

collectible & classic

March 2016 #54

RETROAUTOS

Amazing FB/EK/EJ Collection



Mercury Magic: '49 and '50



Farm Yard Find!
Learn-to-Drive Dodge



Barn Find 80 Year Old Toyota



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THE STAR OF THE SHOW - MG F2 TYPE • 1933



Star of the show, historic sports race car from Melbourne dealer, Lanes Motors, who fitted lightweight body and entered in the 1933 Australian Grand Prix at Phillip Island and finished third. This was restored by Barry in 2005. A new factory style body and interior fitted and now running strongly and available for historic events.



MG TC / 1947 • This stunning early car has had a full restoration. Very original and correct. Ex concours winner and many club trophies.



MG M TYPE ROADSTER / 1931 • Very rare and original M Type. The engine let go on No. 4 piston, block is repairable and engine has a spare conrod to replace the No. 4. Other mechanicals are good and was driven to many events and shows.



MGA COUPE / 1959 • Stunning MGA Coupe has been completely rebuilt and is in excellent running condition and with right hand drive coupes being rare would be a good one for the collector.



MGA MK I ROADSTER / 1959 • This handsome MGA is an older restoration and rebuilt some years ago and was invited and sent to England for the commemorative rally. It finished 3rd outright in the hill climb at Harewood in Yorkshire on the estate of the Queen's cousin and now driving strongly and the family favourite.



ROVER 12HP / 1912 • Handsome veteran 12HP originally discovered in a barn in Glenelg and passed on to Barry who finished restoring it over a 6 year period and has been a regular runner since. The model is distinct with artillery wheels and a short original chassis and is one of the Clegg designed cars.



MG MAGNETTE ZB / 1959 • Last of the Magnette models and one of four delivered to the Adelaide dealers. The body has been totally rebuilt and repainted in its original colours and fitted with a 3.9 diff ratio and MGB engine. Interior redone in leather and timberwork redone plus new wiring loom. Car now requires final assembly.



HUMBER 12/20HP / 1910 • This veteran Humber was purchased in 1971 from a property on Torrens Road and needed full restoration and assembly. Over the last few years Barry has restored it. Reproducing the body using period photography. It's a Coventry Humber with T-head motor and now running strongly.



MGB GT / 1969 • This GT makes for an excellent project and is part restored from a donor car and has an overdrive gearbox and now needing full finish and assembly and a very low reserve.

**BIDDING ACCEPTED IN PERSON,
 PHONE BY ARRANGEMENT OR BIDS ON
bennettsclassicauctions.com.au
 PRIOR TO 1.00PM START.
 10% BUYER'S PREMIUM APPLIES**

PARTS & EQUIPMENT TO BE AUCTIONED

MG Parts and Barry's workshop equipment, including a lathe, drill press, bench grinder and more will be available at the auction.

In This Issue

About Us

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Would you like your car profiled?

Want to have your car profiled in Retroautos? Please contact us at david@retroautos.com.au

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: Russell Cooper collects FB, EK and EJ Holdens. Some can be restored, others are only for parts.

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SCOOP !! Next Month The FJs YOU Never Saw



These previously secret photos taken in 1952, at General Motors in Detroit, show a number of American-designed styling proposals for Holden's upcoming FJ model. They clearly demonstrate that GM in Detroit was thinking of a much more extensive re-styling of the first Holden than what was eventually released. Next month we reveal more images. This will be a MUST SEE for all Holden fans. You will see the photos ONLY in the April 2016 edition of Retroautos.



Images: Copyright 2016 GM Corp. Used with permission, GM Media Archive.

BUICK

The Australian Story

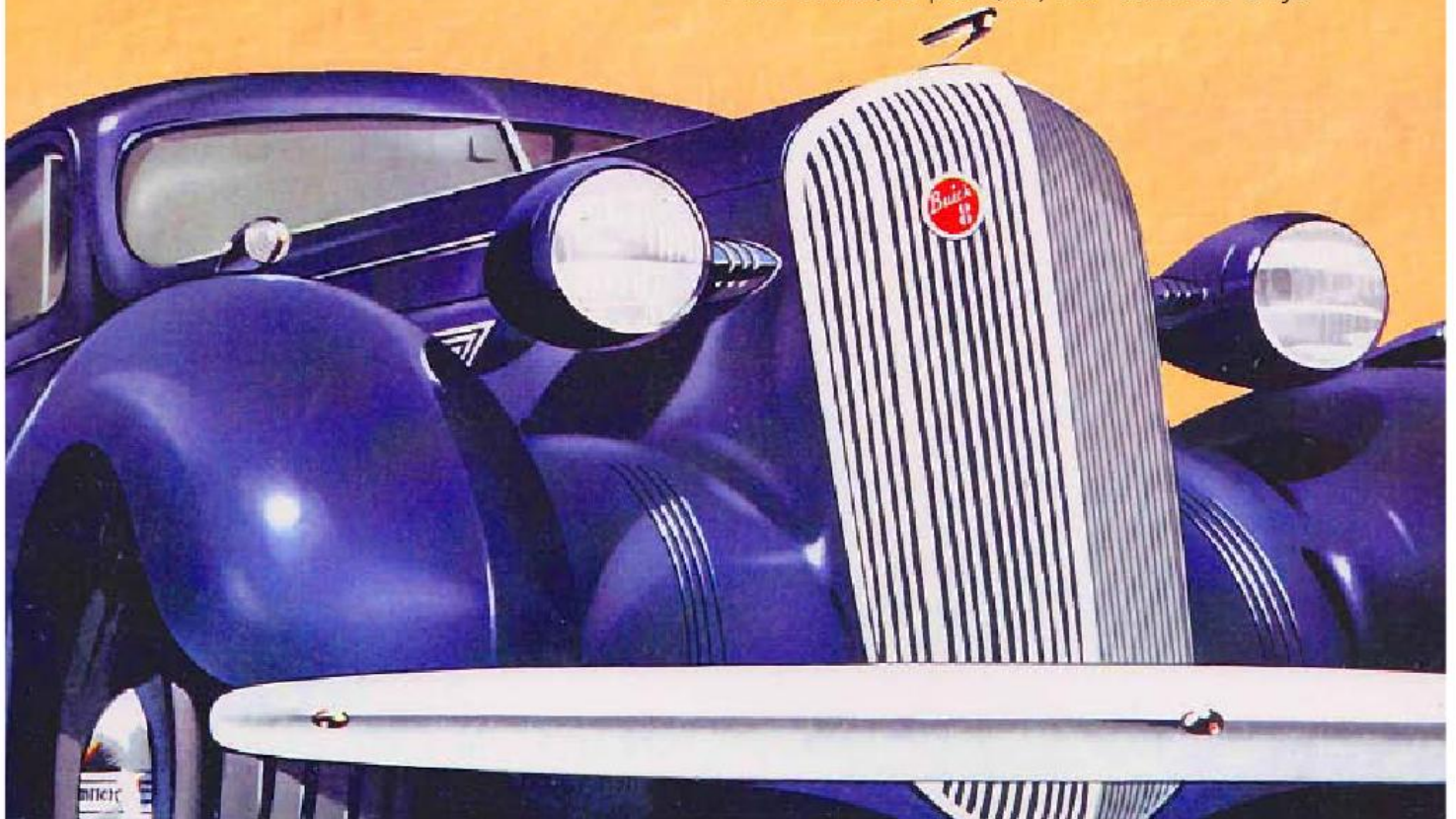
Eric North & John Gerdtz

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Us2
PHOTOGRAPHY

Welcome to the 54th edition of Retroautos.

We have been updating our contact database, confirming the details of many classic car clubs across Australia and what stood out the most as we hit websites and Facebook pages was the diversity of each club's online presence.

Almost every club is online, but there the similarities stop.

Most clubs have simple websites and/or Facebook pages that gave basic information about the club, include photos of members cars and provide contact details. Nothing wrong with any of that.

What we did notice, however, was a that small number of clubs have sought to further their appeal to new and existing members with a more evocative and appealing look to their website, using professional quality photographs and layouts.



The Queensland HD/HR Holden club and the Renault 4CV Register (both pictured on this page) were two that attracted our attention.

The Post Vintage Car Club of Tasmania has a different approach. This club takes new readers on a visual journey which follows their club's motto: People-Cars-Dreams.

Their website's opening image is a of tree-lined, winding country road. They invite you to join them on the driving experience. It's innovative and very appealing.

So what does all this mean? Well, the question we are asking ourselves is: "what amount of influence does the style and imagery of a club's online presence have on attracting new members and retaining existing ones?"

As more and more of what we do in our daily lives moves online, it is a sure thing that, in the future, what a classic car club offers online may well be the difference between growth and contraction.

What it also showed us is that our own Retroautos website is badly in need of refreshing!

RetroNews

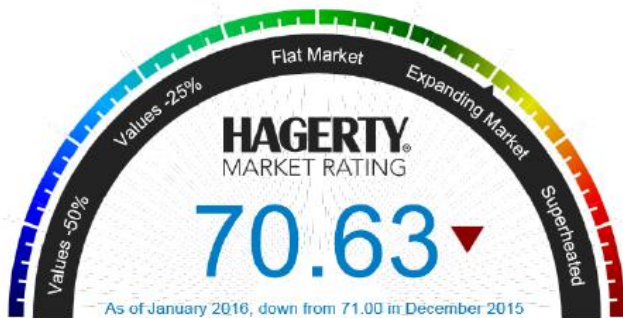


Anniversaries

Everyone likes an anniversary. It's a great way to celebrate and promote a classic marque.

Here's some coming up in 2016. The years are in brackets:

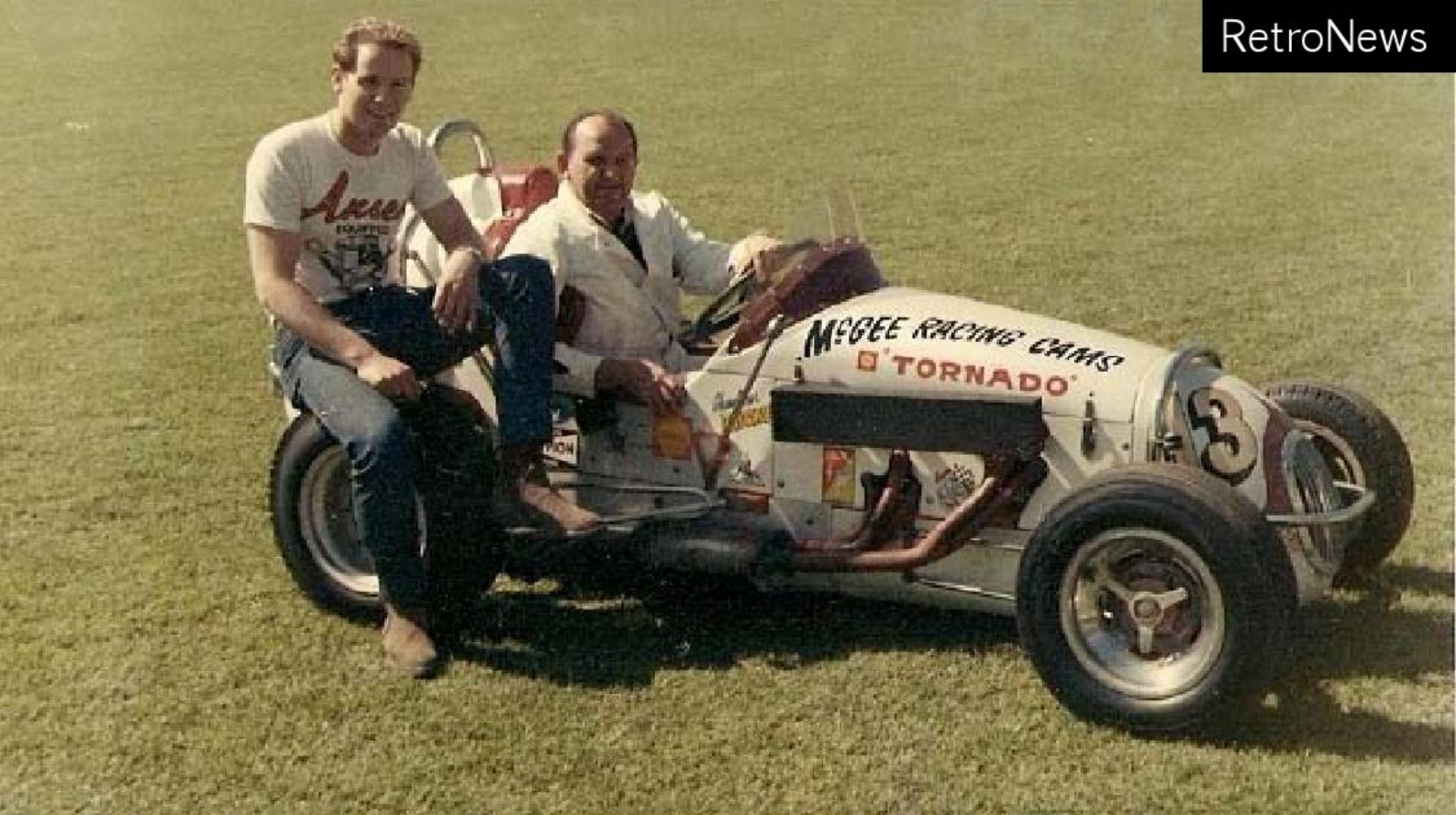
Austin (110), Nash and BMW (100), Pontiac, MGTA and Nash (90), Toyota's first passenger car (80) Jeep (75), Singer Gazelle and Renault Dauphine (70), FE Holden, Austin A35, Morris Minor 1000 and Go Karts (60), Toyota Corolla, HR Holden, Fiat Dino, XR Falcon Oldsmobile Toronado and Lotus Europa (50), Rover SD1, Ford Fiesta, Honda Accord, Porsche 924, XC Falcon, HX Holden, HX LE Monaro and the CL Valiant (40), Holden Commodore VL and Nissan Pintara (30). Plenty to celebrate!



Market Flat

The Hagerty Market Rating is down for the second month in a row, and has been down for seven of the last eight months. The drop from December 2015 is the second largest month over month drop in the last year.

Hagerty also report that auction activity (measured as the number of cars sold) is at the lowest point of the last 20 months.



The 2016 Australian Vintage Speedway Festival will be held at Trevan Ford Grafton Speedway on Saturday, June 11 and Sunday, June 12.

Promoter Dave Lander is well into the planning stages for the fixture which will feature a static display of cars and bikes from days of yesteryear while exhibition runs will be held as a highlight of the Saturday and Sunday afternoon shows.

Lander is hoping many of the vintage clubs throughout Australia will embrace and get behind the promotion to ensure a good attendance is on hand to take the walk down memory lane.

"I will be contacting many of the clubs as I want as many cars and bikes as possible to make the static display really something special, while the demonstration runs will be a major promotion all of its own," he said

Above: Len Brock with crew chief Phil McGee at the Sydney Showground behind the wheel of the McGee Ford Falcon powered "Tornado" in which he scored a sensational victory in the 1967 Australian Speedcar Grand Prix. Image from the Dennis Newlyn Collection.

Lander is keen to have an all Offenhauser Speedcar exhibition run with as many of the famous Meyer & Drake powered cars on the track as possible.

"I want as many Offies there as possible to participate in a very unique track appearance. These cars hold a very special place in the history of Australian speedcar racing and I want to showcase these mighty machines with a separate presentation to anything else we do during the afternoon," he added.

