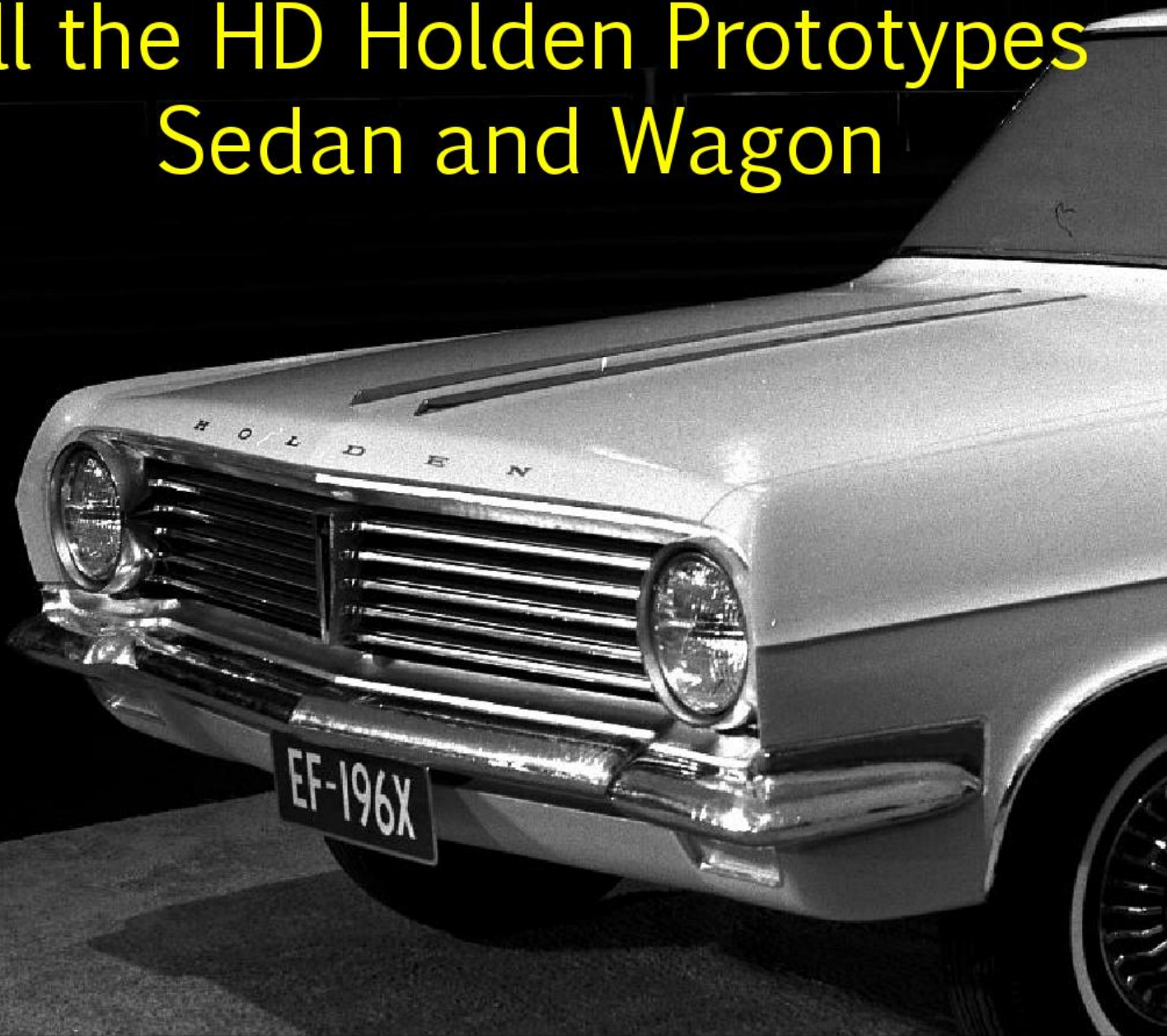


collectible & classic

July 2016 #58

RETROAUTOS

Exclusive Story and Photos!
All the HD Holden Prototypes
Sedan and Wagon



Designing Models



1952 DeSoto Truck



Rolls Royce Adventures





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HD

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PROTOTYPES

5 BIG THINGS
THE FALCON
DID FOR US!



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A9X



Telstra Kombi



Lotus Cortina



1948 F100



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33rd ANNUAL



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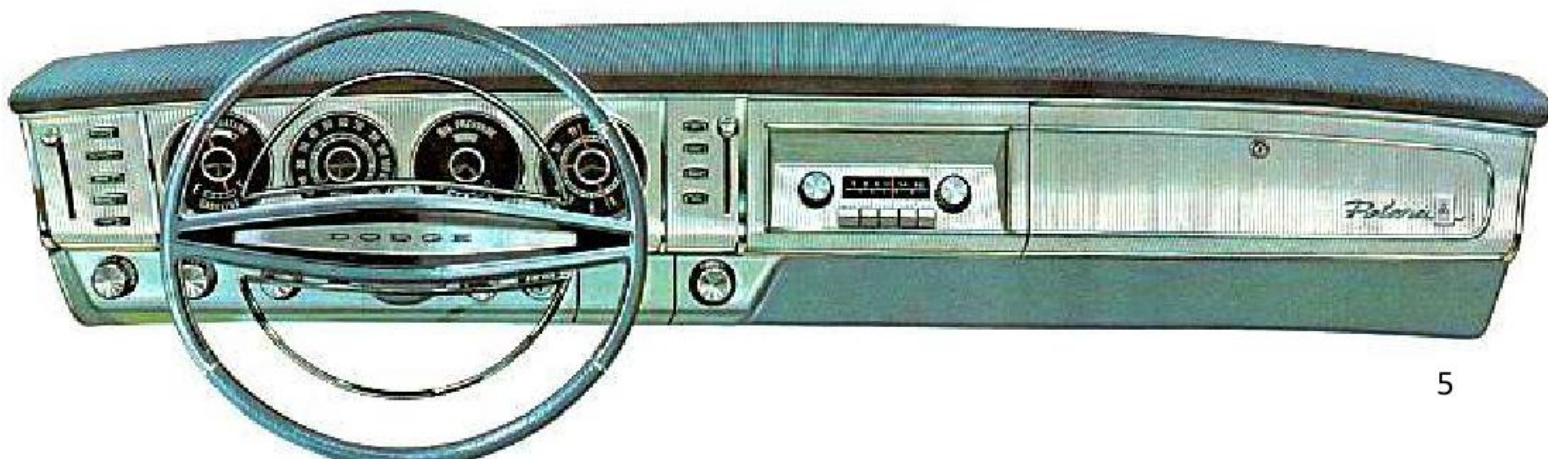
Front Cover: The Chevy Nova based proposal for the HD Holden. Rolls Royce image by Brian Carson.

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Welcome to the July 2016 edition of Retroautos.

The classic car community's biggest day of the year, National Motoring Heritage Day, has come and gone.

Retroautos ventured to the Berry showgrounds in NSW and what a great turnout it was.

All thanks to the Shoalhaven Historic Vehicle Club who did a fabulous job in organising and promoting the event.

Styling the HD/HR Holden

Our front cover this month showcases the Chevrolet Nova based proposal for the HD/HR Holden.

The conservative Nova idea was rejected and a futuristic styling theme was chosen.

Come back to 1962 as we take you inside GM's super secret styling studios and reveal how the design team shaped the HD sedan and wagon. We have found many never-seen-before photos.

In next month's Retroautos we reveal the HR sedan and coupe proposals, plus the commercials and interior styling ideas.

Davin Cole had no intention of buying a classic truck, but he saw a 1952 DeSoto and decided he would restore it. He's written the story about his six year restoration of this farm yard truck.

Brian Crump is the custodian of a very special 1967 Roll Royce Phantom V. He tells us what it is like to drive around in a car that once carried Queen Elizabeth on her royal tours in Australia.

Scale models of classic cars are big business, with producers vying for a share of the Australian market. To gain an insight into this very competitive part of the classic car world we undertook a Q&A with John Pisani who runs Models 56.

And Ray Green is back with more of his evocative RayTookThis images.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Retroautos. It is published with passion and with pride.



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Early Ford V8 Club of NSW
Galaxy Club of NSW
Small Ford Car Club of NSW

Capri Car Club of NSW
Falcon GT Owners Club of NSW
Model A Ford Club of NSW
The Falcon Club of NSW

RetroNews



Another for the Bucket List

Since 2008, the PROTOTYP Museum in Hamburg Germany has housed rare prototype sports and racing cars from 70 years of automotive history (above).

Plus, it has an array of prototype VW Beetles and Porches dating back to the mid 1930s. One of the cars is the legendary Porsche Type 64 “Berlin-Rome car”, (above right) which was developed in the late 1930s and based based on the Volkswagen under Ferdinand Porsche.



August 2016 in Retroautos

This year is the 50th anniversary of the HR Holden. In the final chapter of our story about how the HD/HR was designed, we focus on the HR sedan, the never-released HR coupe, the HD/HR commercials and the interior designs. Many of the photos have never been published before.

Turn up the disco music and come back with us to the late '70s to hear all about John Gerdtz's special order 1978 Buick Electra Park Avenue 225 and Bill Kingston's passion for Lincoln Town Cars and Mark V coupes.



In 1941 Henry Ford made a car out of soy beans. We share this wonderful retro yarn with you. Plus there are all the usual features.

Motoring Heritage Day

Retroautos made the trip to Berry in NSW to have a look around. Here's a few of the large display we saw.



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Chrysler Museum Opens Again

The Walter P. Chrysler Museum in Auburn Hills, Michigan, closed in 2012 because it was losing money.

Now Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) are said to be planning to reopen it on a limited basis.

The Museum is one of the best automotive exhibitions in the world and contains many historic vehicles, including the 1932 prototype of the Chrysler Airflow, pictured below.

Also at the museum is one of the nine remaining Chrysler turbine cars, the 1941 Thunderbolt (see last month's edition) and many concepts.



Good News

Hagerty in the USA reports an up turn in prices for May. However, while auction sales prices are up, private sales prices are down. Overall it seems that the market is still willing to pay top money for excellent condition cars. Offerings of lesser quality need to be priced accordingly.





raytookthis.com
Ray Green - Photographer



The HD/HR Holden



Above and opposite: Ten day before Christmas 1961 the Nova based HD/HR is seen in the styling dome of GM's Detroit design centre. Buick Skylark and Chev Nova in background. The Nova had been released just eight weeks earlier. The Skylark had been on the market for a year. Images copyright 2016 GM Corp. Used with permission, GM Media Archive. Thanks to John Kyros

In our continuing feature story to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the HD and HR Holden, in this edition of Retroautos we tell the story about the development of the styling of the HD sedan and station wagon.

Next month we move to the HR sedan and coupe, interior proposals and commercials.

To recap the story so far, the styling of the HD/HR had its beginnings with two very different design ideas. The first idea was to clone the Chevrolet Nova.

The second took the styling elements of GM concept car called the Solaris.

Nova Expedience

The Nova based proposal was developed in Detroit over the Christmas and New Year of 1961/62.



Design Evolution Part 2



Using the Nova was an expedient decision. It was GM's first attempt at a compact, rear wheel drive car, something which Holden had almost two decades of experience building.

