the late '50s.

Paul Connolly
The Villages, Florida

JIM RICHARDSON'S COLUMN IN

HCC #150 brought back some great memories. In the early 1950s, while walking to school, I noticed that a new gas station was being built. I talked to the guys that were building it and found out who the owner was. He lived nearby, so on the way home I stopped by his house and asked him if he was going to need some help. I guess he was impressed with a young teenage kid that had enough gumption to show up at his front door asking for a job... so, he hired me!

It was a great job. I wasn't completely green; my dad and older brother had already given me tasks to do on their cars such as changing oil, plugs, etc. Pumping gas (25 cents per gallon!), checking oil

Continued on page 41



//
When I ran into
him again,
he looked like
Hollywood's
version of
someone who'd
fallen in love at
first sight—and
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wait to tell
me what had
happened to
him.



An Encounter With Good Design

A couple of summers ago, my out-of-town friend Ron paid me a visit. Wanting to be a good host, I naturally suggested that we take in a local car show.

To tell the truth, Ron isn't really interested in cars. For him, they're not much more than a means to an end. Aside from keeping the tank filled, he doesn't really give his car very much thought at all, and he extends that indifference to the entire automotive world. This tragic flaw, I'm happy to say, is really the only blemish on what is a remarkably sterling character, and I truly value his friendship.

My unexpressed thought was that this car show visit might be just the transformative experience he needed. Though he didn't say so in so many words, his thought was to humor me, and enjoy a stroll in the summer sun. We walked along a bit until I met a friend who wanted to talk cars, and Ron, seeing that he'd been given a chance to escape, suggested that we split up, and meet again later.

When I ran into him again, he looked like Hollywood's version of someone who'd fallen in love at first sight—and he could hardly wait to tell me what had happened to him. "I just saw the most beautiful car!" he gushed. I could hardly believe my ears. "What kind of car?" I asked. "Oh, I don't know what kind it was," he replied, and proceeded to give me a description of its lines. It sounded like nothing I'd ever seen before. Where was this wonderful object? "Come on, I'll show you," he said.

We came around a corner, and he pointed. "There it is," he said. He was clearly pointing at a Studebaker, a 1953 Commander Starliner, to be precise. How about that? Out of all the cars at the show, this was the one that had grabbed him by the lapel and given him a dope slap.

I complimented him on his good taste, and told him that I considered the so-called Loewy Coupe one of the high points of American postwar design. I had to restrain myself from burying this new flower of interest under the weight of the tons of—ahem—manure, but I did share with him a little bit of what I remembered about the design's history, some of which might even have been accurate.

Sensing that I was losing him, I changed tack, and told him that I had in fact once owned a Studebaker of this era. At that, he perked up, and I

proceeded to tell him the story of my Uncle Frank and the 1954 Studebaker Land Cruiser.

Frank—not really an uncle, but one of my mother's cousins—had bought the Land Cruiser many years earlier, and, when he was done driving it, parked it away in a garage, intending to keep it for his son. As if to prove that plans like this sometimes do go awry, the son, having reached the age at which he could drive, told Uncle Frank that he had no interest in the old sedan. Uncle Frank and I weren't terribly close, but he did want the car

to go to someone, and there weren't that many teenage boys to choose among in my mom's small family. So I became the lucky owner.

It might have helped that I knew something about Studebakers, having spent hours at my local library reading and rereading Volume X, Number 3 of *Automobile Quarterly*, the one that focused on the

marque's history. I remember feeling a pang of disappointment that the car I was being offered was a Land Cruiser, and not a Starliner, or even a Starlight. Stylist Bob Bourke's lovely coupe lost most of its charm when given four doors; even he apologetically described the design as "pretty depressing" and "rather uninspiring."

Though it was just 20 years old when it came into my possession, the Studebaker seemed absolutely ancient. The starter button under the clutch pedal, the shift lever on the column and the battleship gray steel dashboard seemed archaic, decades removed from my dad's 1968 Cadillac Sedan de Ville. It was hard to imagine that this was South Bend's idea of luxury. I set about getting it running—mainly what it needed was to have the old gas flushed out of its system—and shampooed its gray cloth upholstery. Aside from that, it didn't need much.

The Land Cruiser and I parted ways when I went off to college. As I recall, the buyer wanted the car for its relatively low-mileage V-8, which he planned to install in—what else?—his Starliner. Needless to say, it's not a deal I would make today, when the Studebaker would be appreciated as a Driveable Dream.

Would I want another? The sedan, probably not. But the coupes are another matter. You've got to respect any design that has the power to make even a non-car person stop in their tracks, more than 60 years later. 🚗



and water were no-brainers.

Two events stand out. One time, while changing oil, I was interrupted and when I went back to finish up, I lowered the hoist and started to fill the crankcase only to discover that I had forgotten to install the drain plug! Five quarts of oil all over the floor. What a mess!

Then one day, a regular customer came in with a new car, one that I had never seen before. Funny looking thing, kinda looked like a bug, which, in fact is what it was! He pulls in, I run out to the pump and he says "fill er up and check the oil and water".... "Yes sir," I say. I walk around the car a couple times without seeing any sign of a gas cap, door or any other filler device, so he gets out, laughs, opens up the hood and there is the gas tank! Then I go to the back of the car where I assume the engine will be and sure enough, there it is. Funny looking engine; I see the dipstick and check the oil, and then look around for a radiator; not seeing anything that looks like one, I ask the owner and he laughs, saying, "It's air cooled." This was my introduction to the new, at that time, VW Beetle.

Dave Simpson

Moreno Valley, California

THE TWO ICONIC "CLASSICS" OF

the Fifties seem to have emerged as the 1959 Cadillac and the 1957 Chevrolet. The reason for the Cadillac is obvious: It is the most outrageous of all the finned creations of the era. But why the '57 Chevy, which to my mind, is one of the most "plain Jane" cars of the '50s? Ford outsold Chevrolet that year, with a great all-new look, and to my mind, the new Virgil Exner Plymouth was sharper looking than either of them. Then, in 1958, Chevrolet came out with a new look that I think was much prettier than the '57 model. Why, then, has the '57 Chevy become the car everyone wants?

I have discussed this with a number of my car friends and we all seem to agree. Can anyone explain why?

Jerry Ramsdale

Dallas, Texas

REGARDING JIM DONNELLY'S COL-

umn in HCC #151, my mother bought a new Corvair in May 1965 that I did most of the driving on until it was sold in 1972, with 120,000 miles on the odometer. We had no complaints about its ability to send as much heat as needed to the occupants even on ski trips in the Oregon Cascade

mountains. My wife and I even drove it to Nova Scotia one summer with no issues beyond wearing out a set of tires and perhaps a fanbelt. When I bought a 1965 VW bus years later, I kept a scraper handy to clear ice off the inside of the windshield and wore much insulating clothing during the winters in central Oregon. I understand now why they offered a gasoline heater as an option for those. Thanks for all the memories and interesting stories you and your cohorts bring each month.

Ben Beckley

Sisters, Oregon

I LOVED THE ARTICLE ON THE "TT"

truck in HCC #151. It shows how far trucks have come in 100 years. However, the industry has overshot the mark. It is not the age of peak truck. In 2007, there was a conspiracy by the manufacturers that they all would stop making six-cylinder, stick-shift trucks; what I call "job trucks." The kind that contractors would get. Like in the article—just to move things. Imagine, today, if just one manufacturer would make a "job truck," with a six-cylinder, stick-shift, radio delete and rear bumper optional—they would probably sell between three and four million in the first year.

Joseph Roth

Holmes, Pennsylvania

RICHARD, LIKE YOU, I WOULD NOT

hesitate to drive a 1983-'88 Monte Carlo SS as my daily driver. Why? Because back in 1987, I bought a brand new Monte Carlo SS that I used as my daily driver, even during our Wisconsin winters. It was a great blend of style, luxury, muscle and comfort. Even my wife, who is not a car enthusiast, liked that car. In spite of all that, we only had it for three years, because someone appreciated the Monte more than me—car thieves. That was a car I was going to keep forever.

Mike Manto

Rubicon, Wisconsin

I ENJOYED JEFF KOCH'S PIECE ON

Famous TV Cars in HCC #150, but the last three words in the paragraph for the *Dukes of Hazzard* got to me. Nearly all the plot lines for the show were insipid, but when, episode after episode, the Dodge Charger *General Lee* did impossible jump stunts that obviously ruined that particular car, "car junkie heaven" soon became "car junkie hell." When I learned of the number of beautiful Chargers de-

stroyed for the sake of TV ratings, I prayed the show would be cancelled to put an end to the CARNage.

Charles Woodruff

Seoul, Korea

MY WIFE AND I WERE MARRIED IN

mid-June 1965 in Saint John, New Brunswick, and we travelled south in our Corvair 500 to New York on our honeymoon. Our first stop was the World's Fair (HCC #152) with a visit to the Ford pavilion and our first experience with a Mustang. We were hooked once we sat in the car and enjoyed the ride, albeit on a track. Obviously, our next car was a Mustang, and it had to be a red one just like the one we sat in at the fair.

Stan Ruthen

Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada

WE USED TO GO TO THE WORLD'S

Fair almost every weekend as my parents were part of a club that put on square dance shows at the Federal pavilion. I recall how it seemed easy to get to the Fair from our house in Suffolk County, but not so easy to get back home, as my father got lost almost every time. Once he jumped the median on one of the highways and tore the muffler off our 1960 Pontiac. Boy, could the old man curse! I recall being nuts about the Mustang, and sure remember the yellow coupe on the display you show on page 60. I rode in the driver's seat of a Mustang at the Ford exhibit, and my big brother was not happy about that, but you sat where the workers put you. I did find lying on the ground a 1/24th scale model of the Chrysler Turbine car, new in the box. I took it home, and if it wasn't for firecrackers I might still have it today.

Larry Lewis

Toronto, Canada

RE: PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN ON THE

Davis three-wheeler in HCC #152: If you want to see one in action, check out an obscure 1950s private eye show called *The Cases of Eddie Drake*. There's an episode online entitled "Shoot the Works" in which he just bought one, which he's nicknamed "Dave."

Mark Astolfi

Teaticket, Massachusetts



To have your letter considered for Recaps you must include the name of the town, city and state you live in. Thank you.



Custom and Rare

Track #11 on The Beach Boys *Greatest Car Songs* CD is “Custom Machine.” That song might not be as familiar as “Little Deuce Coupe,” but it provides one definition of the first of two ambiguous words in our automotive lexicon: “custom.” Has any other word been used more often to denote both the most expensive *and* the cheapest, or both the most exclusive *and* the most common?

One of the lowest-price 1957 cars was the Ford Custom Six; the upscale-sounding name “Custom” having replaced “Mainline” as the designation denoting the company’s cheapest offering. The \$1,991 Custom Six Tudor was Ford’s only 1957 six-passenger car under \$2,000. Comparing with other 1957 six-cylinder two-door models, it undercut Chevrolet’s 150 by \$5, but the \$1,984 Plymouth Plaza was cheaper yet. Three-passenger business coupes were less, of course.

But you were in for a surprise if you went across the street to the Nash dealer to investigate Rambler prices. Having seen a stripper Ford Custom, you’d be surprised to learn that the Nash dealer’s 1957 Rambler Six Custom four-door was the fanciest, most expensive of three trim levels, and priced over 8 percent more than a 1957 Ford Custom Six Fordor!

Trucks posed a similar quandary. For most of the 1960s-1990s, the cheapest Ford truck was a Custom. But if you wanted a nicer interior, you might have paid more to get a Custom Cab. Low-line Chevrolet trucks upped the ante over Ford and Dodge by being identified as Custom DeLuxes. You could be forgiven for leaving truck showrooms confused; did custom mean cheap and plain, or expensive and fancy?

So the industry confuses its customers by using custom to mean both more, and less. But are our hobby and the aftermarket any different?

My fellow columnists Walt Gosden and David Schultz rightly describe certain Full Classics as having custom coachwork, meaning exclusive and premium. But aftermarket custom car shops after World War II usually created customs from common, garden-variety used cars. Custom shops created any vehicle you could imagine, such as The

Beach Boys’ custom machine.

On par with “custom” for ambiguity and over-use is our second word: “rare.” Hobbyists will likely agree on what constitutes rare just as soon as we all agree on who marketed the first muscle car.

The new-car industry doesn’t use rare very much, but the collector-car hobby more than makes up for it. In fact, our hobby has darn near worn it out. Testifying to that are too many advertisements wherein a car is described as rare, and if that doesn’t work, we’ve all seen cars described as *very* rare. I guess that settles it.

My wife has little interest in cars beyond my keeping her new Escape’s gas gauge near full, but we enjoy a day together at the Mecum Spring Classic collector-car auction every May at the

Indiana State Fairgrounds. She proffered a real zinger as we left last year. She had been reading information about each car and noted many consignors describing their cars as rare. She



asked, “If 1969 Camaros are so rare, how come every third car in the sale is a 1969 Camaro?” She has a point, albeit exaggerated.

Should I tell her 1969 six-cylinder Camaros are rare because they were barely 28 percent of production? Or should I save the word rare for when she notices a 1969 Camaro with power windows—only 1.26 percent of production? Maybe a 1969 Camaro six-cylinder is rare and a 1969 Camaro with power windows is very rare. That said, I suppose a 1969 six-cylinder Camaro with power windows would be very, very rare, right?

For the time being, might we agree that any “one of one” car defines rare? Model year 1964 was the last for Studebaker Hawks and supercharged Avanti engine options. You could order a 1964 Studebaker Hawk in any one of 10 exterior colors, including light metallic Horizon Green. A friend of mine has the only Horizon Green 1964 Studebaker Hawk manufactured with a supercharged Avanti engine—truly “one of one.” Would you agree that he has a rare car?

However, he is restoring it with a couple custom touches, so I suppose he’ll have a “rare custom” when he’s done. And having opened that can of wordy worms, I suggest we go fishing. 🎣

“
So the industry
confuses its
customers by
using custom
to mean both
more, and
less. But are
our hobby
and the
aftermarket
any different?”

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Full-Fendered Style

*Ford's 1948 Super De Luxe Convertible Club Coupe,
one of only 12,033 produced*

BY DAVE CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR

It's no overstatement to say that the 1948 Ford represents the end of an era. Put any other automaker's 1948 offering next to the same car from 1928 and you would be hard pressed to find much resemblance beyond the superficial. But thanks to Henry



Ford's peculiar philosophies, Ford offerings represented a continuous refinement of the mechanical basics first offered in the 1928 Model A.

In the highly competitive world of new-car sales, that lack of frequent reinvention was viewed as a demerit, but to a collector it's a boon. Unfortunately for the collector-car scene, when Henry Ford died in 1947, the traditional solid axles, transverse springs, torque tube and Lockheed brakes had lost their champion. For the 1949 model year, all that was swept out the door—and in such a rush that quality suffered.

But for 1948, buyers got the benefit of everything Ford had learned over the two previous decades, including the accelerated pace of wartime technological development. Add in another 70 years of enthusiast support for the V-8 years, and it's possible that

the 1946-'48 Ford is the easiest collector car to own—and none, save possibly the woodie wagon, is more desirable than the Series 89A Convertible Club Coupe; only 12,033 examples were built.

Aside from the folding convertible top, the star of the show is, of course, Ford's famous flathead V-8, in its last year of a design that debuted in 1939. Before the war, Ford engines were set below those from Mercury by virtue of their 221-cu.in. size and 90 horsepower. Beginning in 1946, however, Fords shared Mercury's 100hp, 239-cu.in. V-8. A straight-six engine was also available in most body styles, but not in the Super De Luxe Convertible Club Coupe or its wood-paneled sibling, the Sportsman.

In tune with most cars built in the years immediately following World War II, the Ford was a thinly disguised version of the abbreviated 1942 model year—itsself a major change from the



Expansive bench seat accommodates three-across seating, while the big wheel makes steering easier. Large speedometer and clock are on either side of the white-button radio, and the fuel, oil pressure, battery and water temperature gauges are in front of the driver.

similar-looking 1941s, which may account for the comparative contemporary look of the '46 Ford. Some changes were made, however, beyond the aforementioned engine enlargement.

The flush-mounted grille with its fine, vertical bars was replaced by thicker, horizontal bars that extended beyond the rectangular opening. For the 1947 model year, the hood gained a prominent badge, and midway through that year, the parking lamps changed from rectangular units mounted above the grille to round units below the headlamps. All 1948 Fords were identical to late-1947 production models.

Compared with prewar open cars and 1950s Sunliners, the

immediate postwar Ford convertibles are remarkably affordable even today. Take into account how thoroughly understood and easy to get parts for they are and they're a real bargain. It's also easy to appreciate how one owner managed to keep this particular car for so long.

Back in August of 1955, when owner Rick Bocchi of Saratoga Springs, New York, first acquired this car, the postwar Fords were truly an amazing buy. His father paid a mere \$50 at Selkis Motors, the local Ford dealer in nearby Mechanicville, to take the seven-year-old car home to 12-year-old Rick.

As you might imagine from the price, the convertible was well





Super De Luxe 8 badge on leading edge of the front hood tells the world there's a V-8 engine below, which happens to be the 100hp flathead that's identical to the engine installed in Mercury cars; it's exclusively coupled to a column-shift three-speed transmission.

used, but not necessarily used well. In fact, the initial idea was that the beat-up old Ford would give Rick the opportunity to practice his driving skills on dirt roads near home. Over the intervening four years, however, Rick grew attached to the car and elected to fix it up and drive it to high school once he obtained his license.

"I had to hammer out some dents, painted it in gray primer, added cheap seat covers from J.C. Whitney, a set of decent tires and had to replace the clutch and canvas top," Rick tells us. And, of course, this being the 1950s and Rick being a teenager, he couldn't resist the temptation to hop up the old Ford, either. "I put dual exhaust and dual carbs on the engine and ran it."

The Ford created many happy memories for Rick in the meanwhile, with his younger brother learning to drive in it at the age of 10. But for most people, those memories would become the only reminder of their first car as life progressed and new cars came along. Not so for Rick.

