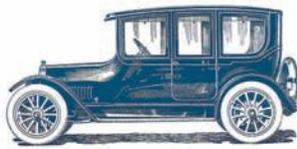


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OCTOBER 2017 #157



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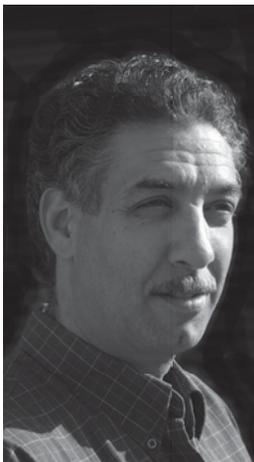
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Museum Masterpieces

Summer is the time when the Hemmings editors do their best imitation of squirrels. Except, instead of gathering food to store for the upcoming winter, we run around photographing cars for those issues that we put together during the long Northeast winter months.

Having an extensive supply of photographed cars in our files allows us to create issues that are as well rounded as can be... the kind that satisfy the interests of our different readers, from prewar automobiles to postwar, from Brass Era beauties to the up-and-coming collector cars of the late 1970s and '80s, and everything in between. Like cooking, a magazine needs the right ingredients if it's going to be worth consuming.

So, on Monday July 10th, I traveled down to Cape Cod to photograph several different prewar automobiles for future features. With Senior Editor Mark McCourt and the new kid on the block, David Conwill, we made the four-hour journey from Vermont down to the town of Sandwich where we spent the afternoon at the Heritage Museums & Gardens. By the time 7:30 p.m. rolled around, the three of us had photographed seven different automobiles during the late afternoon hours. Each of those automobiles was a truly fascinating machine, the kind that we know you will enjoy reading about.

Mark was our point-person who set up this photo shoot, and thanks to the welcoming and cooperative museum staff and volunteers, who tirelessly jockeyed the cars around for us so we could place them in the best locations available, we were able to photograph all seven cars while we had the best light possible. By the time we were done, we had photographed a 1910 Cadillac Model 30 Roadster, 1910 Knox Model R Touring, 1910 Sears Model P Surrey, 1912 Oldsmobile Autocrat Roadster, 1916 Simplex Crane Model 5 Touring, 1922 Ford Model T Howe pumper, and a 1925 Rickenbacker 8 Coupe.

The Heritage Museums & Gardens has some 60 truly distinctive and highly significant automobiles in their collection. In fact, we plan on spending another afternoon at the museum in October to photograph a 1912 Packard Victoria, 1927 La Salle, and a very special 1909 White Model M steam car that was once used by

President William Howard Taft, the first president to be transported by an automobile instead of a horse and carriage. Now that is going to be a truly fascinating story.

When we first launched *Hemmings Classic Car* magazine back in October 2004, we shied away from museum cars because we felt that the human-interest element, which makes reading about the cars that we feature so interesting and heartwarming, would be missing. Only recently we realized that we are actually shortchanging ourselves, as museums house some of the world's most noteworthy automobiles, many with their own stories. And isn't that what this magazine is all about—note-worthy automobiles? So, now we are on a quest to make museum cars



1912 Oldsmobile Autocrat Roadster

an important part of this magazine, which will help us make *Hemmings Classic Car* that much more interesting to read.

I recently contacted the Northeast Classic Car Museum in Norwich, New York, and they also were receptive to Hemmings coming out to photograph some of their cars. They have many rare and limited-production prewar automobiles on display, but also an extensive selection of some fabulous cars from the '50s and '60s. Most of their early cars are models that we have never profiled before, so this is going to be a wonderful opportunity for us to finally feature some of these unique American automobiles.

In the months ahead, you will be reading about these museum masterpieces on a regular basis; perhaps one museum car per issue. We know for certain that you will enjoy reading about these fascinating automobiles as much as we enjoyed photographing them and writing their stories. It doesn't matter to us where these cars are stored—in a museum's garage or yours—as it's the cars themselves and their place in America's automotive history that we are all really interested in learning more about. Once we start profiling these museum cars, let us know your thoughts. We are always interested in hearing if you like the cars that we are featuring—or not—as it helps us to continue to create the magazine that you will want to read, now and into the future. 📷

Write to our executive editor at rlentinello@hemmings.com.

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OCTOBER



Palos Verdes Returns

IF YOU'RE IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA THIS FALL, BE SURE TO CONSIDER A visit to Torrance, where this year's Palos Verdes Concours d'Elegance returns after a one-year hiatus. This year's show will take place in Zamperini Field and will feature some vintage aircraft, in addition to the automobiles. There will be 19 classes, including special ones like Shelby Automobiles; 1955-'67 Corvettes; American Speed, covering cars from 1949-1972; as well as Race Cars of Special Interest. The event takes place October 1. For accommodations and a full itinerary of events, visit www.pvconcours.org.



and Orphans; and the rare Brass Era Lozier, a top of the line luxury car in its day. Expect to see an impressive collection of Loziers from the early 1910s. Saturday will also feature technical sessions and ride-and-drive experiences, as well as a car show in which seven cars will be selected for a special "Magnificent Seven" class to be held on Sunday. Full schedule, classes, and info is available now at atlantaconcours.org.

Hotlanta Weekend

THE ATLANTA CONCOURS d'Elegance takes place at the Chateau Elan Winery and Resort, September 30-October 1. Nearly 30 classes of high-end cars will be on display for the Sunday show. Over 200 cars are expected, with featured classes that include the Fabulous Fins of the Fifties, with sub-categories for GM, Ford, Chrysler,

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Hershey Highlights

THIS YEAR'S AACA FALL EASTERN MEET WILL BE HELD OCTOBER 4-7 IN HERSEY, Pennsylvania. In addition to that vaunted swap meet, car corral, show, and auction, the AACA Museum will be wrapping up its summer exhibits, which includes a 50-year tribute to the Camaro and Firebird. The Lory Lockwood automobile and motorcycle artwork exhibit will run until October 29. Be sure to check out the tribute to orange and black vehicles as the AACA gets in the holiday spirit. The Hershey Hangover tour is also planning to take place around the nearby Lancaster area from October 7-9. Check the above calendar for contact information, and visit our Daily Newsletter for Hershey coverage at www.hemmings.com/newsletter.





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— Jeff from McKinney, TX

"Blue face watches are on the discerning gentleman's 'watch list'."
— watchtime.com

STONE COLD FOX

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Every once in a while a timepiece comes along that's so incredibly good looking, masterfully equipped and jaw-droppingly priced, that it stops us stone cold. A watch that can take you seamlessly from the 18th hole to the board room. A watch that blurs the line between sports watch and dress watch. We're talking the **Blue Stone Chronograph**, and it sits at the top of the discerning gentleman's watch list.

Striking in appearance and fully equipped with features, this is a watch of substance. The **Blue Stone** merges the durability of steel with the precision of crystal movement that's accurate to 0.2 seconds a day. Both an analog and digital watch, the **Blue Stone** keeps time with pinpoint accuracy in two time zones.

The watch's handsome steel blue dial seamlessly blends an analog watch face with a stylish digital display. It's a stopwatch, calendar, and alarm. Plus, the **Blue Stone** resists water up to 30 meters, making it up for water adventures.

A watch with these features would easily cost you thousands if you shopped big names. But overcharging to justify an inflated brand name makes us blue in the face. Which is why we make superior looking and performing timepieces priced to please. Decades of experience in engineering enables Stauer to put quality on your wrist and keep your money in your pocket.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the **Blue Stone Chronograph** for 60 days. If you're not convinced you got excellence for less, send it back for a refund of the item price.

Time is running out. Originally priced at \$395, the **Blue Stone Chronograph** was already generating buzz among watch connoisseurs, but with the price slashed to **\$69**, we can't guarantee this limited-edition timepiece will last. So, call today!

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MERCY! WHEN WE ASKED FOR MORE DOUBLE-ENDERS A COUPLE YEARS BACK (HCC #121 AND #127), WE DIDN'T EXPECT MANY MORE TO STILL be out there. Yet you responded with plenty, and we'll try to get to them all here. Now the question remains: Why?

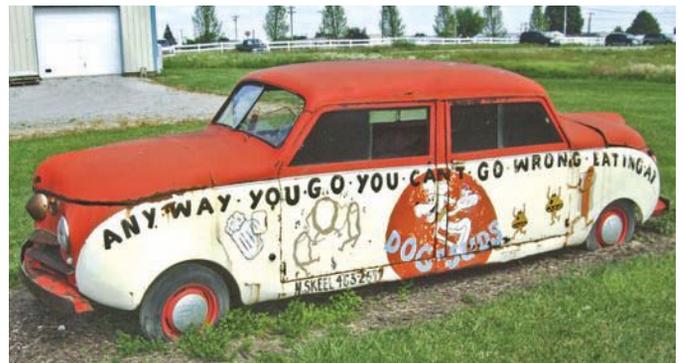


1978 PLYMOUTH HORIZON / 1979 DODGE OMNI

Built by: Bill Brown; Egmondville, Ontario

Where spotted: 2015 Mopar Fest

Submitted by: Vincent Sowa; Wallenstein, Ontario



CROSLY CCS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: Dog 'n Suds; Lafayette, Indiana

Submitted by: Bob Palma; via email



AIRFLOWS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: on Facebook

Submitted by: Jim Davis; via email



1955 CADILLACS

Built by: Robert Perkins and Jack Gunderson

Where spotted: Rawlins, Wyoming

Submitted by: Bob Eng; Sioux Falls, South Dakota... Mary Coffin; via email... Bob Weidendorf; via email



DODGE PICKUPS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: Avondale, Arizona

Submitted by: Frank Gorton; via email



1955 FORDS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: Virginia City, Nevada

Submitted by: Perry Richardson; Lafayette, Louisiana

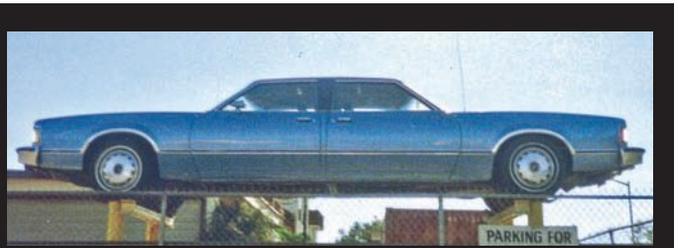


CIRCA 1952 PLYMOUTH

Built by: Roy Henley; Rapid City, South Dakota

Where spotted: Pioneer Auto Museum; Murdo, South Dakota

Submitted by: Bob Norrid; New Boston, Texas



CIRCA 1978 MERCURY COUGARS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: near the Santa Barbara airport

Submitted by: Felix Giachetti; Marina Del Rey, California



HUDSONS

Built by: ?

Where spotted: Bellingham, Massachusetts

Submitted by: Richard Kirby



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. For more Lost & Found, visit <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found/>.



RM SOOTHEBY'S

Branson Beauties

THE BRANSON AUCTION IS BACK, WITH ITS fall show slated to take place October 20-21 at the Hilton Branson Convention Center in Branson, Missouri. The Spring Auction saw nearly 200 cars with a 71-percent sell-through. Among those that went to new homes was this 1939 Packard Safari Car. This Packard was a commercial vehicle and was believed to be one of three such cars. Employed in big game hunts in Africa, it was used by Winston Churchill when he would go on safari. When the final bid was made, the Safari Car hammered home at \$51,700. Visit www.bransonauction.com for consignment information, hotel accommodations, and auction fees.



THE BRANSON AUCTION

Penn Station

"OCTOBER" AND "PENNSYLVANIA" IS ALL A CLASSIC-CAR ENTHUSIAST NEEDS TO HEAR, AS THREE auctions will be taking place in the Keystone State around the time of Hershey. Bonhams will return to Philadelphia on October 2 at the Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum, with early consignments including a 1910 Regal Underslung and 1913 Stevens Duryea C-Six Touring. Also taking place on October 2, Morphy Auctions will feature automobilia, petroliana, and automobiles at its auction house in Denver, Pennsylvania. Of course, Hershey will have the RM Sotheby's Auction, October 5-6—coinciding with the AACA National Fall Meet—in which well over 100 cars are expected during the two-day sale. All three events are still accepting consignments. Visit www.bonhams.com, www.morphyauctions.com, and www.rmsothebys.com for more information.

AUCTION PROFILE

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR AUTOMOBILES at auctions is the Chrysler Town & Country; it's one of those cars that pulls people in like a magnet.

After World War II, the Town & Country returned to Chrysler's lineup sporting a wooden body that had the same basic styling of the steel-bodied models. The wagon was gone, but the sedan and convertible soldiered on, with the 1948 convertible seeing a production run of fewer than 8,400 cars.

This Town & Country was repainted in what is believed to be the authentic Seacrest Green, complemented with a tan canvas top as well as green-and-tan leather interior. Accessories included the under-dash heater, driving lamps, and driver's-side spotlight. The odometer reading was believed to be actual, at just 64,556 miles, and restorations had only been made to cosmetic details, with everything else remaining largely original. With



RM SOOTHEBY'S

CAR	1948 Chrysler Town & Country Convertible	LOT NUMBER	188
AUCTIONEER	RM Sotheby's	CONDITION	#3+
LOCATION	Santa Monica, California	RESERVE	None
DATE	June 24, 2017	AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	\$85,000
		SELLING PRICE	\$67,100

the high demand of postwar Chrysler convertibles, this turned out to be a very good deal, even when considering

its less-than-show-quality condition. It was a fine example of a truly authentic Full Classic.

OCTOBER

2 • Bonhams

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
415-391-4000 • www.bonhams.com/auctions/24308

2 • Morphy Auctions

Denver, Pennsylvania • 877-968-8880
www.morphyauctions.com

5-6 • RM Sotheby's

Hershey, Pennsylvania • 519-352-4575
www.rmsothebys.com

5-7 • Mecum Auctions

Chicago, Illinois • 262-275-5050
www.mecum.com

5-7 • Vicari Auction

Biloxi, Mississippi • 504-264-2277
vicariauction.com

6-7 • Silver Auctions

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
800-255-4485 • www.silverauctions.com

20-21 • The Branson Auction

Branson, Missouri • 800-335-3063
www.bransonauktion.com

Barrett-Jackson Connecticut

BARRETT-JACKSON HELD ITS SECOND

Northeast auction at the Mohegan Sun Casino on June 21-24, with an impressive 630 vehicles finding new homes. This resulted in a sell-through rate of nearly 96 percent, with sales totaling approximately \$23.5 million. The success of this year's event bodes well for future auctions in the region. There was an impressive array of collector cars of all types from all eras. Among the American postwar classics, a 1952 Ford Crestline Victoria featuring a rebuilt flathead and many desirable exterior features sold for \$8,800, making it one of the better buys. The full results of the auction are now available at www.barrett-jackson.com. Look for the firm's next show October 19-21 in Las Vegas.



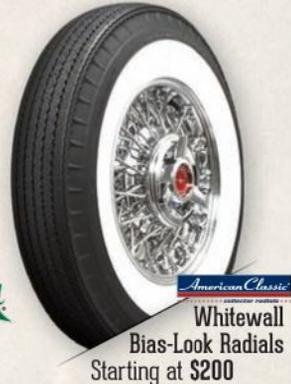
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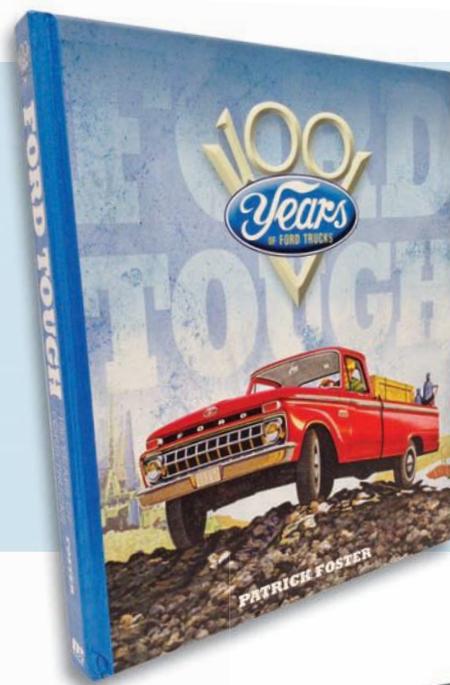
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Trans Am Time

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Is there a more famous automotive logo of the late-Seventies performance car era than Pontiac's Trans Am hood bird, aka the "screaming chicken," especially rendered in black and gold? This iconic décor has been commemorated—along with the dearly departed Pontiac division's arrowhead logo—in a stylish and functional new neon-accented wall clock. This round timepiece (item NEO286) features vintage-style hand-blown glass tubing. The genuine neon gives off a warm, 25-watt glow within its 15-inch diameter, chrome-finished housing, and is electrified through a standard household socket, while the clock itself runs on an AA battery (not included).



Ford Tough

612-344-8100 • WWW.QUARTOKNOWS.COM • \$45

From its 1917 Model TT to today's F-150, the Ford Motor Company has been synonymous with best-selling trucks for a century. Starting with a commercial version of the 1905 Model C (still using a passenger chassis), Ford would smother the aftermarket truck-body conversions that were becoming popular in the next decade by creating a one-ton-capable, extended wheelbase truck, and the sales momentum it started would continue. Our very own Pat Foster has commemorated this impressive milestone with this new, 208-page hardcover, which is filled with 300 original factory images, many of which are rarely seen. It follows Ford's truck history annually through the Depression and World War II—including both light- and heavy-duty models—and into the postwar F-series years. Ford truck fans will thrill to this carefully researched, handsomely presented history.



1969 Dodge Charger

888-910-2889 • WWW.AUTOWORLDDSTORE.COM • \$99.99

If you loved tuning in to the popular Eighties TV show, *The Dukes of Hazzard*, you certainly remember its most famous character, the *General Lee*. That 1969 Dodge Charger was an integral part of virtually every episode in the program's seven-season run. One of the most fascinating final episodes—"Happy Birthday, General Lee"—told this star car's backstory as a robbery getaway vehicle. This top-quality 1:18 model replicates the *General's* pre-Dukes state, and is accurate down to its solid wheels, shaved side marker lamps, and CB radio antenna. Auto World has given it all the best details: swiveling headlamps, a believable engine bay and trunk, accurate-looking undercarriage, and a lifelike interior with ribbon seatbelts and flock carpeting under mats. It's mean and fast-looking, and will be loved by *Hazzard* aficionados and Mopar enthusiasts, alike.

Continued on page 16

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

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Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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1954 Cadillac Fleetwood

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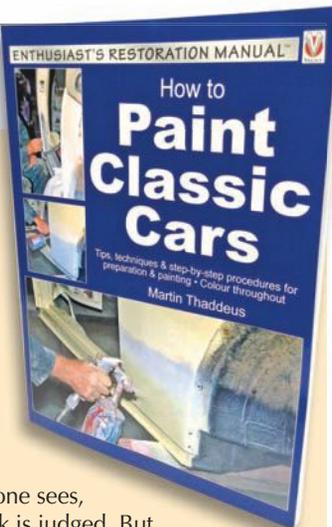
Cadillac claimed its 1954 models were the finest built to date, easily measuring up to the famous "Standard of the World" assertion. The new Series 60 Special was the star sedan that year, its long wheelbase, luxurious interior and Fleetwood body making it among the most prestigious cars on the market. England's Brooklin Models has done a fantastic job rendering a 60 Special in 1:43 scale, its white metal construction feeling almost heavy enough to equal 1:43 of the 1:1-scale version's 4,490 pounds. This sample (item BR-BK-219) features glossy black paint, ample, crisply rendered bright trim, and a two-tone interior visible through the windows. It's not an inexpensive collectible, but it's very desirable, and sure to sell fast.

How to Paint Classic Cars

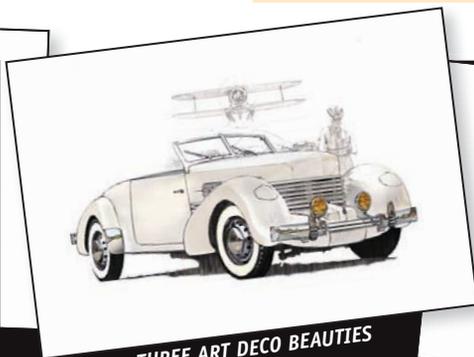
612-344-8100

WWW.QUARTOKNOWS.COM • \$45

Of all the myriad aspects of automotive restoration, the one that can seem most daunting is painting. After all, a vehicle's final finish is its main defense against rust, the first thing someone sees, and is often how that car or truck is judged. But, as this new title in Veloce Publishing's Enthusiast's Restoration Manual series illustrates, you can achieve quality results on your own. Written and fully illustrated (with more than 200 color and black-and-white images) by U.K.-based restoration specialist Martin Thaddeus, this 96-page softcover offers an overview of painting terminology before breaking into the tools, materials, and preparation/execution techniques used by top-notch automotive painters on different metals, fiberglass, and plastic. If you've been pondering tackling your car or truck's final coat in your home garage, consider this book a worthwhile investment in education.



1939 CONTINENTAL



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The ever-increasing capabilities and sophistication of computer graphics programs has enabled new generations of artists to express their interpretations of, and appreciation for, automotive forms. And while wholly-digital artwork can be dazzling on its own, there's nothing quite like the human touch to add warmth and realism to automobile portraiture. That's what Bob Colaizzi does with his in-demand automotive artwork, under the heading of ColaizziDesign.

Attendees of Ohio's Dayton and Ault Park Concours d'Elegance events will no doubt remember the art gallery displays of that state's native, where Bob's creations have hung alongside those of fellow talented artists familiar to *Hemmings Classic Car* readers. Sports car fans will also know his works from the popular posters he's created for events at Watkins Glen and for the Put-In-Bay Road Races Reunion. We've asked him how he brings them to life.

"The pieces are created using photo reference," he explains. "I draw the cars in accurate detail, before scanning the drawings into my computer and rendering them digitally in Photoshop, in a technique that mirrors watercolor and opaque acrylic; there are generally 40 to 60 layers of 'digital paint.' As an example, 1939 *Continental* took about 65 hours to complete."

When he's commissioned to do a piece, he makes what he calls a "Monoprint." "By my definition, this means a giclée print on archival paper; there would only ever be one print in that size," Bob tells us. "I generally have an agreement with those who commission my work that I will make one copy, roughly 10-percent smaller than the Monoprint, for exhibition in concours, art galleries, etc., but no copies are sold or gifted unless we have a prior agreement." When possible, he also makes a limited number of signed giclée prints (sized 24 x 18 inches) and signed proof paper prints (sized 13 x 19 inches) available for purchase, including the three shared with us here.



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Venting

Vintage Air announces the release of ProLine

Louver Balls for 1965-'77 GM cars and trucks equipped with factory air conditioning. These billet-aluminum louver balls are drop-in replacements for the original round factory plastic vents that get brittle with age. They are machined from billet aluminum, come in the factory 3.050-inch diameter, and are designed to maximize air flow for a cool and comfortable cabin. Two finishes are available: machined with clear anodizing, or black anodized. The vents fit 1967-'72 Chevrolet and GMC C-10 trucks, 1965-'68 Chevrolet full-size cars, 1966-'69 Chevelles and El Caminos, 1968-'77 Corvettes, and 1967-'68 Camaros and Firebirds. Cost: \$89.

VINTAGE AIR
800-862-6658
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BY TOM COMERRO



Mopar Weatherstripping

New rear-door vent-window kits for the 1955-'56 Dodge and Plymouth four-door sedans are now available. The often-damaged weatherstripping is now easily replaceable, as the kit includes the main vent-window seals as well as division posts for both windows. The Dodge kit (#0465) will fit the Coronet, Royal, and Custom Royal, and the Plymouth kit (#0466) applies to the Belvedere, Plaza, and Savoy. The left- and right-side seals have the correct curve to provide a perfect fit. They are also available separately, if you don't want the entire kit. Cost: \$180.40/kit.

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Falcon Findings

New underhood panels for the 1964-'65 Ford Falcon and Ranchero have recently been reproduced. These panels cover the exposed area between the core support and grille and don't interfere with the operation of your hood latch. The panels also have the added benefit of improving cooling by directing air to the radiator. Made of aluminum, they come in three different finishes: anodized, polished, and natural. Custom engraving is also available in a variety of styles. Cost: \$101-\$115.

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Bountiful Buick Pumps

Kanter Auto Products has a huge supply of collector-car parts, and it has increased that inventory with a new lineup of brand new production water pumps for old Buicks. The pumps, designed to help keep your 1936-'61's engine running cool, are made with modern-day materials and techniques, guaranteeing durability and high-quality performance. Call for your specific application. Cost: Starting at \$129.95.

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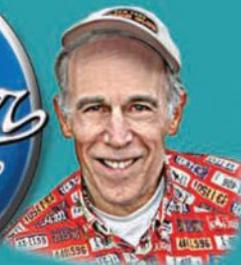
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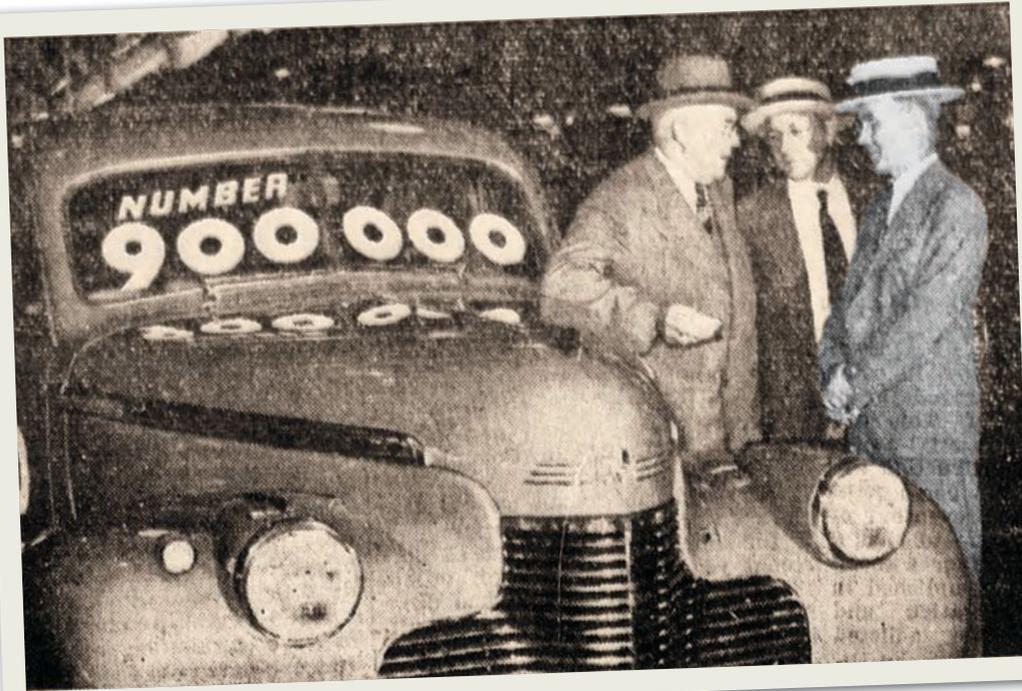
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Parts and availability may vary and be subject to written change.

Arnold Lenz



when the 1955 Pontiac arrived in showrooms sporting the all-new “Strato Streak” V-8 engine. Pontiac’s work on the V-8 had begun in the mid-1940s, under previous General Manager Harry Klinger, whose conservative style did not suit the technological leap forward of such a modern engine, but his assistant, Lenz, was very much in favor of the power plant and accelerated the program when he took over the division in 1951.

Because of his previous experience in the company, Lenz was also renowned in the General Motors organization as a production whiz, meaning he was perfectly suited to overseeing the changes to Pontiac factories necessary to produce the V-8 and a revised chassis to carry it.

His promotion was a natural choice to ease the division’s engineering into the modern era.

Sadly, Lenz would not live to see the fruits of his labor. On July 13, 1952, Lenz, his wife Amelia, and his two older daughters set out to pick up the youngest girl, Barbara, from Girl Scout camp near Lapeer, Michigan. Along the way a brake line failed on the experimental car (perhaps a V-8? History isn’t clear) they were driving, which in turn hit a Michigan Central Railroad “Beeliner” at a grade crossing.

Lenz was killed immediately, Amelia died hours later, and the girls were left as orphans. Pontiac, of course, would soldier on. The 1953 and ’54 models, though ready for a V-8, continued with the flathead sixes and eights that had served since the 1930s. Soon, though, Semon “Bunkie” Knudsen would use the engine that Lenz had worked to create to power a string of legendary vehicles from the 1957 Bonneville, to the “Swiss Cheese” Catalinas, to the GTO, the Firebird, and the Trans Am—a nearly anonymous legacy to the man who had taken them from concept to the cusp of production. 🐞

SOMETIMES HISTORIANS NEED TO take note of the people who didn’t get to do what they intended. Arnold Lenz [above, right] is such a man. You may not know his name, but his life intertwined with some of the most pivotal times in General Motors history, and all along, he was right there making his contribution.

Arnold Lenz was born in Germany, May 10, 1888. He immigrated to the United States in 1906. Two years later, he joined the world of metal casting when he entered the employ of the Browning Foundry Company of Ravenna, Ohio. In 1916, Lenz joined General Motors’ Buick Division as a foundry instructor.

At GM, Lenz slowly but steadily rose through the ranks. During World War I, he was with the Michigan Motor Castings Division of General Motors. A decade later, Lenz was general manager of Chevrolet’s Grey Iron Foundry in Saginaw, Michigan—one of the most modern casting facilities in the country. By the fall of 1934, he was assistant manufacturing manager at Chevrolet Division in Flint, Michigan. He was also

honored that year with an honorary doctorate of engineering from the University of Aachen, in Germany.