Holden's chief engineer, Reg Hall, had already seen the Nova prototypes and had given Chevrolet advice on how to build them stronger.

In addition, Bill Mitchell, GM's styling boss, had pulled back all of Holden's styling responsibility to Detroit in order to realign it with his vision of the future.

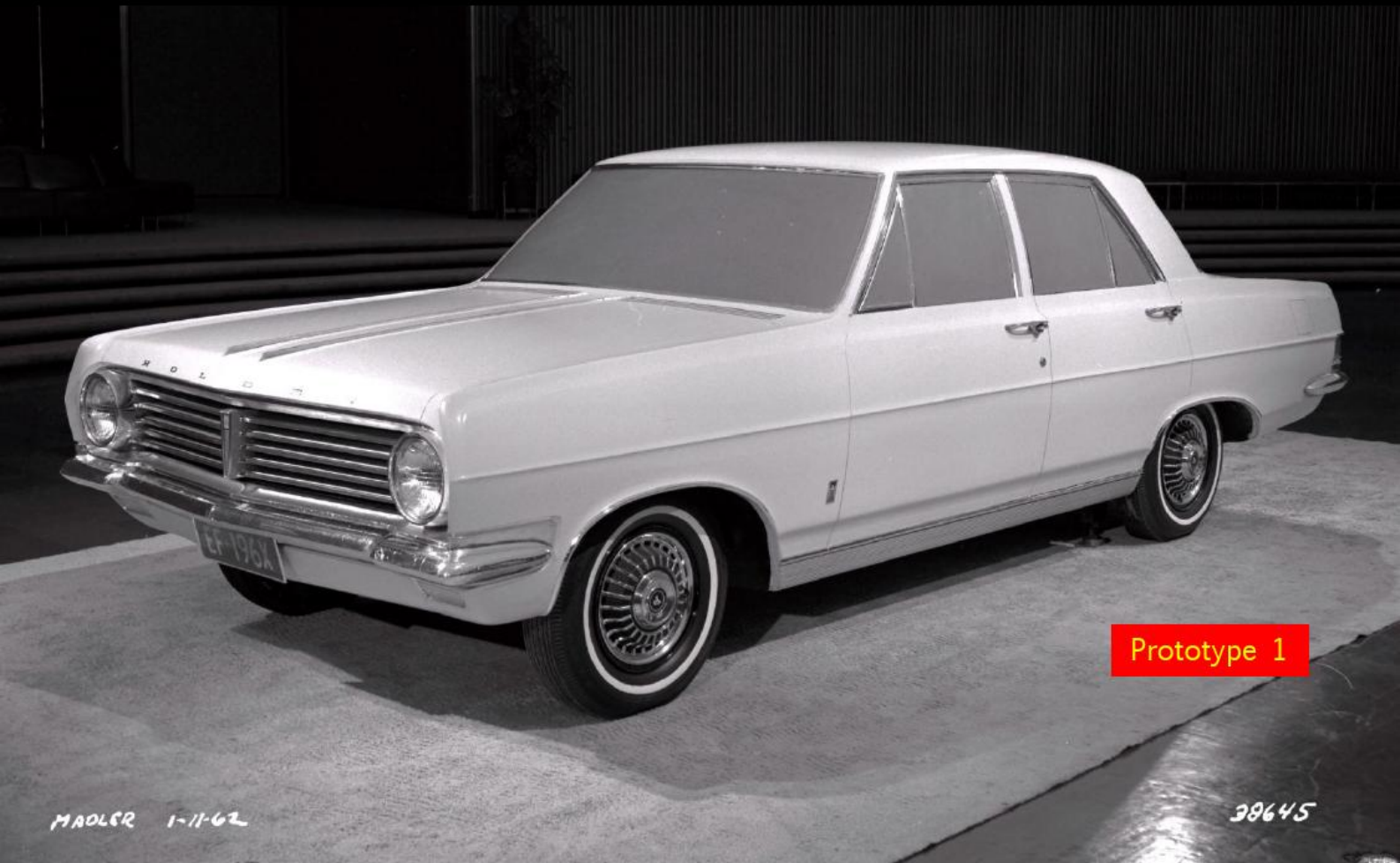
So it is no surprise that when the HD was first mooted (then known as the EF) that a modified Nova was considered as a starting point.

Three full sized clay prototypes were built (we have labelled them Prototypes 1, 2 and 3).

They carried the EF code on the number plates, this being Holden's internal code for "65".

Prototype #3 is basically a Nova with re-worked front and rear ends. Prototypes 1 and 2 vary slightly in terms of grille, front and rear mudguards, roof shape, back window shape and rear end design.

The Nova sat on a 110 inch wheel base. Our measurements of the three prototypes suggest they sit on the 106 inch HD/HR wheelbase. The difference is from the firewall forward.





Prototype 3

This and previous page: Note the slight differences of these three prototypes from December 1961 and January 1962. Prototype #2 was photographed on 20th December 1961.

Whilst the three proposals look crisp and clean they have nothing of what Bill Mitchell was looking for in cars that would take GM in to the mid and late 1960s. Indeed, the Nova had been penned in 1959.

Rather than go back to the drawing board, Mitchell turned to a concept car he'd already commissioned. This car was the 1961 Solaris.

As we revealed in the June 2016 edition of Retroautos, the Solaris was never intended for production. It was a practical, ideas car for GM's styling executives to consider.

Developed by Carl Renner, with assistance from Don Lasky and Leo Pruneau, the Solaris pioneered curved doors and side glass, had a convex

and concave rear window. Plus, those jutting front fenders.

Mitchell liked the Solaris and he gave Don and Leo the assignment of taking the main the design ideas from the Solaris (pictured below and inset above) and applying them to the HD/HR Holden.

The following pages show more images of the Nova based HD prototypes and we pick up the Solaris-to-HD/HR story again on page 22.



Chevrolet Nova



All images: Likeness to the Nova is unmistakable. Prototype #3 is closest to being a basic Nova. The Nova has a five inch longer wheel base than the HD/HR prototypes, all ahead of the firewall

Prototype 1



Prototype 2



Prototype 3





All images: At first glance they all look similar, but close inspection reveals many differences.

Prototype 1



Prototype 2



Prototype 3



Above: Prototypes #2 and #3 show slight variations on front end and grille themes.
Below: Chev Nova is in the background as a comparison.





Below: Note the 1960 American Ford Falcon in the background being used as a comparison point.





The Pruneau/Lasky HD Design Story



During late April and early May 1962 the Pruneau/Lasky initial design idea for the HD/HR was viewed on the outside styling area at GM in Detroit.

The Solaris was hauled out of storage for a comparison, and can be seen in the background of the image above.

As the photos on this and the next pages reveal, Don and Leo developed a two sided prototype with different ideas at the front and rear ends and on the left and right hand sides.

How the EF Became the HD

Bill Mitchell always thought it was quaint that Holden had code letters for their models. Automotive folk lore says that when the HD styling proposal was being shown to Holden's Managing Director, David Hegland for approval in August 1962, Mitchell said: "Let's call it the DH instead of the EF in honour of you, David."

Hegland was reportedly most embarrassed at this. Then the suggestion was made "We'll make it HD for Hegland, David." And the letters stuck.



The right side styling emphasises an upright design theme, while the left side emphasises the horizontal.

The rear door and side styling take directly from the Solaris.

The right side has a more straight-through line with a turn-up at the end of the rear door. The left has a pronounced kick-up through the door.

The concave/convex rear window shape, pioneered on the Solaris, is a constant motif and were a notable feature of the HD/HR.



Solaris



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5-3-62

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Above and below: Two more views of the first Lasky/Pruneau HD styling proposal. The curved body and windows make it look much bigger than the Nova-based proposals



Fast forward to 9th May 1962, and the HD is really taking shape. Front mudguard "blades" are much more vertical and longer than what we eventually saw. This is a two sided model. The right side shown here has a "straight through" rear door design with a slight up-turn, similar to the Solaris.



In early May 1962, Holden sent their Chief Engineer, Reg Hall, to Detroit, to watch the clay prototypes of the HD sedan and wagon take shape.

By 9th May the double sided clay prototype had progressed to a detailed form (see above).

Leo Pruneau tell us what happened next: "Originally Don and I had the car with front mudguards very similar to the Opel Kapitan's. But Bill Mitchell thought the car looked too short, so he told us to make the front guards jut out ahead of the grille. So we worked to lengthen them. That's when Reg Hall arrived from Australia."

"Well, Reg took one look at them and

protested that it would be too hard to manufacture and told us cut them back. So, we did what he asked. Next thing we know is that Mitchell is back in the studio and he ordered us to lengthen them again. And then Reg asked us to shorten them again. This argument went on for a couple of weeks and Don and I would cut them off and stick them back on again. Of course, Mitchell was always going to get what he wanted because he was the boss and he convinced Holden's management to go with a slightly modified design from the original and that's the way the HD went into the showrooms."

During June 1962 the station wagon was also given its shape. (See wagon story beginning page 32).



Left side view of the two sided model. The rear door shape has a "coke bottle" motif. Compared to what went into production, the extra length of the original front fender design and elongated boot is very evident here. This styling proposal could well be mistaken for a 1966 Vauxhall PC Cresta (see inset picture at right)

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5-9-62



1966 Vauxhall Cresta prototype



Cresta image thanks to David Booker at <http://vauxpedianet.uk2sitebuilder.com/>



Above: One of the most telling images in Holden's history. That's Chief Engineer Reg Hall, in the dark coat, sitting in the background staring at the front of the car he will have to manufacture. Below: This is what Reg is looking at. We wonder if he's contemplating those front fenders?





Above: These images, taken on 21st May 1962, show the final clay model fully covered in DiNoc, a plastic film coating that simulates paint. The debate about the fender blades has resulted in a compromise idea. The right side is trimmed as the Special. The left side trim is for the Premier. The tail light bezels were changed before production. The Premier lost its chrome side strip but retained the stainless steel wheel arch and door sill mouldings. Premier badge moved to above the body crease. The Special lost the stainless steel door sills mouldings in the transition to the showrooms, nearly three years into the future.

Below: Automatic transmission badge on the clay model says "HydraMatic". The production car was given the two speed Powerglide, which was smaller and allowed greater interior room.





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8-22-62

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Above and below: This is how Holden's senior executives saw the HD on 22nd August 1962. This is a full size fibreglass model.



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43710



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43708

Above and below: This model sits lower than the nine inch ground clearance Holden used on the production car. Also, the wheel track is greater, giving the car a proper stance, rather than the narrower EH frame that Holden bean counter insisted go under the HD to save money.

