

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR

AMERICA'S DEFINITIVE COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

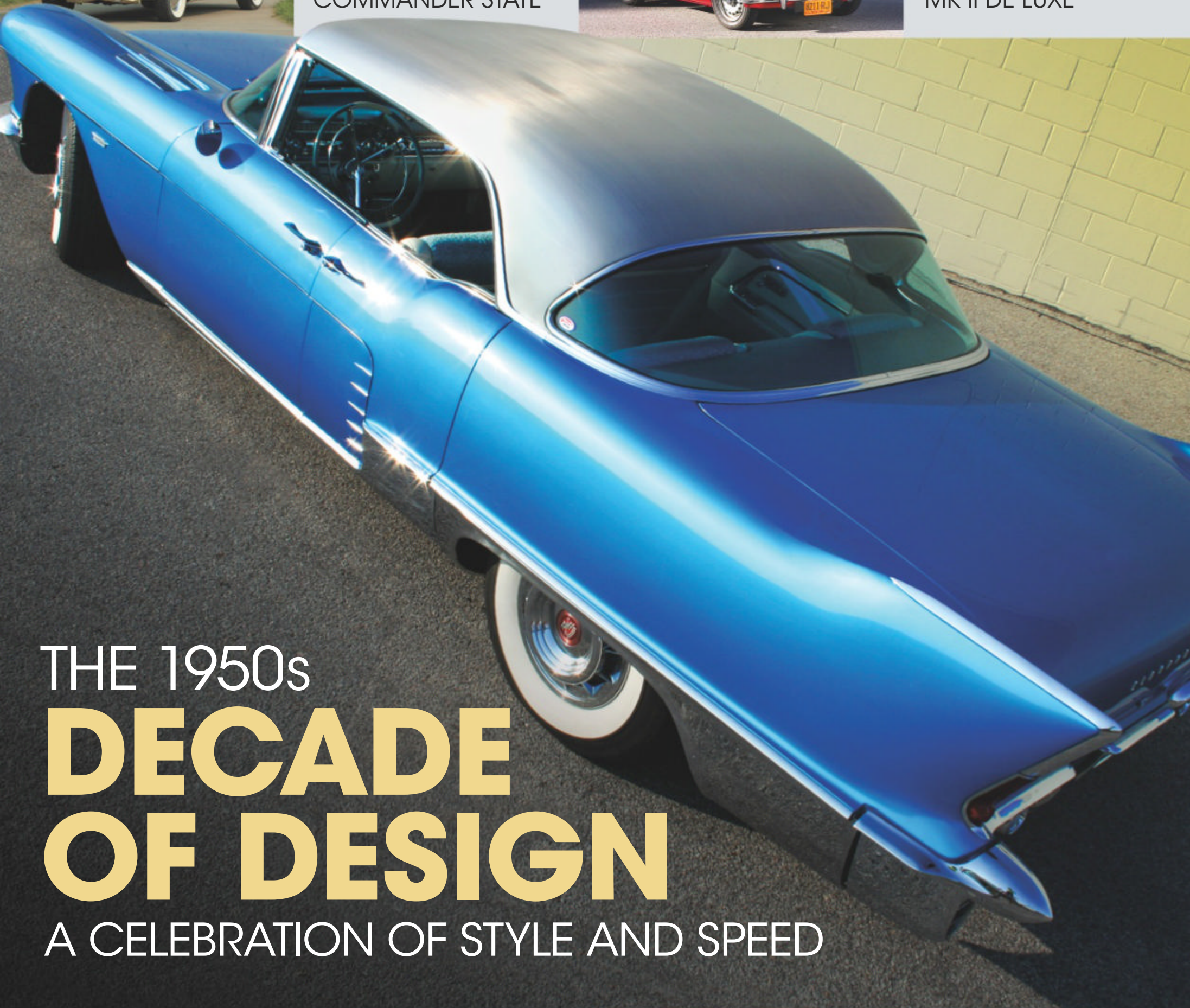
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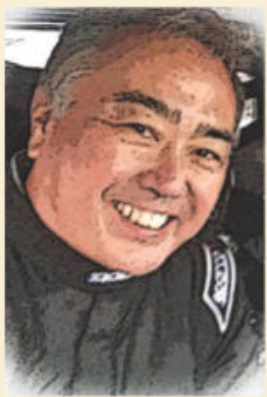


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Car Talk'n With Wade

MAX AIR

The 1962 Chevrolet 409 Bel Air Ushered In The Muscle Car Era

A few years before the muscle car era officially kicked off, the Big Three auto manufacturers in Detroit were already competing in the horsepower wars. The full-size cars of the late 1950's and early 1960's brought along large-displacement engines that rocked the automotive world with stout compression ratios, solid-lift camshafts and multiple carburetors. The example shown here is a 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air, which is actually one of Chevy's lower trim models, compared to the highly-optioned Impala. These stripped-down cars were often equipped with six-cylinder engines, but a select few left the factory with Chevrolet's top-performing engine, the illustrious 409.

This beautifully restored 1962 Bel Air bubbletop features a set of 14-inch OE steel wheels, which are painted body color and equipped with original dog dish caps. The tires come from our BFGoodrich Silvertown product line—they feature a bias ply construction and 8.00-14 sizing, which is the proper fitment for a 409 car. Blackwalls are shown, but we also offer these tires in authentic one-inch whitewalls and wide whitewalls for earlier models. Our American Classic Bias-Look Radial is another great option if you're looking for the original appearance combined with the improved highway manners of a modern radial.

Wade Kawasaki

Wade Kawasaki is the President and CEO of Legendary Companies, and is the Immediate Past Chairman of SEMA.

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CONTENTS

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR • NOVEMBER 2021 • VOLUME 18, ISSUE 2



60

PERSPECTIVE

- 6 Terry McGean
- 10 Lost & Found
- 14 Recaps Letters
- 18 Matthew Litwin 🚗
- 20 Pat Foster
- 72 Jim Richardson

FEATURES

- 8 News Reports
- 22 1957 Cadillac Brougham 🚗
- 40 1969 Chevrolet Malibu
- 48 1962 MGA 1600 Mk II De Luxe



spotlight
nifty '50s



10

MARKETPLACE

- 30 A Dozen Affordable '50s Cars 🚗
- 54 Buyer's Guide:
1951 Studebaker
Commander State 🚗
- 68 Auction News & Highlights
- 70 HemmingsAuctions.com

TECH

- 12 Products & Parts
- 60 Restoration Profile:
1957 Ford Tudor 🚗



40



48

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185/70VR14	CN36	\$159.00	285/40YR15	P7	\$555.00
205/70VR14	CN36	\$269.00	345/35YR15	P7	\$599.00
155HR15	CA67	\$219.00	205/55YR16	P7	\$289.00
165HR15	CA67	\$226.00	225/50YR16	P7	\$335.00
165VR15	CN36	\$245.00	245/45YR16	P7	\$359.00
185/70VR15	CN36	\$295.00	185VR16	CA67	\$345.00
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There was

something

special going

on during that

period of the

mid-to-late

'50s...



A Brief Moment in Design

I can still remember the day our neighbors brought home their “new” car. Really, it was new only to their household, and was in fact many years beyond the showroom by that point. It was a 1956 Chevy Bel Air, but we were standing in 1974.

I was a young kid then, still years from being able to drive but already infatuated with cars, and any time someone I knew was acquiring a different vehicle, I was anxious to check it out – it didn’t matter what it was. But when the ’56 Chevy arrived next door, I was enthralled. The son in that family was my age, and my best friend at the time. Both of us thought that old car was just about the neatest thing we’d seen on wheels, and any opportunity to ride in it was an event.

I knew what a Chevy was and that this one was from the 1950s, and I recall that it was a two-door hardtop with two-tone paint and lots of interesting details – I still remember the awe when his father demonstrated how the fuel filler was behind the taillamp. Looking back, I’m thinking that one had the “Power Pack” 265 V-8, because I recall my friend showing me the dual exhaust outlets and explaining, “That means it’s fast.”

Among the recollections of that car and its details is the memory of how special it seemed, not just to me and my friend, but to the adults around us. Our parents would have been in their mid-30s at that time, and they’d have been high school students when the Chevy was new, so nostalgia was certainly a factor. But there was more to the reactions of the “grown-ups” we’d encounter with that car than a simple reminder of youth – the car seemed to make people smile everywhere it went.

What strikes me all these years later is how that car – not yet 20 years old – seemed to have come from another time, one that was very different from the one we were in. Plus, it was a Chevy, one of the most popular, and therefore, commonly seen cars on the road when it was new. Take a look at a period photo of a city street scene from 1955 to about 1962 and you’re almost guaranteed to spot at least one “Tri-Five” Chevy in the frame – they were everywhere. I have a 21-year-old car sitting in my driveway right now that appears very near to the way it left the showroom, but nobody takes notice when I drive it. It’s not so interesting, just an older car.

There was something special going on during that period of the mid-to-late ’50s, the outcome of all that postwar enthusiasm and

prosperity. Conservative design took a backseat, while bold, ornate design swept in. It was hard for me to believe at six or seven that the very neighborhood I lived in would have once had cars like this Bel Air in nearly every driveway, but that would have been the case. It was a suburb just north of New York City, built in the teens and ’20s, and just 15 years prior, there’d have been fins jutting up over most of those hedge tops.

Another striking thing about those ’50s cars when viewed from 1974: They were essentially gone. Part of what made the sight of that ’56 draw reactions from onlookers was likely the fact that you just didn’t see those cars around. Sure, they had to exist somewhere – there are still plenty extant today – but all those once-everyday autos from that relatively brief time had seemingly vanished from the roads. If I did see some sort of “old fashioned” car from the ’50s, it was unusual enough that even my parents were apt to take note if they spotted one first.

I later became very interested in cars of the ’60s and ’70s, and that remains with me today, but even those celebrated machines were far more subdued than their predecessors. Part of that was just the changing trends – the ostentatious cues of the ’50s had waned. Those same driveways of my old neighborhood might have seemed more modern circa 1968 to the people of the time, but the typical mid-’60s Satellite or Skylark would not have made the statement sitting at the curb as the Belvederes and Supers that came before.

In spite of all the fascinating and covetable cars that have come since the Jet Age tapered off, I don’t think there’s ever been a period of such aggressive and ornate style. It wasn’t for everyone even then, but those designs are still being admired today, even by people who were born long after the Eisenhower administration wrapped, and I expect that will continue.

With some car gatherings happening again, I was able to see this in action recently. A little boy was holding onto his mother with one hand and pointing wildly at a ’58 Buick as it rolled past him. I can only imagine what someone that young today must have thought of that chrome-bedazzled monster, but if the look on his face was any indication, he’s already hooked. 🐞

Write to our editor-in-chief at tmcgean@hemmings.com.



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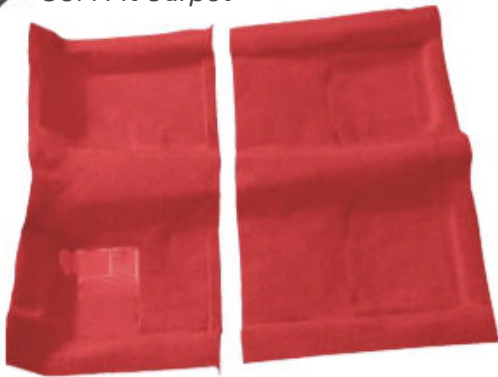
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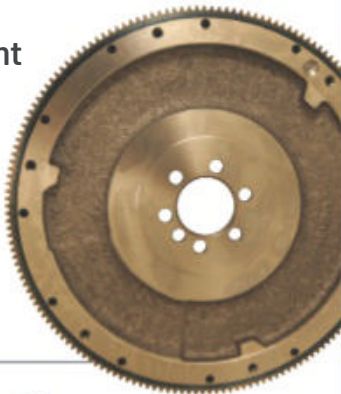


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Joint Efforts Lead to “On the Road” Membership

AMERICA’S AUTOMOTIVE TRUST,

which includes museum stalwarts such as LeMay—America’s Car Museum and the America on Wheels Museum, is teaming up with the Gilmore Car Museum to form a new “On the Road” membership. The partnership offers members mutual benefits at multiple museums across the country. The goal is to promote collaboration



between member organizations to facilitate exploration of museums in other areas of the country, especially by promoting road trips. So far, the museums providing reciprocal benefits to members are the America on Wheels Museum in Allentown, Pennsylvania, the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan, and LeMay—America’s Car Museum in Tacoma, Washington.

“The best way to perpetuate car culture is by working together to break barriers, enhance experiences, and offer frictionless ways for passionate enthusiasts to enjoy cars,” said America’s Automotive Trust’s CEO, Tabetta Hammer. “Our ‘On the Road Membership’ and the partnership between these three incredible museums is an important first step in what I believe can become a revolutionizing way we think about and enjoy auto museums in the future.”

Members of each museum can take advantage of free museum admission, free parking, 10-percent discounts on museum store merchandise, and more. Members should plan to bring and show their current credentials from their “home” museum to take advantage of these benefits. For more about the joint endeavor, visit americaonwheels.com, gilmorecarmuseum.org, and americascarmuseum.org.

Autos & Ales Returns

THE AACA MUSEUM, INC.

has announced that its annual “Autos & Ales” fundraiser will return in November to the grounds of the museum. Expect live music, food, and samplings from dozens of breweries, surrounded by the galleries of the

Hershey, Pennsylvania, transportation museum. Local participants will be joined by the area’s newer breweries, as well as some more distant brewers representing their part of the Keystone State.

Jeffrey Bliemeister, the museum’s executive

director, said, “This is one of our largest and most important annual fundraising events. It is also the most fun, attracting museum guests that otherwise may not visit. We welcome all Pennsylvania breweries, and those in adjoining states, to participate.”

Tickets for Autos & Ales are now on sale and the museum will honor tickets from the canceled 2020 show. The fundraiser is set to take place on Friday, November 5, from 6-10 p.m. Head to aacamuseum.org for more information.



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727-848-7171 • floridaswapmeets.com

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20 • MAFCA Indoor Swap Meet

Albany, Oregon • 541-928-1218 • mafca.com

25-28 • Turkey Run

Daytona Beach, Florida
386-767-9070 • turkeyrun.com

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.

Cottonwood Tour

THE 2021 VINTAGE MOTOR CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

Cottonwood Tour will take place November 7-13 in Arizona. The tour will welcome classics to the area with stops that include the Grand Canyon, Bearizona wildlife area, and Planes of Fame Air Museum. Other planned visits are to Fort Verde, the Arizona Copper Art Museum, Montezuma Castle National Monument, and the Clemenceau Heritage Museum, as well as a trip to the old town of Jerome. The scenic tours will include a drive through Sedona’s Red Rock country, including the Chapel of the Holy Cross.

Registration is still available and open to VMCCA-recognized vehicles 25 years old or older; no replicas or highly modified cars allowed. For more about the tour and the club, visit vmcca.org.



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RE: Executive Flagship

WE RECENTLY HEARD FROM RONALD HEILMAN OF LEWISBURG,

Tennessee, who took a liking to the Executive Flagship (see *HCC*, September 2021) as a teenager reading *Popular Science*, and whose abiding interest in house trailers led him to take jobs selling and even designing house trailers as early as age 13. Though he did spot the Executive Flagship on the road in Florida in 1955 or so, he had a more personal encounter with mobile home tycoon William MacDonald's grand vision a decade later, when he came across it in a storage yard in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"It was in deplorable condition," he said. "It was mostly a shell of its former self. The roof leaked and ruined the floors. The interior walls were gone, and the kitchen was scrapped."

Yet it still had the custom-built couch in the observation deck and the curved sections of steel for the collapsible (not inflatable) pool. And what's more, the storage yard manager claimed that all it needed was a battery to run again. As Ronald relayed what the manager told him, the Executive Flagship had been parked in the storage lot several years prior, then whoever owned it at the time simply abandoned it. The lot wanted \$2,000—essentially what it



was owed in storage fees—and Ronald could take it.

"I was interested in purchasing it, but it was so far gone," he said.

Sometime after that, the Executive Flagship disappeared from the lot, presumably to be scrapped. Ronald never saw it again.

First Mid-Engine Corvair?

EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD LEE EGLESTON

can say for sure that the 1962 Chevrolet Corvair that he once owned was the most dangerous car he ever drove. Not because of the swing-axle rear suspension that Ralph Nader found fault with (or, at least, not just because of the swing-axle rear suspension). Rather, what made it the most dangerous car he ever drove was the 327-cu.in. small-block Chevrolet V-8 that he replaced the rear seats with, quite possibly making it the first mid-engine, SBC-powered Corvair.

The idea came about, according to Egleston, in 1968, after he removed a 327 from a 1965 Chevrolet and decided to mount it in the Corvair in a mid-engine configuration by removing the Corvair transaxle's front cover cap and replacing the main transmission shaft with the input shaft from a conventional transmission. With the help of a 1/2-inch-thick adapter plate, he then bolted a stock Chevrolet bellhousing to the front of the transaxle and the 327 to the bellhousing. "The transmission in the Corvair never moved," he said.

To cool the 327, he fit a Cobra radiator under the decklid. Headers, gauges from the 1965 Chevrolet, and custom front engine mounts were all it took to get the Corvair running again. He didn't even bother installing a separator between the engine and cabin.



Egleston got to enjoy the Corvair for about six months before a divorce forced him to sell it off. He kept in touch with the subsequent owner, who left the Corvair behind parked at his grandmother's house. The grandmother, according to Egleston, got tired of it sitting around and had the junkman haul it away. Egleston didn't see the Corvair go through the crusher, but he assumed as much.



