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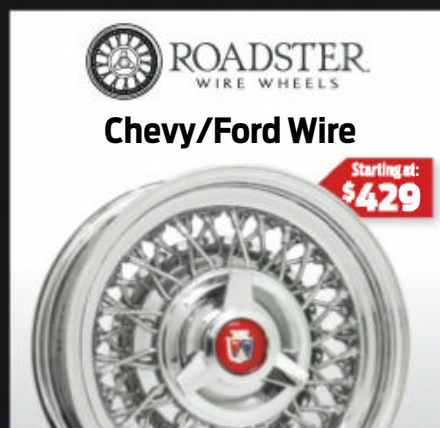




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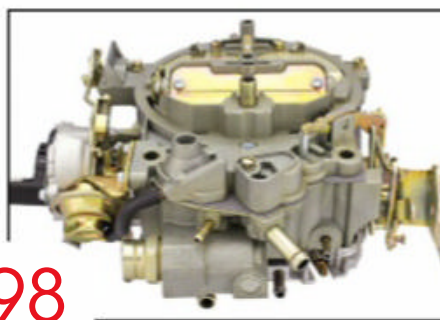
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Colors Matter

Early one Saturday this past February, I was cruising down the scenic Meritt Parkway in southern Connecticut on my way to Long Island when in the east-bound lane an early '60s Jaguar MKII sedan passed by at a leisurely pace. Its attractive rounded form certainly stood out among all the unidentifiable jellybean-shaped modern cars around it, but what I found unappealing about that Jaguar was its color: It was white.

For some visual reason, white simply doesn't look good on most large cars; I find that it makes them appear larger than they really are. Although the Jaguar MKII isn't a large car by any means, its white exterior made it look blah, and flattened out its curvy shape to the point where it appeared boring. Conversely, I always felt that white is the perfect color for BMW 2002s, early Mustang fastbacks, Porsche 911s, Barracuda notchbacks, and Triumph TR6s, perhaps because none of them are large and they are proportionally spot-on. This is simply my personal preference, and you might feel otherwise.

Certain colors make select cars come alive, creating a knockout appearance that can be hard to outshine. Take that MKII Jaguar for example: A rich, iridescent blue or a dark British Racing Green would better enhance its shapely form and lend to an upscale appearance. Red or any other bright color would cheapen such a classy-looking car as the Jaguar, with its proper pedigree.

I never understood why so many enthusiasts think their car will look better finished in red than any other color. I've often heard some car guys say that only fire engines should be painted red, but I wouldn't go that far. Many sports cars do look their best in bright red, especially one particular brand that's built in Maranello.

I guess the main reason that red is so often the color of choice is that there's lots of truth to its nickname: "re-sale red." It has been shown many times, especially at auctions, that red cars not only sell quicker but for a higher price. Of course, we can all understand why: Red is bright, attractive, and somewhat mesmerizing. Love, happiness, joy,

and passion are just some of the many positive associations that come to mind when we see this addictive primary color.

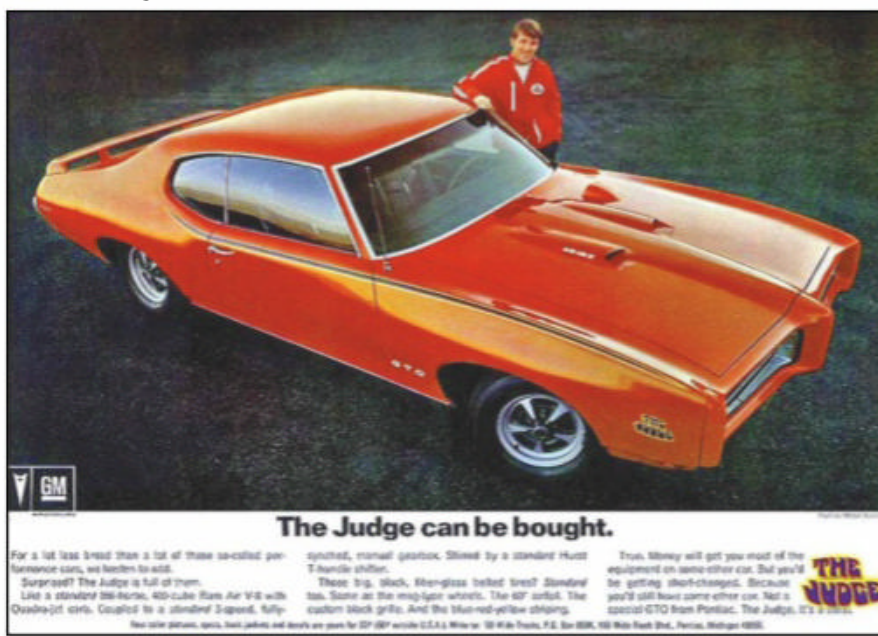
Some cars are thought of with a particular color to the point where they don't have that same attractiveness if they are painted in an alternative shade. For instance, Astro Blue is the signature

color of Buick's 1965 Riviera, while Carousel Red is forever linked to the 1969 GTO Judge, just as Wimbledon White and Guardsman Blue stripes are allied to early Shelby Mustang G.T. 350s. While the color purple may look ugly on nearly all cars, who can argue that it's not

fantastic on a '70 'Cuda? With a name like "Plum Crazy," who wouldn't want a 'Cuda painted this striking shade? Sunset Coral is another color with a strong association; it looks oh, so right on '56 Thunderbirds. And what Bugatti doesn't appear its best in French Blue, Kaiser Darrin in Yellow Satin, or Duesenberg in black?

Speaking of black, it's the one color that suits all body styles, regardless of size. For some reason, every car looks sensational in black; although, due to its absence of color and reflective qualities, black may not be the ideal hue to highlight a particular form. Again, it all comes down to the actual design of the car itself. A black car has an elegant air about it, while at the same time looking a little sinister. It's somewhat evil appearing, tough and masculine, powerful and aggressive.

In the same way that clothes make the man, paint makes the car. Of course, preferring one color over another is a subjective thing, as everyone has their own taste and preferences, but next time you think about painting your collector car, give it some serious consideration. Originality is always the preferred choice, as it better maintains a car's value; however, color is not a permanent modification—the car can always be repainted, albeit at a sizeable expense. Just don't settle for white. 🐞



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Lincoln Plus Party

THE SIXTH ANNUAL LINCOLN HOMECOMING WILL BE HELD AT THE LINCOLN MOTOR Car Heritage Museum this August 8-11 on the campus of the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan. It's sponsored by the largest of the Lincoln clubs including the Road Race Lincoln Register, Lincoln Owners Club, Lincoln-Zephyr Owners Club, and the Lincoln & Continental Owners Club. As a bonus, this year's show will also allow for all Ford Motor Company-built vehicles to join the event. The tagline is "See Ford Blue in Kalamazoo" as the weekend will include appearances by Gale Halderman, a retired Ford designer of Lincoln and Ford automobiles, as well as Andrew Layton, author of a biography of Ray Crawford, championship driver of the Lincoln Pan-American Road Race team. Other activities will include driving tours to the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum, the W.K. Kellogg Gull Lake mansion, Vicksburgh Historical Village, Bell's Brewery, and the US 131 Dragway, where you can take your Lincoln or Ford to the track. Visit www.lincolncarmuseum.org or the various Lincoln club publications and websites for more information.

Spartan Garage to Raffle a Restored 1955 Thunderbird

FOR THE PAST 14 YEARS, STUDENTS AT the Spartan Garage, a technology program at East Syracuse Minoa High School, have purchased a classic vehicle to restore and gain hands-on experience in car restoration. This year's car is a 1955 Ford Thunderbird hardtop convertible with a 292 V-8 with three-speed automatic, air con-

ditioning, and disc brake conversion. Students are responsible for the build from start to finish in all mechanical aspects as well as budgeting, advertising, communication with local shops, fundraising, and collaborating. Visit www.spartangarage.org to see pictures of the restoration, as well as past projects. You will also be able to

participate in the raffle (via mail) with tickets at \$10 each, three for \$25, or 15 for \$100. All proceeds go to fund the Spartan Garage. The Thunderbird will be on display at the Syracuse Nationals at the New York State Fairgrounds July 19-21, where the lucky winner will drive away with the Thunderbird.



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Bahre's Public Viewing

THE 41ST ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY & CLASSIC CAR Exhibit to benefit the Hamlin Memorial Library & Museum will welcome the collection of Robert and Sandra Bahre of Paris, Maine, this July 20. The viewing will take place on the Village Green. Among the many classics in this collection is this 1934 Duesenberg SJ Torpedo Convertible Victoria by Rollston. Expect to see many other Duesenbergs, Packards, Stutzes, and more from the Classic Car era. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$2 for children under 12; visit www.hamlin.lib.me.us, or call 207-743-2980 for more information.

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Bostonfarina

WE KNOW THAT THE ONE-OFF PININ FARINA JAGUAR XK120 SHOWN HERE STILL exists—in fact, it recently re-debuted after its restoration to much acclaim. We also know that importer Max Hoffman had a hand in bringing the car to the United States. But what happened after Hoffman imported it remains a bit of a mystery.

Kelly Williams, who is researching the car's history for the company that recently restored the car, sent us these 1958 photos of the car hoping some Hemmings readers can fill in those gaps.

"Presumably the car was no longer owned by Hoffman at this time," she wrote. "There are at least two locations in these photos, presumably somewhere in the Boston area. Less than three years after the latest works photo, the car looks quite a bit different. It has received a comparatively clunky XK140 front bumper, with extra mounting bolts near the ends, and fog lights; had its tailpipe rerouted; lost its backup light; gotten whitewalls, side mirrors, a radio antenna; been repainted in a much higher-contrast two- or three-tone. It looks like it may even have been hit in the rear, since the bumper sections don't meet as cleanly as they originally did, and there appears to be some wrinkling in the surface of the chrome. Maybe the incident that affected the rear bumper was responsible for the loss of the original front."

If anybody does recognize the car from that time, let us know and we'll put you in touch with Kelly.



Project W-31

AMONG ALL THE CARS AND PARTS THAT GM BACKDOORED DURING ITS SELF-imposed racing ban was one Oldsmobile 4-4-2 fitted with W-31 parts and stripped of its VIN. The Michigan State University students who convinced the division to give them the car would like to know what happened to it.

The story, in a nutshell, starts with the MSU chapter of the Society of Automotive Engineers, who weren't up to much other than going to meetings in 1969. That changed when Jim Miller, the chapter's technical advisor and an Oldsmobile engineer, redirected the 4-4-2 development mule from the crusher and had it equipped as the students specified. Over the next four years, the students then wrenched, raced, and repeated.

But then they lost track of it entirely, as the former students discussed in a presentation at last year's Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals. Rumors abound of its continued existence, though the crew has no solid evidence of its survival. If it's out there, though, they'd sure like to know.


RE: Parade Phaeton

A CHRYSLER IT LIKELY IS NOT. THE PHAETON IN THE postcard that Lee and Chip Caruna sent us (HCC #176) might have a passing resemblance to one of Walter P.'s offerings, but at least a couple of readers—including Bill Gerverdinck and François Faux—pointed out, it's more likely a Renault Reinastella. Indeed, while we don't see any other photos of a Reinastella fitted with such a body, there exists a model of such a car and the front-end details do better match the car in the postcard.

As for the occasion, François, John Blake, and Brian Winslow all suggested King George and Queen Elizabeth's 1938 visit to France. "The event was a huge event to support France because of fears of Hitler and his intentions, hence the postcard of the visit," Brian wrote.

Thanks to everybody who sent in their responses!



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



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MECUM

Mecum in Texas

MECUM ROLLED INTO HOUSTON THIS PAST APRIL AND SAW A 75-PERCENT SELL-THROUGH RATE as 767 cars changed hands, with overall sales eclipsing the \$20-million mark. Among the classics being auctioned was this air-cooled 1925 Franklin 11-A runabout. Powered by a straight-six with three-speed manual transmission and finished in blue with black and tan interior, the CCCA Full Classic was part of the Mario Sueiras collection and found a new home with a final bid of \$26,400. The collection featured 19 American cars ranging from early pickups to 1950s icons to some woodie wagons, and included a 1936 Ford pickup selling for \$44,000, a 1927 Lincoln Model L coupe for \$22,550, a 1955 Chrysler C-300 at \$38,500, and a 1936 Ford woodie with fantastic timber throughout reaching a sale of \$61,600. Mecum will be in Denver July 12-13 at the Colorado Convention Center with approximately 600 vehicles. Visit www.mecum.com for more details.

Barrett-Jackson West Palm Beach

WITH 632 VEHICLES SOLD—BRINGING A SELL-through rate of 98.9 percent with more than \$31.2 million in sales— Barrett-Jackson's April auction in West Palm Beach was a huge success. Its 17th auction was the highest to-date for the company in Florida. The eclectic mix of cars that crossed the block featured 30 selections at no reserve from the World of Classics Collection, amassed by Swedish entrepreneur Leif-Ivan Karlsson. Among those sold were this 1960 Dodge Dart convertible with a D500 V-8 and Dart's top-tier Phoenix trim with options such as custom upholstery, interior trimmings, and power brakes and steering. The mighty Mopar found a new owner at \$41,800. The 1950s were also well represented with a luxurious pink 1959 Cadillac Series 62 convertible selling for \$46,200 and a 1955 Pontiac Star Chief convertible with a 287-cu.in. V-8 and Hydra-Matic selling for \$33,000. Visit www.barrett-jackson.com for more results.



BARRETT-JACKSON

AUCTION PROFILE

CAR	1956 Ford Fairlane Sunliner
AUCTIONEER	RM Sotheby's
LOCATION	Fort Lauderdale, Florida
DATE	March 30, 2019
LOT NUMBER	1079
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	\$60,000
SELLING PRICE	\$55,000

FORD'S TOP TRIM LEVEL CONTINUED TO BE the Fairlane in 1956, and the popular Sunliner convertibles saw a production run of 58,147 units. There were a few changes made this year to the exterior, and among them were larger taillamps with chrome bezels around the lenses. Interiors featured new instrument panels with added padding and the

safety-inspired steering wheel with a recessed hub, along with optional seatbelts. Ford ads touted: "You'll be safer in a '56 Ford!"

This Fairlane Sunliner was part of a private Swiss collection and was powered by the 292-cu.in. V-8 engine mated to the three-speed Ford-O-Matic transmission. The Sunliner had a body-off restoration, and the Bermuda and Diamond Blue paint showed brilliantly against the dark blue canvas top. The original wheels rode on wide whitewalls, and other exterior features included dual mirrors, grille and trunk guards, fender stone guards, foglamps, and a continental kit. Lurking beneath the power top was a two-tone interior with pushbutton AM radio and a Magic Aire heater. When the bidding finished, this Blue Oval changed hands at a reasonable price.



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annual auction during the popular Amelia Island concours weekend in March with sales totaling more than \$38.1 million, and a sell-through rate of 84 percent of all lots sold. Among the top sales was this 1930 Duesenberg Model J "Sweep Panel" dual-cowl phaeton by LeBaron. With a known ownership history over 70 years, this iconic Duesenberg featured a comprehensive restoration by Fran Roxas. The straight-eight engine labeled "J-487" is believed to have been a factory-installed replacement from its early days in Chicago. The rare Duesy truly was one-of-a-kind and the final bid reflected that as it sold for \$1,650,000. Other classics included a 1934 Packard Twelve Individual Custom convertible sedan that went for \$1,325,000 and a beautiful 1926 Hispano-Suiza H6B Cabriolet Le Dandy that raked in \$1,353,500. All results are now available at www.rmsothebys.com.



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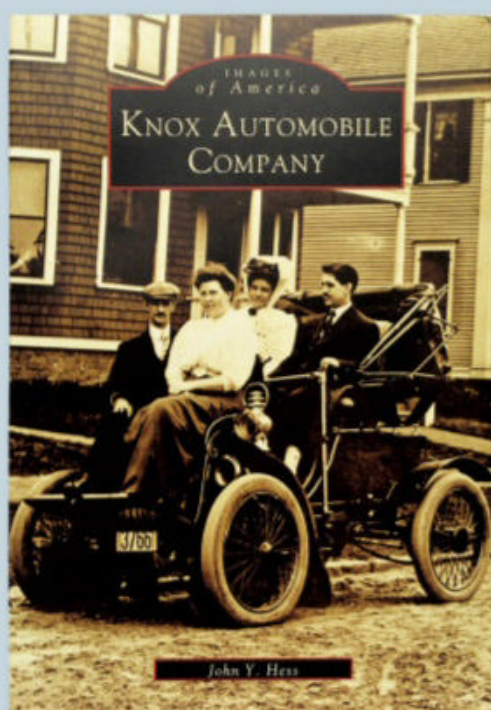


German Iconography Underfoot

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Are you a hot shoe driver with a lead foot? Or simply an enthusiast who's keyed in enough to recognize and respect the colors, patterns, and textures that make our favorite classic road and race cars distinctive? If you answered in the affirmative to either, you're who Heel Tread socks are made for. This company's Petrolhead Collection uses color and design to honor iconic high-performance automobiles. These premium socks come from Portugal, a country famed for quality hosiery, and they're seamlessly knitted in a blend of 80-percent combed cotton, 17-percent Polyamide, and 3-percent Elastane. Their German Perfection series includes the pictured "GTI" (this plaid, a nod to the VW's famed seat upholstery) and "Quattro" (sporting 1980s Audi Sport rally team colors), as well as "E30," "RSR," "Pink Pig," and "Gullwing." Other inspired sock designs can be found in the American Muscle, British Charm, French Finesse, Italian Flair, Pit Stoppers, and Rally Legends collections. Regular mid-calf sizes include medium (4½-7½) and large (8-12), and "Quattro" also comes in an under-the-ankle low version, size large.



Knox Automobile Company

203-877-6717 • WWW.OLDEMILFORDPRESS.COM • \$21

At the turn of the 20th century, the New England city of Springfield, Massachusetts, was famous for its residents' talents in engineering and precision manufacturing. As well as being home to the pioneering Duryea Motor Wagon Company and Rolls-Royce's short-lived American branch, Springfield was the birthplace of the Knox Automobile Company, established by Harry Knox in 1899 to build his air-cooled single-cylinder runabout. Success came fast, and within 10 years this firm had expanded to build commercial trucks and buses, fire rigs, and winning race cars. It was his collection of historic Knox memorabilia that inspired John Hess, president of the Knox Motor Car Club of America, to create this book from Arcadia Publishing. The 128-page softcover is filled with fascinating images of the people, places, and products of this fleeting but influential firm. Each illustration is paired with an informative caption so readers get a fine overview of this important automaker's work.



"We Fix Oldies"

928-708-0897 • WWW.BUSTEDKNUCKLEGARAGE.COM • \$349

If you're searching for a perfect finishing touch for your den or garage, a genuine, vintage-style neon clock might be just the ticket. The Busted Knuckle Garage recently unveiled the latest in its growing line of Oversized Neon Clocks with this, the vintage-looking "We Fix Oldies & Automotive Legends—Classic Repair Service" timepiece. This colorful clock is a generous 20-inches in diameter and 5-inches deep and is handmade in the USA using a spun-aluminum bezel with a powder-coated finish, decorated glass dome, retro-look hands with a smooth-motion sweeping second hand, and a ½-inch genuine neon ring that is rated for 100,000 hours. It runs on household 110-volt AC electricity via an 8-foot power cord and has a separate pull cord to control the neon lighting. This oversized neon clock is sold with a limited warranty against defects in material and workmanship, and ships free in the continental U.S.



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—M., Irvine, CA

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— Men's Journal

I'LL TAKE MINE BLACK...NO SUGAR

In the early 1930s watch manufacturers took a clue from Henry Ford's favorite quote concerning his automobiles, "You can have any color as long as it is black." Black dialed watches became the rage especially with pilots and race drivers. Of course, since the black dial went well with a black tuxedo, the adventurer's black dial watch easily moved from the airplane hangar to dancing at the nightclub. Now, Stauer brings back the "Noire", a design based on an elegant timepiece built in 1936. Black dialed, complex automatics from the 1930s have recently hit new heights at auction. One was sold for in excess of \$600,000. We thought that you might like to have an affordable version that will be much more accurate than the original.

Basic black with a twist. Not only are the dial, hands and face vintage, but we used a 27-jeweled automatic movement. This is the kind of engineering desired by fine watch collectors worldwide. But since we design this classic movement on state of the art computer-controlled Swiss built machines, the accuracy is excellent. Three interior dials display day, month and date. We have priced the luxurious Stauer *Noire* at a price to keep you in the black... only 3 payments of \$33. So slip into the back of your black limousine, savor some rich tasting black coffee and look at your wrist knowing that you have some great times on your hands.



27 jewels and hand-assembled parts drive this classic masterpiece.

An offer that will make you dig out your old tux.

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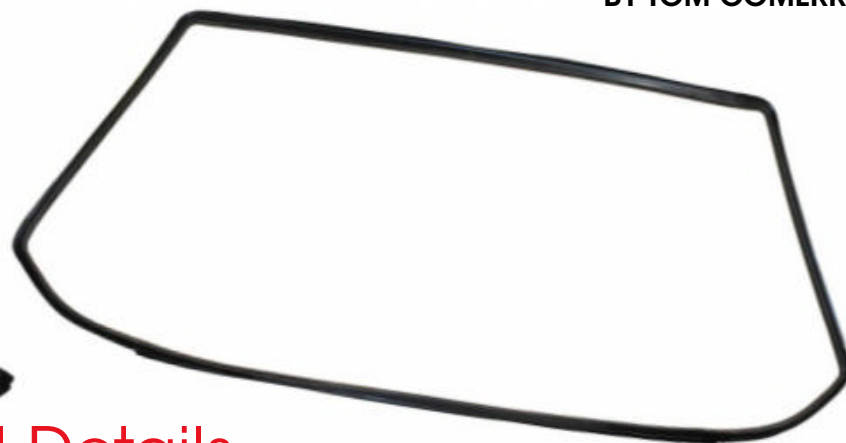


Manual Bushing R&R Set

SP TOOLS • 714-693-7666

WWW.SP TOOL.COM • \$450

This manual bushing removal and installation kit allows you to service a wide range of bushings without removing items like control arms or suspension components from your vehicle. In many cases, a conventional press cannot handle different dimensions, but this kit will save you time and aggravation as it comes with 22 cups and receivers for hundreds of size combinations. Each kit also comes with four acme thread spindles — 10, 12, 14, and 16mm — featuring ball bearing thrust washers to insure smooth operation. Demonstration videos are available at SP Tools' website.



Continental Details

STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS • 800-230-8101 • WWW.STEELERUBBER.COM

\$291.90 (WINDSHIELD GASKET); \$669.50/SET (ROOF RAIL KIT)

Some new weatherstripping parts and gaskets are available for the 1961-'63 Lincoln Continental that are properly molded for a factory fit. The windshield gasket (p/n 70-3860-50) mounts around the full perimeter of the front glass, and the corners are made for a precise fit to keep out noise and moisture. The convertible roof rail weatherstrip kit is a seven-piece set (p/n 70-3784-65) that includes the front bow weatherstrip, the left and right molded front, and middle and rear roof rails. Keep in mind that hardware is not included with the kit. Both parts are designed and replicated from factory originals, and made with brass cores for added durability and performance. The high-quality EPDM rubber used here also has higher ozone and UV resistance, and better overall performance than original rubber.



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WWW.AMSOIL.COM

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Tire Time

COKER TIRE COMPANY • 800-251-6336 • WWW.COKERTIRE.COM • \$202

New BFGoodrich tires are now available for authentic restorations. The 7.75-14 redline tire was a popular size used in the mid-1960s, and new examples are now available to ship. This bias-ply tire has a four-ply polyester cord construction with a 3/8-inch redline built into the mold. Used in Pontiac, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Dodge, and AMC applications among others from 1965 to '69, it was a popular option for the special trim levels, such as the GTO, 4-4-2, and Super Sport. The reproduction tires are period-correct. Each tire is DOT approved and is a great option for restoring your mid-'60s car.



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Malcolm Loughead

PERHAPS NOBODY BETTER

illustrates the overlap between early aviation and the automobile like Malcolm Loughead and his younger brother, Allan. Nor the variety of circumstance from which talent could arise in the early 20th century. Malcolm was born in 1886 to writer and newspaperwoman Flora Haines Loughead and her second husband, John Loughead. Allan was born three years later.

Neither Loughead brother attended school beyond the elementary level. After Flora separated from John, she and her children, including their older half-brother Victor, moved to Santa Barbara, California. In lieu of a formal education, the boys plunged themselves into a life of practical experimentation, including kites, gliders, and, in Malcolm's case, automobile brakes.

It was Victor who set the stage for Malcolm and Allan when he moved to Chicago to become an automobile mechanic for White Steam Car dealer James Plew. In 1904, Malcolm also went to work on Whites, but in San Francisco. Allan joined him in 1906—by 1909, he had a second career as a racing driver.

In 1910, Victor enticed his brothers east to work for Plew in the aviation business. Plew was a distributor for Curtiss and operated a flight school. Allan proved to be a somewhat natural pilot (he was self-taught, anyway) and the mechanical talents of all three brothers proved invaluable to maintaining, repairing, and sometimes entirely rebuilding the aircraft of the pre-World War I era.

After a fatal crash of one of his airplanes, Plew drew back from aviation for a time. Malcolm and Allan returned to San Francisco in 1912 and opened an auto-repair garage. They spent their spare time building a seaplane of their own design, which first flew in 1913. The brothers were unable to make a living with their airplane, and it was seized by their investor.

Even going so far as to go panning for gold, they managed to get the seaplane back out of hock just in time for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, held in San Francisco. Despite the tragic death of aviation pioneer Lincoln Beachey at the Exposition, the brothers were able



Malcolm Loughead (left) and his brother, Allan, at the controls of an early airplane.

to entice enough willing passengers to amass \$4,000 in the course of five months. Allan later claimed that Henry Ford had been offered the opportunity to go up but declined.


The brothers utilized this small fortune (over \$100,000, adjusted for inflation) to found the Loughead Aircraft Company in 1916. They encountered some early success, selling flying boats to the U.S. Navy during the First World War, but postwar cancellation of military contracts and a glut of surplus planes on the market served to undermine the Lougheads' company.

Malcolm took the impending failure of the aircraft firm as a sign to pursue his automotive projects. Tired of having the family name mispronounced "Log Head," he changed the spelling to "Lockheed" (Allan would follow suit in 1934) and founded the Lockheed Hydraulic Brake Company in 1919. Malcolm had gotten his first patent related to hydraulic brakes in 1917 and received several more between then and 1923. Hydraulic brakes first appeared on a production car with the 1921 Duesenberg. Rickenbacker famously introduced four-wheel hydraulic brakes to the mid-priced field in 1922, and it was clear they were becoming an industry standard.

Chalmers, the upscale brand associated with Maxwell, began utilizing

Lockheed patents for 1923, but the engineers at Maxwell-Chalmers weren't satisfied with the basic design. Their extensive redesigns were incorporated into the Lockheed design in an arrangement that permitted the automaker to avoid paying further licensing fees, while Lockheed could utilize the Maxwell-Chalmers improvements free of charge. Lockheed-Chrysler brakes, as they were now called, were standard on the new Chrysler when it was introduced in 1924 and formed the basis for Chrysler and Ford braking systems for many years to come.

Malcolm saw considerable success in the 1920s, building a plant in Detroit. He managed to keep Allan employed in lean times until they, along with Jack Northrop, formed Lockheed Aircraft Manufacturing Company in 1926. The Lockheed spelling was chosen thanks to the favorable image that Malcolm's brakes had in the public eye.

Malcolm sold his brake company to Bendix Corporation in the early 1930s and returned to California's Gold Country. He would die there, having exhausted his fortune, in 1958. Allan continued to be a figure in both real estate and the aircraft industry until his death in 1969, even returning as a consultant, in the mid-1950s, to the company he had helped launch. 

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Anglo Ford Anglia

ONCE VOLKSWAGEN OPENED THE doors, Nash soon followed with its Metropolitan, manufactured in partnership with Austin. Proof of its fine engineering is evident in the number of Metropolitans still on the road, and proof of its appeal are the prices bidders are willing to pay to drive home in a Met today.

Soon, the Renault Dauphine would arrive and become the bestselling four-door import in America. GM took notice and brought over Vauxhalls and Opels. Chrysler bought an interest in Simca and imported the Simca 1000. And Ford? Ford had a well-established presence in England and Germany, so it had a few models from which to choose, and the Anglia turned out to be a good choice.

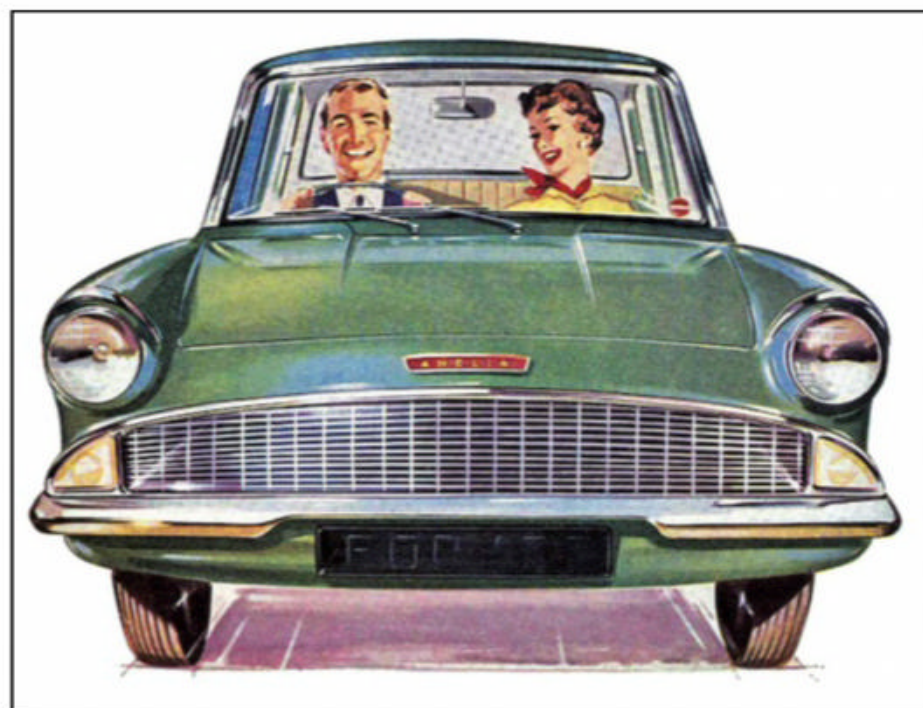
I remember seeing a few on the road when I was kid, and when I lived in Maryland a couple of years ago, there was an employee at the local organic market who used an original, unrestored Anglia as his daily driver. The car looked a little rough, but he told me it was dependable. My kind of car.

Tracing its roots back to 1939, the Ford Anglia was the smallest English Ford to date. The fourth iteration of the popular small saloon was introduced in 1959, designated the 105E. Losing much of its pre-war influence, the Anglia now benefited from American-inspired styling and looked more modern, with a continuous line from front to rear and a full-width angled grille. Ford's British designers favored the

smoother look of early 1950s Fords after wind tunnel testing rather than the angular Fords of the late 1950s. One late 1950s Ford influence was the rear-slanted backlite—the 1958 Lincolns in miniature. One concession was the small tailfins. In 1961, the saloon was joined by an Estate model (“station wagon” to Americans).

“A handsome front end from the neat, functional grille, sleek headlamp eyebrows, to the wide deep curved windscreen, its slim side pillars, low sweep of the roofline,” Ford expressed to potential buyers, adding, “And further flattery from the range of twelve brilliant body colours, with four dual-tone schemes to choose from as well.”

The best news was the introduction of a new engine under the bonnet. The



Kent engine was a 997-cc (61-cu.in.) OHV inline-four with oversquare cylinder bores. Though no speedster, the new engine was a welcome improvement over the old flat-head. In addition, the new Anglia featured a four-speed manual with synchromesh on all but first gear (in 1962, it became fully synchronized). Electric wipers also replaced vacuum units soon after this generation Anglia was put into production. The front end was suspended by MacPherson struts, providing excellent handling.

In October 1962, 24-year-old twins Tony and Michael Brookes competed in their Anglia in the *Monthéry Autodrome* in France and won six International Class G World Records, averaging 83.47 kph (51.87 mph). These events lasted 4-7 days and nights, with distances from 15,000-20,000 km (9,320-12,427 miles). The Anglia earned a reputation for ruggedness, as only tire changes were necessary. "A proven success that's here to stay. Proven in rallies, races and every day motoring," proclaimed one ad.

First-year sales approached 192,000, a new production record for Ford of England. A new Anglia saloon tested by Britain's *Motor* magazine achieved a top speed of 73.8 mph, 0-60 mph time of 26.9 seconds, and returned 41.2 miles per imperial gallon (34.3 U.S. mpg). The car could be yours for £610 plus £180 in taxes.

In 1961, the Escort and Squire were replaced by the 105E Anglia estate, and a new delivery van model was introduced. "Want a true thrift car?" Ford asked, and with its highly successful Ford Falcon on the market, still expressed the following: "'61 English Ford Line Anglia saves more than U.S. compacts, gives more value than other imports."

One Europe-exclusive model was the Anglia Sportsman with a continental kit. A flying turquoise Anglia 105E stars in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, and on the book cover as character Arthur Weasley's car. And I have a neighbor with a nice original 1961 Estate in two-tone green and chartreuse. He is the original owner, has no plans to part with it, and drives it every weekend.

So, what's out there?

In England, Anglias fetch around the equivalent of \$5,000-\$6,000. I have seen them at car shows, but not for sale, in the U.S. There's a 1965 Ford Anglia 250 Estate in Germany being offered for 9,000 Euros. There's a beautiful 1962 Anglia coupe in dark blue that I am afraid might follow me home from England. There's a nice 1966 Anglia in red and white that the owner is asking a bit much for, but I'm sure he would entertain a serious offer. 🐉

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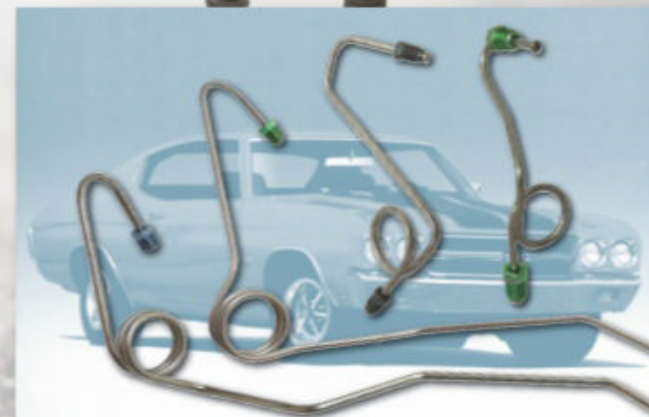
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Pontiac Chieftains

Through the Years: 1949 to 1958



BY DAVID CONWILL • IMAGES COURTESY GENERAL MOTORS

From 1949 to 1958, the Chieftain was the bread and butter of the Pontiac line. It participated in the transition of the marque from a stolid, slightly fancier Chevrolet (or cheaper Oldsmobile, viewed from the opposite perspective) to the Excitement Division that it would become from the 1960s on.

