

collectible & classic

August 2016 #59

RETROAUTOS

1970s American Luxury
When Size Mattered



Styling the HR:
The Secret Photos.



1978 Buick Electra
Park Ave 225





**HOLDEN
PROTOTYPES**
RETROAUTOS EXCLUSIVE



NEVER-SEEN
HK HOLDEN
PROTOTYPES

5 BIG THINGS
THE FALCON
DID FOR US!



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AUSTRALIA
VOL 1, NUMBER 1

#1



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TECHNICAL: DRUMS TO DISCS, DEPT OF YOUTH

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A9X



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1948 F100



1957 Cadillac

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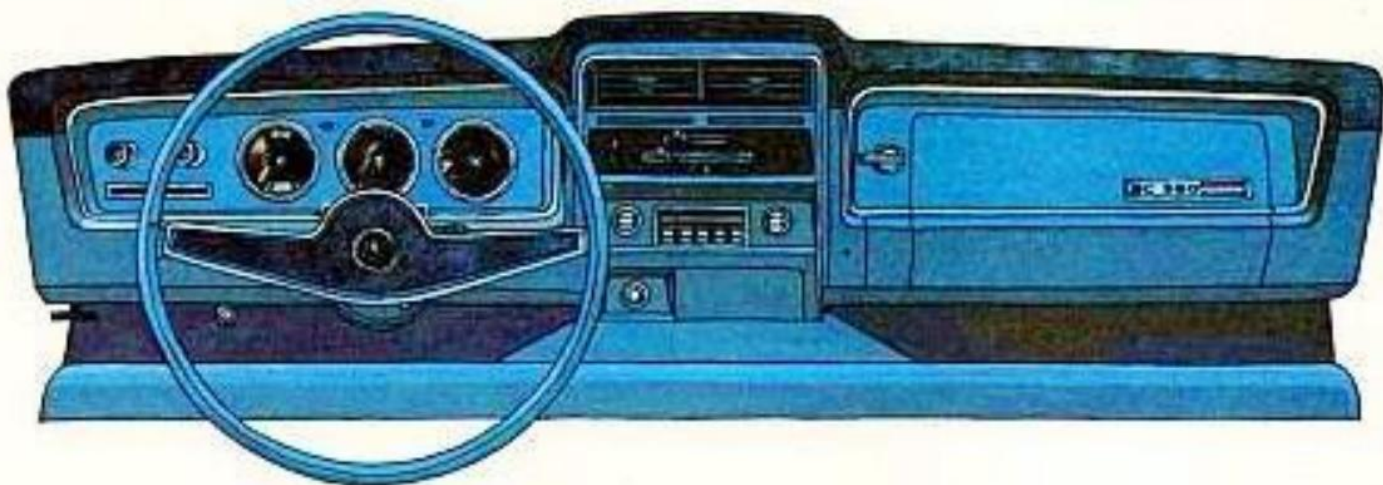
Front Cover: Bill Kington's 1979 Lincoln Town Car

Special Features

- 14 HR Holden 50th Anniversary
 - 14 HR Styling Ideas
 - 20 Interior Proposals
 - 26 HD/HR Ute and Van Prototypes
 - 28 Fabulous HR SS coupe
 - 30 Joe Schemansky:
the Guy who Styled the HR
- 38 1970's American Luxury
 - 38 Four BIG Lincolns
 - 52 1978 Buick Electra 225
 - 64 Buick Styling Prototypes
 - 70 Lincoln Styling Heritage
- 88 Henry Ford's Plastic Car

Regular Features

- 5 RetroVoice
- 7 RetroNews
- 12 RayTookThis
- 92 RetroRacing
- 102 RetroAdvertisements
- 116 RearView





Welcome to the August 2016 edition of Retroautos, number 59.

Back in 1978 General Motors was still wondering if its newly downsized “B” and “C” bodied cars, like the Buick Electra 225 pictured above, would still appeal to buyers who had been indoctrinated with the advertising mantra that length means luxury.

Meanwhile, over at Lincoln, they continued to sell vast quantities of their vast Continental Town Car (below) and Mark V coupe.

We chat to John Gerdtz and Bill Kington who own examples of these late seventies luxury cruisers, and which are

fast becoming very affordable classic automobiles. And in our continuing series of *Design to Driveway* we delve into the history of how these cars were styled and what the prototype design proposals looked like.

This year in the 50th anniversary of the HR Holden and in the final instalment of our feature story, we have opened the secret files and found all the styling proposals for the HR sedan, HD/HR commercials and interiors.

We hope you enjoy what we have brought to you this month. It is published with passion and with pride.





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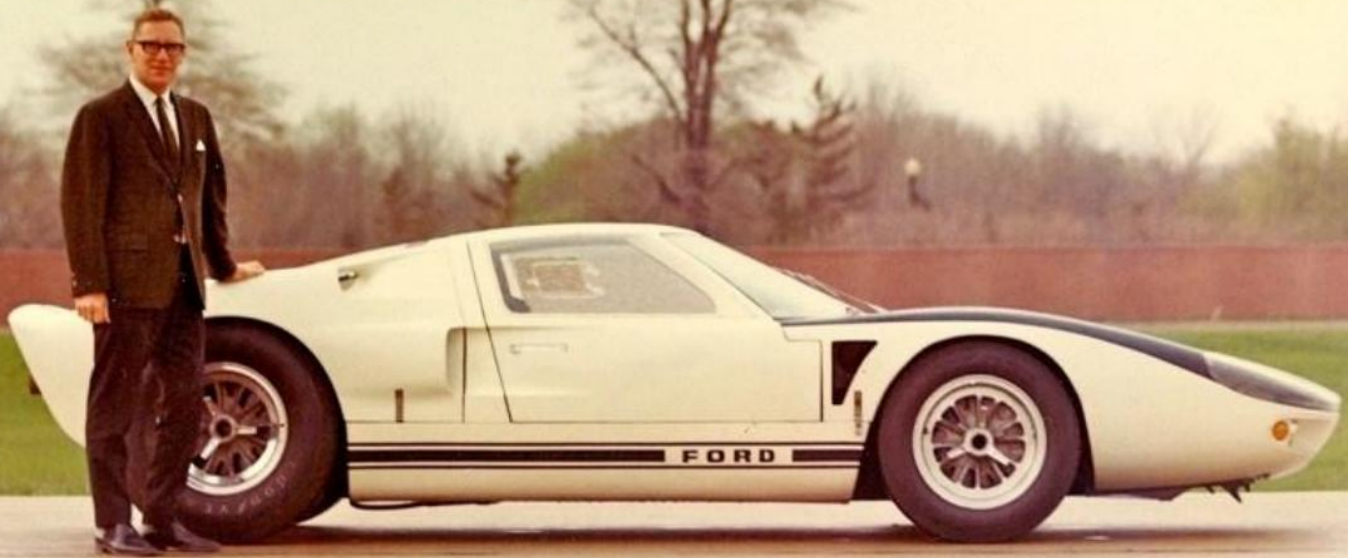
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RetroNews



50th Anniversary of Ford's Le Mans Win

It was on June 19th, 1966, when three GT40 Mark II-As, raced by Bruce McLaren & Chris Amon, Ken Miles & Denny Hulme, and Ronnie Bucknum & Dick Hutcherson, crossed the finish line, respectively – One-Two-Three – win the 24 Hours of Le Mans and change the face of sports car racing.

Ford's GT40, Mark IIs and Mark IV were designed, engineered and developed under Roy Lunn's direction.

Lunn (pictured above) was recently inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame.

Also inducted was former Ford CEO Alan Mullay. It was Mullay who brought Ford back to global profitability during the GFC and ensured that Ford never needed a US government bail out.

Next in Retroautos

In the next edition of Retroautos Ford Australia have generously open their secret vault and now we can show you photos of the XA Falcon styling proposals, the coupe *and* the sedan. Below is a sneak peak of the rear of the coupe, taken on 1st August, 1969 in Detroit.

George Seymour talks to us about his Vauxhall collection





US Military Classics

The America car show scene is coming alive as spring gives way to summer. One of our readers, David Lockard, was very busy in May. He took his 1918 Packard truck to the US Army Heritage & Education Centre in Carlisle, Pennsylvania for their annual display of military vehicles.

Other vehicles on display included this 1918 Dodge staff car (below) owned by Mark Ounan. Then it was off to another Carlisle show with his Serbian built Zastava, a Fiat 500 made under licence (above left).

On Memorial Day David drove his Packard in the big parade in Washington DC, where Desert Storm veterans (above right) inspected the Packard.



First Camaro Now A National Treasure

The first pilot prototype Camaro (No. 100001) was assembled on May 21, 1966 at the General Motors Assembly Plant, located in Norwood, Ohio.

That actual car is now part of the USA's National Vehicle Association's historic register, sort of the automotive equivalent of a national treasure.

It has a three speed, column shift manual, combined with the lowly six cylinder engine. (Below: Interior)



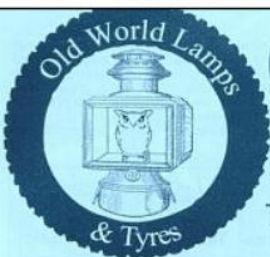
75 Years of Jeep in Toledo

The city of Toledo will celebrate 75th anniversary of Jeep production in the city.

Although the Bantam company, located in Butler, Pennsylvania, is credited with developing and delivering the first prototype Jeep in 1940, it was Willys in Toledo and Ford in Dearborn who produced most of the iconic 4X4 during WWII.

After the war, Willys continued to produce the Jeep in civilian form. It was bought by AMC and then AMC was acquired by Chrysler.

Picture below is a 1946 prototype of a Willys Jeep panel van.



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Historic Winton was a big success again, on and off the race track. Photos by Rensmart Photography.
www.rensmartphotography.com



Raymond Sprague in the Solar Midget.



Darryl Hansen leads a big field in his 1968 Mustang
See more actions photos in RetroRacing starting on page 88



The spirit of Historic Winton is embodied by Kevyn Brown's 1915 T Ford.



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Ray Green - Photographer



Design to Driveway

“For most of the last 50 years the HR has been tagged with the label as a “Hastily Restyled” version of the HD.”



MADLER 1-21-64

HR Holden

50th Anniversary Exclusive

“The HR’s shape was basically agreed by September 1963, three years ahead of its release..... Not so hasty after all.”



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1-21-64

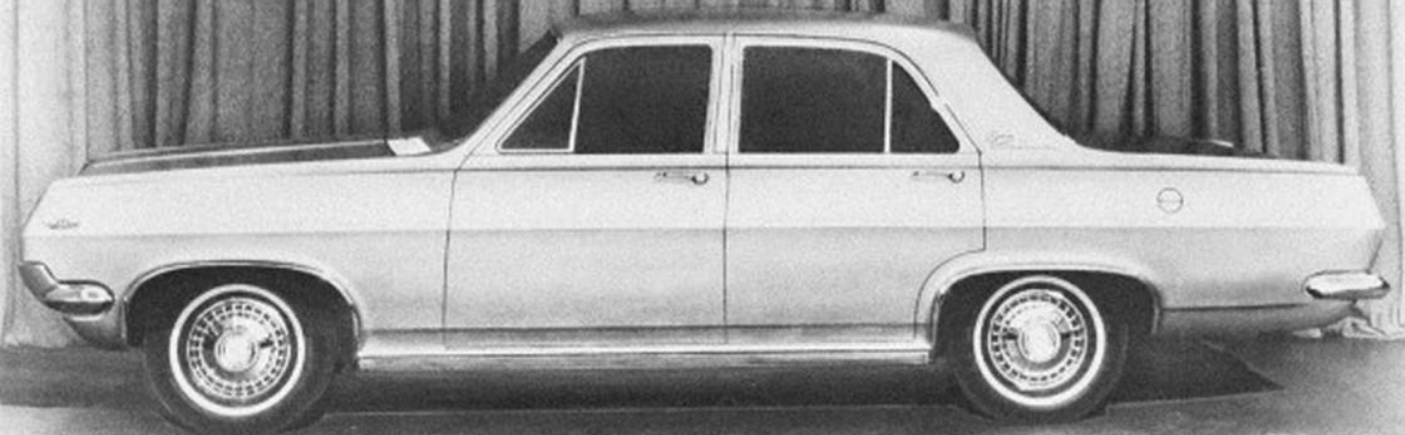
HR line drawing from January 1964

53914



MADLER

53915



This HR proposal was competed in late 1963. It is the car in the top middle of the photo below

In this third and final part of our celebration of the 50th anniversaries of the release of the HD and HR Holdens we focus on the design development of the HR sedan, the commercials, the interiors and the never released coupe.

And let's do some myth busting right at the start.

For most of the last 50 years the HR has been tagged with the label as a "Hastily Restyled" version of the HD.

From a Retroautos perspective that label is not correct.

Quite simply, seventy five percent of the HR's shape was basically agreed



MADLER
1-21-64

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57822

COPY 7.16.64

These images, taken in early 1964 shows idea of parking lights in the grille, which went into production. We have enlarged the inscription on the photo below.

HR-1966-TO BE INTRODUCED
IN MID-66-
DESIGNED AT HOLDEN

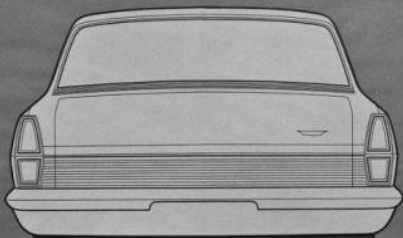


COPY 7.16.64

COPY

HR

This 20th April 1964 image shows that work on the HK had already started, and is being compared to the HR.

HK

CLAPP 4-20-64



55742

by January 1964, 2½ years ahead of its release, 12 months before the HD hit the showrooms and at the same time the EH debuted.

In his excellent new book, Holden Snapshots, Don Loffler, has showcased many images of HR clay models taken during the period September 1963 to September 1964.

