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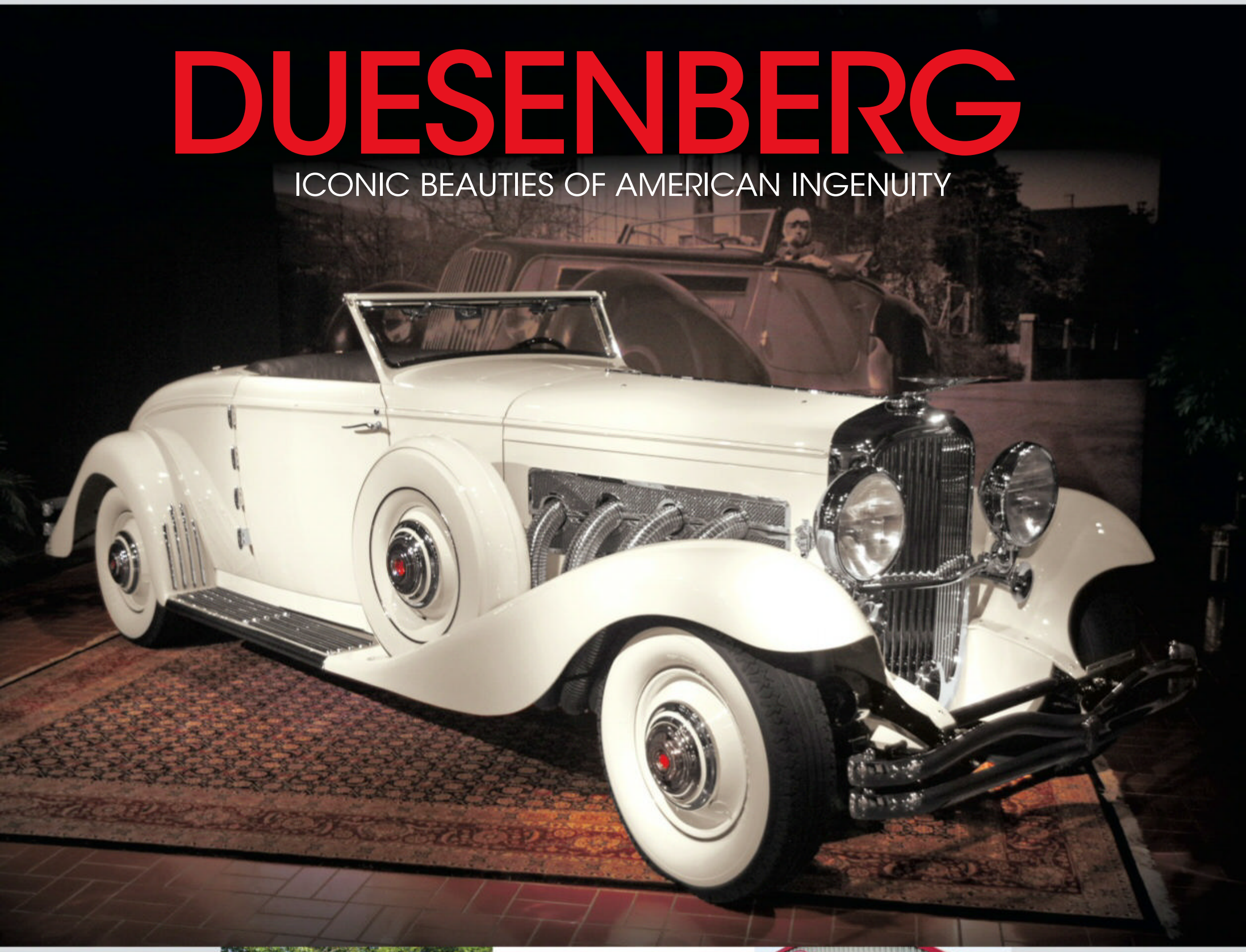

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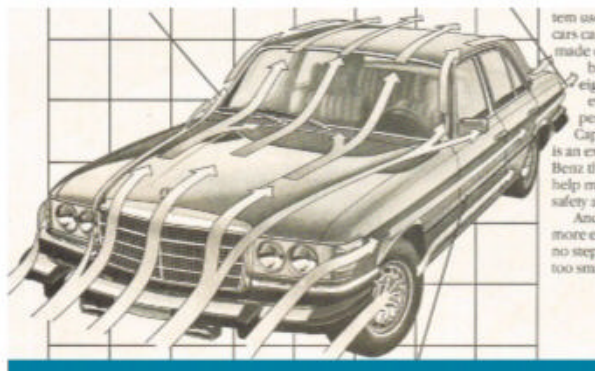

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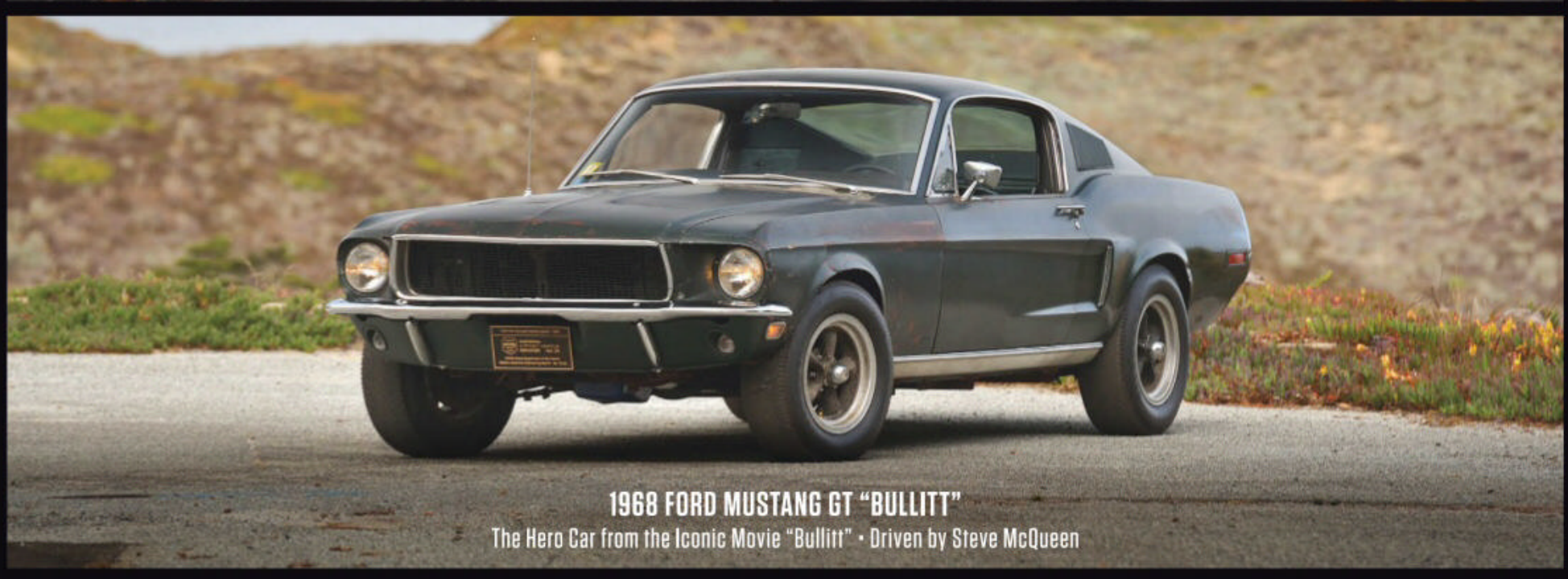

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The Endearing Eighties

Contrary to popular belief, there were many interesting and well-designed automobiles built during the 1980s. While they may not have been the best built cars, nor the most reliable at times, in many respects they were far superior to those cars that came before them. No, seriously, they were.

Like the post-1972 cars of the ’70s, the cars of the ’80s era were in transition; a continuation of regulations kept throwing monkey wrenches at engineers, forcing them to make overnight changes with technology that hadn’t yet been perfected. It was this practice of in-process developments, which centered on lowering engine emissions, that was the cause of many mechanical issues, thus giving car owners recurring nightmares whenever cars of the ’80s are mentioned.

I remember well my 1984 Pontiac Trans Am with its anemic 305-cu.in. L69 High Output V-8; in reality, it should have been called “low output.” Its feedback Quadrajet carburetor, created just before fuel injection technology became commonplace, was sometimes the source of engine malfunctions. Although this hard-riding Firebird never left me stranded – and, oh boy, was its ride firm – whenever the carburetor was acting up, all I had to do was disconnect the solenoid valve, which then sent a signal to the ECM that the engine was now in “limp home mode,” and be on my way, albeit very slowly.

Flaws aside, that Pontiac was far more reliable than my 1985 Ford Tempo; oy vey, what a nightmare that car was. But I did enjoy driving my 1983 Ford Escort five-speed SS, and ’84 LTD station wagon that rode and handled far better than its big size would lead you to believe. Conversely, my 1983 and ’84 Volvo 240 sedans were far more enjoyable to drive, with supportive seats that were the absolute best. But even they had issues, which was clearly a sign of the times due to the infancy of on-board computer technology.

Even with all their faults, cars of the ’80s make ideal “collector” cars simply because they are far safer to drive than cars of previous generations. Their steering is sharper and more direct, they have less body roll when cornering, and, with better functioning front disc brakes, their stopping distances are far shorter – which is a good thing. And their heating and ventilation systems work extremely well, as do their stereos. Best of all, they don’t cost a fortune. You get a lot of car for the money, the kind of car you can drive and enjoy every day, and still feel safe at speed on today’s crowded highways. Back in the ’70s, and even the ’90s, you couldn’t do that with a 30- to 40-year-old car, now could you? But with ’80s cars you most certainly can.

Besides the more popular cars, such as Buick Grand Nationals and Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS models, and, of course, all the various Camaros, Corvettes, Mustangs, and Firebirds, there are many other interesting cars to consider. I, for one, would love to own one of the pre-downsized full-size GM models, especially an early ’80s Riviera, Eldorado, or Toronado. Over at Chrysler, the Dodge Diplomat is a handsome and very comfortable driving car, and in two-door coupe form, it’s quite stylish. And for something completely different, how about a 1983-’84 Chrysler LeBaron convertible? Produced in limited numbers, they’re fun to drive and cheap to buy. And don’t forget the Dodge Mirada, or the “bustleback” Imperial with its electronic fuel injection.

The Lincoln Mark VII was a cutting-edge type of luxury car when it was released, and it still looks handsome after all these years. With its sequential multiport electronic fuel-injected 5.0-liter V-8 and ABS brakes, ’80s-vintage fast motoring doesn’t get much better than this. Although a 3.8-liter V-6-powered ’87 Cutlass Supreme Brougham would be equally enjoyable, and comfortable, to cruise around in; I always thought these GM cars were extremely well styled with a distinctive appeal.

And for something completely different, yet extremely practical, just think how much fun it would be to show up at your local summer cruise night in a Caravan or Voyager.

Write to our executive editor at rlentinello@hemmings.com.

> “Even with all their faults, cars of the ’80s make ideal ‘collector’ cars...”

1987 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme Brougham

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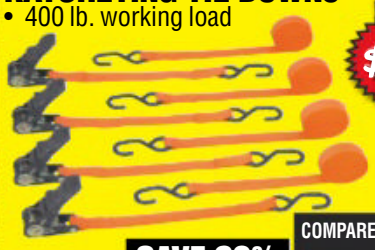

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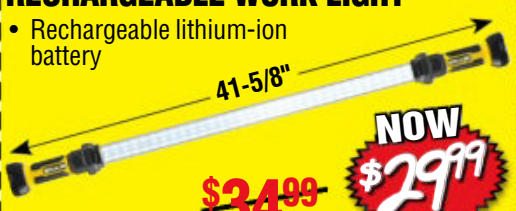

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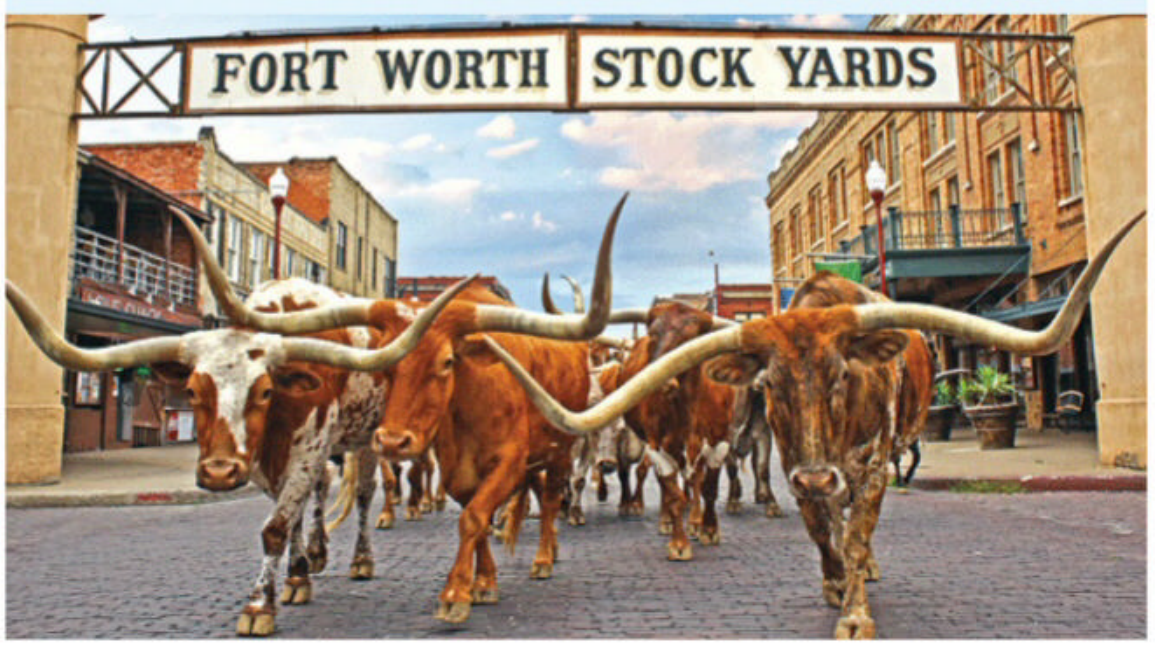
BY TOM COMERRO

Studebaker's Extended Family

A NEW EXHIBIT, "REACHING THE MASSES: STUDEBAKER COMPANION MODELS," AT the Studebaker National Museum in South Bend, Indiana, highlights two of Studebaker's cousins. Erskine and Rockne were Studebaker's attempt to cash in on the wildly popular companion-make market that saw expansion in the 1920s and '30s. Erskine debuted in 1927 to great anticipation, but proved to be lacking in power for its price. The Rockne, named after Notre Dame football coach (and Studebaker employee) Knute Rockne, only lasted two years. Though unsuccessful in sales, the historical marques would assist in paving the way for Studebaker's development, helping to make it one of the most successful independent marques in the automotive industry. The exhibit will run through February. For more details, visit www.studebakermuseum.org.

Texoma Regional Tour

THE VINTAGE MOTOR CAR CLUB OF America announced its Dallas Chapter will sponsor the 2020 Texoma Spring Tour this spring in the Fort Worth area. The tour will include a visit to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and to the Fort Worth Stockyards. The convoy will then head north to Nocona, to tour the Horton Classic Car Museum. Registration is limited to 60 vehicles, with the tour taking place March 19-21. For more information, visit www.texomaregion.org or www.vmcca.org.



FEBRUARY

6-8 • AACA Annual Meeting
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • 717-534-1910
www.aaca.org

7-8 • Moultrie Swapmeet
Moultrie, Georgia • 229-896-2150
www.moultrieswapmeet.com

7-9 • Sumter Swap Meets Winter Extravaganza
Bushnell, Florida • 727-848-7171
www.floridaswapmeets.com

13-16 • Zephyrhills Auto Festival
Zephyrhills, Florida • 813-312-4009
www.zephyrhillsautoevents.com

16 • Buick-Olds-Pontiac-Cadillac Swap Meet
St. Charles, Illinois • 630-865-4349
www.bopcswap.com

21-22 • Big 3 Swap Meet
San Diego, California • 661-374-6754
www.big3partsexchange.com

21-23 • Winter AutoFest
Lakeland, Florida • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

22 • Winter Classic Motorsports Expo
Columbus, Ohio • 614-268-1181
www.jeffjohnsonmotorsports.com

27-29 • AACA National Winter Meet
Miami, Florida • 717-534-1910
www.aacasouthflorida.club

BOPC Swap Meet

A BUICK-OLDSMOBILE-PONTIAC-CADILLAC SWAP meet will take place on February 16 at the Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, Illinois. The show is open to all historic GM automotive brands, except for Chevrolet, and will include an indoor and outdoor swap meet, plus car corral. For more information and registration forms, visit www.bopcswap.com.

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BY DANIEL STROHL

Stolen (From Henry) Ford

WE HAVE SENIOR EDITOR Mark McCourt's sister, Kate, to thank for this tip. In a *Great Falls Tribune* newspaper clipping from April 28, 1922, Kate discovered auto theft can happen to anybody, including Henry Ford himself.

COLLECTIONS OF THE HENRY FORD

According to the report, Ford had parked the Ford he was driving in downtown Detroit one Wednesday night, and when he then discovered it missing he reported the theft. "As the police had been unable to find the stolen machine, there was nothing left for the manufacturer to do but to go to one of his factories and take a new car from the store room," the story noted.

Interesting tidbit of history, of course, but we've got to wonder whether the thief knew whose car he stole and what happened to it afterward.

Forlorn Fieros

CAN YOU ALTER HISTORY BY OBSERV- ing it? One wouldn't think so, but tell that to a group of Australian Pontiac enthusiasts who discovered a trio of second-generation Fiero prototypes.

As the story goes, a contingent from the Pontiac Car Club of Australia traveled to Detroit in 1999 to take in the annual Woodward Dream Cruise. Pontiac officials got wind of the trip, loaned the group some Pontiacs to drive, and even invited them to tour the Pontiac historical collection, both inside and outside. In one of the lots outside the collection sat three circa 1989 Fiero prototypes.

The photos that the group captured of the prototypes show cars that look like a blend of the last production Fieros and the better-known 1990 Fiero prototypes. The images also, according to some accounts of the story, led other Pontiac officials to order the crushing of the trio of Fiero prototypes along with unknown other projects still hanging around, upon publication of the photos in the club's magazine.

However, at the time, GM officials also claimed that a 1989 Pontiac Fiero remained in the corporate collections, "contrary to rumors that seem to have spread." In addition, Editor Richard Lentinello got to see the 1989 prototype when he visited the collection in 1994.

Sounds like a mystery we need to investigate.

Edsel Under Wraps

WHILE SPY PHOTOS AND DAZZLER CAMOUFLAGE are all the rage when it comes to pre-production cars these days, automakers have long covered or concealed the aesthetics of cars prior to their release, as we see from this image that Mark Astolfi sent to us.

"I kept this cover of *Business Week* my dad got in June of 1957, and I've always wondered when people knew exactly what the vaunted Edsel actually looked like," Mike wrote. "This photograph sure shows something weird is going on up front!"

While we imagine that cover would be highly coveted among Edsel collectors these days, we have to wonder if this was the earliest instance of using a car cover in this manner—to build hype for a car without actually showing off its details. Anybody know of any earlier such devices?

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.

BY TOM COMERRO

RM SOTHEBY'S

Sweet Sales in Hershey

RM SOTHEBY'S AUCTION IN HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA, CONTINUED TO FIND SUCCESS WITH A sell-through rate of 97 percent and total sales above $15.5 million. Among the more than 200 cars that crossed the block, more than half were part of the Merrick Auto Museum Collection, which included an impressive array of Brass Era and prewar cars. The top seller from the Merrick Collection was a 1925 Duesenberg Model A Sport Phaeton by Millspaugh & Irish. Equipped with a race-bred, overhead-cam eight-cylinder, the Model A sold for $236,500, exceeding all pre-show estimates. A 1930 Cord L-29 Brougham sold for $103,400, and a rare 1900 Rockwell Hansom Cab went for $132,000. Results from the two-night auction are available at www.rmsothebys.com.

Texas Tally

WORLDWIDE AUCTIONEERS HELD ITS Corpus Christi, Texas, auction on October 4-5, and raked in a total of $5.8 million in sales with more than 200 cars sold at no reserve. The impressive event included several GM cars from the 1950s, starting with this 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham, which sold for $132,000. More affordable examples were a 1950 Buick Special Deluxe sedan, sold for $9,900, and a 1955 Pontiac Chieftain Catalina, sold for $14,300. Of course, the Bowties were on the block, too, and a nice, rare three-speed manual 1958 Chevrolet Delray changed hands for $18,700. Complete results from the show are now available at www.worldwideauctioneers.com/corpus-christi-auction.

WORLDWIDE AUCTIONEERS

AUCTION PROFILE

CAR	1903 Ford Model A
AUCTIONEER	Bonhams
LOCATION	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
DATE	October 7, 2019
LOT NUMBER	339
RESERVE	None
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	N/A
SELLING PRICE	$137,760

BONHAMS

ONE OF FORD'S EARLIEST CREATIONS was the 1903 Model A, which was powered by a twin-cylinder engine positioned under the passenger's seat, with a chain drive to the rear axle. The two-seater runabout could reach a top speed of around 30 mph, and was available for $850, or $950 with a detachable tonneau for additional passengers.

This Model A was retained by the Ford Motor Company and used to defend patent disputes. Following its time with Ford, the car was sold to the Stevens Institute in Newark, New Jersey, where it remained until 1964, when the current owners purchased the Model A in unrestored condition. A thorough restoration took place in the early 1970s, and the reborn Ford spent most of the last 55 years garage-kept in the Garden State. The maroon and black finish is complemented by a black bench seat. The elliptic leaf spring suspension still works smoothly, as does the car's chain drive. The Model A's low-survival rate, and status as an example of Ford's early production, attracted a lot of bidding to this 116-year-old rarity.

FEBRUARY

7-9 • GPK Auctions
Atlantic City, New Jersey
856-573-6969
www.acclassiccars.com

14-16 • Dave Rupp Collector Car Auction
Miami, Florida
561-779-0302
www.ftlauderdaleauction.com

21-22 • Carlisle Auctions
Lakeland, Florida
717-960-6400
www.carlisleevents.com

21-23 • McCormick Auction
Palm Springs, California
760-320-3290
www.classic-carauction.com

MECUM

MECUM

Mecum Chicago

THE WINDY CITY PLAYED HOST TO MECUM'S auction at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center this past October 24-26. More than 700 cars and trucks changed hands during the three-day sale, which accounted for an 80-per-cent sell-through rate. When the smoke cleared, Mecum had achieved overall sales in excess of $18.3 million. Some classy Fords caught our eye, including this red-and-white 1955 Thunderbird that sold for $29,700, and a 1963 Galaxie station wagon, with original paint and the 352 V-8 engine, that went for $10,450. Full results are now available at www.mecum.com.

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

ART & AUTOMOBILIA

BY MARK J. McCOURT

British Brolly

WELSH ENTERPRISES • 800-875-5247 • WWW.WELSHENT.COM • $19.95

A good umbrella is a staple in the wardrobe of any United Kingdom resident, and on this side of the pond, it's handy for a British-car enthusiast to keep one in his or her automobile. Welsh Enterprises, the Jaguar parts specialists, has designed and manufactured its own version that's perfect for lovers of this classic marque, with its Jaguar Union Jack Umbrella. Ideal for use on rainy and sunny days alike, this collapsible unit is sized 38 x 38 inches wide and 21 inches tall, and it sports a full-color British flag design, overlaid with representative outline illustrations of the iconic XK120 Open Two Seater and E-type Fixed Head Coupe. It's available by itself for the price listed above, or as part of two Union Jack sets; one pairs the umbrella with a similarly decorated picnic blanket throw ($39.99), while the other groups those two with a Union Jack-emblazoned car cover ($349.95).

1955 Willys Jeep Station Wagon

888-242-4227 • WWW.DIECASTMODELSWHOLESALE.COM • $51.99

Willys-Overland started a quiet revolution when it introduced the Jeep-based, Brooks Stevens-styled Willys Station Wagon in mid-1946, and this all-steel-bodied SUV ancestor—that gained the availability of "4-Wheel Drive" in 1948—would remain in production through 1963. Lucky Die-Cast has fashioned an officially licensed 1955 Station Wagon in 1:18-scale form for its Road Signature Collection. This tan-trimmed burgundy collectible sports fine paintwork accented by delicate bright trim around its windows. The hood, doors, and split tailgate all function, the latter operating with delicate piano hinges. There's ample detail under the hood and in the interior, which sports adjustable seatbacks and steering linked to the front wheels, and the undercarriage appears true-to-life. This is a very impressive model for the price, and is certain to please Jeepers and fans of Independent automakers.

Great Grilles of the '50s

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For more than a decade, our sister publication, *Hemmings Motor News*, has presented its readers with the column "Glamorous Grilles." We've long appreciated the functional beauty of the car grille, that identifying piece of design that has taken thousands of forms over the past 100 years. Not surprisingly, we're not the only ones to focus on this visible piece of automotive anatomy: authors Mark Misercola and Hank Kaczmarek have created a love letter to some of the finest Fifties front ends in their new title, *Great Grilles of the '50s*. This coffee-table-sized, quality-printed and -bound 104-page hardcover looks at 10 grille—plus one bumper overrider—designs from Big Three and Independent American automakers, devoting a chapter to each. In addition to the histories and descriptions of each highlighted car, numerous photographs and period illustrations show these noteworthy grilles to best effect. If you love 1950s styling, you'll really love this collectible book.

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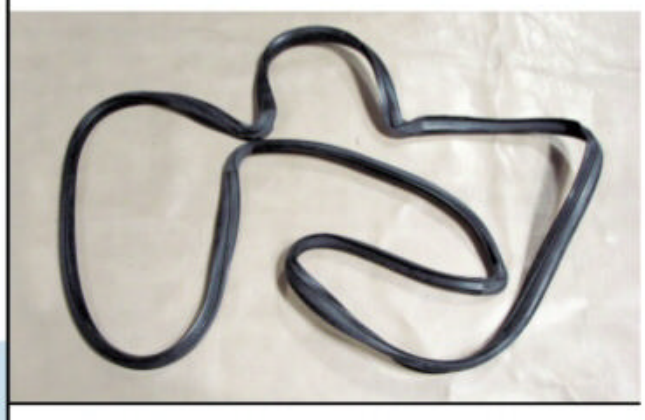

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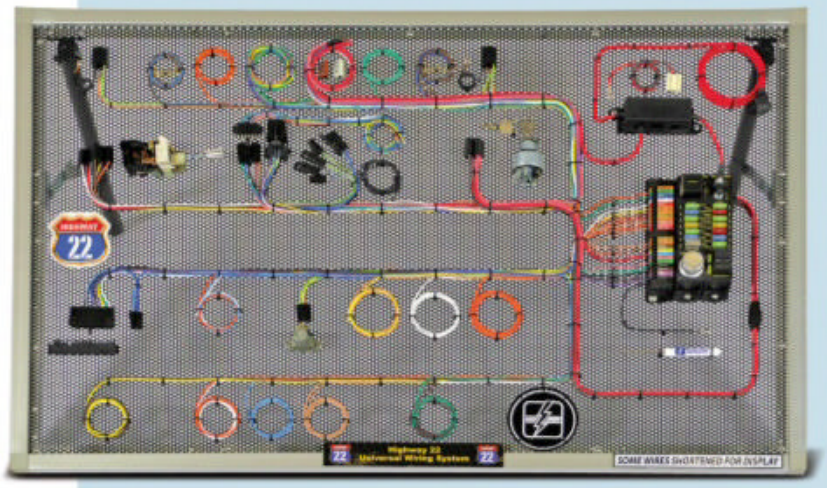

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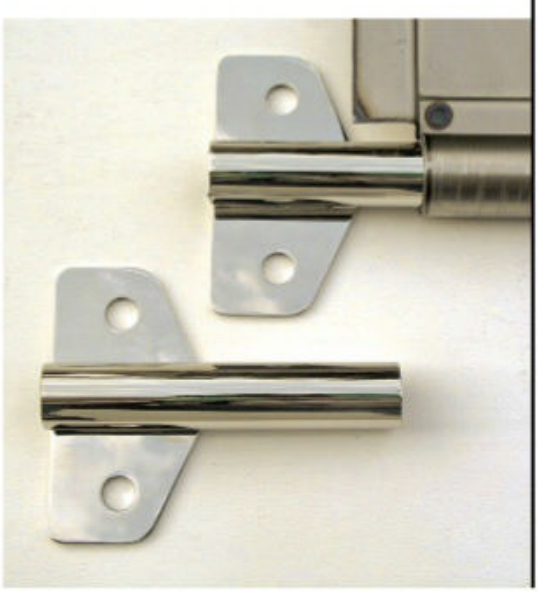

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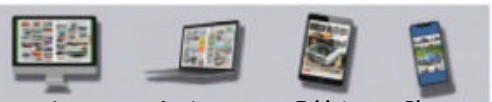

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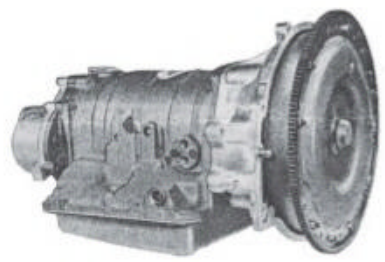

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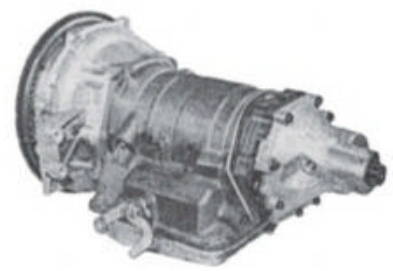

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BY JIM DONNELLY
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Ferdinand Porsche

THE GREATEST GERMAN SPORTING car in automotive history was designed and built by a genius who wasn't even born in Germany. Not only that, but Ferdinand Porsche, the patriarch of the family engineering dynasty, had his hand firmly in the worlds of truck and tank design, aviation, Grand Prix racing, agricultural equipment, and more. He designed one of the biggest-selling cars in automotive history, the KdF-Wagen, which came to be the Volkswagen. And his close association with the Third Reich made him a controversial figure, landing him in prison following World War II.

He was born in 1875 to German-speaking parents in Vratislavice nad Nisou, Bohemia, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and today forms part of the Czech Republic. His father was a panel-beater, which was Porsche's entry into the world of technology. He signed on with an electrical firm in Vienna, where he developed the first known electrically powered hub motor. That accomplishment translated into success in the automotive world when he designed his first car, the Egger-Lohner of 1898, which used battery-powered hub motors for propulsion. In 1902, he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army, and served as a chauffeur to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination later touched off World War I. In 1906, Austro-Daimler hired Porsche as its chief automotive designer and engineer.

Following several honorary doctorates in engineering, Porsche scored his first major triumph by creating the Mercedes-Benz SSK, a supercharged marvel that was a dominant automobile in 1920s European racing, and the first great performance car from Daimler-Benz. That gave Porsche the kind of reputation that allowed him to become an independent design consultant in the early 1930s, bringing along luminaries from his earlier jobs such as Karl Rabe and Erwin Komenda, who would be instrumental in the later development of early Porsche sports cars. Among the Porsche firm's clients was Wanderer, a brand that was folded into the newly created Auto Union conglomerate in 1932. His success led to contact with a new client, Adolf Hitler, who planned to put Germany on wheels in Henry Ford fashion. The Nazi high command tasked Porsche with designing a simple people's car, as it was known, easily constructible from available resources. This, of course, was the Volkswagen, which became the first vehicle in history to sell 20-million units.

Hitler and his propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, rewarded Porsche by making him not only a naturalized German citizen, but also a ranking officer in the Schutzstaffel, the dreaded SS. Porsche's next design achievement was designing the rear-engine, unruly, frightfully powerful Auto Union racing cars, the vehicles that along with Mercedes-Benz's Grand Prix cars, became the Silver Arrows that pulverized the European racing circuit in the immediate prewar years. Once the war began, Porsche worked at making Volkswagen manufacturing more efficient, designed the Ferdinand tank destroyer, and had a hand in the V-1 rocket project.

That would prove, ultimately, to be his undoing when Germany was crushed by the Allies. Due to his Nazi Party membership and SS rank, he was deemed to have profited from slave labor, a war crime. Although Porsche himself was said to harbor no particular political philosophy, he was nonetheless jailed, not returning to Stuttgart until 1949. While incarcerated, the first prototypes for what would become the pre-A Porsches were designed, largely by his son, Ferry, who kept the family business going. After his release, Porsche became a consultant to Volkswagen, and received a royalty on every car it built. He suffered a stroke in 1951 and died shortly thereafter. In 1999, a jury of 132 professional automotive journalists named him the automotive engineer of the century.

Ferdinand Porsche standing with a circa-1937 W30 prototype KdF-Wagen.

18+

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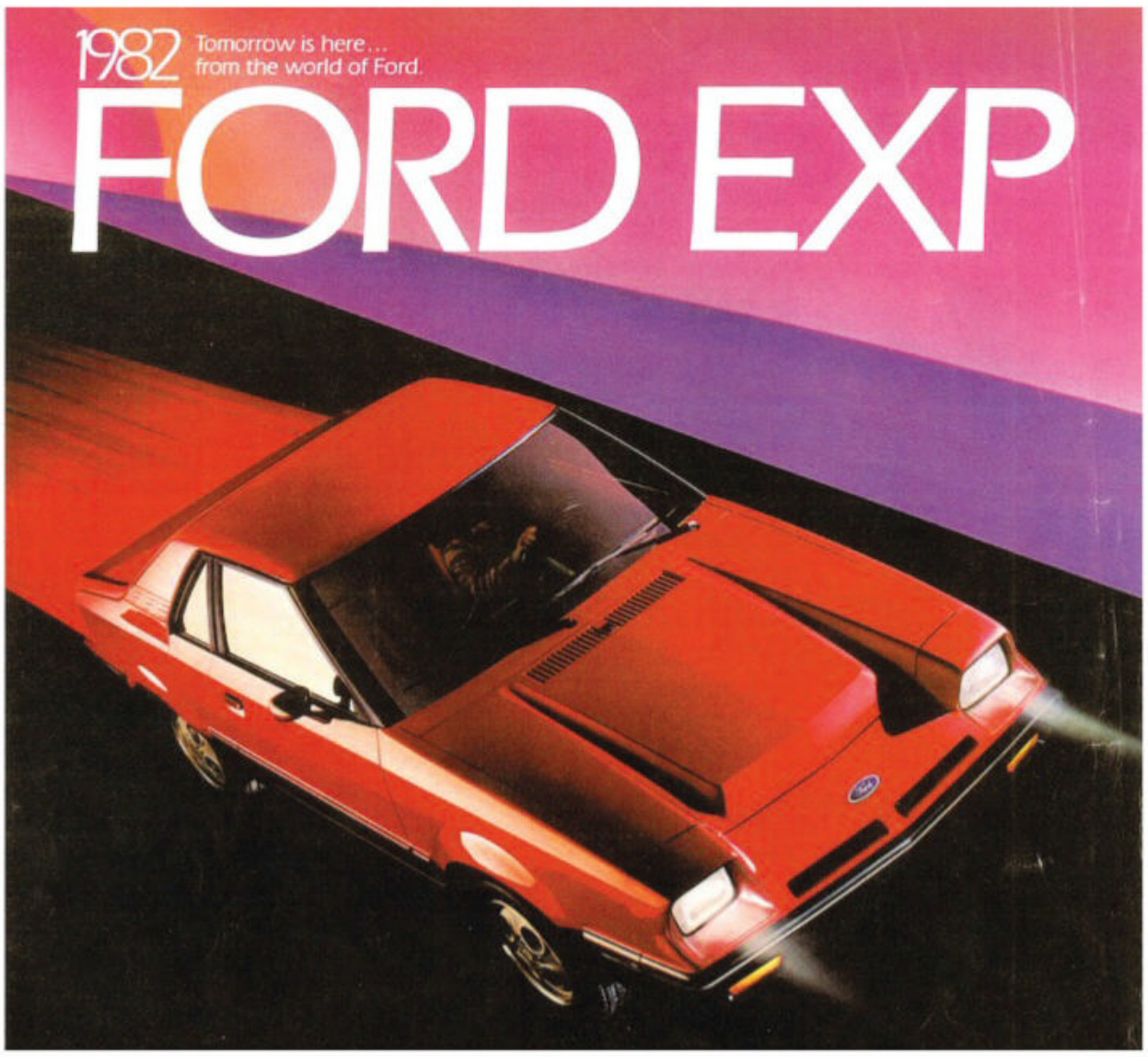
INTERNATIONAL **UNDERDOGS**

BY MILTON STERN

EXPonentially Fun Ford



THE 1980S WAS THE DECADE THAT fashion forgot. Ironically, the decade that gave us big frizzy hair, fluorescent T-shirts, and those gawd-awful white linen suits with the sleeves pushed up, also presented us with some of the most conservative cars. Blackwalls replaced whitewalls. Tightly drawn squares replaced flowing lines, vinyl roofs, and chrome adornments. And most strange was the sudden popularity of cars painted charcoal gray. Thank goodness for this month's International Underdog.

