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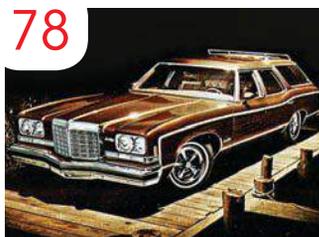
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ISSN# 1550-8730 • [www.hemmings.com](http://www.hemmings.com)

Published monthly by *Hemmings Motor News*

222 Main St., Bennington, VT 05201

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Periodicals Postage Paid at Bennington, Vermont,

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### POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Hemmings Classic Car,

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## Paying it Forward

**I**n the September issue of Hemmings Motor News, I wrote about giving your old car parts away instead of selling them. If you didn't get the chance to read that column, we're reprinting it here in the hope of spreading this idea among us all. As always, your comments are much appreciated.

There comes a point in all our lives when we need to decide what to do with all the stuff we've accumulated. All those car, truck, and motorcycle parts that you've saved and collected through the decades will surely be thrown away if you don't do something with them while you still have the ability to make that decision.

Do you really want all your car parts to end up in a dumpster? If they did, that would be a total waste, not only of all the time and effort you spent searching for those parts and preserving them, but for all your fellow car collectors who may have needed those parts to complete their restorations. In the end, no one wins.

The reality is, not everyone in your family shares the same passion as you regarding your car parts. Most think they are nothing but junk taking up space, and won't hesitate to throw them away as soon as you head to that big salvage yard in the sky. To most of your family and friends, these parts are useless. But we know otherwise. We know just how important—and desirable—some of those parts really are.

If you are of the age where you are no longer interested, or even able, to rebuild or restore another old car or truck, yet you have many desirable parts for a particular model stashed away in your garage, then you should make every effort to find those parts a much-needed welcoming home where they will be put to good use.

So here's the twist: If you are financially secure and don't need the money, may I suggest you give those parts away to a fellow car guy who's in desperate need of them, but for whatever reason can't afford to buy them? This will ensure that your old automobile parts are being properly recycled into another car, which will then help get another old car back on the road again for everyone to enjoy. This act of kindness will also greatly assist in keeping our automotive legacy alive.

Another alternative would be to give the

parts away in exchange for that person to make a donation to your favorite charity or organization. The donation doesn't have to be equal to the value of the parts, as long as the charity or organization can benefit from that financial contribution—a contribution that will be bestowed in your name.

I found myself in this exact situation a few months ago when a man named Bud called me to say that he wanted to give me his extensive collection of Triumph TR3 parts. Evidently, his wife, Carol, felt a strong connection with me

regarding one of my columns where I talked about my four rescue dogs, and the fact that I was undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma. It turns out that Carol had cancer, too, and she worked at the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Because she and Bud had no relatives who needed their old TR3 parts, she asked Bud to give the parts to me. In exchange for the parts, most of which I can certainly use to help complete the restoration of my 1960 TR3A, I agreed to make a donation in Carol's name to the animal adoption center where she worked. It's a win-win for all involved:

Bud cleans out his garage and is happy that his old TR parts will be put to good use; I get some much-needed parts; and the SPCA gets a much-needed donation to help them feed and care for all the dogs and cats that are put up for adoption each day. Most importantly, although she didn't live to see it, Carol's wish did come true.

After this most generous experience, I have decided to, as they say, "pay it forward." I have many parts stashed away in my garage, including parts for Pontiacs, Volvos, MGs, BMWs, Fords and, of course, Triumphs, so I've decided that if I learn of someone who is in need of a particular part that I have, yet won't ever use, I plan on giving them that part for free. Of course, the stipulation is that they have to make a donation to an animal shelter. But I don't want the donation to be made in my name, rather I want the donation to be made in Carol's name. After all, if it wasn't for Carol, this heart-warming parts experience never would have happened in the first place. Thank you, Carol. 🐾



//  
...may I  
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give those  
parts away to  
a fellow car  
guy who's in  
desperate  
need of  
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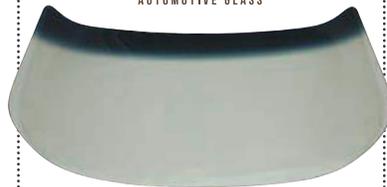
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## Hilton Head Happenings

**THE HILTON HEAD ISLAND MOTORING FESTIVAL AND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE KICKS** off with the Savannah Speed Classic October 27-29 in Savannah, Georgia, and culminates with the Concours d'Elegance November 3-5 at the Port Royal Golf Club, in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina; only 30 miles separate these two events. Featured marque at the concours will be Cadillac, and among the more than 20 classes to be judged will be three special Cadillac classes: Cadillac Classics, Cadillac Production 1949-1962, and Cadillac Production 1963-1973. In addition, some significant Cadillacs will be included in the celebration such as the Cadillac Cyclone, 1908 Cadillac Model T Touring, 1934 Cadillac Victoria Convertible Coupe, and 1955 Cadillac St. Moritz. Tickets are now available online, including multi-day passes for both festivals at a discounted rate. Visit [www.hhiconcours.com](http://www.hhiconcours.com) for complete schedules of both events.



COURTESY CCCA

## Texas Region Grand Classic

**THE CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA WILL HOST ITS FINAL NATIONAL MEET OF 2017** south of Dallas in Waxahachie, Texas. The scheduled dates are October 27-28, with the festivities kicking off Friday night with a Texas barbecue and the judged show taking place Saturday. Cars are still eligible for entry; be sure to consult the CCCA handbook for registration information. Public viewing of the cars will take place after 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. For more details and a downloadable registration form, go to [www.classiccarclub.org](http://www.classiccarclub.org).

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**10-11 • Carolina Collector Auto Fest** Raleigh, North Carolina • 336-972-4362 [www.carolinacollectorautofest.com](http://www.carolinacollectorautofest.com)

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## Buckeye State Winter Show

**THE SPRINGFIELD SWAP MEET** and Car Show has three shows a year and their final event is in November. This year's show will take place Friday and Saturday November 10-11 at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Springfield, Ohio, with thousands of people expected to stock up on parts for their winter projects. The show field welcomes cars of all eras to be judged in various categories throughout the day. Besides the swap meet there's also a car corral. Outdoor and indoor spaces are both available, and pre-registration will expire October 17. For more information on this Midwest meet, visit [www.ohioswapmeet.com](http://www.ohioswapmeet.com).

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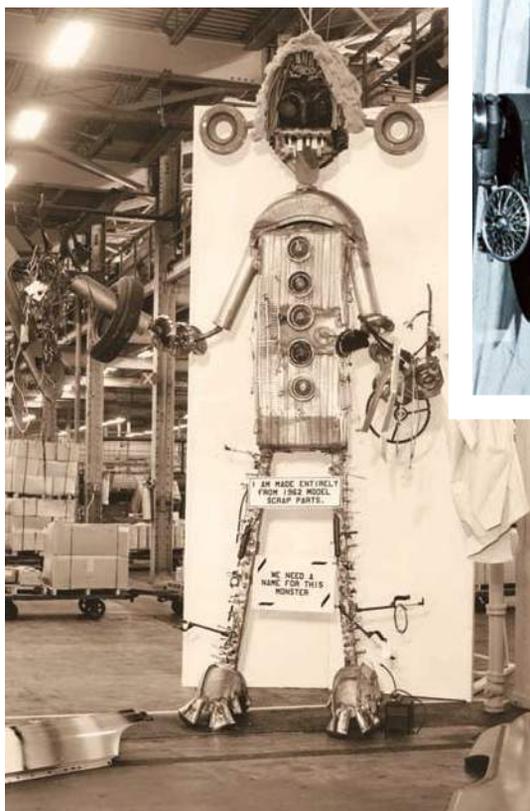
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## Freddie Ford

**FORD MADE A COUPLE** runs at building “robots” from car parts. The first, in 1962, seemed to have been a one-off, but then five years later came Freddie Ford (far right). As we can see from this photo we recently came across, there were three such robots. We know one went to the Texas State Fair; how about the other two? What parts was Freddie made of? And where are the Freddies these days? These are important questions, folks.



## Lannister Lids?

**AFTER THE MASSIVE RESPONSE TO “WHEELIE Interesting” (HCC #156)**, will this hubcap query from Ed Beahm of Lorton, Virginia, prove equally as easy to answer? We’re gonna guess not, considering Ed said he’s been trading wheelcovers for 50 years and can’t identify these two specimens with matching centers. Any clues we can pass on to Ed?



## Bel J

**A FRIEND OF KEN NORMAN’S PASSED THIS PHOTO OF A FASTBACK CHEVROLET** Bel Air on to him with the claim that its subject was a factory prototype. Like Ken, we’re inclined to believe that somebody simply grafted a Henry J’s fastback onto a Bel Air’s body. Looks like a nice meld in the photo, too. Anybody know who’s behind this two-tone sloper?



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

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## Denver Dealings

**MECUM CONCLUDED A SUCCESSFUL** auction in Denver this past July with nearly 700 cars up for sale. The results of the weekend saw a 62-percent sell-through with more than \$10 million in sales. One particular sale that caught our eye was this 1954 Packard Convertible that featured a new top, and reconditioned carburetor and brakes. Only 863 were made this year, and this one had been driven only 56,486 miles. When the bidding ended, the rare independent found a new home for \$30,000. All results from the Denver show are currently available at [www.mecum.com](http://www.mecum.com). Look for Mecum this November as they head to Las Vegas.



CARLISLE EVENTS

## Florida Carlisle

**CARLISLE EVENTS HEADS SOUTH IN NOVEMBER TO SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE SUNSHINE STATE AS** the Fall Florida AutoFest takes place in Lakeland November 9-12. During the weekend event, Carlisle will feature their onsite auction on the 10th and 11th. More than 400 cars are expected to cross the block in Carlisle's final auction of the year. The auction is scheduled to take place from 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and consignments are still being accepted. Visit [www.carlisleevents.com](http://www.carlisleevents.com) for a full schedule and local accommodations.



MECUM AUCTIONS

## AUCTION PROFILE

**THIS CALIFORNIA DUESENBERG HAD ONLY** had five owners when it was up for sale in Santa Monica this past June. The first owner was Arthur Bourne, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune, and it has been pampered ever since. Bourne had it modified in 1934 by Bohman & Schwartz with skirted fenders, metal trunk, and a long radiator to facilitate arid conditions and desert driving. Some other interesting features include a full-size home radio and a secret compartment for stowing valuables.

This car has never had a major restoration and is largely original with same body, engine, chassis, and firewall as it had in 1929. It was cared for with cosmetic upkeep and maintenance, and was also awarded Category One Certification by the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Club. The car had remained with the same owner since 1980, and its sixth owner took home a very nice example of a true classic car.



AUCTIONS AMERICA/KARISSA HOSEK

<b>CAR:</b>	1929 Duesenberg Model J Convertible Berline by Murphy	<b>LOT NUMBER:</b>	189
<b>AUCTIONEER:</b>	Auctions America	<b>CONDITION:</b>	#3
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Santa Monica, California	<b>RESERVE:</b>	None
<b>DATE:</b>	June 24, 2017	<b>AVERAGE SELLING PRICE:</b>	N/A
		<b>SELLING PRICE:</b>	\$880,000

# NOVEMBER

2-4 • GAA Classic Cars Auction  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
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[www.smithauctionsllc.com](http://www.smithauctionsllc.com)

10-11 • Carlisle Events  
Lakeland, Florida • 717-243-7855  
[www.carlisleauctions.com](http://www.carlisleauctions.com)

16-18 • Mecum Auctions  
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LEAKE

## Texas Transactions

**LEAKE WILL BE BACK IN TEXAS THIS FALL AT** the Dallas Market Hall November 17-19. Expect to see more than 500 cars, trucks, and motorcycles, spanning many eras of American cars. Last year's fall show had 585 lots with a total sales reaching nearly \$14 million. Among the sales that day was this 1940 Cadillac Series 60 Special Sedan. It was an older restoration, powered by a 135-hp V-8, and equipped with a factory heater and Trippe driving lamps. The Full Classic sold for \$17,000. Leake is currently accepting consignments, so visit their website for more information at [www.leakecar.com](http://www.leakecar.com).



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\$299.95 (STANDARD EDITION); \$365.95 (TRIBUTE EDITION);  
\$449.95 (HOMAGE EDITION); \$465.95 (ENTHUSIASTS EDITION)

It was two years after Buick's Riviera was put into production that this classically styled coupe received a facelift that would bring it into line with the vision imagined by GM Vice President of Design Bill Mitchell. The hidden headlamps that made his personal 1963 Riviera-based "Silver Arrow I" show car so fetching were now available to all Riviera buyers. 1965 would also mark the introduction of the ultimate Riviera, the 360-horsepower Gran Sport.

The artists at Automodello can be justifiably proud of their GM-licensed 1:24-scale resin model, which replicates the 1965 Riviera's crisp contours beautifully. In typical Automodello practice, this model has no opening panels, and features raised windows on the passenger side. The interior is true to life, offering the appearance of vinyl, chrome, and genuine walnut trim. The exterior finish is virtually flawless, regardless of which paint color you choose—this is dependent on the Edition.

There will be 299 of the Standard Editions available in Astro Blue, along with 50 Tribute Editions in Sahara Mist and 50 in Verde Green. Regal Black will denote the 24 Homage Edition Riviera Gran Sports, while a mere 19 Enthusiast Editions will be created in each of three colors: Arctic White, Burgundy Mist, and Flame Red with Black roof.



## Get Your Kicks

800-227-4373 EXT. 79550 • WWW.HEMMINGS.COM/STORE • \$16.95

Even in the hustle-bustle 21st century of today, the Chicago-to-Los Angeles drive of Route 66 has a strong nostalgic pull for American car enthusiasts who recall it fondly from the simpler, early postwar years. Kate Ward Thacker has created a wonderful collage of iconic Route 66 imagery that celebrates that famous interstate's golden era, viewed from the perspective of a car enthusiast. And that colorful collage makes for a challenging and fun jigsaw puzzle! White Mountain Puzzles' high-quality, made-in-the-USA puzzle (item #PUZRT66) contains 1,000 thick, extra-large pieces and measures 24 x 30 inches, assembled. You'll want to hang on to this one, and enjoy assembling it again and again.



## See Your Ford Dealer Today!

800-423-5525 • WWW.CALCARCOVER.COM • \$49.99

Period-illustrated advertising in the late 1950s had much more charm than the digitally manipulated photographs used to sell cars today, and those in the market for a new car in 1957 would surely have enjoyed the gentle sales pitch recreated by this 26 x 13-inch tin sign. "Picture yourself in the middle of tomorrow... Today!"—while in the driver's seat of a 1957 Ford Fairlane 500 Club Hardtop, of course. The sturdy sign (item #TINFORFD) sports bright, powder-coated graphics and comes pre-drilled, ready to hang, and perfect for your den or garage wall.

Continued on page 16

*Barrett-Jackson*

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## 1947 Packard Custom Super Clipper

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Packard's ultra-modern Clipper was as beautiful after World War II as it had been before, and as rarely happens, its design translated perfectly into a stretch limousine. Fewer than 1,800 Custom Super Clipper Eight Limousines were built, all sharing a 148-inch wheelbase and 165-hp, 356-cu.in. straight-eight engine, as well as two fold-away jump seats in the vast rear compartment. Great Britain-based Brooklin Limited has created a hefty 1:43-scale model of this incomparable 21st Series Packard, hand-assembled in this firm's typical fashion. Ample delicate brightwork sets off flawless black paint, and a two-tone steering wheel and metal-trimmed dash are visible through the windows. Packard enthusiasts will thrill to this quality collectible. (Item #BR-BML-20.)

## Romance of the Road

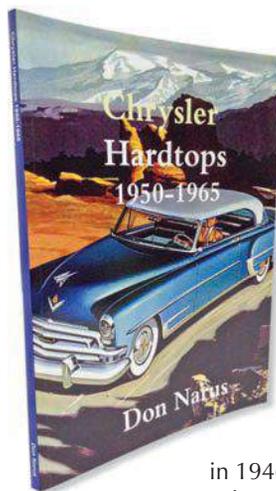
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\$65-\$250 (GICLÉE PRINTS); \$4,000 ("OITNB" ORIGINAL)

When she's not displaying her "abstract-realistic" art at premier concours events like The Elegance at Hershey, our friend and talented fine artist Bobbie Crews (Art & Automobilia, HCC #96) is creating vibrant new automotive pieces in her Knoxville, Tennessee, studio. Bobbie has shared two of her most recent classic-American car-themed paintings with us: "Fatty," and "Orange is the New Black."

"Fatty" is a 36 x 24-inch, oil-on-linen portrait of the custom 1919 Pierce-Arrow 66-A-4 built for silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, distinctive for its bright paintwork, unique radiator shell, and white tires; Bobbie set it on the rocky Maine coast for additional drama. Rendered in oil on canvas, "Orange is the New Black" highlights the beautiful curves and colors of a jazz-era 1928 Auburn Speedster in Bobbie's trademark style.

While the original painting of "Fatty" belongs to that car's current caretaker, Bobbie has made a small number of prints, which are available in the sizes 13 x 19 (\$65), 15 x 24 (\$100), and 24 x 39 inches (\$250). The original "Orange is the New Black" remains available (sized 36 x 36 inches, \$4,000), and this image can also be purchased as a limited-edition, 17 x 22-inch (\$95) giclée print.



## Chrysler Hardtops 1950-1965

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While it's little remembered today, Chrysler can take some credit for establishing the 1950s pillarless hardtop craze by having built seven

Town & Country hardtop coupes in 1946, three years before GM brought

its to market; Chrysler's regular production models that followed were both stylish and well-built.

Author Don Narus has created another quick-reference guide covering this automaker's eponymous and Imperial-branded two- and four-door hardtops, along with some fascinating period show cars. As usual, this 140-page softcover features black-and-white images, background information, and basic specifications including powertrains, prices, and production numbers. It's an inexpensive, handy title for the bookshelf.



FATTY



ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK

*A Duesenberg Model J coupe owned by eccentric playboy George Whittell Jr. commanded \$10.34 million.*



Not actual size.

## “It’s a Duesy!”

*Presenting the American car that commanded the highest auction price in history.*

*Get it before it’s going, going, gone!*

The Duesenberg is a masterpiece. In fact the saying, “it’s a duesy” meaning “the finest of its kind” originated from the shortening of Duesenberg. And, it commanded a duesy of a price! A Duesenberg Model J coupe owned by eccentric playboy George Whittell Jr. commanded \$10.34 million dollars at auction in 2011. *Hemmings Motor News* reports the amazing Duesenberg sale is the highest price an American car has ever brought at auction.

Very few American automakers present the deftness and quality of pre-World War II construction than Duesenberg. Anchored by the ever-popular Model J chassis, Duesenberg offered fine coach-builders of the early 20th century a platform to produce truly beautiful pieces of mechanical art.

**The Duesenberg was then the finest vehicle of its kind that money could buy.** This car is so beautiful it appeared in the 2013 movie *The Great Gatsby*— a most fitting ride for the rags-to-riches, Jay Gatsby.

The Model J quickly became one of the most popular luxury cars, as well as a status symbol in the United States and Europe, driven by the rich and famous, including Howard Hughes, Tyrone Power and Clark Gable.

We can’t put you behind the wheel of this automotive icon, but we can put one on your desktop for a cool \$129.

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New trim rings for the front-wheel-drive and lip-lace Truespoke wheels are now available. The trim rings are for 15-inch wire wheels that have the grooved area as shown in the photo, where the trim ring snaps in. They are made of plastic and fit with ease, the chrome plating is excellent, and each will fit the front-wheel or bead-lace-style wheels. These will not work with standard or reverse Truespoke wire wheels. Limited in production and available in sets of four only. Cost: \$240/set.



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## Corvair Pieces

Clark's Corvair Parts has been providing for Corvair owners' needs since 1973, and they've added some nice, new trim parts to their inventory. The new plastic pillar trim parts fit the windshield of the 1965-'67 Corvair. Each piece is made of easy-to-paint ABS plastic and includes the metal sleeves for the screws. Both sides available for the coupe, four-door, and convertible. Set of chrome screws are sold separately. Cost: \$62/each (coupe or four-door); \$64.70/each (convertible); \$1.35 (screws).

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## No Hands Metal Shaping

If you're into shaping metal, this shrinker/stretcher may be just what you need for your next restoration project. The WFSS-PRO is a hands-free, foot-operated machine that is ideal for forming metal by either shrinking or stretching it. It will work on metals up to 18-gauge mild steel or 16-gauge aluminum. The jaws can form metal an 1/8-inch at a time each time the foot pedal is depressed. Featuring 3 1/2-inch of throat depth, it's great for making patch panels, wheel-well openings, windshield corners, trunk lips, and more. And the wide-stance frame does not require bolting to the floor. Cost: \$695.99.

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## Front-Door Seals

New front-door seals have just been released for General Motors' 1965-'66 B- and C-body four-door hardtop models. Made of a soft sponge-rubber compound, the seals will keep out moisture and excessive sound. The rubber features microcell technology, which provides even compression along the entire seal so you don't have to slam the doors to shut them. Each seal comes with sturdy nylon mounting pins, which are properly spaced for quick and easy installation. Cost: \$99.95/pair.

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Now celebrate the historic 50th anniversary of this epic victory with the "1:18-Scale 1966 Ford GT-40 MK II #2," a superior die-cast replica showcasing the innovative engineering of the sleek GT-40 endurance racer!

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## József Galamb

### WHO DESIGNED THE MODEL T?

The traditional story, of course, was that the Ford Model T—the Car of the Twentieth Century—was the creation of Henry Ford. Ford deserves much of the credit, of course, for developing the concept and overseeing the details, but Ford was a talented farm kid turned savvy businessman. He liked mechanical things, he had a good sense for mechanical things, but he wasn't really an engineer.

Ford's engineer was a Hungarian named József Galamb. He was never famous, then or now. If he had sought the limelight, he likely would have been shown the door, much like Big Bill Knudsen. Instead, Galamb was content to quietly give life to Henry Ford's designs. He was the Leo Goossen to Ford's Harry Miller.

Galamb came to the United States in 1903, at the age of 22, already a trained and experienced mechanical engineer, having graduated from the Budapest Industrial Technology Engineering Course in 1899. He had grown up in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire and initially found work as a draftsman in a steel factory. After a year in the Austro-Hungarian Navy, Galamb went to work for the Hungarian Automobile Company, where he was awarded a scholarship to study in Germany.

The attraction of the United States was the upcoming Louisiana Purchase Exposition, informally known as the St. Louis World's Fair, which was scheduled to open in April 1904. Galamb had heard of the Palace of Transportation, which was to showcase the automobile—for many Americans, the World's Fair would be their first exposure to the concept of a personal automobile.

Once in the United States, Galamb found his education and experience in demand with the rapidly expanding industrial sector. He went to work for Westinghouse in New York, and later the Stearns Automobile Company in Cleveland, Ohio. But the epicenter

for anyone interested in automobiles was Detroit, and it was not long before the up-and-coming Motor City drew in Galamb.

In Detroit, he applied to multiple companies, all of which offered him work. He chose the two-year-old Ford Motor Company. In December 1905, Galamb started reporting to work at Ford's Piquette Avenue plant in Detroit's Milwaukee Junction. His first major job was to redesign the cooling system on the Ford Model N—the car that would start the series immediately preceding the Model T.

Once he had proven his worth, Galamb found himself in a back room at the Piquette Plant alongside C. Harold Wills, turning Ford's ideas for a Universal Car into blueprinted reality. Ford was pleased enough that the collaboration would continue into the development of the moving assembly line for the

Highland Park plant along with Walter Flanders and Eugene Farkas, another Hungarian.