All of the images depict HR proposals with the split, vertical tail lights, parking lights embedded in the grille and the widened rear pillar. What Don's book also shows are two proposals for the front end.

The first proposal retains the HD's front fenders. The second was to reshape the front fenders to mirror rear fender shape.

Another enlarged photo from the series on page 17. The front guards were yet to change



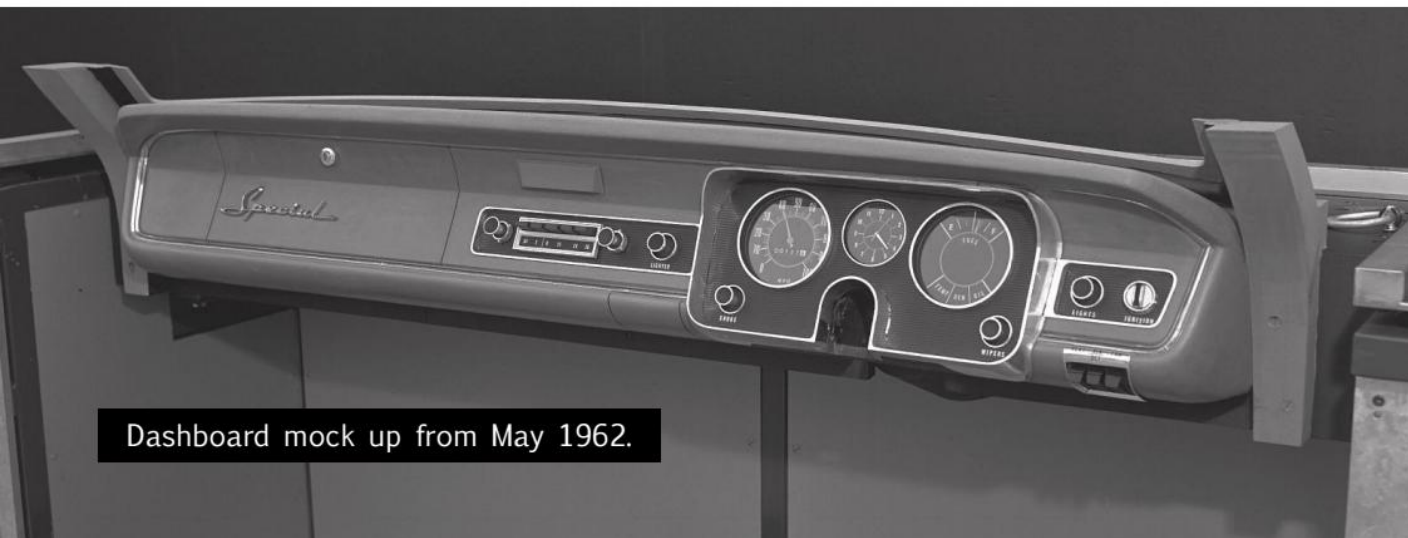


Rear end styling was decided very early in the development process.

Retroautos has also reached into Holden's secret design filing cabinet and found more date-stamped images of the HR prototypes which align with Don's research. We have also found line drawings dated January 1964, which depict the front end and rear end design that went into production in mid 1966.

And we've uncovered a rendering which compares the proposed HK styling with the HR, and it is dated 20th April 1964.

So, the HR was not such a hasty restyle after all. Rather it demonstrates that the HR was a well planned facelift of the HD.



Dashboard mock up from May 1962.



There is no denying that the knife edge styling of the HD/HR has been a love it or hate it proposition for many classic car enthusiasts. That said, the passage of time has been kind to the HD/HR design and the scarcity of good quality examples has caused a big re-think among many collectors.

What has often been overlooked is

the sales story which confirms the popularity of these two models. A staggering 431,289 HD/HRs were sold from February 1965 to February 1968, when the HK debuted.

Interiors

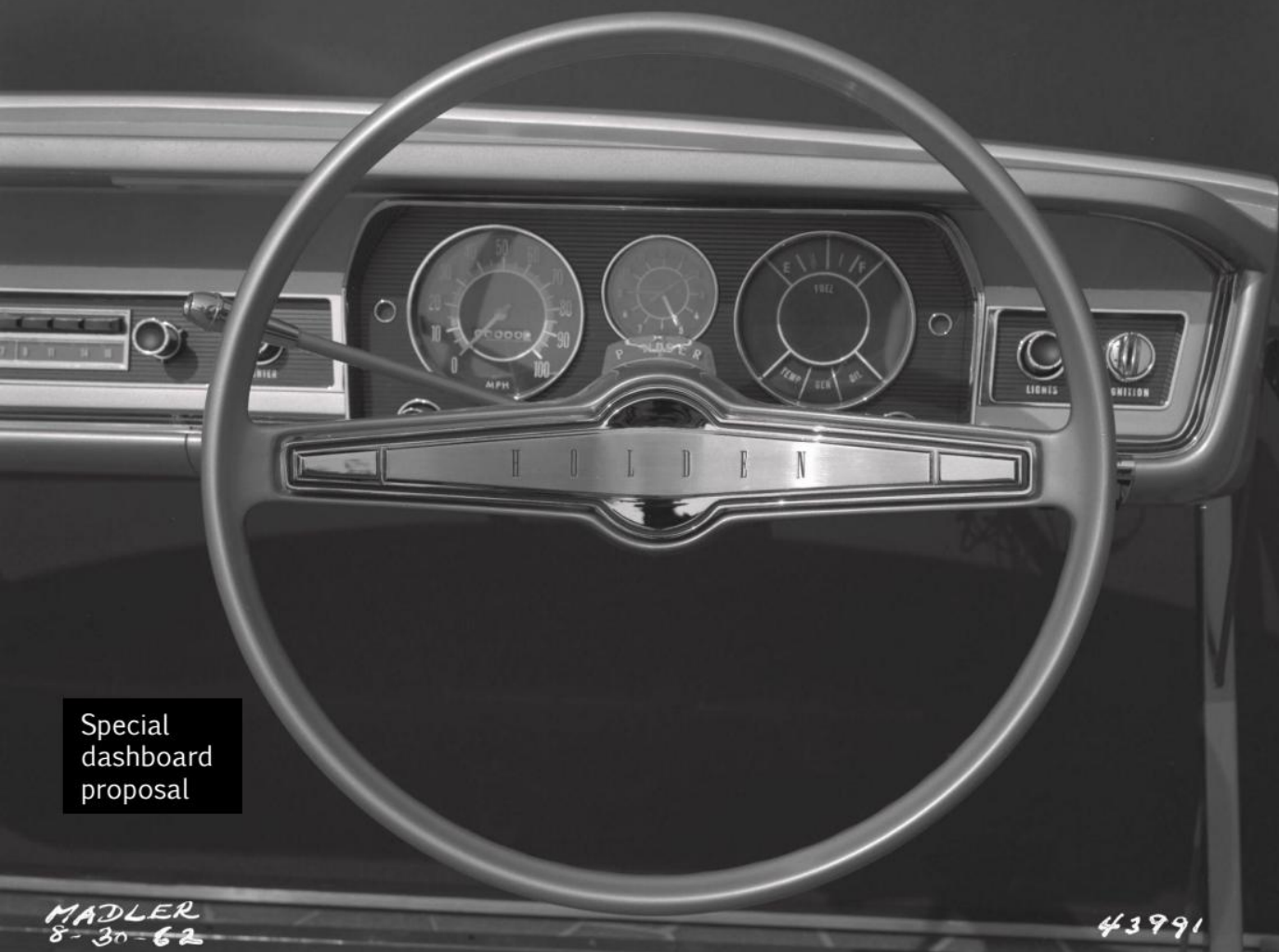
Despite its controversial exterior, the HD/HR interior design has never (continued on page 25)



Above: Mock up dashboard in August 1962 has a LHD American HydraMatic gear indicator combined with a RHD lever. Note the clock in the middle of the two bigger dials. It never made it beyond the proposal stage.







Special
dashboard
proposal

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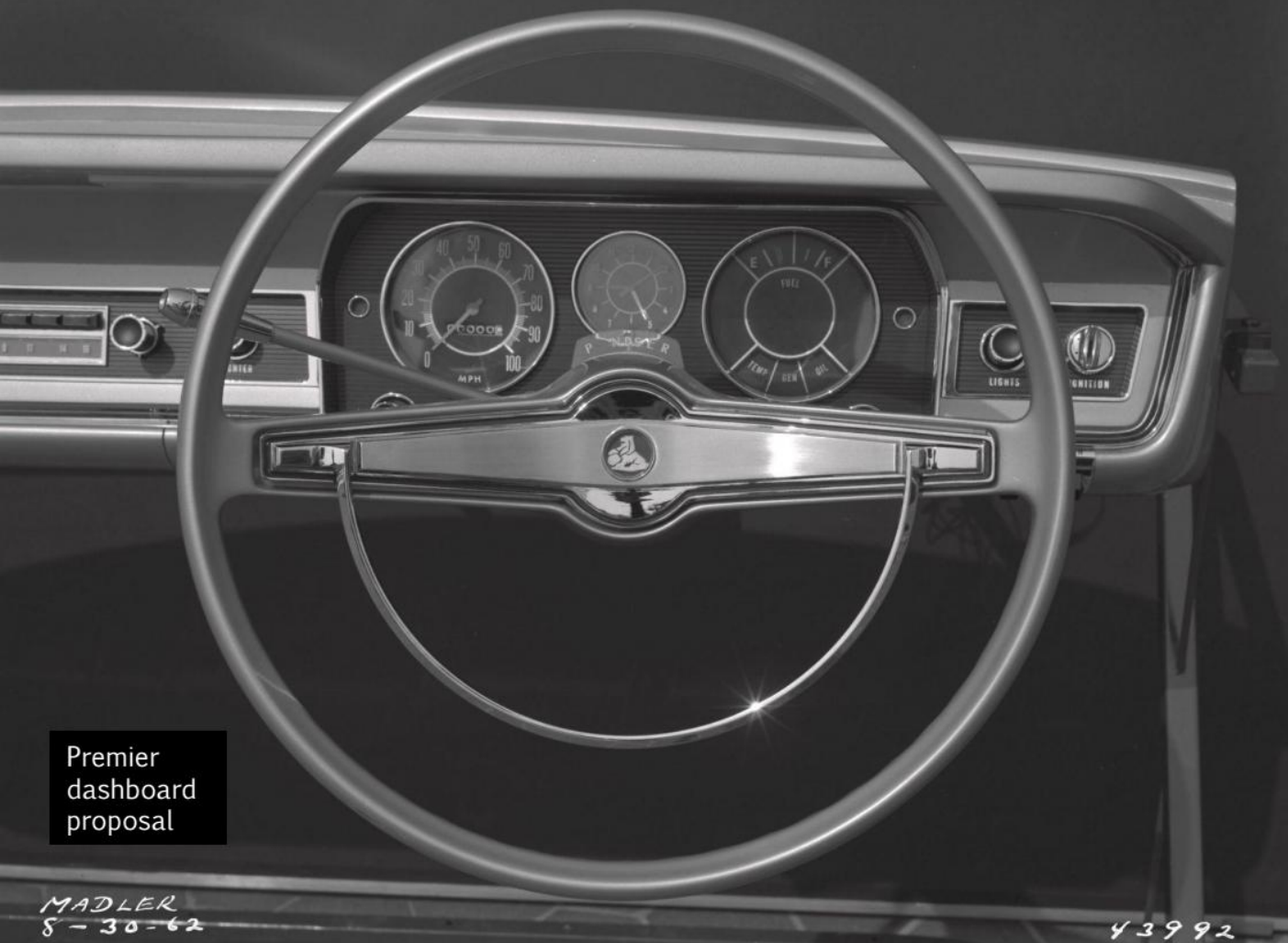
43991



Interesting all white
colour scheme for this
dashboard mock up.

MADLER
8-30-62

24
43987



Premier
dashboard
proposal

been subject to criticism. The linear format of the dashboard was a big step forward from the EJ/EH interior design.

Chrome accents combined with a wide chrome horn bar and colour coded steering wheel gave the HD/HR interior a look of luxury not seen in Holdens before.

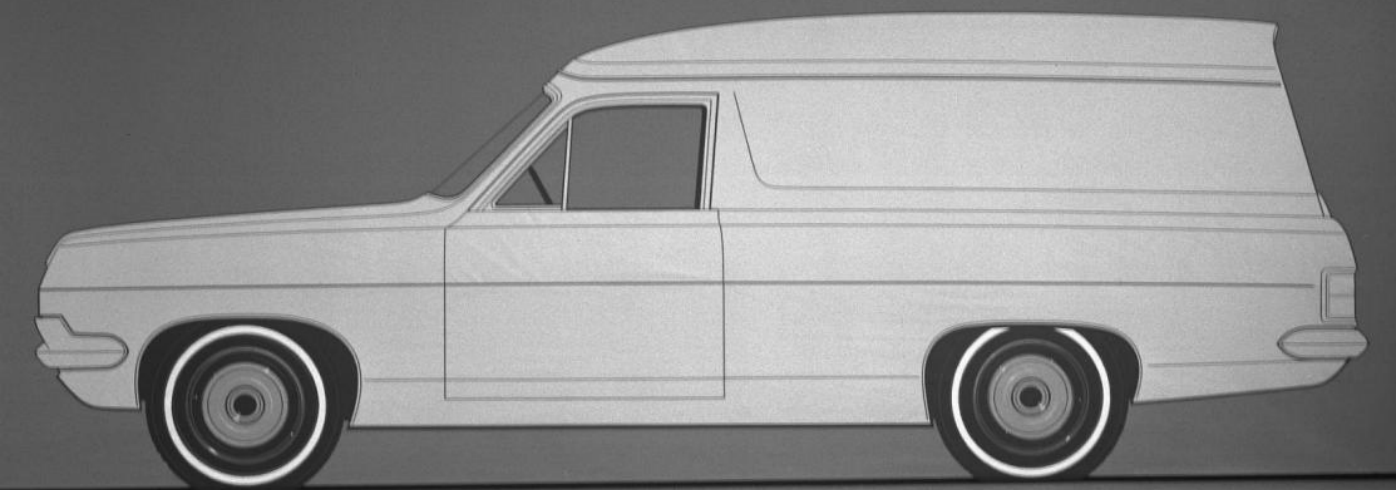
Below: Attention to detail is amazing.