For more information on the 2016 Australian Vintage Speedway Festival phone Dave Lander on 0408 222 908.

www.vintagespeedwayfestival.com

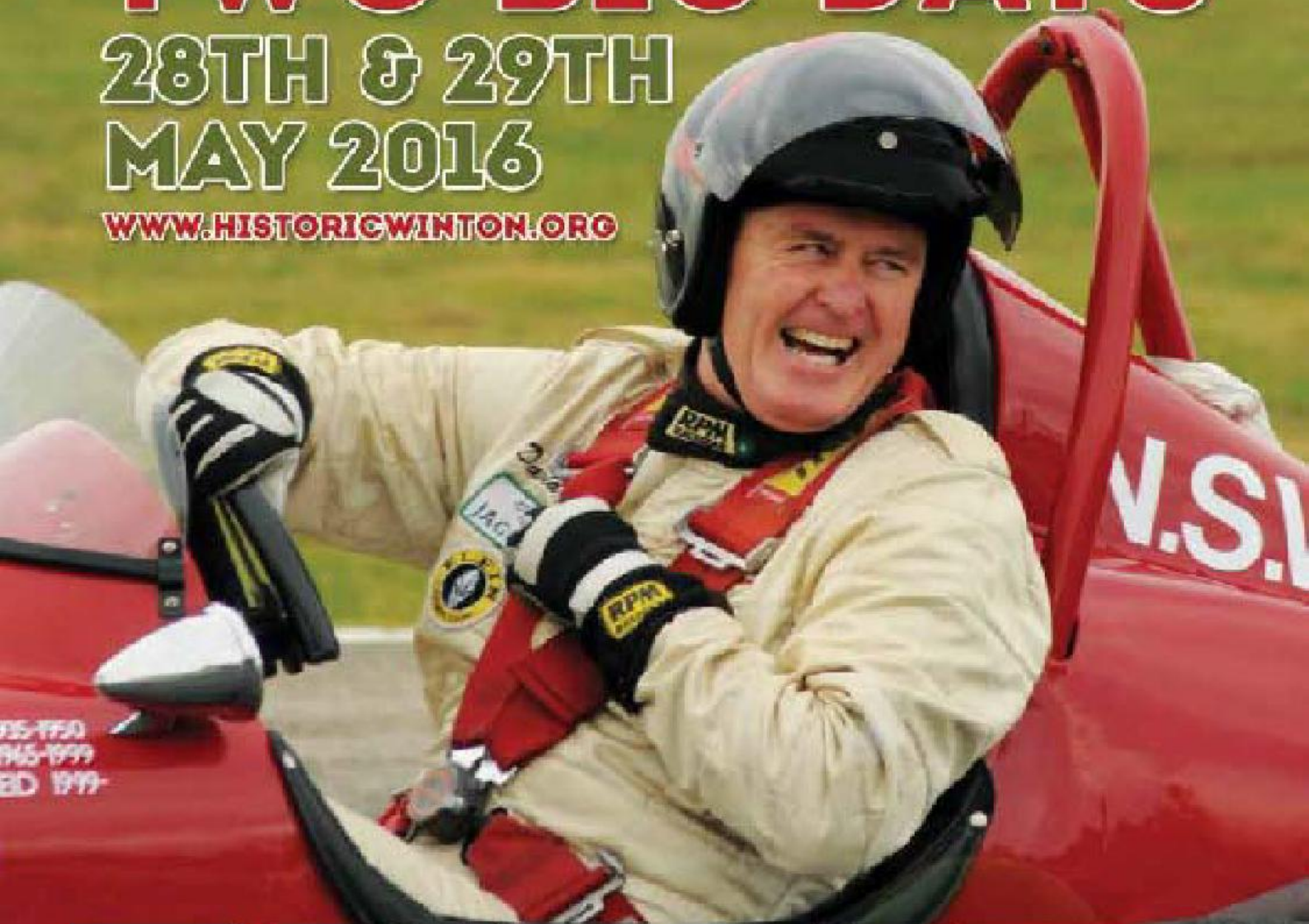
40TH HISTORIC WINTON

PRESENTED BY THE AUSTIN SEVEN CLUB & HMRAY

TWO BIG DAYS

28TH & 29TH
MAY 2016

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1935-1950
1945-1959
ED 1999



40th Historic Winton

Historic Winton is Australia's largest and most popular all-historic motor race meeting presents of non-stop racing featuring over 400 historic racing cars and motorbikes from the 1920s to the 1980s.

The racing and car shows are spread over 27th, 28th and 29th May, 2016.

So Long Land Rover

The final Land Rover Defender went down the production line during the last week of January 2016

Here's a picture of the first prototype with centre position steering.

Inset is the first pre-production vehicle.

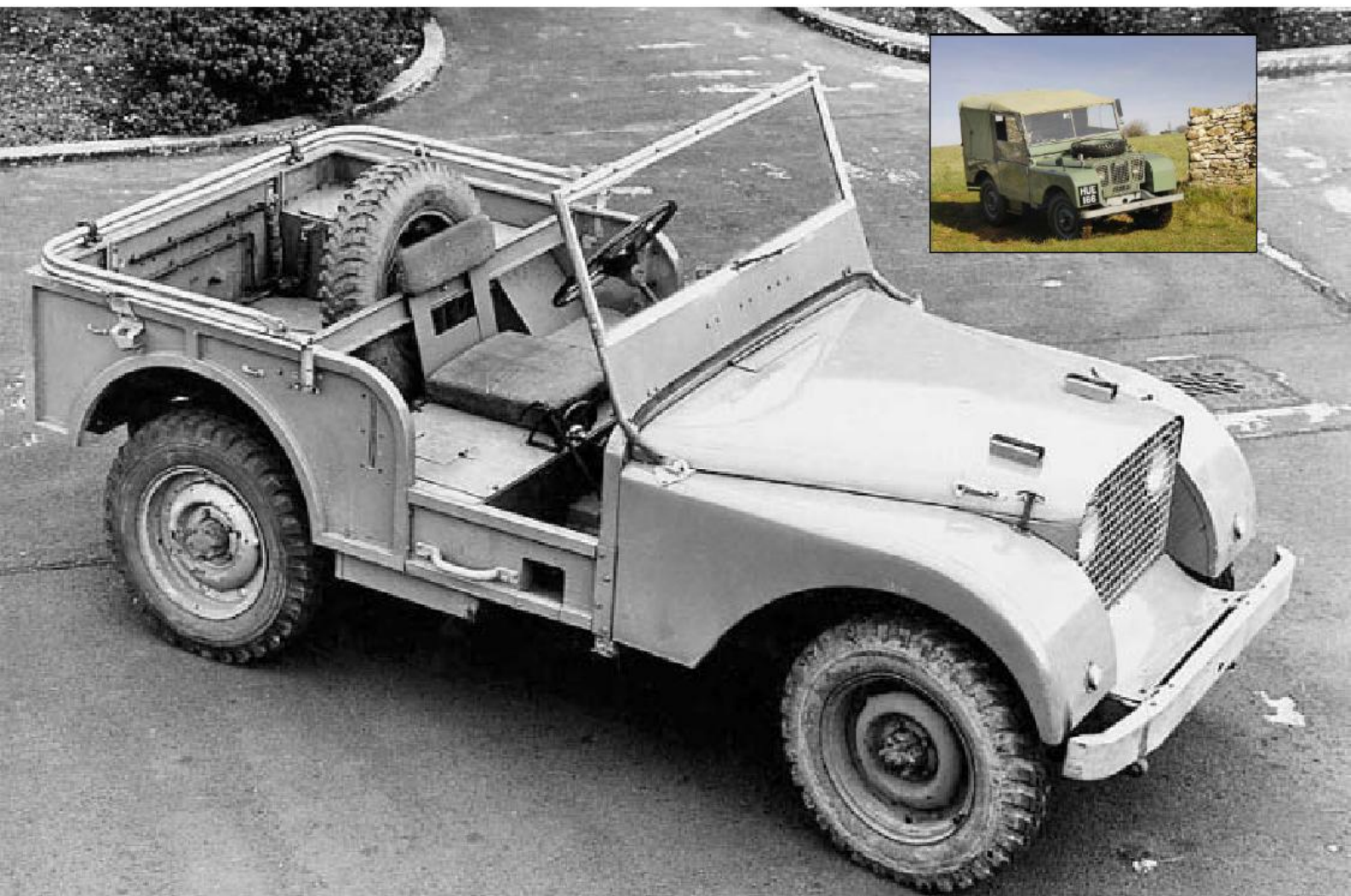
April 2016 in Retroautos

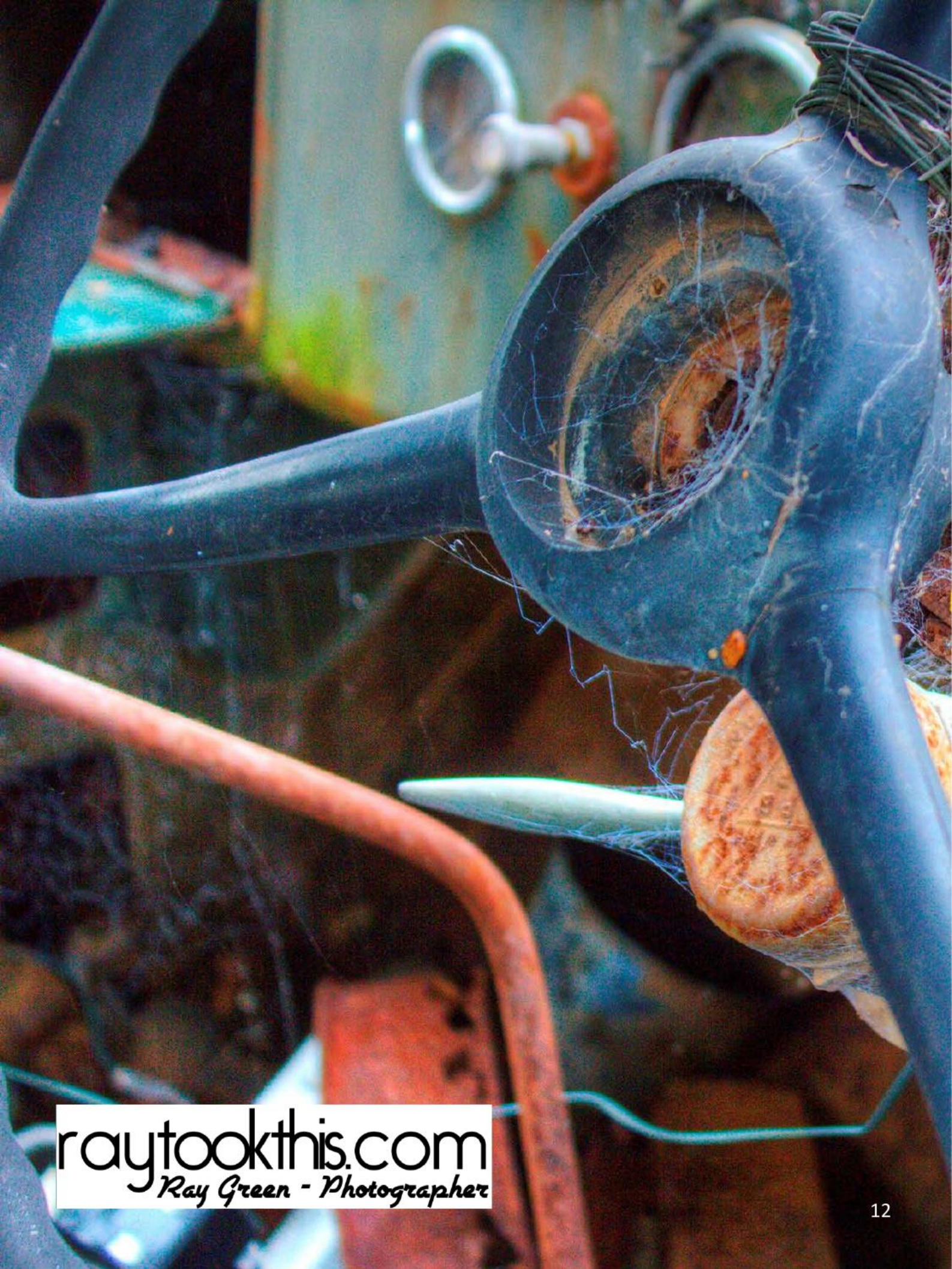
SCCOP!! We bring you an extensive feature story showcasing never before published pictures of styling proposals of the FJ Holden.

Have you ever heard of the Cornell Safety Car? It is a little known classic which has influenced every car made since 1957. We bring you its amazing story.

And we talk to Russell Holden again, and this time we hear about the restoration of his 1902 Thomas.

Plus there's all the regular features, including, RetroAuctions, RetroRacing, RayTookThis and RetroAds.





raytookthis.com
Ray Green - Photographer



Farm Yard Find!

“Just by chance I decided to drive past the old property and there in the yard was the old Dodge”.





Ian Wilson discovers the truck he learnt to drive on.

It is unusual that people can say they own the vehicle on which they learnt to drive. It is even rarer that the same vehicle is now a sought after classic.

For Ian Wilson, that's the definitely situation. And it only cost him \$100!

"I learnt to drive in a 1955 Dodge Fargo truck on my family's farm when I was about seven", Ian says.

The Dodge had lived a hard life in the Riverina and was a rusted relic even when Ian learnt to steer and stop it back in the mid-seventies.

"I had to stand up to steer it so I could see over the dashboard" remembers Ian.



Like so many farm trucks which had travelled well beyond their use-by dates it was left to rot in a paddock and stood in the rain and sun until 2013. That's when Ian saw it again, just by chance.

"We were down in the area of the old farm when I was looking at buying a Ford Capri," says Ian. He collects Ford Capris, and his cars were featured in the May 2015 edition of Retroautos.

"Just by chance I decided to drive past the old property and there in the yard was the old Dodge" he continues.

"So, I decided to see if it was for sale, and it was. I paid \$100 for it

and had it shipped to my house in Newcastle" Ian says.

Luckily Ian has a large workshop and plenty of space for all manner of equipment and cars, and the truck is now safely under cover in a corner of the workshop.

"It will need a lot of restoration work done to it to bring it back to useable condition, but I will get there," he says.

Classic farm trucks are now growing in popularity with astute restorers and car collectors here and in the USA.

Dodges from the 1950s are particularly sought after.

Classic CAR SHOW

Featuring Pre 1975 vehicles
Trophies for Vehicles
of Special Interest

In conjunction with

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WINTON

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RetroAuctions

For this edition of Retroautos we take the less travelled auction road, and avoid the big global auction houses. From Palm Springs to Adelaide and to Dorset, we have found an interesting variety of offerings. Many are no reserve.

McCormicks in sunny Palm Springs always has a great selection of 1950s Americana.

They hold two big auctions each year. The 1955 Ford Fairlane two door hardtop pictured here is a stunning example of the brand, and is part of the auction on 26th, 27th and 28th February.

Keith McCormick, who owns the place, moved to Palm Springs from the UK 30 years ago. See more at: www.classic-carauction.com



Left: 1956 Oldsmobile at McCormicks on 26th, 27th and 28th February.

Also on offer are these turquoise twins. Pictured below is a 1958 Oldsmobile. When this car was being developed, GM's head of styling, Harley Earl, took one look at the chrome trim and demanded that stylists add "another 80 pounds of chrome trim" to it. This is the result.

Bottom: A 1956 Plymouth Bevedere. This was Chryslers economy offering. Even so, it is coated in chrome and boasts a two-tone paint job.



This image and inset left: This 1955 Studebaker President will be offered at the Leake Auction in Oklahoma City on 19th February. No reserve for this one.



This image and inset right: Leake are offering this not-often-seen 1951 Kaiser. No reserve.





Above: 1935 Riley Merlin on offer at Dorset Vintage and Classic (V&C) Auctions on 3rd March. The price guide on this one is \$A23,000.

Below: Barons Sandown auction on 23rd Feb have this 1928 Roll Royce which was featured in the film, "To Paris With Love", starring the late Sir Alec Guinness. \$A500,000 was spent on restoration.





Above: 1971 Humber Sceptre at Dorset. Price guide is \$A9,000 for this upmarket Hillman
Below: Cute 1961 Ford Popular 100E at no reserve at Brightwells. The Popular was the ultimate econo-box car. It used a superceded Anglia body.



1962 Singer Vogue (a luxury version of the Hillman Super Minx) at Brightwells in the UK. It is a no reserve car at their 3rd March auction and would be an ideal first classic.



Above right: At Brightwells there is a 1958 BMW 502 3.2 litre V8 sedan. Thought to be an ex-German embassy car, it was bought in 1976 for \$A700. Price guide is now \$A7,000. Note the engine is out of the car, which means lots of work for someone.



