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FEBRUARY 2014 #113



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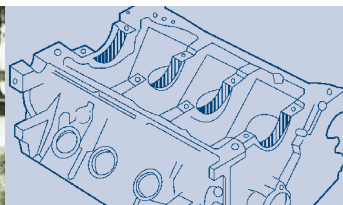
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“Some cars,

however, were

created with

limited financial

resources and

can benefit

from additional

adornment.”

richardlentinello

## Accessorized Mania

Whether they are original-equipment or aftermarket, nothing personalizes a car more than accessories designed to enhance a vehicle's appearance and function.

While some accessories can really add to the look of a car, others can detract from it. Of course, it's all a matter of personal taste, but personally, I like my cars just the way they originally rolled off the assembly line, because that's the way I can best appreciate how their stylists and designers intended them to look. All too often, we see cars at shows that are loaded to the gills with every single optional accessory that was made for them back in the day. Perhaps this is why it's so nice to see, and appreciate, bottom-of-the-line base models that have been accurately restored to reflect their original, no-frills charm without their owners resorting to the temptation of adding accessories that they were never built with.

Some cars, however, were created with limited financial resources and can benefit from additional adornment. Whether you like adding non-original accessories to your car or not, here's my take on their significance, appeal and value.

**Windshield Visors:** A very useful accessory that adds greatly to your safety when driving on bright, sunny days. While they make the interior more tolerable on hot summer days, they do make automobiles look like frumpy old men own them—you know, like the one that the grumpy grandfather down the block used to own.

**Paint Protectors:** Those decorative metal plates that surround the exterior door handles and gas cap that are designed to protect the paint from getting scratched are quite practical. Not only do they benefit the car's exterior, but they are actually quite nice looking, too, adding an unobtrusive and pleasing decorative touch to the car's overall character.

**Steering Wheels:** Because it is an ever-present and important part of your driving experience, you might as well make the most of your time behind the wheel by holding on to one of quality—the kind of quality that makes you feel good. A handcrafted, polished, wood wheel with alloy spokes, or one crafted of hand-stitched leather,

will make you feel like a king, yet they can be easily removed.

**Wire-Laced Wheel Covers:** Always add a touch of class to any vehicle.

**Spotlamps:** Unless you plan on tracking moose at night, there really is no reason to have this overly large pimple of chrome sitting next to your vent window, unless, of course you like the look of giant skin warts.

**Exhaust-Tip Extensions:** These are worthwhile safety accessories that can aid in the deflection of toxic exhaust gases from entering the interior. And they look nice, too.

**Headlamp Stoneguards:** A nice decorative touch that isn't too overpowering. If you added expensive halogen headlamps, what better way to protect them than with easy-to-remove stoneguards.

**Step Plates:** Cast-aluminum plates add safety and a look of quality to any prewar car.

**Curb Feelers:** Seriously? What's the point, other than making your car look like your grandmother with those black hairs sticking out of her face.

**Continental Kit:** The absolute worst accessory ever conceived is the continental kit. No other bolt-on accessory or decorative item makes a car look more grossly overweight and obscenely ugly than that big, tacked-on, fake wheel cover hanging over the rear bumper. It isn't so much the actual spare-tire housing itself that makes the car appear totally out of proportion, rather it's the extension of the rear bumper that's required to hold the continental kit in place. The addition of that trunk-mounted spare tire certainly does negatively impact a car's original design rather than enhance it, and the additional length that the bumper spacer adds to the car's length destroys its styling, transforming it into a clown of its former self. Clearly it's the most grotesque looking—and useless—accessory of all time. 🙄

Write to our executive editor at [rlentinello@hemmings.com](mailto:rlentinello@hemmings.com).



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## 1938 Phantom Corsair

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## 1930 Cord L-29 Brooks Stevens Speedster



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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Beginning with this issue, we have merged News Reports with Club News, as many of the events are of a similar nature. This has allowed us to add a new page called Vintage Collectibles (see page 72), which we hope you enjoy reading.



## De Soto Dreaming

**FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, WILL BE THE LOCATION** of the 2014 convention of the National De Soto Club. Running from July 16-20, the club's big, all-De Soto car show is scheduled for Saturday, July 19, and will be held on the grounds of the Indiana-Purdue University of Ft. Wayne campus. The show field is adjacent to the host hotel—the Holiday Inn—which will make for a convenient arrangement of accommodations. Just roll out of bed, and you'll be in De Soto heaven!

## Texas Teaser

### THE THIRD ANNUAL TEXAS

**CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE** will take place May 2-4 in Montgomery, Texas, at the La Toretta Lake Resort & Spa. If you have a car that is concours-worthy and are planning on being in the Houston area, the deadline for consideration is February 15. The highlights of the weekend include the Tour d'Elegance, the Houston Classic Auction and the Concours d'Elegance, which will take place on Sunday. For more details and information on submitting your car for consideration, visit [www.concoursoftexas.org](http://www.concoursoftexas.org).



## Avanti Winterfest

**FANS OF STUDEBAKER'S ICONIC AVANTI** will want to head down to Gainesville, Florida, February 6-9 to attend the Avanti Winterfest. Hosted by the Avanti Club of Florida, this is the club's 20th anniversary meet annually celebrating this timeless classic. The Best Western Plus Gateway Grand in Gainesville is the host hotel. For more details, contact Tom Pinnel at 407-787-4572.

## FEBRUARY Calendar

**2 • Webster Swap Meet** • Bushnell, Florida  
800-438-8559 • [www.floridaswapmeets.com](http://www.floridaswapmeets.com)

**7-8 • Wichita A's** • Sunflower Swap  
Wichita, Kansas • 316-722-1779  
[www.wichitaas.com](http://www.wichitaas.com)

**8 • Forty Fabulous Fords Show**  
Vero Beach, Florida • 772-794-0601

**9 • Concours South Florida**  
Hollywood, Florida • 954-261-7054  
[www.concourssouthflorida.org](http://www.concourssouthflorida.org)

**14-15 • Automotive Swap Meet**  
Columbia, Missouri • 573-489-4762

**14-16 • Winter Conroe Swap Meet**  
Conroe, Texas • 337-249-7667  
[www.hotrodsoftexas.com](http://www.hotrodsoftexas.com)

**14-16 • Winter Extravaganza**  
Bushnell, Florida • 800-438-8559  
[www.floridaswapmeets.com](http://www.floridaswapmeets.com)

**15 • Corvette Chevy Expo** • Houston, Texas  
386-775-2512 • [www.corvettechevyexpo.com](http://www.corvettechevyexpo.com)

**20-22 • AACA Southeastern Winter Meet**  
Port St. Lucie, Florida • 717-534-1910  
[www.tcvcc.com](http://www.tcvcc.com) or [www.aaca.org](http://www.aaca.org)

**20-23 • Zephyrhills Auto and Antique Winter Fest** • Zephyrhills, Florida  
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**21-23 • Big Three Parts Exchange**  
San Diego, California • 619-276-7135  
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**23 • Buick, Olds, Pontiac Swap Meet**  
St. Charles, Illinois • 630-865-4349  
[www.bopcswap.com](http://www.bopcswap.com)

**23 • Greater Milwaukee Winter Swap Meet**  
West Bend, Wisconsin • 414-491-3260



## Boca Beauties

**THIS YEAR'S 8TH ANNUAL BOCA RATON CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE** will take place from February 21-23 in the beautiful sunshine state of Florida. Over 30 car classes and 10 motorcycle classes will feature more than 200 fine examples of collector cars and vintage motorcycles from all over the country. This year's celebrated marque will be Mercedes-Benz, and the weekend's events will include award ceremonies, dinners, an auction and the Concours on Sunday. For a full lineup of events and more information, visit [www.bocaratonconcours.com](http://www.bocaratonconcours.com).



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1935 Auburn Speedster

## Lone Survivor



**BACK IN 1995, SPECIAL INTEREST AUTOS,** the predecessor to *Hemmings Classic Car*, ran a photo of a fiberglass car that Bill Cathcart of Connecticut owned but couldn't identify. Placed on a Studebaker chassis with a Studebaker straight-six powering it, the car used bits and pieces from here and there—a Hudson steering wheel, old trunk hinges repurposed as door hinges and a variety of gauges.

It doesn't appear as though Bill ever found out what he had, and he's since sold the car to John Erickson of Auburn, California, who wanted to see if anybody recalls the car. He's already checked with Fifties fiberglass car expert Geoff Hacker, who believes it was built around 1953 or 1954 and came out of a mold, indicating that other bodies like it were produced. If so, none have yet surfaced, making John's car the last of its kind.

John said the car is now registered and running, but he's no closer to finding out who produced the body or any of its history prior to when Cathcart found it in Windham, Connecticut. Does anybody recognize it?



## Hess's Hess (and Eisenhardt)

**WHILE WE'RE ON THE TOPIC** of cars that *SIA* once touched on, we came across this 1956 Cadillac station wagon (see *SIA* #92, April 1986) at Hershey last fall and spoke with owner Marc Tuwiner about it.

According to Marc, of the 12 Cadillac station wagons that coachbuilder Hess and Eisenhardt built in 1956, he's owned three, including this one, originally delivered to Pennsylvania department store owner Max Hess. (The one that featured in the *SIA* article originally belonged to shoe magnate Harry Karl.) While most of the station wagons—patterned loosely after the Sky View tour coaches that Hess and Eisenhardt built for the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs—came in the light beige color that Marc's wagon currently sports, Marc said when he peeled back the weatherstripping, he saw that it was originally painted a bronze color and that the car's original build sheet specified TAUP as the car's color.

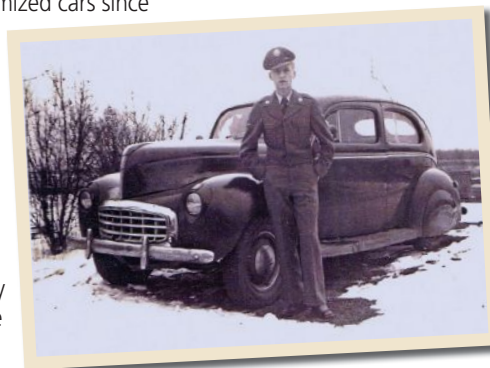
It's gone through a couple other deviations from stock as well—Marc added a dual-quad intake manifold, and it's had the quarter glass replaced with flat glass and curved metal inserts—but Marc said it has only had three owners since new, and while he had it at Hershey to sell, he's now considering holding on to it and repainting it in its original color.



## RE: Face Time

**IT'S ALWAYS FUN TO MAKE SOMEBODY'S DAY WITH THIS COLUMN,** and we appeared to have done just that by running the Mario de Biasi photo of a Ford panel truck fitted with a Nash grille in *HCC* #110. As Richard Salmi of Daphne, Alabama, wrote:

"I have been looking at customized cars since just after WWII, but had never seen another car with a 1949-1950 Nash grille until your last edition. Enclosed is a photo of my 1940 Ford Standard Tudor, taken in 1952. I always thought that the Nash grille blended in very well with the roly-poly look of the late 1930s and 1940 Ford and Mercury, and wondered why there weren't more of them. The truck isn't a round Ford, but the grille still looks like it belongs."



Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201 or emailed to [dstrohl@hemmings.com](mailto:dstrohl@hemmings.com). For more Lost & Found, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>

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RM AUCTIONS



## Disappearing Duesenberg

**RM AUCTIONS HAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED** the addition of this 1930 Duesenberg Model J disappearing top Convertible Coupe with Murphy coachwork to their two day Arizona sale, scheduled for January 16-17, 2014 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix.

Known as *Melvin's Murphy*, number J-357 was first collected at the factory in Indianapolis by West Virginia coal and lumber baron, Doran Hinchman, who owned the Model J until 1946. Melvin Clemans was its next steward, and he drove and cared for the car for over 50 years.

The Murphy Convertible Coupe is one of approximately 25 built with the disappearing top, which, along with its original and largely unrestored condition, makes for one sought after Duesenberg. RM is offering the car for public sale for the first time, and estimates a final bid north of two million dollars.

Contact: [www.rmauctions.com](http://www.rmauctions.com)



GOODING COMPANY

## Superleggera Hudson

**CUSTOM ITALIAN COACHWORK** on a Hudson chassis is always welcome, especially when it's in dream-car form as it is on this 1954 Hudson Italia offered by Gooding and Company at its January 17-18, 2014 auction at the Scottsdale Fashion Square in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Frank Spring designed this enduring example of American and Italian cooperation. Carrozzeria Touring of Milan built the body atop a Hudson Jet chassis using the Superleggera technique of stretching thin panels over a tubular framework for light weight and strength.

This example, one of just 25 built, has a mere 26,000 miles on the odometer and took Second in Class at Pebble Beach in 2011 with its pale yellow exterior, red trim and equally stylish interior, which includes two-tone split-back bucket seats. Contact: [www.goodingco.com](http://www.goodingco.com)

## AUCTION PROFILE

**IT IS HARD NOT TO MARVEL** at this special edition Cadillac that retailed for \$63,000 when it was new. The 368-cu.in. 150-hp V-8 with three-speed automatic transmission was factory Cadillac, but Pierre Cardin put this Cadillac a few notches above the rest of the pack by adding his signature flavor to the car with a restyled front and rear and augmented interior. This car is seemingly tailor-made for the busy Burbank television producer constantly taking the pulse of the industry while traveling the freeways of the greater Los Angeles area.

The interior featured a then state-of-the-art Sherwood stereo system with Altec-Lansing power bass, and a Sony Quasar VCR with five-inch cathode ray tube television aimed at the rear seats.



AUCTIONS AMERICA

<b>CAR</b>	1981 Cadillac Eldorado Evolution 1	<b>LOT NUMBER</b>	114
<b>AUCTIONEER</b>	Auctions America	<b>CONDITION</b>	#2/Original
<b>LOCATION</b>	Burbank, California	<b>RESERVE</b>	No
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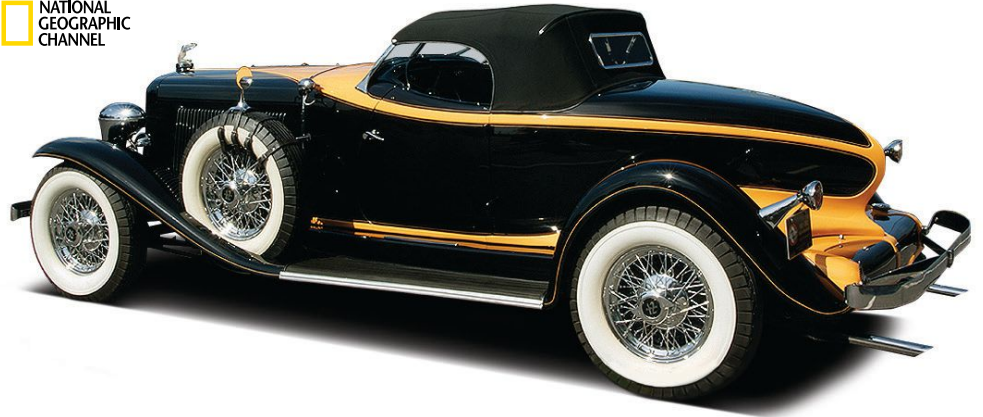
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### The STUTZ STASH of A. K. MILLER

Photographs by Nicholas Whitman  
Text by Dave Brownell



## The Stutz Stash of A. K. Miller

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—By Jim Donnelly

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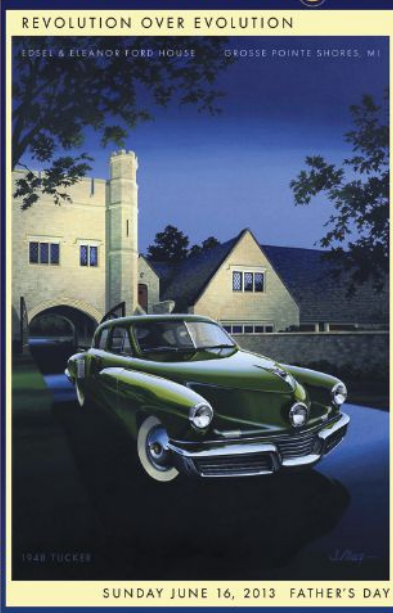


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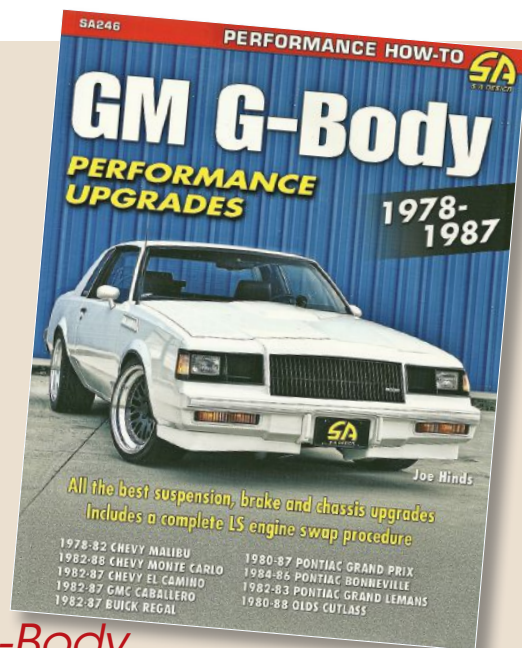
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Being asked to create the annual EyesOn Design poster art is a great honor, and the automotive fine artist behind the 2013 event's evocative image is Des Plaines, Illinois', Steven Macy (Auto Art, HCC #46; www.stevenmacystudios.com). The unmistakable 1948 Tucker 48 was chosen as the feature car because it was an ideal exemplification of the 2013 theme: Revolution Over Evolution. Steven set it in front of the gatehouse garage at Edsel and Eleanor Ford's home, and rendered it in his unique style. Sized 24 x 36-inches, printed on high-quality paper stock and suitable for framing, this poster is for sale, and proceeds benefit the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology. Contact Steven for details. Cost: \$20.00, plus \$8.00 U.S. shipping 313-824-4710 www.eyesondesigncarshow.com



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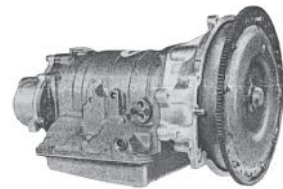
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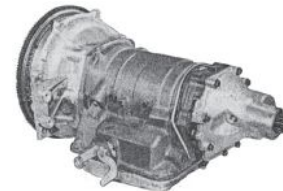
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1964 CHEVELLE 300

RICHARD LENTINELLO

# Chevrolet's Chevelle 300

*Six years of affordability and style in a single entry-level intermediate A-body*

BY MATTHEW LITWIN

If one had to sum up Chevrolet's automotive prowess in a single word, it would have to be "volume." Since the early 1950s, the sales-leading division of General Motors had been going toe-to-toe with rival Ford to claim the title of industry-sales leader. Yet, strangely enough, Chevrolet had essentially left a segment of the market unguarded by the early 1960s.

Ever-growing full-size passenger cars and continued focus on the compact market with the Chevy II/Nova and the Corvair were the basic culprits, leaving Dearborn to rake in the cash by the fistful with its mid-size Fairlane, but even this would not last. Executives suspected, correctly, that a new mid-size car would comfortably fill the void without affecting sales within their current vehicle lineup. GM in turn re-engineered the then-current Buick-Olds-Pontiac



**1964 CHEVELLE 300 STATION WAGON:** Over the course of two years, the two-door station wagons had the lowest production total at 4,378 units, 2,710 of which were assembled for 1964—sales figures that prompted their discontinuation, making them the rarest Chevelle 300 models in the process.

compact, added Chevrolet, and reintroduced it as the corporate A-body platform for 1964.

Arguably, the GM A-body cars are among the most prized by collectors today, bolstered by high-performance engines, provocative monikers—such as Gran Sport, Super Sport, 4-4-2 and GTO—and a vast aftermarket parts industry that caters to hobbyists who prefer either the OE or modified approach to restorations and ownership. But this is only a portion of the A-body story. Strip away the high-horsepower engines, four-speed transmissions, performance suspensions and sporty badges and stripes, and you're left with what most of America drove: basic everyday transportation for all walks of life. Born into the vast field of mid-size makes for the masses was Chevrolet's entry-level Chevelle 300.

Upon introduction, the entire Chevelle line was an instant hit with consumers. Its styling was conventional yet aggressive, with square, crisp lines similar to that of the already-popular Chevy II; however, the front end was furnished with a wide, four-headlamp grille arrangement in tune with its full-size brethren, along with curved side glass, scalloped rear wheel openings and a clean rear fascia. As one would expect, the Chevelle 300 series' exterior trim was minimal: a single, narrow strip of stainless along the beltline that accentuated the body's length.

During its freshman season, the entry-level series, the Chevelle 300, was offered in two- and four-door sedan, as well as two- and four-door wagon guises. Overall length varied—nearly 194 and 199 inches for sedans and wagons, respectively—although the wheelbase measured an identical 115 inches among body styles. This was because the basic perimeter frame served as the Chevelle's only foundation, complete with an independent front suspension complemented by coil springs and hydraulic shocks at all four corners.

Initially, Chevrolet provided the Chevelle 300 with two standard engines: the Hi-Thrift 194-cu.in., 120-hp straight-six and the 283-cu.in., 195-hp Turbo-Fire V-8—with two options at the ready: the 155-hp 230-cu.in. Turbo-Thrift six or the 220-hp 283.

The 327 small-block would not be available until mid-year in 250- and 300-horsepower variations. Backing these engines was a standard three-speed manual transmission, while a three-speed with overdrive, a four-speed manual and the two-speed Powerglide automatic were on the option chart.

In keeping with the basic transportation theme, the series contained a pedestrian interior, highlighted by vinyl-trimmed bench seats, vinyl door panels and headliner, and a vinyl-coated rubber floor mat color-keyed to the rest of the interior with what Chevrolet called "an attractive spatter design." Dual sun visors, front and rear armrests, locking glovebox and automatic interior lighting, completed the standard interior amenities.

The A-body formula as a whole worked wonders for Chevrolet. With a weight for the 1964-'67 300 models that ranged from 2,825 to 3,370 pounds, depending on year and body style, the nimble Chevelle line was regarded by the contemporary press as a rebirth of the '55 Chevy, and with an MSRP ranging from \$2,200 - \$2,800, contingent on model and trim level, sales soared to a staggering 348,286 units, excluding the Chevelle-based El Camino. Although an exact production breakdown is not known, some published reports indicate that Chevelle 300 sedan output concluded at roughly

**1965 CHEVELLE 300 DELUXE:** A Deluxe trim level was added to the 300 series this year, while the simple strip of molding was shortened and lowered on the body. All Chevelles received restyled fenders, front bumper and a slightly veed outward grille.



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**1967 CHEVELLE 300 DELUXE:** Compared to what lay ahead, the 1966 body refinement was slight and carried over to the '67 model year, along with traditional grille and tail panel updates. As seen on this two-door sedan, Deluxe models now featured modest trim over the rocker panels. Deluxe models were also collectively outselling the base 300.

53,000 six-cylinder cars and 15,300 V-8s, while total station wagon output through all three trim levels numbered approximately 44,000 units.

Styling changes to the Chevelle 300 for 1965 were minimal yet easily noticeable. A new bumper and slightly veed outward grille graced the front end, while the narrow piece of side trim was lowered towards the rocker panels. Block letters spelling out the division were positioned on the leading edge of the hood, and polished stainless was added to the vent window frames.

More noticeable was the body style shuffling within the Chevelle 300 lineup with the introduction of the Deluxe models. The two- and four-door sedans were offered in both base 300 and Deluxe 300 trim; however, the two-door station wagon was restricted to the base 300 series, while the four-door wagon was only offered in Deluxe form. To help differentiate the two series visually, Deluxe side trim included color-keyed treatment, and while the entire 300 series received updated upholstery patterns, Deluxe interiors were more decorative and plusher.

Although the suspension was fine-tuned for a softer ride, the basic chassis geometry remained unchanged. Overall length grew only slightly: Sedans now measured 196.6 inches and wagons 201.4

inches. There were slight changes under the hood as well. Both the 120-hp Hi-Thrift 194-cu.in. straight-six and the 195-hp 283-cu.in. Turbo-Fire V-8 retained their status as standard powertrains; however, the optional 230-cu.in. Turbo-Thrift six-cylinder output was reduced to 140-hp. Furthermore, the optional 220-hp 283 was dropped in favor of retaining both the 250- and 300-hp Turbo-Fire 327-cu.in. V-8.

With the model year styling update came a reduction in retail prices—the base 300 two-door sedan started at just \$2,100—and bolstered by continued quality construction and an attractive list of options, Chevelle production increased to a combined total of 384,894 units, of which 73,200 were base 300 and 300 Deluxe sedans; total station wagon production—tabulated separately by Chevrolet—shrank slightly to 37,600.

While still considered a first-generation car today, the 1966-'67 Chevelle was the recipient of a generally longer, restyled body, beginning with a wider recessed grille for a slight wrap-around effect, flanked by new fenders with a racy forward rake. Quarter panels now exhibited a fuller rear wheel opening and a more pronounced “Coke bottle” profile above, mirroring the styling cue of the full-size Chevrolets. Of note was the elimination of the two-door station wagon, which had been the weakest-selling A-body Chevy since introduction. Conspicuous changes for 1967 were a revamped grille, front bumper and new wrap-around tail lamps.

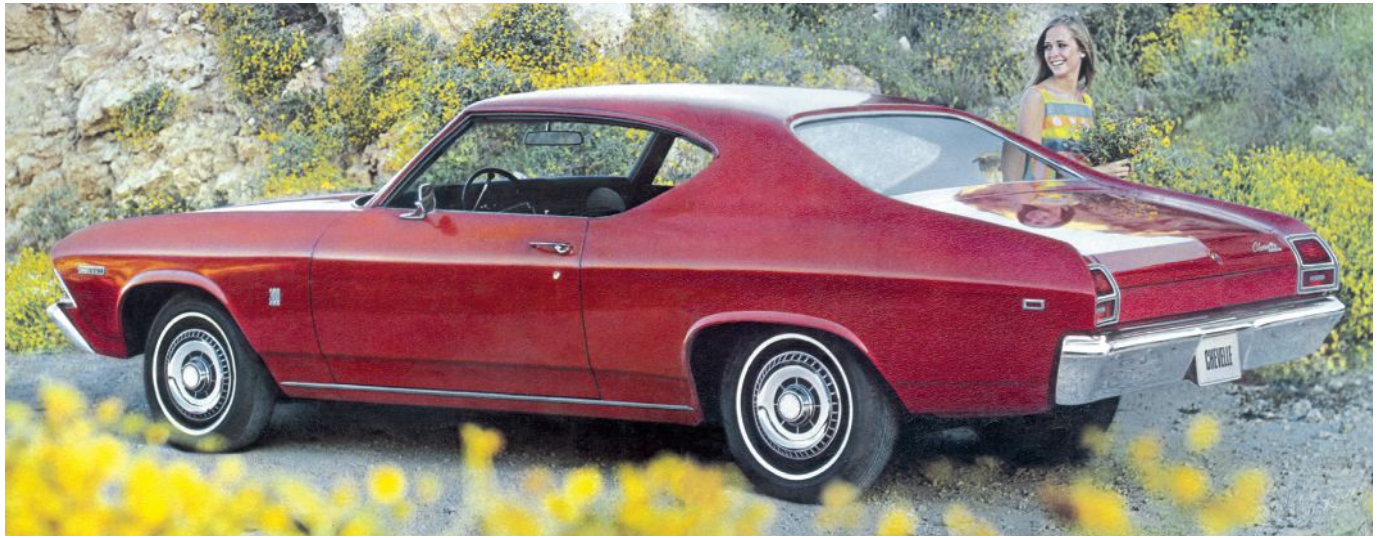
The 300 series, which still offered an upscale Deluxe trim level, continued as the entry-level Chevelle and was detailed accordingly in that the base models no longer included side trim. Deluxe models did feature the full-length strip of narrow brightwork along the beltline, helping to easily differentiate between the two models. As in previous years, the front grille was rather plain, and the rear fascia was devoid of trim other than underlined “Chevelle” block letters for both series. Side trim continued for 1967 Deluxe models; however, it was now tastefully positioned over the rocker panels.

Only modest changes were made to interior

**1967 CHEVELLE 300:** By way of comparison, this base 300 four-door sedan was no longer offered with any side trim, “dog dish” hub caps were still standard, and the tail panel merely featured the Chevelle name; whitewalls, as seen here, were optional.







appointments, although the vinyl-coated rubber floor mat remained a staple through both series. In fact, Chevrolet literature, in a selling campaign directed at mothers—hinting that its target audience was growing families on a budget—made a point of stating, “That vinyl is a breeze to clean. And kids and sticky stuff naturally travel together.”

Below the restyled hood, changes were consistently rapid between model years. For 1966, the base straight-six and V-8 engines carried over from the previous year, as did the 140-hp 230-cu. in. straight-six option. For those who preferred V-8 power, the 220-hp 283 returned to the option chart, joining the 275-hp 327—a new addition to the Chevelle 300 line. This arrangement changed once again for 1967. The 140-hp 230 became the new economy straight-six; the 195-hp 283 remained the standard V-8; and new optional equipment was the 155-hp 250-cu.in. straight-six, 275-hp 327 and 325-hp 327. Fortunately, transmission availability, based on engine selection mandates, remained unchanged from 1964.

In spite of the fact that Chevelle production—El Camino excluded—soared to a new high of 412,155 units for 1966, base 300 and 300 Deluxe production dropped to a combined total of roughly 66,100; in the down year of 1967, it fell again to 51,000 units (again, station wagon production was a separate Chevrolet statistic). With economy being the focus of the 300 series as a whole, during this four-year run, straight-six production outsold V-8s approximately 201,100 to 57,600.

The second-generation Chevelle of 1968 was a great-looking design, with flowing lines, longer hood, shorter rear deck, and a continuation of the forward-rake front end that further enhanced the body's new, racy curves; a perfect fit considering the growing muscle car movement. The chassis was completely new as well: a 112-inch wheelbase for two-door models and 116 inches for four-doors and wagons, although Chevrolet engineers continued to utilize the basic, yet refined coil-sprung suspension system dating to the A-body's 1964 release.