After high school, Rick says, "I used it off and on until around

1977, when I parked it in the garage." Keeping something 22 years is dedication enough, but then Rick stored it another 13 years. "It sat until 1990, when I decided to do a body-off restoration. I am not sure why I decided to restore it, because I had offers from people who were interested in purchasing it." But perhaps the car's presence in his formative years holds the answer. "I enjoyed the car, and it was a good part of my youth. I'm very glad I decided to keep it. Going to shows, you hear a lot of stories about people's first car. I can tell mine and show the car. Somewhat unique."

It's very rare to hold onto a car for 62 years and counting. More so when those years involve taking a cheap, back-row special and turning it into a high-school hot rod and then giving it a factory-correct, body-off restoration. "That took me five years, and the car was put back on the road in May of 1995. It was used in my youngest daughter's wedding in August of that year and summers ever since. I cannot say that in 1955 I had planned on keeping it all this time; it just happened." 🐾

“ I enjoyed the car

and it was a good part of my youth.

I'm very glad I decided to keep it. ”





Colonnade Collaboration

The 1973 GM A-Bodies, including the Cutlass Supreme, were the result of cooperation between corporate and its divisions

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

The 1973-to-1977 General Motors Colonnade models were provocative, with proponents extolling their virtues and opponents exposing their vices. Some lamented the passing of the 1972 A-bodies and their convertibles and the arrival of heavy 5-MPH front bumpers, along with Exhaust Gas Recirculation systems and higher curb weights for 1973, while others lauded the new A-body's design, engineering and safety refinements.

New styling brought a larger windshield and reshaped frameless side windows, fixed rear quarter windows, new backlight designs and roof-strengthening side-pillars to address possible future federal rollover standards. Quad headlamps gave way to a larger one on each side, which offered additional design freedom for the new fenders. The midsize Oldsmobile's distinctive body sides were more sculpted than the previous year, and the doors were larger and heavier.

The approach to the new federal 5-MPH front bumper

standard consisted of positioning the bumper further out from the body and mounting it on twin hydraulic cylinders so that it would retract on impact to absorb the forces and then rebound to its original position. To ensure the divided twin grilles weren't damaged in that process, they were spring mounted and they swung back.

Since the rear only needed to withstand a 2.5 mile-per-hour impact, it didn't require the hydraulic cylinders. Its bumper was integrated into the body more seamlessly, efficiently tying together the converging angles of the deck lid and rear quarter-



The 180hp 350 four-barrel engine was standard in Cutlasses for 1973, but adding the extra-cost dual exhaust provided the 200hp M-code 350 shown here. A 455 was optional.



panels. Rectangular taillamps were recessed into the rear quarter panel caps and the bumper.

Developing the Colonnade cars was a collective effort between GM corporate and its Divisions. Chevrolet completed the new frame after the GM Research Lab initiated it. As had been the case since 1968, all of the two-door A-bodies rode on a 112-inch wheelbase, and four-doors on 116 inches. The front suspension,

also engineered by Chevrolet, more followed the geometry of the second-generation F-body and also adopted Buick's Accu-Drive to increase stability. Oldsmobile developed the new steering system with Delco and Saginaw, Pontiac designed the rear suspension and worked with Fisher Body on the body mounts, and Buick conspired with Delco-Moraine on the brakes.

GM Styling and Fisher Body teamed up on the body. Certain



The optional clock, AM radio with 8-Track player and even the console shifter are set into panels featuring French Walnut-grained appliques. Note the low mileage, the optional gauges and the overall condition of the white interior.

areas were shared by the divisions, such as the inner-body structure: cowl, passenger compartment, acoustically engineered double-panel roof and new door guard beams, etcetera. The individual divisions' stylists designed the outer body panels to maintain autonomy and brand recognition.

Each division retained its own engines and continued to share transmissions, but now they also shared the corporate 8.5-inch 10-bolt differential, except for some station wagons. The interior design and the spring rates, anti-roll bar and wheel/tire sizes and shock valving, etc. were the divisions' own.

Topping the price and prestige ladder in Oldsmobile's Colonnade camp was the Cutlass Supreme. The two-door and four-door Cutlass represented the entry-level A-body, and the middle child was the two-door Cutlass S. The 4-4-2 Appearance and Handling Package wasn't available on the Cutlass Supreme,

and the new European-inspired Salon Package was only for the four-door version.

Debuting for 1966 as an upscale four-door hardtop, the Cutlass Supreme became its own series for 1967. With the 1970 redesign, whereas the other Oldsmobile A-bodies continued with the fastback roof design, the Cutlass Supreme featured a new and distinct formal roofline with revised rear quarter windows and backlight. This practice was carried over to the Colonnades.

The 1973 Cutlass and Cutlass S sported a new semi-fastback roof with triangular quarter windows and a broad backlight, but the Supreme's was a less-sloped formal roof with smaller, rectangular, upright quarter windows and a Vee'd backlight. Along with its ornamentation and upscale interior appointments, the Cutlass Supreme was also differentiated from lower models via a vertical-slat grille pattern and subtly revised taillamps.

This Eclipse Blue Cutlass Supreme is part of the expansive National Parts Depot car collection in Ocala, Florida. Father-and-son-owners, Jim and Rick Schmidt, bought the 37,185-mile example in 1997 at the Charlotte Auto Fair. Rick explains, "I recall that being our blue weekend. By coincidence we ended up purchasing five vehicles, all of which were blue. This Oldsmobile was just too clean and original to pass up."

"Loaded" is an apt description of this Cutlass Supreme, equipped with \$1,507.80 in options above its \$3,646.60 suggested retail price, according to its original window sticker. Its extra-cost white vinyl top surrounds the optional Vista Vent Roof Ventilator (sunroof), one of GM's concessions to the elimination of A-body convertibles with the arrival of the Colonnade coupes.

Comfort options included A/C, AM radio with 8-Track, clock, rear defogger, sports console, Tilt-Away steering wheel,



“This Oldsmobile

was just too clean and

original to pass up.”



The "CS" badge identified a Cutlass Supreme. Upper door panel designs and seat upholstery differed between the Supreme and other Cutlass models. The vinyl top was a commonly seen option, but the Vista Vent Roof Ventilator was a rare sight.



power assist for the disc brakes, Deluxe seat belts, Soft-Ray tinted windows, power trunk lid release and the lamp and mirror convenience group. Protection options consisted of front and rear floor mats, rub strip and bumper guards front and rear, body side moldings with vinyl inserts and bright door edge guards. An appearance option included the sports-styled outside rearview mirrors. Performance equipment included instrument panel gauges, dual exhaust, Anti-Spin for the standard 2.73 final-drive ratio, Super Stock III wheels and G70x14 Wide Oval white-letter tires.

Items that came at no-extra-charge were the Rocket 350 four-barrel engine, Turbo Hydra-Matic, white Moroccan upholstered bucket seats, Vari-Ratio power steering, roof drip moldings and nylon carpeting. The grand total was \$5,222.40, including a \$68 destination charge.

It seems that the original buyer wanted a touring machine, and he or she certainly got one. But ultimately, the Cutlass Supreme wasn't driven too much nor was it neglected. Once it arrived at NPD, the Olds was detailed and the exhaust system and

tires were replaced. It has since lived the life of Riley in a climate-controlled environment, and it receives periodic road workouts.

The stylish Colonnade A-bodies represented GM's best efforts when introduced, despite the fact that they were a year late due to a strike and other factors. Oldsmobile set a sales record for the 1973 model year with over 938,000 cars built (or 939,000 depending upon the source), and the Cutlass and Cutlass Supreme and the Vista Cruiser station wagon series contributed over 405,500 cars to that total. As personal luxury coupes began to gain prominence in the 1970s, the two-door Cutlass Supreme fit the niche perfectly, resulting in 219,857 in 1973 sales, another record. It would be broken again in 1977, the final year of the Colonnades.

Though collector interest has trailed that of the earlier models, and prices remain more reasonable, those who appreciate the Colonnades have kept them in the collector car conversation. And after seeing this expertly preserved example, how could you resist it? 🏁





Timeless Torpedo

Unrestored and driven regularly, this stylish 1941 Pontiac Custom Torpedo Eight is one of the rarest prewar GM C-body cars extant

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Social stratification has existed as long as society, and a class system was a key part of General Motors' product strategy, as devised by

Alfred Sloan. In the run-up to World War II, GM's stratified lines began to blur, as its mid-level Pontiac Motor Division angled for upmarket customers with the full-sized



1940 and 1941 Custom lines. The 1941 Custom Torpedo Eight Sedan Coupe on these pages is an incredibly low-mileage, high-option, never-messed-with example of an indeterminately small number of survivors of that unusual era.

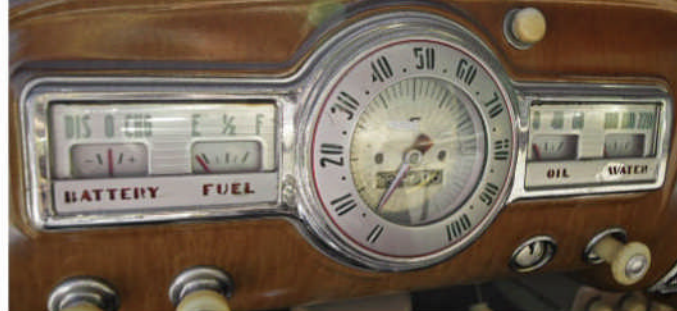
Our first question for this Pontiac's owner, Dave Lanning, is, is the odometer reading of 22,271 miles truly genuine? It is, he says, and explains what he knows of the two-door's history. "I bought this car in 1985, from the Bob Adams Classic Car dealership in Wisconsin. It had 10,500 miles on it at that time. Bob told me it had been ordered new by an Ohio Pontiac dealer who bought the top-of-the-line car offered each year, fitted with nearly every

accessory available. He did this every year he was in business, from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s. On his passing, this car was purchased, with three other Pontiacs, by a collector. At some point in the late 1970s, it was sold to another collector, who traded it to Bob for another car, and later bought it back. Those men traded it back and forth a few times, until I saw it in the showroom."

As Dave found it, the stately Sedan Coupe was indeed generously equipped. Among its factory and dealer accessories were front and rear bumper guards, fog lamps, rear fender skirts, dashboard heat-

er/defroster and under-seat heaters, directional signals, and a De Luxe seven-tube radio. He did note that the lower body paint was noticeably failing, although no corrosion was found on the metal below. "I was drawn to its long, flowing lines, and I liked the way that it handled and drove," he explains. "And the radio and clock still worked!"

This "Torpedo," as all 1941 Pontiacs were marketed, represented the division's flagship line, the series 29 Custom Eight. As had been the case in 1940, this line used Fisher Body's premium "C" bodies, which were shared with Oldsmobile's



Seventy-six years of sun exposure have taken their toll on the dash-top paint, but the factory-painted "Curly Maple" effect remains strong on other interior pieces. This sub-23,000-mile Sedan Coupe has many desirable accessories, including below-dash and below-seat heater systems, an electric clock and a seven tube De Luxe radio, all of which still work.



senior 90 series Custom Cruiser, Buick's Roadmaster, and Cadillac's Series 62. Pontiac's version offered a 122-inch wheelbase within a 211.5-inch overall length, and came in three body styles: four-door Sedan, four-door Station Wagon, and this Sedan Coupe. All could be powered by a 239.2-cu.in. L-head straight-six making 90hp and 175-lb.ft. of torque, or for an additional \$25, a 248.9-cu.in. L-head straight-eight, and both were linked to a column-shifted three-speed manual. The latter engine, which had a 6.5:1 compression ratio and fed through a two-barrel downdraft Carter carburetor, made 103hp at 3,500 RPM and 190-lb.ft. of torque at 2,200 RPM.

Six-cylinder engines had been the most popular choice for Pontiac buyers for some time, but that reasonable upgrade price (roughly equivalent to \$413 in today's dollars) meant that a good number of 1941 models were built with eight plug leads: 36.7 percent, up from 1940's 23.8 percent. The smooth torque of that low-mile straight-eight engine helped the 3,460-pound Sedan Coupe move out, and was a primary selling point for Dave. "I'm sure the cylinder head has never been off of it. It has the same water pump and generator it had when it left the factory. Having done a major tune-up—plugs, points, cap, rotor and wires—and using non-ethanol gas, I've had no driveability

issues with it at all.

"It's much peppier than a six-cylinder model," Dave continues. "Although there's a lot of weight on this Custom Torpedo compared to the smaller Pontiacs and Chevrolets. It goes on the expressway along with other cars, at 55 to 65 MPH, easily. And being an unrestored car, it's so nice and tight. I've owned other cars that have been completely restored, with the new bushings, tie rod ends, shocks, and everything else that goes into the front end, but to me, those cars never seem to



This Pontiac was obviously a collectible, rather than a daily-driver, because its interior fabrics and carpeting are intact.

feel the same as when they were built by the factory. I keep this old Pontiac well lubricated, and it steers fine and handles well. It shifts very smoothly, and is quite easy to drive."

Those who see Dave's Custom Eight in passing on the road might be forgiven for thinking this Driveable Dream has been fully restored. It's not until you get to examine the Pontiac up close that you see its warm patina. "I did have it repainted about 25 years ago in the original 'Parma Wine' color. I thought it was the original paint coming off in chunks, but my trusted local restorer determined the car had been repainted, poorly, many years earlier. He removed all the original chrome trim before stripping that paint from the entire car using razor blades, rather than sanding or grinding. Once it was finished, the trim was all reinstalled, and nothing was re-chromed," Dave says. If you look closely, you can see some minor surface rust and pitting on the grille, and some chips in the red-painted trims, but the exterior bright-work still gleams fetchingly.

The 76-year-old interior remains beautifully preserved. The deluxe wool pinstripe fabrics that cover the foam sponge rubber seat cushions and door panels don't show stains or tears, the factory-installed carpets aren't moth-eaten or threadbare, and the ivory plastic steering wheel rim is not cracked. Indeed, the



“ It shifts very smoothly,
and is quite easy
to drive. ”



While this straight-eight engine has been maintained and received a tune-up in this owner's care, its cylinder head has never been removed. The body's brightwork still gleams like new.



only notable deterioration inside is the finish on top of the “Curly Maple”-painted steel dashboard. A glimpse into the trunk reveals the never-used spare wheel, which still has its hand-painted triple white pinstripe, beauty ring and mounted wide-whitewall Denman Super-Safety bias ply tire from 1941.

Dave typically adds about 1,000 miles to the Pontiac's odometer each year, exercising it on the roads around his Gulf Coast Florida home weekly. He keeps it in top running condition with annual oil

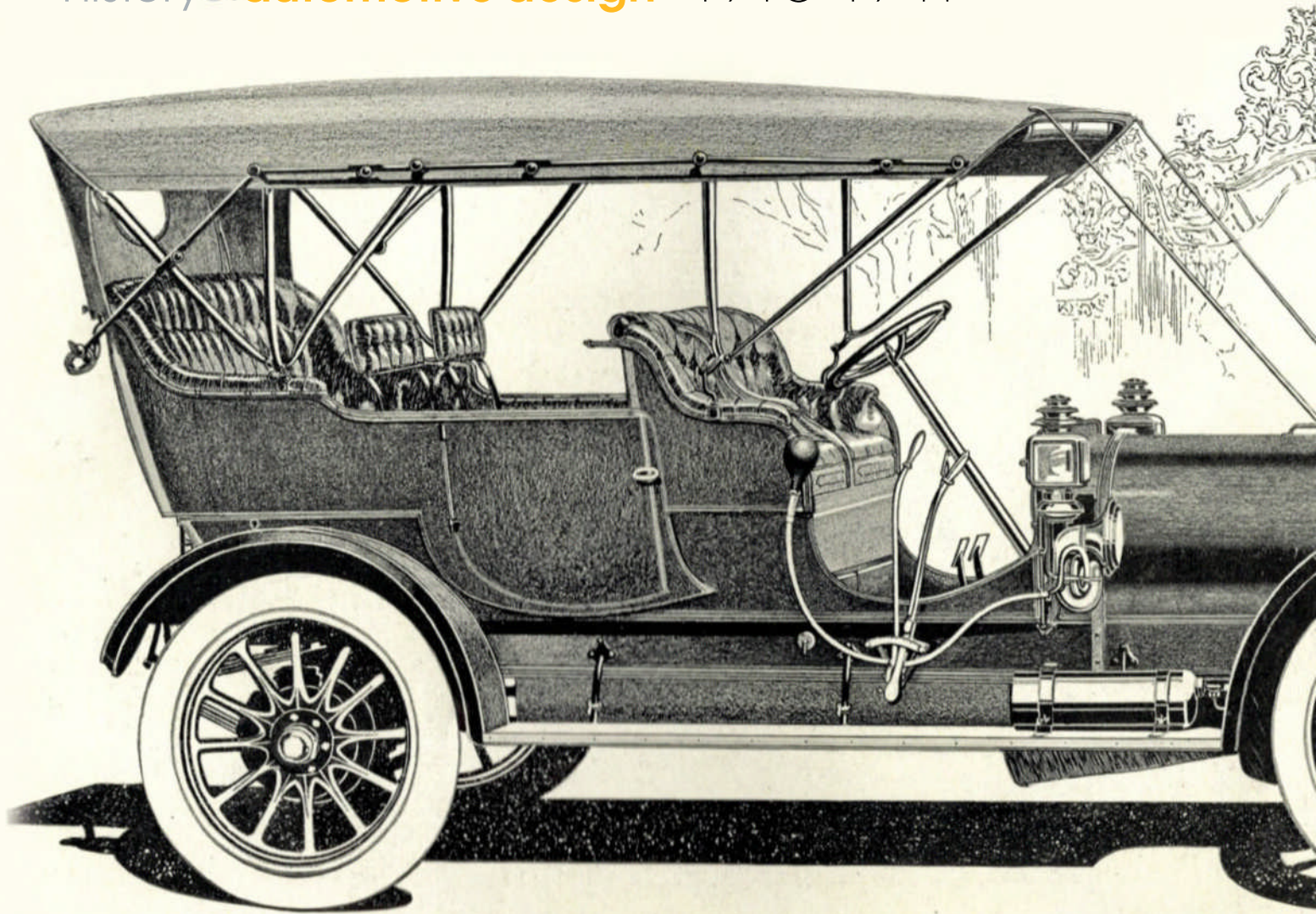
changes using NAPA 10W-30, and has rebuilt the “multi-sealed” four-wheel drum brake system with a correct replacement master cylinder, hoses, wheel cylinders and shoes. The cosmetics are maintained with Meguiar's detailing products.

