

collectible & classic

January 2016 #52

RETROAUTOS

Boat Tail Buick



1978 Falcon Cobra



\$900 Classic Car!



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The Australian Story

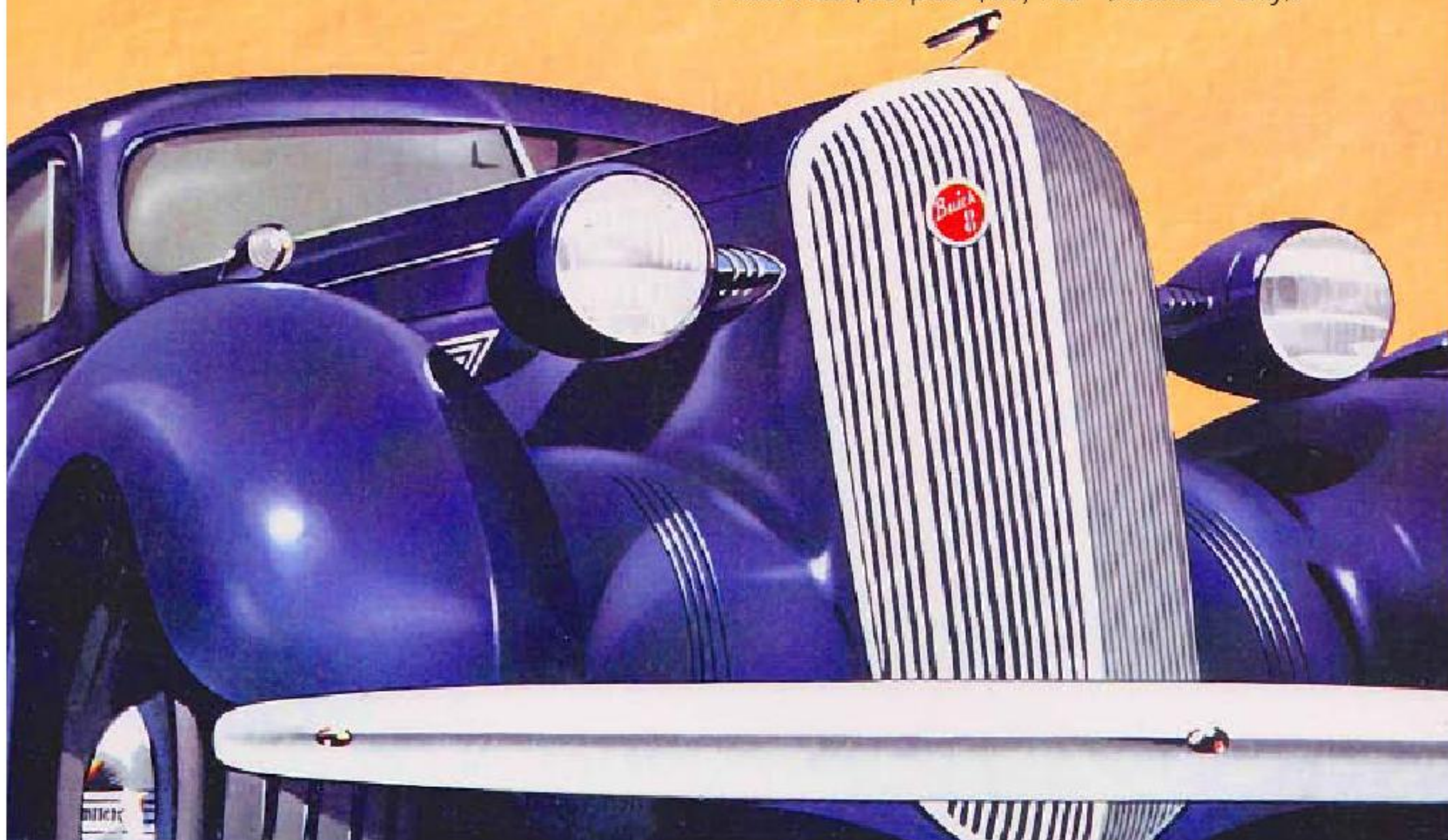
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Managing Editor: David Burrell

Website:
www.retroautos.com.au

Postal Address
PO Box 243
Jannali
NSW 2226

Email:
david@retroautos.com.au

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Club Publicity

We encourage all classic car clubs to let us know what they are doing. If you want publicity for a major event, then simply email us.

Front Cover

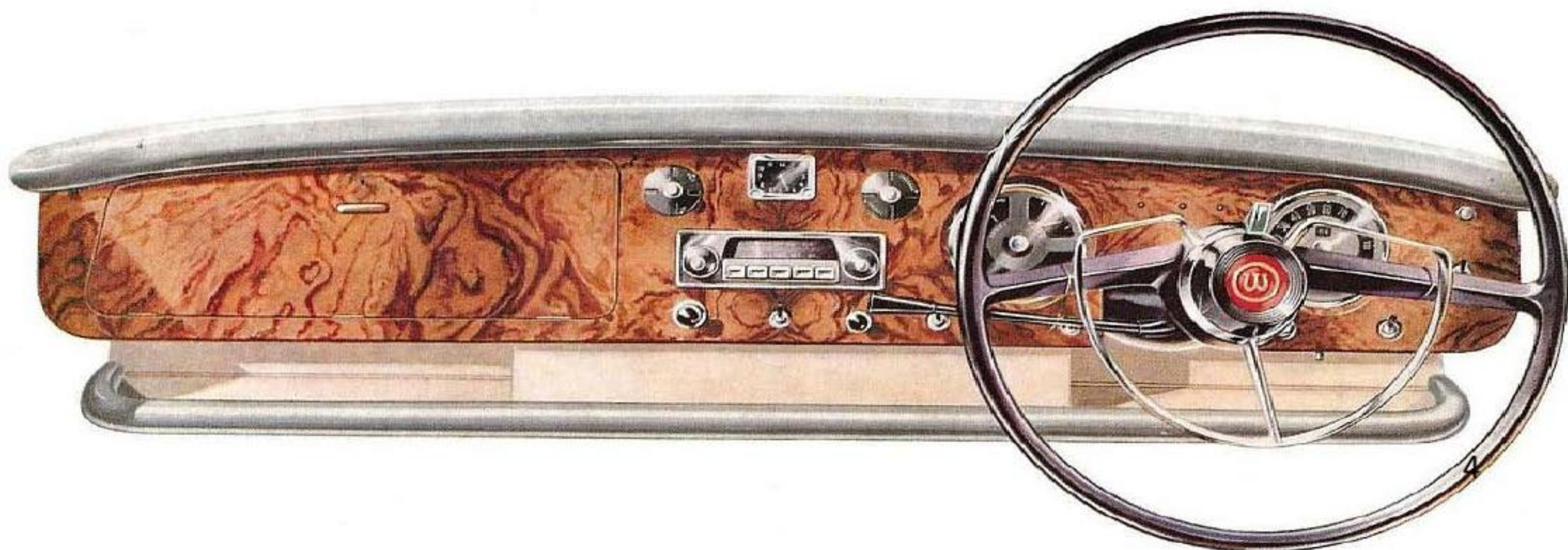
Tony Gentlicore's big and beautiful 1971 Buick Riviera.

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Stunning advertising artwork by Fitz and Van.

Welcome to the 52nd edition of Retroautos.

This month we showcase Tony Gentlicore's 1971 boat tail Buick Riviera and also delve into the secret files to reveal the controversy surrounding this radically styled car. Of course, we have the all of the prototype images.

Daryl Coon's 1978 Falcon Cobra has travelled a mere 400 metres since 2000. The car was languishing in a paddock until Daryl started its full restoration.

Last month we briefly covered a market research study which highlighted that only *half a percent* of drivers in Australia drove cars manufactured before 1980. In our story headlined Classic Report (see page 18) we go through the findings

in much more detail, including the typical financial and social opinion profiles of classic car owners. It is very interesting reading.

Back in 1963 General Motors were actively thinking about interchangeable cars for Opel, Vauxhall and Holden. Go to page 26 to read the story, and Leo Pruneau's on-the-spot insights, and see the pictures of a Holden that never was.

Can you buy a classic car for less than \$1000? Yes you can. Read about it on page 54.

RetroRacing takes in the Sandown historic event. Andrew Day was there and has captured some great images. Go to page 80.

We hope you enjoy Retroautos.

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RetroNews



AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS AUSTRALIA INC

Auto Historians Australia was officially launched in Melbourne during August 2015.

The vision of the Association is "To promote research, education, archival collection and dissemination of knowledge about the history of the Australian automotive industry, and to involve members, industry and others in this history through publications, events, meetings and conferences."

Similar associations have existed in the USA and UK for decades.

The Association's website is being built page by page and from what we have seen so far it will be a "go to" place for car history buffs.

www.autohistoriansaustralia.org

Art Fitzpatrick Dead at 96

They were known as Fitz & Van. During their tenure providing Pontiac with advertising images, Art Fitzpatrick drew the cars and Van Kaufman drew the scenery and people.

Van died in 1995 and last month, at age 96, Art passed away.

We celebrate their stunning visual contribution to automotive culture in this month's RetroAdvertisements. See page 58.



Classic Prices UP! Just a Little.

The Hagerty Market Rating rose for the first time in six months in November 2015.

Hagerty says that price increases among entry-level cars as well as continued strength for modern classics from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s is pushing the market upwards.

Median sale price at auction (in the USA) hit a 15-month high.

Broad economic conditions have helped the Hagerty Market Rating as well. So, all in all, a bit of a “Santa rally” in the US classic car market.

But will it last? Mercedes think so, if you read the next news item.

Mercedes-Benz See \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ in Classics

Mercedes-Benz’s official museum in Germany has launched a new business called All-Time Stars that specialises in selling high-quality Mercedes classic cars.

No doubt the folks in Stuttgart see some money to be made here, and the business case must stack up, otherwise a company like MB would not be wasting its time on this sort of idea.

The All-Time Stars’ inventory is divided into three distinct categories called Premium Edition, Collectors Edition and Drivers Edition.