Van and Utes

While the interior was being finalised, work was progressing on the utility and panel vans designs.

One early version of the van featured a low roof line over the cabin then progressively increasing toward the rear and a more slanted tailgate, as can be seen in the photos on the next two pages.

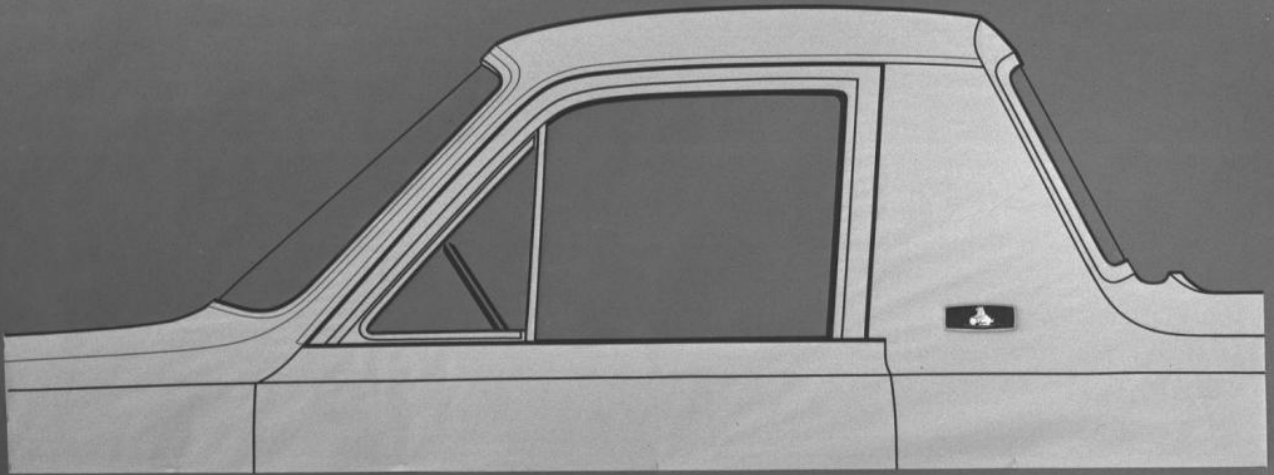


2 FEB
5-15-63

49288

Compare the two van ideas above, with a production ute below. Note the top van roof line is different to the line drawing.. The line drawing has bigger wheels, we estimate 15 inch diameter.





2 FEB
5-15-63

These two utility cabin proposals from May 1963 look very similar, however, they are different. The idea above has the lion emblem positioned on the rear pillar. The pillar itself flows down into the body and the rear window. The drawing below shows a body crease running from the top of the door backwards which cuts through the rear pillar. The shape shown in the top drawing was the one that went into production.



2 FEB
5-15-63

49289



HR SS Coupe

And so to the HR SS coupe, an idea which never went beyond the mock up stage. Retroautos has published these HR coupe renderings in a previous edition.

Dated August 1963 they depict an idea for a HR "SS" coupe.

From the twin exhausts in the photo below they suggest the stylists were hoping for a V8 version.

What is significant is that the rear end is exactly what went into production three years later. It's just





more evidence that the HR was not hastily revised, but a well planned facelift of the HD.

Norm Darwin's excellent book *Monaro Magic* covers the HR coupe concept in detail and is a must-read.

The reality is that a HR coupe was never going to be a production car.

By the time the HR was released in mid 1966 the development of the HK range was well advanced, including a coupe.

As the photo above demonstrates, the shape of the HK Monaro was locked away by July 1967, so there was no reason for Holden to spend large amounts of money developing a two

door HR only to have it replaced in early 1968.

Quite simply, senior executives and accountants would have said "let's wait until the HK. It will be engineered to take a V8 and looks so much better."

And so the HR coupe, which might have looked like the Retroautos photo-shopped idea below, was quietly shelved.



Joe Schemansky

Holden's Style Leader



Who Styled the HR?

The HR styling was led by General Motors (GM) design veteran Joe Schemansky, pictured left.

Joe had had a long and successful career in GM styling before he was given the task of re-styling the prototype of the EJ Holden, in late 1961, to bring it into line with GM's current styling "language".

At the same time as he was revamping the EJ, Joe styled the EH.

His work on the EJ and EH led to his promotion to Styling Director at Holden where he established Holden's first Technical Centre.

Joe's career at GM began in February 1937. He had just turned 21 years old. His first assignments were in the Oldsmobile studio.

In March 1938 he was retrenched from GM because of an economic downturn and then re-hired four months later into the La Salle studio.

On 10th January 1945 he was promoted to Assistant Chief Designer for Pontiac and in January 1949 was given the coveted role of Chief Designer, Cadillac.

In 1951 he was transferred to the Chevrolet studio where his resume includes the interior of the first Corvette and the 1955-57 Chevrolets.

On 12th January 1957 he went to Pontiac as Chief Designer where he developed 1959 wide track Pontiac and its image defining split grille.

Come January 1961 Joe was given the role of Chief Designer Body Co-Ordination, which meant liaising with

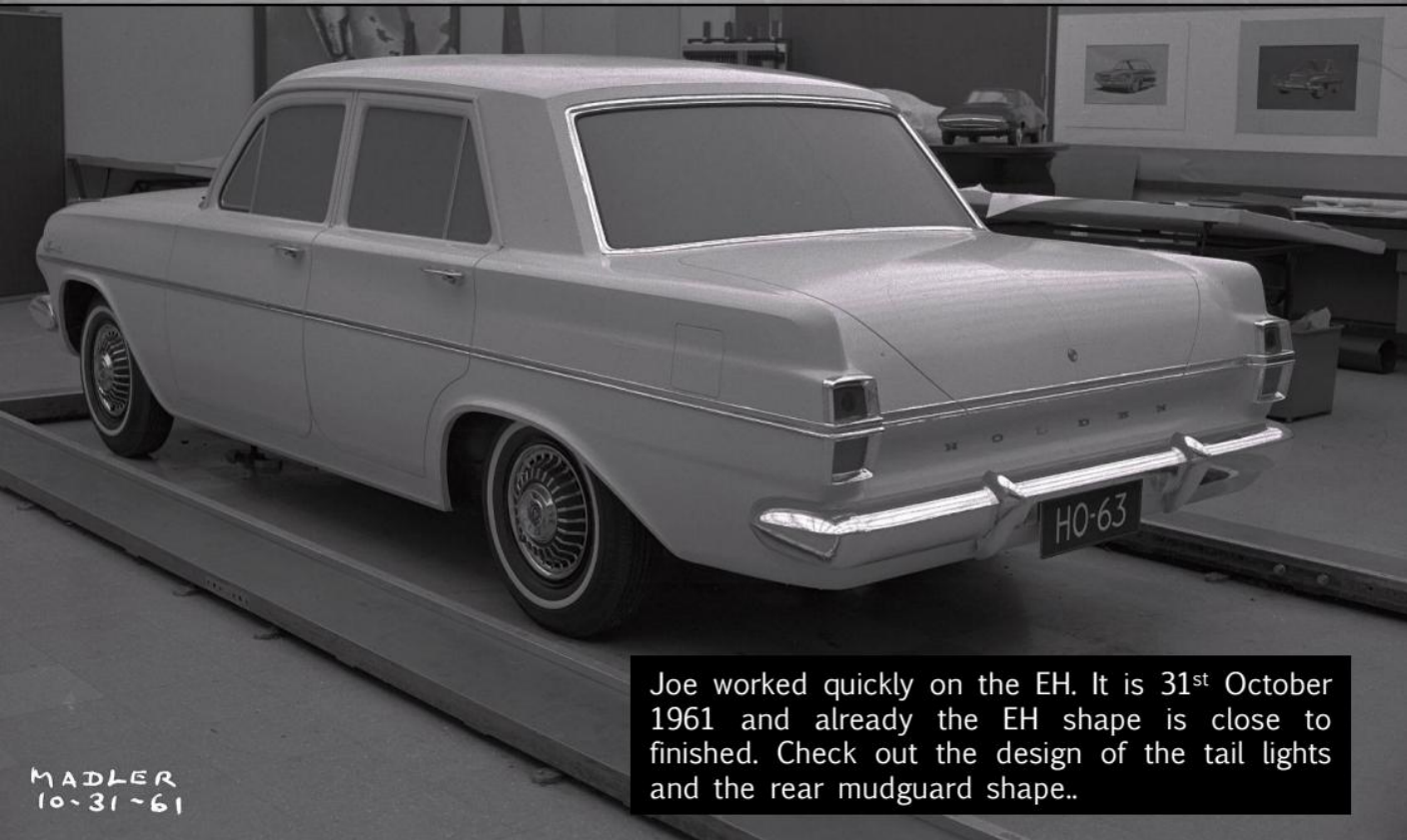


It is 23rd August 1961, and this is Joe's first idea of what the EJ ought to look like. Note that the rear pillar has a more of an EH shape. This is a two sided model. The right side features the final EJ rear pillar design (see next page).



Right side of the EJ prototype. Note sharper rear mudguard line on left side compared to right side which has a softer line.

MADLER
9-11-61



Joe worked quickly on the EH. It is 31st October 1961 and already the EH shape is close to finished. Check out the design of the tail lights and the rear mudguard shape..

MADLER
10-31-61

all the studios to ensure consistency of styling themes across GM. This role put him in a unique position to overview design development world wide.

He was transferred to Australia in January 1963 and took over as Holden's Styling Director.

Joe was someone who GM styling boss, Bill Mitchell, implicitly trusted to ensure Holden's styling was consistent with the direction Mitchell wanted GM's efforts to take.

In a 1986 interview at the Benson

Ford Research Centre in Detroit Mitchell explained Joe's promotion: "I put Joe Schemansky in Australia, and there was a new guy (Leo Pruneau) following him."

In addition to the EH and HR, Joe's legacy at Holden includes the 1969 Torana, the GTR-X Torana, the Hurricane, the HK, HT, HG and HQ. He retired in 1975 and Leo Pruneau took over as design chief at Holden.

Between them, Joe and Leo were responsible for the design direction of Holden from 1963 to 1985.

That's almost three million cars.

1959 Pontiac. Joe's split grille theme defined the brand until GM terminated it in 2009.



In this fabulous publicity photo, taken in 1956, it shows Joe Schemansky in the foreground with his back to the camera, while Chevrolet Styling Studio boss, Clare MacKichan in grey suit, talks with Bob Caderet. Note the 1956 Chev on the right and the clay of the 1957 Chev in the background. Caderet styled the 1956 Corvette.





Above: Joe in the late 1980s at a Holden function, with a HQ. (source: HRC).
Below: Styling proposal for the 1955 Chevrolet from May 1953. Joe had considerable input into it.



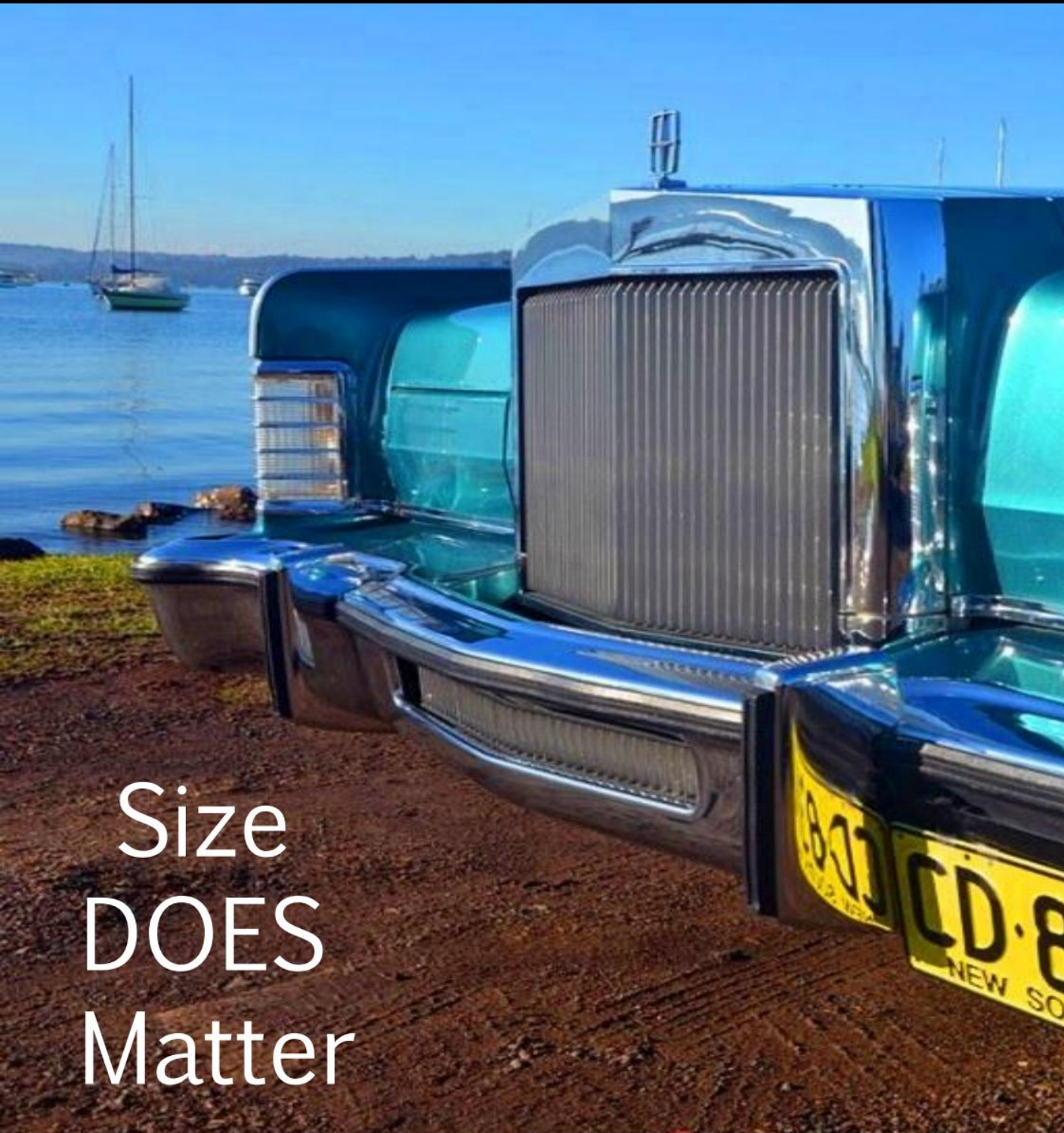
DAWSON
5-20-53

7743

Buick and Lincoln



1970s American Luxury





L I N C O L N



“By that night I had bought a 1978 Lincoln Continental Mark V coupe and within 12 months had I bought three 1979 Lincoln Continental Town Cars.”