Pontiac re-entered the post-World War II market like most of its competitors—with slightly restyled 1942 models. Those cars were the A-body Torpedo on a 119-inch wheelbase and the upmarket B-body Streamliner on a 122-inch wheelbase. Power came from conventional L-head inline engines, either a 90-hp, 239-cu.in. six-cylinder or a 103-hp, 249-cu.in. eight-cylinder. For 1948, the GM Hydra-Matic automatic transmission would become optional on both lines and engines.

By 1949, the postwar seller's market, where cars were so scarce compared with demand that manufacturers felt virtually no competitive pressure, had begun to abate. Oldsmobile and Cadillac had received new bodies the previous year, and now it was the turn of the other GM divisions, Pontiac included. Up front, envelope designs prevailed, which GM called “flow-through-fender” styling, though the rear quarters retained the suggestion of the old pontoon fenders.

People were ready to forget the war, so militaristic names like “Torpedo” were out. Because the Pontiac division was named after the Michigan city where it was established, which in turn was named after a famous 18th century Odawa (Ottawa)

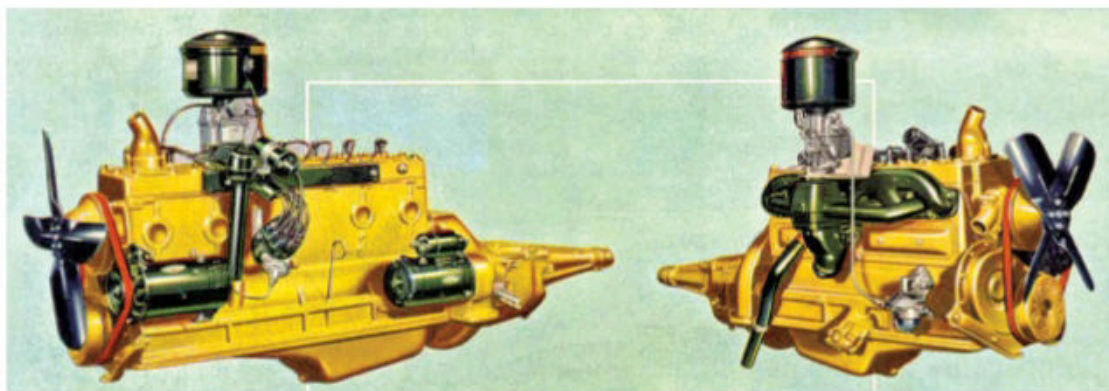
leader, an Indian-head hood ornament had been a Pontiac staple since 1926. It was only natural for the division to further embrace its Native American associations by calling its entry level line “Chieftain.” The luxury connotations of the Santa Fe *Chief* and *Super Chief* passenger trains certainly did not hurt the car's image either.

The Streamliner remained a B-body, but now shared its 120-inch wheelbase with the newly introduced Chieftain. Chieftains were distinguished by being about ¾-inch taller than Streamliners. The Streamliner was also now the less-expensive model, retailing for approximately \$20 under the equivalent Chieftain. The big distinction was that Streamliners used fastback bodies while Chieftains came in only notchback styles, including the convertible. Wagons remained Streamliners as they had in 1948.

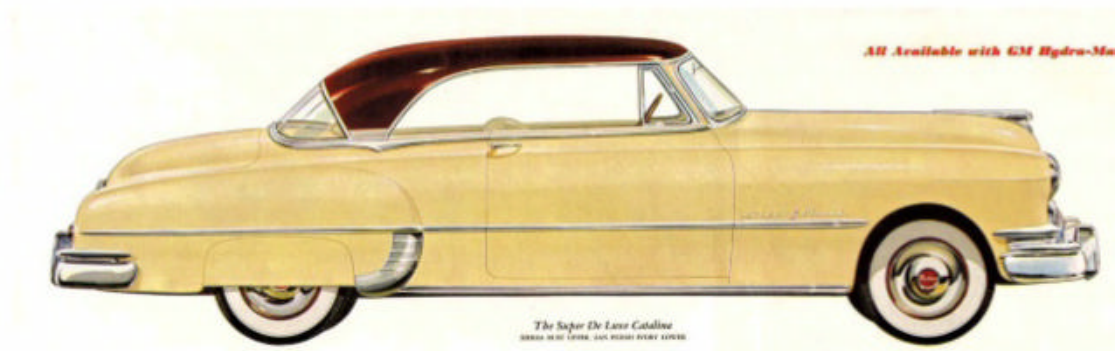
Within each model buyers could choose not only the engine and transmission, but series. To the already elegant standard styling, those who opted for the De Luxe series received extra trim like belt moldings, chrome gravel guards, and plated headlamp rings. Though it was not part of the car's official nomenclature and denoted nothing other



For 1949, the Chieftain appeared alongside the older Streamliner model. Streamliner claimed the two fastbacks (top), the wagons (fifth from top and second from bottom), and the sedan delivery (bottom).



Above: For the 1949-'54 model years, Pontiacs came with flathead engines designed in the 1930s, with either six- or eight-cylinders. Right: As in 1949, the 1950 Chieftain model bodies consisted of everything that was not a fastback, station wagon, or sedan delivery—including the Catalina hardtop (below).



than Pontiac's memorable waterfall styling motif, prominent Silver Streak lettering was applied to all Pontiacs.

Despite dramatically different styling and the adjusted wheelbases, 1949 Pontiacs were not vastly different from their 1948 predecessors. Up front was still coil-sprung independent front suspension with kingpins, under hood were essentially the same six- and eight-cylinder engines (though Hydra-Matic cars got a 3-horsepower boost thanks to a higher compression ratio), and in the rear was an open-drive rear axle suspended from leaf springs. Aside from a longer nose, different trim and grilles, and the mechanical variation, Pontiacs remained essentially fancier versions of the six-cylinder Chevrolet.

The 1950-'52 cars retained the same basic styling as was introduced in 1949 and essentially the same engines and drive-lines as well. However, for 1950, the straight-eight was enlarged to 268 cubic inches, a displacement it would retain through 1954. Big news came in 1950, when Pontiac received a pillarless hardtop body style. What Chevrolet called the Bel Air was called Catalina by Pontiac. For its debut year, the Catalina was available

with either the six- or eight-cylinder engine, but only as a special stand-alone subseries within the Chieftain De Luxe series, called Super De Luxe. Super De Luxe Catalinas came finished only in San Pedro Ivory, Sierra Rust, or a two-tone combination of those. Rust-and-ivory two-tone leather upholstery carried that color scheme inside.

The next year, 1951, marked Pontiac Division's 25th. The "Silver Anniversary" Chieftains weren't much changed from previous years. The Catalina hardtop became available in the Chieftain De Luxe series. The Super De Luxe Catalina returned, still with either a six- or eight-cylinder. This year they were distinguished by special trim on the C-pillars and a blue-and-ivory interior, upholstered either in a leather/cloth combination or all-leather. The interior of the De Luxe Catalina was similar to other Chieftain De Luxe bodies.

Pontiac did not keep production records for body styles at this time, just for chassis production (six-cylinder versus eight-cylinder), but it was becoming clear that the public had fallen out of love with the 1930s-type fastback, and the Chieftain,



The demise of fastback body styles after the 1951 model year meant that all bodies, including the station wagons and sedan delivery, were now badged as Chieftains. The Streamliner model was no more, and no other model would arrive until the 1954 Star Chief.



New styling arrived for the 1953 model year, which was a strong one for Pontiac—the 1953 Chieftain Eight would be a brand champion for the division. Both eights and sixes remained available in myriad body styles, including two Catalina hardtops—De Luxe and Custom.

despite its higher price, was rapidly becoming the dominant model at Pontiac.

Four-door fastback bodies were dropped first, not returning for 1951. For 1952, the Streamliner disappeared entirely, leaving Chieftain the only model. As a result of this move, the station wagon bodies were now sold as Chieftains.

Model year 1953 marked the best-selling year for the Chieftain Eight. The 1949 chassis, suitably refined after four years in production, was stretched 2 inches for a 122-inch wheelbase. Styling was squared up with one-piece windshields and wrap-around rear glass. Emblematic of the kind of fine detail that distinguished Pontiac in this time period, cars painted Caravan Blue, Spruce Green, Marathon Grey, and black had red Pontiac nameplates in front. Other colors received black nameplates—you couldn't get that kind of thing at any price in a Chevrolet.

A dressy version of the Catalina reappeared, but now it was called the Chieftain Custom Six or Eight instead of Chieftain Super De Luxe. Customs were available in Milano Ivory, Laurel Green, or some combination of the two. As with the old Super De Luxe, leather upholstery (in combination with nylon) distinguished the Custom interior.

The six-cylinder engine gained a whopping 16 horsepower

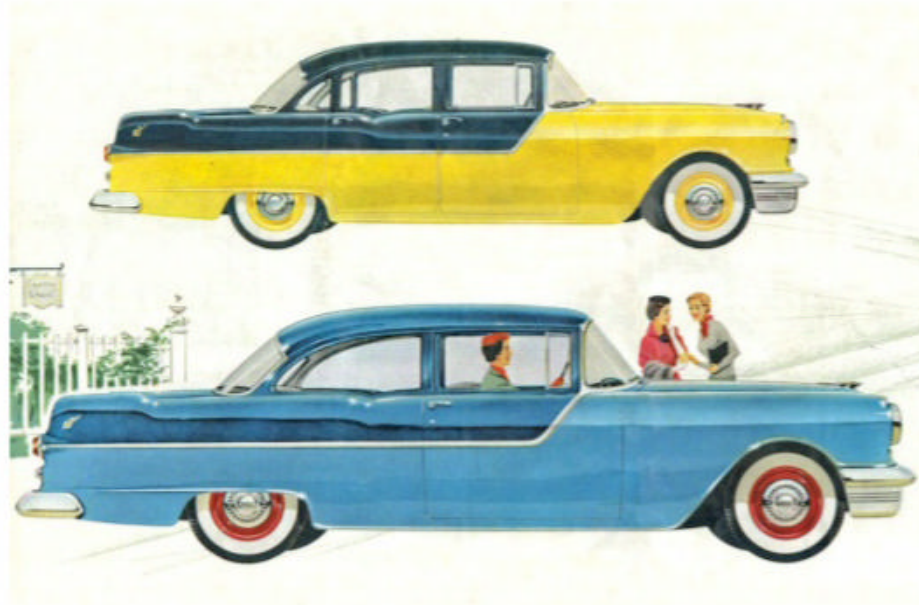
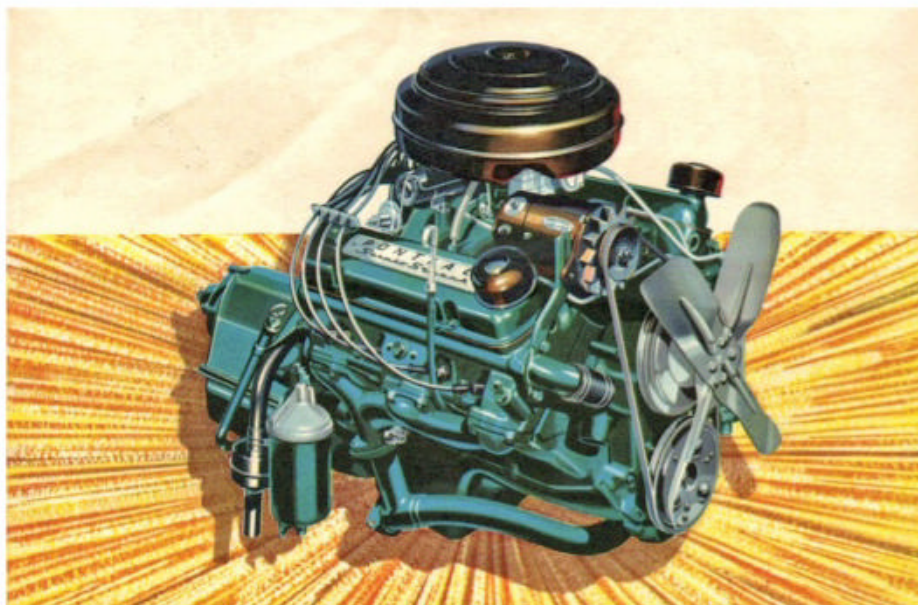
for 1953 (115 or 118 hp, depending on transmission), adding further to an advantage some said it held over the 118/122-hp straight-eight due to its lighter weight. That may have been true in lighter cars, but torquey eights were still favored for their ability to propel heavier body styles. The increased horsepower in the six and lack of change to the eight probably resulted from internal delays in the development of the V-8 engine, which was scheduled to debut for 1953 and was even accommodated in the revisions to the chassis design, but was held back due to the death of General Manager Arnold Lenz in a car/train accident.

A fire in the Livonia, Michigan, plant building Hydra-Matic transmissions resulted in another interruption of a key component for Pontiac. While Cadillac and Oldsmobile made do with the Buick Dynaflo, over 17,000 Pontiacs were assembled with an open-drive version of the Chevrolet Powerglide mated to the Pontiac engine.

Lenz's death pushed back the debut of the V-8 to 1955, but it did not delay the introduction of a new model range for 1954 called Star Chief. The Star Chief came exclusively with eight-cylinder power, and it carried an extra 11 inches of frame at the rear, resulting in a 124-inch wheelbase and a trunk noticeably longer than that of the Chieftain. Star Chief didn't take any body



Styling for 1954 was derived from 1953, but with fresh trim. The Chieftain model was now joined by a pricier, extended-length Star Chief, which initially had only Catalina, convertible, and sedan models. Chieftain retained its own convertible and Catalinas.



The 1955 model year brought brand-new styling and the long-awaited V-8, which was delayed from its planned 1953 introduction. Chieftain retained its shorter, 120-inch wheelbase, and was now divided into 860 and 870, instead of the previous Special and De Luxe.

styles from Chieftain, however, and the full gamut of body styles remained available as Six or Eight and as Chieftain Special (the new name for what had just been the base-level Chieftain) or Chieftain De Luxe. Even the Chieftain Custom Catalina returned with its all-leather interior option.

When the V-8 arrived as the exclusive engine for 1955, it did so along with a striking new body. The Chieftain retained its 122-inch wheelbase but instead of Special and De Luxe designating the price-and-equipment dichotomy between the two lines, inexpensive Chieftains were now called Chieftain 860, and the step between those and the long-wheelbase Star Chief was dubbed Chieftain 870.

The combination of the 200-hp, 287-cu.in. "Power Pack" four-barrel V-8 and a 3,586-pound Chieftain 860 two-door sedan would have been potent in 1955 (two-barrel engines made 173 hp with the column-shifted three-speed, Hydra-Matic engines made 180 hp, and the manual-transmission version of the Power Pack made 193 hp). The Chieftain Custom Catalina did not return, so those not interested in the Star Chief's extra wheelbase had to make do with the Chieftain 870 Catalina. Another casualty of the change to new bodies was the convertible, now exclusive to the Star Chief line.

A special exception to the Chieftain/Star Chief wheelbase assignments came in the form of the Star Chief Custom Safari, a Nomad-like two-door station wagon that was trimmed as a Star Chief but rode the shorter Chieftain chassis. This foreshadowed future roles for the Chieftain chassis underpinning more glamorous models.

The 1956 Chieftain greatly resembled its 1955 equivalent, save for a new four-door Catalina body style arriving alongside the two-door. The bore of the V-8 had been enlarged, yielding a 317-cu.in. engine that now made 192 hp in its two-barrel, low-compression form, as paired with the stick shift. That same engine with the Hydra-Matic gained a full point of compression, to 8.9, yielding 205 hp. The four-barrel engine, now standard in the Star Chief, made 216 hp with a 7.9:1 compression ratio and 227 hp with the higher ratio. As though this weren't enough, in March 1956, Pontiac released a dual four-barrel engine with 10:1 compression that was rated at 285 hp.

At some point in the 1956 model year, factory documentation began referring to the Chieftain 870 series as "Super Chief," a bit of nomenclature that would be formalized in 1957 when the Chieftain 860 dropped its numerical qualifier and became the only vestige of the Chieftain name in the line. The Chieftain



While Chieftain had lost its convertible and Custom Catalina bodies for 1955, for 1956 it gained a four-door Catalina body shared with Star Chief (and Chevrolet, where it was called "Sport Sedan"). The Pontiac V-8 jumped from 287- to 317-cu.in., making up to 285 hp.



Pontiac reshuffled its names again for 1957, with the former 870-series now called Super Chief and the old 860 now called simply Chieftain. The plainer, lightweight Chieftain was an ideal home for the Tri-Power engines that were introduced in December 1956.

could be had as a four-door sedan, a four-door Catalina hardtop, a two-door sedan, a two-door Catalina hardtop, a four-door station wagon, or a two-door station wagon. Super Chiefs and the Star Chief Custom wagons continued to share the 122-inch Chieftain wheelbase.

For the third time in as many years, the Pontiac V-8 had been enlarged, now with a longer crankshaft stroke to 347-cu.in. The Chieftain 347 came as a two-barrel/8.5:1-compression-ratio engine in its base, manual transmission form, or a two-barrel/10:1-compression-ratio engine with Hydra-Matic, making 227 hp and 252 hp, respectively. Stepping up to the optional four-barrel engine from the Super Chief and Star Chief brought those numbers up to 244 hp and 270 hp.

Pontiac was not through yet, however. The arrival of Bunkie Knudsen as general manager reinvigorated the division after the chaos that followed in the wake of Arnold Lenz's death. Knudsen's first moves were to remove the longstanding Silver Streak styling details, or "chrome suspenders" as some had referred to them, and to direct his engineers to continue exploring the performance potential of the new V-8.

In December 1956, Pontiac announced two electrifying changes for a division that had spent most of its existence as a mere stepping stone between Chevrolet and Oldsmobile. One was the Bonneville convertible—a special sports model in the tradition of the 1953 Oldsmobile Fiesta. The Bonneville was a convertible on the Star Chief platform sporting a fuel-injected version of the 347 V-8 rated at 315 hp. Only 630 Bonneville were built.

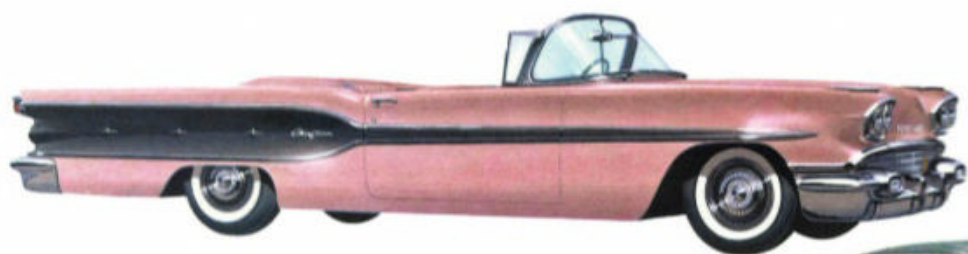
While the Bonneville name would become a legend in the automotive world, it was the triple-carburetor Pontiac V-8, rather than the short-lived fuel-injected engine, that would make it so.

Available in any 1957 Pontiac, including the lightest Chieftain, the tri-carb 347 engine came in three flavors: 290-hp Hydra-Matic form for the average motorist, and two NASCAR-spec engines, both making 317 hp. The manual transmission version of the NASCAR engine was not only as powerful as the Hydra-Matic version, it came with a dual-point distributor not available with the automatic transmission.

For 1958 Bonneville dropped the fuel-injected engine and became its own model line, with both coupe and convertible body styles, above Star Chief but built on the Chieftain's shorter wheelbase. This was a signal that sporty, rather than luxurious, was the way of the future at Pontiac. The Chieftain, however, would be handing off the baton to the Catalina for that part of the story. Like Bel Air in 1953, Catalina was becoming a designation for an entire model. Hardtops would just be called hardtops from now on.

As a suitable farewell gesture for the Chieftain lineup that had been the stalwart through the years of Pontiac's transition from minor luxury to performance, the line was once again graced with a convertible for its final year. Chieftain convertibles were fancier than other 1958 Chieftains, with extra trim and a deck lid shared with the Bonneville. They were also the second rarest 1958 Pontiac Chieftain, their 7,359-car production total coming in just ahead of the 5,417 Pontiac Chieftain two-door wagons.

The Pontiac Chieftain has never gotten the glamour of its successor, the Catalina, which covered itself in drag racing glory in the 1960s. Nor is it even the most prestigious Pontiac of this time. It is, however, a prime example of GM at its pinnacle in the post-war era. Every Chieftain is a handsome, rugged, straightforward car, and we'd be thrilled to drive anything from the basest six-cylinder Chieftain Special to a De Luxe Eight convertible, or one of the oh-so-special Super De Luxe or Custom Catalinas. 🐾



With a de-emphasis on Native American themes, the final outing of the Chieftain model came for 1958, when the base-model Pontiac regained a convertible body. "Catalina" would replace it.





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Worthwhile Austerity

The simplicity of this 1950 Pontiac Chieftain Six is its charm

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

They made less expensive 1950 Pontiacs than this one, but not many. A Chieftain Six two-door sedan like our feature car had a base price of \$1,694. Only the three-passenger Business Coupe came cheaper, at \$1,571. Somehow the original buyer of this car managed to avoid most of the myriad temptations in the Pontiac order book

that year, including De Luxe trim (which would have bumped the base price up to \$1,789), Hydra-Matic Drive (\$159), or the 108- or 113-hp straight-eight engines.

It's enticing to speculate just why the first owner opted for this car. Was it a loss-leader ordered by a dealer to lure in cheapskate customers in the hopes of an upsell? Often those cars

lingered on lots for a long time until finally finding a home at the end of the model year. Sometimes, though, cars like this were ordered by the buyer. Their motivation was usually the fundamental quality that a division like Pontiac represented in comparison with a cheaper car like a Chevrolet.

Recently there was an internet trend among young car



enthusiasts (yes, they do exist) called the “My Car as a Villain Challenge.” The idea was to upload a photo of your car plus the bad-guy of a song, story, or film that you felt it most closely resembled. Well, traditionally when we think of 1950 Pontiacs as movie characters, we recall the benign, light-colored convertible driven by Jimmy Stewart in *Anatomy of a Murder*.

The 1950 Chieftain Six on these pages is about as far from Paul Biegler’s Chieftain De Luxe Eight convertible as you can get and still be a ’50 Pontiac. In fact, it put us more in mind of a steely-eyed Lee Marvin type. It’s solidly overbuilt for whatever punishment the open road metes out, but without an ounce of extraneous frippery (not even overhead valves) to distract from its essential character as transportation. Perhaps it wouldn’t be an outright villain, but sort of anti-hero.

In fact, it’s easy to look at the car featured here, which is a part of The NB Center for American Automotive Heritage in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and owned by Nicola Bulgari, and imagine a hardboiled private eye at the wheel—one more like the Continental Op than Sam Spade. Not full-on Mike Hammer territory, mind you, but perhaps a kind of ascetic Philip Marlowe.

If not an outright detective, perhaps a jaded and cynical traveling salesman (though salesmen generally preferred the Business Coupe, for whom they were designed) with his own

set of morals, traveling the West and dispensing vigilante justice when not demonstrating product samples. Sounds perfect for early TV, in fact, which was just finding itself as a medium when this car was produced. A full six-million households had television in 1950, but radio still dominated serialized storytelling as it had since the late 1920s.

Still, if that original owner wanted to tune in *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*; *The Story of Dr. Kildare*; or the weekly broadcast of *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, he or she would have to be at home. Whoever ordered this one didn’t specify the seven-tube Chieftain radio and mast antenna. Instead, the space below the centrally located speaker grille in the dash is covered by a handsome, Streamline Moderne delete plate. Don’t expect to see one installed any time soon, either. Mr. Bulgari is a fan of unrestored cars, Keith Flickinger, curator of The NB Center, reminds us. “We are about historic preservation.”

With only 10,001.0 miles on the odometer as of this writing, this car is incredibly well preserved. It was sourced from the second owner, who only had it for a brief (2006 to 2013) time before selling it on. Sadly, under the terms of that sale, the second owner wasn’t permitted to disclose much about the original history, so exactly why this car was ordered the way it is may remain a mystery. What can be told from close inspection



Centrally located controls and instruments make observations and adjustments by the driver easy. Although a screen is in place, there is neither speaker nor radio aboard. An aftermarket Signal-Stat turn-signal switch was a wise period addition.



is that aside from some selective repainting with original-type black lacquer and the replacement of the wiring harness going to the headlamps, it's all original—including the painted headlamp rings, the rubber stone guards, and “little dingers, here and there” in the bright trim.

Entering an unrestored gem is always a step back in time, and Mr. Bulgari's is no exception. Base Chieftains received broad, flat expanses of cloth upholstery on their “wide, comfortable seats with restfully contoured cushions” that was comfortable and durable if not especially fancy, though pinstripes certainly add to the visual appeal. The seats in this car are doubly protected, thanks to clear-plastic slipcovers that repel stains and abrasion while still allowing the pattern to be seen. Pontiac offered something similar as a factory-authorized accessory, but in washable nylon. Adjustments for taller or shorter drivers are easily made via a small lever on the driver's side of the front seat.

Another period-correct aftermarket addition, and a wise one, considering what the modern driver expects, are Signal-Stat directional signals. Again, while this was something the factory offered, it was not uncommon to find handy owners (and given the prevalence of DIY magazines in the postwar era, that was likely a number of people) who wanted to save a few dollars by adding their own accessories.

Surprisingly, unlike the base models in less expensive lines,

all Pontiacs received quality interior touches like armrests (front and rear—complete with integrated ashtrays), assist cords, and folding interior sun visors. Even on a standard Chieftain, while rubber covers the floor in front of the front seats, the rear passenger area is carpeted. Also shared with De Luxe Chieftains is the jukebox-like instrument panel. Flanking the speedometer are the battery indicator and fuel gauge to the left, oil pressure and temperature gauge to the right. To see them the driver peers through the steering wheel. The one in this car, sporting a horn ring, is the De Luxe version, which was available as a separate option.

While turning the key was rapidly becoming the standard in American cars, Pontiac still utilized a separate starter button—a nice feature for those who like to spin the engine over a few times before energizing the ignition. A welcome attribute when driving after dark, the ignition switch is illuminated when the light switch is pulled out. The keys themselves will be familiar to anyone who has driven a GM car built before 1969: The octagonal head operates the door locks and the ignition, the oval head locks the glovebox and opens the trunk.

Speaking of security, Pontiac permitted easy locking of the doors from the outside. One could either use the aforementioned key to lock the doors once they were closed, or the locks could be set from the inside. If setting the locks without the key, it is necessary to hold the door-release button down slightly while



Clear plastic seat covers, apparently installed when the car was new, have preserved the pinstriped cloth upholstery. The center of the De Luxe steering wheel commemorates Pontiac Division's namesake. Spare fuses reside near the underdash fusebox.



swinging shut the doors. Simply slam the door and the lock will pop back open—helping to avoid accidental locking of the keys in the car.

Similarly, an interior hood release keeps unwelcome hands out of the engine bay, making sure that your plug wires and air cleaner will be intact and functional when you return. Of course, a secondary catch at the nose of the car keeps the hood from flying open if the release knob is tugged inadvertently. To the left of the hood release is the cane handle that controls the parking brake—an important feature in 1950 as even Hydra-Matic-equipped cars didn't come with a "park" position yet, to say nothing of three-speeds like our feature car.

That three-speed is a pretty distinctive characteristic of this Chieftain. Pontiac heavily promoted that it was the most inexpensive car in the GM lineup to come with Hydra-Matic, but Keith reports that the six-cylinder with the three-speed is a great combination from a performance standpoint. "Fast, peppy" he says of driving the Chieftain, "It's extremely fast and it has really good brakes."

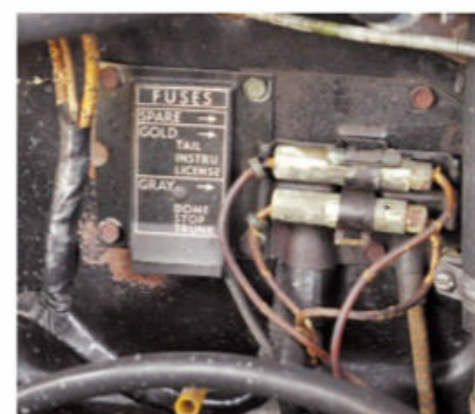
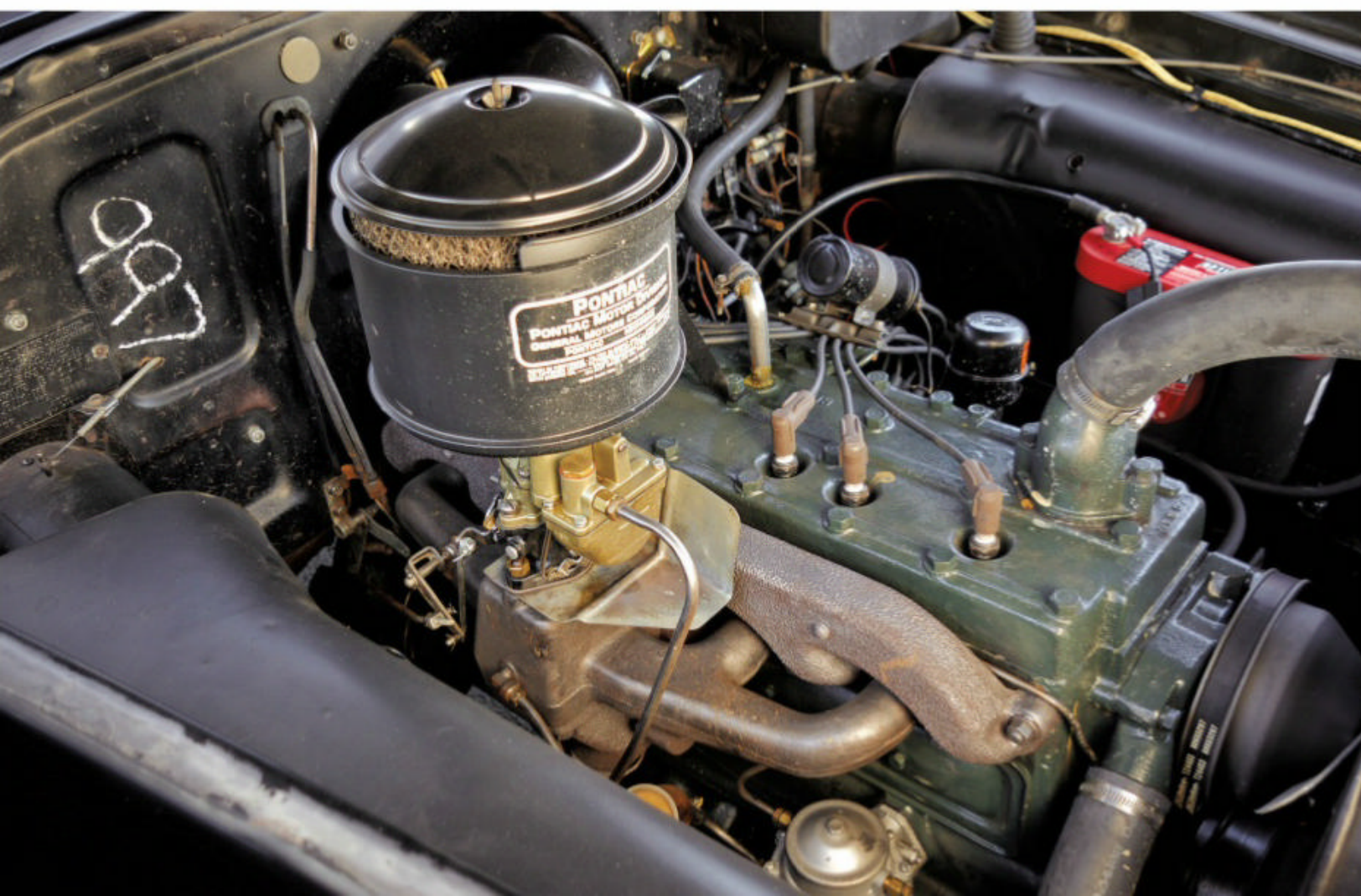
Like every car at The NB Center, the Pontiac is kept on a battery tender and gassed up with racing fuel to be ready at a moment's notice. That means it's easy to jump from the Pontiac and into something like the 1950 Oldsmobile 88 in the collection, which, despite its Rocket V-8, Keith says doesn't accelerate

like the Pontiac. Instead "it groans"—something he attributes to the Oldsmobile having Hydra-Matic drive and its extremely steep first gear.

That speed may also be attributable to the six-cylinder. With the standard 6.5:1 compression ratio, the 239.2-cu.in. flathead made 90 hp at 3,400 rpm. The optional 235-cu.in. straight-six in the comparable Chevrolet also made 90 hp, but it only came with the Dynaflo-like Powerglide automatic (which didn't actually do any shifting on its own until 1953). The 90-hp, 216-cu.in. straight-six that came standard in Chevrolets was splash oiled and not known for incredible durability.

Then there's that Oldsmobile. The 1950 Oldsmobile engine displaced 303-cu.in. and made 135 hp at 3,600 rpm. The comparable body style to this Pontiac weighed 3,490 pounds versus the 3,394 pounds of our feature car—and that doesn't include the weight of the heavy, cast-iron Hydra-Matic in the Oldsmobile. Clearly, intentional or not, the Pontiac Six was something of a sleeper.

That, of course, brings us back to intentions. Nobody knows how or why this car came to be, but everyone agrees they're glad it did and that it has survived to illustrate a little-remembered aspect of flathead-era Pontiac history. In a way, it being an enigma is nice, we can all project our own story onto it. Hats off to Keith and Mr. Bulgari for keeping it around this way and letting us take a look. 🏎️



This Chieftain is so original that the factory chalk marks remain on the firewall. The presence of a late-model battery is a reminder that this car is kept ready to go. The 239-cu.in. flathead six is a good performer—especially with a manual gearbox.