It's no surprise to learn that, with this care, this regal Pontiac has been recognized with the Antique Automobile Club of America's Historical Preservation Original Features certification. And while it does turn heads for its imposing period style, few onlookers know just what a rare

sight a “Model 29” is. This prewar C-body is one of only 25,448 examples that Pontiac built that year, further split into 8,257 Custom Torpedo Sixes and 17,191 Custom Torpedo Eights. The figures that break down the model by body style are lost to history, but it's exceedingly scarce: He tells us he's seen only one other two-door Model 29—a 1940 Sedan Coupe—in more than a half-century of activity in the old-car hobby.

“I like that this Custom Torpedo is so original, and because of its larger size, it's a great tour car,” says Dave. “My wife and I both like this Pontiac a lot, and at some point, when we need to sell all the cars, this will probably be one of the last to go.”





Living Large

Seven-passenger sedans and touring automobiles

BY WALT GOSDEN • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE WALT GOSDEN COLLECTION

The sedans and touring cars of seven-passenger capacity were a staple of the majority of automobile manufacturers during the pre-World War II years, especially up through the 1920s. In the Brass Era of 1915 and earlier, although the jaunty, sporty toy tonneaus and tourings featured predominantly in advertising, they offered little space for passengers, often only accommodating three people in addition to the driver. As the automobile became more popular and larger engines were developed, it offered more power to move larger and larger cars. These longer-

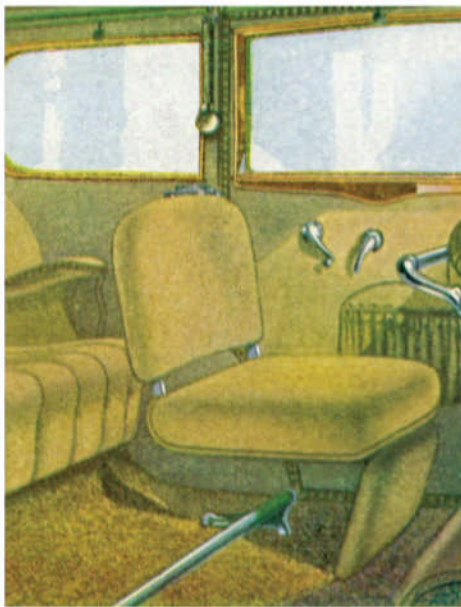
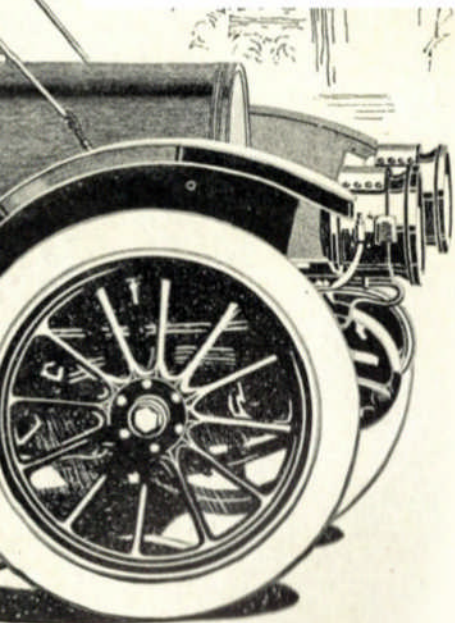
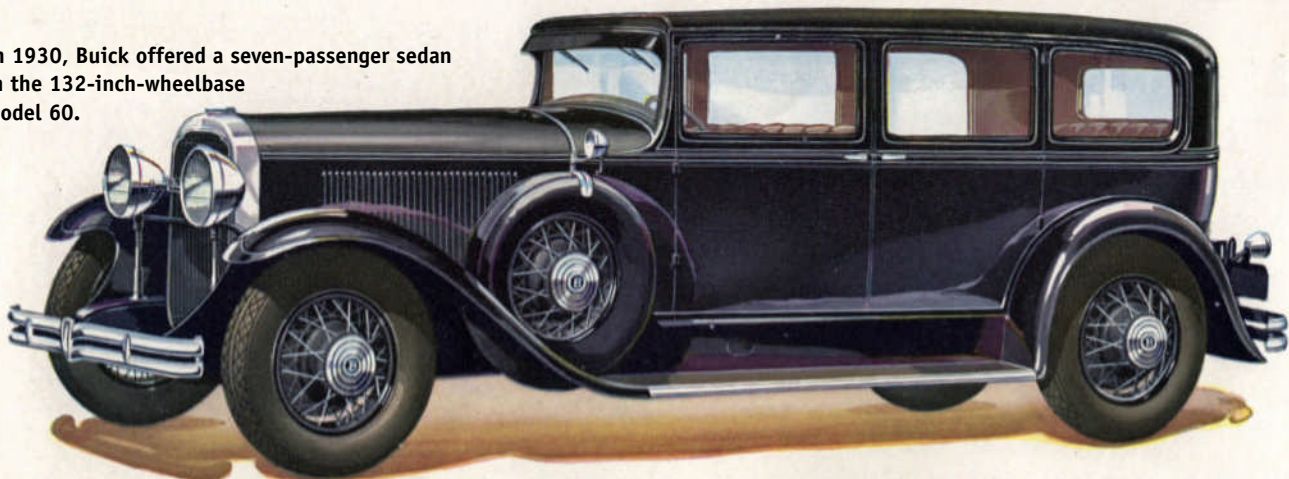
wheelbase cars could then be fitted with larger, more commodious bodies that would allow extra seats to be mounted immediately behind the front seat. These small seats could be quickly folded up to allow access to the rear seat.

The extra folding seats provided accommodation for seven passengers. The cars of the pre-World War I era were mostly open touring cars, upholstered in leather. Their extra auxiliary seats were very basic, constructed with brackets made of heavy iron, and covered in stiff leather; even if equipped with a backrest, it was not a soft, comfortable ride. Basic

transportation at its best.

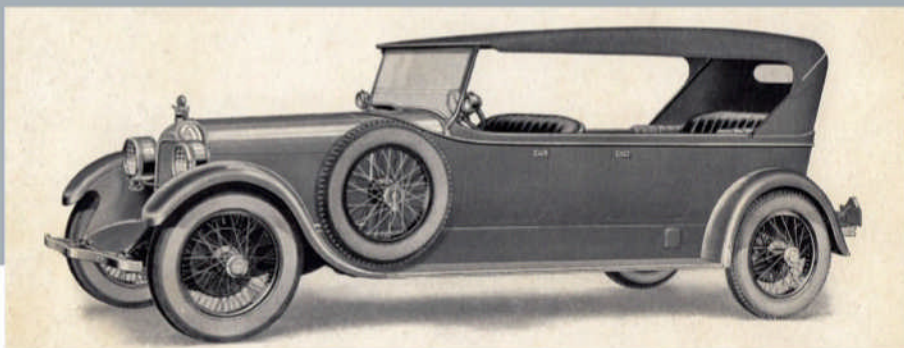
For the folding seats of a seven-passenger car, the wheelbase had to be of sufficient length to allow room to accommodate those passengers. The smaller, lower-priced cars such as Ford, Saxon, Dodge, Overland, Chevrolet, etc., did not offer bodies of seven-passenger capacity. If one looks at the *Handbook of Automobiles*, issued in 1917 by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, it seems that for the most part, if a car's wheelbase was near 125 inches or more, the car manufacturer would consider offering a seven-passenger body style. If the

In 1930, Buick offered a seven-passenger sedan in the 132-inch-wheelbase Model 60.



"Note the unusual size and comfort of the auxiliary seats," touted Buick in 1930. For a production-built car, the seats were indeed more than expected.

The Franklin Model H, six-cylinder seven-passenger touring car of 1910 clearly shows the extra seats in the rear section of the body—practical for extra passengers, but not necessarily comfortable.



wheelbase was smaller, then there would not have been enough space for the extra folding seats. There were always exceptions to the rule, though. Some manufacturers who offered several models on different wheelbases were able to offer the seven-seat body styles. Buick in 1917, for its model D-6-47 on a 115-inch wheelbase had a seven-passenger sedan for sale at \$1,835. This particular body style was sold in "Buick special green" for the body and wheels, with black fenders.

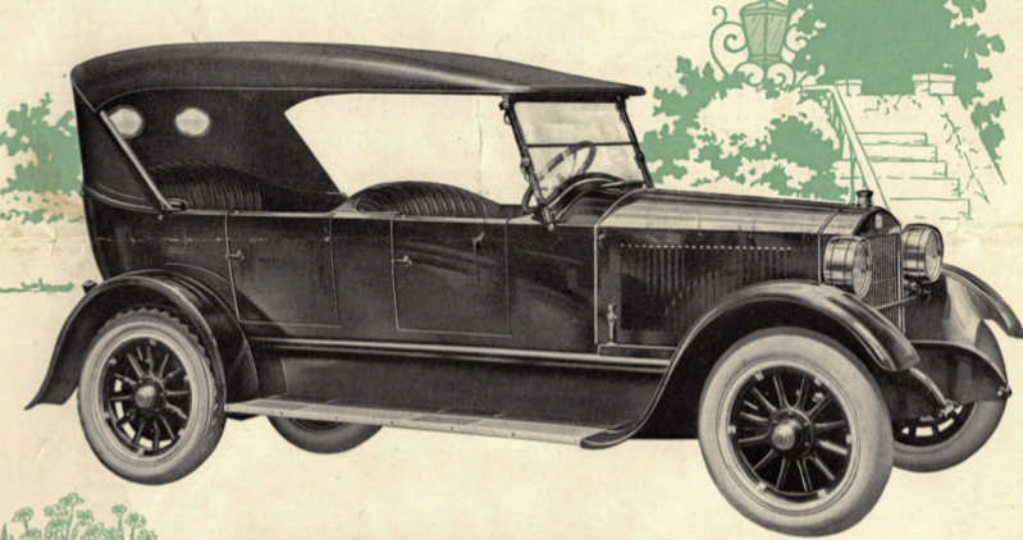
Although touring cars were popular, by 1925 there were more cars being sold with enclosed bodies than open ones; four

The first series of the Duesenberg was the Model A, which was offered as a seven-passenger touring; approximately 40 were built. There was some artistic license taken in this rendering, as period photographs show the rear tub of the body sitting further back and the rear portion of the top differently styled, as well.

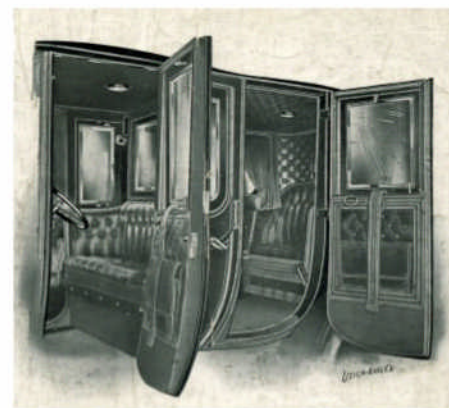
years later, in 1929, 90 percent of the cars sold in the United States had enclosed coachwork. Besides public transportation, there was no way to move more than four or five (if you were friendly) people in a normal-capacity touring car or sedan. Station wagons as haulers of people were around, but, just as their name suggests,

they were used mainly to transport people and their luggage to and from railroad stations. The use of station wagons for family use and transportation wouldn't become popular until after WWII. The only alternative in the prewar era was a seven-passenger touring car or sedan.

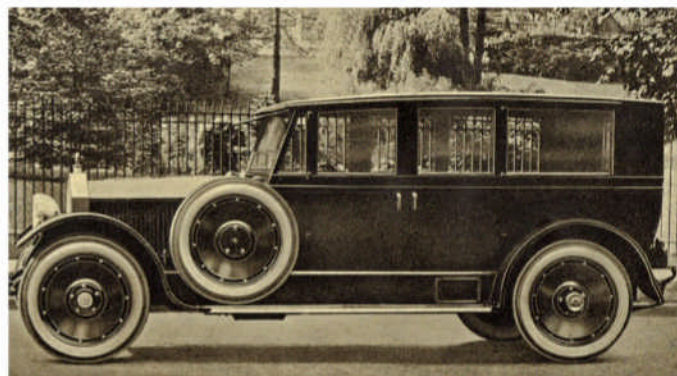
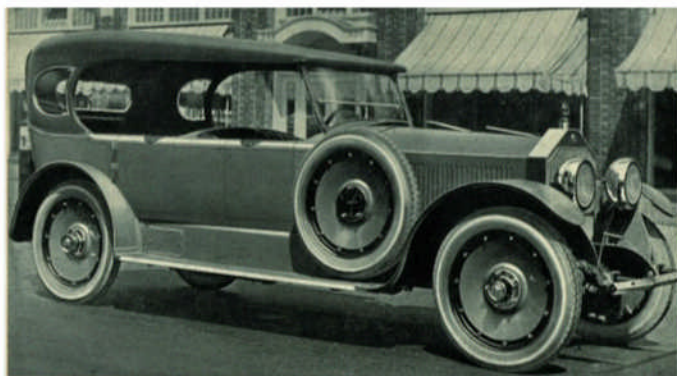
The extra seating required to accom-



The seven-passenger Touring car featured prominently in promotional sales folders by the Stanley Motor Carriage Co. for 1922. Both the five- and seven-passenger Touring models cost the same. It's interesting to see that Stanley still referred to themselves as a "motor carriage" company as late as 1922.



Seven-passenger sedans and limousines shared virtually identical bodies, the difference being the addition of a partition window at the top of the front seat back. This sedan body, made by the Willoughby Body Co. of Utica, New York, was available with or without the division window.



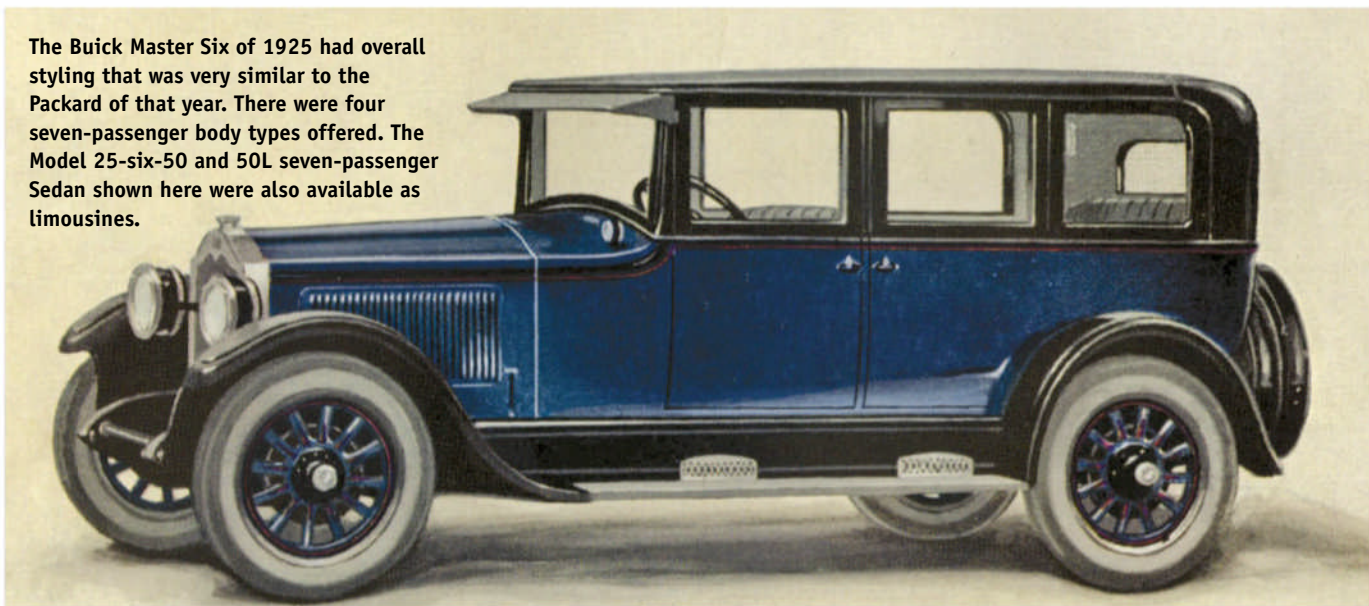
The McFarlan Six Type 147 of 1922 offered two seven-passenger touring cars, both priced at \$5,700. There was an "Open Touring" and then a "California Touring"; the latter had a rigid top that did not fold. Seven-passenger sedans were also offered.

modate additional passengers has been referred to by several different names over the decades. "Jump seats" has been perhaps the most popular term. In 1930, Packard described them in its sales portfolio thus: "...the auxiliary seats that fold

flush into the back of the front seat have been made wider, and comfortable room for seven passengers is assured throughout." Even at that time, the reference to comfort of seating for all passengers was acknowledged, as the least comfortable

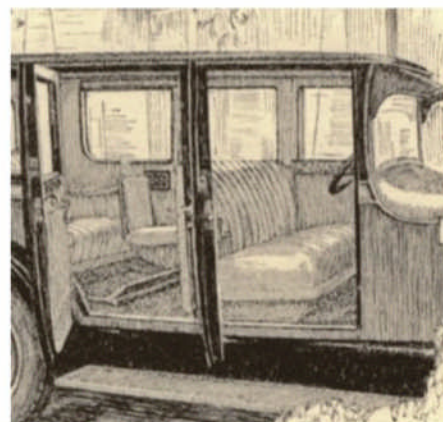
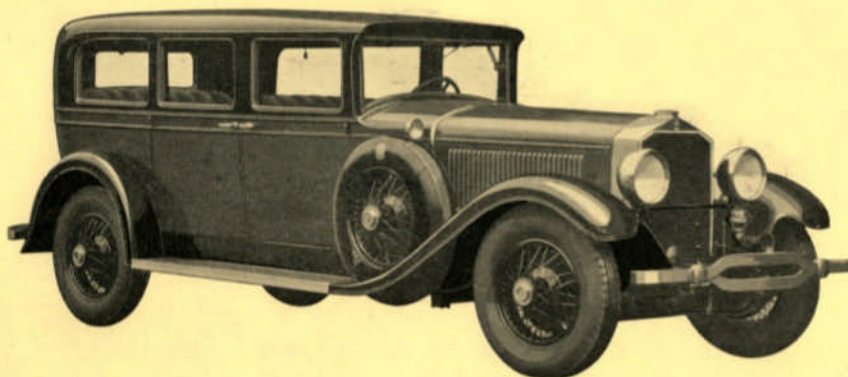
seats had always been the folding types. In 1923, a discussion of these seats in an automotive periodical referred to them as "drop seats," and that they were forward-facing when you sat in them, as opposed to a side-facing seat where the back rest

The Buick Master Six of 1925 had overall styling that was very similar to the Packard of that year. There were four seven-passenger body types offered. The Model 25-six-50 and 50L seven-passenger Sedan shown here were also available as limousines.