Here again, the Chevelle 300 and 300 Deluxe remained the entry level models with an average

starting price of \$2,559; however, body styles were altered. The base 300 could be had only as a two-door sedan and an unceremoniously named four-door Nomad wagon; whereas the Deluxe trim level offered the Custom Nomad, four- and two-door sedans, and a new-to-the subseries two-door hardtop, which was officially referred to as a Sport Coupe. Trim and interior appointments were still exceptionally basic, including the long-standing practice of installing a rubber floor mat rather than carpet.

Economical power remained under the new hood, too, with the 140-hp 230-cu.in. straight-six and a new-to-the-model 200-hp 307-cu.in. V-8 listed as standard engines. Three versions of the 327 and the Turbo-Thrift 250 straight-six remained on the option chart, as did the Powerglide automatic, three-speed overdrive manual and four-speed manual transmissions. Production also increased dramatically to a new combined total of 422,893 units, of which 55,800 were the 300 series sedans.

While styling updates were minimal for 1969, Chevrolet continued to alter the Chevelle's entry-level lineup. The Nomad became the stand-alone base station wagon; the Chevelle 300 designation was dropped, demoting the Chevelle 300 Deluxe to the new base series; and the Deluxe four-door wagons officially became Greenbriers. Finally, the optional 327-cu.in. V-8s were dropped in favor of the venerable 350 small-block variants. Altogether, base Chevelle production ceased at 42,000 units, with a dead split between straight-six and V-8 engine installation within the series for the first time.

More physical changes were in store for the Chevelle line in the years to come; however, 1969 would prove to be the last hurrah for the 300 model designation. It was dropped after the model year, prompting Chevrolet to name the base model simply “Chevelle” the following year, albeit temporarily. Yet in terms of sheer volume, the thing that Chevrolet has always excelled at, it's hard to overlook the 300's bare-bones, ultra-affordable impact: During the six years of its reign as the economical A-body Chevrolet, the sedans alone attained 356,500 customers, and another 435,516 base model Chevilles would be sold from 1970 to 1977. 🐾

### 1969 CHEVELLE 300 DELUXE SPORT COUPE:

The completely redesigned body of the 1968-'69 Chevelle line drew rave reviews, and the 300 series finally received the hardtop, “Sport Coupe,” body style. The Chevelle 300 name was discarded after '68, making the Deluxe line the new one-year-only base model.

# Baseline Beauty

*Full-size features in the base-model Chevelle 300 make this all-original 1964 A-body a rarity today*



BY MIKE BUMBECK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA

**T**he Chevrolet Chevelle was the all-new intermediate for 1964, positioned between the compact Chevy II and full-size Impala. Like the other smaller and larger members of the Chevrolet fleet, the Chevelle was offered in a number of body styles and trim levels in ascending degrees of features, performance and cost. At the lower end of the Chevelle lineup, where equipment was basic but savings high, was the Chevelle 300, which can be quickly distinguished by door posts in the two-door sedan.



Still wearing its factory-applied orange enamel, the Hi-Thrift 194-cu.in. straight-six engine is punchy around town and relaxed on the highway with 120 hp, even with its single Rochester carb. The "300" emblem stands as an enduring symbol of the combination of thrifty economy and unique features.



The baseline 300 is adorned with thin, bright body trim running down the center of the slab-sided fenders, doors and rear quarter panels. A small "300" emblem on a somewhat Chevrolet chevron-shaped badge is located on the rear fender. "Chevelle" is spelled out in uppercase letters on a badge above and behind the front fender trim spear tips. Both taillamp assemblies are set in bezels and divided horizontally by a broad body-color feature line spanning the width of the rear. The lower rear lenses mimic backup lamps, but are actually little reflectors. Setting the Chevelle 300 model apart from the better-appointed Malibu is the thin trim that wraps around the back of the decklid. The Malibu and Malibu SS have long, anodized aluminum trim that covers the center rear deck.

Travis Lipinski of Farmington, Connecticut, sought one of these elusive base Chevelles, and was on the hunt for at least a few years. But sometimes it's the car that finds its new owner, and just as Travis had taken a break from the search, this one found him. The Chevelle had been offered at an online auction, but had not sold, so Travis made arrangements to go see it while on his way to Hershey with his friends.

Upon seeing the condition of the car, Travis was elated. "I was so glad that it was a Chevelle 300. They're so rare. The rarity is that someone kept such a bare-bones car. To me, it's more valuable than a Super Sport model."

Travis learned that the car's previous owner

*I was so glad that it was a Chevelle 300. They're so rare. The rarity is that someone kept such a bare-bones car. To me it's more valuable than a Super Sport model.*



had stored it in his garage for twenty-something years after purchasing it from the original owners, who, as far as Travis can figure out, were two sisters who had shared the Chevelle in making ends meet in suburban New Jersey.

After the deal was done, Travis' crew headed to Hershey and scoured the swap meet for tune-up parts for the old Chevy, as the car was running rough after its long slumber. "It was running like junk, but the brakes were good. We installed a new distributor cap, rotor, spark plugs and the set of AC spark plug wires that we found at Hershey. We then did a shade-tree-mechanic tune-up and drove it home to Connecticut. It was a really cool experience."

Once the car was back home, it was time to give it a more complete run through and address some of the problems that crop up in a car that has been sitting stationary for years on end. None were insurmountable, and the nearly impossible low mileage of the Chevelle meant mechanicals were in excellent order. Nothing is ever perfectly preserved, though, especially when it comes to brake fluid and coolant. Soon, a wheel cylinder started leaking, as did the water pump. Travis and his dad rebuilt the entire drum brake system and replaced the water pump. While glazed is great for donuts, it is not good on brake shoes.

The brake rebuild included new shoes all the way around, four new wheel cylinders, and a clean-up cut of the original drum surfaces. "My father is a retired auto mechanic. So he loves tinkering with

The interior is all-original, and features the standard rubber floor covering. What looks like carpeting is super tough vinyl-coated rubber with color-keyed paint speckled on top. The gauges are set in an attractive metal panel with tiny horizontal ribs. The column-mount shifter works the two-speed Powerglide.



this and showing me how to do it." Travis then took the old Chevy in for a new, aluminized exhaust system. The one that came with the car had been on there since 1974, according to a receipt, and wasn't in the best condition.

The 194-cu.in. Hi-Thrift straight-six engine, with its single-barrel Rochester carburetor, was rated for a healthy 120 horsepower at 4,400 RPM. Seven main bearings and hydraulic lifters for the valves made for quiet and smooth running. Simple six-cylinder thrift is just enough for the fairly lightweight Chevelle 300, which scales in at just over 2,800 pounds.

This base model Chevelle 300 came with just two options: the two-speed Powerglide automatic transmission, which was optional across the entire Chevelle lineup, and a non-pushbutton monaural AM radio. Travis says the smooth shifting is worth every penny. "The two-speed is amazing. It shifts into second gear and it just keeps on going. It's a great transmission. The engine purrs along on the highway at 65 MPH, with relatively low RPM. Around town, the car handles beautifully and shifts great. It's economical in town and a great highway performer."

Travis' example is equipped with the smaller of the two available six-cylinder engines, and it delivers smooth and reliable performance to match the automatic shifts. The carburetor had required a minor adjustment on the fast idle side, but was not in need of rebuilding. Travis explains that a single pump of the gas pedal and a turn of the ignition key get the six-cylinder going. A few minutes of warm up and another kick on the throttle drop the revolutions back down to idle, and the engine purrs along in smooth six-cylinder balance.

Chevrolet did a lot with a little when it came time to appoint the baseline Chevelle 300's interior. The thriftiest of the lineup had top-of-the-line features, even if the choices were few. Four interior color selections for the 1964 model year were Fawn, Aqua, Red and Blue, all of which were carefully selected to complement the exterior colors. Our feature car's interior is the

Blue version, with the seats upholstered in textured vinyl. The headliner and side panels were also constructed from the easy-to-clean and tough-wearing vinyl.

Simulated carpet was made of vinyl-coated rubber with an added touch of distinction depending on interior color. The black vinyl floor coverings were color keyed to the interior with what Chevrolet called an "attractive spatter design." The visual effect is that of a fabric loop carpet, but with the durability and convenience of a tough rubber floor. "That's the coolest thing about it," Travis says. "It's the cheapest, but it looks so different. It's black with a speckled teal that makes it look carpet-like."

Travis treats the rubber carpet with Turtle Wax Super Protectant, formerly known as Finish 2001 Super Protectant. In a throwback to another time, he recently had the original upholstery wrapped in crystal-clear plastic covering to preserve the original material.

When he bought the car, the original GM-applied teal paint was checked and oxidized. Travis used Meguiar's three-step products with a hand buff, followed by a coat of Eighties-vintage Cleanbright Products' Liquid Ebony #27, which he uses sparingly to preserve the remaining supply. Meguiar's Final Inspection Mist is used to keep the original paint looking its best until the next deep detail.

The 1964 Chevelle 300 was big on economy in its day and still is 50 years later. Travis reports that his Chevelle achieves 28 miles per gallon, which is far better than his modern daily driver. The

paradox in finding an original six-cylinder-powered Chevelle is that the base lightweight 300 also made it a favorite of drag racers, thus many were converted into race cars with big V-8s.

Economy doesn't mean a sacrifice in ride. Sporting the standard 14-inch tires, the car's intermediate size, in between that of the compact Chevy II and full-size Impala, makes for a big ride in a relatively small car. "It feels like a big car. It rides nice, but it is, like the promotional materials said, a parkable size," Travis explains. "It handles great. It has full coil-spring suspension. It just handles and rides like a full-size Chevrolet."

Even with manual steering and no power brakes, the car's lightness enables easy steering and braking. Travis reports his 1961 Ford Falcon is more difficult to steer than the Chevelle. "It steers perfectly. You don't even miss power steering," he tells us.

Though it's a well-preserved, unrestored original, the old Chevelle is not treated like a trailer queen. "I try to drive it at least once a week," Travis says. "I enjoy taking it out to do a couple errands, or out to dinner on a Saturday night. It's good to drive it. I feel that it's my escape. I get in that car, and it almost brings me back to that



**Base hubcaps a no-nonsense look. Lower tail lamp "lens" is strictly ornamental. Thin trim wrapping around the rear of the decklid is one way to differentiate a Chevelle 300.**

cut up. It has been my passion to keep these cars as original as possible. I saw it and fell in love with it because I didn't want someone to restore it, because it doesn't need to be restored. It's not a show car, it's not a 10-point car, but it's all there. It's not pretentious, and it is what it is. And I surely didn't want anyone to cut up those rubber carpets." 🐾

time. You wonder what it was like then, what the people were like, and why they kept it looking so good, and why didn't they use it? It spent so many Saturday nights at home that I can't wait to use it on a Saturday night now!"

Plans for the future include ongoing preservation of the past. Travis is looking for some date-coded spark plug wires and any other parts of the original build, but feels that leaving the car as-is is the best plan. The narrative of an all-original car speaks volumes to the car's thrifty heritage.

"Every nook and scratch tells a story. That's why I was attracted to this first body style Chevelle. You always see 1970s Chevelles and Super Sports, and nearly all have either a 396 or 454 V-8 in them. You never see first-generation Chevelles, especially the base model 300, and in original condition, too. It breaks my heart to find a car that has been



**I APPRECIATE YOUR ARTICLE ON CHRYSLER STATION WAGONS**, but there is one error repeated through the article: The engines for Windsors and Saratogas from 1955-on were not Hemis, but Polyspheres. Confusion comes from Chrysler using the displacement numbers from the prior-year New Yorkers (1956 Windsor 331 and 1955 New Yorker of the same cubes, etc.), but vastly different engines.

The 1956 Windsor 331, 1957 354 and 1958 354 Windsor and Saratoga V-8s were all Polysphere wedges, with the 331, 354, and 392 New Yorker engines all Hemis. The De Sotos were Hemis only in 1955 and 1956, being 291, 330 and 341 cubic inches; in 1957, it was 341, with the 325 wedge engine from Dodge in the Firesweep series; in 1958, the Firesweep was 350 cu.in. with Firedome, Fireflite and Adventurer 361s. The Dodges were 315 in 1956 in either wedge or Hemi and 325 cubic inches in 1957, with the heads being interchangeable on the Dodges.

I think Chrysler stylists did a great job of making the 1962 Chrysler exist. The original "out there" Exner design that was canceled left little time to create a new car. The 1962 Chrysler wagons used the 1961 Plymouth wagon from the cowl back with the 1961 Chrysler front. Sedans, hardtops and convertibles were 1961 Dodge Polaras with new rear fenders, and the 1961 Chrysler front sheet-metal (plus new two-door hardtop roof on the 1962).

I had a 1961 Polara at the same time as my '62 New Yorker four-door hardtop, and found everything except rear fenders and front ends interchanged, creating a beautifully styled car.

L. Foster  
Chico, California

**Tom DeMauro replies:**

*Thank you for the correction regarding the engine availabilities in Chrysler station wagons. I incorrectly stated in the 1956-1958 sections of "Well-Off Wagons" that Windsor station wagons were equipped with Hemi engines, when in fact, they were Polysphere engines. My apologies for the errors.*

**Correction number 2**

**Matt Litwin states:**

*In issue #111, we profiled the amazing*

*tale and eventual restoration of a 1934 Pontiac Sedan owned by Arizona resident Donald Kline. Unfortunately, while writing the story I misidentified it as a 1936 sedan — the result of an untimely, misguided keystroke, which sadly, was not noticed during our editing process. We regret the error and appreciate our readers bringing it to our attention.*

**I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN HCC #108**

about the De Soto Airflow. I was always intrigued by the Airflows, especially the overall design that was years ahead. According to what Carl Breer wrote in his book on Chrysler engineering, the body was a completely unitized structure, and very strong. However, their assembly lines were set up to have a chassis to which the powerplant, driveline and running gear were attached. There wasn't time to completely redesign the assembly process, so they used a lightweight frame-like structure to hold the mechanical parts in place while the unit body was dropped on.

And yes, there were European copycats of the Airflow style, particularly Peugeot, but Hans Ledwinka, following the design concepts of Paul Jaray, was building aerodynamic Tatra cars in Czechoslovakia in the early 1930s. Mercedes-Benz made some rear-engined cars in the mid-'30s that looked remarkably like the Volkswagen. Ferdinand Porsche—working against a strict deadline imposed by *Der Fuehrer*—looked at all of these cars, and chose to follow the lead of Ledwinka's Tatra, with a central spine chassis and air-cooled engine in the rear with swing axles. I doubt that the Airflows really had much influence on Porsche's work.

And as for the Airflow's poor sales, let's face it—they were just plain ugly. Ford brought out the Lincoln-Zephyr in 1936 with a sleek, aerodynamic, unitized body that was stirring to look at. Next to a Zephyr, an Airflow looked like a truck. I am not trying to minimize the importance of the Airflow and its effect on the American auto industry. It was a bold move to market a car that really was a harbinger of the future. But being ahead of its time was only part of the problem.

Robert Staneslow, S.A.H.  
Cheshire, Connecticut

**IN HCC #108**, Matthew Litwin presented an excellent article on the "18 Most Innovative American Cars Ever Made." It was an interesting assortment of vehicles, some of which I was unaware of their particular contributions to automotive technological advancement. After reading the article, I wouldn't recommend striking any of them from the list. However, I think there is an important one missing, and that is the Ford Model T.

Granted, its most significant innovation was its unprecedented method of mass production, which ultimately made it available to and affordable for millions upon millions of people. However, it was in other ways innovative in its own right. It pioneered the use of a separate cast block and cylinder head. It was the first vehicle platform to be designed from the start with ease of adaptability in mind, and as such, there were a large variety of models built on the Model T chassis and drivetrain (not to mention the seemingly unlimited offerings of the aftermarket industry).

There were other innovations as well, but none I think were as significant as its overall simplicity in design. Not only was it inexpensive to acquire and easy to operate, it was inexpensive and easy to repair. Most Model Ts were kept running with some basic tools and wire. Because of its simple design, it was very durable and could endure a lot of abuse. The fact that there are so many still on the road today is a testament to its innovative design. In short, if it weren't for Henry Ford's Model T the automobile would not be what it is today.

Gregory Dias  
Spearfish, South Dakota

**THE HEADLINE OF HCC #109'S "DETROIT'S UNDERDOGS"**

was enough. I was already thinking, "Aw krap, I had a K-car but didn't keep it!" Mine was a well-equipped 1984 Dodge Aries Custom station wagon.

Chrysler's inconsistent quality control during the early 1980s meant that some people got fairly reliable cars, while others got duds. My "K" had a troublesome and temperamental

*Continued on page 30*

## International Studebaker

Maybe it's the nocturnal disorder causing it; I've been diagnosed with sleep apnea, and snooze in spurts of three hours, then wake up for an hour, every night. Or maybe it's because I'm such an impassioned advocate of the Independents. Whichever it is, lately I find myself awake at night wondering what might have happened to certain companies had they merged with partners other than the ones they ended up with. I've pondered the "what ifs" and "might-have-beens" concerning a Packard-Nash merger, and a Kaiser-Hudson merger, among others.

I think about Studebaker a lot. Even today I have a hard time accepting that it's gone. Studebaker made great cars and had (has!) some of the most loyal owners in the industry. Could it have been saved?

The Studebaker-Packard merger was, in my opinion, basically a good idea that was poorly executed. The strategy of joining the largest-volume independent with the most prestigious made sense if the two companies merged manufacturing, sales and administrative functions as rapidly as possible. But management dithered too long in fusing the two executive teams into one, moving all production into one plant and eliminating redundancies. For most of its functional life, Studebaker-Packard had two test tracks, two headquarters staffs, two large factories, etc; expenses that drove it to ruin.

But that's water under the bridge. Here's my idea for a better merger: Studebaker and International Harvester. Let me explain the reasoning behind it. People don't usually think of International Harvester as a merger candidate, but back in the early 1960s it was one of the last independent truck makers in America and was doing quite well. In 1960 proper, they actually outsold Dodge, Willys and GMC in the light-truck segment. International Harvester boasted a full model range, from light pickups to heavy Class 8 haulers. However, the same market forces that killed off the auto independents would eventually drive IH close to the edge.

International had a strong dealer network in rural areas, where a large percentage of trucks had traditionally been sold. Unfortunately, during the 1960s, the market changed, with more individu-

als buying trucks as their primary vehicles or as a second "car" in a two-car family. By decade's end, more trucks were being sold to people in cities and suburbs. International didn't have many dealers in those areas, and by 1969, both Dodge and GMC had trounced it in sales.

Studebaker, on the other hand, had a fairly decent dealer network in cities; certainly not perfect, but better than International's rural-based network. But Studebaker needed many more dealers

to sell its cars, and International had them in places Studebaker often didn't. If the two companies merged, they would have created one large, healthy company.

Here's why: Studebaker would have gained as many as 500-1,000 new dealers to sell its cars—

strong, well-established IH dealers who would sell Larks and Hawks, in addition to International trucks. The increase in Lark sales would have pushed sales above the breakeven point, and handsome profits could have been realized.

International would have benefited because it would have gained as many as 1,500 Studebaker dealers who would then be selling International trucks alongside their cars. I firmly believe this would have strengthened both dealer networks, which of course, would have then been one network. Picture in your mind a modern dealership selling Studebaker Larks and Hawks alongside International's great line of pickups, vans and Travelalls. It would have been a very impressive sight.

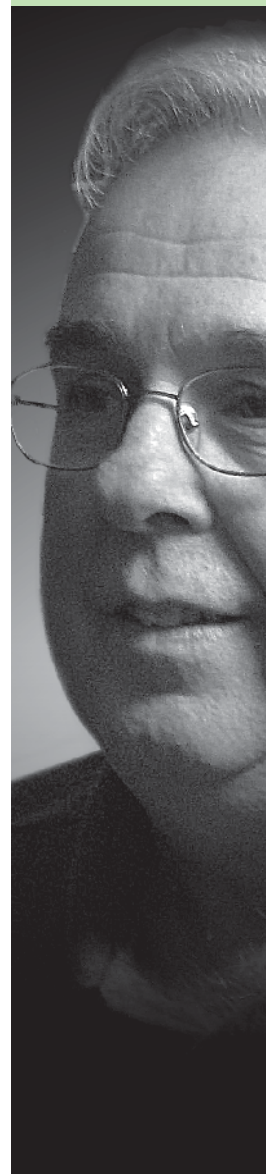
There would probably have to be two levels of International/Studebaker dealers. One made mostly of former Studebaker-only dealers, which would handle Studebaker cars and International light trucks. The other would be full-line International/Studebaker dealers, carrying the full range of light, medium and heavy trucks as well as Studebaker cars. I imagine these would be primarily former International-only dealers. I wouldn't be surprised if a few IH agricultural equipment dealers even took on the Studebaker line as an additional profit center.

The company could then have ended production of Studebaker trucks, and brought in production of IH pickups to boost plant efficiency.

Think it would have worked? 🐞



Picture in your mind a modern dealership selling Studebaker Larks and Hawks alongside International's great line of pick-ups, vans and Travelalls.



carbureted fuel system. Readers looking for a K-car or one of its descendants would best select a later model with fuel injection; those ran much better. On the plus side, my short wagon accommodated my tall body (over 6-foot-4) very well. The optional bucket seats were very comfortable. The two-tone brown and beige with velour upholstery (on the doors as well) was striking. Its plentiful faux-wood trim, was sneered at as “dated” by some. To my eyes, it was opulent—especially compared to the monotone plastic Japanese cars. Sadly, it’s the latter that set the trend for the next 20-plus years.

Between the buckets was a spiffy console and five-speed stick shift. The combination with the 2.2-liter “Trans 4” engine gave sporty performance—and MPG very close to the EPA figures. Import-like economy and traditional Chrysler luxury wrapped up in one car... how cool is that?

K-cars have become the Rodney Dangerfields of Mopars: automobiles that people love to hate. Airflows, the chunky 1946-’49 models, and 1961 Plymouths get more respect. Yet they are the second series of ordinary cars with a letter for a model name to have historical significance. When the Model T was new, I doubt many people anticipated that they would be a sought-after collectible decades later. I hope there are still more than a few K-cars around in 2060.

*Daniel Muldoon, Ph.D.*  
*Omaha, Nebraska*

**TODAY I WAS FLOODED WITH MEMORIES** of nearly 60 years ago when I read Richard’s column “A Car Nut is Born” in *HCC* #104. I grew up in Woodside, Queens, and I too had wheels in my head. I remember all the streets he mentioned. I remember cashing in empty soda bottles to buy a Spalding “Pinky” rubber ball and with an old broomstick playing stickball.

When someone yelled “car coming,” we would watch a shoebox Ford or a straight-eight Buick glide by. Even our neighborhood doctor would wave from his sedate black Pontiac. Since we didn’t have a car, we’d have to take the bus into the big city. We passed by a De Soto dealership, and seeing tri-tone cars with fins and chrome, well, that damaged me for life. I would imagine when they tore down the dealership, my nose print was still on the glass.

Our next-door neighbor, on returning from the Korean War bought a Dove Gray 1952 Chevrolet DeLuxe sedan, which he Simonized every weekend. Oh and how about the older kid down the street, you know, with the slicked-back hair and leather jacket and that deep blue 1950 Merc. Yeah, I was hooked beyond return.

It’s hard to imagine that nearly 60 years later, we see these cars on the show field in better-than new condition. It’s also hard to imagine what we’ve lost. Thankfully we have these memories.

*Ed Bittman*  
*Dade City, Florida*



**AFTER DEVOTING ALMOST ALL OF MY HOBBY TIME TO FOLLOWING BASEBALL** and collecting baseball cards, I began noticing cars in 1954. But it wasn’t until the fall of that year, when I had just turned 13, that the great 1955 class of American cars grabbed my attention. They were all big, full of chrome, multicolored and almost all had big V-8s. I was hooked from then on, and quickly subscribed to *Motor Trend* and *Road & Track*.

Mother and Daddy took turns bringing me to the various dealerships in Baton Rouge, where I grew up, so I could collect all of the various sales brochures, and that continued for a few years. Don’t I wish I still had all that literature now!

*Joe Darby*  
*Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

**RICHARD’S EDITORIAL “SECOND CHANCE CONSIDERATION”** in *HCC* #103 immediately made me think not of a particular make or model, but instead of an automotive color—specifically the light green metallic hue that was so popular on late-1960s to early-’70s American automobiles. For some reason or another, my parents seemed to be hopelessly drawn to vehicles in this shade of green, and as fate would have it, I eventually inherited as my first car their well-used

1969 Oldsmobile Delta 88 in this color. While the antics afforded by the stout 455 Rocket engine beneath the hood made the car a hit with my teenage buddies, I could barely stand to look at that vehicle because of its color, which I derogatorily referred to as “pea green.”

As my teen years wore on, I began to notice that there appeared to be a strange and direct correlation between well-preserved vehicles from the muscle car era and the presence of that dreaded hue. After hours of careful consideration (usually during my Algebra class), I came to the conclusion that this was almost certainly attributable to the fact that the only people who would order an otherwise wonderful automobile in such a god-awful color were “old men”—the very type who would be the least likely to “use-and-abuse” the sheetmetal and mechanicals of a performance vehicle as it aged.

Fast forward 30 years from my high school days, and when I walk into a collector-car show today, I find myself strangely attracted to any car in this shade of green. Examples I can think of from recent events include a beautiful early-’70s Chevrolet truck and a late-’60s Pontiac Bonneville—both of which looked absolutely stunning in their gleaming coats of “pea green” paint. If you had told me in high school that I would have had this change of heart, rest assured I never would have believed you!

*David Dellwo*  
*Tomball, Texas*

**MY PICK FOR RICHARD’S SECOND CHANCE CONSIDERATION** would be the 1949 to 1952 Plymouths, particularly, the ’49 models. While frumpy in appearance, they certainly had Kaufman Thuma Keller’s attributes of beaucoup headroom, general roominess and overall practicality and straightforwardness. The 1949 Plymouth certainly has a charm, with its fluted bumpers, a rather ornate grille and faux woodgrained fascia, to name a few. The only modification I would do is to equip it with a very much-needed overdrive to give it a much-needed higher top end for today’s traffic.

*Mel Miller*  
*Riverside, California*

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## A Hundred Years of Gulf Stations

This coming August, my father will have been gone 10 years. He liked transportation on a much larger scale than most of us will ever experience. He served in the U.S. Maritime Service in the North Atlantic during World War II (commonly known as the Merchant Marine, though never as the “Merchant Marines”), sailed as an engineer aboard a Great Lakes freighter owned by Weyerhaeuser, and then joined the tanker fleet of Gulf Oil Corporation. He stayed with Gulf for 46 years.

So I became wistful when I passed a Cumberland Farms convenience store, with its Gulf pumps, and noted a poster wrapped around a lighting upright declaring that 2013 marked the 100th anniversary of Gulf’s first service station. I am the offspring of a proud Gulf family. The job gave my father an opportunity to see the world from Portland, Maine, to the Middle East and Hong Kong. His long absences at sea were mitigated by a solid salary and benefits that allowed us to live better than decently. He was among the last American mariners to have served aboard U.S.-flagged tankers before homeports and flags of convenience, such as Seoul and Liberia, took precedence in the industry of global petroleum transshipment.

Gulf Oil can trace its earliest origins to Texas, but at its heart was a Pennsylvania company. It started in 1901 when drillers made a gigantic oil strike at the Spindletop field on the Gulf Coast near Beaumont, Texas. A refinery to handle the crude was needed and shortly built in nearby Port Arthur. One major investor was William Larimer Mellon, Sr., of the Pittsburgh banking dynasty, who formed Gulf in 1907. The Mellons later financed a network of pipelines running from the Texas and Oklahoma oilfields east.

The anniversary being marked recognizes the monumental role that Gulf played in the retail marketing of gasoline. In the early days, motorists often had to go to a blacksmith shop,

garage or hardware store to buy gas, which was usually drawn from a barrel using a hand-cranked pump. Gulf took its automotive fuel right to the customers. On December 1, 1913, it took a corner property at Baum Boulevard and St. Clair Street in downtown Pittsburgh and opened what it called the Gulf Refinery. It didn’t distill crude, but was instead a baroquely styled kiosk with a pagoda roof, designed by architect J.H. Giesey, surrounded by pumps to which drivers could simply pull up. This was the first, true drive-in gas station.



There’s another relic of Gulf roadside architecture that you can still sample today. It’s Dunkle’s Gulf, a lovely little Art Deco station in the historic town of Bedford, Pennsylvania, along the original alignment of the Lincoln Highway, U.S. 30. It’s still dispensing gasoline today. Speaking of Art Deco, while Dunkle’s was opening in 1933, Gulf was erecting its headquarters offices, an Art Deco office tower in downtown Pittsburgh, which opened the following year. Along with the Cathedral of Learning, the Gothic Revival tower at the University of Pittsburgh, the Gulf Tower remains one of the Steel City’s most distinctive high-rise structures.

Our story with Gulf didn’t have a completely happy ending. During the early 1980s, Gulf Oil became the target of a hostile takeover attempt, and was forced to merge with Chevron, its “white knight” that blunted the greenmail effort. That sent a lot of longer-term Gulf employees into unwelcome retirement, including my father, although he did enjoy a second career as a chief officer aboard coastal tankers and towboats. More recently, Gulf Oil has been reborn as a limited partnership in conjunction with Cumberland Farms, based out of Framingham, Massachusetts, handing retail and distribution mainly in the Northeast and South. So the story continues, and I know my father would have enjoyed being part of the centennial. ☺

“ Gulf Oil can

trace its earliest

origins to

Texas, but at

its heart was a

Pennsylvania

company.”



**WHEN I FIRST CONSIDERED THE 1961-'63 THUNDERBIRDS**, I found them to lack all imagination, particularly the front ends. To me they looked like two surfboards stood up on their sides, with a canvas stretched across them for a hood, and the roof was a mere holdover from the previous model. It looked like something I would have come up with as a cardboard mock-up when I was 10 years old—ghastly and pukish. For years, I never gave them a second thought.

