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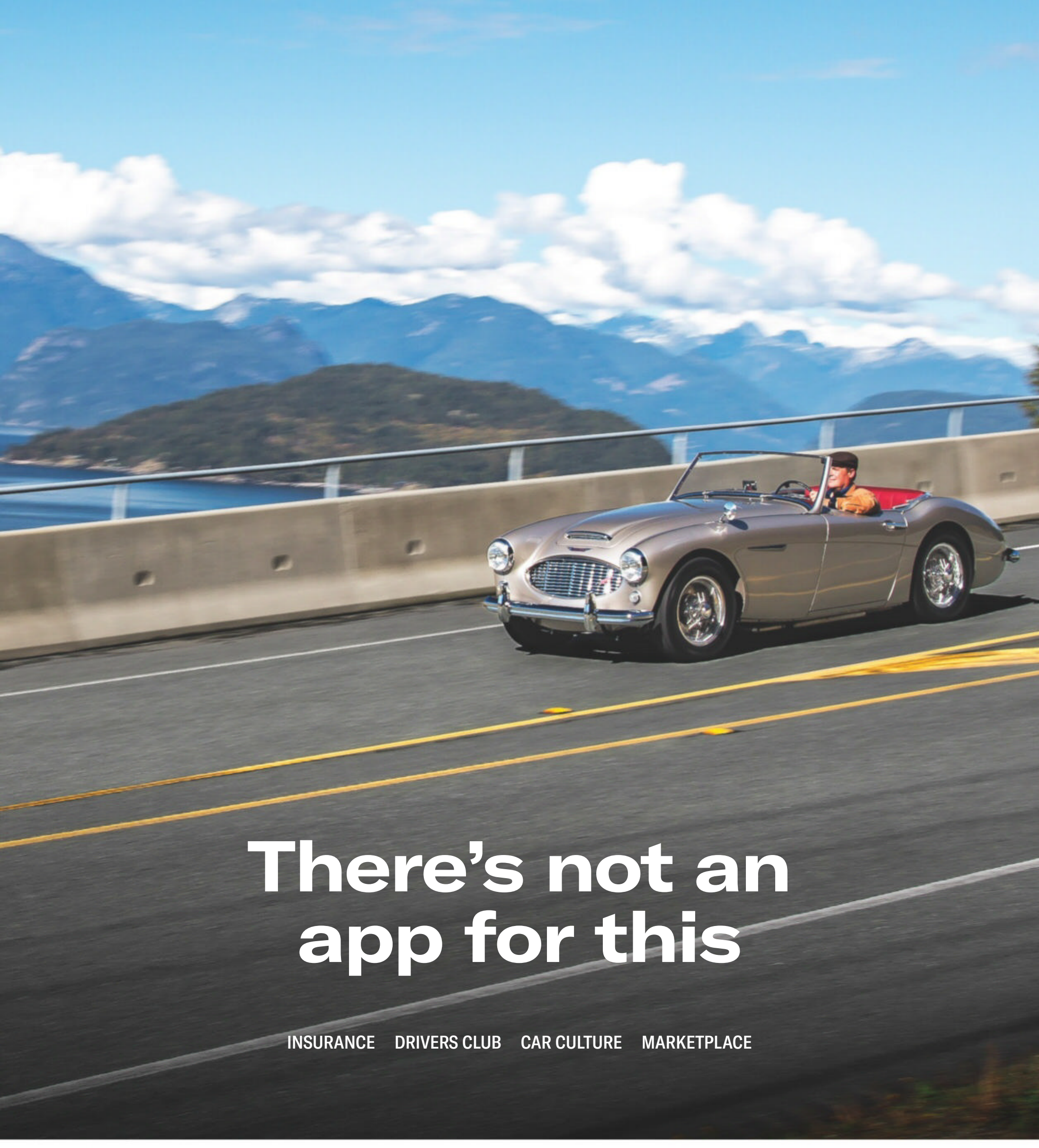

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"There were no bloodstains on this particular Spitfire, but its low seating position cemented in me a life-long lust for sports cars."

Smitten by British

Perhaps because of their endearing designs, or the simple fact that they were rarely seen on the streets of New York City where I grew up, I've always had a special fascination for European cars, especially British ones. Although I still recall with great clarity the first time I saw a 1963 Sting Ray, a '68 AMX, a Cheetah, and a Jaguar XKSS – which has always been my number one dream car of all time – seeing the long curvy shape of an E-type for the first time simply blew me away.

It was a warm autumn night, on Kings Highway in Brooklyn, parked at the curb in front of Dubrow's Cafeteria on East 16th Street, right under the "el." It was a coupe, bright red, with the shiniest chrome wire wheels. My father quickly parked the car so my two brothers and I could get a closer look. Having never seen such an incredible looking sports car before, I was amazed at its sleek shape and how the covered headlamps flowed into the body. That red Jaguar was the talk at our lunchroom table the next day, as we pushed our Aurora slot cars around our sandwiches, hoping all the while the nuns wouldn't catch us.

Then, just a few months later, us kids struck gold. Under our Christmas tree was a Strombecker racing set. Of the two slot cars, one was a red Ferrari GTO and the other a black Jaguar E-type coupe. At last, we had an E-type of our very own, albeit in 1:32 scale. The Ferrari was nice, but after seeing an E-type in person, we always fought over who would get to race the Jaguar.

In 1979, I bought an E-type, though it wasn't the Series 1 3.8 coupe that I always lusted after. Instead, it was a much more affordable 2+2 model, which is why I was able to buy it for $3,000. That was all the money in the world for me, yet every second behind the wheel made me feel like a millionaire. But at least it was a late Series 1 model that was built in the early part of 1967, so it still had the covered headlamps. The not-so-highly-strung 4.2 engine was under the hood, complete with its triplet of SU HD8 carbs; their chromed dashpots dazzled the eyes every time the big bonnet was titled forward. Nothing could beat pushing in the little black starter button and hearing the mechanical whine of the flywheel spin as it started that silky smooth straight-six powerplant – that was always an exhilarating experience.

But my first British car-owning experience came in October 1974, when I bought a 1968 Triumph Spitfire MKIII – a car I still own today. I first fell head over heals for Spitfires when my friends and I stumbled upon a stolen Spitfire MKIV sitting in the sand by Plum Beach, a notorious waterfront location in Brooklyn where bodies were dumped after a person got whacked. There were no bloodstains on this particular Spitfire, but its low seating position cemented in me a life-long lust for sports cars.

That Spitfire eventually led to more British sports cars, including an MGA 1500 roadster, a Sunbeam Tiger, and several other Spitfires, but a '67 GT6 MKI was probably the most fun-to-drive car I've ever owned. It didn't possess the granite-like solidity or reliability my BMW 2002s had, but it was an absolute blast behind the wheel. Unlike my E-type, driving the GT6 in Manhattan traffic was incredibly entertaining. Its slot-car-like steering made mincemeat out of the taxis, allowing me to cut them off with absolute precision and confidence.

Forty years have passed since I sold that Jaguar, yet it left such a deep-rooted impression on me that an early E-type remains on my top-ten list of must-own cars. But in the meantime, I'm satisfying my thirst for British cars by performing a body-off restoration on my 1960 TR3A, with a right-hand drive 1955 TR2 waiting in the wings. And when the weather permits, I alternate between driving my '63 Corvair Monza convertible and an all-original '67 GT6 MKI. Although now that I'm about 42 years older than when I owned my first GT6, I find getting in and out of that little fastback coupe is a whole lot harder than getting in the much-roomier Corvair.

With all this talk about British cars, I hope you enjoy this month's Special Section.

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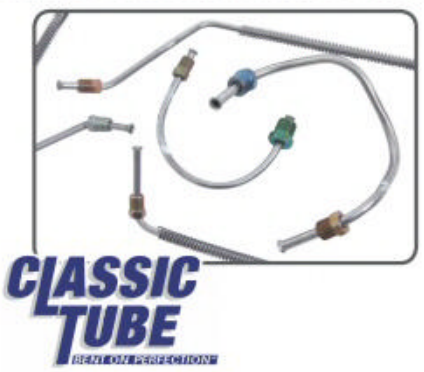

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BY TOM COMERRO

Eastern Divisional Tour

THE AACA HAS MOVED BACK ITS MAY EASTERN DIVISIONAL TOUR, HOSTED BY THE Maryland Eastern Shore Chapter, to August 12-15. This tour is centered around Cambridge, Maryland, and is a great chance to see the state's marshes, shores, and woodlands while touring in your classic. Stops include visits to the Richardson Maritime Museum, the Harriet Tubman Museum, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, and the Classic Motor Museum. Spots are still available; visit www.aaca.org for more information.

De Soto Dreaming

THE NATIONAL DESOTO CLUB CONVENTION IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE JULY 29 to August 2 in Brookfield, Wisconsin, with a judged car show marking the culmination of the event. Driving tours and bus tours, revolving around the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel, are still being put together. Check the club's website, www.desoto.org, for the most up-to-date information.

Kenosha Canceled

THE KENOSHA HOMECOMING, WRITTEN ABOUT BY PAT FOSTER IN HIS COLUMN for *HCC* #190, has fallen victim to the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally slated to take place on July 21-26, the event has been postponed until 2021. The rescheduled reunion is set to begin on July 31, 2021, though further details are absent at press time. For the latest information, visit www.visitkenosha.com/events/kenosha-homecoming-car-show.

AUGUST

Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please verify the status of these events before making plans to attend.

7/31-8/2 • Carlisle Ford Nationals
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

1-2 • Summer Elkhorn Auto Swap Meet & Car Show • Elkhorn, Wisconsin
608-244-8416 • www.madisonclassics.com

4-9 • Hot August Nights
Reno, Nevada • 775-356-1956
www.hotaugustnights.net

7-9 • Mopar Nationals
Columbus, Ohio • 313-278-2240
www.moparnats.org

12-15 • AACA Eastern Divisional Tour
Cambridge, Maryland • 443-877-7750
www.aaca.org

13 • Hemmings Cruise-In
Bennington, Vermont • 800-227-4373
www.hemmings.com

14-16 • Carlisle Import Nationals
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

27-30 • Corvettes at Carlisle
Carlisle, Pennsylvania • 717-243-7855
www.carlisleevents.com

29-9/5 • Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival
Auburn, Indiana • 260-925-3600
www.acdfestival.org

The Great Race

THE HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS GREAT RACE HAS been postponed until August 22-30. This year, the route runs from The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, to Greenville, South Carolina, through eight states. Organizers have been working with local government officials at stops along the way to ensure the safety of participants and spectators. A field of 100 racers, driving vintage cars and trucks, will compete for a $50,000 grand prize in the annual cross-country rally. For the most up-to-date information, visit www.greatrace.com.

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BY DANIEL STROHL

Moore or Less a Ford

OUT OF A ONE-CAR GARAGE IN NELSON, ILLINOIS, EMERGED THIS LITTLE LOTUS-LIKE homebuilt special that Shay Moore completed in 1958. According to Shay's younger brother, Terry, Shay built it on a shortened Ford frame with a souped-up Ford flathead V-8.

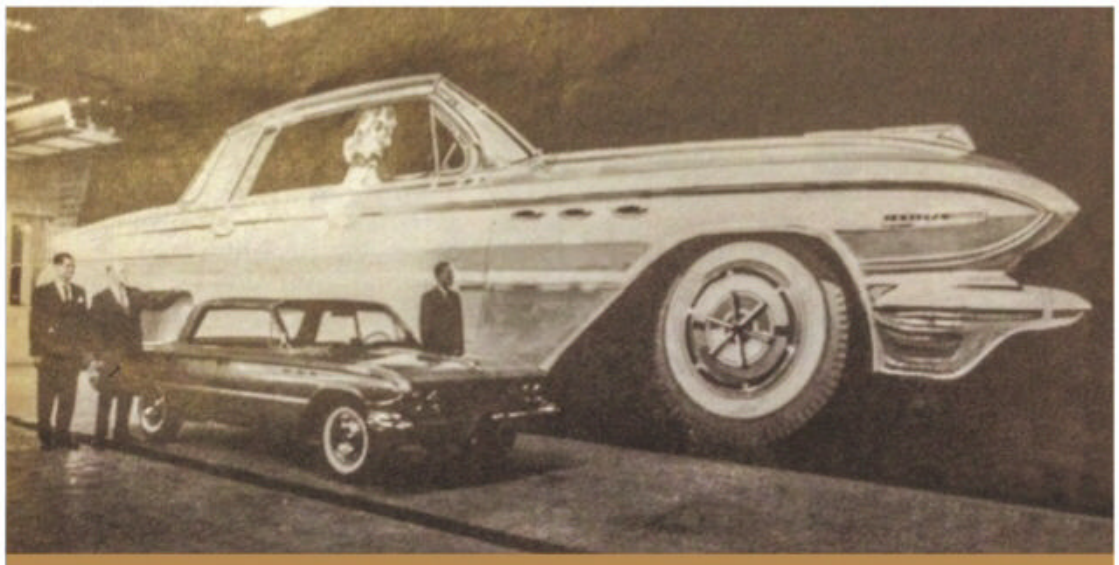
"Used a lot of thin wall tubing and aluminum to shape the body," Terry wrote. "He gave me a ride to grade school in it. It was quite fast being light weight." However, as Terry reports, Shay sold the special in 1960 and they subsequently lost track of it. Now they're hoping that somebody out there knows what happened to it and, if it's still around, where it is now.

Moparcamino

SOMEWHERE IN A TACOMA-AREA STORAGE LOT sits an interesting conglomeration that Paul MacMichael recently photographed and sent our way.

"One-off with black California plates," he wrote. "May well have been made from a station wagon?" Well, what we see here is a combination of 1957 De Soto front half and a 1957 Dodge convertible or coupe back half, with a bit of custom sheetmetal to create the B-pillars that led down to the open pickup bed. A little closer look shows some rust along the seam behind the doors, but otherwise, it appears that it was once well put together.

Who built it and for what purpose? We'd love to know.



One Big Buick

WE HAVE TO ASSUME AT LEAST SOME of our readers drove or rode around Detroit in 1961 and saw this behemoth Buick looming over them, but where?

Geoff Hacker sent this newspaper clipping along describing the 65-foot-long reproduction of a 1961 Buick Invicta Custom four-door hardtop that was slated to go atop a six-story steel structure somewhere in the Motor City. Its 8-foot wheels reportedly turned, its headlamps shone, and its taillamps blinked red.

That all sounds cool, but after looking through his references, our resident Buick guy, Matt Litwin, said he came up with nothing on who was responsible for the display or where it might have greeted Detroit motorists.

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

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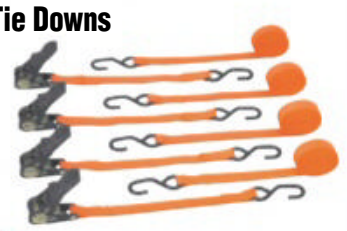

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BY TOM COMERRO

BONHAMS

RM SOTHEBY'S

Amelia Island

WITH AN APRIL THAT WAS COMPLETELY SHUT DOWN, WE'LL GO BACK and take a look at some of the sales at Amelia Island last March. Bonhams saw a 63-percent sell-through in American classic cars with total sales eclipsing $590,000. Two of the more successful sales were a pair of Thomas automobiles that were part of the Harold Coker Estate. A 1903 one-cylinder Model 18 sold at $89,000, while a 1910 M6-40 Flyabout, finished in a two-tone green paint scheme and assembled from parts collected over more than 40 years, including an original 640 engine, found a new home at $112,000.

At Gooding & Company, there were few American choices, but a nice 1941 Cadillac Series 62 convertible sedan did sell among the lots, and was believed to be one of 60 examples known to exist today. It was finished in El Centro Green and had received a body-off restoration in the late 1990s. The prewar CCCA Full Classic sold for a reasonable $50,400.

RM Sotheby's saw sales of American classics come in at just under $6.3 million. Among those was a 1912 Oldsmobile Defender Touring car, one of 325 built. It had undergone a full restoration in 2013 and was finished in two-tone grey livery complimented with polished nickel and brass details. The interior was complete with original instruments and controls, oxblood red leather, and polished woodwork throughout. The selling bid for the first-year Defender rang in at $140,000.

AUCTION PROFILE

CAR	1955 Packard Caribbean Convertible
AUCTIONEER	RM Sotheby's
LOCATION	Amelia Island, Florida
DATE	March 6, 2020
LOT NUMBER	136
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	$67,000
SELLING PRICE	$56,000

RM SOTHEBY'S

THE CARIBBEAN WAS GIVEN AN OHV V-8 engine for 1955 and featured Senior-line styling, tri-color paint schemes, and a dual-scooped hood among the many redesigns. Production saw a limited run of 500 units, making the Caribbean one of the rarer and more collectible Packards of the 1950s.

This example bucked the flash of the tri-colored Caribbeans with its triple onyx scheme and white convertible top and boot cover. It remained under the same ownership from new and showed only 19,513 miles on the odometer. Equipment included power seats, windows, convertible top, steering, and brakes. The interior had its original leather and working instruments like the clock and radio. Recent work encompassed engine, carburetor, and water pump rebuild, and new radiator, brakes, shocks, and four tires. This Caribbean was a great example of fine Packard styling near the end of the company's incredible run. Clearly the buyer bought well.

AUGUST

Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.

7/29-8/1 • Mecum Auctions
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
262-275-5050 • www.mecum.com

13-15 • RM Sotheby's • Online only
310-559-4575 • www.rmsothebys.com

14-15 • New England Auto Auction
Owls Head, Maine • 207-594-4418
www.owlshead.org

GOODING & COMPANY

Monterey Changes

WITH THE CANCELLATION OF THE PEBBLE Beach Concours, the multiple auctions that accompany Monterey weekend will either be canceled or rescheduled. As of press time, RM Sotheby's will continue with its August 13-15 auction, but it will be held online, just as it has been holding other auctions since the spread of the coronavirus. The organizers at Bonhams, who usually plan the show in conjunction with "The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering," have stated that they will arrange an alternative auction to take place elsewhere in California. Both Gooding & Company and Worldwide Auctioneers have canceled their events as well. For the latest coverage, visit each auction house's website or follow our coverage at www.hemmings.com/stories.

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

BY TOM COMERRO

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Headlamp bar pads for 1932-'33 (Series 970, 1070, and 1170) Nashes are now available from Metro Moulded Parts. Each pad is made of a dense rubber compound for maximum protection against moisture and doesn't feature any fillers that can cause premature deterioration. The pads are backed by Metro's 15-year warranty.

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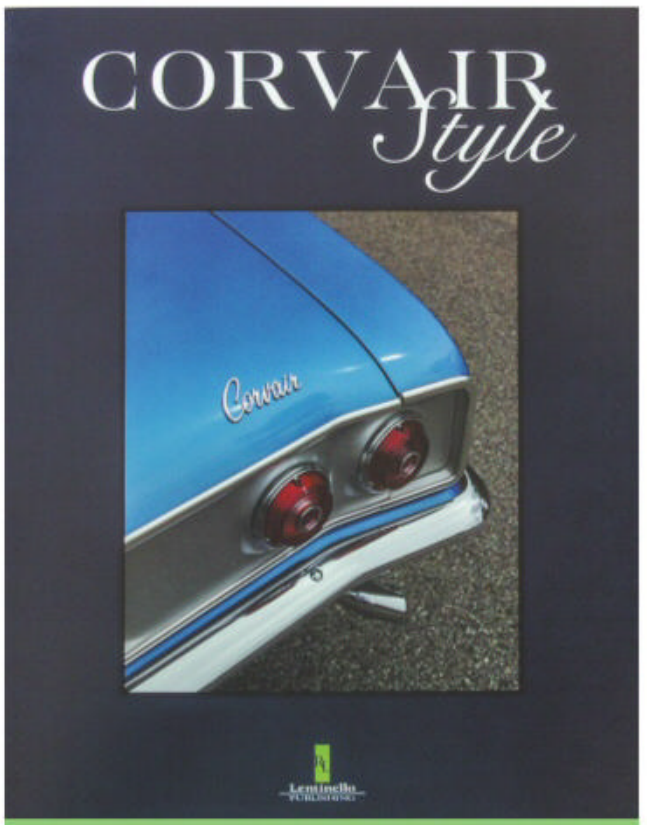

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LENTINELLO PUBLISHING
WWW.LENTINELLO.COM • $35.00

The second title in *Hemmings Classic Car* editor Richard Lentinello's "Style" series, *Corvair Style* is a 196-page love letter to Chevrolet's most extraordinary production car of the 20th century. This handsomely presented softcover contains individual profiles on more than 50 exquisite original and restored examples; every year of production and body type is included, and passionate owners share stories of devotion to the Corvair. Each of the 2,500 copies, printed in the U.S. on premium paper, is signed and numbered by the author. Everyone who appreciates America's automotive heritage will find much to enjoy in this book.

— MARK J. McCOURT

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BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GENERAL MOTORS

Robert Stempel

FROM AN AUTO MECHANIC IN Bloomfield, New Jersey, to chairman and CEO of General Motors and owning a home in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, engineer Robert C. (Bob) Stempel steadily rose through the ranks at the storied automaker during his 34-year tenure.

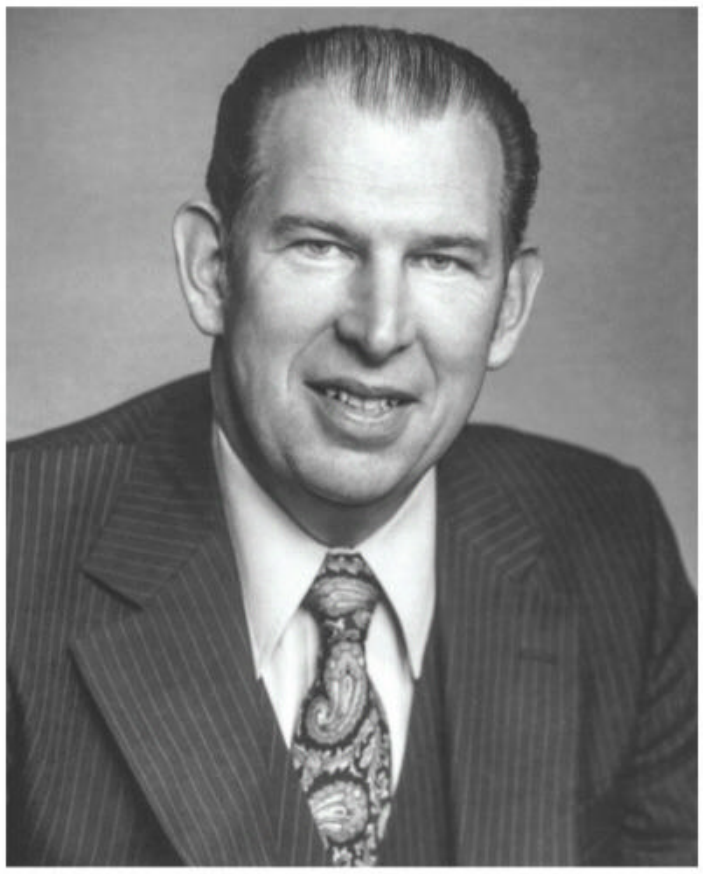
Born during the Depression on July 15, 1933, in Trenton, Stempel had two brothers and a sister. The imposing, 6-foot, 4-inch teenager, a class-of-1951 Bloomfield High School graduate, found his interest in cars flourished as he worked summers as a mechanic at Ed Uniss' shop. "Those were the days when you invested in a good set of sockets and wrenches and feeler gauges, and you could make anything run," Stempel stated in *Automotive News* in 1996.

He studied mechanical engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1955, and married Patricia Bachmann soon after. They later had three children.

After a stint with General Electric, Stempel served two years as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 1958, he was hired as a senior detailer in the chassis design department at Oldsmobile. He was promoted to a senior designer in 1962 and transmission design engineer two years later.

Stempel was instrumental in developing the front suspension and engine and transmission mounting system for the 1966 Toronado's longitudinal-engine/front-wheel-drive layout. The new model won the *Motor Trend* Car of the Year award. To close the decade, he became a motor engineer.

He earned his MBA from Michigan State University in 1970 and ascended to assistant chief engineer at Oldsmobile two years later. GM President Ed Cole chose Stempel to be a special assistant to organize the advancement of emissions controls in 1973, and he led the development of the catalytic converter for production. He was promoted to chief engineer—engines and components for Chevrolet in 1974 and then to the Division's director of engineering the next year.



His family had owned Pontiacs and Chevrolets, likely making his promotion to general manager of Pontiac (and a GM vice president) in 1978 even more momentous.

The managing director job at Adam Opel AG in Germany came in 1980. Then the general manager's chair at Chevrolet just two years after, from which he approved the front-wheel-drive Celebrity Eurosport, among other decisions.

During a GM restructuring, in 1984, Stempel advanced to vice president and group executive in charge of Buick-Oldsmobile-Cadillac. Two years later, he became GM executive vice president and was in charge of the truck and bus and overseas groups, and he was elected to the GM board of directors. He was named president and chief operating officer in 1987.

On August 1, 1990, 57-year-old Stempel, a car guy and engineer, became the chairman and CEO of an ailing General Motors. Shortly after he took over, the Persian Gulf War began, and the recession it helped create exacerbated the corporation's myriad existing financial and other problems that he'd inherited from his predecessor, Chairman Roger Smith.

A plan for cutting about 74,000 jobs and closing 21 plants was announced, but during its implementation, Stempel remained concerned about the impact it would have on the people and communities involved. The board of directors felt that he and his team weren't moving quickly enough. Among other issues, the provision he agreed to with the United Auto Workers that paid laid-off hourly workers up to 95 percent of their wages was also cited as hindering GM's restructuring efforts. Nevertheless, there were several reasons why the corporation lost billions in North America in 1991 and 1992.

The board of directors and the chairman reached an impasse by late 1992, and in what has been widely described as a boardroom coup, GM and Stempel parted ways. Some may argue that his term was mostly ill-fated from the outset by the circumstances of the day.

While at GM, Stempel had been a proponent of the Impact (later EV1) electric car, and following his retirement, he still pursued renewable energy technology, accepting an advisory position with Energy Conversion Devices, established by inventor Stanford Ovshinsky. From 1995 to 2007, Stempel served as chairman. Among the company's various pursuits, it also provided NiMH-technology battery packs to GM for the later EV1s.

When Bob Stempel passed away on May 7, 2011, the 77-year-old executive was still serving on the boards of a few companies. Throughout his career, he was active in various organizations and charities, as well.

Lloyd Reuss, former GM president under Stempel, was quoted in multiple sources as saying, "In the 1970s, Mr. Stempel recognized the need to cut pollution and make cars more efficient, helping lead a shift to smaller, more efficient vehicles."

He was also known for his loyalty and for earning it from others, as well as his motivational skills, measured decision making, engineering talent, commitment to quality, team-oriented approach, hands-on style, and affable personality. Bob Stempel, a life-long car guy, left a positive impression on the vast majority of those he came in contact with.

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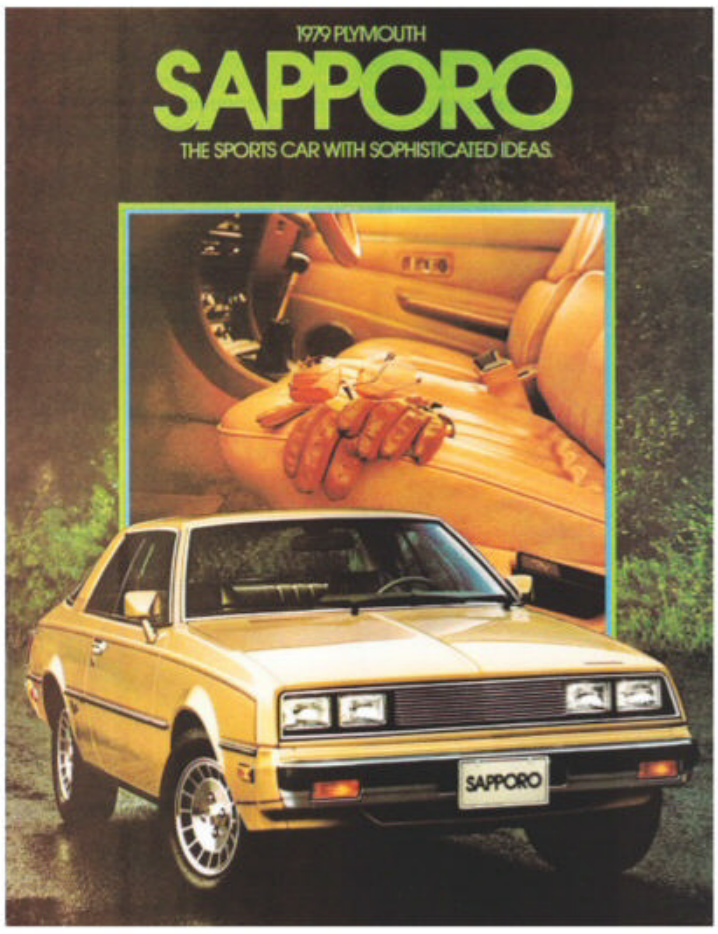
Mercedes-Benz

BY MILTON STERN

Sophisticated Sapporo



I HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT MY FATHER'S older brother, Uncle Stanley, many times. He was a Chrysler man, and he usually drove the top-of-the-line New Yorker, generally keeping a car for around five years. They were either brown or beige because he was slightly color blind. I've never mentioned Aunt Pat, his wife, because when I was a little boy, I only remember her driving Uncle Stanley's cars or her work car.

Aunt Pat worked for the Red Cross. She eventually was promoted to president of the Hampton Roads, Virginia, chapter, and if you were a lifeguard in Hampton Roads during the 1970s or '80s, you saw Patricia Stern's signature on your Red Cross certification card. Why am I telling you all this? Because Aunt Pat always drove a white Plymouth Red Cross station wagon, and it was usually parked at their house. I remember a Coronet, a Satellite, and a Volare station wagon.

In 1980, she earned another promotion and bought a new car since she no longer needed to drive the Red Cross station wagon. She treated herself to a Plymouth Sapporo. See? It took me a while, but I got to my point. I remember this car for two unusual reasons. Okay, make that three. It was a pretty car, and although one of Plymouth's captive imports, unlike the Colt or Cricket, the styling of the Sapporo rivaled that of other sexy Japanese sport coupes. I found it refreshing that an import with a domestic badge put on it was so appealing. The other sexy rebadged import was the Mercury Capri.

However, thanks to a couple of vandals, Aunt Pat did not have good luck with this car. One night, she left the doors unlocked and some neighborhood kids put a dead squirrel under the seat. Like a similarly themed *Seinfeld* episode, the smell became overwhelming, and by the time they discovered the source of the offending odor, it was almost too late. She had the car professionally cleaned, but that created another problem. While the odor was gone, the harsh chemicals that were used to make the car livable again pretty much ate through the upholstery, and the seats practically deteriorated within a few months. Frustrated, and enticed by brochures Uncle Stanley brought home for the Plymouth Turismo, she traded in the very-low-mileage Sapporo in 1983.

After the Sapporo was gone, I never gave it much thought until a few months ago, when, all of a sudden, a couple of Sapporos popped up for sale. Surprisingly for such a forgettable car, they were in pretty good shape. I shared one on a Facebook page to gauge reactions, and I was pleasantly surprised to read the comments, reminiscences, and compliments on the styling and engineering. I wasn't the only one who found them attractive.

The Sapporo was based on the Mitsubishi Galant Lambda and imported from 1978-'82 as the Plymouth Sapporo and Dodge Challenger. In Australia, it was sold as the Chrysler Scorpion.

The Sapporo was marketed as "The new sophisticated car from Plymouth." Under the hood was the OHC 1.6-liter or 2.6-liter "silent shaft" four-cylinder engine, with the new MCA Jet System that created a swirling fuel air mixture to aid combustion. This provided better gas mileage and cleaner emissions, and according to the brochure was a "sophisticated innovation that utilizes a special air valve for each cylinder."

The Sapporo was also very well equipped. Standard features included a full complement of gauges, reclining bucket seats with lumbar support, and an overhead console with a digital clock, swivel map lamp, and warning lights for an open door and low windshield washer fluid.