Premium Edition cars are all-original machines with low miles that have been fully restored in-house by the experts at Mercedes-Benz Classic. And no doubt will command an astoundingly premium price.

The Collectors Edition category contains cars that are in excellent condition inside, outside, and under the bonnet, but they wear more patina than Premium Edition cars because they haven’t been fully restored.

The Drivers’ Edition group cars are aimed either at buyers who are looking for a vintage daily driver — instead of a better-than-new, concours-ready vehicle.

One thing is for sure, there will be no “running when parked” cars here.

The link: www.alltime-stars.com

Pictured below is an example from the current Premium Edition. It’s a nice station wagon, a 280 TE, photographed in what looks like an underground car park. No price is given. Telephone Stuttgart +49 7111749049 for more information. I’m sure their operators are waiting for your call.



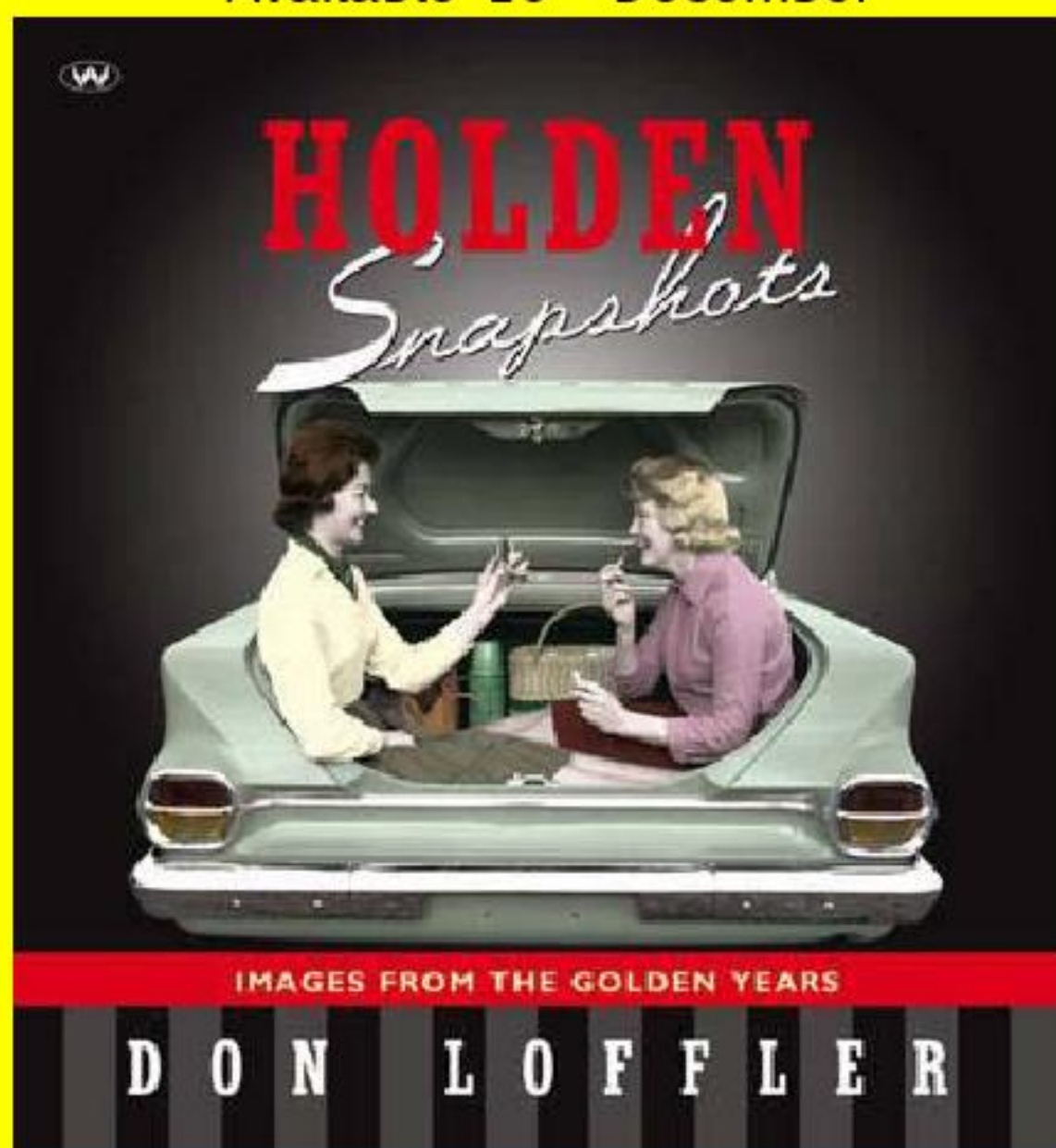
Keno Brothers Now Sell Cars

The American classic car world has been given a surprise with the news that the Keno Brothers, twins Leigh and Leslie, have moved into the high-end auction scene. The guys have a significant reputation in the USA and on TV where they have been seen for the almost two decades on US version of Antiques Roadshow.

The Keno brothers are world renowned for having discovered and sold numerous masterpieces in the collecting categories of art, antiques, and vintage cars. They once owned the 1939 Alfa Romeo 2500 Berlinetta that Italian WWII dictator Benito Mussolini originally purchased for his girlfriend. This car appeared on the cover of Retroautos February 2015 edition. Pictured below, right, are the twins and the Alfa, back in the day.

Their next big auction will be at Hershey, Pennsylvania, in June 2016.

Don Loffler's New Book Available 10th December



February 2016 in Retroautos

Russell Holden found a 1918 Australian bodied Cadillac and has restored it to its former high ranking status as 'The Standard of the World'.

We go back to 1940 for two of our featured cars. We talk to Peter Sara about his '40 Vauxhall Calache and Peter Hibbert about his '40 Ford coupe, an ex-moonshine road runner.

Station wagons were once the vehicle of choice for many Australian families. John Pisani shows us his 1958 FC Holden wagon.

Lost in the '50s is a car museum in Newcastle, dedicated to American iron. We visited recently and bring you the images and the details.

Japanese built Hillmans are rare. Vic Hughes writes about how a very British car came to be made in Japan.

The BMW 507 roadster celebrates its 60th anniversary. We bring you the story of how a styling success became a commercial failure but is now worth millions.

Plus there'll be all the regulars, including RetroRacing, RayTookThis and RetroAdvertisements





Holden at GM Heritage Centre

There's only one Holden in GM's collection at its Heritage Centre in Detroit. It's the red and white FC, pictured here, and it is owned by Mark Ruess. It still has its Victorian number plates.

Ruess and his son commenced its restoration when the American was boss of Holden a few years back.

These days Ruess is responsible for the design, engineering, program management, safety and quality of General Motors vehicles around the world. Mark Ruess's father, Lloyd, is a former President of General Motors.

John Kyros at the Heritage Centre kindly took these images for us.







raytookthis.com
Ray Green - Photographer

Retro Auctions

RM Sotheby's are getting in first with start of the big money auction season at their Driven By Disruption event in New York City on December 10th.

One of the most stunning automobiles in a big array of equally stunning cars is this 1933 Pierce-Arrow Silver Arrow. Recognized as the car which appeared at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, it is one of three survivors of five that were built.

Estimated price: \$A4.3 million.

As always, RM's have supplied the media with exceptional images of their offerings. www.rmsothebys.com





Photo: Darin Schnabel ©2015 Courtesy of RM Sothebys



Above and left: The 1953 Chrysler Special Coupe by Ghia still looks fresh today and still influences the style of Chrysler's big sedan. You will need at least \$A1 million to be in the game when the bidding starts on this baby at Sotheby's NYC auction.

Photo: Tom Gidden ©2015 Courtesy of RM Sotheby's.

Below: Have two million Australian dollars ready for the 1956 Mercedes Benz 300Sc Roadster, one of 53 built. Then again, a 1955 300Sc coupe is going for half that at the NYC auction, because it is a coupe, and not a convertible.

Photo: Darin Schnabel ©2015 Courtesy of RM Sothebys





Also at Barrett's event this 1962 Fury original 413 Max Wedge is one of only 57 built with factory super stock package. Another no reserve special.



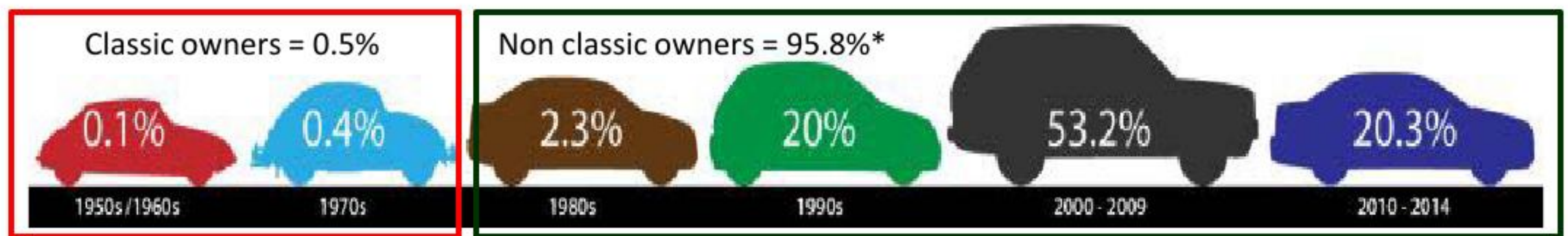
Meanwhile, Barrett Jackson have this chassis at Scottsdale on January 23rd. Henry Ford built and displayed this cutaway chassis to show the wonder of working parts on his Fords. It was on display at the 1939 New York World's Fair. No reserve here.

According to Barrett's, here's a one of only 14 special race car built by Pontiac (pictured right). It boasts the unique "Swiss Cheese" Pontiac engineering frame, aluminium mudguards, bonnet, core support, inner mudguards and bumpers. Zero to 60 in about five seconds. You can bid at Scottsdale.