THE 8th ANNUAL DANDENONG VALLEY
ALL HOLDEN
STREET CAR SHOW



Photo by Vivian of Holloway



SUNDAY APRIL 3rd 2016 Entrants From 7.00am - Public 9.00am - 3.00pm
Greaves Reserve Bennet Street Dandenong. MEL REF 90 A7



PRESENTS

THE BARRY BAHNISCH MG & VETERAN CAR LIFETIME COLLECTION AUCTION

*Safety First!*

ON THE 27TH FEBRUARY 2016 AT 1.00PM IN THE
SHOWROOM AT 2 TAMINGA STREET,
REGENCY PARK, ADELAIDE SA • PHONE (08) 8244 8947

Bennetts Classic Auctions are showcasing a rare lifetime collection of MGs and veteran cars owned by Barry Bahnisch.

Barry is in ill health and now can no longer work on and drive the cars.

He is well known in the classic car community and is a founding member of the Veteran Car club of South Australia and the MG Club of SA.

There has been considerable local and overseas interest in the cars.



1933 MG F2 Type with Historic Racing History

Pictured above, this car is considered the "Jewel in the Crown" of the collection. It is fitted with a 1271cc engine which was the factory modified Wolseley Hornet engine.

The gearbox is by ENV, which is a superior 4 speed non-synchro gearbox. This model was fitted with 12" brake drums. The car has been completely re-built and is a running driving car.

The historic sports race car is from Melbourne dealer, Lanes Motors, who fitted lightweight body and entered in the 1933 Australian Grand Prix at Phillip Island and finished third. This was restored by Barry in 2005. A new factory style body and interior fitted and now running strongly and available for historic events.

24



1931 MG M Type Fabric Bodied Roadster (above). It has a three speed non-synchro gearbox. The 847cc OHC engine was developing 30bhp at 4500rpm. The engine is currently dismantled.



1910 12/20HP Humber

Bought circa 1970, Barry recently completed this restoration. The body has been reproduced faithfully using period photographs and is unique to this period Humber. It is a Coventry Humber with a T-head motor which first ran in June 2011. The car is in running condition, but it has not been driven on local roads.



1912 12HP Rover

This car was discovered at a suburban back yard. Barry finished the project over several years. It has been a regular and reliable runner. The 1912 model is distinct with artillery wheels and a chassis 4" shorter than later 12HP models, which continued to 1924. It is one of the Clegg designed cars. As a regularly run veteran vehicle, there is some upgrade required to the upholstery, repair is required to one of the wheels (currently mounted as the spare wheel), and other minor items.



1947 MGTC

This stunning early car has had a full restoration. Very original and correct. Ex concours winner and many club trophies.





Left and above: 1959 Magnette ZB. This is last of this style and one of only four delivered to the Adelaide dealers. The body has been totally rebuilt and repainted in its original colours and fitted with a 3.9 diff ratio and MGB engine. Interior redone in leather and timberwork redone plus new wiring loom. Car now requires final assembly.



Left: 1959 MGA fixed head coupe. These are rare cars indeed, and this one is in great condition.



Below and below left.: 1959 MGA in Old English White livery. It is an older restoration and rebuilt some years ago and was invited and sent to England for MG the commemorative rally.



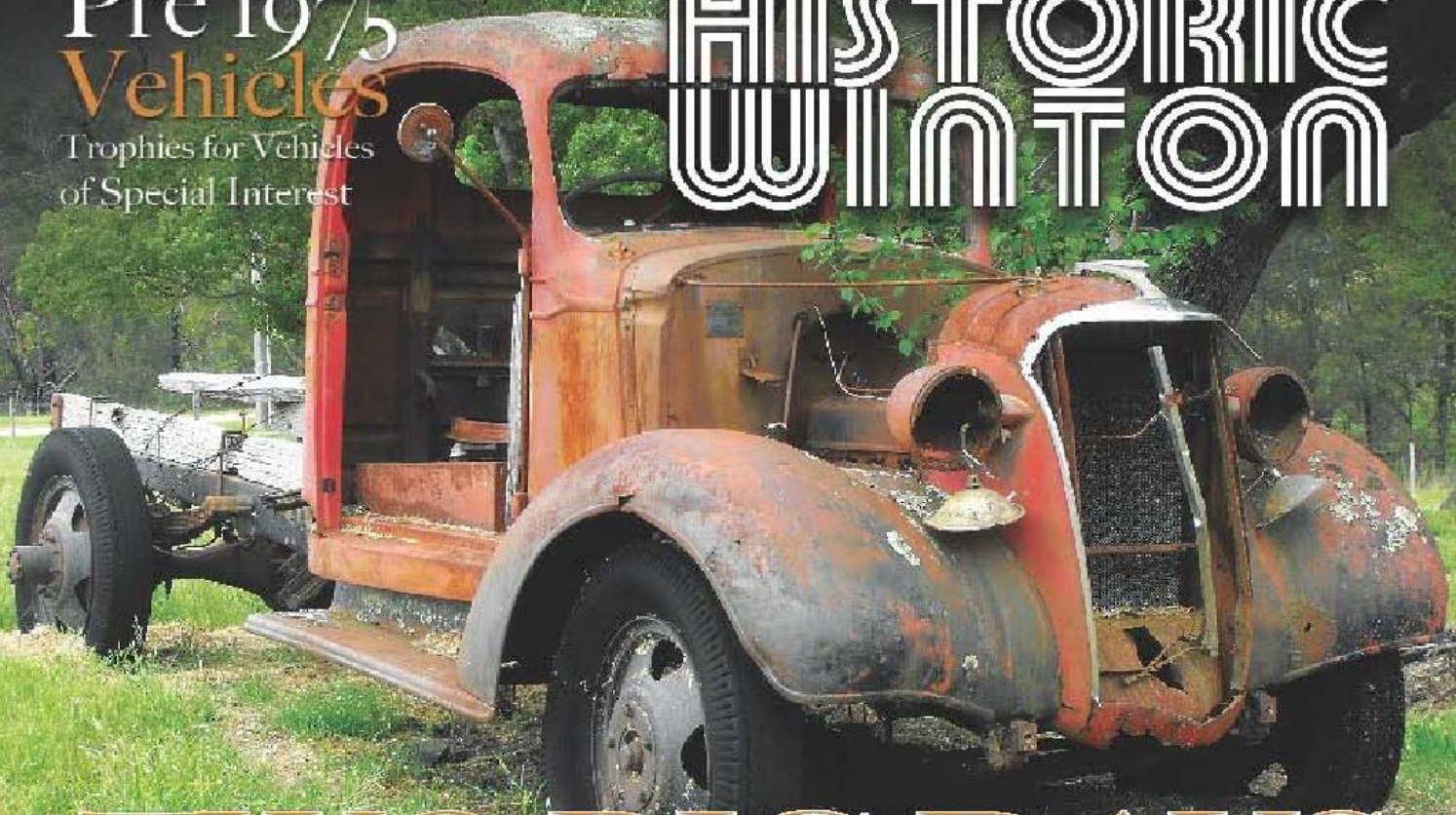
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TWO BIG DAYS

May 28th and 29th 2016

Winton Motor Raceway - Via Benalla

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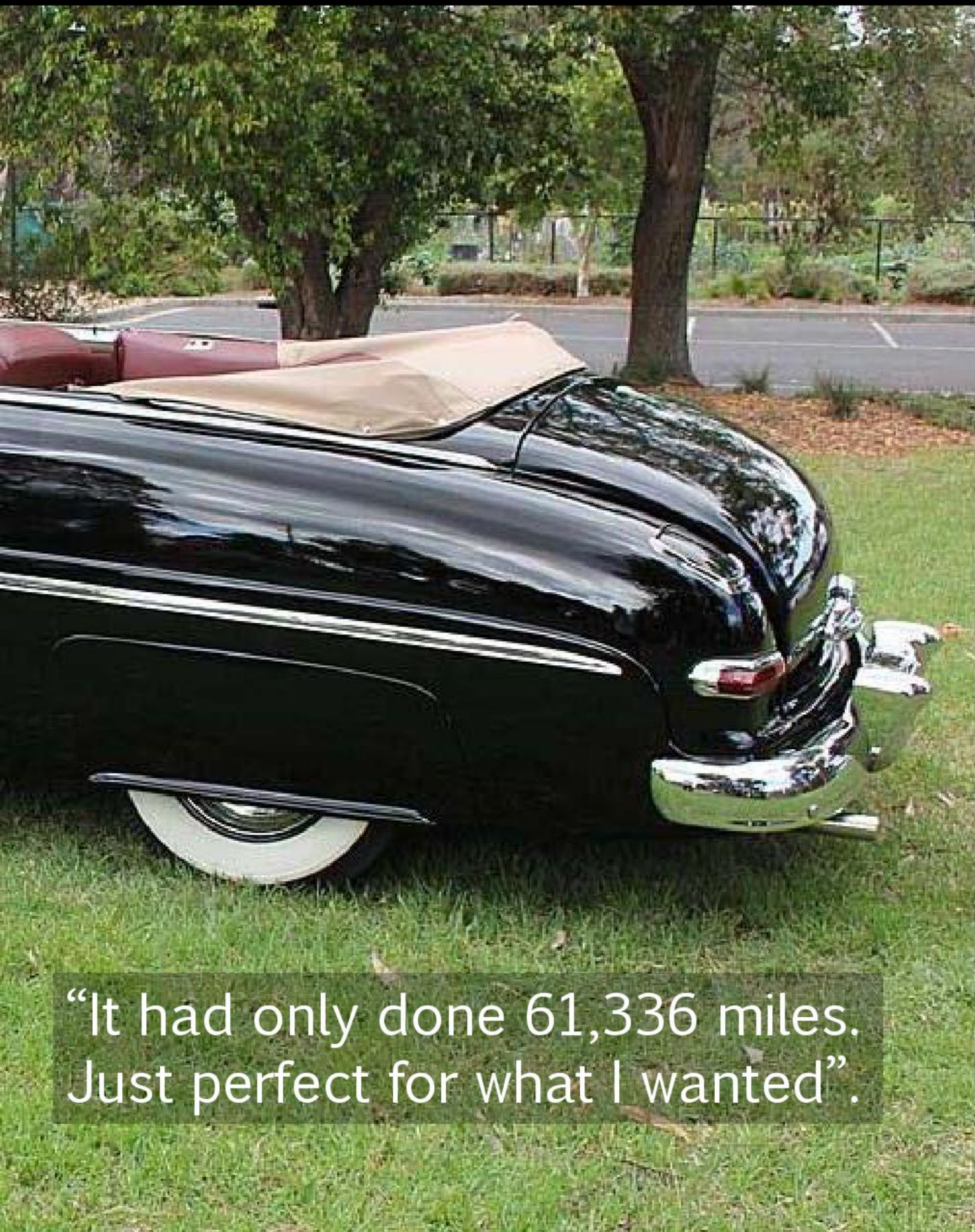


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All images from Peter Hibbert's collection unless otherwise noted.





There is something about Peter Hibbert's 1949 Mercury convertible that compels your attention.

Maybe it is the sleek shape with a menacing stare.

Maybe it's the voluptuous curves and lashings of chrome that have attracted so many customizers and hot rodders to this model.

Maybe it's the liberating experience of driving with the top-down and the summer breeze in your hair.

Maybe it's the sonorous tones that emanate from its flathead V-8.

Whatever it is, Peter's Mercury has the quintessential elements that make cruising in a classic automobile so enjoyable.

In the February 2016 edition of Retroautos we talked to Peter about his 1940 Ford coupe and discovered he is a big fan of American cars from the 1940s through 1960s.

In his garage are many Fords, Mercurys and a 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible.

This Mercury was added to his fleet in 2013.

The '49 is not Peter's first mercury. He owned a 1948 example for 21 years.

Then he acquired a 1950 sedan.



Big and imposing. Buying a 1949 Mercury told your neighbours that you were wealthy enough to afford more than a Ford, Plymouth or Chevrolet.

Peter's 1950 Mercury Sports Sedan



"I bought the '50 Mercury from a guy who lived in Bethel, USA. I looked at many photos of the car and took the guy's word for it that it was ok. I was not disappointed at the quality!, Peter says.

"It was stock factory build including six volt electrics, drum brakes and the 255 cubic inch flat head engine V8".

Peter fully re-trimmed the interior and detailed the engine. The overdrive and running gear were sound so they were left as is.

The brake drums, brake lines, wheel cylinders and the master cylinder were all replaced.

He also cleaned the interior of the fuel tank.

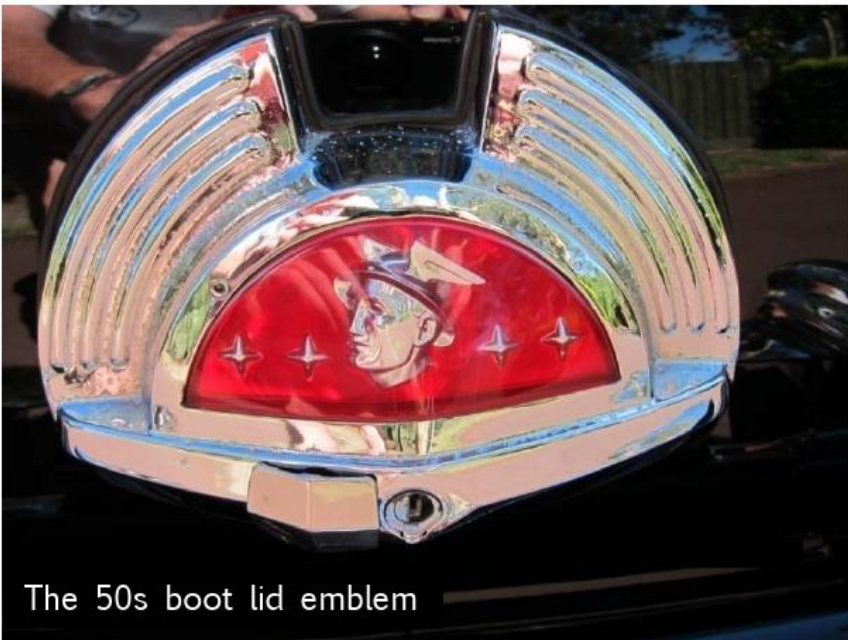
Cosmetic work included all chrome and stainless steel and the front bonnet emblem plated in original gold trim.

Fan of the '49ers

Peter has always liked the styling of the '49 and '50 Mercurys so after a number of years he started to think about adding a convertible. To his collection.

When he started the search for the car he knew it would have to come from the USA, as so few exist in Australia.