If you desired, you could order power windows, AM/FM 8-Track stereo, and an automatic transmission. The Sapporo was suspended by coil springs at all four corners of its 99-inch wheelbase and equipped with power front disc brakes. The standard transmission was a five-speed manual.

Color choices were minimal the first year: Medium Gray, Canyon Red, and Ballast Sand. Aunt Pat's was Ballast Sand. The following year, Silver, Light Blue, and Champagne were added. Luxury was accented by a brushed aluminum band that graced the C-pillar. A vinyl half roof was also available.

Sapporos do pop up for sale sometimes, and they also sell very quickly because they are good looking and inexpensive. Imagine pulling up in a Plymouth Sapporo and seeing all the dropped jaws, then hearing all the stories about middle-aged aunts who bought these sexy imports. In addition, there will be plenty of people who never saw one, and there is your conversation starter.

Six-Passenger Starship

Driving a 1961 Ford Galaxie Starliner puts you at an intersection in Ford history

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

driveReport

You sit somewhat low in a 1961 Ford Galaxie Starliner. The seats are a touch shallow and your legs stretch out before you. The driving position seems to suit the car's rakish lines, however, which puts you in the role of potential astronaut rather than mundane commuter. From the broad grille to the ribbed stone guards and the afterburner taillamps, the big Ford seems eager to gobble up miles on the brand-new and growing interstate system of its youth—or potentially to ferry First Class passengers on interstellar vacations.

Ford styling in 1961 said spaceship, but Ford's marketing said sports cars—which is the phrase most used for performance-oriented vehicles before the muscle car era. One brochure illustrated a Starliner parked at the power boat races. The big rooster tails implied speed, and the car's fashionably dressed owners were clearly people who appreciated power and handling. That same brochure says the 300-hp V-8 and Cruise-O-Matic transmission are the "going combination" for Starliner buyers.

The 1961 Ford full-size cars were heavily refined versions of the 1960 models (see page 28), with fresh styling from the beltline down and a smattering of other new features: self-adjusting brakes, sealed lubrication in many of the chassis components, and a 30,000-mile warranty.

The Starliner wasn't just the hardtop body, however. Other features included vinyl and pleated nylon "shimmer" fabric on the seats and doors, reverse lamps, C-pillar star ornaments, color-keyed carpet, an electric clock, and bright trim on the drip rails. The standard engine was the Mileage Maker six-cylinder,

Gear selector offers three positions in the Cruise-O-Matic and allows manual shifting. Drivers in 1961 found the seating position somewhat awkward, but modern drivers feel at home. Broad pedal controls "truck-size" 11-inch power drum brakes.

the basic design of which dated back to 1952, but like other automakers at the time, Ford pushed its V-8s: the standard 292-cu.in. Y-block and the "Special" V-8s from the FE series, the 352-cu.in. and the new 390-cu.in. These FE engines were the latest in a family that dated back to 1958, but with a bigger bore and longer stroke than previous iterations.

The 390 V-8 came from the factory with four-barrel carburetion and in three different power ratings. The basic version produced 300 hp and 427 lb-ft of torque, and Ford recommended pairing this engine with a 2.91 axle ratio. For police duty, Ford produced a 330-hp version of this engine, but did not market it to the public. At the top of the heap was a 375-hp version with solid lifters and other performance attributes that made it good for competition, but less user-friendly on the street. Interestingly, all three 390s produced 427 lb-ft of torque, just at different engine speeds.

In addition to the factory-installed engines, the dealer offered a triple-carburetor intake to boost the 375-hp engine's rating to 401 hp. It's this latter engine most commonly associated with 1961 Fords today. The solid-lifter engines were available only with manual transmissions—standard or overdrive. The 300-hp 390 could be ordered with the well-respected Cruise-O-Matic.

Ford took what proved to be the conventional route with its automatic transmissions in the 1950s, continually upgrading its Fordomatic and eventually introducing the Cruise-O-Matic for applications with more torque, like the 300-hp 390 in our feature car, owned by Lester Edwards of Harmony, North Carolina. The Cruise-O-Matic is a three-speed, torque-convertor transmission that can be shifted manually for maximum acceleration if the driver is so inclined. Simply start the car with the gearshift in the "Lo" position to take advantage of first gear. Floor the accelerator and blast away to 30 mph or more, then shift momentarily into drive and then back to low, which will hold the car in second gear until ready for third—then shift into drive once more.

Of course, for most of us, letting the Cruise-O-Matic shift itself is just fine. The shifts aren't jarring, and the kick-down for passing works quickly. The torque of the 390, which is 38-cu.in. larger than the 300-hp 352 of 1960, hurries it along smartly. It provides its best acceleration between 20 and 60 mph, likely thanks to the fairly shallow gears in the rear axle.

One place where you'll want to slow down, however, is in the curves. While Ford boasted "Wide-Tread Design," apparently with Pontiac in mind, and claimed handling to be "smoothly precise," allowing the Starliner to "cling tenaciously to the road…hold tight in curves…corner flat and true…" and "handle with sports-car ease," that's not quite the story that plays out behind the wheel.

Typically for full-size American cars of this era, the suspension is tuned to impart comfort, not handling. Automotive journalists of the time often lamented that earlier Fords had been sprightly handlers and the new Fords were not—but magazine writers have always been a particular bunch and not necessarily in lockstep with the buying public on such points.

The Galaxie utilizes coil springs up front and leaf springs in the back. The 1961 full-size chassis, while essentially the same as 1960, had some tweaks. One of them is a thinner main leaf in the rear springs, which in theory imparts a softer ride, though it was not considered a noticeable improvement at the time and came at the further expense of handling. Throwing the Ford into a tight maneuver will result in perceptible body lean and squealing tires if still equipped

Spacious Ford interiors of the early '60s can be quite beautiful. Starliner features vinyl upholstery with pleated shimmer nylon inserts. Shimmer comes courtesy of silver Mylar threads.

FE-series V-8s came in two displacements and five horsepower ratings—up to 401 hp with dealer-installed six-barrel carburetion. Feature car's 300-hp 390, paired with the Cruise-O-Matic, was Ford's recommendation in the Starliner for ideal fun-to-civility ratio. Note the air conditioning compressor, and the distinctive Ford expansion tank.

with the original-specification 8.00 x 14 bias-ply tires (non-air conditioned cars received 7.50 x 14 tires). The radials fitted to our feature car improve things in that regard.

One place where the soft suspension works to the Starliner's benefit is in low speed driving over rough surfaces. Pick up speed or hit a really rough stretch of road, though, and things deteriorate again, with the body seeming to roll from side to side of its own accord. Perhaps call it a boulevard ride, because even on smooth roads, as the speed increases, one encounters a certain floating sensation that does not inspire as much confidence as a firmer suspension. Still, the overall road manners are not alarming, and a 1961 Galaxie is quite content at freeway speeds.

Another area where the overly cushy nature of early '60s cars rears its head (and Ford is far from alone in this) is in the steering. The bulk of full-size cars, especially when equipped with big-block V-8s, practically mandated power steering for most owners. The trouble is that it tends to be excessively boosted and somewhat numb—fine for ordinary driving, but less than ideal for spirited jaunts or emergency maneuvering.

The steering situation becomes particularly noticeable on winding roads—what ought to be fun is hampered by a lack of confidence that the car is doing what the driver intends. The handling is actually better than it seems, but too much of the feedback is masked by the power assist. Conversely, when maneuvering at low speeds the boost helps, but the steering ratio could be better. With 4.5 turns lock-to-lock there's lots of spinning the wheel to get things where you want them.

The picture is somewhat rosier when it comes to the brakes. While all drum systems can suffer from fade if overheated, the 11-inch "truck-size" standard brakes on the Galaxie were appropriately scaled to the car. For severe-use situations, Ford offered heavy-duty drums and linings, and, of course, the modern aftermarket offers disc conversions for

Racing cachet and retro futurism: Starliner's slippery fastback roof was missed by stock-car racers when it was discontinued for 1962. Stars on C-pillar were exclusive to this body style.

the supremely cautious. Power assist had long been a part of the option list and many Starliners are so equipped, including our feature car—which also retains its single-reservoir master cylinder. The latter is hardly a worry as long as the brake lines are regularly inspected and kept in good condition.

Driving any car of the early '60s requires regular maintenance, just as when it was new. It will also expose one to the little idiosyncrasies of their operation. Our feature car is fitted with air conditioning hung under the dash, but on milder days, one can fine tune the window openings with the vent windows.

On a Chevrolet, that operation uses a second, smaller hand crank. Ford took the simpler approach with a hook that serves both to secure the window when not in use and as a convenient handle for adjustment.

Stopping for gas is a common occurrence with a 390-cu.in. V-8 (10 to 14 mpg was typical—fine for its era, but somewhat excessive by modern standards) and the Galaxie makes it easy thanks to a centrally mounted fuel filler. Pull up to either side of the pump and you're ready to go—no peering at the fuel gauge to remember where the filler is located.

The only disadvantages to this system are a slight loss of depth in the trunk area and having the fuel tank at the extreme rear of the car, where it is somewhat more vulnerable in a crash. Incidentally, Ford took the time to locate the spare tire well forward in the trunk, placing it out of the way for cargo, luggage, or the chairs and cooler you're taking to cruise night. Altogether, there's nearly 30 cubic feet of trunk space—Ford touted it as "vacation volume."

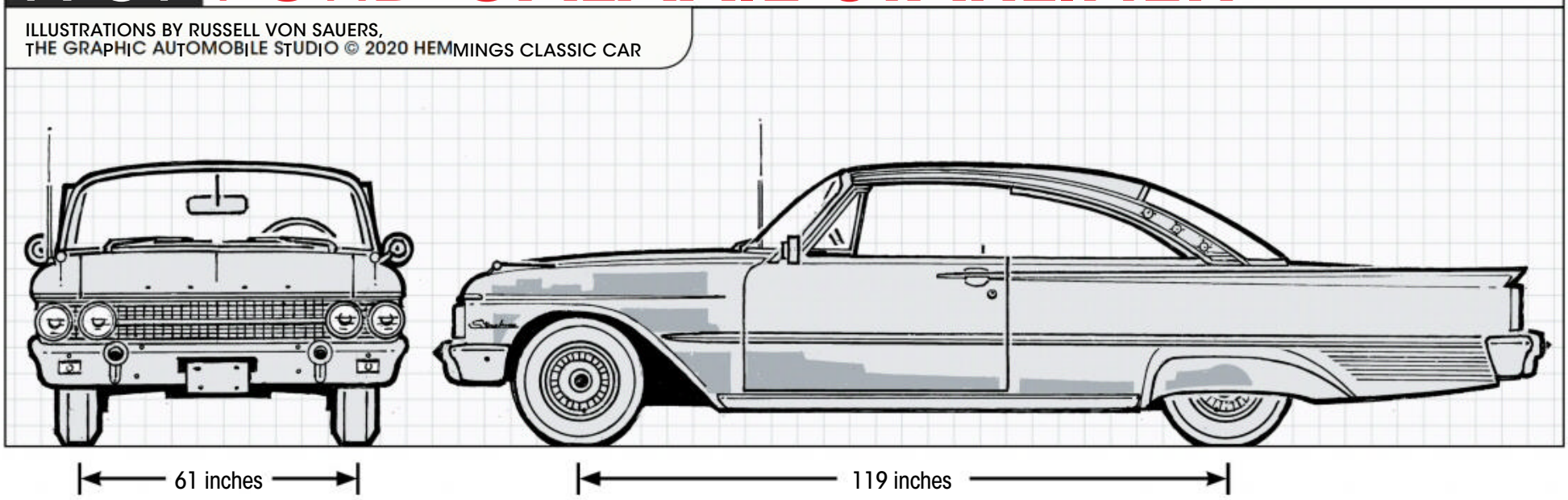
"Road trip, drive to the store, car show, or Sunday drive, a 1961 Starliner is a great window back to Ford in transition… a car that is both wonderful to own and fun to drive."

Another place where there is plenty of room is inside. Although trimmed down from the gargantuan 1960 models, the '61 Fords gave up no interior space. Four people fit comfortably, and there are actually seating positions for six—though you'll be glad for the column shifter if you have a middle passenger up front. It's no flight of fancy to contemplate putting three kids in the back, plus Mom and Dad up front, for a cross-country jaunt.

Road trip, drive to the store, car show, or Sunday drive, a 1961 Starliner is a great window back to Ford in transition. It combines daring styling, proven and rugged mechanicals, and high-quality materials to create a car that is both wonderful to own and fun to drive.

1961 FORD GALAXIE STARLINER

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



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	$2,713
OPTIONS	Thunderbird 390 Special V-8; Cruise-O-Matic transmission; air conditioning; two-tone paint; power brakes; power steering

ENGINE

TYPE	Ford FE OHV V-8; cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	390-cu.in.
BORE X STROKE	4.05 x 3.78 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.6:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	300 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	427 lb-ft @ 2,800
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic
MAIN BEARINGS	Five
FUEL SYSTEM	Autolite 4100 four-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	Ford Cruise-O-Matic automatic transmission	
RATIOS	1st	2.40:1
	2nd	1.47:1
	3rd	1:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Ford 9-inch hypoid, semi-floating type
GEAR RATIO	2.91:1

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball, power assist
RATIO OVERALL	18:1
TURNING CIRCLE	41.2 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic, drums, power assist
FRONT	11 x 2.5-inch
REAR	11 x 2.25-inch

CHASSIS & BODY

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

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Coil springs, shock absorbers
REAR	Solid axle; semi-elliptical leaf springs, tubular shock absorbers

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	Steel with full wheel covers
FRONT/REAR	14 x 5.5 inches
TIRES	Narrow-whitewall radials
FRONT/REAR	225/75R14 (original 8.00 x 14)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	119.0 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	209.9 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	79.9 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	55.0 inches
FRONT TRACK	61.00 inches
REAR TRACK	60.00 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	3,723 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	5 quarts (6 quarts with filter)
COOLING SYSTEM	20.4 quarts
FUEL TANK	20.1 gallons

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.769
WEIGHT PER BHP	12.41 pounds
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	9.55 pounds

PRODUCTION

STARLINER	29,669

PROS & CONS

✚ Highly distinctive style
✚ Plenty of horsepower
✚ Smooth shifting transmission

– Too ’50s for some, too ’60s for others
– Somewhat numb power steering
– Soft suspension compromises handling

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
$10,000 – $15,000

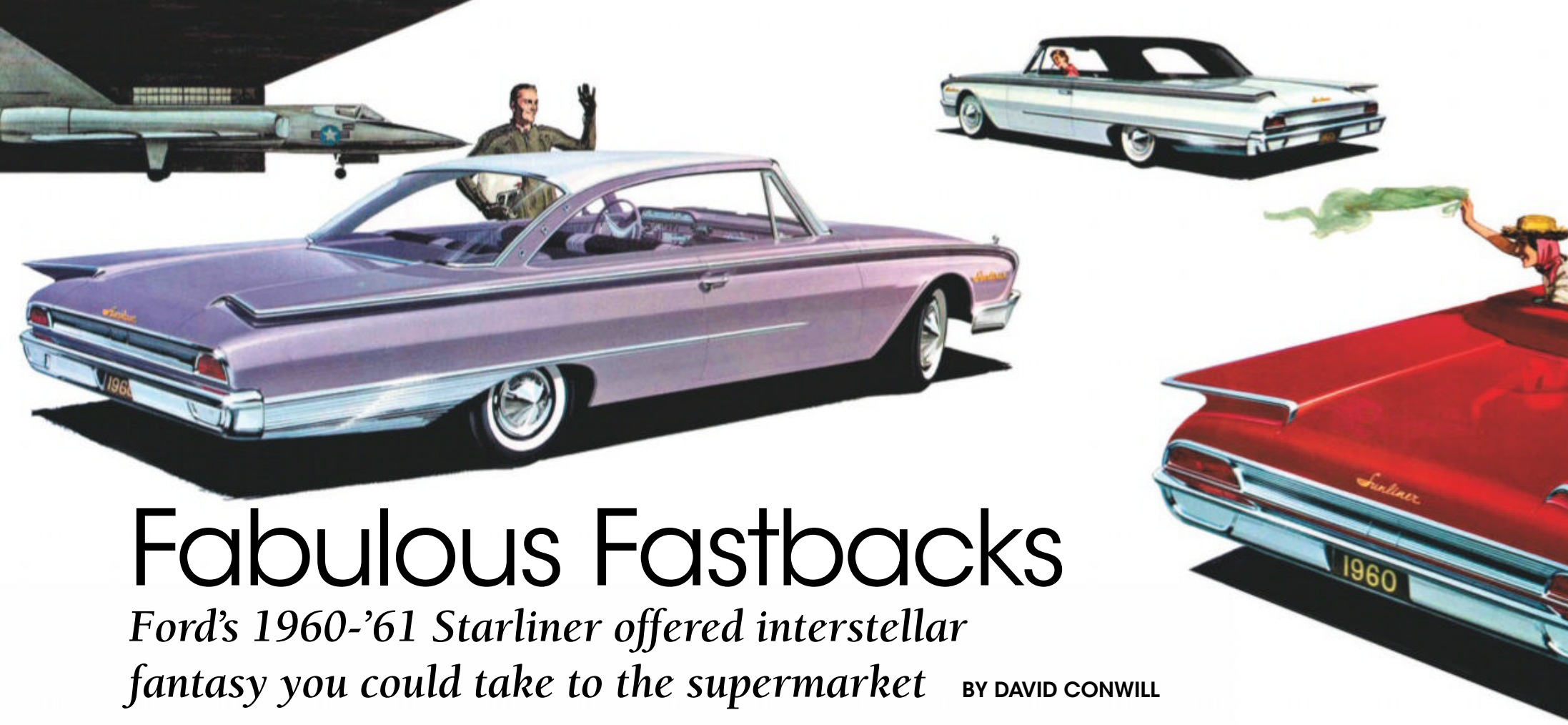
AVERAGE
$25,000 – $40,000

HIGH
$55,000 – $65,000

CLUB CORNER

FORD GALAXIE CLUB OF AMERICA
P.O. Box 429
Valley Springs, AR 72682
870-743-9757
www.galaxieclub.com
Dues: $40/year
Membership: 2,100

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



Fabulous Fastbacks

Ford's 1960-'61 Starliner offered interstellar fantasy you could take to the supermarket

BY DAVID CONWILL

Although only offered for two short model years, the Starliner name captivates car enthusiasts even today. When it was introduced for the 1960 model year, the radical fastback roof was unlike anything Ford had offered since 1948, and it was attached to one of the most flamboyant designs ever to come from Dearborn. When it returned for 1961, it was perhaps the only recognizable feature from the year before, and it has been perennially identified with the resurgence of Ford performance in the early '60s—both in its absence for 1962, and in the way it led to the creation of the memorable 1963½ semi-fastback Sports Hardtop.

While the name Starliner sounds like a passenger ship for the cosmos, it was a natural extension of Ford styling and marketing themes of the era. Automobiles were the technological marvels of the early 20th century, but they had become thoroughly commonplace by the post-World-War-II era. In such a mature market, it was natural to attempt to associate cars with increasingly more glamorous feats of engineering: first piston-engine airplanes (think of the grille of a 1949 or '50 Ford), then jet aircraft (the afterburner taillamps and faux side scoops of 1952), and after the October 1957 launch of Sputnik I, outer space.

Ford really liked that "-liner" tag in the 1950s. First came the Crestliner, which arrived for 1950. The Crestliner utilized Ford's conventional pillared sedan body, but with a padded roof and extra trim to create a halo model to compete with the Chevrolet Bel Air hardtop. Although the Victoria hardtop became available with the 1951 line, the Crestliner continued in production alongside.

For 1952, Crestline (the "r" dropped) became the top Ford trim level and encompassed not only Victoria hardtops but convertibles, which Ford for the first time dubbed Sunliner, a name that would last almost a decade. For 1954, another 'liner joined the Crestline series: a variation on the hardtop with a transparent panel above the front seats, called the Skyliner.

Ford was a company in transition in this era, and the Crestline series was replaced for 1955, with the new Fairlane series (named for Henry Ford's estate in Dearborn, Fair Lane) slotted at the top. The Sunliner was a part of this series, as was the Skyliner, where it formed the basis for the memorable Crown Victoria Skyliner of 1955 and '56.

Ford Motor Company went public in 1956, with the Ford family allowing outside shareholders for the first time since Henry clawed back control from his initial investors in the 1910s. With new voices to be considered, big changes were afoot and among them were much fancier Fords—cars that came at the expense of the traditional badge hierarchy, especially Mercury. One of the first results was the long-wheelbase 1957 Ford Fairlane 500.

The Fairlane 500 series offered considerable luxury for a Ford-branded car and accordingly received both the Sunliner and Skyliner models. The Skyliner badge no longer denoted a transparent roof panel on a hardtop, however. Now, instead, the car's entire steel roof assembly retracted into the trunk area to provide true open-air motoring and completely weather-tight comfort in the same car.

Although it was produced through 1959, the retractable Skyliner was heavy and expensive. It also mandated a roofline that was out of step with styling trends in the late 1950s. Chrysler had introduced its Forward Look line for 1957 with the tagline "Suddenly it's 1960." General Motors responded first, scrapping the last Harley Earl "longer, lower, wider" designs and coming out with the swoopy 1959 body, which included a fastback-style hardtop that was quickly dubbed the "bubble top."

Although the 1959 Ford is now considered a classic and indeed was even selected for a Gold Medal for Exceptional Styling at the World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium, Ford stylists clearly thought something more in the vein of the Forward Look was warranted. After all, Mopar had gotten to 1960 three years early.

When the full-size Ford debuted for 1960 (alongside the new Falcon compact), the derivative styling was obvious. In many ways it resembled a Fordified 1959 Chevrolet. Even the trademark round taillamps had been discarded in favor of a half-moon design, six to a side, which seemed to echo the 1960 Impala. While objectively good looking to many observers, the traditional Ford buyer was repelled, and sales suffered accordingly.

Ford built 464,336 examples of the 1959 Galaxie (the first year for that nameplate, which was created above the Fairlane 500 and used a Thunderbird-style roofline), but the 1960 numbers fell to 289,268, of which 68,641 were the new Starliner hardtop. Ford may have felt the Victoria name, which had previously graced hardtop bodies, warranted replacement given the nature of the new roofline—and the fact that the older body name dated from the carriage era and was first used by Ford on the Model A.

1961

Those who purchased a 1960 Ford got a car that, aside from the driveline, was entirely new. The 1960 Galaxie was longer (213.7 inches on a 119-inch wheelbase), lower, and wider (81.5 inches) than its 1959 counterpart (208 inches long on a 118-inch wheelbase and 76.6 inches wide). The horizontal fins added to the impression of width, and often the breadth is the most memorable feature to those who remember the cars new. The 1960 Ford was also heavy, with a V-8 powered Starliner tipping the scales at 3,667 pounds, versus 3,439 pounds for a 1959 Galaxie Club Victoria.

One place the new Ford body did well was at the racetrack. The extra weight didn't help in the NHRA's fledgling stock classes, but the slippery shape was welcomed by teams at NASCAR's oval tracks. Also welcome was the new 360-hp 352-cu.in. FE-series big-block V-8. The FE had debuted for 1958 under the hoods of Ford and Edsel cars with displacements of 332- and 352-cu.in. (Ford) and 361-cu.in. (Edsel), but because of the 1957 AMA racing ban, its performance potential had never been seriously plumbed. Now that was beginning to change.

More pedestrian Starliners could be had with the sedate and thrifty 145-hp, 223-cu.in. six-cylinder; the base, 185-hp, 292-cu.in. Y-block V-8; or the 352 V-8 with 235 or 300 hp. Transmission choices were all column shifted: a basic Borg-Warner three-speed manual, an overdrive version of the same, or the well-respected Ford three-speed automatic.

For 1961, Ford learned from buyer response and kept what worked (the basic chassis, the driveline, and that sharp Starliner roof), discarded what didn't (the excessive size and GM-like styling), and created a Galaxie that looked entirely new from the beltline down. The full-width grille was totally different, the horizontal fins were replaced by the modest canted type first seen in 1957, and the afterburner taillamps were back. On the posh Galaxie line, ribbed-aluminum stone guards (often termed "washboards" by enthusiasts) showed up behind the rear wheels.

The 1961 Starliner was a more manageable size than its 1960 predecessor. The 119-inch wheelbase remained, but overall length was down to 209.9 inches. The newer car was also lighter, at 3,615 pounds with the base Y-block V-8, now down-rated to 175 hp. The Mileage Maker six was also down in power, to 135 hp. The big news, however, was with the FE-series engines. The 352 was now relegated to two-barrel induction, with 220 hp. The basic block had been bored and stroked to displace 390-cu.in. for the hotter engines. More practical lead foots could order the hydraulic-lifter 300-hp Thunderbird V-8, and those willing to periodically adjust mechanical lifters could have the 375-hp Thunderbird Special. A dealer-installed manifold with triple two-barrel carburetors boosted the rating of the 375-hp engine to 401 hp, and proved a credible threat on both the drag strip and the NASCAR tracks.

Sales rebounded for 1961, with a total of 349,665 Galaxies produced, though only 29,669 of those were Starliners, making them rarer than the 1960 edition. Ford evidently blamed its styling, giving the Galaxie line a slab-sided makeover for 1962, which included eliminating the Starliner hardtop to focus solely on the Thunderbird-type formal roof, which had been reintroduced for 1961. Even the Club Victoria name had been revived.

The losers were those on the NASCAR ovals, where the "box top" roofline proved far less aerodynamic and placed the Ford hardtops at a disadvantage, despite a new 405-hp, 406-cu.in. version of the FE V-8. Ford revived the Starliner roof in an attempt to skirt the rules — instead of being permanently attached to a hardtop car, the roof was called the Starlift and intended as a removable hardtop for Sunliner convertibles. NASCAR disallowed it after just one race, and it appears none were ever sold to the public.

Finally, partway through the 1963 model year, Ford found its solution. The 1963½ Sports Hardtop revived the aerodynamic properties of the Starliner, though not its actual shape or the name. The 1965 Mustang fastback roof was closer and if you look at present-production Mustangs, it's clear that the Ford Starliner, while around only briefly, had a lasting effect on Ford styling.

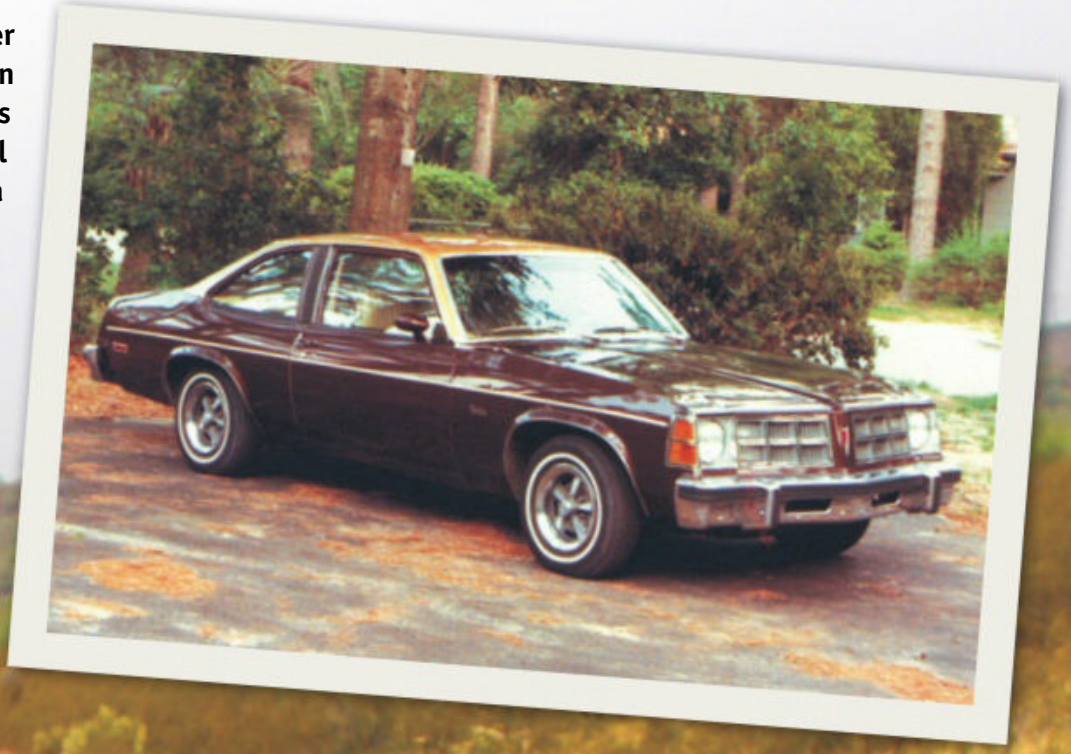
There's more to the Starliner story than just racing glory, however. The styling of the 1960 and '61 Fords, before the Cuban Missile Crisis and President Kennedy's assassination, was the last hurrah of forward-looking '50s optimism in auto design. Those who own them recognize the Starliner as the pinnacle of those trends and cherish them appropriately. Whether you think of them as ground-bound starships or just time machines to the early '60s, there's just something wonderful about a Starliner.

1963

X-body Files

Pontiac's 1977 Ventura offered style and economy for the long haul

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH



Two weeks after the Ventura was purchased in 1977, this photograph was taken. Note the optional two-tone paint featuring a Buckskin Metallic roof and a Brentwood Brown Metallic body. The Rally II wheels and whitewall radial tires also cost extra.

"Because Pontiac decided to build a compact with punch, they went for the knockout," asserted the 1977 dealer brochure description of the Ventura line. For '77, these cars received a modern front-end treatment and interior revisions.

A two-door coupe or hatchback and a four-door sedan in base or upscale SJ trim offered a step up from their slightly lower-priced Chevrolet Nova siblings. Conversely, the Oldsmobile Omegas and Buick Skylarks cost a bit more than the Pontiacs. Though various styling cues, trim, and equipment differed between them to instill brand identity and justify prices, they all shared GM's X-body platform.

Fuel efficiency became a high priority during the energy-crisis-riddled 1970s and automakers responded. Buick's 231-cu.in. V-6 became the Ventura's standard engine for 1977 and had higher EPA fuel mileage ratings than the 250-cu.in. Chevrolet straight-six it replaced. Pontiac's thrifty 88-hp 151-cu.in. Iron Duke four-cylinder engine debuted, as did its 135-hp 301-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 that weighed considerably less than other Pontiac V-8s.

Neither of those two engines was available in California or high-altitude areas, but a 170-hp 350-cu.in. four-barrel Oldsmobile was. Early in the model year, a 145-hp 305-cu.in. two-barrel Chevrolet V-8 arrived, except in California and high-altitude areas for which a 170-hp Chevrolet four-barrel 350 was released.

A three-speed manual transmission was standard with the V-6, except in high-altitude areas. A four-speed could only be paired with the 301, and a five-speed to the Iron Duke, but Turbo Hydra-Matics were available with all engines.

Another sign of the times was using numerically low rear gear ratios for fuel economy. Which of the 2.41, 2.56, 3.08, or 3.23 gearsets went into the Salisbury-type hypoid rear end was determined by powertrain and option choices. A steeper 3.42 gear was available with the four-cylinder engine. Safe-T-Track was optional.

With a bench seat, the Ventura could seat six adults within its 199.6-inch-long and 72.4-inch-wide body that rode on a 111.1-inch wheelbase. Its unitized shell also had a bolt-on front subframe with unequal-length control arm suspension, coil springs, an anti-roll bar, and disc brakes with single-piston calipers and 11-inch vented rotors. Multi-leaf springs controlled the rear axle and 9.5-inch drum brakes were used.

Buick's 8:1 compression ratio, odd-fire V-6 had a 3.80/3.40-inch bore/stroke and produced 105 hp and 185 lb-ft of torque. The block, heads, manifolds, crankshaft, and connecting rods were iron, and the pistons were aluminum alloy. A hydraulic camshaft directed 1.625/1.425 valves via pushrods, 1.55:1 ratio rocker arms, and valve springs. A Rochester two-barrel provided fuel and air, and a High Energy Ignition system the spark. Single exhaust with a catalytic converter and reverse-flow muffler ushered out the spent fumes.