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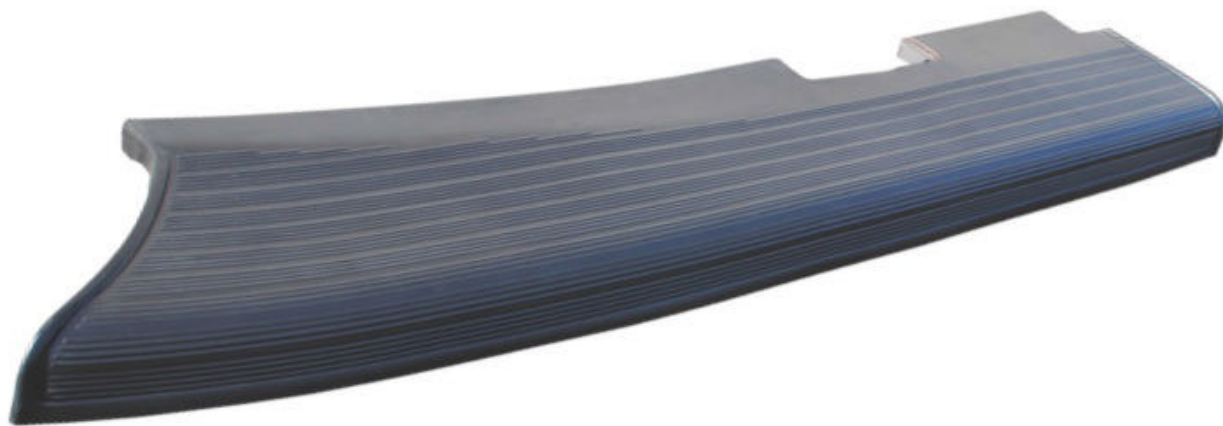
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I READ JIM RICHARDSON'S COLUMN

in the August issue ("Maserati Boogie and Offenhauser Blues," *HCC* #203) over and over as it not only drew me in with his writing, but the way he could turn words into music. As I read it, I could hear those sounds, including the Matra at the Long Beach Grand Prix in 1978, as I also attended that event (I still have the poster). There is one engine that I would include among those producing the most addictive sounds: the 1978-'79 Honda CBX, with six-into-two open exhausts, especially at wide-open throttle. I owned one many years ago and I think that it could be the reason I am having hearing issues now. That screaming exhaust would drill its way right into your ear canal, as if it were a serpent hunting its prey. I am lucky that I did not become the victim on the TV show "Deadly Neighbors," as even though it was the world's greatest opera, rock & roll, and rap all bundled up and passing down the same conduit, there were others that did not enjoy it, or at least would not admit to it. I still have a CBX engine in the shop and maybe I will take it out and fire it up one more time, just to satisfy my love of gasoline motor music. Thanks for the column!

Harold James Kie
Nampa, Idaho

LIKE JIM RICHARDSON, I HAVE BEEN

a lover of the great sounds made by engines. Some of my favorites are the Porsche 917 180-degree V-12 and 911 boxer-six. Most V-8s have a strong, healthy tone, but the blown dragsters are piercing. My favorite V-8 song is the rumble of the 1964-'65 Plymouth Barracuda Commando single exhaust, with its unique exhaust extension. It is a sound all its own! Dual exhaust adds another dimension that can be very pleasing with any engine. Four-bangers can sound great, especially the old Offys. I came across a fairly stock Model A with dual pipes at a car show that sounded very unique. Six-cylinder engines are pretty sweet, with the V-6 having a slightly different note than an inline-six. The sound of the Mopar dual-exhausted flathead straight-six coming down from speed, on compression, is the sweetest rumble of all.

Bob Westphal
Vancouver, Washington

YOUR ARTICLE IN THE SEPTEMBER

issue on International Harvester pickups (*HCC* #204) had a picture that included



the crew-cab Travelette. I have always wondered about the origin of that name. The primary meaning of the suffix "-ette" is "a smaller version of." We have kitchenette, featurette, statuette, novelette, tow-ette, cigarette, sermonette, and so on. By sheer coincidence, Pat Foster's column in that issue mentions the Autoette minicar. But what was the Travelette a smaller version of? Since the names are similar, my best guess is that it meant the vehicle was smaller than the Travelall, not in size but in passenger capacity—six versus eight. Is there a better explanation?

Mark John Astolfi
Danvers, Massachusetts

I think you've got the gist of it, Mark: The Travelette did not have the cavernous capacity of the wagon-style Travelall—it was indeed "smaller than" in terms of interior space. Yet the Travelette was still well suited for traveling, thanks to its then-unusual (for a pickup) full-size back seat. It was a good choice for a work crew heading to a remote job site, or a family hauling a camping trailer or boat.

I REALLY ENJOYED READING JIM

Richardson's column in the August issue of *HCC*, "Maserati Boogie and the Offenhauser Blues." There are some engine sounds that just give you goose bumps, and he hit the button on several of them. Like Jim, I was also fortunate to hear the scream of exotic engines at various racing sites, including the early Formula 1 races

at Long Beach. The sounds made by high-performance engines are music to my ears, but nothing quite compares to standing next to a Top Fuel dragster idling in the pits. Silence, then the sound of the starter motor turning over the monster V-8. POW! And it fires; cover your ears or the vibration will mercilessly rattle your eardrums. Pah-rump, pah-rump, pah-rump... shaking the earth as it idles along. And then the world suddenly changes as the throttle is quickly cracked and all of your senses are attacked! Your body feels the explosion go right through you, the perfume of nitro attacks your nostrils and makes your eyes flow like waterfalls; I love it. Offenhauser, Ferrari, Ligier, or Keith Black, they all affect the center of my soul.

Jan Herten
Laguna Niguel, California

I WAS READING THE RECAPS

section in the August issue (*HCC* #203) and when I got to the letter sent by David Fluck, I was surprised to see that he was responding to an article about a 1969 Plymouth with the vinyl "Mod Top" option.

I know these cars are rare and I had one. In 1969 I was thinking about buying a Chrysler and when I got to the Chrysler-Plymouth dealership in Dallas, I saw this beautiful bronze Plymouth Fury with the paisley roof. I immediately fell in love with it. It had more accessories

Continued on page 16



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than most higher-priced cars, although this car wasn't cheap. One of them was something that I had never seen on another car. It had headlights that closed when not in use, and they were equipped with wipers and water jets to clean them when needed. These features were included, as were the automatic transmission and radio.

This car was very smooth and quiet on the road and when going to Kansas City from Dallas in a snowstorm, I traveled at 70 mph like I was on dry pavement. The snowflakes were a nuisance, though.

When I moved to Kansas City, I worked as sales manager for a small chain of four auto parts stores. My main function was calling on service stations, car dealers, and any other place in the Kansas City area that used auto parts or paint. I had to make several stops a day, and in a couple of years—believe it or not—I completely wore the hinges off the driver's door. I had to trade the car I had loved for a few years.

Roland Sneed

Blue Springs, Missouri

YOUR AUGUST ISSUE WAS OF PARTICULAR interest to me. I've owned three TR-3s at different times: a red 1960 I literally bought new off the showroom floor, a green one I bought to replace the original one I lost in a divorce settlement, and lastly a used TR-3B. I felt the TR-4 transmission in the "B" was far better than the original, and I liked the wire wheels as they seemed to give it better stance because of the couple extra inches of width. Also, the hard-top made it more comfortable in winter and also reduced cowl shake. However, with failing eyesight, I couldn't keep up the work on it, and I had to sell it. I wish I still had it, although with today's heavy traffic, with semis and vans, it is really too small to drive. One can't see around other cars, and they can't see you.

In talking with an older clerk in a parts store, I mentioned the TR and he told me how he had developed yellow spots in the whites of his eyes when he owned a TR. He consulted an older eye doctor, who was mystified as to what caused them and said he hadn't seen anything like it since the days of pilots who flew open-cockpit airplanes without goggles. That explained it!

I also owned an E-type Jaguar, so your issue was a double hit for me. However, the less said about the Jaguar the better—it was a jinx among lemons, and I was supremely happy to see it sold. It took great faith to subsequently buy another Jaguar, a 1990 XJS V-12 convertible, which I still have (and love), and also an XJ8, which was totaled in a parking lot, and which I still miss.

One of the fond memories I have about the sports car era was the comradery of the owners; we always waved to fellow enthusiasts. In fact, *Playboy* magazine printed a sort of spread sheet to show who outranked whom, and which owner should wave first (an MG owner should wave before a Jaguar owner, etc.).

Thanks again for your fascinating and informative magazine. As an old-timer, it's always great nostalgia.

Bill von Kaas

Madison, Wisconsin

IN REFERENCE TO THE ARTICLE

pertaining to International pickup trucks from 1969-'75 (*HCC* #204, September 2021), in 1969 I went to my local IH dealer and ordered a new pickup for my own use. I was doing some logging at that time. I had the truck beefed up quite a bit. As I went over the specs, several things were enlarged: I had the biggest clutch, biggest brakes, heaviest springs, etc. all on what began as a ¾-ton unit. When it came in, I got several years of trouble-free service out of it. It was, no doubt, the best truck that I had ever owned and used. I had it until about 15 years ago when I sold it for snowplowing. It served that owner for several years, and then he sold it to a local supermarket for snow plowing. It was finally scrapped last year.

But what further interests me happened about 2011. I was going to visit a friend in Arkansas and had stopped in Springfield, Ohio, overnight. Before starting out in the morning, I stopped at a diner for breakfast. During the time I was eating, a man came in with a great Ford that he had restored. I'm not a Ford person, but we can all relate to a great restoration regardless of our personal likes. I spoke to him as I was headed to the door. He invited me to sit and visit, which I did. I came to find out he had worked for many years at the International Harvester factory in Springfield, and he was, for much of this time, on the line that made

the special-order trucks, like mine. As we talked, he told me of things that were on my truck that were unusual without me first telling him. He had been on the crew that actually built my truck according to my specs. He even told me the dealer's name as he had many custom-made trucks on the road. How many of us will ever find one of the people who actually assembled our car or truck?

What I have today that passes for a truck can't hold a candle to those old Internationals. If they could only build them today!

Jack Forster

Middletown, New York



THANKS TO YOUR FEATURED ARTICLE

and photography on pages 30-35 of the September issue of *HCC*, I identify with the ultra-pragmatic design of the [Oldsmobile] Delta 88 Royale, circa 1977-'84.

Specifically, I drove a 1978 Delta 88 for 24 years, achieving 23.6 mpg over 192,000 miles with the preferred 350-cu.in. engine. The fabric seats remained intact and ideal. Both the front rotors and driveline U-joints functioned flawlessly with periodic care. The suspension geometry remained exclusively optimal, utilizing 235/75R15 Michelins. Indeed, the light blue Olds, with its HEI ignition and .060-inch spark-plug gaps, performed well.

Frank Pfau

Advance, North Carolina

I AM SURE THAT IN THE 15-PLUS

years that I've been subscribing, no car has captured my fancy as has the 1958 Buick Caballero station wagon (*HCC*, May and June). I'm hopelessly smitten.

Where might one find restraint on this uber-chromed beauty? The front bumper is on the small side. There are no port-holes, wheel opening or rocker moldings. Also, the rear center bumper bar has the blackish insert to tone down the chrome. The instrument panel doesn't appear too chromed. I would have expected the dash to have more of a "wow" factor.

The rear end is an overload of bright—even a thin strip below the gate.

I have dealt with Buick sheetmetal over many years; could this rear bar assembly (including the ends) have fit on a sedan? It would be the first I have encountered. Perhaps a GM parts book could confirm this.

Also, I thought that there might be some connection between the inlay on the 1957 Bel Air quarter panel and the ornamental assembly on the Caballero quarter.

My only complaint is that I wish you had included better pictures of the dash, seats, and door panels. The Garnet Red paint sort of morphed into an attractive medium-dark pumpkin orange.

I wish the wagon would go on a national tour, or at least there be an open house to see, touch, sit and get a ride in this car. My bags are packed!

Thomas Radlo

Westfield, Massachusetts

I STARTED DRAWING CARS WHEN I

was four years old. My father hung the pictures up, and I still have them today. I began cutting out car ads from my mom's magazines at age 8 (in 1946) and I still have those, too. I now have quite a collection of ads and catalogs. Guess what? There are no foreign cars, except for a few random Volkswagens. So, when HCC #203 arrived with its "Hail Britannia!" I went "Ugh." I did not like the looks of old imports then or now.

I've never owned a foreign-brand car, but I was the caretaker of my friend Bob's 1964 MG Midget while he was doing his six-month stint in the Army Reserve. Unfortunately, the night before he reported, his MG hit a concrete lane divider and practically tore off the driver-side front wheel. He limped home driving backwards. After I had it towed, repaired, had some carburetor work done (duals, I think), I enjoyed it until it was repatriated. Although fun, it did not hold a candle next to my stick shift 1959 Oldsmobile 88 convertible. Wow, how the times and the auto industry have changed. Now my problem is trying to accept the SUV invasion. However, I could have easily lived with the 2008 Dodge Magnum.

Bob Thies

Cincinnati, Ohio



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



The 1964 MG Midget under Bob Thies' care, at the edge of the Ohio River flood in March '64. Photo taken from the Covington, Kentucky, side, across from Cincinnati.

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My Time with Beverly

Although my vintage vehicle immersion commenced before I was out of diapers, the opportunity to become a card-carrying member in the vast club of ownership didn't occur until late in my 24th year. At that point, I was hooked on the notion of buying an early Fifties Buick, preferably a Roadmaster. And so, when the very '52 I grew up with became available, I snagged it in a flash. Within a month, Dad and I had plans to attend our first spring swap meet at Carlisle.

That trip yielded a sizable take in spare parts and resources, the latter including knowledgeable people in specialized fields, several of whom have since become good friends. As for Dad, the trip had him befuddled: What vintage vehicle to buy? After all, he reasoned, why not join me in my new automotive passion?

Dad's list was long. He had briefly owned a 1958 Chevrolet Impala before gravitating to the Blue Oval brand over the course of the next two decades. Jumping back into an Impala, it turned out, took a back seat to his memories of the Ford Falcon he had owned through most of his college years, yet surprisingly, even the allure of a '63 semi-fastback coupe with a hi-po 289 behind the grille wasn't enough. No, Dad was determined to play the field, to see what stood out as *the* car to buy.

On the last day of the meet, he found it: a 1956 Buick Roadmaster 76R, one of the 12,490 two-door hardtops assembled that year. The car was glorious as it silently slipped past us, a perfectly restored example finished in a striking tri-tone livery. It took nearly an hour to chase down its location in the car corral, only to discover that the custodian had already sold it a day prior.

For the next few years, Dad searched tirelessly for another. What was thought to be an easy task wasn't. The Buick Club of America's registry showed less than eight examples, and pleas printed within *Hemmings Motor News* produced only one other that was in desperate need of a comprehensive restoration – Dad had specifically stated his desire for a ready-to-drive unit. But

persistence paid off, and he found one for sale in South Dakota finished in two-tone Dover White and Cambridge Blue with a matching interior.

When it arrived, the story of "The '56," as it came to be known, came to light. Repainted once, the Buick was essentially an original, well-cared-for car. The passenger door was inoperable because the original owner never had a passenger in the car; a life-long bachelor, he had passed away weeks prior at age 89. The only other quickly diagnosed ailment was a failed stop lamp switch, its replacement requiring me to become a contortionist, as the master cylinder was tucked awkwardly behind the left fender. As to the door,

once we had freed the latch – mutilating a pair of "slim-jim" tools in the process – a simple spring swap improved egress.

Alongside my '52, the '56 was a regular at events throughout central and southeast Connecticut for more than a decade. My relocation to Vermont happened to coincide with

my parents' decision to downsize, and given the vast real estate in my new garage, it made sense to ship Dad's Roadmaster north. Thereafter, it resumed its regular mobility tests, not on the local show circuit, but commutes to and from the office. The '56 was a true, get-in-and-go gem that never whimpered during startup or struggled up a steep grade; the big, 255-hp 322-cu.in. V-8 was a runner that begged to be let loose, yet it was just as comfortable cruising down Main at idle speed between stoplights.

Despite the relationship I developed with the '56, Dad eventually felt it was time to see it off to a new custodian. With a twinge of sorrow, its weekly commute continued with a "For Sale" sign in the window. Admittedly, I hung my head low as it headed west in an enclosed trailer, destined for a cargo container and a long sea trip to Australia. Happily, though, we receive regular letters updating us on "Beverly" – the '56's new name, and her adventures in the Land of Oz with her current owners. As I had promised her one summer night, Beverly wound up in a caring home. 🐾



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When the

chips were

down, John

Willys simply

refused to

give up.



Learning From Willys

Some years ago, I wrote a book on the history of the Willys-Overland company, the only one that, I think, has ever been written. It was a difficult book to write because during the ups and downs of Willys' existence, most of its historical records were blown to the four winds. It took years to gather all the information I needed.

One thing I don't feel that I put enough focus on is how Willys was able to grow from a tiny company that was literally one day away from bankruptcy into the second largest automaker in the world. It was an amazing transformation that took place over just a few short years. It's something I think should be brought to light for future generations. After all, if one automaker can do it, so can another. It mostly takes having the right man at the top, though a fair amount of luck always helps. I believe Willys-Overland was a success because it had the right man at the top.

The Overland automobile company was founded in 1903 as the motor vehicle division of auto supplier Standard Wheel Company. The new business produced a small two-passenger runabout quite similar to dozens of other small cars being introduced all across America. It was a well-engineered car at a good price so it's not surprising that Elmira, New York auto dealer John Willys signed on as a dealer. The first year, 1906, he sold Overland's entire output of 47 cars and inked a deal to buy all the production scheduled for 1907, some 500 cars. He sealed the deal with a \$10,000 deposit and went home to wait. When 1907 arrived with no cars forthcoming, John Willys entrained to the Overland plant to find out what the holdup was. Upon arriving there he discovered to his horror that they not only hadn't built his cars, but they weren't going to. In fact, they planned to file for bankruptcy the very next day! Besides that, their so-called "factory" was more or less a collection of sheds.

Rather than lose his ten grand, Willys made a spot decision to take over management of the company and pour in enough borrowed capital to get production restarted in a circus tent

he rented. He then had to sweet talk most of his understandably angry suppliers into accepting company stock in lieu of cash for the debts the business owed, and to provide him with the necessary parts and components to build cars.

In the end he saved Overland and made money doing it, though he spent an entire year working almost around the clock to keep the business afloat. He eventually renamed the firm Willys-Overland and in 1909 acquired the idled Pope-Toledo plant, one of the largest and best-equipped automobile factories



in America. With these facilities he produced over 15,000 cars in 1910, in the process becoming the third-largest producer in the country. In 1913, Willys-Overland, which just six years earlier had almost gone under, became the number-two-selling car in America. It was one of the most astounding business turnarounds in history.