Also in 1934, Lenz was recognized by the American Foundrymen’s Association via its J.H. Whiting Gold Medal “for his conspicuous contributions to the foundry industry and particularly for his work on the production of large quantities of automotive castings.” Several innovations in manufacturing technology from the 1910s to the 1940s have Lenz’s name on the patent.

By the fall of 1936, Lenz had risen to assistant manufacturing manager for Chevrolet and manager of the Flint Chevrolet Plant. This put him squarely in the path of the UAW’s climactic sit-down strike of 1936-’37, where he was the face of the company during attempts to restart production without caving to the demands of the strikers. The old-line Lenz, who had been the victim of assaults by unionists as a young man in Germany, had no time for organized labor—though his view would not prevail.

The climax of Lenz’s career actually came over two years after his death,

A portion of proceeds will be donated to these two organizations



SEPTEMBER 15, 16, 17, 2017

Hemmings Motor News

11th Annual

CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE



HELD AT LAKE GEORGE, NY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th

REGISTRATION & RALLY

- 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration at the Festival Commons, Lake George, New York.
- 12:00 noon – Join in a rally to Prospect Mtn. and take in the views.
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Luncheon buffet at Dunham's Bay Resort, Lake George, New York.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th

CRUISE-IN SPECTACULAR

Gates open at 8:00 a.m. An all-makes car show that's open to cars, trucks and motorcycles. Including: muscle cars, street rods, sports cars, exotics and classics.

Awards at 2:00 p.m.

*Cocktail reception with cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner available at 7:00 p.m. at the Ft. William Henry Hotel.

Keynote Speaker/Honorary Chairman: Wayne Carini.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th

CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Open to concours-quality, pre-1974 cars, by invitation only.

TROPHIES TO BE AWARDED!

Winners also will appear in the pages of *Hemmings Motor News* and *Hemmings Classic Car*.

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- Buick Riviera, 1963 – 1973
- MG
- Professional Vehicles, pre-1980
- Studebaker
- Wood-Bodied Station Wagons

collections, from the du Pont family's cars is sure to provide us with an enlightening commentary.

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Master of Ceremonies: Bill Rothermel

Bill's broad knowledge and experience as an automotive historian and writer – as well as his role as master of ceremonies or judge in over 20 concours-level events nationwide – position him as an unrivaled expert. He's also a valued member of the board of directors of the Rolls-Royce Foundation, the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA, and the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. His lifelong interest in cars of all kinds and eras makes him a fascinating automotive commentator.

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Looking Forward

The 1955 and '56 Chrysler models combined world-class engineering and innovation with stunning new designs from the Jet Age

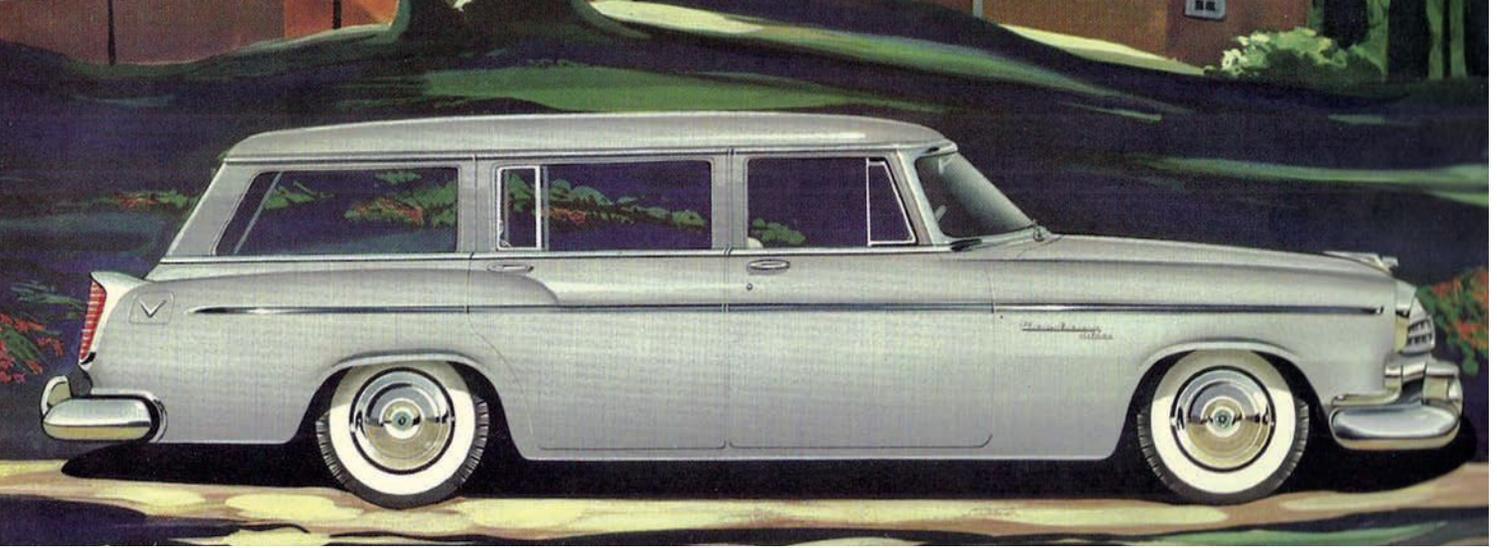
BY TERRY SHEA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO;
ADDITIONAL IMAGES FROM THE HMN ARCHIVES

Chrysler had a tough go of it in the early Fifties. Its conservative styling and prewar engines couldn't keep pace with the competition, most of which had delivered flashy new designs and powerful new V-8 engines along with true automatic transmissions by mid decade. Fortunately for the company that Walter P. Chrysler built, the winds of change blew strong and hard for 1955.

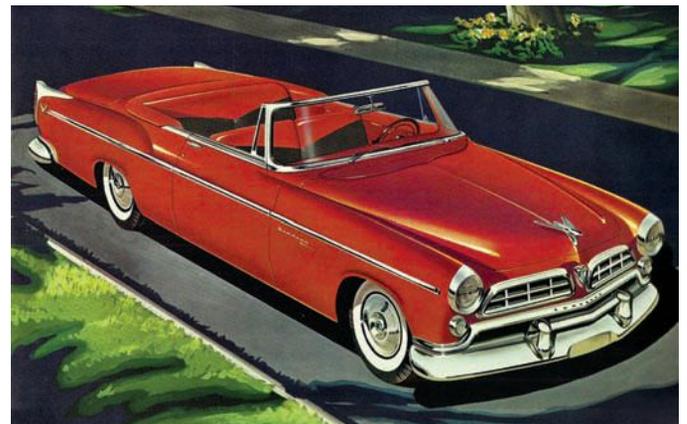
Chrysler sales in the early Fifties didn't suffer at first, what with its solid reputation built on sound engineering and sensible design choices. Its cars were economical, efficient, and a safe bet, if more than a bit staid. But they did little to enthuse a market with a seemingly insatiable desire for new, more and better things. By 1954, Chrysler Corporation had seen its sales shrink considerably, and its market share dive to a level not seen in many years. The company took a bath, financially, reporting a net loss for the years. Chrysler powered its way out of these doldrums with new V-8 engines, fully automatic transmissions, and a design tour de force by the name of Virgil Exner.

A veteran of GM's Art and Colour Section and a protégé of Raymond Loewy, Exner proved just what Chrysler needed when the no-nonsense K.T. Keller, president of Chrysler, hired him for the job. Initially contracted by Chrysler to create design studies and concepts, Exner made a name for himself with small-batch and one-off designs rendered in metal by the craftsmen from Carrozzeria Ghia of Turin, Italy. But Chrysler eventually gave Exner a free hand to redesign the entire lineup of all Chrysler divisions for 1955. Exner wasted no time in turning out handsome cars across all body styles and trim levels.

Longer, lower, leaner and possessing a look radically removed from the outgoing 1954 models, the new-for-1955 Chryslers finally dropped any resemblance to their prewar forebears. Exner's creations included a full slate of body styles, with both the basic Windsor and upmarket New Yorker available as a



Chrysler's "100-Million-Dollar Look" for 1955 offered new body styles for the entire line and included an estate wagon, convertible, a four-door sedan, and a two-door hardtop (aka "Newport"), which also provided the basis for the red-hot C-300 (below).



four-door sedan, two-door hardtop coupe, two-door convertible and four-door wagon. Chrysler waited until GM and Ford had already delivered their new 1955 models to dealer showrooms, in an attempt to make a big splash. The completely redesigned models and the delay worked, as dealerships were mobbed when the new 1955 models arrived.

Chrysler called this new design direction the "Forward Look" and advertised it as such, along with "The 100-Million-Dollar Look" for a tagline. With a long hood and short deck, the cars appeared quite sporty, especially the two-door models. Chrysler had gone from remedial to advanced, having seem-

ingly skipped an entire generation of automotive design in the process. Chrysler differentiated the Windsor entry-level models from the more upscale New Yorker variants with different grilles, trim, and seating materials. The automaker further differentiated the highest-level Imperial models with yet a different grille, trim, and taillamps, among other changes.

But the gifted pen of Exner was not Chrysler's only route to success in the mid-Fifties. With the advent of the Chrysler FirePower "Hemi" engine with its hemispherical combustion chambers (and associated big valves and the free flow of air in them) in 1951, Mopar could lay claim to having some of the





The Exner-penned “Forward Look” Chryslers of 1955 loaned themselves well to Chrysler’s color palette, both inside and outside. Heavy on greens and blues along with other neutral colors, some models were offered by Chrysler with two-tone combinations.

most powerful engines in production. But the Hemi power plants were expensive, and quite heavy with their large cylinder heads.

Chrysler engineers designed new cylinder heads with a less complex valvetrain, creating the lighter and less expensive Spitfire, or “polyspheric” V-8s, so named for the multiple partial spheres in the combustion chambers around the valve openings in the cylinder heads. The polyspheric engine replaced Chrysler’s prewar straight-six relic as the division’s entry-level powerplant.

The first Spitfire engine for the 1955 model year displaced 299.3 cubic inches, breathed through a two-barrel carburetor, featured an 8.0:1 compression ratio, and produced 188 horsepower at 4,400 rpm. The 331-cu.in. FirePower hemi-head engine found in the 1955 New Yorkers was good for 250 hp at 4,500 rpm, albeit with a four-barrel carburetor, a slightly wider bore, higher 8.5 compression, and those freer-breathing Hemi cylinder heads. With two V-8s in the range and the two-speed, clutch-pedal-free PowerLite automatic, Chrysler could finally match the features of competing Oldsmobiles, Buicks, and Cadillacs. Power steering and power brakes were also readily available options for the luxury-minded consumer.

Chrysler saved the best for last with the mid-year introduction in 1955 of the C-300, which produced an even 300 horsepower from its Hemi engine. Chrysler based the C-300 on the two-door hardtop Newport chassis, using the Imperial grille with other trim elements from other models. The automaker also fitted the Imperial’s instrument panel, but swapped out its 120-mph speedometer for a 150-mph version.

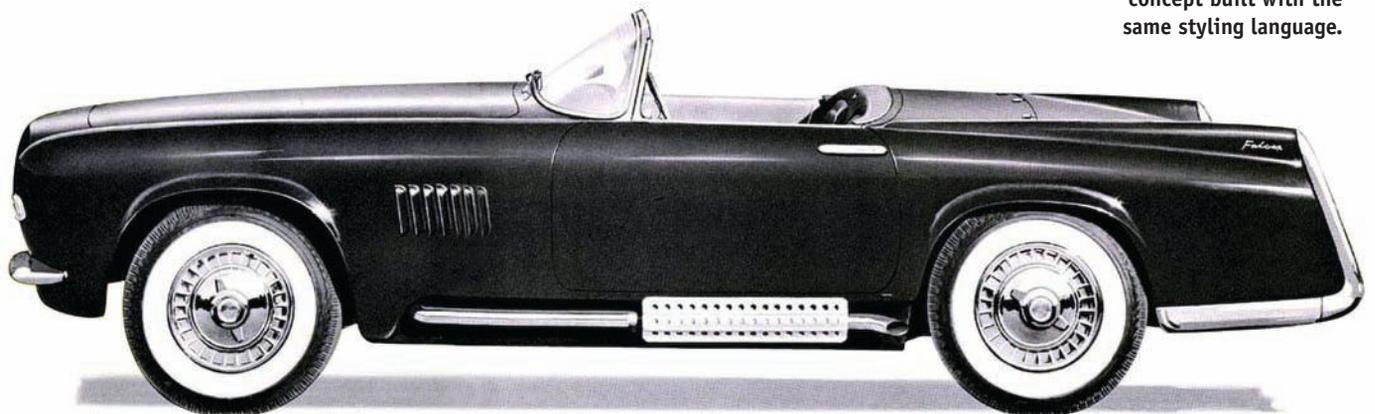
Chrysler engineers based the C-300’s formid-

able power plant on the engines that nearly took Briggs Cunningham to the checkered flag at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Starting with a standard 331-cu.in. Hemi, the engineers added what amounted to a full-race camshaft, dual four-barrel carburetors, and a dual exhaust system with two-inch-diameter pipes. The most powerful and fastest production car available from an American nameplate in 1955, the C-300 powered Carl Kiekhaefer’s Mercury Outboards racing team to the NASCAR Grand National title in 1955.



Virgil Exner’s groundbreaking designs helped turn Chrysler into a company with plenty of style and fashion instead of one that relied almost solely on engineering to sell cars.

In addition to replacing the entire lineup of production cars with new designs for 1955, Chrysler commissioned Ghia to manufacture the Falcon, Exner’s roadster concept built with the same styling language.





Although the seating surfaces were slightly different between the Windsor and New Yorker models, the latter having more pleating and different fabric, the instrument panels were all but identical between the models, with two round gauges in front of the driver.

Chrysler had come full circle in a year's time, capturing the fascination of America's motoring public with sleek designs and stellar engineering, and conquering race tracks with equal aplomb. Chrysler had built excitement into its entire lineup in 1955 with Exner's designs, options customers wanted, and powerful V-8 engines.

For 1956, the designs of the Windsor and New Yorker models varied slightly, while Chrysler added one new body style to the lineup, the Newport four-door pillarless hardtop, as featured on these pages. While the 1955 Chryslers had just a precursor of a fin at the rear quarter panels, Exner went with a more distinct, higher, and longer fin, which soon became a signature touch of his designs, along with most of the rest of the American auto industry. Chrysler, fans of two words concatenated into one with multiple capital letters, called its 1956 designs "PowerStyle."

Below the hood of the up-market New Yorker versions, Chrysler installed a newer, larger-displacement 354-cu.in. Hemi, with increased compression of 9.0 and power up to 280 horsepower. The entry-level Windsor versions also featured an

updated Spitfire engine. At 331 cubic inches, it featured the same bore and stroke as the previous year's Hemi, but produced 225 horsepower and made do with a compression ratio increased to 8.5:1. In other mechanical news for 1956, Chrysler introduced its pushbutton transmission control, a purely mechanical innovation that the company used in some models as late as 1964.

Once again, in 1956, Chrysler went racing with the Mercury Outboard team, this time in the 300B, the successor to the C-300. The street-going 300B saw its Hemi up the ante to 340 horsepower from the hottest version of the 354 Hemi engine that year. The Mercury team also raced Dodge models, and again earned the championship title for Mopar. The Ford and Chevrolet teams were not happy, and all but drove Kiekhaefer out of the series due to their inability to beat him and his team.

From their sleek designs to their powerful V-8 engines, the 1955 and '56 Chryslers represented perhaps the best combination of engineering and design available to American car buyers. Today, that same mix appeals to collectors. Guy Lewis, owner

of the 1956 Chrysler Windsor Newport four-door hardtop featured here, found himself falling under its spell when he spotted the car at an AACA meet held by his local South Florida Chapter.

"I was at one of the AACA shows," recalls Guy, "and a gentleman who I know, a fellow club member, a fellow from Cuba—he drove the car. He had bought the car probably 15 years ago; he found it because his dad had exactly the same car in Cuba. His name was Martin Roca—a very good guy and an active AACA member. It was a wonderfully sentimental car for him. When I saw it, I said, 'Martin, this is a beautiful car. I love it!' It was so nice. The color was right. The chrome was just a mile deep. The engine bay, you could just eat off of it—it was near perfect." Though Martin had sentimental reasons for buying the Windsor Newport and having it restored to a very high level, he also had his eye on another car. The two cut a deal and Guy drove the Newport home that day.

Eight years later, Guy remains ecstatic about the Desert Rose-over-Ivory Chrysler. "It's just a beautiful car," he says. "The colors are so Miami, so South Florida. It's got the Spitfire engine, so it runs terrific. It was all rebuilt, and all the paint



Excellent and thorough restoration of this 1956 Windsor Newport four-door hardtop shows in the interior details as much as outside the car. Chrysler introduced its pushbutton transmission control that year with the two-speed, fully automatic PowerFlite transmission.





Recognizable by the scalloped valve covers, Chrysler's 331-cu.in. Spittfire polyspheric V-8 engine from 1956 never made the headlines the way the Hemi V-8 did.

and chrome is new." Following the car's restoration in the mid 1990s, Martin quickly earned all of his AACA awards, from First Junior all the way up to Senior Grand National. Along the way, he picked up a best of show award at a Walter P. Chrysler Club national event.

Though he still shows the car plenty, Guy drives the Newport now more than ever, putting perhaps a thousand miles a year on it. Though he has not taken any long road trips, the

Miami resident and Tennessee native has full confidence in the car and the work done by Lloyd's Restoration in Bartow, Florida, who have maintained the Newport, along with having performed other restorations for Guy. "It just cruises nicely at 65 or 70 mph," says Guy. "Truly, this is the kind of car that I get into it and say to my wife, Loyda, and my daughter, Rose, 'Girls, let's load up and drive home to Chattanooga for a few days.' With this car, I wouldn't hesitate a moment about doing that."

Although he long considered himself a "foreign car guy," the recent experience with his 1956 Chrysler Windsor Newport has given Guy a new avenue to pursue in the hobby and has even caused a 1959 Imperial Crown coupe to be added to his collection. It's not hard to see how one of us could be smitten by such cars, the culmination of Exner's designs and Chrysler engineering.

Before Exner had arrived on the scene, styling had been a department within the body engineering department, an afterthought for the people tasked with making everything structurally sound and fit well. After Exner, Chrysler became just as well known for its designs as it was for its engineering. Due to the success of those designs, Exner was awarded with a promotion to vice president of styling at Chrysler, a position created just for him. And Chrysler itself was awarded a promotion as a design leader from Detroit for the rest of the decade. A forward look, indeed. 🏎️



Evolutionary Mechanisms

The 1932 Ford Model B continued all that was successful about the Model A



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

It would be easy to pity the Ford Model B. When people think of the 1932 Ford, the first thing that springs to mind is the brand-new V-8 engine that set the world on its head. The host of that engine, the identical-appearing Ford Model 18, has become almost inseparable

from its powerplant. Thus, when the four-piece hood is lifted on a Model B, exposing the 50-hp, 200.5-cu.in. four-cylinder, many will feel disappointed with what appears to be a carryover from 1931.

That's not true, of course. The 1928-'31 Ford Model A engine, with the same displacement but only 40 horsepower, is related but not identical to the 1932 engine. Ford engineers lavished many improvements on the newer four-cylinder, including full-pressure oiling, more compression, an improved intake



manifold and carburetor, better ignition with automatic spark advance, and more.

The changes from the Model A carry back to the transmission as well, with the floor-shifted three-speed carrying synchronizers on the top two gears unlike the “crash-box” Model A transmission. The rear axle was quite like a Model A unit but located its lower-arch spring behind the differential housing, extending the spring base for a better ride and lowering the entire chassis for better handling. At 106 inches, the wheelbase of the Model B was nearly three inches greater than that of a Model A, making for a longer, more dramatic profile.

The backbone of that chassis was a pair of distinctive frame rails, longer and stronger than the simple ladder frame of the Model A. The 1932 Ford frame was ingeniously designed to form an exterior part of the car, filling the gap between running boards and body in the same way as the splash aprons of the Model A. The fuel

tank was now mounted to the very rear of the frame—whether this is a better location than the cowl-mounted fuel tank of the Model A is a matter of debate, but it did require the Model B engine to have a mechanical fuel pump, as gravity feed was no longer an option.

Up front was a heavier-forged, I-beam axle with more built-in drop than that of previous years, and at all four corners were improved mechanical brakes with cast drums for better durability and heat dissipation. Onto the improved brakes were bolted welded-spoke wheels with large center caps, now covering the lugnuts for the first time. At 18 inches, they were one-inch smaller in diameter than those used on 1930-'31 Fords and three inches smaller than those of the 1928-'29 models, contributing to the lower profile of the Model B.

The exterior styling of the Model B is probably its enduring accomplishment. Though some have discounted it as merely a partially streamlined Model A, its scaled-down-Lincoln looks have



The 90-mph speedometer was common to late Model B's and V-8s. Flanking it are an ammeter and fuel gauge, along with a hand throttle, dash light, and choke.



an appeal that neither the Model A nor the subsequent Model 40 have been able to match with latter-day enthusiasts. Most notable changes from the Model A were probably the rounded, body-color radiator shell (often topped with a Lincoln-like, leaping-greyhound mascot for extra chic) and the absence of an exterior visor, a modern touch first pioneered on certain Model A bodies but perfected by the development of the rounded windshield header.

With handsome, modern looks and the traditional four-cylinder engine, it's not hard to guess what kind of buyers were drawn to purchase the Model B when new: conservative folks who didn't want to take a chance on the brand-new V-8 engine but liked the improvements that came with the new chassis—especially given that it was a similarly basic, proven design stretching back to the days of the Model T. The Model B was the evolutionary option for those who didn't care for revolutionary changes.

One such gentleman was Silas Baker of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Mr. Baker owned this Model B Fordor, which he had ordered new with all the De Luxe accoutrements, until his passing. During those years, young John Lapworth, now of Rio Grande, New Jersey, often saw the '32 Ford out and about in the neighborhood where he was growing up—he still recalls his first sighting outside Flourtown Grammar School in 1946, when he was in the first grade. In fact, he was occasionally shooed away, gently but firmly, by Mr. Baker, who was always concerned about his car's wellbeing.

The car occupied John's thoughts all through his elementary

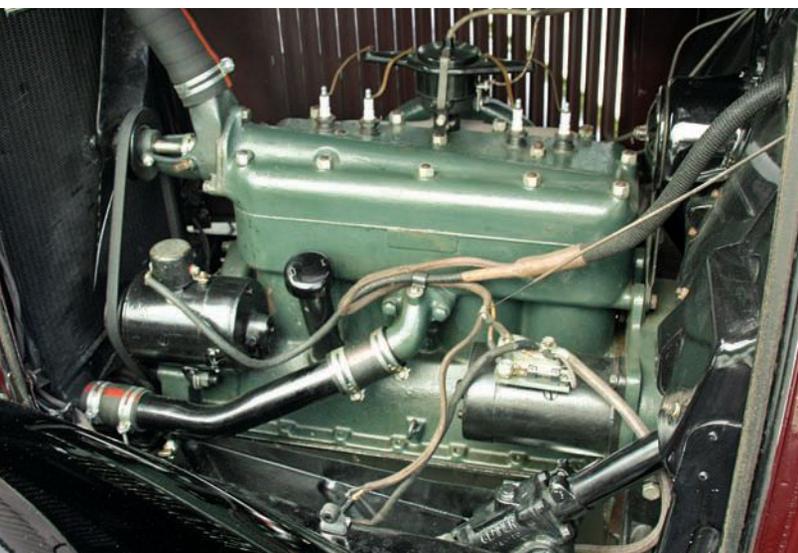
years, as Mr. Baker lived only four houses down from the school. Approximately weekly, Mr. Baker and his wife would drive by the school yard. Today, John remembers the car as being "beautiful" and in "like-new condition." John's friends, also interested by the old Ford, told him that it was never taken out in the rain and if caught in the rain, the car was always dried off before the owner left the garage.

"Mr. Baker was up in years," John recalls, "He adored his car, used it little, and tried to keep it looking and running like new. Needless to say, this car became my dream car."

In 1952, John transitioned to Springfield Township High School. His contact with the '32 was reduced, but his love for old cars was increasing. "I remember my dad talking about the good old days in his Model A's and Chevys," says John. Those reminiscences encouraged him to look for something of that era. Those efforts intensified as he reached driving age.

"As I approached my 16th birthday in June 1956, I found out Mr. Baker had passed away. His estate, including the 1932 Ford, would be auctioned off. On Saturday, July 7, 1956, I went to Mr. Baker's estate auction. There sat the gleaming '32 Ford, which made my heart pump fast with the thought that the car could someday be mine." But further investigation revealed that John had competition on hand, in the form of two local antique car dealers. Both men were also interested in the Model B and John's heart sank.

"I realized that the car would be sold for more money than a 16-year-old high-school student could afford." Before leaving, he encountered a man from town named Wilkinson, who told John he had



Ventilation comes courtesy of the new-for-1932 cowl vent, a tilt-out windshield, and the 50-hp, 200.5-cu.in. four-cylinder—an evolution of the 1928-'31 Model A engine. One leap forward was the centrifugal-advance distributor.





Bud vases and doilies are additions that acknowledge the genteel nature of the Fordor body style. Seatbelts are a wise modern concession installed by John.

a Ford Model A in his garage that he would be interested in selling. Thinking this might be a worthwhile consolation prize, John made arrangements to view the car later that afternoon, took one long last look at the Model B, and departed. On the way elsewhere, John lamented to his friend that it was a car dealer, and not himself, who would ultimately wind up with Mr. Baker's Ford.

"After a few hours," John says, "we headed to Mr. Wilkinson's to look at his Model A. His car was in good condition, but not as nice as the '32 Model B." While looking at the Model A, the subject of the Model B came up. Wilkinson had stayed for the auction and John asked who had ended up purchasing the '32 Ford. "He then looked me straight in the eye and said, 'your mother!'"

John raced back to the auction site and headed for the garage where the Model B was stored. "Suddenly, my mother appeared in front of me with the car keys dangling from her hand. 'John,' said Mother, 'You've talked and dreamed about this car long enough. Here's the keys, it's yours.'"

What of the antique car dealers? As it happened, the auctioneer initially announced that the '32 Ford would be sold in the late afternoon. The dealers, not wishing to wait around, departed with the intent of returning. Later, however, the auctioneer had a change of heart and began bidding around noon, leaving just Mrs. Lapworth and another man bidding on the car.

Bidding opened at \$50 (nearly \$450 adjusted for inflation) and continued

There sat the gleaming '32 Ford, which made my heart pump fast with the thought that the car could someday be mine.



to \$150 in increments of \$5. At this point, John's mother nearly gave up, but just as the auctioneer was about to declare the car "sold," John's mother leapt in with a \$155 bid. This last-minute gambit was enough to drive off the other bidder, who told John's mother in no uncertain terms what she could do with the Model B. With that, John's dream car became his.

Thanks to Mr. Baker's prodigious maintenance, the old '32 Model B fired right off and went home with John quite willingly. John has continued to lavish the same kind of care on the Fordor ever since. From tackling a minor ignition issue with the help of his father (discovered when the car couldn't beat a friend's Model A up a hill, despite the additional power) through the kind of restoration that makes the car as nice as you see on these pages.

Six decades on, the Model B keeps company with John's Model A De Luxe Roadster, and sees plenty of road and show time. John is always happy to share the story of Mr. Baker and his mother's generous gift for her son's 16th birthday. We suspect Mr. Baker would approve of the car's second caretaker. 🍷





Starfire Sensation

Equipped with the J-2 option, the 1957 Oldsmobile Starfire Ninety-Eight was a muscle car in gentleman's clothing

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

Oldsmobile's factory literature stated that its 1957 models were the cars "that put the accent on you!" It was the latest slogan coined to bolster sales; however, the industry had long ago proven that it took more than a catch phrase to sway buyers. It needed to be bolstered by bold designs and, as the decade progressed, increasing power.

Volumes have been written about the efforts by designers in Lansing, who bucked the growing fin trend by nixing increasingly crisp lines and sharp corners throughout the entire line in favor

of sculpted rolling tunnels that crowned each quarter panel on every 88, Super 88, and Starfire 98 model. It seems only fitting that their continued vision of Rocket power was to carry through



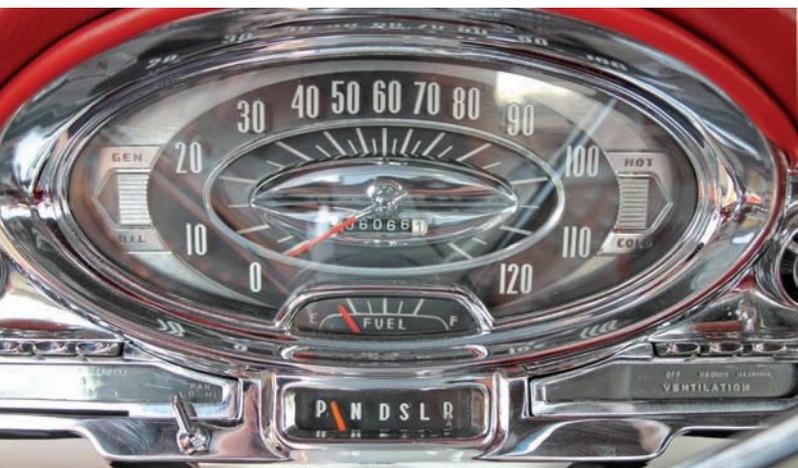
the design with taillamps recessed into the rear fender tunnels.