On the eve of Retroautos being published this month, Bonhams in the UK will stage their annual Hendon RAF Museum auction. Three that caught our eye are a 1947 Bentley with body by Hooper (right). Price guide: \$A110,000. Below is a 1915 Simplex Crane. Price guide \$A110,000. And right (below) is a 1938 Lagonda. Think \$A380,000.





* Note: 3.7 % of car owners did not report year of ownership.

Classic Report

Classic Car Owners
in the Minority.

The 50s and 60s

In the December 2015 edition of Retroautos we summarised new research indicating classic car owners are in an extremely small minority when compared to the overall driving population. This has major implications for peak bodies when dealing with government and politicians.

We now bring you the report in detail.

According to the findings from Roy Morgan Research conducted late last year (see diagram at top of page) *just a mere 0.5% of Australia's driving population own and drive cars manufactured between 1950 and 1979*

Consequently it has implications for peak bodies endeavouring to convince government authorities and politicians to take the old car hobby seriously.

The research also probed the opinion and beliefs of those who own and drive classic cars

It says that people who own/drive cars manufactured in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s are overwhelmingly male, and more likely to be Pre-Boomers (born before 1946) than any other generation. This group tends to view their cars and life in a different light than those with more recent models.

The research says that owners of classics from the 50s and 60s are 130% more likely than the average Aussie motorist to agree with the statement, 'I regard myself as a bit of a car enthusiast' and 60% *less* likely to regard their car 'simply as transport from A to B'.

Owners of 50s and 60s vehicles are 75% less likely than the average Australian motorist to agree that 'I'm not very good with mechanical things'. They're 220% more likely to have worked on their car in the last three months.

The fun-loving 1970s

Owners of cars manufactured in the 1970s are also more likely to work on their car in any given three-month period. But what really sets them apart from other drivers (including those with older classics) is their focus on fun. Compared to the average Australian driver, this group is:

- 150% more likely to agree that they 'will only buy a car that is 'fun to own'
- 125% more likely to prefer 'a car that has lots of sex appeal'
- 115% more likely to 'like a car that handles like a racing car'

Don't go Changing

But it's not just in their automotive attitudes that drivers of old cars distinguish themselves.

Choosing to own and drive cars of this advanced vintage appears to be consistent with a certain ambivalence towards the modern age.

Owners of 50s and 60s vehicles are 58% more likely than the average Australian motorist to agree they 'don't like to know too much about what's going on in the world today' and 32% more likely to feel that 'technology is changing so fast it's hard to keep up with it.'

Meanwhile, people with 1970s cars are 21% more likely to believe 'there's too much change going on these days' and 16% more likely to 'like things to stay the same'.



Summary

In summary, Roy Morgan Research, says that: "While wealthy, high-profile enthusiasts are famed for their large collections of classic, vintage and veteran vehicles, they represent just one end of the spectrum."

"People who own and drive cars from the 1950s, 60s and 70s are actually less likely than the average motorist to be on incomes of \$100,000 or more and more likely to be on incomes between \$15,000 and \$25,000.

"So on one hand, we have these famous collectors of historic prestige models and on the other, the retired enthusiasts channelling their nostalgia for the 'good old days' into a car from the era. And between them, they comprise merely half a percent of Australia's motoring population.

"But though they are a very small group, these motorists represent a passionate and potentially lucrative niche market for insurance companies, auto parts retailers, mechanics and restorers who take the time to understand and reach out to them."

Big Implications

As we noted at the beginning of this story, and in the December 2015 edition, this research has significant implications for all the peak bodies and clubs involved in classic cars.

The results go against the long held conventional wisdom that classic car owners represent a large and influential group of voters.

According to this research, that might not be the situation, and we all need to understand the long term ramifications.

Falcon



Cobra

“Rescued it from a paddock where it had been rusting away.”





Here's the question. Do you drive your rare and valuable classic car on the road, or do you keep it safe and well clear of the highways and supermarket parking lots?

That's the question faced by Daryl Coon, who owns a 1978 Ford Falcon Cobra coupe.

The big blue and white V8 has been in Daryl's garage since 2000 and in that time it has travelled under its own power a mere 400 metres. Yep, you read right: 400 metres. "Just up and down my driveway," Daryl told us recently.

Daryl's had a thing for Falcon Cobras from an early age.

"I've always wanted a Cobra since I was 10 years old and spent many years looking for one" he says. "With the help of the Cobra club I found one in Sydney. It was owned by a guy who rescued it from a paddock where it had been rusting away. He was intending to restore it but never really got around to doing much to it."

After hauling the car back to his home in Melbourne, Daryl was able to survey the extent of the restoration task ahead. "It was in a very sorry state", he admits.

Since 2000 Daryl has restored and rebuilt almost every part and panel on the car. The 5.7 litre engine (351 cubic inches) has been blue-printed and a long range fuel tank installed.

The result of all Daryl's efforts is stunning. "It is basically a 37 year old new car", Daryl explains.

And he's right. The Ford looks as though it has just been driven off the showroom floor.



“I really have enjoyed putting it all back together and bringing it back to as-new condition” he says with pride. Will Daryl ever drive the car on the road? “I may think about registering it next year” is his answer when questioned.

The idea for the Cobra came from Edsel Ford II, who was working in Australia at the time.

In early 1978 Ford were left with 400 body shells of the about to be superseded XC Falcon coupe.

Edsel suggested a special and exclusive production run of the coupes painted in blue and white livery and carrying the Cobra logo of the legendary Shelby Mustang Cobras.

Initially there was a bit of discussion about whether the cars would actually sell.

But the guy who’s great-grandfather started the company was confident about the idea and so the cars were built.

Dealers snapped up the cars and all were sold.

Daryl’s car is number 145 of 400.

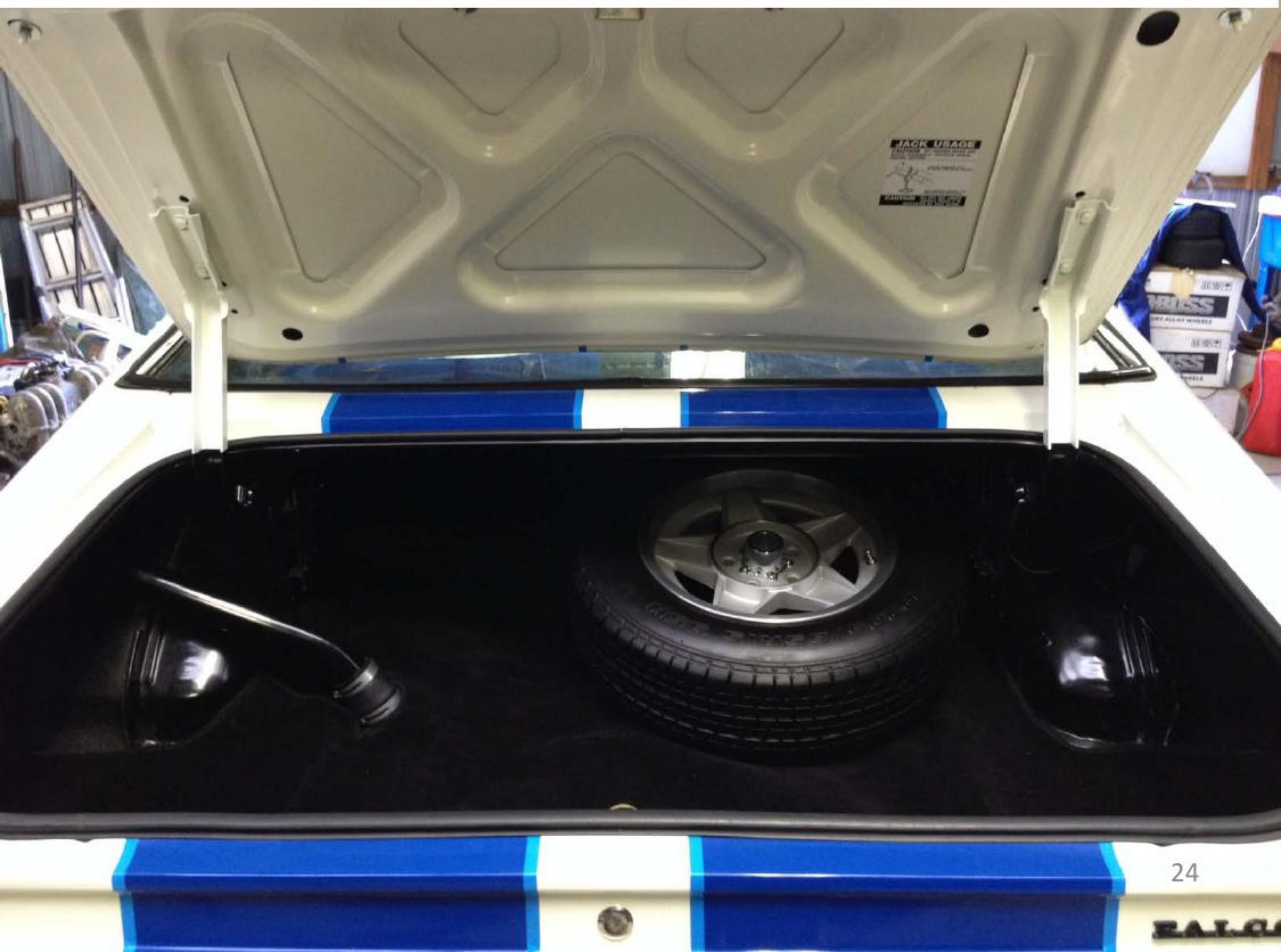
Daryl is no stranger to classic cars. His Dad Bill has had his two MGs featured in Retroautos.

And he’s been a race car driver of note in local NASCAR competition at the old Thunderdome track and in road racing in GT Production in an XR6 Falcon where he was the class championship winner three years running from 2000 to 2002.

He also owns a 2007 Falcon Cobra.



Above: There's no mistaking a Falcon Cobra from behind. The stripes shout out the car's identity. Below: The boot space is reduced by the big fuel tank. Just take a look at Daryl's restoration work. The car looks like it is brand new and not the paddock rust heap it once was.