Bill Kington's turquoise 1979 Lincoln Continental Town Car





The 1978 Mark V was America's most expensive production car

They do not make them like Bill Kington's late '70s Lincolns any more.

He has four of them and whenever he takes one out for a drive it always attract attention.

"I get the thumbs up, lots of cheery waves and stares of disbelief that such a big car actually exists, Bill told us.

Make no mistake, Bill's Lincolns are huge automobiles. At six and a half meters long and over two meters wide they occupy a decent piece of roadway.

Bill acquired his collection on impulse. "I went to classic car show with a friend who is a collector. A 1970s Mercury was being negotiated into a tiny car space and jiggling like a jelly in the process. It looked like fun to me. My friend explained that a late seventies American car has all the comforts of modern cars and are very keenly priced compared to a similar aged Australian classic. By that night I had bought a 1978 Lincoln Continental Mark V coupe and within 12 months had I bought three 1979 Lincoln Continental Town Cars."





Above: One of the Town Cars in the USA prior to shipping to Australia.
Below: the 1979 Lincoln styling themes car be traced back to the 1961 Continental.





Bill Kington with one of his 1979 Lincoln Continental Town Cars

Bill is right about the current price of late seventies American autos. You can land a low mileage, fully optioned example in Australia for under \$25,000.

One of Bill's Town Cars has a mere 10,000 km on it. "It's like new", Bill says, "and still has that new car smell".

The Collection

Looking at his collection one by one, the first in the garage was the '78 Continental Mark V two door hardtop. These land yachts are said to be the largest 2 door coupes ever built.

It is a Diamond Jubilee Edition, celebrating Ford's 75th anniversary. Only 5159 were built.

Originally purchased new by a judge in Ohio who died in 1983, the car sat unused for 30 years.

It was then imported by a collector in Queensland and Bill acquired it in late 2014.

The Mark V has every available power option in the known universe, plus four wheel disc brakes, climate control air conditioning, quadraphonic stereo, luxuriously deep carpeting and that wonderful soft quiet ride



that can only come from a full frame chassis and wads of thick sound deadening material stuffed into every nook and cranny.

Up front is a 6.6 litre V8 but its horsepower rating, a smallish 124kw, reflects the era of power sapping smog controls.

The Diamond Jubilee was available in only two colours: Diamond Blue and Jubilee Gold.

Whichever colour was chosen, it was repeated inside the car

One of the defining styling motifs of the seventies, the opera window in the rear pillar, features Diamond



Jubilee Script and a simulated diamond chip laminated between the glass.

The 1978 Diamond Jubilee Edition carries another distinction of being the most expensive American made car available in 1978, at \$US22,000.

Of Bill's three Town Cars the silver

example is the one with the lowest mileage. It shows just 10,000 kilometres of travel.

It is a "Williamsburg Edition", which was a cosmetic option featuring a two tone silver colour scheme, crimson red velour interior and a silver, padded vinyl roof.





Even the small quarter vent windows are power operated.

Next on the roster is the Turquoise Town Car, with just 22,000km on it.

“This is the one which photographs the best” Bill says.

Finally there is the white with red interior example. This one has a 50,000km on it and was sourced from Florida.

Bill believes that the low mileage on seventies Lincolns stems largely from the demographic of the first owners.

“They tended to be bought by retired folk, who had a bit of money, and who kept them in top condition and did not drive them long distances” he explains.

He also has found is that they are significantly over engineered. “Ford was obviously intent on building a car that was strong and reliable. For example, I’ve got a spare headlight and interior light switch mechanism. It is made out of metal, weighs about 500gms and is 15 centimetres long. It is a solid bit of engineering and was built to endure.”







So how does Bill decide which car to drive?

“That’s easy” he admits,

“I rotate them out of a storage facility as often as possible. I have an aim of improving each one a little bit while it is in the garage. It maybe a touch up of the paint, or cleaning it or having it serviced”.

Bill took us for a cruise in the Williamsburg Edition. That such a large moving object can be controlled from such a small steering wheel is one of the marvels of the modern world.

Lincoln Standard Features

- "MILES TO EMPTY" – the first onboard digital computer in a production car
- Climate controlled air conditioning
- Heated external mirrors
- Heated rear screen
- 4 individual reading lamps
- Foot lighting in floor wells
- Door lighting when door opens
- Time controllable courtesy lamps
- 4 illuminated cigarette lighters
- Coach lamps in door pillars
- Side lights for turning
- Headlights come on automatically
- Headlights dip automatically with sensitivity control
- Time control for headlights turning off ("Follow-Me-Home Function")
- Illuminated external thermometer on driver's mirror
- 6-way electric seats with optional lumbar support adjustment
- Quadraphonic stereo system with 8-track cartridge player
- AM/FM radio with foot pedal control to find station
- Electric antenna
- 2-speed hideaway wipers with infinite intermittent function
- Tinted windows
- Both sun visors with courtesy mirrors and 2-level lighting controls
- Day/night rear vision mirror
- Central locking
- 4 x electric windows plus electric quarter vents
- Frameless glass windows
- 8-ounce super thick carpeting
- Twin headlights with automatic covers
- 4-wheel ventilated disc brakes
- Cruise control
- Windscreen washers spray from blade for instant clean
- Alloy wheels
- Reinforced bumper bars with thick aluminium section behind steel then large shock absorbers running back into chassis – front and rear
- 6 seat belts, all inertia reel
- Tilt-adjustable steering wheel
- Lane changing function on indicators
- "Hill Hold" – vehicle remains stationary at uphill traffic lights without applying brake
- Auto release handbrake when vehicle put in gear
- 6.6 litre (400 cubic inch) V8.
- Automatic transmission





When sitting in the front passenger seat, six-way powered, of course, the front mudguards and bonnet are so long they stretch out into tomorrow, and the rear seat is so far away it seems to be still in yesterday.

The seats are deep pile plush velour, that envelope you in softness.

The power window switches fall nicely to hand, but who in their right mind would ever open a window in a air conditioned Lincoln, except when withdrawing cash from a drive-through automatic bank teller?

Bill started the engine and I could not hear it running. Once underway the car just wafts along in absolute silence and serene stability.

Occupants are totally isolated from the pesky vagaries of the outside environment. Changes in road surface and potholes do not make their presence known.

And people do stare, and point and take photos as we pass by.

So what's next on Bill's car buying agenda? A change of brands is being contemplated.

Bill has recently bought a 1984 Buick Electra Park Avenue.

It is still in the USA and he plans to use it on a lengthy road trip later this year and then ship it back.

Some folks have all the fun!

“Deuce & a Quarter”







Despite being one of GM's first downsized big cars of the 1970s there is nothing small about John Gerdzt's 1978 Buick.

This car has a presence on the road which few cars can command.

The car is probably visible from space.

The interior is as big as all outdoors.

The seats are deep cushioned arm chairs and are swathed in tan velour.

And it carries three storied names from the Buick's illustrious history: Electra, Park Avenue and 225.

The "Electra" was always the top of the line Buick and shared its "C" body with



Cadillac. The name was first used in 1959 and was the car for those who could afford a Cadillac, but wanted something more understated.

It was named to honour Electra Wagoneer Biggs, the sister-in-law of GM's boss at the time, Harlow Curtis. Electra was a famous sculptor whose father owned a half million acre ranch in Texas.

"Park Avenue" was an interior trim level on the Electra, featuring pillow topped, deep cushioned seats, special door trim, extra sound proofing and as much velour as could be tucked, rolled and stretched across the interior of a car without it actually impeding operation of the vehicle.







And then there's the fabled numbers "225", reflecting the car's original 225 inch length in 1959.

Buick fans know it by its street name "the deuce and a quarter".

John's coupe was built in the USA for Joe Mitchell, who was the chairman of Carter GM, one of Vancouver, Canada's, biggest GM dealerships.

Being Canadian delivered the dashboard dials and instruments are all in metric.

"I've been in contact with Joe Mitchell", John says, "and he reckons the car was one of his favourites".

Mr Mitchell kept for about a year and then sold it to a young Australian who was living in Canada.

When the young Aussie returned home in 1981 he brought the car with him.

Oddly, it was converted to RHD in Canada before shipping down under.

The conversion was reasonable job but one thing the Canadians could not get quite right was the linkages for the column automatic transmission selector.

The fix was to install an LH Torana console and T-Bar set up.

Rear seat passengers sink into the voluminous velour pillows. This is American automobile luxury, 1970s style.







John found the 1918 Buick as a rusted hulk, below, and restored it as a Speedster.





John bought the Buick in 2005 from its lady owner. It had been languishing in a shed for eleven years.

It had only been driven about 2,000km a year during the period she had owned it.

The car was on ok condition, but needed some cosmetic work.

"It took me two weeks just to fix the dashboard", John told us. He had to replace all of the wood inlays which had deteriorated.

The bolt-on wire wheels on the Buick are not standard. "They are probably Cadillac wheels, but I know they were factory supplied" John says of his research into the car.

John drives the car at least two or three times a week. "Supermarket car parks are the main problem. Sometimes it can be a bit difficult getting in and out of the car because the doors are so long that they do not open wide enough if the parking spaces are narrow", he admits.

Out on the road the big Buick simply wafts along. The 5.7 litre, long stroke Buick V8 engine is totally under stressed. At 110kph it is barely registering 2,000rpm.

That's because there is a 2.41 diff in it", John explains. "It does not get away from the lights very quickly but it rolls along just fine on a highway."



Above: John's first Buick was this 1925 Tourer, which he restored in 1968.
Below: Buick called it the 225, but it was actually only 222 inches long by 1978.





Above: Fixed rear windows were all the rage in the late 1970s

Mind you, this car does not need speed to attract attention. American Buicks of the late seventies are a rare sight on Australia roads. John's is the only '78 Park Avenue coupe known on the road in Australia.

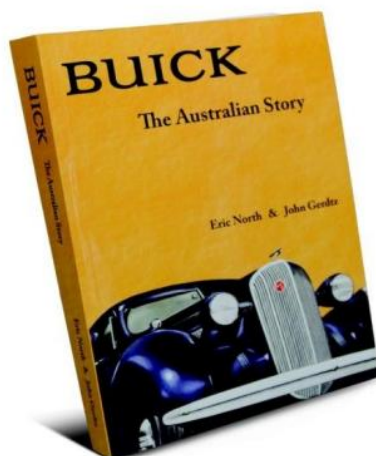
While we were out and about on a sunny Friday morning in north western Sydney, the "deuce and a quarter" drew admiring glances and much taking of photos.

John is no stranger to Buicks. He is one of the founding members of the Buick club in NSW back in 1972. The first of the marque he owned was a 1925 Tourer, which he restored in 1968.

His second Buick was a 1918 which John found as a rusted hulk. It was restored and converted into a speedster body. "It would go at 90kph all day," John says, "but do not try to stop it!"

In 1980 he bought a 1929 Buick. "I restored every nut and bolt on that one" John says proudly. It has now been sold.

John is also the co-editor with Eric North of two books about Buick.. One is *Buick: The Australian Story* and the other is *Buick: Across the Pond and Beyond*.



Design To Driveway



Downsized Buicks





Styling proposal for the 1977 Buick was close to final production version seen on next page.

From a 2016 perspective, John Gertdz's 1978 Buick is a big car. But compared to Electra 225s from previous years, it was demonstrably shorter, leaner and more fuel efficient.

The work on downsizing GM full sized cars (what they called the B and C bodies) began in 1974 right as the oil embargo crisis hit the US and petrol had to be rationed.

The sky high jump in petrol prices and the long lines at petrol stations combined with the US federal government compelling car companies to meet fuel consumption targets, known as CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy).

The industry scrambled to comply and consumers began to appreciate the idea that saving fuel might be a good for their wallet.

GM was no exception. Across the company the word went out: CUT THE WEIGHT! IMPROVE GAS MILAGE! The ambitious target was to eliminate 400kg from each car model.

Speaking to Motor Trend magazine in 1977 when the smaller B and C bodied cars were released, General Motors styling boss, Bill Mitchell, said "We knew it was coming. We knew the days of big engines were numbered and it was obvious that we would have to get weight out of our cars".

Being accountable for the exterior and interior styling, Bill Mitchell knew he had to make the cars smaller without turning off buyers who had been accustomed to decades of advertising which shouted out that bigger is better and longer means luxury.



The 225 was actually 222 inches long by 1978, and the wheelbase was 3020mm (119 inches).

And one more thing. The B and C bodied cars would also be Mitchell's last as head of design, for he would retire in 1978 after 43 years with GM, and he knew only too well that his design legacy was at stake.

It was probably Mitchell's toughest design assignment at General Motors.

"We wanted to make sure (these cars) would look better than before", he told Motor Trend, "so we took the puffiness out and put in the sharp, razor-edged sheer profile".

"The cars had to be as sheer as possible" Mitchell said, "so they would not appear shortened up."