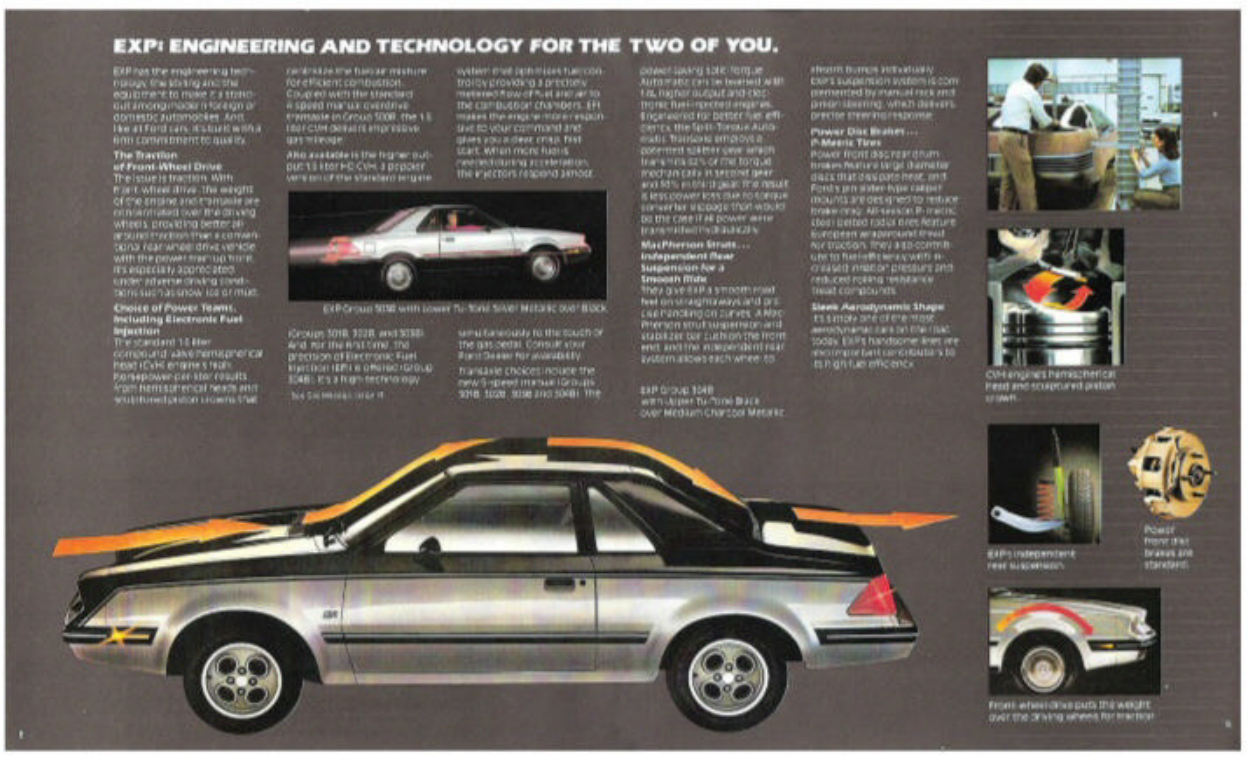
Back in the very early 1980s, I was working my way through college as a waiter at Sammy & Nick's Steak & Pancake House in Williamsburg, Virginia. If you've ever visited Williamsburg, names like "Steak & Pancake," "Lobster & Waffle," and "Crab & French Toast" won't surprise you. One of my coworkers, Norma, drove a triple-black 1976 Lincoln Continental Town Car. It was in perfect condition and magnificent to behold. I love a black car, but anyone who's ever owned one—and I have—will attest that nothing looks more beautiful than a clean, detailed black car, and ironically, nothing looks worse than a dirty black car. Fortunately, Norma kept her car immaculate.

Fed up with gas prices and the ever-moving gas gauge in her Lincoln, one day Norma arrived at work in a brand-new 1981 Ford Escort, also black on black. It was fully loaded—for an Escort, but she chose to go with blackwall tires, much to my delight. I never considered black for a subcompact, but that Escort, all shiny and new, looked really sharp. She loved that car. However, the following year, Ford introduced something more daring to the economy car field, and she was enamored but not quite ready to trade up. All of that would change soon.

Late one evening after work, a man who had been in an accident or altercation, and was covered in blood, approached her car and asked for a ride to the emergency room. She gave him a ride and then attempted to clean her car, but she said it was never the same, so she traded it for a 1983 Ford EXP, also in black, but this time with a red pinstripe and a red-and-black interior. I loved it.

The EXP was good looking, sporty, fun, and, best of all, a two-seater. When she opened the hatch, I couldn't believe it. She could have hauled appliances in that car. I am sure she is driving a black Ford today.

The Ford EXP (along with the Mercury LN7) was introduced in the fall of 1981 as an '82 model. It was the first standard Ford two-seater since the 1957 Thunderbird. Derived from the Ford Escort, it shared the dashboard, floorpans, and most mechanical components, including engines, transmissions, and



suspension, with Ford's World Car. Although using the same wheelbase as well, the EXP was lower and more aerodynamic, with a 0.37 drag coefficient. There were two iterations—1982-'85 with the bug-eyed fascia, and the more orthodox 1986-'88 models.

Interestingly, some buyers would install rear seats from the Escort in their EXPs, though the low roofline meant only Marie Antoinette—post guillotine—would be comfortable back there.

Equipped with a 1.6-liter Compound Valve angle Hemispherical combustion chamber (CVH) 70-horsepower four-cylinder engine, mated to a three-speed automatic or standard four-speed manual, the EXP could reach 60 mph in 12 seconds, and return more than 40 mpg, which was somewhat acceptable at that time.

Standard equipment included power brakes, full instrumentation, full carpeting, map lighting, electric rear defroster, power hatchback release, a digital clock, a cargo area security shade, and wider wheels than the Escort. Options included floor vents, power steering, air conditioning, AM/FM radio, cruise control, roof luggage rack, rear window wiper, removable sunroof, right-hand mirror, Michelin TRX tires, and shocks. A child seat could also be ordered.

In mid-1982, a high-output, 80-hp version of the CVH engine became available. In late 1982, Ford offered Bosch electronic multi-port fuel-injection for the EXP GT, boosting output to 88 hp. The EXP Turbo debuted in 1984, raising horsepower to 120, a 35-percent increase over the base powertrain.

The second generation, now Ford Escort EXP, adopted the front fascia from the Ford Escort for the 1986 model year and the bubble glass for the rear hatch from the newly departed LN7. In profile, the Escort EXP looked heavier and very Escort-like up to the beltline, losing a bit of its personality. While I like this generation, I definitely prefer the daring styling of the first series. Also adopted were the Ford Escort's redesigned interior components. The base engine was now a 1.9-liter, 90-hp CVH inline-four. Two optional models were the Luxury Coupe and Sport Coupe. A five-speed manual had been introduced early in the EXP's run.

Sales never reached the expected 200,000 annual numbers, finishing out its six-season run with a total 225,000 EXPs sold. In 1989, the Ford Probe took over for the EXP.

I found two EXPs for sale, but I did visit a few online forums, and there is a lot of love for the EXP and regret from those who didn't hold onto theirs. There is an EXP LN7 Owners Club, and it has a Facebook page. If you do find one in good condition and reasonably priced, buy it. How many fun, pretty, two-seat economy cars are available out there?


DUESENBERG:
CELEBRATING
AN AMERICAN

Duesenbergs at the Gilmore

The celebration of a classic American icon

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

All throughout 2019, visitors to the incredible Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan, were greeted by the spectacular sight of 20 Duesenbergs. It was one of those rare automotive exhibits that even seasoned enthusiasts will never forget.

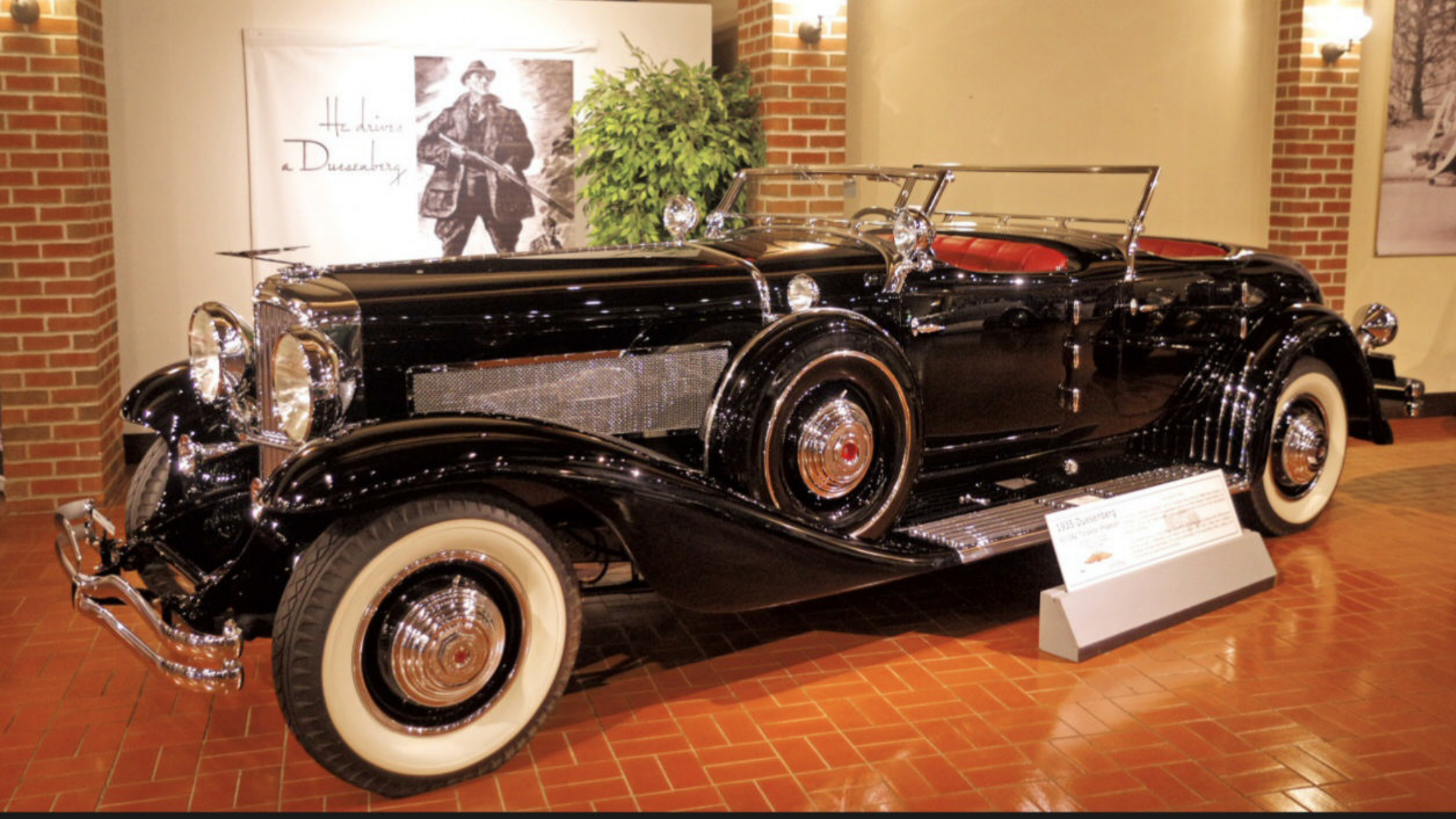
With more than 350 collector cars on display throughout the various buildings that make up the Gilmore complex, this collection of Duesenbergs was a one-of-a-kind happening. It was a real-life historic view of the cars built by this great American car company. Without the presence of ropes surrounding the cars, visitors were able to get up close and peer inside to enjoy each of these metal masterpieces without restriction. That alone was a real treat.

The walls surrounding the cars were decorated with framed illustrations of various Duesenbergs, many of which were styled by Gordon Buehrig. Special life-size backdrops added to the display's appeal.

A visit to the Gilmore Car Museum is an absolute must, regardless the type of cars you're interested in. The best time to visit is after March, when all the various car club buildings are open, each of which is more impressive than the last. For more details go to www.gilmorecarmuseum.org.

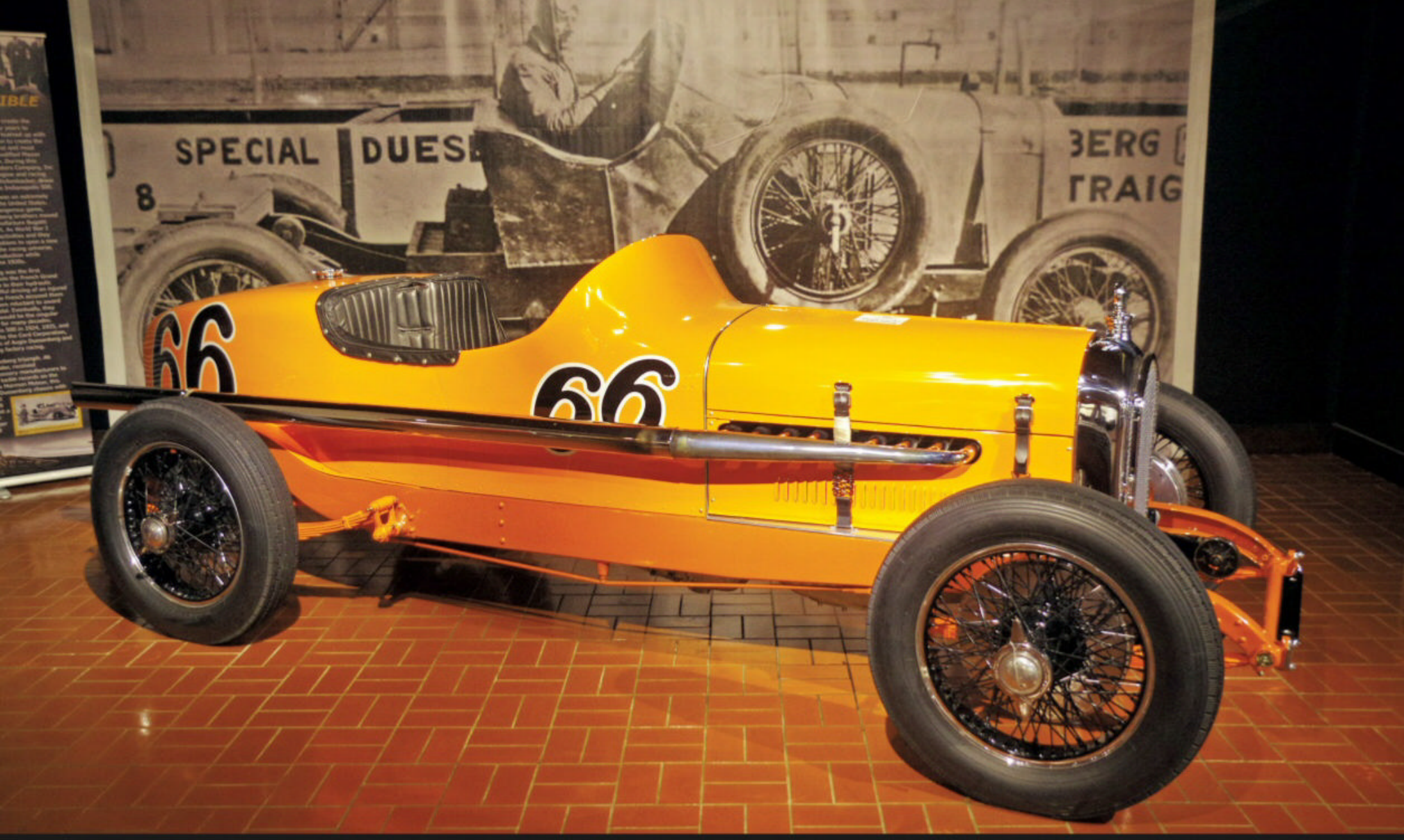
1935 Model JN Cabriolet Convertible **This outstanding JN Cabriolet Convertible is the third of only four built—number one was purchased by Clark Gable. Driven just 16,500 miles, it's the only JN model that was supercharged, hence its external exhausts; it also has a rumble seat.**

1931 Model J-345 Convertible Coupe **Known as a "disappearing top" model due to its cloth top being hidden below the bodywork, this beautiful example is one of 27 produced in this body style, crafted by Walter Murphy of Pasadena, California. It was originally bought by New York mobster William Collins.**



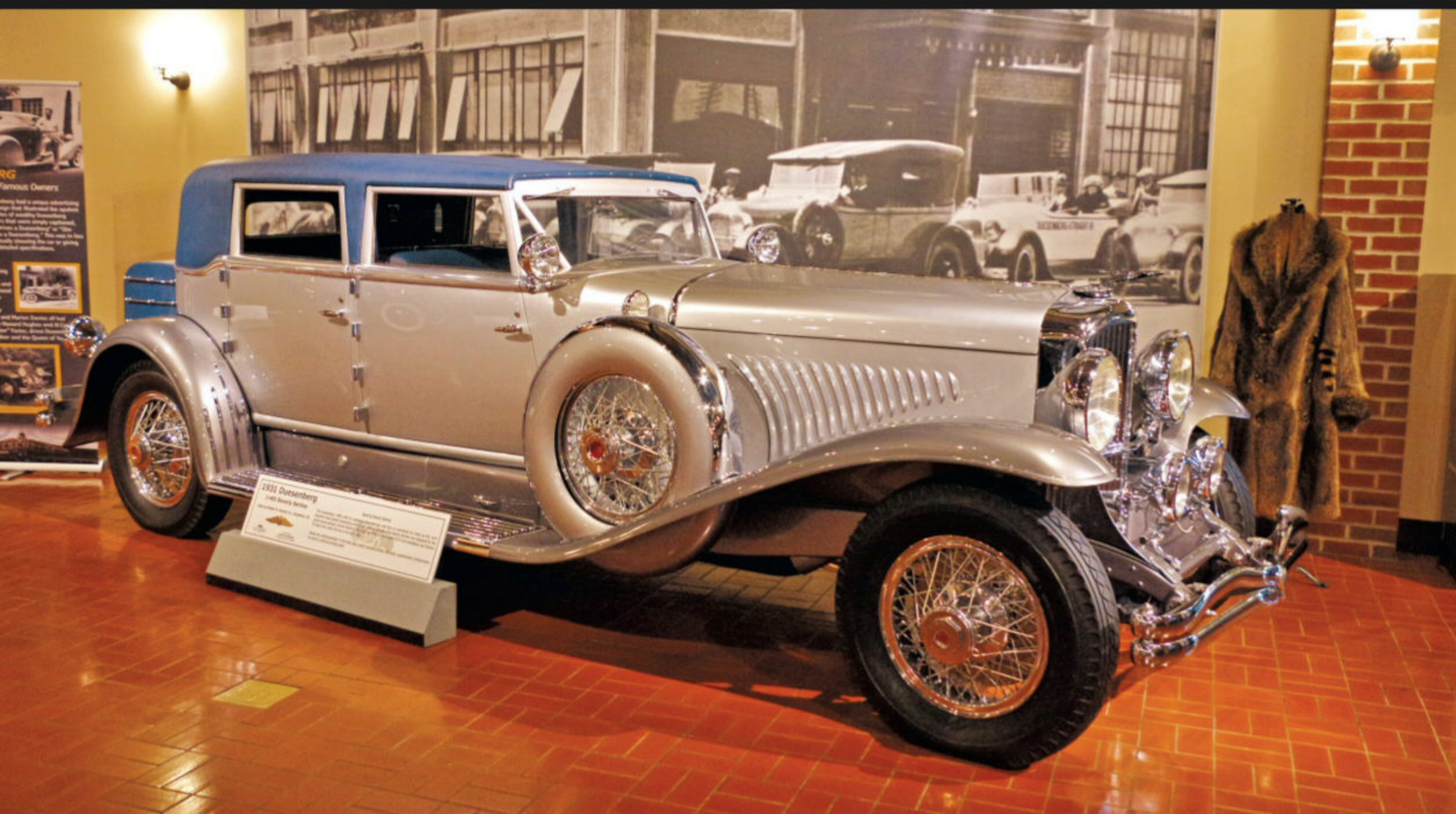
1935 Model SJ-582 Torpedo Phaeton **This sensational Phaeton was designed by Gordon Buehrig. It was built by the A.H. Walker Body Co. in Indianapolis, under the LaGrande name. It features signature dual windshields and a Schwitzer-Cummings centrifugal supercharger. Only five Torpedo Phaetons were built.**

1927 Model A Roadster **The Schutte Body Co. of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, crafted this rumble seat roadster, one of Duesenberg's best-selling models. It's powered by a 262-cu.in. straight-eight engine, and was driven regularly by company co-founder and namesake Augie Duesenberg from the mid-1930s until his death in 1955.**



1930 Model A race car **Bennie Brandfon, a used car dealer from the Bronx in New York City, built this race car from a Model A Duesenberg passenger car. He shortened the chassis and modified the engine, then entered the car in the 1931 Indianapolis 500 but failed to qualify. Note the offset seat.**

1931 Model J-495 Beverly Berline **Spectacularly impressive with its silver coachwork and blue top, this Murphy-built body, with its low roofline, was the creation of Gordon Buehrig. Built on the longer, 153.5-inch-wheelbase chassis, this large four-door Berline is equipped with a pull-out writing desk in the rear.**



1927 Model X Sedan **Still wearing its original paint and interior, this unrestored Model X is one of 13 built, yet only four are known to exist today. Wearing a body crafted by Brunn & Co. of Buffalo, New York, it features hydraulic brakes, and was the last Duesenberg model designed by Fred Duesenberg before the E.L. Cord era.**

1936 Model J-576 Special Town Car **Rollston of New York City custom-built this special-order body, and it has since been driven only 14,000 miles and remains in unrestored condition. One of only 10 Duesenbergs bodied by Rollston, it features skirted fenders and a fabric-covered passenger compartment.**

1931 Model SJ-488 Convertible Phaeton **One of only five Duesenbergs built by the Derham Body Co. of Rosemont, Pennsylvania, this supercharged four-door cost an astounding $15,250 when new. It was originally a company demonstrator, and its black coachwork and blackwall tires lend it a tough, sinister look.**

1929 Model J-111 Dual Cowl Phaeton **LeBaron, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, was contracted to build this car's body. The 10th Model J assembled, it was displayed at the 1929 New York and Los Angeles auto shows. It was then bought by James Talmadge, son of Buster Keaton and Natalie Talmadge. As a used car in 1947, it sold for $123.**

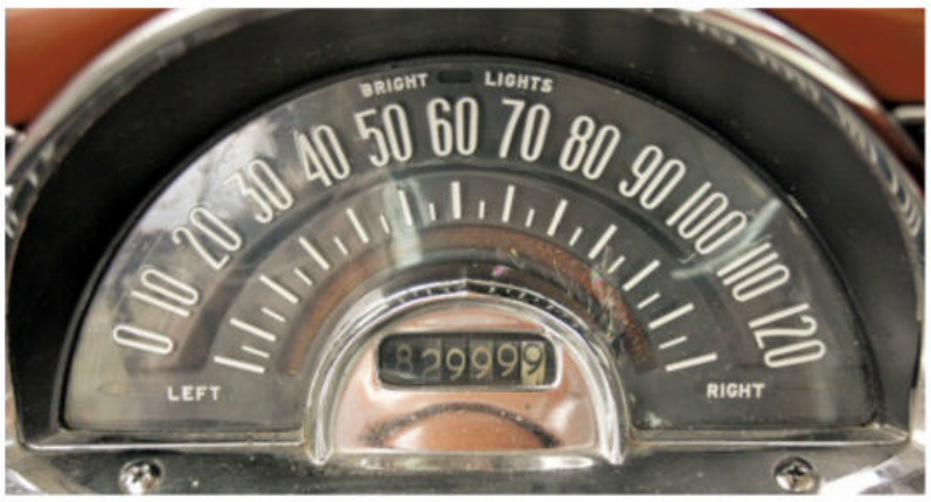
1930 Model J-277 Convertible Victoria **Slathered in bright silver with contrasting silvery-gray fenders and trim, this beautiful Convertible Victoria was built by Hibbard & Darrin of New York City, then shipped to Paris for its socialite owner. It features twin spotlamps and a black leather convertible top.**

1930 Model J-143 Roadster Convertible Coupe **With a body built by Murphy, this roadster began life as a factory demonstrator before being sold to John "Jake The Barber" Factor—a notorious Chicago mobster and half brother of cosmetic king Max Factor. Its blackwall-shod wheels and green body give it a very sporty demeanor.**

Strato-Streak Excitement

Larger than a contemporary Chevrolet, a 1955 Pontiac Star Chief Custom is a fun throwback to mid-century motoring

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL



Interior features leather upholstery in the correct pattern and colors. Note that the brake pedal sprouts from the floor instead of being suspended from the firewall—a vestige of the past, like kingpin front suspension, that would persist a few more years.

Automotive journalists are fond of comparing the dimensions of the 1964-'65 General Motors A-bodies with the 1955-'57 Chevrolet. In muscle car terms, the 115-inch wheelbase, 195- to 203-inch overall length, 58-inch track, and weight in the 3,000-pound range are something of a golden ratio—a car person's ideal balance between full-size luxury and compact/pony car nimbleness.

In all the hoopla around cars like the 1955 Chevrolet and the 1964 GTO, it seems odd that the 1955 and '56 Pontiacs often get lost in the shuffle. Perhaps it's the "chrome suspenders," the Silver Streak hood and trunk trim that ties them to their 1936-'54 heritage, or maybe the slightly longer wheelbase (122 inches for Chieftains, 124 inches for the Star Chief), but their similar overall dimensions and Strato-Streak 287-cu.in. V-8 give them a presence that meets or exceeds any '55 Bel Air or '64 GTO you've ever met.

That Strato-Streak engine is historical in its own right. Pontiac's first OHV V-8 was making its delayed debut alongside Chevrolet's small-block V-8. Unlike its down-market cousin, the Pontiac could be optioned with the well-respected Hydra-Matic transmission, instead of the two-speed Powerglide.

More significantly, the 173-hp (180 hp with Hydra-Matic, as on our feature car), 287-cu.in. V-8 would grow each year through 1959, eventually reaching the 389-cu.in. displacement that would make such marketing magic for the brand. The 421-cu.in. Super Duty engine and, of course, the 400-, 428-, and 455-cu.in. engines that would power Pontiacs through the end of the 1970s, were also descendants of the original 1955 Strato-Streak.

So here is the engine that started it all, under the hood of a car that is the missing link between the Alfred Sloan-era Pontiac, with its sensible flathead engines and better-than-Chevrolet appointments, and the "Excitement Division" with a strong racing heritage and street credibility. Even its model name, Star Chief, bridges the Native American-themed marketing of the 1920s and '30s with the Space Age futurism of the then-present 1950s and '60s.

The body style's name is a third marketing thrust entirely. Catalina, since 1953 meaning two-door hardtop, and from 1956 to 1958 meaning pillarless hardtop, then becoming a model name for 1959, is an island vacation spot off the coast of California. That reference is a vestige of the quasi-luxury vacation themes Pontiac played on in the 1940s and '50s.

This crossroads of themes and Pontiac history is a wonderful place to spend some time—especially behind the wheel. Owner Pastor Bill Wilson of Adams, Massachusetts, was kind enough to let us take it out for a spin and it was a wonderful experience. A 1955 Pontiac Star Chief is a completely capable car for modern roads.

Let's start with that engine. The 180-hp two-barrel V-8, requiring premium fuel, was the middle ground for 1955. Its rating was derived from its 8.0:1 compression ratio. The standard-fuel 173-hp engine, which was available only with the three-speed manual, had 7.4:1 compression. Owners who wanted a little more pep could get an additional 20 horsepower by specifying the Power-Pack engine with a four-barrel carburetor, though dual exhaust never made the option sheet for 1955.

Firing up the 287 is not dramatic. It burbles with a kind of quiet confidence out the single exhaust tip and is entirely unobtrusive in the car with the windows up. The Dual-Range Hydra-Matic has no Park position, and instead the transmission is left in Reverse when parked. On the road, GM's robust four-speed lives up to the legend with nice, firm shifts.

In fact, Bill notes that his 1949 Cadillac, with the same transmission, shifts more smoothly. He says he expects the rebuilt Pontiac unit to wear in over time. Acceleration with the two-barrel engine and the Hydra-Matic in ΔDR (the first of two drive modes pictured right) is more than adequate, and the owner's manual promises more on tap by shifting to DRΔ, though we didn't experiment with that.

The long wheelbase of the Star Chief model makes for a naturally smooth ride, and although Pontiac held onto kingpins in its front suspension through 1957, we found absolutely nothing objectionable about the steering, ride, or handling. That ease of steering is particularly welcome, as one of the options not found on our feature car is power assist, something Bill says would be welcome at low speeds, where the radial tires make their presence known.

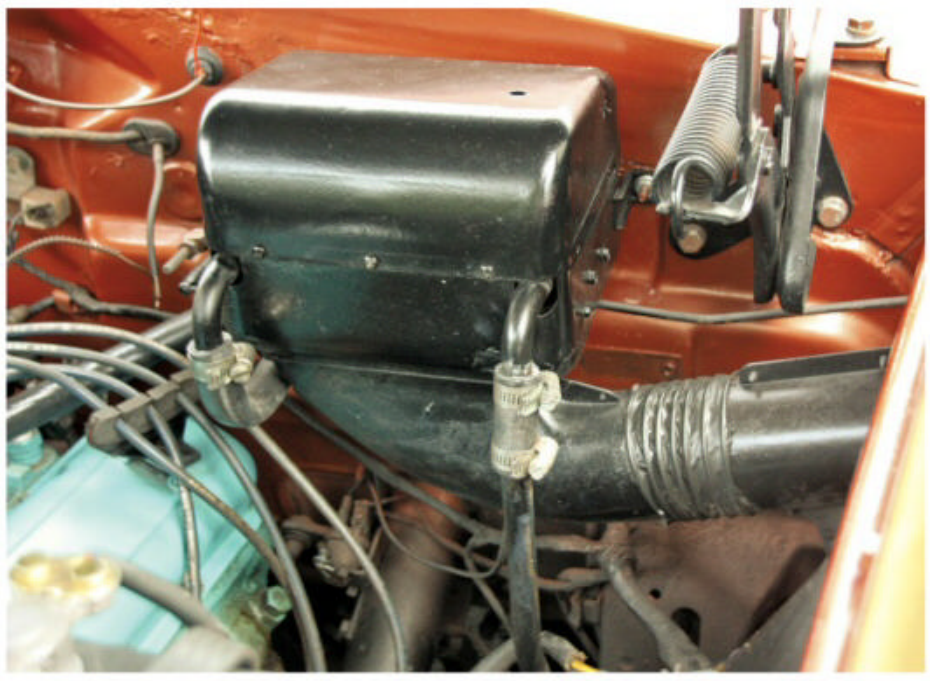
In fairness, the wide-white radials are also noteworthy at speed, but more in the absence of complaint. Between the radials, the good power, and the roomy trunk (some of that additional 7 inches of length on a Star Chief is in the back), we suspect this would make an excellent road-trip car if one were so inclined.

A perennial fear with old cars is the adequacy of the braking system. We didn't take the Star Chief over any mountains, or dice it up in stop-and-go traffic, but the 12-inch drums gave excellent service in ordinary driving, hauling the 3,676 pounds to a stop whenever asked.

Bill backs all of this up. Although it's one of several cars in his collection, he takes his Pontiac out regularly. "I just love sharing it with people," he says, "Even at the gas station, the post office, or the donut shop. I try to drive it once or twice a week in season." Bill says the illuminated Chief Pontiac hood ornament is always a crowd pleaser, especially when leaving Hemmings Cruise Ins in the summer dusk.

"I've always liked 1955 Pontiacs," Bill continues, "It was the first year of that body and the V-8 engine. Plus, there's just something about the front-end treatment and the Silver Streaks. I was six when this car was made and one of my favorite uncles bought one."

The Strato-Streak V-8 would form the basis for Pontiac V-8 engines through 1981, including the GTO's 389. Note the oil filter (below right) — something that wasn't standard equipment on Chevrolet until 1956—and the large black fresh-air heater box on firewall.



Another favorite uncle bought a 1955 De Soto and Bill's parents ended up with a '56 Buick. He says he can remember many spirited discussions at family gatherings contrasting the merits of the Pontiac and the De Soto. While he also kept an eye open for a suitable De Soto, Bill's preference for the Pontiac was no doubt shaped by that Buick and by the Pontiac's presence on television, in the form of *I Love Lucy*, which sent its characters to Hollywood in a '55 convertible.

Convertibles were out of Bill's price range, but he says that in the summer, if you open up the vents and the windows, "it's the next best thing to being there."

Bill first spotted this car in an online auction but was reluctant to get his hopes up about acquiring it. He followed it through a few different platforms before it finally showed up in the pages of *Hemmings Motor News*. He called the owner in California, was satisfied with what he had to say, and asked to send a local friend over to check it out.

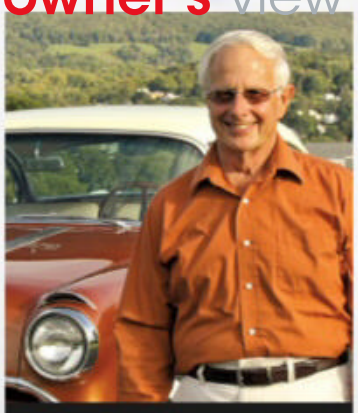
"The car was sold new in California and it was rust-free even before the restoration. I didn't have the means to fly to California, but I had a lifelong friend who lived about three hours away. He looked it over thoroughly."

That friend informed Bill that the Pontaic was not only as good as it sounded, but better. Bill made an offer on the car while acknowledging that it was worth the asking price—he just couldn't afford to pay that much. Luckily, the seller thought the offer was reasonable and agreed to sell—something Bill credits to the Pontiac always playing second fiddle to the '55 Chevy, though he prefers the up-market GM brand.

"I love to drive it because of the ambiance, its comfort, elegance and roominess. When I'm sitting behind the wheel, I see the Chief's profile on the steering-wheel hub, the Silver Streaks and the hood ornament. It's so distinctive and unique—a cool experience not everyone can have. When the weather is good, it's my car du jour."

If you're interested in a 1955 Pontiac of your own, Bill is encouraging: "An excellent condition '55 Pontiac can be obtained for far less money than a comparable '55 Chevy, and in my opinion it's a more elegant and distinctive car, so I heartily recommend it!"