This V-6 powers the Ventura that retired U.S. Air Force Major Richard Edmonds purchased new. Having served his tour of duty in Thailand, he returned to the States in March 1976, and was stationed at Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia. Needing a more reliable car, Sergeant Edmonds traded in his 1968 Le Mans on April 28, 1977, for this new Ventura. "I fell in love with it as soon as I saw it on the lot," he explains. "What mostly drew me to it was its styling and very unusual and pretty two-tone metallic colors, and I could afford it. I remember thinking a V-6 was small, economical, and hopefully easy to work on. I could raise the hood and still see the engine, rocker covers, and spark plugs."

Its base price was $3,596.35, but the Ventura was heavily optioned with two-tone paint, bucket seats, automatic transmission, A/C, tinted glass, console, AM/FM radio, Luxury Cushion steering wheel, Custom seatbelts, cigar lighter, floormats, sport mirrors, bright roof drip molding and wheelwell moldings, door-edge guards, bumper rub strips and front guards, variable-ratio power steering, power assist for the brakes, Rally II wheels, and Radial Tuned Suspension with ER78-14 whitewall tires. The total soared to $5,710.45 (equal to $24,566 in 2020), including a $250 destination charge.

"A deposit and further negotiation left me with just $3,616.03 to finance," Richard explains. "It was still a lot of money for a young A.F. sergeant in 1977. So in August, the Ventura and I headed off to Auburn University in Alabama for a

A Grand Prix-style instrument panel was new for 1977. Factory Rally gauges were added later. Non-stock Velour seat inserts for the Buckskin vinyl interior provide cooler cruising.

The 105-hp 231-cu.in. Buick V-6 has accrued more than 198,000 miles since new. It has received a top-end rebuild and two complete overhauls along with a .060 overbore to clean up the cylinder walls. Today, the highly detailed engine is subjected to less rigorous use.

degree in Electrical Engineering. I took school breaks to Daytona Beach, Florida, and traveled to Fort Eustis in Virginia, to visit my folks, and, although the Ventura's little V-6 engine was a bit underpowered, it cruised the Interstates well."

While at EXPO 86 in Vancouver, Canada, the Pontiac was vandalized, resulting in a broken driver's-door window and cracked windshield. After replacing the glass in Seattle, Richard drove to the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio, where he'd been accepted to graduate school to study Space Operations.

Regrettably, the engine developed a valvetrain issue nearing Dayton, so Richard decided to buy a 1986 Firebird to get him through school, as he'd done with the Ventura nine years prior. He delivered the ailing Ventura to his parents who had since moved to Austin, Texas. Richard had the top-end of the

V-6 rebuilt and offered the Pontiac to his mom. In 1989, now married to Suzanne and living in Los Angeles, he retrieved his Ventura from his parents and had it repainted. The interior was refurbished with a new headliner, carpeting, and seat upholstery, and upgraded with Rally gauges in 1992.

Years after having retired from the Air Force in May of 1996, Richard sold his Ventura because by then it needed quite a bit of work. The Pontiac went to its new home in April of 2004 on the promise of Richard having first right of refusal should the buyer decide to sell it later. In 2014, with urging from his son Matthew, Richard contacted the owner and ended up buying his old Pontiac back for $2,500 in an unfinished state (we will detail the Ventura's restoration in the next issue).

Now living in northern Arizona, to improve performance at the higher Flagstaff altitude, Richard had the catalytic converter removed and 3.08 rear gears replaced the 2.56s, which he says made a big difference in his 198,000-mile Pontiac's demeanor.

He recalls, "I made many memories in this car, covering 38 states, Canada, Mexico, and 19 of my 23 years in the military. I kept it all those years out of loyalty for how well it had served me. Today, people ask why I restored it to stock and didn't hot rod it instead, and I answer, 'Why not stock?'"

Like many American cars of the mid-1970s that are appreciated by some loyal enthusiasts, but haven't attained mainstream collector appeal, the Ventura is not highly valued today. Perhaps the realities of the era — relatively low power output, big bumpers, and abundant emissions controls — or possibly other factors contributed.

This Pontiac's shared origins with the Nova can also be a double-edge sword. While Ventura, Omega, and Skylark owners cringe every time their car is mistakenly referred to as a Nova, the benefit of that kinship is the variety of restoration parts for the Chevrolet that can be used on other X-bodies, aside from marque-specific items.

"I made many memories in this car…I kept it all those years out of loyalty for how well it had served me."

If signature Pontiac mid-1970s styling on a relatively fuel-efficient package with a low buy-in price seems enticing, and high power isn't vital, a 1977 Ventura can serve valiantly as a weekend cruiser. There were 26,675 two-door coupes, 4,015 hatchbacks, and 27,089 four-door models built that year. Additionally, SJ production included 3,418 two-door coupes, 1,100 hatchbacks, and 4,339 four-door cars. Later in the model year, the more luxurious and higher-priced Phoenix was introduced on the same X-platform. The Ventura didn't return for 1978.

Keep in mind that most Ventura's weren't cherished as much as more collectible cars usually were, so the search for a clean example may present more of a challenge. Nevertheless, you likely won't see another at the car shows and cruises you attend with yours.

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

IN *HCC* #187 THE LITWIN-LENTINELLO duo did the 1961 Ford Country Squire proud! As usual, engaging text and fabulous photos. Thank you. Our family had a 1962 Country Sedan and even with its massive chrome luggage rack and tasteful chrome trim I couldn't keep an envious eye from those wood-sided Squires. The featured Squire is a rare beauty, with its options adding a fascination for "loaded" wagon fans.

I've always wondered, however, why Ford didn't plunk a colorful Ford crest in the center of the steering wheel instead of that boring chrome button, or at least somewhere else on the dash for a splash of color. A boyhood friend's family bought a new 1961 Galaxie; we waited for his father to drive it home after work. I'll never forget eyeing that beautiful turquoise sedan pull into the driveway, admiring its lines, chrome and interior. Then came the "what's that?" reaction looking at the "button" in the center of the steering wheel when I expected to be drawn in by something beautiful in living color, (a '60s phrase to be sure!).

Perhaps the coffee was weak in the designers offices. Still love those Squires!
Doug Johnson
Dassel, Minnesota

I AGREE WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT OF the Corvair line, though there are so many more Corvair models, body styles, and types that you didn't mention that are equally as pleasurable to own and drive. I don't think there is any other car line made after WWII that had more variety. Virtually some form of the car could suit any and all tastes. My favorite is the late-model four-door hardtop, preferably the '67 model year (which has so many one-year-only features).

Chevrolet made so many good cars throughout its history, and yet, as you point out, too many of them are not seen very often these days. Certainly anyone who has any of these lesser known cars is probably the talk of any cruise-in that they would attend. How much more fun can one have?
Mark Corbin
Galion, Ohio

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ABOUT THE Pierce-Arrow in *HCC* #189; it was very informative but left out one detail. Albert Erskine gave out over $12 million worth of dividends on Studebaker stock from 1930 to 1932, in the depths of the depression. He had no business declaring dividends. He had already invested in the Erskine and Rockne brands, Studebaker's new economy brands. If he had saved some money for a common eight-cylinder engine block that could be shared with the Studebaker President and an upper-medium-priced Pierce-Arrow, designed by Pierce, they could have had a more profitable line up for when the Depression started letting up. It also could have gone down the same assembly lines as the four- and six-cylinder engines.

A medium-priced car styled like the Silver Arrow and brought out around 1935 would have been a hit, while the regular Pierce-Arrow luxury line could have been sold as a rolling chassis, like Duesenberg. Pierce-Arrow could have made Studebaker a more viable company going into the late '30s and WWII. With the profits of the war years, who knows how long the pair could have lasted.
Charles Winingham
Alton, Illinois

HCC #189 SHOWS A SAD VERTICAL paint smear on the side of that otherwise beautiful 1941 Chevrolet Business Coupe. This is visual proof of the destruction wrought by E10 gasoline. What's not shown are the plastic, rubber, and metal parts that failed throughout the car's fuel system, and had to be replaced because they too were eaten up by this fuel. And now the EPA wants to make E15 gasoline standard! And all for political votes from corn states; what a shame.
Bill Angerer
Foresthill, California

ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ON THE VELIE in *HCC* #188. My mother once told me her dad drove a Velie (photo below) in the 1920s. With that in mind, when cleaning out my parents' home after they had passed away, I searched and found a box of old photos; I eventually found a photo of the Velie. Looks to me that it's likely a 1925 model as the radiator looks just like the one on page 75.
Bill Juffernbruch
Rockford, Illinois

REGARDING THE LETTER FROM JACK Groat in Recaps in *HCC* #186 about Ford Pintos, it sounds like many people had problems with their cars. I bought a new 1971 yellow Pinto coupe and put over 100,000 miles on it; only tires and brakes were replaced. I loved it so much that I traded it in for a 1974 red Pinto station wagon and put over 100,000 miles on it and, yes, tires and brakes were replaced. I loved that car so much that I traded in for a 1977, again, red Pinto wagon and put over 100,000 miles on that one as well. So, all these miles and I had only expected maintenance to deal with. I may be the only owner who had this great luck, but I doubt it.
Rick Martell
Brewerton, New York

IN RESPONSE TO MARK McCOURT'S Drivable Dream article in *HCC* #189, he contends that MGB/GTs were no longer imported to the U.S. after the end of the 1974 model year because of issues with weight and subsequent inability to meet emission standards for 1975. My friend's father was a U.S. dealer field rep for British Leyland at the time, and according to him, BL did originally intend to keep marketing GTs in the U.S. for the 1975 model year and beyond, which is why it went ahead with the rubber bumper

Continued on page 38

Continued from page 36

"conversion" on both the MGB and the B/GTs in late 1974, to meet U.S. market bumper standards. But the real reason BL ultimately changed its mind, was a marketing decision, not U.S. emission requirements.

British Leyland gradually "rationalized" its U.S. dealer network after the creation of BL in 1968. The old BMC franchises sold MGs and the old Leyland franchises sold Triumphs. However, by 1974, most BL dealers in the U.S. were selling both MG and Triumph. The decision to discontinue importing MGB/GTs was because, in early 1975, the new Triumph TR7, created by BL specifically for the U.S. market, was about to be introduced, initially in coupe form only. BL's rationalization was that it didn't want the MGB/GT possibly "cannibalizing" sales from the new TR7 coupe across the showroom. However, since it had already made the investment in a rubber bumper conversion for the MGB/GT as well, it continued to sell them this way in the U.K., since GTs were more popular in Britain and bumpers weren't an issue, one way or the other, in their home market, at that time.
Larry McSorley
Covington, Georgia

I VERY MUCH ENJOYED READING
Jim Donnelly's condensed but comprehensive history of Marc Birkigt in *HCC* #189. A further aspect of Birkigt's Hispano-Suiza automobile legacy, which may well be particularly interesting to readers of this magazine, actually links in to the early productions of W.O. Bentley: It concerns the great similarity of layout and architecture between the engine of the 1914 3-litre model of the King Alfonso, known as the "De Luxe," and that of the 3-litre Bentley that first saw the light of day in 1919.

All the many mechanical similarities were elucidated, in his precise and unanswerable way, back in 1964 by Alec Ullman, well known as an old-car connoisseur of the highest discrimination, in a contribution to an early bulletin of the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. His more-or-less accusing Bentley of engineering plagiarism did not go down at all well with contemporary correspondents in the U.K. motor press. But the facts (and the blueprints) remain for everyone still to see, half a century later, and effectively widen the gyre of Birkigt's great intellect to include cars much less rare than the Hispano-Suizas alone, even though that may not have been his original intention!
Mark Brittle
Carlisle, Massachusetts

DO ANY HEMMINGS READERS
remember the Tucker that sat next to a gas station on 31st and 4th Ave in Minneapolis for a long time during the 1950s? I have often wondered what happened to it.
Ron Roelke
Burnsville, Minnesota

I ENJOY REARVIEW MIRROR BUT
a detail of the 1940 year in *HCC* #189 caught my eye. Although a very small part of the market, I found it odd that Cadillac's range would extend to $7,175 but that Packard wouldn't compete with them above $2,154. In fact, the Packard 180 offered choices up to about $6,400 for some factory customs from Darrin and Rollston.
Bryan Kazmer
Grand Rapids, Michigan

RICHARD'S COLUMN IN *HCC* #189,
"The Other Chevys," brought to mind a question I've had for some time. In 1964, I purchased a 1960 Bel Air two-door hardtop with a 283-cu.in. engine with a three-speed on the column. I regret selling this car in 1967, but a growing family dictated something more practical like a station wagon. My question is, are any still around? I've looked in *Hemmings* and online, and haven't seen one. I've found 1960 Bel Air two-door sedans but no hardtops! In my biased opinion, this was a better looking hardtop than the Impala, as it had less chrome, thus a "cleaner" look.

How many Bel Air hardtops were built? Were any other Bel Air hardtops built in other model years after the Impalas were introduced? I'm curious to know if I sold a 1 of 1 or even 1 of 1,000?
Mike Porter
Urbandale, Iowa

I ENJOYED THE STORY ABOUT
Chevrolet convertibles; they're my favorite style. Growing up in the small village of Rockwood, Maine, in the '40s and '50s, the chance of seeing any convertible was just about zero. But thanks to

advertisements I could see them all. Then I turned to page 56 and there was my first car. A 1952 Chevy convertible; mine was green. It brought back a lot of memories, good times and lots of miles during the short year and a half I owned it. In the first days of 1956, I figured that the draft was going to come calling so I enlisted in the Air Force, and my parents sold my car—I never saw it again. But, the car in the photo has Maine plates on it. I wonder…!
George Fogg
Greenville, Maine

I REALLY ENJOYED *HCC* #189, AS I love 1940s-era Chevrolets. I noticed that the owner of that sharp 1941 Business Coupe on page 48 is not happy about the riding comfort though. He might want to make sure that the springs are actually the correct ones for a Business Coupe, as the original purchaser may have specified convertible or station wagon springs, so that this coupe could better handle his packages, as these are notably smooth-riding cars.
Mike Benardo
Vallejo, California

WHILE STATIONED IN SPAIN DURING Franco's dictatorship in the mid-1960s while in the U.S. Air Force, we saw a car-deprived country with mostly small Seats (Spanish-built Fiats). Our radar site had officers and NCOs with a smattering of American cars that stood out like sore thumbs on Spain's narrow roads. One staff sergeant owned a red-and-white 1959 Impala hardtop that, when parked anywhere, drew a huge crowd as if it was a flying saucer just landed from Mars, which was indeed the sentiment from some of the local gentry. I have always loved the 1959 Chevrolets, and my biggest wish is that I would like to have had that car at that place during that time.
Phil van Leeuwen
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

I ENJOYED THE SPECIAL SECTION on the postwar Chevrolet convertibles, but I was taken aback with the comments about the full-size 1965-'66 models. The writer talked about the plunge in sales from the previous year; I think that rather it was the start of a steady decline. Jerry Heasley's book on production figures

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The Kaiser Bergantin

There used to be a saying back when I was a kid: "Old American cars never die – they go to South America." There was a lot of truth in that; in the 1970s there were several 1960s-vintage American cars still being built in South America from old tooling. Chevrolet produced the circa-1966 Nova in Argentina into the mid-1970s. In Brazil, Ford produced the 1966-style Galaxie, also into the mid-1970s.

And of course, there was Kaiser-Frazer and Willys Motors. After those two U.S. firms merged in 1953, Kaiser's rapidly dwindling car production was moved to Willys' Toledo plant. Kaiser sold its Willow Run plant to General Motors that December.

By 1955, the Kaiser passenger car was dead in this country, but Henry Kaiser managed to work a deal to produce Kaiser sedans in Argentina. Industrias Kaiser Argentina was the joint venture company formed to produce the so-called Kaiser Carabela for the Argentinean market. The Carabela was nearly identical to the U.S. model Kaiser Manhattan, because it was built from the old tooling. Before shipping the machine tools to Argentina, the Toledo plant built 1,021 Kaiser sedans, mostly to use up existing parts stocks, but also to give the new company something to sell while it set up an assembly line in Argentina.

The Argentine company did pretty well with the Carabela, which proved surprisingly popular. Jeep pickups and station wagons were also produced in the plant and sales of those were excellent. But the company realized it needed to also offer lower-priced models if it hoped to utilize the plant's full capacity. Kaiser had already transferred the tooling for the Willys Aero compact car to a joint venture firm in Brazil, so IKA was forced to look elsewhere for a smaller, cheaper line of cars to produce.

It actually found several. Renault was interested in the Argentinean market and bought into IKA in 1959. Before long, the Renault Dauphine was in production. But IKA wanted something sized in between the little Dauphine and the big Carabela, so it approached Alfa Romeo about buying the tooling for its 1951-'58 1900 sedan. A deal was struck, and in 1960 the car went into production as the Kaiser Bergantin (Brigantine). It was an interesting mix: an Alfa Romeo 1900 body with some styling updates, powered by a locally built Willys four-cylinder engine. The following year, the Kaiser-Willys (ex-Continental) six-cylinder 115-hp engine was also available, though sources claim less than 400 were built.

The Kaiser Bergantin was quite a good-looking car, as sedans go. Riding upon a 103.5-inch wheelbase, it was also a perfect size, being right between the Carabela's longer 118.5-inch wheelbase and the Dauphine's shorter 89.3-inch wheelbase. Style-wise, it resembled a Brooks Stevens-designed small-car concept that Kaiser had considered back in 1947. To update the looks, the Alfa's vertical shield-style grille was replaced by a horizontal grille that ran full width between the front fenders, with a smaller air inlet resting above it to cover up the space where the top of the Alfa grille had terminated. IKA designers added full wheel disc and whitewall tire options to give the Bergantin more of an "American" look – which the Argentines preferred – along with a two-tone paint option to add some pizzazz.

Unfortunately, Bergantin production lasted only until February of 1962. Sources claim the company ran into production problems because the Alfa Romeo body dies were pretty worn out by the time IKA acquired them. The plant struggled to build a quality product with substandard tooling until it finally had to give up. That same year, production of the Carabela also ended.

The Bergantins and the Carabelas were thus the final Kaiser cars produced. Seeking replacements for them, IKA decided to assemble Ramblers under license. American Motors was in an expansion mode overseas and looking for licensees to produce its cars, so the agreement suited both parties quite well. At least for a time. Kaiser apparently grew tired of the car business, because in 1967 the company sold its interests in both IKA and Willys-Overland Brazil, the two largest car companies in South America. The former was sold to Renault, the latter to Ford Motor Company.

"American Motors was in an expansion mode overseas and looking for licensees to produce its cars, so the agreement suited both parties quite well."

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states that 72,000 convertibles were built in the model year. I have read elsewhere that 27,000 of them were SS models, so it's as if the author inadvertently transposed the figures. The author further states that no figures were available for the full-size model for 1966; none of the books in my library have that either. But the almost 30,000 soft-tops produced in the Impala ranges for 1967 continued the decline I'm sure.

American readers might not know that there was a third Chevelle convertible on offer during the years 1965 through 1967, in the 300 line. I don't think that production amounted to more than hundreds each year for the Canadian market. A comparable Beaumont model was available from Pontiac dealers in the same years.

Wayne Janzen
New Westminster, BC, Canada

HOW ABOUT THOSE 1959 "BIG" BAT

Wing Chevys and their "little" Bat Wing brothers of 1960? My father had a 1959 Bel Air, turquoise, inline-six, three-speed on the column, four doors. Crank-out butterfly windows, factory installed turquoise seat belts bolted to the rear floor, little hubcaps, and those huge (cat's eye) taillamps, that told you in no uncertain terms that this car was stopping. When you lifted the hood. you could see the pavement below, and if you dropped a tool or nut, you could see where it landed. If you were skinny enough, you could almost stand between the engine and wheelwell. And those bat wings concealed a trunk that was so big it made you want to buy more luggage just to fill it up, or put two set of snow tires, plus the spare in it.

I remember every time I got in the front or back seat, I would step over that chrome sill plate with the logo of a coach and the lettering — BODY BY FISHER. The only drawback was the amount of Simoniz it took to wax it, and how sore my wrist was from applying that wax, then I had to buff it out.

One of my teachers had a 1959 Impala, a four-door model. It always amazed me how the designers had developed that flat roof design that looked as if it was floating on the front and back glass. The windshield wrapped around to meet the butterfly windows, while the rear window glass was curved at both ends to allow it to wrap around to the rear door windows. This design allowed you to be in a true greenhouse and look anywhere from inside to the outside — incredible engineering and vision.

Ron Brown
Dumfries, Virginia

THE ALFA ARTICLE IN *HCC* #187

brought back a lot of memories. In 1962, I was chief engineer on a diesel DE in Key West, Florida. Military personnel could order cars for factory delivery and they would be shipped to your duty station.. A friend's brother had an older Giulietta and I always thought it was a great-looking car, so I sold my Volvo 544 and put in my order. By the time the paperwork reached the factory, there had been a model change and I got one of the first Guilia Spiders, but it still had Giulietta instruments. The 1600 engine was quite an improvement and I was glad for the change, especially since I paid the old price.

Alfa took a lot of care in making the drivetrain, but not so much with the rest of the car. Little details, like the eyebrows on the grille falling off regularly, got overlooked. In Key West, the car was great, and the top was seldom up. When I got back to Wisconsin, things were not as good. I had to run 40-weight oil in order to have any oil pressure, and in the winter that made it tough to start. The heater

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The Future of the Concours d'Elegance

Not too many years ago, when the term "concours d'elegance" was mentioned among vintage car enthusiasts, it conjured up the image of a very special automotive event. Recently – or at least until March 2020 – there seemed to be a concours d'elegance every weekend, thus the name had lost much of its glorious luster.

When I was serving as director of a concours, I was contacted by a woman whose boss had directed her to look into starting a concours in their hometown. After determining that no one in their group was a car person, or had any connection to the car community, I suggested she instead look into a golf tournament. She then asked if I had a manual I could send her. True story.

Not surprisingly, the term "concours d'elegance" is French, and translates to "competition of elegance." According to most sources, the first such events were held in France when carriages were still in use, and shifted to automobiles in the early 20th century. Those original concours d'elegance celebrated not only automobiles, but women's fashions and food. Prizes were awarded in all categories, and the celebrations extended over several days. Today, some critics of concours dismiss them as "beauty contests." Actually, that is correct because the original events were contests of beauty. Judging was entirely subjective, hence the term "French judging," which is still considered by many to be true concours judging.

National automobile clubs, such as the Antique Automobile Club of America and the Classic Car Club of America, as well as marque specific clubs, generally employ point judging, since their goal is accuracy of restoration. Interestingly, the CCCA has held what it calls Grand Classics almost since its beginning, and these events are, in truth, mini concours d'elegance. (In the spirit of full disclosure, I must state that I serve as chief judge of the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, which uses French judging. We select the most qualified judges for each class and the results reflect that.)

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, dozens of automobile events have been cancelled or postponed, including a number of concours. As I write this, I'm not optimistic that any vintage car events will be held this summer or fall. Since the collector-car hobby demographics lean heavily toward an older population, it's unlikely these individuals will venture anywhere unless a vaccine becomes available. No one I know is willing to risk his or her life to attend a car event.

What effect will this have on the concours scene we have come to love and enjoy? I believe we will see, as management experts like to say, a significant paradigm shift. The concours d'elegance of the future will be quite different.

As noted earlier, there are simply too many events calling themselves concours d'elegance. Owners of vintage and classic cars can go to only so many shows. Now, many average car owners have been hurt financially by COVID-19 and will have less discretionary income. Add to that the fact that ours is a hobby heavily comprised of "older folks," who were slowing down before COVID-19 impacted their lifestyle. Individuals who would have driven their cars – or trailered them – are becoming reluctant to get behind the wheel. Finally, there's social distancing and avoiding large crowds, which certainly describes a concours d'elegance – a social experience if ever there was one.

Perhaps what will have the biggest impact on the future of concours events will be sponsor support. As the effects of COVID-19 continue into the summer, it's increasingly obvious that life at the automobile companies may never be the same, certainly for the short term. Sponsorship dollars from the automobile companies–and related businesses–are the lifeblood of nearly all concours d'elegance.

An unofficial general rule of thumb was that sponsorships helped cover an event's production costs and the net gate receipts went to the event's charities. Sponsorships at concours d'elegance have been in decline for several years, and COVID-19 has turned off the spigot of many companies. A strong gate has become increasingly critical for many of these events, so raising ticket prices may be necessary, but there could be a backlash.

The sad reality is that some of these concours d'elegance are going to disappear, perhaps not forever, but until the economy is strong enough to support these events in the manner necessary for them to be called true concours d'elegance. I hope I'm wrong.

"I believe we will see, as management experts like to say, a significant paradigm shift."

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looked like an afterthought that might have come from a 1933 Ford, in order to use the defroster I first had to close the heater flaps. I drove about 20 miles to work and it was just about warmed up when I got there. Still, it was one of the most fun to drive cars I've owned and I'm almost 100.

Gerald Wille
Oak Creek, Wisconsin

I REALLY ENJOYED MILTON STERN'S article about the Renault R16 in *HCC* #187. I took delivery of my R16 two days before our wedding on July 3, 1971. We then took a six-week vacation and drove from Chicago to Oaxaca, Mexico (4,800 miles round trip). We drove through deserts and mountains, on paved roads and dirt roads, and through Mexico City. We returned via the Pacific Coast—Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta, San Blas, entering the U.S. via Arizona and finally to Chicago.

The R16 was reliable and very comfortable with the dealer-installed air conditioning. The seats were soft but supportive, and the cargo space and versatility was great—years ahead of the competition at the time. The four-speed manual transmission on the column was a real conversation starter for parking lot attendants.

My first new car was a 1969 Renault 10 that was very reliable and much better value than the VW of the day, so when I needed more room I immediately thought of a another Renault. Dealer support was okay in 1969, but had deteriorated to close to zero by the time I traded it in in 1974.

James Lukas
Santa Rosa, California

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE "Horse Trading" column by Bob Palma in

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When Detroit Built Some Real Gems!

> "The S-10 had become a real gem, from the yellow-hued citrus family of fruit."

Anyone who survived Detroit's less-than-glamourous era of automobile production, which commenced during the tail end of Nixon's administration and ran through the end of Reagan's, can attest with at least a hint of disdain that our mechanical prowess was thoroughly emasculated. But rather than sing along to that oft-told tune, let's glue a penny to the needle, hop over that skip in the vinyl, and listen to the whole side. After all, Detroit really did offer some gems in this period. I can think of one with ease: Chevrolet's S-10 Blazer, equipped with the High Country trim package.

The calendar had just flipped to 1988, and the life that was left in our family's sedan was being saved for a new career on the road, under the guidance of yours truly. At the time, it still seemed to me as though such new car decisions were made on a whim. I soon learned that was most certainly not the case: The Blazer came about from the need for a winter commuter with space for four adult-like humans and enough cargo room for – among other things – ski excursions to New Hampshire and Vermont.

The High Country package was visually glorious in ads and dealer literature, with its standard gold wheels that complemented special mountain graphics and very "Bandit" Trans-Am-like black-and-gold paint, with a masterfully laid blend zone between the two hues along the beltline (which we later discovered was really a clever decal). Dad never even looked at one. He simply walked into the dealership and bought it, strictly on appearance alone. It was to be the one and only time he did that to this day, yet even then, he made sure his High Country was fully loaded: leather seating, premium sound system, four-wheel drive, cruise control, and more. He wanted an automatic for easy winter driving. To increase cargo capacity, the spare was mounted out back, on a hinged bracket. There was just one, tiny catch: It was going to come with the 2.8-liter V-6, and not the more vibrant 4.3-liter six-cylinder. We were going skiing. The trip was booked. So, the Blazer was ordered, and we took delivery in February.

That 2.8-liter engine, and the S-10 Blazer as a whole, turned into a thoroughly attractive nightmare within a year of taking delivery. It started when the windshield cracked. Between two more replacement panes of laminated glass, the temperature gauge needle tickled the top end of the red zone, prompting the immediate replacement of the radiator. Accepting the fact that a radiator might blow and a windshield could crack is one thing, but three windshields indicated unusual frame stress or body flex. Still, the alarm bells really didn't sound until the air conditioning's compressor failed.

It wasn't terribly long before everyone noticed that the engine was ingesting coolant at a steady rate. Eventually, the dealership had to remove the cylinder head, anticipating a compromised gasket. That wasn't the problem, nor would it be the only time the temperamental 2.8 V-6 beckoned a mechanic's skillful touch.

If it wasn't the 2.8, then it was the abundance of plastic bits used throughout the cabin. The first hint of impending perpetual dissatisfaction was when the plastic center console hinge snapped and was replaced by another bit of plastic that lasted mere weeks by comparison. The hinge was never replaced again. Radio and climate control knobs succumbed to the forces of gravity with regularity, until they were forever lost in the dark footwell recess. The S-10 had become a real gem, from the yellow-hued citrus family of fruit.

Fortunately, most of the problems occurred while the Chevy was under warranty, but after four or five years of shop work and just over 100,000 miles of travel, it came to a head. The cylinder head, to be precise, when the top end of the trouble-prone 2.8 was rebuilt yet again – a job that hit the wallet for $1,400. Making it worse was that the mechanic never discovered what the underlying problem was to begin with. When retrieved, his parting comment was, "Get rid of it." So, we did. A side-of-the-road cash deal was followed by a simple prayer, asking that it would be far enough away from the house when the 2.8 inevitably imploded.

Despite the surfeit of dealership visits the Blazer mandated, it had a visual appeal that was unlike any other SUV on the market at the time. Its four-wheel-drive agility was second-to-none, capable of pulling the compact truck through feet of snow during New England's raging blizzards. Room was plentiful during both winter and the few summer excursions it was commanded to manage. The memories it spawned have since become legend, from an era when Detroit made some real gems.

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HCC #189. For some reason it reminded me of a time when my dad and I went to pick up a used Pontiac at a Pontiac dealership in North Bergen, New Jersey; my father would buy used Pontiacs every so often. In 1961, we had a 1954 Chieftain that had seen better days, so he bought a used 1957 Star Chief, white with blue tinted windows and factory air-conditioning. I was thrilled to say the least. Not many cars had A/C and in New Jersey in August, how "cool" would that be (pun intended). The only problem was my dad insisted on new tires if he bought a used car, which he always got. I was there when the salesman, to make that sale, said yes, of course.

Well, my dad goes to the dealership about two hours early to check on that before he was to pick it up. Sure enough, on go the re-treads. You never hear about that today, probably due to steel belted radials or that it is illegal for re-treaded tires. My dad goes nuts insisting on new tires, but the salesman threatened him with arrest unless he gets out of the service bay. Unfortunately, no white '57 Pontiac with A/C for my family (deposit refunded). Instead he bought a 1957 Star Chief two-door with no A/C from a private party—I hated that green color.

Steve Silverman
San Diego, California

IN REGARD TO THE WONDERFUL article "Power For Peacetime" covering the restoration of the 1967 Dodge Power Wagon in *HCC* #189, the one negative the author mentions in the article is the statement made once the restored vehicle had been driven. "What strikes you most is Power Wagon's lack of power." And, "Deep gears give the flathead some leverage, but it could definitely use more juice to overcome the truck's mass and moving parts".

This is a very bizarre statement, considering the fact that earlier in the article it was mentioned that "George added…4.89 axle cogs in place of the original 5.83s." One thing Dodge Power Wagons are known for is having LOTS of power…lots and lots of power—not top-end speed. Changing the axle gearing from 5.83/1 to 4.89/1 is a 16-percent change in "power"—not a small amount.

If the builder wants "better highway driving" by changing the gearing to accomplish that, he should not be complaining about a "definite lack of power" on a machine that originally had much more "power," prior to changing the axle gearing to higher "road gears."

D. Arthur Martin
Saint Marys, Pennsylvania

I AM A FAN OF THE INDEPENDENT makes and always enjoy Pat Foster's articles. His recent column on the Dixie Flyer in *HCC* #189 was another great one and very informative. I did not know that Kentucky Wagon had taken over the horse drawn wagon inventory of International Harvester in 1936, but there is another connection to the auto business and Kentucky Wagon Mfg. Co.