"I call it the sheer look", he said. "This a new look" he added.

Well, sort of a new look.

Like any smart senior executive, Mitchell had tested the waters long before the '77 cars hit the dealerships. He'd already launched a new look Chevrolet Nova in 1975, which was significantly less rounded than its predecessor.

In 1976 he used the Nova underpinnings to great effect to create the sleek and small Cadillac Seville. The Seville was very much a 'sheer look' car. No curves rode here. The Cadillac was all sharp folds and tight angles.



The size difference between the 1976 Buick Electra (above) and the 1977 version (below) is clear to see. 1976 was the last year of the pillarless hardtops sedans and coupes.





GM tested buyer acceptance to downsizing with the 1976 Cadillac Seville. It was a big success.

And if we go back into the 1960s, Mitchell spoke of his '63 Riviera as having a 'sheer look', plus Elwood Engel had already given the 1961 Lincoln Continental a very sheer look.

Motor Trend also pointed out that the two door B body coupes bear an "obvious resemblance to the Fiat 130 coupe."

To achieve the 'sheer look' on the B and C bodies, the cars were all made taller and narrower. Front and rear overhangs were cut back and the curved body sides were straightened. Plus, wheel bases were chopped back by up to 10cm. And all of this was done without sacrificing interior space.

There were some casualties along the way. Gone from the GM line ups were the two and four door pillarless hardtops.

Not having to engineer these models sped up the development process and rationalised the range.

The impact of the downsized cars was initially mixed when they were first released. Some new car customers rushed dealers to buy the larger superseded models. After a few months, when buyers found that interior room had not been reduced, sales took off.

In 1978 GM's intermediates and E body cars (Riviera, Toronado and Eldorado) were downsized, and the great race to go smaller was on in earnest.

Ford initially laughed at the new GM cars but as sales went up, they downsized as well. A new, smaller Ford LTD arrived in 1979 and in 1980 Lincoln debuted its new smaller Continental Town Car.

The 1979 Cadillac Eldorado. Downsized and looking slim and sheer. Compare the styling themes with the 1961 Lincoln Continental on page 70.



Design To Driveway



The Lincoln Legacy of Edsel, Eugene, Elwood, Henry, Lee, Jack, Bob and Bill

Above: Elwood Engel's iconic 1961 Lincoln Continental design.

Below: Edsel Ford's 1939/40 custom built Lincoln Continental Mark I set the styling theme for all subsequent Lincoln Marks





The clay proposal of Edsel's Continental. (All photos: Henry Ford Museum and Ford media)

Before we start, let's sought out how is who in this story.

Edsel Ford: Son of Henry Ford and champion of styling as a competitive advantage, something his father did not believe.

Eugene "Bob" Gregorie: Ford's chief designer in the 1930s and a supporter of Edsel's ambition to sell well designed cars.

Henry Ford II: Edsel's son and Chairman of Ford from the forties to the eighties. Known as "Hank the Deuce"

Elwood Engel: Car stylist at Ford in the 1950s. Shaped the 1961 Lincoln Continental, which he originally intended to be the '61 Thunderbird.

William (Bill) Ford: Edsel's son, Henry II's younger brother. He championed the development of the Continental Mark II.

Lee Iacocca: Brash Ford boss who developed the Mustang. Fired by Henry II in 1978. Moved to Chrysler and saved it from bankruptcy.

Bob Lutz: Was boss of Ford Europe and championed the aerodynamic Ford Sierra. Was enticed to Chrysler by Iacocca in 1986.

Jack Telnack; Ford styling boss in the 1980s. Introduced the "aero" look to Ford USA.

All photos courtesy of Henry Ford Museum and Ford Motor Company. Chrysler photos courtesy of FCA group.



The styling of Bill Kingdon's Lincoln Continental Mark V and Town Cars have their genesis in two fabled automobiles.

The first is the 1939/40 Continental Mark I. The second is the 1961 Lincoln, arguably one of the 1960s most iconic car shapes, and recycled by Ford and Chrysler for almost three decades.

Back in 1939 Edsel Ford asked Bob Gregorie to customise a Lincoln Zephyr convertible, for his personal use while on holiday in Florida. It was called The Continental.

Low and wide the Continental featured a long bonnet and short rear deck as well as a covered spare tyre attached to the boot.



William (Bill) Ford ran the Continental division at Ford in 1956 and 1957. It made only one car, the Mark II. Note exhaust pipes exiting through the rear bumper bar

The admiration for the car was so great that Ford decided to release it as a limited-production model in 1940.

It was uber-luxury for the times and sold in small numbers.

The car returned to production after WWII but disappeared from the production roster in 1948.

In the early 1950s Ford could see Cadillac's profitability with its luxury Eldorado, so it created a separate Continental division to produce a single ultra-luxury model.

Released in 1955 it was tagged the Continental Mark II, suggesting a strong continuity with the original "Mark I" Continental. Its styling, followed the Continental Mark I's philosophy of a long bonnet, short



Above: Elwood Engel's proposal for the 1961 Thunderbird. It became the '61 Lincoln.
Below: Bill Ford, right, looks over a 1952 clay model of the Mark II. Note the split grille idea.





Authors David Holls and Michael Lamm in their book *A Century of Automotive Style* say that the 1961 Lincoln was the car that won Elwood Engel is job as Chrysler's design boss, after he was passed over for the same job at Ford. And Holls ought to know. He was GM's Design Director. His resume includes the '59 Cadillac, '66 Riviera, '70 Chevrolet Monte Carlo and the '70½ Camaro.

boot and a spare tyre "hump". The price was a jaw dropping \$US10,000, double that of two standard Lincolns.

Bill Ford was given the job of running this new part of Ford.

Problem was, the Mark II was a commercial failure. It struggled into 1957 and was then quietly terminated. Around 3,000 cars were produced and Ford lost money on each of them.

And then came Elwood Engel's 1961 Lincoln. Originally intended to be the 1961 Thunderbird, its understated, knife-edge styling accented with minimal chrome earned the car critical acclaim.

It was given the honour of carrying the "Continental" name, but not "Mark".

And while the styling was being internationally applauded, Cadillac still out sold Lincoln by five to one.

"But why was Cadillac out selling Lincoln?" Ford executives asked themselves.

The answer was because the Continental's greatest strength, its styling, was also its major weakness.

Ford's research found that the Continental was a match for Cadillac in most *objective* categories. What it did not satisfy was ego. Its elegantly understated styling meant it did not appeal to those who wanted everyone to know they owned an expensive luxury car.

In this area Cadillac's more overt styling won hands down.



Elwood Engel's 1961 Lincoln (below) and his look-alike 1966 Chrysler Imperial (above). After leaving Ford, Engel reused this clean and sharp design theme for over a decade on all of Chrysler's products. And when Lee Iacocca went from Ford to Chrysler he continued to encourage the theme. GM later took this "sheer look" theme and rolled it out across all of its downsized cars of the late 1970s. Compare these cars with the 1979 Eldorado on page 69.





The clean edged 1967 Chrysler Imperial four door hardtop was one of Engel's best designs, and predated GM's Bill Mitchell's "sheer look" by a decade.

Meanwhile there was some politics playing out at Ford.

Elwood Engel believed he was in line to get the top styling job at Ford in 1962.

But he missed out on it.

He then accepted the top design job at Chrysler where he immediately imposed his design philosophy.

Engel like to "fill out the box". He preferred oblong shaped cars with defined edges. And if you look closely as most Chrysler products during his tenure, they all conform to this design language.

Not surprisingly within 18 months of Engel taking over, Lincoln-like cars began to emerge from Chrysler.

The big Imperials were given all of the Mark and Continental styling themes.

Back at Ford, and fresh from his Mustang success, Lee Iacocca was noticing that the 1964 Pontiac Grand Prix and '63 Buick Riviera were starting to erode Thunderbird sales.

He was well aware that GM was planning to launch more models to fight the Thunderbird.

Iacocca was also concerned that the Engel styled Chrysler's were gaining traction in the market place and becoming more Lincoln than Lincoln.

More Lincoln than Lincoln, the 1965 Chrysler Imperial.







What he needed was a car that was even more luxurious than the Thunderbird, and which could compete with anything Chrysler and GM threw at him.

What he needed was *one* car that proudly and overtly symbolised all of the successful design elements of Lincoln and could retake styling leadership.

What he needed was a car that owners could brag about to their neighbours, a car with driveway authority.

What he needed was luxury car that made lots of profit.

And he got it.

It is automotive legend that in mid 1965 Iacocca had a late night brain wave.

Lee's idea was this: Take the Thunderbird two door hardtop, put a Rolls Royce type grille on the front, reuse the 1961 Continental knife edge styling ideas, give it the Mark II spare tire hump on the boot lid, make the bonnet the longest in American car history, fill it full of every comfort option known to mankind, sell it for an ultra-high price and give it the hallowed name of Lincoln Continental Mark III.

Instant retro chic!

When Henry Ford II saw the styling prototype he loved it so much he gave it his OK immediately.

So successful was the Mark III and its IV and V successors that from 1968 to 1979 Ford sold over 600,000 of them making almost \$US2,000 profit per car. That's 1.2 billion dollars. Yes, \$1.2 billion.







Above: A 1982 Chrysler Imperial, a Lincoln look-a-like if ever there was one. This is the Frank Sinatra special edition. Just what you need for that one last drive along the Vegas strip.

He also loved that it cost relatively little to develop because it used so much of the Thunderbird's engineering, structure, glass, roof, cowl and inner panels.

Launched in mid-1968 the Continental Mark III's price matched the Cadillac Eldorado, but it had more inclusions.

The Mark III was not a subtle car. It loudly told everyone you had money. That was the point of it.

In its first twelve months it grossed almost \$US300 million. Hank the Deuce and Lee knew they were onto a winner!

No matter how much they pushed up the price, people still bought it.

Very quickly, the Mark's upright grille was applied to all other Lincolns.

So successful was the Mark III, and its IV and V successors, that from 1968 to 1979 Ford sold over 600,000 of them making almost \$US2,000 profit per car. That's 1.2 billion dollars. Yes, \$1.2 billion.

In 1972 Engel retired from Chrysler, but they continued to use Lincoln design themes.

When Henry Ford II fired Lee Iaccoca in 1978 the Chrysler board offer him the Chairman's job.

To Chrysler he took his continued preference for Lincoln look-alikes.

The "high point" of imitation just has to be the 1982 Imperial coupe, pictured above. It is simply a Mark V on a Chrysler chassis.

But like all good things, the need for huge, petrol guzzling coupes and sedans started to be questioned.

As petrol prices rose, the sales of big cars started to fall. GM was already downsizing their fleet. Chrysler and Ford lagged behind.

But it was not long before they too realised they had to shrink the size of their products.

At Chrysler, Iaccoca hung on to his design preference until Bob Lutz arrived from Ford in 1986.



1982 Mark VII. Smaller, rounded. Sales halved.

Lutz was fresh from his successful launch of the aerodynamic Ford Sierra and championed aerodynamic design at Chrysler.

In 1993 they launched their LH series of “cab forward” cars.

No Rolls Royce grilles or sharp edges were to be seen.

Over at Ford, Jack Telnack had been promoted to global styling boss. He too was a believer in “aero” design.

In 1980 all Lincolns were downsized. The Town Car shape remained the same for almost a decade, but the Mark was taken in a more rounded direction.



All the Marks, 1940-1972.



Above and below: 21st Century Mark IX Shown in 2001.
Inset: 2004 Thunderbird based Mark X concept..



Smaller and rounded did not go over well with the Mark's core demographic. Sales fell and by 1997/98 were dragging along at only 14,000., so the Mark was pensioned off along with the Thunderbird..

In the 1990s the Town Car went through a couple of redesigns, but none captured the past glories. The last of the old breed went along the production line in 2011.

During the last 20 years Ford has tried to rekindle the desire for a new Continental and Mark. They created a number of concepts. (pictured left and on the following pages). None made it into production.

The good news is that Ford have now revived the Continental for 2017. It is pictured below. And it was designed by Australian, Max Wolff, who was poached by Ford from Cadillac.

The car is aimed at China and the USA. No RHD version will be available, so anyone thinking it will be a Fairlane/LTD replacement can forget that notion.

There is no doubt that the styling of

the 1961 Lincoln Continental and the original Mark have been very influential.

So many have copied the design themes and so much money has been made from them.

That's the Lincoln Legacy.



The best Mark, 1978.



The last Mark VIII, 1998. .

2017 Lincoln Continental. Back in Town. But not in Australia.





Lincoln Sentinel of 1995 concept combined the 1940 and 1961 Continental styling themes.





2105 Continental concept.



Henry Ford's Experimental Car It's Made From Soy Beans !





Henry Ford and his plastic car.

Henry Ford liked to invent and on August 13, 1941, he unveiled his “plastic car”.

What grabbed the headlines was the claim the “plastic” was largely made of soybeans.

The car was immediately dubbed the “Soybean Car” by the media.

Henry said the project was a serious attempt to combine the car industry with agriculture.

He also claimed that the “plastic” panels made the car safer than traditional steel cars; and that the car could even roll over without being crushed.

The car comprised a lightweight tubular steel frame onto which the “plastic” panels were bolted.

To save more weight, acrylic sheets were used for windows instead of glass.

The engine was a 60hp flathead Ford V-8.

The finished product weighed less than 900kgs, almost 40% less than a typical American car of the era.

There has always been speculation about the exact ingredients of the “plastic” panels. At the time Ford was very secretive about it all.



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1st

to "grow" automobile parts
on the farm



It has always been a Ford conviction that agriculture and industry are natural partners. That is why Ford has pioneered the use of farm products as automobile materials.

Ford was the first car manufacturer to start growing its own timber. This was in 1919, when Ford purchased a large tract in Northern Michigan, to provide a dependable source of both hard and soft woods.

Ford was the first car manufacturer to acquire its own rubber plantations.

Ford was the first car manufacturer to provide its own tung oil for paints and enamels, by planting tung tree groves.