This less-than-subtle element was also a continuation of Oldsmobile's ovoid theme, which had carefully evolved since the 1955 redesign. The front grille, hood emblem, steering wheel hub, optional electric clock, and the main instrument cluster bezel were all oval. So too, in some small degree, were the headlamp bezels. To further enhance the sense of power and speed, the flanks were decorated with a horizontal spear on the forward half, with angular trim bridging the gap between the aft end of the door to chrome below the taillamps, which were fashioned as faux exhaust ports. Real exhaust ports were cut into the massive chrome bumper below.

Complementing styling was the work the engineering department performed on the division's V-8 engine. Released as the 303-cu.in. Rocket for 1949, its initial 135 hp and 263 lb-ft of torque were enough to captivate those well entrenched

within the hot rodding scene and stock car circuits. Durability was a key element: its internals were comprised of a forged-steel crankshaft and connecting rods, and cast-aluminum pistons—among other components—that were capped off with a cast-iron single-plane intake manifold and a pair of cast-iron cylinder heads featuring overhead valves and wedge-shaped combustion chambers.

The engine was also adaptable. As girth and power demand increased simultaneously, the output of the 303 Rocket was increased to 150 hp in two-barrel carbureted form, or 165 hp with the aid of a four-barrel, both for 1953. The block's bore was enlarged from 3.750 inches to 3.875 a year later, bumping displacement to 324 cubic inches through 1956, with output culminating at 240 hp (with a four-barrel) for 1956. Unfortunately, Oldsmobile's close association with performance had taken a beating, compliments of Chrysler's 354-cu.in. Hemi V-8, which,



Color-keyed leather upholstery naturally brightens the interior, including the padded dashtop. Note the optional electric clock mounted top-center, and the Autronic-Eye by the driver's A-pillar (above). A chrome panel insert surrounds all equipment switches and gauges, including the speedometer—with integral odometer, fuel gauge and engine warning lamps—Super Deluxe radio and heater controls.

in race trim, was decimating the stock car world—"Win on Sunday, sell on Monday" was by now powering image decisions.

The solution was a pair of 371-cu.in. Rocket OHV V-8 engines released for the 1957 model year. To achieve this, both the bore and stroke were enlarged to 4.00 x 3.688 inches. Much of the previous internal performance lineage was carried over, save for enlarged main bearing dimensions, along with a bump in compression. When equipped with a Rochester 4GC four-barrel carburetor in base form, the new Rocket V-8—with its 9.5:1 compression ratio, touted a rating of 277 hp and 400 lb-ft of torque.

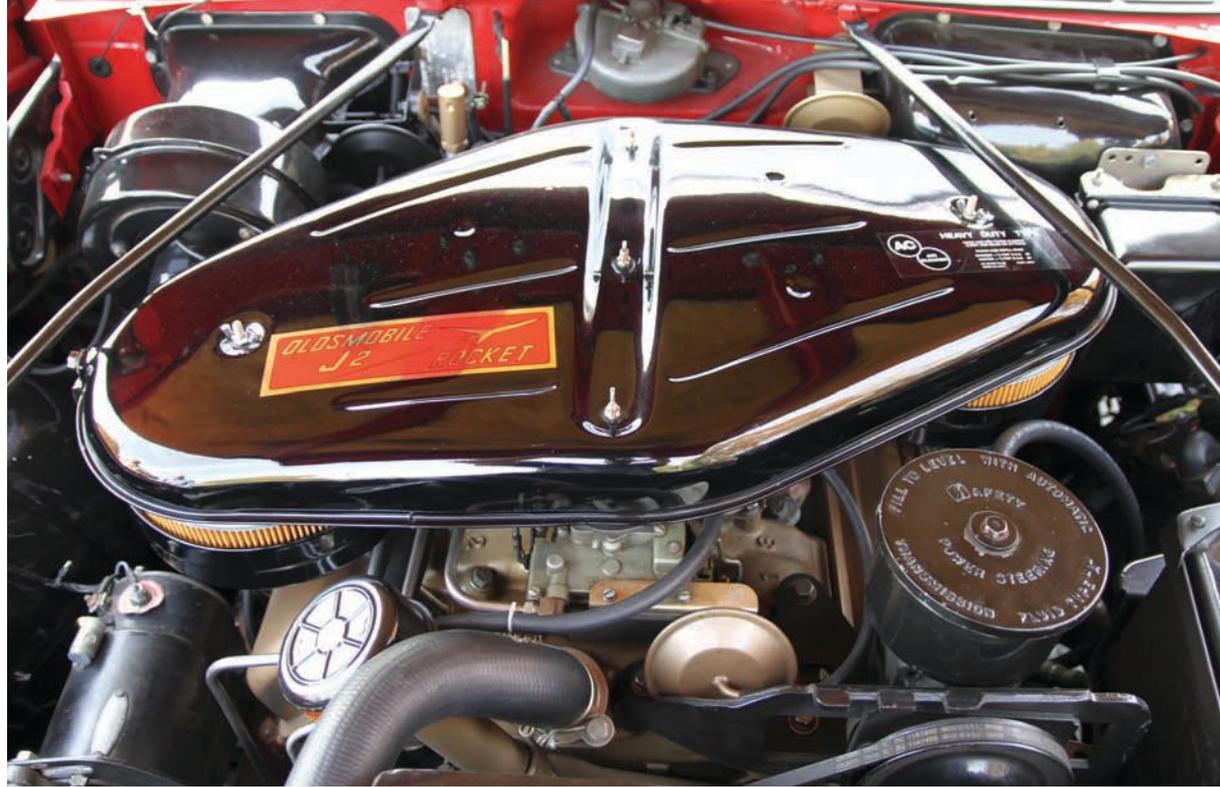
Those numbers looked competitive on paper, and were a welcome boost to the entire line, but the real performer was the J-2 option, which could be described as a version of the 371 V-8 that adopted a trio of two-barrel carburetors and a corresponding "wide throated" intake manifold. As simple as it sounded, it was a little more complex.

The center carburetor was a 280-CFM Rochester 2GC unit that controlled the fuel flow into 10.0:1 combustion chambers under "normal" driving conditions. With a skosh of throttle input, a secondary 290-CFM Rochester 2G carburetor kicked in via vacuum operation, and, at full throttle, the third unit (also a 290-CFM Rochester 2G) engaged, feeding gasoline and air to the engine at a combined rate of 860 CFM. Rated for 300 horsepower at 4,600 RPM and 415 lb-ft of torque at a low 2,800 RPM, the J-2 was essentially a street-legal race engine, available across the entire Oldsmobile line for just \$83. It was phased out of production by the conclusion of the 1958 model year. Just how many J-2 engines were assembled for street use is up for debate—best estimates place the figure between 2,000 and 2,500 collectively. One of those is the car featured here: a Starfire Ninety-Eight convertible now under the care of Bill Logozzo of Niantic, Connecticut.

In spite of his long admiration of the Lansing brand, admittedly Bill wasn't seeking an Oldsmobile to add to his collection in the spring of 2015. A former power boat drag racer, Bill was instead looking for a collector car that would stand out in a crowd. "I had my heart set on a 1956 Lincoln convertible that I found online," recalled Bill. "There were several conversations that ultimately led to the delivery of a video of the car. I purchased the Lincoln, and once it arrived, I and a few of my friends



A hallmark of the new-to-the-model-year 371-cu.in. J-2 engine option—aside from the identifying decal—is the unique air cleaner assembly with dual offset air induction filters that funnel air into a trio of Rochester two-barrel carburetors. Power steering was standard equipment in the 98 Series (above).



quickly discovered the Lincoln was a disaster. We could see 2 x 4 framing studs holding all the fenders together against the rest of the car."

Exasperated, Bill called the dealer and relayed his displeasure. Their reply was that he could return the car, but, in lieu of cash, Bill could select any other car offered for sale.

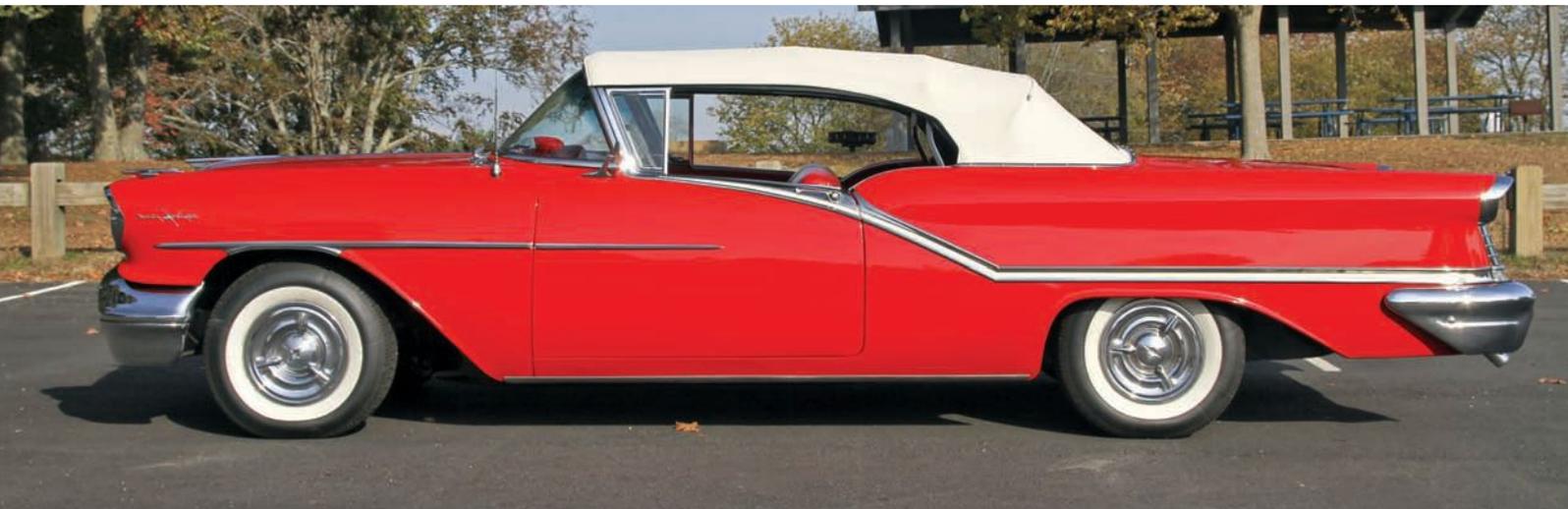
"I did more due diligence and selected a tri-color 1956 Packard convertible. It was gorgeous. The first two shows I took it to, it cleaned house. About the third week of ownership, my wife and I were returning home, and we sensed this big clunk. The body felt like it dropped three inches onto the frame. If you recall, those Packards had the Torsion-Level Ride suspension system that automatically kept the car level no matter the weight distribution or transfer while driving. Well, it failed, the body came down on

the chassis, and I lost my brakes in the process. Of course, at this point, there was nothing I could do about this one with the dealer I bought it from, so I sold it at auction for a loss.

"Right after that, my friends and I were searching online and I happened upon this 1957 Oldsmobile in Wisconsin. It really stood out, with a series of factory options, including a bunch of power accessories and the J-2 engine. Honestly, I like performance, but I wasn't all that intrigued by the J-2 option as a selling point for me. I wanted a car I could enjoy showing and driving. It turns out, when this car was delivered, we had to rebuild the engine and replace the wiring, along with a few other odds and ends, to make it what it is today: a very solid, reliable car that shows well and is a real joy to drive."

We asked Bill about the driving characteristics of the J-2. He said that, since taking ownership of the car, there have been only a few times that he activated all three carburetors, adding that it runs beautifully on the primary center two-barrel carb. "When you do get on it, the car will get up and go," he said. "It doesn't look like anything you think is going to snap your neck, but it's impressive when all three carburetors kick in."

As a top-of-the-line model, there certainly is much more to





The first car I owned in college was a 1956 Olds 88, and I've been partial to Oldsmobiles since. It's funny how the maladies of the other cars I mentioned led back to what I probably should have been looking for in the first place. Oldsmobile is my love; what the heck was I doing looking at other cars? I love the feel of this Ninety-Eight Oldsmobile and the nostalgia I feel when I drive around the neighborhood; that's what I love doing with my cars.

the 126-inch wheelbase Ninety-Eight convertible than the optional race-ready J-2 power and a folding top. When you enter the open-air cabin, Oldsmobile's opulence is quite present. The bench seat, finished in leather upholstery, is both supportive and inviting. The seat belts added post-production are perfectly positioned and fall upon the lap comfortably. Adjust the seat position, and your hands naturally cradle the thin rim of the large steering wheel.

We should add, it's rather bright. The red/white two-tone finish is—as was typical of the era—trimmed with ample chrome, including the 120-mph speedometer surround. If there's a complaint here, it's that, with all that brightwork, it takes a minute to find the primary and auxiliary controls, all of which carry forth the Rocket legacy, a minor nit considering everything is well labeled.

Having driven our fair share of cars from the Tri-Five era, we found outward vision to be rather impressive. This included the view of the gauge cluster beyond the steering wheel, and the apparent acres of greenhouse glass. The bump—compliments of the speedometer—in the padded dashtop does little to impede overall forward vision, and the fenders' edges are pleasantly visible.

Having started the 371-cu.in. J-2 and shifted the Jetaway automatic into drive, we expected to find the throttle hesitation one might associate with luxury brands and boulevard cruisers alike. Not so here. The Ninety-Eight may not win a stoplight battle, but that's not the point of a single two-barrel; it's efficiency. Acceleration is smooth and consistent from the

moment you depress the accelerator.

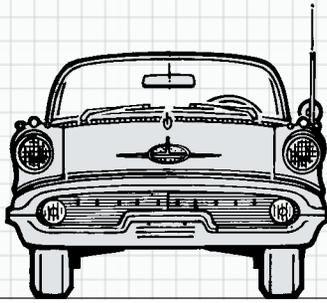
Under "normal" driving conditions, cornering is also typical of the era: efficient and nearly level. We didn't experience any noteworthy lateral g-force attempting to shift our bodies on the leather upholstery, while braking—power assisted and delivered as standard equipment on the Ninety-Eight series—was par for the course.

Although our trip was short, it was time to take it up a notch. Bill's assessment of the J-2's secondaries was spot-on: There isn't a pronounced gear-dropping, neck-snapping response, but rather an extremely obvious steady climb through the power range. With this comes an increase in lateral g-force and body roll, but like the performance wars that were about to erupt seven years later, power here was for straight-line use. Overall, we were highly impressed with Lansing's balance of power, comfort, and handling for the senior model. 🏁

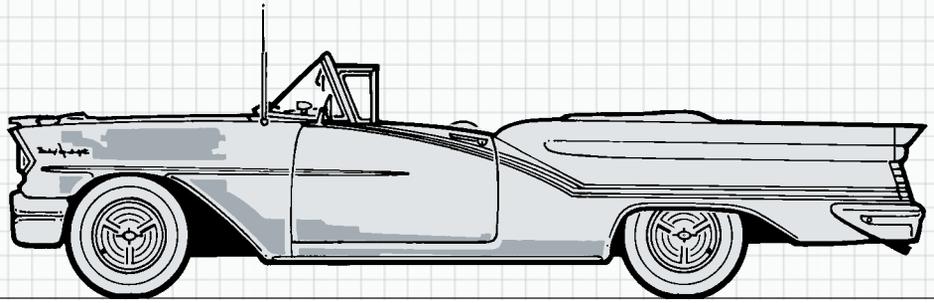


1957 OLDSMOBILE STARFIRE 98 CONV.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSSELL VON SAUERS,
THE GRAPHIC AUTOMOBILE STUDIO ©2017 HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR



← 59 inches →



← 126 inches →

SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE

BASE PRICE	\$4,197
OPTIONS (CAR PROFILED)	J-2 Rocket engine, \$83; Dual-Range Power Heater, \$85; Super Deluxe radio, \$121; Autronic-Eye, \$46; Power windows, \$90; Electric clock, \$19

ENGINE

TYPE	Oldsmobile OHV V-8, cast-iron block and cylinder heads
DISPLACEMENT	371 cubic inches
BORE X STROKE	4.00 x 3.68 inches
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.0:1
HORSEPOWER @ RPM	300 @ 4,600
TORQUE @ RPM	415 @ 2,800
VALVETRAIN	Hydraulic lifters
MAIN BEARINGS	5
FUEL SYSTEM	Dual Rochester 2G two-barrel carburetors, single Rochester 2GC two-barrel carburetor, vacuum linkage, mechanical pump
LUBRICATION SYSTEM	Full pressure
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	12-volt
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Dual exhaust

TRANSMISSION

TYPE	Jetaway Hydra-Matic automatic, dual hydraulic couplings
RATIOS	1st 3.96:1 2nd 2.63:1 3rd 1.55:1 4th 1.00:1 Reverse 4.30:1

DIFFERENTIAL

TYPE	Hotchkiss with thrust-through rear springs
GEAR RATIO	3.42:1
DRIVE AXLES	Semi-floating hypoid

STEERING

TYPE	Recirculating ball, power assist
RATIO	22.7:1
TURNS, LOCK-TO-LOCK	3.50
TURNING CIRCLE	43 feet

BRAKES

TYPE	Hydraulic four-wheel, vacuum assist
FRONT	11 x 2.50-inch drum
REAR	11 x 2.00-inch drum

CHASSIS & BODY

CONSTRUCTION	Welded and bolted-on steel body panels, separate steel I-beam frame with center X-member
BODY STYLE	Two-door convertible
LAYOUT	Front engine, rear-wheel drive

SUSPENSION

FRONT	Independent; coil springs, anti-roll bar, double-acting tubular hydraulic shocks
REAR	Live axle, five-leaf semi-elliptic springs, rubber-mounted shackles, double-acting tubular hydraulic shocks

WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS	14 x 6-inch stamped steel with wheel covers
TIRES	American Classic 235/75R14 radial (Originally: 8.50-14 bias-ply)

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

WHEELBASE	126 inches
OVERALL LENGTH	216.7 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	76.38 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	57.46
FRONT TRACK	59 inches
REAR TRACK	58 inches
SHIPPING WEIGHT	4,747 pounds

CAPACITIES

CRANKCASE	6 quarts with filter
COOLING SYSTEM	21 quarts
FUEL TANK	20 gallons
TRANSMISSION	22 pints
DIFFERENTIAL	5.25 pints

CALCULATED DATA

BHP PER CU.IN.	0.808
WEIGHT PER BHP	15.823
WEIGHT PER CU.IN.	12.795

PRODUCTION:

1957 STARFIRE	
NINETY-EIGHT CONVERTIBLE	8,278

PERFORMANCE

0-60 MPH	9.1 seconds *
* From a road test of a 1957 Olds Ninety-Eight equipped with the J-2 engine option and Jetaway transmission, published in <i>Motor Trend</i> , April 1957.	

PROS & CONS

- + J-2 engine option
- + Comfort while cruising
- + Pinnacle of Olds mid-Fifties styling

- Hefty weight
- Must use high octane
- Lots of interior chrome

WHAT TO PAY

LOW
\$35,000 – \$55,000

AVERAGE
\$95,000 – \$120,000

HIGH
\$175,000 – \$200,000

CLUB CORNER

OLDSMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

P.O. Box 80318
Lansing, MI 48908-0318
www.oldsmobileclub.org
Dues: \$50/year
Membership: 8,000

ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

501 W. Governor Road
P.O. Box 417
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
717-534-1910
www.aaca.org
Dues: \$35/year
Membership: 60,000



Big Spenders

What is it that drives a person to sink a considerable amount of money into restoring a car that will never, ever, be worth anywhere near the restoration's cost? Is it sentimentality, ego, or simply a faulty thought process? Are they "True Enthusiasts" or just nuts?

I'm not talking about guys who spent \$25,000 on a \$20,000 car—I'm talking about the folks who spend \$100,000—or more—on a car that's worth maybe 20 to 40 percent of that amount. Why on earth would anybody do something like that?

I called up Bill Bartels, a hobbyist-collector I know who a few years back found a car he'd always wanted—a 1957 Nash Ambassador Custom Country Club Hardtop. A low-mileage car, it wasn't the color he wanted, so he decided to have it changed during a very costly restoration. The previous owner had sunk \$15,000 into the car, but Bill wanted perfection and was willing to invest the time, money, and patience to see the job through. While friends searched for NOS parts, Bill sent the Ambassador to a noted restorer. It took time, but eventually the Nash was delivered back to Bill in as-new condition, in the color scheme he wanted. It's probably worth \$50,000 now—maybe a little more—and Bill isn't upset a bit that he's got \$235,000 invested in it. He wanted the car to be perfect, and it is. He says he wouldn't sell it even if the offer was a million dollars. See, he had the car restored for the car's sake, not to make a profit on it.

Why did he want it so bad? Because when he was a kid his dad always drove Nashes. One time, Bill and his dad went to the Nash dealer to look at the 1957 models. The dealer had a gorgeous 1957 Rambler Rebel on the showroom floor, and Bill begged his father to buy it for him. Dad wisely said no, probably realizing it was too fast for a teenager. The dealer also had a brand-new Ambassador, bright red with a white side spear, and Bill thought it was the sharpest car he'd ever seen. Although Dad didn't buy that one, either, Bill never forgot the car. His restored Ambassador is painted to match. By the way, he also owns one of the nicest, lowest-mileage 1957 Rebels you'll ever see.

Bill likes the independent brands and

even has a very rare Hudson Italia in his collection. It doesn't bother him when people ask how much he's got invested in a particular car. It's a hobby for him, and he's straight-forward about how much things cost. By the way, near the end of our conversation he mentioned an authentic Cobra he owns, but it seemed to me that he enjoys the Ambassador more than the Cobra—my kind of guy. Bill does this for the love of cars rather than the love of money. Very admirable!

I spoke with another collector who didn't wish to be named. He too focuses on independent brand cars. He didn't say how much he's spent on his small collection, but based on the number of labor hours that he's paid for restoring them, I would estimate that some of his cars, worth maybe \$60-70,000 at auction, were each treated to \$200,000-plus restorations.

I asked why he would spend so much.

"I have a couple motivations when it comes to investing in the 'Best in Class' restoration of my cars," he replied. "One is to create as perfectly as possible the car the designers envisioned. It wasn't the designers' fault that the engineers and production people couldn't reproduce the perfectly aligned trim pieces and straight door gaps on the clay model.

"I also want to be 100 percent faithful to authenticity. This speaks to the extra work and cost involved in matching the paint color, upholstery fabric and colors, and rechroming the trim, for example. It also requires extensive research to faithfully adhere to all aspects of authenticity.

"The end result is an automobile that is not only 100 percent authentic, but is also the work of art that the designers imagined."

He's obviously given this a lot of thought, and I for one applaud his efforts to preserve history. When people see one of his cars, they're looking at as close to new as a 60-year-old car can get. And they're seeing them at their best.

Bravo, guys! 🎩

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He wanted the car to be perfect, and it is. He says he wouldn't sell it even if the offer was a million dollars.

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REGARDING VINCENT CALDERELLA'S letter in Recaps in *HCC* #150, one very important overlooked aspect of this procedure is that a charitable contribution to a nonprofit entity is tax deductible.

First, you will need to list each item to be donated, including a fair assessment of its condition. Then carefully verify a fair market value for each item and indicate the source. Keep the source list in your tax file and be conservative in your prices. Yes, this takes time, but the end reward is well worth the effort. Make certain the recipient of your gift is a nonprofit or charitable organization, and obtain a statement on the recipient's letterhead thanking you for your gift, preferably stating the value of the gift. If you use an accountant or firm to do your taxes, you may want to run the deductions by that person.

You may be surprised by what your collection is worth. Some of the older books, such as those in the Crest Line series, bring much more than they originally sold for, and many manufacturer's sales brochures are eagerly sought after.

If, say, your collection appraises for \$5,000 and you are in a 30 percent tax bracket, then making this contribution is \$1,500 in your pocket. Isn't that better than destroying a piece of history? Not to mention that you are saving something you have worked to build and treasured as a legacy from you, and a tool for future generations.

William Harold
Hartselle, Alabama

IN PAT FOSTER'S COLUMN IN *HCC* #153, "The Aero Mystery," he omitted the last chapter of the life of the Aero Willys.

We lived in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, in 1962-'64. At that time, the four-door Aero Willys sedan was manufactured in Brazil by Willys Overland of Brasil. It seemed identical to the Aero Willys we knew in the U.S., but in 1964 a new, more modern Volvo-like body was introduced, which was unique to Brazil.

The Aero Willys was the only large four-door sedan made in Brazil and was quite popular in the more expensive market. However, it was not large enough to compete as a taxi cab. That market was dominated by older U.S. models, preferably four-door, six-cylinder Chevrolets with standard transmissions. As GM manufactured Chevrolet trucks thus equipped in Brazil, servicing of these vehicles was not a problem.

An interesting market existed for such vehicles. Any six-cylinder, four-door Chevrolet that could be located in the U.S. was literally smuggled into Belém on the Amazon. The smugglers would remove certain vital parts from the contraband car and have it "confiscated" by the customs people, who, not being able to sell these stripped cars, would sell them back to the smugglers legally. Legal titles could then be obtained, and the missing parts installed, after which the now legal old Chevrolet could be sold as a taxi in the big, southern cities!

There is a popular Brazilian phrase: "Dar um jeitinho," meaning, "There is always a way," which made living in that lovely country a pleasure.

Peter Tveskov
Branford, Connecticut

Editor's note:

Pat didn't omit that information on purpose, nor was the purpose of his column the complete history of the Aero Willys. Always keep in mind that due to space restrictions, we are limited in the amount of content that can be included in each column.

ONE THING I LIKE ABOUT *HCC*

some of the unexpected subjects that are brought to light, such as the "Drunken Mitchell" in Pat Foster's column in issue #155. Looking through the *Standard Catalogue of American Cars*, I found that if the photo of the touring car is ugly, the closed models were even uglier, with a sloped and divided V-shaped windshield set in A-pillars that are upright. The poor thing handily out-uglied the air-cooled Holmes, known for its grille that was said to look like a caterpillar's head.

The sad irony is that if Mitchell had used a V radiator, angled the cowl, A-pillar, and windshield at the same rake as the radiator, and put a more graceful flow to the fenders, they may well have set a styling trend. That went to Chrysler, Studebaker, Graham, and a few others only a dozen years later and set the tone for all of the car companies by the mid 1930s.

Jon Perry
West Valley City, Utah

I NOTED IN LOST & FOUND IN *HCC*

#154 the yellow Cuban 1955 Buick. In April, I visited three cities in Cuba and saw and photographed many of the unique variations of American '50s and '60s cars.

The Cuban owners were very resourceful and kept running and repairing their cars over and over again. What was common was to find a Russian, Chinese, Korean, or Japanese engine in a classic!

I saw two great examples of Cuban convertibles in Havana, including this 1955 Dodge "convertible" four-door. Convertibles are "topless" to allow paying customers excellent views. A ride in one of these old cars cost \$40-50 per hour, but the thrill of going back into the 1950s is priceless.

Ted Smith
Savannah, Georgia



I TOTALLY AGREE WITH RICHARD IN

issue #151: As the years go by, there will be many cars from the 1980s and '90s that will become, by definition, "classic cars." Just as the cars from the 1950s and '60s are what most of us baby boomers fondly recall, the later generations will have a whole different list of automobiles that they will warmly remember. These cars deserve to be, and should be, included in your magazine.

A couple of 1980s cars that might be worth an article are the 1978-'87 Chevrolet El Camino and the 1988-'92 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am. I have been a *Hemmings* subscriber for years now, and as a lover of old cars, your magazine is my favorite. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

Mike Fleharty
Benton, Arkansas

THE PERSONALITY PROFILE IN *HCC*

#149 featuring Ken Eberts caught my attention immediately. I own #47 of Eberts' 50 prints of "Hot Rod." Ken is a highly gifted artist, and "Hot Rod" continues to spark my memory of youthful rebelliousness (some would say that "rebel" still lives!). The deuce coupe Ford, vintage late '30s early '40s, with cops giving chase in what appears to be a '49 Ford squad car is superbly crafted. I suspect the thrill I continue to get each time I look at this print is typical of those who grew up in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Continued on page 41



When Vinyl Was King

On a hot summer day in the 1970s, when shorts were really shorts, we cursed the moment we sat down on a vinyl bench seat. But if you had a dog, you appreciated the ease of brushing off the fur. My dog loves a vinyl bench seat. Spills on vinyl are a breeze, including red wine or blood, according to the Hudson Jet owner's manual. Vinyl was popular in homes, too. Remember matching vinyl corner sofas that were usually upholstered in green or orange and abutted a low square corner table? They usually doubled as beds when your relatives visited.

So, what happened to all that vinyl?

Eventually, vinyl found its way to the automotive exteriors in ways we never imagined. Sure, vinyl-covered roofs had been around since the 1920s, when a closed car had a leather, canvas, or vinyl insert. In the 1950s, Kaiser offered vinyl roofs on its spectacular Manhattans. If you ever see a Kaiser at a car show, look inside. They had the most beautifully upholstered interiors—even the Henry Js.

The 1950-'52 Ford Crestliner utilized a vinyl roof to add distinction when they lacked a hard-top body style. For the rest of the 1950s, two-tone exteriors were more popular than vinyl roofs. With solid-color paint schemes coming into fashion in the 1960s, vinyl roofs gained in popularity, appearing on compacts and luxury cars alike.

During the disco era, vinyl would reach its zenith, and no car company utilized exterior vinyl appliques to give an illusion of luxury better than our friends at Dearborn, but Mopar did give them a run for their money.

With new emissions and safety requirements, rising insurance costs and a public becoming more cognizant of fuel efficiency, performance took a back seat to luxury. No longer would consumers settle for a car without a cigar lighter or heater. Base models were more often than not optioned with a radio, carpeting, and air conditioning, too.