In 1920, Kentucky Wagon purchased the remaining horse drawn wagon business from Studebaker and even continued to build a model of farm wagon called "the Studebaker." Obviously, Kentucky Wagon realized there was still a big rural market for horse-drawn wagons and was willing to invest in it.

As an aside, my father was in the feed and grain business in this small Kansas town in the early 1960s. He had one last customer who still came to town every Saturday in his wagon pulled by a pair of mules. I always marveled how he could get that team to back the wagon up to a loading dock.

Mike Emery
Tonganoxie, Kansas

I WAS GLAD TO SEE THAT I WAS NOT alone when I read the Drivable Dream article in *HCC* #189 about David Clark's MGB/GT. I am also afflicted with a love for British cars, so imagine my joy when, four years ago, I came upon a rust-free MGB that had been sitting in inside storage for years because of a poorly rebuilt engine. Finally, a British sports car with windows and heat (sort of) that can be used in winter.

After a proper engine rebuild, new brakes and top, replacing those hideous rubber bumpers, and lowering the car to the correct ride height, I started using the MGB as one of my winter drivers. I must admit that I also have a 4x4 pickup that I use when the snow is too deep for the MG. My other Brits don't have heat or windows, so they are relegated to three-season drivers and are stored for the winter months.

My MGB has the added versatility of being able to be driven alfresco on the milder winter days, but the GT does have the added security of a real steel roof and fewer drafts. Thanks again for the article and thanks for letting me know that I'm not the only one driving a British car on winter roads in the Northeast. David, keep the faith and keep on driving your Brit.

Michael Bonanno
Cairo, New York

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

Racing in Riverhead

The Long Island Stock Chassis Derby competition of 1909

BY WALT GOSDEN
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE WALT GOSDEN COLLECTION

In late September 1909, about 80 miles east of New York City, the Long Island Stock Chassis Derby took place. The race was held on September 29, and started and finished just north of Riverhead. This small town is located at the point where eastern Long Island is met by the Great Peconic Bay, and the land divides out to a V shape to form the north and south forks of the island.

The Long Island Derby course was 22.75 miles long, and was a somewhat oval-shaped route with a sharp, V-shaped turn at its most eastern end, in the hamlet of Mattituck. The entire race was run on public roads. Given the year that the race was organized and held, it's a wonder it happened at all at that location. The roads leading to that area of Long Island in 1909 were primarily dirt, with some "paving" in the form of crushed stone, but those paved areas were more frequent at the west end of Long Island, near New York City. That the race cars even made the journey east in any quantity at all was amazing.

The 1906 90-hp Mercedes entered in the race was driven by G.M. Armstrong and owned by candy magnate George Loft, who bought the three-year-old car from his friend William K. Vanderbilt, II. Note the chain drive at the rear wheel.

There were a total of five different classes, with the cost of the car generally determining class placement. In most cases, the higher the price of the car, the more horsepower it had.

The Stock Chassis Derby term referred to the definition given by the American Automobile Association in that era. The AAA ruled that a "stock" car model had to have at least 25 examples previously produced in order to enter. Automobiles specifically designed and built for racing did not qualify, though alterations such as the removal of lamps, fenders, running boards, and most of the body were allowed for competition.

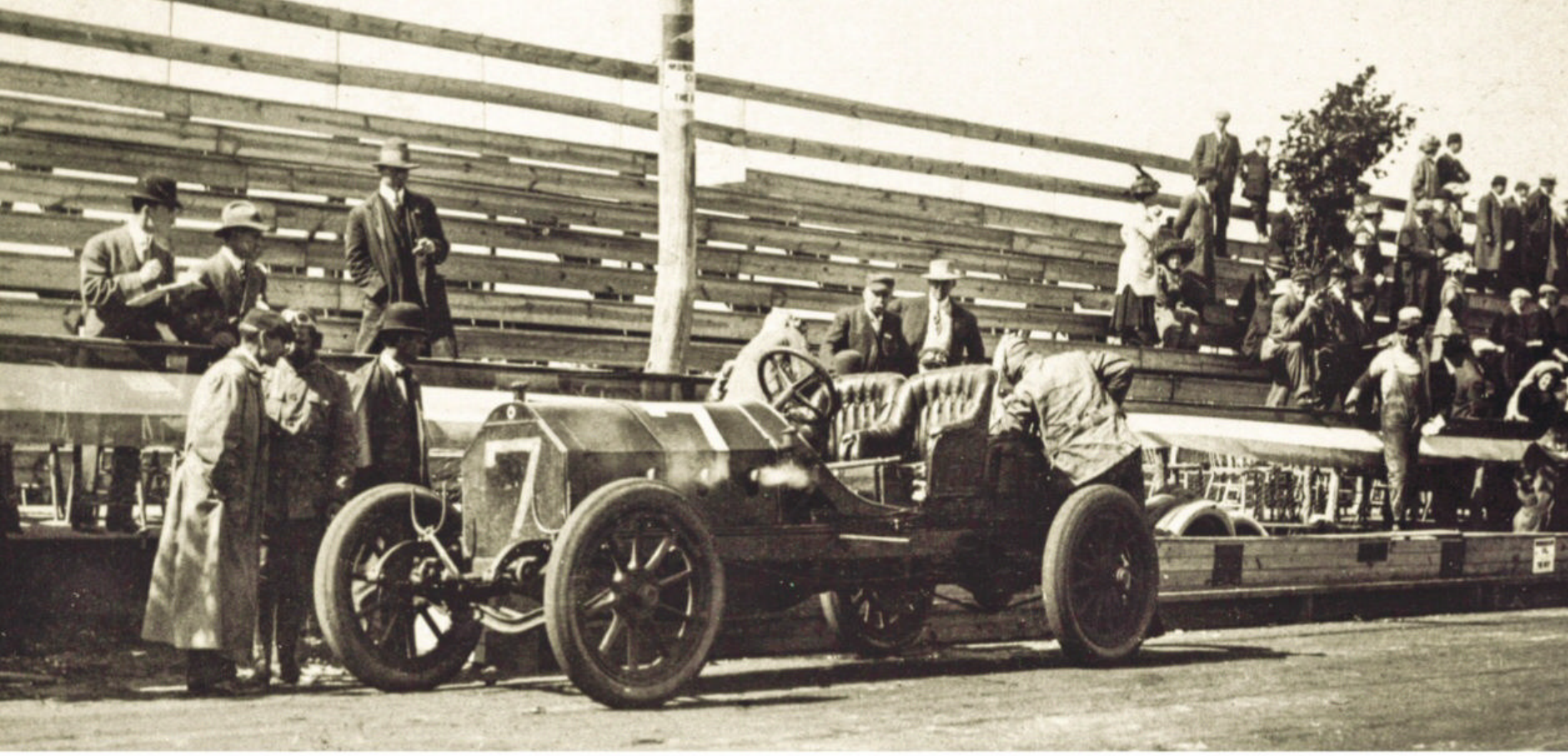
A total of 16 cars were entered, but two had dropped out by the time the race started. All the cars in the event took to the track at the same time, and lower-priced cars with less horsepower would have to complete four laps, for a total of 91 miles. The high-horsepower, more expensive cars would have to complete 10 laps, for a total of 227.5 miles. Other classes existed between these two extremes, with the number of laps and total distance for each determined individually.

There were 13 different makes of cars entered, ranging from 18 horsepower to 90 hp, and several were campaigned by well-known racing drivers. Ralph DePalma drove a Fiat, Herb Lytle drove an Apperson, Louis Disbrow piloted a Rainier, Frank Lescault a Palmer-Singer, and Louis Chevrolet and Bob Burman both drove Buicks. Prices of the cars competing ranged from $851 to over $4,000.

The most powerful automobile was a 1906 Mercedes with 90 hp, driven by G.M. Armstrong but owned by candy maker George Loft; this car had previously been owned by William K. Vanderbilt II. Both men knew each other well, due to overlapping social circles and their great enthusiasm for fast motor cars and racing.

A grandstand was built at the start-finish line, which was located on the west end of the course, about midway between Long Island Sound and the town of Riverhead. The road surface of the course was composed of loam and sand that was rolled and then oiled. Suffolk County, where the race was held, wanted an "automobile contest" due to the popularity of the Vanderbilt Cup Race, which began in 1907 in adjoining Nassau County.

The crowd attending the event was sparse. The wood grandstand marked the start and finish of the race, run on 22.75 miles of public roads.



The Palmer-Singer was driven by noted race car driver Frank Lescault. The roadway surface was a mix of loam and sand that was rolled and oiled.

This 22-hp Maxwell was driven by Martin Doorley and dropped out of the race before it was finished. As depicted here, many of the cars had no treads remaining on their tires.

Thousands of people had gathered to attend the Vanderbilt Cup races, but they were much closer to New York City. Transportation for Vanderbilt Cup spectators was much easier, via the Long Island Rail Road plus abundant trolley line service. Mass transit was an important factor, because the majority of the general public did not own automobiles in the pre-1914 era.

Despite clear weather, attendance at the Long Island Stock Chassis Derby was low. The profits from ticket sales were supposed to be split 50/50 with the winning drivers, but that did not happen. There was a deficit instead of a profit, so all the drivers received were class-winning trophies. Interestingly enough, the winning drivers were presented their trophies by George Robertson, the champion driver of the Locomobile in the Vanderbilt Cup race.

Reports in the automotive press noted that "there was an exceptional demonstration of speed." *The Automobile* magazine for September 30, 1909, noted "Louis Chevrolet in his victory in class 4 with the 30 horsepower Buick traveled at a speed which was close to 70 miles per hour, this being the greatest sustained flight ever accomplished in an American road race." Can one even comprehend what it would be like to travel 70 mph in a car with two-wheel brakes, narrow tires, and no doors or windshield?

The race was not without tragedy. Herb Lytle, in his 50-hp Apperson, "met with disaster and turned over." Lyte and his riding mechanic, J.E. Bates, went into a skid at 70 mph due to a

Driven by C.H. Lund, this Rainier was built in Flushing, New York, and had a 45-hp engine.

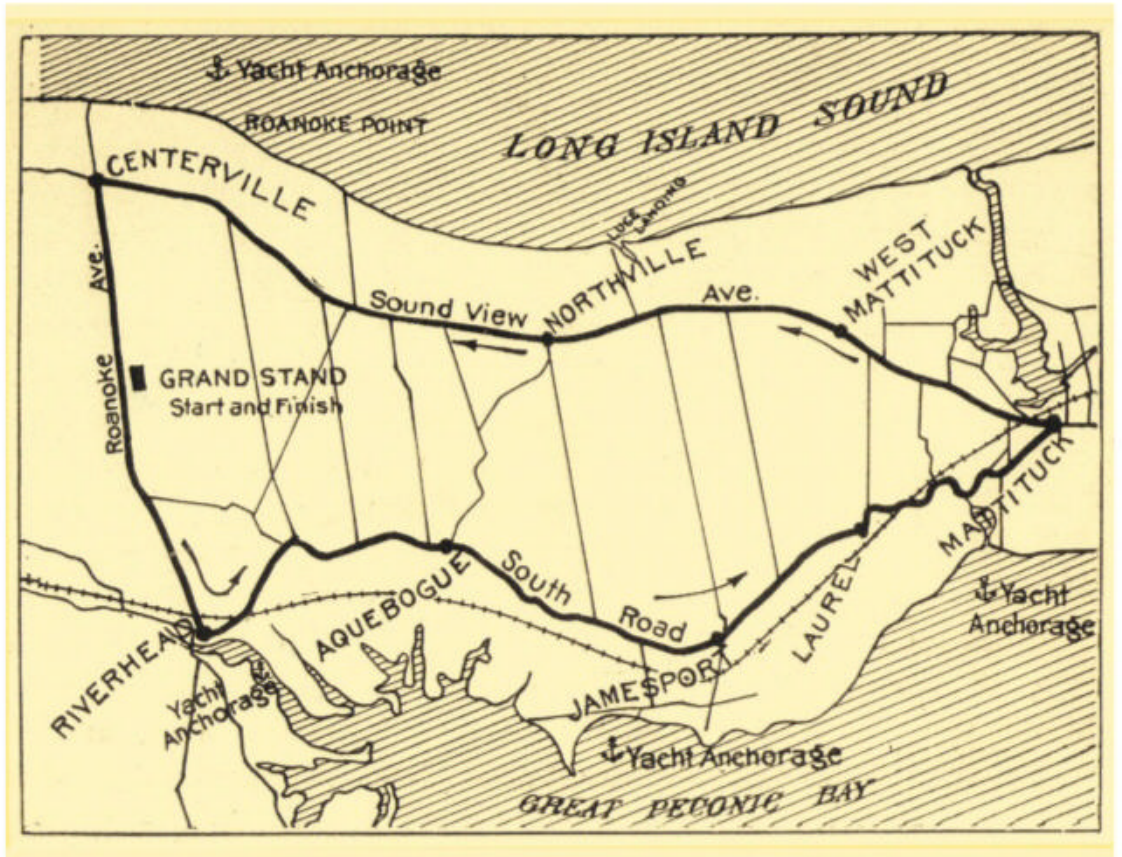
Two Rainiers participated in the race. This one, rated at 50 hp, was driven by Louis Disbrow.

The 40-hp Sharp Arrow was driven by William Sharp.

broken front axle, hit a telephone pole, and turned over. Both men were injured and taken to a hospital in nearby Greenport, where Bates succumbed to his injuries. Lytle suffered a concussion and remained in a coma for a week, but did eventually recover. When news of the accident reached the grandstands, Mrs. George Loft, wife of the owner of the Mercedes race car, ran over to the car's pit area and directed it be withdrawn from the competition.

Throughout the event, various issues with the assorted cars developed, from overheating to numerous tire troubles. When the race concluded, a Maxwell driven by Arthur See won Class 5, Louis Chevrolet in a Buick won Class 4, a Sharp Arrow driven by William Sharp (the only car in its class) won Class 3, the Palmer-Singer driven by Frank Lescault won Class 2, and the Fiat driven by Ralph DePalma won Class 1.

Despite the tragedy, a second race was planned for June 1910. It never took place, thus making the 1909 Long Island Stock Chassis Derby the one and only event.



The Long Island Derby course was 22.75 miles in length, driven in a counterclockwise direction. The five classes of cars, of varying horsepower, ran at the same time. They weren't in competition with each other, just with those in their class.

Mark of a Gentleman

A low-mile, unrestored 1967 Jaguar 240 that represents the finer things in life

BY MARK J. McCOURT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

The year 1967 was a period of change around the world, and one of major transition for Jaguar's sedan lineup. Preparing to launch the 1968 XJ6—that single automobile would replace the compact Mk 2, midsize S-type, and large Mk X—the Coventry automaker would shuffle the names and engines of its four-door trio that year. The model on these pages wasn't sold here new, but proved itself as adaptable and endearing to America as every Jaguar sport sedan.

Prospective buyers visiting U.S. Jaguar showrooms in 1967 may have received a surprisingly pleasant sticker-shock, thanks to the lower price asked for the Mk 2. This car's $4,490 MSRP was a substantial $782 less than what was charged in 1966, the reason traced to less luxury content and a smaller-displacement, 3.4-liter version of the long-serving 3.8-liter XK engine under the hood. Its trunk lid was initially adorned with the badges "Jaguar 3.4" and "Mk 2"; that jewelry would soon be swapped for the simpler

"Jaguar" and "340," the latter being the car's final name. Following similar naming protocol, the model formerly known as the 3.8 S-type got a power boost courtesy of the E-type sports car's 4.2-liter inline-six and was rebranded the 420, while the flagship, 4.2-liter Mk X was now called the 420G (for "Grand" saloon/sedan).

Home-market Jaguar buyers had enjoyed a wider range of engine choices in their Mk 2s, with the economical 2.4 Litre model sold continually from this four-door's late-1959 debut, soon joined by the 3.4- and 3.8-liter versions. Well-heeled customers shopping for a Mk 2 in 1967 could choose between the 340 and a 240. The smaller displacement version was notably less powerful, its combination of a 3.27 x 3.01-inch bore and stroke, 8:1 compression ratio, and twin-SU carburetors, offering 133 horsepower at 5,500 rpm and 146 lb-ft of torque at 3,700 rpm, compared to 210 hp and 215 lb-ft. A choice of four-speed manual with Laycock electric overdrive, or a three-speed

Borg-Warner automatic, could be paired with this seven-bearing engine.

The original purchaser of our feature U.K.-market, right-hand-drive 1967 240 was a properly sporting type, having opted for the manual gearbox. This selection made the most of the 2.4 in this 3,192-pound sedan, allowing a 0-60-mph sprint in around 12 seconds (14.3 with the automatic), and a top speed of 110 mph (102). That performance was well shy of the 340's capabilities — not a small grievance since the 2.4-liter was nearly as thirsty as the 3.4 — but 240 buyers were likely not bothered, since the identical-looking model offered entry into the prestigious ranks of Jaguar ownership.

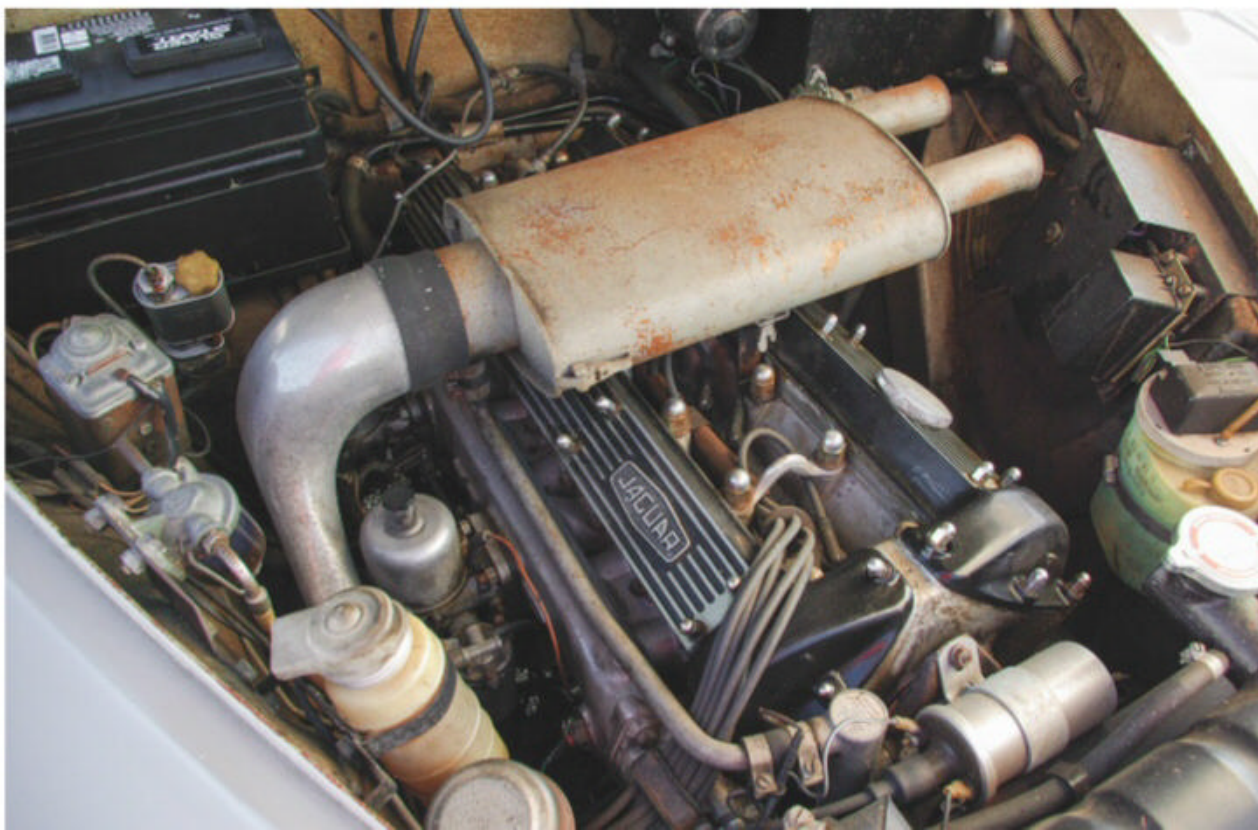
This car, which retained its original registration plates, had two owners in England before crossing the ocean. It came to the attention of an ex-pat living and operating a British car restoration shop in southeastern Alabama, thanks to a subsequent, local American owner. Mike Darby, a native of Leeds, England, runs Darby Classic Restoration in Loxley, and the Jaguar came into his life and his shop in the mid-1990s, then in need of some mechanical attention. "It belonged to an old gent who'd seen an article on this car in the Milestone Car Society magazine and simply had to have it, so he flew to Maryland to buy it and drove it back here," he recalls.

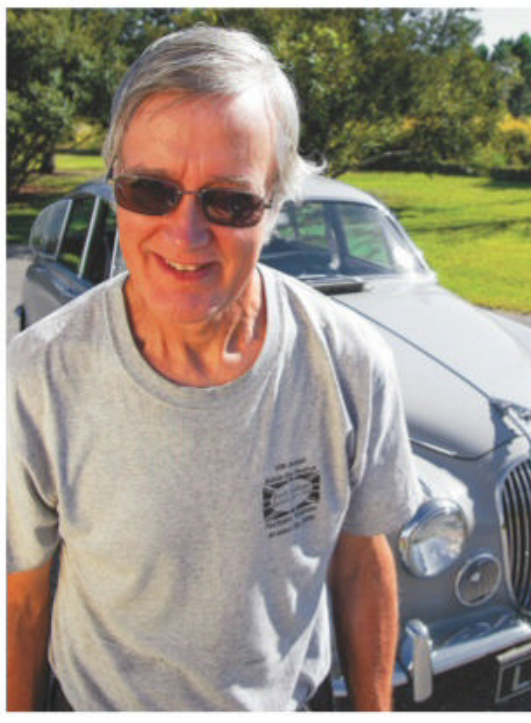
The Warwick Grey 240 was in original condition and had traveled around 45,000 miles at that time. While the trunk emblem was the only exterior item to indicate the model's entry-level

This 240's interior sports intact Ambla upholstery and fully functioning switchgear; overdrive operates via dash switch. Below: The 2.4-liter DOHC engine makes 133 hp, and the muffler-looking unit is the air cleaner. At right: A complete, spare-mounted tool kit is rare and valuable.

status, the traditionally attractive interior betrayed this with Ambla vinyl upholstery instead of leather, the front seats likewise forgoing their reclining function and walnut seatback tray tables. The recirculating ball steering was manual, rather than power assisted as in the contemporary 340. Both cars did share a servo-boosted single-circuit four-wheel disc brake system, though.

That complex braking system was the primary reason Mike was hired to work on the Jaguar in 1999, he explains. "I still have copies of the invoice I generated for that service, which totaled over $2,000," Mike says with a wry grin. "The outboard rear discs on the Mk 2 Jaguar are pressed on the hubs with a very shallow taper to the axle





I knew it was an absolutely straight, rust-free car.

shaft, and to take the rear rotors off, you have to remove the rear hubs and everything else. I remember it took me four days of applying heat, pressure, and impacts to get one of those rear hubs off! I also did a tune-up on the engine, and almost had to take the cylinder head off because a spark plug was fitted very, very tight, and I broke it; the top half rolled down a plug hole, into the cylinder. I had a slender magnet, and that picked it up, vertically, straight out through the plug hole. I never made that mistake again."

It would be many years before he would see the car again. He related how the elderly owner would periodically stop into his shop, complaining of it not running properly, and asking if Mike could squeeze it in to his schedule. "I would say, 'I can't get to it until next week, give me a call and we'll pick a day. The call never came, but he'd show up again about three months later. This went on and on. In 2007, the gent contacted me, saying he was too old to maintain the car, and would I help him sell it? I got some details from him, the price range he was interested in. That was that."

Mike certainly remembered this Jaguar as an excellent example; "I knew it was an absolutely straight, rust-free car. The trunk was like new, the carpets had obviously never been wet. It was stored in a garage, although that wasn't climate-controlled, and the veneer was beginning to suffer from the humidity," he tells us. "For a few days, I talked it over with my wife, Nancy, and we decided to try to buy it from him, so we made an offer. After a tense two weeks, he called to say he decided to sell it to me. We got it for a reasonable price; I didn't have a lot of money to spare. We came out of that deal alright."

When he got the 48,397-mile 240 back to his shop, Mike found it had a seized clutch slave cylinder—a relatively simple repair—and had the long-dormant Jaguar running within two hours. "I worked on the car, mainly cosmetically, for two weeks; mechanically, it was in great shape. I had evidently done the brake system overhaul in 1999 fairly well, because the brakes worked perfectly," he says, smiling. "We started learning how to use this car. It had a badly juddering clutch, which made hill-starts interesting, and synchromesh on third gear was non-existent. Apart from that, it was largely free of vices."

Mike and Nancy would use and enjoy their right-hand-drive Mk 2 for eight years, in that time adding another 12,000 miles to its odometer. The ailing gearbox would be rebuilt, as would the master cylinder, after the clutch stopped working on the way home from a car show in New Orleans, more than 100 miles away. Mike would replace the perished original door seals and refinish the 15-inch wheels; sadly, he was forced to repaint one side of the body after a miscreant key-scratched the factory-applied paint down to the primer. Still, taking it out for drives, both local and distant, was a favorite occurrence.

"It consumed oil, as most old Jaguars do, but it didn't smoke or seriously leak. The 2.4 doesn't have the get-up-and-go of a 3.8, but it's adequate for normal driving," he muses. "It's not an easy car to handle; the steering is desperately heavy at low speeds, and it has a huge turning circle. It's also very hot inside without air conditioning, in a summer rainstorm. But it has a comfortable ride, is fairly quiet, and would cruise all day at 80 mph in top gear-overdrive.

"I didn't really want to sell it, but I realized I'd had my Jaguar experience. I got an offer on it, quite out of the blue, and accepted it within two days," Mike tells us. While he was sad to see it go, he regrets nothing of the experience. "Whenever we were tooling around, people would stop dead, break into big smiles, and say, 'Fantastic car!' The styling was pretty much flawless in my opinion. It was a great conversation piece, a real feel-good car."

Looking Back

BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

Through the years, there were probably way more independent auto manufacturers in England than in America. The larger and more popular companies were Austin, Bentley, Daimler, Hillman, Humber, Jaguar, Land Rover, MG, Morris, Riley, Rolls-Royce, Rover, Standard, Singer, Sunbeam, Triumph, Vauxhall, and Wolseley. Yet, there were literally hundreds of other car manufacturers based there, although many of them were extremely small cottage industry types. Here's a brief description of the more "popular" British independent marques, and why most no longer exist.

AC: Having produced what was arguably the most adored shape ever bestowed on a two-seat roadster, the Ace's success wasn't enough to sustain this great little company and keep its talented craftsmen employed. But if AC had exported the great looking mid-engine 1979-'84 3000ME sports car to the U.S., perhaps it would still be cranking out cars.

ALLARD: Everyone knows the powerful J2 sports cars, but Allard's P-type sedans and Palm Beach roadsters were equally interesting. All were nicely styled and well built. Unfortunately, they never had a mass-appeal design, nor did they have their own engines, which was a recipe for failure in the competitive postwar era.

ALVIS: Like AMC, Alvis was a big-time independent with a diverse range of models and large production efforts. Its Speed 25 was a spectacular sports car, as was the TC21 drop-head coupe, and mid-Sixties TF21 series. Producing outdated designs and chassis will only keep you going for so long. However, we recently learned that Alvis is back, producing limited runs of six different signature models.

ASTON MARTIN: Fine craftsmanship and hand-made aluminum bodies take time and money, but with a limited clientele due to the cars' high price

tags, no wonder this world-renowned company never really grew in size. Having gone through multiple changes in ownership over the last few decades, Aston is steadily climbing back to the top; and with a forthcoming SUV, no less!

BRISTOL: Although it's still hanging on by a thread, if Bristol had produced a car with mass appeal, it would have been to England what BMW is to Germany. Bristol employed top engineers, backed by a solid team of metalworkers with aircraft experience, but it never created the trend-setting sales success like BMW had with its 2002.

JENSEN: Lots of missteps finally took their toll on Jensen. Labor-intensive hand assembly and the use of gas-guzzling Chrysler V-8s, as well as poor leadership, eventually brought the company down. And as interesting as the Interceptor was, the overtly heavy-looking rear end wasn't very attractive, thus turning many potential buyers away.

LOTUS: Once, Lotus was one of the greatest automotive engineering companies of all time, but without Colin Chapman it just couldn't keep that out-of-the-box thinking going. After several ownership changes, it now has a sensational lineup of new models, such as the Exige and Evora, and all because of the great success of the Elise. Finally, Lotus' future is bright again.

MARCOS: When a car is as tall as your knee, and plywood floors are a structural part of the initial design, it's kind of hard to get people excited about your product, no matter how sleek looking the body shape may be. But owning a Marcos GT, or even the ever-cute Mini Marcos, would certainly be a treat.

MORGAN: When your mindset is, "if it was good enough for granddad, then it's good enough for us," then it's no wonder why Morgans will always be considered outdated cars. Even the recent Aero 8 featured wood in its structure. Yet few cars offer the distinctive character that Morgans can deliver.

SWALLOW DORETTI: With Triumph TR2 mechanicals under a stylish aluminum body, the Swallow Doretti was actually sold in the States, but few buyers saw the advantage of paying a hefty premium for what was essentially a rebodied Triumph.

TVR: The epitome of the British cottage automotive industry, TVR built distinctive fiberglass-bodied cars that many enthusiasts craved, albeit in small numbers. Rugged Triumph TR6 mechanicals powered its very popular model, the 2500. But laying up fiberglass shells is a time-consuming and labor-intensive way to produce bodies. Several years ago, the company's assets were sold to a new British owner, and TVR is now back in business with a reborn Griffith, designed by no other than Formula One engineer Gordon Murray, creator of the sensational McLaren F1 sports car.

And there are others: Armstrong Siddeley, Austin-Healey, Bond, BSA, Buckler, Caterham, Clan, Connaught, Dellow, Dutton, Elva, Fairthorpe, Frazer-Nash, Gilbern, Ginetta, Gordon-Keeble, Healey, HRG, Jensen-Healey, Kieft, Lagonda, Lanchester, Lea-Francis, Napier, Ogle, Rochdale, and Unipower. All gone, but hopefully never forgotten.

1965 AC COBRA MK II

Top-Selling Brits

Rounding up the top-three classic sports car models from U.K. automakers

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

"Export or die" was the rally call for British automobile companies in the years following World War II, a period when that island nation's economy was heavily dependent on American dollars to repay its wartime debts. The British cars that U.S. buyers took most to heart—and purchased in great numbers—were the rakishly attractive, engaging sports cars that were so unlike the mainstream transportation produced by automakers on this side of the pond; more affluent buyers also looked to the U.K. for its incredible selection of fine and sophisticated sporting motorcars.

Ship after ship came Stateside carrying sporting automobiles with venerable nameplates like AC, MG, and Singer, bearing newer ones like Austin-Healey, Lotus, and TVR. Enthusiastic American buyers embraced these sometimes impractical, always life-affirming roadsters and coupes, making best-sellers out of cars that were often rarely seen in the home market, so great was our demand. Even after the British sports car boom of the 1950s and 1960s slowed, and once-loved marques began to consolidate and disappear, the cheap and cheerful, or powerful and polished, products of this imported motoring trend continued to radiate unique appeal.

To keep this list manageable and relevant to the primary interests of the *Hemmings Classic Car* readership, we have limited this piece to celebrating the most popular British sports cars introduced before 1990. While this means it's therefore not comprehensive or exact, we hope it still offers a view into the most-produced models from many of the world's favorite U.K. marques. The build numbers included on these pages are approximations, and rounded off for simplicity.

AC CARS

Today's drivers primarily know the venerable Surrey firm of AC Cars for its most popular and enduring model, the pretty, Italian-inspired roadster that would become a steroid-injected racer at the hands of a certain Texas chicken farmer. But AC's postwar sports car had a humble start, and grew more desirable as it cycled through a series of increasingly powerful engines with international backgrounds.