And perhaps the most striking example of this partnership of farm and factory is the Ford development of the soya bean. Ford was

first to sow, harvest and use the "miracle bean" as a basic industrial material. The soya bean has long been an ingredient of synthetic resin enamels and plastic parts for Ford-built cars. This Ford "first" brought impetus to the plastics industry. It gave farmers a new "money crop".

Today many products go from farm to Ford, to contribute to the beauty, performance and economy of Ford-built cars and trucks. And these products benefit owners and farmers alike, because they bring new values on the one hand . . . new income on the other. Here is another of the Ford advances that mean so much to America.

These in . . . THE FORD SHOW . . . CBS, Tuesdays, 10-10:30 P. M., E.S.T. THE FORD SUNDAY EVENING HOUR . . . ABC, Sundays, 8-9 P. M., E.S.T.

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And because the car no longer exists it is almost impossible to accurately identify the chemical components of the “plastic”.

Some researchers say the chemical formula included soybeans, wheat, hemp and formaldehyde. The current consensus is that the body panels were more likely a conventional plastic, with very little soybean, similar to what was used on that East German icon, the Trabant.

Ford exhibited the car at the Michigan State Fair and then it was mysteriously destroyed. Automotive legend suggests that Ford styling boss Bob Gregorie had the car crushed, but no one has ever provided proof that he did. And Gregorie never said he did.

So was the soy bean car the beginning of a new era that simply needed more time and money to see to fruition? Or was it a folly?

Ford had reportedly invested millions of dollars into the project but twelve weeks after its release the USA was attacked by Japan. All automobile production was suspended as the maximum effort was given to winning World War II.

By the end of the war Ford’s plastic car idea had been forgotten.

Then General Motors resurrected the concept in 1954, and called it the Corvette.

RetroRacing



In 1966, at the United States Road Racing Championship event at Riverside, Pete Brock (the American version) entered two Hino Contessa 1600s in the sedan support races. These rear engined Japanese autos, based on the Renault Daupine design, surprised everyone by running first and second. Brock's partner in the racing was a Japanese based American actor, Bob Dunham (in the #51). Hino supported the racing until it was taken over by Toyota in early 1967.





Above: The Hinos about to lap a VW. Pete Brock is in #73 (Images from Henry Ford Museum)
 Below: "Bonzai" Bob Dunham's Hino gets some mechanical attention.





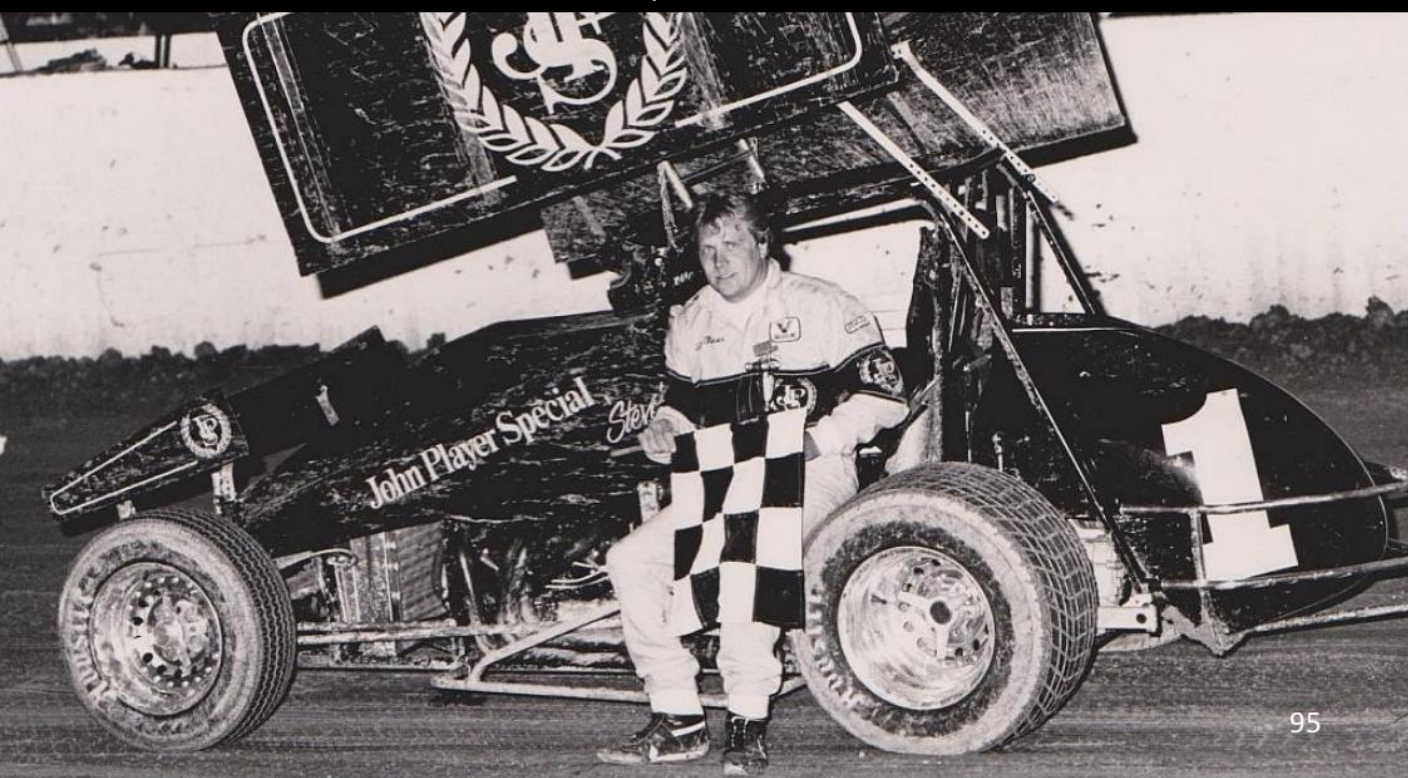
Above: Its 30 years since the JPS Sprintcar team invaded Australia's dirt ovals. The team comprised Americans Steve Kinser and his brother Randy, along with cousins Mark and Kelly Kinser. This team won where ever they appeared. The three guys in front are Karl Kinser, famed sprintcar mechanic, Paul Elrod and the late Brian Healey, who was the team manager.

Below: A rare image of Karl Kinser building the JPS cars at a Sydney workshop in October 1985.





Above: Randy Kinser with his almost completed sprintcar in late October 1985. On 1st November he won the inaugural Sprintcar Masters in Adelaide, held the night before the first F1 Grand Prix. Visiting GP drivers at the speedway watched in disbelief at the speed and ferocity of the racing. Below: Steve Kinser after his first win at Liverpool in December 1985.



40th Historic Winton Special Feature

All Winton photos copyright Andrew Day. www.photosbydaysy.net



Peter Van Summeren off the track at turn one in his 1972 Ford Escort.



40th Historic Winton Special Feature



40th Historic Winton Special Feature



Neil Murdoch does a bit of dirt tracking in his 1938 MG TB Special.



40th Historic Winton Special Feature



Above: Quentin White gets his 1964 Copper S into the grass.



Above: David Anderson is right off the track in his 1967 MGB

Below: Tom Walstab takes his 911 into the dirt



Barry Lyons in his 1971 Ford Falcon XY GT spinning out and off the track at turn one. He rejoined the race soon after.



40th Historic Winton Special Feature



Eric Spokes in his 1955 FJ Holden off at turn one, replicating his previous year's excursion.