It was almost entirely due to John North Willys, who combined his intense drive and determination with a lot of hard work and a bit of luck. When the chips were down, John Willys simply refused to give up.

He did it again when Willys, like several other independents, came close to closing its doors for good during the Great Depression. Between 1932 and 1935, John Willys worked like a man possessed to get the Willys enterprise back on its feet. He poured \$2 million of his personal fortune into the firm, then went on an exhausting, months-long road trip to buck up his dealer force and solicit new orders. He managed to price his new Willys 77 small car \$65 under the cheapest Ford – and that was big money back then. Eventually he was able to wrest control of his company from its creditors, and Willys-Overland slowly began to return to profitability. It was a very close thing, and in the end the effort proved too much for John Willys. He died a worn-out, used-up man in August 1935. But he had saved the company he loved and had it on the right path.

One has to wonder how Pontiac might have done in 2009 if someone like John Willys had shown up determined to save the brand. Or how about Oldsmobile, or Mercury, Plymouth, or...? We can only guess. 🐾

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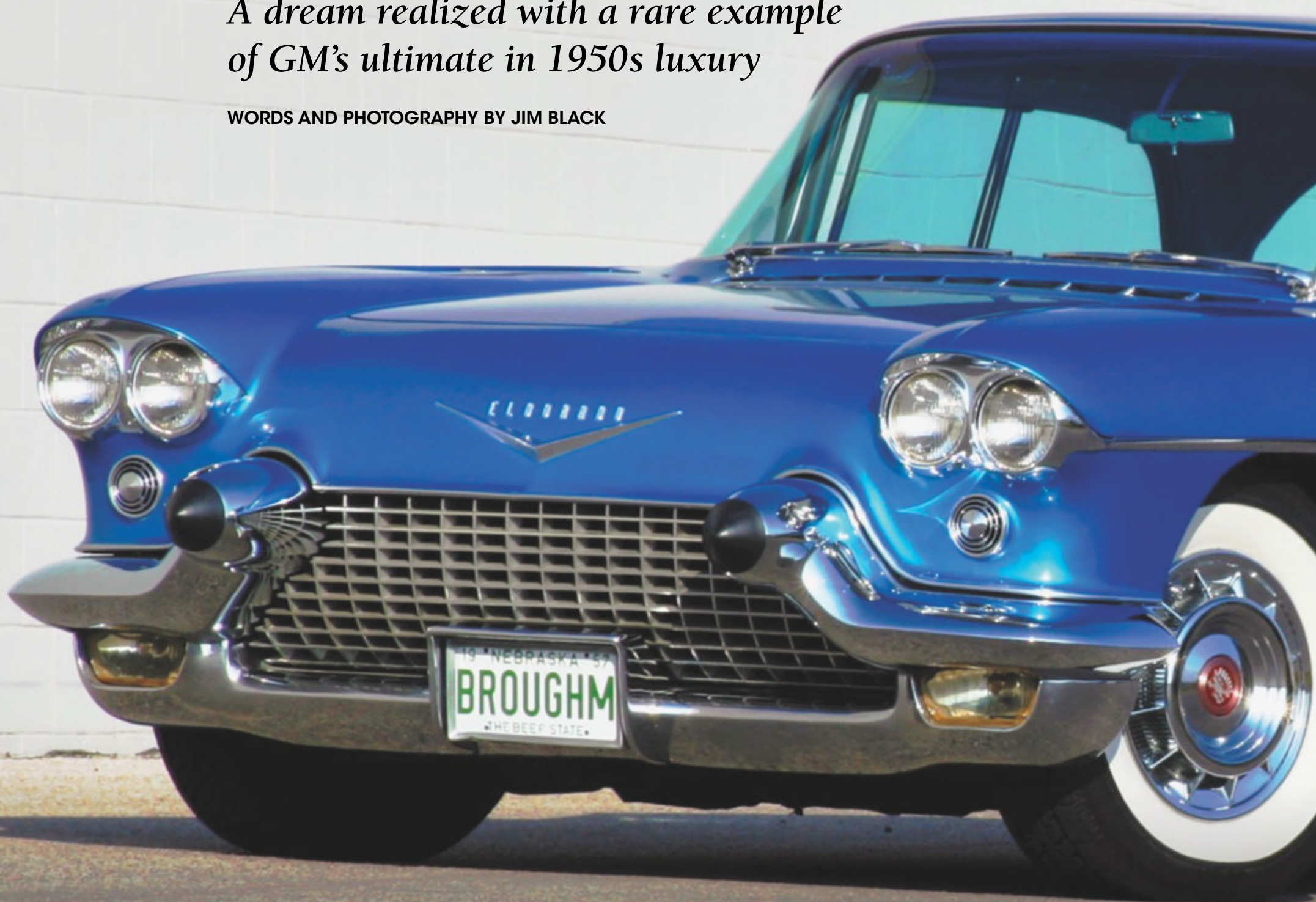


spotlight
nifty '50s

Gliding with the “Blue Lady”

*A dream realized with a rare example
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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK





As announced in December of 1956 and available by March of 1957, the Cadillac Series 70 Eldorado Brougham was designed by Ed Glowacke, who was part of Harley Earl's design studio at General Motors. Arguably the most beautiful and most sought-after Cadillac ever built, the Eldorado Brougham was Cadillac's response to Ford Motor Company's Continental Mark II.



Cadillac's powerful 365-cubic-inch V-8 with dual Carter four barrels was employed to move this heavy beast down the road.



The prototype Brougham was a hand-built, true pillarless four-door hardtop that first debuted as a featured show car in the GM Motorama for 1955. Derived from the ultra-luxurious Park Avenue and Orleans show cars of 1953-'54, the Brougham was stunning with its brushed-stainless-steel roof. Other exterior ornamentation included polished stainless-steel lower rear quarter panels with full rocker sills, and rectangular-shaped side body coves cut into the front and rear doors, with horizontal wind-splits set into each cove. The pillarless four-door design had the rear doors opening towards the rear of the car ("suicide" style), allowing easy access for rear-seat occupants. With all four doors open you could barely see the stub B-pillar.

At \$13,074, each production Brougham came with every conceivable option and power accessory imaginable as standard equipment, including power brakes, power steering, air conditioning, powered memory seat, power windows and venti panes, power door locks, cruise control, automatic headlight dimmer, remote trunk opener/closer, dual passenger heating, rear-seat heater, and standard air suspension, among others. Initially, the Brougham was also planned to have had disc brakes, a Hydra-Matic transaxle, and even fuel injection, but these items would have driven the cost much higher, so they were cancelled prior to production. It also came with a glovebox

full of vanity items, such as magnetized silver tumblers, tissue and cigarette dispensers, lipstick, and a perfume/cologne atomizer. The Brougham was offered for just two years and was available in 15 exterior colors and a choice of 45 different interior combinations, which included Mouton, lambskin, or Karakul carpeting. It's said that Cadillac lost \$10,000 on every sale, but the Brougham was Cadillac's flagship and was never intended to be a profit earner.

The Brougham was the first to offer quad headlamps that, at the time, were still illegal in some states. The air suspension system also proved unreliable, and Cadillac later released a kit to convert cars to rear coil-sprung suspension. Broughams still using the factory air suspension are rarer and even more valuable today.

At 5,315 pounds, the Eldorado Brougham was a brute, which required Cadillac's largest and most powerful overhead-valve V-8 engine. The 365-cu.in. V-8, fed via dual Carter four-barrel carburetors and backed by Cadillac's Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic transmission, produced 325 hp at 4,800 rpm and 400 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm.

The story of how Gus Frics, the owner of our featured Cadillac, was able to find one of these cars was a fortuitous case of right place, right time. "I always wanted a Cadillac Eldorado as they are so beautiful, but I could never afford one," the 78-year-old retiree, living in Omaha, Nebraska, says.

"Back in 2006, I was visiting a friend in San Diego, and he mentioned that he had an old car that he wanted to show me. He opened the garage door and there sat a '57 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham," Gus explains. "It was covered in dryer lint and had not been driven in over five years, but it appeared to be complete, all-original, and in good condition." Gus made an offer and tried to negotiate a deal on the spot, but his friend would not sell.

Two years later, in July of 2008, Gus got a phone call from his friend, who had finally decided to let go of his Brougham. The final purchase price and arrangements were soon made, and it turned out to be a package deal, with Gus buying not only the '57 Brougham but also a '58 Pontiac Bonneville that Gus owned back in the 1980s. Both cars were soon shipped to Omaha.

Once the cars were delivered to Gus' home, he turned his attention to the Brougham and began the lengthy process of

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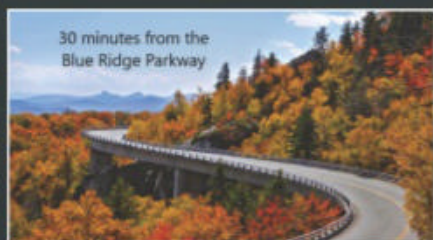
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getting it as show-worthy as possible. This took several weeks of careful cleaning and detailing. The original medium-blue Parisienne cloth and white leather interior (code 2282) cleaned up nicely, but Gus still had to replace the factory-installed Mouton carpet with NOS pieces. “I was also very fortunate that most of the glove box amenities were still in the car,” Gus says. The car’s exterior was still in good condition, requiring just some good old TLC. “The Brougham had been repainted only once before, in the correct Lake Placid Blue (code 122),” Gus says. “I



used a clay bar and stripped away years of old car polish, then applied a fresh coat of Zaino show car polish and was amazed how well it turned out.”

With the paint now looking its best, some of the chrome and trim pieces needed attention, so Gus carefully removed most of the chrome and stainless and had Industrial Plating of Omaha address these items by replating and/or polishing. “Lucky for me the front and rear bumpers were in great shape and required no replating. That would have cost a small fortune,” Gus remarks.

Mechanically, the Brougham was showing its age, so Gus decided to replace most of the wear items, which included the original radiator, coolant hoses, belts, and water pump. The chassis and suspension were also given a once-over with new brake shoes, wheel cylinders, wheel bearings, Gabriel shocks, and a set of Coker 235/75R15 wide-whitewall radial tires. Gus’s most challenging obstacles during this partial, selective rehab were troubleshooting the six-way driver’s seat control, with its 50-plus-year-old wiring, and sourcing and installing a new in-tank fuel pump.

Luckily for Gus he was also able to trace much of the Brougham’s history. Built at the Clark Street Assembly Plant in Detroit in 1957, it was originally sold by Berg Motor Company in Midland, Texas, on July 31, 1957, to C.V. Lyman, an oil tycoon also from Midland. Lyman kept the car for 30 years before selling it to noted collector Gordon Apker from Seattle, Washington, in 1987. From there, the third owner, John Richards from San Diego, California, purchased the car at an unknown date, and it remained in his possession until it was purchased by Gus



A full complement of options and accessories came standard on every Brougham, including a few shown here: power steering and brakes, air conditioning, automatic dimmer, signal-seeking pushbutton radio with power antenna, and both front and rear dual heating controls. Another unique feature of the Brougham was its center-opening four doors. The rears, which allowed for a more spacious entry to the rear seats, are usually referred to as “suicide doors.” The spacious interior was available in 45 different color combinations and included folding center armrests.



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in July of 2008. All three of the previous owners shared one thing in common: They rarely drove the car and did a good job maintaining it in its original condition.

When Gus bought this car 13 years ago, it had just 56,110 original miles showing on the odometer, exceptionally low for a 50-year-old car. Today it reads 60,525 miles, so it still doesn't get driven that often. Yet Gus drives the Brougham on nice days when he can and prefers to keep it close to home, attending local car shows and cars and coffee events only. "I love to drive my cars, so you will never see this Brougham traveling by trailer," he says.

The Brougham has attracted a lot of attention at area shows, earning several first-place honors at annual World of Wheels events, as well as at the 2010 Grand Nationals in Kansas City, Missouri, and the 2016 Des Moines Concours d'Elegance in Iowa.

Gus has been involved in the classic car hobby for much of his adult life and, in addition to the '57 Brougham, has a small,

eclectic collection, including a 1957 Oldsmobile Fiesta wagon, 1958 Pontiac Bonneville, 1959 Corvette, and a 1960 Ford Thunderbird. He has also been a member of the Cadillac & LaSalle Club for the past 10 years.

This '57 Cadillac Brougham, aka *The Blue Lady*, certainly leads a sheltered life in Gus' capable hands. "The first time I drove this car I just fell in love with it! It's so classy and beautiful and it's noticed by everyone, every time I drive it," Gus says. "I truly enjoyed researching the history of this car and experiencing firsthand the pinnacle of mid-century GM design and engineering it represents." 🍷

*The first time I drove this car I just
fell in love with it! It's so classy and
beautiful and it's noticed by everyone,
every time I drive it.*



The Brougham was the first GM car to utilize quad headlamps, which would not become standard in the industry until 1958.

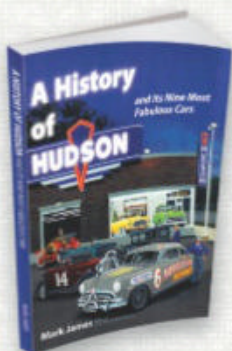


A unique feature for the Brougham was its stainless-steel roof. This motif was originally seen on the 1953 Orleans and 1954 Park Avenue show cars — the first a four-door pillarless hardtop, and the other a four-door sedan — but both used polished aluminum roof panels instead of stainless steel. A few days prior to this photoshoot, Gus broke a taillamp lens and spent the next several weeks in search of an NOS replacement.

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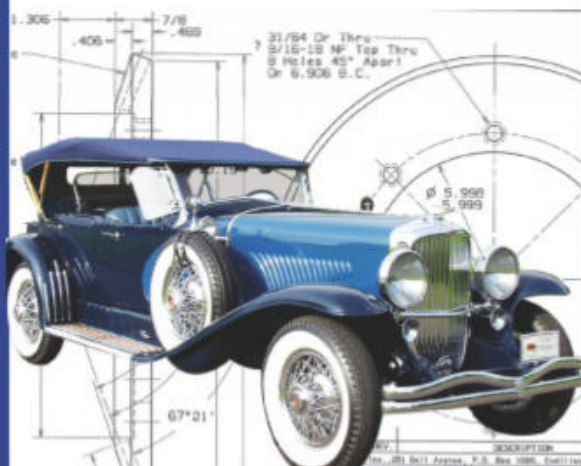
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Postwar Plenty

12 affordable examples of 1950s motoring classics

BY THE HEMMINGS STAFF • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE HEMMINGS ARCHIVES OR AS CREDITED

The period following World War II was an amazing time of optimism and prosperity in the U.S., with industry booming and technology advancing rapidly. Meanwhile, Americans were feeling good about life in the free world and many were flush with cash thanks to the strong job market. This all meshed to create a perfect storm of consumer demand that was advancing beyond the need to obtain products that hadn't been readily available during the war—now, people were buying to satisfy desire as much as need.

The domestic automakers were perfectly poised to satisfy that demand, coming off of war contracts that had been followed by frenzied car sales after years of halted automobile production. The war had also pushed the development of technology, and style was once again a primary criterion for car shoppers. Detroit spent the decade trying to outdo itself, yielding some of the most ornately styled and trimmed cars of all time, while also recognizing that even truck buyers thought about aesthetics. Meanwhile, European automakers were pursuing their own versions of performance and style, creating some landmark designs as the decade unfolded.

This period would shine brightly, but relatively briefly, as trends continued to evolve rapidly and the 1960s would see its own characteristic features. By the 1970s, cars of the '50s seemed like artifacts of a long-gone era, and nostalgia for that time kicked in with substantial force, driving collectors and restorers to latch onto the remaining examples to keep the memories alive. That drive hasn't ever fully subsided, and cars and trucks of the 1950s are still very popular with car

enthusiasts and collectors, including many who hadn't even been born when those models were new.

Yet, '50s cars still make for an excellent enthusiast ownership experience. In many cases, parts are available, and if not, strong networks of fans and specialists are ready to help locate spares to facilitate restorations or even just to keep these models on the road. Speaking of the road, cars of this period tend to be decent drivers, as the highway system was coming online and the ability to cruise smoothly at 60-plus mph became more the norm.

We wanted to illustrate that there are models from the 1950s that are also still attainable by gathering a selection of examples that are enjoyable to own, fun to drive, and still affordable. In this case, we're considering anything costing \$25,000 or less in good, presentable, and driveable condition to be affordable — that seems to be what the market thinks, too. Ponder these examples from a fantastic period in automotive design and let us know what else you think ought to have been included.



1948-'53 Dodge B-Series

DODGE'S 1948-'53 B-SERIES 1/2-TONS HAD ALL THE QUALITIES THAT postwar, light-duty truck buyers demanded: handsome styling, low operating costs, and great reliability. But these "Pilot House" Rams struggled for market share against rivals from Chevrolet and Ford when new and sold in fewer numbers. Their resale values have trailed Advance Design and F-Series trucks as well, over the years, but all of this can be an advantage to a buyer seeking an affordable and unique vintage pickup. Today, average values for these trucks are still below \$20,000 and they can be found for even less, while show-quality examples can range from \$30,000-

\$50,000. Unfortunately, a V-8 engine wasn't available in B-Series Dodges but they could be optioned with Fluid Drive transmissions and, in 1953, the Truck-O-Matic automatic transmission. For 1953, Dodge also offered B-series 1/2-tons in two wheelbases: the standard 108 inches, as well as 116 inches, which could be outfitted with a 7.5-foot box. For a final flourish, before sending the B-Series into the history books in '53, Dodge bolted on a set of newly redesigned rear fenders—those fenders would continue to be stamped out until the Dodge Uline box was discontinued after the 1984 model year. —**Mike McNessor**



1952-'54 Buick Special Model 41 sedan

"BEAUTY ON A BUDGET," CROWED THE '52 BUICK CATALOG THAT advertised eight flavors of 40-series, known also as the Special. Seventy years later, only one comes in valued below ten grand for top money: the Model 41 in '52, and 41D thereafter, the four-door Tourback Sedan. Riding the same wheelbase as the popular Century, the Special still came standard with the 120-horsepower Fireball Eight (126 hp with Dynaflo; 130 hp in 1953, and 150 hp with Buick's new V-8 in 1954). Decades later, they have all of the early postwar style you could want, and that curious old high-end car mix of luxurious features for its time (automatic, power windows) that seem, all these years later, just right for modern living.

