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SEPTEMBER 15, 16, 17, 2017

Hemmings Motor News

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CONCOURS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th

REGISTRATION & RALLY

- 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration at the Festival Commons, Lake George, New York.
- 12:00 noon – Join in a rally through the beautiful Adirondack region to Prospect Mountain.
- 2:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m. Luncheon buffet at Dunham's Bay Resort, Lake George, New York.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th

CRUISE-IN SPECTACULAR

- Gates open at 8:00 a.m. An all-makes car show that's open to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Including: muscle cars, street rods, sports cars, exotics and classics.
- Awards at 2:00 p.m.
- Cocktail reception with cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner available at 7:00 p.m. at the Fort William Henry Hotel.
- Keynote Speaker/Honorary Chairman: Wayne Carini.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th

CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Open to concours-quality, pre-1974 cars, by invitation only.

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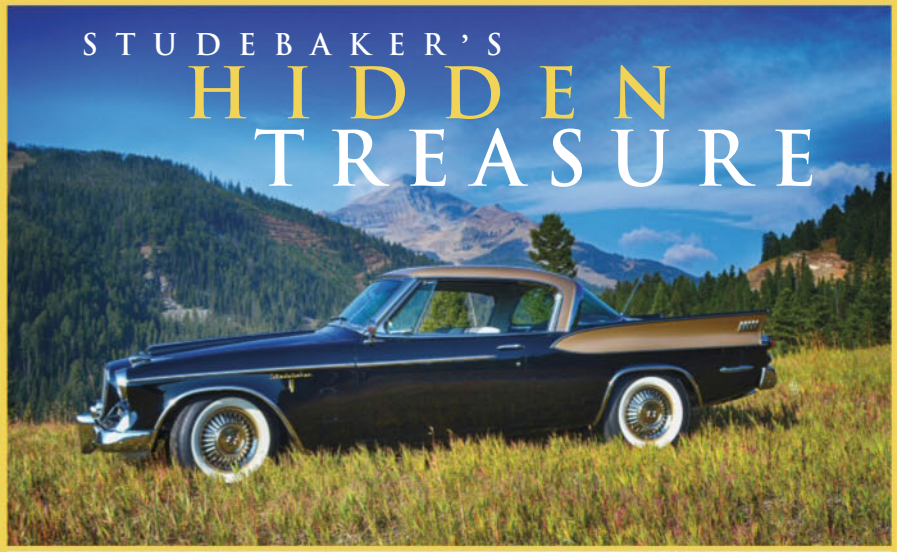

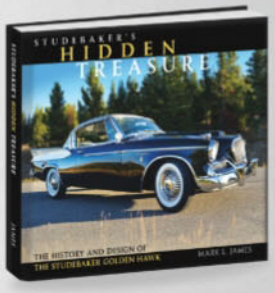

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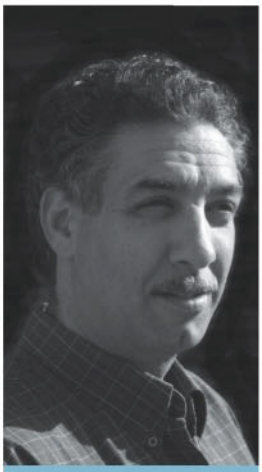

"When it comes to prominent people in the automotive world, who would you like to meet and have a nice, long conversation with?"

Meeting Heroes

When it comes to prominent people in the automotive world, who would you like to meet and have a nice, long conversation with? This thought occurred to me one recent evening while I was reading about Henry Leland. After many delays due to health issues and moving back to New England, I finally resumed work on my Cadillac book, which I hope to publish by the end of the year. During my research of Cadillac history, every time I read some interesting fact on founder Leland, I was continually amazed by this man's incredible accomplishments. That's when I imagined just how fascinating it would be to go back in time and meet certain distinguished individuals in the automotive world who interest me most. To be able to sit and casually chat with them about how they went about executing the work that they became known for, and learning all the little details about the production process and other informative insights, would be absolutely fascinating. More than that, it would be interesting to learn about any other projects and/or future goals that they had had in mind, but never got around to doing.

While there are many automotive stylists, designers, engineers and CEOs, as well as customizers, hot-rod builders, and even race drivers that I would enjoy meeting, here's a short roster of the top individuals from my A-list.

Henry Leland

Between his engineering ability and steadfast desire for perfection, no doubt it would be highly inspirational to learn Leland's approach, methods and insight for building precision-made automobiles such as the Cadillac. Conscientious perfectionists like Leland are a rare breed, making a chat session with him all the more special.

John DeLorean

To learn the reasoning as to why he and his staff fitted a 389-cu.in. V-8 in an intermediate A-body Le Mans/Tempest and believed that it would be a big seller would surely be entertaining. And to discover all the details regarding building the press car, which faked out the media with its 421-cu. in. V-8, surely would be highly amusing to hear firsthand.

John Willys

If ever there was a great salesman and an industrialist with vision, it was John Willys. I would ask about his bicycle company and how he was able to get it off the ground and make it so successful, and then follow up with the same about his car dealerships and how he went about creating such a successful empire. Additional questions would focus on his takeover of Overland, the creation of the Willys-Knight, and becoming the new owner of Duesenberg. I would also ask him what he would do differently to avoid bankruptcy.

Colin Chapman

I would love to know more about Chapman's obsession with lightness, and why he pushed the limits of his race cars to the point of breaking. His early Elite is considered one of the most beautiful sports cars ever conceived, and his Europa the most distinctive, so it would be interesting to learn what he liked and disliked about each. Discovering what his favorite Lotus racing car was and why, surely would be an engaging revelation.

Virgil Exner

Wouldn't it be fascinating to discover the inspiration for Exner's Forward Look style? I would also ask him about being head of the Advance Styling Group at Chrylser and talk about some of the more talented stylists who worked under him. Learning about his personal process for designing cars and where he got the inspiration for all his designs would be terrific. I would also want to know which Letter Car was his favorite, and why.

Elwood Engel

The Chrysler Turbine, 1965 Imperial, 1970 Plymouth Barracuda, and the 1961 Lincoln Continental all had the Engel touch. He was one designer who should have been given more credit than he received, so I would relish spending some time with him learning about his thought processes. I would also want to know about his time working under Exner, and the reason why he replaced the rear fins on Chryslers with his signature slab-side style. And how difficult was it to design the '61 Continental without making it look like a Chrysler, while still incorporating the slab-sided look?

Ettore Bugatti

I've always admired highly creative people, especially those who don't follow convention, so it would be a great honor to talk with Ettore Bugatti to hear about his design process and where he found the inspiration to create such beautiful automobiles. And just how much of the Miller engine did he really copy when he set out to produce his own engine?

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BY TOM COMERRO

Model A National Tour

THIS YEAR'S MAFCA NATIONAL TOUR IS SLATED TO TAKE PLACE IN CALIFORNIA THIS September 24-29. Due to the recent landslide along the Pacific Coast Highway, an alternate route has been planned. The tour will be hosted by the Bakersfield Chapter and begins at the Estrella Warbird Air Museum in Paso Robles. The route will work its way north over the five days, and stops will include the Hearst Castle, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Half Moon Bay, and Grey Whale Cove. At the end, in San Francisco, there will be a chartered boat tour sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge and around Alcatraz Island. Information and hotel accommodations are available at www.mafca.com.

Stainless Steel Donation

ONE OF THE SIX ORIGINAL STAINLESS STEEL 1936 Ford Model 68 DeLuxe Tudor Touring Sedans that Allegheny Steel built will be donated to the Early Ford V-8 Museum. Joe Floyd announced that he's donating it with 16 other 1936 Fords from his collection. Allegheny gave this car and the other five to regional salesmen to promote the benefits of stainless steel. Each racked up over 200,000 miles of travel from 1936 until after WWII. After the car had changed hands a few times, Floyd purchased it in 2014 to add to his impressive collection. The car will be on display in the museum's Rotunda replica. For more information on the museum, visit www.fordv8foundation.org.

Hemmings Concours

THE 11TH ANNUAL Hemmings Concours d'Elegance will be held at The Festival Commons—Charles R. Wood Park in Lake George, New York, September 15-17. This year's event will feature keynote speaker Wayne Carini from the television series *Chasing Classic Cars*, and master of ceremonies Bill Rothermel. Featured marques will include the 1967-'81 Camaro and Firebird, MG, Buick Riviera (1963-'73), Professional Vehicles, Studebaker, and Wood-bodied Station Wagons. This year will also feature a Tucker in our Preservation class. A portion of the Concours proceeds will go to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Autism Speaks. For information about tickets and accommodations, visit www.hemmings.com/events/concours.

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BY DANIEL STROHL

RE: Wheelie Interesting

I THINK—MAYBE, JUST MAYBE—THAT THE WHEEL COVER THAT HARRY CARTER inquired about in the August 2017 issue might come from a Chevrolet Nova Concours. Or, at least, that's what a couple hundred of our readers nearly unanimously wrote/called/mailed us to say.

Specifically, according to Karen Jones of 101 Wheels in Ventura, California, the wheel cover comes off a 1976 Nova Concours with 14-inch wheels. She notes that 1977-'79 Concours wheel covers had different center cap designs. She also provided both a Chevrolet part number (00369009) and a Hollander part number (3079).

About all we don't know about it is whose car it bounced off of. Oh, wait, Jon Charles said it's from his great-grandmother's car: "dark blue with a light blue interior…"

RE: Before April Fools'

SO HERE'S WHAT WE'VE PIECED together on the dirigiblish vehicle from the April 2017 issue, thanks to Geoff Hacker and our Google-Fu.

A guy named Frank Bolger had it built in the spring of 1929. He called it a mono-dirigible. Frank Bolger was the president of the Associated Aviation Clubs Inc. of America. Bolger intended to take it across the country "to stimulate and advance the ever-growing interest of the American people in aviation and to form local flying clubs and chapters of the Associated Aviation Clubs Inc." A *Popular Science* tidbit about it from 1932 claimed a "secret design," though another contemporary reference points out how a regular ol' car lies underneath all that dress-up, and that the mono-dirigible was never meant to fly.

RE: Don't Drive to Jericho?

NOT NEARLY AS UNANIMOUS WERE THE RESPONSES to Danny Plotkin's question about underhood trumpets in the July 2017 issue. Many of you presumed they were some sort of air horn, some speculated they had to do with an air pump emissions system, but the real answer seems like it has to do with snake oil.

As Charles Helman, Jim Dubeil, John Hart, Mike Stevens, Tim Shopp, Stu Allen, and Stephen Heney pointed out, the trumpets are Clear-Ex units, patented by Charles Flint of La Porte, Indiana. "My father and grandfather sold and installed hundreds of these units until they sold their service stations," Shopp wrote. "They were sold to improve mileage and help performance. The theory was that they would let fresh air into the exhaust manifold thru the butterfly valve under the cap as the exhaust pulse went by, reducing the fresh fuel charge pulled out of the cylinder during the cam overlap phase."

Whether they actually worked, nobody seemed to know. Hart's father had a 1955 Chevrolet with just one installed from the dealership, but "I have no idea if it worked, since we had no baseline economy numbers without the device."

Flint apparently made plenty of money off his patent, however: Clear-Ex sales lasted from the late 1940s into the 1970s.

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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BY TOM COMERRO

STEVE HAYWARD

Auburn Spring Results

AUCTIONS AMERICA'S SPRING AUBURN SALE TOOK PLACE MAY 11-13, WITH NEARLY $10.2 million in sales and 83 percent of the lots finding new homes. The three-day auction had nearly 350 cars cross the block, with a 1941 Packard One-Eighty Convertible Victoria by Darrin being the top-selling American Classic at $360,000. There were several other interesting cars, including this 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Townsman station wagon. It was powered by a 283-cu.in. V-8, and had a column-shift automatic and front and rear bench seating. It sold at a reasonable $11,825. Two other '57 Bel Airs also went to new owners, a '57 Nomad wagon for $38,500, and a dual-quad convertible for $89,100.

A full rundown of the sale is available at www.auctionsamerica.com. Look for the fall Auburn show, to take place August 31 through September 3.

Midwest Mecum

MECUM AUCTIONS HAD TOTAL SALES AT its May 30th Indianapolis auction reach more than $55.6 million. The event saw 1,665 cars cross the auction block, for a 73-percent sell-through rate. With cars from 37 states represented, this was the most successful auction in the event's history. This year's auction had cars from all eras, and one of the older automobiles that stood out was this 1915 Model T Depot Hack with a steel-and-wood body. Auction results from the event are now available, so visit www.mecum.com. Mecum will also be holding auctions in Dallas and Louisville this September, with over 1,000 cars expected at each event.

MECUM

AUCTION PROFILE

ONE OF THE MOST DESIRABLE collector automobiles of all time is the Cord 810. A true pioneer, it was one of the first cars to feature front-wheel drive. With its hidden headlamps and coffin-nose styling, the 810 was unlike any car available. The production run was modest, with only 1,736 cars built. It was available in four different body styles, including the popular Westchester Sedan.

This particular Cord underwent a high-quality restoration years ago, and was once owned by the president of Standard Oil. For the last 10 years, it had been in the care of the same owner in Paradise Valley, Arizona. Mechanically sound, it's powered by a Lycoming V-8 and features a pre-selector semi-automatic transmission. The paint is believed to be its original color of Cool Orchard Green, and the upholstery, interior, and dashboard are light tan. Although its restoration was beginning to show its age, it was still an extremely nice 810 Westchester.

CAR:	1936 Cord 810 Westchester	**CONDITION:**	#3+
AUCTIONEER:	Auctions America	**RESERVE:**	None
LOCATION:	Auburn, Indiana	**AVERAGE SELLING PRICE:**	$55,000
DATE:	May 13, 2017	**SELLING PRICE:**	$50,000
LOT NUMBER:	3107		

SEPTEMBER

8/31-9/3 • Auctions America
Auburn, Indiana • 877-906-2437
www.auctionsamerica.com

2-3 • Silver Auctions
Sun Valley, Idaho • 800-255-4485
www.silverauctions.com

6-9 • Mecum Auctions
Dallas, Texas • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

16 • Kruse Classics
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21-23 • Mecum Auctions
Louisville, Kentucky • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

28-30 • Fall Carlisle Auction
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-960-6400
www.carlisleauctions.com

Carlisle Auction

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA BECOMES THE epicenter of the collector-car scene in late September and early October when its annual auction kicks off Fall Carlisle. This year's event will take place at the Carlisle Expo Center between September 28-30 and will feature many interesting consignments, including numerous muscle cars; the auction held at Spring Carlisle last April had over 400. Consignment fees will be refunded if your car doesn't sell; some exceptions apply, so be sure to visit Carlisle's site at www.carlisleauctions.com, for a full rundown of information.

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

BY MARK J. McCOURT

1947 Chrysler Town & Country

708-246-1543 • WWW.ROUTE66MODELCARSTORE.COM • $179

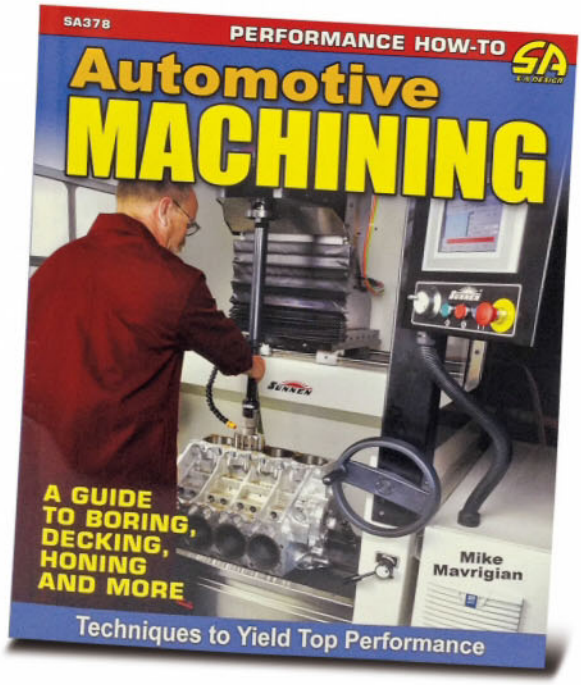
Scaling down a wood-bodied automobile is challenging, as the smaller it gets, the more difficult that woodgrain is to realistically represent. The model makers at England's Brooklin Models have pulled this trick off beautifully with their 1:43-scale 1947 Chrysler Windsor Town & Country sedan (item BML 14). The hefty white metal keepsake features believably grained body panels along with a fabulous wood-look roof rack; its Maroon Metallic paint is deep and glossy, and this car's many bright metal details underscore the realism. This Town & Country is part of a limited run of just 400 pieces, so if you're a fan and want one for your shelf, you'll need to act fast.

"1957"

513-722-9608 • WWW.DAVIDSNYDERCARART.COM • $100, PLUS $15 SHIPPING

It's always fun to see the colorful new creations to emerge from the studio of popular automotive artist David Snyder. This time, he's focused his talented imagination on a Ford dealership, circa 1957, with this piece of the same name. "I started with my two favorite signs from the era," David tells us: "the Ford Jubilee sign from 1953, and the A-1 Used Car sign." He's populated this dealer lot with a sparkling batch of mid-Fifties Thunderbirds, Skyliners, Sunliners, a Crown Victoria, a Ranchero, a couple of wagons, and more.

"1957" can be purchased as a limited-edition print, with 500 signed copies available. All are sized at 22 x 28 inches and are printed on high-quality, acid-free stock.



Automotive Machining

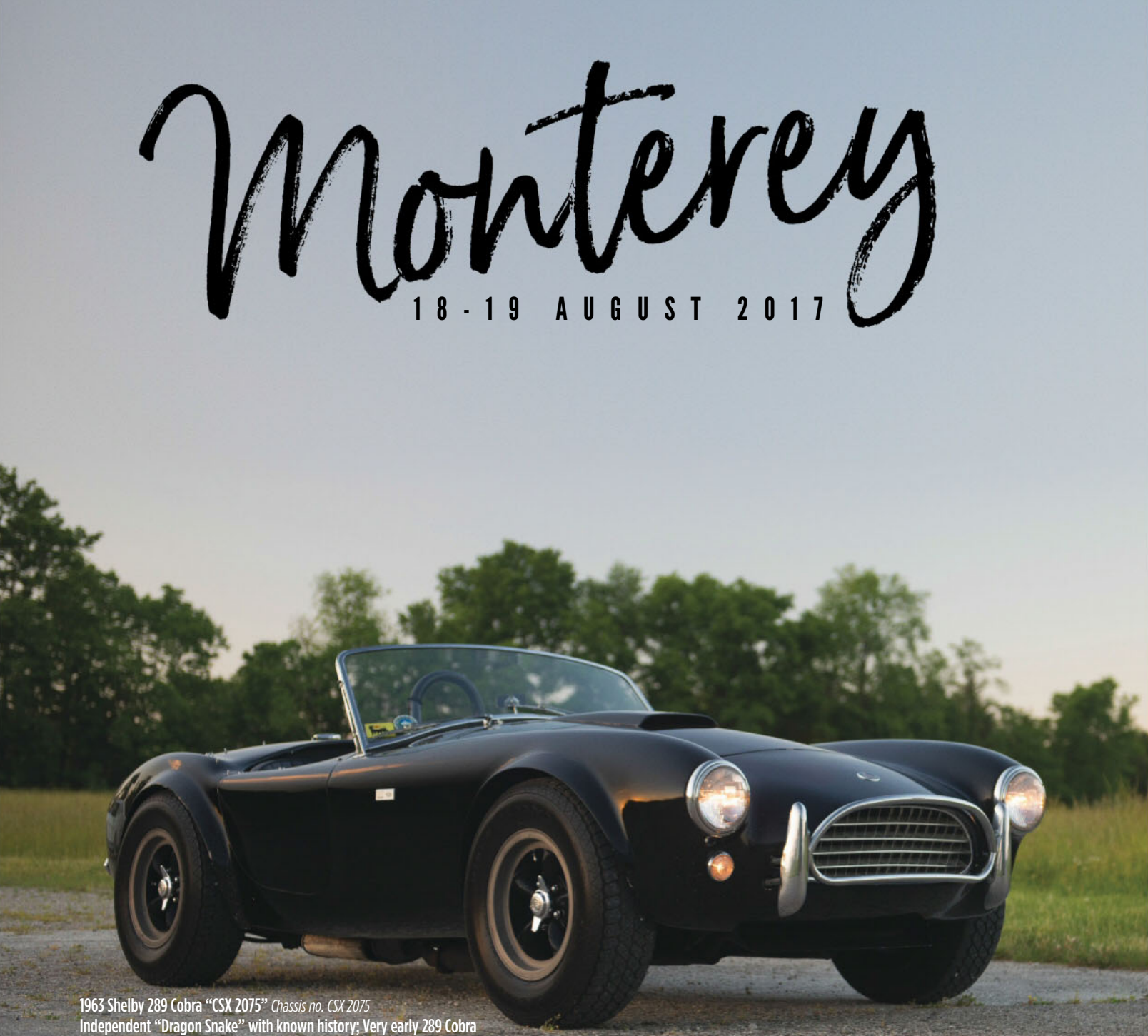
800-551-4754 • WWW.CARTECHBOOKS.COM • $29.95

Any time an engine is rebuilt, its components are machined to expose fresh surfaces and return them to exacting tolerances. This process—requiring the utmost precision—can seem daunting to a novice. This new title in Cartech's Performance How-To series, authored by *Auto Service Professional* magazine editor-in-chief Mike Mavrigian, offers an excellent overview of the processes involved in cleaning, measuring, boring, decking, honing, and other machining tasks. The 176-page softcover (item SA378) is filled with hundreds of crisp, colorful illustrative photos, and its explanatory text is clear and approachable. It's ideal for the prospective career machinist and keen hobbyist engine builder, alike.

Continued on page 18

Monterey

18-19 AUGUST 2017



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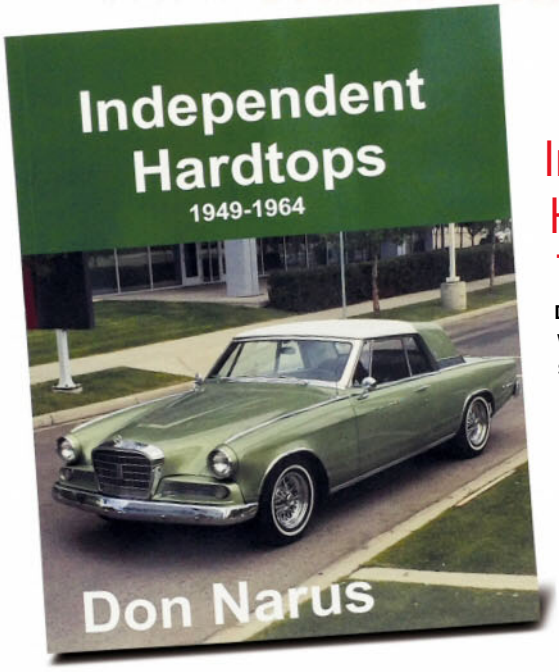

Independent Hardtops 1949-1964

DLNARUS@YAHOO.COM
WWW.NEWALBANYBOOKS.COM
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The latest title in automotive historian Don Narus's ever-expanding library of informational primers is this focus on postwar two-door and four-door hardtops and coupes, both production models and show cars, from Studebaker, Packard, Hudson, Nash, Kaiser-Frazer and Willys. Like his other car books, this 157-page softcover features brief histories, handy charts with pricing and basic specifications, and more than 200 black-and-white images and illustrations (reproduction quality varies). It's an inexpensive, handy quick reference for those new to the fascinating world of American independent automakers.

Polly Oil

800-423-5525 • WWW.CALCARCOVER.COM
$28.99/$39.99 (BLACK/WHITE)

Polly Gas was a Depression-era California firm, and for a time, its stations were a common sight on the West Coast. The cheery green parrot logo has long been popular among collectors of petroliana, and California Car Cover offers two new representations of vintage "Polly Prem" motor oil quart cans—the stylized "S.A.E. 40" black version, and more realistic-appearing "S.A.E. 30" white version. These sturdy metal signs are 14 inches wide by 20 inches tall, feature durable powder-coated graphics, and come with pre-drilled mounting holes for ease of display.

1974 Bricklin SV1

877-343-2276 • WWW.AUTOMODELLO.COM • $119.95/$149.95 (STANDARD/TRIBUTE EDITION)

The fine resin replicas created by Automodello never cease to amaze us with their attention to detail, and this 1:43-scale 1974 Bricklin SV1 is no different. Well, it is very different, in that it represents one of three genuine patrol cars run by the Scottsdale, Arizona, police in the mid-1970s. From the crisp exterior paint and decals to the incredibly lifelike interior, with its delicate steering wheel and nearly-readable instrumentation, the "Team 2" Bricklin is a fascinating representation of one of the most unusual police vehicles to ever patrol America's city streets.

This collectible is available as a standard model, or as a Tribute Edition, the latter being personally hand-signed by Bricklin company founder Malcolm Bricklin.

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BY DAVID CONWILL
IMAGE COURTESY BUICK HERITAGE ALLIANCE

Charles Chayne

CHARLES CHAYNE WAS TO BUICK engineering, and to a degree to GM engineering, what Harley Earl was to styling. In his 15 years as chief engineer with Buick Division, Chayne pioneered such changes to General Motors' founding division as the horn ring, the flexible-spoke steering wheel, coil-spring rear suspension, directional signals, the under-seat heater, the fresh-air heater, fresh-air vents through the grille and firewall, compound carburetion, the foot-actuated parking brake, wide-rim wheels, the power seat, the gearless torque convertor, hardtop styling, hood insulation, and tinted glass—all industry firsts.

It was on the strength of that record that Chayne was ultimately promoted to vice president for engineering within the GM organization as a whole.