Remarkable Ranchero

Ford's 1965 Ranchero Deluxe: A buckets-and-bed Mustang that could haul its own hay

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

Ford's Falcon Ranchero had many forebearers. The first Model T and Model A pickups consisted of a shortened car body with a separate bed mounted in the rear; a rare domestic 1931 Model A Deluxe pickup had smooth bed sides. The Australian market saw Ford launch a coupe utility, or "ute," with integrated bed as early as 1934. Car-based trucks were far more refined than a standard truck, but in an era



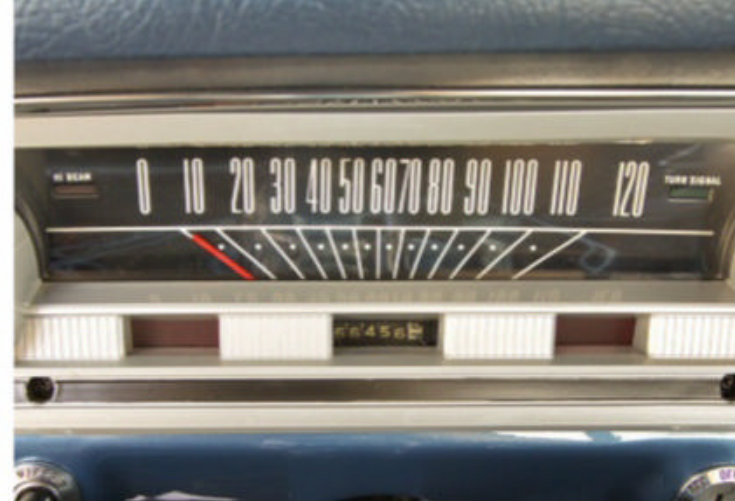
before our current pickup-as-fashion-statement environment, they simply cost too much for a self-employed working man who needed a work truck. Australia loved car-based haulers, but the concept didn't initially fly in the States: Studebaker's Coupe Express lasted from 1937 to '39, while Hudson's "Big Boy" pickups launched in 1939 and ceased production in 1947.

Another American-built coupe utility didn't show up until 1957. Ford's original Ranchero was based on the fullsize, two-door Ranch Wagon (and its cousin, the Courier sedan delivery). A 1957 Ranchero cost 10 percent more than a comparable F-100, but in the still-exploding postwar market, Ranchero was different enough to make an impact and Ford built 45,842 units over three model years. That was a significant-enough piece of the new-car market that Chevrolet would launch its own Spanish-named blend of passenger-car comfort plus pickup-truck utility within two years.

Now 1960 was the year of the compact car in Detroit. Small cars were suddenly in vogue—the ever-increasing presence of Volkswagens and Renaults on American shores was one hint, and Rambler's stratospheric sales rise during

the recession of 1958 laid the issue bare. Every Detroit manufacturer had something compact on the boil, and every one of them approached the issue slightly differently. Chevrolet gave us the Corvair, with its air-cooled flat-six engine in the rear, and Chrysler gave us the Valiant, which had a conventional driveline and controversial styling. Stolid Ford gave us the Falcon: a $\frac{3}{4}$ -scale, unit-bodied Ford Custom that was conservatively styled, largely unadorned, and a huge sales hit—bettering both Corvair and Valiant in the sales race.

Part of the Falcon's sales success—if only a small part—must be laid at the feet of the Ranchero. As in previous years, the car-with-a-pickup-bed was based on the two-door station wagon. Ranchero's bed was 6 feet long, 4½ feet wide, and 14½ inches deep (good for 30 cubic feet of usable load space), with a tailgate 28 inches off the ground and a side-load height of just 39 inches. Load capacity was a generous 800 pounds—a full 100 pounds more than the full-sized Chevrolet El Camino. It satisfied a small but growing need for compact fuel-efficient trucks. Chevrolet offered a Corvair Greenbrier pickup, but it had a driver-forward van-like cab,



Sprint-spec bucket seats and console made it into just 990 Falcon Rancheros for 1965. The console doubles as an armrest. Column-shifted Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic allows fuss-free forward motion.



cost more, and wasn't as fuel-efficient as the miserly six-cylinder Falcon Ranchero. Ford's little half-car half-truck was good for nearly 21,000 sales per season from 1960 to '62, and when Chevrolet put the El Camino on hiatus at the end of 1960, Falcon Ranchero had no real competition.

Starting in 1963, Ford rapidly ramped up Ranchero's relevance. For starters, there were two flavors of Ranchero: Standard (body code 66A) and Deluxe (66B). The Deluxe package was roughly equivalent to a Falcon Futura: It added brightwork around the window frames, the back of the cab, and the top of the pickup bed; a door-activated dome lamp; a cigarette lighter; and an additional choice of black or red vinyl upholstery. Just six months later, for 1963½, the entire Falcon line blossomed, and Ranchero benefitted as well. Hot-rodders had long seen the performance potential of the light, lithe Falcon line, and always wondered how to cram more power between the shock towers. Ford eventually did the work for them, and launched the V-8-powered Falcon. The small Windsor V-8, launched in the 1962 midsize Fairlane at 221-cu.in., was enlarged to 260-cu.in. (and 164 hp with a two-barrel carburetor) by 1963.

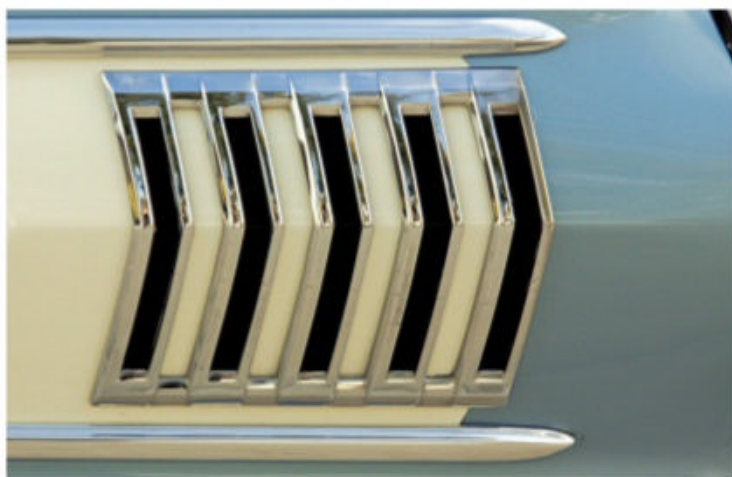
The bigger engine also required Ford to beef up the Falcon's underpinnings. The skinny four-lug, 13-inch wheels were replaced with heavier-duty 14-inch, five-lug wheels on the V-8 Ranchero. Drum brakes increased from 9 to 10 inches front and rear. Torque boxes were welded in at the front side rail/cowl intersection, plus side rails and rockers were made of heavier-gauge steel. A total of 18,533 Falcon Rancheros were built for 1963, with the standard trucklet outselling the Deluxe model by 2:1.

For the 1964 model year, the entire Falcon line was

redesigned inside and out. Sharper, more aggressive styling was in vogue; the pointy front fender edges and the stamped-in side contours that narrowed at the nose gave the feeling of rapid forward motion. The signature round taillamps suggested a jet aircraft's glowing afterburners. The indication of speed was very much in tune with the times, and also fed into Ford's "Total Performance" campaign.

Midway through 1964, a seismic shift happened at Ford: The long-hooded, short-decked Mustang transfixed a nation, creating showroom stampedes nationwide. Mustang used the humble Falcon for its underpinnings, and suddenly the quiet evolution of the Falcon (and all of its myriad versions), from economical wonder to stealthy performance machine, was better understood: It was a dry run for Lee Iacocca's rebodied sport coupe. While Mustang flourished, many compacts took sales tumbles. Corvair fell 25 percent in 1964. Chevy II sales were nearly cut *in half*. While Valiant remained about even, the sporty Plymouth Barracuda was nearly smothered under a rock in the briny deep. Falcon sales were not immune, and were down 30 percent year to year. And so, the Ranchero's final sales figure for the season, with 17,081 sold for the year (9,916 standard models and 7,165 Deluxe models), somehow felt like it could have been worse.

For 1965, little was changed on the Falcon or Ranchero lines: just grilles, paint, and trim were updated. The 1964 260-cu.in. V-8 was set aside for the new-for-1965 289-cu.in. engine, making 200 hp with a two-barrel Autolite carburetor. The 289-cu.in. displacement was an instant legend in the Mustang, and was made available throughout the Falcon line as well. The two-barrel 289, an engine that Ford called "Challenger" in its factory literature, was rated the same 200 hp as it



The factory-original C-code 200-hp 289 has been treated to a few mid-1960s-style over-the-counter “Cobra Kits,” including a dual exhaust conversion, a four-barrel intake and carburetor, a more aggressive camshaft, finned aluminum valve covers, and an open element air cleaner.



was in the Mustang. Also available: choice of four-on-the-floor or C4 Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic transmission. This would be the last year for the Falcon-based sedan delivery, and the last year for the Falcon Ranchero that shared its platform.

Falcon was growing up rapidly, thanks to the Mustang forcing things along, and that meant Falcon took all of its versions upscale with it. Deluxe versions, and all the profit brought in by the extra brightwork and options, were increasingly popular. One popular option had eluded the Ranchero up through 1965, however: bucket seats. For all of the Falcon Sprints that had been treated to bucket seats and a console over time, somehow the Ranchero hadn't been allowed to have the same treatment. Finally, in 1965, Ford delineated a special body code—66H—for bucket-seat-equipped Rancheros: A total of 990 were built. The seats and console that appeared in the Sprint were now in the Ranchero, but for one year only. Even so, it's hard to imagine this particular development without the Mustang coming and

nursing it along.

This example is owned by Anne Lumia of Mesa, Arizona. According to her, “My husband, Jim, has a couple of old cars—an R-code 427 Fairlane and a Mustang Mach 1 his dad bought new—and I decided that I wanted a classic car, too.” Jim offered to build a car to her liking, but ... “I wanted my car before I turned 90 and gave up my license.”

They went to look at a Falcon Sprint locally, only to discover that it had been sold; the Lumias were about to go home disappointed when the seller pointed to this Ranchero in the garage and mentioned that it was available, too. “Which was good for me,” Anne said. “I liked it better anyway.” This example, Silver Blue and Wimbledon White, is the result of a meticulous 10-year restoration by a knowledgeable and active Phoenix-based member of the Falcon Club of America. He was the second owner. “The seller/restorer was 83 years old, and he didn't need the money, but his kids had no interest in the cars. He also restored motorcycles. And he figured he needed



Despite its diminutive size, the Ranchero could hold up to 800 pounds in its 6-foot bed. The special Ranchero badge, the chromed stylized steer horns in a red circle, graced the top of the bed.



the room, and he was still able to restore bikes better than he could cars; he didn't want to wait and have his kids deal with it." That it was one of the 990 bucket-seat cars, admittedly, was something of a happy accident.

The restoration has taken a couple of liberties with the source material. The drivetrain uses the matching-numbers C-code two-barrel 289 block and cylinder heads; the builder added a correctly date-coded four-barrel intake and a Summit-branded Autolite four-barrel carb. Dual exhaust with correct factory manifolds was added, as was a Ford NOS four-barrel 289 camshaft. Ribbed Cobra valve covers and an open-element air cleaner complete the underhood modifications. For those who wrinkle their nose at the unoriginality, recall that Ford itself offered and advertised over-the-counter "Cobra Kits" for 1960s Ford owners to do exactly the same thing to their own vehicles. It won't win Anne a fistful of pink slips, but it's enough to keep things interesting.

Falcon Ranchero sales rebounded to 19,263 total in 1965, broken down thusly: 10,539 standard Falcon Rancheros and 8,724 Deluxe models ... 990 of which had bucket seats. Rising sales in the face of Mustang dominance sound healthy—

except Chevrolet's El Camino had been reborn on the midsize Chevelle platform, and sold more than 32,000 units in 1964, with another 34,000 in 1965. Ranchero continued—onto the new-for-1966 platform (it was not called Falcon Ranchero anymore) and utilized the midsize line until its passing at the end of 1979.

As for the Falcon, it's hard to imagine the Mustang having been born without its DNA smeared all over it; Ford resisted putting Sprint components in the Ranchero for so long that it might have never happened had the Mustang-led compact sporting revolution not taken place. If putting bucket seats in the Ranchero is a small but intriguing way of paying it back through the family line, well, that's okay. 🐮

owner's view



We went to look at a Falcon Sprint and the seller also had this Ranchero, and I liked it better than the Sprint. My favorite thing about the Ranchero is its styling—the color and the chrome, and I love trucks, so I'm happy that it's part truck. If I had to change one thing about it, it would be the power. It's good as it is, but I'd always like more power.

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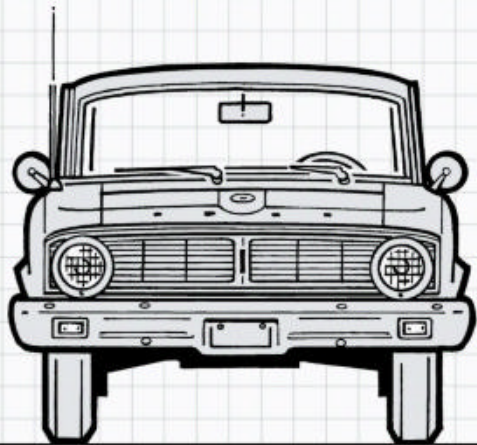
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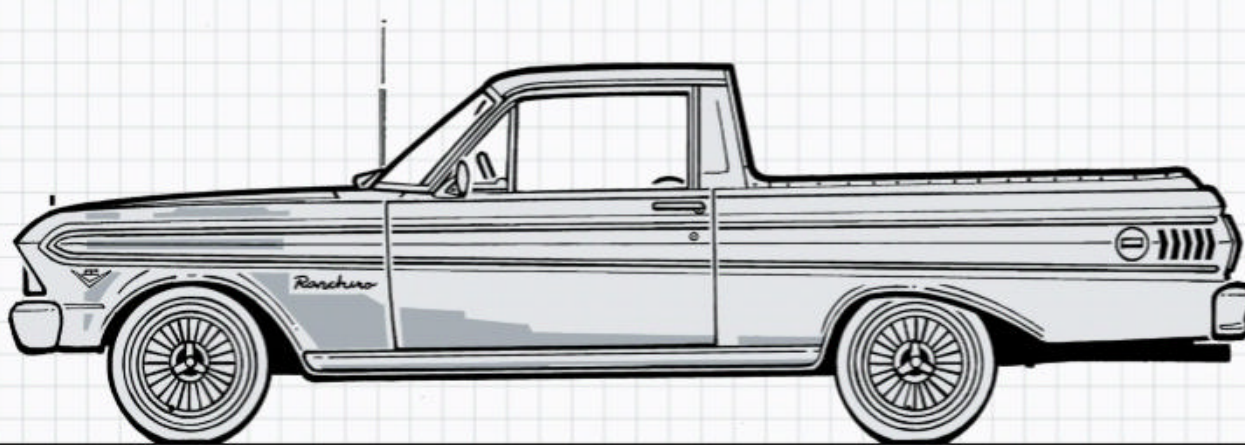
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1965 FORD FALCON RANCHERO

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO © 2019 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



55 inches



109.9 inches

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE \$2,095

ENGINE

TYPE Ford Windsor OHV V-8; iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT 289-cu.in.
BORE X STROKE 4.00 x 2.87 in
COMPRESSION RATIO 9.3:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM 200 @ 4,400
TORQUE @ RPM 282 lb-ft @ 2,400
VALVETRAIN Hydraulic valve lifters
MAIN BEARINGS 5
FUEL SYSTEM Summit 4100 four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM Pressure, gear-type pump
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM 12-V
EXHAUST SYSTEM Factory manifolds, dual exhaust

TRANSMISSION

TYPE Ford three-speed C4
Cruise-O-Matic automatic
RATIOS 1st 2.40:1
2nd 1.47:1
3rd 1.00:1
Reverse 2.00:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE Rigid axle, 8-in ring and pinion
RATIO 2.80:1

STEERING

TYPE Recirculating ball, power assist
RATIO 22:1
TURNS, LOCK-TO-LOCK 3.5
TURNING CIRCLE 38.8 ft

BRAKES

TYPE Hydraulic, four-wheel manual drum
FRONT/REAR 10-in drum

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION Welded steel unit-body
BODY STYLE Two-door pickup
LAYOUT Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT Lower strut-stabilized arms; coil springs; shock absorbers; link-type anti-roll bar
REAR Live axle; asymmetric leaf springs; shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS Stamped steel, drop center
FRONT/REAR 14 x 5 in
TIRES Tubeless rayon cord
FRONT/REAR 7.35-14

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE 109.9 in
OVERALL LENGTH 189 in
OVERALL WIDTH 71.6 in
OVERALL HEIGHT 54.5 in
FRONT TRACK 55 in
REAR TRACK 56 in
SHIPPING WEIGHT 2,370 lb

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE 5 qt
COOLING SYSTEM 14.5 qt
FUEL TANK 16 gal

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER C.I.D. 0.69
WEIGHT PER BHP 11.85 lb
WEIGHT PER C.I.D. 8.2 lb

PRODUCTION

1965 10,539 standard Falcon Rancheros;
8,724 Deluxe models

PROS & CONS

- + Useful
- + Peppy
- + Gets regular exercise
- Buckets in name only
- Not quite factory original anymore
- Good luck finding another 66H

WHAT TO PAY

LOW

\$15,000 – \$17,000

AVERAGE

\$28,000 – \$32,000

HIGH

\$60,000 – \$65,000

PRODUCTION

66A Ranchero 10,539
66B Deluxe 7,734
66H Deluxe 990

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I REALLY ENJOYED HCC #175 WITH the imports. The 1933 MG seemed to be a pioneer in the concept of small engine/high rpm and light body weight to achieve a spirited feel.

All the time I was reading that article it kept bringing back memories of 1961, when I had finally saved enough money to buy a year-old Bugeye Sprite. It seemed to be the same idea, only almost 30 years later. In my flashback, I saw myself as a 19-year-old, rowing through the gears, keeping the revs up and practicing heel-and-toe, all the while envisioning my hero Stirling Moss.

I even tried to find small bits of extra horsepower by removing the fan to decrease parasitic loss and replacing the muffler with a straight pipe.

David Underwood
Nampa, Idaho

HOW WONDERFUL TO SEE AN article about the V4 Saab 96 in *HCC* #176. I well remember my first drive in one, back in the early 1970s, from Boston to Provincetown, Massachusetts, in a raging blizzard. I was stunned. Never before had I felt such stability, control, and safety in terrible weather conditions. Even today, my Subaru Impreza, with its all-wheel-drive, does not hold a candle to that experience in a Saab 96. Those Swedish aircraft engineers hit a home run, and I think it's the best Saab they ever built.

Henry Smith
Sorrento, Maine



MY FIRST CAR WAS A 1947 HUDSON Super Six four-door sedan. It was cherry, ugly, and referred to by my friends as the "pregnant elephant"; I paid \$200 for it. But it was quick; with a 5-inch stroke and a 4.56 rear end, it had tremendous low-end torque. It was practically unbeatable in red light-to-red light drag racing. Nobody could believe what they were being

beaten by. This Hudson had the easiest—and fastest—shifting transmission of any car I have ever driven.

Since it was my first car, I went hog wild on customizing it. The car was lowered, nosed, decked, and painted primer gray. I installed a split manifold with dual glass-packs, '49 Lincoln taillamps, Frenched '54 Plymouth headlamp rims, whitewalls, and spinner wheel covers. The "wet" clutch lasted for the two years I owned the car, but the differential was iffy when I sold it.

My second car was a 1953 Hudson Hornet coupe with Twin-H Power, but that's another story...

Bob Thies
Cincinnati, Ohio

AS A BOY IN COPENHAGEN,

Denmark, during the 1940s, I had the opportunity of entering the free port of Copenhagen where goods in transit were stored to avoid paying Danish duties and taxes.

Quite a few 1947 Hudsons were awaiting transportation, probably to Sweden. These enormous American cars really impressed us boys. During the War and German occupation, few personal cars were seen. Some medical doctors were allowed to purchase the heavily rationed gasoline; otherwise the only cars—or trucks for that matter—on the streets belonged to German occupiers. Most were manufactured by General Motors, Opel, or at Ford's Cologne factory; others were the DKWs, BMWs, and Adlers.

Quite some time later while in university in the U.S., I worked several years at a Texaco gas station in New Haven and became very familiar with driving and servicing U.S.-made cars and trucks, including Hudsons.

In your Hudson article in *HCC* #175 you emphasized the visibility in these big Hudsons. One characteristic of these vehicles was the high, boxy dashboard and long, long hoods that could be a visibility problem for not very tall drivers!

Peter Tveskov
Branford, Connecticut

READING SCOTT OVERTON'S LETTER in *HCC* #176 reminded me of a story about Porsche that is burned into my mind forever. I was working for Toyota back in the '70s in the San Francisco region and stopped by to see an old VW/Porsche dealer friend in town. While we were visiting, his phone rang and

a customer told him he needed some service on his Porsch. Without missing a beat, the dealer said if he needed work on his Porsch he should call a carpenter. He worked on Porsches.

Tom Conley
Murrieta, California

THE NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT

combining these two fine magazines miss the main point. It was a smart business move. It ensures the future of at least one magazine for both of the target audiences. Over the past few years, several magazines have had to stop publication or reduced the number of issues per year. I would rather still have "my" magazine, even if it also covers those "other" vehicles.

Martin Moore
Chester, New Jersey

YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHY OVER

several readers getting up in arms about some of the upcoming changes. Several years ago, I also got upset about something Richard had written. However, after reading my comment later, I wondered what had caused my reaction. Sometimes the only exercise people get is jumping to conclusions. That was apparently the case with me.

Keep up the good work.

Bob Atchison
Newberry, Florida

ARE THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS WHINERS

still threatening a boycott? They still don't realize that the coverage is expanded. I for one am glad to see even more cars in my favorite magazine. The variety of articles is amazing; there are cars I have never seen and cars I had forgotten about. Best of all are the cars of my childhood, the everyday ones. I won't subscribe to any other car magazine since none can compare to *HCC*.

Don Moore
Erial, New Jersey

REGARDING RICHARD'S COLUMN IN

HCC #176, I couldn't agree more. I like a stock appearance, but having owned classic cars since 1976, I have never purchased a bias-ply tire. You can often tell who actually drives their cars by looking at the tires. Corvairs especially benefit from larger, radial tires.

It seems the future of the hobby is trending more in this direction. Many of

the younger enthusiasts have no connection with the skinny bias-ply tires and iffy handling that many old cars have. So, I have no problem with featuring cars such as the yellow Corvair station wagon in HCC #176 that still looks stock. Modern cars drive so much better today, so I don't blame people for wanting to upgrade, especially in the handling department.

So far, I have no complaints about the selection of foreign car-related features you have. Just don't try to convince any readers that they should learn to like foreign cars. Car enthusiasts tend to be a biased and opinionated bunch. I can see John Nagel's point in Recaps about water and coffee. But, Mr. Baker calling the Lancia "butt-ugly" was just plain rude. Obviously, European styling was about 10 years behind American design in that era, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Everyone has their own favorites for their own reasons, and there is nothing wrong with that.

Don Lapinsky
Indiana, Pennsylvania

RICHARD IS EXACTLY CORRECT IN recommending modifications to some of the pre-WWII cars. I can think of several, in fact. I think the best upgrade is the

6-volt alternator. If you are going to drive the car, one of the most troublesome areas is the 6-volt system originally used on the cars of that era. The 6-volt alternator is a perfect answer to this problem; the battery lasts longer because it will not get over-charged, and the lights will not dim when you stop for a traffic light.

Another modification that is a safety issue is adding turn signals. Most drivers today don't know what the hand signals mean, and it is usually hard to roll the windows down on an old car. I have found that very few of today's drivers will give an old car any slack on the road, so you need all of the help you can get.

Charles Thaxton
Evington, Virginia

BECAUSE OLD BRAKE LAMPS

enclosed in glass on 6-volt electrical systems do not show up well, I have added a third brake lamp; it operates the best on 12-volts. I have a small 12-volt battery in the trunk switched to an LED light via 6-volt relay. It only needs to be charged once a year.

Also, my clear fog lamps are on the ignition switch and are "on" when an

Continued on page 40



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interior switch is on. This makes for a good driving light. Safety first, always!

Harold Williams

Lafayette, Indiana

I'M GLAD THAT RICHARD WROTE A

clarification to the policy of allowing some modified cars into the magazine. In the hobby, there is a contingent that thinks that a car should only be run in an "as-built" condition. While I tend to favor pure stock cars, I have rarely left any of my cars alone. I've almost always found things that could be improved or changed in order to make the car that much more enjoyable, comfortable, useful, safer, or more attractive. So, I have to find fault with the "as-built" idea.

The truth is that "as-built" is an illusion, because many, if not most, cars never even leave the dealer lot in an "as-built" condition. It's simply the way most dealers operate. Take, for instance, muscle or pony cars that have all the factory "hot rod" options on them, but the owner shows it with dog-dish hubcaps (aka "poverty caps") on it. I have to ask,

what kind of look are you trying to show? As-built, as-shipped, as-prepped by the dealer, or even as-driven by the owner?

If it's "as-built" then the poverty caps belong in a box in the trunk, and cheap plastic covers should be on the driver's seat, and a paper or plastic floor cover should be on the carpet, along with a window sticker, and the key code knock-outs (at least on GM cars) would still be in the keys. If it was prepped by the dealer, then the window sticker would be removed, as well as the plastic seat and floor covers, the poverty caps would be on, and the key knockouts may or may not be punched out. If it's as the owner drove the car (from the second day on), it would be sporting a set of Cragar mags and big tires. Such cars were usually sold with only the poverty caps and baseline tires because most owners would change to bigger wheels and tires at the first opportunity. So, it came from the factory with the base dog-dish caps, as they were the cheapest thing available, and were going to be thrown away anyway. Why bother with fancy factory wheels?

Further, many, if not most, dealers often take advantage of the factory offering many of the options on a "factory or dealer installation" arrangement. Dealers often use this to decrease the number of cars in their inventory, while still being able to satisfy most customers' options requests by running it through its shop in back. Thus, most cars don't even leave the dealer's lot in an "as-built" condition.

I've often added factory options, as that preserves those options while adding to the owner's satisfaction. As long as the variations from the factory-issued vehicle are kept within the design of the car, then that is all that should matter. And when doing a full pavement-up restoration, remember that paint comes out of a can, and fabrics come off a roll, so there's no reason not to have the car attractive to the owner. And if the owner doesn't like the car, then it has the wrong owner.

Mark Corbin

Galion, Ohio



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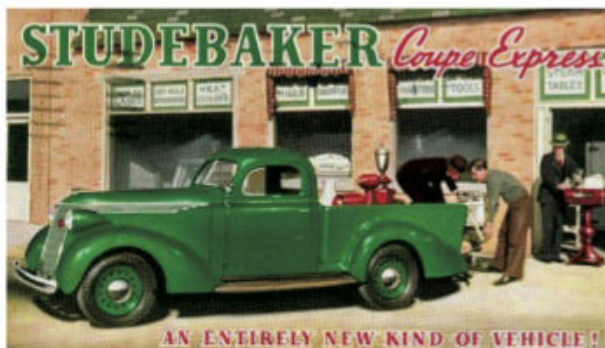
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I WAS EXCITED TO SEE THAT HCC #175 contained an article on car-based commercial vehicles. I'm a fan of all "pickup cars," and I loved the great old promotional illustrations. But I was stunned to see no image or even a mention of the best of the genre: the 1937-'39 Studebaker J-5 Coupe Express. All those car-based pickups look great, but none looked better than the Studebaker!

The 1937 Coupe Express used the chassis and front body panels of the Studebaker Dictator. The 1938s and '39s were updated to reflect the evolving styling of Studebaker's passenger cars. Only a bit more than 5,000 were built over the three years. Today, they are highly coveted, at least among us Studebaker folks.

Fosco Picchi

Las Vegas, Nevada

Continued on page 43

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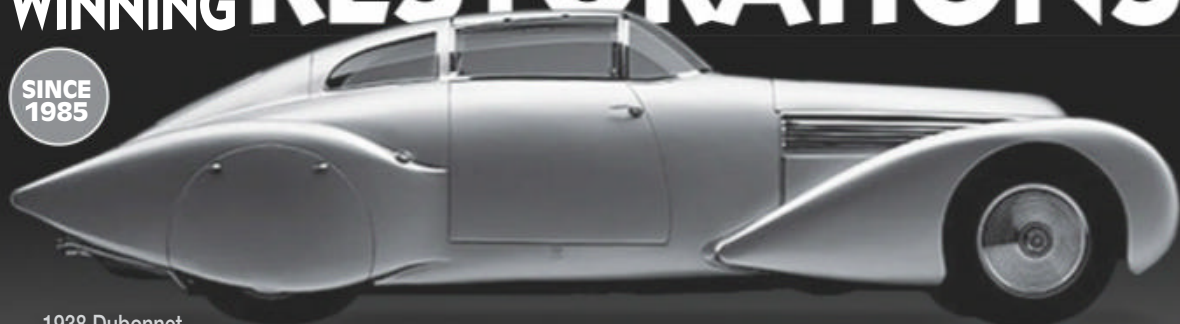
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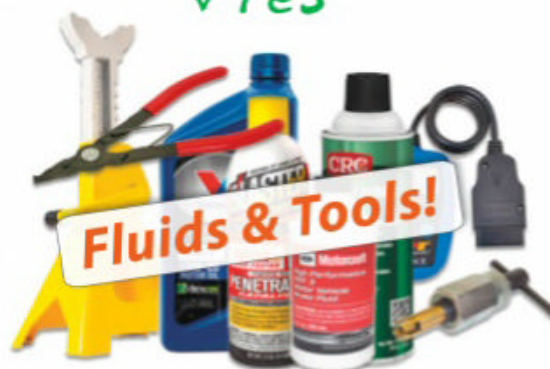
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Chandler's Fate

Many a person has worked long and hard to build up a business only to see it fall, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, but almost always painfully.

It's especially disheartening when the business didn't have to close down. That was the case with the Chandler; it was a pretty good automobile, and it deserved a better ending than it got.

The Chandler Motor Car Company was formed in January 1913 by a group of ex-Lozier employees led by

Lozier vice president and director Frederick Chandler. They were ambitious men and they wanted to create their own company, building cars in much higher volume than the high-priced Lozier could ever manage. It was Chandler who came up with the great idea of offering a six-cylinder car priced under \$2,000. Although that much car at such a low price was considered quite a difficult thing to develop, his team of industry veterans had the new automobile ready for production by July that same year.

Initially, there was only a single model, a five-passenger touring car with a 35-hp six-cylinder engine. The engine was built with a unique aluminum crankcase featuring a wide bottom flange so the powerplant could be mounted directly to the frame rails, with the flange also acting as a splash guard to keep out mud and dirt. A three-speed transmission and sturdy rear axle completed the driveline. The factory price was \$1,795 at a time when most six-cylinder cars sold for \$2,200 and up. The advertising slogan reflected the long experience of the Chandler team: "Built by Men Who Know." Not surprisingly, Chandler was an instant success.

By 1914, an electric starter was added, and for 1915 three new body styles debuted: a runabout, center-door sedan, and limousine. Chandler sold more than 6,400 cars that year, more than Packard and just 1,200 units less than Oldsmobile. By 1919, Chandler annual sales topped 18,000 units. The following year, sales climbed to 23,800 and a new sister firm—the Cleveland Automobile Company—sold 15,800 of a smaller, less-expensive car called the Cleveland. Though technically separate companies, Cleveland and Chandler shared the same management,

and the Cleveland even looked like a scaled-down Chandler. The Chandler/Cleveland combo handily outsold Nash, Oakland, and Olds, among others, that year. At the same time, Chandler also ranked seventh in export sales among U.S. automakers; all this at a time when there were more than two dozen American makes competing.

With a new engine personally tested on Pike's Peak by Fred Chandler prior to going into production, Chandler cars built a reputation for

hill-climbing that was second to none. In 1923, Indy driver Ralph Mulford drove a Chandler up New Hampshire's 6,288-foot-high Mount Washington in 17 minutes, setting a new record. Chandler became known as "The Car Built for Mountains."

By 1926, Chandler Motor Car Company and the Cleveland

Automobile Company officially merged; and soon after that, the Chandler name was applied to all the company's offerings. The company sold a healthy 20,000-plus Chandler cars that year—and then sales began to slow, and the company reported a loss for 1927. Competition was heating up, and the day of the small independent living on 20,000 sales a year was fast coming to an end. Fred Chandler and his management team decided it was time to sell.

Luckily, or so it seemed, Hupmobile Motor Company president DuBois "Pinky" Young was interested in buying Chandler—with the surprising success of his Hupmobile Century Six, he felt he needed another plant to build even more. Young offered \$18 million for Chandler and promised to continue building Chandler cars. Since the value of the firms' assets was only about \$10 million, it was a very good deal for the Chandler crew.

Young did indeed continue to produce Chandler cars until April 15, 1929, after which the plant was retooled to build a new lower-price Hupmobile Model S—and the Chandler name was dropped.

Fred Chandler must have been appalled at Young's dishonesty. He and his friends had spent 15 years building up a business that they were told would continue once sold, only to see it euthanized with barely a second thought. Chandler, the man and the car, deserved better than that. 🐾



1927 Chandler with Ziegfeld Follies' Doris Eaton.

//

...it was a

pretty good

automobile,

and it

deserved a

better ending

than it got.

//

WHEN I READ THE LAST ISSUE AND saw the Lancia and Porsche, I thought "That's fine. Eventually they will run out of American cars anyhow," and I knew that the #176 Recaps was going to be both pros and cons. Like politics, you won't please everyone. Me? I don't care. We have a Porsche Carrera Targa, some Benzes, a half-dozen 1964 Galaxies, a Thunderbird, Crosleys, a Crofton, and so forth—I like them all. Thing is, *HCC* covers its content cars very well—and that's what I look for. The coverage on the early, more chrome-laden, and rare 911 coupe was excellent! Carry on.

Jorn Jensen

Worthington, Pennsylvania

I ENJOYED THE RECENT ARTICLE ON the Dodge Magnum—very well done. I have owned Magnums since June 1978 (my first new car, and I ordered it the last day you could place an order, a triple-black XE). I have probably owned 15-20 of these, and, of them, I'd guess six were the GTs; I currently own four.

I can remember the newscasts of the

day saying how close Chrysler Corporation was to going bankrupt, which deterred many potential buyers from purchasing Magnums and Cordobas, and the fact that GM had downsized its comparable cars, and of course the threat of oil embargoes was in the air. Still though, 88,000-plus production for a two-year model run isn't bad.