To add panache to the small cars that were already setting sales records, Ford created the ultimate package for the Pinto and the Maverick (and, by default, the Comet). Beginning in 1972, you could check off the box for the "Luxury Décor Option," which usually featured reclining bucket seats in a soft or woven vinyl, plush carpeting, woodgrained instrument panel, body-color

deluxe wheel covers, and a vinyl roof. But, the vinyl didn't stop there. They included a deluxe exterior molding with a vinyl insert that either matched or coordinated with the vinyl roof and ran either between the wheel arches or the full length of the car, depending on the year or model. The vinyl molding would last the entire decade and be available on every Ford, including Thunderbirds. Granadas (and Monarchs) were born to wear all that vinyl and did so beautifully.

Check out Sabrina Duncan's Pinto on *Charlie's Angels*, complete with a vinyl half-roof and deluxe exterior molding with matching vinyl insert. More obvious is Kelly Garrett's Mustang II Ghia with all that decorative vinyl and opera windows framed by a vinyl roof. I know someone who has an exact copy of Kelly's car, and it's spectacular.

Ford's upscale brand, Mercury, would take vinyl to new heights with the 1977-'79 Mercury Cougar XR7. The roof, of course, was covered in padded vinyl, and the strip along the length of the car was a vinyl of a thickness apropos to the Cougar's luxury image. But wait, there's more. If you so desired, you could have the Cougar's faux spare tire hump on the trunk lid covered in matching padded vinyl, too.

Over at Chrysler, the 1977-'79 LeBarons featured a generous use of padded exterior vinyl including exterior arm rests on the four-door models, reminiscent of the 1958 Packard Hawk. When the R-body Chrysler New Yorker and Fifth Avenue debuted in 1979, the padded vinyl roof extended to the rear window frames, creating opera windows out of the quarter windows. This vinyl roof treatment would carry over to the M-body Fifth Avenues, with the quarter windows completely covered as well as the short-lived K-car based LeBarons, giving an air of luxury to a compact gone upscale.

The real question is: Are there many shops today that are experienced in replacing any of that worn exterior vinyl? 🐾



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Beginning
in 1972, you
could check
off the box for
the 'Luxury
Décor Option,'
which usually
featured
reclining
bucket seats
in a soft or
woven vinyl...



Thank you for featuring Mr. Eberts!
Reverend M. Vincent Turner
Silver Springs, Maryland

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ON THE 1940

Oldsmobile with Hydra-Matic Drive that appeared in *HCC* #155. That era was the time I really became interested in cars—I'm 85—and the Hydra-Matic Drive transmission was a big deal.

The article reminded me of a story I heard during that time frame. A soldier from Dublin, North Carolina, lost a leg in World War II, and the government gave him a new Oldsmobile with Hydra-Matic Drive to compensate him for not being able to drive a car with a clutch. At that time, Oldsmobile was the least expensive car with an automatic transmission.

I don't know if the story is true. Maybe some of your readers can verify if this was a practice for WWII vets.
Daniel Grimsley
Winnabow, North Carolina

I REALLY ENJOYED THE BUICK

Special/V-6 article in *HCC* #155. My wife and I both had Specials; she started out with a 1962 four-door with the 215-cu. in. aluminum V-8. A great engine until it got cold (below 15 degrees) and refused to start. I bought a 1964 Skylark convertible, with the V-6 and a four-speed with the Hurst shifter. It was a really fun car to drive, quite economical to run, and didn't cost a lot to insure.

Several dealers told me you couldn't order a V-6 and a four-speed, but I was working at AC Spark Plug at the time and had access to all the sales manuals, and it looked like you could. I finally found a dealer who agreed with me and put in the order. If it would have had better brakes, it would have been a perfect car. Wish I still had it. I later had a Buick Sportwagon with the big V-8; nice car but not as much fun.
Gerald Wille
Oak Creek, Wisconsin

I REALLY ENJOY THE ARTICLES ON THE

old drivers that aren't restored. That is the heart of the hobby. You don't have to spend big bucks. Just get an old car and enjoy it.

We still have our 1961 Dodge Seneca two-door sedan. It was interesting to see the 1961 Plymouth dash because our Canadian Dodge uses the Plymouth dash. Why, I don't know, but it does. This old Plymouth my grandpa bought new and has sat outside since day one. It still runs and

drives though, and has driven five generations of our family around.

Also in *HCC* #155 was that great article on the Ford Parklane station wagon. I had never seen one before or even knew they existed, but I always had a love for the mid '50s Fords. I had a 1955 Victoria hardtop I bought for \$35 in 1969. Finally got it running and drove it for a while. I've loved those Fords ever since.

Keep up the GREAT work.
Ron Settler
Lucky Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada

I THOUGHT IT WAS INTERESTING TO

contrast the 1932 Studebaker President that was featured in *HCC* #155 with those '70s Cadillacs in the previous month's issue. I know this may be an unpopular opinion, but those '70s Cadillacs, to me, appear to be just slabs on wheels. While I can appreciate the engineering that provides the comfortable ride, the styling (or lack thereof) couldn't be less exciting.

The Studebaker, on the other hand, is just a work of art. From the body styling, color, chrome, and even the engine, it's just a feast for the eyes. The Cadillac was really no different from most cars of the period. Huge, imposing rectangles, devoid of style. I mourn the loss of the truly distinctive styles of those 1930's cars and really appreciate your articles on these beautiful automobiles.

Ken Vatter
Centereach, New York

I ENJOYED YOUR ARTICLE ON THE

Dearborn Nomad in *HCC* #155. You made reference to Oldsmobile, Buick, Mercury, Chrysler, and even Rambler, but Studebaker had a great little two-door station wagon starting in 1954. As an owner of one of those (actually a barn find in 2015, which had been in storage since 1978) these are great cars and are worth mentioning. Wagons Ho!

Bruce Berst
Casper, Wyoming

KUDOS TO WALT GOSDEN FOR HIS

refreshing and different article about pre-World War II used cars in *HCC* #155; both text and photographs are top-notch. The brochures that likely made this article possible may have been discontinued post-WWII, but surely their spirit lived on in greatly expanded form with the pervasive deployment of used car ads that dominated American newspapers for the rest of the century.

Of course, the manufacturers themselves got into the act by publishing ads and brochures extolling the virtues of buying previously owned iterations of their products while inviting prospective buyers to drop by their local dealer to examine a certified and warranted selection. Mercedes-Benz and BMW, among others, do so to this day.

More sales-related articles would be welcome.
Pete Kraus
Lilburn, Georgia

THE STORY BY MARK McCOURT ON

the 1940 Oldsmobile in *HCC* #155 had mention of a GM engineer by the name of Maurice Rosenberger. That brought back a flood of memories of my conversations with him over about a 15-year or more time frame.

I was a service manager in a small Chevrolet dealership in Southern California. In the early 1960s, Maurice would show up driving a Corvair, but when the engine lid was opened, you never knew what engine was going to be in there. When a car was out of warranty, the local service reps were not much help, but Maurice saved my rear end more than once. My last visit with him in person was in the fall of 1989, and he was on his way to L.A. from Tucson to check on his daughter's Corvair. They were his favorite cars, and at that time, he told me he had a couple that he was working on—and he was in his mid-80s at that time.

Maurice Rosenberger was both a treasure and a pleasure to know. His story about how the automatic transmissions came to be developed was fascinating to hear. Thanks for bringing a flood of memories back.
Frank Johnson
Clarkston, Washington

The following letter is in response to reader Bob Brooks in Recaps in HCC #156 who asked about valve lifters that were noisy in Oldsmobile 324-cu.in. engines in 1955.

MY FATHER WORKED AT

Oldsmobile in Lansing, Michigan, and we had a 1955 car with the 324 engine. Later, I had a 1956 Olds with the same engine and the same problem—noisy tappets. We went to Oldsmobile's own factory parts and accessories department (close

Continued on page 43



Anatomy of a Painting

Roland Stickney, in my opinion, was the premier illustrator of luxury automobiles in the early years of the Classic era. His renderings of coachwork on a vast variety of chassis can be seen in sales literature and salon catalog ads during the 1920s through approximately 1932.

Most collectors are aware of artwork done in his particular style but may not be totally familiar with his name. Stickney had a close association with the LeBaron Body Company when it was located in an office building on Columbus Circle in New York City. Stickney was responsible for all of the artwork in the firm's series of four lavish full-color promotional catalogs. Each of these incredible catalogs showed a number of different chassis with LeBaron's coachwork.

Every artist has their own style that becomes a kind of trademark in identifying their work. Photographer John Adams Davis had a favorite location in Central Park to use as a setting for his photographic portraits. Roland Stickney, to the best of my knowledge, never used a background (showing trees, buildings, or other structures or objects) in any of his automotive paintings. He almost always showed the car in profile, or near profile, and unlike other artists whose work appeared in magazine advertisements of the era, never signed his name to his work.

Most all of Stickney's artwork was done on sturdy illustration board measuring 23 by 16 inches, with the actual image of the car being approximately 5 by 13 inches. I know this as I have an original rendering in my collection of a model L Lincoln with Judkins coachwork. The medium he used was primarily opaque watercolor and colored inks. My own particular career was in art, and I have studied the example of his artwork that I own and am amazed at the level of skill he had—totally amazing.

He did not use an air brush; everything was done with regular watercolor paint brushes

of many sizes. Layers of paint were applied, with subtle differences in shades of color and especially in the levels of grays and black. Although usually invisible in the smaller size that his renderings were printed in the sales catalogs and salon catalogs, the pinstripes on the cars' bodies and wheels were even painted in exactly the way they were on the real cars. He would use white and light grays to highlight areas that would have seen reflection in the daylight on the real car. Although I know the artwork I'm looking at is two dimensional, I

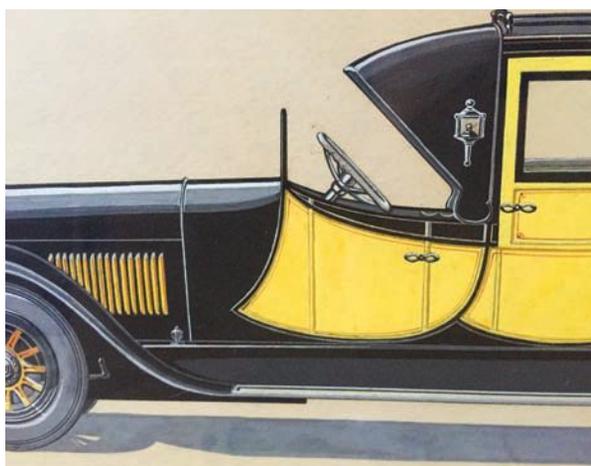
want to touch the car, and think that if I did I would feel the edge of a fender.

In his day Stickney would have been considered a good illustrator / technician (as Norman Rockwell would also have been). Today, the art world would most likely identify his work as Superrealism, Photorealism, or Hyperrealism. His ability to render with such complete, precise

accuracy is, in effect, *trompe l'oeil*. It "fools the eye" into thinking one is viewing the real object.

Although LeBaron was one of his primary employers, Stickney did a great number of renderings for *The Lincoln* magazine in the late 1920s. He was especially prevalent in the issues of that periodical that came out in the latter part of the year when the custom body salons were about to take place in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

George Sutton was a popular and prolific automotive writer and was hired by Rolls-Royce of America to create a sales portfolio for its new Phantom 1 series of cars. Sutton wrote the copy and saw to the production of a beautiful sales portfolio for the late Silver Ghost cars that all featured Brewster coachwork, *but*, all the renderings were by Roland Stickney, and credit was given not to Stickney but listed as "Color Drawings made by LeBaron Studios, N.Y." So, although Stickney was employed by LeBaron, he was "lent out" to do renderings for car companies who had their own in-house coachbuilders. No doubt, Roland Stickney was the grand master of automotive illustration. 🏎



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Every artist
has their own
style that
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their work.
//

to where my dad worked) in Lansing and asked about the problem. They informed us that it was an issue with the oil galley, and the check valve. Both were too small and tended to get varnished up prematurely, thus forcing the valve to not seat properly. They sold us a better set of lifters.

They also said that most of the problems as told by the engineers seemed to come from using one particular major brand of oil and told us not to use that brand.

So, my first major work with an engine was to tear down the 324 and replace the hydraulic lifters with the newer, better-designed lifters. With the new lifters installed, the engine purred like a kitten.

Jerry Blair
Lansing, Michigan

REGARDING THE CARBON DEPOSITS

in the 1940 Oldsmobile that was featured in HCC #155, when I was working at a Buick dealer in the early 1960s, we frequently had Buicks of that era that had the same carbon problems as mentioned in the article. What we did was bring the engine up to 1,600 to 1,800 rpm (with the air cleaner off) and pour about a pint of ATF thru the carburetor (have the tail-pipe pointed toward the shop door). The engine would bang and rattle for a while, but then it cleared up, and we didn't have to pull the cylinder heads.

Jim Taylor
Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina

THANKS, RICHARD, FOR REVEALING your rock & roll soul (HCC #154). This is very brave in the world of grouchy old gray beards who inhabit the classic car world.

I, for one, cannot stand the blaring sock hop music that is at most car shows; even VW car events have this crap.

I have avoided going to car shows knowing there would be nothing but old '50s-'60s music that I don't relate to at all. I certainly would not sit near my car all day showing it while this garbage was being played. I'm a Led Zeppelin guy, born 1954; my wife—1960—she's into Patti Smith.

My antique vehicles have ranged from a 1968 427 Corvette to three VW campers and a very funky 1981 VW Rabbit diesel that runs on vegetable oil that I once ran down the dragstrip at Byron, Illinois, twice (didn't break 60 mph but did almost tie with a 4x4 Chevy truck). All these vehicles have found great interest among passers-by. Don't need expensive

stuff. You are right, a Gremlin will do.
Allen Penticoff
Rockford, Illinois

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF

interviewing the few old expert mechanics left that might be able to share their knowledge on fixes they discovered for these old cars we love so much? I hunt through period magazines for tips that were printed when the cars were new and council with the few experts I know for help. There is a wealth of knowledge that is lost every day, as these service experts pass away taking their discoveries with them.

A classic example is a fellow like George Ache in Venus, Pennsylvania. He is in his 80s, but still is in demand for rebuilding Chrysler's family of engines from the 1930s to the '50s, and their overdrive transmissions. He knows how to interchange between the various members of the Chrysler family to improve an engine's performance and longevity; plus, he's got other tricks he has learned from 60 years of experience. Sadly, all that experience will be lost to the next generation in need of an engine rebuild. Articles about people like him may be able to capture and preserve a little of their knowledge for the future.

Bill Filbert
Easton, Pennsylvania

Richard replies: *Bill, that is an excellent idea; thank you for proposing it to us. So let's hear it from all the old-time mechanics out there. If you have a story to share, or some tips on repairing engines, transmissions, etc., we would appreciate learning more about those repairs. You can either write us a letter or send an email to rlentinello@hemmings.com. Thanks!*

CONGRATULATIONS, RICHARD, NOW

you know what some of us were lucky enough to learn years ago. Nothing rides and drives like a Hudson! I learned to drive 50-plus years ago in my dad's 1953 Hudson Super Wasp. Great then, great now!
John Clement, President Emeritus
Hudson-Essex-Terraplane Club

BOB PALMA'S COLUMN "PATINA OR

Perfection?" in HCC #156 brings up several questions one has to ask. The first one being, "How did such a car come into being?" One easy answer is the old cliché of the "little old lady who only drove it to church on nice days." But there are others,

all adding to each car's story.

I'll give you a few examples from my own experience. I just last year sold my 1984 Suburban with just 42,000 miles; I ordered it new 32 years ago. While I would often put 1,200-1,500 miles on it on a trip, those trips were solely to pull my car trailer, and usually only to my club's annual convention. The truck simply sat for most of its life, otherwise. As I put it, I may not need it very often, but when I do, there's no substitute. It was meant to be a workhorse, but today it's a remarkably original truck.

Two years ago, I also sold a 1967 Corvair Monza four-door that still had the factory window sticker in it. When I bought it 25 years ago, it had just 44,000 miles on it. It was on a dealer MSO for 21 years before being sold off at the dealer's retirement. It was a "demonstrator," aka his personal car for those years. That was a common practice for many dealers, but usually only for six months to a year, at most. The dealer must have loved his Corvair.

Another is my '67 Corvair convertible, all original except for the paint. And this brings up that subject. I bought it less than four years old, and the original owner was a dealer; he had it repainted before I even saw it. Why, one may ask? Probably to guild the lily, and because he could have his own employee do it for little cost to him. The car is otherwise factory original, even down to the top and rear window. How many 50-year old convertibles still have that? But the paint? I had no control over that, and besides, it wasn't done with concours shows in mind. Truth is, many new cars never leave the dealer lot without some repainting. Besides, paint comes out of a can, so I don't sweat it. I just know that the car is otherwise all original, so to me, originality is where you find it.

In the Corvair Society of America, we have a special interest group called the Stock Corvair Group. Our mission is to document as much originality as possible, wherever we find it, and in what degree or amount it is present.

It all comes down to one truth: It's only original once. A car can be all original or partially original, but no restoration can ever duplicate originality.

Mark Corbin
Galion, Ohio

 To have your letter considered for Recaps you must include the name of the town, city and state you live in. Thank you.

The Elegance At Hershey

The AACA's crowning achievement of car shows

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO



Central Pennsylvania is hardly the place one would think a world-class concours would be held, but thanks to the creative vision of a select group of members of the Antique Automobile Club of America, Hershey is now clearly on the map of must-attend Concours d'Elegance affairs.

In a venue on par with the idyllic setting of Italy's Villa d'Este on Lake Como and the calming Pacific waterfront scenery of Pebble Beach, The Elegance at Hershey brings that same level of quality of location to car enthusiasts here in the Northeast. The site is the posh Hotel Hershey, which is situated atop the hill that looks down upon Hersheypark and where the AACA's Fall Meet and swap meet are held each October.

The Hotel Hershey is classically grand, having been built in the 1930s in a Mediterranean style that is positively welcoming, and includes on its grounds a 23-acre botanical garden with a

magnificent rose garden and a butterfly atrium. The view from the rooftop veranda where everyone gathers in the evening to relax is simply spectacular.

On Saturday morning, a short walk from the hotel's front door brings you to a spot beneath the shade of tall pine trees where you can watch all sorts of vintage race cars competing in the hill climb. It's called the Grand Ascent Vintage Hill Climb, and the cars, which range from stock to modified, are kept on display throughout the day.

The concours is held on Sunday, and it, too, is conveniently located at the hotel. In the back of this grand building, whose well-groomed grounds are reminiscent of the garden at the Palace of Versailles, is the show field. This year there were 82 magnificent automobiles on display, many of which were of the extremely rare variety. And just as the name of the event implies, each and every automobile truly defines what the word elegance is all about.



1937 PACKARD—Owned by noted Packard collector Ralph Marano of Westfield, New Jersey, this 120 Convertible Victoria is a one-off example built by Carrosserie Graber of Switzerland. Built on a Senior series chassis, it's four inches lower than a factory convertible.



1934 CHRYSLER—David and Lisa Helmer of Macungie, Pennsylvania, are the current owners of this Imperial Airflow CV Coupe, one of 212 built.



1908 PULLMAN—This is the oldest known surviving Pullman, a Model H Touring, displayed by Pennsylvania's Boyertown Museum.



1960 PLYMOUTH XNR—This was Virgil Exner's dream car, named after himself. It was crafted in Italy by Carrozzeria Ghia. The all-steel body sits on a Valiant chassis and is powered by the ever durable 170-cu.in. Slant Six. It's owned by Paul and Linda Gould of Pawling, New York.



1904 POPE-TOLEDO—Of the 280 Type V models built in 1904, this Rear Entrance Tonneau is the only known survivor. It was restored by owner Bill Alley of Vermont.



1929 DUESENBERG—First built by Murphy, this J/SJ Convertible Coupe was restyled by Bohman & Schwartz in 1937. It's owned by Harry Yeaggy of Cincinnati, Ohio.



1931 MARMON—Only 390 V-16-powered Marmon Sixteens were built, including this Convertible Coupe owned by Cal High of Willow Street, Pennsylvania.



1953 BUICK—Ionia Manufacturing built only 1,830 Super Estate Wagon bodies. This fine example is owned by Loren and Jody Hulber of Macungie, Pennsylvania.



1932 CORD—All the way from League City, Texas, came this front-wheel-drive four-door L-29 sedan owned by Terry and Mary Williams.



1929 PEERLESS—Dania Beach, Florida, resident Dan Johnson displayed his handsome 8-125 seven-passenger sedan. It was featured in *The Untouchables* TV series.



1933 CADILLAC—This is #2 of the three Roadster bodies built by Fisher on the 134-inch chassis. It's owned by David and Lori Greenberg of Hewlett Harbor, New York.



1932 PACKARD—David Steinman from Vermont bought this Super Eight 903 Convertible Victoria in 1956.



1929 CORD—From Savannah, Georgia, came Robert Jepson Sr., with his striking two-tone blue L-29 Cabriolet, one of approximately 1,200 Cabriolets built.



1940 PACKARD—With its distinctively shaped body crafted by Rollston of New York, this style was called “Top Hat” due to its squared-off roofline. Today, this One-Sixty Panel Brougham is owned by John and Maureen Walker of Waverly, Pennsylvania.



1933 PIERCE-ARROW—Originally owned by American industrialist Andrew Mellon, this Sports Coupe now resides in Sea Girt, New Jersey, with owner John Shibles.



1914 PIERCE-ARROW—Mark Smith of Melvin Village, New Hampshire, showed his 38 C-2 Roadster that he bought in 1985—it’s the only known example to exist.



1923 PACKARD—Potomac, Maryland, resident Mark Gessler displayed his very rare 126 Single Six four-seat Sport model with a body crafted by Pullman of Chicago.



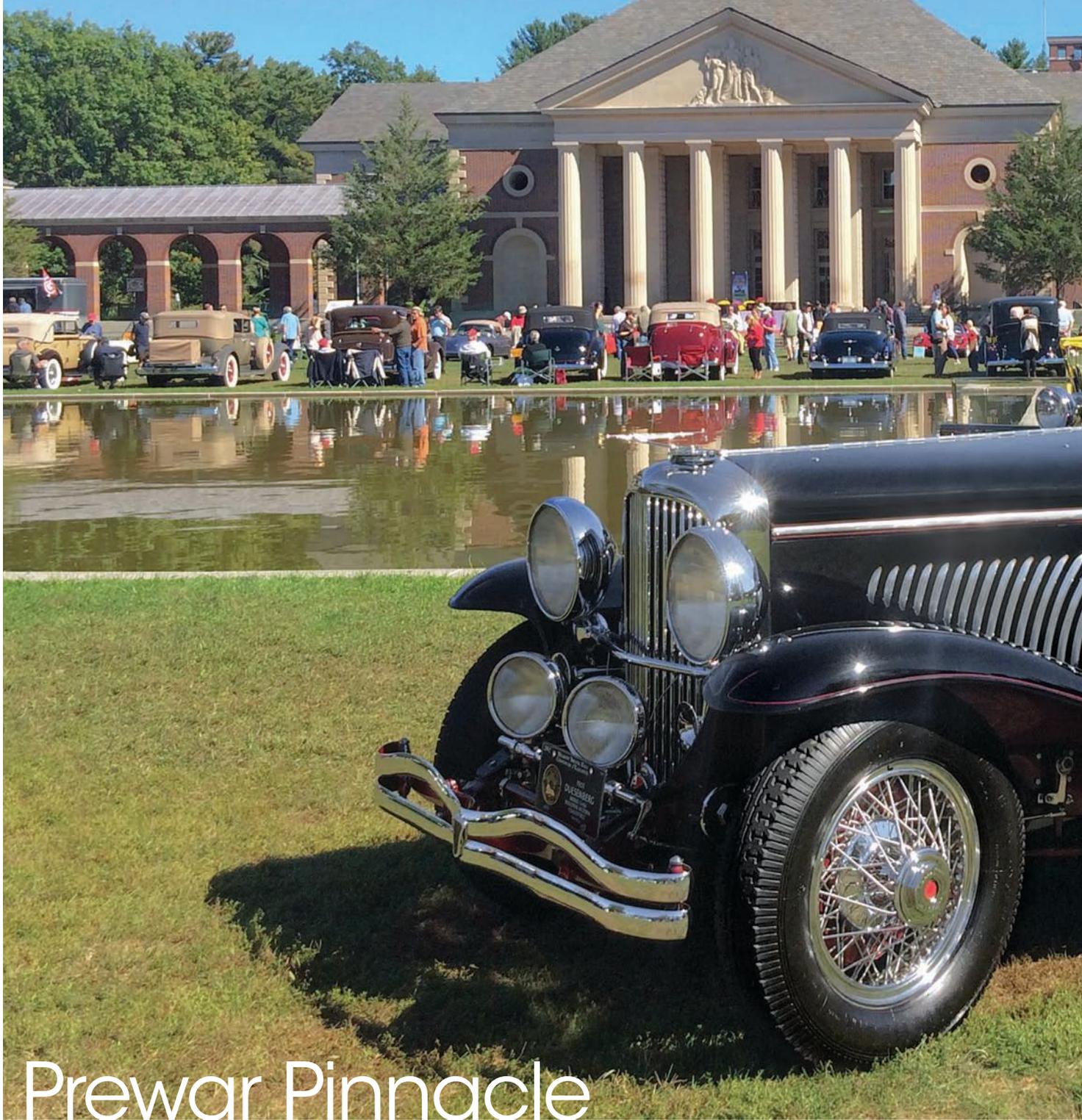
1931 CADILLAC—This V-8-powered 355A Fleetwood-bodied Convertible Coupe was found lying in an orchard in Indiana. Its restoration was then undertaken by its owners, Rick and Brenda Rowland of Danville, Virginia.

1940 BUICK—Nicola Bulgari, of the Italian jewelry and luxury goods brand, showed his beloved Super Estate Wagon, which once belonged to actress Bette Davis.



1930 PACKARD—Previously destroyed in a fire, this Deluxe Eight 745 Roadster now resides in the care of Craig Kappel of Chatham, Massachusetts.





Prewar Pinnacle

Then, as now, bywords for style, sophistication, and performance

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY AS CREDITED

Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg: When the roar of the 1920s reached its crescendo and ended in the cacophonous failure that was The Great Depression, those three names evoked style, technical sophistication, and speed. With the demise of Errett Lobban Cord's automotive empire, America would not create another vehicle on par for 30 years—some would argue it never has.



DANIEL STROHL

Auburn predates E.L. Cord, with roots as a wagon maker in the 1870s that started the Auburn Automobile Company in 1900. The name comes from the town in Northern Indiana where the company was founded, would do business for its entire existence, and where a museum is now dedicated to its products.

Auburn struggled to find success with either its original founders or the cartel of Chicago investors who took over in 1919. The company somehow weathered the post-World War I recession but appeared to be on its last legs by 1924 when 28-year-old Cord, fresh from working with Moon Motor Car, talked his way into the position of general manager, with an option to purchase a controlling interest in Auburn.

With Cord at the helm, the company began to focus on the

styling of its products, adding nickel plating and the two-toned paint scheme that would become a brand trademark. Cord also contracted with Lycoming for the production of eight-cylinder engines, which were fitted to the existing six-cylinder chassis. The sporty-looking Auburns were now spirited performers also, a fact Cord would capitalize on in breaking speed records and attempting to become the market successor to Mercer.

With the ship righted at Auburn, Cord began to expand his holdings by acquiring, among others, Duesenberg. Cord purchased the struggling maker of performance cars from its founders, brothers Fred and Augie Duesenberg, in 1926. Like the Chevrolet brothers' attempt at building a road car, the Frontenac, the Duesenbergs had proved better at race engineering than sales or business.



JIM DONNELLY

Auburn's 1934 restyle was controversial. This 850Y phaeton sedan features a Lycoming straight-eight and a Columbia "Dual Ratio" rear axle.

Retaining Fred Duesenberg as chief engineer, Cord set to work revamping the decent-enough Duesenberg line, which had begun with the 88-horsepower Model A in 1921 and was set to evolve into the 100-horsepower Model X in 1927, to become a truly spectacular car in the class of Hispano-Suiza, Mercedes, and Rolls-Royce. The result was the Duesenberg Model J, the most powerful car of its era, producing 265 horsepower and retailing as a bare chassis for \$8,500 in 1929.

At the same time the sporty Auburn and the Duesenberg super car were being produced, Cord identified a niche between the two products. In the practice of other auto executives of the time, he decided this new line should be

named after himself. It would be distinguished by its technical sophistication. Inspired by the winningest designs at the Indianapolis 500, the new Cord L-29 would be front-wheel drive.

Indy cars used front-wheel drive for better traction, weight reduction and more predictable understeer. By contrast, the Cord used the drive system to obtain a lower ride height and a flat floor. The result was an uncommonly stylish automobile for the era.

Prospects for the brand were bright until the stock-market crash of 1929 and the depression that followed, which severely undercut sales of automobiles—especially in the higher-price brackets. The L-29 remained available from 1930 until 1932, when it was discontinued without a replacement.

The early 1930s were a crucible of change for the auto industry. Marques like Cadillac and Lincoln had no need to compromise because they were buoyed by lesser divisions in their corporate hierarchy. Packard answered the challenge by issuing a lower-priced version of its car, which, in the long run, may have contributed to its demise anyway. Hoary names like Pierce-Arrow and Peerless simply faded from the scene.

E.L. Cord responded with the same solutions that had saved Auburn to begin with: by upping the style, power, and sophistication of his products in an effort to secure as many sales as might possibly be made, even in such trying times. The results were unforgettable.