Charles Augustine Chayne was born February 6, 1898, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was interested in mechanical things, especially after seeing a Brush automobile on the street as a young man. By the time he graduated from Harrisburg Technical High School in 1915, he already held a patent for an improvement to airplane engines.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology was Chayne's next stop, where he graduated with the Class of 1919. Though his first love was the automobile, Chayne found work after graduation with the National Advisory Committee of Aeronautics—what would later become NASA.

Finding aviation and government work insufficiently stimulating, he soon returned to MIT as a teacher. While at MIT, Chayne owned a 1924 Bugatti, a hint at his interest in exotic automobiles and performance engineering. In 1926, Chayne took the opportunity to return to his native Pennsylvania and join the auto industry, taking a position with engine-builder Lycoming, supplier to many independent makes. In quick succession, he moved from Lycoming to Marmon and then to General Motors, where, at age 32, he took a position as supervisor in charge of engines at Buick, which was just in the midst of converting from its traditional straight-six powerplants to the straight-eights that would be the division's hallmark for the next 22 years.

As assistant chief engineer, a position he had reached by 1933, Chayne worked under F.A. "Dutch" Bower. When Harlow Curtice was tapped to rescue the struggling Buick division, which had experienced unusual difficulty in adapting to the conditions of the Great Depression, he sacked Bower and put Chayne in his place. Curtice and Chayne worked closely with Harley Earl in reinventing Buick's image from stolid, perhaps even frumpy, to streamlined marvels of the machine age.

During this period, Chayne received many patents for his innovations. It was not a complete success, however, as Chayne's cost-cutting idea of truncating the frame of the 1939 Buick proved to be a disaster, with the rear bodywork unable to support itself and often folding up on bumpy roads or when the trunk was heavily loaded.

Performance was also an interest of Chayne's, as shown by such Buick hallmarks as the big-engine/small-body 1936-'42 Century models and the "compound carburetion" dual intakes of 1941-'42. He was friends with the likes of Wilbur Shaw and Briggs Cunningham—helping the later engineer his "Bu-Merc" race car, which combined a 1939 Buick Century chassis and engine with a Mercedes roadster body for road racing.

Perhaps the most notable of Chayne's projects are the Y-Job and XP300 dream cars. The Y-Job of 1939 was a collaboration with Earl, and the XP300 of 1951 the result of a friendly rivalry with the designer, who showcased his own ideas in the Le Sabre.

After his tenure at Buick, Chayne was promoted to vice president of engineering at General Motors. In that capacity, he oversaw the introduction of V-8 engines to all GM divisions, the Firebird turbine program, and is remembered for his opposition to the Corvair project. He retired from GM in 1963.

Chayne was also a pioneer of the old-car hobby, being among the earliest adherents to the idea that obsolete vehicles had value for their novelty, their historical significance, and what they can teach about overcoming engineering challenges. His 1932 Bugatti Royale, rescued from a Long Island junkyard in 1943 and painstakingly restored by him, now resides in the Henry Ford.

Today, in honor of Chayne, an award is presented in his name at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. In 1978, Chayne himself bestowed the first trophy, upon "the car with the most advanced engineering of its era." He died later that year at age 80.

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Hudson Hash

More than just a Nash in disguise, the 1955-'57 Hudson Hornet and Wasp are highly distinctive examples of '50s-era Detroit Americana

BY DAVID CONWILL • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF HUDSON

One of the top definitions of "hash" is "a confused muddle," which is probably what was on the mind of contemporary wonks when they dubbed the new, Nash-derived Hudsons of 1955 by that moniker, a contraction of Hudson and Nash.

More charitably, a hash can be defined as a "new mixture of old material," which is probably apt when looking at American Motors' reworking of Hudson and Nash engineering into a new Hudson line—which would also turn out to be the storied marque's *final* line.

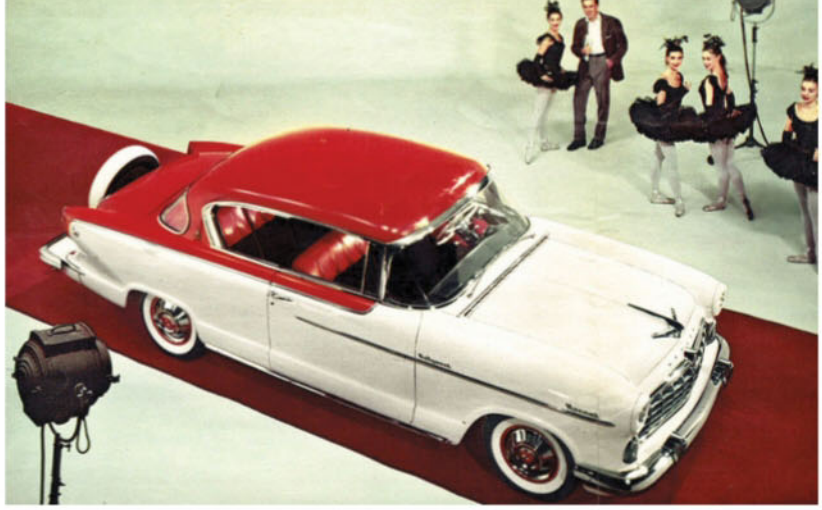
Hudson had bet the farm on the compact craze of the early 1950s, kicked off by then-competitor Nash's 1950 Rambler. Rather than retool from the 1947-vintage "step-down" platform to a new full-size car, Hudson management elected to produce a compact called the Jet.

Although the 1953 Hudson Jet followed the Rambler formula of making a well-built, well-equipped compact, rather than a stripped-down cheapo with margins too small to turn a profit, the quirky styling of the smaller Hudson is largely agreed to have irreparably damaged the company. That damage led directly to Hudson's 1954 merger with Nash-Kelvinator and the formation of American Motors. A 1953 sales war between Ford and Chevrolet, which took its toll on all the independent makes, didn't help matters.

For 1955, a new Hudson Hornet was unveiled. Its lineage from the Nash Ambassador was easy to see, but with its outboard headlamps, non-skirted front wheels, and broad egg-crate grille, it was arguably the better looking of the two cars. A shorter version, wearing the Wasp nameplate, was based on the Nash Statesman platform.

1955

The world caught its first glimpse of the American Motors Hudsons at the Chicago Auto Show in February 1955. This would be the first redesign of the brand since the introduction of the 1948s, and AMC designers, including Edmund Anderson and longtime Hudson stylist Frank Spring, did their best



1955 HORNET V-8 CUSTOM HOLLYWOOD HARDTOP

to marry a platform shared by Nash with styling that was distinctive to Hudson and respectful of the brand's history.

Stylistically, all the body panels save for the decklid were unique to Hudson. In fact, the bodywork ahead of the cowl had been designed by Spring as an update for the old stepdown body shell. Aside from the aforementioned egg-crate grille, wide-set headlamps, and exposed wheels, the Hudson featured an upper grille surround shaped like inverted steer horns, with the traditional triangular Hudson badge inset. At the leading edge of the broad, flat hood were block letters spelling out "HUDSON." Near the windshield was a prominent, full-width cowl vent, a considerable change from the old-fashioned, pop-up style vent used in 1954.

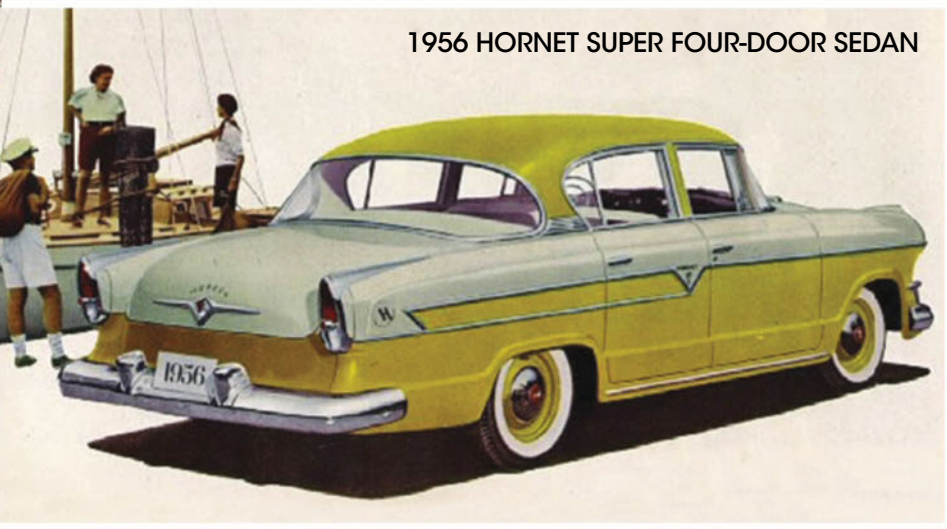
A simple horizontal molding decorated the front fender and extended back to near the trailing edge of the front door. The quarter panels were accented by a beltline molding that dropped from the A-pillar and extended to the rear of the car before wrapping around below the taillamps. This also provided a break point for two-tone color schemes, which carried the upper color from the roof down to the top of the doors and rear fenders. The Wasp came in three varieties: standard, Super Wasp, and Custom. In previous years, the Super Wasp had been a larger-engined variation on the Wasp, but for 1955, it was simply a trim variation on the Custom.

All 1955 Wasps were built on a 114.25-inch wheelbase shared with their corporate twin, the Nash Statesman. That meant the traditional low Hudson stance and wide front track were gone, though AMC engineers *did* manage to retain Hudson's traditional dual braking system with a mechanical backup in the event of a hydraulic failure. Inside, the plush Hudson interiors (at least in the upper trim levels) were augmented by Nash-derived All Season air conditioning and Airliner reclining seats and travel beds.

An important part of retaining a separate Hudson identity within the AMC Hudson-designed engine, the 202-cu.in. 120-hp straight-six from the departed Hudson Jet was carried on. The Twin-H package, including a high-compression cylinder head and twin carburetors, was available and good for 130 horsepower. A three-speed manual transmission, shifted on the column, was standard—overdrive and Hydra-Matic drive were optional.

Hornet styling was very similar to that of the Wasp, though stretched to the 121.25-inch wheelbase of the platform shared with the Nash Ambassador. The base engine choice for the Hornet was the vaunted 308-cu.in. straight-six first introduced in 1951, albeit modified to mesh with Nash transmissions and the Nash enclosed driveline. Twin-H dual carburetion boosted

1955 WASP CUSTOM FOUR-DOOR SEDAN



1956 HORNET SUPER FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

1956

With such a precipitous slump in sales, AMC was naturally anxious to rework the new Hudson into something more appealing to the public. Futuristic stylist Richard Arbib, perhaps best remembered for the 1955 Nash Metropolitan-derived "Astro Gnome," was given the task. He took as his inspiration both the traditional Hudson triangle logo and the newly introduced V-8 engine, for what he called "V-line Styling."

At the forefront, quite literally, of this revised styling was a V-shaped grille with a V-shaped dip in the center, looking somewhat like a bird's beak. The large egg crate of 1955 had been reduced to a finer mesh. The side trim (also boasting V-dips) became vastly more complicated, permitting tri-tone paint schemes, and featuring such details as air-scoop fender-top ornaments and wedge-shaped surrounds for the parking lamps.

The Wasp line was pared back to only four-door sedans with Super trim. The engine and transmission choices were unchanged from 1955. At mid-year, however, the Wasp platform would receive renewed attention, thanks to the introduction of the Hornet Special, essentially a Wasp wearing Super Hornet trim and interior, and equipped with AMC's new 250-cu.in., 190-hp corporate V-8. The Hornet Special was available as both a four-door sedan and a Hollywood hardtop. Priced between the Wasp line and the long-wheelbase Hornets, the Hornet Special foreshadowed the 1957 Rambler Rebel as an affordable performer.

The long-wheelbase Hornets came in both Super and Custom trim. The fancier Custom-trim cars had a Continental-style external spare and a large, gold panel just aft of the V-dip in the side trim. The Hornet the standard 308's power from 160 hp to 170 hp. Solid lifters, retained from earlier Hudson engines, would prove to be tough to adjust in the Nash-derived chassis. With the six-cylinder, transmission choices were the same as for the Wasp.

Big news for Hudson this year was an available V-8 engine. The 320-cu.in., 208-hp unit was purchased from Packard. This was intended as an initial step in George Mason's planned next phase of independent consolidation, where Studebaker and Packard would merge with AMC to produce a corporation able to compete with GM, Ford, and Chrysler. It did not pan out, but it accounts for use of the Packard V-8 in Nash, Hudson, Studebaker, and Packard automobiles. Also used was a Packard-sourced Twin Ultramatic transmission, the only transmission choice when the V-8 was ordered.

The only body styles available for full-size Hudsons in 1955, whether Wasp or Hornet, were a four-door sedan and a two-door "Hollywood" hardtop—convertibles and the storied Club Coupe body style were gone. Hornets were divided into Six and V-8 series and further subdivided by Super or upscale Custom trim. The company produced 7,191 Wasps, 6,911 Hornet Sixes, and 6,219 Hornet V-8s, a considerable decline from the 11,603 Wasps and 24,883 Hornets produced for 1954.

1956 HORNET CUSTOM FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

1956 HORNET SPECIAL V-8 FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

"Championship" six, now offering 165 hp or 175 hp, depending on carburetion, returned in both the Super and Custom lines, but was now equipped with hydraulic lifters for easier servicing. The Packard V-8, now a 220-hp, 352-cu.in. unit, returned, but only in the Custom line and, once again, only with the Ultramatic transmission. It was discontinued at mid-year and replaced by the AMC 250-cu.in. V-8.

At the end of the model year, Hudson had produced 2,519 Wasps, 1,757 Hornet Specials (including just 229 Hollywood hardtops), and 6,395 long-wheelbase Hornets. This was not the shot in the arm AMC had hoped for, and the new automaker was left wondering if its heritage nameplates were a boon or a detriment.

1957

The controversial styling of 1956 was largely retained for the 1957 model year, though the Hudson body itself was lowered by two inches, thanks to a generous sectioning of the roof. That change helped restore some of the low-slung proportions of earlier years, and the elimination of the old, L-head six-cylinder engine helped give the Hudson name a veneer of modern performance. No matter how legendary the Hornet six had been early in the decade, a flathead six-cylinder was nothing to brag about in a mid-priced car in 1957.

Other styling revisions included a standard padded instrument panel, more modern interiors, a new "V" medallion in the center of the grille, dual-fin front fender ornaments in place of 1956's faux air intakes, trendy tail fins, and heavily revised side trim that, at a glance, appears to be a mirror image of the 1956 trim. Top-line Hornet Customs received a textured aluminum insert inside the front fender trim.

Only the long wheelbase was available for the 1957 model year. The Wasp and the Hornet Special had been discontinued. Additionally, the Rambler and Metropolitan models had been spun off into their own marques, leaving only the Hornet Super and Hornet Custom, both of which were available as a Hollywood hardtop or a four-door sedan.

The sole engine choice for 1957 was an enlarged version of the 250-cu.in. V-8 from 1956, now displacing 327 cubic inches and producing 255 horsepower. The standard transmission was still a column-shifted three-speed with overdrive, and an automatic transmission was also available. Only 3,108 Hudsons were produced for the 1957 model year.

1957 HORNET V-8 CUSTOM HOLLYWOOD HARDTOP

1957 HORNET V-8 CUSTOM FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

Afterward

With Hudson and Nash both selling poorly, AMC made a dramatic decision. Redesigned and downsized 1958 Hudson models had been prepared, but with the difficulty in finding buyers for the historic nameplates and Rambler models selling very well, AMC elected to consolidate all its vehicles under the Rambler banner. The 1958 Rambler Ambassador would combine a traditional Nash nameplate with styling that was largely intended for the Hudson Hornet—hence the heavy triangle motif. The gambit was a success, and AMC was the only automaker to gain market share that year.

Some hardcore Hudson fans discount any car built after the end of the 1954 model year, but though they may not be the NASCAR-dominating stepdown model, the 1955 to '57 Hudson Wasp and Hornet provide a quality car and retain a lot of Hudson heritage for any enthusiast looking for a postwar Hudson. Further, their unique looks and late-Fifties flair are quite attention-grabbing on the car-show circuit.

Whether one considers the Hash years to be Hudson's swan song or a missing link in AMC history, the 1955 to '57 Hudsons are a worthwhile and interesting automobile to own.

Different by Design

Hudson's penultimate Hornet: the flamboyant 1956 Custom

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Bold. Dazzling. Eye-catching. And oh-so conspicuous. This 1956 Hudson Hornet Custom is all that and more. Way more. From every angle, it astonishes your senses with a style that is as unique as any automobile to roll out of an American car factory during the heyday of the 1950s. This is decorative Detroit at its very best.

While admiring this sensational-looking automobile, one would be hard pressed to think that Hudson was on the brink of closing down. After all, just look at all the incredible details that the Hudson stylists embellished the exterior with, while an up-close inspection will reveal an outstanding level of workmanship and quality of materials that surpassed that of the Big Three. Engineering advancements surpassed that of Ford and General Motors, as well. Below the Hornet's colorful exterior was a super-strong unitized structure; meanwhile, Ford and GM were still bolting their bodies onto a separate chassis. As proudly stated in Hudson's 1955 brochure, "All Hudsons have a body and frame welded into one single unit. This exclusive single-unit construction is twice as rigid, twice as strong, twice as safe as other cars, which have bodies bolted to a separate chassis frame. You ride protected on all sides by box-section steel girders, and this construction makes a new Deep Coil spring suspension possible."

Prior to the 1956 Hornet, Hudson produced the outstanding Step-Down models. It's unfortunate, though, that the highly advanced body/chassis structure of the Step-Downs was not the foundation of the 1955-'57 Hornets. Instead, they were based on the 1952-'56 Nash. After Hudson merged with Nash in early 1954 to form the American Motors Corporation, the 1956 Hornet was often referred to as a "Post-Merger" Hudson. This is proven by the metal build plate affixed to the door jamb that clearly states: "Pioneered and Built Exclusively by American Motors Corp." No matter who gets the credit for the 1956 Hornet, these are fascinating automobiles that

Twin-H Power features a pair of Carter one-barrel carburetors. Metal door tag shows Hudson is now part of American Motors Corp. Plastic water bag is original, as is the gas cap, with anodized "H" for Hudson.

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20 TON SHOP PRESS
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• Pair of Arbor Plates Included
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Cushy seating provides good thigh support, while the distinctive-looking speedometer is easy to read. Ashtrays are set in both rear doors. AM radio is fitted in an attractive chrome bezel, with Weather Eye A/C and heater control and lockable glovebox below. Rear center back cushion repeats "V" design of front grille; individual rope rails are standard.

are loaded with character and backed by some of the most distinctive styling ever bestowed upon an automobile.

According to noted automotive historian of Independent brands and *Hemmings Classic Car* contributor Pat Foster, "When the 1955 Hudson senior models debuted on the Nash chassis, they were clean-looking cars with styling very similar to what Hudson had planned for that year on their own chassis. But the '56 Hudsons, restyled by independent designer Richard Arbib, have received lots of criticism for their looks. While it's true that they are over-ornamented to an almost-painful degree, the basic styling, especially the grille, is appealing in a 1950s 'Anything Goes' futuristic way. Add to that the fact that they are solidly built, extremely comfortable cars, and one can easily see that they make a dandy collector car—one that is especially unique."

Our feature car is powered by the old Hudson flathead, instead of the more desirable Packard-built 352-cubic-inch V-8, which was a modern, overhead-valve design. Nonetheless, this 308-cu.in. straight-six provides plenty of get-up-and-go, thanks to its being equipped with Hudson's famous Twin-H dual-carburetor setup, which was standard on the Hornet Custom. Backing up its wow factor when opening the hood, this durable, four main-bearing engine with hydraulic valve lifters produces a healthy 175 horsepower at 4,000 rpm, and that's with a relatively low compression ratio of only 7.5:1.

Hudson stated this about their Twin H-Power engine: "Hudson's sensational multiple-fueling system, when applied to Instant Action Engines with Super Induction, gives you power-plus where you need it most: at normal driving speeds. You catapult away from a standing start and zoom ahead when you want to pass—and on regular grade fuel. You must try Twin H-Power to believe it!"

There were two engines to choose from, and three choices when it came to transmissions: The three-speed manual (with optional overdrive), or Dual-Range Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic as fitted to our feature car. Also available was Packard's Ultramatic transmission, but that was only fitted to those Hornets equipped with the Packard V-8 engine.

For the 1956 model year, the Hornet was offered in three distinct lines: the Super Six four-door sedan, and the Custom

I like this Hudson's color combination, the smiling grille, and the uniqueness of the car itself as it's an orphan make. Whenever I take this car out for a drive, it always gets a lot of attention…

Six and Custom V-8, both of which were available in either four-door sedan or two-door hardtop. Production of all three lines amounted to only 6,395 cars, with another 1,757 Hornet Special V-8s being built.

The Custom Six sat on a wheelbase extending to 121.25 inches, and its overall length was 209.25 inches, which better helped soak up road irregularities than shorter-wheelbase cars. But the main reason these model Hornets rode so well was their unitized body structure, which permitted the use of longer, MacPherson-style front coil spring assemblies that provided longer suspension travel for a smoother, steadier ride than standard coil springs. Wheels were 14 inches in diameter and were fitted with 8.00 x 14 bias-ply tires. To further aid the Twin-H carburetion, a dual exhaust system helped the engine get rid of its exhaust gases quicker.

As the years went on, and with production of Hudsons soon ending, the option list got smaller and smaller. The three main options available were power-assist brakes, power steering and power windows. The ever-popular exclusive Hudson "Airliner Reclining Seats," which folded completely flat into "Twin Travel Beds," were standard on the Custom Six. Hudson called its new interior "V-Line Styling," and stated in its brochure: "Hudson's new interiors feature modern, metallic-weave upholstery in a variety of colors, and combined with genuine leather or vinyl bolsters in either contrasting or harmonizing colors. Even the floor coverages feature new, colorful pile carpeting." In another brochure, Hudson went on to say: "…And matching interior fabrics and trim are served up in such wide choice that you're sure to find your own dream-car combination."

Speaking of dream-car color combinations, for a slight extra cost, there were 21 two- and three-tone color combination options, and 14 solid colors, all of which were applied in a hard-wearing baked-enamel finish. Hudson's sales literature stated, "Hudson's 1956 car colors are the greatest ever… refreshingly new, different, rich!" One of the more popular three-tone color combinations is the striking combo of our feature car, which consists of Frost White, Boulevard Gray and Ballerina Red.

Connecticut car collector Naif Makol is the owner of this tri-tone beauty, which has been driven only 65,000 miles from new. Naif adds about 400 miles to the Hornet's odometer every year. "I bought it at Hershey in 2008, after seeing it at Saturday's Car Corral, and drove it back home that afternoon," he told us. "This car is not original, but has been restored to original condition, although it was not completely disassembled. If they are low-mileage, original cars that have never been taken apart, they give you the closest driving experience to when they were new. I try to be a purist, so I only collect non-customized cars. The hardest part of maintaining this Hudson is maintaining its originality. All the parts on this car are either original to the car or the original style, except for the radiator cap, which I had to replace."

When he's not driving his 1956 Continental Mark II, '57 Imperial convertible, '58 Cadillac Series 60 Fleetwood or '60 Buick Electra, Naif enjoys taking his Hornet out for a leisurely drive through the back roads of his northern Connecticut home. "My original intention when I bought this Hudson was to sort out the car mechanically and aesthetically, then drive it and show it. The engine is pretty frisky for a six-cylinder flathead. It pulls very well through the entire rpm range. It's comfortable to drive and, surprisingly for a mid-'50s American car of this size, it handles very well."

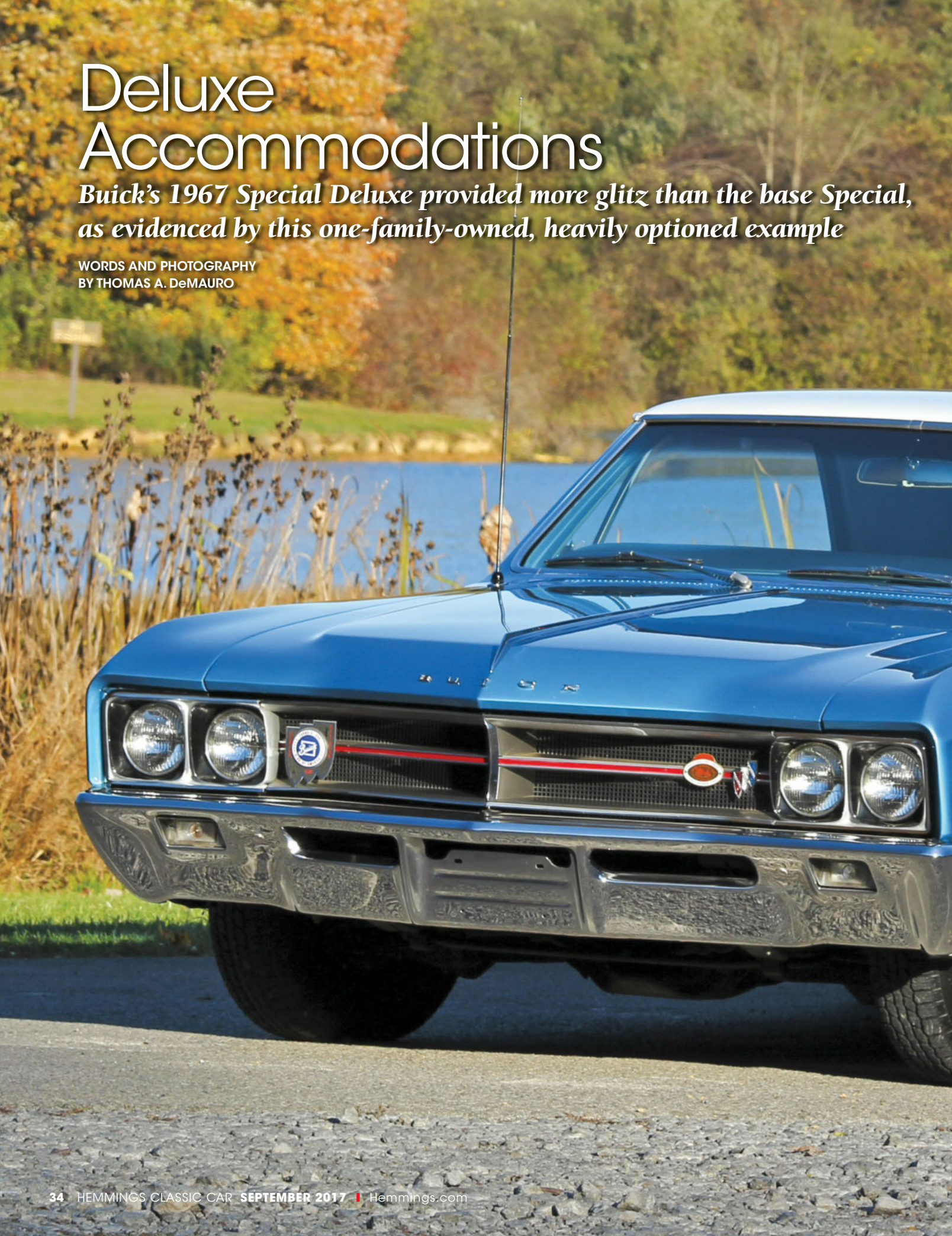
"I like this Hudson's color combination, the smiling grille, and the uniqueness of the car itself, as it's an orphan make," Naif was proud to tell us. "Whenever I take this car out for a drive, it always gets a lot of attention; it makes people who see it smile."