There's quite a following of these cars, as I have a Magnum page on Facebook with nearly 1,600 members, and a goodly number are multiple-Magnum owners. Like many cars of this era, it's unusual to see any at car shows, except for the Mopar Nationals or Chryslers at Carlisle. My Facebook page is "78-79 Dodge Magnum Owners Group." A website is soon coming, encouraging all Magnum owners to join as we are always searching for parts, parts cars, and Magnums for sale. We have quite a network going.

Although I'm mostly all-Mopar, I do enjoy reading about the "others." You are doing a good job!

Bill Amberger

Racine, Ohio

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED MILTON

Stern's column on the '70s Pontiac Grand Prix. I was fortunate enough to own both a 1978 and a '79 model. My '78 Grand Prix was brown with tan bucket seats, and I enjoyed it for its size, ride, and handling. Later that year, I read that for 1979 the Grand Prix would be available with a four-speed manual. This seemed a good way to get a bit more sport with the Grand Prix luxury. I had my dealer order me a dark blue Grand Prix SJ with the four-speed and light blue bucket seats. It took a while to arrive, as the factory had to wait and accumulate enough orders to justify production. When it arrived, I drove it everywhere—to work, on vacations, including trips through New England. It was fun to drive, and handled and rode well. Today's cars, try as they may, don't have the character like the cars did then.

Don Bryant

Colmar, Pennsylvania

Continued on page 45

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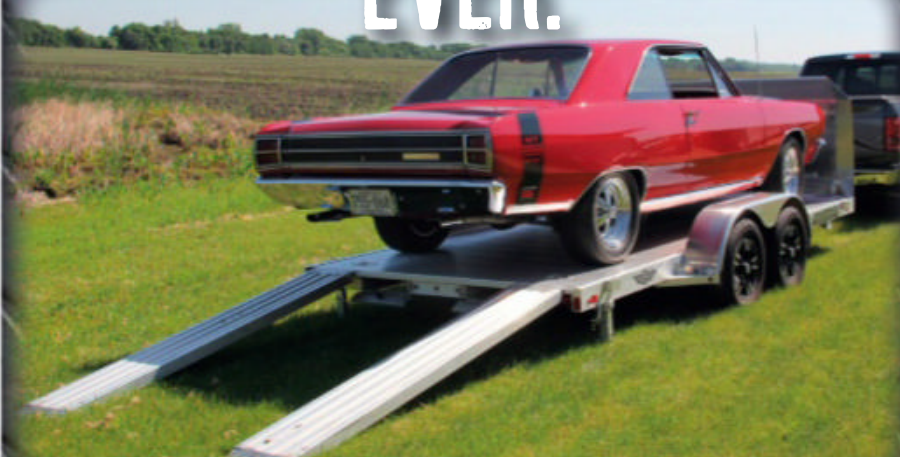
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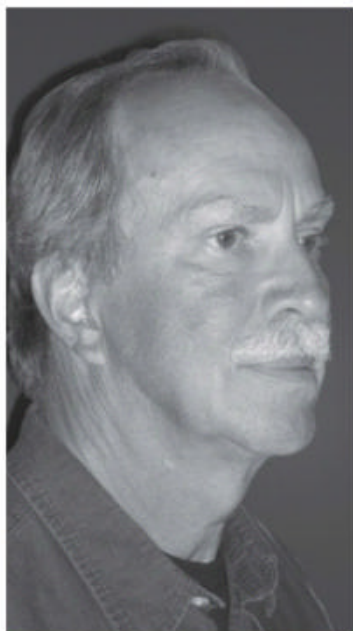


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I felt I had stumbled across the King Tut's tomb of coachbuilders material.

Bodies in Stock

In the 1970s, I started attending the huge antique shows along Route 20 in the Madison/Bouckville, New York, region that took place each August. That was prior to this era of abundant internet sales we are in now. You could still see cool stuff in person that was discovered and brought for selling, and buy it on the spot.

Utica, New York, is just north of the region where the antique shows are held and, 50 years prior, it was home to the Willoughby Body Company, located at Dwyer Avenue and Turner Street. On the table of one of the vendors at a show, four-plus decades ago, I spotted some single-sheet flyers that were printed and issued by Willoughby to advertise its coachwork in the mid to late 1920s. Always having an interest in period car-related paper, especially coachbuilders stuff, I asked about the sheets. The seller told me, "If you are interested in more stuff like this, we have some albums." Wow, did they ever!

It took him a few minutes to dig it out, but he had a huge box of leaflets, photographs, and material that apparently were once part of the Willoughby files. The seller told me he got it all from someone (today referred to as a "picker") who got it when the Willoughby factory was being shut down, and it seems stuff was being thrown away as refuse. These items had sat in this guy's garage for decades. I felt I had stumbled across the King Tut's tomb of coachbuilders material.

All of the material is a real window into the past, and among all the interesting things were carbon copies of three typed sheets that had the title "Bodies in Stock at Utica" at the top. On the sheets were listed a total of 30 open and closed bodies of assorted states of completion. Some were just shells, but many were complete bodies. The lists are not dated, but seem to be from the 1907-1912 era. More than half the bodies have prices for each one penciled in next to the typed description, and occasionally it is noted more than one of the same body is available.

About 25 percent of the bodies were not finished, but were noted as being "in rough stuff ready to paint." It does not mention all the specific makes of cars the bodies were built for, but it seems there were a variety of sizes, from small

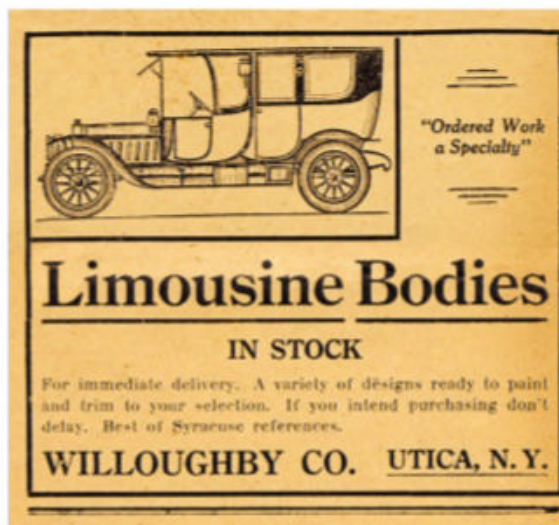
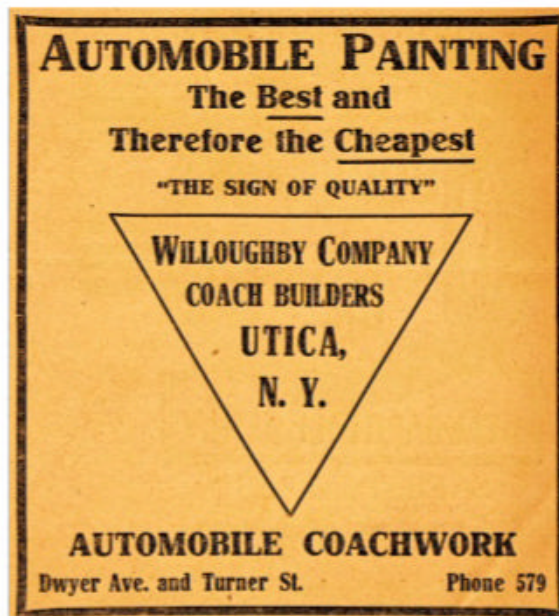
coupes to limousines. Two makes of chassis among the descriptions are mentioned, and it states the limousine body is for a Franklin seven-passenger landaulet that is "about 83 inches from dashboard to center of rear wheel"; this was priced at \$300 and marked sold. There were also two Packard landaulet bodies, at \$390 each, with "flush front seats and four doors; seven-passenger, in rough stuff, ready to color and trim including seat frames, windshields, etc." They were marked sold, as well.

Although Willoughby did on occasion build open body types (a pair of phaetons on the Lincoln chassis in 1937 at the end of the company's existence come to mind as totally magnificent cars), it was primarily a builder of enclosed formal body types and did very well.

The typed pages give an interesting insight into the daily operations of a

well-known body builder. I believe it would be safe to assume other body companies of the same era had similar memos that were sent to select perspective purchasers (car manufacturers and dealers) to interest them in readily available coachwork that could be had, without the several-month wait that would be encountered with newly ordered coachwork.

There was a market for the used bodies that came off the cars of customers who wanted to keep and use the same chassis, but desired new coachwork. Prices ranged from a low of \$50 for "one used Ford taxi cab," to the \$275 to \$700 range. The higher figure was for limousines suited for larger chassis. If only we had a time machine that could take us back to be able to buy the "French style five-passenger touring body, that would fit any large car, such as Simplex, Packard, etc." 🐼



I ALWAYS ENJOY THE COLUMN BY

Jim Richardson, and his one in *HCC* #177, "The Sound of Music," about classic car radios playing classic tunes really got my attention. I had the AM radio in my 1964 Corvair Rampside repaired by a radio guy I found in *Hemmings*, and he offered the service of installing an MP3 player in my old-school radio. It is totally hidden in the radio and plays thru the speakers. The input wire goes into the glovebox, and from there we plug in my wife's iPod, downloaded with whatever music we want. A lot of Beach Boys—"She's Real Fine My 1-6-4."

John Scheurer
Mansfield, Ohio

MY WIFE AND I OWNED FOUR

Dodge Darts during the 1960s and '70s. We purchased a 1966 model new; the others were used and included a '65, '71, and a '74. All were equipped with the Slant Six and TorqueFlite transmission. The '71 Dart had the 198-cu.in. engine, and, while it did get better mpg (up to

25), its performance, unlike the sprightly 225s, was barely adequate.

The Darts were very good cars, but I would suggest anyone thinking of converting to power steering to drive one so equipped first. Our '74 Dart had power steering and, typical of all Chrysler products at the time, its full-time power steering lacked any "feel of the road." Okay in low-speed town

driving, terrible on the highway, so I converted to manual steering.

Ted Shannon
Mokelumne Hill, California



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Strange But Desirable

One TV car show I particularly like is the British series, *Car SOS*. If you are not familiar with this show, Tim Shaw and Fuzz Townshend rescue stalled restorations at the request of the families of owners who have fallen on hard times usually due to ill health. The cars are snuck away and then revealed to the owners who marvel at the cars they so cherish, not realizing they are looking at their own pride and joys. I watch with a box of tissues nearby.

Tim and Fuzz also don't cut corners. On some other shows, you know they are just putting a rust bucket together with Silly Putty and spit during a 72-hour "restoration." I watched one such where they featured a basket-case 1972 Cadillac, and I knew the first time that guy drove over a railroad crossing he was going to be sitting on the ground with the remnants of his "Standard of the World" all over the tracks.

On *Car SOS*, they restore sports cars, saloons, military vehicles, and the occasional family hauler. Whenever they take on a project, either Tim or Fuzz has a fond memory of the particular car, and one convinces the other of its greatness by driving a fully restored example while working on their present project. One such car was the VW Rabbit GTI, which was Tim's favorite in his youth. Another was a car that Fuzz owned, and I found rather curious. What made this particular car most interesting was Fuzz's criticism of its style and engineering, yet he loved and missed the car. And that brings us to a car that isn't an underdog, but some think a dog nonetheless—the kind of dog that elicits an extreme sense of loyalty from its master.

If you want a Daimler Dart, good luck convincing a happy owner to sell it to you. In America, we instead refer to the Daimler Dart as the Daimler SP250 because at its introduction in the 1959 New York Auto Show, it was unofficially dubbed the "ugliest car in the show," and Chrysler threatened to sue Daimler if it didn't change the name.

Let's start with its appearance. The Daimler Dart looks like a smaller version of the Packard Hawk with a fish-mouth grille and large fins. I have

a taste for the bizarre and prefer being noticed, so I like it. However, for a British sports car, it lacked the tidy styling and sporty flair of contemporaries like the Austin-Healey, Triumph TR3, and Jaguar XK 150.

The Dart was the result of the SP250 sports car project that evolved from a desire to design a 2.5-liter V-8 powered saloon, dubbed the DN250 project. Production goals were rather conservative at 1,500 the first year and double that annually thereafter. Daimler expected to sell two-thirds of the cars in the U.S.

To save development and production costs, the body was made of fiberglass and mounted on a "14-gauge ladder frame with cruciform bracing" that unfortunately had a tendency to flex. With 140 hp and 155 lb-ft of torque, the car could go from 0-60 in 8.9 seconds, with a top speed of 124 mph, but the doors would fly open if you took a sudden turn.

Steering was by cam-and-lever, and brakes were four-wheel drum. According to period literature and to Fuzz, himself, the heavy steering and braking required quite a bit of effort, thus taking away from the car's jauntiness. Fuzz never said it was fun to drive, but he liked driving it.

Jaguar bought Daimler in 1960 and addressed the chassis-flex problem. It introduced a frame with "extra outriggers" on the chassis and strengthened "the hoop" between the A-pillars. In its five-year lifespan, there were 2,654 Daimler Dart/SP250s produced, never achieving even a fraction of the original production estimates. Of the cars made, as of December 2017, there were 532 Daimler Dart/SP250s still registered. That's an impressive 1/5th of total production. The 2.5-liter V-8 would live on in the Jaguar Mark II saloon.

Today, you can expect to pay around \$40,000 for a decent example if one happens to come up for sale. If you do desire one, and I can understand why, there is a shop in Birmingham, England, that has all the parts you need to keep your Daimler sports car in top running condition and looking good, too. 🐾



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Bill Warner

Bill Warner may be best known as the tireless founder and chairman of the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, but his résumé goes far beyond this. He's been an automotive journalist, a race car driver (and Road Racing Driver's Club inductee), a business owner, a car collector (with chapters of his own in the books *The Cobra in the Barn* and *The Hemi in the Barn*) and a vehicle restorer, to name but a few of the hats he's worn over the decades. Bill can also lay claim to being a participant in the Cannonball-Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash, competing in the 1975 running in a Porsche 911 he still owns today.



MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Bill Rothermel

Bill's broad knowledge and experience as an automotive historian and writer – as well as his role as master of ceremonies or judge in over 20 concours-level events nationwide – position him as an unrivaled expert. He's also a valued member of the Boards of Directors of the AACA Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and the Elegance at Hershey, and a past-Board member of the Rolls-Royce Foundation and the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. His lifelong interest in cars of all kinds and eras makes him a fascinating automotive commentator.

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NEXT MONTH'S
SPECIAL SECTION:

CHEVROLET
VS.
FORD

The Chrysler Corporation cultivated a legion of devotees via dynamic designs and engineering

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

When competing against General Motors and Ford, offering styling and engineering that entices buyers is imperative. A high-compression straight-six engine and four-wheel hydraulic brakes aided the sales of Walter P. Chrysler's namesake 1924 car that was developed while he headed the Maxwell Motor Company. In 1925, he founded the Chrysler Corporation, which took over Maxwell. Success followed but Chrysler wasn't infallible. The revolutionary Airflows of the mid-1930s were shunned by a public unwilling to embrace their radical styling.

With Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler, and Imperial catering to markets in ascending order of price and equipment from pennywise to prestigious for a good portion of the 20th century, the Corporation offered vehicles for every budget.

When rival automakers built their OHV V-8s with easy-to-package-and-produce wedge chamber

heads, Chrysler, De Soto, and Dodge each engineered an OHV V-8 for 1951 with hemispherical combustion chambers and more power. Soon after, unique Polysphere head engines were developed to provide lower-cost alternative V-8 choices.

B- and RB-series wedge engines arrived in the late 1950s delivering reliable day-to-day service, while also offering high performance versions at a lower-than-a-hemi cost due to the less complex design. They also served as corporate engines, shared among the divisions, which further simplified manufacturing and reduced the amount of required replacement parts and inventory. A compact LA-series wedge-head small-block arrived for 1964.

The 413 and 426 Max Wedges and the 426 Hemi became legends in motorsports. The 426 Street Hemi, the 340, and the high-powered versions of the 440 and 383 established the performance legacies of Dodge and Plymouth through the muscle car era.



Chrysler Corporation set itself apart again in 1957 with the introduction of its “Torsion Aire” (torsion bar) front suspension, while Ford and GM stuck with coil springs in front.

Unitized construction promised a more rigid overall body structure. Though already used by a few automakers, for 1960, Chrysler committed to it across its divisions. (Imperial, however, remained on a separate frame through 1966.)

On the styling front, the “Forward Look” of 1955-’61 was so influential in its first few years that it prompted General Motors to redesign its already scheduled 1959 models. The Chrysler 300-letter cars of the 1950s and 1960s were standouts of style, power, and status. Awe-inspiring describes the 1968-’70 Charger, and the form-married-to-function 1969 Daytona and 1970 Superbirds pushed the racer-for-the-street design envelope to the limit.

“Fuselage” fullsize C-bodies of 1969-’73, the redesigned 1971-’74 midsize B-bodies, and the 1970-’74 E-bodies stood well apart from competing GM and Ford models.

Vintage Mopars of nearly all types are still coveted by voraciously faithful followers of the Pentastar, many of whom don’t discriminate based on displacement or door count. Sure, the Hemi cars, 440s, and the like draw top collector dollars, yet ample respect is still paid to the less powerful V-8s and those equipped with the ubiquitous “Leaning Tower of Power” Slant Six, or even the antique L-head straight six. To foster that kind of loyalty, the Chrysler Corporation must have done quite a few things right. 🐾

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BY TERRY SHEA • IMAGES COURTESY OF FCA AND THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

The legacy of Chrysler as one of the premier makes of prewar automobiles sometimes gets overshadowed by Packard, Cadillac, Pierce-Arrow, and the like. But, make no mistake, Chrysler Corporation was at the forefront of engineering in the industry at a time when advances came at a rapid pace. When it comes to recognition as a Full Classic, the Classic Car Club of America generally defines the designation as a “fine” or “distinctive” automobile, built from 1915 through 1948, with consideration for limited production and a high price when new. And Chrysler, despite being a volume-production make, has quite a few models that make the CCCA’s list, owing largely to its combination of those engineering advances and the distinctive style it developed with coachbuilder LeBaron.

Walter P. Chrysler combined his experience as a self-trained engineer on the railroads with an acute acumen for business and organization,

becoming a sort of rock star in the automotive world in the early part of the 20th century. After a successful turnaround project at Buick that left him a wealthy man, Chrysler decided to retire but was soon wooed back to the industry by bankers holding the notes on Willys-Overland. Paid a then-unheard-of salary of \$1 million per year, he was hired to run Willys. One of his first moves was to engage a trio of renowned former Studebaker engineers, Fred Zeder, Owen Skelton, and Carl Breer, to lead a team developing a new six-cylinder car for Willys that was to be named the “Chrysler.”

When company founder John Willys made the surprise move to place Willys in receivership, Walter Chrysler attempted to buy the plant and the “Chrysler Six” designs, but was outbid. Simultaneous to his time at Willys, Chrysler had bought into the Maxwell Motor Company, positioning himself as chairman. Chrysler hired Zeder, Skelton, and Breer, first as consultants and later as employees, to follow him to Maxwell, which would

➤ 1941 TOWN & COUNTRY

One of the most popular Chryslers among collectors for many years is the Town & Country, which debuted in late 1941 as a station wagon and continued into production during the war-shortened 1942 model-year run. Production continued postwar, but it was only available as a four-door sedan or two-door convertible. With its ash-framed, mahogany-paneled doors, Chrysler’s first station wagon also bore the distinction of being the first steel-roofed wagon from any manufacturer. Based on Chrysler’s six-cylinder, 121.5-inch wheelbase Windsor model, with which it shared a front clip, the Town & Country wagons featured a steel wagon body from Briggs with wood components built by Pekin Wood Products of Helena, Arkansas.

Just 1,997 Town & Country wagons were made, the distinctive model available as a six- or nine-passenger vehicle.

soon become the Chrysler Corporation.

Nicknamed “The Three Musketeers,” the trio led Chrysler Corporation engineering as the company immediately began pioneering a long list of firsts in the American automotive industry, from four-wheel hydraulic brakes, tubular front axles, unibody construction, wind-tunnel-aided design for aerodynamics, and so forth. Within a few years, the company had purchased Dodge, and had introduced the Plymouth and De Soto brands as well, giving Chrysler a market reach all

» 1932 IMPERIAL CH CONVERTIBLE SEDAN

The Full Classic designation is generally reserved for the longest-wheelbase Imperials, but for 1932, the CCCA granted recognition to the 135-inch wheelbase CH models—not exactly compact, but still smaller than the 146-inch CL models, though encapsulating the same elegance and design flourish as the bigger model. Just 1,402 were made, the vast majority (1,002) four-door sedans, with a mere 152 in the four-door convertible Sedan pictured here. Using the same 384.8-cu.in. engine as the larger CL model, the CH surely had somewhat brisker performance, though its listed weight, at 4,890 pounds, was only 235 pounds less than the CL convertible sedan.



but equal to General Motors. The Three Musketeers, building on work that started at Willys, developed a series of six-cylinder, L-head engines with features that immediately put the company at the forefront of engine technology: seven main bearings, full-pressure lubrication, a replaceable oil filter (an industry first), high-compression cylinder head (another first that took advantage of GM-developed, high-octane leaded gas before GM did), and more.

But it was at the high end of the market with the Chrysler models, most notably those that carried the Imperial designation, that today have earned the Full Classic designation. Among the earliest Chrysler cars that are today recognized by the CCCA, the Series 80 Imperial and L-Series Imperial models from 1926 through 1930, and the Series 77 from 1929, all had six-cylinder engines, though they were some of the most powerful sixes on the market. Optional “Red Head” engines with red-painted, high-compression cylinder heads reached outputs of as

much as 112 horsepower. Chrysler marketed its Imperial line with the slogan “As Fine As Money Can Build,” emphasizing that “Chrysler Imperial ‘80’ represents the fullest development today of Chrysler engineering genius.” The words “standard” and “engineering” appear many more times throughout the brochure than does the word “luxury.”

But a six just wasn’t enough in the ever-increasing game of one-upmanship at the high end of the market. With the development of a straight-eight in 1930 for Dodge, Chrysler was poised to enter the market with its own eight for 1931, and that’s exactly what the company did, using its biggest powerplant in the most-vaunted Imperial models, starting in 1931, when the CG series featured Chrysler’s 384.8-cu.in. straight-eight. The Imperial engine was not merely a scaled-up version of the Dodge’s smaller-displacement, five-main-bearing powerplant (which was used in some Chryslers, too), but an all-new nine-main-bearing engine with wider bore spacings that resembled no other Chrysler Corporation engine, due mostly to its mas-

sive length and overall size. The crankshaft itself measured nearly 42 inches end-to-end, and with big, bolted-on counterweights, it required a much deeper skirt than the smaller Chrysler eights. It would provide the engine for all of the Imperials through 1936.

The Imperial CG’s big eight in 1931 produced as much as 135 horsepower and 280 lb-ft of torque when fitted with the high-compression Red Head setup. And the big Imperial needed all of that

» 1933 CUSTOM IMPERIAL CL PHAETON

Despite the Imperial line being a regular production model, volumes of the highest-end, long-wheelbase Custom Imperial line were often counted in the mere double digits. The second series CL of 1933 (the Custom Imperial line of the time spanned multiple model years) saw very limited production, with just 36 four-door CL phaetons made by Chrysler with the help of the talented coachbuilders at LeBaron. In total, just 151 long-wheelbase Custom Imperials were made in 1933, making them one of the rarest of the Full Classic Imperials.





« 1937 C17 AIRFLOW IMPERIAL

By 1937, the Imperial was no longer exclusive to the Airflow line, which was then in its last year of production. But the Imperial Airflow was still offered with a big, 323.5-cu.in straight-eight, which produced 130 horsepower. The Airflow's wind-tunnel-tested design gave the model not only more efficiency in terms of economy and performance, but also aided in creating a quiet environment for driver and passengers alike.



» 1937 C15 IMPERIAL LEBARON LIMOUSINE

Along with a catalog of standard body types, Chrysler made Imperial chassis for custom coachbuilders. In this case, this LeBaron designed-and-built Town Car was a one-off creation for Walter P. Chrysler himself, commissioned as a gift for his wife. The custom Chrysler, which was essentially bespoke from the firewall on back, featured aluminum bodywork with some wood framing in places. Estimated to weigh 6,300 pounds, the massive Town Car measures 228 inches in total length and rides on a 144-inch wheelbase. This unique car was essentially forgotten about in storage at a Long Island museum for decades before it was recently restored to its present award-winning condition.

output, as Chrysler's flagship model, riding on a 145-inch wheelbase, ranged from a 4,530-pound roadster to an eight-passenger limousine that tipped the scales at 4,915 pounds. Chrysler fitted a four-speed transmission as standard equipment to these Imperials. Similarly large and styled Imperial CH and CL models followed in 1932 and 1933, with the CH riding a slightly shorter 135-inch wheelbase and the CL having a 146-inch distance between the axles. The smaller Imperial

CQ series from 1933 is not considered a Full Classic.

During this truly classic period of Chrysler excellence, the company joined forces with LeBaron, by then a subsidiary of the Briggs Manufacturing Company, the largest maker of steel body stampings in the industry. The Imperial LeBaron-bodied cars are among the most coveted and elegant Chryslers to have ever been produced. The Imperials of this era all had a chrome-laden, swept-back, V-shaped grille, with a leaping gazelle ("the fleetest of all animals") atop it. Inspired by the groundbreaking Cord L-29 of 1929, the LeBaron-styled Imperials had long hoods, had slightly swept-back windscreens, and sat much lower, proportionately, to the ground than more common cars of the day. Body styles included two- and four-passenger coupes and roadsters, convertible coupes, and sedans, five- and seven-passenger sedans, a phaeton, a limousine, and a bare chassis for custom coachwork.

With the dawn of the revolutionary Airflow in 1934, Chrysler affixed the Imperial name to the biggest and most luxurious of that line, reserving such features as a one-piece curved windshield for the Airflow Custom Imperial when lesser Airflows made do with a two-piece windshield. Riding on a 137-inch or

» 1930 MODEL 77 ROADSTER

Like many other automakers, Chrysler went racing in the 1920s and 1930s, including at Indianapolis. Unlike most American automakers, the company was represented on the road races in Europe, such as at Le Mans in France and Spa-Francorchamps. The Mille Miglia Storica, the revival of the original thousand-mile Italian road race, only allows examples of cars that originally competed to enter the fame event. In 2005, this 1930 Chrysler Model 77, powered by a straight-six, was entered against a field comprised almost entirely of European cars.



» 1931 IMPERIAL CG SEDAN

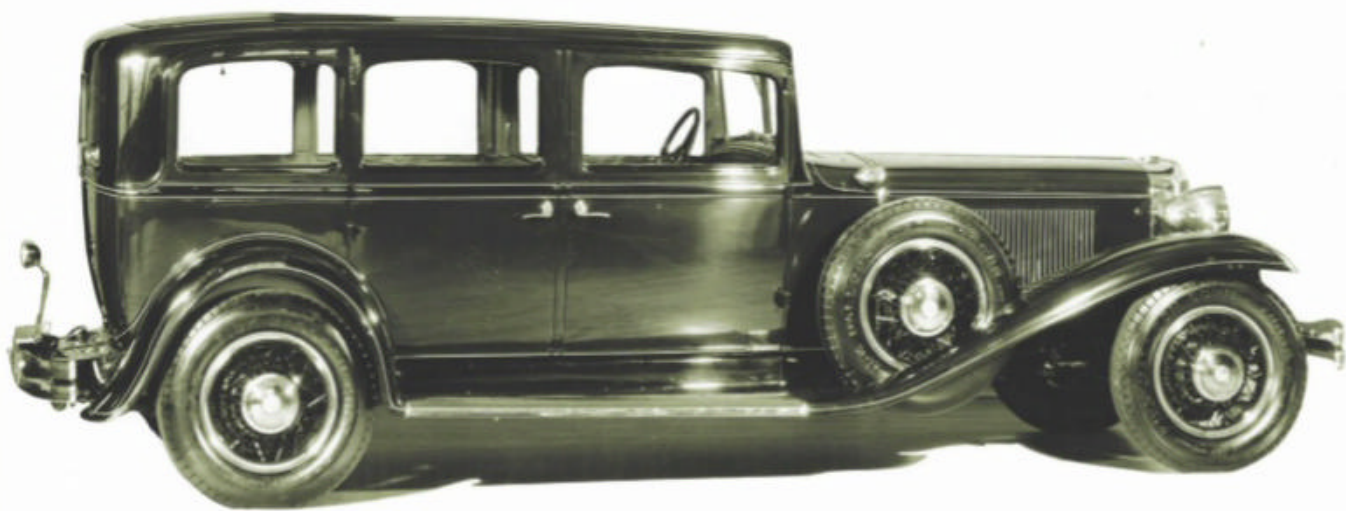
Not as elegant as the open, LeBaron-bodied cars, the big Imperial CG sedan still benefited from the robust Chrysler engineering that included a massive, nine-main-bearing, 125-hp, 384.8-cu.in. engine cradled in Chrysler's patented rubber mounts for an utterly smooth driving experience. Four different four-door sedans were offered: a five-passenger sedan, five-passenger closed-coupled sedan, seven-passenger sedan, and limousine.

146.5-inch limousine-length wheelbase, the Imperial version of one of the first aerodynamic cars also had optional a very special version of the 384.8-cu.in engine, fitted with a high-compression aluminum head for a robust 150-horsepower rating. Overall, the Airflow was a sales disaster for Chrysler, and just three Custom Imperial Airflow limousines were built in 1937, the year that the Imperial line returned to a more standard design. Only the C-15 and C-17 versions, with longer wheelbases, are considered Full Classics. The designs of these late-Thirties Imperials are generally somewhat more conservative than those of the early part of the decade, perhaps an overreaction on Chrysler's part following the radical design of the slow-selling Airflow, but the quality and engineering of the car remained top-notch.

With the demise of the Airflow-based Imperials, the top engine in the Custom Imperial came in the form of a five-main bearing 323.5-cu.in. straight-eight, though with 7.45:1 compression ratio, it was rated at 143 horsepower by 1940, all but equal to the highest-output version of the 384.8-cu.in. version. After a redesign that saw the headlamps moved to recesses in the fenders in 1939, another modification in 1940 saw the fenders grow closer to being integrated into the body. The Crown Imperial models, similarly styled from 1940 to 1942, and continued after the war from 1946 to 1948, are considered Full Classics. But by this time, the top model was only available as a sedan or limousine, but, as always, built on a longer wheelbase than standard Chrysler models and appropriately outfitted with more luxurious features befitting a model that was essentially twice the cost of the next most expensive Chrysler.

Like the Crown Imperial, the final models from Chrysler that carry Full Classic status are the 1946 to 1948 Town & Country automobiles.

Beyond the regular production models highlighted above, Chrysler made two very limited-run concept/prototype models to bring attention to



FCA



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» 1941 THUNDERBOLT

Chrysler and LeBaron built five Thunderbolts as concept/prototype cars in 1941. The futuristic Thunderbolt's retractable hardtop predated Ford's production Skyliner retractable hardtop by 16 years, though the Chrysler version never seemed destined for production.

The Thunderbolt rode on a Chrysler New Yorker 127.5-inch chassis and was powered by a 140-hp straight-eight. Each of the five built had a different body and top color combination.

the company's everyday model lines. Both the Thunderbolt and the Newport were designed and built by LeBaron and are accepted as Full Classics today. The dual-cowl phaeton Newport was an aerodynamic take on one of the most elegant automotive designs of the past, while the Thunderbolt was a streamlined two-seater with a retractable hardtop that stored in the trunk. Just six Newports and five Thunderbolts were made.

Chrysler's legacy as a maker of finely engineered and exquisitely designed cars during the Classic era remains impeccable, aided by collectors and museums that have dedicated their efforts to keeping that legacy alive. 🏆

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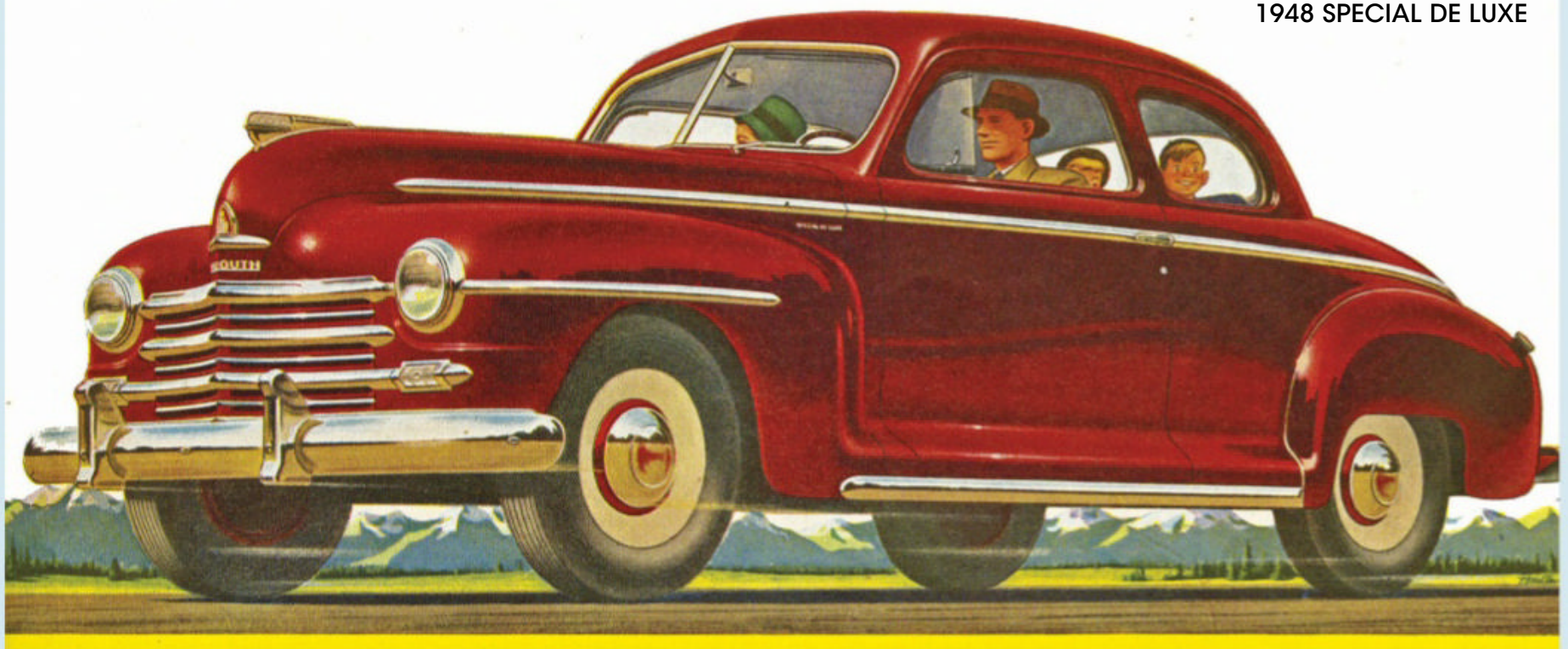
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Bestselling Postwar Mopars

1948 SPECIAL DE LUXE



Ten times Plymouth hit the sweet spot of economy, value, comfort, and style—and knocked it out of the park

BY JEFF KOCH • IMAGES FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

Have you ever wondered what Chrysler Corporation's bestselling postwar model lines were? Wonder no more.