COBRA, 1962-1965: 655

Called an AC or Shelby depending on its market, the Cobra was the ultimate development of the 1953 Ace, powered by Ford's light, compact American V-8. A high-compression 260-cu.in. version topped with a four-barrel carburetor initially put 260 horsepower to the back wheels of the circa-2,100-pound car; a 289-cu.in. development made 271 hp, more than double the output of the Bristol straight-six. This legendary model became coveted on both sides of the ocean.

ACE-BRISTOL, 1957-1962: 465

The Ace-Bristol got its name from the engine under its alloy bonnet, supplied by the Bristol Aircraft company. This 2-liter six-cylinder was a British development of the prewar German BMW 328 engine, and with triple Solex carburetors, it made up to 127 hp, enough to push the roadster to almost 120 mph. When new, this sports car cost around $5,600 in the U.S., or $50,000 in today's money.

1978 ASTON MARTIN AMV8

ACECA-BRISTOL, 1957-1962: 170

Aceca was the name AC gave to the sleek fastback coupe version of its Ace, and as this model's full name implies, the body variant shared a Bristol-supplied straight-six engine. For an additional $1,000 over the open sports car, buyers of the Aceca-Bristol got enhanced touring ability with a weathertight roof, upgraded leather and carpet trimmings, and a then-innovative rear window tailgate.

ASTON MARTIN

Aston Martin wouldn't begin to export its sports cars and grand tourers in earnest until the postwar David Brown era, when examples powered by the W.O. Bentley-designed DOHC straight-six attracted a well-heeled clientele. Still, it would be decades—the mid-1990s introduction of the DB7, to be precise—before Aston Martin built more than 500 cars in a year, so longevity was a primary reason for the big sales numbers of earlier models.

AMV8, 1972-1989: 4,000

The timelessly stylish AMV8 started life in 1967 as the DBS, carrying over the DB6's six-cylinder engine, but within three years, that car gained a quad-cam, 5.3-liter V-8. The model was renamed after David Brown sold the company, and it grew more powerful and opulent through the 1980s, the Vantage ultimately making more than 400 hp. When V8 coupe production ended in 1988 and the soft-roof V8 Volante was retired in 1989, they represented the best-selling Aston Martins to date.

DB6, 1966-1970: 1,470

This firm followed the DB5 by stretching its wheelbase 3.75 inches to make more interior room for four passengers in the new DB6. Nearly 300 hp was on tap from the carryover DOHC inline-six, but the looks got a boost with a new rear quarter window design and integrated ducktail spoiler. Although this model cost about $3,000 more than its predecessor—stickering for $15,400, equivalent to $119,000 today—people lined up to buy it.

DB4, 1958-1963: 1,150

The lithe DB4 offered international flair thanks to its Touring of Milan styling and lightweight Superleggera body construction. This 2+2 coupe or convertible's all-alloy, hemi-head straight-six engine made 240 hp in twin SU-carbureted form, or 302 hp with triple Webers. Desirable variations would include the short-wheelbase two-seat DB4GT and the stunning Ercole Spada-penned, Carrozzeria Zagato-built DB4GT Zagato.

AUSTIN-HEALEY

Engineer and rally driver Donald Healey had made his reputation on both sides of the pond, his small firm building eponymous sports cars and collaborating with Nash on the postwar Anglo-American roadster, the Nash-Healey. A 17-year connection with Austin brought Healey his greatest fame, and the Austin-Healey emblem seen on the entry-level Sprite and upmarket 100 and 3000 became synonymous with British sports cars.

SPRITE, 1958-1971: 129,350

The best-selling Austin-Healey was the smallest, cheapest model, but this elemental two-seater was no penalty box. Nearly 49,000 first-generation Sprites wrapped a twin-carbureted 948-cc four-cylinder and Austin/Morris components in a delightful skin. The follow-up Sprite—its squared-off body design shared with the MG Midget—would endure three updates and outlive the Austin and Healey corporate partnership,

1971 AUSTIN SPRITE

ASTON MARTIN MEDIA


1968 JAGUAR E-TYPE

spending its final years badged simply as an "Austin Sprite."

3000, 1959-1967: 42,500

A displacement bump to 2,912-cc gave the larger, six-cylinder Austin-Healey its new name, albeit rounded up for punch. The 3000 would have a nine-year lifespan that covered three updates and included the two-passenger, BN7-chassis roadster, two-plus-two BT7 roadster, BJ7-chassis two-plus-two convertible, and BJ8 two-plus-two convertible. The luxuriously trimmed 150-hp 3000 Mk III remained a strong seller until the end.

100-SIX, 1957-1959: 15,000

A more powerful development of the 2.7-liter four-cylinder-powered Austin-Healey Hundred, the 100-Six was known for its fixed-position windshield, oval radiator grille and accompanying bulged bonnet, and its namesake 2.6-liter, 102-hp straight-six engine. Most examples of this popular model were assembled in MG's Abingdon factory, and the 100-6's cost, ranging from $3,200 to $3,400, made it approachable in our market.

JAGUAR

SS Jaguar cars of the late 1930s were highly desirable and proven in competition, and the reboot that World War II represented for the automotive industry would lead to a new generation of world-class Jaguar sports cars, powered by a new DOHC straight-six engine that would power the company's vehicles for decades to come. To this day, Jaguar builds a hugely capable sports car in the F-type, whose style echoes that of its famous forebear.

E-TYPE, 1961-1974: 72,500

Dubbed "XK-E" by its U.S. importers, this monocoque-bodied sports car embodied the lessons Jaguar learned in racing, including four-wheel disc brakes, a fully independent suspension, and advanced aerodynamic design. In its impressive production run, the E-type gained long-wheelbase 2+2 coupe and open two-seater variants, and doubled its cylinder count to 12. This model's successor, the 1975-'96 XJ-S/XJS, was a luxurious GT, and would handily outsell it with more than 115,000 units.

XK120, 1949-1954: 12,000

It's amazing to know Jaguar merely intended the XK120 to be a limited-production vessel to showcase the 160 hp, 3.4-liter XK engine that would power its forthcoming premium sedans. Named for its top speed, this paradigm-shifting model was built with alloy and steel bodywork, and in Open Two Seater, Drop Head Coupe, and Fixed Head Coupe styles. Surprisingly reasonable pricing made it approachable to a wide range of buyers.

XK150, 1957-1961: 9,400

The final generation of XK sports car was like a mature woman, fuller-figured and brimming with refinement and power. Like the 140 and 120, the 150 came in three finely trimmed body styles. This model's 210-cu.in. DOHC six made between 190 and 250 hp; late in the run, 3.8-liter versions made 220 hp, or in the triple-carbureted XK150-S, 265 hp. Final-year MSRPs of circa-$4,600-$5,160 undercut the new E-type by more than $400.

JENSEN

Jensen Motors had gained international exposure as a coachbuilder in the 1930s, and upon the ceasing of WWII hostilities, it went all-in on building its own automobiles. The 1949 Interceptor was this firm's first postwar sports car, and that iconic name would later be used again to great effect. While it famously assembled Volvo's P1800 and made Sunbeam Tiger bodies under contract, Jensen earned respect and reasonable sales for its eponymously badged sports and GT cars.

JENSEN-HEALEY, 1972-1975: 10,500

Jensen-Healey was a joint project between Donald Healey and son Geoffrey, and U.S.-based British-car importer Kjell Qvale, and the result was a well-packaged, reasonably priced ($5,545, the rough equivalent of $29,000), modern sports car. Initial issues with the 140-hp 16-valve twin-cam Lotus engine, sorted in running production changes, sadly harmed the stylish soft top's reputation. The Healeys left the firm before the low-production 1976 Jensen GT variant arrived.

INTERCEPTOR, 1966-1976: 7,500

The second coming of the Interceptor took the forms of an Italian-designed, American V-8-powered, four-seat bubble-back coupe, convertible, and a notchback coupe, the latter pair arriving at the end of Jensen production. The Chrysler V-8s below the bonnets of these bold Brits displaced 383- and 440-cu.in., and with the triple Holley carburetors of the SP variant, made up to 385 hp. The four-wheel-drive FF was years ahead of its time.

541, 1955-1963: 550

Jensen was an early adopter of fiberglass body construction, that material forming the sleek, four-seat coupe body of the 541

1974 JENSEN-HEALEY


1965 LOTUS ELAN SERIES 2

grand touring sports car. Powered by a triple SU-carbureted 4-liter six-cylinder sourced from Austin, this model would be refined into the 541R—notable for the standard four-wheel disc brakes capable of slowing from its 125-mph top speed—and facelifted 541S. The final 541s were available in the U.S.

LOTUS

Competition and clever design were at the heart of every product of the Lotus Engineering Company. Racing was founder Colin Chapman's focus, and starting in the late 1950s, his roadgoing cars were sold to bankroll track efforts. Famous for their lightweight fiberglass bodies, Lotus cars would gain an even keener handling edge when mid-engine variants joined the lineup. Nearly 70 years from its founding, this automaker still builds the most purist sports cars on the market.

ELAN, 1966-1974: 12,200

The Elan pioneered a new steel backbone frame that would become the go-to chassis design for Lotus. This sports car that inspired the original Mazda MX-5 Miata was available in both two-seat convertible and coupe forms, and it paired a Ford-based DOHC four-cylinder with a fully independent suspension and four-wheel disc brakes. Elan would prove the most popular nameplate in Lotus history, also appearing on the long-wheelbase "+2" coupe and GM-developed 1990s convertible.

ESPRIT, 1976-2004: 10,700

Perhaps the most iconic Lotus outside of the elemental Seven of kit-car fame is the Esprit. This Giorgetto Giugiaro-designed two-seater had the 1970s-trendy wedge look of a show car brought to life, and its 160-hp twin-cam four-cylinder would get a literal boost with the Ferrari 308-baiting 1980 Turbo Esprit. A 1987 styling update perfectly smoothed the car's sharp edges, and 10 years later, a 350-hp twin-turbo V-8 made the Esprit an undeniable supercar.

EUROPA, 1967-1974: 9,200

The first roadgoing mid-engine sports car from Lotus was the Europa, an uncompromising two-seater whose function-over-form design may have inspired Porsche's creation of the 914. This unusual-looking model featured a surprisingly aerodynamic body design that covered an upgraded, Renault-sourced (later, Ford-derived) driveline and other components. Famous derivatives included the "Big Valve" and John Player Special F1 tribute models.

MG

Arguably the marque that, along with Porsche and Ferrari, most exemplifies the term "sports car" for enthusiasts around the world is MG; no talk of pre- or postwar sports cars is complete without mentioning the pride of Abingdon. This small firm began as a passion project for its founder and corporate benefactor, soon earned competition laurels, and then went mainstream. Through healthy export sales, its roadsters, coupes, and sedans fed international demand for British automobiles.

MGB, 1962-1980: 512,250

The MGB owns this list: until Mazda's MX-5 Miata took its crown, it was the best-selling sports car of all time. The Japanese roadster took 21 years and two generations to eclipse what the plucky Brit earned as a single model in 18 years. That most examples built went to America—it was still selling strongly at the end of its run—shows just how right the simple, user-friendly MGB Tourer and MGB/GT were then, and their popularity and value endure today.

MG MIDGET, 1961-1979: 224,800

This generation of entry-level MG sports car reintroduced a beloved name from the company's past, and it contributed


1972 MGB

1965 MORGAN PLUS 4

to the company's postwar market success. Marketed as a better-trimmed sister to the second-generation Austin-Healey Sprite, this Midget would evolve from sporting a 46-hp, 948-cc engine, and a build-your-own top with side curtains, to offering 55 hp from 1,493-cc, and a fixed, folding top with roll-up windows.

MGA, 1955-1962: 101,100

While the mechanical components were largely carried over from its "square-rigger" predecessors, the MGA took the world by storm because of its sleek, Le Mans racer-inspired envelope body. With this new model, MG leaped from being a charming anachronism to offering a truly modern sports car, and its short-lived Twin Cam variant made the MGA a top-notch performer, too. This would be the first British sports car whose production reached six figures.

MORGAN

The tiny, venerable automotive concern from Malvern Link has long been famous for its stubborn adherence to tradition, and in that lies its unique appeal. While today's Morgan sports cars still look like direct descendants of their 1930s ancestors, those cars are built with a blend of modern and old material types. The examples hailing from the era discussed here had evolved with the times, but retained the original Morgan style, and annual production numbered hundreds, not thousands.

PLUS 4, 1951-1968: 6,100

The 4/4 set the mold for the four-wheeled Morgan automobile, but the larger-engine Plus 4 made for a truly engaging sports car that caught the world's fancy. This model—still in production today, called the "Plus Four" to honor its new-style alloy chassis—would undergo numerous visual and mechanical changes, cycling through generations of Standard-Triumph four-cylinders until those stopped production and this model went on hiatus, returning in the 1980s.

4/4, 1936-1968: 2,700

Flagging Trike sales pushed Morgan to bring out a conventional car in 1937, and this, the 4/4 (four wheels, four cylinders) would be available in sports roadster or drophead coupe styles. It was the first Morgan sold in postwar America, but the model would be dropped in 1950, returning to the lineup five years later as an entry-level car using a British Ford engine mated to a three-speed manual gearbox; more power and another gear followed.

PLUS 8, 1968-1989: 2,600

The light Rover V-8 crammed under the long bonnet of this Morgan gave it a power-to-weight ratio akin to that of an American muscle car, the result looking old-fashioned but accelerating like its quickest contemporaries. A five-speed replacing four in the 1970s gave the Plus 8 long legs, and U.S. enthusiasts lined up to buy examples modified to run on propane to meet emissions rules. The aluminum-intensive Aero 8 would later take its flagship role.

TRIUMPH

The evocative Triumph nameplate was a vintage one, having first appeared on two wheels before the turn of the last century, the firm building a short run of cars prior to WWII. It was the postwar series of rugged, powerful, uniquely styled, and popularly priced roadsters that made this marque's reputation and fortune, both on countless racetracks and countless roads. Triumph would have the sad distinction of building the last mass-market British sports cars of this era in production.

SPITFIRE, 1963-1980: 314,350

While it shared chassis underpinnings and mechanical components with the practical Herald, the Spitfire (was there a better-named British sports car?!) draped those workaday pieces in sensuous coachwork penned by masterful Italian stylist Giovanni Michelotti. The pricier and more powerful GT6 fastback coupe was a Spitfire spin-off. This inexpensive, small-displacement roadster presented well above its station, and the buying public responded suitably.

TR7, 1975-1981: 112,350

The final Triumph sports car developed was also the company's most controversial, following the much-loved TR6 with a radically different, more modern design. Initially only offered as a live axle, four-cylinder, wedge-shaped coupe—a dashing convertible joined it for 1980, as did a desirable V-8-powered TR8 derivative—the TR7 would handily outsell all of its traditional body-on-frame TR ancestors, proving it was indeed the right car for the times.

TR6, 1969-1976: 94,600

The TR6 represented a clever update to the Michelotti-styled TR4, its Karmann of Germany-reworked front and rear ends giving this new model a very fresh and contemporary visage. It retained the torquey 2.5-liter straight-six from the short-lived TR250, along with the fully independent suspension introduced on the TR4. This was a tough-looking car with universal appeal, and its $3,275 price at introduction equates to a reasonable $23,000 today.

TVR

Like Lotus, TVR was a postwar concern that began selling sports cars in assemble-yourself kit form, and would be an early adopter of fiberglass in body construction. The TVR-based, Ford V-8-powered Griffith was a Cobra-style U.K./U.S. hybrid, while other TVR models of the 1960s and 1970s used Triumph or Ford four- or six-cylinder power. U.S. imports would end in the 1980s, but TVR remained a going concern with limited production of exotic sports cars into the early 2000s.

TASMIN, 1980-1989: 2,600

TVR followed the trend of wedge styling with its Tasmin. This new model (soon renamed 280i) carried its bold fiberglass coachwork, in convertible and Plus 2

1963 TRIUMPH SPITFIRE 4


1986 TVR 280i

coupe forms, on a tubular steel chassis. Its power came from Ford's tried-and-true, fuel-injected "Cologne" 2.8-liter V-6, its suspension and differential from Ford and Jaguar, respectively. The Tasmin/280i would spawn the exciting, Rover V-8-powered 350i. These TVR wedges have a small but passionate following today.

M SERIES, 1971-1980: 2,500

Then-TVR Engineering-owner Martin Lilley named the M series after his first initial, and that batch of sports cars produced under his watch—the 1300M, 1600M, 2500M, 3000M, and the Taimar fall in this family—shared a low, lean look that faithfully recalled earlier TVRs. These hand-built models, some of which were marketed in the U.S., used naturally aspirated or turbocharged Ford or Triumph engines, and had an appeal unlike anything else on the road.

VIXEN, 1967-1973: 1,150

The second act in TVR's playbook was its delightfully named Vixen. This adaptation of the Grantura brought a perky Kamm tail and new coil-sprung suspension, along with 1,600-cc of Ford Cortina or Capri power, as well as the 2,498-cc Triumph inline-six that would motivate the 2500M. There would be four series of Vixens built between 1967 and 1973, and the cars evolved along with their parts supply, in endearingly typical TVR fashion.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

Great Britain was home to many once-independent smaller automakers that would be subsumed through mergers like the ones that created the British Motor Corporation and the Rootes Group. The Riley company specialized in fabrics and weaving before shifting to motorized vehicles before the turn of the 20th century; it would be a founding part of BMC. The Singer Motor Company started making bicycles, turning to cars around 1905; it would field an Index of Performance-winning entry at Le Mans in 1933, and in 1955, become part of Rootes. Likewise, an eventual Rootes property was Sunbeam, famous for its 1920s land speed record cars and the racy-looking postwar Alpines.

RILEY 2½-LITRE "RMC" SPORTS ROADSTER, 1948-1951: 510

While Riley returned to car production after WWII with traditionally styled cars, its surprisingly large Roadster had a uniquely jaunty look with cut-down door tops and a folding windscreen. Three passengers could sit across the single bench seat. The 2,443-cc four-cylinder under the long bonnet made 100 hp and gave this Riley a top speed around 100 mph. This model was intended to conquer the U.S. market, but sadly, didn't make a dent.

SINGER NINE ROADSTER, 1939-1956: 12,700

The name of the Singer Nine, which debuted in 1932, came from the taxable horsepower rating of its initial 31 hp, 972-cc, SOHC four-cylinder engine. This sporting car soon made a stir in international endurance racing, and before the end of the decade, the Nine Roadster debuted. This model returned after the war, by 1950 offering 37 hp, a four-speed gearbox, 12-volt electrics, and a price that undercut the MG TD by $355, equivalent to about $3,800.

SUNBEAM ALPINE, 1959-1968: 69,250

Wearing an evocative name steeped in rally heritage, the second coming of Sunbeam's Alpine featured a monocoque body that blended style and advanced features years ahead of anything MG or Triumph were making: roll-up windows that sealed against a fully integrated soft top that stowed under a permanently attached metal boot. The Alpine's twin-carbureted 1,592/1,725-cc four-cylinder would be supplanted by a Ford V-8 in the thrilling Tiger variant.

Her Majesty's Best-Known Marques

The most famous pre- and postwar models of England's most popular car brands

BY JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM HEMMINGS ARCHIVES AND COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS

Britain, Britain, Britain! A land of rolling green hills, and seemingly a thousand carmakers vying for business in the early days of motoring. Many failed, many others merged, some achieved significance and volume sales. Many remain today, but plenty have fallen by the wayside in decades past. But the cars they built oozed charm, and many, in their way, changed the face of motoring.

Maybe they were high-performance specials that received fame on the racetracks of Europe, or maybe they simply helped England change over from the horse to the automobile. All are significant in their own way: Thus, these are the definitive pre- and postwar automobiles of a given marque. Each car is a standout in its own way and is well worth getting to know.

Due to space limitations, this is a decidedly incomplete selection of significant British marques. A more complete overview has been posted on Hemmings.com.

AC CARS

AC stood for Auto-Carrier, with the first production vehicle being a three-wheeled delivery buggy in 1905. By 1908, a passenger's seat replaced the trunk, and AC called it the Sociable. Four-wheelers arrived in 1913. A series of racing victories in the 1920s cemented AC's legend as a builder of high-end sporting coupes, roadsters, and saloons. The company continued building cars into the early 1980s.

AC SIX

More an engine than a model, the 2-liter AC Six started production in 1921 and was still produced in early versions of the postwar Ace. Initially offered in 1.5- and 2-liter guises, it was a SOHC inline-six with wet liners in an aluminum block, with an aluminum sump and cam cover, and an iron cylinder head. The Six won many races and set many records, including the Brighton Speed Trials of 1923 and '24, the continuous 24-hour speed record in 1924, and the 1926 Monte Carlo Rally.

ACE

AC's new-for-1953 Ace was a lightweight, open, two-seat, alloy-bodied sportster riding a tube frame with independent transverse leaf-sprung suspension and lower wishbones at all corners. Early Aces retained AC's own Six (referenced above), but when racer Ken Rudd installed a BMW 328 engine in his Ace, AC was inspired to use the Bristol-built engine that it took as wartime spoils from BMW. In 1962 Carroll Shelby did AC one better by installing Ford V-8 power and creating the Shelby Cobra.

ASTON MARTIN

Aston Martin was founded in 1913, but despite racing success in the early 1920s and a chain of owners, series production didn't start in earnest until 1926. Most were open-cockpit two-seaters aimed at well-to-do gentlemen, and their racing successes helped cement the marque's reputation as a builder of rakish, high-performance GT cars for men of means.

LE MANS

Wringing 70 horsepower from just four cylinders and 1.5 liters of displacement, and offering a top speed of 85 mph, the alloy-bodied Le Mans was named for the French event where Aston Martin had enjoyed such success. Just 130 were built between 1932 and 1934.

DB5

Its appearance in the James Bond spy caper *Goldfinger* was enough to cement it in the hearts of 10-million wanna-be spy boys around the world; only 1,059 were

built, including 123 convertibles and a baker's-dozen shooting brakes. Styling was by Carrozzeria Touring. The Vantage, with triple SU side-draft carburetors and different camshafts in its inline-six, were rated at 325 horsepower.

AUSTIN

Herbert Austin had transformed Wolseley's sheep-shearing business into Britain's biggest carmaker by 1905; Austin went solo that year, and soon was building cars for royalty across Europe. Following post-Great-War receivership, the Austin Motor Company pivoted to making the ultra-compact Seven, which ultimately helped the company through the Great Depression. By 1952, Austin merged ownership with Morris; by 1968, both were absorbed into British Leyland. BL was renamed Austin Rover Group in 1982; by 1987, the Austin name was history.

SEVEN

A proper four-seater with a footprint no larger than a cyclecar, arriving in 1922, it was popular enough that it killed the cyclecar market. With its A-shaped frame, 75-inch wheelbase, 40-inch track, sub-800-pound curb weight, and 10-hp 747-cc side-valve engine, it was a hit: 300,000 sold through 1939. The Seven's existence directly affected marques as varied as Jaguar, Nissan, BMW, and Jeep.

MINI

When Egypt seized the Suez Canal in 1956, European oil prices skyrocketed. BMC boss Leonard Lord saw the need for a fuel-efficient car and tapped Alec Issigonis for a solution. The result: the Mini, which was 105 inches long, 50 inches wide, 52 inches high, and only 1,400 pounds. Features included a transverse-mounted engine atop a front-drive transaxle, 10-inch wheels so that the arches didn't intrude on interior room, and suspension engineer Alex Moulton's innovative solid rubber cones in place of springs and shocks. Nearly five and a half million were built into the 21st century. This car was a true legend.

BENTLEY

Named for its creator, Walter Owen Bentley, the first Bentley automobile was shown in 1919; sales started two years later. Bentley's high-performance program saw its Indianapolis debut in 1922, and a win at the second 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1924; it also won Le Mans in 1927-'30. Perpetual money trouble saw Bentley absorbed by Rolls-Royce in 1931, then sold to Volkswagen in 1998.

4½-LITRE "BLOWER"

Out of 720 4½-Litre Bentleys built from 1927 to '31, 55 received an Amherst Villiers supercharger, located ahead of the radiator shell. W.O. Bentley was not in favor of supercharging: this modification was made by Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin, with help from engineer Villers, and together they created a legend. A monoposto version set a speed record at Brooklands, running 138 mph.

R-TYPE CONTINENTAL

The postwar Mk VII Bentley chassis (shared with the Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn) gave birth to the gorgeous R-Type Continental Coupe, executed by coachbuilder H.J. Mulliner & Co. Engineers changed carburetors, induction, exhaust manifolds, compression ratios, and gear ratios to take advantage of the body's reduced wind resistance. Widely considered to be one of the most beautiful postwar classics, just 207 were built from 1952 to '55.

JAGUAR

William Lyons started the Swallow Sidecar company in 1922, though he soon began restyling Austin 7s for resale. By 1935, the company was called SS Cars. The advent of World War II saw another name change, to Jaguar, inspired by wartime Germany's ruination of the SS moniker. Jaguar was absorbed into British Leyland in 1968. Ford then owned Jaguar from 1990 through 2008, who sold it to Tata of India. It became a semi-autonomous unit of Tata in 2013.

SS 100

The chassis was a cut-down 2½-liter saloon's, and the engine was a development of Standard's inline-six, featuring a new cylinder head and an OHV conversion, bumping power to 100 hp. (Later examples received a 3½-liter version.) But that body! Low-slung, with cut-down doors, an SS Jaguar 100 won the International Alpine trial of 1936, and took class wins in the 1937 and '38 RAC rallies.

E-TYPE

The most beautiful sports car ever? Possibly. But the E-type experienced mission creep: starting as a pure sports car, with its alloy-head inline-six, it was an instant classic. Over its 15-year life, additional concessions to popularity (a 2+2 body style, longer wheelbase, automatic transmission, mandatory V-12) completed its transformation from pure sports car to exceptional GT.

JENSEN

Brothers Alan and Richard Jensen started their automotive careers re-bodying Austin 7 Chummys; they would later build bodies for a variety of chassis. Their own cars, starting with sports cars, began in 1936. While most Jensens used American power (either flathead Ford, Nash Six, or Chrysler OHV V-8), the company did use Austin power immediately postwar. Jensen ceased manufacturing in 1976; various revivals have come and gone since.

S-TYPE

Jensen Motors' first volume production car was the S-Type, available as a saloon, tourer, or convertible from 1936. It used a steel chassis, aluminum bodywork, and American Ford flathead V-8 power in 136- or 221-cu.in. form. Roughly 10 per year (on average) were built through the start of WWII.

INTERCEPTOR/FF

The Vignale-styled Interceptor, arriving in 1966, became a symbol of swinging affluence in late '60s Britain. Through

1970, the Interceptor used Chrysler 383 V-8s; from 1971 on, they used Chrysler 440s instead. Rare FF (Ferguson Formula) variants accommodated all-wheel drive; the conversion included Dunlop four-wheel-antilock disc brakes. Just 320 FFs were built.

LOTUS

Anthony Colin Bruce Chapman started Lotus Engineering in 1952, although he had been tinkering with racing cars since 1948. Initially available in kit form (to avoid purchase tax) or fully assembled form, Lotus aimed both its road and competition cars at keen drivers. Its goal was speed via lightness. GM bought Lotus in 1986. In 1993, it sold Lotus to a holding company that also owned Bugatti. In 2017, Chinese company Geely bought a 51-percent stake.

ELITE

Chapman's "add lightness" mantra was never more evident than with the Elite, launching in 1957. Clocking in with a curb weight near 1,100 pounds, the body was of fiberglass monocoque construction, with a steel front subframe and windscreen hoop for mounting door hinges. A 1,216-cc, 75-hp Coventry-Climax four-cylinder, fully independent suspension, four-wheel disc brakes, standard radial tires, and an aerodynamic shape all contribute to its minimalist beauty, efficiency, speed, and fun. It was built through 1963.

ELAN

Although there were no prewar Lotus cars, we'll add the Elan, considered by many to be the ultimate sports car due to its race car-like handling, which resulted from its unique backbone chassis constructed of sheetmetal.

MG

Operating out of William Morris' main showroom (MG stands for Morris Garages), business manager Cecil Kimber modified Morris Oxford models to help spur sales. The MG marque saw its first cars in 1924, but it was the M-type Midget of 1929 that cemented MG's reputation for light two-seat convertible sports car fun. MG's sports cars died in 1980, with the end of the MGB, but the MG name lived on, most recently on a series of sports cars and Chinese-built compact SUVs.

TA

Known only as the T-Type until its replacement, the TB, appeared, the TA Midget arrived in 1936. It set the mold for T-series MGs to come: four cylinders, four-speed manual gearbox (with the top two gears synchromesh on the TA), a bench seat, and a diminutive footprint (94-inch wheelbase, 45-inch track) from which to maximize its 50 horsepower. A total of 3,003 were built through mid-1939.

MGB

The MGB is what most people alive today think of if you say "MG." Its longevity made it the best-selling British sports car of all time — more than half a million sold. It was a big step forward from the MGA when it launched in late 1962: proven mechanicals in a sturdy new monocoque chassis, plus roll-up windows in the doors as well as locking door handles and trunk. It lasted through 1980.

MORGAN

H.F.S. Morgan, having cofounded an automotive sales-and-service shop, began cyclecar production in 1910. Subsequent designs were improvements on the same basic concept: a three-wheeler with backbone chassis, coil-sprung independent front suspension, and a motorcycle engine — mounted ahead of the front wheels — that drove the single rear wheel via driveshaft. Starting in 1936, Morgan built the four-wheeled 4/4. Morgan's production techniques, with ash frame and hand-beaten body panels, remain largely unchanged from the '30s.

SUPER SPORTS

Morgan introduced a new three-wheel chassis in 1928. The M-type, as it was known, sat 2.5 inches lower to the ground, all the better to handle the power from the fully visible J.A. Prestwich 60-degree V-twin motorcycle engine. (A 990-cc, 39-hp Matchless V-Twin would arrive in the mid-1930s.) For 1931, Morgan's original two-speeds-forward-only transmission was replaced with a gearbox that offered three forward gears plus reverse.

PLUS 8

In the face of diminishing options for a large-displacement four-cylinder for the Plus 4, engineer Maurice Owen was tasked with fitting the Rover (ex-Buick) aluminum V-8 under that hand-beaten bonnet. The Plus 8 weighed the same as the all-iron Triumph four-cylinder that it replaced, and the new Plus 8 quickly became one of the hottest-performing sports cars in the country despite power that rarely rose above 200 hp. Production ended in 2004.

ROLLS-ROYCE

Henry Royce was an electrician by trade; he built his first car in 1904. Charles Rolls, as one of England's first auto dealers, sold Peugeots and Minervas. Royce's technical acumen meshed well with Rolls' financial backing; their joint desire to build a quiet, smooth, reliable car for the British upper class resulted in the 1906 Rolls-Royce. The aircraft division forced receivership and nationalization in 1971. BMW now owns the storied marque.

40/50 "SILVER GHOST"

The first all-new Rolls-Royce launched in 1908; an early production model used for publicity was nicknamed Silver Ghost. Beyond the color, the name was chosen to emphasize its silence and reliability, both hallmarks of the marque from inception. The name stuck to all 40/50 series Rolls-Royce cars until the arrival of the Phantom of 1925. That first Silver Ghost participated in the 1907 reliability trials in Scotland, and then another 15,000 miles run with the press on board, never failing. Its reputation built, more than 6,000 40/50s were sold.

SILVER CLOUD

From mid-1955 to mid-1966, the Silver Cloud *was* Rolls-Royce. The original used a 4-liter inline-six; power steering, and A/C became optional shortly thereafter. The 1959 Silver Cloud II used a newly developed 6.25-liter V-8; despite improved performance, customers said the Six was smoother and quieter. A restyle, including a four-headlamp face, accompanied a 200-pound weight reduction for 1963. A total of 7,800 Silver Clouds were built, including long wheelbase and chassis meant for coachbuilders.