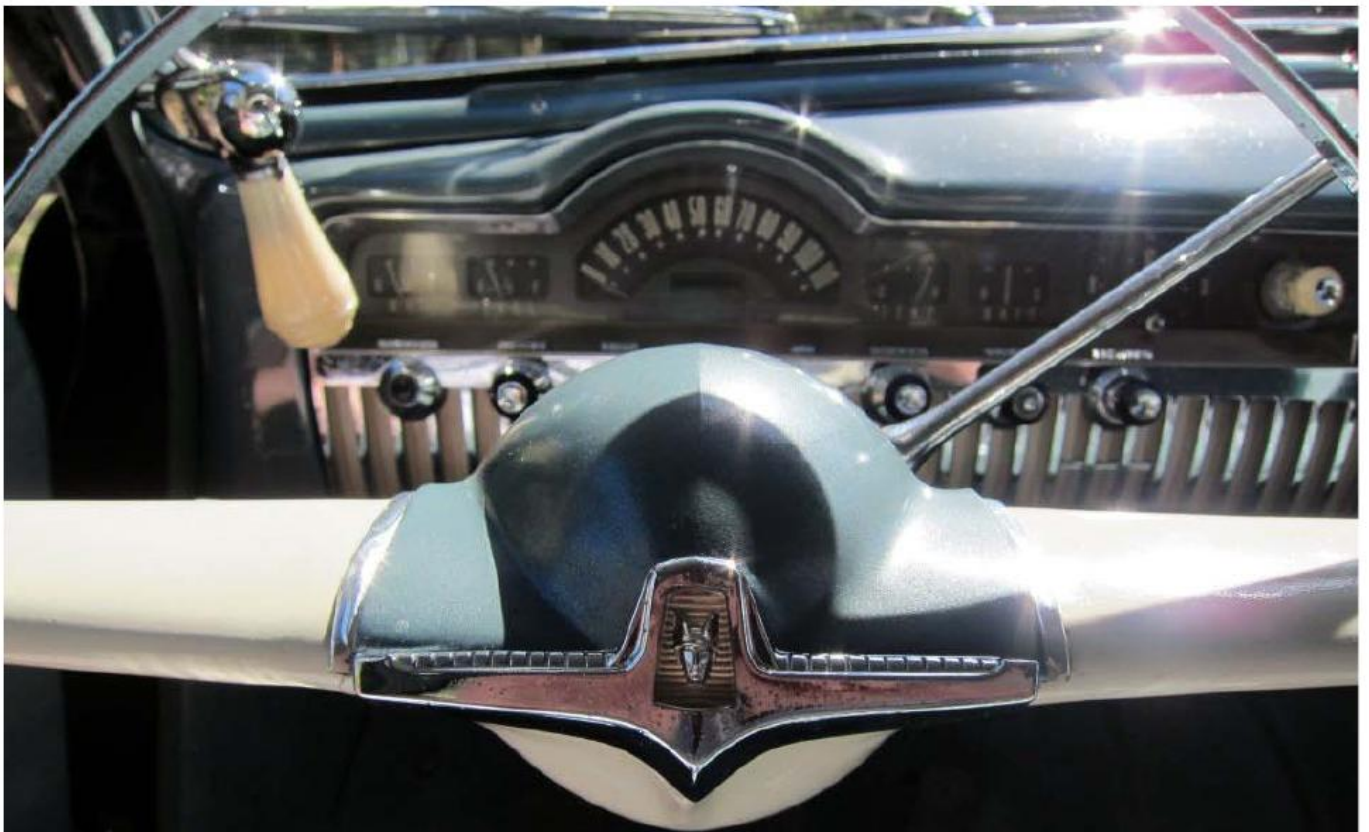
He wanted a car that did not require a major restoration.



The 50s boot lid emblem



Off to a new owner



Above: Classy steering wheel graces the 1950 Mercury
Below: A police-style spotlight was a frequently added accessory. It was internally controlled by a lever through the front pillar (see above).





"I advertised in various American publications for a convertible in complete condition and only requiring a refurbishment," he told us.

The advertisements drew a number of enquiries and led him to the car he eventually bought.

"It was rust free, had been dry-stored in Arizona, had new tan convertible top, all the parts and chrome work was in place and it had only done 61,336 miles" he says.

"Just perfect for what I wanted".

And the good news continued.

It still had its original 255 cubic inch (4.2 litre) flat head V8 and gearbox with its electric overdrive.

"They were in fine condition and only required cleaning", Peter says.

The steering components were in great condition, too.

The focus of Peter's restorative work was ensuring the car was properly rust proofed. He also had the exterior repainted, just to be sure.

The interior was completely stripped and redone. A reproduction fuel tank was also installed.

Peter also retained the convertible in its left hand drive configuration to preserve its originality.

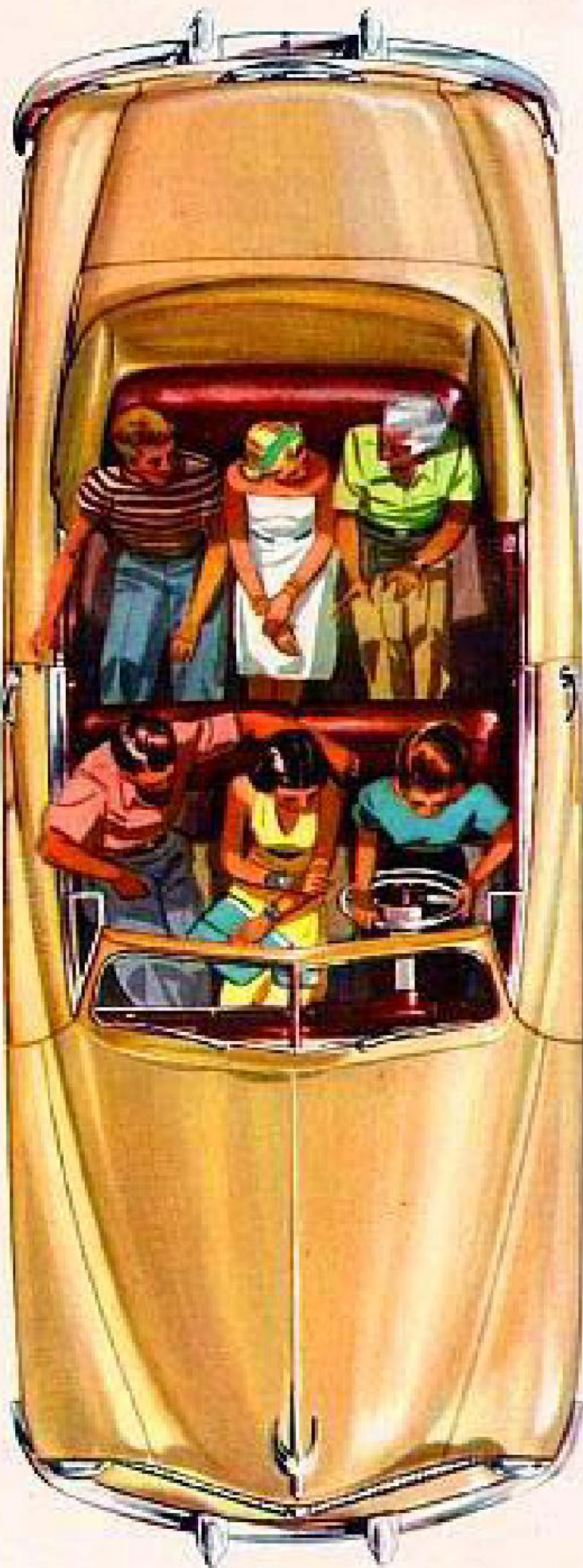


In 1949 the Mercury brand was only eleven years old. The convertible was the top-of-the-range model



Above: The 1949 dashboard is simple yet elegant. The radio was an optional extra.
Below: The 1950 dashboard from the four door sedan is less modular than in 1949.



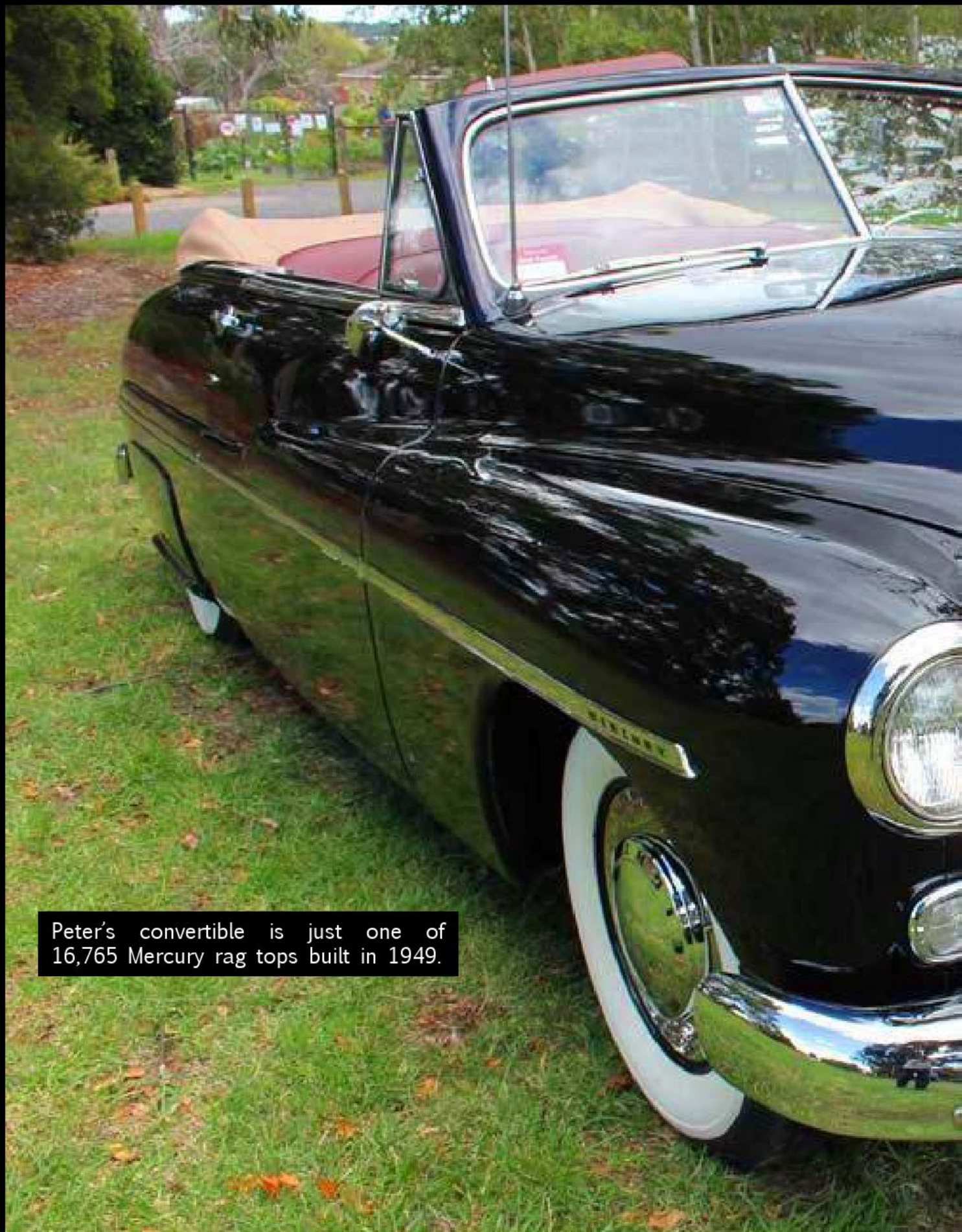


The trouble was that the convertible was one car too many for Peter's garage, so he sold the '50 sedan and it went to Swan Hill.

Out on the road the big car just purrs along and attracts considerable attention. "It is a great cruiser, especially with the top down and has proved reliable and safe" Peter says.

The big Merc was also a drawcard at the 2015 Motorclassica event.





Peter's convertible is just one of 16,765 Mercury rag tops built in 1949.





The Coolest Car Ever?

The Birth of the “Lead Sled” Customised Mercury



It is generally accepted that Sam Barris and his brother George, were the first to customise the 1949 Mercury.

Sam used his own brand new two door coupe.

The work on the car started in 1950 and spread into early 1951.

Sam smoothed the side of the car by eliminating the down turn of the front mudguard line as it went through the front door.s.

The roof was chopped four inches (10mm) and the door handles shaved.

The car was first seen at the Oakland Roadster Show on 21st February 1951, and caused a sensation.

It then appeared on the front cover of the December 1951 edition of Motor Trend and the orders flooded into the Barris workshop.

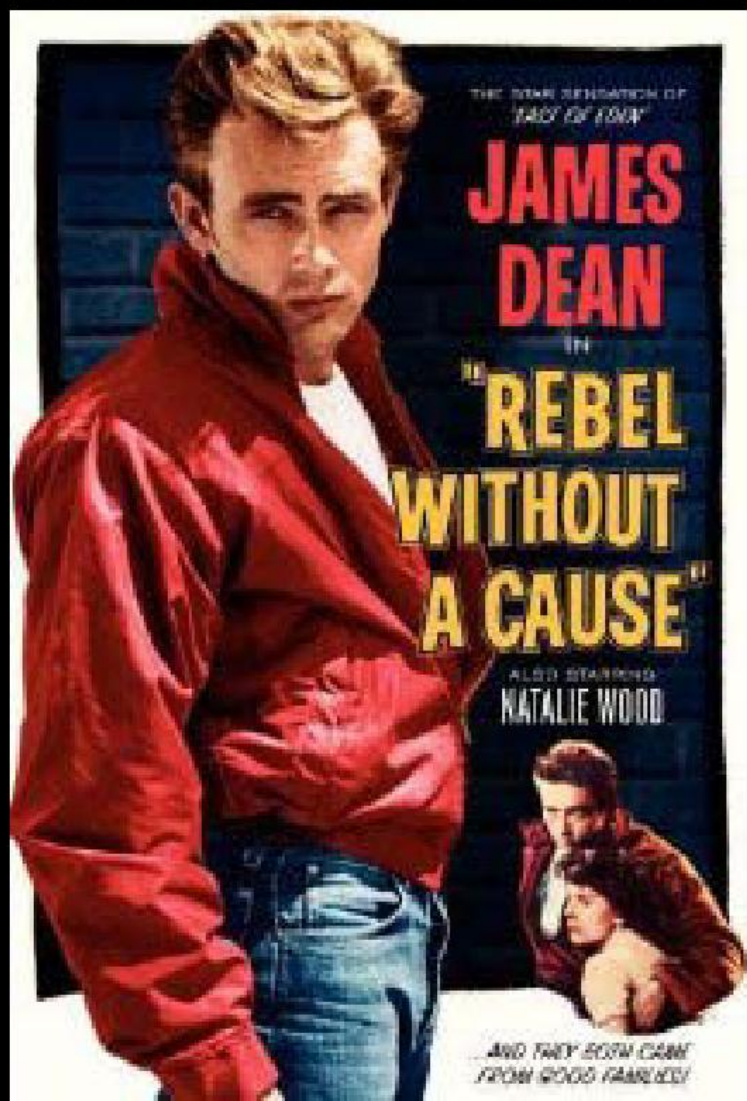
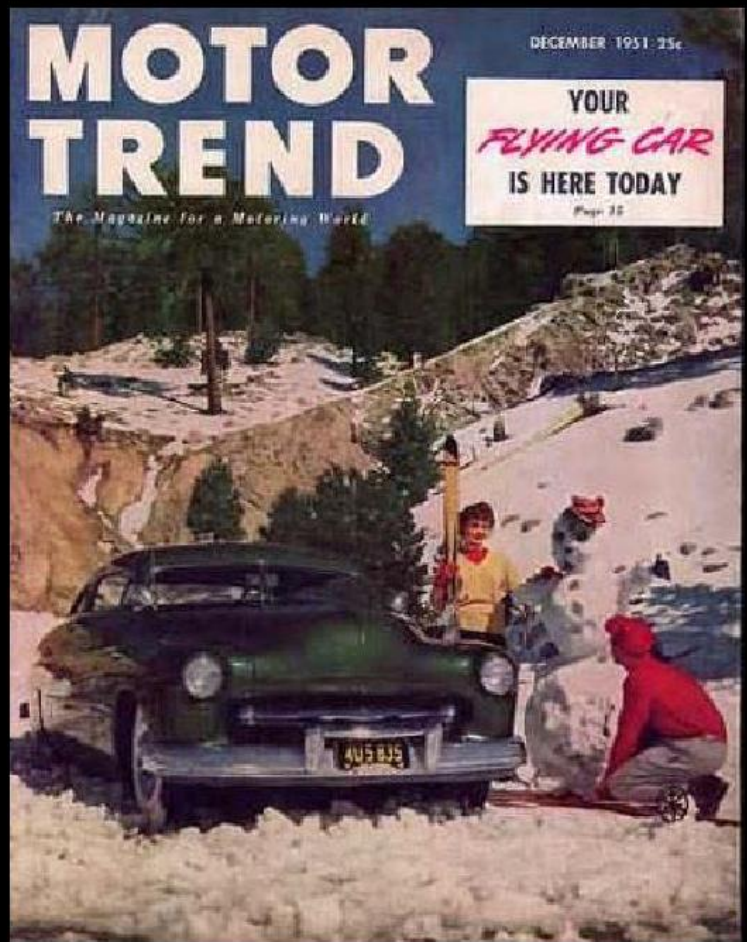
This Barris car and those that followed have inspired a global car culture around customised, chopped Mercurys.

Sam's original car still exists and was shown at the 2015 Pebble Beach Course d Elegance. It is owned by car collector John Mumford.