196X Holden



The Car That Never Was



Thanks to John Kyros for the research.
Images copyright 2015 GM Corp.
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In early 1963 GM executives in Detroit began a project to find out if it was economically and stylistically feasible to develop a range of cars for Vauxhall, Opel and Holden, that would be largely interchangeable.

We asked Leo Pruneau, the now retired Design Director at Holden, if he had any involvement in the project when he was in Detroit at the beginning of his career.

"I had a bit of involvement in it before I went to Vauxhall in 1964", he told us. "At that time the project was in its early stages and hadn't had much exposure within the corporation. It mainly existed in the Design area. It was however the forerunner to Design department's idea of designing modular platforms to suit a variety of different GM products and sizes. As I remember the general consensus among the

planners at the time was that the Opel and Vauxhall small cars Kadett/Viva would be the first to be design integrated around the early 70s when the next new models were due. It was thought that Holden could share some components with Vauxhall's Cresta and Opel's Diplomat models."

Later, when Leo was back at Design HQ in Detroit in 1974/75, between Holden assignments, he noted that the international interchange program had gained a lot of momentum and was by then it was being developed jointly by Design Staff and Engineering Staff. The first outcome was the T Car.

Seen here for the first time are the initial sketches for the Opel, Vauxhall and Holden ranges, plus a clay prototype of what the medium sized Holden would have looked like.

O P E L



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Whilst details are sketchy, the small car range is the size of the Vauxhall Viva and Opel Kadett, with a 92 inch wheelbase.

The medium cars probably sit on a 108 to 111 inch wheel base.

The large car is most likely a 111 to 114 inch stretch, depending on the size of the medium car.

All of the cars are quite handsome and whilst styling differences are small, they are just enough to avoid cookie-cutter looks.

The back and white images of the Holden are, by our estimation, the medium-sized car.

It clearly continues the front mudguard blade theme which, by 1963, had well and truly been locked into the HD program.

The rear end styling, with its wrap around bumper bar arrangement, would be seen almost a decade later on the HQ.

Had interchange project gone ahead then the mid-sized car would have been in place of the HK, and the larger car would have negated the need for the Brougham.

And whilst these 1963 drawings are blue-sky thinking they provide an insight into the direction that GM was heading with interchangeability, and predicted the future of the car industry.



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'71 Buick Riviera



Boat Tailed Beauty



"I love it", says Tony Gentilcore of his green '71 Riviera. Images from Tony's collection. He retains copyright.



There is no mistaking a 1971 Buick Riviera !

It is big, brash and everything about it screams "American".

Its extravagantly shaped boat tailed rear end, huge rear window and deeply sculptured body generate plenty of diverse opinion.

It was and remains one of General Motors' (GM) most controversial designs.

The overall styling theme was set by GM's design boss, Bill Mitchell who wanted the styling to be memorable and attract attention. Heading up the styling team was Jerry Hirschburg, who would go on to be the head of design for Nissan.

The Riviera was originally intended to be a standalone model about the same dimensions as a 1970 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, which was considerably smaller than the big Buicks of the day.

A full sized clay prototype was developed but the cost cutters shouted out very loudly that it would be too expensive to build as a standalone model in the Buick range.

They demanded it share the cowl, inner frames, some exterior panels and windscreen and side glass with other Buicks.

The bean counters also secured the backing of GM President Ed Cole on the glass and panel sharing idea.



Faced with such a senior level of opposition to the original idea, Mitchell, very reluctantly, was forced into a compromise.

Some automobile historians suggest that the 1971 Riviera marks the point at which Bill Mitchell's influence within GM started to ever so gradually decline. He retired in 1978.

Read more about the compromise and how it impacted the Riviera's styling, and sales, in our *Design to Driveway* story on page 44

The Big Green

"I love it", says Tony Gentilcore of his green '71 Riviera.

"It is a crowd stopper".

Tony is no stranger to Buicks. He has a 1965 Riviera and, for a while, a 1966 Wildcat.



Tony bought '71 Riviera a decade ago when he and his wife Barbara were in the USA celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary.

"We actually bought the car in the USA before we left to go on the trip", Tony explains.

He told Retroautos that they placed a "wanted" ad in the Buick Club of America magazine.

Some replies started coming in with pictures and details from Michigan, North Carolina, New York state and Orlando. Many were too expensive, too far from the west coast, the wrong colour and most had bench seats.

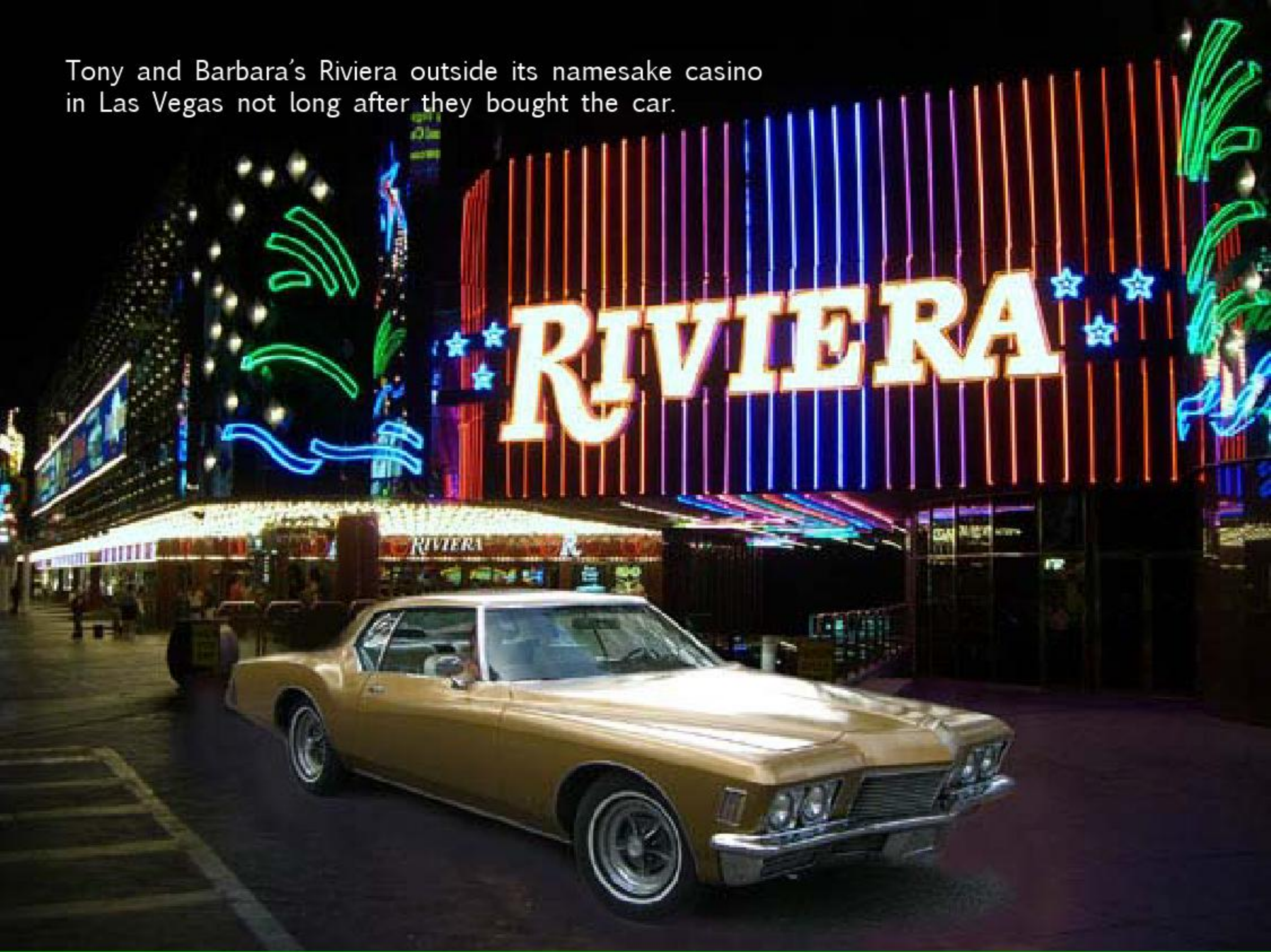
Then a bit of luck. Mike Ordway in Phoenix who helped Tony find his Wildcat emailed him saying that he had a colleague at work with a '71 for sale. And a deal was done.

"When we got to the USA we picked it up and did some touring in it, including going to the Buick Riviera Owners Association meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona", says Tony.

After their holiday the Buick was shipped back to Sydney where Tony and Barbara continued to use it for a couple of years before starting on a restoration.

Tony continues the story.. "Although it was quite healthy mechanically, the engine bay was very dirty and a shonky paintjob didn't help matters, either. There was no rust in it, but the paint job on it was shocking. Someone had painted it in the '90s, a friend of the owner, and they didn't mask-up anything. They didn't take badges off, they just tried to go around them. The bumper bars were left on, the chrome strips were left on – I think they call it a closed-door paintjob in the US. Very cheap."

Tony and Barbara's Riviera outside its namesake casino in Las Vegas not long after they bought the car.



"It was a gold colour. It was only shiny and looked nice if the sun was on it. Once it was out of the sun it was dull. So we had to take it back to bare metal," he says.

"I pulled the engine out, ripped off all the front guards, front clip, inner guards and everything. Everything that was black that came off the engine and the inner guards I sandblasted and powder-coated it in General Motors' Satin Black. While the engine was out, I replaced the timing cover, the timing chain and all the seals and gaskets that I could get to. Then I stripped all the gold paint off, and about a kilo of grease, and repainted it and had it all nice and ready to go back in once all the bits came back from the powder-coaters."

That left the inside – no small job.

"The interior was awful," Tony says. "Being a Phoenix car, everything was sunburnt to buggery. It was all brown and as soon as you put your elbow on the top of the seat it just cracked. So I found a place in the US that had new-old stock vinyl which has a bit of a pearl finish to it. It's called White Madrid. I bought 10 metres of the fabric. I'll never run out of it now."

Tony has no reticence about driving the Riviera long distances.