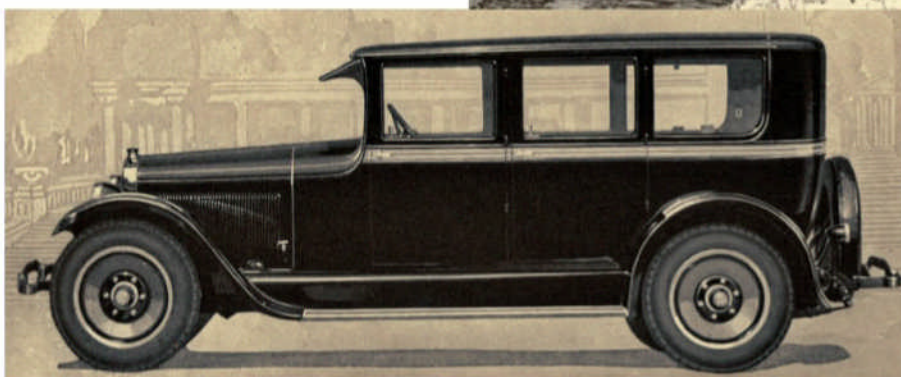




The seven-passenger Stearns-Knight Touring and Sedan were on a 145-inch wheelbase; the Sedan was \$5,600 and the Touring was \$5,500.

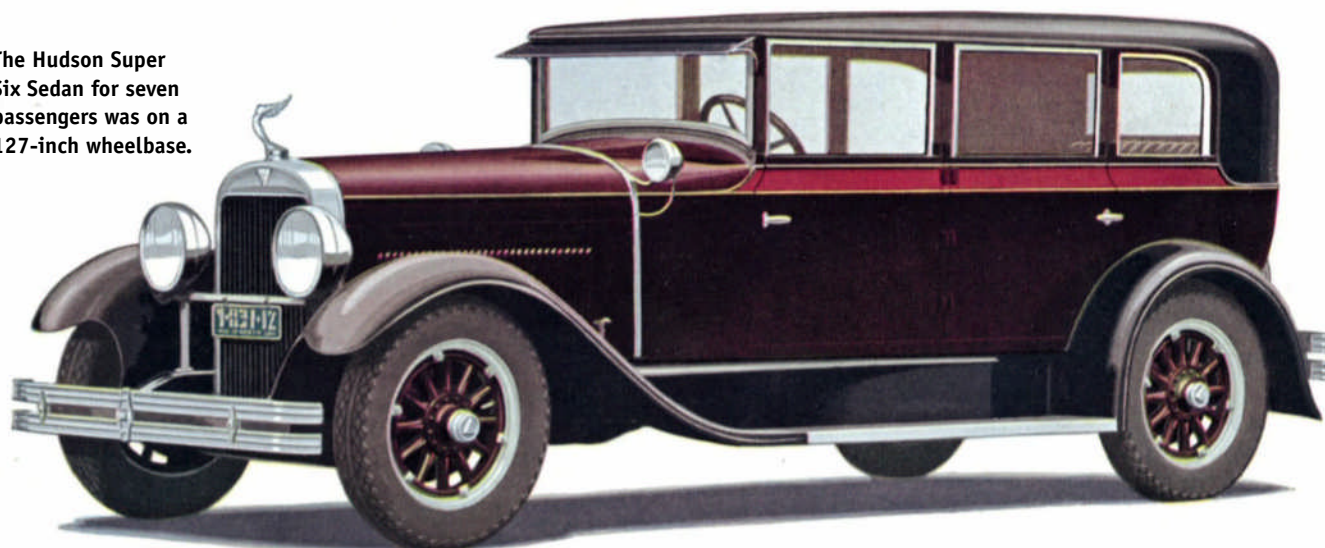


was closest to the rear door. Most of these folding seats did not have armrests, although I have seen examples that did. When folded up and stowed away when not in use, they would fit into a notched space in the lower back area of the front seat. On sedans, some folding seats would disappear from view completely, and since they were covered in the same cloth as the rest of the door and interior panels, they just blended into the back of the front seat. The steel brackets and hinges used to support the seats and the weight of the passengers were substantial. Most often, the seats were anchored to the floor and bound seams in the carpet would allow the carpet to fold up with the seats when



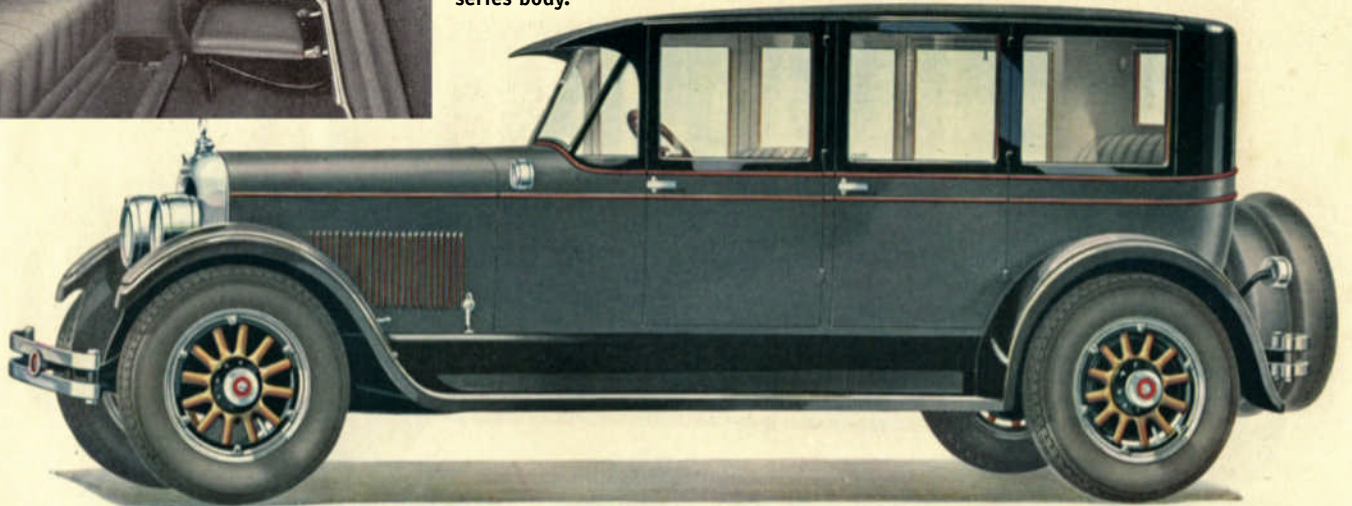
Regarding its seven-passenger Sedan, Wills Sainte Claire stated: "...while it has always been regarded as a different thing to design into a car of this type an appearance of grace and ease, this very thing has been accomplished." Of its seven-passenger Phaeton: "...the tourer, low-slung appearance is obvious."

The Hudson Super Six Sedan for seven passengers was on a 127-inch wheelbase.





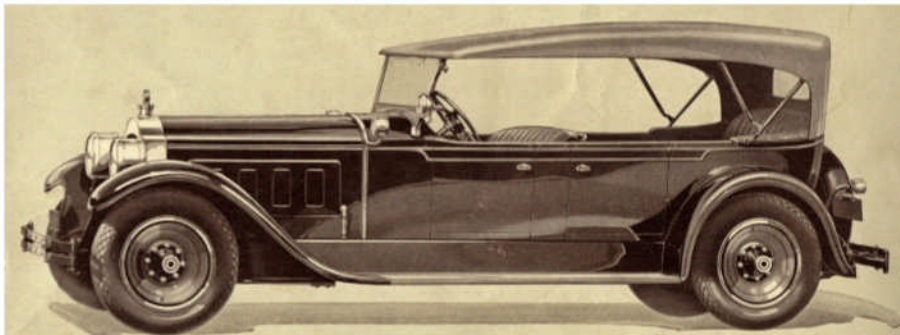
The Marmon Series 74 seven-passenger Sedan Deluxe featured an auxiliary seat, which, "instead of facing forward, is companionably seated with respect to the rear seat passengers." This placement was not unknown, but was not often seen on a production-series body.



This 1925 Lincoln Sedan featured a body by Fleetwood, complete with trunk rack, side-mounted spare tires and plated bumper—fitted to the front only!



The Windsor White Prince was built in St. Louis by the Moon Motor Co. in 1929-'30. This Model 6-77, seven-passenger Sedan had a four-speed transmission and was available in striking color combinations.



The Packard Eight Model 4-43 standard model seven-passenger Touring clearly shows the taller windshield that body style used to allow enough headroom for passengers sitting in the auxiliary seats. All seven-passenger Touring cars used oval coach handles for the exterior door handles. This was exclusive to the seven-passenger Touring models through 1934.

they were in the raised position, and lie perfectly flat when they were stored and not in use.

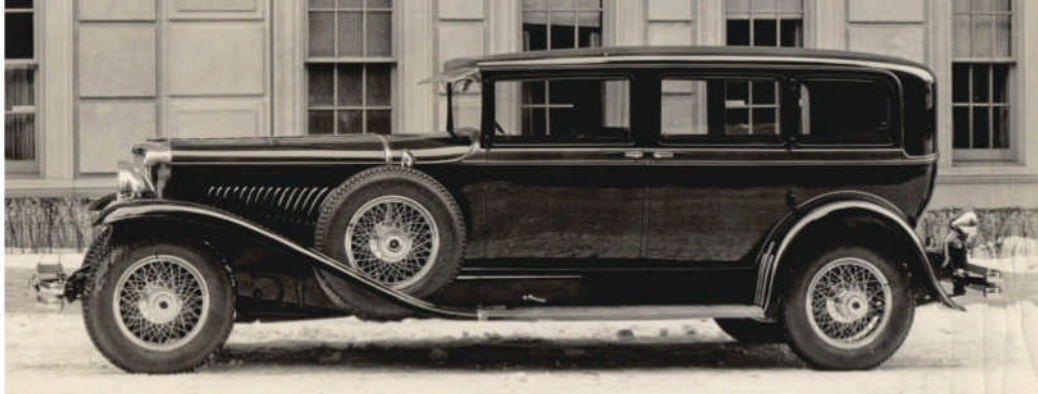
If you look at the period photographs and artists' renderings used in the periodical advertisements and sales brochures, one of the most obvious ways to spot a seven-passenger car is to look at the area of the rear body tub that starts just aft of the rear door. On five-passenger cars, this area is much shorter and does not extend much beyond the downward curve of the rear fender. For the seven-passenger sedans and touring models, this area, with its extra length, allows the rear seat cushions to set back further, thus provid-



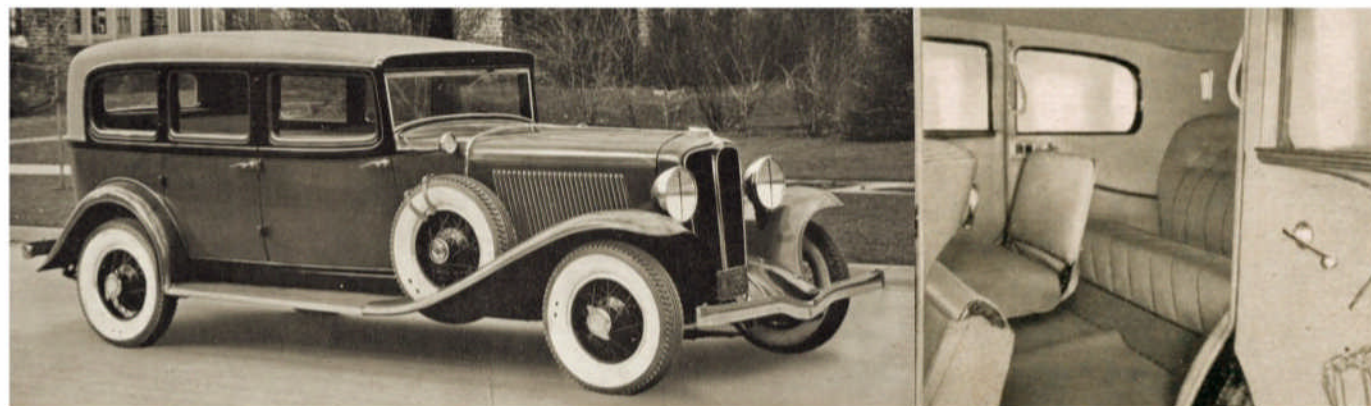
The new Studebaker President Eight Series Sedan and Tourer for seven passengers were introduced in a brochure printed in July 1930. The cars were on a 132-inch wheelbase.

ing more room for the auxiliary seats to fold down into position.

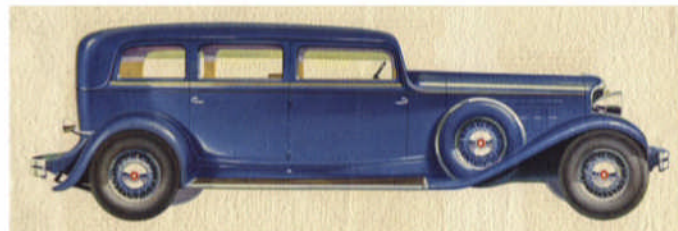
The height of the roof line also had to be considered, and on some sedans and touring cars, these were raised as well, some more noticeably than others. Packard, for instance, in its seven-passenger touring cars, had a higher windshield and top, which was more noticeable (especially with the top up) when compared to the five-passenger phaetons of the same era. As fender lines, designs of lamps, body styles and wheel size started to be



The Willoughby Company was well known for its enclosed coachwork; it designed and supplied the body for this immense Model J Duesenberg.



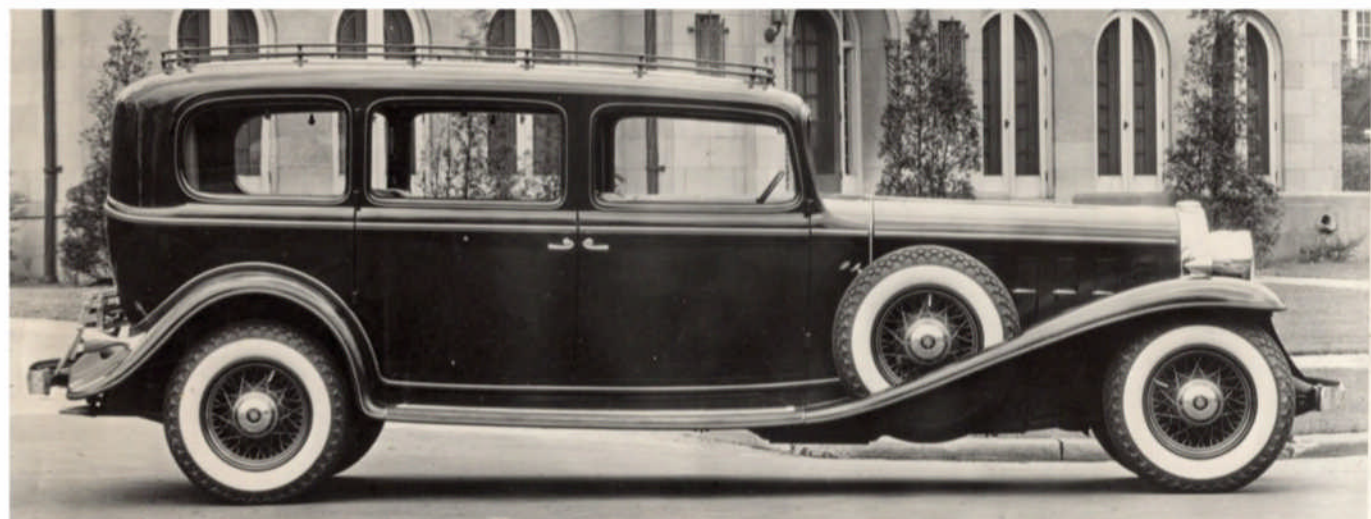
The Auburn model 8-98 seven-passenger Sedan was promoted in its own sales folder, separate from other body styles of that year. The car had great proportions and a low roofline for the body style. Rear auxiliary seats were thick and plush, but did not stow away as compactly.



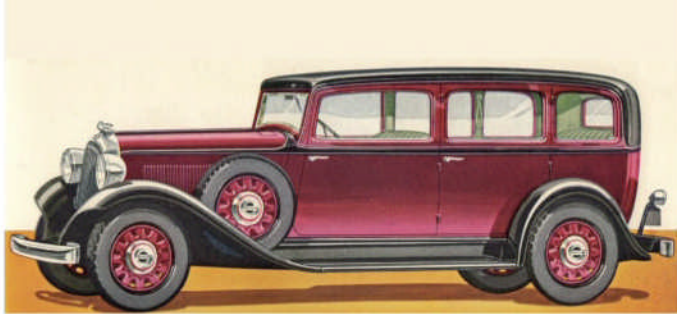
The Reo Royale Eight was proclaimed "the largest standard car in America." The Royale was always a really sleek-looking automobile and still managed to maintain that image even with its seven-passenger Sedan that had a 152-inch wheelbase. The interior had what Reo described as "Beetle ware" handles.