No other domestic GM cars from the era dip into the four-figure price range. Cadillac was always too ritzy and Chevy was always too popular, but the closest Olds is valued at triple the money. Even low-line Pontiac Chieftains are valued twice-plus what a Special is. These Specials can only be seen as terrific value today. The combination of a common body style—more than 170,000 combined across all three model years listed—and a pre-boomer-driving-age era whose only connection to such cars would be riding in the back seat, have combined to suppress pricing, even all these decades later. The high average pricing for a Buick Model 41 sedan from this era ranges from \$8,800 to \$9,150. —**Jeff Koch**



HEMMINGS AUCTIONS

1953-'56 Ford F-Series

THIS MIGHT RAISE SOME EYEBROWS, APPEARING ON A LIST OF affordable 1950s vehicles, because 1953-'56 F-100s have been wildly popular with collectors and hot rodders for decades. Way back in the April 1984 issue of *Hemmings Special Interest Autos*, writer Dave Emanuel opined, "No other truck, and damn few cars, have ever inspired the almost maniacal fervor found in F-100 aficionados. In fact, Ford's early Fifties pickup is every bit as much of a cult vehicle as the Chevrolet Corvette or VW Beetle." That's a bold comparison, especially almost 40 years ago, and light trucks have become even hotter over the years. So, what's an aspiring 1953-'56 Ford light-truck owner on a

budget to do, as F-100 prices continue to soar? Go bigger. A $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton F-250 of this vintage shares the same good looks as the $\frac{1}{2}$ ton, but with more to love from an 8-foot box or a 7.5-foot platform stake body. If you're really into hauling heavy, old-school style, consider a 1-ton F-350 with a 9-foot box or 9-foot platform stake. Popular price guides estimate that values for a 1955 F-250 range from \$11,650 on the low end to \$59,400 on the high end, with an average of about \$24,000. F-350 values trend slightly less than that, but you can expect to pay almost double for an F-100, with a range of \$20,000-\$113,000 and an average price of about \$40,000. — **Mike McNessor**



1953-'54 Hudson Jet

THE JET SHOULD HAVE BEEN GREAT. IF YOU CAN GET PAST THE controversial styling, it is great. After two years of producing the powerful Hornet and five years of the road-hugging "stepdown" chassis, Hudson had become known as a performance make. When the company decided to join the compact-car wars, kicked off in 1950 by Nash, it brought that hot-car mindset to the compact field. The Jet used a new 202-cu.in. flathead six-cylinder design that was essentially $\frac{3}{4}$ of the old straight-eight engine. It could be had with Twin-H power (dual carbs and

high compression, boosting output from 104 to 114 hp) and came backed up with the buyer's choice of three-speed, overdrive, or Hydra-Matic. Despite its great engine and well-designed chassis to match, plus all the luxury options a buyer could want, the Jet fizzled after only two model years. Perhaps if it had looked more like the Italia, things would be different. No matter, Hudson may be gone, but Jets are still affordable and still lots of fun to drive. Expect average prices to start around \$11,000, and top out at about \$20,000. — **David Conwill**



MERCEDES-BENZ

1953-'62 Mercedes-Benz W120/121

NOT EVERY VINTAGE CAR WEARING THE THREE-POINTED STAR IS an exotic, an ultra-luxury sedan, a sporty coupe, or a convertible. Mercedes-Benz built millions of humble people movers in the postwar years, right through the 1970s and '80s, many of which served as taxicabs due to their anvil-like reliability. The template for those cars was the four-cylinder-powered W120 series, and the more up-level W121. These were sold as 180 and 190 models respectively, with 65-75-hp gasoline or 48-hp diesel engines. They're known commonly by the nickname "Ponton" because of their pontoon-like styling, and that nickname was also shared

with the more expensive W105, W180, and W128 six-cylinder sedans. As collectibles, the four-cylinder Pontons have never been particularly hot and average prices have hovered between \$10,000-\$15,000 for a decade or more. The beauty of any old Mercedes, though, is that genuine factory parts, needed to keep it on the road, can be ordered from Mercedes-Benz. However, the cost of an extensive overhaul can quickly add up to more than one of these cars is worth. Still, if you're looking for a cute, unusual, economical German sedan, a W120 or 121 makes a great entry-level introduction into the Mercedes-Benz universe. — **Mike McNessor**

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1955 Plymouth Plaza and Savoy four-door sedans

IN 1954, PLYMOUTH'S SALES TUMBLED, AND THE DIVISION FELL from third to fifth in the sales race. A lot was riding on the all-new '55 line then. The "Startling New" Plaza (base) and Savoy (mid-grade) sedans were the volume leaders for the brand. They were bigger in most dimensions: 115-inch wheelbase, a 10-inch increase in overall length, a 2.5-inch front tread increase, V-8 power was available (where demand outstripped supply), but it's more likely that a four-figure Plaza or Savoy sedan will feature Plymouth's PowerFlow 6, good for 117 hp. New "Forward Look" styling sprung forth from Virgil Exner's pen. They did so well, they broke Plymouth's all-time sales record, set in 1950 — and

very nearly doubled its sad '54 numbers. Plaza sedans outsold Savoy saloons by a ratio of 3:1, doing the bulk of the work to get Plymouth back into fourth-place in sales for the year, so depending on your point of view, the base model will be easier to find, or the higher-level machine is a rare treat. Today, getting into a Plaza or Savoy sedan (the biggest differences: Savoy enjoys trim and carpeting that the Plaza does without) will be the least-expensive ways into owning a Forward Look Mopar of any flavor, according to the sales averages; while these range between \$9,500 and \$9,950 on the top end, every other model of the generation is well into five figures. — **Jeff Koch**



1955-'56 De Soto Firedome and Firelite

THE CHRYSLER CORPORATION'S "FORWARD LOOK" GAVE ITS 1955 cars a fresh helping of modern style, and the midline De Sotos were particularly attractive. Today, the Firedome and upmarket Firelite models offer a captivating blend of appearance, engineering, and in two- and four-door forms, genuine affordability. While the glamorous convertibles, rare station wagon, and the premium Adventurer coupe are valued beyond the scope of this story, the sedans and hardtops are still approachable on a budget, with

approximate asking prices for driver-quality examples ranging from \$5,600 to \$20,700. These Mopars offer ample standard power from a 291- or 330-cu.in. hemi-head V-8, road-trip-friendly interior and trunk room, and the joy of driving something that's rarely seen on today's highways. We love the trademark toothy De Soto grille that carried over into 1955 models, and the more powerful, fin-bedecked '56 has its own charms. The old slogan still rings true: "Drive a De Soto before you decide!" — **Mark J. McCourt**



1956 Hudson Wasp

MUCH LIKE THE STUDEBAKER-PACKARD MERGER, THE MARRIAGE between Nash and Hudson was not without its hiccups during the early years of the union. Case in point were the senior Hudsons, such as the 1956 Wasp, which has been harshly criticized for its visual styling. It was a problem that stemmed, in large part, from Hudson's lack of frequent updates earlier in the decade, which left its sales lagging behind similarly priced makes from GM and Ford. Lagging sales meant less working capital, which only compounded matters. So, when the "new" '56 Hudsons emerged, it didn't take long for everyone to

realize the basic foundation of the Wasp — and Hornet — was a two-year old senior Nash, the interior of which was fitted with leftover and outdated instrument clusters. Interestingly though, below the hood was Hudson's venerable engine lineup that was heralded by new car review magazines. The 1956 model year marked the last appearance of the Wasp, of which 2,519 were built. Because of a lack of appreciation from a wider audience for a multitude of reasons, the final Wasp is a true affordable rarity today. Expect average prices to start near \$8,500 and climb to \$18,500 for better examples. — **Matt Litwin**

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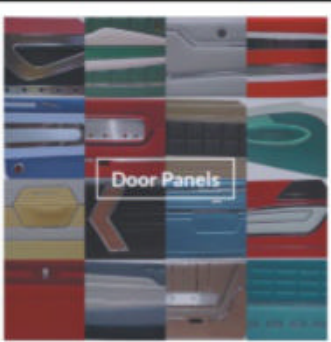
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1958-'59 Ford Thunderbird

FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S DECISION MAKERS FELT THAT THE INITIAL success of the original Thunderbird could be built upon if the model was useful to more people, so seating for four became a mandate. The new-for-1958 Thunderbird was larger in every dimension, including engine displacement, now coming standard with the FE-series V-8 in 352 cubic inches. Its styling was more ornate than its two-seat predecessor, and the T-Bird now offered two body styles: a fixed-roof coupe and a convertible. Sales took off and remained strong for the "square-bird" era of 1958-'60, yet years later, enthusiasts would pay far less attention to four-seat models than those of the original 1955-'57 design.

Today, interest in the second-generation Thunderbirds is on the rise, though they remain very affordable. You likely won't be able to get a prime specimen of a square-bird with rare features for under \$25,000, but there are plenty of quite nice examples on the market hovering right around that price point, in both coupe and convertible form. Caring for a T-Bird of this period is relatively straightforward as the mechanical bits are common to most Ford cars of the time, and these cars are well supported by clubs and the restoration aftermarket. Plus, they were designed for interstate travel and still cruise at speed with ease.

—Terry McGean



1958 Packard Sedan

WHEN THE 1958 PACKARD SEDAN WAS ANNOUNCED, IT WAS touted as being, "A luxurious automobile designed for exclusive prestige and Town Car versatility." Factory literature promised distinction in the Packard tradition, but the car was distinctive for different reasons than intended. A year prior, it was easy to see that Packard—long synonymous with superior luxury and virtually second-to-none build quality, having withstood the test of time and volatile economic climates—was suddenly nothing more than a hastily retrimmed Studebaker, following the companies' merger. Exclusivity once heralded by the motoring press vaporized. One could argue that the facelifts seen on the

'58s were over-the-top, even during a year of excess within other divisions. Besieged by more than questionable styling, Packard's days were numbered; of the 2,622 cars produced during the abbreviated year, 1,200 were sedans. Today, the same sedans, once criticized, rank among the most affordable Packards available to vintage vehicle enthusiasts, with prices ranging from \$6,000 to \$14,500 or so. Furthermore, the mechanical Studebaker infrastructure behind the Packard emblems and unique trim is more attainable, which means it's considerably easier to keep one rolling on the road in tip-top shape. —Matt Litwin

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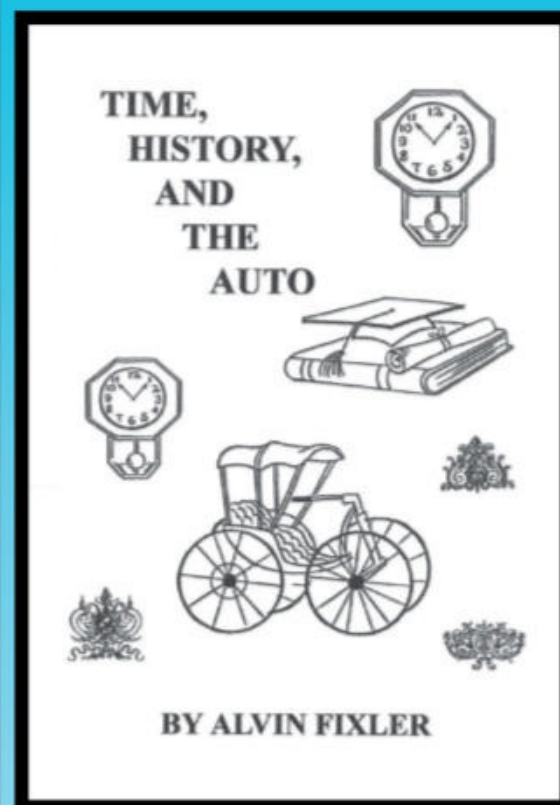
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1958-'60 Rambler American

NOT EVERY '50S CAR IS ENORMOUS, V-8 POWERED, AND SWIMMING in chrome. The 100-inch-wheelbase Rambler traces its roots back to the Nash Rambler of 1950. That original Rambler went away after the 1955 model year, replaced by larger (but still compact) models. Then, to the surprise of everyone, in 1958 American Motors (successor to Nash) brought it back. It was mildly restyled, but still obviously the same old bathtub-shaped Rambler. An even bigger surprise was that it sold really well: Although it was introduced late, Rambler moved over

30,000 Americans in 1958 alone. AMC kept it in production, with added body styles but virtually unchanged, for 1959 and '60, and then gave it a largely cosmetic restyle and sold it from 1961-'63! The little Rambler was economical, actually somewhat peppy when equipped with a manual transmission, and its little flathead six is an absolute joy to work on. They're pretty overlooked by those with an investment mentality, but those who have them, love them. Average prices start at about \$7,000 and top out around \$11,500. — **David Conwill**



1959 Volvo PV544

"THE SWEDISH '48 FORD" WAS AN INDIVIDUALIST'S CHOICE OF wheels in a decade when longer, lower, wider, and flashier was what American consumers were told to strive for. What Volvo's long-lived PV544 lacked in size and modern appearance, it made up for with charisma, build quality, and genuine sporting ability. The hunchback two-door gained a one-piece windshield, larger rear glass, and a stronger, twin-carbureted, 85-hp 97-cu.in. four-cylinder backed by a smooth-shifting four-speed manual; perhaps

most famously, it also introduced Volvo's three-point seat belts to the world. The PV544's moxie was proven in countless rallies and races, yet this long-legged economy car is equally at home on the highway today. This compact import remains accessibly priced — driver-quality examples trade hands for less than \$8,000, with show-level PVs still under our \$25,000 budget cap — and its durable mechanicals and enthusiastic fan base make it easy to maintain and a joy to drive. — **Mark J. McCourt** 🏆

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Resurrecting a Wreck

Saving a 1969 Chevrolet Malibu 350 from the crusher

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

This 1969 Chevrolet Malibu survived a ruinous traffic accident to thrive once more. In 2017, while it was idling at a red light, an SUV plowed into it nearly head-on. The son of the Chevelle's original owner was behind the wheel, and though he weathered the ordeal unscathed, the car wasn't so lucky. Its nose was crumpled, the firewall and an A-pillar were pushed back, and the frame was bent upward.

Most of those who saw the aftermath wrote the Malibu off as another totaled classic, but Dennis Majewski identified its potential despite the wrinkled visage. He told *HCC* that he purchased the brutalized A-body just 48 hours before its date with the crusher.

His devotion to Chevilles began as a teenager when, aided by his father cosigning a loan, he purchased a new Malibu in February of 1969 from Bauman Chevrolet in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania. The intermediate hardtop featured a 307-cu.in. V-8, Powerglide automatic transmission, power steering and brakes, an AM/FM radio, and a vinyl top, and it was painted a special-order color of blue normally used on Chevy trucks. (The sales manager liked to order unique colors to spur profits.)

Dennis, now a retired engineering manager, recalls, "In April of 1969 I got my first job as the second-shift and Saturday

lot boy at the same dealership. I was able to drive all the hot muscle cars for work and enjoy my own car at home."

He was a doting Malibu owner through nine years and 90,000 miles, but time and western Pennsylvania winters proved hostile to his A-body. Dennis ultimately sold it in 1978 but retained his admiration for 1969 Chevilles.

"In 1980, I was driving along Route 22 in Murrysville when I came upon a car carrier hauling six of what appeared to be brand-new 1969 Chevelle Super Sports of every color," he remembers. "Each one appeared to be nicer than the last. I never figured out where these cars came from or where they were going, but I vowed I would have another 1969 Chevelle. In 1983, I finally found a low-mileage 1969 Super Sport. Over the next five years, I purchased four more Super Sports and sold three. Each time I acquired a more original car in the correct color. In 1988, I stopped pursuing them, as I had two that I considered keepers and I still own them today, but I didn't have a Malibu."



Dennis Majewski's first 1969 Malibu inspired this project. Shown here with him in the early 1970s, it featured a special-order color.



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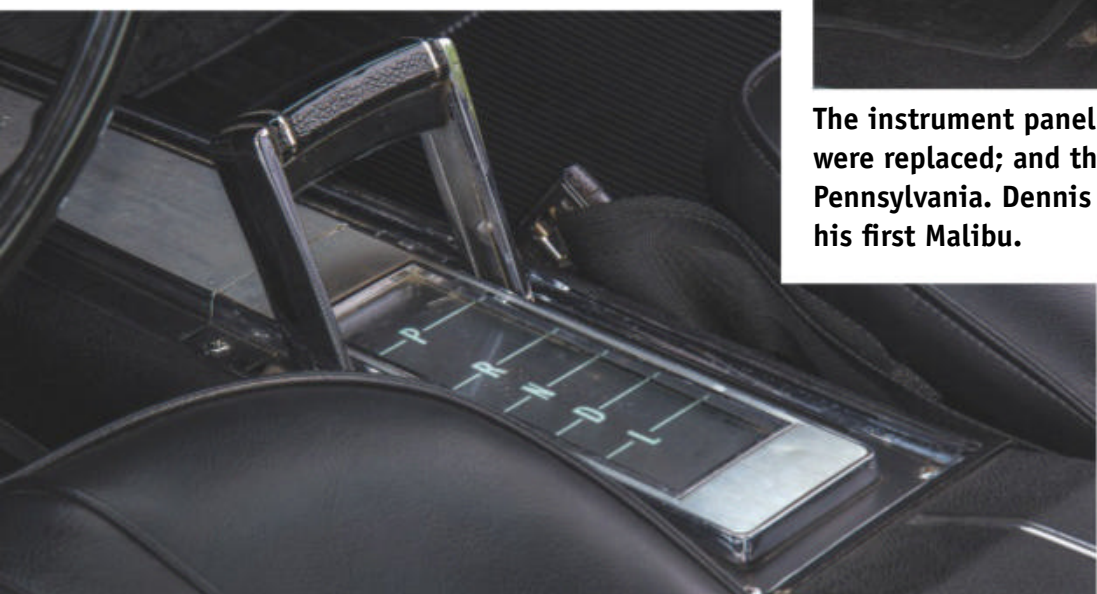
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The instrument panel and rear seat are original; the dash pad, carpet, and door panels were replaced; and the front seats were reupholstered by Weimann's Interiors in Delmont, Pennsylvania. Dennis will soon swap the aftermarket radio for the stock AM/FM unit from his first Malibu.