He and Barbara took it to Western Australia for the 2014 Buick Nationals.



Tony and Barbara take the big Riv everywhere.

“Barbara and I thought it would be a good opportunity to see more of Australia and cross the Nullarbor for the first time and in a classic car.”

“I thought about all the things that could go wrong with the car and in preparation ordered spare parts like wheel bearings, seals and brake rebuild kits, fuel pump, spark plugs and a spare electronic distributor module, apart from the normal fan belts and hoses. I had the drive shaft overhauled, rear wheel cylinders re-sleeved as one was weeping and the AC re-gassed in case it got warm.”

After the Nationals Tony and Barbara and about 25 other club members drove north of Perth. “We went to Cervantes, Geraldton, Kalbarri, Dalwallinu and New Norcia.” Tony says.

“After we returned to Perth I put the car on the Indian Pacific and flew home.”

In all, the trip added 4,500 miles to the Buick. Tony summed up the trip: “The Riviera performed faultlessly the whole trip. It averaged about 18mpg overall and as high as 22mpg on the 90 mile straight stretch doing about 55-60mph. I found out the 455 cubic inch V8 runs quite well on 91 ULP, due to the lower 8.5:1 compression ratio on these engines.”

Despite the ongoing debate about the Riviera’s styling, Tony knows for certain that if he goes to a car show it always attracts attention, comments and plenty of questions. And if that is what Bill Mitchell had intended, then he’s succeeded.

From gold to green. Follow Tony and Barbara's restoration over the next three pages.







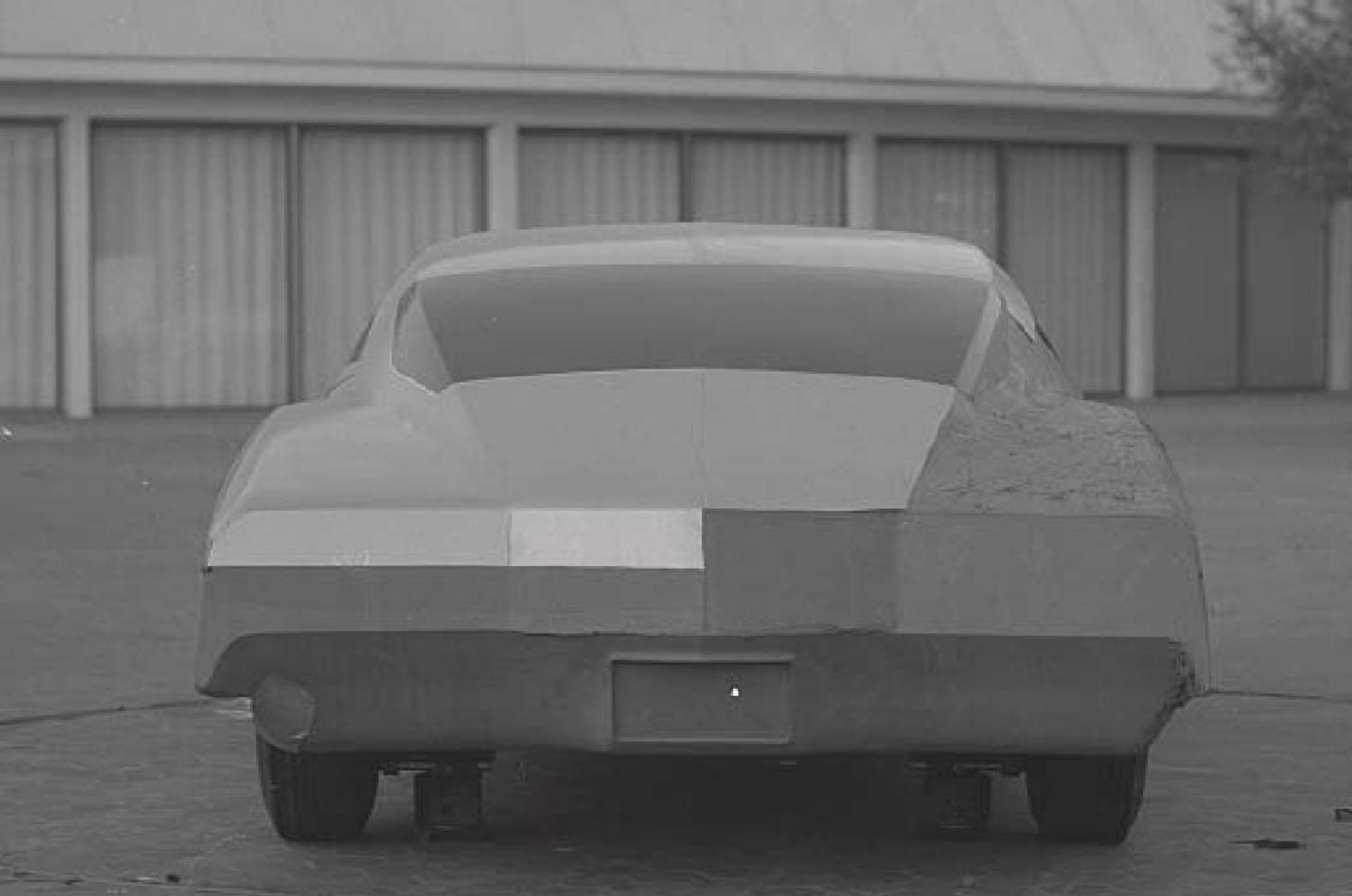


Design to Driveway



Styling the 1971 Riviera

Thanks to John Kyros for the research.
All prototype images copyright 2015 GM Corp.
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Above and below: The first styling proposal for the 1971 Buick Riviera. Was about the same dimensions as the mid-size Chevrolet Monte Carlo. This was changed when bean counters caused the car to be re-shaped to fit the full size Buick chassis.

Bill Mitchell, GM's design boss from 1958 to 1978 was not afraid of radical styling. He liked crisp, sharp lines on long low cars, such as the 1963 Riviera.

He'd already used these themes on two 1950s Motorama show cars, the 1956 Buick Centurion and the 1955 Oldsmobile Golden Rocket.

Mitchell had begun his GM career in 1935, was also fond of the sensuous "boat-tail" speedsters of the 1920s and 1930s. cars like the Auburn Speedster and German Adler.

The first production car he deployed the boat tail idea on was the 1963 Corvette Stingray. And for the 1971 Riviera the idea was to upsize the Stingray..





Above: First proposal has a less radical rear end treatment. "Sweepspear" motif is very evident.

Further, he wanted to embed the "sweep spear" styling motif, which had been part of Buick's heritage since the early 1950s, into the side styling.

Mitchell put Jerry Hirschberg in charge of the design team.

The Riviera was originally intended to be a standalone model with dimensions similar to the 1970 Chevrolet Monte Carlo. This meant the car would be narrower, shorter and less bulky than a full sized Buick.

And such a car was developed into the clay prototype seen above and on the previous page.

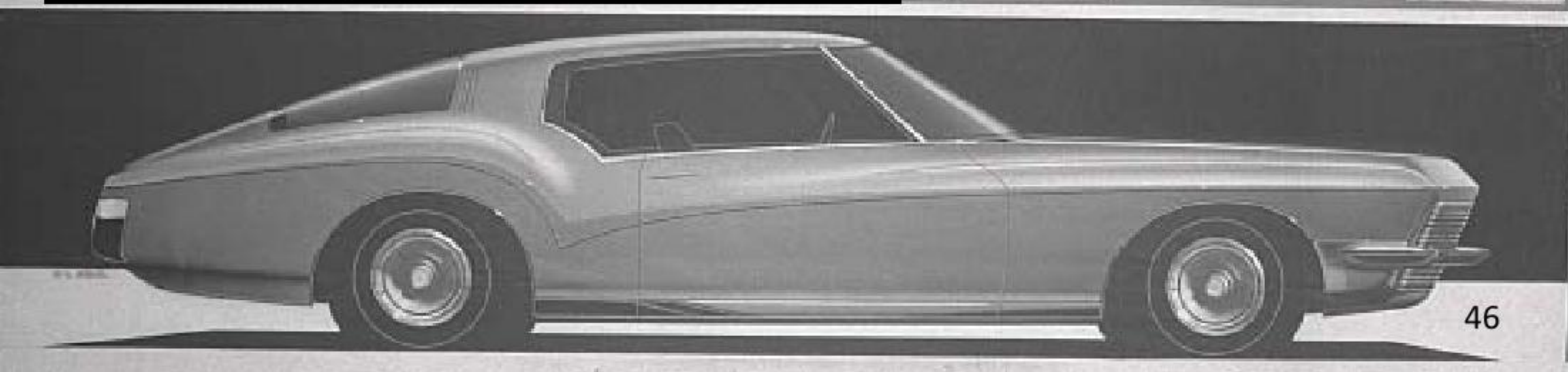
Then it all got complicated.

The bean counters would not agree with the proposal for a standalone car, it being too expensive to develop. They sought and gained backing from the President of GM, Ed Cole. Mr Cole pointed out that Chevrolet's Monte Carlo and Pontiac's Grand Prix were prestige personal cars, like the Riviera, and yet they shared many panels and parts with their cheaper, more common siblings.

Essentially, Mitchell was told to make the Riviera styling fit around the much larger full sized Buick chassis, cowl, front pillars, windscreen and side glass. in order to minimise costs.

Cole agreed to provide just enough funding to develop the distinctive rear

Note the photos of 1930s luxury cars on the wall above the drawing of the re-sized car.





Above: The multiple compound curve shape of the rear window required months of test to get the manufacturing process correct. It has a stress break line down the centre to stop cracking.

end of the car in order to distinguish it from other two door Buick coupes.

And so the boat tail coupe was up-sized into the 119 inch wheel base car we know today. All of Mitchell's basic styling themes were retained, but with the

stretching of the design across a larger area meant the Riviera looked a little out of shape from some angles.

It is a pity that the controversial styling overshadowed a technically advanced car.



Full sized Buick coupe. The Riviera had to use every thing forward of the door handles.