The bread-and-butter Auburn line received a V-12 engine for 1932. With the coupe model retailing for just \$975, it was easily America's lowest-priced 12-cylinder automobile. It featured other technical innovations as well, including driver-adjustable shock absorbers and a dual-ratio rear axle. As with the debut of the eight-cylinder Auburn, the new V-12 also went to the races—breaking 37 stock-car records at Muroc Dry Lake.

In a concession to the economy, the V-12 would disappear again after 1933, aside from cars assembled from leftovers. At the same time, a six-cylinder engine, absent since 1930, was reintroduced. A controversial 1934 restyle hurt the already



DAVID LACHANCE

Duesenberg sold bare chassis. Coachbuilder Walter M. Murphy Co. of Pasadena, California, bodied this 1931 Model J as a convertible sedan.

ailing Auburn line, but Gordon Buehrig's 1935 changes were roundly hailed—especially when paired with the optional supercharger—and continue to inspire replication to this day.

At Duesenberg, innovation continued despite the death of Fred Duesenberg, who was replaced by brother Augie. Before his demise, Fred had devised a centrifugal supercharger, which could push the 265-horsepower straight-eight to 320 horsepower, perhaps even up to 400 with the exhaust manifold developed later. To prove the Duesey's mettle, the company hired Salt Lake City building contractor and racing virtuoso Ab Jenkins to run a specially prepared Model J on the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1935, where he set a 24-hour record of 135.57 mph that would stand until 1961.

For 1936, with the economy seemingly on the mend, the company conceived a lower-priced companion to the Duesenberg Model J, akin to the GM LaSalle or Packard's 120. When the decision was made to bring back front-wheel drive for this new model, it was determined that the time was ripe to also revive the Cord nameplate. The new Cord 810 featured a 125-hp Lycoming V-8 in place of the L-29's 132-hp straight-eight and arresting "coffin nose" styling by Gordon Buehrig.

In addition to the V-8, front-wheel drive, and an optional supercharger that pushed engine output to 170 horsepower, the Cord 810 offered a technical sophistication not found on any other U.S. make: a pre-selector gearbox. This novel transmission type, found on expensive and sporty European cars, allowed the driver to select his next gear (up or down) ahead of time. The shift would then occur automatically when the driver disengaged the clutch.

The technical sophistication and avant-garde styling of the 810 and its successor the 812 were well received, but the coffin-nose Cord's life would be short due to E.L. Cord's overall neglect of his automotive interests in favor of industrial and aviation concerns. Compounding the problem, Cord had moved his family from the United States to England in the wake of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping because he felt his sons might be at risk.

With his lieutenants unable to run the company as well as Cord himself, the second dip of the Great Depression hurting auto sales, and investigations of his dealings in the stock market distracting him, Cord made the decision to discontinue auto manufacture and sell his industrial assets to Avco in 1937. Cord remained involved with Avco and also began investing in California real estate, a venture that would keep him prosperous until his passing in 1974.

Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg remained present in the public mind, even after the end of production. Although, like all vehicles, the cars themselves went through a period of ignominy, it was mercifully short lived. By the mid-1950s, collectors were already beginning to recognize their worth. Thanks to the style, performance, and sophistication of the Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg, their story to the present day has been one of nearly continuous appreciation. 🐞



JEFF KOCH

The newest design in the ACD empire was the "coffin-nose" Cord, like this 1937 812 Westchester sedan. When Cord production ceased, the radically modern body remained in production for Graham and Hupmobile.



MECUM AUCTIONS/MAGGIE PINKIE

A second owner had the LeBaron body on this 1933 Duesenberg Model J replaced by a disappearing-top convertible coupe body by Bohman & Schwartz.

Classic Capacity

A largely original 1965 Chevrolet Impala station wagon that has proven fun for the whole family

BY MARK J. McCOURT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

When did the American station wagon become a sacrificial lamb? Why were countless wagons, purchased and valued for their comfort and utility, later stripped of their useful components and solid body panels, and discarded, those remnants used to keep convertibles, coupes, and sedans on the road? Ponder what has the loss of those wagons meant for the greater old-car hobby, and how has it changed today's automotive landscape. The rare survivor on these pages reminds us how millions of families once got

around, and brings smiles to everyone who encounters it.

This nine-passenger 1965 Chevrolet Impala station wagon was in the care of a single family until 2012, when Don and Tina McIntosh purchased it. It caught Don's eye because it rekindled fond memories. "My mother's father had a 1965 Impala four-door, and my father's dad had a 1964 Impala four-door," the Long Island, New York, resident recalls. "I would visit them in Brooklyn, ride with them to the supermarket, and they would come out to see us and take us to the candy store—we

took many trips with those cars. My father inherited his father's 1964 Impala in 1975 when it had only been driven 20,000 miles; I took my driver's test in that car, and used it in high school, up until it was sold in 1985. I loved the way it looked and drove."

This is the first classic station wagon that these McIntoshes have owned, a practical anomaly after a string of sporty and luxurious Sixties cars that included a Chevelle SS, a 'Cuda, a Challenger, a Dart GT, and a Chrysler 300. "We wanted something different, nostalgic, and family-



oriented," Don remembers. Tina adds, "My family had a wagon where the third-row seats faced each other, and I remember being able to sit in the back, looking outside and being able to see everything. Now, our seven-year-old daughter, Mia, is enjoying that experience."

Chevrolet offered station wagons in three sizes for 1965, those being the compact Chevy II/Nova, the "in-betweener" Chevelle/Malibu, and the full-size Biscayne/Bel Air/Impala. The latter could be specified with two rows of seats or three, the seventh through ninth passenger sitting on a fold-up bench and facing backwards in that glassy greenhouse. All occupants could enjoy the stretch-out room afforded by its 119-inch wheelbase, positioned within 213.3-inches of sturdy, body-on-perimeter frame goodness.

Our feature wagon was the second costliest full-size Chevy that year, behind the Super Sport convertible, and its \$3,181 base price—roughly \$24,715 in today's dollars—was inflated by options and ac-



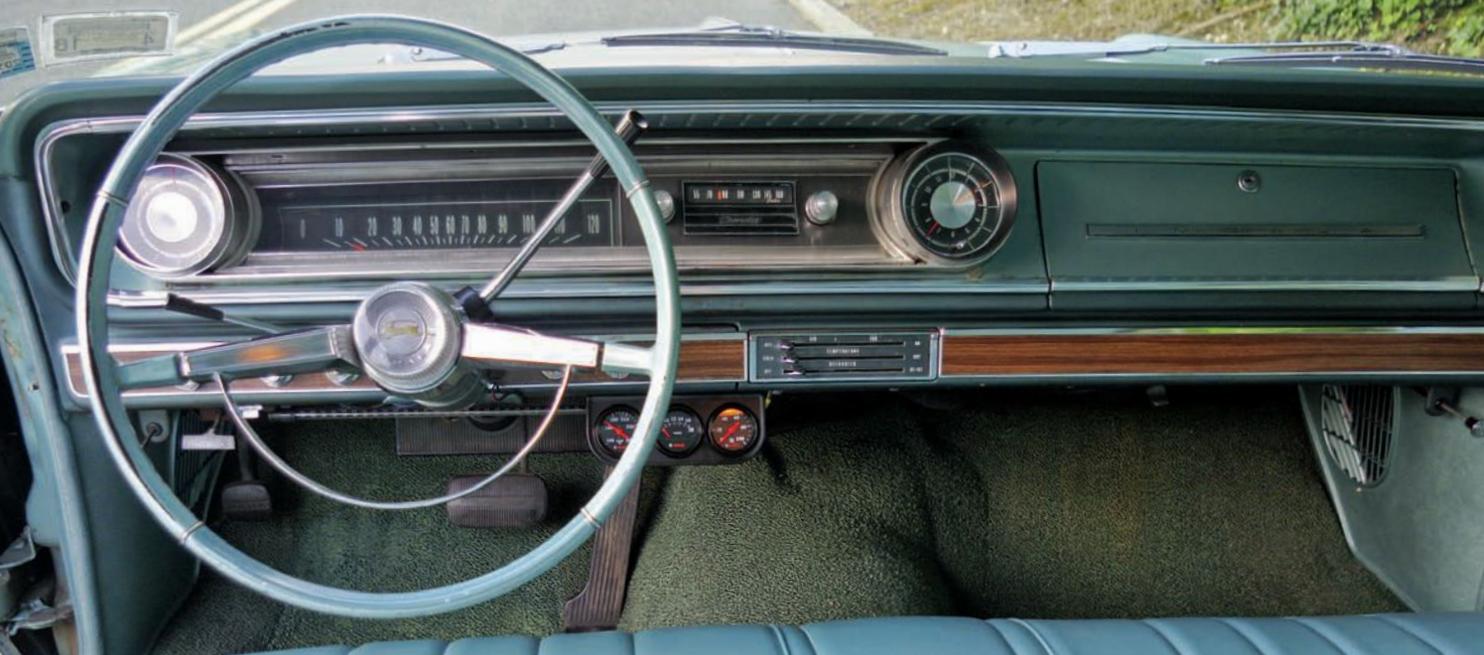
cessories like a four-barrel-carbureted 283 cu.in. V-8 (\$95), AM radio (\$50), and roof luggage carrier (\$43). That first upgrade replaced the standard overhead-valve V-8's Rochester two-barrel carburetor and offered an additional 25 hp and 10 lb-ft of torque, for a total of 220 hp at 4,800 rpm and 295 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm.

The California resident who originally purchased this Artesian Turquoise paint-over-Aqua vinyl interior wagon had also ordered the roof, A- and D-pillars, and upper tailgate to be painted Ermine White; it was said that his wife so disliked the



Original and re-sprayed Artesian Turquoise paint finishes are maintained with Armor All car wash and Turtle Wax spray wax.





This Impala's odometer registers a mere 75,046 miles. Its unrestored padded-top dashboard remains in great shape, and the AM radio and clock still function after 52 years. The upholstery and carpeting they fitted are close replicas of those the car was built with.

two-tone scheme that, after a few years, he had the white areas repainted to match the lower body. The bright metal trim that once separated the two colors on the rear of the body remains in place. Factory-applied "Lustrous Magic-Mirror acrylic lacquer" paint, now liberally stone-chipped and satin matte in texture, is still present on the hood and lower-body areas.

"It was in decent condition when we bought it," Don tells us. "The exterior was good, with no rust or rot, although the brakes were bad, and the interior needed work after years of sun damage." The body of the original Rochester four-barrel had developed a crack that led to poor running, and blockages in the factory-installed radiator resulted in inefficient cooling.

The particular Rochester used by this Impala isn't common, so rather than sideline the car while he searches for

a correct substitute, Don bolted on an equivalent four-barrel, 600-cfm Edelbrock carburetor; he similarly swapped the soon-to-be-re-cored radiator for an aftermarket aluminum one. "The headlamps and dash lighting would dim at idle, so we installed an alternator from a 1986 Impala, which offers more amperage, and rewired the voltage regulator; we also changed the distributor to an HEI," he explains. "Now, you touch the key and it starts right up. It's not missing anymore, and this carburetor doesn't flood like the old one did. We just change the oil each spring, and put between 3,000 and 4,000 miles per year on it. It runs like a top, it's so smooth."

In their quest to further improve their Driveable Dream's roadability, the McIntoshes found this magazine to be a good resource. "We read Richard Lentinello's column, 'Enhancing '50s-era Performance'

in HCC #150, and felt his advice applied to our 1965 wagon as well," Don reveals. "We installed new radial tires, replacement springs and shocks, upgraded the front anti-roll bar and added a rear anti-roll bar, and fitted polyurethane front-end bushings, an upgraded steering box, and a dual-master brake cylinder, along with new drums and better shoes."

Those suggested upgrades markedly improved this coil-sprung Chevy's handling. "The steering is so much tighter now," Tina says. "It went from 4½ turns lock-to-lock, to three," Don reveals. "This steering box came from a 1996 Jeep, and new bushings were in the kit—it was a minimal expense. Adding the larger front anti-roll bar and the rear one—which involved drilling a couple of holes and bolting it on—means the car doesn't wallow, and stays the course. The brake upgrades help it stop a lot better, and bring the safety closer to modern standards."

While the Impala reveals its 52 years under close inspection, it's benefitted notably from the attention to detail its current owners have lavished upon it. Tina tells us the perished original vinyl seat upholstery was recreated exactly in color and pattern by a talented local upholsterer, although the tired carpet proved a greater challenge. "We'd tried to find a reasonable replacement, and chose a greenish color first, but decided it didn't feel right—it was too dark. We went through a couple of rounds of carpet to get it to match the aqua interior better." The factory-installed headliner, dashboard, and seatbelts remain in the car, and the luggage compartment floor was painted a non-stock light blue—it was originally a darker turquoise—to better coordinate with the rest of the interior.



We're always getting questions about the car, or someone is telling us their memories of riding in the back of a wagon.



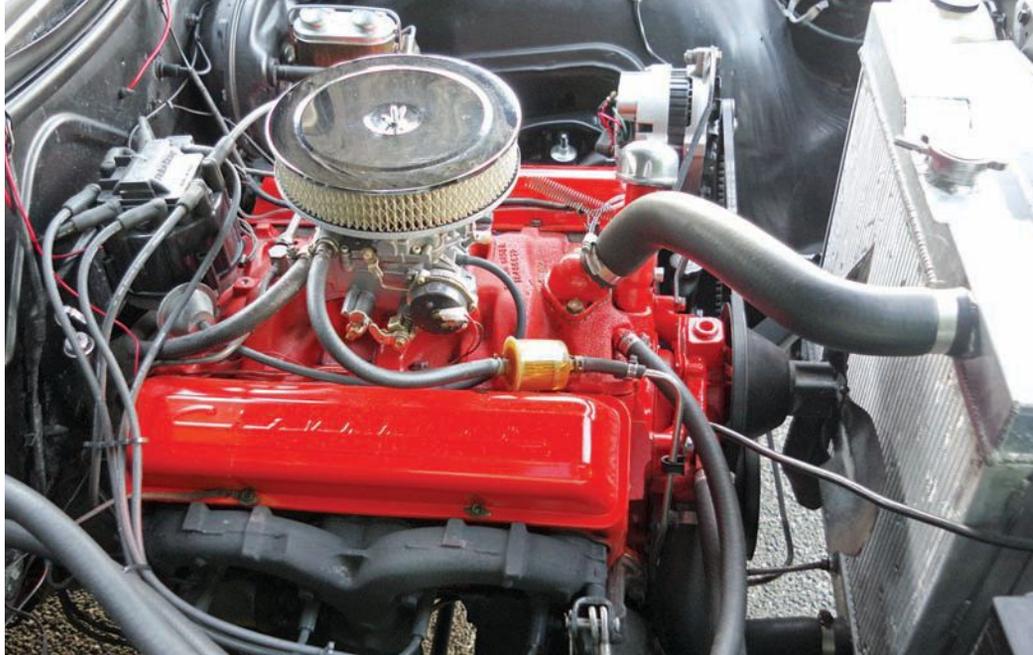
This rear-facing, stow-away third bench recalls memories for fans of this Chevrolet wagon, and creates new ones for its owners.



Impala-signature triple taillamps and their trim were unique parts on 1965's wagon.

The exterior trim was also improved, Don tells us. "At the back of the car, the corner pieces and the Chevrolet trim panel were pretty damaged. I took them off the car and knocked out the dents, and then gave them to Tina, who hand-painted the Chevrolet logo and stripes." "I was tortured by that," she says with a laugh. "I had to find the thinnest brush, and it took a really long time to get all the details right without going on the inside bevel of the logo."

This family's investments have really paid off in results. "Whenever we drive it, around town to the store or out to the beach, people tell us they love it, it just draws them in. We're always getting questions about the car, or someone is telling us their memories of riding in the back of a wagon," Don muses. "We recently took it to a show that had more than 500 cars turn up, and while there were trucks, motor-



This 283-cu.in. V-8 has not needed major repair, although it's enjoyed new paint and, for reliability, the replacement of its carburetor, radiator, and distributor.

cycles, fire engines and more, this was the only station wagon there. It was nice to be unique.

"The station wagons are gone, they've all been crushed," he continues. "I remember being a teenager when my father's Impala started wearing out, and we got a 1964 wagon to pull parts from for his car. That's what people did—get a wagon, take the engine and parts, and send it to the crusher. It's why you never see them today, and when you do, it's so hard to find parts for the rear of these wagons. Chevrolet styling changed from year to year, and wagon-specific parts like the wheel well trim, corner trim and taillamps, are not reproduced. The biggest issue I've had with this car has been finding the clips that hold on the trim pieces on the back—even if you find a wagon at a junkyard, they'll likely have broken the clips when they

removed the trim."

It's impossible to know how many of the 155,000-plus full-sized V-8 wagons Chevrolet built for 1965 are still around today, but Don and Tina drive their Impala as often as they can. "It's fun that we do this together. I give her the keys, she gives me the keys—we're partners in this car," he says with a smile. Tina agrees. "We truly share it, and our daughter continually asks to ride in it. It's nice that she enjoys it as much as we do. She even loves washing the car.

"What's great about riding around in a classic like this is that it doesn't have all the bells and whistles of modern cars—you don't have A/C, Sirius radio, or GPS. It feels like you've simplified yourself, just by being in it. You experience the car," she muses. "It's like why people go camping: pare away all the extras and luxuries, and just get down to basics, to have a nice ride." 🐾





Kissel Motor Car Company

A real American success story

BY PATRICK FOSTER • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

Big 12-cylinder luxury automobiles, beautiful sports cars, fine-looking sedans and touring cars—over the years, Kissel made them all. In terms of beauty and style, Kissel was truly one of the top auto manufacturers of its time. So, how was a company that produced such well-regarded cars forced to leave the business?

The men who founded the Kissel Motor Car Company were honest, hard-working fellows, sons of a German immigrant who moved to Hartford, Wisconsin, to become a farmer, but by dint of hard work, became the well-to-do owner of several businesses. Three of his sons, William, Otto,

and George, decided in 1906 to get into the automobile business by producing a car of superior quality and style.

With support from the family, they incorporated and by the end of the year were building their first production automobiles, the 1907 models. After installing Beaver-supplied engines in the first few cars, the Kissels switched to a 30 horsepower, inline-four-cylinder of their own manufacture. Bodies were initially supplied by Zimmerman Brothers, a nearby firm that produced horse-drawn vehicles. The new KisselKar Model C was designed principally for a Chicago distributor who placed an order for 100 cars, helping the newborn firm

get launched into the world of automobile building.

The following year the lineup was expanded to include touring, roadster, and 'Inside Drive Limousine' models, each mounting a 108-inch wheelbase, with engine power bumped to 40 horsepower. In addition to excellent styling and quality, Kissels had a reputation for hill-climbing ability, a significant advantage in that era. By 1909, Kissel was producing its own bodies, and offered nine distinct models in three series.

The LD9 series featured a 107-inch wheelbase and three body styles: five-passenger touring, two-passenger roadster,

This huge building was the factory and headquarters for the Kissel Motor Car Company during its heyday. Located in Hartford, Wisconsin, over the years the plant turned out thousands of Kissel automobiles and Bradford taxis.



KISSEL KAR SAVES AS MUCH AS A THOUSAND DOLLARS

MODEL D. 9
4 Cylinder—49 H. P.
ROADSTERS AND TOURING CARS, \$2000

A prepossessing car of strong construction, repair-saving simplicity, and motoring ability. Timken roller bearings throughout, elliptic springs, I beam front axle, floating type rear axle with two Timken roller bearings instead of one, Atwater-Kent generator, or Remy Magneto with single, non-vibrating coil and dry cells, giving double ignition.

MODEL L. D. 9
4 Cylinder—39 H. P.
TOURING CARS, \$1500 ROADSTERS, \$1200

Smaller than D. 9, but with identical construction, and special features—comfortable for four and five passengers. All control levers drop forging—Spicer universal joints with dust proof grease cups on driving and propeller shafts—selective type transmission, Remy Magneto with single, non-vibrating coil and set of dry cells.

Model G—6 Cylinder—60 H. P., \$2000 An elaborate Touring Car
WRITE FOR CATALOGUE

KISSEL MOTOR CAR CO., 122 Kissel Avenue, Hartford, Wis.

Advertisement, from the November 1, 1908, issue of the *Cycle and Automobile Trade Journal* shows two models—the D. 9 and the L. D. 9, with prices that ranged from \$1,350 to \$2,000. At this point, the cars were marketed as the KisselKar.

The Big Idea of the Year in Automobile Design

ONE bold advance step in design has added new conveniences to motoring, and at an extremely moderate cost. The KisselKar Two-Door body with the Detachable Sedan Top is the big idea of the year, supplying a long-felt need for an economical ALL-YEAR car at a cost of but \$350 extra. This Detachable Sedan Top, which fits snugly and perfectly over the touring body, converts a Two-Door KisselKar into a perfect Sedan, with all the luxuries and niceties of the Kissel into a specially built closed coach.

KISSEL KAR Every Inch a Car

Without the cost of two separate bodies or the expense and delay of employing a carriage maker twice a year to make the change, the two-door KisselKar is fitted to all-year service. Two persons can climb or detach it without touch other than a wrench and screw-driver.

This all-year combination is available in either the KisselKar 36-Door at \$1450, plus \$350 for the Detachable Sedan Top, or the 48-Door at \$2350, plus \$350 for the Detachable Sedan Top.

Buy your car now—either the "36" or the "48," with Top attached. Enjoy it all winter and in spring remove the Top. Let us show you these wonderful values.

KISSEL MOTOR CAR CO., 122 Kissel Ave., Hartford, Wis.

The ALL-YEAR KisselKar
Touring Car with Detachable Sedan Top Attached

One of Kissel's great innovations was the "All-Year" body, which was a touring car with a detachable sedan top half that was used in cold months. Unlike other such tops, the Kissel's included roll-down side windows. Note the midship placement of the door. This ad is dated November 1, 1914.

Introducing—
The new
KISSELKAR
Two-Door
"Six"

\$2350
(4 or 5 passenger model)

The KisselKar offers for the first time in America a single compartment open body two-door touring car.

The Society of Automobile Engineers at a recent meeting in Indianapolis unanimously endorsed the prediction that this type of body will become very popular.

There is no question that they are right and that this KisselKar innovation will be extensively copied—the signs are unmistakable.

This unique body has no forward doors. Entrance and exit for both passengers and driver are through large 26-inch doors on either side of the tonneau. There are two individual forward seats with an aisle between, thus allowing easy access to the front seats. The introduction of this new single compartment two-door model is in keeping with KisselKar practice—foremost in all that is practical in automobile construction.

Features that give the KisselKar its individuality

Its distinguished appearance, the long, rakish body, stream lines, distinctive headlights, foreign design axles, crowned fenders, illuminated running board and instruments, gasoline tank and spare tires in the rear.

Its provision for riding comfort—132 inch wheelbase, 36 x 4 1/2 inch tires, 2 1/2 inch rear three-quarter elliptic springs, 11 inches of upholstery, and shock absorbers.

Its mechanical standards—long stroke motor, four speed transmission, extra efficient brakes, full floating rear axle, Mayo (Mercedes type) radiator, "fool proof" force feed oiling system.

The KisselKar two-door Six had midship-mounted doors, which made for a stronger body but were doubtless a little inconvenient for entering and exiting the car. A 1914 model is shown.

and four-passenger baby tonneau, each powered by the 30-hp four-cylinder. The D9 series had a five/seven-passenger touring, four-passenger roadster, and four/five-passenger baby tonneau equipped with a 40-hp four-cylinder and riding a 115-inch

wheelbase. The big 128-inch wheelbase G9 series included a seven-passenger touring, four-passenger roadster, and seven-passenger baby tonneau models powered by a 60-hp six-cylinder. Prices ranged from \$3,000 for the LD9 roadster to \$4,200

KISSELKAR
Every Inch a Car

SERVICE FIRST

One famous KisselKar slogan was "Every inch a Car." The rounded radiator shape seen on this 1916 touring car was a longtime Kissel style mark.

for the G9 limo. A distinctive touch was a round emblem placed on the upper right of the radiator with the slogan "KisselKar Every Inch a Car." The company also offered trucks, though initially it didn't place much emphasis on them.

The 1910 model year saw another expansion of the lineup to four series—LD10, D10, F10, and G10, on wheelbases of 112 to 132 inches. Each series offered touring and toy tonneau body styles, and some sources claim a semi-racer model was also



Shown here is a 1917 Kissel Double Six seven-passenger sedan, powered by a 12-cylinder engine. The Kissel's large size and elegant lines are quite attractive and quietly luxurious. Kissel sold mainly in the middle- and upper-price ranges to a discerning clientele.

available in some series. Three engines were offered: 30 hp, 50 hp, and 60 hp. Prices ranged from \$1,500-\$3,000. The lineup was expanded again for 1911, and the company produced its first firetruck chassis. The 1912 model range again expanded, and designations were changed to Models 30, 40, 50, and 60, to coincide with power ratings. With body styles that included coupes, semi-racers, five- and seven-passenger touring cars, and a limousine, Kissel covered the field.

Kissel's handsome styling was created by in-house designer/coachmaker J. Friedrich Werner, and Kissel automobiles occupied the medium- to high-price market

segments. Prices now began around \$1,500 and topped out at \$4,200, compared to Ford's range of \$590 to \$900. Capitalized at a million dollars, by this point the company was producing about 2,000 cars, annually, nothing to cause Henry Ford to lose any sleep about but a tidy and profitable business, nonetheless.

The Kissel brothers hoped to raise production to as high as 10,000 cars and trucks per year but were never able to. One of the brothers later claimed that one year—probably 1916—the company produced four or five thousand vehicles, though published industry figures don't support that. The com-

pany's distribution system included 11 main branch offices strategically located around the country.

Reliability was a strong point, proved by letters from owners bragging of driving over 100,000 miles with only routine servicing needed. One owner, with 110,000 miles on his KisselKar, believed he could go another 110,000 miles before needing to replace it.

For 1914, Kissel introduced a new Model 48-Six two-door with the doors mounted midship between the front and rear seats. However inconvenient this might seem, the governor of Wisconsin promptly

One of three new models for 1917, this Kissel "Tourster" was a sporty four-passenger touring car with sharp lines and a close-coupled body. Kissel was one of the industry's quiet style leaders for many years.



purchased one. Late summer saw the addition on the new Model 36 tourer with a detachable hardtop for winter use—the company advertised it as the “All-Year Car.” Prices were up sharply this year, ranging from \$1,850 to \$4,000.

After attempting higher prices, Kissel lowered them dramatically for 1915, explaining the decrease was the result of lower costs for materials and production. Two series were offered, the 4-36 line of four-cylinder cars, and the 6-42 line of sixes priced about \$200 higher than the comparable fours. A unique one-man top was introduced, a smart innovation that was quickly taken up by other companies.

For 1916, Kissel again expanded its offerings with an additional line of higher-priced sixes on a longer 126-inch wheelbase. Management became determined to move into the higher-priced ranges. That grew more evident the following year when the company dropped its four-cylinder models and introduced a surprising new one: the Kissel Double Six, a line of luxury cars powered by a new 82-hp overhead-valve 12-cylinder engine purchased from Weidely. The Double Sixes topped a lineup that included the Model 6-38 100-Point Six (advertised as “The Car With 100 Quality Features!”) and the midrange 6-42 100-Point Six series.

Designated 1917 models, the Kissel Kar Double Six line included a sharp Gibraltar seven-passenger touring car; four-passenger coupe; roadster; four-, five-, and seven-passenger sedans; and a four-passenger touring. The company bragged that its cars benefited from a 22-coat paint finish meant to last the life of the car. Accord-

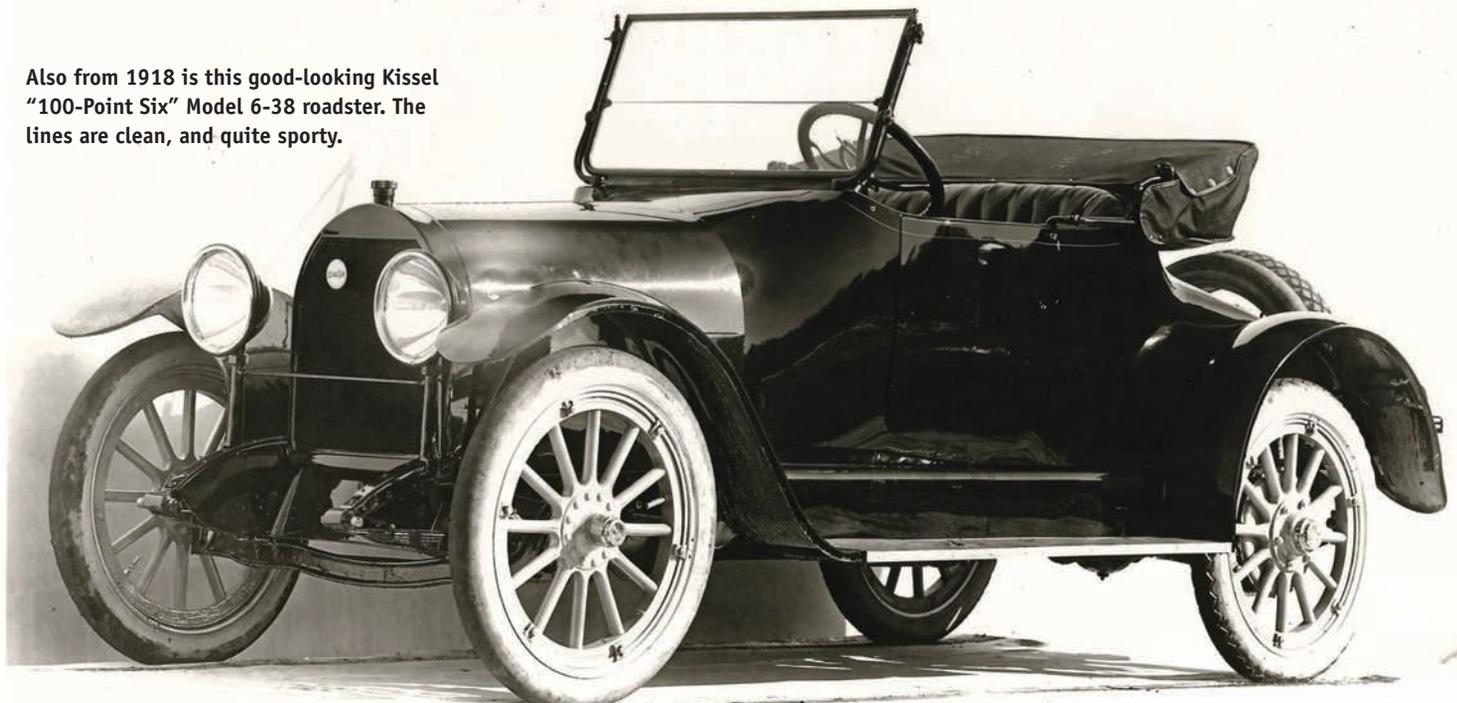


The Kissel Model 6-38 town car for 1918 was as elegant as could be, and boasted the outstanding quality construction that Kissel was known for. One has to wonder why the company didn't offer this body on its 12-cylinder chassis as well.