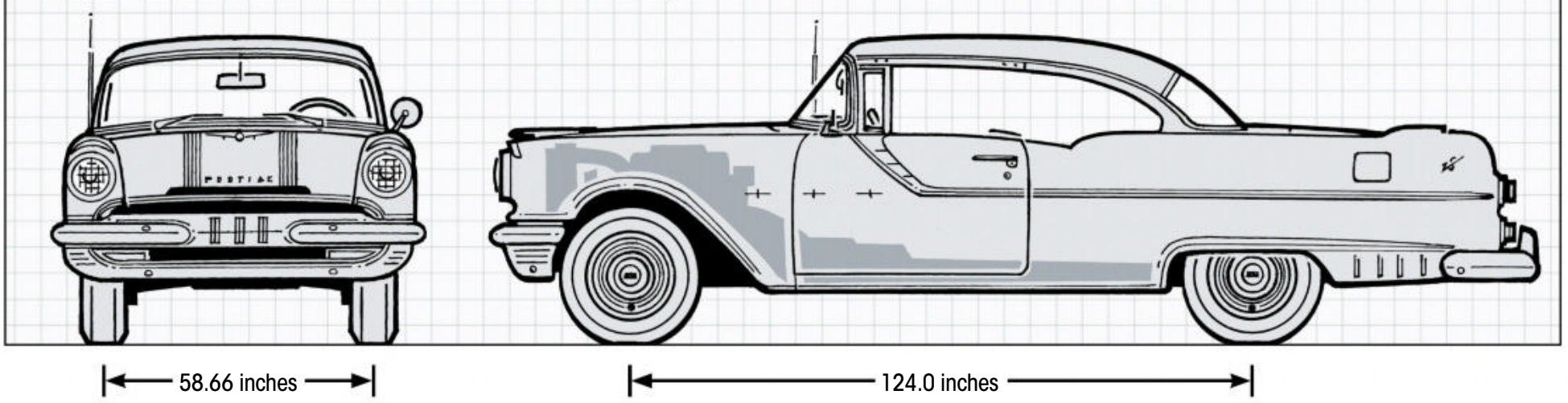
owner's view



Every time you get behind the wheel of an old car, it's an adventure, and you overlook things that would be an annoyance with a daily driver. This is a great hobby and I'm grateful to participate in it. I'm glad that owning this car invites conversation.

1955 PONTIAC STAR CHIEF CUSTOM CATALINA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO © 2020 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	$2,499
OPTIONS	Hydra-Matic drive; radio; directional signals; backup lamps; outside rearview mirror; oil bath air cleaner

ENGINE

TYPE	OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	287-cu.in.
BORE X STROKE	3.75 x 3.25 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	8.0:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	180 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	264 lb-ft @ 2,400
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Carter WGD two-barrel carburetor; mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Pressure, gear-type pump
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt, breaker point ignition system, generator
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Single exhaust

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	General Motors Hydra-Matic automatic transmission	
RATIOS	1st	4.1:1
	2nd	2.63:1
	3rd	1.55:1
	4th	1:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hypoid drive gears, open
GEAR RATIO	3.23:1

STEERING

TYPE	Saginaw, recirculating ball
RATIO OVERALL	25:1
TURNING CIRCLE	42.6 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, drums
FRONT	12 x 2.25-inch
REAR	11 x 1.75-inch

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Steel body, separate I-beam steel frame with crossmembers
BODY STYLE	Two-door hardtop
LAYOUT	Front engine/rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; unequal-length upper and lower control arms, coil springs, tubular shock absorbers, kingpin steering knuckles
REAR	Solid axle; semi-elliptical leaf springs, tubular shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Steel with full wheel covers
FRONT/REAR	15 x 5.5 inches
TIRES	Wide whitewall radials
FRONT/REAR	215/75R15 (original 7.10-15)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	124.0 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	210.2 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	75.4 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	62.5 inches
FRONT TRACK	58.66 inches
REAR TRACK	59.05 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	3,676 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts (6 quarts with filter)
COOLING SYSTEM	22¾ quarts
FUEL TANK	20 gallons

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.627
WEIGHT PER BHP	20.42 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	12.81 pounds

PRODUCTION

TOTAL	99,929

PROS & CONS

+ Stands out in a sea of ’55 Bel Airs
+ Awesome cargo capacity
+ Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic
− Not as collectible as a ’55 Chevy
− Extra body length
− Hydra-Matic shifts firmly

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
$11,000 – $14,000

AVERAGE
$22,000 – $32,000

HIGH
$40,000 – $49,000

CLUB CORNER

PONTIAC-OAKLAND CLUB INTERNATIONAL
P.O. Box 68
Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359
763-479-3571, www.poci.org
Dues: $45
Members: 7,500

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA
161 Museum Drive
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
717-566-7100, www.aaca.org
Dues: $40
Members: 60,000

A few wild thinkers suggest that in the...future there will be tens of thousands of automobiles...

Carriages Without Horses

It's been said that Studebaker was the only major producer of horse-drawn vehicles to successfully transition to automobile production. I don't know if that's true or not, but right now I can't think of any other firm of consequence that made the switch, though that doesn't matter. What does matter to me is the question of why more wagon and carriage makers didn't realize a change was coming and react accordingly.

Let's pretend for a minute that it's 1899 and you're the owner of a medium-sized company that builds horse-drawn carriages and buggies. Your firm has been operational for a while and is successful; in fact, this year is going to be one of the best years ever for the business.

But you're concerned about all the attention being given to the new-fangled "horseless carriages." There aren't many of them on the road, and the few that you see seem to break down a lot. When that happens, the locals hoot and holler "Git a horse." But the town doctor recently purchased one, as have a few other prominent people in the area. They claim the horseless carriage is the future of personal transportation in America. It's a lot cheaper to keep a car than to keep a horse, they note, because the car only needs fuel when it's being used, whereas a horse eats all the time like, well, like a horse. In addition, car exhaust doesn't smell nearly as bad as horse exhaust and doesn't dirty up the streets. A few wild thinkers suggest that in the not-too-distant future there will be tens of thousands of automobiles across the country.

When you have a few moments to think about it, you reassure yourself with a few hard facts:

1) Horse-drawn vehicles have been the favored means of transportation for two or three hundred years; they're not likely to suddenly fade out of existence in favor of a noisy mechanical contraption that breaks down a lot.

2) Cars may be cheaper to keep, but they can be expensive to buy.

3) America's entire transportation network is geared to the horse, with stables and livery businesses in every town, along with blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, and tens of thousands of farms growing hay for the horses. That's not even mentioning the thousands of businesses that produce harnesses, wagon wheels and buggy whips, axles, and everything else that goes into the modern horse-drawn wagon. In comparison, a broad network of repair shops and fuel stations serving the automobile doesn't exist.

In short, you live in a horse-drawn world, you were born into a horse-drawn world, and it just seems impossible that someday – let alone the near future – the whole horse-drawn transportation industry is going to be obsolete. It's just too fantastic to accept. Carriages without horses? It's a fad, like bicycles. After all, didn't they claim that trains would make the horse obsolete? Didn't happen.

So what *did* happen is the majority of horse-drawn vehicle producers continued to build and sell a diminishing number of horse-drawn vehicles to a country that was rapidly converting to automobiles and motor trucks. Those businessmen simply lacked the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Studebaker did adapt, quite successfully, because they had smart management at the time, as well as enough capital and factory space to be able to build and sell both products for a while, providing steady income even as they transitioned to a new industry. They also had a very large network of dealers, many of whom later became car dealers.

Studebaker looked into producing electric vehicles in 1896, and a year or two later began producing taxicab bodies for the Electric Vehicle Company. The firm finally began series production of a line of Studebaker electric cars in 1902. The gasoline-powered Studebaker-Garford automobiles came out for 1904 and soon became known simply as the Studebaker. Once management began to witness the flood of cash from the high-priced cars, they became true believers in the automobile. However, the company didn't officially exit the horse-drawn business until May 1920, when it sold its remaining inventory of farm wagons to Kentucky Wagon Manufacturing Company – a thriving business known today as Kentucky Trailer.

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

WHAT A WONDERFUL TRIBUTE TO Mr. Lido Anthony "Lee" Iacocca from columnist Bob Palma in *HCC* #183. This was the best editorial on Iacocca I've read since he passed on July 2, 2019. Again, great work Bob. Thank you.
Charlie Hart
Johnstown, New York

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO READ THE story on Alex Tremulis in *HCC* #183. I had the privilege of knowing Alex when we were both members of the Executive Committee of the San Buenaventura Concours d'Elegance. In addition to being a highly gifted designer, he was a brilliant conversationalist, often telling of his personal experiences with some of the most important people of the 20th century.

His knowledge of automotive design principles was second to none. Being an avid proponent of automotive aerodynamics, he would frequently refer to certain designs as representing "the unnecessary and cruel punishment of innocent air."

Thanks for a great article about a unique talent. His influence on the automotive world will live on for future generations to admire.
William Bowen
Ventura, California

REGARDING THE B-O-P SECTION IN *HCC* #183: The first time I saw the term "B-O-P" was when the new-car issue came out with the 1961 models. The article was talking about the new "senior compacts." In later years, I read that B-O-P was a marketing construct by General Motors during the depression to save on administrative costs due to the lower sales. Maybe like the B-O-C grouping in the Roger Smith reorganization? Anyway, what I remember most about that magazine issue was how ugly the 1961 De Soto was. It wasn't marketed in Canada anymore. I never saw one until 1970 in Idaho while on family vacation. For that matter, the BOPettes weren't sold here either, although the F-85 and Special were both imported, and were shown in the dealer catalogues.
Wayne Janzen
New Westminster,
British Columbia, Canada

THE FIRST REFERENCE TO B-O-P THAT I recall would have been sometime in 1960 in a *Road & Track* article concerning the upcoming line of GM midsize cars that everyone in the motor press already knew were going to be three peas in a pod. And B-O-P was just easy shorthand. Also, B-O-P refers to the GM B-O-P Assembly Division, the plants where they assembled Buicks, Oldsmobiles, and Pontiacs in one factory. It is not slang and was a General Motors corporate entity. I think the "forgotten middle children" idea is pretty much hokum.
Paul Dietzel
Clearfield, Pennsylvania

JUST TO MAKE SURE THAT MILTON'S article on the Opel Kadett E/Daewoo/Pontiac Le Mans in International Underdogs in *HCC* #183 is not misunderstood, I would like to add: The Opel Kadett E was presented by Opel, Germany, in 1984, and more than 3.7 million were made in Germany. Korean production did not start before 1986. When this version of the Kadett came out, I thought that the front aspect with the dark grey grille integrated in the bumper looked ugly, the facelift version and, in fact, the Daewoo version, look much better.

I had the predecessor, the Kadett D, as a company car and it was quite nice, except for one thing: When driven longer distances with the accelerator floored (1.2 litres, 60 hp on the German Autobahn!?), the accelerator pedal became a hot pedal at the same time, that is temperature-wise. A friend had a similar car and when I drove his car (I think he had the 75-hp version), I experienced the same problem.

About Michael Sarli's comment on similar components in German cars of the '50s and '60s: As far as I know and remember, if you had your Porsche, BMW, or Mercedes equipped with reclining seat backs, you got Keiper Recaro hardware and I doubt that any other German company made similar hinges. If you opted for leather upholstery in Porsches or Mercedes, you got Roser leather, probably in BMWs, too. Instruments were mostly by VDO and electrics by Bosch or Hella.

I really enjoy your magazine and, in contrast to my expectations, it got even better when you started to report on international cars.
Fred Albrecht
Ludwigsburg, Germany

AT 13 YEARS OLD, I BOUGHT MY first car—a derelict 1942 Ford for $35. I cleaned the fuel pump, installed an old set of points from the box of parts in the trunk, and sold the car for $50. I was hooked! I then bought a '39 Ford from the junkyard, dragged it home, and eventually made a $20 profit. I acquired five various cars, free, from behind houses and barns that were gladly donated to "get 'em out of my way."

My family wasn't poor, we just didn't have any money. If we hadn't lived on a steep dirt road, I would never have gotten any of my cars started, because I couldn't afford a new battery. My only income, $3-$5 a week, was from an 8-mile bicycle ride twice daily, to deliver newspapers to the doctors and lawyers in the "rich" neighborhood. Even after I started pumping their gas and changing their oil at the gas station where I worked, my "rich" classmates always made sure to brag (not only in school but also while I washed their windshields) about their new Mercedes, Datsuns and Volvos that "Father" had bought for them—constantly reminding me and my less fortunate buddies, with grease under our fingernails, that our old cars were disgusting. Some of our cars were pitiful and needy, but not disgusting. I would like to believe that some of the treasures we drive today were rescued back then, when they were pitiful and needy.

My opinion was formed 60 years ago, when community and national scars were still healing from memories of Germany and Japan from 14 short years earlier. But the determining factor for me was that my old "junkyard buddies" would help me push my car back up the hill if it didn't start, and help figure out why it didn't, whereas the foreign-car lovers wouldn't stoop that low. I remember thinking that I hoped to never become like them.
Gleason Worrell
Ridgeway, Virginia

I REALLY ENJOYED READING THE article in *HCC* #183 on "Non-Classic Town Cars" by Strother MacMinn that was reprinted from *Special Interest Autos*. I always enjoy learning the origin of automotive terms we use without really knowing where they came from. Strother described when the terms "town car" and "brougham" came to be used, so it was interesting to learn that "landau bars" came from Landau, Germany, and that they were used for an application for an outer cover for a very small folding, but thick,

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An Old Car Show Like No Other

In past columns, I've occasionally referred to the Old Car Festival held annually in Greenfield Village, in Dearborn, Michigan. It's the one vintage car event I try never to miss – it's that good. I first attended the Old Car Festival in the mid-1950s, when I was about 10 years old. That's about 65 years ago; hard to admit, but true.

When I first visited this world-famous complex created by Henry Ford Sr., it was known as the Edison Institute and Greenfield Village. The former is a unique history museum, curated in large part by Mr. Ford. Greenfield Village contains historic buildings and homes, relocated from throughout the United States, to create a 19th-century village.

Today, the entire facility has been renamed The Henry Ford, a move I suspect was intended to prompt folks to call it "the Ford," much as we refer to "the Frick" or "the Met." For many of us old-timers, it's the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

The Old Car Festival began in 1951, and is believed to be the oldest continuously running antique car show in the world. Until 1986, the cut-off date for entries was 1925. That year, the date was raised to 1932, and a new event was added–the Motor Muster–featuring vehicles from 1933 to 1968. The Old Car Festival is held in early September, while the Motor Muster takes place in mid-June. Each event attracts in excess of 600 cars and trucks.

What sets the Old Car Festival apart from similar car shows is that participants are encouraged to drive their cars throughout the village during the two-day weekend event. Watching vintage cars move under their own power is another of the reasons the show is a favorite of mine. Electric, steam, and gasoline-powered; one cylinder to sixteen cylinders. A priceless experience for anyone.

One of my grandfathers, Gus Schultz, took me to my first Old Car Festival. I remember him pointing out the car on which he'd learned to drive – a Brush, which has a wooden front axle. (I also remember standing next to a massive Oldsmobile Limited touring that is still owned by the same Michigan family, the Belfs.) Years ago, I realized I had pointed out my grandfather's early driving experience one time too many to my youngest son, when he replied, "I know, dad, great granddad learned to drive on a Brush with a wooden front axle…."

Many years later, I became an exhibitor, and transitioned to the person showing his car to visitors and taking youngsters for their first ride in a vintage car. I never tire of it.

Today, the two-day event remains similar to when it began, although penny candy is no longer sold in the village's country store. But the ambiance of the show remains, and there have been some welcome additions. A vintage bicycle organization, The Wheelmen (which includes women) ride and display their 1930 and earlier bicycles throughout the weekend.

The Wheelmen add to a feeling of constant motion when you're in the village that weekend. A steam locomotive carries passengers around the grounds, a vintage carousel entertains, and there are the cars and trucks being driven. And, Greenfield Village offers tours in Ford Model A buses and Model T touring cars. There are "old car games" on the village's activity field, and spectators can watch a team assemble a Model T in a matter of minutes.

For me, a key element of the Old Car Festival is driving my cars to the event – a 400-mile round trip. It's part of the total experience. Although awards are given, there's no award that compares to touring in a vintage car.

Another significant attraction is staying at the historic Dearborn Inn, built in 1929 by Henry and Edsel Ford as an airport hotel for their nearby airfield, which since has been developed by the Ford Motor Company. The original airfield even had a zeppelin mast – which was used once.

I should note that I usually arrive a few hours early, so I can do research in the Benson Ford Research Center, which houses thousands of documents, photos, and pieces of automotive literature on dozens of makes of cars and trucks – not just Ford products. It's yet another part of what makes this weekend so special.

"

…taking youngsters for their first ride in a vintage car. I never tire of it.

"

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leather roof behind the main solid roof in order to avoid pinching the top material.

Keep those great articles coming.

Bill Denton
Birmingham, Alabama

I GOT A REAL KICK OUT OF READING about the English Ford Anglia in International Underdogs in *HCC* #178. Back in 1964, in North Miami, Florida, it was my first car during high school. Several guys had them back then, and we always wound up racing them in front of the school. I had a cut-out, which I would open at the time, and boy was it loud. I drew lots of attention, including the police. On dates and at drive-in movies, the back seat worked out fine, but today, forget about it!

Rod Mazer
Gold Canyon, Arizona

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ABOUT Hershey 2019. I have never seen so many people with dogs as I did this year. I observed an incident in the Orange Field where a certain car club had a dog that engaged in a fight with two other dogs; it was pure pandemonium. I was told that one person was injured as were the dogs. Why do people feel they have to bring their animals to an event like Hershey or any other event were there are crowds? Bringing an animal is a liability and is a lawsuit waiting to happen. The AACA bans dogs from the show field on Saturday, so why not for the entire event? I, like others, are annoyed by having to watch out for someone else's dog while trying to shop for parts.

Secondly, I was amazed at how many golf carts, motorbikes, and mobility scooters were crowding the aisles. I thought that you had to have your scooter registered with AACA and you had to be handicapped. I saw very few carts with the proper registration. I can't believe that four healthy looking males on a golf cart were all handicapped.

Thirdly, there were more empty vendor spots this year and it seemed more cars were taking up vendor spaces as just parking spots. Those in charge of the event are getting lax or they just don't care.

Richard Gahr
Chardon, Ohio

ANOTHER SUPERB PAT FOSTER article, "Designing the Matador" in *HCC* #182. This generation (1974-'78) Matador has always interested me, primarily for its styling. It's one of a small handful of cars that, when I first saw it, didn't generate an immediate impression. The 1963 Studebaker Avanti was one, the '66 Oldsmobile Toronado another, and then came this '74 Matador—I remember just looking at each of them, somewhat puzzled.

They were just so different designwise from other current cars and had so many unique exterior design elements that it took a while for me to fully wrap my head around them and form an opinion. With the Avanti and Toronado, it only took several minutes of pondering for me to conclude these were very attractive cars. With the Matador, I'm still puzzled, and still can't seem to decide whether it's nice looking or not—some 40 years later. I do know I'd like to have one though.

James Brophy, II
Tokyo, Japan

I HAD A 1980 CADILLAC SEVILLE Diesel, however, it was the Goodwrench version since the original engine had been replaced. I removed the Roosamaster fuel injection pump, took it to a diesel rebuild shop, had them remove the Pellathane ring at the advance mechanism and replace it with a solid weight retainer. The Pellathane ring had a weakness in that it eventually hardened due to engine heat and then the engine would either run at constant advance, or no advance, or not at all. The solid weight retainer advance mechanism fixed the problem.

I bought my Cadillac used, to commute 50-plus miles to the GM Training Center, which, back then, was called the Newark (New Jersey) Training Center, where I was an instructor. It averaged about 56 mpg driving the New Jersey Turnpike at about 60-70 mph. One night on the way home from a concert, the engine overheated severely; the longer it ran overheated, the better it performed, probably due to the burning off of the soot collected inside.

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> "Like others before me, I had been justly sentenced to garage purgatory."

Liberated from Limbo!

History has a habit of repeating itself. Maybe not down to the finite details from one event to the next, but close enough. I know this from my own experiences as a vintage-car owner, which means you probably know where this story is going: Nowhere.

Like others before me, I had been justly sentenced to garage purgatory. My failed self-defense excuse was as common as "my dog ate my homework," except that it had a more mature connotation in the guise of "life took precedence." It's a broad yet true statement, but it means one must be proactive with time management. In my case, I was guilty of failing to spend not even an hour a week addressing an anti-cruising malady. To explain, let me backtrack and paint a picture from exactly two years ago.

Many may recall that fellow editor David Conwill and I attempted to revive a Hemmings editorial staff version of "garage nights," with the exorcism of an electrical gremlin that had taken residence in my 1961 Buick Invicta a few years prior. On that night, intentions were good, ambitions were high, and we were armed with tools, manuals, and knowledge to solve the problem quickly.

Lesson One for any novice: Never assume anything will go "quickly" within a garage. The notion of starting the 401-cu.in. Wildcat V-8—in order to properly diagnose a copious flow of voltage, or in this case, lack thereof—noisily became Preliminary Project A (PPA). Cranking the big V-8 repeatedly proved useless, until we spent time clearing the fuel line of debris and coaxing the Rochester carburetor's floats back to life.

Lesson Two: Solving one problem to correct another can lead to a new issue. Although we solved PPA, it initiated Problem Two. Habitually stepping on the brake, while attempting to start the Buick, forced the aging main front-to-rear hydraulic line to erupt like Mount St. Helens; the master cylinder's contents unceremoniously discharged onto the garage floor in less than a second. Later, as we stood in a shallow lake of DOT 3 fluid, the Buick's malfunctioning generator continued to taunt us. I thought I heard the haunting laugh of Vincent Price echo from the nearby mountain. We called it a night, neither of us aware this was when history would repeat itself.

Further attempts at automotive resurrection stalled. Though the thought perpetuated, schedules conflicted, and by spring I had regressed into a deflated state of mechanical limbo. A summer of car shows and cruising weather began its steady march. Fall turned to winter. The spring thaw was tumultuous, and as another summer ebbed into the past, my friends' subtle-but-unending questions pertaining to my car's status became a full-fledged inquisition.

Surrounded by other interests that consume part of my private life, I was bracing for another winter of stagnant progress. The future looked bleak; another chapter added to the half decade of mechanical misery—a story going nowhere. That is, until those same friends, Ken and Dave, heard enough and hatched a proactive plan to reverse the automotive mess I have been wallowing in, before it was too late.

After returning from Hershey, they arrived on a damp afternoon with trailer hitched to truck. The idea was to start the Invicta and drive it—albeit carefully—to their waiting trailer, whereupon an electric winch would guide it aboard for safe transit to *their* shop, where they would affect all the necessary repairs before spring. Like a bad horror movie, though, the engine wouldn't start. They weren't going to leave without the Buick, so we pushed the car out of the rear bay, around a corner, through a temporary carport, to the trailer.

With its rescue came immediate progress. Fluid levels have been topped off, a new fuel pump has been installed, and the fuel line from the pump to the carburetor has been purged of contaminants. Fueled by fresh gas, the big V-8 starts in an instant and purrs like it did when new. As I type, the generator and voltage regulator have been sent to specialists for examination, and a complete brake job is next on the list—a task that I've always enjoyed tackling.

My release from garage purgatory is underway, but it's far from complete. As I'm sure many can attest, help from friends like Dave, Ken, and David is always a welcomed blessing, but you're never truly liberated from limbo until you contribute to the effort, especially when the calamity was your own fault.

It's going to be a bright 2020.

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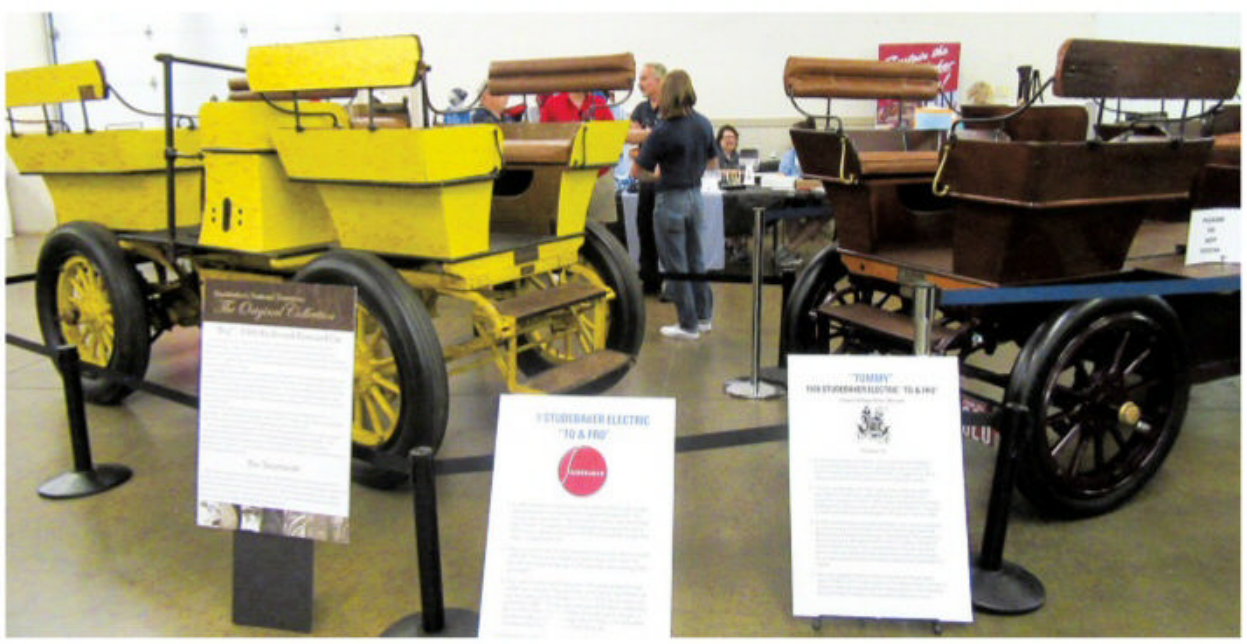
After checking with engineering, I was told to use Dexron Type A automatic transmission fluid about two to three times a year. After running the fuel level down very low, I added a quart of ATF in the fuel tank, and then filled the fuel tank with diesel fuel to mix it. The detergency of the ATF would clean the soot better than driving it overheated. Also, they recommended mixing the ethylene glycol with water in a 60/40 mix instead of the normal 50/50 mix. They said it would allow the cooling system heat to increase and help not only with the soot accumulation but also would improve fuel economy. I can verify all of that.
Frederick Allen
Union, Maine

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ON THE 1967 Firebird in *HCC* #183, and was surprised to learn that the Firebird was introduced after the Camaro as I had always thought it came out first. In the description of the available engines, there's a statement regarding the Firebird 400: "325-hp (due to restricted carb linkage) engine." What's up with that? I've never heard of a linkage restriction.
Alan Zayac
Hinsdale, New York

Thomas DeMauro replies: *At the time, GM didn't want engine output to exceed 1 horsepower per 10 pounds of vehicle weight, meaning a car that weighed 3,250 pounds couldn't produce more than 325 horsepower. To use higher-rated GTO 400 engines in the lighter-weight Firebird, power was reduced by revising the carburetor linkage to limit the full-open position of the secondary throttle blades to less than 90 degrees.*

I HAD A BLAST READING ABOUT THE 1967 Firebird. I'm the third owner of my 1968 Firebird, which I bought back in 1976. It is very similar to the one you wrote about, although mine is not even close to original anymore. But it did come with a 350-cu.in. V-8, two-barrel carb, two-speed automatic, and non-power-assist drum brakes all around. It was great to read and see this original car and its original equipment. It's been fun to learn about Pontiacs and its cousin the Camaro while working on mine over the years. A number of parts are able to be replaced especially the braking system; I was able to upgrade to front power disc brakes when a friend of mine wrecked his Camaro and let me grab some of his suspension parts, which bolted right in. I also learned that Pontiac had only one block size in its V-8 design, which let me upgrade to a 455-cu.in. V-8 that was also a simple swap. The same for the transmission which was swapped to a TH350 — it bolted right in.
Guenter Hubert
Newport, New Hampshire

THE PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF Technology story in *HCC* #183 was very interesting. I saw some of the work on display at the 55th International Studebaker Drivers Club meet in Mansfield, Ohio, in September. Both *Peg* and *Tommy* (the two 1908 electric vehicles) were in different states of decay when obtained, thus differences were being compared at this meet. *Peg* is owned by the SNM and *Tommy* is owned by the William E. Swigert Jr. Automobile Museum. It was really great that these two vehicles could finally be together after being separated for years.
Duane Miller
Eldridge, Iowa



LOVED PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN ON the DKW in *HCC* #182. I was 17 in 1966, living and going to college in Jersey City, New Jersey, when my neighbor, who was a used-car dealer, told me that he took in a strange car in trade. He said I could have it if I took it off his lot. I went to see it and found a 1958 DKW. It was a black-and-white four-door. I towed it home and found that it was completely rust-free and even came with the owner's manual. I realized it was a two-cycle and easily got it started. It did not have a clutch pedal, yet it was a four-speed column shift. When I tried to put it in first gear, there was a loud screeching and grinding of gears. I attempted to do some research, but there was little available, and no one could figure out the lack of clutch and noise. I gave up and sold it for $50.

Six years later, I worked for Volkswagen of America and found out about the existence of the automatic stick shift on VWs. There was a micro switch on the shift handle that activated the release of the clutch. I realized that this is what I had in the DKW, and could have fixed it by removing the engine that weighed about 40 pounds! How many cars have we lost due to lack of information?
Ray Polakoski
Halifax, Virginia

I, TOO, WAS INTRIGUED AND amused by the 1950 Pontiac Chieftain Six that was presented in *HCC* #178. Pete Betz's letter in Recaps in *HCC* #182 concerning the likelihood that it was a minister's car reminded me of a car that I owned some years ago. It was a 1949 Hudson Super Six two-door Brougham sedan, black in color, no radio, no overdrive, perhaps a heater, but nothing else. I remember the little bit of history that I was given by the guy who I purchased the car from: It was bought new from a Hudson dealer in Richmond, Virginia, and was for a minister. Go figure!
George Field
Ashland, Virginia

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

Cost-Effective Convertible

The bare-bones construction that makes a 1948 Crosley CC a fun bargain

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

Tiny cars, in one form or another, have been around since the early 1900s. Just before World War I, the cyclecar fad lasted approximately two seasons in the United States. Here, the Ford Model T spelled early doom for those diminutive contraptions—as did the rural character of much of the country. The segment hung on a bit longer in Europe, where the industry was not done in entirely until the arrival of the Austin 7, in 1922. A vestige lives on today, in the form of the Morgan 3 Wheeler.

The Austin 7, with a 46-cu.in. flathead four-cylinder and a 75-inch wheelbase, was itself no giant among cars—especially when it arrived on these shores for 1930. It staggered in and out of the U.S. market through 1941, becoming American Bantam in 1937. Bantam, of course, designed the vehicle that was to become famous as the Willys Jeep.

Around the time American Bantam was expiring, Powel Crosley Jr. was making his third attempt at entering the U.S. auto industry. The Cincinnati, Ohio, native's first try had involved the semi-luxury Marathon Six, which failed in the Panic of 1907. Undeterred, Crosley continued to work in the business and nurse ambitions of becoming a manufacturer.

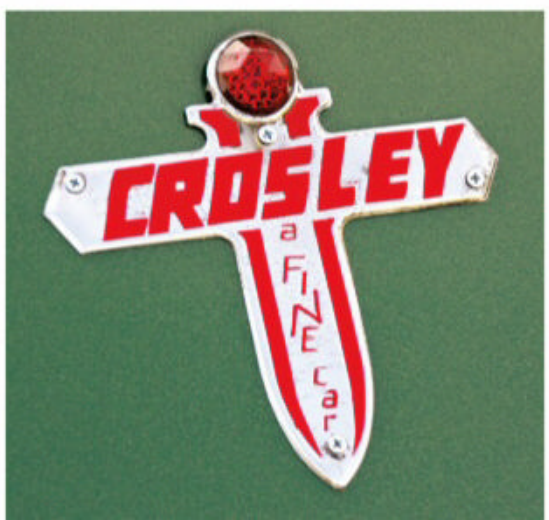
He made another attempt during the cyclecar craze, which also failed to congeal. After his second dalliance with cars, Crosley turned to accessories, and finally, this morphed into manufacturing appliances and radios. Perhaps his most famous products were the 1933 Crosley Shelvador, the first refrigerator with shelves in the door, and the 1930 Roamio radio for automotive and boat installations.

As a radio and appliance man, Crosley excelled. He met with so much success that he amassed sufficient fortune to start the powerful radio station WLW, and to purchase the Cincinnati Reds baseball team, which hosted baseball's first night game in 1935.

The Crosley automobile was produced with the benefit of Powel Crosley's accumulated experience since the 1910s. In many ways, it was more like an appliance than an automobile. Its simple, upright lines were a marked contrast to the swoopy, stylish shapes employed by Russian Count Alexis de Sakhnoffsky on the outgoing American Bantam.

Crosley's intent for his car was well summarized by his proclamation "You wouldn't cross a river in a battleship," nor would you want to cross town in a large family car just to purchase groceries or have coffee with a friend. The earnest looks of the Crosley could be considered canoe-like if one wants to extend the river analogy, though we're struck more by the similarity to the nicely styled tools of the era, with Streamline Moderne housings enhancing a machine's appearance rather than hiding it.

The original 1939 Crosley, with its 12-hp, two-cylinder, air-



The virtue of simplicity is on display inside: The vinyl seats lack pleats or piping. Instruments are confined to a four-gauge panel on one side and a speedometer on the other. Crosleys used a floor shifter at a time when most other U.S. cars had moved to column shift.

cooled Waukesha engine, sold well enough to remain on the market through 1942, when automaking went on hiatus for World War II. Crosley picked up defense work, which led it to a relationship with a man named Lloyd Taylor, who had designed a clever lightweight overhead-cam engine that seemed perfect for use as a portable powerplant for refrigeration units, generators, and the like. The novel thing about the Taylor engine was that, rather than using a cast block, it was constructed of oven-brazed sheetmetal, expanding production possibilities beyond those equipped with foundry facilities.

Crosley's wartime contracts led it to financial stability, and the Copper Brazed (CoBra) engine seemed to offer real potential for upgrading the car line for the postwar market. The new Crosley CC that arrived for the 1946 model year featured a 26.5-hp, 44-cu.in. CoBra OHC four-cylinder mated to a non-synchronized three-speed transmission with floor shift. Its lines were slightly more sophisticated than its prewar ancestors and it was available in just two body styles: two-door sedan and convertible. The latter sported heavy steel rails above the windows on both sides.

The car featured on these pages is a 1948 Crosley Model CC, part of a run of 29,084 examples, which would make for Crosley's best sales year ever. The postwar market was hungry for new cars and they were hard to get. Crosley built the first batch of CCs, 16,637 of them, from July 1945 (remember that the fighting didn't stop until August 15) to March 1946. A station wagon joined the fray for the 1947 model year and proved to be of enormous utility.

So popular was the wagon, that for 1948 the body style made up nearly 81 percent of production. By contrast, there were only 2,845 convertibles built. Commercial vehicles, similar to the new-for-1948 Citroën 2CV, had been in the mix from the beginning. In fact, the Crosley seems to beg comparison with many postwar European cars.

"Around town, at 35 to 55 mph, they're just fine."

Dimensionally, the Crosley has very much the same presence as a 1957 Fiat 500 or a 1959 Austin Mini. Both European cars are of a similar size to the Crosley, with 72.4- and 80.2-inch wheelbases, respectively. They also both have sporting pretentions the Crosley doesn't make, though the Hot Shot, Super Hot Shot, and Super Sport roadsters of 1949-'52, with tuned versions of the Crosley engine and chassis, are very much akin to an MG Midget or Austin-Healey Sprite in spirit.