His performance so impressed Ford that Galamb replaced Wills as chief engineer in 1919, where he oversaw the engineering of the Model T during its peak years. The life of the Model T was long enough that Galamb had opportunities for other tasks alongside his duties to Ford's passenger car. He worked on the development of the Fordson tractor and on military hardware during World War I. His last major design task was the Ford Model A of 1928, though he would continue at Ford until his retirement in 1944.

Galamb lived another 11 years, dying in Detroit in 1955. Unlike many of his fellow automotive pioneers, he was laid to rest not in Woodlawn Cemetery on Woodward Avenue, but in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Detroit. 🐾



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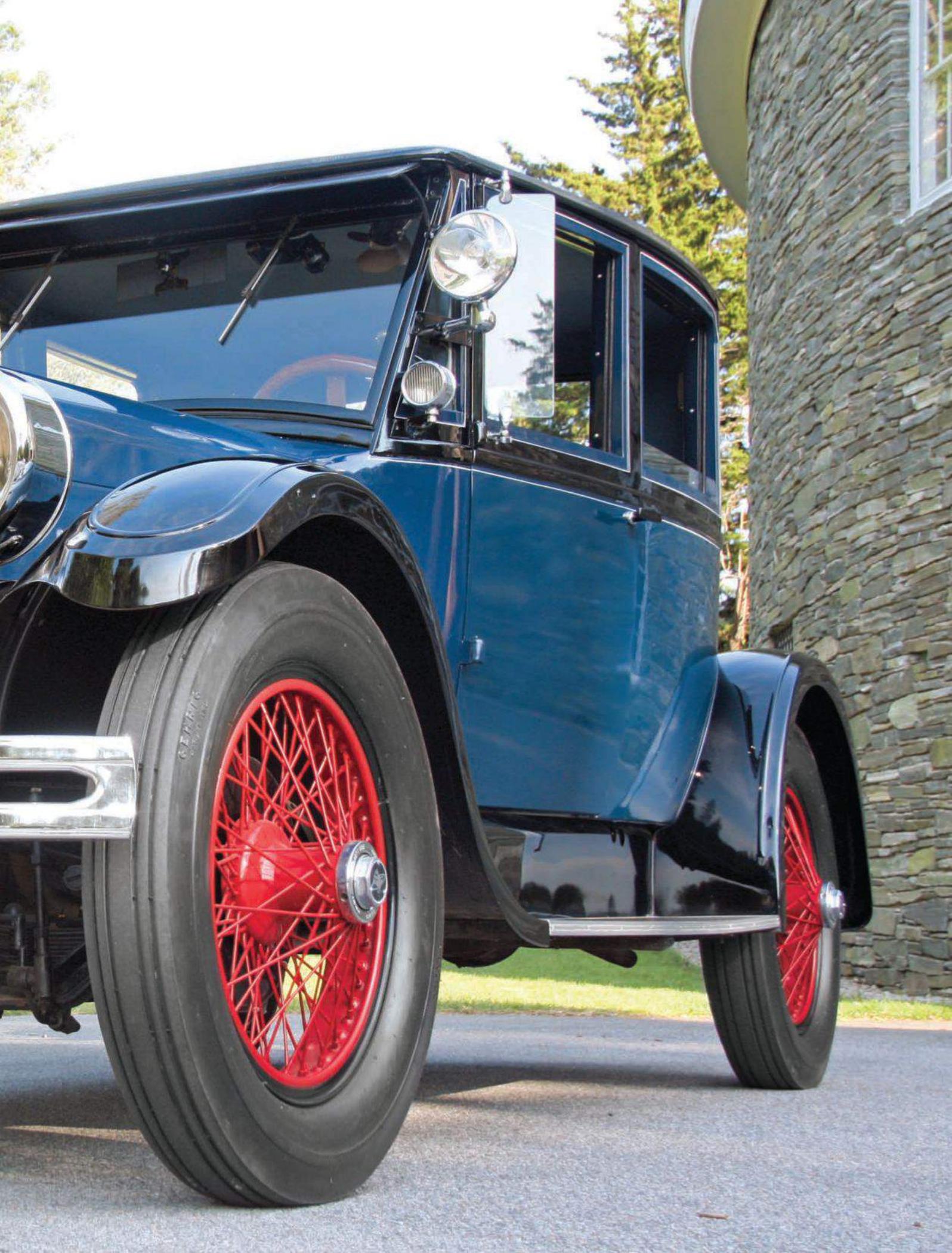


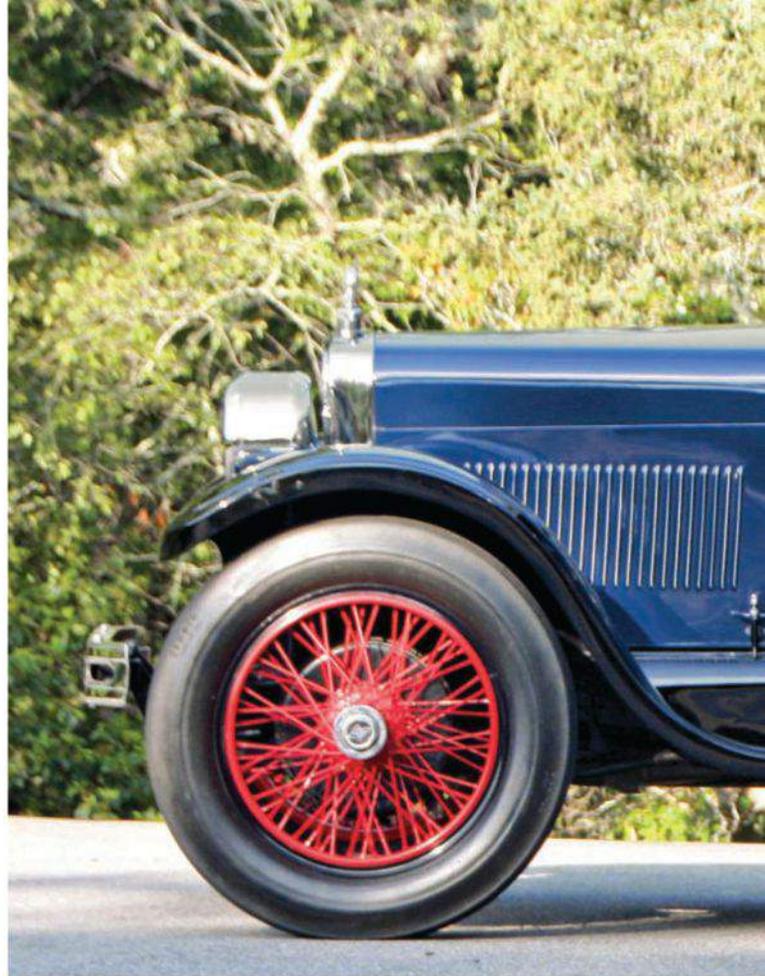
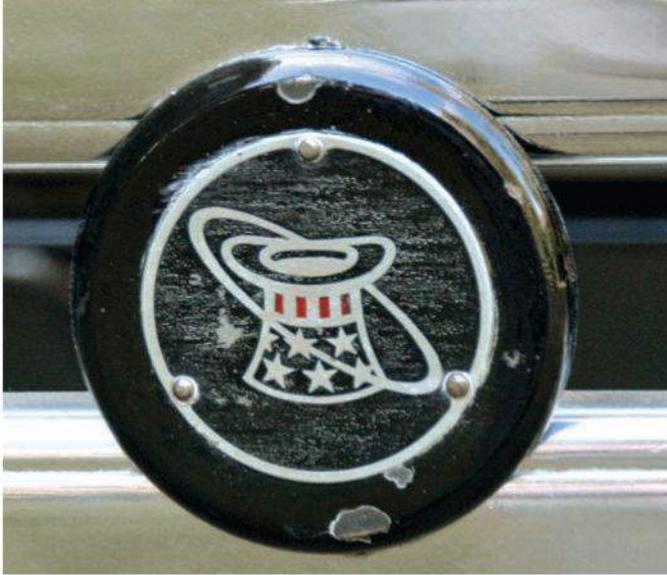
# Too Much, Too Soon

*The impressive 1925 Rickenbacker Vertical Eight Superfine was too advanced for its time*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL







**T**he creative genius of car enthusiasts and the cold calculations of businessmen are the age-old yin and yang of the automobile industry. Think of the car enthusiast as an artist, driven to create the purest expression of his or her vision in steel, glass, and rubber—regardless of expense. The businessmen are there to make sure that the unfettered vision doesn't bankrupt the company. Both the artist and his or her fans may decry the artificial limitation on mechanical genius, but the graveyard of the car business is littered with nameplates that went too far, too fast, and were unable to sustain themselves.

By the time he was approached to append his appellation to the eponymous company in 1921, Eddie Rickenbacker's car-enthusiast credentials were already well-established: He first rose to prominence as a race-car driver in the 1911-'17 era, having appeared in every Indianapolis 500 race before World War I, and as a driver for the factory teams of Peugeot and Maxwell.

During the war, he was the United States' "Ace of Aces," having shot down a confirmed 26 enemy aircraft at the controls of his Nieuport and SPAD biplanes. He was promoted to the rank of major at the end of his service, but throughout his life preferred the rank he felt he had earned, that of captain. By 1918, "Captain Eddie" was already a household name in America.

Rickenbacker wasn't merely a good driver and pilot. Before his skill at the wheel was recognized, Rickenbacker had seen to his education via a correspondence course in engineering. An early internal-combustion enthusiast, he had also worked for

the Columbia Buggy Company selling its Firestone-Columbus automobiles.

Further, Rickenbacker was already associated with General Motors founder Billy Durant, thanks to a marketing arrangement wherein Rickenbacker promoted GM's Sheridan division. In 1922, he would actually marry Durant's ex-daughter-in-law. So when Barney Everitt, William Metzger, and Walter Flanders—three men with enormous experience in the auto industry—joined with Rickenbacker, they were getting far more than just a famous name.

Everitt, Metzger, and Flanders are best remembered for the E-M-F Company, which was eventually folded into Studebaker—



The simple-yet-elegant details of the instrument panel and controls reflect the Rickenbacker's dual heritage in racing cars and military aircraft of the Great War—two things Eddie Rickenbacker knew intimately, thanks to his time as a driver and a fighter pilot.



though that was far from their only accomplishment. They were, respectively, a body man, a salesman, and a production man. All three had good reputations as auto executives, though their companies usually did not survive long after their personal leadership had departed. Rickenbacker was, sadly, not to be an exception.

Captain Eddie himself had initially wished to stay in aviation after the war. Unfortunately, the postwar recession, combined with a glut of surplus aircraft, meant that the fledgling aircraft industry was struggling. Instead, he reverted to his prewar enthusiasm for the automobile. In the 1920s, the line between automotive technology and aviation was far thinner than today, and the disciplines cross-pollinated liberally.



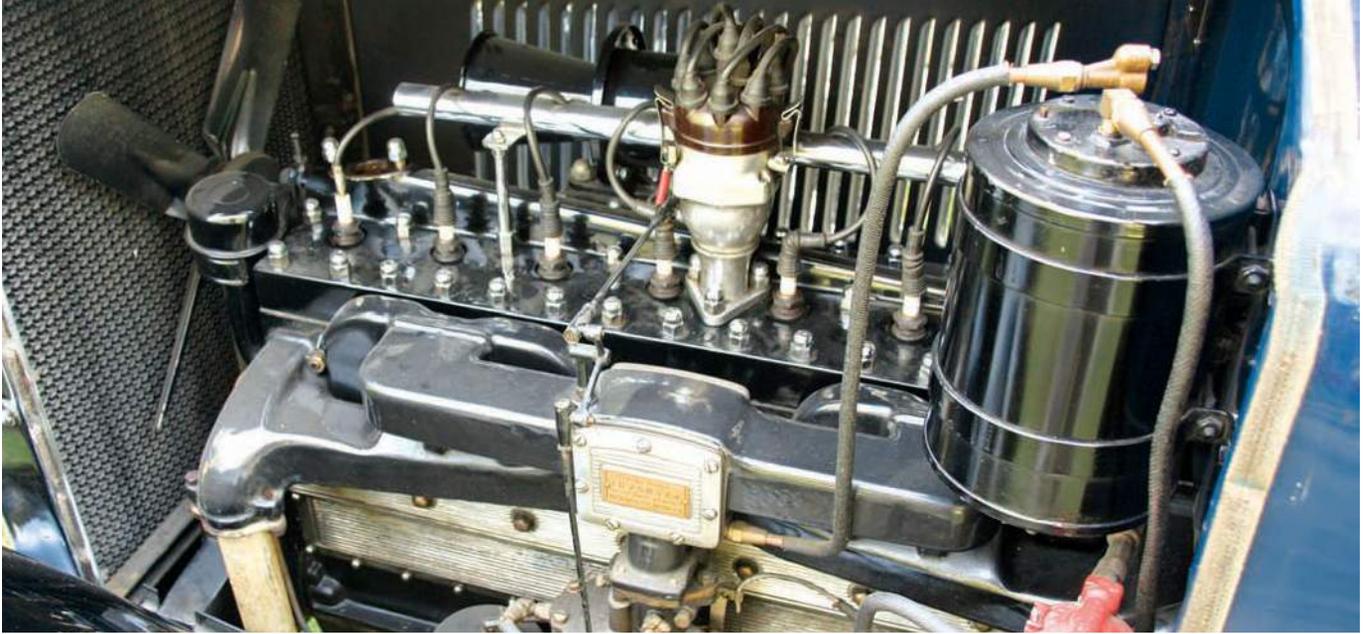
The early '60s restoration has held up well. Comfortable seats lend credence to the story that one owner could have lived in the car.

What Rickenbacker wanted in his own new car was to bring the high-performance technology of military aircraft and racing cars to the street. He was not alone in this, with the Chevrolet brothers (who had previously sold their family name to Durant) making similar plans at the same time to turn their Frontenac racing team into a producer of road cars. Rickenbacker got further, however, and while Frontenac was forced to produce speed parts for the Ford Model T, Rickenbacker really did produce what the company termed "a car worthy of its name."

The biggest technical triumph of the original Rickenbacker Six was its "tandem flywheel." Captain Eddie had been impressed by the smoothness of the liquid-cooled inline engines of his German opponents in the skies over France. When he was able to inspect the inner workings of crashed or captured airplanes, he discovered that their crankshafts had flywheels at both ends, greatly reducing the vibration transmitted outside of the engine.

What most people remember about Rickenbacker, however, was its pioneering use of four-wheel brakes in the medium-price field. Even the prototype chassis, displayed at the 1922 New York Auto Show, had front-wheel brakes present, a major departure for the time. In June of 1923, both Duesenberg and Rickenbacker announced that four-wheel braking would now be standard. For Duesenberg, a race-bred, high-performance, luxury car, this was not much of a surprise. For a less-expensive car like Rickenbacker, it was remarkable in the extreme.

Other companies soon followed suit, though Studebaker actually launched a smear campaign attempting to paint front brakes as unsafe, and Rickenbacker felt the pressure to continue to update its product line. For 1925, the year of our feature car, the original 58-horsepower, 218-cu.in. straight-six was upgraded to a 236-cu.in. engine with seven main bearings, producing 68 horsepower. The six-cylinder engine was also joined by an



An eight-cylinder engine was unusual for a car in the mid-price field in 1925, and the Rickenbacker's is particularly stout, with nine main bearings. The 268-cu.in. engine produces 80 horsepower. By 1927, a twin-carb version would make 90 horsepower.

L-head, 80-horsepower, 268-cu.in. straight-eight with nine main bearings. The six retained the traditional 117-inch wheelbase, but the eight received a lengthened 121.5-inch wheelbase. The lines were otherwise quite similar.

This "Vertical Eight Superfine," as the new-for-1925 eight was called, was an excellent car—smooth and powerful. The details are outstanding for a car at its price point, right down to the "hat-in-the-ring" logo, borrowed from the United States Army Air Service's 94th Pursuit Squadron, Rickenbacker's own unit, cast into the rear axle housing where only someone crawling underneath the car could see it. In bringing luxury-car features to the mid-price field, it was arguably five years ahead of the competition.

Unfortunately, just as the company seemed to be finding its

footing, Flanders—a crack production specialist who had helped Ford Motor Company on its way to the moving assembly line—was killed in a car accident. At the same time, dealers began fleeing the fold, possibly due to Studebaker's hatchet job (though it wouldn't stop newcomer Chrysler from adopting four-wheel hydraulic brakes that year) or possibly due to word of the kind of executive infighting that had brought down other efforts by the founders of E-M-F.

It was in this environment that Captain Eddie left the automotive firm bearing his name in 1926. Soon after, he would buy the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, which he would own until 1945, and embark on a career as an aviation executive that would keep his name in the public eye until his death in 1973.

Rickenbacker, the company, kept trying, promoting its Super Sport boat-tailed coupe as the fastest four-passenger automobile for sale (faster models from the likes of Duesenberg seated only two) and introducing dual-carburetor engines for 1927. But it was not enough, and the firm did not survive to sell 1928 models.

It is said that after the company folded, Captain Eddie personally repaid all debts he had guaranteed for the company, despite a bankruptcy discharge, burnishing his reputation as an ethical businessman. Everitt went on to help found the Verville Aircraft Company in the same Detroit factory building that had housed Rickenbacker. Metzger also got into aviation, helping form Stinson Aircraft in 1926.

As an interesting aside, the tooling for both the six-cylinder and eight-cylinder 1927 Rickenbackers was sold to a Danish businessman in Germany named Jørgen Skaft Rasmussen who had planned to produce the engines for sale to European automakers. When no orders were forthcoming, Rasmussen instead shopped his designs to Audi, in which he was the majority shareholder. This resulted in the Rickenbacker 6-70 becoming the Audi Type-T "Dresden" and the eight-cylinder Rickenbackers becoming the Audi Type-SS "Zwickau." Both were produced until 1932.

That makes the four-passenger coupe on these pages a rarity to begin with. In fact, it is believed by the Rickenbacker Club of America to be the only surviving 1925 eight-cylinder coupe. It should come as no surprise, then, that for the past 48 years it has been a part of the Automobile Gallery of the Heritage Museums & Gardens, in Sandwich, Massachusetts. The Automobile Gallery has as its nucleus the collection of pharmaceutical heir J.K. Lilly III, and the Rickenbacker was acquired by Lilly in 1966.





**The Rickenbacker's dual-flywheel engine is fed by a vacuum fuel pump, fired by a conventional distributor, and very smooth.**

We spoke with Director of Collections and Exhibits Jennifer Madden, and she told us that Lilly acquired the car from a Dearborn, Michigan, collector named J. Walter Heater. We don't know if there is a connection, but Heater was an executive with a Detroit firm called Fleet Supply Corp. ("parts and supplies for trucks, trailers, and cars"). The address for Fleet Supply, 2896 Central Avenue, was less than a mile from the still-extant former Rickenbacker factory at 4815 Cabot Street—could that have sparked Heater's interest in finding a Rickenbacker?

Heater found the car in 1960 in what the *Detroit Free Press* described as "an abandoned garage on Ferry Park Avenue near the Lodge Freeway." The previous owner, a man named Gauss, was a retired Army engineer. According to a letter in the car's file at the Heritage Museums, Gauss had sold his home and actually

lived in the car in his garage for 15 years!

Heater restored the Rickenbacker, completing the job in 1962. The coupe was immediately recognized as Grand Champion at the Henry Ford Museum's Old Car Festival in the division for cars built between 1917 and 1925. While it was in his care, it was reunited with Captain Eddie for a television show apparently called *On the Street*.

Sometime around 1966, Heater and Lilly happened to encounter one another, and Heater told Lilly about his Rickenbacker. The two men corresponded that summer regarding the car, and eventually it was settled that Lilly would purchase it for \$5,000 (a little more than \$37,500 adjusted for inflation).

Heater even offered to drive the Rickenbacker from Dearborn to Boston for Lilly to take delivery. In a letter, he noted "it runs very well at 55-60 mph, which means two days on the road from here." Eventually, it was settled that Heater would meet a representative of Lilly's in Syracuse, New York, about half way between the two men. Heater apparently took the Greyhound home.

It's not recorded why the Rickenbacker caught Lilly's fancy. Perhaps it was just the excellent restoration that the car still wears today—having been museum-kept since 1969 and undriven since sometime in the 1970s, although the museum intends to get it driving again soon. It is worth noting that the Lilly family's roots are not in Boston, or Cape Cod, but rather in Indianapolis, Indiana, where the Rickenbacker name and the speedway are icons. It's not impossible that Lilly, who was six when this car was built, recalled the excitement associated with Captain Eddie and his airplane-inspired car way back when.

Though it survived only a brief six model years, and only an estimated two dozen examples remain, the Rickenbacker is well remembered today, thanks to its technical sophistication and its association with one of America's greatest aviation heroes. If you are lucky enough to see or experience one, linger awhile and soak in the details, quality construction, mechanical elegance, and handsome styling. You will be glad you did. 🐞



# Four-Door Sensation

*With its nailhead V-8 and Turbine Drive, the entry-level upscale Electra was more than just another four-door sedan*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY RICHARD LENTINELLO







One warm summer evening this past July, I was driving down scenic route 186 in Somers, Connecticut, enjoying the outstanding at-ease ride of the 1960 Buick Electra that I was behind the wheel of. General Motors cars of this era have a certain unmistakable driving characteristic that makes operating them a very memorable experience. They also have a distinctive interior aroma that, for me, instantly brings back a flood of wonderful childhood memories.

I'm a longtime admirer of Buick's styling for the 1960 model year, so this was certainly going to be an unforgettable event. Owner Danny Plotkin, of East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, had thrown me the keys and said, "You really have to drive this Buick to see exactly what it's all about." And so I was.

My time behind the large-diameter, power-assisted steering wheel was all too brief, I felt like I could have driven that big four-door sedan another two hours with relative ease—it was

that comfortable, that pleasurable. Yet, no doubt about it, at 80 inches, the Electra is a wide ride; all 1959-1960 model year General Motors full-size cars were. And long, too. This series 4700 four-door sedan rides on a long 126.2-inch wheelbase; at 221.2 inches, that's an overall length of nearly 18½ feet. Now, that's big! Sitting behind the wheel, you know you're driving a big car with an elongated body. You feel it.

The trick to enjoying the unique characteristics of this amazing automobile is to drive it as its engineers intended it to be driven. It's not a muscle car, and it certainly isn't a sports car, so it shouldn't be treated as such. The Electra was your typical American-made sedan that was built to handle long-distance drives in total luxury. So, just sit back, relax, and let the car casually cruise on down the road.

Buick engineers really knew the right combination of shock valving and bushing durometer to make their cars' chassis and suspensions eagerly soak up the bumps while maintaining a



The softly sprung foam-cushioned upholstery on the power-activated, six-way adjustable, wide bench seat is still covered in the original cloth and vinyl fabric. Flat-top instrument panel adds to the cabin's airiness, which is enhanced with the wraparound windshield.

compliant ride quality. Perhaps that is why they preferred to use coil springs front and rear instead of harder-riding leaf springs. Most surprisingly was how the big Electra handled through northern Connecticut's winding roads. The body lean was less than expected, and it always remained composed, with a reassuring feel about it. Best of all, the enticing view of those slanted front fenders lets you know you're driving not only a special automobile, but one that is loaded with style. As to the steering, the recirculating-ball gearbox isn't so much overly assisted as it is wide in its ratio; a closer 14:1 ratio steering box instead of the stock 19:7 ratio would be far more precise, engaging, and way more fun.