Also on show at Pebble Beach was the original Mercury driven by James Dean in the 1955 movie "Rebel Without A Cause" (see car pictured left)

This car is owned by the National Automotive Museum (the old Bill Harrah collection) in Reno Nevada.

Dean's use of the car further enhanced the Mercury's image as the coolest car for teenagers and hot rodders.



A Life's Work



Collecting and Restoring FB, EK and EJ Holdens







Left and above: Russell has ensured two of his EKs carry NASCO accessories. This EK has mint condition wind deflectors, so common in the days before air conditioning

If Russell Cooper's ever went on a TV quiz show his subject specialty would just have to be "Holdens: from 1960 to 1963".

The Holden collector and restorer has them stored in sheds all over his property. They include a pair of award winning 1960 FB and 1961 EK Specials, an original EK ute and sedan, a 7,000 mile FB wagon (Yes! Just 7,000 miles on the clock), a slick EJ Premier and a few rusted relics that are good for parts and not much else.

We stopped counting when we reached eleven FB/EKs and four EJs.

"It was my late father who got me started", Russell admits. "When I was growing up all he had were FBs and EKs. They only used to cost him around \$100, sometimes a just \$20, and he always had a couple of them".

It was only natural that as soon as he was able to drive Russell gravitated to FB and EK Holdens.

Russell began collecting and restoring early sixties Holdens back in the day when they were plentiful and cheap. "I used to be able to go to the local garbage dump and pick up parts for free", he laments.

That lament is shared with this Retroautos' scribe who also scavenged parts at local tips for a 1961 Vauxhall. Ah, the good old days. Alas, no more. The FB and EK are famous for their two tone colour schemes and Russell's cars are no exception.

His award winning FB and EK have been meticulously returned to showroom floor condition, with pink being the dominant colour. The FB is a dusty pink with cream side flashes, while the EK has a white roof over a pink body.





Left and above: This EK is an award winner and also showcases NASCO accessories.

The two cars also boast many of the accessories that dealers sold to boost their profit margins. Things like chromed scuff plates under the door handles, rear venetians, gear level locks, sun visors, wheel dress rings and white wall tyres.

Not only does he restore cars, his vehicles are in demand from film and TV companies for use as props.

“My blue EK was used recently in a TV show which recreated a crime from the 1960s and I have a black and white EK that saw screen time in *Home and Away*,” Russell explains.

The latter car is largely unrestored. Its black paint is etched with age “I have left the body as is, but I had to fix the roof” Russell admits.

The car also has a few customised features, including period mag wheels and Falcon tail light lenses in place of the Holden lens.

The tail light switch was standard thing to do back in the late sixties if you had an EK or FB and wanted to make it different and not spend much money. “It is exactly what the TV people wanted,” Russell says.

Hidden away in a corner of one shed is the two tone green 7,000 mile FB wagon.

It has not been driven since 1961.

“The guy how owned it died not long after he bought it and his parents just parked it,” Russell explains. “It still has the 1961 rego sticker on the window.”⁴⁷



Russell's highly awarded FB. He is very proud of this car. It is a wonderful restoration.





Above: Cars await restoration or will give their parts to other projects.
Below: Not all of Russell's cars are fully restored. This ute is for "hauling things".





Film and TV companies use Russell's mildly customised EK when they want to portray early 1960s culture. Ford Falcon tail lights were typical of what young owners did to re-style their FB/EKs without spending much money.



The wagon interior is as new and Russell is not sure yet if he will restore the body, which has some surface rust, or just given it a quick rub back and get the car mobile.

He has a couple of EJ's, a white Special and a lovely turquoise Premier, plus two parts cars.

"I like them, too", he says of the EJ's.

Russell's restoration skills are well known in the early Holden community. Right now he's working on an FE panel van.

He's also doing an EJ restoration for a client who bought a rolling shell from Russell while we were chatting with him.

Although his main focus is early sixties Holdens, Russell has been partial to the FX/FJ and HK/HT/HG Monaros.

Top right: Cream FX on the lawn.
Above right: Spencer Martin replica FX
Top left: Period customised EK
Above left: Rusty's Garage Ute

Two FXs and an FJ currently reside in his garage. There's an FX Ute, in faded beige with signage that says *Rusty's Junk Yard*.

Parked on one side of the Ute is a cream FJ, and on the other side a replica of the FX race car driven by Spencer Martin, the Australia open wheel Gold Star champion.

The distinctive FX was known as the "BP Boomerang Service Station" car and Spencer drove the it in 1963 to great effect around the old Catalina Park track at Katoomba.



Russell is restoring this panel van for a client

Russell has also collected, bought and sold a number of Monaros over the years.

He confided that he had just done a deal to part with his last one, a red 1968 GTS V8, which he's owned for eleven years.



An EJ waiting to be put away in one of the sheds. It will be restored.

"I won't tell you what I paid for it and I won't tell you how much I'm selling it for, but it will pay down quite a bit of the mortgage" he told us.

With ten cars yet to be restored, Russell has some work ahead of him. And he's looking forward to every minute of it.



Above: The blue EK was recently used by in TV show which reconstructed a murder.
Below: Underneath the seats and other bric-c-brac is a 7,000 mile FB wagon. The interior is in perfect condition and the exterior is ok as well, when you get a close look.







Design to Driveway

The 1949/50 Mercury has legendary status.

Originally intended to be the 1949 Ford, how it became the Mercury is an instructive story of corporate political manoeuvring and tough financial decision making. How it became the customiser's dream is another legendary story. And then there's its role as James Dean's car in "Rebel Without a Cause."



1949/50 Mercury



Photos from the Henry Ford Museum



HF II's brother, Benson Ford, with a quarter scale model of the 1949 Mercury. This was a four door fast back that never made it into production. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum

There is no doubting that the 1949 Mercury has become an automotive icon.

The '49 Mercury is the car that propelled the Barris brothers, Sam and George, into the customising business and global recognition.

The '49 Mercury is the car that James Dean drove in "Rebel Without A Cause", and became a pop cult icon.

The 1949 Mercury was developed, along with the '49 Ford and Lincoln, during a period of absolute chaotic upheaval at the Ford Motor Company.

That they emerged from the design studio at all and made it onto suburban driveways, and saved the Ford company from financial failure, is the stuff of automotive legend.

And what is largely overlooked these days is that the '49 Mercury was originally planned as the 1949 Ford.

The Birth of Mercury

To understand the 1949 Mercury we need to go fifteen years back in time, when Ford sales were starting to decline in the face of an onslaught of freshly styled cars from General Motors (GM)

Edsel Ford, Henry Ford's long suffering son, firmly believed that styling, and annual model changes, was a one of the main reasons Ford was losing sales to General Motors.

Old Henry thought styling was frivolous and continually fought his son's improvement efforts at every turn.



1939 Mercury styled by Bob Gregorie. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum

One story often told is that Edsel had a Model T replacement designed in 1923. It was code named “the Australian job”.

When Henry saw it for the first time he physically attacked the car and ripped it apart with his bare hands.

He believed the Model T was what the public wanted and should never be changed.

Not only was he adverse to styling changes, old Henry insisted that 1920s engineering, braking and suspension technology was good enough for Fords in the mid-1930s.

For example, Henry did not agree to introduce four wheel hydraulic brakes until 1939. Chevrolet had these as standard in the mid-1920s. Potential Ford customers could see the benefits. They went to GM and Chrysler instead.

And the impact was significant. By 1941 Chevrolet alone was selling 300,00 cars a year more than Ford.

Edsel knew he’d never win the technology arguments with old Henry and his group of “yes-men” cronies, including the thug Harry Bennett (Head of Security) and others who had been with the old guy since the early Model T days, like Joe Galamb.

How Could Ford Survive?

What Edsel did understand was that carefully managed styling was a way he could at least allow Fords to compete with GM and, at the same time, he could continue the internal fight for engineering improvements. And ensure the Ford Company actually survived.

By the mid 1930s GM had successfully structured its car line-up in an ascending order of style, engineering sophistication and luxury: Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick and Cadillac.

This meant they had a car for every level of buyer affluence and aspiration.



Above: Ford publicity image of the 1949 Mercury.

Below: This unusual photo shows the photographic team setting up to take the publicity photos. The location was the Ford airport in Dearborn, Michigan. This location was used extensively in the late '40s and early '50s. It is now one of Ford's proving grounds and can be seen from the adjacent parklands containing the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.





1938 Mercury. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum

The lesson was not lost on Edsel.

He correctly indentified that there was a BIG gap in his company's line up between the simple, cheap Ford and their high priced, luxury Lincoln. So, he worked to convince his father to develop a mid-priced, mid range car to fill the gap.

And that's where Eugene "Bob" Gregorie enters the story.

Gregorie began his styling career at Ford in 1931 in the Lincoln draughting studio. His talent was spotted early and he was given the job of designing a small Ford for the British market, called the Y Model.

Later that car was increased in size by Edsel and became the 1933 Ford in the USA.

In mid-1933 Gregorie and most of the stylist at Ford were laid off because of the Great Depression. Re-hired in 1934 he was told by Edsel that he would work for him personally on advanced styling ideas.

Then, in 1935, Gregorie was promoted by Edsel and told establish the first styling studio within Ford, and to also focus on styling the new, mid-range Mercury.

One consequence of Gregorie's hiring was the sidelining of Joe Galamb, one of Henry's first body development engineers hired in 1905, and who had assumed control of "design" at Ford.

Galamb had refined the Model T over the years and "styled" the Model A.

Mercury Rising

Joe was not pleased with being ousted by an outsider and nursed a grudge.

With Edsel's backing and patronage Gregorie was able to set a new styling direction for the company. Gregorie's impact can be seen in the difference between the 1937 and 1938 Fords and the sleek Lincoln Zephyr of 1936.

The new Mercury was released on 4th November, 1938.

1938 Mercury. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum



Essentially a stretched, “senior” Ford, the Mercury offered more appointments.

Many viewed as a “senior” Ford.

In early 1941 Edsel and Gregorie began planning the Ford, Mercury and Lincoln ranges for 1943.

What emerged from those styling proposals was a “bath tub” shape, with flow through front mudguards and slab sided side styling.

But the start of America’s involvement in World War Two put all those plans on hold.

Like all the car companies Ford was a vital aspect of America’s war efforts

And for a while all was ok.

Edsel had taken more control of the company but behind the scenes old Henry still made life very difficult for his son, using his network of mates to make changes to Edsel’s decisions.

The situation was not helped by Henry’s deteriorating health and what may have been signs of dementia.

Then, on 26th May, 1943, Edsel died of stress induced cancer. He was just 49.

With Edsel’s passing so too went his patronage of Gregorie.

In June 1943 Joe Galamb had him fired.



It was a time of considerable turmoil at Ford.

Government Talks About Takeover

Two days after Edsel's death old Henry reasserted his influence and his old cronies, particularly Harry Bennett, who was now Henry's right hand man, began running the company.

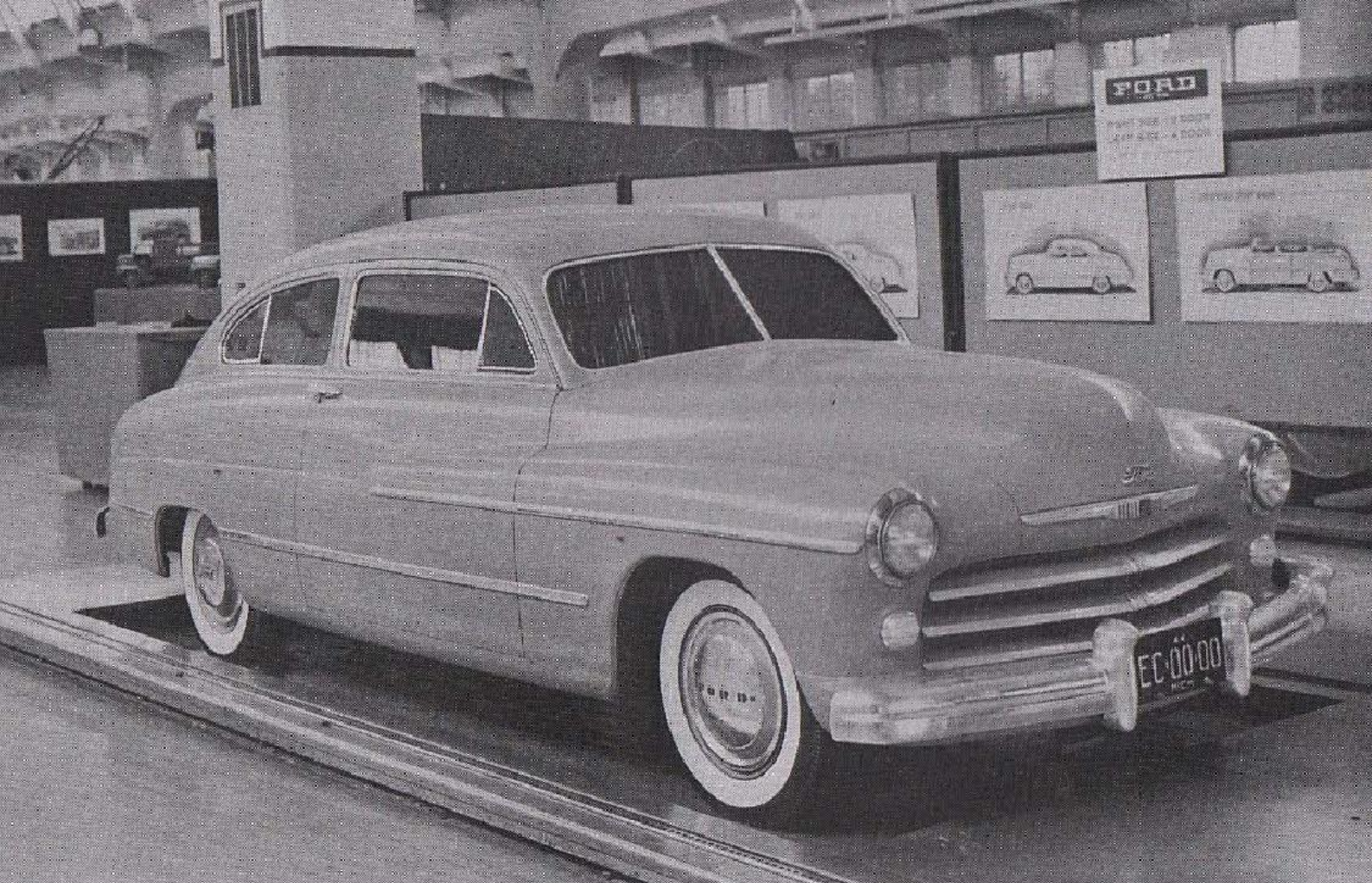
Remember this is a company that was integral to producing so much of America's war material: Jeeps, tanks, guns, B17 aircraft, troop carriers and engines.

Bennett fired many of the talented senior executives and engineers who he

disliked, including production supremo Charles Sorensen. Efficiency and staff morale plummeted.

Looking on with increasing concern was the US government. At a time when young American soldiers were fighting and dying overseas, the last thing America needed was a major wartime supplier at war with itself.

Above: 1936 Lincoln Zephyr. It is one of Gregorie's major styling successes at the Ford Company. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum



An image taken in 1942 of the full sized clay model of what Bob Gregorie and Edsel Ford planned to be 1943 Ford. Photo from the Henry Ford Museum

Questions were being raised about the Ford company's ability to continue contribute to the war effort.

Indeed, so bad was the situation that US President Franklin Roosevelt actively considered taking the company away from the Ford family and nationalising it or giving it to another car company.

In the end he was persuaded to recall Henry Ford II (HFII), Edsel's eldest son, from active service in the US Navy and have him try to bring order to the chaos.

HFII started in August 1943. It would not be easy. He was given the title of Executive Vice President, the #2 role in the company, but he had little power in the beginning. Old Henry was still in charge.

He also had Harry Bennett's security people spy on HFII (and Bennett had thousands of security people working for him spying on many Ford staff).

One of the first actions HFII took was to organise a group of trusted advisers, mostly friends of his late father. One of them was an ex-FBI agent, John Bugas.

Then in mid-1944 HFII re-hired Gregorie. Bob had two conditions for his return.