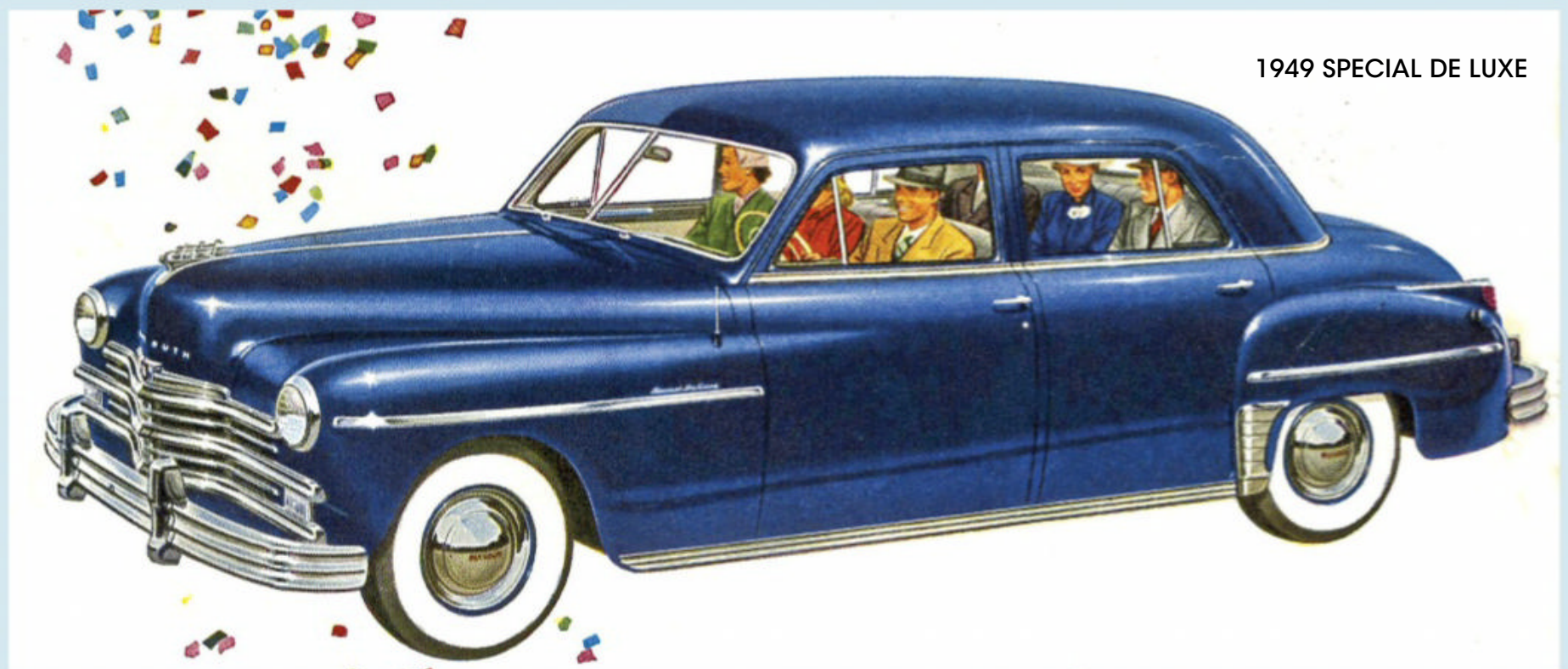
None of the models listed here sold fewer than 330,000 copies in a single season. That's a thousand cars a day built and sold across the country, give or take a state with blue laws that mandate no car-buying business on Sunday (we're looking at you, New Jersey). Among the multiple body styles available within each model name, four-door sedans were generally the overwhelming sales winners; outliers will be called out. Our sales numbers have come from J. Kelly Flory Jr.'s comprehensive trio of reference

tomes: *American Cars, 1946 to 1959*; *American Cars, 1960 to 1972*; and *American Cars, 1973 to 1980*.

The ebb and flow of product planning and marketing and the magic of the marketplace conspired to make a couple of eras of postwar Plymouth shine particularly brightly. Plymouth, you say? 'Tis true: All of the top-10 bestselling Mopars are Plymouths. Little wonder, since Plymouth was Chrysler's entry-level high-volume value brand designed to compete with Ford and Chevrolet.

We suspected that, when compiling a list of the top-10 bestselling postwar Mopar lines, there would be outlier models and years, but this was not the case. Models and eras tended

1949 SPECIAL DE LUXE





1951 CRANBROOK

to cluster together: the 1948-'53 Special Deluxe and Cranbrook models, when Plymouth was solidly third place in the sales race behind Chevy and Ford; the mid-to-late-'60s Fursys, big sedan sellers in an era when Pontiac had come up and knocked Plymouth into a perpetual fourth in the annual production charts; and the compact Valiants (particularly Dusters), when Plymouth bounced from fifth to third in a single year (1973-'74) thanks in part, perhaps, to the oil crisis. Read on to learn more about the bestselling cars from the bestselling division of the smallest of the Big Three.

1948 SPECIAL DE LUXE: 353,832

Postwar, it was all Detroit could do to build cars—America was hungry, and it didn't matter that most of what was on offer was warmed-up 1942 models. It was enough to keep the market happy while all-new cars were being designed and engineered for the decade ahead. Chrysler Corporation's topseller in that era was the Plymouth Special

De Luxe, the top-of-the-line model from third-place Chrysler's highest selling economy-priced car. Plymouth's ads touted value and technical achievement (Safety-Rim wheels, Floating Power engine mounts) in equal measure, and the message clearly resonated.

Plymouth offered two versions of essentially the same car: the De Luxe and the Special De Luxe. The two models shared all dimensions, sheetmetal, and the 6.6:1 compression ratio, 95-hp L-head inline-six. Special De Luxe added the following equipment for a whopping \$94 over the standard De Luxe: dual wipers, dual sun visors, electric clock, glovebox lock, stainless windshield surround. It didn't sound like much, but it was enough to make the Special De Luxe outsell the standard model by 7:1.

1949 SPECIAL DE LUXE: 371,241

New styling did nothing to dampen America's enthusiasm for Plymouth. Plymouth sought to differentiate De Luxe and



1953 CRANBROOK



1968 FURY

Special De Luxe models with different wheelbases starting in March of 1949; a new 118-inch wheelbase lived beneath the Special De Luxe, while the 111-inch standard De Luxe (on a new, shorter wheelbase shared with Dodge) was meant to compete at a lower price. The gambit worked: Standard De Luxe sales shot up 140 percent year to year, thanks in part to a starting price \$231 cheaper than the Special De Luxe's \$1,602 entry fee, but standard models couldn't touch the strong production numbers of the Special. The L-head Six was revised for 7:1 compression ratio, and was now rated at 97 horsepower.

1950 SPECIAL DE LUXE: 348,199

The 1949 models had only been introduced a few months earlier, so there's no point expecting major changes for 1950. Larger rear windows and reshaped rear fenders (a simple task, as they were still bolt-on units), along with a

new grille, represented the bulk of the changes. The new two-door Suburban wagon used Special De Luxe trim despite riding the shorter De Luxe 111-inch wheelbase, so its sales totals didn't contribute to the Special De Luxe's continuing strong numbers.

1951 CRANBROOK: 348,993

For 1951, Plymouth revamped its names; Cranbrook was said to be a street located somewhere between Seven Mile Road and Eight Mile Road in Detroit. But the Cranbrook's function was the same as the Special De Luxe it replaced: top-of-the-line positioning in Chrysler's strongest division. And once again, it dominated the sales charts.

The 1951 Cranbrook was essentially the same car as a 1950 Plymouth Special De Luxe, down to the split windshield and K.T. Keller's hat-friendly cabin styling. It had lower front fenders and hood, new grille and "Mayflower"



1969 FURY HARDTOP COUPE



1969 SUBURBAN

hood ornament, and larger wrap-around bumpers front and rear. The two-door hardtop version was christened Belvedere, the first appearance for that now-legendary name on a production Mopar. The L-head, 97-hp, 218-cu.in. straight-six remained unchanged.

1953 CRANBROOK: 447,653

All-new styling, penned by Virgil Exner, saw Plymouth into its 25th anniversary in 1953. The windshield was now a single piece, and wrapped around; single-piece rear-quarter stampings replaced the old-fashioned removable rear quarters. The overall effect was to make the Cranbrook lower and wider, even though the wheelbase contracted to 114 inches, and overall length was reduced by half a foot. Another marginal power increase—an even 100 horsepower from the 218-cu.in., one-barrel L-head Six—solidified the modifications. Cranbrook gained a new model, the Savoy six-passenger wagon, though with barely 12,000 made, it was just a blip in the Cranbrook's sales chart.

1966 FURY: 330,489

In the early 1950s, companies made one size of car, and your budget chose your preferred trim level (i.e., Deluxe or Special Deluxe) and body style (two-door, four-door, convertible, or

wagon). Just 15 years on, there were pony car, compact, midsize, and fullsize models all competing for buyers' attention on the showroom floor. Within a given model lineup, there were two-door sedans and hardtops, four-door sedans and hardtops, convertibles, wagons, and more... and that's before you delve into myriad trim levels (Fury I? II? III? Sport Fury? VIP?). So, while there were only four or five Special De Luxe or Cranbrook models in the 1940s and '50s, the 1966 Fury had a whopping 17 versions to choose from (more, if you consider six- and eight-cylinder versions to be separate models).

Those 17 models were good for 330,000 sales—a strong year for a resurgent Plymouth. For Chrysler, who had shot itself in the foot with the downsized-fullsize 1962-'64 models, the new big "C"-body Fury was a bona fide bounceback success, its 119-inch-wheelbase chassis (121 inches for wagons) exactly what the doctor ordered to get customers back into the showrooms. Stacked lights and a split grille, plus crisp body styling, were part of the big Fury's grand re-introduction in 1965, and styling for '66 changed little. Engines ranged Mother Mopar's gamut, from the 225-cu.in. Slant Six to the 365-hp four-barrel 440 V-8. And, of course, all Furys now sported unit-body construction and torsion-bar front suspension—they were practically Mopar trademarks by 1966.

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The bestselling model out of those 17 Fury models was the Fury II four-door sedan, with 55,000 sold. For perspective, Chevy sold nearly twice as many Impala coupes in 1966 as Plymouth sold C-bodies in total for the year.

1968 FURY: 349,457

The 1967 Plymouth Fury lineup was restyled with a crisp new smooth-sided look, and was so successful that Plymouth introduced a second two-door hardtop roofline (a semi-fastback roofline with a triangulated C-pillar, called “Fast Top” in the brochure). The chassis dimensions remained the same (as did the wide-ranging engine selection outlined in the 1966 Fury previously), but the result was a longer, lower appearance. All 1968 cars, Fury included, received a host of federally mandated safety-compliant components, including side marker lamps, dual-circuit brake master cylinders, energy-absorbing steering wheels and columns, recessed instrument panel controls, and shoulder belt mounting points for outboard front seat occupants. The 1968 Fury lineup received only color-and-trim updates, new grilles, and updated taillamps. For a change of pace, the Fury III two-door hardtop was the bestseller of the Fury bunch, moving 60,472 examples for the year.

1969 FURY: 336,625

If big sells—and Plymouth had no reason to believe that it didn’t—then bigger will sell better. Right? That might have been the idea behind Chrysler’s new-for-1969 C-body line. New rounded “fuselage” styling gave the appearance of

being more wind-friendly while stretching the wheelbase out to a whopping 120 inches. The former stacked lights in front reverted to horizontal positioning. Otherwise, little else changed: The 225-cu.in. Slant Six was the base engine in low-line Fury models, and the 375-hp four-barrel 440 continued to be the most aggressive powerplant available. And it sold like there was no tomorrow.

1972 VALIANT: 330,373

Traditionally strong Valiant sedan sales fell off a cliff in the early 1970s, but the sporty Duster fastback coupe (counting the hot 340-powered model, marketed separately) accounted for two-thirds of all Valiant sales in 1972. Why? Well, it was \$80 cheaper than a comparable four-door Valiant, to start, and it was a damned sight sexier to look at. Dropping compression ratios (plus a switch from gross to net power ratings) meant the pocket-monster 340 (once rated at 275 hp) was now down to 240-net horsepower for the year. Of course, the legendary Slant Six, now rated at 110-net hp, was still available, as was a 318-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 rated at 150-net hp.

1973 VALIANT: 380,592

Not much changed on Valiant for 1973 beyond what was required to satisfy the ever-changing federal regulations. A new front bumper (with impact-absorbing mounts) and grille were able to pass the federal 5-mph impact test, and protective steel beams were installed in the doors to meet new side-impact legislation. The formal-roof two-door Scamp lost its vent windows. The 225 Slant Six and 318 and 340 V-8s carried over to

1972 VALIANT





1974 DUSTER 360

1973. Duster sales numbers continued to dominate the Valiant line's chart, with nearly two-thirds of total Valiant sales (nearly a quarter-million sold) for the '73 model year.

1974 VALIANT 476,818

Valiant sedans now used Dart bodies, and enjoyed a marginal increase in wheelbase. Beyond this difference, actual year-to-year changes on the Valiant (and its fastback stablemate, Duster) were few and far between: a 5-mph rear bumper (plus a new rear light treatment), and a 360-cu.in. V-8 replacing the legendary LA-based 340, plus the usual color-and-trim shuffling, constituted the bulk of the modifications. A new Valiant Brougham package on two- and four-door models brought personal-luxury plushness to the compact field, making some optional Valiant equipment standard, like

cruise control, power steering and front disc brakes, A/C, and an AM/FM radio. Additional luxury accoutrement was also generously added, like ample brightwork, special paint and trim selections, vinyl top, and a soft-feel interior that included door padding, velour seating areas, and deep-cut pile carpet.

So, the Valiant's chassis was 15 years old, and there hadn't been a significant redesign since 1970, yet this was the bestselling season for Valiant, ever—more than 476,000 built for the model year. (Duster sales, at more than 277,000, were responsible for more than half of the Valiant's numbers for the year—other body styles had picked up considerable sales steam also.) The OPEC oil crisis had buyers fleeing to smaller cars; better fuel mileage, a cheaper buy-in price, plus all of the comfort options now available in the Valiant family, meant that buying a compact car no longer meant having to sacrifice. What's harder to explain is how Chevy's Nova and Ford's Maverick, Valiant's equally aged compact competitors, managed only weak single-digit-percentage sales increases in the same time period. Plymouth once again hit the sweet spot of economy, value, comfort, and style—and knocked it out of the park. 🏆



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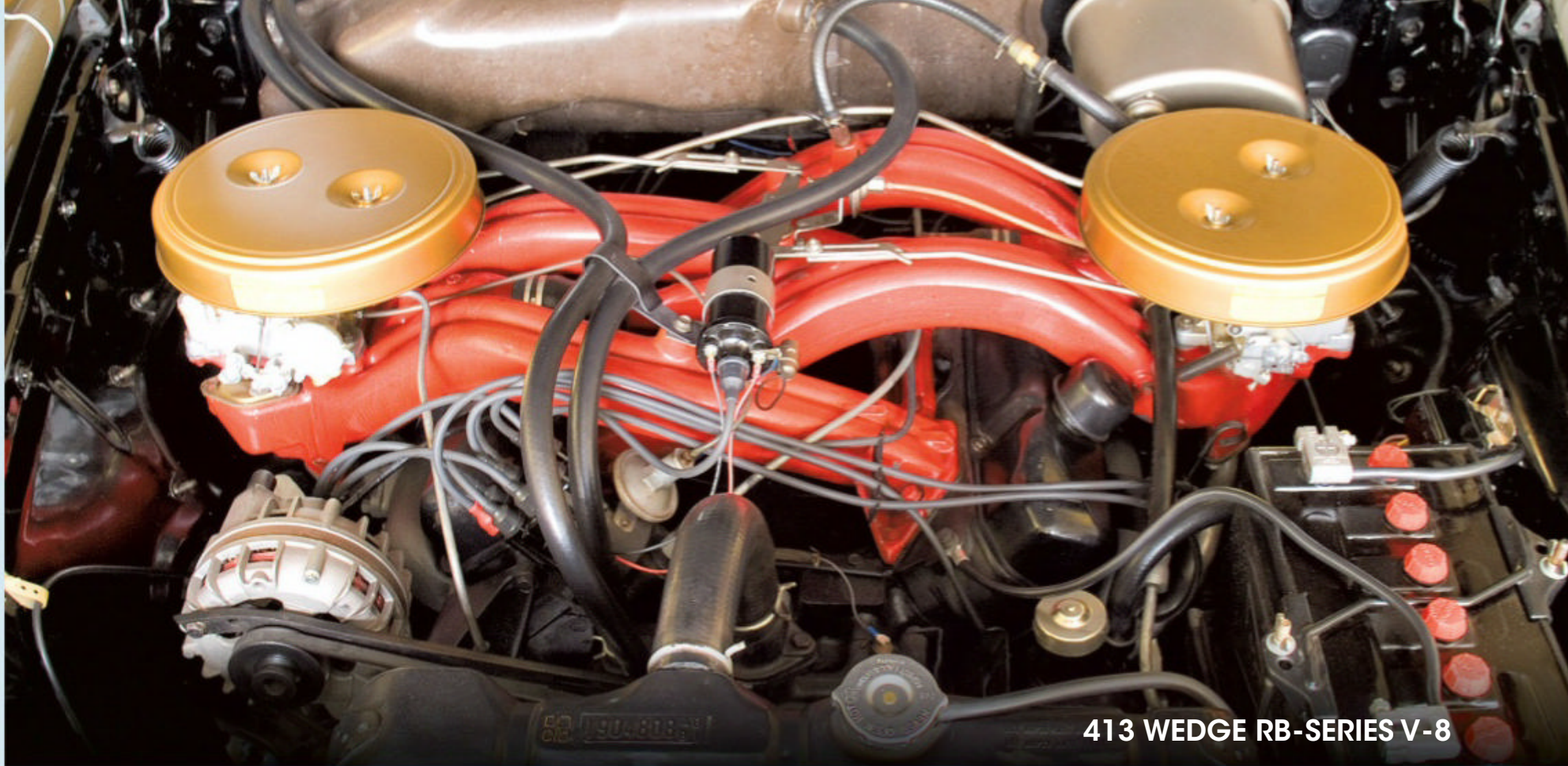
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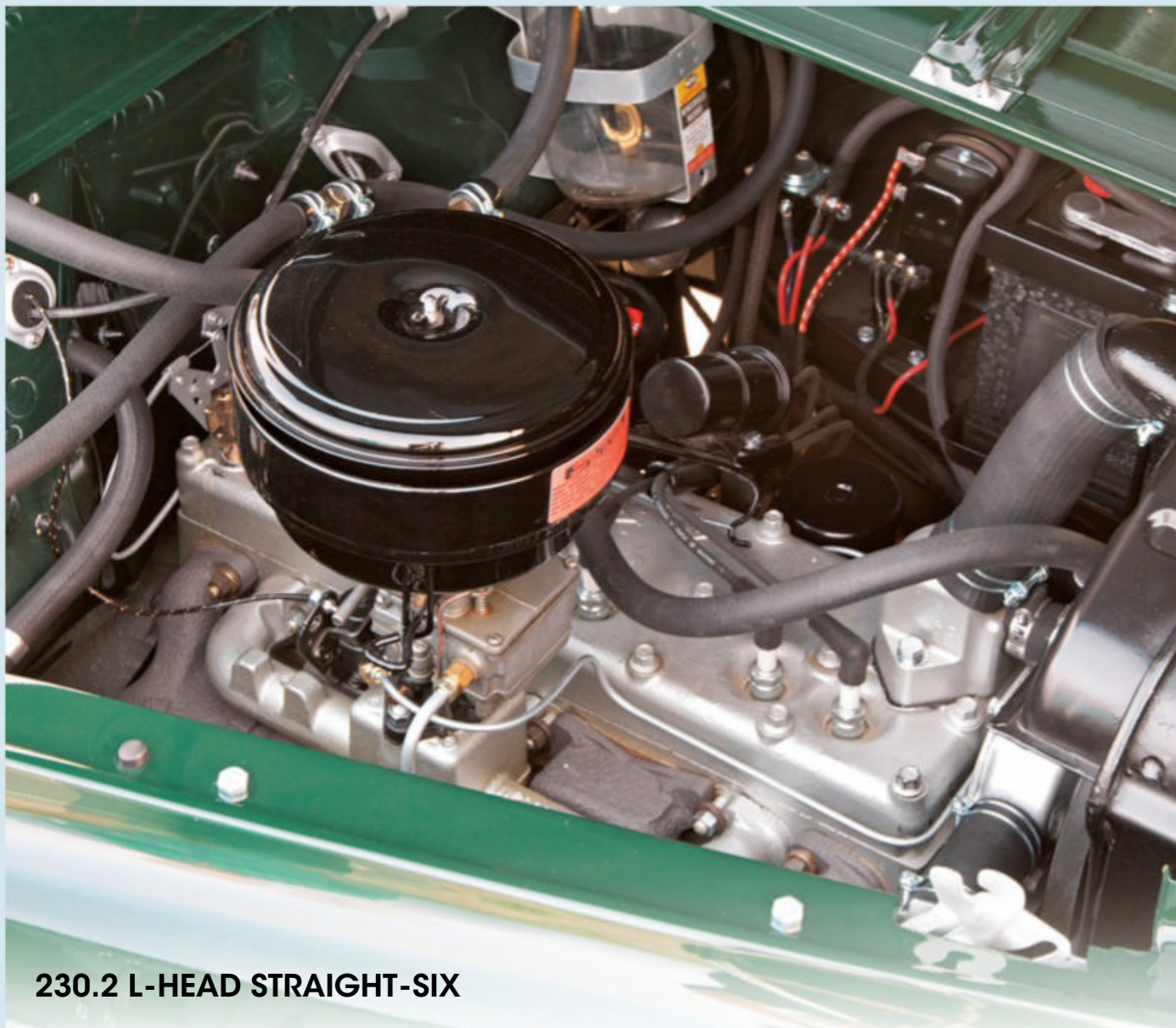
BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • IMAGES COURTESY OF FCA HISTORICAL SERVICES AND THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

Chrysler's intrepid V-8s featured hemispherical, polyspherical, or wedge heads, and some were equipped with multiple carburetors on inline or ram-type intake manifolds, as well as having sweeping exhaust manifolds. Though several were powerhouses for their eras, other engines simply got the day-to-day jobs done, and a few were among the most enduring.

For instance, the L-head six-cylinder's basic design remained from the Great Depression to nearly the end of the Eisenhower era, and the Slant Six introduced for 1960 wasn't phased out until after 1983 in cars. B- and RB-series big-block wedge engines arrived in the late 1950s and were used through the twilight of the 1970s. The LA-series small-block debuted for 1964, and late 20th-century modernized V-8s still retained some of its DNA.

Adapting to changing markets and regulations ensured long lives for these engines. We'll cover a few aspects that made them unique.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Truck, Canadian, and industrial applications aren't included in this article.



230.2 L-HEAD STRAIGHT-SIX

L-HEAD STRAIGHT-SIX

Over the many years of L-head six-cylinder production, there were various displacements of 23-inch-long blocks for Plymouths and Dodges and 25-inch examples for most Chryslers and De Sotos, so we'll discuss the 217.8-cu.in. (3.25/4.375-inch bore/stroke, aka 218) and 230.2-cu.in. (3.25/4.63-inch bore/stroke, aka 230) ones. Dodge used the 218 from the early 1930s into the 1940s, and then the 230 through 1959. Following the 201.3, Plymouth had the 218 from the 1940s through the mid-1954 model year, finishing the decade with the 230.

The 100-hp 1954 218 and the 1959 230 featured a 7.1:1 and 8:1 compression ratio, respectively. The 230 was rated at 135 hp in Dodges and 132 hp in Plymouths. Both engines had four main bearings, aluminum pistons, hardened exhaust valve seat inserts, and more. These straight-sixes were torquey given their long strokes (205 lb-ft at just 1,600 rpm for the 230) and were durable and economical.

After about three decades of service, the L-head engine was replaced by the OHV Slant Six for 1960 cars. See *Tilted Perspective* (HCC #159, December 2017) for its detailed history.

CHRYSLER FIREPOWER V-8

During engine development for the war effort, Chrysler engineers realized the high volumetric efficiency and thermal efficiency potential, among other attributes, of the hemispherical (domed) combustion chamber. The added design complexity and cost of streamlined intake and exhaust ports, centrally located spark plug with access through tubes in the rocker covers, and big, laterally opposed intake and exhaust valves that would require dual rocker shafts on each cylinder head, was deemed worth it to make more power than OHV V-8 competitors.

Chrysler didn't invent the hemi chamber, but designed its own to enable the 331 FirePower (3.8125/3.625-inch bore/stroke, aka 331.1) two-barrel to produce 180 hp for its 1951 debut—20 hp more than Cadillac's 331 and 45 hp more than Oldsmobile's 303. By 1955, the 331 boasted 300 hp in two four-barrel Chrysler C-300 trim. The 354 arrived for 1956, and the taller-deck 392 (4.00/3.906-inch bore/stroke) for 1957 and 1958. The 300D with two-fours produced 380 hp. Imperials used Chrysler Hemis. Dodge and De Soto had their own, yet very few parts swap between them.

POLYSPHERE V-8

Polysphere engines were developed to reduce costs but retained some hemi qualities. A redesigned combustion chamber housed valves that were canted, but their placement (now diagonal) and angles were revised to use a single rocker shaft for the intake and exhaust for a more compact design. These engines had smaller rocker covers with scalloped lower edges just above the relocated spark plugs. A two-barrel or four-barrel was used depending upon year and application.

Chrysler (301, 331, and 354) and Dodge (241, 270, 315, and 325) Polysphere engines were based on their existing Hemi block designs. Plymouth used Dodge's Poly-head 241 and a bored 259 version for 1955 and the 270 for 1956. De Soto used Dodge's 325 in 1957. Hemi-block Poly engines were born in the mid-1950s and retired in the same decade.

New lighter A-Series Polysphere engines included Plymouth's 1956-1957 277 and 1956 240-hp 303 (Fury), 1957 301 and 318, and the 1959 326 (for Dodge). The 318 powered various models through the mid-1960s.

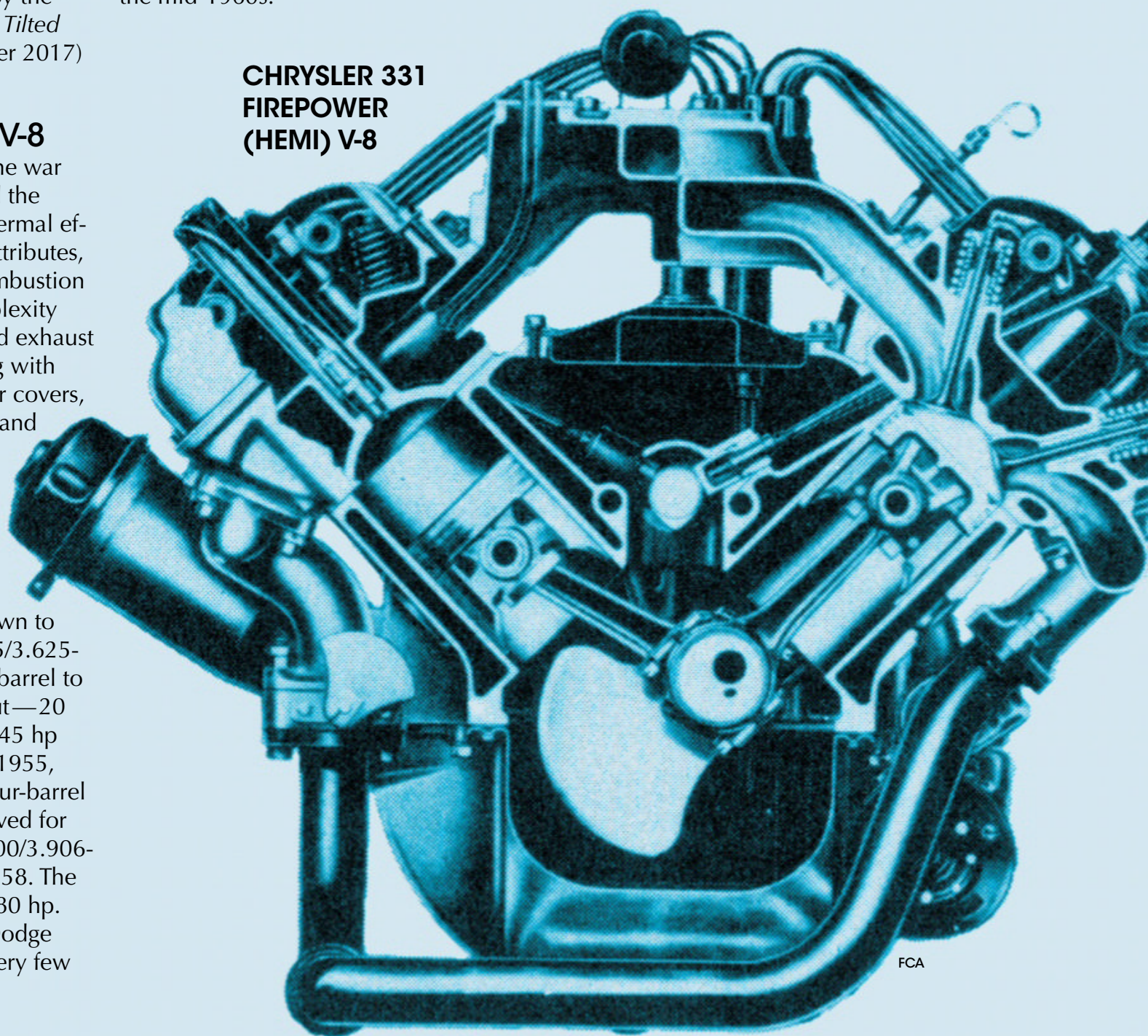
B-SERIES WEDGE V-8

New B-series engines went beyond the Polysphere with larger displacements to ensure hemi-like output coupled with less weight and a new wedge-shaped chamber with inline-valves that used a single rocker shaft; the results were in smaller cylinder heads and easier and lower-cost production. A deep-skirt block provided rigidity for the bottom end, and a 3.375-inch stroke forged steel crank was employed for the 350-, 361-, and 383-cu.in. engines with bore sizes of 4.0625, 4.1250, and 4.250 inches. The distributor was mounted up front.

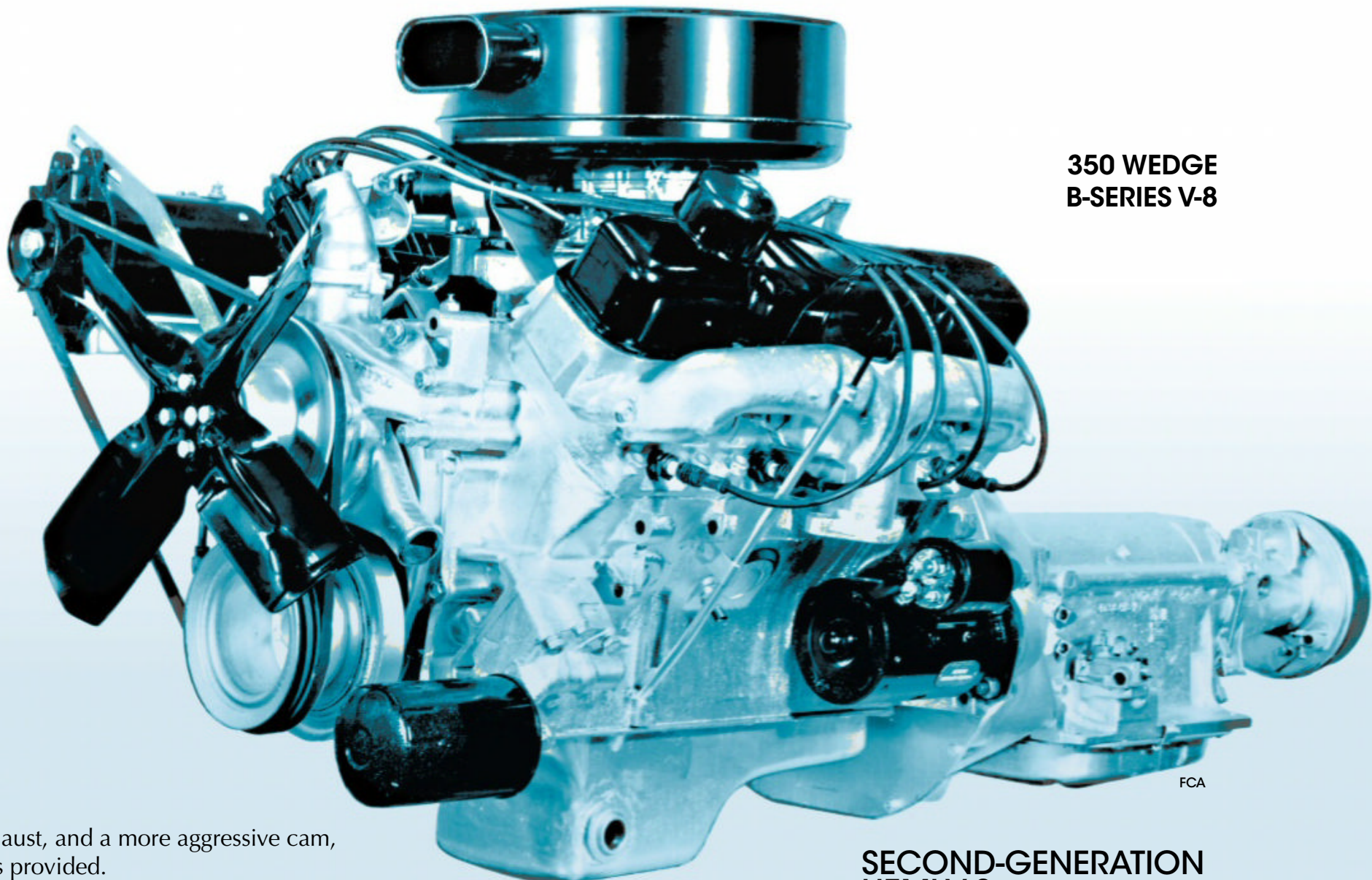
A 1958-only 350 was offered in certain Plymouths, De Sotos, and Dodges. A 361 was also new that year, as was a 383 in 1959. There were two-barrel, four-barrel, and twin four-barrel versions of the engines. Even the dramatic long-ram intake with two four-barrels was optional for the 361 and 383 in the early 1960s.