If anything, the nature of the Crosley driving experience is probably more related to the Volkswagen Type 1 "Beetle." Volkswagen had dug out of the wartime rubble sufficiently to produce 19,244 cars in 1948, but no Volkswagens would be imported to the U.S. until 1949. The Beetle also wouldn't get a folding canvas sunroof until 1950, but it nevertheless makes an interesting comparison to the Crosley.

The 94.5-inch wheelbase of a Beetle is more than a foot longer than that of a Crosley, and the German car is 15 inches longer overall and weighs at least 600 pounds more. Despite the extra bulk, a 1948 Volkswagen had similar output to Crosley. The Beetle utilized a 25-hp four-cylinder engine, giving the American car a superior power-to-weight ratio.

Another thing the Crosley and the contemporary Volkswagen shared were mechanical drum brakes. In the case of the Crosley, they are cable-operated and 6 inches in diameter. Famously, Crosley would be among the first automakers to offer disc brakes, beginning in 1949 when it adopted a hydraulic system, but those disc brakes were short-lived and soon replaced with drums.

One could almost imagine a modern carmaker—following in the wake of the revival of the Mini and the Fiat 500—resurrecting the Crosley marque with a contemporary (much larger) compact—perhaps electric? After all, the Crosley intellectual property is still current on retro audio equipment and telephones, as well as an affordable line of appliances. It's not a stretch to imagine a Yankee-flavored sporty compact to join the aforementioned European equivalents. We actually wouldn't be surprised to see someone like Mahindra take something like this on, to go along with the Jeep-like Roxor offroader and Royal Enfield motorcycles, both hoary old brands trading an updated, retro product globally.

Meanwhile, if you're mechanically handy, there's a good case to be made for purchasing a vintage Crosley as a fun car. They're very simple and yet still legally a car—a great in-town runabout capable of delivering some serious fuel economy. It seems the Crosley secret may be coming out, however, as recently a 1951 Crosley CD Super wagon sold for $47,600 at an RM Sotheby's auction during Monterey Car Week, in August 2019.

Feature-car former owner Dave Anspach, of Palm Bay, Florida, suggests that the Sotheby's result is an outlier and likely the result of a spirited bidding war rather than indicative of a market trend. Given that Dave has owned 56 Crosleys in his life, 13 of which are still in his collection, we're inclined to take his word for it.

And yet clearly two persons of means felt sufficiently enamored of the Tommy Bahama-themed wagon at Monterey to consider spending some serious money to purchase one. It suggests a certain inherent value, don't you think? Perhaps we will see some more beach-themed restorations on the market soon, or perhaps North Woods or Mountain flavors.

Of course, the quality of the restoration matters a lot. A well-preserved original would be a great curiosity, and wonderful to haul out for car shows, but Dave says "almost every restored Crosley is better than new." That's not to suggest that there were major issues with Crosleys, but rather that they were built for function first, while appearance came second.

"Door and hood gaps weren't good," Dave says, "Plus, they're so lightweight that just tightening one bolt will throw the rest of the body out of alignment. 'Good enough' tends to be the mindset of most Crosley people."

Our feature car was, in fact, an unrestored original when Dave first acquired it in 2012, not far from Crosley's hometown. The seller was the son of the original owner, a man who had held the car for decades with never-to-be-realized ambitions of restoring it himself. The level of preservation, however, was not outstanding.

"They had jury-rigged the wiring," Dave recalls, "But we were able to drive it onto the trailer. The body was in great shape—we only had to repair the one vent door."

The body restoration, including hand sanding off the original paint, was performed by Mervin Zimmerman of Rehrersburg, Pennsylvania. Mervin also sprayed the new paint, which is the original 1948 Crosley color Island Green Metallic.

While the body had survived well, the interior was another story. Dave reconditioned the instruments, and Rob Gilbert of Fix It All in Hamburg (a fellow Dave describes as "particularly talented when it comes to Crosley stuff") reupholstered the seats in an appropriate tan vinyl.

The simple mechanical work on a Crosley is easy to tackle. Dave himself handled rehabilitating the chassis and handed off the "all but bulletproof" Crosley engine and its associated transmission to Barry Seal of Walnutport for a rebuild. To illustrate just how tough Crosley engines are, while this one ran, upon investigation Barry discovered the crankshaft had broken in five places.

It's worth noting that this Crosley sports one particularly desirable upgrade, installed back when it was new or nearly so: The

The SOHC four-cylinder engine was developed during World War II and initially built using a brazed-together sheetmetal block.

cast iron block assembly engine. The CIBA engine came out for the 1949 model year, first as an option. It would later become standard equipment and was available to retrofit CoBra engine cars.

The design was the same, but the innovative construction method, which had been well suited to military and stationary applications, was not quite up to the task of dealing with the average consumer. Running the engines low on coolant was particularly hard on them, and they were especially vulnerable to electrolysis and corrosion. The CIBA retained all the other high points of the OHC design, but in a more durable package.

Dave no longer owns this Crosley, which we photographed at the 2016 AACA Spring Meet in Vineland, New Jersey. "I buy a car, restore it, show it for a while, and then it goes to one of my grandchildren." This one resides with granddaughter McKenzie, age 16.

In some ways, a Crosley is ideal for a teenager. Its small size makes it easy to handle, and, despite the mechanical brakes, a Crosley will stop okay, too. "I've always found that if you keep the brakes in adjustment, they'll stop just as well as anything," Dave says. He also notes that older cables tended to stretch over time, but new cables usually stay put longer.

As far as speed, there will be no temptation to race a Crosley convertible, sedan, or wagon, but they do alright for themselves when used as intended.

"Around town, at 35 to 55 mph, they're just fine."

"Just fine" is an excellent summation of the whole Crosley experience, actually. The smaller and simpler a car is, the less effort it takes to own, restore, and/or maintain. Enthusiasts of the Ford Model T and Model A know this, as does the crowd that loves the air-cooled Volkswagen. Crosley folks also know it, and their little corner of the hobby might be the best-kept secret of the old-car world.

And the Award Goes to

Eighties cars officially recognized for excellence, worldwide

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHS ARE COURTESY OF THE AUTOMAKERS, AND FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

The 1980s was a decade of notable developments in technology and design, and arguably, the automotive industry exhibited those advancements more clearly than any other. The deepening focus on efficiency that had forced the downsizing of cars and their drivetrains in the late 1970s would inspire new, wind tunnel-tested shapes that were motivated by innovatively designed engines. Performance and style were interpreted through a fresh filter, and buyers in America and Europe were spoiled for choice by the wide range of clever and attractive economy, luxury, and sports cars appearing on dealer lots. The most promising of these 1980s automobiles were rewarded with prestigious Car of the Year titles: In the United States, *Motor Trend* magazine recognized a domestically produced car, as well as an import, each year, while numerous international automotive publications collaborated overseas to award the equally coveted annual European Car of the Year prize. We've gathered the 1980 through 1989 COY/ICOY/ECOY winners on these pages for a retrospective, because it's fun to look back on those modern-classic cars through today's lens. Do you feel their choices stood the test of time?

CHEVROLET CITATION

LANCIA DELTA

HONDA CIVIC

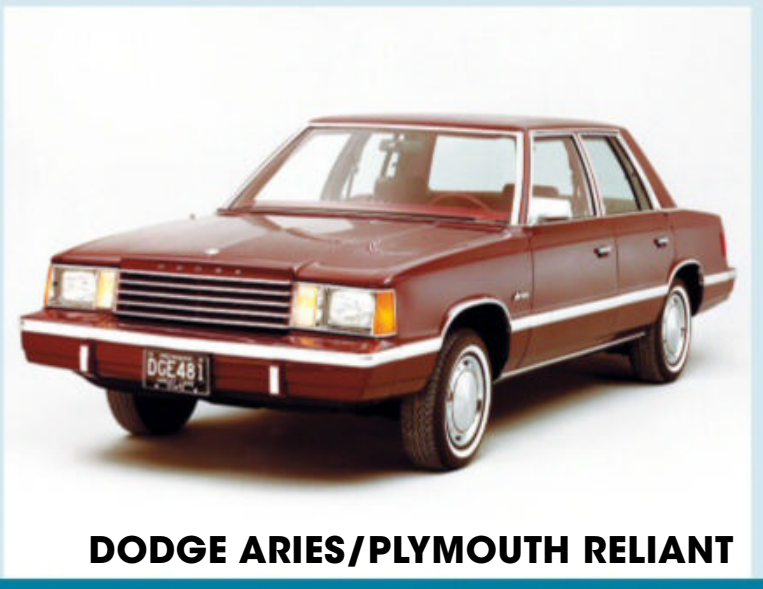
CHRIS GREEN

1980

While General Motors was no stranger to front-wheel drive—its groundbreaking Oldsmobile Toronado dated back to 1966—it brought this drivetrain tech to the mass market in its new X-platform **Chevrolet Citation**. GM called this 1980 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year "the most thoroughly tested new car in Chevy history," noting the versatility of this compact-yet-roomy two-door notchback and two- or four-door hatchback. For all that effort, the Citation would earn a recall-prone reputation, something that didn't tarnish GM's follow-up FWD cars, and was never an issue for *Motor Trend*'s 1980 Import Car of the Year, the second-generation **Honda Civic**. This Japanese model, which had previously changed the emissions-control game with its clever CVCC engine design and added a flexible wagon body style, progressed into a larger and more polished performer that retained its industry benchmark standard, and continued to send competitors back to their drawing boards. A compact four-door hatchback from Italy, the **Lancia Delta**, would similarly become spoken of in reverent tones, thanks to its eventual evolution into a turbocharged, four-wheel-drive, Group A World Rally Championship winner. That was in the future for this 1980 European Car of the Year, an attractive family hatch penned by Giorgetto Giugiaro of Italdesign. Marketed for a time in Scandinavia as a Saab-Lancia 600, the first-generation Delta was never offered in the U.S., but by the time its production ended in 1994, it was a global legend.

MERCEDES-BENZ 300SD TURBODIESEL

FORD ESCORT MK III



DODGE ARIES/PLYMOUTH RELIANT

1981

For decades, Germany's flagship luxury cars had earned reputations for being among the world's best-engineered automobiles. The introduction of the all-new **Mercedes-Benz 300 SD Turbodiesel** in the fall of 1980 put that sedan on top of the list for *Motor Trend*'s 1981 Import Car of the Year award. The magazine's editors found the W126-chassis S-Class "a benchmark vehicle of the time," notable for its sleek design (0.36 coefficient of drag, then lowest of any four-door), rendered in aluminum and lightweight steel, as well as for its efficient SOHC 3.0-liter five-cylinder engine and sophisticated underpinnings. This model would be a staple in Mercedes' U.S. lineup through the '80s, like the K-car twins were for the Chrysler Corporation. Americans love scrappy underdogs, and, at the start of that decade, Chrysler played that role, having to recently borrow from the federal government to remain afloat. It used that $1.5-billion loan to invest heavily in smaller, more efficient front-wheel-drive models. Following the successful launch of its largely European designed Dodge Omni and Plymouth Horizon, the smallest of the Big Three introduced the **Dodge Aries and Plymouth Reliant**. This pair shared the 1981 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year award, which proved prescient, since these compact front-drivers were the right cars at the right time; they'd sell well enough to put Chrysler in the black, and would share DNA with products ranging from minivans to sports coupes. The Blue Oval had its own right-car-right-time moment with the front-wheel-drive **Ford Escort**, the third generation of this celebrated nameplate that was awarded 1981 European Car of the Year. Conceived as a "world car," the hatchback (and, from 1983, Karmann of Germany-built cabriolet!) was assembled in England, Germany, Spain, Brazil, and Venezuela. A surprisingly different contemporary variation developed in the U.S. would become a top seller for Ford (and Mercury, badged as the Lynx) in North America, too.

TOYOTA CELICA SUPRA

1982

RENAULT 9

In the 1960s, American car performance had primarily meant straight-line speed, dragging down the quarter-mile. Powerful, thirsty, big-displacement V-8s, and the large, heavy bodies they'd motivated, were *outré* in the emissions- and fuel-conscious '80s, and the hottest American cars would find success in adopting a more international outlook and broader performance envelope, with fresh focus on handling prowess. General Motors thoroughly revised its long-in-the-tooth second-generation pony cars into a new third-generation, and the new, top-of-the-line **Chevrolet Camaro Z28** would earn *Motor Trend*'s ultimate accolade, the 1982 Car of the Year award. This smaller, lighter, sleeker Camaro was developed in Z28 form first, its MacPherson strut front and torque arm/trailing arm/live axle rear suspensions expertly tuned to blend responsive cornering with a reasonable ride. That Z28 didn't fall short on power either, its standard 305-cu.in. V-8 making 145 horsepower with a Rochester four-barrel carburetor or 165 hp with Cross-Fire fuel injection. Matching the carbureted Z28's output, but doing so with two fewer cylinders, was *Motor Trend*'s 1982 Import Car of the Year, the **Toyota Celica Supra**. This flagship GT from Japan's largest automaker exhibited crisp, well-proportioned styling, with the P-type version adding a tough edge via bold fender flares circling 7-inch-wide alloy wheels with a deep-dish, split-four-spoke motif. Under the hood was that aforementioned straight-six, a DOHC engine that would, in development, become legendary for its sturdy build and power potential. The output of this engine never threatened to overwhelm the fully independent suspension—which had been refined by Lotus of England—and was smoothly delivered to the rear wheels through a limited-slip differential. This generation of Supra would sell strongly until being replaced in 1986. Another car that was a strong seller—in fact, its parent company's best-selling car, ever, at 6.3-million built—was the **Renault 9**, the 1982 European Car of the Year, as selected by 52 journalists from 17 countries. The compact-yet-roomy, front-drive French sedan, available with two or four doors, featured quietly attractive coachwork. Under the hood was a small-displacement four-cylinder engine, and within a few years, the initial 1.1-liter (67.1-cu.in.), 47-hp version could be supplanted by a turbocharged 1.4 (85.4-cu.in.) making a much livelier 113 hp. This model would win awards on both sides of the pond, as we'd see the next year.

CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28

1983

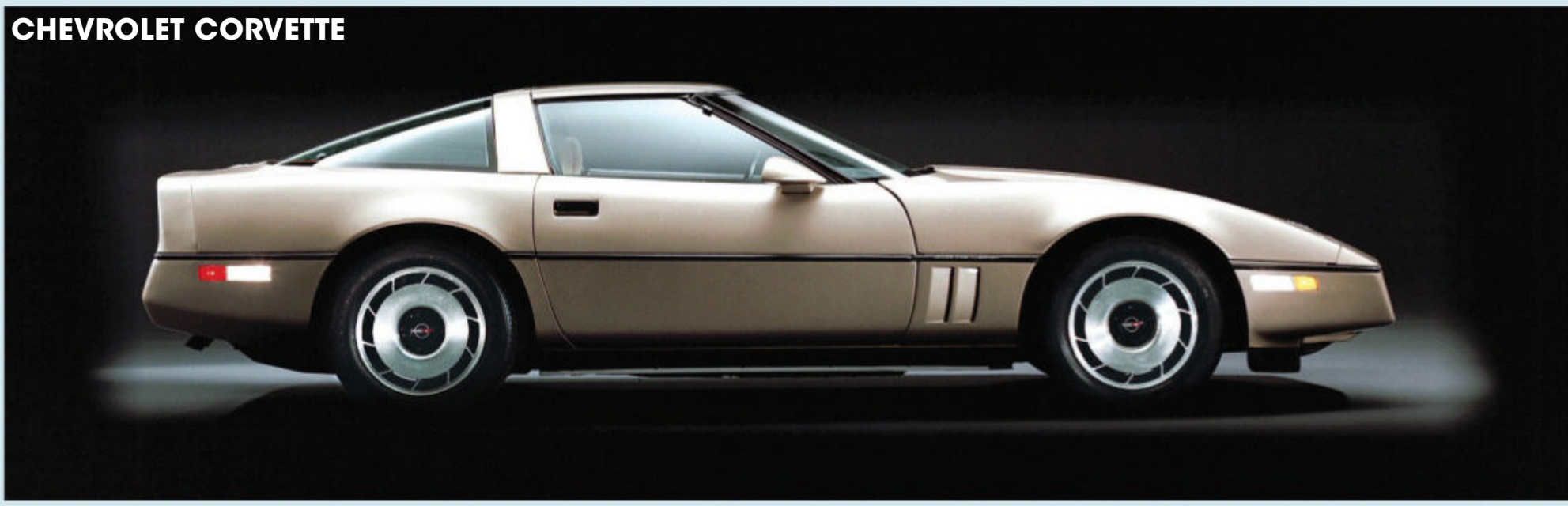
The car's name for the U.S. market couldn't be more apt: The **Renault Alliance**, an Americanized version of the Renault 9, was the fruit of the collaboration between that French parent company and AMC, that Independent automaker in Wisconsin. Indeed, the American Motors plant in Kenosha was where this *Motor Trend* 1983 Car of the Year winner was built. Like its counterpart 9, the Alliance was a compact five-passenger sedan that had been engineered to provide a supple, large-car ride in the best French tradition. North American buyers received a larger base engine—a frugal, fuel-injected SOHC 1.4-liter producing 60 hp—than did Europeans, better equipped to cope with our interstate system. The Alliance got off to a great start, selling 100,000 units by July 1983, but quality issues soon arose that tainted the car's reputation, and after 1987, the AMC-Renault alliance, like its automotive namesake, was history. A car that would, within a few years of its introduction, nearly become history in the U.S. due to allegations of unintended acceleration, was the third-generation **Audi 100**, sold here as the 5000. This 1983 European Car of the Year was a real trendsetter that wrapped autobahn-honed mechanicals in a stretch-out spacious, genuinely aerodynamic (0.30 Cd!) four-door sedan or station wagon body. With a four-cylinder or naturally aspirated gas- or diesel-fueled inline-five with a maximum of 136 hp powering the front wheels, this executive class 100 wasn't posing a direct threat to BMW just yet… but the intercooled, turbocharged five-cylinder and rally-bred quattro four-wheel-drive in its not-too-distant future sure would. Advanced technology was also hallmark of 1980s Japanese cars, and the **Mazda 626** was packed with it. The small automaker would win the coveted 1983 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year award with the second generation of its midsize family car line, which would be sold in the U.S. in two-door Sport Coupe/Luxury Sport Coupe, four-door Sport Sedan/Luxury Sport Sedan, and four-door hatchback Luxury Touring Sedan forms. The 626 family shared smooth, unfussy lines with era-good coefficients of drag, as well as an all-new SOHC four-cylinder piston engine that displaced 2.0 liters (121.9-cu.in.) and made 83 hp. The fully independent suspension could be fitted with driver-selectable Electronic Variable Shock Absorbers, while the interior sported an oscillating-action center dash vent—the latter was a unique bit of 626 tech that Mazda fans still miss today.

1984

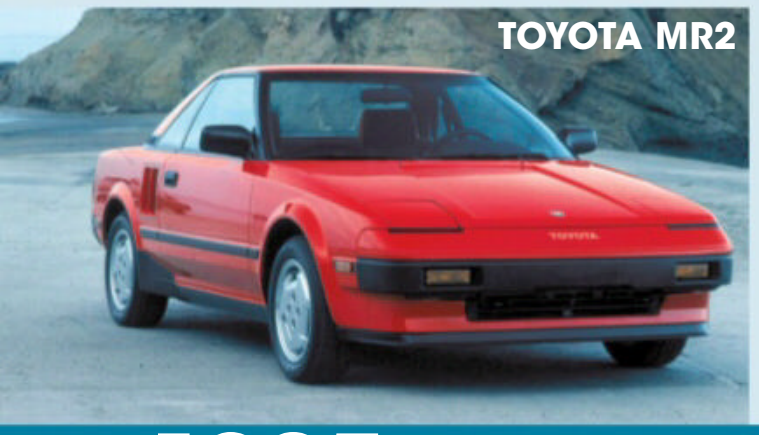
HONDA CIVIC CRX

The third generation of Chevrolet's famous fiberglass sports car had already been on the market for 98 dog years before its long-awaited replacement appeared, but as even a casual glance revealed, the taut, sophisticated fourth-gen **Chevrolet Corvette** was well worth the wait. Winner of the 1984 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year calipers, this car had been reimagined for the new decade, and was capable of no-excuses-required, world-class performance. GM engineers admitted to benchmarking Porsche's V-8-powered 928, and the 205-hp, 350-cu.in. Corvette could match or beat that pricey German GT in skidpad grip, braking, and acceleration. This car represented the best GM could offer at the time, and would remain relevant well into the 1990s through upgrades like the LT1 and LT4 engines, not to mention the incredible Lotus-designed DOHC-powered "King of the Hill" ZR-1. Sharing the 'Vette's seat count (two) and can-do attitude was a new model from Japan: the **Honda Civic CRX**, the 1984 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year. In base, 1,342-cc (81.9-cu.in.) form, this practical short-wheelbase runabout offered the best fuel economy in America at 51/67 mpg, while in sport-suspended, 1,488-cc (90.8-cu.in.) 1.5 form, it was a genuinely fun sports car in the mold of a solid-roof MG Midget, yet with the *snick-snick* five-speed manual, still capable of 45 mpg. The CRX did so much with so little, courtesy of its circa-1,800-pound curb weight, achieved through use of some composite plastic body panels. Time would cement the legend of this two-seater Honda in the import tuner craze of the following decades. Meanwhile, in Italy, Fiat had given its famously diminutive city car concept a total rethink, and debuted the new, 1984 European Car of the Year-winning **Fiat Uno**. Looking fashionably efficient in its Italdesign-penned skin, the short-but-tall Uno established a new mold for the "supermini" hatchback, which, in this case, could be had with two or four doors. Its front wheels were driven by four-cylinder engines displacing between 903- and 1,301-cc (55.1- to 79.4-cu.in.), and examples would be built in its home country, as well as in Brazil, Morocco, the Philippines, and Yugoslavia, among others. The Uno's astonishing 19-year production run through two generations led to an impressive 8.8-million examples sold. Incidentally, this Fiat beat out Volkswagen's second-generation Golf in the 1984 ECOY contest, but as we'll see, that German-branded best seller was soon vindicated in America.

FIAT UNO



CHEVROLET CORVETTE



1985

How, you're asking, could a Volkswagen win a *Motor Trend* Car of the Year award that was traditionally given to a domestic-brand car? Ah, remember that, decades before it built a plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Volkswagen assembled more than a million U.S.-market cars in Westmoreland, Pennsylvania: This is how the second-generation **Volkswagen GTI** drove away with the prestigious calipers in 1985. The new Golf GTI was slightly larger and sleeker than its predecessor, and retained a fuel-injected 1.8-liter (108.7-cu.in.) inline-four making 100 hp, capable of 0-60 in 8.5 seconds. In the not-too-distant future, this hot hatch would become even hotter with the introduction of the 16-valve engine that came to characterize the "Mk 2." A contemporary competitor to the GTI, albeit a more focused one with a mid-mounted 112-hp, 1.6-liter (95.6-cu.in.) four driving the rear wheels, and two seats instead of five, was the new **Toyota MR2**. This 1985 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year was a 1986 model that took the fun-car world by storm, combining mini-Ferrari 308 looks and sharp handling with this Japanese automaker's usual mechanical reliability and thoughtful ergonomics. Indeed, road testers found the Mister Two's precision feel made Pontiac's Fiero seem clumsy in comparison, an impression that grew stronger when a supercharged variant was added for 1988. Meanwhile, across the pond, General Motors had cooked up a subcompact front-wheel-drive hatch with state-of-the-art styling that would be sold in Europe and the United Kingdom, respectively, as the **Opel Kadett E and Vauxhall Astra Mk II**. This pair shared the 1985 European Car of the Year award, and their reach was truly global, since they'd soon be found on the streets of Australia, South Africa, South America, and Korea. We'd get our own, Daewoo-built version of this car in the little-loved 1988-'93 Pontiac Le Mans.

FORD TAURUS

1986

Jack Telnack joined the Ford Motor Company in 1958, and would work in Australia and Europe before returning to preside over styling in Dearborn. It was he who oversaw its envelope-pushing 1980s aerodynamic design motif that resulted in big-selling cars both abroad and at home. The aero-look Ford Sierra had been a finalist for the 1983 ECOY award, ultimately losing to the upmarket Audi 100, but its replacement, the sleek Mk III **Ford Granada/Scorpio**, was victorious as the 1986 European Car of the Year. This model's names indicated the markets in which it was sold: The Granada was retailed in the United Kingdom and Ireland, while the Scorpio was sold in Europe (as well as indicating the top-line Granada in those aforementioned countries). Initially built as a four-door hatchback, it was later joined by a sedan and wagon, and all were powered by four-cylinder or V-6 engines driving the independently sprung rear wheels. The American market would receive this car as the Cologne, Germany-sourced 1988-'89 Merkur Scorpio, but its sales were low. That was not the case for another Telnack-directed new model under this company's umbrella, the 1986 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year-winning **Ford Taurus**. This risky, forward-thinking midsize, offered as a sedan and station wagon, was a big gamble that paid off handsomely, as Americans took to them and their even more avant-garde Mercury Sable twins, to the tune of more than 200,000 units sold in the first model year. The Taurus was undoubtedly one of the most important American cars of the decade, and it would remain popular through two more generations, before an ill-advised short-term name change (remember the Five Hundred?) and shifting buyer preferences made it lose steam. When it came to the 1986 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year, a Ford partner company was revving up with the second iteration of its popular rotary engine sports car, the **Mazda RX-7**. The original RX-7 had been a nimble two-seater with attractive, dart-like styling, and Mazda took a different road with its replacement. This 146-hp, twin-rotor car was European-inspired—many likened it to Porsche's 944—and it proved very clever, an example being its rear multi-link suspension design that featured "Dynamic Tracking" passive rear steering. The body looked chunkier, but offered an excellent 0.29 drag coefficient when equipped with the Sport Package, and folding "+2" rear seats were optional inside. Forthcoming turbocharged and convertible variants cemented its appeal.

FORD GRANADA/SCORPIO

MAZDA RX-7

ACURA LEGEND COUPE

1987

OPEL OMEGA/ VAUXHALL CARLTON

Yet another Jack Telnack-overseen design that achieved both critical and commercial success was the 1987 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year, the **Ford Thunderbird**. This Fox-platform coupe represented a big overhaul of the circa-1983 "Aero Bird;" its sportiest Turbo Coupe (read more on pages 68-72), performing best with a five-speed manual transmission mated to its forced induction 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine, had a distinctly modern flavor. Ford ensured T-Bird traditionalists weren't left out in the cold with the plush base, mid-line Sport, and luxury LX variants, and their buyers could choose between six or eight cylinders, those being the 3.8-liter (231.7-cu.in.) V-6 and 5.0-liter (302-cu.in.) V-8. The European brands of Ford archrival General Motors would have their own award-winning, aero-styled cars this year in the **Opel Omega and Vauxhall Carlton**, the German/British-branded twins that swept the 1987 European Car of the Year balloting. These inline-four- or inline-six-powered, rear-wheel-drive cars sported a breathtaking 0.28 Cd, along with modern features like a standard anti-lock brake system and onboard-diagnostic computer. They would also be marketed in Australia as the Holden Commodore, and in Brazil as the Chevrolet Omega. The ultimate versions of these models were the Lotus Omega and Lotus Carlton, those being Corvette six-speed manual-equipped, twin-turbocharged cars that could reach a stunning 177 mph. Focused more on smooth grand touring performance than on ultimate top speed was Honda's lithe new flagship **Acura Legend Coupe**, the 1987 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year. This addition to the history-making Acura line was Japan's first take on the premium luxury two-door, as exemplified by the BMW 635CSi. Despite the advanced double-wishbone suspension behind each wheel, the front-drive, 161-hp 2.7-liter V-6-equipped Legend Coupe couldn't match the dynamic ability of that autobahn-bred German, although it gained points for Honda-typical careful ergonomics, superb visibility, and its well-trimmed interior. Being Japanese, this Acura used value as its trump card against the established luxury coupe players; its circa-$28,000 price undercut the Europeans by thousands, being closer to that of BMW's entry-level 325iS coupe than the big 6er that was its conceptual benchmark. The Legend Coupe would grow more powerful and accomplished in its second generation, although some of its luster would be stolen by the even more upscale, V-8-powered Lexus SC400 coupe.

FORD THUNDERBIRD

PEUGEOT 405

PONTIAC GRAND PRIX

1988

The Honda Motor Company was on a roll in the 1980s, as evidenced by its cars' 1980, 1984, and 1987 Import Car of the Year awards from *Motor Trend*, and it kept up that momentum in spectacular fashion for 1988, when the new **Honda CRX Si** took the ICOY golden calipers award, followed closely in the ranking by the runner-up Civic LX and third-place Prelude Si 4WS (4-Wheel Steering). This second-generation CRX Si maintained its predecessor's puppy-dog-playful personality, but added a veneer of sophistication courtesy of a sleeker, more voluptuous body, a stronger 1.6-liter (96.8-cu.in.) engine, and F1-inspired four-wheel double-wishbone suspension. Going through the five-speed's gears—no slushbox here!—its 105 hp was plenty to motivate the 2,017-pound, point-and-squirt two-seater. Around 65,000 examples would be sold through 1991, and, some-30-years on, precious few examples remain in preserved, stock condition. The winner of the 1988 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year, the **Pontiac Grand Prix**, is another car that was once ubiquitous, but has now all but disappeared. This "W-body" coupe represented a total rethink of a venerable nameplate, and was a 180-degree change from its formal-bodied, rear-wheel-drive forerunners, adopting the front-wheel-drive GM-10 platform and cloaking that in very modern, aerodynamic (0.29 Cd!) styling. The top-of-the-line Grand Prix SE was highlighted for its extended lower body trim and trendy monochromatic paint treatment that extended to the alloy wheels. The standard 2.8-liter (173.1-cu.in.), 130-hp V-6 was no powerhouse, but the Grand Prix would regain some 1960s swagger with the limited-edition, 205-hp 1989-'90 ASC/McLaren Turbo, and even get a turbocharged sedan counterpart, with an available manual transmission, in 1990's Grand Prix STE. Sport sedans were not a traditional market segment for France's largest automaker, but it had a runaway hit in the **Peugeot 405**, selected to be the 1988 European Car of the Year. This compact, front-wheel-drive sedan and wagon featured crisply beautiful styling by longtime Peugeot collaborator, Carrozzeria Pininfarina of Italy, and in top-of-the-line Mi16 form, the 405 was a true athlete. While that sedan variant got the most attention, thanks to its revvy 16-valve engine and taut-yet-supple suspension, there was more depth to this hugely popular Peugeot; in an enduring global production run, it's sold more than 4.6-million units. Americans could buy the 405 between 1988 and 1991, but few did—our mistake.


HONDA CRX Si

FORD THUNDERBIRD SC

1989

The 1989 European Car of the Year award winner, the new **Fiat Tipo** from Italy, was another vehicle that began its sales domination in its home region, but whose popularity would expand once its tooling was sold on to emerging markets—in the Tipo's case, to Turkey and Brazil. Fiat specified galvanized external sheetmetal in this roomy, five-passenger subcompact hatchback, to preclude the rust that plagued its products in prior decades. A two-door-hatch variant followed, as did distinctly sporting engine choices; the top model introduced for 1991 used a 148-hp, DOHC 2.0-liter (121.7-cu.in.) 16-valve four-cylinder that made it capable of 130 mph. A similarly athletic sedan was the surprise winner of *Motor Trend*'s 1989 Import Car of the Year—having already been named 1988 Japan Car of the Year in its home market—that being the redesigned **Mitsubishi Galant GS**. Powered by a balance shaft-equipped, twin-cam 2.0-liter (122-cu.in.) 135-hp engine mated exclusively to a five-speed manual, this Galant was filled with high-tech equipment, including driver-selectable electronic controls for the suspension and variable ratio power steering. Its attractive four-door body was accented with color-matched ribbed lower body cladding, a trunk-lid spoiler, and 15-inch alloy wheels covering four-wheel disc brakes with available anti-lock control. Within a few years, this Galant would spawn a legendary high-performance variant, that being the rally homologation special turbocharged, four-wheel steer, all-wheel drive VR-4. The new-for-1989 **Ford Thunderbird SC** brought a similarly impressive, world-class level of sophisticated design and technology to the market, and this car's blend of performance, style, and build quality gave it the nod to repeat 1987's triumph, winning the 1989 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year prize. The SC, short for Super Coupe, exchanged the Turbo Coupe's boosted small-displacement four-cylinder for a supercharged-and-intercooled 3.8-liter (231.7-cu.in.) V-6 that, mated to a five-speed manual or four-speed automatic, made 210 hp and a stout 315 lb-ft of torque; it also swapped the solid rear axle for a fully independent suspension, and a limited-slip differential and four-wheel discs with ABS were standard. *Motorweek* got its test car to 60 mph in 6.0 seconds, while *Motor Trend* testers found theirs could achieve .85g on the skidpad. Ford's Super Coupe was sold through 1995 before being dropped—the Thunderbird nameplate to return once more, in retro-style form, in the 2000s.

FIAT TIPO

MITSUBISHI GALANT GS

1980 FORD LTD COUNTRY SQUIRE

Tailgate Party

Four Big Three station wagons that were very popular in the 1980s

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY ARCHIVES, GENERAL MOTORS LLC, AND FCA HISTORICAL SERVICES

Countless treasured memories were created in station wagons offered by the Big Three automakers in the 20th century, as they were the go-to haulers for millions of families. These leviathans could cart the kids and their loads of sports equipment to games, carry 4 x 8 sheets of plywood back from the local lumber yard, and still deliver the groceries as needed. Midsized and even compact versions were also popular for smaller families that didn't require as much cargo area.

In the 1980s, the Big Three's station wagons faced increasing competition not only from imports, but also from the emergence of the game-changing Chrysler minivans introduced for 1984, and the rise of the four-door SUV Jeep Cherokee XJ released that same model year.

Ford and Mercury entered the decade with the full-size, V-8, rear-wheel-drive Panther platform siblings. The former offered the LTD S, LTD, and Country Squire, and the latter the Marquis, with or without the Colony Park option.

At General Motors, Chevrolet had the Impala and the Caprice Classic, Pontiac the Catalina and Bonneville Safaris, Buick the Le Sabre and Electra Estates, and Oldsmobile the Custom Cruiser. All were based on GM's B-body, and each division's models mostly differed in frontal appearance, taillamps, interior and exterior trim, price point, and some equipment, powertrains, and options. Chrysler and its divisions were already out of the big wagon business by this time.

Midsize RWD station wagons for 1980 included Ford's Fairmont and Fairmont Squire, and Mercury's Zephyr, with or without the Villager option. GM also offered a full complement, with the Chevrolet Malibu and Malibu Classic, Pontiac Le Mans and Grand Le Mans Safaris, Buick Century and Century Estate or Sport, and the Oldsmobile Cutlass Cruiser or Brougham. Chrysler fielded the LeBaron and Town & Country, Dodge the Diplomat, Diplomat Salon, and the Aspen (with or without the Custom Package or Special Edition Package). Plymouth offered the Volare that could also add the Custom or Premiere packages.

During the decade, other midsize versions were unveiled. Ford's "new-size" RWD LTD and Mercury Marquis joined the ranks for 1983 and lasted through 1986. GM's new front-wheel-drive A-platform wagons—the Chevrolet Celebrity, Pontiac 6000, Buick Century, and Olds Cutlass Ciera—arrived for 1984, and Ford wowed the market with its space-age Taurus and Mercury Sable for 1986.

Though AMC isn't one of the Big Three, its Eagle station wagon is notable for its four-wheel-drive capability. It was introduced in 1980, based on the Concord two-wheel-drive wagon (1978-'83) and was produced until 1988. An article on a 1984 Eagle appears elsewhere in this issue.