Firstly he wanted double his former salary. And second, he asked HFII to fire Joe Galamb. HFII did both.

Back in charge of styling Gregorie re-activated the 1943 model ideas planning them as Ford's first post-war designs, for when the war was over.



But still the chaos and problems went on. Bennett and his mob had complete control. Make no mistake. Ford was a company in crisis. There was no useful financial system, no real management structure, no effective procurement nor logistics system.

Most big decisions were made by Bennett and approved by old Henry.

Later analysis revealed it had been losing money since 1931 and in 1943 it was losing millions of dollars each month.

However, by 1945 with the elder Ford in increasingly poor health HFII was slowly gaining more control.

Behind the scenes Clara Ford, Henry's wife, was agitating for the old guy to hand over to HFII. Detroit legend has it that Edsel's widow Eleanor, and HFII's mother, was more direct.

She gave old Henry an ultimatum. She would sell her considerable share holding in Ford to the public if HFII was not put in control.

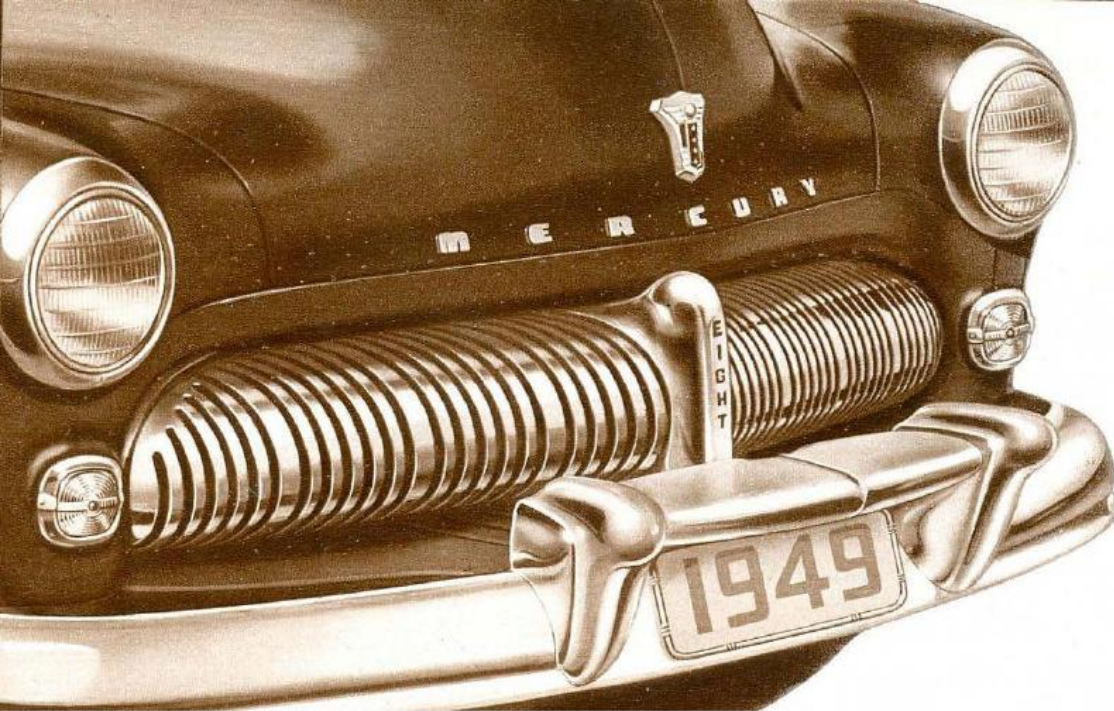
Another version is that HFII went to his grandfather and said he was taking over the company with Clara's and Eleanor's support, and that he had to resign from the Board.

Whatever the inputs, the outcome was the same the old guy capitulated.

HFII became President of the Ford Motor Company on 21st September 1945 and, with John Bugas in attendance, fired Harry Bennett almost immediately.

Detroit mythology has it that Bugas took a gun to the termination meeting.

Above: This was a planned 1949 Mercury two door fastback that was withdrawn from the line up at the last minute. Note how closely it resembles the 1942 Ford prototype on the previous page.



Knowing That You Don't Know

Knowing he could not make all the changes himself and realising he did not have the skills to do it HFII hired a group of former Air Force statistical and systems analysts. They became known as the "whiz kids" because of their youth and talent. These guys brought systems and structure to Ford very quickly and gave HFII the information he needed to make long term decisions.

In addition HFII hired senior GM executive Ernest Beech. He joined on 1st July 1946.

Beech brought with him Harold Youngren, Oldsmobile's chief engineer and instrumental in developing the HydraMatic transmission, Lewis Crusoe a finance guru and Delmar Harder, a body engineer.

Crusoe was made Chief Financial Officer, Youngren was given the Chief Engineer's role and Harder was made Chief of Operations. Beech was given HFII's old job and a seat on the board

The ex-GM managers were real car guys and combined with the technical and

systems brilliance of the "whiz kids" HFII was able to re-invent Ford internally in just 18 months.

It was a remarkable turnaround effort.

While HFII was fighting to control the company and the end of the war got closer. Gregorie sped up work on developing full sized clay proposals for the post war range of cars, based on the 1943 designs he'd done with Edsel.

Further, he and the product planners agreed that range would span six platforms.

They envisioned a small Ford on a 100 inch (2540mm) wheelbase. Next would be the mainstream Ford on a 118 inch (3000mm) stretch, the same size as the current Holden Caprice.

The Mercury would sit on two wheel bases of 120 and 123 inches (3050/3125mm). The Lincoln would top the range with 125 inches (3175mm) and 128 inches (3252mm). So far good so far.

Tools and dies were ordered and some delivered and running prototypes made just as Beech and Youngren arrived.

Then things changed.

Using their GM experience and knowledge Beech and Youngren took one look at the six platform plans and concluded they would send Ford broke.

First, the small Ford was too expensive to build and would not make any money at the projected price in the USA. It was sent to France to become the 1948 Vedette (pictured right)

Next, they said the 118 inch wheelbase Ford was also too big and too heavy to build and sell at the proposed price against the planned 1949 Chevrolet, which they knew something about.

They decided it would become the Mercury, which could be sold at a higher price to recover the higher costs.

Also, it would share its body with the "small" Lincoln (on a 121 inch/3073mm wheel base), which had added benefits of moving the Mercury up-market and away from its "senior" Ford status.



1949 French Ford Vedette. This is what Gergorie proposed as a small American Ford until Beech and Youngren said "no way". Note the styling "dip" in the front door, similar to the '49 Mercury. Would it have sold well in the USA? In hindsight, probably not. These are rare cars now.

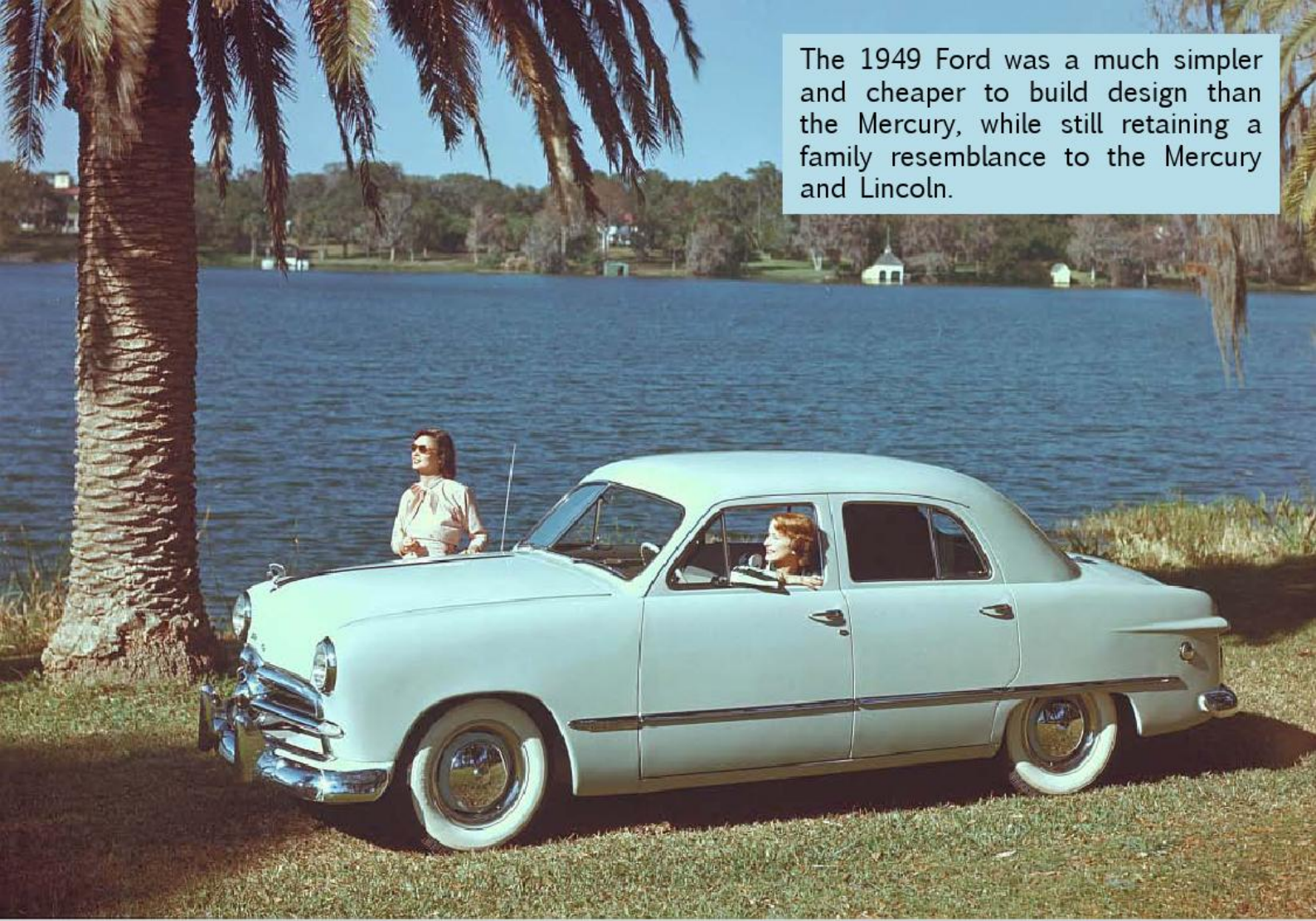


Images from the Triangle Motor company



A 1946 scale model of the 1949 Lincoln convertible.

The 1949 Ford was a much simpler and cheaper to build design than the Mercury, while still retaining a family resemblance to the Mercury and Lincoln.



The 1949/51 “small” Lincoln shared most of its panels with the Mercury. This is a 1951 model.



The 1949 Mercury. It was planned to be the '49 Ford.



Then came the double stunner.

Firstly, Beech and Youngren wanted a new, mainstream Ford car ready by mid 1948 at the latest.

It had to be smaller than the Mercury, but not too much smaller. It had to be easy to develop, cheap to make and competitively priced. It needed ultra modern styling to make it stand out.

Most of all, it had to be the car that would propel Ford out of its financial problems..This was a risky and bold undertaking and would require considerable resources to achieve.

To speed up the Ford's development they settled on the approximate size and dimensions of the 1947 Studebaker, using a 114 inch (2896mm) wheelbase.

Second, Beech and Youngren did not think much of Gregorie's styling proposals. So, they hired an independent consultant, George Walker, to review them. (He was also a golfing buddy of Beech). Not surprisingly Walker said he could do better.

Beech set up a design competition between Walker's team and Gregorie's in-house team to style the mainstream Ford which also had to visually link to the Mercury and Lincoln.

Walker's team won the contest (that's a story in itself for another time).

Gregorie decided that his time at Ford was over. HFII offered to double his salary again if he stayed but Bob said "no". By Christmas 1946 he was living in Florida and had opened a yacht design company.

George Walker went on to head up Ford's global styling efforts until 1961. One of his team, Joe Oros, was instrumental in many successful Ford products, and drew the basic shape of the Mustang. Another on Walker's team, Elwood Engel styled the 1961 Lincoln and then moved to Chrysler as its styling supremo.

"Bob" Gregorie never styled cars again.

The 1949 Mercury and Lincoln were his final legacy.

A total of 301,307 Mercurys were produced for the 1949 model year, which was 80,000 more than the 1946, 1947 and 1948 models *combined*. And over its three year model life ('49-'51) 1,215,376 were sold.

Beech and Youngren were proved right.

Those Who Influenced the '49 Mercury



Below: George Walker (right) in 1957 with some of his styling team. That's Elwood Engel in the front middle. He went on to be boss of Chrysler styling from 1961 to 1973. (Photo from Henry Ford Museum)

Left; Harold T. Youngren, who developed the HydraMatic transmission while at Oldsmobile.

Inset: TIME magazine cover of Walker when the Edsel debuted.





Above: Eugene "Bob" Gregorie.
Below Edsel Ford
Photos from the Henry Ford Museum



Top: Henry Ford and Harry Bennett.

Above: Joe Galamb

Below: HFII and ex-FBI agent John Bugas, who became a major stockholder in Ford and sat on its Board. Bugas accumulated considerable wealth and owned a big ranch in Wyoming where many of the Marlboro cowboy cigarette TV commercials were filmed.



80th Anniversary of



Toyota's First Car





The only known pre-War original survivor of Toyota's very first car, the AA, from 1936. It was modelled on the Chrysler Airflow. Found in Russia in 2008. Photos from the Louwman Museum.





The oldest Toyota passenger car in the world, a 1936 Toyota model AA, was found on a farm in Russia.

Only 1404 of the Model AAs were built between 1936 and 1942, and all were thought to have been destroyed during the Second World War.

Even the Toyota factory museum in Japan could not find one and commissioned a replica be built.

How an original AA came to be found and then displayed in the Louwman Museum in The Hague is one of those fabulous automotive yarns.

In 2008, Ronald Kooyman, Louwman Museum's Managing Director, was told by a contact that an original AA was being sold in Russia.

Kooyman tracked down the car to an advertisement in a Vladivostok newspaper.

The Toyota was mistakenly advertised as a Chrysler Airflow. But after some detective work it was confirmed as an original AA.

The car was being sold by the grandson of a farmer who had used the AA on his land in Siberia since World War II.



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How it got from Japan to Russia is still open to speculation.

It took seven months for the Russian Ministry of Culture to give its consent for the car to be exported to the Netherlands. The car has not been restored and remains in its "as found" condition.

During its existence the Toyota was modified to survive and drive in the harsh eastern Russia environment. The steering wheel was switched from its right-hand to left hand drive by simply relocating the steering column, brake and clutch pedals.

A boot has been welded onto the rear and the original engine replaced.

Originally fitted with a 3.3-litre, 62 hp six-cylinder engine the Toyota AA's design was inspired by the Chrysler Airflow.