So now I find myself quite smitten with that same design. What changed? Honestly, I saw one customized. It was lowered, with wider wheels, mini moons and beauty rings. In a moment of candor, I just couldn't deny how fun the car looked. It's like it was looking at me, smiling slyly, and slowly nodding its head saying "Yeeeahhh!!" I couldn't help but smile back. This forced me to rethink the car.

To me, this car appeals to the psyche of pop culture of the era. It was bold, young and exceedingly optimistic. It speaks directly to the space race and the notion that through science and engineering (and hard work), there are no limits. This is a car in motion even when it is sitting still. Nowadays, the huge afterburner taillamps and sloping spaceship rear treatment actually cause my heart rate to increase. It says, "We can go wherever we want and as fast as we want." Such zeal and forward-thinking is a welcome breath of fresh air today, even if it has to come from a 50-year-old car.  
*Willy Hoskovec*  
*Edgewood, New Mexico*



**REGARDING TAILLAMP DESIGNS**, I have been fascinated with them ever since I was a tot. The taillamp figures in prominently with any car purchase I make; even for new cars.

I call to your attention a singular oddity in the classic car world: a case where the taillamp design went from unquestionably ugly to positively majestic, in just one year. This would be the Packard taillamp design of 1954 and 1955. The 1954's "sore thumb" design is, in my opinion, the ugliest, silliest taillamp I have ever seen; however, the 1955 "cathedral"

design denotes nothing but poise, stature, and elegance—all in perfect proportion—from any angle. What an amazing turnaround in one year. Too bad the rest of Packard could not do the same.

Honorable mention goes to the 1966 Thunderbird, which was (to my knowledge) the first full-width taillamp, and also the 1948 Cadillac tailfin.

*Joe Razumich*  
*Portage, Indiana*

**I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF THE 1967-'68 MERCURY COUGAR** styling from the rear three-quarter view. Because the body lines form a slight wedge from rear to front, this view gives the car the perspective of being at speed, even when standing still, especially if there is a slight forward rake. These Cougars don't look good with the rear end hanging down.

I'd also like to give the 1965 4-4-2 a rear-view honorable mention. With the front end lowered a bit and with some wide American five-spokes... Tasty.

*Ed Bonuccelli*  
*Milpitas, California*

**REGARDING RICHARD'S ASSESSMENT OF REAR VIEWS** in *HCC #106*, I've always thought the 1964 Mercury Comet Caliente has one of the best.

*Del Schwab*  
*Payne, Ohio*

**I THINK THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THREE-QUARTER REAR VIEW OF ALL CARS** has to be the 1966-'67 Oldsmobile Toronado. Simple, functional, and beautiful flowing lines blend into the entire theme of the whole body.

*Tom Ziem*  
*Laguna Hills, California*

**THE MOST STRIKING REAR VIEW OF ANY CAR** has got to be the 1961 Oldsmobile 88 bubbletop. It has the look of a custom car; besides the taillamps and the rear quarter treatment, that bumper is out of this world!

*Dennis D'Angelo*  
*Middletown, Connecticut*

**I LIKE ANY OF THE BOATTAIL REAR ENDS OF THE 1930S**, such as the 1934 Packard LeBaron Speedster and all the Duesenberg and Auburn speedsters, especially the 1935-'36 Auburns. I thought the 1953 Studebaker Commodore looked good from any angle. You mentioned the

1958 Buick, but I thought the rear end treatment of the '58 Oldsmobile 88/98 looked stunning and dramatic; the '57 Olds 98 isn't bad either. The 1959-'60 Chevrolets, though not universally loved, certainly made a bold statement. Though not as dramatic, I thought then that the 1960 Rambler Classic, with its gothic taillamps and the understated, canted fins looked stately and cute at the same time. Cars with trunks aside, I find that, if the general body shape is finely wrought, the rear of the car will also pass muster.

*Tom Pine*  
*Fort Pierce, Florida*

**RICHARD'S REAR VIEW COLUMN BROUGHT BACK A MEMORY** from my early teen years. I was walking with friends down a street in north St. Louis when I said, "Hey, look at the rear end on that." They immediately started looking up and down the street for an attractive girl, but I was referring to a 1953 Ford convertible with a continental kit and fender skirts. It took quite a while before they stopped teasing me about that. But one of my favorite rear-end designs is the 1955 Plymouth. The taillamps seemed to be protruding from inside the quarter panels and not just stuck on the rear end. The recessed area that goes the full width of the body between the lower lip of the trunklid and the bumper looks like it could be the exhaust for a powerful engine.

*Gene Fleschute*  
*Kansas City, Missouri*

**MY CHOICE WOULD BE THE 1965 IMPERIAL**, trying to run with the Lincoln design boys and doing a good job knowing they would have a small production run.

*Dan O'Flaherty*  
*Mt. Dora, Florida*

**I TOO FIND THE BACK-END OF LATE '50S IMPERIALS** to be one of the wildest designs to come out of Detroit. I was taken aback, though, when you referred to these cars as "Chrysler" Imperials. Consequently, I noticed you didn't call the 1959 Cadillac a General Motors Cadillac. As I'm sure you're aware, in 1955 the Imperial became a separate division of the Chrysler Corporation. Just as the Cadillac and the Lincoln are separate divisions of their parent companies.

*Lou Beauchain*  
*Shrewsbury, Vermont*

## Why Isn't My Car a "Classic"?

One of the questions I regularly receive from readers is along the lines of, "Why isn't my (fill in the year and make) recognized as a Classic by the Classic Car Club of America?" In fact, I recently had that discussion with executive editor Richard Lentinello, who pointed out to me that one of his friends was disappointed to learn that his 1949 Cadillac Series 62 was not eligible for CCCA Classic status (yet the 1947 Cadillac Series 62 is).

Coincidentally, I touched on this in a recent column, in which I briefly summarized the beginnings of the CCCA and how the club came to define a Classic automobile. It's worth repeating:

"...fine or unusual foreign or domestic automobiles... distinguished by their respective design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship." Of equal significance, the club also recognized what it believed to be the Classic Era—1925-1942.

It's worth noting that the club's founders chose those years arbitrarily. When the CCCA was founded in 1952, the AACA was the dominant antique auto club and recognized automobiles 25 years old and older. That means the newest car eligible for "antique" status in 1952 was built in 1927. The cars accepted as CCCA Classics, in effect, found a home.

The criteria above address what really defines a Classic automobile—simply stated: design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship. I would also add limited production as a criterion.

Thus, not all Packards—one of the most famous automobiles ever built—are considered Classics. In the early 1930s, automobile sales slowed—particularly for luxury car manufacturers. In 1935, Packard entered the medium-price field with its small eight 120 series at a price lower than its Super Eight and Twelve. During that first year, Packard sold nearly 25,000 model 120s. Combined sales of Eights, Super Eights and Twelves weren't even close. Capitalizing on the model 120s success, Packard introduced in 1937 a six-cylinder—the model 115. Most automotive historians acknowledge those cars saved the Packard company.

Today, however, only the Super Eight and Twelve series cars are considered Classics by the CCCA. They fulfill the criteria laid out above,

which the club uses in determining a car's status—when was it built and how it measures up to the club's stated standards of design, engineering, workmanship and scarcity.

Over the years, car owners have approached the club about reviewing its list of Approved Classics. A few years ago, the club reexamined the Buick series of the 1930s and determined that the 80 series should be accepted as a Classic, in addition to the 90 series.

In recent years, there has been discussion about moving beyond 1948, but for the time being that seems to have stalled out. There is currently, however, a movement within the club's

classification committee to accept cars built before 1925, on the basis that there were a significant number of automobiles built that conform to the club's criteria and have been excluded solely because of

the arbitrary 1925 date. Examples include the Cole, Daniels, Lafayette and Templar.

One significant point that has emerged from the ongoing discussions about the club's established dates for inclusion as Classics is whether, in fact, the club should be focused on recognizing an era—not whether a car is "a Classic." In fact, discussions within the club's classification committee point to the fact that the Classic Era extended from approximately 1916 to 1942—a time period that closely parallels the era of the custom coachbuilding companies. (The club does accept certain cars built through 1948.)

I agree with this finding. The great era of custom bodybuilding extended from just before World War I through the 1930s, ending at the beginning of World War II. A few custom bodybuilders remained after the war, but the era was over.

No major changes are imminent, but the club continues to evaluate its criteria. I'm quite certain that the discussion of "What does it take to be a Classic?" will continue for some time to come—and I'm sure *HCC* readers have their opinions as well. 🐶

*I should note that the Packard 120 chassis, when fitted with custom coachwork, such as by Darrin, is considered a Full Classic.*



COURTESY OF THE CLASSIC CAR CLUB OF AMERICA

“What defines a Classic automobile? Simply stated: design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship.”



# Stunning Style

*More than 8,000 Oldsmobile 98 Holiday Coupes were built for 1950, yet few are known to exist today. Why?*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH





**A**fter WWII, and before cold-war paranoia and jet-age suburban excess set in, General Motors seemed ready to shed its tank-like car-cocoons for something slightly more flashy, accessible and open. Up to that point, coupes, sedans, station wagons, pretty much everything but convertibles, offered thick door frames and hard B-pillars in the name of torsional rigidity and safety. Though the glass may have been tall, the high body sides of the day made the view out minimal at best. It has to be said that inside one, the claustrophobic were at odds to stave off that sinking feeling that the walls were closing in on them. Within the seemingly impregnable cabin, you certainly feel secure and impervious to outside forces.



And so, GM's postwar, fashion-forward hard-top coupes were a revelation. Frameless side glass and doors, and eliminating the B-pillar merely by tightly aligning the window-edge chrome, once seemed impossible, yet GM had a brisk trade in doing the impossible. Adding to the open-air feeling were wrap-around rear windows, which were also claimed as an industry first.

Launched mid-1949, GM's three highest-end divisions (Buick, Oldsmobile and Cadillac) were each bestowed a hardtop model: Buick had the Roadmaster Riviera, Cadillac had the Coupe DeVille, and Oldsmobile actually had two Holiday Coupe models, on both the 98 and the hot new 88 model. These hardtops managed to split the difference between solid-top safety and security, and a convertible's feeling of fresh-air freedom and ability to bring the outside in. "Hold fast to your heart," a 1951 ad warns. "...the smartest looking car on the road [is] the Holiday Coupe. Freedom and fun and the open road beckon the master of this glamorous car."

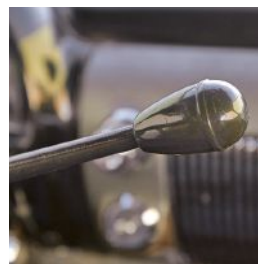
Oldsmobile's 98 had introduced its fastback Futuramic styling concept for the 1948 model

**Two pedals on the floor means that this car is Hydra-Matic-equipped. By the time this 1950 Olds was built, there were more than one million Hydra-Matics on the road.**

**Clearly-displayed speedometer with inset fuel and amp gauges, dash-mounted clock and a Super Deluxe AM radio were among this 98 Holiday Coupe's comfort accoutrements; pull the shifter toward you and down to go.**

year with the low-line 76 and the division's new hybrid model, the 88, following suit. Olds stylists did it once again for 1950, giving the 98 all-new slab-sided styling and a one-piece windshield that would also hint at what was coming for the 1951 A-body 88. Olds division sales went from strength to strength in the late '40s and early '50s: from 172,852 cars sold in 1948, to 288,310 for 1949, to 408,060 in 1950, skipping from eighth to sixth in the national sales race. Breaking 98 Holiday Coupes out of those numbers, just 3,006 were built in that abbreviated 1949 model year, but production nearly tripled to 8,263 (inclusive of 317 cars lacking Deluxe equipment) in 1950.

There was little doubt that the early Oldsmobile Holiday Coupes were some of the most technologically sophisticated and up-to-date cars on the American road, and the sales numbers proved that Oldsmobile's ad-copy writers effectively communicated the upscale-yet-within-reach message. The fully automatic Hydra-Matic transmission barely had time to make itself known from its 1940 launch, and a brand-new 303.7-cu.in. OHV V-8—featuring hydraulic lifters for the new 1949 models and sport-



ing a 7.25:1 compression ratio that helped it develop 135 hp—were among the mechanical advances from Oldsmobile division alone.

But some of that remarkable technology is responsible for these cars' shocking lack of visibility today. "The hydroelectric windows were a marvel of their time," explains Jim Schultz of Chino Valley, Arizona, and president of the National Antique Olds Club, "but were a detriment to the car's longevity. They were powered by a starter motor that was stood on its end, with a brake-fluid reservoir on the bottom that pushed hydraulic rams to raise the windows. Going down, the windows are silent, but you can hear the pump when they go up. Well, when they leaked brake fluid, they'd take paint off the doors. When they got older, no one wanted to screw with the windows, so the car just got junked." And this, more than anything else, is why so few of the early 98 Holiday hardtops remain.

Sentiment is a funny old thing; it can bring you back to where you started, even if you were too young to remember it. For Jim, it started with his dad, Fred. A line mechanic for a couple of Oldsmobile dealers—first Gardner Oldsmobile, then later, Valley Motors—in upstate New York, Fred would also hustle cars, buying near-new vehicles, keeping them a while, then flipping them to buyers for more than he paid. Valley Motors, in Endicott, New York, was located just down the road from IBM headquarters, and Oldsmobile seemed to be the car of choice among the junior-executive crowd there. Though it seemed unusual for a dealership line mechanic to get his hands on such a new and relatively unusual car, an early trade-in likely explains the appearance of one in the Schultz family driveway.

"Our first Oldsmobile was a 1949 98 Holiday Coupe," Jim recalls. "My mom went to the hospital in that car, and my ride home from the hospital in July, 1950, was in that car, too." It was also a tow vehicle for a local dirt-track hauler that Fred campaigned in the area, and it was soon traded in for another Olds. Fading black and white photos make it difficult to discern the factory Canto Cream-over-black paint scheme, but Jim has its exact duplicate awaiting a full restoration in his shop. Not long after, Jim's dad traded up to a red and white 1950 Olds 98.

So, having a completed near-duplicate in the collection—one that combined the paint scheme of the family's first Oldsmobile with the year and model of the car he remembered as a child barely old

**New for the 1949 Oldsmobile lineup, the Rocket V8 for 1950 was virtually unchanged from its debut, from its 303.7-cubic-inch displacement to its 7.25:1 compression, and from its five main bearings to its 135-horsepower rating.**



*Our first Oldsmobile was a 1949 98 Holiday Coupe. My mom went to the hospital in that car, and my ride home from the hospital in July, 1950, was in that car, too.*

enough to walk—was too great an opportunity to pass up. Jim was a focused and enthusiastic collector when he found this 1950 98 Holiday hardtop coupe for sale in Florida back in 2002.

Precious little has been done to it since falling into Jim's clutches. "I had the interior reupholstered, I switched out some of the trim since I had better trim on some of my other cars, and I did a thorough detailing that brought it up quite a bit from what I got. In Florida, I'm sure the salt air penetrated the outer layer of the repaint, and it wasn't looking as crisp as it could have. I used a 3M light-cut polishing compound, hit it with a foam pad buffer, then I used Jack's Wax. I like it. Goes on easy and really pops the chrome when you use it all over."

The 98's door opens up plenty wide, but between the high seat and the low roof that wraps around and down, you're going to need to scrunch yourself a little to get in. Take stock inside: visibility is limited, even with the new-for-1950 one-piece windshield, as if the top is chopped, though clearly it's not. The steering wheel is massive and in your chest; the seat allows you to be more upright than reclined, which gives you good leverage on the

**The swoop of roofline chrome, thin along the bottom edge of the roof but widening at the base of the C-pillar, was a Holiday trademark on both coupe models and the sedan line that was to come. The segmented rear glass is nearly hidden in profile.**



## owner's view



This Oldsmobile came out of Pinellas Park, Florida. Though it's been repainted and kept a presentable driver its whole life, it hasn't been restored, and its body has never been off the frame. And it'll stay that way as long as I own it.

Today, we know of more 1949 Holiday Hardtop Coupes for whatever reason than the 1950 version. There may be two dozen '49 models around between the two big Oldsmobile clubs, but there are a lot fewer of the 1950s model for whatever reason—maybe a dozen known examples.

—Jim Schultz

wheel itself. Your legs probably will need to wrap around it to reach the pedals, though. It's hard to imagine that the Old West font on the gauges was ever considered classy or contemporary in the motorcar age, yet here it appears; if anything, it makes an old car seem older still. Contrastingly, every switch you touch inside is made of metal—cool to the touch, and unblinkingly classy.

To start, twist the key and push the start button, located on the dash, next to the key. There is no park, only neutral and the handbrake on these early Hydra-Matics. The 303-cu.in. V-8 kicks over into a gentle simmer that's barely heard or felt. With the windows down and ambient noise to help dissipate the engine, plus no shake at all, you could be forgiven if you went to try and start it again and were met with the grinding of the starter teeth on the flywheel.

While still smooth through the revs, the 98 doesn't come off like some snarling muscle machine. Despite a 3.82 first and 3.64 final drive gears, there's still just 135 hp pushing around two tons of weight plus driver. The 98 still feels old-car acceptable while getting up to speed. Off the line is the biggest surprise—nothing's jumping here—though once you're at about 25 MPH, you can feel like you're gathering speed with the best of them. The Holiday hardtop roofline, with all windows down, plays a part here. The pillarless



roofline lets the outside in better than anything short of a convertible, and allows additional sensory input as you accelerate.

Another big surprise is that you can actually feel the road. The wheel and seat are chatty, but not annoying as you toddle off down the boulevard. Keep both hands on that big wheel, though: steering slop on the straight-ahead is nearly nonexistent, but the bias-ply tires allow the car to wander around, even on smooth pavement. Aftermarket anti-roll bars front and rear do eye-opening work on the cornering: there's hardly any body roll at all, and the tires want to give out before the chassis does.

On our drive, the big drum brakes don't kick in until somewhere after the first half of the pedal, and the tires allow the body to pitch and yaw. When you stomp the pedal, it's not the brakes that pull the 98 one way or the other, but those tires do have a hard time keeping the big Olds steady and within the lines as you come to a halt.

**The windshield was one piece for 1950, but the Holiday wrap-around rear window remained in three sections. Still, between the thin A- and C-pillars, the rear glass and the lack of a B-pillar, GM combined convertible atmosphere with sedan safety.**

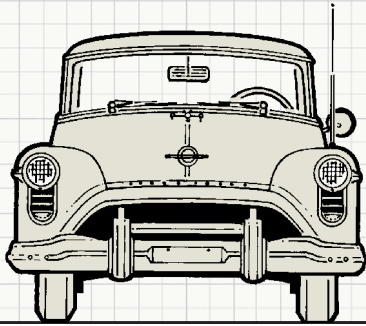
It wasn't long before hardtop coupes, sedans and even station wagons permeated Detroit's model lineup. Letting the outside in became a widely-accepted way to split the difference. Goodbye, claustrophobia, hello outside world! And for Jim Schultz, hello to the most tangible link yet to his dad and the Oldsmobiles that have decorated their lives for six-and-a-half decades. 🍷



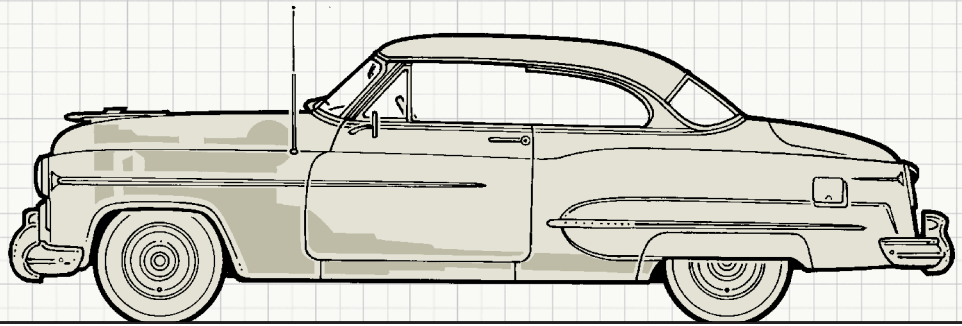


# 1950 OLDSMOBILE 98 HOLIDAY COUPE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS, THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO  
©2014 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



58 inches



125 inches

## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

Base price: \$2,490

### ENGINE

Type: OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads  
Displacement: 303.7 cu.in.  
Bore x stroke: 3.75 x 3.44 inches  
Compression ratio: 7.25:1  
Horsepower @ RPM: 135 @ 3,600  
Torque @ RPM: 263 lb.ft. @ 1,800  
Valvetrain: Hydraulic valve lifters  
Main bearings: 5  
Fuel system: Rochester AA dual-downdraft two-barrel carburetor, mechanical fuel pump  
Lubrication system: Pressure, gear-type pump  
Electrical system: 6-volt  
Exhaust system: Single exhaust

### TRANSMISSION

Type: GM Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic  
Ratios:  
1st 3.82:1  
2nd 2.63:1  
3rd 1.45:1  
4th 1.00:1  
Reverse 4.31:1

### DIFFERENTIAL

Type: Semi-floating, hypoid  
Ratio: 3.64:1

### STEERING

Type: Worm-and-roller  
Ratio: 23.3:1  
Turns, lock-to-lock: 4.75  
Turning circle: 42 feet

### BRAKES

Type: Hydraulic, four-wheel manual drum  
Front/rear: 11-inch drums

### CHASSIS & BODY

Construction: Channel-section frame with X-member

Body style: Two-door hardtop  
Layout: Front engine, rear-wheel drive

### SUSPENSION

Front: Independent; unequal length A-arms, coil springs, telescoping shock absorbers, anti-roll bar  
Rear: Upper and lower control arms; coil springs, telescoping shock absorbers

### WHEELS & TIRES

Wheels: Pressed steel, drop center  
Front/rear: 15 x 6 inches  
Tires: BFGoodrich Silvertown low-pressure bias-ply, wide white side wall  
Front/rear: 8.20-15 4-ply

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Wheelbase: 125 inches  
Overall length: 213 inches  
Overall width: 78.75 inches  
Overall height: 63.844 inches  
Front track: 58 inches  
Rear track: 61.5 inches  
Shipping weight: 4,000 pounds

### CAPACITIES

Crankcase: 5 quarts  
Cooling system: 21.5 quarts  
Fuel tank: 18 gallons  
Transmission: 21 quarts  
Rear axle: 3.75 pints

### CALCULATED DATA

Bhp per cu.in.: 0.445  
Weight per bhp: 29.63 pounds  
Weight per cu.in.: 13.20 pounds

### PRODUCTION

Deluxe 98  
Holiday coupe: 7,946

## PROS & CONS

+ Beautiful styling  
+ Comfortable and spacious  
+ Anti-roll bars minimize roll

- Hard to find today  
- Visibility is a bit difficult  
- Bias-ply tires cause it to wander

## WHAT TO PAY

Low \$13,000 - \$15,000

Average \$28,000 - \$31,000

High \$52,000 - \$55,000

## CLUB CORNER

**Oldsmobile Club of America**  
517-663-1811  
www.oldsclub.org  
Dues: \$30/year  
Membership: 6,400

**National Antique Oldsmobile Club**  
4 Lindworth Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63124  
www.antiqueolds.org  
Dues: \$25/year  
Membership: 1,600

# Well-Off Wagons

*From fuselage to frugal: Town & Country station wagons upsize and then downsize to satisfy an ever-changing market*

## PART 3: 1969-1981

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY CHRYSLER HISTORIC EXCEPT AS NOTED

In 1969 and again in the 1970s, Chrysler Town & Country station wagons enjoyed some of their best sales years, exceeding 24,000 units in 1969, and 20,000 in 1972, 1973 and 1978. Many buyers bought into Chrysler's vision of what a station wagon should be—huge (except 1978), stylish and luxurious.

Even John Lennon and Yoko Ono owned a T&C station wagon. Registered through Apple Records, they used the green 1972 model around New York City and even took it across the U.S. They still had it when John died in 1980. The legendary Beatle and singer/songwriter also recognized the attributes of the T&C for work and play.

Nevertheless, the glory days of the large land-barge wagons were numbered, and the social, political and economic turmoil of the 1970s would lead to changing transportation requirements for the American family. Late in the decade, less became more: less station wagon heft meant more sales. Let's see how Chrysler's Town & Country offerings fared in this climate.

### 1969

T&C station wagons, now their own series, featured new styling, which Chrysler described as, "... a fuselage frame that curves up

and around you in one fluid line. Close the window and the arc is complete. From under the doors to over the cockpit." It was a departure from the rigid lines of the 1968 models.

The new wraparound integral front bumper of the T&C incorporated the New Yorker's grille. A Cherrywood vinyl applique (that could be deleted) with bright trim also featured style lines, two of which continued through the taillamps and across the tailgate. A new wind deflector in the form of an airfoil, which blows dust off the tailgate window and keeps exhaust fumes out when driving with the window open, was integrated with the body. Its outer edge line continued from the roof down into the bumper, creating a recessed area for the new double-action tailgate, which opened to lay flat or swung out to the side. The cargo area was 93.1 cu.ft. and had storage pockets in the wheel housing areas. Two-seaters (six-passenger) still had over 10 cu.ft. of lockable storage beneath the cargo

floor. Outside dimensions were 224.8 inches long and 79.1 inches wide. A seven-step dip and spray process to guard against rust was still employed.

A simulated walnut dash applique surrounded a horizontal 120-MPH speedometer with gauges for fuel and alternator beneath it and warning lamps above it. Lighting, wiper and washer switches were to the left, and heater controls (and A/C if ordered) and the radio were to the right.

The TorqueFlite automatic transmission was standard, and rear gearing for the 290-hp 383-cu.in. V-8 was 2.76 with a 3.23 ratio optional, and the optional 330-hp 383 and 350-hp 440 V-8s

used 3.23 gears with 2.76 gears optional.

A 122-inch wheelbase, torsion-bar front suspension with HD anti-roll bar and asymmetrically-mounted rear springs with 6.5 leaves were employed. The front track was 62.1 inches, and the rear was widened to 63.4. Power steering and brakes and 8.85 x 15 tires on



15 x 6.5-inch wheels were standard. Power 11.76-inch front disc brakes were stated as standard in the dealer brochure, but optional in the 1969 *Chrysler Data Book*.

Standard was a power tailgate window, accessory lighting, fender-mounted turn indicator lights, Cleaner Air System and three-speed concealed windshield wipers. A trailer towing package, 3-in-1 divided bench seat, a roof luggage rack, single or dual A/C, Sure-Grip, Tilt-A-Scope steering wheel, and tailgate washer all remained optional, and a new Driver Awareness Package warned occupants to fasten seatbelts, lock doors and if the headlamps are still on when the door is opened.

Total production for the six-passenger wagon was 10,108, and for the nine-passenger wagon it was 14,408.

### 1970

The protruding center section of the grille now began on an angle from the headlamp bezels, unlike 1969, and the pattern was revised. Simulated Brazilian Rosewood adorned the sides and tailgate. "Town & Country" emblems moved to the rear quarters, and the marker lamps moved up on the fenders. The woodgrain lost its style lines, but on the rear door it featured a dogleg and covered more area, as it did on the tailgate. Chrysler boasted that the T&C could carry a 4 x 8-ft. sheet of plywood, lying flat, with the tailgate closed.

Powertrains were carried over from 1969. A new Sound Isolation System added rubber isolators to the front frame structure and to the front and rear suspension to reduce road noise in the cockpit. Additional bracing was also added (up front), as was another 25 sq.ft. of sound insulation material. The Sound Isolation System, unibody and torsion-bar suspension comprised the new Torsion-Quiet Ride. Tire size was J78 x 15; power front disc brakes were standard, and the Rim-Blow steering wheel was a new option.

The two-seat wagon sold 5,686, and the three-seat, 9,583.

### 1971

A mild facelift brought squared headlamp bezels and a new grille pattern like the New Yorker (though the factory 1971 photo in this story shows a Newport grille and round bezels). Vent windows were retired and High Level Strato Ventilation



1971 TOWN & COUNTRY

was a new option. The woodgrain trim was carried over but could still be deleted. Backup lamps were redesigned.

A mildly revised instrument panel layout and some new knobs adorned the dash.

Compression ratio reductions resulted in lower power ratings: standard 383 two-barrel, 275 hp; optional 383 four-barrel, 300 hp; and the 440 four-barrel, 335 hp. The TorqueFlite received part-throttle downshift, and rear gearing carried over from 1970.

A new steering gear offered better road feel, and larger L84x15 tires became standard. Stereo cassette, microphone and an engine block heater were new options.

There were 5,697 six-passenger and 10,993 nine-passenger models built.

### 1972

Restyling included the loop bumper bisecting the center of a new New Yorker grille that featured more horizontal sections. A raised ridge on the center of the hood matched the bumper divider. The woodgrain area was revised, foregoing the dogleg, starting lower on the sides and featuring wide bright trim along the bottom. Rear wheel-opening skirts were standard. The tailgate could now open with its window up, and the new standard Auto Lock locked the tailgate when the ignition was on. Redesigned taillamps extended onto the tailgate where the woodgrain area was reduced.

Single exhaust systems and SAE net ratings caused another precipitous drop in power figures. An 8.2:1 compression ratio 400-cu.in. two-barrel V-8 produced 190 net hp, and the 440 four-barrel engine had 225 hp. The TorqueFlite received durability upgrades, and rear gears were unchanged. A new



1972 TOWN & COUNTRY



1973 TOWN & COUNTRY

Electronic Ignition System that did away with the distributor points and condenser was optional, as was a vinyl roof in black or tan. Production increased to 6,473 for six-passenger and 14,116 for nine-passenger wagons.

### 1973

The loop front bumper was replaced with a more formal separate front bumper with guards (that could meet federally mandated 5-MPH impact standards) and a more upright grille. It was recessed and had a subtle vertical split with horizontal bars on either side. Headlamps were set into divided rectangular chromed bezels adjacent to the grille. Revisions to the leading edge of the woodgrain's trim helped integrate it, and the Chrysler lettering on the tailgate got smaller.

An 8.2 compression 440 four-barrel V-8 with 215 net hp (208 hp, California) and the Electronic Ignition System was the only powerplant. The rear gear was 2.76 with a 3.23 ratio optional. A digital clock, the Security Alarm System, steel-belted whitewall radial tires and vent windows were new options.