Smaller FWD station wagons also pervaded the 1980s. Chrysler's K-car Plymouth Reliant and Dodge Aries were new for 1981, and the Ford Escort and Mercury Lynx replaced the RWD Pinto and Bobcat that same year. The Chrysler Town & Country K-car wagon followed for 1982. GM's J-body Chevrolet Cavalier and Pontiac J2000 station wagons debuted early

for 1982, and 1983 brought the Buick Skyhawk and Oldsmobile Firenza versions.

If you have the impression that the station wagon market was saturated in the 1980s, keep in mind that even more were offered by other competing automakers. With the success of the minivan, Chrysler dropped the K-car station wagons after 1988. However, several from GM and Ford still carried the torch to close out the decade and beyond.

We're highlighting four station wagons of the 1980s that you may have owned, rode in regularly while growing up, or would like to relive your youth in now. By comparing their sizes, styling, powertrain layouts, suspension designs, equipment, and utility, the diversity of the wagon offerings of the 1980s will become apparent.

The full-size Fords and Chevrolets represent the old guard. They're large, V-8-powered, RWD, have eight-passenger capacity when fitted with an extra-cost third seat, and can seemingly tow a small home when optioned appropriately. That same recipe had been successful for decades prior, so their throwback nature may even make them desirable to some who've experienced 1960s and '70s examples. When considering 1980s cars, these have a following.

Chrysler's K-car is regarded as the platform that saved the company from financial ruin, and the Town & Country Turbo reveals philosophical shifts during the 1980s. It was smaller than its RWD predecessor and more maneuverable. It employed FWD for improved traction and a transverse-mounted four-cylinder engine, which saved space and improved economy, yet it also offered a high-performance engine option. (Of course, the larger wagons could still fit and tow much more.) Though the luxurious Town & Country was modern, it also retained several traditional styling cues, so as not to scare off conservative customers. The turbo version isn't as plentiful as the other wagons, but if you can find one that was well cared for, its size and power-to-weight ratio will ensure an entertaining driving experience.

Conversely, the Taurus threw convention out the window. Its jellybean shape put function ahead of form with smooth surfaces and gentle curves to cheat the wind and increase efficiency. It also employed a transverse-mounted engine and front-wheel drive. Until competitors caught on, no other domestic wagon looked like it, except the Mercury Sable, of course. Either would make an affordable, unique, and handy collectible.

FORD LTD AND COUNTRY SQUIRE

Ford's 1980 full-size cars had received the new Panther platform the previous year, which had a lower cowl height, increased glass area, and modern sharp-edged appearance. Its wheelbase was 6.7 inches shorter at 114.3 than the platform it replaced, length was 11 inches less at 215, and the car's curb weight was reduced by more than 900 pounds.

There was 89.7-cu.ft. of cargo volume with an additional 9.9-cu.ft. below the floor, and 2-cu.ft. in a lockable side storage compartment. A 4 x 8 sheet of plywood still fit flat on the floor with the tailgate down.

The 1980 LTD wagon offered single- or two-tone paint, while the upscale LTD Country Squire featured woodgrain vinyl body-side paneling, upgraded interior, and a hood ornament. A low-priced LTD S wagon was also offered.

An all-vinyl bench seat, one-hand latch on the fold-down rear seat, color-keyed load-floor carpet, and Luxury Sound Insulation Package were just a few standard items, as was Ford's "3-Way Magic Doorgate" (with power window) that opened like a door with the window up or down, or like a tailgate to provide a loading platform.

A 130-hp variable-venturi carbureted 5.0-liter (302-cu.in.) engine and a three-speed SelectShift automatic were standard. Powertrain options included a 140-hp 5.8-liter (351-cu.in.) V-8 with a four-speed Automatic Overdrive transmission.

Featuring body-on-frame construction, the wagons sported a short upper/long lower control-arm front suspension with anti-roll bar, a four-bar link rear setup, and coil springs and shocks all around. Recirculating-ball steering with power assist, 11.08-inch power front disc brakes with 11-inch rear drums, and 14 x 6.5-inch wheels with 215/75R14 steel-belted radials and deluxe wheel covers were standard.

Heavy-duty suspension, Traction-Lok axle, and the trailer towing package (with 6,000-pound rating) cost extra, as did a deluxe luggage rack that featured a "velocity-

1988 FORD CROWN VICTORIA COUNTRY SQUIRE

1980 CHEVROLET IMPALA

sensitive air deflector that changed its angle at high speed for less aerodynamic drag." DuraWeave upholstery and others were also optional, as were two facing rear seats for eight-passenger capacity, myriad sound systems, CB radio, typical power assists, A/C, and more.

For 1981, the AOD transmission became standard and the front bumper no longer had air intakes. The 351 engine was dropped for 1982, and an optional Trip Minder computer was new. In 1983, Central Fuel Injection (CFI) was added, the grille was revised, and the base LTD became the LTD Crown Victoria; the Country Squire remained. For 1984, EEC-IV computer was used on the 5.0 and the engine also gained 10 hp. Sequential Electronic Fuel Injection (SEFI) was added to the 5.0-liter for 1986 and output rose to 150 hp. An upscale LX series arrived for the same year, and larger 15-inch wheels and radials (optional in previous years) became standard. A more aerodynamic front end debuted for 1988. With production steadily declining since the mid-1980s, the full-size wagons were discontinued during the 1991 model year.

CHEVROLET IMPALA AND CAPRICE CLASSIC

Chevrolet's full-size wagon for the 1980s dated back to the 1977 downsizing of GM's B-bodies, which were reimagined on a shorter 116-inch wheelbase that was reduced from 125 inches.

At 214.3 inches long, the '77 wagons were more than 14 inches shorter, as well as more aerodynamically shaped than the previous year. Width was nearly the same at 79.3 inches, and the rear was squared-off for more efficient space utilization. The 1,000-pound lighter new station wagons were well received. (Chevrolet's Caprice Classic sedan won the 1977 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year award.)

For 1980, the front-end styling was revised. As in the past, the Impala was affordable and the Caprice Classic more luxurious, adding full wheel covers in place of hubcaps, a hood ornament, exterior brightwork, emblems, Quiet Sound Group, dual horns, electric clock, and interior upgrades.

A three-speed automatic was included, as was Chevrolet's "Three-way Door-Gate" with power window, which replaced the previous year's "Glide-Away" version that disappeared into the floor when opened. A vinyl bench seat interior (50/50 bench seat and cloth were optional), power steering and brakes, fold-down second seat with button release, vinyl-coated textured metal in the cargo area, and a built-in engine diagnostic connector, were also standard in 1980.

A 120-hp 4.4-liter (267-cu.in.) two-barrel Chevrolet V-8 was the base engine, and the 155-hp 5.0-liter (305-cu.in.) four-barrel Chevrolet gasoline engine (required in California) and 105-hp 5.7-liter (350-cu.in.) fuel-injected Oldsmobile diesel were optional for 1980.

The body was bolted to a perimeter-frame through rubber bushings, as before. Coil springs and shocks adorned the short upper/long lower control-arm front and four-link rear suspension systems. (The 1976 model had used rear leaf springs.) An anti-roll bar was bolted on up front, as was recirculating-ball steering, and 12-inch disc brakes, with 11-inch rear drums, hid behind 15 x 7-inch wheels with P225/75R15 steel-belted radials.

Down from 106.4-cu.ft. for 1976,

1989 CHEVROLET CAPRICE CLASSIC

there was now 87.9-cu.ft. of cargo area, but don't worry, the all-important 4 x 8 sheets of plywood still laid flat even with the Door-Gate closed, as long as the front seat was fully forward. An additional 8-cu.ft. of lockable storage area was under the load floor (two-seat models) and 2-cu.ft. were in the left trim panel. Built-in utility trays topped both panels.

Options included a rear-facing third seat, Estate equipment with simulated woodgrain on the body sides and door-gate (for Caprice Classic), two-tone paint, roof carrier (rack) with integral air deflector, heavy-duty suspension, rear air shocks, limited-slip differential, heavy-duty radiator, deluxe load-floor carpeting, gauges (no tach), a variety of sound systems, an integrated CB radio, and much more. The wagons offered up to 5,500 pounds of towing capacity.

Computer Command Control was new for 1981 gasoline engines. It monitored engine functions and made adjustments to reduce emissions and maintenance, and increase fuel economy. A four-speed automatic overdrive transmission became optional for the 150-hp 5.0-liter engine in 1981, and the 4.4-liter was downrated to 115 hp. For 1982, the 5.0 was rated at 145 hp, and the overdrive was optional with all engines. The Impala station wagon and the 4.4-liter engine were dropped for 1983, and the 5.0-liter (now 150 hp) and overdrive became standard.

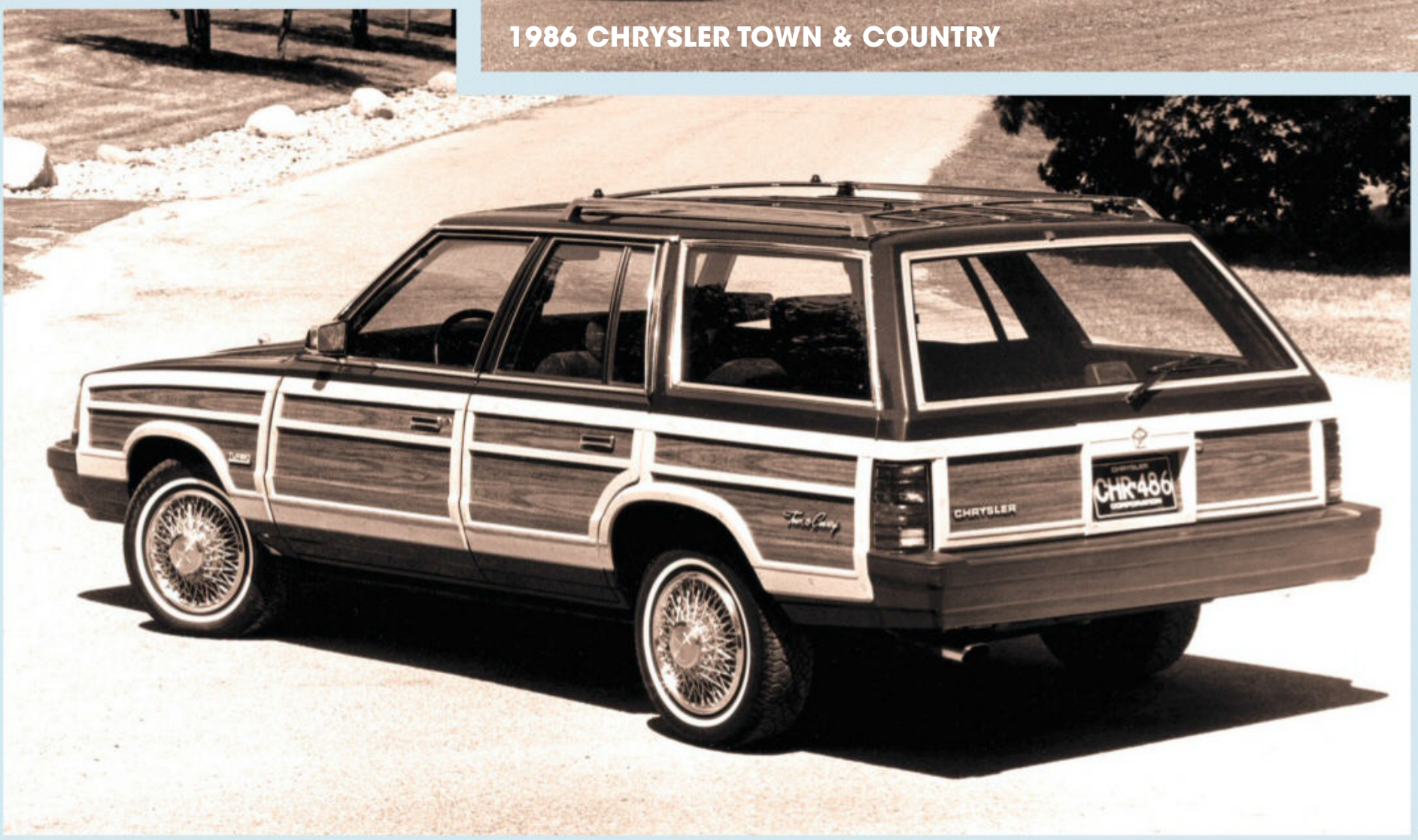
For 1985, the 5.0 was uprated to 165 hp. Front-end styling was mildly modernized for 1986, the troublesome diesel engine was dropped, and the standard Chevrolet 5.0-liter (305-cu.in.) four-barrel engine was replaced early in the model year with an Oldsmobile 5.0-liter (307-cu.in.) four-barrel V-8 rated at 140 hp. Composite headlamps were new for 1987, and the Oldsmobile engine continued in the wagon for the remainder of the decade.

LeBARON TOWN & COUNTRY TURBO

Passenger comfort weighed heavily in the design of Chrysler's original K-cars. The 1982 mid-model-year arrival of the new FWD Town & Country station wagon went even further. Referred to as a "Super-K," it was plusher, quieter inside, slightly longer, and had chassis revisions for a better ride. The wagon received a performance boost for 1985 when the 146-hp OHC 2.2-liter multi-point-EFI turbo engine became an option. It produced 47 percent more power than the naturally aspirated version. Hood vents (1985-'86) and Turbo badges on the fenders announced it.

Augmenting the engine was the TorqueFlite three-speed automatic transaxle. Additional standard features included simulated woodgrain side paneling, power brakes, AM radio, tonneau cover for cargo, and a cloth and vinyl split-back bench seat or all-vinyl bucket seats. A revised seat, and leather and vinyl upholstery were in the optional Mark Cross package.

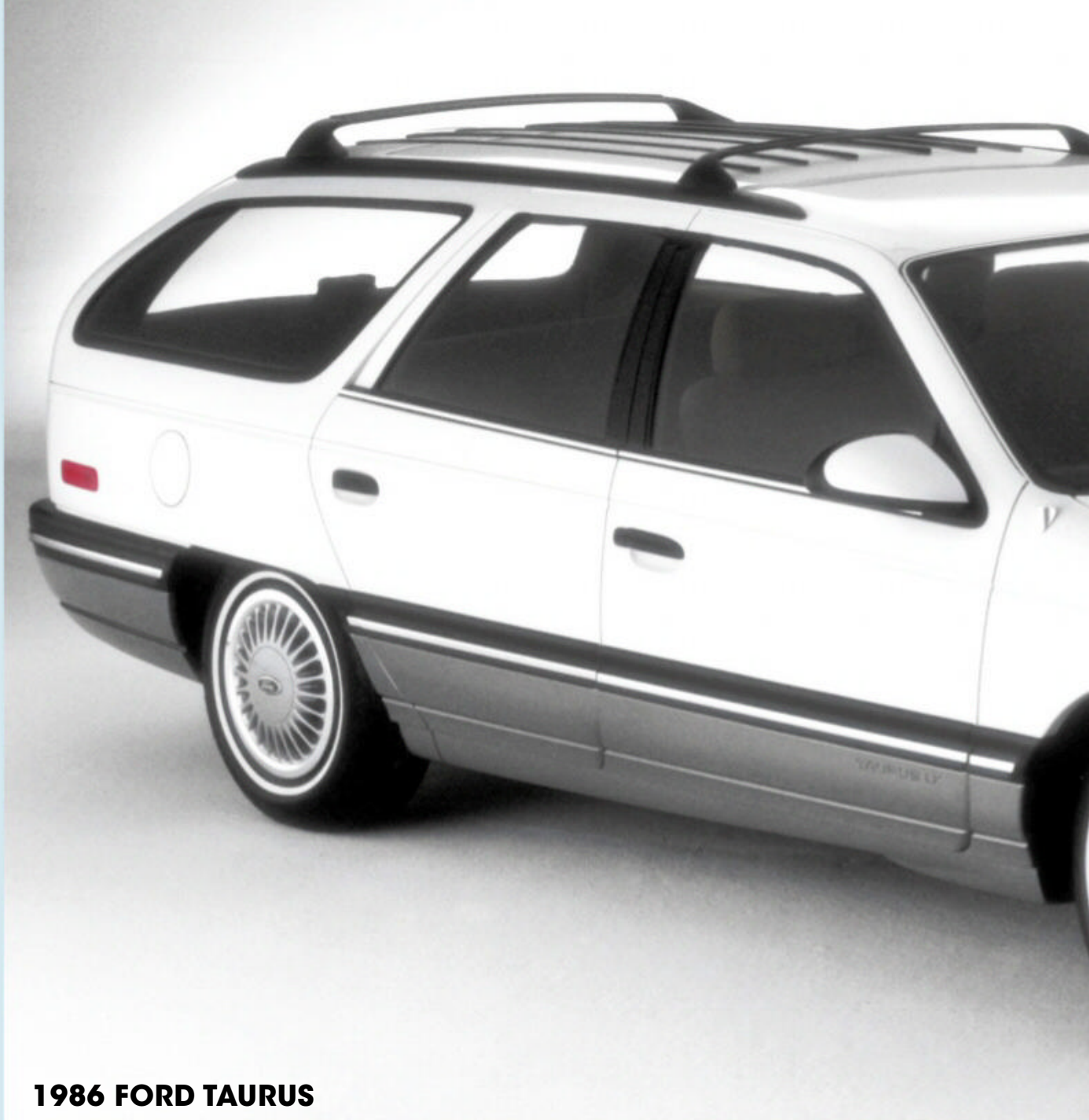
1986 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY



The wagon employed unitized construction and power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering, front suspension with dual-path Iso-Struts, coil springs, and an anti-roll bar; the rear suspension consisted of a beam axle, trailing arms, coil springs, and shocks. A set of P185/70R14 steel-belted radials were mounted on 14 x 5.5-inch wheels, and luxury wheel covers were added. Power brakes with 10.09-inch discs in front and 7.87-inch rear drums were standard.

The Town & Country wagon was little more than 179 inches long and about 68 inches wide. It rode on a 100.3-inch wheelbase, weighed about 2,744 pounds, yet still seated six people. Cargo volume was 69.6-cu.ft. with the rear seat down. Typical comfort and convenience options were available, as were Sport suspension and aluminum wheels.

For 1986, the front end was revised for a smoother appearance, and an automatic rear load leveler was standard. That same year, the new 2.5-liter Chrysler four with EFI and balance shafts replaced the Mitsubishi 2.6-liter MCA-Jet silent-shaft four-cylinder as the standard engine. The 2.2-liter Turbo option remained until 1988.



1986 FORD TAURUS

FORD TAURUS

"Taurus, for us!" was the TV ad's tagline, and there was truth in advertising, as the new model represented a new attitude at Ford. Many norms of how it conceived, designed, engineered, built, and marketed a car were set aside. Potential customers were consulted to determine what they valued in a car and their responses guided major decision-making. Competing cars were disassembled to identify beneficial engineering practices and desirable features. All departments involved in the development of the FWD transverse powertrain Taurus operated as a cohesive team. And with its huge $3.5-billion budget, failure was not an option if the corporation was to remain solvent.

For the December 1985 debut of the 1986 models, Ford presented a base Taurus L, middle-of-the-road GL, and a lavishly equipped LX. The sporty MT5 was available to the public a few months later. A wind-tunnel-bred aerodynamic shape, integrated polycarbonate bumpers, and flush glass all contributed to a low .34 coefficient of drag for the wagon for improved economy and reduced wind noise, and resulted in unique styling. The 106-inch-wheelbase station wagon was 70.7 inches wide and 191.9 inches long, with 81-cu.ft. of cargo volume with the second seat folded down, and there was additional storage under the carpeted load floor. In L trim, the Taurus weighed 3,184 pounds.

Unitized construction with a separate front sub-frame was employed, as was four-wheel independent suspension. Gas pressurized MacPherson struts fitted with coil springs, an anti-roll bar, tension struts, and lower control arms comprised the front suspension, and the station-wagon-specific rear layout had short upper/long lower control-arms, variable-rate coil springs, stamped tension struts, two-piece spindles, gas shocks, and an anti-roll bar.

Power rack-and-pinion steering was standard, as were power-assisted 10.1-inch disc brakes up front and 9.8-inch rear drums, and 14-inch steel-belted radials on 14 x 5.5-inch wheels—15-inch wheels and tires were optional.

Interior ergonomics were enhanced with the placement and tactile design of the controls that enabled the driver to operate them without having to look away from the road. Front door curb lights, rear seat heat ducts, 60/40 split fold-down second seat, a high-strength plastic luggage rack, and a two-way liftgate containing a lift-open window were among the standard features.

The Taurus L wagon was equipped with a 140-hp, 60-degree, 3.0-liter, multiple-port-fuel-injected V-6 mated to an AXOD four-speed automatic transaxle with lockup converter; a cloth front split-bench seat with driver recliner and fold-down armrest, or buckets with driver's-side recliner, and an AM radio were also on the list.

The GL was fitted with the L equipment plus an electronic search AM/FM stereo, dual electric remote-control mirrors, luxury steering wheel, digital clock, front seatback map pockets, secondary sun visor (driver), interval wipers, tinted glass, rocker panel moldings, and an elasticized cargo net to secure small loads.

Along with the GL features and powertrain, the LX added lower body-side cladding, a plusher interior, power front-seat lumbar, tilt wheel, A/C, power windows and locks, passenger secondary visor, cornering lamps, light group, luxury wheel covers, cargo compartment convenience kit, and more.

An 88-hp 2.5-liter throttle-body-injected four-cylinder mated to a five-speed

manual transaxle powered the MT5, and it was equipped with bucket seats, console, tach, trip odometer, and upshift light. The MT5 also retained many GL features.

Most of the LX equipment was extra-cost on other models. Additional interesting options included rear facing third seat, a foldout picnic table, Insta-clear electrically heated windshield, electronic instrument cluster (not available with the five-speed manual), aluminum wheels, extended range 18.6-gallon fuel tank, and leather upholstery (for the LX).

The Taurus/Sable siblings were a major sales success. They advanced some industry trends and earned critical acclaim. The Taurus was *Motor Trend* Car of the Year for 1986, and it was one of *Car and Driver*'s 10 Best. It would become the best-selling car in America in the early 1990s.

With 90 hp, the 2.5-liter MT5 station wagon saw its last year of production in 1987. A 140-hp 3.8-liter 90-degree V-6 engine option was added in 1988, and some visual updates came for 1992, before a major redesign for 1996.

1989 FORD TAURUS

Aerodynamic Ads

As cars put a gentler face to the wind in the 1980s, manufacturers touted improved efficiency

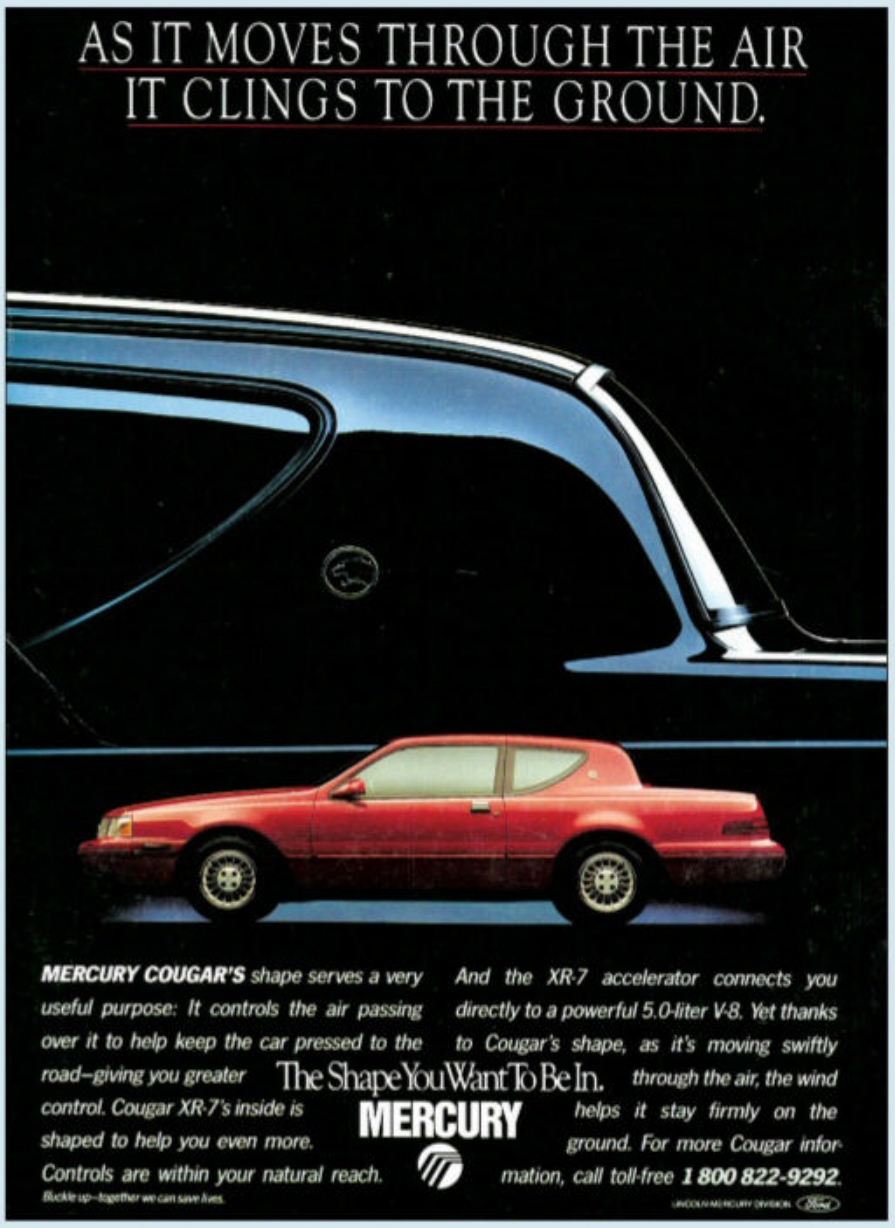
BY JEFF KOCH • IMAGES FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

As the 1980s wore on, "aerodynamics" became a buzzword throughout the industry. The study of how car bodies flow through the air became a crucial new piece of the post-OPEC II puzzle for carmakers worldwide. As GM would tout in more than one of its ads, half of a car's fuel is used to simply push air out of the way. Bluff car noses with upright grilles went the way of Nehru jackets, while roller disco slicked-back faces, high tails, flush glass, and air-diverting shapes were suddenly the order of the day.

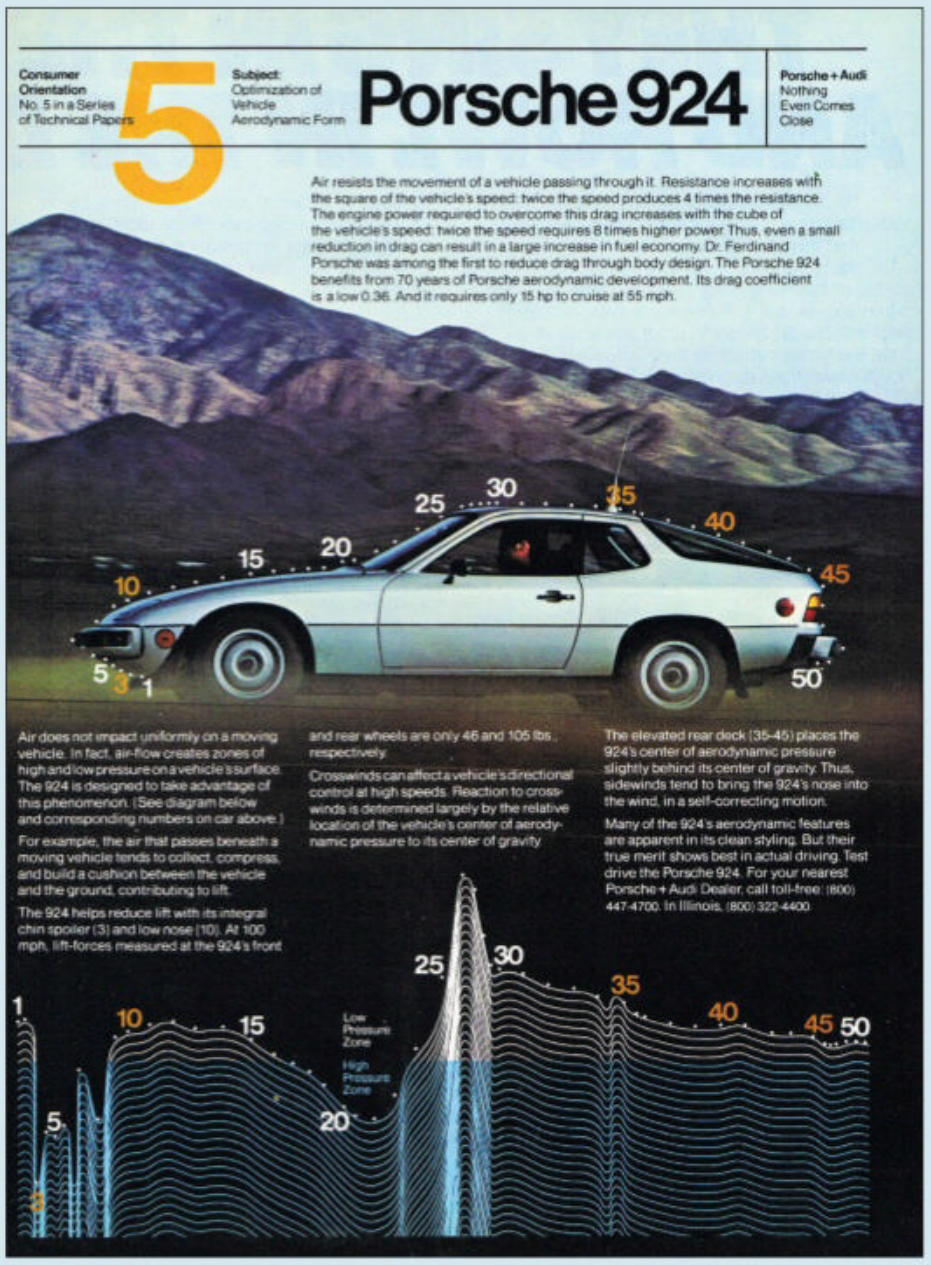
Attention to aerodynamics yielded all manner of tangible benefits: quieter cabins, increased fuel efficiency at speed, better acceleration, increased control in windy and high-speed conditions, and stylish good looks (or so the ad copy would like you to believe)—all at the same time. Some car companies hailed this attention to detail as "free horsepower," which sounded good when the ability to harness 200 horsepower sounded like a pipe dream that we would never see again.

In an effort to make their cars look modern and high-tech—even if, in some cases, an ancient chassis was hidden underneath—the marketing folks at the world's car companies took a crack at explaining aerodynamics, and why it was important. To varying degrees of success.

Seeing these ads, it's obvious that the idea was a new one for consumers in the early 1980s and, as time went on, the benefits of aerodynamic attention to detail were better understood by the public at large. Witness the early '80s domestic car ads that carefully walk you through the benefits of fealty to the wind, while by the end of the decade such notions are practically a given. Also interesting: This isn't just for sports cars—the principles of aerodynamics were being harnessed to make the general new-car buyer a better-informed (and ultimately more efficient) customer. European carmakers' ads, assuming a greater enthusiast base than the general American car-buying public, often gave the vibe that they knew you knew what aerodynamics was all about, and got on with pitching their wares.



By 1987, fuel efficiency wasn't such an issue anymore, but aerodynamic profiles were part of our car culture. So, the formal-roof Mercury Cougar suggested its lines helped keep it glued to the pavement.



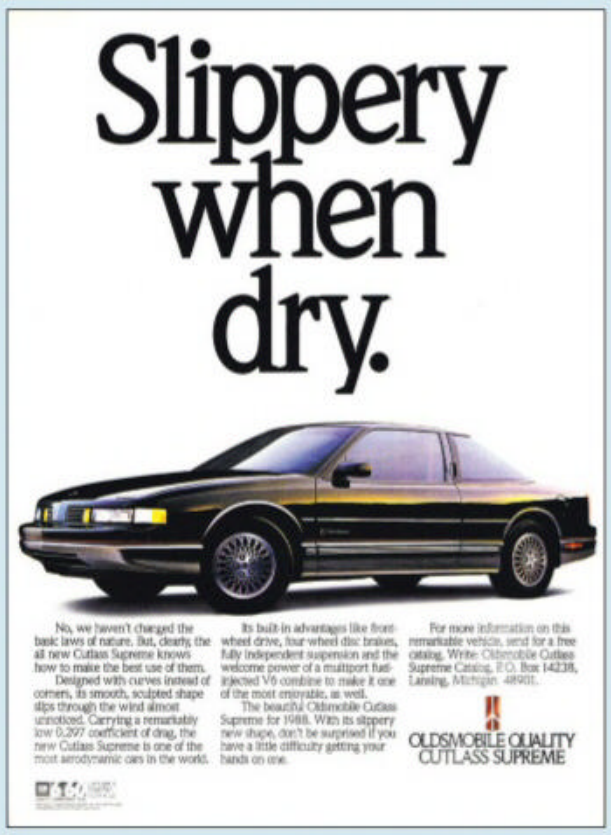
Porsche went deep with its Series of Technical Papers ads from the '80s, and touted its 70 years of experience in the field. They added lift and downforce to the equation, with a new 924 coupe used as an example.

As you might imagine from a car company with fighter aircraft in its family tree, Saab eschewed sharp corners on its 900 Turbo. Even the park-bench 5-mph bumpers were said to be aerodynamically shaped.

Lincoln's Mk VII was the first new car sold in America that eliminated sealed-beam headlamps in favor of flush-style units that had been the standard in Europe for decades; the aero headlamps quickly became common.

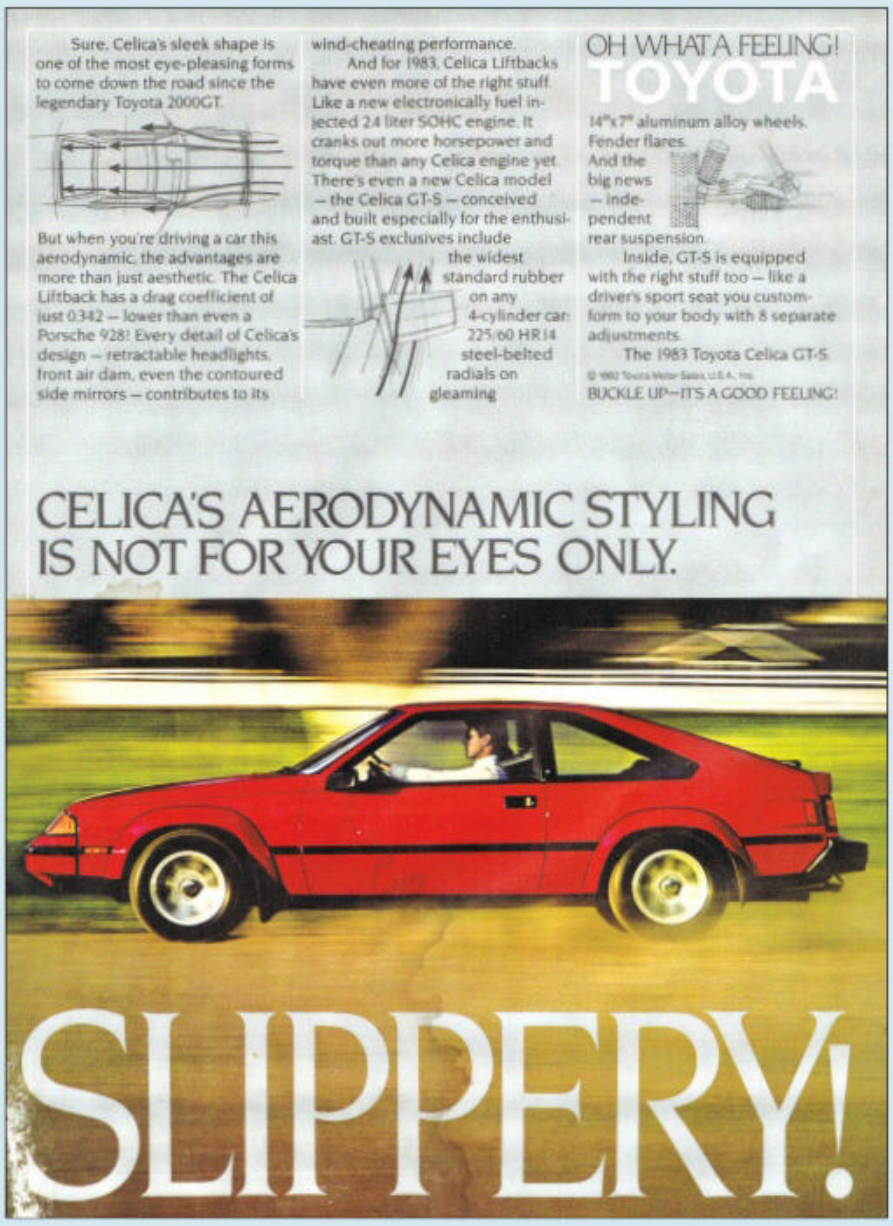
You couldn't even see most of Pontiac's third-generation Trans Am in this two-page spread ad from late 1982. Yet you got the idea that when the wind was no obstacle, ultimate performance could be yours.