Kissel had a reputation for innovation in body design, and this 1918 Kissel “100-Point Six” series auto wears a striking “Staggered-Door” body. In this design there were two doors, one up front on the driver's side, and one in the rear on the passenger side.

Also from 1918 is this good-looking Kissel “100-Point Six” Model 6-38 roadster. The lines are clean, and quite sporty.



During World War I, the Kissel factory produced versions of the famous F.W.D. four-wheel-drive truck for the army, as well as some of the "Scout Kar" passenger cars seen here. The sign on the side reads "Military Highway Scout Kar." The setting is the famous Multnomah Falls National Park in Oregon.





This handsome automobile is a 1920 Kissel "Custom Built" four-passenger coupe. Notice the cycle fenders and low-set headlamps; these were recognizable Kissel styling features.

ing to industry publications, Kissel retailed 1,361 cars in 1917.

The company was also producing trucks rated from three-quarter ton to five tons. When America entered World War I in April 1917, Kissel became a supplier of trucks to the military, mainly producing all-wheel-drive F.W.D. heavy trucks under license. It also dropped the "Kar" part of its name, feeling it sounded too German.

During 1917, Kissel took the advice of one of its distributors and began development of a trio of sports models. Introduced for 1918, the models included a four-passenger "Tourster," seven-passenger touring, and a very exciting "Speedster." A gorgeous Speedster prototype shown at the New York Auto Show was painted chrome yellow. A newspaperman dubbed it the "Gold Bug," and the name stuck, although never as an official designation.

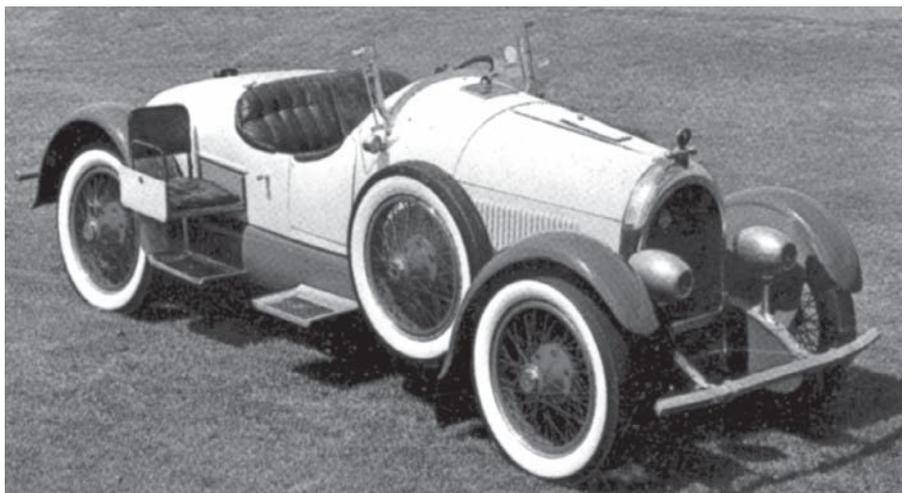
Also for 1918, an elegant new seven-passenger town car debuted, though, oddly enough, it was slotted into the Model 6-38 100 Point Series, rather than the Double Six line. That same year, a new Custom Silver Special line took over as the base line, and the 6-42 series was dropped.

Although Kissel production was modest compared to the big sellers, its cars enjoyed notable prestige. Owners included Amelia Earhart, Al Jolson, William Randolph Hearst, and screen stars Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Fatty Arbuckle. Racer Ralph De Palma was an enthusiastic Speedster owner.

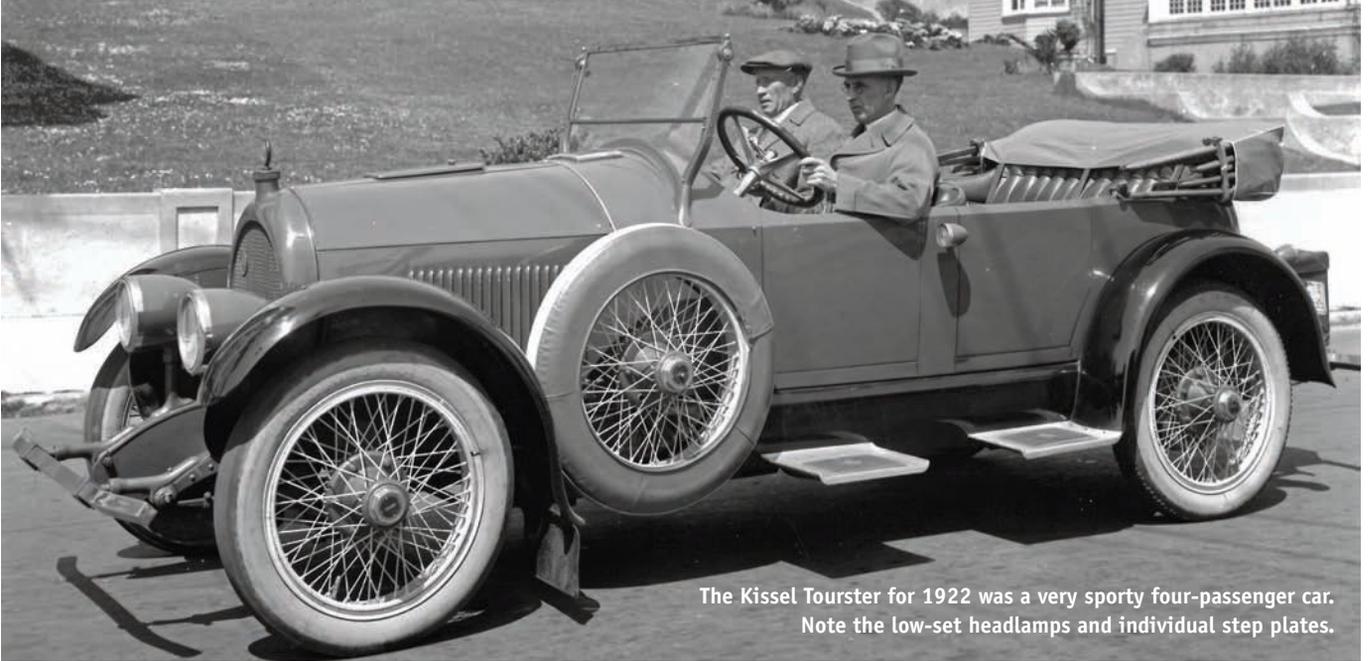
As nice as the 12-cylinder cars were, they failed to sell in reasonable numbers and were dropped by 1919. Kissel shuffled its model range, replacing the Silver Special line with the new Custom-Built series,



1920 Kissel "Custom Built" Tourster—one of several sporting body styles offered that year.



One of America's most famous sports cars: the Kissel "Gold Bug" Speedster. Although the company referred to the car simply as the Kissel Speedster, the public slapped it with the Gold Bug nickname after seeing a yellow model at the New York Auto Show, and the name stuck. One very interesting feature on this car is the side-mounted "pocket seat" seen just ahead of the rear wheel. This was an extra seat that slid out from the side of the body, and was used by very daring, devil-may-care occupants.



The Kissel Tourster for 1922 was a very sporty four-passenger car. Note the low-set headlamps and individual step plates.

featuring 13 distinct models. The top Kissel series was now the 6-38 100-Point Six.

From 1920-1922, Kissel focused on a single series, the Custom-Built Six, each year offering eight body models powered by a 61-hp six-cylinder engine. All Kissels were stylish, but the two-passenger Speedster—especially popular in yellow—was the one young men throughout the country dreamed of. It had an almost cult status.

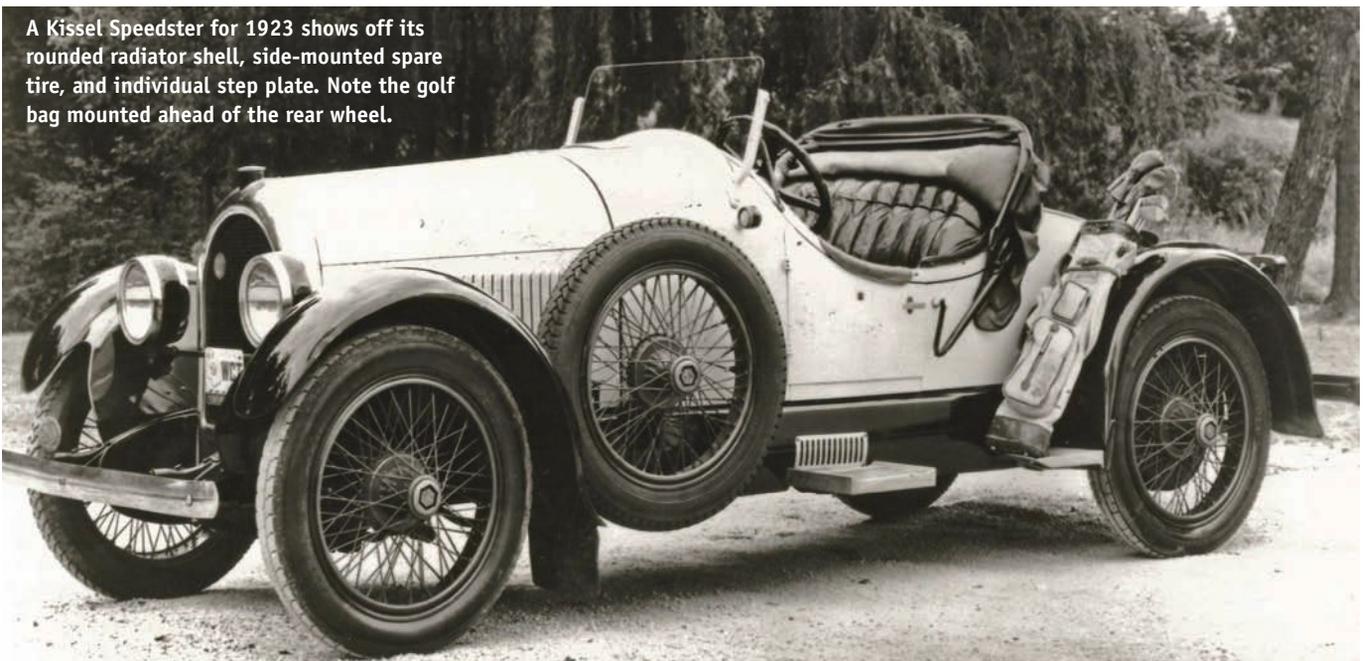
However, Kissel production sank to just 829 cars and trucks in 1921 due to a postwar recession. Management cut prices by up to \$500, with little effect. Production for 1922 was just 891 vehicles, and prices were cut again. The standard touring car went from \$2,475 to \$2,175, while the Speedster was \$2,695, a \$300 drop. As sales continued to sputter, management began to consider other markets for business.

An 18-passenger bus was developed, and sold in modest numbers.

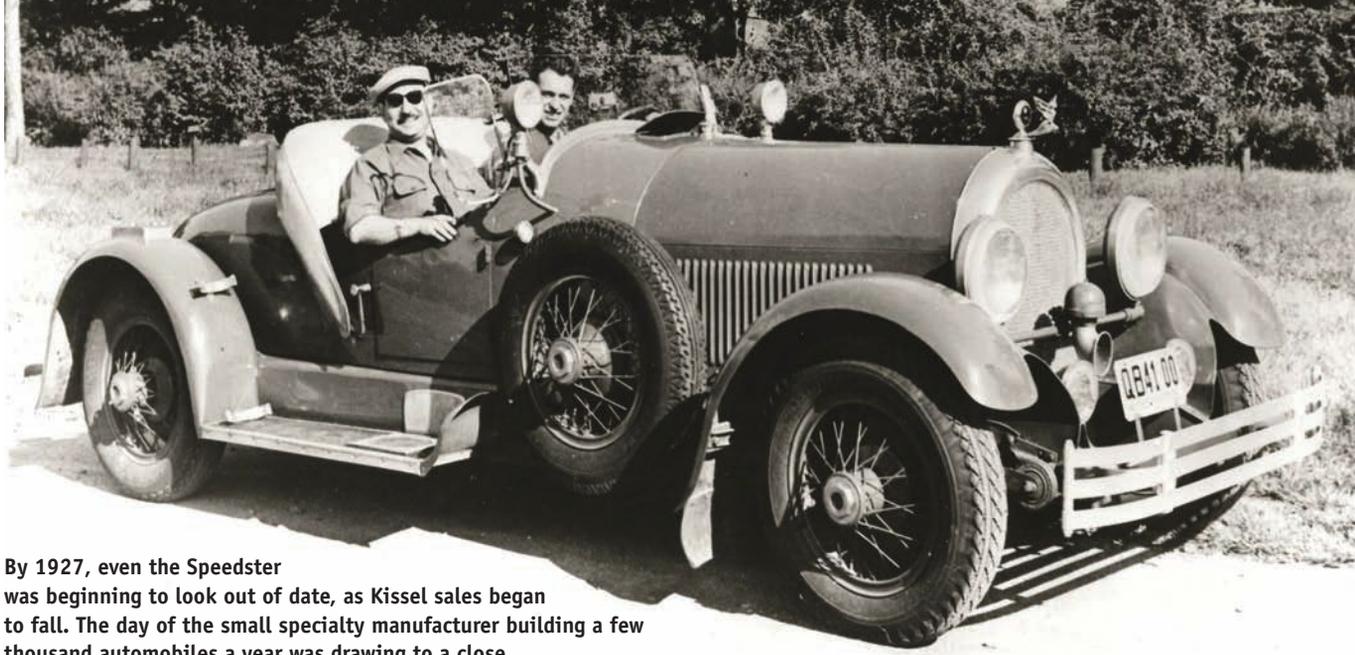
Over the years, Kissel had shuffled its model range, trying to build sales volume, but to little avail. Dealers asked them to move down into the \$1,000-\$2,000 range. So, for 1923, a new phaeton was introduced with a \$1,485 price tag. In response, production rose to just over 2,100 vehicles. However, the following year, the economy was poor and production sank to 803 units. For cars of such good styling and quality, it was discouraging. However, mass production was becoming the standard of the business, and the era of a small producer building two or three thousand cars a year was nearing its end. The automobile industry was consolidating, and only the larger companies would survive.

Fighting back, Kissel dramatically

expanded its offerings for 1925. There were now four series: six-cylinder Models 55 Standard and 55 Deluxe, each offering 11 distinct models; the new eight-cylinder Model 75 Standard with 10 models; and the 75 Deluxe, offering a whopping 14 versions. Prices ranged from \$1,795 to \$3,585. Each series included both two- and four-passenger versions of the popular Speedster. Production climbed to 2,125 vehicles. That year, company officers stressed the firm's 19 years of experience building automobiles. Noting the dozens of brands that had gone out of business, they stated, "Nothing can affect the growth of Kissel. It is as permanent as the motor car." That was true in Wisconsin, where Kissel was second in popularity only to Packard in the over-\$1,500 range, but in the rest of the country Kissel was an also-ran.



A Kissel Speedster for 1923 shows off its rounded radiator shell, side-mounted spare tire, and individual step plate. Note the golf bag mounted ahead of the rear wheel.



By 1927, even the Speedster was beginning to look out of date, as Kissel sales began to fall. The day of the small specialty manufacturer building a few thousand automobiles a year was drawing to a close.

The 1926 model year brought the new All-Year Coupe Roadster, a roadster body with a folding landau-coupe roofline and roll-down windows for all-year comfort. Available in two and four-passenger (via a rumble seat) versions, it combined sporting looks with practicality. Although the cars initially proved very popular, by mid year, Kissel sales began to slacken, and totals fell to 1,972 vehicles. It seemed nothing to worry about, but in retrospect, it was the beginning of Kissel's final descent.

Kissel's custom-built, wooden-framed bodies had always been known for sturdiness and excellent styling, but their construction was labor intensive and that was reflected in the vehicle's price—and in the company's cost per unit. As lovely as the Kissels were, they were becoming anachronisms, and sales continued to drop, falling to 1,147 vehicles for 1927.

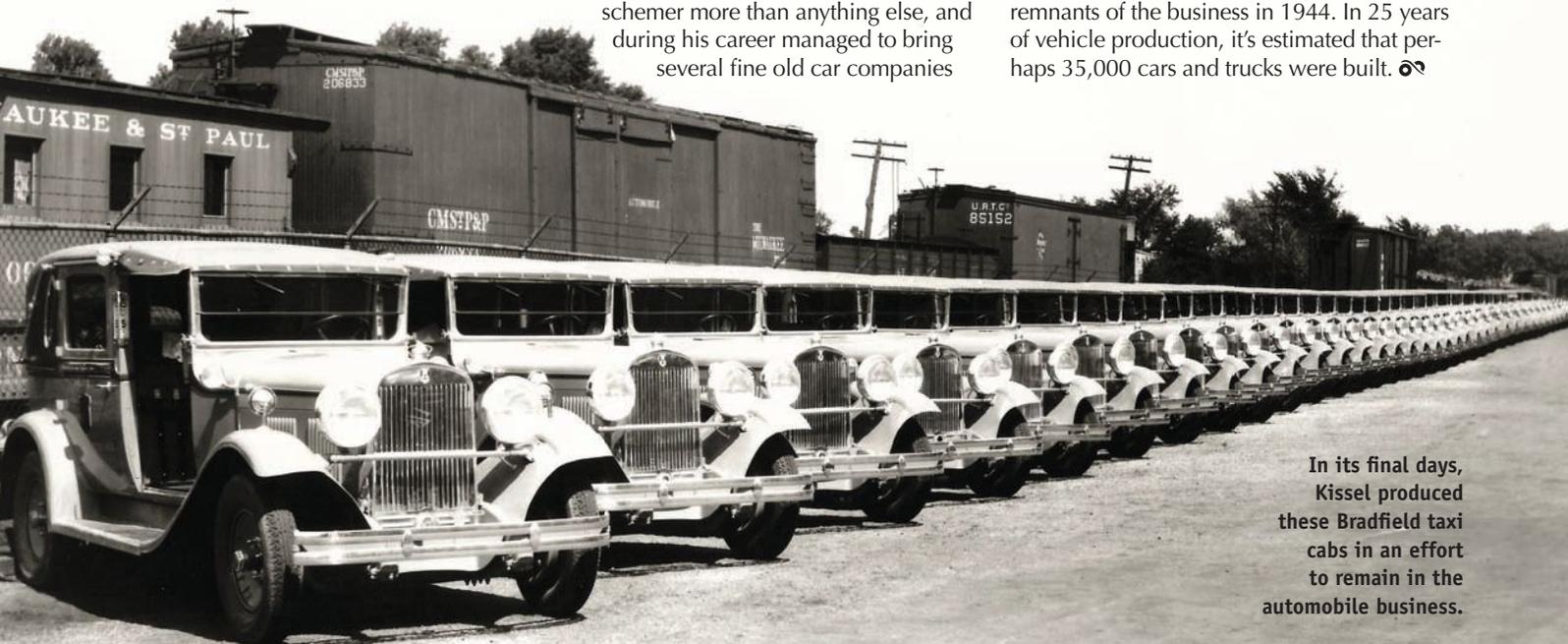
The 1928 line included a smaller six-cylinder Model 70, along with a special run of 100 "Kissel White Eagle Deluxe" models based on the eight-cylinder 8-90 chassis. Available in the same body styles as the ordinary Kissel eights, the White Eagles were luxuriously-trimmed and carried a three-pound Eagle set upon the radiator cap.

But sales fell again that year, and Kissel lost money. To offset the lost volume, the company began building funeral cars for Boston's National Casket Company, along with taxicabs marketed under the Bradfield badge. It even began to downplay the Kissel name, marketing the 1929 models simply as the "White Eagle Series." Nothing worked.

Then came the fatal mistake. In 1930, Kissel entered into an agreement with Archie Andrews of New Era Motors to manufacture 1,500 of his Ruxton automobiles, annually. Andrews was a promoter and schemer more than anything else, and during his career managed to bring several fine old car companies

to ruin. His cunningly contrived agreement stated that if Kissel was unable to meet the terms of the contract, control of the company would go to Andrews in return for stock in New Era. Kissel failed to meet the terms, but rather than allow Andrews to take them over, management put the firm into receivership in September 1930. The Kissels tried to find new financing or some way to restart production, but couldn't. They considered having Moon manufacture a front-wheel-drive car for them, but in the end, they leased much of the plant to other companies. The part they retained was used for light manufacturing.

The Kissel Motor Company became simply the Kissel Company until the formation of Kissel Industries. It produced replacement cylinder heads for Ford and Chevrolet, outboard engines for Sears Roebuck, and, during World War II, torpedo parts for the Navy. The Kissel family finally sold the remnants of the business in 1944. In 25 years of vehicle production, it's estimated that perhaps 35,000 cars and trucks were built. ☞



In its final days, Kissel produced these Bradfield taxicabs in an effort to remain in the automobile business.

Tom McCahill

For 30 years, he was America's pre-eminent automotive journalist, telling it as he saw it—whether the car companies wanted to hear it or not



BY JEFF KOCH

The first automobile manufacturer to actually deliver his new cars to the public has been Ford, and even now here and there on the highway, we can see some of these 1946 jobs all decked out in their polished chromium and shiny paint. As soon as I heard that the new Fords were coming off the production line, I rushed to Dearborn, Michigan, and after getting the go-ahead from company officials, I was given a stock car and proceeded to ‘give it the works.’”

The author was “Uncle” Tom McCahill, debuting in the pulpy pages of

Mechanix Illustrated in February 1946. This was the opening salvo of postwar automotive journalism—actual hands-on testing and independent judgment rather than regurgitating a manufacturer’s press release.

Thomas Jay McCahill III, was born in 1907 in Larchmont, New York, to a family of some wealth and influence. His grandfather, Thomas Jay McCahill I, was a successful Harvard-trained libel lawyer who worked for the giants of the newspaper business. McCahill’s father, TJC II, was a football all-American at Yale, won a \$50,000 prize shooting pigeons

in Monte Carlo, and was admitted to the New York bar after graduation. Rather than practice law, however, TJC II continued to lead the sporting life, winning the billiards championship at the Yale Club in New York shortly before his passing. Crucially, he also managed a Mercedes distributorship in New York. The McCahills also provided room and board: When Mercedes came to America to compete for the Vanderbilt Cup (held in New York from 1904-1910), the team stayed with the McCahills in their Larchmont home. According to a *Daytona Beach Sunday News Journal*

Six Favorite Home Workshop Projects in Full Color

MECHANIX[®] ILLUSTRATED

THE HOW-TO-DO MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1971

TOM McCAHILL'S 25th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

STILL ONLY **35c**

Uncle Tom Retests the
Amazing 1948 Tucker,
Chooses His All-Time
Favorite Cars...and
Reveals Some Surprising
Facts about Himself!



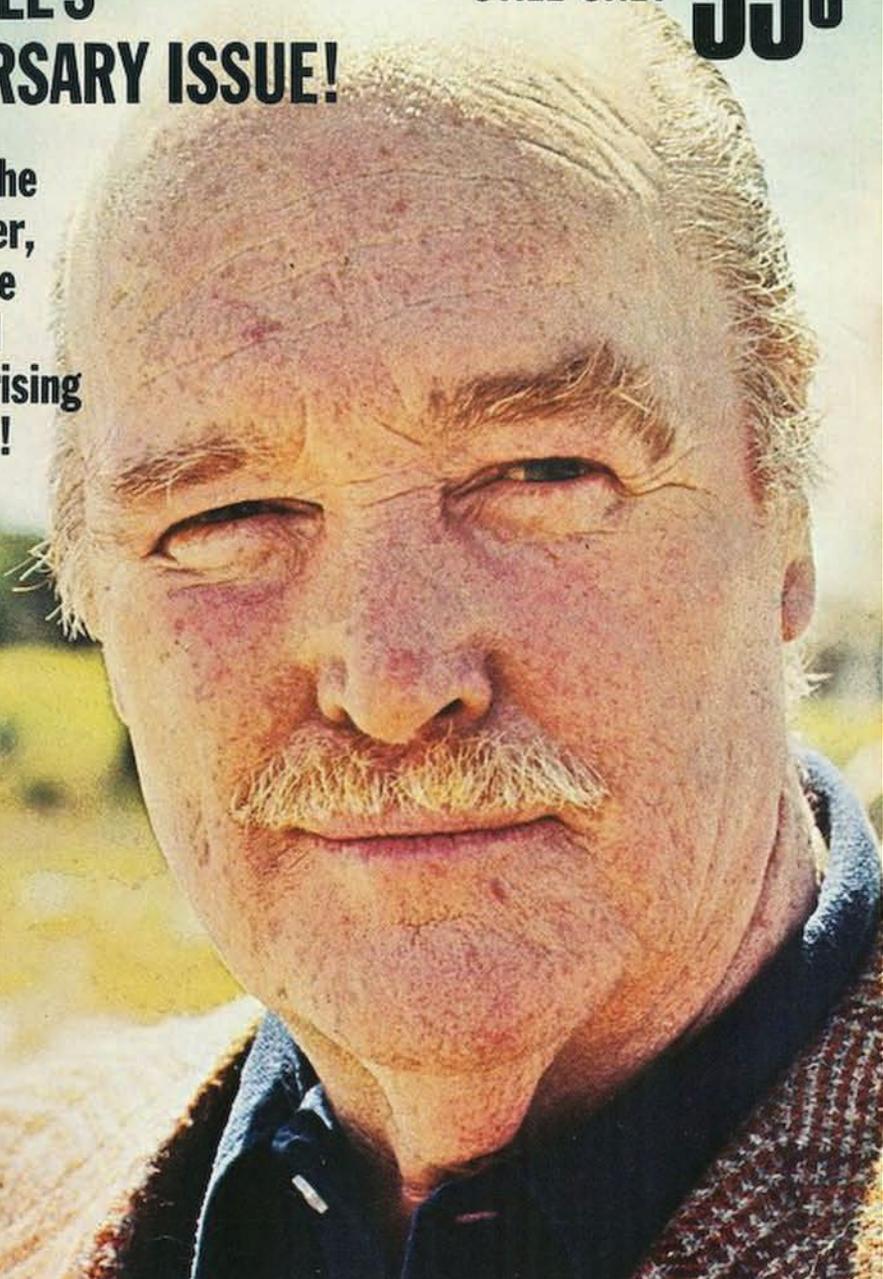
1948 Tucker



1948 Davis



1962 Chrysler 300

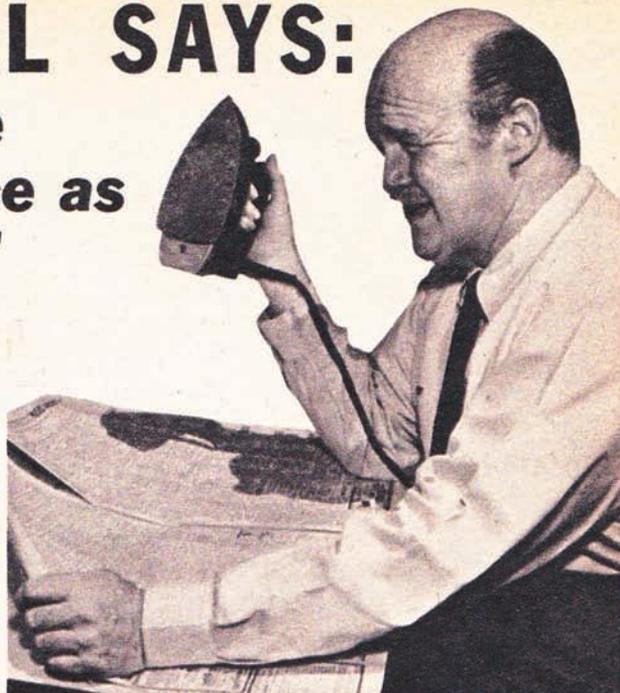


TOM McCAHILL SAYS:

“Good Appliance Repairmen are Scarce as Edsel Dealers!”

I don't think anything disturbs me as much as trying to find an appliance repairman . . . and finding out I'll have to wait my turn because he has more business than he can handle.