In March 2017, "Richard Sauers Jr. and Sr. had this car delivered to their repair shop [Richard's Auto Center in New Kensington] because they knew I was looking for a 1969 Malibu to restore," Dennis explains. "Rich Sauers Sr. and I have known each other since 1969 when we both worked at Bauman Chevrolet. He was the head mechanic."

When Dennis examined this battered boulevardier through the rose-colored glasses of nostalgia, he determined that it could be renewed, and it had to be completed in time for his 50th high school class reunion, which was two years away.

Not the same brazen baby blue hue as his original, this example was instead painted the more popular Le Mans Blue. It was factory equipped with a 350 V-8 and TH350 three-speed automatic, a vinyl top, bucket seats, floor mats, console, power steering and brakes, shoulder belts, and A/C.

According to the NCRS documentation Dennis recently received, his Chevelle was built in the Baltimore plant on the 19th of November, 1968, and was delivered to the Hoover Motor Company in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. He learned after purchasing the Malibu that he'd actually bought it from the original owner, who had taken delivery in January of 1969. It later spent several years in the Sunshine State as a weekend driver before coming back to the Keystone State, where it was stored before being refurbished in 2014.

Due to the extensive accident damage, in May 2017 the front clip and engine were removed at Richard's Auto Center, and the car was delivered to Autoline Frame Straightening in Creighton for the frame work and to pull the firewall and driver's side A-pillar back into their proper positions.

Once back at Richard's Auto Center, suspension parts were replaced as needed, some of which included a new passenger's-side lower control arm, Moog coil springs, bushings, bearings, Monroe shocks, and the front brakes (9.5-inch drums) and lines. A set of 215/70R14 BFGoodrich Radial T/A tires on 14 x 7-inch Rally wheels were also installed. The steering column was damaged in the accident as well, and Dennis laments, "I had a tough time finding another good one to replace it."

George Dobrick, also in New Kensington, took on the body and paint with help from Kenny Danovich. The shell was sanded to bare metal, the passenger door, A-pillar, and firewall repairs were completed, and the radiator support, inner and outer fenders, driver's door, and header panel were replaced with reproductions from Luty's Chevy Warehouse in Cheswick.

George recalls that the new driver's door required a "quarter-inch-wide piece of metal to be added to its front to match the length of the original door." Dennis relates, "I never did find a Malibu hood, so I ended up buying a reproduction Super Sport hood instead."

Two coats of Cromax epoxy primer were applied to the bare body and were block sanded with 150-grit paper. Evercoat Rage Gold filler was employed sparingly where needed, over the primer, and it was block sanded with 180 grit. Two coats of Cromax 2K urethane primer-filler were laid down and also block sanded with 180. Then, USC Icing Polyester Finishing Putty was applied to small imperfections and sanded with 220 grit. A third coat of 2K followed and was block sanded with a progression of paper grits up to 600.

Just prior to George applying the base color coats, Richard's Auto Center reinstalled the engine. Richard Sauers Jr. says that the mechanical, electrical, and fuel systems, among additional areas, were also addressed to make the Chevelle road worthy.

The 350 engine from a '72 Chevelle and the original TH350 and 3.08-geared open rear axle had been rebuilt in 2014, and since just 1,000 miles were accrued before the accident, they were simply inspected for proper operation. Details of the engine build are few, but Dennis learned that it was bored to 355-cu.in., the heads were milled, the compression ratio was bumped up to

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10.25:1, and headers, a 2.5-inch dual exhaust system with Flowmaster mufflers, a GM HEI electronic distributor, an Edelbrock aluminum intake manifold and carburetor, and an open-element air cleaner were added.

Back at George's, the body received two applications of sealer, three coats of Cromax ChromaBase in Le Mans Blue, and four coats of Cromax clear. The finish was wet sanded with 1200, 1500, and 2000-grit paper. The 3M Perfect-It system was employed for compounding and polishing. A reproduction vinyl roof, grille, and front bumper were installed, as was a new windshield.

The Chevrolet was completed by September of 2019, just in time for Dennis to take it to his 50th high school class reunion. "I parked it outside, and many thought it was my first Malibu despite the different shade of blue."

Dennis says, "My Chevelle is fun to drive. It tracks straight down the road, and I've had no problems with it. Sure, my big-block Super Sports are still faster than the 350, so I prefer the Super Sports for performance, but the Malibu brings back all the great memories of driving my first one in my teens and twenties."

Coincidentally, Dennis' first Malibu was totaled by its second owner, which made rescuing and rebuilding this wrecked example even more of a sentimental journey. In retrospect, he realized, "Financially, I would have been better off scrapping the car and starting with one that wasn't damaged, as I have more money invested in this project due to the accident repairs, but I got into it for love, not money."

The Bowtie grille emblem and a few other pieces from his first Chevelle survived and Dennis had previously retrieved them, so they now adorn this example as a fitting tribute. A circle of Malibu ownership that was initiated over 50 years ago is now complete. 🏁



Financially, I would have been better off scrapping the car... but I got into it for love, not money.



High-performance induction and exhaust parts had been added to the 1972 350-cu.in. V-8 by the previous owner. Instead of reinstalling the underhood items from the factory A/C, Dennis plans to upgrade to a new system.

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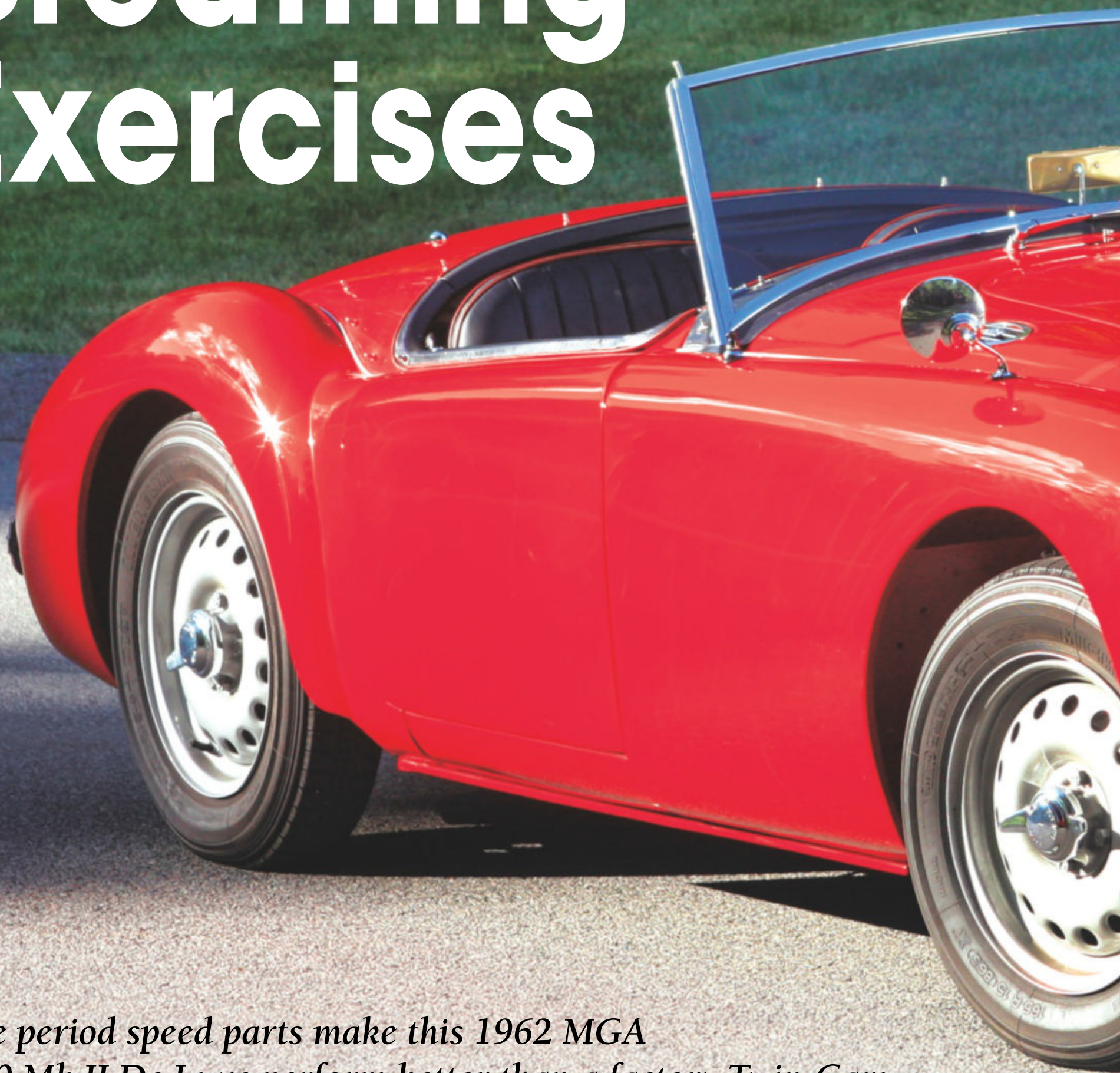
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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

The sounds it makes are intoxicating, recalling purebred race cars rather than standard road cars. It's a nearly indivisible blend of high-pitched induction howl and deep exhaust bark, a noise more purposeful and far meaner than a delicately pretty MGA should make. It's different from the exotic Twin-Cam's, this rich cacophony, and unless you notice the understated exhaust outlets below the rear bumper, or catch an eyeful under the bonnet, it seems entirely out of character for a cheap-and-cheerful MG.

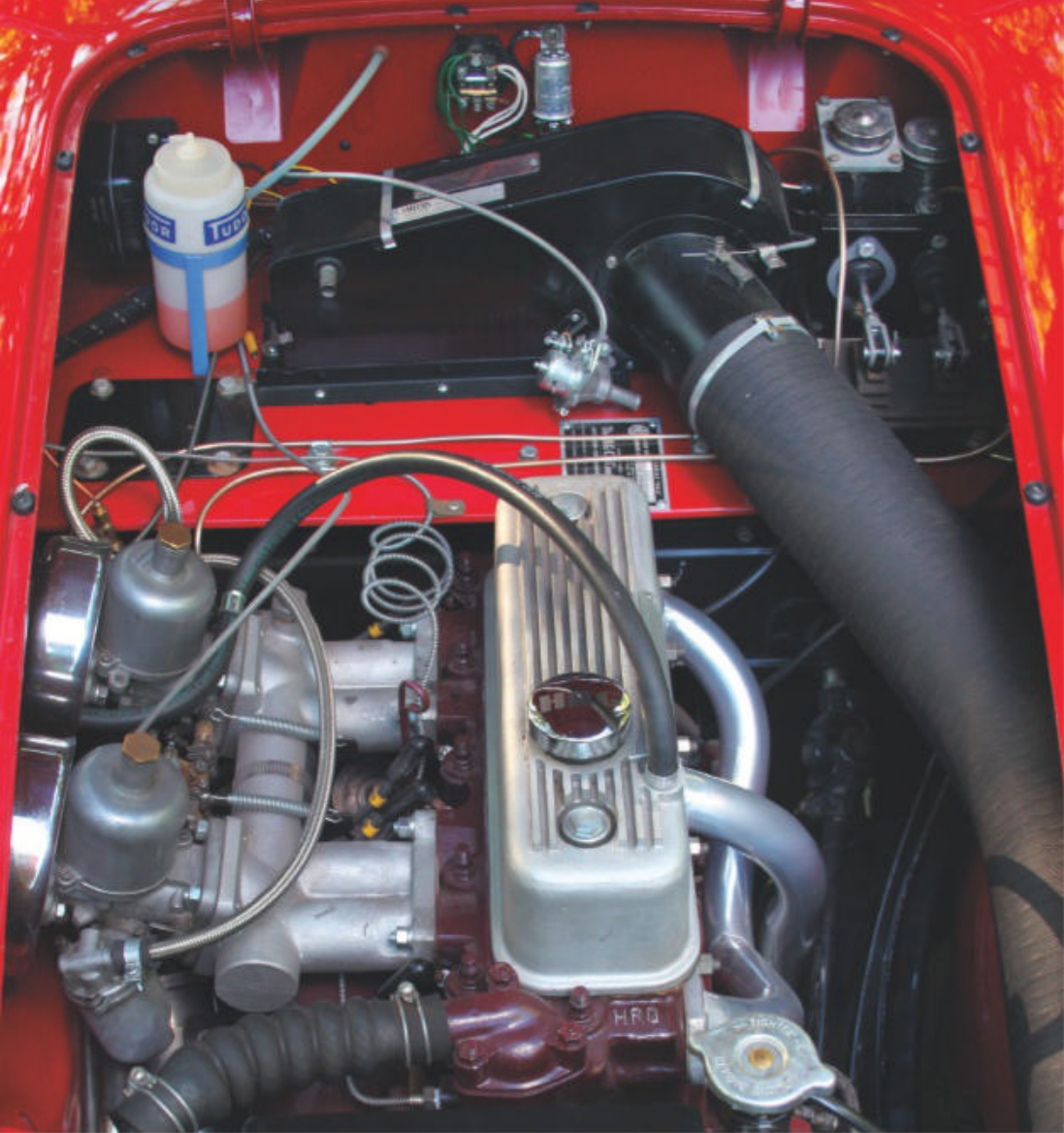
But it's not, when you consider that enterprising enthusiasts were improving on factory engineering and making go-faster parts for cars long before the 1962 Mk II De Luxe on these pages was built. Those keen individuals weren't limited by considerations of cost, economy, or warranty-friendly longevity, so their personalized cars could be highly tuned. Sometimes, as in the case of our feature import belonging to noted MG collector Carl Meyer, their developments eclipsed even the automakers' best efforts.



From its 1956 introduction, the MGA was powered by a twin-carbureted British Motor Corporation B-series 1500 four-cylinder. This overhead-valve, pushrod, 1,489-cc unit used a cast-iron head that located the two intake and three exhaust ports all on the left side of the engine, a space-efficient siamesed design that had two major compromises. The first negative was that with just two intake ports, it was difficult to get enough air and fuel into the engine. The second was that the intake and exhaust ports were so tightly spaced that the engine's airflow was limited even further, and exhaust gases exited through a restrictive three-into-one cast-iron manifold.

Before this engine went into an MG, it was modified by engineers within BMC. The complex double overhead-cam conversion they developed offered great promise for competition: A new, high-compression, crossflow aluminum head had hemispherical combustion chambers and relocated, opposing intake and exhaust ports matched with high-flow intake and exhaust manifolds. This design would enter limited production, after some five years of refinement, under the bonnet of the star-crossed, 1,588-cc MGA Twin-Cam of 1958-'60.

BMC engineers weren't the only ones working to improve B-series performance at that time. The racing specialists at the



The crossflow design of the H.R.G.-Derrington alloy head placed the carburetors on the opposite side of the engine from stock, requiring revised routing of the heater duct hose. To keep the engine as MG might have built it, it was decided to fit larger SU carburetors rather than Webers, plus free-flow Derrington headers leading into a Monza exhaust. This is the only crossflow head allowed in vintage racing.

wheels, and its own twin- and multi-carburetor conversions and tubular exhaust manifolds, with patronage from the world of Formula 1 Grand Prix, as well as private racers and enthusiast drivers. These specialized parts earned reputations that handily exceeded their small production numbers.

It was the mention of an H.R.G.-Derrington crossflow head, Derrington manifold, and a free-flow Monza exhaust system—among the other parts listed—that caught Carl's eye when he spotted the ad for this car in a 2015 issue of *Hemmings Motor News*. Carl is no stranger to MGAs, having owned multiple examples of factory Twin-Cams and Mk II De Luxes [see hmn.com/meyermgas], so he knew what this '62 represented. The A was a special package, being one of 165 De Luxe roadsters built for North America in the model's final year, powered by the enlarged 1,622-cc OHV engine, and factory-painted in the late color, Chariot Red. It was largely complete and in generally good condition, with one small spot of rust repair needed in the frame, but solid rocker panels; he would treat it to a body-off restoration to its as-built exterior and interior specs that incorporated numerous original and NOS pieces like the grey vinyl folding roof and matching sliding-window side curtains. The standard-ratio four-speed manual gearbox was retained, while the engine would get the period upgrades.

Being a De Luxe meant it had been equipped from the factory with the special chassis components that remained after

H.R.G. Engineering Co. had their own ideas about how to get the most from this four-cylinder. This firm was founded as an automotive engineering concern in 1935. It built a 1½-liter sports racing car on its own before collaborating with Singer Motors; it was atop a Singer engine in 1955 that the firm debuted an alloy DOHC cylinder head. While the last H.R.G. sports car was built in 1956, the H.R.G.-Derrington crossflow head improvement work for pushrod engines continued until the company's dissolution.

The latter part of H.R.G.-Derrington was the eponymous speed equipment and accessory company of V.W. "Vic" Derrington. This prominent tuning firm marketed these light-weight alloy crossflow heads, along with racing seats, steering



*I wanted to build a car
like I imagine the factory would
have done, back in the day...*

Twin-Cam production ceased, a mere 2,111 examples of that high-strung variant having been built. They included 11-inch disc brakes at each corner, behind center-lock, peg-drive 15 x 4-inch Dunlop steel disc wheels; separate brake and clutch master cylinders replacing the combined unit in the standard MGA Mk II; a relocated rack-and-pinion steering rack and new front anti-roll bar; and a 4.3:1-ratio three-quarter floating hypoid bevel rear axle. These upgraded parts enhanced the capabilities of the MGA's standard lever-arm-shock-equipped, double-wishbone and coil spring front, and semi-elliptic leaf-sprung, solid-axle rear suspensions, and measurably improved its braking capability.