Above and below: The final styling proposal in the viewing area in late 1969.

The '71 Riviera boasted full flow ventilation and a traction control system.

The styling was blamed when sales of the '71 Riviera did not match those of previous years, dropping nearly 10% (37,300 to 33,800) and doing similar numbers 1972 and 1973.

For 1974 a completely squared-off rear end was developed eliminating all traces of the boat tail and its glassware. Sales plummeted even more to a mere 20,000 and stayed there through 1978.

In 1979 a new, front drive, smaller Riviera was released. It sat on a 114 inch wheelbase and was about the same size as Mitchell had originally envisioned for the '71 car. Sales skyrocketed to 52,000. But by then Mitchell had retired.

Despite the lukewarm sales of the Riviera Mitchell gave the boat tail idea one last outing before he retired. This time it was on a Pontiac, and not at the rear either. He basically took the Riviera's rear end and grafted it onto the front end of the 1973 Pontiac Grand Am (see page 53).

Mind you, before he retired, Bill Mitchell did get what he wanted. He had a specially customised Riviera built for himself as a company car. Called the Silver Arrow II it featured a lowered roof line, raked windscreen and rear end styling similar to his original idea. It is a pillared coupe, not a hardtop. The front seat belts are anchored into the front seats. Now on display at the GM Heritage Centre it is a companion to Mitchell's first Riviera show car, the Silver Arrow I, which is based on the 1963 Riviera.





All images: The full sized Riviera is compared to the smaller, first proposal.





Bill Mitchell's personal car, the Silver Arrow II seen here at the GM Heritage Centre. This is what the production car ought to have looked like. Stop lights are in the roof. Rear side windows are a very different shape, as is the "C" pillar, compared to production Riviera.



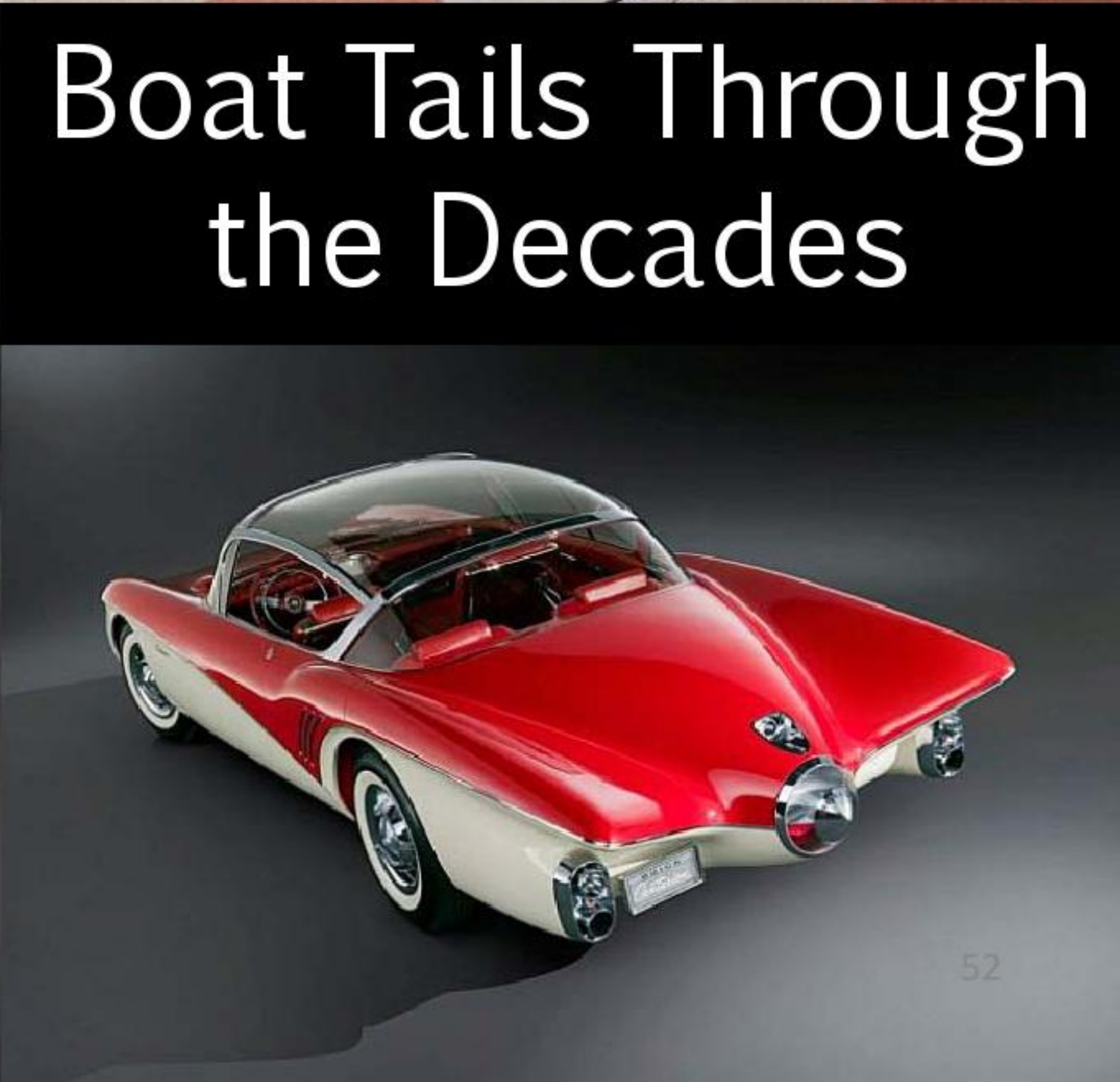


Above: Note how closely the Silver Arrow II and the first proposal resemble each other.
Below: The interior of the Silver Arrow II. It is a pillared coupe. Seat belts are anchored in the seats. This car is very sleek and only waist height. It is fully operational.





Boat Tails Through the Decades





Above left : Auburn Speedster. Image taken at The AuburnDuesenbergCord Museum
 Below far left: 1938 Alder Rennlimousine (one of only three still in existence).
 Below left: 1956 Buick Centurion, seen at the GM Motorama of the same year.
 Above: 1963 Corvette Stingray styling was the basis for the '71 Riviera.
 Inset: Rear end of 1938 Alder could be mistaken for the '63 Corvette.
 Below: Boat tail on the front end !! The 1973 Pontiac Grand Am.



\$900





Classic Car!

If you are thinking of buying your first classic car, Peter Sara has proven you can buy a reliable and classy automobile for less than \$1000.

He paid just \$900 for his 1974 Mercedes Benz sedan. (A W114 in Merc language)

Yes, that's right, \$900.

"Who could resist it at that price?" Peter explained to us recently.

Not only did he get a bargain, the car came with all its history, including the original sales receipt.

The log book was there too, all filled out in meticulous detail by the previous owner, since new.

"Mercedes cars of this era are over-engineered and of high quality" Peter explained.

More than that, Peter says he "got a safe, reliable classic car, with a four speed automatic transmission, power

steering, four wheel disc brakes, inertia reel seat belts and leather seats."

"It sits outside and starts every time. What more could you ask?", he says.

Our research shows that mid-1970s Mercedes Benz are probably the best value in the market at the moment.

They are a perfect starter car for someone new to the old car hobby.

You might not be as lucky as Peter, but good four door sedans can be had for less than \$3,000.

Surprisingly, comparable Kingswood or Falcon sedans from that time are not as cheap as you might think.

Prices start around \$3,000 for really poor examples of these home grown vehicles.

Given that price they are likely to need lots of work.



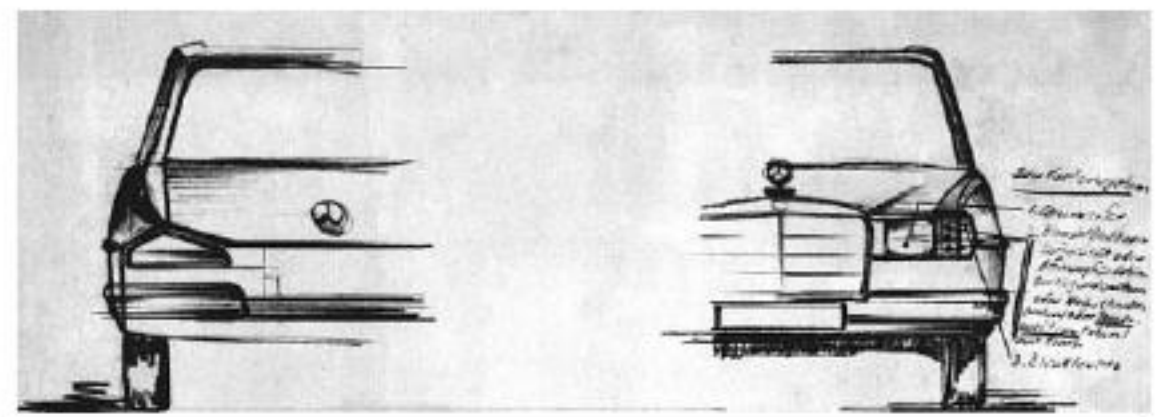
At the top end of the market we've seen sellers asking \$35,000 for a Kingswood.

Definitely not your first time classic!

The papers and log book which came with the car show it cost \$15,000 when new. By comparison a 1974 Ford LTD set you back less than half that amount

The W114 was a technological leap forward by Mercedes. The car used a newly engineered chassis, which owed nothing to previous models. The new chassis format of semi-trailing rear arms and ball-joint front end would later be used in all new Mercedes passenger cars

The model range was released in 1968 and was positioned below the bigger S class. It replaced the "fintail" model.



Above: Early sketch of the W114.

The W114 has been referred to as "tank-like" by their enthusiastic following due to their robust construction and reliability. Parts are never a problem because over 1.9 million sedans were built during the eight year production run which ended in 1976.

A stylish two door hardtop coupe was also part of the range. and it always commands a premium over the sedan. We seen nice ones go for around \$10,000 and that's an absolute bargain when compared to a Holden Monaro of the same vintage.