ROVER

Rover started with bicycles in 1885 and motorcycles in 1902; its first car launched in 1904. Real success eluded Rover before WWII, though the company survived by positioning itself a cut above everyman Austins and Fords. Postwar, Rover developed remarkable technology; wartime experimentation with gas turbine engines nearly saw their use in the Rover P6, and the aluminum-bodied four-wheel-drive Land Rover was a legend that lasted 70 years in production. Rover was absorbed into British Leyland in

1968 and entered a joint venture with Honda in 1979; Austin Rover Group was rescued from the ashes of BL in 1982; Rover Group launched in 1988 when Austin finally disappeared. Today, Rover is owned by Jaguar Land Rover, a subsidiary of Indian conglomerate Tata.

MODEL 20

Rover survived but rarely thrived before the war, so our choice is Rover's medium-sized 20 launched in 1907. It arrived on the heels of the marque's 1906 victory at the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy race, when interest in the Rover car was high. Designed to be a premium car, the crankcase, clutch case and gearbox case were all made from aluminum. A pair of levers operated throttle and ignition.

P6

The first-ever European Car of the Year, the P6-generation Rover sedan was, at its heart, a sports sedan. Conservative-yet-contemporary styling, four-wheel disc brakes (with rears inboard), four-wheel independent suspension (with wishbones and cowl-mounted springs up front, a De Dion arrangement at the rear), radial tires, an all-synchro gearbox, and a plush, roomy four-seat interior were among its charms. The engine was a 90hp SOHC 2-liter four-cylinder, but the engine bay accepted the all-aluminum ex-Buick V-8 starting in 1968.

SUNBEAM

Initially used as a name for his bicycle business, John Marston began building cars with the Sunbeam name in 1901, but sold the Sunbeam name, for use on cars, in 1905. As the marque soldiered on, it entered the 1912 Coupe De L'Auto, owning the podium.

Post-WWI, Sunbeam merged with the French marque Darracq; Darracq already owned Clement-Talbot. The resulting company, STD Motors, continued racing, land speed runs, and record-setting. In the mid-30s, a bankrupt Sunbeam was acquired by Rootes Group (which also owned Hillman and Humber), with postwar competition efforts limited to rallying. In 1964, Chrysler took a 30-percent share in Rootes Group, and bought it outright in 1967. Peugeot bought Chrysler's European operations in 1978; the Sunbeam name had one last hurrah on the Sunbeam Lotus, which won the 1981 World Rally Championship.

3-LITRE SUPER SPORTS

Racing was a real proving ground in the early days of the automobile, and Sunbeam's 3-Litre was the marque's attempt to beat Bentley at its own game. Using a robust Sunbeam 16/50 chassis, the DOHC inline-six (Britain's first production DOHC engine) featured a single-casting cylinder head and block, as well as dry-sump lubrication and twin Claudel Hobson carburetors. Sunbeam finished second to a Loraine-Dietrich at Le Mans in 1925. For 1929, a super-charged version was rated at 135 hp.

ALPINE

The Alpine was one of a pair of sporty convertibles. The original was from 1953-'55, and was driven aggressively around Monte Carlo by Grace Kelly in Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief*. Fewer than 1,600 were made. A later version, built from 1959-'68, was driven aggressively by Don Adams in the opening credits of the first two seasons of *Get Smart*! Roughly 70,000 were made. Fitted with a small-block Ford V-8, it became the Tiger. Either of these would easily qualify as the best-known Alpines in America.

TRIUMPH

With bicycles dating to 1889 and motorcycles back to 1902, it's surprising that Triumph didn't jump into cars until 1921. Despite some success, Triumph went into receivership prior to WWII, and in 1944, the Standard Motor Company bought the name and tooling. By 1952, the Standard name was used on sedans and Triumph was used for sports cars. Triumph was acquired by Leyland Motors in 1960, who discontinued the Standard name by 1963, then folded into British Leyland in 1968. The last new Triumph model, the Acclaim, was a badge-engineered Honda Civic. The Triumph name was retired in 1984, though BMW holds the rights to the name.

DOLOMITE

The original Triumph Dolomite was produced from 1936 to the end of Triumph's pre-Standard run in 1940. With the model 14/60, Triumph was aiming for the upper-middle-class end of the market; the aluminum-bodied Dolomites featured crank windows, dual-circuit hydraulic brakes, and an optional radio. Mid-1938, a 2-liter version of the Six (fed by triple SU carburetors) arrived.

TR4

Slightly more than 40,000 TR4s were built over its 1961-'65 production run. Standard's wet-sleeve inline-four, now displacing 2,138-cc, continued. But the TR4 contained plenty of advancements, setting the mold that lasted through the TR6: face-level ventilation, roll-up windows replaced side curtains, cut-down doors were eliminated, new styling by Michelotti allowed a roomy trunk, all forward gears had synchromesh, rack-and-pinion steering aided precision and feel, and with the 1965-'67 TR4A, independent rear suspension was added.

Dream to Reality!

A charmed life has kept this 1968 Buick Electra 225 Custom on the road

BY MATTHEW LITWIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

The Electra 225 oozed luxury without the wallet-busting price tag of rivals. Its instrument panel was fitted with elegant gauges and unobtrusive warning lamps. A deluxe steering wheel and electric clock were standard equipment, complemented by supple vinyl upholstery.

No matter why an automobile was created, or how it was destined to be used, most—if not all—left an indelible impression upon a young life at least once. Whether it was a striking body design, gleaming trim, the throaty growl of an engine, or the elegance of open-air travel, its impact survived for decades until the perfect moment when youthful dreams become mature reality.

Among the many who know this path of ownership destiny is Michael Stemen. A resident of Grahamsville, New York, during the summer months, his moment of automotive revelation occurred at the age of eight, when a family friend arrived in a newly acquired 1948 Buick Roadmaster convertible. According to Michael, "I looked at the Buick and said to my father, 'Look at this car; why don't we have one like this?' He said, 'Oh, that's completely impractical, Mike, you don't ever want to have one of those.'"

Despite his father's practical sensibility statement, the Buick never left Mike's mind, even while driving a 1964 Pontiac GTO, or as his wife-to-be steered a '65 Ford Mustang. They married in 1968 and soon after he landed a sustained career at Macy's. Practicality reigned supreme then—the GTO was sold long before the Mustang—but by 1987, convertible Buick ownership became a reality. His first restoration attempt, of a 1947 Roadmaster convertible, led Mike to a model-year-newer example, a car he still owns today. A 1941 Super convertible soon joined the stable, along with a '59 Invicta drop-top. Yet there was one missing from the growing collection: a convertible from 1968, a significant year in his life.

"In 2002, I was looking through the 'Buick cars for sale' section in *Hemmings Motor News* when I spotted an ad for this Electra 225 Custom convertible in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was white with a black top and interior, and had only 70,000 miles on it; the listing also said it was an all-original car."

Buick's Electra 225—the numerical portion of its name derived from its overall length—was still a status symbol since the name had supplanted the Roadmaster/Limited line in 1959. By 1968, the "Deuce-and-a-Quarter" was again available in two subseries, base trim and upscale Custom, with the latter differentiated by plusher cabins. Both versions were equipped with Flint's venerable 430-cu.in. V-8 engine, which was rated at 360 hp and a substantial 475 lb-ft of torque. Output from the 430, introduced a year prior, was managed by a Super Turbine automatic transmission.

Although Buick's engineering had last redesigned the chassis for 1965, model-year refinements helped increase demand. For 1968, a new pair of cast grilles, in an eggcrate motif, helped set the Electra 225 apart from the similarly styled Wildcat, while a slim bank of four "ventiports" accompanied subtle "sweepspear" flanks that were so prevalent in Buick's Fifties styling. It was enough to help set a new combined Electra 225 production record of 125,362 units, an overwhelming 86,558 of which were dressed in Custom trim. Of the four body styles offered though, the convertible mandated Custom trim, and with a sticker price of $4,541 (second only to the Riviera), only 7,976

Buick's 430-cu.in. V-8 came standard in the Electra 225 series. Using a Rochester four-barrel carburetor, the 10.25:1 compression engine made 360 hp and 475 lb-ft of torque.

The Custom trim package, mandated on all Electra 225 convertibles, coddled rear seat occupants, as demonstrated by the deep vinyl upholstery and center-mounted rear speaker. Convertible tops were electrically manipulated with a dash switch.

customers purchased the elegant cruiser.

"This one had really been owned by an older lady and she lived in a house with a U-shaped driveway lined with stone walls," Mike recalled. "The car was as-advertised: all-original. The top had hardly been put down, so the vinyl interior was in perfect condition. The engine ran smoothly and the paint was fine—it just looked like Moby Dick. Other than two tiny spots of rust that needed to be fixed, each corner of both bumpers had been dinged; I'm pretty sure the stone walls were the culprit. I paid cash for the car and drove it home."

Mike admitted his ideal convertible would have been painted red, and considering that two patch panels were required to repair the left front fender and right-rear quarter panel, the color switch was done simultaneously. After cleaning the engine bay and a bit of minor detailing, the Buick was ready for the road.

"My goal was always to drive this," Mike told us. "I wanted a car I could drive anywhere, anytime, and this Electra 225 is exactly that. I've driven it up and down the East Coast. Two years ago, I drove it across the country to take part in the Buick Club of America's national meet in Colorado. Since taking ownership 18 years ago, I've driven it nearly 34,000 miles and not once has the Buick complained. I just make sure I change the oil twice a year and perform the usual maintenance, and every time it's on my lift I check the chassis and lubricate the suspension. This really is a driveable dream and I couldn't be happier with it."

"I wanted a car I could drive anywhere, anytime, and this Electra 225 is exactly that."

The 1922 Checker Model C proved very successful. Note the "non-skid" tires on this museum-owned example.

Checker Cab Manufacturing Co.

From humble beginnings came one of the most iconic automobiles—Part I

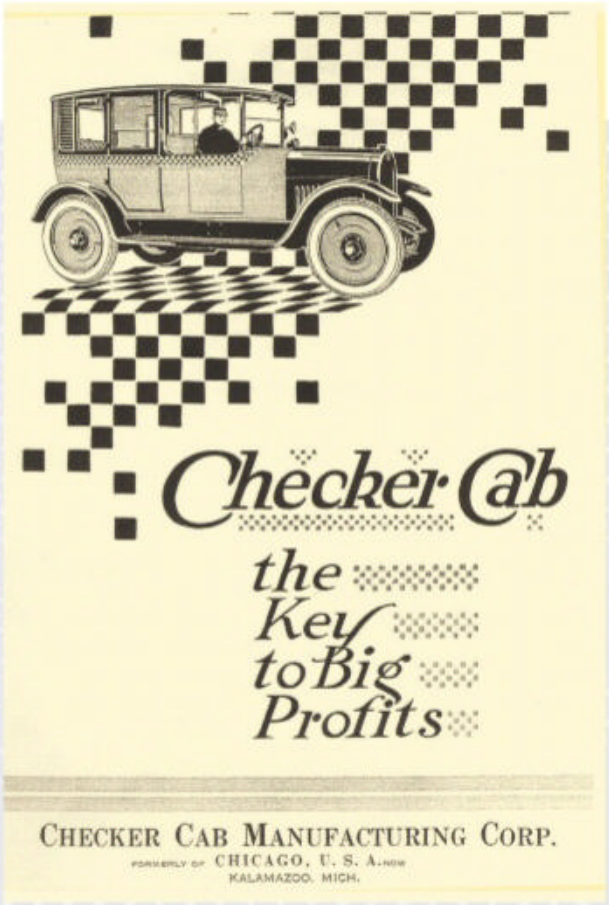
BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

Among the thousands of immigrants arriving in America in 1913 was a 19-year-old Russian named Morris Markin. According to family legend, Markin had but $2 in his pocket, which was not enough for the $25 minimum cash assets required to enter the country, so a sympathetic janitor lent him the difference.

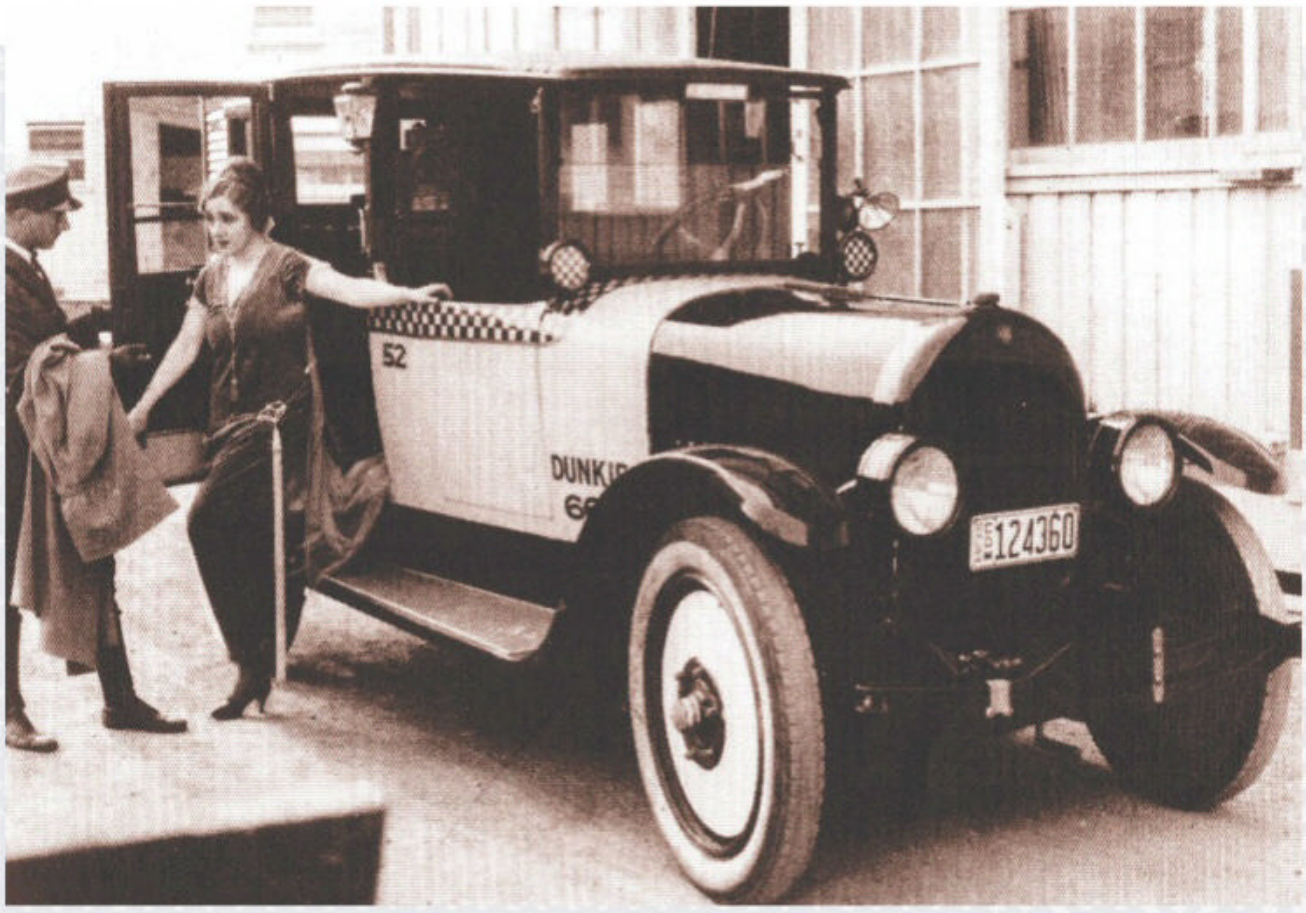
Markin moved on to Chicago, where he had relatives, and managed to land a job as a tailor's assistant. He worked hard and saved his money, so that when the shop owner eventually died, Markin was able to purchase the establishment from the widow. He and one of his brothers partnered to grow the business, and in time expanded it into a pants factory. After landing a World War I contract to make uniform pants, Markin soon became a rather prosperous man.

Markin comes across as a shrewd fellow, but he also must have been fairly generous, because he loaned $15,000 to a friend who owned the Lomberg Auto Body Manufacturing Company and needed to expand production. Lomberg's chief customer was Commonwealth Motors, builder of the Mogul taxi. Not surprisingly, when Commonwealth got into financial difficulty, Lomberg soon followed, defaulting on the loan from Markin. The end result of all this was that in 1921 Markin ended up owning Lomberg—which he renamed the Markin Auto Body Corporation—and also took over Commonwealth Motors. In this manner, Markin became both an automobile body manufacturer and its chief customer as well, ensuring a certain level of business for the body company. The two firms were brought together under the name Checker Cab Manufacturing Company.

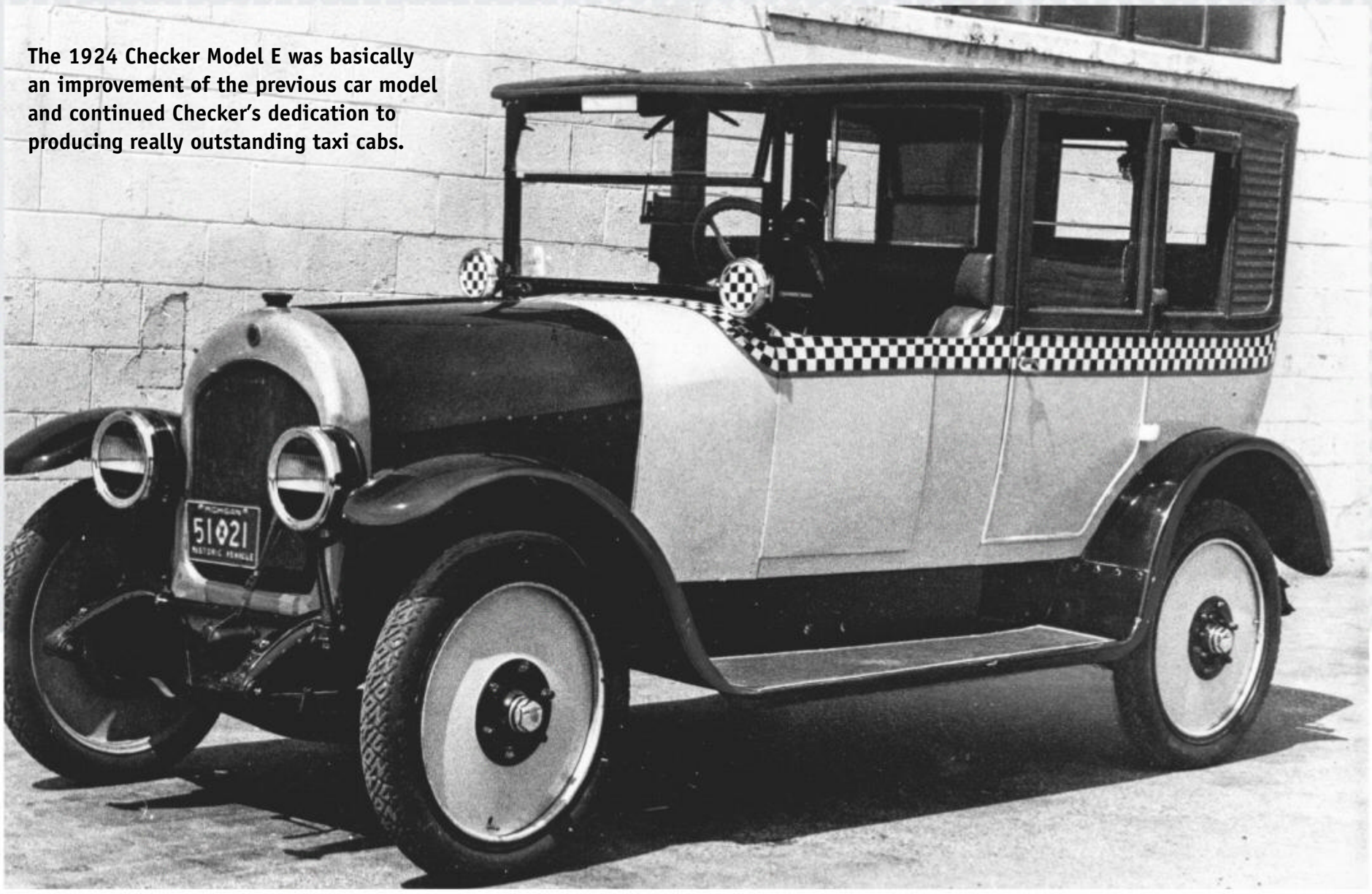
Checker cab production began in the former Commonwealth factory during mid-1922 with the Model C, which essentially was the Mogul cab with a few



This 1922 advertisement for the new Checker cabs show off its large, comfortable size and extols its profit-making potential



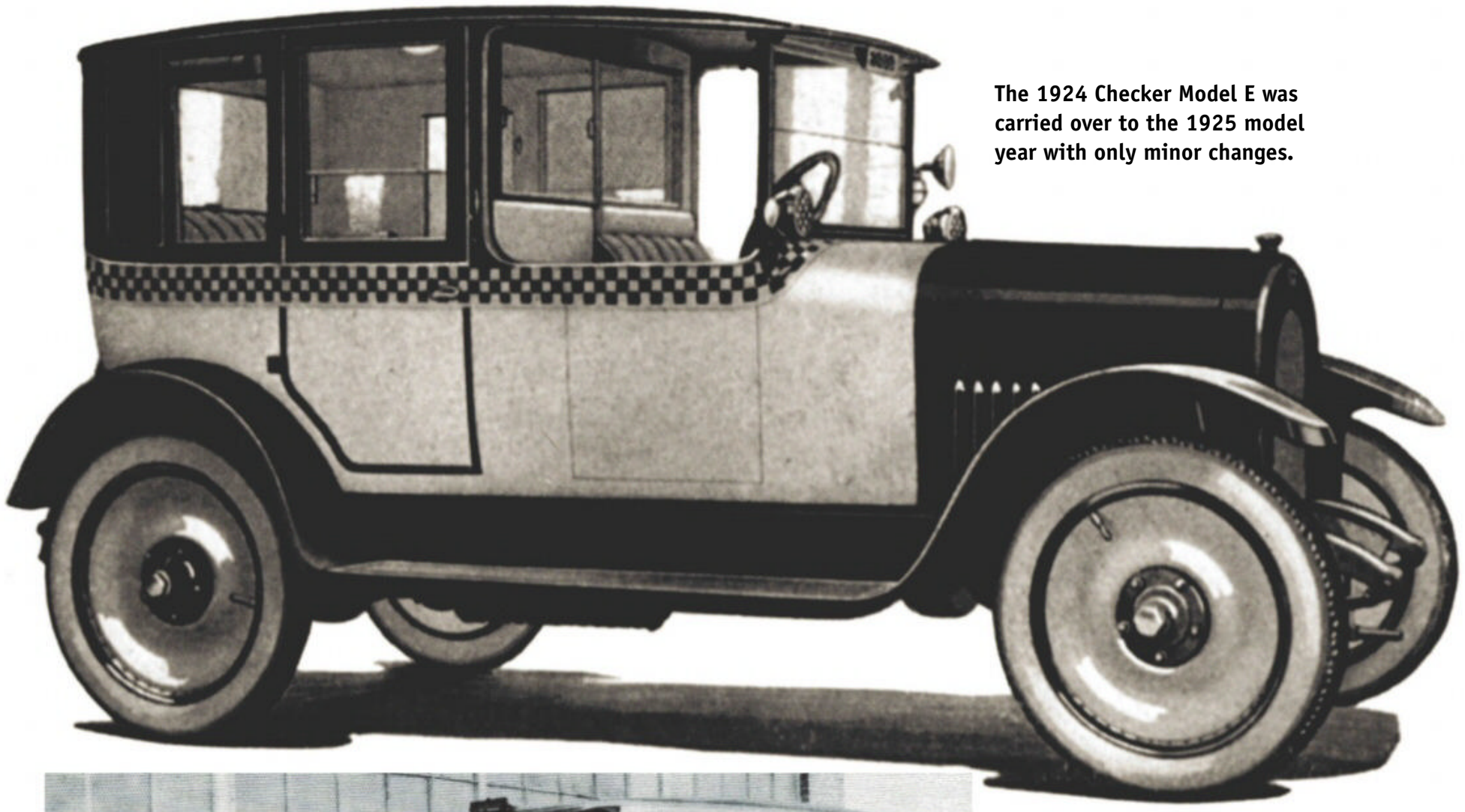
Another large, roomy cab was the 1923 Model H. Notice the elegant attire of the driver.



The 1924 Checker Model E was basically an improvement of the previous car model and continued Checker's dedication to producing really outstanding taxi cabs.

improvements. It was a sturdy vehicle, with a chrome-nickel-alloy steel frame boasting 5-inch channel sections and heavily gusseted crossmembers, and bodies framed with hefty wooden beams. The Model C was originally powered by a Lycoming engine, but a switch was soon made to Herschell-Spillman engines. The Checker taxi was roomy, rugged, and economical. Despite a reported price of $1,595 — a new Ford sedan was but $725 — cab companies preferred Checkers because they held up so well that in the end their purchase made more economic sense. Customers appreciated their roominess and comfort.

In 1923, the Mogul-based car was replaced by the new Checker Model H. It proved surprisingly popular and demand quickly outpaced Checker's small Chicago factory. Needing significantly greater



The 1924 Checker Model E was carried over to the 1925 model year with only minor changes.

Although this photo is identified as a 1924 Model E, we believe it may actually date to 1926 since it looks quite a bit different from other 1924 Model E's we've seen. The front door glass is fully framed and style-wise, it's closer to a 1926 Model F than to a 1924 Model E.

The 1926 Model F is easy to spot because of its unique slanted windshield, a feature used for this one-year only model.

production capacity, Markin ended up moving his cab manufacturing operation to Kalamazoo, Michigan, where two plants were available: the former Dort Motor Car body plant on South Pitcher Street, and the Handley-Knight assembly plant on North Pitcher Street. They were impressive facilities; the Dort factory had recently been substantially upgraded, while the Handley-Knight plant was practically new, having been built in 1921. Production of 15 Checker cabs a day was planned in the new plants, with bodies produced in the old Dort factory and final assembly in the former Handley plant. Processing the bodies took quite a bit of time because they received a reported 12 coats of paint, each hand rubbed. The eye-catching checkerboard border that was affixed to Checker cabs was well-known around the country as a taxi symbol, and Markin displayed more of his shrewdness when he took legal steps to ensure no other company would be allowed to affix it to their cars. His lawyers made certain only a Checker cab could display the checker border.

In 1924, the Model H was replaced by the Model E, offered as a taxi limousine for $2,440 and a landau for $2,340. (The reason for the sharp increase in price is unknown). The Model E landau included a fold-down rear roof section for open-air motoring. The engine was now a rugged Buda four-cylinder, rated at 22.5 hp. Standard equipment included an ammeter, horn, spotlamp, heater, dome lamp, jack, tool kit, and spare tire. Both models

boasted fold-down jump seats for carrying extra passengers when needed.

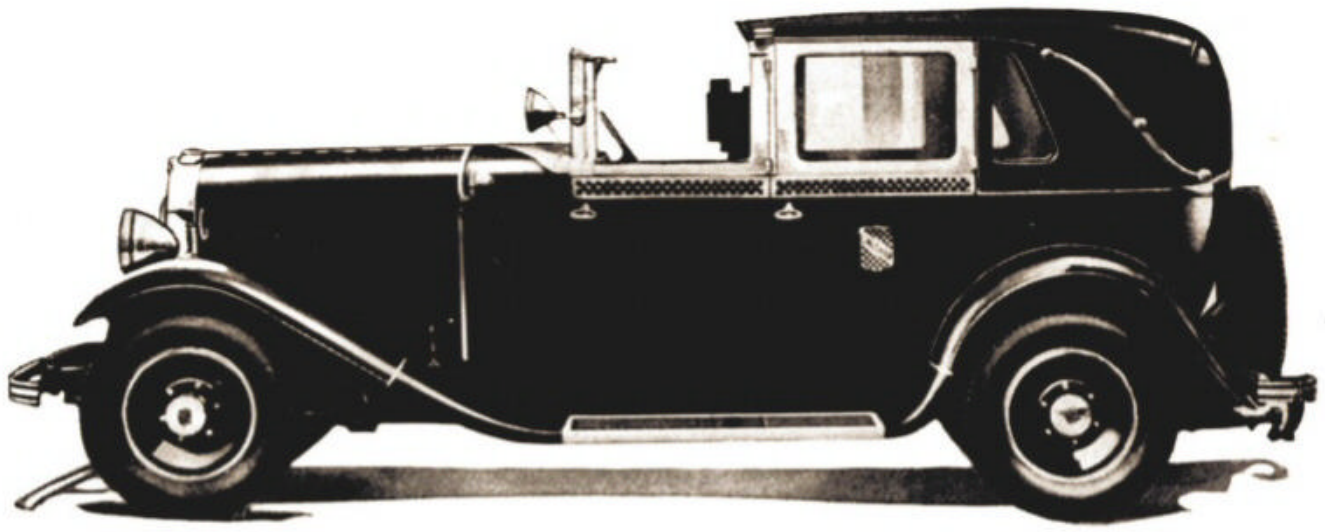
By the end of 1925, Checker production had reached 75 cars per week and a new model was introduced. The Model F was mainly just a modification of the Model E, but its unique slanted windshield gave it a very different appearance. The Model F was in production for just one year, after which it was replaced by the Model G for 1927.

With the Model G, Checker offered a choice of a Buda four-cylinder (in the Model G-4) or six-cylinder engine (in the Model G-6). The cab featured an upright windshield, a pretty good indication that buyers hadn't liked the Model F's slanted type. This time, styling may have been a little too conservative, as sales began to slow down and profits began to evaporate. In an ensuing company shakeup, Markin was removed as Checker's president for a time.

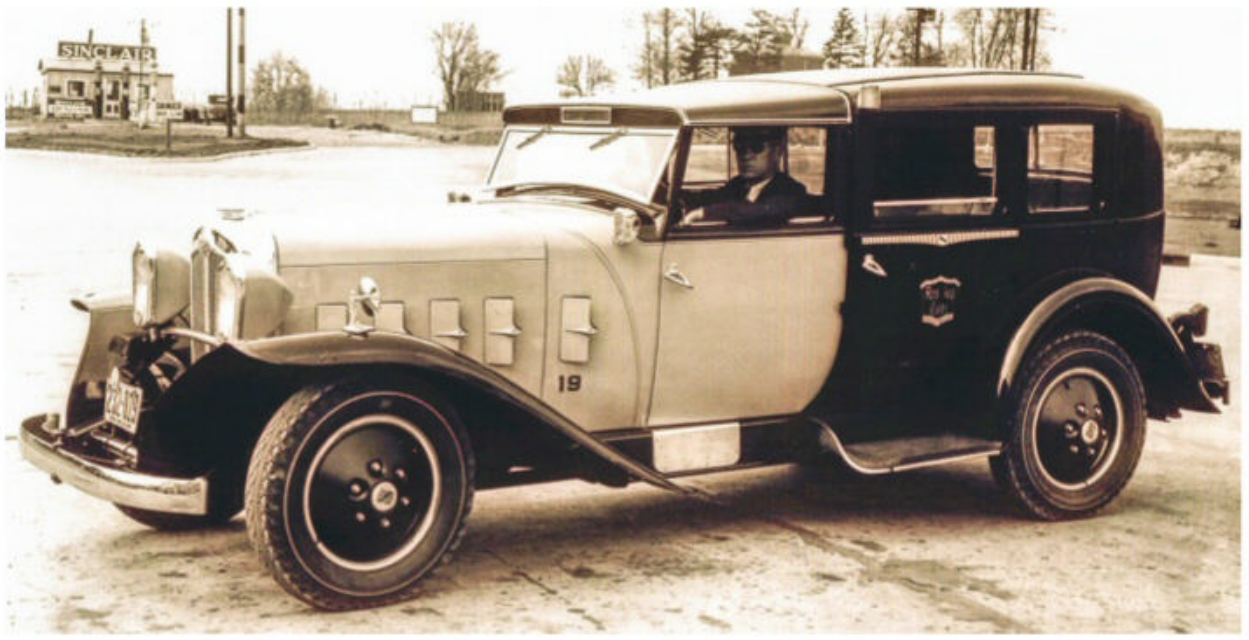
However, by 1928 Markin had wrested back the presidency — he was a tough little man — and launched the big new Model K (aka K-6), a large, roomy car with modern styling riding on a 127-inch wheelbase. Powered by a 27-hp Buda CS six-cylinder engine, it was offered in two variations, sedan or town car, the latter featuring a roofless driver's compartment. The Model K boasted four-wheel hydraulic brakes and more standard equipment than ever before. Included in its $2,600 base price were filters for oil, gas, and air, a speedometer, windshield washer, chrome bumpers, a ventilating windshield, and dual fender-mounted mirrors.