40th Historic Winton Special Feature

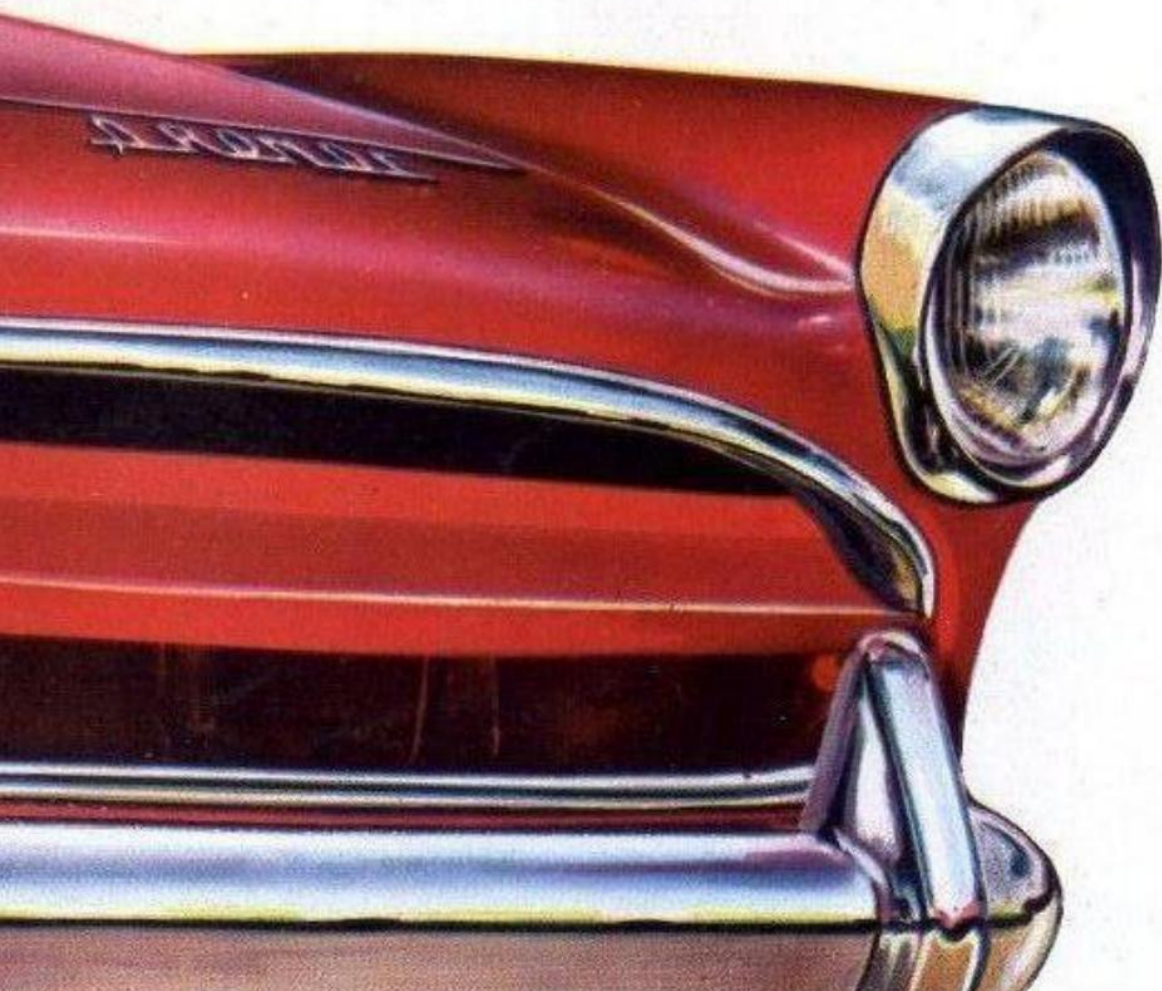


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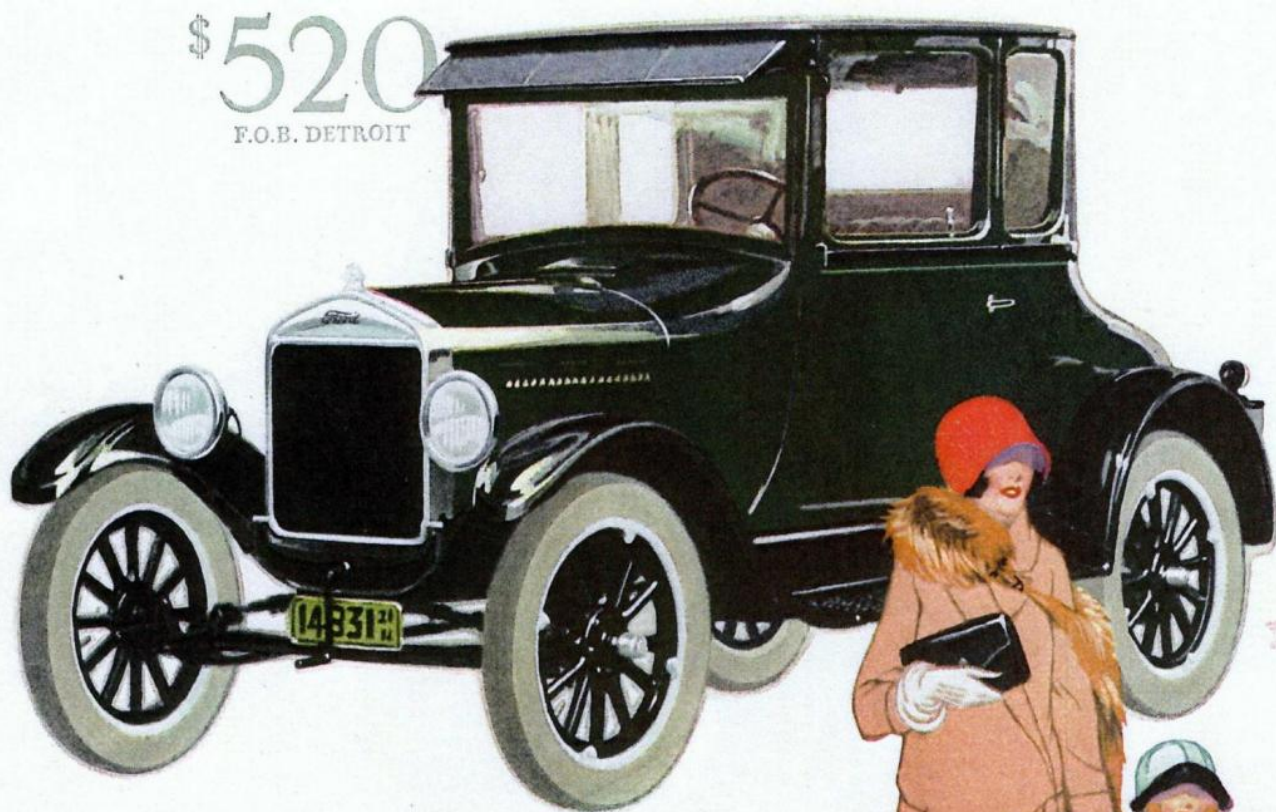
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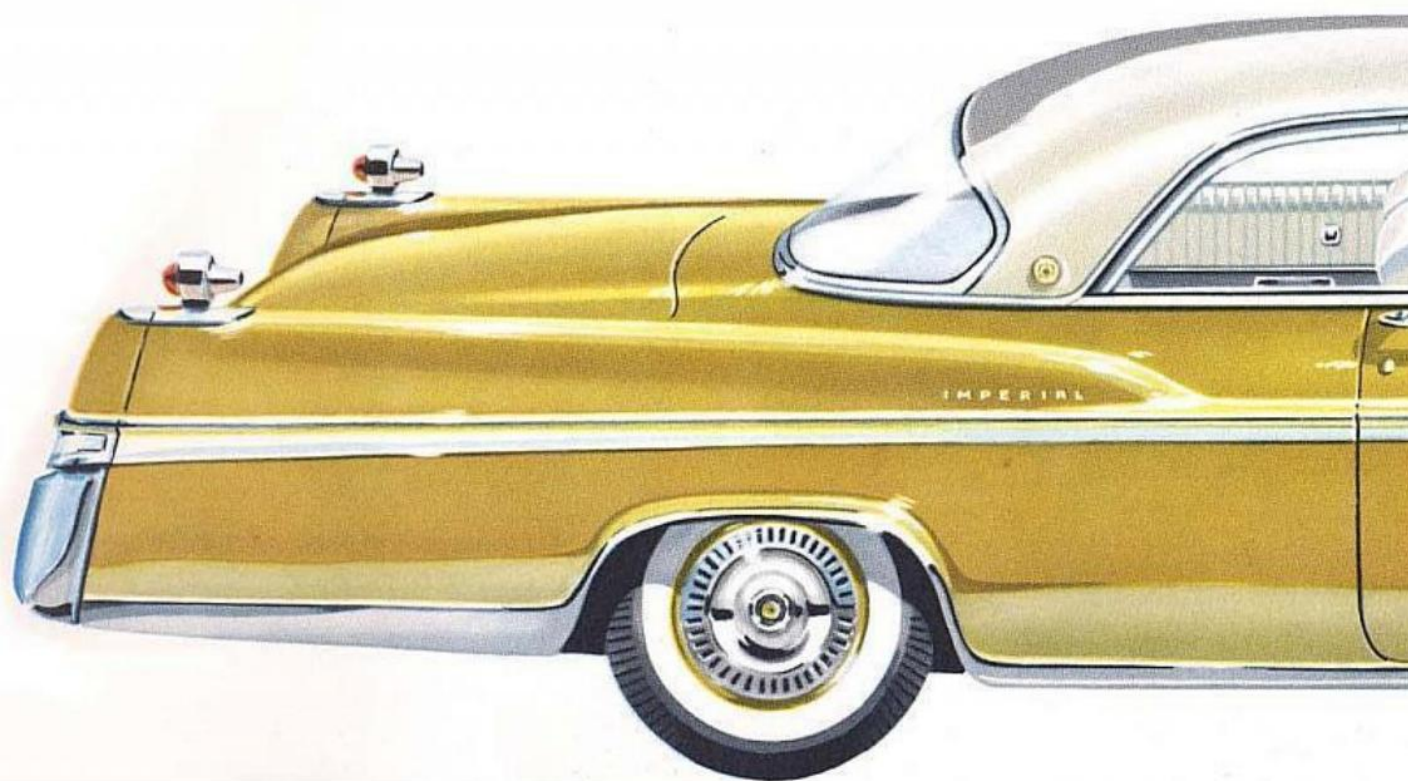


The Ford Coupe with all-steel body finished in deep Channel Green, having interior upholstery to harmonize, and embodying many important refinements in body and chassis, is an ideal car for a woman's personal use. You will particularly like the

streamline effect of the body, the placing of the gas tank under the cowl where it may be conveniently filled from outside the car, the generous compartment under rear deck, the one-piece windshield with hooded sun visor, and the attractive, cozy interior.

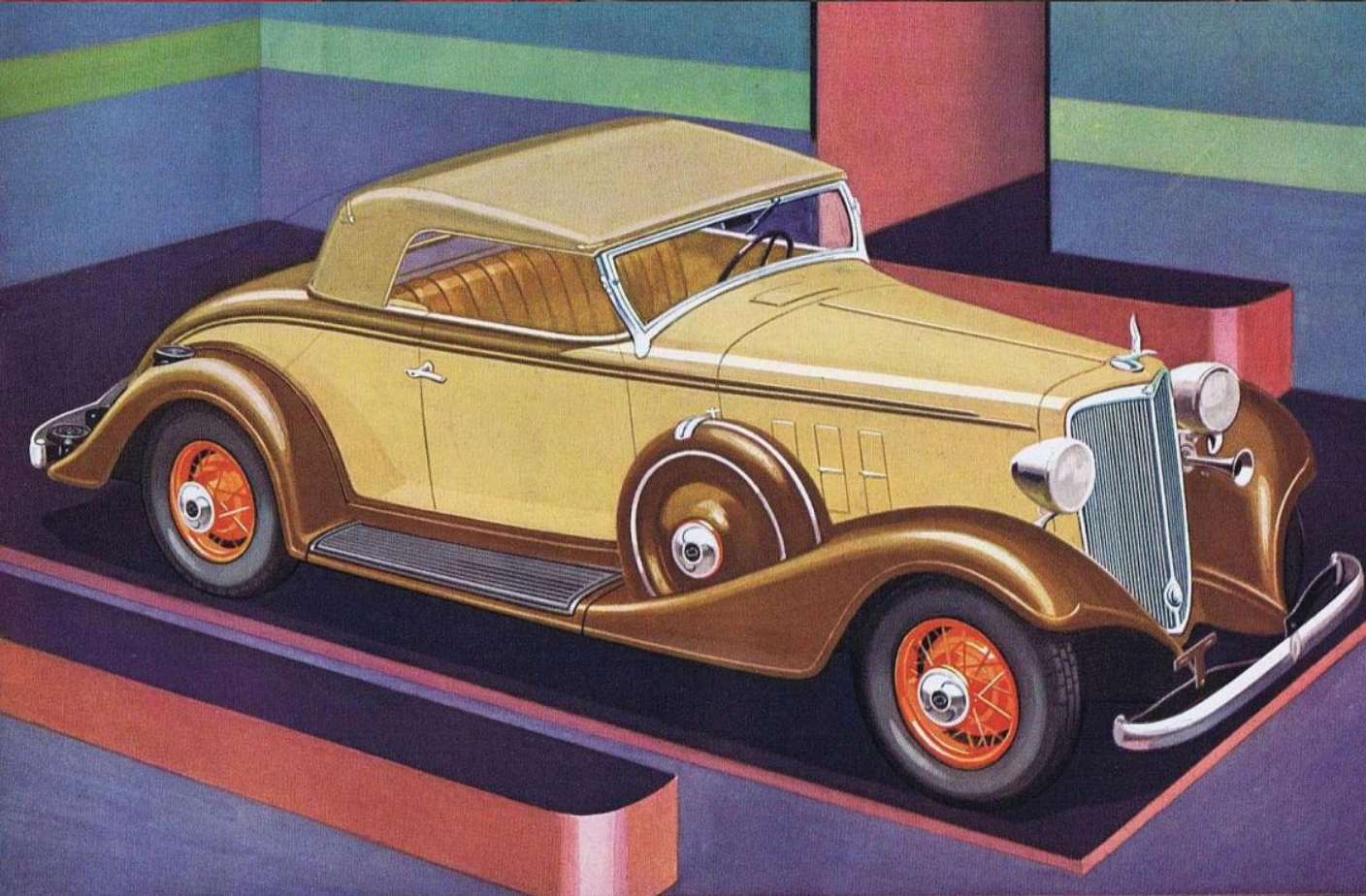
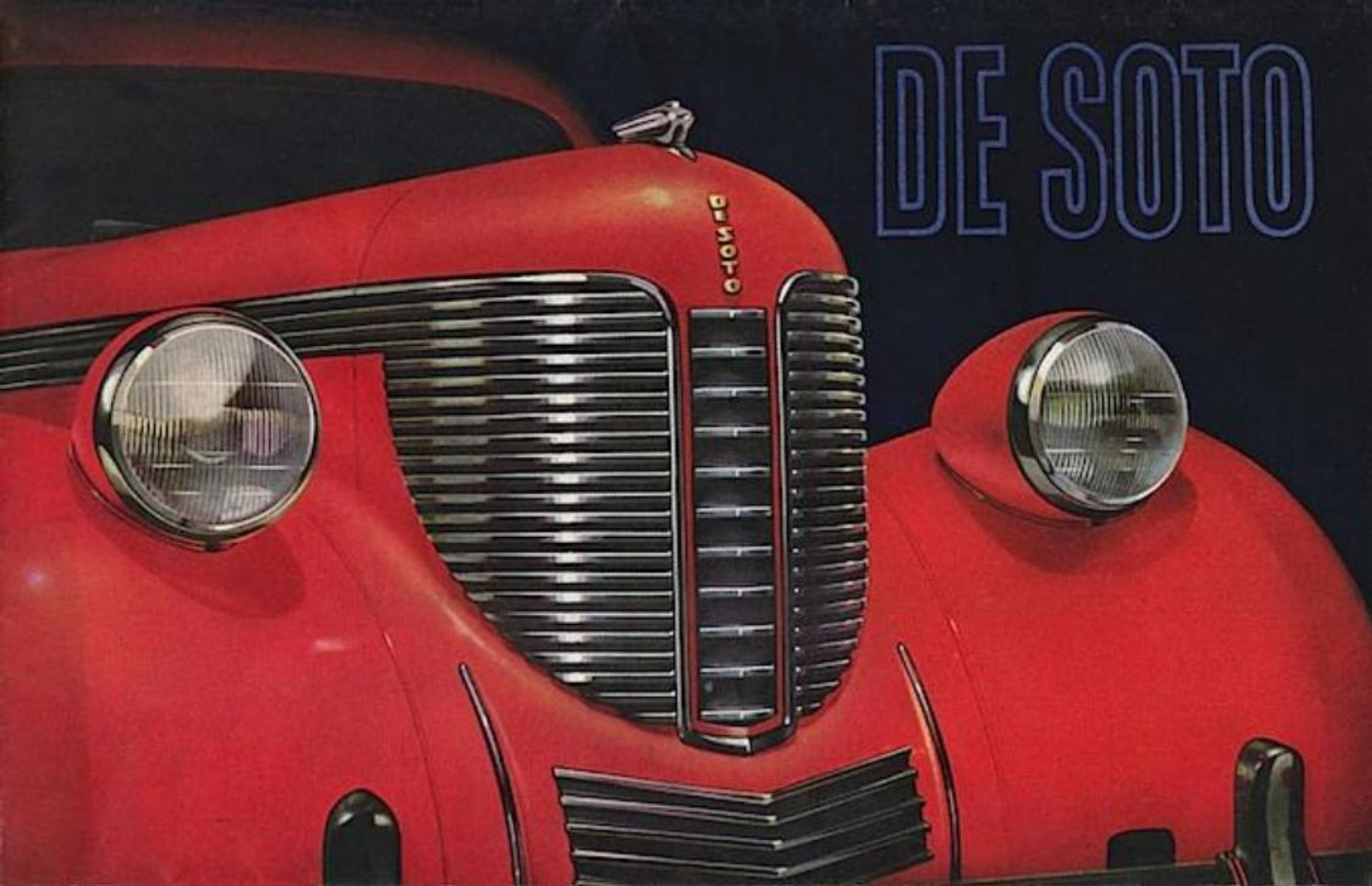
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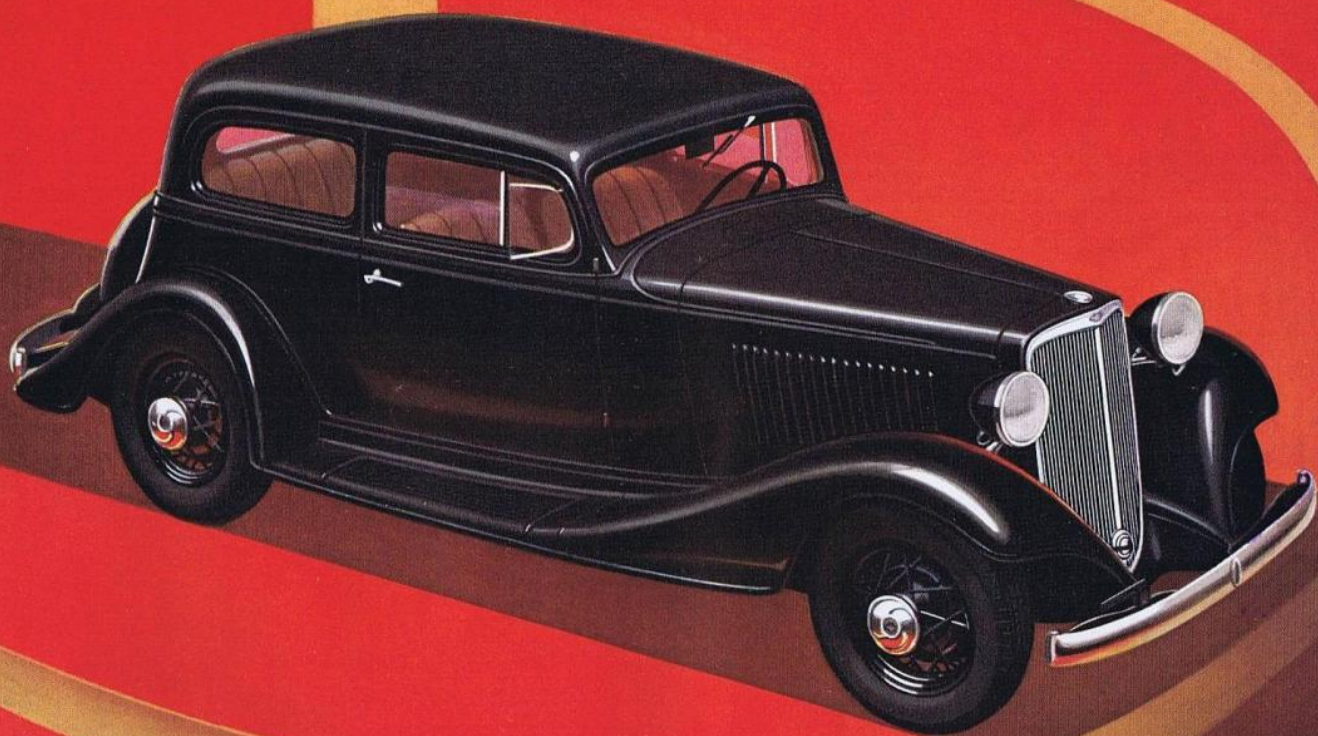
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For 1937