In general, big seven-passenger cars can come across visually as somewhat ungainly due to their size and height in the greenhouse area. This 1931 Lincoln Model K has a Willoughby body, yet, despite its size, it is a truly handsome automobile.



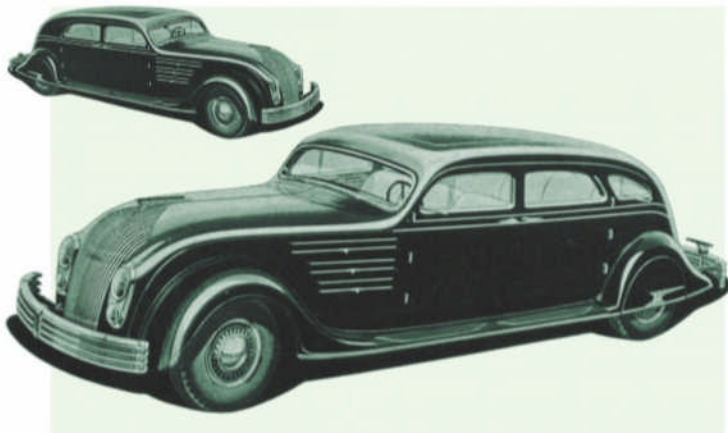
Cadillac built some enormous seven-passenger sedans, as this 1932 V-16 illustrates. It featured a long hood and long body with a very tiny cowl. Note the roof rack that runs the length of the body.



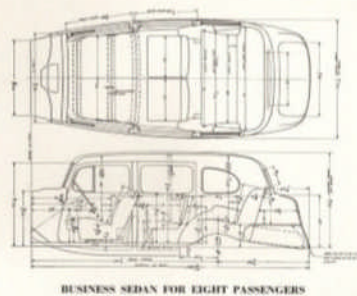
Not all seven-passenger sedans were of monstrous proportions. This 1932 Plymouth Model PB had a four-cylinder engine and featured a 112-inch wheelbase.



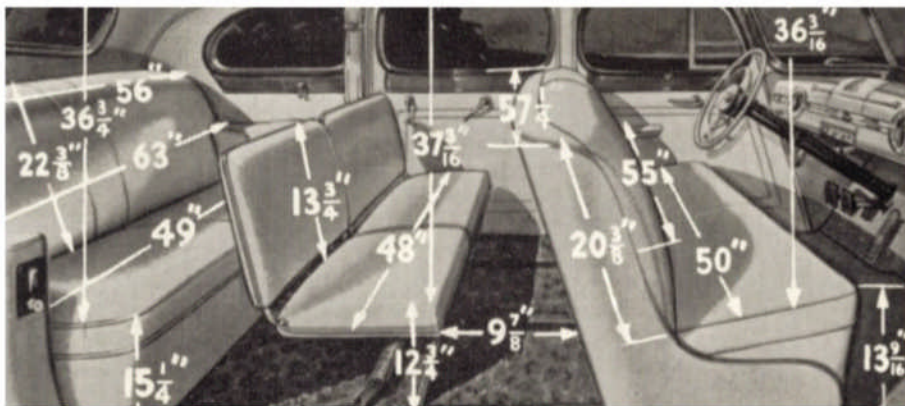
The Cadillac V-12 of 1933 had a 140-inch wheelbase and featured a well-proportioned body for its seven-passenger Imperial Sedan.



When the Airflow made its debut in 1934, Chrysler included a seven-passenger sedan in its offering of body styles for the Imperial line. It was unique in many ways—its dramatic styling was obvious, and it featured a new curved windshield.

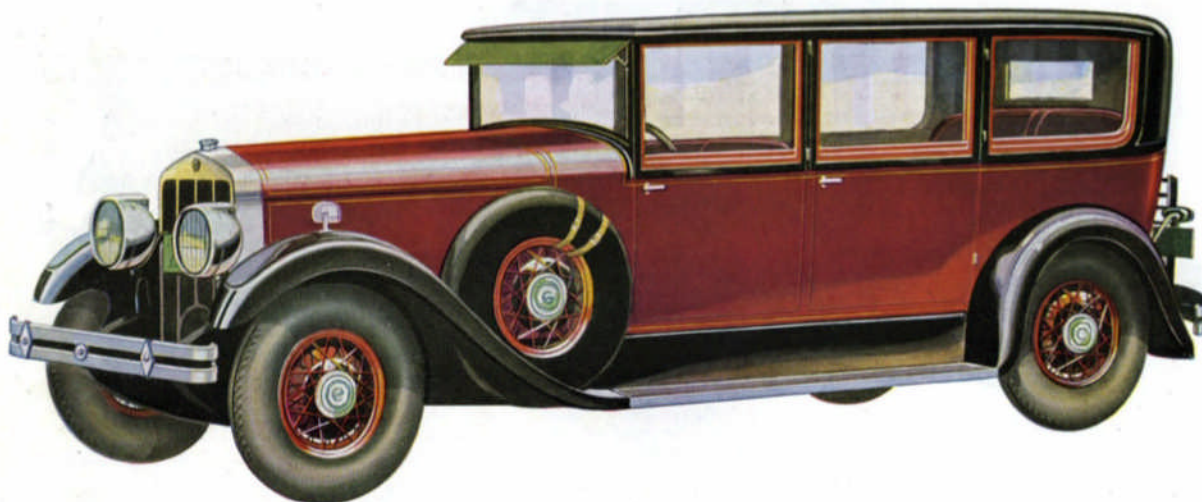


The 1937 Packard Business Sedan—with folding seats for three extra passengers and increased rear seat width—was actively promoted as capable of accommodating eight passengers. “Fleet business is repeat business,” was the company’s motto.

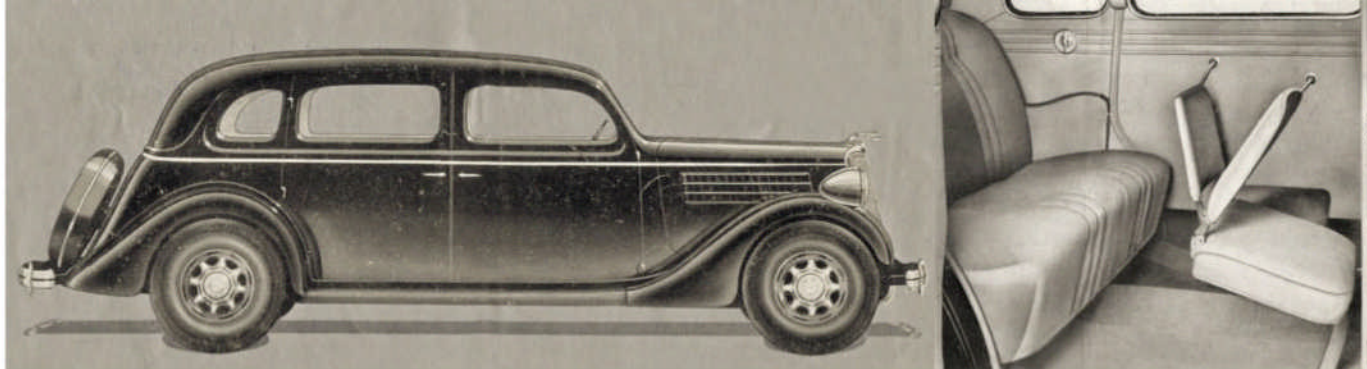


In 1940, the Packard Business Sedans were available as the Super 8 and Custom Super 8 series, both using the 148-inch wheelbase.

of lower profile, the higher roof line of a seven-passenger car became more recognizable. On Packard’s seven-passenger Touring cars (the manufacturer designated its five-passenger four-door open cars “Phaetons,” while its seven-passenger model was called a “Touring” by 1928, in 1930, a new belt line design made a big difference in the way the car looked. Although the windshield on Packard’s seven-passenger Touring car for all 1930 models was 1¼-inches taller than the five-passenger Phaeton, the higher profile of that top is barely distinguishable from the Phaeton. That may seem like a very insignificant difference in height, but it



The Franklin Airman Limited made its debut in the latter part of 1928. All seven-passenger cars, both open and closed, used a longer steel chassis, while the shorter-wheelbase five-passenger cars used the laminated ash wood chassis. This was the final year for Franklin to use a wood chassis.



The New Era seven-passenger Custom Sedan utilized a stretched 1935 Ford chassis and running gear with an all-steel body built by LeBaron. The two auxiliary seats were “full sized and forward facing Pullman design.” Upholstery was in pinstriped broadcloth. New Era Motors was located at 1775 Broadway in New York City.



1941 was the last year that Plymouth would offer a long-wheelbase seven-passenger sedan.

did allow just enough extra headroom for anyone sitting in the middle of the car on the auxiliary seats.

Packard saw respectable sales of its seven-passenger sedans (as did Cadillac, Lincoln and Pierce-Arrow), and to further promote that body style to the commercial clientele (private car service, funeral homes, etc...), starting in 1935, it introduced a five-/eight-passenger Business Sedan and Business Limousine. For all intents and purposes, this Business Sedan looked like a normal Standard or Super Eight on the outside—the difference was on the inside.

A limited number of upholstery choices, mostly of simple designs, were offered. By 1937, there was one choice—brown Bedford cord. The folding auxiliary seats were substantially wider than those offered on the regular seven-passenger Sedans and, by being so, almost touched edges when in the down position. This allowed an extra person to squeeze in for a seat; Packard said there was room for three people. The rear wheel wells of the body were also moved out closer to the tire/wheel to gain several more inches of space, and allowed the rear seat cushion to be made wider; the rear axle track was also increased. Foot rests, robe rail and rear center armrest and cigar lighters were eliminated, and the top of the auxiliary seat backs was capped in leather for durability. All of this was explained and promoted in a separate special sales bro-

chure aimed at a very select commercial market that was addressed by name in the text of the brochure.

Although fairly popular in their day, the large sedans and touring cars that had seating accommodation for seven people have largely been ignored by car collectors. These neglected and underap-

preciated elegant automobiles are rarely seen at car shows today (especially the sedans), and are almost never invited to a concours.

Many of the prewar “Big Tankers,” as author Bob Gottlieb once called them back in the 1960s, when found by car collectors in the post-WWII era, were used by these collectors as donor cars to restore automobiles with open body styles—roadsters, phaetons, etc.... Many low-mileage, well-maintained, excellent original cars were cannibalized for their parts that were shared with their sportier cousins.

Due to the nature of their extra capacity for passengers, the seven-passenger sedans and touring cars were, for the most part, conservatively styled—elegance and utility over flash. If you have the opportunity to view one in person, take the time to do so and soak in what magnificent automobiles they really were. 🐞



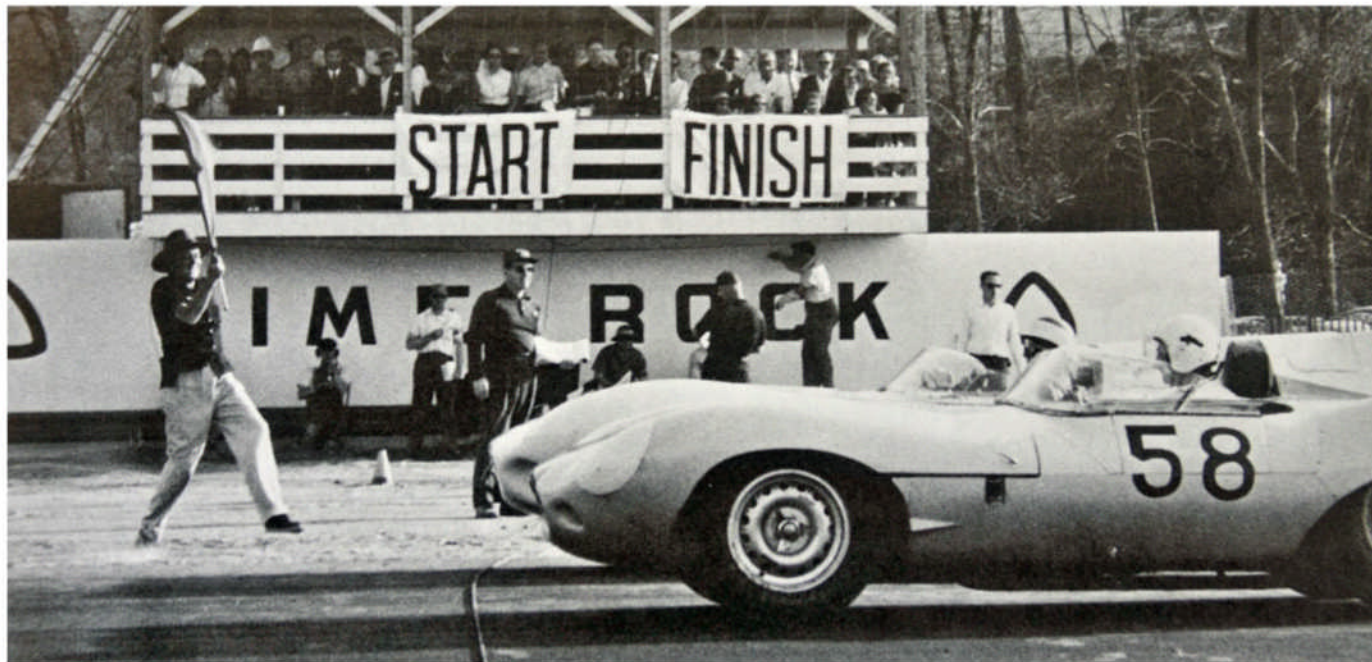
In 1937, De Soto offered a seven-passenger sedan, as did Dodge, Plymouth and Chrysler; all shared many body-panel stampings. In England, the De Soto was rebadged as the Chrysler Richmond.



Lincoln, in its 1937 K-Series models, offered a seven-passenger Sedan it described as “a patrician vehicle, long and sweeping its outward contours ... generously proportioned within.”

John Fitch

The racing icon and inventor was a true American hero



LIME ROCK PARK

BY DAVID LoCHANCE • PHOTOGRAPHY AS CREDITED

If you go looking for John Fitch, it isn't hard to find him.

Close your eyes, and there he is, in the skies over Nazi Germany in 1945, strafing a locomotive with his P-51 Mustang while the flak bursts around him. Look again, and he's in the pits at Le Mans in 1955, stunned by the horrific accident involving his co-driver, Pierre Levegh. You can find him in the Fitch Sprint, the modified Chevrolet Corvair he built and sold to give enthusiasts the fun of a Porsche 911 at half the cost. He's in the curves and straightaways of Connecticut's Lime Rock Park, the road racing track he designed and managed. The easiest place to find him—the one you can't avoid seeing, if you spend any time on the highway—is in the Fitch Inertial Barrier, the ubiquitous yellow barrels that have saved more than 17,000 lives since he invented them.

John Cooper Fitch, the first Sports Car Club of America national champion and a bright light in European motorsports in the Fifties and Sixties, was born 100 years ago in Indianapolis, Indiana. Fitch was six when his parents divorced, and his mother married George Spindler, an executive with Stutz. Spindler launched assaults on the record books in Stutzes, and on at least

one memorable occasion brought young John along for a ride around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

After attending military school, Fitch studied civil engineering at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. Having inherited a small trust fund—his grandfather had made a fortune in chewing gum—Fitch decided to visit Europe. In London, he befriended Ham Johnson, and the two decided to buy a car and tour Great Britain. The used MG Magnette they bought had seen better days, but it did give Fitch his first taste of road racing, when he tried—and failed—to keep up with a BMW 328 on a twisting Welsh roadway.

In the fall of 1939, shortly after the German invasion of Poland, Fitch tried to join the Royal Air Force, but was turned away—Britain had enough pilots, at least for the moment. And so he headed to Florida, where he bought a schooner for \$1,500, and enrolled in the Coast Guard's volunteer antisubmarine patrols. For 12 months, he piloted his boat, the *Banshee*, in the Gulf of Mexico, but failed to sight a single U-boat. Realizing that the war was moving ever closer to the U.S., in April 1941 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, the predecessor of the Air Force.



LIME ROCK PARK

Jim Vaill, John Clark and John Fitch at the opening day of Lime Rock; in top photo, Fitch and Walt Hansgen await the start in Jaguar D-types.

Attached to the 15th Bombardment Squadron, Light, Fitch was sent to England in 1942. The unit moved to Algeria as part of the Allies' Africa campaign, attacking German armor and supply depots, and dicing with Focke-Wulf 190 fighters. In June 1944, after the Allied invasion of Normandy, Fitch was sent back to England as a member of the Fourth Fighter Group, escorting B-17 Flying Fortress bombers over Germany. He was one of very few pilots credited with shooting down a Messerschmitt Me 262, the jet-powered fighter; with characteristic modesty, Fitch would explain that he caught the plane on





Albert Neubauer chose Fitch to drive for Mercedes-Benz in the 1952 Carrera Panamericana; he finished fourth in a 300 SL, but was disqualified for pulling off the road to make repairs.

takeoff, when it was vulnerable.

It was while trying to destroy a German locomotive that Fitch's P-51 was hit by antiaircraft fire. He bailed out, suffering a broken arm in the crash, and ended up in a prisoner-of-war camp—after pleading with sympathetic townspeople to save him from a Nazi official who threatened to stab him to death. He and his fellow prisoners were liberated by the Seventh Army as it fought its way across the Rhine and into Germany; after a brief stay in Paris and London, he sailed for home in the spring of 1945. For him, the war was over.

He tried his hand at dairy farming, and then at making educational toys, before buying his first sports car—a yellow MG TC—and setting himself up as a dealer in White Plains, New York. It was at this point in his life that he met his future wife, Elizabeth Huntley; the two would



remain together for 62 years. Fitch added Willys, Riley, Hillman and Renault to his dealership, and, in 1949, took part in his first race, at Bridgehampton, with Elizabeth as his pit crew.

Fitch was the greenest of drivers, but he managed to finish fifth overall, in a borrowed MG TC. He finished third in his class in a race at an airport in Linden, New Jersey, and took second at Watkins Glen before capping a successful first year with an outright win at Palm Beach Shores, Florida, in January 1950.