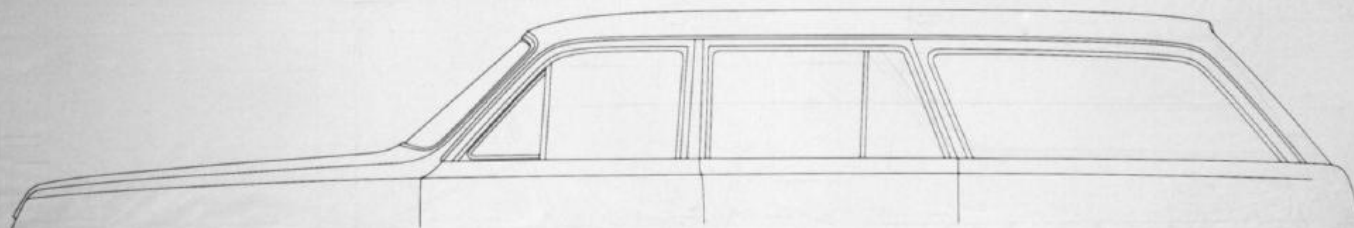
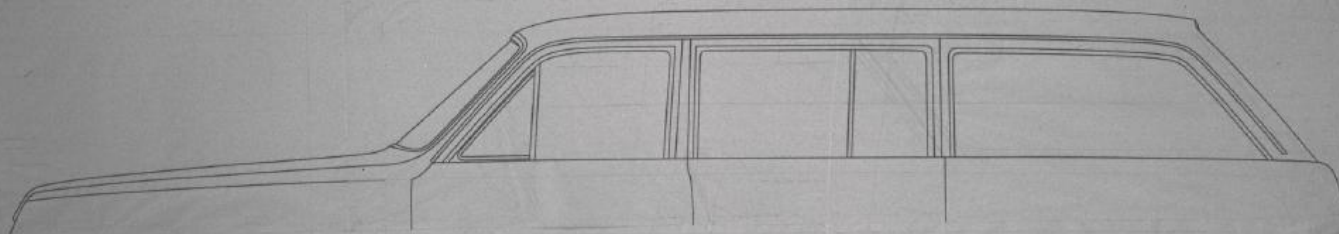


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8-22-62

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Designing the HD/HR Wagon



With the basic shape of the HD agreed, work on the station wagon began, with the three line drawings seen on this page.

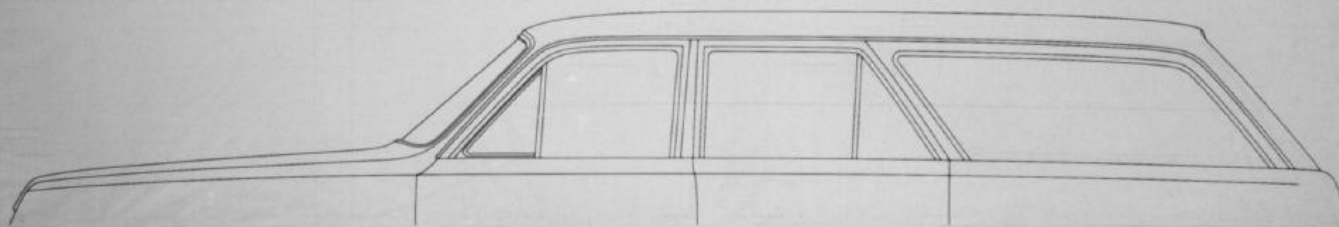
The main difference between each drawing is the angle of the C pillar behind the rear door. The most severe angle was chosen and by mid June 1962 a clay prototype had been constructed.

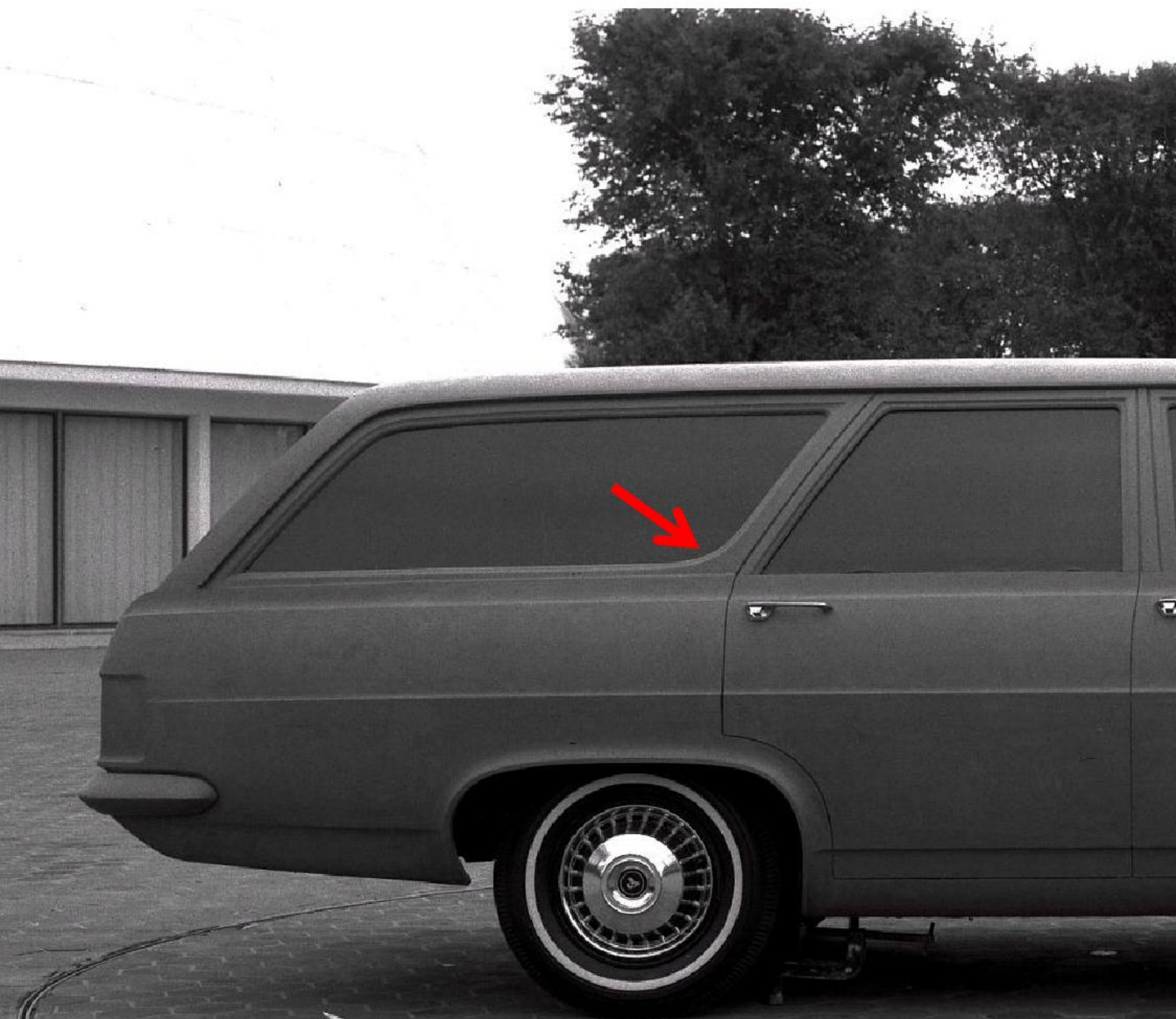
This prototype was very close to the final version of the wagon.

One difference was that the prototype had a slight curve to the base of the long side rear window. It was eliminated by mid July.

The wagon was made into an in/out fibreglass model, and shown to Holden's senior managers on 30th August 1962. It was then boxed in a crate and shipped to Melbourne.

The next time Leo Pruneau saw the HD was when he was sent to Australia eight years later.





It is 14th June, 1962 and the clay model of the HD/HR wagon is very similar to the production car, except for the shape of the base of the wagon's long rear side windows (see red arrow)

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6-14-62



42387



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6-14-62



The distinctive front fenders are very much in evidence.

42385



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6-14-62

Rear end details have yet to be completed.



42386



Above and below: By 16th July, 1962, the right side rear window of the clay prototype had been changed to a sharpened angle. Left side still shows the curved window edge.





Above: This trim idea on the tailgate did not go into production

Below: Finished clay model from 27th July, 1962, is close to production ready.



ZEED
7-27-62



Above and below: both pages are fibreglass prototypes on display for Holden executives. The left side was trimmed as a Special. Right side has no badges and minimal bright work. Like the sedans, these were in/out models.



Part 3 of the HD/HR 50th Anniversary feature is in next month's Retroautos. We have never-before-seen images of HR prototypes, commercials, HD/HR interior proposals and the stunning HR coupe.



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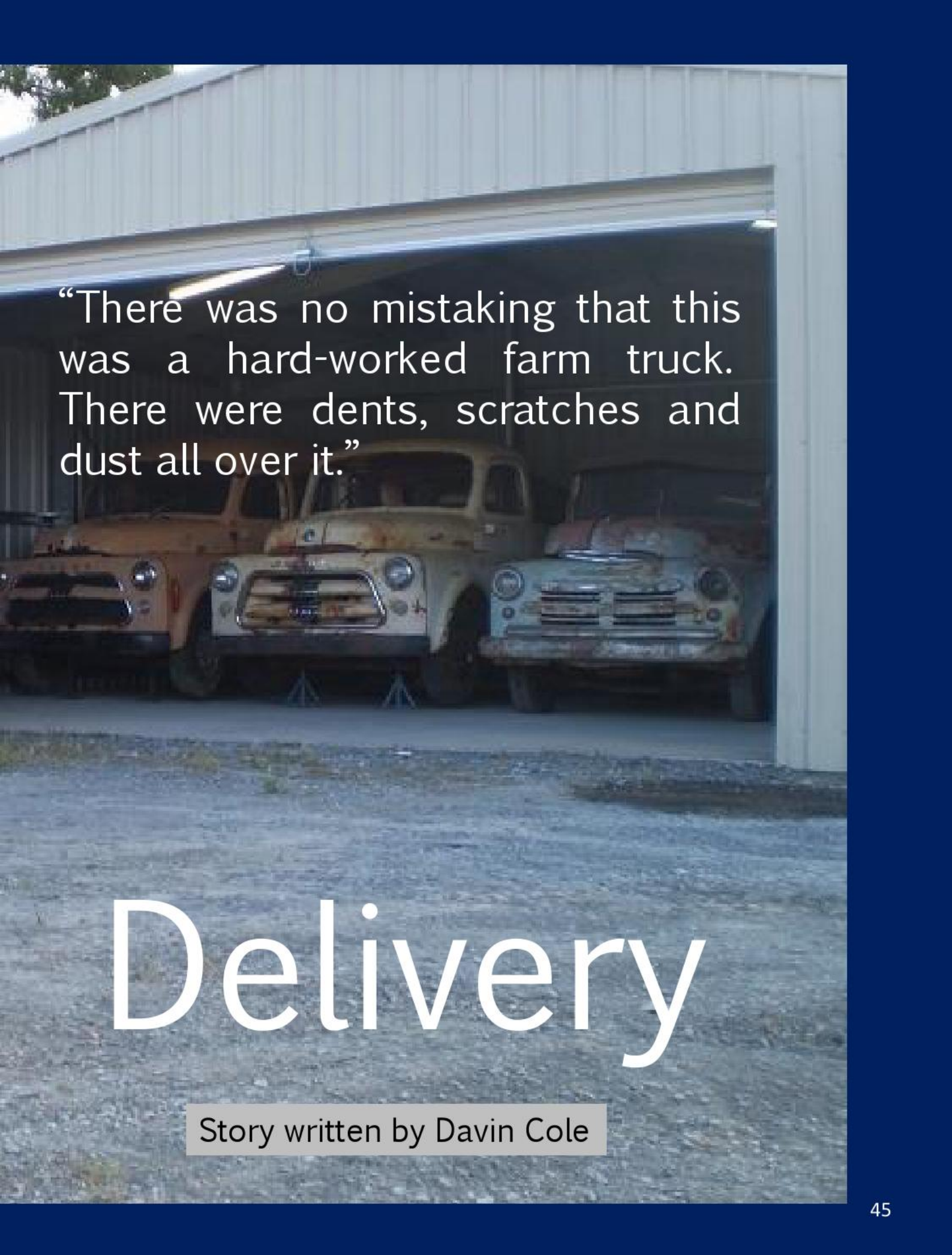


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DeSoto

A photograph of three vintage, rusted farm trucks parked inside a large white metal building. The trucks are arranged in a row, facing forward. The building has a large open bay door. The ground in front of the building is gravel.