Audi leaned hard on "the future is now!" when the new 5000 came out for 1983. The company was right: Ford's 1986 Taurus looked a lot like it. Audi's flareless wheel openings and smooth silver surfaces suggested Teutonic precision.



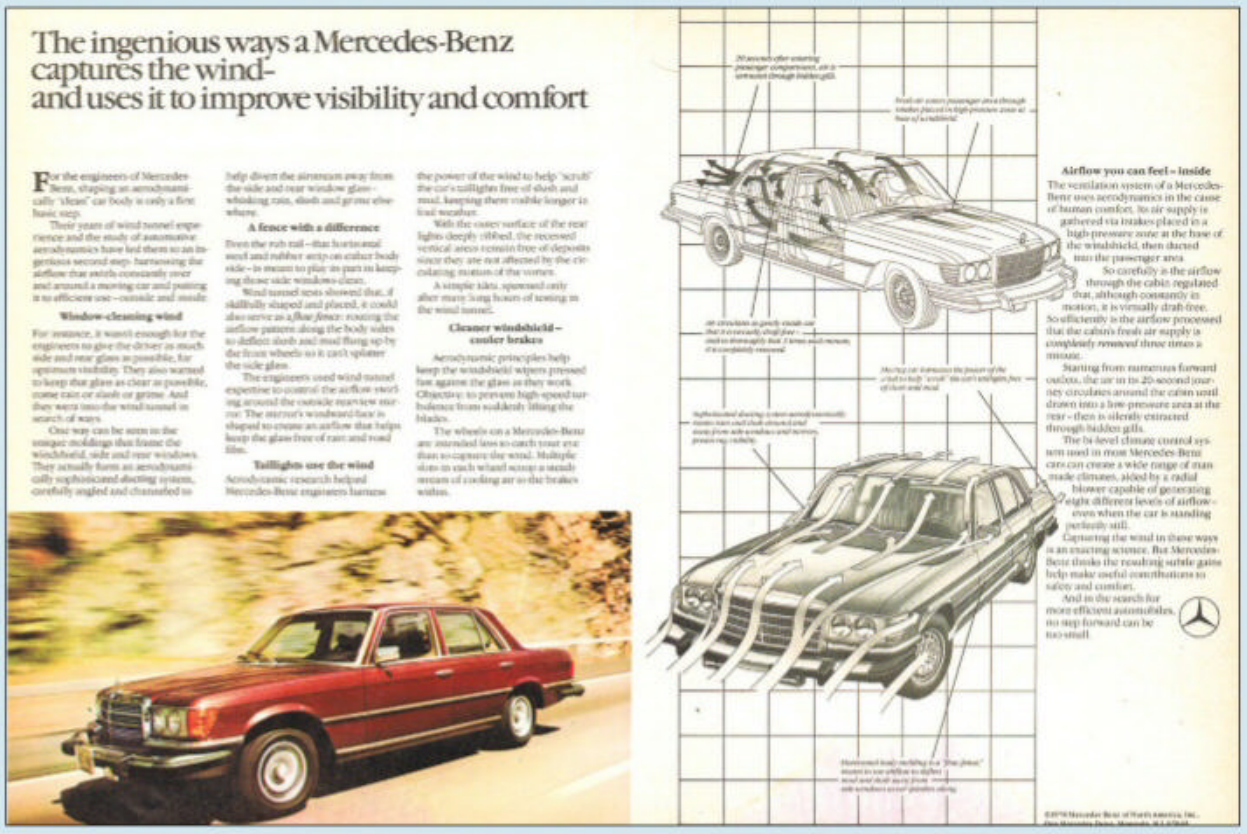
New for 1988, the front-wheel-drive "GM-10" Cutlass Supreme held up Oldsmobile's reputation as GM's technology leader by advertising a .297 coefficient of drag — "one of the most aerodynamic cars in the world."

This corporate GM ad from 1983 showed a Cavalier in a wind tunnel to help explain the hows and whys of making aerodynamically efficient cars — part of a program that helped double GM's average fuel economy in just eight years.



You know, the whole "more aerodynamic than a Porsche 928" boast was thick in ads of the day, like this one for the 1983 Toyota Celica GT-S.

While Ford didn't club you over the head with tech talk in this 1983 LTD ad from Canada, the idea of using just 6.7 horsepower to drive at 50 mph (and emphasizing its rakish nose profile) brought the point home.



Isuzu's rear-drive Impulse coupe cleverly sported a clamshell hood that minimized shutlines, and roof-wrapped doors. Isuzu creepily called it "the private fantasy of world renowned designer, Giorgio Giugiaro."

Top left: Mercedes managed to turn its brick of a 1980 S-class into a paragon of aerodynamic virtue: The windshield molding ducted air (and rain, and slush...) away from the windshield, and kept the wipers pressed to the glass.

Top right: Buick broke out the mathematical equations to help explain the shape of its restyled-for-1981 Regal coupe to mainstream America. Colored bars over the roof suggested airflow, even as the illustrated Regal was still.

Above: Honda ads were about efficiency and engineering leading to a long-lasting purchase, but the new-for-1984 Civic Hatchback points out the subtle roof spoiler and doors that concealed roof drip rails.

Silver Bullet

Ford gave its Aero Thunderbird a

techno makeover in its final stretch as the Turbo Coupe

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Articulated sport bucket seats complemented the five-speed manual; keyless entry and premium stereo with graphic equalizer were popular options.

It was supposed to be a simple nip and a tuck. A set of flush-mounted composite headlamps, some restyled taillamps, and the obligatory fresh alloy wheel design. Ford's initial plan for the mid-cycle facelift of its ninth-generation Thunderbird was modest, until everything changed. It took $250 million and years of engineering work, but the top-performing 1987 Turbo Coupe was transformed into a world-class grand touring car.

When the 1983 Thunderbird was unveiled, it had represented a new concept and a huge leap in design language. Banished were the formal, ruler-straight body panels and overstuffed velour boudoir interiors that defined this model through the Seventies; in their place were wrap-over doors, windswept curves, and an efficient cabin. The traditional V-8 engine was actually less powerful than one with half the cylinders, that mated to a manual transmission, the first such available in this model since 1960. While traditionalists were shocked by these radical changes, they had little choice but to accept them, as Ford would, year by year, introduce new models and designs in this same vein.

The top-of-the-line Turbo Coupe, a mid-1983 introduction, used a 145-horsepower version of the fuel-injected, Garrett-turbocharged 2.3-liter (140-cu.in.) SOHC four-cylinder that had debuted in carbureted form in the 1979 Mustang and Capri. Indeed, this car shared more than its engine with Ford's pony car; it rode on an extended, 104-inch-wheelbase version of the Fox platform, and used the same "Quadra-Shock"-damped live rear axle, front disc/rear drum brakes, and five-speed manual or three-speed automatic transmission. It was polarizing at first, but the Euro-flavored variant won new fans and sales for the marque. And Ford opted to take its model year 1987 update to an even higher level knowing a radically new, BMW 635CSi-inspired all-new Thunderbird would be introduced just two years later, adding technology and further-improved aerodynamics to bridge the gap between the current and the future.

Floral Park, New York, resident John Bianco distinctly remembers the first time he saw that redesigned Turbo Coupe in person, thanks to his brother, who managed a Ford dealership in the 1980s. "He would bring home new models—Mustangs, Crown Victorias, Escorts. It was at night when he pulled in with a Turbo Coupe. That car was optioned out… I'll never forget how the dashboard and console were lit up like the cockpit of a personal aircraft. The fit and finish were especially good for a Ford, and I was impressed by the design," he says. This self-professed "Ford guy" was already fond of the Thunderbird, having ridden as a youth in 1964 and '78 models and absorbed their special characteristics, and he knew the latest example represented something else entirely.

The magazine testers were equally impressed by the big two-door, whose development budget ended up 2½ times higher than originally planned. *Car and Driver* wrote, "it was money well spent. A load of new stuff—good stuff—is baked into the Turbo this year." *Motor Trend* obviously agreed, awarding it 1987 Car of the Year. From the familiar, yet notably revised skin, with its flush-mounted glass, ducted hood, bottom-breather nose, and smooth tail, to the interior, with articulated sport seats and still-fresh dashboard (carried over from a 1985 restyle) housing comprehensive instrumentation and a boost gauge, the Turbo Coupe looked the business. Ford engineers ensured there was substance to the style, since the car sported a then-impressive drag coefficient of 0.35, with the base Thunderbird even slicker at 0.34.

And it had the goods, too. The 1987 model retained the tried-and-true 2.3-liter four-cylinder, but this five main-bearing engine was upgraded with an IHI turbocharger, top-mount intercooler, and improved intake and exhaust plumbing to create 190 hp at 4,600 rpm and 240 lb-ft of torque at 3,400 rpm, those figures up substantially from the previous year, and a stone's throw from the 200 hp made by the final 2.3-powered Mustang SVO. Turbo Coupes neutered by the optional four-speed automatic made 150 hp at 4,400 rpm and 200 lb-ft of torque at 3,000 rpm. For comparison, the Thunderbird's available 5.0-liter (302-cu.in.) V-8 made the same 150 hp, but trounced the turbo's torque with 270 lb-ft. As with last year's model, if using lower-

octane gasoline, the driver could manually limit peak boost via a dash-mounted switch.

The suspension of the top T-Bird would inspire its own SAE Technical Paper Series dissertation that explained the form and function of the patented Programmed Ride Control system. The microprocessor-controlled active front gas struts and rear shocks could be optimized for nimble handling ("Firm"), or biased towards a smooth ride ("Automatic"), selectable by dash control, and they acted upon signals from the accelerator, brakes, steering position, and wheel speed sensors to predict and react to the road surface in about 40 milliseconds. This new electronic suspension dovetailed with the equally new anti-lock braking system, acting on four-wheel discs, the rear pair replacing the prior year's drums behind bold, 16 x 7-inch alloys mounting special compound 225/60VR16 Goodyear Eagle radials.

In its optimal five-speed state, the 3,380-pound '87 Turbo Coupe was found by *Car and Driver* to be capable of 0.80 g on the skidpad, 0-60 mph in 8.0 seconds, and a 137-mph top speed. These figures didn't compare favorably with those of the 225 hp, 5.0-powered Mustang GT, but that quicker, cheaper ($11,835 versus $16,805 base MSRP, or roughly $26,750 and $37,983 in today's money) car was aimed at a much different buyer. Indeed, John — who is the second owner of this 100-percent stock, sub-30,000-original-mile example on these pages — bought a new Mustang GT convertible himself, in 1989. "But that Thunderbird always stayed with me," he admits.

A handful of classic and modern Mustangs — and a 1986 Lincoln Mark VII LSC driven by his wife — have resided in John's garage, but it wasn't until October 2017 that he found our feature car at a Ford dealership in Minnesota. "They were asking a ridiculous amount for it. After it sat for a while, I was able to negotiate a price that was more down to earth." This car's 88-year-old first owner had passed away three years earlier, and his family had consigned the little-used Turbo Coupe. Upon his purchase, John had the dealer's technicians replace the engine seals, perform a tune-up, and replace the factory-installed tires and mufflers, the latter of which had rusted from the inside. "When it arrived," he recalls with a smile, "I found it to be a lot nicer than I'd imagined- it was in showroom condition."

According to the original window sticker, this now 33-year-old car had cost nearly $19,000, the equivalent of just under $43,000. It was one of 15,537 five-speed Turbo Coupes built in a year when Ford sold 128,138 Thunderbirds. Curiously, it sports a post-factory-installed Webasto tilt-and-slide moonroof, the same style as optionally fitted on the assembly line; contacting the original selling dealer to learn more about this add-on proved fruitless. Regardless, this survivor is a window into a time when the Ford Motor Company sold more than trucks and SUVs.

"Given its low mileage, it drives like a new car," John explains. "This is a Fox body Thunderbird sharing the same chassis as the Mustang of the day. The turning radius is broad, which was also a characteristic of the Mustang, but the steering is responsive. The car can feel a bit 'boaty' on the highway when the suspension isn't set to Firm. When set to Firm, there is more confidence in fast turns. It has an excellent demeanor on the highway, very forgiving on the smaller bumps."

He continues, "Idling will send ripples through your coffee, which was even typical in my 1986 Mustang SVO; that slight vibration was a hallmark of the Lima-built 2.3. As was usual for the day, there is some initial turbo lag, up to about

This 2.3-liter SOHC four-cylinder sports a top-mounted intercooler, fed through functional hood scoops. The manual Turbo Coupe could hit 137 mph in 1987.

2,000 rpm. Once it's boosting, you can feel the g-forces sucking you back—it reminds me of riding the Coney Island Cyclone roller-coaster. At highway speeds, the throttle is very responsive and accelerates with little effort, since at those rpm, the boost is always at the ready. But you can drive that 2.3 like an economy car… if you don't get into the boost, you can get close to 30 mpg. Goose the boost, though, and the car really goes."

The incredible condition of this collector-quality Aero Bird means it now only comes out for special occasions, but the Turbo Coupe still has the power to take its owner back to that long-ago night in the family driveway. "This car is my time machine to when I was 22 years old. I loved the 1980s, and this car is emblematic of the styling and technology of the time," John says. "Thunderbird had many faces and personalities throughout its life. For me, the T-Birds from 1983 to 1988 capture the best of those faces and personalities."

COURTESY DAVID BIANCO

"I'll never forget how the dashboard and console were lit up like the cockpit of a personal aircraft."

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Freeagle

A now-daily-driven 1984 AMC Eagle wagon that didn't cost its owner a penny to procure

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

It's all my fault.

The phone rang one day about four years ago; it was a friend who worked for electric carmaker Tesla. "Hey, a friend of mine here has an AMC Eagle. It's not running. He just wants it gone. Know anyone who'd want it?" The owner/donor's story is short and sad: moving cross-country to his new gig in Fremont, California, the previous year, he grenaded his own car en route, and needed something relatively cheap to get out to the coast. He found this low-buck 1984 Eagle (a California car all of its life, sold new at True American AMC in Sunnyvale) in the want-ads, and drove it around for about a year as a fun car—well, as much fun as a 3,500-pound car with 112 horsepower could be, anyway. And then…

"Little things started to go wrong with it," my friend reminded me recently. "He'd come into work and mention that this went out, or he'd have to replace that. It drove him nuts trying to figure it all out. He tried to talk me into helping him fix it, but I feel about other peoples' cars like I feel about their kids: *I like mine*." To be fair, the engineer worked in Tesla's Materials department; even so, the thought of someone working for America's biggest all-electric car company who's flummoxed by wiring issues is slightly jarring. "Anyway, he said that repairs would cost more than it was worth—more than he paid for it in the first place. He figured he'd never get any money out of a dead Eagle, even parting it out. So, he knew I liked cars, and he asked if I knew anyone who'd want it."

Turns out, I *did* know someone who'd want it.

Well, in truth, I contacted a local family of genial Rambler enthusiasts to see if *they* knew anyone who wanted a free AMC Eagle. I figured they could put the word out, and what happened after that was not my concern. All I knew was, I'd have done a *mitzvah*, found a home for a car that needed some TLC, and relieved someone who no longer desired the burden of ownership. My karma (carma?) would be on the plus side of the ledger. So, did they know someone who wanted one? Yeah, *them*. They headed up to San Jose with a truck and trailer so fast I'm not sure they hung up the phone with me before leaving town.

What Matt Edmonds and his Flagstaff, Arizona-based family found waiting on the central California coast was a Deep Night Blue Eagle Limited wagon with honey-hued Chelsea leather interior, one of 21,294 Eagle station wagons built that year. It was loaded, packing every option bar rear air shocks and exterior fake wood, with a $15,217 sticker price (base price, $10,866). It had been driven more

than 160,000 miles, had been treated to a dealer-installed sunroof when new, although the custom headliner was gone, and the dash had been cut to make way for a more modern radio. It ran, "sort of." A sketchy tint job was alternately peeling off the windows and clinging on for dear life. Minor trim pieces were missing. The passenger-side front fender and door had been repaired at some point, otherwise the scratched paint remained original. Beyond this, the Eagle was simply a victim of neglect: most of the extra-cost luxury accessories were binding, jammed or else not functioning; the rear axle was "toast," according to the new owner; and most of the weatherstripping was rotten.

Matt isn't entirely surprised, in retrospect: "The people who bought Eagles loved them, and drove the wheels off them. AMC was long-gone by the time Eagles were worn out, so parts support was minimal; I think most owners gave up at that point, and either sold their Eagles or drove them into the ground—beat to death off-road or else rusting out on winter roads."

And the truth is, when Matt was 24 years old, his first idea was of a quick flip: get it running and pocket the cash. But then the Eagle got under his skin. Granted, there was already a predilection for AMCs and Ramblers in his family—for years he drove a 1972 Jeep Wagoneer that his grandmother bought new, his mom owns a 1965 Ambassador wagon that his grandmother also bought new, a late-model Hornet sedan was his ride of choice as he completed his Historic Automotive Restoration degree from McPherson College in Kansas, there's a stick-shift Marlin living in the family barn, and he spent a couple of summers helping out at Terry Gale's Rambler Ranch in Colorado.

Leather-wrapped sport steering wheel was a $25 option, while the tilt feature ran $110; gauges look contemporary; go from two-wheel drive to four-wheel drive at the flick of a switch; optional gauge package reveals all.

But its AMC-ness was simply an entree into what Matt felt could be a nice-driving old car. "Yes, I like AMCs, and I particularly like luxurious and comfortable ones," he says. "I saw too much usefulness in keeping it for myself," Matt said, noting that its sale is now off the table. "It was too nice of a car to get rid of." He also sees his car as trend-setting, historic, and ahead of its time: "The Eagle was the first mass-production all-wheel-drive (by the modern definition) passenger car—not based on a truck chassis. The Eagle wagon could be considered one of the first 'crossover' vehicle."

The idea that the Eagle was ahead of its time seemed laughable in 1984: functionally unchanged since its 1980 launch, the basic body and chassis stretched back to the compact Hornet Sportabout wagon of 1969, and the six-cylinder engine went even further into the past, clear back to 1964. Yet with car-based crossover SUVs increasingly taking over car makers' lineups, and the lack of new sedans coming out from any American marque, it's hard to argue the Eagle's pioneering place in the automotive pantheon.

This Eagle actually sat for a couple of years while Matt completed school. But once he wrapped his college career, and got back to the Eagle, he discovered a new issue: mice. "Stripping the entire interior down to clean out the mouse mess was unbelievably time consuming," he recalled. "The mice chewed up much of the original insulation under the carpet and on the firewall to make nests, and urine-soaked the rest. Poop under the back seat could be measured in inches of depth. They did not chew wires though, just left a sticky pee residue all over the harness that had to be washed. Literally everything had to be deep cleaned to get the funk and the smell off it. Mice also died in the car; I found five corpses rotting into the carpet. Horrible, horrible things happened in that car." And yet, "the interior was salvaged by scrubbing, soaking in Pine-Sol, and power washing." Today, while it's not back to new-car smell, there's certainly no hint of the former residents.

Repairs to the car now known within the Edmonds family as the "Freeagle," combining its birth name and its purchase price, came swiftly—most in less than a year. "Anything shared with other AMC cars, specifically the Hornet, is easy—engine parts, rear axle parts, some transmission parts, and some body and interior parts. Anything Eagle-specific, like the four-wheel-drive system components, are pretty hard to find." Yet despite the shared components, rebuilding the legendary 258-cu.in. straight-six was problematic:

…I like AMCs, and I particularly like luxurious and comfortable ones…

For 1984, the long-lived 4.2-liter, 258-cu.in. six-cylinder was rated at 112 horsepower—just seven more than the base "Iron Duke" four.

Honey-colored Chelsea leather and six-way power greet the well-to-do Eagle owner of 1984. Surprising room with the rear seat folded down—a total of 57 cubic feet of space, even if the liftover height is a little on the high side.

"There is just so much stuff packed under the hood of an Eagle: all of the accessories, the engine control systems, the front axle assembly… it's more about removing the Eagle from the engine than removing the engine from the Eagle."

One change that purists will note: the valve cover. "The original valve cover on 258 engines, from about 1982 to about 1987, was plastic," Matt informed us—a weight savings move. "The plastic cover has a horrible reputation for warping and leaking. The previous owner drilled and threaded the bolt holes in the cylinder head to accept an aftermarket cast aluminum valve cover upgrade." Matt sorted that out, but sitting had caused other issues. "The engine was in sound condition when it arrived, but the head gasket started leaking coolant into the oil during storage. That, and redoing the valve cover properly, plus getting all the mouse products out of the engine compartment, prompted a complete engine rebuild." It's still running the factory computer and feedback two-barrel carburetor.

Though the much-improved Eagle is now Matt's daily driver, to the tune of 6,000 miles per year, it's not quite perfect. The rear defroster isn't working yet, a consequence of the badly applied window tint laid over the hatch glass some decades ago—removing the tint could mean harming the filaments. Previously, Matt managed to go through and sort out the Eagle's entire braking system, refurbished the air conditioning (and converted it to R134a), installed a new headliner, serviced the transmission, added new shock absorbers and tires, and corrected myriad cosmetic issues, making it look degrees better than what you can see even in our pictures.

The Freeagle is sorted—safely cared for (and regularly improved) by its current owner, its wings spread so that it may fly through foul Flagstaff winters, where only vehicles with tire chains dare tread. And on my driveway is a van in need of a new battery. That's karma for you.

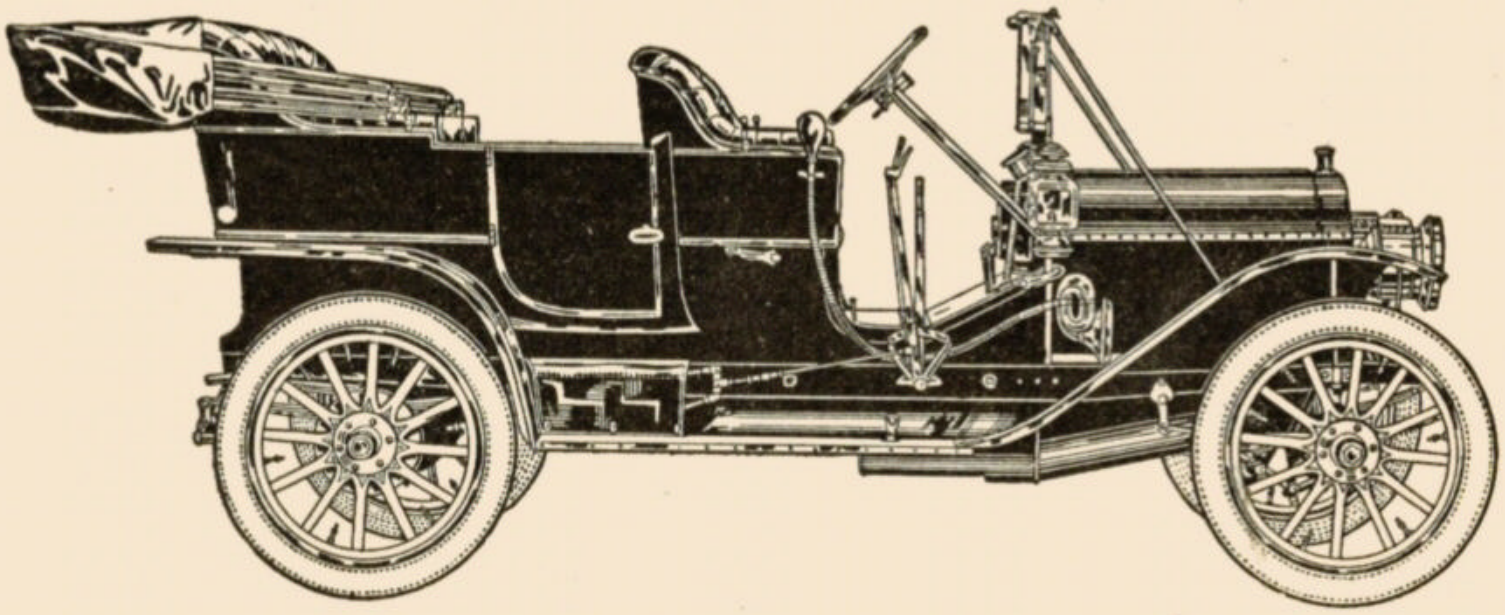
Dorris Motor Car

St. Louis-based manufacturer of well-engineered cars known for quality

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

St. Louis, Missouri, was the home of a number of early automobile companies—small, well-run firms that made some pretty good cars. One of the better manufacturers was Dorris Motor Car Company, named after founder George Preston Dorris. He seems to have been born with mechanical ability and an inquisitive mind: After designing and building a steam engine for his boat in 1892, when he was a mere teenager, Dorris went on to build his own gasoline-powered horseless carriage around 1897, when he was a young man of 23. He also pretty much invented the first float-feed carburetor in America, although he never patented it. Later on, some enterprising—and dishonest—manufacturers put slightly altered versions on the market and took credit for the idea.

There's no record of whether or not Dorris pursued legal action against the men who stole his idea, but he probably didn't. Dorris was more interested in building automobiles and was anxious to get to work in that field. In 1898, he joined forces with an old friend, John French, in the St. Louis Motor Carriage Company, which introduced the St. Louis automobile in 1899. It reportedly was the first successful automobile manufacturing business established west of the Mississippi, though it lasted only to 1907. French died in May 1903 of injuries suffered in an auto accident, and the other owners of the company—mostly the French family, apparently—decided to move the business to Peoria, Illinois, in 1905. Rather than make the move, Dorris decided to stay in St. Louis and open his own business, the Dorris Motor Car Company. A local grocer named H. Benjamin Krenning helped finance the new company, which was incorporated in August 1905 and capitalized at $55,000. Krenning was named president of Dorris Motor Car, and George Dorris was vice-president and chief engineer. The new firm



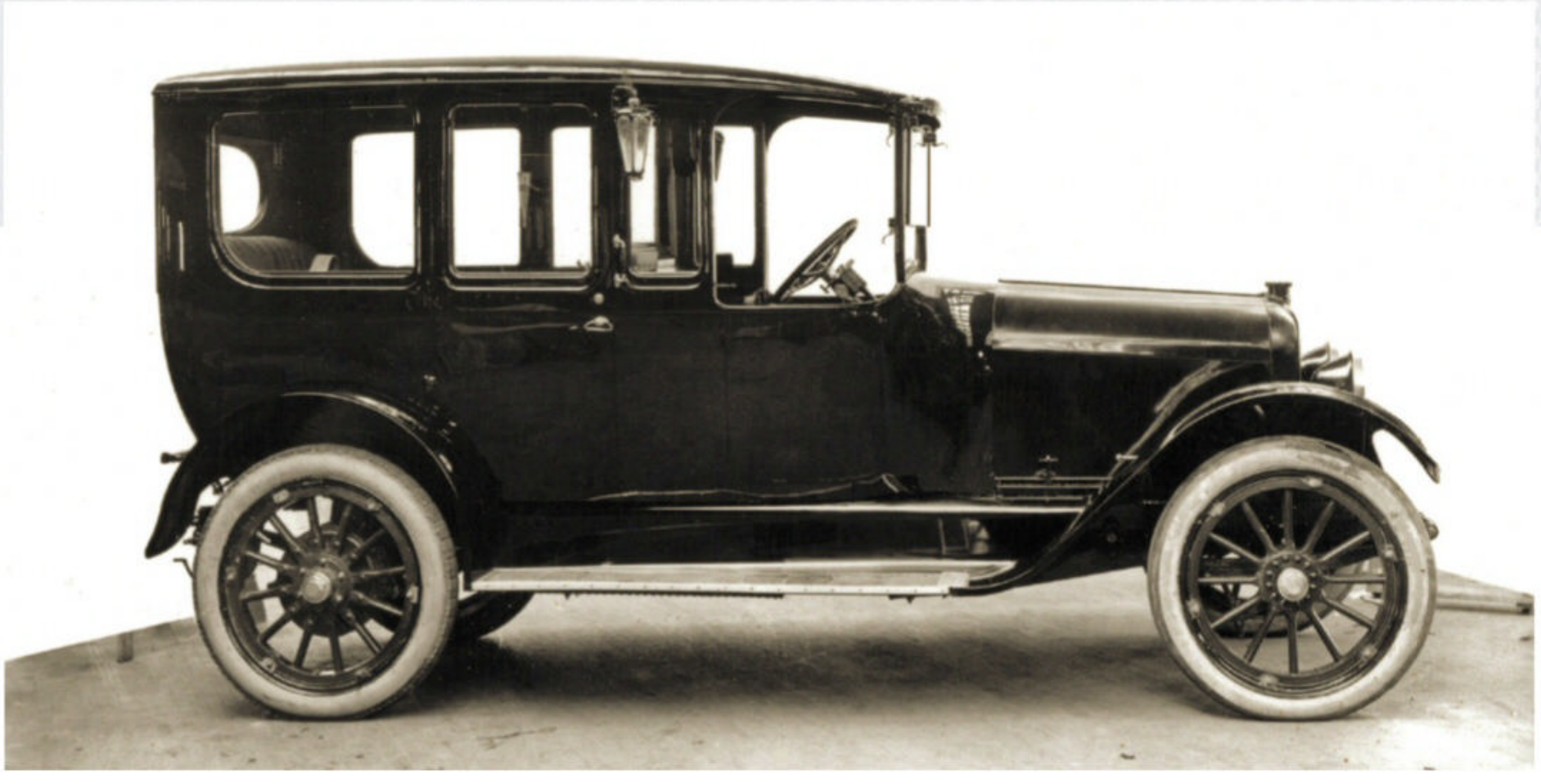
Dorris TOURING CAR
Price, $2500

Equipt with

Top	Tire Carriers	Prest-O-Lite Tank
Speedometer	Tools	Brass Folding Shield

Dorris Motor Car Company :: St. Louis, Mo.

Left: The 1909 Model D Dorris touring car was one of four Dorris models offered that year and was priced at $2,500 fully equipped. Its hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, spawned a number of excellent automobile manufacturers. Above: The very similar Dorris Model E series was offered in 1910. All of the 1910 Dorris models rode on a longer 110-inch wheelbase. Below: Reference books don't mention Dorris offering a limousine model for 1914, but this photo shows a handsome model with coachwork produced by Seaman Body Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



The 1915 Dorris line included stylish and powerful six-cylinder cars such as the seven-passenger touring car. Like the Dorris four-cylinder, the six-cylinder utilized overhead valves that the factory referred to as "valve-in-head."

would utilize the same factory that St. Louis Motor Carriage had so recently occupied.

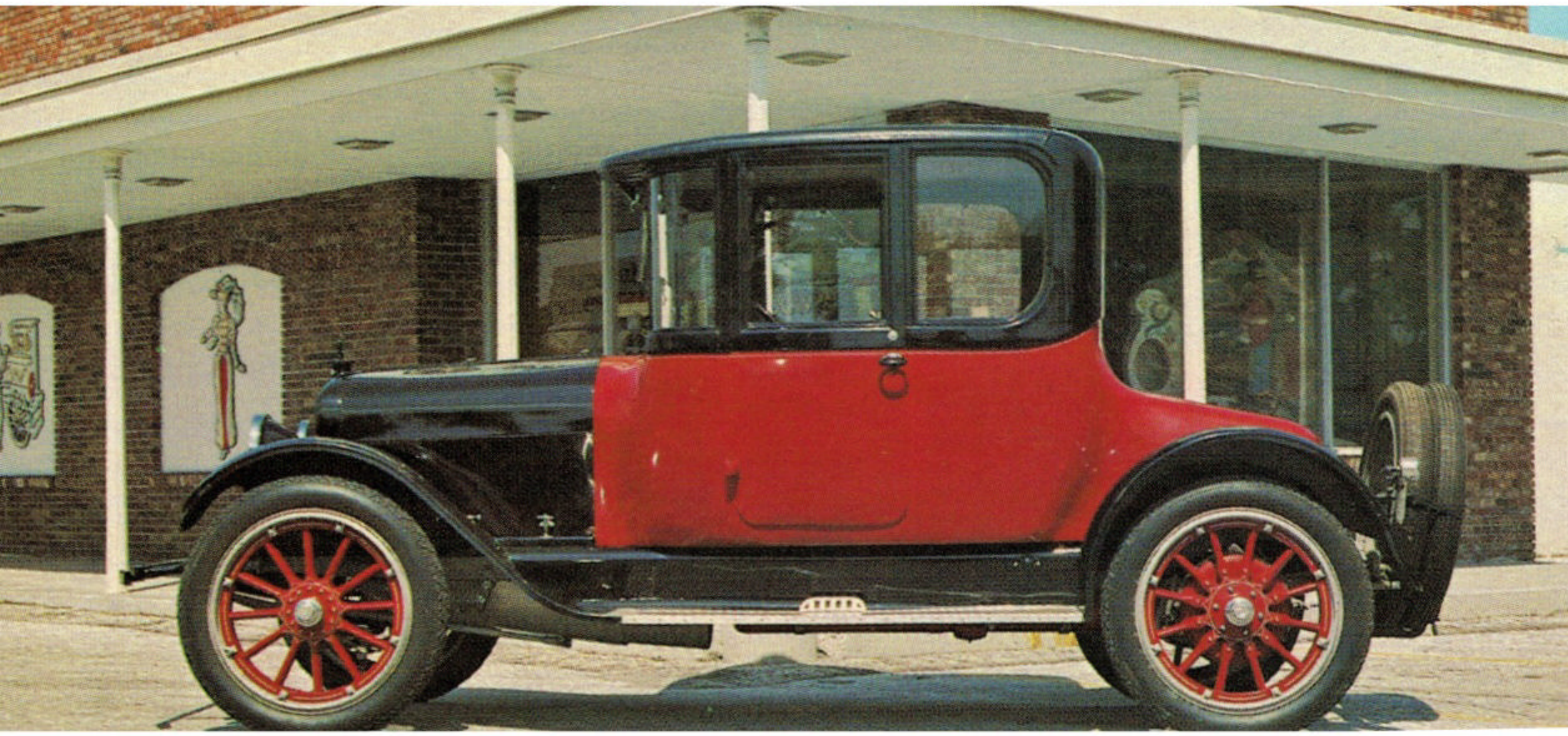
Putting his considerable engineering expertise to work, Dorris designed a five-passenger touring car on a 101-inch-wheelbase chassis, powered by a water-cooled 30-horsepower four-cylinder engine with overhead valves—at the time this was one of few automobiles with an OHV engine. It was a clever design, with removable inspection plates so mechanics could view the engine's innards. And rather than using a separate belt-driven fan, the Dorris engine had fan blades on the flywheel that provided ample cooling. Connected to this sturdy engine was a sliding gear transmission. Dubbed the Model A, the new car was introduced at the New York Auto Show in January 1906 with a price of $2,500. The company's motto was "Built to Last" (sometime later the company adopted the new slogan "Built up to a standard, not down to a price").