Encouraged by the enthusiastic response to the Model K, the company decided to branch out into the civilian car market, offering town cars to individuals desiring a roomy, stylish limousine built for rugged service. Checker Motors even produced Model K trucks for a few companies, using the taxi's front-end body panels from the bumper to just aft of the front doors. Apparently, it offered pickup and flatbed versions, too, and possibly other models as well. How many were produced is uncertain.

Meanwhile, to ensure a steadier flow of business for his cab manufacturing concern, Markin was busily creating a distribution network in the form of dozens of taxi companies around the country. The Parmelee Transportation Company, National Transportation Company, and Checker Cab Company of Chicago were among the larger taxi firms he acquired,



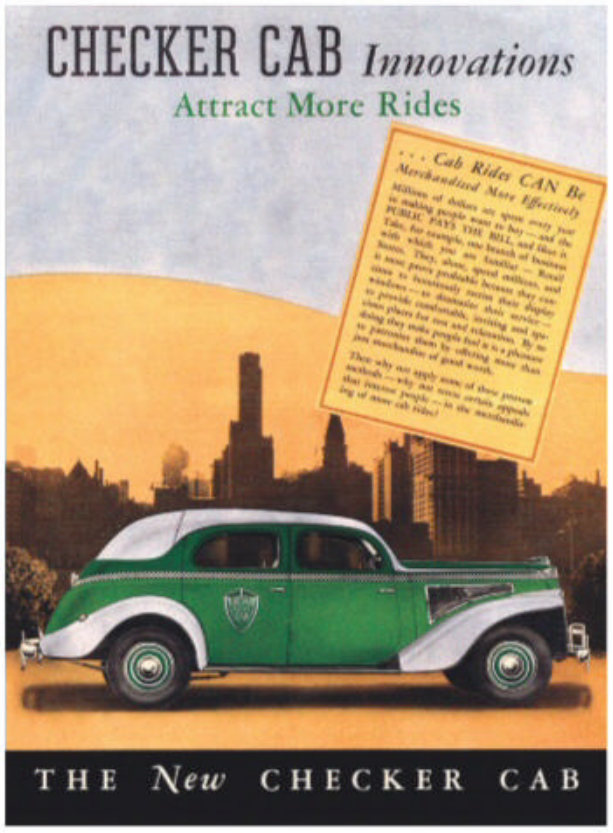
The big Model K for 1929 featured an open driver's compartment, limousine-style.



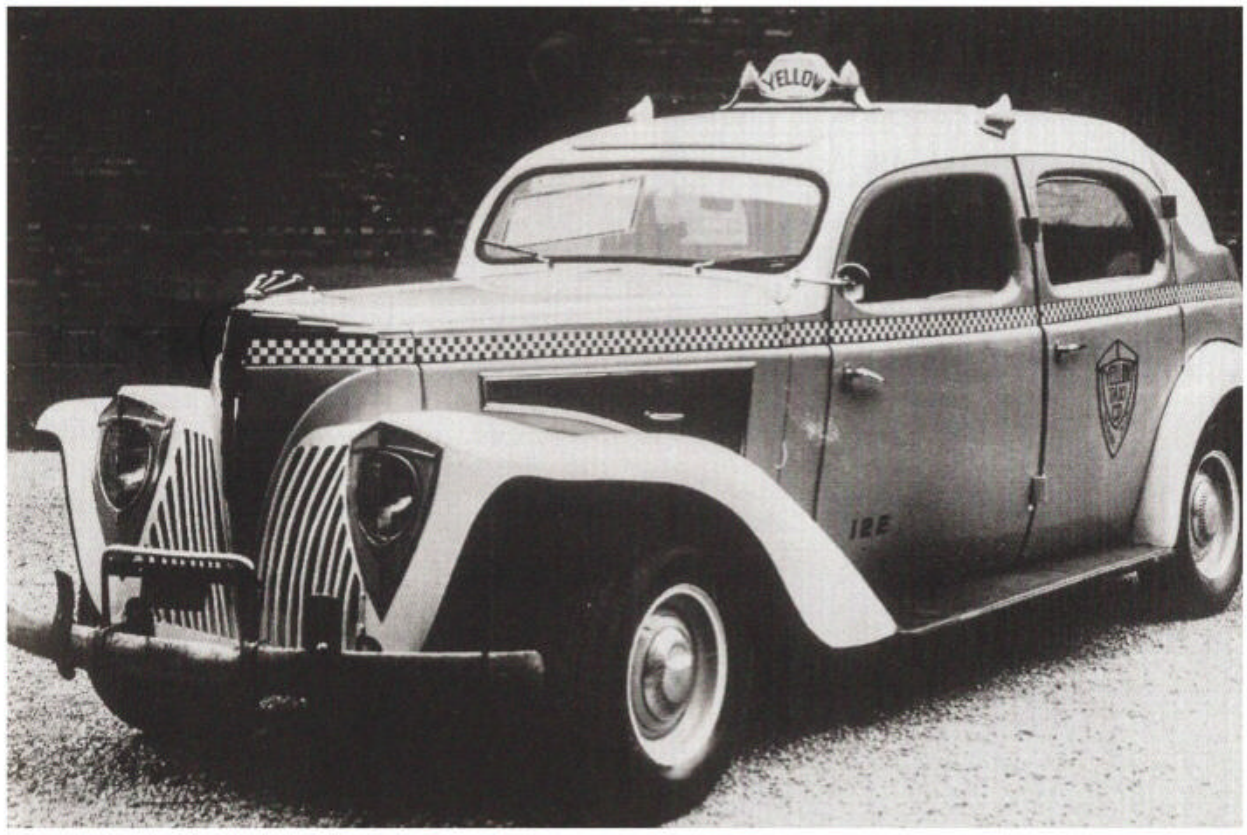
This big two-tone beauty is a 1931 Checker Model M. Notice the unusual front fender shapes and the rear-only running boards.

This big black beauty is a 1931 Checker Model M. Notice the unusual front fender shapes and the rear-only running boards.

This very rare photo is of a 1937 Model Y taxi, seen on the streets of Chicago. Note the 'Checker' name in the windshield header, and the windshield and side windows, both of which appear to have been pierced by bullets.



In all its years, Checker never produced a more radical car than the 1939 Model A.



The frontal view of the 1940 Model A shows just how unusual the styling was. We especially like the 'shield' pods holding the headlamps.

thus guaranteeing a steady market for the cabs he assembled. By 1929, production was an estimated 7,500 units per year, but with the onset of the Great Depression, it soon began to fall.

A new Model M joined the line for 1931. Riding a 122-inch wheelbase, it boasted a 61.5-hp Buda six-cylinder engine. Two versions were offered: the landau taxi and the new Suburban, which featured a folding rear seat and opening tailgate. The Model M was essentially a more powerful version of the Model K, and its unique new Suburban variation offered buyers much greater utility.

In 1933, the Model T appeared, which was the first eight-cylinder Checker. Powered by a 98-hp Lycoming straight-eight, the Model T appears to have been heavily based on the Model M.

It was during the Great Depression that the wisdom of Markin's ownership of various taxi companies was thoroughly proven. Although Checker Motors was forced to reduce production and even had to shut down completely on occasion, the company managed to weather the crisis

In profile the 1940 Model A was quite large in size, had unusual fender shapes and an innovative roll-down metal rear roof section.

and come out the other side as a viable concern. A great many larger independent automakers went bust during the mid-1930s, but Checker survived, thanks to sound management and a built-in customer base.

Even so, things were difficult at times. When the company began to lose money, Markin was again ousted from his position as president. He held an option on 60 percent of the company's voting shares, but lacked the money to purchase them. Then, in mid-1933, he sold the options to auto magnate Errett Lobban Cord, owner of the Auburn Automobile Company, Cord Corporation, Duesenberg Inc., Lycoming Engines, and more than 100 other companies. E.L. Cord, who apparently was a friend of Markin's, promptly exercised the options, gaining control of Checker. He reinstated Markin as president and transferred production of the Auburn-built Saf-T-Cab to Checker, in order to boost production in Kalamazoo. Cord ended up selling his Checker interests back to Markin in 1936.

Meanwhile, the company introduced the new Y-series for 1935. The Y-6 was powered by a Continental six-cylinder; the Y-8 by a Lycoming straight-eight. The Model Y's swept-back styling was quite different from previous Checkers, with a very pleasing sloping grille and front drip rail, and a rounded European-style rear roof line. Sales improved as the U.S. economy continued to climb out of the Depression.

Next to appear was the most innovative automobile Checker ever produced: the 1940 Model A. Overall, the body styling was typical 1940's "rounded potato," save for the bold front end which featured a high, sharp prow bisecting an unusual slotted metal grille, along with headlamps resting in dramatically-styled "shield" housings, and oddly cut-back front fenders; all four doors were rear hinged. The most unusual feature was the rear of the roof, which boasted a patented folding metal section allowing open-air motoring when desired. This unique feature was operated electrically from the driver's seat. Powered by an 80-hp Continental inline-six, the Model A won high acclaim when it debuted. Around this time Checker also took on extra work supplying truck bodies to Hudson for its panel delivery trucks.

When World War II began, Checker tried to win some of the Jeep contract business, converting two Bantam BRC-40 scout cars to four-wheel steering for better maneuverability. The company didn't land any substantial contracts for the Jeeps, but did end up with production contracts for tank recovery vehicles and large military trailers. Checker remained quite busy throughout the war with various contracts, but its engineers also began work on an all-new car for the postwar era. They wanted it to be something special, unique in design and radical in engineering. It would be called the Model D, and it was quite an automobile.

With World War II approaching Checker tried to earn additional business doing modifications of military Jeep vehicles, as depicted here with this modified 1941 Bantam Jeep with Checker-installed four-wheel steering.

Carryover Carryall

The 1988-'91 Suburban soldiered on to cap off the breed's longest production run

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY GENERAL MOTORS

Chevrolet's Suburban turned 85 years old in 2020, easily making it one of history's most enduring nameplates. The all-new 2021 edition, due out this year, is like a 19-foot-long rolling pleasure boat, and its 8,000-pound tow rating means it can pull most pleasure boats to the lake. The latest 'Burb rides, for the first time, on four-wheel independent suspension, with optional adaptive air ride. Power comes from one of two V-8s or the 3-liter Duramax diesel six, all paired only with a 10-speed automatic transmission. Inside, there are amenities that were once unthinkable in a light truck: 10-speaker stereo, touch-screen infotainment, 12-way power seats, and more.

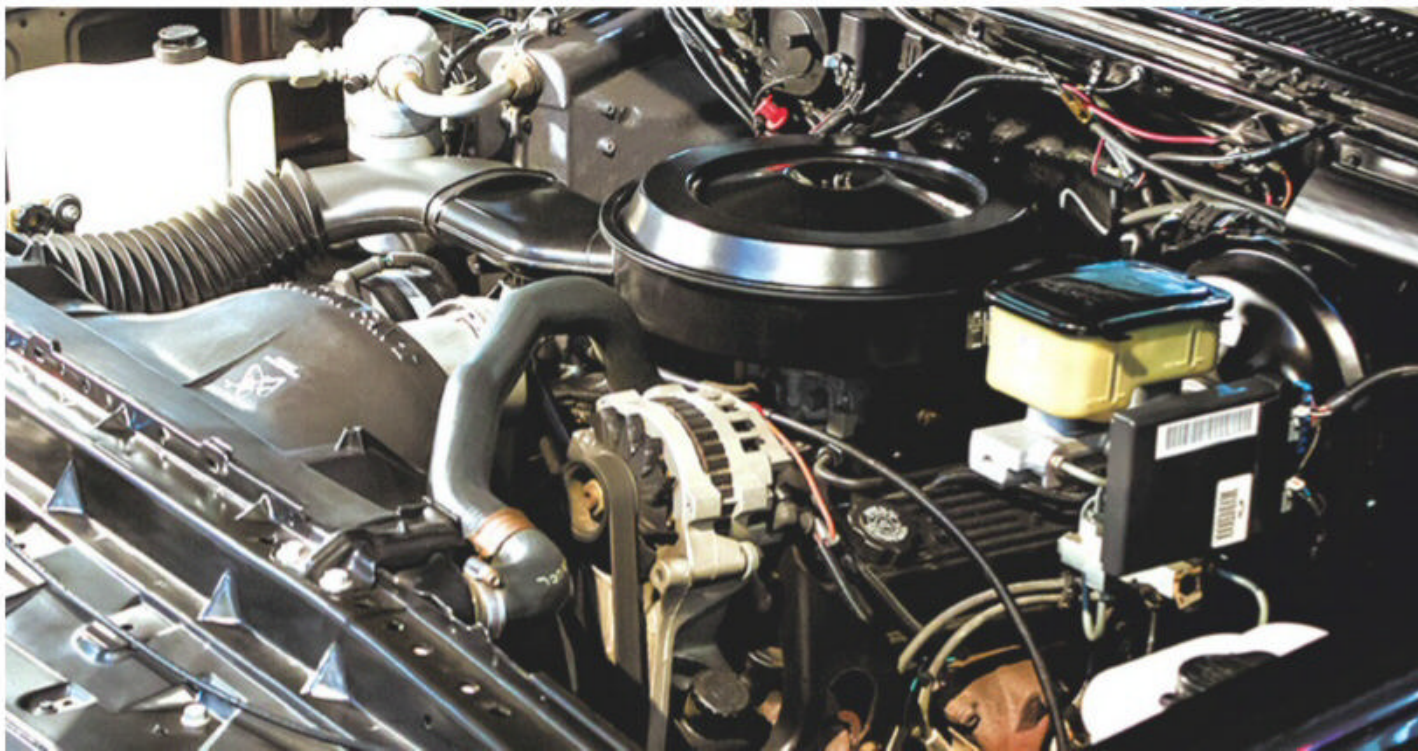
Luxuriously appointed Suburbans aren't a new concept, as our 1990 feature truck demonstrates. It's part of the GM North American Heritage Collection and a top-of-the line Silverado model with Deluxe two-tone paint in Onyx Black and Fire Red with Vermillion stripes. It has optional cast-aluminum wheels, a 210-hp throttle-body fuel-injected 5.7-liter V-8 with a four-speed automatic transmission, four-wheel drive, reclining front bucket seats, power windows, air conditioning, a center folding seat, and a rear seat, as well as a tailgate with electric window.

When this striking truck was new, it was already a little dated, arriving on the tail end of the 1973-'91 Suburban series. In 1988, Chevrolet rolled out its all-new GMT400 series C/K pickups, but the new Suburban wouldn't arrive until the 1992 model year. By then, the 1990s SUV craze was taking shape and buyers were demanding sedan-like comfort in a rugged-looking package. This 1990 4x4

This two-tone Onyx Black and Fire Red 1990 Chevrolet Suburban is part of General Motors' collection and nicely optioned with the Silverado package, extra-cost aluminum wheels, and more. Under the hood is a throttle-body injected 350-cu.in. V-8 rated at 210 horsepower, paired with a four-speed automatic transmission.

Suburban rode on leaf springs and straight axles, but Chevrolet's next series of 4x4s were more car-like than ever, with torsion bar independent front suspension (two-wheel-drives still rode on coils up front), Insta-Trac shift-on-the-fly four-wheel drive, and four-wheel antilock brakes.

Despite the Suburban's gentrification over the decades, its basic blueprint remains the same today as it did in 1935: an outsized station wagon body perched on a light-truck chassis. The original prewar Suburban Carryall had an all-metal cabin, rode on a 112-inch wheelbase, and



power came from Chevrolet's 207-cu.in. "stovebolt" inline-six. Initially, the truck packed 60 hp with 5.45:1 compression, but that was later upped to 79 hp. Upgrades to the 1936 truck included the addition of hydraulic brakes, but since the Suburban Carryall was still a commercial vehicle, items like a radio, clock, heater, and dual windshield wipers were available only as options.

For 1941, Chevrolet truck designers rolled out front ends with brightly polished vertical and horizontal grille slats, combined with bullet-shaped headlamp housings that blended into the fenders. This sparked new life into the exteriors of these haulers and created what collectors have long referred to as the "Art Deco" series, or as "Wurlitzer jukeboxes."

When the now-legendary Advance Design trucks hit the road in late 1947 for the 1948 model year, Suburban benefitted from the first significant redesign of Chevrolet's truck line since before World War II. The Advance Design series ushered in sloped fixed windshields, cowl-mounted wipers, and headlamps integrated into the front fenders. The cargo hold was accessible by (the buyer's choice of) either a tailgate or a pair of "barn" doors, and the two rear rows of seats were removable. For 1954, GM's Hydra-Matic automatic transmission was first available in Advance Design Chevrolet Suburban Carryalls.

The second-series 1955 "Task Force" Chevrolet trucks and carryalls boasted revolutionary new styling, with their wraparound windshields and no exterior running boards. The Task Force trucks also introduced the Chevrolet small-block V-8s that were offered in Suburbans until the LS series of V-8s became standard in 2000.

The Suburban Carryall had been around for 25 years when the next new series arrived in 1960. These Jet Age-styled trucks featured greater passenger amenities and safety features—although a deluxe heater was still a $53 option. The Suburban was offered in a ½-ton chassis, with two-wheel drive or four-wheel drive, but fewer than 1,000 of the approximately 13,000 examples sold in 1966—the final year for this body style—were 4x4s. The 230-cubic-inch six-cylinder was standard, but also available were two versions of the classic small-block V-8: a 283 engine rated at 175 hp and, later, a 327 rated at 220 hp.

For 1967, the Carryall name was dropped from factory literature and the newly designed Suburbans featured a third door on the right side of the truck. The 1967-'72 rigs introduced a longer, 127-inch wheelbase, which increased the

Suburban's cargo capability and enhanced its towing ability. This was also the generation that launched the ¾-ton chassis beneath the 'Burb. Suburban sales grew dramatically during the 1967-'72 era, from about 6,200 in 1967 to more than 27,000 in 1972. The number of Suburbans ordered with four-wheel drive increased significantly during those years, too. Only 166 ½-ton models and 120 ¾-ton models were built with four-wheel drive in 1967, but those numbers grew to more than 3,000 ½-tons and nearly 1,400 ¾-ton models in 1972. The 1972 model was the last to roll out with coil-spring rear suspension on two-wheel-drive trucks, until rear coils returned across the board (on two-wheel-drive and four-wheel-drive ½-tons) in 2000.

Big changes came with Chevrolet's 1973 light-truck overhaul, which was a good thing, considering that this same basic truck would soldier on through most of the 1970s, all of the '80s, and the early days of the '90s. In fact, the longest-running series to date in the Suburban's 85 years was the 1973-'91 edition.

The 1973 Suburban rolled out with four doors and rode on a 129.5-inch wheelbase. By 1980, the 250-cu.in. inline-six was gone and a small-block V-8 was standard. The 454 became the extra-cost big V-8 in 1973 and lasted as an option for years, though, in 1981, it was available only on ¾-ton, two-wheel-drive trucks. The front-end body panels were also redesigned in 1981, and quad headlamps became available. The 6.2-liter diesel was first installed in 1982, and fuel injection debuted on gasoline engines in 1987.

After 85 years, the popularity of Chevrolet's Suburban shows no signs of waning. As collector vehicles, you won't find many Suburbans outpacing midyear Corvettes. But a vintage Suburban makes an interesting collector car tow vehicle—at a fraction of the cost of new.

The interior boasts bucket seats, a folding second row seat, a third-row bench, and full carpeting. There's also air conditioning, power windows, and four-wheel drive with automatic locking/unlocking hubs. Map pockets, woodgrain trim, and deluxe door panels were standard on Silverados.


CHEVROLET
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GREAT LAKES

Executed Excellence

Final assembly of a show-winning 1961 Triumph TR4—Part II

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY AND LEAD PHOTO COURTESY MACY'S GARAGE

After all the required metalwork has been completed, and once the body shell has been painted, the most time-consuming part of any restoration is the final assembly. It's a tedious task to install all the trim and make it fit perfectly, all the while being extra cautious not to damage the new finish. That's why it pays dividends to test-fit every exterior part that gets bolted to the body, prior to applying the paint. It's similar to that old familiar carpenter's adage: measure twice, cut once.

When Mark Macy and his talented crew at Macy's Garage in Tipp City, Ohio, decided to restore Mark's wife Tonda's TR4 to a never-before-seen level, with the objective of attaining a perfect 100-point

score, they set in motion a goal that all before discovered was unobtainable. Thousands of parts make up a car, yet for a car to be judged with a faultless result, every single one of those parts has to be correct, finished in an authentic manner the way the factory first installed it, and be in like-new condition. Yes, it's a tall order, yet Macy's Garage did just that.

In the first part of this story in our last issue, when the Triumph Register of America held its 2018 national convention in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, this striking 1961 TR4 — known by its commission number, CT288L — won Best in Show and it did so by scoring a flawless 100-point grade. It was the first time since the TRA was founded in 1974 that a Triumph had achieved a perfect score. Here's the rest of the story.

When we asked Mark to describe the process of restoring a TR to show-quality condition, he gave us this detailed explanation: "Typically, we strip the body down to bare metal before replacing floorpans or doing any metalwork, but exceptions have been made once or twice. If a car was really weak through the middle, we would sometimes install the floorpans and inner and outer sills first, to hold it together. We have our cars chemically dipped at Pro-Strip in Indianapolis, which is a former Redi-Strip facility. This way, we can not only evaluate the condition and locate all of the weak areas that will need repair, but it also provides us with clean metal that can be easily welded to. Today, now that we have refined our body jigs, we have the confidence to go ahead and cut the worst cars in half, strip the pieces, and then build it back up on the body jig. Stripping a complete car of the TR4's size is close to $2,000."

Triumphs, like many other affordable, mass-produced automobiles built by small

The earliest TR4s used a combination of 11-inch brake rotors from the TR3A with B-spec calipers, but with a special rotor shield to accommodate the TR4's rack-and-pinion steering. Rare and hard to find today, this setup was used until TR4 CT4387.

Early TR4 hoods are known as "short" bubbles (to the clear the SU carbs below), but they were weak and would bend when lifted. Mark said: "We devised these auxiliary corner braces that mimic the factory braces at the front corners near the hinges."

Every TR engine rebuilt at Macy's Garage is run on a test stand for a minimum of 30 minutes for proper break-in of the camshaft and lifters, and to check for fluid leaks and general operation. The turquoise oil filter canister is factory correct.

Identical to the way it was assembled at the factory, painted bodies are dropped over the restored completed chassis with engine and gearbox in place, as this avoids any chance of damaging the finish. Gearboxes and differentials are rebuilt in-house.

Because TR2-TR4 exhaust systems are notorious for leaking at the first joint, where the front downpipe meets the front muffler, after the exhaust system is installed, the engine/gearbox are removed so the pipes can be TIG welded for leak-free connection.

Original-spec mild steel exhaust systems are virtually unobtainable, so stainless steel systems are accurate reproductions, and last longer, too. Note the correct straps and hardware used to attached the Macy's Garage-made brake hard lines.

Six workers were required to lift the newly painted fenderless and hoodless body onto the restored rolling chassis, prior to which new insulation strips were fitted atop the chassis rails; the body was then fastened down using new bolts and washers.

New reproduction taillamp assemblies were painstakingly tested for a correct fit while the body was in the metal shop. They have been topped with new-old-stock Lucas lenses, which had a different pattern and were dated "61" on the early TR4s.

The windshield frame was first painted white to match the body, then it was trimmed in a thin black vinyl just like the original before being refitted to the body. A new windshield replaced the scratched original, adding to the TR4's new-car appearance.

The first 11,307 TR4s were fitted with this embossed aluminum gauge panel which was easily damaged and hard to restore. The Macy's sorted through their extensive inventory of spares and selected their best original panel for use on this car.

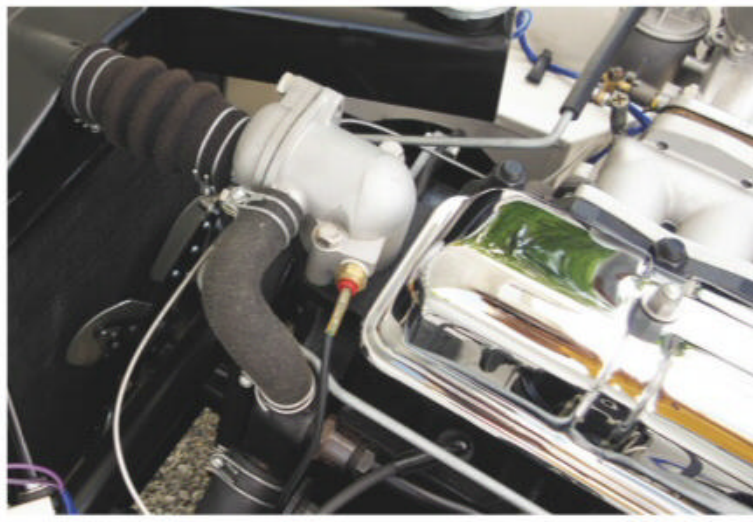
All early TR4s had white painted instrument panels, but it's believed that all USA-bound cars after CT30000 (early 1964) were fitted with polished wood veneer. Lower crash pads and air vents must be assembled before the dash is installed into the car.

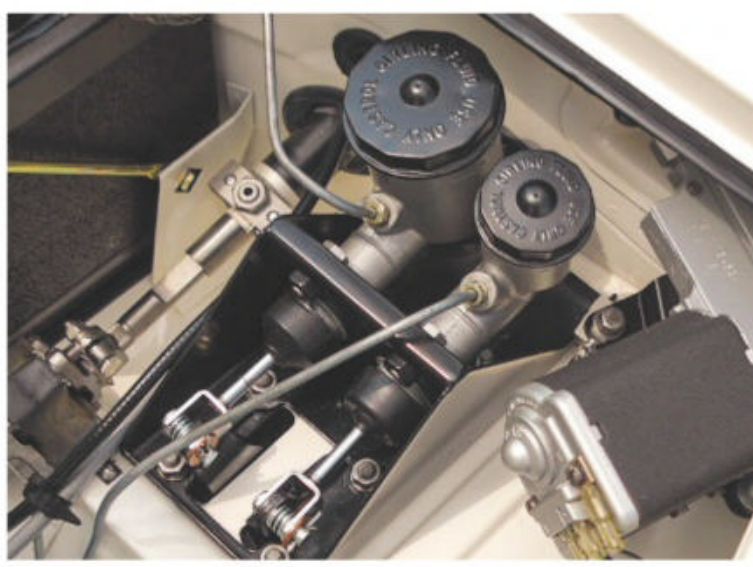
The heater assembly was completely restored, even duplicating the side panel stamps seen here in white and red. The electric motor was rebuilt, all seals and grommets replaced, and the original core was tested and repaired at the local radiator shop.

The correct shade of blue upholstery with white piping and gray carpets accurately replicates how this TR4 was originally built. The three-spoke steering wheel and black shift knob are also correct, as is the white instrument panel that all early TR4s were fitted with.

manufacturers, had their share of shortcomings after assembly. Fitment of body panels and trim, for example, was oftentimes less than ideal. Added to that reality was that this TR4 was a very early production example, thus it shared some components with the former TR3 model. Mark told us, "Shooting for a perfect 100-point car is extremely difficult on its own, but then with this TR4 being such an early build, the research to verify and document all of the strange early parts and changes added a huge additional burden to the process. The early production cars were built with many leftover TR3 parts, and several early TR4 components that were quickly changed or superseded when the first design pieces didn't work out."

Although this TR4 was mostly complete when Mark and Tonda purchased it, there were a few parts missing, some of





The fully rebuilt 2,138-cc wet-liner four-cylinder engine features all the correct details, including black air cleaners, rocker cover cap, and master cylinder caps, chrome plated rocker cover, correct blue-taped wiring harness, ribbed top radiator hose, and wire hose clamps.

The sidescreen TR2-TR3B cars are fun, more like go karts, but my aging body appreciates the creature comforts offered by the TR4, such as roll up windows and a trunk that's large enough for an overnight bag. The ride of the IRS cars (TR4A-TR6) is a little too soft, so the TR4 is really the sweet spot for me.

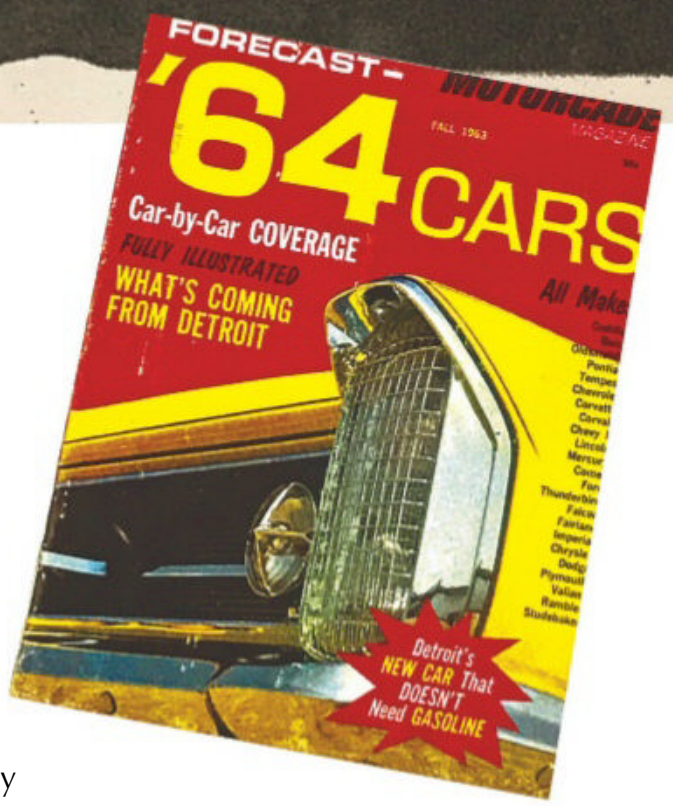
Researching and documenting all of the early parts and changes was an exciting and difficult challenge, well beyond the effort needed for the TR restorations we do daily at our business. But now that CT288L is complete, it's fun to explain to other Triumph enthusiasts why this car has a TR3 engine fan and radiator, why the lower dash support is vinyl covered instead of painted with wrinkle paint, and why the trunk prop rod is more like a TR3 boot rod than the familiar TR4 sliding support bar, just to name a few. This car is destined to be a "Trailer Queen" for a while longer.

which are nearly impossible to find today. Looking back, Mark revealed, "The absolute hardest piece to find was the early TR4 bonnet safety catch, p/n 611635. Prior to this car, I had only seen drawings of these in the spare parts catalog, and CT288L was missing this catch when we received the car. The parts catalog is blank at the spot where it should show the VIN when this part was eliminated, but it must have been very early. We also have TR4 CT611L in our personal collection, and the early "short bubble" bonnet on that car has never had the blind nuts installed to attach this catch. We got very lucky: One day, out of the blue, I received an e-mail from a TR enthusiast in Canada who asked if we needed this part for #288. He learned from our website that we were restoring this super early TR4, and he just happened to have an NOS part available, complete with the Stanpart ID tag still attached!"

As often happens when shop owners tackle personal projects, the restoration of Tonda's TR4 was placed on the back burner many times, in order to complete work on customer's cars. Thus, this car's restoration took way longer than usual. But just how many months does it take to restore a TR? Mark cautioned us that this question can be very misleading, however, he did say, "We find that the length of time to restore a car is more often tied to the owner's financial health, and their ability to keep up with the invoices, than to the implied difficulty of the restoration. We can usually perform a frame-up restoration on the worst of these cars in 14 to 16 months if the owner can keep up with the progress payments, so rougher cars can often be completed much faster than better candidates if the owner can afford to fund it. But as for CT288L, we worked on this car off and on for brief moments between client cars for a little more than seven years. Professionals in any business never seem to have enough time to work on their personal projects. With the goal of a 100-point car, we also did not hesitate to back up and redo tasks which did not come out absolutely flawless the first time, and that added to the length of time to complete the restoration as well. What mattered most to us were the end results for this car, so we did not keep track of man-hours like we normally do for client cars that have price tags attached to them."