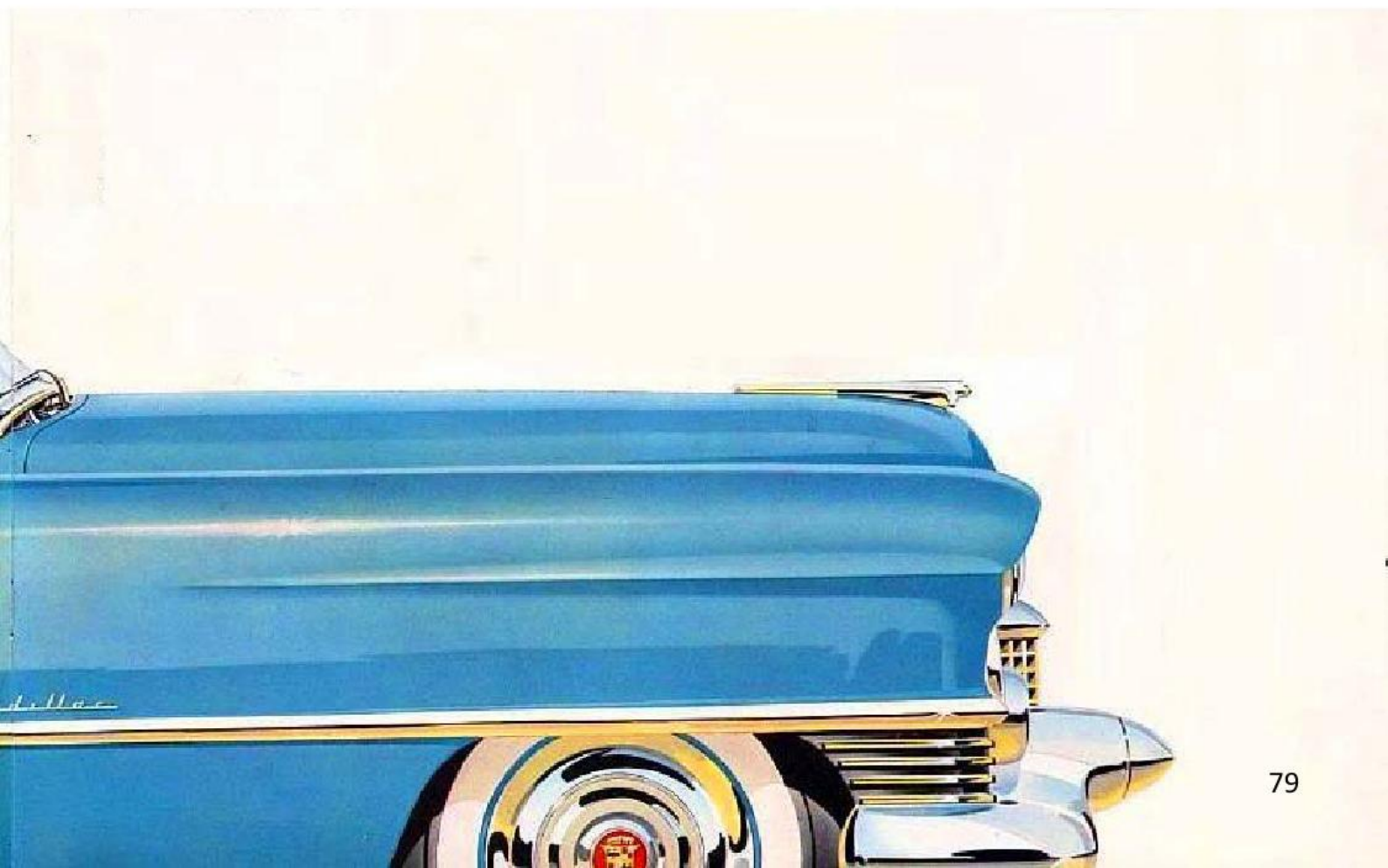


All images courtesy of the Louwman Museum. The museum houses the world's oldest private collection of motor cars, compiled by two generations of the Louwman family. The museum dates back to 1934 and now comprises over 250 antique and classic cars.

Retro Ads



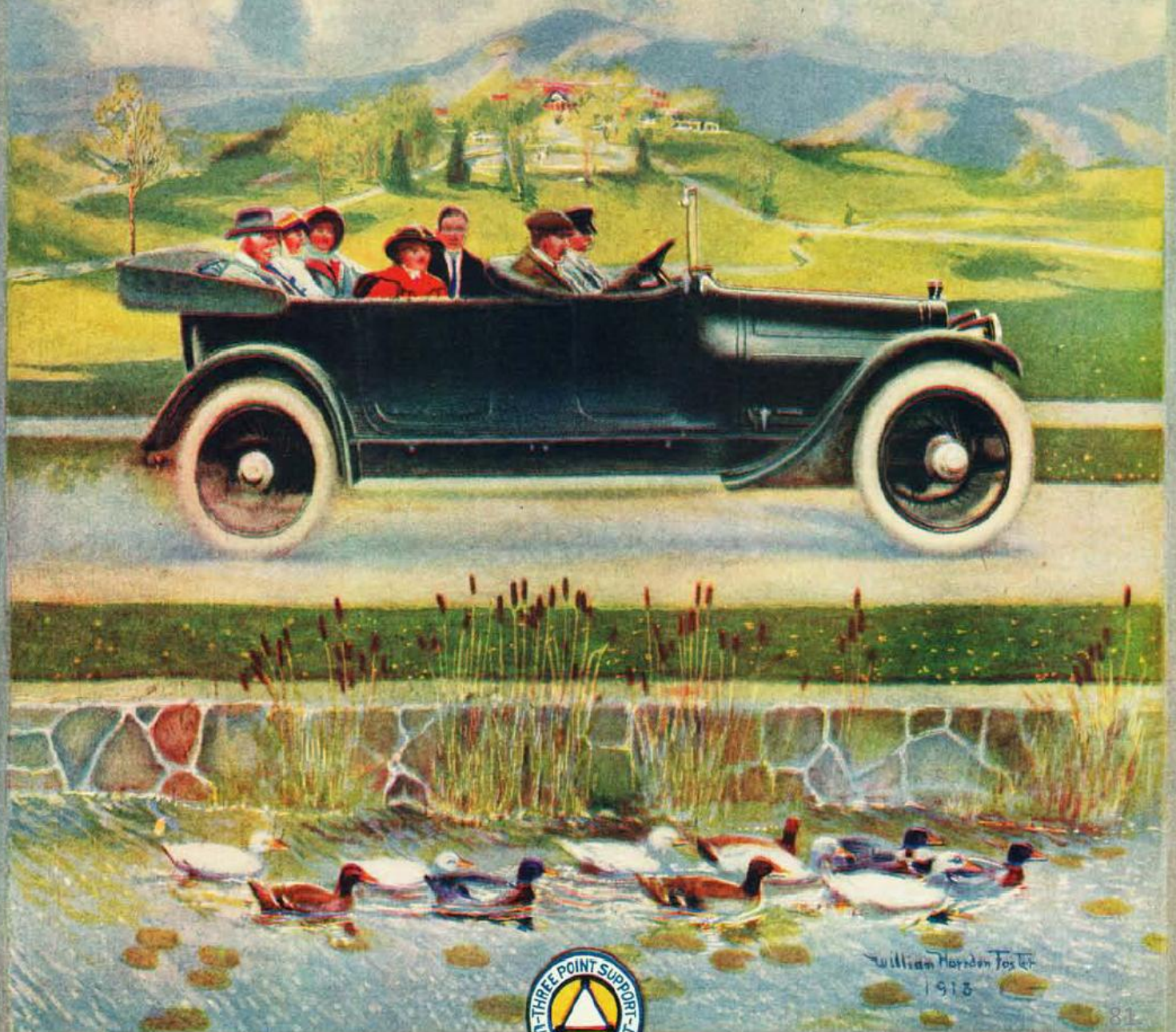
Celebrating the Art of Automotive Advertising

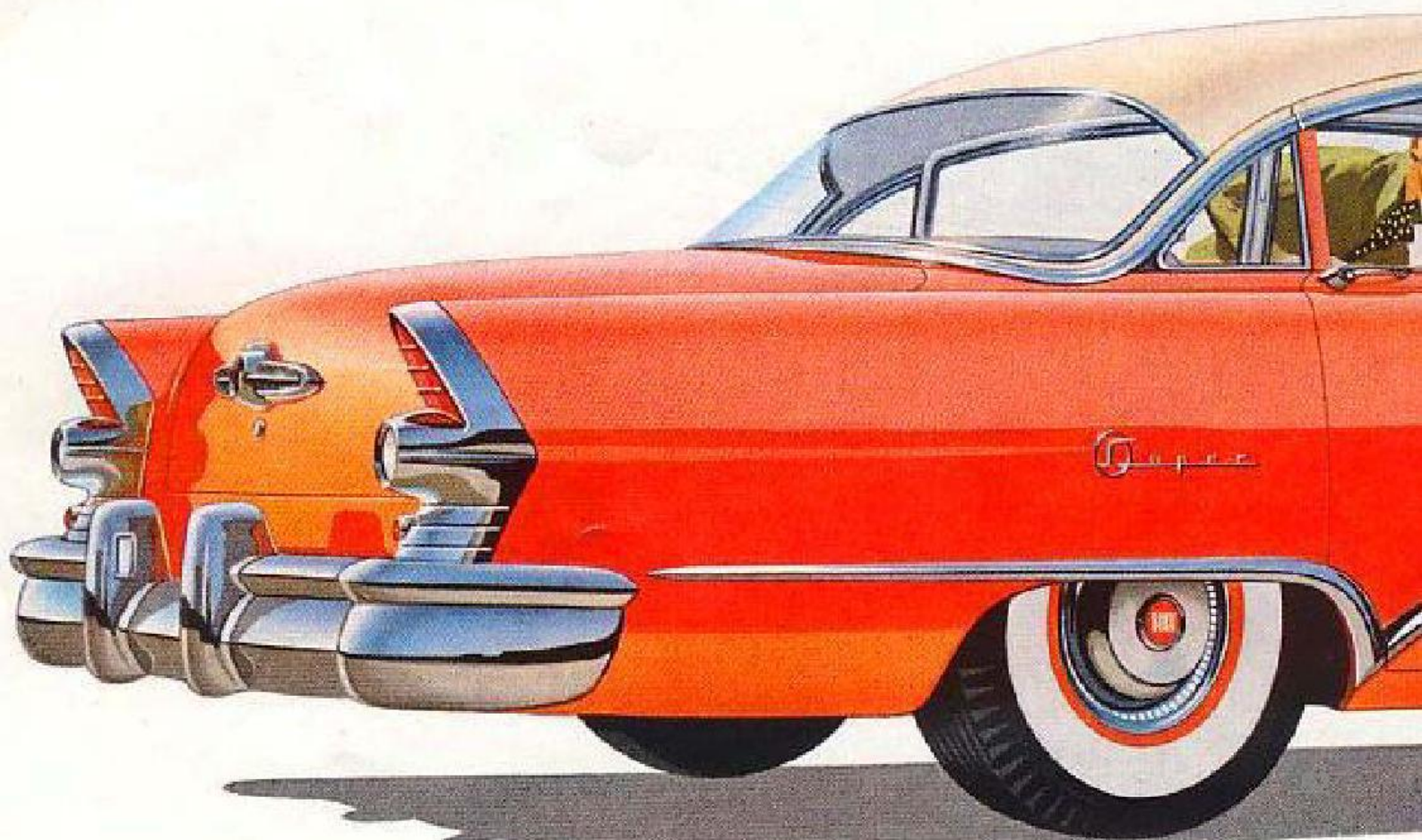


The **Pierce Arrow**



Stevens-Duryea







Geugeot





CHEVROLET

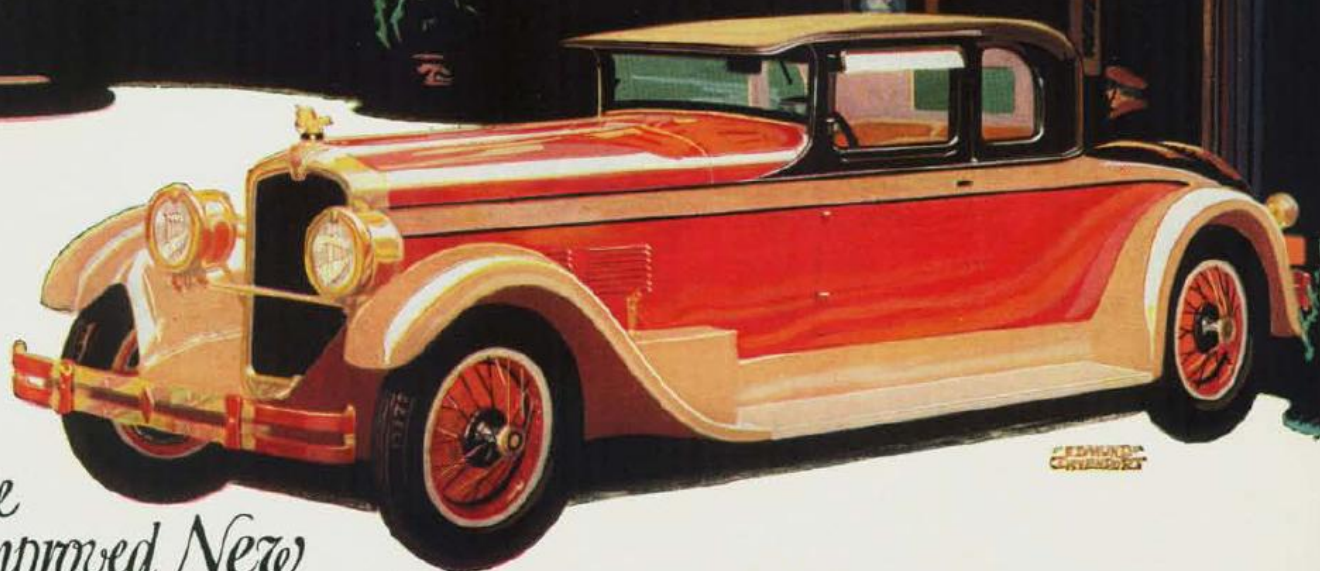
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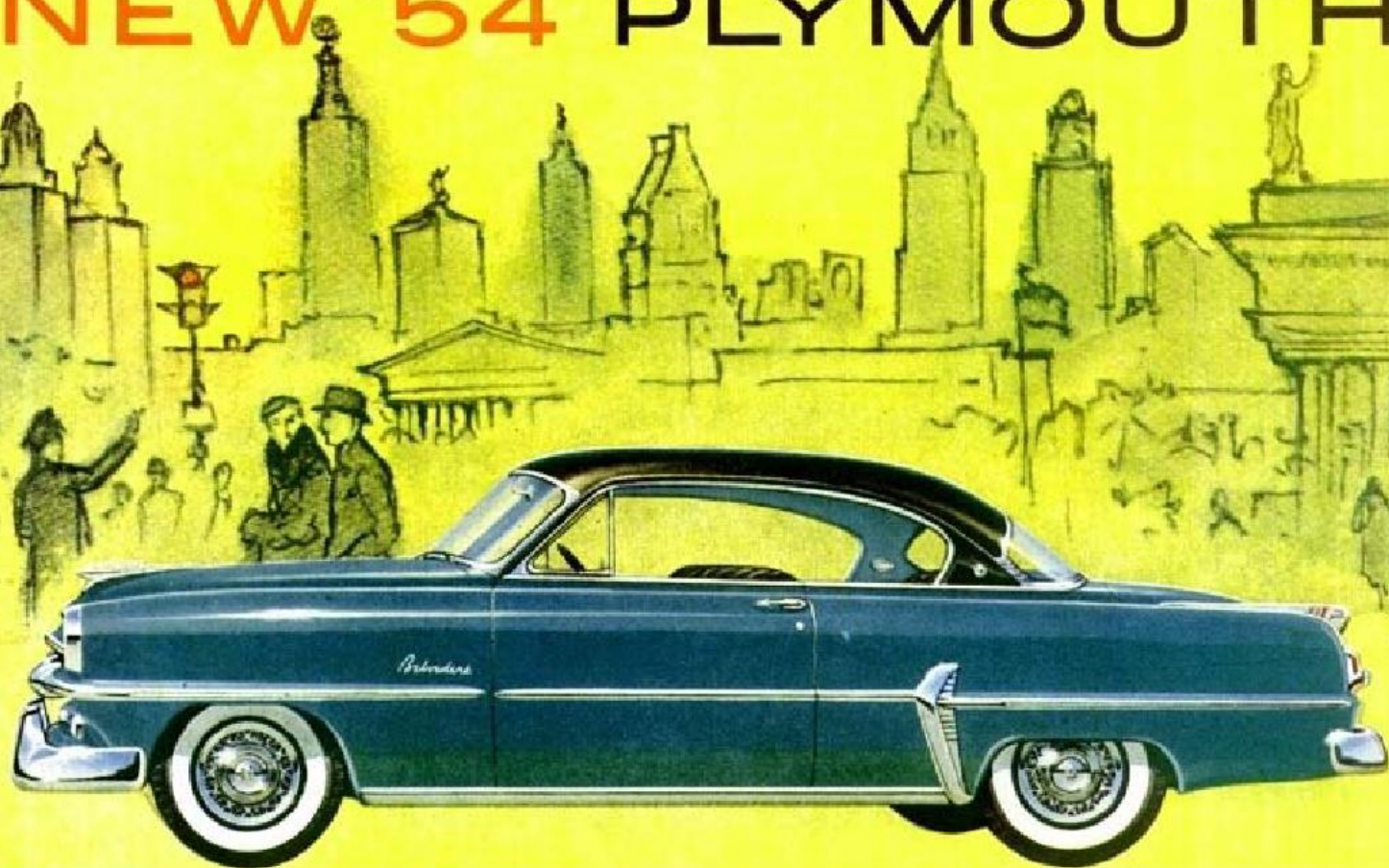
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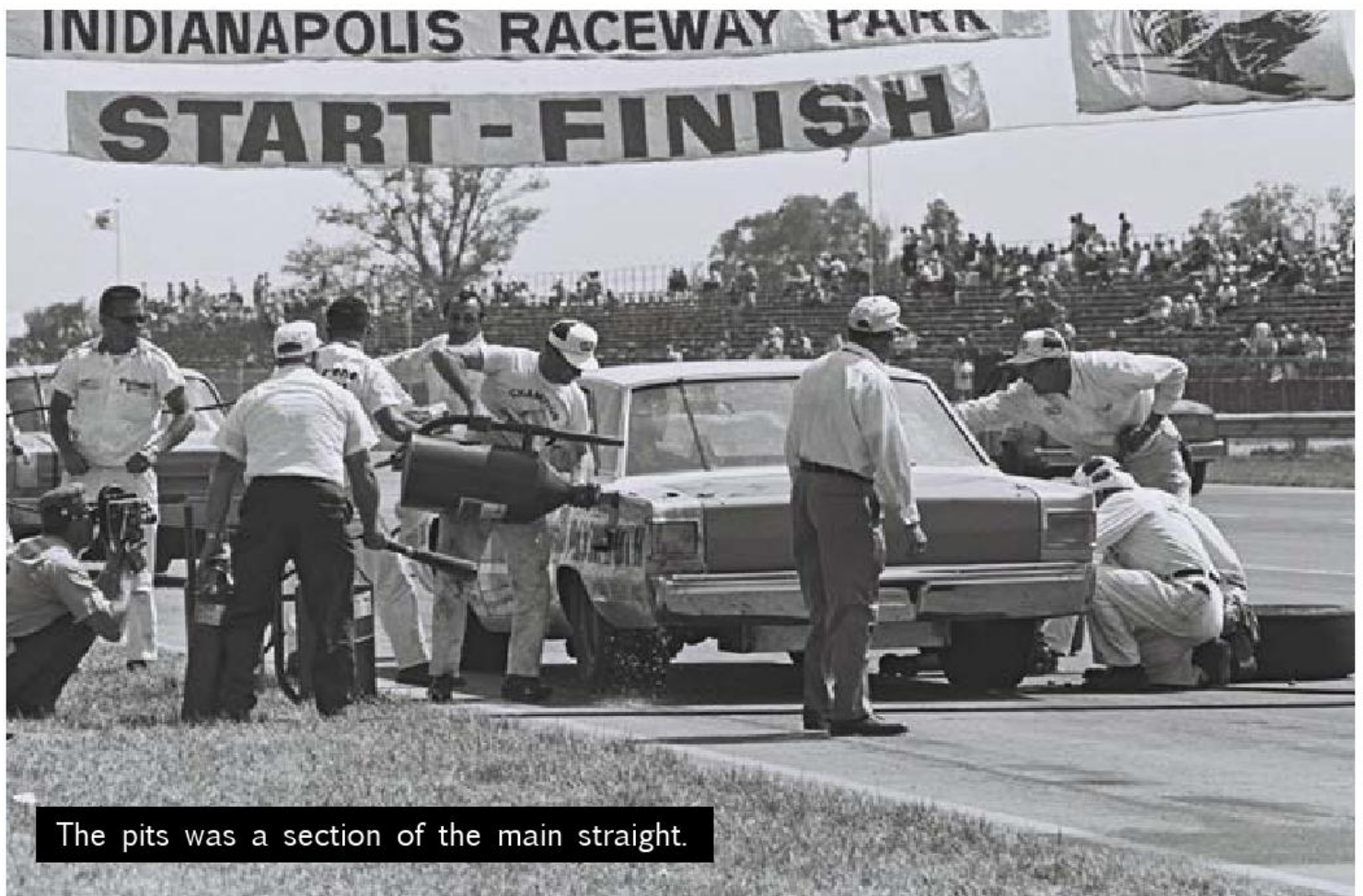
Yankee 300