56895

Deluxe Accommodations

Buick's 1967 Special Deluxe provided more glitz than the base Special, as evidenced by this one-family-owned, heavily optioned example

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO



Except for the carpet, the entire interior is original, and it's equipped with a host of options and accessories. The 8-track tape player is particularly rare.

When the Buick, Oldsmobile, and Pontiac Y-body "senior compacts" graduated to midsize status for the 1964 model year, the resulting A-body platforms were comparatively conventional with regard to engineering. Gone were the Buick-developed aluminum 215-cu.in. V-8, Oldsmobile's cylinder heads and turbocharger for the 215, and Pontiac's half-a-V-8 four-cylinder engine, flexible driveshaft in a torque tube, rear-mounted transaxle and independent rear suspension. Retired, too, was the unitized construction on a 112-inch wheelbase that they all shared.

Instead, for the A-bodies, each division employed a six-cylinder engine and smaller V-8 that adhered to GM's 330 cubic-inch limit for the new intermediate models. Buick increased its 198-cu.in. iron V-6 to 225 cubic inches and developed a new 300-cu.in. V-8 that featured an iron block and aluminum cylinder heads and intake manifold.

Modern exterior and interior styling highlighted new bodies for each division with increased overall dimensions and more passenger and luggage space. The new perimeter frame, which attached to the shell via bolt-in rubber bushings, featured a longer 115-inch wheelbase.

Revisions for 1965 were fairly subtle for Buick's midsized cars. The big news was the mid-year introduction of the Skylark Gran Sport with the 401 V-8, which complied with GM's new 400-cubic-inch edict for its intermediate cars. (When Pontiac skirted GM's 330-cu.in. edict with its 389 GTO for 1964, it proved that the new A-bodies were large enough, and their available driveline and revised suspension components were robust enough, to accept larger V-8s.) Less touted was the fact that the Buick 300 engine now had iron cylinder heads and intake.

All of GM's A-body models received attractive new exteriors for 1966. Surfaces became more rounded, the flying buttress roof with recessed rear window and Coke-bottle side styling added visual drama, and new front and rear styling completed the package. The interior and instrument panel were also restyled, and Buick's mechanical offerings for its midsized cars were mostly carried over. A 340 V-8 was new, however.

The 1967 model year was the second of a two-year styling cycle, so the basic body design remained, but Buick's front-end became much more aggressive with a new "jet scoop" grille, "sculptured" hood, and bumper. The tail panel, taillamps, and

The Guide-Matic headlamp control momentarily dims the high beams for oncoming traffic. A 32,000 beam candle-power spotlamp can be pointed up, down, or rotated 360 degrees via an under-dash control.

rear bumper were also redesigned, as were the "Ventiports" and the side trim.

Buick's A-body line included the Special, Special Deluxe, Skylark, and GS 400 with the new 400 V-8, and each model contained various body styles. The GS 340 sport coupe and California GS thin-pillared coupe were also introduced. The Special Deluxe was between the Special and Skylark and could be had as a two-door sport coupe (hardtop), four-door sedan, or a station wagon. A two-door sport coupe wasn't offered as a V-6 base Special.

Compared to the Special, the Special Deluxe for 1967 added exterior hood, side, and rear bright trim and upgraded seat upholstery for its bench-seat interior, and "SPECIAL" lettering was on the front fenders instead of the rear quarter panels. It came standard with 160-hp, 225-cu.in. V-6, but the 210-hp, 300 two-barrel V-8 and 260-hp 340 four-barrel V-8 were optional. The standard transmission was a column-shifted three-speed manual, and the Super Turbine two-speed automatic was on the options list.

Our 1967 Buick Special Deluxe (Model-43517) driveReport car features the 300 V-8, automatic transmission, Blue Mist finish with white top, blue interior and wire wheel covers. "I can remember as a kid always going out to the garage when we would visit my grandparents to look at the '67 Buick," Keith Bleakney of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reminisces. "It always had a magical hold on me; I always loved getting to ride in it."

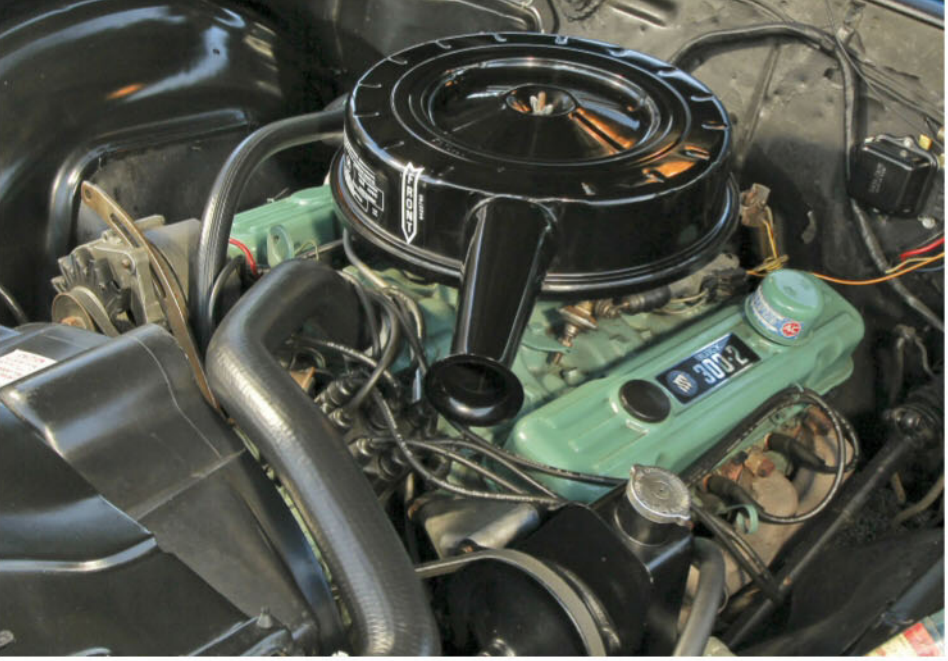
The Buick was purchased new by his grandfather, and features a multitude of extra-cost items. "He always liked the toys," Keith quips. "He even ordered the spotlamp so he could see deer. I used to joke with him that he ordered everything right except A/C. Ultimately, the lack of A/C is why he finally sold the car to me."

In April of 1979, Keith's childhood dream came true when he purchased his grandparents' Buick as his first car. With 89,000 miles on the odometer, the Flint flyer was complete and original.

In 1986, Keith decided to perform a cosmetic restoration on it. A parts car donated doors and a decklid, and a local shop, long since defunct, was tasked with stripping the body to bare metal, installing the replacement parts, repairing any rust and dings and refinishing the Buick in its stock colors using a modern Sherwin Williams basecoat/clearcoat system. The trim has since been polished or rechromed as needed, and NOS bumpers and headlamp bezels have been installed.

The interior, except for a new carpet, and the chassis, except for new coil springs and shocks, remain original, and the 300-cu. in. two-barrel engine, Super Turbine transmission, and 2.78-geared Positive Traction differential have yet to require rebuilds.

Upon sliding behind the wheel of the Special Deluxe, an



The optional 300-cu.in. two-barrel engine currently has over 140,000 miles on it. Though it has been detailed, it has not required a rebuild. A reel-out underhood lamp is another extra-cost convenience accessory.

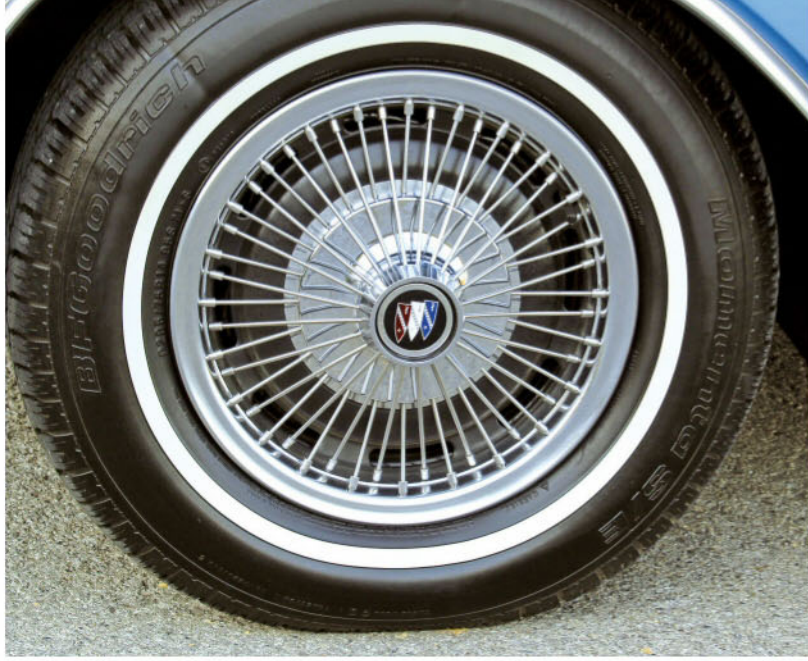
air of affordable luxury is realized. The bench seat is differently upholstered than that of the Special. It's more ornate, with two colors and metal embellishments. It's not as sporty in appearance as the upscale Skylark, but it's quite comfortable.

The instrument panel layout, which is shared with all of Buick's A-body models, features a horizontal speedometer with clustered tiny warning lamps and the fuel gauge to its left, and the optional clock on the right, but no discernible space for accessory gauges. Switchgear is neatly arranged beneath the speedometer and vertical heater/defroster controls are more centrally located.

The layout comes across as quite formal when compared to the sportier round gauge designs of Oldsmobile's F-85 and Pontiac's Tempest. Contributing further to the plush atmosphere is a veritable treasure trove of convenience options and accessories, which are seemingly everywhere.

A GM compass is mounted on the rearview mirror, and there are knobs for the Spotlamp, Guide-Matic headlamp control, and rear defroster dotted about the dash. There's a purse hook. The speed alert is in the speedometer face, and the passenger is pampered with tissues from a swingout chrome-faced dispenser and has access to a sun visor-mounted vanity mirror. An AM/FM radio (with rear seat speaker) and 8-track, and even a waste basket are within easy reach of both front seat occupants.

Peering out the windshield, you are reminded of yet more accessories as you see the Spotlamp and Guide-Matic unit. From the driver's seat, visibility is very good, overall. Typical of all two-door A-bodies of the era, however, are the blind spots created by



the roof's sail panels, which make the optional passenger-side outside rearview mirror all the more necessary. The seating position is comfortable, putting major controls within easy reach, and the new-for-1967 steering wheel, with two thin horizontal spokes and a wide vertical one at the bottom, which contains the padded horn button, ensures an unencumbered view of the speedometer.

A twist of the key awakens the 300 V-8, which settles into a quiet idle through non-stock dual exhaust. Out on the road, the Special Deluxe is a smooth performer. Power steering is nearly effortless, which some may not like because of the inherent lack of road feel, but it seems to be in character for this Buick. Oddly, with all those options we've discussed, you may not have noticed the fact that power brakes are not one of them. Thus, the extra pedal pressure required to stop the Buick through its four-wheel drum-brake system, though not objectionable, is noticeable and a touch out of sorts with the somewhat luxurious feel this vehicle exudes.

Handling is what you'd expect from a moderately softly sprung A-body of this era. It leans in the turns, though not excessively, but the ride is smooth and secure, and the car feels like it was built well, with no untoward creaks or rattles to be heard.

Engine power is not ample, but again, it's more than adequate for the Buick's intended purpose. It's unobtrusive, yet will likely get you onto the expressway with alacrity when called upon to do so. The dual exhaust freed up a few additional horsepower, as well.

The Super Turbine two-speed automatic has only one upshift, from low to high gear, but contains another feature to augment performance and efficiency. "Switch-the-Pitch" (aka "Switch Pitch") describes changes in the position of the vanes in the stator to facilitate acceleration at wider throttle openings and efficiency in cruise situations at smaller throttle openings. Its transition isn't really perceptible, except of course for the increased push to higher road speeds, and it reduces creep when the vehicle is stopped and in gear.

Though we didn't venture out onto the Interstate during our brief test drive, with 2.78 gears in the extra-cost Positive Traction differential it's a good bet that highway rpm will remain quite low, reducing noise and wear, and again reinforcing this Buick's comfortable cruising disposition.

Likely the best compliment this particular Special Deluxe can be given is that it in no way behaves like a car that has existed 50 years and traveled 140,000 miles. Of course, maintenance has been performed regularly, and the springs and shocks were replaced, and it's riding on newer whitewall radials—radial tires were actually an option for 1967 according to Keith. The A-body was painted in 1986, but its Blue Mist metallic finish still shines.

The car has given me 37 years of pleasure, excellent reliability, and the opportunity to meet so many people. And it has taken me to so many different places for meets. It amazes me at times that I have owned the car three times longer than my granddad did; I still think of it as his car. When the time comes, I will pass it on to my son who is now 24 and who has been all over the country with me in it since the time he was born.

If what you've seen in the photos and gleaned from our comments still hasn't convinced you of this A-body's condition, bear in mind that it has also garnered impressive accolades over the years, including an AACA First Junior, AACA Senior, Buick Club of America Senior Gold, and multiple First Place awards at Buick Regionals. It also earned a Best of Show at a regional meet held in Flint, Michigan, where the Special Deluxe was chosen, and the award was presented by Buick's general manager.

Despite all the road time since 1979, it was showing the Buick that created one of Keith's fondest memories. "I think my highlight with this car came in 1992 at Hershey for the AACA meet, during the drive onto the field for what's known as the car show parade," Keith says. "I can remember how exciting it was with all the people lining the route and how terribly proud I was to have my grandad's Buick finally there. It earned its first Junior at that meet."

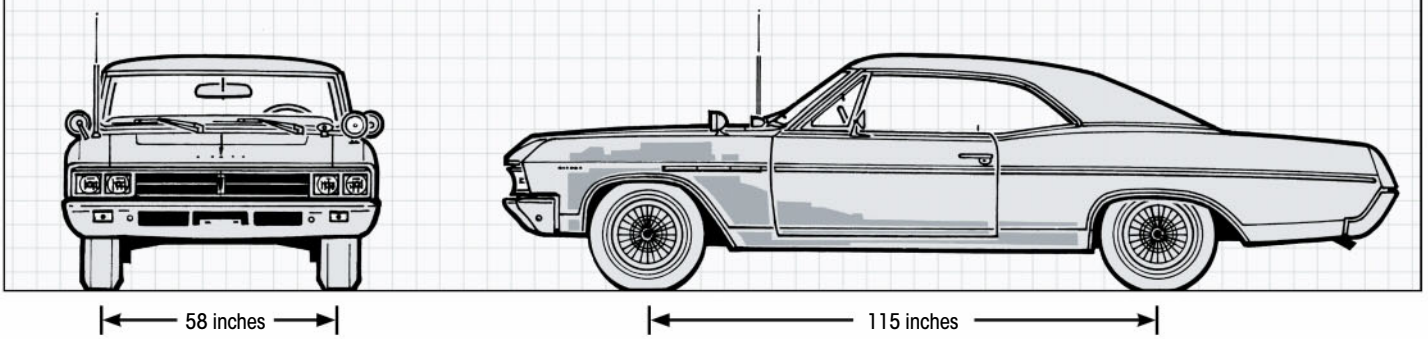
This Special Deluxe has been in Keith's life since he was seven years old, and that's not about to change any time soon. Consequently, his plan remains the same as it's always been, to simply continue to maintain and drive it to cruises and national meets when he's not otherwise involved with his 1972 Buick Electra Limited, 1990 Buick Reatta convertible, or 2003 Ford Thunderbird.

Buick's Special Deluxe was positioned in its model hierarchy to provide a little more flash than the base Special, but remain less expensive than the Skylark. Keith's grandfather took the word "Deluxe" to heart and made sure his was outfitted to live up to its name. He then kept the car for 12 years and ensured that it stayed in the family. Buick fostered that kind of loyalty back then, and Keith has carried it forward.

"When Better Automobiles are Built, Buick Will Build Them," the division stated in 1967. After spending some time behind the wheel, we believe this Special Deluxe ranks as a better-built Buick.

1967 BUICK SPECIAL DELUXE

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



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	$2,566
OPTIONS (AS PROFILED)	300 V-8, $69.51; Super Turbine transmission, $205.24; power steering, $94.79; Positive Traction, $42.13; whitewall tires, $31.60; speed alert, $8.43; rear window defroster, $23.25; wire wheel covers, $25.00; custom seat belts, $6.32; Soft Ray tinted glass, $30.54; two-tone paint, $26.33 Guide-Matic headlight control, $41.95; AM/FM radio, $133.76; rear-seat speaker, $16.64; Delco 8-track, $113.50; Carpet Savers and Handy Mats, $12.19; clock, $18.50; Spotlamp, $36.00; litter basket, $2.55; tissue dispenser, $5.10; purse hook, $1.00; license plate frame, $1.80; under-hood utility light, $7.85; luggage compartment light, $2.80; visor vanity mirror, $2.50; glove box light, $1.00; auto trunk release, $11.05; trunk mat, $4.75; right-hand mirror, $4.50; door-edge guards, $4.74; wheel-opening moldings, $31.60; compass, $6.95; destination, $67

ENGINE

TYPE	Buick OHV V-8, cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	300 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	3.75 x 3.40 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.0:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	210 @ 4,400
TORQUE @ RPM	310 lb-ft @ 2,400
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic valve lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Two-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Super Turbine two-speed automatic	
RATIOS	1st	1.765:1
	2nd	1.00:1
	Reverse	1.765:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Positive Traction (limited-slip)
GEAR RATIO	2.78:1
DRIVE AXLES	Semi-floating

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball nut, power assist
RATIO	20.9:1, overall
TURNING CIRCLE	40.6 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, four-wheel drum
FRONT	9 x 2.50-inch drum
REAR	9 x 2.00-inch drum

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Welded and bolt-on steel body panels, separate steel perimeter frame
BODY STYLE	Two-door, hardtop
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; coil springs, hydraulic shocks, anti-roll bar
REAR	Solid axle; four-link, coil springs, hydraulic shocks

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	14 x 6-inch stamped-steel with wheel covers
TIRES	7.75 x 14 bias-ply, currently 205/70R14 radials

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	115 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	205 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	75.4 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	53.2 inches
FRONT TRACK	58 inches
REAR TRACK	59 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	3,202 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts w/filter
COOLING SYSTEM	12.7 quarts
FUEL TANK	20 gallons
TRANSMISSION	9.5 quarts
DIFFERENTIAL	2.75 pints

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	.700
WEIGHT PER BHP	15.247 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU. IN.	10.673 pounds

PRODUCTION

1967 BUICK SPECIAL DELUXE TWO-DOOR SPORT COUPE (HARDTOP) MODEL-43517, V-6 AND V-8	2,333

PROS & CONS

+ Numerous options
+ One-family owned
+ Appealing Buick styling

– Value not as high as the GS
– Not as quick as the 340
– No air conditioning

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
$4,000 – $5,000

AVERAGE
$8,000 – $10,000

HIGH
$13,000 – $15,000

CLUB CORNER

BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA
P.O. Box 360775
Columbus, Ohio 43236
614-472-3939
www.buickclub.org
Dues: $50/year
Membership: 8,000

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA
501 W. Governor Road
P.O. Box 417
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
717-534-1910
www.aaca.org
Dues: $35/year
Membership: 60,000

Whatever Happened to the McLouth?

I don't recall exactly where or when I first saw the McLouth automobile... but it struck me as the most unusual car I'd ever seen.

When I first got into the old-car hobby, one of my favorite pastimes was reading about obscure makes of American automobiles. For some reason, they absolutely fascinated me; the more off-beat the car was, the better I liked it.

There were not many books written about short-run American autos, but I devoured every one I found and loved playing the "expert" with fellow car guys by displaying my latest newfound knowledge. (In retrospect, I'm sure I must have irritated a lot of people–sorry, guys!). There were occasional magazine articles on obscure brands, perhaps the best being a multi-issue series called the "Quarter Century Chronicle," written by R. Perry Zavits in the old *Car Collector/Car Classics* magazine back in the 1970s. I was in hog heaven when that came out.

I don't recall exactly where or when I first saw the McLouth automobile, whether it was in a book or magazine article, but it struck me as the most unusual car I'd ever seen. I can't explain why, but I was absolutely floored by its unique design.

The photo shown here is the same one I saw some 40 years ago, a black-and-white press image of an unusual four-door car with a steeply sloped rear. With an upright front end looking much like a small city bus, headlamps recessed into deep, rounded sockets unadorned by any sort of trim, and a slim bumper bar set bladelike in a recess just below the headlamps, it looked like something out of the distant future. In fact, it still does today. The front doors ride above the front wheels, like an early Econoline van's, and feature flush window glass. The rear doors are much larger than the fronts, and the flush glass reaches up higher into the roofline. The back features a sharply sloped "C" panel. But I think what impressed me the most were the soft, sheer body lines, which were highlighted to best advantage by the subtle two-tone paint scheme. Chrome trim was kept to a minimum, so the lines are still clean and modern. It was just so different from any other car I'd seen to that point. Look how the wheel openings arch out over the tires, how smoothly the windshield integrates into the overall shape. It's really a clever design. Later, when the AMC Pacer came out, I thought it had some of the McLouth's flavor.

But finding any details about the McLouth proved impossible back in the days before the internet; try as I might, I was unable to learn anything about the car, other than its name. Now, thanks to the worldwide web, I'm able to provide some details.

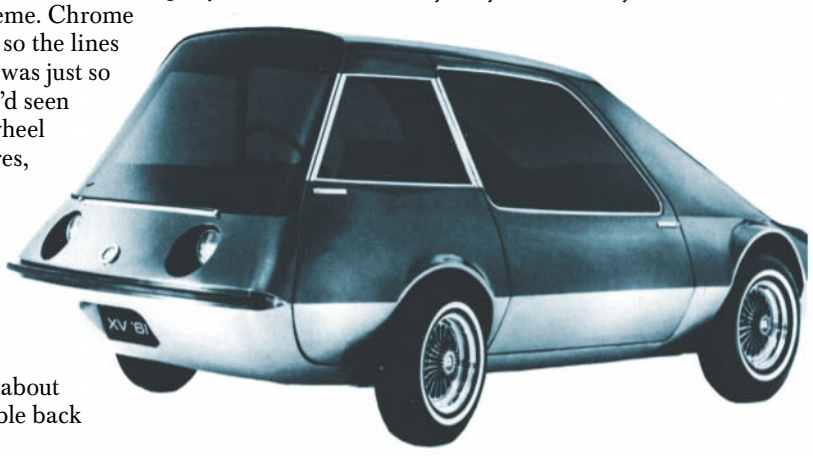
Construction of the McLouth automobile was commissioned by the McLouth Steel Corporation of Detroit, Michigan, and it was displayed at the New York International Automobile Show, held in April 1961. In a press release, the company referred to the car as the McLouth XV'61 (Xperimental Vehicle 1961) and explained that it was "… a concept, not a forecast. But it is an exciting and a possible concept".

The McLouth, the company claimed, was specifically designed to be used in conjunction with an advanced Monorail system because "… transportation engineers and planners believe that future travel will rely heavily on monorail systems for the safe, convenient and rapid transportation of people and goods between distant points. Nearly all systems proposed to date make use of multi-passenger … trains. Few, if any, have considered the monorail as a means of transporting personal vehicles from point to point so that the traveler may have private transportation at his destination."

According to the press release, the idea was to place McLouth cars on small platforms that would be "…affixed to a platform or 'pod,' which was mounted on a section of the monorail track". The vehicles could then "…be carried safely at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour…". Exactly what was special about the design is unclear. Why any other car couldn't be fixed to a pod in a similar manner and put on a monorail wasn't explained.

Nor were any details given about the drivetrain, other than a sketch indicating it had a rear-engine layout. I don't know if the concept was even equipped with an engine or transmission.

More than that, I don't know what happened to the car. Has anybody seen it lately?



EMAIL YOUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS TO: **rlentinello@hemmings.com**

REGARDING PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN "A Question of Muscle," in *HCC* #154, I consider the 1936 Buick Century to be the first true muscle car. Having only a 122-inch wheelbase and the Roadmaster 320-cu.in., 120-hp engine, the Century was a real performer.
Rich Walters
Eagleville, Pennsylvania

THE ARGUMENT ABOUT WHO HAD the first muscle car is one that has gone on for years. The arguments start with the Essex Terraplane of 1932, to the 1936 Buick Century. They were cars that used a smaller body and a bigger engine to fill a hole in their manufacturers' lineups. The 1949 Oldsmobile 88 and the 1954 Buick Century did the same thing. The Hudson Hornet was a car that had a huge parts book that could be used to make those cars go fast on the race track, and they could corner for days. The 1957 Rambler Rebel and the 1956 Studebaker Golden Hawk were top-of-the-line cars that were limited-production, and the 1964 Pontiac GTO was in the right place at the right time to be the first affordable muscle car.