The 361 lasted through 1966, but the 383 carried on with various power ratings. For the 1968 Road Runner and Super Bee, a higher-performance 335-hp 383 four-barrel with freer flowing induction, heads, and

**CHRYSLER 331
FIREPOWER
(HEMI) V-8**



FCA



**350 WEDGE
B-SERIES V-8**

FCA

exhaust, and a more aggressive cam, was provided.

For 1971, a 400-cu.in. two-barrel with a 4.34-inch bore and 3.38-inch stroke was offered, and two- and four-barrel versions replaced the 383s in midsize cars for 1972. Net power ratings were instituted that year. The 400 would endure increasing emissions regulations through the decade resulting in 190 net hp for its swan song in 1978.

RB-SERIES WEDGE V-8

For the 3.75-inch stroke applications, the raised-block version of the B-engine was used. The four-barrel wedge head 413 (4.1875-inch bore) arrived for 1959 Chryslers (380 hp with two-fours on the 300E) and Imperials, and was later available through 1965 in various models. A 383 RB was also built for 1959-1960 Chryslers using a 4.030-inch bore.

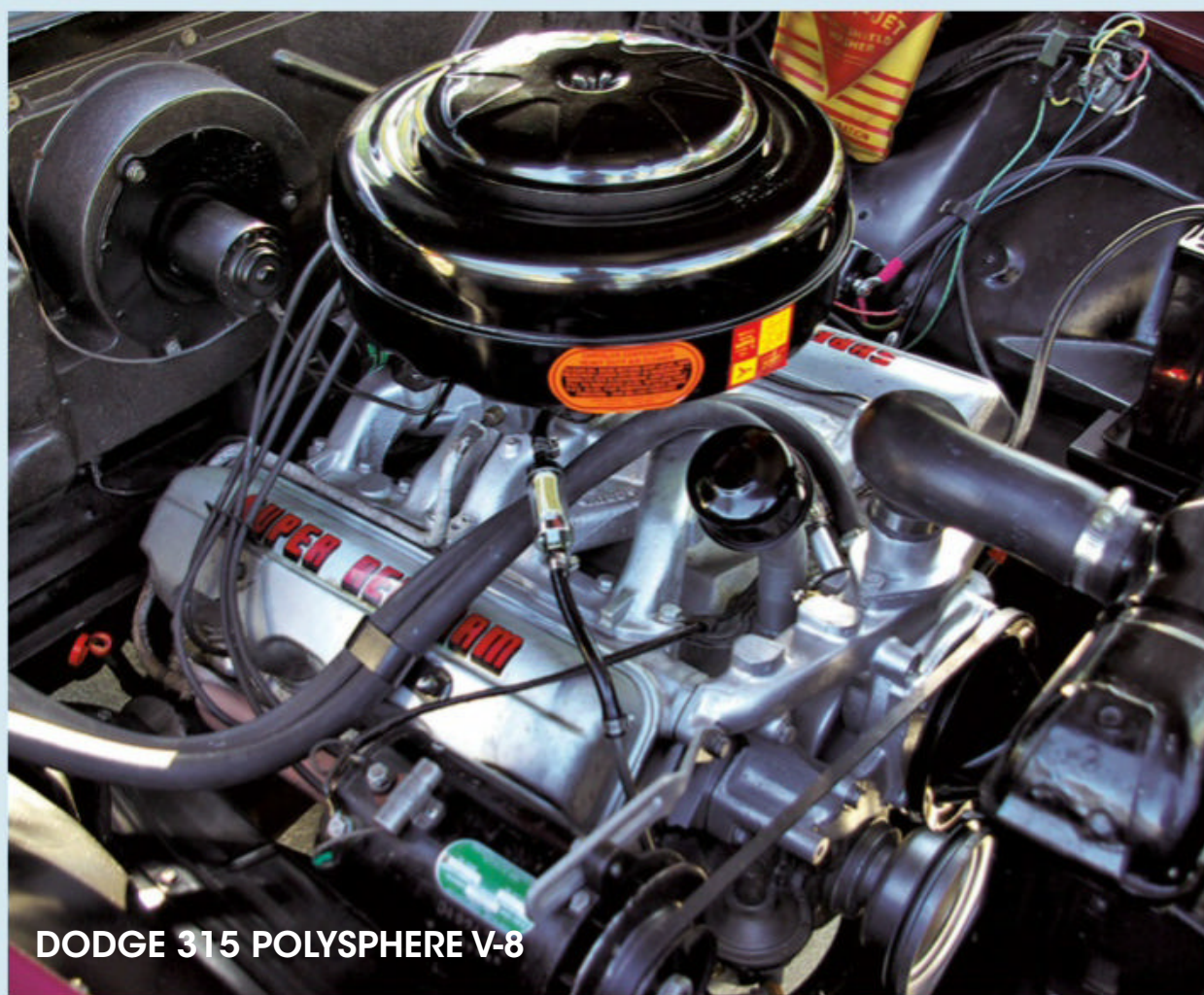
The long-ram intake was standard on the 375-hp 413 1960 300F and 1961 300G. Max Wedge engines — 410/420-hp 413 for 1962 and 415/425-hp 426 for 1963-1964 — with cross-ram induction and race parts were terrors on drag strips in the downsized Dodges and Plymouths, while the 365-hp 426 four-barrel street wedge of 1964-1965 held its own on the boulevard.

A 350- and 365-hp 440 (4.32-inch bore) debuted in fullsize 1966 models, and for 1967, a 375-hp muscle car version provided a lower-cost alternative to the midsize cars' 426 Street Hemi option. It was also available in fullsize

cars. With three two-barrels and other upgrades, the 440 Six-Pack Dodge (Six-Barrel for Plymouth) was rated at 390 hp for 1969½-1970 and 385 hp for 1971. Various 1960s-1970s models were equipped with 440 engines, yet by 1978, its final year, it was rated at just 195-net hp and 185 hp for California.

SECOND-GENERATION HEMI V-8

The single four-barrel 426 Race Hemi was conceived to gain a competitive edge in NASCAR, which it did the first time out, with Richard Petty winning the 1964 Daytona 500 and Hemi cars claiming second, third, and fifth place. The drag-strip-spec dual four-barrel cross-ram Race Hemis were also highly successful.



DODGE 315 POLYSPHERE V-8



**426 STREET HEMI
RB-SERIES V-8**

Newly designed Hemi heads, a revised RB-block, and HD parts comprised the 426 Race Hemi. The detuned Street version became an option on midsize B-bodies for 1966 and E-bodies for 1970. It retained the reinforced 4.25-inch bore block, cross-bolted main caps, and 3.75-inch stroke forged crank, rods, and pistons, but the latter's dome was reduced to lower the compression ratio to 10.25:1. Iron Hemi heads (1965 race heads were aluminum) still had the large laterally opposed valves, centrally located spark plug, free-flowing ports, and dual rocker shafts.

Dual Carter AFBs on an inline aluminum intake, a milder solid-lifter cam, and streamlined iron exhaust manifolds replaced the race items, and heat was provided under the rear carb to lessen warmup time.

A stronger cam and oiling system upgrades came for 1968, and for 1970 a hydraulic cam of the same specs was used. The 426 Street Hemi was rated at 425 hp from 1966 through 1971 and made each Mopar equipped with it highly desirable.

LA-SERIES V-8

These small-blocks featured modern thin-wall block castings, wedge chambers, new intake and exhaust manifolds, and single rocker shafts. Though the basic bottom-end design was derived from the A-series Polysphere engines, the LA was about 60 pounds lighter. The 273-, 318-, 340-, and 360-cu.in. engines had 3.63-, 3.91-, 4.04-, and 4.00-inch bore sizes and a 3.31-inch stroke except the 360 at 3.58 inches.

The 180-hp 273-cu.in. two-barrel (1964-1969) and a 235-hp HP four-barrel

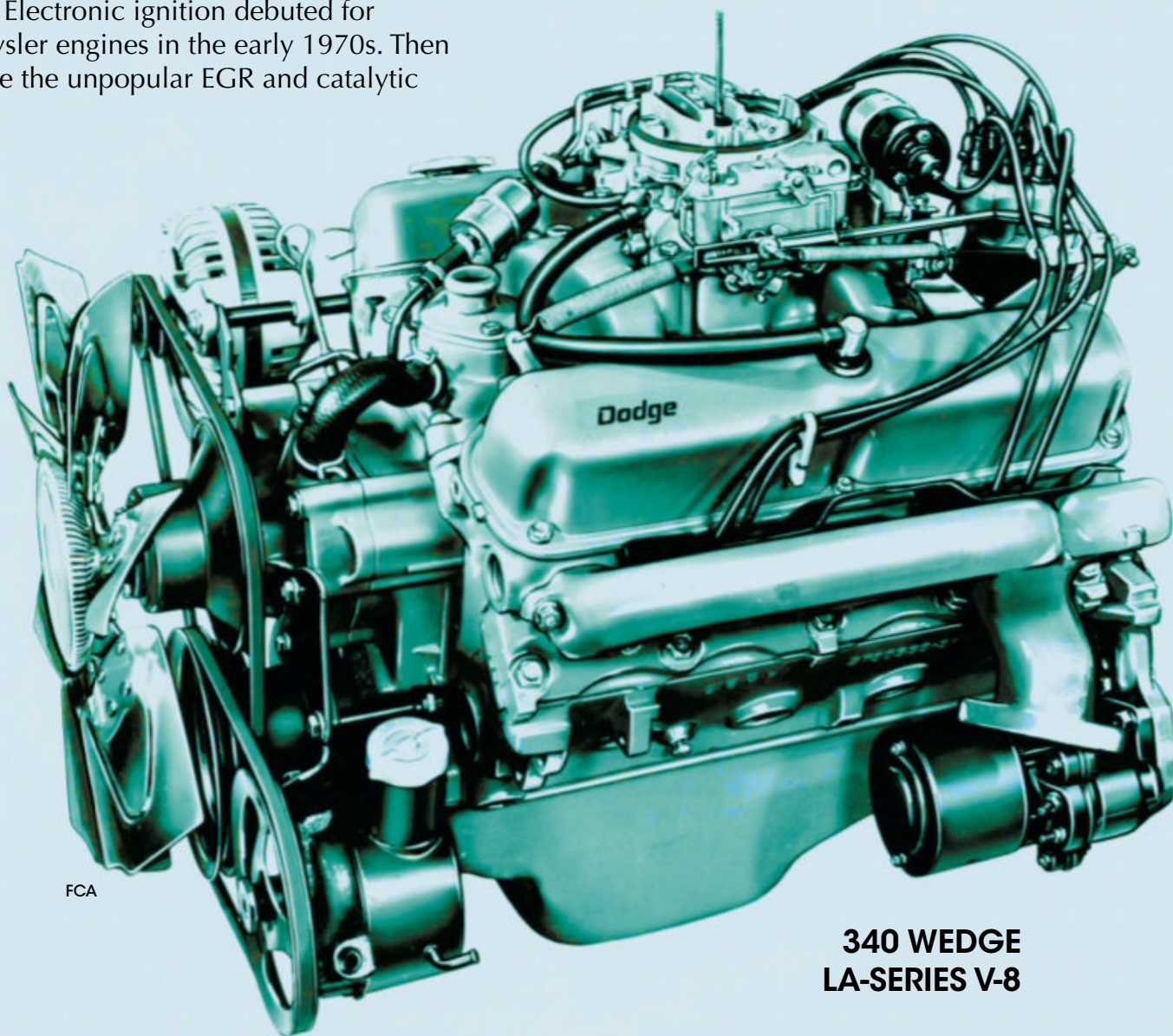
engine (1965-1967) were offered. There was a rare drag race 275-hp 273 Dodge D/Dart for 1966.

A 230-hp 318 two-barrel engine debuted for 1967, and new-for-1968 was the 275-hp 340 with HD parts, a higher flowing top-end and exhaust, and a more aggressive cam. The 1970 Challenger T/A and AAR 'Cuda 3x2-barrel 340 with significant upgrades was rated at 290 hp.

The 255-hp (175 net hp) two-barrel 360 arrived for 1971 and a 245-net-hp 360 four-barrel replaced the 340 for 1974.

Electronic ignition debuted for Chrysler engines in the early 1970s. Then came the unpopular EGR and catalytic

converter among other emissions controls, and the Electronic Lean Burn System. The 360 lasted into 1980 in cars and the 318 longer, but they continued in trucks for several years after. 🏁



**340 WEDGE
LA-SERIES V-8**





Touch of Glamour

A remarkably original 1947 Dodge Custom sedan fulfills the wish of its owner

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY TERRY SHEA

Some people just know what they want. Tempt them with bright, shiny things, powerful objects and they can resist, while the rest of us might not be so strong. Jerry Davis knows exactly what he wants.

Born in 1947, Jerry was raised on a steady diet of Mopars. “When I was a youngster and beginning to get into cars,” Jerry recalls, “I could never afford the Chevrolets or the Fords. I could always afford the beat-up, old Chrysler products. So, I’ve been a fan of Chryslers ever since.”

More recently, Jerry set out looking for a highly original Mopar from his birth year. “It could have been a Plymouth, or a Dodge, or a Chrysler, or a De Soto—I wasn’t picky about that,” Jerry says. “The only thing I was picky about, was the 1947 part, the year I was born. And I wanted a four-door because it’s so odd. There are less and less of them coming to the car shows.” After a multi-year search, Jerry found the car he was looking for.

A resident of Concord, North Carolina, Jerry discovered this 1947 Dodge Custom D24C sedan in New York in 2011. Remarkably, despite its decades in the Northeast, this Mopar retains the vast majority of components it was delivered with. “It’s just as original as you can get,” Jerry remarks, “except for the tires being replaced and the new mirrors put on the outside of it. But the rest of it is all original: the paint, the upholstery, the engine—everything!”

Like much of the rest of Detroit, Chrysler was still selling freshened versions of its prewar models in 1947. Based on a body and 119.5-inch-wheelbase chassis that dated from 1941,



Dodge's "touch of glamour" is evident in the well-appointed interior, chrome-laden and outfitted with a full set of gauges and an AM radio.



and with mechanicals going back even farther, all Dodge cars bore the D24 designation from the factory from 1946 through early 1949, when the all-new D29 arrived. Other than some minor details that changed from year to year, all D24s pretty much looked and drove the same. Dodge advertised its cars, positioned above Plymouth and De Soto, but below Chrysler, with ads touting "A touch of glamour and a dash of taste," to try and bring some excitement to what was, in many ways, a 1942 model with a new grille.

Under the hood sat a 230-cu.in. version of Chrysler's venerable, 1920s-developed flathead straight-six, a four-main-bearing, solid-lifter engine with 6.7:1 compression ratio that produced 102 horsepower and 184 lb-ft of torque. Given the age of Jerry's car and the likelihood it has never been rebuilt, power might possibly be down a bit. Jerry doesn't seem to mind, though, and he continues to enjoy the car a couple hundred miles per year, even as he tries to maintain its originality.

Standard on the Dodge was Chrysler's innovative, semi-automatic Fluid Drive transmission, introduced in 1939, that combined a three-speed manual with a fluid coupling used in place of the flywheel. Drivers need to shift a Fluid Drive-equipped car conventionally through the gears, but once in a gear, the car can be kept in

the gear and rolled to a complete stop without ever engaging the clutch. If a driver is at a stoplight, he can shift to first and let out the clutch without moving or stalling, holding steady by the brake only. When the light changes, he merely needs to push on the accelerator as the fluid coupling does its job.

The fluid coupling is so forgiving that leaving the Dodge in second gear in such situations, so long as the car is not on a steep hill, is perfectly acceptable. The Fluid

Drive makes up for its lack of alacrity with a smoothness few other transmissions of the day could offer. "Fluid Drive provides marvelous flexibility," declared a Chrysler promotional film from 1940. "At your wish, Fluid Drive promptly delivers a surge of power from a snail's pace to 80 miles-per-hour—and without shifting gears." With fewer gear changes around town, wear and tear on the clutch and the complete lack of a flywheel also reduced maintenance on those parts. A true torque-converter auto-



The rugged and reliable 230-cu.in., L-head, 102-horsepower straight-six appears to never have been out of the Dodge, nor had any major work done to it.

matic was still a few years away from the Dodge options list in 1947.

The steel chassis and body were rather conventional as well, with body-on-frame construction. You needn't even look very closely to see that Jerry's Dodge is the embodiment of a Driveable Dream, what with paint all but worn through in some spots, touched up with a brush in others. "When I got it, I only had to do deep cleaning," he says. "And then I had to do who knows how many hours' worth of compounding and polishing and compounding and polishing to bring the finish back and then I just used brush touch-up paint to fix any bad spots because that's what people would have done back in those days." Among the few options on Jerry's car are the front grille-and-bumper guards with integrated driving lamps and the rear bumper guard.

One of the few areas Jerry worked on the body was on the hood, which had some surface rust showing through. "One side was really rusty," he says. "The rest of the paint was still there, but you could tell it was really, really faded, and primer was showing through. I started a little small spot to see what I could do." What he did was use a very fine grit sandpaper to remove the thin layer of surface rust—there was no major corrosion—and then dried it and sealed it with a rattle-can clear protectant. The patina is honest, but no longer threatens to turn into full-on rot.

The tan broadcloth interior shows plenty of signs of aging, too, with various holes, likely the work of insects over the



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years. Jerry tends to this condition by storing the car in his oversize, dry garage that also houses a Plymouth Valiant Signet convertible and a Nash Metropolitan that belongs to his wife, Chris. Though the Dodge appears to have been well taken care of over the years, and likely garaged for some of them, it also was outside for a while, possibly neglected by a family member of a previous, long-time owner

who had transitioned to a retirement home. Today, the big Dodge sedan is as coddled as ever, a trusted friend to Jerry and Chris for fair-weather days.

"It's a very good handling car," Jerry explains. "With the old, old, nylon tires, it goes 'thump, thump, thump.' It sits enough that I'm pretty sure they're out of round. Once you get it to a certain speed, it likes that. It does not wander. It's pretty hard to turn the steering wheel while sitting still. You get it moving just a little bit, it rolls just fine. The transmission works nicely. It has the Fluid Drive, which means you can actually start off in third gear on level ground with the clutch out. It's just very slow. Or you can use all three gears like a standard three on the tree, which is what I like to do. You can come to a stop with the engine running and the clutch out and it does not stall."

Given the Dodge's originality and solidity, Jerry understandably has no inclination to restore the old Custom sedan, merely to maintain and keep as much of that originality as possible. "It's still original," he reminds us, "so, it's just intriguing to leave it that way. When I go to a cruise-in or enter a car show, it's so enjoyable to let folks come and look at it. If they want to sit in it, that's fine. I'm happy for people to be involved with it. But everything about it—the chrome, the emblems, the little courtesy light—all of that is still original. That's my thought: How many old cars this original are still left? There can't be many of them." 🐾





AMX

The design and development of AMC's pony car

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

American Motors produced a variety of AMX models from 1968 to 1981, but the most noteworthy are the 1968-'70 two-seaters. As the only mainstream Corvette challenger in the 1960s, the AMX is not just a beautiful automobile, it's historically significant.

AMX was designed to be a "halo car," to cast an aura of goodness over AMC's entire lineup. It would also serve as a rallying point for the discouraged corporate troops, a shining banner to gather around. AMX helped restore the public's faith in the company and

American Motors' confidence in itself. Conceived at a time when AMC was facing bankruptcy, the AMX was nearly its last bullet.

The company's troubles began after CEO George Romney left to pursue a career in politics. Successor Roy Abernethy decided to compete head-on with the Big Three, spending huge amounts of money to create an entirely new lineup of cars. He misread the youth market, introducing the midsize Marlin to compete with Ford's compact Mustang, and initially refused to offer a V-8 in the Rambler American.

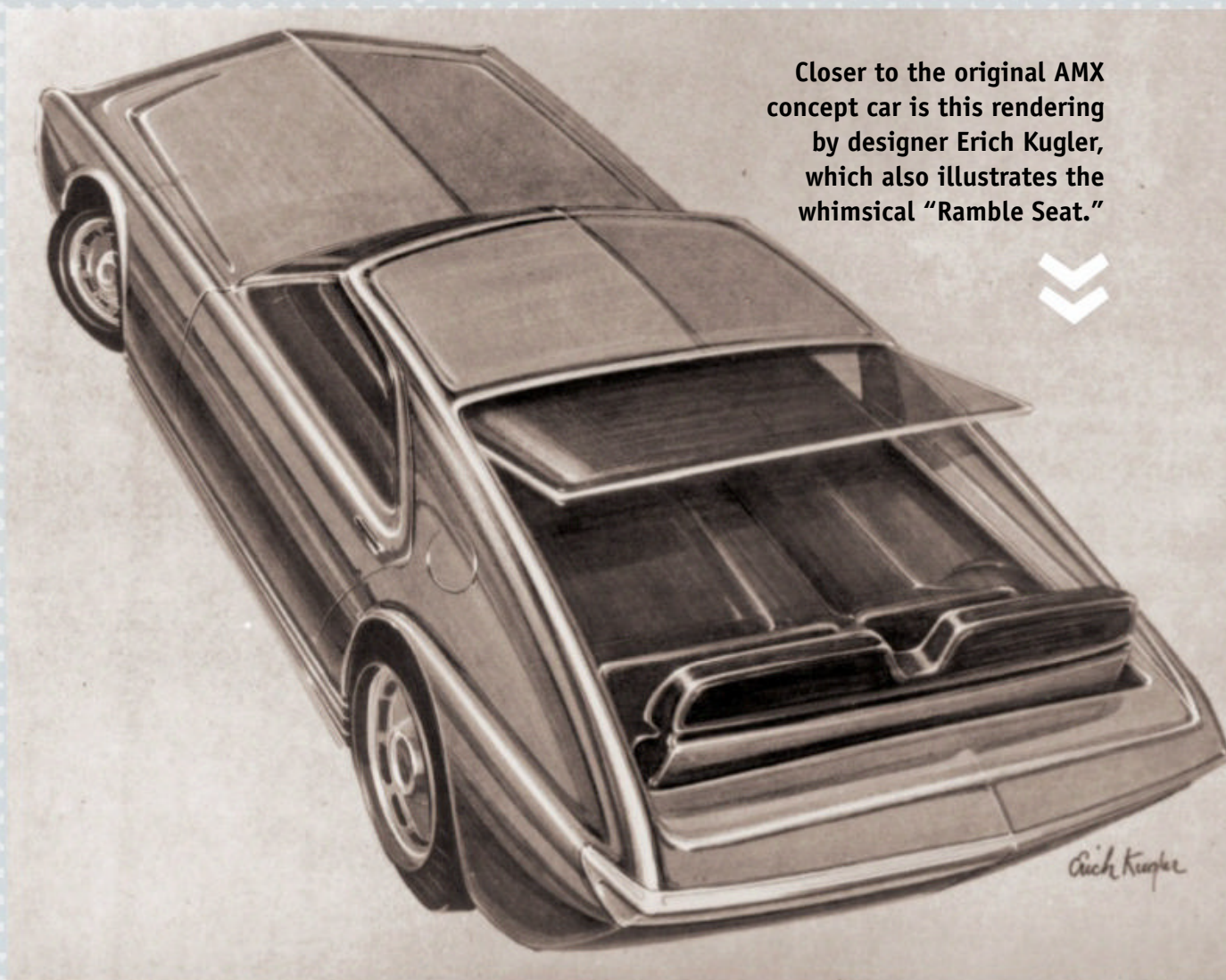
Sales dwindled, finally triggering a crisis in 1967. AMC's board retired Abernethy, putting tough ex-Ford man Bill Luneburg in his place, while chairman Roy Evans relinquished the CEO position in favor of Roy Chapin Jr. Luneburg and Chapin quickly formulated a plan to revive AMC with price cuts, new compacts, a subcompact model, and restyled senior cars. Work had already begun in 1964 on a pony car to challenge Mustang. Created by AMC's Small Car Group under manager Bob Nixon, it was a sleekly styled coupe called the Rogue. It would eventually replace the Marlin, which, being an



This concept illustration shows an idea by AMC designer George Krispinsky as to what the new AMX sports car should look like.



The 1968 AMX joined the Corvette as the only U.S.-built two-seaters in the 1960s. With bold, aggressive styling, the AMX offered the exclusivity of an exotic sports car at the price of a pony car.



Closer to the original AMX concept car is this rendering by designer Erich Kugler, which also illustrates the whimsical "Ramble Seat."

intermediate, wasn't competitive with Ford's Mustang. The Rogue would later be renamed Javelin by sales promotion manager Guy Hadsall Jr., a member of AMC's Product Naming Committee. Both Evans and Chapin pushed to get the Javelin into production as quickly as possible. But Chapin believed that an equally critical new product was still needed: a car to lift the spirits of AMC's dealers, sales people, and employees, as well as the motor press and public. He wanted something very special. He found it.

In 1966, the Small Car Group's Advanced Design Studio manager

Chuck Mashigan and his team created Project IV, a group of four new small car concepts for the future. The most striking of the bunch was a European-looking sport coupe called the AMX. Initially a fiberglass mockup, it proved so popular that a complete running car was soon commissioned; it was built by Italian coachbuilder Vignale. Styling vice president Dick Teague wanted to add some fun, so he instructed Vignale to include what he called a "Ramble Seat"; in which an extra, high-mounted rear seat allowed rear passengers to sit up high, with their heads outside the car,

just like an old-fashioned rumble seat. To accommodate this, the rear window glass lifted up to create a sort of windshield. Teague's Ramble Seat had zero chance of being approved for production, but it generated an incredible amount of press for AMC.

Meanwhile, the AMC Javelin pony car was taking shape. It was a beauty, with clean, exciting styling, a handsome grille theme, and more interior space than the Mustang. With the potential for decent sales volume, Nixon's model was quickly approved for production. But Chapin decided he also wanted to build the AMX



The production AMX ended up being produced on a shortened AMC Javelin chassis. Here we see the Javelin concept bearing its original Rogue name. Created by a team under the direction of the late Bob Nixon, the Javelin was AMC's belated entry in the pony car market. Note the interesting wheels.



Early in the AMX gestation, this is the first clay model of the concept car. The man in the white shirt standing at the far right is Advanced Design Studio manager Chuck Mashigan.



The original AMX concept, built as a non-running fiberglass "pushmobile." The cantilever roof and cockpit-style doors were both popular features, but were impractical for production.



After the public's rousing reaction to the AMX concept, it was decided to build an actual running version of the car. The job was handled by the Italian coachbuilder Vignale. Shown here is one of Vignale's craftsmen hand hammering a sheet of metal using a stump.

only as a two-seat sports car—something that would really burnish AMC's image with younger people.

The only way to make AMX a reality was to keep tooling costs low, and that happened to be a particular specialty of Teague and his designers. At this juncture, the AMX concept was handed over to Nixon to create the production version of the car. Retaining the basic styling themes of the concept, the production model AMX would be built on a modified Javelin platform to cut costs. AMX became, in essence, an AMC Javelin with 1 foot cut out of the center section, its 97-inch wheelbase being exactly 12 inches shorter than Javelin's. Even while sharing a great deal of sheetmetal, the two vehicles managed to look very different because the unique quarter panels imparted a whole different appearance to each, as did the shorter wheelbase on the AMX. In addition, AMX had a distinct grille, and its hood was stamped differently. Clever cost savings included doors, front fenders, trunk lid, and bumpers that were shared with Javelin. For perhaps one-third the

usual cost—or less—American Motors had itself a hot new car aimed at an entirely separate buyer.

AMX was a true two-seater; the surgery to shorten the chassis eliminated the possibility of seating for four. The area behind the bucket seats was carpeted, but small, making it useful for stowing things like briefcases. Interior features included one of the more stylish instrument panels of the decade. Created under the direction of long-time AMC employee and racing enthusiast Jim Alexander, the manager of the interior hard trim studio, much of the actual design work was handled by the very talented designers Jim Pappas and Bill St. Clair. The instrument panel featured a sort of symmetrical design with the left side housing deeply recessed gauges, the right side holding the glovebox. A center "stack" contained the optional radio and A/C vents, if so equipped. Later, a number plate was added to drive home the exclusivity theme.

What Nixon's team achieved was one of the most remarkable cars of the decade, a production sports car that actually looked better than the concept



This is the running, driving AMX concept built by Vignale. We especially like the look of the hood vents. Note the doors now reach down to the rocker panel molding. The pushbutton door handles with a body indent were later used by Renault on its tiny LeCar.



Unlike the production AMX, the Vignale concept car was a four-seater. In this photograph we can see the workings of the tilt-up rear window and the fold-down rear seats. The handle on the back was probably used as a foot rest for 'Rambler Seat' occupants.



Interior view of the Vignale AMX concept car shows the stylish instrument panel and centrally located gauges.



Unusual door design on the Vignale AMX includes an unframed front glass section.

it sprang from. Leaner, more agile, and much prettier, the production AMX was a revelation. It had all the glamour of a European Grand Touring car, but with American muscle and dependability.

According to AMX expert Chris Zinn, styling VP Teague helped convince Chapin and Evans to put the AMX into production. "AMX was a dream of Teague's that he somehow talked them into building. He sold them on the idea of it being an 'image' car." However, the new Javelin pony car would debut first, since it would

be the volume seller of the two. Once the Javelin was firmly established as a contender in the pony car arena, the two-seat car would follow as a mid-year surprise, something to keep the momentum going. Since the production version of AMC's new sports car had much of the flavor of

the auto show model, it would use the same name, AMX, a moniker originally suggested by Teague.

The AMX ended up being one of the best-looking cars of the 1960s, low and sleek, and incredibly stylish. It had the powerful appearance of a limited-

After Chuck Mashigan handed off the AMX concept to the Small Car Studio, it was the job of Bob Nixon and his team to create a production version based on the Rogue/Javelin car they had already designed. This mockup is close to the final production styling. Note the unusual fender badge.





The production model AMX shocked many people when it debuted in mid-1968. Few people dreamed AMC would actually produce a two-seat sports car, and they were further surprised at how nice it was.



Production AMXs all came with V-8 power and dual exhausts. This particular car has the extra-cost Go Pack option, which included either the 343-cu.in. V-8 or the AMX 390 engine, Twin-Grip differential, rally stripes, redline tires, power disc brakes, and more.



AMX interior trim and upholstery were of a high quality and very refined for the car's price.

production Italian sports car, and the performance to match, because all AMXs were V-8-powered.

At announcement time, AMC executives stated that the new AMX was designed "...to fill the void between the present personal car and the high-priced sports car. In price, performance, and design the AMX is not comparable to any other U.S. car available on the market today." *Road Test* magazine called it "a Dream Car Come True."

Specifications tell the story better. AMC's AMX was small by American standards, just 177.2 inches long. For comparison, Ford Mustang was 183.6 inches long, and its 108-inch wheelbase was 11 inches longer than the AMX, and the Chevrolet Corvette's wheelbase was 1 inch longer than the AMX.

Engine offerings included a choice of three V-8s, all with four-barrel carburetion and dual exhausts, capable of supplying whatever level of power a buyer might prefer. Standard was a 290-cu.in. V-8 good for 225 hp at 4,700 rpm and 300 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm. The next step up was a 343-cu.in. V-8 producing 280 hp at 4,800 rpm and 365 lb-ft of torque at 3,000 rpm. Both of these high-compression V-8s debuted earlier on other AMC cars, but the AMX's top power option was a brand-new engine debuting with this car—the mighty "AMX 390" V-8, the largest and most powerful engine AMC had produced yet. The 390 produced 315 hp at 4,600 rpm and a whopping 425 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm. This thundering, locomotive torque could propel the 3,097-pound AMX from 0 to 60 in a mere 7.1 seconds. Driving



The AMX was one of the few times a concept car became a reality. Although sales were relatively modest during its three years of production, it helped change AMC's image among young people.

a stock car, *Mechanix Illustrated's* Tom McCahill turned in a quarter-mile run of 15.4 seconds at 93 mph. At the press preview held at California's Orange County Raceway another driver did even better—a 14.37-second quarter-mile!

Getting that power to the rear wheels was a standard four-speed manual transmission with Hurst shifter, or an optional Borg-Warner three-speed automatic. A variety of rear axle ratios were offered so buyers could tailor the car to their specific driving needs—grand touring or street racing or something in between, depending on which transmission was specified. On four-speed cars, a 3.54:1 rear axle ratio was standard with the 290 V-8, optional with the 343 and 390 V-8s. The latter two came with 3.15 gears standard and 3.54 optional. With automatic transmissions buyers got to choose between 3:15 gears that were standard with the 290 V-8, optional on the others, or 2:87 gears that were standard with 343 and 390 V-8s, and optional with the 290 engine. Twin-Grip, AMC's limited-slip differential, was a popular option.

Standard equipment also included heavy-duty shocks and springs (coil up front, semi-elliptical leaf in the rear), a front heavy-duty anti-roll bar, and rear traction bars necessary to handle V-8 power. Not surprising, drum brakes were standard, with power assist optional. The standard bonded linings provided 167.5 inches of lining area, which was pretty good for that era. Thankfully, front disc brakes were also available.

Price-wise, the AMX was a bargain. In addition to the standard V-8 engine and four-speed gearbox, the \$3,245 base

sticker price included reclining bucket seats, full carpeting, an 8,000-rpm tach, 140-mph speedometer, and E70x14 Wide-Profile tires; redline tires were optional. AMC executives claimed that AMX wasn't meant to compete head-to-head with Chevrolet's Corvette but rather, offer a lower-cost alternative. The Corvette coupe listed for \$4,663 that year—more than 40 percent higher than AMX. Mercury Cougar XR-7's base price was only a few dollars under AMX, while a well-equipped Camaro could easily exceed AMX's price, and neither offered AMX's exclusivity.

AMC stated that only 10,000 AMXs would be produced for the 1968 model year. However, if more than 10,000 had been ordered, the factory in all likelihood would have built them. But, in any event, there was no test of the statement, because just 6,725 AMXs were built in what was a short model year.