Despite the visual updates, sales receded slightly to 5,353 for the six-passenger models, but increased to 14,687 for the nine-passenger models.

### 1974

A new body debuted for 1974 with more squared-off windows and more glass area. Wheelbase was increased to 124 inches, front track to 64 inches, and the length was 224.7 inches.

The grille appeared even taller thanks to added bright trim above it. New rectangular headlamp bezels were divorced from

the grille trim. Parking lamps flanked them on the leading edges of the fenders, and the bumper was revised to match the other changes. A new bumper impact absorption system allowed front and rear bumpers to recess during minor impacts and rebound after. The woodgrain panels (now walnut) were revised, and the dogleg reappeared on the rear doors. Rear side marker lamps were added, as was a new thinner tailgate with larger taillamps and a new bumper. Two-seat wagon cargo capacity increased to 104.9 cu.ft., and the three-seat was 100.8 cu.ft.

A new modular instrument panel designed for easier servicing grouped all operational controls to the left of the column, and comfort controls (radio and HVAC) to the right. A squarish speedometer had temp, generator, and gasoline gauges stacked to its left. There was a new upper-level ventilation system and swing-down fuse box.

The 440 V-8's power output increased to 230 hp (220 hp with California emissions) and the TorqueFlite was standard. A 9¼-inch Salisbury-type rear axle replaced the 8¾-inch Hotchkiss-type unit. The gear ratios and Torsion-Quiet Ride were carried over, as were standard front disc brakes, now with L78x15 tires. An optional Electronic LED Alert System warned of high coolant temp, low fuel and low charging voltage.

Most likely due to the late 1973 start of the fuel shortage, sales for this year fell to 2,236 units for the six-passenger and 5,958 for the nine-passenger wagons.

### 1975

Body changes were minimal with grille pattern revisions matching the New Yorker Brougham, and the bumper received

air intakes. Inside, a new molded fiberglass headliner was used.

The 215-hp 440 was joined by a Federal no-cost-option 175-hp 400 two-barrel V-8 and a 195-hp 400 four-barrel with California emissions. A standard Phase II Electronic Ignition System added long-life spark plugs and battery. The catalytic converter was introduced. And the



1974 TOWN & COUNTRY



T&C wasn't available in California or in altitudes over 4,000 ft.

The standard 195-hp 440 V-8 and the no-charge-option 190-hp 400 four-barrel engine featured the Lean-Burn System. A new low-slip converter was used in the TorqueFlite. EPA estimated combined MPG was 12 for the 440 and 400 T&C.

Was buyer optimism returning, or did the fact that 1977 would be the last year for the large T&C wagon rally the big-wagon faithful to buy theirs before they were all gone? Whatever the reason, the result was 1,930 six-passenger

and 5,345 nine-passenger wagons built.

2.71 axle ratio and LR78 x 15 steel-belted radials were standard. An automatic vehicle height control system and a tailgate window defroster were new options. The Electronic Fuel Pacer system illuminated the left fender-mounted turn signal indicator when engine vacuum dropped, indicating inefficient driving style.

With the country in recession, sales continued to wane for the T&C, with just 1,891 six-passenger and 4,764 nine-passenger wagons produced.

### 1976

Visually the 1976 T&C's exterior was virtually unchanged from the 1975 model. The standard 440 V-8 dropped to 205 hp (200 hp with California emissions), the 175-hp 400 remained an option, as did a 185-hp 400 four-barrel with California emissions. A 2.71 gear-set was standard, 3.21s were optional for the 440 and 400 engines, and 2.45s were also optional for the 400. The Electronic Lean-Burn System (ELB) debuted on some engines. It used an onboard Spark Control Computer and feedback from sensors to adjust spark advance for the most efficient operation.

Production dropped to just 1,271 units for the six-passenger and 3,227 for the nine-passenger wagons.

Production dropped to just 1,271 units for the six-passenger and 3,227 for the nine-passenger wagons.

### 1977

Again for 1977, the body and trim appear to have been carried over intact. The *Chrysler Data Book* states that

### 1978

The T&C wagon moved to the LeBaron's M-body. It rode on a 112.7-inch wheelbase vs. 124 inches of the 1977 C-bodied T&C. Its length was 202.8 inches vs. 227.7, and width was 73.3 inches vs. 79.4. The V-8 LeBaron T&C weighed over 1,000-lbs less than the 1977 two-seat T&C. Only a six-passenger (two-seat) model was available. There would be no 4 x 8-ft. sheets of plywood lying flat in the 72.7cu.ft. of the LeBaron T&C's cargo area with tailgate closed, but it was still spacious and fully carpeted, and the second seat folded flat with storage on either side. The spare tire was now stowed under the cargo floor, and the tailgate became a liftgate that was supported by gas-filled struts.

LeBaron T&Cs featured unibody construction with



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH



1978 LeBARON TOWN & COUNTRY

transverse torsion bars, control arms and sway bar in front and asymmetrical HD leaf springs in back, HD Oriflow shocks all around and power 10.8-inch front disc brakes, with 10-inch rear drums. FR78 x 15 radial tires were also standard.

Styling was contemporary, and the LeBaron T&C wore its teakwood grain "woodtone" appliques with simulated white ash moldings (all of which could be deleted), well. The nose featured a rectangular box motif with the grille area imitating the headlamp and parking lamp shapes. Marker lamps and lenses for optional cornering lamps were at the leading edges of the fenders. Taillamps extended into the liftgate and wrapped around the quarters, and Chrysler's impact absorption system was applied to the new bumpers.

Within the simulated leather dash pad, two large round gauges housed the speedometer and fuel gauge, with smaller round gauges and switches to the left in the Rosewood-grained bezel. HVAC controls and the radio were to the right of the gauge cluster. A vinyl-covered bench seat was standard with a thin-back design 60/40 cloth or leather-covered seat optional.

The T&C standard engine was a 225-cu.in. Slant Six and optional were 318 and 360 V-8s in different configurations, depending upon emissions requirements and altitude. A TorqueFlite was required with all engines except the standard (Federal) 225 Slant Six. Electronic Lean Burn (ELB) engines used the second generation system that eliminated the distributor's starting pick-up coil and centrifugal advance weights.

Federal: The 110-hp 225-cu.in. Slant Six two-barrel with the OD four-speed had a 3.2 rear gear, but with the automatic transmission had a 2.7 like the optional 140-hp ELB 318 two-barrel V-8. The 155-hp ELB 360 two-barrel V-8 had a 2.4 rear gear and the ELB HD version had a 3.2 gear.



1979 LeBARON TOWN & COUNTRY

High Altitude: The 90-hp 225 one-barrel Slant Six, 140-hp ELB 318, and the 170-hp 360 four-barrel had a 3.2 rear gear.

California: The 90-hp 225 one-barrel and 160-hp 360 four-barrel HD V-8 had a 3.2 rear gear and the 155-hp ELB 318 four-barrel and 170-hp 360 four-barrel had a 2.7 rear gear.

High-altitude powertrains could be ordered in low-altitude areas, and California powertrains could be ordered in other states.

EPA estimates for combined MPG for Federal two-barrel engines were: 225/four-speed, 20 MPG; 225/auto, 19 MPG; 318/auto, 16 MPG; and 360/auto, 17 MPG.

A lockup torque converter was employed with V-8s, except the 360 HD engine and the high-altitude 318 and 360 engines.

A 40-Channel CB integrated with a stereo became an option, and aluminum road wheels could be ordered.

The LeBaron T&C seemed to be exactly what buyers were waiting for, as sales soared to 21,504 units, eclipsing the combined total of 1977 big wagon sales by 14,229 units. In fact, the new model sold more in one year than the 1975-1977 models combined.

## 1979

With everything essentially new for 1978, the 1979 T&C was carried over in many areas. The grille was simplified with a pattern change and the deletion of the vertical bars, and the woodgrain sides could be deleted if desired.

The powertrain combinations were the same as 1978 except for the following changes. High-altitude packages were not listed. The 100-hp 225 Slant Six one-barrel became the standard Federal engine with the overdrive four-speed. A 2.9 rear gear was standard with the optional Federal 110-hp 225 two-barrel and TorqueFlite. An optional 2.7 rear gear was available with

Federal 135-hp 318 and 150-hp 360 two-barrel V-8s. The 360 four-barrel HD engine was rated at 195 hp, Federal, and 190 hp, California. The Electronic Spark Control System was used on V-8s (even the California-bound models) except for the Federal 318 two-barrel. TorqueFlite was required for all optional engines.

A diagnostic connector was added to the driver side wheelhouse to accept Chrysler's



1980 LeBARON TOWN & COUNTRY

Electronic Engine Performance Analyzer. Halogen high-beam headlamps were optional.

For 1979 the LeBaron T&C sold 17,463 units as inflation was rising and another energy crisis was upon us.

### 1980

A base LeBaron wagon, without the teakwood appliques, became a lower-cost alternative. Adding a new upright waterfall grille with vertical ribs on either side of a center divider, moving the marker lamps and cornering lamp lenses from the leading edge of the fenders to the lower fenders and revising the bumper, further refined the front end. The taillamps were horizontally divided into three sections and backup lamps were integrated into them.

Standard in all states, the 225 Slant Six put out 90 hp. A Federal 120-hp 318 two-barrel V-8 and a California 155-hp 318 four-barrel were optional. A Combustion Computer System with an electronic feedback carb became standard on California emissions engines. A 2.9 rear gear was used with the Slant Six (and V-8 high alt.) and a 2.4 with V-8s. The TorqueFlite and 195/75R15 radial tires were standard with 205/75R15 steel-belted radials optional. New five-spoke forged aluminum road wheels were optional, as was a new liftgate wiper/washer system.

With Chrysler's financial troubles becoming public, and as the move to even more fuel-efficient cars gained momentum, the T&C sales plummeted to 6,074 units, and just 1,865 base models were produced.

### 1981

The LeBaron wagon and the LeBaron T&C were in their final year, and much was carried over. The 85-hp (90-hp for California emissions) 225 Slant Six was standard and received hydraulic lifters. A 130-hp 318 two-barrel V-8 (Federal)

and a 165-hp 318 four-barrel V-8 (California emissions) were offered optionally. The standard TorqueFlite remained, as did the 2.9 rear gear. A cargo security cover was a new option.

Sales dropped to 3,987 units, with 2,136 base wagons built.

### Conclusion

There was no rallying cry to get the last rear-wheel drive station wagons. For 1982 the LeBaron T&C was a front-wheel drive K-car, and sales rose sharply for the smaller, yet more fuel-efficient, five-passenger station wagon.

Chairman Lee Iacocca, government loans (that were paid back early) and the K-car platform, would later be credited for saving the Chrysler Corporation.

Chrysler altered family car purchasing patterns forever with the release of the minivan. Jeep, which was later purchased from AMC by Chrysler, did the same with its introduction of the mid-sized Jeep Cherokee SUV, and station wagons would fall out of favor.

Regardless, let's not forget Chrysler's classy rear-wheel drive wagons that roamed the city streets and highways of the U.S. from 1949 to 1981 with kids, luggage and sometimes even grandma in tow in search of family fun. 🐾



1981 LeBARON TOWN & COUNTRY

# Windsor Wonder

*Rolling regally in an unrestored  
1951 Chrysler Windsor four-door sedan*



BY JIM DONNELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

**A**imed squarely at the family man who wanted the prestige of owning a Chrysler but at a far more affordable price than that of the more expensive Saratoga and New Yorker, the Windsor fit the bill perfectly. This was especially true of the four-door sedan with its low \$2,390 price tag, no-frills appointments and ample room for accommodating six passengers in royal comfort.



Its few cosmetic touches and very minor upgrades concealed the fact that it was a base-model four-door Windsor, which became the most basic Chrysler, relatively speaking, when the Royal was dropped following the 1950 model year. Its powertrain was a straight-six flathead with an exciting name: Spitfire.

And yet, for the person who wanted to drive, the Chrysler flathead six represented a stone-simple, reliable alternative that presented little in the way of either cost or headaches. The shallow-skirt Chrysler six, its crankshaft running in four main bearings, dated to 1937, when it debuted in the low-line Royal C16 and De Soto S3 models. Even at its original displacement of 228.1 cubic inches, it was prized for its torque and utter reliability, if not for its high-





We think you could reasonably refer to this as “originality-plus.” The Spitfire straight-six was retrofitted with split dual-exhaust manifolds, correct for when this Chrysler engine was used for years in Dodge medium trucks. Wiring is largely untouched. The aftermarket aluminum radiator was needed for sultry Florida summertime cruising.

end wallop. That made the Chrysler straight-six the engine of choice for medium-duty Dodge trucks, which grabbed it as their own from the very first year that it entered production. And its torque was so copious that once it was retired from automotive duty, this particular six-cylinder powertrain remained in the Chrysler lineup as an industrial or stationary engine right through 1972. So, today, parts are both easy and cheap to acquire.

Nevertheless, none of this entered into the consciousness of Geoff Bonebrake when he first spotted this standard Windsor four-door for sale on the Internet about a decade ago. It was in the hometown where it was first sold new, in Englewood, Colorado. Not being all that willing to travel all the way to the Rockies from his home in Lake City, Florida, Geoff never really moved on the Chrysler, and it got away—at least for the time being. He more or less forgot it until about three years later, when he ambled over to the huge car show and swap meet in Moultrie, Georgia, a giant affair that typically boasts 5,000 offerings in the car corral. Geoff wasn’t long off selling a low-mileage 1950 Chrysler Town & Country hardtop that was still running on its original MSO. He’s a Chrysler guy, and he spotted something at Moultrie that looked very familiar.

“I thought, I know this car, and sure enough,

that was it, the same Windsor sedan from Colorado,” he recalls. “An elderly gentlemen from Georgia had bought the car. I figured I was destined to own this Chrysler.”

And he was also destined to drive it. When he got the Windsor four-door, it showed 50,000 miles and was all but totally factory-correct. But northern Florida gets brutally hot, usually 95 to 100 degrees for months on end in the sultry summertime. The original Chrysler radiator was in fine shape, but Geoff wanted some insurance. He went with an aftermarket three-core aluminum radiator by Champion of Orange, California, many of whose products are aimed at drag strip applications and capable of cooling down engines that routinely thump out over 700 hp. This radiator, however, was a straight drop-in installation, at least once Geoff sprayed it in more presentable and correct semi-gloss black. He routinely drives the Windsor as far as his native northern Ohio in the summer with zero problems, no overheating, as confirmed by the water temperature gauge. That, like every other instrument in the dashboard, including the factory AM radio, still functions perfectly. As Geoff puts it, “You run it, say at 60 MPH, and the gauge needle stays at the lowest mark, closest to the ‘C.’ You shut it down after running it for a while, and it’ll get hotter from the soak-down, but once it gets going again, it cools

Everything you see here functions perfectly, including the radio. No ashes have ever been flicked into that rear-seat tray. Other than the front seat cushion, onto which something nasty had been spilled that ate it away, all of the upholstery and carpeting is factory-original. Fluid Drive is surprisingly capable.



*You rarely see one of these models—the bottom of the line, which should have been a throwaway car—in this condition.*



right off. Never a problem.”

This, to be clear, is a baseline Windsor, the less well-appointed of two such ranges that Chrysler sold in 1951. The biggest distinction between the Windsor and the next rung up, the Windsor Deluxe, was mainly a fender-mounted name badge on the Deluxe and full carpeting, an upgrade from the front rubber floor mats that were Windsor standard issue. Even so, four-door Windsor Deluxe sedans outsold Windsors in 1951 and 1952 by a margin of more than four to one. The dashboard in Geoff’s car, looking as if it had been lifted from the Louvre, is totally original. So is the paint, including a spot atop the driver-side front fender where polishing wore the color coat partially down into the primer. Same for the upholstery, with the sole exception of the front seat’s lower cushion, which had been eaten away by some unknown, long-past caustic spill. Geoff got some fresh facing cloth and by hand, using a straightedge and Plexiglas for guidance, inscribed a matching pattern into the material, coloring it by hand believe it or not using a permanent marker. It looks totally authentic.

Most amazing is how well preserved the car is, no doubt thanks to Colorado’s dry climate and a little luck. All the weatherstripping around the windows are free of cracks and still jet black in appearance, and the lacing around the door apertures looks brand new with nary a wear mark. The original trunk mat is still in decent shape too, but what’s most remarkable is that both ashtrays in the rear, as well as the cigarette lighter, have never been used. Their metal is still bright and tarnish free. Oh, and the headliner, shows no signs of the usual stain

marks that are so common, especially in the rear, in cars more than 60 years old.

Aside from the radiator, the only departures from stock are the aftermarket Chrysler-style wire wheels, wide Coker radial whitewalls and a dual-exhaust system. Despite being a flathead straight-six, it’s not completely anomalous to find one of these Chryslers sporting an authentic dual exhaust, and here’s why. In 1937, it turned out that the older, deep-skirted Chrysler six would be easy to replace in the medium-duty Dodge truck line with the new, slightly more compact engine. Lighter trucks continued to use the earlier Dodge and Plymouth small-displacement sixes, the Jefferson Avenue machining plant in Detroit selflessly lavishing upgrades on the shallow-skirt engine for truck duty. Beginning in 1953, these included an option package that added dual single-barrel downdraft carburetion and dual exhaust. Geoff retained the Windsor’s single factory B-B E9A1 carburetor, but found it easy to locate the dual-manifold exhaust setup and bolt the pieces to the Spitfire block, with twin pipes. “I wanted to make it sound different, richer,” he tells us proudly. “I love the way this car sounds now. You ought to hear it.”

It drives surprisingly easily, too, benefiting from the use of Chrysler’s optional Fluid Drive transmission, or as it existed in 1951, the M-6 version of Fluid-Torque Drive. It’s putatively possessed of four forward speeds, at least if you adjust your thinking a little bit. To move out from a dead stop, you depress the clutch and move the column-mounted gear lever into a position designated as Underdrive Low. Release the clutch and the car moves out. Get up to



You normally see gleaming wire wheels and wide whitewalls on premium restored Chryslers such as Imperials and Letter Cars, not on as-built early Windsor sixes. The paint is so good that the slight rub-through on top of the driver-side front fender doesn't even show up.

about 15 MPH, lift completely off the throttle, and the M-6 upshifts into High. Roughly reversing the process allows the driver to also start the car off in Underdrive Low on a steep hill and then release the throttle again, shifting up to Low and, eventually, into High. In practice, the process is far more seamless than its explanation. With 3.54 standard rear-end gearing and a little easier-breathing exhaust, Geoff describes the Windsor as all but sprightly, which is better than anybody would expect from a car weighing 3,775 pounds and powered by a mere 116-hp 250.6 cu.in. engine.

"You accelerate up to speed just like you would in an automatic-transmission car," Geoff tells us. "It's a fluid coupling, not a torque converter, which came in 1952. They use a really light hydraulic fluid, about 10-weight, so it feels like a really tight torque

converter when it shifts, although there's no torque multiplication. There's no slippage at all, which is why I can get really good gas mileage, about 19 to 20 MPG. There's no power steering, no power brakes, but it doesn't sway much because there's an anti-roll bar up front, about 7/8th-inch in diameter. The only thing you've really got to do is put in ZDDT additive into the oil, which prevents wear on flat-tappet camshafts and they've now taken out of modern oils.

"I'm an original-type car person, and you rarely see one of these models—the bottom of the line, which should have been a throwaway car—in this condition," Geoff declares. "And best, I love four-door sedans. There's few of them out there today in good shape compared to two-door or hardtop models." 🐾

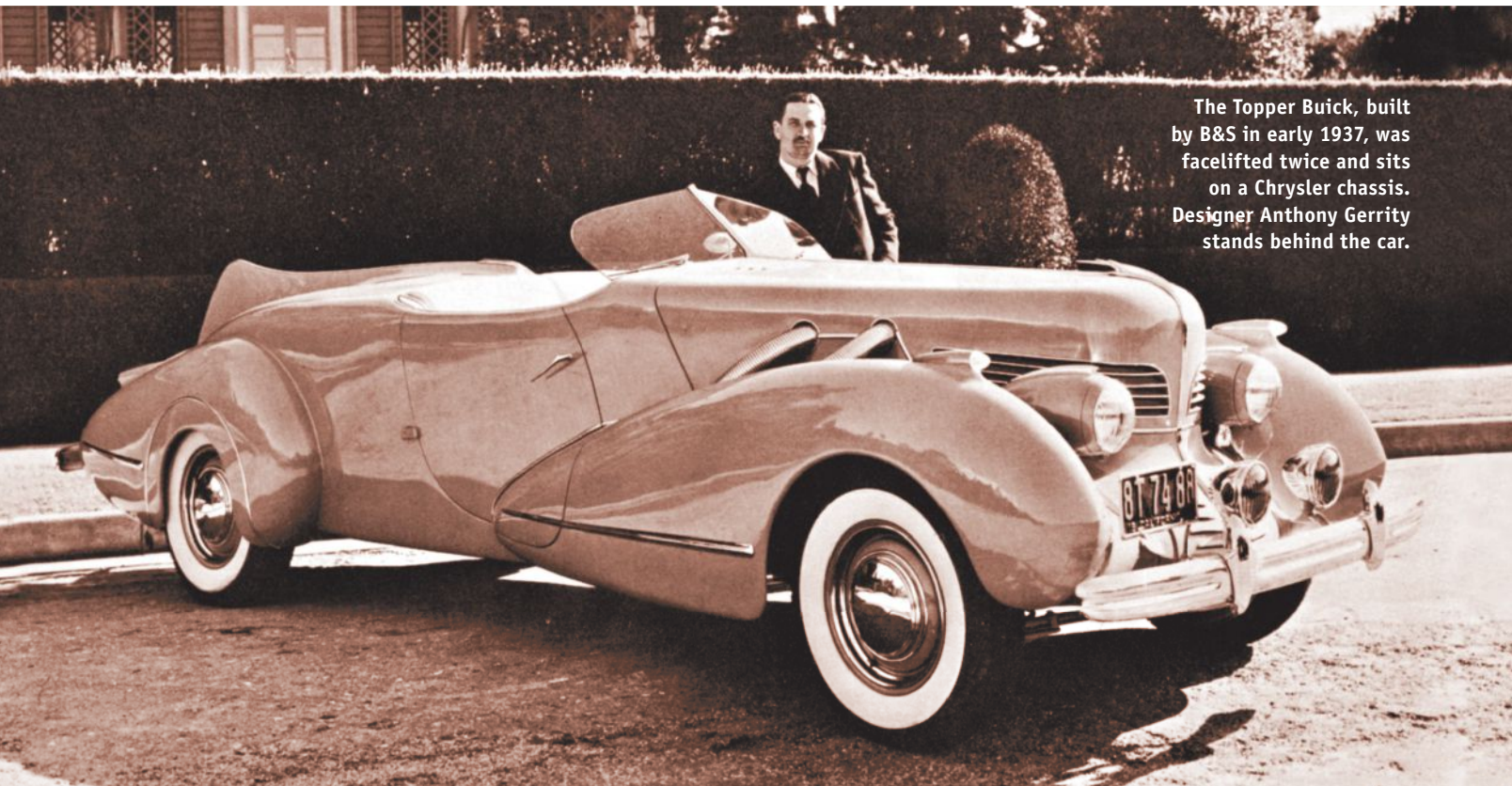


Trunk latches aren't sexy, but this one still has the original dark-green paint that Chrysler used when finishing trunks—not the body color.



This is a very rare factory accessory, an electrically operated locking fuel cap that the owner installed. It's actuated via a switch located underneath the dashboard. That's the original NOS Mopar box that the cap came packed inside.





The Topper Buick, built by B&S in early 1937, was facelifted twice and sits on a Chrysler chassis. Designer Anthony Gerrity stands behind the car.

## The Lighter Side of Bohman & Schwartz

*B&S customized nearly as many S-I cars as great classics*

BY STROTHER MACMINN  
REPRINTED FROM SIA #11

Christian Bohman and Maurice Schwartz were both members of the tide of immigrants who brought their skills to this country in search of new opportunity. During the middle of the Depression they formed a partnership as coachbuilders and thrived on their coupled craftsmanship for 15 years. Afterward, they each continued separately and worked the rest of their lives building custom automotive bodywork of exceptional quality.

Bohman was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1892 and apprenticed as a coachbuilder. He came to America in 1910, age 18, and found work with both Brewster and Holbrook in the New York area. Here he met and married Signe Andersen, who had also emigrated from Sweden. At the same time he became good friends with Ed Wengren, another fine Swedish craftsman at Brewster.

Wengren moved to Pasadena, California, in 1920 to become woodshop foreman for the newly formed Walter M. Murphy, Coachbuilders. The work and the California climate so agreed with him that he persuaded Bohman to follow.

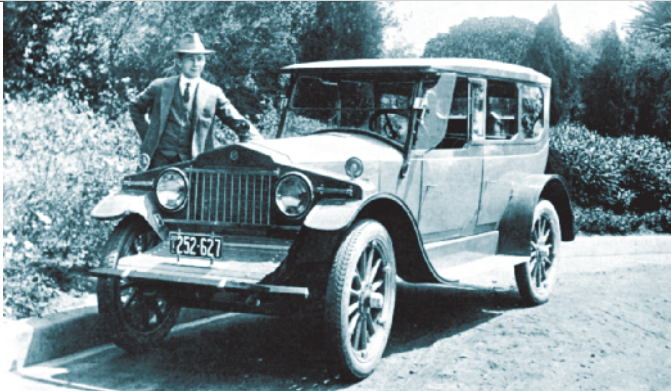
Maurice Schwartz was born in Schwarza im Gebirge, Austria, in 1884 and apprenticed as a coachbuilder with Armbruster

Kaiser-Koneg Hofwagen Fabrik (Imperial coach plant) in Vienna. The transition from horse-drawn vehicles to motorcars was on, and Schwartz helped to build his first automobile bodies there in 1904.

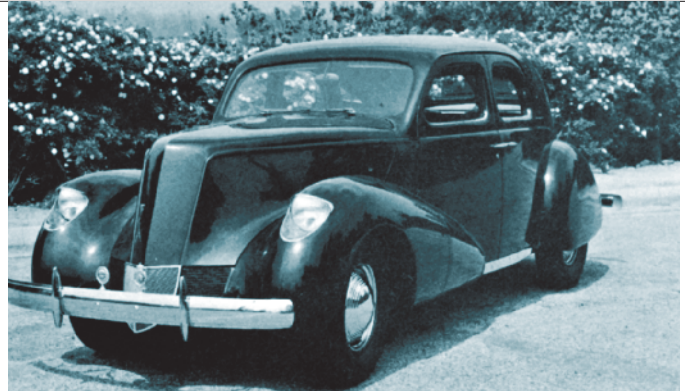
At 26, he came to the U.S. and worked at the Springfield Metal Body Co., Willoughby & Co., and the Fisher Body Co. Then, in 1918, he moved to California to work at the Earl Carriage Works in Los Angeles. It was a short move to Walter M. Murphy in 1924, where he joined Ed Wengren in the woodshop.

Neither Bohman nor Schwartz was the talkative sort, being what we would call today “old world craftsmen”—dedicated to doing fine work without adding any unnecessary conversation. Bohman was blessed with a wry sense of humor that took the edge off his rigid discipline. Later, it also helped greatly in putting Bohman & Schwartz clients more at ease during contract discussions. He was an excellent businessman and could easily level a supplier or designer with an unblinking eye and yet hold the meeting with casual informality.

Schwartz tolerated nothing but the best in anything that he did. He wasted no time on idle talk and put in an exact day's



Photographed in 1920, Maurice Schwartz poses with his personal 1919 Essex. The winged grille houses headlamps, and the car's top is removable.



Skilled Japanese mechanical engineer Marquis Hachisuka redesigned his 1937 Zephyr. Bohman & Schwartz customized it and revamped the entire cooling system.



Radical 1936 Duesenberg fastback for Dr. S.G. Mudd used leatherette-sheathed body, 1936 Buick grille and 1937 Buick fender lamps as taillamps.



Marquis Hachisuka put a taper in the rear fenders and made them removable. He blanked in the backlite and rear windows, and recessed the headlamps.

work. Yet he was also a warm and kind person who loved and told splendid jokes.

Both men worked for Murphy during the best part of the firm's history. Bohman left in 1930 to begin his own work, and Schwartz remained until the firm closed down in April, 1932. Cars belonging to Gary Cooper and Eddie Peabody were still in the shop for rebuilding at the time, so Bohman approached the receivers and got permission to complete the work on separate contracts. Schwartz came in as a partner, and they hired a small staff of specialist craftsmen from the former Murphy work force. They also bought some essential machinery and equipment from the liquidators.

Their first shop was in the rear of Prosser's Garage at Delacey and Green Streets in Pasadena, but in less than a year they moved to the heart of auto row, 326 West Colorado, next to a branch office of the Automobile Club of Southern California and a block from Frank Miller's Lincoln agency.

Even though they started during bad times, there were three basic pluses going for them. First, they were all highly skilled specialists who worked equally well as a team or as individuals. Whitey Compton could do upholstery repair and retrimming on



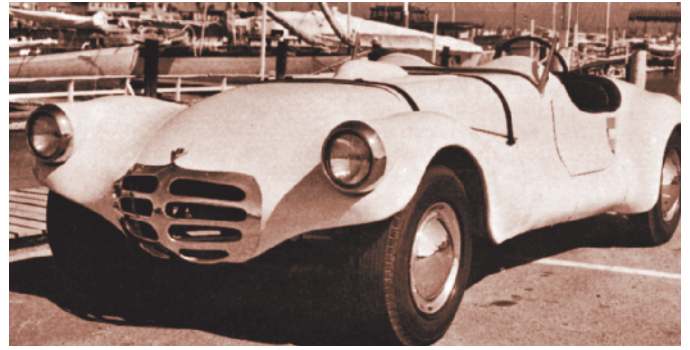
Rust Heinz's famous front-wheel drive Phantom Corsair was one of Bohman & Schwartz's greatest challenges. Its steel-and-aluminum body was handformed.