Power wise, just a blip of the throttle and the 4,544-pound Buick responds quickly, and without delay. The 401 cubic inches of its nailhead V-8 puts out a healthy 325 horsepower at 4,400 rpm, and is backed by a massive 445 lb-ft of torque at just 2,800 rpm, which is the rev range where you want it when driving an automobile this size and weight. All that muscle is fed fuel via a large Carter AFB four-barrel carburetor that returns, on average, 9 miles per gallon when driven in urban traffic and a high of 13 mpg while cruising on the highway. Due to the engine's 10.25:1 compression ratio, only the highest octane grade fuel is used. But the signature quality of this beautiful Buick is not its powerful small-valve engine, which is certainly a remarkable engineering marvel in and of itself, rather it's its Turbine Drive transmission.

Now we'll let Danny describe just how this transmission works, as he's owned this Electra since 2005 and knows well all the little details and minute characteristics about it and how the car performs in a variety of situations: "The engine bolts to a torque converter that resembles a washing-machine drum. In it is the requisite impeller, but also a variable-pitch stator and not one but two turbines, each with a different 'bite' or vane angle.

This provides the torque multiplication needed to mitigate the single gear ratio. The transmission starts in 'direct.' It has a low first gear, but it can only be selected manually. As with most period automatics, it has a front and rear pump that can be push started, but unlike Chevrolet's Powerglide, which was co-developed with Dynaflo, the Twin Turbine does not have the front-pump whine of the Powerglide. The Buick transmission is nearly silent.

"Pulling away from rest raises more engine noise than seems appropriate for the speed. All the action takes place in that big torque converter rather than the planetary gear sets. But the tardy uptake doesn't last long before the powertrain tightens and the nailhead comes on cam. It's then that the car rockets down the road as if shot from a cannon, and with no shifting there is nothing but a smooth, uninterrupted flow of glorious V-8 power. It's comparable to a big-engine ski boat coming on plane. Before you know it, the speed minder buzzes alarmingly as the Buick hurtles down the expressway while those passed gawk in awe that anything so big and ridiculous can go so fast.

"With no traditional kick-down, the Twin Turbine uses an accelerator linkage to activate a variable-pitch mechanism on the torque-converter stator vanes. This works similar to the propeller prop-pitch mechanism on airplanes, but the net effect is negligible. Matting the pedal merely brings up the rpm that puts the engine in a better power-producing speed range, but without a ratio change it's not nearly as effective as dropping down a gear. That is offset by the excellent throttle response and the wall of torque from the willing and beautifully internally balanced nailhead.

"The big Buick easily cruises stress-free at 80 mph and will climb to over 110 in short order. It's then that the little valves responsible for the copious low-end torque enter the fray, and the engine begins to nose over for lack of air flow. Evidently,



The speedometer is easy to read and sits in an adjustable panel that adapts to different driver's line of vision. The Sonomatic radio is a pushbutton AM unit; the column shifter has a small magnifying glass, the better to see gear engagement; sliders control heat and air; "Power Steering" is inscribed on the steering-wheel boss.





Original 401-cu.in. V-8 is called the Wildcat 445 — it has never been rebuilt; the A/C's hot-gas bypass valve activates via the "COLD" lever on the left side of the dash; radiator "Caution" decal is original to the car.



Buick engineers knew their customers well.

"Incidentally, Buick included the speed minder buzzer option and the gigantic 12-inch aluminum front brakes to deal with its penchant for speed, which can go unnoticed due to its quiet and lack of vibration and harshness. Besides, the Twin Turbine transmission does not provide much engine braking. Long downhill runs rely on the big brakes, which were so effective that period auto journalists proclaimed them the best in the business. It is very easy to find oneself unintentionally well over legal speeds. Brake-pedal travel is short and firm, with a satisfyingly secure action that brings to mind discs in better, newer cars. Brake fade is all but a rumor.

"Power steering is decisive, with good road feel and only about four turns lock to lock. Its width notwithstanding, the car is easy to jockey around. The dash instrument angle is adjustable, and with six-way power seats, anyone can find a comfort-

able driving position. The hood is lower than it is on the 1959 Buicks, so the view of the road is wide open, and the smaller fins give the driver a better idea of the location of the rear corners. Yet, for such a large sedan, back seat ingress/egress is oddly compromised by a narrow opening and a sunken floor well in the the period-styling fad of lower bodies.

"GM's compound curve windshield for 1959 and '60 was its largest on the four-door sedans and tantamount to a fishbowl. The opposing wipers are but two wagging fingers that sweep less than 40 percent of its surface. The glass wraps into the roof, and is so large as to make efficient winter defrosting unimaginable."

Performance characteristics aside, what I've always admired most about the 1960 Buicks is their shape. If ever a car can be called 'rolling sculpture,' this body design would be an ideal example. Like its transmission, its body flows oh-so smoothly and effortlessly, from the tip of its front fenders back towards its sloping rear deck and canted tail fins, while the same curve of the rounded headlamps is what shapes the front fender, thus giving the body that sculptured look. Most dramatic is the way the outer edge of the front fenders flow downward into the quarter panel. This line is further enhanced by the strong horizontal line that runs from the base of the windshield to the tip of the rear fin, defining the body's entire rearmost portion.

Clearly, this car is a masterpiece of automo-



tive design, as each shape, form, and crease transitions into the next shape, form and crease with total unity and sense of being. Most apparent is the lack of any frivolous ornamentation or trim, as the purity of the exterior design is what gives the body its defining character. And while it may be a large car, unlike other automobiles of its era, its proportions are extremely well balanced.

Returning after a two-year absence were Buick's signature ventiports; however, instead of the more common oval openings, the 1960 Buick had simulated louvers, which were non-functional. Also gone are the 1958-'59 models' complex and busy-looking grilles, replaced instead by a pressed, concave-shaped grille with alternating thick and thin vertical lines, capped off with the striking tri-shield Buick emblem surrounded by a chrome ring that was positioned in the grille's center. And, unlike the 1959 Buicks, with their canted headlamps, the horizontal positioning of the 1960 model's headlamps give the them a sportier and leaner appearance.

For the 1960 model year, total Buick production was a mere 253,999 automobiles—a reduction of 31,090 cars from the previous year, which pushed Buick into ninth place in Detroit's sales race. After the ever-popular LeSabre, which had a production of 144,700 units, the Electra and the Electra 225's combined output was 56,300 cars. Four-door sedans totaled 13,794, which was the second-most popular of all the Electra models after the four-door hardtop's production of 14,488.

What's most amazing about our feature car is that it has

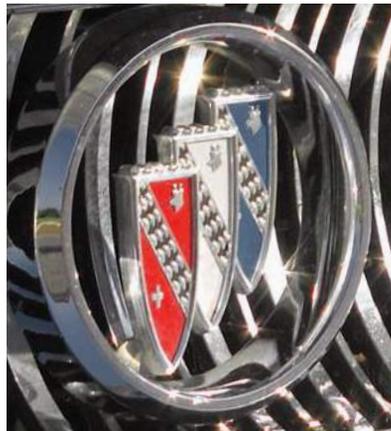
never been restored. Apart from the Tahiti Beige body color having been resprayed, the Cordovan brown paint on the roof and trunk is original, as is the entire cloth and Cordoveen leather-grained vinyl interior and upholstery, as well as the engine, suspension, and everything else. Perhaps that is why

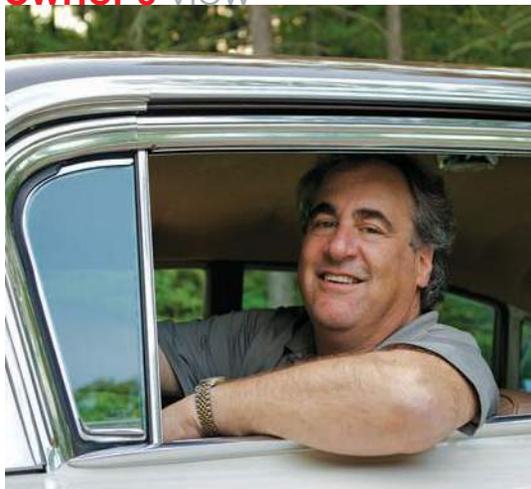
it handles and rides so well—it has never been taken apart since the day it was first assembled. And being an original Texas car, where it was sold new from Poole Buick in Pampa, and where the climate is fairly dry, there's nary a spot of rust nor corrosion on the body or underside.

Of course, that's not to say that absolutely everything in the car is original, because any automobile that's been driven 50,000 miles and is 57 years old is going to need to have some of its parts rebuilt, or replaced. Although no modifications have been made to this Electra at all, Danny did have to have the brake booster, master cylinder, and all four wheel cylinders

rebuilt, and the brake linings replaced. To keep the engine compartment looking as original as possible, the factory generator was retained but fitted with new brushes. The water pump had to be replaced, as did the starter, valve-cover gaskets, power-steering hoses, voltage regulator, and several vacuum actuators for the HVAC system. And aside from a comprehensive tune-up, valve adjustments, and oil and fluid changes, the handsome Buick remains just as it rolled off the assembly line in Flint, Michigan.

"Notwithstanding 57-year-old hardened door seals and the slight movement they allow the doors in their openings,





The 1960 Buick has always been on my must-own list, but I didn't want to pay for a convertible, and most non-convertible examples are the lesser LeSabre. Low mileage and original Electra models, even with four doors, are hard to find. While 1960 may have been the height of GM divisional sovereignty, I'd argue that while Cadillac enjoyed the most styling independence, it was Buick that appeared to have the most latitude in engineering exclusivity. Consider, for example, the following items that were exclusive to the 1960 Buick: full-perimeter frame with K-section front engine and transmission cradle; Buick-designed and manufactured Twin Turbine automatic; torque-tube driveline bolting the transmission and rear axle together, eliminating axle windup; 12-inch finned, aluminum front brakes with 218.03 square inches total lining area; accelerator pedal starter engagement; dual exhaust terminating in a single transverse mounted muffler to eliminate a "cold" side for longer life; and adjustable mirrored instrument panel.

the Buick is extremely comfortable and quiet," Danny tells us. "The seats are full foam and couch-like, and the view through all 10 windows is as if you're sitting on a mountaintop. General Motors wouldn't move to a fully integrated HVAC system capable of reheating refrigerated air until 1963, so the A/C and heat functions are independent of each other using a common fan. Still, Buick provided a duct under the carpets for rear-compartment heat selectable via a dash control, and the

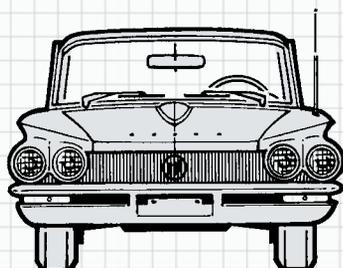
four-speed fan moves plenty of air."

When we asked Danny to compare this Buick Electra to his other cars, including his striking 1962 Pontiac Bonneville sedan that was profiled in *HCC* #148, he replied: "I own eight classic cars. Except for my Plymouth Super Stock and Corvette, this Electra will clean the clock of any of them. It is by far the most comfortable and the fastest sedan I own, and easily the best highway car in my collection." 🏁

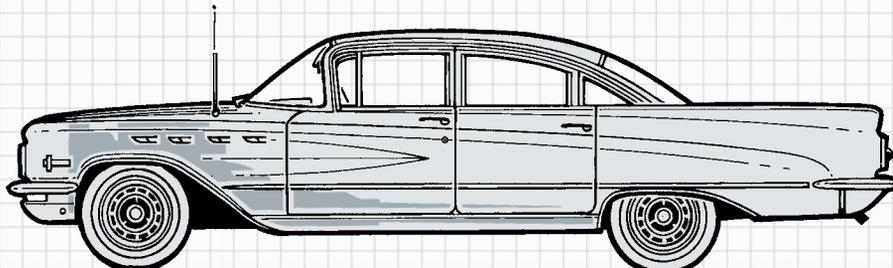


# 1960 BUICK ELECTRA

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



62.2 inches



126.3 inches

## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

**BASE PRICE** \$3,856  
**OPTIONS (CAR PROFILED)** A/C, \$430; heater/defroster, including rear heat, \$99; power windows, \$108; E-Z Eye glass, \$43; radio, \$99; rear-seat speaker, \$17; six-way power seats, \$103; WW tires, \$13; two-tone paint, \$43; safety group, \$34; reverse lamps, map lamp, parking brake warning light, speed mind buzzer, \$N/A

### ENGINE

**TYPE** OHV V-8  
**DISPLACEMENT** 401 cubic inches  
**BORE X STROKE** 4.189 x 3.64 inches  
**COMPRESSION RATIO** 10.25:1  
**HORSEPOWER @ RPM** 325 @ 4,400  
**TORQUE @ RPM** 445 lb-ft @ 2,800  
**VALVETRAIN** Overhead, hydraulic lifters  
**MAIN BEARINGS** Five  
**FUEL SYSTEM** Single Carter AFB four-barrel carburetor  
**LUBRICATION SYSTEM** Full-pressure  
**ELECTRICAL SYSTEM** 12-volt  
**EXHAUST SYSTEM** Dual

### TRANSMISSION

**TYPE** Twin Turbine automatic  
**RATIOS**  
 1st N/A  
 2nd N/A  
 3rd N/A  
 Reverse N/A

### DIFFERENTIAL

**TYPE** Semi-floating  
**GEAR RATIO** 3.23:1

### STEERING

**TYPE** Recirculating ball  
**GEAR RATIO** 19.7:1  
**TURNING CIRCLE** 45 feet, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches

### BRAKES

**TYPE** Finned, aluminum drums, power-assisted  
**FRONT/REAR** 12-inch diameter

### CHASSIS & BODY

**CONSTRUCTION** All-steel  
**BODY STYLE** Four-door sedan  
**LAYOUT** Front engine/rear-wheel drive

### SUSPENSION

**FRONT** Upper/lower control arms, 360-pound coil springs, direct-acting shocks  
**REAR** Solid axle, 360-pound coil springs, direct-acting shocks

### WHEELS & TIRES

**WHEELS** 15-inch stamped steel  
**TIRES** Bias-ply  
**FRONT/REAR** 8.00 x 15 inches

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

**WHEELBASE** 126.3 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH** 221.2 inches  
**OVERALL WIDTH** 80 inches  
**OVERALL HEIGHT** 57.4 inches  
**FRONT TRACK** 62.2 inches  
**REAR TRACK** 60 inches  
**CURB WEIGHT** 4,544 pounds

### CAPACITIES

**CRANKCASE** 4 quarts, plus filter  
**COOLING SYSTEM** 18.5 quarts  
**FUEL TANK** 20 gallons

### CALCULATED DATA

**BHP PER CU.IN.** .810  
**WEIGHT PER BHP** 13.98  
**WEIGHT PER CU.IN.** 11.33

### PRODUCTION

**FOUR-DOOR SEDAN** 13,794

## PROS & CONS

- + Excellent visibility
- + Super-smooth transmission
- + Fantastic ride characteristics
- It's BIG
- Lousy gas mileage
- Trim parts hard to find

## WHAT TO PAY

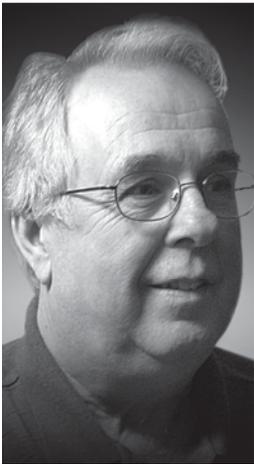
**LOW**  
\$4,000 – \$5,000

**AVERAGE**  
\$7,000 – \$9,000

**HIGH**  
\$12,000 – \$14,000

## CLUB CORNER

**BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA**  
 P.O. Box 360775  
 Columbus, Ohio 43236  
 614-472-3939  
[www.buickclub.org](http://www.buickclub.org)  
 Dues: \$50  
 Membership: 8,000



## Trumbull's Death

In the long history of American automobiles there've been numerous instances of young companies being torpedoed before they had a chance to become well established. In one case, it was done both metaphorically and literally. That unfortunate company was Trumbull, of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Trumbull automobile was designed during 1912 by Detroit engineer Harry Stoops, with the engine developed by the Hermann Engineering Company. Stoops engineered the light vehicle for the American Cyclecar Company (which one source claims was based in Detroit, while another says Bridgeport). However, before the car entered production, the business was acquired by two Connecticut brothers, Alexander and Isaac Trumbull, who promptly renamed it the Trumbull Motorcar Company.

As cyclecars went, the new Trumbull was dandy. Riding an 80-inch wheelbase and 44-inch tread, it could hold two adults in reasonable comfort. Ground clearance was a generous nine inches. Careful engineering kept the weight down to 950 pounds, and company advertising claimed the Trumbull could go as fast as 50 mph—quite good for that era. Power was supplied by a water-cooled 86.4-cu.in., 18-hp, side-valve four-cylinder engine that was smoother and more durable than the air-cooled twins used in some other light cars. The balance of the drivetrain consisted of a friction-disc transmission and chain drive during 1914, the first year of production. The following year, these were replaced by a conventional three-speed gearbox and shaft drive.

Production apparently began in late 1913, with the 1914 models. Two body styles were offered, initially, a roadster priced at \$425 and a two-door sedan tagged at \$600. Advertising called the Trumbull “America’s first fully-equipped light car,” because standard equipment included electric lights and horn, a top, side curtains and windshield, along with tools and a tire pump—items that cost extra on some automobiles. Trumbull’s production plant was in Bridgeport, which was a major manufacturing center at the time as well as home to Locomobile. The Trumbull

family was already a noted manufacturer, as owner of the Connecticut Electric Manufacturing Company. Trumbull Motorcar became a sort of offshoot of that business.

The 1915 models debuted with the upgraded drivetrain and introduction of an additional model—a light delivery car. But cyclecars were mainly a



fad in the United States, and despite Trumbull’s fairly robust engineering, the tinny design of most cyclecars gave the entire segment a poor reputation. However, the Trumbull cars did prove popular overseas. In fact, the majority of Trumbulls produced in the two years the company was in business were exported—easy to do since Bridge-

port boasts a fine harbor on Long Island Sound. Sources claim that about 2,000 Trumbull cars were produced in all, with perhaps 1,500 exported to Europe and Australia; both left- and right-hand drive models were built.

Thus, Trumbull enjoyed a measure of success despite the lack of a large home market. So, why did the company fail?

On May 1, 1915, Isaac Trumbull checked into cabin B-1 aboard a ship headed for the U.K. where he expected to negotiate a nice deal—an order for 300 of his cars. He was bringing along 20 automobiles to show other prospective dealers and distributors. The ship he’d booked passage on was majestic—the *RMS Lusitania*, a proud and fast British luxury liner. However, Britain was at war with Germany at the time, and German U-Boats were wreaking havoc on Atlantic shipping. The unthinkable happened: On the afternoon of May 7th, a German U-Boat torpedoed the *Lusitania*, an unarmed passenger ship, 11 miles off the coast of Ireland. A second, unexplained internal explosion quickly finished off the *Lusitania*, and in fewer than 20 minutes, she slipped under the waves. A total of 1,198 passengers and crew died with her, including Isaac Trumbull. His body was later recovered.

Apparently, Isaac had been the main sparkplug for the firm, and with his death came, not long afterwards, the death of the Trumbull Motorcar Company.

His grieving brothers quit the car business, declaring they would produce munitions as a way of avenging his death. ☹



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So, why did

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## I ENJOYED CLELL BALLARD'S

Reminiscing story of the 1954 Buick "steamer" in *HCC* #156. Reminded me of a similar Buick V-8. In 1965, I used to hang out at the local Shell station in my misspent youth, and this old fellow, must have been about 30, used the work bay a lot for his own cars. He had a 1957 or '58 Buick V-8 with a bad piston, along with whatever damage it caused, and very little cash. His approach for getting a little more life out of the Buick was to disable the valves on the bad cylinder, pull the bad piston, and cut the rod off so he just had a bearing cap left. His Buick "V-7" served its purpose 'till he could afford a used engine. Don't remember how long he drove it that way, but when he swapped the engine out, my best friend and I hauled the old Buick engine back to his house in the back of his 1947 Crosley pickup; it was very overloaded. Jim Bollman  
*Jonesborough, Tennessee*

## I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN *HCC*

#154 on the 1978 Buick Skyhawk, as I owned one. I ordered my Skyhawk from the factory because there were some options and items that I wanted, which the few cars on the dealer's lot did not have. I wanted a stick-shift as my prior car (an Austin Marina) had also been a stick. My Buick was cherry red with tan cloth interior and I specified the optional instrument package, which included a tach and clock. On the outside, my Skyhawk had a chrome targa bar that covered the "vents" on the B pillar. Because of the targa bar, I could not get a sunroof. I also ordered air conditioning and an 8-track player (it was 1978, after all) and color-coordinated custom wheels. I kept the car until 1982, when I traded it in for a Pontiac 2000. In the years that I owned that Skyhawk, I had some problems: the clutch cable broke and front suspension was damaged. The car was very classy looking, and it was fun to drive. Chris Beck  
*Westfield, New Jersey*

## JEFF KOCH'S ARTICLE ON

getting initiated into the old-car hobby jump started by Hot Wheels

(*HCC* #156) was absolutely, positively correct as far as I am concerned. In the spring of 1968, I was in the third grade at Olive Elementary School in Orange County, California. One day, a kid showed up on the playground with a Hot Wheels car. I thought to myself, "Wow, that's kinda neat." Within a few days, just about every boy was talking about Hot Wheels. The Saturday morning cartoon commercials were becoming saturated with advertisements for the product. Within a short time, another kid put up a display on a show-and-tell day. He laid out around 10 shiny, colorful little cars on a table at the front of the classroom. The dazzling exhibit just blew my mind. I had to have these cars. Thus began an obsession that lasted from early 1968 to the onset of my adolescence in 1971.

As to the link with the old-car hobby, it goes like this: I was riding in the passenger seat of my father's 1967 Camaro while looking at an example of a Hot Wheels 1936 Ford Coupe. I asked my father if he had ever seen a real 1936 Ford Coupe. My father turned to me and told me his first car was a 1936 Ford Coupe that he purchased for \$50 in 1949. In fact, as a teenager in the early 1950s, he said that he owned five of them. Well, that blew my mind, too. He soon bought his own specimen of the 1936 Ford Coupe Hot Wheels as well as the "Custom Camaro," which he painted Capri Cream with genuine Chevrolet touch up paint to match his own car.

Dad passed on Father's Day in 2002. I was responsible for going through all his automotive items. I found and acquired his Camaro and Ford Hot Wheels. I keep them to this day in a display case in my study, along with most of my original Hot Wheels that I obtained back in the day. Whenever I go into my garage I look at Dad's Capri Cream 1967 Camaro parked next to my 1941 Ford Coupe. Rick Reardon  
*Valley Center, California*

## ONE OF MY FAVORITE FEATURES

of *Hemmings Classic Car* is the discussion of the people behind the cars. The designers, the engineers,

the CEOs, the sales people, the mechanics—all instrumental in the success of an automobile. So, I was a little disappointed in your Hot Wheels story, which had no mention of Larry Wood and his merry band of designers. "L.Wood" has probably designed more cars than anyone in history. When I knew him back in the Seventies, his daily driver was likely to be one of several really tasty hot rods or custom trucks. Some of them may have become Hot Wheels. He lived and loved cars. Could we have some of his perspective on this die-cast phenomenon? Charlie Bailey  
*Mattel Preliminary Design, 1974-1978*

## THANK YOU FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE

Pioneers article on Charles Chayne in *HCC* #156. As a museum educator at LeMay—America's Car Museum, I had the privilege of doing a presentation on Chayne at our monthly lecture series, "If Cars Could Talk," assisted by Chayne's daughter, Nancy Martin.