Although the Dorris Model A sold well, it was superseded the following year by the similar, but improved, Model B on a slightly longer 102-inch wheelbase. The Model B proved so successful in the marketplace that the company soon had to move operations to a larger factory building. For 1908, the sole offering was the Model C—yet another touring car, this time on a 106-inch chassis, and still powered by the Dorris-designed 30-hp four-cylinder engine.

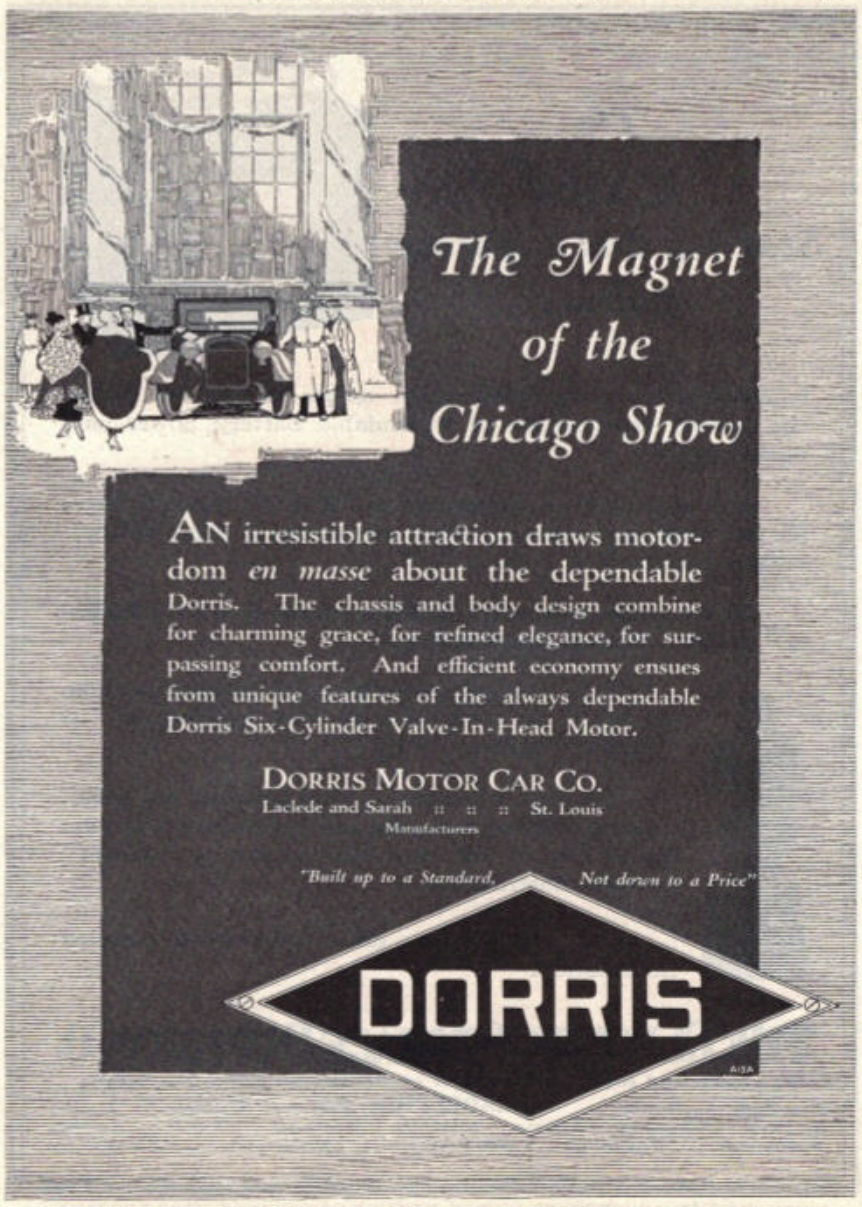
Looking to further increase sales, Dorris added a third floor to its factory building and, for the first time, was able to field a range of automobile models for the 1909 model year. The new Model D series included a five-passenger touring, a roadster, and a four-passenger convertible, each tagged at $2,500. A fourth model, crowning the top of the line, was a new four-place limousine priced at $3,600.

Dorris made most of the parts and components that went into its cars, and the factory had its own machine shop, trim shop, paint shop, and woodworking department, along with nickel-plating equipment and metal-hardening ovens.

For 1910, the company offered four models in the new Model E series, reportedly at the same prices as before. An



This lovely Dorris four-passenger coupe is a 1916 model. The two-tone paint scheme really adds to its beautiful styling.



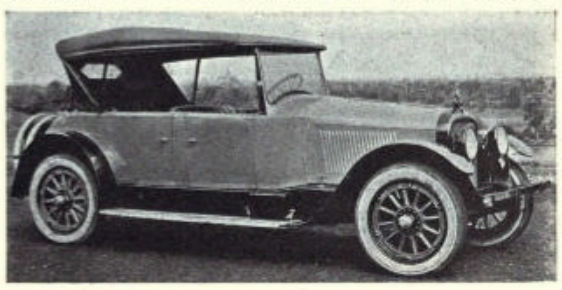
AT THE NATIONAL SHOWS

Dorris Line for 1920 Comprises Four Models

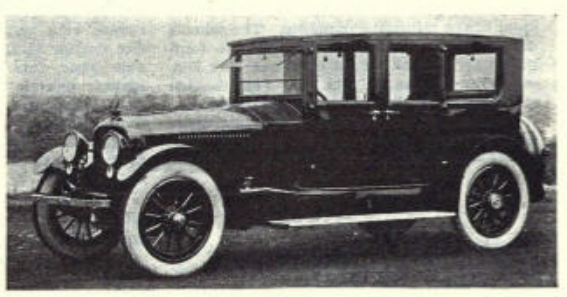
DORRIS cars for the coming season are comprised of four body models mounted upon one chassis. They are known as the Dorris 6-80 line and are equipped with a large size six-cylinder engine, bore 4 in., stroke 5 in. The engine is a valve-in-head of the unit power plant type. The car has attractive lines and is well finished. A recent improvement to the Dorris valve-in-head engine is a detachable cylinder head, which eliminates the valve cages and permits greater water space in the cylinder head. There is a "super-heater" on the intake manifold which gives better fuel economy. The Dorris engine crankshaft has seven bearings, as has also the camshaft. The clutch is a multiple disc. On this new 6-80 line, the platform spring is discontinued, the long, underslung, semi-elliptic rear side spring being substituted.

Lubrication of the engine is by full force feed to all main and connecting rod bearings. Oil is circulated by gear pump with a pressure gage on instrument board. The transmission is selective sliding, integral with the engine.

Carburetion is cared for by a Stromberg Model L-3, with gasoline fed to it by the Stewart vacuum system from the 20-gal. gasoline supply tank carried in the rear.



Dorris Four-Passenger Car is Mounted on the Same Chassis as the Touring Car.



The Dorris. Sedan Seven-Passenger

Ignition is by a Bosch magneto; the electrical system is a Westinghouse two unit, with Willard storage battery. The front axle is a Timken, drop forged "I" beam, and the rear a Timken full-floating, the final drive being through the springs. The propeller shaft has two Spicer joints. The steering gear is worm-and-gear type with an adjustable tie-rod behind the front axle.

The front springs are semi-elliptic 38 x 2¼-in., 7 leaves; the rear are 60 x 2½ with

Above left: An advertisement for the 1918 year called Dorris "The Magnet of the Chicago Show." Above right: The two 1920 Dorris 6-80 series models: the four-passenger touring car and the stately seven-passenger sedan. Right: Two additional 1920 Dorris models: the Model 6-80 seven-passenger touring car and the stylish 6-80 coupe.

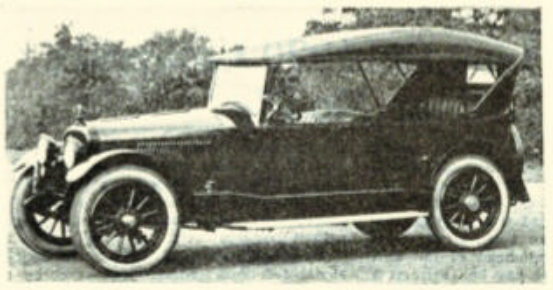
advertisement noted that the factory price included a top, tools, Prest-O-Lite tank, brass folding windshield, and tire carriers, items that were often extra-cost on other cars. All of the 1910 Dorris models rode a longer 110-inch wheelbase. Then, in 1911, Dorris trimmed the lineup by one, offering touring, roadster, and limousine versions in the new Model F series. These continued to use the trusty 30-hp four-cylinder engine, but now rode a more generous 115-inch chassis.

Dorris automobiles gained a reputation for hill-climbing ability, an important feature in those days of low-horsepower engines and untrustworthy cooling systems. They also proved worthy competitors in board track racing.

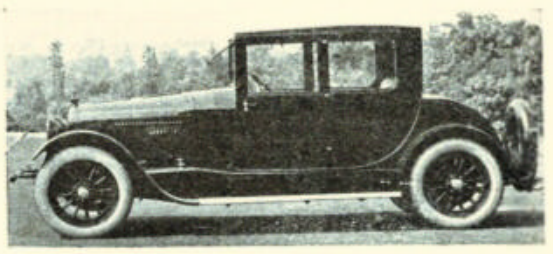
The business continued to grow and, by 1912, the company had to move to a newly built and much larger factory. It continued to use the old factory building as well, so great was demand for its cars. Coincident with the new facilities, the company introduced the new Model G and expanded its model offerings to six: five-passenger touring, two-passenger roadster, and four-passenger torpedo, each priced at $2,500, a coupe priced at $2,700, a five-passenger limousine for $3,500, and a seven-passenger limousine priced at $3,600, all on a 115-inch wheelbase. As before, the Dorris cars were all powered by the carryover 30-hp four-cylinder powerplant.

Dorris automobiles received some impressive restyling and mechanical improvements for 1913, and were now dubbed the Model H. Riding a new 121-inch-wheelbase chassis, but still powered by the 30-hp four-cylinder, the line consisted of a

NEW CARS AND MODELS



Dorris Model 6-86 Seven-Passenger Touring Car, Wheelbase 132 in.



Dorris 6-80 Coupe Sedan of the Dorris Line, Which Sells at $5720.

9 leaves and are underslung. The brakes operate on the rear wheel drums, the foot brake being external contracting and the hand brake internal expanding. The wheels are of wood, tires 33 x 5-in. on the four-passenger and all closed cars, and 35 x 5-in. on seven-passenger cars. A Van Sicklen speedometer is driven from the transmission.

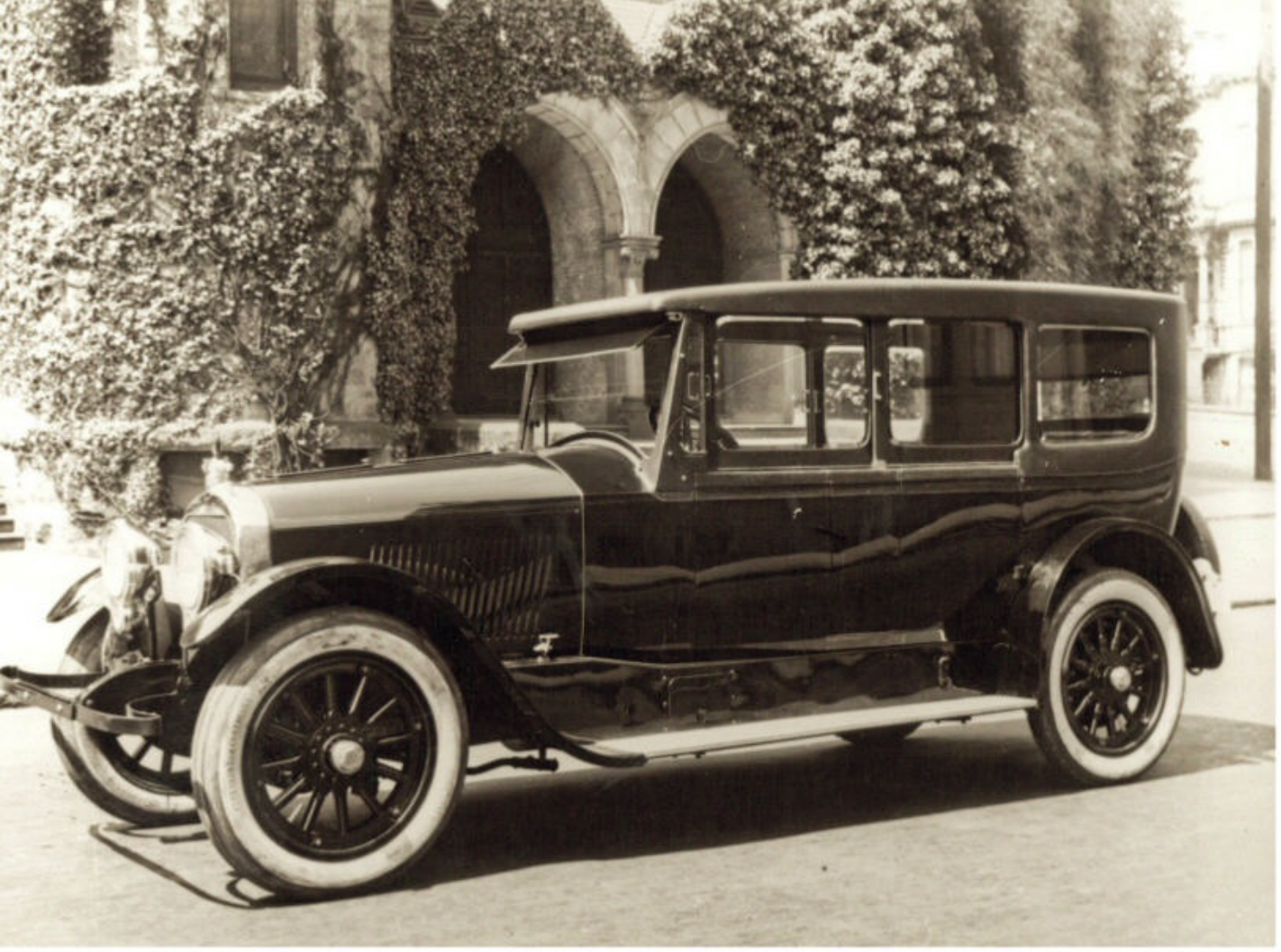
Firestone demountable rims are included; a tire pump, power-driven, integral with transmission with enclosed gears is another feature. The upholstery is a good grade of black leather with Marshall cushion springs. Equipment includes a one-man top and top cover; rain vision, ventilating windshield; tire carrier in the rear; an extra demountable rim; two 10-in. headlights; Warner lenses; electric tail light with license carrier; inspection lamp; Klaxon horn; Waltham clock; Boyce motometer; tools, etc. The finish of these cars is Cobalt blue, Milori green or maroon.

Crow-Elkhart Exhibits

Exhibit of the Crow-Elkhart cars at the National Shows will include the 1920 models, illustrated and described in the September issue, pages 260 and 261. Both sedan and touring have advanced design incorporated. Lines of the hood and body extend without break from the radiator to the rear. The running boards are low and the fenders give a graceful sweep to the general lines. The sedan is featured by the V-type windshield, flat top and the silent operating windows. The doors are square and wide opening.

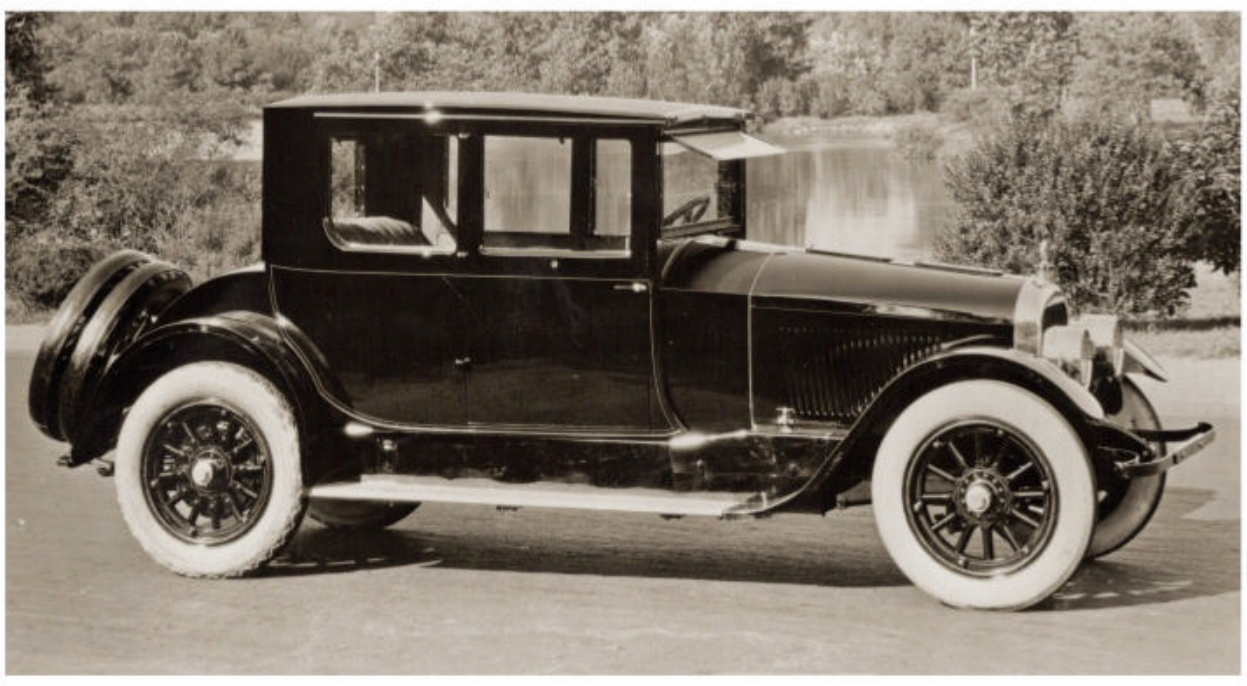
The interior of the sedan is finished in heavy whip cord with nickel trimmings, silk window curtains, heavy carpeting, cut-glass dome and step lights, vanity case, smoking set and foot and robe rails. The open models have the plaited leather conforming to the finish color of the car. The six-cylinder Crow-Elkhart has a wheelbase of 116 in. and the four-cylinder has a wheelbase of 115 in.

Do You Use the Wiring Diagrams Reproduced on Page 384 and Following Pages?



Although this photograph came to us identified simply as a Dorris, we believe it is a 1921 or 1922 Dorris touring car fitted with a winter hardtop. Note the unusual door glass.

The 1922 Dorris 6-80 was a handsome and well-trimmed automobile, but, at that point, the company was beginning to fail due to intense competition in the medium-price field.



The 1922 Dorris coupe had sweeping European lines and a sloping hood. It's a shame it didn't sell better than it did.

four/five-passenger touring model for $2,500, a six/seven-passenger touring for $2,550, and a seven-passenger limousine for $3,600.

As can be seen, George Dorris apparently didn't like to fiddle much with his pricing formula—the majority of his cars continued to be priced at $2,500 despite industry trends towards lower prices. He was also generous to his stockholders, paying handsome dividends almost from the start.

The only Dorris model we could find listed for 1914 in the *Standard Catalog of American Cars 1805-1942* is a very handsome seven-passenger Model I touring car on a 121-inch wheelbase and priced at $2,550. However, in our Seaman Body Company files, we have a photograph of a 1914 Dorris Model I limousine—and the same photo actually appears in the Standard Catalog. It's a very elegant car, with a six-window passenger compartment, cut-glass coach lamps, and separate driver's compartment. Since Seaman was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the limousine may have been a special order by a Wisconsin customer—or it may have been one of a small production run of Dorris limousines built by Seaman. Perhaps one of our readers can provide more details.

For the 1915 selling season, Dorris retained the 121-inch wheelbase, but offered a greatly expanded lineup. A five-passenger touring car was priced at $2,200, as was a two-passenger roadster. A seven-passenger touring was $2,250. Output of the carryover four-cylinder was now rated as 31 horsepower. For a bit more money, buyers had a choice of a four-passenger coupe for $2,600, four-passenger sedan for $2,800, or a limousine for $3,400.

Dorris expanded to two series for 1916. The Model A-1-4 series included five- and seven-passenger touring cars priced at $2,200 and $2,250, respectively; a $2,200 roadster; a coupe tagged at $3,000; and a seven-passenger limousine for $3,475; all riding a 121-inch wheelbase and powered by the 31-hp engine. The Model A-1-6 offered a seven-passenger touring and two-passenger roadster for $2,475 each, a four-place coupe for $3,250, and a seven-passenger limousine for $3,675. These cars were powered by an all-new 38-hp six-cylinder, and rode a regal 128-inch wheelbase.

Buyers were beginning to expect six-cylinder engines in a $2,500-plus automobile, so for 1917, Dorris dropped its aging four-cylinder and concentrated on six-cylinder models exclusively. The sole series offered that year was the 1-B-6,

The 1922 Dorris 6-80 sedan was a big car, with a large comfortable interior and unsurpassed reliability, but the day of the small Independent surviving on sales of a few thousand cars per year was fast ending.

which appears to have been a slightly updated 1-A-6. The same four models were offered, at the same prices.

Dorris also had a small business making trucks and delivery cars, and after World War I broke out in 1914, the company received orders for those vehicles. Once the United States joined the fight in April 1917, the Dorris factory was quickly turned over to 100-percent military production: trucks, parts for the Mark VIII tank, and other war materiel. It was said that its entire stock of cars and trucks was purchased in one swoop and sent to France.

But, by 1917, Dorris was losing money and, since the automaker had paid out great dividends over the years, its working capital was becoming depleted. Management expanded the company's capital stock to $1,000,000 and president Krenning stepped aside, replaced by a gentleman named W.R. Colcord. By December 1917, the company had also arranged to build a new car under contract—the Deering Magnetic—in hopes of returning to profitability. The Deering was designed to use a Dorris engine with an Entz electric transmission. The company ended up building a number of the cars, but Deering proved to be financially weak and was out of business by 1919.

By 1920, Dorris was in trouble. Another local automaker, newly formed Astra Motors Corporation, made an attempt to merge the two companies, but was unable to raise the needed capital. In the end, Dorris took over Astra and reorganized as Dorris Motors Corporation. The 132-inch-wheelbase Dorris Model 6-80 series was offered for both 1919 and 1920. For 1919, the line consisted of seven- and four-passenger touring cars priced at $3,500 each, and a $4,850 limousine. The following year, a seven-passenger sedan and five-passenger coupe were added and prices rose dramatically, now ranging from $4,350 to $5,800.

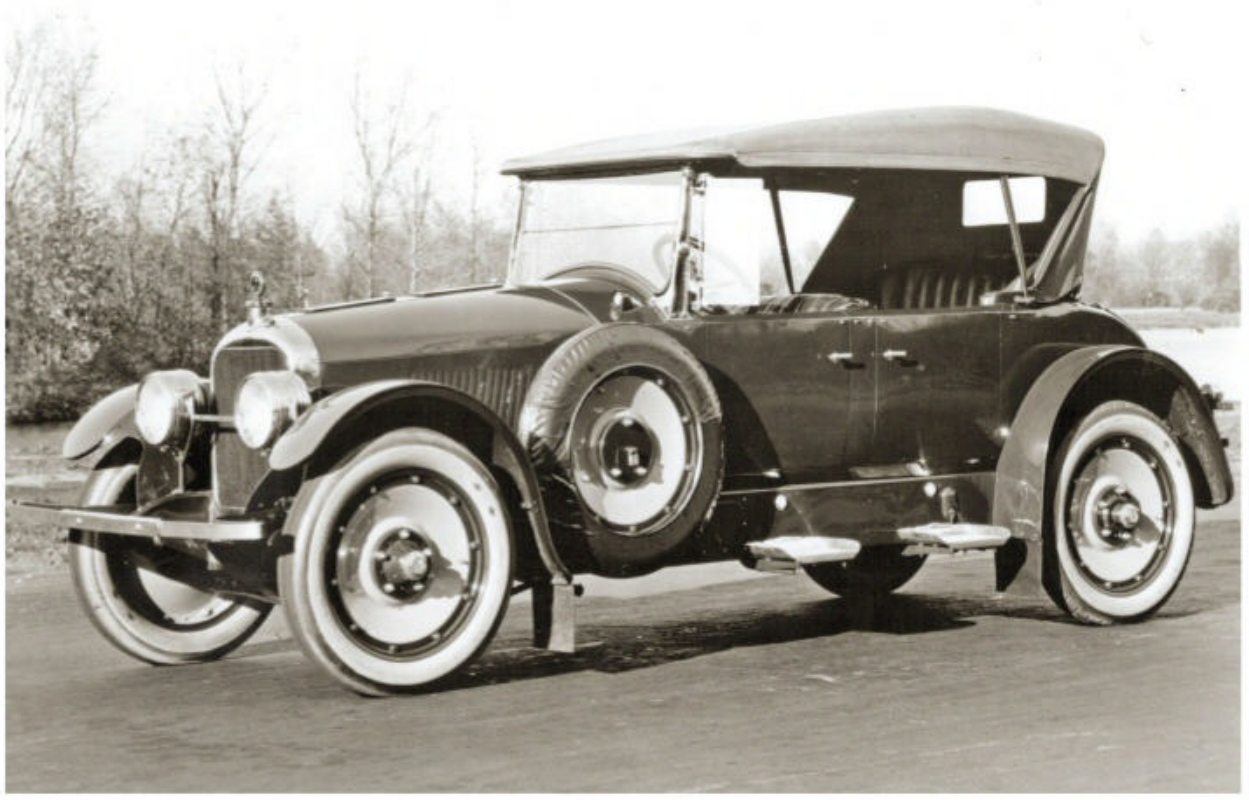
Dorris would continue to base its cars on a 132-inch wheelbase to the end of production; the 80-hp six-cylinder remained in use from 1918 to 1922. Although the story gets a little vague from here to the end, apparently Dorris' operations continued to droop.

For 1921 and 1922, Dorris retained the Model 6-80, offering four versions each year: four- and seven-passenger touring cars, a very stylish four-passenger coupe, and a seven-passenger sedan. Prices kept rising and, in 1922, ranged from $4,785 to $7,190. For 1923, a 73-hp six-cylinder was used, and prices were cut in an effort to boost sales. The same four body styles were carried over, and a new Pasadena touring car was added, though exactly what made it special is not explained. However, a photo in our Dorris files shows a very stylish close-coupled Dorris touring car with white sidewall tires, brightly painted disc wheels, separate step plates rather than running boards, a side-mounted spare, and wind wings. It's a beautiful, very sporty-looking car and it's our belief that this is in all likelihood a Pasadena model, although the photo itself is marked simply 1923 Dorris.

What is definitely known is that the auto industry was buzzing with rumors of a merger of Dorris Motors with fellow automakers Haynes Automobile Company and the Winton Motor Car Company. A story in *Automotive Industries* magazine about the merger even claimed the parent company would be called Consolidated Motors, though in the end nothing came to pass.

Which was too bad. A financially exhausted Winton announced its plans for liquidation in February 1924. Haynes lasted to early 1925, and only built cars to use up the last of its parts stock.

Although Dorris Motors Corporation continued to build cars through 1926, in effect, it too expired in 1924. Sales had dried up, there was no money left, and the few cars it built in 1925 and 1926 were essentially hand-built by a skeleton crew of workers, using up what parts and components that remained. In bankruptcy court, its management stated simply that "Competition was too keen." A sad ending, but one that it shared with too many small automakers back then, as the automobile industry went through its near-continual winnowing out process, rewarding the big companies and killing off the small ones.



Another unidentified Dorris photo, we believe this is the special 1923 Dorris Pasadena touring car. It's beautiful to behold.

museumprofile

National Auto & Truck Museum

Building a future within Auburn's historic structures

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

On July 6, 1974, a vast piece of Indiana's automotive history, restored and saved for posterity, marked its opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. This was the culmination of extensive planning, fundraising, and negotiations by residents and business owners that kept the iconic Art Deco edifice of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg showroom and corporate offices from becoming a demolished footnote—a history we conveyed in *HCC* #181. But while the showroom-turned-renowned museum glistened once again on the southern outskirts of Auburn, the remaining pair of corporate buildings standing on the A-C-D property continued to lay dormant.

Constructed in 1923, the Service and New Parts Department building—the oldest of the trio, with a barrel-designed roof—originally housed both the company's distribution center and new parts inventory on the basement level, while the ground floor was utilized by engineers and mechanics for the construction and testing of experimental vehicles. To its immediate south, the L-29 Building was erected in 1928, its construction coinciding with the front-wheel-drive Cord's development and introduction to the 1929 market. Its ground floor was designed to manage the final preparation and shipment of Cord's new L-29s, while the basement served as additional workspace for experimental vehicle development. Auburn had purchased Duesenberg during 1926, so its engineers were also seen conducting tests on the same level after the building's completion.

It's easy to understand why the structures were widely considered equally important to Auburn's automotive legacy. Unfortunately, in the years following the opening of the museum, the condition of these buildings continued to deteriorate at an accelerated rate, particularly the roofs. With their structural integrity coming into question, there was renewed talk of demolition, a fate that many within the community desperately wanted to avoid. Spearheaded by individuals from within the Auburn Automotive Heritage Inc. organization, a new fundraising campaign was launched to save the two troubled buildings, bolstered by the prospect of a new proposed museum that would occupy the space: The National Auto & Truck Museum, or NATMUS.

According to NATMUS executive director, Dave Yarde, "The idea behind its founding was that this would be a museum that would complement the existing Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum. While the ACD would focus primarily on the facility's namesake automobiles and history, NATMUS would focus on other models of transportation from both Indiana's rich heritage and around the world, including a permanent display dedicated to trucks. Through the efforts of the AAH, new roofs were installed, allowing the structures to be stabilized and repaired where needed. In 1988, the museum officially opened to the public."


AUBURN
Sales and Service
PAYING 4 PER ANNUM
PEOPLES SAVINGS
AND LOAN ASSOCIATION
HAVOLINE
INDIANA
49U2391
1964

This red 1965 2+2, built in New Jersey by Curtis Wright, is America's first rotary-powered Mustang. There are several Brass Era cars on display, including this 1903 Ford Model A Tonneau (red) and a very rare 1910 Pratt Elkhart 30-35 Touring (blue). The yellow stake bed truck is a 1933 Indiana 85A powered by a Hercules engine.

Dave went on to say: "We currently have about 175 vehicles on display that are divided into several different galleries throughout the two buildings. Among them is a muscle car gallery, which includes Hemi 'Cuda number one, as well as the only surviving 'Ball Stud' Hemi engine, which is still in the 1969 Plymouth Barracuda once owned by Sox & Martin and Tom Hoover. Our brass car gallery features the fourth-oldest Ford in existence: a 1903 Model A, which also happens to be the first one built with a back seat. Visitors can also see the rotary-engine Mustang that Ford was trying to develop in 1965, the 1988 Buick Reatta prototype, and the very De Lorean that served as a test mule for PPG, painted red. PPG spent two years developing a formula that would enable paint to adhere to stainless steel. Unfortunately, when it finally perfected the paint, De Lorean was just about bankrupt, and I think only 43 cars ended up being painted."

To help demonstrate the diversity of the collection within NATMUS, Dave stated that there's a gallery dedicated to other Indiana makes, such as Studebaker and Elcar, with another populated strictly with a variety of vehicles from the storied International Harvester Company, which had a plant in nearby Fort Wayne. The fully restored Futurliner #10—one of the most iconic vehicles from GM's Parade of Progress—has also been shown within the institution. Among the largest displays, however, is the gallery of the American Truck Driver.

"This display takes guests through the earliest modes of truck transportation right up to the latest semis. We want to tell the story of how difficult it was to be a truck driver from the Twenties to the Fifties," Dave reported. "There were no creature comforts. Seats were bolted flat to the floor so most of the drivers wound up with severe back problems. There was no air conditioning, so they hung their left arm and left side of their face out the window. Many were later diagnosed with skin cancer. The trucks didn't have insulation or soundproofing, so a lot of them lost their hearing. Fumes came back through the floorboards, and a lot of them ended up with respiratory diseases. Headlamps were basically like two Bic lighters strapped to the front of the truck; the brakes were poor. This is the story we're telling here, and we want to let people experience the cabs—climb into a couple of the early models so they can see what it was really like to be a truck driver during this stage of the trucking industry."

There's more to NATMUS than static and hands-on vehicle displays. A slice of car culture is also present, including a full-scale vintage gas station. A collection of roadside cabins that predate the advent of motor lodges, are on the grounds, and tucked within the facility is a diner originally built in 1948. In addition, NATMUS

Model AA Fords were used for a variety of trucking needs, including transporting oil, as did this 1931 tank truck. With its distinctively shaped engine cover, this 1925 Mack "bulldog" is a Model AC and is powered by a large four-cylinder engine. Of the 12 Futurliners built, below is #10, a 1953 model that is displayed with period Parade of Progress memorabilia.

and the ACD Club will be recreating a new Auburn dealership—the first in 85 years.

"We have so much going on here at the museum, including a driving experience starting this spring, and a youth program," Dave was proud to say. "The latter is a hands-on education program for kids—ages 13 to 18—held on Wednesday nights from 6:00 to 8:00. It's limited to nine students, and we assign mentors with them. We teach them a variety of trade basics, such as woodworking skills. We work with them to make templates and shape new wood for our 1934 Auburn sedan, a process that includes bending spars and cutting finger joints. The museum has a 1949 Chevrolet Canopy Express under restoration, so we have the kids working on sheetmetal skills—bending metal, welding, and how to use an English wheel. Another group is tackling electrical wiring within a vehicle, and we even teach the basics of servicing and maintenance. The last 15 minutes of each night is set aside for journal writing.

"Through this program, we also enhance their communication skills. One of the key things we do is get the kids off the phone, and they learn how to talk and communicate with adults eye-to-eye, and verbalize, rather than type. Our board of directors meets once a month, so the kids elect a representative from amongst themselves to attend the board meeting and present project updates. We've found that they take pride in their involvement and they look forward to the presentations. They get a chance to do different things, and develop a variety of life skills. We're not out to make the next great generation of mechanics, just expose the students to different aspects of the hobby, with the hope some of that translates to a lifetime involvement. If the kids stay with the program for two years, we gift scholarships, and these can be used for two- or four-year educations, junior college, or even a trade school," explained Dave.

"We are working hard to make NATMUS, and the ACD Museum, a destination, not just a stop. We're celebrating more than just the car and truck. We've got a campus experience that allows people to walk back through the early stages of automotive development and motoring. Our attendance is increasing, particularly with the number of young people—most of them interested in vintage trucks—who are actively engaged, and that is a big plus for the hobby, right there."

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Hip to be Square

Chevrolet's K10 was a real workhorse, but this restored 1976 model now turns heads at car shows

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR

We're not sure who first coined the term "square body," but it's now the de facto nickname for GM's 1973-'87 C/K pickups. The General churned these rugged trucks out by the millions for more than 15 model years, so today they're accessible and affordable, which has made them attractive to an audience of younger enthusiasts. These pickups have also long enjoyed an aftermarket support rivaling Camaros and Mustangs. In the rust belt, early 1970s C/K series trucks corroded so rapidly that, by the latter part of the decade, a cottage industry sprouted up selling reproduction doors, fenders, rockers, cab corners, and more. The 1973-'87 models have always been easy to

This truck is powered by its original 250-cu.in. inline-six, and breathes through a one-barrel carburetor. The 250 was the base engine for this truck, but it was optioned up with power steering, power brakes, and an automatic transmission.

personalize, too: from lifted 4x4s with chunky off-road tires to slammed sport trucks riding on air bags—that were particularly hot in the 1990s—and everything in between.