Bob Marcks

Designer, *Chrysler Corporation*



BOB PALMA'S COLUMN, "WHITHER the Convertible" in *HCC* #168, was excellent in covering the realities of the convertible's rise and fall that culminated in the production of the "last American convertible," the 1976 Cadillac Eldorado. When Lee Iacocca arrived at Chrysler, he overcame formidable odds and saved the corporation. He deserves full credit for every accomplishment that contributed to it. However, he obviously didn't personally initiate all of them. The convertible was a work in progress when he heard about it. But he did like the idea (in contrast to his sales and market VPs, who reluctantly signed up to sell 5,000, if sold at cost!) so much he had the Gaffoglio Family Metalcrafters in California build him one, but it was unrelated to the production program.

I had arrived at Chrysler in 1973 in a 1970 Le Mans convertible, after 10 years as a partner in a California design group. I returned to Detroit as a designer, as I had been with Ford, Raymond Loewy, and Studebaker in the past. I designed Chrysler's 1977 turbine car and a custom Cordoba for Ricardo Montalban. I then joined Product Planning, becoming Chrysler's special vehicle projects manager.

In 1980, and employed by "financially troubled Chrysler," we needed new products, but we were out of money and out of time. As Chrysler's special vehicle projects manager and also corporate show car designer, I searched for any overlooked opportunity; only the convertible's potential stood out when this Sherlock Holmes' quote came to mind: "When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." We had received several letters asking for an undefined "fun" car. There were also news articles about people seriously restoring old Mustang convertibles, in unprecedented numbers, and that the Mercedes SL series convertibles had the highest retained percentage of resale value of *any car sold*.

I had begun working with Cars & Concepts in 1979 on a 1980 Turismo Spyder show car, with its Ferrari-like hatch (Iacocca considered it for production), prior to creating the Plymouth Reliant convertible show car for the 1981 Detroit Auto Show (LeBarons were introduced in 1982). I was responsible for the product plan and spearheaded the production version, introduced a mere 11 months later. The car was launched with a three-month waiting list; at the time, one of the company vice presidents told me, matter-of-factly, that there was "no effing way, the Plymouth

2002 DODGE RAM

50 Year Ad Theme: "FORD BUIL

Ford brags about it's *tough* trucks. Has
every other vehicle built, car or truck.
Fifteen years ago those Ford pickups outso
If you were hopelessly-out-of step-Dodge,

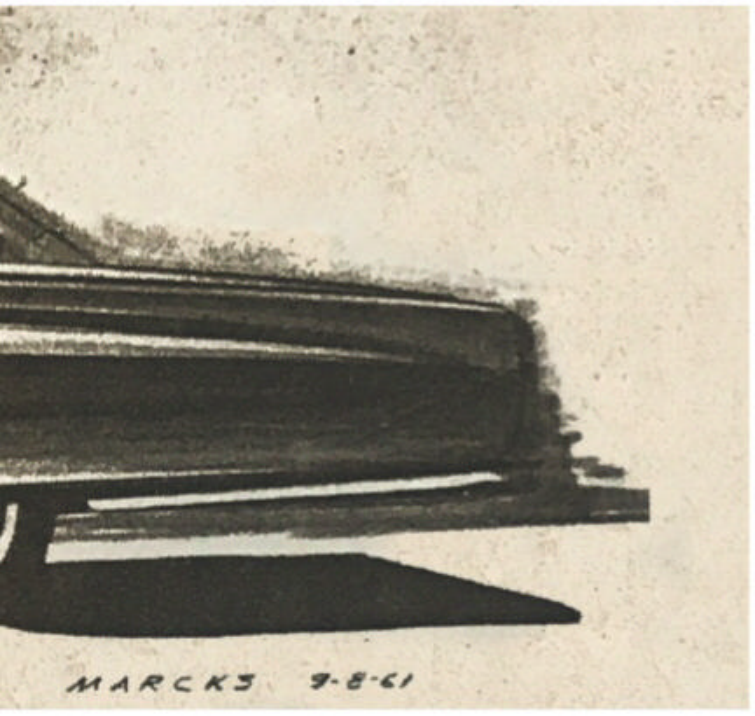
March 16, 1986: The Dodge /

At a Michigan ski lodge on a warm St.
was bad at skiing. So (as a Dodge marketing ma
paper on hand . . .
When the competition sells six times more
on advertising, logic might call the situation ho
marketing ju-jitsu. I sketched and scribbled notes

Ford builds tough trucks? Ma

Force Ford to promote Dodges! This page
a tougher "big-rig" look; with a "tombstone" grill
As you see above, my sketches forecast th
years later as "Dodge scores with its '02 family tr
Dodge Ram pickup sales quadrupled -- f

Bob M
480.860.



Reliant would be built in the K-car plant," but demand was so great, just three months later he was proved wrong.

But prior to its introduction, Chrysler stock price kept dropping—the K-cars were an indifferent success—the convertible had a positive influence out of proportion to its sales, although sales were "ten times greater than expected." In *Car and Driver's* February 1982 cover story: "Convertibles come back!" and "Chrysler's leading the way," by Editor David E. Davis, he stated, "The LeBaron convertible is quite a handsome car when its top is down, with a silhouette that is at first glance reminiscent of the Mercedes-Benz 380SL. This car makes us optimistic about Chrysler's future to almost exactly the degree that the clumsy, obsolete Imperial made us doubt that it had one."

Others felt the same way. Chrysler stock had dropped to a new low of $3 per share the week of the introduction, then shot upward instantly, forecasting Chrysler's return to profitability. Convertibles, directly and indirectly, produced much of Chrysler's 1982 turnaround profit. An August 2, 1982, *Newsweek* story titled, "Chrysler Makes a Comeback" stated: "Each convertible carries a profit margin of almost $4,000 versus $1,000 for the standard K car, and they have also sparked interest in Chrysler's other big and more profitable models. 'It's marketing par excellence,' says Maryann Keller. 'They've gotten all the mileage they can out of one car.'"

A new Renaissance in convertibles had begun in earnest. *Automotive Age* in a January 1982 article, "Bob Marcks, The Man Who Brought Back Domestic Convertibles," indicated this may have also been a sign of rewakening of not just the United States market, but the world's market. I only recall Mercedes SLs and Alfa Romeo roadsters at that time—there were others, of course—and today Mercedes and BMW offer 11 different convertibles between them!

In 1988, Chrysler LeBarons became the best-selling convertibles in the world. From zero to number one in six years! Then I moved on to Dodge marketing, proposing a "big-rig" image for the Dodge Ram pickup.

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.

BRENT MOORE
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

The Old MGA

IT WAS THE WINTER OF 1968, AND I had been without a car since being drafted into the U.S. Army the year before. Upon leaving for the service, I had sold my Chevrolet Impala to my brother Marlon; we both enjoyed that car immensely. In December 1968, I got leave to come home for Christmas.

As I was enjoying my time back home, I ran across a pale yellow 1957 MGA 1500 coupe at a used car dealer in Long Beach, California, and fell in love. It was listed at a reasonable price, though more than my available funds, but I still attempted to buy it. Servicemen at that time were considered to be high risk for loans. I was told that I would need a civilian to co-sign for a loan before the dealer would sell me the car. My former roommate Paul and his wife Carolyn agreed not only to co-sign on the loan, but also to advance me some of the funds needed for the down payment. I purchased the car for $895, with $400 down and 18 monthly payments of $36.31. (Paul and Carolyn received an additional $25 per month, until they were reimbursed.) This all came together for me just in time, as I needed to start back to Fort Benning, Georgia, right away to allow for a few days of travel.

The return trip to Fort Benning began that very afternoon. I made it fine down to San Diego, but as I got into the Pine Mountains, the MG started overheating. It got progressively worse, until I had to pull over to let it cool down. From that point forward, I would start the car, go through the gears, then put the car in neutral, turn off the ignition, and coast as far as the car could travel before pulling off the road to allow it to cool down again. I repeated this ritual for several hours, until I saw a vacancy sign in front of a large old private home. I pulled in, paid for a night's stay, and went to my room in the basement of the house.

I left early the following morning and started once again with my drive/cool down regimen. I drove through a few small towns before limping into El Centro, California, which had a radiator shop. It turned out that my radiator was totally blocked, most likely from the additive used by the car dealer to plug the leaks in my MG's cooling system. It took an entire day for the shop to rebuild me a functioning radiator, but with a lighter wallet I resumed my journey eastward.

Because it was winter, I determined that the Southern route across the country would be the most prudent way to go. I was able to take Highway 10 through much of Arizona and New Mexico, and mainly experienced the boredom of long days driving, followed by somewhat seedy, run-down overnight lodgings along the way. I did manage, however, to get myself a speeding ticket in the middle of the night, driving through an almost totally uninhabited section of Texas. The state trooper there wasn't inclined to give a G.I. a break, especially one coming from California.

With all of the delays after I started this trip, I was beginning to wonder if I was going to make it back to base on time. The Army's grace period wasn't long after you were supposed to be signed back in on base; miss it, and you were considered AWOL (Absent Without Leave). It was a long and fairly uneventful drive across Texas, but when I hit Louisiana, the car, including all lighting, would randomly die for no apparent reason. I would pull over

and stop, open the hood, then start wiggling wires until the lights came back on and I knew the car would start and run again. Unfortunately, it chose very inopportune times to die, like at night, on the serpentine backroads of Louisiana's swamps. There were no street lights or other automobiles on these roads, so when the car died and my lights went out, I would have to open the driver's door and look for the white lines in the middle of the road to guide my car to a stop without going off into the swamps. I was always worried about crossing paths with an alligator at those times.

I continued in this fashion through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and finally arrived in Columbus, Georgia, near Fort Benning, late in the morning on the last day of my grace period. My car made it to within one block of my Army living quarters, then died and refused to start. Fortunately, it was close enough that I was able to push it back to my company barracks parking spot. My MG then sat for the next several weeks, as I didn't have enough money to get it repaired. It ultimately needed a new starter motor, and some of the wiring had burned up and needed to be replaced. The reason my car, and all of its electrical functions, kept dying was traced to the main wiring harness, where it went through the firewall. Some of the insulation had rubbed off the wires, and when I hit a bump in the road, the bare spot on the harness would short out against the metal firewall.

Once I had the old MG repaired, I was able to get off base more often. In town, people would point at my car and say, "What kinda car y'all got there?" MGs and most other sports cars were not common in the South, except for on the military bases. I also found out that repair parts were never on hand locally and always had to be shipped in. Because of this, I got creative when my coil wire gave out. I cut a section out of the power cord on our barrack's floor buffing machine to replace it. The improvised coil wire worked better than the original and didn't short out and kill the engine when I drove through a puddle. It functioned beautifully for years and was still on the car when I sold it.

Panama City, Florida, was our "go to" destination when we could get a weekend pass, as it was close enough to get to on Friday night and return from on Sunday afternoon. On one particular trip there, the fuel pump on the MG got wonky as I was trying to leave for the base. As it was Sunday, and most cities observed Blue Laws, I was in a real pickle as to how to get my MG fixed in time to make it back on post before being AWOL. The fuel pump itself was under the floor behind the passenger seat. After I had located it, I tried to repair it, but to no avail. Being as this fuel pump was produced in the UK by Lucas meant two things: First, there was no way that anyone would have a replacement fuel pump available nearby, and second, hammer strikes often do wonders for mechanical parts made by Lucas!

I didn't have a hammer, but I did have a heavy Crescent wrench which could substitute for one. If I struck the body of the fuel pump, it would temporarily cause the electrical points to open and pump fuel, at least for a few seconds. With this newfound remedy, I drove for hours with my right arm draped over the passenger seat, and smacked the fuel pump each time the points would stick. I made it home with an hour of my grace period left, went to bed, and woke up the next morning with my neck seized over my right shoulder. It took several days before it returned to normal.

For the next few months, my MG caused me no problems and actually won the occasional drag race against a fellow drill sergeant who drove a Triumph sports car. Of course that couldn't last, as I soon discovered some broken and loose spokes on my wire wheels. No one nearby was set up to repair wire wheels, but I finally found a shop in Florida that said it could. I had to put the MG on blocks and ship them the wheels via Greyhound Bus. Several weeks later, I was notified to pick up the wheels at the bus depot in town. Much to my dismay, several of the spokes on the wheels were still loose, although the broken ones had been replaced. I phoned the business to complain but was met with indifference. "Nothing we can do about it," the shop said. I attempted to file a small claims court grievance, but again ran into too many obstacles to even pursue that remedy. I would have tightened the loose spokes myself, but they were too frozen with corrosion to adjust. I decided that they would be okay, as most of the other spokes were tight.

When I completed my term of duty in December 1969, I decided to drive to Chicago to visit a girl I had occasionally dated on post. As I traveled north, I realized how cold it could get in an MGA with no heater, and no airtight door and window seals. My desperate remedy was to stuff my laundry around the edges of the doors, and I even tried heating the cabin with open cups of hot coffee placed on the passenger's floor. After a few freezing days in Illinois, I was eager to get on the road and head home to sunny California. The MG was good to me, as we made it back to home without incident.

HEMMINGS AUCTIONS

BY TERRY SHEA
IMAGES COURTESY OF WWW.HEMMINGSAUCTIONS.COM

Heavy Traffic Leads to Strong Bidding

NEVER FAR FROM THE PULSE OF THE ACTION ON THE COLLECTOR-CAR market, we are now closer than ever with our online-only Hemmings Auctions, where we immediately see trends and surprises alike. We are able to tell not only which cars are selling or which ones end in a bidding war as time winds down, but also the volume of people that are visiting our auctions site. Perhaps one of the most positive signs of the strength of the collector-car market during the first couple months of the pandemic has been the record levels of traffic we are seeing at hemmingsauctions.com. And that has led to some strong bidding as well.

The 1957 Chevrolet Nomad detailed below was one of three, two-door '57 Chevy wagons that recently sold on Hemmings Auctions. The other two were customized 150 (sold for $38,850) and 210 (sold for $30,975) Handyman versions, with the more upright B- and C-pillars. Both of those featured more modern drivelines rather than the original-type engine in the Nomad, but strong bidding on all three shows what car guys have known for years: people love wagons and Tri-Five Chevys.

It's no surprise that a Full Classic like the 1947 Lincoln Continental would appeal to bidders, particularly a nicely turned-out example. The same goes for the Ford Model A, also discussed here. But with interest in Eighties cars at an all-time high and collectors always keen on entry-level cars, an 11,500-mile 1989 Lincoln Town Car sold for $11,025, while a higher-mileage, but still rather clean, one-owner 1988 Chrysler Fifth Avenue, described here, found a new home with a collector for just $3,800.

Note: We're proud of our new online auction so we've decided to share some sales results here, in monthly reports detailing the vehicles that crossed Hemmings' virtual block. Hopefully you'll find these vehicles and sales outcomes as interesting as we do. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Auctions Editor Terry Shea: terryshea@hemmings.com.

1947 LINCOLN

Model: Continental cabriolet
Reserve: $32,000
Selling Price: $49,350
Recent Market Range: $23,000-$37,000

Lincoln Continentals are among a handful of postwar cars considered Full Classics by the CCCA and they've been popular with collectors since they were new. This example, refinished in Pace Car Yellow (a Continental paced the 1946 Indy 500), won a third-place in class trophy at a West Coast concours in 2015. The paintwork looked exemplary, but there were imperfect panel gaps, reported engine leaks, a disconnected overdrive, and some noticeable wear, bunching, and uneven stitching on the redone interior. Despite those flaws, the final result was a very strong showing against other recent sales.

1957 CHEVROLET

Model: Nomad
Reserve: $42,600
Selling Price: $47,775
Recent Market Range: $41,000-$51,500

Long before a "sport wagon" was a thing, Chevrolet sold the Bel Air Nomad, a unique two-door wagon in its highest trim level. A great number of Nomads (and plenty of regular, old '57 Chevy sedans) have been given the hot rod treatment, but this '57 Nomad remained largely stock, though the tinted windows certainly felt anachronistic to that standard of originality. It featured a 283-cu.in. Power Pack V-8 under the hood. The Matador Red finish was applied sometime in the last 15 years and had some touchups, but the underside of the car was shown to be very clean with almost no surface corrosion at all.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept
Selling Price: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee
Recent Market Range: Range of selling prices for similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months

Hemmings Auctions is a live, online-only collector-car auction staffed by live customer service professionals ready to help bidders and sellers with any questions. See more at hemmingsauctions.com.

1931 FORD

Model: Model A sport coupe
Reserve: $14,250
Selling Price: $23,625
Recent Market Range: $12,300-$17,800

This Model A was said to have been restored from the early 1990s through about 2000. The PPG two-stage finish, in Bronson Yellow with black fenders, dated to 1993, but appeared to be holding up well. The brown padded top and exterior chrome also looked to be in good shape, though the wheels showed some chipped paint and the wide whitewalls on the tires looked like they were close to a match for the body color. The engine bay, with some surface corrosion on the exhaust manifold and its fasteners, could have used some tidying up. That said, bidders took to the little coupe and significantly bested the going rate.

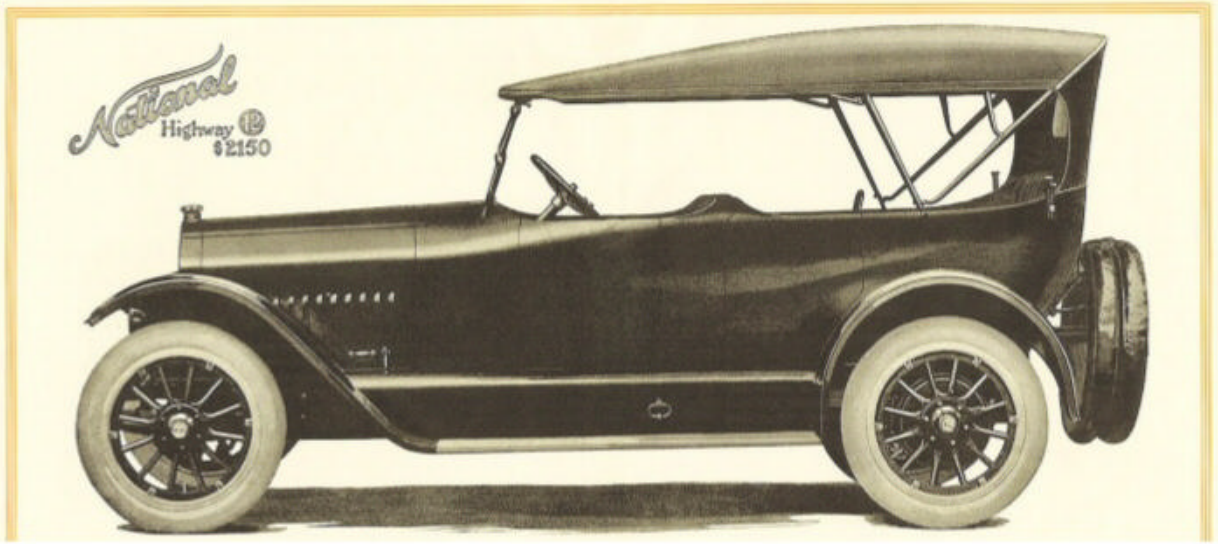
1988 CHRYSLER

Model: Fifth Avenue
Reserve: None
Selling Price: $3,800
Recent Market Range: $3,200-$5,800

With 98,000 miles on his car, the only owner of this Chrysler probably decided the time was right to sell before the odometer rolled around to the six-figure mark. This entry-level collector car, among the last of the full-size, rear-drive American sedans, presented as a clean, well-cared-for car, but far from concours ready. Underhood was dusty, but not crusty. There were a couple of door dings, and the plastic insert between the body and the front bumper had faded. But the interior presented in excellent condition, and the underside showed only slight surface corrosion, a rarity in a New England car.

REARVIEW MIRROR 1916

BY TOM COMERRO



THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TWELVE IS A NEW OFFERING FROM THE INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR Company. The V-type engine features six cylinders per side, en bloc, at a 60-degree angle, generating more power with its 338 cubic inches. Conveniences include aisle-way front seats, angled windshield to decrease wind resistance and reflections, and a larger body and new tire holder allowing for the transport of two tires requiring only one strap. The Highway Twelve is available for as low as $1,990.

FACTORY PRICES

Buick	$985-$1,485
Cadillac	$2,080-$3,600
Chevrolet	$490-$750
Dodge	$785
Ford	$390-$740
Franklin	$1,900-$3,100
Hudson	$1,350-$2,000
Hupmobile	$1,085-$1,365
Oldsmobile	$1,095-$1,850
Packard	$3,050-$5,150
Pierce-Arrow	$4,300-$7,200
Stanley	$1,925-$1,975
Studebaker	$850-$1,675

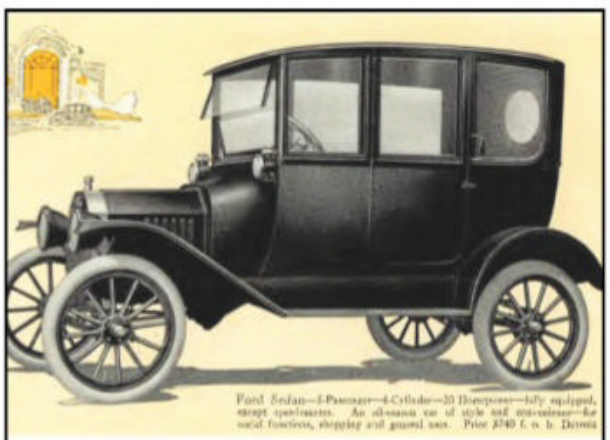
SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Ford	734,811
2. Willys-Overland	140,111
3. Buick	124,834
4. Dodge	71,400
5. Chevrolet	70,701
6. Maxwell	69,000
7. Studebaker	65,536
8. Saxon	27,800

CHAMPIONS

Indy 500	Dario Resta *(84.001 mph)*
Grand Prix	Suspended due to WWI



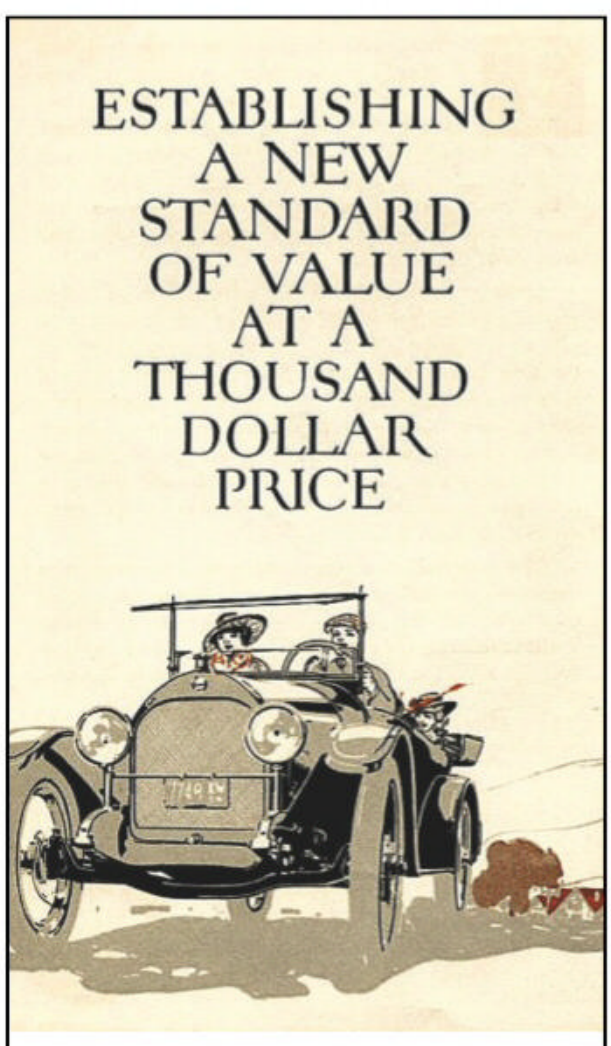
FORD CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE market with over one-million cars in service today. Known for its dependability and simplicity, the Model T continues to perform and is available in five different body styles. Powered by the reliable four-cylinder, four-cycle engine, the Model T has more power per pound than any other mass-produced car on the market. Available now at its lowest ever price, the Model Ts start at $390.

ELCAR BURSTS ONTO THE MARKET AS "THE Car for the Many" from the Elkhart Carriage & Motor Car Company. Each is powered by a 37.5-hp Lycoming four-cylinder, and the 114-inch-wheelbase Elcar is available as a five-passenger touring and Clover Leaf runabout. Silent, powerful, and smooth riding, the Elcar offers you features and performance usually only associated with a higher price range. The Elcar is available starting at $795.

EXPENDITURES

(per capita)

New auto purchase	$12.44
Auto parts	$5.54
Gas and oil	$11.73
Intercity transport	$5.43
Local transport	$7.78



THE JEFFERY FOUR AND CHESTERFIELD SIX return with the most advanced engineering and driver comforts available on the market today. The Four is powered by a high-speed, high-efficiency L-head four-cylinder, capable of 40 horsepower and the Chesterfield sports a six-cylinder with an output of 48 hp. Interiors finished in comfortable black leather and deep double-deck springs, with other equipment, including rain vision windshield, electric horn, specially designed one-man tops, and much more. Pricing for the Jeffery begins at an affordable $1,000.

2020

HEMMINGS MOTOR NEWS

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PRESENTED BY HAGERTY DRIVERS CLUB

New Dates! August 22-30 2020

2020 GREAT RACE ROUTE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22
START: Alamo Plaza (Alamo front), San Antonio, TX - 8 a.m. to noon
LUNCH: Courthouse Square, downtown San Marcos, TX - noon
OVERNIGHT: Santa Fe Plaza, Temple, TX - 4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23
LUNCH: Lake Granbury Conference Center, Granbury, TX - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Ardmore, OK - 5 p.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 24
LUNCH: Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum, Sapulpa, OK - 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Joplin, MO - 5:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25
LUNCH: Benton Square on East 5th Street, Rolla, MO - 11:45 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Cape Girardeau, MO - 5:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26
LUNCH: Broadway and Water Street, downtown Paducah, KY - noon
OVERNIGHT: Veterans Blvd., downtown Owensboro, KY - 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27
LUNCH: Elizabethtown Sports Park, Elizabethtown, KY - noon
OVERNIGHT: Griffin Gate Marriott, Lexington, KY - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28
LUNCH: Visitors Center, 11th Street, downtown Huntington, WV - 11:40 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Word Park, Neville Street, downtown Beckley, WV - 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29
LUNCH: Main Street, downtown Galax, VA - 11:15 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, downtown Mooresville, NC - 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30
FINISH: Hyatt Regency, Main Street, downtown Greenville, SC – 1 p.m.

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ODDIES BUT GOODIES

"Cannonball" Baker with the Gardner sedan he bought immediately after his trip across the continent in one of the cars

Cannonball Run

Motor Age
May 22, 1924

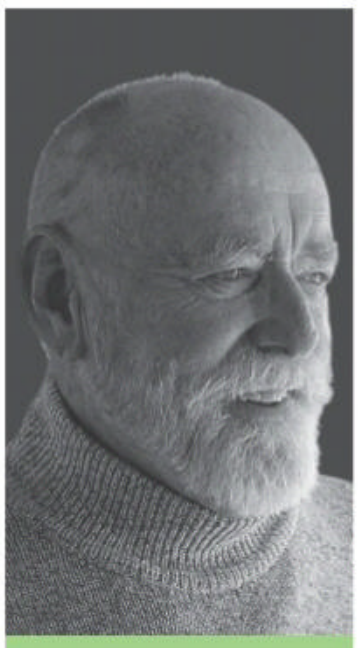
GET READY TO

GET OUT

PROJECT OFFLINE!

Get ready to go off the grid, grow a weekend beard and go analog with the latest project from Hemmings: Project Offline! We're building a 1976 Chevy Blazer prestomod that preserves the original spirit animal of the truck while restoring all its Blazer-cool and a few great mods you're gonna love for some added kick-in-the-seat fun. **Come along for the ride at hemmings.com and go Project Offline!**

Hemmings
Est 1954
Dedicated to the drive™



> Think about it. You could take your bubble — and its inhabitants — with you wherever you went.

Revivin' the Drive-In

In my squandered youth, we spent a lot of time sitting in our preened and polished rides at drive-in restaurants, sipping our Cherry Cokes and watching the endless stream of cool and not-so-cool cars cruise by. We were lucky if we even found a slot on a Saturday night in the summer of 1960. And cute girls came out in little uniforms with short skirts to take our orders: burgers, fries, and soft drinks were the usual fare.

Ground-pounding hot rods with rumbling Chevy small-blocks would roll slowly through, and occasionally a big Chrysler Hemi shook things up. And then there were the customs that were lowered to the ground, with '59 Dodge Royal Lancer spider hubcaps glinting slowly as they passed. Sometimes they even sported little lamps in the wheelwells to make the hubcaps sparkle. There would also be plenty of backyard specials, what we now call rat rods, that were assembled from available junk.

Cruising drive-in restaurants was a national pastime in the '50s. The places were so crowded on weekends that you often had to make several passes before you could stop and have a meal. It was like one continuous car show. And when you finished your burger-in-a-basket and tired of the endless cavalcade of cars, you then headed to the drive-in theater for a double feature and a little alone time with your main squeeze.

If you ran short of money, you could cruise through the drive-up window at the bank nearby and cash your weekly paycheck. There were even a few funeral homes where you could drive in and view a dearly departed loved one through a big window where they would pull back a curtain upon request.

If you wanted to attend church, you could head back to the drive-in theater on Sunday morning. The late televangelist Robert Schuller, who built the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, started his church in a drive-in theater in the 1950s, and, in 1961, he even purpose-built his own drive-in church. A local disk jockey came up with a slogan for it. He quipped: "Come as you are, but stay in your car."

And then there was the family Sunday drive and picnic. The drive, not the destination, was the point. Sometimes we would tour the harbor and see what ships had come in, or take a spin in the countryside when the orange trees were in bloom, or perhaps go over to the airport to park and watch the airplanes take off. In those days, cars had wind wings, too, so Dad could smoke and flick his ashes out without rolling down the whole window on cold days.

So why do I bring all this up? Just this: I think we need to go back to those days. It would mean a return to big, comfortable, stylish cars and, in view of the fact that we need to keep our distance due to this COVID-19, we could stay in them and go to drive-ins and be safe and healthy. Think about it. You could take your bubble—and its inhabitants—with you wherever you went.

In my opinion, cars are why my native Los Angeles has had far fewer coronavirus cases than New York City. That's because most people drive to work here. Sure, we clog the eight-lane freeways for hours at a time, but we do it in the relative comfort and isolation of our own cars; whereas most New Yorkers take subways or other public transportation, sitting or standing in close proximity and sharing whatever virus is popular at the time.

I'm ready for this return to the drive-ins. I have a '55 Chevy Beauville station wagon that seats six, and I have my doo-wop tapes in the glove compartment. I'm eager to once again cruise the A&W, Harvey's Broiler, or Scriveners in L.A. where Art Laboe used to do his live radio show. Art was the one who coined the term "Oldies but Goodies," and he is still with us, albeit a bit older.

Not only did we do our banking, dining, courting, and viewing of the latest flicks in our cars, but we could even sleep in them, when necessary. The seats in the early '50s Nash Ambassadors folded into comfortable beds; and the Kaiser Traveler – America's first hatchback – also opened out for comfortable convenient slumber.

I say we need a major push to build new drive-in restaurants, theaters, and churches, though perhaps not funeral homes. I would mandate that Cadillac resume building the 1959 Eldorado Biarritz, and I will put in my order right now for one, preferably in Pepto Bismol pink with a white top. I would be ridin' in style and stayin' healthy. It couldn't get better than that.

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