One interesting item not mentioned in the article is that Chayne was instrumental in getting the manufacturers to standardize license plate sizes. Prior to standardization, each state had its own idea of plate size. The standard adopted in 1956 is a 6 x 12-inch plate for all states, making it easier on the manufacturers and designers. Doug Wolford  
*Puyallup, Washington*

## PAT FOSTER WROTE A GREAT

article in *HCC* #156 on a very rare car, the McLouth. Mr. Foster also mentioned his love of car history and his fascination of obscure brands. I was wondering if anyone knows more about the very short-lived Anhut Car brand, 1909-1910. The car was called the Anhut 6. It was built in Detroit on Howard Street. Has anyone ever run across one or know of one in a museum or private collection? Ed Daniels  
*Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida*

## IT HAS BEEN DEBATED FOR YEARS

why Packard became unsuccessful in the 1950s. Mr. Foster seems to think it was its new-for-1951 styling, which lasted

*Continued on page 39*

## Embracing Changes



Off they went.

Two men on

a mission,

working on

an unknown

project

together,

and using

technology to

do so.



This October marks my 20th visit to the Antique Automobile Club of America's Eastern Fall Meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania—it hit me when I was filling out the vendor renewal registration forms for the seventh consecutive year. Having a moment to reflect, what had started as a one-time adventure for this second-generation Meet Week attendee has turned into, hands-down, my favorite vacation of the year. It's become a pilgrimage for us: time to bond, relax, shop—and now sell our treasury of collector-car parts and assorted automobilia—all at once. It made me think back to what had transpired over the previous 19 adventures.

Like everything else, a lot has changed at Hershey in two decades. Of course, opinions on such topics, like the ever-expanding car show on Saturday, differ. Conversely, public parking has indisputably improved, and the car corral is larger than ever. There's a greater diversity in terms of nourishment, too, and all the swap-meet vendors are now located on the south side of Hershey Park Drive, cutting down on the number of times one has to cross five lanes of traffic. And, one could argue, the biggest improvement is that those vendor fields, now totalling seven and referred to as "zones"—have been paved, which means the acres of mud that were a constant wet-weather hazard have been eliminated.

There's no debating the fact that everyone prefers dry skies over Chocolate Town. But, perhaps sadistically, the famed mud was part of the joy of Hershey. While my father and I were on our own scavenger hunt for parts, it was always entertaining watching someone side-step the greasy matter and try to keep their balance while carrying a fender. Also interesting was seeing firsthand how a John Deere Gator Utility Vehicle lugging garbage was sucked axle deep into the Pennsylvania muck. The driver abandoned it. That particular day, truckloads of trap rock and countless bales of hay did little to stave off the devastation unleashed upon man and machine, especially the overloaded light-duty pickups and RVs that required the use of heavy machinery to pull them to the comparative safety of asphalt.

Something else has changed at Hershey, too: The technology.

Way back when, long before my feet ever hit the famed fields for the first time, a close friend and long-time veteran of the show gave me these words of wisdom: "Be prepared for all kinds of weather. Have a heavy-duty bag ready to haul your finds. Make sure you have a copy of the field maps. And bring a notepad and pen, because you'll never remember where you spotted something—your only other option is to buy what you have found on the spot; it might be gone when you get back."

Today, that advice still rings true, except that a growing number of swap-meet shoppers are updating some of those guidelines, thanks to the technology found within our mobile devices. What was once a simple wireless phone



has become the world's smallest do-everything computer, with the ability to retain countless bits of automotive information within its digital notebook. In recent years, I've witnessed more than one generation using the "Notes" feature at several large-scale automotive events.

"Notes," it turns out, travels hand-in-hand with another digital advantage that captured my attention just last year. A middle-aged man was closely examining a part, and commented to his son about its condition and price. Without hesitation, the teenager swiped his fingers across the screen and replied that, "the other vendor had the same thing in better condition for less money." When asked where, the reply was a definitive "256 feet over there" while pointing. The lad was using the phone's built-in GPS system to pinpoint their finds. Off they went. Two men on a mission, working on an unknown project together, and using technology to do so.

Admittedly, a lot can be said both for and against the evolving technology many of us hold in the palms of our hands. But I've employed my cellphone more than once to take a snapshot of a part, it's price, and the vendor spot, all while making sure the aging, yet meticulous, shopping-list notes I put to paper with pen were safely tucked in my back pocket. Having a redundant system isn't a bad thing, but if you see me staring at my cell at the next collector-car event, odds are good that I'm using the GPS feature. ☺

until 1954. People today either like it or hate it.

We had a 1952 Packard outside my grandfather's office window, and he often referred to it as a "frog face." My dad, who grew up in the 1930s and early '40s, often commented that Packard should have kept their classic grille shape.

Mr. Foster, however, is wrong in the evidence he presents for Packard's demise. The 70,000 cars he quotes that were sold were not all 1950 models. Packard was suffering from over-production of its postwar cars. There were so many leftover '48s that the introduction of the 1949 models was pushed into May of 1949. (The excuse given was the introduction of Ultramatic transmission and the celebration of Packard's 50th.) At the end of 1949, Packard was still trying to get rid of '48 models that had not sold. Only 42,640 of the 70,000 cars quoted by Mr. Foster were 1950 Packards.

The 1951 Packards were introduced in August of that year and received the greatest interest from the general public since the introduction of the 1949 Ford (more than 100,713 cars sold). More than 30,000 cars sold in 1950 were 1951 models! This new "Continental" (as in European) styling was clean and very contemporary, with its fenders higher than the hood and rear fenders that could be seen from the front seat. Packard's big mistake was not having enough Senior 300 and 400 models on hand, which resulted in lost sales to other brands. The rest of the industry didn't really catch up with Packard's modern "low Bonnet" styling until 1954!

The sales in 1952 were limited by government restrictions on material and credit (larger down payments were required for car loans). Even then, Packard produced 62,921 cars. By 1953, Packard rolled out 90,277 cars, but was caught with leftovers again due to over production when conditions changed to a buyer's market after the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed. The president of Packard, James Nance, thought he could just force dealers to get rid of the extra cars as they did in the appliance business he was from. As a result, the '54 models

were delayed until February, but still Packard managed to sell 31,291 cars before an early end was brought to the 1954 models with the tearing up of the production line at East Grand.

As far as the myth of Packard "abandoning" the luxury market, it has to be recognized that the high-end, luxury market all but disappeared before World War II. Large custom-bodied cars were no longer in vogue. The very rich had either lost their money during the Depression or were taxed out of it (the income tax rate for the rich in the 1940s was 90 percent).

Modern manufacturing techniques were able to yield a mass-produced car that was faster, and handled better, than the old barges. The new entrepreneurs and the rich that were still around didn't want the ostentatiousness of the old classics. Even then, Packard was the last automaker that still cataloged semi-custom limousines, town cars, sedans, and Darrin convertibles up to 1942.

Chris Nuno  
*San Gabriel, California*

**THANKS FOR GLADDENING MY** heart with the "Baby Buicks" feature in *HCC* #155. I've enjoyed my 1961 Buick Special for 35 years. It is equipped with the 215-cu.in. V-8, and at just over 37,000 miles, the engine remains untouched. So is the rest of the car, except for the radiator. The V-8 offers sufficient power and reasonable mileage. It's not a sexy car, but still never fails to get thumbs-ups and smiles when I drive it.

Ron Varland  
*Elida, Ohio*

**A MISNOMER FOUND ITS WAY INTO** the nice article in *HCC* #156 about the 1956 Hudson. The pictured "rope rails" really are "robe cords." Those rope-like features were successors to the robe rails that were on many cars into the 1930s. Their purpose was to hold lap robes at hand for chilly passengers in the years before effective heaters were commonplace. The robe rails were metal tubes mounted behind the front seatbacks.

My mother's older sister lost a tooth or two when riding in the rear of her uncle's Packard. She was thrown

forward suddenly into such a rail when the car was forced into a ditch by "kids" in a jalopy who ran the big car off the narrow roadway.

James Wohlmuther  
*Mechanicsville, Maryland*

**IF SOMEONE IS THINKING OF** adding a 1955-'57 Hudson to their collection, the most "Hudson" of the three years is the 1955 model. Not only is the grille and classic Hudson emblem lifted off the '55 step-down prototype, but AMC incorporated several leftover step-down components on the '55 model only. They used the 1954 instrument cluster, radio bezel, steering wheel with center emblem, along with a dash emblem left over from the 1946-'47 models, making it the better-looking dash of the three years.

Also, some of the upholstery options were 1954 Hudson stock, and on the exterior they went with '54 Hudson pushbutton door handles versus Nash squeeze-type ones, and the body side and hood lettering is also from 1954. The trunk lid name plate/key lock/hand grip is from the 1952-'54 model run, and the sill molding appears to be made from the same stock used on 1951-'53 step-downs. Of course, you could make it more Hudson-like by finding one with the 308 Hornet engine.

Larry Crane  
*Grosse Pointe, Michigan*

**FOR 50 YEARS, I HAVE SAID** something "was as ugly as a '57 Hudson!" And they are, and always will be, ugly. There is high class, low class, and no class, and these Hudsons are the latter. It would be different if you were blind and had Hoke to drive you around. Although they had a very good chassis.

Hal Franklin  
*Cohutta, Georgia*

**I REALLY ENJOYED PAT FOSTER'S** column "A Question of Muscle" in *HCC* #154. I liked his definition of muscle cars: "a midsize car equipped with a large engine." I feel that the 1948 Packard Super Eight Convertible meets that definition, and should be

Continued on page 41



## Behind the Wheel

**A**mong the joys of owning a Classic and collector car are receiving awards and driving them. The two are not mutually exclusive, but it seems to be increasingly rare for high-point, award-winning automobiles to be driven on tours. My hat is off to those Classic- and collector-car owners who own such automobiles and participate in touring events in which they are often driven hundreds of miles over the course of a few days.

Another joy of owning Classic and collector cars that is not experienced by every owner is the maintenance and, when necessary, restoration of the automobile. Some owners simply don't know which end of a screwdriver to hold. Their cars belong in the hands of a professional collector-car shop. Other car owners may have the aptitude, but don't want to be bothered with working on their cars; they leave that to the experts. Their involvement consists chiefly of writing checks to the person or restoration shop performing the work.

Then, there are the car owners who are involved with their cars. They run the gamut from individuals who are blessed with mechanical aptitude and resourcefulness to individuals who do their best, despite limited ability. In my lifetime, I've been fortunate to have met—and become friends with—a number of individuals who fall into the camps above, or somewhere in between.

I, of course, am in one of those camps: I was not blessed with mechanical aptitude. As I usually joke to friends, "I was a liberal-arts major. I enjoy working on my cars, but I know my limitations. I know when to call in the professionals." Sometimes my only contribution to the mechanic working on my car was locating technical information and/or locating parts. I was involved and my mechanic let me know he appreciated it.

My first car was a 1929 Ford Model A Tudor sedan, which I bought when I was 19 years old. An older vintage-car enthusiast

described it at the time as "about as complicated as a hand coffee grinder." However, it was a great first car and I recommend that experience to anyone entering the hobby. From there, I moved on to Classic cars.

Years ago, after owning some high-point motorcars, I made a conscious decision to own either original, maintained cars or cars that

had been properly restored years ago, but were now what some would term "drivers." That turned out to be one of the best decisions of my 50-plus years in the collector-car hobby. I rarely receive awards, but I have enjoyed driving through some wonderful countryside and met some wonderful people along the way. In fact, many of my best friends

are in the vintage-car hobby, and among those friends are a small group of mechanics who have helped me maintain my automobiles. I have the highest respect for these individuals.

A fellow member of the Lincoln Owners Club once told me how he spent nearly 40 hours restoring the rear window frame of his Lincoln Sport Phaeton. The die-cast frame required a great deal of tedious repair work, but when it was completed he felt a great sense of accomplishment. That experience was repeated on a number of similar procedures as he carefully restored a car that had scared off several Classic-car enthusiasts. When the restoration was completed he was rewarded with a 96-point score by CCCA judges—not bad for a first-time restorer.

Today, he receives a great deal of satisfaction when driving his Lincoln—which is often—and additional satisfaction from knowing how involved he was in bringing this fine Classic back to life.

As I said earlier, my hat is off to those individuals who are truly involved with their Classic motorcars. They may not be able to transport themselves back to the 1920s or '30s, but they are getting as close as possible to the true vintage car "experience." 🐾



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Another joy of owning Classic and collector cars that is not experienced by every owner is the maintenance and, when necessary, restoration of the automobile.

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considered America's first muscle car. This car has the new Packard 327-cu.in. straight-eight engine in the small, light body. It is probably the largest and most powerful American postwar engine in a small body by any American manufacture. This engine put out about 150 horsepower. Granted, the Packard Custom Super Eight 356-cu.in., which came out in 1940, produced 160 horsepower, but this engine was very heavy. The new 327 was about 300 pounds lighter and would fit in the smaller body, which resulted in a great-performing automobile.

I have owned a 1948 Packard Super Eight since 1990, and I like driving it. It performs very well in our modern traffic here in Silicone Valley. I always enjoy passing a Prius on the freeway because they have no clue as to what kind of car it is. Sometimes, while getting gas at a service station, I hear "Nice car. What engine is in it?" I say a 327. "Oh, a Chevy!" Then I say, "No, it's a Packard." Then they look confused. So, Pat, check out the 1948 Packard Super Eight, and I think you will find it to be one of America's best performing "muscle cars" of the early postwar period.

Milton Wheeler  
Saratoga, California

## RICHARD, I ENJOYED READING

your recent "Meeting Heroes" column in *HCC* #156, and as a Chrysler collector and life-long Chrysler 300 fan, I wanted to comment on your thoughts about what Virgil Exner might have told you when asked to reveal his favorite "300 Letter Car."

Back in 2011, I was invited to exhibit my recently restored 1957 Chrysler 300C at the Radnor Hunt Club, near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The show was featuring Mopar vehicles, and the invited guest was Virgil Exner, Jr. A gentleman's gentleman, he was available to chat and clearly loved speaking about the cars his dad designed. At one point during the day, he happened upon my 300C, stood there, and then asked if he could sit in it. Without any inquiry from me he said that this was his dad's favorite 300 Letter car, and his dad

simply loved the 1957 Forward Look style and certainly the performance of the 1957 300C. He clearly enjoyed this step back into a 1957 300C.

Bob Porecca  
Somerset, New Jersey

## IN REFERENCE TO THE DETROIT

Underdogs column in *HCC* #155, my first car was a 1987 Pontiac Grand Am, which I bought right after finishing college. And, yes, Pontiac did make them in colors other than white and burgundy. Mine was a base model four-door, with the standard 2.5-liter Tech IV engine in Light Sapphire Blue Metallic, with the interior, bumpers, side moldings, and pinstripes in dark blue. It did rental duty for two years, then was passed on to my local Pontiac dealer, Don Sudbay Motors in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where I bought it in December 1988. All Grand Ams got the analog gauges for the 1987 model year, and since my Grand Am was assembled in December 1986, it didn't have the motorized belts.

With all due respect to *Consumer's Guide*, I found my Grand Am more than satisfactory. This car was not only very reliable, it had spunk! Although 98 horsepower may not seem like much, it certainly made the most of it. It was a superb handling car, too. In fact, I'll never forget one time when I was making my way to Bennington, Vermont, and I was driving westbound on Route 2 through the northern Berkshires. There is this point just before you get to North Adams where the road descends steeply for a mile or so before it culminates in this wicked hairpin turn, and it's a real doozy, but by golly, my Grand Am made it through with flying colors.

I enjoyed my Grand Am so much that I kept it for 17 years. When the day finally came that I had to let it go and have it hauled away, I felt like a dog owner who had to put his animal out of its misery.

When Pontiac said "We Build Excitement," they meant it! They really knew how to pack a lot of fun into a rental, and I, for one, am proud to have made the Grand Am my first car!

Eric Josephson  
Beverly, Massachusetts

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR** article about automotive fine artist Ken Eberts in *HCC* #156 and the references to the Art Center College of Design during the 1960s. Some readers may have been puzzled by the reference to "Sophie's boarding house." Art Center has excelled in many areas, but has regarded student housing as secondary, and most students have lived in approved boarding houses or nearby apartments. I, too, lived at Sophie's, possibly the best-known boarding house on the list—but only for one semester.

Sophie was a Polish immigrant who somehow managed to snag two pretty large old houses located across the street from one another on Manhattan Place. This was a spot near the school when it was on West 3rd Street, and within sight of the preferred art supply store. Notably, the last Studebaker-Packard dealer in the area was adjacent to the store, and still had some leftover new cars to sell with a number of years on them in 1967.

Memories from Sophie's include my particular bed, which sloped eight inches from one corner diagonally to the opposite. This was enough to propel my mattress onto the floor during the short nights of sleep we art students occasionally managed. "Art Center" and "all-nighter" have always been synonymous, since skimping on homework became extremely obvious if one walked into class with a rendering half done or only five concept sketches when eight had been assigned.

Incidentally, I perused your article on Hot Wheels in this same issue and didn't spot Larry Wood's name. He enjoyed at least 40 official years with Hot Wheels, and is reportedly still a consultant to the brand. Nevertheless, it becomes rarer and rarer to encounter names and stories from Art Center and those fabulous 1960s.

Dick Hatch  
Fort Wayne, Indiana



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

# Coachbuilt Extravagance

*Ford pulled out all the stops for the 1956 Continental Mark II and created the ultimate American luxury car*

BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO







The Mark II established its bona fides with its mix of European-inspired luxury and American sportiness. The four-gauge lineup included a tachometer to keep tabs on the big V-8, while the seats were clad in exclusive Bridge of Weir leather from Scotland.

“Taking inspiration from the Lincoln Continental—acknowledged to be the most beautiful car of its day—to design a car that will be the most distinguished car in the world.” Such was the design brief Ford set in motion in the early 1950s, its goal to supplant Cadillac as the maker of the finest American cars, and, indeed, to take on the finest automobiles from the rest of the world, as well.

With Henry Ford II in firm control of the family business in the 1950s, the company began an audacious expansion, adding two new divisions, including the ill-fated Edsel. “The Deuce,” as Henry Ford’s grandson was known, even took the Ford Motor Company public, raising the hundreds of millions of dollars needed to make the projects happen. Henry II put his younger brother, William Clay Ford, in charge of the newly created Special Projects Office. With Lincoln more likely in contention with Oldsmobile or Buick, dealers clamored for a competitor to Cadillac,

then the rulers of the American luxury-car market.

Inspired by the groundbreaking 1939 Lincoln Continental, a joint project from Edsel Ford and Design Chief Bob Gregorie, William Clay Ford’s team essentially opened a design competition between Ford’s stylists and outside designers, ultimately choosing a design by Ford’s John Reinhart, who had previously penned Packards. Ford managed to keep the Special Projects Office’s work under wraps, only announcing the new car in 1954 and then debuting it at the Paris Auto Salon, one of Europe’s premier auto shows, in the fall of 1955. By this time, the primary work of the Special Projects Office had become the newly minted—and destined-to-be short-lived—Continental Division.

The Continental Mark II’s lines proved to be elegant and simple at the same time—innovative and timeless all at once. Though it sported its fair share of chrome, the Mark II had an economy of line that gave it far more substance than the oceans



Though it used a slightly modified Lincoln driveline, the Continental featured plenty of custom parts exclusive to the Mark II. Ford went to extraordinary lengths to ensure the highest quality of components and assembled cars.





**The original ivory and light-brown interior—yes, it's original—matches the rich Deep Bronze exterior finish very well.**

of chrome then gracing so many American cars in the Fifties. With a long hood and short rear deck, it copied a bit from European design themes, mimicked the proportions of the original Continental, and also foreshadowed a look that would become popular across all car companies in the next decade.

That's not to say that the Mark II was completely devoid of decorative trim, but where other cars may have had a wide, chrome "spear" that ran down the side of the body, the Continental made do with a simple crease to emphasize the kicked-up rear quarter panels that started behind the doors. And, in a nod to the Continental's roots from the original Lincoln model, the Mark II had a raised section stamped into the decklid that covered the space for the upright spare tire in the trunk underneath, a more-than-subtle reminder of the car's inspiration.

When William Clay Ford's vision came to life, Ford had slotted Continental in way above the standard Lincoln, indeed

well above any other American car then in production. The Mark II was largely a hand-built automobile, a low-volume expression of Ford producing the finest American car in the tradition of a prewar coachbuilt luxury special. While it used Lincoln running gear, the Continental's limited production (only 3,005 Mark II's were made during its 1956 and '57 model run) and unique design required a unique chassis, so comparing it to a coachbuilt car certainly makes sense. And it was priced like one.

At \$9,695, it cost significantly more than any other Lincoln, Cadillac, or Imperial on the market in 1956. Adding in air conditioning—the sole option on the otherwise spectacularly appointed luxury coupe—pushed the price into the five-figure territory, the realm of cars like Mercedes-Benz's vaunted 300 SL Gullwing. The MKII proved a critical hit, attracting the sort of famous buyers Ford had hoped to lure, though overall numbers were fairly insignificant for a company used to making millions of cars each year.

Ford's production process for the Mark II included a focus on quality, both in terms of materials, but also in terms of fit and finish. In the former department, buyers of the Continental Mark II found themselves sitting in seemingly acres of the finest hides from Scotland's Bridge of Weir leather. Ford chose Bridge of Weir because its farms used no barbed wire to contain the animals, which vastly reduced the risk of damaged hides. But Ford also had the hides dyed in the U.S. because they felt U.S. tanneries did a better job with the colors they wanted.

Though the chrome was never the focus of the car's design, Ford still insisted that the chrome pass a 240-hour salt spray test, which was triple industry standards and required the company to come up with a new plating process for production. Ford also took extra care with pre-delivery supplier inspections to ensure quality and then again when parts were received. Sample sizes for parts inspection were far greater than those for standard production cars, and, in some cases, such as with windshields and radiators, every single part required inspection before assembly. The two-speed automatic transmissions were tested before and after installation in each Mark II.

With an average assembly time double that of any Lincoln model, Continental's production staff hand-fitted body panels to ensure proper fit before painting. And each car was carefully finished in multiple coats of lacquer—the only Ford model of any division painted with such a finish in 1956. It was suggested that the time passed just painting a single Continental was the equivalent of the entire production process for many cars.





Lincoln extensively upgraded and modified its V-8 engine for 1956. Displacing 368-cu.in. and sporting a 9.0:1 compression ratio, the powerplant breathed through a Holley four-barrel carburetor to produce 285 horsepower and 402 lb-ft of torque.

Under the hood of each 1956 Continental sat the 285-horsepower, 368-cu.in. version of the Lincoln OHV V-8 that was first introduced in 1952. By 1956, Lincoln engineers had thoroughly updated and upgraded the powerplant, with a new block, crankshaft, camshaft, and other details. With a 9.0:1 compression ratio and a Holley four-barrel carburetor, it also produced 402 lb-ft of torque. In order to ensure high build quality and smoothness, Ford balanced each V-8 bound for a Mark II. They also went to

the extra effort to make operations smooth by going so far as to balance the generator before installation.