Installed and sorted, the aftermarket engine parts that came with Carl's iron-head De Luxe gave it the potential to match or exceed Twin-Cam performance, without the durability concerns that plagued the OEM model. He says this was his goal: "The Twin-Cam was being developed around the same time this crossflow head was, and H.R.G. had apparently offered it to MG as a performance accessory, but it was refused because of the in-house work. I wanted to build a car like I imagine the factory would have done, back in the day, if they'd used that crossflow head on the pushrod engine instead of going with the Twin-Cam: install the H.R.G. head, fit larger, 1¾-inch SU carburetors, and utilize the Derrington header and Monza exhaust."

It wasn't a straightforward installation, as moving the carburetors to the other side of the engine bay conflicted with the heater intake ducting, and Carl wanted the engine bay to look like it came off the assembly line. "I had to switch the heater box so the duct was on the left side rather than the right," he recalls. "That proved a hassle because the pipe that comes out of the heater was angled improperly to convert from one side to



A reproduction of the period MG competition steering wheel, crafted from alloy and wood, enhances the racy aesthetic of the MGA's cabin. This car was restored to its original specs, as noted in a British Motor Industry Heritage Trust Certificate. The period Radiomobile AM radio works.



the other. Doing a bit of research, I found the MG Midget had its heater ducting on the left side, so I adopted that configuration. It now looks much like the Twin-Cam setup, with the ducting on the left and carbs on the right.”

With the visuals locked down, what about the speed? In the late 1950s, H.R.G. advertisements compared road-test statistics of its crossflow head with hand-finished ports to those of the standard 72-hp MGA 1500 and 108-hp 1600 Twin-Cam; they proudly showed an H.R.G.-Derrington head-equipped MGA 1500 was notably quicker, faster, and more fuel-efficient than both factory examples. That performance improved further when the alloy head was bolted onto 1962’s larger-displacement 1,622-cc engine, which made 90 hp at 5,500 rpm and 97 lb-ft of torque at 4,000 rpm in stock form, thanks to its 8.9:1 compression ratio and 1½-inch SU H.4 carburetors.

Original H.R.G. documentation compiled by vintage racer and historian William Spohn [rhodoworld.com/HRG.html] includes period comparative dynamometer testing results showing peak horsepower for a 1,622-cc engine with this head and 1¾-inch H.6 SUs being 103.5, versus 83.5 for the stock head and SU H.4s; fitting twin-choke Weber 42 DCOE carbs resulted in an even stronger 108.5 max hp. It noted that using a tubular extractor exhaust manifold—like the Derrington fitted to this car—was required to achieve top output.

Speaking of peak output: Carl has not yet put this 1962 Mk II De Luxe on the dyno, but considering its breathing modifications, he and his friend, MG fleet technician Paul Allen, estimate it makes around 125 hp at the crank. “I have driven many MGs, and have never experienced such rapid acceleration, even from a Twin-Cam,” Paul tells us. Carl agrees, “I love getting into it and listening to the sounds. The De Luxe rumbles down the road, it’s unbelievable. You definitely feel the difference between a Twin-Cam and this De Luxe. From a start, the Twin-Cam takes a while to get up into the power; it’s got to pass 3,500 rpm before the torque really kicks in. Not the De Luxe—it’s right there, right away. Throttle response is unbelievable.

“All this performance stuff was available at that time,” Carl continues. “MG could have produced the MGA with this crossflow head, and avoided all the problems that ensued with the Twin-Cam. This head should produce 15-percent more power than the 1,622, the Derrington header and free-flow exhaust should each add a little more, the 1¾ carburetors might add a bit on top. Can you see why this car might blow the doors off a Twin-Cam?”



Mk II De Luxes sported leftover MGA Twin-Cam 15 x 4-inch Dunlop steel wheels fronting four-wheel disc brakes. These wear era-correct Michelin X radials.

Period H.R.G. advertising showed the alloy head’s benefit compared to stock setups.

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ACCELERATION TIMES in top gear			
20-40 m.p.h.	13.6 sec.	8.9 sec.	10.7 sec.
60-80 m.p.h.	17.6 sec.	11.9 sec.	13.9 sec.
ACCELERATION TIMES in 3rd gear			
10-30 m.p.h.	8.1 sec.	6.7 sec.	8.3 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	7.9 sec.	6.0 sec.	6.5 sec.
MAXIMUM SPEED (timed ¼ mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest) Mean of opposite runs	92.0 m.p.h.	102.3 m.p.h.	101.3 m.p.h.
FUEL CONSUMPTION At steady 50 m.p.h. on level	43.2 m.p.g.	44.5 m.p.g.	33.5 m.p.g.
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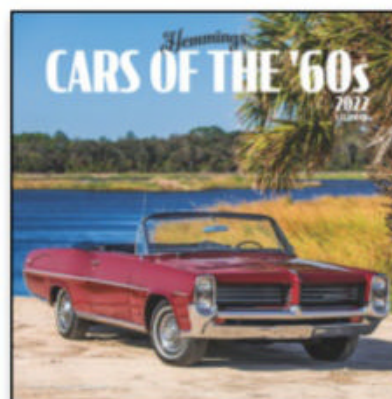
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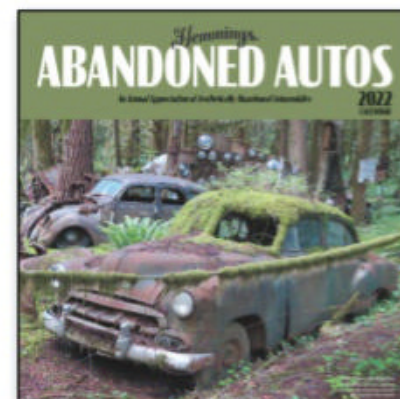
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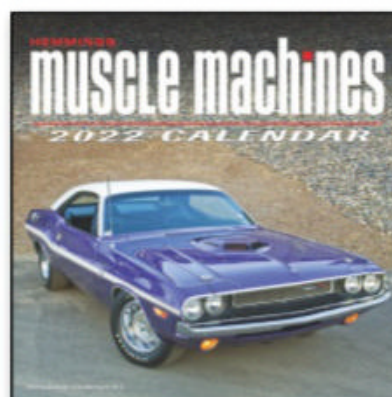
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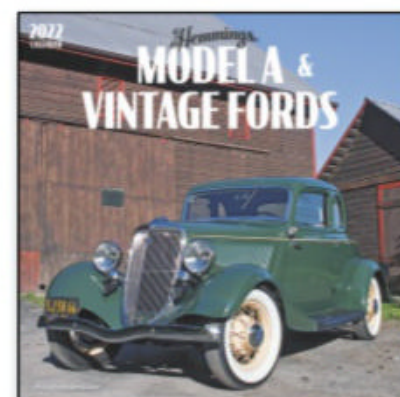
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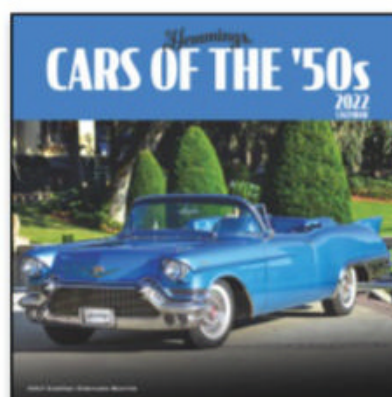
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1951 Studebaker Commander State

*For convertible aficionados, the Commander was
a good buy then, a great buy now*

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOS BY DAVID LaCHANCE



You know the refrain: When the top goes *down* the price goes *up*! It's a cliché, but it's true. Still, if you want that open-air experience, take a look at the early '50s—a largely forgotten era between the recycled prewar designs of 1946-'48 and the fin-and-chrome-bedecked insolent chariots of 1957-'59. The folks who were supposed to feel nostalgic for those cars never really seemed to drive prices up very far, and now that they've largely aged out of the market, cars of the 1949-'54 period especially have become ever more attainable.

Even within that era, the savvy shopper will forget the Ford and Chevrolet products. While they were produced in great numbers, affordable examples have gotten hard to find. Instead, it's worth looking at the middle-priced segment, which was in its heyday in the early '50s and is virtually moribund today.

"Middle priced" for our purposes means a convertible that cost around \$2,500 in 1951. Adjusted for inflation, that equates to \$25,000 today. You can't go out and buy a new five-passenger ragtop for that anymore, but interestingly, that's right in the middle of where the popular price guides say something like the 1951 Studebaker Commander State on these pages sells for now.

Other players in the middle-priced convertible segment included Pontiac, Oldsmobile, and Buick; Dodge; Hudson; and Mercury. Even among these, the Studebaker stands out. Only the Dodge regularly sells for less than a Studebaker today, likely because many were built with a semi-automatic transmission that tends to perplex modern drivers. For 1951, Studebaker offered not only a true automatic transmission, but a brand-new, state-of-the-art overhead-valve V-8 engine and some of the most distinctive styling of not only the 1950s, but any decade.

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Studebaker's V-8 engine debuted in the 1951 Commander. It remained in production through the 1964 model year, growing from 233 to 304 cu.in., and moving from a single two-barrel carburetor to available dual-quad and supercharged induction. The bullet nose on 1951 models is different from the similar 1950 unit.

ENGINE

Studebaker regularly offered eight cylinders in the 1930s and early '40s, but when production resumed after World War II, South Bend didn't resurrect the old flathead straight-eight. Instead, it offered only the Champion, a six-cylinder compact car the company had introduced for 1939. The rehashed Champion lasted only one year before it was replaced by a new Champion, joined by a new Commander—also six-cylinder powered, albeit with a different, larger engine shared with the truck line.

The Commander persisted with six cylinders up through 1950. By that point, Oldsmobile and Cadillac had shown that overhead-valve V-8 engines were the new standard for automobile powerplants. Studebaker followed their lead quite literally, producing a V-8 of its own that is remarkably similar to the Cadillac engine. In fact, the adjustable rockers of a Studebaker V-8 were a popular retrofit by hot rodders into the Cadillac V-8.

When the new engine debuted for 1951, Studebaker stood virtually alone in the middle-priced field with modern, OHV

V-8 power. Pontiac still used L-head straight-sixes and eights of prewar vintage; Buick had a 124-hp, OHV eight-cylinder, but it too was a prewar inliner; Dodge and Hudson both had flathead straight-sixes (albeit well-respected ones); and Mercury had its traditional flathead V-8. Only Oldsmobile had a comparable design to Studebaker, with its 135-hp, 303-cu.in. engine.

Copied from GM or not, the Studebaker V-8 proved to be an excellent design. Occasionally refined, it remained in production until the company shuttered its South Bend facilities in 1964 and switched to Chevrolet engines. In capable R1, R2, R3, and R4 form, it became and remains a remarkable performer for its era.

The earliest iteration was mild in comparison with those later engines. It displaced 232.6 cu.in. and produced 120 hp at 4,000 rpm. Unlike the engines that followed, it didn't use multiple carburetors or supercharging, making do with a single Stromberg two-barrel carburetor and a 7.0:1 compression ratio.

Because Studebaker engineers foresaw greater things for their new engine, it was overbuilt from the beginning, with a forged crankshaft and stout cylinder block. One of the reasons it

PARTS PRICES

6-volt overdrive relay (all 1947-'55 models)	\$95
"Bail Out Studebaker" bumper sticker	\$2.00
Brake drum and hub (1951-'53 Commander, each)	\$195
Door sill plates (all 1947-'57 models, pair)	\$239
Front suspension rebuild kit (all 1951-'52 models)	\$1,351.00
Gabriel front shock absorber (1950 Champion, all 1951-early '57 models, each)	\$35
Gabriel rear shock absorber (1950 Champion, all 1951-early '57 models, each)	\$35
Gas gauge (1950-'52 Commander, Land Cruiser)	\$60
Hood (1951, all models)	\$800
Minor rebuild kit for 1951-'54 V-8	\$782
Quick-ratio steering arms (all 1951-'85 models, pair)	\$125
Rear door latch (all 1951 models, each)	\$50
Replacement floor panels (all 1947-'52 models, pair)	\$525
Replacement rocker panels (all 1947-'52 two-door models, pair)	\$215
Rubber front floor covering (all 1950 models with auto trans, all 1951-'52 models)	\$195
Stainless rocker moldings (all 1947-'52 models, pair)	\$525
Temperature gauge (1951-'52 Commander)	\$55

WHAT TO PAY

later took so well to supercharging was that it was designed to withstand compression ratios as high as 13:1. It also had more bearing area per cubic inch than the Oldsmobile Rocket or the Cadillac V-8 that inspired it, and more bearing area, full stop, than the 331-cu.in. Chrysler FirePower Hemi that also debuted for 1951.

Technical information on the Studebaker V-8 abounds and a strong enthusiast network means that parts are still relatively plentiful and easy to find.

TRANSMISSIONS AND AXLE

A Studebaker Commander buyer in 1951 had three choices for a transmission. A column-shifted three-speed was standard, with overdrive as an extra-cost option. What most motorists coveted in that era, however, was an automatic transmission. Studebaker accommodated those buyers as well, with a Borg-Warner built three-speed automatic.

The three-speed and overdrive gearboxes will be familiar to anyone who has had a manual-transmission-equipped car from the '40s, '50s, or '60s. Although long established and technically competent, Studebaker depended on Borg-Warner for its transmission needs. Both the overdrive and non-overdrive gearboxes were from the T-86 family, with the R11 overdrive used when that option was selected. Because Borg-Warner also supplied the T-86 to multiple other manufacturers (including Ford and Chrysler), technical know-how and rebuilding parts remain plentiful.

The automatic transmission, introduced partway through 1950, was a technological standout for its era. While Buick, Chevrolet, and Packard were using non-shifting torque-converter units and Hudson, Pontiac, and Oldsmobile had the four-speed Hydra-Matic (with no torque converter), Studebaker helped develop the Borg-Warner DG series automatic. Only Ford's Ford-O-Matic (Merc-O-Matic in Mercury cars) was similar.

The DG was a three-speed unit that (for 1950-'53) shifted automatically between second and third gears (first had to be selected manually). It also used a torque converter, but remarkably, that torque converter would lock into direct drive at speeds above 18 mph. That's a feature not found on most other vehicles (although Packard had it) for another 30 years.

	Low	Average	High
1951 Studebaker Commander State convertible	\$17,500	\$28,500	\$41,000

The DG was an excellent transmission. It only added 4 or 5 seconds to a V-8 Commander's 0 to 60 time, and it permitted a careful driver to still obtain fuel economy numbers over 22 mpg. It remained in production through 1955, when it was replaced with a less-expensive Borg-Warner automatic similar to the Ford-O-Matic.

Regardless of transmission, all Commanders received a Dana 44 rear axle. Like Borg-Warner, Dana was an outside supplier that sold not only to Studebaker. The Dana 44 is still in production today, and suppliers carry virtually everything necessary to rebuild the units found under 1951 Commanders and tailor the gear ratio to suit your driving style. The 1952 Commander used an identical unit, and the 1953-up cars used one that was slightly wider. Watch out for the Dana 41s used under Champions—they look like a 44, but the parts don't interchange and they're not as well supported.

Dealing with a manual or overdrive transmission in a 1951 Commander is quite straightforward. Most rebuild parts are available and good used parts can be found if necessary. The automatic also has relatively good support but finding a shop that is comfortable working with such an old design will be a challenge. It's areas like this where joining an organization like the Studebaker Drivers Club will reap major benefits, as club members have spent decades sorting information and keeping tabs on technical resources.

CHASSIS

While many have difficulty telling a 1950 Studebaker from a '51, once you dig beneath the sheetmetal, you will find a world of difference. For 1951, Studebaker placed both the Commander and the Champion on the same 115-inch wheelbase, with the Commander's Land Cruiser subseries (a luxurious four-door sedan) on a 119-inch span.

At the same time, Studebaker had been updating its chassis engineering. Before 1950, all Studebaker cars used the prewar "planar" independent front suspension, which used a transverse





The 1951 instrument panel is considerably different from that in the 1950 Commander, but identical to the 1952. Convertible rear seats are narrower than closed-car units but will interchange from 1947 to 1952. Front seats are specific to 1951-'52, but interchange between open and closed cars. This car features the optional leather upholstery, but vinyl and nylon were standard.

leaf spring in lieu of upper A-arms. For 1950, the company switched to coil springs and A-arms, but this was an interim design and the 1951 IFS was refined even further.

The good news is that the 1951 front suspension was so good that it was retained, kingpins and all, up through the end of Studebaker production in 1966, and beyond. The Avanti II sports car continued to use the 1951 Studebaker IFS through 1985. While there were refinements, once again the longevity of the design works in favor of the 1951 buyer, who can count on parts and information even today.

Further, the non-purist who wishes to employ some driver-type upgrades can do so by dipping into the factory parts bin and the aftermarket resources that have grown up around the later cars. Disc brake conversions have been engineered, as have power steering and power brake retrofits, though most owners seem to find the Commander's self-adjusting drum system to be adequate.

BODIES

The basic 1951 Studebaker Commander body shell dates back to 1947 and was used one last time for 1952, but the bodywork from the cowl forward is unique to 1951—not even the similar 1950 pieces will interchange, although the rear fenders will swap from two-door to two-door and four-door to four-door. They will even look nearly correct thanks to the vertical taillamps. Perhaps the most noticeable difference between 1950 and '51 is the bullet nose itself. For 1950, the entire thing was chrome, while in 1951 the outer ring was painted body color. Thanks to the differences in wheelbase, there is virtually no chance of seeing a 1950 front end on a 1951 car.

Studebaker bodies were well built for their time, but the complexity of the stampings make for a plethora of moisture and rust traps. Check especially around the cowl vents, at the bottoms of the doors, and at the leading edges of the rear fenders. Any place there is a drain that could have been plugged, you'll want to be sure water wasn't allowed to sit and eat at the back side of those panels.



Patch pieces are available to repair rusty Studebakers, but no complete panels have been reproduced. Owners faced with extensive rust repair will want to look to used sheetmetal vendors in desert areas. Some have even gone so far as to remodel 1952 front fenders and 1947-'49 rear quarters to work on a 1951. Luckily for 1951 owners, equivalent pieces will exchange between the Champion and Commander (something not true in earlier years), though trim will have to be reconfigured. Some items, like doors (not counting the rear doors of the Land Cruiser) and decklids, will exchange back to 1947.