“There was no mistaking that this was a hard-worked farm truck. There were dents, scratches and dust all over it.”

Delivery

Story written by Davin Cole



The DeSoto in Davin's driveway prior to restoration



My love of old MOPAR trucks had a somewhat unusual beginning. It was actually because of my brother-in-law Julian's affection for old Ford F100 trucks that my association with MOPAR trucks began.

I had dropped in to see my auto electrician mate, Jerry, back in late October 2005. While I was there, Jerry asked me if I had seen the old truck that was stored in his shed. As we made our way to his shed Jerry told me that the owner, Frank, was actually looking to sell.

And what he was selling was a complete 1952 Desoto truck. Jerry told me that it ran. He said that they had driven it around in the paddock a few times. I think his exact words were "it runs but

it doesn't stop". Apparently it did have some issues with brakes not working and a water pump that leaked water out almost quicker than you could fill the radiator!

My initial thought was that my brother-in-law would be really thrilled that I had found him an old truck which would look just right sitting in his shed beside his 1949 and 1954 F100 trucks that were awaiting restoration.

When I got back home I told my wife about the truck and seeing I was so impressed with it she suggested that it might be a great project to undertake with my (then) 12 year old son Brendan. I quickly advised Jerry that I was interested in purchasing the truck for myself.



The hard work starts!

I went back to see the truck a couple of days later and we pushed it out into the daylight and had a good look at it.

There was no mistaking that this was a hard-worked farm truck. There were dents, scratches and dust all over it.

Nonetheless, it was actually fairly rust-free for a 60 year old vehicle.

I made the arrangements to pay for the truck and a week later we loaded the truck onto the car trailer and 20 minutes later rolled it onto my driveway, where it would spend many of the next months being pushed in and out of my garage during the tear-down phase

Work progressed slowly on the truck. It eventually made its way down to Metalprep Sandblasting. A coat of black etch-prime was sprayed on after the sandblasting was completed and the old truck was finally back to one colour.

It was now a lot easier to see the extent of panel repair required to restore this old truck to its former glory.

Red, who owns Metalprep told me that he was impressed at the state of my truck once it was back to bare metal, and that it was probably one of the better vehicles that he had seen for its age. I told Red not to rush into sandblasting the truck as I knew that



he had plenty of work on at the time, and as a result the truck sat in his shop for quite some time. The truck would later return for sandblasting again after it was decided that 2-pack paint would stick better to epoxy primer than it would to etch primer.

The truck underwent a major panel beating process by the lads (Andrew, Bill and Graham) at Streetneat at Thornlands. The full panel beating and painting process was meticulously documented. Although Andrew has moved the Streetneat family to NZ, Bill and Graham continue to turn out high quality work as Carr Creations Auto Finishing, and BJ Panel Restoration and Fabrication.

The majority of the truck assembly was

completed by myself, wife and children in our garage and on the driveway.

The running gear for the truck went out for a rebuild while the panel work was being done. The majority of this work was carried out by Harold Ireland at Narangba. I had asked Harold to complete this work for me due to his extensive mechanical knowledge and dealings with old MOPAR vehicles over the past many years. Many of the mechanical parts were obtained from Harold's parts supply that his Father (Wally) had accumulated from Austral Motors Brisbane some years prior.

The re-build process and final assembly was completed in 2011 and the truck was registered. In all, it took six years.



Years on the farm hauling just about everything beat down the tail gate. Very little rust.





Yes, this was a comprehensive restoration job.





During the truck restoration process. I made contact with the original owner of the truck, Ernst. I told him that my intention was to restore the truck back to original condition and to take him for a drive when it was finished.

So, after six years of restoration I was able to drive the truck to the Gold Coast in July 2012 where I met up with Ernest and his family. This was the first long trip for the truck.

Ernest is a terrific guy, and is a spritely 99 years old! He was absolutely tickled pink to see the truck in its present state. He lives with his son Graham, who was also excited to see the truck because he learnt to drive in it all those years ago.

They both jumped into the DeSoto and we took a cruise down memory lane.

Ernest told me that the truck was purchased from Densley Brothers Dalby (MOPAR dealer). It was collected from Austral Motors Brisbane and driven back to the family 1200 acre farm near Dalby. The truck (and all other machinery on the farm) were always kept in sheds, which might account for the lack of overall rust and the good condition of the instruments.

It was Ernest who gave the truck its nick-name. He patted the dash as we returned to his house from our road trip and announced "you shall now be known as Ernie".

Our 1952 DeSoto has been known as "Ernie" ever since.

And would you believe it, Ernest and I we discovered that we share the same birthday!





Above: The truck is finished and Davin shows it to its first owner, Ernie.





'Ernie' the truck has undergone a few other finishing touches of late. I have recently managed to locate a few original factory accessories from my contacts in USA including an original 8-valve radio, a factory ash tray, and a factory horn ring. I have finally found and installed 'pyramid' floor matting which I believe to be the closest style that I can find to the original floor mat. I am yet to complete a few of the interior trim modifications in areas that I feel were not completed to required standard. I am presently considering adding the factory triple pinstripes to the rims.

I have travelled around 1100 miles in Ernie in the past 12 months.

I've found that the DeSoto sits comfortably on 50-55 miles per hour for on the freeway. The engine temperature hovers between 160-170°F, which is perfect.

I attend the occasional show and have won a few trophies. Whilst I am honoured to have received these trophies, I get more of a thrill just seeing the looks on people's faces when they see the truck. I am constantly amazed at the interest that the truck generates whenever I take it out for a drive.

It has been great to see the delight on people's faces when they tell of old tales of learning to drive in a truck like





Above: the '52 De Soto with two more projects

that, or having an old truck like that on the farm, or their Father or Grandfather had one just like that, and so forth.

I am constantly on the lookout for similar trucks and am happy to purchase them at the 'right price'.

I have a few 'future projects' stored in the shed for now and plan to start restoring a 1953 Dodge 108 coupe truck shortly.



Royal and Regal Rolls Royce



“Most people are surprised to learn that the body is entirely hand-made from five large sheets of alloy.”





The Phantom cops an egging. Sir John Kerr has a tight grip on the hand hold strap.

Would you believe that this 1967 Rolls Royce Phantom V, looking so regal and staid outside a church, has led a very adventurous existence.

It has carried Royalty and Governors General, had eggs thrown at it, been raced in an international car rally and now attends car shows.

In 1967 the Australian government imported the massive car specifically for conveying Royalty, visiting heads of state and the Governor-general.

Because it was for the Queen's use she had a few requirements including a special rear armrest incorporating controls for the division, heating, air-conditioning and radio, a cocktail cabinet with crystal sherry glasses and

silver-capped decanters, pink silk blinds on rear windows when required for privacy and an intercom system in the rear to communicate with the driver.

Her Majesty always sat behind the driver; with her seat being adjustable for both height and forward movement so that her adoring subjects could see her clearly.

The car was not armoured at the express wish of the Queen.

This Phantom V is a 7 passenger version.

The body is hand built and shaped out by H.J. Mulliner, Park Ward in the UK.

The engine is a 6.2 litre V8 running a special low-compression ratio of 8:1 instead of 9:1.



An oil-bath filter replaces the paper version to cope better with Australian dust and the fuel tank has an extra 13 litres capacity.

The “parade” rear axle ratio allows the Phantom to travel consistently and smoothly at seven kilometres per hour for ceremonial purposes.

The car gained a measure of fame when, back in 1976, while transporting Governor General Sir John Kerr, protesters who were angry at his sacking of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, threw eggs at it.

The Phantom V was decommissioned in 1983, when the government decided an upgrade was necessary because its three-vehicle Rolls fleet wasn’t bulletproof.

Dr John Matheson bought the vehicle for private use later that year.

In 1997 Dr Matheson drove it in the Peking to Paris Rally, with no problems.

Dr Matheson then donated it to the Sir Henry Royce Foundation in Australia which has passed on custodianship to the Rolls-Royce Owners’ Association in NSW (RROCA).

The regal vehicle is now under the custodianship of Brian Crump, a member of the NSW club.

Brian told Retroautos that the car is driven to a variety of major cultural, Rolls Royce and motoring events.

“The aim is to conserve the vehicle but



Image copyright Brian Crump.

also to bring it to the public as a major cultural and motoring icon.” he said. “As a motor car it needs to be driven to maintain seals, ensure petrol is fresh and that tyres stay true. Thus there is something of a contradiction; to be conserved it must be used. It is not a museum piece; it is a fully operational cultural and motoring icon and serves as an ambassador for the Rolls-Royce movement in Australia.

Brian said that the Rolls has been driven to the RROCA NSW Rally in the Hunter Valley in 2014, to the Shannons Display Day in Tamworth in 2015 and the RROCA Victoria Rally in Bendigo in May this year.

It is regularly displayed at All British Day in Sydney, has attended Terribly British Day in Canberra and is often displayed outside the Royal Automobile Club of Australia on Australia Day

When we asked him about its road

manners he noted that the “car drives comfortably at freeway speeds. It is incredibly quiet and well-mannered, being light to steer and highly manoeuvrable. The servo-assisted drum brakes are exceptionally powerful and being so well-designed will allow for stopping in a straight line even under emergency braking. The brake servo runs from the rear of the gearbox which was typical of Rolls-Royce engineering at the time.”

Brian’s role as custodian of this piece of Australian history is to manage the daily mechanical health of the Phantom; to organise its use, servicing, registration and insurance.

The NSW club provides the upkeep funds.

“It is also my responsibility to ensure that such money is spent wisely and that we look towards the future when more significant mechanical repairs might become necessary.” he said.



Image copyright Brian Crump..

Brian has developed and implemented a conservation plan for the car.

“The main point is to conserve the Phantom in the best possible condition consistent with it being a roadworthy and usable vehicle that attends appropriate events.” he said.

“The aim is to minimise wear but also to allow the public to see it, take a ride in it and learn more about both its engineering and its history. For example, most people are surprised to learn that the body is entirely hand-made from five large sheets of alloy. It is a living exhibit and as such serves as an ambassador for the Rolls-Royce movement in Australia.”

To help mitigate the costs of maintenance Brian is looking for sponsorship. “I would like to arrange sponsorship of the car by organisations that appreciate its iconic status and all donations are fully tax deductible” he told us.

And what does it feel like to be driven around in this luxurious and regal conveyance?

“When I drive through the streets of Sydney other motorists recognise an extraordinary vehicle and will often give way to the Phantom”, Brian says.

“People who ride in the rear compartment generally comment on how much they feel like royalty.” he said.



It's a



Small World

“...we have to make sure that the perspective is right. In fact we agonise over this point all the time ...”



“Australian collectors like 1/18th and 1/43rd scale model cars”



Models of classic cars are big business, with local and overseas producers vying for a share of the Australian collector market.