He was invited to take part in the first international sports car meet in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March of 1951, and took the checkered flag, driving a borrowed Cadillac-powered Allard J2. Beyond a kiss from Eva Peron, Fitch earned the attention of Briggs Cunningham, who invited him to co-drive a blue-and-white Cunningham

C-2 in the 1952 24 Hours of Le Mans. He and co-driver Phil Walters were in second place overall as late as the 18th hour, but bearing failure in the Chrysler Hemi V-8 resulted in a DNF.

Cunningham was impressed, and asked Fitch to remain with the team. At Elkhart Lake, he drove a Cunningham C-4 to victory, beating an Allard and a Jaguar XK special. Watkins Glen was next on the calendar, and Fitch finished second, behind a Maserati. In November, driving for Carl Kiekhaefer, he took on the 2,000-mile Carrera Panamericana in a 1951 Chrysler, but the effort ended in engine failure after just 320 miles. Still, with a win at Palm Beach Shores in a 4.1-liter Ferrari, Fitch had secured the SCCA's national championship.

At Le Mans in 1952, which proved to be a disappointing showing for the Cunningham team, Fitch met the legendary Mercedes-Benz engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut. Fitch asked if he might get a chance to try out an SL roadster; Uhlenhaut replied that if Fitch could make his way to the Nürburgring, he'd see what he could do. Which is how he found himself in an unfamiliar car, on a route he did not know well, with a chance to make the Mercedes team on the line.

Fitch managed to put in a better lap time than some of the team drivers had done during the previous day's German Grand Prix on the same course. He went home, resumed his racing for Cunningham, and in October of 1952 received a telegram asking him to leave immediately for Mexico City, to compete with Mercedes-Benz in the Panamericana. It was a 1-2 finish for Mercedes, but Fitch, who had finished fourth, would be disqualified for pulling off the roadway to make repairs.

In 1955, Fitch was part of an all-conquering Mercedes team that included Stirling Moss and Juan Manuel Fangio. In one of the greatest races of his life, he won



Fitch was hired by Ed Cole to manage the Corvette team at Sebring in 1956, and was given about a month to prepare the production cars for competition.

the GT category in the Mille Miglia at the wheel of a production 300 SL, bettering the time of the previous year's overall winner, a Maserati. This victory was a prelude to Le Mans, in which Fitch and Pierre Levegh were to drive a Mercedes 300 SLR.

Much has been written about the disaster at the 1955 Le Mans. In the third hour of racing, Levegh was involved in a horrific accident in which more than 80 spectators were killed. Officials continued the race, reasoning that departing crowds would make it impossible for the ambulances to get through. Fitch felt strongly that Mercedes should withdraw, and his point of view eventually won out—against the protests of Moss, who had been in the lead. The crash led Mercedes to abandon racing for decades.

The disbanding of the Mercedes factory team marked the start of the Corvette chapter of Fitch's life. In December 1955, he wrote to Chevrolet's engineering chief, Ed Cole, offering to work as a consultant to develop the sports car's competitive abilities. The following February, at Cole's invitation, he drove a stock Corvette on Daytona Beach, setting a production-car record of 145 MPH in the flying mile.

Up until that point, the Corvette had had little racing success, and was losing badly to the Ford Thunderbird in the sales race. Cole, promoted to general manager of Chevrolet, knew that racing success could give GM's sports car the credibility it badly needed. When Zora Arkus-Duntov turned down an assignment to ready a

team of Corvettes for the 1956 Sebring races on short notice, Cole gave the job to Fitch.

Fitch cursed these "junkers" and "plastic pigs," but in the end he had them whipped into shape. Corvette won the production class and the team prize, with Fitch sharing the driving duties. In 1957, the Corvette team defended its prize, finishing first, second and fourth in class. In 1960, Fitch was again behind the wheel of a Corvette, this time part of Cunningham's three-car team at Le Mans, and he surprised the skeptics by finishing first in the GT class, and eighth overall.

Valued for his extensive road racing experience, Fitch was recruited to help build a modern closed circuit in the village of Lime Rock, Connecticut. He bought a house not far from the cornfield that would become the track, and got to work, laying out a 1.5-mile course that was designed with the safety of both drivers and spectators in mind. When Lime Rock Park opened in 1957, he was the manager.

Fitch, settled in Connecticut, now put his stamp on a pair of cars. Recognizing the performance potential of the new-for-1960 Chevrolet Corvair, he developed a kit for improving the steering and suspension, and for raising the power of the flat-six engine. Selling for about \$3,000, or less than half the price of a Porsche 911, his Fitch Sprints would acquit themselves well in SCCA racing.

In June of 1966, Fitch debuted a Corvair-based car of his own design: the

Fitch Phoenix. This striking targa-topped coupe, styled with the help of his friend Coby Whitmore, was doomed by federal safety regulations and by GM's decision to pull the plug on the Corvair; rather than the 500-production run Fitch had envisioned, only one prototype was produced. He kept it, and would drive it for the rest of his life.

In the late 1960s came the invention that gave Fitch the most satisfaction: the Fitch Barrier. Still driven by what he had seen at Le Mans in 1955, he turned his attention to ways to mitigate crashes on the highway. His solution was a system of sand-filled plastic barrels, which would absorb the energy of a crash and bring the car to a smooth stop. Fitch conducted his early experiments at his Falls Village home, driving cars into sand-filled liquor barrels.

At the age of 88, when many would be content to look backward, Fitch wrote a coda to his Mercedes-Benz story with one last assault on the record books at Bonneville with a 300 SL. His attempt, which was thwarted by mechanical issues, was documented by Chris Szewo in the award-winning *A Gullwing at Twilight*.

Fitch was honored many times over, and inducted into the Corvette Hall of Fame, the Sebring Hall of Fame, the Sports Car Club of America Hall of Fame, the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America and the New England Auto Racers Hall of Fame. He died on October 31, 2012, of Merkel cell carcinoma at his home in Connecticut, at the age of 95. 🐾



DAVID LUCHANCE

In this 2010 photo, Fitch stands with his one-of-a-kind Fitch Phoenix, behind which is a 1966 Chevrolet Corvair Sprint.



Royal Treatment

*The restoration of an original-owner
1955 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer convertible*

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM DONNELLY
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF REAL PERRAS

In last month's issue, Senior Editor Jim Donnelly introduced us to Real Perras and his 1955 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer, a car he purchased new from Twin City Motors in Barre, Vermont, for \$3,915.55. The tri-tone convertible was equipped with the Super Red Ram V-8 engine and PowerFlite automatic transmission. With the body safeguarded by factory undercoating and Real's fastidious chassis lubrication maintenance every 1,000 miles, along with regular oil

changes and his efforts to avoid road salt during winters, the Dodge would survive multiple cross-country trips totalling in more than 130,000 miles, all without suffering even the slightest malady.

Having returned to his Morrisville, Vermont, homestead long ago, Real put the Dodge to more pedestrian use—pleasure driving—until it was placed in his hangar for a stretch of time. Eventually, however, the car would emerge once again.



"We decided that it was time to start driving it after a few years, so we pulled it out, cleaned it up and started going to car shows in the area," Real tells us. "One Saturday night, we decided to go to Barre, and on the way home we hit a moose. It jammed the bumper, headlamp and the fender, and it ripped the antenna, door handle and mirror off the Dodge. It wasn't totaled; in fact, we drove it home. We were lucky, actually, and right away we had the car fixed, which included a new paint job that wasn't quite right."

It was just one aspect of the reconditioned Dodge that never sat particularly well with Real, who admits with regularity that he prefers driving "like new" cars. So, he began to consider the convertible's overall appearance. According to Real, "It got to the point where I wanted to go through the whole car, check it all out and clean it up. A lot of the factory paint had flaked off the frame and had been

replaced by slight surface rust from moisture; and since I know this car never saw salt, I figured the body was still solid as a rock. I knew it was going to take time, but I wanted the Dodge looking new."

With the decision made to perform a complete restoration, the project commenced in the spring of 2011. Due to his regimental care of the Dodge, disassembly was accomplished with relative ease. As is the case with most restorations, trim was carefully labelled, electrical connections documented and fasteners bagged-and-tagged to ease final reassembly later. Glass was carefully removed, and the interior was pulled and evaluated for potential continued use. In short order, the body had been separated from the frame and placed on a homemade dolly. This enabled Real and his sons, Heath and Kirt, to strip the frame of its brake and suspension systems.

Media blasting followed, quickly

eliminating minor surface corrosion from the frame and most of the suspension components. Relocating the frame for its media blasting proved more difficult than first imagined, however. "Dodge used a heavy-duty frame design under the convertibles—like most others—and my boys thought they could put it on the trailer pretty easily with just four people. They couldn't budge it, so I used my forklift instead," laughs Real.

Immediately following media blasting, the frame was sealed in a layer of self-etching primer and then finished with a new coat of chassis black enamel. This same process was utilized on the suspension system, each step being permitted to cure while new replacement parts, such as bushings and tie rod ends, were purchased, including new brake system parts.

While that effort was underway, work began on the body shell and the panels that had been

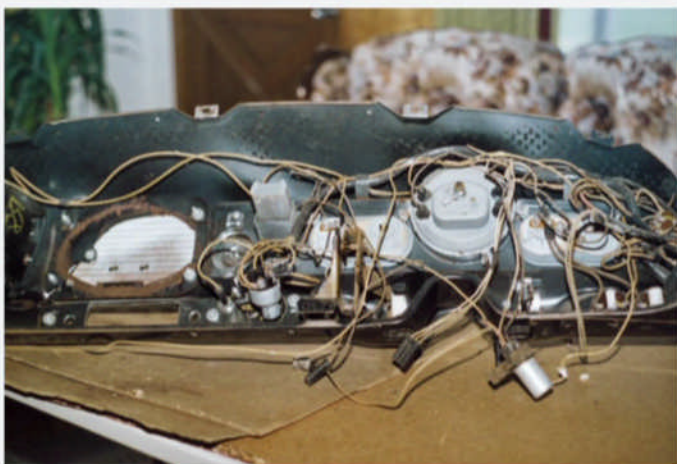




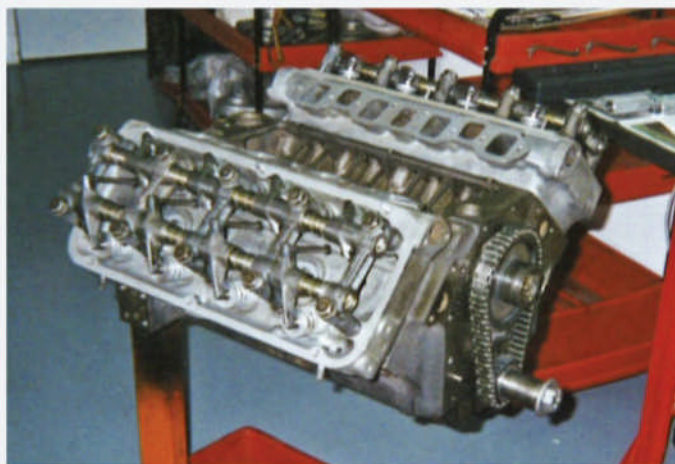
After the Dodge was fully disassembled, the convertible body was braced from within to prevent twisting, and then placed on a homemade dolly. The height may imply adverse working conditions; however, it did assist with inspecting the underside.



An early image of the Custom Royal Lancer's X-braced frame after the engine and transmission had been removed. The suspension and exhaust systems still remain. Little is left of the original factory chassis paint, replaced by light surface rust from moisture.



This is the reverse side of a portion of the Dodge's instrument panel. All the gauges were still functioning and required only careful detailing. The wiring was tagged, helping identify which leads would connect to the main harness during reassembly.



This particular Dodge had been built with the Super Red Ram V-8; a true Hemi engine capable of 183hp in stock form. Here, reassembly has begun after the cylinder bores were honed. Note that the Hemi uses separate rocker shafts for the intake and exhaust valves.



After the chassis and suspension were media blasted, sealed in primer and then painted in chassis black, reassembly could begin. Here, much of that process has been accomplished, including new brake parts; note Dodge's use of dual front brake cylinders.



The 270-cu.in. Hemi V-8 has been completely reassembled with new pistons, a complete set of valves and a new camshaft, and then carefully refinished in correct silver and reunited with its rebuilt PowerFlite transmission before being bolted back in place.

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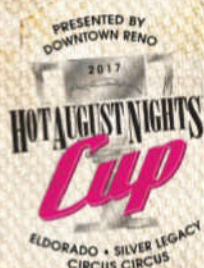


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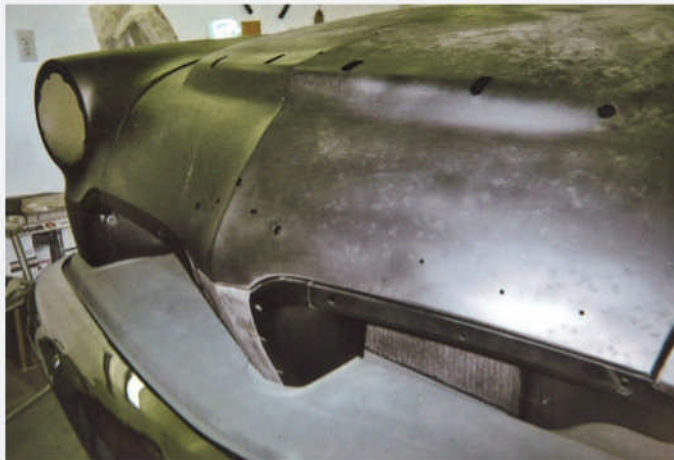


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Earlier, the body had been stripped to bare metal and sealed in self-etching primer. Several coats of sandable primer followed, allowing the bodymen to create perfectly smooth panels via sanding. The body is temporarily on the chassis to check contours.



A layer of sealing primer has been applied to the body, still temporarily bolted to the chassis. Note the hood, fenders, front panel and bumper have been fitted as well, allowing for verification of alignments and panel gaps before the next stage of the restoration.



While a final layer of primer was curing, the workers took the opportunity to reinstall the fully restored instrument panel. Some of the trim may look as though it is chrome, but it is in fact a high-luster silver paint. Note the new wiring coiled below.



In preparation for using a basecoat/clearcoat paint system, the body was masked to replicate the Dodge's original tri-tone combination. Black was the first color to be applied and, with the masking removed, one can clearly see the natural body contours it follows.



Once the black paint had cured, the body was masked again in advance of the application of Cameo Red paint along the flanks. Of note here is that the door has been left slightly ajar, allowing the color to wrap around the panel edges.



The body has been bolted to the chassis with new mounting hardware, and much of the final assembly has begun, including much of the glass, lamps and trim. Restored convertible bows are ready for a new white top that will complete the tri-tone effect.

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removed. A byproduct of media blasting is heat, which can warp metal panels with relative ease if the blasting tip is kept in one location for too long. To avoid this malady altogether, the team opted to sand the body panels to bare metal. It was a lengthy process, but it eliminated the chance of damaging a panel. Fortunately, as Real had believed, the sanding did not

uncover any corrosion. Each of the body panels was as sound as the day it was installed at the factory. As was the case with the frame, the body was then sealed in self-etching primer to prevent the bare metal from flash rusting.

As the first layer of primer cured on the body, focus shifted to the Super Red Ram engine. A true Hemi V-8, the

183hp, 270-cu.in. engine was completely dismantled and carefully inspected.

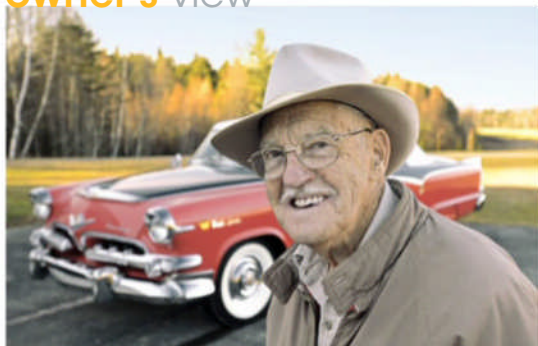
"The only problem we noticed was that one of the rings was stuck on the number-eight piston. Instead of cleaning the block with a standard .020-inch overbore, we simply honed the cylinder bores and installed new pistons and rings. We also installed new valves in the cylinder heads and installed a new camshaft. We were able to reuse everything else, including the original crankshaft.

"Since we had the transmission out at the same time, I had that looked over by a friend. At first he said it didn't need anything; however, he suggested it might be worth the effort to install new bearings and bands just to be safe. It cost me \$1,700, but I thought it was worth the effort because the PowerFlite's design makes it tough to remove from a fully assembled car," says Real.

By the time the engine and transmission rebuilds had been completed, much of the chassis had been reassembled, including most of the brake system and new wheel bearings. The absence of the body also enabled the team to reinstall the drivetrain with considerable ease, in addition to the exhaust system.

Considerable expense was avoided due to the overall solid condition of the body. Several coats of sandable primer were applied, and each surface was carefully smoothed using several





The car was in such good condition when we started, including the body, because nothing was bent or rotted; I made sure the moose damage had been fixed properly. Looking back, all I did was take it apart and clean it. For example, I took the front end apart, and it wasn't even worn out. The Dodge had 138,000 miles on it, but a lot of it was highway and cross-country driving. It's still a restoration, though, and you have to be prepared to spend money to get it done right, otherwise you'll be doing it all over again. I was fortunate in that there were no real surprises, other than an issue with chrome. It just proves that you should still do your homework and be prepared for the unseen.


grades of wet/dry paper and only a hint of plastic filler in a very few locations. Once that was completed, the body was sealed in an epoxy primer and then permitted to cure before paint—a basecoat/clearcoat system—was applied, perfectly matched to the factory Jewel Black/Cameo Red combination.

"Finding someone to redo the chrome for me was probably the toughest thing I had to deal with," Real recalls. "Dodge used a lot of pot metal, and if left in the acid tanks too long it will be destroyed. A few pieces were ruined, forcing me to locate replacements. Eventually we found another shop that was able to do the job right. While that was being sorted, we cleaned and refinished the instrument panels and

gauges, ordered a new wiring harness, and found exact replacement upholstery."