Continental included a litany of power features standard on every Mark II: power windows, power brakes, power front seat, power vent windows. Assemblers also installed an AM radio, heater, and a four-instrument cluster with a clock and a tachometer on every car. With high quality, a stunning design, and a complete set of luxury features, Continental had achieved the car it had set out to build. And not only did the well-heeled clientele and the automotive press take notice, but so, too, did a young lad from Massachusetts.

As a 13-year-old, Naif Makol, today a Connecticut resident, fell in love with the Continental Mark II the way most people do—at first glance. In a Lincoln showroom with his father, who was there to finalize the deal on a 1957 Lincoln Premiere convertible, Naif glimpsed a Continental Mark II across the room. “The Premiere was white with black-and-white interior,” recalls Naif. “When you’re a kid, kids like convertibles, you know? But I saw this other car over in the corner and it was a 1957 Continental Mark II. And I said, ‘Dad, why don’t you buy this car instead? I like this car a lot better.’ I liked the Mark II because I just loved the lines of it. I never forgot the car; it’s always been on my mind.”

Fast forward 20 years, and Naif purchased his first Mark II. “In 1977, I bought one,” he says “It was a ‘57 model, and, unfortunately, I used it as a daily driver for about five or six years, and it beat the car up pretty good, but I always loved the car. I just sold it a few years ago, after holding onto it for all of these years.” He wasn’t done playing the Continental game, not by a long shot. But this second time around, his tastes were a bit more discerning.

Having grown as a collector (he has owned various cars from the Fifties, including a very well-preserved and highly original 1957 Lincoln Premiere convertible like his father once had),



Though the Continental name survived several years on various models without the Lincoln badge, Ford's separate Continental Division was folded into the Lincoln operation midyear 1956.

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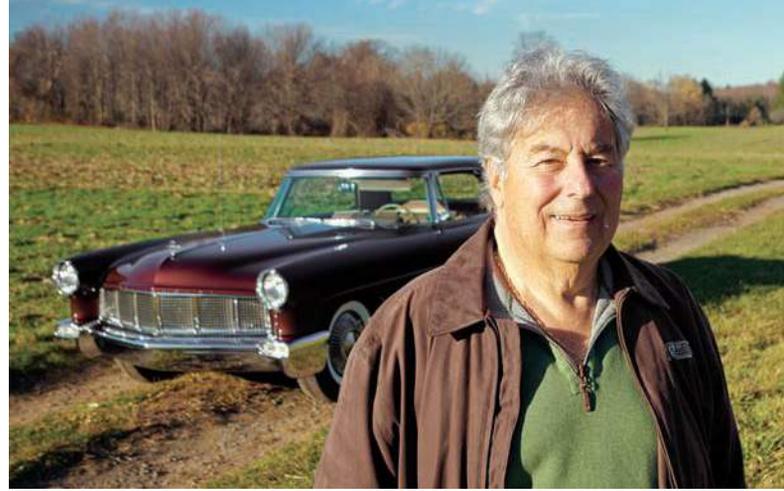
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Naif found that he appreciated original cars, or perhaps restored-to-original cars, more than cars restored to any lower standards. And he also knew that some things can never be brought back to original, particularly on a largely custom, low-volume model like the Mark II.

So, he set about trying to find the most original Continental he could, with a particular focus on the interior, as replacing the Bridge of Weir leather and other components inside is no mean feat. "I said I need to get one that's got an absolutely gorgeous original interior," says Naif, "so I am not going to change the interior. And then I can do the rest of the car frame off."

About eight years ago, Naif found just what he was looking for. "I bought this MKII from the family of the original owner," he says. "And I have the paperwork showing the car coming from the plant, the Lincoln Company, to the dealership to the owner of the car and from the first owner of the car to me. I've got all of the documentation back to the factory."

"The car had an absolutely gorgeous interior in it—that's why I bought it—but the body had been repainted. We took the car, and we did a body-off restoration on it, obviously except for the interior. When we stripped the body down to bare metal, there were no signs of any rust whatsoever. There were no signs of any accidents that had ever happened to that car, ever. We did a body-off restoration, and I had some very, very good people

*It's just a gorgeous car.  
I drive the car a little bit, and it  
drives better than it looks.  
It's just a beautiful-driving car.*

working on it." That restoration included a rebuilt engine and transmission (though neither truly needed it on this low-mileage example) and lots of refurbishing of original parts, rather than replacement or fabrication.

The restoration took a total of about four years, but since completion Naif has enjoyed his restored Mark II with its original interior. "The car gets an award every place it goes," he says. "It's just a gorgeous car. I drive the car a little bit, and it drives better than it looks. It's just a beautiful-driving car." 🐾



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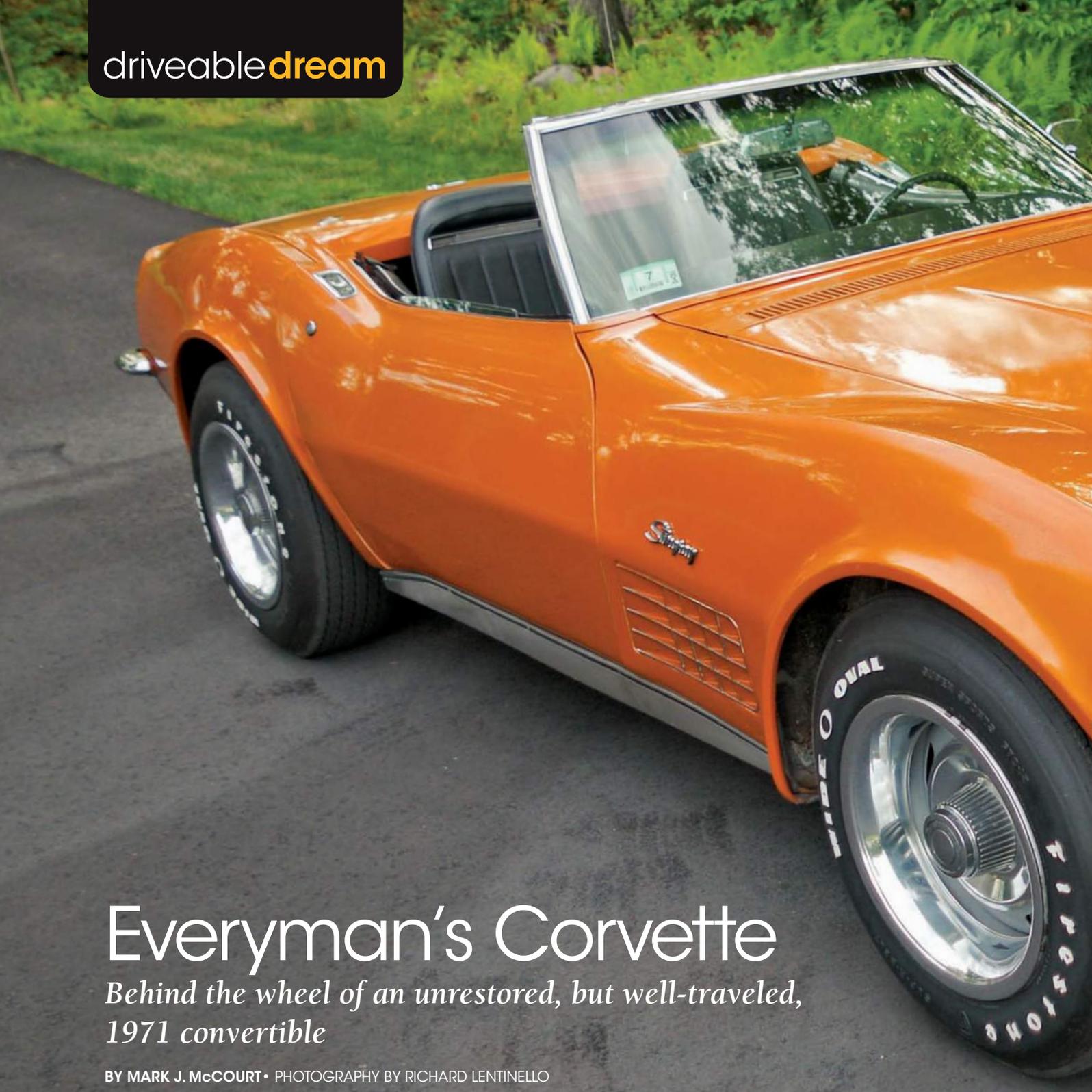
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# Everyman's Corvette

*Behind the wheel of an unrestored, but well-traveled, 1971 convertible*

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

It's the flashy ones that everyone idolizes, the fire breathers and the one-of-ones. But in the Corvette world, as in all the collector-car hobby, those rare and powerful examples are not what most people bought off the showroom floor, drove daily, and made fun memories with. When it was new, the 1971 Corvette convertible on these pages was a low-production car with a strong V-8, but it was like thousands of other

1971 soft-top 'Vettes. Today, considering this car's healthy use, its unrestored and unmodified condition is what makes it a rarity, worthy of veneration.

Chevrolet priced the Corvette convertible a bit less than the Sport Coupe in those days, its MSRP of \$5,259 being roughly equivalent to \$31,810 today, and despite being a relative bargain, this body style was chosen half as often as the T-top model: 7,121 to 14,680. Our feature car

sold for little more than base price, with a \$178 AM/FM radio being its major option. "It's not a big-block or LT-1, just a standard 350. There's no power steering or power brakes, no air conditioning. No automatic, either. It was a base model convertible, the Everyman's Corvette, the kind that a guy coming back from Vietnam would buy," muses owner Kurt Zimmerman from Wilbraham, Massachusetts. "And there were definitely more of those



base Corvettes than there were 454s!”

Kurt found this two-seater online four years ago. “I’d probably owned five Corvettes before this 1971 model. I think that was a good period for Corvette—the chrome bumpers, the swoopiness of the body. I would only buy a four-speed convertible, and this car appealed to me. It was advertised as having original paint and an original interior, and there were around 95,000 miles on the odometer.

“I don’t know anything of its history, but I think it was always a Massachusetts car. It had a 1993 inspection sticker on the windshield, and that was the last time it was on the road,” Kurt continues. “I’m guessing that the guy I bought it from found it at an estate. He’d dropped a cheap new battery in it, changed the rocker cover gaskets, and repainted the covers bright orange, but the Firestone radials on it were probably 25 years old.

I could see through all the dirt and dust that it hadn’t been messed with, the entire car was as-built... engine, transmission, rear end, paint, interior, everything. That appealed to me, because so many of them have been done over, and not necessarily to a very high standard.”

This mechanic-by-trade decided to take a chance on the honest-appearing Corvette. “It still had all the original hoses and the factory water pump and



The condition of this interior belies its age and use, but its caretaker has adopted a policy of maintenance, not restoration. The driver's door panel is cracked, but rather than installing a shiny reproduction piece, he's looking for a used, but better, example.



rpm. The numbers-matching 350 in Kurt's new convertible still wore its original dual snorkel air cleaner with the factory horsepower sticker, although those shiny rocker covers annoyed him whenever he lifted the hood. He began going through the mechanicals to ensure they were safe and reliable.

"The four-speed was a bit noisy, so I rebuilt it, and fitted a new clutch," Kurt says. "I replaced the hoses and belts, rebuilt the carburetor, and installed a new fuel pump. I put on LT-1 ribbed aluminum rocker covers that had a similar patina to everything else under the hood. I also did the brakes, and put a new gas tank in it—when I was under there, I found the original tank sticker, although it wasn't in very good condition."

That particular sticker wasn't the only one he came across while fettling his Chevy. While working under the car to weld in two small frame patches—"One in each side in the back, a very minor

fuel pump, but it started and ran fine. I probably should have taken it home on a trailer, but I jumped in and off I went. I made the 70-mile drive on pins and needles, waiting for the tires to explode," Kurt recalls with a laugh.

To make it compatible with unleaded fuel, Chevrolet significantly altered the

compression ratio of the Corvette's base L-48-code 350-cu.in. "Turbo-Fire" V-8 for 1971, dropping it from 10.25 to 8.5:1, while retaining the Rochester Quadrajet MV4 carburetor. Naturally, power ratings followed, with 1970's 300 hp and 380 lb-ft of torque settling to 270 hp at 4,800 rpm and 360 lb-ft of torque at 3,200



Long-deferred maintenance was performed—including rebuilding the Quadrajet—and used aluminum rocker covers were fitted to enhance the period-perfect look underhood.





repair using pieces I'd cut from reproduction frame rails," he explains—Kurt found intact Rockwell Reinforced Plastics Operation stickers under the fenders. As this was a New England car with close to 100,000 miles, he found its level of preservation impressive.

And that extended to the cosmetics. "I was really drawn to the Ontario Orange color. Except for a bit of paintwork done on the right front, it's what came from the factory. The paint was pretty dry when I got the car—it's pretty well checked, even worn away on the rear deck where the top sits, and you can see the bonding strips coming through. I did a lot of research about how to preserve it, and found Meguiar's products have an oil in them that really brought the color back out. The interior was good, so I just cleaned it and put a bit of protectant on it here and there, and didn't load it up.

"The biggest challenge is keeping it having that 'used car' look all the time,

rather than giving it a restored-car look. Compared to my other cars, which I'm always polishing and waxing, I want to keep this one looking the same, maintaining the status quo. I just don't want it to age any more than it already has," Kurt explains.

He's adopted a similar mindset when it comes to preserving the car's mechanical health. "I use 10W-40 Lucas Hot Rod & Classic oil with zinc, because it's similar to what this car used when it was new—not that it has a high-lift cam or really stiff valve springs, but it's still a non-roller engine. I also use ACDelco oil filters to maintain the correct vibe under the hood.

"It's a nice-driving car, with a smooth idle, and it doesn't overheat at traffic lights. The engine is a little tired, though, and every once and again, if I get on it, it will smoke a bit. But I kind of like that—this shows it's been driven, and enjoyed. What's a little smoke, for something that's 46 years old and has more than 98,000 miles? I remember seeing guys beating

*It was a base model convertible, the Everyman's Corvette, the kind that a guy coming back from Vietnam would buy.*

on Corvettes when I was a kid, and you'd see a lot of blue smoke. They weren't all freshly restored back then, they were used. And abused!" he laughs.

Abuse is no issue for this Corvette in Kurt's care. He says, "If you decide to buy an original one, you have to be ready to live with that. You can't modify it at all; you have to keep it going. You're a caretaker." 



These Firebirds are pre-production cars. Note the unfinished fender emblem and missing production Firebird 400 extended horizontal bright grille trim on the red car, and the round Camaro-style fuel cap on the green one.



# Pontiac Firebird

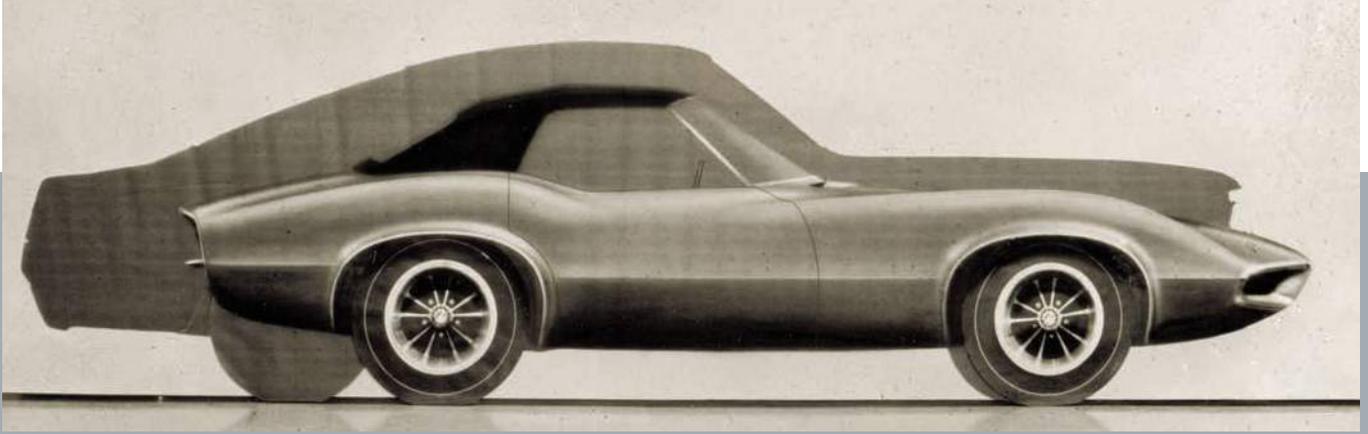
*Although fashionably late, PMD's upscale pony car arrived prepared for the competition*

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GM MEDIA ARCHIVES AND THE AUTHOR

The Pontiac Motor Division wasn't enthusiastic about the prospect of joining the F-body program in the mid-1960s. In fact, General Manager John Z. DeLorean and his staff were busy trying to advance the affordable XP-833 two-seat V-8 sports car for production, but General Motors management wouldn't approve it. A

forward-thinking four-seat sporty personal-sized XP-798 (aka Scorpion and Banshee) had also been cultivated, but the powers that be weren't about to green-light it, either. A few lesser-known Pontiac proposals were presented as well, but the corporation instead became adamant that PMD produce a version of Chevrolet's Camaro.

From a business perspective, adding a second F-body would aid in recouping the program's tooling costs more quickly, and, of course, development costs would be substantially less (the same reasons why so much was shared with the 1968 X-body) than if Pontiac continued on its own sporty personal car, because Chevrolet



Designed and engineered to be significantly smaller and cheaper than the Corvette, but comparably quick, Pontiac's two-seat XP-833 fiberglass-bodied sports car appeared to pose a threat to Chevrolet's sports car. Assistant Chief Engineer Bill Collins formulated a proposal that aimed the XP-833 squarely at the Mustang, but GM's management still didn't approve it.



By September of 1965, Pontiac had joined the F-body effort, but soon recused itself, only to return in March of 1966. The result of that short stint was this handsome front and rear treatment that never made it to production.

had already done most of the work. Additionally, Pontiac's place in the corporate pecking order above entry-level Chevrolet would position the Firebird as the perfect foil for the upscale Cougar, which Mercury was preparing for a 1967 introduction and presenting as "America's first luxury sports car at a popular price."

It was a prudent financial and marketing decision by GM, but it wasn't viewed that way by Chevrolet and Pontiac personnel. Chevrolet had to give a nearly finished F-body to Pontiac, an inter-divisional rival, so it could develop its own version, which would cannibalize at least some of the Camaro's sales. And PMD would have to trans-

form a Chevrolet into a Pontiac after the fact. Nevertheless, it happened, and fortunately two renowned model lines resulted.

The designers and engineers were challenged with instilling Pontiac identity into a Chevrolet in a very short time without changing the parameters that had already been approved for the Camaro.



The XP-798 was an innovative four-seat sporty personal car. However, the features that made it unique, like its fiberglass body, flip-up roof panels, and extended doors with a one-off hinge system, also made it too expensive to build, and difficult for GM to justify as a Pontiac exclusive. Thus, it remained an idea car.

Visually, the wheelbase and everything except the front end and tail panel had to remain unaltered, aside from minor trim changes. To their credit, Chief Designer Jack Humbert, Assistant Chief Designer Ron Hill, and the staff did a masterful job.

Consumers were expected to pay more for a Pontiac, so they expected to get more for their money, which made aesthetic refinement a key element. Where the Camaro used a thin front bumper, the Firebird employed a loop bumper with center divider

that surrounded the signature split grilles and formed a subtle beak. The Camaro had a nearly flush grille, but the Firebird's were recessed. Camaro's flatter hood with a raised center ridge gave way to what would later become known as Pontiac's "ironing board," a raised center-section that narrowed to a point at the front while flowing into the center bumper divider. Engine displacement emblems were affixed to the hoods, and small scoops adorned the Firebird 400 hood. The parking lamp/turn

signals were set into the outer edges of the revised opening in the lower valance panel.

If you note a resemblance between the front-end styling of the 1967 Firebird and the 1968 Tempest, Le Mans, and GTO, here's why. Humbert recalled, in the book *Firebird! America's Premier Performance Car*, "It was so late, in fact, that the '68 A-cars were nearly finished. That's why there's a little similarity ... the hood scoops, the front-end theme really came off the A-car."

Simulated louvers were added to the rear quarter panels just ahead of the wheel wells, and the taillamps and rear panel were revised for a slotted appearance that was akin to the 1967 GTO and Grand Prix. The bumper was larger than the Camaro's, and it kicked up to frame the top of the license plate area. Camaros' round fuel-filler cap gave way to a squared fuel filler door and an emblem centered in the Firebird's tail panel. Firebird 400s wore another engine emblem on the right side of the decklid. All told, these revisions added more visual weight to the front and rear, which kept it in stride with upscale models of the day.

As stated in "Camaro History of Automotive Design" (HCC #155), the body shapes were more rounded than the angular restyled Mustang, so, of course, the Firebird inherited them and the "Coke bottle" sides and semi-fastback roofline. The updates, however, made the 188.8-inch Pontiac 4.1 inches longer than the Camaro.

The unique bolt-on front subframe with unitized body design was carried over for the Firebird, as were the SLA front suspension with coil springs and anti-roll bar, the steering box and linkage mounted aft of



Multiple frontal updates were explored that ranged from quite mild to extensive. Fortunately, the extensive one was used.



**This OHC-6-equipped Firebird convertible is also a pre-production car. Notice the “Firebird” callout and emblem appear to be decals. The extended horizontal bright grille trim and the arrowhead emblem shown here were only used on the production Firebird 400s.**

the front wheel centerline, and the mono-leaf rear suspension. Despite the sameness of the layout, Pontiac used its own spring rates and shock valving to further tailor the ride and handling. Power steering was optional, as were Koni adjustable shocks.

Ride rates at the wheel front/rear were 73/100 ppi for the standard Firebird; 85/115 ppi for the Sprint, 326, and H.O.; and 92/135 ppi for the 400. These rates were softer than the Camaro’s—124/121 ppi with the six, 112/121 ppi with the 327, 112/131 ppi for the 350, and 136/131 ppi with the 396. When the optional ride and handling package was specified on the other Firebird models, the 400 spring rates were used.

Rear radius rods were added to reduce spring windup under heavy acceleration and braking. One was mounted on each side of the axle on all V-8 Firebirds and Sprint-6s with a manual transmission. The left one wasn’t used with the automatic transmissions or the OHC-6 one-barrel with the manual, and no rod was used with OHC-6 engines with a rear gear ratio of 3.08:1 or numerically lower.

Though the 59-inch front track remained, the rear track grew to 60 inches from 58.9 inches, larger E70x14 Wide Oval tires were standard in place of the Camaro’s 7.35-14 tires, and 14 x 6-inch wheels were used instead of 14 x 5s. Hubcaps were standard, and various wheel covers and styled steel 14 x 6 Rally I and Rally II wheels were optional, as were radial tires.

The standard 9.5-inch drum-brake system and the optional four-piston caliper front disc brakes with 11.12-inch rotors were also shared with the Camaro. Power assist was optional.

The interior remained very similar to the Camaro, with standard carpeting and a padded instrument panel featuring two large bezels with the speedometer in

the left one and warning lamps and fuel gauge in the right. Heater controls, optional radio, and the ashtray were grouped in the familiar central panel, and the glovebox remained to its right.

Unlike the Camaro, a woodgrain applique was added to the center panel, and optional Rally gauges replaced the warning lamps in the right bezel with instruments for oil pressure and temperature, and an ammeter, but it still included a fuel gauge. An optional tach could be mounted on the hood.