To gain an insight into this very competitive part of the classic car world undertook a Q&A with John Pisani who runs Models 56.

John started Models 56 in 2006 because no one was building the models he liked.

The first model he produced was a diecast of a street machine XB Falcon coupe in 1/24th scale. The outcome gave him considerable insight about what sells and what does not.

Retroautos: Was it successful?

John: We thought that a street machine Falcon would be popular, and it was, to a point. The thing is, Australian collectors like 1/18th and 1/43rd scale model cars, and ours was the wrong size for a diecast model. The learnings I got out of that were that just because I liked a model did not mean everyone else does. From that point on I focused models that customers wanted.



Above and below: John's wagon offering is based on his own 1958 FC wagon.



Retroautos: Can you give us some background about scale size?

John: The most popular scale for model cars worldwide is 1/43rd. This scale was made popular by Dinky in the 1930s as it was compatible with O gauge model railways. This scale is the most commonly used in Britain, Europe, Japan and Australia, but less so in the USA. 1/18th models are large, detailed models, usually about 18 or 20 cm long. America is the main market for these.

Prototype of the FJ wagon and caravan.



Final version.





Prototype of Peter Brock's first race car.



Retroautos: You started out doing diecast and have now switched to resin models. Why is that?

John: Resin gives me the flexibility to do short run models because the cost of developing a resin model is significantly less than it is for a metal diecast product. There is no tooling required with resin, just patterns. The diecast products need stamping tools made, just like a real car does. These can cost up to \$250,000 for one model, so you need very long production runs of up to 20,000 to cover the costs. With resin the breakeven point is below 500 units so we can do cars that other volume manufacturers cannot. For example we can do a low volume run cars clubs who want a specific model done and still make it affordable. That's not possible in diecast.

Retroautos: Your range has focused on 'niche interest' models such as 70's touring cars and trucks. What was the decision making process that led to these particular models?

John: We aim to release models that no one else would do in diecast, meaning that if we did not do them in resin then they would probably never be made. The race cars we have done have been very well received and have now sold out. Another good example is also the Ford F600 truck and trailer model. We will only make 500 and already it is selling well.

Retroautos: What do you see as the benefits of resin versus diecast?

John: Apart from the initial lower set up costs to a manufacturer, I think I can get a better finish and detailing





Close up images of the FE wagon proposal.





First version of the Valiant Duster van

with resin. With diecast the metal is hard stamped by a tool and in that stamping process you can lose fine details over time. Not so with resin, which is a moulded process. We aim to have tight edges and smooth surfaces, like a real car.

Retroautos: Are there any trade-offs?

John: The use of resin does not allow us to have opening doors, boots and bonnets. However our feedback has been that this is not a problem for collectors who value higher levels of external details.

Retroautos: When making a scale model you have to make a decision between human perspective of a car, and accuracy, is that right?

John: Yes. This is a key part of producing a successful model. The main question to keep asking is: does it look right? All car models are not just scaled down from real life size. The shape needs to be modified a little to get the visual perspective right. For example, rounded shapes look more rounded when reduced in size and wheels look bigger even though they have been reduced in scale. So, we have to make sure that the perspective is right. In fact we agonise over this point all the time. I've spoken to car stylists and they have the opposite problem. When they do a ¼ scale model of a styling proposal and then take it to full size they also have to change lines and curves because what the eye sees in smaller scale does not translate into full size.

Mould and first impression of the Ford Landau.





Retroautos: Can you explain the process involved in getting one of your cars built?

John: We first choose the model, such as the Ford F600. Then there is lots of discussion with actual owners and drivers about dimensions. We check quoted manufacturers dimensions and we research reference material for all the paint and trim colours and combinations. This reference and research can take a lot of time but it is vital to ensuring a model looks right. Get one dimension wrong and it will impact the total look of the finished product. Anyway, after we have done the research, we have a prototype hand-shaped in resin here in Australia. The prototype is sent to our manufacturer in China and they do a master copy. They send it back to us and we do all the corrections. Back it goes to China to have another master made and then correct again, if required, then we go into production. It is a long process.

Retroautos: How many of each model do you produce?

John: We do 500 of each. That's it. We do not do additional runs so when someone buys a model from us they know they are one of 500 to have it.

Retroautos: Do you see 3D printing becoming a disruptive element in the model car industry?



John's FC wagon



Ensuring the model looks “right” in scale is a primary issue. John spends a considerable amount of time at this point of the development process.

John: Yes, I think that once 3D printing equipment becomes much cheaper and people can do it at home it will impact the industry, just as emails have impacted mail services and digital imagery has seen the decline in printed media generally. The thing we are looking at is how to integrate 3D printing with what we do.

Retroautos: Do you have a plan for this?

John: If you look at it from a buyer’s perspective what they want is a great looking model which is well built, painted, durable and be something that they and other people will admire. Consequently, what we have to figure out is the part a home-based 3D printer will play in all of that and then decide what part of that process will we operate in. Basically, our role could be to help collectors get what they

want easily, quickly, at an attractive cost and without them having to do all of the research work on dimensions and the trial and error of scaling down to any size. That’s where the intellectual property and the skill resides.

Retroautos: Your FC Holden Station wagon is a beautiful representation of that car. Did you use any particular car as a reference?

John: Yes – mine!

Retroautos: Is there a car you would like to make but cannot justify financially?

John: I’d love to do a 1963 Studebaker GT Hawk.

RetroAuctions

A close-up photograph of the front left corner of a vintage car. The car is painted a vibrant green with a glossy finish. A round, chrome-rimmed headlight is prominent. Below it, a smaller, rectangular yellow-tinted light is visible. The chrome bumper and grille are highly reflective, showing highlights from the ambient light. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Auctions America
photo by Jeremy Cliff.







This four door convertible is a 1951 Frazier Manhattan. You can bid on it at Auctions America hammering on 25th and 26th June in Santa Monica. The price guide is \$A110,000. Photo by Jeremy Cliff





More expensive than a Rolls Royce when new this 1957 Cadillac Eldorado has a A\$170,000 price guide at Auctions America Santa Monica hammering. The roof is brushed stainless steel. One just like this turned up at the recent All GM Day in Sydney and stopped everyone in their tracks. These are truly awesome cars to see up close. They are low, long and wide. With all the windows lowered it showcases the four door hardtop styling to perfection. Photo courtesy of Auctions America.



Above: The 1957 Eldorado.

Below: Auctions America at Santa Monica have this 1984 Toyota Century sedan. It is unusual for two reasons. The first is that it is registered in California as a right hand drive car. The second is that these big Japanese limos rarely exist outside of their home country and are the reserve of senior government and business folks who shun more plebeian automobiles, such as a Lexus. The price guide is around \$A40,000. Go to www.auctionsamerica.com





Barons in the UK have a \$A2.4 million price guide on this 1954 Bentley R type continental fastback. If you feel inclined to bid, the auction is on 12th July, so plenty of time to save up. Thanks to Barons for the image.





Bonhams are in Connecticut on 5th June with these cars, and more. Above left is a 1926 Packard Phaeton. Middle left is a 1937 Mercedes 540K. If you want a price guide you must ring Bonhams and ask politely. Above right is a 1976 Roll Royce Corniche coupe, hand built by Mulliner Park Ward. No price guide on this one either. The brown on brawn colour scheme is not to our taste, but it was all the rage in the 1970s. Below: A no-reserve, left hand drive, 1958 MGA. Close inspection of the images reveals it is a little rough around the edges. Thanks to Bonhams for the images.

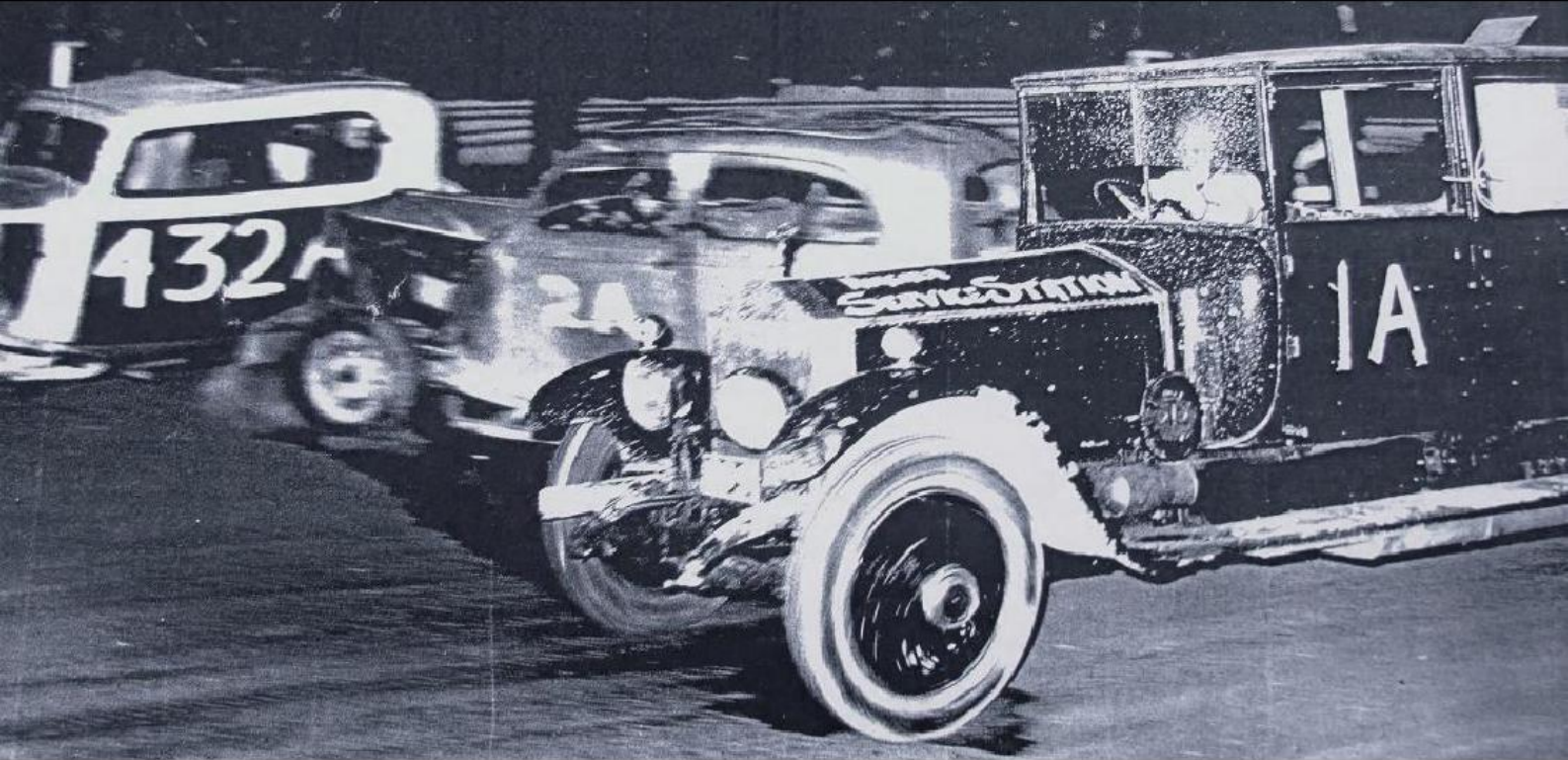




H&H Auctions in the UK have this cute 1914 Saxon Model A at their 10th July event. A former owner is the USA drag racing champion, Don "Big Daddy" Gartlis, who owned many classic automobiles from the brass era. Price guide is \$A25,000.