With the body finished, final reassembly could begin in earnest as soon as the body shell was secured to the chassis, accompanied by new body mounts. Fenders and doors quickly followed, as did the aforementioned wiring harness. Glass and trim would eventually complete the exterior; however, the interior required extra time and patience to reinstall the convertible top framing, refinished seats and restored instrument panel. Among the last items on the list was the white convertible top. "It took three tries to get right," Real says, due largely to the expanse of material required and the design of the rear window.

In the fall of 2014, Real's Dodge

was completed. The effort was gratifying in that his once-new car was as good as new again, and the effort it took has been recognized at several national and regional events. Even better, Real, now age 90, still enjoys driving his Custom Royal Lancer. 



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SUNDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: West Broad Street, Downtown Newnan, GA -- Noon
PIT STOP: 6204 Martha Berry Hwy, Armuchee, GA - 3:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Riverfront Pkwy, Chattanooga, TN - 5:15 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Cannonsburgh Village, Murfreesboro, TN -- Noon
OVERNIGHT: Fountain Square Park, Bowling Green, KY - 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 27

LUNCH: Maple Street, Downtown French Lick, IN - Noon
OVERNIGHT: Courthouse, Downtown Franklin, IN - 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

LUNCH: Auglaize St., Downtown Wapakoneta, OH - 12:30 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: ACD Automobile Museum, Auburn, IN - 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

PIT STOP: Hudson Auto Museum, Shipshewana, IN - 9:45 a.m.
LUNCH: Gilmore Car Museum, Hickory Corners, MI - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Depot Town, Downtown Ypsilanti, MI - 4:45 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

LUNCH: Stahls Automotive Museum, Chesterfield, MI - Noon
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, Frankenmuth, MI - 4:45 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

LUNCH: Bay View Park, Downtown Alpena, MI - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Ashmun St., Downtown Sault Ste. Marie, MI - 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

FINISH: Union & Seventh, Downtown Traverse City, MI - 1 p.m.

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Capacious Coupe de Ville



THE 1970S PRODUCED SOME OF THE largest and most memorable American cars ever to grace our highways. Among collector car aficionados, they have as many fans as they do detractors. This wishy-washy existence has affected what one should expect to shell out for a nice full-size land yacht. That is why every once in a while, a car pops up that doesn't seem to have a firm hold on its market, even if the online pricing guides try to nail down a figure. I never thought I would write about the last of the big Cadillac Coupe de Villes until a friend picked up a nice example for a steal after I shared the details of the car on Facebook. As a result, I did some more research, which led to a very interesting discovery. The 1971-'76 Cadillac Coupe de Villes are the most undervalued and overvalued cars available. There is no middle ground. They also tend to linger for sale longer than most luxury cars before they find a suitable home. So, let me be the first to welcome the 1971-'76 Cadillac Coupe de Ville to the world of Detroit underdogs.

I consulted with a gentleman who owns dozens of 1970s Cadillacs, and he agreed that Coupe de Villes don't command



the attention of their four-door stablemates. It must be those 200-pound doors.

When stepping back in time, I like to peruse the brochures. The 1970s Cadillac brochures are bound and embossed, and you were reminded on every page that this was not an ordinary car. When you purchased a Cadillac, you had arrived. All of us have stories about individuals who dreamed one day of owning a Cadillac, finally buying one, only driving in good weather, and washing and waxing it weekly. Those days are long gone. In my working-class neighborhood, it is no big deal to drive an Escalade.

"Clearly, the completely restyled Cadillacs for 1971 are destined for an honored position among the great classic cars of all time," stated the brochure. They were still distinctly Cadillac, with their square lines and fender skirts. The headlamps looked square, thanks to individual bezels. At the rear were the tall, narrow taillamps that still reminded us that these were indeed Cadillacs. The standard engine was the 375hp, 472-cu.in. V-8.

As with any 1970s car, energy-absorbing bumpers were attached to the front in 1973 and both ends in 1974. Cadillac thankfully took the time to integrate the design of the new bumpers, so they don't look like afterthoughts, avoiding the steel girder approach of their closest competitor.

"Even for those who have long accepted Cadillac leadership and quality as a matter of course, these new motor cars stand out. If anything, they make the special

world of Cadillac even more special," they stated in 1973.


An evolutionary design element was the popular Cabriolet padded roof in 1974, which featured opera windows. Whoever thought I would one day miss opera windows?

For the 1975 model year, a 210hp 500-cu.in. V-8 was standard. In 1976, the last of the truly huge Coupe de Villes featured doors that locked when the transmission lever was shifted into drive. Cadillac also offered Track Master, a computerized skid prevention system that automatically pumped the back brakes, much like future ABS systems. There were 13 new colors among the 15 available. Steel-belted radial whitewall tires were also standard. "The 1976 Cadillac Coupe de Ville is again out front with all the important considerations Americans seem to want most in their luxury cars." The following year, Cadillacs would be downsized along with the rest of the GM full-size lineup.

I could list the dozens of standard and optional safety and luxury items that were offered from 1971 through 1976, but I have discovered that more car guys know Cadillacs than any other make. Let's just say, with a Cadillac, you don't have to crank the windows, pump the brakes, or use both hands to steer. You'll be cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

While I write this, here's what's available in the "very good" condition range with prices all over the map: a yellow 1974 Coupe de Ville with 92,000 miles for \$7,500; a black-and-white 1976 with 41,000 miles for \$1,750; a blue 1975 with 73,000 miles for \$10,000; and my favorite, a white 1971 with 60,000 miles for \$2,300. Among the deals are examples like the metallic Kelly green 1971, with chipped paint and pitted chrome, wide-whites and a claim of only 15,000 miles, for \$20,000.

If you follow the more expensive examples above, you will see them linger and pop up again until they are listed for approachable money. That's why the good news is that a Coupe de Ville should be on your short list. The difference between this month's and all the other underdogs is that you just need to be patient. The right one will come along.

Imagine the envy of your friends when you pull up, living large, in a 1971-'76 Cadillac Coupe de Ville. Just don't tell anyone what you paid for it. 



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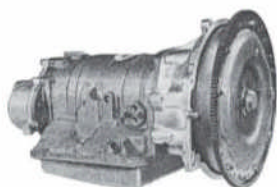
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Marjorie Boy

Assembly Line Worker
American Motors Corporation

I WORKED AT THE AMERICAN

Motors plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin, for 37 years, from 1946 until 1983 when I retired. My job the entire time was working on the assembly line as a welder. I welded in floor pans and fitted panels, fenders, hoods, and trunk lids. When I started in February 1946, the Kenosha plant was just switching over from building tanks back to Nash automobiles. I was 25 years old, unemployed, and the plant was hiring. The pay was about \$1.30 per hour. That was considered "man's pay," because women didn't get that kind of salary back then.

When I started, I was initially scared of all the noise on the assembly line. I had never worked in such a loud place. There were many women on the assembly line then, and we had to wear ball caps to protect our hair. I had long hair, so I had to put it up under a cap.

My first job was spot welding floor boards to the chassis. Once, I messed up by welding a two-door floor board to a four-door chassis; I admit I wasn't paying attention. They took me off the assembly line for a while and gave me odd jobs to do instead. At least I didn't get fired. I know others who made mistakes like that, but they needed workers so badly that they would do anything to keep them.

The assembly line consisted of overhead conveyor belts moving slowly enough where you could work on the cars. I had to weld while the cars were moving, but it wasn't hard to do, and I got to be pretty good at it. We worked as a team with one person on each side of the car. The panels were stacked on the side, and if we ran low, they would bring in more panels. In my first year, the factory shut down several times for lack of parts due to strikes among suppliers.

Nash employees could buy new cars at an employee discount. My boyfriend, who also worked on the assembly line, bought a new 1946 Nash 600, and I enjoyed driving with him around Kenosha. I liked his car so much, and the employee discount price was so good, that I got one, too.

I remember when Nash became American Motors in 1954. We all showed



up for work one day, and they took us to a large area of the factory where they had built aircraft engines during the war. They told us that they were changing over from Nash-Kelvinator Corporation and merging with Hudson Motor Car Company to form American Motors Corporation. We didn't know what to expect. We thought that merger was going to cause the company to go broke, and that would be the end of it, but we were wrong. We really took off and did better after the merger.

I met George Romney, president of AMC, twice. One time, he came to visit us in the factory. He got us all together and gave a speech about quality. He told us, "I want quantity, but I want quality more." He was very nice, polite and good looking, too. Also, I went through several strikes. The union gave us shifts to work the picket line. It wasn't so bad because we were still getting paid while we were on strike.

I helped build every model of Nash and American Motors car that came out of the Kenosha plant, but my favorite was the Rambler American. It was a nice, well-built car. I owned about two or three of them as the years went by. I also liked the looks of the Hornet. I dearly loved the AMC Eagle, which came out in

1979, because it was so different with its four-wheel drive. It was the first crossover car ever built. I thought the Matador was about the ugliest car I ever saw until they came out with the Gremlin, and later the Pacer. But I built them all anyway because that was my job.

I went through a lot of changes in my time there as the company adapted to survive. I didn't like it when Renault bought us in the early 1980s, because they brought in new management, and they changed a lot of things. I remember when robots started to be put on the assembly line. We didn't feel like they were a big threat because they couldn't do all the jobs humans did. Of course, that changed over time, and now it's nearly all robotics.

All in all, I had a great career. They presented me with a really nice mantel clock when I retired as one of the longest-employed women welder assemblers. 🏠



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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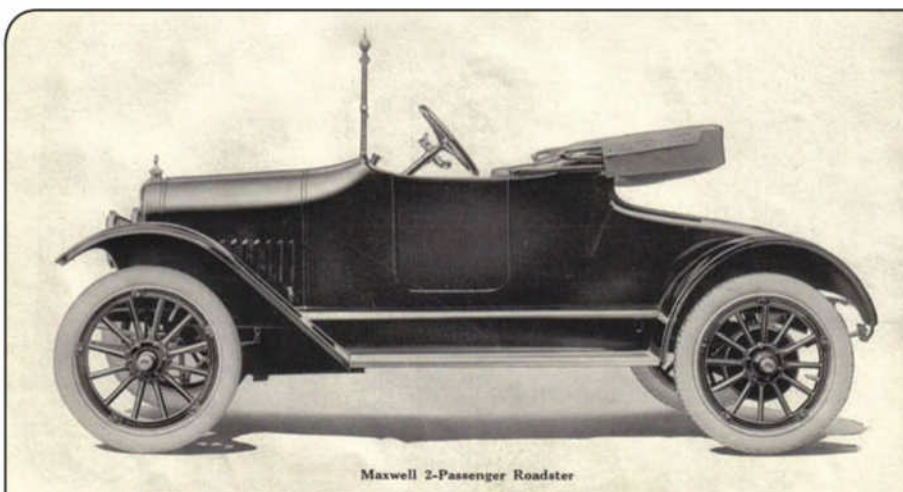
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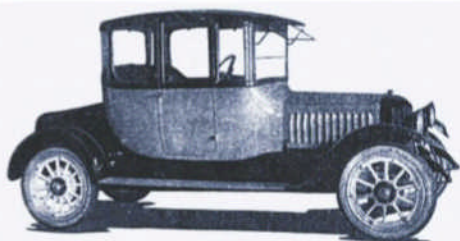


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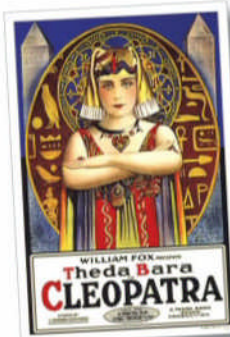
STANLEY IS BACK, AND production rises to 500 automobiles for the year. Available body styles include touring for five or seven passengers, as well as roadster and sedan. The two-cylinder steam-powered engine is still among the safest and most efficient ways to travel. The Stanley is available for as low as \$1,925.

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IN AN EFFORT TO COMBAT THE FIVE- percent luxury tax proposed on automobiles by Congress, a group of dealers unite to form the National Automobile Dealers Association. After prolonged lobbying, they convince Congress that the automobile is not a luxury item, but a necessity, with one car available for every 20 people in the United States. As a result, Congress will now only implement a three-percent tax, while NADA will safeguard the interests of wholesale motor-vehicle distributors.



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Two Beautiful Blue Buicks



MANY CAR CRITICS HAVE VIEWED the 1950 Buick as an abomination. The over-the-bumper grille was, if nothing else, impractical, so many of the critics said. There had been other cars that had incorporated the bumper and grille into one entity, but the 1950 Buicks definitely took the concept to the extreme. Yet I tend to disagree with those who thought it was an ugly duckling.

I well remember the 1950 trip to Charleston, West Virginia, with my dad to pick out a new Buick. He had owned Buicks since 1934. He was definitely sold on Buicks and did not even consider looking at another brand. He traded his 1934 Buick for a 1939 Special, and the '39 for a 1946 Roadmaster. He acquired the '39 Buick the year I was born, so I have no memory of the '34, but I do have memories of the 1939 four-door Special with the straight-eight engine. We all loved to hear it whine when we took off in first gear. I still get misty eyed when I hear one pull away at a car show. The 1946 Roadmaster? Well, needless to say, we all felt pretty heady when we rode that big Buick down Main Street in our small, rural West Virginia town on Saturday afternoons.

When it came time to trade in the Roadmaster, I went to Charleston with my dad and we looked all the new Buicks over. When we came to a blue 1950 Super, the game was over. It pretty much knocked my dad's eyes out. He always liked blue ones, and this particular shade of blue made the Super a thing to behold. The interior was huge. He had

three children still at home, so he needed the space. When we brought it home it drew an immediate crowd. Uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews all walked around it in awe. It was Dad's first automatic transmission, and he immediately liked the Dynaflo.


I learned to drive on that Buick, and even though it was a family sedan, I was always proud to drive it through town. But in early 1955, tragedy struck. As I was crossing the narrow bridge that led over into the town of Clendenin, I met a huge truck. I hugged the side of the bridge and held my breath. I was almost by the truck when some sort of protrusion on the bridge caught the back quarter panel of the Buick and put an ugly crease in it. My dad's reaction was much milder than I had anticipated. As I look back on it, I think the mild reaction was because, like the rest of America, he was quite taken with the 1955 Buicks.

He got the body of the Super repaired, then almost immediately he and I again made the trip to Charleston to look at the new Buicks. As we walked around the lot, we were both smitten by a 1955 two-door hardtop Special. It was a tri-tone, the top was dark blue, the middle was light blue, and there was a white strip along the bottom. It was beautiful. I never saw another '55 Special with that color combination during all of the years that I drove it.

We sat down at the table with the salesman, and he wrote down the difference he wanted on a piece of paper and

handed it to my dad. Dad looked at the figure and threw the paper back on the desk and said, "You guys are out of your mind." My heart fell to my feet. I figured that Buick was gone. But as we walked out of the dealership, the salesman and the sales manager followed us to the 1950 Super. There was more haggling, but my old man would not give an inch. The end result was they finally agreed to his terms and we drove the Special home. He told me as we drove, "Don't ever take the first offer they come up with."

I loved that '55 Special and got to drive it a lot, even got to drive it to school several times. It was far and away the best looking car on the parking lot at school. When I graduated from high school in 1957, I joined the Navy and spent most of the next three years in Japan. When I came home in mid-1960, there was a big white 1959 Electra 225 sitting in the garage. It was okay, but I missed the '55 Special.

Just before I graduated from college in 1964, I wanted to get married. I didn't have a car at the time, so I borrowed \$300 and bought a 1955 Buick Century, four-door hardtop, for \$200. I used the remainder of the money to buy a wedding band for my bride. Since that time, my wife and I have owned several different brands of automobiles, including a few Buicks. I no longer have a Buick as a daily driver, but there is a pristine, blue 1991 Buick Riviera sitting in my garage. But nothing has ever compared to those two blue Buicks that I was privileged to drive in my youth. 

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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR



You'd assume it was someone in Ford's styling department who first hung Fairlane front-end body panels on the Ranchero for 1967. But don't be so sure.

In 1966, an electrical contractor (and well-known NHRA Funny Car racer) Ed Skelton of North Carolina ordered a brand-new 1966 Falcon Ranchero. But something about the Ranchero's Falcon front-end didn't sit right with him. So back he went to the Ford dealer and ordered a complete stacked-headlamp front-end from a Fairlane GTA, painted the panels to match the existing body and bolted everything on. The result was an unofficial pre-production glimpse at the 1967 Ranchero, and it was considered so cool at the time, that Skel-

ton's Ranchero was featured in the September 1966 issue of *Hot Rod* magazine. But Skelton didn't stop with the exterior. He also ordered a "mid-riser" 427 FE engine to replace the original 390-cu.in. V-8, a Cruise-O-Matic three-speed transmission designed to be used with a 428 Police Interceptor engine and a 31-spline, nine-inch differential from a Thunderbird, creating what must've been the baddest hauler in all of the South.

Our featured Ranchero, owned by Kevin Biebel of New Milford, Connecticut, is about as close as we could find to the *Hot Rod* magazine feature truck. Kevin's Dark Moss Green Ranchero is one of 171 1967 Rancheros built with a four-barrel 390-cu.in. V-8 and a four-speed manual

transmission. It also boasts the XL Package, which gives it a tidy set of bucket seats and a floor console. This also makes it very unusual. Among Ranchero 500 XLs equipped like this, it's one of two with tinted glass and the only one with heavy-duty suspension. Today it's powered by a date-code-correct 390 topped by three carburetors and backed by a rugged Toploader four-speed. The rear is a Ford nine-inch with a 3.00:1 gear ratio and a limited-slip differential. It rolls on a set of 15-inch styled steel wheels. Kevin is the owner of Art Metal Industries, which specializes in high-end stainless steel fabrication, and he brought the Ranchero to the Hemmings Concours d'Elegance in Saratoga Springs, New York, where it was part of the Vintage Trucks Class. It's got plenty of go, thanks to its stout FE engine, but these days it's used primarily for shows, where it has earned AACA First Junior honors, a first place at the Lime Rock Sunday in the Park Concours and a first in class at the Fairlane Club of America Nationals.