Pontiac was able to do what it did because of its corporate pricing structure and its clever staff. There's a reason that the passing of Pontiac is mourned in my house.
Charles Winingham
Alton, Illinois

THE FIRST "MUSCLE CAR" WAS THE 1955 Chrysler 300. Nicknamed "the beautiful brute," it had unprecedented performance in a sporty package. Perhaps not as bare-bones as the 1964 GTO or 1968 Road Runner, it nevertheless was the first packaged performance car.
Ron Santos
West Warwick, Rhode Island

AS USUAL, PAT HAS DONE HIS research well. His offering of the Rambler Rebel and the 1956 Studebaker Hawk with the Packard Clipper V-8 are top candidates for examples of the first muscle cars. But let me suggest going back a bit further in time—to the 1930s, when Buick created the Century by packing the big 320-cu.in. straight-eight from the Roadmaster into a Buick Special body. By the way, the Roadmaster engine claimed 165 hp, the same as Packard's largest straight-eight.

If we choose not to address the four-door versus two-door part of the equation, I believe the prewar Buick Century should have a shot at being considered the first factory muscle car. The moniker "the banker's hot-rod" seems to claim this distinction.
Scott Geesey
North Chesterfield, Virginia

A LONG TIME AGO, MY DAD AND I attended a car show that represented cars from the 1920s to the '80s, and came across a 1933 Essex Terraplane Eight. To me, it was nothing special, but to my dad it was a shot in the arm. He told me when he turned 16 back in 1948, he and his brother bought one from a neighbor for $25. With a little TLC, they got the car running and drove it for two years. I remember him telling me, "This car drove faster than stink."

The 1933 Essex Terraplane Eight was a mid-size car, built for only one year, and was equipped with a full-size Hudson straight-eight engine providing 94 hp in a 2,400-pound car. (That was 19 more horsepower than a comparable Ford). That Essex was one of the fastest cars of its day, reaching 80 mph. It also set numerous speed records, including over 100 stock car records.

Was this the first muscle car? If not, it should be getting an honorable mention.
Mark Lamphron
Rochester, New York

IN ISSUE #153, JERRY RAMSDALE wonders why the '57 Chevy is so popular. I think the biggest factor is nostalgia. The car was a million seller in its day, so "everybody" had one, or knew someone who did. Plus, what was popular when new is often then popular later, like the Model A Ford and the Mustang. A popular new car will most likely be a popular used car, too.

Regarding the '57 Chevy in particular, it was also in its third year of that body style, whereas the low-price competition, Ford and Plymouth, were in their first year of new bodies—neither of which had the long-term durability that would have been desirable. So, in the end, more '57 Chevys survived in any case.
Wayne Janzen
New Westminster, B.C. Canada

BESIDES BEING A GOOD ARTICLE ON '70s Coupe de Villes, Jeff Koch's feature in *HCC* #154 also reminded me of the color choices of the day. This wasn't exclusive to Cadillac, but they had an endless selection of beautiful combinations. When most luxury cars today are black, white, or some shade of gray, in those days you had choices—a lot of choices. My best friend's 1978 Coupe de Ville, which was his daily driver in the early '80s, was blue with a white top and darkish blue leather. My parents had a 1977 Seville in Buckskin Firemist with matching leather. Both cars were beautiful. And just look at the illustrations in the article! There were so many choices of exterior paint and upholstery colors, it was staggering compared to today. And customers bought them!

I have a 1973 Cadillac brochure that features a Coupe de Ville with a silver body and black top. Elegant at the time, matter-of-fact today. But, it had an Oxblood Red leather interior. Oxblood? Name a car today of any stature that offers an Oxblood Red leather interior. If you bought a big Mercedes or high-end Cadillac today in Canyon Copper Firemist, as the beautiful cover car is painted, you'd be considered eccentric. Or at least someone with bad taste. And it would certainly reduce your car's resale value. I sure miss the '70s when it comes to individuality and color choices.
Ron Schultz
Las Vegas, Nevada

I WAS GREATLY SADDENED WHEN I heard that *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car* was coming to an end. I just received my first issue of its replacement, *Hemmings Classic Car*; I might as well give it a try. When I got to page eight, I saw a familiar name, Richard Lentinello—a good sign. Richard's column in *HCC* #154, "The Punk Rock Effect," is literary genius!

Although I am not a punk rock fan—my taste runs more to '60s and '70s rock, Jimmy Buffett and Jackson Browne—music speaks to me, also. Oh yeah, so do cars! Richard's views on car ownership ring so true. I say buy and drive whatever blows your hair back. Who cares what others may think? If it makes you happy, then I am happy for you. I remember years ago when one of my car buddies decided to install a big-block Chevy in his Cobra replica. Many gasps from folks. Blasphemy, they said. Geez, it was his car, let him do what he wants. And for god's sake, it was not like he was butchering a classic; it was a replica!

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Young Folks and Old Cars

When he remade Pontiac Division from frumpy to exciting in the late 1950s, Bunkie Knudsen quipped, "You can sell an old man a young man's car, but you can't sell a young man an old man's car." That was true then and likely remains true in the new-car world, but as a relatively young man of 35, my observations suggest that that is no longer true in the old-car hobby.

Conventional wisdom has it that the next wave of collector enthusiasm will be for the so-called "malaise" era of the '70s and '80s, followed by '90s stuff. That's based on the preferences of today's moneyed collectors who are largely focused on muscle-era cars from the late '50s to the early '70s—the era when they were in high school and the cars that they coveted were new. The generation before them sought V-8 Fords of the 1930s and exotics like Auburns and Cords.

The problem with this thinking is that there are very few newer cars that excite on the same level as a Tri-Power Bonneville convertible or an Auburn Speedster. Henry Ford II told *Time* magazine as early as 1970 that he thought "the glamour of the automobile [was] decreasing," and that people were already viewing a car as "a machine to get from place to place to do something else."

He was right. Not too many people who went to high school in the '80s and '90s viewed new cars as much more than transportation. The natural culmination of those trends is in the emphasis of current automakers on infotainment, and the rise of the self-driving car.

But for those who like cars and like driving, most of the excitement is still found in earlier cars. One of the under-the-radar hot areas right now for people in their 40s and younger is prewar cars. Part of this is financial—as the folks who grew up with those cars and later collected them get out of the hobby, there is a glut on the market of '20s to early '50s automobiles. Anything from the low- and middle-priced makes of that era that isn't a Ford V-8 is affordable right now—especially if it has four doors.

Prewar cars provide a radically different experience from the numb, isolation of a modern car. In the era before freeways, when 100 horsepower was a lot, driving was rawer and more adventuresome. Still glamorous. Automobiles were also made of more-durable materials and with simpler construction techniques. That glamour and quality isn't found in an '80s or '90s car that was built to drive the same superslabs that exist today.

Another part of the appeal of such old cars to young folks is that they play into a larger movement in youth culture: A search for authenticity and an era before disposable consumer goods. Look at the rise of gatherings like the Jazz Age Lawn Party in New York City—something more than a living-history event, it's a way for people to continue an earlier era. And it's done with respect and completely without irony.

Some of these young retrophiles enjoy vintage cars alongside other hallmarks of the era: clothing, household appliances, entertainment venues, music, dancing, films, cameras, and the like. That's a kind of context many cars haven't enjoyed since they were new.

One of my favorite examples of a young person with a vintage car is Robert Smith, a 39-year-old stage manager at L.A.'s Cicada Club. Robert got into the 1940s in the 1990s, as a young teen. Pop culture included things like the swing-dance revival and celebrations stemming from the 50th anniversary of World War II. He saw unrestored '30s and '40s cars. One whiff of an old mohair interior, and he was hooked on the simplicity and style of an earlier era.

Twenty years later, Robert and his wife, Ashley, are full-time retrophiles (see photo). Their vintage apartment is furnished with pieces from the '30s and '40s, and their wardrobes and even their appliances are of an era from long before they were born. In the garage is Robert's 1940 Dodge Luxury Liner. As a four-door sedan, it was affordable; as a flathead Mopar, it is a piece of cake to maintain; and it wows people far out of proportion to its actual cost to own.

Are all of these young people as hardcore as Robert? No, but the same things that appeal—the simplicity, the authenticity, the aesthetics, and the bang for the buck—are applicable to the more casual young person who is tired of the treadmill of cheap, disposable goods that modern life runs on. Keep your eyes open, you'll see them.

"One whiff of an old mohair interior, and he was hooked on the simplicity and style of an earlier era."

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Thanks again for the great read. It was the best column I have read since "The Softer Side of Sears," by Craig Fitzgerald in *HS&EC* back in 2010.

OK, I admit it, I kinda like Green Day.

Billy Hufnagel
Placentia, California

I REALLY ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN *HCC* #154 on the 1955 Oldsmobile. I remember these cars very well as used cars in my youth in Boston. They were the upper echelon of used cars and very sought after because of the Rocket V-8.

One thing that I do recall about these Oldsmobiles is that, at least as used cars, they had very noisy valvetrains, almost like they had solid lifters. In fact, that was what we thought back in the day, so I was surprised to see that you listed them as having hydraulic lifters, which should have been quieter. I had a '58 Olds with the 371-cu.in. V-8, and it was one of the most quiet engines at idle that I have ever experienced. At any rate, I would be interested if any of your readers remember this as well and what it was that made these fine 324 V-8's sound like they were dragging a chain around.

Bob Brooks
Suffield, Connecticut

REGARDING MILTON STERN'S Detroit Underdogs column in *HCC* #154 on the third-generation Falcon, I agree these are great cars, but the lack of reproduction parts keeps most enthusiasts from considering them. While the 1960-'65 Falcons have a strong aftermarket, it is nonexistent for the 1966-'70 models; and that's a shame. They were well-built, economy transportation, and more stylish than the 1966 compact offerings of either GM or Chrysler. Maybe, someday, the collector world will realize what it has been missing. Until then, keep up the excellent work of putting the forgotten models into the eyes of younger enthusiasts!

Howard Leach
Buffalo, Texas

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

Patina or Perfection?

> While we honor and respect cars restored to perfection, don't we spend a little more time admiring a rare, original car's authentic, unrestored features?

What might be the fastest-growing segments of our collector-car hobby? How about trucks and station wagons… and original, unrestored cars?

A good case could be made for trucks. The contemporary new-vehicle market has shifted dramatically to trucks in the last 30 years. An increased interest in collectible trucks logically follows, because trucks formerly constituted a smaller percentage of overall vehicle sales, and those that were sold tended to be used up as the utilitarian vehicles they were.

Regarding station wagons, our hobby has nicknamed them "long roofs." Station wagons have experienced increased favor of late among baby boomers who fondly remember classic American road trips in their family's wagon. Those were humorously overplayed in National Lampoon's unforgettable 1983 movie, *Vacation.* The movie's customized 1979 Ford LTD Country Squire, *The Wagon Queen Family Truckster,* was a star in and of itself, its styling "improvements" notwithstanding.

The 1970s malaise hit the big station wagon market hard. Smaller wagons like Vegas and Pintos and the popular Volare/Aspen twins helped push the annual 1970s wagon tally over 1,000,000 at its peak, before that market was co-opted by 1980s mini-vans and 1990s SUVs. (As the owner of a sliding-roof 1964 Studebaker Daytona Wagonaire, I can attest to a unique station wagon's attraction at any car show. An invitation for young parents to hoist their tykes aboard the cargo area to view the show from the open roof is always tendered to promote good public relations for our hobby.)

But is there a more rapidly-growing segment of our hobby than original, unrestored cars? Do any cars at a show attract more attention? Probably not. We even devote regular features to them in *HCC* in the Driveable Dreams department.

However, the term "original," when applied to collector cars, is fraught with land mines. What defines an original car? I'll propose the following simple definition: An original, unrestored car is one that has never looked worse than it does today, periodic detailing and routine wear items (tires, belts, hoses, etc.) excepted.

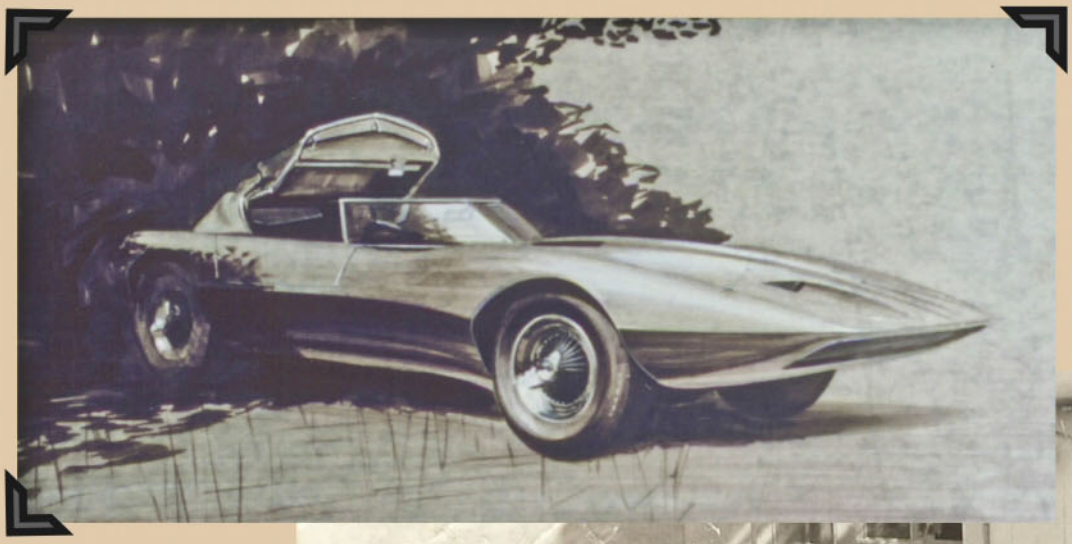
That definition makes a lot of sense if you stop to think about it. Every car has been dirty at some time, so, naturally, an original car at a show would have looked worse than it does today until it was detailed. However, if a car has been repainted, how can it be legitimately described as an original car? After all, isn't new paint a step away from originality, toward perfection?

Superficial blemishes due to age and use on an original car are its patina. In our hobby, the polar opposite of original patina is restored perfection. Consider: With enough money, virtually any old rusty or wrecked carcass hauled out of a junkyard can be made perfect, but all the money in the world can't return it to the status it would have enjoyed as a grandma's gently-used original with appropriate patina. While we honor and respect cars restored to perfection, don't we spend a little more time admiring a rare, original car's authentic, unrestored features?

This spring, I had the pleasure of connecting the buyer and seller of the Timberline Turquoise 1966 Studebaker Cruiser shown here, built during Studebaker's swan-song year. It's an original-paint car needing no paint work. Yes, its patina includes a few door dings and paint chips, attesting to its originality. The interior, however, is not only original, but virtually perfect. The odometer read 25,793 miles when this photo was taken, and is most assuredly accurate.

The *HCC* subscriber who now owns it will enjoy many summers attending a variety of car shows. Attendees may ask him who restored the car. As caretaker of a nice, original car, he will enjoy telling them it has never been repainted, much less restored, and witness their disbelief.

This year, take a moment to appreciate the history to be experienced by inspecting and respecting an original car. Given the choice of patina or perfection, you'll likely notice a larger crowd around a clean, original car with more of the former and less of the latter.



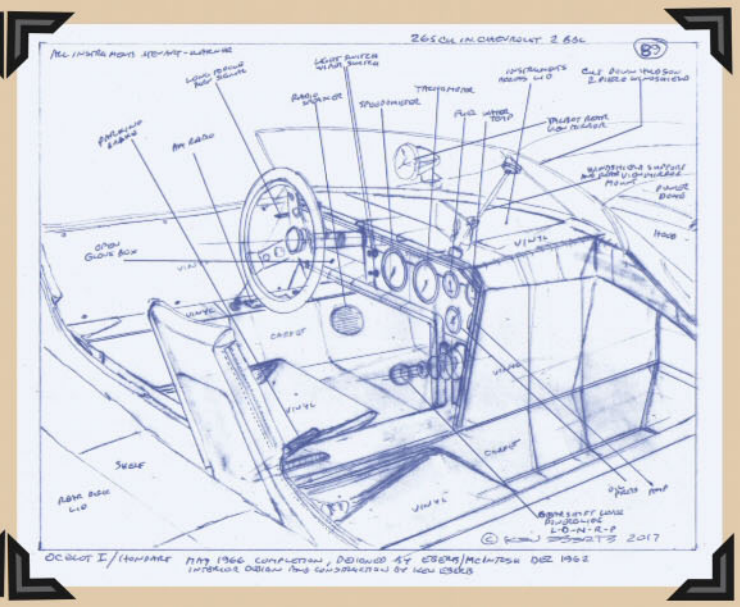
At left: My 1964 rendering of the Ocelot sports car illustrated the proposed design and operation of a folding convertible roof. Below: In 1963, I stood by the finished full-sized plaster body pattern, off which the fiberglass molds for all body panels would be made.

The "Hondart" Adventure

Before becoming one of America's most beloved automotive fine artists, Ken Eberts built his own sports car

WORDS AND IMAGES COURTESY OF KEN EBERTS • EDITED BY MARK J. McCOURT

Dave McIntosh and I met at Sophie's Boarding House, having arrived at the same time, on our first day at Art Center School ("ACS," now Pasadena's Art Center College of Design) in Los Angeles, California. We came from different backgrounds—he was the son of a successful oil man from Kentucky, while I grew up in a Bronx, New York, walk-up apartment—but we both thought almost exclusively about cars, and immediately became close friends. We soon met a former ACS student who'd built a fiberglass sports car on a Buick chassis. That inspired Dave and me to do better—we'd build our own dream cars, one for each of us.



At left: After a series of sketches, Dave and I sculpted a small-scale clay model; one side showed his design, the other mine. We ultimately selected Dave's design as the basis for our two cars. Right: This illustration shows the ultimate layout of the Ocelot/Hondart interior, as it looked in May 1966, and includes my custom-made seats.

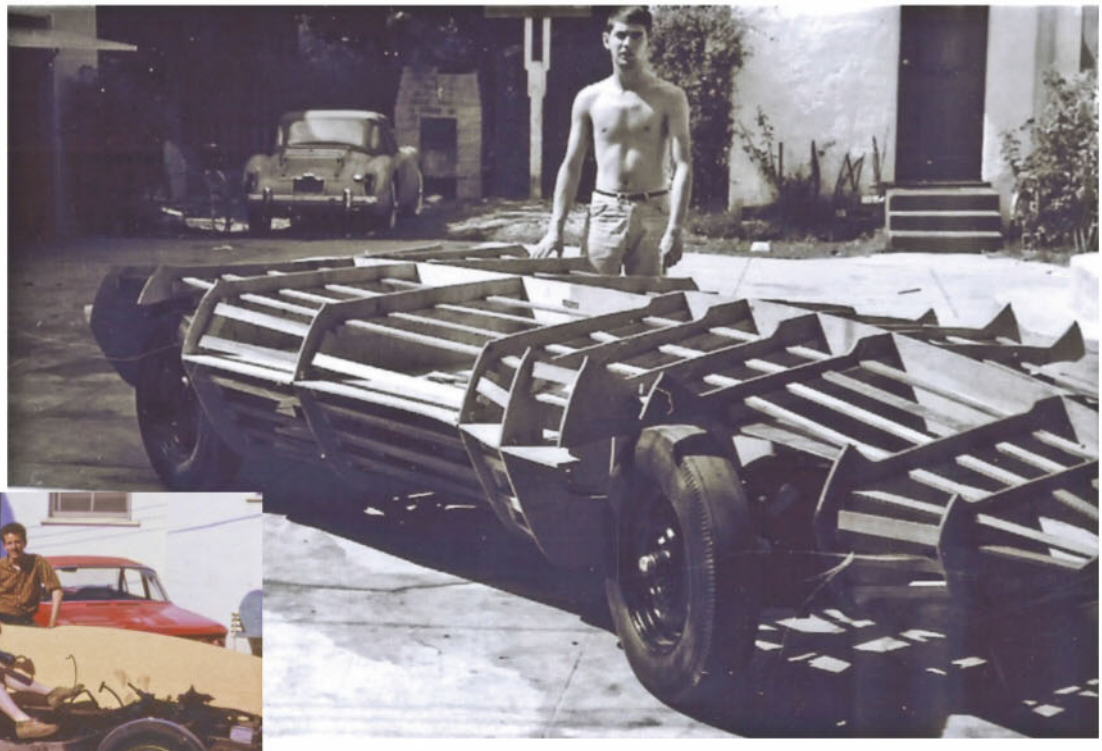
We started out with sketches. Dave had design ideas pouring from his head to his fingers. While everyone else sketches with lots of lines and erasing, Dave just needed one line; his wheels with one line were perfect ellipses. I'd say, 'Yes, I like that idea,' or 'Maybe you could change it like so.' I did some sketches, but most of the design came from his fertile mind.

A scale clay model was next: Dave did one side, I the other. They were very similar, but we chose Dave's side, which was better defined. We both liked the final design well enough to start building it, and signed off on it in December 1962.

A $50 1950 Ford was our first base, but we decided its 108-inch wheelbase was longer than ideal for a sports car: 100 inches was better. The junkyard purchase of a 1951 Henry J—a small, body-on-frame car costing $46.80—was our real start, and we had a rolling chassis with a gas tank. We rented two one-car garages in our building, and that's where we drafted the design in side view and plan view—this was called 'lofting,' where we figured and laid out the sections of the body. When the day came to cut the first piece of plywood for the contour profile, we had plenty of volunteers to help; they soon disappeared after seeing how much work was involved.

We built our pattern, a full-size plaster model, using a wood spaceframe structure, onto which we applied a lot of plaster of Paris. Then we shaved and sculpted the plaster down to the design plywood ribs. We usually appeared ghostly after this work, being covered in white plaster powder. After finishing sculpting the plaster model, we sealed it with a coat of shellac, and then black paint.

Below: Dave sits in the Henry J frame as I hold the plywood cut-out, mocking up the central spine of the body form, in place. At right: Dave stands with the completed wood pattern, which will be covered in chicken wire, paper, and plaster, to form the body pattern shown above left.



Applying, then shaving and sanding the plaster of Paris to create the body shape, were some of the messiest parts of the building process. Next we see Ocelot I and Ocelot II in raw fiberglass, on their frames, separated by the upper body mold.

It was late 1963 when our next step was to build fiberglass molds on top of the plaster pattern. Dave and I bought a 55-gallon drum of polyester resin, and yards and yards of fiberglass mat and cloth. Our molds were designed to come apart in sections, so we could release the body from them after "laying" up the inside with fiberglass. We pulled the first body out of the molds in February 1964, then went on to laying up the second body. After we finished those molds, you could tell I did most of the fiberglassing, as my clothes stood by themselves when I took them off at night.

It was then that we found a second Henry J chassis, and the Chevrolet 283-cu.in. V-8 that would be our engine; we also decided to use 1950s Hudson windshields, cut to fit our body design. Building the plaster pattern, molds, and the two bodies, had proved a tremendous job requiring many hours of labor, but Dave and I were aided by our friends and fellow ACS students Lenny Stobar (who understood body fabrication from growing up in his father's pattern shop), Alvin Ako, and Bob Kuester. I took a semester off ACS to devote more time to building the cars. As they took shape, we named them "Ocelot I" (mine) and "Ocelot II" (Dave's). At that point, we'd spent about $2,000 on the chassis and parts.

Upon Dave's graduation in the fall of 1964, he was hired onto the General Motors design staff—his successful GM career would later include styling Buick's Reatta—and Ocelot II was shipped to Detroit. My final semester at ACS ran through January 1965, and when I graduated, I took a job offer from Ford. This automaker followed GM's courtesy to Dave, and moved Ocelot I from L.A. to Detroit for me. After a year of focusing on my new career, I resumed work on the car in rented garage space.

Chuck Hance taking a photo of Hondart and me in Eric, Oklahoma, June 1966. Note the modified front air scoops, tilted hood for airflow, and replacement front tires.

The Henry J frame proved too flexible, so I paid $75 for a 1956 Corvette that had burned from the windshield-forward. I used the Chevy's frame and fiberglass floor—its 102-inch wheelbase worked fine—and while the Ocelot's body had to be cut to fit the Corvette frame, the 283 V-8 I'd bought at a Detroit wrecking yard for $88.40, slid right in.

I decided to leave Ford for a job in California in May 1966, and since I wanted to drive it out, this left me 30 days to finish Ocelot I. My roommates, Larry Wood and Chuck Hance, pitched in to help with wiring and other necessities. I fabricated the interior with cardboard sandwiched between laid-up fiberglass, built a pair of racing bucket seats to my design, and bought American Racing mags and Firestone Wide Oval racing tires. In the rush to finish, 1,500-candle-

I painted my vision of the completed Hondart—with its Honda S600-registered license plate, and my wife, Liz Eberts—on Route 66.

power pencil beam driving lamps had to stand in for the retractable headlamps Dave and I originally designed. And I had to cut a circle from the hood to receive the top of the two-barrel carb, without an air cleaner. It took the full 30 days, but we did it, and I took my first test drive outside the old Packard factory.

I didn't think I'd have time to finish it to pass inspection (requiring headlamps, wipers, turn signals, etc.) and to get a Michigan title and license plates. I'd bought a new Honda S600 sports car earlier that year, so I decided to put Ocelot I on the road using the S600's plates and registration, and adding "rt" to the paperwork. I fabricated a body and frame number plate, along with a manufacturer's build plate, and my car was now a "Hondart 427." I even fabricated a badge for the hood, and Hondart 427 nameplates for the body sides. It worked: I would get two traffic tickets on the drive to California, both citing the Hondart.