RetroRacing



Above: A press photo from the mid-fifties in the UK shows this 1920s Rolls Royce in a speedway race. Worth very little back then it is probably valued near one million now. Such a waste.



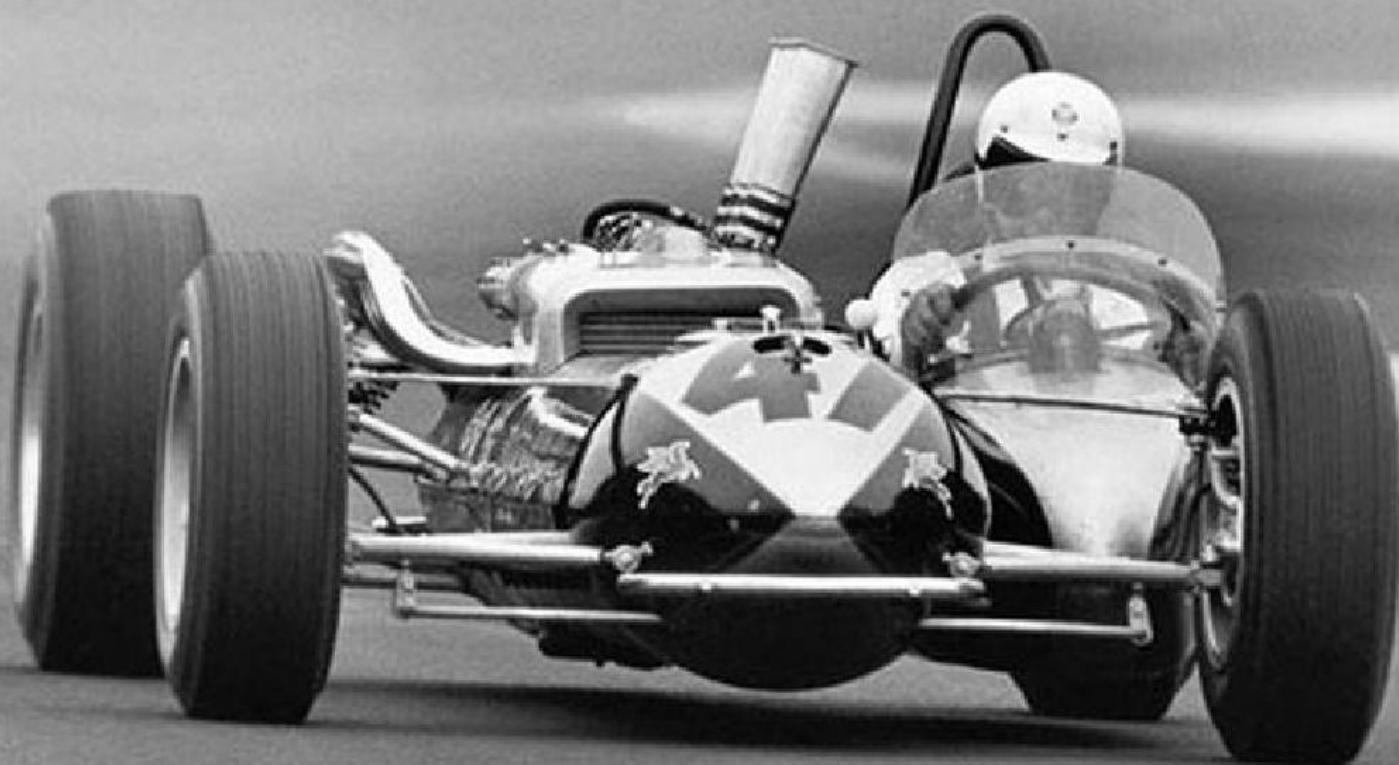
Left: Banger racing in the UK has been big for years. Many classics have been destroyed in these mobile demo derbies. Here's one we found on the net. It is an FB or EK Holden. How it got to the UK and then ended up being demo derby fodder is not known.

Below: The 2015 world champion (!!!) banger racer in his 1960 Cadillac limo barging through a classic Rover. Jaguars and Rovers are particular favourites because of their excellent suspension. Many are rusted hulks that have been found in fields and junk yards. A well known trick to improve their combat strength is to pour concrete into the frame rails.



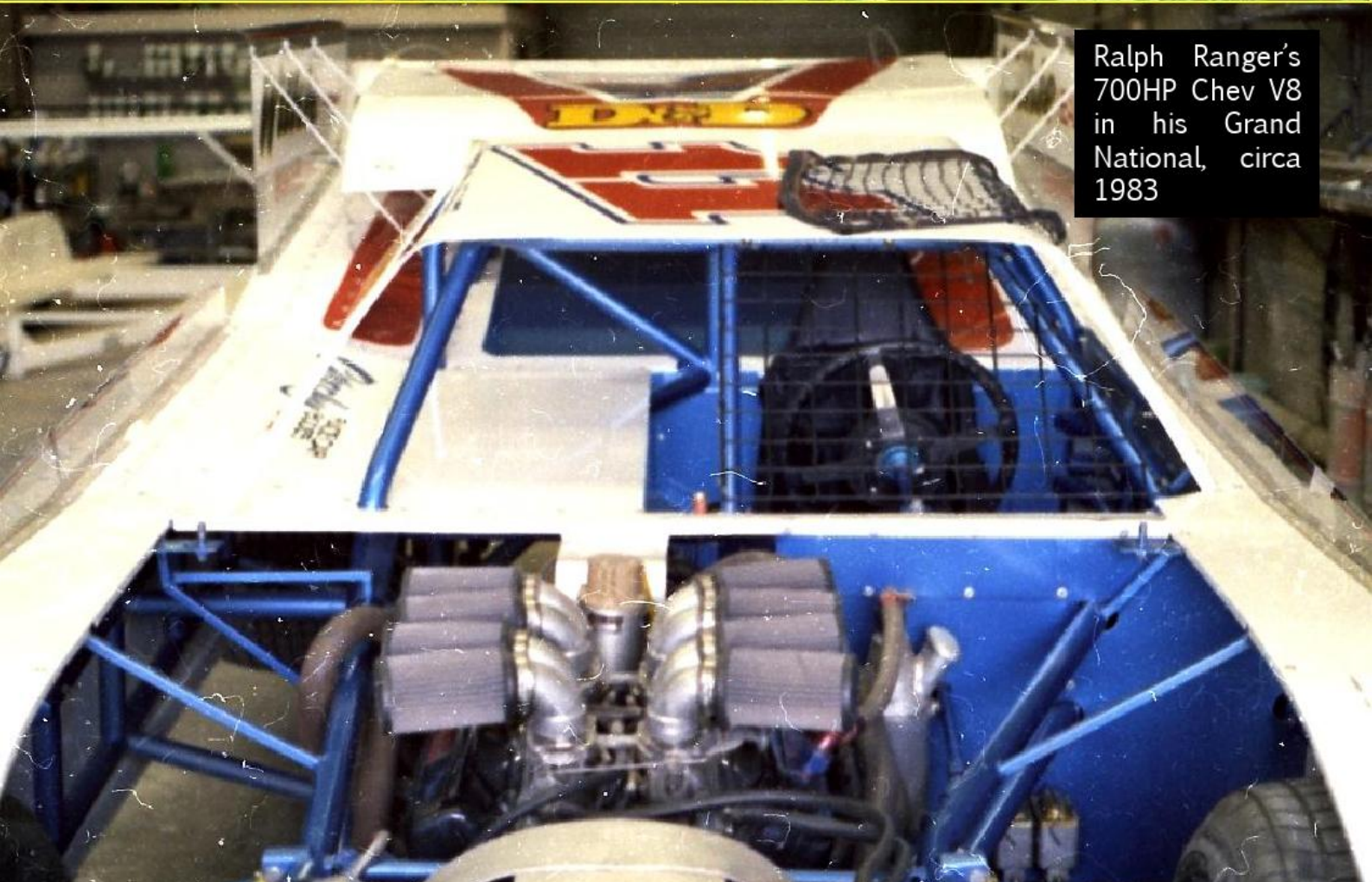


Legendary race car owner and mechanic, Smokey Yunick, brought this unusual car to the 1964 Indy 500. Labelled the "pod car", it was sponsored by Hurst Shifters. Bobby Johns drove it but failed to qualify after he backed it into the safety fence during practice. Driver protection was minimal. Images from the Henry Ford Museum





Merv Villis drove
this 1938 Dodge
Hot Rod at Morriset
Speedway in 1968



Ralph Ranger's
700HP Chev V8
in his Grand
National, circa
1983



The 1968 Sebring 12 Hour event. The winning #49 Porsche 907 driven by Jo Siffert and Hans Herrman. They had teamed earlier to with the Daytona 24 Hours. Siffert died in 1971 at Brand Hatch in a race crash and subsequent fire. (Images from The Henry Ford Museum)





Above: Here's the smiling gang of the American sedan team, pictured in with one of the four 600HP V8 Chevrolet Vegas they campaigned across Australian speedways in January 1975. Built by Tognottis Speed Shop in Sacramento, the Vegas were really sprintcars with a light weight Vega body. Left to right: BIG Ed Wilber, Mike Klein, Gene Welch and Wayne Sue. All were experienced oval track champions on the west coast of the USA.

Below: It's 1955 and a young Bobby Unser hauls his home built car up Pikes Peak. No roll cages here and just rudimentary seat belts. (The Henry Ford Collection)