Phil Berg's fabulous land yacht *Savitar* was completed by Chris Bohman in 1957. Mercury Sun Valley made the observation dome on this Greyhound body.



Chris Bohman, who took over his father's business in 1950, built this aluminum full-custom body on a six-cylinder Maserati chassis for Rosan Engineering.



This Ford-based sportster, built by Chris Bohman around 1951, had single-panel front and rear sections, and an engine that was relocated 30 inches rearward.

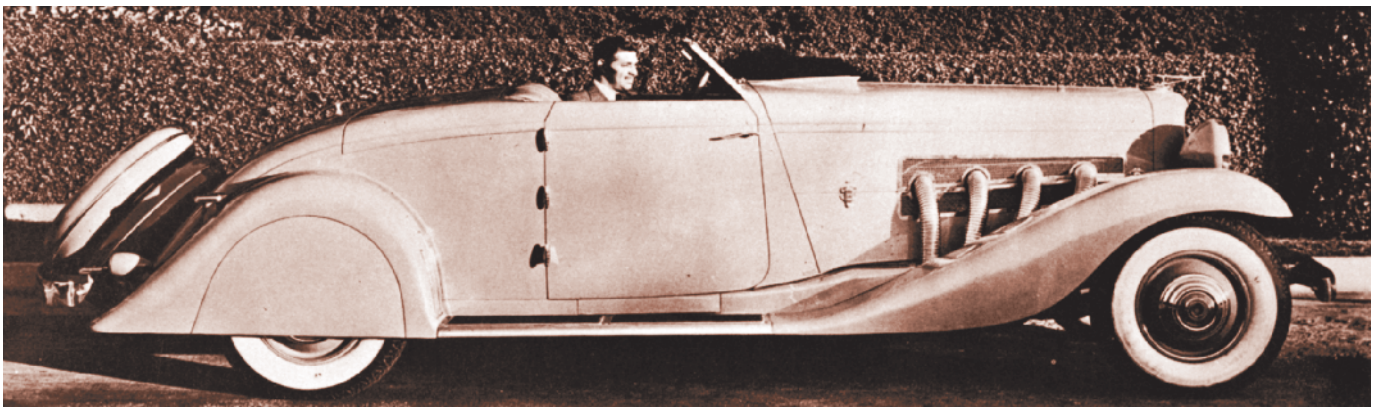
his own. The metalmen took on prestige-car accident repairs for the neighboring auto club and dealers. The painter could finish the work and also do independent repaints.

Second, Hollywood's stars could still afford fine cars and even have them customized to suit their special tastes. Third, styles in automotive design were changing radically in the early 1930s when skirts were added to fenders and streamlining introduced soft tapering forms that contrasted sharply with the stiffness of traditional designs. B&S did a booming business in updating and modifying excellent cars whose service was far from finished but whose appearance was outmoded. This applied to sporty convertibles as well as formal limousines. Today, purists are often bothered by changes that were made to great classics, but at the time it was a very logical way to maintain contemporary style.

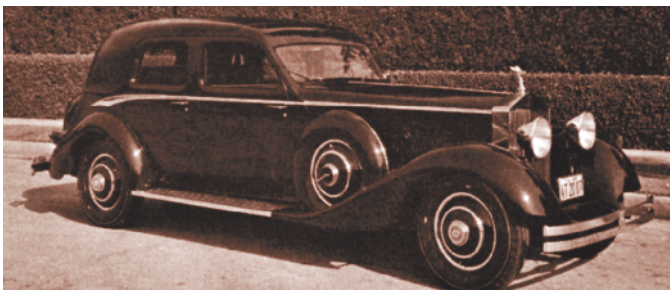
The then smog-free Southern California climate attracted many wealthy, elderly residents and, during the early 1930s,

Pasadena bought more Lincolns than New York City. Some patrons preferred not to stoop as they entered their cars and commissioned B&S to move their cars' roofs up to a more aristocratic height. Others found the journey from rear lounge to doorway an uncomfortable crawl in their cavernous limousines, so Schwartz motorized the aft seat to move forward at the command of an armrest switch. When running boards were eliminated during the 1940s, B&S modified new cars by adding disappearing step boards for easier rear entry.

Perhaps the greatest challenges were met for those invalids who travelled in wheelchairs. Portable aluminum tracks were used to move a chair in and out of the vehicle, and the chairs themselves were custom built and upholstered to exactly match the interior of the car. Two systems were developed here. In one, the wheelchair occupied the right front seat position and moved out sideways. This required removal of the sedan's center pillar and some additional strengthening around the doors. In the



The King and the King—Gable and Duesie. B&S modified the original Rollston design in 1937 by lengthening the hood back to the cowl, adding air scoops, moving side-mounted spares to rear deck, lowering and raking windshield and adding rear skirts and l-bar bumpers.



Bohman & Schwartz built an entirely new body for this P-11 Rolls-Royce in 1938. The author did client-approval rendering for this car and received a magnificent \$20 fee.



Anticipating camper vogue by 20 years, this Schwartz custom was built for Californian Frank Wheeler in 1947. It had all the comforts of home.



**B&S did a series of wheelchair modifications, this one on a 1935 Plymouth. The center pillar was removed to make way for the chair mechanism.**



**The chair had six wheels, two hidden here, and moved out of the car sideways. Aluminum U-section channels formed ramps. Hasps locked the chair to floor, and upholstery matched the car's interior.**

other system, on larger cars a turntable was built into the rear floor that allowed feet-first entry and exit in the chair through the normal rear door.

The cream of the business came when a client occasionally asked B&S to build an all-new body. Most were replacements on classic chassis, the majority being Duesenbergs. The towncar built in 1936 for Mrs. Ethel Mars of Chicago set a kind of pattern

with its overlaid, sloping radiator shell and long, tapered, pontoon fenders. The same hammer forms used to make these parts were re-used for some other cars, and the repetition established a style unique to B&S.

One of the more bizarre designs, also on a Duesenberg chassis, was commissioned as a gift by followers of the Rev. M. J. (Father) Divine. The tonneau was full-car width and had an



**Bohman (left) and Schwartz demonstrate the pivoting passenger's seat in this pillarless Zephyr.**



**Another pillarless Lincoln, this time showing the wheel on the chair back that let down the ramp wheels.**



**Look closely and you'll see a turntable in the rear floor that lets the chair pivot for feet-first exit.**



**Milady had only to touch a switch near the armrest, and the rear divan slid forward electrically. Arrival at full-front position put passengers nearer the rear door. Seat mechanism used an electric motor and operated much like power front seats.**





Mexico's president Miguel Aleman commissioned Maurice Schwartz to build him a 1949 Cadillac station wagon on a stretched Series 62 wheelbase. This became one of many such station wagons completed between 1946 and '50, most of them also on Cadillac bases.



Maurice Schwartz rebuilt the Series 75 limousine for Harry Karl as a gift for his wife. Stretched trunk integrates well with rear fender.



Six-door 1946 Cadillac wagon commissioned by cowboy star Gene Autry. This woodie ambulance chassis has a special roof rack.



Three-passenger coupe for W. A. Woodward on a 1949 Cadillac 75 base had blended stock panels, stretched deck and golfbag doors.



Maurice Schwartz delivers the first of the Cadillac wagon series to a movie studio in 1947. It carried stars between filming locations.

elevated red plush center seat (throne) with white plush seats on either side for acolytes (angels). The entire rigid upper rear quarter section of the top was removable for better visibility during religious parades.

By far the most exotic car built by Bohman & Schwartz was for Rust Heinz, whose family name is a household word in food products. Rusty's imagination cut through automotive design conformity of the day, going to bold new ideas in aerodynamics, safety and comfort. At the end of a cross-country search in his 1936 Cord sedan, he finally found, in Maurice Schwartz, the man who could carry out his ideas for a highly advanced personal car. Schwartz translated Heinz' sketches first to a small three-dimensional half-model and then to a larger quarter-scale model that could also be used for promotional purposes. Heinz intended the car to be a prototype for limited production. When it was completed, he had it temporarily sprayed with a white water-base paint for photographs taken on a Warner Brothers set and used in a handsome advertising brochure. The car was also featured in *The Young in Heart* and was renamed *The Flying Wombat* for that film. Very sadly, the plans for duplication ended with Heinz' tragic death in another automobile.

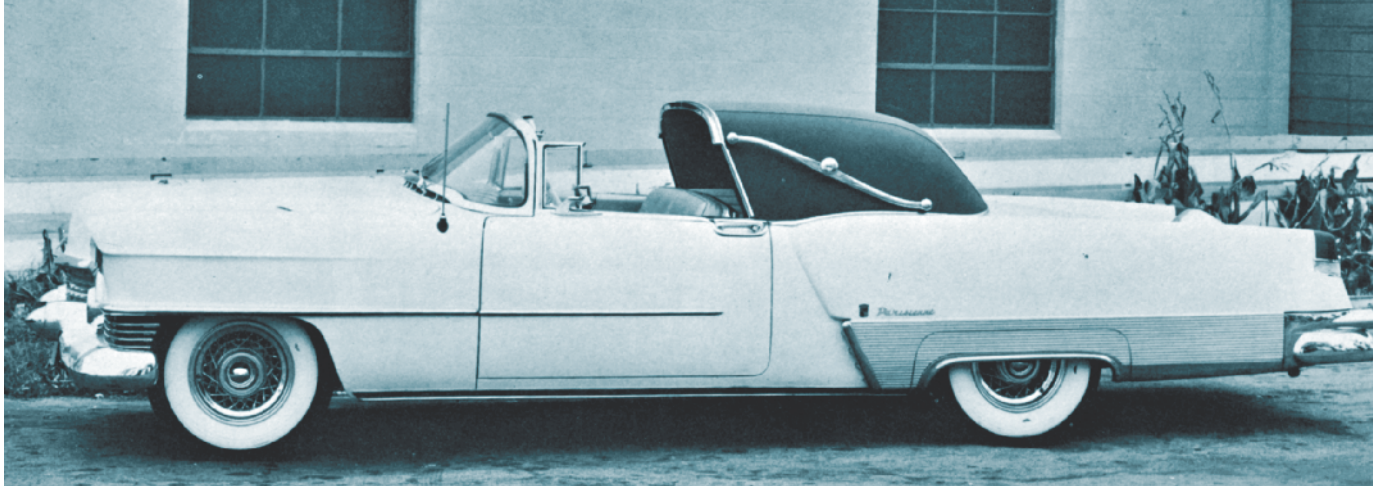
Another famous film car, the roadster used in the first *Topper* movie, was built by B&S for the Hal Roach Studios on a 1936 Buick chassis. Body design was by Anthony Gerrity. Then sold to the Gilmore Oil Co., it was used for publicity at local Southern California car races (complete with a lion passenger). Mobil Oil, which absorbed Gilmore, added a matching trailer full of electronics and a PA system. The car got a facelift in 1948 and again in 1952 when the body was remounted on a Chrysler chassis by the elder Bohman's son, Chris.

Encouraged by Dutch Darrin's success with Packard Darwins, B&S built a series of similar European-style convertibles on various chassis. A 1939 LaSalle and two 1940 Cadillacs (see *SIA* #9, pp. 40-41) were built on speculation (i.e., without a firm order), but later Packards were sold through Thompson Motors, the Pasadena dealer.

In order to close a contract, B&S would often pay a designer to make a proposal rendering for a client's approval. Everett Miller did most of these drawings, but Schwartz had the final say on design execution. His full-sized drafts refined proportions and detailed each part of the structure. He had an amazingly accurate eye for three-dimensional surface control. In the final stages of construction he would bend a thin wooden spline across a series of body frames to make sure that the metal covering would follow a perfectly controlled curve.

B&S survived WWII by doing sheetmetal subcontract work for the aerospace industry. In 1945, they moved the whole operation to 306 N. Hudson Ave. The partnership was amicably





**George Barris did most of the work on this early El Dorado, but Schwartz built the rigid cabriolet top and its removable forward section.**

dissolved in 1947, and Bohman formed a new partnership with his son, L. C. Bohman, using the lower floor of the building. Schwartz moved his machinery upstairs and continued building special bodies there until 1951, when he re-established in his own building at 1901 E. Walnut St., Pasadena.

Chris Bohman had become a top authority in sheetmetal fabrication and construction engineering, so he continued the business after his father's death in 1950. He built many "formal" conversions by blanking out the rear quarter windows on Cadillac and Lincoln limousines. He also built two from-the-ground-up sports car bodies plus a handful of land cruisers (now called mobile homes). The most magnificent of these was the land yacht *Savitar*, completed in 1957 for Phil Berg. Even today its tasteful luxury is unsurpassed. Beginning with the bare shell of a GMC Greyhound bus, Chris rebuilt it to provide a lounge, observation cab, bedroom, full bath and galley in the owner's apartment.

There were sleeping quarters and another bath in the forward section for the two-man crew. The interior was paneled in teak Parkwood with black Formica trim and the separately powered air-conditioning unit was tied in with a heavy-duty heater and refrigeration system for full-time climate control.

Maurice Schwartz, meanwhile, worked mainly by himself in producing a whole series of Cadillac station wagons. The first

was a six-door limo used to transport movie studio personnel to and from shooting locations. He also built a handsome three-passenger coupe on a 1949 Cadillac Series 75 chassis. The last formal body that Schwartz built was a towncar on a 1949 Cadillac ambulance chassis.

He also did quite a few custom modification jobs including step installations, wheelchair conversions, etc. While in his early 70s, he began to rebuild antique car bodies for the Harrah Automobile Collection in Reno. Harrah's would ship him the remains of a body along with bundles of research material, and Schwartz would reconstruct the whole unit to like-new condition.

Maurice Schwartz enjoyed excellent health and spirits all his life. He never looked his years, and it was his favorite joke to ask new friends if they could guess his age. He and Sophie, his wife, were deeply devoted to each other, and she helped him by keeping all of his business records. Much of the information and many photos for this article came from Mrs. Schwartz.

Although it's been 11 years since Maurice Schwartz' death and 22 since Bohman left his business to his son [editor's note: now 52 years and 63 years, respectively], much of the work that these two men produced is still with us. Valued now more than ever, the cars they built, the techniques and their legendary standards will be preserved as a legacy of great craftsmanship. 🐾



**At age 70, Schwartz began to take on restoration projects for Harrah's Automobile Collection and others. Here he's shown starting to frame in a Duesenberg SJ Speedster. Photo was taken in 1959.**



**Maurice Schwartz maintained his old-world craftsmanship, working until his death in 1961.**

## CURTIS BLAKE

*Founding partner of a famous ice cream franchise has been a practicing automotive enthusiast his entire life*



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

The old-car hobby, as we know it today, has its origins in the mid-1930s, when some prescient automotive enthusiasts began banding together in different parts of the country to preserve and celebrate the earliest motorcars. It was at this same time that Curtis Blake, along with his brother Prestley, founded the Friendly ice cream company, known around the country today as Friendly's. Following World War II, Curtis would become an avid automotive hobbyist, active in vintage car clubs and owning and enjoying over the years upwards of 150 automobiles, with ages spanning more than a century.

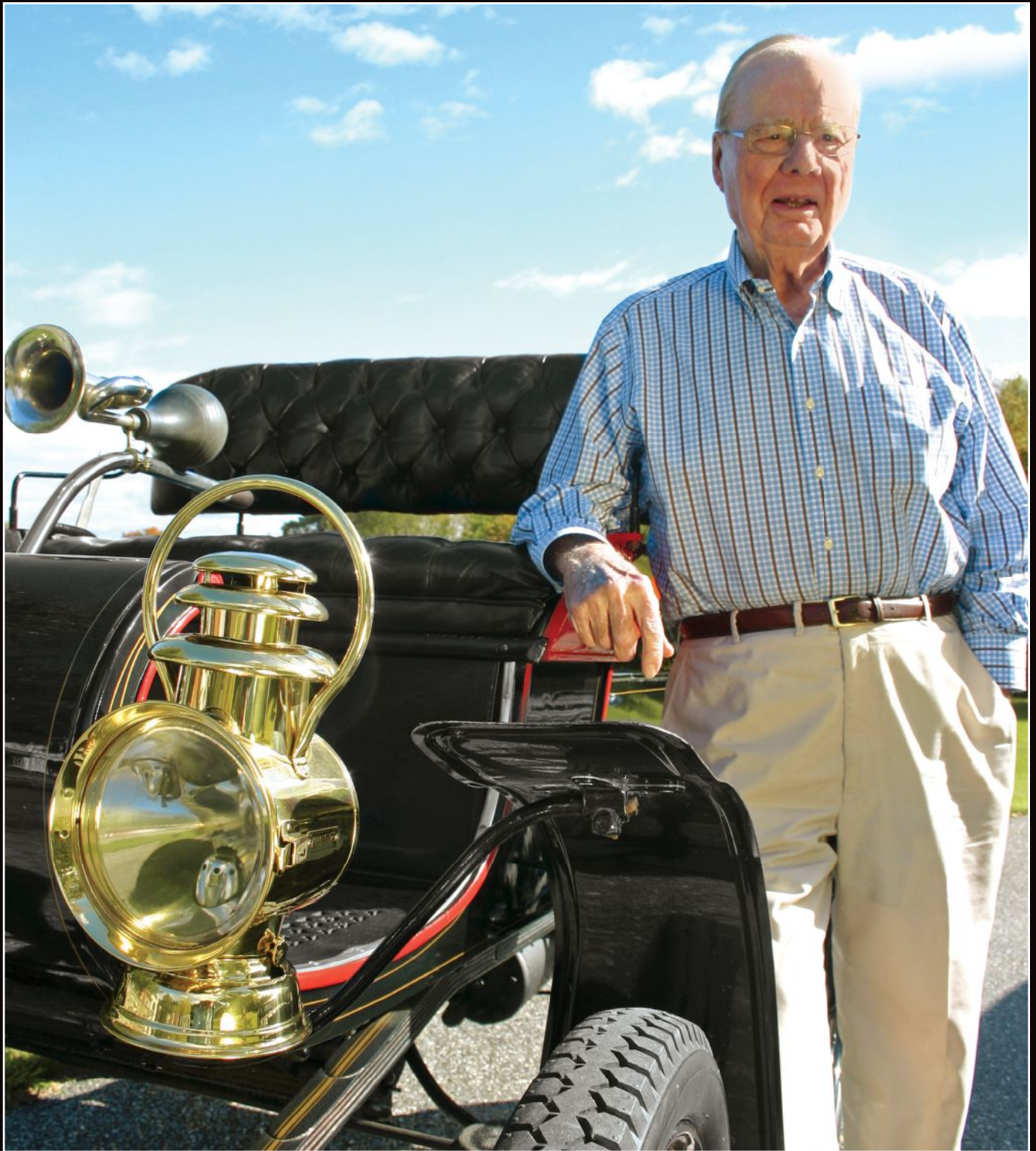
We joined Curtis at his home in picturesque South Woodstock, Vermont, where he houses the four vintage cars that remain in his collection, cars that represent his favorite eras of automobiles: those built before 1910, and those from the mid-1930s. Curtis, and Prestley, two years his senior, grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, as sons of parents who embraced cars and weren't afraid to tackle maintenance and repairs.

"My love of cars really started as a child because my mother, who was a very mechanically inclined person, loved cars," Curtis recalls. "She and my father had Model T Fords. I remember one morning that my father said, 'We have to do a carbon and valve job on the Ford.' This was a Model T from about 1925,

and you did this every 1,000 miles or so back then. My mother said, 'I'll get the car ready, and when you come home from the office at 5:00, you can grind the valves.' So that day, she took the cylinder head off, and when he came home, they ground the valves and put the engine back together. By 8 or 9 p.m. the car was running again. That's how mechanical she was."

With an influence like this, it's no surprise that Curtis got an early start on motorized transportation. "I bought my first car when I was 11 years old; it was a 1921 Ford Model T chassis, and it cost \$2.50—imagine, \$2.50! I bought it from my scoutmaster, and I remember him writing out a bill of sale. I kept it with a friend of mine who lived with his grandfather, on what you'd call an estate—it had two miles of rough roads on it, and we would drive all over. I owned five cars and two motorcycles before I was 16, and between the two of us, we probably had 12 cars before either of us could legally drive," he says with a smile. "On my 16th birthday, I went down to get a license, and the clerk asked me where I'd learned how to drive. I told him that I'd learned on private property, and I got the license."

It was just two years later, in July 1935, that Curtis and Prestley started an ice cream parlor in their hometown, which they would grow through succeeding decades into one of America's



*“I learned by doing, and early cars were so simple to work on. You could take them apart and put them back together.”*





**Curtis purchased the 1903 Curved Dash Olds in 1948, the year he joined the AACA, and has been driving it since the restoration was completed.**

most famous dessert shops. They conceived the name, “Friendly,” because that described their personalities and credo. “We wanted to create a place where ice cream was our whole business: We’d do one thing and do it right,” he says. “When we went into business, we bought a 1930 Ford Model A touring car for \$40. We lived at home. We didn’t have any employees. One of us was always working, and we just had the one car. We went back and forth; when we closed our first shop at midnight, one of us would stay at the store and start making ice cream for the next day, and the other went home and slept. Then the ice cream maker would come home and sleep around 7 a.m. Then that one would go back to help with the noon hour, because we put in hamburgers and coffee in the fall.”

From the slow start of \$27.60 they earned on opening night, the Blake brothers worked tirelessly and brought in about \$7,000 in their first 12 months, which allowed these avowed car enthusiasts to trade up. “After a year with the Model A, my brother called all the local Ford dealers. Dillon Ford, in Manchester, Connecticut, allowed us \$175 for that A, and we ordered a brand new 1936 Phaeton in Washington Blue, with a radio, heater and white sidewall tires. It cost \$620, and was built in Somerville, Massachusetts. We’d decided that whoever was not on duty at the ice cream shop the day it arrived, got to take delivery. My brother was off, so he drove the Model A down. Because of the Depression, we weren’t going to leave any extra gas in it. We figured there was just enough gas in the tank to get down to the dealership—but he ran out of gas on the ramp into the garage,” Curtis laughs.

The following year, he and Prestley traded the 1936 Phaeton on a ’37 model, and added a second car, a new 60-hp Ford Coupe. “That car cost \$500, and it was underpowered. We didn’t keep it long.” They continued the trend with two new 1939 Ford convertible sedans, and then with two 1940 Mercurys. Curtis bought a new 1941 Ford station wagon to transport ice cream between their first and second store locations. He took a detour from personal Ford ownership that year, buying a new Buick convertible coupe that he sadly wrecked with fewer than 3,000 miles on the odometer; it was replaced with a 1942 Chevrolet convertible that his wife drove through

the war years, while Curtis served in England.

After Curtis returned from the service, they continued to grow Friendly’s. In the following three decades, they’d expand from two stores to 625, encompassing from Maine to Virginia, and as far west as Illinois. These restaurants would be served by a fleet of roughly 75 Ford and Mack trucks, and 100 trailers. They would sell their business to the Hershey Company in 1979.

As these hard-working young family men became more prosperous, they joined the burgeoning old car hobby. Prestley would focus his collecting on the Rolls-Royce automobiles built in their hometown from 1920 through 1931; in 2013, he donated his first Springfield Rolls, a 1925 Silver Ghost Pall Mall dual-windshield tourer, to the Elliot Museum in Stuart, Florida, where he now lives. Curtis’s more extensive car collection would have a broader scope.

“I bought my first antique car, a 1909 REO, in 1948; I paid \$350 for it,” he explains. “I restored that REO, with a total investment of \$790—that was the first of four cars I restored in my garage in Springfield. I learned by doing, and early cars were so simple to work on. You could take them apart and put them back together. Today, you wouldn’t think of restoring an original car like that, but it was 65 years ago. I sold it a year later when I fell in love with the Curved Dash Oldsmobile.

“I bought the 1903 Olds—which I still have today—for \$450 in Auburn, New York. I had this car restored by George Green, of Lambertville,

New Jersey, who drove his 1904 Olds across America twice, and who after the War, would become known as ‘Mr. Curved Dash Olds.’ He restored something like 15 Curved Dash Oldses, and mine was about the 12th he did. I made new louvers, and used plywood for the deck over the engine—I wish I hadn’t done that, but back then, I didn’t think about original materials. The rest of the car is original, except for small mechanical changes to improve the car’s oiling system and cooling. When it was finished, it took first place in class at the AACA Fall Meet on the Devon Horse Show Grounds, the forerunner of the Hershey meet, like all of the Oldses he [George Green] restored and showed.”

Curtis enjoyed using his 1903 Oldsmobile, and in 1958, he took the car to Brussels, Belgium, to show it at the 1958 World’s Fair. “We were the only American entry,” he recalls. “They couldn’t have been more hospitable; they treated us wonderfully. The only bad occurrence of the trip was that the cobblestone roads in Antwerp, where we unloaded the car, shook it so badly that the steering spring broke. This happened near a General Motors assembly plant; I pulled off the road, and two American engineers from the GM plant pulled up behind us in a new 1958 Oldsmobile. They offered to repair it at the plant, and even loaned us a new Oldsmobile to use for the day while they did the work!

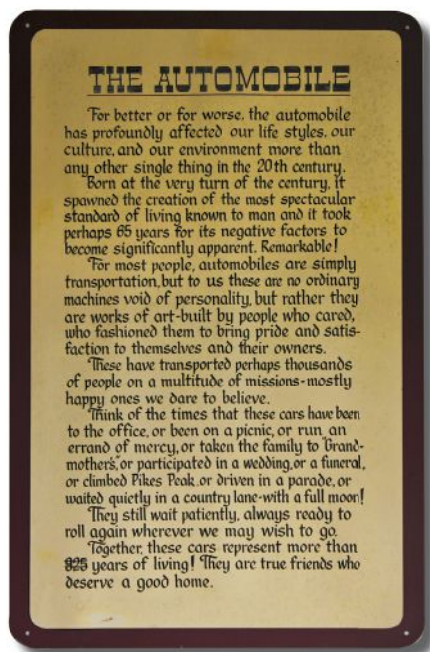
“After the show [Expo 58], we toured through little villages in Holland, then took it across the Channel to England. We drove it in London traffic, and then drove up to the Midlands, where I had been stationed for two years in World War II; we found the concrete foundation of the building where I lived at that time. We shipped the car home on the *Queen Mary*, and sailed with the car.”

By this time, Curtis was very active in the Antique Automobile Club of America, the Horseless Carriage Club of

America and the Veteran Motor Car Club of America. His collection of cars was expanding to include early cars like a 1903 Cadillac, 1903 Stanley, 1905 Packard, 1910 Mitchell and a 1911 Pierce-Arrow, and later cars like a 1931 Lincoln Le Baron Convertible Coupe, 1937 Packard 120 Convertible Sedan and a 1938 Packard V-12. In all, he's owned around 75 cars built before 1940. "I've always loved top-grade cars—I fell in love with the three Ps: Packard, Peerless, Pierce-Arrow. But deep down, I never lost my love for Fords," he admits with a smile. To this end, he's owned Model Ts, Model As, early V-8s and later V-8s, like the two 1936 Fords that he currently owns and which remind him of that first new car.

Touring in veteran cars became a Blake family tradition; they vacationed in a chain-drive 1906 Panhard-Levassor in the 1950s—"I'd drive it 50 MPH, and those chains would sing!"—drove across the country in 1968 in a 1910 Peerless, and repeated that adventure in 1976, driving it from Seattle to Philadelphia and encountering frightful weather in the Powder River Pass of Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains. "The wind got so bad that it tore the fasteners out of the side curtains. It was snowing like mad, we only had rear wheel brakes, there was no salt on the road. We made it through the pass and down the other side, where it was sunny and dry," he remembers. Curtis also participated in many AACA Glidden Tours, with a memorable one going through Seneca Falls, New York, in his chain-drive ALCO. "It's a great family hobby, because you can take your family on these trips. To this day, my now-65-year-old daughter says that those old car trips were the most fun she had, and she'll never forget them."

The driving tours weren't the only fun of belonging to classic car clubs in those days, as Curtis met people with family



ties to America's early auto industry, and befriended many prominent hobbyists. He got to know Ransom E. Olds's daughter, Gladys Olds Anderson, and Ransom's grandson, Woody Roe, as well as descendants of Charles Kettering and Roy Chapin. Curtis sold the aforementioned Panhard to fellow AACA member and AMC chief stylist Dick Teague. "That car is now in a museum in California, and it's still running with half of the clutch discs removed, a modification I had to do on the side of the road when the clutch acted up on a tour." He became close with Jerry Duryea, son of Duryea Motor Wagon Company co-founder Charles, as well as with famed opera singer and veteran car enthusiast James Melton, two of the men who brought the AACA and the old car hobby into the spotlight.

Curtis is now 96, and while he and his wife, Pat, no longer participate in cross-country driving tours, he still enjoys taking the 1936 Ford De Luxe Phaeton and Convertible Cabriolet, and the 1938 Buick Century Convertible Sedan, for local drives, often accompanied by Francis Carbino, his vehicle caretaker and a fellow vintage Ford enthusiast. His beloved Curved Dash Olds shares the garage with a 2003 Oldsmobile Silhouette minivan, which he bought because it was 100 years newer than his 1903, and represents the last Oldsmobile. "We exercise all of them, but I can't get under them and take out the clutch anymore, like I did in that Panhard," he muses, then smiles; "It's nice that we sold so many ice cream cones." 🍦

**Above: Hanging in Curtis's garage is the sign he created as a tribute to the beloved cars in his collection, which once numbered about 75.**  
**Below: His 141-hp, 1938 Buick Century Convertible Sedan is a masterpiece of Deco design and a solid performer.**





## Rejuvenated Rampside

*Part 2: The lengthy process of final assembly that transformed this 1961 Corvair Rampside into a concours winner*

**WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY SHEA**  
RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CALVIN CLARK, JR.





Despite pervasive rust, major parts of the front subframe, including the crossmembers and the A-arms, were salvageable, though required complete restoration. New bushings, ball joints, tie-rod ends, shocks and springs were fitted to make it new again.



The rear subframe, yoke-shaped to accommodate the complete drivetrain mounted underneath the Rampside's load floor, also needed a complete rebuild. With no plans to use it for heavy loads, lighter-duty springs were fitted for a softer ride.