The convertible top assembly was identical in 1951 and '52. A complete 1947-'50 assembly may interchange into a later car in a pinch. When shopping for convertible top pieces, be sure to find the power assists as well, and if they are not present in a car you are considering, negotiate price with that in mind.

INTERIORS

While closed Studebakers used a luxurious broadcloth material, convertibles came standard with nylon upholstery and vinyl leatherette trim. Leather was an extra-cost option.

While knobs, switches, gauges, and other small parts are reproduced, it does not appear that upholstery and door panels are currently available for any 1947-'52 Studebaker. When faced with the need for new fabric, an owner will have to source material through a specialist vendor and have it installed locally.

In the case of cars that need extensive restoration, it may be



necessary to source replacement seat frames. Front seats are relatively easy, with any 1951-'52 two-door front seat a direct fit and 1947-'50 front seats a functional interchange. Rear seats, while the same 1947-'52, are specific to convertible models.

PRODUCTION

In case you needed a reminder, rare does not always equal valuable. Although we've previously established that the

'51 Commander, even as a convertible, is an excellent buy compared with its competition from the era, you may not be able to simply run out and pick one up tomorrow. Studebaker built 268,565 cars total for the 1951 model year, of which 124,329 were Commanders (including 38,055 Land Cruisers). Among Commanders, the convertible made up only 3 percent of production, with 3,770 built. In contrast, Studebaker also built 4,742 1951 Champion Regal convertibles. 🏆



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*Restoring a single-family-owner, supercharged
'57 Ford Custom Phase 1*

BY JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO
AND COURTESY OF THE HOLMES FAMILY



When a car has been in your household longer than you've been alive, it says a couple of things—both about the car, and about your household. It says that car means something to the owner. It means that memories were made in that car. It says that sentiment outweighs the inconvenience of moving a non-running hulk from place to place across the decades as it awaits its turn

for rejuvenation. Such is the case with Randy Holmes' award-winning Flame Red '57 Ford Custom—one of 65 built with the Phase 1, McCullough-supercharged 312-cube V-8 below the hood.

You'd think that such a machine would have been spirited away to the parts department to have headers and gears installed, a dealer's name painted on the doors, and sent off to the drags to promote the local Ford store. Somehow, this one

wormed its way onto the lot, where it was spotted by Randy's dad. "My dad John and his brothers were always into fast cars. They raced stock cars at the dirt tracks up around Niagara Falls and Ithaca, New York. The story I get out of my parents is that my dad saw this car on the lot at the Ford dealer in Erie, Pennsylvania. He took one look at it and knew what it was; he traded in the car my mother Carole says was her favorite, her '56 Ford, in order to get it."



Family photos from the early 1960s show the Ford in repose in the Holmes family driveway. As seen here, it was treated as the family grocery-getter—despite the hairy supercharged engine lurking under the hood.



In 1957, NASCAR's horsepower wars were on: While Chevrolet fiddled with fuel injection, Ford tried supercharging as a way to achieve maximum power and speed. Homologation requirements at the time meant just 100 production cars with the engine in question had to be built. So, at the dawn of calendar 1957 and before Daytona Speed Weeks, Ford built 100 supercharged cars: 65 low-line Custom two-door sedans, with a minimum

of chrome filigree, sparse interior fittings, and pie-pan hubcaps on body-colored steel wheels; 15 two-seat Thunderbirds; and 20 Fairlane 500 Sunliner convertibles. These first 100 cars are unofficially known as Phase 1 cars. Plenty of supercharged '57 models were built after the fact, but those first hundred cars are full of all manner of skunkworks goodies with experimental part numbers.

How such a car ended up in Erie,

Pennsylvania remains a bit of a mystery. "The earliest paperwork I've found for this car was a warranty sheet explaining that the selling dealer was Bill Brown Sales in Livonia, Michigan, and my dad's signature was at the bottom. The story I got was that the owner of a lot in Erie obtained it from Bill Brown for his son, but once it came in, the dealer thought his son would kill himself in it, so he sold it to my dad. He is the first owner of record. The car was built



Ford quickly built the first hundred supercharged 312s in early 1957 so that it could be ready for NASCAR's season opener at Daytona in February. By May, the blower had been outlawed by rule changes. Those first 100 cars, known as "Phase 1" models, have components with experimental part numbers.

in Dearborn on January 19th, 1957, but the paperwork is dated May 21 of '57."

During the day, it was the family car, and Randy and his two older siblings clocked plenty of time in that expansive back seat as Mom drove around greater Pittsburgh. Despite 300 rated horsepower worth of supercharged 312-cubic-inch Y-block under the hood, the Ford was never lettered up. That doesn't mean that John and Carole didn't have a bit of fun with it.

"Dad always snuck off to the drags. He'd say 'Hey, I'm going to fill the tank' and then come back a few hours later with a trophy from Heidelberg Raceway. It was his toy, but my mother also drove it as the family car until the late '60s. Maybe even later. I remember a time when she was driving it, I wasn't even 10 years old yet. Dad had added a dual-quad intake to go with the supercharger and the Holley 4100 teapots, and when the gas station guy checked the oil, he'd take one look at that engine, then give her a look through the windshield."

Once the '70s arrived, the Custom's

pace of life slowed dramatically, as witnessed by the 63,000-mile odometer. Randy admits that fit-and-finish from the factory wasn't everything it could have been. The body and chassis had been looked after as best as possible, cutting out the rot and making it more or less presentable. A month after the heads were redone, it dropped a valve. Randy's older brother played with it briefly before he went to college, and from about 1975 on, it sat. Randy, too young before the engine issues, didn't get to drive it in his youth.

You might say that irked Randy a bit, that he didn't get a shot at driving the car that his dad so loved. For three and a half decades he moved it, and its attendant parts, from place to place as he relocated around central Pennsylvania, finally ending up with the Ford in storage. "It remained there until I got the time, money, and inclination to start restoring it. It was always Dad's car, we always said it was special, and I always kept it." For 35 years.



2022



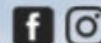
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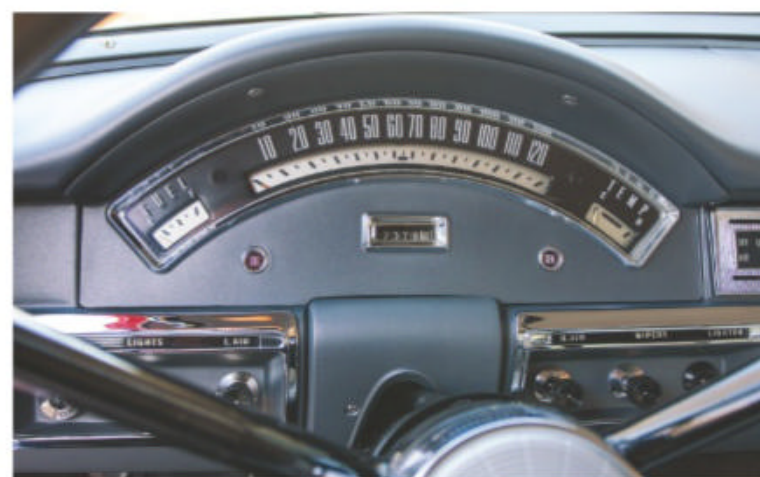


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Ford Custom interiors were low-line affairs, devoid of the filigree and flash most associate with '50s cars: speedometer, heater controls, and precious little else. The 63,000-mile odometer is correct. No fair guessing how often the edge of the 120-mph speedometer saw the needle.

The restoration took seven total years, from 2011-'17, performed mostly by Randy and his pal, body-and-paint pro Jim Testa, with a few items farmed out. The project started with a simple accounting of what parts Randy had available, what could be salvaged and brought back to life, and what he needed to find.

While the floors were largely solid, "We replaced an awful lot of the rest. The rear quarters and trunk drops were

replaced, and I replaced the inner and outer rockers. Anything that didn't get sprayed with undercoating had to be replaced. When I took the rockers out, I could still see the U.S. Steel stamp in the metal where it was spot welded together. Those rockers were untouched—no attempt was made to rustproof them at all."

The hood, which was off the car and standing on end in storage, was ruined when the facility's roof leaked

and water soaked the steel. Despite that, things stayed mostly dry and rodent-free. "What really helped was these parts were in storage and no one touched 'em for years," Randy said. "No mice attacking or anything else."

It would be the supercharged-specific components—or more specifically, the Phase 1 experimental-coded components—that would be most difficult to locate. Luckily, the bulk of those parts



A thick layer of goopy undercoating meant that the underside survived a decade-plus of Pittsburgh winters better than most. "The floors were surprisingly good; we only had to replace the driver's side footwell," Randy reports. Much of the rest of the lower body sheetmetal had to be replaced with NOS metal.



The roof remains all factory Ford steel. After acid etching to promote adhesion, two coats of PPG epoxy primer and four coats of PPG high-build primer were applied, then block sanded with 320-, 400-, and 600-grit paper.

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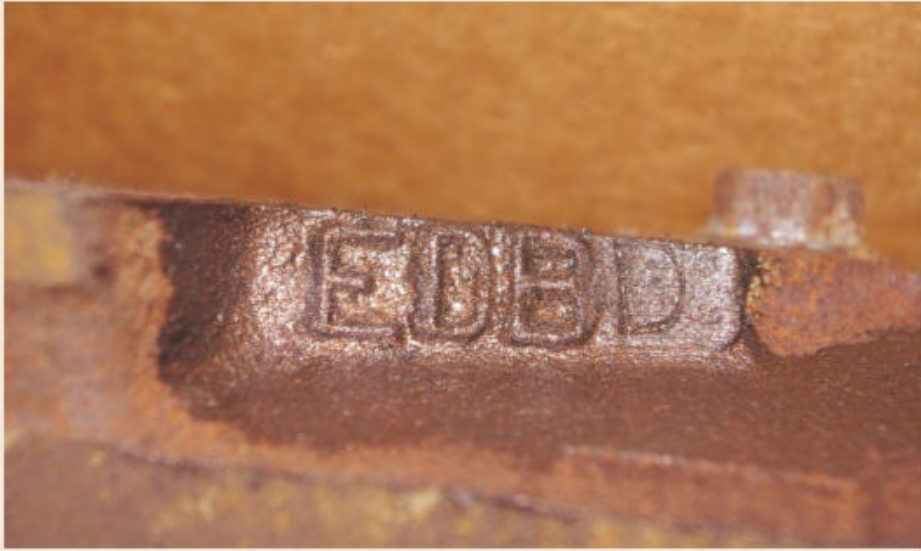
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Phase 1 Fords can be tough to verify, because the early cars didn't have the F-code (Ford's engine code for the 300-horse-rated supercharged 312 V-8) stamped into them. As seen here, the heads have a raised EDB code, which could be confusing to anyone trying to verify or document. Randy isn't worried: The car has been in his family since new, and he's confident that all of the parts here are original to the car.



We're used to seeing seats start out like they'd been attacked by a rhesus monkey after being denied a banana, but the original cloth front seat held up remarkably well for its decade and a half of life with three kids bouncing around. A LeBaron Bonney reproduction interior kit was installed by Weimann's Interior of Delmont, Pennsylvania, and some custom-mixed PPG grey paint made the gut look new.



"Flame Red has a watermelon-ish, orange-ish tint to it. A lot of Flame Red cars now are too red. Paint companies didn't update all of the old colors when new paint formulas came out, and you don't know how many samples we got from PPG. We had good original paint inside the door frames to match, and PPG went to their research department for the original formula. They mixed a really good Flame Red for us."



Other than installing the front sheetmetal, and the detail work involved therein, the Custom is largely done here. "We didn't start the engine until this stage. This was one of the times I invited my dad over during the restoration. I said, 'Hey, help me get it started...' He turned the key, and I ran the throttle from outside. It was the first time in 40-some years that he heard it; he just enjoyed that so much." Who's chopping onions in here?



The frame was straight and true, thanks to an impact-free life and a liberal application of undercoating. A simple strip-down and repaint in PPG chassis black, prior to fitting a suite of NOS OEM chassis components (including a factory-supplied $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch front anti-roll bar), did the trick.



Saved by and freed from a life covered in undercoat, the chassis is now as clean and detailed as the top side. A set of 11-inch drum brakes, a 9-inch Ford rear with factory 3.56:1 gearing, the column-shifted Borg-Warner T-85 three-speed, and the new tapered driveshaft are all visible from this lift shot.



Randy (left) did the bulk of the restoration with a long-time pal; the Ford has been in the family longer than him. Original owners Carole and John have ridden in the restored Ford since its completion. Carol affirms that it's nicer now than when it left the factory, while John will tell any and all interested parties about his car's remarkable history.

remained in the Holmes' possession from new. "I was lucky... I had everything except the specific crank balancer" and he found that hiding under his dad's workbench a year or two after the restoration was completed. "Supercharged cars have a different intake, special carbs so that air doesn't leak out the throttle shaft, the distributor is different, the fuel pump is different. I was fortunate. I had all that stuff except the dampener."

Yet restoring a '57 Ford presented its own challenges. You'd think parts would be easy to find — Ford built 10 percent more '57 models than Chevy did, after all — but the crosstown competition saw its star rise on the secondary market, leaving fewer people looking to restore the

Blue Oval. "It was rough," Randy confesses. "It's not like doing a Chevy where you can buy a fender; there's little good reproduction sheetmetal made for the '57 Ford. I'm always on the lookout for NOS sheetmetal. It took years of looking before I found a set of outer rockers."

Since its 2017 completion, the Custom has garnered AACA Junior, Senior, and Grand National First awards; Best In Class (American Sports Car) at the 2018 Greenwich Concours d'Elegance, and more. More importantly, John and Carole are both out there at car shows with their son Randy, and the '57 Ford that John had to have so badly.

"My parents were married in 1953 and are both still alive. Dad hasn't driven

it since it was done, but he was there the day we fired up the engine for the first time since restoring it. They've ridden in it since completion. Mom's first comment was, 'Boy, it never looked that good when it was new!' And yeah, it's probably over-restored.

"Dad still loves it. Anytime anyone comes up, he'll tell 'em all about it. It was his toy; he was always playing with it, working on it, drag racing it. Finally, it's finished, and he loves to talk about it."

When a car has been in your household longer than you've been alive, it says a couple of things — both about the car, and about your household. It says that car means something. It says that the years of storage and effort to make it work again were all worth it. It says that it's loved. 🐾

GAA Classic Cars Auction

July sale in North Carolina netted more than \$17 million

GAA CLASSIC CARS AUCTION HELD ITS THIRD SALE OF THE YEAR AT ITS FACILITY IN GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA, ON JULY 22-24. UNLIKE ITS previous event, the midsummer auction has been a regular part of its annual calendar. As such, the July sale served up—by our count—613 vintage and contemporary collectible vehicles, for onsite and remote bidders alike, during the three-day event. GAA sold 550 lots to new owners, which equated to an 89.7-percent sell-through rate and a collective take of nearly \$17.7 million (all listed sale prices include a buyer's premium).

After the last lot crossed the block, sitting at the top of the overall sales list was an incredibly restored 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 454 that achieved a sale price of \$250,000. It was followed by a 1958 Chevrolet Corvette restomod that realized \$190,000. There were no less than 48 vehicles from the Fifties offered at the sale, a trio of which we present here. For more details pertaining to GAA Classic Cars future sales, as well as a complete list of results from the July sale, visit www.gaaclassiccars.com.



1955 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE

Reserve: None Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$6,500 \$10,000 - \$17,000

The Fifties marked a period of model changes within many manufacturers' lineups, including Plymouth, which in 1953 introduced the Belvedere as a well-appointed two-door hardtop. A year later, it was redesignated the division's top model line, available in four body styles—five, when this four-door sedan was built in 1955, becoming the line's biggest seller by more than 113,000 units. Though an economical six-cylinder was offered, this one benefitted from a 157-hp Hy-Fire V-8 engine. Looking the part of having been repainted at some indeterminate date, it also had an automatic transmission, AM radio, and little else. This was a nice driver that sold well below the market range.



1955 PONTIAC STAR CHIEF

Reserve: Undisclosed Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$15,500 \$14,000 - \$24,500

Like the Belvedere, Pontiac's Star Chief became the division's top trim level during the Fifties, exemplified by this attractive two-tone Custom four-door sedan, of which 35,153 were built. The Custom aspect was the addition of brightwork surrounding the side windows. Consigned as an undated yet fully restored car, it boasted of not only the base 287-cu.in. V-8 engine, but automatic transmission, power steering and brakes, power windows, power antenna, and a functioning, all-important lighted hood ornament. This Pontiac was essentially a turnkey car that managed to land nicely on the low end of the market range for the buyer.



1951 MERCURY SPORT COUPE

Reserve: None Avg. Market Range:
Selling Price: \$20,000 \$33,500 - \$53,500

Mercury wasn't in the habit of assigning names to its line of cars. That changed a bit when the upscale Monterey coupe was unveiled in 1950. Even in '51, the other four models remained nameless, save for simple designations such as "Sport Coupe," attached to this two-door. It was reported to be an all-original paint and interior example that had seen only two owners since 1988. Other details were thin: "Manual transmission." Mercury had two things going for it in '51: It won its class in the Los Angeles to Grand Canyon Mobil Economy Run, and custom car fans liked how the Merc's lines lent themselves to further styling enhancements. Offered without reserve, it oddly sold well below market range.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price: What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer's premium)

Average Market Range: Values coincide with current market trends for vehicles rated from condition #2- to #1, respectively

Mecum Wraps Orlando Auction

MECUM'S ORLANDO, FLORIDA, AUCTION AT THE END OF JULY SAW 1,056 CARS

cross the block with a sell through of 80 percent and overall sales reaching \$35 million. Nearly 100 American cars built prior to 1960 changed hands during the three-day auction, with total sales in this group reaching \$4.3 million and a sell through of 81.7 percent. One of the oldest cars sold was this 1931 Ford Model A DeLuxe roadster. It had the same owner for more than four decades and had undergone a body-off restoration. The stock Model A featured a number of period accessories including a grille stone guard, running board step plates, flying quail radiator cap, and rare dual-cowl windshield arrangement. This car was the highest seller among the A's, finding a new home for \$42,900.