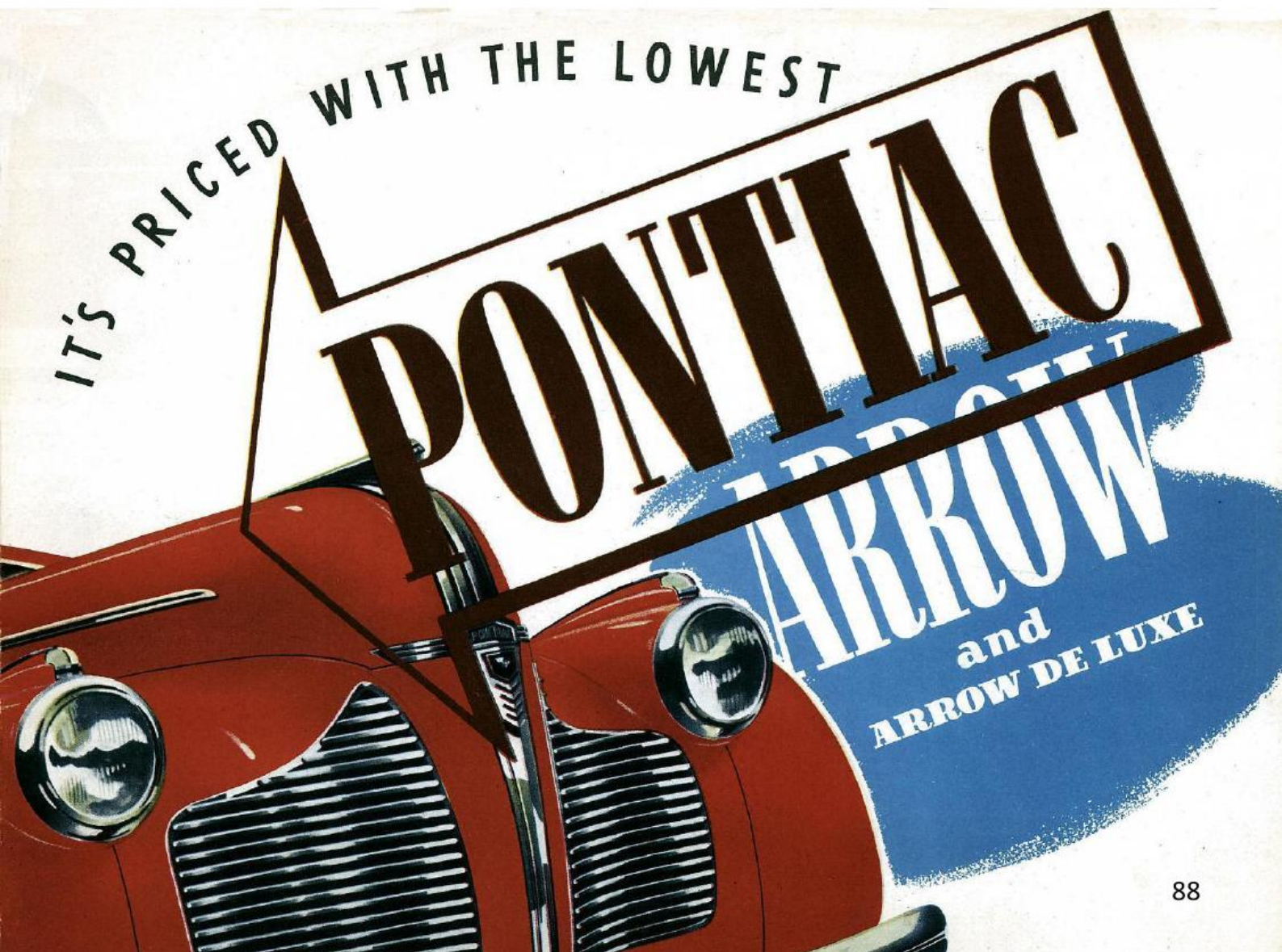


Above: American Wayne Sue stands next to his V8 powered Chevy Vega at the Newcastle Motordrome in January 1975 ahead of combat with the strongly competitive local dirt oval racers. Below: 1970 Japanese sedan Grand Prix, Mazda rotary versus Nissan Skyline.



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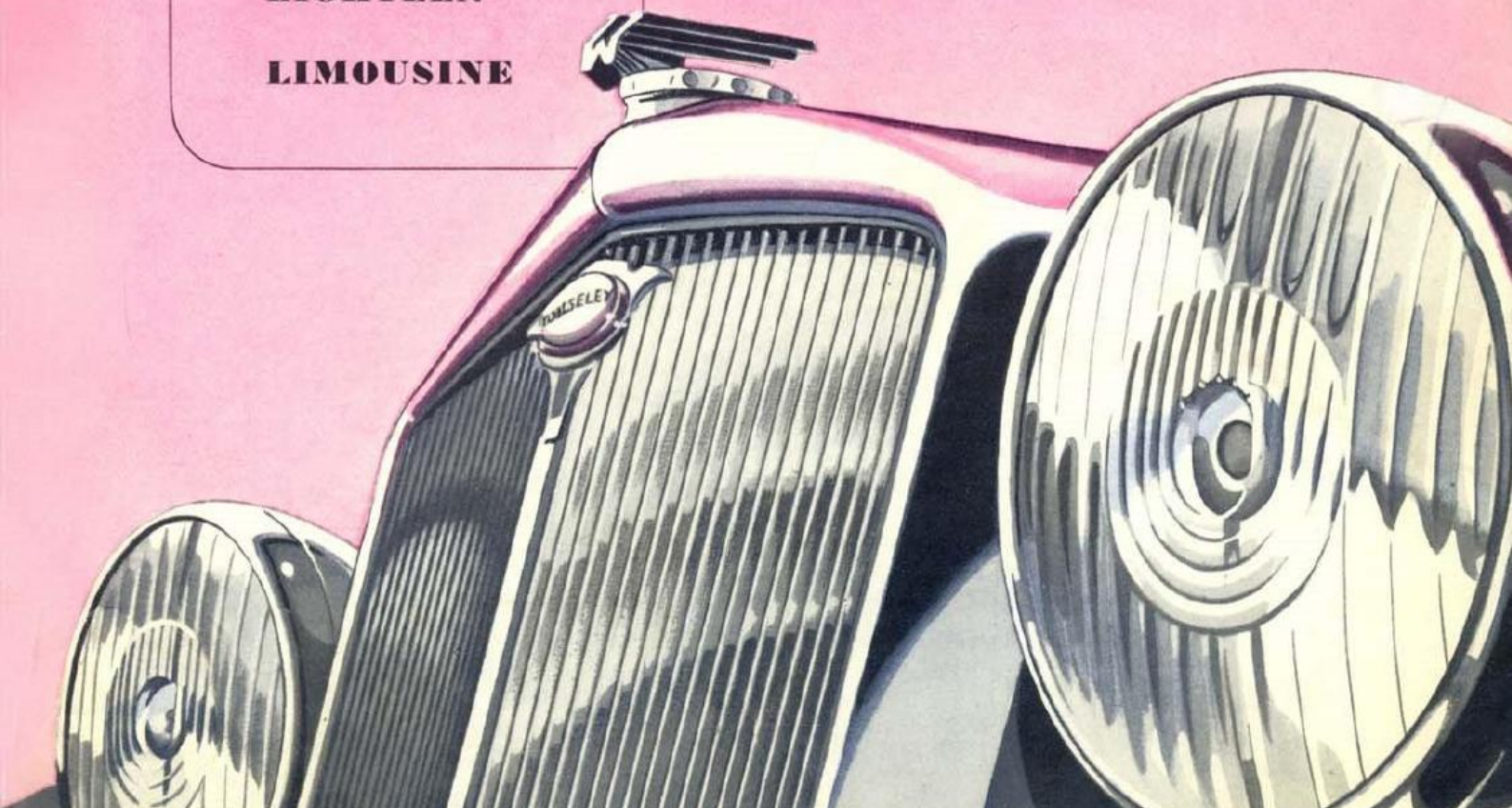
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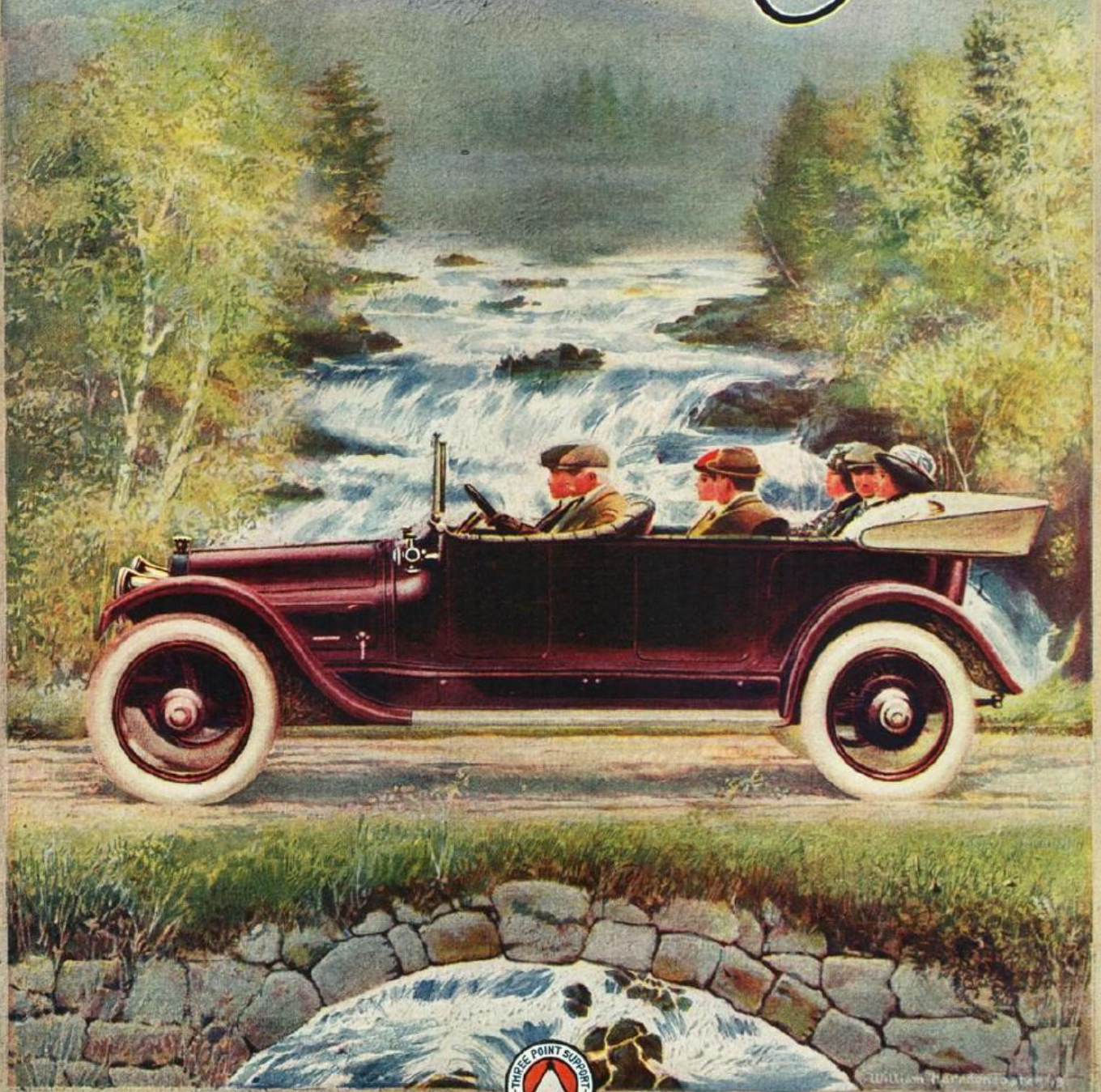