The 1967 Fairlane Ranchero is undoubtedly one of the best looking of Ford's popular car-based trucks. The Ranchero first appeared in 1957 based on Ford's full-size Courier sedan delivery. In 1960, Ranchero joined the compact Falcon lineup, where Ford aimed its new, no-frills trucklet at thrifty customers promising savings in fuel costs, insurance premiums and, of course, the purchase price over a full-size truck. The Ranchero's overall length had shrunk from 208 inches in 1959 down to 180 inches, but cargo capacity increased from 27 cubic feet to 31.5 cubic feet. It could accommodate objects eight-feet in length with its tailgate flipped down and more than 42 inches wide between the wheelhouses. Of course, as part of the uni-body Falcon line, it didn't have the full-size car's rugged frame, so payload capacity was down from 1,000 pounds to 800 pounds. The base powerplant was the 144-cu.in. 85hp Falcon straight-six; by 1961, buyers could opt for the 101hp 170-cu.in. six-cylinder.

For the 1964 model year, the Falcon Ranchero rolled out with crisp new body lines and an available 260-cu.in. V-8 engine that was first introduced midway through 1963. Also on deck were the 85hp 144-cu.in. straight-six and the 101hp 170-cu.in. six. Later in the model year, the 200-cu.in. straight-six was made available on Falcons. Trucks equipped with V-8s were upgraded with 10-inch brakes, while nine-inch drums were standard issue with the six-cylinder engines.

The big news for 1965 was the avail-



ability of a pair of 289-cu.in. V-8s with the buyer's choice of either two- or four-barrel carburetion, rated at 200hp and 225hp, respectively. A three-speed automatic was also optional. Shift-it-yourselfers could choose from a three-speed or four-speed manual. Standard fare inside included Palomino vinyl surfaces, right- and left-side armrests, dome light, right- and left-side sun visors, color-keyed steering wheel with a bright horn ring, a glove box and an ashtray. Bucket seats with or without a center console were available at extra cost, as was carpeting.

For 1966, Dearborn dropped the Falcon name from its car-based truck, calling it Ford Ranchero instead. It rode on the shared Falcon/Fairlane platform and grew from a 109.5-inch wheelbase to a 113-inch wheelbase. In fact, the revised Ranchero was larger by every measure than its predecessor: almost 16 inches longer, three-inches wider and 1.5-inches taller. Its payload capacity was rated at 850 pounds or almost 1,200 with an available heavy suspension package. The base powerplant was the 200-cu.in. straight-six, while the 2V and 4V 289s were optional.

Model year 1967 brought a whole host



of exciting changes—perhaps inspired by Skelton's customized '66 Ranchero, appearing on the pages of *Hot Rod*, or perhaps not. The 1967 Ranchero remains popular with collectors because of its one-year-only affiliation with the attractive Fairlane passenger car, and subsequent editions would revert to being called Ford Ranchero. The '67 Fairlane Ranchero was available as a base Fairlane, as a Fairlane 500 or as a 500 XL like our well-equipped feature truck.

The Fairlane Ranchero included a full-width seat in cane-pattern vinyl trim with crinkle-finish borders, a color-keyed floor mat, courtesy light door switches, an ashtray, a lockable glove box, a remote control left side mirror, a bright horn ring, arm rests



engine also packed a 10.5:1 compression ratio, which helped raise its factory rating to a healthy 320hp and 427-lb.ft. Like the other V-8s, the stoutest 390 could be had with a three- or four-speed manual as well as the Cruise-O-Matic.

The list of available options for the new-for-'67 Fairlane Ranchero was as long as any of Ford's midsize passenger cars: power-assisted brakes and steering, disc brakes, heavy-duty suspension with 1,165-pound rear springs, SelectAire air conditioning, push-button radio, Stereo-Sonic tape player (N/A with four-speed and A/C), tinted glass, tachometer, limited-slip differential, a tempting selection of bright wheel covers as well as styled steel road wheels.

Pickup buyers in the late 1960s must've been a pragmatic bunch, however, as the top-trim-level Fairlane Ranchero 500 XL found few takers in 1967. Out of the total 17,243 Fairlane Rancheros built, only 1,881 examples rolled out of the factory with the XL package, making them an unusual find today. Most Ranchero owners opted for the 500 package with 9,504 built, while the standard Fairlane Ranchero accounted for 5,858 of total production. 📺



body side paint stripes. The top-of-the-line Fairlane 500 XL received an upgraded interior with bucket seats, a center console and sporty door panels—all in the buyer's choice of 15 interior colors.

There were four engines available under the Fairlane Ranchero's hood for 1967: three V-8s and the stalwart 200 six. The six was rated at 120hp and 190-lb.ft. of torque and could be paired with either a Cruise-O-Matic three-speed or a three-speed manual. The 2V 289 V-8 was rated at 200hp/282-lb.ft. with the buyer's choice of a three- or four-speed manual transmission or a three-speed Cruise-O-Matic. For the heaviest hauling and towing applications, Dearborn offered the big 390-cu.in. V-8 from its FE engine family. The entry-level 2V 390 was good for 270hp/403-lb.ft. and could be ordered with a three or four speed manual gearbox or Cruise-O-Matic. The big dog of the group was the 4V 390 V-8. In addition to a four-barrel carburetor, this "Z-code"

and bright body side molding. Fairlane 500 Ranchero buyers stepped up to deep-pile, color-keyed carpeting, a stylized instrument panel applique, an electric clock, pleated seat upholstery, bright wheel opening moldings, bright door window frames and



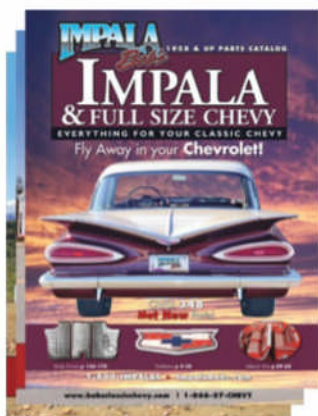
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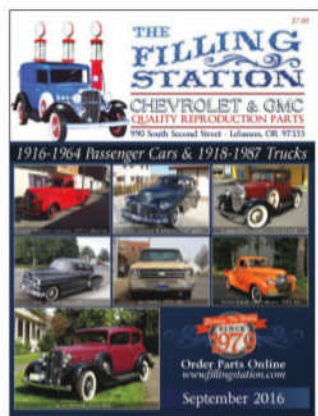
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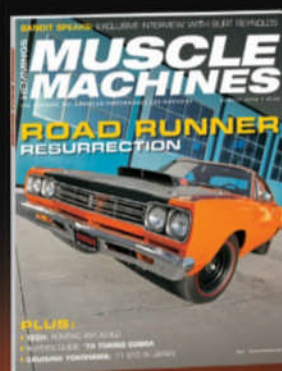
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BY ROBERT C. ACKERSON • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY BROOKS STEVENS

Back in 1958, shortly after the introduction of the FC-150 cab-over-engine Jeep truck, Brooks Stevens convinced Edgar Kaiser that they should develop FC-150-based prototypes of a small commuter type vehicle. As he had done earlier with the original Jeepster, Stevens used an existing design, and with minimal tooling costs created a vehicle with a personality all its own.


The use of six doors provided easy access to the nine-passenger interior of the FC-150 van. To avoid unnecessary tooling, Stevens used the same stampings for the front and rear doors. A symmetri-

cal door was also used in the center. The tailgate dropped down to a level floor, and the spare tire, always a storage problem in a van-type vehicle, was stowed away within the counter-balanced tailgate. Three separate versions of this vehicle were built by the Reutter body firm in Stuttgart, Germany.

Stevens was aiming for the small bus market at the time and readily admits that, "We were probably too early with this, but we might have started the van fad with the youth of the nation at that time."

This project was stillborn, but it still makes you wonder, "What if...?" 🚚



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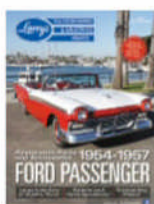


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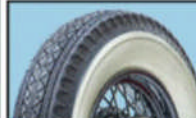
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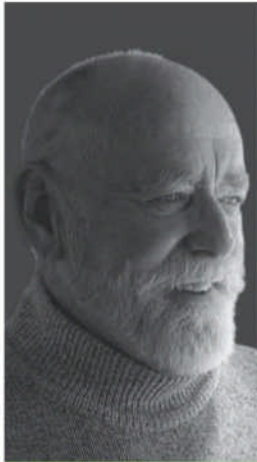
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1962 Ford Advertisement



Today, I would

love to have

that little Ford

Sedan again,

but I would

want it the

way Henry

built it.



If it Looks Like a Ford . . .

In 1960, I helped a friend put a 1957 Oldsmobile V-8 in a tired, dirty 1940 Ford Sedan. We thought it was a brilliant improvement at the time, but then we were only 17 years old. When we finished, the car could only be push started, and in the process it would backfire through its hot tub-sized four-barrel, causing a big smoke ring to waft skyward. Its front-end shimmied like your sister Kate at 40 miles per hour, and its brakes were marginal at best.

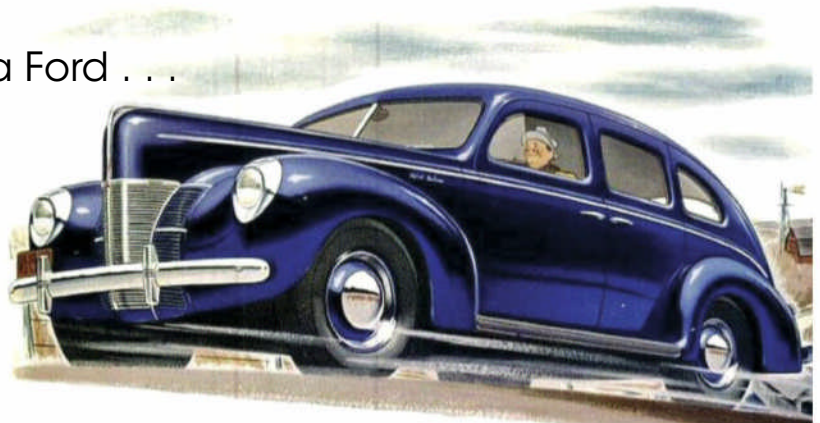
But that old Tudor ate tires for breakfast. And for lunch it consumed Corvettes; but for dinner it often scarfed its own transmission. We had used an adaptor plate to tie into the Ford bellhousing, and the standard Ford gearbox was no match for that monstrous engine. We probably used up every Ford gearbox in Los Angeles County that summer.

Today, I would love to have that little Ford Sedan again, but I would want it the way Henry built it. I wouldn't change a thing, even though vapor lock might be a problem in the summer, and keeping up with freeway traffic would be a challenge. I would treat it like family. These days, there is nothing I enjoy more than seeing properly restored cars with correct components, painted correct colors and running their correct drivelines. The only thing I'd like better might be an original unrestored survivor.

I suppose my change of heart is a matter of maturity. When I was 17, those old cars were just that—old cars. Nobody cared about them. They were ready for the junkyard. But now they are classics that evoke an earlier time, and we have come to appreciate how beautiful and well-designed they were in their own right.

Don't get me wrong. I say if it's your car you can do with it what you wish. I know of a fellow who wanted to be buried in his Porsche 356. And I am not without sin myself. I put a later starter on my otherwise impeccable 1940 Packard 110 because the one they supplied that year was marginal. I replaced it with a later starter that is identical in appearance but has a lot more power.

With my 1955 Chevrolet Beauville station wagon I went even further, and many readers may not approve. I added air conditioning for long tours, and that necessitated adding an alternator to provide enough amps. I piped the air through the correct nozzles for the year, but went with a modern unit because the originals are hard to find. Besides, you



can't get at the transmission dipstick with the original unit if you have an automatic.

I also added power front disc brakes to make the car safer in modern traffic, but I kept the stock wheels and hubcaps, and the car is otherwise painstakingly restored to original. It has taken trophies at shows; and I have all the original parts to put it back to factory, but we enjoy touring much more as a result.

I suppose it boils down to whether you want to sacrifice a little comfort and reliability to preserve an important artifact from the past, or take liberties in order to enjoy the car on tours. But then there is a third type of collector who merely wants a car that looks like, for example, a 1962 Corvette, but is state of the art modern underneath.

I have seen just that, as well as several other cars that have classic bodies, but everything else is contemporary. Such cars cost a great deal to build, but are as easy and dependable to drive as a modern car—that is, if they are well-engineered and crafted. My only regret is that an authentic restorable classic may have been sacrificed merely to obtain its body.

Of course, there is that other realm, the hot rod. With that we have come full circle to putting a huge Oldsmobile V-8 in a '40 Ford, and that to me now is grotesque, even though such things are done all the time. Yes, if you replace the entire driveline and beef up the frame you will have a very fast old Ford, but unless you go all the way by putting a classic Ford body on a modern car, you will have essentially succeeded in building yourself a fast coffin.

It won't handle or stop dependably, and if you push it beyond its design envelope, it will take its revenge. Building a car that looks like a 1940 Ford is a nice idea because they were beautiful cars, but the cost to do it right would be astronomical and, in the end, it would not be a '40 Ford. It would just look like one.

Personally, I would actually delight in the marginal handling, vapor lock, and gasoline and crankcase vapors, just to experience a real classic Ford again. There are so few left, and they were great cars. What's your say: I am at jameshr106@aol.com. 🐾

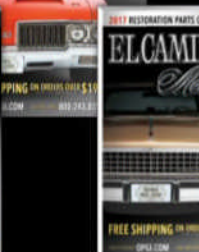
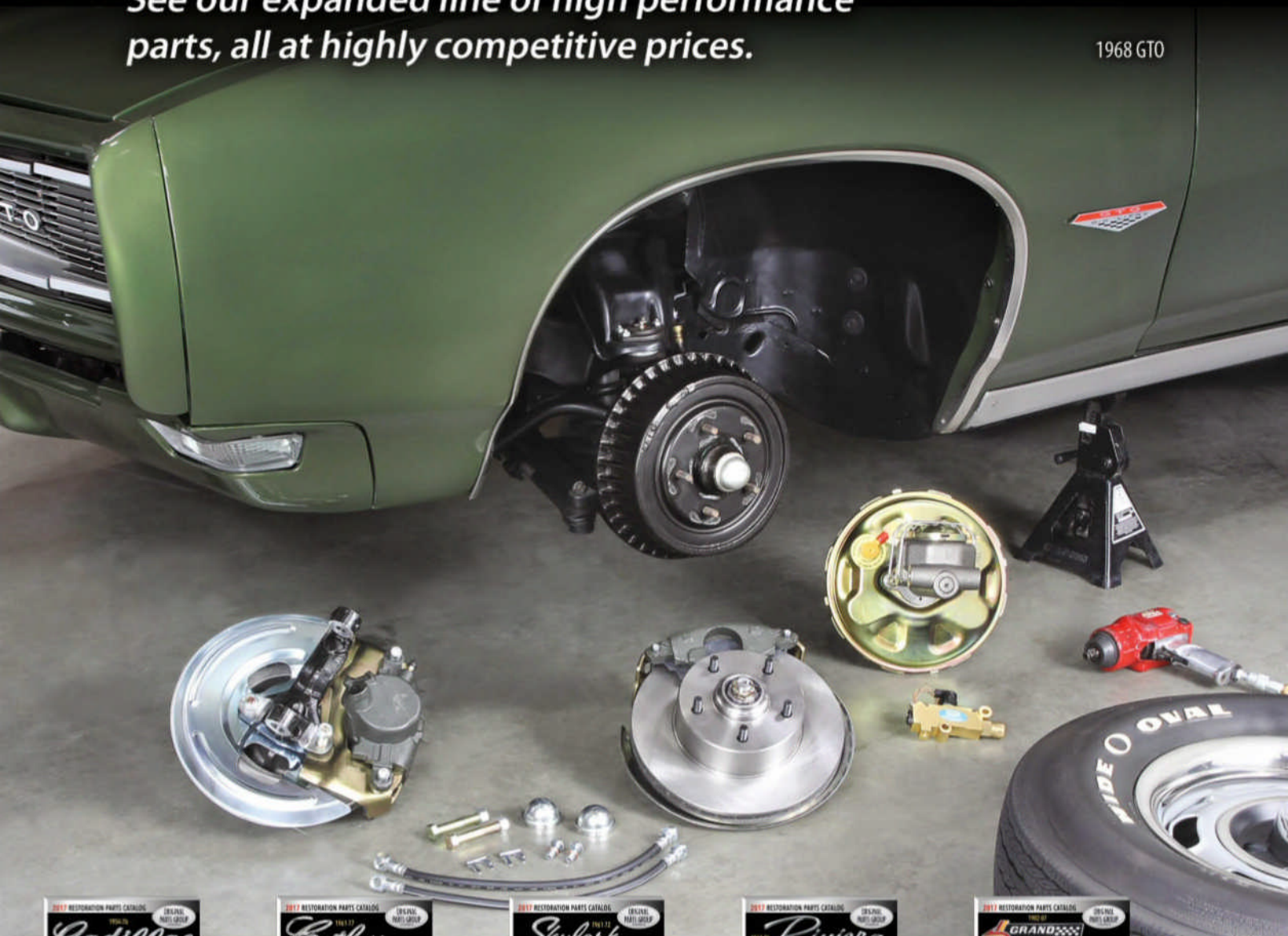
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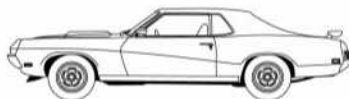
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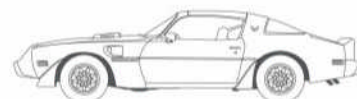
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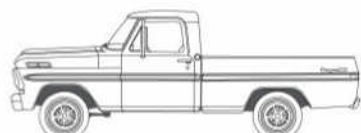
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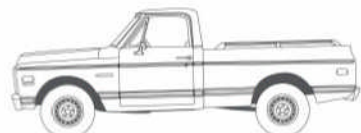
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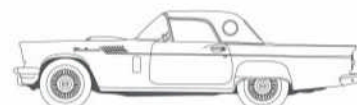
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