Chuck volunteered to make the California trip with me, so we hitched up a two-bike motorcycle trailer to pull his Triumph and my Honda 350, our suitcases, and tools. On the way out, I drove to Ford Styling, where a crowd of stylists came out to see the car and wish me luck. Some were jealous, some thought I was crazy. They were both correct.

I drove about 10 miles before the first stop for repairs. I'd used liquid gasket when fitting the radiator hoses, and as they heated up, they slid right off. Despite fixing the hoses, the car ran poorly, and burned up a set of points after 15 minutes of running. A service station mechanic quickly spotted the problem: no ballast. After one was installed, it ran great.

We headed for Route 66, where more problems surfaced: Between 45 and 65 mph, the front wheels shimmied violently; and on warm days, the engine ran hot. Pretty soon, my beautiful Firestone Wide Ovals were bald, so we bought two 7.10 x 15 cross-plies off a service station used-tire rack, and we'd buy and mount another five pairs of used front tires, going across the country. The hot-running problem was solved by modifying the air inlets and radiator shroud, and by slightly lifting the rear edge of the hood.

Pretty soon, we'd developed a routine. We took it slower during the day, and ran hard at night (those lamps really lit the road, but we likely blinded a few oncoming cars!). We took turns driving, running pretty much nonstop save for gas, tires, and waiting out a thunderstorm under an overpass. We made it to California on schedule.

I found an apartment to share with another ACS buddy, and parked the Hondart behind a neighboring gas station. I removed the wheels and seats as a precaution, but the car was stolen, or towed by the police. Since it wasn't legally registered on the Michigan plates, I didn't report its disappearance. It ended up in an impound yard, and was auctioned off.

My friend Liz LaSalle—now my wife—had also moved to California, and she found my car on the back lot of a used-car dealer on Sunset Boulevard. A salesman said it was built on a Buick chassis, and wanted too much for it. I was starting a new life, and still didn't have a place to keep it, so I passed. That was the last time I saw the Hondart.

I didn't think much more about it, but in retrospect, I'm upset I let it slip through my fingers and disappear for good. I eventually used its seats in my 1957 Porsche Speedster, and sold the wheels and tires. Dave never did get Ocelot II running, and later scrapped it in Detroit, although he gave the body molds to Chuck, who, I think, still has them. This was an excellent adventure and a great learning tool, and I wish I'd kept mine; I have only good memories from the project.

Editor's Note: Learn more about Ken by reading his Personality Profile in the February 2017 (#149) issue of Hemmings Classic Car.

Pony Preservation

Careful, loving ownership for more than 50 years has kept this 1966 Ford Mustang in superb condition

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR

What if all cars were owned by collectors, and everyone went out of his way to make sure his car always got the best care? Our hobby sure would be a lot different. Then again, none of us would get very far on days it rained or snowed.

We think we can answer part of that "what if" question by looking at the 1966 Ford Mustang hardtop on these pages. Never repainted, its engine never rebuilt, this pony car proved good enough to win first place in the Preservation Class at the 2016 Hemmings Motors News Concours. In 2006, it scored First Place Unrestored Gold at the Mustang Nationals.

The 200-hp, two-barrel, 289-cu.in. V-8 in this low-mileage Mustang hardtop has never been out, never been rebuilt. Like the rest of the car, the engine bay shows off its originality with almost entirely factory components and finishes.

The instrument panel, bright trim, carpets, Parchment interior, steering wheel, and the three-speed transmission—you name it, it's all original and super clean.

Current owner Ted Sacawa, of Rotterdam, New York, chalks up this Mustang's remarkably unmolested character to the four owners who came before him. "I was able to trace it back to the original owner from 1966," Ted says. "I am the fifth documented owner, so all through its life this car has been collector owned and has been treated with care."

The first owner, a young man from Connecticut, came from a household that valued automobiles. Ted recalls, "He told me his father was big into car collecting. They had everything: Model A's, Model T's, muscle cars—you name it, they had it. Everything they had was really, really well taken care of." That would seem to be the first important step in the Mustang surviving so thoroughly intact for 50 years when the majority of the 607,568 produced by Ford in 1966 have long since disappeared from the road.

The original owner ordered a seemingly unique set of options for his Mustang. By choosing Emberglo paint, he selected a one-year-only color that marks the car as a '66 model. The bronze-like color contrasts beautifully with the Parchment interior. He also ticked the box for the 200-hp Challenger V-8, a 289-cu.in. Ford small-block with a two-barrel carburetor, 9.3 compression and hydraulic lifters. He also opted to stick with the standard transmission included with the V-8, the Synchro-Smooth Drive three-speed manual, which featured synchronizers in all forward gears, rather than the higher-cost four-speed.

Take a closer look at what otherwise might be a boring shot of the trunk as it tells more of the story than other parts of the car—original materials, no corrosion and factory paint.

What perhaps marks this Mustang as unique is the fact that it was ordered with a limited-slip differential and the Special Handling Package. Normally seen on cars with the four-barrel, 225-hp Challenger Special V-8, or the 271-hp, four-barrel, high-compression, solid-lifter Cobra V-8, the limited-slip rear end option made it "kind of a sleeper of a GT, but without the GT badges on the car," according to Ted. The handling package, too, spoke to the sporty character the original owner was looking for in the Mustang.

The Mustang was then sold to another Connecticut enthusiast, followed by a third owner in that same state in 2003. That owner offered the car for sale at a Ford show in Pennsylvania in the spring of 2010. Jeff Gill, a local friend of Ted's, saw the well-preserved hardtop and immediately called Ted to let him know that another original Mustang was on the market.

We should take a moment to pause in our story and note that Ted's interest in the hobby has largely been focused on original cars, and Mustangs at that. Ted's collection also includes a 1966 Springtime Yellow convertible. Equipped with the 200-hp Challenger V-8 and an automatic transmission, that '66 convertible maintains approximately 95 percent of its original paint. He also has a Brittany Blue 1968 hardtop that was restored with the intent of keeping as much original as possible.

When Ted got Jeff's call about the Emberglo '66 Mustang, it piqued his interest, and the photos Jeff immediately emailed him seemed to show that the car, advertised as a 33,000-mile original, was the real deal. "The car looked beautiful," says Ted. "I was really impressed. But, I'm the type of guy who believes pictures can say a thousand words, but can also hide a thousand flaws. I decided to pass on it. For me, I have to physically see a car, no matter where it is, before I sign on the

> *I like the body style, number one… it surprises me as to how smooth it rides and how well it handles. It's fun to drive.*

dotted line. So, I thanked my friend for the opportunity, and I just hung up the phone and never gave it a second thought."

Fast forward a few months, to the fall of 2010, when Jeff called Ted to come over to his house to show him "something." That something turned out to be the Mustang that Ted had passed on. "Jeff opens up the garage door," remembers Ted, "and there's the car—he bought it. My mouth just dropped to the floor. I couldn't believe the condition of this car. I said to myself, quietly, 'Well, I certainly blew this one.' My friend says, 'See, I told you. I wouldn't steer you wrong. You had the chance to buy this car, and now it's mine.' I said, 'Congratulations.' I felt a little grumpy because it was a beautiful, unrestored car, and those are tough to find."

But Ted's sense of loss lasted only two years, as Jeff decided to move on. The friends were able to make a deal, and, since 2012, Ted has been able to call this gorgeous Mustang his own. Ted has attended to a couple of issues that have come up, most notably replacing leaky front wheel cylinders and installing a dual master cylinder for added safety for the 300 miles or so a year he drives the car.

Ted also uses a careful hand when taking care of this pristine pony car. "I think I've only waxed it once that I can recall. I was kind of a little bit skittish because you could see some of the paint coming off. I just use a straight polish instead of a wax. I talked to one of the show judges a long time ago, and he recommended not to use a wax, but a polish, on old cars, especially ones with original paint."

Ted remains enamored with the Mustang, reaping the benefits of previous careful ownership. "I like the body style, number one," he says. "The ride and handling are amazing for a 1966 car. It surprises me as to how smooth it rides and how well it handles. It's not overbearing like one of the larger Mustang models from the early Seventies. It's just a nice, little neat car. It's fun to drive—you get a lot of high fives and horn toots and thumbs up, that kind of thing."

Car collecting and Fords go hand in hand. From the Model T to the Model A to the Deuce to the Thunderbird to the Mustang, Fords have been at the center of collecting seemingly since there has been a car-collecting hobby. The Mustang attracted collectors pretty much right out of the gate. From parts to preservation, from clubs to competition, Mustang collecting could almost be considered its own hobby within the hobby. But without owners like Ted, none of that would matter. Preserving an older car is a conscious choice that requires no small amount of diligence on the part of the owner.

Though he doesn't pile on the miles, Ted isn't afraid to drive his original, unrestored Mustang either. Just days before talking to us, Ted took care of some springtime, out-of-hibernation maintenance and promised us that by the time this story hits newsstands, the odometer would be rolling over the 34,000-mile mark, still with its original paint, unfaded carpets, like-new interior and one satisfied owner behind the wheel.

Rare Air

For 65 years this unrestored 1926 Franklin Sport Runabout has been lovingly cared for by one upstate New York family

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL • FAMILY PHOTOS COURTESY KEN GYPSON

If you're automotively inclined from a young age, you know how influential the cars of your youth can be. When you've grown up with a special car in your family, it means a lot to you. When that special car is something as historic as a sporting, open-top 1926 Franklin, when it's a link to your parents and a group of like-minded enthusiasts, and has been in your life for the entirety of your memory, then it becomes an irreplaceable treasure.

And that's what this month's Driveable Dream feature car is to Ken Gypson. His father, Kenneth, found this Series 11A Sport Runabout in May 1951, on a farm in Addison, Vermont, where it was being used as a chicken coop. He paid $50 for the Franklin, and drove it back to the family's home in Essex Junction. This car appeared then largely as it still does today, with oxidized black fenders and a thin, fading coat of blue barely hiding the factory-applied cream yellow

paint and the original, delicate double-pinstripes still seen outlining the hood edges, cowl, and other body panels.

"I was two years old at that time," the Poestenkill, New York, resident, explains. "My father was always interested in old cars, and had a circle of old-car friends. It was during his birthday party in 1953 that my mom, Anne, suggested they start a car club, which led to the formation of the Vermont Automobile Enthusiasts [Classic and Antique Car Club], now in its 64th year." A 1954 Vermont inspection sticker remains on the windshield; this Franklin saw regular use with the VAE. And when the Gypson family moved to New York's capital region in 1957, it was not trailered.

"My father's friend, Keith Marvin—a well-known automotive historian—actually drove the car to East Greenbush for my parents. By the time we moved, the engine was tired, and I'd guess that trip helped determine it needed to be rebuilt," Ken tells us. "My father had the last known living mechanic who'd worked in Albany's Franklin dealership—he was legally blind at that time—do that work. This was in 1958, 24 years after the company stopped making cars."

A California Duster is all this car's finish requires for maintenance, although blankets usually cover the 91-year-old leather seats. Gauges still function.

The engine in this Franklin is the first of its many fascinating aspects. It's air-cooled, as all Franklin engines were, and displaces 199 cubic inches through the 3¼ x 4-inch bore and stroke of its six individual cylinders. Each aluminum piston is housed in an iron cylinder that features 104 cast-in copper cooling flanges, those dissipating heat with airflow from the Sirroco fan mounted on the front of the seven-bearing crankshaft. Carburetion is by Stromberg, with an electric primer to aid in cold starts. This special six was designed to make a reliable 32 hp at 2,200 rpm (or a taxable, SAE-rated 25.3), a conservative figure in a vehicle weighing around 2,600 pounds.

More conventional for the era are the car's other mechanical systems: a three-speed manual transmission; worm-and-gear steering; regular braking by an 11-inch drum on the rear of the transmission, with emergency brakes being contracting drums at the rear wheels; and a suspension of full-elliptic springs and Watson Stabilator web-style shocks. Balloon tires on 21-inch wood-spoke wheels contribute to what would have been a compliant ride when new, as does the inherent flexibility of the three-ply laminated, creosote-dipped ash wood frame that supports the coachwork.

The Sport Runabout, introduced with the Series 11 in 1925, was the first example of mass-production boattail roadster bodywork, which heretofore had been an unusual, coachbuilt style. These lines were the work of noted custom-body designer J. Frank de Causse, who was credited with the attractive, if conformist, new frontal appearance of Franklin cars for that year. Assembly of that four-seat body was by Buffalo, New York's, American Body Company, and it brought steel fenders, hood panels, and the rumble seat deck together with Franklin's traditional building material of aluminum, used here in the cowl and doors. Final assembly took place in Franklin's home city of Syracuse, New York, and when this car reached a dealer in 1926, it cost $2,750, or an inflation-adjusted $38,025, a bit more than Packard's equivalent Six.

In the two decades after buying it, Kenneth and Anne used this car sparingly, and it amassed fewer than 200 miles. "My father always had thoughts of restoring the car," Ken remembers. "In the early 1970s, he took off the left front fender and splash pan, and started to restore them, along with the front axle. But he and I were very active in vintage midget and sprint car racing, and that became the priority. We did get the car back together, what little he'd taken apart, but it basically sat, in a heated garage, until he passed away in 2004. I inherited the Franklin, along with some other cars.

"I was determined to get this car back on the road," he continues. "My friend in the Franklin Club, Lee Schopmeier, lived nearby, and he came over to work with me for a couple of days. All the car basically needed was a valve adjustment, which we did, according to the owner's manual. The carburetor had no fuel in it, because the vacuum tank wasn't working, so it didn't need to be rebuilt, and hasn't been touched since the engine work was done in the 1950s. We cleaned out the gas tank, changed the points and plugs, installed a fresh battery, and 'Boom,' it fired right up."

The Sport Runabout was registered

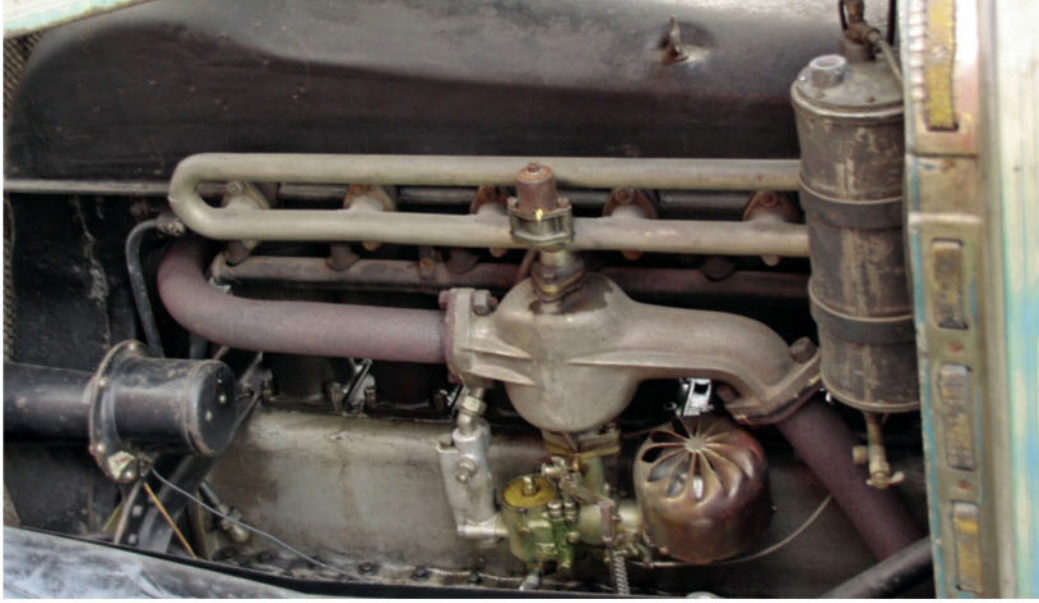
"The ride is amazingly good—it's quite smooth—and this car will cruise at 45 to 50 mph with no problem."

on genuine 1926 New York plates from Kenneth's collection. Its original convertible top and side curtains were in poor condition, actually disintegrating in the breeze as the car drove down the road, so Ken used them as templates to have new weather gear made using period-look fabric from LeBaron Bonney. He puts blankets down over the factory-installed leather upholstery to protect both it and his passengers, and is happy to take us for a ride.

"The starting procedure is kind of tricky," Ken explains. "I haven't been successful at fixing the vacuum tank, so I've installed an electric fuel pump, my only modern cheat. You turn that on, adjust the choke on the dash, and push the starter button on the floor. It actually starts pretty easily, considering it's 91 years old.

"There is no synchromesh, so you have to double-clutch up and down through all the gears. The ride is amazingly good—it's quite smooth—and this car will cruise at 45 to 50 mph with no problem. I have found the steering does wander a bit, so you have to pay attention. The steering box seems pretty tight, and I've replaced the front wheel bearings with new ones made by Timken; I don't know if something else is loose, or if that's the nature of the beast.

"The air-cooled six-cylinder sounds like a muffled tractor," Ken says with a smile. "When it's idling in neutral, you can hear all the gears in the transmission turning; it's very cool. Like a lot of old transmissions, you go through the gears and hear them whine. And the brakes—or I should say, the brake—is surprisingly good. The Franklin goes down the road really well, and it's actually not that much different than my 1940 Lincoln. The speedometer and amp gauge work fine, although the oil-level gauge doesn't, likely due to a problem with the float. The gas gauge was originally on the tank, and that's missing, along with half of the car's original tools—they've been a 12-year hunt."



Air-cooled, 199-cu.in. six-cylinder engine was rebuilt by a Franklin mechanic in the 1950s, and its oil is changed annually; an electric fuel pump was the only modification.

His lifelong association with this veteran classic in mind, we asked how it felt to have the Franklin back on the road. "It was very sad when I first drove it, because Dad was gone. I'd hoped we could do that together, but we were always out racing. Now I have two boys, and my oldest, who's 38, is a dyed-in-the-wool car nut. He likes the Franklin, and knows the family heritage behind it. But he's afraid to drive it. He says, 'Dad, I don't wanna screw it up,'" Ken laughs.

"It's been in my life for 65 of my 67 years. I love the fact that this car was the impetus for the VAE, and the fact that it's original. I very emphatically do *not* plan to restore this car. I've been offered a lot of money for it, and always said, 'No way.' If I had to sell my cars—and I've got a lot of them—this would be the absolute last one to go. I hope my son passes it on to his son, and that it stays in the family, as long as there's a Gypson name."

The 1967 Camaro

Chevrolet answers Ford's Mustang challenge

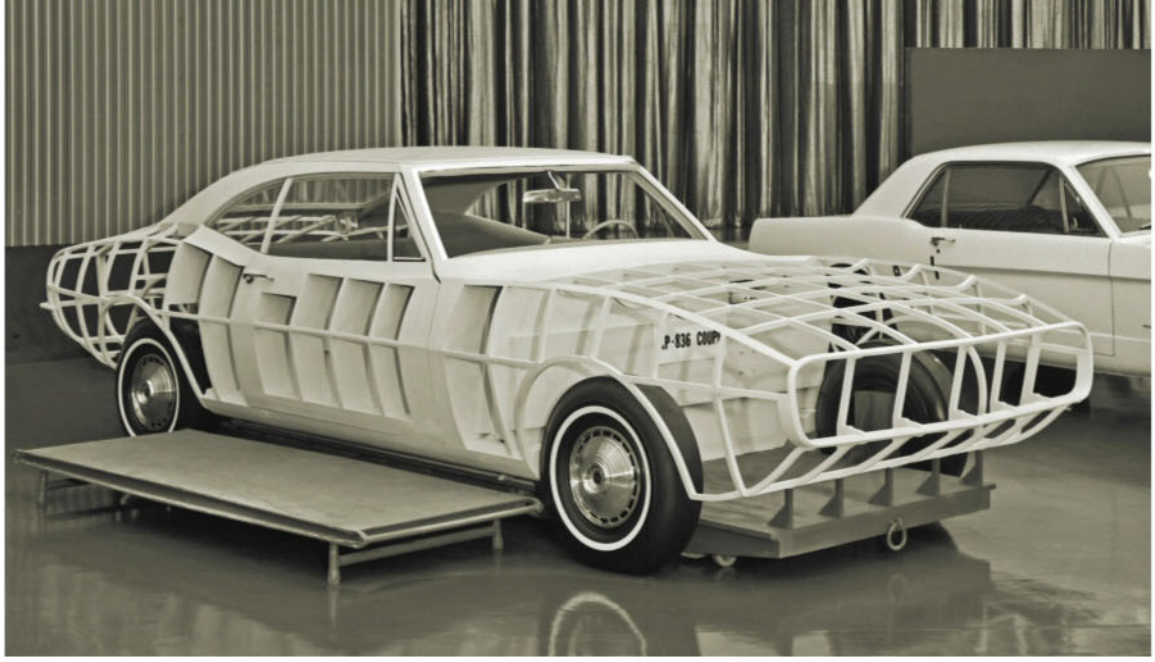
BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF GM MEDIA ARCHIVES AND HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

Chevrolet's Camaro and the mid-year-introduced Pontiac Firebird melded long-hood/short-deck contemporary exterior styling, a cockpit-inspired interior and an innovative unit-body/subframe design with conventional drivetrain and suspension layouts to create formidable foes to Ford's sporty, four-place, Mustang and upscale Mercury Cougar. With pricing and performance competitive, the sales race was on for 1967.

GM's F-body Camaro and Firebird were playing catch-up, however, since Ford was first to market with the Mustang in April 1964, despite the fact that GM stylists had been contemplating cars for the same niche as far back as the late 1950s. A GM concept developed by Irv Rybicki, then Chevrolet studio chief for Bill Mitchell, GM vice president styling, reached the clay model stage in the early 1960s. A fiberglass-bodied show car, the Chevy II-based Super Nova, was displayed at the 1964 New York Auto Show, just prior to the Mustang's debut at the World's Fair.

GM's upper management still wasn't convinced it needed a new car for that market, as there were concerns that it could cannibalize sales of the redesigned Corvair, the car it initially touted as suitable competition for the Mustang. It was even thought that Chevy II Nova sales could be adversely affected.

In early 1960, the Corvair had essentially created the four-place, affordable, sporty, personal car when the bucket-seat, two-door Monza debuted, and performance then leapt forward with the turbocharged Monza Spyder in mid-1962. The Corvair was also an engineering standout, with its aluminum horizontally-opposed six-cylinder engine mounted in the rear, and its transaxle and independent rear suspension, whereas the new Mustang



The body buck for XP-836, on which the clay will be applied. Note the Mustang right next to it.

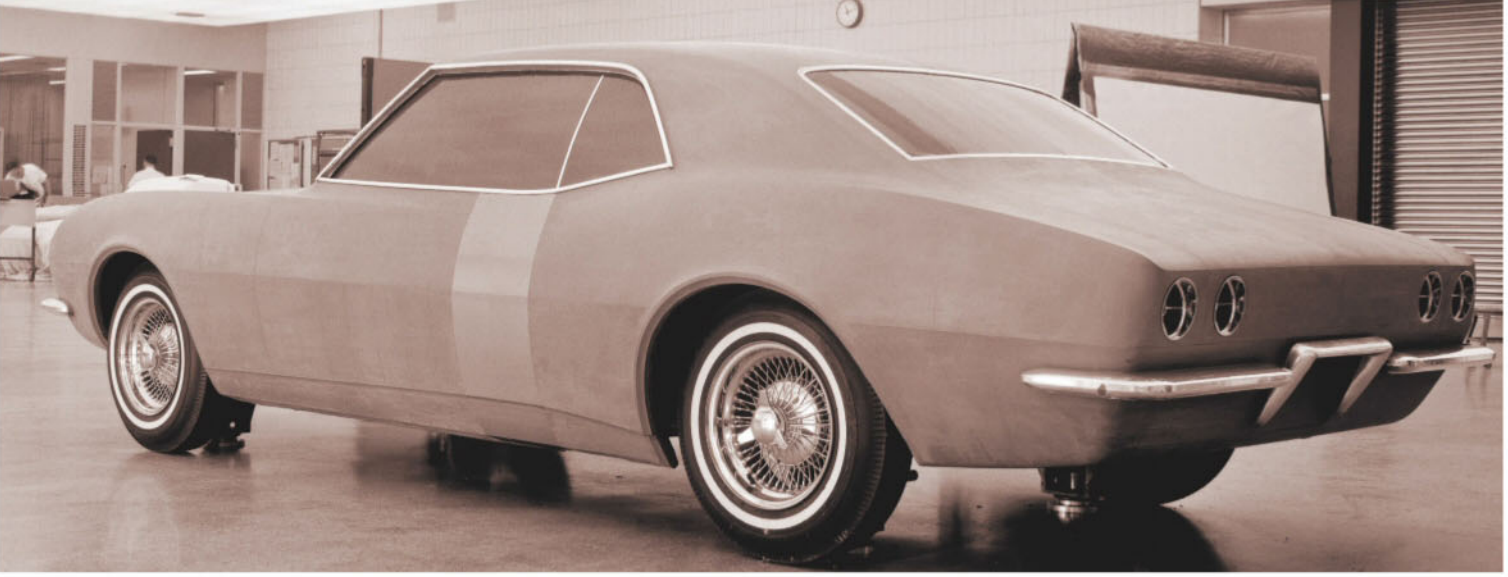
Except for possibly the backlite, much of the styling of this early clay model differs from the production Camaro. Yet it is appealing.

A different version with revised side and quarter windows and front and rear treatments.

was viewed by GM as largely a rebodied Falcon.

The public however, which now included a sizable postwar baby-boomer generation of young drivers, perceived the Mustang as a contemporary car, thanks to its styling. Its conventional engineering kept the price affordable and eliminated the idiosyncrasies of the Corvair, and the Mustang could be had with a V-8, while the Corvair's 164-cu.in. flat-six was already near the limit of its power potential.