Getting subframes into better-than-new condition required heavy media blasting and rust removal before the welding in of any needed new metal. As much as possible, components were primed and finished inside and out to keep future corrosion at bay.



With the gas tank corroded and too far gone, and with new, reproduction tanks now available for the forward-control Corvair 95 trucks and vans, it was an easy choice to ditch the old rusty one for a shiny new one.

Last month we looked at the tear-down and spectacular paint work that went into Cal Clark, Jr.'s 1961 Chevrolet Corvair 95 Rampside pickup—a level of work typically only found on a vehicle headed to the likes of the Pebble Beach Concours. This month, we'll look at the engine, sub-frame assembly, interior and finishing touches that are required by such a high-level restoration.

While the Rampside originally came with the 140-cu.in., 80-hp version of Chevrolet's air-cooled flat-six, Cal, who founded Clark's Corvair Parts, bought this truck out of *Hemmings* in 1974 sans engine. So he reached into his personal stash of parts and installed a new-old-stock 110-hp crate engine during the restoration.

GM shipped the crate engines nearly complete: The distributor, generator adapter, oil filter, oil cooler, bell housing, flywheel, clutch and pressure plate were all included. "It was pretty complete," says Cal. "You needed to add carburetors, alternator and plug wiring, and the shrouds and you were ready to go." While the option to install a complete NOS crate engine may not be available to everyone, it didn't necessarily speed things up for Cal.

Being anywhere from 40 to 45 years old at the time and despite being properly sealed from the factory, the engine would not turn by hand. "The oil that they oiled the rings and pistons and stuff with had turned to something like Cosmoline," reports Cal. "There was no rust, but I





An NOS crate engine might seem like an easy swap, but 40 years of albeit dry storage left the top end in need of a rebuild due to the lubricant turning to sludge. A thorough cleaning, a fresh set of rings and a cylinder hone put it back in order.



The NOS four-speed transmission—a step up from the original three-speed and an option when new—also needed a rebuild because of its decades of storage. Its lubricant, too, had hardened, and a thorough cleaning and fresh seals brought it up to snuff.



The NOS differential's lubricant also gummed up the works and required the same treatment as the transmission. The owner decided to swap out the truck's 3.89-geared differential for a sporty, but taller 3.55, an optional ratio from the coupes and sedans.



The unique Corvair driveline components—with the differential sandwiched between the four-speed transmission and air-cooled, flat-six engine—were mated together before the entire unit was installed as one under the truck's bed.



couldn't turn it by hand." Although he didn't need to redo the bottom end, Cal did go through the top end, cleaning up everything, installing new rings and honing the cylinders to freshen the surfaces.

Given that the original engine was already long gone and that Cal lives in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, he also had no qualms about upgrading the three-speed transmission to a four-speed, which was optional on the forward-control 95s when new. As with all Corvairs, the gearbox is mated directly to the differential, which is sandwiched between the transmission and the engine. Before installation, as with the crate engine, Cal had to go through the NOS transmission, once again fighting old lubricant: "It was

thicker than Cosmoline, it had congealed so much. I had never run into that because I had never dug into an original transmission. It just wouldn't shift."

Any guess as to the condition of the NOS differential used in Cal's restoration? Yep, that, too, needed reconditioning before installation due to aging lubricant. Chevrolet originally delivered Rampsides with a very short 3.89:1 final-drive ratio, but given Cal's desire to just use the truck as another car and not for any heavy hauling, he instead installed a differential with 3.55 gears, which was the high-performance option for the coupes and sedans. Before installation, the rebuilt NOS transmission, differential and engine were all assembled together before insertion under the rear floor.





Before the interior or any glass was fitted to the finished body, the front and rear subframes and driveline were installed in the Rampside. Note the metal bar in place of the ramp door to ensure body rigidity and integrity before the door's installation.



Once rusty and now shiny front subframe and suspension—a mix of restored and replacement parts—are testaments to the owner's thoroughness, which presents as well underneath as it does on top, with a stellar finish all around.



Rear subframe being lifted into place from below with a heavy-duty, four-ton floor jack. The owner prefers lifting such sub-assemblies from below, as opposed to lowering the car onto them, due to the ability to make small adjustments with a jack.



As seen from above with the service panels removed, the driveline is also installed from below with the use of a big floor jack. Note where the yoke-shaped rear subframe is curved to fit the Corvair's unique drivetrain.

When it came time to do the suspension, Cal used a mix of old and new. "I was able to save the crossmembers and the A-arms," he says, "but bushings, ball joints, tie rod ends—anything like that—was replaced with new parts." The Corvair's relatively novel, coil-sprung, four-wheel independent suspension was maintained for the Corvair 95 models, though beefed up to handle the truck's impressive 1,700-pound load rating, but Cal opted for softer-rate springs for the rebuild.

With the forward-control setup having the bench seat riding above the front axle, the steering mechanism is unconventional. "We were able to rebuild the box," recalls Cal. "But there are all kinds of funky things—I don't know what they're called. We called it a 'boomer-

ang.' It's kind of like a double idler arm, but it's boomerang shaped because the steering box is way up front, and it comes back to pivot on the boomerang and that comes back to the control to the drag link going across. The steering box is almost up by the front bumper."

Cal painted the interior first, with its two-tone black and silver hues, before tackling the exterior finish. Only when the entire body was painted and the drivetrain installed, however, did he start re-assembling the interior. The instrument cluster, a self-contained unit that attaches to the dashboard, was in great shape. "Nothing needed rebuilding," says Cal. "I just cleaned everything up and lubricated the speedometer a bit and it's all perfect."

Cal was able to use reproduction





Before the exterior was painted and long before the seats, gauges, steering column and other related components were installed, the two-tone interior's metal work was thoroughly disassembled and completely refinished in black and silver urethane.



Though it never suffered from any animal invasion, the entire wiring harness had become brittle due to age and was completely replaced. The gauge cluster remained remarkably intact, with only a cleaning and a speedometer lube needed before re-installation.



After the original had gone missing over the years, the windshield was the only piece of glass that needed to be replaced. All of the other glass pieces were treated to a fine polish to remove any minor pitting, scratches or rust streaks.



The completed underside shows the owner's "absolutely nuts" restoration, looking as better-than-new from below as it does from above. When possible, NOS parts were fitted, reproduction components were used and a few things came off a junkyard Rampside.



seat covers, which included original fabric material for the bench seat, though their overall condition was not bad. "It was pretty much just a matter of aging. We had kept it good enough so no mice or anything had gotten into it. Luckily, the interior, we were able to do all new. And you could just tell as soon as you started moving the electrical cables that the insulation was brittle, so we were able to do all new electrical. So, that really wasn't a problem."

Parking an old Corvair for years in the garage of a Corvair specialist does have its pitfalls, however. Take the glass, for instance. "All of the glass is original except for the windshield," says Cal. "It got lost. Somewhere along the line, I took it out to check a reproduction

weatherstrip, and I don't know if it got broken or sold on me or what. Somehow it disappeared, so I had to get a new one." Not a fan of installing windshields, Cal, with help from his wife, Joan, took three hours to get the Rampside's front glass properly installed.

He also took great care in restoring the rest of the glass. "Some of it had little streaks on it," Cal recalls. "What I usually do is take some glass polishing stuff and I polish them. You can remove minor scratches. You can remove rust streaks. When I do them, I take them out of the channel so I can redo the channels and put new fabric in and then press the glass back down into the channel."

With the seats recovered, the new crate engine installed under the load

## owner's view



The Corvair Rampside is actually fairly usable. Although I don't use it quite like a truck anymore, I still do transport stuff in it. As far as being an old truck, it actually rides pretty comfortably. The handling is acceptable; it wanders a little bit, even though everything's been completely rebuilt. It's really a neat-handling vehicle for an old truck. I think that, along with the fact that it is a Corvair—and I am kind of into the whole air-cooled Corvair thing—makes it pretty nice.— *Calvin Clark, Jr.*



floor and virtually every part restored, refinished, NOS or reproduction, it's no boast when Cal says, "Everything is better than when it left the factory." While they haven't made any new Corvair 95 trucks or vans of any type for 50 years now, Cal's Rampside does indeed drive like new. Its air-cooled flat six's 110-hp will never be mistaken for the grunt of a big V-8, but it moves fine in traffic, and the four-speed shifts easily.

Cal harbors no illusions about the over-the-top attention to detail that went into the Rampside. "I would call this absolutely nuts," he says. While we would never accuse anyone of going too far with a restoration nor diagnose any mental illness leading to it, we can fully endorse the results of such madness. 🍷



## 1966 Sports Car Graphic Magazine

Back in the 1960s, Americans became obsessed with horsepower. Advertising touting fast cars and high-performance products was seemingly everywhere, and all the enthusiast car magazines were chock full of it. It was a great time if you liked power, speed and excitement.

Detroit's advertising agencies fed into this performance frenzy in a big way, crafting entertaining display ads extolling the virtues of their client's cars and associated parts and products. They did their best to flaunt their performance edge, and it worked. As seen in the May 1966 issue of *Sports Car Graphic* magazine, these ads are just a small sampling of what car enthusiasts feasted upon.

The world's wheel-driven speed record



Summers brothers bring it back to America

### MOBIL

Breaking speed records at Bonneville was hot, and Mobil capitalized on America's fascination with these salt flats speed runs.

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MAY 1966

(They did it with Mobil)

In 1964, Donald Campbell of Great Britain pushed the speed record for wheel-driven cars to over 400 mph. But the Summers brothers, Bob and Bill, of Corona, California, were a much greater challenge to meet in the motor-paced world. The "Comet" was built for it.

And on September 21, 1964, at Bonneville, Utah, the "Comet" set the top lap of the record books, 412.323 MPH. Campbell, 400-250 MPH, average, for an incredible two lap average of 409.220 MPH.

It took a lot of sweat and tears, but the Summers brothers each drove 600 laps. That's an amazing feat for that car's big job in representing all of

Mobil

## "Super Stock" discovers Mercury Comet!



Car enthusiasts' magazine applauds Comet as the "Performance Car of the Year."

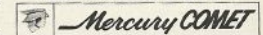


Why did Comet earn Super Stock & Drag Illustrated's first annual performance award? Because of Comet's heritage as a "can-do" car. Daytona, 1963, 100,000 miles at over 100 mph in specially equipped Comet for more world's records than any other U.S. make. Then Cape Horn to Ketchikan, Alaska, in 10 months before 40 days. Now the awarding editors say: "The 1966 Comet is one of the best all-around packages of performance anywhere." Give this big, new-generation driving machine a whirl and discover what performance is all about!

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- Discover Mercury Cyclone GT 261 390 CID 4-114 335 HP V-8, 7.25 x 14" nylon whitewalls, 35" tires. Fewer bends last!
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"Performance Car of the Year"



Here are things you, too, can discover...  
 • Discover Mercury Cyclone GT excitement! For 1966, a wider

Have you driven a Mercury Comet lately? Take a discovery ride!



### MERCURY COMET

It was a huge accomplishment to win the "Performance Car of the Year" award because it quickly translated into additional new car sales. Mercury discovered this firsthand when its handsome-looking 1966 Comet took top honors, and the company wasted no time letting everyone know.

"Why did Comet earn *Super Stock & Drag Illustrated's* first annual performance award? Because of Comet's heritage as a 'can-do' car."

"Give this big-new-generation driving machine a whirl and discover what performance is all about."

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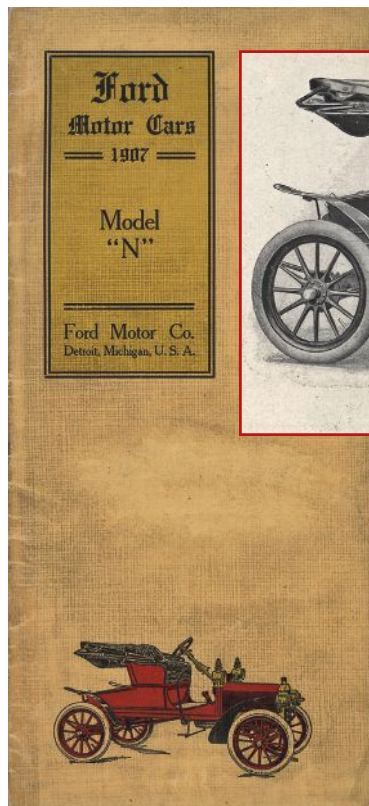
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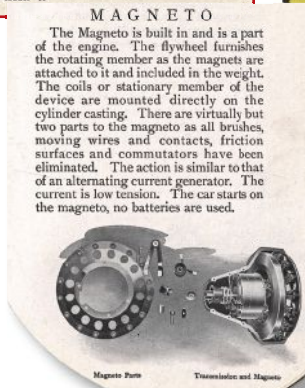
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# Prewar Ford Sales Literature Part 1



Ford 4-cylinder 16-18 H.P. Runabout—Model "N"



MAGNETO

The Magneto is built in and is a part of the engine. The flywheel furnishes the rotating member as the magnets are attached to it and included in the weight. The coils or stationary member of the device are mounted directly on the cylinder casting. There are virtually but two parts to the magneto as all brushes, moving wires and contacts, friction surfaces and commutators have been eliminated. The action is similar to that of an alternating current generator. The current is low tension. The car starts on the magneto, no batteries are used.



*Souvenir Booklet.* The booklet featured a green car on top of a yellow letter "T." Behind this is a purple inner cover that provides a great visual contrast. As 1910 was the second year for the Model T, the booklet states that there was "no sign of waning popularity" for 1910—boy, were they on to something! The booklet highlights the specifications for the car and each body style offered. Since several models included a rumble seat, Ford created a unique adjective to describe accessibility by saying the seat was "get-at-able." A key selling point that the booklet makes is that Model T bodies are interchangeable; an owner could buy a closed body for the winter and simply swap it with an open body during the warmer months using "an hour's labor."

Next month, we will move on to Ford's Weekly Purchase Plan from the 1920s and also the company's willingness to improve the quality of its cars while maintaining a fixed price point. The series will finish up when we look at an effort in the 1930s to replicate sales literature from high-end manufacturers and the company's early attempts to market cars to women. ☺

**FROM THE FIRST DECADE** of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the last, the most consistent theme in Ford sales literature is value. From making a Model T affordable to the average family in the 1910s, to enhancing standard equipment and trim pieces without raising the price of the car, Ford set the bar for cars in the low-price field. We've selected a handful of pieces from Ford's prewar era to discuss in the coming months. The pieces stand out for one reason or another, yet consistently embody Ford's approach to selling cars to the motoring public.

Ford's first production automobile rolled out in 1903. Between 1903 and 1905, Ford produced a total of 5,002 cars. In 1906, the company produced 8,729 cars, and by 1907 that number was nearly 15,000. In 1907, sales literature took on an aggressive approach when selling the 1907 Model N. Introduced the previous season, the Model N quickly developed a strong reputation within the automotive industry. The catalog states that the Model N was at one

time the "butt for jest or ridicule... [and] now the car to duplicate." The catalog also claims that "it is not even necessary for us to waste words to assert that this car stands without rival or an equal today." Ford goes on to highlight the importance of economy and value in an automobile, stating that these two things were of great importance to Henry Ford as he was "working out the design and plans for his cherished scheme—a car that would combine all that was best in an automobile and built in such numbers and at a price that would place it within the reach of... men to whom a motor car is a necessity rather than a luxury." The Model N catalog measures 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and has 20 pages. While the catalog contains several illustrations, it relies mostly on written descriptions.

The successor to the Model N would be the Model T, and we are all well aware that this is the car that would allow Henry Ford to realize his vision. Ford took a unique approach to advertising the 1910 Model T by creating a colorful die-cut

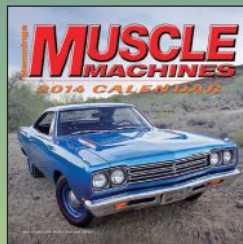
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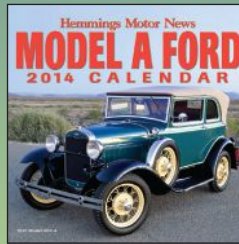
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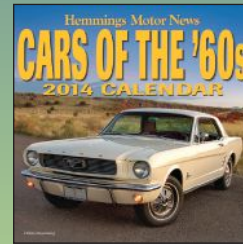
Classic Car **CC14**



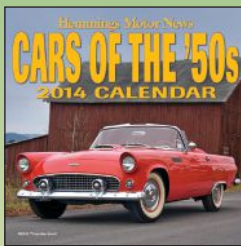
Muscle Machines **CM14**



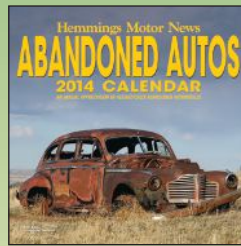
Model A Ford **CF14**



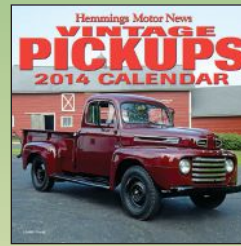
Cars of the '60s **C614**



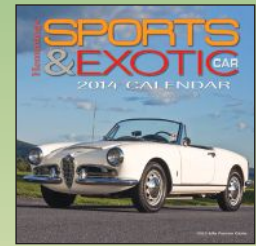
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## DETROIT UNDERDOGS

DEKOU UNDERDOG?

BY MILTON STERN

## Dodge Aspen/Plymouth Volaré



that come off the assembly line are—how shall we say—somewhat problematic, there always seems to be the one car that slips by without a flaw and ends up in the hands of a careful driver who babies it. When you ask him how he likes his car, he answers, “My 1976 Dodge Aspen is a fine car. I never had a problem with it.” Even more shocking is that you saw him driving it last week!

Ironically, the Aspen and Volaré eventually replaced what were among the most dependable cars of all time, the Dodge Dart and Plymouth Valiant.

In the early 1980s, a national car magazine ran a piece on the best used cars. They included the Aspen and Volaré. Their reasoning was that, if you found one, chances were the owners had already visited the dealer to take care of all the recalls and flaws, leaving you with a decent car. They don’t call them “survivors” for nothing.

As with their own replacements, the Aries and Reliant, the Aspen and Volaré would spawn a few desirable Mopars of their own, particularly the Chrysler LeBaron, second-generation Cordoba, and Imperial, along with the last of the old school Chryslers, the Fifth Avenue. There were also countless Diplomat and Gran Fury police cars. But before they were allowed upstream to spawn, a few issues needed to be addressed.

Chrysler decided it was time to field a more luxurious compact, especially since the Valiant Brougham had proven so popular. Adding a station wagon to the mix was genius. The only four-door American compact wagon available since 1971 was the AMC Hornet Sportabout. These would be Chrysler’s first compact wagons in the United States since 1966.

The new Mopar compacts looked much larger, but they were less than two inches bigger than their predecessors wherever you measured them. They had one-quarter more glass and a lower beltline and were more aerodynamic, thanks to wind-tunnel testing a couple of plastic mock-ups that couldn’t rust away during development. With a new

transverse torsion bar suspension to give them more of a big-car ride, the car’s engines were carryovers, featuring the 225-cu.in. Slant Six, and the 318- and 360-cu.in. V-8s. What they lacked in exterior dimensions, they made up for in weight, coming in at close to 3,500 pounds and sometimes more when fully optioned. These heavy compacts rode on a split wheelbase: 108.7-inches for the coupe, and 112.7 inches for the four-door sedan and wagon. It’s interesting that what was once a compact would today be considered a full-size car. Initial EPA fuel economy ratings were 18 mpg city and 27 mpg highway, with a Slant Six and a column-mounted three-speed manual transmission. Good luck finding one of those, but mazel tov if you do!

Among the innovations were the “Iso-Clamps” for attaching the leaf springs to the frame of the car. These rubber donuts were sandwiched between the spring perch and the frame to reduce the transference of vibrations to the passengers. All other Chryslers would eventually adopt the Iso-Clamps.

To address the immediate and very apparent rust issues (especially in the front fenders), a seven-stage autophoretic coating system was adopted, and Chrysler recalled all existing 1976 and ’77 Aspens and Volarés in mid-1977 to replace those front fenders. They also added fender liners.

Other recalls included those for emissions control systems, fuel systems and seatbelt retractors. As you can see, finding a pristine first-year model will be next to impossible unless the owner followed his recall—I mean *maintenance*—schedule.

By 1978, the problems that Aspens and Volarés had been experiencing were completely addressed, but their reputations were permanently damaged due to having the most recalls in American automotive history at the time, and all those problems drove Chrysler to the brink of bankruptcy.

Now, if you follow my advice and buy an Aspen or Volaré, you are going to have to deal with something no other old car owner encounters, and you must have thick skin. Everywhere you go, someone is bound to walk up to you and say, “I had one of those. It was a real piece of ...”

I know, because I used to own one. 🐾

**PEOPLE RARELY AGREE ON** the appeal of any particular car. If they did, everyone would show up at his next cruise-in driving a Ford Granada? I can dream, can’t I?

Though, one car does universally provoke the same response. Mention the Dodge Aspen/Plymouth Volaré twins, and everyone agrees these cars embody all things lemony. This month’s column may convince you that an Aspen or Volaré is in your future, or you can just count how many times I say “recall.”

I once overheard the owner of a restaurant reasoning with a regular customer. The owner began by asking, “Would you agree that a Cadillac is a fine car?” The customer agreed. The owner then followed up with, “Let’s say one bad Cadillac comes off the line, does that make a Cadillac a bad car?” His long-time patron said, no. “Well,” the owner continued, “That is what happened tonight. Every night you have had a fine meal here, but not tonight. That doesn’t make this a bad restaurant, does it?”

Unfortunately, we aren’t talking about the “standard of the world.” My point is that there is an odd thing about lemons. While the majority of the cars



## Frank Abramson & Ted Fiala

**AS MUCH AS AN INDIVIDUAL**—or even a pair of individuals—can claim credit, these are the two guys who started it all. It may be difficult for many of us to grasp in 2014, but there was once a time, many years ago, when people pretty much ignored antique cars. In fact, when Frank Abramson and Ted Fiala first got together, the adjective “antique” was scarcely applied to cars at all. But leave it to two guys from the Philly area to have a different idea.

Frank Abramson, who lived in Philadelphia proper, and Ted Fiala, who grew up south of the city in Haverford, Pennsylvania, were united in their generation, their trade as highly skilled tool-and-die makers, and their shared fascination with some of the earliest cars. Abramson, in particular, had a sideline designing and fabricating replacement parts for cars that, in some cases, had only existed in double digits.

They also agreed that old cars, however obscure and primitive, deserved to be rescued and preserved, rather than junked. To that end, Abramson and Fiala had been scouring the area for them since the 1920s. Fiala had located a single-cylinder 1907 Waltham Orient (predecessor of the Metz, named for the town in Massachusetts where it was manufactured and the bicycle that the company originally produced), a buckboard-type contraption, in his grandfather’s barn located on the site of today’s Philadelphia International Airport. Abramson joined Fiala in restoring the 1907 car, or at least in getting it running, and then began offering it to a variety of local businesses for promotional use in parades and such.

In 1931, the friends hit upon the notion of inviting people they knew who owned veteran cars to drive the vehicles,

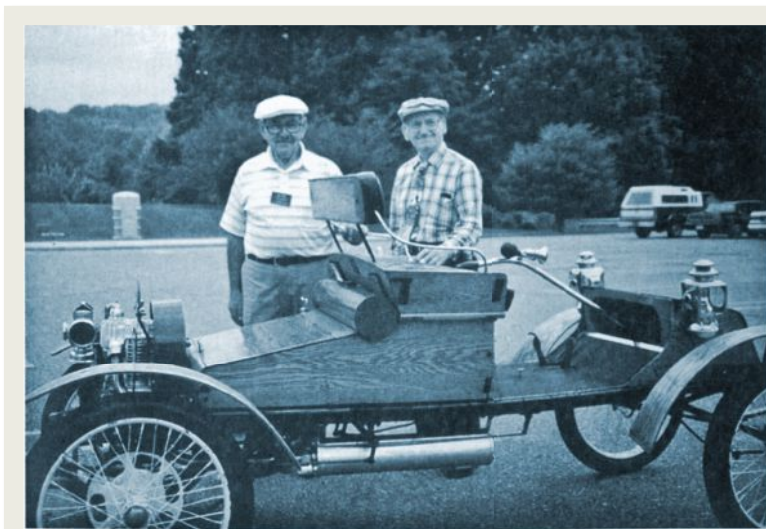
Glidden Tour style, to a new-car show that was scheduled for the old Philadelphia Convention Center. The rules were simple: A participating car had to be at least 25 years old and drive under its own power to the show. Only a handful showed up, but it began a tradition of annual “derbies.” In 1935, Abramson and Fiala had the idea of formalizing the events for non-promotional purposes.

They organized a derby on a frigid January day in 1935 and asked the participants if they’d be interested in joining a club devoted to preserving and running the earliest cars. The proposed rules were that member cars had, again, to be a quarter-century old, and be capable of being driven at least 25 miles to the gathering point. Abramson and Fiala named the new group the Antique Automobile Club of America, and attracted an initial 14 members, all of whom were from

either Pennsylvania or New Jersey. The first official AACA gathering was a derby to the 1935 Philadelphia auto show. Members named Abramson as the first AACA president and Fiala as the organization’s first secretary-treasurer, plus editor of its newsletter. Within five years, membership had risen into triple digits. In 1935, Abramson said he decided on the club’s name because he firmly believed it could grow beyond the Philadelphia area. Today, the club boasts more than 60,000 members, grouped into 400 chapters in the United States and abroad.

Fiala died in 1993. Abramson was the final AACA founding member to pass away when he died in 2001. The Waltham Orient that he and Fiala returned to life is now a centerpiece display at AACA headquarters in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

For details on joining this wonderful club, go to [www.aaca.org](http://www.aaca.org).



The AACA marked its first anniversary with this 1936 wintertime gathering of member cars prior to a Philadelphia automobile show.



# Oilzum Signs



**THE GOGGLE-EYED MAN** in the cool-looking cap is one of the most recognizable faces in the automobilia world, especially so for collectors of petroliana. He's the face of Oilzum, one of the world's oldest manufacturers of automotive oils and lubricants. From cans to signs, his face was used everywhere to sell oil. And sell oil it did.

The company's slogan was: "If motors could speak we wouldn't need to advertise."

While creating crafty slogans is one of the methods employed by advertising agencies to compel consumers to think about a company's product in a positive way, the primary and far more effective approach to selling products is persistently a visual one: signage. And the best way to ensure their products were successful was by means of signs that were attention grabbing, with bold colors and designs.

Like everything else back in the day that was crafted of a high quality, this was the period when signs were made to last a thousand years. Fabricated of thick steel, the illustrations and wordage were executed in porcelain, a virtually indestructible finish that was able to go head-to-head with all Mother Nature threw at it. And it did. Expensive and time consuming to produce, right around the time of World War II's end, the hard-wearing porcelain gave way to signs made of stamped sheetmetal and enamel finishes, which were much quicker

to produce and a lot cheaper, too.

For collectors of petroliana, which is any antique object relating to gas stations and automotive-related oil companies, some of the most sought-after motor oil signs are those advertising Oilzum products. Their bright orange and black, and later, turquoise, signs quickly became familiar to early motorists, especially those throughout New England where Oilzum was mainly marketed at first.

Introduced by White and Bagley in 1905, this Boston-based petroleum company soon made Oilzum into one of the country's most recognizable motor oil brands. Today, original Oilzum signs, as well as their bottles and cans, are highly prized by petroliana collectors and car enthusiasts for their creative artwork, which is a pleasure to admire.

While the early porcelain Oilzum signs are the preferred favorite for the serious collector, and also the most expensive with some signs valued in excess of \$5,000, the later sheetmetal signs are easier to find, more affordable to buy and a bit more colorful with their use of turquoise and white colors.

About ten years ago, I had the good fortune of walking into a used book store in Vermont seeking old automotive books, but ended up instead buying the Oilzum

Located in the lower right corner is the sign's production location and date.

sign seen here. When I asked the store owner if he had any books on old cars, he asked if I was an old-car enthusiast, and when I told him yes, he said wait here. He soon appeared from the backroom with a thin cardboard box about three feet long, placed it on the counter, removed a sheet of brown wax paper and proceeded to remove this Oilzum sign. Being truly brand new, it was in perfect condition and had never before been removed from its original box. I quickly snapped it up for a mere \$65. It now hangs in my office on the wall directly in front of my 1890s mahogany table that I use for a desk, so I can enjoy its distinctive design.

Fans of the Oilzum brand can now rejoice, especially if you reside in the New England region, as the familiar orange-labeled brand is now back on select stores' shelves. Sold to Castrol years ago, in 2010 it was sold to Dennison Lubricants, which bought not only the Oilzum name, but also the old building in Worcester, Massachusetts, where it was originally bottled. Today's Oilzum line of engine oil includes multigrades, diesel engine oil, synthetic and synthetic blends. Sadly, the signature man with the goggles has been retired. ☹



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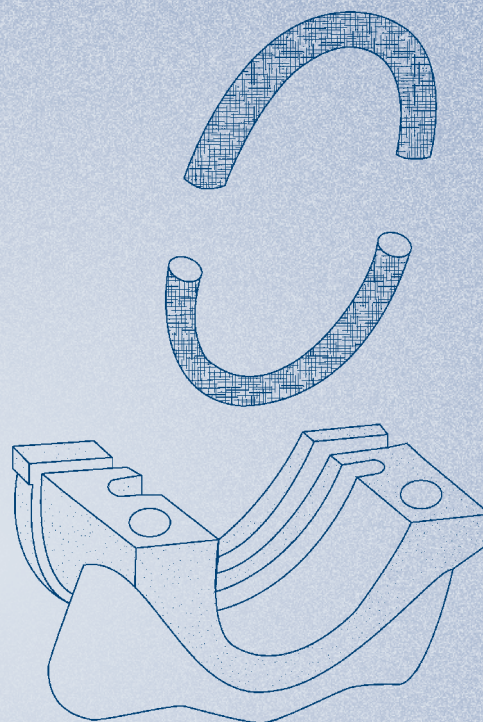
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# Rear Main Seal

How the rear of the crankshaft is sealed against oil leaks



## JOB: Preventing rear main seal leaks

BY RAY T. BOHACZ

**EARLY ON,** Detroit engineers learned that once they were able to deliver a reliable and easy-to-operate automobile, that new mechanical concerns continually presented themselves. Prior to this, seepage of engine oil or transmission grease was considered normal and quite acceptable, but refinement meant there was little tolerance for leaks.