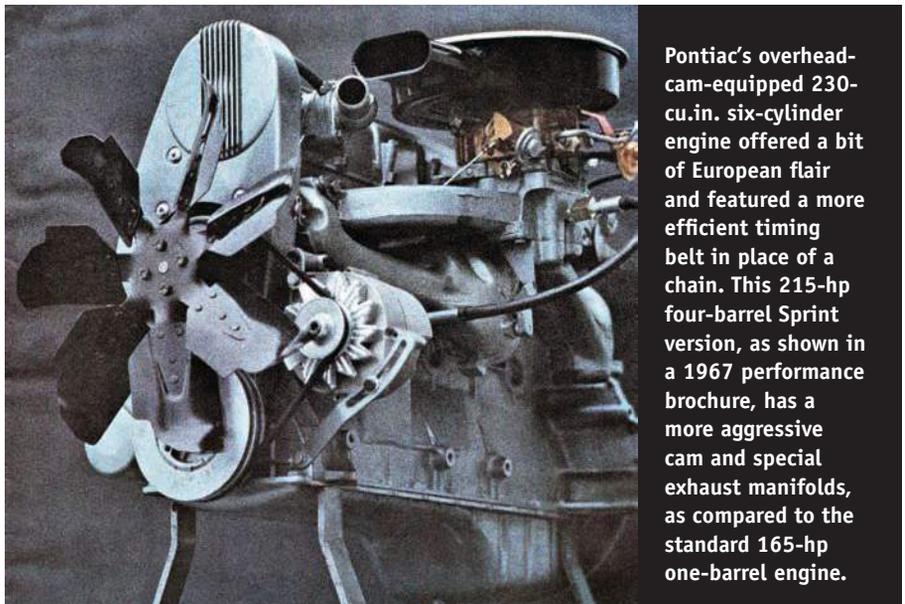
Bucket seats upholstered in expanded Morrokide vinyl were standard, but a bench seat in certain colors could be ordered for the sport coupe. Side panels in both the standard and custom interior, and the consoles were shared between the Firebird and Camaro, but the steering wheel design and seat upholstery patterns differed.

Pontiac’s upscale trim was comparable with Camaro’s Special Interior Group,

but its identification is somewhat more convoluted. Though Pontiac referred to code W54 Custom Trim as the “Custom Firebird Option” or “custom interior-exterior trim package,” some internal departments used “Standard” and “Deluxe” to describe the base Firebird versus those with W54, and devised a numbering system to identify the different body styles and engines that featured each one. “Deluxe” and “Custom” both refer to the presence of the W54 option.

The Custom Firebird Option included bright windshield pillar and roof rail moldings and formed foam-filled vinyl-covered door panels with molded-in armrests, recessed door handles, and carpeted lower areas that were the same as the Camaro’s.

Pontiac added a passenger-assist grip, its own Deluxe steering wheel, a vinyl headliner in place of cloth, Deluxe wheel covers, wheel opening moldings, and dual horns. The Camaro had upgraded the seat



**Pontiac’s overhead-cam-equipped 230-cu.in. six-cylinder engine offered a bit of European flair and featured a more efficient timing belt in place of a chain. This 215-hp four-barrel Sprint version, as shown in a 1967 performance brochure, has a more aggressive cam and special exhaust manifolds, as compared to the standard 165-hp one-barrel engine.**



From the rear, the Firebird differed from the Camaro in the taillamp, bumper and fuel door designs, the model and automaker ID, and the louvers on the rear quarter panels. The H.O. received the side stripe, and the Rally II wheels were optional.

upholstery for its Special Interior Group as compared to its base interior and included additional smaller items, but the Firebird didn't.

These were still the days of divisional autonomy regarding engines, so to further differentiate it from the Camaro, the Firebird was marketed as having five individual identities based on its engines. Pontiac's "Magnificent Five" consisted of the 230-cu.in. OHC-6 "Firebird," OHC-6 "Firebird Sprint," "Firebird 326," "Firebird H.O." (with a 326), and the "Firebird 400" with a choice of a 400 or 400 Ram Air V-8.

Compared to the Camaro engines, the base Pontiac 230-cu.in. OHC-6 one-barrel's 165-hp rating bested the Chevrolet

pushrod 230's 140 hp and optional 250's 155 hp. The four-barrel 230 OHC-6 Sprint engine, at 215 hp, had no direct Bowtie competition, just as the 290-hp 302 Z/28 engine and 295-hp 350 SS engine had none from Pontiac.

Chevrolet's 327 two-barrel spotted 40 hp to Pontiac's 250-hp 326 two-barrel, but the 285-hp 326 H.O. was aptly aligned with the 275-hp 327—both four-barrel engines. Rated at 325 hp were Pontiac's 400 and Chevy's 396, but the same 325-hp rating for the Ram Air 400 paled in comparison to the 375-hp 396. Part of the reason is the fact that all Firebird 400 engines had a limiter on the Quadrajets carburetor linkage to inhibit realizing full throttle at the sec-

ondaries, which reduced engine output to keep the ratings within corporate mandated power-to-weight ratios.

The Ram Air 400 featured a functional air induction system, higher performance cam and heavy-duty valve springs, free-flowing exhaust manifolds, and revised carburetor and ignition tuning, among other smaller items. A close-ratio four-speed manual transmission or Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 automatic and 3.90 rear gears with Safe-T-Track were mandatory. Just 65 Ram Air Firebird 400s were built for 1967. All 400s had chrome rocker covers (and air cleaner on non-Ram Air) and heavy-duty suspension.

A 10-inch clutch backed the OHC-6, and a 10.4-inch clutch was used behind the V-8s. Transmissions were mostly shared between the Camaro and Firebird, with column-shift three-speed manual standard in the base, 326, and H.O. Firebirds, and a floor-shifted heavy-duty three-speed standard in the Sprint and 400s. A four-speed manual (wide or close-ratio) was optional. The two-speed Super Turbine 300 automatic was optional on all but the Firebird 400, which instead had the extra-cost three-speed Turbo Hydra-Matic 400. Transmission and rear-gear restrictions varied with engine choice.

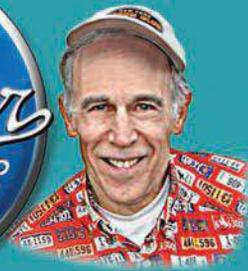
The BOP 8.2-inch 10-bolt rear end was employed, and gear ratios ranged from 2.56:1 to 4.33:1. Safe-T-Track was optional, but mandatory with 3.90-4.33 gears.

Pontiac was already known for offering an extensive list of options to further personalize each of its models. A few highlights that haven't already been mentioned include, a fold-down rear seat that added usable storage area (as did the standard



This original, low-mileage 326 H.O. engine features a Carter AFB carburetor, standard log manifolds, and dual exhaust with a crossflow muffler.

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Though “Banshee” was strongly considered for Pontiac’s F-body, and other monikers were in contention, it was ultimately named after the GM experimental gas turbine cars developed years before. The Firebird was introduced in February of 1967—five months after the Camaro and Cougar. It cost \$2,666 for the base six coupe and \$2,761 for the base V-8 coupe, which was more than the Camaro (\$2,466 and \$2,572), yet less than the Cougar coupe at \$2,851 with its base V-8.

Since the Cougar was the intended sales target for the Firebird, it’s important to note how its base model and upscale XR-7 compared to it. Featuring more formal body contours than the Mustang and Firebird, the Cougar was longer than both at 190.3 inches, but was 1.4 inches narrower than the F-body at 71.2 inches. Coincidentally, it also had split grilles, and a raised-center hood treatment. Unique exterior features included concealed headlamps and sequential blinkers in the taillamps, like the Thunderbird.

The Cougar incorporated more traditional unitized construction as opposed to the F-body’s hybrid subframe/unitized layout. It rode on a 3-inch-longer 111-inch wheelbase, with a narrower 58.1-inch front and rear track and used an articulated/strut coil spring front suspension and a leaf-sprung rear.

Standard inside was a walnut-grained steering wheel, floor-shift, full carpeting, and all-vinyl bucket seats with Comfort-weave (breathable vinyl) upholstery optional. A bench seat was also extra-cost. The XR-7 added leather and vinyl upholstery, simulated walnut on the instrument panel, and competition gauges.

The 200-hp 289 two-barrel was the base engine and the 225-hp 289 four-barrel was optional. A three-speed manual transmission was standard, and a four-speed manual and three-speed automatic were extra-cost. Various rear-gear ratios were offered, as was the Power Transfer Axle (limited-slip).

On par with the Firebird 400’s equipment, the extra-cost GT Performance Group for the Cougar delivered the 320-hp four-barrel 390 engine with dual exhaust, heavy-duty suspension, 14 x 6 wheels, Wide Oval tires, power front disc brakes, and GT badges.

Many road testers’ first ride in a Firebird was in the more expensive convertible, as Pontiac was likely exploiting the fact that the Cougar wasn’t available in that body style. From a performance standpoint, however, the convertible was much heavier than the coupe and wasn’t as structurally rigid.



**Though much of the interior was essentially unchanged from the Camaro, the seat upholstery pattern, steering wheel, woodgrain center panel, and passenger-assist grip were Pontiac specific. The extra-cost Custom trim is shown, as is an optional clock. (The T-handle shifter isn’t stock.)**

*Motor Trend* tested multiple versions of the Firebird and Cougar with various drivetrains. The Firebird was lauded for having the most power, with the 400s over the 390 and the 326 H.O. over the 289s, and the Cougar was said to have the better combination of ride and handling, yet the Firebird had the best handling near the limit. Body flexing in the Firebird convertibles tested was duly noted, as was the limited flexibility of the optional two-speed automatic with the 326, when compared to the three-speed auto that was available with the Cougar’s 289. There were no major differences noted in braking, but the Cougar excelled in front-seat comfort. The Mercury was ultimately named *Motor Trend’s* Car of the Year.

When comparing the sales figures of the 1967 Firebird with the other pony cars, it must be remembered that it arrived much later and it was purposely more generously equipped and priced higher than the Camaro and Mustang, so its volume would be generally lower. Nevertheless, the Firebird’s breadth of offerings ensured that it competed with more pony cars than just the Cougar. Pontiac built 82,560 1967 Firebirds, and Chevrolet manufactured more than 220,900 Camaros. More than 472,100 Mustangs were produced, and Mercury sold 150,893 Cougars. Plymouth made 62,534 Barracudas.

The Firebird, and later the Trans Am, advanced Pontiac’s performance image and enjoyed sales increases during its second generation, which culminated in a record in 1979. Production spanned four



**Pontiac’s innovative optional tachometer was on the hood, whereas the Camaro’s optional tach was placed in the right-hand gauge bezel.**

generations and included various special editions and pace cars, and ended with the 2002 models.

Cougars moved more toward the luxury market through the 1970s, and were produced until 1997. The nameplate returned briefly on a small sporty model from 1999 through 2002.

Coincidentally, the fates of the Firebird and Cougar aligned, with both nameplates retiring after 2002, and both the Mercury division of Ford and the Pontiac division of General Motors being phased out in 2010.

Like other pony cars of the era, Firebirds achieved legendary status and are highly collectable today. Though production ended many years ago, they still live in the hearts, minds, and garages of an adoring legion of fans worldwide. 🐦

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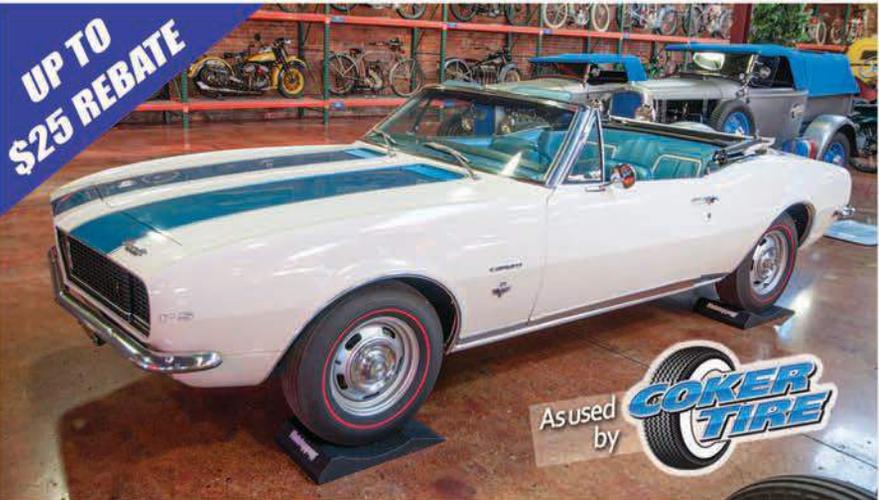
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# F-body Advertisements

Half a century after their debut, we look at how Detroit's ad agencies presented the Camaro and Firebird in print ads

**Smile when you call it Detroit iron**

Oh, sure, Camaro is comfortable as all get-out and the heater works. But that doesn't mean it's a motorized marshmallow. It's a real driving machine without the old-fashioned sports car symptoms of chills, sore bones and sharp shooting pains in the wallet.

Camaro will make a believer out of you if you don't think so. It has what it takes, including engines up to an exclusive new 350-cubic-inch V8 you can order, handling that's just as *pur sang* as you could want, front disc brakes available and all the other earmarks of a real driving machine.

It has safety in mind, too, with items like GM-developed energy-absorbing steering column, safety door latches and hinges, padded instrument panel and back-up lights standard.

So smile, call it Detroit iron, enjoy the foam cushioning and quiet running, and go show those purists.

**Command Performance** **Camaro** by **CHEVROLET**

**CAMARO SS 350**—The accent's on fun in this one with special suspension, new 350-cubic-inch V8, big red stripe trees on 14 x 6-inch rims, 22-inch dual exhausts, all standard. It looks the part, too, with a special striping and lower-styled hood, plus special identification emblems.

**CAMARO RALLY SPORT**—Change the appearance of Camaro by ordering the Rally Sport package. It has hidden headlights in a full-width black grille, special taillight treatment and special exterior trim. You can order the SS 350 and Rally Sport packages together, too, for double the pleasure.

A 1967 Camaro SS 350 Rally Sport convertible, sporty and stylish.

BY JEFF KOCH AND TERRY McGEAN

There are times when it can be advantageous to arrive a little late. General Motors didn't start the pony car trend with its Chevrolet Camaro and Pontiac Firebird, that having been accomplished so famously by the Ford Mustang. Though they could easily have been a "me-too" offering, the F-body twins stood tall from the moment of their official introduction, burrowed into the hearts of millions, and have gone on to become American institutions all their own. Time passes, fashions change, and technology evolves. During the Camaro's lifetime, plenty of other factors have arisen, including crash standards and fuel economy concerns, in addition to ever-changing tastes among consumers.

One thing that stands out immediately from the print ads:

**Pontiac Firebird 400.** The top end. Heavyweight of Pontiac's Magnificent Five Firebirds for 1968.

The credentials below are the powers behind our Heavy. You'll find them all set snugly atop 400's extra-firm but obliging suspension, with new asymmetrically mounted, multiple rear springs and wide-ovals. And you can order knitted (the better to breathe with) vinyl upholstery.

And, with every Firebird, the kind of safety that comes from seat belts and side mounted marker lights. And that's just the beginning.

Now, any guesses why we call the 400 the Heavyweight of our Magnificent Five? We didn't think there'd be any confusion. Pontiac Motor Division

**400 cu. in.  
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The stacked headline on Pontiac's in-your-face Firebird ad says it all.

GM seemed to eschew the Everyman aspect of the pony car, and geared its advertising more toward the performance angle of these models. That played well in the pages of the buff books, and helped take a significant chunk out of Mustang's sales once the F-bodies arrived on the scene. The racy image even played a part when performance cars were (supposedly) not the sort of thing America wanted to buy anymore—even though the Camaro and Firebird single-handedly made that overarching assumption a complete fabrication.

As these icons turn 50, let's take a look at some of the magazine-ad sizzle that helped sell the F-body steak during the platform's first two generations, and rediscover just what it was that made the Camaro and Firebird so appealing for so long. 🐾









# National Corvette Museum

*Corvette's past, present, and future come together in a one-of-a-kind setting*

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM

**T**hrough seven decades of continual production and technical development, the Corvette has represented the aspirations of millions of sports-car enthusiasts. As it's connected with, and adjacent to, this car's sole assembly plant, the National Corvette Museum offers a uniquely engaging, ongoing historical celebration that evolves along with the car itself.

Bowling Green, Kentucky, has been the home of Corvette assembly since 1981. Located between Louisville and Nashville, it was home to a defunct Chry-

ler air conditioning-unit plant that would double in size once GM purchased and modernized it. And it would benefit from a growing belief amongst Corvette faithful that a not-for-profit foundation should be created to gather and preserve historic materials and, perhaps, to form the basis for a museum.

As explained on the National Corvette Museum's website, the spark came from forward-thinking members of the National Corvette Restorers Society (NCRS), who conceived of a "National Corvette Technical Library & Museum" in

1984, and worked tirelessly for a decade to bring it to life. Key Corvette luminaries, including Zora Arkus-Duntov and Larry Shinoda, would also contribute their time and energy to the cause.

"General Motors was approached about funding a Corvette museum in the beginning, and they turned it down, saying, 'If we do this, then we'll have to fund a Camaro museum, and a Chevelle museum, and a Corvair museum,'" explains Katie Ellison, marketing and communications manager for the National Corvette Museum. Those NCRS members found allies within



the Bowling Green plant, Chevrolet, and GM itself and, in 1988, got approval to create an archive and museum.

While its final location was natural, it was not a given, and potential locations in four other states were considered. Bowling Green campaigned for this honor, though, coming through in large and small ways that echoed the populist appeal of Chevy's two-seater. "In 1990, the community provided a lucrative package to attract the museum, including a land donation of 32.9 acres close to the GM Corvette assembly plant and visible from the interstate. They offered to create a complete infrastructure at no cost to the Foundation, as well as a \$4.3-million tax-free bond to help with financing," Katie tells us. "And employees of the Corvette plant would give payroll deductions as donations, which raised more than \$100,000 to help the museum get started."

The first iteration of this museum was modest, the "National Corvette Museum Annex" being a storefront in a small local strip mall. Big plans were on the table, though, and the facility we know today was designed by Neumann, Smith & Associates, with interior planning by Exhibit Works. After Arkus-Duntov helped break ground, construction began in earnest in 1993, and the public was admitted for the first time on September 2, 1994.

"The front of the museum resembles a battleship, where the iconic car got its name," Katie explains. "And the Skydome feature—while eye-catching from the interstate as it stands 13 stories tall, wearing bold yellow and red colors—actually looks like the taillamp of a 1962 Corvette, if you turn it on its side."

The architecture isn't the only fascinating aspect of the complex—since 2014, it's been home to the 200-acre NCM Motorsports Park ([www.motorsportspark.org](http://www.motorsportspark.org)). This site includes a Le Mans-inspired road course with one-mile, 10-turn "East" and two-mile, 13-turn "West" loops that can be arranged in four configurations. Also on the grounds are an autocross/skidpad area, the Holley Control Tower housing offices and classrooms, and a high-speed go-kart track. The Motorsports Park is just as accessible as the museum and the assembly plant, off Interstate 65's exit 28, and it's not Corvette-exclusive, having been rented by automakers like Ford, Toyota, and Nissan, as well as by IMSA teams, and even the testers at *Road & Track* magazine.

This recent addition to the National Corvette Museum is now a big part of the experience, Katie explains. "We have Corvettes on site that people can drive, and offer Touring Laps where visitors drive their own car, as well as Hot Laps, where visi-



The museum's facade recalls a Corvette warship. Stylist Larry Shinoda designed the logo. The 200-acre Motorsports Park is adjacent to the museum and assembly plant.



The 115,000-square-foot facility welcomes “R8C”-option museum-delivery cars. Also here are the Corvette Store and Corvette Café.

tors ride at speed with a track professional. Our Corvette Experience is a half-day program that combines classroom instruction with in-car training on the track.”

Touring Laps at the Motorsports Park is just one of the perks of selecting option “R8C” when ordering a new Corvette. This code represents another special function of the National Corvette Museum: a car is delivered there for pickup, rather than to the ordering dealer. One of the regular benefits of this choice is a VIP tour of the Bowling Green assembly plant, although plant tours have been temporarily suspended due to construction and new-equipment installation; model-year 2018 R8C buyers will receive a voucher permitting them to tour the plant upon its public reopening in 2019. Other niceties include a museum

webcam that follows the car, so family and friends can watch the delivery remotely; a VIP-guided museum tour; and a special sticker identifying the Corvette as a factory/museum-delivery car. “We’re contacted every so often when someone purchases a used Corvette and finds that sticker in the doorjamb. They want to see what records we might have on that particular car,” Katie notes. “We maintain archives of photos of each car’s pickup.”

Visitors will likely encounter a privately-owned 2017 Corvette in the museum, and they’ll also experience the prior 63 years of this model’s history. GM has loaned this facility numerous important concept and production models, including the 1968 Astro-Vette and the world’s sole remaining 1983 Corvette (which Katie shares in a film

on the museum’s YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wjlz7YUCu7U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wjlz7YUCu7U)). Other organizations and individuals have loaned cars and memorabilia to the museum for display, as well.

Curator Derek Moore told us more about what ‘Vettes visitors may see, as well as about the regular and special exhibits themselves. “We have between 75 and 80 cars in the collection that are held in our trust. Among the special cars that were donated to us are a 1963 Z06 race car, and the 1973 Corvette that was the 1981-’82 SCCA national champion.

“We try to do a good job of balancing the museum’s cars on display, with the cars that are on loan to us for special exhibits, so people can see something a bit different each time they visit us,” he continues. “One



Visitors will experience the entirety of Corvette history, from 1950s Motorama show cars and later concepts, to examples of all seven generations of production Corvettes. There’s a special tribute to first chief engineer Zora Arkus-Duntov (at left), and rare glimpses inside the Chevrolet design studios. The archives offer reproduction build sheets and window stickers for 1981-up cars.



Many futuristic Corvette-based concepts have been built through the decades, and GM has loaned some to the National Corvette Museum.

of our current temporary displays is a four-car mini exhibit in the Skydome celebrating rare colors. And we're showing all eight of the sinkhole cars, two of which General Motors has already restored: the 2009 ZR1 Blue Devil and the One Millionth Corvette. Our vehicle maintenance and preservation coordinator, Daniel Decker, and I are currently doing an in-house, cosmetic restoration of the black 1962 that went into the hole, bringing it back to how it looked before it fell in. Visitors can watch this work being performed." That infamous February 2014 collapse has been commemorated with a permanent exhibit called "Corvette Cave In: The Skydome Sinkhole Experience."

The Skydome is also home to the National Corvette Museum's Hall of Fame,

a Who's Who in the world of Chevy's flagship. "This is our 20th year of honoring individuals in the categories of GM/Chevrolet, Racing, and Enthusiasts," Katie says; a rundown of HoF members can be found on the museum's website. "Any member of the museum can nominate someone for the Hall of Fame. Portrait banners line the walls, and inside the spire in the center of the room, we have display cases, and videos and information on the current year's inductees."

Since his arrival at this institution, Derek has been encouraging 501(c)(3) tax-deductible donations, and planning fresh ways to interpret the Corvette's legacy. "Like every museum, we rely heavily on contributions," he tells us, "And when something's donated, we try to ensure

it's without restrictions. We're looking for items related to the history of the Corvette—this could be a car, or parts and pieces that we can use to talk about the engineering story, or archival materials, like engineering drawings from companies that contributed components to the manufacturing of Corvettes. These help our visitors understand all of Corvette's history: How was it manufactured, what did it take to manufacture it, and all those stories that go along with it."