No matter. AMX succeeded where it counted most. It generated tons of free publicity and drew young people like a magnet into AMC dealerships. It also proved the much-needed inspiration that AMC itself needed at a critical time in its corporate life. 🏁



To further distance itself from the frumpy "Rambler image," AMC gave *Playboy* magazine's Playmate of the Year, Angela Dorian, a special pink AMX. The presenter is AMC VP of marketing William McNealy.



The Haartz Corporation

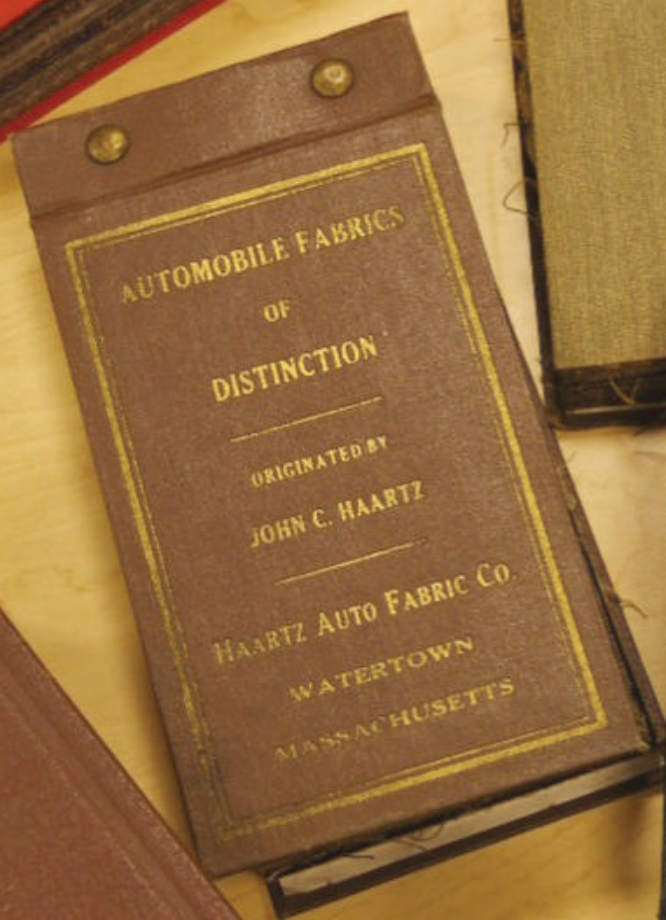
The firm that made your convertible's original soft-top still has the classic-car hobby covered

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO
HISTORICAL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE HAARTZ CORPORATION

In the 130-plus years of automotive production, few industry suppliers have endured for more than a century. Of those survivors, one family owned American firm remains a leader in its field, supplying interior components and the vast majority of weatherproof soft roof materials used on new cars today. The Haartz Corporation is the most respected name

in convertible top material, and as it advances into the 21st century, it actively supports the past through leadership that's personally engaged in the old-car hobby. Whether you're researching historical information about convertible tops and vinyl roof coverings or looking for an accurate reproduction material for your classic car's application, Haartz is the go-to source.

It's not a given that automotive executives are also enthusiasts, but in the case of this venerable Acton, Massachusetts, concern, that's very much the case, and has been through three generations of leaders. We recently sat down with CEO Eric Haartz to learn how the now-multinational business bearing his family name got its start and weathered the ups and downs of the last





John C. Haartz Sr., founder of the J.C. Haartz Company and Haartz Auto Fabric, was an auto enthusiast. He's shown here at his New Hampshire home, in the driver's seat of his 1916 Haynes touring car, under a top made from Haartz waterproof material.

112 years. The Haartz Corporation was founded by Eric's grandfather, John Carl "J.C." Haartz, and grown through the postwar era by his father, John Haartz Jr. The love of cars was passed from father to son, twice over, and Eric is hands-on active, maintaining and enjoying a collection of vehicles that includes gems like an unrestored 1911 Knox touring car, 1910 and 1912 Buicks, and a touring-bodied Packard 740.

Having grown up in and with the business, Eric can talk about how convertible top material was its key product through the 1970s, and how, in the early 1990s, Haartz Corporation expanded to become a domestic supplier of moldable interior trim material, which currently represents more than half of its output. This now-global company has come a long way from its humble roots in the first decade of the 20th century, he explains. "My granddad partnered with his cousin to start the company in Boston. His father had been a textile inspector, and had a little specialty fabric finishing business. He saw a burgeoning market in two areas: Tops for automobiles—in 1906, this was hardly more than a novelty, as people were just coming around to the idea that they'd drive these things in inclement weather, and it may be good to have a top on the thing rather than bundle up in raingear—and coated fabrics for the shoe industry, since New England was, at that time, a huge center for footwear. He got nowhere with the latter, but thankfully, he managed to get himself a good

position in the top material business."

J.C. was what Eric calls "a converter," meaning he would buy cloth that was woven to his specifications, have rubber-coating firms put that together with another textile to create top material, and then sell it on to the automotive market, after which the top material was cut, sewed, and assembled on the frames. "Around 1910, the roads people drove were dusty and muddy. He was aware of a fabric called mohair, which we think of in terms of upholstery applications, but in a flat-woven form, put together in a three-ply cloth top material, it allowed top material to be more readily cleaned than traditional cotton fabric," he explains. This premium, easy-care textile was quickly embraced by medium- and upper-priced carmakers of the day including Buick, Franklin, Locomobile, and Packard, and its acceptance encouraged J.C. to expand his offerings into other surface-coated convertible top materials, including the ancestors of today's vinyl, which at that time, included natural rubber that was lacquered and embossed to create grain. Those coated materials became very relevant around World War I, when trade embargoes halted the supply of a German chemical that American textile dye firms needed in their coloring process. Fabric-surface tops would return on finer cars in the next decade, when this company experienced its own bust and boom.

While the J.C. Haartz Company had quickly found success—including the

establishment of a lasting relationship with General Motors trimmer Fisher Body—the economic recession of 1920-'21 caused financial issues that led to Eric's grandfather being pushed out of his own firm within a few years. People loyal to J.C. formed a new company in Watertown, Massachusetts, that turned coated-material rolls into finished tops; circa-1925, that firm became Haartz Auto Fabric Company. "Very quickly recognizing the need to have more manufacturing presence, my granddad teamed up with a rubber chemist, Jesse Mason, and they started a sister company that was a rubber-coating firm. They sold automotive fabrics through Haartz Auto Fabric, and the sister company, Haartz-Mason, sold in the non-automotive markets," Eric tells us. He notes that the family sold Haartz-Mason in 1980, and when it was dissolved in the late 1990s, it had been making roofing membrane material for flat industrial roofs.

Haartz Auto Fabric was perfectly situated to cater to the custom coachwork boom of the late 1920s, and it offered lines of "Jonarts Cleaneasy" top fabrics—the former name a contraction of John Haartz—that were in demand by volume and premium automakers (including the nearby Springfield-based U.S. plant of Rolls-Royce), and by prominent coachbuilders. Eric lays some fascinating Depression-era sample books before us. "We got into some interesting styles in that era; there are examples of flat-woven material with two, three, even four different yarn colors to get a particular look. I can't imagine the volume on that ever amounted to very much. How do you economically set up and run a textile like that, because you've got to run a fair distance before you get the stability of the process?" he muses. Extensive contracts like the ones that saw Haartz supply the majority of GM and Chrysler convertible top material helped the family business weather the hard times of the 1930s, and hit the ground running after World War II.

John Haartz Jr. was leading this supplier in the 1950s, when colorful, easy-cleaning vinyl tops came into favor. This UV-stabilized modern substance was a development of synthetic material research during WWII, like the acrylic-based fabrics that were making cloth tops more durable and color-fast than ever before. "Vinyl convertible top materials were predominant until the 1970s, and then came the American convertible hiatus," Eric remembers. "While they were still halo cars in the showroom, they were a nuisance to build in pre-computerized factories, and



CEO Eric Haartz explains that, since 1965, the Massachusetts-based headquarters of The Haartz Corporation has been the company's largest facility. It now produces hundreds of thousands of yards on a weekly basis, running 24 hours a day, 6 days a week.

weren't profitable. I think that was more the reason for them going away than the safety concerns that are often mentioned, because when Lee Iacocca turned the K-car into a convertible a few years later, there wasn't much fuss about safety.

"In the meantime, we were riding high on the boom of the vinyl roof cover era. All three of the major American automakers embraced that to some extent. It started off as vinyl on a textile, then evolved into vinyl on a synthetic felt type of material using polyester fiber and a little foam layer. We had equipment here to produce that kind of substrate," he continues. Haartz adapted as fabric top material regained popularity through the 1990s, its solution-dyed acrylic Stayfast line being embraced by automakers influenced by the rich-looking cloth tops on prestigious German convertibles. Working out of its Massachusetts and Mannheim, Germany, plants, Haartz still develops, quality-tests, and certifies numerous product lines, and is an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of finished top materials used by automakers including Audi, BMW, Bentley, Fiat, GM, Rolls-Royce, and Volkswagen. It also supplies the aftermarket, including businesses like Robbins Auto Top, Electron Top, Kee Auto Tops, and Bill Hirsch Auto, with the Acton plant running 24 hours a day, up to six days a week.

A small but significant part of this company's business is its ongoing contribution to the old-car hobby, in the form of the vintage restoration market.

Working with historians and restorers covering a wide swath of marque clubs, Eric and his team have researched which original material style numbers were used by which automakers, also compiling a comprehensive online "Vintage Restorer's Guide" (www.haartz.com/introduction-restorers-guide). This section of the company's website offers a glossary of terms, details of top textiles and coatings, documentation, and more.

As much as it feasibly can, Haartz works with restorers to make correct-looking replacement top materials for vehicles of all ages. "We'll soon be doing a second pilot run of the long, cobra-style roof grain that you see on sedan and coupe roof covers of the 1920s and 1930s," Eric says. "We'd used a grain roll that was never exactly right—it pertained more to a roof cover job on Chrysler-Plymouth cars of the early 1960s, but people accepted it for years. Finally, after wrestling with it, we decided to play that scratch ticket in the form of a new grain roll last year. Initial response on the first pilot run was positive."

"Some replication jobs are easier, some are harder," explains Haartz director of business development, Matthew Williams. "It's all about what's available in the marketplace for fibers and yarns. Some of the technologies out there have not lent themselves to maintaining the ready availability of certain colors and old types of materials. Synthetic fibers have almost completely displaced natural fibers in automotive



applications, so finding people who are skilled at handling fibers like mohair is extremely difficult. As an example, we consulted with people who are in the men's clothing business, as they still use a bit of mohair in certain types of jackets and suits. We eventually worked with those more in our vein, who got the right yarn and were able to weave it. With some reproductions, we have to go back to ground zero, finding the raw materials or re-developing a specialty embossing tool to create textures because it doesn't exist anymore... it takes time.

"In a lot of cases, the coatings we're applying are modern versions of what was done back in the day. It's not changing the aesthetic effect, the look and feel of the material, and how it will tailor and install on the roof," Matthew adds. "We'll use a modern version of a vinyl or rubber formulation that makes the product waterproof, which is certainly more durable than it was in the original form. We've modernized it to the point that it looks original, but will stand the test of time."

Reproducing vintage top textiles is rarely a profitable exercise ("If we even recover our costs on materials, I think that's a good day," Eric admits), but Haartz Corporation continues to support the old-car industry today. "As long as the overall prosperity of the business enables us to do so, we will provide specialty materials that support the restoration of older vehicles, and we'll do that until my burial," he says with a grin. "It's a labor of love." 🐼



Split Personality

The highs and lows of the 1928-'31 International Six Speed Special

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY BONHAMS

Sugar beets were once big business in Northern California. Among the region's sweetest spots for beet farming was King Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The island's soft loamy peat soil could produce 20-25 tons of beets per acre annually, yielding about 2,500 pounds of sugar. After picking and processing, the leafy tops of the plant, the pulp remaining after pressing, and the beet molasses produced during refining were used to feed livestock, so nothing went to waste.

But sugar beets are perishable, meaning they need to be trucked to the factory immediately after harvesting. In the late 1920s, that job required an uncommon hauler: one that could

negotiate soft terrain in the beet fields while loading up, then hit the road and run along at a good clip to get the vegetables to a processing plant. Time is money in the short-haul trucking business. To be profitable you need to load up and deliver quickly, then get back for another round. Getting stuck in a beet field or breaking down on the way to the drop? Not an option.

The Ireys family of Lodi was successful in the trucking business around Northern California for decades. Advertisements seeking crops that needed moving placed in the *Lodi Sentinel* by Frank Ireys can be found as far back as 1919: "Farmers... Attention. If you have grain or hay to haul see the City Transfer Co. or Phone 39. Best Equipment in San Joaquin County."



International's Six Speed Special was a bestseller for the company, though few surviving are as handsome as this example. (It commanded an impressive \$46,750 at Bonham's Scottsdale sale in 2015.) The truck's Waukesha four-cylinder was no powerhouse, but its two-speed axle gave the driver six forward gears.



The Ireys obviously took pride in having the right rig for the job, so when they saw a demonstration of International's all-new Six Speed Special in 1929, they knew it was a moneymaker. What made the Six Speed Special so special? For one thing, as a one-ton it was right sized for this sort of work: Stout enough to shoulder a load yet light enough on its feet to tip-toe through a field, then sprint to the destination. It didn't have an abundance of power—beneath its hood was a 173-cu.in. Waukesha L-head four-cylinder—but it was stingy with a gallon of fuel. What the Six Speed Special did have up its sleeve was an Eaton two-speed axle, which was a first for a factory-built commercial truck. Combined with a conventional three-speed transmission, the stick-operated Eaton unit gave the International six forward gears and two in reverse. When a Six Speed Special was demonstrated for the Ireys on King Island, they watched the truck, fully loaded with sugar beets, drive slowly through the field in low range without spinning its wheels or overheating. Once the International hit the pavement, the driver was able to hit a top speed of 35 mph in third/high (or sixth).

The Ireys purchased several Six Speed Specials and, in

1929, they used the plucky Internationals to move 14,557 tons of beets. That low fuel consumption and reliability added up to an operating cost of about 72 cents a ton.

We don't know if the 1930 Six Speed Special on these pages ever hauled beets, but it has definitely beaten the odds. These trucks were never rare—in fact they were one of International Harvester's bestsellers. In 1928, the first model year, International built more than 14,000 of them, accounting for about 40 percent of its total truck production. In 1929, that number increased to 21,122. But these trucks were beasts of burden, and it's remarkable that this one survived hard work, as well as wartime scrap-metal drives, to emerge beautifully restored at Bonhams' Scottsdale, Arizona, Auction in 2015. The prewar twin-stick sold for an impressive \$46,750 (including buyer's premium)—a far cry from the original \$820 base MSRP.

International sold the Six Speed Special as a cowl and chassis with front fenders, running boards, lights, a horn, and a set of tools. Buyers could then opt for extras like an enclosed cab and a rack body as well as a high-tension magneto ignition, a governor, an underslung tire carrier and spare rim, or a water pump in place of the standard thermo-syphon system.

The Six Speed Special was similar in appearance to International's $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton Special Delivery but it rode on a 124-inch wheelbase — 7 inches longer than the Special Delivery. The Six Speed Special also had larger pressed-steel frame rails that measured $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick, 6 inches deep, and 2 inches wide. Supporting its frame were eight-leaf front springs that measured 2 by 40 inches and 12-leaf rear springs that measured 2½ by 46 inches. The front axle was a beefy I-beam made of heat-treated steel, while the rear was an iron banjo-type housing packed with molybdenum steel shafts. Armed with the auxiliary two-speed unit, in high range the final gear ratio was 5.25:1, while low range delivered a stump-pulling 15.46:1.

The truck's versatility and wide gear selection made it a natural for more than just farm work. In a photo spread from International's dealer magazine, *International Trail* (November 1928), the company showed how truck buyers across the country were making use of the Six Speed Special's "Power and Speed For Every Need."

For instance: The Specialty Sales Company of Fort Dodge, Iowa, put a Six Speed Special to use hauling Kraft Cheese in a special van body; the Oriska, North Dakota, Fire Department upfitted a Six Speed Special with firefighting gear and used it to battle blazes; while the Brazos Valley Produce Company in Waco, Texas, turned its Six Speed Special into a road tractor pulling a semi-trailer. On the Hawaiian Islands, Maui's Kaleakala

Pineapple Co. used Six Speed Specials to haul pineapples and transport workers. One of its trucks accumulated 11,000 trouble-free miles in the first eight months of service. An owner operator on the islands, K. Takahashi, reported making 17 round trips from the field to the railroad depot each day, loaded with 85 boxes of pineapples per run. His Six Speed Special did the work without a wimper and sipped gasoline, he said.

By the end of 1932, the Six Speed Special had been shifted out of International's lineup. At that point it was known as the B-2 and its rating had grown to 1½-tons. The truck's wheelbase was longer by then, too, at 136 inches. Though International was moving to more powerful six-cylinder engines and four-speed transmissions, the two-speed axle wouldn't ride into the sunset for many, many years. Two-speed axles did move away from the stick-shift control however, in favor of vacuum and electric actuators operated by a button mounted on the main shift lever. 🐼





JUNE 22 - 30, 2019

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

START: Mission Inn Ave, Riverside, CA - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
LUNCH: California Route 66 Museum, Victorville, CA - noon
OVERNIGHT: The Boulevard, Lancaster, CA - 4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

LUNCH: Bishop City Park, Bishop, CA - noon
OVERNIGHT: Lampe Park, Gardnerville, NV - 5:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 24

LUNCH: Mill Street, Grass Valley, CA - 11:45 a.m.
PIT STOP: State Theater, Myers Street, Oroville, CA - 2:30 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: City Plaza, Downtown Chico, CA - 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Recreation Grove Park, Willits, CA - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: 2nd Street, Old Town, Eureka, CA - 5:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Curry County Fairgrounds, Gold Beach, OR - noon
OVERNIGHT: Southwest G Street, Grants Pass, OR - 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

LUNCH: Rim Village, Crater Lake, OR - noon
OVERNIGHT: Tower Theater, Wall Street, Bend, OR - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

LUNCH: Aeroplane & Auto Museum, Hood River, OR - noon
OVERNIGHT: WAAAM West, Vancouver, WA - 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

PIT STOP: Maritime Museum, Astoria, OR - 10 a.m.
LUNCH: Commerce Avenue, Longview, WA - noon
OVERNIGHT: LeMay Collections at Marymount, Spanaway, WA - 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

FINISH: LeMay - America's Car Museum, Tacoma, WA - 1:30 p.m.

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Engine 1!

A 1927 Seagrave Suburbanite fire truck receives a top-notch restoration

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

BY MATTHEW LITWIN

RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY

COURTESY OF JOHN GASPER

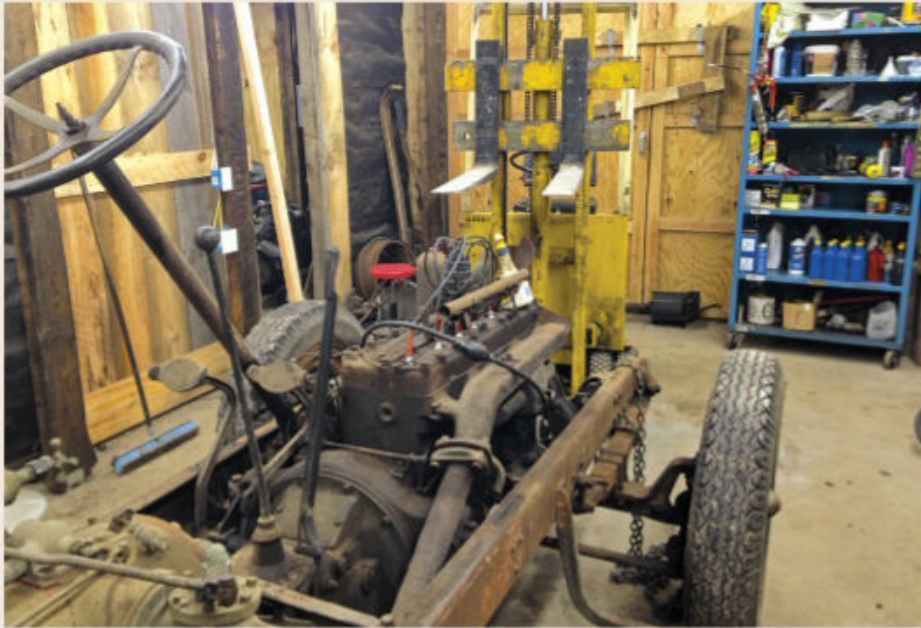
Like most New England communities, Woodbury, Connecticut, is steeped in history. Founded in 1673, its proximity to the Housatonic River spurred the growth of an agriculture-based economy and, by the mid-19th century, Woodbury was a melting pot of industry while retaining its rural charm. Naturally, much-needed services followed, such as a volunteer fire department. The first to be organized in 1896 was Orenaug that served the Main Street district. Hotchkissville followed in 1924, to serve the village of the same name. Just three years later, initial meetings occurred that led to the ultimate June 1928 merger of both departments. One of the first new vehicles purchased by the newly formed Woodbury Fire Department is this 1927 Seagrave Suburbanite.

Seagrave was the brainchild of Massachusetts native Frederic Seagrave. Born in 1849, he moved to Michigan as a young man and began making wooden ladders for apple orchards. His ladders quickly became a favorite among regional fire companies and, by 1881, Seagrave & Company had been organized in Detroit as a supplier of fire apparatus. A decade later, the company was relocated to Ohio where its first motorized apparatus was developed in 1906.

Seagrave was the second-largest manufacturer of fire trucks when it announced the Suburbanite truck in 1923. As the name suggests, it was designed for small urban towns and villages, featuring a svelte-yet-strong chassis fitted with a 70-hp Continental six-cylinder engine, three-speed Brown-Lipe manual transmission, and 350-gpm water pump. For



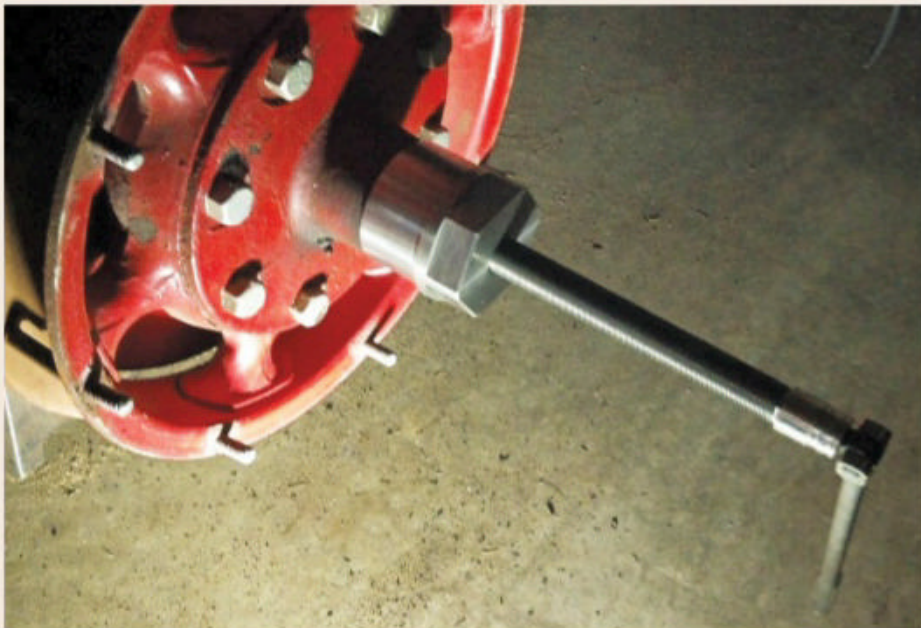




The Seagrave was already partially disassembled when the project was relaunched in 2014. A forklift was used, within the confines of a small garage, to pull the Suburbanite's six-cylinder engine and three-speed manual transmission from the chassis.



All of the fire truck's original body panels had been retained in dry storage, preserving everything from the original paint and gold leaf design to Woodbury Fire Department livery. Corrosion was limited to the easily correctable surface variety.



The tapered design of the rear hubs installed against the Timken differential meant that a unique puller had to be designed and fabricated, pictured here. Had this tool not been built, the differential could not have been properly inspected and rebuilt.



After removing the hubs, a forklift was used once again to fully disassemble the Timken unit; its mass and heft are apparent in this image. The gears were in perfect condition; however, new bearings and seals were installed to ensure longevity.



Though svelte compared to its siblings, the Suburbanite chassis is still substantial. At this stage, having already been sandblasted, it's been refinished in Fire Engine Red paint and portions of the leaf-sprung suspension system has been bolted to the frame.



This subassembly is a restored rear axle seal, which features a custom-made leather seal, as was originally done. The new leather sits between the original steel plates, which are also riveted together further duplicating the original design.



Seagrave utilized a Continental six-cylinder engine in its Suburbanite line, and, although this unit is from the 1932 model year, its architecture is similar to the original engine. Close inspection determined that the engine did not require rebuilding.



This is the Seagrave-designed, single-lever 500-gpm water pump cleaned and under inspection on a work bench. New seals and bearings helped rebuild the unit; however, it also required a new drive gear after the original was found in pieces.



Here the new water pump drive gear is installed. The straight-tooth cog was custom-fabricated from bronze. Like the original gear, this is a sacrificial part designed to take a load yet fail under catastrophic duress to prevent damage elsewhere within.



One of only three exterior metal parts that needed to be fabricated was the right-side splash apron. The damaged original was used as a pattern, and the replacement was test-fit multiple times—as seen here—prior to receiving primer and paint.



The Seagrave's seat during its restoration. The springs have been reconditioned and mounted to a new wooden base frame. Matching the factory build traits, horse hair will fill the void before new leather upholstery completes this subassembly.



Final assembly is underway, with the engine, transmission, and pump installed, along with the completed suspension and brake systems. New wiring was also installed. Note that several pieces of trim are in place, finished in chrome versus nickel.



Original gauges have been restored and installed within the original dash, which was made of aluminum when new to help reduce weight. The engine runs smoothly and the original pump has been returned to its fully functioning glory.



1926, the line was upgraded with a 90-hp Continental that permitted a 500-gpm pump, helping make the Suburbanite one of the company's most popular platforms before the Woodbury Fire Department took delivery of its truck.

After decades of service, the Suburbanite was reportedly sold to a local resident who intended to restore the weather-worn truck. It was partially disassembled during the Eighties in dry storage, where it then sat in limbo for the next 20-plus years. The owner then donated the fire truck back to the department with one stipulation: That it be restored to as-new condition. Its historical significance was not lost on the department or the town, and by 2014 a budget was in place that allowed the restoration to begin, led by department Captain Frank Morgan, who searched for the right shop to manage the daunting job. That same year, John Gasper, of Gasper's Automotive Restorations, was contacted by the department.

A volunteer fireman himself, John officially opened his restoration business in 2010, specializing in fire trucks. According to John, "The Seagrave had been returned to the department disassembled. Most of the parts and the body had been removed, but the chassis and running gear were still intact. What amazed me was the lack of damage. There was no rot on the body or the chassis, and some of the original paint and gold leaf was on some parts of the body and wheels. Its biggest problem was the surface rust—it looked like the truck had led a charmed life otherwise."

Recognizing John's passion, the Woodbury department commissioned the project to John, who transferred the Seagrave to his small garage in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Space limitations meant John had to hang body panels from the walls while he used a forklift to help remove the truck's engine and transmission, the former of which turned out to be a later 1932 L-head Continental. The differential soon followed suit, as did the suspension system. The base frame was then sandblasted, after which it was sealed in PPG primer. With no damage to repair, the frame was given multiple coats of PPG Concept paint matched to an appropriate shade of Fire Engine Red.

"When I examined the suspension, it was obvious that the truck didn't see the same use that today's equipment endures. Back then nobody called a fire department for small problems, only the large concerns. The bushings, for instance, were practically brand new, so there was no need to replace them. I simply cleaned everything up, painted what needed paint, and started to reassemble everything," said John.

The same lack of abuse was found when John examined the engine and transmission. He reported that the latter only required new seals, but, as a precaution, he installed new bearings. As to the six-cylinder engine, John told us, "I removed a few crankshaft bearing caps to check tolerances and everything was within factory specifications, so I bolted it back together. I did replace the exhaust valves and lapped the intake



valves though, and rebuilt the carburetor, generator, and starter.”

Next on his list was the Timken differential. To fully disassemble and inspect the unit, and because of the hub’s tapered design, John had to have a unique puller fabricated. Like the transmission, new bearings and seals were installed after determining that the gears were in like-new condition. New axle seals were also needed.

“The outer seals used leather sandwiched between two steel plates. I found a woman in East Hartford who had a leather shop, and using a jig I created from round bar welded to a steel plate, she was able to make me a set of proper seals.

“The Seagrave-designed, single-lever water pump needed new bearings and seals, but to make it functional we had to have a new drive gear fabricated. The original gear was made of a fiber-based material, the idea being that it was an easily replaced sacrificial part that prevented the rest of the pump from incurring damage. The original gear was in pieces, so we had a new one made from bronze. It’s still a sacrificial material compared to steel.”

Soon after the pump was reassembled, John relocated his business to a larger facility in Bolton. This enabled him to rebuild the chassis with greater ease while a new gas tank was being fabricated. According to John, the original tank was as thin as paper thanks to the effects of years of moisture accumulation within. There was also the ongoing search for correct parts, such as headlamps and lenses,

with the aid of fellow restorer Andy Swift, while a proper lamp bar was fabricated and a new siren bell made from copper. Meanwhile, the seat was being restored by Ken Nadeau, who installed new leather upholstery over a cushion of horse hair—just as Seagrave had done—versus modern foam.

“When the truck was new, the brightwork would have been finished in nickel, which is a labor-intensive finish. If someone touches a nickel finish, you can see their print within 24 hours, which then requires a lot of buffing and polishing to eliminate. The truck was going to be used for all kinds of ceremonies, and to help alleviate visual maintenance, the department chose to have the brightwork done in chrome.”

Workflow was interrupted only briefly for one final move to John’s new permanent shop location—John purchased the historic Manchester Armory, in neighboring Manchester. With a small staff and ample space to work on multiple projects simultaneously, final assembly of the Seagrave hit high gear when the body panels were painted and installed, including one splash apron that had to be fabricated. New oak panels completed the hose bed, and new hoses, fitted with the original couplings, were added. The crowning touch was the gold leaf finish, including “Woodbury F.D.” markings, accomplished by Gregg Heger of East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, who had copies of the original 1927 Seagrave patterns in his files.



New oak decking graces the hose bed. Hidden below is an extra two-shelf compartment just deep enough for extra firefighting tools.



In December 2017, John delivered the completed Suburbanite to the Waterbury Fire Department, where it was received by Chief Janet Morgan, Captain Frank Morgan, and the 68 volunteers who fill the department roster. “It was a proud moment for everyone involved,” John said. “It’s a part of the community’s history, and to be able to deliver it in the same functional condition as it was in 1928 was very gratifying.” 🐾



Triumph's Triumph

The handcrafted elegance behind the 1935 Gloria Southern Cross

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LaCHANCE

Decades before Triumph introduced its highly successful line of TR sports cars, it had been producing all sorts of automobiles—saloons, tourers, drophead-coupes, and roadsters. For a small car company, Triumph's line of automobiles was quite extensive.

Back in 1885, a young German businessman named Siegfried Bettmann, who had just emigrated to London at the age of 21, started a bicycle company; he named it Triumph. During the ensuing years, Bettmann's Triumph Cycle Company went from manufacturing bicycles to producing motorcycles; one of the first was a motorized tricycle with a single-cylinder engine that dated back to 1903. Around 1911, Bettmann was appointed the chairman of the Standard Motor Company, yet it wasn't until 1944 when Standard bought the Triumph Motor Company that Standard-Triumph was born.

Since 1923, Triumph had been producing a variety of automobiles, all of which were quite small compared to the many other cars of the era. It did, however, produce a large car during the mid-1920s called the Fifteen. Its most popular line was the Super Seven (1927-'32), available in a variety of body styles, followed by the Super Eight (1933-'34), all of which were compact cars powered by small four-cylinder flathead engines. Then came the Scorpion (1931-'32), Twelve-Six and Super Nine (1932-'33), Ten (1933-'34), and an extensive line of various Gloria models (1933-'38), along with the Vitesse (1937-'38) and Dolomite (1937-'39).

Introduced in 1933, and lasting in production through to 1938, the Southern Cross was the Gloria's "grand touring" sports car. With the entire Gloria line created to push Triumph upmarket, the Southern Cross was blessed with handsome good looks thanks to its well-proportioned two-seat body. It offered several distinctive features such as an upright chrome mesh grille, an unusually tall engine compartment with double row of louvers on each side, cut-down doors, and tall 17-inch wheels for a rugged appeal, along with its signature twin spares in the rear. With so many sporting cars of the day being puny and somewhat frail looking,



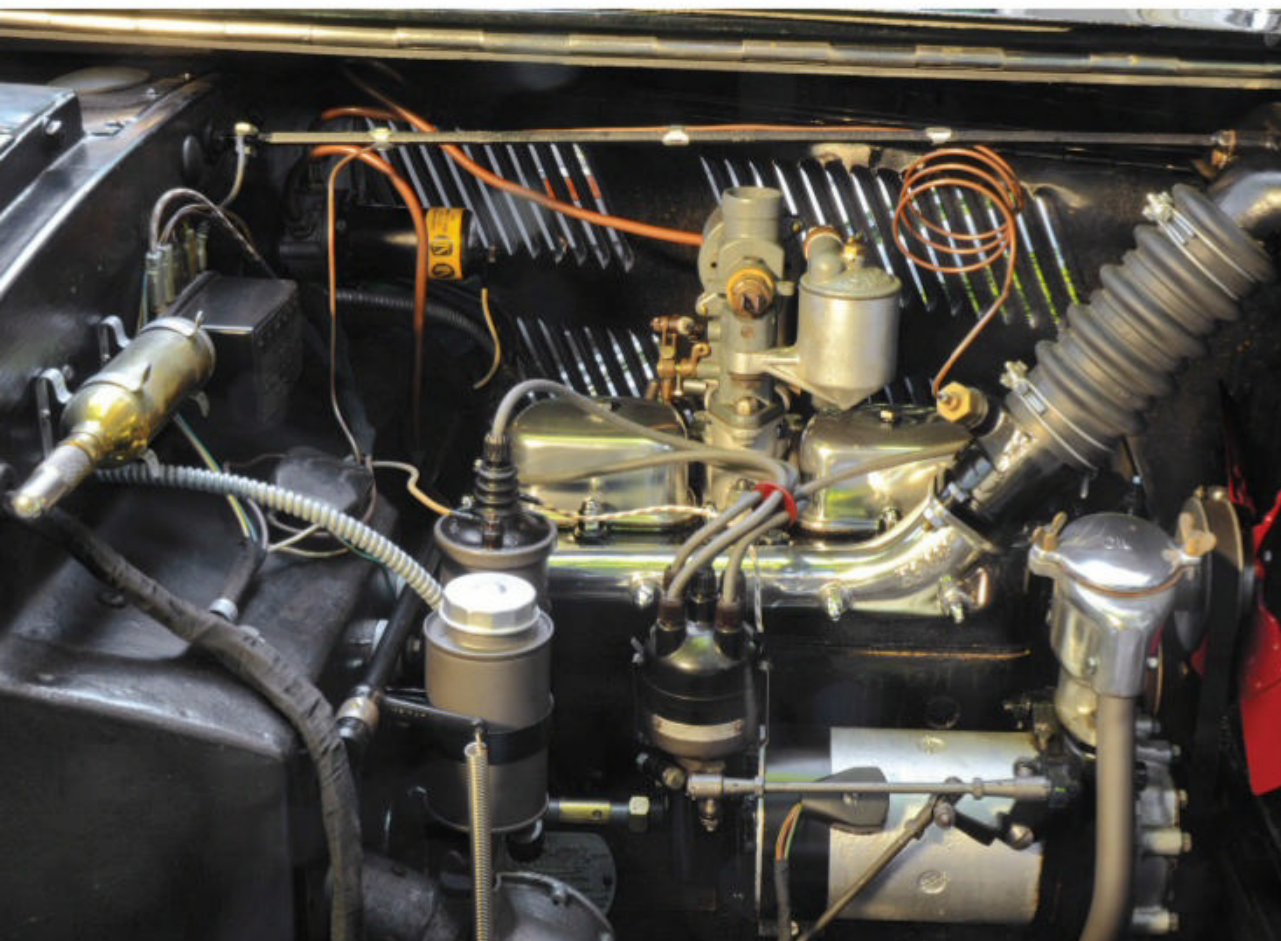




In the traditional British solid wood instrument panel, the Jaeger speedometer and tachometer are flanked by ammeter, oil pressure, and fuel gauges.