If you spend any time around old cars, you know that a majority of the vehicles suffer from a leaking or dripping rear main crankshaft seal. This is especially problematic since not only does it leave a mark on the ground when the car is parked, but the leaking oil gets blown all over the undercarriage by the air flowing under the car when it is in motion. The result is a surface that attracts dust and dirt. Worse than that, though, the oil degrades rubber components such as chassis bushings and creates an odor when it spatters on to the hot exhaust system.

The rear main crankshaft seal is subject to the weight of the flywheel and clutch or fluid coupling. In later years, it was influenced by the torque converter mass. Every crankshaft flexes, but the additional mass

on the rear accentuated this movement and made sealing in the oil more difficult than on the front of the engine.

### Seal Types

There are three types of rear main crankshaft seals in use today. Each presents positive features as well as concerns.

The seal types are:

- Rope or wick (original type)
- Neoprene or split (1960s forward)
- One-piece (1980s to present)

Most classic American engines used the rope or wick-style seal up until the 1959 model year when it's commonly thought that Chevrolet first introduced a neoprene or split seal on its V-8 engines. Other General Motors divisions, however, along with their competitors, continued to employ the rope seal on most applications.

**Rope/Wick Seal:** This kind of seal got its name because it resembled a rope, but it was far from a simple piece of cord. The material was engineered to withstand the high RPM of the crankshaft while rubbing against it and enduring extreme variations in temperature. The seal must not shrink

excessively when cold or expand too greatly when heated, otherwise friction will cause it to wear out prematurely. As is common with most seals of any design that ride on a moving part, a small amount of the system fluid (in this case, engine oil) is required to keep the seal from operating dry. In addition, the oil functions as a swelling agent, expanding the seal so that it fits tightly into the rear main cap/block and rides snugly on the crankshaft, thereby preventing oil leaks from occurring.

**Neoprene/Split Seal:** Made from a rubber-like material, this is a two-piece, lip-style seal that rides up against the crankshaft. Its design is similar to a front timing cover seal or a grease seal in the rear of a brake drum or rotor. The difference being that the split seal does not use a metal retainer and is installed separately in the main cap and block in similar fashion to a rope seal. When looking at a two-piece seal, there will be a lip on one side, and this must face the crankshaft to seal the oil from leaking. If the seal is installed backwards, it will leak immediately upon engine start-up. The neoprene seal is very effective at sealing

oil, but seems to be just as sensitive to leakage as the wick design. It does have an advantage, however: it is easier to install when the crankshaft is still in the block, especially if the engine is in the car.

Note that though commonly called a neoprene seal, not all so-called seals are made from this material. Car manufacturers used a variety of materials to manufacture their split rear main seals, depending on their specific needs and applications. Thus, it is important to research the requirements of your particular vehicle and purchase the seal made from the proper material.

**One-Piece:** The one-piece is a neoprene-style seal that is completely round and installed in similar fashion to a timing cover seal. The one-piece design mandated a special crankshaft and block. Retrofit kits are offered for some engine blocks, but require a newer-style crankshaft. Thus, in nearly all cases, you cannot upgrade an older rope-seal engine to a one-piece rear main seal without changing the crankshaft.

This style of seal has proven the most effective at being leak-free; however, when it does need to be serviced, either the engine or transmission has to be removed to access it.

### Why Does it Leak?

When faced with a rear main seal leak, analyzing the situation is imperative. If the engine in your car is very old and the seal is leaking, it is most likely the result of simple age and use. Installing a new rear main seal of any design should end the problem. But if the engine has been recently rebuilt and a rear main seal leak appears, then the cause must be found. If quality parts were used, do not assume the seal is defective. The problem is more likely with either the installation or some aspect of the engine itself.

Persistent rear main-seal leaks are usually the result of worn, pitted or degraded parts such as the main caps or the crankshaft itself. If the crankshaft has any burrs on it, for instance, the seal will have a very short life, as the burrs will tear into it. Alternatively, if the block has experienced many rebuilds and excessive machining of the main caps, then it is very possible that the relationship of the seal groove in the cap and the block are no longer correct. This is because when main caps are cut, the block is align honed/bored making the crankshaft journals true to size and in line, but the procedure does not alter the seal groove in a corresponding manner. The result can be a proper clearance crankshaft that is actually sitting away from the rear main seal on one side. If this has occurred, the engine will leak, for sure.

Other concerns are all related to the parts. Many are 60 and 70 years old and may have been mismatched over time. It is common when restoring an old car to be happy just to find the crankshaft or block that you want even though the production years may be different. With some brands of engine, this makes little difference, but often a car company has made unpublished changes to a block or crankshaft. During a cursory inspection, the parts may look comparable, but may, in fact, be subtly different. If you are fortunate enough to recognize this, you may end up using a bottom seal from one year and a top seal from another to get a leak-free fit.

### Stopping a Leak

If the leak isn't very bad, an effective temporary solution maybe using engine oil labeled for "high mileage engines," because it traditionally contains a greater level of swelling agents. If high-mileage oil fails to stop or slow the leak, try one of the specially designed stop-leak additives available on the market. Keep in mind that neither of these are intended as substitutes for making repairs, and should only be used as a stopgap measure or on a car that is driven just a few miles each year.

Another alternative for stopping a rear main seal leak in a limited-use vehicle is to use a leak repair kit—if you can still find one. The kit includes a pushrod-like tool that's used to drive a pointed steel spacer pin between the upper rear main seal and the block. This procedure tightens the old seal and may stop the oil leak.

To actually repair a rear main seal, however, likely requires that the engine and potentially even the crankshaft be taken out of the car, especially when dealing with a rope seal. The proper way to install the rope into the groove in the block and the adjoining main cap is by rolling the seal into place with a pipe or large dowel. Though tools for pulling the seal around exist, often the results of using them are at best marginal. If you do not want to remove the engine and crankshaft in the future, consider replacing your old rope seal with a split seal (if one is offered).

When installing a split seal, be sure to read the gasket manufacturer's instructions carefully and follow all the steps. For example, silicone sealant may be required on the sides of the cap, yet other engines use side pins, etc. Do not assume the seal is a direct drop-in with no special procedures. If a wick seal is the only option, don't be afraid of it even if it means removing the engine and crankshaft for a proper installation. Regardless of which seal you use, if you've already changed the rear main seal once and it still leaks, you will need to

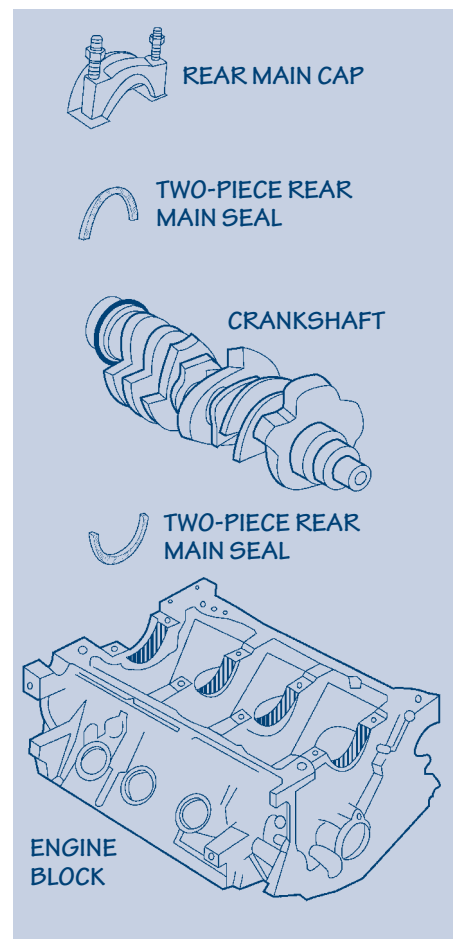


figure out what is really going on.

Here are some more possible trouble spots. If the engine has no way of breathing, through either the valve covers or a PCV (Positive Crankcase Ventilation) system, then the crankcase will become pressurized and push oil past the rear seal. Some engines have an oil pan that is very small. When the piston rings wear, cylinder pressure leaks past the rings and into the oil pan. Due to the small capacity design of the sump, the dipstick is usually blown out of its tube, and the rear main seal begins leaking.

If there are no ventilation issues with the crankcase, and the rear main is still having a problem sealing, then an in-depth study of the area is in order. The engine should be removed and disassembled. The part of the crankshaft that rides on the seal needs to be measured accurately. The main cap needs to be torqued in place with the seal installed and checked for fit against the block.

Controlling the oil at the rear of the block is not rocket science. Any excessive clearance or misalignment will allow the hot oil, which is very thin, to escape. But do not despair. Detroit engineers still face the same issues you do. Sealing an engine is a marvel of design, procedure and often luck! 🏎️

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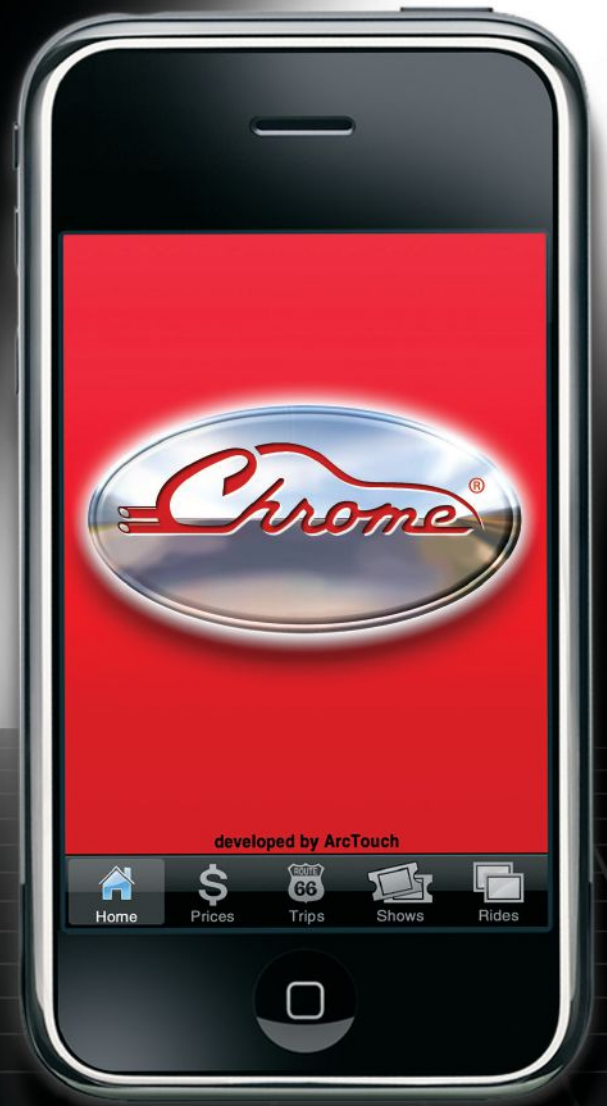
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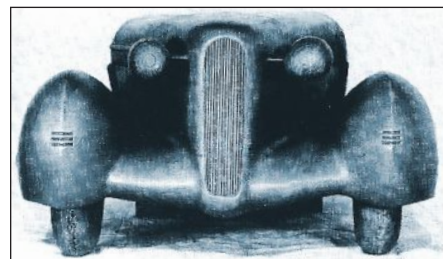
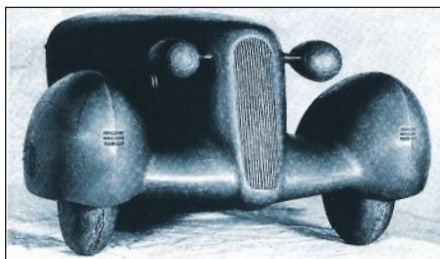
## Paul Jones Mochel

Stylist

General Motors

**MY MENTOR WAS** Jules Agramonte, who came from Fleetwood Body sometime after it was purchased in 1925 by Fisher Body. In the fall of 1939, Jules came to the school I was attending and offered me a job in the Cadillac/La Salle Studio upon graduation. In June of 1940 the school, California Graduate School of Design, was an affiliate of the California Institute of Technology, and offered courses in Buying Psychology and Engineering Materials & Processes. In addition, there were several design courses and a complete model shop. I had drawings and models to show him. I received a lot of encouragement from my two roommates, Ben Rine and Paul Browne, both of whom knew Jules and had recently come from the GM Styling Section themselves; Paul was connected with the 1939 Buick grille design. They felt that I would be well suited for such a job, because of the diversity of my background. What I did not know was that Jules had left the Styling Section after losing out to Bill Mitchell as head of the Cadillac Studio. Jules was persuaded to take a few months' vacation in California, and while there, to recruit talent before returning to Detroit.

I contacted Jules to see if his job offer was real. He replied: "If you come to Detroit, we have a job for you." When I arrived at GM Research Building B, which was where the Styling Section was located, Jules said that I would be with him and Tom Hibbard in one of two Special Projects Rooms. I wondered why we were not going to be in the Cadillac/La Salle Studio, but was told that a Special Projects room in Styling was better, because we could keep regular



Clay model of Jules Agramonte's 1934 La Salle front end design.

eight-to-five hours and would not have to spend the Christmas holidays working, like the production rooms often did. I still wondered why the change, but readily accepted this explanation.

Jules and Tom had been spending a few hours each week as instructors at the school across Milwaukee Avenue in the GM building. Their assignment was to teach the new students a pencil-rendering technique, so that they could quickly convey their design ideas when some of them would be moved into the Styling Section. In 1940, Harley Earl closed the school and brought the successful students into Jules' Special Projects Room, and let the others go. They all had been paid a salary by the Styling Section; however, the successful ones received the promotion, as well as a small raise when they moved into Styling in Research Building B.

The Special Projects room had the appearance of a schoolroom, even though it was definitely a part of the Styling Section. It was equipped with three rows of desks and attached seats. Alongside each desk was a taboret, that is, a small, portable cabinet to hold work supplies. There were four or five units in each row and there were three rows. The room had

a large blackboard in front where we placed the best designs of the day. At the side of the room was a moveable (up or down) display board to accommodate a full-sized drawing of the front end of an automobile. The only thing that differentiated Jules as the head of the department was a partition for his workspace. For me, it all was a dream come true, but what I didn't realize at the time was that for Jules it was a step down in his career. Earlier in 1937, Bill Mitchell had been put in charge of the Cadillac/La Salle Studio instead of Jules, and it had been renamed the Cadillac Studio. Subsequently, each day he became less connected with La Salle and the Cadillac Studio.

I found myself sitting between two of the fortunate, former students, Gene Bordinat and Ned Nickles, with Elwood Engel and Frank Bianchi sitting in the front of the room. I was asked by Jules not to reveal my salary to the others, as it was substantially more than theirs. He justified my higher salary by saying that I had presented models and drawings done before I came to GM. Jules then arranged a meeting with the New Devices Section, the purpose of which was for me to assign to the Frigidaire Division my school thesis on the harvesting of ice cubes. I don't know for sure, but I have always assumed



I Was There relates your stories from working for the carmakers, whether it was at the drawing board, on the assembly line or anywhere in between. To submit your stories, email us at [editorial@hemmings.com](mailto:editorial@hemmings.com) or write to us at I Was There, c/o Hemmings Classic Car, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont 05201.



that Harley Earl was the one who was ultimately responsible for my receiving one month's salary in compensation.

We all had our own themes or favorite design gimmicks that so identified us that some of us stopped signing our drawings. I guess the reasoning was that, if the design was well accepted by our peers, everybody would know whose design it was. If it was a lackluster solution, we didn't want anybody to know. Bianchi was called the "badge man." He put the car's division name all over the car, on the fenders, on the hood, on the quarter panel and even on the rear decklid. Bomb forms were a favorite addition to the front of the car at this time. I felt that they were too much form without a function. I cut off the points and added fog lamps, since directional signals and parking lamps were either above or below the headlamps then. They were referred to as "Mochel's pots."

Only in retrospect do I see what was happening to Jules' career at GM. Harley Earl was shifting people around like chessmen and creating departments to house them. Each time Earl made a move on the GM chessboard, the result was a smaller, less prestigious environment for Jules, in spite of the fact that Jules was responsible for the 1934 La Salle design that helped build Earl's reputation tremendously. (Both Ben Rine and Paul Browne, my former roommates, credited Jules with the design of the 1934 La Salle.)

The events I have cited are examples of Harley's systematic handling of anybody with a known talent for automobile design. The list is long and includes all of the old-time body designers. Harley Earl husbanded people whom he thought might someday bring him a genuinely new design. The system called for: Get 'em in, milk 'em, and drop 'em. If they came up with something with potential, it became known as being designed by Harley Earl. And he did it all without putting a line on paper. While looking at a design, and after some consideration, he would say, "I think we ought to add three nah-ro, chromium bars." The narrow, chromium bars were added, and everyone was happy. What may have been difficult for Jules to take into consideration was that Earl was responding to a growing and difficult situation. The years building up to World War II gradually resulted in the elimination of all automobile production except for the military. 🐼

Please see the next issue of Hemmings Classic Car, #114, for the conclusion of this story.

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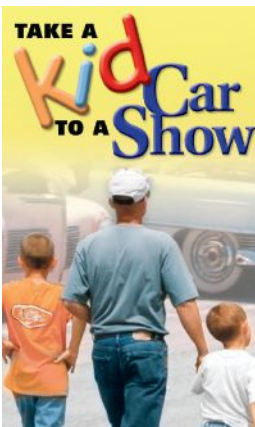
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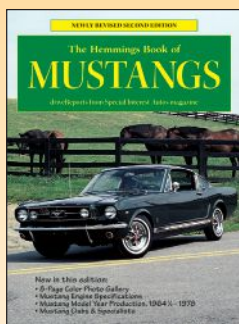
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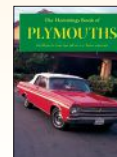
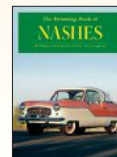
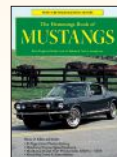
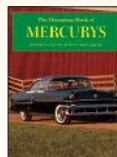
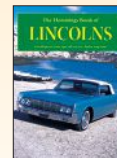
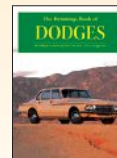
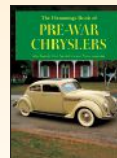
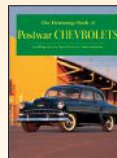
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## VEXED BY VATS

**Q:** I have a 1990 Cadillac Allanté that uses an ignition key with a resistor chip embedded in the blade. On two occasions (one year apart) when the car sat in the hot sun, the starter circuit would not activate. Although I pushed the key in and out several times, wiggled it, twisted it and bumped the column many times, the ignition circuit would not engage. The key would turn and activate all of the other electrical items perfectly, but there didn't appear to be any connection to the ignition circuit. Because the cabin was so hot inside, I put the windows down and walked away for a while. After waiting about 15 minutes I tried again, and the car started immediately. I had both of my keys checked, and they are reading the correct resistance. The mechanic wants to replace the (expensive) key assembly, but I'm not convinced that will solve my problem. What are your thoughts?

Richard Kelson  
Bountiful, Utah

**A:** I think, like your mechanic, that when the ignition key on GM cars equipped with the Vehicle Anti-Theft System or Pass Key system passes a diagnostic check, the ignition switch is the next likely suspect. As you know, these ignition keys have a small resistor chip embedded in them, and the amount of electrical resistance provided by the chip serves as a signal to the anti-theft module.

If there's too little or too much resistance in the circuit, the car won't start. Sometimes the solution is as simple as just wiping off the key to clean the resistor, or checking the connections under the dash. Other times, you have to start replacing expensive parts like the ignition switch or the VATS module.

One common workaround is to install a resistor, with the same amount of resistance as the key, in the wires leading from the ignition switch. This basically fools the system into thinking everything is okay and allows the car to start. It also makes your car easy to steal, and there is the possibility that on very hot days, the car will not start as temperature variances can affect resistors.

You could also remove the system entirely, and just run a single hot wire

from the key. This, too, of course will make your car an easy target for a thief.

Since it has only happened twice, both on hot days, I'd like to believe that it was a temporary fluke—maybe the resistor in the key was hot or dirty.

This is a very common problem, and the best thing you can do is Google the terms "VATS," "VATS and pass key," as well as "VATS bypass." You'll be amazed at the amount of information out there, and reading up on it will help you make an educated decision about what to do if this condition becomes chronic.

## COOLANT TUBE QUANDRY

**Q:** I own a 1950 Imperial with a 323.5-cu.in. straight-eight engine. My question is: Where can I get a new water distribution tube for my engine? I've called everybody who advertises in *Hemmings Motor News* regarding this important piece that can keep my engine from overheating. If I cannot get one, maybe I can get a blueprint with the size, metal type and dimensions. Please help me out because I think my Imperial is beautiful and would like to show it off

Daniel M. Tiburcio  
Vallejo, California

**A:** If you've exhausted all of the Chrysler parts suppliers in the most recent *Hemmings*, try contacting Vintage Woodworks in LaLuz, New Mexico. Owner Dennis Bickford is one of the go-to people in the Chrysler Town and Country community and a purveyor of hard-to-find parts for these cars (which also used the Chrysler 323 straight-eight). Their phone number is: 575-443-1160, and their address is: Vintage Woodworks  
PO Box 1132  
LaLuz, NM 88337

## DIY CONVERTIBLE HELP

**Q:** I need help. The convertible top assembly from my 1948 Ford is all apart, and I am looking for information or a manual on how to assemble it and adjust it for fit. Hope you can help me!

Frank Russo  
Via email

**A:** This is a job I'd be apt to leave to someone who has tackled a few convertible top installations.

But, if you're determined to go it alone, Convertible Top Guys sells, for \$29.95, a self-published manual called, *How To Remove and Install Classic Two-Part Tops*. They also offer a discount on the book if you purchase one of their top packages.

Their website is [www.convertibletopguys.com](http://www.convertibletopguys.com), or you can give them a call at 401-789-0472.

## BRAKE WHOAS FOLLOW-UP

I received from Tech Talk readers many alternate solutions to a problem with a power-disc-brake-equipped 1957 Chevrolet discussed in *HCC* #111 ("Brakes Won't Take a Break").

In his letter to Tech Talk, Gary Kerrick wrote that his car's front brakes seemed to stay on with each application of the pedal until the engine was laboring just to keep the car moving.

I suggested that he make sure that the pushrod was adjusted to the correct length and that the clevis was in the correct position on the pedal.

Recently, Gary wrote in to tell us he'd found the solution:

*"Thank you for taking the time to address my problem. I had already taken the car to another mechanic and after misdiagnosing it as a failed master cylinder, he found the problem. The new mechanic discovered that the push rod that came with the brake kit was 3/4-inches too long, causing the power booster to be partially engaged all the time. Pushing the pedal caused preloading in the master cylinder and after heating up I had full-time disc brakes! Since this happened, I have found that quite a number of folks had the identical problem.*

*Thanks for your assistance. Love your column and read it with great interest every month."*



Send questions to: Tech Talk, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201; or email your questions to: [mmcnessor@hemmings.com](mailto:mmcnessor@hemmings.com).

# My Grandfather's Plymouth

I WAS 13 YEARS OLD IN 1953 when I spotted old Mr. Poner coming home from work in a very classy-looking sedan. I learned later that it was either a 1934 or '35 Pontiac. Not many prewar cars survived the Cleveland, Ohio, winters and the accompanying copious use of rock salt.

I had my first paper route, which netted a little over \$5 per week, and thought an offer of \$100 might tempt Mr. Poner to part with his daily driver. While collecting for the weekly paper, I made my pitch, offering \$50 now and \$50 more when savings permitted. I think he had a tear in his eye when he explained he'd just sold the car to the junk man for \$15 and would have given it to me if he had known. Then I was the one with the tear in his eye.

But then my grandfather announced one day that it was about time to replace his 1949 Special DeLuxe Plymouth sedan; that Cleveland salt was beginning to work its magic. The year 1956 was a big one for Buick, and the division was pushing to outsell Plymouth for the number-three spot behind Ford and Chevy. Simms Brothers Buick on Lakeshore Boulevard was running an ad: "We'll take your car in trade, and sell it back to you for \$100." That was a deal I hoped my grandfather could not refuse.

Per my suggestion, we mapped out a trip to a couple Chrysler/Plymouth dealers that would bring us home via Lakeshore Boulevard. At each stop, one could easily find some detail on the new Plymouth that pointed to an absence of quality and/or poor assembly. On the return trip, passing Simms Brothers, I yelled out, "Hey, let's check out one of these Buicks!"

My grandfather gravitated to a plain-Jane two-tone Special four-door with radio, heater, whitewalls and Dynaflo. Not much in the way of extras, but a big step up from Plymouth.

The salesman did his job well, and soon he was talking price. "I'll give you \$700 for your Plymouth, but sell it back to you for \$100 (i.e. a \$600 discount off the sticker price). My grandfather thought for a moment while I sat quietly in the corner trying to blend in with the wall. Things had gone too well, and it took all my self-control to keep my mouth shut and my butt seated.

"I'll take it," he said, and buy my car back!" As he completed the paperwork, the salesman exclaimed. "Now the missus will have a car to drive." My grandfather responded with: "My wife can't drive, won't drive, ain't gonna drive!" "What are you going to do with two cars?" the salesman wanted

to know. My grandfather pondered the question for a moment, turned to me and exclaimed, "You could use a car, Butch."

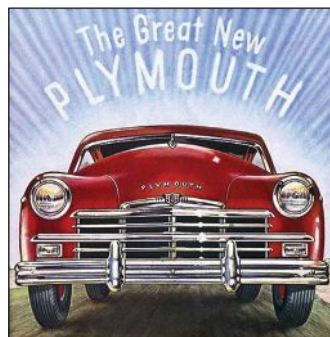
He threw me the keys as I leaped from the chair. Most likely, both the keys and I were in mid-air when contact was made. I wanted to know right then how to register the Plymouth in my name. "Had to go downtown to the courthouse," I was told.

It was now 4:15 p.m., a 30-minute drive, and it was rush hour. Worse, I had never driven a stick shift and wasn't exactly sure where the "H" pattern began and ended. I had 30 minutes in traffic to learn. I couldn't coordinate shifting into second gear while turning a corner. Probably over rev'ed a couple of times in first gear as I slowly negotiated left and right turns from a stop at 3,000 RPM. Got there with minutes to spare, only one lady behind the counter. I gave her my grandfather's title. "Address the same, just change the name," was my request. It must have cost less than five dollars, perhaps nothing, because I never had more than that on me at any time.

I had to complete everything and get home by 5:30 before my father arrived. When he saw that white-over-green Buick, he knew Gramps had a new car. "What's he going to do with the Plymouth?" "He sold it," I responded, "...to me."

There was a big "Oh, no!" whereupon I produced an Ohio title printed on official-looking yellow paper with wavy border lines and my name listed as "owner." There was a sound of disgust as my father walked away; another word on the subject was never spoken. I had wheels, and an insurance bill.

I didn't appreciate at the time just how good those Plymouths were with their



L-head 218-cu.in. 97-hp straight-six engines that didn't like anything over 60 MPH. It steered like a truck and pulled like a truck, but it wouldn't get you in any trouble. It was the perfect teenager's car.

After passing through a couple more vehicles and finding a wife along the way, we spent that recurring amount of \$100

and purchased a 1950 Plymouth sedan. This Plymouth pulled a heavy boat all over the state of Florida, top to bottom, never over 55 MPH, until the frame rusted through, and the car collapsed at the firewall. That dreaded salt claimed another victim.

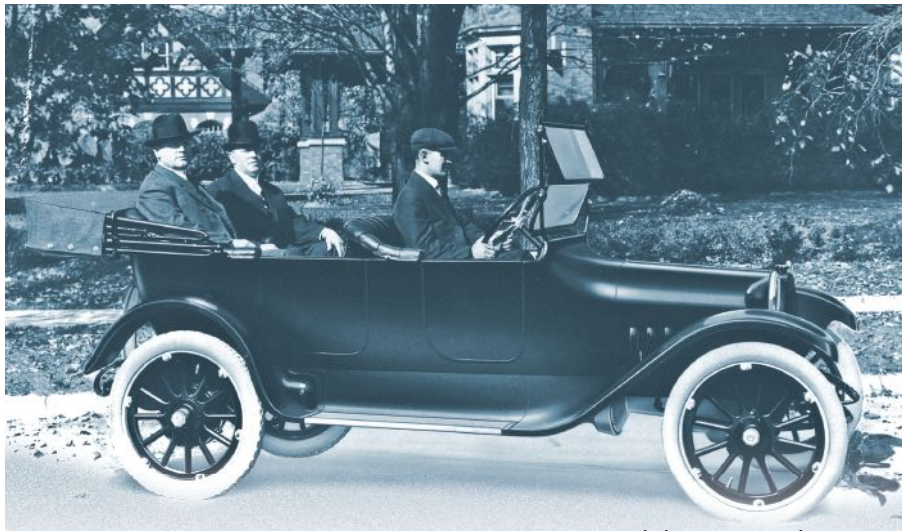
When I spotted a Channel Green 1949 Special DeLuxe club sedan at the donut shop with a "FOR SALE" sign, I was more than tempted, and my wife encouraged me. The car is actually in better shape after 60 years in the West than my first '49 Plymouth after spending just six winters in salt.

I always loved that stainless steel grille and never saw a car that had a front end that held up as well or looked as classy. As far as I can tell, this grille has never been professionally polished.

We named her *Hattie Belle* after my grandmother. If she had known how to drive, I would have been walking for some time, and there would have been a big crimp in my teenage independence. 🐾



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**HORACE AND JOHN DODGE RELEASE THE FIRST DODGE** automobile on November 14. Standard equipment includes leather seats, a folding top, electric lighting, an electric self-starter, windshield, speedometer and demountable rims. The four-door Touring model features an inline L-head four-cylinder engine and is priced at \$785.