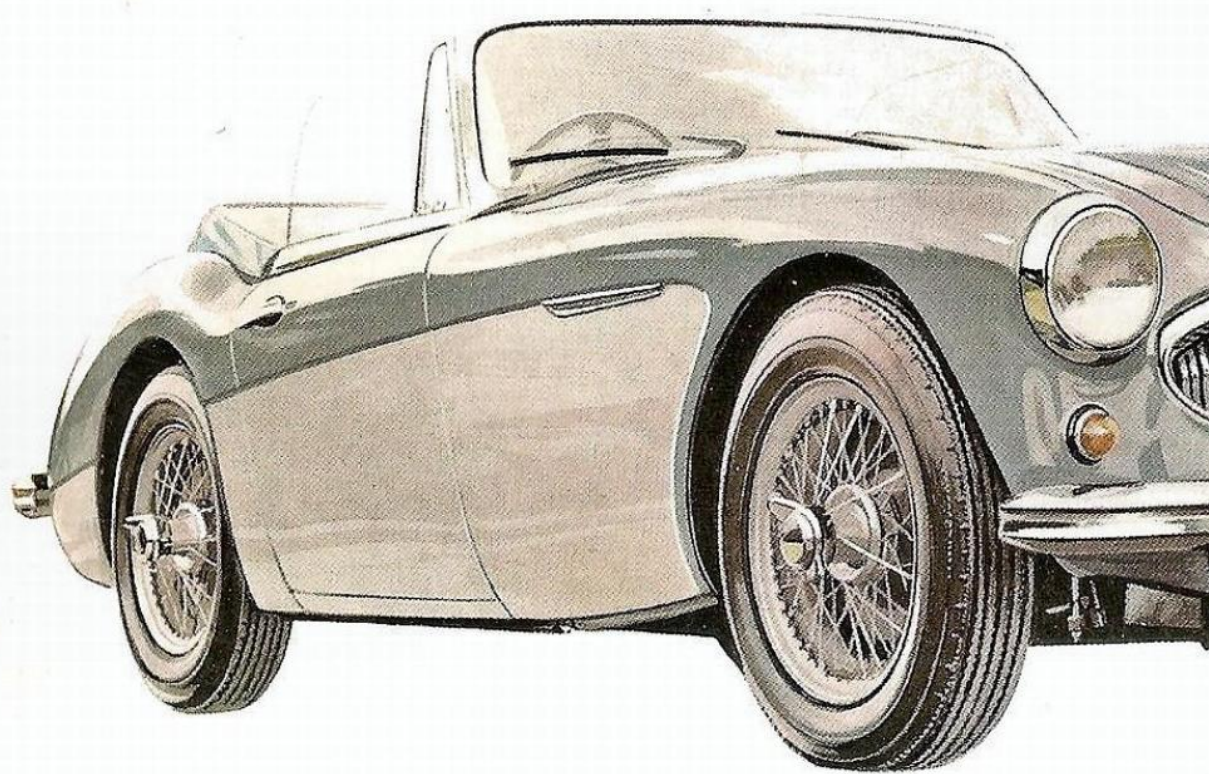
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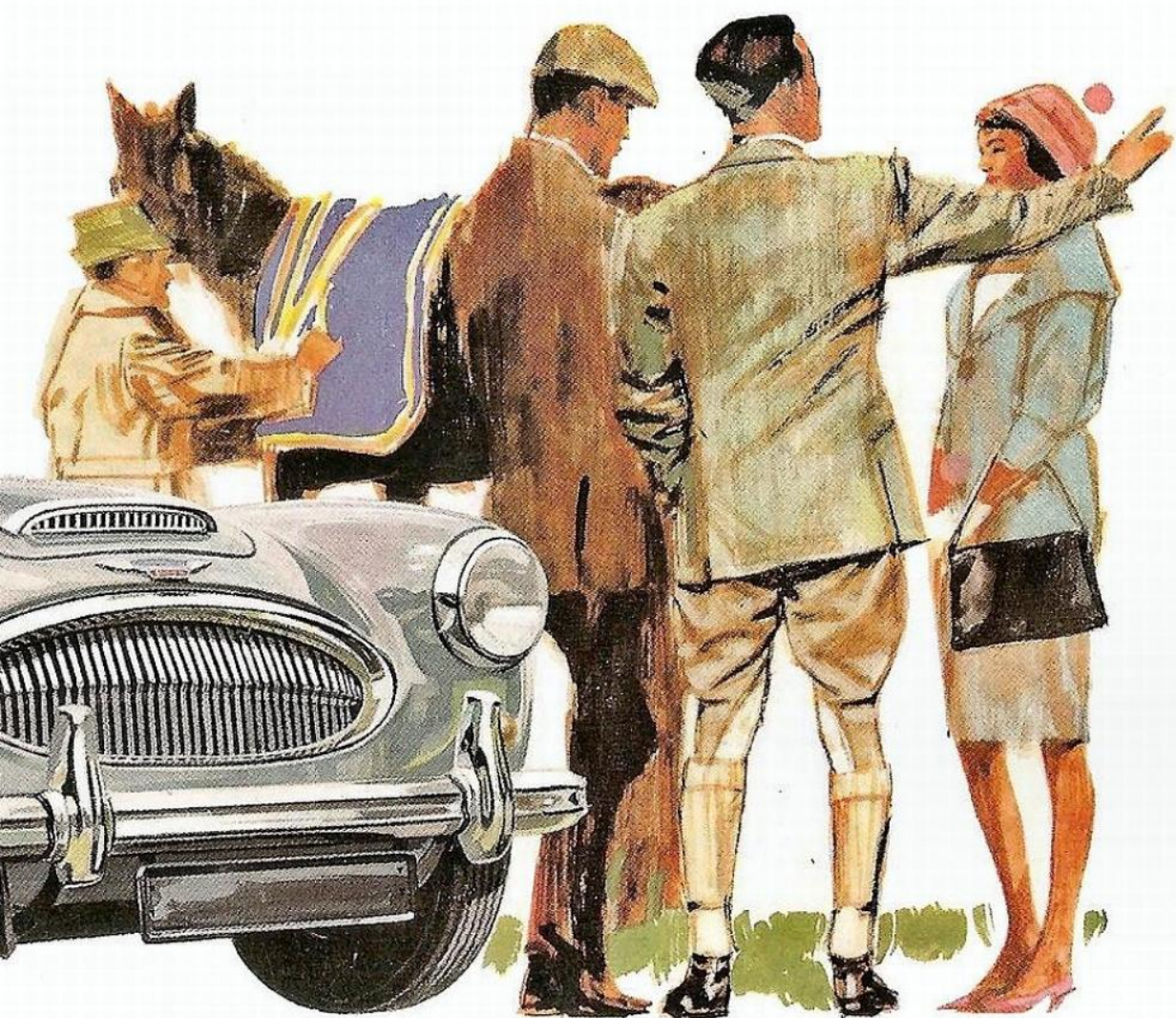
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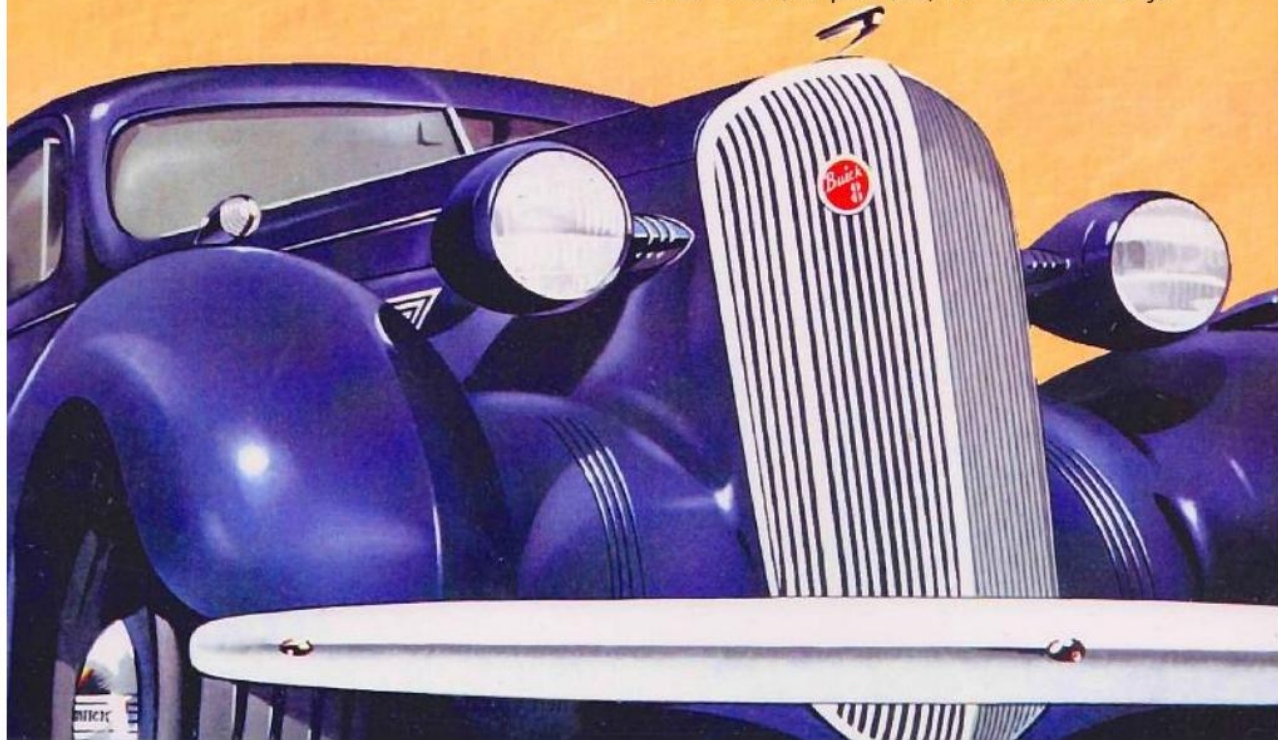
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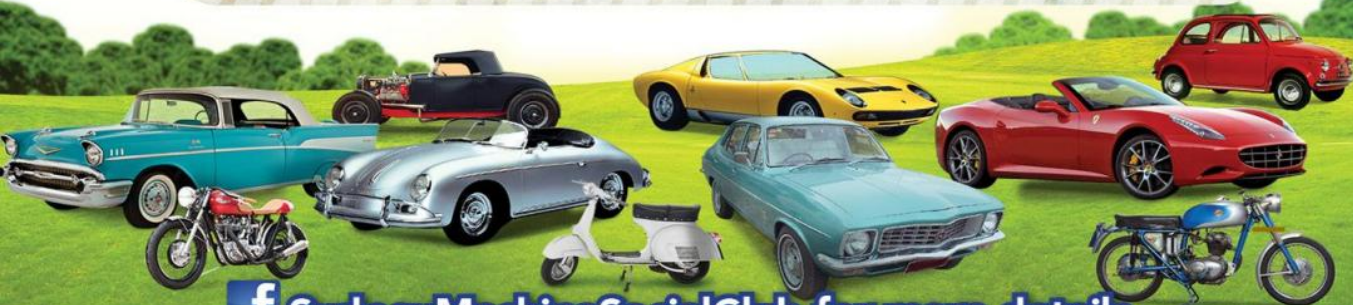
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MOTOR SHOW & FAMILY FUN DAY

SUNDAY JULY 10th 2016 9am - 1pm
HARBORD DIGGERS CLUB, FRESHWATER. NSW



f SydneyMachinaSocialClub for more details

CLASSIC, CUSTOM,
MUSCLE, MODERN,
HOTROD, EXOTICS
ALL WELCOME

YOU MUST REGISTER

\$11 EARLY BIRD (BEFORE JULY 1ST)

\$22 LATE BIRD (AFTER JULY 1ST)

f TO REGISTER
SydneyMachinaSocialClub

**EVERY ENTRANT GETS A
GOODIES BAG**

**TROPHIES
UP FOR GRAB**

★ ENTERTAINMENT ★

- Live bands •
- Jumping castle •
- Facepainting •
- Slot car track •
- Photobooth •
- Food: Dig in Cafe,
Diggers Diner, Rooftop
bar & restaurant

**[THE ULTIMATE
RIDE EXPERIENCE]**
YOUR CHOICE OF MACHINE TO
GO FOR A CRUISE IN

FUNDRAISING



HEAPS OF FANTASTIC
RAFFLE PRIZES
TO RAISE FUNDS FOR OUR
CHARITIES

**FREE SPECTATOR
ADMISSION**

Presented by
harbord diggers
**SYDNEY MACHINA
SOCIAL CLUB**

Goodspanner.