In the summer of 1964, Mustang sales crested 100,000, and around that time the XP-836 program, aka the F-car, F-body and "Panther," that would evolve into the 1967 Camaro, began. Later that same year, GM upper management approved the design



Taken in early 1965, this photo depicts a clay model with side and quarter window treatments, kick-up of the rocker area, and front and rear shapes that are much closer to those of the production Camaro, but the taillamps and rear bumper still differ.

This front view of the clay model reveals rectangular instead of the round parking lamps that the 1967 production car ultimately received, and grille differences.

"Panther" script adorns the concealed-headlamp grille.

for production. The staff of Chevrolet Studio 2, under chief Hank Haga and his assistant John Schinella, developed the exterior design.

GM's size, resources, and industry dominance notwithstanding, the Camaro still had to compete with the Mustang on price. Though the F-car would be newly designed and engineered, a concerted effort was made to keep development and production costs, as well as sticker prices, down. Thus, GM management decided that the Camaro (including the later added Firebird, to be discussed in the next issue) and the 1968 X-body Chevy II would be developed at essentially the same time with certain concessions made in favor of the latter, because it would be a higher-volume seller.

They would share the cowl height, sub-frame, front suspension and brakes, as well as some other parts. Both employed mono-leaf-spring rear suspension, though of different spring lengths, and both used existing powertrains from the other Chevrolet car lines.

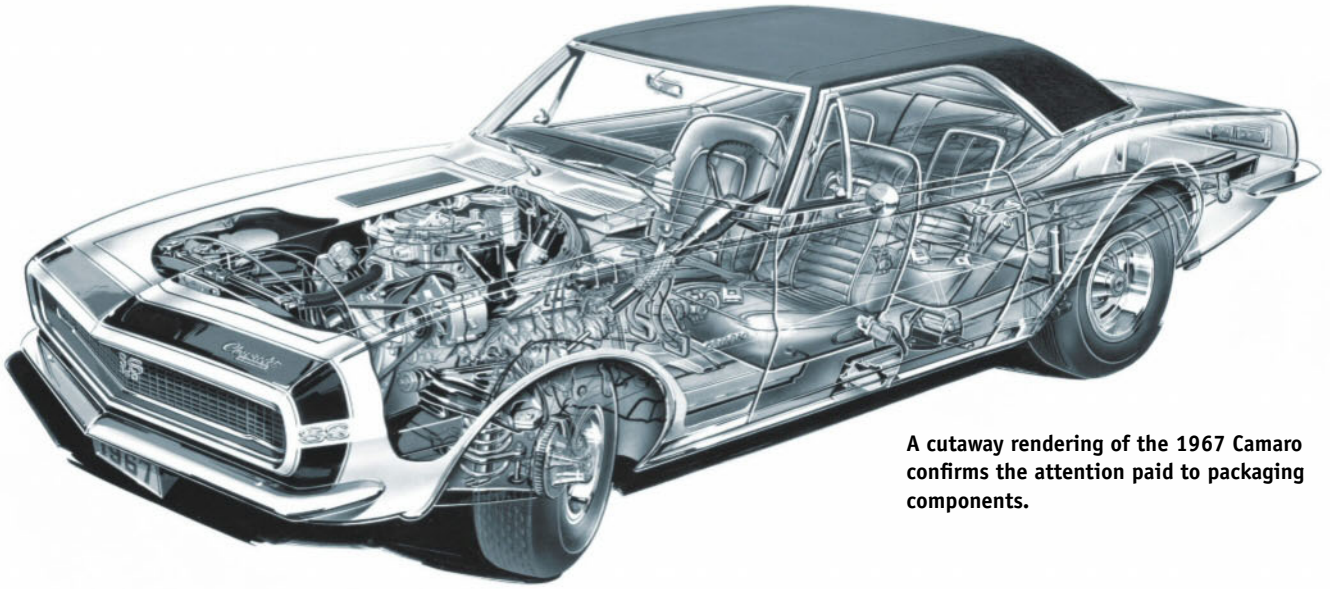
Design and Engineering worked together to develop the F-car. Additionally, according to a January 1967 Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) paper on the Camaro (by Donald McPherson, then Chevrolet chief engineer, and engineers Charles Rubly and Victor Valade), design, production, and research engineers; manufacturing specialists; and sales representatives were all regularly consulted during the development process.

The initial goals for the F-car were reviewed in that same SAE paper:

- Distinctively modern aerodynamic styling, for a clean functional appearance;
- Small, highly maneuverable size with packaging for four passengers;
- A very broad range of available performance capabilities;
- Quick, sharply defined roadability with a firm, yet comfortable ride;
- "Cockpit-type" interiors for close driver identification;
- An evolutionary rather than revolutionary, basic design approach to maintain maximum value to the customer;
- Wide selection of mechanical and appearance equipment to allow customer tailoring to his needs and desires.

An additional goal was to have the Camaro excel in every way when compared to the Mustang.

The dimensions of the seating package were determined first, then incorporated into the emerging design theme. To attain the long-hood/short-deck treatment,



A cutaway rendering of the 1967 Camaro confirms the attention paid to packaging components.

the passenger compartment was moved rearward relative to the 108-inch wheelbase, but the high cowl needed for the 1968 Chevy II and the shorter-than-desired distance between the front wheel center and the dash would negate a low-slung sports car silhouette, leaving a number of designers less than satisfied with the result. Bill Mitchell would later state that the 1967 F-body was a "committee car."

Nevertheless, at 184.7 inches long and 72.5 inches wide, the design was stylish and modern… and larger than the Mustang. Haga was quoted in the book *The Great Camaro* by Michael Lamm as saying, "The canvas-stretched-over-wire theme served to give the Camaro its own character and separate it from the Mustang approach, which was much stiffer and more angular." Inspiration was drawn from many sources, a few of which were the 1965 Corvair, 1968 Corvette, and the Super Nova show car that Haga's studio had developed.

The front-end featured a black plastic small-box-pattern grille that extended to the headlamps and housed large, round parking lamps. Below it was a subtle, thin bumper and a valance panel. A central rib on the hood was flanked by recessed areas that led to the cowl air intakes. The greenhouse employed curved side glass and the sail panels and backlight flowed into the quarter panels and decklid in semi-fastback fashion.

Compared to the competition, the Camaro's body sides were curvaceous. They featured "coke bottle" styling—a pinch at the rocker just before the rear wheel complemented by a rise at the top of the quarter panel just behind the door. A character line ran the length of the body side, bisecting the rounded wheel wells, and the lower portions of the body panels dramatically wrapped under the car.

Moving along the assembly line, the Camaro nears the installation of its drivetrain, suspension and exhaust. Shown are the standard tailamps, with integral back-up lamps.

One of the engineering requirements for the Camaro was that it could be built on the same assembly line as other models. Note the full-size Chevrolet in the background of the previous assembly line photo and in this one. This Camaro is awaiting its headlamp trim installation.

The Camaro was chosen to pace the Indianapolis 500 in 1967.

The squared-off tail panel featured chrome bezels for the rectangular taillamps/backup lamps. A round fuel filler cap was centered below the trunk lock, with the bumper and valance panel beneath it.

Wind tunnel testing using a 1/4-scale clay model enabled fine tuning of the aerodynamics and led to revisions to the leading edge of the fenders and the rake of the front valance.

Elaborating on a feature of the Camaro's styling, the SAE paper stated, "One interesting styling aspect of [the] rounded beauty surfaces is the feeling of motion achieved by light reflections while the car is stationary as well as moving. This characterizes the basic theme of the Camaro: smooth horizontally accented surfaces blended together into an aerodynamically functional shape, a clean, straightforward piece of sculpture."

To meld the positive elements of unitized and separate body and frame construction, the F-body was unitized from the cowl back and employed a subframe up front that was attached via four double-biscuit rubber bolt-in mounts, two under the cowl and two under the passenger compartment. It supported the engine, transmission and front suspension on crossmembers also using rubber-isolated mounts.

According to the engineers, the rubber-bushed front subframe allowed for a quieter and smoother ride than a fully unitized design. It also enabled the Camaro to be built on the same assembly line as Chevrolet's larger body-on-frame models.

The body shell featured a "cross-bow" roof design, with box-section rails, double-wall cowl construction, galvanized box-section rocker panels with a drain system like GM's "washed-dried," and a reinforced underbody with integral rear frame rails. Double-panel construction was employed for the hood, doors and decklid, and inverted "bathtub" style fender wells protected the inner fender area.

Convertibles instead received reinforced rockers and floors, but objectionable body shake was still present. "Dynamic dampers"—canisters fitted with a weight suspended between springs in oil—were installed at the four corners of the body to thwart the shake. Nicknamed

The Z/28 featured exclusive stripes and 15-inch Rally wheels and tires. This one was optioned with the Rally Sport package as well.

"cocktail shakers," they added production cost and weight. With the required additional body reinforcements and dynamic dampers, the convertible weighed about 255 pounds more than the coupe.

Computers were employed to aid in evaluating proposed suspension specifications via simulations, before parts were ever built and tested. Chevrolet engineers provided handling parameters and goals for the F-car and worked with their counterparts from the Engineering Mechanics Department of General Motors Research Laboratories in studying the myriad factors required to achieve the target ride and handling characteristics.

New front suspension was designed specifically for the Camaro, but its concepts were conventional GM. It featured unequal-length upper and lower A-arms, spindles, ball joints, coil springs, shocks, and a .6875-inch anti-roll bar. A Saginaw steering box with parallel relay-type linkage was located behind the front wheels. Standard and quick ratios were available, as was optional power steering.

The rear suspension used Mono Plate single-leaf semi-elliptical springs mounted slightly splayed to gain a small handling advantage and space for an 18-gallon fuel tank and a transverse-mounted muffler. They were isolated via low-durometer rubber bushings at the hangers and shackles. Computer analysis revealed that shocks mounted in a nearly vertical position just ahead of the axle and outboard of the springs improved the suspension's response over bumpy roads and in cornering.

However, on the road, the springs

This Ermine White Camaro sport coupe is equipped with an optional 327-cu.in. V-8.

An optional plenum air intake is revealed on the underrated, Holley-carbureted, solid-lifter-camshaft, 302 engine in this Z/28 RS.

The 325-hp, 396-cu.in. big-block V-8 was released partway through the model year. It featured a Quadrajet carburetor, oval-port cylinder heads and a hydraulic-lifter camshaft.

tended to wind up under heavy acceleration or certain braking conditions, causing axle hop, so a stopgap remedy was added partway through the model year for higher powered drivetrain combinations. It consisted of a bushed radius rod (round tube initially and then rectangular tube) that ran from a bracket bolted to the floor and side of the frame member to a bracket on the passenger side of the axle.

Employing a wider stance of 59 inches front and 58.9 inches rear improved stability, ride and appearance. A set of 7.35-14 tires on 14 x 5 wheels with hubcaps were standard. Rally wheels were included with the disc brake option and not available separately.

Standard brakes consisted of 9.5- x 2.5-inch front drums and 9.5- x 2-inch rear. Power assist was optional, as were front disc brakes, with 11-inch rotors and four-piston calipers. Metallic drum brake linings were available for SS 350 and SS 396 Camaros.

Designed in Chevrolet Studio 2, the instrument panel featured two large elliptical bezels, inspired by the 1968 Corvette, which contained the speedometer in the left and warning lamps in the right. A central black panel with bright trim featured HVAC controls, radio and ashtray. The glovebox was to its right.

Optional Special Instrumentation required the extra-cost console and consisted of a three-dial panel mounted at the head of it that contained an ammeter; temp, oil pressure, and fuel gauges; and a clock. Included was a tachometer and fuel level indicator light for the large right gauge pod.

To augment the sporty intentions, the seating position was lowered, and more rearward travel was added to maintain leg room. Strato-bucket seats were standard and a fold-down rear seat was optional. A Strato-back bench seat was extra-cost in sport coupes. Padded dash and sun visors, carpeting, and vinyl upholstery were standard.

A Special Interior group consisted of bright pedal trim and windshield-pillar and roof-rail moldings. The Custom Interior option featured upscale vinyl-covered door panels with molded-in armrests, recessed door handles and carpeted lower areas. A revised upholstery pattern and complementing-color accents were added to the seats. A trunk mat, glovebox lamp, courtesy lamps, and upgraded steering wheel were included, as were ashtrays in the rear for sport coupes.

The 1967 Camaro was offered as a six-cylinder or eight-cylinder sport coupe or convertible. Its base straight-six engine produced 140 hp from 230 cubic inches, and the base V-8 was the 210-hp, 327 two-barrel—both backed by the column-shift three-speed manual transmission.

A 155-hp, 250 six-cylinder and a 275-hp, four-barrel, 327-cu.in. V-8 were optional. The SS 350 featured the newly developed 295-hp, 350-cu.in. small-block engine. Partway through the model year the Z/28 and its specific 290-hp, 302-cu.in. engine arrived, as did an SS 396 big-block with 325 horsepower, followed soon thereafter by an optional 375-hp version.

An 11-inch clutch was mated with the 302, 350, and 396 engines; a 10.4-inch clutch with the 327, and a 9.12-inch with the six-cylinder. A heavy-duty floor-shift three-speed was optional, as were wide- and close-ratio four-speeds, a Powerglide or a Turbo Hydra-Matic, but there were availability restrictions that varied with engine choice. The same held true for the 2.73:1 to 4.88:1 gear ratios and even which rear end was installed—Salisbury-type 10-bolt or beefier 12-bolt. Positraction was optional, but mandatory with 4.10, 4.56, and 4.88 gears.

Personalization via options was a mandate for the Camaro, so the option list is too extensive to cover here, but there are interesting packages to discuss.

The Rally Sport included the Style Trim Group (bright moldings for wheel well openings and drip rails and body side stripes) plus concealed headlamps

with electric doors and a revised grille, sans the parking lamps, which were now squared and mounted on the valance panel. Taillamp lenses became all red, as the white backup lamps were relocated to the valance panel and redesigned. An "rs" callout adorned the center of the grille and the fenders, the black-with-bright-trim fuel filler cap, and the horn button. Bright lower body side moldings were added, and black paint was applied on the rockers, with some exterior paint colors.

Super Sport Camaros received a broad front stripe, a revised hood design with simulated louvers, underhood insulation, SS badging on the front fenders, and "SS 350" or "SS" callout in the grille, on the black-with-bright-trim fuel filler cap and horn button. Engine callouts were on the fenders. The tailpanel was blacked out with the SS 396. Red or white-stripe D70-14 tires on 14 x 6 wheels, extra-duty springs, 350 engine, 61-ampere-hour battery and HD starter were also included.

The Special Performance Package under RPO code Z28 was offered to homologate it for SCCA Trans-Am racing. It consisted of exclusive paint stripes on the hood and deck, 15 x 6 wheels, 7.35 x 15 NF nylon red stripe tires, the 302 engine, closed positive ventilation, dual exhaust with deep tone muffler, special front and rear suspension, heavy-duty radiator and temperature-control fan, quick-ratio steering, and 3.73 gears (other ratios optional). It could only be ordered in conjunction with the close-ratio four-speed, power brakes, and front disc brakes or HD front disc brakes with metallic rear brakes. Positraction was recommended. A plenum air intake and exhaust headers (the latter not installed) could also be ordered with the Z/28.

With design, engineering, testing, and most other preproduction tasks completed, the F-car finally received its "C" name to match other Chevrolet models, "Camaro." According to GM, it's a French word, which means comrade or pal. Detractors noted other, harsher definitions.

The Camaro arrived at dealers in late September 1966. Base prices were on par with the Mustang, at $2,466 and $2,704 for the six-cylinder coupe and convertible and $2,572 and $2,809 for the V-8 coupe and convertible.

Evidence of how the design and engineering of the Camaro fared in the hands of the public was published in the July 1967 issue of *Popular Mechanics* magazine. In the *PM* Owners Report, styling, handling, power, performance, and economy topped the list of likes, and rear suspension, rear seat legroom, rear quarter panel design, trunk space, and rattles topped the list of dislikes. Given the Camaro's target market, not surprisingly, just over 55 percent of the respondents were under 30 years old.

Standard interior features bucket seats, with optional woodgrained plastic steering wheel, four-speed, console, Special Instrumentation, and power windows.

Over 65 percent cited styling as a specific like, making it number one in its category, yet owners were less enthusiastic about the consequences associated with it. The "roll-under" lower body styling left the quarter panels vulnerable to anything the rear tires kicked up, making those areas difficult to keep clean and chip-free. Front seat comfort was praised, and though handling was lauded by nearly 63 percent, the rear suspension was called out as a specific dislike due to axle hop by just under 32 percent of the owners.

Chevrolet sold just over 220,900 Camaros for the 1967 model year, which is an impressive figure until it's revealed that over 472,100 revised Mustangs were sold that year. Yet, despite a few peccadillos that arose in the development and in the inaugural finished product, the Camaro's styling, size, price, performance, wide variety of options, and dragstrip and SCCA racing presence made it popular when new, and drove it to legendary status in performance and collector car circles in the decades that followed. Today, the Camaro and Mustang are still in a sales race… fortunately with no end in sight.

This Z/28 RS features the Custom Interior with optional console, four-speed, Special Instrumentation, and woodgrained plastic steering wheel. Note the differences in the seat upholstery patterns and the door-panel design when compared to the standard interior.

Hot Wheels

After 50 years, Hot Wheels remains top dog in the world of die-cast cars

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

Before you could drive, there was the desire to drive. Before you could put your name on a pink slip, you could ask Grandpa for a dollar to buy something cool. The rip of the package, the smell of the fresh paint that escaped the blisterpack, the bounce of the suspension, the fast roll of your new ride. More than a few car junkies will have to admit that playing with (and collecting) Hot Wheels was their first step into loving cars.

But Hot Wheels, that multi-billion-dollar division of toy giant Mattel, wasn't created in a vacuum—the brand was a reaction to what had come before, and quickly took on a life of its own, influencing tens of millions of kids worldwide and building a billion memories in the process.

To understand why they were such a phenomenon, you have to understand what came before. In the 1950s, Tootsietoy made die-cast cars in a variety of sizes, including 3-inch scale (roughly 1/64, or S-scale, for you train fans). They were charming, but crude: the bodies featured faint detail, so-so paint and a pair of barbells (wheel/axle combinations) clamped in to a pair of stanchions jutting down from the body. There was no chassis, interior or glass on cars of that size in those days.

When England's Matchbox burst on the scene in the mid-'50s, their small cars offered a new level of detail: interiors, chassis, and (in the early 1960s) window glass. Their cars were roughly OO scale (1:76), but grew over time to the familiar 3-inch size. They covered vehicular subject matter from around the world. And, across the globe, they were favorites among boys of a certain age (and likely not a few girls, also) for most of the 1960s. Other brands—Impy, Husky, Mini Dinky—followed in their sales wake.

And then, along came Hot Wheels. They were the brainchild of Elliot Handler, co-founder of toy giant Mattel and the "el" in that company's name; he made his fortune on Barbie, her friends, and her never-ending line of fashion accessories. But Mattel didn't have an evergreen sales staple for boys the way it did for girls. When Handler suggested a line of cars (with a twist) to compete with Matchbox, the Mattel board rejected it. Can you imagine? Handler pressed on regardless.

Hot Wheels tapped into both the late '60s muscle car zeitgeist and the world's thirst for California car culture, and introduced it to a group (the young end of the Baby Boomer brigade) that didn't yet have their drivers' licenses. Custom-car designer Harry Bentley Bradley was retained to design 11 of the first 16 models that were released in the fall of 1967. His own heavily-customized 1964 Chevrolet El Camino was the inspiration for the Custom Fleetside pickup, and more: Before the little metal cars were introduced, someone spied Bradley's Elky in the parking lot and told him that he had some "hot wheels." The legendary moniker was born.

Hot Wheels cars were an instant hit, and to understand why, you had to see what they were up against. Where other manufacturers from distant lands had worldwide marketing needs to consider, Hot Wheels models were based on either American performance cars (Camaro, Firebird, Mustang, Corvette) or American custom cars (Alexander Brothers' Dodge Deora, Bill Cushenberry's Silhouette, etc.) for the American market. Ford's Thunderbird and Cadillac's Eldorado were outliers—large personal-luxury cars that didn't fit the performance vibe, but which were undeniably American in subject matter.

Where nods to replicated realism were part and parcel of the old guard, Hot Wheels embraced chromed engines popping through hoods, zoomie-pipe exhausts, and radically raked stances. Where wheels and tires on other brands were just featureless black disks designed to roll via kid power, Hot Wheels offered mag wheel styles, red-stripe tires, 0.02-inch piano-wire axles bent to replicate torsion-bar suspension, space-age Delrin bushings with press-on wheels, and a razor-thin contact surface on the tire itself for fast-rolling action—achieving scale speeds of 300 MPH or more.

Other toy companies had playsets that resembled roads, parking lots and construction sites; Hot Wheels offered neon orange race track, as well as a Super Charger, with a pair of counter-rotating soft-feel wheels designed to fling cars forth on the track. That track would be offered in endless configurations: drag strip, high-banked oval, Figure 8, loop-de-loop, and more.

Other toy companies painted their cars with plain ol' paint, in factory-type colors that were frequently offered on a given model for years on end; Hot Wheels' special Spectraflame paint, a semi-translucent paint over a polished raw body, was available in up to 16 colors. Not every color was available on every car, and with two factories going, some cars were only available in some colors from one factory or the other. All of that… for a dollar.

Hot Wheels did more than just make Mattel a shedload of cash—they changed the way die-cast cars were marketed and made. They made such an impact on the market that they instantly put everyone else on the back foot as they scrambled to catch up, with varying degrees of success. Matchbox introduced the Superfast line, with thin wheels and wire axles, in 1969. Also in 1969, Hot Wheels designers' flights of fancy—cars like the Torero or the Tri-Baby—

took up more and more of the lineup alongside real cars. Within a year or two, Matchbox sidestepped realism and introduced fantasy models into the lineup (anyone remember the Stretcha Fetcha ambulance, or Toe Joe tow truck?).

Topper Toys' Johnny Lightning models thoroughly aped the Hot Wheels business model from 1969-'72, selling up to one Johnny Lightning for every three Hot Wheels—and likely would not have existed at all without Hot Wheels.

AMT launched its 1/64 Pups line to a resounding marketplace thud, because they were duds on the orange track; subsequent owners of the tooling introduced wire axles and speed wheels, but didn't have the marketing might to mix it up with Mattel. Aurora briefly continued its Cigar Box line with chromed bodies and mag-type hard wheels. Other lines (Impy, Husky/Corgi Junior, Budgie, Mini Dinky) either adapted or disappeared. Even Matchbox itself, once the industry leader, was purchased by Mattel in 1996.

Though initially made in America, Hot Wheels were such an instant hit that Mattel used a second factory, in Hong Kong, to make a variety of models. It wasn't long before the U.S. factory closed and all production was sent through Hong Kong; Malaysia replaced Hong Kong in the early 1980s. Tooling differences between the U.S.-made and Hong Kong-made models meant little (if anything) to kids who wanted to dial their rides in for speed on the orange track, but would prove interesting to collectors many decades hence. Plenty of modern collectors don't consider, for example, the Hong Kong-made Camaro and the U.S.-made Camaro to be the same casting; Redline-era completists will need at least one of every available color from both countries.

Color mattered too. Spectraflame Pink models were purchased in far lesser numbers than cars in other colors; whether it was a production issue, with fewer made, or simply that boys didn't want a car in a "girl's color" is open for debate. What isn't up for debate is that pink models today command prices more than double that of other colors; while many colors of the Oldsmobile 4-4-2 from 1971 sell in the hundreds of dollars, pink versions vault into the thousands. Other colors are less common on certain castings, more through happenstance than design, and can command similar prices.

For 1969, Hot Wheels expanded into new areas: Grand Prix and road-racing cars like the Chaparral and Ford Mk IV; European models like the Pagoda-roof Mercedes SL and Maserati Mistral; American hot rods like a '36 Ford coupe (with opening rumble seat!) and '31 Model A Ford Woody, a couple of American high-performance cars like the AMC AMX and Dodge Charger; and at last a '67 Plymouth Fury police car to stop all the riff-raff. (The police car was the first die-cast car to use tampo pad-printing

technology in lieu of stickers or painstaking hand-detailing.) The police car and some of the race cars were painted enamel colors, to better emulate the real subject matter, and the European models were largely unmodified beyond the Spectraflame paint.

There is one notable exception to this: the legendary Volkswagen Beach Bomb, a Bay Window-era VW van. The ones available in stores have a box that widens the rear track of the van; each side also holds a surfboard. Those "side-loader" Beach Bombs are common on the secondary market. There was also a prototype version, the "rear-loader" Beach Bomb. The body was correctly proportioned, and the surfboards slotted in through the rear window. But it was too narrow to work properly on Hot Wheels' orange track, and so was modified. These few prototypes now sell for five figures on the open market; the one known pink rear-loader Beach Bomb sold a few years back for more than $70,000. Reproductions were available for a time, but are no longer on the market.