With over 400 million Appliances now in use, and more coming every year, there just are not enough repairmen around to take care of every Mrs. Jones who wants a broken Appliance mended in a hurry! And that's why a smart guy could really clean up in the Appliance repair field.



McCahill wasn't above shilling for non-automotive advertisers in the pages of *MI*. His tell-it-like-it-is nature always lent credibility.

profile in 1964, McCahill III's first car ride was in a Mercedes.

McCahill III also went to Yale, graduating with a degree in either English or fine arts (his story changed over time). After college, he briefly sold Marmons and owned a couple of repair shops for high-end luxury cars, but the Depression squashed those ventures. For most of the 1930s, he wrote articles and fiction for periodicals ranging from *Reader's Digest* to yachting magazines. (“A lot of people,” he said in a 1968 interview, “still think I'm writing fiction.”) When

fiction stopped selling, he turned to writing marine-engine stories for *Yachting* magazine.

By 1944, fresh out of wartime service, McCahill was in Manhattan with a copy of the *New York Times* classifieds and \$43 in his pocket. An ad for the position of automotive editor sounded intriguing, and he was soon writing tech pieces for *Popular Science*—things like how to rebuild your rear axle—all without mentioning brand names, lest they suggest that a particular car company built an inferior product. But

McCahill couldn't help naming names, and he was fired on the spot; that same day, he was hired as a freelance writer for Fawcett, which published a line of magazines and comics, from the pulpy *Daring Detective* and *Screen Secrets* to the wholesome *Family Circle* and *Woman's Day*. But the big dog at Fawcett in the 1940s was *Mechanix Illustrated (MI)*, selling a quarter-million copies a month. McCahill was never an employee for Fawcett; he was freelance only.

It was McCahill's idea to evaluate new cars and report the findings. He sprung his road-test idea on his editor, Bernie Wolfe, who was fine with McCahill's notion, but car companies were less enthused. The car companies didn't want to play ball, and so, early road tests were mostly quick driving impressions. His 1946 Ford test was conducted as he posed as a photographer wanting to take more photographs of the car; he drove a '46 Buick by convincing a rail-yard worker to take one off the train for him to try.

McCahill tested two cars a month for *MI*, and eventually car companies started loaning him cars to evaluate. By the early 1950s, *MI* circulation topped a million copies a month—most of it on the back of McCahill's pithy prose and outrageous analogies. Car companies quickly realized that a couple of lines from McCahill could drive or halt showroom traffic.

Oldsmobile felt this. McCahill's drive of the new 1948 Oldsmobile 98 rendered opinion that stomping its gas pedal was “like stepping on a wet sponge.” Neither



McCahill's bread-and-butter were the cars driven by a million-plus readers, but occasionally he'd get behind the wheel of something more exotic, like this early '50s Cunningham C3.

the division nor its dealers were thrilled, and while his remarks may not have been the only impetus, they certainly helped push Oldsmobile to drop its new OHV V-8 into the 76 body, creating the model 88 and, arguably, the first postwar muscle car.

McCahill's pen praised and punished with proportionate pizzazz. Tackling bends in a '52 Nash was like "steering a three-acre lot." His 1953 Kaiser test car was as comfortable as "a wheelchair upholstered in cream puffs." The 1954 De Soto felt "as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar and just as fast." The 1957 Pontiac's ride quality was as "smooth as a prom queen's thighs." Buicks for 1957 handled "like a fat matron trying to get out of a slippery bathtub," while Fords of the same era "cornered as flat as a mailman's feet." Even recognized Classics didn't escape his gaze: early 1930s Imperials were "...long-hooded brutes [with] more sex-appeal than a boatload of starlets anchored off Alcatraz." Even if you didn't like cars, the spinning similes were amusing.

Later, McCahill would create the 0-60 measure of acceleration, which would become a standard. (Even overseas, 0-100 kilometer-per-hour acceleration times were adopted—100 kph working out to 62 mph.) Combined with the established 1/4-mile time that came from the world of hot rodding in the late 1940s, these metrics remain the litmus test for what separates hot cars from the merely tepid.

McCahill was not afraid to use the pages of *MI* as a bully pulpit to advance the cause of the car. He rode American carmakers for their "Jello suspensions" that provided a soft ride, but which did little to help handling, and believed that better brakes and handling were keys to automotive safety. He tested foreign cars, too, praising their build quality while butting heads with Walter Reuther of the UAW over American cars' lack thereof. Yet McCahill also proposed that, in lieu of war reparations, car imports cease immediately and England and France instead receive boatloads of used American cars to stimulate the U.S. economy. He also claimed that the new 1960 Corvair he tested handled better than the '59 Porsche he tried previously.

He also led a rich and varied life beyond car testing. He married four times. He raced a series of cars (including a 1952 Cadillac 62, a Carrera Panamericana-spec Lincoln, and an early Thunderbird) in NASCAR's Daytona speed trials. He was the 1956 duck-shooting champion, and runner-up for

1959. He was a fisherman and deep-sea diver. McCahill was said to be the last living relative of famed Scottish outlaw/folk hero Rob Roy. He had a succession of black Labrador retrievers as hunting dogs, including Boji, who famously appeared in many 1950s and '60s *MI* road tests as a measure of trunk volume. From 1962 onward, he was a director of the Daytona International Speedway.

After a legacy of more than 600 road tests over the course of 30 years, McCahill passed on May 10, 1975, aged 68; cause of death was not given, but a 1968 *Car and Driver* interview that describes him chain-smoking Winstons "pausing only long enough to rock the room with shattering coughs that roil up from the depths of his lungs" points us in a direction. *Mechanix Illustrated* magazine never acknowledged McCahill's death: fearing that readers would disappear without McCahill's prose to entertain them, they instead ran a column called McCahill Reports, which was ghost-written by Brooks Brender, his stepson from his fourth and final wife. *Mechanix Illustrated* faded in time; it was rechristened *Home Mechanix* in

1984, renamed again in 1996, and finally disappeared from publication in 2001.

Tom McCahill's influence is in every new-car magazine you can read today, and has been for 70 years: always squarely on the side of the reader and new-car buyer, never in the pocket of the car companies. In 1956, Packard President Hugh Ferry told Tom: "We never really liked you, but we always respected you."

"It was," McCahill later said, "the finest compliment I ever received." 🐾



McCahill traveled the globe; in England he tried Ford's experimental Comuta in 1967. Designed as a full-on electric car to reduce congestion and pollution, the Comuta had four 12-volt, 85-amp lead batteries, a top speed of 37 miles an hour, and a 37-mile range at 25 mph.



New Horizon

Restoring a 1979 Plymouth Horizon using some of the last available NOS parts

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO
RESTORATION PHOTOS BY ROBERT SUHR

It's been 39 years since the 1978 Plymouth Horizon and Dodge Omni first began rolling off the Belvidere, Illinois, assembly line and ushered in a new era of design and engineering at Chrysler. The Omni/Horizon's L-body platform was the "first front-wheel-drive car with a transverse-mounted engine ever built in North America," boasted a 1978 Omni dealer brochure. Conceived for economy while

retaining ample passenger and cargo space, the unitized construction sub-compact L-cars rode on a 99.2-inch wheelbase, were just 164.8 inches long, and a broad 66.2 inches wide.

These hatchback sedans were based on the Horizon developed by Chrysler Europe, but the U.S. versions had different suspensions and drivetrains. Their target competitor was Volkswagen's Rabbit. The

Omni/Horizon was *Motor Trend's* 1978 Car of the Year, though *Consumer Reports* cited a handling/control issue, which brought about some debate in the press.

Journalist and Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, resident Robert Suhr knows the history of the Omni and Horizon all too well. "A friend used to run a Chrysler Plymouth dealership, and our family owned 19 of these vehicles over the years," he explains. Robert currently holds the titles to four Dodge Omnis, a 1979, 1983 multi-award winner, and 1990 model in addition to this Horizon.



He bought this originally Chianti Red 1979 Plymouth with red two-tone interior in St. Louis on August 17, 2013. By his own admission, it was only in fair condition and wasn't running, but it struck a nostalgic chord. "I wanted an early L-body to turn into a woodie, and this one was a complete 1979 model, which is difficult to find today."

Additional options included A/C; automatic transaxle; light package; custom interior package with cloth and vinyl seats; cargo compartment dress-up and sound

package; bright Rallye center caps, lug nuts and trim rings for the standard 13-inch Road wheels; left remote control mirror; power steering and brakes; and tinted windows.

The restoration and transformation into a woodie began in September 2013. According to Robert, "The first year included teardown and noting which parts were needed. It then took a year to accumulate all the NOS parts. Much of the actual restoration was performed in the third year."

Ray Donch Body Werks in Pittsburgh

was entrusted with the exterior revitalization in May 2015. Sandblasting and sanding stripped the factory finish, and the left rear inner wheel well's upper shock (alternately referred to as a rear shock or a rear strut in factory literature) mount area and the right front fender were replaced.

Lesonal epoxy primer was applied over the bare metal body to aid adhesion, 3M Quick Grip Filler was used sparingly to fill small imperfections and was block-sanded smooth. Multiple coats of Sikkens Colorbuild Plus primer were applied,



When purchased, the red-on-red Horizon had a dented passenger fender, no grille, rust in the rear, and a non-running engine. Despite the hurdles, Robert was still confident that this Plymouth would be a sound foundation for a white woodie build-up.



Robert and his uncle Paul inspected the non-running Volkswagen 1.7-liter engine to diagnose its issues. Under the previous owner's care, a catastrophic engine failure resulted in multiple holes in the block. Paul removes the ailing engine with a hoist.



During teardown, a serious rust issue was revealed at the driver's-side rear shock mount. At Ray Donch Body Werks' request, the door jambs were sanded to ease refinishing, and the shop would then sand the rest of the body bare.



To ensure the Horizon was structurally sound before work continued, the rear shock mount area was repaired first. Its rusted portion was cut out, the surrounding metal was cleaned, and then a rust-free replacement panel from a donor car was MIG welded in.



Spinnaker White replaced Chianti Red for the exterior. To facilitate the color change, the body was painted while disassembled. The shop would then bolt on the hood, doors, fenders, and hatch, properly align them, and install the front and rear glass.



Ray Donch Body Werks also applied the woodgrain appliqué and gold pinstripes. Then the Horizon went back to Robert's garage where he and Paul installed the side windows. The headlamps, grille, taillamps, body trim, and bumpers would follow.



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The dashboard and door panels are original, and the carpet is new. Though not installed yet here, the headliner and the front buckets and rear seat were professionally recovered with NOS material by Rich's Auto Upholstery in Gibsonia.



After the body and interior were finished, work began on the chassis. The wheels, brake system, anti-roll bar, front suspension, component crossmember, and steering rack were removed. Some of these parts were restored, but the wear items were replaced.



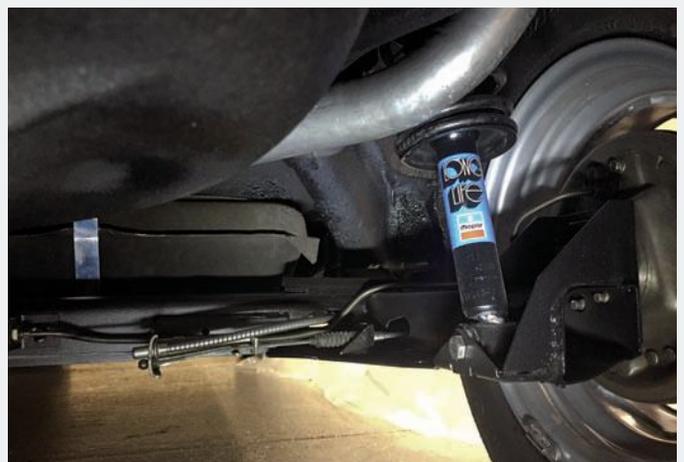
The front suspension crossmember was stripped, and Nason SelectPrime 2K urethane primer was applied followed by Nason Chassis Black 422-05. Robert says the NOS control arms were left in natural steel with Cosmoline coating them. The steering rack is also NOS.



To avoid damaging the paint, the Horizon was perched on jackstands, and the rebuilt engine with the automatic transaxle was slid under the front of the car and then lifted into the tight engine bay and secured to the mounts. The chassis parts were then bolted in.



Up front, NOS MacPherson struts (with the parts decal still in place), steering knuckles, hubs, CV-style drive shaft assemblies and disc brakes were bolted in, and new lines and hoses were employed. Single-piston calipers squeeze the pads against rotors.



Most of the rear suspension components were also refinished with Nason SelectPrime 2K and Nason Chassis Black. NOS natural steel backing plates coated with Cosmoline and the brake drums were used. Note the Mopar decal.

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with block-sanding between each using a progression of grades of paper. One coat of sealer was laid down before three coats of U-Tech U500 single-stage acrylic urethane in Spinnaker White were sprayed. The finish was wet sanded with 1200-, 1500-, and 2000-grade paper and then compounded and polished with the 3M Perfect It III system.

An NOS vinyl woodgrain overlay and the gold vinyl pinstripes were applied at the shop, and Robert installed the remaining exterior parts at home. By September 2015, the body was completed.

Still two years before Chrysler's

2.2-liter engine was offered, the 1979 Horizon was equipped with the 70-hp (65 hp in California), 8.2:1 compression ratio, overhead cam 1.7-liter Volkswagen four-cylinder. Unfortunately, this engine was damaged by the previous owner, so a replacement was tracked down in Toledo, Ohio, and purchased in April of 2014.

While the body was out for restoration, Robert and his uncle, Paul Barr, disassembled the engine. The crankshaft journals were polished, and the bottom end was re-assembled with new piston rings, bearings, and gaskets. A valve job was performed on the aluminum cylinder head, and new

valve guides and springs were added. The remaining original parts were retained. A Holley two-barrel carburetor is bolted to a Chrysler aluminum intake manifold, the NOS exhaust manifold is cast iron, and Chrysler's Electronic Spark Control System provides ignition.

The optional A404 three-speed Torque-Flite transaxle (a four-speed manual was standard) was rebuilt using Mopar parts, and an NOS torque converter was installed. Final drive ratio is 3.48:1.

Robert began the interior restoration with teardown in April 2014, and he reinstalled it in November of 2015. With





This is an extremely difficult car on which to perform a complete “nut and bolt” restoration. Unlike Chargers, Barracudas, Corvettes, and Mustangs, you can’t open a catalog and order any part you need. This took months and months of hunting and calling Chrysler dealers across the county and hoping they still had a 30-year-old part sitting on their shelves, and I accepted the fact that I wasn’t going to find everything. I’m almost certain this restoration can never be done again because many of the NOS parts on this car were the last remaining in the Chrysler dealer inventory system, making it a truly “one of one” car.

the body completed and the engine and transaxle ready to install, in January 2016 the “Iso-Strut” front suspension and “Independent trailing arm with integral anti-sway feature” rear were removed for refurbishing.

The engine and transaxle were re-installed, followed by the restored “front suspension component crossmember,” with NOS control arms and steering rack, the struts, steering knuckles, hubs, CV drive shafts (axles), and disc brakes. Then the rear suspension and drum brakes were bolted in, and an NOS exhaust system was mounted, as were the wheels with Maxxis MA-1 P155/80R13 tires.

Many small parts were also replaced with NOS items, including the Electronic Spark Control computer, voltage regulator, relays, A/C compressor, alternator, distributor, headlights, fender-mounted turn-signal indicators, ignition coil, spark plug wires, spark plugs, and light bulbs.

Options that Robert added during the restoration consist of the Premium Wood-grain Package, an AM/FM stereo with 8-Track, roll-top storage module, center console, luggage rack, and front and rear

bumper guards.

The project went well, but Robert notes how flawed NOS parts slowed progress. “We had issues with the master cylinder. The thermostat was the wrong size; I ordered three or four under the same part number and finally the correct one showed up. Some parts were slightly damaged from decades of being in inventory. Sometimes, pieces were missing from the assemblies. NOS window channel guides were so dried out they disintegrated in my hands.

“Chrysler’s parts locator system couldn’t be accessed online, so I got a parts book to find the correct part numbers, took them to a dealer and hoped its parts department personnel would help. I spaced out my visits and only asked for 10 part numbers to be run each time, so as not to overwhelm them.

“When they located a part, they’d provide me with the contact information for the dealer, and I would call,” Robert says. “Many dealers would say they didn’t have it anymore despite the fact that it was still in the system. Other times, I’d have to explain, ‘This is not a joke; I really do need a relay

for a 1979 Plymouth Horizon.’ Occasionally, I got the parts at cost, but sometimes they were more expensive.

“The dealer always had the best prices, but didn’t have all the parts I needed, so I had to go online to find NOS parts specialists.”

Some parts proved expensive to obtain, based on the way they’re sold. “I had to buy 10-feet of ‘Mopar’ heater hose just to get the 18-inch length the Horizon needed,” Robert says.

By April 2016, his Horizon was road ready. It now travels about 300 miles per year between May and September. “It accelerates adequately and drives and handles like a new car with new ‘stiff’ parts.” Robert also attends cruises and car shows with it.

American roads were inundated with Horizons and Omnis for over a decade, and the aggressively performing and styled Omni GLH and GLHS versions are still coveted. However, Omni/Horizon production ended after 1990, so they’re seldom seen today. Yet, as long as Robert Suhr and others who share his appreciation for these L-bodies keep getting them in the public eye, these game-changing Mopars won’t soon be forgotten. 📷



1930 VIKING EIGHT

FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

The new Viking is particularly outstanding in performance. Its 90-degree, V-type, eight-cylinder engine delivers 81 horsepower, with exceptional smoothness throughout the entire speed range. Its response to the throttle is remarkable, both in get-away from a standing start and in acceleration at the higher speeds. Its top speed is greater than the average motorist will use and it provides a mighty power reserve for steep hills, long grades, and hard pulling. Self-energizing mechanical four-wheel brakes of the new two-shoe, internal-expanding type assure smooth, sure deceleration in keeping with Viking speed and get-away.



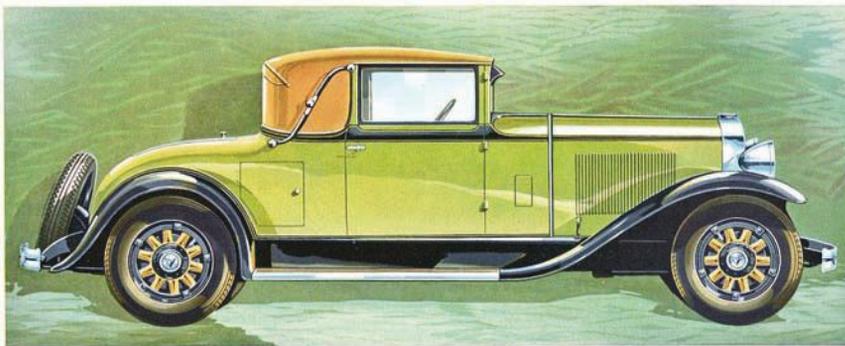
VIKING FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

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Automatically controlled full-length vertical radiator shutters for efficiency to the beauty of the deep radiator. Beauty is enhanced by the long-life luster of chromium plating.

IGHT AT MEDIUM PRICE



VIKING CONVERTIBLE COUPE WITH REAR DECK SEAT

Among the most enjoyable features of the new Viking are its driving convenience and handling ease. The entire front seat may be moved instantly forward or backward to suit the driver. The steering wheel is also adjustable. Both gear shift and clutch action are exceptionally smooth and quiet. The worm and split nut steering gear and short turning radius assure finger-tip steering and easy parking. The doors on all models are unusually wide and contribute to the comfort that characterizes every feature of the Viking.



The Fisher adjustable front seat and Viking's adjustable steering wheel combine to suit each driver's individual stature.

9..

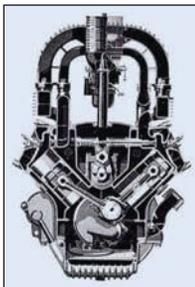
THE 90-DEGREE V-EIGHT AT MEDIUM PRICE

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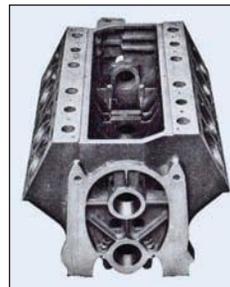
EIGHT-CYLINDER SMOOTHNESS AT ITS BEST

The Viking introduces desirable and exclusive new characteristics of performance – the result of new developments in the 90-degree, V-type principle, brought about by new engineering advancements based on well-established, time-proved fundamentals. The principle of 90-degree, V-eight engine design permits the use of two banks of pistons to propel a short, rigid, two-plane, counterbalanced crankshaft. The result is smooth, highly concentrated power. In the new Viking engine, power impulses occur at precisely equally overlapping intervals – providing eight-cylinder smoothness at its best.



RIGIDITY AND COMPACTNESS, CONTRIBUTING TO SMOOTHNESS AND LONG LIFE

Many of the new features to be found in the Viking are made possible by integral construction of the entire cylinder block and crankcase in one unit – an advancement in V-eight design found for the first time in the Viking engine. It results in rigidity, accessibility, a new and desirable valve arrangement, and highly efficient cooling and lubrication. In addition to this feature, the natural compactness of the V-type engine, combined with the added strength obtained through ribbing and trussing the crankcase, provides exceptional rigidity – a vital factor in smoothness, quietness, and long life.



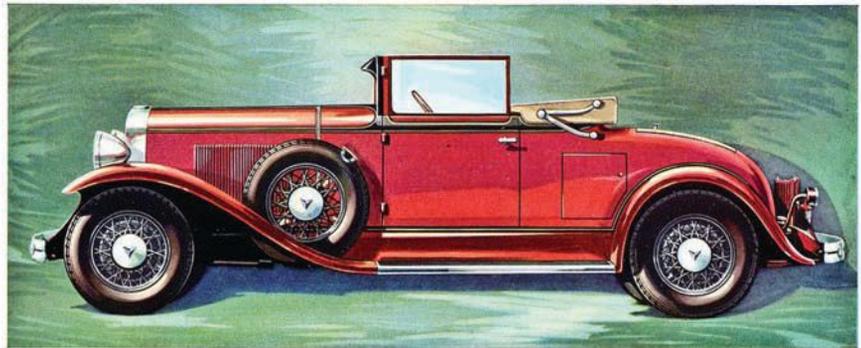
THE VIKING EIGHT

The Viking . . . a newcomer among fine cars . . . one vested with worthy associations . . . is the result of more than three-years' development by Oldsmobile and General Motors engineers, working hand in hand. Only Viking offers the advantages of 90-degree,

V-eight performance in the medium-price field. It is built to meet a growing public demand for an eight-cylinder car of General Motors quality at medium price. The Viking introduces to its field qualities of stamina, endurance, and brilliant achievement best typified by the intrepid spirit of the race from which its name is derived.

DeLUXE CONVERTIBLE COUPE WITH REAR DECK SEAT

The bodies of the new Viking are the smartest, latest style creations of Fisher artist-engineers. In designing the Viking, they sought distinction along the most difficult path – the achievement of beauty and grace through simple lines. The result justifies their diligence, for the new Viking takes its place among the smartest cars, regardless of price. And Viking bodies are as sturdy as they are beautiful, due to Fisher combination wood-and-steel construction. Flush door construction, the generous fabric beading between metal surfaces, and the use of non-shatterable plate glass in the windshield are details that indicate the quality standards throughout the Viking.

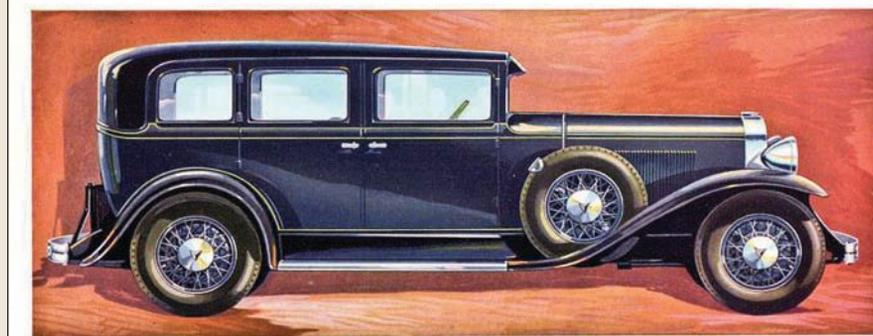


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Convertible Coupe rear deck seat is trimly upholstered and affords ample space for two additional passengers with the top down affords an intimate sport car.



VIKING DeLUXE FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

The new Viking chassis has a wheelbase of 125 inches. The extra strong frame tapers to the front to permit a short turning radius, and is low dropped to provide a low center of gravity and maximum roadability. Every provision has been made for restful riding ease. Seats are wide, deep-cushioned, and comfortably form-fitting. Sedan rear seats are equipped with flexible arm rests. Head room and leg room is more than ample. Four Lovejoy hydraulic shock absorbers function in unison with the springs to smooth out road irregularities.



Walnut paneling, vanity case, and genuine mohair upholstery create luxury atmosphere for car of medium price.

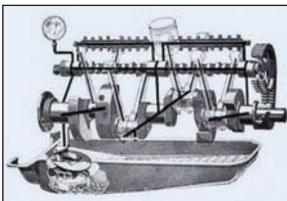
THE 90-DEGREE V-EIGHT AT MEDIUM PRICE

KING DeLUXE FOUR-DOOR SEDAN

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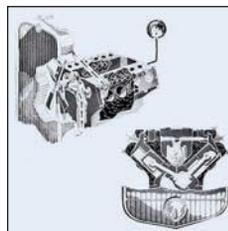
EIGHT LUBRICATION

The new Viking engine has a remarkable lubricating system. Oil is pumped under pressure direct to the main, connecting rod, and camshaft bearings. Pressure lubrication is also extended through rifle-drilled passages in the connecting rods to piston pins, and through the rocker arm main shaft to all rocker arm bearings. The pump is submerged in the oil pan, where the flow of oil is positive. Crankcase ventilation prevents excessive oil dilution. And injurious foreign matter is removed by the new and exclusive Viking precipitating-trap oil cleaner and dual air cleaners. Generous water spaces, extending below the cylinder walls, assist in maintaining lubricating oil at an efficient temperature.



A DISTINCT ENGINEERING ADVANCEMENT IN THE COOLING SYSTEM

Uniform, efficient cooling of the entire engine is assured by equal manifold distribution of the water in the twin blocks, with graduated outlets direct to points of greatest heat. The accompanying diagram shows how completely the cylinder walls, valves, valve-stem guides, and combustion chambers are water-jacketed. The water space extends far down on the crankcase wall beyond the line of piston travel to assist in keeping the lubricating oil at the proper running temperature. The engine thermo-gauge, which is located on the dash, shows the actual temperature of the water circulating in the engine. Thermostatically controlled radiator shutters are standard equipment.



Corsica, the Compact



A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, MY friend Ron, his dog, Rocket, my dog, Rose Marie, and I were mapping out a road rally, when in the distance, he (Ron not Rocket) spotted a Chevrolet Corsica. Ron's father once owned a Chevrolet dealership, so he was familiar with Corsicas. He tried speeding up, so I could get a photo of it, but that Corsica was way too fast for Ron's Chrysler minivan. It was probably a V-6 model.

A Corsica is less a show car than a way to drive vintage daily. But, if you were to take care of your Corsica, maintaining it cosmetically and mechanically, in a few years, you would have an interesting car to show because this is one of those cars that sold like hotcakes, but you rarely see anymore.

Still think I am smoking something funny? Keep in mind that back in the day, no one thought my mother's brown 1972 four-door Mercury Comet was all that spectacular, but imagine if I still had it and brought it to a cruise-in this weekend. The crowd would be all over it.

The Chevrolet Corsica was introduced as a 1988 model. Offered as only a four-door sedan, there was also an attractive two-door companion make—the Chevrolet Beretta that may or may not be an underdog.

Corsica's "jelly bean" styling, first evidenced in the Ford Taurus/Mercury Sable twins introduced a couple years earlier, significantly marked the movement away from the boxy offerings that were omnipresent in the early 1980s. The Corsica also signaled a turn away from copying Japanese automotive trends and leaning toward European sports sedan-like styling and features—a welcome change to many.

The Corsica debuted with a 90-horsepower, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine

and an optional 2.8-liter V-6 with 130 horsepower. Transmission offerings were a three-speed automatic and a five-speed manual. Later in the first year, an AM-FM stereo with a digital clock was standard.

For less than \$10,000, you could drive off the dealer's lot in a base model. For a little less than \$14,000, you would be more comfortable with a V-6, automatic transmission, A/C, and power windows and locks. That was a pretty good price, catapulting the Corsica to sales of more than 290,000 examples its first year. They—Corsica and Beretta—were the second best-selling American cars of 1988. The Chevrolet Celebrity was number one.

A five-door hatchback joined the Corsica family in 1989, giving 39 cubic feet of cargo space with the rear seat folded down. The hatchback had a thicker C-pillar and more angled backlight, but one really had to look hard to tell the difference between it and the sedan. The Corsica sedans outsold the hatchbacks by 800 percent. Some blame price, with the hatchback costing almost \$400 more. But, hatchbacks in general were losing favor with the buying public. No one even says "hatchback" anymore; now we call them liftgates.

A more interesting model was the Corsica LTZ sedan with sport suspension, 15-inch alloy wheels, a split/folding rear seat, complete gauge package, and sporty interior. The LTZ's standard powerplant was the V-6.

More standard equipment was added to the build sheet in 1990 when black exterior trim replaced much of the chrome on the Corsica. The four-cylinder was replaced with a 2.2-liter version, increasing horsepower to 98 and torque to 120 lb-ft (up from 108).

The optional V-6 was enlarged to 3.1

liters, with an increase of five horsepower to 135 and torque to 180 lb-ft; transmissions remained unchanged. Corsica sales dropped slightly to 194,521 units, which was still very respectable.