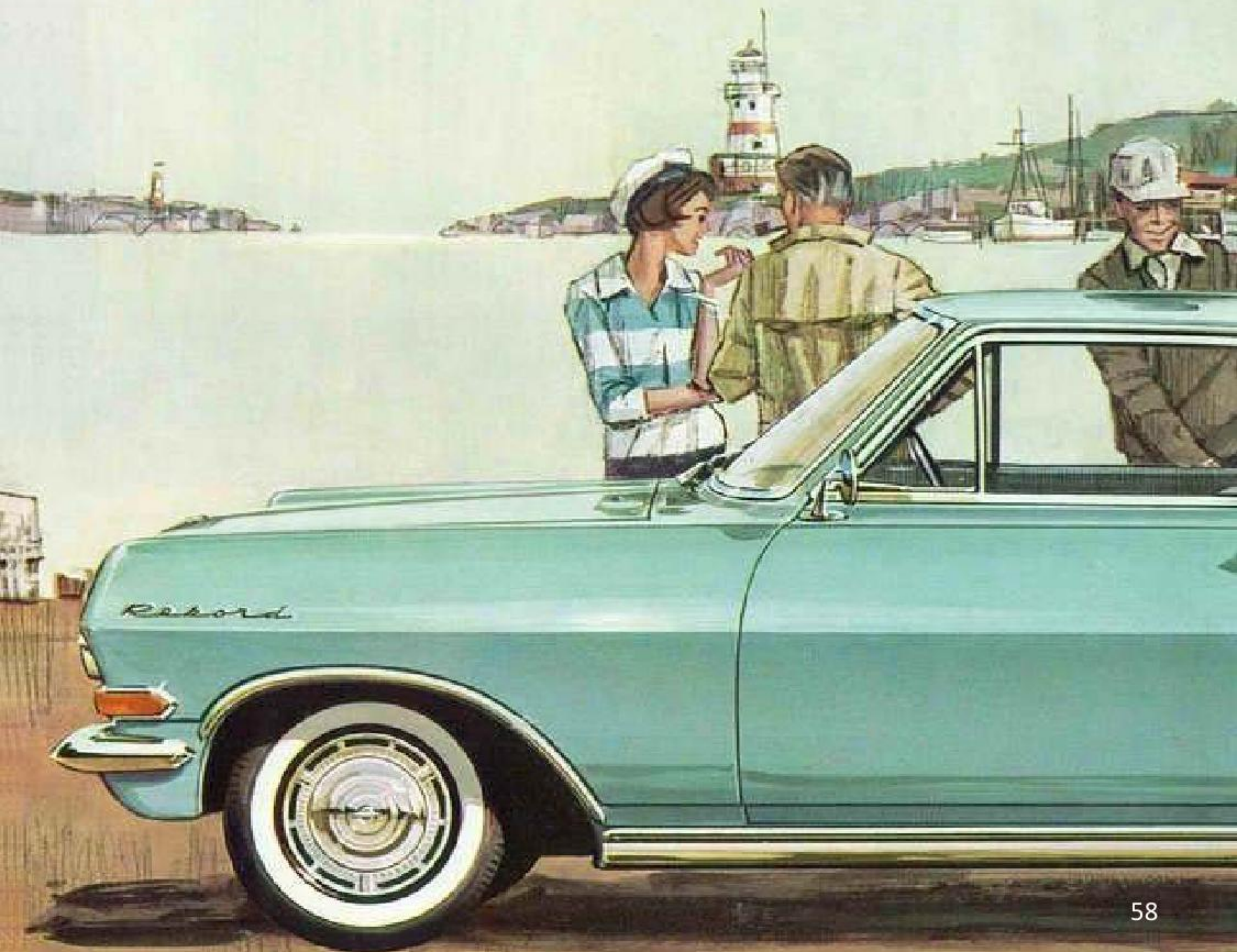
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Fitz and Van: Automotive Artists

It was the evocative combination of dreamy, exotic locations and visually successful people drawn by Van Kaufman and the razor sharp renderings of the cars by Art Fitzpatrick that compelled your attention. Art's style was to illustrate Pontiacs to look even lower and wider than they already were, without the cars ever looking cartoon like.

Art died last month, aged 96. Van passed in 1995. The duo first worked

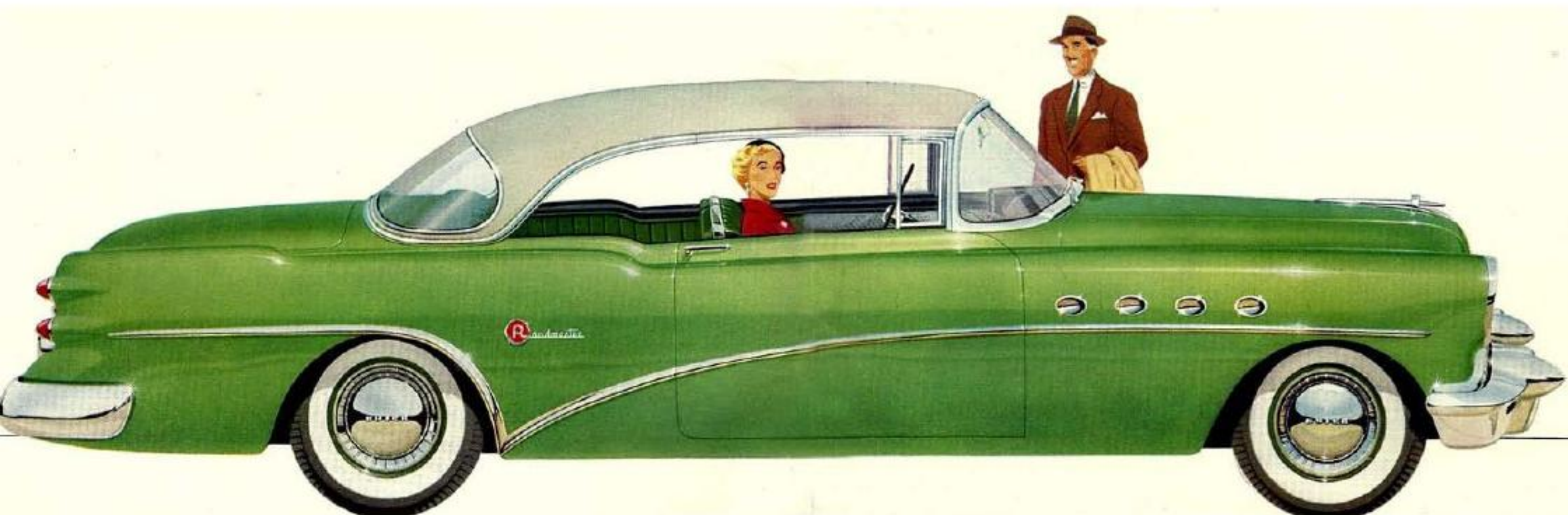
together in 1953 when they were hired to provide art work for Buick. They moved to Pontiac in 1959 and it was there that they found their home. Opel also used their work.

Such was their talent they even made the poverty pack two door Pontiacs look expensive, as the image on this centre spread so wonderfully shows.

On the following pages we pay tribute to two guys who helped shape an automotive culture. Their style was often imitated but never duplicated.