So what can visitors expect in 2018 and beyond? "One of my goals is to make the museum follow the development of technology in the Corvette through the decades, up to the newest C7," Derek reveals. "We'd like to make the interactive aspects of the displays grow greater as you progress through the museum, much like tech does in the Corvette itself. People will be able to use their smartphones to access information, as well as interact with the exhibits physically, culminating in an immersive experience."

While other automakers offer factory delivery programs, few foster such a powerful, inclusive enthusiast experience as does the National Corvette Museum. "We're definitely more than your average museum—you have the plant, the museum, and the Motorsport Park, all within a mile of each other. It's like the Corvette trifecta," Katie says with a smile. "Some call it the Disney World of Corvettes." 🏎️



The 2014 sinkhole that brought this museum to the world's attention is commemorated with a permanent display in the Skydome. Two of the eight cars affected were restored by GM; a third is being cosmetically refurbished in the museum's garage area, visible to visitors; and the rest are on display as-recovered.

**CONTACT:**  
National Corvette Museum  
800-538-3883  
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# Tribute to the Past

*A 10-year restoration revives a 1961 Chevrolet Corvair Greenbrier with some '62-model flair*

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BILL WISE

**N**ostalgia often drives us to own a specific collector car or truck. Or, for Bill Wise, a vintage van. From his youth, the North Adams, Massachusetts, resident fondly remembers the 1962 Corvair Greenbrier his father purchased. "It was the only car he bought new, and when I got my driver's license my parents gifted

it to me as my first car. The Chevrolet was already a bit rusty by then, but we did some basic work on it so that I could use it. There were a lot of great memories associated with the Greenbrier," explained Bill.

Flash forward to the Fall of 2004. Bill had previously restored a 1962 Corvair Monza Convertible and was scanning the

internet looking for another project. By chance, he stumbled upon a listing for a 1961 Greenbrier for sale in Boston, just a couple of hours' drive east on the Massachusetts Turnpike. Admittedly, Bill wasn't looking for anything specific at the time.

"I was familiar with Corvairs in general, and I had always toyed with the idea of getting a van again," he



said. "That's what kind of drove me to the listing to begin with. I could tell it needed work, of course, but the price was reasonable. When I picked it up, I noticed it had a Maine State Police sticker attached to the inside of the windshield—I can only guess that's where it came from originally—and the interior was packed full of parts stripped

from other Greenbriers, including a few bench seats and two engines."

To beat the looming winter weather, Bill's first order of business was to clean out the interior and get its 164-cu.in., air-cooled, six-cylinder engine back into operational condition. According to Bill, "It hadn't run in years, because, as I discovered, the rubber parts inside the carbu-

retors had disintegrated into this mass of black goo. I took my time rebuilding both Rochester one-barrel units and replaced the fuel pump. Rather than pour fresh gas into the Greenbrier's fuel tank, I ran a new line to a gas can and tried firing off the engine. Amazingly it started. It smoked and wheezed, and banged and chugged for a while, but eventually it quieted down and



On the surface, the Greenbrier looked to be a solid example of the Corvair-based van as-purchased. By now, owner Bill had spent time rebuilding the vehicle's fuel system, enabling it to run under its own power for the first time in several years.



The first part of the restoration to be accomplished was the elimination of surface rust on the upper sections of the body, roof, and within the rain rails. Corrosion was removed via sanding, and the metal was quickly sealed in self-etching primer.



Removing the interior seating, inner side panels, and the rear engine cover allowed for a complete visual inspection. Several areas of rust could already be seen; however, sandblasting that was scheduled to occur exposed far more corrosion.



Even before sandblasting, the stability of the driver's-side floorboard is clearly completely compromised; a condition repeated on the front passenger side of the Greenbrier, due, in part, to its water-catching design and wheel proximity.



Self-etching primer was applied to metal left bare from sandblasting to protect it from flash-rusting while repairs were made to damaged sections. Here, nearly a dozen fabricated patch panels are set out, ready to be MIG-welded.



This is the view of a completed repair to the front passenger floorpan. The fabrication work included duplicating the factory bolt patterns. A final layer of self-etching primer helped seal the new and original metal until paint could be applied later.

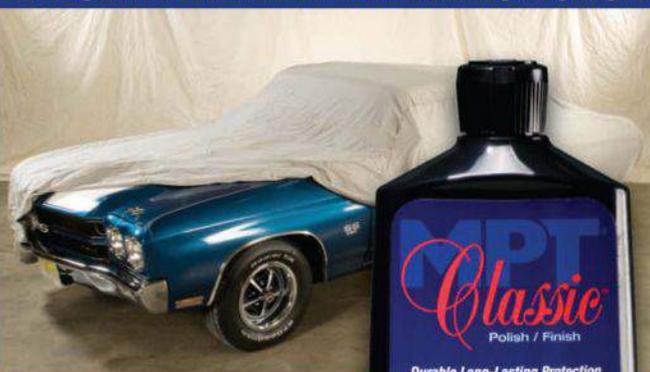


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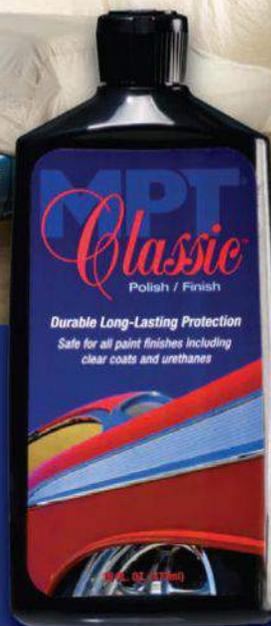


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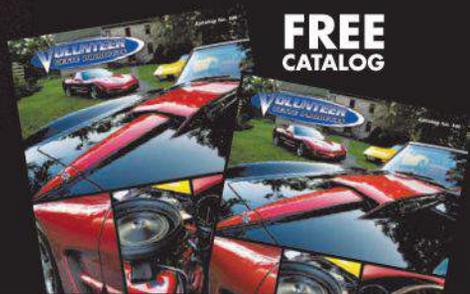
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Both the front and rear suspension systems were removed from the chassis as subassemblies. Each was then broken down into individual components, painted, and carefully rebuilt. This is the completed front suspension assembly ready for installation.



In this image, the engine bay has been painted Cameo White, and both the re-detailed 164-cu.in., air-cooled six-cylinder and the transaxle have been reunited to the chassis. Interestingly, the block is from a passenger car and did not require a rebuild.



With all of the metalwork completed throughout the Chevrolet, the interior was the first to receive paint. Here, three of the four different colors used to finish the cabin can be seen, including Fawn Metallic side panels, a color first used in 1962.



Rather than retain the original dark blue/light blue two-tone scheme, Cameo White and Cardinal Red were chosen. A PPG-basecoat/clearcoat system was used, consisting of two color coats and four applications of clearcoat. Sanding and polishing followed.



With the paint process completed inside and out, final reassembly could begin. Here, new rubber floor mats have been secured into position, while the instrument panels had been fitted and wired. The radio and other trim parts have yet to be installed.



The interior is nearly complete and includes new upholstery—a 1962 color pattern. While new white headliner sections help brighten the cabin. All of the glass is original to the Corvair and was merely cleaned.

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ran smoothly. I wanted to accomplish that first to prevent my garage from filling up with exhaust fumes during the process."

Next, Bill addressed some of the minor bodywork required above the beltline, where the crowns of each body panel had accumulated what was determined to be surface rust, in addition to that found along the entire length of the Greenbrier's rain rail. To rectify this, he sanded one section at a time, covering the clean metal with self-etching primer to protect the panels from flash rusting. Bill then got to work on the far bigger issues discovered inside the cabin.

"I suspected I would find rust, but when I sandblasted the middle floorpan there was more than I anticipated. You can't buy replacement panels for Greenbriers, so I had to fabricate everything. In order to fix the middle floorpan, I made patch panels out of two clean pieces of engine cover metal. I had to seam it in the middle, and that seam is over a brace on the underside, so you can't see anything from below. The patches were made to replicate the factory bolt patterns as well. I had to repeat the process with the front floor sections as well, and parts of the rear floor. Each of these patches I fabricated were MIG-welded together. There was also some rust that ate through the driver's-side inner rear wheelwell into the cabin; it was a time-consuming repair, because it required a lot of test fitting to get it right.

"Once that was done, I had to replace a small section of the sill below the side doors. A common problem can be severe rust on the bottom inner section

of the doors, but, interestingly, all of the doorjamb were in really good shape. The only other areas I had to cut rusted metal from and replace were under the battery tray and the bottom of the right rear quarter panel. One final spot was correcting the hole diameter for the rear license plate lamps: someone had enlarged them for aftermarket lamps. Again, after each section was completed, I covered the repairs with self-etching primer for protection," explained Bill.

After the metalwork was completed, Bill turned his attention to the undercarriage. Having safely positioned the unit-body chassis on heavy-duty jack stands, he removed both the front and rear sus-

pensions as subassemblies. While some components required media blasting, most of the parts that were to be reused only required simple cleaning with small hand tools. Each piece was then repainted in chassis black paint and then rebuilt as subassemblies on a temporary workbench. "I installed all new bushings throughout, rebuilt the steering box, and installed new tie-rod ends, springs, shocks, and brakes. I also cleaned and repainted the undercarriage and installed all new brake and fuel lines," explained Bill.

With the suspension removed, Bill also removed the engine and transaxle. Although the six-cylinder had been brought back to life earlier, Bill opted only to clean and repaint the engine, citing that the block is actually incorrect for the Greenbrier. "Chevrolet used a different block for their vans. This one runs, moves the vehicle, and has power, but I have a correct engine that I will be rebuilding," Bill told us. "I didn't feel the need to spend a lot of time completely rebuilding an engine that will eventually be swapped. As to the transaxle, I had to replace the nose shaft. Once that was done, I painted it and it was ready for installation. In between all of that I painted the engine bay. It enabled me to quickly reunite the suspensions, engine, and transaxle with the chassis once they were completed."

At this stage, the Greenbrier was ready for paint, and, rather than start with the exterior, the interior was done first, which required four different colors. The primary hue Bill chose was Fawn Metallic, which was complemented by white top bows (and a white headliner to follow) and Gunmetal Gray for the steering column, emergency brake handle, and some





of the parts under the dash; the floor was painted another color, although most of it would be hidden by a rubber mat.

Final prep of the exterior began with a skim coat of Rage Gold filler only where required, which was then block-sanded smooth with 60-, 100-, and then 150-grade paper. Happy with the results, Bill then applied two coats of PPG-epoxy primer. More sanding with 200-grade paper followed before he progressed to a PPG-basecoat/clearcoat system.

Cameo White was selected as the body's primary color, while Cardinal Red was used for the side stripe. Both colors were sprayed in two applications; four layers of clearcoat followed. Final sanding, like almost all projects we've documented, occurred using the step process: Bill completed it with 1,000-grade paper.

Bill recently retired from his engineering job, enabling him to concentrate on final assembly. He recalled: "I spent January to April putting the Greenbrier back

together. Between the trim and glass, and all the associated bits, it took a lot of time. The interior came together fairly quickly though, having obtained new upholstery from Clark's Corvair Parts. Because of my deep connection with my first Corvair, I opted for a pattern that wasn't available until 1962 that fits with the paint scheme inside (also not offered until that year). Other than putting the correct engine in, there's not much left to do other than enjoy it as often as possible." 🐶

## owner's view



**T**he Greenbrier was my fifth restoration, so the process was not unfamiliar to me. The toughest part was having to fabricate so many parts. There was one section that took me 16 hours to complete. You have to be patient and not work beyond your abilities, which should be a key thought going into any project. Overall, this was a 10-year effort—there was a spell where it wasn't high on my priority list—however the outcome was worth it. Sure, there are subtle differences I incorporated, but I really wanted to mimic the original 1962 model I had. I could not be more pleased with the outcome.



## 1974 Pontiacs

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But specs can't tell you what a test-drive can. So put Grand Am on the road. And discover the Wide-Track people's way with cars.



# Cimarron, Cadillac's Compact

**THE CIMARRON WAS AN UNEXPECTED** development and like no other Cadillac before or after, but it was derided more for its origins than its execution. So what if it was based on the J-car? Let's be real. Quite often, an all-new car really isn't "all" new. Most cars are evolutions of prior platforms, borrowing everything from mechanical components to body panels. My college economics professor would always say, "What is the difference between a Chevrolet and a Cadillac? \$6,000." I can hear the keyboards clacking already.

In a world gone small, Chrysler dipped its toes into the water with the Aspen/Volaré-based LeBaron. Lincoln dressed up a Granada/Monarch and called it Versailles, and Cadillac started with a Nova and introduced the Seville. While none of these were really economy cars, they were small enough to be a nod to sensible transportation, while satisfying their customers' needs and desires at the time.

For the 1982 model year, Cadillac took its formula one step smaller and introduced the Cimarron.

Cadillac only considered offering an economy car when the U.S. government's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) requirements went into effect. The automaker intended to introduce a small car in the mid-1980s, but instead decided to base its entry on the existing J-car platform that currently supported the Chevrolet Cavalier, Buick Skyhawk, Oldsmobile Firenza, and Pontiac J2000/Sunbird.

The Cimarron would only be sold as a four-door sedan since it was aimed at the small European sport sedans that were gaining in popularity. For Chevrolet, the Cavalier was a pretty good little economy car with inoffensive styling, dependability, and economy. Today, the Cavalier has quite the following: clubs, Facebook pages, social networks, etc.

The front-wheel-drive Cimarron had a 101.2-inch wheelbase with MacPherson struts up front and a semi-independent torsion beam suspension supporting the rear. It was unitized with a subframe up front. The Cimarron added hydraulic dampers between the subframe and the body, so it would have a more Cadillac-like ride than its GM siblings. It also featured a Cadillac-tuned touring suspension with stabilizer

bars front and rear.

The engine was Cadillac's first four-cylinder since 1914: 1.8 liters producing 85 horsepower. And, the four-speed manual with overdrive was Cadillac's first manual transmission since 1953. In 1983, a 2.0-liter four, producing 88 hp and mated to a five-speed manual, was standard. The base price was \$12,181; in today's dollars that is around \$35,000. That was double the Cavalier's price. EPA rated the Cimarron at 25 mpg city/42 mpg highway.

Standard features were A/C, AM/FM four-speaker stereo, electric remote-controlled outside mirrors, locking fuel filler door, dual-color painted accent stripes, copper-nickel-chrome-plated bumpers, body side molding, reclining front bucket seats, side- and rear-window defoggers, Cadillac-specific rear axle arm bushings for ride firmness and smoothness, dual-toned horn, and much more. I have only seen Cimarrons with power windows and door locks. While not listed as standard in the early brochures, I can't imagine Cadillac selling any car at that time without the latest available luxury features.

In 1987, all the required doodads are listed as standard in the brochure: "Slip behind the leather-wrapped steering wheel.

Relax into the body contoured perforated, leather-faced bucket seat with lumbar support. This ... is Cimarron by Cadillac. With full instrumentation ... including tachometer, oil pressure gauge, and voltmeter ... Isolated from road noise by the acoustical insulation package ... Go on ... turn the key. You are in command."

The absence of wood veneer on the instrument panel raised a few eyebrows among luxury car buyers. The interior was tufted just enough to give an air of elegance without being overdone. At introduction, it was advertised as the "Cimarron by Cadillac," and the company sold 26,000 examples the first year amid the hope of selling more than 75,000. By 1987, a 125-hp 2.8-liter V-6 was standard. In its final year, 1988, Cadillac sold barely 6,400 Cimarrons.

"Nimble. Road Hugging. And fun to drive. This ... is Cimarron. An efficient new kind of Cadillac for a new kind of Cadillac owner." I drove a friend's Cimarron many years ago, and it was a nice-riding, tight-handling car that was much more refined than the critics would have you believe.

I like Cimarrons, and I feel sorry for them. Few people wanted them back in the day, but share the details about one that's for sale today, and all the fans come out of the woodwork. The problem is there is usually only one or two for sale at once. At the time of this writing, I found a very clean, low mileage, 1988 model for \$3,800. I am sure it has been sold by now. I'll bet there are those who wish they had picked one up when the original owners started selling them in the 1990s.

Best of all, it's a Cadillac. 🐶



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## David Bennett

Salesman

*Chrysler-Plymouth-Jeep Dealership*

### IT WAS 1984, I HAD JUST GRADUATED

from college with a degree in communications and was working in the newsroom of a local radio station in Dubuque, Iowa. With a three-year-old son and another baby on the way, I was looking for a better job, that paid more than minimum wage, to support my growing family.

I spotted a classified ad for a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership looking to hire a salesman, and went in for an interview. I was somewhat familiar with Tegeler's Chrysler-Plymouth-Jeep as my dad usually bought Chrysler products, and we had shopped for cars there.

The dealership was located in downtown Dubuque, which was the older part of town when most new car dealerships were building new facilities in the growing west end of the city. The 70-year-old dealership was in its third generation of owners, having started life as a Nash-Rambler franchise, and even sold boats at one time. I interviewed with the owner, Ed Tegeler Jr., and his son, Barry, and ended up getting the job. I was one of three salesmen at the dealership and, up to that point, had never sold anything in my life. My dad had sold appliances at the local Sears store for 40 years, so I suppose selling was in my blood.

On my first day, the owner showed me to my desk, pointed to the front lot, and said, "The cars are out front, the keys

are hanging on the board. Let us know when you go to lunch." I started studying the data books that Chrysler provided to get familiar with the cars I'd be selling, and drove every model we had on the lot. If you remember, Chrysler had just received a government bailout in the early 1980s and was selling quite a few "K-cars," but had just introduced its all-new minivan to the market. Of course, the original Dodge and Plymouth minivans were a huge success and probably saved the company.

It was months before I even got to drive a Plymouth Voyager, as every minivan that came in was already sold. It didn't take me long to figure out that there were a lot of competing car salesmen out there who didn't know much about the products they were selling, and were just out to make a fast buck and didn't really care about the customers. I decided early on that I would not be one of those guys, and prided myself on knowing our product line inside and out.

In 1990, I competed in the National Chrysler Plymouth Walk-Around Competition, where I would ultimately qualify for the national competition held in Tucson, Arizona. I went up against other salespeople from New York, Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Dallas. They poked fun at me for being from the Midwest, with the L.A. guy saying, "I don't even know where Iowa is!" I got the last laugh, as I ended up winning the national competition, and returned to win it again two years later.

We didn't get paid commission on the gross profit, like salesmen at most other dealerships did, but we were paid a flat

fee per car sold, ranging anywhere from \$45 for our lower-priced used cars up to \$150 for a top-of-the-line Chrysler Fifth Avenue. Needless to say, I had to sell a lot of cars to make a decent living, and I did. I was always scanning the lot for customers and rarely sat in the showroom waiting for someone to come through the door. After a few years, I was selling an average of 25 cars per month, and depended on my return customers and referrals for most of my sales.

Back then, you couldn't just go online and price out a new car like you can today. You actually had to go into a dealership, sit down with a salesperson, and spec out your new car. In some ways, things were much simpler and probably more fun, as you had more interaction with the customers.

When it snowed, we plowed the lot in an old Willys army jeep that was open to the elements. We would pile the snow up 20 feet high, and then drive the jeep up to the top! We had a lot of fun back in those days, especially when the owners weren't around. When the father, Ed Tegeler Jr. passed away, we knew the writing was on the wall and that his son would eventually sell the dealership, as his heart wasn't in it and he was looking to cash in the family fortune and move on.

He ended up selling the business to the local Ford dealer, who built a new facility on the west end of town. I was hired on as the sales manager and remained in the car business for a total of 19 years, working at five or six other dealerships throughout the years. But I never enjoyed it as much as I did my time at Tegeler's. 🐾



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**THE CHEVROLET FLEETLINE AEROSSEDAN CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE MARKET WITH** production likely to exceed 200,000 units this year. The sleek, sloped rear gives the Aerosedan a dynamic look yet still provides plenty of headroom and comfort for rear passengers. This staple of the Chevrolet lineup is also quite affordable, starting at \$1,434.

## FACTORY Prices\*

- Buick Roadmaster — \$2,297-\$2,837
- Chevrolet Fleetline and Fleetmaster — \$1,381-\$1,750
- Chrysler Windsor — \$1,906-\$2,434
- Dodge Deluxe — \$1,587-\$1,718
- Ford Super De Luxe — \$1,330-\$1,740
- Plymouth Special Deluxe — \$1,440-\$1,857
- Pontiac Torpedo (Six) — \$1,500-\$1,935
- Studebaker Champion — \$1,535-\$2,059

\*Station Wagons excluded



**CHARLES WILLIAMS**  
Nash passes away on June 6, at the age of 84. Nash Motors Company was incorporated in 1916 and has been a pillar of the automotive industry ever since. This year,

Nash is 11th in market share and will likely see production exceed 100,000 cars. Nash is planning some new designs for next year, and the company still looks strong with George Mason at the helm and George Romney ascending to vice president.



**FORD HOLDS THE LINE ON PRICING, UNLIKE** many other manufacturers who have seen an increase this year. The Super De Luxe convertible is back at \$1,740, same as 1947, and available with the 100-hp 239-cu.in. V-8. This year will feature a shortened run of Ford production, as the Blue Oval will be back with an all-new design as the decade comes to a close. And be on the lookout for the new F-series trucks, which will be available in eight different models.

**INDIANAPOLIS CHAMPION**  
Indianapolis 500 — Mauri Rose (Deidt Offenhauser) at an average speed of 119 miles per hour. His third title.



**PRESTON TUCKER INTRODUCES THE** Tucker Torpedo, powered by a rear-engine capable of 166 horsepower. The prototype has been making its rounds at various auto shows, and it will be interesting to see what becomes of this venture. Only 49 inches tall, the car has many innovative safety features, including a cycloptic center headlamp that turns with the steering wheel, pop-out windshield, and disc brakes. In addition to its safety features, it boasts performance with a top speed around 120 mph.

## PASSENGER Car Sales Race\*

1. Chevrolet — 696,449
2. Plymouth — 412,540
3. Ford\*\* — 247,722
4. Dodge — 243,340
5. Pontiac — 235,419
6. Buick — 213,599
7. Studebaker — 184,993
8. Oldsmobile — 172,852
9. Chrysler — 132,417
10. Hudson — 117,200

\*Most production data was recorded 1946-'48; these are estimates for 1948 based on various sources.

\*\*Model run was from November 1947 to June 1948

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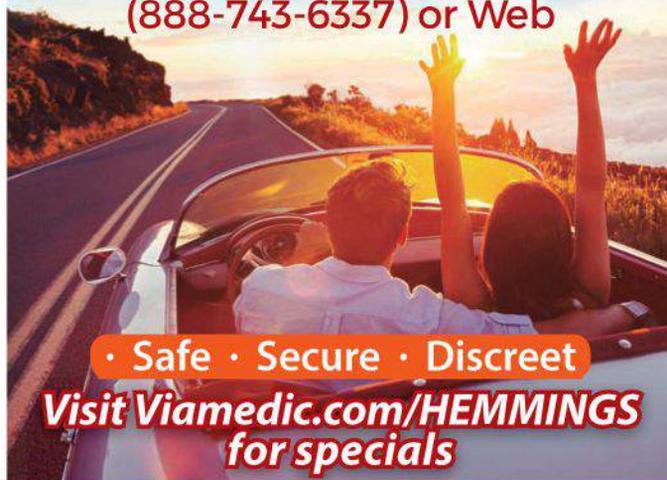


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# My Life With Hudsons



## IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF MY

life, I developed a strong association with Hudsons, arguably the greatest American postwar automobiles ever built. During that time, I had many experiences, but none more memorable than those spent in or around the Hudsons in my family.