Indianapolis Raceway Park

Back in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s the United States Auto Club (USAC) promoted a stock car series in opposition to NASCAR. It was very successful for many years as it allowed USAC open wheel and Indy stars, such as AJ Foyt, Parnelli Jones and Mario Andretti to get seat time in stock cars. It also meant that many racers who could not or did not want to qualify with NASCAR, or had cars too old for NASCAR regulations, had a national series in which to compete. The USAC series raced on paved ovals, road courses and mile long dirt tracks. It ceased in 1984.

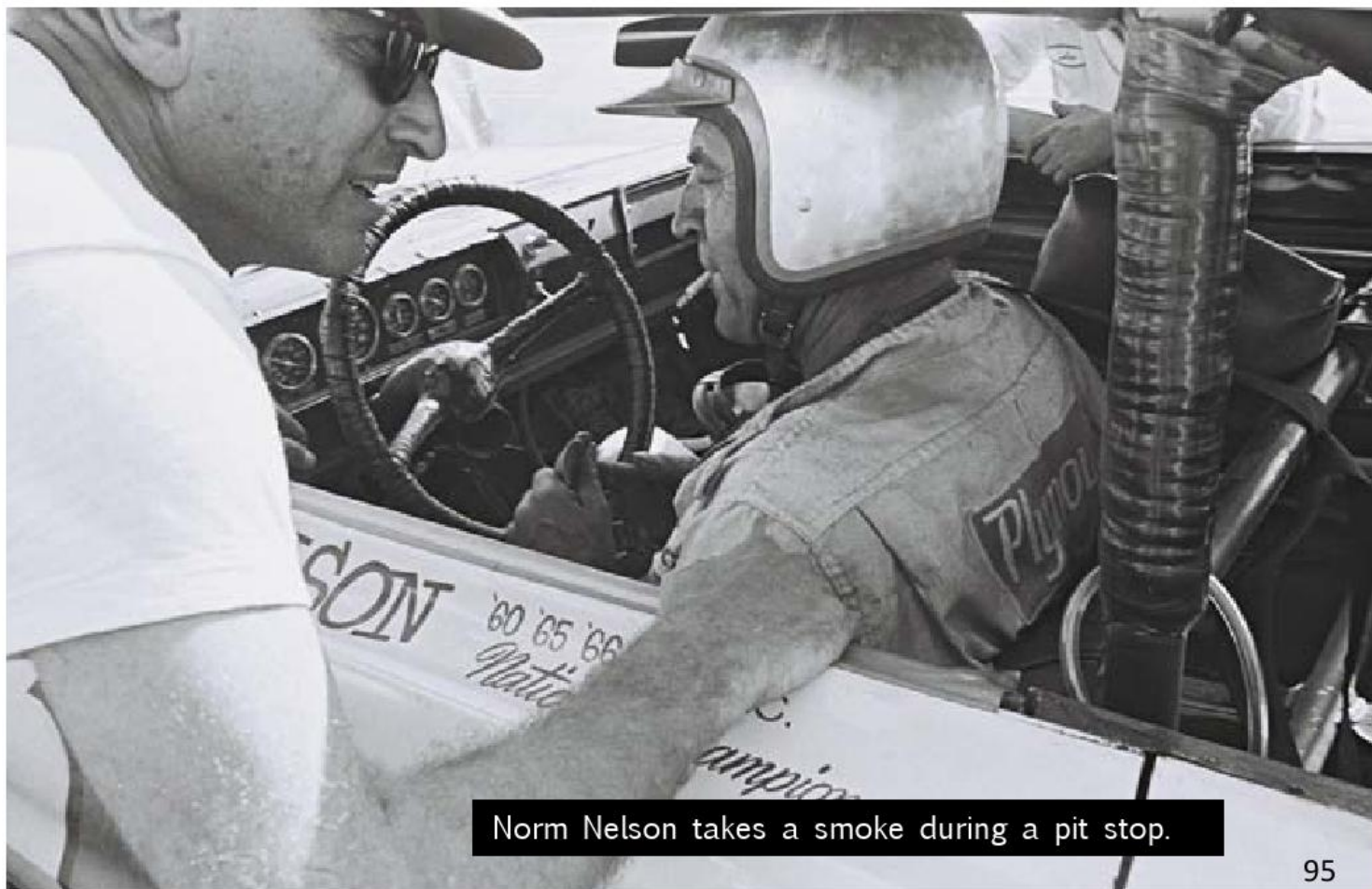
Here we are on 27th May, 1967, at Indianapolis Raceway Park. That's Norm Nelson, the 1965 and 1966 USAC Stock Car champion in a 1967 Plymouth, hard at work. He lasted 132 of the 160 laps. A snapped oil line put him out. Parnelli Jones won from Mario Andretti.







Jim Clarke and Jackie Steward chat to a USAC official at the Yankee 300, held a couple of days before the Indy 500. AJ Foyt won the 500, Jim was 31st and Jackie 18th.



Norm Nelson takes a smoke during a pit stop.

Parnelli Jones cuts it fine ahead of Roger Regeht. Three days later Jones would be leading the Indy 500 when, three laps from the finish, a small bearing failed in his STP Turbine car and he handed the chequered flag to AJ Foyt.



Back in 1967 the Indianapolis Raceway Park was located in corn fields. Now it is surrounded by houses.



Mario Andretti in one of two Holman & Moody Fords. Jones was in the other H&M car. Mario was on the pole at the Indy 500 held on 30th May. On lap 58 if the 500 he lost a wheel and was credited with 30th place finish. In this stock car race he was second.



Jack Bowsher finished fourth.



Gary Bettenhausen, brilliant in sprint cars, Indy cars and stock cars. He finished 5th.



USCA stock cars gave locals and opportunity to race against Indy heroes. This is Sal Tovella in the Sal's Auto Sales 1966 Dodge Charger entry. Check out the sponsorship from a hot dog vendor.



Roger Regeth's local entry was owned by Jim and Jerry's Service Center



Bettenhausen ran one of the "banana" Ford Galaxies. These cars may have looked like they came from a dealers showroom, but every panel was hand shaped for extra aerodynamic advantage. The front end was dropped and as was the rear, hence the "banana" tag. The paint scheme was specifically designed to fool the eye.



Jack Martin lasted 145 laps and scored 8th place in his #45 Plymouth. Don White finished 3rd in his 1967 Dodge.



USCA allowed cars that were much older than NASCAR. The #67 Mercury, driven by Ross Smith, is a 1964 model. The 1965 Dodge is driven by Andy Hampton. Many of the older cars were ex-NASCAR vehicles.



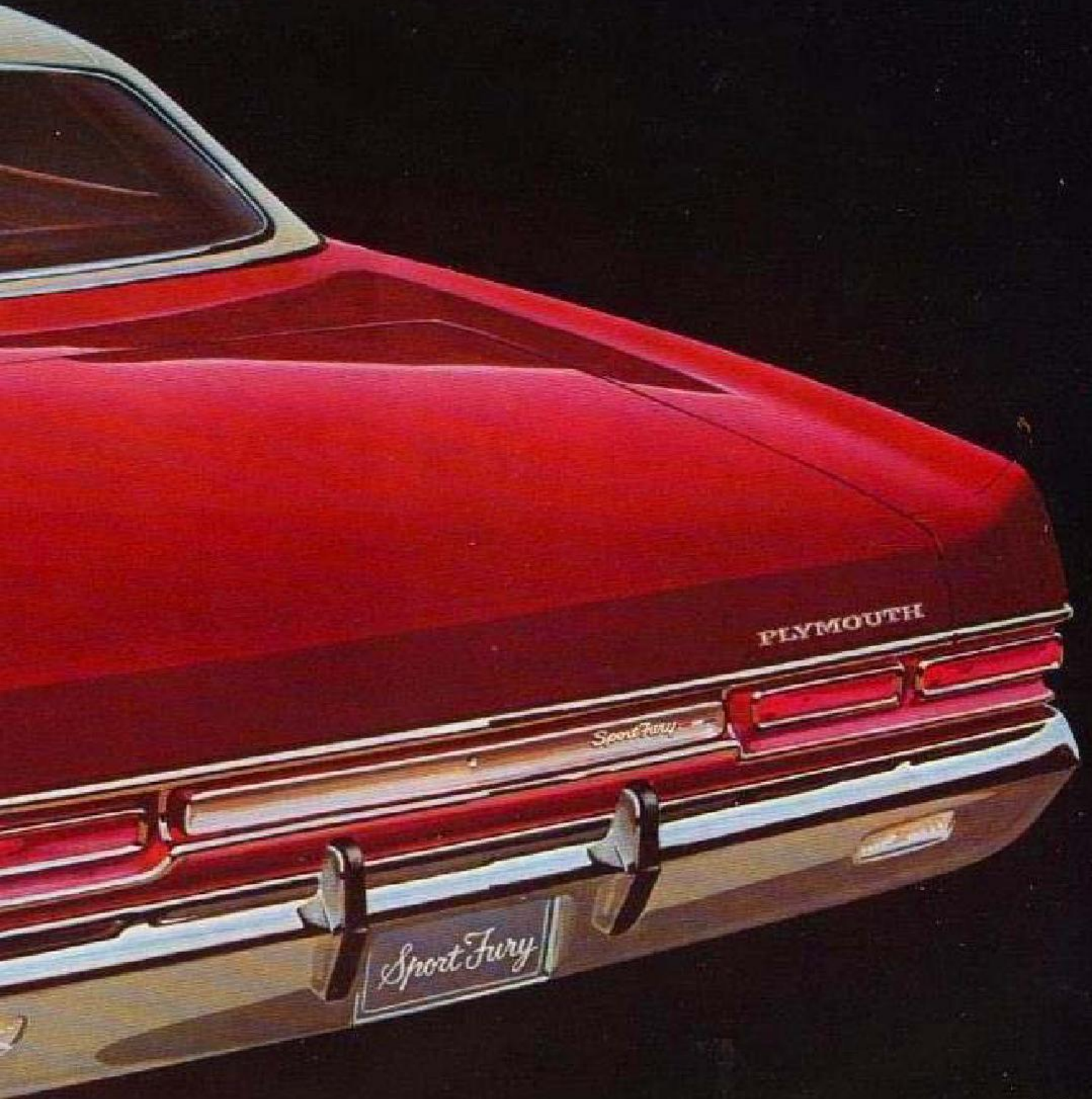
Paul Goldsmith's Plymouth blew an engine on lap 137.



Eddie Meyer in #55 is about to sweep past Bob Coe. Meyer ran 6th and Coe 11th







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1966 Cadillac Coupe DeVille

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**SYDNEY
MACHINA**
SOCIAL CLUB
presents...

Machines & Macchiatos

Sunday 13th December
8am - 10am



2nd
Sunday
EVERY MONTH
Le Montage Cafe
8am - 10am

Come join us for our Machines & Macchiatos, **Sunday 13th December**

Our Machines & Macchiatos event is a very friendly, relaxed & fun event. It is where proud owners of all makes & models unite over their common interest - their Machines. Great coffee, a nice brekki & wonderful location are a big bonus too.

Everyone is Welcome

Our Machines & Macchiatos event is not only for motoring enthusiast, but it's open to all the general public too. It's a fun event for all types of people: young, old, families, kids, male & female, we welcome you all.

Location

It's all happening at Le Montage
The General & Co Cafe. All the Machines
will be parked in the Le Montage Carpark.

LE MONTAGE

Address:
Maliyawul St Lilyfield

Fund Raising

At each Machines & Macchiatos event, we run raffles to help fund raise for our 3 Charities.



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www.sydneymachinasocialclub.org Sam - M: 0438 060 821 E: sam@sydneymachinasocialclub.org