## Dollars & Cents

- New house – \$3,800
- Average annual income – \$630
- One gallon of gas – \$0.12 (\$0.22 after WWI begins)
- Average new car – \$600
- Steaks/lb. – \$0.22
- Milk/qt. – \$0.09
- Washing machine – \$9.70
- Steel walking plow – \$9.23



**CHEVROLET'S ALL NEW H-SERIES** is available in two body styles, the "Royal Mail" roadster and the "Baby Grand" touring. Standard equipment includes top, curtains, windshield, speedometer, horn, spare tire and complete tool kit. Pricing for the Roadster is \$750 and for the Touring model is \$875. Add \$125 for those equipped with the Auto-Lite system.



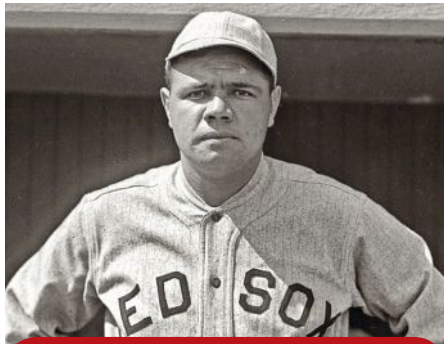
**HENRY FORD IMPLEMENTS THE \$5 PER DAY WAGE**, reducing employee turnover, new hiring and training costs, while increasing production to over 200,000 Model Ts.



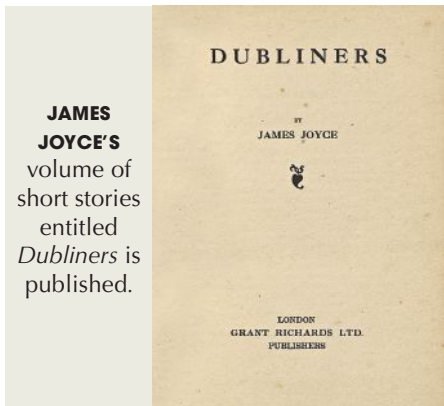
**ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND** assassinated; WWI begins.



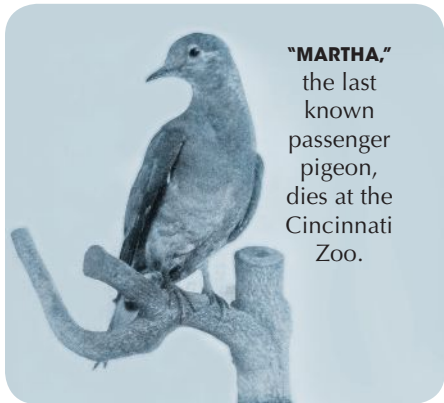
**STUDEBAKER'S SIX RETURNS AGAIN** with a longer wheelbase at 121 inches and longer hoods. The seven-passenger touring model is available for \$1,575. Also available is the two-door sedan, which has heavy plate-glass windows, coachlamps on the side and double body-beltline moldings. The five-passenger sedan is priced at \$2,250.



**BABE RUTH AT 19 MAKES HIS**  
Major League Baseball debut with  
the Boston Red Sox.



**JAMES JOYCE'S**  
volume of  
short stories  
entitled  
*Dubliners* is  
published.



**"MARTHA,"**  
the last  
known  
passenger  
pigeon,  
dies at the  
Cincinnati  
Zoo.



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Limited Edition -  
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# 1941 Plymouth Pickup diecast model

1/24th scale model  
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**A** handsome vehicle, worthy of being  
made into a diecast model with  
Hemmings branding. This model's  
doors open to reveal the sparse  
interior typical of trucks of the era.



The louvered hood panels lift to show an  
L-head straight six, and the steering works,  
making it road worthy just in case you  
decide to take it for a spin.

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**LIMIT 1** - Save 25% on any one item purchased at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. \*Cannot be used with other discount, coupon, gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans or on any of the following: compressors, generators, tool storage or carts, welders, floor jacks, Towable Ride-On Trencher (Item 65162), open box items, in-store event or parking lot sale items. Not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/6/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.



73084455

**SUPER COUPON!**



Item 90899 shown

**CENTECH**  
**7 FUNCTION DIGITAL MULTIMETER**

ITEM 90899/  
98025/69096

**\$9.99**  
VALUE

**WITH \$19.99 MINIMUM PURCHASE**

**LIMIT 1** - Only available with qualifying minimum purchase (excludes gift value). Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/6/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.



93177823

**SUPER COUPON!**

**WEIGHS 74 LBS.**

Item 68048 shown

**PITTSBURGH** AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 68048/69227

**RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK**



**\$69.99**

REG. PRICE \$149.99



82114098

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**SUPER COUPON!**

Item 67227 shown

**27 LED PORTABLE WORKLIGHT/FLASHLIGHT**

LOT NO. 67227/  
69567/60566

**SAVE 56%**

Requires three AAA batteries (included).

**\$259**

REG. PRICE \$5.99



40329698

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**US★GENERAL** (REG)

**NEW!**

**2633 LB. CAPACITY**

**44", 13 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET**

**WEIGHS 245 LBS.** LOT NO. 68784/  
69387

**SAVE \$290**

**\$359.99** REG. PRICE \$649.99



Item 68784 shown



47507052

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**2 HP, 29 GALLON 150 PSI CAST IRON VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

LOT NO. 68127/  
69865/61489

**SAVE \$70**

**\$329.99** REG. PRICE \$399.99



Item 68127 shown



62275000

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**SUPER COUPON!**

Item 38846 shown

**PITTSBURGH** AUTOMOTIVE  
**3 TON HEAVY DUTY JACK STANDS**

**SAVE 64%**

LOT NO. 38846/  
69597/61196

**\$15.99**

REG. PRICE \$44.99



47924626

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**MECHANICAL WHEEL DOLLY**

**HaulMaster**

LOT NO. 67287

**SAVE \$50**

**1250 LB. CAPACITY**

**\$59.99**

REG. PRICE \$109.99



84532472

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRALPNEUMATIC**  
**20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN**

**SAVE 66%**

**\$9.99** REG. PRICE \$29.99

Item 47016 shown



97194545

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRALPNEUMATIC**  
**40 LB. CAPACITY FLOOR BLAST CABINET**

Item 68893 shown

**SAVE \$120**

**\$179.99** REG. PRICE \$299.99

LOT NO. 93608/68893



73786665

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**RETRACTABLE AIR/WATER HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 50 FT. HOSE**

LOT NO. 93897/69265

"Impressed with the Quality, Covers your Entire Garage at an Unbelievable Low Price!"  
- Street Trucks Magazine

**SAVE \$70**

**\$59.99** REG. PRICE \$129.99



**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC**

Item 93897 shown

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY SUPER HIGH TORQUE IMPACT WRENCH**



**SAVE \$60**

Item 68424 shown

**700 FT. LBS. MAX. TORQUE**

"Top of its Class in Quality at a Really Great Price" - Hot Bike Magazine

**\$69.99** REG. PRICE \$129.99



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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTECH**  
**AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER**



Item 42292 shown

**SAVE 66%**

**\$4.99** REG. PRICE \$14.99

LOT NO. 42292/  
69594/69955



20759228

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING**

**MIG-FLUX WELDING CART**

Welder and accessories sold separately.

**\$29.99** REG. PRICE \$59.99

**SAVE 50%**

Item 69340 shown



16875870

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**SAVE 68%**

**CENTRALPNEUMATIC HIGH SPEED METAL SAW**  
LOT NO. 91753/60568

Item 91753 shown



**\$999** REG. PRICE \$31.99

45753715

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE**  
PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE  
LOT NO. 69445/69512/93840

Item 69512 shown



**\$9999** REG. PRICE \$249.99

56256799

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**US\*GENERAL 580 LB. CAPACITY FOUR DRAWER TOOL CART**

LOT NO. 95659/61634

Item 95659 shown



**\$9999** REG. PRICE \$259.99

52802931

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**170 AMP MIG/FLUX WIRE WELDER**  
CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

LOT NO. 68885



**\$15999** REG. PRICE \$299.99

46798044

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100**  
MEDIUM  
LOT NO. 68496/61363

Item 68498 shown



**\$599** REG. PRICE \$10.99

98334138

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**NEW! 900 PEAK/800 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) GAS GENERATOR**  
STORM CAT

LOT NO. 66619/69381/60338

Item 69381 shown



**\$8999** REG. PRICE \$179.99

70091071

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER**  
drillmaster

LOT NO. 95578/69645/60625

Item 60625 shown



**\$999** REG. PRICE \$19.99

62791445

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE 1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT**

LOT NO. 69904/68892

Item 68892 shown



**\$29999** REG. PRICE \$699.99

72237929

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**ADJUSTABLE SHADE AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET**  
CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

LOT NO. 46092/61611

Item 46092 shown



**\$3599** REG. PRICE \$69.99

27443408

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINES**  
PREDATOR ENGINES

LOT NO. 68120/60363/69730

Item 60363 shown



**\$9999** REG. PRICE \$179.99

38459072

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**4" MAGNETIC PARTS HOLDER**  
PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 90566

Item 91616 shown



**\$179** REG. PRICE \$3.99

51343591

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**3 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP DRILLS**  
WARRIOR

LOT NO. 91616/69087/60379

Item 91616 shown



**\$799** REG. PRICE \$19.99

45853635

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**20 GALLON PARTS WASHER WITH PUMP**  
CENTRAL MACHINERY

LOT NO. 7340/94702/60769

Item 7340 shown



**\$7999** REG. PRICE \$129.99

85223581

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**12 TON SHOP PRESS**  
Central Hydraulics

LOT NO. 33497/60604

Item 33497 shown



**\$8999** REG. PRICE \$169.99

85830146

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**3" HIGH SPEED ELECTRIC CUT-OFF TOOL**  
CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

LOT NO. 68523/60415

Item 68523 shown



**\$1999** REG. PRICE \$34.99

92637724

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**36" METAL BRAKE WITH STAND**  
CENTRAL MACHINERY

LOT NO. 91012

Item 93265 shown



**\$17999** REG. PRICE \$279.99

74690852

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**10 PIECE 3/8" DRIVE DEEP WALL COLOR CODED SOCKET SETS**  
PITTSBURGH PRO

LOT NO. 93264/69344

Item 93265 shown



**\$1099** REG. PRICE \$17.99

32072624

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**5 PIECE AUTO TRIM AND MOLDING TOOL SET**

LOT NO. 67021

Item 67021 shown



**\$499** REG. PRICE \$12.99

22611087

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*Polished to a high shine and loaded with extras, this CJ2A is still a no-frills off-roader at heart*



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE McNESSOR

**Y**ou see them everywhere across America. Jacked up, mud-splattered Jeeps rolling on waist-high rubber and bristling with off-road add-ons: tube bumpers, winches, Hi-Lift Jacks, you name it. Jeep owners love to customize their rigs for work and play—a trend that was encouraged by the factory when the first civilian Jeeps rolled off Willys Overland's production line in Toledo, Ohio, after WWII.

Though the Jeep has morphed into a sort of hot rod/sports car for off-road enthusiasts, Willys-Overland hoped its quarter-tonner might serve in peacetime as part tractor and part light truck on American farms and ranches. To that end, the options listed in CJ2A factory literature read more like extras for a Farmall H than an SUV. Forget six-way power seats and climate-controlled cupholders, new CJ2A buyers chose instead from steely harrows, mowers, discs and plows, even air compressors, PTO-driven arc welders and generators.

The idea of the Jeep as rural Swiss Army knife never really caught on, but it's fun to think about, given that most Jeep owners today see their machines as recreational playthings and all-weather commuter cars.





Though it lives a life of leisure today, this 1948 CJ2A is ready to work. An accessory bed extension gives this Willys an almost 6-foot-long cargo hold, while a rear-mounted PTO can be used to power a variety of implements.

Bob Quartararo, owner of this month's feature truck, has known Jeeps as work and play vehicles almost all of his life. This particular one is the 72-year-old former welder and pipefitter's crowning restoration achievement to date, a retirement project that he undertook with a friend, leaving no part unfinished during the two-year-long process. "I bought it in 2006 in Ballston Spa, New York. I went over to buy an M38 a guy had for sale, and that was pretty ratty—it needed a lot of work," Bob said. "I looked in the garage and saw this Jeep sitting there, and asked if he wanted to sell it. He said he was working on it, but had grown sick of it."

Bob brought the CJ2A to MK Automotive near his home outside Schenectady, where owner Mike Koza cleared out room in the shop for the Jeep. "Mike Koza, a friend of mine, was just about ready to retire, and he was an old Jeep mechanic—he had room in his garage, so I took it over there and took it all apart."

While the Jeep's body tub and fenders

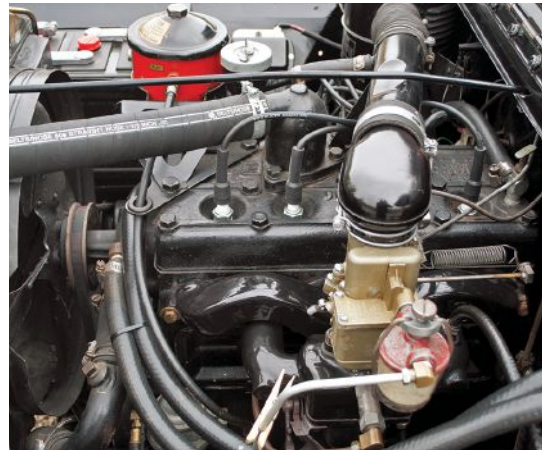
weren't rusted, the sheetmetal required significant straightening. "Both fenders and the rear quarter were smashed in, so we started banging on it and priming it and looking at it, and then banging on it some more," Bob said. "The metal is so thick that you can do that. Eventually, we got it looking pretty good."

An original patch of the Jeep's Princeton Black paint was discovered under the removable transmission cover on the Jeep's floor, so Mike finished the body in that shade using Mar-Hyde urethane basecoat/clearcoat, over Eastwood urethane primer. The chassis was sandblasted and then finished with POR-15 black coating, while the Jeep's entire running gear was reconditioned. "I rebuilt the engine, both axles, the transmission and the transfer case," Bob said. "It needed brake lines, wheel cylinders and a master cylinder as well."

Mike painted the Jeep's wheels the original color, Harvard Red, and they were finished off with a correct black pinstripe. Inside, the

On the front bumper (below left) sits a capstan winch manufactured by Link-Belt and used on military as well as civilian Jeeps. Despite its ornate appearance, this winch is powerful, as it's run by a shaft that's coupled to the engine's crankshaft.





**Inside, an array of sticks operate the CJ2A's transmission, overdrive and transfer case. The owner chromed a few of the interior bits for a long-lasting finish and replaced the original canvas seat upholstery with vinyl. The CJ2A's original 134-cu.in. Go Devil L-head four-cylinder engine (above right) was completely rebuilt. Ceramic-coated manifolds are about the only deviation from stock.**

original seats were torn down, the seat frames powdercoated and then recovered with a durable, weather-resistant red vinyl in lieu of the original canvas. The top Bob installed is a faithfully reproduced full enclosure, made by Beachwood Canvas Works, that replicates the original canvas tents used on early military and civilian Jeeps.

For a touch of shine and to keep high-wear parts from rusting, Bob sent out a number of pieces for chrome plating, including the parking brake handle, the folding windshield regulators (as well as some other windshield hardware), the tailgate hinges and chains, the seat hinges and the gas pedal footrest.

To further personalize his CJ2A, Bob restored and installed some extras that were original to the truck, as well as some others that would be correct for the well-dressed postwar Jeep.

For instance, the sheetmetal cargo bed extension on the Jeep was a Willys accessory (listed as "Extension Body" in the brochure) that Bob found folded up in the bed when he purchased the CJ. Bob's Jeep also has a front-mounted capstan winch, a popular early CJ accessory. These winches were manufactured by Link-Belt starting

in 1944 and used on military and civilian Jeeps. Bob also outfitted his Jeep with a new-old-stock rear PTO, a Warn transmission overdrive unit and an accessory heater.

Another interesting feature of Bob's CJ2A is the driver's-side-mounted spare tire, which appeared only on 1948 Jeeps — apparently in order to comply with state laws mandating the placement of exterior-mounted spares. Willys moved the spare back to the right side of the CJ in April of 1948, where it would remain as standard for many years. The now-familiar, rear-mounted spare first appeared as an option.

Today, Bob enjoys driving his CJ2A and logs in about 1,000 miles a year, going to shows and events. "I would trust it to go anywhere," he said, "And I usually carry a tool kit with me so I can keep it going."

At last count, this nicely restored, well-equipped flat-fender Jeep had hauled home more than five dozen trophies, including an award from a Hemmings event in 2012. "I might have to stop taking it to shows," Bob said. "It's won 66 trophies; my wife won't let them in the house, and I'm running out of room in the garage." 🐾



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## Canadian Conquest

*Life and death on Rogers Pass aboard a cabover Kenworth*



BY JIM DONNELLY • IMAGE FROM THE COLLECTION OF HANK SUDERMAN, INTERPRETED BY TONY GUSSIE

For a long time, it was impossible to drive a truck, or anything else, directly between Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Vancouver, British Columbia, in western Canada. Not if you planned to live through the journey, anyway. The only way across the Selkirk Mountains at the eastern edge of British Columbia was through Rogers Pass, a fabled railroad route across their pinnacle named for the surveyor who laid out the pathway. The Canadian Pacific Railroad first steamed across it in 1885, after about 250 workers died during its construction, and innumerable others were swept away during winter avalanches—which came to be known as “White Death”—that buried trains despite the presence of protective snow sheds.

Once highways wormed their way west in Canada, truckers did the smart thing. They dropped down south when assaulting the Rocky Mountains, into the United States. From Winnipeg, truckers would head south into Devil’s Lake, North Dakota, before turning westward on U.S. Route 2. From there, they’d make their way toward Portland, Oregon, and vector northward back toward the Canadian border, and on to Vancouver. Generally, the run took about 48 hours one way. Truckers like Tony Gussie commonly logged two such round trips every week.

And then, in 1962, Transport Canada pushed through the last obstacle in the completion of the Trans-Canada Highway, known generally among our northern neighbors as Highway 1. It was an east-west approach and climb to the top of Rogers Pass, located in the shockingly beautiful Glacier National Park. Getting across the summit at 4,534 feet, amid glistening mountain peaks that soar from 8,000 to more than 11,000 feet in altitude, was only half the battle. There were intimidating grades in both directions,

running from 43 miles east of Revelstoke to 70 miles west of Golden, both in British Columbia. For a Canadian trucker, Rogers Pass presented the ultimate test of driving skill, and, yes, nerve.

“I remember that when the government was planning Rogers Pass, at first they brought in all these engineers from Switzerland, I think, to look at the plans,” Tony says. “They went into B.C. and did their surveying, I guess, then said, ‘Forget about it’ and went back to Europe. But the government got it built anyway.”

Tony surmounted Rogers several times a week for years, beginning in 1963, aboard a truck just like the one you see here. He was a company driver for East-West Transport Ltd., based in Winnipeg, on the regular run from Manitoba to Vancouver. There was an immediate benefit in taking the Rogers Pass route across Highway 1, as it slivered the one-way travel time down to around 36 hours, weather depending. East-West’s fleet included a number of these unusual cab-over-engine Kenworths with ultra-long wheelbases that allowed them to accommodate the

installation of a dromedary box—named after the camel’s hump—inside which dry cargo could be loaded. As the lettering on the trailer indicates, East-West specialized in refrigerated transport, and a westbound rig would often be loaded with swinging sides of beef in the trailer plus whatever went in the “drom box.” This trailer, built along with the dromedary by Brown, is not refrigerated, however.

The tractor is a 1962 Kenworth K923 sleeper, twin-screw, meaning dual drive axles. Tony, who now lives in Surrey, British Columbia, after spending five years hauling oil-field equipment from Texas to Alberta, took the photo and drove this very sort of rig—resplendent in the company’s livery of dark blue with a white cab stripe—for East-West. He was just starting out with East-West, and shortly after Rogers Pass opened to trucks, the company ended up being purchased by the Canadian National Railway, seeking an alternative land bridge. In any case, Tony tells us that the fleet initially numbered 14 such dromedary combinations, allowable under both Canadian and U.S. length laws with the 40-foot

trailers, which represented the pinnacle of East-West trucks. By the time Tony started, four were left in service, among the most distinctive in western Canada, thanks to the dromedary layout.

The Kenworth's powertrain consisted of a Cummins 262-cu.in. six-cylinder diesel and a twin-box driveline, with a four-speed main transmission and either three- or four-speed auxiliary transmission, both by Rockwell. The Roadranger-type transmission and shifter arrangement didn't yet exist, so Tony changed gears with dual shifters, twin sticks.

"In the winter, we had to do a lot more chaining than we do now. First of all, when it first opened, there was practically no traffic on the road through the pass," Tony remembers. "Even so, there was this towing company that had the franchise to service that part of the Trans-Canada, and they operated junkyards in both Revelstoke and Golden, at the opposite bottom ends of Rogers. By the end of the winter, they were double-stacking the trucks that had been destroyed in bad wrecks. The nicest way you can describe driving Rogers Pass in winter is that it was hell."

This, then, was about pure survival, not just banking a paycheck. We should also point out that at the summit, Rogers is a two-lane highway, which cannot be widened because it's within the boundaries of Glacier National Park. And let's also note that when Tony started out, there was no such thing as a Jake brake, the Jacobs Engine Brake not coming to market until 1965. You had to gut it out, especially once you faced the plunge about 10 miles on either side of the summit.

"With a full load, it would take you maybe a half an hour to 40 minutes to get from the bottom to the top, a really heavy grade that was all curves," Tony says. "They lost so many trucks on that pass, it was ridiculous. They'd get five miles, 10 miles down and they'd burn up their brakes, and they were gone. You only had your service brakes. The secret to getting down the pass was getting down in the gears enough so you never used more than 10 pounds of air pressure. You watched your gauge religiously, because if you didn't, you'd be flying an airplane, and then you'd be dead." 🐼



We enjoy publishing period photos of authentic, old-time working trucks, especially from the people who drove them or owned them. If you have a story and photos to share, email the author at [jdtonnelly@hemmings.com](mailto:jdtonnelly@hemmings.com).

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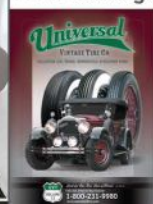
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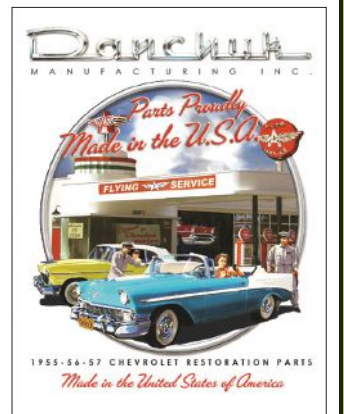
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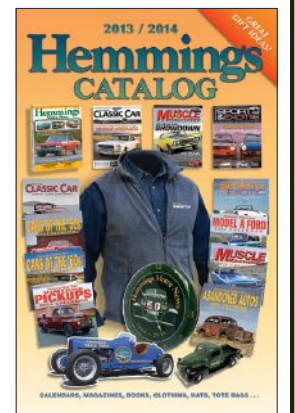
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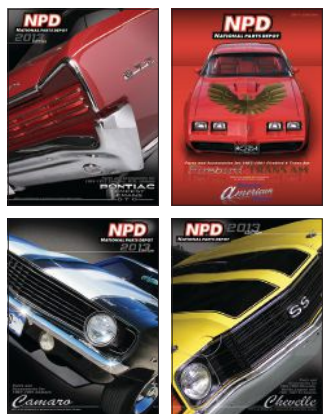
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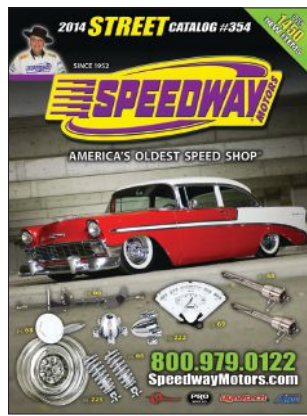
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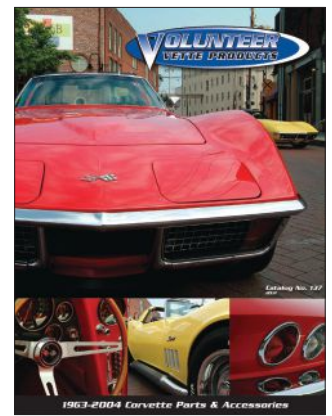
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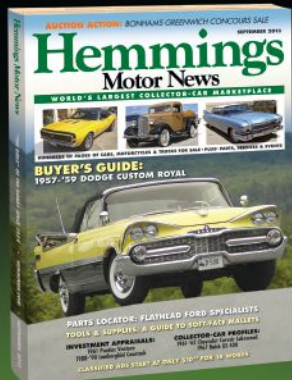
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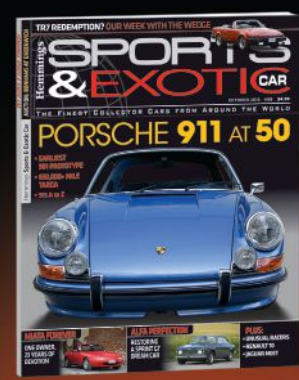
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## Mastering Mindfulness

It took me the better part of two days to replace a water pump on my 1940 Packard. There was a time when I could have done the job in an hour, and it would have worked fine. But these days I have the time to do the things I enjoy, and I enjoy working on cars. I also like doing things passionately and meticulously.

I take the time to paint the new pump to match the engine. I replace the hoses, even though they are supple, because they are 10 years old. I chase the boltholes with a tap, and clean the bolts of rust. I take my time, and give each task careful attention. The Dalai Lama says that we should be mindful at all times and give even the most menial tasks our complete attention. Becoming impatient or letting your mind wander are the quickest routes to trouble. I'm not a Buddhist, but I think that is great advice.

When I worked on cars professionally years ago, I was up against the clock and budget constraints. Knowing that the customer was coming back at 4:30, and the part wouldn't arrive from the warehouse until 2:30, and that I had a tune-up to do as well, took a lot of the fun out of it.

But then after I went to work for a magazine where we operated like a triage unit in Vietnam, I went home and worked on my cars on the weekends in order to get my shoulders to drop below my ears. I did not hurry to complete any task. I concentrated on each job and did it the best way I knew how. It took me a year to paint a 1936 Packard touring sedan. That job included lots of paint—and sanding until I had no fingertips. Washing my hair in the shower after that was bloody agony.

It took me eight years to restore that car completely, but it bagged first place trophies every time I showed it. And it gave me hours of quiet meditative enjoyment along the way. I would put on my favorite jazz station and rub out paint, assemble carburetors, clean grunge off of chassis, and not worry about how long it was taking me.

I don't shoot pool, chase women or hang out in bars. My wife Bette would have divorce papers drawn up by the next morning if I did. Besides, none of that appealed to me much after my adolescence. Drinking was a hobby for a while, but

for the most part, I did that at home. I must admit that I enjoyed the feeling of being lightly toasted in the evenings, but that got old too. And my doctor told me to give that up years ago, along with my Marlboros, so I did.

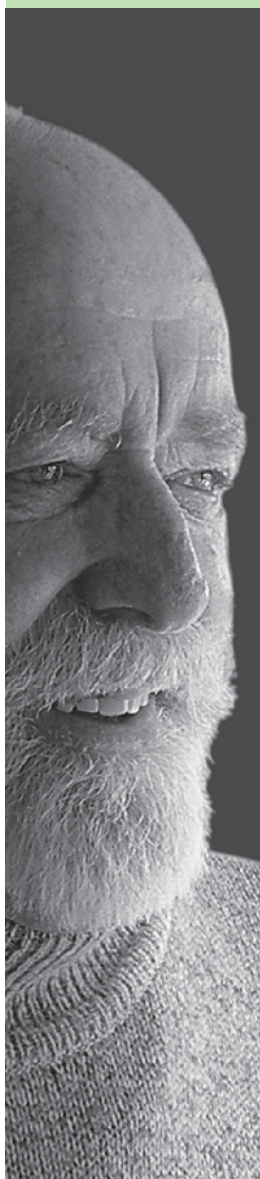
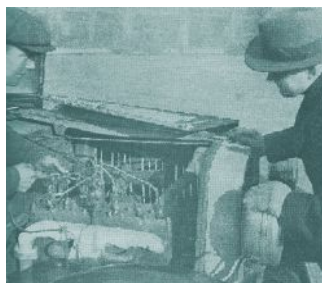
He also told me to walk for exercise, and I did that too. I would walk over to a neighbor named Jeff two blocks away and drink coffee and talk cars for hours. He collects Buicks. His last name is Richardson, too. I once remarked that we might be related. He told me he came from a long line of riffraff and alcoholics. I replied that there was a good chance we were family.

I retired from full-time work with the magazines and became a freelancer, and I retired from drinking, and that allowed me more time to do the thing I love most, which is to restore old cars. As Robert Pirsig says in his book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, regarding motorcycles, "They are equations sculpted in metal," and that is the way I feel about classic cars too.

We can see some of man's greatest thinking (and artistry, in the case of styling) if we but take the time to look, and understand what the machine is telling us. The automobile is a monument to human inventiveness and creativity. To me a 1931 Duesenberg Model SJ is the automotive equivalent of Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pieta*. With its mechanical perfection and its stunning beauty—like Michelangelo's art—it transcends its time and is a classic.

I smear Gaseginch on the mating surfaces and place new lock washers on each bolt. Then I tighten the water pump evenly into place. I paint the heads of the bolts, and slip the fan belt over the pulleys and tighten the generator down, setting the belt tension carefully. Then I loosen the heater hose and open the heater control valve on the cylinder head so water can run out, telling me the block is full. I fill the cooling system, and add rust inhibitor.

I tap the accelerator and push the starter button. The old Packard starts instantly; there are no leaks or rumbles from the water pump. The car is 73 years old, and she will make 74. Her beauty and refinement live on to keep wowing those of us who appreciate old cars. ☺





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