My first recollection is of riding in my dad's 1941 Super Six Hudson during World War II. Dad needed a solid, reliable car because his sales job required traveling daily within a 50-mile radius of Reading, Pennsylvania. At the age of four, I realized that the Hudson was something special—soft foam seats, a good radio, and red lights that blinked off when the engine started.

After the war, Dad had company cars, and the 1941 Hudson became our family car. Hudsons were in our blood, and we watched the model changes into the late '40s and, in particular, the development of the step-down design. We'd look at the new Hudsons, but didn't really make a move until the winter of 1950, when the step-down designs became irresistible.

And there it was, a gold 1949 Commodore Eight on a used car lot, with 19,000 miles. It had a beautiful style, including a sunvisor over the windshield. It was loaded, complete with Vacuumatic Clutch and Drive-Master. Talk about me being impressionable at age 11. It had an owner's manual that actually taught you how to repair the beast, and I read it cover to cover.

Dad drove his company car as a daily

commuter, but when it was vacation time, we used the Hudson. One great vacation we took with the Commodore was in the summer of 1952 to Niagara Falls. When my brothers returned home from the Korean War, the gold Commodore was there for their use. My family put many miles on the Commodore in the years up to 1955, and it began to show its age.

The Hudson's straight-eight was a throwback to the 1930s, with splash lubrication. The antiquated roller valve lifters were quite noisy, and it idled like a threshing machine. In later years, it was firing on only six cylinders due to a blown head gasket. Our last memorable trip to western Pennsylvania was in the fall of 1954, with Hurricane Hazel looming behind us. Coming home, I sensed that the Commodore had seen better days, as it took several quarts of oil. After that, the Commodore was parked in the garage without much usage, but it wasn't done yet.

Winter of 1955 came, and I got my learner's permit, as well as renewed thoughts of the Commodore. By then, the family had pretty well written the Commodore off, and relegated it to being parked out of sight behind the barn. It was really low on oil, but still ran. In a last-ditch effort to save her, I went to Pep Boys, picked up an 8-quart can of SAE 30 "recycled" oil, and filled the Commodore's crankcase. I fired it up, and I had claimed "my car!"

The summer of '56 was spent caddying at the local country club and spending evenings cruising in the Commodore. School started in the fall, and there I met her: "The Blonde"—tall, smart, and friendly. Talk about love at first sight!

The dating scene began and it was regular movies, and we were sort of going together, and through all this, we were accompanied by the Commodore. The Blonde didn't like the heater since it didn't blow hot air on her legs like her dad's Oldsmobile, so I raided the local junkyard for a new heater valve. As winter came, my parents decided to pass on insuring the Commodore. Dad and I talked about getting a used engine and Sears shocks, but it ended up being parked for good behind the barn. It was a sad end for a car with so many great memories.

My brother Bill picked up a 1951 Hornet with overdrive. The rear axle had a lower ratio to match the engine rpm in overdrive, and it would scald the tires in regular mode. It had a 304-cu.in. straight-six with a counter-balanced crankshaft and pressure lubrication that could run all day.

On the next date with The Blonde, I took the Hornet. I had it in overdrive when I floored it to kick it into third gear. I felt a jolt of power and then a sudden loss of power with the engine still revving. The high-torque Hornet engine had ripped the center out of the clutch plate, much to my embarrassment and out-of-pocket costs.

With the demise of the Commodore, Dad had to have another Hudson. There was a green 1953 Hornet coupe sitting on a used car lot with a really nice tapestry fabric interior; this would be the first car we had with Hydra-Matic. He bought it, and then we detailed it, touched up the paint, added Porta-Walls on the tires, and hung a scented pine tree from the mirror. When done, it looked pretty sharp.

Being my insecure self and needing a date for the senior prom, I renewed my acquaintance with The Blonde and ended up dating her again in the Hornet coupe. It was sweet. She actually appreciated me! I took her and the Hornet to my senior prom, but the joy was short-lived. My brother Karl needed a car, so Dad sold him the Hornet, and I never drove it again.

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Once again, Dad went after another Hudson. I was attending Penn State when he purchased a 1954 Hornet sedan. This was the last year of production for the step-down design as the company struggled to modernize the lines and add a one-piece windshield. It had Twin-H Power, which vapor locked constantly, and a problematic Borg-Warner automatic. I drove it when I came home from Penn State and used it to date The Blonde, but we were never happy with it. In 1959, Dad ended up trading it in for a 1955 Cadillac Sedan de Ville.

I didn't need a car at Penn State, but during spring semester there was an ad in the *Daily Collegian* for a 1949 Hudson Super Six for \$110. Of course, I went to take it for a ride. The green paint was faded, but the body was free of rust and had no dents. The odometer showed 50,000 miles; the seats had covers that had no tears; it had good tires and a new battery. It accelerated well, and the transmission and clutch were smooth. I took it down to idle in high gear without it bucking, and it accelerated right up to speed smoothly, indicating good valves. Once again, love at first sight!

I offered the guy \$100, and it was mine. The first thing I did was to jack it up and adjust the clutch pedal to have more free play. I went to Sears and had the oil changed and got it a grease job. I parked it outside the dorm until the semester was over and then took it home.

That Super Six became my refuge for the next two years. That summer, I got a job with the local steel company and drove it, daily, to work. The local junkyard was golden; it had a dozen Hudsons sitting around, and they allowed me to freely pick at them. I got an updated heater valve and carburetor, along with a fancy steering wheel and chrome knobs from some Commodores.

In my junior year, I'd make it home occasionally to see family and, of course, The Blonde. Throughout the year, the Hudson proved to be a faithful and reliable car. One Friday in April, Mom called and said that Dad had died. The family wanted someone to get me at school, but I overruled them and said I (and my Hudson) would be okay to make the drive home.

I drove the Hudson back to Penn State, and graduated in the spring of 1961 with a degree in chemical engineering and a commission in the Air Force. I gave the Hudson to my brother, who drove it for another year or so. Incidentally, I married The Blonde, and we headed off into the horizon for the next chapter in our lives, with fond memories of having experienced the greatest postwar cars built in America. 🏠



# CLASSIC TRUCK PROFILE





# Many Facets

*A 1947 Diamond T 509 that shines at shows and still does a day's work*

BY MIKE McNESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

For more than 50 years, Diamond T built straight trucks and semis for serious hauling jobs. The company also soldiered through two World Wars and manufactured heavy rigs that the Allies used to move supplies and matériel.

Diamond T's last call as an independent badge came in 1966 after which it was consolidated with Reo to form the Diamond Reo division of White in the spring of 1967. Diamond Reo changed hands, struggled through bankruptcy in the 1970s, and changed hands again. It lives on today through a Pennsylvania-based truck builder as the T-Line brand of custom trucks and glider kits.

This month's feature truck is a 1947 Model 509 Diamond T—the company's midsize offering that year with a 14,700-pound gross vehicle weight. It was built during the postwar boom when demand for trucks was at an all-time high. In 1947, Diamond T manufactured 10,475 trucks, then climbed to a record output in '48 with 10,651.

The truck maker's story begins in the early 1900s when C.A. Tilt, the son of a Chicago shoe manufacturer built a car of his own design, working out of the machine shop in the family's factory. The Diamond T name and logo was co-opted from his father's shoes—the diamond was meant to represent high-quality while the "T" in the center stood for Tilt. After building cars for about five years, a Chicago plumbing supply business ordered a delivery truck from Tilt in 1911, and Diamond T trucks was born.



That first 1½-ton chain-drive hauler paved the way for a dealer network and a new heavy-truck factory in Chicago by 1917. From the start, Diamond T's were built almost entirely using components supplied by outside vendors—a common practice in heavy-truck manufacturing that continued for more than a century. Diamond T's new plant also went immediately to work building the World War I Standard B Liberty military truck: a single-axle, two-wheel-drive, heavy hauler designed by the U.S. Quartermaster Corps and manufactured by 15 different companies.

In the early 1920s, Diamond T offered an expanded line of trucks ranging from two to five tons. By the end of the decade, the company's lineup had advanced dramatically: four-cylinder engines were replaced by sixes; four-speed transmissions replaced earlier three speeds; its trucks were using hydraulic brakes and rolling on heavy steel wheels shod with

pneumatic tires; tandem rear axles were offered; and the range grew to include one-ton trucks all the way up to 12-ton rigs. In addition to piling on advanced features, the company was beginning to heap on chrome trim to further accentuate the trucks' styling, which began its long lasting reputation for building fancy commercial rigs. A makeover in 1933 ushered in new cabs with slanted V-shaped windshields and a bold grille with vertical slats. The styling became even more aggressive in 1936 when the windshield was tipped back dramatically and the cab squared off at the corners. That year also saw the debut of the Diamond T Model 80 ¾-ton light truck, of which only a handful were built until it was discontinued in 1938 and replaced by the more robust Model 201.

While the 1938 cab stuck around until 1951, the grille underwent some styling changes leading up to WWII. The new-for-1940 treatment became a sort of trademark for the company, with its fat

horizontal grille bars that would influence the design of Diamond T front ends into the 1960s. It was that distinctive look that appealed to Kent Zimmerman of Mesa, Arizona, owner of this month's feature truck, when he spotted a 1949 Model 201 pickup at a show almost 20 years ago. "I decided I wanted a Diamond T, but one of the bigger models," he said. "My son Scott soon found this truck on the internet."

The truck was 1,200 miles away in the Midwest, but the Zimmermans wasted no time catching a flight out for a look. "Scott and I took a red-eye flight in February 2001 to Springfield, Missouri, then rented a car and drove out to the seller's place," Kent said. "I fell in love when I saw it."

The seller turned out to be the truck's second owner, and he'd purchased it at an auction in Minnesota. When he acquired the Diamond T—a former farm truck from South Dakota—it was in solid, low-mileage condition, but in need of a cosmetic restoration. "He worked on it for five years," Kent said. "He painted it, inside and out, reupholstered the seat, and shortened the bed two feet because he didn't like the long bed."

Amazingly, to date, the truck has been driven just 24,000 miles in the last 70 years.

"It had 21,000 miles on it when I bought it, and I've put 3,000 miles on it in

16 years," he said. "One of the oil-change stickers showed it had just 16,000 miles on it in the 1960s. It's too big of a truck to take on errands, and you have to double clutch it, so it probably saw limited use, and it was clearly kept inside."

The Diamond T is still powered by its original Hercules 282-cu.in. straight-six, rated at 99 horsepower, and it breathes through its factory one-barrel Zenith carburetor. A non-synchromesh Warner T-9 four-speed and a vacuum-operated two-speed rear was installed in the truck on the Diamond T assembly line to give the operator a wider selection of ratios.

Kent, a retired pathologist, hasn't had to do any major restoration work on the truck, but it has required some maintenance and fresh rubber all the way around to replace the original tires.

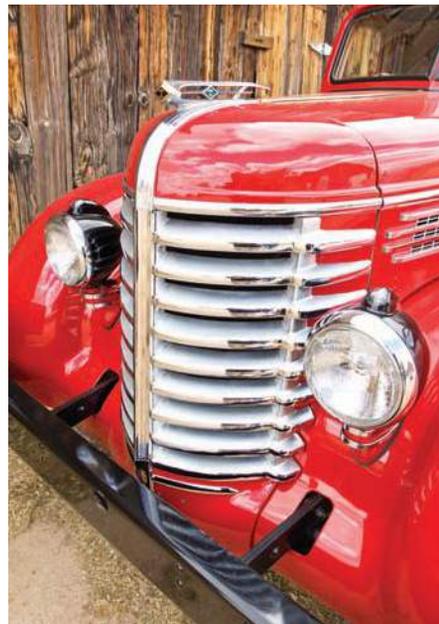
"I've done a lot of mechanical stuff on it. I had to do the radiator, a manifold gasket, the water pump, the starter, and the generator," he said. "The engine has never been torn down, and it still has its original wiring harness, which is in good shape. The gauges have never been restored, but they look brand new."

Kent owns several old trucks, all of which are used for light-hauling chores. "All of my trucks make trips to the dump," he said. "They have to earn their keep." To

that end, Kent fabricated a set of finished-looking low-rise stakes for the bed. "The bedsides are oak, and I made them so whatever I'm carrying doesn't roll out—though it's not really authentic. I cut them down so I could see behind me more easily, as cars are always tucking in behind you on the road. It doesn't have signal lights, so I have to use hand signals."

Like a lot of old-truck owners, Kent likes the fact that he can roll his Diamond T into a cruise-in on Friday night, and into the town dump on Saturday morning loaded with brush.

"Ever since I was a teenager, I wanted an antique car," he said. "But when I finally had a little disposable income and a little bit of time, my practical side kicked in and I thought, what would I do with another car? But if I have an old truck, at least I can use it." 🐾



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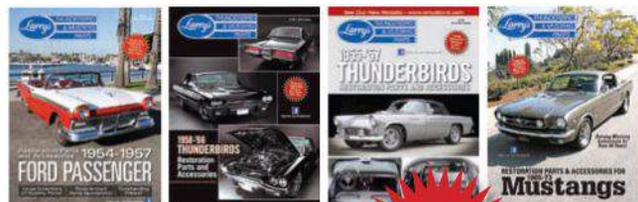


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475/500-19	A \$ 99.00	525-21	A \$149.00	33x4	A \$269.00
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670-15	Black	A \$147.00	915-15	1"	C \$209.00
670-15	2-11/16" or 3-3/4"	A \$173.00	600-16	Black	A \$144.00
760-15	3" or 4"	B \$186.00	600-16	3-1/2"	A \$169.00

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600-15	Black	\$152.00
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G78-15	1", 2-1/2" or 3-1/4"	\$168.00
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165HR14	CA-67	\$179.00	205/70WR15	CN-12	\$299.00
185/70VR14	CN-36	\$149.00	205VR15	CN-72	\$439.00
205/70VR14	CN-36	\$299.00	215/60VR15	CN-36 N4	\$419.00
155HR15	CA-67	\$239.00	215/70WR15	CN-12	\$359.00
165HR15	CA-67	\$209.00	225/50YR15	P7 N4	\$329.00
165VR15	CN-36 N4	\$259.00	255/60WR15	CN-12	\$449.00
185/70VR15	CN-36 N4	\$289.00	165HR400	CA-67	\$249.00
185VR15	CA-67	\$339.00	185VR16	CA-67	\$359.00

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700-18	\$219	\$309	\$399
750-18	\$229	\$319	\$439
700-19	\$259	\$329	\$429
750-19	\$259	\$349	\$469
600-20	\$179	\$279	
650-20	\$180	\$299	

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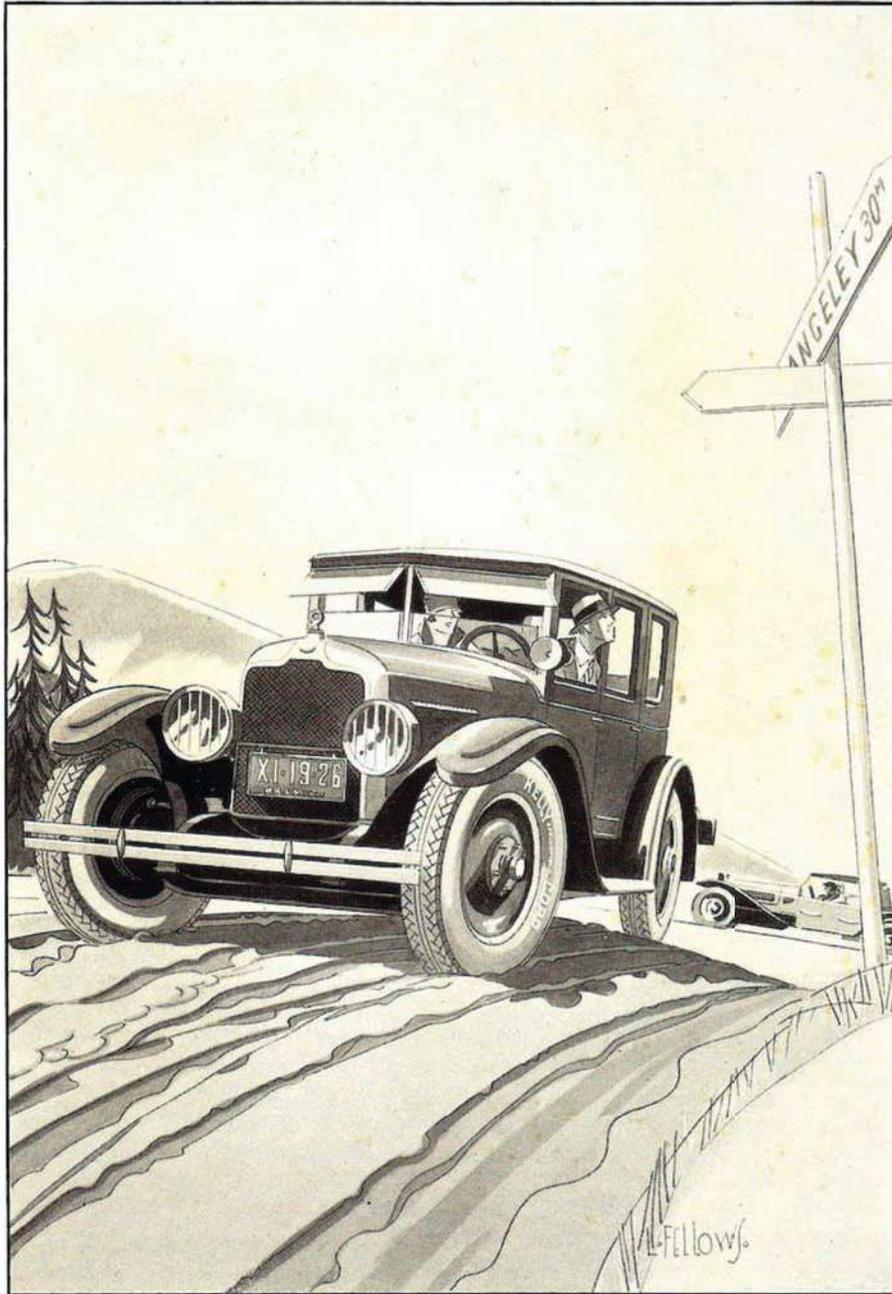
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ODDIE? BOI GOODIE?

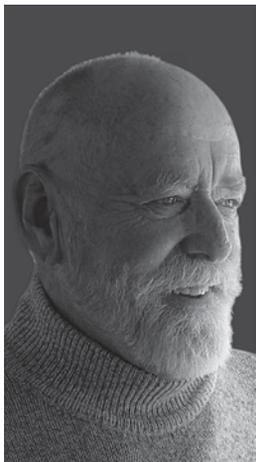
*"We'll save twenty miles by going this way."  
 "I know, but if the road is all like this—"  
 "My dear, with these Kelly-Springfield Flexible tires  
 you'll never know you're on a rough road."*



Kelly-Springfield Tires  
 Circa 1926

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## Flying in the Face of Reason

**P**opular *Mechanics* was one of my favorite magazines as a kid in the Fifties. On its covers, there were always things like atomic-powered space ships, and rocket packs that could allow you to leap tall buildings in a single bound. But for me, the most intriguing of those machines of tomorrow were cars that could fly. They usually had wings that folded back along their sides like cockroaches and engines that drove propellers when in the air. Everybody was going to have one in the future, according to the magazines.

I don't know what happened. A lifetime has gone by, and we are still grounded—that is if all is going well. Getting airborne in your car often has unfortunate consequences. But, then, aircraft are not ideal for the freeway, either. It seems that all these years of trying have yet to get us into the air in something that is somewhat like a car, but it's not been for lack of trying. It all started not long after the Wright Brothers took to the air. That's when Glenn Curtiss came up with his three-winged flying car. It never got off the ground, though it did hop a little.

He built it in 1917, and it looked like a Model T sedan without fenders and with three wings attached further back on the car's sides. It used a pusher engine of 100 hp and had a twin-boom tail. Our entry into World War I ended further development.

And, then, in 1937, there was the Waterman Aerobile, which was the brainchild of a fellow named Moulton Waterman. It looked like a blimp gondola with trouser-button wheels at each corner mounted on stalks, and it had a big sweptback boomerang wing on top. A Studebaker six-cylinder engine drove a pusher propeller or the rear wheels, depending on whether you were on the ground or airborne. It looked sort of like someone had bred a squirrel with a seagull.

The tiny car that seated three was made of aluminum, with lots of Plexiglas for visibility. It was said to be able to sustain 55 mph on the ground and 100 in the air; the wing was detachable for road use. It flew successfully, and Studebaker bought it for promotional purposes, but it was too heavy and expensive to be put into production and only five were built.

World War II halted further tinkering, but then in 1949 the Taylor Aerocar debuted. It looked like a Crosley of the era, but again with wheels the size of bagels mounted on slender outriggers. The front

wheels were powered, and the rears just trailed along. It had a Lycoming four-cylinder aircraft engine in it, and the wing and tail assembly, along with the rear shaft-driven pusher propeller, were detachable.

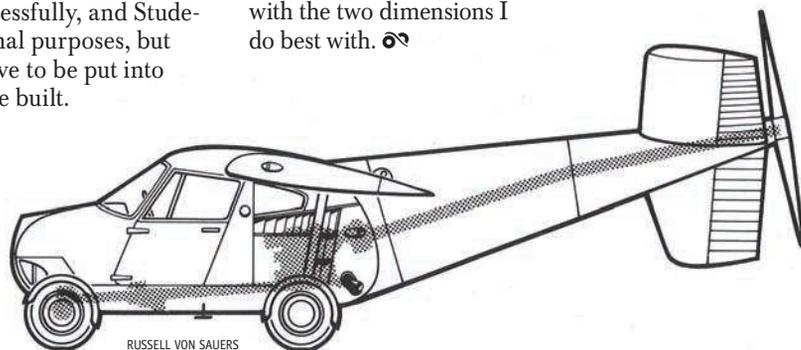
It flew pretty well, with a top air speed of 117 mph and a cruising speed of 87, though it was a bit underpowered, and it was licensed for the road—sans wings—but it made for a cramped, noisy, frail automobile. Only six were built, but there's one in the Smithsonian, and another 1954 Aerocar N-101D is currently for sale for a mere \$1.5-million in flyable condition. Good luck getting insurance on it, though.

And then there was the Mizar in 1971, built by a fellow named Henry Smolinski, that appeared to consist of a 1971 Pinto with most of a single engine Cessna Skymaster bolted to its top. It was intended to go on the market for around \$19,000, but Mr. Smolinski smacked it up testing the thing. However, that did not dampen some people's enthusiasm for a flying car.

Today we have the Terrafugia, which looks reminiscent of a 1949 Aerocar that has been reworked by a modern stylist. The company is located in Massachusetts. Prototypes have been built and flown, and production is predicted to begin in 2019. The estimated purchase price is \$279,000, so start saving now if you want one.

Personally, I have outgrown my desire to have a flying car. Even the most well thought out of them is somewhat like a Swiss Army knife. It can do more than one thing, but none of them very well. Also, you would need a driver's license as well as a pilot's license to make full use of one. Of course, a flying car would be great for circumventing Los Angeles freeway traffic, but it would also be cramped, noisy, and dangerous.

Back in the '50s, they thought we would all have flying cars by the turn of the century, but these days I'm not so sure that was such a great idea. Can you imagine New Years Eve with drunks trying to get home from parties? In an inebriated state it is hard enough to deal with left-and-right without adding up-and-down to the mix. I'll continue to celebrate at home, and stick with the two dimensions I do best with. ☺



//

Back in the '50s, they thought we would all have flying cars by the turn of the century...

//



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