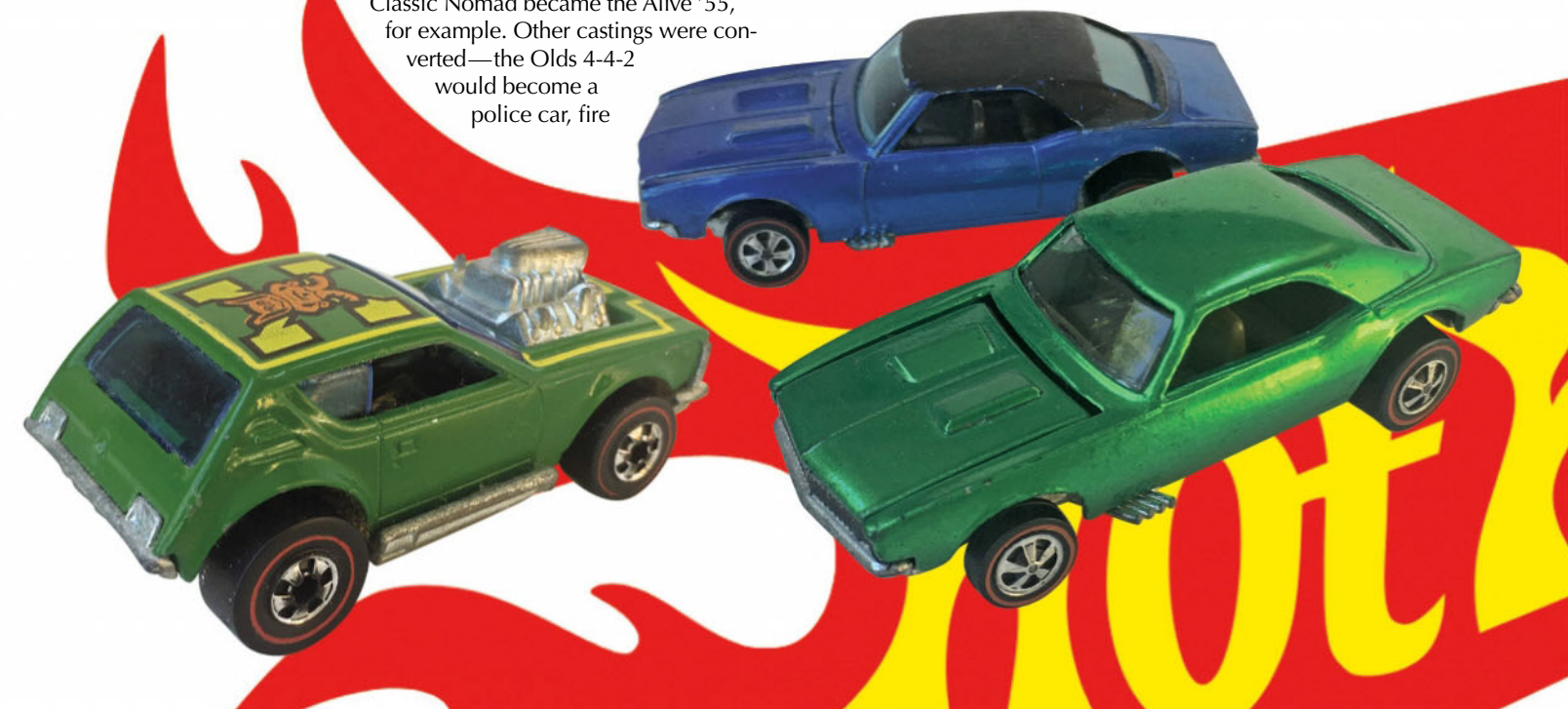
For 1970, Hot Wheels could easily be described in two words: Snake and Mongoose. The two drag racing legends match-raced each other all over the country in Hot Wheels-sponsored racers, and Hot Wheels made die-cast cars and play sets replicating the two Mopar funny cars. Also, Mattel introduced the Spoilers, which saw fatter tires, aggressive cast-in air dams and trunk lips, and removed hoods (to better show engine detail) as a way to refresh the line using existing, lightly modified tooling.

A sales slump in 1972, following Mattel's saturation of the die-cast car market, led to some changes for 1973. A paucity of all-new castings (just three, the fewest in a year in Hot Wheels history) meant that creative new solutions were pressed into place. Old castings were renamed—the Classic Nomad became the Alive '55, for example. Other castings were converted—the Olds 4-4-2 would become a police car, fire chief car and a taxi cab, with lights on the roof and the opening hood permanently sealed. Spectraflame paint went away, replaced by a dozen (admittedly fragile) enamel colors—making clean 1973 models hard to find, and therefore a favorite of collectors. Wheels retained the trademark red stripe, but they no longer rolled on Delrin bushings: The pull-off wheels were a choking hazard to small kids, it was judged, and new safety laws eliminated the old style of wheel. Newer redlines have a center hole that clearly shows the axle. Hot Wheels sales picked up.

For 1974, paint-quality improved and brightly-colored tampo decorations festooned the new Flying Colors line of Hot Wheels—another move copied by others, notably Matchbox with its Streakers line—and while it wasn't the seismic shift that Mattel brought in 1968 with the introduction of the brand, it certainly helped invigorate the line for a few more years. By 1977, bowing to fashion and cost considerations in equal measure, the red stripe on Hot Wheels' tire sidewalls was eliminated.

But Hot Wheels continued, and continues to this day. Today, the brand remains such a force that (like Kodak, Kleenex, and Xerox) its name is in danger of becoming genericized, shorthand for "toy car." Hot Wheels dominates the worldwide new toy car market. The chassis (and sometimes parts of the body) may now be plastic. The paint colors may be jarring (a recent pink car with yellow wheels comes to mind). The subject matter may not be what turns us on (hello, Minecraft cart). Other brands may be more popular in different countries, but wherever you go toy hunting, the presence of Hot Wheels on the pegs in stores is inevitable.

And in the States, half a century later, your local brick-and-mortar store still sells them for a dollar. It's a cheap way to get another generation hooked on old cars, just like we got hooked.



Relaunched!

After a two-decade delay, a rare 1958 De Soto Adventurer is restored

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TOM WHITE

It pays to know your subject matter. Just ask Tom White, founder of Whitehall Auto Restorations, in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Although he and his family of employees have been restoring all manner of collector cars for more than 40 years (see Specialist Profile in *HCC* #131), Tom has gained a deep appreciation for rare Mopars of the late Fifties and early Sixties, and has studied everything from build numbers to design nuances. The knowledge paid dividends in the early Nineties when one of Tom's sons, Larry, came back from a flea market in Amherst, New Hampshire, with news of

a car he had seen for sale.

Tom recalls: "They came across what the seller said was a 1957 De Soto convertible. Larry looked it over, eventually opened the hood, spotted a 361-cu.in. "Wedge" engine there, and walked away thinking someone had modified the car. When Larry got back and told me about it, I said 'I just want to know one thing: The exhaust outlets on the back of the car, were they like a guppy's fish mouth or were they like a pair of sunglasses?' His reply was that the outlets had a dip in the center like a pair of sunglasses."

What Larry had stumbled upon was in fact one of the rarest De Sotos ever built: one of just 82 Adventurer convertibles assembled in 1958, containing one of two versions of the 361 "Wedge" V-8. The tell-tale design cue was the exhaust outlets. Currently, there are only five known to exist in the world.

"The boys had enough money in their pocket to pay cash for the car," Tom says. "Coincidentally, it had been spotted by a gentleman who knew me and was aware of my likes and dislikes. He negotiated a price and called me on Monday morning to see if I was interested. Of course, I was. Although he couldn't meet me in person, I was at his house soon after with instructions to take the dual-quad carburetors out of the trunk if I was going to buy it, and he would deliver the rest of the car shortly thereafter," Tom says.

Once at his shop, the De Soto was thoroughly examined by Tom and his sons, and the restoration was begun right away. According to Tom, the front end of the car was pretty bruised up, so one of his first tasks was replacing the fenders. Although the engine ran, it did so with a

This is the condition the rare Stewart-Warner South Wind Heater was in when it was removed from the De Soto. This complex gasoline-powered, under-dash furnace needed cosmetic refurbishment, as well as the replacement of spark plugs, coil, and other components.

Once the Adventurer's restoration was restarted, the body and inner fender panels were stripped to bare metal. The body was straight and devoid of corrosion, allowing several panels, such as this inner fender, to receive epoxy primer immediately.

Earlier, the dash panel had also been stripped to bare metal, which was then sealed in epoxy primer. After any imperfections were removed via a skim coat of filler followed by sanding, it received a few coats of Adventurer Gold paint, followed by clearcoat.

The Adventurer's main body shell has just emerged from the booth after receiving several coats of water-based gold paint, in addition to a "drop-coat," done to provide a uniform metallic finish. Standard clearcoat would follow to seal the paint.

Even though the standard 345-hp 361-cu.in. engine had been altered, the block was original to the car, and both four-barrel carburetors were retained. The engine was restored to factory specifications and refinished in a correct shade of silver paint.

The early TorqueFlite three-speed automatic transmission has been rebuilt, and the bellhousing and tail shaft housing, with drum-type parking brake, are attached. Shifting this unit is accomplished via push-button control panel located on the dash.

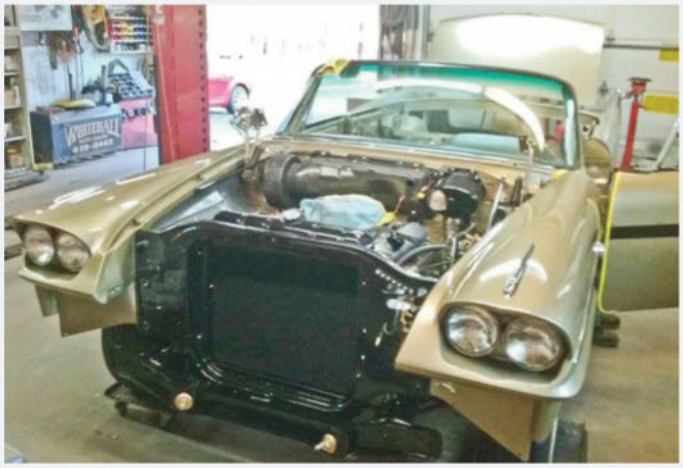
While the body received only minimal corrective treatment and then paint, the frame had been media blasted and smoothed with a skim coat of filler before getting gloss black polyurethane paint. Note that the rear axle and lower control arms have been installed.

De Sotos, like other Chrysler Corp. cars, employed a front torsion-bar suspension system, which has been completely restored, rebuilt, and reassembled here. The steering box and new brake lines are also installed.

Now resting on dollies, the chassis has been completely rebuilt with new or restored suspension and brake parts. Both the engine and transmission have been installed, along with a complete exhaust system and driveshaft; wire wheels are temporary.

To help expedite the car's completion, several aspects of reassembly were completed as sub-assemblies, such as outfitting the front fenders with replated trim and replacement headlamps, which also helped eliminate potential damage to the new paint.

Look closely and you'll note that gloss-black paint has been applied to the body, duplicating the factory accent color scheme. Using a two-post lift, in addition to the wheel dollies, makes the task of reuniting the body to the chassis relatively easy.



Once the body was secured to the chassis, a significant amount of work was done rather quickly, including the installation and proper alignment of the reassembled fenders and doors. Both the decklid and windshield have also been installed.

single four-barrel carburetor induction system. He also assessed its upholstery, trim and other mechanical needs. "This one had been painted red at one time, then burgundy, and eventually black. Typically, when these cars were a few years old, the multiple carburetor systems were swapped to a standard single four-barrel. We also pulled the chrome off and shipped that out to be redone or polished, and I rebuilt the original carburetors.

"This was about the time I bought a 1957 Chrysler 300-C convertible to restore, which was more important to me at the time. And then I bought another car; and another car and this De Soto kept getting pushed to the side. Eventually, I purchased another 1958 Adventurer convertible in 1998: the fuel-injected pilot car (*HCC* #1). Knowing I would get back to this first Adventurer, I had the interiors for both cars done. We had to have carpet material woven, and the door panels and seat upholstery made, so it just made sense to do them simultaneously. The interior for this car was stored in the shop until we needed it. So, too, were the interior and exterior trim. Except for the chassis, body, and drivetrain, everything had basically been done as if I was going to finish that car in the Nineties, but I kept getting interrupted," Tom laughs.

Flash forward to the summer of 2015. The Adventurer's progress had been stagnant for a tad over 20 years, when Tom, prompted by an offer from Vernon Smith—a resident of Newfoundland, Canada—to buy the car, finally relaunched the restoration. The body was separated from its 126-inch-wheelbase chassis and then bolted to a rotisserie. The frame was stripped of its driveline, suspension, and brakes, then sandblasted down to bare metal and sealed with epoxy primer.

According to Tom, "Any flaws that were in the frame were removed before we finished it with black polyurethane enamel. Getting the chassis ready was no big deal. If I needed something, I would just go down to the cellar and pull it off the shelf. For 25 years, I bought every Adventurer part I came across."

While that was ongoing, Tom and his staff rebuilt the Adventurer's gasoline-powered Stewart-Warner South Wind Heater. "They are exceptionally rare. Essentially, it's a furnace under the dash. Fuel is fed to it from the engine's fuel pump; a fine copper line tee's off the feed to the dual-quad carburetors. Inside is a spark plug, a coil, and a vibrator similar to those found in period radios. A flexible 1.50-inch exhaust hose was routed under the car. When you turned it on, the heat was instant, but it was a complicated system. There are temperature sensors in the ducts as well, and the fuel pressure had to be boosted to 30 psi. This one has been restored to function, but we blocked the fuel line."

Also rebuilt to stock configuration was the 361-cu.in. V-8 engine. The "Wedge" engine, it's nickname derived from the wedge-style combustion chambers, was part of Chrysler's new-to-1958 B-series family of V-8s. Although a fuel-injected version was an option, the standard Adventurer engine featured dual four-barrel carburetors, a 10.25:1 compression ratio and a bore and stroke of 4.13 x 3.38 inches, resulting in a factory rating of 345 hp and 400 lb-ft of torque. The Adventurer's three-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission was also restored, and both components were returned to the chassis.

As the chassis neared completion, the body shell and removed panels were carefully stripped to bare metal. Sealed in epoxy primer to ward off flash rust from

developing, each panel's surface was examined for any collision and rust damage. With nothing noteworthy to speak of, the team quickly moved to final preparations for paint by applying a skim coat of filler only where needed, which was then sanded smooth. Several layers of sandable primer followed, helping provide an incredibly smooth surface for paint once final wet sanding was accomplished.

"Color was an interesting process. To do it right, we had to use a water-based color coat; we sprayed several layers on the body for coverage. Then we had to drop coat the last few coats. That is done by dusting the body from above, letting it drop lightly to provide a uniform metallic finish. Once that cured, a standard polyurethane clearcoat sealed it, allowing us to wet sand and polish everything to an impeccable shine," Tom explains.

Final assembly was fairly rapid. The chassis was already waiting for the finished body, which was promptly lowered via two-post lift. The interior was then installed, while the other body panels—many of which were waiting as completed subassemblies—were bolted into place and carefully aligned. This allowed Whitehall to have the Adventurer completed in time for the 2016 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. The De Soto won its class at both Amelia Island and the 2016 Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance—a testament to the quality of work the team had done.

"Initially, I bought this car for myself," Tom says. "And it turned into one of those projects that just took us a while to get to. We've worked with Vernon for several years, and in a weak moment, we were talked out of this Adventurer by him. It happens, but it's always rewarding when we can preserve a piece of automotive history."

owner's view

I've always been drawn to the rare cars from the Chrysler Corporation, much like Tom. Over the years, I've been able to collect a De Soto pace car convertible, a few Chrysler 300s, and others, about half a dozen of which have been restored by Whitehall. I had known Tom owned this Adventurer for a long time and, being that there were only three known to exist in the United States, I really wanted to add it to my collection; it's the coup de grâce of the De Soto line. Whitehall's attention to detail is amazing, and, after a period of time, I was finally able to negotiate a deal that included its restoration. I'm very proud of the result. ***–Vernon Smith***

1967 IMPERIAL

THE CROWN FOUR-DOOR HARDTOP

An expensive prestige automobile should adjust to you. Not vice versa.

The new Imperial is a highly versatile automobile—as witness, this new Crown Four-Door Hardtop.

At first, the front seat of Imperial's four-door hardtops appears to be a wide sectional sofa. But, at your command, it becomes individually adjustable twin armchairs (power if you prefer). The passenger seat reclines.

Your climate is adjustable with a touch of your finger.

From the driver's console, you control vents, windows, window locks, and locks for the doors.

If you wish, you may have music… exactly to your taste. Each Imperial FM/AM or AM radio includes a rear speaker, floor tuning switch and power antenna. You select your station with but a touch of your finger or a tap of your foot.

And the reverberator for the rear speaker adds a new dimension to the fidelity of Imperial sound.

Exterior colors come in twenty-two new shades—sixteen of them, brilliant metallic. And the matching interiors are just as remarkable. Sumptuous Jacquard cloth in leather trim. Or with any of nine Imperial leathers.

The Tilt-A-Scope steering wheel moves through five positions up and down, three inches in and out. And engineers tested more than 600 steering wheels before they chose the best one for the Imperial.

Imperial '67…

Your personal automobile.

Next year other luxury cars will be a little better because of it.

THE IMPERIAL SEDAN

The new Imperial Sedan has a glove compartment in each door.

The armrest on each door is hinged to provide easy access to a deep, personal storage compartment. In the instrument panel, there's a vanity with mirror. The unexpectedly new. The unexpectedly lavish.

It is significant that these and thirty-two other luxuries are standard on the new Imperial Sedan… our lowest priced Imperial.

The new Sedan was specifically designed to extend the invitation of Imperial ownership to more fine-car buyers than ever before.

Consider its appeal…

Nearly nineteen feet of new prestige automobile. Distinctive. Unmistakable. Seldom before has a four-door luxury sedan achieved such distinction.

Dramatic styling is the signature of the new Imperial. A signature deftly complemented by custom striping—standard on the new Imperial Sedan.

At night, the embossed cornering lamps provide instant recognition at your club.

The Imperial deserves its prominence. It is a new mark of stature. A new symbol of prestige.

And more. Behind Imperial prestige is the assurance of Imperial luxury.

THE CROWN COUPE

The Imperial Crown Coupe is strikingly new.

At the rear of the passenger door armrest on two-door models is an auxiliary door handle. Within easy reach of your rear seat companions so that they may exit gracefully at curbside.

The Crown Coupe has eleven new interiors. Three are of leather and shaft-loomed Bedford cloth. Sumptuous. The other eight have seats swathed with supple Imperial leathers. Western steerhide, finer than that found on many European limousines.

The vinyl roof canopy is standard on the new Crown Coupe. In black or white—at your discretion.

Even among the new Imperials, the Crown Coupe stands out.

But a genuine prestige automobile is much more than first appearances. It is thoughtfulness in even the smallest detail.

The Imperial has the look of walnut on its exterior door handles.

Four cigarette lighters which are canted gently to your hand.

The new Imperial Crown Coupe... relentlessly thoughtful. But still more.

With the Mobile Director option, this lavish personal coupe becomes a traveling board room or office.

The conference table is covered with walnut. The turnabout seat swivels 180 degrees. The high-intensity reading lamp stores in a housing under the seat and attaches to any of four cigarette lighter sockets.

Or, with the addition of your table linen and the adjustment of two levers, your Crown Coupe is transformed into an intimate roadside dining suite. Just for two.

Imperial '67... the new style of travel. A style you should discover for yourself. At your Imperial dealer's.

THE IMPERIAL LEBARON

Not in ten years has any line of American prestige automobiles changed so dramatically. Quite simply, Imperial '67 is totally new.

Consider the Imperial shown above—the new LeBaron.

The LeBaron is the consummate town car. Designed to dignify the most ceremonial occasion. Its body is a new, unitized structure—unshared with any automobile in the world. The new roof line is formal and may be covered with a Seville-grain vinyl wrap—in the tradition of the custom-crafted automobile.

The new carriage window assures privacy. Generous twin storage pockets keep your papers in trim. There is a glove compartment in each door.

Reading lamps focus light within the rear compartment. They do not disturb your driver. Individual air conditioners—front and rear—regulate temperature for each compartment. They cool and dehumidify even in torrid climates.

For those owners who live in colder regions, the new rear seat heater is a welcome innovation.

Most LeBaron fabrics are of matelassé weave and trimmed with genuine leathers. The exception is grey broadcloth. Its simple stateliness is yours at no extra cost.

For the average owner, head room is ample for even a homburg. And new sliding assist straps assure entrance and exit with no loss of aplomb.

Imperial '67... the new LeBaron.

It is what the American prestige automobile has always aspired to be.

A point you are invited to verify firsthand.

BY MILTON STERN

Big 'Birds to a T

CARS AFTER WORLD WAR II WERE like puppies. They would start off cute, then keep growing and growing until you couldn't afford to feed them anymore.

This month's featured underdog started as a two-seat sports car, then gained two more seats, which resulted in a nice sales bump. By the mid-1960s, it started to grow again, and eventually gained two extra doors—suicide-style—in a generation known as the "Glamour Birds." By the time the biggest generation arrived for the 1972 model year, the Thunderbird was firmly planted in the field of large personal luxury cars, borrowing much from the Lincoln Mark IV, including a similar body that was big on bulk, but somewhat limited for its size in passenger and trunk space.

The 1972-'76 Thunderbirds are among the least popular of Ford's flagship. For some people, they are just too big and thirsty and lack the distinction to justify treating every gas station like a buffet at the Golden Corral. Their heft has not dissuaded my love for them.

Friends of my parents owned a local Ford dealership, and the better half of the couple always drove a brand-new Thunderbird. I remember when she drove a white 1975 T-Bird. I complimented her car, noting the color, and she told me that her 1974 model was the last red Thunderbird she would ever drive, since it was the only car in which she had been issued a speeding ticket.

But enough about dead friends. These Thunderbirds debuted for model year 1972. Arriving with a 120.4-inch wheelbase and weighing more than 4,400 pounds, they were, as I mentioned, the biggest 'Birds of them all, and in two years, they would grow even longer. Under the hood was a 429-cubic-inch V-8 as standard, and one could opt for a 460-cu. in. V-8. Due to the bloat and emissions equipment, performance was not as high spirited as prior 'Birds', but apparently enough for Aunt Fran to get pulled over. Needless to say, gas mileage was dismal, but who cared about gas mileage in 1972?

"Still unique in the world. A car made with care in the Thunderbird tradition. It combines elegance with innovative engineering for its own high standard of what a personal luxury car should be." Let

me pause and reflect for a moment on the one class of cars I wish they would bring back—the two-door personal luxury car.

As the T-Bird was all-new, sales were promising, with 87,000 flying to new homes. This wouldn't last, with 53,000 sold in 1976, amid news of a new, smaller model leaving the nest the following year. The 1977 T-Bird sold like no other Thunderbird before or after, and would be the most popular late model.

The new-for-1972 Thunderbird was pared down from three body styles to one, a two-door hardtop with a landau bar on the C-pillar. Gone was everyone's favorite feature—the sequential turn signals. The Thunderbird owner looked to round gauges, for speed, fuel level, and time. Have you ever noticed that, as a car gained more prestige back in the day, the driver was expected to monitor less information? I never liked idiot lights, even though they were invented by my favorite company, Hudson. In my experience, the temperature light would only come on after you saw steam flowing out of the hood, and the oil light after you heard the racket of metal on metal.

A 1970s favorite, opera windows, were carved into the C-pillar of the 1973 models, which featured power windows, vinyl roof, A/C, and tinted glass as standard equipment. This was also the same year Ford clearly took an apathetic approach to attaching 5-mph bumpers. Yes, I have said it before, but unlike their competition, Ford's steel girders were never fully integrated into the overall aesthetic of their cars. Just look at a 1973 Imperial or even an Eldorado of the same vintage, and you will see a lot less plastic filler, if you see any at all. But, don't let that deter you from considering a Big Bird. Now, those big bumpers are part of its charm and a great place to sit while at a drive-in.

After 1973, the 429 V-8 was no longer available. The following year, the base 460 would require unleaded fuel, which was poured into the car at frequent intervals from the side rather than behind the license plate.

The special luxury group trim option also debuted in 1974: the burgundy luxury group and the white-and-gold luxury group. More options were available for all models, including a power moon roof, automatic headlamps, and power vent windows.

For anyone interested in a large personal luxury car from the 1970s, but an Eldorado or a Mark IV/V is more than your budget would allow, the 1972-'76 Thunderbird may just be the car for you. I have seen quite a few that sell for around 30 percent less than what you would pay for a direct competitor, and they're usually in nice condition.

With its basketball court-sized hood, large wheel arches, and distinctive opera windows, you will always command attention when you arrive in one of the last big Ford Thunderbirds. Just remember, when you park, that you have about a foot of bumper at each end.

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Tony Haryn

Parts Department
Ford Dealership

FROM 1972 TO 1974, I WAS THE stock boy for a parts department at the largest Ford dealership in New Jersey. I was working my way through college, paying for my tuition, books, car insurance, and car repairs, all on $2.49 per hour. That meant I worked Monday through Saturday putting away parts (44 years later I still remember FOMOCO and MotorCraft part numbers), sweeping down all the mechanic bays, squeegeeing the shop floor, and washing cars on Saturday; so, I was there pretty much all of the time, and saw a lot of funny things go on.

One day, I was talking to the parts manager when we both turned towards the shop to see a new 1973 Thunderbird rolling out backward, with the mechanic's legs waving up and down from under the hood, with four other mechanics and the service manager in hot pursuit. It looked like the Keystone Cops chasing a car in the movies. The car and the mechanic were both saved, with no damage to either. The mechanic later went on to become a doctor.

Another day, I was walking into the showroom just behind one of our salesmen and his customer. This was a nice woman who had just traded in her mint 1968 Camaro convertible for a new 1973 Mustang convertible. She was so proud of her Camaro, she was bragging that the Camaro was so good to her that she never had to change the oil, just add some! The gasp that came out of me and the salesmen echoed throughout the showroom to the extent that other sales people stopped and turned towards us. As soon as she was in her new Mustang and off the lot, we all ran to the Camaro and lifted the hood. Sure enough, the original GM factory oil filter was still on the engine.

The service manager told a mechanic to remove the valve cover to take a look. We saw what 50,000 miles of unchanged oil looked like. It was caked with black sludge from the top of the valve cover to the bottom. The manager then ordered that the oil be drained and replaced with kerosene. Then it would be replaced with a lightweight oil and new filter and repeated one more time. The shop was filled with white smoke for the 20 minutes the engine ran with kerosene, and by the time they had changed the oil and filter a second time, the engine was running smoothly with no smoke. The Camaro was sold by the weekend and never came back to the shop.