Another car from the 1930s was a 1938 La Salle Series 50 convertible coupe from the Dickey Weaver collection. This example of the Cadillac companion marque was thought to be one of 819 produced and was red with a tan top and maroon interior. Powered by a 322-cu.in. V-8 mated to a three-speed transmission, it featured a rumble seat, banjo-style steering wheel, dual fender-mounted spares, and whitewalls mounted to red wheels with chrome La Salle hubcaps and beauty rings. The convertible raked in \$26,400.

One of the highest-priced sellers in this group was a 1942 Lincoln Zephyr three-window coupe. It was said to be one of just five known to exist, and had won many awards at various shows. It still had its original steel body and flathead V-12 engine, and it only showed 85,000 miles on the odometer. The rust-free Zephyr was painted black, which was a factory option, keeping it eligible for show competitions. With its new interior and period matching luggage set, the old show-quality Zephyr sold for \$94,600. Full results from the Orlando auction are now available at mecum.com.



MECUM

RM Sotheby's August Open Roads

THE AUGUST EDITION OF RM SOTHEBY'S

online-only "Open Roads" auction finished with a sell through of 90 percent, while a total of more than \$1.7 million in sales was realized. The auction showed positive signs of gains, with first-time bidders comprising 34 percent of the eligible buyers. Among the cars to change hands were a 1959 Edsel Corsair convertible. It was fitted with the Teletouch three-speed automatic transmission, which was mated to the 361-cu.in. V-8. The Platinum Gray Metallic finish was complemented by black vinyl bolsters, silver vinyl inserts, and white vinyl accents. The vinyl-covered top and boot



RM SOTHEBY'S

were complete, and inside, the Edsel had standard factory features including front foam seat cushions, carpeting, electric clock, cigarette lighter, front and rear ashtrays, and original armrests. When the bidding ended, the Corsair reached a final sale of \$19,800.

Also selling was a 1950 Cadillac Series 60 Special Fleetwood, which had the same owner since 2014. It was finished in El Paso Beige Metallic over tan Bedford cord and tan plain broadcloth. Riding on 15-inch steel wheels with whitewalls and wheel covers, the Special Fleetwood was one of 13,755 made for the 1950 model year. It was powered by a 331-cu.in. V-8, and the car's interior features included a factory radio, rear sunshade, dash-mounted clock, and aftermarket front lap belts. The solid and mostly original Caddy changed hands at \$15,950. Full results from the latest Open Roads auction are now available at rmsothebys.com.

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the seller pays only a \$99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Director of Auction Operations Terry Shea: terryshea@hemmings.com



1968 VOLVO 1800S

Reserve: \$35,000

Selling Price: \$38,588*

Recent Market Range:

\$29,500-\$45,220

There's something about a white Volvo 1800S that conjures up intrigue and adventure. This one had enjoyed a mechanical refresh, along with bare-metal paintwork after some lower-body rust repair. The interior was a blend of original rear seat material and front seats reupholstered in matching red vinyl, while the padded dash was recovered. The sturdy B1800 engine was rebuilt some 9,000 miles ago and fitted with a single Weber carburetor, although the original SUs went with the car; the overdrive-equipped four-speed promised to work without issue. An interested bidder agreed to the seller's asking price, and a Premium Classified sale took place within a couple hours of the auction's end.



1940 FORD DE LUXE

Reserve: \$52,000

Selling Price: \$54,600

Recent Market Range:

\$50,120-\$65,220

Countless prewar Fords have been irreparably hot rodged, but this '40 remained as Henry built it. The Convertible Club Coupe was said to have been restored around 20 years ago, driven sparingly since, and kept in climate-controlled storage, all of which meant it presented nicely today. The 85-hp, 221-cu.in. V-8 looked great and promised no leaks or smoke, while the chassis retained a spotless gloss. The body paint was noted to have small areas of imperfections, but no rust, and the vacuum-operated top and leather seats appeared excellent. An intermittent fuel gauge and untested radio were divulged, but easily sorted. The seller welcomed inspections, and this prewar Ford sold right on the money.



1967 AUSTIN-HEALEY 3000 MK III

Reserve: \$52,000

Selling Price: \$66,675

Recent Market Range:

\$50,250-\$69,530

Many consider the final, BJ8-generation 3000 Mk III to be the most desirable "Big Healey" outside of the racing-inspired Hundred models. This restored, two-tone example appeared stunning, and it was promised factory-correct by its British Motor Heritage Trust certification. Its cosmetic presentation was top-notch, with the exterior and interior done to a high standard, including brightwork and weatherproofing. The engine and overdrive-equipped four-speed were said to run beautifully and included modern upgrades like an alternator and high-torque starter. The seller was very responsive to questions, and this Austin-Healey sold for a price commensurate to its condition.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price*: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee
(*sold as a Premium Classified following the live auction)

Recent Market Range: The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months



1950 PACKARD SUPER DELUXE EIGHT

Reserve: \$10,000
Selling Price: \$12,600

Recent Market Range:
\$11,250-\$17,250

Smooth straight-eight power was a defining characteristic of Packards, and this Super Eight Deluxe, in touring sedan trim, was said to deliver that in spades. The 327-cubic-inch engine enjoyed recent servicing and fresh components, including an alternator and fan, and the Ultramatic two-speed transmission was rebuilt, although a minor fluid leak was noted, along with minor undercarriage corrosion. Body repairs were effected before cheery new two-tone paint was sprayed, and chrome trimmings were replated over the last 25 years. Fresh seat upholstery, carpet, and headlining made the interior appealing. A last-minute bid extended this auction, pushing it to a result good for both parties.



1958 CHEVROLET IMPALA

Reserve: \$41,500
Selling Price: \$53,550
Recent Market Range: \$40,000-\$62,800

This Canadian-built Impala Sport Coupe exhibited a sympathetic restoration of an indeterminate age, as well as a replacement quarter panel after a minor crash (photos were included). It offered excellent paintwork, a fully functional 348-cu.in. V-8/Turbo-Thrust automatic driveline with occasional fluid leaks at the tailshaft, and a handsome interior with good original seat upholstery and replacement carpeting. The stylish Chevrolet promised fine chrome and attractive accessories like a continental-style spare wheel. The chassis received a rebuild last year, with fresh suspension components and tires mounted that have traveled just 5,000 miles. It hammered in the heart of its value range.



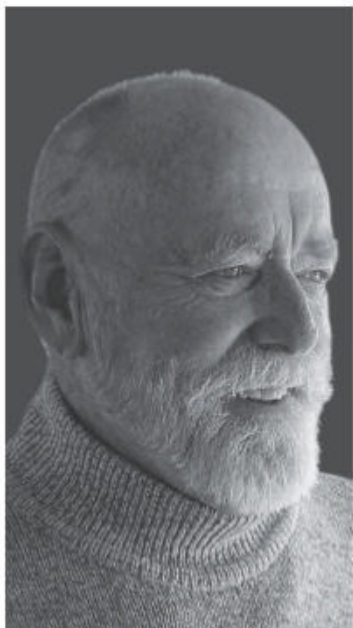
1966 FORD THUNDERBIRD

Reserve: \$24,000
Selling Price: \$33,600
Recent Market Range: \$22,140-\$32,450

The fourth-generation Thunderbird represented the last convertible of the breed until the retro-styled model of the early 2000s. This example wore aftermarket wire wheels (original wheels with covers were included) that complemented its dark blue paint and white interior, and the brightwork was said to present well. No structural corrosion was reported, although minor bubbling was noted in a rocker panel. Everything inside worked, and the vinyl upholstery was clean and intact; videos showed the power top in action. The suspension had been refreshed, and the 275-hp, 390-cu.in. V-8 was said to run well, but have minor fluid leaks. The appealing Ford sold at the top of its value range.

Advertisers in this issue

ADVANCED PLATING	27
ALVIN FIXLER	37
AMERICAN COLLECTOR INSURANCE	3
AUTOMODELLO	37
BARRON PUBLISHING	29
THE BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.....	
FOUNDATION	33
BIRD NEST.....	69
BOB'S SPEEDOMETER	45
CLASS-TECH	59
COKER TIRE.....	1
COLONEL CRAWFORD ATHLETIC	
BOOSTER CLUB	59
COVERCRAFT INDUSTRIES	25
CUSTOM AUTOSOUND MFG.....	27
D&D CLASSIC AUTO RESTORATION.....	35
ECKLER'S AUTOMOTIVE.....	47
FIRSTSTREET	19, 21
THE GREAT RACE.....	63
GULLWING MOTOR CARS INC.....	17
THE HAMILTON COLLECTION	11
HAWKS HILL DEVELOPMENT	
CORPORATION.....	25
HILL'S CLASSIC CARS	47
HYDRO-E-LECTRIC.....	29
IDIDIT INC	33
J.C. TAYLOR AUTO INSURANCE	15
KEEN PARTS.....	37
LUCAS AUTOMOTIVE.....	5
NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT.....	BACK COVER
ORIGINAL PARTS GROUP	45
REMPKO ACQUISITION, INC.....	29
RESTORATION SUPPLY COMPANY.....	27
ROBERTS MOTOR PARTS.....	69
ROCKAUTO, LLC.....	15
RPM FOUNDATION	43
SMS AUTO FABRICS.....	35
SPARKS MARKETING ...	INSIDE BACK COVER
STAUER.....	9, 13
STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS	25
SUMMIT RACING EQUIPMENT	7
UNIVERSAL VINTAGE TIRE	4
VINTAGE CHEVROLET CLUB	
OF AMERICA	45



The LRVs

were all open

roadsters, with

what looked

like cheap

aluminum

lawn chairs

for seats.



Out of this World

I have never really been excited about electric cars, but there is one that debuted 50 years ago last month that I would love to restore, or just drive as is. Only four were ever built, and one of those was cannibalized for spare parts. They look like big, two-passenger go-karts, but they took 17 months and cost millions to build, and they were only driven about 18 miles each, on average, before they were abandoned. They ran great when parked, but two of them were damaged during their brief service lives.

I am talking about the Moon Buggies. No, not dune buggies, but Moon Buggies. And no, I have not been experimenting with recreational drugs. I am referring to the LRVs (Lunar Rover Vehicles) that debuted on July 31, 1971 for the Apollo 15 moon landing. The first of them was driven by astronaut David Scott, along with Jim Irwin. They drove it a total of only about 18 miles, and then just parked it and left.

There is no atmosphere or water on the moon, so it is probably still bright and shiny. Its 36-volt Delco non-rechargeable batteries would be long gone now, and replacements would be hard to find, as would be the 32 x 9-inch spun aluminum disc wheels and woven steel wire radial tires with titanium chevrons for added traction, but they may be okay for a few more years back here on earth.

The LRVs were all open roadsters, with what looked like cheap aluminum lawn chairs for seats. Steering was done with a joystick as in an airplane, and you tilted it to one side or the other to turn, and pushed it forward speed up. You pulled back to slow down, and mechanical brakes were used to stop. This was perfect for our professional pilots. There were also television and 16-mm film cameras on board, along with a lot of other state-of-the-art navigation and communication electronics.

The average temperature on the moon at the equator goes from + 224 degrees Fahrenheit during the day, to - 298 degrees at night, and the solar radiation is intense, so the rubber seals and the wiring are no doubt history. And, there was no heater for the passengers on the LRV because their spacesuits were heated. The LRVs had four 1/4-horsepower motors powering them, one at each wheel, and the motors each had heaters to keep

them warm enough to operate. The motors could also be switched to freewheeling if one broke down.

Interestingly, a day on earth is 24 hours, but a day on the moon is a month of earth time, and there is no protective atmosphere to help moderate between the daytime and nighttime temperatures. Also, the gravity on the moon is only 1/6th that of

earth's; while the rover weighs 460 pounds here, it weighs a mere 77 pounds on the moon. That's why the astronauts could leap tall rocks in a single bound, too.

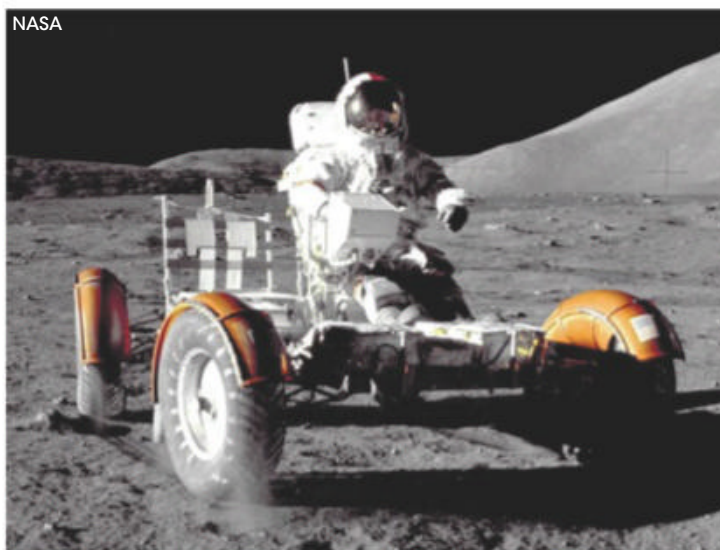
So, what exactly were these moon buggies used for? Well... they had cameras on them to show the folks back home what the moon looked like up

close, and the guys did bring back some dark gray rocks they found. I know that because some of them are in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, and you can even touch one of them. Other than that, I don't think there is anything else up there except more rocks and dust.

That first LRV would be the one to have, because the astronauts damaged the second one on the Apollo 16 mission by running it into a leg of the lunar lander. That mangled a front fender, which allowed dust to be thrown all over the astronauts and machinery, after which it got into the works and caused things to heat up and fail. Luckily the astronauts were able to hoof it back to the lander. A good cleaning might just get the second LRV going again, though.

The third LRV that went on the Apollo 17 mission was also damaged in a collision while messing around, but the guys did manage to set the lunar speed record of 11.2 miles per hour with it. The two earlier models were only good for 8.5 miles per hour. But who cares if the LRVs are slow? Can you imagine the looks you would get at the next show and shine trundling along at hair musing speeds in a lunar rover?

I think long term, so I am going to call Jeff Bezos and Rich Branson to see if—when they finally get to the moon—they could bring back one of the LRVs for me. It would be a lot more valuable than a bag of rocks. Also, when they returned to earth, they could take a spin in it and show off even more, with the cameras rolling on a worldwide television hookup. 📺

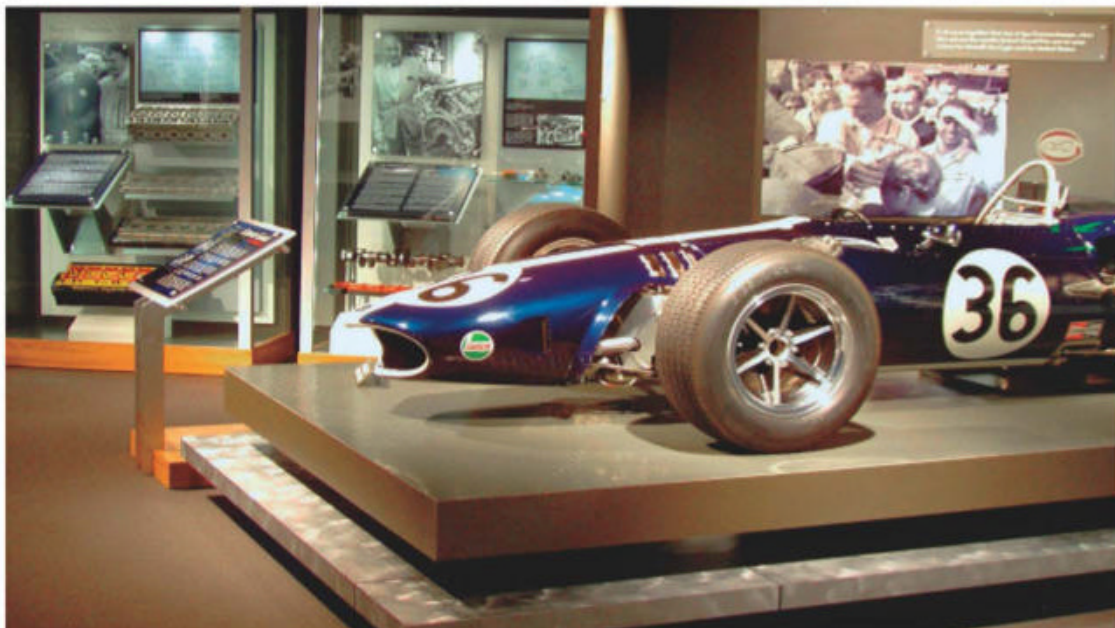


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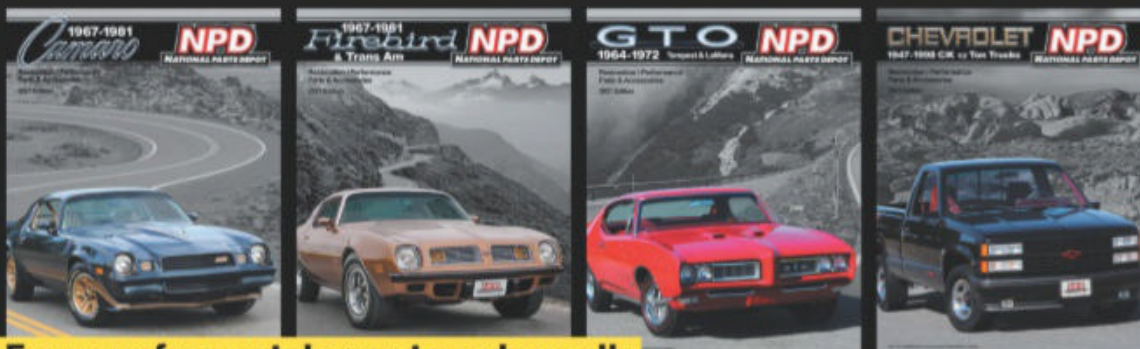
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