The fashionable pair of Brooklands racing-style aeroscreens help deflect the oncoming wind when the windshield is folded down; they adjust to any angle.



Designed by Coventry Climax but built by Triumph under license, the 1,232-cc four-cylinder features two valve covers with a single SU carburetor in between; the intake valves are positioned overhead with the exhaust valves on the side.

the Southern Cross had a very robust, muscular appearance about it.

Behind the Gloria's broad line of automobiles was renowned Triumph engineer Walter Belgrove, the man who is responsible for the model's design and overall style. The aerodynamic shapes of the Glorias were clearly ahead of their time. As a hobbyist sculptor, Belgrove even created the Gloria's signature winged female radiator mascot. As to the construction of the roadster's body, in keeping with the coachbuilding traditions of the day, it was crafted out of aluminum paneling by Cross & Ellis and fitted atop a wood frame made of ash. Like contemporary higher-end automobiles, such as Alvis and Rolls-Royce, these prewar Triumphs were also handcrafted and every bit equal in quality and workmanship.

As was the case with nearly all British automobile manufacturers at the time, their primary export market outside of Great Britain was Australia and New Zealand. Given that, it's no surprise Triumph named its new sporting model "Southern Cross" after a constellation of stars that's seen only in the southern hemisphere.

In the June 1935 edition of *Motor Sport*, the Gloria Southern Cross was called a "solidly built light car, well sprung, comfortable, and suitable for long distance touring." The article went on to report: "The name 'Triumph' has always been associated in the minds of road-users with sound design and solid construction—whether in the manufacture of pedal-cycles, motor-cycles or in later years, automobiles. Now this Triumph tradition is no empty virtue, pleasant to possess but intangible in value. It is something definitely worth while, as we can personally testify at the end of a week-end trial of a 'Gloria' Southern Cross two-seater."

Motor Sport continued its road test by declaring: "To begin with, the car gives one the impression of being a 'class' larger than it really is. In spite of its modest 1,232cc engine and 8-ft. wheelbase, this is no small sports car, but a comfortable, solid machine of generous size and strength." As to its road manners, the article stated: "...we had plenty of time to appreciate the easy gear-change, light steering and flexibility of the engine, which throttled-down comfortably to a slow speed yet gave good acceleration on the gears. Manipulation of the ignition lever was necessary to avoid pinking."

With its ideal size, stout reliability, and road-holding maneuverability, it's no surprise that the Gloria was highly successful in competition. It twice won the Light Car Class in the Monte Carlo Rally in successive years: 1934 and 1935.

The Southern Cross version was based on the more sporting six-cylinder-powered Gloria Monte Carlo, which was the high-performance sporting car engineered by Triumph's experimental manager Donald Healey. Under its louvered bonnet sat a Coventry Climax-designed four-cylinder engine built under license and modified by Triumph. Its design incorporates overhead intake valves,

but the exhaust valves are positioned on the side. Featuring a 66-mm bore and 90-mm stroke with a single-barrel SU carburetor and three-bearing crankshaft, it puts out a RAC-rated 10.8 taxable horsepower, or 42 hp at 4,500 rpm. The four-speed manual gearbox features a fabric-lined single dry-plate clutch and incorporates freewheeling in its design. Semi-elliptic leaf springs are positioned front and rear, with Luvax hydraulic lever-arm shocks that can be remotely adjusted from the cockpit to increase pressure up to 200 pounds. The hydraulic brakes are by Lockheed, and the steering column is adjustable fore and aft, up or down, to better accommodate different sized drivers. Dunlop tires, measuring 5.00 x 17, were fitted to Rudge-Whitworth wire wheels as standard.

All told, approximately 5,400 four-cylinder Glorias—of all body styles and sub-models—were produced during the 1934-'37 production period. Today, just 31 Southern Cross four-cylinder examples are known to have survived, as recorded by the Pre-1940 Triumph Motor Club in England.

Three of those 1935 Gloria Southern Cross cars reside in the United States, including our feature car that lives in Verona, New Jersey, in a collection belonging to Triumph enthusiast Dennis Mamchur. Already the owner of a 1959 TR3A and a 1964 TR4, Dennis bought this Gloria via an ad in *Hemmings Motor News* back in 2006 because, as he put it: "It's a rare example of a Triumph, and has a beautiful shape."



“...I appreciate all the attention it gets, and I enjoy sharing it with other enthusiasts who have never seen a Gloria before.”

Although this model was never officially imported into the U.S., this particular Southern Cross, known by its number plate “BLX 454,” is here because of the Ford Motor Company. Back around 1972, the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn was seeking a prewar Triumph to include in a special *Sports Cars in Review* exhibition, and it was this Southern Cross that was chosen for the display. Prior to being shipped to Michigan, it was restored at the Triumph factory to the condition you see here.

After the exhibit closed, the Triumph was sent to New York City in 1973 where it went on display at the New York Coliseum during its annual International Auto Show. There, it was photographed with several notable British celebrities, including Patrick Macnee from *The Avengers*, and Donald Healey, himself, who was on hand to help celebrate Triumph's 50th Anniversary.

So, what's it like to drive a Gloria Southern Cross? According to Dennis, “It's a challenge at higher speeds thanks to its narrow bias-ply tires. It feels like most other 1935-era cars; the only difference is that it's right-hand drive. The four-speed gearbox is easy to shift, and the four-wheel drum brakes perform well without any pulling. Best of all, I appreciate all the attention it gets, and I enjoy sharing it with other enthusiasts who have never seen a Gloria before.”

“At a car show once,” Dennis adds, “someone remarked that it looks like an MG TD on steroids.” 🐾



Swiss Showstopper

*Special Ghia-Aigle coachwork makes this
1955 Alfa Romeo 1900C Super Sprint Cabriolet
a true one-of-one*

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO







Alfa Romeo was in an unfamiliar place after World War II. This small but prestigious firm had long enjoyed a reputation as a builder of world-class competition and touring cars, the latter often bodied by Italy's best coachbuilders. To remain viable in that new age, Alfa had to adapt to mass-production with its monocoque-constructed 1900 model range. This modern building method made fitting custom coachwork a challenge, but the famous design houses persisted, and gems like this unique, Swiss-bodied 1955 1900C SS came to represent the twilight of a glamorous era.

The prewar 6C 2500 was the model with which the Milanese automaker rejoined the automotive market in early 1946. That low-volume sports/luxury car was built by hand in the factory in two-door fastback *berlina* (sedan) form, as well as bodied by *carrozzerias* Touring, Pinin Farina, and more. Those magnificent dinosaurs would be replaced out of financial necessity, and chief engineer Orazio Satta Puliga and technical designer Giuseppe Busso led the charge. The result was the 1900, a smaller, simpler game-changer for the marque that was introduced in 1951.

As Christian Schön wrote (and David Johnston translated) in the excellent Schiffer publication, *Alfa Romeo: A Century of Innovation*, "Using funds provided by the Marshall Plan, Giuseppe Luraghi, then head of Finmeccanica, the state owner of Alfa Romeo, built a modern factory with assembly lines. Luraghi hired the Austrian Rudolf Hruska, who had made a name as an engineer, organizer, and rationalization specialist



Nardi made a special, unsigned replacement steering wheel when the restored original wood rim broke. This seat upholstery replicates what was on the car from new, as found under tan leather seat covers. The rebuilt five-speed manual transmission is shifted on the column, via a floor-hinged clutch pedal. Much work went into making the cloth top fold properly.



with Porsche, as advisor. And so the Alfa Romeo 1900, designed in cooperation with body specialists Touring, marked the operation's change from manufacturer to series producer."

The factory-built 1900 was an attractively styled all-steel unit-body four-door primarily using left-hand steering, the latter a point of interest considering previous Alfas were right-hand drive. This attractive, envelope-bodied car used a new coil spring suspension design, and was powered by the equally fresh, suitably compact dual overhead-cam four-cylinder whose 1,884-cc (115-cu.in.) displacement, rounded up, gave the model its name. That engine was the company's first four-cylinder since the early 1920s, and its aluminum-intensive design revealed influences of Alfa Romeo's deep heritage in both racing and aircraft engine manufacture.

It wasn't long before sportier 1900 variants made the scene, as the company sought to keep coachbuilders in business by radically modifying its own unit-body platform for their use. Carrozzeria Touring built a 1900 Sprint 2+2-seat coupe for the 1951 Turin Salon, basing this on a nearly 5-inch-shortened version of the berlina's 103.4-inch wheelbase. Touring built a new body using its trademark Superleggera (super-light) construction, fitting aluminum panels over a sub-structure of small steel tubes. The abbreviated platform, dubbed 1900C for "Corto," or short, would underpin the officially cataloged Sprint coupe; Pinin Farina would likewise build a four-seat coupe and cabriolet. Much rarer sanctioned versions of modified 1900Cs were built by Carrozzeria Zagato (the Super Sprint Coupe Zagato), Bertone (the



Berlinetta Aerodinamica Tecnica series, or B.A.T. 5, 7, and 9 show cars), and Ghia.

In 1954, the venerable Carrozzeria Ghia, long affiliated with Alfa Romeo, built a small number of Giovanni Savonuzzi-penned 1900 coupes whose lines recalled the show cars this firm was then building for Chrysler. It was not that Turin-based Ghia, though, but an affiliated international coachbuilder—Carrosserie Ghia S.A., Aigle & Lugano of southwestern Switzerland—that would fabricate the masterful automobile on these pages.

Ghia-Aigle was founded in 1948, and that shop built cars to the designs of the home company's primary stylists, including Mario Felice Boano and Giovanni Michelotti. The prolific Michelotti drafted many designs that were translated into metal at Ghia-Aigle, including different open and closed versions of Alfa Romeo's 1900. It was during a visit to the Swiss firm that journalist Eberhardt Seifert photographed Italian and Swiss metalworkers in the process of handcrafting aluminum body panels in traditional fashion to clothe a conservatively stylish cabriolet. Those fascinating images appeared in the September 1955 issue of the German periodical, *Motor im Bild*, and can be seen today on the excellent historical reference site, www.ghia-aigle.info.

It's believed the cabriolet in Seifert's grainy black-and-white images is the same Alfa on these pages. For the past decade, this car has belonged to Florida residents Stephen and Kim Bruno, who tell us it was built for special display at the March 1955 Geneva Auto Salon, and was the first of eight Alfa Romeos bodied by Ghia-Aigle. Serial number 01959 left the factory on May 10, 1954, with the rolling chassis sold to Società per il Commercio dei Prodotti Alfa Romeo in Lugano, Switzerland, then the home of Ghia-Aigle. After the finished car was shown in Geneva, it was purchased by a Swiss customer. It's thought to have primarily remained in the country of its



This DOHC, hemi-head 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine was Alfa Romeo's highest-performing 1900 variant, here making 115 hp with 8:1 compression ratio and twin Solex carburetors. The crinkle-finish painted air duct is a correct reproduction piece, since the original assembly was poorly patched through the years. Mechanical parts were easy to source in this restoration, compared to body repairs.



birth, being displayed for a long period in Claude Frésard's now-defunct Musée De l'Automobile Muriaux. The cabriolet came to the U.S. circa-2000, and Stephen bought it in 2009.

"My collection centers around coachbuilt postwar Italian sports cars, and I prefer unique and one-of-a-kind examples, so when the Ghia-Aigle showed up in the hands of a local broker, I felt it would be a great addition to the collection," he says.

As a 1900C Super Sprint, the Brunos' 2,205-pound soft-top has Alfa Romeo's top-spec "Tipo 1308" twin-cam four-cylinder engine that displaces 1,975-cc (120.5-cu.in.) via a 84.5 x 88-mm (3.32 x 3.46-inch) bore and stroke. With an 8:1 compression ratio and two twin-choke Solex 40 PII downdraft carburetors, it makes 115 hp at 5,500 rpm. This desirable engine is mated to a column-shifted five-speed manual gearbox, with unassisted four-wheel Alfin drum brakes and worm-and-roller steering. An independent wishbone/tube shock/coil spring suspension supports the front, while the live rear axle works with tube shocks and coil springs.

It was driveable as purchased, but the age of the restoration was evident, and Stephen notes it wasn't true to form. "It was rather generic-looking, having been refinished in 'Rosso Rivendita' (resale red) over tan, as a result of a less-than-thorough overseas restoration." Jon Dega, principal of Rare Classic Restorations of Coconut Creek, Florida, maintains the Bruno family's automotive collection, and was involved in this 1900's latest restoration. He adds, "It was missing the chrome trim on the side, and the dashboard was wrapped in tan leather, which was incorrect."

Jon continues, "It was obviously not a concours show car when Stephen got it, and he commissioned a full restoration. It was completely disassembled and stripped to bare metal. At that point, it was realized that the body structure was in very poor condition. An extensive amount of metalwork went into the car—the equivalent of one person working 40 hours a week, for 52 weeks!—and this involved making all of the floors, making one bumper, and putting some steel in the



*I... was rewarded
with a spectacular vehicle
that we debuted at
Pebble Beach...*

rockers to strengthen the body. We were able to forensically determine the original color of the car, uncovering gold paint behind the dashboard. Fortunately, the 1955 seat materials were intact, hidden under sewn-on covers, so they could be accurately recreated." Other body-related issues included breaking one of two replacement windshields sourced for the car along with the restored original, unsigned Nardi wood-rim steering wheel, necessitating a specially commissioned replacement from that Italian firm.

As expected, this special coachwork proved challenging, but the mechanical renewal was surprisingly straightforward, thanks to the mass-produced nature of this Alfa's underpinnings. "You can buy a lot of parts for the 1900—mechanically, it could have been a Dodge Dart," Jon says with a laugh. "It has Borrani wheels,

Alfin drum brakes; that stuff's all available. The engine was completely rebuilt, the transmission gone through, the rear end and brakes. This car doesn't have a thermostat in the water line, instead using a thermostatically controlled set of louvers mounted in front of the radiator. That system was missing, so we bought louvers, and fabricated the springs and linkages to make it all work."

The intense restoration was completed just in time for the Ghia-Aigle to be trucked to California to be revealed on the lawn at the 2013 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, where it earned an award in its competitive Custom Body Postwar Sports and Touring class. Stephen fondly recalls that experience as payoff. "It needed to be returned to its original livery and former glory, and I suffered through its long and very expensive restoration but was rewarded with a spectacular vehicle that we debuted at Pebble Beach, and has taken us to every other major concours, including the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este in Italy. Even though the car has been primarily used for concours, I have enjoyed over 500 miles behind the wheel. Not only was the Ghia-Aigle a great addition, it has become a cornerstone of the collection." 🐦





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I BEGAN WORKING AT GENERAL

Motors' Rochester Products Division located in Rochester, New York, as a "probationary" United Automobile Workers' member on February 2, 1967, when I was 18. I was assigned to the second-shift Quadrajet Set and Pack line. The setup man quickly taught me the basic carburetor setting process. He then assigned me to another worker to further learn how to set the choke, fast idle, vacuum break, and wide open.

Quadrajet carburetors were heavy, and I was one of five mechanical settings operators. Each one of us lifted and set about 500 carbs per shift. In addition to the weight, there was Stoddard fluid used for flow test that would leak out onto your hands, frequently causing your skin to peel. Each unit was flow tested in a large pressurized room before being transported to several Set and Pack lines. This flow room was state of the art when it was completed in the '60s, with dozens of flow stands that simulated driving conditions and input readings into a large computer. New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller made a tour through it when it was first opened due to its advanced technology.

There were many different model numbers, which we quickly learned and remembered. I still recall working on a Chevrolet no. 7027202 Quadrajet my first night; the numbers do stay with you. Each car line had its own configuration. Oldsmobile, Pontiac, and Buick had bowls with a straight-forward fuel inlet, while Cadillac and Chevrolet had the inlets on the side. The throttle levers, vacuum breaks, and other settings would vary model to model. Manual shift, air conditioned, and even California-spec carbs had different part numbers and calibrations. I eventually became a Relief Operator, which enabled me to learn how to do secondary settings, wide open, plugger, and idle vent while other workers took their 12-minute break.

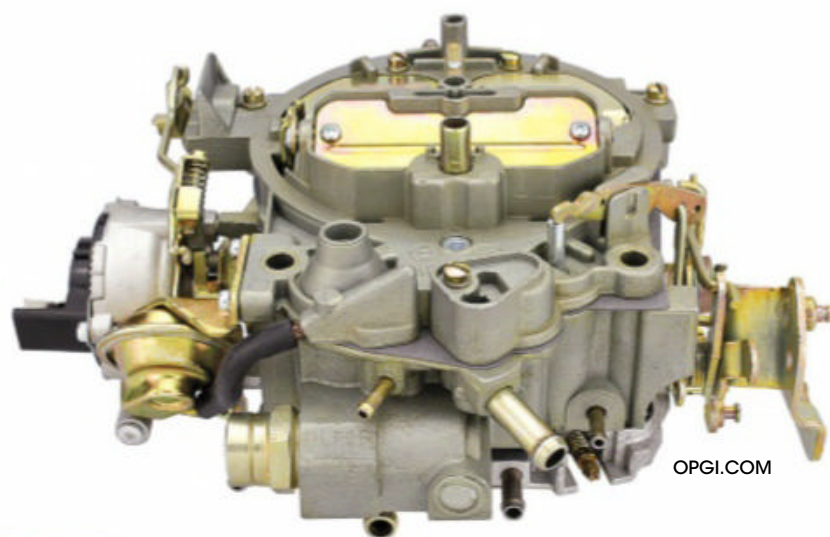
We also had a pack area at the end of the line where we would put cardboard caps on the top of the carbs and load them upside down into large boxes. We packed 16 per layer at six tiers high for a total of

96 carbs per skid. We had product inspectors who would monitor carbs during the setting process and after the packing. If defects were found, the skids would be tagged and held until corrected. A forklift operator would then transport them to the shipping department where they would then be loaded on railway cars or trucks headed to the assembly plants through the U.S. and Canada.

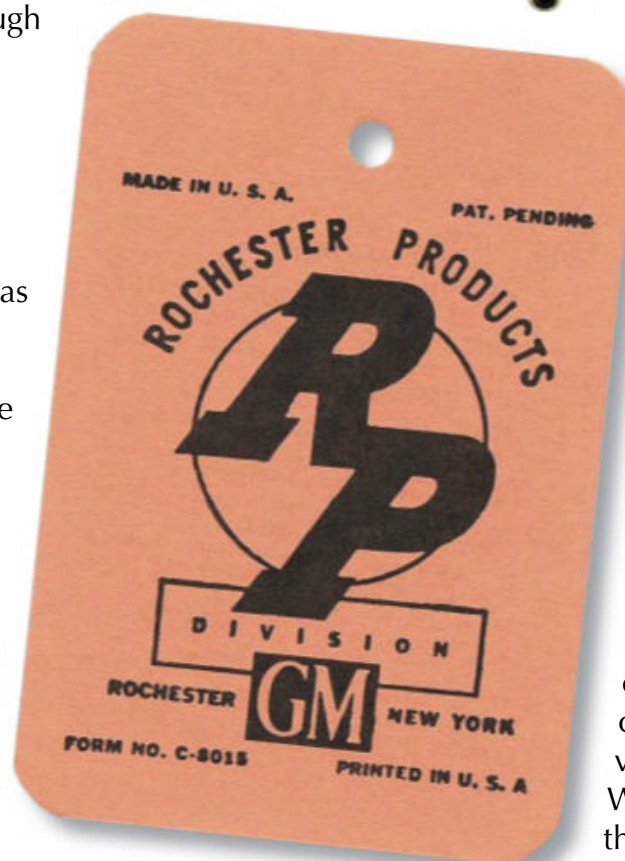
I worked many six- and seven-day weeks back then, sometimes 12 hours per day with only a 30-minute lunch. I was on nights (3:45 p.m. to 12:45 a.m.) for several months before building enough seniority to switch to days (7:05 a.m. to 3:35 p.m.). I even did a late-night shift (11:05 p.m. to 7:35 a.m.) that offered a 10-percent shift premium.

In the '60s, GM was producing and selling so many vehicles we were working around the clock. The 1967 GM vehicles had blue door-jamb stickers that stated "GM Mark of Excellence." It was a great time in the American automobile industry. The money I made was unbelievable for this time. I hired in at a \$2.89/hour plus 5-percent night bonus in addition to lots of overtime. I made enough money that year to purchase a brand-new 1967 Impala convertible with a 283-cu.in. V-8 and Powerglide for about \$3,000!

In 1970, I was out of work for three months due to a UAW strike, which ended up closing all the General Motors plants. Although the strike was long and costly, the blue- and white-collar workers did receive a 30-year-and-out retirement



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1,000 due to outsourcing, technological changes, and foreign competition.

It is amazing to think that back then corporate America was paying good wages and was providing total health care for the family, retirement pensions, and vacations, and they were still making profits! 🍷

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SPECIAL SECTION

The Strangest Car Ever In My Garage

IF YOU ARE A HEMMINGS READER, chances are excellent you have a “want ad addiction.” Many of us have struggled with it for decades, and occasionally it can take us places we never imagined!

Back in the pre-internet mid-1980s, just as the collector-car “bubble” of that period was starting to emerge, I spotted a tiny classified ad in the free flyer from the newsstand. There was no photograph, but it said “Genuine 289 Cobra with jet engine. \$10,000 firm,” and it gave a local phone number. In one of those dangerous combinations of circumstance, I had just received a very unexpected tax refund check of almost that amount, and I was newly single.

What was I to do? Like a moth to the flame, I called. The owner, a local real estate guy, said it was “a real Cobra” but that it had been modified as a drag car with a jet engine that he was planning to use to make a jet boat. He said he’d received a lot of calls and wasn’t taking any deposits; the first one with the 10 grand would get it. Fortunately, being a small town, we both used the same bank and I was friends with the manager. I had the funds transferred and bought the car, sight unseen!

What a beauty it was. The aluminum body was in great shape, and, man, did it ever look impressive in my driveway! As I studied it, more of its story revealed itself. Looking closely at the lettering on the side, I could see they had painted over

another name. Tracing it out, I could see it said “Romeo Palamides.” Romeo was a very well-known drag racer who had been on the cover of *Hot Rod*, had started the American Racing wheel company, and had fielded a land-speed jet car in the 1960s.

None of the original Cobra frame was there. The jet engine ran from about where the radiator should have been and ended several feet behind the modified trunk lid, and it was wide enough that the cockpit was very tight, with nothing between you and that hot silver cylinder. I also learned that the engine was originally used in an

early 1950s Navy fighter, and that it had twice as much thrust as the car weighed, so vertical flight was a frightening possibility. I didn’t have the equipment to start it, but that was probably okay because there were no brakes, just a lever that was hooked to a cable running aft to “pop the chute.”

The big discovery was that the original chassis number—2517—was marked in several places. A few months after that discovery, the Shelby Club came to town for a National Meet. Some of the members came by to look at the car, and one of them told me that he had researched the

chassis number and that the original chassis still existed and had been rebodied, so that car was officially CSX2517 and not mine. He said he felt the club was *the authority* on what was and what wasn’t an “authentic” Cobra.

About that time, I received a letter from the IRS saying that it had made an error and wanted its money back, so I decided to take advantage of the rapidly rising market and sell.

I put an ad in the local paper and promptly received calls from three different people who also owned jet-powered cars. One came to look at it but turned up his nose, saying: “The way this thing is set up I doubt it would even reach 200 mph in the quarter-mile!” Eventually I sold it to a guy and his wife from England for \$16,000. I thought I’d really struck it rich! 🐸



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Towards the close of 1920, over six months' experience of the recent general price changes, Oldsmobile announced a new four-cylinder car. This car was designed and built and priced to meet exactly the conditions which our 25 years of experience in building motor cars demand.

Paradoxically, instead of waiting for the material and labor market to adjust itself to public demand, our resources made it possible to be foreshadowed in the action that these conditions and our own experience demand.

The car was immediately recognized as an exceptional value in size, appearance and comfort. Its outstanding qualities are an amazing record of power, remarkable ease of riding and handling, public taking inspection in the refinements of upholstery and construction equipment that

amounts to the appearance and general lines.

The Oldsmobile Four would not have been possible without strength and built in the public's confidence in quality to true value. It could not have been accomplished without the intense close buying power and the rigid economy of a 25 year old organization.

The public have answered, and the volume of their purchases, well as all cases of Oldsmobile's past production resources, prove that no other value has been approached by any other car of like class.

If you, too, are taking full advantage of the greatest performance of today's value, you will be better to yourself and the world's motor needs for Oldsmobile's performance—in its value, ease of riding, ease of riding, power and performance.

OLD SMOTOR WORKS
LANSING, MICHIGAN (DETROIT, MICHIGAN)

OLDSMOBILE ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF the four-cylinder to cater to all needs of the automotive consumer. Available in both open and closed styles, the 43-A model sits on a 115-inch wheelbase while its engine produces 43 hp. Economical, yet stylish, the Oldsmobile provides true value to its customers and is available in touring or roadster for as low as \$1,445.

The JORDAN Playboy

HURE is a car for the man who knows how to play as hard as he works—a vigorous, happy and reliable companion for the day with the racing car and the girl who loves the range of the open road.

It's a thing of muscle and bones—quick, responsive, strong and unarmored.

The Jordan Playboy leaps lightly and nimbly to the throttle on its way.

Stop on it, and this masculine car springs quickly from the traffic crowd, sails racing up the hill, and makes for the land of somewhere we have longed to go.

With balanced and subtle power, it levels the hounding hills which invite you up and across you down.

Nimble, snug and hunkered-down, close to the skimming road, it carries young hearts and young hopes to places where we like to go.

It's a practical car as well—equipped, for those who prefer it, with all-weather top, making it exactly suitable to the individual who prefers an enclosed but friendly roadster.

The Playboy is finished in striking colors for those who know the joy of being distinctive.

The production is limited. There are only a few on the Avenue. Even that people stop and stare at this striking car of personality and charm goes by. The day of the general car has come.

JORDAN

JORDAN MOTOR CAR COMPANY, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio

THE LIMITED PRODUCTION JORDAN PLAYBOY returns as part of the Model M lineup sitting on a 120-inch wheelbase. Powered by a patented 224-cu.in., 56-hp Continental 7R straight-six, this car's strong and reliable engine should meet your motoring needs. In addition to performance, it's a good-looking car with classy styling and appeal that will turn heads wherever you go. It's available now for \$2,650.

CHAMPIONS

Indy 500	Tommy Milton (89.621 mph)
French Grand Prix	Jimmy Murphy (USA, Duesenberg, 4h 7m 11.4s)

SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Ford	1,275,618
2. Dodge	81,000*
3. Chevrolet	76,370
4. Buick	55,337
5. Willys-Overland	48,016*
6. Studebaker	36,797
7. Hudson	27,143*
8. Nash	20,850*
9. Oldsmobile	19,157
10. Hupmobile	13,626
*calendar year	

Ford
THE UNIVERSAL CAR

Ford Motor Company
Detroit Michigan
1920-1921

FORD IS TRULY BECOMING THE UNIVERSAL car as the Model T continues to serve the needs of the automotive consumer. A few minor changes have been made, but you can be sure the reliability and low price are intact. Some of the improvements you'll notice are seatback adjustment for a more comfortable ride and a slightly modified frame for more stability. Offered in the touring, runabout, coupe, and sedan body styles with truck options available, the Model T Ford's prices start at a lower \$370.

ODDIES BUT GOODIES

Impossible.

A Volkswagen can't boil over. It's physically impossible. The reason is absurdly simple: the VW's rear engine is cooled by air, not water. Since air can't boil, neither can the car. If you had to, you could drive a VW all day at top speed through a desert. Or edge along in bumper-to-bumper traffic on the hottest day of the year.

You may get all steamed up, but not your Volkswagen. Chances are you'll appreciate the air-cooled engine even more in winter. Air can't freeze any more than it can boil. So you don't need anti-freeze. (You couldn't put any in a VW even if you wanted to; there's no radiator. And so no hoses to leak. No draining. No flushing. No rust.)

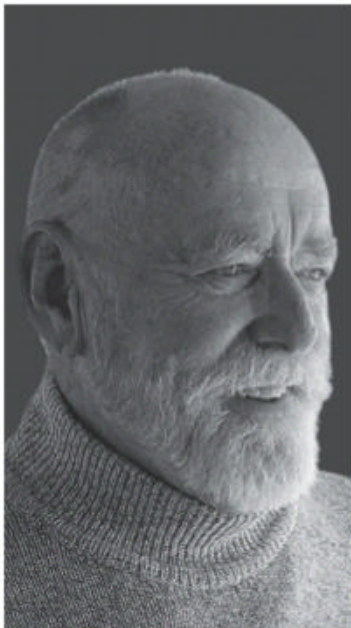
In the past, a few VW owners have been amused to find a perplexed gas station attendant with a bucket of water and no place to put it. But we've taken care of that in our '61 model. This year, a windshield washer is standard equipment. It uses water. Let the man fill it up.

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Volkswagen of America Inc.
1961

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In the future,

your car will

drive itself.

In fact, you

won't even

need to go

along.



Clutching for Happiness

I learned to drive on my father's 1947 Chevrolet Fleetline Aerosedan. It was bewildering at first trying to give the engine enough gas while simultaneously feathering the clutch in order to get going, and then having to do it again to shift into second, and then again to get into high gear. I was nervous about the whole process at first, but it could have been a lot worse had I been born 50 years earlier.

It took until the late 1920s for automotive controls to become standardized. For example, if you wanted to drive a 1924 Model T Ford, you needed to develop a different set of skills. The throttle was not on the floor, but on the steering column, and it stayed at the speed you selected until you reached up and moved it back. The spark advance was up there too, and had to be managed.

There were three pedals on the floor of the Ford. The right was the brake, and the center was reverse. You depressed the left pedal to the floor to go into low gear. Then to shift into high gear, you lifted the pedal half way and pulled back the parking brake lever. That put the transmission into neutral. You then let the pedal out all the way and pushed the brake lever forward to put the car into high.

Model T Fords were so different that several states required two driver's licenses—one for the Model T, and another license for other brands. There were also many electric cars in the old days too, and they had their own unique controls. Here are my notes from having driven a 1917 Detroit electric a few years ago:

"I turn the key at the base of the controls to unlock the tiller and controller lever, and drop them down to just above waist level. It turns out that electric cars don't need starters. You just step down on both brake pedals, push the control lever to the first click, and let up on the brakes to start rolling. Then, you simply push the controller forward again and you can rocket up to about 17 miles per hour."

Tiller steering is instant and one-to-one. At speed, you could flip the car if you swung the tiller all the way to one side. At the turn of the last century, all American cars had tiller steering. That is until the Packard brothers went out motoring in 1900 and hit a rut. The tiller smashed James' knee and the car flipped over.

When they got back to the factory, they told the engineers to come up with something better, and the steering wheel (in America) was born. The motoring press panned it at the time though. Journalists asked: "How will you know where you are going without a tiller to show the way?"

Another novel Nickel-Era car was the steam-powered 1925 Doble, one of which is now owned by Jay Leno. The controls were nothing like a conventional car, except for the handsome ebony steering wheel. But even then, on top of that was another smaller wheel that served as the throttle. This could get confusing if you were turning right, and at the same time rotating the throttle left to accelerate.

On the toe board of the Doble were two pedals, one for reverse, and the other for the brake. There was no shifting because there was no transmission. The car's powerplant produced more than enough torque to shred the tires from a standing start and could take the car well beyond the century mark, as Howard Hughes once did in the car I tested when he hit 134 mph.

And then there was the 1904 De Dion Bouton, a French touring car I once drove. The clutch was where the brake would be on a modern car, and the brake was where the clutch would be. And if that weren't confusing enough, the gas pedal was between the two of them. Driving required concentration to proceed.

Despite its challenges, I was awed by the fact that the De Dion was way ahead of most contemporary cars. Its engine was in front rather than under the seat, and it had a sequential four-speed (including reverse) and a clutch at a time when most cars only had a two-speed planetary gearbox. As a result, while most of its contemporaries had a top-end speed of 25 mph, the De Dion can do 45 mph without drama.

These days, cars are dead simple to drive. The only complexity is in programming the GPS and fine-tuning your sub-woofer for the music you like. And selecting your music takes time, because everything from Mexican Mariachi to Mongolian throat singing is available via satellite.

And more change is on the way. In the future, your car will drive itself. In fact, you won't even need to go along. You will be able to stay home and visit with your friends and family endlessly on FaceTime or Snapchat. 📺





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