A customer came in and bought a new 1973 Ford Custom four-door with a straight-six. This was the model that was primarily used for police and fire chief cars or taxi cabs. Some people, who wanted a big Ford without all the frills, still purchased these cars. Our customer had a strange request: He wanted all the Custom badging taken off and wanted it to look like an LTD. So, we ordered all the LTD badging and the shop put on white-wall tires, full hubcaps, and an aftermarket vinyl top. The car went from looking like a taxi cab to an LTD overnight.

One of the parts countermen had just gotten back from Vietnam. His first present to himself was a new car; but it was not a Ford. For $1,895 he purchased a new 1972 four-door Toyota Corolla. It came with an AM/FM radio, rear defroster, and carpets, but no air. At the end of the day, he proudly brought it into the shop to show it off to the guys. About 12 guys were standing around it when the dealership owner walked in and started to look it over. Now, the 1972 Pinto cost around $2,395 with nothing in it. The dealership owner did not say a word all the time he was looking it over. As he turned to leave, he said to the parts counterman, "Very nice car, don't park it on my lot again," and walked away. For the next two years, or until he left, he had to park the Toyota across the street in the supermarket parking lot.

Pintos were always having problems. If the rack-and-pinion was not falling off, they were being hit from behind and blowing up. A new problem was that the plastic fan blades might break off, as one of our mechanics found out. It hit him in the upper lip, knocking out all his front teeth. A few weeks later, he had a new set of teeth, but something else arrived at the dealership: a car carrier, with a Michigan dealer plate on it, pulled onto the lot with only one car on it—a red 1972 Mustang Mach 1. Without a word, the new car manager walked up to the mechanic and handed him the keys, and nothing more was ever said.

In 1974, a man about 60, pulled in with a mint-green 1958 Thunderbird to have it serviced. He told us that his wife had won the car on a game show, and she'd passed away after a short illness, having driven it only 1,800 miles. He put the "Square Bird" into his garage, and rarely drove it. The service manager offered him $21,000 for the car, but the gentleman was still attached to it. We all took turns going around the car. It was like looking at a time capsule. One mechanic sat in the car with the windows closed because he said he wanted to smell what 1958 was like.

The craziness of the shop also spilled over to the showroom salesmen. They were like juveniles. If they were not trying to get dates with the female customers, they were running after the office staff. I would get requests from the manager to clean the footprints off the headliner of his car. One day, a salesman came back from a three-martini lunch in his new 1974 Grand Torino. I guess he thought he could squeeze the Torino into a parking space half the width of an LTD. After his fifth or sixth try, he made it, but also had the whole dealership staff watching outside, and some were cheering him on. He damaged one customer car, a new rental car, and his Grand Torino. After the manager got him out of the car, he drove the salesman home, who was never seen again. Oh, did I forget to tell you about what the mechanics did when a young blonde in a white leather miniskirt, white sweater, and white go-go boots, pulled in with a triple-white 1972 Thunderbird, got out and walked into the showroom?

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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CLELL BALLARD
FAIRFIELD, IDAHO

Steam Car Across America

SINCE STEAM POWERED CARS disappeared in the 1920s, how could it be that that last steam car trip across America took place in 1962? And how could that "steamer" be a 1954 Buick?

Many amazing events take place quite by accident, and this was one of them. I attended a Christian College in South Carolina in the early 1960s. Since we lived out west, in Idaho, we had to drive almost clear across the country. In the fall of 1961, we did that in my neighbor's blue 1954 Buick Super. Although seven years old, the car was in excellent shape. Travel in it was kind of like being on a yacht, because of its large, comfortable interior and soft road manners. Other college kids from the area rode along with us, helping pay for the cost of the trip.

When school was out in the spring of 1962, we took a roundabout trip home, going by the southern route. As poor college students without money for motels, we traded off driving during the night and were tourists during the day. For a couple of days, it was an idyllic trip that only the young can experience. Then it happened. It was barely light at 5 a.m. when I was roused from my sleep to find the car sitting on the side of the road. Since I came closest to being the resident authority on mechanical problems, the others wanted me to determine what was wrong with the car.

"What happened? Did it just quit?"

"No, it started making funny noises, so I pulled over."

"Where are we?"

"According to the map, we are between Goodnight and Claude."

"You've got to be kidding. What state are we in?"

"Texas.

"Don't you remember passing through Texarkana before you went to sleep?"

"Oh, ya. Well, start it up and let me hear what it sounds like."

When the old nailhead came to life, I was confronted by a mechanical sound I had never heard before. It sounded halfway between a slap and a knock. It was fairly loud, and the engine was obviously missing. My suggestion that we try to get a tow truck was voted down by the others because of our lack of funds. They insisted we continue on driving slowly until we got to the next town. Thus we limped along until we reached the city limits of Claude, Texas.

There was a Buick dealer in that small town, and after many hours, it opened and we had the mechanic take a look at our ailing '54 Super. Then they called us into the shop and gave us the bad news: The piston in cylinder #5 had exploded, and only the rod with a wrist pin remained. Either at the time the piston exploded, or more likely since we continued driving it, the wrist pin had worn a deep groove in the cylinder wall. The mechanic said the engine was ruined!

We terribly dejected young men held a hurried conference. We determined that we had no choice but to ask the mechanic to put in a new piston and hope we could nurse the sick engine the rest of the way home. He agreed to do it, but made sure we knew that he guaranteed nothing. By 3:30 p.m., the engine had been reassembled and started. It sounded okay. We were told that even with new rings, that cylinder would use more oil. We pooled our resources and came up with $80. To this day, I believe the dealership, as a kindness, accepted what we had even though it didn't cover the total bill.

We did fine for the 35 miles from Claude to Amarillo, and in those days we had to go through that city. All at once, the guy driving exclaimed, "Oh, my gosh! Look out the back window!" There was a huge white cloud behind us. Obviously, something had gone terribly wrong with our engine, but what could it be? It was running well and didn't seem to be down on power.

Whatever it was, we were causing quite a sensation. We were in the going-home rush-hour traffic, and it was bumper-to-bumper. I should say everyone but us was bumper-to-bumper. We had a half block behind us with no traffic at all. You could tell by the expressions on people's faces as they met us that they thought our car was about to explode. They avoided us like a plague.

That old Dynaflow Buick just kept "guzzing" along like it always did. It may have been the world's worst single automotive polluter, but we were still covering ground. As we emerged on the north side of the city, there was a sign that said: Denver, Colorado: 444 miles. As we debated what had happened to our engine, the driver discovered the heat gauge was pegged at the top. It was then that we figured out that the compression from the new piston had blown through the gouge in the cylinder wall, and every time the piston went down, water was sucked in. The white cloud was steam condensing as the exhaust hit cooler air.

We stopped at a service station and begged a dented five-gallon oil can from the reluctant attendant. We filled the radiator and the can, which didn't have a lid. We stuffed a wash cloth in the hole and set the can between the front passenger's feet. We then headed for Denver. It was not long before we developed a routine that ensured fairly rapid travel. Approximately every 20 miles, we would pull over and top off the radiator. About every 60 miles we had to replenish the water in the can.

We steamed through Denver in the very early morning hours and had just 750 miles to go. Although I was worried that the internally leaking water would contaminate

the engine oil, the new piston rings were doing an amazing job of keeping it out. It really was a miracle we were doing so well, considering our major mechanical problem. We got to Laramie, Wyoming, on Sunday morning just as people were going to church. Probably more than one congregation heard about a miraculous sighting on the road. From a distance, we may have looked like a blue comet surrounded by a rainbow as the sun shone through the steam cloud that followed us.

The next time we stopped for gas, it was obvious the miracle was beginning to unravel. A check of the dipstick showed some contamination of the oil. Since we had an oil company credit card, we had the oil changed. With no money, we four growing boys were starving, but we managed to find a few scraps of food in the car, which we devoured. We then headed west across southern Wyoming.

The old Buick V-8 was slowly losing power. Soon it was obvious that cylinder #5 had stopped firing, perhaps because the hole in the cylinder wall grew larger. We had to stop for water more often.

I guess the old Buick thought it had done its duty by getting us back to Idaho. We were still 300 miles from home when we stopped for gas, and the engine refused to start. We had no choice but to see if someone would push start us. Old automatics like the Dynaflow had a rear pump, and if the car was pushed at least 35 MPH the engine would turn over. One of the guys managed to convince two drivers in two small rural towns to push us after refueling. I'm not sure I would be willing to push a dirty old whale of a car carrying four unkempt and scruffy college kids, but maybe the drivers he approached were afraid not to.

Late that Sunday night, we pulled into our little hometown. Our parents knew nothing of our problems getting there, so, like always, they welcomed us home with a table loaded with food, and we devoured it. It wasn't until later that the car's terminal condition was revealed to them. Sure enough, when the cylinder head was removed, there was a hole almost as large as the end of one's little finger in cylinder #5. Due to the car's age, it wasn't worth putting a new engine in, so it was delivered to a wrecking yard.

Looking back, it seems that, that old Buick should have been saved and displayed somewhere. After all, no one would believe a car with a ruined internal combustion engine could travel over 1,200 miles. In addition, it holds the distinction of being the last steamer to ply the roads of America.

The Mileage Master

Chevrolet's 1937 pickups proved their worth on the open road

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

More than 80 years ago, Chevrolet needed to convince buyers that its light trucks were the most dependable, capable, and economical haulers on the road. So, the company cooked up a plan to send a new 1937 Chevrolet half-ton pickup, loaded with 1,000 pounds of weight, on a 10,000-plus-mile road trip, certified by the American Automobile Association. For the driving chores, they signed on race car driver Harry Hartz—a three-time Indianapolis 500 runner-up who made headlines in a 1933 Chrysler publicity stunt by driving a De Soto "backwards" across the country. (The car was set up with reverse-facing controls and a modified drivetrain so that Hartz had three speeds in reverse and sat facing the rear window.)

On December 23, 1936, Hartz wheeled the Chevrolet truck off the assembly line in Flint, Michigan, and headed northwest across Montana, Idaho, and into Washington. He then followed the West Coast south and traversed the U.S.-Mexico border to the Gulf of Mexico. After passing through the Gulf states and North Florida, he pointed the Chevrolet up the frigid East Coast, to Maine, then headed back to Michigan through New England. Hartz arrived back where he began on February 23, 1937—mission accomplished.

Some of the highlights from the truck's two-month-long, 10,244-mile odyssey are surprising even by modern standards. During 328 hours of running time, the Chevrolet averaged 20.74 mpg and a speed of 31.18 mph. It needed only a minor repair along the way that cost 73 cents, and oil consumption was reported to be more than 7 quarts, but that included an oil change en route to keep the truck's babbitt bearings protected.

That same year, Chevrolet staged another road trip to demonstrate the durability of its heavy rigs. The company sent a 1.5-ton single-axle tractor, pulling a flatbed trailer loaded with five tons, on a trip from Southern California to New York. Over the 3,511-mile journey, the big truck averaged 27.34 mph and an impressive 11.37 mpg. It burned just two quarts of oil and used one gallon of water.

Powering both of these road-proven Chevrolets was the new-for-1937 216.5-cu.in. Blue Flame six—the only engine offered in the company's trucks that year. The 216 was a more robust engine than

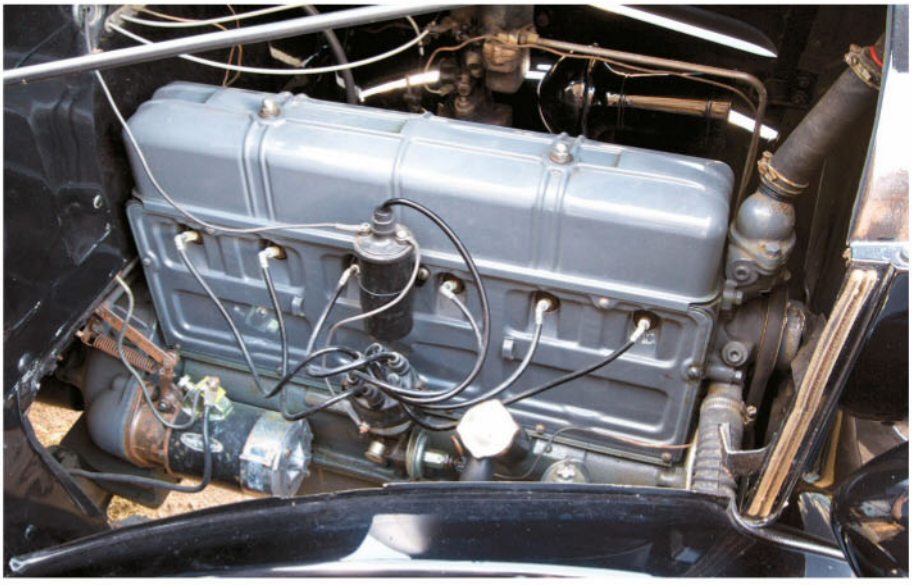
its 206.8-cu.in. predecessor. The block was two inches shorter, with full-length water jackets, and its crankshaft spun in four main bearings. The oiling system, however, was still a low-pressure arrangement that Chevrolet described as "four-way" lubrication:

- A gear-type oil pump supplied oil to six nozzles inside sheetmetal troughs in the oil pan—these nozzles squirted oil on the big-end connecting rod bearings.
- Drilled passages supplied oil to the crankshaft and camshaft bearings.
- Dippers on the ends of the connecting rods splashed oil upward on the cylinder walls and small ends of the connecting rods.
- A tube routed through the water jacket carried oil to the top end of the engine.

The 216 had a shorter stroke than its predecessor, at 3¾ inches, versus the 4-inch swing of the 207, but a larger 3½-inch bore than the earlier six's 3 5/16-inch openings. For extra oomph, Chevrolet boosted the compression ratio a quarter of a point from 6:1 to 6.25:1. (Later 216s would have 6.5:1 compression). The new engine was factory rated at 78 hp @ 3,200 rpm and 170 lb-ft of torque. (In passenger cars, it was rated at 85 hp and 170 lb-ft of torque.) Rounding out the powertrain on Chevrolet's half-ton trucks was a three-speed manual transmission with a floor-shift and a 4.11:1 final-drive ratio.

The engine wasn't the only new feature Chevrolet was boasting about in its 1937 haulers. Also that year, it introduced an all-steel cab with taller front and rear glass, for a better view of the road or job site. The front end was restyled to strongly resemble Chevrolet passenger cars, with a similar (but not interchangeable) grille, as well as painted headlamp pods mounted to the sides of the radiator surround.

Inside the cockpit, a bench seat was divided into two sections with adjustable cushions and backs. In pickups, the fuel filler was accessed by raising the passenger side seat cushion and unscrewing a bung on the top of the tank. For 1938, a more conventional external filler pipe was routed outside the cab on the passenger side. To further blur the lines between its cars and light trucks, Chevrolet equipped both with similarly styled and configured instruments, switchgear, etc. As the company pointed out in promotional literature: "The same easy control that is yours in a passenger car is provided for the driver of a Chevrolet truck. The instrument dials are directly in front of him. Close by his right hand are the choke, throttle, and light controls. There is even a package compartment, with lock, in the



panel. Clutch and brake pedals operate at light pressures."

The instrument cluster was well appointed, for the time, with a 100-mph, AC-branded speedometer in the center, gasoline and water temperature gauges to the left, and amperes and oil pressure gauges on the right. Simple paneling disguised most metal interior surfaces, and a rubber floor mat covered the floor.

Optional creature comforts indoors included a radio, a heater, a clock, a cigarette lighter, and seat covers. Outside, buyers could pile on extras like a rear bumper, a right-hand taillamp, an outside rearview mirror, fog lamps, a spotlamp, whitewalls, and more.

The half-ton's chassis was redesigned for the 1937 model year, too, and built rugged enough for light hauling chores. The reinforced frame rails were made from 9/64-inch #1025 hot-rolled, pressed steel, measuring 2¼ by 5¾ inches. Tying the frame together were five stout crossmembers, plus there were beefed-up engine mounts, spring hangers, and steering brackets.

In the rear, there was a "Monorail" spare tire carrier that clamped the tire beneath the bed with a locking bolt, to guard against theft. The carrier was also designed to make raising and lowering the spare tire under the truck easier on the operator.

Chevrolet's 1937 1/2-ton pickups were 183 inches long, from nose to tailgate, and rode on a 112-inch wheelbase. The whole package tipped the scales at 2,945 pounds, with a 4,400-pound GVW. When it came time to test that GVW, operators had a wood-decked box at their disposal that measured 77 inches long and 45¼ inches wide inside. The 1937 model's cargo box also benefitted from a redesign that stretched it out 5 inches from earlier trucks.

To shoulder whatever load owners might pile on, Chevrolet equipped its littlest pickups with eight-leaf springs front and rear, as well as Delco hydraulic shock absorbers to help smooth out the bumps. When it was time to stop, Chevrolet's light haulers relied on 11-inch hydraulic drum brakes, borrowed from the company's passenger-car line, fitted with 1¾-inch-wide linings, front and rear.

By 1937, light-truck sales in the U.S. were heating up, thanks to their versatility and low operating costs—as demonstrated by Harry Hartz's trip around the country for less than a penny per mile. Chevrolet moved 88,867 1/2-tons that year, 64,420 of which were pickups. The 1937 redesign rolled through 1938 with some minor updates, and in 1939, Chevrolet unveiled a made-over light truck, identifiable by its more modern V-shaped windshield.

This month's feature Chevrolet is owned by Dave Russell of Prescott, Arizona. Dave has owned the truck since December after purchasing it from the estate of his late uncle, Marvin Nelson of Flushing, Michigan. Marvin purchased the badly deteriorated remains of the truck in the 1990s and spent a decade restoring it. Interestingly, the engine is based on an NOS block that Dave bought for his own '40 Chevrolet, but gave to his uncle when he realized it was an older-vintage casting.

Dave told us that Marvin worked as an electrician at the Chevrolet plant in Flint, Michigan, and learned to restore vehicles by buying, fixing up and selling Buicks in his off hours.

"He'd buy late-model Buicks that had been wrecked, fix them up, and then sell them. As a kid, I remember he was always building a new Buick," Dave said. "He was working on this project near the end of his life, but he brought all of those years of experience to the job, which is why it looks so great."

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670-15	2-11/16" or 3-3/4"	A	$173.00	600-16	Black	A	$144.00
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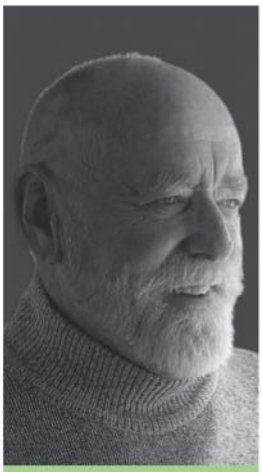


Let Us Spray

Dad wet down the garage floor around his newly acquired 1936 Chevrolet Deluxe Master Town sedan, stubbed out his Lucky Strike, sprayed a couple of test bursts on a piece of cardboard, and then started shooting the car. The air was soon filled with a light-green mist. The year was 1950, and Pop had picked up this derelict old Chevrolet from who knows where and was making it respectable again. It had been black, but he said the light color would make the car look newer.

Our family didn't have a lot of money at the time, and Dad had done paint and bodywork before the war, and still had his old dollies and hammers, as well as his Binks spray gun and his skills, so he made a little money on the side resurrecting old cars. He had spent the last several days hammering out dents, sanding, scuffing, masking, and priming the old beast.

And on this magic day, he transformed what had looked like a dull, dented cockroach into a jewel. Pop was a good body man, but he could shoot lacquer in such a way that it didn't need rubbing out. In fact, he had shot paint for none other than Dutch Darrin before the war. He would spray on several color coats, sanding between them, and then shoot on a thin final coat of nitrocellulose lacquer that was as much solvent as paint, and it would melt into the coats underneath and blend to a beautiful finish.

I admired Dad's skills and self-reliance, and wanted to be able to do such things myself, and ultimately did much later in life. However, my first effort at car painting was—shall we say—naïve. In the late '50s, a high school friend named Ray decided he needed to paint his 1950 Ford. It was an odd blue color that defied description, and red oxide primer was showing through in places.

We scuffed the body with 400-grade wet-and-dry, taped newspaper over the windows, and then shot the whole car with black primer using eight rattle cans. It looked like a gigantic charcoal briquette when we finished. The paint was uneven, fish eyed, orange peeled, and unsightly, but we figured we could sand it all out at a later date. However, as fate would have it, that later date never came. Ray—who went on to become a highway patrolman—wrecked the car trying to jump a ditch.

Not only was our paintwork disgraceful, but also it left a black outline on Ray's folks front lawn that looked like one of those leaf paintings you did in kindergarten. Ray's mom, who was usually a stable individual, became dangerous as a result. And though I did a lot of wrenching on cars after that, I didn't attempt to paint another car for 25 years. That is, until I decided to restore a 1936 Packard 120 Touring sedan.

After a couple of years of wrenching, I was ready to do the body and paint. I called my pop, who was semi-retired by then, and asked him for some tips and tricks. He said only: "What the hell are you doing that for? I only did it because I had to." That was not the advice I was seeking.

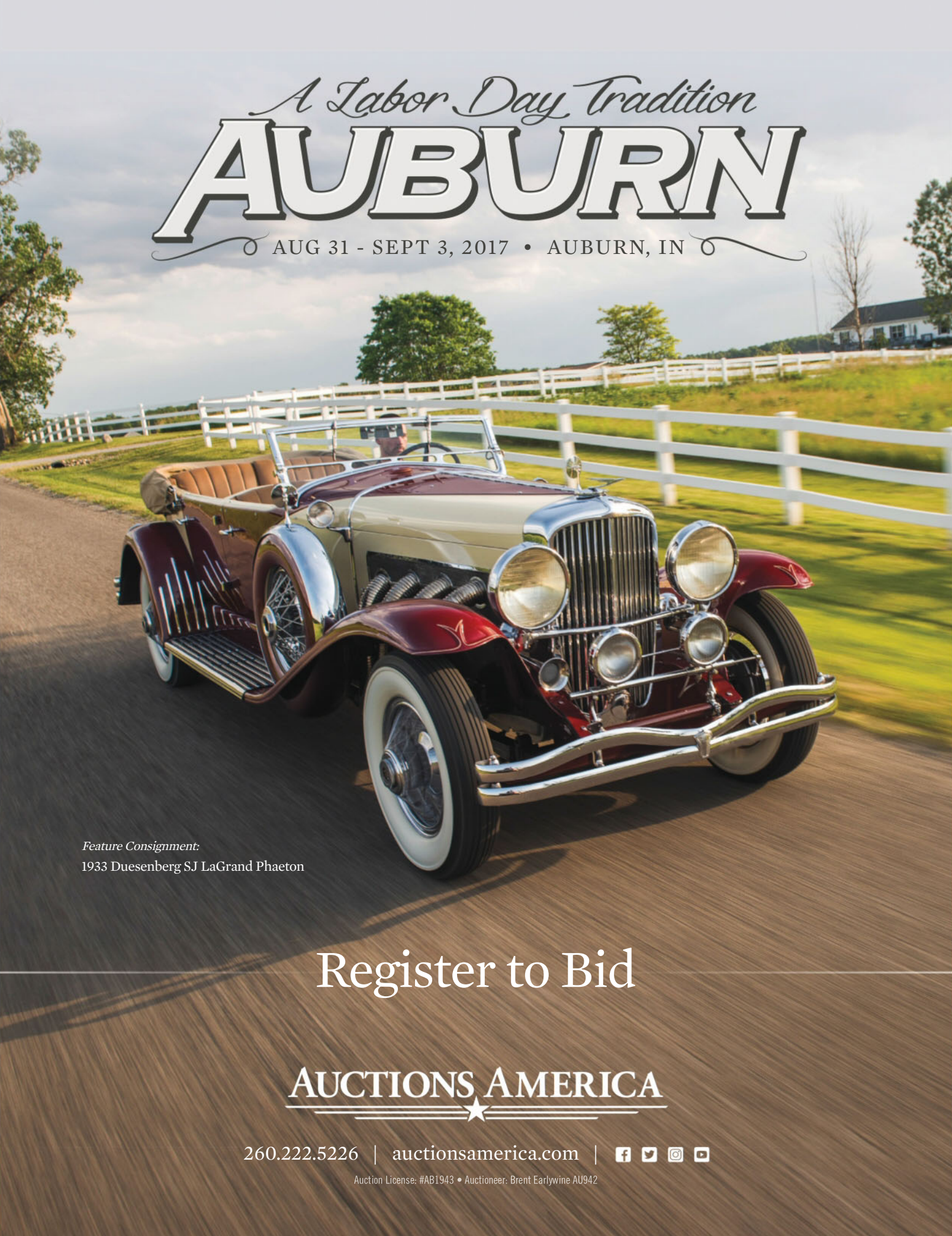
I then enrolled in a night class at the local JC and learned the requisite skills needed. It took me a year to take out all the dents, Bondo and rust, and it took gallons of primer and acrylic lacquer, but I did it, and the car ended up taking trophies at car shows. I don't think my father ever understood. And I don't think he ever figured out that I admired his skills and wanted to be able to do what he did.

I have since done show-quality paintwork on other cars, and even written a book on the subject called *Pro Paint & Body*, along with my good friend Tom Horvath who has painted Pebble Beach winners and invented a polishing system called CSI Clearcoat solutions. However, these days, because of the toxicity of the clear coats, I have hung up my gun for good.

I'm no longer awed by entertainers, but talented hands-on people who can create, rebuild, and make beautiful things still impress me. Most people don't recognize or appreciate what it takes to rebuild a vintage V-12 or to restore and refinish a classic car to better than new after it has been on the road for 50 or 60 years. People who can do such things are truly special as I see it.

My old man could do it all, and did. He came from a generation that wouldn't—and often couldn't—pay someone else to do things, so they did them themselves. I just wish Dad had kept that 1936 Chevy, and some of the other cars he made new again.

"And on this magic day, he transformed what had looked like a dull, dented cockroach into a jewel."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