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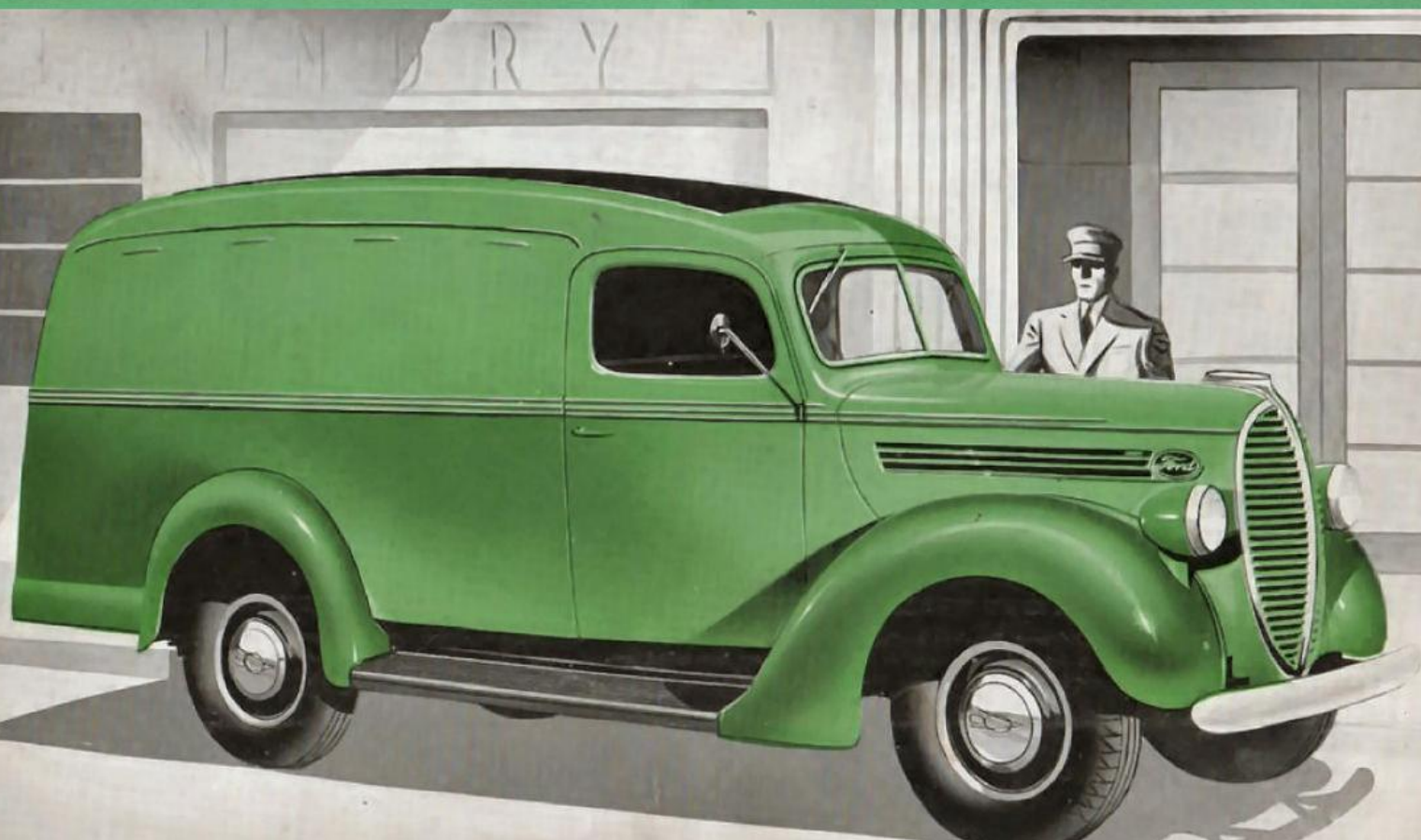


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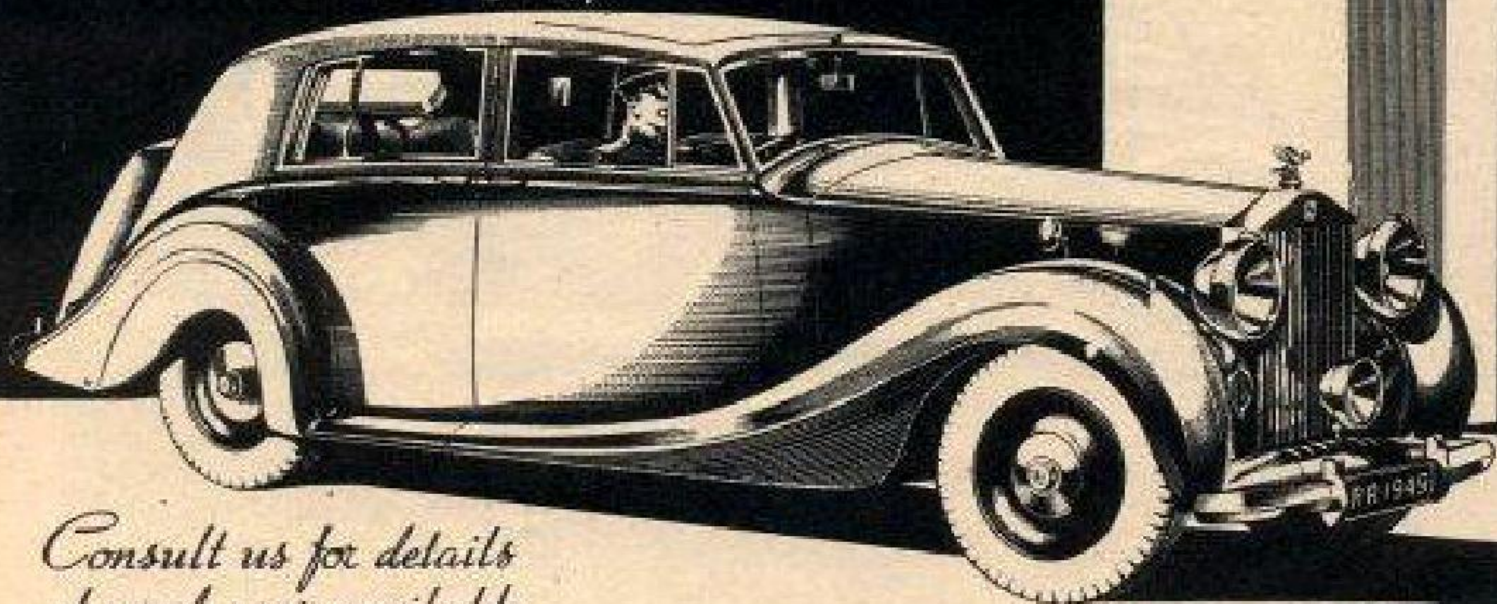
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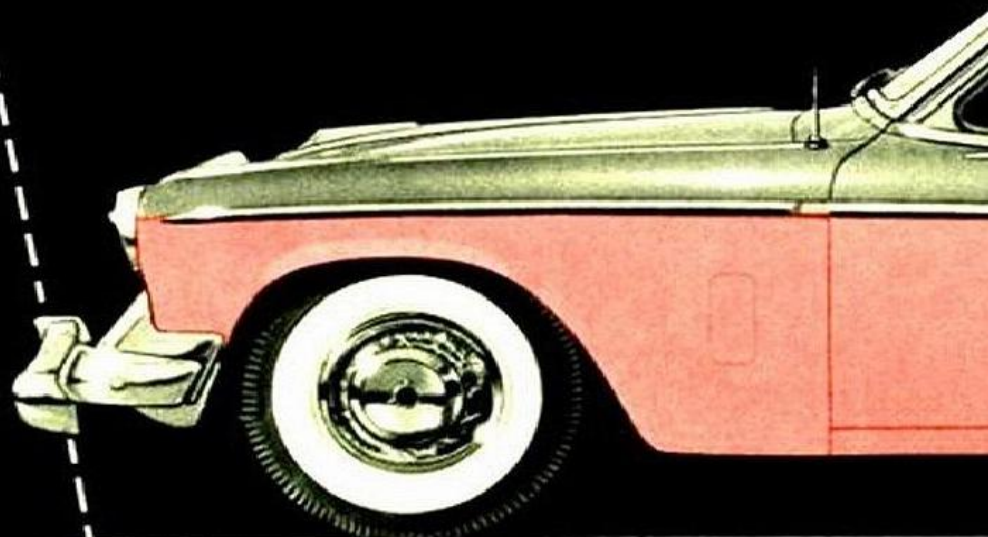


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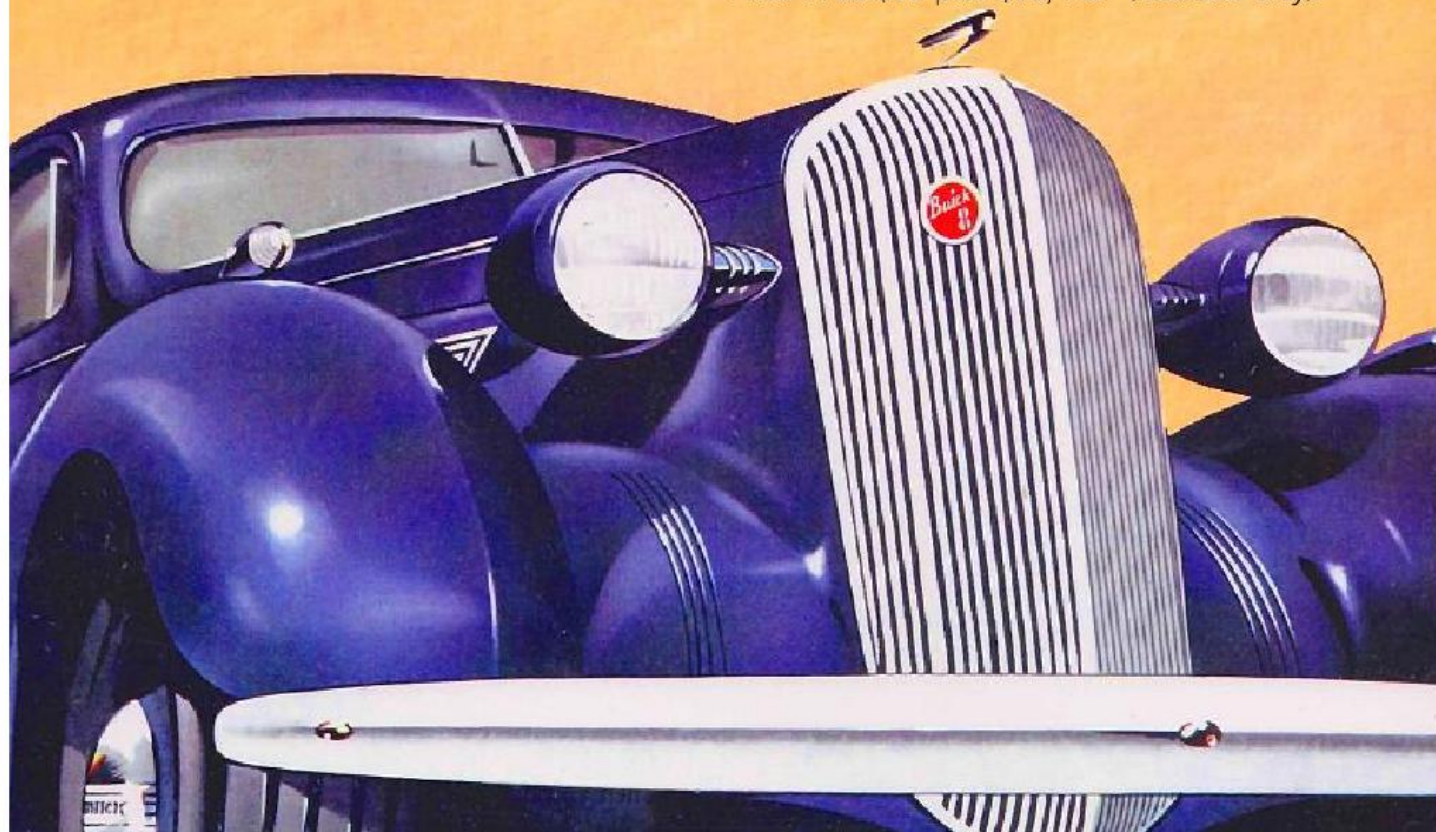
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