SPECIAL 2-DOOR 6-PASSENGER SEDAN, MODEL 46, 122-IN. WHEELBASE, 250 HORSEPOWER











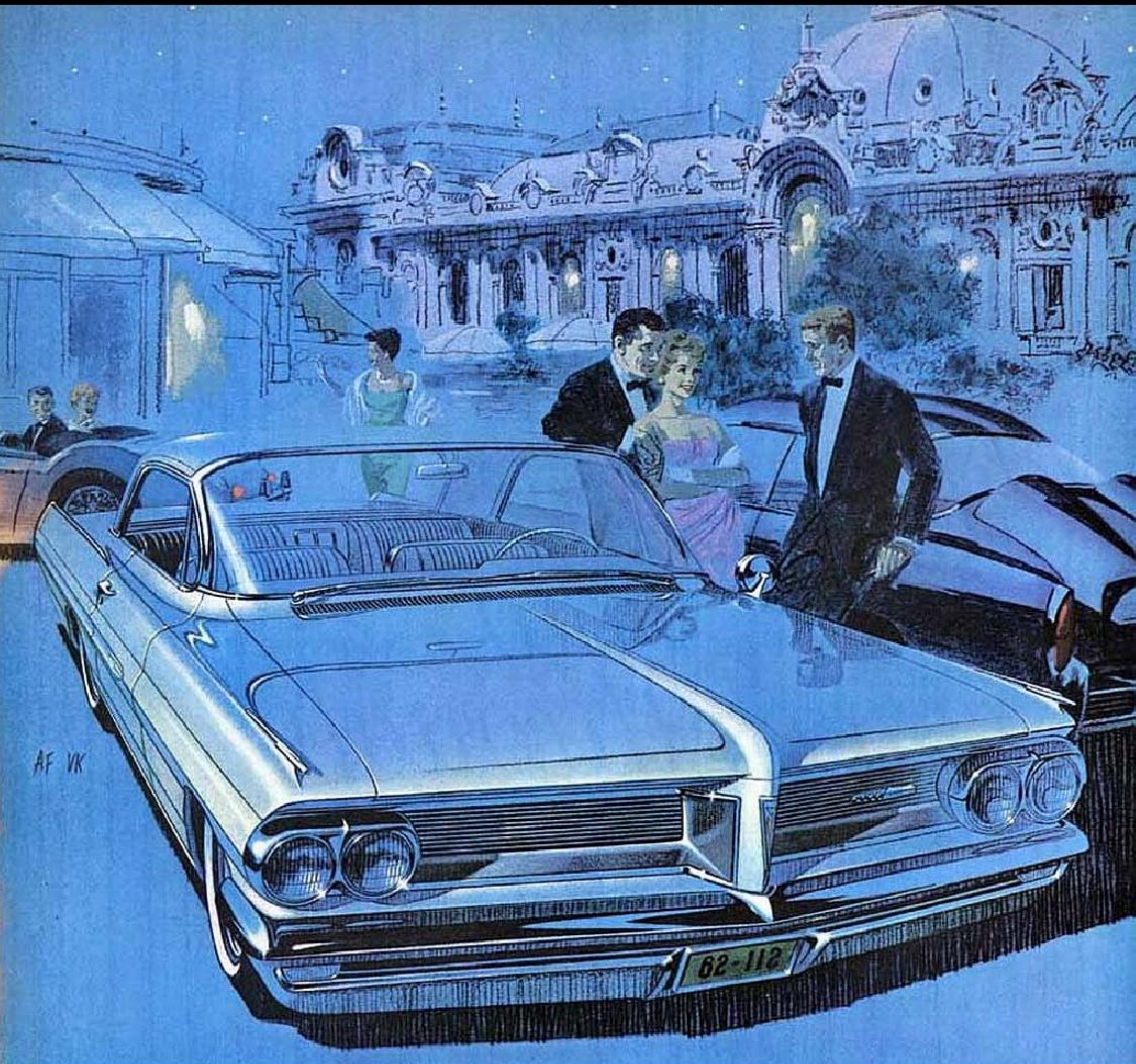




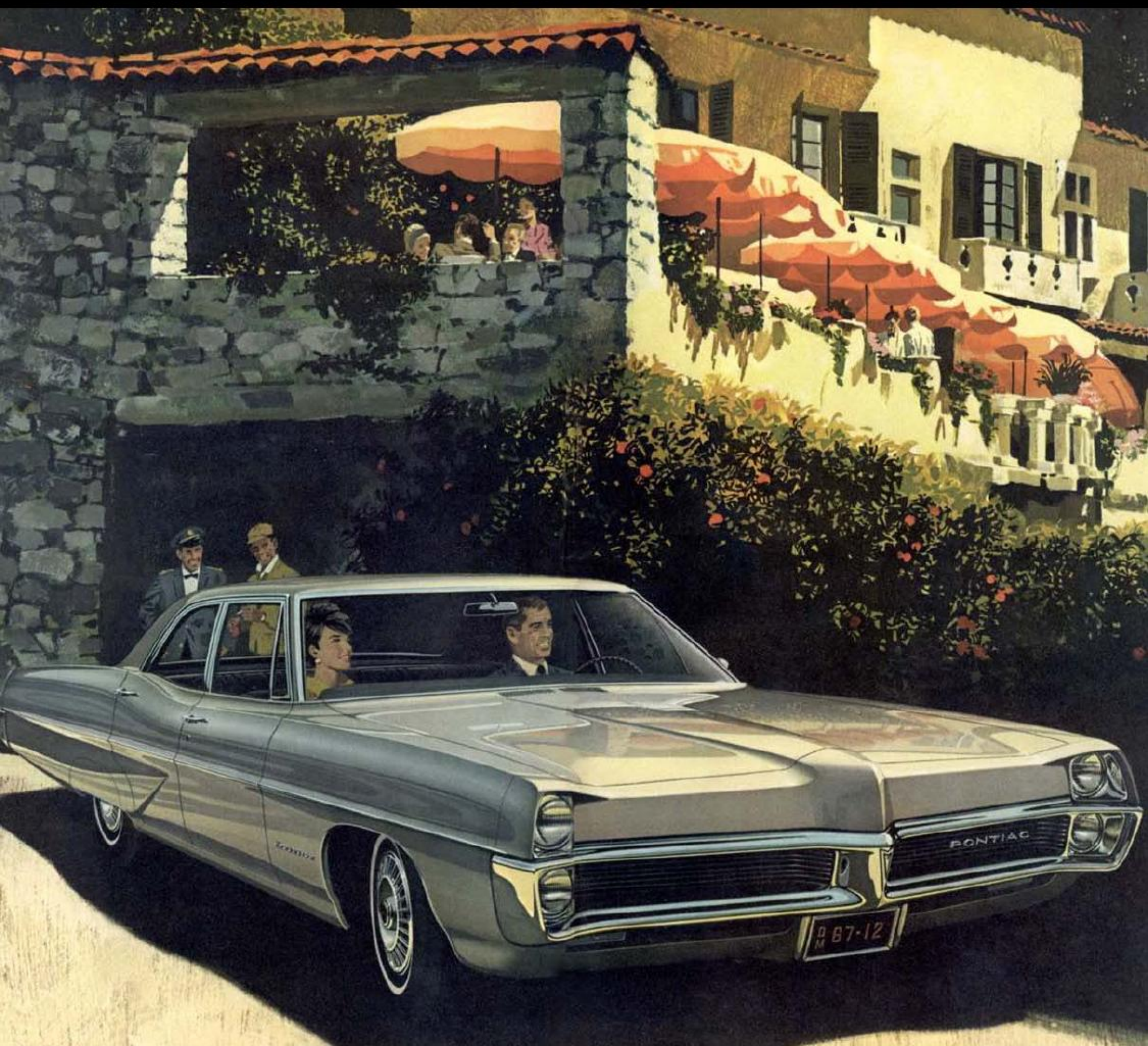
Tempest Coupe





















STAR CHIEF SEDAN



Retro



Racing

A close-up, low-angle shot of the front of a red Lotus Cortina racing car. The car is positioned on a dark asphalt track, with its front left wheel lifted off the ground. The car's front features a prominent chrome grille, a single round headlight, and a chrome bumper. A yellow racing number plate is visible on the front left. In the background, a blue and white striped safety fence runs across the frame, with a grassy area and a blue-painted curb visible behind it.

Andrew Day was at the recent Sandown historic event and captured some great images. Here's Ted Perkins in the Lotus Cortina up on two wheels,. All Sandown images copyright by Andrew Day Photos By Daysy. Click on link below:

www.photosbydaysy.net

Sandown



Above, below and right: Quentin Ferry gets his EH into some bother.





Below: Shane Attwell in the Mustang hounds Michael Cannon.





Sandown

Above: Another off road excursion. This time it is John Luxmoore in the GT Cortina.
Below: Craig Bowring fights the wheel as he bicycles through a turn.



Below right: Michael Cannon has the right front off the deck.
Below left: Paul Blackie heats up the side pipes of his Corvette.





Above: Peter McKnight in the Lotus Mk9
Below: Paul Freestone in a right hand drive Falcon Sprint



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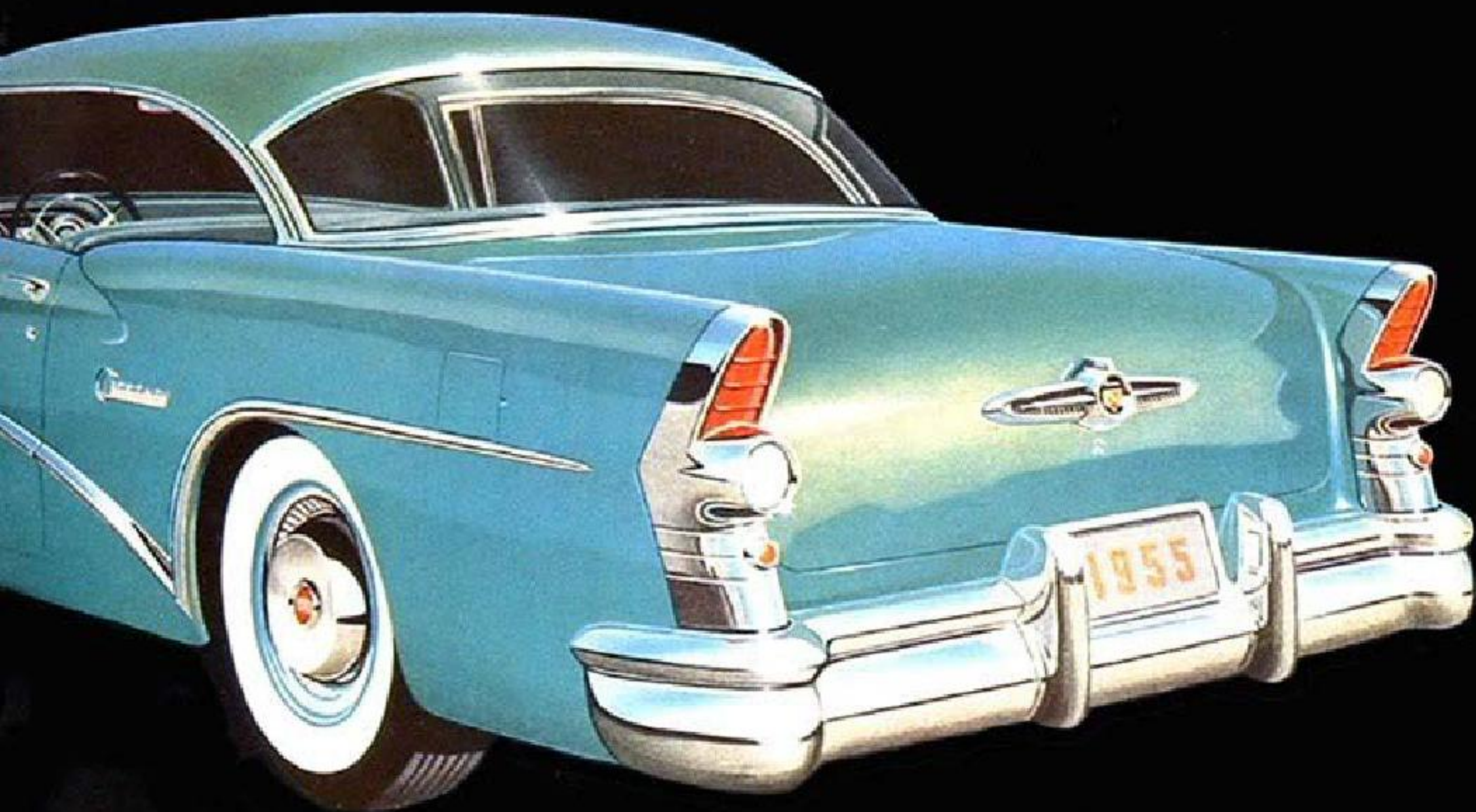


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