What you don't see a lot of these days are meticulously restored GM square bodies, particularly four-wheel-drives with original six-cylinder engines.

Our feature Chevrolet K10, which scored class honors at the Hemmings Concours d'Elegance in Lake George, New York, last year, is owned by William Baumgartner of Dalton, Massachusetts. William didn't really want a meticulously restored pickup when he purchased this one back in 2013, but his son Brent had other ideas. He told us: "My father wanted a truck and he found this one, so I went to look at it. I told him afterward that it required some work if he wanted to drive it," Brent said. "That's not really how I do things, though, and, once I got it home, I tore it all apart and went through it."

After a year-long thrash that brought the truck to its current show-stopping condition, Brent didn't get the reaction from his father that he expected. "When I was done with it, he asked, 'How can I drive this thing? It's so perfect, I'm afraid to use it.'" So, the elder Baumgartner went out and found a more broken-in 1949 Ford pickup that he now uses as his fair-weather driver.

To Brent's credit, this '76 K10 was a prime candidate for a full-on restoration. It was a one-owner rig purchased new at F.W. Spaulding and Sons Chevrolet in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The first caretaker drove it 38,000 careful miles but, as a Northeast truck, it had succumbed to rust in many of the typical locations. "The truck was kind of weathered," Brent said. "It had some rust around the cab corners and the rockers, and a little on the bottoms of the doors."

Brent tore down the K10 in his father's shop, removing the body, drivetrain, and suspension. "After work every night, I'd stop by and work on the truck for a couple hours and on weekends," he said. Brent's father jumped in too, stripping and refinishing

The interior still boasts its original plaid upholstery, which was standard issue on Custom Deluxe trucks. Four-wheel drives with automatics were equipped with a full-time transfer case, so the lever on the floor offered: High, Low, High Lock, and Low Lock.

parts — prepping them for service again.

Lacking a sandblaster, Brent stripped the frame and suspension components with a wire wheel on an angle grinder. "Only the rear part of the frame required a lot of cleaning," Brent said. "The front end was oily from leaks and well preserved, so that was just a matter of degreasing."

Brent coated the frame rails with POR-15, then sprayed the axles with semi-gloss black. The transfer case and driveshafts he stripped and sprayed with clearcoat. While the original 250-cu.in. six-cylinder engine and Turbo Hydra-Matic transmission were out, he rebuilt and refinished them as well.

As the chassis took shape, Brent enlisted the help of lifelong family friend Keith Holden to tackle the body and paint chores. First, the truck's sheetmetal was stripped of its original paint with 80-grit paper on a DA sander. Any areas needing filler were coated with 3M Platinum Plus and, after block sanding, four applications of high-build primer were sprayed on, then block sanded. The final finish was comprised of four coats of PPG Deltron base, matched to the original Crimson Red, followed by three coats of clear. The truck was reassembled with new brake and fuel lines, a new wooden bed floor, and more. The interior boasts the original seat with the factory installed upholstery, a new floormat, and a new dash pad.

Custom Deluxe was the base trim level in 1976, below Silverado, Cheyenne, and Scottsdale. Standard issue items included a full-width bench seat covered in plaid-pattern vinyl, a black rubber floormat, padded armrests, sunvisors, and dash, as well as a prismatic rearview mirror.

Outside, Custom Deluxes wore bright upper and lower grille moldings, argent headlamp bezels, silver plastic grille inserts, bright mirrors, door handles, and drip rails, plus white bumpers, white wheels, and hubcaps. In ½-tons, the base engine was the plucky 250-cu.in. inline-six. With a one-barrel carburetor and a low-octane-fuel friendly 8.25:1 compression ratio, it mustered 105 hp and 185 lb-ft of torque. Checking the box for the optional Turbo Hydra-Matic automatic transmission on a 4x4 also got you an NP203 full-time transfer case. In High or Low, the transfer case's differential would vary the power from front to rear while in High Lock or Low Lock the differential was locked out, putting power to both axles over slippery terrain. The standard gear ratio with a six cylinder was a stump pulling 4.11:1 while V-8-powered trucks came standard with a loftier 3.08:1.

GM's square body made its debut in 1973 as an all-new truck with a host of improvements. The front suspension was moved forward in the frame and the rear axle was repositioned for greater stability and load handling, and a better ride. Rear leaf springs were made standard issue on two-wheel-drives, and four-wheel-drives received improved leaf springs all around as well as a front stabilizer bar for more refined on-road manners. A factory four-door 3+3 crew-cab model was also introduced — a first for GM — as a $1,000 option on 1-ton and ¾-ton trucks.

One of the more controversial elements of the 1973-'87 pickup design was its "side-saddle" fuel tank mounting. These outboard mounted fuel tanks drew nationwide attention when NBC's TV news magazine *Dateline* ran an episode on November 17, 1992, called "Waiting to Explode." The setup was already deemed a fire hazard in a side-impact accident and blamed for numerous deaths. *Dateline*, however, added more fuel to the fire by rigging a GM truck with incendiary devices wired to explode by remote control. The show's producers then rammed a Chevrolet Citation into the truck creating a fiery made-for-TV crash, but neglected to tell viewers that it had faked the explosion.

GM sued and NBC issued an on-air retraction of the segment but, in 1996, GM issued a retraction of its own when it agreed to a $600-million settlement over the side-saddle tanks installed in upward of 10-million trucks. As part of the deal, owners of 1973-'87 GM light trucks were issued $1,000 rebates toward the purchase of a new GM vehicle.

Today, fans of these trucks forgive their faults and view them as simple, fun haulers for work or play. This example is probably a bellwether of restored 1973-'87 trucks to come as the popularity of this series continues to grow.

"It gets a lot of attention at shows," Brent said. "I guess people are starting to take a liking to that body style and vintage. I think that as a six-cylinder and four-wheel-drive, people find it even more unusual."

Bronze Beauty!

Rekindling the past with the restoration of a 1959 Plymouth Sport Fury convertible

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARK EVANS

Although Chrysler Corporation had been enjoying success with its "Forward Look" design—introduced in 1955 and updated in 1957—and despite a recession that besieged the industry during 1958, Chrysler's board approved a $150-million budget to simultaneously update its divisions for 1959.

Third-ranking Plymouth received the lion's share of alterations, beginning with a restyled front end, streamlined tailfins, and a revamped rear. A new Constant Level Torsion-Aire suspension system accompanied a reworked front torsion bar arrangement, while front swivel seats, electronic headlamp dimmer, and auto-dimming rearview mirror were new options. Not ignored were the 318- and 361-cu.in. V-8 engines, each tweaked for greater output.

Completing Plymouth's evolution, the entry-level Plaza was nixed, and the Belvedere and Savoy were shuffled down the ladder to make space for the Fury. Previously Belvedere's performance sub-series, the name was promoted to its own series and occupied the top rung with the new performance-minded Sport Fury, the latter only offered in two-door hardtop or convertible guise with standard

front swivel seats. Collectively, Plymouth built 23,857 examples of the Sport Fury for 1959, of which 5,990 were convertibles, including this restored example owned by Mark Evans. We learned, however, that this copper-hued convertible wasn't his first.

"My first was the 1959 Sport Fury my father had purchased in the early Sixties from a Plymouth dealer in Newtown, Connecticut, not far from where we lived in Bridgeport. The Sport Fury was white with a copper interior and had power windows, Mirror-Matic rearview mirror, headlamp dimmer, power seats, and the 361 Golden Commando V-8. The dealer's sons had driven it when new and they installed a dual four-barrel setup from a '58 model. We left it that way when I started driving, and the convertible was what I used to take my driving test—in the snow, with chains on the rear tires."

The Sport Fury was sold soon after graduation mid-decade, but it was never far from Mark's mind. He eventually settled in Woodbury, and had assembled a humble collection of vehicles, prompting several annual trips to car shows and swap meets around the region. One stop at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, started out like any other excursion, until Mark wandered through

It's October 2006, and owner Mark had already completed much of the Sport Fury convertible's disassembly, including the entire interior and top. The remaining trim was to be removed by the body shop upon its delivery.

Further disassembly continued at the shop, including the entire front end. The outer body panels had been media blasted and, although it's a little tough to see, the process uncovered prior repairs and "swiss cheese" metal on the lower sections.

After stripping the body of old paint and filler, the bare metal was sealed in epoxy primer to eliminate the risk of flash corrosion. Areas damaged by corrosion were then cut and used as templates to fabricate replacement sections.

In advance of the removal of the body from the Sport Fury's frame, a basic frame was welded within the passenger compartment space using round tubing. This temporary internal structure prevented the convertible body from twisting out of shape.

The reinforced body was then mounted on a rotisserie to help accelerate repairs to the trunk floor and main cabin floorpan. Exterior bodywork was an ongoing, time-consuming process, with a skim coat of filler over patch panel seams.

The convertible's X-braced perimeter frame, with fully boxed side rails, was exposed for full inspection. Although the suspension and remaining exhaust system still needed to be removed at this stage, media blasting had uncovered damage-free factory metal.

Without the need to repair the frame, its restoration was streamlined, beginning with chassis black enamel. New suspension components were installed, along with aftermarket front disc brakes. The rebuilt engine and transmission were also installed.

The bodywork has been completed and it was ready to welcome paint. Note the firewall had already been done. A keen eye will spot a single carburetor on the engine. The 361-cu.in. V-8 was initially rebuilt with a standard four-barrel induction system.

After the Plymouth's body was painted, its corresponding panels — painted simultaneously — were returned to the chassis and carefully aligned. Re-polished rocker panel trim, door handles and vent windows had been reinstalled as well.

At this stage, the Plymouth was ready to be picked up by the owner. The passenger compartment's mismatched colors replicated factory assembly conditions. Although the speedometer was installed, only the ignition and brakes functioned for delivery.

Final reassembly of the Sport Fury was underway once it was safely stowed in the owner's garage. The exterior was finished first, which included restored Fury-specific side trim, while the right taillamp assembly was nestled into its position below the fin.

Among the last steps was finishing the passenger compartment, where the instrument panel had already been reassembled. Before new carpeting was installed, the reupholstered standard swivel seats were tested for fit and function.

Plymouth's gauges were easy to view through the ornate two-spoke steering wheel. Pushbutton TorqueFlite automatic transmission controls were to the right of the speedometer. Bucket seats automatically swiveled out when the door was opened.

the car corral, where he discovered a 1959 Sport Fury convertible for sale.

"The Plymouth was wearing coral red paint with a red interior. Overall, it looked pretty good, having been driven up from North Carolina. Below the hood was its standard Fury V-800 engine, a 260-hp 318, but someone had put a dual four-barrel setup on it. The body tag indicated it was originally black with a blue interior, so it was likely that some bodywork had been done if it was needed. It was complete — even the Fury-specific trim was there — so, I bought it," explained Mark.

Once home, Mark drove it as-purchased for a year, getting reacquainted with the 3,700-pound cruiser and what it might need. As seat time accumulated, he decided to keep the car as a driver. The problem was the Plymouth's color scheme. Two different shades of red were not the copper hue he had come of age with, and the 318, even modified as it was, didn't provide the same sense of nostalgia he envisioned. Both had to be changed.

In late 2006, Mark began its disassembly, first with most of the exterior trim, followed by the convertible top and the entire interior. It was then delivered to Connecticut Custom Cars, of Enfield, for the first phase of the restoration. With the body mounted to the chassis, the outer surfaces were media blasted to bare metal, then sealed in primer. The hood, front fenders, doors and decklid were removed, as were the inner front fenders, enabling quick extraction of the 318 engine and TorqueFlite transmission.

Damage to the outer body was found on the lower areas of both quarter panels and rocker panels. It was rectified by cutting out the affected areas and using the sections to fabricate patch panels that were then butt-welded in place. A basic tube frame was then built inside the convertible cabin, to prevent the body from twisting when it was separated from the frame. With the body secured to a rotisserie, the cabin and trunk floorpans were repaired.

While the body was being repaired, Mark obtained a date-correct 361-cu.in. V-8 and delivered it to a shop on Long Island, New York, to have it rebuilt. As he explained, "In 1959, you could still get leftover dual-quad setups from the dealer counter. It took a bit, but I was able to find the parts. I had the shop install a camshaft designed for the 1960 SonoRamic (long ram) Commando V-8, and install bigger valves in the cylinder heads, but we also dropped the compression from 10:1 to 9:1 to help it run efficiently on pump gas."

During the Sport Fury's final reassembly, the engine was truly completed when a factory-correct, dual four-barrel induction system was obtained and installed.

When I bought the Plymouth, I had it in my mind that if I enjoyed driving it again, I would build it to be the car I had always wanted when I was a kid. It had to have the copper interior, and I always envisioned what it would look like with matching paint. Some might look at a project like this and think there's no support for a big, late Fifties Plymouth, but there is. There's a strong community of owners across the world, and tapping into the network was an amazing experience. At one point I was trading parts with enthusiasts in Denmark. The Sport Fury is a big car, but tuned right, it's a very comfortable-yet-powerful cruiser.

Meanwhile, progress with the body continued with a skim coat of filler, extensive sanding, several coats of high-build primer, and more sanding. Between coats of primer, the Sport Fury's frame had been media blasted. The X-braced structure proved to be devoid of damage, so it was finished in chassis black enamel and quickly rebuilt with new suspension and brake parts. Intending to drive it frequently, Mark had the front end upgraded with a disc brake package from an aftermarket supplier.

The rebuilt engine and transmission were bolted to the chassis just as the body was ready for paint. Rather than opt for white, replicating the appearance of his first Plymouth, Mark chose copper—technically called Bronze on the color chart. With the body returned to the chassis, several coats of urethane enamel were applied, followed by wet sanding and polishing. This was duplicated on the other body panels, after which they were installed and properly aligned before the entire ensemble was returned to Mark.

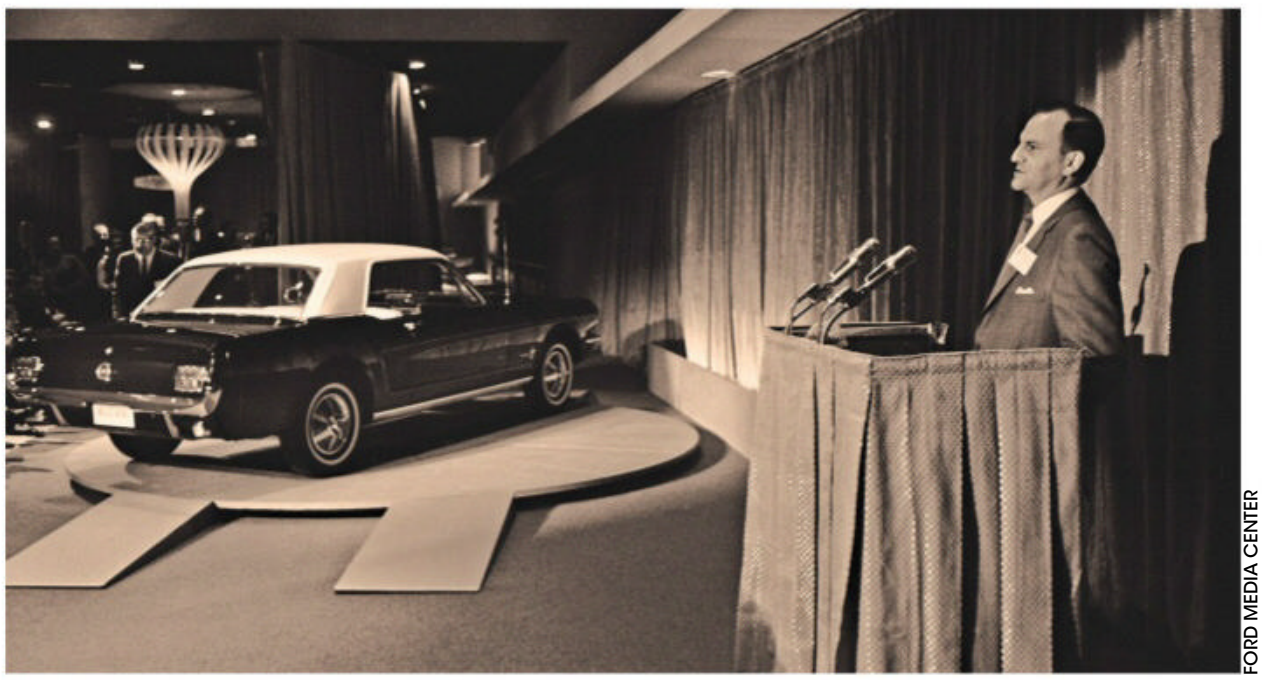
"I like taking them apart and putting them back together, so my approach from the start was to subcontract the project. Dave's Upholstery, in nearby Watertown, reupholstered the seats and side panels, Just Dashes restored the gauges, and JC Auto Restoration helped me locate and rebuild most of the optional equipment, including the power windows and seats. When I got the car back as a rolling tub in September 2011, I was able to enjoy doing what I like—putting it all back together again. It was completed a year later," said Mark.

As a testimony to the effort managed by multiple businesses, he entered the Sport Fury in events throughout the region with winning results, including a second in class at our 2015 Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance. Mark stayed true to his original objective, however, and drove the convertible regularly in the years that followed, until it was sold at auction in late summer 2019. "When I completed the restoration of my 1962 Plymouth Sport Fury, it was time for me to let go of the '59 Sport Fury and let someone else make new memories," said Mark.

I WAS THERE

Randy Edwards

Field Service Representative
Ford Motor Company



FORD MEDIA CENTER

LOOKING BACK AT FORD MOTOR Company in the 1960s and '70s, it was a great place to work. FoMoCo was actively involved in all forms of racing, its engineering was not stuck in a box, the Japanese were forcing innovation, and yet the company was still very hidebound in its approach to its corporate structure.

My job at FoMoCo was as a field service representative in South Florida. I was responsible for service technical problems and customer complaints at dealerships. When I first got to my new district, it was not unusual to have close to 100 complaints open at any one time; a good number of them were due to repairs that had not fixed the customers' problems. The standard procedure was to call and question the technician and service manager at the dealership involved and ask if they had done the repairs exactly as shown in the shop manual. In most instances the answer was yes, they had done exactly as described in the manual.

When arriving at the dealer, the next step was to get the shop manual and start a re-repair exactly as instructed. All too often, the shop manual clearly had never been opened—it was still clean with no greasy fingerprints. Most of the time, in cases like this, the re-repair following the shop manual fixed the problem.

A number of the customer complaints were due to hurried construction in the factory or continuing sloppy procedures at certain assembly plants. A few of the plants were so bad you could actually look at a car from a few feet away and tell where it was assembled—chrome trim not lining up, poor door fit, etc. Some issues, though, were good head scratchers, like the 390-cu.in. V-8s that weeped oil past their rear mains and had us stumped for a few months. We finally discovered the factory had built and distributed a few 390s with reverse rotation marine crankshafts that had knurling in the opposite direction.

Other cars had severe rust conditions that Dearborn said was only popping up in South Florida, but eventually progressed to the rest of the country. The problem turned out to be an application of body seam/adhesive at the factory that was retaining moisture. Even when this cause was discovered, the engineers refused to admit they were using the wrong product.

When I arrived in the district, FoMoCo gave me what, at first, seemed like a very menial extra job. It turned out to be most interesting, informative, and rewarding. There were 60 new Fords at the Miami airport that came under my control and were loaned out as courtesy cars as needed. Along with these courtesy cars was the responsibility of taking care of members of the Ford family and upper executives when they came to South Florida. One of these executives was Lee Iacocca, who owned a condo in Boca Raton. He started making regular trips there via the West Palm Beach airport, and I'd drive him. I soon learned that members of the Ford family and FoMoCo executives were very normal people, not fire-breathing dragons, as they were too often characterized.

Spending time with Iacocca turned out to be one of the most interesting and educational jobs ever. He was not averse to talking while on our trips to the airport or going to meetings, and was always very informative. He once followed up on a problem I was having with a Ford program and took notes—he said he could usually get better results than most people. About an hour after his plane arrived in Detroit, I started receiving telephone calls from numerous high-up company executives in Dearborn asking how they could help. He also shared how he became proficient in all phases and departments of retail dealerships. When he was a district sales representative, he was called into the office of his boss and mentor, Charlie Beacham. Mr. Beacham told Iacocca there was a service problem at one of the dealers and he was to go fix it. When Iacocca protested that he did not know anything about the service business, he was told in no uncertain terms that his task was to *go fix it*.

Iacocca had an uncanny ability of grasping the meat of any problem by condensing any hour-long dissertation put to him down to 10 minutes of pure facts. It was hidebound company policy to move representatives from district to district every year, and dealers knew this. When changes were requested in service department procedures, the answer from dealers was usually yes, but they would hold out on making the changes until the representative was transferred and then start over using the same procedure of yessing the new rep.

My job with the courtesy cars and dignitaries kept me in place for three years and allowed me to go past the yessing phase to implement the needed improvements. This drastically reduced the number of open customer complaints, dropping from the 100 range to around 20. This simple fix of leaving a representative in place long enough to cure a problem was ignored by FoMoCo. Nationally, FoMoCo continued to rotate its representatives from district to district after too short a stay, thus allowing the problem dealers to stonewall needed fixes.

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

GALE NICKEL
GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON

My Old Jaguar

MY FIRST CAR WAS A 1952 JAGUAR Mark VII, Model M, baby blue with white top and red leather upholstery. Beautiful and sexy, it had a 3½-litre DOHC straight-six engine rated at 190 hp at 5,500 rpm, twin SU carburetors, two fuel tanks, and two electric fuel pumps with a toggle switch selector on the dash. The four-speed, floor-mounted non-synchromesh gearbox meant you could not shift from second to first without first double-clutching.

Besides its leather interior, this Jaguar sedan had many upscale details, such as a walnut wood dash with full instrumentation including tachometer, oil pressure, ammeter, fuel level, and coolant temperature gauges. The car was also equipped with a sunroof, tool kit, radio, walnut fold-down trays in the rear (and other wood details throughout the interior), leather door pockets, and rear wheel valances.

I found the Jaguar during the summer of 1958, when I was working the night shift for Boeing in Renton, Washington, trying to earn enough money for another year at Washington State College, where I was studying to become an architect. One day, while riding my motorcycle with a friend, I spied this exotic-looking car in nearby Tacoma and stopped to take a better look. It was very nice, had no damage to the body, and only one seam on the driver's bucket seat needed repair. The sign in the window said it was for sale for $500. I bought it on the spot.

My mother was very upset with me for spending so much of my college savings on a car. She wouldn't let me drive it, and the Jaguar sat in the yard for some time. I showed it off to friends, and we would sit in it and dream our dreams. I don't recall how long it was before my mother relented; I think my stepfather, Ralph, helped me out there.

One day, while driving too fast with some friends east on Pioneer Way out of Puyallup, where we lived, I ignored a traffic warning that work was in progress at the railroad crossing. The paving had been removed between the rails. I hit the crossing pretty hard and knew right away that I'd damaged the car. A quick check revealed that the engine now rested on the front torsion bars. Nothing else appeared damaged and the car still ran, so I very slowly drove it home.

After further inspection, it was evident that the engine mounts were broken. In those days, foreign car dealers never stocked any parts and there was always a 30-day minimum wait for parts. It became a standing joke of sorts.

In the fall of 1959, my mother rode with me and we drove the Jaguar the nearly 300 miles to Pullman, Washington, for fall semester at WSC. I had a lot of fun driving that Jaguar, and one of the interesting idiosyncrasies was the speedometer. It indicated 20 mph faster than the actual speed, and thus was a source of amusement because at 60 mph it read over 80, prompting lots of yelling and screaming from my passengers.

The other fun aspect was its oversteer. I loved the way it would drift or slide around the curve while driving aggressively. There was a very curvy road leading from Pullman to Lewiston, Idaho, and I loved to drive it fast. With the drifting rear and inaccurate speedometer, well, what can I say—it was a blast.

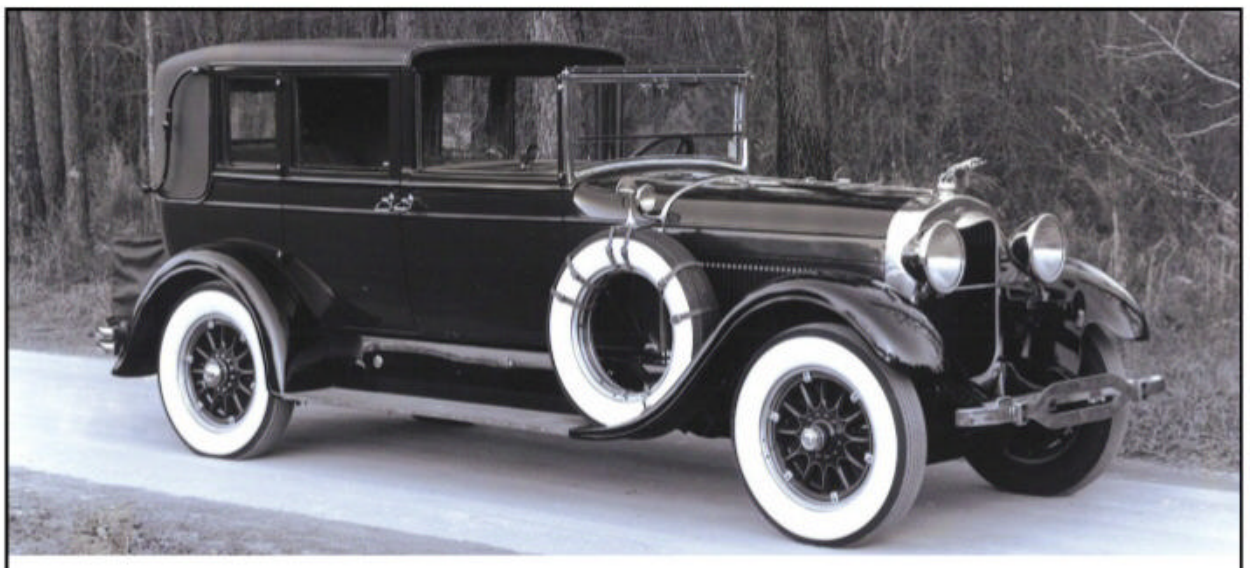
During Thanksgiving break, I invited my friend, Amos, to come home with me to Puyallup. We drove the Jaguar without incident over the Cascade Mountains via Snoqualmie Pass. The very next day, I took the car out for an errand and stopped at a stop sign about two miles from home. I then attempted to turn right, and the steering broke! I picked up all the ball bearings scattered on the road and called my stepdad. Since the car had no steering, Ralph decided to tie the front bumper tight to the rear bumper of his 1956 Dodge pickup. This worked well until we were almost home, when the forces involved caused the front bumper of the Jaguar to tear loose.

Upon inspection, we found that the cap that held the ball bearings in the Burman recirculating ball worm-and-nut steering box had failed, likely because the cap was made from soft metal. Ralph's brother, a welder, repaired the cap for me. I put it all back together with lots of grease, and bought chrome-headed ½-inch-diameter carriage bolts to reattach the front bumper. To do this, I had to drill some holes in the bumper and then make the holes square for the shoulder of the carriage bolts. The metal the bumper was made from was also very soft, and the file I used to square up the holes cut through it like butter.

I repaired and sold the Jaguar without ever driving it again.

REARVIEW MIRROR 1927

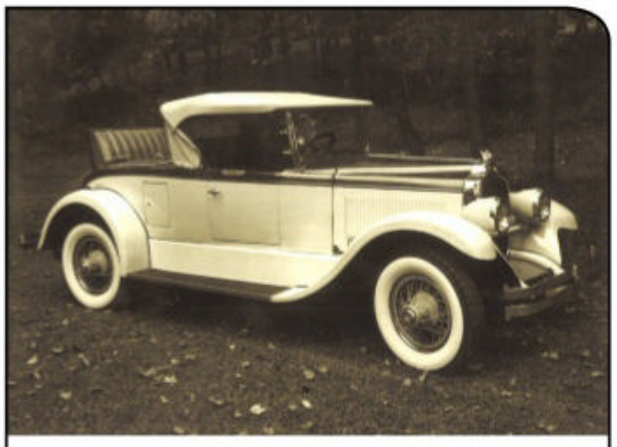
BY TOM COMERRO



LINCOLN HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCLUDE FOUR-WHEEL BRAKES ON ALL OF ITS MODELS, giving a safer ride in the prestigious motorcar. Powered by a 357.8-cu.in. L-head V-8, the Lincolns produce 90 hp and feature a lighter sliding-gear transmission and clutch system. Other innovations include new dual-filament headlamps for high- and low-beams, plus a new instrument panel to spruce up the luxurious interior. The Model L is available in several body types and starts at $4,600.

FACTORY PRICES

Buick	$1,195-$1,995
Cadillac (Standard)	$2,995-$3,650
Cadillac (Custom and Fleetwood)	$3,350-$5,750
Chevrolet	$525-$745
Chrysler	$750-$1,795
Chrysler (Imperial)	$2,495-$5,495
Detroit Electric	$2,800
Dodge	$795-$1,245
Duesenberg	$5,500-$7,800
Essex	$700-$895
Ford	$360-$545
Hudson	$1,095-$1,850
La Salle	$2,495-$4,700
Nash	$865-$2,090
Oldsmobile	$875-$1,075
Packard	$2,585-$5,100
Pontiac	$775-$975
Studebaker	$1,165-$2,495
Stutz	$3,150-$3,785
Willys	$1,295-$2,950



CHRYSLER'S IMPERIAL LINE REMAINS THE top offering from the vaunted car marque. The Series 80 Imperial Six offers lower and longer bodies with state-of-the-art hydraulic brakes. Each Imperial features a high-compression 288.6-cu.in. inline-six engine producing 92 hp at 3,200 rpm. Over a dozen bodies are available for the Imperial, making it capable of comfortably transporting four to seven passengers. The Imperial line starts at $2,495.

EXPENDITURES

(per capita)

Auto parts	$7.09
Auto purchases	$16.76
Gas and oil	$13.39
Intercity transport	$4.77
Local transport	$9.45

SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Chevrolet	1,001,820
2. Ford	367,213
3. Hudson-Essex	276,414
4. Buick	255,160
5. Pontiac/Oakland	188,168
6. Willys-Overland	184,127
7. Chrysler	182,195
8. Dodge	180,000

GM MEDIA

LA SALLE IS THE NEW OFFERING FROM General Motors, launching as the companion car to the Cadillac. Luxurious and styled like the Cadillac, but available at a lower price, the La Salle 303 is available in many body styles from both Fisher and Fleetwood. Powered by a 303-cu.in. L-head V-8 mated to a selective sliding-gear transmission, the La Salle offers efficient performance tailored to its 125-inch (or optional 134-inch) wheelbase. The brand-new La Salle starts at $2,495 for Fisher bodies, and $4,275 for Fleetwood.

STUTZ IS BACK WITH A 145-INCH- wheelbase chassis built close to the road for nice handling, with the added comfort of safety and security. Performance has been improved with the new 299-cu.in. engine, increasing the output to 110 horsepower at 3,600 rpm. A large of array of body styles and custom combinations are available for your individual needs and desires. The Stutz is priced as low as $3,150.

CHAMPIONS

Indianapolis 500	George Sounders *(97.945 mph)*
French Grand Prix	Robert Benoist *(4:45:41.2)*

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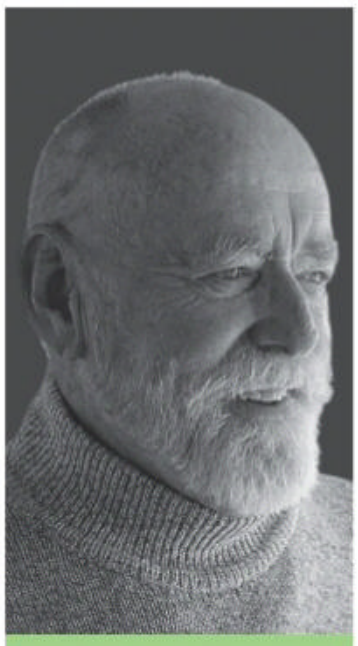

A Thing of Beauty

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever." That is from a poem by John Keats, written a couple of hundred years ago, but it is just as true today. What he is saying is: Seeing something beautiful will bring you joy even long after it is gone, and that's how I feel about some of the great automobiles from the past. When I think of the 1933 Packard Car of the Dome, 1936 Cord Beverly sedan, 1941 Cadillac Series 61 Coupe, 1953 Corvette, or the 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO, each gives me pleasure.

I wasn't around for the 1933 Packard Car of the Dome at the Chicago World's Fair. I only wish I had been born sooner so I could have seen its debut, because it brings me pleasure just to picture it in my mind. It is the epitome of the Classic car in more ways than one. It is exquisitely finished in champagne gold, and has that inimitable Packard Gothic church window grille motif gracing a hood that seems to go on forever.

It is the most beautiful four-door sedan ever. It is a Classic in the true sense of the word, too, because its beauty transcends its time and is still admired today. And, it is also a Classic, because it is styled in the Greco Roman tradition that was popular at the time. It would look quite at home parked in front of the Parthenon in Athens.

The 1937 Cord 812 is another masterpiece, and reflects the Art Deco styling of its day, even though it was trouble prone and not thoroughly sorted out mechanically. As a result of its sheer beauty, thanks to master designer Gordon Buehrig, who among us would not want one in their collection?

And then there's the 1941 Cadillac Series 61 coupe. It's one of Bill Mitchell's masterpieces from the Streamline Moderne era. It started out as a prototype for the 1941 La Salle, but the La Salle marque was dropped that year because it was upstaging Cadillac and eating into its profits. For those who are not familiar with the La Salle, it was Cadillac's sportier companion make that helped get them through the depression.

I do remember the debut of the 1953 Corvette at the Los Angeles County Fair when I was 11 years old. It was the most beautiful car I had ever seen to that point. It was not much of a sports car, though, with its heavy 235-cu.in. inline-six derived from Chevrolet's truck engine and its two-speed Powerglide automatic transmission. It had no outside door handles either; you were locked out if you inadvertently closed the door when the slip-in side curtains were in place. However, I loved it then, and would still love to have one now. It got even better in 1955 when Chevrolet dropped in the V-8 and a manual transmission.

Another car that makes me stop in my tracks even today is the 1952 Jaguar XK120 fixed-head coupe. A neighbor had a black one in the early '60s, and I would go into rapture when it went by. The owner also had a daughter, named Rita, who was about my age and a thing of beauty and a joy forever, too. In fact, she was so beautiful that I could not even talk to her, though she and my sister were friends.

And then there is the legendary 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO I saw at Riverside Raceway that year. It was stunningly beautiful. Designed by Giotto Bizzarrini and Sergio Scaglietti, the GTO was magnificent beyond compare. It is a kinetic Brancusi sculpture, and goes like a brush fire. The GTO only seats two people and isn't practical for driving back and forth to work, but those things are easily forgiven.

Nobody cares, because the 250 GTO is love at first sight, and it is mechanically as beautiful as it looks. As Robert Persig said in his book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, its drivetrain is "brilliant equations frozen in metal." I'm paraphrasing, but you get the point. He maintained that when you see the real-world manifestations of great ideas, the beauty is obvious. The 250 GTO even *sounds* fabulous, with its race-tuned V-12 roaring its challenge to all comers.

This is only a partial list of great cars that I will forever cherish having beheld. I know there are many other styling and engineering triumphs from the golden age of the automobile, but these are some that I will never forget, and would still love to own and drive, and that brings me to the question: Which car do you remember as a thing of beauty and a joy forever? You can email me at: jameshr106@gmail.com.

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