In 1991, the LTZ was out, but driver-side airbags were in. To make up the difference, a performance package with Level III sports suspension, alloy wheels, and sports-inspired steering wheel called Z52 was added. This would be the last year for the hatchback.

Anti-lock brakes became standard on the Corsica in 1992. CFC-free A/C was new in 1994 when automatic door locks were standard as well. These locked the doors once you were moving.

As the Corsica entered its twilight years, daytime running lights were added for 1995, and the recently added four-speed automatic didn't require fluid changes for 100,000 miles. With mostly mechanical changes over a nine-year run, the Corsica and its stablemate, the Beretta, rode into the sunset at the end of the 1996 model year.

Many Corsicas are still in the hands of original owners or their families, but on occasion, they come up for sale. The ones I've found are usually in pretty good shape since they are from an era when running for more than 100,000 miles wasn't unusual, and rust wasn't a major factor anymore.

A Corsica can also be had for a few thousand, tops. Why not pick up a piece of American history? Regular maintenance will be a breeze, your fuel bill will be manageable, and parking a cinch. Take care of it, and a decade from now, you'll be the guy at the car show in a Corsica. Many of today's classics were once ubiquitous, everyday grocery getters. 🐾

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**Hemmings
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HAGERTY



George Beckman

Assembly Line Worker
Ford Motor Company

MY PARENTS OWNED SEVERAL

cars that they needed for their business, including a Nash, an Oldsmobile, and an ancient Chevy pickup. Somehow I became fond of the Nash, which was a very comfortable and sturdy automobile. The Nash was used mainly to transport food from our farm upstate to the family business in Brooklyn during World War II.

Growing up in the mid-Hudson Valley in a community with very few kids my age, I busied myself with my interest in cars. After high school and two years of college, I decided to try working as a salesman at our local Pontiac dealer. That job didn't last too long; however, I do recall selling one especially nice new Pontiac, a 1957 Bonneville convertible.

During this time, I decided to join the Navy. To do so, I had to take several tests and had to await my orders thereafter. So, in the meantime, I got a job at the Ford Motor Assembly Plant in Mahwah, New Jersey. I started there in January 1957. It was a new factory, and the largest Ford assembly plant. There were a few assembly lines: one for pickup trucks and two for cars.

My first job on the second shift ran from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and consisted of working at the beginning of the chassis assembly line. I bolted the rubber parts onto the "A" and "D" frame. These frames would be attached to the wheel spindle, an integral part of the car's left front suspension. A duplicate operation adjacent to me would build the right-side suspensions. The spindle assembly was attached to the chassis by an operator sitting on a floor cart who would place the pins through the frame attachment points as the chassis passed over his head. This operation was known as the "Octopus." This large green apparatus would hydraulically clamp coil spring and spindle onto the chassis for attachment as it passed.

After the chassis was completed, including frame, engine and axles, it was joined to the finished body assembly line. The bodies were tracked over the top of the chassis line, then lowered onto the chassis.



COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY

There was an assembly area called the "Merry Go Round," where the front clip was assembled. This required careful selection of colors and trim. There was a computer-controlled document called the "Build Sheet," which coordinated all these assemblies to come together correctly. Then the tires would come rolling out of a large hopper to be fitted on wheels and inflated. I still remember the hiss and the thump of this operation. After the fluids were added, the completed car was started and driven to the test ramp.

This would go on for eight to 10 hours per shift. It was very noisy, with all sorts of pneumatic tools going on and off. Specks of Cosmoline, grease, and tar flying all about. It would take an hour to scrub it from your hands and arms after the shift was over. It wasn't easy, but for a gearhead, it was a good job, a tough job, and a well-paid job making a great product.

One day, while strolling to my job location, I noticed a blueprint on an engineer's wall of a Ford car with a different grille—"Aha! The Edsel was coming!" At that time, I believe Ford was building 600 to 800 cars in a two-shift operation. The lower-priced Edsels were salted into the main assembly line and were just beginning to be built. The more expensive Edsels were built at the Metuchen, New Jersey, Mercury plant a few miles down the road.

The Edsels came off the assembly line by being pushed, and there were some problems with certain parts harnesses which didn't quite match the Ford system. Early-on problems like

these occur when new products are introduced; sometimes they require "debugging." The Edsels were moved to another area where they were repaired by special mechanics.

I worked the chassis assembly job for five months when an opportunity came up for a Quality Control Inspector at the final operation. With the production of the 1957 Fords in full swing, the new job involved a static road test of the cars as they came off the assembly line. The test involved starting the engine while the car's rear wheels were positioned on a free-turning drum. Checks were made for the shift points, oil leaks, lights, etc... It was a great-paying job—lots of overtime and I loved it. Those '57 Fords were a high-quality product.

Then the Navy came calling. I was in a dilemma; refuse the Navy and I might become an Army grunt. Better take the Navy offer—it was the right decision. Because 1958 was a recession year, most likely I would have been laid off by Ford. My two-year Navy service gave me some of the greatest experiences of my lifetime, while the Ford Quality Control job set the course for my future working career; later in life I would have the privilege to work in one of America's foremost computer industries. 📧

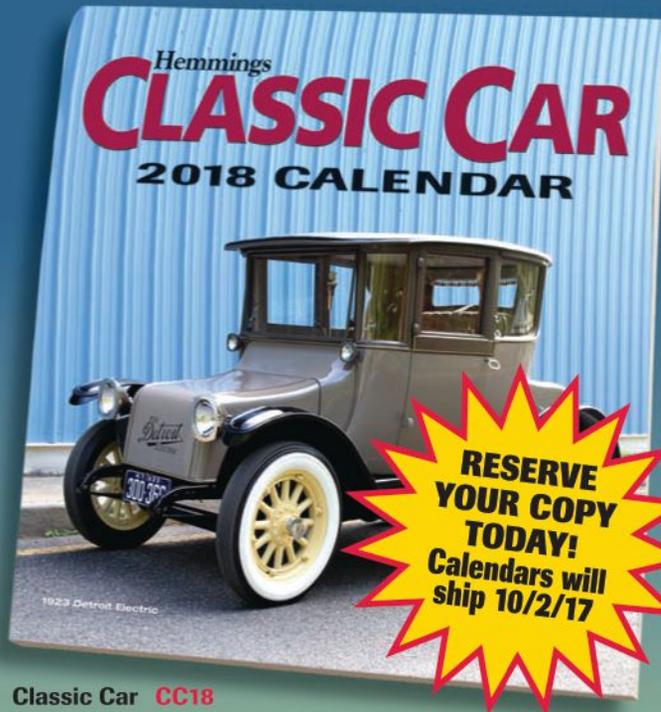


I Was There relates your stories from working for the carmakers, whether it was at the drawing board, on the assembly line or anywhere in between. To submit your stories, email us at editorial@hemmings.com or write to us at **I Was There**, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car*, 222 Main Street, Bennington, Vermont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

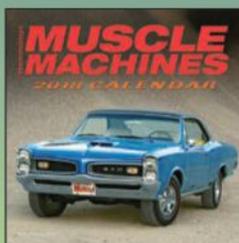
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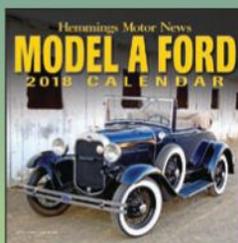
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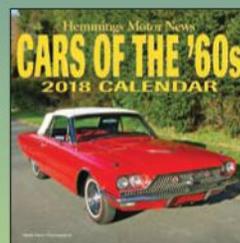
Classic Car **CC18**



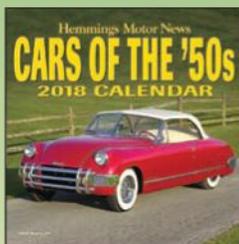
Muscle Machines **CM18**



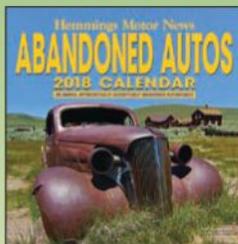
Model A Ford **CF18**



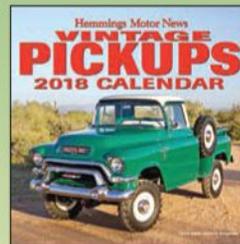
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AFTER THE MYSTERIOUS SINKING OF THE USS MAINE IN HAVANA HARBOR, TENSIONS COME to the breaking point between Spain and the United States. Spain refuses America's ultimatum to relinquish sovereignty of Cuba, and declares war against the U.S.



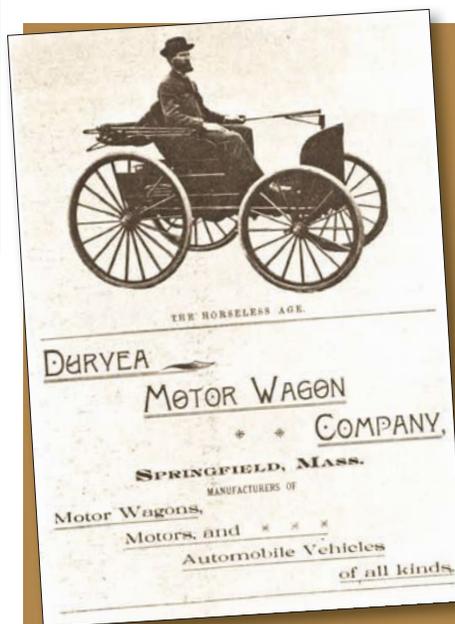
AFTER A FEW YEARS OF FAVORABLE publicity and patent applications, Ransom E. Olds, with an infusion of capital from many around the Lansing area, incorporates the Olds Motor Works in August of 1897. The gasoline-powered vehicle is no stranger to those in the Lansing area, as Olds has driven it around and now plans to make it available to all. Early print ads list a price of \$1,000, and it will be interesting to see if demand keeps pace with curiosity.



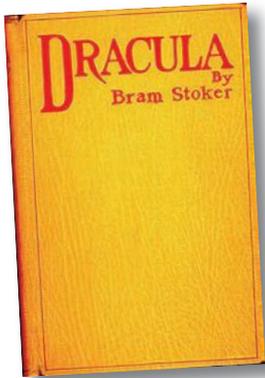
HENRY FORD'S QUADRICYCLE RUNS ON FOUR BICYCLE WHEELS AND A TWO-CYLINDER, rear-mounted engine capable of propelling the vehicle at around 20 miles per hour. Ford debuted the Quadricycle on June 4, 1896, and it was indeed able to attain the 20-mile-per-hour mark. The 32-year-old inventor intends to make more Quadricycles in the future.

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- Train fare (from New York City to the resort town of Bushkill, Pennsylvania, on the Delaware Valley Railroad) – \$1
- Boat fare (New York City to Southampton, England) – \$60
- Steamship fare (Cooks Tours Nile Steamers; New York City to Egypt) – \$675-\$1,225



THE DURYEA HAS EMERGED OUT OF Springfield, Massachusetts, as one of the first horseless carriages, and is quickly making a name for itself, winning the *Chicago Times-Herald* contest on November 27, 1895. Defeating five other entrants, including three Benz cars from Germany, the Duryea, piloted by Frank Duryea, finished the 54-mile course from Chicago to Evanston, Illinois, and back in a little over 10 hours. The Duryea Motor Wagon Company will produce more than 10 vehicles in 1895.



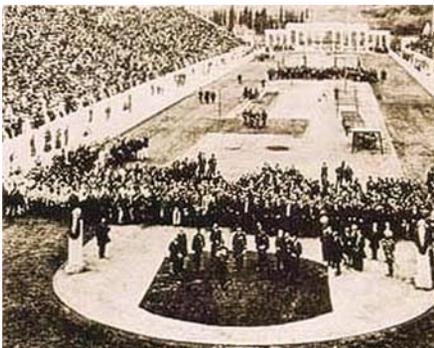
BRAM STOKER'S novel *Dracula* is released in May of 1897. The gothic horror tale follows Count Dracula and his scheme to move from Transylvania to England, and to spread the curse of the undead.

THE INAUGURAL BOSTON

Athletic Association road race took place April 19, 1897, and featured 15 skilled distance runners. The 24.5-mile foot race was held as a conclusion to the B.A.A. games and the winning runner was John J. ("JJ") McDermott of New York, with a time of 2:55:10, 3-minutes and 40-seconds faster than the winner at the Olympics.



WILLIAM MCKINLEY defeats William Jennings Bryan to become the 25th president of the United States in 1897. McKinley carries 23 of the 45 states and finishes with over seven million votes.



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I Built My First Car

I HAVE ALWAYS SAID I WAS BORN IN a garage. That's not quite correct, but I have been around cars for about 88 years. My dad was a mechanic. He had a garage, and my two older brothers worked with him for many years. Dad referred to it as a "Ford garage," though it was not sanctioned by the Ford Motor Company; it was that Dad thought the Ford was the best and only car made.

I can recall, at the age of five, I would go to his garage. We lived in a small town so it was alright for me, as a five-year-old, to walk to the garage, which was about five blocks from our house. Everyone in town knew everyone else, so there was no thought of it being dangerous. To keep me away from the work Dad was doing, he would give me the job of scraping carbon out of the cylinder heads of Model Ts. I realize I did very little scraping, but I was being tutored in auto repair, and for that I am forever thankful.

Somewhere around 1936, a farmer near our town passed away. It happened that he owed some money to my Dad, and as part payment, he received the farmer's 1926 pickup truck which was not quite all there. It sat outside the garage for close to two years and was missing items like the engine and transmission, all four wheels, and the radiator. What was there was in fair condition.

In those days, no one ever threw any-

thing away. There was a man who had another shop, and he was a customer of our garage. He had two big steam tractors as well as two grain separators, as harvesting grain was his principle business; he also had a Twombly cyclecar, dated around 1914. In the fall and winter he would cut firewood using a large buzz saw with a 30-inch blade that was powered by a Model T Ford engine. If the engine went bad, he would not repair it; rather he would acquire another engine, after all, there were many to be had.

He had an old engine sitting outside his shop, so I went there and asked how much he wanted for it. He told me, "You can have it if you will haul it off." So I took our Model T wrecker to his shop and transported the engine to our garage—I am in hog heaven. Also, he had four wheels that would fit my project. I asked about the price of the wheels, and he said they were four for a dollar. Mind you, at that time a person could work on a farm for 50-cents per day. "Okay, I'll take the wheels," I told him. I knew the man owed my dad money, so I told him he could deduct the dollar from his bill. When Dad came home, the first thing he said when he entered the house, "Did you tell Bill the cost of the wheels would go on what he owes me?" "Yes," was my answer, and boy did I ever get a chewing, but I got to keep the wheels. Another farmer had a

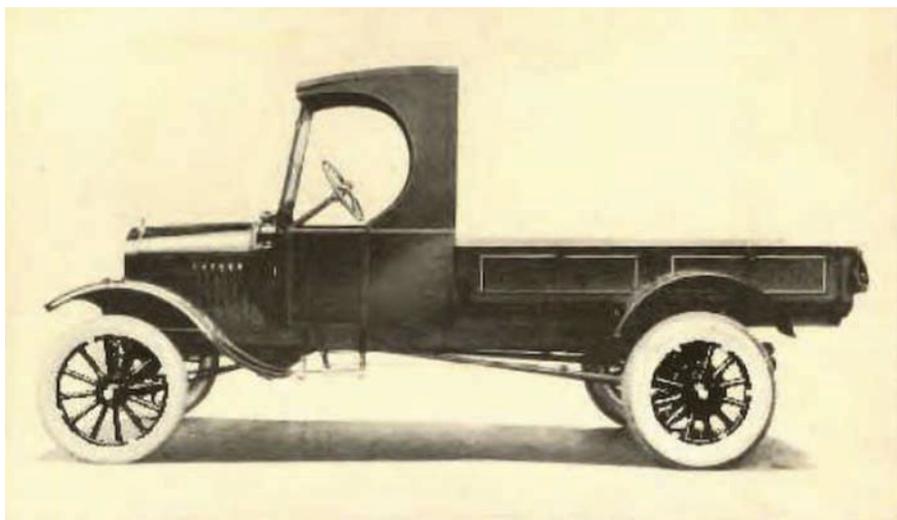
radiator, which I bought for 50 cents.

I was allowed a little space in the garage to "overhaul" the engine. I was given the privilege of going through my dad's goody boxes for parts. He also gave me a gasket set. So, I tore the engine down, checked the parts, primarily the connecting rods to check the condition of the babbitt bearings, and reassembled it. I took the chassis into the shop and hooked the engine to a chain hoist and was ready to install it. Dad came over and asked, "What are you doing?" I replied that I was ready to install the engine. "No, you aren't," was his sharp reply. "Did you time the engine?" he firmly asked. "No, I didn't." I confessed. "I knew you didn't. I was watching you, and I let you put it together so now you have to tear it down and time it. From now on you will never forget to time an engine." And I haven't.

The engine ran well and I drove the car a few blocks—on the rims because I had no tires. Not only that, if a cop would have seen this, I would have been in trouble. I had no title, and to get a title at that time would cost \$10, and there was no way I could afford that. I ended up selling the pickup truck to the school so they could teach auto repair to students in Future Farmers of America. I received \$4 for the truck.

I still play with cars, as I'm only 93-years old. I have in my stable my pride and joy: it's a frame-up restored 1949 Studebaker pickup with a Studebaker 289 V-8 and automatic transmission. There's also a restored 1972 El Camino which I have owned since it was six months old, a 1954 Studebaker Commander hardtop, a 1960 Rambler American, which has a continental spare on the back, and a 1962 Nash Metropolitan with a Ford Pinto engine and automatic. And, at this time, I am restoring a 1961 Corvair Monza.

I believe everyone should have a hobby, and I'm sure having one has helped me reach my age. This is a fact I am most proud of, as I had a triple-bypass heart operation... in 1978! This past July was the 39th anniversary of that operation. 🐶





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CLASSIC TRUCK PROFILE



The Coachbuilt Carrier

Briggs built this one-off 1922 Essex truck, and a New England Museum rescued it

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT

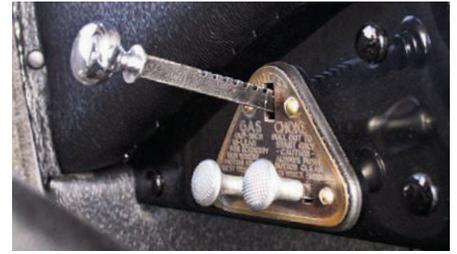


Meticulously restored 1922 Essex pickups are not an everyday sight. In fact, you'll likely never see another because Essex didn't mass-manufacture light haulers.

This particular example, which is part of The Bickford Collection—a truck museum in Yarmouth, Maine—and lovingly resurrected by longtime Bickford

employee Wayne Devoe, is believed to have been built as a one-off alongside Essex's new closed coach bodies that year. It's exact origin story has been lost to time, but looking back at the history of this once-great automaker, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Essex toyed with the idea of a closed-cab, integral-box pickup, years ahead of other manufacturers.





Long before automobile industry disruptor Elon Musk sunk millions of his own money into an electric vehicle startup called Tesla, Joseph Hudson threw his financial might behind a cutting-edge effort that would become the Hudson Motor Car Company.

People on the East and West Coasts might not be familiar with Hudson's, but it was a legendary department store chain founded in Detroit. Its home base was a landmark 25-story building in the Motor City with more than two million square feet of space. In its heyday, 100,000 customers browsed more than a half million items aided by the store's 12,000 employees. It all came crashing down, literally, in 1998 when the 439-foot-tall building was demolished with almost 3,000 pounds of explosives. The store had closed for good years before, in 1983, ending nine decades of operation.

Hudson's namesake cars came to a less dramatic end when the company merged with Nash-Kelvinator in 1954 and formed American Motors. Virtually from the start, though, Hudson Motor Car established itself as a game changer by offering six-cylinder engines to the masses by 1913. Its smooth-running Super Six pioneered the use of a counterbalanced crankshaft, which ran in four main bearings and made an impressive 70 horsepower.

On the heels of Hudson's success, company president Roy Chapin rolled out Essex Motors in 1917, and the first of the new nameplate's cars made its debut in 1919. The Essex was to be an entry-level brand but would leverage Hudson's reputation for solid engineering and deliver it in a smaller, less-expensive package. The power plant for the new car was a 179-cu.in. four-cylinder that

utilized a counter-balanced crankshaft, allowing it to run nearly as smoothly as Hudson's straight-six.

The engine's then-unusual F-head configuration put the intake valves in the cylinder head and the exhaust valves in the block. This easy-breathing arrangement helped the engine make 55 horsepower, which was impressive compared to the Ford Model T's 20-hp 177-cu.in. four. Chapin had hoped to sell Essex automobiles for less than \$1,000 (still double the price of a Model T), but initially, its lowest price offering wound up selling for more than \$1,500. Still, the cars were a hit and outsold their Hudson siblings, 21,879 to 18,175 in the first model year.

For 1922, Chapin would give Essex an even more distinctive bang for the buck. Open cars in those days outsold closed cars because they were far less



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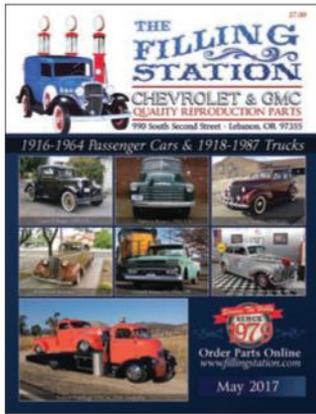
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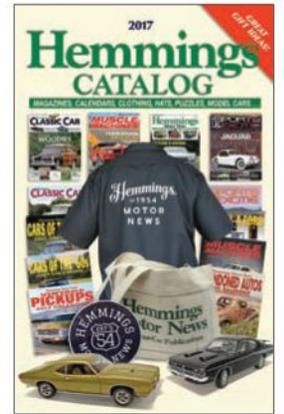
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expensive. So what if Essex customers could buy a closed car for slightly more than an open-air tourer?

A prototype two-door was built in-house out of wood, and taken to Briggs Manufacturing Co. Briggs liked what it saw and signed on to make the new Essex bodies. The Coach used metal-over-wood construction, and its roof was covered in weather-resistant fabric, while the doors swung open on four rear-mounted hinges. Inside, it was nicely appointed with cloth upholstery and a complement of instruments that included oil and ammeter, speedometer, odometer, and tripmeter. By keeping the shape of the body simple and easy to manufacture, however, Essex was able to set the price of the Coach down to \$1,145—just \$100 more than the company's touring car.

It's easy to see how this truck might've been derived from the closed cockpit coach body: The cab was built by removing everything aft of the front seat and replacing it with a simple sheetmetal box. Evidence shows it was built by Briggs, but how it acquired some of its

unique accessories is a mystery.

George Nye, a director at The Bickford Collection, has formulated some plausible theories, however. "We believe that the truck was used at the Hudson Essex factory," he said. "The body was built by Briggs. It does have a Briggs tag on it, and it has a number stamped on the tops of both doors. The Landau irons are identical to a pair we saw on a 1925 Hudson sedan. Those were on it when Bickford acquired it. The seat in the pickup has more springs than those used in Essex cars, and the springs are larger so it, too, could be from a Hudson sedan. The rear window shade would be uncommon in a pickup, but we saw a '27 Hudson with that same type of roller. So, if the vehicle was being used around the factory, the workers had access to the parts bins and might've bolted on components from big Hudsons for their own entertainment."

At some point in its life, the truck left Detroit and wound up employed at a Hudson Dealer in West Springfield, Massachusetts. It passed unrestored through the hands of a couple of owners until Bickford Collection founder Erv Bickford bought the truck in the 1990s.

"J.J. Fitzgerald was the Hudson dealer in West Springfield, and this truck became their service vehicle after the factory use," Nye said. "Beyond that, it was owned by two individuals for long periods of time who intended to restore it. Erv Bickford bought it from a man in Springfield who'd had it for decades but Erv died before it was restored."

After Mr. Bickford's death, his widow, Lyn Bickford, fast tracked the Essex truck's restoration and decided a color change was in order. "It was blue, but Lyn went with the maroon and black," Nye said.

Devoe dove into the project in 2014 and tackled everything but the upholstery in about 16 months. "Wayne cut out extensive portions of the fenders and welded in new metal. He made the running boards in their entirety," Nye said. "The wood in the top of the cab, the bed, and the tailgate were replaced. All the rest of the wood is original that Wayne cleaned up. Wayne also made the vinyl work on the cab."

The truck's drivetrain remains, amazingly, as is. The Essex four-cylinder engine was treated to a new timing chain and gears, while the three-speed transmission and stock rear axle were cleaned and returned to service.

"The engine wasn't rebuilt," Nye said. "Jim Hall just pulled the pan off and lubricated the mains and bearings before the engine was started. The transmission and differential were fine, but the gas tank was replaced. The exhaust was made up locally, and Wayne installed it."

Today, the truck is driven occasionally and makes guest appearances at shows and local parades. Anyone who'd like an up-close look at a one-off 1922 Essex pickup can visit the Bickford Collection in Yarmouth, Maine. Contact them to make arrangements on their facebook page (www.facebook.com/thebickfordcollection/) or call 207-807-2682. 🐾



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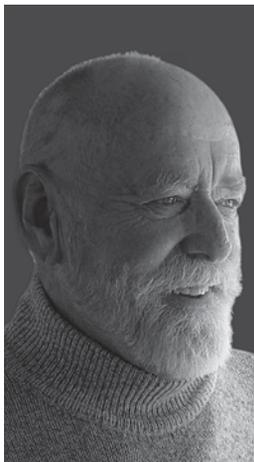
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Later, I was even more amazed when beholding the insides of a 1952 Chevrolet Saginaw three-speed standard transmission. That opportunity presented itself after a poorly executed shift during an ill-advised contest of speed. Upon removing the side plate of my sick Saginaw, I was awestruck by the beauty in front of me. It was then that I realized what wondrous devices automotive transmissions are, and how little credit they get as mechanical masterpieces.

It took a lot of engineering to get where we are today, too. One of the first solutions for getting power to the ground was to use big, flat industrial belts to switch back and forth among different-size rear pulleys while the engine drove a smaller pulley up front. This was used on horseless carriages in the 1890s, but not for long.

Ford's Model T had a unique solution. It employed a two-speed planetary gear setup that didn't involve clutching, but required fancy footwork to shift. It had three pedals on the floor; one being a two-speed and neutral shift pedal, the second being the reverse gear, and the third being the brake. There was also a hand brake that would shift the car into neutral while braking and could lock out high gear when desired.

Model T transmissions were so different that some states required two driver's licenses; one for Fords and another for cars with standard H-gate transmissions, which allowed you to shift from any forward gear to any other, unlike early sequential transmissions that were also available. The H-gate won out in the end after synchromesh was invented in 1929 by Cadillac.

Another bright idea for transferring power in the early days was to use the car's engine to drive a flywheel-mounted generator that, in turn, drove an electric motor, sort of like the

way things are done on submarines and modern diesel electric locomotives today. That is how the Owen Magnetic, built from 1915 to 1922 was configured.

It was arguably the first successful hybrid, although it wasn't designed that way in order to save fuel. Instead, it allowed the engine's power to be transmitted to the differential and rear wheels smoothly without the need for a clutch. What doomed it was that it was expensive and complex, and no one knew how to work on it.

Fluid couplings and torque converters came next. These devices use hydraulic fluid, turbine blades and hydraulic pressure to drive the transmission. And these, plus other innovations such as using engine vacuum, hydraulic pressure, and solenoid switches, completely eliminated the need for clutching and shifting in the end.

Fluid couplings were first used in

Chrysler products in 1939. But behind the fluid coupling was a conventional flywheel and clutch, backed up by a standard three-speed transmission. You still needed to clutch to shift gears, but you could bring the car to a stop in any gear and then take off in that same gear from a complete stop. Of course, accelerating from a stop in high gear was leisurely.

Soon after in 1940, the Hydra-Matic fully automatic transmission debuted in the Oldsmobile. And then Chrysler came back with a more sophisticated fluid drive that only required a clutch to put it into first gear, after which it would shift automatically within the range you selected. The Hydra-Matic won out in the end, but taxi companies in the 1940s preferred Chrysler's fluid drive because it was sturdier and more reliable.

In the end, all of these devices endeavored to do the same thing, which was to allow the car's engine to run in its sweet spot but facilitate driving at different speeds. They were all marvels of engineering, and are fascinating to behold and understand. To me, they are as amazing as Fabergé eggs. And after seeing the inside of that smashed Saginaw, I gained a whole new reverence for transmissions. It was an expensive education, but I did learn how to rebuild one, and I haven't damaged one since. 🛠️



It was then that I realized what wondrous devices automotive transmissions are, and how little credit they get as mechanical masterpieces.

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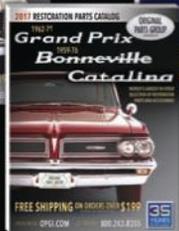
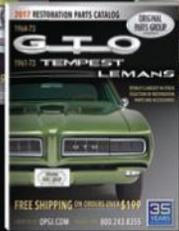
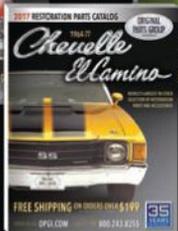
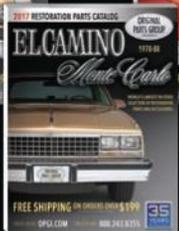
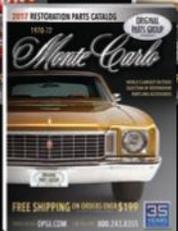
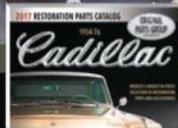


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